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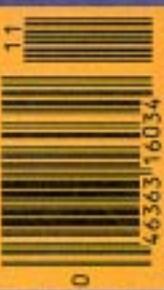
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Magazine

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# CONTENTS

## SPECIAL ATTRACTION

- 9 **THIEVES:** Picking the pockets of the underworld
- 10 **Lords of the Night** – Eric Oppen
- 14 **A Den of Thieves** – Vince Garcia
- 26 **The Art of Climbing Walls** – Vince Garcia
- 28 **Honor Among Thieves** – Eric Oppen and Robin Jenkins
- 32 **Getting Up in the World** – Robin Jenkins
- 34 **Tools of the (Thieving) Trade** – Vince Garcia

## OTHER FEATURES

- 38 **Hammer of Thor, Spear of Zeus** – James A. Yates  
Weapons of choice for clerics to choose
- 42 **Sharper Than a Serpent's Tooth** – Ray Hamel and David Hage  
Why does it have to be snakes? Well, why not?
- 46 **Airs of Ages Past** – Ed Greenwood  
Magical harps from the Forgotten Realms
- 48 **"There's Something on the Floor. . ."** – Reid Butler  
Humorous and deadly things that lie underfoot
- The Ecology of the Harpy**
- 50 *Songs of beauty. . .* – Barbara E. Curtis
- 52 *. . . Songs of death* – Ed Greenwood
- 55 **Elven Armies and Dwarves-At-Arms** – James A. Yates  
Troops for demi-human lords
- 60 **Door Number One, Door Number Two, or. . .** – Dan Snuffin  
Creative door design with a rude twist
- 62 **Stayin' Alive** – John J. Terra  
TOP SECRET® game advice for all agents
- 71 **The Role of Books** – John C. Bunnell  
Who's that with the scarf and the police box?
- 76 **When Only the Best Will Do** – Kevin Marzahl  
Heckler & Koch weaponry for the TOP SECRET® game
- 85 **An Interstellar Armory** – Gus Monter  
New weapons and defense systems for Knight Hawks gamers
- 89 **The Marvel@-Phile** – Jeff Grubb  
A terminal solution to ultra-powered heroes

## DEPARTMENTS

- |                      |                        |                |
|----------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| 3 Letters            | 84 TSR Previews        | 99 Dragonmirth |
| 4 World Gamers Guide | 92 Gamer's Guide       | 102 Snarfquest |
| 6 The Forum          | 94 Convention calendar |                |
| 82 TSR Profiles      | 95 Wormy               |                |

## COVER

Denis Beauvais's talent for capturing the essence of fantastic conflict is beautifully pictured in this month's cover, *The Antagonists*. The eternal struggle of good and evil was brought to life without the use of models or props; the artist's imagination and his brushes were his only tools.



# 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.

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® game; GW = GAMMA WORLD® game;

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# Science & Sorcery in Earth's Far Future

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# F O R U M

I read Scott Devine's letter in issue #111 and agreed with him wholeheartedly. At the time, the issue didn't seem worth reopening. However, after seeing the cover to #114, I really think that something a little stronger should be said on the subject of the depiction of women on [DRAGON® Magazine] covers.

Doesn't the cover to #114 go just a trifle too far into the realm of soft-core pornography, fellahs? Halloween mood notwithstanding, that woman is for all practical purposes naked. For the first time, I was glad that my DRAGON Magazine comes in a brown wrapper — I would hate for my postperson (a woman, in fact) to think that I subscribe to pornographic magazines.

You have to remember that not everyone knows what DRAGON Magazine is about, and they will tend to judge it by its cover. I'd be embarrassed to have to buy that issue off the rack in a toy store or comic book store (DRAGON Magazine is sold in both kinds of places, and in some towns that's the only place you can buy it). Do you want to see the magazine stuck behind opaque plastic covers like Playboy and the Lamppoon? Do you want to see crowds of bozos picketing Toys-R-Us to have DRAGON Magazine removed from the shelves?

D&D® and AD&D® games have a bad enough reputation in some circles now, what with succubi and Tlazolteotl and Hecate running around. Every time I explain to non-gaming friends that it's a fantasy game, I have to add, "No, no, I know what you're thinking — not that kind of fantasy!" DRAGON Magazine's preoccupation with flesh (always, inevitably female flesh, as Scott pointed out) doesn't help.

The D&D® and AD&D® games also have a bad reputation for misogyny, among feminists and other self-respecting women, and this includes (especially) players. The same people that sneer at explanations of low strength for female gnomes and halflings on the basis of realism ("You see, *real* gnomes . . .") are going to be less than thrilled by DRAGON Magazine's one-sided exploitation of female figures.

I read your explanation about "fine art" in #111, and consider it a crock of beans. First, it is possible to have art without female skin, as the cover of that issue (#111) demonstrates. Second, as Scott said, you don't picture male figures in anything like the same degree of undress. Now, please don't take that as a challenge — the very last thing I personally want to see on the November cover is a moonlit picture of an Arnold Schwarzenegger lookalike, see-through chemise blowing in the wind, from any angle. However, if you insist on showing skin from time to time, you ought, in all fairness to the ladies, to show a little male skin too, even if you have to commission the art yourselves. Third, you do in fact make use of the "plate-mail bikini" in "game art." On the cover of issue #108, for example, the warrior maiden is showing a lot of leg for someone about to be attacked by a hidden gargoyle (or whatever that thing is supposed to be). If she isn't fighting a monster now, she will be in a minute, and I don't believe she'll have time to change. The fellow on issue #109 proba-

bly wasn't out looking for taers to fight, either, but he was prepared, as you pointed out, and she wasn't.

I am well aware that DRAGON Magazine didn't invent the D&D/ AD&D game predilection for sexy artwork. There are, for example, the unnecessarily explicit pictures of the succubus, the erinyes devil, and the Type V demon in the *Monster Manual*. But at least those are on the inside pages where I don't necessarily have to explain them to inquisitive nongamers (although I have had the misfortune of having to play with 14 and 15-year-old guys who could not get their hands on the *Monster Manual* without pawing and sniggering over those pictures — don't forget that kids play these games, too!). And, of course, it is no easy task to find lead miniatures for female NPCs that do not look like porno or heavy-metal queers, especially if I am looking for female fighters.

Parenthetically, I would like to know who came up with the idea that female fighters armored only at the top of the head, the breasts, the midriff (maybe), the groin, and the feet are as well protected as men in the complete tin can. Never mind all the hits they will fail to turn — how do they avoid freezing to death in cold weather? Perhaps they wrap transparent nighties around themselves, which is the way the priestess on #114 is protecting herself from the October night wind. On the other hand, maybe that's why her skin has turned blue.

Well, enough of that. I'm just suggesting that you try, in future artwork, to stop short of total nudity and to strike some kind of balance in your treatment of the male and female form. As matters stand, people are likely to conclude that the "ancient god" on the cover of #114 is really a candid portrait of one of your art editors, with horns curling, eyes asquint, and tongue hanging out.

John M. Maxstadt  
Baton Rouge, LA

In DRAGON issue #113, Corey Ehmke asked readers what he could do about losing many of his players to what he called Monty Hall campaigns. In response I can only say, "Not much!" As C.S. Lewis said, when people try to make themselves more stupid than they really are, they very often succeed. If Mr. Ehmke's players prefer to play in campaigns that allow a very rapid rate of improvement for their character levels, then there is not much he can do to get them back into his campaign.

This does not mean that his campaign is doomed, though. As long as there are even one or two people willing to take part in his campaign, it can be maintained. If anything, an adventure in which only two stalwart adventurers must accomplish a quest should be even more of a challenge than if seven or eight people attempted the same quest. Think of the tales of such great adventurers as Conan, as well as Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser or even Holmes and Watson. This will be a new challenge for Mr. Ehmke as well, who will have to create even more cunning quests for the smaller group that

probably won't be able to destroy the enemies that a larger group could. This is not to say that small games are any better or worse than larger ones, only different.

Furthermore, time is also on the side of the "impartial and fair" DM. From time to time, we all would like to be that 39th-level ranger with the Sword of awful Destruction, just to see what it's like, but we wouldn't want to spend all our gaming time with it. On this line of thought, we must assume that in time the players will grow tired of such easy victories as they have been receiving in the "Monty Halls." Having played the AD&D game for many years now, I find it hard to believe that any DM could keep a Monty-Hall campaign going for any great length of time. It has been my experience that they get off to a great start as players watch their characters skyrocket in power, but soon the novelty of the situation wears off and easy victory after easy victory leaves a stale taste in the gamers' psyche. Such disillusioned players either drop out of gaming altogether or go in search of more talented and reasonable DMs.

Paul Astle  
Hartford, CT

There were a couple of things in #114 that caught my eye. First of all, I read Zeb Cook's comments about the upcoming second edition of the AD&D game with interest. As it stands now, I own all the first-edition books to the game, and most of the modules. In spite of that, I'd like to see a revision done. Zeb mentioned bards, weapon-speed factors, and encumbrance as things that need fixed; I'd add psionics, the new demi-humans in *Unearthed Arcana*, and double weapon specialization to the list. Unfortunately, the new books are going to be large (and expensive), and there's no real way around it.

What I don't want to see is *Oriental Adventures* added to the basic rule books. The culture and feel of this game is so different, it works better as a supplement book.

Finally, Roger Moore's problems with impersonators can be easily solved. Just do one of your TSR Profiles on him, with a picture, then, all of us faithful readers will know what he looks like, right? (*Done.* — Editor)

David Howery  
Dillon, MT

As for Vince Garcia's article about player characters being business proprietors — while it sounds interesting, PCs who are mages or clerics and set up their business using their magical abilities could run afoul of other local businessmen who do not maintain these skills. Imagine the ire of carpenters, stonemasons, and other construction workers who see a mage put a large stone structure up in no time flat! Also, the article about peasant movements in issue #112 points out other possibilities for the type of business a PC could start. For example, the idea of a Supernatural Sanitation League stated in #112 could be a lucrative line of business for a PC willing to stand the toxic wastes. I see a PC that makes out like gangbusters by not only disposing of droppings from unusual animals, but also disposing of poisonous wastes from failed mages' experiments. I say this because even in a fantasy world, disposal of unusual wastes from magical experiments, if not properly done, could cause an environmental catastrophe on a very large scale.

Raymond Chuang  
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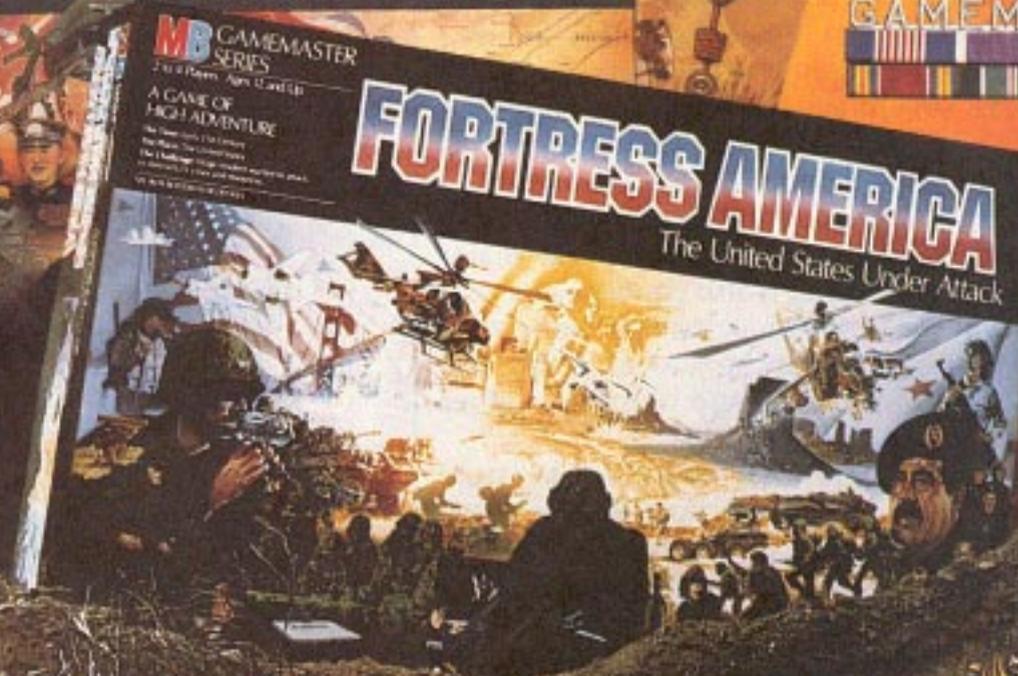
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# THIEVES



# Lords of the Night

*Behind the scenes at the local thieves' guild*

by Eric Oppen

The thieves' guild is a regular part of AD&D gaming, and yet the rules say very little about it. The *Players Handbook* mentions that player character thieves may choose to join a guild. *Unearthed Arcana* states that thief-acrobats are treated as regular thieves by any thieves' guild in their area, and may be found in leadership positions in such a guild. The *Legends and Lore* book has a paragraph or two about the Thieves' Guild of Lankhmar. The *DMG* has tables to determine what sort of thieves and how many a would-be Guildmaster can attract. But the question of why thieves join guilds remains unanswered.

## Training

Any thief wishing to improve his or her abilities needs training. Under the rules, a thief player character must undergo training to advance to a higher level or, at the proper level, to become a thief-acrobat. The obvious place to obtain training and competent instruction is a thieves' guild. A guild should have examples of various

sorts of locks for practice picking, traps to practice setting and disarming, and doors with various lock-and-trap combinations to open, perhaps in competition with other aspiring thieves or against a time limit.

