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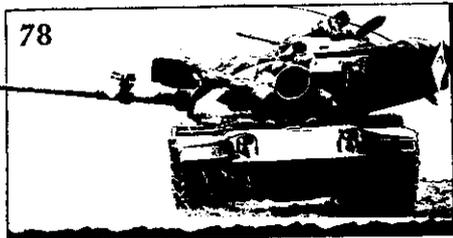
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Mike Cook

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Kim Mohan

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Art director and graphics
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This issue's contributing artists
Robin Wood
Roger Raupp
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COVER

People are still writing in to say how much they liked Robin Wood's first cover painting, back on issue #97. This piece depicts an entirely different scene, but we expect the painting to be just as popular as its predecessor. Through the aid of a ring of flying, this magic-user is able to do battle with these giant bats on her own terms. That big bat in the foreground is about to find out the hard way what a lightning bolt spell is like — and it's not even grounded.

Letters

Here we go again

Dear Editor,

Page 11 of *Unearthed Arcana* says that "no instances are known of half-elves descended from grugach stock." However, in the article *Arcana* update in issue #103, it says on page 12 that "A half-elf of wild descent cannot become a cleric, a ranger, or a magic-user."

Based on this evidence, either (a) The rule on half-elves of wild descent from *Unearthed Arcana* is removed; (b) An error was made in issue #103; or (c) Wild elves can toss humans a long way. Which is it?

Nicholas Leahy
Boise, Idaho

Thanks, Nicholas. I love multiple-choice tests, and I love making corrections to an article about corrections. . . . The answer, of course, is (b). I used the offending sentence in issue #103 as an example to illustrate how certain classes were prohibited to certain half-elves, and I didn't stop to think that no half-elves can be "of wild elf descent" in the first place.

Technically, the statement is accurate — there is no such thing as a half-grugach cleric, or ranger, or magic-user. What it doesn't say is that there is also no such thing as a half-grugach fighter, or thief, or illusionist, or . . . — KM

A special archer?

Dear Dragon,

Should the archer NPC class (Best of DRAGON Vol. III) be allowed to have the ability of weapon specialization as described in *Unearthed Arcana*?

Adam Lidz
Bala Cynwyd, Pa.

If you're using the unofficial archer NPC designed by Len Lakofka, the original bonuses to hit and damage given in that article should be retained, not replaced by the combat bonuses given in *Arcana* for specialization with a bow.

Those original bonuses are part of what makes an archer an archer; besides, from 4th level on, they're better than the bonuses given to a bow specialist. On top of that, the archer gets an extra +1 when using any magical bow or arrow. If you find these advantages too powerful, you can treat the archer more like a regular bow specialist. But if these advantages haven't caused any game-balance problems in your campaign, then there's no reason to replace them with the lower bonuses.

I can't think of a logical reason why archers should be denied the benefit of the other aspects of weapon specialization. If a bow specialist "who begins the round with arrow nocked, shaft drawn, and target in sight is entitled to loose that arrow prior to any initiative check," then an archer should be able to do this, too. An archer should be able to do increased damage at point-blank range just as a bow specialist can, but don't add in the archer's damage bonus before dou-

bling the amount. Determine "raw double damage" first; e.g., an arrow +1 does 2-7 points of damage, so "raw" double damage" would be 4-14 (2d6 + 2). A 14th-level archer also gets +7 on damage and an extra +1 for using a magic arrow, for a total of 12-22. That's enough damage, isn't it? I'd make the archer live with his generally lower number of attacks per round (he never gets better than 3/1), as some compensation for his greater ability to hit and damage.

You'll need to solve other problems to make the two systems mesh smoothly; for instance, they differ in the definition of point-blank and short range. Maybe you'll want to rule that an archer who benefits from some of the aspects of weapon specialization can never have proficiency with anything but a bow. You can use the two systems side-by-side, or you can mesh one into the other without making the archer too powerful. — KM

Back to the dogs

Dear Dragon,

Thanks for another great article by Stephen Inness ("A dozen domestic dogs," issue #103). One additional fact on water dogs is that the webbing between their toes extends much farther toward their nails than that of non-water dogs. This increases their swimming efficiency and speed, and the length of time they can spend in the water over what their brethren can do.

Also, in the "Costs" table on page 28, an entry for "food dog" is listed. Is this the kind of dog used to hunt rabbits, or is it the kind that would be served on a plate in *Oriental Adventures*?

Steve Null
Palm Bay, Fla.

The description of very small normal dogs mentions that some of the canines in this category "are raised for the cooking pot." This is what the entry on the costs table refers to. A dog for hunting rabbits will probably be a small fighter or a medium runner (in Stephen's system) and will cost 17 gp, as per the *Players Handbook*. — KM

A jump too far

Dear Dragon,

I found the article "Short hops and big drops" (#93) very useful. However, it does not mix with the *Unearthed Arcana* version of jumping. The book says a thief-acrobat with 15 strength and 16 dexterity can make a running broad jump of 9 feet at sixth level, and any other character can broad jump 8 feet. But in the article, a character with combined strength and dexterity of 31 would have a basic jump number of 9, which would be doubled to 18 feet for a running broad jump.

Could you clarify this?

Peter Colucci
Alta Loma, Calif.

You've clarified it very well, Peter. The two systems are drastically different in most respects

For Paul

It's easy to lose track of what's really important in life when you spend day after day doing the same things. Anyone who has a job, goes to school, or runs a household knows what I mean.

Once in a while, though, something happens during one of those monotonous days — something that almost seems designed to shake us out of our ruts and get us thinking about what counts. I had one of those experiences on the day before Thanksgiving, when I received a letter from a familiar address in San Diego.

It was Paul Crabaugh's address, but it was his mother who wrote the letter. She wanted me to know, by means of what she called "the letter a mother should never have to write," that Paul died of cancer on Nov. 17, at the age of 29.

The news hit me right between the eyes and sunk into the part of my brain that's In Charge of Priorities. Paul had been a regular contributor to DRAGON® Magazine longer than I had been on the staff. Over the years he had become one of my many long-distance friends. He sent in lots of articles, practically all of which were accepted and printed. He always wrote in a casual style that I enjoyed and envied — a style that made it seem as though he didn't have a care in the world.

And maybe he didn't. He knew he was sick, of course, and he did what he could to fight the disease. But "he never once gave in, or even admitted his pain and discomfort," said his mother. "Right up to his last hours he was looking ahead to various articles and projects." In fact, he enjoyed a gaming session with some of his friends the day before he died.

Paul Montgomery Crabaugh's name will appear on only one more article in this magazine — a piece we accepted a few months ago, and which will be printed within another issue or two. But his contribution to the magazine will go on for as long as people keep buying back issues and taking advantage of the knowledge and insight in the pieces he wrote. And his contribution to me will last even longer than that. Whenever I get bummed out about the problems I have to solve in my life, I'm going to try to remember Paul and what he had to tackle. From now on, I'm going to see problems such as making a deadline and balancing my budget for what they are — small obstacles, easily overcome.

I realize now that my problems are not big ones, and I'm grateful for that. But if I ever have to deal with a *real* problem, I hope I'll be as strong and courageous about it as Paul was.

I'll miss him.

— so different that they can't be used side-by-side in a campaign without seriously weakening the thief-acrobat split class (Imagine a world where anyone with a combined strength and dexterity of

14 or higher could jump better than a 6th-level thief-acrobat.)

If thief-acrobats exist in your campaign but you like the mechanics of the "Short hops"

system and you think everyone else ought to have a chance of being able to jump, then you'll have to do some extensive fiddling with the way a

(Turn to page 89)

The World Gamers Guide

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

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21 Nankeen Street
Modbury Heights 5092
South Australia
Australia

Gavin Mountjoy (AD,T)
21 Victory Crescent
Tawa
Wellington, New Zealand

William Vernon (AD,CC)
Avenida Sojo
Residencias El Escorial
Urbanization El Rosal
Caracas 1060
Venezuela

Guy Girardi (AD,ST,GW)
Place des mines 46,
L-4244 Esch/Alzette
Luxembourg

Jason F. Wilcox (AD,TS,GW)
1/121 McLeod Rd.
Te Atatu 5th, Auckland 8
New Zealand

Bryan Bernstein (AD,GW,DD)
Aconcagua 5073
Montevideo, Uruguay

Nigel Cherk (AD,RQT)
8 Bengal Cres.
Mt. Waverley,
Victoria 3149
Australia

Russel Davidoff (AD,TS)
110 Greenlands Crescent
Sunningdale
Johannesburg 2192
South Africa

Eric Cooper (DD,AD)
Sq DU Solbosch 28
1050 Brussels
Belgium

Darin Pilacinski
Bartoklaan 6
2253CX Voorschoten
The Netherlands

Peter S. Magnusson (AD)
Ankarvagen 7
181 43 Lidingo, Stockholm
Sweden

John Maravilla (VV,GW,DD)
73 Bacolod St.
Alabang Hills Vill.
Muntinlupa, Metro Manila,
Philippines

Frank J. Romeo III (AD)
63 Oberon Drive
Belmont, Vic.
Australia 3216

Dr Bruce Ross (AD)
7 Apollo Place
Rotorua
Bay of Plenty
New Zealand

Gianna Vacca
5, clos des Avettes
95800 Cergy
France

Tim Mortimer (AD,DD)
10 Lindfield Avenue
Edwardstown 5039
South Australia
Australia

Gavin Archer (AD,GW,T)
Box #536
University of Alaska
Fairbanks AK 99775-1040

Erebor RPG Association
Mosehusvej 2
2700 Broenshoej
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204 University Dr.
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Republic of China

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Casilla de Correo 181
6600 Mercedes
Provincia Buenos Aires
Argentina

Jonathan Cary (AD,DD)
Carrera 11A #113-14
Apt. 501
Bogota, Colombia

Matthew Strickler (AD,TS,SF)
Impasse de Mon Idee 3
1226 Thonex
Switzerland

Matthew Temple (AD)
42 Seaview Ave.
Northcote, Auckland 9
New Zealand

Neil Schunke (CC,T)
Diamond Heights Apt. 301
1-108, Ogino
Itami, Hyogo, Japan T664

Peter Kay (DD)
Hebel str. 65
4056 Basel
Switzerland

Cameron Lind (AD,DD,RQ)
36 Hawthorne St.
Woody Point, Queensland,
Australia

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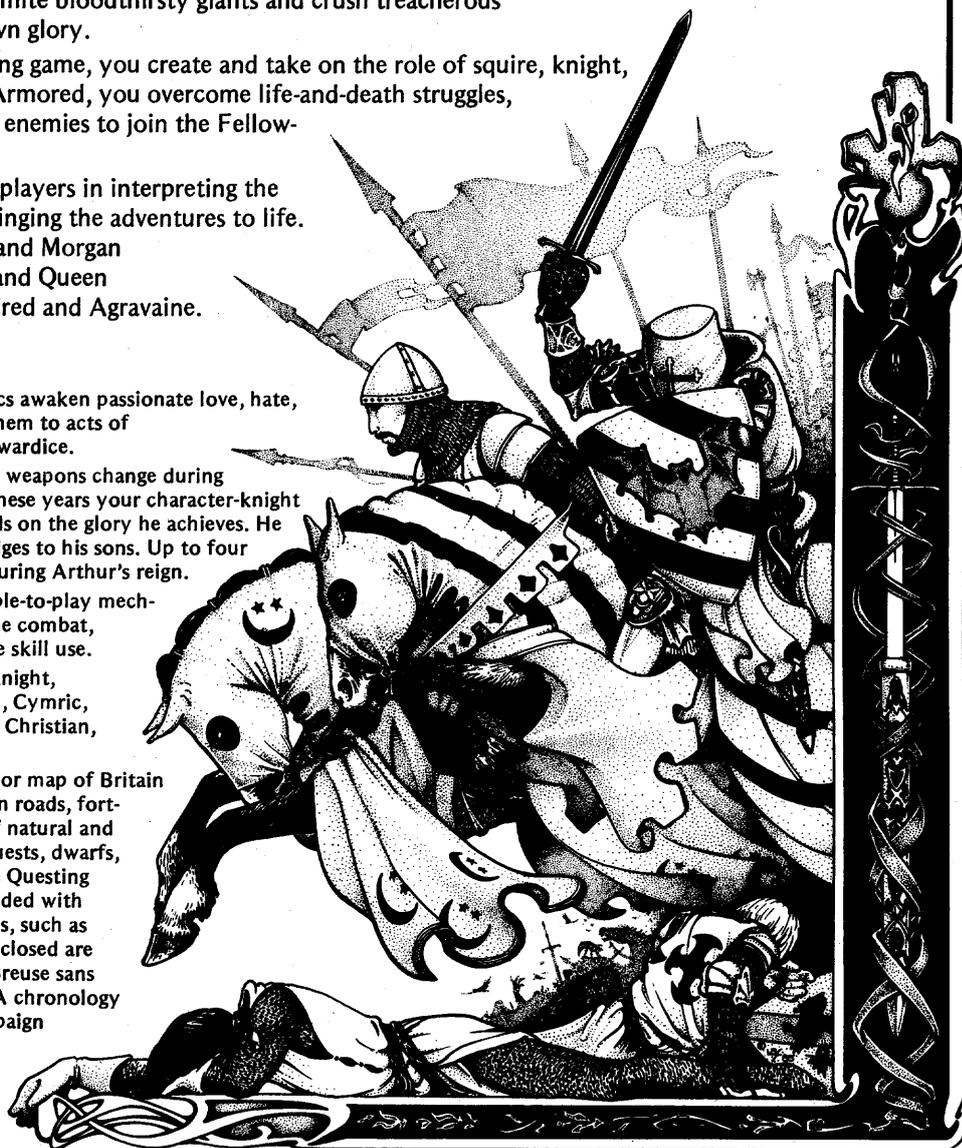
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The forum

I disagree with the letter from Craig Sheldon in #102, which said "it is very hard to role-play with one character and a DM." I have played in both situations, with a big party and then just as a single player with a DM. I've been playing the second way for five years, and I think it's easier and more fun. The player is pushed to think more on his own, and his character is limited to his special abilities only.

I have been playing a monk character for over a year as a single player with my DM. Most large parties will run from nothing short of a deity, and some even then will not run. My character is forced to run all the time from pursuing monsters and even border patrols. This adds much flavor to the game. Sure, I could be a 20th-level fighter with several other 20th-level characters, and we could be a walking meat grinder. But running now and then can be fun.

With the right DM and player, this kind of gaming can be even more fun than large parties of PCs.

Cole Langston
Rockport, Tex.

* * * *

This letter, confusingly enough, is in reply to Richard Silva's reply (#103) to Frank Mentzer's letter back in #101. As you will recall, Mr. Mentzer's letter stated that the dragons in the new D&D® game system were a challenge even to 25th-level player characters, while Mr. Silva's reply denied it. Both writers used the same melee as an example, and I will do the same. Part of this reply is based on a letter from Dan Fejes (#102) which pointed out that magic items must save vs. attack forms like everything else.

The seven player characters with "+5 everything" are heading for a red dragon's lair. But the dragon finds them first, swoops down in a surprise attack, and flies off with a fighter, the thief, and the magic-user. So far, so good. From then on, here's what happens.

In the first place, a magic-user caught in the jaws of a dragon will not be able to cast any kind of spell. Not only will he not have free movement, but the shock and pain will probably keep him from concentrating. This would last a short time after he is dropped (until it's too late to save himself). The magic-user and fighter are killed when the dragon drops its prey. The thief, with his *ring of feather falling*, survives — but, fighting alone against a huge ancient red dragon, won't last more than a round or two in melee (why waste your breath on one puny thief?).

Now the dragon flies over the ridge again, to find the survivors on the ground, who will either be retreating or walking around the ridge after the dragon. (If the dragon comes back while they have their hands full climbing the ridge, the fight will end in a hurry!) Swooping down again, the dragon breathes on the entire party. Its members take half damage from the flames because of their protective rings, but the cost is high. All the soft metal rings fail their saving throws vs. magical fire and melt. The +5 bows of the fighters are incinerated (making their +5 arrows useless), as is one cleric's *staff of withering*. In addition, one

poor fighter even sees his +5 plate mail melt away, stripping him down to AC 10. (Since the fighters in the example were using two-handed swords, they couldn't have used shields.)

On to the next round. As soon as the fiery assault is over, the fighters drink their *potions of storm giant strength*, expecting an imminent melee. Alas, it is a fatal miscalculation on their part. This dragon, having spent part of his treasure on an issue of DRAGON® #98, has read the dragon articles in it, including the bit about sneaky tricks. So he flies a short distance away, picks up two boulders, comes back, and proceeds to play B-17 Over Berlin with the party. The boulders strike as catapult missiles, and the dragon's supply of them is practically limitless. So the characters suffer a steady bombardment for a while. This tactic could finish off the party by itself, but the dragon eventually wearies of the sport and comes down again.

By this time the unarmored fighter is dead, and his armored companion is down to 40 hp. The two clerics are more or less intact, but only at the cost of expending all of their healing spells on themselves. The dragon breathes again as it comes down, killing the fighter and reducing the clerics to a handful of hit points apiece. He lands on top of the cleric who is still armed and crushes her before she can use her *mace +4* and *gauntlets of ogre power*. One good bite finishes off the other cleric, and the battle is over.

This scenario is rather unrealistic in one respect — an intelligent beast like the dragon would be pickier in its initial selection of victims, assuming it had observed them for some time. The example also made no allowance for the possibility that the dragon was a spell-user. So now, an alternate scenario.

After having watched the party for some time, the dragon turns *invisible* before attacking to gain complete surprise (not even a 25th-level magic-user can keep *detect invisibility* going all the time). Carefully selecting his initial victims, he picks up the magic-user (again!) and the two clerics, flying over the ridge before dropping them. As before, being tightly held prevents spell-casting, and with their arms pinned to their sides, the clerics can't even use their weapons. (The *gauntlets* only affect the hands, so the female cleric can't use their power to help her break free — and where would she go if she did?) Everyone dies when dropped this time, and the dead clerics certainly can't *resurrect* themselves.

The dragon returns, *invisible* again. Now he pops into sight as he breathes on the party. As before, the bows and rings fail their saves, this time including the thief's ring. Again the fighters drink their potions anticipating melee, and again the dragon stays out of reach and drops boulders on them. The party is badly battered; no one dies, but no one is healed, and soon everyone is down to 40 hit points each.

Now for the final round. Still flying out of reach of any attack the party can muster, the dragon belches forth his fire again. Three characters die; the survivor is picked up in the dragon's jaws by a swooping attack just as the fire dies down, carried five hundred feet in the air, and dropped to his death.

These two scenarios show that the dragon is an inevitable victor against the party, given the circumstances of the encounter and a show of intelligence on the part of the dragon. He would know all his advantages, and would pick out the most dangerous opponents for special treatment. (In the case of the clerics, their arsenal of all blunt weapons is a dead giveaway.) So the great wyrm is triumphant yet again, DMs can rejoice in the fact that the dragon is indeed a challenge to high-level characters, environmentalists can be glad that a creature of Nature was not slaughtered, and everyone lives happily ever after — except the thief, the magic-user, two clerics, and three fighters.

Gregory W. Detwiler
Williamsburg, Pa.

* * * *

The debate about character alignment of late has driven me to give my thoughts on the subject. In the original edition of the D&D® game, all characters were told that "it is not only necessary to select a role, but it is also necessary to determine what stance the character will take." To the new hobby of fantasy role-playing, character alignment was an important concept. Not only did it state what the imaginary player character believed, but it also served to help the player to better take on the role of his or her persona.

In later supplements of the original rules set, alignment was taken a step farther. It was used as a means (along with ability scores) to determine whether or not a PC was eligible for one of the more specialized (and often more powerful) subclasses. In this way, alignment was a tool used by both the players and the Dungeon Master to relate to the characters' beliefs, ways of acting, and to restrict entrance into certain subclasses.

It has been eleven years since the original D&D game appeared. While many of the ideas found in those little brown booklets and supplements were expanded and revised for inclusion in the AD&D game, alignment was not one of them. Even though the number of possible alignments has been tripled and more detailed descriptions of each ethos given, they are used as little more than tools for the players and Dungeon Master, in much the same way as was done over a decade ago.

My belief is that alignment should be used to restrict entrance into certain character classes and to determine how a player character will act in *most* circumstances. For example, an assassin, no matter how evil or chaotic he or she may be, would not attack the first group of good and/or neutral adventurers sighted simply because of their conflicting alignments. The assassin character class as written is composed of very intelligent individuals who make a living by killing those individuals who are deemed "troublesome" by the assassin's employer. Being as intelligent as he is, an assassin would know when a particular job was over his head. Intelligence, not only alignment, should dictate how a character reacts to certain situations. Similarly, paladins do not charge the first demon prince they see, even though such a creature is diametrically opposed in its beliefs and actions.

Thus, alignment has been around with fantasy role-playing games too long simply to be forgotten. It is still an integral part of the game. Alignment, like other aspects of the game, needs only to be restructured in order to once again take its place of importance among the minds of players and their fantasy personae. Remember that all that needs to be done is use your head!

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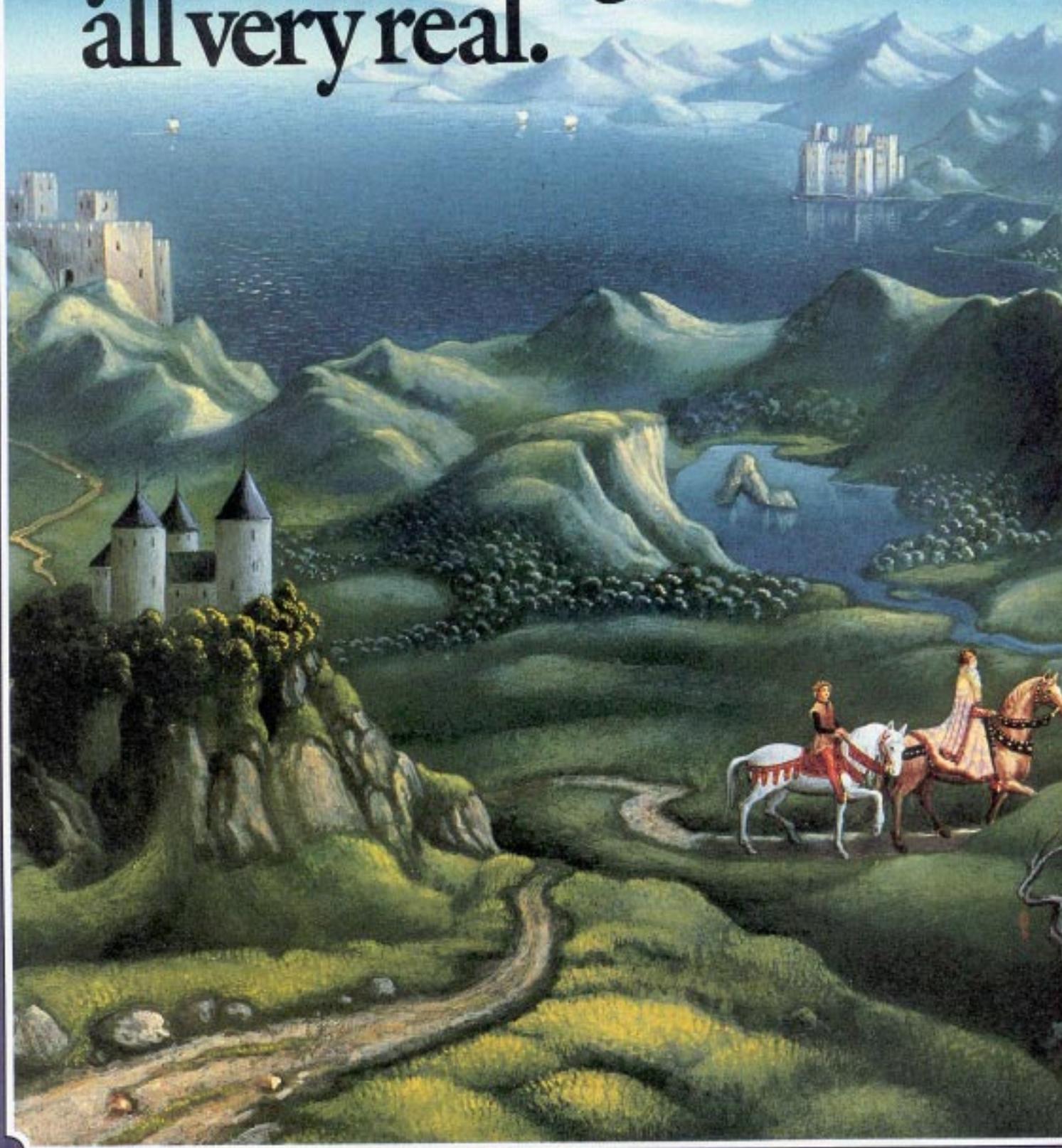
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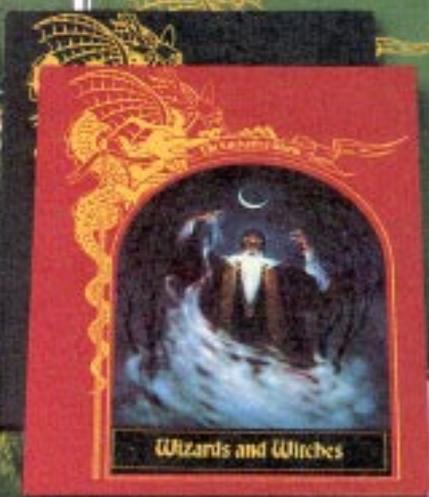
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LEOMOND'S TINY ADVENTURE



by Lenard Lakofka

Tone down the demi-humans

The list of possible player-character races was expanded by seven with the publication of *Unearthed Arcana*. Three of the new choices — gray elf, wood elf, and valley elf — should present no problem for the DM to incorporate into a campaign. However, the other four new races all have abilities or characteristics that may make them tough to handle without upsetting the balance of the campaign. Here are some suggestions for avoiding those difficulties.

The wild elf

This character race is the easiest of the four to deal with. The wild elf's power of animal friendship could cause the DM possible strife if the player decides to have his character (like many a druid we all know and love) strike up an encounter with every squirrel and bluebird the party chances to meet. The DM can discourage this tactic by ruling that the ability is only usable once per day (just as the spell would be), once every 6 hours, or whatever seems appropriate, and also by sticking to the letter of the spell description. First of all, the target is given a saving throw. Second, remember that animal friendship does not allow conversation with or communication from the animal, and can only be used to attract the pet and teach the animal three simple tricks. The magic only works on non-magical creatures of neutral alignment and *semi-* or animal intelligence.

It takes a week to teach each trick, and the animal must be tended to continuously (at least once every 3 days) or it will leave. It could be ruled that while one animal friendship training session is under way, a wild elf cannot attempt to use the innate power a second time without penalty; doing so, even if the target animal makes its save, would cause the first enchantment to be broken.

A wild elf can attract a second pet successfully only when the first one has been fully trained (taught three tricks), and in this way can accumulate a group of pets. A wild elf can control one or more animals totaling 1 HD per level of the elf. This is reduced from the 2 HD per level given in the druid spell, because having a 5th-level wild elf character with an elephant or a rhinoceros in tow could unbalance things rather badly.

A wild elf player character of an alignment other than neutral would have more difficulty in attracting animal pets; allow the animal +1 or +2 on its saving throw if the wild elf's alignment is one step removed (neutral good, neutral evil, etc.), and a +2 or +4 bonus if two steps removed (lawful good, chaotic evil, etc.). Also, allow an extra saving throw if the elf tries to teach the animal a trick that would be out of character for the animal, or which would show disrespect for nature.

The gray dwarf

Duergar have a disadvantage that makes them very hard to play in some campaigns, and a few advantages that might be too powerful for the game if they are interpreted literally.

The disadvantage (also shared by two other new PC sub-races) is the adverse effect that daylight or bright light has on them. Even in a campaign that takes place mostly in the dungeons, a party has to move above ground during the day to get from place to place. *Unearthed Arcana* says that the gray dwarf "will not venture forth" on bright days. This inhibits the player character too strongly. The dwarf may not like to do it, but there are going to be times when he'll have to come out in the sunshine to keep from slowing the party down or becoming separated from it. He will "venture forth,"

but only when he has to — and the duergar must then operate with all the penalties given in the text.

Alas, there is no Create Foster Grants spell that would significantly aid the light-sensitive gray dwarf. Perhaps the dwarf could travel wearing a full helm with the visor down, so that marching would be a little easier. A lenient DM might want to allow a gray dwarf attired in some sort of eye or head covering to ignore the dexterity penalty if a thieving ability is used in a noncombat situation. However, all penalties given should apply during any hostile encounter or combat.

The duergar's advantages, and the problems that arise from them, are the result of having immunities — to non-natural poisons, paralyzation attacks, and illusion spells. If we tone these down to resistances instead of immunities, we can avoid possible game-balance problems.

An immunity to non-natural poisons may be too strong. Such a rule allows a gray dwarf to enter a deadly situation without jeopardy. Instead of immunity, give the gray dwarf a saving throw of 2 versus non-natural poisons (so that it can be failed on a roll of 1). Or, reduce the experience-point award for the encounter in which the opponent was expecting an advantage from its use of non-natural poison.

Immunity to paralyzation is a greater advantage, and potentially a greater problem. With this on their side, gray dwarves can stride into a pack of ghouls or ghosts without fear or threat. The suggested solutions are the same as above: require a saving throw of 2, or cut down the XP award by not counting the paralyzation power as an exceptional ability. This immunity/resistance only extends to paralyzation caused by physical attack (such as the touch of a ghoul or ghost) and not to paralyzation or a similar force of magical origin; thus, a gray dwarf is just as susceptible to a hold person spell or a *wand of paralyzation* as any other dwarf is.

Now, the book says that gray dwarves are "unaffected by illusion spells." This is really opening Pandora's Box. This statement must be toned down, or entire types of play are going to crumble into nothingness.

Consider one of the most common types of illusion — the *invisibility* spell. Imagine a party of PCs being able to see everything they encounter because their good buddy, the gray dwarf, is unaffected by illusions. As extreme as this example is, it only represents the tip of the iceberg. The party will encounter many other common illusions, and having one member (or more) of the group never affected by an illusion simply gives the party too big an advantage.

To tone down this immunity, let's first stipulate that in order to use this characteristic, the gray dwarf must concentrate for one round on seeing through, or looking for, an illusion. If any other action is taken in the same round, the dwarfs concentration is broken and the effort is wasted.

Second, the chance to be unaffected should not be a 100% thing in very many cases. The distance between the dwarf and the illusion is a factor; it's harder to detect illusions that are farther away. If you interpret this resistance to illusions as an innate ability that cannot be improved, then a dwarfs intelligence score will also help determine how good he is at seeing through illusions. If you interpret the ability as something that can be improved through practice and experience, then use the dwarfs experience level as a factor in determining his chance. In the following table, use either the head-

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ings for "Level" or "Intelligence" over the columns, depending on what you think is the nature of this resistance ability.

Range to illusion (feet)	Level							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+
	or Intelligence							
	3-7	8-7	10-11	12-13	14-15	16	17	18+
1- 29	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%	100%	100%
30- 59	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%	100%
60- 89	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%
90-119	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%
120-149	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%
150-179	5%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%
180-209	2%	5%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%
210-239	—	2%	5%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%
240-269	—	—	2%	5%	10%	20%	30%	40%
270-299	—	—	—	2%	5%	10%	20%	30%
300-329	—	—	—	—	2%	5%	10%	20%
330-359	—	—	—	—	—	2%	5%	10%
360-389	—	—	—	—	—	—	2%	5%
390-419	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2%

It is impossible, even for a gray dwarf of utmost intelligence or level, to successfully see through an illusion at a distance of 420 feet or greater. Illusions that have real effects (such as shadow monsters) could still harm a gray dwarf, even though the character could see the monsters for what they are. Concealed and hidden doors are not illusions in any case. Neither are things hidden in shadows, blended against rock formations, or similarly camouflaged.

This is only one way to deal with this power of gray dwarves; certainly there are other ways of approaching the issue — but it should be approached. Using the rule book literally where immunity to illusions is concerned has the potential to bring irrevocable harm to the campaign.

Deep gnomes

These little people have a problem operating in bright light or daylight, just as gray dwarves do, which can be handled as described in the preceding section. They are also "immune to the effects of illusions and phantasms"; take care of this with a table identical or similar to the one above. (Success figures for deep gnomes might be higher than for gray dwarves, since gnomes have an innate attunement to illusions.)

A non-illusionist svirfneblin (say this with a Swedish accent and it becomes easy) of 6th level or higher can conjure an earth elemental once a day! Good grief, what a power! Having a 90% chance to summon a monster of at least 8 HD once a day will change many a campaign. This is especially true when one considers what an earth elemental can do in a dungeon. Imagine how long your opposition monsters will last when an earth elemental, immune to normal or +1 weapons, shows up. And 30% of the time the conjurer will get a monster of 16 HD or more!

There are two ways to tone down this power — make it usable with less frequency (once a week, for instance) or impose an experience-point penalty on player-character deep gnomes in return for their possession of this ability. I would suggest a 10% penalty on all earned experience through the end of 4th level, and a 50% penalty when going from 5th to 6th level. You may find that a combination of these procedures (a slight XP penalty plus a reduction in frequency) will suit the purpose.

The svirfneblin's spell-like abilities of *blindness*, *blur*, and *change self* are not too radical — although a thief who can change self is going to be hard to find in a populated area!

Dark elves

Drow player characters also have a problem with bright light or daylight; handle this as described above for gray dwarves.

The drow have some very substantial spell-like powers usable once per day. Dancing lights, faerie fire, and darkness 5' radius are not too severe and probably do not need a counter. Assume that the duration, range, etc., of these abilities are the same as for their namesake spells, with variable characteristics dependent upon the dark elf's level.

Dark elves of 4th level or higher also get detect magic, know alignment, and levitate abilities. The first two are not great problems, although they can obviously help a party very much. However, the ability to levitate can be an unbalancing advantage for a drow of high level, who might be able to get an entire party out of trouble with one usage of the ability. To compensate for this great advantage, I would make all classes of player-character drow take a 10% penalty to earned experience at all times after attaining 4th level.

Female dark elves get even more advantages at 4th level, and player characters should take a 20% penalty to earned experience in going from 3rd to 4th level, plus a 10% penalty for every level thereafter. This penalty does not seem too severe, considering that female drow obtain clairvoyance, detect lie, and dispel magic abilities — a very handy group of powers for a player character to have on a once-a-day basis.

Editor's conclusion

Much of the difficulty in designing the new player-character races arose from the fact that many of the races were previously described as "monster" types in the rule books. Clearly, player characters belonging to these races could not be permitted to enjoy all the special abilities attributed to the "monsters." For instance, gray dwarves could not be automatically psionic; svirfneblin could not have special skill with darts; drow could not retain many of the magical attributes given for that race of "monsters" in the FIEND FOLIO® Tome.

Counterbalancing this was our desire to be faithful to the way the races were originally described; because of this, characteristics such as the duergar's immunity to illusions were retained, even though it wasn't always easy to find a game-balance reason for doing so.

The changes suggested in this article are good ways of dealing with problems — if the problems occur or threaten to crop up in your campaign. If you find it necessary, you can use any method of toning down these abilities that you think is appropriate. — KM

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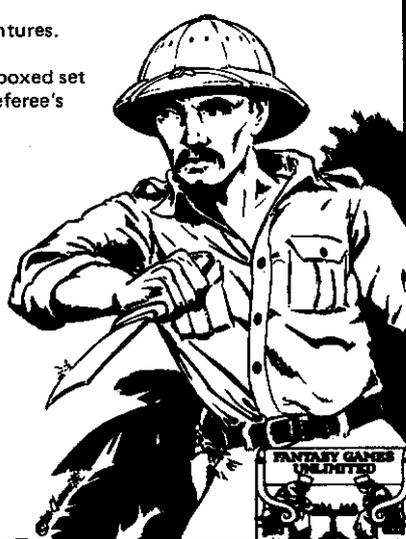
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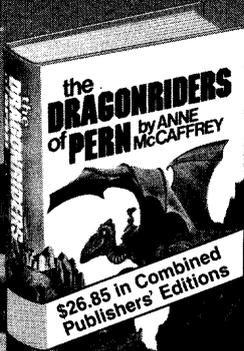
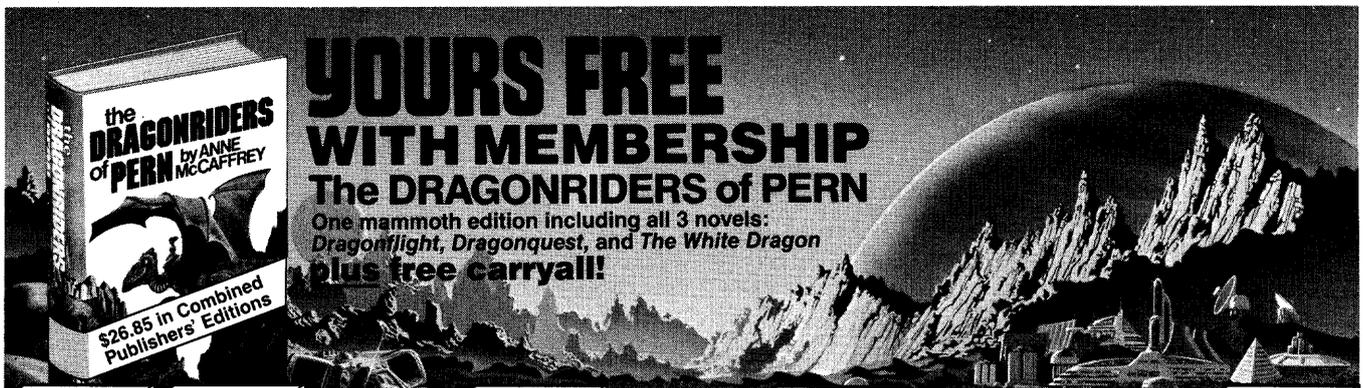
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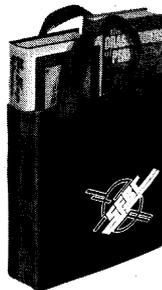
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Travel works both ways

PCs on the road will meet many fellow wayfarers

by Paul Vernon

The encounter tables in the *Dungeon Masters Guide* and the *FIEND FOLIO*® Tome are very limited where fellow travelers are concerned. The dozen types of men listed lack variety and soon become predictable. This isn't so important when the only traveling is between unrelated dungeons — every encounter at least generates some interest or danger to overcome — but when they are used in campaign play, the tables soon prove inadequate.

One of the best things about playing in a well-run campaign is that you can almost believe that the place actually exists. Unfortunately, when the only travelers you meet are patrols, robbers, merchant caravans, rootless tribesmen, and bands of pilgrims on their way to unknown shrines, the illusion is soon shattered. What happened to the other people? This is a question that you must answer for yourself in accordance with the type of campaign you run.

My own campaign is loosely based on medieval England, and its roads are used mainly by the types of traveler which would have been found there. A selection of those whom adventurers might meet is represented on the accompanying tables, and detailed descriptions of the types are given below. Most of the material was gleaned from various history books, especially *English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages*, by J. J. Jusserand.

Commoners

In settled areas especially, a large number of encounters are with common people going about their everyday affairs. Although rarely posing a threat to adventurers, they are useful sources of general information about the area, gossip about political situation, and news of past, present, and future local events. Many of the following are also good disguises for those not wishing to draw attention to themselves, perhaps for nefarious purposes.

Villagers (level 0, AC 9 to 10, 1-6 hp): If encountered near their village, these people are involved in agricultural tasks (herding, tending crops, gathering wild nuts or berries, searching for straying animals, etc.) or other everyday affairs. If encountered on roads they might be taking agricultural produce to a local market, returning from market with their purchases, on the way to or from visiting relatives, and so on. Villagers possess arms which could be easily manufactured or cheaply purchased by the users, or they use agricultural implements employed as weapons. These "peasant

weapons" include clubs, staves, bill hooks, scythes, axes, sickles, and short bows.

Carters (level 0, AC 8 to 10, 2-5 hp, armed with daggers or peasant weapons): Carters are found only on roads or tracks, carting a large variety of loads. In agricultural areas, they carry agricultural produce and implements of all kinds (from dung to grain and ploughs to millstones, either in service to their lords or on their own account). Alternatively, they could be connected to some local "industrial" enterprise, such as a mine, quarry, or clay-pit, and carry appropriate materials. In less peaceful areas they could be accompanied by men-at-arms.

Wandering laborers: Wandering laborers can either be poor townspeople who supplement their meager incomes by taking agricultural work at certain times of the year (especially during harvest) or peasants out of bond who have deserted their former masters or fled from famine, war, flood, disease, banditry, inroads by monsters, or some other catastrophe that has destroyed their villages. Some lords see them as unwelcome troublemakers, as they often spread discontent with the status quo. Their statistics are the same as those for villagers above.

