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81



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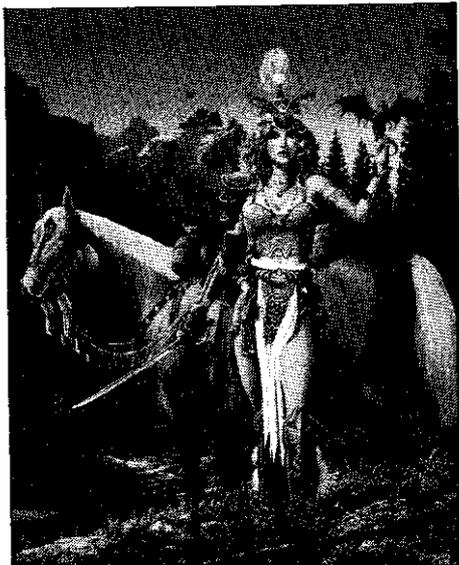
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## SPECIAL ATTRACTION

- 45** A plethora of paladins — *Christopher Wood*  
Seven new alignment-oriented NPC classes

## OTHER FEATURES

- 8** The laws of magic — *Charles Olsen*  
Everything you wanted to know about the arcane
- 14** Casting spells for cash — *Fraser Sherman*  
Magic-users are good for more than combat
- 16** The ecology of the maedar — *Ed Greenwood*  
All about the medusa — and her man!
- 18** Money isn't everything — *Carl Sargent*  
... But a few gold pieces can make a big difference
- 22** Open them, if you dare — *Ed Greenwood*  
Enter an unusual magic item — enchanted doors
- 24** The ranger redefined — *Deborah Christian*  
More skills to help strengthen the class
- 33** More range for rangers — *James A. Yates*  
A new system for determining followers
- 38** The way we really play — *Tom Armstrong*  
Thoughts on the development of a Dungeon Master
- 40** Bad idea, good game? — *Michael Dobson*  
Why some "bad" games fail and others don't
- 62** Intruder — *Russell Madden*  
Being considered alien is always in the eye of the beholder

## THE ARES™ SECTION

- 70** Notes from the Underground — *Ken Rolston*  
How to be a better traitor in the PARANOIA game
- 76** Stellar Feedback — *Roger E. Moore*  
A look through the science-fiction gaming mail
- 78** The MARVEL®-Phile — *Jeff Grubb*  
Alpha Flight™ and Omega Flight™, part I
- 81** The New Humans — *David Wainwright*  
Pure strain humans in the GAMMA WORLD® game

## DEPARTMENTS

- |                      |                        |                |
|----------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| 3 Letters            | 60 TSR Profiles        | 90 Wormy       |
| 4 World Gamers Guide | 87 Convention calendar | 92 Dragonmirth |
| 6 The forum          | 88 Gamers' Guide       | 94 Snarfquest  |
| 58 TSR Previews      |                        |                |

## COVER

TSR staff artist Keith Parkinson enters the ranks of cover artists for DRAGON® Magazine with "Valshea." According to Keith, the woman who stared back at you when you first laid eyes on her is Lady Valshea, an elven fighter/magic-user who was captured in color as she, her familiar, and her trusty steed took a break during their passage through Blue Rock Vale.

# Letters

## Missing maps

Dear Dragon,

I am ecstatic about the module in #104, since I play the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game and am always interested in new plots. But there was one problem: I didn't have any of the maps listed in the adventure, so I couldn't use it.

Another problem: The article on kender in #101 contained little signs that indicated kender would make great thieves, but when I looked for bonuses to their abilities all I could find was a high dexterity. What bonuses do kender get?

Final question: A while back Mr. Gyax said something about some new character classes like the savant, the mystic, the mountebank, and the jester. Are these going to be published and if so, when?

Mark Baxter  
Orlando, Fla.

*Of the four maps required to play the Sudden Dawn adventure, the one for Chapter 1 comes in the MARVEL SUPER HEROES boxed game set, and the one for Chapter 2 is provided in the adventure. Because of space limitations, we were unable to reproduce the maps for Chapters 3 and 4, but they are both contained in MHAC6, New York, New York. If you don't want to buy that accessory or can't find it for sale, you can make your own maps. The Barclay Research Center is similar to the city map in the boxed set, but with the addition of a riverfront section. The 35th floor of the Empire State Hotel has 4 large suites, a storage room accessed by a stairwell, and three elevators, with a central hallway connected to each of them — 10 areas in all, counting the stairwell.*

*Kender have the same bonuses for thieving skills as halflings do. This was implied in the article (on p. 13), but should have been more clearly stated. Kender, like all other thieves, also receive bonuses for high dexterity*

*In issue #103, Gary Gyax mentioned the mystic, the savant, and the jester (but not the mountebank) as new character classes (subclasses, actually) that will be included in the Second Edition of the AD&D® game rules. To the best of our knowledge, he has no plans at present to preview these classes through articles in the magazine. If that situation changes, we'll let you know. — KM*

## Armor class answer

Dear Dragon,

I have a question pertaining to the thendar (issue #101, Creature Catalog, p. 54). Under armor class it says "see below," but nothing is mentioned in the text about armor class. What is it supposed to be?

David Korson  
Louisville, Ky.

*We neglected to note that because of their magical and extraplanar nature, thendar have*

*a natural armor class of 7; however, high dexterity and magic devices such as rings of protection may improve this figure considerably — RM*

## One or the other

Dear Dragon:

I have a question regarding the spell-casting abilities of the new bard class in the Best of DRAGON Vol. III. It states that "the effectiveness of a druid spell cast by a bard is the same as that of a druid one level lower than the bard." Under the new *Unearthed Arcana* rules, it is now possible for elves to be druids of unlimited levels (except for wild elves). Elves can also be bards of unlimited advancement, according to the article.

My question is this: If an elfen druid/bard (of perhaps 5th/5th level) casts a druid spell acquired by his bard class, would the spell be cast at 4th level efficiency (as in the rules), or would the elf cast it at his normal druid level? After all, the spell effect is no different for both classes (except for the special few outlined in the article).

Richard Hudson  
Jackson, Miss.

*What we have here is an excellent example of what happens when you combine official rules with unofficial material from a magazine article, and toss in a pinch of personal preference to boot. The ingredients don't mix very well. Sometimes you can use one or the other (the rules or the article), but not both.*

*In the first place, the rules in Unearthed Arcana were not designed to be compatible with the unofficial bard class, which was written and first published several years ago. In the second place, neither the rules nor the article specifically permits the existence of a multi-classed druid/bard. Obviously, problems can (and often do) arise when someone tries to make an "illegal" multi-class combination work with the existing rules.*

*But if you want to assume that a druid/bard character is possible, Richard's question does have an answer. If the spell was "acquired by his bard class," the character would cast it as a druid of one level lower — just like the article specifies. The fact that the character is a druid in addition to being a bard should have no effect on the character's ability to cast a druid spell that he receives by virtue of being a bard. You have to keep the character's "dual identities" separate, and moderate his spell-casting as a bard as though he were only a bard. — KM*

## A question of size

Dear Dragon,

I have a question about the size and population of Ansalon in the world of Krynn. In the article about the gnomes of Krynn (#103), Roger Moore said there were about 59,000 gnomes on Sancrist Isle. How do you make room for all the other and more numerous races on Ansalon (which could be

*(Concluded on page 4)*

## More for your money

DRAGON® Magazine now costs more than ever before. That's not exactly hot news to those of you who read this column a couple of issues ago, when we announced the upcoming price increase. It shouldn't be bad news to subscribers, since the subscription rate didn't go up, and I hope the higher price didn't come as a shock to anyone who bought the magazine at a store.

What we didn't tell you in December, but what we can tell you now, is that you're going to get more for your money. Beginning with issue #107 (March 1986), the magazine's page count will go up from 96 to 104. Because we don't expect our advertising lineage to go up, that means we'll be able to devote those eight pages to more articles.

I won't try to claim that an extra eight pages is worth an extra 50 cents. As I pointed out two issues ago, the price increase is intended to help us cover our costs, and the costs of the distributors and retailers who sell the magazine on our behalf. Approximately half of that 50 cents will go directly to distributors and store owners; out of the 25 cents that we'll receive, we've decided that we can afford to pay the cost of producing and printing more pages and still end up with enough bucks to pay the bills.

I don't expect Ralph Nader to give us a medal for caring about the consumer, but I am rather proud of the fact that the company I work for has decided to use some of that extra revenue to directly benefit the people who are giving us the money.

In the next few months, we're going to be looking into ways to use our page space as effectively as possible — also in the interest of giving you more for your money. We've already "saved" one page, starting with this issue, by combining the table of contents page in the ARESTM Section with the contents page for the rest of the magazine. (That's why the page at the left looks a lot more crowded than it used to.) As other ideas come to us, or are suggested to us, we'll try them out. We want to do whatever we can to encourage you to keep thinking that the magazine you buy is worth every penny of the price you pay for it. As always, if you have any ideas on how we can accomplish this, we'll be glad to hear about them.



compared to the size of Arkansas), which has many barren and uninhabitable areas?

Wesley Marshall  
Cane Hill, Ark.

According to the map in DL5, the continent of Ansalon measures about 1,320 miles from east to

west and about 1,000 miles from north to south. This is a lot larger than Arkansas.

It occurs to me that you might have been referring to Sancrist Isle alone, not to the whole of Ansalon, when you were wondering how all those gnomes would fit into that space. Consider that 59,000 people (or gnomes) will not even fill

many of our world's baseball and football stadiums. Arkansas has about 2,000,000 people, and it is not considered a densely populated state. In addition, there are as many people living in Little Rock as there are gnomes on Sancrist Isle, and the gnomes live largely underground. Sure, everyone has enough room. — RM

## 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.

Abbreviations in parentheses after a name indicate games in which that person is especially interested:

AD = AD&D® game; DD = D&D® game; CC = CALL OF CTHULHU®

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way for them to contact other game-players who would be interested in corresponding about the activities that they enjoy. Unfortunately, we cannot extend this service to persons who live in remote areas of the U.S. or Canada, or to U.S. military personnel with APO or FPO addresses. Each eligible name and address that we receive will be published in three consecutive issues of DRAGON® Magazine; to be listed for more than three issues, you must send in another postcard or letter.

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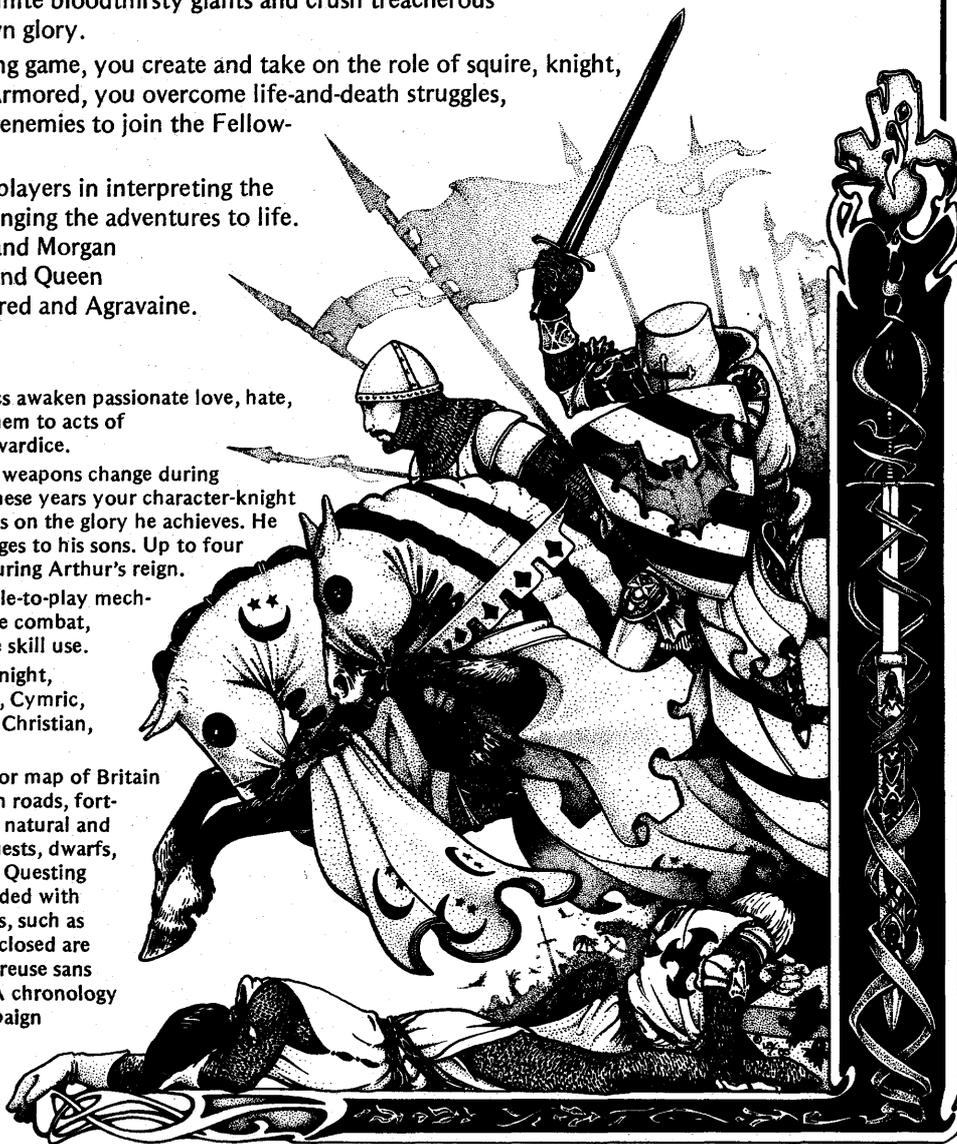
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## The Game of Quest, Romance, & Adventure

# The forum

I'd like to comment on two statements in DRAGON® issue #102.

First, I applaud Mr. Gygax on his choice of words in "Realms of role playing." For a long time I've tried to convince people that "role playing" is not saying archaic words in a funny voice or mouthing stereotypical attitudes to let everyone know from your first breath what class and alignment you are, but is rather using actions and words to play the character in an internally consistent manner. The phrase "role assumption" says it all. The rest of the process — varying language and actions to fit the situation, etc. — falls into line once the role is assumed.

Second, I'd like to comment on Mr. Sheldon's comment in the Forum. Yes, it is difficult to role play with one character and a GM. But it can also be rewarding. The joy of gaming is that game systems are flexible — you don't always have to be part of a large group going to a specific place to find a specific object and fight masses of creature just to have fun. A good GM can tailor an adventure to fit the number and level of the available characters. Playing a 1st-level character lost in the woods and encountering minor beasts can be as enjoyable (and dangerous) as running a party of mid-levels through a jungle full of lions, tigers, and bears.

The adventures available to the single character are many. A robbery attempt by a single thief, wandering through the city, and going to an inn to meet a potential employer all offer the chance for role playing and role assumption that can be challenging and enjoyable. Single-character adventures also offer the GM who likes role playing the chance to run multiple NPCs. This type of adventure can be difficult, but this is balanced by increased player involvement.

In fact, some games seem to be made for one-on-one playing. The TOP SECRET® game is a good example, with a subject suited more to lone agents than to groups of the same. The super-powered hero games also provide single-character quests as close as your favorite comic book.

Admittedly, my gaming group (which has been together for eight years now) tends to go on group adventures more often than not, with 4-6 players being the norm. But it is very common for one or two of us to get together with our GM for adventures between or instead of the group's meetings. After all, if one assumes the character properly, there will be things that the character wants and needs to do that don't involve the other characters. Thus, single-player adventures can grow logically out of character assumption.

Bob Kindel  
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio

\* \* \* \*

Gary Gygax's article in issue #102 really bothered me. I guess that it would be really silly to contend that Mr. Gygax misses the point of adventure role-playing, as he is in large part responsible for creating the point, but perhaps I can say that fantasy role-playing games have evolved a long way from the D&D® game's early days, that maybe Mr. Gygax is missing the full potential of the point.

What Mr. Gygax seemed to be saying is that role-playing (*i.e.*, assuming a character different from yourself and then playing it accurately) has become too much of a priority in role-playing games, that it bogs down the action of the game and blurs a distinct line between role-playing and acting, which is for some reason bad. Instead of playing a role different from oneself, one should play oneself, assuming the role of a fighter, wizard, or whatever.

Mr. Gygax is wrong, and here's why.

To begin with, how can a character who has grown up in a fantasy society (and is perhaps not even human) have the same personality as a person who has lived his life in the twentieth century on Earth? Human nature is a constant, but the environment has a significant effect on a person's character. Besides, what if your character is a nonhuman? Is it possible to play a nonhuman character with your own personality? It seems to me that one cannot take a personality out of the Eighties and assign it to a person in a totally different environment.

Secondly, role playing is not acting. In many respects it is similar, but in the most important one, it is not. The main difference is that an actor plays the role of a pre-invented character. The script writer is responsible for the creation and development of the character; the actor's job is to convincingly change the character from a written format to a visual format. The closest thing to that in role playing would be to have a player use an NPC created by the DM, but that would still have nothing to do with actually getting up and acting. No, if you must compare role playing to any other art form, it should be with writing, in which the author creates his character, then guides it through a series of events, having it behave as befits its personality.

This, however, is trivial when placed next to Mr. Gygax's assertion that role-playing is difficult and is done at the expense of action. This is not necessarily true; in fact, if it is, then someone is doing something wrong. Role playing is very simple, once you define your character. It has been my experience that if you really enjoy your character, playing it will become almost second nature. Furthermore, role playing actually enhances the action in a game, in that the characters tend to take new approaches in handling situations. If I were playing myself as a fighter in a fantasy world, as Mr. Gygax suggests, then I can hardly help but to draw on my years of experience in fantasy RPGs to help me in a difficult situation. However, if I play a character different from myself, I find the character takes novel approaches to various situations, almost as if it had a mind of its own. Granted, sometimes the character makes mistakes that get it into trouble, but then, what fun would the game be if everything went right all the time?

Furthermore, a campaign can be tailored around certain characters. I have run several fun games in which the adventures were specifically designed around the personalities of the characters involved. These games had more mystique and atmosphere than any others I've ever seen, as well as action that rivaled the best. Also, the relationships between the characters in the party

may be different than those between the players, if the characters are different from their players. Generally, a group of players are friends who have known each other for some time. Their relationships, good or bad, are usually straightforward and known. Why should this be so for the characters? In the campaign I just mentioned, two of the characters were for all appearances the best of friends, yet they were plotting against each other behind each other's back. There were distrustful relationships, as well as amorous ones, that did not exist in real life. This threw a lot of spice into the game and made it a lot more fun.

Sometimes playing a character who is not only different from the player but different from the adventuring type in general can be fun. Ever play a character who was totally averse to adventures but was drawn into one by circumstance? That can lead to a very interesting and entertaining campaign, as I'm sure Bilbo Baggins would agree. Maybe Mr. Gygax prefers to play adventuring machines, Herculean characters who know all the tricks, even at 1st level. To my way of thinking, that is not a character; that is an automated chesspiece. But to each his own — that's what this game is all about. Still, characters who are a little different from the player are generally more realistic and have so much more "fun potential" that I don't feel that Mr. Gygax should attempt to sway other people's opinions away from them.

Charles Ryan  
Blacksburg, Va.

\* \* \* \*

In issue #99, on page 38, David Godwin brings up a good point about player characters being allowed to kill deities. In my opinion, the answer to this isn't to let the gods escape, but to make them more powerful. To say that a certain god has 300 hit points and does 7-70 points of damage is to say that he's tough, but also that he can be beaten. If deities are expressed in human terms, then there is no reason why humans cannot deal with them, and I see no reason why characters who can beat a god should not be allowed to do so.

In my campaign, I don't give gods hit points and armor classes; I just let it be known that they cannot be bested by mortals. Because a god can bestow spells on the clerics who worship him, then he must automatically be powerful enough to cast all these spells himself, as many times (and as many at a time) as he desires. In order for a being to be called a god, he should be of a power unreachable by player characters; if he's not, I see no reason why characters should not be allowed to destroy him.

Adam Griffith  
Seattle, Wash.

\* \* \* \*

In light of the recent discussion of the so-called "Monty Haul" campaign, I suggest that DMs turn to page 7 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide* for a few inspiring words from E. Gary Gygax. Then start at the top with money and power.

To deal with the surplus gold pieces acquired from oversized hoards, try reading the explanatory notes on page 5 of the *Monster Manual*. Under the section on treasure type is a set of rules for giving out reasonably sized treasures.

Power in fantasy role playing lies in religion and magic. In the *Legends & Lore* volume, on page 8, are guidelines for controlling divine beings as a DM. Here it is explained that the deities are jealous gods and won't allow a mere  
(Turn to page 87)



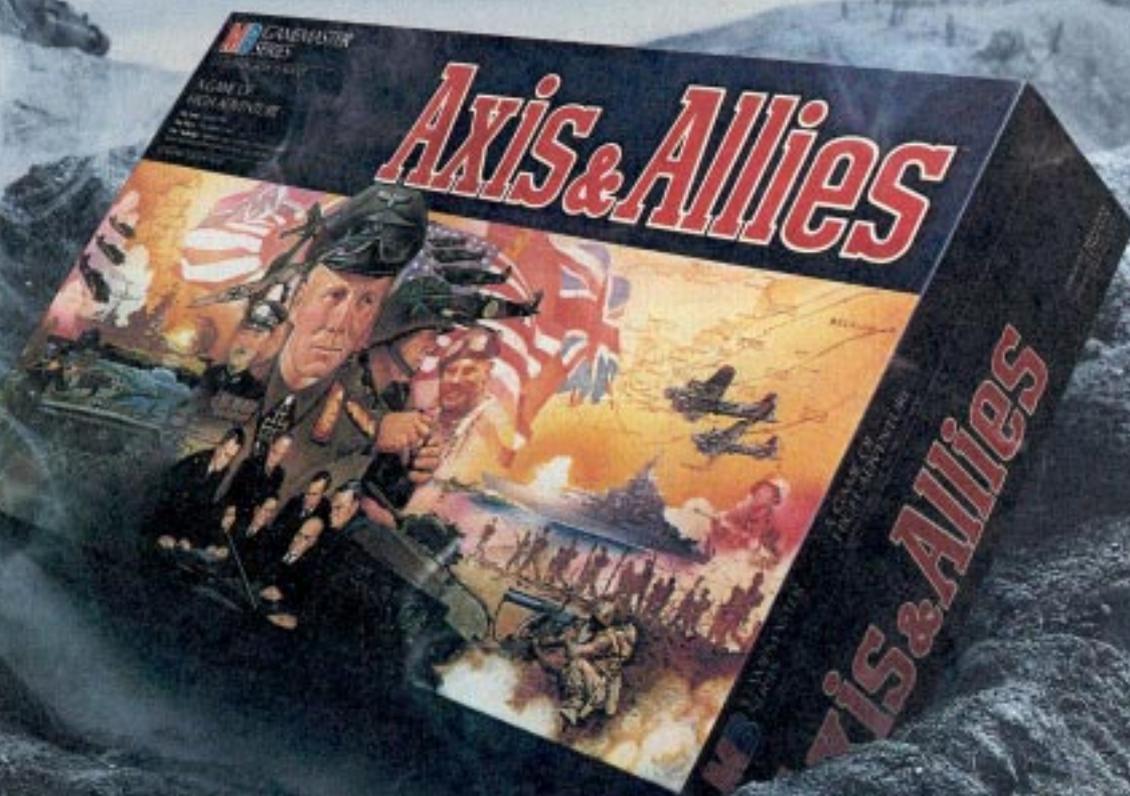
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# The laws of magic

## How the AD&D universe works, and why

by Charles Olsen

In the physical world, we are bound by certain laws. The law of gravity says that what goes up will sooner or later come down. The second law of thermodynamics dictates that in a closed system, the quantity of disorder (or entropy) will increase with each spontaneous event.

In a fantasy world where magic exists, there must also be laws governing the use of that magic. An understanding of those laws is necessary to develop and use spells. Yet, in the AD&D® game rules, these laws are ignored in favor of a "black box" approach to magic.

"Black box" is modern electronics jargon for a device with known performance characteristics but unknown means of operation. A well-known example is the telephone:

most people have no idea how or why this little marvel operates. They have no concept of electrons rushing-along their preordained paths, kicking relays and caressing transistors, or of the vast computer network involved in connecting two telephones. In truth, the average person has no need for such knowledge. All he or she needs to know is how to lift the receiver and push the buttons (or, on older systems, how to turn the dial).

This is the same approach used for magic in the AD&D game. The player whose character is a magic-user selects a spell from a list and casts it, having no idea what words are being spoken to invoke the magical energy. (That is, the *player* doesn't know what words are being spoken; of course, the magic-user character knows, for he or she has spent quite a bit of time memorizing the spell.) Each spell has a specific effect (or range of effects) and will perform exactly as defined.

Of course, this system of spell definition is necessary to make the game playable. Players and DMs alike must know exactly what each spell is going to do, or the entire system quickly breaks down. Yet, there must be a set of laws governing this system of magic. Since the rules allow the possibility of magical research to discover new spells, it would be helpful to both Dungeon Masters and players to have these principles of magic explicitly defined. This definition would give everyone a better idea of what is possible within the game's system of sorcery, and would indicate the proper approach to achieve a desired effect.

### The source of magic

To begin with, what is the source of magic? Why does it exist, and what gives

some characters the ability to utilize and manipulate its energy? Why must spell-casters have exceptional intelligence or wisdom — what is it that gives these characters the ability to invoke arcane energy? In order to explain these points, we must consider some of the findings of present-day biology and physics. Clearly, characters will have no knowledge of this, but players and DMs can know and understand.

The human mind is a powerful tool, and it is generally accepted that the average person uses only a fraction of the full potential of his mind. Even so, some people in an AD&D game world manage to develop and use a fair degree of this power. It typically manifests in one of three ways: magic-user spells, cleric spells, and psionics.

The use of any of these abilities obviously requires some source of energy. The human body (and, presumably, the body of an elf, dwarf, or other being) is in fact full of electrical energy, carried along nerve paths by neurons, but this energy is not sufficient to account for these arcane abilities.

To understand these powers, it is necessary to have a basic understanding of the structure of the multiverse. Long ago, men believed that all matter consisted of four elements: air, earth, fire, and water. This was the prevailing notion for centuries. Eventually, it was discovered that there are a hundred or so natural elements, composed of tiny particles called atoms. The word "atom" is derived from the Greek *atomos*, which means "indivisible," and indeed these particles were thought to be the smallest units of matter.

Then atoms were found to consist of still smaller particles — negatively charged electrons circling a nucleus, that is composed of protons, positively charged, and neutrons, which possess no charge at all. Recently, even smaller particles have been hypothesized — tiny quarks are thought to make up protons and neutrons. Other particles, such as neutrinos, are so small and energetic that they freely pass through solid matter, even substances as dense as lead. Collectively, these particles (and others, some of which may yet be discovered) constitute a pervasive energy field which permeates every part of the multiverse.

A cohesive energy field that flows through every point in the multiverse, penetrating all matter, would naturally have an effect on the events transpiring within the multiverse. This energy forms a link between all people and things, all events and places. Can this principle be used in magical universes?

Some of the ancients who considered the elements to be air, earth, fire, and water also believed in a fifth element they called *akasa*. In *The Sorcerer's Handbook*, by Wade Baskin, *akasa* is defined thus: "In Pythagorean thought, the fifth element. It is a celestial ether or astral light that occupies all space. In certain Buddhist teachings, it is the cosmic spirit-substance, the vast reservoir of being." This fifth element could be taken as the energy field which permeates the multiverse.

The *akasa* is everywhere — it is everything. Its energy reacts with the electrical energy in living things, influencing lives and events in ways that are not completely understood. Because of its pervasive nature, it forms a bond among all things present in the multiverse. Just as air is a medium to transmit sound, *akasa* could be the medium of all arcane powers — spell-casting abilities (magic-user and illusionist, cleric and druid, and the power of the gods) and psionic powers.

Also, the DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ Cyclopedica (now titled *Legends & Lore*) notes that "The source of a deity's godheads is in some way connected to his or her earthly worshipers, though in what manner the gods derive this power is a mystery totally beyond mortal (or immortal) comprehension. However, it is true that a god's power often increases or decreases as the number of his worshipers varies. Thus deities, and clerics as their agents, constantly try to increase the quantity and quality of their worshipers."

When the *akasa* is taken into account, this is no longer a mystery. As the *akasa* flows through living creatures, it is influenced slightly by their thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs. On an individual level, this influence is too small to be noticeable, but the effect is cumulative. As more people worship a deity; more *akasic* energy is focused on that being; and its power increases proportionately. [See "Deities and their faithful," DRAGON® issue #97. — Editor]

### Manipulating magic

The *akasa* can be consciously manipulated, but a person's ability to manipulate it depends on his mental strength; those with strong minds can do much more than people who are weak-minded. This is what *Legends & Lore* refers to in the statement that deities try to increase the *quality* of their worshipers. A hundred strong-minded, highly dedicated worshipers will increase a god's power more than a thou-

sand weak-minded worshipers of marginal dedication.

In the AD&D game, mental strength is reflected in the character abilities of intelligence and wisdom. Not coincidentally, these are the primary abilities of spell-casters — magic-users and clerics, respectively. Psionic characters must have high scores in *both* intelligence and wisdom. Why are the prime abilities different for each class of spell-caster? This will be answered later, after each class's relationship with the akasa has been discussed.

Of course, mental strength alone is not sufficient to manipulate the akasa. One must also know *how* to perform the manipulations. Use of the akasa is sometimes referred to as "magic," but this is a label born of ignorance. There are at least three distinct systems by which the akasa can be influenced, and magic is but one way. Now, if there is but one source of arcane power, why does it manifest in three different ways? What is it that makes magic-users, clerics, and psionics three different classes?

The difference lies in the manner in which the akasa is invoked. Ultimately, it is the strength of the mind that taps into this power and molds it. But even the most powerful mortal minds are very limited in their capacity for akasic manipulation. Most of the mortals who use the akasa need help to do so effectively.

Magic might be considered a crutch for manipulating the akasa. It takes years of study and practice to bring about a properly disciplined state of mind, for the mage must learn and understand the relationship between thoughts, spells components (verbal, somatic, and material), and the akasa.

A magic spell begins in the mind. By concentrating on the effects that the spell is to achieve, the magic-user initiates the process of focusing the akasa. This, however, is not sufficient to actually evoke the akasic energy. To trigger the spell, it is necessary to stimulate the akasa further. This is accomplished by generating small but very specific physical vibrations in the akasic energy field. These vibrations are produced primarily by vocal sounds (sound being a vibratory disturbance in the pressure and density of a fluid) and sometimes by gestures. (More often, however, the somatic component of a spell serves as a control rather than an invocation. For example, a mage casting *fireball* or *magic missile* must point at his target.)

There are a number of factors that determine exactly what a given spell will do when cast. These include the vibrations of verbal and somatic components, the focus of the mage's thoughts, and the properties of the material components.

The nature of this manipulation usually rips the materials used to cast the spell into their component particles, so that they become one with the akasa. But not all spells destroy their material components in this fashion. *Write*, for example, requires a fine ink composed of rare substances. Obviously, if the ink disappeared the spell would

be useless. *Bind* requires any ropelike object of nonliving material, and the spell causes this object to behave as the mage commands. Again, destruction of the material would render the spell pointless.

Clearly, there are two types of material components for magic spells. One type of component is needed to cast a spell, and is destroyed in the process. The other type of component merely receives the magic.

Cleric spells require a third type of spell component: religious items such as holy symbols and prayer beads. This is a requirement imposed by the deities, perhaps to remind the cleric where the power to cast these spells is coming from. While the holy symbol is essential to gain the deity's cooperation, it is not necessary for implementing the spell, and is not consumed when a spell is cast.

For magic-users, no matter what spell is being cast, the power to manipulate the akasa originates in the magic-user's mind. This might give a clue as to why a magic-user forgets the spell after it has been cast. The memory of a spell (or, for that matter, *any* memory) is actually a set of neural impressions. The akasa flows through the mind and, as the spell is cast, the invocation "smooths out" the impressions that form the memory. The spell is forgotten.

### Psionics

Some people have minds that are sufficiently strong and disciplined that they need no crutch, and no deities to draw upon. Their own minds provide all the power they need to manipulate the akasa, though in a manner that is less powerful than those who get outside help. These are the psionics.

Because psionic characters are drawing upon their own mental strength, they don't have to memorize (and forget) spells. But there is a price for this minor independence: psionic powers usually affect only the psionic, or perhaps one other person. Psionics is the most limited use of the akasa.

Psionic strength points are the AD&D game's equivalent of mental fatigue for psionics, giving characters and DMs a tangible method of measuring a person's psionic capacity. Everyone should be familiar with the effects of concentrating on a specific problem for several hours: the mind becomes fatigued, weary — headache may set in, and there may even be a feeling of physical fatigue.

The same principle applies when psionic attacks, defenses, and disciplines are used. However, these psionic abilities are a much greater expenditure of mental energy than normal concentration. A character with a psionic ability of 200, for example, could easily expend his full psionic attack strength in less than twelve segments (two minutes).

A person who has concentrated on a problem for several hours can restore his full mental strength by turning to other activities, resting, or sleeping. Sleeping is, of course, the fastest method of recovery, but anything that involves little or no mental effort will help.

Similarly, the AD&D game's psionic strength is recovered slowly (3 points/hour) by walking and like activity, 6 points/hour by sitting and talking or reading, 12 points/hour by resting and meditating, and most rapidly (at 24 points/hour) by sleeping.

### Magic-users and clerics

Now, why are the prime abilities different for clerics and magic-users? The answer lies in their respective methods of manipulating the akasa. In AD&D gaming, intelligence "is quite similar to what is currently known as intelligence quotient, but it also includes mnemonic ability, reasoning, and learning ability. . . . [magic-users] must be perspicacious in order to correctly understand magic and memorize spells." Because magic-users invoke the akasa directly, they must have the intellect to understand what they are doing, and the memory acuity to memorize spells.

Conversely, wisdom "is a composite term for the character's enlightenment, judgment, will, will power, and (to a certain extent) intuitiveness." Clerics don't need intelligence to manipulate the akasa themselves, because their deity supplies that power. But the deity wants to be sure that their clerics will use this power properly. A deity wants — and needs — to increase his number of worshipers, and his clerics are his representatives. Improper or inappropriate use of clerical power will turn people away from the represented deity. Therefore, a deity will only accept as clerics those who have enough wisdom to use clerical powers in an acceptable fashion.

Did the deities become what they are because they were worshiped, or are they worshiped because they are deities? This is a variation of the chicken-and-egg question, and I'm sure that both answers have many supporters. However, for our purposes it really doesn't matter. The fact is, these beings are deities, and they have tremendous power — in part due to the number of worshipers they have.

In order to increase their power, deities must increase the number of worshipers. They employ mortals to do the dirty work of recruiting worshipers, and assist the mortals by allowing divine power of akasic manipulation to be channeled by the clerics. The cleric draws directly on the power of his or her god — the deity supplies the energy, and the cleric merely directs its use.

### The principles of magic

Now that we understand the source of arcane power, we can discuss the laws governing spell-casting. For now, this article will deal with the principles of magic, which for our purposes pertain only to magic-users and illusionists. The arcane powers of the gods and clerics will be discussed later in the text.

There are three principles of magic; sympathy (sometimes called similarity), contagion, and signatures. The Law of Sympathy states that similar causes produce similar effects or, more simply, like produces

like. The Law of Contagion states that parts of an object can affect other parts of the same object, even if the parts are separated. This could be rephrased as "once together, always together." According to the Law of Signatures, "The attributes without reveal the powers within."

*Like produces like.* This principle is used to produce effects on a different scale in time and distance. For example, by starting a small fire as part of a spell, a magic-user might create a much larger fire in another location. This law is also the basis of a voodoo doll that is made in the likeness of an enemy. The theory is that damage caused to the doll will also occur to the person represented, if certain other conditions are met.

For example, *mending* requires two small magnets. Presumably the spell binds the magnets to the item being repaired, and then the magnets are allowed to come together. The Law of Similarity will then cause the parts of the item being mended to come together in the same way.

*Once-together, always together.* A voodoo doll is useless unless the spell-caster has a part of the person the doll represents — such as a lock of hair or a clipping of a fingernail. In another example, a sheet of paper might be torn in half, and one piece placed in a strategic location while the other is retained by the magic-user. Later, after an appropriate spell of binding has been cast, the caster can ignite the piece he or she carries, and the other piece will also start to burn.

As an example, the 4th-level spell *hallucinatory terrain* requires "a stone, a twig, and a bit of green plant." The stone, twig and plant should be picked up from the terrain that the illusion will hide. Also consider the 6th-level spell *move earth*, which requires a mixture of soils in a small bag and an iron blade. The soils should be part of the earth that is to be moved. The spell takes effect after the magic-user casts the binding, then scoops a portion of the soil out of the bag.

*The attributes without reveal the powers within.* Many spells draw directly upon the nature of their components. For example, the material component for the *jump* spell is the hind leg of a grasshopper, a creature known for its ability to make powerful leaps. The material component of the *grease* spell is a bit of pork rind, butter, or other greasy material. *Irritation* requires powdered leaf from poison ivy, oak, or sumac. *Sending* requires two tiny cylinders, each with one open end, connected by a short piece of copper wire — a toy telephone.

These are only a few examples of material components derived from the Law of Signatures. Most of the material components of magic spells draw directly upon the component's properties in this fashion, rather than following the more vague fashion defined in sympathy and contagion.

Presumably the laws of magic were discovered, refined, and finally applied through centuries of observation, theoriz-

ing, and experimentation — the same fashion in which our own scientific laws were established. There were no revelations, no mighty beings handing over a tome conveniently laying out the laws. The earliest magicians (or, more accurately, pre-magicians) were probably misunderstood, and quite likely were mercilessly labeled as charlatans, fakers, and worse. Like the early scientists of our world, early magicians undoubtedly were viewed with a great deal of contempt. A thankless task, to say the least.

### Clerics, gods, and metamagic

By contrast, the clerics were quite fortunate. They had no need to work out any arcane laws, for their spell-casting power was given to them on a proverbial silver platter — or, as the *Players Handbook* states, "Clerical spells, including the druidic, are bestowed by the gods so that the cleric need but pray for a few hours and the desired verbal and somatic components will be placed properly in his or her mind."

The arcane power of the deities is obviously not magic, for they are not bound by the laws of magic. This is quickly demonstrated by a casual perusal of the *Legends & Lore* volume. Consider, for example, the gods' innate *teleport* ability that requires no spell-casting, time, or concentration. Most gods have other abilities that are outside the range of magic. A few examples: Shang-Ti can instantly summon or banish any type of weather; Ares can *shape change* at will; Tvashtri can regenerate 20 lost hit points per melee round by grabbing parts of the air and applying them to his (or anyone else's) wounds; and, Freya is able to remove any curse with the touch of her hand.

These abilities are clearly above and beyond standard magic, with its spells requiring study, verbalization and sometimes troublesome material components. Since this arcane system transcends magic, it might be appropriate to call it *metamagic*.

Few — if any — clerics have any understanding of the laws of metamagic, for they have no need. The gods understand the laws well enough to use metamagic efficiently, and this in itself may be what makes these beings gods rather than mortals. Perhaps one factor that sets greater gods apart from lesser gods and demigods (apart from the number of worshipers) is their degree of understanding and proficiency with these laws.

In turn, each deity sets divine laws that its clerics must follow. These divine laws have nothing to do with the actual laws of metamagic, being governed instead by each individual god's temperament. *Legends & Lore* advises us that "Deities of all types, from the highest to the lowest, expect a great deal of work from their clerics in return for the power to work miracles." The *Dungeon Masters Guide* adds, ". . . clerics wishing to use third or higher level spells must be in good standing."

A cleric is judged by his behavior, which is always expected to be exemplary. *Always*.

"Even common everyday concerns must be viewed in light of their beliefs," as it is written in *Legends & Lore*. This behavior must naturally include daily prayer and meditation, occasional fasting, and most deities require regular sacrifices. Clerics must demonstrate considerable discipline and devotion to their deity every day, and a cleric who falters will not be given further spells — at least, no spells higher than those of 3rd level will be granted. If the cleric continues in this manner, eventually *all* spell ability will be suspended.

The process of enchanting items allows magic to be stored for later use. With many items, especially rings, a spell cast once during the enchantment will continue to provide benefits without further effort.

Furthermore, an item might provide its power to characters who are not spell-casters. A barbarian who knows nothing of magic (and wouldn't believe it even if he did) might still see the advantage in using a *ring of invisibility* to become a more powerful hunter and warrior.

A *necklace of prayer beads* includes stones that will allow a cleric to cast spells without the usual prayer and meditation, so there is obviously some method of enchanting metamagic into items as well. But there are very few metamagic items listed in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*; nearly all of the arcane items listed are products of magic. Since metamagic artifacts can and do exist, why are they so rare?

The answer should be clear. Deities give spells to clerics who practice the proper discipline and devotion *every day*; if the cleric's devotion falters, so does his or her spell-casting ability. If clerics could enchant metamagic into artifacts, they would be able to invoke these spells at a later time without prayer and discipline. This is contrary to the laws of the gods, who demand constant and unswerving discipline from those who use metamagic.

Metamagic artifacts might also make it possible for non-clerics to use cleric spells or — worse — clerics of *another deity* might invoke these spells. The gods must consider this a completely unacceptable situation, and they undoubtedly take steps to prevent it or minimize the possibility. The easiest way to accomplish this is to prevent metamagic from being enchanted into items. Since each god sets the laws that his or her clerics will follow, it is a simple matter to prevent their clerics from using metamagic in this fashion.

Yet, there *are* artifacts which could be produced by certain metamagic spells, with no corresponding official magic spells. (This doesn't mean that the magic spells don't exist — merely that they are not listed in the *Players Handbook* or *Unearthed Arcana*.) These include *rings of fire resistance*, *regeneration*, and *water walking*; *rods of resurrection*; *staves of curing*; *Keoghtom's ointment*; and the *periapt of wound closure*. There are other artifacts for which no character spells are listed, but which affect only clerics. These include the *books of exalted*

deeds and vile darkness and the pearl of wisdom.

Most of these items were probably created by the gods as gifts to assist faithful clerics. An occasional high-level cleric who has never strayed in alignment and whose service has been exemplary in all respects might be granted the ability to enchant items. This ability would be very rare and almost certainly only granted to clerics with a wisdom of 18, and of at least 9th level (High Priest).

One might wonder why a fighter with an intelligence of 18 cannot cast magic spells, or why a magic-user with a wisdom of 18 cannot cast metamagic spells, even if he is devoutly religious. Regarding the fighter with 18 intelligence, consider this analogy: Why can't a carpenter fly an airplane? The answer is that he doesn't have the knowledge and training required. If he did, then—in the terms of AD&D gaming—he would be called a carpenter/pilot. Similarly, a fighter cannot cast magic spells because he doesn't have the knowledge and training required to do so.

The answer to the other question—regarding the magic-user with 18 wisdom—is the same: The magic-user is not trained to cast clerical spells. However, this does not tell the whole story. The ability to cast metamagic spells is granted by the gods, who pretty much do what they please. While they normally will not allow metamagic to be used by non-clerics, they may occasionally find reason to give this power

to other devout worshippers.

Why do clerics have a chance to spell failure, while magic-users do not? This looks like an oversight, as it seems logical that all casters should have a chance for spell failure. Everyone has occasional problems with stumbling over words as they speak, and it would seem that a single mispronunciation in an incantation would nullify the spell.

Oversight or not, that is how the official rules stand. We will assume that this is the way it should be, and explore what may be the rationale behind the rule.

Clerics receive spells from their deities, and from the minions of their deities. Deciding which clerics are to receive spells, and judging the behavior and ministry of each cleric, in addition to tending normal business, makes for quite a lot of work. (Especially considering that large numbers of clerics are praying for spells at approximately the same time, just after a good night's sleep.)

Deities and their minions are aware that clerics of high wisdom are probably going to be more helpful than clerics with lower wisdom. With possibly hundreds of clerics praying for spells right around breakfast, hard-pressed deities and minions will naturally hurry through the process of granting spells. They would be careful when giving spells to clerics of high wisdom, but they occasionally get sloppy with clerics who are less wise. When a cleric with a wisdom score of less than 13 casts a spell, percentile

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dice are rolled according to Wisdom Table II: Adjustments for Clerics, in the *Players Handbook*. If failure is indicated, it means that the being who gave spells to the cleric wasn't paying full attention while placing the verbal and somatic components of that particular spell in the cleric's mind.

### Magic and metamagic compared

Since the magic and metamagic spell-casting systems are quite different, how does one account for those spells which appear in both systems? Both types of spells originate in the akasa, but the invocations are completely different and spells in one system are not necessarily possible in the other system.

Thirty-five official spells appear in both the magic and metamagic spell-casting systems. These are listed in the accompanying table, with the spell level in each of the respective systems. In the context of the game, these spells are not identical. The end results are the same, to be sure, but otherwise the spells are not similar. By analogy, consider computer programming. Once an application is defined, a program might be written in BASIC, COBOL, FORTRAN, Pascal, C, Assembly — or one of the other available languages. There are few similarities between these languages, yet the end result is almost always the same.

Almost? Well, there would be differences in speed of execution; depending on the exact implementation, BASIC is probably the slowest of the languages listed above, whereas Assembly would be the fastest. Another obvious difference lies in the size of the executable program code. Assembly is by far the smallest, with the closest runner-up placing in distant second.

The analogy still applies in AD&D gaming. There are some differences in range, duration, material components, and area of effect between spells of different systems. If a magic-user wants to acquire a new spell — *hold person*, as an example — he or she must find the *magic* spell of that name. The *metamagic* version would be useless to a magic-user, even if the cleric sincerely wanted to give away the spell.

Consider the twenty-two spells in the table that are available to both clerics and magic-users. In nine of these twenty-two common spells, the cleric spell is of a lower level than the magic-user spell. Additionally, nine of these spells are the same level for both classes. But, for the first seven experience levels, clerics advance faster than magic-users, so spells of 4th level or less are usable by clerics sooner than by magic-users. Only one of these same-level spells — *part water* — is higher than 4th level.

In effect, seventeen of these cleric/magic-user spells — roughly seventy-seven percent — are of a lower level for clerics than they are for magic-users. We can also compare cleric and illusionist, druid and magic-user, and druid and illusionist spells in this fashion. A summary of these comparisons is listed in the table in the next column.