Other facilities might include a large gym with sections of stone, brick, and wooden walls to practice wall-climbing under the eye of instructors, with padding below to break a fall. For obvious reasons, this sort of practice could not go on in public, unless the thief's public *persona* is a fire fighter, construction worker, or other person authorized to climb buildings. Some practice walls would be built so that they are exposed to the weather, or could be wetted down or iced, for practice climbing in bad weather.

Pickpocket training would involve dummies with bells attached to pockets and pouches, or experienced instructors dressed up in various sorts of clothing to play the part of victim for advanced practice, like Fagin in *Oliver Twist*.

Still other training facilities might include sections of various sorts of floor on which to practice silent movement, fighting instructors to train thieves in backstabbing and melee skills, acrobatics instructors for thief-acrobats, and language instructors to teach the thieves' skill of reading languages, reading magic (at appropriate levels), and speaking the thieves' cant.

## Instruction

Of course, all these facilities would be nearly useless without expert instructors. The thieves' guild offers even the richest thief the advantage of convenience. Instead of wandering all over a city for instruction, a thief or thief-acrobat wishing to advance a level can simply pay the guild and take advantage of the fact that the instructors are already there and are good at their jobs. (If they weren't good at their jobs, they wouldn't be there.) A thieves' guild, by necessity, is one of the

most pragmatic organizations imaginable.

## Equipment

Other specialized needs of thieves are best met through a guild set up especially for that class. One such need is for the thieves' tools. After all, aspiring thieves won't walk calmly into a local tool shop and buy a set of distinctive thieves' tools, even assuming that such tools are openly available. The guild offers both convenience and discretion, since a thief would often not want to make his or her lock-picking skills public knowledge. The thief's cover profession might not include lock-picking skills. Not only that, but thieves' guild tools would often be much better adapted to a thief's special needs than the type found in local tool shops, since they would be designed to be light, quiet, and easily concealed.

A very well-equipped and long-established guild might even have magical items available for purchase or rent. For obvious reasons, the thief wishing to rent a *chime of opening*, *gauntlets of dexterity*, or a *rope of climbing* would have to be high in rank and possibly willing to submit to magical compulsion, such as a *geas*, to insure the return of the items. This could be one way for a DM to make appropriate magical items available to a party without permanently unbalancing the campaign.

## Information

Having been equipped and trained, the next thing a thief would need is accurate information about potential targets. Burglarizing a mansion or store is far easier when the thief knows what to look for and where to look. Accordingly, a thieves' guild would develop contacts in the community that could tip it off on the location of riches. An obvious approach is through the servants in a rich man's house. A standard method used by thieves in Victo-



rian London was to look up people recently discharged from domestic service and pay them well for any information on their former employer's belongings. Victorian thieves even planted a servant or two on the premises, complete with forged references and all necessary skills, and had them work with the thieves. An AD&D game thieves' guild would be able to use these methods and could garner a great deal of useful information by keeping up on servants' gossip through spying or by operating a restaurant or club catering to servants.

Inside information is not the only sort of information a good thief would want before planning a big job. Through the friendly thieves' guild, a thief could easily hire several nondescript people to keep an eye on a wealthy household or business for several days or weeks, to learn about the happenings there. Another source of information about a particular target is the recollections of the thieves who've had a go at that target in the past. Whether in a formal classroom setting or yarning over a tankard of ale, an experienced thief's tales could mean success or failure for an attempted theft. The guild might even pay such people a wage to be available with information about targets they've tried. Of course, such information might not be remembered correctly or might be out of date. . . .

### Assistance

The services a good guild would offer wouldn't end there, but would continue into extremely specialized fields. Through a guild, a thief planning a big job could more easily contact thieves with special skills, particularly demi-human, multi-classed thieves. One *sleep* or *knock* spell cast at the right time could ensure success more surely than almost any skill single-classed thieves or thief-acrobats have to offer. Cleric-thieves (see "Arcana Update," DRAGON® Magazine issue #103) would also be quite useful, particularly in the case of a target guarded by undead. Through a large, well-run thieves' guild, a member would have a much better chance of obtaining this sort of help when needed.

Unspecialized help on a job would be much easier to arrange through a guild than otherwise. For instance, a loud brawl, an accident, or even a well-staged fire in the right place at the right time would do much to distract an estate's guards long enough for some clever thieves to slip in and out.

### Disposal of loot

Once the thief has the loot, his problems aren't always over. In fact, more thieves today are caught trying to sell or otherwise dispose of stolen goods than are actually caught in the act of theft. Any form of loot other than coin of the sort commonly used in the region presents the

problem of how to dispose of it most profitably and safely. Jewelry is often extremely distinctive, and an important person who had lost valuable jewelry to thieves would certainly pay well for information that Biff, the halfling thief, was trying to dispose of just such a piece to Honest Dismas the pawnbroker. Fine weapons, magical items, and other valuables present similar problems. A recently-robbed VIP might have word sent around to all jewelers, weapon dealers, or pawnbrokers that there would be a large reward to anyone providing information that led to the recovery of the stolen valuables.

The thieves' guild would probably have several reliable fences on the staff, with magic-users to *identify* any magical treasure. These fences could take distinctive goods off the thief's hands for a reasonable sum, making sure that they were safely sold with a good profit for them and the guild. In fact, the thieves' guild would probably control all regular buying of stolen property in its town, with anybody knowingly making a business of receiving stolen goods being invited (forcibly or otherwise) to join.

### The law

The successful thief would have one more problem to complicate things. That problem would be the law and its enforcers. When a thief is caught, the guild goes to work to make sure that witnesses recant their testimony or muddle it, juries hand in acquittal, judges acquit or give light sentences, and guards leave keys in locks. That is, assuming the thief is caught by guards who are not guild members themselves or paid well by the guild to make sure that guild members get safely away from the scene of their crimes.

If the captured thief is important enough, forcible break-ins to help the thief escape are possible, in the truest commando style. But if all else fails and if the punishment is not severe, a little jail time to reflect on one's errors in a heist might be worthwhile.

### Recruiting

Like any other organization, a thieves' guild needs recruits. These could come from several different sources. One obvious pool of potential talent would be the abandoned or neglected children found in all cities. These waifs would already have no qualms about stealing, and the best ones would be quite willing to accept an offer of training from the thieves' guild. After all, in the guild, a homeless child would have a regular place to sleep, systematic training, status, and some certainty of a next meal. In return, the guild would gain a recruit with some aptitude for the life of a thief, street wisdom, and probably some haphazard experience. Since a street waif would be young when recruited, he would be easier to train than

an adult.

Another source of recruits would be freelance thieves, such as adventurers wishing to use the city for their headquarters or people who came to the trade as adults. Since these people would not know who was under guild protection, they could bring themselves to the guild's attention by stealing from people who have bought theft protection from the guild. For the sake of its relationship with the town, the guild would have to make an effort to track down these freelancers; once they were caught, they could be offered guild membership if they were deemed worthy of it. An amateur thief would be offered training on the same basis as other new recruits. As has been mentioned, a thieves' guild is a very pragmatic organization. Having caught someone with talent, why not take him or her into the firm? After all, good talent doesn't grow on trees.

Still another source of new blood in a guild would be guild thieves from other cities who wish to change their place of residence. Perhaps they long for a change of scenery or are too well-known in their home towns. Since they would already be guild members, they would make sure to obtain references from their Guildmasters to facilitate entry into their new guild. In fact, ambitious Guildmasters might compete to lure the most talented thieves to their own guilds. This can provide an opportunity for a lot of interesting role-playing.

### The guild and races

A thieves' guild is certainly the most racially mixed organization likely to be encountered in most AD&D game campaign worlds. Since all player character races (and, conceivably, exceptional members of NPC races such as hobgoblins) can be thieves, they could all be found at a guild. Few well-run guilds could afford to tolerate racial friction. An elven or half-elven Guildmaster would be unlikely to attract many half-orcish followers and might have a problem with dwarves, but a thieves' guild would usually be less likely to establish racial barriers. In a well-run guild where such frictions are kept under control, it would be quite possible to see members of all player character races hobnobbing in harmony. Due to the different outlooks of each race, there would always be some trouble, but a well-run guild would take the attitudes and special abilities of the various races into account. A dwarven thief might be less intolerant of elves if an elven thief made the success of the last big job possible.

### Types of membership

A guild might have several levels of membership, reflecting the different expectations and abilities of members. The very lowest, for example, might be the honorary membership extended to those who purchase the guild's protection from

thieves. This would not confer the right to enter the Guild hall or grant any voice in the guild's decisions, but it would allow the purchaser the right to appeal to the Guildmaster for aid and redress if theft occurs. Since the guild's connections and investigators might be far more effective than the usual city guardsman, many people might be very happy to pay a nominal fee (i.e., protection money) for the benefits of this "service."

The next level of membership would be that conferred on apprentices. They would be strictly under the orders of their tutors and forbidden to steal without their tutors' consent, but they would be allowed to enter the guild hall and watch guild decisions being made, even though they, as apprentices, would have no voice in them. They would have the same right as other members to appeal to the Guildmaster, but would be well advised not to do so without their tutors' consent. In return, the guild would extend its full protection to them, and any Guildmaster with sense would not tolerate wanton abuse of apprentices. A full member, particularly a tutor, found to be mistreating apprentices would not be treated gently at all.

The most common sort of membership in the guild, not counting those who purchase guild protection, is that offered to fully-fledged thieves. A guild thief has the right to full use of all guild facilities (upon payment of appropriate fees), immunity from theft, and a voice in the guild's decisions. If a dispute between thieves occurs, the thieves may appeal to the Guildmaster to arbitrate it, perhaps with a jury of other thieves. Full membership also confers the guild's permission to commit theft within its territory and to ask for guild assistance on a job too big to handle alone.

The rarest sort of membership in the guild would be that conferred on the non-thieving specialists the guild might need. Since demi-humans cannot advance beyond certain levels in spellcasting professions, a guild with a regular need for high-level spells might invite a spellcaster of the required sort to become a specialist member. In smaller guilds, if no cleric-thieves are available, a cleric of some god favored by thieves might be invited to

become "chaplain" and build a chapel or temple on thieves' guild property. These specialists would be treated very carefully by ordinary thieves; if offended, the offenders might not need to bother with appealing to the Guildmaster; they might in fact be slain or cursed.

Other specialists that might become guild members would include jewelers (for disguising distinctive loot and disposing of it), locksmiths (for training thieves in the fine art of opening locks), fences (for disposing of stolen property), acrobats (for training thief-acrobats), and fighters (to protect the guild in case of real trouble). Such specialists would have the right to enter guild property on business but would have no voice in decisions lying outside of their expertise. For instance, if a problem has arisen about how to dispose of loot, fences might be called in, but locksmiths would not expect to be consulted. Those specialists who don't cast spells would have the same immunity to theft as all other members.

### Alignment

The alignments represented in a guild would almost always be affected strongly by the Guildmaster's own alignment. In general, the most successful Guildmasters would be lawful, and the thieves who operate best in a guild setting would also be lawful. Chaotic thieves would be less happy in a guild and would prefer to freelance. If in a guild, chaotic thieves would tend more toward working alone, using the guild more as a training hall, fence, and equipment supplier than as a place to recruit help. Lawful thieves would prefer a well-planned job with a place for everything and all contingencies covered. Since most thieves tend toward evil and no thief starts out good, conflicts over good and evil would not be a major problem. For purely pragmatic reasons, though, even an evil Guildmaster might strictly forbid all guild thieves to engage in gratuitous atrocities, as that would bring trouble to the whole guild. An evil thief would not feel welcome in a guild in which everybody else was neutral (or even good), and vice versa.

### The Guildmaster

A Guildmaster is a person of power and influence, even if only behind the scenes. His days are spent in administrating guild affairs, approving expenditures, recruiting, handling promotions (and demotions), dealing with guild auxiliaries (such as fences, toolmakers, and spellcasters), judging squabbles between thieves, and acting in the name of the guild when necessary. Depending on local mores, the Guildmaster may be openly acknowledged as the leader of the thieves or may operate behind a public persona. If the Guildmaster is not in control of a town's underworld, he is certainly a power in it. The Guildmaster is also a person of great influ-

ence in town politics, if only because of his wealth, and must probably deal with ambitious schemers who wish to control the guild for their own ends. All in all, a large thieves' guild is certainly a profitable organization to head, though not every thief is well suited for the post. A player-character thief, for instance, would not make a good Guildmaster, for the simple reason that he would be far too prone to go off adventuring. In his absence, his lieutenant might well decide that he should be the new Guildmaster; should the boss come back, the player character would find a mutinous guild and be either killed or expelled.

### The guild's environment

We have seen above how a typical thieves' guild might operate. Why, though, should the rest of the people in a town tolerate a well-organized group of thieves in their midst? Why can't the town government just send soldiers to break the whole thing up?

One reason is that the guild would often operate secretly. Before Prohibition, very few ordinary citizens knew that organized crime existed. A thieves' guild would usually operate through fronts, if only to save face for town rulers. Some useful fronts would be servant agencies (see the comments above on servants and their uses), security consultants, entertainers (especially for thief-acrobats), locksmiths, and dealers in second-hand goods and jewelry. In public, the Guildmaster might be known as, for example, a leader of the locksmiths' guild.