Beggars (level 0, AC 10, 2-5 hp, armed with staff, club, or perhaps dagger): Beggars can be wandering laborers who have been unable to find work, or professional beggars (most of whom have some real or feigned disability). Solitary hermits begging alms from passersby were fairly common in medieval England and can also be included in this class. Often they lived near bridges or small shrines and begged alms ostensibly for their upkeep. They can be a good source of local legends — for a price. Finally, wandering holy men can be found preaching by the road side, or anywhere else they can find a congregation. A favorite place for these (usually good or chaotic) zealots to preach is in the grounds of lawful temples on holy days after services so that they can harangue templegoers as they leave. Naturally, they are also seen as troublemakers by the authorities.

Common hunters (fighter level 1 to 4, AC 7 to 10, armed with peasant weapons or spears): These people hunt for a livelihood, rather than for pleasure as nobles do. In settled areas, common hunters have the statistics given above in parentheses. They hunt deer, boar, wolves, or fur-bearing animals, some of which may be reserved by nobles for their own sport. The more expe-

rienced or successful hunters might also have swords and longbows, for use against more formidable quarry. Crossbows would not usually be employed due to their low rate of fire and the difficulty of maintaining them in rural areas.

In wilderness areas, hunters pursue more exotic species, possibly for capture and sale to menageries, nobles, or other characters. In this case, they should be treated as bandits as per the *Monster Manual*, insofar as levels, capabilities, and equipment are concerned.

Outlaws: Outlaws are usually runaway serfs, common hunters who have been caught with illegal game, or other malefactors fleeing from local justice. Their statistics should conform to the above types. They might be seen as freedom fighters by the local populace, but should not pose much of a threat to most parties of player characters.

Tradesmen

Medieval villages would not normally be big enough to support many craftsmen, and would depend upon itinerant tradesmen to fulfill many of their needs. Even smiths and wheelwrights (who doubled as housebuilders, carpenters, coffin-makers, and even undertakers) would be itinerant workers, if the local villages were too small to have their own. Villagers would also have to trade for necessities (such as salt, metal, and pitch) and other useful items (tools, pots and pans), while the richer ones would attract traders in luxury items such as oil, wine, and finely woven fabrics.

As professional travelers, these tradesmen have a fund of knowledge about roads and inns, useful short-cuts, the state of local trade (with associated dangers), and the like, in addition to being among the first to hear about current local news. Typical tradesmen who could be encountered include: cobblers and cloggers selling and repairing leather goods and shoes or cloggs; tailors selling, repairing, and making various garments to order; joiners repairing wooden structures and selling wooden implements such as bowls, cooking utensils, buckets, tubs, and tuns; thatchers constructing and repairing thatched roofs on all types of buildings; tinkers or itinerant metal-workers with portable forges selling and repairing metal implements, sharpening knives and other cutting tools; and, quack doctors selling universal panaceas and "holy relics" to cure all known ills.

All of the above are level 0, AC 8 to 10,

2-5 hp, and are armed with daggers, tools, or peasant weapons. They usually travel in wagons or carts in the company of one or more helpers, who could be relatives.

Other professionals who may be encountered include:

Pedlars (level 0, AC 10, 2-5 hp, armed with daggers and peasant weapons): They travel on foot, selling a wide range of goods including pins, musical instruments, purses, ribbons, points, laces, gloves, knives, glasses, rabbit skins, vests, caps, hats, girdles, pewterware, and pots. In lawful areas, they would need licenses and have to keep to the circuits allotted to them.

Herbalists: They travel on foot between villages, offering herbal remedies for most complaints. Statistics are as for pedlars above.

Local merchants: These are similar to the merchant described in the *Monster Manual*, but they trade throughout a more restricted area with a base at a nearby town. As with pedlars, they trade in a variety of goods. Towns want surplus agricultural

products such as corn, meat, hides, wool and other animal products, wood bark for tanning, and so on, while villages want necessities like salt, manufactured goods, metals, and luxury goods for the richer inhabitants. Alternatively, they could trade in locally extracted raw materials or be local entrepreneurs taking raw materials to and collecting finished articles from their outworkers. Whatever their specialty, they usually travel in smaller numbers (and are less well guarded) than merchants traveling farther afield. Each local merchant are accompanied by a scribe and 1-3 carts and carters (or pack animals and handlers). If men-at-arms are called for, due to local unrest or dangers, 1-10 will be in the employ of each merchant.

Masons, carpenters and diggers (level 0, AC 8 to 10, 2-7 hp, armed with tools and peasant weapons): Workers at these trades would travel vast distances to take employment on large-scale construction projects such as castles, town walls, and temples. When Edward I built his castles and forti-

fied towns in Wales, for example, masons, carpenters, and diggers were drafted from 28 shires of England, and some specialists traveled all the way from Savoy in France. Cranes and scaffolding would be constructed on-site; tools were often provided by the employer. Journeymen were presented with their own tools on completing their apprenticeship, and they would prefer to use these. The 70 men from Newport Pagnell, summoned to the king's works in Wales in 1282, brought all their own tools in a handcart.

Scribes (level 0, AC 10, 1-4 hp, armed with staves or daggers): Such wayfarers are often in search of permanent employment. Traveling scribes often take to occasional scrivener for illiterate folk to offset the costs of their journeying. Traveling between towns in the main, they might also head for one of the construction projects mentioned above in hopes of finding work in keeping accounts, etc. They make reliable sources of information.

Bandits: Practicing the robbing of trav-

TABLE 1: TEMPERATE CONDITIONS, INHABITED/PATROLLED/LAWFUL AREAS

	No. in group	Road/ Plain	Scrub	Forest	Rough	Hills	Mountains	Marsh
Villagers	3-18	01-12	01-16	01-16	01-16	01-16	01-16	01-16
Carters	1-4	13-20	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wandering laborers	2-12	21-24	17-20	17-20	17-20	17-20	17-20	17-20
Beggars	1	25	21-23	21-23	21-23	21-23	21-23	21-23
Beggars	2-8	26-27	24	24	24	24	24	24
Common hunters	3-12	28-30	25-29	25-29	25-29	25-29	25-29	25-29
Outlaws	3-18	31-32	30-32	30-32	30-32	30-32	30-32	30-32
Cobbler/clogger	1	33-35	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tinker	1	36-38	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tailor	1	39-41	—	—	—	—	—	—
Joiner	1	42-44	—	33-35	—	—	—	—
Thatcher	1	45-46	—	—	—	—	—	33-35
Quack	1	47-48	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pedlar	1	49-56	33-50	36-50	33-50	33-50	33-50	36-50
Herbalist	1	57-60	51-56	51-56	51-56	51-56	51-56	51-56
Local merchant*	1-2	61-65	57-65	57-65	57-65	57-65	57-65	57-65
Masons, diggers, and carpenters	4-16	66-68	66-67	66-67	66-67	66-67	66-67	66-67
Scribes	1-2	69-71	68-69	68-69	68-69	68-69	68-69	68-69
Bandits	3-30	72	70-72	70-72	70-72	70-72	70-72	70-72
Nobles *	1	73-74	73	73	73	—	—	—
Church dignitaries	1	75	—	—	—	—	—	—
Noble hunters	2-20	76	74-76	74-76	74-76	73-76	73-74	73
Knights on expedition	1-2	77	77	77	77	77	75-76	74-76
Robbers	**	78	78	78	78	78	77-78	77-78
Sheriff*	1	79	79	79	79	—	—	—
Bailiffs*	1-2	80-81	80-81	80-81	80-81	79	79	79
Steward*	1	82	82	82-83	82-83	80-81	80-81	80
Purveyors*	1-3	83-84	83	84	84	—	—	—
Messenger	1	85	84	85	85	82-83	82-83	81-82
Patrol	**	86-88	85-88	86-88	86-88	84-88	84-88	83-88
Entertainers (minor troupe)	1-4	89-92	89-93	89-93	89-93	89-93	89-94	89-94
Entertainers (major troupe)	2-12	93-94	94	94	94	94	95	95
Entertainers (players or menagerie)	***	95	95	95	95	95	—	—
Merchants	50-300	96-97	96	—	96	96	—	—
Characters	****	98-99	97-99	96-98	97-99	97-98	96-98	96-98
Pilgrims	10-100	00	00	99-00	00	99-00	99-00	99-00

* — These persons will have suitable retinues and escorts.

** — See p. 182, *DMG*.

*** — See listing in article.

**** — See p. 175, *DMG*.

elers as a profession (rather than from necessity as do outlaws), bandits can be played as detailed in the *Monster Manual* or in the *Best of DRAGON® Magazine*, Vol. 4. Most bandit gangs are made up of ex-mercenaries, deserters from military companies, successful outlaws, landless knights, and other sorts of dangerous malcontents.

Dignitaries

Wayfaring adventurers might also meet up with people of considerable importance, traveling in a style befitting their rank. Although these important personages are unlikely to have much time for common soldiers-of-fortune and ruffraff adventurers, these encounters give the opportunity to make influential friends (or powerful enemies), and can result in some interesting commissions for a party.

Nobles and retinues: In medieval England, important lords (those with the rank of baron or above) often had many estates scattered over the country. This aspect of royal policy made the nobles easier to control, as it deprived them of compact individual power bases, lessening the chances of rebellion. In France, on the other hand, where individual nobles controlled vast blocks of land, they could defy royal authority with impunity (and often did so). The only exceptions to this rule were the Lords of the Marches, who controlled counties on the borders with Scotland and Wales. These lords needed their resources to counter foreign attacks. With the ever-present threat of raids on their domains by the Welsh and Scots, it was felt that these lords would not be free to rebel anyway.

Instead of having all their dues sent to a central collection point, it was common practice for lords and their followers to spend much time traveling between estates, literally eating their dues when they stayed at an estate for a few days before moving on to the next one. This custom applied even to kings. In the year 1299-1300, for example, King Edward I changed his abode 75 times without leaving the kingdom, moving on the average three times a fortnight. Purveyors (see below) would go on ahead of the main party, requisitioning carts (often for no payment) and demanding corn, hay, oats, beer, and meat from unfortunate peasants.

Nobles and their ladies traveled in fine carriages (costing up to 24,000 gp in AD&D® game terms) as well as on horseback. Their accompanying retinues could be very large indeed. The king, for example, was preceded by two dozen archers and accompanied by his foreign marshall (his military commander in the field), inner marshall (responsible for royal palaces and castles, whose duties included keeping them free of courtesans), chamberlain (chief accountant), marshall of the hall (to eject dogs and unworthy persons from the royal presence), steward (the organizer of the trip, who informed sheriffs and other notables who were expected to entertain the king's party of his forthcoming arrival), and chancellor (chief dispenser of justice), all of whom would have servants of their own. In addition, there would be a host of knights, squires, clerks, valets, grooms, carters, porters, falconers, huntsmen, messengers, bakers, and kitchen servants.

The retinue proper would be followed by parties with lawsuits, out-of-favor nobles seeking to reinstate themselves with the king, and other types of petitioners and solicitors. This latter group spent much time quarreling, robbing, murdering, and generally making themselves (and the king) unwelcome. King Edward II, in the ordinances of his household, ordered that these "men without a character" should be put in irons for 40 days and be fed only bread and water. He also forbade those who traveled with him, his knights, and servants to bring a wife with them, unless she had a post or employment at court. Nobles might also be traveling to important functions, such as weddings and tournaments; to attend parliament; or, to visit other nobles or important personages.

Lesser nobles, including church dignitaries (who would also be important landowners), would travel in similar style, though on a smaller scale. The Bishop of Hereford, for example, had 40 servants, most of whom accompanied him on his travels. They included the bishop's champion, who fought for him in judicial duels.

Noble Hunters: These are either local dignitaries (with their relatives, friends, or guests) or members of a noble's retinue which is traveling nearby. In either case, they are hunting for sport and accompanied by various grooms, huntsmen, falconers, and other necessary personnel.

Knights on expeditions: Knights could be seeking adventure for its own sake or be questing for their lords, for their ladies, or in fulfillment of a vow. In the former case, mounted adventurers in knightly armor

TABLE 2: TEMPERATE CONDITIONS, WILDERNESS/CHAOTIC AREAS

	No. in group	Road/Plain	Scrub	Forest	Rough	Hills	Mountains	Marsh
Carters*	3-12	01-05	—	—	—	—	—	—
Beggars	1-12	06-08	01-03	01-02	01-03	01-03	01-02	01-02
Common hunters	8-48	09-10	04-10	03-10	04-10	04-10	03-10	03-10
Quack		11-12	11	11	11	11	11	11
Local merchant*	2-5	13-17	12-17	12-16	12-17	12-14	12-16	12-18
Masons, carpenters, and diggers	6-36	18-20	18	17	18	15	17	19
Bandits	20-200	21-25	19-25	18-25	19-25	16-25	18-25	20-25
Nobles*	1-3	26-31	26-27	26-27	26-27	26-27	26-27	26-27
Church dignitaries*	1-3	32-35	28	28	28	28	28	28
Noble hunters	4-40	36-40	29-36	29-36	29-36	29-34	29-36	29-39
Knights on expedition	1-4	41-45	37-42	37-40	37-42	35-38	37-40	40-45
Robbers	**	46-50	43-50	41-50	43-50	39-50	41-50	46-50
Messengers	2-5	51-55	51-55	51-55	51-55	51-55	51-55	51-55
Nomads	30-300	56-69	56-65	—	56-60	56-66	—	—
Merchants	50-300	70-85	66-79	56-62	61-70	67-78	56-62	56-62
Characters	****	86-87	80-84	63-67	71-75	79-83	63-67	63-67
Pilgrims	10-100	88	85-86	68-69	76-83	84-86	68-73	68-73
Tribesmen	10-100	89	87-89	70-90	84-89	87-89	74-88	74-90
Berserkers	10-100	90	90	—	90	90	89-90	—
Entertainers (minor troupe)	1-4	91-92	91-92	91-96	91-92	91-92	91-96	91-96
Entertainers (major troupe)	2-12	93-94	93-98	97-00	93-98	93-98	97-00	97-00
Entertainers (players or menagerie)	***	95-00	99-00	—	99-00	99-00	—	—

* — These persons will have suitable retinues and escorts.

** — See p. 182, DMG.

*** — See listing in article.

**** — See p. 175, DMG.



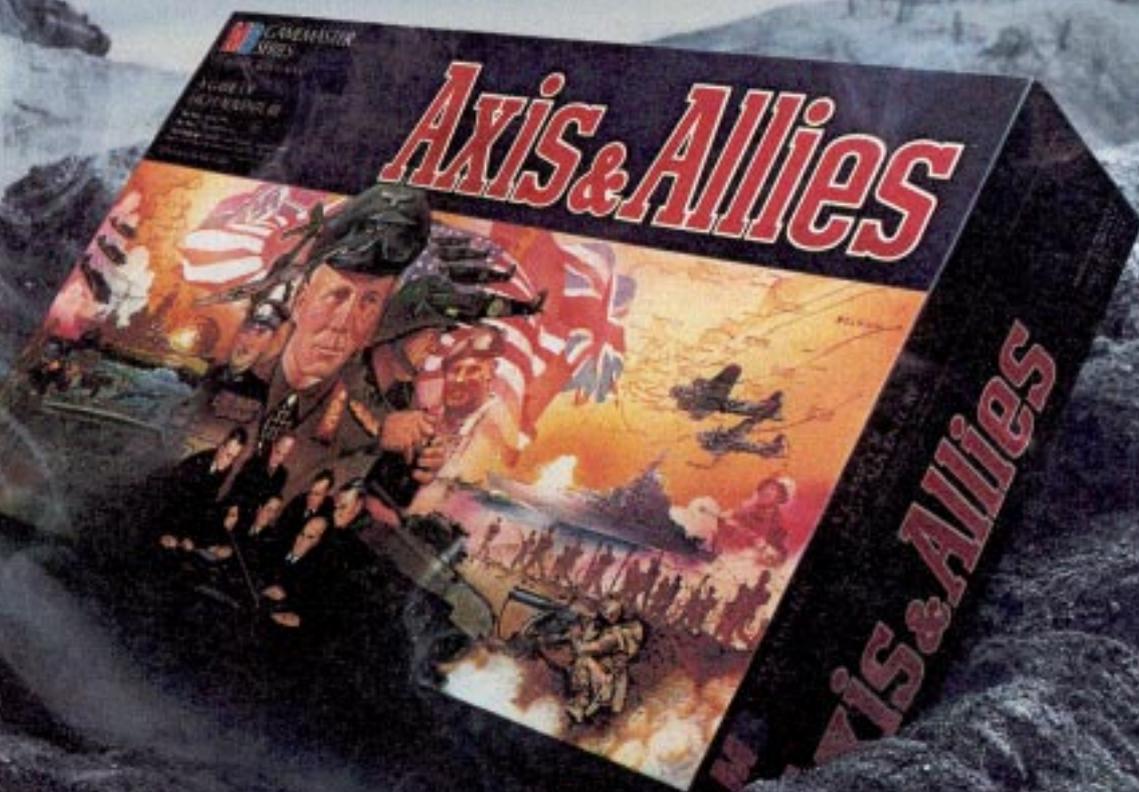
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could be challenged to an impromptu joust in the Arthurian tradition. Quests could range from running down monsters or brigands, to rescuing abductees; from seeking revenge upon individuals who have wronged the knights themselves or their lords in some way, to seeking knowledge from elusive wisemen. Alternatively, the knights could be on their way to a major conflict, perhaps a crusade or tournament. Knights are usually accompanied by a squire, and might also have a number of men-at-arms if their task warrants them.

Robbers: In less well-governed areas, travelers were often robbed (and worse) by quasi-seigneurial bands under knights or nobles who acted as a law unto themselves. The bands of these robber barons should be treated as hostile patrols as per the *DMG*.

Officials

A number of officials involved in the government of the local area may be encountered. They are a good source of information regarding local rulers, but can be a great deal of trouble to adventurers if affronted, insulted, or annoyed. These official types include:

Sheriffs: They are responsible for tax collection and judging offenses against the king (robbery, rape, murder, sorcery, apostasy, destruction of bridges and roads, etc.). Usually powerful nobles in their own right, they often travel to hold Hundred Courts (a county being split into several hundreds) in addition to sitting at the county court. Sheriffs are fighters of level 7-10, accompanied by 1-3 bailiffs (fighters of levels 2-3; see below), 2-4 scribes, 2-5 servants and 3d4+3 men-at-arms.

Bailiffs: They work under sheriffs, apprehending lawbreakers and collecting taxes. Bailiffs are fighters of level 2-3, and each is accompanied by 1 scribe and 2-5 men-at-arms.

Stewards: They are appointed by important nobles having too many estates to manage personally. They visit their lord's manors to formulate and implement agricultural policy, convene the manor court in the lord's absence, ensure that services due are being rendered and that the lord gets (and keeps) his due, and hear the accounts of the village reeves. They are fighters of level 3-6 and are accompanied by 1-2 scribes, 2-5 servants, and 2-8 men-at-arms.

Magistrates: They also travel to dispense justice, and are often installed by the king to curb the power of influential sheriffs. Their statistics are as for stewards above.

Purveyors: They precede noble retinues, having writs to requisition carts and provisions. They are thieves of level 3-6. Opposing a *bona fide* purveyor carries a stiff penalty, but there is a 30% chance that any such character encountered is a charlatan.

Messengers (level 0, AC 8, 2-5 hp, armed with daggers and swords): They are employed by nobles, officials, or church dignitaries, and carry tokens designating their status. They are always mounted in wilderness areas, though in settled areas there is a

15% chance they are on foot. Hindering them in their tasks carries stiff penalties, but could provide useful information. Merchants and important tradesmen also use messengers on occasion, but they usually don't enjoy the same protection under the law.

Patrols: These are as described in the *DMG*, p.182.

Entertainers

Many different types of entertainers can be found traveling between markets, fairs, towns, festivals, and banquets at wealthy houses. They have much interesting information concerning local towns, and they possess a wealth of juicy gossip. Details of rich residences (including layouts) which they have visited are of special interest to thieves. Entertainers are likely to travel in bands, increasingly so as the following list progresses:

Minstrels and bards: They sing and recite the deeds of heroes. Bards had their own guild in England until the sixteenth century, complete with a guild marshal and two wardens. Famous practitioners are in great demand among cities and noble houses. They are bards, fighters, or thieves of levels 1-8.

Conjurors: They could be charlatans, or they could be magic-users or illusionists of levels 1-2.

Bearwards: They display performing bears or other animals. They are level 0, AC 8, 4-7 hp, typically armed with staves, daggers, or whips.

Jugglers: Depending on their ability, they may handle anything from apples to deadly sharp knives.

Fire-eaters: Performers who are able to breathe flames from 2' to 8' in length.

Tumblers and acrobats: A group of these would make a good cover for members of the thief-acrobat split class.

Jugglers, fire-eaters, tumblers, and acrobats are all either level 0 characters (2-5 hp) or thieves of levels 1-3, AC 10 (though dexterity will lower this), typically armed with daggers.

Traveling players: They perform plays based on legends or important historical figures. They could also be commissioned to perform plays lampooning certain characters by their political opponents. They travel in bands of 10-30 and have wagons to transport scenery, costumes and props. Players are level 0, AC 8-10, 2-5 hp, and are typically armed with daggers or peasant weapons. The leading actors could be fighters or thieves of up to 5th level; various weapons, and armor as good as AC 4, could be found among the props.

Traveling menageries: These are the forerunners of zoos and circuses. The animals would be transported in wheeled cages, accompanied by 1-2 owners (level 0, AC 10, 2-5 hp, armed with swords or daggers), 3-10 carters, 3-10 animal handlers (statistics as bearwards), and 3-8 men-at-arms. Large menageries could be accompanied by 2-12 conjurors, jugglers, fire-eaters,

tumblers, and acrobats, so as to make up a circus.

All of the above wayfarers are included in the accompanying tables, which can be used whenever an encounter with men (including patrols and characters) is called for by the *DMG* or *FIEND FOLIO®* Tome encounter tables. Those groups not mentioned in the article should be played as outlined in the *Monster Manual*.

In a well-structured campaign, the comings and goings of important personages who are integral to an adventure plot are preordained to a large extent. When an encounter with an important personage is called for by the encounter tables given with this article, this could be an opportunity to call into play an existing noble who isn't doing very much at the time. Alternatively, the personage encountered could be "just passing through," visiting an existing noble, or the dice roll could be ignored. When the encounter tables are used in areas that are not carefully structured by the *Dungeon Master*, as in a campaign based upon *dungeon-delving*, the details and goals of encountered dignitaries can be tailored to the situation in hand.

The tables here are by no means exhaustive, and refer only to a campaign based on medieval northern Europe. Various other types of wayfarers could be added, and considerable changes must be made if they are to be used in campaigns with other backgrounds. In a middle-eastern campaign, for example, grand viziers, slave traders, and troops of exotic dancing girls could be substituted for some of the above types.

These tables show how the standard encounter tables can be expanded to help a particular campaign come alive. If this is done, the background of the campaign becomes much more real and believable. Chance encounters with many of these wayfarers can provide entertaining subplots to the main adventure, information may be gained to help the main adventure along. Traveling, especially in settled regions, becomes a much more interesting occupation, rather than just a necessary interlude between dungeoneering and city intrigue.

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Seeing is believing

Examining the three varieties of invisibility

by Geoffrey Meissner

Invisibility is a wonderful thing. It is used in many adventures and is a basic power that many characters depend upon. However, despite how often it is used, it is one of the most misunderstood spells in the AD&D® game. This article explores invisibility powers in depth.

A look at the *invisibility* spell as described in the *Players Handbook* shows that the spell is an "illusion/phantasm." This is contrary to the way it's understood to work. In most game play, the spell is not treated as an illusion, but rather as something that affects the physical world. Many references in the AD&D game books imply that the spell somehow bends light waves around the recipient, thus rendering him invisible. This raises many questions. What causes us to think of invisibility this way? What is the correct way to deal with invisibility? What was originally intended? What implications does this have for AD&D gaming?

The *Players Handbook* and the *Dungeon Masters Guide* contain descriptions of many spells and objects that confer invisibility. They can be divided into three categories.

Physical invisibility is that bestowed by an item or power which causes light waves to be actually bent around the invisible object. In this class we find only *dust of disappearance*.

Mind-control invisibility is a direct mind-affecting power. It includes the minor psionic discipline called invisibility as well as the druid's *invisibility to animals* spell. The cleric spell *sanctuary* is assumed not to confer any sort of invisibility as such; enemies are assumed to be able to see the cleric using such a spell, but the cleric's deity (or agent thereof) causes the enemies to believe that the cleric is unimportant or harmless, thus sparing the cleric any attack or attention that might otherwise be directed toward him.

Illusionary invisibility is the sort bestowed by several spells used by magic-users and illusionists, such as *invisibility* *invisibility 10' radius*, *mass invisibility* and *improved invisibility*. The effects of most magical items that confer invisibility, such as a *potion of invisibility* or a *ring of invisibility* are also in this category.

Some spells or magical items confer a power similar in some ways to invisibility, such as a *cloak of elvenkind* or *robe of blending*. These powers are closer to a chameleon's powers than to real invisibility, and they will not be considered here. A thief's *hiding in shadows* skill also falls into this category, and will not be discussed.

Physical invisibility

As mentioned earlier, there is only one known example of an item that bestows this power: *dust of disappearance*. This magic *dust* has the power to bend the rays of light as they pass near it. This causes light not to strike the object the dust is sprinkled over, rendering it invisible because no light reflected from it reaches the eyes of the viewers. This is the only "real" invisibility in the game, and is also the only power that can turn something non-living invisible. The other spells only affect a single living thing and any possessions being carried.

The *Dungeon Masters Guide*, p. 143, says that the *dust's* effects are not negated by a normal *detect invisibility*, but are negated by *dust of appearance*. The *dust* has an undependable and limited duration (2-20 turns), but while it is in effect, invisibility from it is *not* negated if its subject makes an attack.

Apparently, *detect invisibility* does not work against *dust of disappearance* because the spell is potent against illusion-type invisibility only, acting as a limited *detect illusion*. The *dust* causes a physical change in the world, so it cannot be detected as an illusion.

Mind-control invisibility

Psionic *invisibility* is a power that affects its victims through direct mind control; in this sense, it is more of a charm than an illusion. It forces the victim's mind to disregard what his senses tell him is going on, without altering the real environment. Illusions, on the other hand, change the sensory information and not the mind itself. Psionic *invisibility* is thus more powerful than the illusionary spell form, despite its limitations.

The power is interesting in that invisibility will be conferred only upon the caster himself, and only be effective against those people or creatures he specifies. Thus, the power is neither infinite in duration nor all-inclusive in scope. If another enemy walks in the room, the caster may not have the ability to extend his invisibility to affect the newcomer (depending upon how many creatures he's already affecting).

This power is so strong that it completely neutralizes all attempts to see through the invisibility. Even if the victim decided to try a detection spell, his mind wouldn't let him believe the results. Therefore, *detect invisibility* or *dust of appearance* will not show it for what it is.

It must be possible to use a psionic disci-

pline while making physical attacks against an opponent; otherwise, a power such as *body weaponry* would be fairly useless. What the *Players Handbook* does not say about psionic *invisibility* is what happens if the invisible character physically attacks someone who cannot see him: The victim will not realize the attacker is present, thus granting the attacker an enormous advantage in any combat situation, especially in the first round.

An invisible attacker should be allowed one complete surprise attack. The armor class of the defender should be adjusted to disregard any applicable bonuses for dexterity and shield, and in most cases any other directional bonuses (such as for cover). The attacker can take his time and line up a very accurate spell attack, weapon thrust, or missile shot. The DM may want to grant an extra bonus "to hit" in this case as well (+1 to +4, depending on circumstances), since the defender has no idea he is about to be attacked.

On all subsequent rounds, the defender will have been alerted. However, if the mind-control invisibility is still affecting him, he will not know what is attacking him or where it is. He will try to defend himself, moving his shield toward the direction of the last attack, and may possibly try to escape. For subsequent rounds, he still cannot use his dexterity bonus to AC, but his shield (if any) should be usable if the situation allows. Attacks against the invisible character are made at -4 "to hit," if they are possible at all.

Invisibility to animals is classified as a type of alteration magic in the *Players Handbook*. The spell works like a selective psionic *invisibility*. It reaches into the minds of animals and makes the caster totally unseen to them, just as the psionic power does to characters. The effect is similar even though the cause is different (a spell instead of a psionic discipline), but the spell is quite different in some ways from the psionic power. The effect of the spell is somewhat weaker than psionic *invisibility*, since it only works on dumb animals. Like most spells, it has a finite and fairly limited duration. And, as with all spell-induced forms of *invisibility*, the spell "does not allow attack" (DMG, p. 60); the magic is dispelled if the druid makes an attack against a creature that cannot see him.

Illusionary invisibility

Invisibility spells classified as illusion/phantasms in the *Players Handbook* affect

the visual senses of the victims. There is no saving throw allowed and no chance to disbelieve. However, in something similar to a disbelief roll, there is a chance for high-level and intelligent creatures to overcome the spell.

There are many inconsistencies surrounding illusionary *invisibility* spells. On one hand, they are written as illusions; on the other, they are referred to in ways that imply that they actually alter the light waves around the caster. For example, check the description of psionic *invisibility* in the *Players Handbook*, p. 113. The text says that "... only a *mind bar* is able to prevent the power from operating with respect to [the recipient of the mind bar], for this power affects minds, not light waves or similar physical manifestations." This clearly implies that normal invisibility is physically oriented.

The DMG (p. 59) explains the problems a caster may have with invisibility. It points out that if others deduce that an invisible person is in the area, they will take actions to thwart him. For example: "Think of a door opening without any visible cause; this will cause suspicion in the mind of the viewer." This is a very strange thing to say about an illusion-class spell, as most illusions are negated or at least compromised when someone knows what's going on. This also implies that the power is something other than an illusion.

Take a look at the next page (p. 60). It says: "*Dust of disappearance* does not negate sound or odor either, so it is basically the same as an *invisibility* spell." This can be interpreted in several different ways, but it seems to imply that *dust of disappearance* (a physical invisibility device) is the same as the illusion-based *invisibility* spell.

While they do not affect the mind directly, illusions certainly do not affect light waves, either. An illusion spell should be treated like a projection screen. The illusion flashes something up on this "screen," hiding something behind it. The senses of the victim register what is seen on the screen and can't see what's beyond it. Note that invisibility is a visual screen only; noise and odors are still detected.

If the spell were truly an illusion, then the realization that invisibility was afoot should be enough to dispel the magic, or at least greatly reduce its effect on observers. This does not happen. In addition, illusions usually do not affect the friends of the caster. Again, the DMG seems to say the opposite. (See p. 59: "Furthermore, the associates of the invisible party are not able to see him or her any better than foes are, so this can cause problems, too.")

But let's not get carried away. We should not reverse the intent of the spell and call it a physical manifestation; this would just create other problems. The fact that the spell turns itself off after an attack is made suggests that it's an illusion, and as such would have no effect once the observer is unmistakably convinced (by the attack) that an illusion was present. Changing the *invis-*

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ibility spell is certainly not the answer.

Much has been written that seems to point either way. If we make any decision, we have to contradict the written word, somewhere. It's a matter of deciding what makes the most sense to the game, and trying to figure out what definition was originally intended.

Invisibility, as written, is an illusion/phantasm spell, and this is undoubtedly what was intended for it. What remains to be done is to clean up the interpretations made with respect to this spell, involving some subtle changes in the way in which most people play it.

In the next section is a list of questions about the illusionary invisibility spell. None of these are official game answers; they are merely suggestions for play of the spell. Following this, two suggestions for new spells are presented. The first is based on physical invisibility, and the second on mind-control invisibility.

Questions and answers on illusionary invisibility

If my character is invisible, can he see himself?

Yes. The spell is an illusion which the recipient automatically disbelieves — and so, for that matter, does the caster of the spell when the recipient is some other creature. By the same token, neither the recipient nor the caster will be immediately aware of the fact when the recipient becomes visible to others. If some viewers have disbelieved and others haven't, the recipient might forget who can see him and who can't, which could cause problems.

Does all of my character's personal equipment become invisible with him?

Yes. The illusion would be useless if a suit of clothing were seen walking around with no body inside it. The DM may want to make a ruling on just how much stuff goes invisible in this manner; it should not be more than the character can bear or carry. The best way to handle this is to define how far the invisibility "screen" extends outward from the recipient's body. Anything that sticks out beyond that point is visible. About 2' of space would be a good (perhaps generous) ruling on this.

What happens if an invisible person picks up an object or puts one down?

Since the area of effect of the spell is defined as "one person," it is reasonable to assume that the things picked up would be behind the aura of the spell and would become invisible. This only works for those things that are small enough to fit entirely within the prescribed "screen" of invisibility, and which the recipient of the spell is able to lift, assuming he intends to move the object. If he puts something down, and moves away from it, it becomes visible. Things don't become partially invisible; if an invisible character approaches or touches a long table, the table remains fully in sight.

Why was no saving throw or chance to disbelieve the spell given in the rules?

The rules provide a chance for certain characters and creatures to detect invisible beings, which is equivalent to a disbelief roll. The Detection of Invisibility Table (DMG, p. 60), as given, only applies to beings of at least 7th level (or 7 hit dice) and at least 17 intelligence. But other factors besides level and intelligence could come into play; as stated in the note below the table, "unintelligent creatures with keen hearing or sense of smell" can be granted a chance to detect an invisible creature. Building on this, it would not be unreasonable to allow certain creatures or character races a chance for detection based on some special sensory characteristic. For instance, the same "sense" that gives an elf or half-elf an advantage in detecting secret doors could also contribute to that character's ability to detect something invisible. If you agree with this line of reasoning, you could grant chances to detect/disbelieve for characters not accounted for on the table.

Players should speak for their characters when they intend to try to detect invisibility; for NPCs, the DM must use judgment as to when and how often the character would intend to try. As demonstrated in examples within some of the following answers, the DM may allow detection attempts to be made with varying frequency and at different chances for success, depending on the circumstances.

If a party is absolutely sure that there is an invisible person in a room, can all the characters in the party receive a chance to detect the invisibility?

A normal chance to detect the illusion of invisibility may be granted only to characters who have evidence that an invisible person is in their immediate vicinity. If no such evidence exists, no roll can be allowed. If the evidence persists — for instance, if the breathing of an invisible creature can be heard continually — then the character sensing the evidence can be granted successive rolls (once per round would not be too often) until he succeeds in seeing through the illusion. If one character detects an invisible object or creature, he cannot cause others to see it as well by simply conveying the information to them, but this information would allow a bonus to other characters' attempts to detect it for themselves.

Are members of a PC's party able to see him if he goes invisible in front of them?

Technically, the other members of the party who see the spell being cast are affected by the illusion — at least initially — in the same way that anyone else would be affected. Each of them has to successfully detect in order to actually be able to see his invisible cohort, but the roll for detection should be made with a hefty bonus and new rolls (for those who fail) should be awarded frequently. The odds are that everyone will see through the illusion fairly quickly. Alternatively, to save some dice-handling, simply

rule that all other party members have a 100% chance to detect because the evidence (they saw the spell take effect on the recipient) is indisputable.

How does dust of appearance work with respect to the spell invisibility?

According to the DMGuide, the dust will reveal invisibility of all forms except the psionic version. The dust will insure that a correct picture of the world is getting to the eyes of the user, and whether that picture was distorted by illusion or physical bending of light waves is immaterial. This power of the dust does not affect the mind of the user, so psionic invisibility is not dispelled.

When an invisible person attacks someone it cancels his invisibility. However, if he is alone with his victim, kills him, and the next victim doesn't hear the scuffle, there is no reason that his invisibility should be cancelled — right?

Like all illusions, invisibility is dispelled when it (the illusion) comes into contact with an opponent. The phantasmal force description (PH, p. 75) says "The illusion lasts until struck by an opponent," but this works both ways: When the recipient of an invisibility spell causes damage or takes damage in a combat situation, the illusion is instantly negated for all those who actually see it dispelled (not just the victim). Obviously, anyone who encounters the formerly invisible character later will see him — because he's not invisible any more. The duration of the spell is given as "special" not to imply that the magic is permanent in any way, but because the duration of the invisibility depends on how long it is before the invisible character attacks or takes damage in combat.

How can the illusion of invisibility be dispelled if not through combat?

The spell will only be negated if the recipient or caster of the spell wishes it to be so, or if the recipient is the specific target of a successful *dispel magic* or *dispel illusion* spell or similar magic.

Are there other actions that reveal the invisibility?

As pointed out above and mentioned several times in the rules, the spell only shields the recipient from detection by sight. Sound, odor, or any tracks he may make as he moves could all give away the presence of an invisible character to those who sense this conflicting information and succeed in actually seeing the source of the sound, odor, or whatever. Simply being invisible isn't much good when it comes to being detected by certain creatures. A dog, or any other animal with a good sense of smell, will locate some invisible creatures by odor more easily than any human or demi-human could.

New spells

If the DM allows new spells to be researched or discovered, here are a couple of

ways for magic-users to make use of the other two types of invisibility. Illusionists should not be allowed to research or use these spells, simply because they have nothing to do with illusions.

Physical Invisibility (Alteration)

Level: 5

Components: V, S, M

Range: Touch

Casting Time: 4 segments

Duration: 5 rounds/level

Saving Throw: Special

Area of Effect: Creature touched

Explanation/Description: This spell causes the recipient to vanish from sight and not be detectable by normal vision or infravision. The spell works similarly to dust of disappearance, which is described in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*. It bends the light waves in the immediate vicinity of the recipient so that no light from his body escapes; therefore, he becomes invisible. The invisible creature is not magically silenced with respect to noise, nor are his smells or tracks masked.

Dust of appearance or a successful casting of dispel magic will negate this spell. Dispel illusion or detect invisibility will have no effect on this spell. *True seeing* or a similar power will allow its caster to see the invisible person for as long as the true sight is in effect. Any character may have a chance to detect the invisible object or creature, but if

the invisible object moves or is moved, successful detection attempts must be made in each end every round to keep from losing track of it again, because *physical invisibility* is not permanently negated (for that viewer) by a successful detection attempt.

The spell remains in effect until it is magically broken or dispelled, or until the duration expires. The recipient of the spell may cause damage or take damage without negating the magic. As with other types of invisibility, attacks against the recipient are at -4 "to hit" in addition to any other bonuses or penalties that apply. The material components of the spell are a prism and a small mirror.

Mind-Control Invisibility (Enchantment/Charm)

Level: 5

Components: V, S

Range: 0

Casting Time: 4 segments

Duration: 2 rounds/level

Saving Throw: Neg.

Area of Effect: 4" radius of caster

Explanation/Description: This spell affects the minds of one character or creature per level of the caster (all of which are chosen by the caster) within a 4" radius of his location. It causes the caster (and only him) to become visually undetectable by the victims. No matter what means are used to locate him, the minds of the victims will not

believe the caster is there. Note that only creatures within 4" of the caster are so affected; the mind control is broken if movement takes the caster and viewer more than 4" away from each other. The caster can attack a character or creature affected by the spell, and the defender can only attempt a futile defense; shield and dexterity adjustments are not counted on any blow. Victims may believe some arcane spirit or other aberration is attacking them.

All whom the caster intends to affect by the spell are allowed a saving throw versus spell at -2 (plus any wisdom bonus or penalty) to escape the mind control attempt. Dispel magic will negate the spell if successfully cast against the level of magic at which the mind-control invisibility was cast. Detect charm will pick out those people under this spell's effects.

Conclusions

Invisibility is not a single power, but is rather a set of very different powers with similar effects. The distinctions between the three types are very important for an accurate simulation of the magical effects that occur, and add depth to the playing of the game.

Overall, everything is subservient to fun. This look at a very basic AD&D power was not meant to complicate the game, but was an attempt to understand its foundations, and to inject an element of freshness into the play. The new spells will, I hope, achieve this last goal.

Choose your weapons

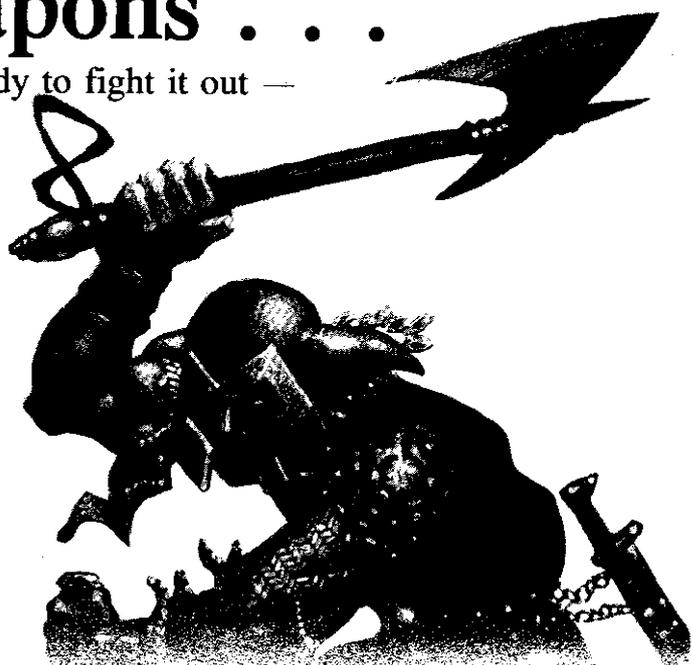
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The rest of the Papers

Cleaning up a few odds and ends about centaurs

Two months ago (DRAGON® issue #103) we presented an article called "The Centaur Papers," written by two very centaur-oriented people from the Great White North, Stephen Inniss and Kelly Greig Adams. As readers will recall, "The Centaur Papers" was a composite article, put together from the two individual articles that Stephen and Kelly had written on the topic. We claimed at the time that "The Centaur Papers" had "virtually everything you could ever want to know about centaurs."