The first column lists the total number of

## SPELLS COMMON TO MAGIC/METAMAGIC SYSTEMS

Spell	Attained at level:				Spell	Attained at level:			
	Cl	Dr	M-U	Ill		Cl	Dr	M-U	Ill
<i>Animal growth</i>	—	5	5	—	<i>Locate object</i>	3	—	2	—
<i>Animate dead</i>	3	—	5	—	<i>Lower water</i>	4	—	6	—
<i>Astral spell</i>	7	—	9	7	<i>Part water</i>	6	—	6	—
<i>Cloudburst</i>	3	3	3	—	<i>Plant growth</i>	—	3	4	—
<i>Confusion</i>	—	7	4	4	<i>Precipitation</i>	1	1	1	—
<i>Conjure animals</i>	6	—	—	6	<i>Protection from evil</i>	1	—	1	—
<i>Continual light</i>	3	—	2	3	<i>Pyrotechnics</i>	—	3	2	—
<i>Control weather</i>	7	7	6	—	<i>Reincarnate (-tion)</i>	—	7	6	—
<i>Detect evil</i>	1	—	2	—	<i>Remove curse</i>	3	—	4	—
<i>Detect magic</i>	1	1	1	2	<i>Stone shape</i>	—	3	5	—
<i>Dispel magic</i>	3	4	3	4	<i>Succor</i>	7	—	9	—
<i>Feeblemind</i>	—	6	5	—	<i>Symbol</i>	7	—	8	—
<i>Feign death</i>	3	2	3	—	<i>Tongues</i>	4	—	3	—
<i>Fire trap</i>	—	2	4	—	<i>Transmute rock/mud</i>	—	5	5	—
<i>Gate</i>	7	—	9	—	<i>Transmute water/dust</i>	—	6	6	—
<i>Hold person</i>	2	—	3	—	<i>Wall of fire</i>	—	5	4	—
<i>Know alignment</i>	2	3	2	—	<i>Water breathing</i>	—	3	3	—
<i>Light</i>	1	—	1	1					

spells that are common between the two spell-casting systems. The second column tells how many of these spells the metamagic caster can cast before the magic caster, taking into account differences in the number of experience points required to advance in experience levels, and also gives the percentage of these spells which the metamagic-caster gains before the magic-caster does. In each of the four cases, more than half of the common spells are available first to the cleric or druid.

### Magic/metamagic spell level comparison

	Total	Metamagic spell gained before magic spell
Cleric/magic-user	22	17 (77%)
Cleric/illusionist	6	4 (67%)
Druid/magic-user	19	11 (58%)
Druid/illusionist	3	2 (67%)

The fact that most of these duplicated spells are of a lower level in metamagic than in magic could be interpreted as an indication that, for the most part, the cleric spell-casting system is slightly more powerful than the system employed by magic-users. This is logical, both in terms of game playability and internal consistency. The actions of clerics are limited (and often dictated) by the alignment, temperament, and sphere of control of their patron deities. While their spells tend to be more powerful, clerics must be careful not to overstep the bounds of acceptable behavior when using this metamagic.

In contrast, there are no restrictions on the actions of magic-users. There are, of course, the normal restrictions that every character faces according to his or her alignment. But magic-users don't have to please finicky divinities in order to exercise their arcane abilities.

Having established that clerics are using a different system, and that cleric and magic-user spells are incompatible, what

happens to spells such as *detect magic* and *dispel magic*?

"When the *detect magic* spell is cast, the cleric detects magical radiations . . ." How is this spell description from the *Players Handbook* to be interpreted? Can a cleric detect magic? Can a magic-user detect metamagic? Can one spell detect both types of radiation?

Based on what has been said so far, perhaps there should be two different spells, *detect magic* and *detect metamagic*. Each spell is detecting the same thing — akasic radiation — but each spell is detecting different frequency ranges of the radiation. (Consider that X-rays are the same type of radiation as visible light; X-rays are merely a much higher frequency.) A third spell, called something like *detect psionic power*, might also be appropriate.

More likely, in this case "magic" is simply a generic term that encompasses both (or all three) kinds of power. The same principle would apply to *dispel magic*. In addition to being simpler, this approach has the advantage of remaining within the rules as currently written.

Presenting a logical and consistent explanation of a system of pure fantasy, such as the means and methods of spell-casting in the AD&D game, can be quite a challenge. The information presented here is, for the most part, merely the opinions and speculations of one person. There are some exceptions: The Laws of Sympathy and Contagion are generally accepted principles of magic that can be found in many sources. But beyond that, there may be as many interpretations as there are readers. This is natural, considering the subject.

The intent of this article was simply to present a logical, consistent explanation of the laws of the arcane, explaining why these powers exist and how they may be used. This should be helpful to players whose characters are performing magical research. It also answers some of the questions raised by the AD&D game rules of spell-casting, and could be an aid to role-playing. ❧

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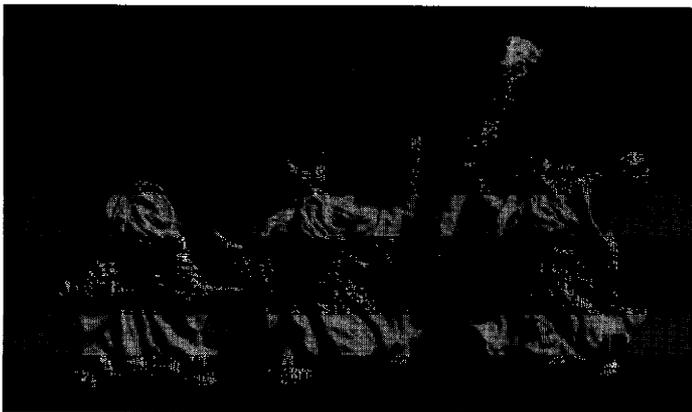
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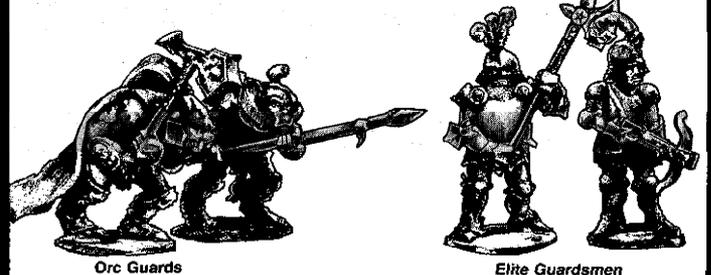
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# Casting spells for cash

## How magic-user PCs can earn their keep

by Fraser Sherman

In many AD&D® game campaigns, magic-users fall into two categories: reclusive, powerful NPCs whose services might be bought, and wandering, adventuring NPCs and player characters. However, this simple form of classification doesn't do justice to what a magic-user is and what such a character could be capable of.

In a sense, magic-users have much in common with the doctors and lawyers of our own world. They are experts in a body of specialized knowledge; they spend years of study to gain their expertise, and they also expend more effort and money than members of any other character class to acquire their class's special skills. Presumably, like doctors and lawyers, some take up magic out of a love of knowledge, and some for altruistic reasons — and a goodly percentage choose the profession based on a desire to turn their powers into wealth. Unfortunately for those in the third group, the rewards for all their effort and study may prove to be rather meager.

Consider: If a mage chooses not to go adventuring, he or she has two ways to make money — casting spells for a fee, or enchanting magical items. The latter, of course, is extremely possible — creating even one magic item could support a spellcaster in luxury for some time, and it's certainly much safer than adventuring against pit fiends and mind flayers. The catch, alas, is that it takes a 12th-level magic-user to cast the necessary spell, putting it beyond the reach of many spellcasters. Furthermore, even a wizard of the requisite level must still find a copy of *enchant an item* somewhere and make a successful attempt to learn it.

For magic-users without the luck or the level needed to learn *enchant an item*, the alternative path to wealth is to cast magic spells for hire. This, too, has its drawbacks. The most obvious problem is nobody wanting your spells. Many magic-user spells are combat- or adventure-oriented. A stay-at-home magic-user won't find many people wanting to buy a casting of *fireball*, *magic missile*, or *lightning bolt*. Other spells, like *shield* or *find familiar*, are usable only by the one casting them, so they have no sale value. Finally, even if the magic-user does have one of the useful spells — *identify*, *stone to flesh*, *reincarnation*, *detect magic*, etc. — how can he be sure anyone will know he has them? How many customers can he expect to knock on his door?

The answer to that will depend on what the magic-user does to get customers. After

all, why should a magician wait for adventurers to seek him out when he can seek them out? Instead of being purely a place of contemplation and study, a magic-user's guild hall might be plastered on every wall with advertisements or *magic mouths*, listing spells available, rates, and the level of the caster, all placed by members in hopes of attracting clients. ("Lagor the spellbinder detects more magic faster — special discounts for rings and rods!") This tactic alone might serve to boost business (and profits).

The truly ambitious wizard, however, will not stop there. Instead of merely providing spells on request, he might go out and create his own market, designing and offering special services that no non-magic-user can match. In our world, technology changed the face of many trades and professions; in a world where magic reigns, sorcery could have the same effect. Dozens of ordinary jobs could be done faster, better, and more efficiently by magic. Why shouldn't some enterprising magic-user go ahead and do them, and turn a profit in the process?

What follows, then, are suggestions on new ways for spell-casters to get rich (and I'm sure there are many more that haven't occurred to me). I believe they can add a touch of novelty to an AD&D world, emphasizing the difference from our own. While I conceived of them for use by NPCs, some might prove interesting avenues for player characters to explore as well. With this in mind, some of the practical problems involved in opening such businesses have also been covered.

To begin with, there are the areas of information-gathering, surveillance, and espionage. Magic-users have many ways to gain hard-to-learn information — *clairvoyance* or *wizard eye*, for example. Think what a king or an empress might pay for an agent who can hear a conversation in any room with which he's familiar, watch a meeting through solid walls, or read even the best-hidden secret documents. Think how a *wizard eye* could revolutionize detective work, making it possible to trail a man with almost no chance of detection. For the less honorable magic-user, blackmail is always an option. ("My *crystal ball* showed me a most interesting scene — some noblewoman consorting with the queen's paramour — ah, yes, counting gold always takes my mind off such tawdry matters.") A magic-user specializing in such services could find plenty of clients. Of course, this

would lead to the development of appropriate security measures, both magical (an *amulet of proof against detection* would neutralize such spying techniques) and non-magical (simply writing down conversations instead of speaking them would foil a mage using *clairaudience*).

Another field where magic-users could make an impact is communications. In these days of interstate highways, television, and telephones, it's difficult to realize how isolated even a large town could be forty years ago, never mind the medieval setting of most AD&D worlds. But just as science helped bring our world together, magic can do the same in AD&D campaigns.

Consider, for example, a widely flung empire, where even vital news — plague, famine, rebellion — can only be spread at the speed of a man on horseback. How much more efficient to hire a couple of magic-users, equip each of them with a *crystal ball*, and set them in two widely separated cities. At regular intervals each would stare into his ball at the other end and trade reports (or, if the rooms were familiar to them, *clairaudience* would serve just as efficiently). This has its limits — without efficient clocks, timing the reports might be difficult — but it should still work often enough to be useful. Such a system could also be set up as a private concern, offering information from leagues away to local lords (politics and war news), merchants (crop yields, weather, and current prices), and anyone else willing to pay for the service.

Along with the lack of modern communications, most AD&D worlds lack swift, modern means of transport. As most adventurers know, travel is a slow, often risky business. This presents another opportunity to the enterprising magic-user. A *teleport* spell could take days and miles off a journey, something worth paying for if speed is important; even when time is not of the essence, the very rich might find instantaneous travel a wonderful luxury.

There are, however, several drawbacks the magic-user would have to keep in mind. First, he or she must be familiar with the target area to minimize the risk of teleporting low or high. (It would be advisable to set up a standard "landing site" in each city, a place with which the magic-user can become thoroughly familiar.) Second, the amount of weight carried and the number of jumps per day will be limited by level — a 9th-level caster could only memorize one *teleport* spell a day, forcing him to go one

day and return the next; if there were several passengers, it might take a week or more to transport them all.

In addition, the risk of teleporting high or low cannot be completely eliminated. What is the magic-user's liability, then, if he transports a client into the floor, killing them both instantly? Will payment for *raise dead* spells (coming from either the raised magic-user or his estate) suffice, or will there be punitive damages as well? In fact, this problem could arise with any magical endeavor — if a thaumaturge casts *identify* on an object and gets a wrong property, can he be sued? What if someone relies on his statements as to its powers and gets seriously injured? Even if the customer can't regain his money, the failure would seriously damage the magic-user's reputation and business.

Turning to yet another branch of business, consider construction work. To anyone engaged in construction, *dig* or *move earth* spells could be well worth the price, as could *telekinesis* or *levitation* for raising stones. Even a low-level magic-user could enlarge a few workmen to ogre- or giant-size to increase their strength; if enlarged enough, they could even use items like the *mattock of the titans* in their work. It would also be possible to raise a *wall of stone* entirely by magic, saving both time and money — but of course, it would also be possible for it to be dispelled by enemies.

Even menial labor can be lightened with magic. There may be a number of low-level NPCs content to use 1st-level spells and cantrips for menial tasks. My own campaign world has several traveling tinkers and village magicians content to live peacefully, casting humble *mend* spells and the like, rather than compete for greater knowledge and power.

For the neutral or evil magic-user, there is also another option — crime. I'm not so much concerned with the spell-caster committing his own crimes (the potential of magic for murder, arson, and fraud is too obvious to bother discussing), but with a magic-user working (on retainer, perhaps) for the local thieves' guild. Illegal or not, such work could provide a steady income — casting *detect magic* and *identify* on stolen property, making a pair of thieves *invisible*, or *diminishing* them (to slip through windows or small holes).

*Polymorph other* could also yield rich rewards for the magic-user who knows it. Many AD&D characters are interested in obtaining rare beasts and monsters for their use, and they're often willing to take great risks and expenses to acquire them; a magic-user who can provide them easily should find a ready market. If a cavalier wants a griffon for a steed, why go to the effort of catching one when it'd be a lot simpler to *polymorph* a cow? The system shock roll might be a failure once or twice, but it should work eventually. If you have to feed a subdued dragon, *polymorph* a few blue-bottle flies into horses or cattle, then let the dragon kill them if the system shock

hasn't done it. It'd be a lot cheaper than buying that much meat through regular channels.

NPC businesses like these can be a very interesting part of the background of AD&D worlds. However, what if player characters decide to make investments, not war? How does a DM deal with player characters who want to be entrepreneurs, not adventurers? Well, that can be interesting too; the key to making it so is to make the business jungle as much of a challenge as a real jungle. If the players expect their characters to make easy money, make sure that they're wrong.

First — the player character enterprises must get established. This will require advertising and possibly winning public acceptance. Who'd want to be the first passenger *teleported* by an aspiring businessman? The law will also have to be dealt with; taxes must be paid, as well as rents, insurance, and licenses. If the characters neglect these things, what are the penalties?

Second, there's the question of business liability. This has been discussed above in the text about teleporting.

Third. . . well, businessmen are not without enemies. There may already be magic-users in the same business the PC wants to start, in which case they may be hostile to their competition. Even non-magical businessmen may prove unfriendly — a shipping or carriage company would see a teleporter as a threat to its trade, and local laborers would see their jobs disappear if a magic-user comes to a building site. Counterattacks could range from the non-violent (bribing the town council to put some legal obstacle in the PCs' path) to very violent (hiring an assassin to put them out of business permanently). If the characters have acquired any enemies during their adventuring, their foes might decide that this is the perfect time to strike. Who knows? Your players may decide their characters were better off fighting Demogorgon.

Turning magic to money requires as much thought from the DM as designing a well-crafted dungeon. Giving that thought can make magic-based businesses a fascinating aspect of background detail or a challenge for your players — and either way, your game will profit by it.

### Pricing magic-user spells

For every magic-user with the drive to set up his own business, there will probably be three or four content to operate the old-fashioned way, selling their services on a per-spell basis. Since most PCs will need such services eventually, it seems a good idea to have a definite pricing system which will give them — and you — some idea of a fair price for spells. What follows is one example of how it can be done.

To begin with, there is a base price per spell level, which I arbitrarily set at 200 gp per cumulative spell level. That means 200 gp for a 1st-level spell, 600 for a 2nd-level one (200 + (200 × 2)), 1200 for a 3rd-level one (200 + (200 × 2) + (200 × 3)), and so on.

Given the sharply increasing power and scarcity of higher-level spells, this doesn't seem unreasonable.

In addition, there will be an added fee based on the level of the caster. Many spells are more effective when cast by a higher-level magic-user — *identify*, *dispel magic*, and *contact other plane*, to name a few; these spells carry an added charge of 100 gp per cumulative level of the caster. If a party wants some magic dispelled, it can go to a 5th-level caster and pay 2700 gp (200 + 400 + 600 for the spell itself and 100 + 200 + 300 + 400 + 500 for the mage's levels), or to a 7th-level magic-user and pay 4000 gp (1200 for the spell and 2800 for the caster) to get a higher chance of the spell being successful. For other spells, like *stone to flesh*, where the level of the caster makes no real difference, a straight 100 gp per level — not cumulative — should be sufficient; a 3rd-level spell in this category (like *invisibility 10' radius*, if you're not worried about someone casting *dispel magic* at it) would cost but 1700 gp from a 11th-level magic-user and 1900 gp from one of 7th level.

Beyond the basic price and the caster's fee, there will be additions for certain special extras. If the material components are rare or expensive, the client buying the spell will be expected to pay for or supply them. Spells which materially weaken the caster (like *haste* or *wish*) or have great risks attached (like *cadodemon* or *spiritwrack*) will cost double the normal amount for a spell of that level. A *haste* spell cast by a 5th-level spell-caster would cost 5600 gp (double the normal 2700 gp); a 7th-level magic-user would charge 8000 gp for the same service.

If you use this system, you should keep in mind that practical considerations may alter the theoretical list prices. In a port or an island city, for instance, spells like *water breathing* or *airy water* will be worth more than other spells of the same level and could go for a correspondingly higher price (but then again, they might be a great deal more common, which would drive-the price back down). Magic-using businesses like those I've described might charge less per spell (making it up in volume) or more (as specialists). Of course, if there's only one magic-user in a thousand miles and a character just *has* to get a spell cast — well, the only use for a pricing system may be in letting him know how badly he's being ripped off.

This system is an arbitrary one, though not unreasonable; don't hesitate to change the basic cost per spell level or caster level if it suits you better. This is particularly true for worlds where the highest levels are very low (4th or 5th) or very high (20th and up). In the former case, spells over 1st level will be so much rarer that the price per level should be sharply steeper (300 or 400 gp cumulative, perhaps); in the latter case, the increased supply should lower the prices of even 9th-level spells. In either case, adapt these ideas freely to suit yourself and your game.

# The ecology of the maedar

Medusa's male counterpart does what she doesn't

by Ed Greenwood

The hearthfire flickered in the tavern known as The Leaning Post. The evening was old, and the few tippers left in the taproom were crouched close around the fire. Tongues were wagging with tales of fell keeps and grim adventures, and monsters most strange. Old Urvan, a grizzled warrior of scars and reputation most grim, rubbed his bald pate and disagreed with a younger man.

"Nay," he rumbled, wagging a cold grey eye, "men die like cattle, for all their armor; I've fought a dozen, on horseback, and slain them all, and me a lone man with but my fists. But the woman-monster, the medusa, the maiden who turns ye to stone, is far the worse."

From his dark corner, Elminster coughed. "Oh? Think ye so?" he said casually. Everyone fell silent at the sage's words. He spoke seldom, but his tales were not soon forgotten. Old Urvan fixed the sage with a colder grey eye and emitted a grunt that urged Elminster to speak.

"The medusa is a fearsome thing, true," Elminster said slowly, looking around the firelit circle of faces. "But as bad or worse is the male, the stealer-through-stone, the maedar. Medusae, ye see, have mates. An' they're by far the deadlier sex. . . ."

Elminster then unburdened himself of the tale of Ilguld the illusionist and the Walking Stone of Yarech. It is a long tale, full of mimes and bawdy jests and local jokes, and unless one is the raconteur Elminster is, 'tis better to paraphrase, thus:

Ilguld was an adventurer, the youngest and least powerful of a proud and reckless band who rode out of Waterdeep often, combing the caverns of the wild North. On one jaunt, the group met a medusa, whose gaze turned two brawny warriors to unmoving stone. The survivors withdrew hastily and thought of a plan. Ilguld had with him a small mirror, and this he tied across his eyes so that, peering down, he could see only the ground before his toes. He covered himself in his storm cloak, the cowl thrown forward to conceal his face.

Thus prepared, Ilguld advanced into the monster's lair, shuffling like an old man and leaning on a staff. The medusa rushed him to bite and slay. As he tried to fend her off with his staff, she tore open his cowl — and, gazing into the mirror, turned herself to stone while she still clutched him.<sup>1</sup>

Ilguld tugged himself free of the stony grasp, ran from the lair, and called his comrades out of hiding. They rushed forward heedlessly to seek the medusa's trea-



sure, waving aside Ilguld's stammered warnings, and were soon deep within the maze of small caverns that made up the medusa's lair. Ilguld followed more cautiously, and was scared badly when he saw his comrades at the other end of a long cavern — coming back toward him as fast as they could run with their bags of coins and coffers of gems. The illusionist noticed immediately that two of the band were missing. As he watched, a part of the wall seemed to move, reaching out to fell the rearmost adventurer. At that, Ilguld cast a spell of invisibility on himself and fled until he was just inside the entrance to the lair.

Seconds later he again heard the weapon-clanking and curses of his comrades. They had dropped their treasure and were running hard. The men, now without two more of their number, burst past him and out of the cave. Ilguld remained frozen as he beheld what had chased them out — a muscular, bald-headed man clad only in breeches, who came behind the group at a fast trot<sup>2</sup>.

Ilguld dared to leave the cave entrance after this strange man passed, taking care not to stumble or make undue noise. He turned in the direction his friends had gone, and just ahead he saw them — statues, all, frozen forever in the midst of their flight. Beyond the statues stood the medusa, stone no more, her arms raised in triumph.<sup>3</sup>

As he watched the bald man approach the medusa, Ilguld realized that she must have somehow been restored to life and had left the lair by another route so as to lie in wait for the intruders to exit. The medusa and the man embraced, and she spoke to him in loving tones.<sup>4</sup> Ilguld was amazed again by what happened next. He saw the man shatter the stone form of his fellow mage and then touch some of the fragments, which turned from stone rubble to bloody flesh. The bald man and his mate, the medusa, sat down to eat as Ilguld tore his gaze away from the scene and stole away as softly as he could.

"A likely story," Urvan scoffed. "One man, weaponless, defeating an entire band?"

"Why, Urvan," Elminster replied mildly, lifting his tankard, "I hear from your own lips that such a feat — defeating a dozen armed men, and their horses too — is easy, if one has but the use of both fists. Is it then not so?"

"Phauugh," Urvan replied eloquently.

#### Notes

1. The gaze of a medusa can turn itself or any other medusa to stone. Such petrification is permanent unless reversed by spell or special ability (see note 3 below).

2. Maedar are the male counterparts of the medusae. (Singular and plural forms of "maedar" are the same; the name can be used to refer to both genders collectively, or to the male alone. The latter usage is employed in this text.) The maedar are far rarer and more reclusive than their mates, and are seldom seen. Many men do not

even know, or believe, that they exist. They dwell in the depths of caverns, guarding the pair's hoard of treasure (and food) while their mates hunt.

Maedar appear as bald-headed (in fact, completely hairless) muscular human males. In all statistics they are identical to medusae, except that they have two attacks per round, doing 2-8 points of damage with each blow of their mighty fists. Maedar cannot petrify other creatures and are themselves immune to petrification and paralysis (including related magics such as *slow* and *hold* spells) from any source whatsoever, although they can be confined by *webs*, *forcecages*, and the like.

3. Maedar have the ability to turn *stone to flesh* by touch, once every three turns. Thus, one can free a medusa who has gaze-trapped herself to stone — or, by smashing petrified prey to rubble and then turning it to stone, gain an easy meal for himself and his mate from a creature petrified earlier by the medusa. Like medusae, maedar can see into the Astral Plane and the Ethereal Plane, and they can use their *stone to flesh* ability into those planes as well.

Maedar possess the ability to *pass through stone* as xorn and xaren do, at normal movement rate. A maedar requires one round of concentration to adjust his molecular structure before entering rock and after leaving it again; no other activity may be undertaken during this round. If struck by a *phase door* spell while *passing through stone*, a maedar is killed. If a mated maedar and medusa are confronted by a stronger creature in their lair, the male will abandon the female to her fate without hesitation, escaping through the rock walls of the cavern. However, a maedar will never neglect to unpetrify a medusa when it is safe to do so.

The treasure of a medusa and maedar is usually concealed (behind loose stones, in crevices, etc.) in addition to being guarded by the maedar. The males monitor the treasure continuously and frequently move it from place to place within the lair, particularly to discourage thievery by other creatures able to pass through stone. Males and females alike will flee from strong attackers, abandoning whatever treasure they cannot carry, rather than defend a hoard to the death. The treasure hoard of a medusa and maedar will almost always contain a selection of feminine garb that doubles as the medusa's wardrobe.

4. All maedar and medusae speak and understand the language of lawful evil, the common tongue, and any other languages spoken often by creatures in the vicinity. Details of the courtship of a mated pair are unknown, but they do pair for life (one choosing another partner only if a mate is slain), and live and hunt together at all times. The female produces 1-3 live young every 10 years or so. Young have the same abilities as their parents, but no physical attacks and only 1-2 HD. (A young female can petrify, and a young male can *pass through stone* and turn *stone to flesh*; how-

ever, the asplike, poisonous "hair" growth of a medusa develops only in maturity, and young maedar lack the strength for damaging blows.) Offspring gradually gain hit dice as they approach maturity and adulthood, a process that typically takes four or five years. When they reach maturity and gain the ability to physically attack, the young are roughly encouraged to strike out on their own; no more than one adult medusa and one adult maedar will ever be found in the same lair. If a medusa is slain but her mate survives, the male will search tirelessly for the killer(s) to take revenge, sometimes pursuing such quarry for years. A maedar can track as a ranger does, but this does not include the ability to follow the trail of a creature that has passed through stone. All maedar and medusae are immune to the poison of (their own and other) medusa hair growths.

Medusae and maedar respect, but do not worship, Skoraesus the Living Rock (see *Legends & Lore*, Nonhuman Deities), and have a like attitude toward lawful evil deities and creatures. They will cooperate with lawful evil creatures such as orcs, kobolds, or even devils, for reward or security or (rarely) under duress. If forced to aid or serve another, they will always seek revenge. Maedar and medusae cannot be trusted by other creature except of their ilk. Occasionally they will bargain with, or purchase information or services with, their treasure.

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# Money isn't everything

. . . except to those poor beginning characters

by Carl Sargent

If money is the root of all evil, then the AD&D® game certainly pushes player characters toward the path of righteousness. The weight of taxes, tithes, training costs, recreation costs, and the like is part of the game, certainly. But, there are times, especially for low-level characters, when it weighs too heavily on PCs. What's more, the cutthroat economics of the AD&D game tend to suppress PC cooperation, which doesn't make for good play. Good gamers surely know that a harmonious, cooperating party survives more easily than a bickering, conflict-ridden one. Sensible cooperation by PCs, and some suggested rule revisions for the AD&D game, can overcome many of these problems — and this begins before any adventuring starts!

## Starting money

To begin with, some key desirables — like plate mail armor — are well beyond the purses of beginning characters. Fair enough, and of course any purchase of magic must be completely out of the question for starting-out characters. However, some small deviations in dice rolls can make vast differences to characters at this level, especially clerics and fighters.

For the cleric, starting money is 30-180 gp (average 105). His overhead before he buys any armor can't be driven below 35-40 gp (for a small helm, shield, money for a week's rations, one waterskin, one weapon, a holy symbol, a backpack, and one — just one — flask of oil). This sum includes absolutely no luxuries at all — no question of affording a bone tube for holding maps or scrolls, for example. Let's use 35 gp as this fixed overhead sum. (He'll be lucky to get it down to this, but it is possible, assuming he doesn't have to pay for the clothes he wears at the game's start.) A dice roll of 12 or better leaves him sufficient money to purchase splint mail, for a base AC 3. A dice roll of 11 may just leave him enough to buy chain mail for AC 4. On a roll of 10 or below, he has to settle for scale mail, for AC 5. Two dice pips cost him two armor class places. At this level, one good hit from a goblin may kill him, and the goblin's chances of hitting him nearly double as he drops from AC 3 to AC 5 (from 15% to 25% hit probability). It is clear that few times in a PC's career will such a tiny sum of money — just 20 gp or so — make such a huge difference to his survival chances.

The same logic holds for the fighter. Certainly, the lighter starts with an average of 20 gp more than the cleric, but his weap-

ons cost more. The extra 20 gp will be eaten up when the fighter buys only two weapons. He usually gets a sword and a bow; without the latter, the party has no missile attacks worthy of the name. (Crossbow-using monks hardly have enough money to eat at this level.) The fighter will be in the same boat as the cleric.

It might be thought that this shouldn't be a problem, since the adventurers in question (if they're intelligent) will run back to base as soon as they've gained a few gold pieces from adventuring and trade in their old armor for better stuff. Actually, this is no solution at all, except perhaps for thieves who can pick a pocket or two around town (but they don't usually need more starting money anyway!). At 1st level, one good hit from anything bigger than a giant rat may do a PC in; his first combat may be his last. If the adventure involves any significant trekking from home base, returning home will slow the game down badly. There are credible alternatives.

The first option is the moneylender. It should at least be possible for a PC to borrow a small sum from a moneylender; remember that sums of as little as 10-20 gp may be crucial here. The DM must decide what factors will influence such transactions, but certain elements are of obvious importance. The moneylender will obviously seek surety and guarantees of some kind, and he will probably want some form of written agreement. Character alignment will be relevant (lawful characters will get the best reactions). Racial factors may be relevant (e.g., dwarven or gnomish NPCs may add moneylending as a sideline to jewelry or other commercial businesses, and may react very favorably to PCs of their own race).

Moneylenders may well ask for very high interest rates (100% per month, perhaps). This is fair enough; after all, this is a speculation on their part. With small sums, players are not going to feel that this is unreasonable. So far as surety is concerned, other PCs (especially lawful ones) may guarantee the repayment if the PC who borrowed the money is killed, or the PC's family or church (only for a paladin or cleric) might do so. This raises an obvious point: Why go to a moneylender at all? Couldn't these potential guarantors actually loan money themselves?

It should rarely be possible for a PC's family to loan him needed money. Presumably, the character's starting funds may, in large part, come from that source. This will

depend on how the DM determines the social class of PCs. If they come from wealthy backgrounds, they will surely have all the money they need. This isn't desirable in my view; PCs should have similar backgrounds, from comfortable but not wealthy families, and this extra money — if needed — shouldn't be handed over in this way.

However, institutions — notably churches — are very plausible loaners to clerics and paladins. Perhaps the church has already provided part of the PC's starting money, but a small loan in addition is hardly out of the question. After all, it's in the interests of the church. A young acolyte going on his first adventure with inadequate armor has a much smaller chance of becoming an adept and furthering the interests of the church than one who had sufficient funds to start with reasonable armor. The same is true of a paladin. Of course, it will be implicitly understood that the favored acolyte will be expected to make up a worthwhile donation from the funds he gains on his first adventure, as a mark of his gratitude.

The last possibility for borrowing sources, however, is another player character. Here we run up against the fact that, in the AD&D game, helping other characters out in this way is not encouraged. Paladins never give excess money away to other PCs, no matter how loyal, courageous, lawful good; and needy they may be. Likewise, rangers never donate extra funds to other PCs.

But, at first level, two character classes usually do have excess funds: the druid and the magic-user. Their weapons (and the druid's armor) cost next to nothing, and no costly material spell components are required yet. Why shouldn't these characters lend to the clerics and fighters who need just a small handful of gold coins? Whether or not they *can* do so depends on when the PCs who form a party actually meet up. The clerics and fighters may have spent their poor funds on inadequate armor before the roving young druid turns up, and trade-in values may be too low for a small loan to make buying better armor possible. But, both loans and even gifts from druids and magic-users should be reasonable and well within the spirit of the game, even if the letter of the law sometimes clearly discourages it.

Druids might seem implausible moneylenders, but a wise druid might see an opportunity for furthering his own interests

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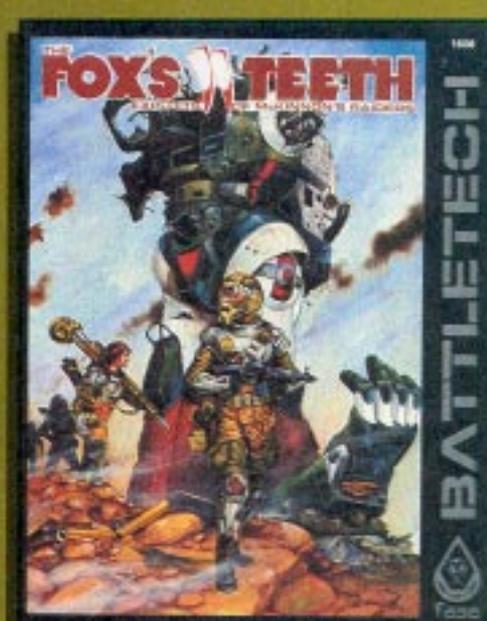
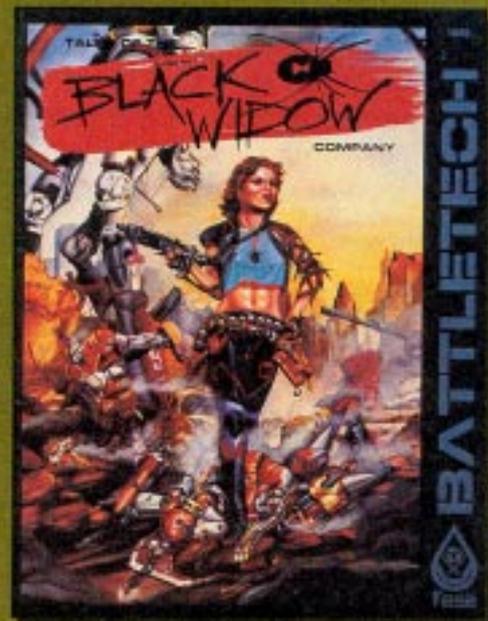
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or his religious views here. As an example, many a 1st-level druid may wander around with the spell combination of *Speak with animals* and *animal friendship*, and a trained pet (perhaps a war dog, if the DM permits a 1st-level druid to have a 2 + 2 HD animal). This pet may have "to hit" rolls better than the fighters in the party at 1st level, and would be handy to have around to help out beleaguered PCs in a dicey combat.

But the druid has a problem: He has no healing spells at 1st level. So, as he hands over a few coins to a cleric of an alignment he finds tolerable (neutral good; perhaps), mentions that the dog is a handy helper in such situations, and expresses the hope that the cleric will be prepared to cast one of his cure *light wounds* spells on the animal if needed, using all his high charisma when making this reasonable suggestion. The cleric will hopefully agree, and one of the druid's anxieties is eased.

The magic-user is an even more likely prospect to be a lender. In one example from actual campaign play, a lawful good magic-user I rolled up selected a deity from the DM's pantheon and found that the paladin rolled up by another had independently chosen to worship the same deity. Since all PCs in the campaign came from the same small town, it is likely that these PCs worshiped together at the same church and knew each other as children. The paladin was 8 gp short of affording splint mail; my magic-user had 31 gp to spare. Lend the 8 gp? I gave it away as a gift. How could any lawful good character in my magic-user's situation have behaved otherwise?

Gifts like this are usually given by good characters to other good ones, but another example will show how any sensible PC with a few gold pieces to spare should help others out with starting funds. A group of newly created 1st-level characters is confronted with the prospect of adventuring in some catacombs, wherein old tombs lie. Tombs mean undead; undead need turning by clerics. If the clerics are a few gold pieces short of buying decent armor, surely all other PCs with just 5 or 10 gp to spare could help out. Even a chaotic neutral thief with an intelligence of 6 can see the sense of

this. It's obviously in his own interests; the clerics get rid of the undead and leave some tombs for the looting. This monetary cooperation is part and parcel of good PC cooperation, and wider cooperation is essential for successful adventuring.

### Insurance policies

The *Dungeon Masters Guide* provides costs for having NPC clerics cast spells. Although a newly formed group of 1st-level adventurers may be too excited at the prospect of setting off on the high road to think about this, there are some services from the NPC spell list that may be needed before too long. Some possibilities are too expensive to be considered, and some require high-level NPCs who will not be available to 1st-level characters. Other spells are simply unlikely to be needed at this stage. *Cure disease* may well be helpful, but this spell costs 1,000 gp — obviously beyond almost any 1st-level character's resources. Since giant rats are plentiful in many low-level adventures, it may very well be needed. *Remove curse* (at least 2,500 gp) and *dispel magic* (100 gp per level of the spell-caster) may also be high on a list of spells needed by a returning 1st-level party. The most-needed spell is *raise dead*, which will cost at least 5,500 gp (however, costs may be adjusted downward for "faithful, lower-level characters").

Characters may very well agree that an insurance policy would be a pretty smart idea. If any adventurer needs one of the above cleric spells, the cost should be shared among all the PCs who make an agreement with each other. If there are not sufficient funds for a spell (and the need for *raise dead* is the most likely possibility here), then those who made the initial agreement will give absolute priority to further adventuring to gain the extra funds needed. A written contract might be drawn up or an oath sworn to seal the bargain.

Intelligent chaotic characters or characters of true neutral alignment might also well see the sense of being part of such an agreement — enlightened self-interest applies here. But, lawful characters might require some exceptional form of oath-taking before they would accept this. Insur-

ance policies are a wise move at any experience level — and good habits should be cultivated from the beginning!

### Two final problems

There are two aspects of AD&D game rules which make the life of 1st-level characters harsh so far as money goes — and that oppressiveness doesn't favor the enlightened cooperation and good gaming we've been considering. One of these is the training system and the phenomenal costs attached to it, which David Reeder discussed so well in DRAGON® issue #97. A DM who can't be bothered to revise the training system wholesale, and doesn't want to simply scrap it and give training away free (and that's *too* kind to PCs), has a real opportunity here. The DM can introduce an adventure by ruling that the NPC trainer is prepared to halve costs for PCs with impossibly high training costs, if the PC carries out some assigned task or duty. If more than one PC is in this boat, it should be possible to think up some reason why both the NPC trainers involved have a common desire to see some task accomplished. Now, the DM can kill three birds with one stone. The economic adversity afflicting the PC is lightened, one does *not* give away something for nothing, and one can set up the next adventure, all in one fell swoop!

The other aspect of the AD&D rules that needs changing is the DMG ruling that PCs *have* to spend at least 100 gp per month between adventures entertaining themselves, such expense being justified by the rationale that adventurers are a free-wheeling and high-living lot (except, of course, for monks). This rather annoys me! Are paladins free-wheeling and high-living? Of course not. I suggest that this DMG section infringes on players' rights to determine the personalities of their characters. Pious clerics, righteous paladins, introverted and studious magic-users and illusionists, and nature-loving druids and rangers are *not* high-living, and the DMG ruling should be ignored by DMs. It is especially unfair to PCs when, for whatever reasons, the DM requires that they should spend some time (weeks or longer) between adventures, awaiting the return of a mentor or patron. The only significant costs incurred by my paladin (except for eating) at such times are the replacement of prayer mats worn out by many hours of kneeling!

Cooperation is the key to successful adventuring — and it should start before any adventuring begins, with wise sharing of resources, including money. Sadly, the letter and spirit of the AD&D rules tend to discourage this. It doesn't have to be this way, and certain rule revisions would lighten the heavy burden on low-level characters and encourage better cooperation in all areas of character play. When that nasty little goblin rolls a 16 and-your 5-hp cleric is wearing splint mail and shield, thanks to a little help from his friends, he may owe his life to that cooperation. It's worth thinking about. ❧

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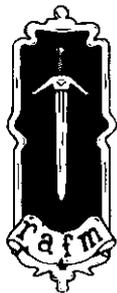
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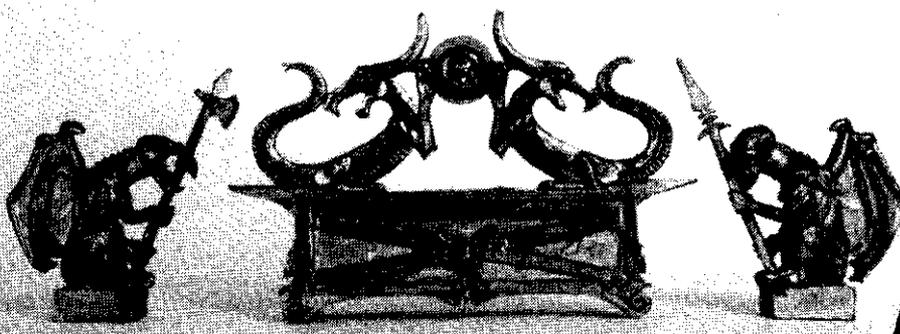
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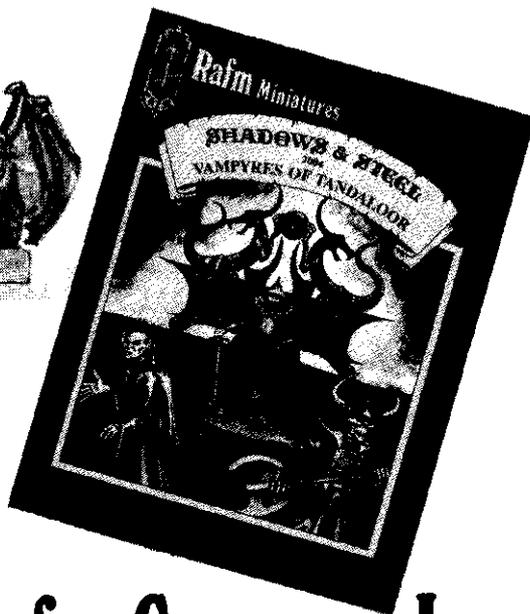
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# Open them, if you dare

A dozen dweomered doors to delight DMs

by Ed Greenwood



... And then the fools fled deeper into Undermountain," Elminster said, "but took the wrong passage. They passed through a Dread Portal, and then fell into the pit beyond it, and their bones —"

"Pardon me for interrupting," I said, refilling his glass, "but what is a Dread Portal?"

"Ah. Oh." The sage favored me with an expression like that of a small boy who has taken great pains to rob a cookie jar, only to find it full of pats of dried mud. "I suppose," he said, abandoning his tales of hapless adventurers perishing in various corners of Waterdeep's vast and famous dungeon, "that you'll get another article out of this."

"It is to be hoped," I said expressionlessly, staring at the ceiling.

Elminster chuckled. "All right," he said, draining his glass in one swig and holding it out to be refilled. His new weakness was a beverage known as Mountain Dew, and it looked like the three cases I'd bought

weren't going to be enough.

"Magical doors," Elminster began, "are of course common in folktales and adventurers' tavern-tellings; they are all too common in tombs, old castles, ruins, and dungeons in the Realms, and so are oft encountered. There are too many different types of these — every amateur magician and artificer has a go at doors, it seems — to tell you all of them even if you had enough of this marvelous drink to keep me sitting here a week. But there is one famous craftsman of old, Nadrun the Artificer of Waterdeep, who made thousands of doors. He made them to order, but had twelve, ah, standard models, of which examples of all still exist in the Realms, even after more than two thousand winters."

"What happened to Nadrun?" I asked.

Elminster grinned. "He grew very rich by, and very skilled in the making of, his magical doors. And one day the Artel — a tyrant who then ruled northern Amn — came to buy a door specially made to order,

and apparently decided to try to preserve its secrets and save money by slaying Nadrun. The Artificer, it is said, foiled his plans when he stepped through an invisible door and vanished."

"Vanished?" I asked on cue, refilling his glass.

"Vanished — probably to another plane or a remote corner of the Realms, for Nadrun was never seen again. And the Artel, I fear, found that the way he had come in was blocked by bars and stone walls, and had to try some of the other doors. He ran out of servants and bodyguards in the trying, although they found a passage that seemed to lead in the right direction, until only the Artel was left. The last door killed him, for it was a Dread Portal."

"Those words again," I prompted.

"What is a Dread Portal?"

Elminster grinned and held out his glass, empty again.

Over the next three hours, he told me details of Nadrun's doors (as well as a lot of

quite unrelated stuff; like any sage, he does wander when his mouth is working), and I've summarized what he told me below.

All of Nadrun's doors radiate a *dweomer*; they may be of wood, metal, or stone, and always have heavy preservative magics laid upon them. These preserve the materials of the door and frame, and make them resistant to shattering when struck. The twelve "standard models" have magical powers as follows:

*Type #1:* Unless a one-word password is spoken by someone touching this type of door within 2 rounds before opening it, it will cast a 1" radius *hold monster* (60% chance) or *sleep* (40%) on any creature(s) standing before it or passing through it. Some of these doors cast only one or the other spell, not both, and in all cases the spells are cast as though by a 12th-level magic-user.

*Type #2:* Any creature(s) passing through this type of door are instantly *gated* to a specific or random destination (typically: 01-36%) elsewhere in the Realms, usually deep in the northern mountains or glacial wastes; 37-60%, Astral Plane; 61-82%, Ethereal Plane; 83-92%, Nirvana; 93-98%, the Nine Hells; 99-00% Limbo or another specific chosen plane, usually the Abyss or a parallel Prime Material Plane), such *gating* occurring all of the time, or at a specific trigger, or some of the time randomly or at a set rate (i.e., every seventh time the door is opened).

*Type #3:* This door bears a permanent *symbol* (see the 8th-level magic-user spell and 7th-level cleric spell) graven upon it, usually covered by a sliding overlay panel, which moves aside to reveal the *symbol* whenever a living creature(s) approaches within 1" of the "outward" or "active" side of the door. (Too much casting of *permanency* spells is said to have aged Nadrun prematurely.)

*Type #4:* Every third time this type of door is opened and closed, it upon closing casts a *silence 15' radius* upon the back(s) of any creature(s) who have passed through it, the central focus of this spell being 15' from the frame of the door.

*Type #5:* This type of door temporarily *negates* (as a *wand of negation*) the powers of magical items borne through it. Artifacts are unaffected, but all magic items except scrolls and other written magic (maps, spellbooks, etc.) must save vs. spell or be *negated*, all powers nullified, for a period of 1-4 turns. Characters' spell-casting abilities and memorized spells are unaffected.