All these fronts would be extremely useful in and of themselves. The servant agency could plant servant-spies on potential targets, collect information, forge references and teach servant-spies the appropriate skills. A locksmithing service would also provide useful information, as well as offering thieves material on which to practice their skills, thereby creating an excuse for owning and carrying their tools. After all, who would have a better excuse for having lock-picking skills and tools than a locksmith? Dealers in second-hand goods and jewelry could dispose of stolen goods, either in the same town or by selling them to similar dealers in other towns. The advantages to these fronts are that they help the town's rulers save face (as mentioned above) and provide a valid excuse for the guild members' income and skills. Of course, the money that fronts bring in through legitimate business could tide a guild over a lean period.

Another reason for a town to tolerate the presence of a thieves' guild is that its presence tends to inhibit freelance theft. At least, with the guild thieves, a citizen would have the option of paying them a sum for immunity to theft for a given length of time. Where freelance theft is concerned, a group of guild investigators would be much more effective in bringing evildoers to justice than any constable, due



to their greater knowledge of the underworld and their control of any likely buyers of stolen goods.

Another reason for local officials to ignore a discreet thieves' guild could be bribery. Certain officials, particularly the lower-ranking ones, might think of themselves as outrageously underpaid, and a regular system of subsidies, from the town's ruler down to the lowliest constables, would be worthwhile for any thieves' guild. As long as the guild avoided outlandish actions, the officials would be likely to ignore them or go through the motions of investigating guild thefts (while doing nothing).

Another way to neutralize official interference would be blackmail. With a good spy network in place, the guild could easily find out facts that any official might not want made public knowledge. These facts could be kept on file at the guild headquarters to be used when necessary. If at all possible, the officials concerned would be kept ignorant of the fact that the thieves' guild possesses this incriminating information. As always, blackmail is a dangerous game.

#### Relations with other guilds

Though their skills and areas of concern tend to overlap, it is not always likely that thieves and assassins will be at odds with each other. An evil thieves' guild would be quite willing and likely to cooperate closely with an assassins' guild, if one exists nearby, and even neutral thieves see some benefit in having the assistance of "troubleshooters" around. In small towns, the thieves and assassins might well share some facilities or even be different branches of a common guild.

In general, with regards to other non-thieving guilds, the rule would almost certainly be to purchase their services when needed and not antagonize them unduly the rest of the time. Interguild warfare would benefit nobody, and all Guildmasters, officials, and other influential citizens (such as the head clerics of the town temples) would cooperate to ensure that the peace is kept. It is doubtful, though, that thieves and merchants will ever get along well.

#### To guild or not to guild

To take an extreme example, the fantasy-world peasant village of Hogwallow (with a total population of 38 poverty-stricken souls) would have no thieves' guild and no work for one if such a guild existed. At the other end of the scale, a major city on important trade routes and a large population of wealthy nobles, clergy, and spellcasters, could not avoid having a large, wealthy, and well-entrenched thieves' guild. Between these extremes, we can set some simple rules for determining if a particular town does or does not have a guild.

For game purposes, assume an average of 500 people in a town would be neces-

sary to support and cover the activities of one professional thief. This number may be adjusted downward by a hundred to reflect a wealthy population, or upward by a few hundred to reflect a relatively poor population. If too few people are in a town, everyone is more likely to know everyone else and know a good deal about them as well. In Hogwallow, any professional thief could only hope to survive by plundering outsiders, but a village that small could not hope to see enough visitors to make theft a viable career. In a major population center, anonymity is possible and the chance of encountering worthwhile targets is greater.

The ratio of one professionally qualified thief to every 500 people is a reasonable reflection of the facts mentioned above. For game purposes, a DM can simply decide how many people (to the nearest 500) live in a town, divide that number by 500, and determine how many professional NPC thieves live there. If the DM wants more thieves, they can be present, but should be given other jobs to provide most of their income. The relatively high chance of meeting thieves in the *DMG's* table of city encounters reflects the fact that thieves, particularly full-time thieves, would be more likely to have free time to roam the streets than ordinary citizens would.

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# LEADING EDGE

G A M E S

# A Den of Thieves

*The care and management  
of a thieves' guild*

by Vince Garcia

Nazier hadn't thought it would be like this. A heady life leading a select group of trusted disciples who would become the terror of the countryside, living life their own way and beholden to no one — that was the way it was supposed to be. Not like this, standing amongst this group of strangers before this mockery of a king's court to swear allegiance to this . . . unliving thing.

All too soon it was his turn. The last to be summoned, Nazier tentatively advanced towards the dark-robed priestess, who beckoned from beside the throne upon which her master sat.

"This is Nazier," she spoke as he dropped to his knees, eyes lowered in real fear.

The black-shrouded nightmare had never spoken throughout the ceremony as

the parade of followers had been led before it to swear fealty — and Nazier hoped it wouldn't find its tongue now. But the Thing stirred, and Nazier knew his bitter luck was holding true.

"You are spoken well of, Nazier," came the sibilant from the visage peering down at him from its drawn hood. "Am I correct in hearing that you have chosen to join our Brotherhood?"

The priestess grasped Nazier's arm, raising it so that his sleeve fell away to reveal the still-stinging trident-shaped brand upon his arm. The Thing nodded approval.

"Great in this life shall your reward be," it continued. "And great your responsibilities. You know the city of the Sea Kings, to the east?"

"Yes," Nazier managed to whisper.

"A powerful guild of thieves makes its base in that city, controlling all pirate vessels who make that its port. You will journey there with such assistants Drucinda gives you. Having arrived and made contact with other servants of mine, you will form a rival faction of thieves" — the Thing leaned forward — "and you will eliminate the present guild, by any means at hand, subjugating all criminal activities under you — and therefore ultimately under me."

"But how —" Nazier sputtered, turning paler still.

"You will find a way, Nazier," it cut him off. "You will find a way. For now, go and gather to yourself such followers who will see in you a worthy master." A skeletal

hand stretched from the figure and dropped a small disc at his feet. Reaching down, Nazier grasped a small token that was similar to the one he had long possessed, with one difference — above the embossed skull in the center of the golden circle was scribed an ebon crown.

"Receive this token of your new authority." The Thing stiffly rose to its feet. Its arm stretched out, and Nazier instinctively drew back, fearing it would touch him. But no — the arm, rigidly extended, was lifted up in what Nazier recognized was actually a salute.

"Hail Nazier, Guildmaster!" Its voice was a hissing blast.

Now all in the secluded mountain glen raised their arms in salute, the rotting forest echoing their cry.

"Hail Nazier! Guildmaster . . ."

One portion of the AD&D game system never fully dealt with is the formation and operation of a player-character thieves' guild upon the character's attaining 10th level and choosing to do so. Far from being so simple a matter as rolling a few dice to see how many NPCs flock to the character's side, the proper incorporation of a player-controlled thieves' guild can be the most demanding aspect of a well-developed campaign, requiring a great deal of creativity and work on the part of the player and especially the DM. To aid in this end, the following article presents some guidelines and principles dealing with this long-neglected aspect of the AD&D game, in the hope those campaigns ready for it can experience a new dimension in role-play and adventure.

## The DM's role

First of all, it's going to take a fair amount of work on the DM's part. The player is naturally going to desire the PC guildmaster and his guild to become part of the mainstream campaign, and he may also expect — not without some justification — to make some profit on the endeavor. It thus falls to the DM to keep the player happy and to keep the guild in its proper perspective as a sideline to the normal campaign, and to also see that its influence does not become unduly significant without limiting factors, such as being subservient to other, more-powerful guildmasters.

## The player's role

A player-character thief's days of adventuring whenever and wherever he chooses are in all likelihood drawing to a close. Little in life can be counted on, and few things are more tenuous than the hold of a guildmaster over a group of ambitious thieves — especially when it is realized a cornerstone of the thieving philosophy is to keep one eye on the back in front of you while keeping the other on your own. The responsibilities of a guildmaster thief are many — and there always exists the



chance that a protegee may move to step into an absent, adventuring guildmaster's shoes (à la the knife-fight scene in *Butch Cassidy & the Sundance Kid*).

### Preliminary steps

When initially forming the guild, five steps must be observed.

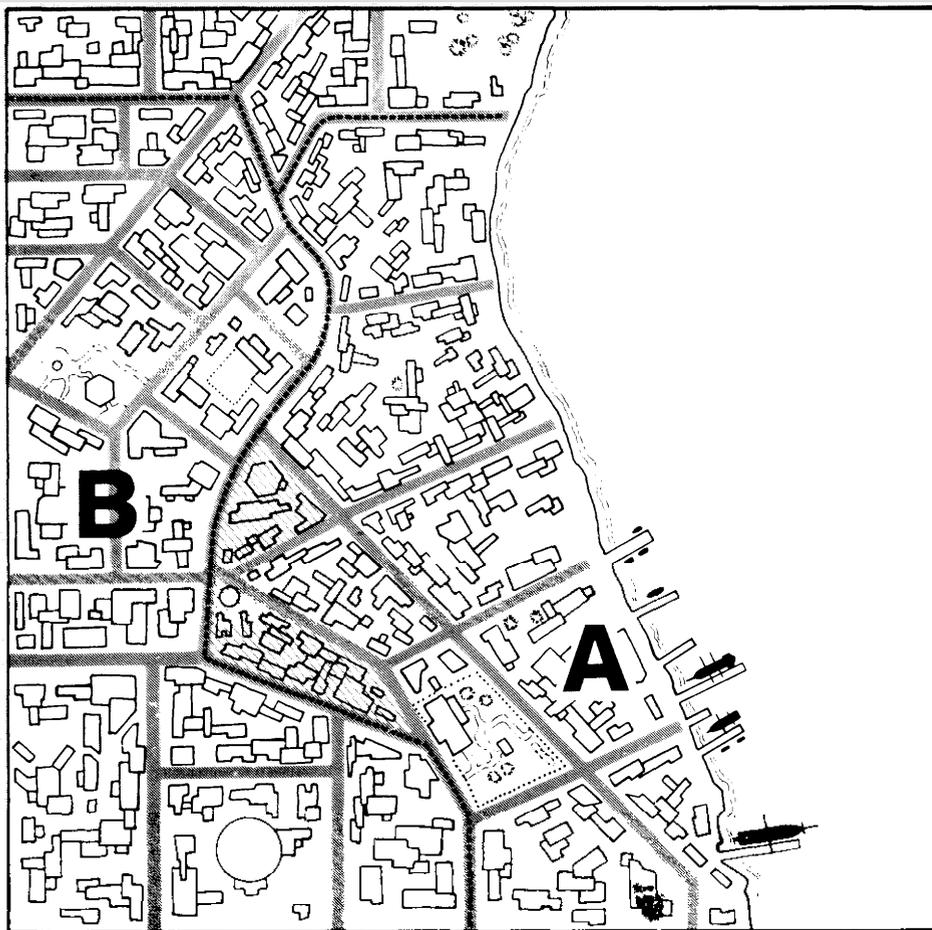
1. Take an in-depth overview of the campaign.
2. Determine what the best role is for the guild in the campaign, and note whether an entity or nonentity guild fits within the mold of the DM's assessment.
3. Note the type of training the guildmaster has received in advancing through his levels of experience.
4. Choose the most appropriate guild type based on the former factors.
5. Create the thieves.

In looking over the campaign, the DM should note where it is and ultimately where he intends it to go. If his future campaign plans do not include a specific town or city to serve as a central hub of the campaign, a player-character thieves' guild becomes next to useless, for the greater the degree in urban interaction with NPCs and land development present in the campaign structure, the more a PC thieves' guild finds a useful spot in the game. Conversely, as the emphasis on play shifts further from this type of play to the extreme of dungeon-delving as the only developed phase of the campaign, so the PC guild must invariably shift from a viable tool for campaign development to a forced nonentity status, depriving both players and DM of an almost limitless source of intrigue and adventure.

Having taken an overview of his game, the DM must then decide whether the guild is to exist as an entity or nonentity within the campaign. Of the two, the entity guild is the type with the most potential. It becomes an active part of the overall campaign, fitting into the DM's plans for the Big Picture. While comfortable in its role as a sideline to the mainstream game, it nevertheless is involved in current events, perhaps even to a critical extent. Its counterpart, the nonentity guild, exists entirely on paper. Either because the game has failed to develop past the dungeon stage, or the DM feels the present needs of the campaign do not include a fully developed fellowship of thieves, the guild is recognized as existing but plays no real part in the campaign.

Next, a look must be taken at the PC guildmaster. Specifically, it must be noted how the thief has been obtaining training to advance in levels of experience. If the training has been accomplished by members of the player character's parent guild, it is obvious that the guild hierarchy will be aware of the character's advance in levels and his growing influence amongst the lower-level thieves, especially novices, who may — though not necessarily — be a bit more impressed with the player char-

## Associated guild structure



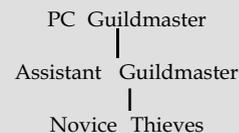
acter's reputation and exploits than the guildmaster desires. If, on the other hand, the player character has found training with nameless NPCs encountered while roaming the world in search of adventure, no such automatic awareness of the character's potential will exist in the minds of the local guildmaster, but this also limits the thief's guild-type options, possibly increasing the potential for confrontations with established guilds in the same area.

There are a number of different guild types open to the player character, and the type chosen is dependent primarily upon what the DM feels adapts into current game circumstances best. While generally a singular type of guild will fit right into most games, it is possible that campaign circumstances could dictate the creation of a guild that contains aspects of two or more listed guild types. If this occurs, the guild hierarchy should duplicate the guild type which most accurately reflects the ultimate authority of the guild, including all required tithes and responsibilities, while the guild should be run and followers determined by the guild type which most closely reflects in what manner the guild is to be operated.

Those guilds available to the player character can generally be broken down into one of the following sorts.