Well, "virtually" should have been "almost."

Jeannie Whited of Rockville, Md., pointed out that the height of a horse is measured in "hands," which indicates the height of the horse at the withers — at the top of its front shoulders, on the ridge of its back. One "hand" is equivalent to four inches; there are three hands in a foot just as there are three feet in a yard. For instance, a 17-hand-high centaur would be 5' 8" tall at the withers. A centaur's withers correspond to the point on its back where the human half of the body meets the equine half.

The two authors also wrote to us with some additional material. Kelly Adams believes that a weight of one-quarter ton for a centaur is rather low, since the average weight for a 14 hh pony is about 700 lbs. Most riding horses are about 1000 lbs., and a horse larger than 17 hh will weigh 1300 lbs., or more.

Stephen Inniss says that the tables for human heights and weights may also be used to generate centaur heights and weights. A centaur is 1.2 times as tall from head to hoof as an equivalent human, and is

about 6 times as heavy. The height of a centaur at the withers is about .84 times the height of an equivalent human. To determine the height and weight of a centaur, roll on the Dungeon Masters Guide tables for height and weight on p. 102 (or use the tables from Stephen's own article in DRAGON issue #91, "Realistic vital statistics.") For example, a height of 6' and a weight of 175 lbs. is obtained. Multiplying these figures by the "centaur factors" yields a height of 7'2" ($6' \times 1.2$) from hoof to head, or about 15 hands high ($6' \times .84 \times 3$) at the withers. The centaur's weight is 1050 lbs. (175×6), which agrees very well with Kelly's notes above.

Stephen had several other comments. The quantities of food given in the table on p. 37 of "The Centaur Papers" are consumed on a daily basis. Centaurs would not often eat tough foodstuffs such as hay and straw. Unicorns, like pegasi, are on distant but good terms with centaurs. The starting age for a player-character centaur would be the same as for a human character of the same class. The use of a spear or lance from a centaur's back would be difficult, but we, the editors, feel it is still possible (perhaps with penalties "to hit"). Stephen corrects an example given in the article on p. 44: An 8' tall centaur requires about 12' vertical space for his front hoof attacks.

Stephen has also expanded the Racial Preference Table to include centaurs. In the listings that follow, the letter before the slash indicates the given race's attitude toward centaurs, and the letter after the slash is the centaur's attitude/reaction toward the given race: Centaur, P/P; Dwarf (any), N/N; Dark elf, H/N; Gray elf, G/G; Valley elf, T/T; Wild elf, N/T; Wood elf, P/P; Gnome (any), N/T; Half-elf, T/T; Halfling (any), N/T; Half-arc, A/H; Human, N/N.

Last but not least, Stephen suggests a revision of the upper level limits for centaur characters. He pointed out that all other character classes had at least one class in which they progressed without limit, and the various other bonuses and penalties of being a centaur tend to cancel out.

We (the editors) prefer the use of the limits given in the article in issue #103, since centaurs are not truly human or demi-human in nature and there is no precedent, on that basis, for them being able to rise to extremely high levels. Nevertheless, Stephen's table is presented below, for use by more liberal DMs and their players. It is patterned after similar tables in *Unearthed Arcana*, pp. 8-9.

Ability score	Highest level attainable as:			
	Cleric	Druid*	Fighter Ranger	
14	3	5	U	6
15	4	6 ¹	U	6
16	4	7 ²	U	6
17	5	9 ³	U	7
18	6	11 ⁴	U	8
18/90			U	9 ⁶
18/99			U	10 ⁶
18/00			U	11 ⁷
19	8	13 ⁵	U	15 ⁸
20	10	13 ⁵	U	15 ⁸

* — Only possible for a centaur having an unmodified charisma score of at least 15 with respect to other centaurs.

In the following notes, "Cha" refers to the centaur's charisma score with respect to other centaurs.

- 1: Cha 15 required.
- 2: Cha 15 required; Cha 16 allows 8th level.
- 3: Cha 16 required; Cha 17 allows 10th level.
- 4: Cha 17 required; Cha 18 allows 12th level.
- 5: Cha 19 required.
- 6: Con 19 required.
- 7: Int 14, Wis 15, and Con 19 required; Int 15 and Wis 16 allows 12th level; Int 16 + and Wis 17 + allows 14th level.
- 8: Int 17, Wis 18, and Con 20 required.

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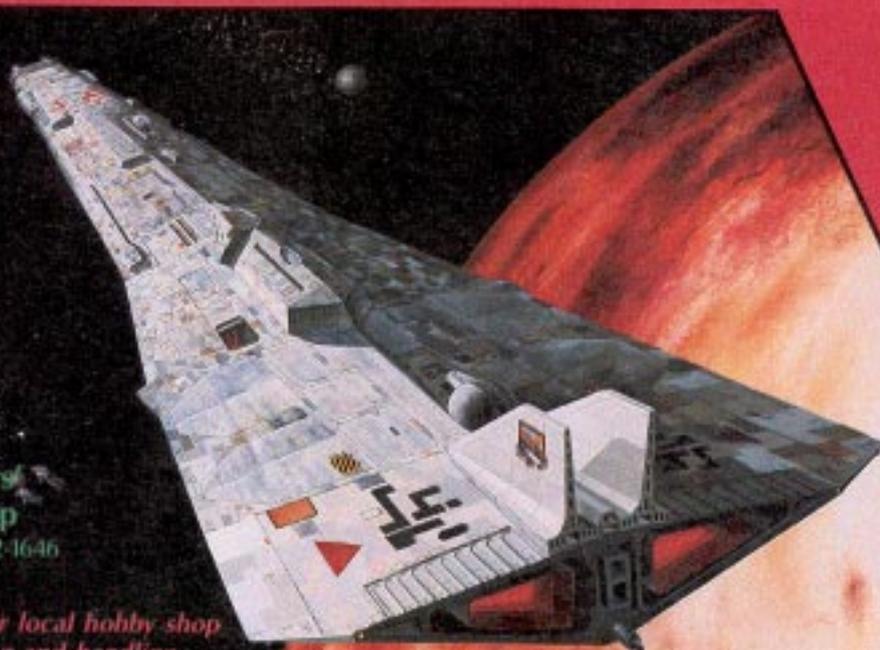
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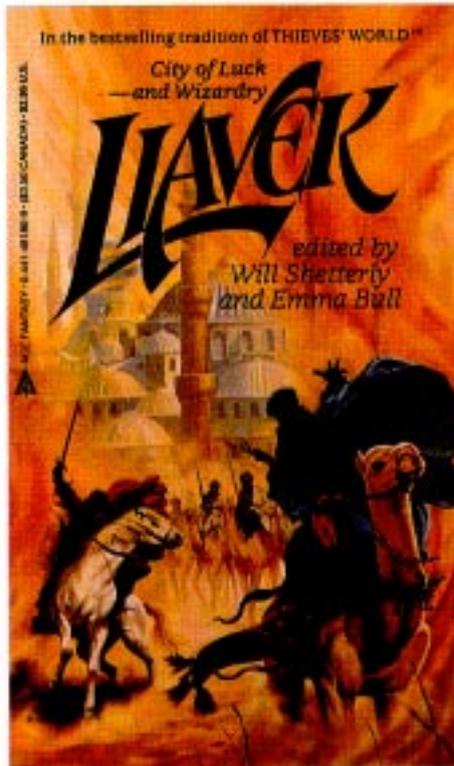
Being junior wizards, however, they're unexpectedly called on to save the life of a fellow magic-worker who just happens to be a dolphin, and from there, they are rapidly drawn into preparations for a crucial magical ritual needed to preserve the ocean's vitality.

The complications that arise along the way are more than merely obstacles to be swept aside. Nita and Kit are both eventually recruited to take part in the ceremony, but the role Nita assumes calls for an unexpected commitment. The magic that allows Kit to function underwater is not without a risk. And, Nita's parents are becoming worried about their daughter's peculiar absences at odd hours.

Duane handles all this with respect, sympathy, and gentle wit, giving the novel a light touch even as she stretches her characters' strength of will to the breaking point. She also sets her tale against a fresh, original background of underwater culture, and game masters interested in seagoing scenarios will find a wealth of fascinating detail about marine life. Dolphins, whales, and a truly nerve-bending shark are among Duane's characters, and each one is distinctive and memorable.

Bookstores and libraries will likely place *Deep Wizardry* in the YOUNG ADULT section, and its predecessor may be found with the children's books. Both, of course, are well written and enjoyable, regardless of the reader's age. *Deep Wizardry* is, though, that rarest kind of sequel: a book that surpasses the previous tale in both its level of craftsmanship and the sheer power of the story itself.

It's difficult to imagine how Diane Duane's next novel could be better than this one, but both she and her growing group of readers should have a wonderful time working out possibilities.



LIAVEK

Will Shetterly and Emma Bull, eds.

Ace 0-441-48180-9 \$2.95

Yet another shared-world anthology has reached the bookshelves. This one is set in the "city of luck and wizardry" named in the title. However, *Liavek* isn't just a collection of tales riding on the reputation of *Thieves' World*. Both the eleven tales and the editing in *Liavek* are uniformly excellent — not unexpected, given the track records of many of the people involved.

An appendix reveals that *Liavek* is the creation of the Scribbles, a Minneapolis writers' group that includes co-editors Shetterly and Bull, successful fantasists Patricia Wrede and Steven Brust, and talented newcomer Pamela Dean. All these have stories in the collection, and other contributors include such authors as Gene Wolfe, Jane Yolen, and Barry Longyear.

Not surprisingly, such talent makes for a diverse group of stories. Yolen's is a proper tavern yarn, Bull's concerns a multi-talented merchant, Wolfe's involves seafarers and religious fanatics, and Wrede's is a tale of a chipmunk god and related magic. Megan Lindholm has contributed a devious-minded wizard's story, and Kara Dalkey provides a pleasantly convoluted mystery.

The real surprise is the beautifully intricate web that holds all eleven tales in a remarkably consistent framework. *Liavek* is an entirely credible, well-designed world where political intrigue and complicated magic are thoroughly intertwined. Major characters wander in and out of each other's adventures almost as if the book were a novel, and events in the early stories sometimes have effects on those in later adventures. All this is clearly the result of a monumental editing job from Shetterly and Bull — or possibly an indication of just how well the Scribbles and their colleagues work together. In either case, the end product is little short of amazing.

As an additional plus, the system of magic that operates in *Liavek* is exceptionally well developed. Several stories turn on quirks of its application, and another appendix provides a useful summary of the concept. Though the idea of personalized "luck" is very different from the approach to magic found in the AD&D® game system, it's a premise that seems very adaptable to a gaming environment — despite the limits the system places on magical devices.

According to the anthology's final page, at least one more volume of stories will continue the saga of *Liavek*. If that book sustains the high quality so evident in this first collection, the *Thieves' World* series will have a serious challenger on its hands in the shared-world category.

MUSTAPHA AND HIS WISE DOG

Esther M. Friesner

Avon 0-380-89676-1 \$2.95

The novel begins with a familiar scene: an old storyteller sits in a corner of a magnificent bazaar and regales his listeners with a tale of magic, adventure, and mysterious quests. It's not long, however, before *Mustapha and His Wise Dog* reveals itself as a highly literate Arabian Nights yarn told with subtlety and style.

The storyteller's tale also is familiar at first. *Mustapha* is the fifteenth of fifteen sons, but his wealthy merchant father still loves him best. That insult isn't the only one for his brothers, though, for upon his father's death, *Mustapha* inherits more than a pittance and gains a chance to escape his brothers' intrigues. However, before long, *Mustapha* is alone in the world with neither friends nor money.

So it seems, at least, until a chance encounter in a tavern finds *Mustapha* the new



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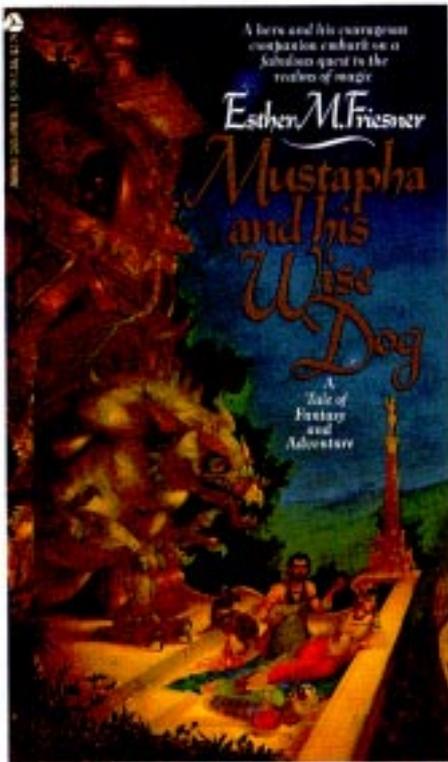
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of speech and shapechanging. After settling for a time into the lives of traveling performers, the two eventually go in search of a sorcerer who can remove Elcolq's power to transform so that he won't be tempted to steal for his master's sake. In turn, the sorcerer's advice sends them into the dangerous lands of the Older Empire on a quest to find the deathless Queen Nahrit, who alone may be able to lift the spell.

All this is by no means as straightforward as it appears, and secrets are layered within secrets throughout the tale. Friesner's prose deftly captures the easy lilt of the Arabian Nights stories which it emulates, as well as their aura of politely worded wit. Only the novel's chapter titles provide a contemporary touch, and even those are both amusing and somehow relevant.

There are occasional hints of a magic more powerful in scope than even Queen Nahrit knows, but whether they foreshadow a companion book or are merely examples of Friesner's thoroughness in shaping her world is difficult to tell. Whichever is true, *Mustapha and His Wise Dog* is an example of an exceptionally well-created world. The characters are lifelike and engaging, civilization and untracked wastes are neatly balanced, and very little is certain except that the expected will rarely occur. Even Scheherezade, Arabia's original storyteller, could hardly have asked for much more than that.

CHILDREN OF THE DRAGON

Rose Estes
Random House 0-394-86433-6 \$2.95

Why do novels that seem to be aimed toward children keep popping up in this

column? In general, there are two answers. One is unabashedly commercial: since it often deserves the chance to reach a wider audience, original paperback fantasy wouldn't sell well if it were marketed only to children. That wider audience is the second answer: like many so-called children's novels, some fantasy works are worthwhile entertainment for readers of all ages. *Children of the Dragon* is one such novel: not only will it please children, but it will also be fascinating to those readers who are role-players.

Author Rose Estes has previously written a number of ENDLESS QUEST® books for TSR — a credential which implies more skill at handling complicated plots than it does at weaving believable, three-dimensional characters. It's therefore a welcome surprise to find that Estes's first full-length novel is notable for its thoughtful characterizations and its unassuming, yet detailed, background. Daniel, Lydia, and Max — the three children of the man responsible for taking care of Gallardia's ancient guardian dragon — are drawn with a light but sure-handed touch, as is the scheming smith Iestyn, who wants control of the dragon's soon-to-be-hatched offspring. And the sleepy realm of Gallardia itself has been developed with a startling degree of realism that adds immediacy to the tale.

The plot, by contrast, is fairly straightforward, following the children as they flee Iestyn's efforts to seize power and they find themselves lost in an underground labyrinth. There are several dangerous and puzzling encounters along the way, and the novel closes with a not-quite-surprising twist and hints of possible sequels.

Two things, however, lift *Children of the Dragon* above the merely average. One is the generous sprinkling of dragonlore Estes has provided — one idea is borrowed politely from Anne McCaffrey, but there is still enough detail and insight to give gamers a better perspective on dragon character. The other is the sympathetic, evenhanded treatment Estes gives Iestyn, which makes the smith a far more interesting villain than is usual in a book aimed at children.

The novel is also surprisingly well-packaged for its kind. Both the cover and paper are of better than usual stock, and Carl Lundren's illustrations are clear and detailed, if a bit oddly flat. All in all, Rose Estes has given readers much more in the book than might have been expected.

A GATHERING OF GARGOYLES

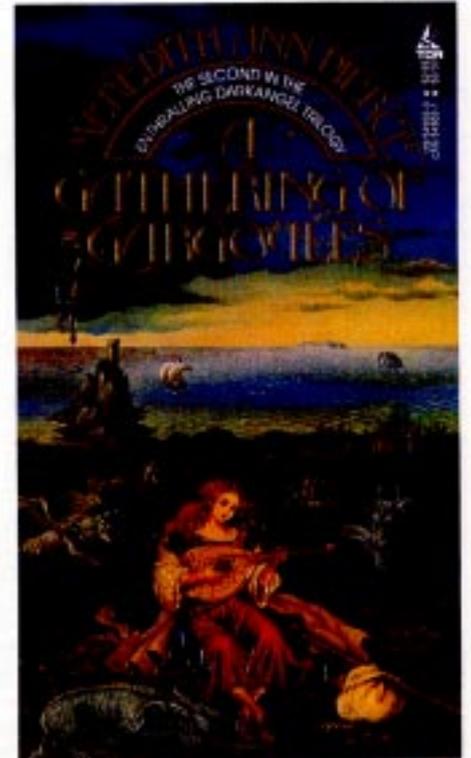
Meredith Ann Pierce
Tor 0-812-54902-3 \$2.95

It's both exciting and irritating to learn that Meredith Ann Pierce's *A Gathering of Gargoyles* is the second book in a trilogy that began with *The Darkangel*. Pierce is still mistress of a fascinating style and a many-faceted tale rooted in old-folk traditions, but catering these gifts to the service

of the overly abused technique of the three-book sequence is a trifle disappointing.

As *The Darkangel* ended, Aerial appeared to have rescued the mortal prince Irrylath from the spells of the White Witch and solved the ancient riddle of Ravenna, last of the Ancients. Now, though, Aerial learns that, though Irrylath is no longer a vampyre, the White Witch still commands his dreams. Furthermore, there is more to Ravenna's riddling prophecy than was revealed previously, and Aerial must go questing again in order to fulfill this second part of her destiny.

Pierce sets all this up with a very formal structure which makes the first few chapters



rather slow going. Once the quest is properly begun, however, her storytelling skills return in full force, and the pace picks up. Aerial quickly begins to accumulate gargoyles (giving the book's title a trace of double meaning) and acquires human companions as well. This latter fact broadens the focus of Pierce's tale, giving it a slightly different texture than its predecessor.

Although the gargoyles of this book are not quite as distinctive as was *The Darkangel's* vampyre, they are still much more than standard-issue monsters. Physically, they do resemble the grinning Gothic statues for which the monsters are named, but their attitude toward Aerial shows a loyalty and affection quite unlike any that might logically be expected from a gargoyle. Unfortunately, a catch in the novel's plot is likely to make this quality difficult to translate into gaming situations: *Dungeon Master's* have problems with Pierce's approach, and others do not easily come to mind.

The preceding comments give a rather dim vision of *A Gathering of Gargoyles* that isn't entirely justified. Pierce's narrative voice is as interesting as ever, and while her

riddles are far from insoluble, they lead Aerial into adventures that will generally hold readers attentive. But while the novel is definitely well above average as far as the fantasy genre is concerned, its reliance on the trilogy format seriously diminishes the quality of Pierce's achievement. Some writers work best with continuing characters and settings, but Meredith Ann Pierce would do better to concentrate on creating individual wonders.

MASTERS OF GLASS

M. Coleman Easton

Questar/Popular Library

0-445-20064-2

\$2.95

Typical fantasy novels often involve fantastic amounts of magic and often present situations in which vast kingdoms and entire worlds hang in the balance.

Masters of Glass represents the opposite extreme: two villages are confronted with separate problems, and the futures of both rest on the relatively minor powers of carefully-colored glass talismans.

M. Coleman Easton has postulated an intriguing form of magic in the glass amulets, which allow the possessor to control a specific creature or type of creature. To be effective, the tint of the glass must exactly match that of the intended subject's eyes, so glassmasters (also called Vigenes) are required to have superb color sense as well as the usual skills of glassmaking. They are

also miners of a sort, constantly seeking the natural pigments needed to tint their talismans — which are normally used by hunters and warriors to aid in killing game animals and assorted predators.

Unfortunately, as *Masters of Glass* opens, Vigenes seem to be in short supply. Worse still, the vaguely demonic *Lame Ones* have been sighted in the wilds around the town of Darst, and the Vigen of Darst is without both an apprentice and the rare pigment called *astablak* needed to create talismans effective against *Lame Ones*.

Solving the former problem eventually requires the Vigen to take on a female apprentice, going against age-old tradition. Then the search for *astablak* leads to an obscure mountain village where a renegade Vigen has used his talents to enslave his fellow citizens, binding their wills with talismans the color of human eyes.

Easton has given his characters reasonably good treatment in this tale, and the plot is logically crafted. But somehow the narrative has a perpetually awkward sound to it, as if Easton was not quite sure whether this story was worth telling. The result is a book that feels rather too much like the first draft of a novel; even so, it presents enough good ideas to make it unusually interesting. Gamers who are curious about *Masters of Glass* will have to decide for themselves whether the quality of the concept is worth the effort it would take to translate it into game application.

Recurring Roles

Because there are both time and space restraints on this column, not all books can be reviewed in depth. However, to keep readers updated on new installments of a book series previously reviewed, a section of capsule comments seemed appropriate.

David Bischoff, regrettably, isn't as successful with *Wraith Board* (Signet 0-451-13669-1 \$2.95), the second book in the *Gaming Magi* sequence. It's even clearer this time out that he's saving the explanations for future books, but neither the humor nor the rapidly disintegrating universe — which now includes, among other things, modern-day New York — seem as cleverly designed as they did in the previous book. One wonders if Bischoff has simply set his word processor on automatic pilot.

For sheer inventiveness, especially in a series format, the latest novel from Elizabeth Scarborough gets far better marks. *The Christening Quest* (Bantam 0-553-25122-8 \$2.95) starts in the familiar lands of Argonia, but quickly follows a stolen baby to the less-traveled realms of Miragenia and Gorequartz. The plot twists faster than it ever has, and Scarborough's lively humor is still fresh and enjoyable. Her trick of following successive generations of characters rather than using the same heroes over and over keeps the books from becoming repetitive, and this one includes a genuine surprise ending for good measure.

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The well-equipped victim

A “treasure type” system for 0-level encounters

by Ed Greenwood

In the perilous worlds in which most AD&D® game campaigns are set, player characters often encounter intelligent opponents who are (through the work of some other force) or soon become (at the hands of the party) helpless to defend themselves. When such victims are bestial monsters, treasure is expected when player characters go looking for plunder — but what if the victims are 0-level humans, the countless merchants, craftsmen, beggars, farmers, and other innocent bystanders who fill cities and villages in the fantasy world? What do they have “in their pockets”?

Here are tables to aid the harried DM when player characters insist on rifling the pockets of drunks in alleyways, casualties in tavern brawls, innocent or not-so-innocent targets of hold person spells, corpses on battlefields, and the like.

First, decide which of these categories describes the victim(s) in question:

- Merchant
- Craftsman
- Laborer
- Mercenary
- Warrior
- Farmer
- Errand-runner
- Knave
- Noble
- Beggar

Each of these categories is briefly described hereafter, and for each the combination of tables to roll on is given. Unless specific instructions are given to the contrary, DMs should roll twice or more on each table that applies, or choose specific items from the tables (in which case the tables actually serve as lists).

Merchant: This category includes all independent operators engaged in trade and commerce, including moneylenders and moneychangers, ferrymen, and tavernmasters. It does not include craftsmen (see below). Most merchants are literate. Roll on tables B, H, J, K, and I. If traveling, roll also on D and F.

Craftsman: Craftsmen and women are those who earn a living by skilled handiwork of some sort, independently or in the service of another. This includes smiths, coopers, harness-makers, tanners, potters, carpenters, masons, wood carvers, and wagon-makers. Most craftsmen are literate or semi-literate. Roll on tables A, E, G, J, and K. If traveling, roll also on D and F.

Laborer: This category takes in all presently-employed individuals who earn a living by the strength of their bodies, per-

forming some unskilled or routine task not requiring complex training. This includes miners, farmhands, dock men, and all other loaders and unloaders of goods, and those who dig graves, pits, trenches, and the like. Most laborers are illiterate. Roll on tables A, E, and I. If traveling, roll also on tables D, G, and K.

Mercenary: This category includes all hireswords, those independents who fight for the pay of any master rather than in the continuous service of only one. Mercenaries are generally better fighters than warriors (see below) but are almost always more poorly equipped. Roll on tables A, C, D, G, and K. If traveling, roll also on tables F and H. This category includes caravan guards; caravan masters are usually considered as merchants (see above) for belongings and warriors (see below) for armor and weaponry.

Warrior: This category includes both men-at-arms and guards, sworn to the service of an individual, family, or guild. The bodyguards of nobles and other important personages fall into this category. Roll on tables B, C, D, G, and K. If traveling roll also in F and I.

Farmer: This category includes all who independently (or, for a fee, working the land of another absent individual) earn their living by raising produce on the land. Farmhands are considered laborers (see above); their masters are farmers. This category includes independent drovers and herdsmen. Farmers tend to be middle-aged and in prime physical condition. Roll on tables A, D, and J, and as follows: if traveling to market, roll on tables F, G, and K. If at home, roll on tables E and I.

Errand-Runner: This category includes apprentices and assistants to all the above categories; they are generally younger and less well-trained than their masters/employers. Roll on tables A (or B if applicable), D, E, G, J, and K. If at home, roll on tables E and I.

Knave: This catch-all category includes jobless persons: hangers-on, roustabouts, street youths, and 0-level (NPC) thieves, the “rabble” of any settlement. Roll on tables A, D, K, and (if applicable) G. For pilgrims, roll also on table H.

Noble: This category includes gentry, envoys and dignitaries of churches, guilds, and state, and visiting VIPs. The actual wealth, dress, or even presence of this category at all will vary according to your world and the specific location; it is suggested that the DM make deliberate selections from

tables B, D, F, H, K, and perhaps I and J, rather than rolling randomly.

Beggar: This category includes diseased (e.g., with leprosy) and disabled persons, those forced to beg. (Able-bodied, sham beggars should be considered as knaves.) Roll on tables A, D, G, and K (also, perhaps, on table I).

Table A: Everyday garments

Roll once on each subtable. For well-to-do individuals, roll twice on subtables 1 and 3. For beggars and knaves, roll on subtable 2 and add +2 to all rolls (consider results of 9 or 10 as 8).

Subtable A-1

1. Cloak w/hood
2. Robe (or long skirt)
3. Tunic & hose
4. Tunic & breeches
5. Surcoat or overtunic
6. Smock

Subtable A-2

1. High, hard boots
2. Low, hard shoes
3. High, soft boots
4. Low, soft shoes
5. Slippers
6. Clogs
- 7 or 8. Cloth-wraps (strips of cloth tied and twisted around calves and feet)

Subtable A-3

1. Belt, leather
2. Cap, felt
3. Cap, leather
4. Hat, woven straw
5. Purse on straps
6. Satchel, leather, w/drawstrings
7. Pouch, leather, w/wooden toggle fastening
8. Girdle, broad (fitted cummerbund belt)
9. Apron
10. Headscarf

Table B: Fine garments

Roll on all applicable subtables.

Subtable B-1: Male garb

1. Doublet & hose (fitted)
2. Cotehardie (w/short, flared sleeves), worn over long-sleeved jupon, and hose
3. Short gown with voluminous bagpipe sleeves, and hose
4. Tunic and breeches

5. Doublet and hose, with leggings
6. Pantaloon
7. Surcoat (sleeveless and long, with matching shield-cover, if shield is borne)
8. Gorget (throat-plate) of silver set with gems
9. Chaperon (hood with dangling end to wrap around face or neck)
10. Roundlet (large, frilled cloth hat, worn over cap)
11. Coif (bonnet with chin strap)
12. Hood (covers neck, shoulders, and head; cutout for face)
13. Hat (beaver hat, conical but rounded, with turned-up brim)
14. Cloak, dagged (ragged edges, cut in repeating patterns) with tassels or cords
15. Belt, jeweled, with three strands and filigreed buckle; one strand is long and dangles down the front
16. Harness (shoulder to waist ornamental strap with bells strung on it)
17. Houppelarde (male version; surcoat with bell-shaped sleeves), worn over long-sleeved doublet
18. Robes; two or three worn one over the other, outermost with ornamental sleeves (dangling empty)
19. Breeches, cross-gartered, with jerkin
20. Sash and breeches, with bell-sleeved shirt

Subtable B-2: Male footwear

1. Walking boots (heavy leather, with heels) or buskins
2. Shoes, pointed and bejeweled
3. Shoes with very long points, turned up, with knee-to-point chains
4. Bucket-topped boots, ornamented
5. Riding boots, thigh-high and of soft leather
6. Slippers, embroidered

Subtable B-3: Female garb

1. Cote/cotta/cottahardie (fitted tunic), worn over skirts
2. Two-tunic dress (of contrasting colors, with embroidered necks, sleeves, and hems)
3. Houppelarde (large, trailing skirt), worn with kirtle (a silken undergown)
4. Surcoat (overgown) with tippets (strips of fur or cloth hanging from elbows), worn over chemise
5. Gown (stola), worn with fine linen under-trousers, and mantle
6. Embroidered, close-cut mock version of man's clothing

Subtable B-3a: Accessories

Whenever subtable 3 is used, roll or select 2 or 3 items from following list:

1. Shawl
2. Gloves
3. Scarf
4. Hair-ribbon
5. Frontlet; richly embroidered bodice
6. Girdle, jeweled and studded with gold

7. Walking-stick, with silver bird, flower, or heraldic device on top
8. Mantel (fitted cloak) with jeweled breast clasp
9. Sleeves (separate from dress); bejeweled, puffed, and slashed
10. Purse (amoniere) with needlework, attached to girdle
11. Garter or anklet, bejeweled
12. Bracelet; gold filigree with gems
13. Earrings; gold with gems
14. Necklace; gold chain with gems and ornaments of precious metals
15. Ring(s), gold and/or silver, set with gems
16. Tussoire (clasp and chain which hangs from girdle to hold one side of long gown up, for walking with ease)
17. Mask or face-veil
18. Pendant; large gem on chain
19. Pectoral; necklace with plates of ivory, silver, polished abalone, or obsidian, joined with filigree wire, and trimmed with pendant-cut gems
20. Eyepatch, bejeweled and with trim of tiny teardrop rock crystal gems

Subtable B-4: Female footwear

1. Sandals
2. Slippers
3. Pattens (ornamental wooden clogs, worn with slippers or boots)
4. Boots

Subtable B-5: Female headgear

1. Circlet, gold
2. Hennin (long, conical steeple hat with lappets, dangling head ribbon, and veil, drapery hanging from point of hennin)
3. Wimple and veil
4. Gable headpiece (brocade, gem-encrusted cap with gable-like, flaring side points)
5. Caul (hair net with diadem and silk draperies)
6. Crispine (gold-thread circular hair net)
7. Gorget (linen-wrapped around head and neck, to frame face)
8. Escoffion (two-horned headdress with veil)
9. Diadem; jeweled head-band
10. Hood (of parchment, stiffened and painted, adorned with cloth or silk)
11. Liripipe (later form: throat scarf covering chin to shoulders, like an all-around stand-up collar)
12. Bonnet, linen, pleated and embroidered, with tassels
13. Fur cap
14. Tiara, of wire filigree studded with gems (e.g., rose quartz, emerald, or carbuncle)
15. Headscarf, of green, flame-orange, white, or red silk
16. Soft hat, trimmed with gems, fur, and feathers
17. Cap-of-coins, strung on wire



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20. Hawk-head mask of felt painted and trimmed with feathers, gems for eyes, etc., to resemble bird perched on head of wearer (bill forming prow of brim), plumage shielding head and tail trailing out behind; various other birds possible

Subtable B-6: Possible fabrics for fine garments

Cloth of gold	Used by royalty or titled nobles only
Sable fur	Used by royalty or titled nobles only
Camlet	Made from camel's hair; heavy and expensive
Cloth of silver	
Silk, sheer	Gauzy, fine, translucent
Samite	Thick silk
Morey	Stiff, water-marked silk
Satin	Sheen-finished, fine silk
Velvet	Silk cut so as to have pile
Brocade	Silk woven in contrasting colors and textures
Damask	Linen or cotton, with pattern in weave
Linen	
Tissshew	Gauzy linen weave
Wool	Heavy-work; warm, mainly used for outer garments
Keyrse	Very fine wool, like a veil
Musterdevelys	Greyish, soft wool

Table C: Harness (body armor)

Roll once on subtable 1 and twice on subtable 2. Warriors roll three times on subtable 2, and re-roll any results below 56 on subtable 1.

Subtable C-1

- 01-20 Leather jerkin (only)
- 21-35 Leather armor
- 36-44 Padded armor
- 45-55 Studded leather
- 56-60 Ring mail
- 61-70 Scale mail

- 71-83 Chain mail
- 84-89 Splint mail
- 90-94 Banded mail
- 95-00 Plate mail

Subtable C-2

- 01-33 High, hard boots, with armored insteps
- 34-50 Skullcap or sallet (metal cap)
- 51-58 Helm with visor
- 59-65 Gauntlets
- 66-89 Shield
- 90-00 Buckler

Table D: Personal belongings

- Always a leather backpack, canvas dunny-bag, muslin sack, leather pouch and satchel, or the like, plus:
- 01-25 Skin of water, and food (use table of Food & Drink in *DMG*, Appendix I: Dungeon Dressing)
 - 26-35 Skin of wine and food (see above)
 - 36-40 Earthen jug of milk, wrapped in skin, tied in leather thong
 - 41 Ink, vial
 - 42 Parchment, 1-6 scrips
 - 43-44 Quills (for pens)
 - 45-47 Pipe and pouch of tobacco
 - 48-50 Tapers, 1-6
 - 51-53 Candlestick, traveler's
 - 54-64 Candles, 1-3, tallow
 - 65-75 Tinder box or flint & steel
 - 76-78 Drinking jack (hollow-horn drinking cup)
 - 79-81 Mirror (small metal hand-held type) and comb
 - 82-87 Bowl, wooden
 - 88-92 Lamp
 - 93-96 Lamp oil in flask
 - 97 Symbol, holy, wooden (iron or silver possible), or "lucky keepsake"
 - 98 Lice, body; see *DMG*, "Parasitic Infestation," p. 13
 - 99 Disease-carrying germs (see *DMG*, pp. 13-14)
 - 00 Family treasure: valuable piece of jewelry, minor magic item (such as *Quaal's feather token*), treasure map, or the like, well hidden

Table E: Tools

- Pick deliberately for craftsmen. Otherwise, roll three times on the table, re-rolling when the result is inappropriate.
- 01-1 1 Mallet, wooden¹
 - 12-18 Chisel(s), (1-4) with canvas satchel⁵
 - 19-23 Sickle, draw-knife, or coracle⁵
 - 24-27 Hammer¹
 - 28-33 Iron nails, bag of 20-50
 - 34-37 Spike(s), iron, large, 1-12⁵
 - 38-40 Wedges, iron, 1-3
 - 41-45 Chain, 1-3, each 12' in length (in leather pack)
 - 46-48 Tongs, iron²
 - 49 Anvil iron
 - 50 Pincers, iron²
 - 51 Saw (differing sizes, from jeweler's to cross-cut 2-man wood-cutter's)²
 - 52-57 Bar, iron⁴
 - 58-62 Shovel³
 - 63-64 Whetstone
 - 65 Oil, non-flammable lubricant, in glass or clay vial, wrapped in leather
 - 66-70 Rags, 1-6
 - 71-75 Sack, heavy canvas (1-2)
 - 76-77 Sack, muslin (1-4)
 - 78-82 Tarpaulin, canvas
 - 83 Twine, ball (50' -90')
 - 84 Scissors, iron (rarely, of gold or silver, or plated)
 - 85 Buckle(s) or clasp(s) (1-8)
 - 86-87 Leather thongs, 1-12
 - 88-89 Leather straps
 - 90 Awl or punch, iron, with wooden head⁵
 - 91 Ladder, wooden, 12'-20' in length
 - 92-95 Poles, 10' long
 - 96-99 Measuring cord (knotted at regular intervals), usually 12 '-20' in length
 - 00 Chalk, 1-4 pieces

Many tools can be used as weapons. Tools in the above table marked with numbers will do damage equivalent to standard weapon types, as follows: 1 = hammer; 2 = club; 3 = quarter staff; 4 = morning star; 5 = dart.

Table F: Traveling goods and gear

Follow the four steps below in the order given. Items considered cargo (materials carried by trade) should be determined deliberately by the DM, and are not given here; Table J gives a random selection.

1. Choose whether victim is afoot (or afloat) and alone, or using beasts of burden: mules, horses, oxen, camels, or others (e.g., yaks, dogs, elephants, pack lizards).
2. Choose conveyance (or none): wagon, litter (covered cargo or passenger cubicle on poles, borne on shoulders of 2 or 4 men or beasts), travois (two poles with cargo lashed to them, and between them — poles and ground form triangular shape — dragged behind men or beasts of burden), sledges or sleighs (dragged behind teams of men or beasts; best in snow).

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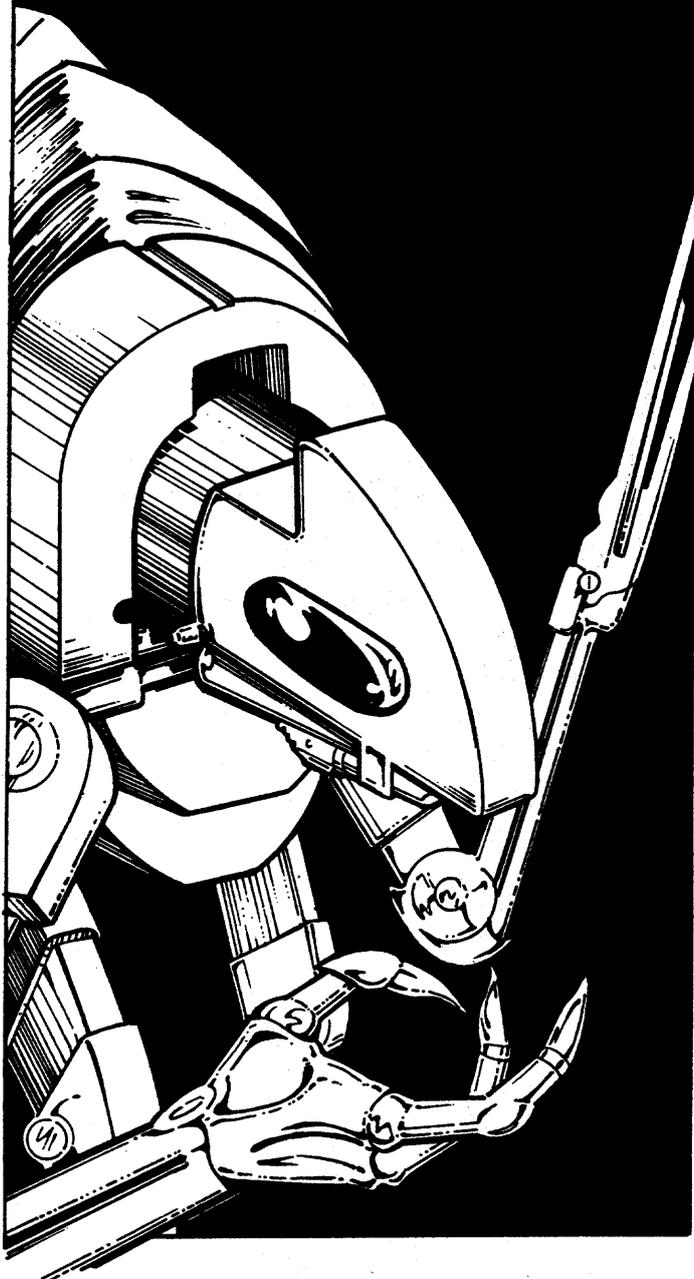
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3. Tack if beasts used (select): saddles, saddle blankets, saddle bags, bridles, nose-bags (feedbags), leading reins, whips, hobbles, harness, barding (beast armor). If beasts of burden are not used, tack will include sacks, ropes, and tumplines (leather straps, circular, go around heavy load and forehead of carrier, load carried on back).

4. Accoutrements (select or roll):

- 01-20 Tent(s)
- 21-26 Stakes, wooden
- 27-35 Rope, 1-4, 50 50'-long coils
- 36 Pennant(s)
- 37-45 Bundle(s) of faggots (firewood)
- 46 Chopping block
- 47-55 Torches, 1-20
- 56-75 Water, in 2-12 costrels (small leather "barrels" with shoulder straps and central neck), or 1-6 wooden barrels (in wagon)
- 76-80 Maps (trade routes, surrounding lands); usually scratched or burned on leather hides, rolled and stored in leather bags
- 81-86 Poles (for tents, probing rivers for ford-footing, erecting fences and tripods)
- 87-89 Snares, wire, and spring-jaws (for game and against intruders)
- 90-94 Stew cauldrons(s), iron (1-2)
- 95-97 Lamp oil in small wooden barrel(s), 1-2

- 98-99 Skillet(s), cast iron
- 00 Spare wheel(s) for wagons; spare poles for litters and travois; spare runners for sledges; spare shoes for horses, etc.