*Type #6:* Dead creatures (including characters) who fall or are carried through this type of door are temporarily animated (as in an *animate dead* spell), such animation lasting for 5-10 (d6 + 4) rounds. Such creatures may be turned, "dispelled" (which will cause them to become simply inanimate corpses again), or controlled by a cleric (roll on "Matrix For Clerics Affecting Undead" table in DMG) if one is present; otherwise such creatures will attack any living creatures within 7", as zombies or monster

zombies (depending upon the nature of the dead creature).

*Type #7:* Any creature passing through this type of door (or sometimes, every second or third creature passing through) must save vs. spell or be blinded and *feeble-minded* for 2-5 rounds. At the end of this time, affected victims must save again, at + 2; if this save is failed, they remain *feeble-minded*, or blinded, or both (DM's choice) for a further 2-5 rounds.

*Type #8:* Any creature (or at DM's option, a few specific creatures with high intelligence, or who fail a save vs. spell, or who are chosen at random) passing through this type of door will receive an extremely clear and vivid mental image of a scene (action, with characters and background), being, or item, of up to 12 seconds duration, chosen by the creator or activator of the door.

*Type #9:* Anyone passing through this door (or anyone failing a save vs. spell who passes through, or at the DM's option some other method of choice of a few individuals out of a group) will be followed by 1-3 exact duplicates of that figure, who will follow the real creature, aping his or her actions, until they merge with him or her, a process causing 1-4 points (per image) of electrical damage and 1-2 rounds of *confusion* to the real creature. These images are non-corporeal illusions that cannot be dispelled or disbelieved out of existence, but, although not solid, can be destroyed by weapon blows or spells such as *magic missile*, *shocking grasp*, and the like, each image being destroyed upon suffering a total of 12 points of damage. The images can merge with (and harm) only the creature they are modeled after; they do not harm other creatures coming into contact with them.

Ten percent of the time this door acts as a *mirror of opposition*, 1-3 images being created that actively pursue and attack their real double(s).

*Type #10:* This type of door is metal, and locked; if picked or forced, it electrifies (dealing a 3d6 lightning-like discharge that conducts through all metal). It can generate an unlimited number of such discharges, emitting one each time the door is forcibly opened. Nothing will happen if the door is unlocked by a key or password, and if the door is opened and remains open, only one initial discharge is produced, and another will not occur until the door is closed (whereupon it instantly locks) and is forced open again.

*Type #11:* This type of door is usually adorned with a beast-head knocker or door-knob; if its lock is picked, or the jeweled (usually rubies, emeralds, or amber stones) eyes of the beast-head are disturbed, the doorway will emit monsters within 2 rounds of being thus disturbed (see *monster summoning IV*). If the door is closed after being disturbed, it will fly open again when the monsters are released.

*Type #12:* The Dread Portal. This, the most infamous type of Nadrun's doors, contains an imprisoned wraith encased

within the door. The method of capture and imprisonment within the door was lost with Nadrun; all that is known is that anyone touching the door directly is drained of 1 life energy level each time (or, if they remain in contact with it for more than one round, 1 life energy level is drained per round). The wraith cannot be turned or dispelled while in the door, but can be turned or dispelled if the door is shattered and it escapes (whereupon it will probably attack all living creatures nearby).

Any or all of Nadrun's twelve types of magical doors can be combined with physical traps, and most were. Nadrun had many of these; the most common are as follows:

- handles (or doorknobs) containing poisoned needles, or cavities with sliding covers (activated by disturbing the handle or knob) containing rot grubs, green slime, or brown or yellow mold.

- bladders of poisonous gas (or vapor laden with yellow mold spores) that will be ruptured if door panels are struck with any force.

- mechanism that fires daggers, spikes, javelins, or darts into the backs of creatures after being closed, unless deactivated with a key.

- a pull-ring handle on the door pulls out, causing (by means of cables and pulleys) a sliding panel of floor in front of the door to move, plunging creatures in front of the door into a (spike-lined, water-filled) pit.

- a wide door-sill, if stepped on three times (i.e. by three successive individuals) triggers a pit opening immediately beyond the door.

- the entire door is hinged and weighted so as to topple downward upon anyone opening it by pulling on its pull-ring. Anyone beneath it when it falls suffers 5d6 points of crushing damage.

"Got all that?" Elminster asked, filling his pipe. "Good. Now, as I was saying, this self-styled company of the Manticore now lie somewhere in Undermountain, and among their bones can be found several items of magic, namely -"

At which point I got up and closed the door.

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# The ranger redefined

## Systems for giving the class more skills

by Deborah Christian

Ranger Bruno Breitfuss led his four companions across the shimmering expanse of desert. Had their caravan not been decimated by raiders, they would not now be in this spot. The desert was alien, far different from their wooded homeland, and the toll it took was high. The water bags hung empty from their straps. Little conversation was possible through dry mouths and chapped lips.

Barny, the halfling, stumbled and collapsed. Arna knelt by his side as the others sat wearily nearby. Few could go much farther, and Barny was at the limit of his endurance.

Arna looked up at the ranger. "We need water, Bruno," she said.

Bruno nodded and scanned the hazy horizon. He had seldom been in the desert before, but if any of them had a chance to find water in this wasteland, it was he.

"Wait here and rest," he said to his friends. "I'll see what I can find." He rose slowly to his feet and trudged off toward an outcropping of rock in the distance.

Will Bruno find water? Will his party perish of thirst in the desert? The *Players Handbook* is of little assistance in such a dilemma, saying of rangers only that they are adept at woodcraft, tracking, scouting, infiltration, and spying. Percentages for tracking are given, and that ends the detailing of ranger skills in the AD&D® system. The rest is left to the imagination of the Dungeon Master.

This was unsatisfactory for me, since I wanted my ranger to be more than just a specialized fighter. We worked from the premise that rangers should have special skills quite aside from those acquired at higher levels. The following detailed treatment of rangers and their abilities was developed for use in our campaign in the land of Drakmil.

### Environment and skills

Rangers spend a lot of time in the wilderness, and they are independent, as indicated by the fact that there are never more than three rangers working together. They may team up with others of basically good or neutral alignments to accomplish a worthwhile goal, *a la* Tolkien's Strider. A ranger's skills imply much time spent in a wilderness environment, and some skills, such as infiltration and spying, suggest military or mercenary uses as well. From these implications — wilderness experience and paramilitary abilities — it is clear that a ranger





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seldom uses his full potential in a dungeon environment. Although many of his skills are useful in indoors situations, the ranger is of most use to his adventuring party (and enjoys his full potential) in an outdoor environment or any scenario in which he can make use of his special talents.

Two important background facts must be determined for each ranger character: the nature of the terrain where he grew up and the terrain where he took his ranger training. Although the ranger is defined as being adept at woodcraft, he need not be limited to a forested environment. In this article, we will look at ranger skills in a broader sense than they have previously been defined. Not all rangers come from woodlands, although woods-related skills may be among those most commonly found among rangers. What of the ranger from an arctic, plains, island, or desert environment? What skills will he or she learn?

Climate must be considered as well as terrain. Skills learned on the permafrost of tundra vary greatly from those learned on the lush savannahs of the tropics. The climate designation also aids the DM in determining what types of animals and monsters the ranger character recognizes. Obviously, the exact nature of the ranger's native environment plays a major role in the definition of his particular skills and abilities (see Tables 1 and 2).

Not all of the ranger's skills are quantifiable in game terms. Many are useful abilities that may be called on at any appropriate time. Others, however, carry with them a percentage chance for success, and some of these percentages increase as the ranger gains in experience. Charts detailing percentage rolls for successful skill applications are included in this article.

Defining ranger skills is a complex task. To begin with, woodcraft is skill in things pertaining to woodland living. Here it is also used to include abilities useful or necessary for wilderness survival, and the continuation of existence in such an environment. Woodcraft includes survival skills, tracking, hunting, and knowledge of animal and plant lore.

### Wilderness survival

Shelter, water, food, and warmth are the basic requirements of wilderness survival. Any ranger not able to fill these requirements for himself or his party would not survive long in the wild. Therefore, these basic skills must be mastered by a 0-level ranger before his progression to 1st level.

Shelter protects an individual or individuals from the elements. It ideally keeps one warm and dry, and it provides a place to sleep and store provisions, supplies, and other equipment. A shelter is less important in good weather, but it may be critical for survival in inclement weather.

Shelter can be a simple blanket strung on a line as a wind break, a lean-to woven of saplings and covered with branches, or a mud-and-wattle hut for a relatively long-term stay. In extreme or unusual environ-

ments, the nature of shelter may change substantially. In sub-zero weather in a snowy waste, for example, a ranger may burrow into a drift to create a snow den. Such a burrow may be uncomfortably chill, but it will save those inside from freezing. A ranger knows better than to camp on a ridge or hilltop in gusty winds, where wind chill may lead to hypothermia or at least to an uncomfortably cold and windy night. In a desert with extreme temperatures, a ranger may suggest that no traveling be done during the day — rather, the party should shelter in a shady spot and travel at night. How to construct shelter appropriate for the current environment, and where to construct it, are basic and fundamental ranger abilities.

*Water location* is a critical skill. What does a party do when there is barely any liquid in the water flasks or (horrors!) no water at all? Find some, of course — often easier said than done. There is not always a convenient rill of water or rushing stream nearby. In woodlands, water may be easier to find than almost anywhere else; in snowy areas, there is usually little difficulty at all. But what about scrubby chaparral, where waterways are obscured by dense vegetation? What of marshes, where undrinkably stagnant and algae-filled water is the rule and not the exception? What of the desert, where water is a rarity at best?

These environments may prove a real test of the ranger's survival skills. A 1st-level ranger, because of his lack of experience, may understandably have a more difficult time locating water in a desert than his 6th-level ranger companion. Locating water requires a knowledge of geology and certain plant-life indicators of water. When a dried-out river bed is found in the plains, for example, the experienced ranger knows that digging down a few feet may reach the water table. He'll encounter mud first, then water will seep in to fill the hole.

Suppose a party of gnolls has raided camp and made off with all the edible supplies, as well as most of the inedible ones. What does the party do now? *Food location* is just as critical as the ability to find water. Depending on the environment, food may be easy or difficult to find. Anyone may recognize a herd of deer and try to get one with a handy bow. Some may recognize edible plants or know how to fish. The ranger, though, must know all these things and more. The ranger uses his woodcraft, his hunting and tracking skills, and his knowledge of plants to help feed the party.

The ability to *produce or locate warmth* is deceptive. Almost every adventurer is considered able to build a fire. A standard piece of equipment is the ever-ready tinder box, and a magic-user may know that handy cantrip *flamefinger*. But imagine if everyone has been dunked in the river in the rain, and there is no dry tinder on the ground or on their persons. What about the party lost in the arctic or in a great sandy desert, with nothing suitable for a fire anywhere in sight?

The well-prepared ranger may have a magically waterproofed pouch about his neck, with a supply of wood shavings and dry moss. It will most likely be the ranger, in a party of city-dwelling thieves, magic-users, clerics, and mercenary fighters, who thinks to chop inside a fallen log to find dry deadwood for fuel.

Apart from firestarting, a ranger knows other ways to keep warm. He may have everyone huddle together at night to share body warmth when it is not possible to start a fire, or he may keep everyone moving and pacing when snowbound in a blizzard. A ranger's skills may save the party from an uncomfortably cold night or save lives in an emergency.

A ranger stays alert for a variety of *wilderness signs*, indicators of weather or terrain hazards. He recognizes the cloudy signs of coming snow, a red twilight warning of storm, or a hazardous snow ridge over a glacial crevasse. Because he can recognize such signs, the ranger is able to aid his party with wilderness wisdom. He may be the one to lead the group to shelter in low spots when a thunderstorm threatens, and he would know to avoid desert gullies when there is danger of flash floods.

These skills are applied in a game or campaign at the DM's discretion. If a party makes a cross-country trek in which several hundred miles must be traversed in a few real-time hours, the DM will undoubtedly wish to skim over the details of food-gathering and shelter building. If, however, the environment is extreme, the circumstances unusual, or the outcome critical to the game, the DM should allow the ranger a chance to use his abilities to secure food, water, or shelter for the group.

### Hunting skills

A ranger is a capable hunter. He is also proficient in trapping, snaring, and fishing — all useful skills for providing food. He draws on his knowledge of tracking and animal lore to be more effective in food gathering (see next section). The ranger's particular abilities are affected by his background; a desert-dwelling ranger may be more adept at snaring small game than at hunting jungle tigers.

Hunting basically requires a weapon and the ability to locate a food animal. The weapon used must be appropriate for the game hunted: a sling stone may bag a wild duck, but a sword and spear are best for hunting a wild boar. Hunting may be done with a minimum of equipment. A fleet-footed ranger might need only a rock or dagger; such will suffice for game he may run to ground or at which he may have a clear throw. A bow or other missile weapon is suitable for animals that move rapidly or that are at a distance from the hunter. More sophisticated hunting techniques may require stalking, waiting for an animal in a cleverly hidden stand, or driving the quarry towards the hunter with beaters.

*Traps* capture an animal and hold it alive. *Snares* kill the animal at the time it is

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caught. Such devices are useful because they free the ranger to do something else while his food is being caught for him. Some types of animals are best hunted in this fashion; for example, a ranger may only be equipped with a sword, but he wishes to catch the plentiful grouse in the fields around him. Building a snare or trap will net him as many grouse as he can eat, although his sword would be practically useless for such a task.

Pitfalls, deadfalls, line snares, and drop-traps are just a few of the devices that a ranger is familiar with. He may build them from materials at hand, or he may carry trap-building materials with him, in which case the DM should adjust his percentage for successful trapping and snaring.

*Fishing* can be done with little equipment. A ranger may know how to "hypnotize" fish with his fingers and grab them out of the water. More conventionally, fish can be caught with line, net, spear, or fish trap. A ranger should be able to weave a net of jungle vines and know where running salmon are found for spearfishing. He recognizes likely hiding holes in which to find crayfish, and on an ocean beach he seldom goes hungry. The ranger knows the types of edible seaweed; he looks for clams in the sands of a beach, and oysters and mussels in tidepools and on reefs. He may even build lobster or crab traps.

Some of these activities cross the line into actual food gathering; once again, the extent of a ranger's marine knowledge depends largely on his background. A ranger from a coastal environment knows more of these things than one from the woodlands. Success in fishing is rolled for on Table 5.

### Tracking

Successful tracking requires knowledge of animal lore and several related skills. The ranger must be able to recognize and follow signs, such as a pawprint, a broken leaf, or a bit of crumbled loam. He must be familiar with his quarry's rate of movement and movement habits. He knows that a fox will walk in water to hide its scent, and that a startled deer runs a few hundred yards, then freezes in cover, waiting to see if it is being followed.

The basics of tracking are known to a 1st-level ranger, but this is a skill that improves with experience, as noted in *Unearthed Arcana* (pp. 21-22). A ranger may be called upon to track either animals or humans. Likewise, if a ranger can follow others, he knows what a tracker looks for in order to follow him. Therefore, a ranger can hide his own trail better than can the average character.

Rangers have two new abilities related to tracking. One is *stalking silently* the ability to soundlessly follow quarry in the wilderness. This skill can be used whenever a ranger wants to move soundlessly in the outdoors and should not be confused with the thief's ability to *move silently*. The ranger's rate of movement when stalking is reduced. He must be by himself in order for

this skill to be effective and may not run while doing so.

Another ability is *trackless movement*, the ability to move through the wilderness leaving no trace of passage. As when *stalking silently*, the ranger's movement is reduced, he may not run, and he must be by himself. When using *trackless movement*, the ranger wades in water to hide his scent, steps on rocks, brushes out footprints with a leafy branch, and takes other measures to obscure his trail.

Characters not trained in tracking are considered to have a base tracking chance equal to their intelligence score (on a scale of 1-100%). An average character has a 3% -18% chance of tracking successfully. This is checked once every game turn the character is attempting to track. If the trail is lost — which is likely to happen — a check is made every turn of searching to see if it is found again. Obviously, then, non-ranger characters have a chance of following prints on the ground, but are unlikely to be successful for any length of time. Characters with forester and trapper secondary skills may be given a 20%-50% base chance to track creatures.

### Animal lore

To be successful in his pursuit of animals, the ranger must command a certain knowledge of animal lore. This is not comprehensive at first; a 1st-level ranger's fund of animal lore is limited to the fauna native to where he grew up and where he took his ranger training. This knowledge increases as the ranger goes up in level.

Animal lore includes knowledge of animal habitats, habits, food, shelter, migration, dangers, and uses, as well as familiarity with their calls and sounds. Knowledge of animal lore is vital to successful tracking and hunting. Tracking an unfamiliar animal should add a negative modifier to the ranger's percentage roll; a penalty of -5% in each case is suggested.

This skill is useful in other ways as well. For instance, if a ranger recognizes a certain set of tracks near a waterhole, he may suggest that the party camp far away and downwind from the watering spot, since the tracks belong to a predatory night hunter unafraid of humans. The DM should let the ranger know what tracks he recognizes at a particular place and time, and pertinent information about the animal to which they belong.

### Plant lore

Plants are useful as sources of food; in cases such as the barrel cactus, they may even provide water in the desert. Anyone may recognize berries, but a ranger should know enough to pull up the tuberous roots of cattails or locate wild parsnips for the dinner stew.

Plants have numerous practical applications, as well. Vines can be used to tie things together, gourds serves as water containers, and springy branches make a good cushion for a bed roll. The ranger should

also know several plants with healing properties. He can use mint or camomile for a tea to soothe an upset stomach or make one drowsy, and he may know that a poultice of nettles (boiled and drained several times) can stop the bleeding in a severe cut. The milk of a dandelion can be used to get rid of warts and a poultice of comfrey to soothe the swelling of a sprain or torn ligament.

As with animal lore, the ranger is most familiar with those plants he has seen or used before. Although he may recognize unfamiliar plants from drawings, descriptions, or word of mouth, his ability to locate and use them decreases as his environment changes from that with which he is familiar. For instance, a forest ranger will be lucky to find an useful plants he recognizes in a desert. However, this skill, too, increases with experience.

### Transportation

Depending on his native environment, a ranger may be able to construct an aid to travel or transportation. If he grew up with snow, he may know how to make skis, snowshoes, or a sled. If water is an element familiar to him, the ranger may be able to construct a raft, coracle, dugout, or know how to make a bark canoe. He may even know how to string a rope bridge or improvise tack and harness for animals. A failed success roll for transportation may have some interesting results. (The DM should always make these rolls.) A failed roll may mean one of two things: either there is no suitable material at hand out of which the desired object may be made, or, although material can be found, the quality of workmanship leaves something to be desired. This will result in some unpleasant consequences when the object is put to use.

For example, if the ranger is in a forest and he wants to make a pair of snowshoes, the DM rolls for him. Whether the roll is successful or not, it is obvious that there is no shortage of material for use in the snowshoes. However, if the roll fails, the DM tells him he has found material and made his snowshoes — only to have them fall apart after a short period of use. A ranger attempting to make skis above the tree line may well find no wood to serve his purpose; if he makes a coracle, he may not find a suitable piece of hide with which to cover it. If materials are scarce, the DM should adjust the roll for success accordingly. If there is adequate material, then a failed roll may indicate that the ranger gets washed downstream out of control in a hopelessly twirling boat. A raft may break up in mid-stream, and a rope bridge may be insecurely tied and collapse under weight.

Such incidents complicate the characters' lives, but they also add excitement to the game. The DM should make it a point to keep track of time expended when a ranger attempts to use his transportation ability; materials may be gathered for snowshoes in half an hour, and they may be constructed in one or two. Skis, on the other hand, may take all day or longer, and such efforts as

stringing a rope bridge require that the stalwart adventurer swim the raging river or cross the chasm first — efforts that are adventurous in their own right.

### Scouting

When a ranger scouts, he gathers information. He does this by carefully observing terrain, wildlife, and activity by humans or other intelligent beings. A scouting ranger will observe the land around him and note such things as rockslides, washed-out roads, a ford in a river, or the location of a mountain pass. Calling on his knowledge of animal lore, he can locate suitable grazing land for his party's animals or spot the forest lair of giant spiders. He may be able to pinpoint the encampment of a band of orcs or a bandit hideout.

A roll is made for successful scouting once per scouting mission. Scouting is a time-consuming business, and the DM must keep track of the time and travel involved. A successful roll indicates that the ranger has gathered accurate information about terrain or, if creatures have been sighted, numbers, type, direction of travel, and so on. A failed roll may indicate incorrect information, no information at all, or a dangerous encounter while scouting — perhaps resulting in the ranger being captured by those he went to observe.

### Spying

If scouting is looking, then spying is lurking — in fact, this ability is very similar to the assassin's skill. Naturally, the outdoor orientation of a ranger leads him to spy in different environments than those of an assassin. A ranger may lie concealed beyond the firelight of a camp at night, listening to the conversation of a group of goblins (assuming he speaks the goblin tongue, of course). While doing so, he may count their numbers, inventory their weapons and animals, listen to their secret plans for a raid, and perhaps even search tents for a suspected captive.

The information a ranger discovers is up to the DM. The character should state specifically how he intends to spy on his objective; the DM should adjust his roll for modifiers such as cover of darkness or numerous passersby.

A ranger may also spy indoors, similar to the reconnoitering done by a thief. Thieves are more adept at this since they work indoors more frequently, but the ranger still has a chance for success. His indoor spying ability is half as great as his regular (outdoors) ability. The DM should make adjustments for encounters, noisy armor, conversation, and so on.

One last aspect of spying is general information gathering. For this, the ranger makes use of whatever personal connections he has. Allies aid him willingly, neutrals may be paid or convinced to aid him, and enemies can be interrogated for information. There is a chance that his source will turn up useful intelligence, depending on the origin of the information. "Facts" from

neutrals or enemies may be partly or completely false; allies may also unwittingly pass on false or misleading information. Incorrect intelligence is indicated by an unsuccessful spying roll, if the DM decides there is anything to be learned at all. Once again, this roll should be made by the DM, and the information imparted to the ranger as if it were true.

### Infiltration

A ranger may wish to infiltrate a town, encampment, or other place where people come together in order to gather intelligence. Successful infiltration enables the ranger to mingle with the people and be accepted as if he belonged there.

There are numerous variables to consider in a job of infiltration. The size of the population, the dominant race, the language spoken, whether it is day or night — all these factors contribute to the difficulty of a mission. The character should state how he plans to infiltrate his objective: under cover of darkness? In disguise, posing as a beggar or a bard? Strolling in with the farm wagons going to market, or climbing over the walls at night? The DM then adjusts his percentage for success accordingly. A human ranger infiltrating a camp of dwarven bandits is surely be easier to spot than if he were in a camp of humans. If the dwarves are all drunk and the ranger appears to be one of the local traders, he is more likely to succeed in his mission.

### Disguise

The more sophisticated the job of infiltration, the more skills a ranger must draw on. At 3rd level, a ranger gains a limited disguise ability that adds a percentage to his chances for successful infiltration. He will never be as accomplished at this as an assassin, but he can do well when impersonating a character of his race and a type he is familiar with — fighter, beggar, or something similar. When the attempted impersonation is of major importance to the adventure, the DM should role-play the ranger's NPC encounters in the infiltrated place, to give him a real feeling for his disguise and infiltration attempt.

### Miscellaneous skills'

A ranger is familiar with a variety of other skills. The first of these is healing — or, more properly, first aid. At a minimum, the ranger knows how to deal with broken limbs and cuts, especially injuries that are typical of those sustained in combat. The character is capable of splinting and possibly setting a bone, and he may cauterize a wound to prevent bleeding and infection using only his dagger, heated in a campfire — crude, but effective when a party is far from more civilized aid.

Another skill essential for every ranger is the ability to clearly mark a trail. This consists of cutting blazes on tree trunks with an axe or piling stones to mark a direction taken. A ranger is capable of reading such trail signs as well as making them.

Depending on his background environment, a ranger may be exceptionally skilled at certain physical activities, from running and swimming to rock-climbing and ice-climbing. These skills are determined when a character's native terrain is known; the ranger should be highly proficient in these "natural" skills at 1st level. His abilities will improve only slightly with experience, and then only if he chooses to train in the skill. A character may choose to learn a skill that is new to him, in which case his ability increases at a different rate (see Table 11).

A standard skill shared by all 1st-level rangers is knot-tying. As any sailor knows, there are a multitude of useful knots, hitches, ties, and splices that can be made with a piece or two of rope or line. The ranger will know an appropriate knot or tie for most situations he can expect to encounter.

Finally, rangers may become skilled in signaling. Signaling is useful for long-distance wilderness communication. Once a signal is sent, it is necessary that there be someone capable of understanding it. Rangers may communicate among themselves or with anyone else who understands this method of communication. The exact type of signal used will vary greatly from area to area; drums, smoke, horns, or semaphore are typical methods of signaling. This is an advanced skill, and the character may choose to learn it once he has reached 3rd level or greater.

### Charts and tables

The following information is divided into three sections. Part I contains terrain and climate information for random generation or arbitrary determination of environment. This section also includes tables for determination of abilities based strictly on native environment, such as physical skills and knowledge of transportation modes.

Part II contains the regular range of skills which improve in a steady progression as a character goes up in level. Here are most of the percentage tables for character abilities.

Part III contains skills which begin with a set level of proficiency. Training to improve in these skill areas is optional and will cost the character extra time and money.

Some definitions are in order:

*Unfamiliar terrain* refers to a place unlike that in which the ranger grew up or received training. A lack of familiarity with terrain (and sometimes climate) carries negative modifiers for many skill rolls.

*Similar terrain* is an environment similar to that which the ranger already knows. There are still enough differences in terrain, climate, flora, and fauna that his wilderness skills are slightly penalized.

Terrain becomes familiar after the ranger has taken training in a new environment or has spent a base time of 12 months adventuring there. This length of time is modified by subtracting the ranger's level from the base of 12 months. For instance, in order for 4th-level ranger Bruno to become familiar with desert terrain, he must spend eight

months in it, or he must take his 5th-level training there. At 10th level and greater, rangers must spend a minimum of three months in a new environment before it can be considered to be familiar.

The DM should make all die rolls to determine the success or failure of a skill roll. The ranger may think he is successful, although he is not; he should not discover this until he has to deal with the consequences of his failure. A bungled attempt at infiltration may get the character arrested in a hostile town; a misidentified plant may cause an illness rather than cure one. The DM must use common sense when adjudicating the results of failed rolls.

## I: Terrain, climate, & skills

**Terrain and climate:** Determine the character's native terrain and climate, and the terrain and climate where he took his ranger training, if different from the former. The DM may define terrain based on the geography of his campaign, or it may be randomly determined by using these tables.

**Table 1: Terrain**

Dice Terrain	Dice Terrain
01-02 Arctic*	56-75 Forest
03-05 Tundra*	76-90 Coast
06-20 Plains	91-98 Desert
21-37 Mountains	99-00 Island
38-55 Hills	

\*—Arctic and tundra terrain have arctic and subarctic climates, respectively. Roll for climate in all other areas.

**Table 2: Climate**

Dice Climate	Dice Climate
01-05 Arctic*	56-85 Subtropical
06-20 Subarctic	86-00 Tropical
21-55 Temperate	

\*— Roll again for climate if terrain is forest or desert.

**Physical skills:** These skills are based on the character's native terrain. Roll for the following percentages to determine if the character has exceptional ability in one or more of the following skill areas.

**Table 3: Physical skills**

Skill	Terrain	% chance
Swimming <sup>1</sup>	Plains, mountains, hills, forest, coast	50%
Climbing	All except desert, plains, tundra, arctic, mountains	40%
	Mountains	60%
	Desert, plains, arctic	20%
Running <sup>2</sup>	Any	20%
Throwing <sup>3</sup>	Any	20%

1 — Temperate climate or warmer.

2 — The ability to run rapidly for extended lengths of time depends upon the nature and culture of the local people.

3— Some cultures use hand-thrown missiles for hunting activities. Items especially made for throwing, such as chipped rocks, boomerangs, or throwing sticks, may be used.

**Transportation:** The DM must determine what types of transportation skills are common to the ranger's native area. Of these, there is a 20% chance per skill that he will be proficient in that mode of transportation and, given adequate materials, can duplicate the equipment or device used. Typical transportation skills include the following, divided by subject matter:

*Cold climates:* Skis, snowshoes, snow sledges or sleds. Sleds are pulled by local beasts of burden.

*Water:* Sailboats, rowboats, coracles, rafts, canoes, dugouts, kayaks, ships. (Don't forget that although a character may not live on an island or near the coast, he may still be near a body of water that encourages water-related skills. Rivers and lakes are common geographical features.)

*Beasts of burden:* Harness or tack for driving or riding; construction of vehicles for animals to pull.

*Bridge-building:* Wood or stone bridge construction; rope bridge across chasms (requires strong mooring points and climbing ability); pontoon bridge across water.

## II: Standard skills

**Table 4: Survival**

This roll may be used for survival skill in general or, depending on the circumstances, for the specifics of providing water, food, shelter, and warmth.

Ranger level	Success chance	Ranger level	Success chance
1	78%	7	90%
2	80%	8	92%
3	82%	9	94%
4	84%	10	96%
5	86%	11	97%
6	88%		

This skill increases at +1% per level above 11th. Penalties may apply for unfamiliar terrain (-10%), unfamiliar climate (-10%), and similar terrain (-5%).

**Table 5: Hunting and fishing**

If the DM knows the specifics about the abundance of game or lack of it in an area, adjust the dice roll accordingly.

Ranger level	Success chance	Ranger level	Success chance
1	60%	7	86%
2	65%	8	89%
3	70%	9	92%
4	75%	10	95%
5	79%	11	97%
6	83%		

This chance increases at ½% per level above the 11th level. Penalties for unfamiliar

terrain (-10%), unfamiliar climate (-5%), and similar terrain (-5%) may be applied.

**Table 6: Trapping and snaring**

Ranger level	Success chance	Ranger level	Success chance
1	35%	7	65%
2	40%	8	70%
3	45%	9	75%
4	50%	10	80%
5	55%	11	85%
6	60%		

This chance increases at 3% per level above 11th level. Penalties for unfamiliar terrain (-10%), unfamiliar climate (-5%), and similar terrain (-5%) may be applied.

**Table 7: Stalking silently**

Ranger level	Success chance	Ranger level	Success chance
1	20%	7	62%
2	27%	8	69%
3	34%	9	76%
4	41%	10	83%
5	48%	11	90%
6	55%		

This skill increases at +2% per level above 11th level. Movement rate is reduced by 30%, or by 50% in dense undergrowth. A ranger may not run while stalking. Modifiers may be applied for unfamiliar terrain (-10%), similar terrain (-5%), darkness of night (-20%), twilight (-10%), precipitation (+5%), and for elven rangers (+5%). Dexterity modifiers may also apply, either at +2% per dexterity point over 14 or -2% for every dexterity point under 7.

**Table 8: Trackless movement**

Ranger level	Success chance	Ranger level	Success chance
1	10%	7	64%
2	19%	8	73%
3	28%	9	82%
4	37%	10	91%
5	46%	11	98%
6	55%		

This skill increases at +1/10% per level above 11th level. Movement is reduced by 50%, or by 75% in dense undergrowth. A ranger may not run while performing trackless movement. Modifiers may be applied for unfamiliar terrain (-10%), similar terrain (-5%), darkness at night (-30%), and during precipitation (+5%).

**Table 9: Plant and animal lore**

Ranger level	Success chance	Ranger level	Success chance
1	15%	7	51%
2	22%	8	56%
3	29%	9	61%
4	35%	10	66%
5	41%	11	71%
6	46%		

This skill increases at +1% per level

above 11th level. Penalties may be applied for unfamiliar terrain (-20%), unfamiliar climate (-10%), similar terrain (-10%), and similar climate (-5%). A bonus of +3% is awarded for every intelligence point the ranger has over 12.

**Table 10: Scouting and spying**

Ranger level	Success chance	Ranger level	Success chance
1	40%	7	70%
2	45%	8	75%
3	50%	9	80%
4	55%	10	85%
5	60%	11	88%
6	65%		

This skill increases at +2% per level above 11th level. Modifiers may be applied for scouting in darkness of night (-20%), spying at night (+15%), if the ranger is an elf (+10%) or half-elf (+5%), and for every intelligence point the ranger has over 14 (+2% per point).

**Table 11: Infiltration**

Ranger level	Success chance	Ranger level	Success chance
1	50%	7	80%
2	55%	8	84%
3	60%	9	88%
4	65%	10	92%
5	70%	11	96%
6	75%		

This chance improves at +1% per level above 11th level. Any percentage chance at disguise may be added to the infiltration chance percentage. Penalties may be applied for impersonating a different race (-20%), entering a group that uses an unfamiliar language (-20%), and entering a group with a dominant race that is different from the ranger's race (-20%).

### III: Miscellaneous skills

These skills may generally be called upon without rolling for success or failure. Such a roll would only be necessary in critical situations, at the discretion of the DM. Most of these skills begin with a basic level of proficiency that does not automatically increase with experience. At the character's option, additional training may be taken in order to increase his proficiency in any or all of his miscellaneous skills.

#### Physical skills

All physical skills have a 75% chance of success. Modifiers apply as noted. If a character trains to improve a physical skill, the ability increases 2% per level spent training.

**Swimming:** Fast water -10%; cold water -10%; strength: +2% per point over 13, or -2% per point under 7.

**Climbing:** Unfamiliar terrain -10%; similar terrain -5%; dexterity, +2% per point over 14; strength, +1% if 15-16, +2% if 17, and +3% if 18 or more.

**Running:** Unfamiliar terrain -5%; dexterity, +2% per point over 14; constitution, +2% per point over 14.

#### Transportation

Transportation skills have a base 75% chance of success. Modifiers apply as noted. If and character trains to improve his transportation skill, his proficiency increases by 2% per level spent training.

Unfamiliar terrain: -10%

Similar terrain: -5%

Intelligence: +2% per point over 15.

#### Gaining a new skill

A character may wish to learn a new physical or transportation skill, whether or not he already has a similar skill. Training requirements are explained under Training, below. Expertise will progress as follows, with "level 1" being the level at which the character begins his training.

**Table 12: Physical and transportation skill improvement**

Ranger level	Success chance	Ranger level	Success chance
1	20%	7	46%
2	25%	8	49%
3	30%	9	52%
4	35%	10	55%
5	40%	11	58%
6	43%		

The skill chances improve by +2% per level above 11th level.

#### First aid

When a critical injury may mean life or death to a character, a ranger has a 20% chance of successfully aiding the injured person. This skill will improve by 3% per level spent training.

A ranger is assumed to be competent enough to handle basic cuts and fractures. Such injuries may normally be treated without a roll for success or failure. (A good example of this is the act of patching up companions after combat, which any ranger should be capable of doing successfully.)

#### Trail-blazing

Rangers blaze and read trails with a base 75% chance of success. If training in this area is continued, the skill improves by 3% per level of training.

#### Knot-tying

There is a base 80% chance of successful knot-tying. This progresses by 2% per level of training. This is another skill that will be rolled for only in critical situations — for instance, when lowering a companion down a cliff with spliced ropes.

#### Disguise

Rangers at 3rd level and greater may choose to train in the skill of disguise, which is useful for infiltration attempts. The ranger gains 3% disguise ability per level of training. This cumulative percentage is applied to the ranger's infiltration percentage when he is disguised, to reflect his

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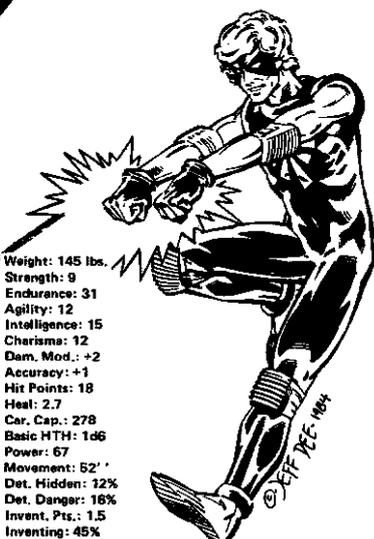
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improved chances of success at infiltrating his objective.

### Signaling

At 3rd level and greater, rangers may choose to train in the skill of signaling. The ranger begins at 15% proficiency (see next paragraph for training details). This skill improves 10% per level of training.

### Training notes

Training time and costs for most of the ranger skills are consistent with the AD&D rules. Certain abilities represent extra time and money to the character who wishes to develop them. The availability of a trainer who can teach the character the skill he wishes to learn is also important. Such qualified teachers may be few and far between. It is likely that a ranger from the woodlands will never find anyone to teach him how to run a dogsled team, as long as he is living and adventuring near a temperate coast. The DM must use common sense when determining what skills are available for a ranger to learn in training.

### Learning or improving skills

A character need not improve any of his miscellaneous skills. If he wishes to do so, extra training can improve the following skills: physical, transportation, disguise, signaling, first aid, trail blazing, and knot-tying.

The character must spend one month training to learn the basics of these skills: physical, transportation, disguise, and signaling. If he is learning more than one physical or transportation skill, he must spend one month in training for each skill.

The time required to improve an ability that the ranger already has will be equal to 50% of the time he must spend on training for his new level. For example, a 4th-level ranger will spend four weeks training for 5th level. If he wishes to improve his swimming ability as well, he will have to spend an additional 2 weeks doing so. This extra training time is limited to a maximum of 6 weeks. The additional training time is required for each miscellaneous skill the ranger is working to improve. Training costs are the same weekly rate the ranger is paying for his regular training.

### Conclusions

This expanded treatment of rangers and their abilities should enable players and DMs alike to play the ranger character in a more versatile way. Rangers will find themselves much more useful — even vital — in outdoor adventures, and will gain an in-depth feel for their special skills. The option to develop certain skills or even to ignore them completely personalizes the ranger, and adds to the new perspective gamers will develop toward this long-neglected character class.

# More range for rangers

## New tables for determining a PC's followers

by James A. Yates

A ranger has the potential to attract a diverse group of followers, certainly more varied than the followers prescribed for any other character class. The official method of determining followers for upper-level rangers, outlined on pp. 16-17 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, was sufficient when it was written — but it actually contains a possibility of some contradictory outcomes, and is somewhat outdated since the inclusion of new monsters in the game rules. This article is an attempt to devise a more logical and more comprehensive method for determining followers for all would-be woodsmen.

### Followers for rangers

Rangers at 10th level now attract 5-20 followers ( $3d6 + 2$ ) instead of the old 2-24. This was changed so that the minimum number of followers for a ranger could be increased, assuring him of a small band of faithful followers. A ranger lord is a powerful character, and he should attract a modicum of power in the form of followers. Under the old system, a ranger who attracted only two followers would get a high die roll modification for determining what those followers were, yet there was nothing to prevent them both from ending up as 1st-level fighters; it is hard to imagine a ranger lord with only two followers of this sort.

Under the new system, the ranger gets a higher minimum number of followers, but the maximum has been reduced to compensate for this. The bonuses and penalties for having too few or too many followers also have been tempered to reflect this new situation.

When the number of followers has been generated, adjust the following percentile dice rolls as follows:

3d6+2 result	Modify d% as follows:
5	+ 15% to each roll
6	+ 10% to first roll
7-8	+ 5% to first roll
9-11	no adjustment
12-14	-5% from first roll
15-17	-10% from each roll
18-20	-20% from each roll

Elves and half-elves are likely to have more nonhuman followers than a human ranger. To reflect this, all percentile dice rolls for the followers of elven rangers are modified by + 10%, and dice rolls for half-elven rangers are given a + 5% bonus. These modifiers, cumulative with those given in the table above, help to ensure that

few dwarves would serve an elf or a half-elf — a situation that would suit all races concerned.

If any addition or subtraction falls within a category no longer permissible, or if any subtraction results in a number less than 01, roll again.

When the number of rolls the ranger character is entitled to has been determined, and any adjustments necessary noted, determine the followers or creatures using the following tables. All scores over 70 are special, and the ranger is able to attract only one group of followers or creatures from each of these categories. Add together all creatures of any sort to find the total number of followers, including humans, demi-humans, etc.

Use the following table to determine which of the six followers tables each die roll is made on.

Dice	Result
01-50	Humans, Table I
51-70	Demi-humans, Table II
71-80	Animals, Table III
81-90	Mounts, Table IV
91-95	Creatures, Table V
96-00	Special Creatures, Table VI

### Rangers' followers tables

A major overhaul was performed on the six tables used for determining followers for rangers. The main failing of the original tables was that they were all listed in alphabetical order — a system that can actually penalize a ranger who is entitled to a die roll bonus, and benefit one who is supposed to be penalized. Under the old system, a ranger who attracted only two followers would be entitled to a bonus of + 25% on all subsequent dice rolls. This would give the ranger an excellent chance of making it onto the coveted special creature tables, and the possibility of gaining a storm giant or a copper dragon. Unfortunately, once the ranger made it onto the special creatures table, the mandatory + 25% bonus to all die rolls would already place the ranger well beyond the range of the giant or the dragon. Conversely, low rolls on the demi-humans table will produce dwarves and elves, while very high rolls will get halflings. I may be somewhat prejudiced, but it seems to me that an elven fighter/magic-user/thief is more valuable than a halfling fighter/thief.

The listings on these tables have been rearranged in order of strength. Hit dice was the basic factor used in the calculations, although several other factors, such as

intelligence, special abilities, and so on were also considered. The tables have also been updated and expanded to cover a wider range of possibilities. Using these new tables will go a long way toward giving rangers more diversity. Until now, most rangers were regarded as protectors of the forest; given these revisions, they can be better known as lords of the jungle, guardians of the tundra, or whatever title one's imagination can devise.

### Humans, Table I

On the original table, a ranger with a few followers was unlikely to receive a cleric, while one with many followers could not get a magic-user. Also, no matter what type of character one rolls up, there was nothing preventing it from ending up as a 1st- or 2nd-level character. The new table eliminates the need for a second die roll to determine level, which is now factored into the table. The new table is arranged so that low die rolls will get low-level characters, and higher die rolls will get higher-level characters, but never beyond those limits set in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*. This table now makes sense of the bonuses and the penalties, and allows a wider range of numbers, at nearly the same percentages, for gaining any character type. Illusionists have also been added to this table.

### Demi-humans, Table II

This table was more difficult to revise because it covered a much wider range of possibilities. I was forced to retain the second die roll to determine level, but I was also able to expand the number of character types and arrange them in a more progressive fashion. Although this table is still arbitrary, it does allow for a greater variety of character types while retaining approximately the same racial percentages.

Characters with two classes have been given the chance to be 2nd level, but those with three classes are still restricted to 1st level. This was done to retain parity between those character types with multiple classes and the pure fighters. When rolling up any demi-human fighters, there are always two or three gained, with a maximum of 10 experience levels (two 5th-level elf fighters). Those character types with two classes could now total up to 4 experience levels, which seems a little more equitable.

### Animals, Table III

This table, and the three remaining tables, posed problems of an entirely different

nature. Humans and demi-humans can be found in almost any climate, but one is not going to find many polar bears in the tropics, even in fantasy games! After much thought on the subject, I took my cue from *Monster Manual II* and decided to create three subtables for each of the main climatic zones: arctic, temperate, and tropical. It is up to the DM to decide which climatic subtable will be used. Some of the subtables could overlap in certain regions, but common sense should prevail in any situation.

The animals on these tables had to meet several requirements. All had to be native to the Prime Material Plane, have at least 2 hit dice; be of good or neutral alignment, and be at least semi-intelligent. The first requirement for 2 HD was to ensure that the ranger could get animals that would be of real help in combat. Intelligence was restricted to semi-intelligent and above so that the ranger could get animals that were easy to train. The only animal on this table that is not at least semi-intelligent is the cheetah, but I feel that its animal intelligence rating is in error. Several of the animals added to these subtables are part of an effort to overcome certain public prejudices; for example, wolves are not inherently evil creatures, and they would make fiercely loyal pets.

Of course, if a roll indicates the presence of an animal that should not exist in that particular area of a campaign, then the roll should be disregarded and a new roll made.

#### Mounts, Table IV

This table permits the ranger to acquire an impressive mount or useful assistants. Buffaloes, rhinoceri, and several types of elephants were added to the subtables in an attempt to break out of the mind-set that so many people have. Ranger lords should be given the opportunity to sit astride an elephant and ride around striking awe into the tropical locals. This will certainly make for more variety, though it will cause additional problems with feeding and housing such beasts. Centaurs are unwilling mounts, wemics will not allow themselves to be ridden, and only a very small creature could ride a hybsil (if the latter would permit it), yet these creatures fit this table, as they make useful scouts.

A high dice roll will gain the ranger a flying mount. Some might balk at the notion of giving a ranger a griffon; however, it is assumed that any ranger who receives a griffon will have enough brains not to stable it next to his favorite horse.

As above, if a roll indicates the presence of a creature that should not exist in the current campaign area, the roll should be disregarded and a new roll made.

#### Creatures, Table V

This table began simply enough and progressed well, until I discovered only two entries for the arctic subtable. Eventually, this was expanded to four entries with the inclusion of the aarakocra and the swanmay.

Any ranger receiving an aarakocra had best understand the limits of their relationship; the aarakocra will make an excellent scout and a loyal companion, but it will be extremely reluctant to venture indoors and could never be persuaded to go down in a dungeon. The swanmay carries the possibility of becoming a romantic consort for a male ranger and a lively companion to a female one. By using  $d4 + 3$  to determine the swanmay's ranger level, we keep her from being too powerful by assuring that she has not yet gained any spell capabilities. The swanmay will also be very reluctant to venture beyond the natural world into cities.

#### Special Creatures, Table VI

This table also caused some difficulties. I wanted to expand it because any ranger lucky enough to get a roll on this table should get something special. Two more types of giants and the earth dragon have been added. Some trouble was encountered with the copper dragon, which can only be found in the tropics, so I went up one step to the bronze dragon — only to learn that it cannot be found in the arctic. Next in line was the silver dragon; it can be found anywhere, but is a bit too powerful. In the end, I decided to use a different dragon for each climatic zone. I also altered the method for determining the age of any dragon received, giving it a better chance of being older. This was done because a ranger who gets a

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dragon should get a *dragon*; a small, young, copper dragon with 14 hp is little more than a big lizard with a very limited life span.

#### Humans, Table I

Dice	Character class and level
01-10	fighter 1
11-15	cleric 1
16-21	druid 1
22-25	ranger 1
26-27	illusionist 1
28-30	magic-user 1
31-38	fighter 2
39-42	cleric 2
43-47	druid 2
48-50	ranger 2
51	illusionist 2
52-53	magic-user 2
54-61	fighter 3
62-65	cleric 3
66-70	druid 3
71-72	ranger 3
73	magic-user 3
74-79	fighter 4
80-82	cleric 4
83-87	druid 4
88-92	fighter 5
93-96	druid 5
97-00	fighter 6

For more variety, the DM might, at his option, allow a 10% chance that each fighter rolled up is actually a member of one of the new official or unofficial subclasses — i.e., archers, barbarians, sentinels, etc. Any restrictions on these classes would still apply; for example, a sentinel (see DRAGON® issue #89) could not serve a chaotic good ranger.