**1. Independent guild.** The independent guild is one which forms with no affiliations to other guilds or individuals. As an example, assume a thief has been spending some time around a city or town without a thieves' guild. If she chooses to, she can set up her own guild without fear of competition (at least initially). This guild type is highly desirable from the perspective of offering no competition while being set up with a minimum of difficulty. However, it can usually be assumed that one reason no competitive guild exists in the area is that the pickings in the area are slim; no one else wants to waste time with the project. Additionally, local law enforcement may vigorously and effectively hunt down thieves in the area.

### Independent guild structure



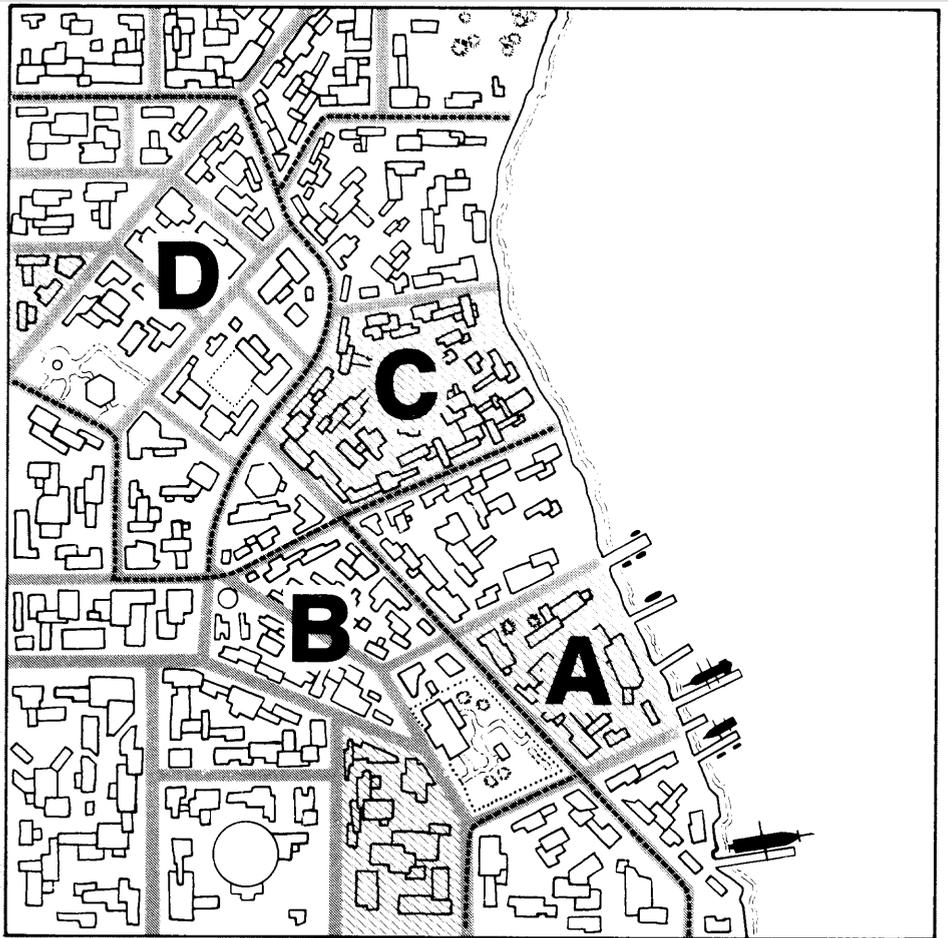
Initial number of followers: 4d6  
 Follower-type table: A  
 Income factor: E or better  
 Confrontation factor: None or F  
 Loyalty factor: C  
 Additional followers table: C

**2. Allied.** The allied guild is one which forms an alliance with another guild, usually for the purposes of mutual benefit or protection. This clearly suggests an initial conflict with a third entity (law enforcement, another guild, or other entity), and there exists a high probability the PC guild will begin its existence by infringing on territory claimed by others.

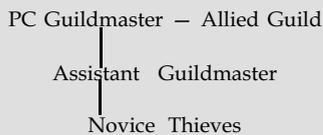
Figure 1 illustrates the concept of allied guilds. Guild A is a waterfront guild controlling all activities in that portion of the city, while guild B is a large but less powerful faction with its eye on two disputed blocks of territory (the shaded area), which recently have been the scene of a few minor confrontations between the two groups. Currently a member of guild A, our PC guildmaster-to-be has determined that his guild requires new leadership — namely, himself. He makes contact with the guildmaster of B. In return for B's recognition of A's claim on the two blocks, the PC thief offers a tithe of 5% of all monies obtained in the area as well as a pact of alliance, should he (soon) come to power. Guildmaster B readily agrees, as he can now expect revenue from this area without risking any of his own forces.

Thus, depending on who has the most to gain from the alliance, the PC guildmaster may — in addition to the normal risks, costs, and repercussions — pay a tithe of up to 10% of all monies obtained in guild activities to his ally. Further, if the allied guild requests the aid of the player character or some of his thieves for a project or attack on their mutual rival(s), it is expected the PC guildmaster will cooperate.

## Renegade guild structure



### Allied guild structure



Initial number of followers: 3d6

Follower type table: A

Income factor: D

Confrontation factor: E

Loyalty factor: D

Additional followers table: C

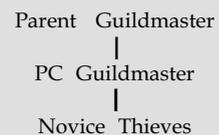


**3. Associated guild.** The associated guild is one which is overseen by the player character while remaining under the ultimate authority of a more powerful guild, perhaps governed by the player character's parent. Figure 2 shows a scenario in which the player character's current guildmaster is receptive to the idea of his forming a new guild. But, rather than ceding his claim over the two disputed blocks of territory, he instead reinforces it by having the player character set up a secondary guild in the heart of the area. The PC guildmaster thus becomes responsible for all criminal activities within the territory, paying a tithe of 5% of all monies obtained, as well as policing the area and discouraging incursions by guild B. Some of the benefits to this guild type include the option of forgoing the acquisition of an assistant guildmaster, as the training for the novice thieves can be accompanied by the player character's parent guild. Further, the player character will generally have greater access to cooperation and assistance from his parent guild with regards to different projects than he would with an allied guild. In practical game terms, this form of guild can also aid the DM in keeping a reasonable amount of control over the player character's guild in a legitimate fashion by

adopting the persona of the parent guildmaster, rather than resorting to arbitrary rulings.

Yet another set of circumstances which could bring about this type of guild would be if the player character's parent guildmaster desired to assign an area to the player character in order to be relieved of the responsibilities of this section in order to pursue the acquisition of new territory on another front. Or, in keeping with the thought of acquiring new territory, it is possible for the parent guildmaster to assign his protege one or more blocks of territory presently under the jurisdiction of a rival guild with the command to absorb this area into the parent guild, showing one example of how a guild can mirror two separate guild types — in this case an associated guild which would be run as a maverick guild (see below).

### Associated guild structure

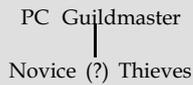


Initial number of followers: 4d4

Follower type table: B  
 Income factor: A or B  
 Confrontation factor: Variable from A to D  
 depending on campaign circumstances  
 Loyalty factor: B  
 Additional followers table: C

**4. Guild-within-a-guild.** While probably the most dangerous of all guild types, this guild opens the door to an exciting campaign based around the intrigue of operating a secret guild under the nose of the player character's guildmaster. One case that would cause this type of guild to be created would be if the NPC guildmaster would be unreceptive to the idea of the player character's forming an associated guild, and circumstances are such that an allied guild is also out of the question. In retaliation, the player character gathers to his side a select few acquaintances to form a fellowship of thieves within the larger guild with an eye towards one of these possibilities. Overthrowing the current guildmaster and assuming control of the whole guild? Forming a growing power base to eventually force a sharing of authority? Gathering a group to work together on unapproved projects to avoid paying high guild taxes? The possibilities can be endless. Clearly, this type of guild cries out for entity status. Further, because of the potential and risk involved with this type of guild, it is not inconceivable a DM could allow thief characters higher than 1st level to become a part of it.

**Guild-within-a-guild structure**



Initial number of followers: 2d3 or as determined by DM  
 Follower type table: A  
 Income factor: B  
 Confrontation factor: G  
 Loyalty factor: B  
 Additional followers table: D

**5. Sponsored guild.** A sponsored guild is one which is formed with an individual or group willing to back the PC guildmaster with money or force for their own particular reasons. A fighter of Lord status, for example, may ask a thief who is a fellow adventurer to form a thieves' guild in an area he is developing so as to have — at least in theory — a friend with control over the thieving activities he knows will be a natural outgrowth of a civilized area. In another form, the sponsor can exist as an NPC individual or group played by the DM; the opening portion of this article, which relates an incident in my campaign. A PC thief was forced by various circumstances into accepting sponsorship on the part of a powerful but evil group, with an obvious eye towards gaining control over a major seaport's criminal activities.



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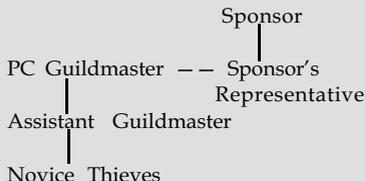
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In the case of a sponsored guild, it is again quite likely that the PC guildmaster will have to stake his claim on territory claimed by someone else, once more opening the door to a possible dual guild type.

Finally, it is not unusual for a sponsor to place a representative within the guild hierarchy to protect the individual's or group's interests.

### Sponsored guild structure



Initial number of followers: Either 5d4, as indicated by second portion of dual guild type, or as determined by DM

Follower type table: A or C

Income factor: C or as determined by DM

Confrontation factor: Either B, variable according to second portion of dual guild type, or as determined by DM

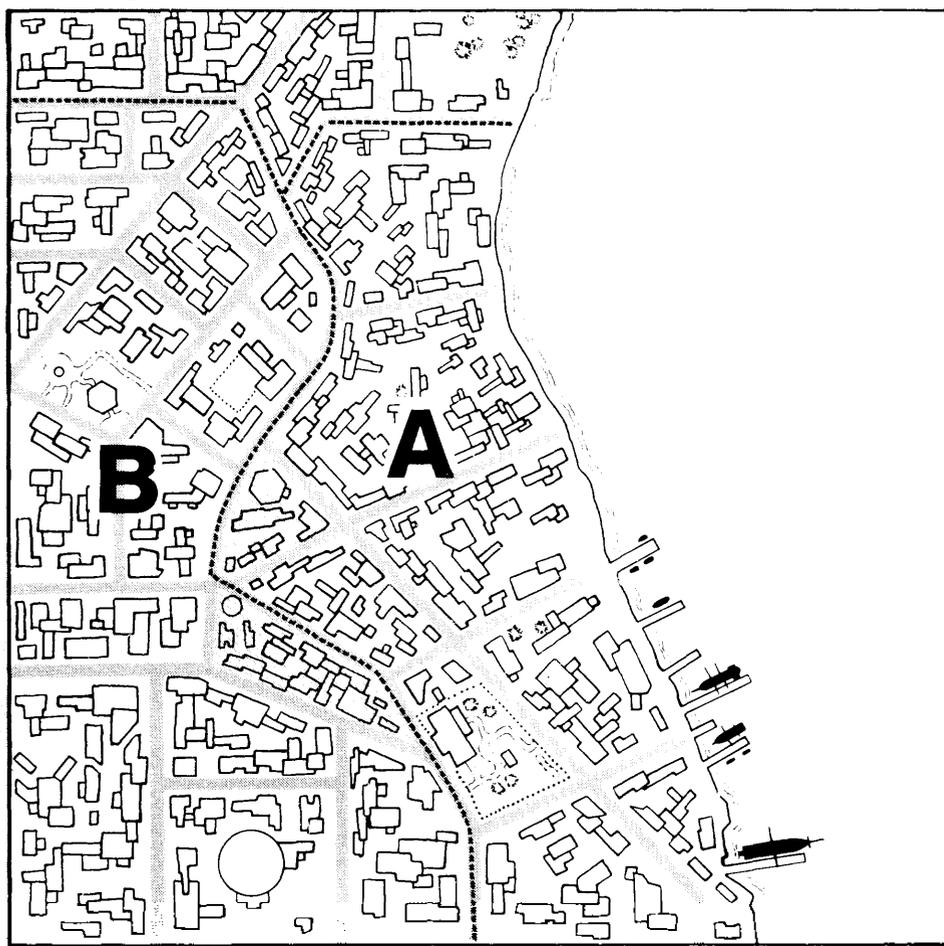
Loyalty factor: B

Additional followers table: Variable or C

**6. Renegade guild.** The renegade guild has a particular advantage where the DM is concerned in that it is the simplest guild to run in entity form, as little work is required to create a backdrop for the campaign; the DM may merely scope out a few excursions for the guild to partake once every few sessions of play. The renegade guild almost always tends to be a small and versatile group, relying on these two traits and that of constantly shifting locales to ply its trade under the noses of other guilds.

The form of the renegade guild can also come surprisingly close to duplicating an adventuring party, due to the versatile nature of the fellowship. It is not unusual, for instance, to find a guild of this type consists of the PC guildmaster to provide mastery of thieving skills, a strong fighter or two for muscle, and a multiclassed magic-user/thief or cleric/magic-user/thief

## Allied guild structure



to provide spell support. For this reason and its fluid nature, the renegade guild can also double in the overall campaign as the regular adventuring group, if the DM allows!