Table G: Carried coinage

Everyday monies, carried in pouch, money belt, or purse.

- 01-04 6 cp
- 05-18 3 cp, 1 sp
- 19-26 11 cp, 1 sp
- 27-36 6 cp, 2 sp
- 37-44 15 cp, 4 sp, 1 ep
- 45-51 2 cp, 3 sp, 2 ep
- 52-58 4 cp, 6 sp, 1 gp
- 59-65 1 cp, 3 sp, 5 ep
- 66-71 2 cp, 4 sp, 2 gp
- 72-77 1 sp, 4 ep, 1 gp
- 78-82 8cp, 2sp, 4ep, 3gp
- 83-86 3 6 4 cp, sp, ep, 3 gp
- 87-90 4 sp, 1 ep, 4 gp
- 91-93 3 sp, 5 gp
- 94-96 3 sp, 3 ep, 6 gp
- 97-98 1 cp, 2 sp, 4 ep, 9 ep
- 99-00 3 sp, 11 gp

Table H: Wealth

Choose from list according to situation. Roll randomly if large caravan, or family hoard, or thieves' spoils/mercenaries' plunder. Wealth can be the life savings of a

traveler or displaced person, cash carried by a person often engaged in commerce, or items worn or carried by rich persons.

- 01-20 Bars, silver (3-60), each of 25 gp value
- 21-30 Bars, gold (4-48), each of 100 gp value
- 31-45 Chest (iron-bound) holding 250 gp
- 46-55 Chest (iron) holding 500 gp
- 56-65 Chest holding 500 sp
- 66-70 Coffe holding 50 pp
- 71-75 Casket of delicately carved ivory (value 20 gp) holding 100 cabochon-cut star rose quartz stones (value 50 gp each) or at DM's option, another gem type (bloodstones, zircons, etc.)
- 76-86 Ring, gold, worked (value 3 gp)
- 87-90 Ring, gold, set with a ruby (value 1002 gp)
- 91 Ring, gold, set with a band of four emeralds (value 4003 gp)
- 92 Plates (2-12), gold, inlaid with lapis lazuli, ivory, or turquoise (value 25-100 gp each)
- 93 Sack of 300 ep
- 94 Coffe of mixed jewelry (all pieces wrapped in velvet or silk), e.g., necklace of strung pink pearls, value 8000 gp; silver gorget inset with a spiral of rubies, value 12,000 gp; coronet of gold inlaid with diamonds, value 50,000 gp; pectoral of silver w/moonstones, value 1000 gp.

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- 97 Furs and skins, 1-20, rare and exotic (e.g., bugbear, jaguar, lammasu, owlbear, black bear, giant lynx, dire wolf, etc.)
- 98 Chains, gold filigree, delicate (value 25-100 gp). Gold chains vary in length, are usually joined to form a circlet, belt, headband and veil, or mantle, but are too soft to constrict any but the smallest of creatures, hold up any weight, or fasten against any force
- 99 Rare spices in gold, silver, and carved jade vials, 1-8 in number, value 1-20 gp each (a vial of saffron is worth 40 gp)
- 00 Perfumes and scarce substances (e.g., ambergris) in silver and glass vials, 1-20 in number, value 2 sp-5 gp each

Table I: Miscellaneous

Roll once or twice per person, or (preferably) choose deliberately from list. Personal items of value (preceded by asterisks) will typically be hidden (in lockets, boot heels, sewn in belt, cloak-hem, or hat).

- 01-05 Splint and/or sling
- 06-20 Rags/bandages/towels
- 21 Harp
- 22-24 Flute ("tin whistle")
- 25-28 Drum or tambourine
- 29-36 Dice, pair (d6)
- 37-43 *Pretty pebbles, 1-3, keepsakes (at DM's option, some may be ornamental or semi-precious)
- 44-45 Ball (rubber or leather stuffed with dried seeds) and jacks (brass, 3-14 in number)
- 46-55 Playing cards
- 56 *Magic: spell scroll, information (item's command word, being's true name, wizard's name and location of abode, etc.), or minor magical item

- 57 *Map showing way to treasure hoard, wizard's keep, sprite settlement, hidden pass, magical gates, and the like
- 58-60 Thread or wool, 1-6 balls
- 61-68 Pets (chipmunks, songbirds, snakes, ferrets, cats, dogs, monkeys, lizards, even beetles possible)
- 69-70 Doll or toy (ball, carved wooden soldiers or horses, etc.)
- 71-77 Basket, straw or cane
- 78-80 Walking stick/cane/crutch
- 81-84 Soap (in clay or metal pot)
- 85-86 Mask (ornamental, perhaps adorned with gems or filigree, feathers, and fur; or, for concealment, made of black silk or tanned leather)
- 87-88 Toothpicks, wooden (for nobles, gold or electrum with jeweled heads)
- 89-91 Tea, coffee, cocoa, chicory, or equivalent brewing-drink, dry ingredients, in earthen pot
- 92 *Book or ledger (perhaps magical)
- 93-94 *Legal deed, proclamation, heraldic grant-of-arms, (royal) commission, writ, or pass
- 95 Corpse (in shroud, casket, or bag) or memorial stone (borne in wagon, sledge, travois, or litter)
- 96 Cage (iron, wrought) for pets, captured animals, or prisoners (various sizes possible)
- 97-98 Needles (and/or pins), 1-8 in number, of bone, brass, iron, or wood
- 99-00 *Key(s), single one on girdle-thong or neck chain, or ring holding 1-20

Table J: Goods and merchandise

These are items destined for delivery to customers, recent purchases, etc.; in general, the sorts of things not actually designed to be used by the bearer at the time he or she becomes indisposed. Monetary amounts, where given, represent the market value of one such item, portion, etc.; amounts in parentheses are approximations.

- 01-05 Glass jug(s), goblet(s), and/or bowl(s); 3 cp
- 06-15 Tobacco or snuff; 1 cp
- 16-20 Pomander (ball) or perfume (vial) or incense stick(s); 1 gp
- 21-23 Brass censer or lamp; 5 sp
- 24-25 Vellum, 1-4 hides stretched on wood frames and scraped; 1 gp
- 26-28 Inks (all colors possible), 1-8 glass vials, stoppered with corks and sealed with wax; 6 sp for sepia, up to 2 gp/vial for gold, red is next most valuable
- 29-32 Clothing, fine (see table A)
- 33-34 Birds, pets, or live food creatures, in cages
- 35-40 Copperware (bowls, trays, ewers, and pots); (5 gp)
- 41-43 Silver trays, cups, and pipkin (small dipping cup); (15 gp)

- 44-45 Carved wooden stools; 2 cp
- 46 Statuette(s), carved ivory, jade, or obsidian; 20-200 gp
- 47-53 Livestock (use table under "Equipping the Character" in *Players Handbook*)
- 54-55 Parchment, 1 ream (of 50 pages, in canvas bag, bound between two boards); 2 gp
- 56-62 Wine, 3 gills (or "noggins"), glass bottles each held in wicker carrier; 1 cp/gill to 2 gp/gill (varies with quality)
- 63-66 Knives, of iron with wooden handles; 5 sp to 1 gp
- 67-73 Candles, in bundles of 12 (scented and colored wax with untrimmed wicks); 1 sp/candle
- 74-77 Harness (for horse, or other creature at DM's option); 12 sp
- 78-82 Skewers, tongs, and pokers, wrought iron; 1-6 sp
- 83-86 Herbs: parsley, sage, garlic, rosemary, thyme, marjoram, mint, oregano, savory, etc. (sprig or leaves); 4 sp to 2 gp/sprig (rare spices ten to twenty times as much; see Table H)
- 87-90 Lock, brass, with hasp (fist-sized); both larger and smaller sizes more expensive; usually comes with 2 keys; 5 gp
- 91-93 Hinges, wrought iron (large, door size); 1 gp each (2 needed for most doors)
- 94-95 Spectacles, magnifying-glass or pince-nez (ground glass in brass wire frame; gold or silver plated more expensive); 3 gp
- 96-98 Shears, brass; 1 gp
- 99-00 Tiles, clay glazed and painted with colored designs; 2 cp each, or 1 cp each for plain tiles

Table K: Weaponry

Mercenaries and warriors roll three times on subtable 2; all others roll twice on subtable 1. Re-roll if results are inappropriate (e.g., horseman's weapons for individual on foot, or duplications).

Subtable K-1

- 01-10 Bo stick
- 11-24 Bow with quiver of 2-24 arrows
- 25-38 Club
- 39-53 Dagger
- 54-66 Hand axe
- 67-70 Javelin
- 71-79 Sling w/pouch of 1-20 stones
- 80-93 Staff, quarter
- 94-00 Staff, short

Subtable K-2

- 01-40 Dagger
- 41-46 Flail, horseman's
- 47-55 Glaive
- 56-64 Lance (light horse) or hammer
- 65-75 Mace (footman's or horseman's)
- 76-84 Sword, long
- 85-88 Sword, short
- 89-91 Sword, bastard
- 92-00 Spear

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A world of difference

The “parallel” concept expands gaming horizons

by Fraser Sherman

The danger of player boredom is one to concern every DM. No matter how good your dungeon is, there can come a point when your players find it uncomfortably familiar. In previous issues, DRAGON® Magazine has offered many answers to the problem, from new treasures and monsters to tips for better refereeing. This article offers one more answer — the use in AD&D® gaming of parallel worlds. A short hop to a strange land can do wonders in removing campaign ennui.

The parallel-worlds concept is a classic idea in science-fiction and fantasy literature. It states that an infinite number of universes are in existence, independent of each other, separated by extradimensional barriers of time and space. In fantasy, it has been the basis for DeCamp and Pratt's Harold Shea books, Randall Garrett's Lord Darcy stories, and various novels by Poul Anderson and Michael Moorcock. (This is by no means a complete list.) The official AD&D material has very little to say about the concept (except for the superb use of parallel worlds in the *Queen of the Demonweb Pits* module), but they can add a lot to the game. By leaving the worlds of “normal” AD&D gaming behind, the DM's options are expanded — new environments, new creatures, new forms of spell-casting, and other surprises can be introduced to confound and intrigue your players.

Types of parallel worlds

To begin with, where do these alternate worlds fit in the orthodox AD&D universe? The answer, according to *Legends & Lore*, is that the Prime Material Plane encompasses “the real world and all of its parallels.” I don't think it violates the spirit of the game, however, to suggest that there may be other worlds existing outside the Prime Material Plane on other, different levels — Alternate Material Planes, let's say. The difference could be that the powers of the gods and the laws of nature will be more or less consistent from world to world within a given Material Plane, but there could be great differences between that Material Plane and any of its Alternates. The might of the gods themselves could change (more on this later) and “reality” might be very different from ordinary AD&D worlds. While this is not a license for completely overthrowing the game, it can justify some of the variant world-concepts discussed further on.

Whichever plane your parallel world inhabits, there still remains the task of

building it and making it distinct and different from the one used in the current campaign. The world may be physically similar to your old one, with the difference lying in the monsters or magic it contains, or it may have physical conditions unlike the ones your characters are accustomed to seeing.

For example, instead of a round parallel world, how about a flat one? I use a flat earth for my campaign, because of my own desire to try something different. The most obvious change, from the viewpoint of someone from a round world, is that the horizon extends to infinity; given an unobstructed view, it's possible to see much further than on our own planet. Because there is no earth-curvature, everything is more or less the same distance from the sun (which, in this universe, goes around the earth). No polar or tropical regions exist, and there are no changes in seasons — a perpetual temperate spring reigns throughout the world. Bear in mind, however, that spring in the American Midwest can include anything from summer heat waves to winter blizzards; the weather isn't boring. Differences in climate are caused entirely by features of the land — the center section of my northern continent, for example, is bounded by mountains on both sides, shutting off the rain and creating a desert.

All this, in turn, creates changes in human life. Consider farming: Instead of having separate times of the year for growing and harvesting, farmers can plant and reap year-round. Because of the erratic weather, however, it's more important for the plants to be tough and durable than big — in other words, they can grow more plants, but smaller ones. Because there are no seasons, the only measure for the calendar is the moon, which waxes and wanes like our own (but in relation to the power of the moon goddess, not the angle of the sun's light). The moon's cycle of exactly twenty-eight days makes one four-week month; fourteen months make a lesser year and two such years — twenty-eight months — make a Great Year (all of which makes it a heck of a lot easier to keep track of days and dates). The result is a distinctly different world, with the differences evolving logically from the basic decision to make it flat.

Some people may be bothered by the fact that a flat earth isn't scientifically feasible (there seem to be a lot of arguments along those grounds in “Forum” sometimes). Personally, I don't think feasibility matters in the slightest. In fantasy, as Fritz Leiber once put it, it's not necessary to be reality-

consistent, only self-consistent. In other words, it doesn't matter if your new world is “impossible,” in the sense that it contradicts the laws of nature, provided that its own laws don't contradict each other.

Another possible shape for a new world would be an elliptical one. Because the atmosphere of any world, no matter what shape, will take on spherical form, the ends of the ellipse, poking out of the sphere, will have very little atmosphere — or possibly none at all, if the ellipse is extreme enough. Either way, survival at the ends would be difficult or impossible without magical protection. It's also possible the world would wobble on its axis as it rotates, so that the length of the days and seasons would vary wildly — some years might have no winter, while other years could have triple-length ones.

What if a world had two suns? The planet could orbit one of the pair or both of them at once, but physics dictates that it cannot orbit one and then the other. Then again, a flat earth doesn't fit in with physics, either. In an AD&D campaign, it's possible that the local deities provided some powerful artifact to protect a sun-changing world from harm as it went through its climatic alterations. If the local evil arch-mage were threatening to destroy the artifact, that would certainly be a challenge for the player characters to deal with.

A world could be shaped like Burroughs's Pellucidar, located on the inside of the Earth, so that the horizon curves up in the distance. One could pick an even stranger shape, like Larry Niven's sun-circling Ringworld, or the ziggurat-shaped planet in Philip Jose Farmer's *The Maker of Universes*. Even on a spherical world, there could be unexpected differences — everything could be a hundred times its normal size, for example, so that the characters appeared no bigger than rats. Suppose the surface of the planet was airless, confining all life to caverns and tunnels below the ground, or it was unstable, with volcanoes and earthquakes a part of daily life. What of a planet covered by an ocean and small islands, like LeGuin's Earthsea? I think you've got the picture.

Populating a parallel world

Once you've settled on the world you want, the next step is to populate it. A new world allows you to introduce an assortment of variant monsters to surprise your players. One simple but effective step is to reverse alignments, presenting players with evil

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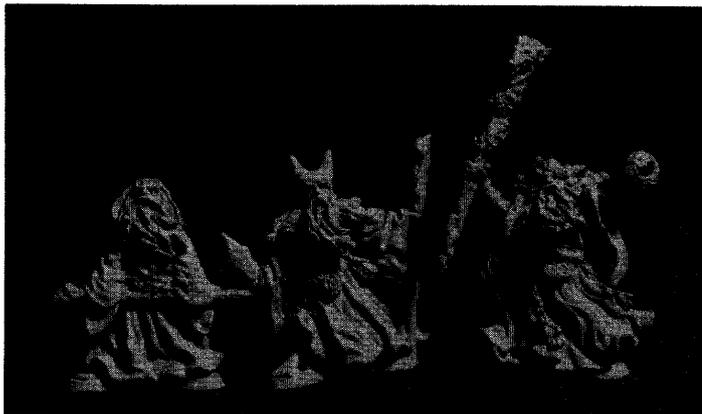
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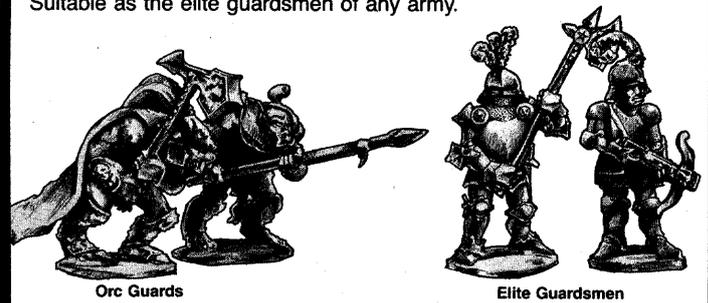
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unicorns and treants, and good fire giants and werewolves. Monster powers should be adjusted accordingly — an evil unicorn's horn being poisonous rather than a poison antidote, for example. A second possibility would be to give more kinds of magical powers to creatures, creating gnoll illusionists and giant magic-users. One could go even further and allow one or more of the demi-human or humanoid races to have the same range of classes and-lack of level restrictions as humans — halfling arch-mages would be pretty surprising, while a few half-orc assassin/magic-users could be both surprising and nasty.

For an even more alien world, this can be taken even further. What if the race dominating the new world — in the sense of having no class or level restrictions — were neither human, humanoid, or demi-human? What if evolution had turned out differently and the ruling race had evolved from dogs, cats, birds, fish, insects, lizards, or spiders? What would their society be like? How would they react to humans? Would elves and dwarves exist, or would they be replaced, too? For example, cat-people could fill the place of humanity, while bird-, lizard-, and dog-people fill the roles of races with limited classes and levels. The AD&D game already has intelligent forms of most kinds of animals, so it's not that great a jump for them to reach full "human" status.

A different physical world will also produce different inhabitants. If your world is an Earthsea-style world, adapt land-going monsters for the ocean; the two *Monster Manuals* have already presented sea-going forms of elves, ogres, gargoyles, and ghouls, and you can add to the list. Could there be sea-dwarves or sea-gnomes to match sea-elves? How about aquatic sphinxes, minotaurs, medusas, or puddings? Whatever your new earth is like, see if there are ways old monsters could adapt to it.

Once your world is built and populated, you can civilize its inhabitants. Even if the people of your new realm are humans and demi-humans, you can still give the world special qualities through their cultures. For example, what if the world is in a more advanced era than the usual setting? It would be a novel experience for most players to find their characters in societies like Elizabethan or Victorian England, or France during the revolution. Coping with new customs and a different class structure would be challenging. (The Victorian class system was, if anything, harsher than that of medieval times, while the French Revolution sought to dispense with the aristocracy completely.)

Both technology and magic in these new worlds may have advanced beyond the levels that player characters are used to seeing. (The Lord Darcy stories mentioned earlier give an excellent example of incorporating magic into a quasi-Victorian setting.) Being on another world, one doesn't have to worry that these more advanced societies will overrun or change the regular cam-

paign — although an alternate world's invasion of the PCs' home dimension could be the source of many adventures.

A culture could be developed that has no connection at all with Earth history. Suppose that the new world had once reached a peak in science and technology and then deteriorated; its "magicians" now combine real magic with advanced science. (The *Thundarr* TV cartoon series used this concept extensively.) This would allow use of many new forms of techno-magic, such as robots, lasers, holograms, and so on.

Unique cultural developments are great fun to tinker with. As an example from my own campaign, there's the Dragonworld. This is a parallel world where dragonkind realized from the moment of humanity's creation that men (and, to a lesser extent, demi-humans and humanoids) had the potential to challenge or even destroy them. Rather than make attempts to destroy these races, the dragons opted to take the fledgling races under their wing (figuratively speaking), becoming not their foes but their teachers and champions.

On Dragonworld, dragons taught witch-doctors and magic-users their spells and offered to protect tribes and towns against the rest of the world — in return, of course, for food, shelter, and lots of treasure. Today, every village, town, and tribe has its own dragon, of variable age, power (the stronger the city, the older and more powerful the dragon), and appropriate alignment (brass dragons with elves or chaotic good humans, black dragons with chaotic evil men or gnolls). The dragons receive food and treasure from their allies and, in return, protect them in time of war. (If it looks like its meal ticket is going to be wiped out, a dragon will do whatever it takes to protect the gravy train.) Not everyone believes this benefits humans as much as it does dragons — but no one wants to be without a dragon protector, nonetheless.

All this has made Dragonworld different from my primary campaign world. Where my regular game world has only a few varieties of dragons (mostly those from the *Monster Manual*), Dragonworld has them all. All the official species and many of the unofficial ones (like the neutral crystalline dragons, the yellow, orange, and purple dragons, and the landdragons from DRAGON issues #37, #74, and #65, respectively) exist, for every species has a good chance to survive and breed. Similarly, while most of the humanoid species have been wiped out on my earth (only goblins and gnolls exist in large numbers), almost all races survive on Dragonworld under their lizardly protectors. Where the regular campaign world has been dominated by a succession of empires, Dragonworld has become the province of innumerable independent city-states and tribes; conquest by the sword has, of necessity, been superseded by political and economic pressure and Byzantine intrigue.

In some ways, even the basic outlook is different. A human from my main world

would be totally confounded by the affection most Dragonworlders have for dragons, while a Dragonworlder would be equally bewildered by the idea of subduing a dragon, let alone selling one. It's in these ways that parallel worlds can be built and differentiated.

Magical variations

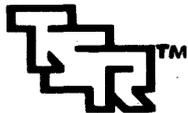
Even after your world is built, populated, and civilized, still more can be done to make it unusual. One way to give your players some new experiences is to introduce variations in the way magic works.

Suppose that boundaries between your new world and the Positive and Negative Material Planes are weaker or stronger than in most worlds. This could affect the amount of energy drawn from the planes by spells and magic items, so that they would only have one-half or one-third of their normal power (where the barriers were stronger) or be increased to double or triple force (if weaker barriers existed). With lessened magic, PCs would find adventuring far more difficult (and more challenging); enhanced magic could be a lot of fun for a short while, like giving players high-level characters to run for one adventure. Of course, if they were going to be in an enhanced-magic world for some time, game balance might dictate pitting them against equally enhanced opponents — like double-strength ogre magi.

A second possibility is that power from the energy planes seeps constantly into the new world (instead of being drawn there only by spells). As a side effect, the natives could have built up "immunity" to the magical energy — in other words, even the weakest of creatures have developed some degree of magic resistance.

It's also possible that a different world will have new, different spells. In the "Earthsea" world described earlier, druid spell lists might be expanded to include *predict tide*, *summon current*, and *call sea-being*. Magic-users and clerics would also have new spells, along the lines of create *whirlpool*, *tidal wave*, or *neutralize drowning*, and might have spells such as *water walking* or *water breathing* at 1st or 2nd level. If the DM allows PCs to learn a lower-level version of a regular spell like *water breathing*, it might be wise to reduce the power and duration to make it fit a 1st-level listing.

Another possibility is that the magic-users in your new world are not generalists, as they are in regular AD&D gaming, but specialists. In this case, fire magicians, ice magicians, healers, shapechangers, and so on make their appearance, perhaps grouped into colleges or guilds like the spell-casters of the DRAGONQUEST™ game. This can be fixed by regrouping AD&D spells along guild lines; thus, a fire magician would know not only *burning hands*, *fire shield*, and *fireball*, but non-magic-user spells like *produce flame*, *flame scimitar*, *fire strike*, and *fire resistance*, with most of them available at lower levels than a character would

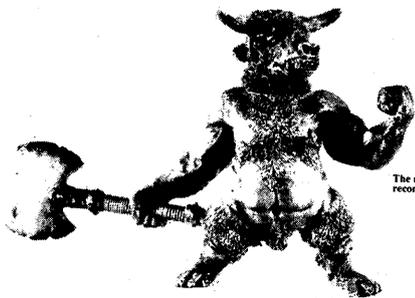


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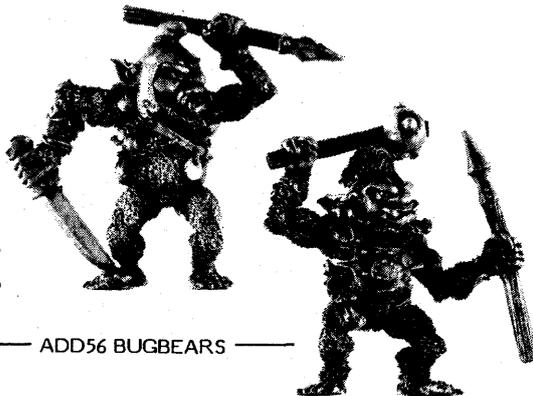
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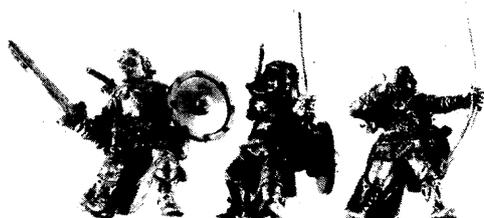


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get them (for example, getting a 1d6, small-area *fireball* at first level).

Consider the confusion when a wizard like that meets an orthodox AD&D enchanter. To the fire-wizard, the latter will seem like some super-spell-caster, capable of using spells from every college; a conventional magic-user, on the other hand, will assume someone who flings around *walls of fire* and *flame strikes* is a much higher-level character than he actually is. This could lead to some intriguing situations.

It's also possible to make some simple alterations in the spells themselves. Under the natural laws of the new universe, casting time might be altered, different material components required, or spell duration prolonged or shortened. Perhaps there's a particular material component essential to all magic-user spells, the way druids are dependent on mistletoe. Changes like these could bewilder and surprise the spell-casters in your party, in some cases making them virtually powerless until they learn how the new rules work.

Suppose there is one kind of magic — enchantment/charm spells, illusions, *polymorph* spells, or weather-control magic — that simply doesn't work in the new world. Perhaps, at some time in the long-gone past, a foolishly arrogant magic-user attempted to *charm* one of the gods; as a result, the outraged deity declared the use of such spells forbidden for all time. If a character casts one, it might simply fail, the caster might fall under the spell himself, or some other penalty you deem appropriate might take effect. Nor need the classification of taboo spells be as simple as "*charm spells*" or "*illusions*"; it can be based on any rationale you wish. For example, the gods could ban any spell of magic item that does damage outside the range of hand-to-hand combat. In order to attack someone, you have to get close enough to him to risk being hurt yourself.

Finally, what about a world where everyone — not just clerics and magic-users — can cast spells. Perhaps everyone is capable of learning magic-user cantrips (which are some of the most useful spells in non-combat situations) or casting at least one particular useful spell — *cure light wounds* or *enchanted weapon* being common knowledge, for instance. Alternatively, everyone might possess one unique spell of his own, like the inhabitants of Piers Anthony's Xanth — one has *magic missile*, another can *haste* himself, while a third can *purify food and drink*. In either case, near-universal use of magic could make a fight with even zero-level characters hazardous. It would not be advisable to let player characters learn these special spells. At the very least, the DM should have PCs forget them when they return to their own world.

Variant psionics

Having touched on magic, let's consider a closely allied topic — psionics. Even if your regular game doesn't use them, creating parallel worlds that do could prove

intriguing for your players. For example, some of the ideas given above for magic could be reused for psionics — everyone native to that world could have one random psionic ability, or they could all share one common power, like *ESP*, *teleportation*, or *telepathy*. Then again, perhaps only one branch of humanity possesses special powers — a race possessing innate *mass domination*, for instance, could become master of its world.

A new world might also affect the player characters, perhaps stimulating any latent psionic talents they possessed. A character who is potentially psionic (having charisma, intelligence, or wisdom above 16) will become psionic while on this world; but without being in control or even aware of his powers at first. Awareness might only come when some condition is fulfilled; after a set period of time, a developing talent might start to function but randomly so, or there could be a percentile chance of activating a talent during moments of intense stress. The latter would make the PCs' first battle pretty bizarre — imagine trying to fight while talents like *reduction*, *dimension door*, or *etherealness* were activating randomly! Needless to say, game balance usually dictates that the PCs lose these powers on their return home.

The social implications of psionics should also be kept in mind. How would a society of telepaths react to a party of nontelepathic characters? Would they mock them? Treat them as little more than cattle? Subject them to "treatment" for repairing what they assume are damaged telepathic faculties? (What effects that could have would be anyone's guess.) Legality might be another important factor; a world where psionics are commonplace may have firm laws about what is and is not permissible (no reading minds without a warrant, no taking over someone else's mind, etc.). Violating these rules would bring a great deal of trouble to the PCs — and this would probably apply to spells like *charm person* and *ESP*, too.

Borrowed game worlds

These suggestions cover some of the possibilities for creating an original parallel world of your own. But there is another way besides building your own to provide your players with new and different earths, and that is to "borrow" your new world from somebody else.

One means of doing this is to use another gaming system as the basis for the alternate world. The *DMC* discusses this on pp. 112-114, working out the possibilities and details for sending AD&D characters into a GAMMA WORLD® or BOOT HILL® game. The appeal of this approach is natural — the laws of nature and much of the background for the new world are already worked out for you, yet your PCs will still be thrust into a totally different setting offering a variety of new adventures.

There's no need to stop where the *DMG* does — you can use just about any gaming system if you've a mind to. How about

setting adventurers loose in the Roaring Twenties of the GANGBUSTERS™ game? Why not have them join forces with the agents and spies of the TOP SECRET® game? The heroes and criminals of FGU's VILLAINS & VIGILANTES™ game? (Perhaps some super-criminal is recruiting evil magic-users for a sinister plan, driving the heroes to seek the assistance of the player characters.) One could also put them into another magic-based game system, like that of the DRAGONQUEST™ game or the RUNEQUEST® game.

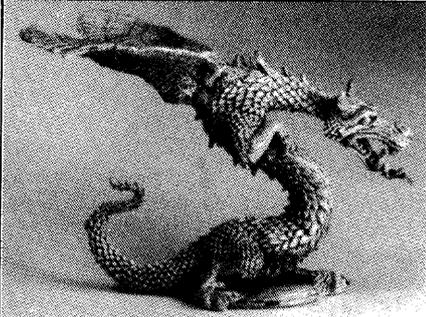
Whichever system you pick, using it will require the same sort of work the *DMG* did for the GAMMA WORLD and BOOT HILL games. If the new game uses a different set of character abilities, one will have to generate the statistics that the characters don't have. If the range of stats is different (5-25 for normal humans, for instance, instead of 3-18), the equivalent in the AD&D system has to be calculated. In addition, one has to answer a dozen other questions. How do you adapt characters to a different initiative system? How do special rules covering fatigue or critical hits apply to the PCs? What are the effects of new weapons or powers, such as machine-guns or the V&V *absorption* ability, on AD&D characters? If characters from other games and worlds pass into an AD&D universe, all of the same questions must be asked in reverse.

Borrowed fiction worlds

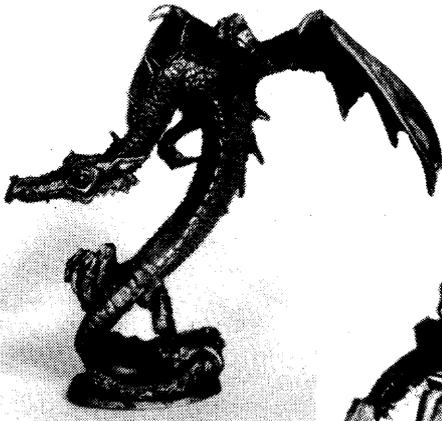
An alternative to borrowing an established gaming system is to borrow an established fictional system. Players who read fantasy are bound to have favorite characters, be they Fafhrd, John Carter, or Conan; think of the pleasure your players can find in visiting their favorite heroes in their native worlds. For my taste, it's best that they be in their native worlds. Seeing Elric without Melnibone or the Mouser without Nehwon just wouldn't seem right; their worlds are part of their charm. Rather than establishing these heroes in one's own world, where they can never really fit in, one can use a parallel world system to let his players meet whom they wish, going to Covenant's Land or Amethyst's Gemworld with no trouble.

Even more than an ordinary game, however, one using an established fantasy requires preparation. To begin with, do you know the mythos you're using? It might be fun to take your players' characters to Middle Earth, but it could be disastrous if they all know Tolkien better than you; the odds are they'll catch every error you make in handling their favorite work and scream indignantly at all of them, which is hardly conducive to an enjoyable evening. One must also not only be familiar with the personalities and histories of the characters from the book but must translate their powers and abilities into AD&D terms — what level magic-user is Glinda the Good, for instance? There are many resources to help out here — *Legends & Lore* and many

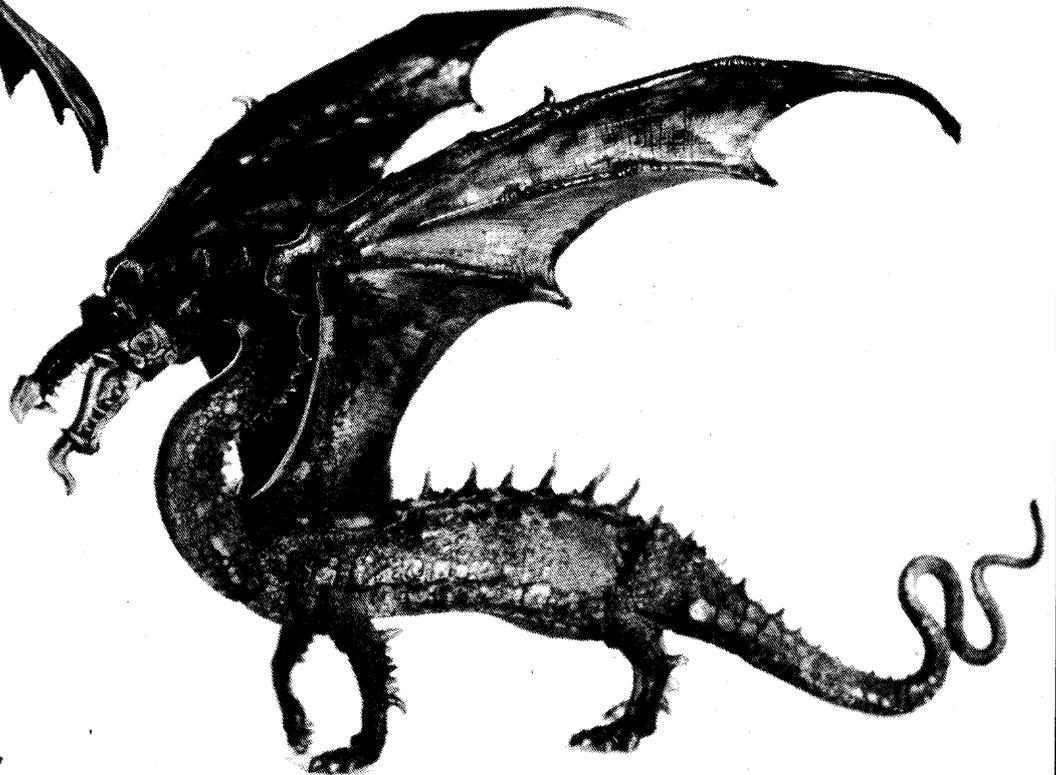
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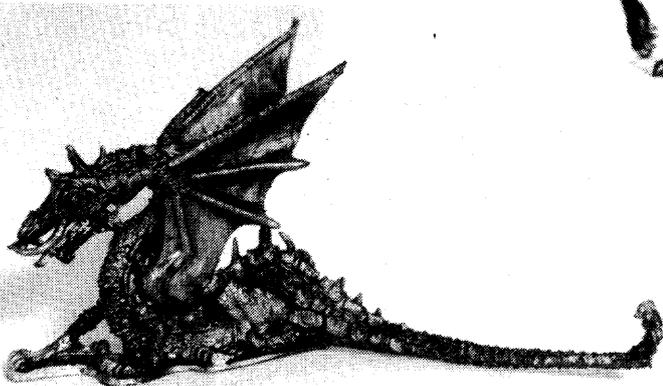
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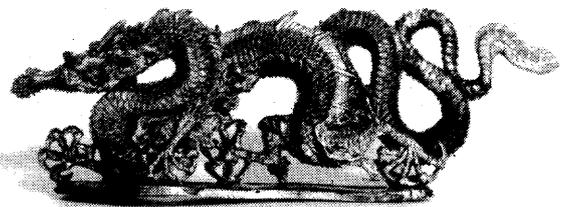
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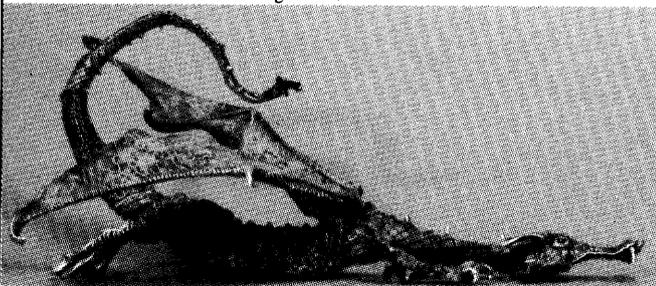
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articles in DRAGON Magazine have given stats, powers, levels, and descriptions for many fictional and legendary heroes.

Then too, how much change are you willing for the PCs to bring to the established course of events in the fiction-world's saga? If you have them enter Elric's world during the events of *Elric of Melniboné*, for example, suppose they revise the entire Elric canon by killing Yrkoon? If you're not ready for that (and I can vouch from a similar experience that it can be extremely unsettling), it might be better to involve them in a minor adventure that won't affect the major hero's destiny.

[AD&D game adventures are available for Conan's Hyboria (modules CB1 and CB2) and Fafnir's Nehwon (Lankhmar": City of Adventure). Chaosium's Thieves' World game setting described the famed city of Sanctuary from the anthology series in AD&D terms as well. — Editor]

Character problems

Whether one uses an established alternate world or an original one, and whatever surprises the world contains, the same PCs will visit it. Some player character classes are going to have problems no matter which world they go to. Of them all, clerics will be the hardest hit, for they must deal with the fact that residents of other worlds and Alternate Planes may not worship the same gods.

This is entirely understandable (with an infinite number of worlds, even the most

energetic deities can't proselytize them all), but it still gives clerics a problem. When they enter a parallel world, it's entirely possible that no one there has even heard of their gods. The native deities will probably want to keep it that way; who needs the competition? If clerics of the Greek gods were to try preaching their creed on a world ruled by the Celtic deities, they would probably be ridiculed ("Zeus? Hephaestus? Where'd you make up those names?") and would certainly run into heavy opposition from the established churches. At best, they'd simply be forbidden to preach; at worst, they'd be outlawed, condemned as heretics, hunted by the church, and possibly threatened with divine wrath as well.

It's also unpleasantly feasible that on some worlds the clerics will find their powers diminished. According to Gary Gygax (in an article in DRAGON issue #97), the powers of the gods depend on the number of their worshipers on the Prime Material Plane; a deity without such worshipers "is consigned to operations on some other plane of existence, without the means to touch upon the Prime Material." Logically, this should also apply to Alternate Material Planes — if a god has no worshipers there, he has no powers. Thus, if a cleric arrives on a world in such a plane, his god would be almost completely unable to aid him and — as happens on the planes of Hell or the Abyss, where clerics are similarly cut off — the cleric would be unable to

recover any spells above 2nd level, since anything higher draws upon the divine power. Needless to say, this could prove a dire situation.

Another possible problem (on a world in any plane) is that the ruling deities are active enemies of the cleric's god. Imagine the position of a good priest, for instance, on a world where daemons and devils were the greatest powers, or the danger to a priestess of Athena on a world where her arch-enemy Ares was the dominant deity. Clerics could wind up making some unconventional alliances — a lawful neutral cleric might join forces with devils or rakshasa in order to break the grip of demonkind on a world where those chaotic beings held sway. A cleric's life definitely won't be easy, but it won't be dull, either.

The other classes with problems will be those with limited membership at high levels — assassins, druids, and monks. There is only one 10th-level monk in a campaign area, for example, so if a player takes his own Master of the North Wind into another world, he may soon be tagged as an impostor or a fraud.