#### Demi-humans, Table II

Dice	Race, class, level range
01-04	Halfling fighter 1-3
05-08	Gnome fighter 1-3
09-16	Dwarf fighter 1-4
17-26	Elf fighter 2-5
27-29	Half-elf druid 2-4
30-34	Halfling fighter/thief 1-2
35-39	Dwarf fighter/thief 1-2
40-42	Elf fighter/thief 1-2
43-44	Half-elf fighter/thief 1-2
45-47	Half-elf cleric/fighter 2-2
48-50	Half-elf cleric/ranger 1-2
51-53	Gnome fighter/illusionist 1-2
54-56	Elf fighter/magic-user 1-2
57-59	Half-elf cleric/magic-user 1-2
60-61	Gnome illusionist/thief 1-2
62-64	Elf magic-user/thief 1-2
65-66	Half-elf magic-user/thief 1-2
67-69	Two halfling fighters, each 1-3
70-72	Two gnome fighters, each 1-3
73-79	Two dwarf fighters, each 1-4
80-87	Two elf fighters, each 2-5
88-90	Elf ftr/m-u/thief 1
91-92	Half-elf cler/ftr/m-u 1
93-94	Half-elf ftr/m-u/thief 1
95-97	Three halfling ftrs, each 1-3
98-00	Three gnome ftrs, each 1-3

At the DM's option, allow a small chance that a demi-human fighter is of an official or unofficial subclass, as noted in Table I.

All followers with the professed class of thief are always neutral good in alignment.

#### Animals, Table III

(one roll only on this table)

##### IIIa. Arctic

Dice	Animal(s)
01-08	badger, giant
09-16	lion, mountain
17-21	cooshee
22-36	bear, black
37-41	eagle, giant
42-46	hoar foxes (2)
47-51	lynxes, giant (2)
52-66	wolves* (2-4)
67-74	lion*
75-82	bear, brown*
83-90	tiger*
91-95	owls, giant (2)
96-00	bear, northern

Animals marked with an asterisk are the normal version of that animal (wolf, lion, brown bear, tiger) 90% of the time, and the prehistoric version (dire wolf, spotted lion, cave bear, smilodon) 10% of the time.

##### Mounts, Table IV

(one roll only on this table)

##### IVa. Arctic

Dice	Mount(s)
01-10	oliphant
11-25	mastodon
26-40	mammoth
41-55	rhinoceros, woolly
56-70	hippogriff
71-80	pegasus
81-00	griffon

##### IIIb. Temperate

Dice	Animal(s)
01-09	badger, giant
10-18	lion, mountain
19-24	cooshee
25-37	bear, black
38-41	elfin cat
42-47	eagle, giant
48-61	wolves* (2-4)
62-70	lion*
71-79	bear, brown*
80-88	tiger*
89-94	blink dogs (2)
95-00	owls, giant (2)

##### IIIc. Tropical

Dice	Animal(s)
01-06	cheetah
07-16	lion, mountain
17-26	leopard
27-32	cooshee
33-42	gorilla bear
43-52	jaguar
53-66	wolves* (2-4)
67-76	lion*
77-86	tiger*
87-90	banderlogs (2)
91-96	owls, giant (2)
97-00	apes, gorilla (2)

#### Creatures, Table V

(one roll only on this table)

##### Va. Arctic

Dice	Creature(s)
01-20	pixies (1-4)
21-60	brownies (1-2)
61-80	arakocra
81-00	swanmay*

##### Vb. Temperate

Dice	Creature(s)
01-07	pixies (1-4)
08-16	atomies (2-5)
17-25	brownies (1-2)
26-32	grigs (1-2)
33-46	leprechauns (1-2)
47-55	buckawns (1-4)
56-64	sprites (2-4)
65-71	arakocra
72-78	pseudo-dragon
79-93	satyr
94-00	swanmay*

##### Vc. Tropical

Dice	Creature(s)
01-12	pixies (1-4)
13-33	atomies (2-5)
34-55	brownies (1-2)
56-67	grigs (1-2)
68-88	buckawns (1-4)
89-00	arakocra

\* — Use d4 + 3 to determine the ranger level of the swanmay.

#### Special Creatures, Table VI

(one roll only on this table)

##### Via. Arctic

Dice	Creature(s)
01-10	weretigers (1-2)
11-32	giant, stone
33-44	werebears (1-2)
45-56	dragon, earth*
57-68	treants (2-5)
69-78	giant, firbolg
79-88	dragon, silver*
89-00	giant, storm

##### Vib. Temperate

Dice	Creature(s)
01-12	weretigers (1-2)
13-30	giant, stone
31-42	werebears (1-2)
43-54	dragon, earth*
55-66	treants (2-5)
67-78	giant, firbolg
79-90	dragon, bronze
91-00	giant, storm

##### Vic. Tropical

Dice	Creature(s)
01-12	weretigers (1-2)
13-32	giant, stone
33-50	dragon, earth*
51-68	treants (2-5)
69-88	dragon, copper*
89-00	giant, storm

\* — Roll percentile dice to determine dragon's age as follows: 01-10, young; 11-45, sub-adult; 46-80, young adult; 81-00, adult.



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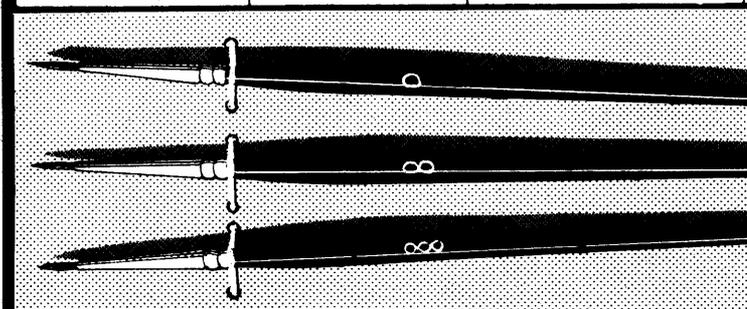
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# The way we really play

## Development of a DM is a three-stage process

by Tom Armstrong

I would venture to guess that perhaps 5% of all AD&D® game players actually follow all the rules, use only officially approved character classes, and permit only sensible, balanced magical items in their campaigns. Actually, the figure should be more like 2%, if that's not too high, and they are probably members of the group that I call the "letter of the law bunch," about which I'll say more later.

I should know. I've played in every type of game from those run by Monty Hauls, where a 1st-level character can come back with 10,000 gp and six magic items after stomping on a dozen orcs, to campaigns in which the Dungeon Master was so stingy that it was a red-letter day when the party came back from a fight against hundreds of monsters (literally!) with 1,000 gp and a *ring of water walking!* I've also refereed both styles and many in between. I don't feel guilty about any of this. At the time each game was played, it was the style with which I felt most comfortable.

I've noticed that almost all people who become good DMs go through at least three distinct stages in their development. It's a safe bet that, if a DM has been running a Monty Haul campaign for a long while, he is not developing his skills. Rather, he is probably stagnating as a DM. As with all "rules," this one has its exceptions, but it is accurate enough.

These three stages of development are discussed below, with a couple of examples from my own experiences as a DM.

*Stage 1:* This is the "Monty Haul" campaign. The novice DM is frequently so worried about keeping his players happy with the game that other methods of accomplishing this end do not occur to him. Instead, he takes the most obvious route of supplying tons of treasure, scores of magic items, and easy ways to advance in level and in skills to hold the players' interest. The new DM has usually not realized that the main attraction of AD&D gaming is *not* necessarily the collection of gobs of goodies for relatively minor accomplishments. If you or your DM utilize this style now, don't lose heart. Three of the best DMs I've ever gamed with began with this style.

*Stage 2:* This step begins with the realization that the campaign has gotten out of hand. The characters can buy and sell most kingdoms before breakfast. They can walk up to Odin, kick him in the shins, and get away with it. They've killed off all the

archdevils and demon princes, and they are starting on the deities, beginning with the first page of the *Legends & Lore* volume. ("Hey, George, we get Bast next time! I've been waiting to get even with *her!*")

The DM reasons, "I must be doing this all wrong." There quickly ensues a sudden 180-degree change of course to *strict* adherence to The Rules. DMs of this sort are the ones I call the "letter of the law bunch." Their creed is: "If it ain't in The Books, it ain't so!" They regard the written word as a set of Holy Laws, and death to the infidel! Fortunately, this stage is generally short-lived and ends quite abruptly, either with all the players quitting in disgust ("What do you mean, I've got to add in my weapon speed? My cleric's been trying to swing his mace for the past ten minutes!") or with the DM losing his cool at the countless times he's consulted tables and made die rolls. This latter stage is frequently achieved amid loud and often profane screams of frustration and anger, usually accompanied by endless sheets of paper sent flying through the air like so many weird, rectangular butterflies.

*Stage 3:* This is what I call the "normal" style of refereeing, as it is by far the most common style and is the easiest to referee. It is a blend of the official AD&D rules, the individual DM's unofficial rules, and common sense. While this method will usually not be seen in official tournament play, it is the form most frequently found in the average neighborhood get-together. Since it doesn't require constant reference to the many tables, it permits smoothness and speed of play, as well as allowing the DM to insert his own results, should he feel it necessary.

A DM using the "normal" method still needs a solid grounding in the actual rules of the game, but he is no longer bound by the inflexible results of a die. Provided the DM's altered results do not unbalance the campaign, and are consistent with its goals, he can feel free to reward or punish the characters' actions without making a die roll. He must still remember that no one appreciates a DM who plays favorites, is inconsistent, or who makes decisions without regard to balance or merit.

I've made off-the-cuff rulings in both directions at times. Once I killed a character by altering a die roll. The player had shown total disregard for the rules, altered his character's ability scores, and cheated on his die rolls (come on, no one rolls 19's

and 20's twelve times in a row!). He was rude to the other players, disregarded his character's alignment when it suited him, and was generally a pain in the neck. But my dice were as idiotic as he was; they refused to give a result that would legally allow me to cream his character, so I arbitrarily killed his character within the framework of the scenario.

On the other side of the coin, one poor young paladin of my acquaintance had done everything right and had worked hard at it. He gave half of his winnings to the church or the poor. If this fellow had 3 hp left and a party member was in trouble, he dove in to help, usually managing to save the day. He prayed to his deity as required and gave sacrifices to him. Unfortunately, my dice *hated* him! So, on the next treasure roll, I supplied a lawful good *ring of limited wishes*. Nearly all the wishes were later used to benefit other party members.

The DM must keep in mind the probable consequences of his "playing god." Does some character deserve a special award or penalty? Is the character well-played within the restrictions of his class, race, and alignment? Will these results have unbalancing consequences? If all is to your satisfaction, go for it. It's *your* game, and you alone are responsible for it. Don't allow the players to pull the lawyer routine on you. If you are fortunate enough to have players who realize that this is your campaign, and that you are the one who determines what its goals are and how best to achieve them, you will get no static from them about whatever you do. But you must be consistent and fair. If you have done your homework, studied the books (and once through them is not enough — I've refereed for almost ten years now, and I still don't remember it all, but I *have* read it all several times), and planned out what you want to happen, you will have no insurmountable problems.

*Example 1:* When I first began refereeing D&D® games, I, too, ran a Monty Haul campaign. I was having fun and the players seemed to enjoy themselves. Before each gathering, I just couldn't wait for the players to discover my newest monsters, tricks, and magic items.

One day, however, I received a shock. The characters had just wiped out some horrible, nasty monster and were dividing up its treasures. One of them picked up my newest artifact, the *staff of instant death*, and another found a sword I had especially placed for him. The sword-finder's subse-

quent actions showed that all was not well in River City. He took the sword to a high-level magic-user, who could identify almost anything, and found out that he was the proud owner of the best and most powerful sword ever created by the dwarves under the mountain. He then informed me that he was placing the sword in his extra-large bag of holding, then dumping both into his sphere of annihilation!

I was dumbfounded. That sword was a work of art! What did he mean by throwing it away like that? I had created it expressly for his character! He further told me that he would give away all his magic items except for his mace +4, plate mail +3, and his boots of speed, and would then give all his wealth to the church and become a cleric of Odin!

After the game, I cornered him and asked why he'd done all that. All he said was: "It isn't any fun to play like that any more."

I thought about that all week. At our next session, for which I was a player, I presented the DM for the session with a brand-new character, rolled strictly by the rules. He was nothing great, but was above average in some respects. In the following weeks, I played him entirely within his alignment, class, and abilities. I allowed him no more magic or money than he could reasonably be expected to have by the rules. I found that my friend was right! It was more fun to play a character who ran into problems once in a while and had to use his head, rather than one who got whatever he wanted due to his unlimited power and possessions.

*Example 2:* Two years ago, I decided that my campaign was getting out of hand from my allowing characters into play from other campaigns. I didn't want to trash the whole thing and have to redraw all my maps, random encounter tables, etc. Besides, I didn't particularly want to DM a whole party of 1st-level characters again.

So, I made a list of the rules I wanted to stick by from then on, including those official rules which had not been previously used but which would not greatly slow down game play. I also set down in writing the limits for abilities and powers that I would allow the characters. Then I waited for the next session.

After everyone sat down around the game table, I asked for all the character sheets to refamiliarize myself with the characters. At the same time, I told the players to write down three things they thought their characters deserved or needed.

While they were writing, I began to revise the characters. All statistics above 18 were dropped to 17 or less unless I specifically remembered that it had been a legitimate gain in my game. Such super-high scores were generally dropped by 1-6 points, unless it was a primary score for that character class, in which case I allowed an 18 to stand.

Magic items not found in the *Dungeon Masters Guide* or issues of *DRAGON*®

Magazine, or that I regarded as overly powerful or unbalancing to the game, were sharply downgraded or removed entirely. Hit points, alignments (except for evil ones), mundane possessions, monetary treasure, and physical attributes such as height, weight, etc., were untouched. Throughout the process, I kept in mind how well or how badly the character had been played in regard to his alignment, character class, race, etc.

I then asked for the "wish sheets" and compared them to the revised characters. A few requests were entirely reasonable, and these were granted, but most were greedy, selfish, or just plain silly. (A couple fitted all three of these categories.)

One player, whose fighter had been consistently unlucky in finding any kind of magical armor beyond ring mail +1, asked for some kind of protection. He received a suit of chain mail +3 that happened to be available on loan from his temple.

On the other hand, another player thought his lawful good character deserved a ring that would instantly and automatically kill or paralyze, by touch, any chaotic or evil creature. His "wish" also was granted, but he never did figure out just why all subsequent chaotic or evil creatures he met either fought him from a distance or were immune to magic. He had terrible luck with saving throws, too. . . .

After I handed back the character sheets, and after the predictable hue and cry had

died down to relatively calm sulking, I explained why the changes had been made. I handed out the copies of the new house rules, and we discussed them. A couple of these rules were subsequently discarded, but a number of new ones were added. This surprised me; I hadn't thought to ask the players what kind of campaign they wanted.

The resultant campaign worked very well, and we established a cooperative relationship. I kept the magic and power in the campaign to a low level. The players thought about more than killing and collecting, and the campaign became great fun for everyone.

Dungeon Masters should try working with their players instead of for or against them; players have good ideas, too. If the rules are getting too cumbersome or complicated for your group's style of play, think about what you and your players really want and need in your campaign.

If you are not particularly happy with the direction in which your campaign is heading, or if you are an aspiring DM, try these methods. Remember:

1. It's *your* campaign, first and foremost. Don't be railroaded into something you don't want;
2. Work *with* your players. A little time invested at the beginning will pay dividends in mutual enjoyment later on;
3. Keep it within the AD&D rules; and,
4. Have fun!

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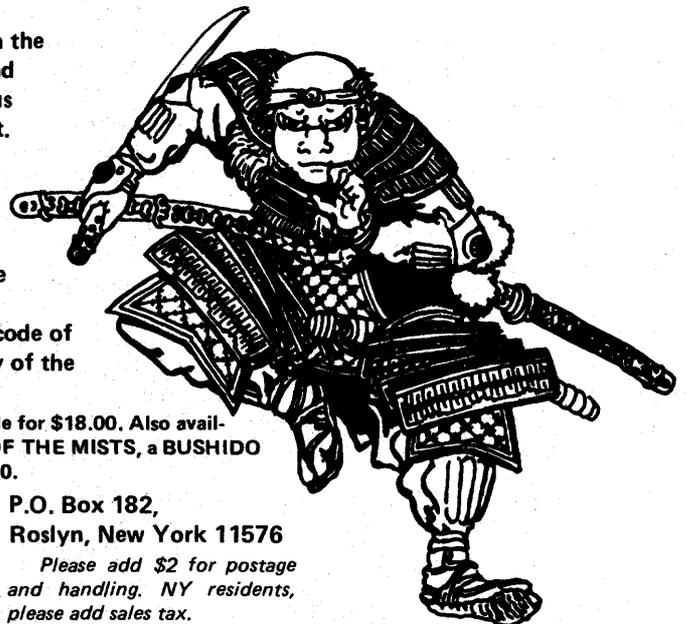
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# Bad idea, good game?

Yes, it can happen — but not all the time

by Michael Dobson

A bad idea doesn't necessarily make for a bad game. In fact, the opposite is often true — some games that end up doing very well in the marketplace were born from bad ideas.

This premise was the foundation of a panel discussion held at last summer's Origins '85 convention, entitled "Bad Game Ideas and How to Make Them Work." The principles and opinions brought out during the discussion are applied in this article to several games that have recently appeared on the market. Some of these games have succeeded, or have the potential to succeed, even though they are based on "bad" ideas. But it doesn't always work this way — many bad ideas lead to games that are just as bad.

The word "bad" in this context can mean a number of different things, such as silly, tasteless, outrageous, or even incredibly clever. "Bad" game ideas tend to violate accepted marketing wisdom ("You can't sell a game about killing baby seals in the mass market!") or accepted notions of game design ("You can't possibly design a good game about rollerskating accountants!").

Of course, accepted marketing wisdom and accepted notions of game design have a way of changing once someone creates a hit game. The *Monopoly*® game was rejected by a number of publishers before Parker Brothers bought it, because the game rules were so complex no one would ever bother to learn how to play it! Similarly, the *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*® game was such a "bad" idea that it was turned down by a number of publishers who felt that a fantasy role-playing game couldn't possibly be successful. Now, many of the same publishers who rejected the original are publishing imitations. Role-playing games ceased to be a "bad" idea as soon as one of them became successful.

In this sense, a "bad" game idea can actually be a very good idea. The word "bad" used to mean "good" has become a catchphrase at West End Games, where if a designer tells you your game idea is "really bad," it might just be a compliment. The equivalent term at Steve Jackson Games is "stupid." At TSR, there is no precise equivalent, but the terms "cheesy" and "wahoo" are often heard.

Not all "bad game ideas" are actually good. Most of the time, accepted marketing wisdom and accepted theories of game design are very much on target — that's how they got accepted in the first place. If everyone hates your pet game idea, they're

probably on to something. For every *Monopoly* or *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* game phenomenon, thousands of games die in the marketplace each year.

Sometimes a "good game idea" turns out to be a very bad idea, as the manufacturers of a number of imitation trivia games found out. A game can have all the support of the marketing department, have the most carefully researched and tested game mechanics, and still flop.

With this in mind, let's look at a few "bad game ideas" that have been recently published.

During the panel discussion, several participants tossed out suggestions for unpublishable "bad-as-in-really-tasteless" game ideas, among them a game based on the Bernhard Goetz subway incident. Upon returning to the dealers area at the convention, the first game I saw was the *Subway Vigilante*™ Game (by Paperback Games), based on you know what. The bright yellow box was decorated with a hand pointing a revolver at the buyer, and "Make My Day!" was emblazoned above the title. This suggests that there is no idea so tasteless that no one will publish it.

The game is packaged as a fake paperback, so you can store it on your bookshelf. It's a hefty package, too, because it includes 4 lead "guns" and 24 "bullets." The board is merely folded paper. The object of the game is to get from Brooklyn to the Bronx without getting killed.

*Subway Vigilante* uses a Monopoly-style movement track, with "Punk", and "Make My Day!" spaces that require the player to draw cards. You get and use Bullets against Punks and sometimes innocent bystanders during play, but the game shies away from showing actual death. Some of the cards are humorous, but most are surprisingly bland, especially considering the subject matter of the game.

The packaging and design of this game is clearly intended to be outrageous and exploitative. The logo design clearly plays upon fears about public safety, and the "Make My Day!" slogan evokes a Dirty Harry attitude toward law enforcement.

There is nothing wrong with a little tastelessness in a game. *Subway Vigilante* would make a good gag gift. Unfortunately, the game becomes hypocritical when it suggests that after playing the game the players should have a "Roundtable Discussion" about the effects and morality of vigilantism. This is just as phony as the "psycholo-

gist" introducing a dirty book by claiming it provides "socially redeeming value" and provides psychological insights into modern urban morality. Good trash must be honest. *Subway Vigilante* is not an honest game, not a funny game, and not a good game.

One of the best "bad ideas" in recent gaming history has been the *Toon*™ role-playing game from Steve Jackson Games. Most of the definitions of "bad" apply to *Toon* — it is silly, sometimes tasteless, always outrageous, and certainly clever. It violates conventional marketing wisdom ("You can't sell a game to adults about silly cartoons!") and accepted notions of game design ("You can't do a role-playing game in which no one ever gets killed!"). *Toon* is beer-and-pretzels role-playing with a vengeance. It doesn't hold up well as a campaign game, but is a very good choice to introduce someone to role-playing. The mechanics of *Toon* are both simple and versatile, except for an experience-point system that seems very out of place and a skills list that is too cumbersome for an otherwise streamlined game.

*Toon Strikes Again*, the first supplement for the *Toon* game, contains new rules, useful advice for the Animator (referee), some pregenerated cartoon characters, and four cartoon adventures.

Although *Toon* is officially meant to be a generic cartoon role-playing game, it is obviously designed around the classic Warner Brothers cartoons, especially the works of Chuck Jones. Several of the adventures (including Warren Spector's hilarious "Mars Needs Creampuffs") are strongly influenced by the originals. Even the pre-generated characters have a strong Warner Brothers feel to them — but they just don't have the range or class of Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, or even Foghorn Leghorn.

The lack of a Warner Brothers license handicaps *Toon*, though it is a delightful (if not great) game even so. It's a shame that the game does not expand beyond the genre it is based on. Cartoon role-playing has, I think, a lot of possibilities that have not been explored. Part of the joy of role-playing is the ability to put yourself in an unreal situation. *Toon* is about as unreal as you can get, but the designers have so far only scratched the surface.

The *Paranoia*™ role-playing game from West End Games is in many ways quite similar to *Toon*. Like *Toon*, it has a refreshingly silly, cartoonish worldview, and en-

courages anti-rational game play. *Paranoia* lends itself more easily to an evening's entertainment than to a prolonged campaign. (The character death rate in *Paranoia* tends to rule out campaign play anyway.)

*Paranoia* also fulfills many of the "bad game idea" criteria: It is silly, tasteless, and outrageous, and it violates nearly every accepted standard of game design. In *Paranoia*, characters die easily, important information is deliberately withheld from the players, the adventures are deliberately designed to frustrate and persecute the players, and the gamesmaster cheats. In the hands of another designer, the *Paranoia* universe might have been treated seriously, and would have been awful. *Paranoia* is fun because it doesn't take itself seriously.

*The Yellow Clearance Black Box Blues* (YCBBB) is the second full-length adventure module for *Paranoia*. It is billed as "an excessively devious adventure by John M. Ford, winner of the 1984 World Fantasy Award!" It is possibly the best-written role-playing adventure in the history of the field.

The module is filled with delights, from the Experimental Security Computer Terminal that becomes a different, escalating practical joke each time it appears, to the sinister Smokey the Bearbot, who attacks the PCs with its shovel, growling "Only you! Only you!"

Ford has created a complete and successful slapstick comedy. The pie-in-the-face humor is brilliantly handled, and the module is filled with little touches that had me laughing out loud. When he needs a map for an important mission Outdoors, he provides the following tip:

"You are encouraged to actually fabricate the map [of the adventure area]: take a gas-station map (of any location, it doesn't matter) and work it over, stomping on it, spilling coffee, tearing pieces off, until it looks like it's been in your glove compartment for three hundred years or so. Circle a couple of random locations in red ballpoint, mark a stretch of road with highlighter. If you can stamp it, 'COMPUTER PROPERTY - Unauthorized Possession Punishable by Summary Execution,' all the better."

The danger in *Paranoia*, of course, is that the players will be kept in the dark too much for them to have fun. In YCBBB, all the best jokes are for the gamesmaster.

The adventure reads better than it plays. With a group that is temperamentally suited for the game, it's very entertaining until combat begins. But the much-touted "free-style" *Paranoia* combat system causes play to bog down until the firefight is over, clones are activated, and the mission is allowed to continue.

YCBBB is structured in a very linear fashion. The players spend most of the adventure being herded from one funny situation into another. The adventure is designed to keep the PCs on track no matter what. For example, in one section, the PCs are saddled with a "jackobot" that is the only member of the party that knows where

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to go next. Since the information is classified, the jackobot cannot reveal it. The referee is even encouraged to build a dependency on the jackobot for information and guidance, and to lead the players around by the nose for the duration of the mission.

The adventure is structured and paced like a movie, and there is enough entertaining detail for three modules. It is almost too much — the climactic chase and its consequences are so fulfilling and so complete that they make any future *Paranoia* modules irrelevant. With *YCBBB*, *Paranoia* has reached its apotheosis.

One of the main problems plaguing the role-playing industry is the proliferation of systems on the market. When the first few role-playing games came out, the field was fresh, and each new system could attract a following. But with a glut of games on the same topics, each new game had to offer something truly new and exciting, or become "just another role-playing game."

The worst possible topic about which to do a new game is heroic fantasy. Not only do the D&D® and AD&D® game systems dominate the market, but games from *RuneQuest®* (Chaosium/Avalon Hill) to *Chivalry & Sorcery™* (Fantasy Games Unlimited) to *Rolemaster™* (Iron Crown Enterprises) have each grabbed their little corner of the fantasy market. Can yet another fantasy role-playing game compete?

Evidently the publishers of *Fantasy*

*Hero™* (Hero Games) believe so. *Fantasy Hero* is based on the popular Hero System, initially derived from the *Champions™* superhero role-playing game.

There is much to like about the Hero System and its fantasy conversion. It was one of the first game systems to make it an advantage to take character disadvantages, which promoted PCs that were not look-alikes. The modular super-power creation system allows a wide variety of effects to be simulated with relatively simple mechanics. When adapted to the range of magical spells, effects, and items, it works just as well. Although the magic system does not have the consistency of magic in other games (such as the Vancian concept of magic that shapes both the D&D® and AD&D® games), it has the advantage of being whatever each magic-user in the campaign wants it to be.

*Fantasy Hero* is a perfect-bound 160-page paperback book, and contains all the basics. The material is well organized, well written, and well presented. (The cover is amateurish, but a great improvement over *Champions*.) The creators emphasize storytelling and role-playing throughout, and encourage players to create backgrounds and a context for the campaign.

If *Fantasy Hero* had come out five years ago, it would have been a major release, but today it runs the risk of being lost in the crowd. I found it most useful as a source-book of options and advice rather than as a

game in itself. Fans of *Champions* who also play fantasy games may find it to be more.

The publishers of *Fantasy Hero* also publish *Justice, Inc.™*, a broad-based pulp adventure game set in the 1930's. It is conventional marketing wisdom in the field that 1930's games are not popular, but the genre is such a natural for role-playing that people keep trying.

*Lands of Mystery* is a campaign supplement for *Justice, Inc.*, and is "approved for use with *Chill™*, *Call of Cthulhu™*, and *Daredevils™*. (It is a growing trend among smaller game publishers to print conversions in their products for other game systems, thereby increasing sales by appealing to players of rival games, as well as other games produced by the same company.)

It's a shame that *Lands of Mystery* is tied to such a small market, because it's a wonderful and much-needed guide that provides practical advice for designing a campaign world and creating a story to go with it.

*Lands of Mystery* is officially a guide to creating a classic "lost worlds romance," a campaign set in a place hidden away from the civilized world, discovered by a party of pulp adventurers, filled with danger, excitement, romance, and the inevitable beautiful princess. But it is every bit as useful as an aid in designing a fantasy or science-fiction campaign. It provides advice, tips and techniques that are almost universally applicable in creating a campaign environment.

The world-design information is well thought-out, complete, informative, and practical. But even more useful is the guide to creating a "novel" set in the campaign world. It shows you how to take a simple theme and build it into a coherent series of episodes leading characters to a goal.

*Lands of Mystery* also advances (for the first time, to my knowledge) the idea that characters should be assigned roles, as in a play or movie, that fit various stereotypes, such as the Strong-Jawed Hero, the Native Princess, the Girl Seeking Her Father, or even the Cynical Pianist. Although this idea seems simple and obvious, it is extremely important, because it makes the job of creating a coherent story around the characters possible.

Finally, *Lands of Mystery* contains a complete campaign, "Zorandar," which could easily be adapted to a variety of fantasy games. Zorandar is an Edgar Rice Burroughs-type environment, set in an alternate dimension linked to Earth.

*Lands of Mystery* is an important product; it is one of the few good guides to creating and running a successful campaign. No matter what period you prefer, or what game system you like best, *Lands of Mystery* is going to be useful.

The proliferation of role-playing systems has reached its zenith with the release of the *Midnight at the Well of Souls* role-playing system (TAG Industries), based on the novels by Jack Chalker. It may be conventional marketing wisdom that "licenses

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sell," but how many fans of the novels will rush right out and swap this game off the shelves?

The game is mediocre in every respect. The mechanics were state-of-the-art ten years ago, and the game universe as presented in the game has no spark to it. Whatever atmosphere the books may possess (I have not read them) is not translated into the game.

The Stellar Generation System for creating new worlds quickly seems astronomically accurate, as far as that goes, but as *Lands of Mystery* so ably demonstrates, mere number-crunching, however accurate, does not a realized campaign environment make. A simple starship combat system is primitive and spiritless. The introductory adventure, about the hazards faced by a mining party, is tedious both to read and to play. It does nothing beyond introducing the game systems.

TSR, Inc., has branched out from its role-playing roots with a new line of family board games: the SIROCCO™ game, a military boardgame; the CROSSCHECK™ game, a crossword-puzzle game; a line of PARTYZONE™ themed party games; and finally the ALL MY CHILDREN™ game, based on the popular soap opera. The latter two games easily qualify as "bad ideas."

The SPY RING™ Scenario, by David "Zeb" Cook, is the first PARTYZONE game to be published. The game contains

pre-printed invitations with which to invite friends, and folders that provide each player with a "spy identity" and secret mission. Missions range from selling secrets to defecting to the other side. Each spy begins with a password with which he can identify other spies on his own team. By talking and socializing with the others, each player tries to figure out how to perform his mission and then does so.

The game is similar to various solve-a-murder party games that have become popular over the past several years, but with a twist. I've always felt that the fun part to play in a solve-a-murder party is that of the murderer, because the murderer gets to lie and cheat and try to confuse people, while the other participants have to play it straight. But in SPY RING, everybody's got a secret, so everyone gets to lie and cheat and obfuscate.

PARTYZONE is a new approach to role-playing; with no dice, no combat system, and no pretend violence. Like many of the "bad ideas," it is stretching the limits of the field by trying something new, different, and a little radical.

It may seem like a bad idea to even mention the ALL MY CHILDREN™ game in a magazine for serious role-players, but no discussion of current "bad game ideas" would be complete without it.

ALL MY CHILDREN is a "bad idea" from the word go. Historically, soap-opera

games have never succeeded because soap-opera fans don't play games. A soap-opera game is just plain tacky, even outrageous. But ALL MY CHILDREN is actually a lot of fun, even if you aren't a soap-opera fan. (A noted game designer from another company was heard talking about how much fun he had playing Phoebe.)

For one thing, you can commit Dastardly Soap Opera Deeds by playing Goal Cards such as "Toy with Adam's Affections," "Seduce Hillary on Her Birthday," or "Frame Jesse for Murder." Although the mechanics of the game concentrate on card play, there is a spirit of role-playing the characters from the show that makes the game quite lively.

The ALL MY CHILDREN game has been mentioned in *TV Guide*, and the premier of the game (attended by the TV stars) was shown on *Entertainment Tonight*. It seems to be catching on, deservedly so.

Bad game ideas reflect the willingness on the part of designers and companies to take risks in hopes of creating a fun game or a surprise hit. In that sense, bad game ideas are what the field is all about. Of course, a solid, traditional game, thoroughly designed and developed, fitting into a clear marketing niche, is terribly important. A budding young designer is well advised to start by learning how to design good traditional games. But taking risks and pursuing "bad" ideas is what makes the field grow. ■■

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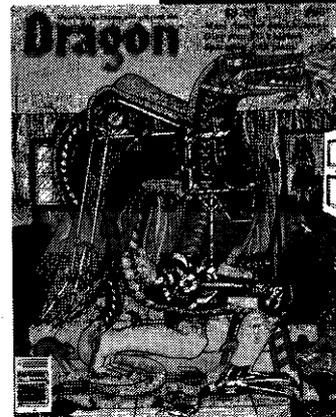
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# A plethora of paladins

Alignment is everything to these seven NPCs

by Christopher Wood

## Editor's introduction

This article was received and accepted prior to the publication of the *Unearthed Arcana* volume, in which paladins were made a subclass of the cavalier. Thus, the article presents these variant paladin "subclasses" as subclasses of the fighter. Of course, these classes may be treated as separate from true paladins, since the article makes "paladin" a generic term for any holy warrior who promotes the causes of his or her alignment.

Anti-paladins were dealt with in the article, "The Anti-Paladin," reprinted from DRAGON® issue #39 in the Best of DRAGON Magazine, Volume 2. Use of these classes as player characters is not recommended, as they have not been playtested for balance and tend to duplicate powers from existing classes.

*Through breaks in the dense foliage overhead, Aan could see the moon, full and imposing, burned deep orange by the falling sun.*

*Night covered him as he rode through the forest, and he shivered at the realization that darkness was the element of his enemy.*

*Aan felt his bold mount beneath him. The warhorse had served him well in his years of service to the church, hard years of the service that only a paladin can give. He rode now in that service, toward the stronghold of Gulgazh the shadowed, the chaotic, the anti-paladin. Swords would be bloodied before the sun rose again. . . .*

The struggle is as ancient as life itself. The two vastly diverging alignments, lawful good and chaotic evil, represent the truest of convictions. They are the extremes.

But extremes are always facets of a greater whole, and without the middle, the extremes represent nothing. Paladins and anti-paladins such as Aan and Gulgazh are the extremes of a spectrum of holy fighters. Until now, there was no greater whole.

This article offers the concept of the whole. Paladins — holy fight-

Character Classes Table I: Hit dice, spell ability, and class level limit

Class of character (alignment)	Hit dice type	Maximum hit dice	Spell ability	Class level limit
Myrikhan (NG)	d6+3	9	yes (6)	none
Garath (CG)	d8	9	yes (8)	none
Lyan (LN)	d12	15	yes (3)	none
Paramander (N)	d8 + 1	9	yes (8)	none
Fantra (CN)	d10	10	yes (1)	none
Illrigger (LE)	d10	11	yes (5)	none
Arrikhan (NE)	d8+1	9	yes (7)	none

Note: The number in parentheses under "spell ability" shows the level at which spell ability is gained.

Character Classes Table II: Armor and weapons permitted

Class of character	Armor	Shield	Weapons	Oil	Poison
Myrikhan	C	any	any	yes	never
Garath	any	any	any	yes	never
Lyan	any	any	any	yes	never
Paramander	any	any	any	yes	never
Fantra	C	wooden	any	yes	never
Illrigger	any	any	any	yes	yes
Arrikhan	any	any	any	yes	yes

Note: An entry of C under "armor" indicates that the class may use any armor up to the quality of chainmail, but will use nothing heavier or bulkier.

Character Classes Table III: Character ability limits

Character class	Ability score minimums/maximums					
	STR	INT	WIS	DEX	CON	CHA
Myrikhan	8/18(00)	12/pr	13/pr	9/18	8/18	10/18
Garath	9/18(00)	10/18	12/pr	8/18	8/18	13/pr
Lyan	12/pr	7/16	12/pr	9/16	12/pr	7/16
Paramander	10/18(00)	14/pr	10/16	9/18	8/18	8/18
Fantra	11/18(00)	9/18	13/pr	10/18	11/18	9/18
Illrigger	9/18(00)	13/pr	12/pr	9/18	10/18	7/18
Arrikhan	10/18(00)	9/18	13/pr	9/18	10/18	6/15

Note: Ability minimums are to the left of the slash, and maximums are to the right. An entry of "pr" indicates that the score is a prime requisite with a maximum that can be higher than 18.

ers— can be of any alignment. Players cannot use paladins other than the lawful good ones, but NPCs may be encountered who are of every other sort.

Seven new NPC character classes follow: the Myrikhan, the Garath, the Lyan, the Paramander, the Fantra, the Illrigger, and the Arrikhan. All are holy fighters of deep alignment convictions and should be played as such. Alignments, the entire basis of these paladin classes, must be played to the hilt. Punishment for deviations should be severe.

A distinction must be made here. Like the word "level" in the AD&D® game, "paladin" now takes on more than one meaning. The first denotes the lawful good human player character as described in the rules; the second denotes a holy fighter of any alignment (including those characters who might be called anti-paladins). All paladins (second meaning) are fighter subclasses and use the attack and saving-throw matrices for fighters. These paladin types are also exclusively human.

#### Weapon proficiency table

Character class	Initial number of weapons	Non-proficiency penalty	Added proficiency in weapons/level
Myrikhan	2*	- 3	1/4 levels
Garath	5	- 1	1/2 levels
Lyan	4	- 2	1/3 levels
Paramander	2	- 3	1/3 levels
Fantra	3	- 2	1/3 levels
Illrigger	3	- 2	1/2 levels
Arrikhan	2	- 3	1/2 levels

\*— One of the myrikhan's initial weapons is a "favorite weapon" (see the text for details).

#### Attacks per melee round table

Character class	Levels for attacks per round of:				
	1/1	3/2	2/1	5/2	3/1
Myrikhan	1-6	7-12	13 & up	—	—
Garath	1-6	7-12	13 & up	—	—
Lyan	1-7	8-14	13 & up	—	—
Paramander	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21 & up
Fantra	1-7	8-14	15-21	22 & up	—
Illrigger	1-6	7-12	13 & up	—	—
Arrikhan	1-7	8-14	15 & up	—	—

#### THE MYRIKHAN

The neutral good myrikhan, whose name in the original Creation Argots means "godservant," is primarily a field agent of a good church, the one on whom quests fall. Myrikhans usually (95%) travel alone, although they sometimes accompany others with a similar goal. They are rarely seen in the company of other myrikhans, and in a group are almost certainly abiding at the church until their next mission. Myrikhans live for good deeds. Should a myrikhan ever commit an evil deed, his church will excommunicate him and he will become forevermore a normal fighter.

Myrikhans favor leather armor and chain vests, sometimes augmenting this protection with great helms or shields. They spend much time outdoors and usually wear furs to protect themselves from cold. Utility is the heart of their wardrobe, a combination of efficiency and minimal encumbrance. Their most common mount is a pony or light warhorse. Their few weapons are usually a favorite and only one or two others.

Wisdom and intelligence are the prime requisites of the myrikhan. A score of 16 or greater in one of these abilities adds 10% to earned experience, and scores of 16 or greater in both abilities add 15%. Myrikhans receive spell bonuses and chances of spell failure according to their wisdom scores as clerics do (see the *Players Handbook*, p. 11, Wisdom Table II: Adjustments for Clerics).

Myrikhans use any magic items usable by fighters or clerics. At

9th level and above, a myrikhan with sufficient funds can build a fortress or church stronghold, thus attracting followers. Because myrikhans are agents of a church, any established base will be an extension of that church — a myrikhan always serves under a high priest. Myrikhan Table III shows the type of followers attracted by the myrikhan.

The special abilities of a myrikhan are:

1. Detection of evil within a 100' radius, revealing only the general direction and requiring unbroken concentration.

2. Saving throw bonuses against evil magic at +1 for each three levels the myrikhan has (+1 at 1st through 3rd level, +2 at 4th through 6th level, etc.). Evil magic includes any spells cast by evil NPCs or monsters, and any effects of magic items that are intrinsically evil or that are used by evil beings.

3. Turning of undead as a cleric of equal level, including creatures of the lower (evil) planes.

4. Spell use at 6th level and above. Myrikhan Table II shows the number and level of such spells.

5. Hit and damage bonuses of +1 per level when fighting larger-than-man-sized giants and humanoids, similar to a ranger's anti-humanoid combat ability.

6. At 4th level, a symbol of power received from the church. A suede collar that ties at the rear and is removed only in emergencies carries the precious metal symbol, unique to the character, that gives the myrikhan *protection from evil* as long as he wears it. The collar and symbol are worth 50-500 gp.

7. A 10% chance per level to identify plants and animals, automatic at 10th level and above.

8. Hit and damage bonuses of +1 for each three levels (+1 at 1st through 3rd level, +2 at 4th through 6th, etc.) with a favorite weapon. At 1st level, the myrikhan designates a certain type of weapon (bastard sword, quarterstaff, morning star, etc.) as a favorite weapon and receives the bonuses for any weapon of that type.

The strictures of a myrikhan are:

1. Forbidden retention of wealth. The church pays personal expenses from a limited fund for each myrikhan. Treasure goes immediately to the church. The myrikhan keeps single items (one sword, one ring, one staff, etc.) and no more.

2. Speaking his deity's name only on consecrated ground, prayers and godcalls notwithstanding. Deviations incur serious punishment and require atonement and meditation.

#### Myrikhan Table I

Experience points	Experience level	Hit points	Level title
0— 2,500	1	d6+3	Godseye
2,501— 5,500	2	2d6+6	Godsarm
5,501— 12,000	3	3d6+9	Godsheart
12,001— 25,000	4	4d6+ 12	Myrikhan
25,001— 60,000	5	5d6 + 15	Myrikhan
60,001— 130,000	6	6d6+18	Myrikhan
130,001— 230,000	7	7d6+21	Myrikhan
230,001— 350,000	8	8d6 + 24	Myrikhan
350,001— 700,000	9	9d6 + 27	Myrikhan
700,001— 1,050,000	10	9d6 + 30	Myrikhan
1,050,001— 1,400,000	11	9d6 + 33	Myrikhan

Myrikhans gain one level per 350,000 experience points above 8th level.

Myrikhans gain 3 hit points per level above 9th level.

#### Myrikhan Table II: Spells usable by experience level

Myrikhan level	Cleric spell level				Druid spell level		
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3
6	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
7	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
8	2	1	—	—	—	—	—
9	2	2	—	—	—	—	—
10	2	2	1	—	—	—	—
11	3	2	1	—	—	—	—

Myrikhan Table II continued

Myrikhan level	Cleric spell level				Druid spell level		
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3
12	3	3	1	—	1	—	—
13	4	3	2	—	2	—	—
14	4	3	2	1	2	1	—
15	5	3	2	1	2	1	—
16	5	4	3	2	3	2	1
17	5	5	3	3	3	2	1
18	5	5	4	4	3	3	2
19*	5	5	5	5	3	3	3

\*— Maximum spell-casting ability.

Myrikhans acquire and cast cleric spells and druid spells in the same way that clerics and druids do, by meditation and prayer. Myrikhans can cast all cleric spells but only certain druid spells. The myrikhan druid spell list shows the limited druid spells available to myrikhans. The spells are numbered from 1 to 8, to allow for random die rolls in determining what spells an NPC might possess.

#### Myrikhan druid spell list

Number	1st level	2nd level	3rd level
1	<i>Detect snares &amp; pits</i>	<i>Barkskin</i>	<i>Call lightning</i>
2	<i>En tangle</i>	<i>Charm person or mammal</i>	<i>Cure disease</i>
3	<i>Faerie fire</i>	<i>Create water</i>	<i>Fire purge*</i>
4	<i>Invis. to animals</i>	<i>Fire trap</i>	<i>Neutralize poison</i>
5	<i>Locate animals</i>	<i>Heat metal</i>	<i>Protection from fire</i>
6	<i>Pass without trace</i>	<i>Locate plants</i>	<i>Pyrotechnics</i>
7	<i>Predict weather</i>	<i>Obscurement</i>	<i>Summon insects</i>
8	<i>Purify water</i>	<i>Produce flame</i>	<i>Water breathing</i>

Unless otherwise indicated, all spells in the myrikhan druid spell list correspond to the druid spell of the same name and level. The spell marked with an asterisk is a special spell available only to the myrikhan class, described below:

#### Fire Purge (Evocation)

Level: 3

Range: 0

Duration: 1 hour per level of caster above 15th

Area of effect: Radius of 600' per level of caster above 15th

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 5 rounds

Saving Throw: None

Explanation/Description: *Fire purge* opens a temporary portal to the magical fire in the heart of the caster's god. A purging flame seeps from the caster at a rate of 10' per round, subjecting items and creatures to intense holy fire. All items in the spell's area of effect must make saving throws vs. magical fire or be destroyed. All creatures in the area of effect must make a saving throw vs. spell or suffer 1-4 points of fire damage per round, until they leave the area of effect or extinguish the fire. Anything hostile to the god makes the saving throw at -3 and suffers double damage from the fire. *Protection from fire* adds +1 to the saving throw.

The body of the caster becomes immobile and intangible for the duration of the spell, a necessary self-defense against the fire. During this period of intangibility, the caster loses awareness of his surroundings and has a 1% chance per level of having a holy vision (a side effect of exposure to the deepest powers of his god). After the spell ceases to function, everything in the area of effect except the items that made their saving throws will be smoldering ashes. The spell is often used to consecrate church ground or exorcise demons from possessed areas. *Dispel magic* eliminates the fire and cancels the spell. *Extension* and *permanency* have no effect.