Figure 3 outlines the activities of a renegade guild over the course of a week's time. On Monday night, the guild burglarizes a warehouse containing some stolen merchandise in the hands of guild A. Wednesday, after a period of scouting and paying bribes to obtain information, the group assaults and robs a courier in B's territory as he heads back to the guild headquarters with the weekly tithe of an associate guildmaster. Laying low for a few days, three of the group set up a wealthy merchant to have her pockets picked on Saturday afternoon in the marketplace claimed by C. And (finally!), on Sunday night, the guild burglarizes a mansion in D's territory.

Monday, the entire area is in confusion. Guildmaster A is convinced the warehouse burglary was an assault by B's forces, in retaliation for a B thief being killed in a piece of disputed territory. Guild B is just as certain that A had his courier robbed in a flagrant violation of territorial boundaries. C is fuming over the fact that no tithe has appeared from the pickpocketing, and D doesn't know what to think. Meanwhile, the renegade guild has moved to another

part of town or has left the region altogether, a few hundred gold pieces richer. Thus, the renegade picks and chooses its operations carefully, taking maximum advantage of existing schisms and tensions within and between other guilds to screen their existence.

### Renegade guild structure



Initial number of followers: 1d4 + 1 or as determined by DM

Follower type table: C

Income factor: A

Confrontation factor: A

Loyalty factor: A

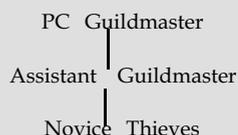
Additional followers table: None or D

**7. Maverick guild.** The maverick guild is that type most closely resembling the guidelines outlined in the *Players Handbook*. Put simply, the player character recruits some followers, obtains a structure to serve as a guild headquarters, and claims outright ownership of territory under the possession of another guild. Conflict inevitably follows. Unless the player character has the power or the money to obtain henchmen or hirelings to



bolster his position, his guild may be short lived. The key in this situation to survival is maintaining a low profile for as long as practical to gain more followers and remain undetected by the rival guild.

### Maverick guild structure

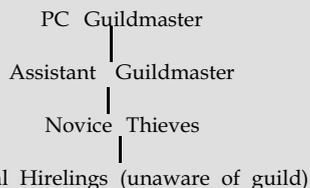


Initial number of followers: 4d6  
 Follower type table: A  
 Income factor: C or D  
 Confrontation factor: E  
 Loyalty factor: C  
 Additional followers table: B or D (keeping a low profile)

**8. Business front guild.** This guild type frequently coexists on good terms with one or more other regular thieves' guilds, with which it has agreements to provide services for a percentage of profits or a flat fee. A seemingly legitimate business front is used as a screen to hide the operations of the guild. Some examples of this type of set up would include a teamster service which ships stolen goods to fences out of the area, a ship or boat owner who leases the craft for an occasional smuggling run or secret transportation elsewhere for a wanted thief or assassin, or a fencer of stolen merchandise from an emporium.

Conflict among regular thieves' guilds is usually negligible — but run-ins with law enforcement agencies are a danger always to be reckoned with!

### Business front guild structure



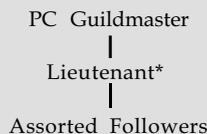
Initial number of followers: 2d6  
 Follower type table: A  
 Income factor: A or variable  
 Confrontation factor: D  
 Loyalty factor: B  
 Additional followers table: C

**9. Bandit gang.** While unusual, it is possible for a player character to band together a group of brigands along the lines of Robin Hood's merry men (if he's a nice guy) or Ali Baba's forty thieves (if he isn't). Both the income and the confrontation factors can vary from the top to the bottom of the scale; likewise, loyalty factors can also be either quite tenuous or very strong, again depending on how the guild is set up and what its philosophy is.

Due to the nature of this type of guild, there is a great potential for it being strong in an offensive way due to its large size and chances for possessing fighters and spellcasters. Its weakness lies in an urban impotency and lack of true thieving specialists. Law enforcement also tends to take a special notice of bandit gangs, and various members may find their descriptions on wanted posters with uncomfortable regularity.

In another form, this type of guild can exist as a group of freebooters or corsairs, sailing the world as pirates. The pirates would have a seaside lair away from prying eyes or based in a Port-Royal type of city that thrives on piracy. The pirate ship itself might serve as the "guild house."

### Bandit gang structure



Initial number of followers: 5d6  
 Follower type table: C  
 Income factor: A or variable  
 Confrontation factor: D or variable  
 Loyalty factor: E or variable  
 Additional followers table: C  
 \* The lieutenant need not actually be a thief, and in this case can be a fighter of the same general level as an assistant guildmaster.

### The guild structure

At the top of the hierarchy is, of course, the PC guildmaster. To assist him in the normal guild operations, he usually finds it necessary to obtain the services of a thief of not less than 5th level, whose duty it is to furnish training to the novices, as well as receive the monthly guild taxes. This assistant guildmaster may further be called upon to act as a go-between and negotiator between the player character's guild and others.

When initially obtaining this assistant, an inducement of 1,000 gp per level of experience is required; thereafter, the assistant's salary is expressed as a percentage of the guild's monthly take, but not less than 2%. At the PC's desire, this can be increased, which may proportionally increase the assistant's cooperativeness and loyalty base.

At the bottom of the totem are the novice thieves (and nonthieving characters, if any). It is they who bring in the revenue to support the guild and its officers, and a tithe of not less than 5% is assessed as a guild tax on any valuables obtained in the course of thieving.

As mentioned, it is possible that the make-up of the guild can include members with no thieving skills whatsoever, such as fighters or spellcasters; it can be assumed that they lend their particular talents to their thief associates during sanctioned

operations, gaining an equal portion of treasure and experience for doing so.

While the DMG indicates the novices may in fact be of a greater level than 1st, and includes a table for determining that, this writer has found in actual play that unilaterally starting all followers at 1st level makes for the smoothest and most balanced campaign. If, however, a DM feels that strict adherence to the official system is best for his campaign, he is certainly free to disregard this suggestion. In fact, one may forgo the following tables altogether if such best maintains campaign continuity.

When using the follower type tables below, an initial percentile dice roll is made to note what race of follower and class potential are available. In the case of multiclassed elves and half-elves, a second roll is made to see whether the individual possesses two or three classes. The DM then chooses the particular professions, and the follower is created by random dice rolls.

### Follower type table A

Dice roll	Follower type	Die roll	Classes
01-57	Human thief	01-90	Elves
58-59	Human fighter	01-80	2 classes
60-63	Dwarf thief	81-00	3 classes
64	Dwarf, multi-classed		Half-elves
65-68	Elf thief	01-90	2 classes
69	Elf, multiclassed	91-00	3 classes
70-73	Gnome thief		
74	Gnome, multi-classed		
75-78	Halfling thief		
79	Halfling, multi-classed		
80-83	Half-elf thief		
84	Half-elf, multi-classed		
85-88	Half-orc thief		
89	Half-orc, multi-classed		
90-91	Dwarf fighter		
92-93	Elf fighter		
94-95	Gnome fighter		
96-97	Halfling fighter		
98-99	Half-elf fighter		
00	Half-orc fighter		

The DM chooses all additional classes for multiclassed characters, as well as choosing particular sub-races (where applicable).

### Follower type table B

Dice roll	Follower type	Die roll	Classes
01-40	Human thief	01-90	Elves
41-44	Human fighter	01-60	2 classes
45-49	Dwarf thief	61-00	3 classes
50-53	Dwarf, multi-classed		Half-elves
54-57	Elf thief	01-75	2 classes
58-60	Elf, multiclassed	76-00	3 classes

### Dice Follower roll type

61-64	Gnome thief
65-67	Gnome, multi-classed
68-71	Halfling thief
72-74	Halfling, multi-classed
75-78	Half-elf thief
79-81	Half-elf, multi-classed
82-85	Half-orc thief
86-88	Half-orc, multi-classed
89	Dwarf fighter
90-91	Elf fighter
92-93	Gnome fighter
94-95	Halfling fighter
96-97	Half-elf fighter
98-00	Half-orc fighter

The DM chooses all additional classes for multiclassed characters, as well as choosing particular sub-races (when applicable).

### Follower type table C

#### Dice Follower roll type

01-20	Human thief
21-30	Human magic-user
31-35	Human cleric
36-72	Human fighter
73-74	Dwarf fighter
75-76	Dwarf thief
77-78	Elf fighter
79-80	Elf, multiclassed
81-82	Elf thief
83-84	Gnome fighter
85-86	Gnome thief
87-88	Halfling fighter
89-90	Halfling thief
91-92	Half-elf fighter
93-94	Half-elf thief
95-96	Half-elf, multi-classed
97-98	Half-orc fighter
99-00	Half-orc thief

The DM chooses all additional classes for multiclassed characters, as well as choosing particular sub-races (where applicable).

### Die roll Classes

01-80	2 classes
81-00	3 classes
01-90	2 classes
91-00	3 classes

### Follower type table D

#### Dice Follower roll type

01-20	Human thief
21-40	Human fighter
41-44	Dwarf thief
45-50	Dwarf, multi-classed
51-54	Elf thief
55-60	Elf, multiclassed
61-64	Gnome thief
65-70	Gnome, multi-classed
71-74	Halfling thief
75-80	Halfling, multi-classed
81-84	Half-elf thief
85-90	Half-elf, multi-classed
91-94	Half-orc fighter
95-00	Half-orc, multi-classed

The DM chooses all additional classes for multiclassed characters, as well as choosing particular sub-races (where applicable).

#### Die roll Classes

Elves	
01-50	2 classes
51-00	3 classes
Half-elves	
01-60	2 classes
61-00	3 classes

### Guilds and your campaign

In the case of the nonentity guild, the DM can merely choose the particular guild type and assess the character a fee to obtain an assistant guildmaster and structure to serve as guild headquarters (if such is deemed necessary), thereafter referencing on a monthly basis the following charts to determine cash flow and any confrontation factors with law enforcement or other guilds.

The entity guild is best created with the participation of all the players in the campaign. In Nazier's case, when the remainder of the gaming group arrived, they were told to create a thief character for use in a short scenario. A number of multiclassed and straight thieves were rolled up, and the group was then told their guildmaster was Nazier. As was expected, a few smart remarks followed, but the resulting campaign, taking up a session or two every couple of months, has been an exciting diversion from the normal game. In the case of the entity guild, the players should be allowed to create whatever type of thief interests them. If the DM is concerned that this will result in gratuitous loyalty to the guildmaster, rest assured that in actual play this need not necessarily be the case. (Nazier — with gritted teeth — would be the first to admit this.)

Unlike in the nonentity guild, which causes the PC guildmaster to foot all costs in outfitting his thieves, the entity guild allows characters to roll up funds using the method in the *Players Handbook*.

As regards a guild headquarters, campaign circumstances must ultimately dictate whether such is necessary and what the cost will be. The renegade guild, for example, would have no real need for a

specific guild headquarters due to its small size and its need to constantly change locales. The business front guild, on the other hand, obviously requires one or more structures to house its various operations.

The tables following are presented as a guideline primarily for a nonentity guild. In the case of an entity guild, it can generally be taken that the DM has scoped out both some occasional excursions to gain the guild and its followers money and experience, and has determined what conflicts and confrontations with other bodies are likely to occur.

### Income and experience

When referencing the following tables, an initial percentile dice roll is made, adding 1 to the roll for each thief above 10 in the guild, and 2 for each block of territory the guild operates in above one block. The result indicates the gain over the month, which is then adjusted by the Income Factor, either increasing, decreasing, or leaving the amount unchanged.

Once the monthly income is known, the tithes and guild taxes are then subtracted and disbursed, with the player character and assistant guildmaster receiving experience for their portions of the take on a 1-to-1 basis. The amount of money left over is then broken down into separate lots of cash and experience by dividing it by the number of guild members. These guild members, including any nonthieving individuals, are then numbered; each lot is assigned by random dice roll, gaining the guild member one or more portions of money and experience.

As an example, an allied guild with 15 members operating in a three-block area rolls a 77. Adding 5 to the roll for the extra five guild members and 4 for the extra two blocks of territory, this modifies the roll to an 86.

### Income table

#### Dice roll Result

01-10	5-50 gp (5d10)
11-25	8-80 gp (8d10)
26-50	10-100 gp (10d10)
51-70	40-160 gp (4d4 x 10)
71-80	40-240 gp (4d6 x 10)
81-90	60-360 gp (6d6 x 10)
91-95	80-640 gp (8d8 x 10)
96 +	100-1000 gp (10d100)

Natural

00 See below

On an unmodified roll of 00, roll twice on the above table and add the results together. Subsequent rolls of 00 indicate additional rolls in the same manner, all of which are added together.

The above result is adjusted by the following income factors:

- A. Exceptional: x5
- B. Above average: x3
- C. Average: x1



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D. Below average: x.5

E. Poor: x.25

The following activity factors are optional and must be applied at the DM's discretion:

1. Opportunities purposefully created for theft (traps, scams, lures, etc.): x2

2. Extreme and purposeful measures taken (i.e., steal everything in sight): x4

In the example above, between 60-360 gp was taken in by the guild; this is determined to be 200 gp. This result is adjusted by the guild's Income Factor (D), halving this figure to 100 gp. From this is subtracted a 5% tithe to an allied guild, 4% for the assistant guildmaster, and 6% for the PC guildmaster, for a total of 85 gp given to the guild members. The modest sums gained by the PC and his assistant are 6 gp and 4 gp, respectively. What can be done to bolster this rather mediocre amount? Higher guild taxes, for a start – but this affects loyalty of the novices in an unfavorable way (who likes taxes?). At the PC's discretion, the thieves can be urged to step up their activities by one or two factors. The first factor will double the take, while the second will triple it – and, of course, this will modify the confrontation roll (see below) in an unfavorable way.