Maintaining the balance

No matter what you have planned in your new world, it's important not to overlook game balance. With parallel worlds so full of special surprises, there's always the risk the PCs will come into possession of

(Turn to page 55)

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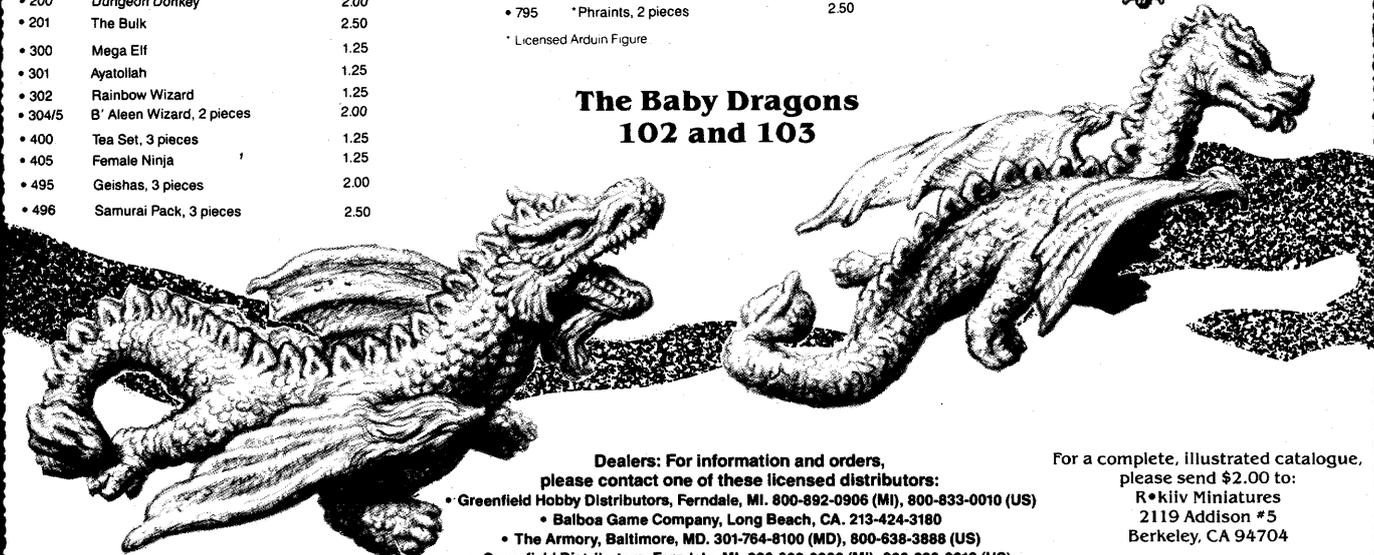
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BETRAYED!

An AD&D® game adventure for characters of levels 3-5



BETRAYED!

Intrigue and adventure for 4-8 player characters

Designed by Jim Bengtson

This AD&D® adventure is designed for a group of 4-8 characters of levels 3-5. Parties having lower-level members should have more adventurers than upper-level parties. The group should include a ranger and at least one cleric or druid.

Players' background

You are in the city of Gurdikar, at the southern tip of the Palim Mountains. Situated on the trade road between the dwarven city of Galantor and the gnome kingdom of Oparan, the free city of Gurdikar is governed by the powerful Council of Merchants.

After a week of enjoying the city's pleasures (and emptying your money pouches), your party is approached by a man who introduces himself as Eskan Colnet. He tells you that he needs the aid of a group of brave and honest adventurers, and you agree to hear his story.

"First, I must caution you to tell no one what I tell you now," he says. "There are those in Gurdikar who would kill to stop you from aiding me. I am brother to Kallan Colnet, master of the House of Colnet. We are a relatively small merchant house, engaged in the spice trade, but thanks to some good business deals we are becoming quite successful.

"Recently, though, our shipments of spice have been stolen with alarming regularity. Our caravans are found, burned and shattered, with the guards slain and the spice gone. This brings me to my current problem, which concerns my nephew, Brannod Colnet.

"Three weeks ago, Brannod went on a camping trip up into the mountains to celebrate a reunion, of sorts, with his friend Vasil Volenta, of the House of Volenta. The House of Colnet and the House of Volenta have had good relations for many years, though things have cooled between us for business reasons. Brannod and Vasil have been friends since childhood, though they, too, have not been very close lately. When Vasil contacted Brannod and asked him to spend a few days in his company, as in the old days, Brannod was pleased to accept.

"But Vasil Volenta returned alone a few days later, bruised and battered. He told us that a rockslide had buried Brannod and his escort, killing them all. He alone escaped, because he had been riding out ahead of the group. He led us to the spot and showed us the remains of the escort, buried under tons of rock. Looters had stripped the area of

any useful or valuable items. Wild animals had apparently been at the remains; the bodies that could be identified were all escorts from the camping group, but Brannod's body was not found.

"We resigned ourselves to our loss and began mourning when, a week later, we received a note, by courier, from a member of Brannod's escort — still alive! He was at a small village to the north. He claimed that the group had been ambushed by orcs, and that Vasil was responsible. The orcs seemed to know which among the group was Brannod, and captured him after a brief fight. This man escaped by feigning death when he was injured and then crawling into some nearby bushes. After the surviving guardsmen were herded away, boulders were hurled down upon the caravan to make it appear that the group was hit by a landslide. The guardsman said he saw a man standing at the top of the hill from which the boulders were thrown, but the man was not a giant. Perhaps he had the strength of a giant.

"The orcs led their captives east through the valley. The guardsman's wounds were not serious, as it turned out; a broken ankle was the worst of his problems. He was able to find a pack horse that escaped the landslide, and he made his way southwest to the nearest village, where he received help.

"My brother and I are convinced of this man's -honesty, but we need more than the word of a simple mercenary before accusing the House of Volenta of being connected with the raid on Brannod's party. I want you to go into the mountains and find evidence of Vasil's treachery, and to see if Brannod yet lives. If you are successful, my brother and I will richly reward you."

Specifically, Eskan offers the party a *mace of disruption*, a *rope of climbing*, and a *ring of warmth* as rewards. However, these items *cannot* be received before the mission is completed, under any circumstances. Brannod must be returned (or his remains brought back) along with his killers — alive, if at all possible — before the party can claim the rewards. (If the PCs bring back extra prisoners, they may be entitled to an additional reward.)

If the PCs accept Eskan's offer, he gives them a map of the Palim Mountains (the Players' Map; see page 53) marking the location of valleys, villages, and forts, and showing where the ambush occurred. They also receive a pouch containing 100 gp for outfitting expenses.

Notes to the DM

Brannod Colnet is still alive, the captive of a firbolg giant in the pay of the House of Volenta. This giant is also responsible for the stolen spice shipments that have plagued the House of Colnet. The giant often maintains his diminutive form to further the impression that he is a normal human with abnormal strength. Though he is quite powerful, a determined and clever party of low-level characters should be able to take on him and his allies and win — though the going will certainly be rough.

This adventure takes place in the Palim Mountains, which may be located on the DM's campaign maps (and renamed) if used as part of an ongoing campaign. These mountains are thickly forested with mixed deciduous and coniferous trees. Because of the very rough terrain, characters are only able to move 1½ miles (3 hexes on the large-scale map) per hour through the mountains. This roughly corresponds to the figures listed for "very rugged terrain" on the outdoor movement tables in the *DMG*, p. 58. Occasionally, characters may find a path zigzagging across the face of a mountainside (such as near encounter area 11), but travel on such a path does not make movement easier: The only way to move faster than 3 hexes per hour is to stay in the valleys (see below). The party has 8 hours of daylight by which to travel, plus an hour of partial darkness at dawn and another hour at dusk.

Both random and set encounters appear in this part of the Palim Mountains. Some of the encounters are dangerous, while some may be very helpful to the party. Some, such as the werewolf (encounter area 11) and the giant (encounter area 1), require careful handling.

Valley encounters

Travel through the valleys is at the rate of 2 miles (4 hexes) per hour. Encounters in the valleys differ from those in the mountains around them. Check for valley encounters using the table below, rolling for morning, night, and pre-dawn times.

Dice Encounter

01-30	No encounter
31-40	5-10 wolves (HD 2 + 2, AC 7, MV 18", #AT 1, DAM 2-5)
41-60*	2-5 hunters from the nearest village; 1st-level fighters, AC 10, MV 12", armed with spears and short bows

- 61-74* Patrol from the nearest fort; ten 1st-level fighters, AC 7 (leather and shield), MV 12", armed with long swords and spears; and, one 3rd-level fighter as leader, AC 7 (leather and shield), MV 9", armed with long sword and 2 daggers
- 75-90 1-2 poisonous snakes (HD 2 + 1, AC 6, MV 15", #AT 1, DAM 1 plus poison for 3-12)
- 91-00 2-5 giant ticks (HD 3, AC 3, MV 3", #AT 1, DAM 1-4 plus blood drain of 1-6 hp/round)
- * – For night encounters, a die roll of 41-74 indicates 3-6 orcs from Gador's Hall (see encounter area 1, room 16).

Mountain encounters

If the player characters leave the valleys, the encounters they have will change, though most are non-aggressive. Check the following table for mountain encounters at morning, night, and pre-dawn times.

Dice Encounter

- 01-10 1-2 eagles, flying over adjacent hex (60%) or same hex (40%) (HD 1+3, AC 6, MV 1"/30", #ATT 3, DAM 1-2/1-2/1-2)
- 11-25 1-4 giant ants (workers), foraging 5-20" away from party (HD 2, AC 3, MV 18", #ATT 1, DAM 1-6)
- 26-35 1-2 falcons, flying over adjacent hex (60%) or same hex (40%) (HD 1-1, AC 5, MV 1"/36", #ATT 3, DAM 1/1/1)
- 36-45 1 ram, 4-16" away (HD 2, AC 6, MV 15", #ATT 1, DAM 1-2 plus charge damage, if any)
- 46-60 2-8 huge ravens, flying over adjacent hex (60%) or same hex (40%) (HD 1-1, AC 6, MV 1"/27", #ATT 1, DAM 1-2 plus eye attack)
- 61-65 1 skunk, 2-8" away (HD ¼, AC 8, MV 12", #ATT 1, DAM 1 plus musk squirt)
- 66-00 No encounter

If a ranger searches for tracks, he will find only signs of small game unless within 2 hexes (1 mile) of a set encounter, in which case he may find signs of that encounter. If a *Speak with Animals* spell is used on local wildlife, the party will receive only very vague information on nearby encounters. No animal knows of the basilisk (those that did are now stone statues), and most animals know of a "nice man" (the hermit) who lives around here. All animals dislike the brutal orcs.

Villages and forts

The villages located around the perimeter of the Palim Mountains are small, usually consisting of no more than 10-30 peasant families each. The residents know next to nothing of the mountains, other than that it is dangerous to go wandering about there.

The surviving guardsman is at the village

marked on the Players' Map. If the player characters seek him out, he will repeat what he told Eskan in the note, with the following additional details.

"The man who buried the escort with boulders had a long black beard and carried a two-handed sword. He dressed in brown clothing. Vasil Volenta seemed very friendly with him, calling him something that sounded like 'Bator.' "

If questioned further, the guardsman will admit that he did not see the man actually throw the boulders. The man walked into view moments after the last boulder crashed down upon the remains of the escort. Vasil and the man then shouted to each other and parted, the orcs and their captives leaving with the strong man.

The guardsman's broken ankle prevents him from accompanying the party. Besides, he wishes to return to Gurdikar after a few more days of rest and recuperation.

The forts are the bases for patrols of provincial troops, which go out regularly into the Palim Mountains. Log palisades around the forts provide protection from wild animals, but they would quickly fall before siege equipment. The population of each keep consists of a 40-man garrison of 0-level fighters, who are commanded by a 5th-level fighter assisted by two 3rd-level fighters.

Both keeps have trading posts, where PCs can stock up on most common items found in the *Players Handbook* (at a 10% higher price). Each fort also has a small chapel, where a 5th-level cleric cares for the spiritual and physical well-being of the soldiers and nearby villagers.

None of the soldiers will agree to join the party if approached, and the 0-level fighters will not give information to strangers. However, if the commander or one of his assistants is bribed, he will tell the party some or all of the following facts: The Palim Mountains are home to a basilisk and groups of rock reptiles, bowlers, and cave fishers, but no one is sure where their lairs are located. The mountains also contain bands of orcs, of varying numbers, liable to pop up anywhere, and somewhere among the peaks is the home of a wealthy hermit who occasionally comes to the fort to buy supplies.

Encounter area 1: Gador's Hall

Rangers and elves have a 2-in-6 chance of spotting Gador's Hall from the valley floor, 4-in-6 if they are actively looking for it. They will see a faint path on one side of the valley leading up the mountainside. The path ends at a house built into the mountainside, with attached stables. Smoke drifts from the chimney. A pair of very large double doors are on the south end of the building, with a large brass knocker on each door.

The double doors are made of solid oak (a successful *bend bars/lift gates* roll is required to force them open). They are 10' tall and are locked. If characters attempt to force the doors open, there is a 20% cumu-

lative chance per round that the noise will be noticed, and Gador will meet the characters in his human form (see scenario 2 below). Hidden above the doorframe (easily spotted if characters climb up to look) is a key that will open the door. Gador keeps it there as a spare. If the door is opened quietly (by using a *silence* spell, a *knock* spell, or the key), then use scenario 1 below.

The floors of Gador's Hall are cut from stone. The ceiling in rooms 1-5 is 20' high and only 14' high elsewhere. All double doors are 12' tall, but single doors are of normal height (7').

Room 1: Main Hall

Scenario 1: This large room is lit by oil lanterns hanging from the ceiling. A large table dominates the room. It is surrounded by 15 chairs, the one at the head very much larger than the others. A haunch of meat is roasting over the coals in a fireplace off to one side. Paintings of mountain scenery hang on the walls. The doors are locked and untrapped. Twelve paintings, worth 10-40 gp each, hang on the walls.

Check on the following random encounter table once per turn that the PCs remain in this room.

Die roll Encounter

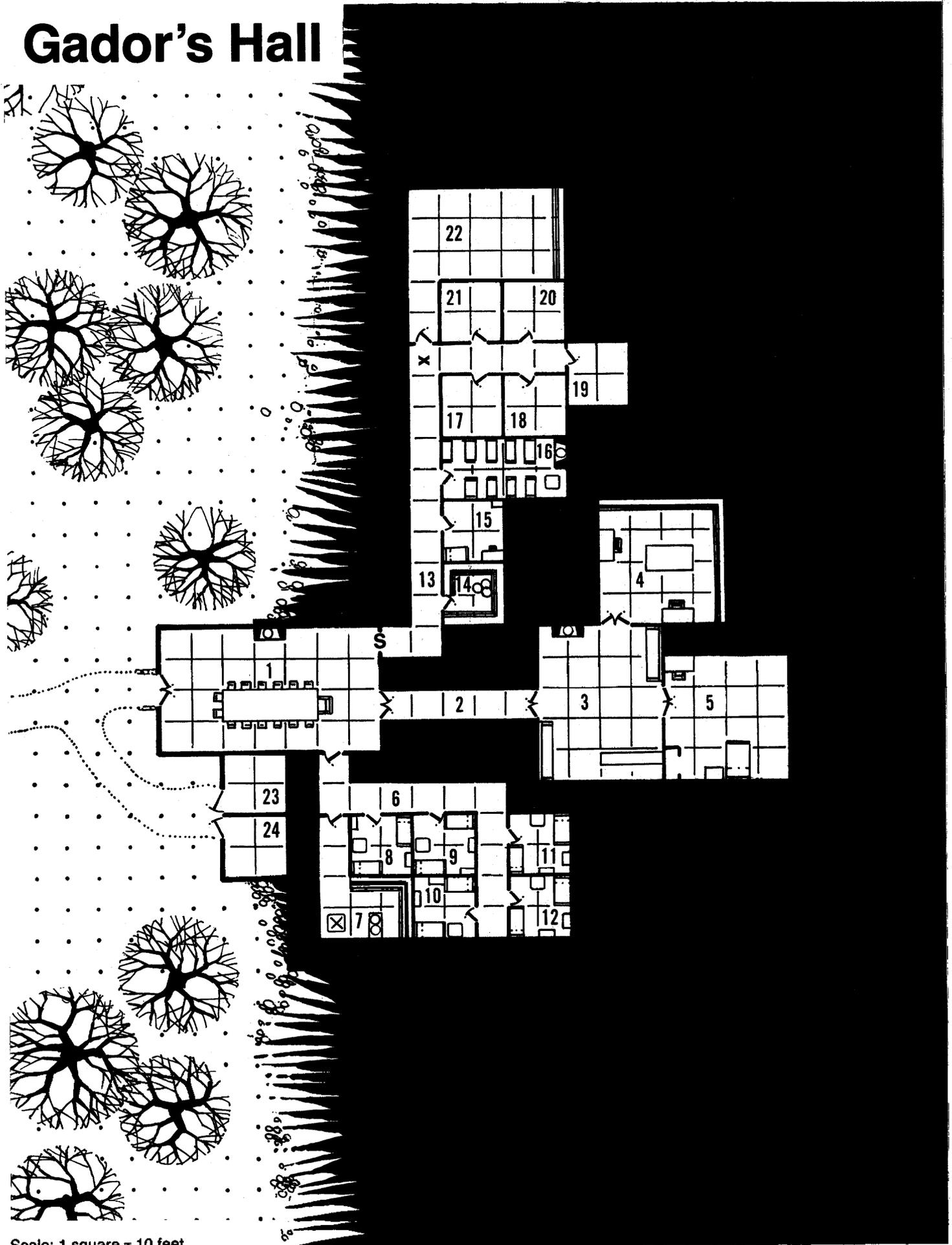
- | | |
|------|--|
| 1 | Gador, in giant form, from corridor 2 |
| 2-3 | Brunnel, from corridor 13 (through secret door) |
| 4-6 | 1-4 orcs, from corridor 13 (through secret door) |
| 7-11 | No encounter |
| 12 | Double encounter – roll twice, using d6 die |

Scenario 2: The door is opened by a man dressed in servant's robes, a sheathed longsword at his side. Behind him, beside a large table, stands a big bearded man dressed in leather, his hands on a sheathed two-handed sword. The man at the door is Brunnel (see room 15 for statistics), while Gador, in human form, waits by the table (see room 3 for statistics). Orcs are watching through a peephole in the secret door, and they will rush to defend Gador if the party attacks.

If the characters have spoken with the injured guardsman at the village, they will notice that Gador (because of his beard and clothing) resembles the man whom the guard saw appear after the landslide. Gador will try to use trickery to fool and capture the party, hoping to make them think he is a friendly but eccentric hermit. If the party members are not hostile, Gador will greet them in a friendly manner and, after finding out the party's task, will offer to help out. He claims to know where a band of orcs may be hiding, and he promises to lead them there the following morning. In the meantime, he invites them to stay in his home as his guests.

If the characters accept Gador's hospitality, they will be served food and drink con-

Gador's Hall



Scale: 1 square = 10 feet

taining delayed-action sleep poison. When the PCs go to sleep for the night in the guest rooms (8, 9, and 10), they will drop into total unconsciousness. While they are in this condition, Gador will strip the PCs of all their possessions except the clothes they are wearing and toss them into cells (rooms 17, 18, and 20), where they will awaken in 2-5 hours. (If possible, split the party up into cells in such a way that the “treasures” hidden in each cell can be put to the best use by the characters.) Gador will put the PCs’ magical possessions (if any) in a chest in room 5 and their normal possessions in room 22.

Room 2: Corridor

The corridor is dark, but a light can be seen under the doors at the far end. The ceiling is 20’ high.

Room 3: Gador’s living room

This room is lit by oil lamps suspended from the ceiling. Several bearskin rugs cover the floor, and couches line the walls. A small fire burns in a fireplace, and paintings of mountain scenery hang on the walls. There is a bar in one corner of the room.

Gador, the renegade firbolg giant, will be encountered here (if not met elsewhere already) when the party enters this room. His statistics are as follows: HD 13 + 7, hp 55, AC 2, MV 15”, #ATT 1, DAM by weapon type (+10). Gador has the following spell-like powers, which he can use one per round when not in melee combat: *detect magic*, *diminution* (as the potion, with double effect and double maximum duration), *fool’s gold*, *forget*, and *alter self*. He can also bat away projectiles (such as arrows) with a free hand, twice per round, on a roll of 6 or better on a d20.

Gador is chaotic neutral and greatly dislikes humans. He enjoys the idea of raiding caravans, even if he doesn’t use the treasures he gets from them. Gador uses his two-handed sword with both hands when in human form, but he needs to hold it with only one hand when in giant form. Gador only possesses his +10 bonus to damage in his giant form (10½’ tall).

Gador also has a *figurine of wondrous power*, a *golden lion*. If forced to fight, he first invokes the *lion* and has it attack any magic-users while he takes on the fighters. If Gador is slain, the lion reverts to its statuette form. In animal form, the lion has HD 5 + 2, AC 5/6, MV 12”, #ATT 3, DAM 1-4/1-4/1-10 plus rake for 2-7/2-7 if forepaws hit, surprised only on a 1.

If encountered at night, Gador is 60% likely to be very drunk. In such a case, he attacks at -5 “to hit” and has 58 hit points, due to his greatly intoxicated state. If Gador is encountered while drunk, there is a 10% chance that he will have passed out, but if any damage is inflicted upon him, he will awaken and begin to fight drunkenly.

Eight kegs of ale are stacked behind the bar. Hidden in a secret compartment in the bar are 30 bottles of a very good wine. In

the room may also be found six paintings valued at 10-40 gp each and five bearskin rugs worth 50 gp each. The bottles of wine would bring a price of 20 gp apiece from a connoisseur. In his pocket Gador keeps a set of keys that open all the doors and chests throughout the Hall.

Room 4: Gador’s library

This room is obviously a library, with bookshelves lining two walls and maps and paintings covering the other two walls. A pair of large desks and a large table stand in the center of the carpeted floor. The room is illuminated by two oil lamps hanging from the ceiling. The doors are unlocked and not trapped.

Gador is very interested in maps and books on distant lands. Most of the 125 books in the library deal with geography and history. Of the five maps hanging on the walls, only one is familiar to the characters; it is essentially identical to the Players’ Map. Reading the books may give the characters some hints about legends that may be expanded into later adventures.

The maps and books are worth 5-20 gp apiece to a collector, but the bulk and quantity of these books will probably not make the effort of transporting them or shipping them worth the while.

Room 5: Gador’s bedroom

This bedroom obviously belongs to a very large person, judging by the size of the bed. It is 12’ long and 8’ wide, and it is covered with furs. In one corner of the room is a closet, while a desk and large chest are along another wall. A very large painting of mountain scenery hangs over the bed. The room is lit by a hanging oil lamp, and another oil lamp sits on the desk.

The doors are locked but untrapped. The closet contains spare cloaks, boots, and clothing for someone of about 11’ in height. In a locked drawer of the desk is a contract signed by Vasil Volenta, agreeing to pay Gador 750 gp for holding Brannod Colnet captive (so that he can be used for a surprise ransom demand later on). Another contract agrees to pay Gador 500 gp per mission for hijacking shipments bearing the mark of the House of Colnet. This is all the proof the party needs of Volenta’s involvement in the crimes. Also in the desk is a paper showing the expected routes and dates of shipments for the House of Colnet, which Kellan and Eskan can use to identify the spy in their merchant house.

In the chest (which is locked) will be any magic items and money previously taken from the party, as well as the following: a pouch containing five 100 gp gems; a small, finely crafted wooden box (50 gp) containing a silver stick-pin with a diamond head (1000 gp) and a gold necklace (1100 gp); a green *potion of fire resistance*; a green *potion of flying*, a yellow *potion of healing*, 4,840 electrum pieces; and 6,510 gold pieces. There are 15 furs on the bed, worth 5 gp each, and the painting is worth 75 gp to a collector.

Room 6: Corridor

The corridor is lit by torches in holders spaced 10 feet apart.

Room 7: Kitchen

This room, obviously a kitchen, has a large oven, several counters, and cupboards over the counters. A blood-stained chopping block in one corner has a large meat cleaver stuck into its top surface, and a solid oak trap door is set into the floor in another corner of the room.

This room is lit by two oil lamps bolted to the walls. This is where Brunnel (see room 15 for statistics) prepares meals; he is here 25% of the time. The cupboards hold the usual dried herbs and preparations. The trap door leads down into a freezer (large blocks of ice line the walls) that holds the carcasses of three deer and one human (one of Brannod’s bodyguards, which Brunnel was planning to prepare as a reward for the orcs). The ice is maintained by a small ice toad (HD 5, AC 4, MV 9”, #ATT 1, DAM 3-1 2 plus cold damage), which is fed on dinner scraps and “useless” prisoners. The toad has been trained by Gador not to attack him or orcs, and they can enter and leave the freezer at will. Other creatures are not so favored — even Brunnel dares not enter the freezer. Nothing else is of value here.

Room 8: Guest room

This bedroom contains two large beds, a table, and two chests. The floor is carpeted, and an unlit oil lamp hangs from the ceiling. The door is unlocked, and the chests are unlocked and empty. Nothing of value is here.

Rooms 9-12: Guest rooms

Use the description for room 8, adding a few minor items here and there from the Dungeon Dressing Tables in the *DMG*, pp. 217-219.

Room 13: Corridor

There is a peephole in the secret door. The orc guard at point “x” is drowsy and bored, but will certainly notice anyone walking down the corridor from either direction, in which case he will yell an alarm to the orcs in room 16 and attack.

If the party is imprisoned in rooms 17, 18, and 20, the guard will notice any attempt to kick the doors down, but he will not hear any whispered conversations or see a door being opened quietly. It is possible for a thief to sneak up on him from the cells, if a successful *move silently* roll is made. The orc (HD 1, AC 6, MV 9”, #ATT 1, D battle axe) has the keys to rooms 17-22.

Room 14: Storage Closet

Shelves line the walls of this room, filled with various miscellaneous items such as blankets, tablecloths, and other household equipment. There are also three large barrels of oil. The room is dark, and nothing of particular value is here.

Room 15: Brunnel's room

This room contains one bed, a desk, and a chest. The floor is carpeted, and a pair of crossed longswords are hung above the bed. The room is lit by an oil lamp bolted to one wall.

If Brunnel has not been encountered elsewhere, it is 70% likely that he'll be here. He is a half-orc, though he easily passes for human. A dwarf character has a 10% chance per turn, cumulative, of realizing that Brunnel is a half-orc. He is Gador's butler and cook, and he wears robes over his *splint mail* +1 to keep up appearances. He carries a *longsword* +2 beneath his robes. In the chest (to which Brunnel has the key) are 430 silver pieces. He also wears a silver ring worth 100 gp.

Brunnel is a 3rd-level fighter (25 hp, AC 3, MV 9", lawful evil, STR 18(89), INT 13, WIS 13, DEX 14, CON 16, CHA 10). His combat adjustments are +3 to hit and +5 to damage from strength, or +5 to hit and +7 to damage with his sword's bonuses. If the party was captured and had any magical armor or weapons better than his longsword, Brunnel will be employing them.

Room 16: Barracks

The walls of this room are lined with bunk beds, and a chest is at the head of each set of bunks. At the far end of the room is a fireplace and a table.

There are 20 beds, and the area by the fireplace is used as a kitchen. This is where the orcs relax when not on guard duty or out causing havoc. The orcs will hear and respond to any alarm raised by the guard (see room 13), but they don't like Brunnel and will ignore any noise coming from his room. Because the door opens outward into the corridor, it is possible to block the door shut, trapping the orcs inside room 16. The chests are not locked and contain only spare clothing and miscellaneous items for the orcs (each HD 1, AC 6, MV 9", #ATT 1, D battle axe), plus a total of 63 copper pieces and 24 silver pieces.

Room 17: Cell

The stone floor here is covered with filthy straw, and the stench in the room is incredible. The door is solid oak, with a 1' square window of iron bars set into it about 5' off the ground. The room is lit only by the light shining from the hall through the bars in the door. A successful *bend bars/lift gates* roll is required to kick the door open.

A fist-sized rock has fallen loose from the wall here and is lying under the straw in one corner. If thrown, its maximum range is 3", and it does 1-3 hp damage plus a chance of stunning its target equal to the thrower's *bend bars/lift gates* figure.

Room 18: Cell

Use the general description for room 17. A half-dressed human skeleton lies in one corner; hidden in the heel of one of its boots is a set of lockpicks which will allow a thief the chance to pick the locks on the doors.

Room 19: Cell

Use the general description for room 17. There are seven humans in this room. One matches the description given of Brannod Colnet. All are bruised, filthy, and half-starved, possessing nothing but the clothing on their backs.

Brannod Colnet is a 1st-level thief with 5 hp, AC 10 (8 with DEX bonuses), MV 12", neutral alignment, STR 11, INT 15, WIS 13, DEX 16, CON 13, CHA 15. His chances of success at thieving skills are: PP 30%, OL 30%, F/RT 20%, MS 15%, H/S 10%, HN 10%, CW 85%. (In a city as full of intrigue and backstabbing as Gurdikar, it is only natural for members of the merchant families to pick up thieving skills.)

The other six men in the cell are 0-level fighters (each 2-7 hp, AC 10, MV 12", neutral). They are loyal to Brannod alone.

Room 20: Cell

Use the general description for room 17. Under the straw in one corner of the room, carefully wedged into a crack in the stone floor, is a dagger of orcish manufacture. It may be found after two turns of searching the cell.

Room 21: Cell

Use the general description for room 17. The body of a dwarf lies in one corner, a worn metal belt buckle in one hand. On the wall beside it, scratched into the stone, is the following message in Common: "Overheard guards — armor, weapons in next room — avenge me."

This dwarf was captured a few days ago while wandering in the mountains. Brannod Colnet saw him being tossed into this cell, and he has seen orcs sneak into the cell every so often to beat the dwarf up. Yesterday he saw several drunken orcs enter the room and heard them kicking and beating the prisoner. After an hour, the orcs left, and no one has entered the room since.

Room 22: Storeroom

This unlit room is filled with crates and boxes. In one corner is a pile of armor, and on the wall above are racks holding assorted weapons. If the party was captured by Gador, their non-magical armor and weapons will be found here, except for any exceptional items which may have been claimed by Brunnel or an orc. The other weapons and armor were taken from Brannod Colnet, his group of escorts, and from other wanderers in the mountains. The major contents of the room include:

- 8 longswords
- 5 spears
- 23 daggers
- 3 suits of plate mail (man-sized)
- 8 suits of chain mail (man-sized)
- 3 suits of banded mail (man-sized)
- 1 suit of chain mail (dwarf-sized)
- 18 helmets (various sizes)
- 12 shields (various sizes)

The 12 boxes and 23 crates display the mark of the House of Colnet and contain the missing spice shipments. The party will

also find 5 barrels of ale, apparently stolen from an earlier shipment.

Rooms 23-24: Stables

Room 23 holds Gador's heavy war horse, while room 24 holds Brunnel's light war horse. Gador can ride his horse only in his human-sized form. The horses will not attack unless attacked first. Chain barding, saddles, tack, and other gear are stored just inside the doors, while hay and oats are stored in the loft. (Heavy war horse: HD 3 + 3, AC 7, MV 15", #ATT 3, DAM 1-8/1-8/1-3; light war horse: HD 2, AC 7, MV 24", #ATT 2, DAM 1-4/1-4).

The rest of these encounters lie scattered across the mountains, waiting for adventurers to discover them.

Encounter area 2: Rock reptiles

Two rock reptiles (HD 5 + 5, AC 3, MV 6", #ATT 1, DAM 1-4 + (5-12), chameleon powers, surprises on 1-3) have their lair here. They are very active at night but are dormant in daylight. Neither has any treasure yet.

Encounter area 3: Rock reptiles

A solitary rock reptile of the largest size (HD 5 + 12, 12' long, bites for 13-16 hp damage) lairs here. This rock reptile managed to catch a couple of orcs a few weeks ago, so it has acquired a little treasure (28 cp, 44 sp, *dagger* +1) that it keeps in its lair under an overhanging rock.

Encounter area 4: Galeb duhr

This location is noteworthy because the moderately steep slope here is covered with loose rock, unlike any of the area around it, and looks like a good place to climb if PCs are so inclined. At the top of the slope may be seen several large boulders. Anyone who tries to climb the 30-foot slope up to the large boulders must make a roll of dexterity or less on d20 to avoid slipping and causing a small rockslide. A character who fails this roll will slide back down the face of the slope, suffering 2-12 points of damage from falling debris.

One of the boulders at the top of the slope is actually a galeb duhr (HD 8, AC -2, MV 6", #ATT 2, DAM 2-16, various magic spells for attack and defense, various resistances vs. attacks). The galeb duhr knows Gador is a giant and the hermit is a spell-caster. If it likes the party (reaction roll, DMG, p. 63), or if the party gives it a gift, it will give them limited information or advice. It will not engage in combat unless the PCs are foolish enough to attack it first.

Encounter area 5: Cyclopskin

This remote valley is the home of a family of cyclopskin. It is 65% likely that the three largest cyclopskin (from room 4) will be out hunting and will return in 1-6 hours. If so, the party has a 20% non-cumulative chance per hex (while within 2 hexes of the path) of meeting them. Rangers and elves have a 2-in-6 chance of spotting the cave,

4-in-6 if they are actively searching for noteworthy features. The cyclopskin are implacably hostile toward all humans.

Room 1: Entrance tunnel

The tunnel ends at a large wooden door, which is unlocked.

Room 2: Main room

A small fire burns in the middle of this cavern; a small iron kettle is suspended over it. A giant, one-eyed woman (7' tall) sits nearby, stirring the contents of the kettle. A giant child (5' tall) sits against the far wall, playing with some bones. (Female cyclopskin: HD 5, AC 3, MV 12", #ATT 1, D club, +2 on damage. Young cyclopskin: HD 2 + 2, AC 4, MV 12", #ATT 1, D fists for 1-4.)

Room 3: Women's cave

Rough hides hang on the walls here. A torch burns on the far wall, providing some light. In a pile of furs in one corner lies a female cyclopskin, who awakens if PCs do not enter silently. (Female cyclopskin: HD 5, AC 3, MV 12", #ATT 1, D club, +2 on damage. The hides are worth about 5 cp apiece.

Room 4: Men's cave

A large pile of smelly furs lies in the middle of the cavern. If the male cyclopskin are not out hunting, they will be in here. Each has HD 5, AC 3, MV 12", #ATT 1, D clublike morning star, +2 on damage. Under the furs are 6 gems worth 100 gp each.

Room 5: Children's cave

A pile of ragged furs are piled in one corner of the cave. Sitting on the furs are two young cyclopskin. Each has HD 2 + 2, AC 4, MV 12", #ATT 1, D fists for 1-4.

Room 6: Storeroom

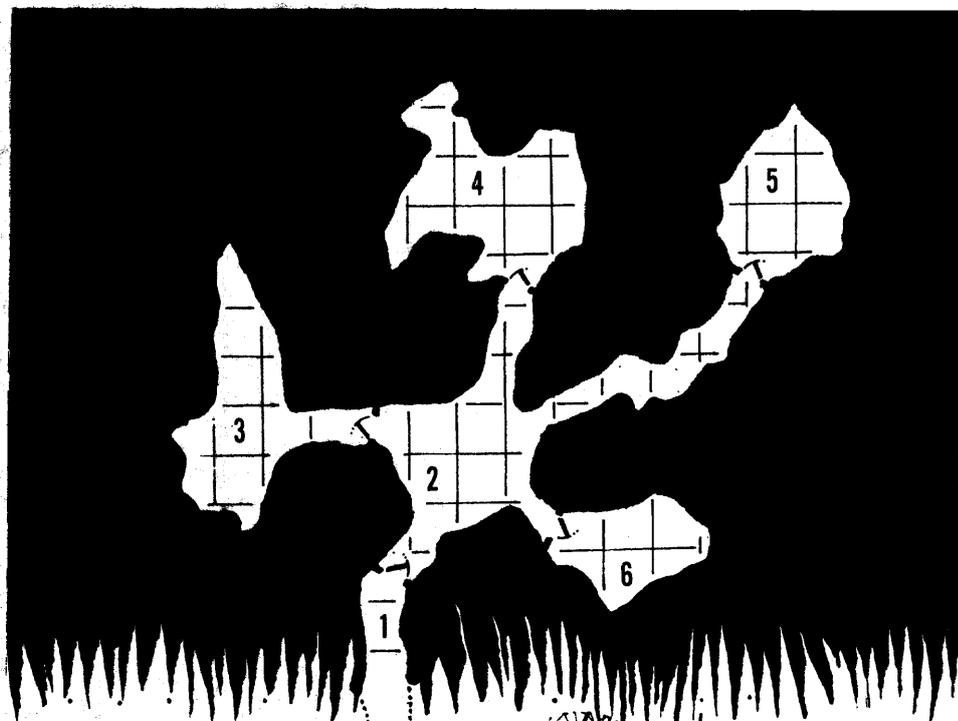
Crude shelves have been cut out of the stone walls here. Dried leaves and grasses line the shelves, along with roots and other food. Behind a pile of dried leaves is a glass vial containing a yellow *potion of extra-healing*, the cyclopskin know of its powers and will use it in an emergency.

Encounter area 6: Cave fisher

Anything moving in this valley attracts the attention of a cave fisher, which lairs 20' above a cliff, and has normal chances to surprise. It has HD 3, AC 4, MV @1", #ATT 2, DAM 2-8/2-8 plus 60' adhesive filament. The cave fisher has no treasure as such, though the bones of many animals (and a few orcs) may be found within one-half mile of it.

Encounter area 7: Bowlers

This part of the slope is grassy, with few trees. At the top of the slope can be seen a number of boulders. If any characters head up the slope, three of the boulders begin rolling down the slope toward them. These are bowlers (each HD 1, hp 2-5, AC 4, MV



Cyclopskin lair

6" + special). Each bowler has a base 10 gp gem in its center.

Encounter area 8: Bowlers

This encounter area is similar to area 7, except that 5 bowlers inhabit this area.

Encounter area 9: Bowlers

This encounter area is similar to area 7, except that 4 bowlers live here. The remains of two orcs may also be found here; one of them clutches a pouch with 22 gp inside.

Encounter area 10: Basilisk

If the PCs enter of the hexes at the edges of this area, each member of the party has a 25% chance of discovering a crude wooden sign in the bushes nearby. The sign is lettered in Common and reads: DANGER! DO NOT ENTER! DANGEROUS MONSTER! Patrols from the forts try to keep these signs posted in plain sight, but occasionally the orcs from Gador's Hall (see encounter area 1) will ride by and tear them down. If the PCs continue to travel through this area (whether or not they see the sign) they will notice that the valley is unnaturally quiet. Rock formations bearing uncanny resemblances to living creatures — a rabbit, a deer, a bear — will appear in the foliage.

This area is the lair and surrounding territory of a basilisk (HD 6 + 1, AC 4, MV 6", #ATT 1, DAM 1-10 plus petrification). There is a 60% chance that the basilisk is out sunning itself on the hot rocks, and characters will have a 30% chance per hex (cumulative) of encountering it. Its cave, in the center of the valley, is behind some rocks and vines, but can be easily spotted.

The tunnel leading to the basilisk's lair is about 80' long and opens into a chamber of roughly oval shape, 12' wide and 30' long.



Scale: 1 square = 10 feet

The little rock formations that litter the tunnel entrance are petrified animals (foxes, rabbits, etc.).

At various places on the chamber floor are stone formations resembling men, orcs, and dwarves — many of them chipped or broken. These are the petrified remains of intruders who were surprised by the basilisk while investigating its lair. Most of the statues have clothing or gear nearby; if all of the statues are searched thoroughly, the total treasure to be found in non-petrified pouches and backpacks includes 4,460 gp, 170 pp, a green *potion of invisibility*, a white *potion of heroism*, and a blue *potion of healing*. A *cloak of protection* +3 is wrapped around one statue's shoulders. In the hand of another statue is a bone tube holding a cleric spell scroll containing *dispel magic* and *protection from evil*, 10' radius.

Encounter area 11: Werewolf

At the end of a winding path leading up this mountainside is a small, crudely built log cabin. The cabin is 10' x 15', with a dirt floor. The furniture consists of a table, a cot, and a locked chest containing 5 pelts (worth 3-6 gp each) and a pouch containing 12 ep and 35 cp.

This is the home of Diren Belora, a hunter. He was recently infected with lycanthropy, and came here so he wouldn't harm anyone when the blood urge overpowered him; now he's chaotic evil and dangerous. He will be friendly toward the party and will try to get them to stay with him at his cabin until nightfall, when he can attack under darkness. He will not reveal his affliction to the party beforehand.

If the party is within 4 hexes of the cabin when night falls, the werewolf will track them down and attack. It has HD 4 + 3, AC

5, MV 15", #ATT 1, DAM 2-8, +1 or better weapon needed to hit it (or silver weapon), surprises on 1-3.

There is a 70% chance in the daytime that the werewolf (in human form) will be out hunting; if so, characters have a 20% non-cumulative chance per hex (while within 4 hexes of the cabin) of encountering him. Rangers and elves have a 2-in-6 chance of spotting the cabin from the valley floor, 4-in-6 if they are actively searching the mountainside for something noteworthy.

Encounter area 12: Pedipalps

This area is inhabited by a variety of huge pedipalps, three in number (each HD 2 + 2, AC 4, MV 9", #ATT 3, DAM 1-6/1-6/1-8 plus gripping attack with automatic damage). The pedipalps, if surprised, will be seen waiting silently for animal prey to come by.

Encounter area 13: Pedipalps

See area 12. One huge pedipalp lurks here. An orc's dagger is stuck in one of its pincers, rendering the extremity useless (2 attacks only, for 1-6/1-8).

Encounter area 14: Pedipalps

See area 12. Four huge pedipalps roam here.

Encounter area 15: Pedipalps

See area 12. Two huge pedipalps hunt for prey in this area. In the recent past, one of

them killed an cyclopskin which now lies in a gully where the two monsters lurk. The cyclopskin was carrying a sack containing three human-sized helmets, a 250 gp gemstone on a silver necklace, and a bone scroll case with a sheaf of illegible papers inside.