Myrikhan Table III: Followers

Dice roll	Type of follower
01-03	1-4 clerics of 5th-8th level
04-07	2-8 clerics of 3rd-6th level
08-12	2-16 clerics of 2nd-5th level
13-18	2-20 clerics of 1st-3rd level
19-21	1-4 cloistered clerics <sup>1</sup> of 1st-4th level
22-24	1-4 fighters of 5th-8th level
25-28	2-8 fighters of 3rd-6th level
29-33	2-16 fighters of 2nd-5th level
34-38	2-20 fighters of 2nd-5th level
39-41	1 ranger of 1st-4th level
42-45	1 myrikhan of 1st-4th level
46-52	4-40 men-at-arms, 1-6 hp each
53	11-30 aarakocra (one tribe)
54	1-2 magic-users of 5th-8th level
55	2-5 magic-users of 3rd-6th level
56	3-6 magic-users of 2nd-5th level
57	2-8 magic-users of 1st-3rd level
58	1-4 illusionists of 1st-4th level
59-66	1-10 unskilled persons, 1-6 hp each
67	1 healer of 1st-4th level
68-69	1-3 experienced cooks, 1-4 hp each
70-71	1 smith <sup>2</sup> of 1st-6th level
72-73	1-4 carpenters of 1-6 hp each
74-76	1-4 farmers of 1-4 hp each, plus their families (one mate and 1-4 children of 1-3 hp each per farmer)
77-78	1 tailor of 1-4 hp
79-80	1-3 miners of 2-5 hp each
81-82	1-3 scribes <sup>3</sup> of 1st-4th level
83-85	1-3 stablemen of 1-4 hp each
86-88	1-4 chambermaids of 1-2 hp each
89-91	1 maid/manservant of 1-4 hp
92	1 baku
93	1 dragon horse (mount)
94	1-4 firbolg giants
95	1 itinerant grim
96	1 moon dog
97	5-20 pech plus females and young
98	1 pseudodragon
99	1-4 NPCs of any neutral good class or subclass
00	DM's choice

1 — Cloistered clerics are described in Best of DRAGON Magazine, Volume 4, p. 7.

2 — Smiths are described in Best of DRAGON Magazine, Volume 4, p. 26.

3 — Scribes are described in Best of DRAGON Magazine, Volume 4, p. 23.

Note: Followers are nearly always (90%) human, but may be of other races if the campaign allows.

#### Race of follower (if needed)

Roll d20: 1-3 = elf; 4-5 = half-elf; 6-8 = gnome; 9-11 = human; 12-18 = same race as the myrikhan; 19-20 = halfling.

When a base has been established, the DM rolls to determine the type of followers attracted and, if necessary, the race of the followers. Each time the myrikhan gains a level (or accumulates enough experience points to gain a level after reaching his level limit), roll again. All followers of a myrikhan are neutral good.

For example, an 11th-level myrikhan builds a church fortress and attracts followers. The DM determines that 2-16 clerics of 2nd-5th level are attracted. Additional rolls define them as a 4th-level half-elven cleric, two gnomish clerics of 4th and 3rd level, and two 2nd-level elven clerics. When the myrikhan reaches 12th level, the DM will roll again to determine additional followers — perhaps a pair of elven chambermaids or a dragon horse.

## THE GARATH

Garaths are chaotic good church guardians. They primarily defend their churches, no matter what the method or cost; often guarding church journeys or caravans. Devout church members, garaths adhere to their god's strictures with absolute conviction. If a garath ever breaks a church rule, he loses his garath church rank and abilities and becomes forevermore a normal fighter.

Garaths pride themselves on finely crafted and exquisitely detailed clothes, weapons, and armor. Plate mail is the most common garath protection, always embellished with church symbols and holy script.

Wisdom and charisma (a factor of devotion for garaths) are the prime requisites of the garath. A score of 16 or greater in one of these abilities adds 10% to earned experience, and scores of 16 or greater in both abilities add 15%. Garaths receive spell bonuses and chances of spell failure according to their wisdom scores as clerics do (see *Players Handbook* p. 11, Wisdom Table II).

Garaths use any magic items usable by fighters or clerics. Normal followers are those found in the church as lower-level garaths, for a garath's level determines his church rank. At 7th level, the church appoints two 1st-level fighters of the same race as personal guardians to the garath. Check for other followers at each new level using a 5% chance per level beginning with 2nd level of a follower joining the garath (5% at 2nd level, 10% at 3rd, etc.). If a follower is indicated, roll once on Garath Table III to determine the type of follower. Garaths never build strongholds.

The special abilities of a garath are:

1. Detection of evil within a 100' radius, revealing only the general direction of the evil source and requiring total concentration.

2. Saving throw bonuses against evil magic at +1 for each three levels the garath possesses (+1 at 1st through 3rd level, +2 at 4th through 6th level, etc.). Evil magic includes any spells cast by evil NPCs or monsters, and any effects of magic items that are intrinsically evil or that are used by evil beings.

3. *Protection from devils* beginning at 5th level, including all lawful evil creatures from the lower planes.

4. Spell use at 8th level and above. Garath Table II shows the number and level of such spells.

5. The ability to use all holy swords (of chaotic good alignment) as paladins do.

6. Good welcome from any allied chaotic good church. A garath abuses this only at the risk of deviating from his alignment.

7. Hit and damage bonuses of +1 for each 4 levels of experience (+1 at 1st through 4th level, +2 at 5th through 8th, etc.) with any weapon, due to their fierce fighting ability and devotion.

8. Two bodyguards appointed at 7th level. These two 1st-level fighters, of the same race as the garath, progress in level as normal NPCs and will serve unto death. The church will not replace killed bodyguards.

The strictures of a garath are:

1. Forbidden retention of wealth. Garaths keep non-monetary treasure if desired; otherwise, they give it to the church.

2. Use of force only against non-good-aligned individuals, except for self-defense or church defense.

3. Employment of only good-aligned individuals, except for church defense.

**Garath Table I**

Experience points	Experience level	Hit points	Level title
0— 2,400	1	d8	Shroud
2,401— 5,000	2	2d8	Defender
5,001— 11,500	3	3d8	Guardian
11,501— 22,000	4	4d8	Keeper
22,001— 47,500	5	5d8	Lord's Shield
47,501— 100,500	6	6d8	Garath Aspirant
100,501— 190,000	7	7d8	Garath
190,001— 320,000	8	8d8	Garath
320,001— 640,000	9	9d8	Garath
640,001— 960,000	10	9d8+2	Garath
960,001— 1,280,000	11	9d8+4	Garath

Garaths gain one level per 320,000 exp. pts. above 8th level.

Garaths gain 2 hp per level above 9th level.

**Garath Table II: Spells usable by experience level**

Garath level	Cleric spell level			
	1	2	3	4
8	1	—	—	—
9	2	1	—	—
10	2	2	—	—
11	3	2	1	—
12	3	2	2	—
13	3	3	2	1
14	3	3	3	2
15*	3	3	3	3

\* — Maximum spell-casting ability.

Garaths acquire and cast spells in the same way that a cleric does, by meditation and prayer.

**Garath Table III: Followers**

Dice roll	Type of follower
01-20	1-4 clerics of 1st level
21-30	1-2 clerics of 2nd level
31-56	1-6 0-level men-at-arms of 1-6 hp each
57-76	1-4 fighters of 1st level
77-86	1-2 fighters of 2nd level
87-91	1 scribe <sup>2</sup> of 1st-3rd level
92-96	1 cloistered cleric <sup>1</sup> of 1st-2nd level
97	1 pegasus (mount)
98	1 faerie dragon
99	1-3 NPCs of any chaotic good-aligned class or subclass
00	DM's choice

1 — Cloistered clerics are described in Best of DRAGON Magazine, Volume 4, p. 7.

2 — Scribes are described in Best of DRAGON Magazine, Volume 4, p. 23.

Note: Most followers of a garath are human (80%), but elves and half-elves are often seen with them.

Each time the garath gains a level (or accumulates enough experience points to gain a level after reaching his level limit), the chance of a follower increases by 5% (5% at 2nd level, 10% at 3rd, etc.). The DM rolls to determine the type of follower and, if necessary, the race of the follower. All followers of a garath are chaotic good.

## THE LYAN

The lawful neutral lyan functions more as a cleric than a fighter, for his church consists only of other lyans (no acolytes, clerics, priests, etc.). The subclass name and its level titles derive from the ancient names for the ascending floors of the Arbiter's Edifice, a massive tower of legend in which the Arbiter lived and ruled. Lyans call their god the Arbiter despite his true name, which is often held sacrosanct and reserved for the most solemn church rituals. (Many believe that the Arbiter is actually Primus, ruler of Nirvana.) Lyans believe that, after death, their souls travel to the Edifice Prime (Nirvana), a celestial reconstruction of the original mythical tower, and serve the Arbiter thereafter. A lyan devotes himself to law and its promotion, and should he ever commit a chaotic act with other courses available, he loses his status in excommunication and becomes forevermore a normal fighter.

Although the rules of the edificial churches (the term for any lyan's church) forbid armor or weapons on consecrated ground, elsewhere lyans wear any type of armor desired, usually leather or studded leather reinforced by a breastplate and gauntlets (which in no way hinder their somatic spell-casting actions). Their mounts are the largest and strongest of their type, their weapons the most fierce, their methods the most efficient and unforgiving in dealing with the dangerous forces of chaos.

Wisdom, strength, and constitution are the prime requisites of a lyan. A total of 45 or more in those abilities adds 10% to earned experience, and a total of 51 or more adds 15%. Lyans receive spell

bonuses and chances of spell failure according to their wisdom scores as clerics do (see *Players Handbook*, p. 11, Wisdom Table II: Adjustments for Clerics). Lyans can use any magic items.

At 10th level, a lyan can construct his own edificial church, thus attracting followers. Lyan Table III shows the type of followers possible.

The special abilities of a lyan are:

1. Detection of chaos at 20' per level to a maximum range of 400' (at 20th level). (This benefit corresponds to the abilities of *detection of good or evil*.) The lyan can determine the type of chaos (good, neutral, or evil) after two rounds of concentration.

2. Saving throw bonuses against chaotic magic at +1 for each three levels (+1 at 1st through 3rd level, +2 at 4th through 6th level, etc.). Chaotic magic includes any spells cast by chaotic NPCs or monsters and any effects of magic items that are intrinsically chaotic or that are used by chaotic beings.

3. Spell use at 3rd level and above. Lyan Table II shows the number and level of such spells.

4. Hit and damage bonuses of +1 per level when fighting any chaotic creatures, of either good, neutral, or evil nature.

The lyan has no strictures other than the rules of his edificial church. When and if he forms his own, he determines his own rules, which must roughly correspond to the Arbiter's standards.

**Lyan Table I**

Experience points	Experience level	Hit points	Level title
0— 5,000	1	d12	Foyar
5,001— 10,000	2	2d12	jiFoyar
10,001— 25,000	3	3d12	1st Hael
25,001— 50,000	4	4d12	2nd Hael
50,001— 100,000	5	5d12	3rd Hael
100,001— 250,000	6	6d12	4th Hael
250,001— 500,000	7	7d12	5th Hael
500,001— 1,000,000	8	8d12	6th Hael
1,000,001— 1,500,000	9	9d12	jiHae1
1,500,001— 2,000,000	10	10d12	Lyan
2,000,001— 2,500,000	11	11d12	Lyan
2,500,001— 3,000,000	12	12d12	Lyan
3,000,001— 3,500,000	13	13d12	Lyan
3,500,001— 4,000,000	14	14d12	Lyan
4,000,001— 4,500,000	15	15d12	Lyan
4,500,001— 5,000,000	16	15d12 + 5	Lyan
5,000,001— 5,500,000	17	15d12 + 10	Lyan

Lyans gain one level per 500,000 exp. pts. above 7th level.

Lyans gain 5 hit points per level above 15th level.

**Lyan Table II: Spells usable by experience level**

Lyan level	Cleric or magic-user spell level			
	1	2	3	4
3	1	—	—	—
4	1	—	—	—
5	1	—	—	—
6	2	—	—	—
7	2	—	—	—
8	2	1	—	—
9	2	1	—	—
10	2	1	—	—
11	2	2	—	—
12	3	2	1	—
13	3	2	1	1
14	4	2	2	1
15	4	3	2	2
16	5	4	3	2
17*	6	5	4	3

\*— Maximum spell-casting ability.

Lyans have the unique ability of acquiring and casting either cleric or magic-user spells from prayer and meditation. For example, a 6th-level lyan can cast two 1st-level spells. He might choose two cleric spells, a cleric spell and a magic-user spell, or two magic-user spells. Lyans use no spellbooks of any type; their power comes directly from deities and divine beings. Lyans learn spells from the magic-user spell list as cleric spells.

**Lyan Table III: Followers**

Dice roll	Type of follower
01-02	1-4 fighters of 5th-8th level
03-05	2-8 fighters of 3rd-6th level
06-09	2-16 fighters of 2nd-5th level
10-14	2-20 fighters of 1st-3rd level
15-21	4-40 0-level men-at-arms of 1-6 hp each
22-24	3-6 magic-users of 2nd-5th level
25-28	2-8 magic-users of 1st-3rd level
29-30	1-4 illusionists of 1st-4th level
31-32	1-2 assassins of 4th-6th level
33-35	1-4 assassins of 2nd-4th level
36-40	2-8 assassins of 1st-3rd level
41-42	1-3 thieves of 4th-8th level
43-45	1-6 thieves of 2nd-5th level
46-49	2-12 thieves of 1st-4th level
50-55	2-20 thieves of 1st-2nd level
56-61	1-12 unskilled persons of 1-6 hp each
62-66	1-12 unskilled persons of 1-4 hp each
67-69	1-12 unskilled persons of 1-8 hp each
70-71	1-3 experienced cooks of 1-4 hp each
72-73	1 smith <sup>1</sup> of 1st-6th level
74-75	1-4 carpenters of 1-6 hp each
76-78	1-4 farmers of 1-4 hp each and their families (one mate and 1-4 children of 1-3 hp each per farmer)
79-80	1 tailor of 1-4 hp
81-82	1-3 miners of 2-5 hp each
83-85	1-3 scribes <sup>2</sup> of 1st-4th level
86-88	1-3 stablemen of 1-4 hp each
89-91	1-4 chambermaids of 1-2 hp each
92-94	1 maid/manservant of 1-4 hp
95	1 pride of wemics
96-99	1-4 NPCs of any lawful neutral class or subclass
00	DM's choice

1 — Smiths are described in Best of DRAGON Magazine, Volume 4, p. 26.

2 — Scribes are described in Best of DRAGON Magazine, Volume 4, p. 23.

**Race of followers (if needed)**

Roll d20: 1 = elf (30%) or half-elf (70%); 2-5 = dwarf; 6-8 = gnome; 9-10 = human; 11-14 = same race as the lyan; 15-17 = half-orc; 18-20 = halfling.

When the lyan establishes an edificial church, the DM rolls to determine the type of followers and, if necessary, the race of the followers. Each time the lyan gains a level (or accumulates enough experience points to gain a level after reaching his level limit), roll again. (Example: A 9th-level lyan builds an edificial church and attracts followers. The DM determines that 1-3 thieves of 4th-8th level are attracted. Additional rolls define them as a 6th-level human thief and a 4th-level half-orc thief. When the lyan reaches 10th level, the DM will roll again to determine additional followers — perhaps an illusionist or an assassin.) All followers of a lyan are lawful neutral in alignment.

## THE PARAMANDER

The true neutral paramander's name means "one beside the world," an allusion to the position of their god after he created and balanced the universe. A paramander seeks to maintain that balance, often by manipulating (and, when necessary, destroying) high-powered beings of deep alignment convictions (e.g., paladins and anti-paladins) or by aiding weak opponents of those beings. Any deed of outright good, evil, law, or chaos, performed without a previously determined balancing effect on the world's structure, causes him to become forevermore a normal fighter. The paramander must justify every action in the interests of pure neutrality.

Paramanders favor subdued design in armor and weapons. Armor, though unrestricted, is usually leather or studded leather and, like paramanders' shields, bears little or no decoration. Paramanders ride light horses or ponies, mostly gray or brown. Weapons tend toward simplicity (swords, staves, etc.); no missile weapons are used.

Intelligence is the prime requisite of a paramander. A score of 16 adds 10% to earned experience, a score of 17 adds 15%, and a score of 18 or greater adds 20%. Paramanders have chances to know listed spells and minimum and maximum spells per level as magic-users do (see *Players Handbook* p. 10, Intelligence Table II: Ability for Magic-users).

Paramanders have no followers. Instead, at 9th level or above, they take on an apprentice, training him in the ways of balance and neutrality. The apprentice, a normal 0-level fighter with 2 hp, becomes a 1st-level paramander after achieving 1,172 experience points (see Paramander Table I) in the service and under the guidance of his magister (master). A hit-dice value of d8 + 1 per level replaces his 2 hp, and the new paramander leaves his magister's service.

A paramander can train any number of apprentices, one at a time. The magister commonly gives to his apprentice a favorite weapon or other item, perhaps something that his old magister gave to him upon completion of his own apprenticeship.

The special abilities of a paramander are:

1. Detection of good or evil within a 50' radius. At 3rd level and above, the paramander can determine the exact nature of the good or evil (lawful, neutral, or chaotic) with minimal concentration.
2. Immunity to diseases of all types, including diseases caught from monsters, such as mummies, lycanthropes, and so forth. This includes diseaselike attacks from monsters like green slime.
3. Saving throws against non-neutral-aligned magic at +2 for each five levels (+2 at 1st through 5th levels, +4 at 6th through 10th levels, etc.) and against half-neutral-aligned magic at +1 for each five levels (+1 at 1st through 5th levels, +2 at 6th through 10th levels, etc.). Non-neutral alignments consist of lawful good, lawful evil, chaotic good, and chaotic evil. Half-neutral alignments consist of lawful neutral, neutral good, neutral evil, and chaotic neutral. Aligned magic includes any spells cast by NPCs or monsters of a specific alignment and any magic items that are intrinsically of a specific alignment or that are used by beings of a specific alignment.
4. Spell use at 8th level and above. Paramander Table II shows the number and level of such spells.
5. The use of certain thief functions at a level equal to half that of the paramander (1st-level ability at 1st and 2nd level, 2nd-level ability at 3rd and 4th level, etc.). The functions include open locks, find/remove traps, move silently, hide in shadows, and hear noise. Racial adjustments do not apply.

The forbidden accumulation of wealth is the only stricture of a paramander, as they have no use for wealth other than as expenditures in the line of duty. Hoarding treasure rarely affects the balance of the world.

### The Paremandyr

A rare and horrible creature, the paremandyr is an insane cousin to the paramander, a mobile and intelligent death-dealer. The two are identical in every way but one: The paramander strives to create balance by molding the powerful forces of aligned convictions, whereas the paremandyr strives to destroy these forces, believing that in oblivion there is perfect balance. The paremandyr leaves a sigil on his victims, a unique sign that identifies the death's origin.

Paremandyrs and paramanders have equal benefits and strictures, and they use the same tables. They cast the same spells and follow the same rituals of apprenticeship.

Paramander Table I

Experience points	Experience level	Hit points	Level title
0— 1,172	0	2hp*	Apprentice
1,173— 2,344	1	d8 + 1	Symmeter Initial
2,345— 4,688	2	2d8+2	Symmeter Medial
4,689— 9,375	3	3d8+3	Symmeter Final
9,376— 18,750	4	4d8+4	Fulcrum
18,751— 37,500	5	5d8+5	Balancer
37,501— 75,000	6	6d8+6	Libra Charge Initial
75,001— 150,000	7	7d8+7	Libra Charge Medial
150,001— 300,000	8	8d8+8	Libra Charge Final
300,001— 600,000	9	9d8 +9	Paramander
600,001— 900,000	10	9d8+12	Paramander
900,001— 1,200,000	11	9d8+15	Paramander

\*— 0-level apprentices have 2 hp, replaced at 1st level by d8 + 1.  
Paramanders gain one level per 300,000 experience points above 11th level.  
Paramanders gain 3 hit points per level above 11th level.

Paramander Table II: Spells usable by experience level

Paramander level	Paramandic spell level				
	1	2	3	4	5
8	1	—	—	—	—
9	2	—	—	—	—
10	2	1	—	—	—
11	2	2	—	—	—
12	3	2	1	—	—
13	3	2	2	—	—
14	4	3	2	1	—
15	4	3	2	2	—
16*	5	4	3	2	1

\*— Maximum spell-casting ability.

Paramanders have a unique spell list. They acquire and cast spells in the same way that a magic-user does, by use of spellbooks. A paramander must learn spell use from a spell-magister of at least 16th level. Until then, the paramander cannot advance above 8th level. The secondary apprenticeship is similar to a magic-user's apprenticeship before 1st level (see the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, p. 39). The spell-magister commonly makes a gift of a 1st-level paramandic spellbook including the spell *read paramandic magic* and two to five others, depending on the worthiness of the student. Paramanders have no knowledge of cantrips.

### Paramandic spell list

Number	1st level	2nd level
1	<i>Affect normal fires</i>	<i>Audible glamer</i>
2	<i>Burning hands</i>	<i>Continual light</i>
3	<i>Detect magic</i>	<i>Detect invisibility</i>
4	<i>Erase</i>	<i>In visibility</i>
5	<i>Feather fall</i>	<i>Know alignment (c)</i>
6	<i>Hold portal</i>	<i>Levitate</i>
7	<i>Identify</i>	<i>Locate object</i>
8	<i>Light</i>	<i>Magic mouth</i>
9	<i>Message</i>	<i>Phantasmal force (3)</i>
10	<i>Read paramandic magic (p)</i>	<i>Scare</i>
11	<i>Shocking grasp</i>	<i>Strength</i>
12	<i>Write</i>	<i>Wizard lock</i>

Number	3rd level	4th level	5th level
1	<i>Clairaudience</i>	<i>Charm monster</i>	<i>Azure flame</i> (p)
2	<i>Clairvoyance</i>	<i>Charm person</i> (1)	<i>Conjure elemental</i>
3	<i>Dispel magic</i>	<i>Confusion</i>	<i>Contact other plane</i>
4	<i>Dispel good/evil</i> (c4)	<i>Dimension door</i>	<i>Enchanted mirrors</i> (p)
5	<i>Explosive runes</i>	<i>Extension I</i>	<i>Magic jar</i>
6	<i>Fireball</i>	<i>Fear</i>	<i>Polymorph other</i> (4)
7	<i>Fly</i>	<i>Guards &amp; wards</i> (6)	<i>Question ball</i> (p)
8	<i>Gust of wind</i>	<i>Loyalty</i> (p)	<i>Slow mutation</i> (p)
9	<i>Lightning bolt</i>	<i>Polymorph self</i>	
10	<i>Cache</i> (p)	<i>Spelltrap</i> (p)	

Unless otherwise indicated, all paramander spells correspond to the magic-user spell of the same name and level. A number after a spell indicates that it is normally of a level different from that at which a paramander learns the spell. A letter after the spell indicates that the spell normally belongs to a class other than the magic-user (c = cleric, p = special paramander spell). New spell definitions follow, in the format of the *Players Handbook*.

### Read Paramantic Magic (Divination) Reversible

Level: 1

Range: 0

Duration: 3 rounds +1 round/level

Area of effect: *Special*

Components: V,M

Casting Time: 2 segments

Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: This spell allows a paramander to read the complex, guttural language used in paramantic magic. With the exception of these parameters and the material components of a pinch of bone and a silk string, the spell is essentially identical to the 1st-level magic-user spell *read magic*.

### Cache (Alteration)

Level: 3

Range: *Touch*

Duration: 1 hour/level

Area of effect: *One item*

Components: V,S

Casting Time: 2 segments

Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: The casting of this spell upon an item transfers that item to the Astral Plane for the duration of the spell. Wherever the spell caster goes, the item will follow on the Astral Plane. When the spell dissipates, the item will fall into the caster's hands (if possible) or reappear in front of him if not. Nothing can detect the item while it is on the Astral Plane, except items meant to see into astral space. The chance of the item returning in damaged or broken condition equals 15%, -1% per level of the caster. The caster can recall the object at any time. *Extension* applies, but *permanency* traps the item on the Astral Plane forever. The weight limit is 5 gp/level of the caster. The spell malfunctions if cast on living things.

### Loyalty (Possession)

Level: 4

Range: 4"

Duration: 1 round/level

Area of effect: 1"/level radius

Components: V,S

Casting Time: 1 round

Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: All creatures of 1 hit die or less, or below 1st level, within the area of effect of this spell become immediately loyal to the caster for the duration of the spell. They obey commands (if understood) and will fight to the death alongside of the caster. Creatures of more than 1 hit die or above 0 level remain

unaffected by the spell. *Extension* and *permanency* have no effect. *Dispel magic* eliminates the effects of the spell.

### Spelltrap (Alteration)

Level: 4

Range: *Special*

Duration: *Indefinite* (5 rounds)

Area of effect: *Special*

Components: V,S

Casting Time: 6 segments + *special*

Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: *Spelltrap* creates a special environment capable of accepting another spell and delaying its effects. When the caster casts a *spelltrap* on a small immobile object such as a book or a weapon, a magic receptacle saturates the item. The caster can then place another spell within that receptacle (adjust the casting time accordingly). When the item is moved or probed (by *detect magic*, etc.), the *spelltrap* disappears and the second spell takes effect, just as if the item on which the *spelltrap* was placed had cast the spell at a level equal to the caster of the second spell.

The *spelltrap* will fade in 5 rounds if another spell is not placed in it. If someone casts *dispel magic* on the *spelltrap*, it is 75% likely that the second spell will be eliminated, leaving the *spelltrap* empty (and fading) and ready to receive another spell; otherwise, *dispel magic* will eliminate the *spelltrap*, releasing the effects of the second spell and exploding the item on which it was placed, causing 2-12 points of damage to all within a 20' radius. Only the following spells can be placed in a *spelltrap* (others will have no effect, as if they had not been cast at all): *light* (on the same item as the *spelltrap*), *message\**, *audible glamer*, *magic mouth*, *scare*, *fireball\**, *gust of wind\**, *lightning bolt\**, *confusion*, *fear*, *polymorph other\**, *conjure elemental*, *azure flame*, *guards and wards*, *slow mutation* (dweomer placed on same item as the *spelltrap*). Spells marked with an asterisk are released from the *spelltrap* in a random direction. If the *spelltrap* is moved or probed in any way before a second spell is placed inside, it vanishes. Only the use of a *gem of seeing* can detect a *spelltrap*.

### Azure Flame (Alteration)

Level: 5

Range: 5"

Duration: *Special*

Area of effect: 2" radius

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 6 segments

Saving Throw: *Neg.*

Explanation/Description: The *azure flame* spell causes all creatures within the area of effect to burst into blue flame. A successful saving throw vs. spell negates the effect. *Protection from fire* adds +1 to the saving throw. *Azure flame* burns until extinguished by *dispel magic* (nothing else affects it) and spreads to any living thing touched. Lifeless items (including undead) do not burn with blue flames. Burning creatures take 1-4 points of damage per round until the flame is dispelled and are considered to be under the effects of a *fear* spell while the *azure flame* burns. Creatures reduced to 0 hit points by *azure flame* crumble into a pile of bluish ashes from which they cannot be resurrected. The material component of the spell is a small piece of azurite rubbed between the fingers of one hand while the other hand performs the complicated somatic gestures. The spell requires a dexterity of 13 or higher.

### Enchanted Mirrors (Alteration)

Level: 5

Range: *Special*

Duration: *Permanent*

Area of effect: *Two mirrors*

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 7 rounds + *special*

Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: The material components of this spell are two small, matched mirrors of fine silver worth not less than 100 gp each. When the caster casts the spell, the mirrors begin to emit a faint glow and hover 3 feet apart above the ground, facing each

other, at the eye level of the caster. The caster can now cast another spell into the area between the mirrors (adjust casting time accordingly) and the effects of that spell will be recast every third round beginning with the round in which the casting of the second spell was completed. The effects of the second spell are at half the ability of the caster (1st-level ability at 1st and 2nd level, 2nd-level ability at 3rd and 4th level, etc.).

Only the following spells can be placed in the *enchanted mirrors* (others will have no effect, as if they had not been cast at all): *light* (on one of the enchanted mirrors), *message\**, *audible glamor*, *scare*, *fireball\**, *gust of wind\**, *lightning bolt\**, *confusion*, *fear*, *polymorph other\**, *conjure elemental*, *azure flame*, *guards and wards*. Spells marked with an asterisk are released from the enchanted mirrors in a random direction. If anything touches or comes between the fragile mirrors, both the *enchanted mirrors* spell and its repeating spell are cancelled, and the mirrors fall to the ground. *Dispel magic* is 75% likely to remove the repeating spell, leaving the mirrors ready to accept another; otherwise, the *enchanted mirrors* spell is dispelled and the repeating spell ceases to function.

#### **Question Ball** (Alteration/Conjuration)

Level: 5

Range: *Touch*

Duration: *Special*

Area of effect: *One ball*

Components: *V,S,M*

Casting Time: *3 rounds*

Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: This spell transforms a normal *crystal ball* into a unique *question ball*, which answers any questions put to it. The material components of the spell are a *crystal ball*, a *gem of seeing*, and a pound of pure sulphur. The caster piles the sulphur in a heap and burns it with the *gem* and the *crystal ball* in the middle. While the flames consume the *gem* and *crystal ball*, the caster performs the verbal and somatic components of the spell, upon the completion of which the *gem* and crystal disappear in a sulphurous explosion (no damage) marking the creation of the *question ball*.

The ball is a partial manifestation of an extraplanar humanoid being of divine nature, who uses the *gem of seeing* and its own powers to discern the answers to the caster's questions. The being speaks common and 2-3 other languages, as well as tongues exclusive to his mysterious plane. The being, as payment for the *gem of seeing*, is bound to answer a number of questions equal to the caster's level. A percentile roll of less than 50 minus the level of the caster indicates that the being tells a carefully fabricated and reasonably believable lie. When the being has answered a number of questions equal to the level of the caster, the *question ball* will darken and crumble to useless powder.

The being can be released on the Prime Material Plane, the ball shattering and all of the being's possessions (including the *gem of seeing*) appearing in its place, if any of the following things happen to the *question ball*:

1. If any attempt is made to move the ball to another plane;
2. If *trap the soul*, *gate*, *monster summoning VII*, or *cache* is cast on the ball;
3. If the ball is destroyed using any of the methods for destruction of artifacts or relics (see the *DMG*, p. 164);
4. If a wraith or similar creature performs an *energy drain* on the ball.

The being is neutral in alignment, AC 2, HD 10 +6, # ATT 3, DAM 1-6/1-6 (plus 5% chance of disease) by claws, and 2-12 (plus poison, save at -2) by fangs. Its poison causes sleep for 1-6 days, during which time the being will eat its victim. Its claws are infected with a terminal blood disease, as per the *DMG*. The being has all the spell-like abilities of a type I demon, and it can travel in the Astral and Ethereal Planes. Its other possessions number 2-12, each having a 20% chance of being magical in nature.

#### **Slow Mutation** (Alteration/Possession)

Level: 5

Range: *Touch*

Duration: *Permanent*

Area of effect: *One creature*

Components: *V,S,M*

Casting Time: *2 rounds + touch*

Saving Throw: *Neg.*

Explanation/Description: The material component of this spell is a piece of whatever the caster wishes his subject to become (e.g. a kenku feather to turn him into a kenku, or a drop from a *potion of invisibility* to turn him invisible). The spell is cast on a non-living item such as the end of a staff, where it glows red with the power of its dweomer. Should any living (or undead) thing touch the dweomer, that being becomes infected with *slow mutation* unless it makes a successful saving throw vs. polymorph. The effects of the dweomer vary according to the description given by the caster in the verbal component of the spell but, once triggered, the complete mutation occurs within 3-18 rounds.

The spell has two aspects. The first is a condition that must apply to the affected creature for the spell's mutation to function (e.g., contact with a certain substance, performance of a certain action, etc.). While this condition applies, the second aspect of the spell takes effect — the subject begins to change slowly into the form described by the caster during the creation of the dweomer (e.g., he begins to resemble a kenku or becomes increasingly translucent).

Only a *remove curse* spell will eliminate the dweomer from a possessed creature's body, allowing a *wish* or *polymorph* spell to return him to his original form. Before a dweomer leaves its original position on its weapon, *dispel magic* will eliminate it. After the dweomer leaves its position, by *dispel magic* or by infecting someone, the weapon is once again normal in every way.

## **THE FANTRA**

The chaotic neutral fantra, whose name means "guardian," bears the weapons of the church. Fantras belong to a nomadic culture, the members of which call themselves meadlennes ("tribe members"). Fantras sometimes see themselves as guardians of their entire people, their protective and comforting nature giving them a charisma score bonus of +3 when dealing with other meadlennes. Fantras and their people care only for their god and themselves. People not of the same tribe and whose religious beliefs differ from those of a fantra are called attlennes ("outsiders") and are regarded as no different from intelligent animals. Should a fantra ever aid an attlenne without good cause (*i.e.*, without aiding the meadlenne tribe in some way), he loses his status, is excommunicated and exiled, and becomes forevermore an attlenne and a normal fighter.

Fantras only wear armors of chain mail quality or lighter, and they only carry wooden shields. They have few personal possessions, because they must carry all of their equipment on horseback or in carts when the tribe moves. Fantras prefer mounts with stamina, depending on them often for their lives.

Wisdom is the prime requisite of a fantra. A wisdom score of 17 or greater adds 10% to earned experience. Strength and constitution are secondary requisites, adding an additional 5% to earned experience for a total of 28 or more. Fantras receive spell bonuses and chances of spell failure according to their wisdom scores as clerics do (see *Players Handbook*, p. 11, Wisdom Table II).

Nomadic fantras never build strongholds. At 9th level or above, a fantra might attract tabaxi or atomies as followers, but otherwise he works only with other fantras.

The special abilities of a fantra are:

1. Immunity to normal diseases of all types, excluding magical diseases and lycanthropy.
2. A 10% chance per level to identify plants or animals, automatic identification coming at 10th level and above.
3. A 15% chance per level to identify pure water or nonpoisonous wild foods, automatic at 7th level and above.
4. The ability to concoct antidotes from natural herbs and roots. The antidote has a 10% chance per level of the fantra of neutralizing the poison in 1-4 rounds. This ability assumes the availability of proper herbs and roots. Concoction time ranges from 2 rounds to 2 hours, depending on the complexity of the poison (and therefore the antidote). The fantra must know the exact nature of the poison to concoct a suitable antidote,

5. Spell use at 1st level and above. Fantra Table II shows the number and level of such spells.

The strictures of a fantra are:

1. Forbidden retention of wealth. All treasure falls to the tribe and its eigen (chieftain). Fantras keep only personal magic items such as weapons and rings.

2. Tribal gain over personal gain. The fantra must sacrifice all for the tribe.

**Fantra Table I**

Experience points	Experience level	Hit points	Level title
0 – 2,250	1	d10	Fantra
2,251 – 4,500	2	2d10	Fantra
4,501 – 7,500	3	3d10	Fantra
7,501 – 15,000	4	4d10	Fantra
15,001 – 35,000	5	5d10	Fantra
35,001 – 50,000	6	6d10	Fantra
50,001 – 125,000	7	7d10	Fantra
125,001 – 225,000	8	8d10	Fantra
225,001 – 350,000	9	9d10	Fantra
350,001 – 700,000	10	10d10	Fantra
700,001 – 1,050,000	11	10d10 + 4	Fantra
1,050,001 – 1,400,000	12	10d10 + 8	Fantra

Fantras gain one level per 350,000 experience points above 9th level.  
Fantras gain 4 hit points per level above 10th level.

**Fantra Table II: Spells usable by experience level**

Fantra level	Fantra spell level			
	1	2	3	4
1	1	—	—	—
2	1	—	—	—
3	2	—	—	—
4	3	—	—	—
5	4	1	—	—
6	4	1	—	—
7	4	2	—	—
8	4	3	1	—
9	4	4	2	1
10	4	4	3	2
11	4	4	4	3
12*	4	4	4	4

\*— Maximum spell-casting ability.

Fantras have a unique spell list. They acquire and cast spells in the same way that a cleric does, by meditation and prayer.

**Fantra spell list**

Number	1st level	2nd level
1	<i>Animal friendship (d)</i>	<i>Cure disease (3)</i>
2	<i>Cure light wounds</i>	<i>Detect charm</i>
3	<i>Detect good/evil</i>	<i>Dispel magic (3)</i>
4	<i>Detect magic</i>	<i>Find traps</i>
5	<i>Detect snares &amp; pits (d)</i>	<i>Know alignment</i>
6	<i>Invis. to animals (d)</i>	<i>Locate plants (d)</i>
7	<i>Light</i>	<i>Predict weather(d)</i>
8	<i>Locate animals (d)</i>	<i>Produce flame (d)</i>
9	<i>Protection from plants (f)</i>	<i>Protection from animals (f)</i>
10	<i>Remove fear</i>	<i>Resist fire</i>
11	<i>Resist cold</i>	<i>Slow poison</i>
12	<i>Sanctuary</i>	<i>Speak with animals</i>

Number	3rd level	4th level
1	<i>Animal summoning I (d4)</i>	<i>Animal summoning II (d5)</i>
2	<i>Continual light</i>	<i>Atonement (5)</i>
3	<i>Cure serious wounds (4)</i>	<i>Control temp. 10' r. (d)</i>
4	<i>Detect lie (4)</i>	<i>Control winds (d5)</i>
5	<i>Neutralize poison (4)</i>	<i>Cure critical wounds (5)</i>
6	<i>Prayer</i>	<i>Exorcise</i>
7	<i>Protection from insects (f)</i>	<i>Flame strike (5)</i>
8	<i>Remove curse</i>	<i>Insect plague (5)</i>
9	<i>Snare (d)</i>	<i>Resurrection (7)</i>
10	<i>Speak with dead</i>	<i>True seeing (5)</i>

Unless otherwise indicated, all fantra spells correspond to the cleric spell of the same name and level. A number after a spell indicates the spell is normally of a level different from that at which a fantra learns the spell. A letter after the spell indicates that the spell normally belongs to a class other than the cleric (d = druid, f = special fantra spell). New spell definitions follow, in the format of the *Players Handbook*.

**Protection from Plants (Abjuration)**

Level: 1  
Range: *Touch*  
Duration: 2 rounds/level  
Area of effect: *Creature touched*  
Components: *V,S,M*  
Casting Time: 3 segments  
Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: This spell prevents bodily contact between the creature touched (the caster or a willing recipient of the spell) and normal plants in a manner similar to the *protection from evil* spell. The spell does not inhibit monsters and plants of a magic nature (excluding giant normal plants). All attacks from normal plants incur a -2 penalty on hit rolls. Saving throws for the spell recipient against attacks from normal plants receive a +2 bonus. The material components of the spell consist of plant fiber (any type) and crushed leaves.

**Protection from Animals (Abjuration)**

Level: 2  
Range: *Touch*  
Duration: 2 rounds/level  
Area of effect: *Creature touched*  
Components: *V,S,M*  
Casting Time: 6 segments  
Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: This spell prevents bodily contact between the creature touched (the caster or a willing recipient of the spell) and normal animals in a manner similar to the *protection from evil* spell. The spell does not inhibit monsters and animals of a magic nature (excluding giant normal animals). All attacks from normal animals incur a -2 penalty on hit rolls. Saving throws for the spell recipient against attacks from normal animals receive a +2 bonus. The material components of the spell consists of animal hair (any type), a chip of animal bone, and a drop of animal blood.

**Protection from Insects (Abjuration)**

Level: 3  
Range: *Touch*  
Duration: 2 rounds/level  
Area of effect: *Creature touched*  
Components: *V,S,M*  
Casting Time: 9 segments  
Saving Throw: *None*

Explanation/Description: This spell prevents bodily contact between the creature touched (the caster or a willing recipient of the spell) and normal insects in a manner similar to the *protection from evil* spell. The spell does not inhibit monsters and insects of a magic nature (excluding giant normal insects). All attacks from normal insects incur a -2 penalty on hit rolls. Saving throws for the spell recipient against attacks from normal insects receive a +2 bonus. The material components of the spell consist of ground insect bodies.

## THE ILLRIGGER

The lawful evil illrigger creates for his god a framework of evil on which to operate and subdue key proponents of good. He has crisply efficient assassination skills and maintains a functioning network of followers to precipitate his crimes upon the world. Should the illrigger ever commit a chaotic or carelessly disruptive act, his church will excommunicate him and he will become forevermore a normal fighter.

Illriggers prefer armor and weapons of darkened metal. Plate mail and morning stars predominate. Illriggers wear great helmets bearing the symbols and war standards of their gods. Insignias of rank, each a subsymbol of the illrigger's personal sigil, accompany every follower.

Wisdom and intelligence are the prime requisites of the illrigger. A total score in both abilities of 32 or greater adds 10% to earned experience, and a total of 35 or greater adds 15%. Illriggers have chances to know listed spells and minimum and maximum spells per level as magic-users do (see *Players Handbook*, p. 10, Intelligence Table II: Ability for Magic-users) and receive spell bonuses and chances of spell failure according to their wisdom scores as clerics do (see *Players Handbook*, p. 11, Wisdom Table II).

Illriggers can use any magic item unless it has an intrinsic good alignment. Each time the illrigger gains a level, a cumulative 10% chance indicates the presence of a follower (10% upon reaching 2nd level, 20% upon reaching 3rd, etc.). Illrigger Table III shows the type of followers attracted by an illrigger. An illrigger with sufficient funds can build a stronghold at any time.

The special abilities of an illrigger are:

1. A continual emanation of a *protection from good* spell.
2. Immunity to all forms of disease.
3. Detection of good at 5' per level. The illrigger can determine the type of good (lawful, neutral, or chaotic) in one segment of concentration.
4. Saving throw bonuses against chaotic magic at +1 for each three levels (+1 at 1st through 3rd level, +2 at 4th through 6th level, etc.). Chaotic magic includes any spells cast by chaotic NPCs or monsters, and any effects of magic items that are intrinsically chaotic or that are used by chaotic beings.
5. Spell use at 5th level and above. Illrigger Table II shows the number and level of such spells.
6. The use of certain thief functions at a level of ability equal to half the level of the illrigger (1st-level ability at 1st and 2nd level, 2nd-level ability at 3rd and 4th level, etc.). The functions include *open locks*, *find/remove traps*, *move silently*, *hide in shadows*, and *hear noise*. Racial adjustments do not apply.
7. The ability to attack on the assassins' table for assassinations after surprising an opponent.

The illrigger follows no strictures other than the rigid rules necessary to maintain his church. Nearly all known illriggers are devil-worshippers.

**Illrigger Table I**

Experience points	Experience level	Hit points	Level title
0— 2,800	1	d10	Arch of Ruin
2,801— 6,000	2	2d10	Pillar of Sin
6,001— 15,000	3	3d10	Griefbringer
15,001— 45,000	4	4d10	Evilforger
45,001— 75,000	5	5d10	Illrigger
75,001— 115,000	6	6d10	Illrigger
115,001— 165,000	7	7d10	Illrigger
165,001— 225,000	8	8d10	Illrigger
225,001— 300,000	9	9d10	Illrigger
300,001— 400,000	10	10d10	Illrigger
400,001— 800,000	11	11d10	Illrigger
800,001— 1,200,000	12	11d10 +2	Illrigger
1,200,001— 1,600,000	13	11d10+4	Illrigger

Illriggers gain one level per 400,000 experience points above 10th level.

Illriggers gain 2 hit points per level above 11th level.

**Illrigger Table II: Spells usable by experience level**

Illrigger level	Magic-user spell level				Cleric spell level		
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3
5	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
6	1	1	—	—	1	—	—
7	2	1	—	—	1	—	—
8	3	2	1	—	1	—	—
9	4	2	1	1	2	—	—
10	4	3	2	1	2	1	—
11	4	4	2	2	2	1	—
12	4	4	3	2	2	2	—
13	4	4	4	3	2	2	1
14	4	4	4	3	3	2	2
15	4	4	4	4	3	2	2
16	4	4	4	4	3	3	2
17	4	4	4	4	4	3	3
18*	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

Note: 4th-level magic-user spells are usable only by illriggers of 15 or greater intelligence.

\*— Maximum spell-casting ability.

Illriggers acquire and cast magic-user spells in the same way that a magic-user does, by use of spellbooks. They acquire and cast cleric spells in the same way that a cleric does, by meditation and prayer.

**Illrigger Table III: Followers**

Dice roll	Type of follower
01-08	1-10 thieves of 1st level
09-14	1-8 thieves of 1st-2nd level
15-19	1-6 thieves of 1st-4th level
20-23	1-4 thieves of 2nd-5th level
24-26	1-2 thieves of 3rd-6th level
27-28	1 thief of 4th-7th level
29-31	1-4 assassins of 1st-2nd level
32	1 assassin of 3rd-6th level
33-35	1-6 magic-users of 1st level
36-37	1-4 magic-users of 1st-2nd level
38	1-2 magic-users of 2nd-5th level
39-40	1-2 illusionists of 1st-2nd level
41	1 illusionist of 2nd-4th level
42-46	1-6 clerics of 1st-4th level
47-49	1-3 clerics of 2nd-5th level
50-51	1-2 clerics of 4th-7th level
52	1 cleric of 5th-8th level
53	1-2 cloistered clerics <sup>1</sup> of 1st-4th level
54-61	4-40 0-level men-at-arms of 1-6 hp each
62-67	1-10 fighters of 1st level
68-72	1-8 fighters of 1st-4th level
73-76	1-6 fighters of 2nd-5th level
77-79	1-4 fighters of 3rd-6th level
80-81	1-2 fighters of 4th-7th level
82	1 cavalier of 1st-6th level
83-84	1 hellcat or hell hound
85	6-24 mites
86	1 penanggalan
87	20-200 duergar plus females and young
88	20-200 orcs plus females and young
89	30-300 goblins plus females and young
90	10-100 hobgoblins plus females and young
91	1 blue dragon
92	1 ghost
93	1 spectre
94	1 wight
95	1 wraith
96	2 manticore
97	1-8 fire giants plus females and young
98	1-4 NPCs of any lawful evil class or subclass
99	special (see subtable on next page)
00	DM's choice

1 — Cloistered clerics are described in *Best of DRAGON Magazine*, Volume 4, p. 7.

### Special follower subtable

Die roll	Type of follower
1-2	1 styx devil
3	1-3 abishai (any color)
4	1 pit fiend
5-6	1-2 horned devils
7	1-2 bone devils
8	1 ice devil
9-10	1 rakshasa
11-12	1 imp

### Race of follower (if needed)

Roll d20: 1-3 = dwarf; 4-7 = half-orc; 8 = elf (5%), drow (75%), half-elf (20%); 9-11 = human; 12-17 = same race as the illrigger; 18 = halfling; 19-20 = gnome.

The illrigger has a 10% chance per level beginning with the second of attracting a follower (10% upon reaching 2nd level, 20% upon reaching 3rd level, etc.). Each time the illrigger gains a level (or accumulates enough experience points to gain a level after reaching his level limit), the DM rolls to determine whether a follower will offer services. If a follower is indicated, roll to determine the type of follower.