Of the 85 gp remaining for the month, this is divided by the 15 guild members for a lot amount of roughly 5 gp (round down). A 20-sided die roll is then made, ignoring results over 15. Each time a number comes up corresponding to a particular guild member's number, he receives one lot of money and experience. If this seems too modest an income, consider the fact that the DMG rates the pay of a professional mercenary soldier at a mere 3 or 4 gp a month!

As for funds received by either the assistant guildmaster or the guildmaster himself for the recruits' level training, it can be taken for granted the bulk of these amounts will go towards paying actual costs, while the remainder serves to keep up the guild headquarters and maintain the two guild officers in a modest lifestyle. No experience is gained for training monies.

Finally, if the DM feels a greater potential for gain is appropriate, he may check the tables on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, rather than monthly.

### Monthly confrontations

While operating a thieves' guild can be fun and profitable, it can also be dangerous. Neither city government nor law-enforcement officials number thieves' guilds among their allies. Rival guilds can likewise prove to be an annoyance. Each month (if not more frequently), the following tables are checked to see what baneful occurrences, if any, befall the guild or its members. While the term "novice thieves" is used throughout, it also is meant to include any nonthieving guild members. While in the matter of the entity guild these tables are probably unnecessary, they may nevertheless provide some helpful ideas.

**Table A: Low potential for conflicts**

Dice roll	Result
01-90	No confrontations this month
91-98	Randomly selected novice thief apprehended by constabulary; fine of 10-40 gp must be paid or thief is punished
99+	Randomly selected novice thief killed in thieving attempt
Natural 00	1-3 novice thieves apprehended or killed (50% chance of either)

The following adjustments are made to the dice roll:

- +1 for every thief above 10 in guild
- +30 if activity factor 1 pursued (opportunities created)
- +50 if activity factor 2 pursued (extreme measures taken)

**Table B: Below-average potential for encounters**

Dice roll	Result
01-75	No confrontations this month
76-85	Randomly selected thief apprehended by constabulary; fine of 10-40 gp must be paid or thief is punished
86-90	As above, but number of thieves captured is 1-3
91-95	Rival guild active in area; gross receipts halved this month
96+	Randomly selected novice thief killed in thieving attempt
Natural 00	As above, but 1-3 thieves lost

The following adjustments are made to the dice roll:

- +1 for every thief above 15 in guild
- +20 if activity factor 1 is pursued
- +40 if activity factor 2 is pursued

**Table C: Average potential for encounters**

Dice roll	Result
01-50	No confrontations this month
51-70	Rival guild active in area; gross receipts fall 25%
71-85	Randomly selected novice thief apprehended by local constabulary; fine of 10-40 gp must be paid or thief is punished
86-90	Randomly selected novice thief killed in thieving attempt
91-95	Rival guild active in area; halve monthly receipts
96+	1-4 randomly selected thieves apprehended by local constabulary; fines must be paid (as above) or thieves are punished
Natural 00	Randomly selected novice thief is assassinated

The following adjustments are made to the dice roll:

- +1 for every thief above 20 in guild
- +15 if activity factor 1 is pursued
- +35 if activity factor 2 is pursued

**Table D: Frequent encounters with law enforcement**

Dice roll	Result
01-40	No confrontations this month
41-60	1-2 randomly selected thieves apprehended; fine of 100 gp per thief to be paid or else they are executed
61-75	1-2 randomly selected thieves killed while attempting a robbery
76-85	Local law enforcement hunting guild headquarters; 10% chance they locate and raid it
86-95	Law enforcement sweeps area; 40% chance that 1-6 guild members apprehended and fined 10-100 gp each
96+	Reroll on table E
Natural 00	Assistant guildmaster apprehended with stolen property in his possession; DM should arbitrate situation

The following adjustments are made to the dice roll:

- +10 if activity factor 1 is pursued
- +25 if activity factor 2 is pursued

**Table E: Frequent encounters with other guilds**

Dice roll	Result
01-40	No confrontations this month
41-60	Rival guild active in area; monthly take down 25%





- 61-75 Randomly selected novice thief beaten up by rival guild members; 20% chance that death results from attack
- 76-85 Courier robbed; no guild tithe this month
- 86-90 Rival guild active in area; monthly take halved
- 91-95 Randomly selected novice thief killed by rival gang
- 96+ Reroll on table D

Natural  
00 Roll percentile dice on special events table

### Special events table

- | Dice roll | Special result   |
|-----------|--|
| 01        | Officer from rival guild offers to join your guild   |
| 02-05     | NPC guildmaster frustrates assassination attempt   |
| 06-08     | Randomly selected novice thief kidnapped and held for ransom   |
| 09-15     | Street urchins pickpocket PC guildmaster, taking 1-20 gp   |
| 16-24     | Randomly selected novice thief works con game with rival guild friend; gains 10-100 gp                       |
| 25-29     | Guild cheated by crooked fence; lose 25% of indicated take this month  |
| 30-34     | Rival guild member killed by novices from player character's guild   |
| 35-39     | Rival guild member's body dumped on player-character's turf by third party to stir up trouble                |
| 45-49     | Stoolie sets up 1-4 novice thieves for apprehension by law enforcement                                       |
| 50-59     | Guild headquarters firebombed or attacked by damage-causing spell; 50% chance of 100-600 gp damage           |
| 60-74     | Mutually beneficial project with another guild goes well; guild takes in an additional 100-600 gp this month |
| 75-82     | Randomly selected novice thief disappears  |

- 83-84 Guild headquarters destroyed; DM must arbitrate
- 85-94 Assassination attempt made on PC guildmaster; DM must arbitrate
- 95-99 Assassination attempt made on assistant guildmaster; DM must arbitrate
- 00 Assistant guildmaster assassinated

### Loyalty table

- 01-60 No problems this month.
- 61-75 Randomly selected thief lies about monthly take; subtract 5% from indicated guild tithe
- 76-85 Guild members unhappy with paying guild tithe; subtract 40% from indicated guild tithe this month (they lied about what they took in)
- 86-90 Guild members unhappy; subtract 50% from indicated guild tithe (they lied even more); 25% chance a randomly selected novice thief quits guild (20% chance this thief becomes turncoat, setting up problems for player character's guild)
- 91-95 Rebellion brewing; subtract 75% from indicated guild tithe; 20% chance that 1-4 novice thieves quit the guild
- 96+ Open rebellion; no guild tithe this month; 25% chance of a guild-within-a-guild developing (30% chance assistant guildmaster heads it)

The following adjustments are made to the dice roll:

Subtract the PC guildmaster's loyalty base, as indicated by his charisma  
 +1 for every percentage point of tax over 15% charged by the guild  
 -5 for every percentage point of tax charged by the guild below 10%

The following loyalty factors are also added to the dice roll:

- A. Fanatic/devoted: -40
- B. Above-average loyalty: -25
- C. Average loyalty: +0
- D. Below-average loyalty: +15
- E. Relatively mutinous: +25

### Additional followers table A

When there is a superior chance for new candidates to join the guild, the percentage chance of this occurring monthly is figured as follows:

Base recruitment chance: 20%  
 Modified by:  
 +3 for every 6 points of guildmaster's charisma  
 +2 for every block of territory controlled  
 +1 for every 10 thieves in guild  
 Number of recruits gained: 1

### Additional followers table B

When the guild's chance of gathering to itself new thieves is no better than — or worse than — average, it is figured as follows:

Base recruitment chance: 10%  
 Modified by:  
 +2 for every 6 points of guildmaster's charisma  
 +1 for every block of territory controlled  
 +1 for every 10 thieves in the guild  
 Number of recruits gained: 1

### Additional followers table C

When circumstances are such that the chances for gaining new guild members are poor, the following table is consulted:

Base recruitment chance: 05%  
 Modified by:  
 +1 for every 6 points of guildmaster's charisma  
 +1 for every 2 blocks of territory controlled  
 +1 for every 15 thieves in the guild  
 Number of recruits gained: 1

### Robbin' hoods

While this work has dealt primarily with the thieves' guild as a purely criminal body, nothing is further from the truth if it is assumed the guild must stop there. The good-aligned guild is a perfect example of this. It is possible for a thieves' guild to exist in the open as a helpful and respected part of the community — even working hand in hand with law enforcement to cleanse society of particularly undesirable elements, such as an assassins' guild selling murder to the highest bidder! More than once in both history and fiction have thieves not only found favor with the people but have even saved the day a few times. The wealthy merchant who desires a secret repository be built to house valuables, a prosperous businessman who desires a report on the trustworthiness of his employees or the security of his building, the engineer who must construct a secret passage to provide a sovereign with egress from his castle in time of war, the party of adventurers who have come to the Kingsford Burglars Guild to seek the services of an honest thief for dungeoneering help, the devoted group of bandits committed to overthrowing a wicked monarch and restoring freedom to the people — these are examples of how a thieves' guild can be one of society's best and most valued friends.

Thus, while much of what a thieves' guild can stand for may be contrary to the tenets of good alignment, those truly rare and creative players and DMs may find that the good-aligned guild achieves a potential no criminal guild could ever hope to attain.



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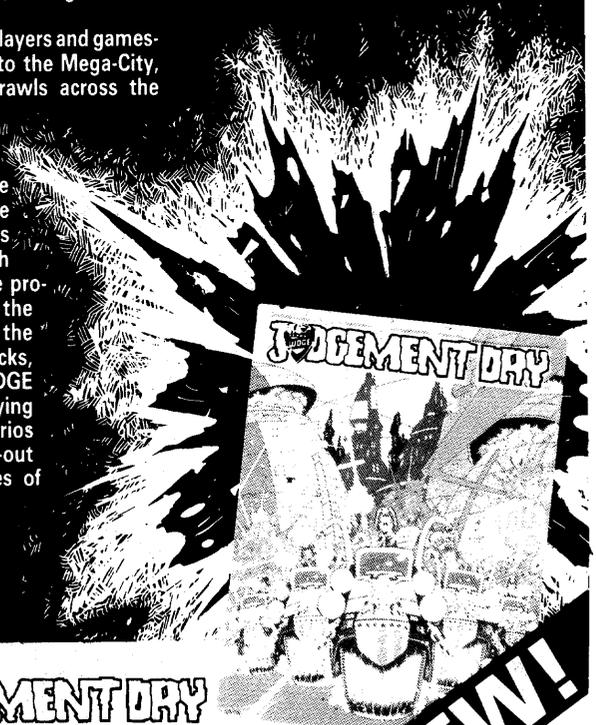
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# The Art of Climbing Walls

*A modified system for thieves*

by Vince Garica

As pointed out in the *DMG*, probably the most abused thieving function is that of climbing walls. While a number of important guidelines on this critical talent exist apart from the *Players Handbook*, few DMs are aware of them, and fewer still incorporate them into actual play. Perhaps the primary reason for this can be found in the *Players Handbook*, which provides a simple, understandable table for noting the base climbing percentage of a thief or assassin. This handy table unfortunately engraves the thought upon the minds of both player and DM alike that the subject ends there, without the realization that strict adherence to this table alone invariably results in the talent of wall-climbing becoming overly simplified and gratuitous.

Successfully scaling surfaces ranging from slime-covered masonry to slippery limestone formations is a difficult, specialized talent of which the thief and assassin should be justifiably proud — as well as aware of the true difficulty entailed in the action. Cheapening the skill by the assumption that the climbing percentage never varies from the base figure (that figure being referred to as a *non-slippery/dry, rough* surface in the enclosed table) robs the character of the true satisfaction he deserves when he does make the roll, as well as granting an undeserved bonus

to the profession not balanced by comparable bonuses to other classes.

The purpose of this article is to encourage a change of attitude in the way most gamers view this skill, and present a clearer picture of how it is performed and what terrain factors alter the character's climbing potential.

## Climbing methods

When a thief or assassin attempts to scale a surface of any sort, he probably resorts to one of five different means to get from the ground to the desired point aloft. No single method should be presumed to be superior to any other, and it must be assumed that the character has chosen the means most applicable to the task at hand when the roll is made.

Regarding the use of tools in climbing, it is up to the DM to decide whether or not these are necessary in special situations. Although the *Players Handbook* seems to imply that the thief's ability to climb walls is unique, there is no explanation for how these climbs are achieved. One could assume that since there is no mention of tools used in climbing walls, that there is no need for them — at least in regard to the thief's ability to climb. Still, this is not a very realistic approach. Surely, some walls are impossible to negotiate without tools; the slipperiest, smoothest surfaces probably require some method of approach other than the *isometric* or *hands, feet, and muscle* methods (described below).

Nevertheless, the question of whether tools are necessary in certain climbs is one that must be answered by the Dungeon Master. If a hard, realistic approach to gaming is preferred, the DM may require tools for scaling certain surfaces. (Some of the types of tools used in climbing appear in this article and on page 16 of the *DSG*.) If a more symbolic, figurative gaming approach is preferred, the DM may describe the thief's ability to climb walls as akin to the monk's control of mind over matter. As a result, the thief requires no tools to negotiate even the slipperiest,

smoothest surface — the *climb walls* ability accounts for this action.

The information provided in this article is offered purely as a system of guidelines; it is entirely up to the DM to determine what approach to take in regard to the thief's ability to climb walls.

1. *Isometrics*. The thief achieves this mode of ascent by maintaining constant pressure between two opposing surfaces and squirming slowly upwards. Two walls or surfaces are necessary for this, and they may either be parallel to or at right angles to each other (e.g., a handy corner of a room, a chimney, or a narrow corridor). Surfaces parallel to each other must be no farther than 5' apart.