Encounter area 16: Hermit

These are several points at which the party may encounter the hermit who lives in these mountains. As the PCs travel into each area marked 16, each character in the group has a 5% chance of seeing a one-armed old man sitting among the trees on one side of the path, watching the group pass. The hermit will do nothing unless the party reacts violently, in which case he will use an entangle spell to slow the party down and then vanish among the trees by using a tree spell. If the party is friendly and respectful, he will say "The caterpillar is in truth a butterfly. Everything may not be as it seems." Then he will walk into the forest and vanish among the trees. See encounter area 18 for more information on the hermit, who is a retired druid.

If he has already been encountered and has delivered his warning, the hermit will remain hidden among the trees during further encounters. If the characters are having difficulty finding Gador's Hall, the DM may have the hermit direct them to the galeb duhr by remarking that "the rocks have ears, too," and giving them directions to the galeb duhr's location.

Encounter area 17: Rock pile

The valley ahead is almost blocked by a large pile of boulders. Beneath some of the boulders can be seen pieces of bone, ripped cloth, and crushed armor. Orc and animal tracks are all around. This is where Gador's force ambushed Brannod Colnet and his escort. The boulders are too large and too heavy to move without a lot of effort.

Encounter area 18: Hermit's grove

The crowded forest here opens up into a well-kept grove. There is a 75% chance that, unless he has been encountered elsewhere, the lone inhabitant of the grove is home. He is a one-armed old man who wanders among the trees, singing softly to himself in the tongue of the druids. The old man is Edmar Kantorna, a retired druid. He lost his left arm while adventuring in his youth. Unable to continue adventuring, he retired to the mountains to be close to nature. Practice has enabled him to cast spells with only one hand. Edmar Kantorna is a 5th-level druid (20 hp, AC 8, MV 12", uses a *staff of the serpent (python)* for attacks). He wears a *ring of protection + 2*. The loss of his arm does not affect Edmar's ability to cast spells; when encountered he will be carrying the spells *detect magic* (x2), *detect snares & pits* (x2), *entangle*, *speak with animals*, *barkskin*, *charm person or mammal*, *cure light wounds* (x2), *obscurement*, and *tree* (x2). Edmar has a friend who is a large brown bear (HD 5 + 5, AC 6, MV 12", #ATT 3, DAM 1-6/1-6/1-8 plus hug). The bear will appear in 1 round whenever Edmar calls for it, and he will do so immediately if he is threatened or attacked.

Edmar has complete and detailed knowledge of the entire region, including the locations of all the set encounters. He knows about Gador and his activities. If the party has been respectful of nature and treats him with respect, Edmar will share his knowledge with the party. He may, however, withhold some information to keep things interesting.

Edmar lives comfortably in a cave, the entrance to which is hidden by a *plant growth* spell. The party will not be able to locate the cave without Edmar's assistance or magical spells. Edmar keeps a small hoard of 573 gp, 423 sp, and 32 cp buried in the dirt floor of his cave. He would love to share the company of a fellow druid, and likes elves, half-elves, and rangers as well.

Ending the adventure

If the PCs rescue Brannod Colnet, the House of Colnet will give them the promised rewards. If the characters bring proof that the House of Volenta was behind the thefts, they will get an additional 2000 gp (total). If they bring back the stolen shipments, they will receive a finder's fee of 1 sp per 1 gp value of the shipment (this works out to 5000 sp, or 250 gp).

The city of Gurdikar will also award the PCs a bounty of 1 gp for each orc head they bring in and 50 gp for the giant's head (500 gp if he is brought in alive).

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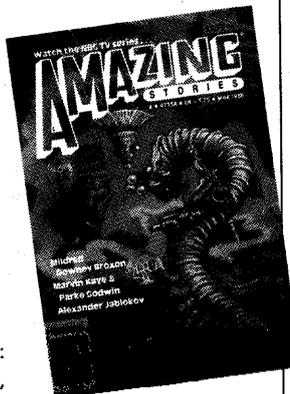
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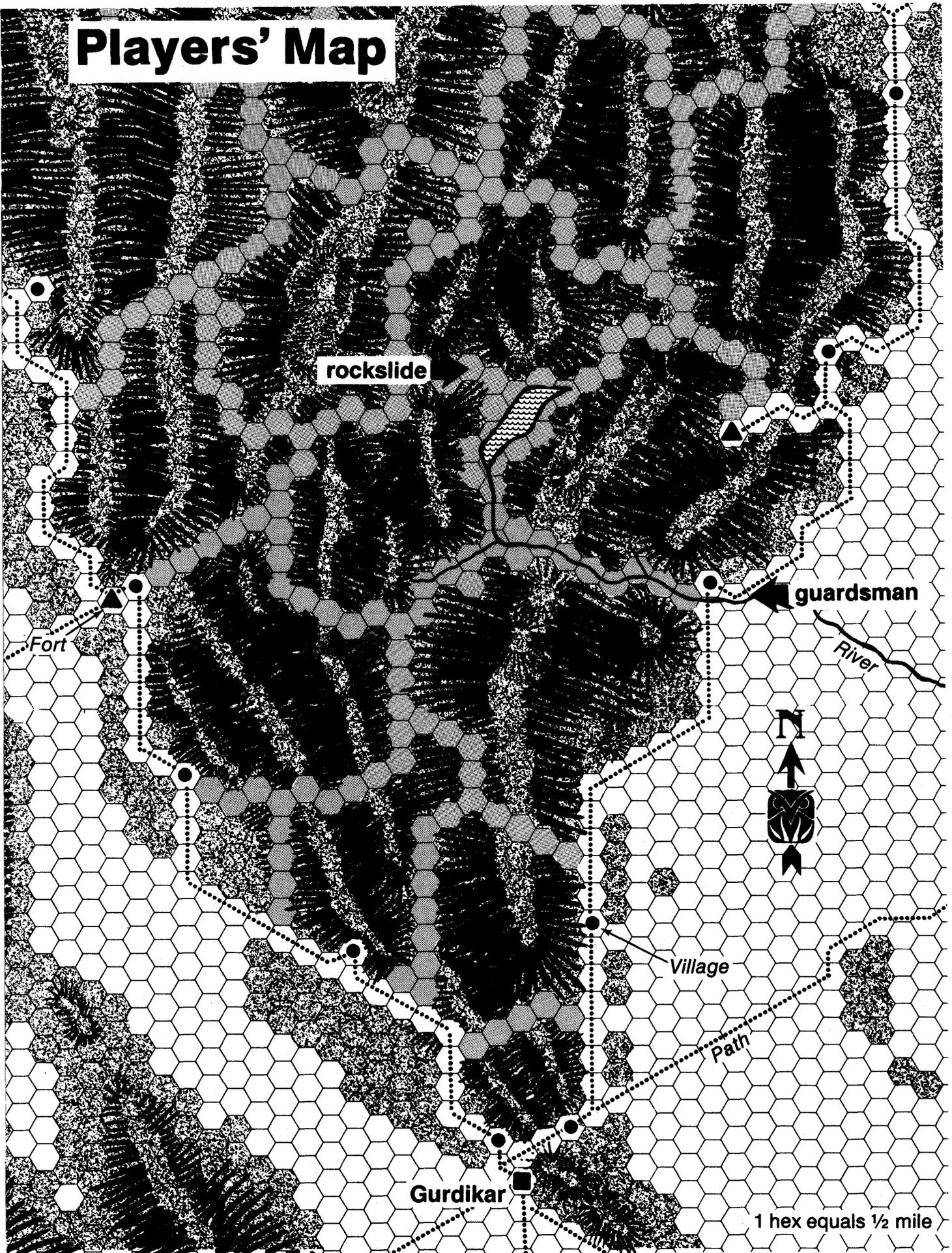
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Players' Map



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guardsman

River

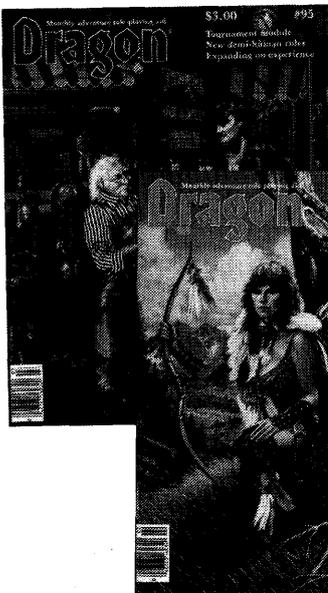
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Gurdikar

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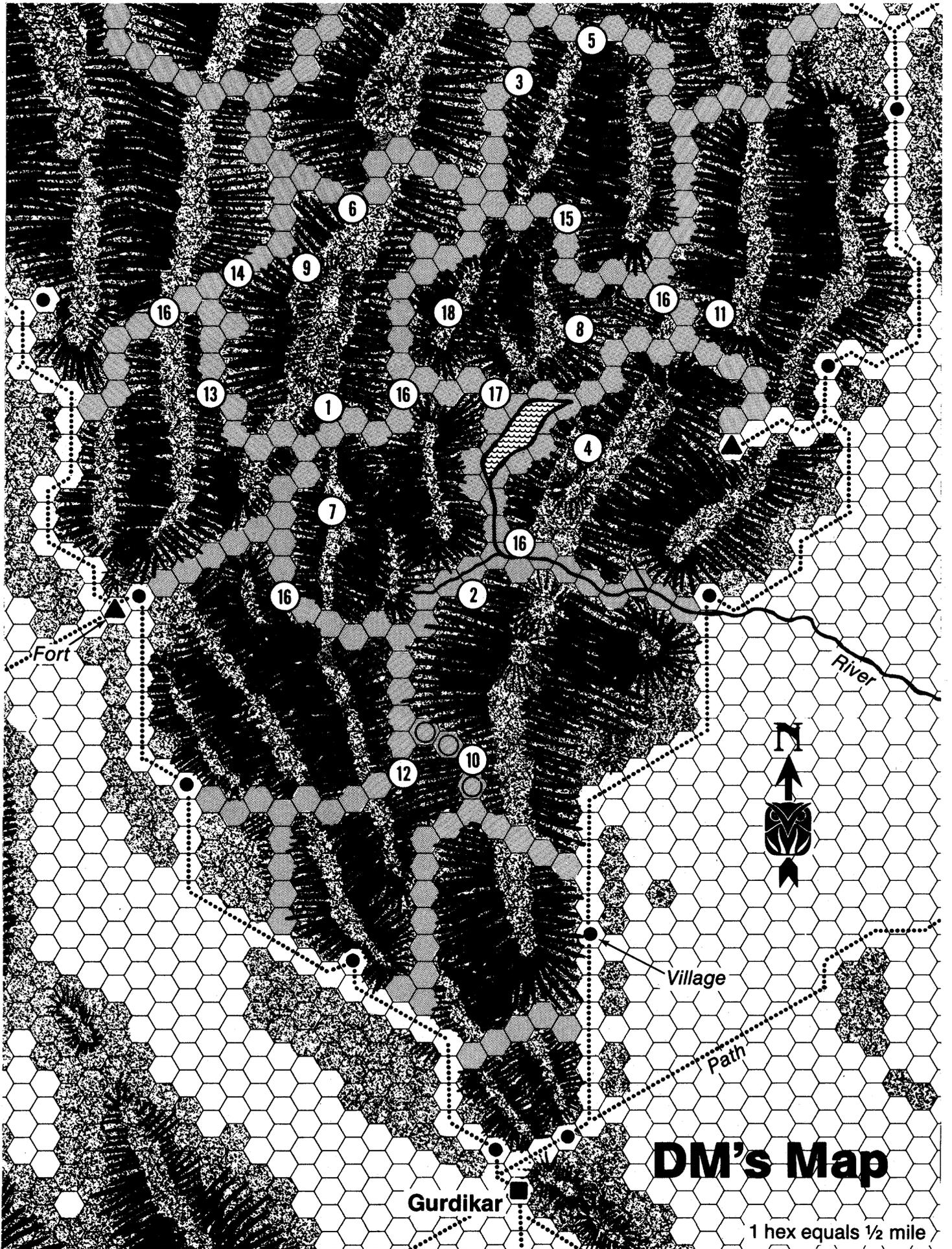
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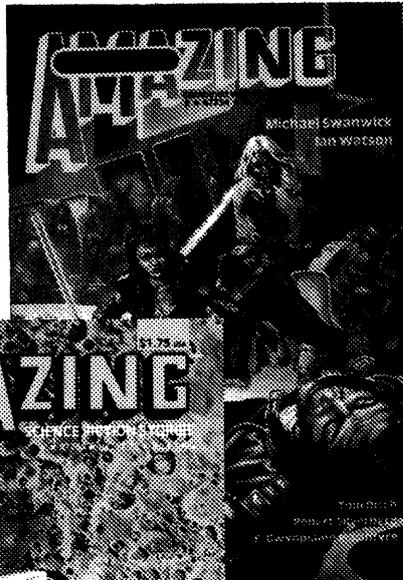
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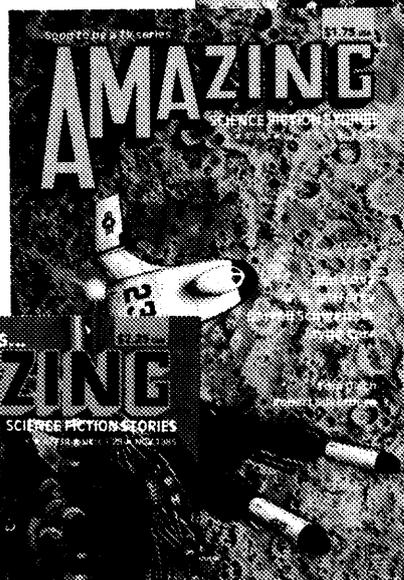
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A world of difference

(From page 42)

something a little too special; the thought of a character returning to his homeworld bearing *Stormbringer* should be enough to make any DM blanch.

The problem is hardly absurd; there was the article in DRAGON issue #82 citing characters who'd acquired everything from battlestars (as in Galactica) to Thor's hammer. One has to be as careful giving out treasure on parallel worlds as he would be in his primary campaign. While a reasonable amount of caution should protect the mightiest artifacts (it shouldn't be very hard to keep your PCs from getting *Stormbringer* unless you actually want them to get it — in which case, you deserve the results), it's sometimes harder to make decisions about low-powered ones.

This is particularly true on technologically oriented worlds; since most items will not be found in the DMG, it may be difficult to decide what's safe to give them. An anti-matter bomb may be clearly too powerful, but what about a light-sabre or a jetpack? To decide such questions, translate the items into the nearest AD&D equivalents. A gas mask might be equated to a *necklace of adaptation*, a jetpack to *wings of flying*, or a robot to an iron golem. Then decide if the analogous magic item would be acceptable as treasure — if a *necklace of adaptation* is fine, so is the gas mask, but if a *cube of force* seems unreasonable, a force-field device probably will be unreasonable, too.

Keep in mind charges — or the lack of them — while you're evaluating the items, since this can make a big difference. An anti-gravity belt with unlimited usage is clearly worth more than *wings of flying*, while a force-field projector with only two or three charges remaining is a long way from being as valuable as a *cube of force* (a closer equivalent might be a scroll with three *wall of force* spells on it).

Once you know what is and isn't acceptable, it will be relatively simple to set up the adventure with a suitable selection of treasure. If the PCs do manage to get their hands on something you don't want them to have — or if you want to let them use an item in the adventure but not keep it forever (they may actually need a force-field device at some point, for instance), there are other steps that can be taken. The simplest is to rule that technological items above a certain level of complexity simply don't work on the PCs' native world (the laws of nature don't permit it to operate there), or that passage through the dimensions has damaged them so that they're no longer functioning. The same principle can be used to keep spell-casters from retaining any special spells they may have acquired in other worlds.

If PCs do bring something back in working condition, they will still have problems. Knowledge, for instance: can they learn the

secrets of controlling an android or an anti-gravity platform? If it's damaged, can they repair it? How will they recharge charged items? To keep their treasures working, it may be necessary to return to the other world again. . . .

Of course, one can reward player characters adventuring in parallel worlds with special treasures to fit the occasion, prizes that are both unusual and game-balanced. Any item from a technological world will appear special in an ordinary AD&D world, even if it isn't devastatingly powerful. Magic items can be distinctive, too; adventurers might return from an Egyptian world with one of Isis' special charms, or from an American Indian plane with a sacred medicine bundle. These items that would appear quite out-of-the-ordinary on worlds without those mythologies. Carefully chosen, such items can give the players real satisfaction without overloading their characters with power. This is not to say you should never give a group a spectacular magic treasure — but think it through carefully first. It's far better to give PCs too little and to make it up later than to give them too much.

The parallel world ideas given here are not — I repeat, not — intended as the basis for anyone's primary campaign. It's one thing to encounter illusionist kobolds or DRAGONQUEST air mages as a special feature of a parallel world and quite another to establish them as part of your regular, primary earth; you can't rationalize a variant game by saying it's set on an Alternate Material Plane: Just passing through an unorthodox world shouldn't wreck game damage if you're careful, but making some of these ideas part of your regular game could lead to major imbalances and distortions. The same applies to starting an ordinary AD&D world and then shifting permanently to a variant one.

There is also one final warning that should be added: Always keep the players' satisfaction in mind. No matter how different or original your world is, don't assume the sheer novelty of the setting will make up for any flaws in dungeon design; setting a dungeon beneath Lankmar will certainly enhance the game, but it won't make your players overlook any shoddiness in your work. This is true even if you're using an original fantasy world or an established one they don't know about — in those cases, you can't count on your world holding their interest without a good adventure to go with it. If players dislike a world, don't use it at all; the best DM on earth can't make me enjoy a trip to a BOOT HILL campaign (I do *not* like Westerns). Also, make sure the game balance doesn't tilt too far against your players. New worlds should be exciting challenges, not killer dungeons on a grand scale.

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Spy's advice

by Merle M. Rasmussen

Are the weights on the Table of Weapon Weights (page 23) for empty or loaded weapons?

The weights given are for unloaded weapons and usually don't include an empty magazine. (This table did not appear in the first edition of the TOP SECRET rules.) Assume that purchased guns come loaded or with one loaded magazine.

Why do .002 caliber differences between weapons and ammo cause weapons to jam?

The rule under Weapon Modifications and Accessories (page 43) states that ammunition within .001 caliber of a weapon's bore can be used in that weapon. A difference of .002 larger or smaller will cause jamming or non-firing of the weapon. Ammunition that is substantially larger than the weapons' firing chamber will jam the weapon. Ammunition that is smaller will cause the firing pin will miss its mark.

I chose .001 as the margin of error for all weapons so that simple game mechanics would help explain ammunition compatibility and the effect of off-caliber customized

gun design. This also creates a sneaky way to sabotage a character's weapons. If you allow the agent to find, steal, and load off-size ammunition, it will teach the agent to only use ammo provided by the agency. For more details, see the rule section on Misfires and Jams, page 25.

Why is high-explosive incendiary ammo more effective against vehicles than armor-piercing incendiary?

This is a good (and embarrassing) question. My original reasoning, given in DRAGON issue #49, was that if an incendiary (I) bullet has a +10 modifier and a high-explosive (HE) bullet has a +20 modifier, it figures that a HEI bullet will have a +30. It now occurs to me that an armor-piercing (AP) bullet with a modifier of +10, or an API bullet with a modifier of +20, is more likely to pass through a lightly armored vehicle than to stop and explode or ignite on impact.

What is the rate of fire for the .45-caliber M3 submachine gun?

The correct rate of fire for the M3 is a maximum of 4 shots fired per phase. The 5 shots each phase mentioned under Automatic Weapons on page 20 is incorrect.

Agent A (Offense 65) has an Uzi submachine gun set on full automatic (PWV 72). He is standing unwounded in broad daylight, aiming with his correct hand at agent B, standing 100' away (medium range modifier -17). His Base Accuracy with all modifiers of hitting with the first shot is 120 (Chance to hit 95%). His second chance to hit with an automatic weapon is at a -11 penalty. Is this penalty deducted from 95 or 120?

The -11 is deducted from 120. The modified Base Accuracy for the five full-automatic weapon shots are: 120, 109, 98, 87, and 74. The respective chances to hit are: 95%, 95%, 95%, 87%, and 74%.

How fully should an Administrator describe an NPC holding a weapon to a player character viewing him? Shouldn't the viewer receive a bonus to notice more about the NPC depending on his skills or knowledge?

I would roll percentile dice and compare the value rolled against the viewer's Observation, Perception, or general Knowledge score. If the value rolled is less than the viewer's value, the character with a pistol will be much better described than if the value rolled is greater than the viewer's score. Specific Areas of Knowledge will help to identify a character's uniform, costume, weapon, or other outer appearances.

What is the air gun (pellet-type) mentioned on the Special Weapons list on page 9? What are its weapon statistics (PWV, Range Modifier, etc.)? Does the air gun do normal damage?

Air guns (like dart guns) are intended to be used as non-lethal projectile weapons. All damage should be calculated as if they were regular weapons, and then halved to reflect the non-lethal nature of the attack. It is possible for a victim to receive 1/2 point of damage; persons with 1 point of Life Level may be unconscious, persons with 1/2 point are always unconscious, and persons with a Life Level of zero or less are mortally wounded and usually die within 5 minutes if left unaided.

Weapon statistics for an air gun are the same as those given for a dart gun on the Weapons Chart, page 23, except that ammunition varies from 1-100 (pellets only).

How many Areas of Knowledge (AOK) can one agent have? My character doesn't know anything about Military Science/Weaponry; is this possible? If my agent does not have Transportation Engineering as an AOK, can she still operate any vehicle?

Every agent has 37 different AOKs (42 if the Agent Dossier accessory rules are included). The number of superior AOKs that an agent can have are determined by dividing the general Knowledge trait score by 10 and rounding up. This gives the number of AOKs in which the character possesses a subject familiarity beyond that of his normal general knowledge. For instance, an agent with a Knowledge rating of 81-90 would possess 9 superior AOKs. Your agent only has the superior AOK he or she starts the game with. It is possible by applying experience points to raise any AOK value to 150, whether it started out as a superior AOK or not.

The other more numerous AOKs outside of a character's personal expertise will also have a rating score, and that AOK score will uniformly begin at a figure which is one-half (round up) of the character's primary Knowledge score. For instance, if a character has a Knowledge trait score of 89, he or she would possess 9 superior AOKs at the start (with a roll made for each) and the score for the remaining AOKs would be a uniform 45.

In TS 003, Operation: Rapidstrike, characters have a tertiary personal trait called "Wrestling Value." What is this?

Wrestling Value is an obsolete trait that was cut from the TOP SECRET rules in the second edition. Its function is performed by the Hand-to-Hand Combat Value.



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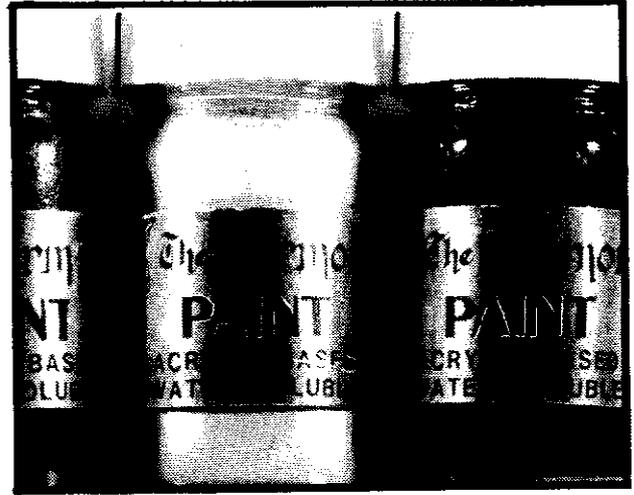
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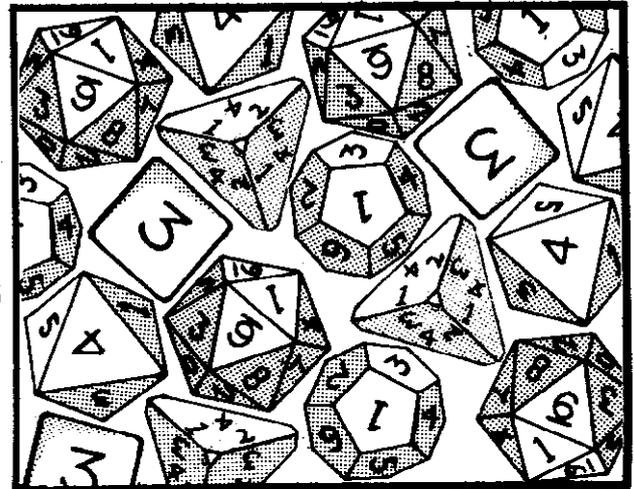
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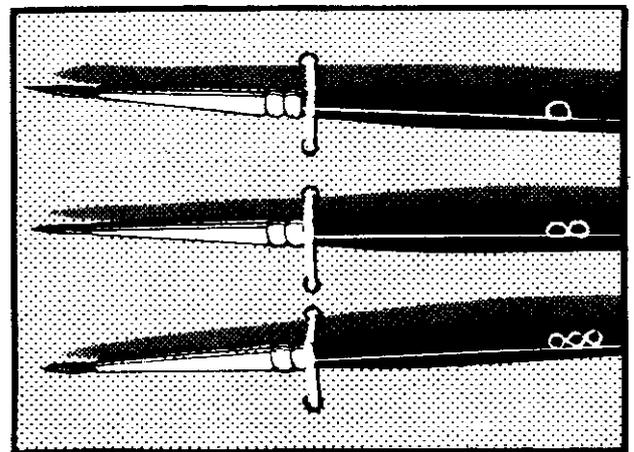
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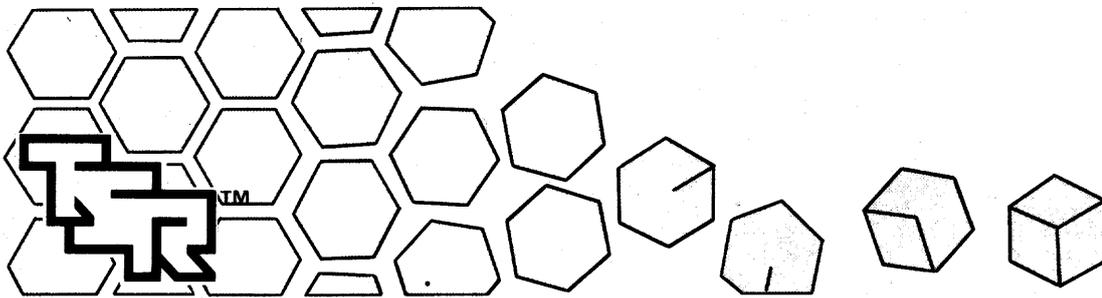
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by TSR Staff**

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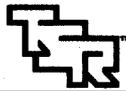
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ABOUT OUR PRICE INCREASE

On February 1, as Kim Mohan reported in DRAGON® issue #103, the prices on some TSR® items will be increasing. The \$12.00 hardcover books will be going to \$15.00, and the DMG will now cost \$18.00. Most of our boxed games (except D&D® Basic and Expert Sets) are going from \$13.50 to \$15.00. Existing \$6.00 modules will not increase in price, but new ones will be \$8.00 or higher.

We really do regret the need to raise prices, but bills keep increasing, and our margin of profit on books, games, and modules has been steadily shrinking.

This is the first price increase ever in the history of TSR, Inc. We know that this is a big jump for a lot of you, but we raised prices enough so that we don't expect to raise prices again for many years to come — never, if we can help it.

On new modules, we will be increasing pages and adding components so that you will get more in an \$8.00 module than you got in a \$6.00 module, so that will help some.

We're grateful for your support over the years, and we're sorry that we've had to do this. We promise that we'll work even harder to give you the best games, modules, and accessories in the field.

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P R E V I E W S

KIM MOHAN

"My principal purpose in granting this interview," said Kim Mohan, DRAGON® Magazine's male Editor-in-Chief, "is to let people know what sex I am."

"I've had fun at conventions when people see my name tag and then do a double-take when they see my beard, but now it's time to let the world in on the truth."

Kim was born in Chicago on May 4, 1949, and moved to Williams Bay, Wis. (just a few miles west of Lake Geneva), when he was five. He grew up in Williams Bay as an avid science-fiction and fantasy reader and occasional wargamer, and graduated third in his high school class.

He enrolled in Beloit



(Wis.) College (right on the Wisconsin/Illinois border), where he switched majors a lot — philosophy, mathematics, etc. Everything, in fact, except for English and Journalism.

"I decided that what I really wanted to do was write, so I sort of fell into a job working for the Lake Geneva Regional News as a reporter, and dropped out of college. That lasted for a few months, then I joined the staff of the Beloit Daily News, where I stayed for nine years."

During that time, Kim was a sports writer, an editorial writer, the state editor, the wire service editor, and just about everything else. "I was a handyman, doing a little bit of everything as it needed to be done. Come to think of it, that's what I'm still doing," he said.

After nine years, he had grown tired of the newspaper business, but wasn't sure what he wanted to do next. So he quit his job to become a freelance writer for various newspapers. That wasn't financially viable. "Besides, I discovered that I really needed someone to tell me when I had to be at work," Kim said.

One day, in the summer of 1979, Kim drove over to Lake Geneva, walked in the door of what was then the TSR Periodicals headquarters, and invited himself for an interview. They gave him some freelance editing assignments as a test, and when he brought them back in, they hired him on the spot.

Kim started as the number-three man on a three-man staff. Not too long thereafter, he was promoted to Assistant Editor of the magazine, and then to



Editor-in-Chief with issue #49 (May 1981).

"I suppose I shouldn't say this, but I'm not much of a D&D® game player. This helps me keep my objectivity, which is all to the good. When I look at a manuscript, my judgment isn't influenced by my experience as a player or DM. I see everything as an editor.

"I was very interested in playing the D&D game when I first heard of it, but by the time I found people to play with, the game was my job — and after working with it all day, I didn't want it to be my hobby, too," Kim said. "This helps keep the game fresh for me."

Kim describes himself as a "computerphile," and enjoys writing programs and tinkering with his Commodore 64 in his spare time. He also collects stamps. "Well, I accumulate stamps, actually. Sometime I'm going to take six weeks off and put them all in albums."

In addition to being Editor-in-Chief of DRAGON® Magazine, Kim also performs some managerial duties for STRATEGY & TACTICS® Magazine and AMAZING® Stories. His job involves everything from planning to production, meaning that he does everything from read manuscripts to set type when necessary. Putting out a monthly magazine is an unbelievably complicated process, and Kim is proud of the fact that DRAGON® Magazine has never missed a printing deadline during his tenure as editor.

In addition to his regular duties, Kim served earlier this year as the editor and general handyman for *the Unearthed*

DRAGON

Arcana rule book, and he edited *Saga of Old City*, Gary Gygax's first novel.

"The extra projects are extra work, naturally," he said, "but they were also very fulfilling."

The magazine has grown tremendously since Kim took it over, and that has resulted in a number of changes — some of them not good ones. "I've never wanted to discourage amateur writers from submitting, but we just don't have as much time for personal feedback and nurturing of new talent as we used to. We've become somewhat impersonal, and that bothers me — but there's nothing I can do about it."

"I like to get letters from our readers. I always read them, even if I can't print or answer all of them. What our readers think is a very important factor in what kind of magazine we make," he said.

TSR Profiles

Profiles

type, and handles a lot of the details of production. For STRATEGY & TACTICS Magazine, he does the same. His primary responsibility, though, is for AMAZING Stories. Working with editor George Scithers (who is located in Philadelphia), Pat coordinates all business and production aspects of the magazine. He handles contracts, typesetting, page design, relationships with the printer and purchasing agents, subscription labels, ad placement, story tracking, covers. . . . Whew! There's hardly a single detail of magazine production, however small, that doesn't pass across Pat's immaculately clean desk.

Pat is originally from Whiting, Ind. (a southern suburb of Chicago), and has a B.A. in French and Spanish from Marian College in Indianapolis, Ind. He became a teacher and tutor in those languages for several years.

His brother, Mike Price, was at that time a game designer for TSR, Inc. (He did some GAMMA WORLD® modules and mini-

on time. Pat managed the department for nearly three years.

But editing was in his blood, and so he transferred to the magazine staff. "By this time, I had the technical background to be a good editor, and I could be useful in all phases of the operation," he said. "I'm an editor both by training and temperament, and I really like the job I now have.

"I'm not a gaming fan, or a would-be game designer, or a would-be writer. I like the editor's role — the responsibility for helping people come up with ideas and make them work. I think I've got a good critical sense for identifying problem areas in manuscripts and advising writers on improvements?

According to Pat, editing is much like writing: it is about manipulating the written word. A writer or an editor needs to read a lot - not only for ideas, but to learn syntax, improve vocabulary, and study characterization. Pat also likes to read and analyze other magazines to get ideas about how to do things differently.

Although there are few colleges offering degrees in editing, Pat recommends not only English and Journalism, but also foreign languages. "Foreign languages are particularly helpful because you must learn them formally. This makes you focus on syntax, grammar, and word choice."

Pat reviews all fiction submissions for



Patrick Lucien Price

PAT PRICE

On the masthead of every issue of DRAGON® Magazine, under "Editorial Staff," is the name of Patrick Lucien Price. In every issue of STRATEGY & TACTICS® Magazine, here listed as Assistant Editor, is Patrick Lucien Price. And if you open an issue of AMAZING® Stories Magazine, there he is again: Pat Price, Managing Editor. Although you may not know him by name, his work in each issue of TSR's magazines is very important indeed.

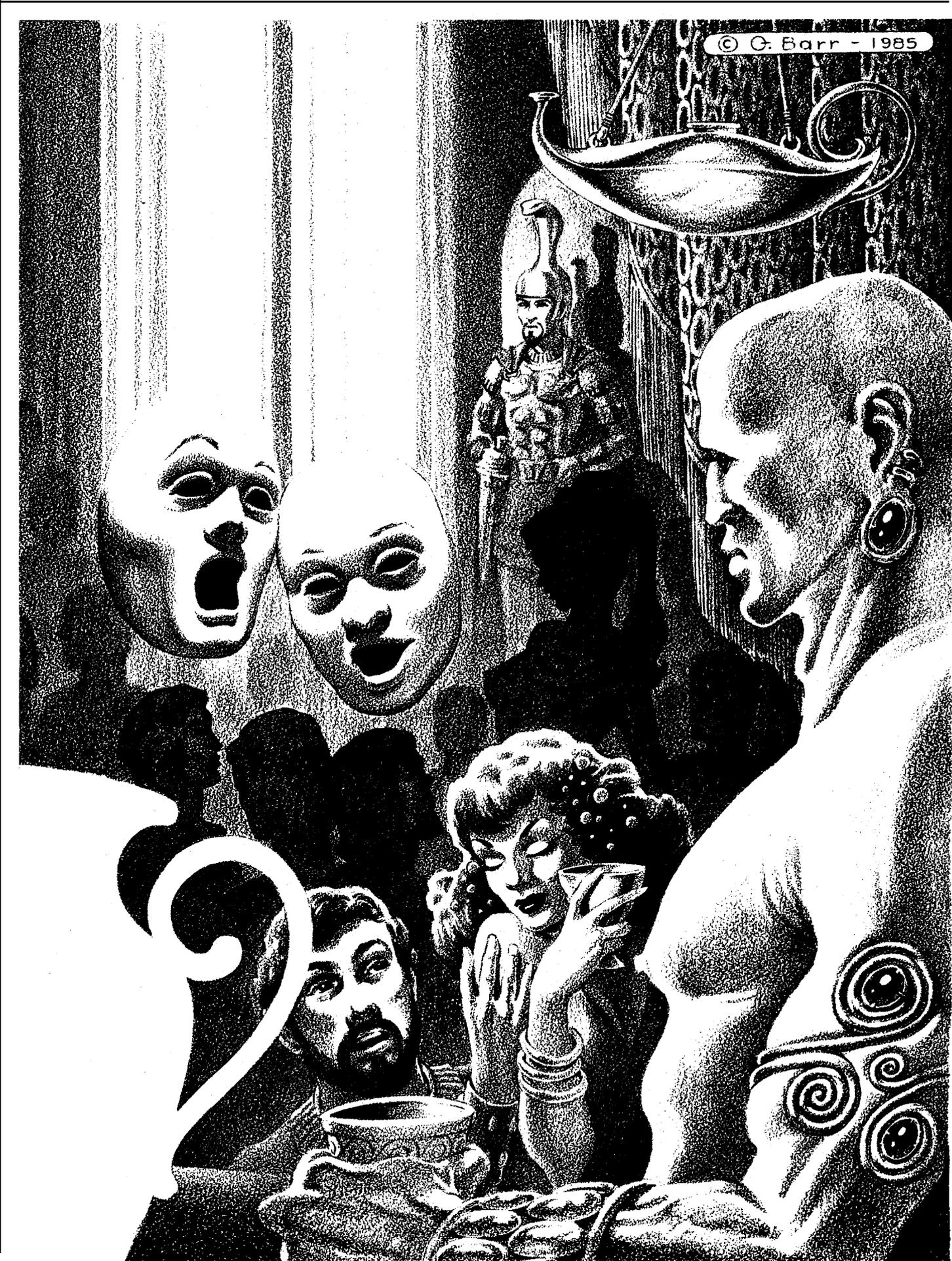
For DRAGON Magazine, Pat edits book reviews, compiles the Convention Calendar, proofreads everything, occasionally sets

ing for editors . . . and Pat answered the call.

He began with TSR as a games editor in 1980, working on the revisions of the D&D® Basic and Expert Sets. After a year with the company, he was promoted to manager of the Pre-Press Department, which handles typesetting, keylining (the process by which type and art are pasted onto boards for the printer to photograph), photography, etc. This is one of the most important jobs at TSR — the people in Pre-Press are greatly responsible for making sure that the final product is done right and

DRAGON Magazine. His advice to would-be contributors is, "Read, write, read some more, and write some more. That's the best thing to do. And, before you send your work off to a magazine, read the magazine first. See what's being done; learn what formats are acceptable. Research your market. For example, DRAGON Magazine doesn't publish poetry or plays, but I receive both regularly. They are rejected automatically. That wastes my time and the author's efforts. I'd much prefer people to write and ask if they want to submit anything too unusual. It's far better to ask a stupid question than to do a stupid thing. And, if you really don't know the answer, then it's not a stupid question, is it"

Pat's pet dragon is named St. Cyril of Milwaukee.





HE ORACLE RODE ALONE THROUGH the gates of Zelloque: around him crackled an almost-invisible aura of power and authority. The City Guard fell in behind him as he headed, intent on his mission, straight for the steps of the palace.

* * *

I was watching two disembodied heads sing drunken songs when the trouble started. A couple of City Guards sauntered in, glanced around with disdain, then headed toward my private table. They looked splendid in full uniform, with their red capes flapping boldly behind them.

Quite a few of my tavern's patrons made a hasty retreat through the back door. The heads vanished in puffs of ethereal gasses. I had nothing to hide — nothing much, anyway — so I waited.

"Ulander," the guard on the right said, "I have a message for you." Only then did I recognize him beneath his red-plumed helm — Nim Bisnar, an old City Guard who'd worked off and on for me during the last ten years.

"What is it?" I demanded. "You know you're supposed to use the back entrance — you'll give my place a bad reputation!"

He ignored my protests. "Captain Yoonlag sent us. An Oracle from Ni Treshel — that's right *the* Ni Treshel, where the bones of Shon Atasha are kept — came to the Great Lord's palace yesterday. He's looking for more splinters of his god's bones. Somehow he'd heard tales about Slab's Tavern, and he persuaded the Great Lord to let him search your place!"

I jolted to my feet, startled and alarmed. "What? *When?*"

"In an hour, maybe two."

Calling to Lur, my doorman and bodyguard, I dug a handful of silver royals from my pouch and poured them into Nim's hands. "Half are Yoonlag's. Split the other half between you."

"Thank you, sir!" they both said, then turned to go — through the back door, this time.

Lur lumbered over to my side. He was a large man — about seven feet tall, with broad shoulders and muscles enough to make him look twice as large. I'd always found those characteristics ideal for my purposes.

"Master?"

"Throw everybody out," I said, "except the servants."

"Sir?" he said, bewildered.

"You heard me — *do it!*"

The tavern was dark, its dim light concealing the crumbling plaster and foot-worn paving stones. There were numerous secluded spots, and off at the curtained booth along the edge of the room, illegal transactions were taking place. I marked the pirates at their tables, with their rich, colorful, jewel-encrusted clothes that mimicked but never quite equaled the dress of wealthy noblemen, and nodded to the ones I knew — Rigelem Teq, Hilan Lammiat, Kol Fesseda, a few others. In return for protecting his city's ships, the Great Lord of Zelloque had made his city an open port ten years earlier. In one dark corner a couple of black-robed slavers threw dice; in another, two

On the Rocks at Slab's

by John Gregory Betancourt

dock hands threatened each other with knives. With little patience or gentleness, various barkeeps persuaded them to take their squabble to a nearby alley. But mostly the people drank and talked and sang too loudly, the room ringing with boisterous shouts as they swore, laughed, and argued.

Lur moved among them, bending now and then to whisper something in various ears. Usually the men would turn pale, then tremble, then bolt for the door. Even the pirates left without a fight — Lur's imposing bulk was just too much for them, I guessed. Within minutes the place was deserted.

For a long minute, I just stood there and pondered the Guard's words. An Oracle, coming to search my tavern for a splinter of a god's bone. . . .