For example, an illrigger gains sufficient experience points and training to reach 5th level and has a 40% chance of attracting followers. The DM determines that followers are present and rolls to determine their type, the result indicating 1-6 thieves of 1st-4th level. Additional rolls define them as two 1st-level thieves and a 3rd-level thief. Upon reaching 6th level, the illrigger will have a 50% chance of attracting followers — perhaps a wight or hell hound.

Followers can never have levels or hit dice greater than the level of the illrigger. If such followers are rolled, disregard them. Suppose the above illrigger attracted his followers at 2nd level. The two low-level thieves offer services; the one of higher level does not. A hell hound attracted at 6th level could have 4, 5, or 6 but not 7 hit dice. All followers of an illrigger are lawful evil.

### THE ARRIKHAN

The neutral evil arrikhan, whose name in the Creation Argots means “beast-servant,” acts as an opposite to the myrikhan. The arrikhan serves his god in the field, carrying out the orders of the high priests of the church. Like a myrikhan, an arrikhan almost always travels alone. An arrikhan lives to promote the evil ways of his god. Should he ever commit a good deed, he will find himself unquestioningly excommunicated. If the church allows him to live (which is not likely), he becomes forevermore a normal fighter.

Arrikhans favor light armor because of its low encumbrance, often using exotic hides or breastplated furs for their protection. Their weapons tend to do the maximum amount of physical destruction (morning stars predominate).

Wisdom is the prime requisite of an arrikhan. A score of 14 adds 5% to earned experience, a score of 15 adds 10%, a score of 16 adds 15%, a score of 17 adds 20%, and a score of 18 or greater adds 25%. Arrikhans receive spell bonuses and chances of spell failure according to their wisdom scores as clerics do (see *Players Handbook*, p. 11, Wisdom Table II: Adjustments for Clerics).

Arrikhans can use any magic items except those usable only by magic-users or illusionists. An arrikhan with sufficient funds can build a stronghold at any time. Thereafter, he has a cumulative 5% chance per month beginning with the completion of the stronghold of attracting followers. Arrikhan Table III shows the type of followers attracted.

The special abilities of an arrikhan are:

1. Saving throws against good magic at +1 for each two levels (+1 at 1st and 2nd level, +2 at 3rd and 4th level, etc.). Good magic includes any spells cast by good NPCs or monsters and any effects of magic items that are intrinsically good or that are used by good beings.

2. At 3rd level and above, affecting undead as a cleric of two levels below the level of the arrikhan (1st-level ability at 3rd level, 2nd-level ability at 4th level, etc.). The arrikhan can turn the un-

dead or ally them with himself as desired. The ability has no effect on devils, demons, or other extraplanar creatures — it only affects undead.

3. Hit and damage bonuses of +1 per level when fighting against good opponents. The arrikhan must be aware of the good alignment for these bonuses to apply.

4. A 10% chance per level to identify plants and animals, automatic at 10th level and above.

5. At 5th level and above, the ability to call for a warhorse that magically appears near the arrikhan. The mount has a 5% chance per level of the arrikhan of being a nightmare of maximum hit points; otherwise, it is a normal heavy warhorse, AC 5, HD 5 + 5, NE. The mount will serve faithfully unto death, but only two such horses can be called in the arrikhan’s lifetime.

6. The ability to torture helpless victims. This torture requires special instruments (restraints, hot irons, salt and other caustic chemicals and irritants, etc.). The creature being tortured must make a saving throw against its constitution score (rolling its constitution or less on a 3d6 roll) during each turn of torture; otherwise, it will reveal any information that the arrikhan wishes to know. Torture damage accrues at 1-4 points per round. Player characters cannot be tortured for information in this manner, but may be harmed.

7. Spell use at 7th level and above. Arrikhan Table II shows the number and level of such spells. Halflings of the arrikhan class, unable to learn cleric spells, cannot advance past 6th level; dwarves of the arrikhan class, unable to learn druid spells, cannot advance past 10th level.

8. Detection of good in a radius of 50’ + 5’ per level, revealing only the general direction of the good source and requiring unbroken concentration.

9. The use of certain thief functions at a level of ability equal to half the level of the arrikhan (1st-level ability at 1st and 2nd level, 2nd-level ability at 3rd and 4th level, etc.). The functions include *find/remove traps*, *move silently*, and *hide in shadows*. Racial bonuses do not apply.

10. A 15% chance per level to identify pure water or nonpoisonous wild foods, automatic at 7th level and above.

11. The ability to concoct ingestive poisons and their antidotes from natural herbs and roots. Arrikhan Table IV shows the possible poisons and antidotes and their concoction times. This ability assumes the availability of proper herbs and roots.

The strictures of an arrikhan are:

1. Referring to his god only by his titles or as “arriman” (“beast-lord”), except when the god’s name must be used (rituals, ceremonies, proselytization, etc.). The oinodaemon is the usual deity worshipped.

2. Forbidden accumulation of wealth or treasure. All plunder must go to the church, which might or might not award part of that plunder to the arrikhan as a reward for his deeds.

Arrikhan Table I

Experience points	Experience level	Hit points	Level	Level title
0— 2,500	1	d8 + 1		Beasteye
2,501— 5,500	2	2d8 + 2		Beastarm
5,501— 11,500	3	3d8 + 3		Beastheart
11,501— 24,000	4	4d8 + 4		Arrikhan
24,001— 58,000	5	5d8 + 5		Arrikhan
58,001— 125,000	6	6d8 + 6		Arrikhan
125,001— 215,000	7	7d8 + 7		Arrikhan
215,001— 325,000	8	8d8 + 8		Arrikhan
325,001— 650,000	9	9d8 + 9		Arrikhan
650,001— 975,000	10	9d8 + 12		Arrikhan
975,001— 1,300,000	11	9d8 + 15		Arrikhan

Arrikhans gain one level per 325,000 experience points above 8th level.

Arrikhans gain 3 hit points per level above 9th level.

**Arrikhan Table II: Spells usable by experience level**

Arrikhan level	Cleric spell level			Druid spell level		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
7	1	—	—	—	—	—
8	2	—	—	—	—	—
9	2	1	—	—	—	—
10	2	2	1	—	—	—
11	2	2	2	1	—	—
12	3	2	2	1	—	—
13	4	3	2	1	1	—
14	4	4	3	2	1	—
15	5	4	3	2	1	1
16	6	5	4	2	2	1
17	6	6	5	3	2	1
18	6	6	6	3	2	2
19	6	6	6	3	3	2
20	6	6	6	3	3	2
21*	6	6	6	3	3	3

\*— Maximum spell-casting ability.

Arrikhans acquire and cast cleric spells and druid spells in the same way that clerics and druids do, by meditation and prayer. Arrikhans can cast all cleric spells, and can use the same druid spells that are available to myrikhans (see above).

**Arrikhan Table III: Followers**

Dice roll	Type of follower
01-08	1-10 thieves of 1st level
09-15	1-8 thieves of 1st-2nd level
16-21	1-6 thieves of 1st-4th level
22-26	1-4 thieves of 2nd-5th level
27-30	1-2 thieves of 3rd-6th level
31-33	1 thief of 4th-7th level
34-37	1-4 assassins of 1st-2nd level
38-40	1 assassin of 3rd-6th level
41-44	1-2 magic-users of 1st level
45-46	1 illusionist of 1st level
47-48	1-2 clerics of 1st level
49-56	4-40 0-level men-at-arms of 1-6 hp each
57-63	1-10 fighters of 1st level
64-69	1-8 lighters of 1st-4th level
70-74	1-6 fighters of 2nd-5th level
75-78	1-4 fighters of 3rd-6th level
79-81	1-2 fighters of 4th-7th level
82-83	1 death dog
84-85	1 ettercap plus spiders (see subtable below)
86-87	1 forlarren
88-90	20-200 grimlocks plus females and young
91-92	1-4 fomorian giants
93-94	1 night hag
95-96	1-6 wyverns
97-98	1-4 NPCs of any neutral evil-aligned class or subclass
99	special* (see subtable below)
00	DM's choice

\*— Only arrikhans of 9th level or above may have special followers. Reroll in other cases.

**Spider subtable**

Dice roll	Type of spider
01-18	10-40 tarantulas*
19-36	2-40 trap-door spiders*
37-54	2-8 wolf spiders* *
55-72	2-12 lynx spiders* *
73-90	1-6 black widow spiders* * *
91-93	1-8 giant spiders* *
94-96	1 - 12 huge spiders* *
97-99	2-20 large spiders* *
00	1-4 phase spiders* * *

Roll on this subtable once for each 10 hp of the ettercap (1 roll for

5-10 hp, 2 rolls for 11-20 hp, etc.). Asterisks indicate the relative toxicity of the spider's poison — one asterisk representing mild poison, three representing fatally strong poison.

**Special follower subtable**

Die roll	Type of follower
1	1 fog giant
2	1 mezzodaemon
3	1 nycadaemon
4-5	1 skeleton warrior plus 10-29 skeletons
6	1 lich

Beginning with the completion of a stronghold, an arrikhan has a cumulative 5% chance per month of attracting followers. When a follower is indicated, the DM rolls to determine the type of follower and, if necessary, the race of the follower.

Followers can never have levels or hit dice greater than the level of the arrikhan. If such followers are rolled, disregard them. All followers of an arrikhan are neutral evil.

**Arrikhan Table IV: Poisons and antidotes**

Arrikhan level	Poison/antidote type		
	Venom	Bane	Toxin
1	5%	—	—
2	10%	—	—
3	15%	3%	—
4	20%	6%	—
5	25%	9%	2%
6	30%	12%	4%
7	35%	15%	6%
8	40%	18%	8%
9	45%	21%	10%
10	50%	24%	12%
11	55%	27%	14%
12	60%	30%	16%
13	70%	35%	18%
14	80%	40%	20%
15	90%	45%	22%
16*	100%	50%	25%

\*— Maximum poison concoction ability.

Concoction times: Venom, 5-40 rounds; Bane, 10-100 rounds; Toxin: 2-5 hours.

Percentages on the table above indicate an arrikhan's chance to concoct one dose of a venom, bane, or toxin at a certain level. The success or failure of the concoction remains unknown until the concoction time has fully elapsed. Venoms deliver 1-4 points of damage per round to a maximum of 4-24 points, unless the victim makes a normal saving throw vs. poison. Banes deliver 1-10 points of damage per round to a maximum of 10-60 points unless the victim makes a saving throw at -2. Toxins cause death in 1-4 segments unless the victim makes a saving throw at -5. Antidotes of the proper type take effect in 1-4 segments. Antidotes neutralize only the same type of poison (e.g., a venom antidote will neutralize venom but not bane or toxin).

. . . The forest thinned and became a sea of thorns. Beyond it, Aan saw the ominous towers of Castle Gulgazh, the last rays of the sun bleeding red around their edges.

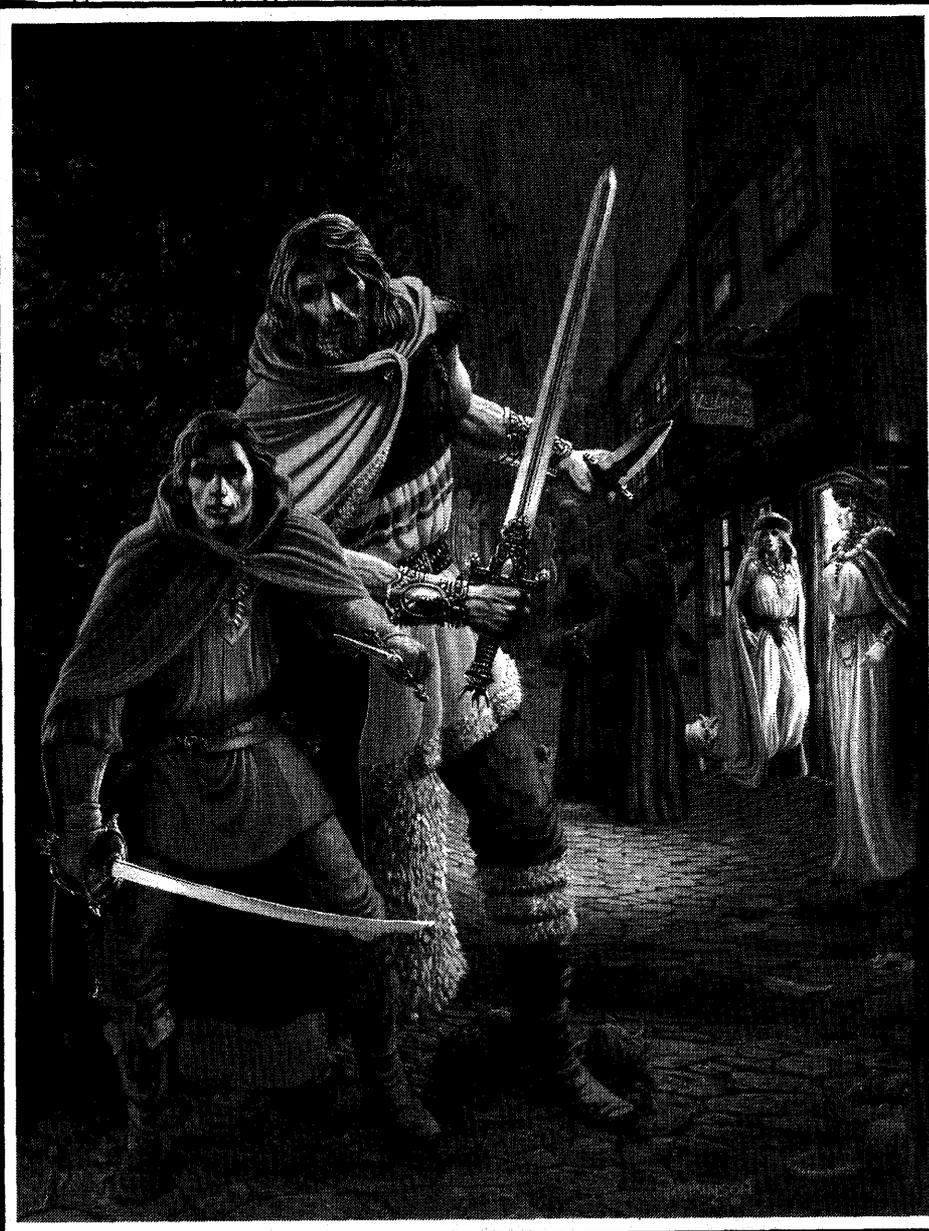
Aan reined his horse up and stared silently at the sight before him. The drawbridge lay open. Hanging from chains in the entryway, the body of Gulgazh swayed in the evening breeze, his unhelmed head matted with blood. Deep knife gouges in the dark breastplate sent chills through Aan — Gulgazh bore the crossed-guuntlet sigil of the paremandyr, Fein. With Gulgazh dead, on whom would Fein next prey?

Aan knew all too well. His right hand strayed to his sword hilt as he eyed the forest warily. Slowly he turned his mount around and forged back the way he came. The sun vanished soon after. Only the moon, massive and orange, remained.

# JUST ONE LITTLE NEIGHBORHOOD

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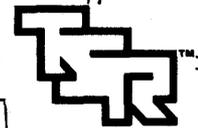
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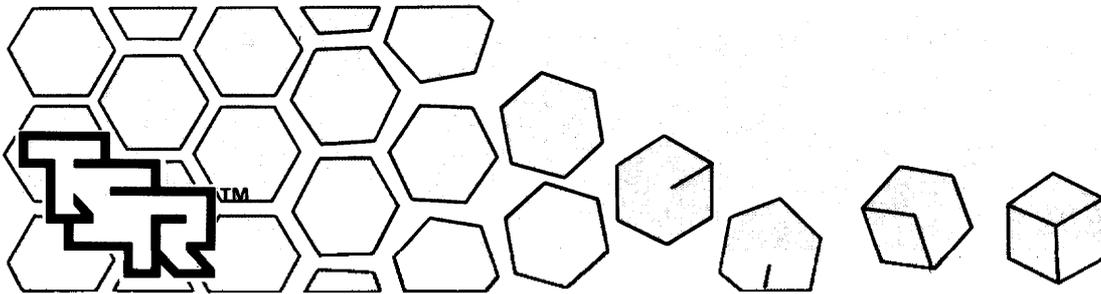
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## COMING RETRACTIONS

In our never-ending effort to bring you the finest quality games, we've run into a little bit of a deadline problem. The two new SPI™ games we promised you last issue (delayed from October) are delayed once again, this time until late June or July. (We're hoping for an ORIGINS release.) The games, of course, are the long-awaited TERRIBLE SWIFT SWORD™ revision by Rich Berg, and the BARBAROSSA™ game by Dave Ritchie.

Why does this sort of thing happen? Well, one reason is that an SPI game takes about 20 times as much production time as a module. Map preparation alone can take months, especially when each individual hex on the map must be inspected for absolute historical accuracy. It often takes days of careful attention to proofread a counter sheet. And, SPI games have to compete with modules for our graphics, typesetting, and editorial services. Modules, frankly, make a lot more money for us, and tend to come first.

But don't give up hope. The company that published T2 just a little bit behind schedule is working hard . . . and we'll have these two games for you *almost* before you know it!

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# P R E V I E W S

## JON PICKENS

Jon Pickens is the Acquisition Editor for TSR, Inc. When you submit a module for possible publication, Jon reviews it and decides whether it is suitable, not suitable, or possibly suitable if rewritten. "But please don't send us new monsters, new magic items, or anything else without writing for a set of writer's guidelines," he says. "If you don't submit a properly filled-out disclosure form or don't follow our formats, your manuscript is automatically returned. That wastes our time and yours."

Jon has a number of other responsibilities as well. When a manuscript is accepted, Jon edits and

*Jon Pickens*

develops it, and puts it in final form for publication. He has been the Games Editor for STRATEGY & TACTICS® Magazine for several years, and with issue #105 becomes the Managing Editor as well. "In a way, this completes a circle in my life," Jon said.

Jon was born in Mishawaka, Ind., on Aug. 12, 1954. In 1968, he came across a library book titled *Warfare in Miniature*, which introduced him to miniatures gaming, and shortly thereafter read a book titled *Wargames*, which introduced him to wargaming. For Christmas, his parents bought him his first wargame, *Blitzkrieg*. A couple of months later, he saw an ad in *Popular Mechanics* for a magazine titled STRATEGY & TACTICS, and he immediately wrote in for a sample copy. "That was issue 17," he said. "I spent the rest of the summer mowing lawns to get enough money to buy some wargames advertised in the magazine, and to get all the back issues."

As it turned out, the publishers didn't have all the back issues for sale, so they suggested that Jon write a collector in Wisconsin who might be able to help him. "So I wrote a letter to this collector, whose name was Gary Gygax, and arranged to buy the back issues from him. Gary invited me to attend a gaming convention in Madison. By a coincidence, my father had a speaking engagement in Delavan, which is near Lake Geneva, on the same weekend, so he took me up."

"Unfortunately, I had forgotten about the time zone change, so I went knocking on Gary's door at about 8 a.m., and woke him up. He answered the door in his bathrobe. Gary was very gracious about the whole

thing, considering the circumstances," Jon said.

"I rode up to Madison with Gary. Oddly enough, the first question he asked me was if I read science fiction. Most wargamers at the time were primarily into military history. At the convention, I played in my first large-scale miniatures game, and at the end of the day, Gary gave me a copy of a fanzine, *Panzerfaust*, and drove me back to Lake Geneva."

Gary invited Jon to attend that year's GEN CON® convention, but he couldn't. The next year he did attend — it was GEN CON 3 — and has been there every year since.

Jon attended Valparaiso University in Indiana, and earned a BA degree in English and Economics in 1976. While in college, he kept attending conventions. At the 1973 GEN CON, the hit of the convention was a new miniatures game called CHAINMAIL™, published by the fledgling Tactical Studies Rules group, then unincorporated. The word was that next year, TSR would have something special to show . . . which turned out to be a little thing called the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game.

In college, Jon met Bob Blake (who has since written several modules for TSR, including C4 and C5), and helped start a gaming group at Valparaiso. "Bob was our first D&D® game dealer. He would order three or four copies at a time and sell them out."

When Jon graduated, he worked for three years as a waiter at a Red Lobster to pay off his student loans, and gamed at the Griffon hobby store in South Bend, Ind., playing mostly D&D. He wrote occasional articles for DRAGON® Magazine (some of which have been reprinted in Best of DRAGON Magazine anthologies) and was active in

the famous gaming amateur press association (APA) publication *Alarums & Excursions*.

Finally, he decided to try to turn his hobby into his profession. He applied for a job at TSR, Inc., and was interviewed by Lawrence Schick, then head of Design. He took the designer and editor tests, and completed them the night before the interview. "They didn't think much of the design work, probably because I wrote it in a few hours late at night, but the editing part was OK," he said. Lawrence suggested that Jon interview with Harold Johnson, then Manager of Editing and Production, and he was hired.

And he's been here ever since.

 Profiles

# Profiles

me I was a model child." Steve was born in Dubuque, Iowa, on Dec. 8, 1957. "My first recollection goes back to when I was eight months old. I stuck a metal rosary into a wall socket, and got 110 volts through my tiny little body."

He attended Catholic school from first grade through high school, then two years of Catholic college before transferring to Iowa State University at Ames. "A nun introduced me to the works of J.R.R. Tolkien in high school," he said. "Previously, I had been mostly into historical novels and military history. For the next several years, I read all the fantasy I could get my hands on — but I didn't enjoy very much of it. I couldn't find anything with the same sense of humor and style as Tolkien. I also read a lot of science fiction. These days, I read mostly military history again."

In 1978, Steve was working part time in a department store while attending college. The store had a small games department with a few wargames. Steve bought *Third Reich* by the Avalon Hill Game Company and took it home, but he couldn't persuade anyone to play it with him. So, he took it back, traded it for a copy of *The Russian Campaign*, and did



As Manager of Game Editors, Steve Winter is responsible for taking every game, module, and accessory once the designer has finished with it, and editing it into final shape. That doesn't just involve copy editing, fixing spelling, and correcting grammar, but also involves checking rules, making sure everything fits together logically, improving organization and flow of information, and sometimes rewriting sections of the text.

"In spite of the fact I ended up working for a game company," Steve said, "I had a more or less normal childhood. My folks tell

me I was a model child." Steve was born in Dubuque, Iowa, on Dec. 8, 1957. "My first recollection goes back to when I was eight months old. I stuck a metal rosary into a wall socket, and got 110 volts through my tiny little body."

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"From then on, I played all day every Saturday, but I never was one of those 5-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week gamers. The newspaper took up most of my time, and I had my heart set on becoming a journalist."

When Steve graduated, he got a job on the Peoria (Ill.) Journal-Star as a city desk reporter. Among other things, he covered the Saturday night police beat. "The first night I was there I covered the first murder in Peoria for over a year. I also covered Reagan's last campaign appearance in 1980. Then there were less exciting jobs, like covering the Mass Transit Board."

Unfortunately, this was a temporary position, substituting for a woman who was on maternity leave. When she came back, Steve was to be laid off. "One day I was in a hobby shop in Peoria, and saw an issue of DRAGON Magazine that mentioned that TSR was looking for editors. I sent my resume, and got an interview. I ended up coming to Lake Geneva three times. The first time, my car broke down, and I had to call and postpone the interview. The second time, everything worked out. But on the third trip, my car broke down again, but I was within five miles of Lake Geneva, so I was able to get it towed in."

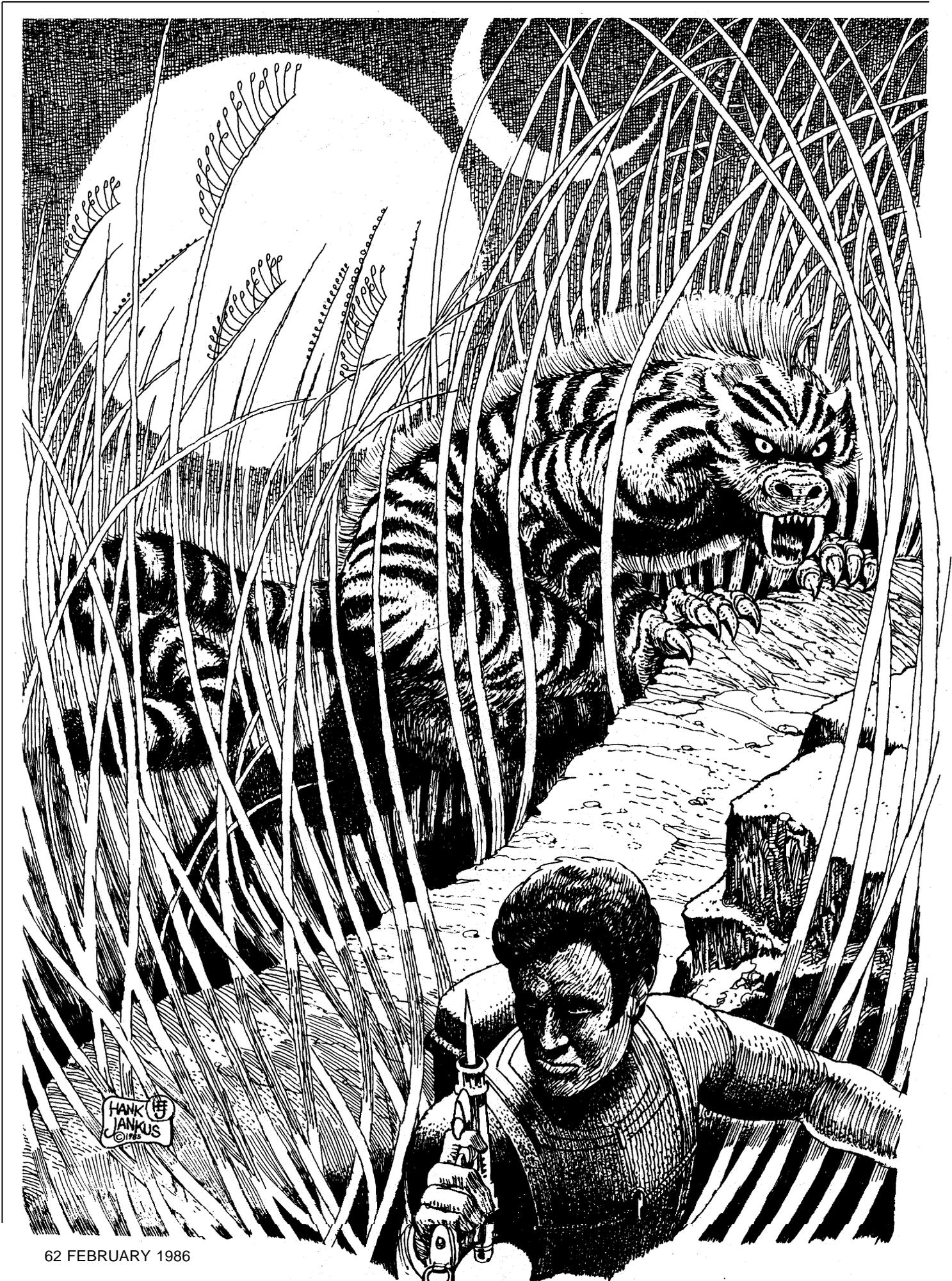
Steve started with TSR in May 1981 as a Games Editor. He is the co-creator of the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Game, and the editor of both STAR FRONTIERS® boxed games, the GANGBUSTERS™ games, the WORLD OF

GREYHAWK™ revision, and the TOP SECRET® Companion. He was promoted to manager in 1984. Since then, he's worked on many different projects in addition to his management duties, including the editing of half of *Oriental Adventures*.

His main gaming interests are wargaming and miniatures. He runs annual miniatures events at GEN CON, including the famous *Car Wars* "Lake Geneva Death Rally" series. He collects and paints colonial and American Civil War figures, and has also amassed a large number of fantasy figures. As a result of his miniatures background, he wrote *The Art of Three-Dimensional Gaming* booklet for the BATTLE-SYSTEM™ Fantasy Combat Supplement.

In September 1985 he married Mary Kirchoff, who had been a member of the DRAGON Magazine editorial staff and the editor of the POLYHEDRON™ Newzine. Mary is now a freelance writer, and is working on several books for TSR, Inc. They have an Irish setter named Hannibal, who frequently gets in to trouble.

Steve is currently designing and developing an SPI game, SNIPER PATROL, which combines and expands the old SNIPER and PATROL games.



HANK JANKUS © 1985



CENT . . . ALERT! . . . INTRUDER  
. . . prey?

For a brief moment, Nen-al stood poised at the crest of the grassy knoll. Slowly, he twisted his thick-muscled neck. The surrounding dreary landscape slid beneath his gaze as his black eyes narrowed in suspicion.

Nothing was revealed, though, beyond the normal stunted grotesqueries that passed for trees in his world. Huge boulders — reminders of the ancient Cold Times — and the rolling, grass-covered hills were his only companions.

Or so it appeared.

Nen-al thrust his furry muzzle into the early morning breeze. More than his not-unsharp vision, he trusted his nose. It would not be fooled by shifting shadows. The traces of scent which the currents of air had wafted to him moments before waxed in intensity as he swept his snout from side to side.

Perhaps, he thought, it was another of his kind come to slay his mate and his newborn son.

Immediately, Nen-al crouched on all fours. For caution's sake, he extended a trio of curving, ebony claws from each forehand and a double pair from each hind foot. Carefully — not from fear, but from wisdom — his head bobbed up and down, left and right as he fluffed out his ears in support of his two primary senses.

The scent seemed strongest downhill and to his left. With no further hesitation, Nen-al glided across the coarse blades of autumn grass. Like the restless blanket of morning fog around him, Nen-al drifted along the hillside. Tensing the hard planes of his muscles, he drew back his leathery lips. His long, ivory white fangs were thirsty for the blood of the intruder.

Nen-al would make certain that *he* was the first to strike. He had never yet been caught off guard. He knew he would never have survived such a mistake.

Abruptly, Nen-al froze as an alien form, all angles and silvery hardness, sliced across his line of sight. A tangle of shadows which huddled from the rising sun had kept the strange thing hidden. It was no more than five body lengths distant from him.

With a soundless snarl, Nen-al lifted his hind quarters in instinctive warning. The thing did not move. Nen-al could not understand it. What would dare to stand and face him other than one of his own kind? It was from in front, though, that the intruder scent beckoned the most urgently.

At thought of a possible interloper in his domain, Nen-al could feel the first bubbling fires of *rall-dai*, the frenzy which would seize any male of his species in defense of his near barren territory. He would light to the death against anyone foolish enough or desperate enough to threaten his scarce resources.

Nen-al did not surrender to that joyous release, however. The scent before him was one totally unfamiliar. He would wait. Prey or foe — that determination alone would guide him when the time came. Silently he moved forward.

Nothing stirred in or around the silent hulk which lay

# Intruder

by Russell Madden

Illustrations by Hank Jankus

half-buried in the red-brown soil. With a certain puzzlement in his manner, Nen-al drew his sharp claws along the shiny, curving surface of his find. His eyes widened perceptibly and a low rumble escaped his throat when the passage of his claws left barely a scratch. Never before had he encountered a substance resistant to his claws. Even the rocks which littered his land would furrow beneath the force of his hands. But not this . . .

The scent, Nen-al realized, did not emanate from the strange silver rock. It merely clung there the strongest. It was time, he decided, to discover the source which had drawn him there. Further investigation of the new addition to his realm could wait. The creature which had sheltered there would not.

With a fluid motion, Nen-al bent low with his arms at his sides. Scanning his horizon, he protruded a fleshy lump from the bare skin of his abdomen. A hand's breadth in length, the lump emitted a fine spray as Nen-al swiftly circumnavigated the object. Satisfied with his action, he turned and loped away without a backward glance.

Nen-al knew that with his trace to protect it, his possession would be safe. Any denizen of this land insane enough to venture there would find that sticky substance adhering to him in a grip that would spell his death. Nen-al could follow the spore of any creature to whom his scent was attached. And he would. His territory was his life. Nothing short of his own death — not even the signal of another of his kind — would stray him from following, finding, and utterly destroying anything rash enough to defy his warning.

Nen-al never gave up. On anything.

As the bloated orange hole of the sun struggled higher above the Hills of Bone, Nen-al knew that success was only a matter of time.

Troy Overton hugged himself against the chill of the dying night. His thin jacket kept in little heat. Wearily, he trudged onward. He still had not found his wife.

Troy paused at the crest of the hill he had been climbing. His gaze drifted back across the foggy valleys he had traversed. In that direction lay the now-useless one-man capsule in which he had been dropped to Zahn-Bey. Somewhere in the surrounding hills was an identical vessel which had carried his wife, Rozelle. He had to find her soon. Troy was afraid that if the cold did not claim her, one of the predators which dominated this frigid land would.

Troy shivered. A bitter smile twisted his lips.

The members of the Council were smart, he had to admit. They knew better than to execute dissidents outright. Humane exile was the Council's alternative to creating martyrs.

Troy shook his head. It was more like murder by proxy. He and his wife had been dropped on the northernmost edge of the only continent on Zahn-Bey. The single center of civilization on the planet — a struggling enclave of other exiles like themselves — lay well over a thousand kilometers to the south. It would be warm there, if they lived long enough to reach its precarious safety.

For the tenth time since he had landed, Troy checked

the load in his needler. It still read full. The knife in his belt and those explosive-tipped slivers of metal were the only weapons he had. Neither he nor his wife were very proficient in their use. They were writers, not warriors.

The Council thought they had the dissidents beaten. They were wrong, Troy knew. They had only postponed the confrontation.

One final time, Troy looked towards the location of his landing capsule. The explosive device implanted in its hull would soon be rendering its possible shelter into a glowing heap of worthless metal. He was counting on the detonation of the similar device in his wife's vessel to guide him towards her. She was to remain nearby as they had agreed. He hoped she would be all right until he arrived.

Troy turned. An orange-yellow ball of fire bulged above the too-close horizon. That small sun offered a promise of at least token relief from imminent freezing. He knew, however, that he and Rozelle would have to find some type of shelter before that sun went down below the opposite horizon. Dressed as they were, they would never see another dawn without protection. A fire would help — surround it with a cave, then the odds would be on their side. After that, they would have to hunt for some fur-bearing animal to provide real coats and a supply of food.

It was not a future for which they had been trained, Troy knew. They would have to tap into untested talents if they expected to live. And he wanted to live. Their fight against the Council was far from finished.

With those considerations in mind, Troy scanned the landscape around him. Below him ran a small brook. Perhaps if they followed the streambed, he thought, they might come across something which might pass for a cave. At any rate, it would be better than wandering up and down this seemingly endless range of hills and cliffs.

First, however, he had to find his wife.

As best he could, Troy scrambled down the slope to the brook. The water was numbing cold but tasted good. He filled his canteen. Rozelle might be thirsty, he thought. She was not adept at conserving consumables.

Troy rose and squinted up at the pale sun. Its light barely reached the bottom of the depression in which he stood. Best to keep to the ridges, he thought, until he had found his wife.

Drawing his jacket closer around him, Troy began to climb.

An unexpected roar of thunder smashed into Nen-al as he loped quickly away from the alien rock. With an involuntary yowl of surprise, the hunter was knocked to the ground. The deafening sound rumbled over him, echoing away into the distant hills.

Scrambling up onto his hind feet, Nen-al was greeted by a boiling fireball bursting upward into the chill air. A snarl of rage twisted his lips. The heavy heartbeat of fear was a rare sensation for him. It was not a feeling he enjoyed.

As the crimson flames weakened and began to die, Nen-al backed cautiously away. Not until the top of the next hill lay between himself and the seldom seen

phenomenon of fire did his breathing relax.

Nen-al paused for a moment on the lower hillside as he considered what had just occurred. There had been no warning of that attack. Even more puzzling to him was that he had been certain that the intruder was nowhere within current scent range. So how had he managed such an unexpected assault?

There had been rare occasions, Nen-al remembered, when an unfamiliar prey had made the mistake of attacking him rather than fleeing. Such oddities, however, had always been face-to-face, claw-against-claw. There had never been trickery with flame.

Once again the tickling tendrils of *rall-dai* flicked through Nen-al's mind. Perhaps, indeed, he thought with relish, it was an enemy he sought and not merely prey. In either event, it would be a noble contest.

One, however, which must be swiftly brought to a culmination, Nen-al decided. The beast might be searching for the lair of his mate. She was weak yet, he knew, from the birthing, and was unable fully to defend herself and his son. It would be up to Nen-al to see her through the next few days.

Dropping to all fours for speed, Nen-al bounded away. He was eager for a confrontation with the unknown intruder. But there was a new underlying caution to his thoughts. For he suspected that there would be much more to this beast than met the eye.

The sound of the second explosion came minutes after the first. Troy froze in midstep as he waited for the noise to die away.

"Damn!" he murmured. He had been heading in the wrong direction.

Ignoring the incessant pain which lanced his side, Troy turned and angled back along the path he had just traversed. Sweat drenched his clothing. That was dangerous, he knew. If he stopped now, hypothermia would not be far behind.

What goaded him the hardest, though, was not any danger from the elements. What nipped at his heart was the memory of that unnerving howling which had mingled with the echoes of the first explosion. Some . . . thing . . . was on the prowl. And Rozelle was out there. Alone.

Biting his lower lip, Troy quickened his pace.

Nen-al paused at the crest of a ridge as a second loud roar pierced the morning air. How many traps had this creature set, he wondered. His enemy must be powerful, indeed.

Nen-al's gaze flickered across his territory. A thin plume of smoke rose above a distant hill. The spore he had been following led away from that locale. Perhaps, Nen-al thought, the beast had started to circle behind him.

A low growl rumbled in Nen-al's throat. A coward, he thought, despite its strength. How else to explain its failure to face him head-on?

With a visual cue to guide him, Nen-al abandoned the scent trail and bounded towards his prey. It might be attempting to lead him astray, he thought, while it sought for his mate and his son.

Nen-al spotted the being as it rested near a small pond in the Len-nal Valley. It seemed pitifully small and defenseless. The glorious battle Nen-al had envisioned would not come to pass. There would be no rejoicing in *rall-dai*.

Still there would be food for his mate and his offspring.

Nen-al crept forward down the slope. The creature's back was turned to him. A swirling breeze brought its scent to the hunter. Nen-al slowed as he explored that trace. It was very similar to the trail he had been following. There were, however, subtle differences which puzzled him. Were there perhaps *two* interlopers, he wondered.

Without warning, the creature stood. Nen-al knew it was time to abandon stealth. He leaped forward to strike, easily engulfing the distance which separated them.

The beast turned at the sound of Nen-al's approach. A glint of light from an object held in one of its paws caused Nen-al to slow his pace. That shiny surface reminded Nen-al too closely of the exploding rock.

Nen-al rarely hesitated. Such a reaction bothered him. Carefully, he studied the beast and its strange fur. It seemed agitated. A danger lurked in that smooth face,



Nen-al knew. Precisely what it was, though, he could not say.

Nen-al slowed his stride still further. He halted a few paces from the animal. Warily, he rose to his hind feet and extended his claws.

The creature screamed then and pointed the shiny stone at Nen-al. Flashes of fire exploded rapidly around Nen-al. One touched his hind leg. He howled his pain at its vicious bite.

In reflexive self-defense and new-found fear, Nen-al lashed out. With devastating effect, his claws sliced downward with a force only he on his world possessed.

The deadly tips severed muscle and artery and bone as Nen-al destroyed the intruder. Bloodlust flared through his brain as he seized the dying flesh and commenced to feed.

All was as it should be.

A glacial chill stabbed through Troy as he heard his wife's high pitched scream and its abrupt termination. He began to run. It was not a pace he could maintain, however.

Cursing his age-weakened body, Troy slowed to a jog. As fast as he could, he scrambled up one rocky slope and down another. His legs grew leaden, and his breathing took on an unpleasant, rasping edge.

The sight of his wife's melted capsule spurred Troy on. She had to be close, he thought as he huffed past the wreckage. She had promised to remain nearby.

The pond had been hidden by a jumble of rough-edged boulders. As Troy rounded one corner, he stumbled to a halt. His heart stuttered in his chest as he took in the scene before him.

Steam still rose from the blood which soaked the stony ground. Just enough remained of the body for Troy to realize that he would never see his wife again.

Troy's legs buckled beneath him. Sobbing, he collapsed to the cold ground.

What would he do without her, he wondered. She had always been the source of his strength. His inspiration. What value was a life in exile if he had to endure it without her?

Troy lifted his head. To one side, he could see his wife's needler lying among the rocks.

At least she had fought back, he thought. At least she had been given that chance.

Wearily, Troy stood. It was all he could do to walk over to where his wife had died. Half choking, he piled stones over the bits of cloth and flesh and bone which had been scattered about.

When he had finished, Troy paused and thought over the tiny grave. There was not much he could say, he knew. Not then. Later, perhaps, when he had had time to absorb his loss. For now, it was still too raw a wound to face. He knew he could not afford to dwell on it. There were too many things yet to be done.

Wiping at his eyes, Troy turned and went to pick up his wife's weapon.

The load was a quarter gone. Troy lifted his gaze.

Perhaps she had wounded the beast which had attacked her, he thought. It might be travelling slowly.

Troy's fingers closed more tightly on the needler. His lips thinned to a determined line. The thing which had killed his wife and carried away her body would not remain alive for long, he vowed. He would see to that.

Forgetting his pain, Troy pushed on up the hillside. The trail of his wife's blood was easy to follow.

Carrying a large slab of meat from his kill, Nen-al scrambled up an eroded wall of rock. His injured leg gave broken surface. For a moment, he teetered on the brink of falling. With practiced skill, however, he righted himself and eased over the top.

Tren-dar would be pleased, he thought. This new prey had a unique taste. A welcome change from the usual spring diet of ground skitterer or rock hopper. She and his son would be able to eat their fill.

Quickly Nen-al slid down the opposite side and then loped away along the ravine floor. The meager heat of the sun reflected from the rock around him. With graceful economy, he sped on. It was good that spring had come, Nen-al thought. Good that he and his mate, Tren-dar, had been proven fertile once more.

Nen-al saw little of his mate. He brought her food now and would until she could hunt on her own. His son had to remain safe and grow strong like his father. That was his main concern.

Nen-al always left his kill at a fair distance from the lair. There was no physical contact. That came only during the season of mating. He had learned from experience that it would be a mistake to do otherwise.

Nen-al had seen his son only from the crest of the hill which overlooked the lair. He did not want to succumb again to the frenzy of *rall-dai*. With his first son, Nen-al had been too confident of his own will power. He had visited the lair during one of Tren-dar's absences. His curiosity had been immense. But when his son had nipped his leg with baby-sharp fangs, Nen-al had reacted instinctively. In slaying his son, he had eliminated one who might someday challenge his dominance. He had also, unfortunately, eliminated one to carry his genes into the future.

Nen-al felt no guilt. *Rall-dai* was as much a part of him as were his claws. But cubs rarely lived long in any circumstances. He did not want to shorten the odds still further.

Nen-al crept over the final ridge leading to Tren-dar's lair. He could see her and his son sitting at the entrance to the cave. He was happy that all was well with them.

As Nen-al watched his son play, he felt a mounting urge to see him up close. Tren-dar was there, he argued, to keep his offspring safe. Perhaps just this once . . .

Through long habit, Nen-al searched the landscape behind and before him. His nostrils flared to catch a sign of possible danger. The midday breeze was weak, however. He would have to trust to his ears for warning of hidden enemies.

Carefully, Nen-al picked his way towards the base of the hill as his son began to nurse. To approach near enough to explain the situation to his mate, Nen-al knew, he would have to hold back his normal greeting call. If she saw him too soon, she might try to drive him away.

Nen-al had traversed half the distance to his family when he froze. Creeping towards his mate from the left was an intruder; a male of his own kind who had been hiding behind a jumble of boulders. Nen-al gave a soundless snarl. He dropped his kill and extended his claws in preparation for combat. He wanted to catch the intruder unawares. *Rall-dai* would soon crash over him in a thunderous wave.

Nen-al saw the male picking up speed. The stranger would be upon the unsuspecting Tren-dar far too soon. Realizing that stealth was now useless, Nen-al unleashed a massive roar of rage and streaked down the hillside. He would avenge his family, he vowed, if nothing else.

Tren-dar did not turn at the sound of her mate's voice. Without looking back, she bounded towards the lair with her son. Safety for her child was her only goal. She did not see the stranger closing in from the side.

The intruder caught Tren-dar's flank as she scrambled for the darkness. Red blood blossomed on her smooth, brown fur. With a savage scream of surprise and pain, she spun towards her attacker. Aroused, she was a formidable fighter. Her short claws were, however, no match for those of the young male who faced her.

Seconds later, Nen-al collided with his enemy. In a blur of teeth and claws, the two males tore at one another. Blood spurted from deep furrows in the flesh of each fighter.

Forgotten, Tren-dar dragged herself deeper into the darkness. Wicked gashes exposed the muscles and bones in her side and hip. Her breath came in short, hard gasps. With a warning snarl, she cuffed her too eager son away from the battle. Then turning, she settled against a rock wall to wait and see who would emerge victorious. She was too weak to do more.

The interloping male was young and eager to carve out his own slice of territory. Nen-al could tell, however, that he was weakening. Tren-dar had acquitted herself well. Nen-al was determined to do the rest.

Abruptly, there was a lull in the fighting. For a moment, Nen-al and the intruder stared at one another with fire in their eyes. The attacker was backed up against a boulder which protected the entrance to the lair strips. One eye was gone. An arm hung limply at his side; its claws withdrawn. Still the youngster growled his defiance.

Nen-al was well-pleased with the damage he had inflicted upon his enemy. Unfortunately, he knew, he was in little better condition himself. The hind leg which had been bitten by the fire rock was throbbing more and more. It had slowed his movement. He had been unable to avoid a number of attacks which normally would have struck only air.

Nen-al knew he had to finish off the interloper soon. He could feel himself tiring as blood continued to flow from his many wounds.

The truce was over.

With a rasping roar of challenge, Nen-al leaped for the throat of the stranger.

Troy knew that his heart was beating dangerously fast. His pulse had been close to one hundred and sixty when last he had checked it. He had not slowed his pace since

then,

"Just ten more minutes," he muttered. Ten more minutes to add to the total.

The roar which has shattered the silence had been close. Very close. It had to be the one, he knew.

One more hill, Troy told himself. One final hill to conquer.

Troy nearly collapsed from fatigue as he came to the top. Below him he could see the creatures whose roars and growls reverberated from the walls of the canyon. Blood drenched their hides and the rocks around them. Amazed at the ferocity of the combat, Troy wondered why they fought so savagely.

But when his gaze fell on the reddened mass which rested on a boulder only meters from his feet, Troy buried any thoughts concerning alien motives. His face twisted into a hard mask. He had found the beast which had destroyed his dreams. It was time for retribution.