2. *Hands, feet, and muscle*. This is the most direct climbing method, usable when the surface has either protuberances or apertures that the character's hands and feet can use as anchoring points as he muscles himself up the surface.

3. *Grapple and line*. If he successfully snags a high projection with a grappling or climbing hook, the character hauls himself up hand over hand by rope. In the event the roll is unsuccessful, the DM may indicate that the thief or assassin let go of the rope or that the hook was improperly set and worked its way loose. In any event, when using a rope in climbing a wall, a basic modifier of +40% (as established on page 16 of the *DSG*) should be appended to the base climbing rating. This figure is then determined using the table at the end of this article, and is further modified by the type of surface and its condition.

4. *Tiger claws*. Similar to the *ninja nekode*, these are metal spikes or spiked sandals the thief slips onto his hands or feet, making use of them to grip small cracks and fissures in the surface being scaled. This method of climbing works only on the following surfaces and at the listed bonuses: *smooth/cracked* at +10%, *fairly rough* at +15%, and *rough* at +20%. Thieves are not able to use tiger claws or similar climbing hooks on very smooth walls.



5. *Spikes and line.* When a number of cracks are present in an otherwise smooth or slippery surface, the character hammers in some climbing spikes, using them as steps or anchors for a climbing line. The success of this action is modified by +40%, as illustrated by the use of a rope and grapple above, and only works on surfaces of a *smooth/cracked*, *fairly rough*, and *rough* nature. Spikes may be used on *very smooth* surfaces with some cracks, but the climber receives no 40% bonus.

### Surface varieties

As the DMG points out, a thief or assassin usually encounters four general types of surfaces when attempting to climb walls. Just as the relative degree of slipperiness can alter the base climbing percentage, it may also be reasoned that the smoothness of the surface in question affects this figure.

The different types of surfaces normally encountered are listed below, along with the type of climbing method most frequently applicable to each of them.

1. *Very smooth.* Some examples of this surface are cleanly faced walls of granite or marble, where few deep cracks are present to aid the character in the climb. When confronted with a surface of this type, which is encountered most often in a temple or throne-room area, isometric climbing would be the most frequently used means of ascent. By far the most difficult surface to deal with, the scaling of very smooth walls challenges the talents of even master thieves and assassins.

2. *Smooth/cracked.* Next in difficulty are these surfaces. Gigantic statues of stone or metal would fall under this category (the cover of the old *Players Handbook* shows such a statue) as well as the majority of natural cavern walls. The *hands, feet, and muscle* method, as well as *tiger claws* and *spikes and line*, would be the most prevalent modes of climbing these surfaces, depending on available protuberances and cracks.

3. *Fairly rough.* As most dungeon walls fall under this category, and as a character most frequently uses his talents against these surfaces, this article and the following climbing table consider the *fairly rough* category as the base surface type, granting neither bonuses nor penalties to the base climbing percentage except for applicable slipperiness factors. In ascending the typical dungeon wall, the *hands, feet, and muscle*, *grapple and line*, or *tiger claws* methods are standard.

4. *Rough.* Rough surfaces are generally encountered in natural outdoor settings, such as mountain sides, cliffs, and so forth. Further, on those occasions the thief or assassin plies his trade outside of the dungeon setting, the scaling of urban walls and buildings also comes under this heading. The *hands, feet, and muscle* and *grapple and line* methods usually suffice here.

### Friction and climbing

The greatest detriment to the character's climbing ability occurs when the surface to be scaled lacks friction because of slipperiness caused by moisture, slime, or plant growths. In general, the character is faced with any of three condition factors:

1. *Nonslippery/dry.* When the DM rules that no moisture or other circumstances are present to cause the climbing surface to be slippery, apart from the natural smoothness of the face itself, no penalties are assessed the thief's climbing percentage other than those for armor type (see *Unearthed Arcana*, page 22) or heavy encumbrance.

2. *Slightly slippery/damp.* According to the DMG, just as many dungeon walls fall under the *fairly rough* category, so most of them (but not all) are also fairly slippery due to moisture, slime, and the like. These conditions make the climb twice as dangerous as normal.

3. *Slippery/wet.* The most dangerous climbing conditions occur when the surface to be scaled is either slippery or wet due to excessive dampness or slime. Under these conditions, the player character's

risks are ten times what they would normally be! Even the most proficient wall-climbers utter a prayer or two when ascending any surface of this type, doing so only under the most extreme of circumstances.

### Using the climbing table

The following table has been provided to give quick and easy determination of a thief or assassin's chances to climb a given type of surface. Observant readers may note several differences between this section and the DMG. First, the character is given a bonus of +25% to the base climbing percentage when climbing *rough/natural* surfaces. Conversely, a penalty of -25% and -50% is applied to the base figure when facing *smooth/cracked* or *very smooth* surfaces, respectively. The logic behind this is that a *rough/natural* surface is somewhat easier to scale than the standard *fairly rough* surface, and the *smooth/cracked* and *very smooth* surfaces are in turn increasingly more difficult to scale than the *fairly rough* median.

The biggest change, however, lies in a restructuring of the slipperiness penalty. As presently written, the DMG handles this aspect of wall-climbing by multiplying the character's chances of falling by two when scaling *slightly slippery* surfaces, and by 10 when facing *slippery* ones. While penalties due to these conditions are fundamentally reasonable, an imbalance appears when the DMG formula is applied during actual play. A 5th-level thief, for instance, has no chance whatever to climb a *slippery* surface, while just five levels later his chances increase to 90%! The massive penalty at lower levels is not rationally balanced by large bonuses in quick succession; as a result, this article suggests a more consistent use of condition penalties would be to apply a set penalty at all levels when ascending *slightly slippery* or *slippery/wet* surfaces of -25% and -50%, respectively. These penalties are added to any adjustments for surface-types, and when both these fac-

### Thieves' table for climbing walls

Surface type and conditions	Base climbing percentage (for level and race)																				Move round			
	01-05	06-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-60	61-65	66-70	71-75	76-80	81-85	86-90	91-95	96-00		101-105	106-110	
Very Smooth																								
nonslippery/dry	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	6'	
slightlyslippery/damp	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	3'	
slippery/wet	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	05	10	1'
Smooth/cracked																								
nonslippery/dry	01	01	01	01	01	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	12'	
slightlyslippery/damp	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	6'	
slippery/wet	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	3'	
Fairly rough																								
nonslippery/dry	As per base climbing percentage																				18'			
slightlyslippery/damp	01	01	01	01	01	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	9'	
slippery/wet	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	6'	
Rough/natural																								
nonslippery/dry	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	24'	
slightlyslippery/damp	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	99	99	99	12'	
slippery/wet	01	01	01	01	01	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	9'	

character's base climbing percentage, the character's true chance of scaling a given surface is revealed.

The final difference between the present rules and this system lies in the fact that the character is always allowed a negligible chance to climb certain difficult surfaces irrespective of indicated penalties. Likewise, there is always a 1% chance of the character's falling, regardless of indicated bonuses.

To properly make use of the chart, four steps must be followed.

1. Determine the particular surface type to be scaled (*very smooth, smooth/cracked, fairly rough, rough/natural*, etc.).

2. Note whether the surface to be scaled is *nonslippery/dry, slightly slippery/damp*, or *slippery/wet*.

3. Take the character's base climbing percentage as listed in the *Players Handbook* and modify it by any bonuses or, penalties due to armor or encumbrance, then find the appropriate column at the top of the climbing table in which this number falls.

4. Cross-reference down to the surface type and its relative degree of slipperiness. The number revealed is the character's actual percentage chance to climb the surface in question.

For example, a 1st-level human thief plans to climb a dungeon wall with a few patches of slime on it. We know that the typical dungeon wall falls under the *fairly rough* category, and the slime marks its relative degree of slipperiness as *slightly slippery*. The *Players Handbook* shows the thief's normal chance to *climb walls* is 85%. The thief wears normal armor, and so no modifications are made to this figure. Finding the "81-85" column on the climbing table and cross-referencing down to the *fairly rough* and *slightly slippery* categories, we see the thief's final chance to climb this wall is 60%.

No system can please everyone. If a group prefers to retain the *DMG's* slipperiness modifiers, any applicable penalties can be subtracted from the base climbing percentage, and the climbing table may then be used only for surface-type adjustments, referencing only the *nonslippery/dry* category regardless of the relative degree of slipperiness.

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# Honor Among Thieves

*Oaths and codes  
of the thieves' guilds*

by **Eric Oppen** and  
**Robin Jenkins**

Playing an entity thieves' guild as described in Vince Garcia's article, "A Den of Thieves," provides a variety of opportunities for role-playing intrigue and adventure. Aside from the normal activities of running the guild and making money, there is certainly room for the development of game plots and scenarios. By its nature, the thieves' guild is the perfect setting for intrigue and adventure; whether steeped in a Masonic atmosphere of silence and secrecy or in a visible hierarchy of political machination, the thieves' guild is the perfect source for game plots.

The following article is a sidelight to the

entity guild as described in Vince Garcia's article. Although it is generally held that there is no honor among thieves, the guild structure is a direct contradiction of this statement. Within this social structure, there are certain laws and beliefs that must be maintained in order to keep the social fabric tightly woven. Without a code of ethics and an oath of fealty, chaos quickly bursts the seam that order offers. The following oath and list of ethics are provided. As conflict is the essence of storytelling, the subject of violation of the oath and the code are discussed at length. Although these guidelines are provided for developing the atmosphere of the entity thieves' guild, there is no reason they cannot be used in the formation of game plots, subplots, and scenarios.

## The Guildsman's Code of Ethics

1. A guild member never informs on a fellow guild member.
2. A guild member never discloses the location of the thieves' guild.\*
3. A guild member never discloses the identity of the Guildmaster.\*
4. A guild member never robs a business or individual protected by the thieves' guild.
5. Nonguild members may never be brought onto guild premises without the Guildmaster's approval.
6. Guild members may not include non-members in guild-sponsored or guild-condoned activities.
7. No guild member may belong to or work for another thieves' or assassins' guild.
8. No guild member may enlist the aid of another guild or foreign guild member without the Guildmaster's approval (in such cases, the enlistee is expected to act in accordance with guild policy).
9. No guild member may involve himself in nonguild thievery within the guild's territory.
10. Guild members must never reveal guild-related information or its sources to the authorities, nor to any nonguild member. Guild premises, procedures, or personnel may not be discussed with any nonguild member.
11. Bribes and other forms of monetary compensation may not be administered by any thief other than the Guildmaster or his appointee.
12. No thief may hold membership in the thieves' guild without paying all regular guild dues or guild tithes.

13. Guild members must always relinquish their share of taxation to the guild and to the Guildmaster before receiving their cut.
14. No large heists or robberies may be performed without the Guildmaster's approval. \* \*
15. A guild member may never accept an apprentice without the Guildmaster's approval.
16. Apprentices are not allowed to involve themselves in guild activities without their mentor's or Guildmaster's consent.

\* In cases where the guild location or the Guildmaster's identity is commonly known, these two rules do not apply.

\* \* The Dungeon Master must define the size of the maximum haul allowed from thieving adventures, or else note what areas (such as royal palaces, government buildings, etc.) cannot be pillaged without permission.

As a general note, many of these ethics have little or no importance, depending on the structure of the guild and its relations with other guilds (see Vince Garcia's article, "A Den of Thieves"), and upon the particular details of the circumstance at hand. It is up to the DM to determine the importance of these ethics and the severity of a particular infraction.

As expressed before, the guild structure demands some code of ethics to maintain order and authority. The Guildsman's Oath of Fealty affirms both. At the point of his induction into the thieves' guild, the apprentice thief is expected to utter the Guildsman's Oath aloud. This oath is uttered before the entire guild in a ceremony that marks the apprentice's acceptance into the guild as a novice thief. This ceremony varies from guild to guild.

In guilds of good alignment, for example, the apprentice may kneel before the Guildmaster and place his own right hand on his left shoulder. The Guildmaster then places his hand upon the apprentice's hand, and as the Assistant Guildmaster reads the Guildsman's Oath aloud, the apprentice repeats it. After the oath is uttered, the apprentice is motioned to arise. From this point on, he is recognized as a member of the thieves' guild.

Once the Guildsman's Oath has been uttered aloud by an apprentice, he or she agrees to abide by the Guildsman's Code of Ethics for that particular guild. Ethics vary from guild to guild. For a neutral-good guild that is highly visible in a society, Ethics 2 and 3 will not be a part of the Code. It is up to the DM (or the PC Guildmaster, in such circumstances) to decide which ethics are appropriate for that particular guild.

Ethics 1, 2, and 3 are known collectively as the Vow of Silence. Rumor has it that in an unnamed city with a particularly powerful thieves' guild, a thief disclosed the

location of his guild headquarters (a highly secretive and extremely mercenary organization at constant odds with the authorities and rival guilds) to a group of friends at a waterfront tavern. A thief from a rival guild overheard the drunken thief and passed the information along to the authorities. The authorities immediately infiltrated the premises, arresting the Guildmaster and a large number of guild members, all of whom were executed. Though the full nature of the punishment visited on the talkative thief by his surviving guildless comrades was never revealed, it is said that the assistant Guildmaster who caught the miserable wretch cut out his tongue to insure the act would never be repeated. From that point on, these three basic ethics have been known as the Vow of Silence.

There are numerous actions not included in the Guildsman's Code of Ethics that are considered inviolate acts. Usually, any unlawful act committed against the guild, its Guildmaster, any guild member, or any guild protectorate is considered a breach of ethics and is punishable in any of a number of ways.