More than ghostly, disembodied heads that sang drunken songs, my tavern had quite a reputation for strange, magical happenings — it had helped keep away all but the least bloodthirsty clientele. Slab's was the sort of place where anything could happen: rumor said that, late at night, drunks sometimes inexplicably became sober, the furniture rearranged itself (always when nobody was looking), and people sometimes vanished, never to be seen again. Of course, that was only rumor, but I *did* know that against the far wall stood a table where chilled wine tasted like warm blood, and there was a certain spot (which moved every night) where Slab Vethiq himself, the man who'd founded my noble drinking establishment, was known to appear from time to time — or at least, his spirit was. And even if Slab didn't come, chances were someone — or some *thing* — else would . . . if you stepped too close.

The two drunken, singing heads suddenly appeared over a table. One of the barmaids seized a broom and swatted at them until they disappeared.

If the Oracle saw them — or anything else magical — he'd tear the building down in search of his bone.

I barred the doors and shuttered the windows. At once the barmaids lit tallow candles and set them in various niches. The place filled with a warm, somewhat hazy light. Everyone stared at me, wondering (I could tell) if I had gone completely mad. It was then that I told them, in short, blunt, angry words, what Nim had told me and what I planned to do about it.

The Oracle moved through the streets of Zelloque like a hot knife cutting through fat. He wore gold-and-blue silk pantaloons, a gold silk shirt, and slippers of soft, white klindu fur, and he carried a golden wheel in his arms. His wheel glittered brightly, red and blue from rubies and sapphires, gold and silver from the dying sun's light. Behind him, in perfect formation, marched twenty members of the City Guard.

He held his divine purpose in mind: to gather all the bones of Shon Atasha the Creator together into one place, to use their magic to summon His spirit back to Earth.

The noise of a hundred tramping feet echoed loudly through the deserted streets.

Trying to reason with ghosts seldom succeeds. Like with Slab.

"Bones!" he mocked. "Bones!" And then he trailed off in laughter.

I stepped back and he slowly disappeared, disintegrating in wisps of green fog.

"Well," I told him, "at least *I'm* not going to die trying to swallow fifty blue-backed crabs — alive!" But gloating wouldn't help; *he* didn't have to worry about having *his* livelihood demolished. He could always go haunt someplace else.

I should have known better than to try to persuade him and all the other ghosts not to appear during the Oracle's visit. Now I had a terrible suspicion they'd be certain to show up, if anyone stepped close to their special spot (which, fortunately, was off in one dark corner tonight).

I stood back and surveyed everyone else's work, then gave the signal for the doors to be unbolted and the shutters thrown open. Afternoon sunlight flooded in.

Most of my employees now sat at various tables, with bottles and goblets of wine before them, looking like the tavern's regulars. I'd stationed them in all the places where I knew odd things occurred; they all had orders to prevent anything unusual from happening — at any cost. Only Lur and a couple of the barmaids kept to their regular duties, moving from table to table as usual. For the thousandth time, I thanked my good fortune in having the most loyal servants money could buy. None would give my secrets away.

"Master?" Lur said, looming over me. I took a quick step back and he still loomed over me. "I hear them coming."

Straining, I heard them too — the tramp-tramp of many booted feet somewhere close at hand. Then they marched outside and halted there. One of the Guards, silhouetted in the door, stood for a second and surveyed the place before entering. Then I recognized him: Tayn Lastoq, the Captain of all the City Guard — one of the few officials I'd never been able to bribe. Behind him came another figure — the Oracle.

Like all the Rashendi, this one wore gaudy, brilliantly-colored silk clothing. He carried his future-telling wheel in front of him like a holy relic, which, of course, it was.

"This is the place?" he asked, with obvious disdain. He sniffed.

"Yes, Oracle," Tayn said.

"So be it. Find what I seek."

I stepped forward. "Wait a minute —"

"Be quiet, Ulander!" Tayn snapped. I could see the Oracle had begun to annoy him — and he was taking it out on me. "I know you better than you think. You know why we're here! Now let us get on with our business."

"I have friends in high places!"

He whirled around, his sword suddenly in his hand. Its point touched my chest just below my heart. "Narmon Ri himself ordered the search. You have no choice. Do you understand?"

Lur tensed beside me, growling softly, ready to attack Tayn. I restrained him with a quick look, then turned back to the Captain of the Guard. "I understand," I told him. "But if anything's broken, I'm sending Lord Ri the bill."

He laughed, then, and resheathed his sword. "You have a quick wit, Ulander. I'll tell the men to keep the damage to a minimum."

He turned and sauntered out, leaving the Oracle there alone. I heard Tayn instructing his men through the open door.

"Who are you?" the Rashendi asked me.

"Ulander Rasym, owner of this establishment."

He stared at me a moment, eyes strange and dark.

"Perhaps if you told me more about this god's bone, I'd be able to help. What does it look like? Where should it be?"

"It may take," the Rashendi said softly, "any form — a piece of marble, a building stone. They try to remain hidden. For years I have located bones for the shrine in Ni Treshel. Each splinter has been different — and yet the same. They have an odd feel, an uncertain look as if their shape is untrue. With my wheel I can perceive a splinter's true nature, if it is put before me." He nodded wisely. "So it has always been. I will find one here, I feel." Then he turned and wandered toward the curtained booths.

Off to one side, I saw wisps of fog beginning to gather above a table. I gestured wildly to one of the barmaids. With a gasp, she seized her broom and stepped forward, swinging madly at the two disembodied heads that had begun to appear. They'd started to sing —

*Vimister Groll was a merry old soul
Who loved his wine and women —*

but dissipated just before the Oracle turned to look back. The barmaid pretended to chase cobwebs from the ceiling with her broom while two of the barkeeps took turns continuing the song, mimicking the ghosts' high, drunken voices:

*He picked a brew and drank up to
The point his nose fell brim -in -*

It rapidly became obvious they'd never heard the tune before and were making it up as they went along. Fortunately, they soon became stumped at a rhyme for sausage and grew silent.

Tayn Lastoq and his men entered and spread through the tavern. For once, everything seemed to be going well — they found nothing but dust beneath the tables and under the booths. I followed Tayn around, looking over his shoulder, trying my best to bother him.

"You see," I said again and again. "There's nothing here."

Then I turned around and noticed Slab Vethiq sitting at one of the tables, as solid-looking as he'd ever been in life. He grinned at me, then turned back to his wine. As I stared, other people began appearing at the other tables, gradually filling the place. I recognized one — then another — then another. They were all patrons who'd died! Fortunately, they'd brought their own wine.

Nobody else seemed to notice.

The Oracle now stood in the middle of the room as the men searched, ignoring the people seated at tables. He looked mildly annoyed at not having found his bone

(though I had repeatedly said it wasn't here in front of him). At last he shouted for Tayn. The Captain of the Guard hurried over.

"Yes, Oracle?"

"Tear out the counter, then have your men start on the booths in the back. I want it found if it takes all night!"

With a sigh, Tayn turned to obey. I threw myself in front of him before he could speak. "There must be another way!" I said. "You can't just tear up my tavern!"

"I'm sorry, Ulander, but —"

Just then, one of his men chose to step too close to that certain spot in the corner. With a roaring sound, a gaint mouth appeared, filling the whole ten feet between floor and ceiling. Its lips were thick and bloodless white; its teeth were sharp, jagged spikes; its tongue lolled out like some immense gray carpet. Gazing down its gullet, I saw only blackness.

This seemed to be what Slab was waiting for. With an insane cry, he rose and seemed to flow rather than walk to the Oracle. Seizing the Rashendi by the hair, he dragged him forward and into the mouth, vanishing down its throat. The other ghosts of patrons long-dead grabbed all the guards, Tayn included, and spirited them off as well.

The mouth closed with a snap, the tongue flicked over the lips, and it vanished with a slight sucking sound.

Too stunned to do more than stare at the now-empty corner, I just stood there. Then one of the barmaids began to scream. I heard a slapping sound and she shut up.

I retreated to my booth and sat down heavily. I was ruined, I knew. The Great Lord would have me executed for killing his favorite Captain and twenty of his guards. His assassins would track me down wherever I went. Well, I figured, at least I could get drunk, ease the pain of my death — that was the only advantage left of owning a



haunted tavern.

Hearing singing, I looked up. The two disembodied heads had appeared over my table. Slowly they drifted away. Sounds from outside told me a number of pirates had entered. Business went on as usual.

As the day wore on and I got progressively drunker, I began to hear strange rumors: tales of how twenty-one of Lord Ri's guards had been plucked from the harbor by slavers — and Lord Ri had declined to buy them back; tales of how their leader, Tayn Lastoq, had gone mad and led his men and an Oracle off to fight sea-monsters; tales of how the Oracle had disappeared, never to be seen again.

That night, Slab's haunted spot moved into my private booth. I first became aware of it when I looked up and found Slab sitting in front of me, casually sipping a bottle of my best Coranian brandy. He raised it in salute, and

gave me a knowing wink, then slowly faded away.

I shuddered a bit. That wink had always disturbed me back in the days when Slab still lived and I'd been his right-hand man, with only as much power as he let me have. That wink had been a private sign, one last reminder that he owned the place and I never would . . . or so he'd thought.

But I'd saved my money, made sure I knew all the right people, and finally taken over when he'd died. But for all the documents that said I owned the place, something deep inside me called me a fool, and cursed, and somehow I knew the truth.

I drank more wine and tried not to think. My pains eased: somehow everything no longer seemed quite so grim. Slab, they'd said when he was alive, always takes care of his own.

Secure with that thought, I drifted toward sleep.

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SCIENCE-FICTION GAMING SECTION



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ON THE COVER

Five of the newest foes of Captain America™ slither into this issue as members of the criminal union called the Serpent Society™. Read about them on p. 74. Art by the Marvel Bullpen; collage by Roger Raupp.



Those of you who are comic-book hero fans might be interested to know of a new book on the market which details many of the greatest (and not-so-greatest) heroes ever to appear on the comics racks. *The Encyclopedia of Super Heroes*, by Jeff Rovin, lists the appearances, origins, powers, and biographies of hundreds of super-powered heroes. Those featured range from the famed Marvel and DC Comics characters to more exotic and humorous ones like Underdog, Ultraman, Super Pickle, Space Ghost, Isis, Judge Dredd, the Lone Ranger, the Masked Lizard, Megaton Man, Tarzan, Captain Nice, Wonder Wart-Hog, Super Chicken (and Fred), Zorro, Captain Klutz, Kid Psycho, The Shadow, Doc Savage, Mighty Mouse, Popeye, and (ahem) Roger Ramjet.

The few problem areas that this wonderful volume have lie in the realm of who or what is not included in the listings. For example, I cannot find Magnus, Robot-Fighter (of 4000 A.D. fame), my absolute favorite hero of all time, dating from my childhood; nor can I find Spain's Trashman, the black-bearded, post-holocaust revolutionary from the underground comics of a few years back. Jeff Grubb, who is in love with this book, was miffed that Danger Mouse was left out, especially since Bananaman is listed. And, if G-8 is included, why not James Bond?

I also admit that I would have loved to see individual pictures for all the heroes and more details on each. A companion volume covering super-powered villains would be nice, too. But I cannot fault the quality of this volume otherwise. *The Encyclopedia of Super Heroes* is a superb collection that makes an excellent resource book for all gamers involved in hero campaigns. As a gift book, it's hard to beat.

The Encyclopedia of Super Heroes is published by Facts on File, Inc., N.Y., N.Y.; it is hardbound (about 8½" x 11", 443 pp.), and it costs \$29.95.

ARES™ Section 105
 THE SCIENCE-FICTION GAMING SECTION

Editor: Roger E. Moore

Editorial assistance: Eileen Lucas, Georgia Moore, Patrick Lucien Price

Graphics, design, and production: Betty Elmore, Kim Lindau, Roger Raupp

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Rites of Passage

Initiations for the GAMMA WORLD® Cryptic Alliances



by Danny Kretzer

Whitney was lead into a small room by the hooded figure. A single shaft of sunlight from a high window. In one corner of the room sat a large metal box with a screen and buttons along one side. A coiled length of wire sat by the device, one end attached to the back of the device and the other end lying on the floor, tipping with an unusual projection.

"You wish to join the ranks of the Restorationists," the hooded one spoke. "First, you must prove yourself worthy. That device" — the figure gestured to the corner of the room — "was a communications system of the Ancients. Make this device functional, and you may take your place with us. You have until sunset."

With that, the hooded one left the room. Whitney stared at the alien contraption. Over and over, the hooded one's words echoed in his mind.

"You have until sunset...."

In order to join a certain Cryptic Alliance in the GAMMA WORLD® game, all a player character has to do roll percentile dice, as noted on p. 53 of the Basic Rules Booklet. What this dice roll simulates is not specified, but the method seems very insufficient. When a person joins a certain organization, the organization wants to make sure that the new member is of the sort the organization is looking for.

At one point in my campaign, several PCs tried to join the Restorationists. One PC who was a Pure Strain Human with very low intelligence and mental strength scores rolled a 07, so he was automatically able to join. A humanoid PC who was not only highly intelligent

but who also had *mechanical genius* rolled an 86, thereby failing to join that alliance. This didn't seem right. Why should a Cryptic Alliance that needs intelligent people to figure out artifacts and piece together the culture of the Ancients choose brawn over brains?

From that point, I put into effect the "initiation rule." In order to join a Cryptic Alliance, a PC would have to pass a specific test or initiation that replaced the dice roll.

The first thing a PC has to do is to locate an appropriate Cryptic Alliance base, which could prove to be an adventure in itself. Just finding information on certain bases runs the risk of being badly misled or stumbling across enemies of your chosen alliance.

Once the base is located and its personnel contacted, a fee is usually required to take the initiation test. (Every alliance needs money.) Regardless of the amount of money offered or the personality of the applicant, a character cannot join an alliance that is opposed to his or her (or its) racial type. For example, a Pure Strain Human could not get into the Radioactivists.

The initiation itself could vary widely, depending on the nature of the Cryptic Alliance performing it. Warlike alliances are generally the more savage and barbaric sorts, and have goals centering around military activity, conquest, destruction, and warfare. The Ranks of the Fit and the Friends of Entropy are two good examples of this type of organization. An initiation into these alliances would likely consist of a test of courage, endurance, or fighting prowess. Combat with large monsters, driving or running through an obstacle course, or spending the night in a cold, wet, and possibly inhabited cavern are three good examples of such initiations.





Runo stood in the center of the war pit, the howls of the audience filling his ears. The desert sun was as hot as a blast furnace, but he wasn't sweating from the heat.

"Hey, mutant bait!" shrieked a faceless voice among the watching horde. "Catch!" He leaped aside as a six-foot spear slammed in to the ground beside him. The roar of the audience redoubled and became a mindless thunder. Is joining the Red Death a good idea after all? he wondered. But he had little time to think now. The cage door was being opened. The Duel of Death had begun. Runo snatched at the spear in panic when he saw what was coming for him out of the darkness. . . .

Peaceful Cryptic Alliances are those dedicated to the protection and aid of living creatures. Initiations into these groups would consist of healing an injured person or creature with several medical artifacts provided for this purpose, or performing some great and selfless deed using nonviolent methods.

"Attend, Torrel," said the Healer. "On the table before you are five devices. You must choose one with which to heal the podog on the straw mat."

Torrel blinked as he looked over the various artifacts. One was a white box with a scratched red cross on the side, containing several jet-spray tubes and containers of medicine. After a few moments, he chose the box. One of the jet-spray tubes appeared functional, and he loaded an antibiotic into it. Then he walked over to the whimpering, shaggy mass of fur that looked up at him with huge, brown eyes. Here goes, Torrel thought, and gave the creature the full injection. . . .

Some alliances are religious in nature, built around the worship of one or more deities and serving them by acts designed to promote their worship. Initiations would usually involve a formal service, prolonged questioning on religious doctrine, and possibly a special rite to see if the gods show favor in the initiate. Archivists, Followers of the Voice, and Radioactivists are alliances of this sort. Successful operation of an artifact might get one into the Archivists; successful operation of a computer terminal or program might work for the Followers (with a `SYNTAX ERROR` message indicating divine disfavor).

Bereny approached the cave under the, watchful eyes of the two mutant priests. He stopped before the ancient opening

and examined the faded sign over the entrance. WARNING! REACTOR CHAMBER! AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY!

"Here is where you must seek your fate," said the two priests in unison.

"Inside a waits the shining Radiant Divine Glory. The Glory will either find favor with you or blight you with a defect. If you are unchanged, there is still the Trial of the Green Pit. Go now."

The priests fell silent. Bereny steeled himself, then started toward the caverns.

Cultural alliances vary greatly, more so than any other sort, and their initiation practices vary as well. Alliances of this nature seek to bring into being a world-wide culture common to all beings. Restorationists, Seekers, and the Brotherhood of Thought are of this sort.

Generally speaking, initiations into these groups requires the PC to show that he has the skills or powers necessary to be an asset to the organization. Whitney's trial with the Restorationists (at the start of this article) was such an initiation. If another alliance wanted to promote a world culture based upon peaceful cooperation between humanoids and Pure Strain Humans, they might set up a puzzle, trial, or problem that requires the combined efforts of one being of each sort to solve. An attempt to find the fastest route through a maze (with some nasty traps scattered throughout its corridors) would be such a test.

Finally, there are the genetic alliances, which are essentially racist in nature and seek to destroy all other intelligent beings not of their own species or mutant type. Some have watered this philosophy down so that they seek only to enslave those not of their own species, but genocide is usually the rule. If a violent end to other creatures is sought, an initiation usually consists of hand-to-hand combat with a captive creature of the unfavored sort. If the alliance permits mutations and the initiate possesses them, they may be used in the combat.

Though theoretically anyone of the appropriate genotype could join a genetic alliance, their ranks are usually restricted to those who are deemed superior to their fellows in skill, power, and dedication to the cause. The Created, Zoopremisists, Iron Society, and Knights of Genetic Purity may be considered genetic alliances, with overtones of warlike alliances evident.

Arturo stood alone in the domed room, feeling the slight chill from the air conditioners. Some arena this was, he

sneered. Big deal. So he was supposed to prove himself to the other Knights by killing some wimp humanoid? Fine. He had his shotgun, commando knife, harpoon gun, strangling wire, and every thing else. So why were the faces pressed against the thick quartz windows around the room so worried looking? Hey, they'd never seen him in action.

The door opposite him opened. With a lightning move, he snatched at his harpoon gun and took aim.

And froze.

She was easily the most beautiful woman he had ever seen in his life, a stunning platinum blonde with a heart-breaking face, crystal blue eyes, and —

Four arms, each whipping back to hurl a dagger at him. He raised the harpoon again, but he'd waited too long. . .

Any PC undergoing an initiation into a Cryptic Alliance should use only the tool and weapons given to him by the alliance itself. Combat situations should be balanced, though bias in favor of either opponent may be hard to avoid in complicated fights using weapons and various mutations.

If the referee has created his own Cryptic Alliances (as delineated in

DRAGON® issue #93), then it shouldn't be a difficult matter to design an initiation rite for them. The Friends of Justice might admit those who prove themselves by taking on a particular threat against their home town, for example.

Adventuring situations with initiation ceremonies should also be considered. The PCs might be hired to infiltrate a particular alliance, thus being required to undergo the initiation ceremony in order to complete their mission. Once in the organization, the PCs set about stealing a particular item, assassinating a hated leader, or the like. Perhaps the initiation will be worse than the mission the PCs were to carry out.

The PCs might also be forced to join an alliance that is suffering from low membership. Once initiated, the PCs' next job will be to escape

Extraordinary initiations might also occur. If the PCs join an organization at a time when the alliance desperately needs a particular mission accomplished, they might end up taking the mission instead of a regular initiation. As one would expect, the alliance is not likely to charge the PCs for this assistance, and if the mission succeeds, the PCs may be hailed as alliance heroes.

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The Marvel-Phile

"Why does it have to be snakes?"

by Jeff Grubb

A few months ago, I gushed about the efforts of Mr. Peter Sanderson. In addition to being the writer of the *Marvel Saga™* and co-writer of the *Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe™*, Pete came to GENCON® 18 to help out. Now it's Mark Gruenwald's turn. Mark Gruenwald is the *other* co-writer of the *Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe*, as well as the writer of the *Squadron Supreme™ Limited Series* and one of my favorite books, *Captain America™*.

In *MHAC-7, Concrete Jungle*, we laid out the existing members of the *Serpent Squad™*, which recently tripled in size and became the *Serpent Society™*, including some new, never-seen-before members. Enter Mr. Gruenwald, who sent me the information on *Rattler™*; coupled with his entries on *Bushmaster™*, *Diamondback™*, *Asp™*, and *Cottonmouth™* from *OHOTMU*, this

completes our collection of the bad guys of the *Serpent Society*.

Thanks, Mark. Nothing is better than getting a full set of serpents.

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BUSHMASTER™

Real name unrevealed

Fighting: EXCELLENT (20)
Agility: EXCELLENT (20)
Strength: EXCELLENT (20)
Endurance: GOOD (10)
Reason: GOOD (10)
Intuition: GOOD (10)
Psyche: TYPICAL (6)

Health: 90
Karma: 26
Resources: GOOD
Popularity: -7

Known powers:

BIONIC LIMBS. Bushmaster is a quadriplegic who has bionic arms attached to

his shoulders and a 14'-long snakelike tail instead of legs. These modifications give Bushmaster the stats listed above, as well as the abilities to move at 4 areas per round and to spring up to 1 area away (or 2 stories straight up). If using his tail in wrestling combat, Bushmaster may exert Remarkable constricting strength on his target.

CLAWS. Bushmaster's bionic arms each include two 6-inch "fangs." These claws are made of Remarkable-strength material, inflict Remarkable damage on the Hack-&-Slash chart, and are tipped with Excellent-intensity snake poison. (Those failing an Endurance FEAT will be knocked unconscious and will lose Endurance ranks if a second Endurance FEAT is failed.)

ASP™

Real name unrevealed

Fighting: GOOD (10)
Agility: REMARKABLE (30)
Strength: TYPICAL (6)
Endurance: EXCELLENT (20)
Reason: TYPICAL (6)
Intuition: EXCELLENT (20)
Psyche: TYPICAL (6)

Health: 66
Karma: 32
Resources: GOOD
Popularity: -5

Known powers:

VENOM BLASTS. Asp radiates an unknown form of paralytic energy that inflicts Feeble damage on anyone who

remains in the same area with her for an hour; prolonged contact with Asp is fatal. She may direct this energy into a single bolt of bio-energy, striking a target in the same area with her. This bolt inflicts Remarkable damage to living creatures, and those hit must make an Endurance FEAT against the Remarkable-intensity bolt or be stunned for 1-10 rounds. Upon firing this bolt, Asp cannot fire another until recharged. This takes a half-hour, but if engaged in strenuous activity (such as belly-dancing, which she enjoys), she may recharge fully in 10 minutes.

DANCER. Asp has excellent control of her arms, legs, and torso muscles, since she is an accomplished dancer. Her agility is Incredible when dodging.

COTTONMOUTH™

Quincy McIver

Fighting: EXCELLENT (20)
Agility: GOOD (10)
Strength: TYPICAL (6)
Endurance: GOOD (10)
Reason: TYPICAL (6)
Intuition: GOOD (10)
Psyche: TYPICAL (6)

Health: 46
Karma: 22
Resources: GOOD
Popularity: -3

Known powers:

BIONIC JAWS. McIver's mouth and jaws have been bionically enhanced. His teeth were replaced with Incredible-strength steel, and his jaws were strengthened

and hinged like a snake's. Cottonmouth uses his jaws as a does a snake, inflicting Remarkable Hack-&-Slash damage to an opponent. (He hits on the Incredible column if in wrestling combat with his victim.) His jaws close with Remarkable strength and are capable of surrounding and crushing a normal-sized cinder block.

DIAMONDBACK™

Rachel Leighton

Fighting: REMARKABLE (30)

Agility: REMARKABLE (30)

Strength: GOOD (10)

Endurance: GOOD (10)

Reason: GOOD (10)

Intuition: GOOD (10)

Psyche: EXCELLENT (20)

Health: 80

Karma: 40

Resources: GOOD

Popularity: -1

Known powers:

THROWING DIAMONDS: Diamondback's preferred weapons are a set of throwing spikes constructed of carbon tool-steel with collapsible hard rubber vanes. She throws these diamond-shaped spikes with Incredible Agility for a range of 3 areas. The effects of a spike depend on the type of head used with it; the following are examples.

Needle – Inflicts Good Hack-&-Slash damage.

Venom – Does damage as Needle, with Excellent-intensity poison.

Explosive – Explodes in a single area for Remarkable damage to all within that area.

Acid – Contains Remarkable-strength corrosives that inflict Excellent damage to living targets.

Narcotic – Contains a Remarkable-intensity sleep-drug. If the target fails an Endurance FEAT, the target will be unconscious for 1-10 hours.

RATTLER™

Gustav Krueger

Fighting: GOOD (10)

Agility: GOOD (10)

Strength: EXCELLENT (20)

Endurance: EXCELLENT (20)

Reason: GOOD (10)

Intuition: TYPICAL (6)

Psyche: TYPICAL (6)

Health: 60

Karma: 22

Popularity: -3

Resources: GOOD

Known powers:

BIONIC TAIL: Rattler's tail is an artificial bionic implant of unknown origin, and it has several super-powered abilities. The tail may lift with Remarkable strength. If used as a weapon, it strikes for Remarkable damage. In addition, it may generate sonic vibration waves of up to Remarkable intensity. Used offensively, the vibrations strike with Remarkable force, breaking down materials of lesser material strength. The vibrations may disrupt mechanical devices and cause nausea in living creatures. (Living targets make an Endurance FEAT or are stunned from 1-10 rounds.) The tail may also set up a vibrational shockwave in the air that will deflect bullets and other physical missile weapons, but it will not affect energy beams. The range of this omnidirectional force field is 2 areas.

The Serpent Society's story: Not much is known of the lives of these new members of the Serpent Society before they joined that team. All that can be said is that they were active as super-powered criminals before they were recruited.

The Serpent Society is a descendant of the second Serpent Squad™. The original Serpent Squad consisted of Viper™, Cobra™, Eel™, and Princess Python™; it was broken up by Captain America during its attempt to capture the Serpent Crown™. The second Serpent Squad was funded by Roxxon™ through its mutagenic division, the Brand Corporation™. This group consisted of team leader Sidewinder™, Anaconda™, Black Mamba™, and Death Adder™, and it succeeded in capturing the Serpent Crown for Roxxon. Sidewinder deserted his teammates to make the delivery, then went underground while his ex-partners searched for him and their share of the reward.

They located Sidewinder in New York City, where the super-criminal was living comfortably on his gains. Sidewinder escaped doom at the hands of his former comrades by giving them their intended rewards, with additional interest. (Sidewinder had been a financial analyst before becoming a costumed criminal, and he had wisely invested the money.) Sidewinder recruited the three to form the bedrock of his new Serpent Society. The group soon recruited Rattler, Diamondback, Cobra, Princess Python, Asp, Cottonmoth, and Bushmaster into their ranks. Viper

refused their offer, as did Constrictor™ (who then attempted to betray the group to the authorities).

The Serpent Society's purpose is to form a union of serpent-named and snakelike villains to serve as an organized negotiating tool with such major criminal powers as A.I.M.™, Hydra™, The Secret Empire™, and Kingpin™. In the past, these larger groups would hire super-powered mercenaries, but usually with little trust, considering them expendable in combat. The Serpent Society is essentially a "villains' union" that negotiates for jobs with these organizations, with set fees and guaranteed satisfaction (or their money cheerfully refunded). The members of the society retain a portion of the fee for any job they perform, but the majority of the funds are invested into dummy corporations and retirement funds for the members.

In addition, Sidewinder does not accompany the group on their missions, remaining behind to serve as a rescue force, if need be. If the members of the society are threatened with capture, they may surrender. He will then use his teleporting ability to break them out of jail in quick fashion. (Sidewinder has also put some of their funds into retaining a good lawyer, just in case the captured villains are put into an area into which he cannot teleport.)

Finally, as members of a tight criminal group, these villains may form a Karma Pool, just like organized hero groups. They will chiefly use this pool for escaping from heroes, but they significantly improve their chances of survival as a team.

The Serpent Society's most successful mission to date has been the capture and neutralization of MODOK™ on the behalf of A.I.M. Their reputation as an organized team has grown, despite their losing battles with Captain America.

Bullpen note: A long while back, I introduced the idea of an "advanced" set of rules for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game. The response was phenomenal, ranging from words of encouragement to suggestions for new rules and rule expansions. After wading through the mail, I said that, as a result of the large number of letters, the Advanced Set was "under consideration."

Well, it's no longer *just* under consideration. It's **coming**, and I'll talk more about it next month, as we return to the Great White North for *Alpha and Omega*.

Villains & Variants

Optional rules for VILLAINS & VIGILANTES™ gaming

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currently one of the major super-powered hero games, and does a good job of simulating the "reality" found in the comic books. However, the V&V system is not without its weaknesses. Some problems have arisen in the two years that my gaming group has been playing the game, and I've compiled the solutions we developed. While these revisions are not official, they should add to game balance, repair minor rules glitches, and improve the flow of play. Gamemasters and players should have ample experience with the system before attempting to integrate any of these rules into their prospective campaigns, as these rules add complexity to the game.

The material below is organized in the same order in which corresponding material appears in the revised rulebook. Thus, each revision is headed by a number and letter. In the case of entirely new rules, each is numbered so as to fit into its proper section of the rulebook.

2.6-E Final calculations: Basic hand-to-hand damage.

There is currently no PR (power requirement) given for performing hand-to-hand (HTH) combat or lifting heavy objects. This makes the strength characteristic inordinately powerful, as characters do not have to spend power for any of their attacks. HTH combat should have a PR of one point per turn. Thus, a character employing two HTH attacks in a turn would be charged three power points: one for using HTH combat and two for taking an extra action phase. If a character employs his Carrying Capacity simply to lift an object, rather than do damage, he is only charged one point of

character's Carrying Capacity.

2.6-F Final calculations: Movement rate. As with HTH combat, there is also no PR required for movement. A character moving more than one-half of his movement rate allowance should be charged one point of power per turn. This would allow a normal man to move at top speed for forty turns (ten minutes) and cover a little more than a mile, which is about what a normal man can do in real life. If a character employs a movement power which already has a PR, the power's PR is added to the PR of one per turn, as noted above.

Presently, no rules are given for encumbered movement. I suggest that a character be allowed to move at normal speed when carrying one-half of his Carrying Capacity or less, three-fourths normal when carrying up to three-fourths of his Carrying Capacity, and one-half normal speed when encumbered over three-fourths of his Carrying Capacity. An encumbered character is charged a point of power if he moves more than one-half of his adjusted movement score allowance.

A swimming character has his strength and endurance scores halved for the purpose of calculating movement, unless he has an appropriate water-related power (Adaptation, Water-Breathing, etc.). A character climbing a surface like a mountain, tree, or wall has his Agility and Endurance cut by half as well.

3.4-A Lethal attacks. One facet of comic book reality which is ignored in the rules is the ability of villains (and some heroes) to make potentially deadly attacks. This leads to the introduction of the lethal attack form. In order to perform a lethal attack, a character must

(or three times, in the case of a head attack) the normal power required for the attack. The attack will have all of the effects a normal special attack would have, but with the following additional effects:

Head: A successful lethal attack to the head yields a 3% chance per point of damage of causing double damage, and a 1% chance per point of forcing the victim to make a successful saving roll vs. Death Touch to avoid death.

Eyes: A hit on the victim's eyes yields a 2% chance per point of damage of causing double damage, and a ½% chance per point of causing permanent blindness. A normal special attack to the eyes should not cause permanent blindness.

Throat: A successful hit here has a 2% chance per point of damage of stunning an opponent. A stunned opponent is unable to launch any attacks, moves at one-half his normal rate, and is +4 to be hit by an attack. A stunned character must roll twice his Endurance or less on d100 between turns in order to recover.

Arm, hand, or leg: Hitting the opponent's arm yields a 4% chance per point of damage of disabling that arm, and 2% chance of causing severe permanent damage to the limb. A disabled arm will heal in (20 - Endurance) days, with a minimum healing time of one day. A severely injured arm will take five times as long to heal. Regeneration will cut the recovery time down to one-fifth normal. Further attacks to the arm cause double damage. Attacks to hands and legs are similarly treated.

Device: A lethal attack from a device or weapon will do double damage. In addition, a character using an appropriate attack form (claws, bladed weapon, etc.) may make a lethal attack without designating a specific part of the

The Big Guns

*The armed forces in the
MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game*

If a gigantic reptile is chomping on the docks of Seattle or an alien saucer is dropping stink bombs on Kansas City, costumed heroes won't be the only ones going against the enemy. Aliens, giant reptiles, and Marvel Super Villains™ are going to have to take on the regular Army, Navy, and Air Force — and they are *tough!*. This article gives a few suggestions on using some of the weapons of the U.S. military in your campaigns, and describes five military vehicles in MARVEL SUPER HEROES terms. First, a few definitions.

Crew — Most of the larger vehicles and weapons require a minimum crew to operate efficiently. Each soldier, sailor, or pilot may be considered a typical soldier as described in the Campaign Book. Each shifts his Agility one column to the right when using the weapon or when piloting the vehicle with which he has been trained. Untrained persons trying to fire a heavy weapon must first make a Reason FEAT roll to be able to get it to work. They must also shift their Agility one column to the left to simulate the expected loss in accuracy.

Sensors — Radar uses radio waves to detect objects, bouncing them off a vehicle or object and measuring the time it takes them to return in order to gauge distance. Some aircraft are able to fly and land without visibility, using radar alone. Radar waves can be controlled by certain individuals with magnetic or electrical control (such as Magneto™ or Electra™). With a successful FEAT roll, the radar waves may be redirected to make any one object the controlling person chooses invisible.

For example, a villain with Monstrous electromagnetic control approaches an air base protected by radar with a 200-mile range. The Judge decides that a Green FEAT will be sufficient to deflect the radar. When the villain enters the radar field, the judge rolls for him and gets a Yellow FEAT result. The villain is then invisible to the radar unless his power is reduced or his attention distracted. If he is attacked, the Judge may require a second FEAT roll to make sure he has not been distracted and allowed the radar to detect him.

Sonar uses sound waves to detect objects under water. Almost all naval craft are equipped with some form of sonar.



Characters with sound control can make themselves invisible to sonar with a successful FEAT roll.

Guided missiles and torpedoes — Guided missiles and torpedoes have either active or passive control systems. Active control allows the missile to be guided by the person who fired it. With passive control, the missile has homing abilities using heat, sound, or some other target-finding system. The Control rank of a missile or torpedo represents the accuracy of the tracking system. With a passive system, the person firing the missile rolls on the control system's rank rather than on the character's Agility.

Each missile is designed for one attack mode: air-to-air, air-to-ground, ship-to-ship, etc. If a missile designed for one purpose is used for another, its Control rank moves one column to the left (if it can be used at all). Only missiles designed to go underwater will be able to penetrate the surface of an ocean or lake; all others will explode the instant they strike the surface of the water.

For example, a hypothetical villain named Buzzard Man zooms toward a military jet. The jet fires a passive heat-seeking air-to-air missile at him. The missile has Remarkable con-



The accuracy of bombing is determined by rolling on the Shooting-&-Throwing column, using the Agility of the pilot who dropped the bomb. If the pilot misses, count the number of columns by which he missed; that will be the number of areas away from the target where the bomb strikes the ground, in a direct line from the approach of the aircraft. (There is an equal chance that the bomb will either fall short or long.) Anyone in the blast area must roll for damage. Large bombs have broader areas of effect.

The accuracy of a napalm drop is determined by the same method as a high-explosive bomb. However, everyone in the target area will be exposed to flame and heat of Incredible power. This may only be dodged by ultra-high speed or teleportation which allows one to leave the area almost instantly. The judge must decide if the surrounding buildings, forest, etc., catch fire and, if so, how long they burn.

Strafing occurs when a plane flies over an area and fires at it with machine guns and cannons. The accuracy of the attack is determined by rolling on the Shooting-&-Throwing column with the pilot's Agility. Some judges may choose to reduce the pilot's rank one to the left when flying jets on strafing runs, since jets have such high minimum speeds.

Bull's-Eye and Kill results — To simulate the firing of precision weapons against armored vehicles, I suggest certain unarmored parts be available as targets for Bull's-Eye slots. For example, someone shooting-at a tank may not be able to penetrate the armor, but he may try to shoot off the radio antenna, the spotlight, or even the machine gun.

With a Kill result, the vehicle should receive some serious damage. On a tank, the attacker may have jammed the treads or damaged the engine, if he or she can penetrate the tank's armor. Similar results may be devised for other vehicles.

M-60 Main Battle Tank

This vehicle is used by the U.S. Army and Marine Corps, Israel, Iran, Italy, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, and Turkey. It has a Remarkable Body, Poor Speed, Excellent Control, and a crew of four.

Body — The M-60 has .5" to 4.8" of cast armor and weighs 54 tons. The crew receives Excellent protection (due to the tank's air conditioning) from all chemical weapons. The electrical systems, including the ignition and radio,

have Excellent protection from energy attacks.

On the M-60 series, Bull's Eye targets include the radio antenna and headlights (Typical material strength) and the external machine guns (Good material strength). On a Kill shot, the Judge may decide to jam one of the treads, freezing the tank in place until it is repaired.

Performance — The M-60 has a 12-cylinder diesel engine capable of 30 mph in flat terrain. The tank can climb a slope of 60°, climb over vertical obstacles 3' high, and ford water up to 3' deep without modifications.

Armament — The M-60 carries a 105mm cannon (Incredible damage, 20-area range) and a 7.62mm machine gun (Remarkable damage, 10-area range) on its turret. These guns can only fire in the direction the turret is facing, but the turret can turn 360°. On top of the turret is a 5" anti-aircraft machine gun (Remarkable damage, 15-area range) which can turn independently of the turret for 360°. One model of the M-60 tank replaces the 105mm cannon with a flame thrower (Incredible damage, 2-area range).

The M-60 can ram for Remarkable damage. If it rams and rolls a Red result on the Remarkable column, it will run over the target and do Incredible damage, supposing the target is of the appropriate size.

F-16 Fighter-Bomber

The General Dynamics F-16 multi-role jet fighter-bomber is used by the U.S. Air Force, Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, and Norway. It has a Excellent body, Amazing speed, Remarkable control, and one crewman (the pilot).

Body — The F-16's body is considered Excellent, but the control and communications systems have only Good protection against magnetic and electrical attacks. The pilot is protected against all chemical and biological weapons while his cockpit is sealed. The plane weighs 21 tons with a full load of weapons and fuel.

A Bulls-Eye result may damage the control surfaces of the plane. If this happens, the jet must land as soon as possible. A Kill result damages the single engine and causes the plane to crash. The pilot may only be struck by an attack that can penetrate the plane's armor.

Performance — The F-16 has one 23,845-lb. thrust afterburner turbo-fan engine. Its maximum speed is 915 mph fully loaded, but its minimum speed is

control and makes a Green FEAT roll, meaning the missile has been able to follow the heat of Buzzard Man's jet thrusters. The missile will clip his tail feathers, perhaps permanently.

Some characters will use fireballs, fog, or other things to distract a missile. The judge must decide how difficult it will be for the missile to find its true target under these circumstances. Dodging is rolled in the usual way, if a character wishes to avoid being struck by a projectile or missile.

Bombing and strafing — We need consider only two types of bombs: explosives and napalm. An explosive bomb is treated like a large hand grenade. Everyone in the area where the bomb explodes must roll on the Hack-&Slash column of the Battle Effects Table to determine if they take damage.



uncertain. It requires 25 areas to take off or land safely, requiring a perfectly smooth, straight surface such as an airport runway.

Armament — The U.S. Air Force usually equips the F-16 with one 20mm multi-barrel cannon with 500 rounds (Excellent damage, 10-area range) and carries two Sidewinder missiles, one on each wing tip. Under the wings and body of the plane are four more hard points which can carry cluster bombs, Sidewinder missiles, or Sparrow missiles. In the center of the body of the plane is a rack able to carry a 2,200-lb. bomb.

The Sidewinder is a heat-seeking anti-aircraft missile (Remarkable damage, 11-mile range, Typical body, Unearthly speed, Typical control). The Sparrow is a radar-guided missile which comes in three types: air-to-air, air-to-ship (the Sea Sparrow), and air-to-surface (the Land Sparrow) (Remarkable damage, 28-mile range, Typical body, Unearthly speed, Good control). Cluster bombs (Incredible damage) and the single large bomb (Amazing damage) may be used free falling or laser-directed. If free-falling, their accuracy is dependent on the pilot's Agility rank. Laser-directed bombs are guided toward targets (but not propelled) by air-control surfaces. This control system simply adds one rank to the pilot's Agility.

If the F-16 rams anything, it does Incredible damage. However, if either the plane's body or control rank falls to Feeble, it blows up. It must also make an

immediate control check (Yellow FEAT) in order to avoid going out of control when it strikes something (or vice versa). The pilot may successfully eject if he makes a FEAT roll against his Agility.