Locking his sorrow away, Troy let his anger have full rein. It was time to move. Mechanically, he drew his needler and headed down the hill.

He was approaching the bottom when one of the predators gave a swipe of long claws and opened the throat of the other. The second beast shuddered a moment as blood flooded its chest. Then, soundlessly, it crumpled to the ground.

Troy stopped. For a long moment, he stared at the tableau before him. Despite his anger, despite his desire for vengeance, he was sickened by what he saw. His life had been spent in the pursuit of knowledge and a quest for justice and truth. He had had little contact with gory reality. The stylized political struggle which had sent him to Zahn-Bey bore little resemblance to the steaming corpse which confronted him.

Troy jumped as the victorious animal turned its coal black eyes toward him. The intensity of that gaze was unnerving. There was an intelligence there, Troy realized. Alien perhaps, but an intelligence nonetheless.

Those feral eyes narrowed. Troy tensed. He swallowed dryly. Without thinking about it, he raised the needler to fire.

Nen-al looked at the scrawny creature before him. His nose confirmed that it was the one he had followed from the first exploding rock. Soon it, too, would die.

The fires of *rall-dai* still flickered in Nen-al's brain. Though he was close to collapse, he gathered his legs under him for one more assault. He would destroy this unusual animal as he had the other, he told himself. There would be a feast for all.

When the beast pointed the fire rock at him, Nen-al hesitated. He remembered only too well the bite it could deliver.

Snarling, Nen-al berated himself for his cowardice. The other thing had had a fire rock. Nevertheless, he had slain it with ease. He would do so again.

Nen-al readied himself to attack. Just as he was prepared to leap forward, a small black streak dashed past him.

Nen-al reached for his son as the fire rock spat its flame. Its teeth exploded against the stone near Nen-al's head

while the creature which held it yelled and stumbled backward. In his injured state, it was all Nen-al could do to maintain his grip on his squirming offspring.

Delivering a heavy blow, Nen-al cuffed his son back towards his mother. *This* kill was his, Nen-al thought angrily. A thud came from the darkness of the lair. The tiny growling stopped for a moment and then transformed itself into a low-pitched whimper.

Unsteadily, Nen-al turned to face his enemy. His eyelids fluttered. The sky was growing dark. How could that be, he wondered. The afternoon was not yet over.

Nen-al squeezed his eyes shut for a moment. The animal before him was growing fuzzy. It was starting to fade into . . .

Nen-al struggled to move forward; to complete his attack. His suddenly wobbly legs refused to obey. He opened his mouth to issue his challenge. Before he could utter a sound, however, the world dove into blackness. Nen-al crashed with it.

Troy stood open-mouthed and trembling. His needler was still pointed at the beast. One shaking finger covered the firing button. But he did not depress it. There was no longer any need.

Only half aware of his action, Troy lowered his arm. Gingerly, he picked his way closer. He could see that the animal he had come to kill was still breathing.

Troy stood over the unconscious predator. He could feel a part of his brain urging him to finish the thing off, to even the score. It would be so easy. First it. Then its mate and cub. The cave would be Troy's then. Fur and meat to see him through his journey. His troubles would be greatly diminished.

Troy refused to listen. He realized that he had erred in following the guidance of that primitive dictator in his brain. It was time to shove it back in its cage. He knew that slaying this animal would not restore his wife. To this thing, Rozelle had simply been legitimate prey. There had been no malice involved.

Such was not the case with the members of the Council, Troy knew. *They* were the ones who would have to pay the price for their crime. Troy vowed he would make certain that they did.

If the being at his feet could survive its wounds, let it live, Troy decided. Let it care for its own family as best it could. *His* destiny lay elsewhere.

Troy's gaze went to the animal which had been killed. It was large. Its fur was thick. He knew what had to be

done.

Steeling himself to the messy job, Troy took his hunting knife and began cutting away the bloodied hide. As he worked, Troy kept an eye on the predators. The male was still unconscious, and the female seemed to prefer the darkness of her cave. Behind her, her cub peered out at the human. Its teeth were bared, Troy saw, but its earlier rashness was apparently subdued.

Finished, Troy wrapped the tattered hide around a hunk of meat and stood. The rest of the carcass could remain there, he decided. These animals would need the nourishment if they were to heal their injuries.

Wiping sweat from his brow, Troy looked up at the sun. There were, he guessed, a few more hours of daylight remaining. Enough time to put some distance between himself and these creatures. A rock shelter, a small fire, and the fur would see him through the night, he decided. Tomorrow he would scrape the hide. He knew enough to do that much. Experimentation would have to guide him after that.

There was, however, one thing left to be done before he headed south.

Aching and tired, Troy climbed the hill. Two graves on an alien world, he thought as he performed his task. Two piles of stones to remind him of all he had lost.

From his vantage point, Troy saw the alien mother crawl to her mate. Though she was badly injured herself, she was looking first to his welfare. Licking his wounds. Nuzzling him. Seeking to give him life.

As Rozelle did in her own way for me, Troy thought.

Quickly Troy stood. Brushing at his eyes, he turned away. He had a long journey ahead of him. At least a month's worth of walking. This would be the first major undertaking of his life which he had attempted alone. He knew now that he had no choice other than to succeed. He knew it was only a matter of time.

The first thought which solidified in Nen-al's mind was that he had failed. His prey was gone. He would have to hunt again. Straining, he tried to rise. He discovered he could not.

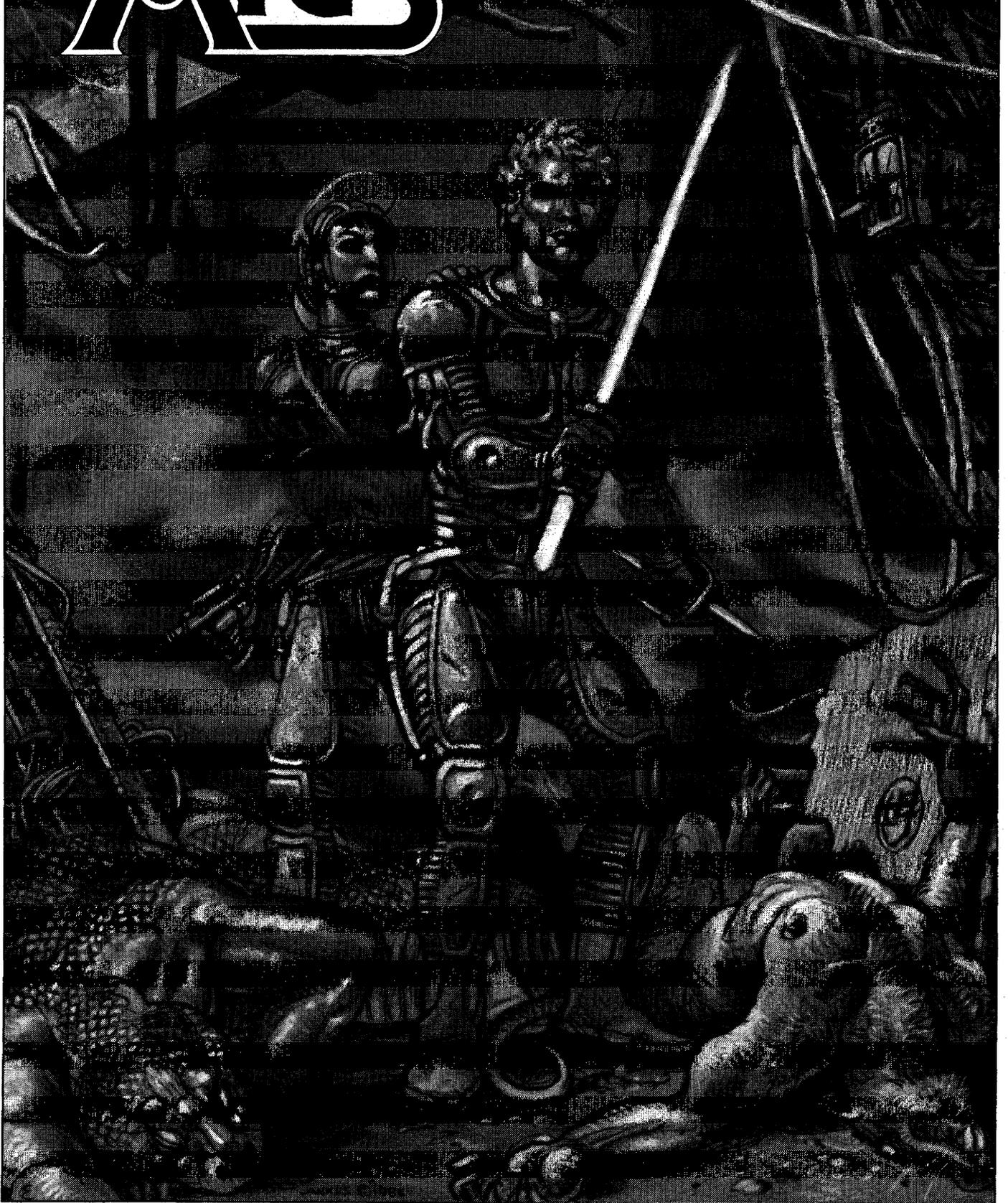
Then he would wait, Nen-al decided. He knew that eventually his strength would return. His days of killing were far from over.

Nen-al smiled as his son joined Tren-dar in licking his wounds.

Perhaps, though, Nen-al thought, *some* of the killing was at an end.

# Ares

SCIENCE-FICTION  
GAMING SECTION



# Notes from the

## Tips for PARANOIA traitors

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*Bootlicking is the primary survival skill.*

**WARNING:** This document is *not*, repeat, *not* available to The Computer. All game masters reading this should present themselves for summary execution at the Commie Mutant Traitor Enemies of The Computer Revolutionary Bunker and Social Club beneath the grease trap in the main sewer for IKY Sector.

Smash The Computer. PURGE is your friend.

The following excerpts from the manuscript known as "Treasonous Jive That'll Keep You Alive" are presented by the inspired leadership of PURGE to aid inexperienced Troubleshooters in surviving mission assignments. The manuscript is a compendium of maxims, collected and annotated by an anonymous citizen with the assumed pen name of One Clone Charl-Y. In the absence of more tangible evidence, the sheer size of this manuscript (over 600

handwritten pages in tiny, crabbed script) attests to the author's longevity and, therefore, the presumed utility of his advice. Imagine the difficulty of scribbling even one page of such treasonous wisdom while evading the ever-vigilant eyes of The Computer and its loyal servants and toadies.

1. I never saw a boot I couldn't lick. Or a bot sensor. Or a Computer terminal. Indeed, licking the metaphorical boots of The Computer is the primary survival skill. You know what The Computer wants to hear: its citizens are safe and happy, treason has been rooted out and destroyed, and the citizens are endlessly grateful to The Computer for its bountiful generosity and compassionate concern.

Never tell anyone (or anything) something that he, she, or it does not want to hear. If this compels you to misstate yourself, and you are caught creatively interpreting the facts, immediately and humbly acknowledge your "error" in memory, perception, or judgment, or blame the misinformation on some other source — preferably the perennial scapegoat favorite, Commie mutant traitors and saboteurs.

"Gosh, how could I have ever forgotten that flybot we lost. It just must have slipped my mind in my eagerness to report to you, sir."

"Yes, Friend Computer, it is certainly clear from the explicit photographs you have shown me that it was indeed I who smashed the computer terminal with a hammer. Oh, woe is me! Surely I have been made the unwitting dupe of some Commie spy with mutant mind control powers! You must let me go seek this Commie traitor without delay before he corrupts some other loyal citizens."

Always have a few nice speeches prepared in case you are forced to bootlick for your life on short notice. For example:

"Indeed, I can see that the circumstantial evidence demands my execution. But, in your extensive experience and abundant wisdom, surely you have discovered that appearances are deceiving, especially when the masters of misrep-

# Underground

resentation, Communist traitors, have fabricated the web of falsehood to indict innocent citizens, confounding the process of justice and causing loyal citizens to suffer tragically in spite of their unswerving devotion to The Computer. All I ask for is an opportunity to clear my name and to fight this insidious threat to the security of all citizens and to their benevolent protector, The Computer."

Numerous catch phrases are sure to receive a gratifying response:

"Friend Computer . . ."

". . . obviously the work of Commie saboteurs . . ."

". . . clear implication of the operation of some unregistered mutant power . . ."

"How terrifying it is to contemplate that even The Computer's information sources may be compromised by Communist conspirators."

"No, of course not! The Computer in error? Completely implausible! No, it can only be the work of traitors . . ."

"But I was only following your orders when we [executed that High Programmer/cooperated with that registered mutant/tested the experimental matter imploder.] Who could have dreamed that your orders might be unwise or ill-considered?"

"Of course, for my own protection, that important information [about the flybot's operation/about the weapon's destructive capacity/about the instability of that isotope] was not available at my security clearance. I hope that as I rise in The Computer's favor, such tragic destruction of Computer property can be avoided."

**2. If you're going to make a citizen lick your boot, he might as well start with the sole.** A common mistake made by ambitious young Troubleshooters is acting heroically in the service of The Computer. The proper approach is to direct subordinates to act heroically, then, after their inevitable and carefully planned demise (often in the act of their heroism), claim credit for their heroic deeds.

Always present orders that entail certain death for subordinates in such a

way as to suggest that you are graciously offering them an opportunity to distinguish themselves, like so:

"Here, Gone-R, you take this experimental plasma-powered flashlight. I'm sure a comprehensive report on its testing will earn you a commendation." Or:

"Splat-R, I commend you on your courage in volunteering to disarm the berserk scrubot. None of us veterans could begrudge you the honor of serving The Computer in so selfless and loyal a fashion."

Beware of excessively cooperative bootlickers. Many are simply mindlessly loyal and courageous, and present no threat to you, and you will find it easy to assign them to useful tasks that they will not survive. However, a shrewd bootlicker may have schemed a way to survive the task you have assigned, planning to exploit his actions to further his ambitions or to bring about your demise. Assign him to the task for which he has volunteered, but add some additional complication that he cannot have anticipated. For example:

"Why, thank you for volunteering to attempt salvage of that malfunctioning plasma cannon. A noble gesture. Of course, with such a dangerous mission, it would be unwise for you to further risk any of The Computer's valuable equipment by exposing it to any explosion that might result if you should fail. Therefore, I regret that you will have to leave all your equipment here with us in the bunker. Yes, I'm afraid that means your tool kit, also."

**3. Accidents will happen — and the sooner, the better.** Whenever possible, reduce the number of Troubleshooters in your mission group. Several basic principles are at work here. First, fewer Troubleshooters means fewer weapons aimed at your back. Fewer Troubleshooters also means more casualties to be tailored to your scapegoat requirements without the embarrassment of contradictory testimony.

"Yes, the villainous traitor Fawlg-I was obviously responsible for sabotaging our mission at every turn. How unfortunate

that he did not survive so that we might force from him the complete story of his heinous betrayals."

Lastly, fewer Troubleshooters means less confusion when the commendations are handed out. (If you are the only survivor of a successful mission, you can certainly dramatize your crucial role without fear of contradiction.)

The unsophisticated method of reducing mission staff is the *summary execution*. This technique is effective if well-planned and executed, but, if no more than an impulsive bit of gunplay, the executioner is often executed by his victim — or by other trigger-happy citizens who want to join in the fun.

The *accident* is a more controlled and efficient method of reducing staff. A properly staged accident, even if it fails, does not prompt the victim to pull his weapon and start firing away. A well-planned accident may not even alert a victim that he has been the target of an attack; even if he suspects that he has been set up, the victim is not sure who to shoot in retaliation. Also, occasionally survivors may be called to task when a mission group is decimated; if the fatalities were obviously "accidents," charges of false execution are not likely to be filed.

#### **4. NEVER let untrustworthy citizens behind your back — and whoever heard of a trustworthy citizen?**

A good position in the mission deployment is vital to survival. Since the mission leader usually has the power to order the group deployment as he likes, a discussion of best choices is properly addressed to mission leaders. However, if a mission leader is weak or stupid enough to permit personnel to position themselves as they will, other Troubleshooters should understand these basic principles.

The coveted position in any mission deployment is at the rear of the group. Normally, this position is preempted by the mission leader. (Oh, fortunate mission leader!) If you are the mission leader or the ranking citizen, *demand* this privilege. Do not be swayed by



**Always ensure that executions are risk-free.**

clever tactics, like: "Say, my combat skills and training make me the perfect one to guard against attack from the rear," or, "Since I carry the multicorder and must record all our activities, I must stand behind you, Mission Leader Sir, for a panoramic view."

Of course, if you are not the mission leader, you must try these clever tactics. Some inexperienced or dim-witted mission leaders may fall for them. However, if the mission leader assumes the rear, then you must scramble to assure yourself of the best spot you can wrangle. Far right or left flank is usually the second-best choice for a combatant, affording a wide field of vision and fire. If you are the multicorder operator or some other technician, you can usually make a good case for being back with the mission leader, since, without a drawn weapon, you present a less immediate threat to his security. (Note, however, that a prudent mission leader arranges to eliminate any recordings of the mission, and that the multicorder operator is at serious risk when near the mission leader and out of line of sight of the rest of the group.)

The rear position is coveted for its superior range of fire and the safety it affords from backstabbing; it is also the place where fewest eyes are trained. Those who wish to do things that go unnoticed will find this is the ideal position.

Conversely, not only is the point man the focus of all weapons in his own party, as well as the weapons of any opposition, he is also constantly sub-

jected to the scrutiny of his companions. This position should be assigned by the mission leader to the Troubleshooters most likely to present a real threat to him. Never waste this resource by placing a low-status nincompoop there.

Wimps and morons should be graciously assigned a position in the center-rear of the group, and told: "Now, aren't I a kind and considerate mission leader to place you inexperienced men in such a safe spot?" Reassure them often about how safe they are, then terminate them at your leisure after the tough guys have been eliminated.

Never assign anyone with a powerful area weapon to a position on the periphery of the group. The temptation to turn and wipe out the rest of the party in one shot is just too seductive. Place him in the middle of the group where you can keep an eye on him.

Power armor appears to be an advance equivalent to rear guard; however, the risk of equipment malfunction is serious — no leader wants to get caught helpless in a powerless power suit. A compromise is to assign the weakest, most docile, low-status dolt to the power armor, then position him directly in front of you as you assume the rear position. This way you have the indirect protection of his armor and still have enough warning to get out of the way if he becomes obstreperous.

**5. Don't start anything you can't finish — preferably to component atoms.** Inexperienced "Troubleshooters haul out their lasers and open fire the

moment someone says or does something that might be construed as an excuse for a summary execution. This is dumb. You are not looking for an excuse to execute someone. You are looking for an opportunity to execute someone in such a thorough and risk-free fashion that he is dead before his weapon can clear his holster.

Given the generally poor marksmanship of Troubleshooters, the unreliable killing power of their weapons, and the substantial protection of their armor, the chances of aing a prospective traitor before he gets off several shots is diminishingly small; thus, you are as likely to die as your victim. Dumb.

Bide your time, build your case against your prospective victim, then plug him when he is relatively unable to return your fire. An ideal time is when he has his hands full of some other kind of trouble, like attacking hostiles or a malfunctioning weapon or a berserk bot. At the very least, his weapon should be still in its holster and his attention engaged elsewhere. Ideally, he should never even know it is you attacking him. Whenever possible, attack when you have superior firepower or when circumstances ensure that you will hit your target — for instance, when you are standing behind him with your slugthrower pressed against his torso.

Often, resorting to weapons is unwise. The "accident" is normally a more effective way of eliminating a traitor and claiming a commendation, and if you never get a good opportunity during the mission, there's always the de-briefing. A well-supported case of treason is a more deadly weapon than a laser and less likely to backfire on you than a summary execution.

#### **6. A sucker for every scheme, and a scapegoat for every crime.**

Carefully select your prime victim candidates. Certain types make excellent suckers and scapegoats. Trigger-happy, impulsive types can easily be induced to start trouble with hostiles, facilitating your shooting them from behind. Super-loyal, heroic types can usually be talked into getting involved in risky ventures that will either kill them or distract them enough to give you a good shot at them. Naive, eager types who throw themselves wholeheartedly into a mission won't have time to notice the sneaky stuff you're doing to them.

Scapegoats should be of a lower status, permitting you to give them orders that set them up as fall guys for any of

your schemes that backfire or blow up in your face. For example, just before you test an experimental weapon, always ask a lower status tech to inspect it first. If something goes wrong, then obviously the tech damaged it during his inspection. (Of course, keep an eye on the tech at all times to make sure he isn't really sabotaging the weapon.)

Absent scapegoats (either deceased, missing, or imaginary) are preferable to scapegoats who can stand up at the debriefing and defend themselves. The all-time favorite scapegoat is the hypothetical Commie-mutant-traitor that is always lurking just out of sight. The Computer is an easy mark for the impassioned, melodramatic speech which conjures sinister images: evil agents hidden under benign, loyal smiles; demonic criminals hovering behind every back; tiny, gremlin-like presences of unimaginable malevolence with almost magical power to avoid detection. As long as other citizens can be dissuaded from persistently pointing their fingers at you and crying traitor, The Computer can be easily sent off on some wild bot chase, searching for an imaginary Commie, while your treasonous acts are overlooked in the hysteria.

**7. Nothing is more deadly than experimental equipment.** Though fatalities involving experimental equipment seem less memorable because they do not include the thrill of plotting, backstabbing, and gunplay, a quick survey of Troubleshooter records indicates that a very large percentage of clone deaths are directly or indirectly related to malfunctioning experimental equipment.

Directly-related equipment deaths include such typical misadventures as explosions, suffocation, incineration, poison, and brain-frying. Indirectly-related deaths include secondary effects like distraction in combat (shrieking danger alarms that deafen listeners painfully), weapons that fail in crucial situations, horribly expensive or otherwise valuable devices which cannot be abandoned when they break down in the midst of life-threatening disasters, and execution for failure to carry out stringent, unrealistic, and impossibly deadly testing programs devised by proud R&D wizards.

Normally, some pretext is made of offering a choice of devices for volunteers to test. Volunteer promptly, in best bootlicking style, for the least harmful-looking device under consideration. Jump in before anyone else and bubble

over with enthusiasm. Thereafter, when other devices are offered or pressed on you, confidently assert that your complete attention must be given to the device you have already been assigned in order to properly test and evaluate it. This eager volunteering also dispels suspicion about your lack of loyalty or enthusiasm, and may cause other Troubleshooters to dismiss you as a foolish gung-ho type — an excellent pose to assume while hatching your sinister plots.

If no safe-looking item seems available, go for a portable weapon. Though such devices often present serious direct and indirect threats to your health, other non-weapon devices often present equally serious threats, but without the potential benefits of a first-class weapon. And, if the rest of the mission group is "accidentally" killed before you realize the weapon's true destructive potential, such news is likely to excite and please, rather than dismay, the R&D designer who assigned his device to you for testing.

Avoid bots at all costs. No other experimental device is so unpredictable, expensive in fines for loss or damages, heavy and difficult to recover if damaged or malfunctioning, and capable of perversely independent action that may either implicate you in treason or force you to follow it into certain death to avoid abandoning it.

Never accept cumbersome items that have to be strapped onto your person by lots of tricky buckles and fastenings. These are often the devices with loud malfunction-warning alarms that go off at inappropriate times — like, whenever you use them.

**8. Traitors have nothing to lose by committing treason.** Many traitors are too indoctrinated by The Computer's propaganda to profit from their treason, despite the fact that they are as likely as anyone else to be executed for being traitors, whether they behave treasonably or not.

Take mutants, for example. How many mutants effectively exploit their innate capabilities? Sure, many mutant powers are pretty unimpressive, but powers like super-hearing or super-seeing are just perfect for gathering information. The best power is telekinesis. Think of the possibilities for planting false evidence, pulling pins on grenades, or squeezing the trigger on another Troubleshooter's weapon in the middle of a briefing or R&D visit. Rumors are that there is a secret society that can teach people how

to discover and use these powers in themselves. Sign up in a hurry if you make contact with one of those guys.

Speaking of secret societies, no one ever uses their secret society connections to full measure. Sure, it's dangerous, but what isn't in Alpha Complex? The moment I get a new mission, I find some excuse to stop by my secret society drop points and get the inside scoop from some highly placed lodge brother or wrangle a special, secret society assignment that promises a big payoff in blackmarket information or equipment.

"Er, excuse me, mission leader, but it appears that my laser barrel has only one shot left in it, and my spare has a hair-line fracture at the aperture [carefully put there for just such an emergency]. Let me drop by my PLC supply and pick up a couple of new ones so I'll be primed for this important mission."

Don't be shy when asking for information or equipment. You aren't going to get something unless somebody is feeling generous, anyway. Secret society higher-ups prefer a little unbridled greed in subordinates; it displays promise, ambition, and enthusiasm that may be channeling into bootlicking, profitable for all parties concerned.

**9. De-briefings always go smoothly when you are the only surviving attendee.** "I speak without fear of contradiction . . ." is the opening sentence of the ideal de-briefing. A creative dramatist can transform a disastrous mission replete with treasonous crimes into a glowing heroic narrative with the speaker as the modest model of a loyal, courageous citizen serving The Computer with all his heart.

First, other Troubleshooters are potentially embarrassing records of the mission. Get rid of them. Since wholesale slaughter is not always practical, bribing or blackmailing them into supporting your story may be an alternative.

Recording devices, like bots, multicorders, and live radio/vidcom links with the party, must be eliminated, sabotaged, or distracted wherever possible. Such records represent hard evidence that is hard to explain away and more difficult to dismiss as Commie treason than the verbal statements of other Troubleshooters. Be prudent, however. Unsubtle and unrestrained destruction of recording and transmitting devices will be interpreted as a deliberate effort to compromise the records. It may be sufficient to make sure that the multicorder is turned the other way or that the snooperbot is busy down the hall

while you perpetrate nefarious deeds.

If you volunteer or are chosen as the multicorder operator, your problems are more complicated. First, you wish to survive, which is not consistent with carrying something that others are eager to destroy. Further, you are the one who gets the fines if the device is damaged or destroyed. To improve your chances of survival, stick close to the mission leader — usually in the rear of the party and less subject to outright attacks. Further, make it known that for a few credits you can make sure that the mission record features a Troubleshooter's finest moments and overlooks his egregiously treasonous acts. Another clever ploy is providing narration for the record tapes by speaking loudly as the events are recorded.

"Note the diligent labor of citizen Bumm-R as he searches for the source of the jackobot's malfunction." (Bumm-R is in fact reprogramming the bot to respond to a remote control self-destruct device that will obviate the need for an extensive de-briefing by obliterating the other party members and the briefing personnel.)

**10. When disaster looms, keep stalling only heroes are too stupid**

**to wait patiently for miracles.** When I'm called upon to perform the impossible in the face of certain death, I always politely ask The Computer if I can go to the bathroom first — and if I can have a glass of water — and if I can check just one more reference by data search — and if I can field-strip the electron howitzer to stop that buzzing noise it makes when you set the fuse timer — and so on — and so forth. This tactic is most effective if the requests can be made privately and without alerting the rest of the mission group to the fact that you will be tarrying behind just a little bit. Once the rest of the group catches on, everyone gets into the act, and The Computer's temper-simulation software gets short.

Stalling is also the ideal tactic for resisting the preemptory orders of security superiors.

"Of course, sir, right away, I'm right on top of it, just have to get my tools ready, yessir, er, could you stand back a bit so I can spread these out on the floor and make sure all of them are neatly assorted by size, shape, color, and serial number?"

Of course, stalling doesn't make the looming disaster go away. While you're stalling, you must continue feverishly

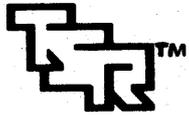
brainstorming and scheming, hoping for some inspiration or the intervention of good fortune. A gifted footdragger has one special resource he can always count on: the impatience of other Troubleshooters. If the stalling is executed with exquisite subtlety — if your mission leader and fellow Troubleshooters perceive your actions as bumbling incompetence, finicky perfectionism, tiresome attention to detail, or simple cowardice — *if they don't perceive your actions at all*, so perfectly have you managed to avoid attracting their attention — then the action-oriented, impulsive types will often push forward, elbow you out of the way, and stride confidently into the trap you were desperately hoping to avoid.

Remember: "He who hesitates is lost, but I'd rather be lost than eviscerated any day cycle."

**NOTICE:** Possession of this document is foolish. Please make yourself comfortable in an out-of-the-way place convenient for trashbot pickup while the DMT-borne contact poison permeating this page spreads through your central nervous system. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

**The coveted position in mission deployment is at the rear**





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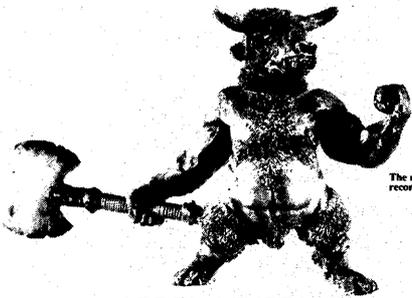
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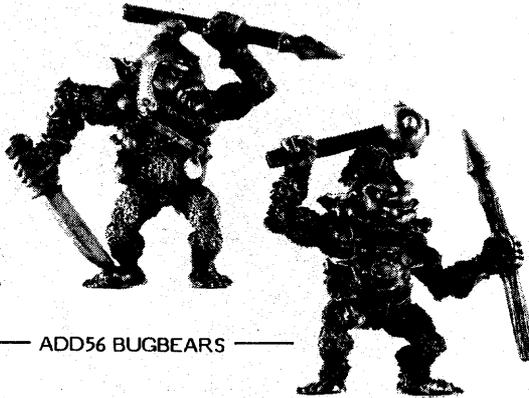
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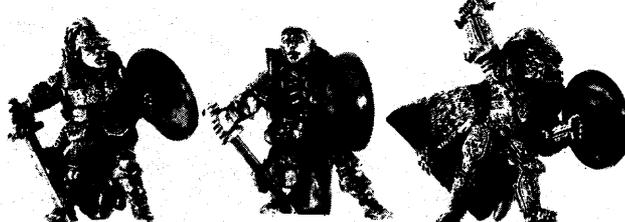
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CITADEL MINIATURES

# Stellar Feedback

*Readers write on science-fiction gaming*

by Roger E. Moore

It's been almost two years since the ARES™ Section was first introduced to the pages of this magazine, so now would be a good time to review the mail that the section has received from science-fiction gaming fans over the months. Which articles and games are most popular? What more do readers want to see?

## What readers like

The most popular articles that the ARES Section has carried since it appeared in DRAGON® issue #84 include "Tanks a lot!" (#99), "Out of the Sun" (#101), the STAR TREK® deck plans in issue #96, and "Rogues of the Galaxy" (#97). The "Luna" series that appeared in last year's section was also well received, and we've had requests for another, similar series spanning several role-playing games. The GAMMA WORLD® Mutant Manual (#98) received praise (and more contributions) from a number of Gamma Fans.

The most popular feature we've ever done, however, has been the Marvel®-Phile, which continues to draw an enormous amount of attention. We've had dozens upon dozens of requests for favorite or little-known heroes and villains who have never before been published, as well as requests for expanded descriptions of complex heroes like Iron Man™. If you have any new ideas for what can be covered in the Marvel-Phile, keep on writing to let us know.

Readers have requested that we run more articles on the CHAMPIONS™, STAR FRONTIERS®, VILLAINS & VIGILANTES™, MARVEL SUPER HEROES™, and TRAVELLER® games, but the requests for GAMMA WORLD modules and articles (if you don't count Marvel-Phile requests) lead the field.

Would you like to see a "Best of" volume devoted to science-fiction game articles? If so, which articles would you like to see reprinted? We've gotten



several requests for this already, and we'd like to know your opinions on this matter.

On the whole, readers are more interested in telling us what they want to see *more* of, not *less* of. Some ARES Section readers have written to ask for more "real" science-fiction articles, as opposed to super-powered hero articles. I would like more input from readers on this topic. Is too much (or not enough) space going to the hero games? What would you like to see instead?

## Space wars feedback

"Starships and Star Soldiers," in DRAGON issue #101, asked for feedback from gamers on the science-fiction miniatures rules that they use and would like to see printed. The response was remarkably good. Nearly everyone who wrote back used the STAR FRONTIERS system and wanted to see an infantry combat rule book for the game, as well as more information on running Knight Hawks battles.

Opinion was divided on whether to use cardboard counters or lead figures and on what scale lead figures (if used) should take. Lead figures look good but cost a lot; cardboard is cheap and easy to use, but not as visually striking as an army of figures. Then, too, 25mm figures have sharp detail and are widely available; 15mm figures would be more suitable for large groups of soldiers in mass combat. Perhaps it would be best to have the rules fit all situations, allowing the gamers to decide whether to use paper counters or figures and what scale the figures should be.

The only problems cited in STAR FRONTIERS miniatures gaming are the lack of three dimensions (for airborne craft and soldiers) and the need for air and sea power rules. Gamers also want to see realism in their warfare settings and set-ups.

As a side note, gamers looking for 15mm science-fiction figures should try either Alliance Miniatures (P.O. Box 2347, Des Moines, Iowa 50310) or Ral Partha Enterprises, Inc. (5938 Carthage

Court, Cincinnati, Ohio 45212). The former has the current license to produce Laserburn figures, and the latter has a wide selection of *Galactic Grenadiers* and *Final Frontiers* figures. All of these figures are beautifully done and quite detailed, more than would be believed for 15mm scale. They are suitable for any miniatures gaming system. Write for more information.

### MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game

In DRAGON issue #102, I asked readers to describe how their MARVEL SUPER HEROES game campaigns were developing. Do people stick with the current Marvel Universe™ when adventuring, or do they create their own alternate universes?

Judging from several of the letters we received, most gamers aren't worried about sticking to the current Marvel saga as outlined in the comics. Scott Amrozewicz, of Lanoka Harbor, NJ, described the campaign in which he gamed: "...in our world, the West Coast Avengers™ disbanded, as did the Defenders™. Iceman™ and Hawkeye™ got together to form a new group of heroes... known only as the New

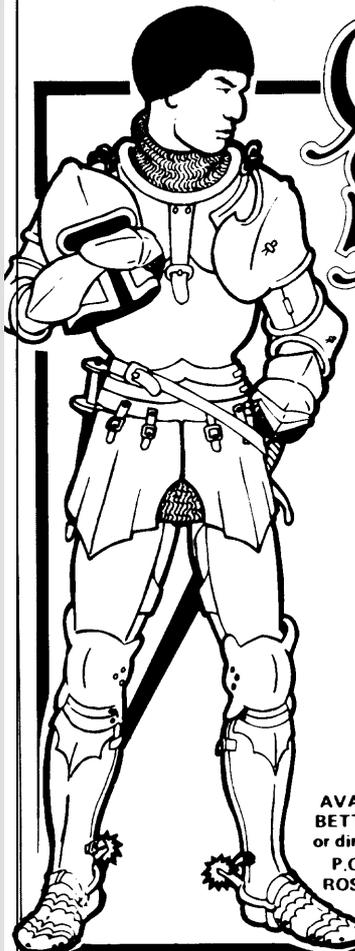
Champions. This group, located in San Pedro, California, consists of Iron Man with his new suit, the high-flying Angel™ (who never joined X-Factor™), Cyclops™ (who also never joined X-Factor™), Shadowcat™ (who quit the X-Men™), Henry Pym (who got back into the business as Goliath™), and the Vanisher™ [who was reformed by the Beyonder™]." Scott's group fought with the Decepticons and triumphed.

Garrett W. Roberts, of Hurlburt Field, FL, wrote about a complex adventure that he had been running for a large group of past and current X-Men. The mutants met up with Derek Summers, a super-mutant from an alternate future timeline. Derek was the son of Jean Grey and Scott Summers, and he possessed a limited form of the Phoenix Force (with a Shift X Psyche and limit on his use of the force). Derek was married to the adult Kate Power, and the couple was expecting their first child when Derek (known as Phoenix II) was dumped into a new universe by an unknown force. The timestream of this universe diverged from the Marvel Universe in 1984, and it has focused heavily on mutants (joined together under the old banner of the X-Men, and including their old foe Magneto").

Finally, Dave Robinson set up a campaign in which the players used characters that were the players themselves, written up in game terms and gifted with assorted super-powers. His current group is based in his home town of Prescott, AZ, and it consists of the new heroes Tempo, Coil, Omega, Fast Forward, and Grav. New heroes have also appeared across America in his campaign, forming hero groups in St. Louis (the Saints of the Skies) and Seattle (Pacific Coast Superfighters). Most of the villains that have fought Dave's group are based in Phoenix, AZ. Marvel Super Heroes from the southwest United States, such as Dazzler™, Doc Samson™, the West Coast Avengers, and the Hulk™ have also appeared in the group's adventures.

The other mail received on the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game consists almost entirely of requests for more heroes and villains, and suggestions for revising the game. I pass these letters along to Jeff Grubb, who then eats them. Really. The tales I could tell...

By all means, keep your letters coming to DRAGON Magazine. It's the only way we can tell if we're on the same track as our readers. Your comments are always welcome.



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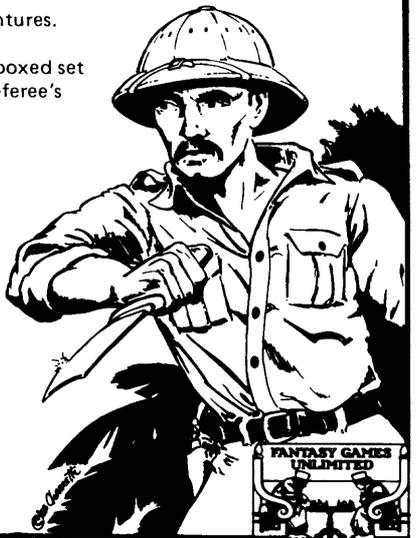
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# The Marvel-Phile

## Alpha and Omega, part I

by Jeff Grubb

Before we settle into the first part of our two-part series on Alpha Flight™ and Omega Flight™, I'd like to briefly mention an upcoming revolution in the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game system.

The MARVEL SUPER HEROES Advanced Set is coming. The system is expanding, more rules and material are on their way, worlds will live, worlds will die, and the Multiverse – oops, wrong company.

As I write this (Thanksgiving of '85), I am hip-deep in rough manuscripts for the Advanced Set – an expansion, not a revision or rewrite of the game. One of the most frequently made comments I've received is a request to not create a different game system, so that there will be MSH Original Set adventures and MSH Advanced Set adventures. These same requests also asked for more rules, more definitions and options, and more things to do.

For this reason, the MSH Advanced Set will build on the original game, providing more depth to the existing rules – including, but not limited to:

- \* Expanded character generation;
- \* More combat options and actions;
- \* An expanded universal table to handle the **real** heavyweights of the Marvel Universe™ (the prototype has a column labeled "Beyond");
- \* More uses for Karma;
- \* Suggestions for setting up your own MARVEL SUPER HEROES Campaigns, both inside and outside the Marvel Universe;
- \* More information and rules on Resources and Popularity; and,
- \* Other neat stuff.

In other words, it will have what everyone has been writing in to say that *they'd* like to see in an expansion of the game. We are considering a couple of 64-page books for the new boxed set, but may have to go to 96 pages each if there is enough material (and it looks like there is). Plus, there are more maps, three-dimensional figures, character cards, and everything you need for a

MARVEL SUPER HEROES campaign. (More than enough to keep me and editor Steve Winter busy until next spring.)

We're shooting for a May release for this product. Saying something like that is usually the kiss of death as far as schedules go, but we don't intend to miss this one!

Enough to get you interested? Good. As I move along further in the design, I'll pass along more information.

Now that the plug/warning/public service has been dealt with, let's move on to the entertaining portion of the column. About a year ago (in DRAGON® issue #97), I did a column on Talisman™, Box™, and Guardian™ of Alpha Flight. Since that time, Canada's protectors have added another pair of super-powered members: transmutator Madison Jeffries™ and Heather Hudson™ as the new Vindicator™. While we're at it, we should also note the members of Alpha Flight's greatest super-foe team – Delphine Courtney™ Smart Alec™, Flashback™, Diamond Lil™, and Wild Child™ of Omega Flight. In this issue and the next, we will deal with Alpha and Omega.

### MADISON JEFFRIES™

#### Transmutator, hero

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

Health: 48  
Karma: 50  
Resources: POOR  
Popularity: 0

#### Known powers:

TRANSMUTATOR: Jeffries has Unearthly control over all metals in a 2-area range around him. He may assemble complex and intricate mechanical and electronic devices, and operate them by force of will. The modified metal retains its original material strength, which also serves

as its armor, physical Strength, and Endurance. The Fighting and Agility of any device created by Madison has a maximum score of Remarkable (Madison's Psyche).

In addition, he may repair damage inflicted upon metal-based individuals, including Box, Iron Man™, and robots such as Ultron™, restoring up to Unearthly damage each round. Similarly, Jeffries can inflict up to Unearthly damage each round on robotic or metallic targets, which must fail an Endurance FEAT (Red if Endurance is less than Unearthly, Yellow if equal, and Green if Endurance is greater than Unearthly).

Jeffries may only use existing metals, since he cannot create them, but his power is such that he can transform a standard car into a 9' tall killer robot. Madison can talk and move while using his power, but a serious break in his concentration (such a damage-inducing attack) will cause his creation to freeze in its last position.

**Talents:** Madison served in Vietnam with the United States Army has a



mechanic. He has an Unearthly understanding of Mechanics (though this is mostly intuitive; he cannot invent new items, but he may create things from other people's designs), and he has the Military skill.

**Jeffries's story:** Madison Jeffries has the ability, possibly mutant in origin, to manipulate metal materials, alloys, and components by force of will. His brother Lionel possessed similar powers, only his were directed towards organic matter. Madison felt himself an outcast and did little with his skill, while Lionel used his ability to become a surgeon. Both brothers served in Vietnam – Madison as a mechanic, Lionel as a medic. When their squad was wiped out, Lionel went mad trying to reassemble and reanimate the bodies of his dead comrades. Madison subdued his brother using his own transmutation power. Lionel, now known as Scramble the Mixed-up Man™, was placed in hospital isolation.

After his return, Lionel drifted, ill-at-ease with his abilities. James MacDonald Hudson, the original Guardian, located Jeffries and recruited him for Department H. Jeffries was made part of Gamma Flight™, the team containing the newest recruits, when Department H folded. Out of work again, Madison Jeffries drifted off.

Jeffries returned to Alpha Flight following the death of James Hudson at the hands of Omega Flight. Roger Bochs's invention, Box, was used by Jerry Jaxon™ to kill Guardian, and Bochs now felt responsible for Hudson's death. Bochs recruited Jeffries to help him build a new, improved Box to hunt down Omega Flight. Jeffries agreed, mainly because he liked Hudson for giving him a chance to use his powers in a positive fashion, and he wanted to bring Omega Flight in as well.

Box joined Alpha Flight, but it was Jeffries who defeated Omega Flight. Jeffries' automotive killer-robot creation killed one of Flashback's future forms and beat the rest of the group senseless. Jeffries then dismantled the team's robotic leader, Delphine Courtney, in a matter of seconds.

Following the battle with Omega Flight, Jeffries became a *de facto* member of Alpha Flight. While he doesn't go into the field with the team, Jeffries maintains the devices in Alpha Flight's headquarters, including its version of the "Danger Room." He also makes repairs on the Box armor, and with Bochs's help has rebuilt the Guardian/Vindicator armor for Heather.

## VINDICATOR™

### Heather MacNeil Hudson

*All of Heather's powers derive from the Vindicator suit she wears. Statistics to the left of a slash represent her normal abilities; those to the right are her uprated abilities with the suit fully powered.*

Fighting: TYPICAL (6)  
Agility: GOOD (10)/INCREDIBLE (40)  
Strength: TYPICAL (6)/  
REMARKABLE (30)  
Endurance: EXCELLENT (20)  
Reason: GOOD (10)  
Intuition: EXCELLENT (20)  
Psyche: GOOD (10)

Health: 42/96  
Karma: 40  
Resources: GOOD (government funding)  
Popularity: 4

#### Known powers:

**BODY ARMOR:** The steel mesh Vindicator battlesuit is reinforced by a personal force-field generator and provides Amazing protection from physical attacks, with Incredible protection from energy attacks. The field dampens blows, so the wearer may be Slammed but not stunned. This protection applies when the field is "on" (as when the suit is in flight or firing weapons). When the suit is off, it serves as Good protection.

**FLIGHT:** Heather can fly at 7 areas per round by manipulating electromagnetic Energy through the suit. The force field prevents wind injuries to her.

**ENERGY BEAM:** The suit can fire a bolt of electromagnetic force once per round from its gloves, with a range of 10 areas, inflicting up to Incredible concussive (slugfest) damage.

**TRANSPORT:** There is no indication that the recreation of the Vindicator armor has this function, but this is included in the event that it has been developed by Roger Bochs. This is a special form of transport that operates by negating the wearer's inertial position with regards to the rotation of the earth. The earth rotates beneath the wearer, transporting her up to a thousand miles west in an hour (at the equator). On-board computers prevent sudden impact with tall structures and will cease movement should such a structure be encountered.

**DIGGING:** Hudson's original design for the armor was as a petrochemical explo-

# A



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ration device. Heather may tunnel at 3 areas/round, or 2 areas/round if forming a tunnel for others to crawl through after her.

**VISORS:** Heather wears a special set of polarized prescription eyeshields which protect her from bright lights of up to Remarkable intensity. Without the eyeshields (or her normal glasses), Heather is very nearsighted and will not be able to make out objects more than one area away (Intuition reduced to Poor when without her lenses).

**Heather's story:** Heather MacNeil was first a secretary with Am-Can Petro-Chemical™, where she first met James MacDonald Hudson, "Mac" had developed a super-powered exploration suit for the company, but he resigned upon discovering the suit was to be sold to the U.S. military. Hudson then broke into the company and stole his original designs, created before his employment there. Heather resigned as well; upon discovering that Mac had taken his invention back, she encouraged the unemployed scientist to approach the Canadian government.

At Heather's urging, the Prime Minister authorized the creation of Department H, a secret government operation geared towards super-human powers. With the historic flight that created the Fantastic Four™, Hudson sought to emulate Reed Richards and formed his own team of super-powered heroes. Hudson continuously refined his suit; under the various names of Weapon Alpha™, Vindicator, and Guardian, he became the leader of Alpha Flight.

Heather and Mac married, and she supported her husband in his super-powered life. Mac became depressed when the government disbanded Department H, and when Canada was threatened by an Elder Beast™ known as Tundra™, he set out alone to fight it. It was Heather who called in the rest of Alpha Flight, including the most promising members of Beta Flight™ (Puck™ and Marrina™), to aid him.