AV-8 Harrier Jet Fighter

The Harrier VTOL jet fighter is used by U.S. Marine Corps, Spanish Navy, and British Air Force. It has an Excellent body, Incredible speed, Remarkable control, and a crew of one pilot.

Body — The plane's body is considered Excellent armor, but the control and communication systems have only Good protection against magnetic and electrical attacks. The pilot is protected from all chemical weapons when his cockpit is sealed.

A Bull's-Eye result may damage the plane's control surfaces, requiring it to land immediately. A Kill result means that the engine is knocked out and the plane will crash.

Performance — The Harrier has one 21,500 lb. thrust turbo-fan engine and travels 740 mph maximum. It can go a minimum of 58 mph (Typical speed) using its VTOL powers. It is able to take off and land in a single area. Since it weighs 12.5 tons with weapons and fuel, it cannot land on rooftops or other structures not designed to hold such weight (requiring Amazing strength or better).

Armament — The AV-8 normally carries two 30mm machine guns

(Remarkable damage, 10-area range) and two Sidewinder air-to-air heat-seeking missiles (Remarkable damage, 11-mile range, Typical body, Unearthly speed, Typical control). The AV-8 can carry three 1000-lb. bombs, one under the body and the other two in the wings (Incredible damage).

The Harrier can ram for Remarkable damage, but if either its Body or Control Rank drop below Feeble, it blows up. Due to its VTOL features, it can blast the area directly below it with flames of Excellent power. This happens whenever it lands or takes off. If the plane is damaged, the pilot may eject to safety if he makes a Green FEAT Roll on his Agility.

Ohio-Class Submarine

The Ohio-class ballistic-missile submarine is used only by the U.S. Navy. It has a Remarkable Body, Good Speed, Good Control, and a crew of 133.

Body — The submarine's body consists of a very heavy, pressure-resistant hull. The hull is compartmentalized, so if one chamber is breached, it is sealed to protect the others. Each time a chamber is flooded, the submarine loses one rank in both speed and control. If either rank reaches Feeble, the submarine sinks helplessly to the ocean bottom. The electrical system has Remarkable shielding, and the crew is protected from all chemical weapons when the hatches are sealed.

Bull's-Eyes may be scored against the periscope or the radar antenna disc. Destroying the disc (Good material strength) destroys the ship's radar capabilities. Damaging the periscope (Typical material strength) renders the ship blind (except for its sonar) when submerged. A Kill roll allows the attacker to disable the sub's single propeller (Excellent material strength).

Performance — The exact top speed of the Ohio-class submarine is secret, but may be assumed to be over 100 mph (Good speed). The sub's depth limit is 985 ft.; to go below this level requires a FEAT roll using the hull's strength. A white or green result means it survives, a Yellow roll means the sub drops one rank in every class, and on a Red roll, the hull is crushed and the sub destroyed.

The submarine requires 36 ft. of water to maneuver on the surface. In shallower waters, the sub runs aground. Escape will require a Green FEAT roll on the Typical column. The ship may only try and escape once every 10 turns.



Armament — The Ohio class is equipped with four 21-inch torpedo tubes firing acoustic homing torpedoes which follow the sounds made by a ship (Incredible damage, Typical body, Excellent speed, Remarkable control).

It also has 24 tubes for Trident Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (Class 1000 damage, 4,400-mile range, Good body, Uneearthly speed, Excellent control). An ICBM's target must be a fixed position on the earth's surface. The missile may be equipped with explosives of any power, and it may also contain chemical weapons.

As a final resort against intruders, the crew may release radiation from the sub's power plant. This will cause Monstrous radiation damage to everything alive in a 10-area radius around the sub.

Special equipment — Each ICBM-carrying submarine has ten different communication systems on board, linking it to the world's satellite system as well as allowing direct transmissions. All Ohio-class subs are equipped with sonar and may use both air and surface radar when surfaced. The radar has a range of 200 miles and the sonar 25 miles.

Kidd-Class Destroyer

The Kidd-class destroyer is used only by the U.S. Navy. It has a Remarkable body, Good speed, Good control, and a crew of 200.

Body — The Kidd-class destroyer is designed for fleet escort duty, and it carries armor that will not reduce its speed. The hull of a destroyer will not protect crew members from chemical weapons, as it is not sealable. Destroyers are compartmentalized to protect them from flooding. When the outer hull is breached, only one chamber floods; the entire ship loses one rank in both Body and Control whenever this occurs. If

either of these ranks reach Feeble, the ship sinks.

Possible Bull's-Eye targets are the radar discs, radio antenna, and any crewmembers standing on the deck or bridge. The discs and antenna each have a material strength of Good.

A Kill result means one of the propeller shafts (Excellent material strength) has been damaged or fouled. This reduces the destroyer's Control and Speed by half.

Performance — The best speed of the Kidd-class destroyer is over 100 mph. It uses four gas turbines with two propeller shafts.

The destroyer cannot move into water less than 60' deep, or it will run aground. Escape will require a Typical FEAT roll, and an escape attempt may be made once every 10 turns.

Armament — The ship carries front and rear MK-26 twin missile launchers, each able to fire two missiles in the same round in 180(o) fields of fire. Three kinds of missiles may be used. The MR anti-aircraft missiles have active guidance (Incredible damage, 6-mile range, Typical body, Excellent speed). The Harpoon anti-ship missiles also have active guidance (Good damage, 60-mile range, Typical body, Good speed). The

ASROC anti-submarine missiles carried on the destroyer become acoustic homing torpedoes after they strike the water (Incredible damage, 6-mile range, Typical body, Good speed, Remarkable control).

In addition, each destroyer has two 5" MK-45 cannon, one each mounted on the bow and stern (Excellent damage, 30-area range). They also have six MK-32 torpedo tubes, firing MK-46 torpedoes with acoustic homing (Incredible damage, 2-mile range, Typical body, Excellent speed, Remarkable control).

The Kidd-class destroyer also carries two LAMPS (Light Airborne Multi-Purpose Systems) anti-submarine helicopters. These helicopters are equipped with radar, sonar buoys, and a magnetic system for detecting submarines from the air (nicknamed MAD). They can direct Harpoon missiles fired from the ship after the missiles have crossed the ship's visual horizon. A LAMPS helicopter has a Good body, Good speed, Good control, and a crew of four.

Kidd-class destroyers are able to ram surface targets for Amazing damage without harm to themselves, since their bows were designed for ramming. This attack only affects surface craft and beings.

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Exploring new worlds in the STAR FRONTIERS® universe



by William Tracy

One of the most exciting challenges in the STAR FRONTIERS® game comes with the exploration of an uncharted planet, facing dozens of unexpected dangers. This can be a great source of adventure, and there is a chance that the characters will make a pretty good profit – if they survive.

Of course, the characters will need a

spaceship to get to the planet. If they don't own one, there are still some ways to get one legally. The PCs might buy or get a starship on loan, if they have enough money. If they don't, their financial backers will purchase or rent a ship for them. In any case, if a starship is rented, all characters concerned will be required to accept a tracer implant (p. 41, Knight Hawks Campaign Book). The procedure for renting a spaceship

getting a financial backing is the same as that for getting a loan (pp. 40-42, Campaign Book).

An expedition team to an unexplored planet must contain at least one character who has Environmental skills. But if the characters are financially backed by someone else, the character with Environmental skills must have a skill level of at least 4, or the backer will refuse to finance the expedition. If this happens,

the characters will have to employ an NPC with the proper qualifications, who should then receive an equal share in the profits.

Financial backing

It takes a relatively large amount of money to finance such an expedition. If the characters are not able to support such an expedition themselves, they can be financed by a corporation, government, or a group of private citizens. The *Eleanor Moraes* (from the "Beyond the Frontier" module series, SFKH 2 through SFKH 4) was financed by the United Planetary Federation, with a little megacorporation assistance.

If the characters have their own ship, they still might want to find a backer who can pay for the special equipment needed to explore a planet. The backer can also pay for any special modifications to the characters' ship that are needed to explore planets. A backer always requires that the characters accept a tracer implant.

Characters will often be granted funds for exploration work by a megacorporation. Corporations are usually on the lookout for planets with valuable commodities, such as mineral ores, new types of drugs or food delicacies, or habitable land. Of all the corporations, the Cassidine Development Company backs the largest number of expeditions to unexplored planets, since this is the company's specialty and main source of income. Pan-Galactic Corporation also sponsors a number of trans-Frontier expeditions to new worlds, and a generally friendly rivalry has developed between agents of the two companies.

The UPF, as noted in module SFKH 2, has become more aggressive about exploring newly-discovered planets since the Sathar Wars. Worlds with colonization potential and those with potential (or existing) Sathar bases are of special concern. The Planetary Survey Administration was created to govern the exploration of such new worlds, but the PSA is rumored to have been infiltrated by agents of PGC and CDC, who funnel off selected information for use by their megacorporations.

Planetary governments, eager for colonies which can supply them with new resources (as was Pale in "The Volturnus Connection," in DRAGON® issue #98), also finance certain exploration missions. However, such missions are almost always crewed by members of that world's space navy and armed forces, and are considered to be exten-

sions of the government's space fleet.

Sometimes a group of private citizens might back an expedition. They are generally interested in establishing a special political, religious, or anti-establishment colony with their pooled resources, and hire the characters to find a suitable planet for them. Such groups are usually called "pilgrims."

Joining an expedition

Sometimes characters are hired by a ship captain who needs a crew for a planetary expedition. They are promised an equal share in the profits. Unfortunately, this does not happen often. The competition is tough to win a berth on such an expedition, since such trips have been known to enable a character to permanently retire on his earnings. A character must have at least one skill level of 4 before he or she can even be considered for the position.

The type of ship used for such expeditions are called exploration ships (p. 8, Campaign Book). Occasionally different types of ships are used; the *Eleanor Moraes* was a modified exploration ship that resembled an assault scout ship. Referees may invent new starships and deck plans as they desire.

A variety of special exploration equipment can be found on pp. 21-22, in the Campaign Book. Some of this equipment can be rented, but some of it (like atmoprobos) must be purchased outright, as they are one-use-only devices. Any rental equipment that is destroyed must be paid for by the characters, unless prior arrangements are made by the persons backing the expedition. Anyone renting equipment must accept a tracer implant, if the equipment costs more than 100,000 Cr.

To explore a star system and its planets efficiently, three new pieces of equipment need to be introduced. These new items are the Radar Mapper (RM), the Planetary Scanning System (PSS), and a special Planetary and Star System Exploration (PSSE) computer program.

The RM package contains both a special attachment for a ship's radar system and a special computer program. The whole package costs 15,000 Cr., and it cannot be rented. The computer program is considered to be level 2 and takes up 12 function points. The RM package produces an accurate relief map of a planet's surface, using the ship's computer and special program. It takes $1d10 + 5$ GST days to produce this map while the ship orbits a given

world. Pilot expertise may speed things along; subtract the pilot's skill rating from the number of days needed to make the map. It always takes a minimum of three days of checking and rechecking to map a world accurately.

The PSS package consists of a special sensor attached to the outside of the ship's hull and a special computer program. The sensor itself is too small to affect a ship's ADF or MR. The computer program is level 3 and takes up 25 function points. The whole package costs 50,000 Cr., and it cannot be rented. Like the MR system, the PSS is used while the ship is in orbit.

The sensor scans and photographs the planet, feeding the data into the computer. The special computer program uses the data to forecast the planet's climate and general weather patterns, and to pinpoint areas where one is likely to find deposits of mineral ore. Colonization sites may be located, and evidence of existing civilizations may be found. Natural hazards, such as volcanoes, fault lines, geysers, swamps, waterfalls, landslide zones, and so forth may also be detected. Energy sources such as natural radioactive ores and artificial power stations may be found, too.

To find out how many days of orbiting it takes to get a complete scan of the planet, roll $2d10 + 8$. This roll cannot be reduced by the pilot's skill level, as bad weather (obscuring details of the ground) is beyond his control.

The Planetary and Star System Exploration (PSSE) computer program is considered to be level 3 and takes up 35 function points. This special program data-links the computer to all the equipment used to explore and classify star systems and their planets. This includes the geoscanners, vaporscanners, bioscanners, the RM and PSS components, atmoprobos, laboratory equipment, landing drones, remote probes, energy sensors, and any special information typed in by the characters. The program correlates all the data from these sources and organizes it into a hard-copy Star System and Planetary File. The characters must have this information for ground exploration they perform.

Exploration procedure

Upon entering a new system, an exploration team follows a general basic procedure. Each planet in the system is orbited long enough for the Planetary Scanner System and the Radar Mapper to do a complete job. Atmoprobos are

then launched at each planet, and other standard observations are made.

Meanwhile, the pilot and astrogator make navigational observations and feed them into the computer. This includes information such as the jump program to the system, descriptions of the astronomical bodies in the system, and the stellar type and nature of background radiation (as it applies to communications and radio interference) — in other words, all the astronomical information that an astrogator and pilot need to travel to and through this system.

Any planets indicated by scanning that are capable of supporting life must be explored further by a landing party. Remember that only ships with a hull size of 3 or less can land on a planet with an atmosphere. If an exploration ship is not able to land on a planet, the characters must use a shuttle or lifeboat to descend, or they must use landing drones or remote probes to explore the planet's surface.

The expedition's environmentalist must land on several different regions of the planet so that a total view of the planet's eco-system can be obtained. To find out the number of different regions the character must visit, roll 2d10 and subtract the skill level of the chief environmentalist. At least two different regions must be visited. To find out if the character has successfully analyzed the ecosystem in each region, see pp. 15-16 of the STAR FRONTIERS Expanded Rules Book. Be sure to add all the bonuses due to mechanical aid, especially if the character has a laboratory.

If the planet has a previously undiscovered intelligent species living on it, the PCs have their work cut out for them. They are responsible for making first contact (and making sure the contact is peaceful and positive), and their actions could literally make or break all future contact with that culture. The UPF emphasizes to its research crews that one thing the Frontier *doesn't* need is another enemy race like the Sathar to fight. Megacorporations emphasize the loss in profits taken when a potential customer and ally turns into a threat.

A character with a Psycho-Social skill of at least 4th level is required to study the species adequately. The character must study the species for 10d10 days to develop a first impression of the race and to establish minimal contact with them, if such is desired. At the end of the time period, the character must roll his Logic score or less. If he succeeds, the character is able to give a complete

description of the race, including all relevant customs and superstitions. If he fails, he has the impression that he hasn't missed anything important, but (of course) at least one thing of critical and vital importance might have escaped his notice (e.g., Dralasites are spitting images of the local beings' most beloved deity, and all Humans appear to be "demons" from ancient mythology, bent on destroying the world).

After receiving all the data, the computer prints a complete System Brief, Alien Creature Update File, Alien Culture Background Reports, and maps of the planet. An incomplete report results in a deduction in the character's profits, as well as possibly causing terrible problems later on for other research crews.

Planetary types

The variety of planetary types is endless, but very few planets are capable of supporting carbon-based life-forms. Of course, planets unable to support carbon-based life might support a new type of life form, such as silicon- or fluorine-based life. On such strange planets, the characters may have to wear spacesuits in order to survive. Even if a planet isn't habitable, it might still have large deposits of valuable ores which can be mined by enclosed colonies or by robots.

Planets that can support carbon-based life-forms possess many types of terrain. Occasionally, a planet is discovered that is almost completely covered by one type of terrain, such as water, desert, swamp, forest, or jungle, but this is very rarely seen. Referees should map out these new worlds before the PCs arrive, and should have detailed descriptions of each planet's particular features. Global maps may be patterned after those used for Alcazzar in SF 4, *Mission to Alcazzar*. More detailed surface maps may be generated of particular features that the referee believes the PCs may want to investigate (such as alien ruins).

The peculiar nature of each planet dictates the sort of special equipment needed by exploratory crews. High-gravity worlds require the use of exoskeleton suits; all-water worlds obviously require scuba gear or the like. Certain other pieces of equipment may need modification, as desired by the referee.

Hazards of exploration

Many dangers face the explorers on strange planets. Characters have to deal

with carnivorous or annoying animal and plant life, geophysical disasters (volcanoes, earthquakes, hurricanes, etc.), astrophysical disasters (solar flares, meteorite strikes, radiation increases from various sources, etc.), and even new alien races and cultures. The planet might already be inhabited by Sathar and their agents, or it might be used as a base by pirates, Mechanons, Zuraqqor, or other unfriendly forces. Crews can mutiny, equipment can break down, and ships and vehicles can run out of fuel or spare parts.

Even after leaving the planet, the characters might still face unusual threats. Their financial backer might try to get rid of them after getting their report. A rival of the characters' backer might try to bribe or steal the report from the characters. If the characters try to hold an open auction, any of the participants might try to steal the report. If the characters attempt to cheat their backer, a price may be put on their heads. (Remember the tracer implant?)

Rewards and pay

The final payment for a System Report, including the coordinates and the calculations for the jump route to the world, varies a great deal. There is no set formula for figuring out the price because of a variety of factors. On the average, a complete System Report (noting the location of valuable ore deposits and a habitable planet) goes for 250,000 Cr.

This sum can be modified according to the situation, due to a variety of factors. The amount of valuable ores that can be safely mined, the presence of pirates, Sathar, or other hostile races in the system, the completeness of the report, and the presence of dangerous life forms (of the unintelligent sort, including bacteria and viruses) that would inhibit colonization are all taken into consideration.

If the characters hold an open auction for the report, they can usually get a 1-10% increase in the price. If the characters work for the Cassidine Development Corporation, add 15% to the character's final profit. Future sources of income from the report might even include being hired to transport equipment and people to the new planet. And if the characters gain a monopoly on transport to the world, they may be able to set themselves up for life.

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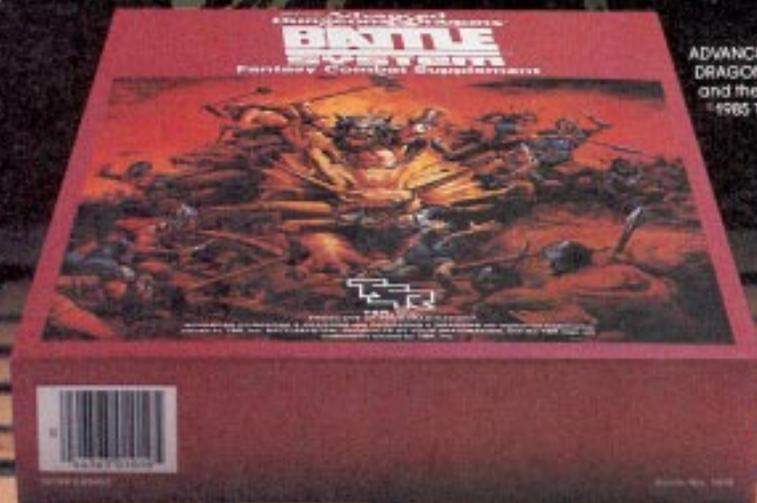
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Convention Calendar

QWESTFIELD 1, Jan. 4

This one-day gaming event will take place at Eason Hall in Westfield, New York. Featured events will include AD&D®, GAMMA WORLD®, TRAVELLER®, STAR FRONTIERS® tournaments. A dealers' table will also be available. For more information about this event, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Gamer's Connection, P.O. Box 822, Jamestown NY 14702-0822.

WINTER FANTASY, Jan. 4-5

To be held at the Americana Resort in Lake Geneva, Wis., this convention will offer a variety of role-playing tournaments, miniatures events, board games, an auction, and demonstrations. Guests of honor will include game designers Jim Ward, Tom Wham, Frank Mentzer, and Carl Smith, and RPGA™ Network coordinator Penny Petticord. Registration fees are \$7 for the weekend, or \$4 per day. For more details, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Winter Fantasy, P.O. Box 721, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

DRAMACON, Jan. 10-12

This convention is sponsored by the Fort Worth Country Day school branch of the International Thespian Society, and proceeds will benefit said organization. A variety of tournament events will be offered, and there will be a team quiz for which the questions will be based upon the literary words of J.R.R. Tolkien. For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Dramacon Gaming Convention, 3836 Glenmont Drive, Fort Worth TX 76133, or telephone (817) 292-8745.

RUSTYCON III, Jan. 17-19

To be staged at the Executive Inn in Seattle, Wash., this science-fiction convention will feature a number of activities. Guests of honor include author Vonda N. McIntyre and artist Ilene Meyer. Registration fees are \$20. For more information, contact: Rustycon III, P.O. Box 47132, Seattle WA 98146.

BRIDE OF PANDEMONIUM, Jan. 18

This event will be staged at the Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in Toronto, Ontario. This third annual convention will include 17 games, a figure and diorama contest, an auction, and open gaming. Gift certificates will be awarded. For more details about this gaming convention, contact: Dungeon Parties, Inc., P.O. Box 67, Stn. F, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4Y 1N1, or telephone (416) 924-1989.

CHIMERACON III, Jan. 25-26

This convention will be held at the Carolina Union at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, NC. Guests of honor include Orson Scott Card, Manly Wade Wellman, Allen Wold, M. A. Foster, and C. Bruce Hunter. Special events include an "Outer Limits" cantina, a writing workshop, a trivia bowl, an art show, panels, and readings. Registration fees are \$3 per day. For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: ChimeraCon III, 12-A University Gardens, Chapel Hill NC 27514, or telephone (919) 967-5347.

CACTUSCON I, Feb. 1

This gaming convention will be staged at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Sierra Vista, Ariz. Special guest of honor is Rick Loomis of Flying Buffalo. Seminars, instruction groups for beginning players, and a variety of role-playing and board game tournaments are among the planned activities. Registration fees are \$1, and each scheduled event costs \$1. For details, contact: Cactuscon I, P.O. Box 1103, Sierra Vista AZ 85635, or telephone (602) 459-1073.

1986 FANTASY WORLD'S FESTIVAL, Feb. 7-9

This convention will be staged at the Hyatt Regency Hotel at Oakland's International Airport. Guests of honor will include Diane Duane, Marion Zimmer Bradley, and Diana L. Paxson. Registration fees are \$25 until February 1, and \$30 thereafter. For more details, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Friends of Darkover, P.O. Box 72, Berkeley CA 94701.

WARCON '86, Feb. 7-9

This convention will be held at the Memorial Student Center at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. Events will include tournaments for the AD&D®, Traveller, Squad Leader, Nuclear War, and Star Fleet Battles gaming systems. Preregistration fees are \$7; registration fees are \$10. For more information, contact: MSC Nova, Box J-1, Memorial Student Center, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77844.

AUGCON '86, Feb. 8

This gaming convention is sponsored by the Algoma University Games Club, and will be a part of the Ontario Winter Carnival in Bon Soo. For more information, contact: Algoma University Games Club, 1520 Queen Street East, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada P6A 2G3.

DUN DRA CON, Feb. 14-17

This gaming convention will take place at the Airport Hyatt in Oakland, Cal. Seminars, a painting contest, and a flea market are among the scheduled events. For more information, contact: Dun Dra Con, c/o T.O. Green, 386 Alcatraz Ave., Oakland CA 94618

ORCCON, Feb. 15-17

This gaming convention will take place at the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel. Activities will include role-playing tournaments, war games, seminars, and an auction. For more information, contact: Orcccon, P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808, or telephone (213) 420-3675.

WISCON 10, Feb. 21-23

This science-fiction convention will be staged at the Concourse Hotel in Madison, Wis. Guests of honor include Chelsea Quinn Yarbro and Suzette Haden Elgin. Activities include films, a masquerade, and an art show and auction. For more details, contact: WisCon 10, P.O. Box 1624, Madison WI 53701, or telephone (608) 251-6226 (days) or (608) 233-0326 (evenings).

NOVAG 1, Feb. 22-23

This convention will take place at the West Park Hotel in Fairfax, Va. Events will include role-playing and war games. Contact: Northern Virginia Adventure gamers, 101 East Holly Ave., Sterling VA 22170, or telephone (703) 450-6738.

WAMCON '86, Feb 28 - Mar. 2

This event will be held at the Sheraton Inn Coliseum in Hampton, Va. Guests of honor will include Judson Scott, A. C. Crispin, and Tracy Hickman. Two- and three-day registrations are available. For more details, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: WamCon, P.O. Box 2223, Poquoson VA 23662.

BASHCON '86, Mar. 1-2

This gaming convention will be held at the University of Toledo's main campus in Toledo, Ohio. More than 60 role-playing and board games and miniatures events will be offered. Also, an RPGA™ AD&D® tournament will be scheduled. For more details, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: UT-BASH, BashCon '86, 2801 W. Bancroft, Toledo OH 43606.

LUNACON '86, Mar. 7-9

This science-fiction convention will be held at the Westchester Marriott Hotel in Tarrytown, New York. Guests of honor will include Marta Randall and Madeleine L'Engle. Multi-track programming of panels, workshops, and readings will be available. Also featured are an art show, a dealers' room, films, a masquerade, and a variety of role-playing and computer games. Registration fees are \$16 until February 26, and \$20 thereafter. For details, contact: LunaCon, P.O. Box 6742, FDR Station, New York NY 10150.

TRI-CON IV, Mar. 14-16

This gaming convention will be staged at Poe Hall at the NC State University Campus in Raleigh, N.C. Tournaments, films, and miniatures events will be scheduled. Registration fees are \$5 for the weekend, or \$3 per day. For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: N.C. State Gaming Society, P.O. Box 50201, Raleigh NC 27650.

NEOCON V, Mar. 21-23

To be staged at the Gardner Student Center of the University of Akron in Akron, Ohio, this convention will offer role-playing, board, and miniatures games. For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Neocon V, P.O. Box 7411, Akron OH 44306.

SIMCON VIII, Feb. 21-23

This gaming convention will be staged at

the University of Rochester's River Campus in Rochester, N.Y. Role-playing events, board games, and historic miniatures will be among the featured activities. A dealer's room will also be available. This convention is free to the public. For more information, contact: Jevon Garrett, P.O. Box 29142, River Station, Rochester NY 14627.

MACON OPUS CON 1, Mar. 28-30

This science-fiction convention will be held at the Hilton Hotel in Macon, Ga. Guests of honor will include television celebrities James Doohan, Jon Pertwee, and Elvira. Activities will include gaming tournaments, two costume contests, videos, and an art show. Registration fees are \$15 until January 16, and \$20 thereafter. For details, contact: Middle Georgia Society for Fantasy and Science Fiction, 4315 Pio Nono Ave., Macon GA 31206, or telephone (912)781-6110.

AGGIECON 17, Apr. 3-6

This convention will take place at the Memorial Student Center of Texas A&M University. Guests of honor include George R.R. Martin, Orson Scott Card, and Frank Kelly Freas. Howard Waldrop will be the toastmaster. Scheduled events include panels, readings, movies, a masquerade, an auction, and a banquet. Registration fees are \$10 until March 15, and \$13 thereafter. For more details about this convention, contact: AggieCon 17, Box J-I, Memorial Student Center, College Station TX 77844, or telephone (409) 845-1515.

VIKING CON 7, Apr. 18-20

This science-fiction convention will be staged at the SFFC V. U. Building at Western Washington University. For more details about this event, contact: Tim Hoehner, Western Washington University, Bellingham WA 98225.

Convention Calendar Policies

In order to ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be either typed double-spaced or printed legibly on 8½" by 11" paper. The contents of each listing must **not** exceed 70 words in length.

The information given in the listing **must** be prepared in the following format:

- 1) title and date (not to exceed 2 lines of printed matter),
- 2) site and location,
- 3) guests of honor (if applicable),
- 4) special events offered,
- 5) registration fees or attendance requirements,
- 6) address (telephone number optional) where additional information can be obtained.

Sample listing:

EVERYCON, Jan 1-3

This gaming event will take place in Nowhere, Ind. Fred Smith and Jane Doe are guests of honor. Role-playing games and miniatures events will be featured. Registration is free. For details, contact: EveryCon, P.O. Box 000, Nowhere IN 46000.

Convention flyers, brochures, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for this column and will be discarded. We reserve the right to edit listings, but we are not responsible for updating them.

All listings must be accompanied by a cover letter which includes both an address and a telephone.

number. We are not, though, responsible for incorrect information provided to this office. If a cover letter is not provided, the listing will not be printed. No call-in listings will be accepted.

Foreign and domestic listings are welcome. Convention listings should be mailed by the copy deadline date to Patrick Lucien Price, Convention Listings Coordinator, c/o DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

Copy deadline dates are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. For example: The copy deadline for the April 1986 issue is the last Monday of February 1986.

For any questions related to the Convention Calendar, please contact Mr. Price at (414) 248-3625, ext. 376.

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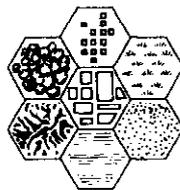
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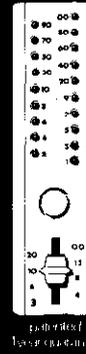
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The forum

(From page 4)

character's jump number is determined. I'd start by reducing the basic jump number to two-thirds of its present value (and I'd make the "Combined strength and dexterity" column top out at 36-37; beyond that, you don't get any better). Now a non-thief-acrobat with a combined strength and dexterity of 31 has an unadjusted jump number of 6; under non-hazardous conditions, he can clear 12 feet in a running broad jump. But this character is near the limit of his physical ability; he has only a 30% chance of being able to extend the jump to 14 feet, and he'll never get any better

at jumping than he is already. The thief-acrobat, on the other hand, has a 50% chance of extending his jump to 13 feet — and he's only at the low end of the scale; as he gains experience, he'll get even better at jumping.

Reducing jump numbers by one-third means that a character with an average score (21) in combined strength and dexterity has a jump number of 4, and can clear 8 feet in a running broad jump — the same distance given in *Arcana* for a non-thief-acrobat character.

Although it seems inappropriate to use a character class that specializes in jumping plus a separate jumping system for everyone else, you may be able to find a way for them to work together. The answer lies in toning down the average guy's ability to jump, not in improving the figures for the thief-acrobat. — KM



HEY, FRED! ...YA S'POZE ALL DESE GUYS GOT COOSHY JOBS, WIT' BANKER'S HOURS? ...N DAT'S WHY DEY GOT DER SHNOZOLAS STUCK IN A MUG DIS OILY IN DE AFTERNOON?

UH, CAPTAIN... I DON'T THINK YOUR STRATEGY IS WORKING.

YER RIGHT.

CRASH!

I AIN'T GETTIN' NOWHERE TRYIN' TO SWEET-TALK DIS BUNCH!

EY! LEGGO MY LEG!!

OK, IMP... WUT'S IT PAY?

TWENNY BUCKS FER BIG TROLLS, 15 FER LITTLE TROLLS, 12 FER HOBGOBLINS, 10 FER GOBLINS, AND 2.50 AN HOUR FER RATS!

AN HOUR?

YEAH!

TWUNNY BUCKS AN HOUR???

DAT'S WHAT I SAID! NOW PUT ME DOWN!

AUGH!

CRASH! SPLAK! SLAM! NOCK! BASH! BUMP! BANG! CRUNCH! WOMPACH! BOONK! GET OTTO THE WAY! RAVV! THUMP THUMP THUMP! BOM! BANG! BUMP! BASH! KEY! WATCH WHERE YER GOIN! OUCH!

HEH!

GET DISED CLUNCEY IDIOTS!

N N N

YA SEE, FRED?

NUTTIN' TO IT!

OBVIOUSLY YOUR CHARISMA OVERWHELMED THEM, CAPTAIN.

I TAKE IT YOU'RE GONNA BE THE FOREMAN.

WHERE'D YA EVEH GET DAT IDEA?

TRAMP ©1986

Dragonmirth

*A clever young druid named Eve
Used magic, her foes to deceive.
When other spells were spent,
She'd change to an ent
To make like a tree, and leave.*

— Joni Leigh Perry



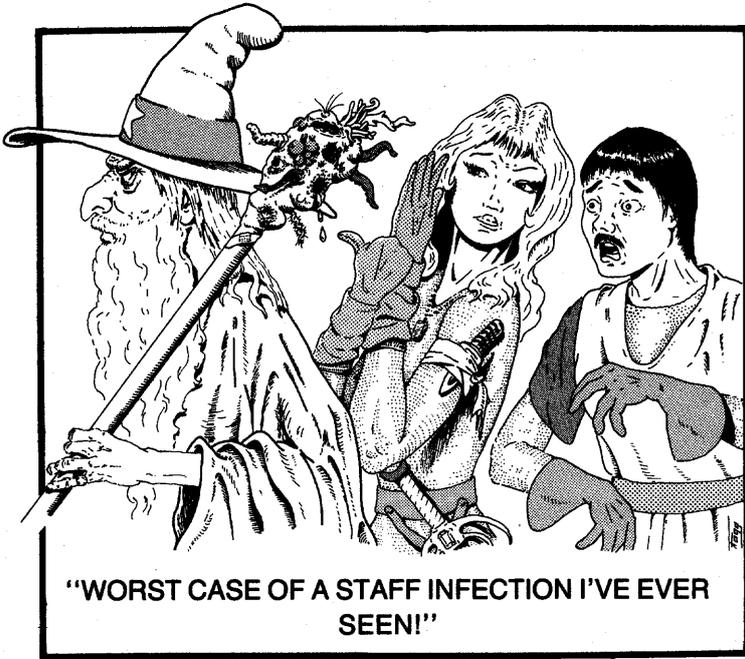
"WE GOT HERE AS SOON AS WE COULD. NOW, WHAT WAS ALL THAT SHOUTING ABOUT?"



"I HEARD YOU WERE EXTINCT!"

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"WORST CASE OF A STAFF INFECTION I'VE EVER SEEN!"

"IS IT USER FRIENDLY?"

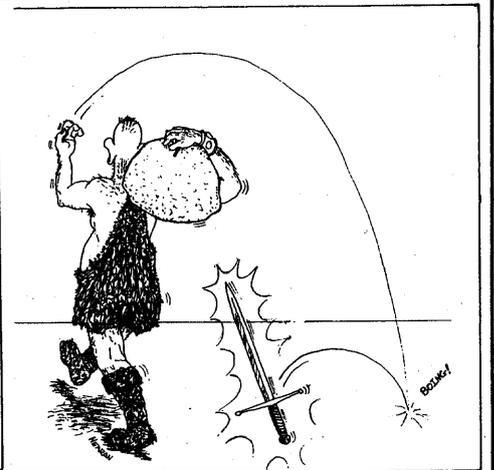
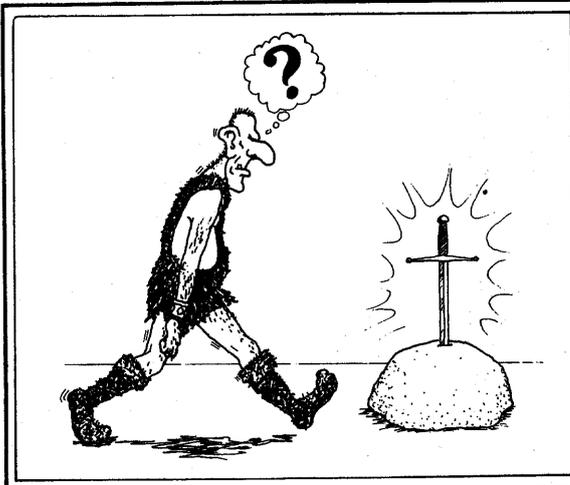


TOMASIC

E, B, Wagner



"ARE YOU ABSOLUTELY SURE THE GUY YOU BOUGHT THESE NAVIGATIONAL CHARTS FROM WAS COLUMBUS?"

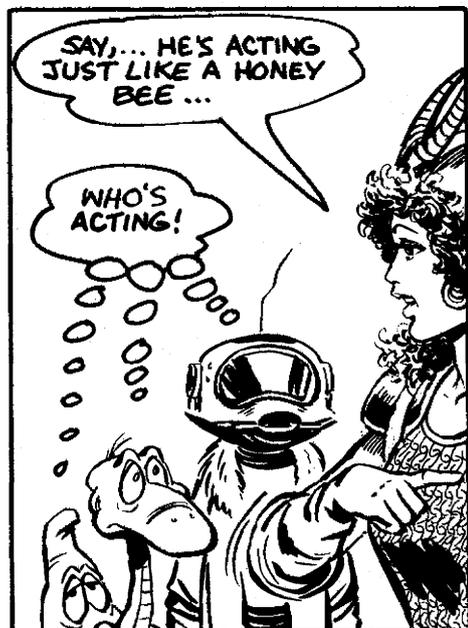


SNARFQUEST

#30

BY ELMORE

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HOLYSMOKE, AVEEARE! WHAT DA @*#% IS GOIN' ON?... WHERE DA *#* ARE WE?... WHO IS DAT BEAUTIFUL WOMAN?

OH SNARF! SNARF!



BLEEP! SNARF, YOU HAVE BEEN SCARED BACK TO YOUR NORMAL SELF!

DAT MONSTER-LGH! WHERE DID HE COME FROM?



SO AVEEARE QUICKLY EXPLAINED TO SNARF WHAT HAD HAPPENED THE LAST COUPLE OF DAYS.

YOU MEAN I REALLY DID ALL OF DAT STUFF?... WOW! NOW DAT EXPLAINS WHY MY HEAD HURTS AN' WHY I FEEL SO BAD!

YES, YOU'VE HAD A COUPLE OF HARD DAYS.



SNARF, YOU'VE REALLY IMPRESSED ME. YOU ARE THE BRAVEST PERSON I HAVE EVER MET.

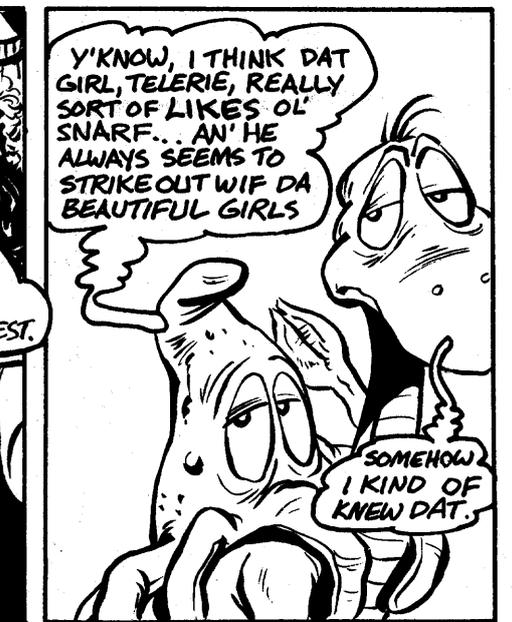
SNARF, STAY COOL, DON'T START BRAGGIN' AN' BLOWYER IMAGE!



THANK YOU... I GUESS, ... Y'KNOW, THINGS AREN'T REAL CLEAR, BUT I GUESS I DID WHAT I HAD TO DO?

DAT'S IT! STAY COOL.

SO MODEST.



Y'KNOW, I THINK DAT GIRL, TELERIE, REALLY SORT OF LIKES OL' SNARF... AN' HE ALWAYS SEEMS TO STRIKE OUT WIF DA BEAUTIFUL GIRLS

SOMEHOW I KIND OF KNEW DAT.



LEAD ON, SNARF, WE WILL FOLLOW.

LEAD?! GAK... I COULD GET KILLED DOIN' DAT.

ER...OK... F-FOLLOW ME.



LATER.

LOOK, THERE'S A LIGHT UP AHEAD.

BETTER PUT OUT YOUR TORCH.



LISTEN LEECH, I DON'T LIKEDIS - I DON'T NEED DIS - I DIDN'T ASK FOR DIS, I IS SCARED TO DEATH!

HEY, I'M SCARED TOO - BUT ADMIT IT, DIS IS EXCITING!

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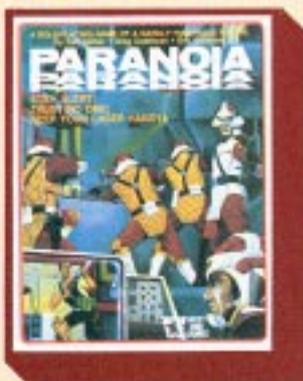
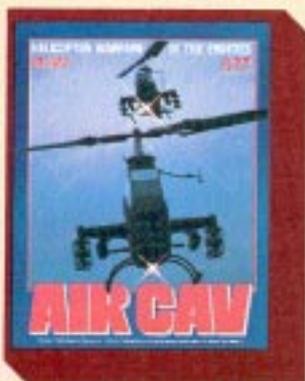
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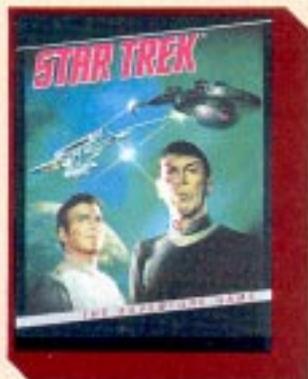
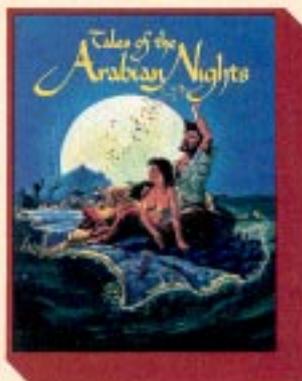
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