While Alpha Flight fought for Canada, Hudson's former boss, Jerry Jaxon, conspired to get revenge on Hudson and his creations. Recruiting outcast members of Beta and Gamma Flights, Jaxon formed Omega Flight and lured Heather into a trap. Using Heather as bait, Omega Flight ambushed Guardian and Alpha Flight. Omega Flight was defeated, but a malfunction in Guardian's suit destroyed him before Heather's eyes.

James Hudson's death left Heather emotionally shattered. Picking up the pieces of her life, she decided to keep Alpha Flight together, or else all that Mac had accomplished would be for naught. She stayed with the team as a non-super-powered leader. Mac then reappeared, but this "Guardian" was in reality the robot Delphine Courtney (a.k.a. Dark Guardian™), who (along with Omega Flight) sought to rescue Smart Alec, trapped in the medicine bag of Shaman™. Delphine was destroyed by Madison Jeffries, but the components of the robot's suit remained.

Jeffries and Roger Bochs rebuilt the suit to its present state, which appears similar to that as developed by James Hudson. After refusing the impulse to follow in her husband's footsteps, Heather donned the suit when it became obvious that her lack of super-powers made her a liability to a weakened team. She has sought out the aid of Puck and Wolverine™ to give her the combat training she needs. The above statistics reflect only her abilities when she first donned the suit, and they may improve with further training.

### **DELPHINE COURTNEY™**

#### **Robot villain, destroyed**

Fighting: EXCELLENT (20)  
Agility: EXCELLENT (20)  
Strength: EXCELLENT (20)  
Endurance: EXCELLENT (20)  
Reason: GOOD (10)  
Intuition: AMAZING (50)  
Psyche: INCREDIBLE (40)

Health: 80  
Karma: 100  
Resources: EXCELLENT  
Popularity: 0

#### **Known powers:**

**GUARDIAN ARMOR:** While masquerading as Guardian, Delphine wore a suit that duplicated most of Guardian's powers. This suit became the basis for the Vindicator armor that Heather Hudson now wears. As such, Delphine in this form had all the listed abilities for Vindicator above.

**BODY ARMOR:** Delphine's insulated metallic covering provided Excellent protection from all physical and energy attacks.

**SHAPE-SHIFTING:** Delphine had limited shape-shifting ability owing to her construction. As a robot, her body can be rebuilt, her voice changed to mimic another individual, etc. Her builders

allowed her to mimic others with Incredible ability, but it took 1-10 weeks for her to adopt any given identity.

**Delphine Courtney's story:** Delphine Courtney was constructed by the Special Developments Department of Roxxon Oil™; she was a highly developed robot with artificial intelligence and open-ended deductive capacity that made her effectively sentient. She was sent to Jerry Jaxon to help him recover the Guardian technology; on Jaxon's orders, she gathered together the members of Omega Flight and kidnapped Heather Hudson to lure James Hudson to his death. Jaxon was apparently slain in the battle, but with the defeat of Omega Flight, Delphine escaped with Jaxon's body.

In the time that followed, Courtney continued to pursue her programming set by Jaxon: to destroy Heather Hudson and Alpha Flight. To that end, she developed a version of Guardian's suit and masqueraded as him, meanwhile regathering the original members of Omega Flight. Defeating Alpha Flight, Courtney attempted to free Smart Alec from Shaman's medicine bag. She instead turned the bag inside out, releasing the dimension within. Courtney and Omega Flight left Alpha Flight to its fate and fled, only to be stopped by Madison Jeffries.

Jeffries proceeded to turn Courtney inside out, presumably ending her criminal career; her components were later used to build a new suit of Vindicator armor. It is unknown if the creation of Delphine Courtney was a singular event or if others of her type exist, nor is it known if Roxxon possesses the Guardian technology or even if Jaxon may still survive in some form. If any of the above is true, then Alpha Flight has not seen the last of this menace.



Next issue: *Alpha and Omega* concludes with the rest of Omega Flight: Diamond Lil, Flashback, Smart Alec, and Wild Child.

# The New Humans



## Pure Strain Humans in the GAMMA WORLD® game

by David Wainwright

From any perspective, it must be admitted that the Pure Strain Humans of the GAMMA WORLD® game are tough customers. With their 8-sided hit dice, high constitutions, and high number of hit points, a well-armed and armored human is a fearsome opponent.

All things being relative, though, the GAMMA WORLD environment is a very unhealthy place in which to be. Even

with the 50 or so hit points the average character may have, he is at best just marginally suited to his world. Still, this incredible durability of post-holocaust inhabitants is a two-edged blade. Without this durability, the GAMMA WORLD game would be nearly unplayable, yet with it, situations in which it takes two dozen arrows to kill a so-called "normal" man add a degree of absurdity that is hard to ignore.

This article examines Pure Strain

Humans in two respects. First, a comparison between Pure Strain Humans and "normal" humans (as detailed in the AD&D® game) is given. Second, a history is created for the origin of Pure Strain Humans, to explain their durability and strengths.

### GAMMA WORLD® and AD&D® humans

One of the most interesting aspects of the GAMMA WORLD game has to be the inordinate hardness of the average game resident. When compared with their AD&D game counterparts, GAMMA WORLD humans are incredibly hard to kill. A 1st-level AD&D character can be killed with one dagger thrust, yet there is almost no way to do in a GAMMA WORLD character with a dagger blow.

Perhaps it would help to look at the AD&D game's explanation of hit points. While an AD&D character's hit points reflect how hard it is to kill him, such difficulty is not due to invulnerability or toughness of skin but rather to combat skills the character has learned. "A certain amount of these hit points represent the actual physical punishment which can be sustained. The remainder, a significant portion . . . at higher levels, stands for skill, luck, and/or magical factors. . . . Thus, the majority of hit points are symbolic of combat skill, luck . . . and magical forces" (*Players Handbook*, p. 34).

A 1st-level AD&D character with 3 hp can be killed with a dagger doing 3 hp damage. At 2nd level, with 6 hp, the same thrust doing 3 hp damage only wounds him. This isn't because the character in question has acquired hard skin, but because he has learned to get out of the blade's way.

Perhaps the main reason for the seeming incompatibility of the AD&D and GAMMA WORLD systems lies in confusing what we call "normal" human beings with Pure Strain Humans. One blow with a sword would probably hurt you or me as much as it would a 1st-level AD&D character, so it is convenient to label AD&D characters "normal" human beings. Where does that leave Pure Strain Humans?

It is ludicrous to think that GAMMA WORLD characters are born virtually indestructible. It should not be too difficult to believe that such characters, since they don't progress in levels of ability like their AD&D counterparts, attain their full adult abilities while still

very young, perhaps at age 7 (just like Li'l Abner). The average post-holocaust person learns quickly how to dodge potentially lethal blows and can only be killed after first tiring him or her. [Note, too, that combat damage is assessed every Action Turn (10 seconds) in the GAMMA WORLD game, whereas it is assessed every melee round (60 seconds) in the AD&D game. The time differential in game mechanics accounts for some of the hit-point differential. – Editor]

References to Pure Strain Humans in the *Metamorphosis Alpha* game and in both versions of the GAMMA WORLD game state that Pure Strain Human resemble, but are very different from, their pre-holocaust ancestors. (See GW2, *Famine in Far-Go*, p. 30). Most people exposed to high levels of radiation die. If radiation poisoning doesn't kill them outright, then leukemia or other degenerative disorders that develop after massive irradiation will. Pure Strain Humans, however, can take it. Why? A little inventive history might help.

### Before the holocaust

Pre-holocaust humankind was quite similar to the average non-combatant in the AD&D game, though better dietary habits and increased access to medical care would have added up to better health (and more hit dice). What caused the drastic change in mankind's physiology was the end product of his former ecological carelessness.

Even before the Social Wars of the 24th century, mankind was in serious trouble. Toxic chemicals had been poisoning the earth for generations. Biological weapons released new and horrid plagues; formerly harmless microorganisms that had been affected by mutagenic substances developed by earlier civilizations also generated new diseases. Background radiation took its toll on humanity, adding to the chromosomal damage done by the various scourges of modern life (e.g., radiation accidents).

While the causes of these afflictions were known, no defense was known from these evils. Then, from the cornucopia of 24th-century medicine, came hope: a process of genetically boosting the human body's defenses against outside agents. Early experiments actually increased the number and degree of mutations before the final Genetic Safeguarding Treatment was perfected. Genetic Safeguarding Treatment (GST) created the ultimate human: *Homo novus*, resistant to the mutational haz-

ards of nearly every known chemical and radioactive toxic then known.

The inventors of GST had no idea of the degree to which their process exceeded their initial intents. Despite being 100% successful in aiding human physiology combat the many hazards of 24th-century life, there were some very unexpected side effects. One serendipitous side effect of GST was the reinforcement of the human immunological system. This resulted in a total resistance to every communicable and hereditary disease known to 24th-century man, including the common cold!

More amazing still was the development of a genetic repair system, which provided automatic radiation resistance. As a result, those receiving GST were now able to recover from doses of radiation that would have killed those not so protected. Nonetheless, the same genetic repair system which allowed *Homo novus* to heal otherwise fatal radiation wounds now prevented the genetic booster (as well as other mutagenics) from working for repeat applications. It is due to this chromosomal maintenance that Pure Strain Humans are no longer prone to alterations of their genetic code as their ancestors obviously were, or else the GAMMA WORLD land would not have its present population of mutated humanity. In short, the road to becoming a Pure Strain Human was a one-way street. Mankind was now locked into a permanent mold – but what a mold it was!

Another benefit that did not manifest itself for several months after the treatment was an amplification of human reflexes and adrenal responses to an incredible degree (not necessarily raising dexterity scores). Beneficiaries of GST were able to dodge, roll with, and avoid the full effects of most potentially fatal blows. Even falling damage did not affect New Men (as they were initially called) as one would expect. This enhancement is not considered a mutation as far as game purposes go, but it goes a long way in explaining why Pure Strain Humans have so many hit dice. (A general household robot, by comparison, has only 5 HD.)

Within months after its adoption by a grateful humanity, the benefits of GST were realized, as the hospitals of the early 24th century were emptied of their patients. The majority of humanity had changed from our present form to nimble and resilient beings whose chances for survival had been maximized. By the time of the Social Wars,

every family that could afford GST had gotten it, leaving only the very poor and those skeptical of its benefits unprotected.

The genetic booster, one of the final discoveries of the pre-holocaust world, was the key to GST. The demand for it became so great that soon nearly every adequately stocked doctor's office had it. After the perfection of GST, genetic booster was still widely used for breeding livestock and growing horticultural foodstuffs, as well as certain applications in the fur industry. But, not long after this breakthrough in medical science, came the Social Wars.

### After the holocaust

Unlike their medieval namesakes, the Dark Ages (or Black Years) that followed the holocaust were literally devoid of light. Blasts during the wartime holocaust threw up gigatons of soot and earth, blocking out sunlight and rapidly lowering the earth's temperature in what is currently referred to as a "nuclear winter." Those who survived the original catastrophe were further diminished by the hard times that followed. To the credit of the initial survivors, it can truthfully be said that their mutual cooperation and courage saved humanity from extinction. However, after the darkest hours had passed, divisive elements emerged.

Throughout the world, the majority of survivors were *Homo novus*, which didn't please those not given GST. Those who had voluntarily refused GST came to regard science and technology as evil, and the New Men as the crowning achievement of that corruption. On the other hand, those initially unable to afford GST came to resent and despise a society that could so easily abandon its wretched to the consequences of its own past indiscretions.

In many of the pockets of gathered survivors, these factions gradually formed into a religious movement calling itself the Faithful, and it urged condemnation of the New Men for being the minions of the evils of Science. Though some of these holdouts were later more than happy to take GST to increase the odds of their survival, the majority of them still perceived GST as representative of the evil technology that led to this destruction in the first place.

After all, wasn't it man's obsession with science that had initially resulted in the poisoning of the world? Surely the suffering of 24th-century mankind was deserved as long-overdue punishment

for tampering with forces best left alone! Wasn't it obvious to all that man's only hope now was to turn his back on the false god of Progress? Yet, in spite of all these "signs," there were still pompous fools whose arrogance kept them from seeing the error of their ways.

Still, there was hope for the Faithful. In time, they realized that as the earth itself had been changed, so had they. Though beset with hardships, they also received help in the forms of new powers and abilities, not the least of which was an enhancement of the adrenal/reflex response, similar to that of the New Men. This beneficial mutation quickly became prevalent throughout the Faithful population. Clearly, this could only mean that only those who had been mutated would inherit the reformed earth. With this divine providence, they knew that they could still prevail over the Hell-spawned might of the New Men. It was from the ranks of the Faithful that mutantkind would eventually spring. Later, schisms within Faithful doctrine would ultimately produce such diverse schools of thought as the Mutationists, Radioactivists, and the Seekers of the New Dawn.

At the same time, the New Men were undergoing a parallel metamorphosis. At first patronizing towards the "Untreated," as they referred to the Faithful, the New Men gradually came to feel aloof from them. They slowly cultivated a condescending attitude towards the simple-minded and superstitious Faithful, which in time became open contempt. After all, wasn't it ignorance and a refutation of the warnings of the scientific community that allowed the poisoning of the earth in the first place? In mankind's hour of need, it was those who used their natural intelligence that came through with GST and saved the day. Wasn't it obvious to everyone that the only hope now for man's continued survival lay in whatever could be salvaged from the technology of the past? Yet, there were still cretins whose ignorance kept them from seeing the evidence all around them.

About this time another unsuspected effect of GST was making itself known. While nothing seemed safe from the unleashed power of the atom, the New Men observed that their children were seemingly unaffected by radiation. The effects of GST were hereditary! Occasionally, children were born who lacked the full benefits of GST, but such throwbacks had no mutations or defects — although, like their pre-holocaust ances-

tors, they were susceptible to mutagenics. Throwbacks can be considered "latent mutants" and only need exposure to radiation, genetic booster, or some other mutagenic to realize their abilities. This seems to be the case in one of the scenarios in GW1, *Legion of Gold*, in which a family of Pure Strain Humans has a child susceptible to mutation.

How much of the increase in hit points is dependent on the GST-heightened reflexes and how much can be accounted for by training in combat, martial arts, and learning in general? The little girl in the above scenario is said to be 10 years old, yet she has 8 HD and 30 hp! Obviously, in the setting of the GAMMA WORLD game, self-defense tactics would have to be taught and learned at a very early age; however, it is implausible to assume that a non-mutant could learn enough evasive maneuvers by the age of 10 to become tougher than a plastic-and-steel mechanical construct. (Remember the general household robot with 5 HD?)

Far more likely is that the effects of GST are independent of each other and need not all be present in each and every Pure Strain human. Some throwbacks could have, as in the case of the

little girl in GW1, the enhanced reflex/adrenal system (which would explain her hit dice) and still lack the genetic repair system that would normally prevent mutations from occurring in Pure Strain Humans. It should be added that to strip any other GST-enhanced ability from a Pure Strain Human character other than genetic repair is to diminish his or her odds of survival (and playability) drastically.

What happens to a pre-holocaust human arriving in the Gamma World of the 25th century? Unless the character is a New Man, he will lack the genetic repair system which stands between him and radiation poisoning. Without GST-enhanced immunological system, the character will suffer the same consequences as if he had the defect *bacterial susceptibility*. A Game Master must consider what sort of man-made diseases are lying in wait for such an unprotected organism. Such a character would also be susceptible to all the toxic wastes in the world, too; again, the GM should decide what poisons are natural or industrial in origin, for purposes of allowing or not allowing saving throws. The pre-holocaust human shouldn't have more than 12, possibly 15 hp altogether.

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In short, an unprotected pre-holocaust human is not long for the Gamma World.

When one considers all the complications that pre-holocaust NPCs present, it seems to discourage inclusion of pre-holocaust characters in a campaign. It is not improbable that some fortunate (?) pre-holocaust survivors may turn up from time to time in stasis chambers. Such characters may have valuable historical, technological, or medical knowledge which will make them important in any power struggle in your world. To preserve game balance, a GM may be more likely to allow a pre-holocaust restaurant manager into his world than a nuclear physicist or a firearms expert.

Gradually, as more and more mutations occurred among the Faithful, the New Men came to see themselves as not only the true heirs of 24th-century man, but also the sole progenitors of future humankind. Due to their superficial similarity to their pre-holocaust ancestors and their resistance to mutation, they came to think of themselves as "pure-strain" humans. This was the first use of that term, and, as that way of thinking spread across the land, it polarized the two respective populations further.

Unchecked distrust and animosity between Pure Strain Humans and the Faithful erupted into open hostilities in many of the enclaves of survivors throughout the GAMMA WORLD lands. Some of these battles resulted in genocidal pogroms by the Faithful to purge the hated Pure Strain Humans from the community. Although any Knight of Genetic Purity believes that the only good mutant is a dead mutant, the Purist order was not the brainchild of any one man. Mutant defense leagues sprang up in many isolated villages as a last line of defense against hordes of fanatical mutants on holy jihads. Elsewhere, mutant-hunting posses formed in human-held territories for the sole purpose of wiping the "evil stain of mutantkind from the face of this great land!" In either event, the outcome was the beginning of the longstanding strife and warfare between human and humanoid.

The Faithful, susceptible to the mutations that made up their new world, continued to mutate; all humanoids of the 25th century could (if any records had been kept) trace their ancestry back to them. This includes members of such Cryptic Alliances as the Mutationists,

who maintain the original Faithful belief that only the changed should inherit the earth, and the Radioactivists, who agree but whose conviction that "The Great Mutator helps those who mutate themselves" has become an obsession. Both of these offshoots of the Faithful have long since abandoned the original Faithful condemnation of all technology.

Oddly enough, both Mutationists and Radioactivists view each other as having strayed from the true path. Mutationists consider the Radioactivists to be idolatrous heretics who dare to presume the Provider needs their aid. The Radioactivists believe the Mutationists are passive agnostics who lack the conviction of faith to approach the Radiant Divine Glory in all its Atomic splendor.

Pure Strain Humans, once forming the majority of humanity, fragmented into numerous and varied sub-groups. The high regard Pure Strain Humans had for the technology of the ancients, combined with the veneration of the good old days before the cataclysm, produced the Restorationists. The scarcity of such artifacts and their great value during the Black Years caused some members to succumb to ignorance and superstition. These ritualistic technology worshipers founded the orders of the Archivists and the Followers of the Voice, debased offshoots of the original Restorationist concept.

Another group, the Healers, often comes from small communities centered around ancient medical facilities. In the days before the Social Wars, many advances had been made in the fields of medicine, holistic theory, and psychical research. Healers are the retainers of the end product of such research. Their extraordinary powers, they claim, are natural abilities only dormant in most men. Most inhabitants of the GAMMA WORLD lands, while in awe of the "White Hand," secretly scoff at the Healers' vows of poverty and meditation. Still, Healers live long lives (up to 125 years) and generally enjoy excellent health.

### **Pure Strain Humans today**

Dark ages breed illiteracy and ignorance in the way careless campers breed forest fires. In the setting of the GAMMA WORLD campaign, all inhabitants are steeped in oral traditions. No one knows with any degree of certainty where facts end and legends begin. Much of what passes for truth is that which people want to hear, and Pure Strain Humans

are as attached to their "truths" as anyone else. By A.D. 2450, they have forgotten that their current condition was artificially arrived at through genetic engineering, and they are unaware that they have more in common with their humanoid antagonists than they do with pre-holocaust humanity.

Yet even when legends are false, they tell us something about the people who made them up. The most popular surviving tale of the ancients among Pure Strain Humans is that of Cinderella. The story of the dutiful daughter maligned by those around her has special meaning to a people who feel the resentment of almost every other being on the planet. Pure Strain Humans see great relevance in the dilemma of Cinderella, victimized by her stepmother and sisters, as compared to their own predicament.

In a world of powerful mutants, intelligent animals, and sentient machines, it's safe to say that Pure Strain Humans no longer occupy the pedestal their genetically-engineered ancestors once did. There are other residents of GAMMA WORLD besides humanoids with grudges against the direct descendants of 24th-century man. As sentience flowered in the animals, they came to appreciate the atrocities committed against their ancestors by the Ancients, whom Pure Strain Humans resemble so well. Androids, once the servants of mankind, also have axes to grind with the descendants of their former oppressors. Rightly or wrongly, Pure Strain Humans are perceived as being responsible for every wrong in the post-holocaust world.

Perhaps this explains the current attitude of Pure Strain Humans in the year 2450. Despite their present impoverished state, Pure Strain Humans still have an attitude not unlike that of dispossessed royalty. As compensation for the loss of their former status and prestige, they have embraced that which alone distinguishes them from the other tenants of the GAMMA WORLD lands: the legacy of the Ancients. Throughout the ruined world, the monuments of the Ancients all give mute testimony to the original favored place of humans in the scheme of things. Statues, billboard advertisements, and what few surviving records of pre-holocaust life there are proclaim the role of humans as the shapers of the world. In the GAMMA WORLD game, Pure Strain Humans are feared, hated, and envied – but, above all, respected.

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# Convention Calendar

## **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 \$30. 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 about this gaming convention, 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. 14-17**

This gaming convention will be staged at the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel. Role-playing, computer, family, and war games will be featured. Also scheduled are flea markets, seminars, demonstrations, and an

auction. For more information, contact: Orcon, c/o DTI, P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808, or telephone (213)420-3675.

## **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.

## **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.

## **UTHERCON 6, Mar. 1**

This gaming convention will take place at the Palmer Auditorium in Austin, Tex. A large variety of role-playing and board game tournaments will be offered. In addition, there will be seminars, discussions, demonstrations, and an extensive video show. This one-day event will begin at 9 A.M. and continue until midnight. Preregistration fees are \$3; registration fees at the door are \$5. For more details, contact: Uthercon, 3212 Red River #108, Austin TX 78705, or telephone (512)477-1704.

## **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.

## **MILCON II, Mar. 8-9**

This gaming convention will take place at the Ramada Inn in downtown Milwaukee, Wis. Featured events will include a two-round RPGA™ AD&D® tournament, a two-round CHILL™ tournament, and an RPGA AD&D masters' tournament. Everyone entering one of these tournaments will receive a free lead miniature. Role-playing and board games will also be available. Registration fees are \$6 for single-day attendance and \$10 for weekend attendance. For judging information, contact: Keith Polster, 1312 Wayne Road, West Bend WI 53095, or telephone (414)338-1469. For all other details, contact: Lou Mengsol, 5616 West Cairpel Lane, Mequon WI 53092, or telephone (414)242-2304.

## **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 about this gaming event, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: N.C. State Gaming Society, P.O. Box 50201, Raleigh NC 27650.

## **ALASCON VII, Mar. 15-16**

This convention will be held on the University of Alaska, Fairbanks campus. Featured activities will include an AD&D tournament and a miniatures painting contest. For more details about this convention, contact: Alascon VII, P.O. Box 80925, College AK 99708.

## **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 about this gaming convention, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Neocon V, P.O. Box 7411, Akron OH 44306.

### 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 \$20. 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-1, Memorial Student Center, College Station TX 77844, or telephone (409)845-1515.

### WIZARDCON '86, Apr. 5

This gaming convention will be held in Ferris Booth Hall at Columbia University in New York, N.Y. Events will include demonstrations and tournaments of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game, Diplomacy, Ace of Aces, Pente, and many more game systems. Although there is no admission charge, a nominal entry fee will be required for participation in each tournament. For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Columbia Games Club, 301 Ferris Booth Hall, Columbia University, New York NY 10027.

### STAR CITY CON, Apr. 18-20

This convention will be staged at the Patrick Henry Hotel in Roanoke, Va. Orson Scott Card and Rudy Rucker will be the guests of honor. Panels, videos, an art show, author readings, and a dealers' room will be among the scheduled activities. For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Star City Con, 1305 Burks St. SW, Apt. #9, Roanoke VA 24015.

### 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.

### HAVOC II, May 3-4

This convention sponsored by Battle Group Boston will be staged at South Middle School in Waltham, Mass. The weekend activities will feature 15mm WRG Ancients, Napoleonic (Empire Three), Napoleonic sail (Heart of Oak), and Avalon Hill's WWII and Modern microarmor. In addition to these minatures events, Circus Maximus will be played, using chariot models. For more information, contact: Al Garnache, 142 Clark Street, Waltham MA 02154.

### LITTLE WARS, May 9-11

This convention will be held at the Triton College Student Building in River Grove, Ill. This convention will focus on miniatures events only. Over one hundred historical, fantastical, and science-fictional miniature battles will be offered. Registration fees are \$6. For more information about this miniatures convention, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Todd Fisher, 6010 N. Maramora Ave., Chicago IL 60646.

### TECHNICON III, May 16-18

This convention will be staged at the Blacksburg Econo-Travel in Blacksburg, Va. Featured at the convention will be a gaming tournament, video rooms, an art show, computer games, a masquerade, and a Star Wreck play. For more details, contact: Technicon III, P.O. Box 256, Blacksburg VA 24060.

### TRI-STATE CON '86, May 16-18

Sponsored by the Cincinnati Adventure Gamers, Inc., this convention will feature board and role-playing games, miniatures events, an auction, and a large fantasy role-playing tournament. For more information, contact: Tri-State Con '86, P.O. Box 1754, Cincinnati OH 45231, or telephone Dave Rolf at (513)931-6028.

### M.I.G.S. VII, May 25

The Military Interests and Gamers Society cordially invites all gamers to the society's seventh annual convention. This convention will be staged at the Kitchener-Waterloo Regional Police Association Recreation Centre in Cambridge, Ontario. This one-

day event will begin at 10 A.M. and end at 6 P.M. Free tutorials, seminars, painting contests, board games, and adventure role-playing tournaments will be among the featured events. Registration fees are \$2. For more information, contact: Les Scanlan, President M.I.G.S., 473 Upper Wentworth Street, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L9A 4T6.

#### 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.

## Write on!

Got a question about an article? A subject you'd like us to cover — or *not* cover? What do you think of the magazine you're reading? Drop us a line at "Letters," P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147. We'll read every letter we get, and we'll select certain letters of general interest for publication — maybe even yours!

## The forum

mortal to strut around with magic powerful enough to challenge the gods.

These might seem like simplistic solutions, but they are simple and basic common sense. Common sense and fair play are the real solutions to the "Monty Haul" campaign.

Thomas J. Todd  
Sutter, Calif.

I am writing you in reference to the rules presented in the *DMG* regarding the memorization of magic and cleric spells. On page 40, the rules state the following:

Once rested, an additional one-quarter hour per level of spell must be spent in study/prayer and meditation in order to memorize/acquire the ability to cast each spell.

If one would follow this rule, it would take an 8th-level magic-user 6 3/4 hours to memorize the spells usable at this level, a 12th-level magic-

(Turn to page 89)

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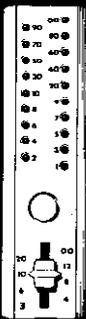
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## The forum

user 16½ hours, and a 29th-level magic-user 70 hours!!! I find several flaws with this system, especially when you also take into account the amount of time for rest that is necessary. What is the purpose in giving the spell-caster additional spells usable as he or she progresses in levels if it is physically impossible for the caster to memorize these additional spells due to time limitations? Using the system present, it would take over 13 hours for a 29th-level magic-user just to memorize his 9th-level spells; if you add on the 12 hours of required sleep time, you have already used more than a day's worth of time.

Unless I am misinterpreting the rule presented, I feel that there must be a change in the amount of time necessary to memorize a spell. Since the ability to memorize is related directly to one's intelligence, I suggest the following system:

Intelligence	Minutes to memorize one spell level
9	15
10	14
11	13
12	12
13	11
14	10
15	9
16	8
17	6
18	4
19	2

Since a magic-user's main ability score is intelligence, this system would correlate the class to the ability score to a much higher degree. Using this system, an M-U of 29th level with a 19 intelligence can memorize all of his spells in about 9 1/3 hours. Even with the necessary 12 hours of rest, it is now possible for the mage to use and regain all of his spells in one day.

Lawrence Lerner  
Somerset, N.J.

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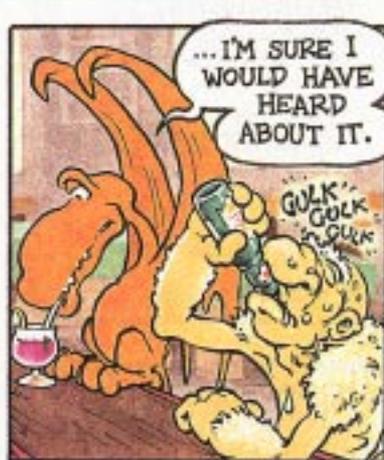
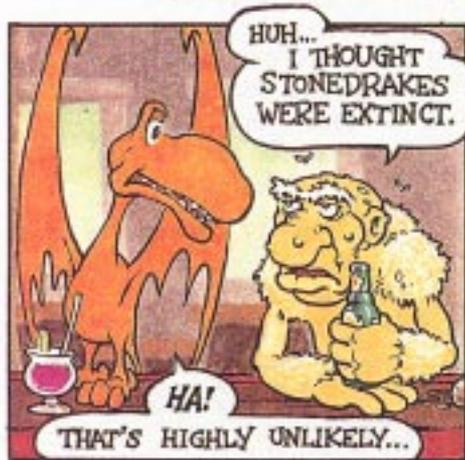
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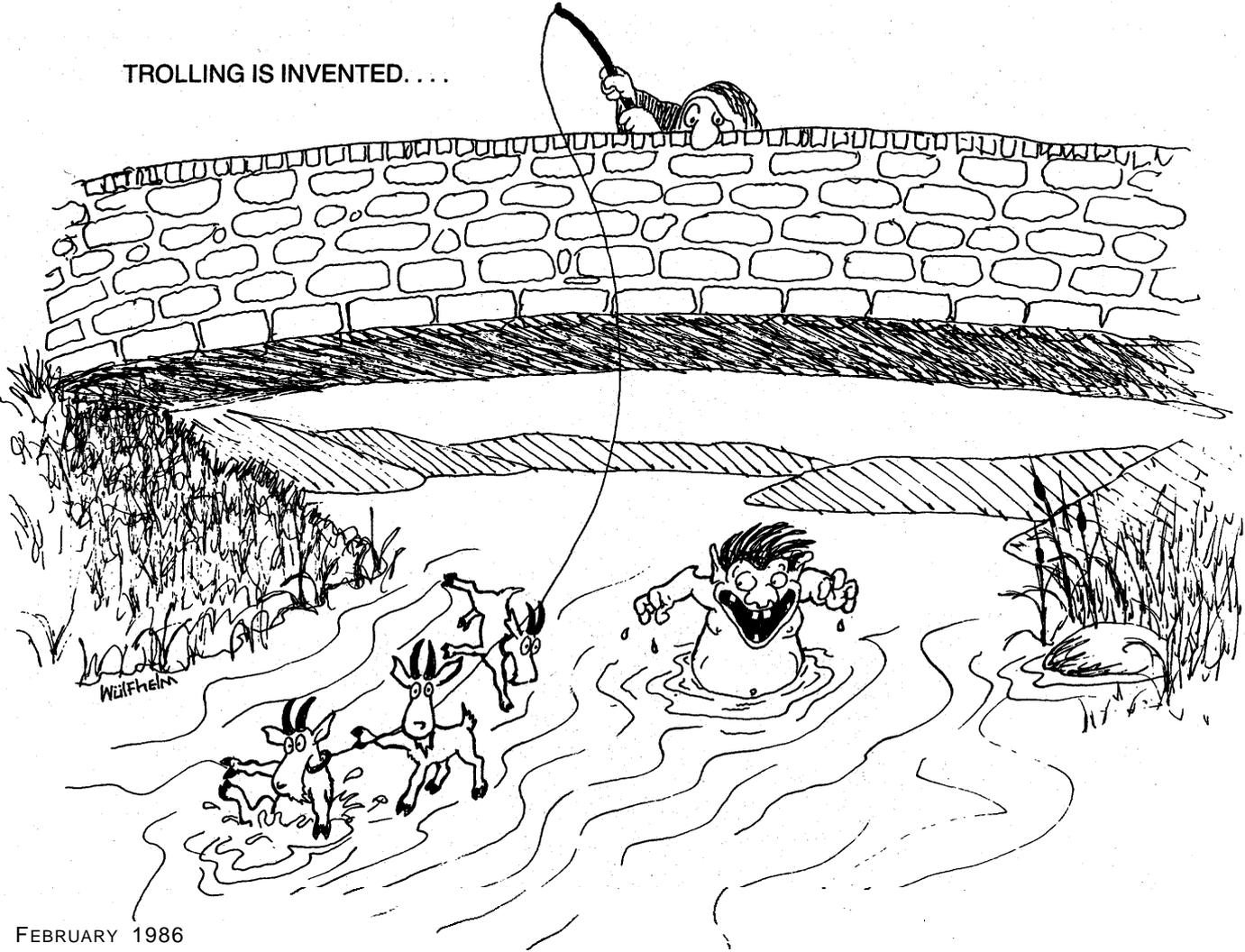


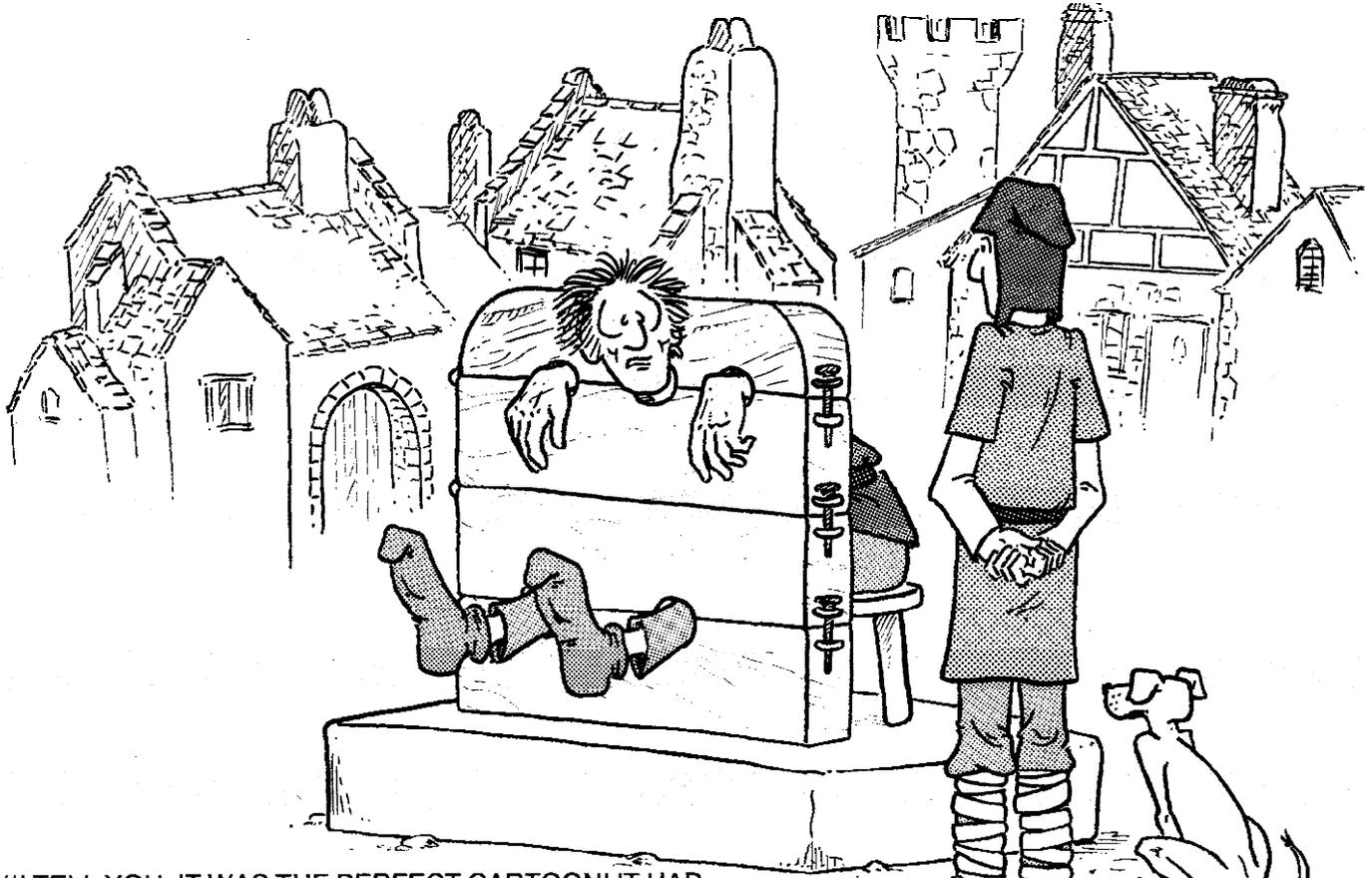
# Dragonmirth



"I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN! THE TREASURE IS A BOX OF FLIES!"

TROLLING IS INVENTED. . . .





"I TELL YOU, IT WAS THE PERFECT CARTOON! IT HAD SEX! VIOLENCE! GORE! EVEN DEVIL WORSHIP! EVERYTHING!! [SIGH] THEN I WENT AND SENT IT IN TO DRAGON..."



# SNARF QUEST

#31

BY ELMORE

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IT LOOKS AS IF WE ARE IN SOMEONE'S BASEMENT.

I DON'T LIKE DIS.

I THINK I KNOW WHERE WE ARE.



WHERE?

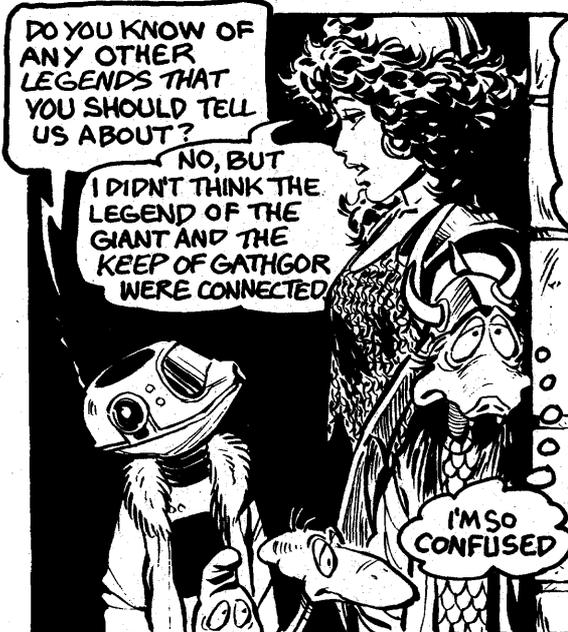
IN GATHGOR'S KEEP.

WHO'S KEEP?



GATHGOR... THE EVIL KEEP OF GATHGOR.

IT'S ANOTHER LEGEND IN THIS LAND.



DO YOU KNOW OF ANY OTHER LEGENDS THAT YOU SHOULD TELL US ABOUT?

NO, BUT I DIDN'T THINK THE LEGEND OF THE GIANT AND THE KEEP OF GATHGOR WERE CONNECTED

I'M SO CONFUSED



WELL, ALL OF DIS IS JUS' GREAT!... I LIKE TREASURE JUS' LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE, BUT I HAVE NO IDEA OF WHERE I AM... SO LET'S SPLIT!



OH SNARF, I WOULD NEVER HAVE EXPECTED YOU TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

...ER... LIKE WHAT?



LIKE, "LET'S SPLIT!"

DID I SAY DAT? NO, I SAID... EEH... I SAID... LET'S SPIT.



SPIT?

YEAH... LET'S GO SPIT... IN DA EYE OF DAT OL' GATHGOR!



NOW THAT SOUNDS LIKE THE SNARF I KNOW. COME ON, I'LL LEAD FOR A WHILE.

THANK GOODNESS, DIS BRAVERY BUSINESS IS GONNA KILL ME.



THE LIGHTING IS A BIT DIM, SO WATCH YOUR STEP. CAN EVERYONE SEE GOOD ENOUGH?

SURE.



LATER

THIS DOOR COULD BE TRAPPED... IS ANYONE SKILLED IN LOCATING TRAPS?

I AM.



I'LL JUST X-RAY THE LOCK SYSTEM, ... HHUMMM...



IT LOOKS GOOD, IT ISN'T EVEN LOCKED.

CLICK

BE CAREFUL



!!?000

WHANG



EEEEII!

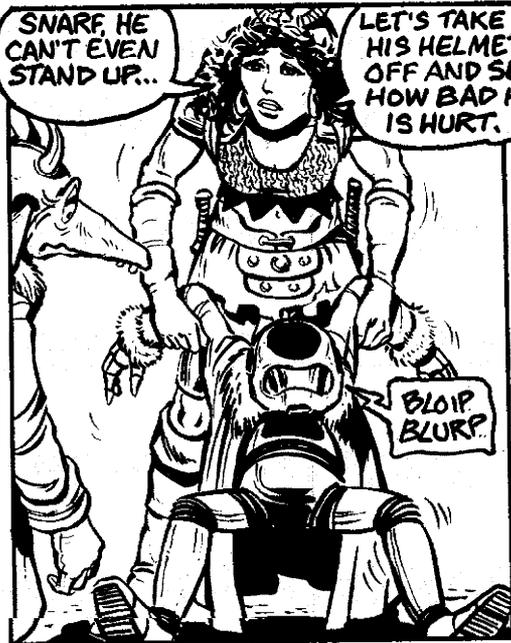
BZZT

@\*!\*



OH AVEARE, ARE YOU ALRIGHT?!

BBLOOEEII



SNARF, HE CAN'T EVEN STAND UP...

LET'S TAKE HIS HELMET OFF AND SEE HOW BAD HE IS HURT.

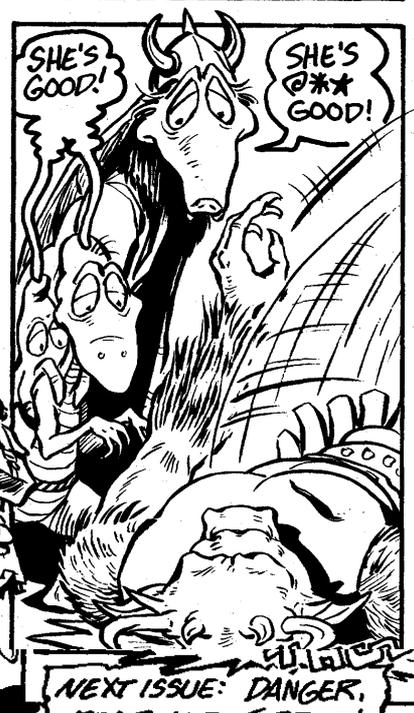
BLOIP BLURP?



NO, LET'S LEAVE HIS HELMET ON, IT'S PART OF HIS KNIGHTLY RITUAL STUFF. HE NEVER TAKES IT OFF.

OH?

BZZ POP!



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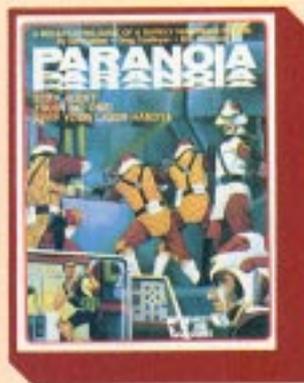
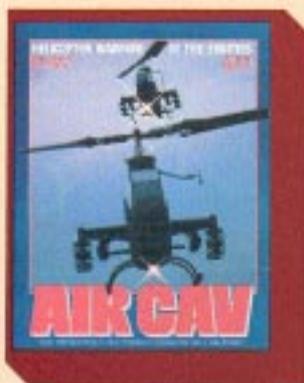
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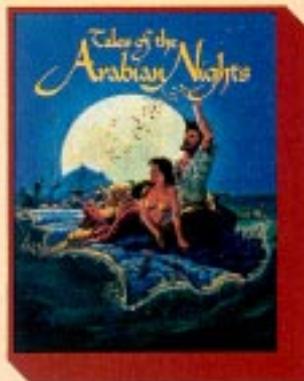
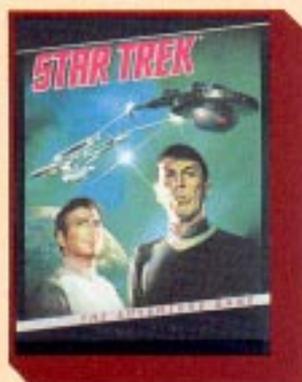
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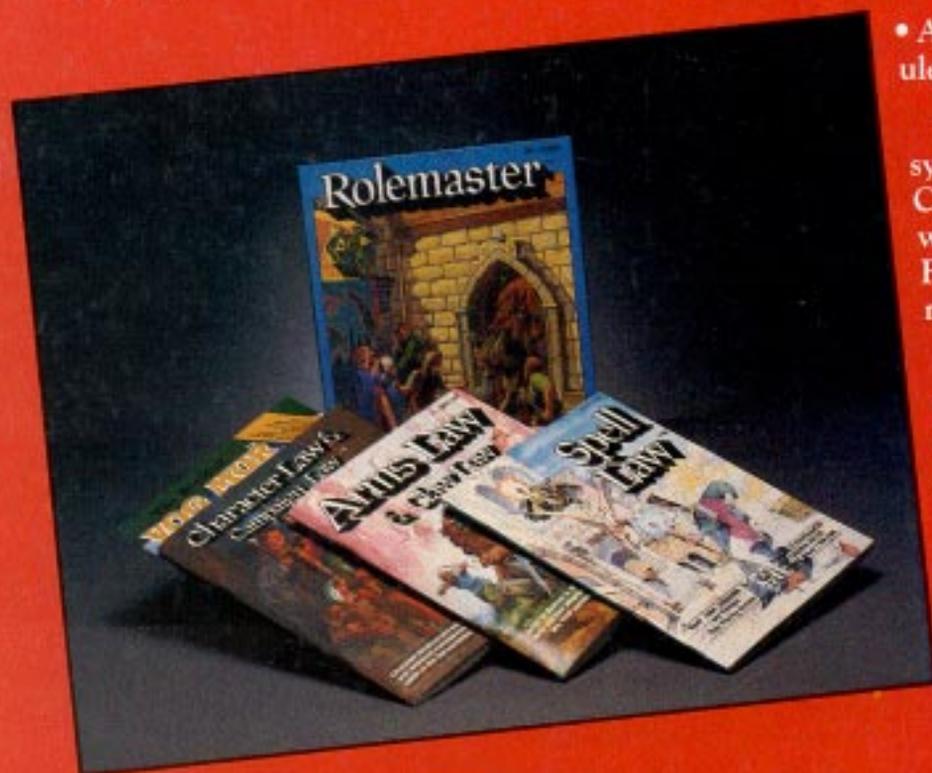
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