#### Code violations

Any breach of ethics is punished immediately by the guild. The severity of the punishment varies from guild to guild, and

should be decided by the DM in each particular case in accord with the alignment of the guild and the severity of the crime. Keep in mind that these punishments are merely guidelines, and as such can be administered, altered, or dispensed with at the DM's discretion.

The severity of infractions varies from guild to guild based upon the alignment of the guild and upon the special circumstances surrounding each guild. For example, a neutral-good guild that is fairly well-known in a society may allow the local authorities to deal with recreant guild members as they deem fit. By the same token, a neutral-evil guild that mires itself in secrecy may prescribe prolonged torture and eventual execution for any disclosure of guild information, the guild location, or the identity of any guild members. Basic examples of the severity of each infraction are as follows:

**Severe infractions:** Ethics 3, 5, and 10 in highly secretive guilds; Ethic 2 in all guilds; Ethics 7 and 9, depending upon the guild in question; and, any act of felony against the Guildmaster, the guild, or its members. Murder, grand theft, blackmail, sedition, etc., all fall into this category.

**Major infractions:** Ethics 4, 12, and 13 in all guilds; 5 through 10, and 14 through

## The Guildsman's Oath

**"I SWEAR MY SOLEMN AND utter allegiance to the Thieves' Guild of (this city) before all other guilds, groups, and authorities. I place the Guildmaster's authority before any other authority, AND I VOW to abide by this authority exclusively. IN guild affairs, I acknowledge the Guildmaster's word as law."**

16, depending upon the visibility of the guild and the details of the infraction; and, any act of misdemeanor against the Guildmaster, the guild, or its members. Petty theft, assault, destruction of property, etc., all fall into this category.

**Minor infractions:** Ethic 11 in all guilds; Ethics 6 through 8, and 14 through 16, depending on the guild and the details of the infraction; and, any skirmishes, arguments, or similar problems between guild members.

Generally speaking, guilds of a lawful alignment decide a guild member's guilt or innocence, and the punishment for the infraction, through some type of guild court or vote. At their best, these courts may resemble our present-day legal system of representation, giving the suspected guild member the benefit of protection and unbiased trial. At their worst, however, guild courts may resemble the kangaroo courts that often epitomized law in the Old American West, offering little protection and representation to the suspected member, and administering extreme punishments without reserve.

Guilds of a chaotic alignment usually leave judgment in such cases entirely up to the Guildmaster and his associates. At its best, judgment by the Guildmaster and his associates could resemble a review by the Supreme Court. At its worst, however, judgment by the Guildmaster may resemble a judgment by the worst of the Roman emperors, such as Nero or Caligula. In either case, judgments may be made by either the Guildmaster himself, or by a small council composed of the Guildmaster (who heads the council) and his immediate associates.

Because circumstances vary over time, it is important to remember that no one set of rules can be expected to cover every possible case of infraction. As always, each situation is different, since the nature of rules is that there are always exceptions. For this reason, the information in this article is offered as a set of guidelines, and not as a strict set of rules. Suggested punishments for infractions against the guild, its members, or its code of ethics follow.

They are listed in order of general severity.

### **Punishments**

1. Execution.
2. Expulsion from the guild.
3. Suspension from the guild.
4. Suspension of select guild rights.
5. Restriction from select guild activities.
6. Monetary or material fine, or confiscation of possessions.
7. Mandatory work or activity.
8. Any other penalty deemed fit by Guildmaster.

The lengths of suspensions and restrictions, amounts of fines and penalties, and types of works, suspensions of guild rights, and restrictions from guild activities are all variable. Monetary fines are usually assessed only in cases of crimes against property (theft, destruction, etc.), and most often are double, triple, or quadruple the value of the property involved — depending, of course, on the severity of the crime as assessed by the guild or Guildmaster. Suspensions and restrictions are usually administered in cases where a thief has disclosed guild information, allowed nonmembers to be involved in guild activity, has betrayed guild trust or secrecy, and so on. The lengths of these suspensions or restrictions vary with each case, and can extend from anywhere between one week to five years, depending upon the severity of the act. In extreme cases, some guild members may be permanently restricted from certain guild activities or may have certain guild rights suspended. Types of work, suspension of guild rights, and restrictions from guild activities are variable in each case, and are decided by the DM.

### **Execution**

In the thieves' guild, some infractions are punishable by execution. Generally speaking, only guilds of an evil alignment condone execution as a form of punishment, although it has been known to occur in some neutral guilds and even to a rarer extent in good guilds. This latter case is more an exception to the rule, since the infraction would be nothing less than the murder of a fellow guild member, sedition against the guild, or unlawful acts against the Guildmaster. In guilds where secrecy is paramount, an infraction such as disclosure of the Guildmaster's identity or the location of guild headquarters warrants immediate execution. In some chaotic-evil guilds, disclosure of protected information such as names of guild members and prospective plans for robberies also carries execution as a penalty.

The manner in which executions are carried out vary greatly from guild to guild. In a neutral guild, an execution is usually hired out to a professional assassin, thereby dissociating the guild from the crime. In an evil guild, the execution is

performed by a guild member and conducted in utter secrecy away from guild headquarters. In instances such as these, a thief who has committed another crime punishable by mandatory work may be required to perform an execution in order to clear his record with the guild. The guild is not interested in how the act is performed — just that it is performed and done without any ties whatsoever to the guild. Preliminary torture for severe offenses may precede the execution in evil guilds.

A good-aligned thieves' guild rarely expects a guild member to perform an execution. Assassins are not hired, but the Guildmaster, as a matter of honor, may elect to perform the task if there is no other recourse. On occasions, good and neutral guilds notify the local authorities (if they are in favor with them) and, through the process of bribery or favors being repaid, have the thief set up for a crime that carries a penalty of execution. In this manner, the guild is able to wash its hands of the act entirely. Note that any reprehensible act, such as informing on a fellow thief or committing any act of murder within the guild, often carries a penalty of death. In chaotic and neutral guilds, acts against the Guildmaster often carry this penalty, since the Guildmaster only entices others to follow suit if the first case is not provided as an example.

### **Expulsion from a guild**

There are numerous cases in which a guild or Guildmaster would deem expulsion from the guild a justifiable punishment. One such example is withholding of guild funds. Although the function of the thieves' guild is to make money through illegal means, the guild does not take kindly to having money made from it in the same manner. In the guild's opinion, thieves are granted the opportunity to steal within guild territory in return for a reasonable and regular amount in dues. For these dues, thieves are provided all the benefits the guild has to offer (as illustrated in Eric Oppen's article, "Lords of the Night"). Thus, a thief who withholds dues, as is forbidden in item 12 above, is in violation of this exchange. The guild does not tolerate any abuse of such a system. Within its structure, thieves are expected to not only adhere to the guild's code of ethics, but they are expected to have some sense of respect for the guild and for its members. As far as the guild is concerned, a thief who doesn't abide by these codes simply doesn't belong in the guild. As a result, expulsion from the guild is often advised in cases such as these.

### **Suspension from a guild**

Some infractions, such as a guild member performing a major heist without the Guildmaster's approval, may warrant a suspension from the guild. Depending upon the severity of the crime, this suspension can range anywhere from one



week to one year, but are usually one month in length. If a thief operates for another guild during this time, one of two situations occurs. In a good-aligned guild, for example, the suspended guild member is expelled permanently from his original guild. This often results in the expelled guild member becoming an enemy of his original guild. If the member is still operating within the same city as his original guild, the former guild member may become a target for a robbery or for a bit of rough action from his old guild mates. If it is discovered that the former guild member has been providing his new guild with information on his former guild's operation, the former guild may elect to have the thief bumped off to silence him — regardless of alignment considerations.

In some cases, the former guild may try to get the suspended member to rejoin his original guild. If the former guild member has worked for a rival guild, it is to the original guild's advantage to know the operations of their rival. Of course, once he has returned to the original guild, it is doubtful that the turncoat will ever be returned to a position of complete trust. As a result, the thief may be retained for information on the rival guild, but won't be included in any important guild activities. If the character refuses to return to his original guild, the guild may decide to have the character assassinated, either by members of the guild or by a professional for hire. Obviously, a thief who has gone to another guild in the same sphere of influence is a danger to the original guild, as the knowledge he possesses is certainly of interest to the rival guild.

### **Suspension of rights**

Some infractions do not immediately result as an action against the guild, but lead indirectly to some later infraction. For example, a guild member accepts an apprentice without the Guildmaster's approval. The apprentice likewise breaks the rules, by thieving without his master's or his Guildmaster's approval, and is caught in the act by the local authorities. If the apprentice is smart and remains silent, the Guildmaster may allow the master to bail the apprentice out or bribe for him at the master's own expense. Needless to say, the apprentice will not be allowed to return to the guild upon his release.

If the apprentice talks, informing on the guild in any way, he is dealt with by the guild. If the guild is highly secretive, attempts may be made to silence the apprentice. If the guild is fairly public, having some degree of control within the local law enforcement agency, a bribe might insure the apprentice's silence by placing him in solitary confinement for an indefinite length of time. In either case, the Guildmaster decides whether the master acted unwittingly, though not malevolently, in his acceptance of an apprentice without approval. As his punishment, the

thief master may have his right to an apprentice suspended for a period ranging from one month to one year. If the action resulted in major problems for the guild, the Guildmaster may decide to revoke the thief master's right to ever have an apprentice.

### **Restriction from activities**

In the case of minor infractions, such as cheating on a lottery for a monthly payment or for failing to return items (of a nonmagical nature) belonging to the thieves' guild after using them, a restriction of select guild activities may be deemed a reasonable punishment. In the former case, the member may be temporarily (one month to one year, depending upon the severity of the act) restricted from participating in the monthly lottery. In the latter case, the member may be restricted from using guild tools for a similar duration. If the act has been deemed particularly heinous, these rights might be restricted permanently.

This type of punishment might also be instituted in the case of a bungled burglary. If, for example, a group of thieves have been apprehended during a robbery, and the Guildmaster has agreed to bail them or bribe for them, he may elect to punish the bunglers by restricting them from any future heists. Instead, he may require the thieves to work the streets or train novices for one month to one year, or permanently in an extreme case (an extreme case being a bungled burglary that results in the death of a guild member or in the loss of a substantial amount of capital).

### **Monetary fines and confiscation**

In major and minor infractions, the Guildmaster may decide to levy a monetary fine. In major cases, the fine is usually in addition to another form of punishment (e.g., mandatory work or suspension of select guild rights). For example, in the example of the master accepting an apprentice without the Guildmaster's approval, the Guildmaster may deem the situation a major infraction if the apprentice has leaked information about the guild to the authorities. If the apprentice has been bailed out, the Guildmaster may levy a fine in addition to the suspension of the master's right to have an apprentice. The fine in this case may be the cost of the bribe — double or triple if the situation has created great problems. If the apprentice has to be silenced, the Guildmaster may require the master to finance the act in addition to the suspension of his right to have an apprentice. An additional payment to the Guildmaster or to the guild as a whole may also be required in particularly difficult circumstances.

A minor infraction, such as inadvertently picking the pocket of an individual under guild protection, may warrant a fine only — in this case the amount stolen

(paid to the guild or Guildmaster) in addition to the return of the original amount to its original owner. The justification here is that both the guild and the individual under guild protection need to be reimbursed for this foolish act. Fines are usually assessed in cases in which money or property are the key issues. As a result, minor cases usually require the amount involved, major require double, and severe cases require triple.

Confiscation of a thief's property and finances is a rare punishment, usually used in addition to expulsion (and certainly in cases of execution), and is only instituted in the most severe cases. Confiscation is performed by the usual illegal means of breaking into the thief's home and taking everything that is of any worth.

### **Mandatory activity**

In certain minor circumstances, mandatory work or activity is considered enough of a penalty for an infraction. For example, in the case of a bungled heist, the Guildmaster may require the bunglers to work the streets as pickpockets or to train novices in the finer arts of climbing walls or moving silently. In the case of the unapproved apprentice, the Guildmaster may have required the master to be involved in a major heist — a job for which the thief may or may not be paid (depending on the Guildmaster's attitude and the severity of the infraction). The duration of mandatory work orders may be from one week to one year in length: activities such as major robberies are usually one-time punishments.

It should be noted that final decisions regarding guilt or innocence, penalties or punishments, are always up to the Guildmaster. In lawful and neutral guilds, the Guildmaster generally abides by decisions made by a council; in chaotic guilds, however, the Guildmaster may decide contrarily. In either event, the Guildmaster's decision is always final. Also, it is within the Guildmaster's power to determine unique penalties or punishments in certain circumstances. In the case of a minor argument between two thieves, for example, the Guildmaster of a chaotic guild may advise a competition between the two thieves. The thief who steals the most in a one-month competition is determined the winner, and the argument is thus decided in his favor. Penalties of this nature are up to the Guildmaster's discretion. There are some stipulations as to what types of penalties can be demanded of a thief. This, of course, varies from guild to guild and is dependent upon the alignment type of both the guild and its Guildmaster, and the structure and code of ethics of that particular guild. A Guildmaster seldom requires punishment or penalty that is far above and beyond the severity of the crime. An action such as this merely serves to promote dissension within the guild — a result the Guildmaster does not want to fuel.

# Getting Up in the World

## Defining and changing the climbing rules

by Robin Jenkins

The ability to climb walls is best suited for the thief, although any class is capable of this action to some minor degree. The major distinction is that all classes have the ability to climb natural surfaces, but a thief is granted a special ability to climb walls. The distinction between the two surface types is obvious. For the sake of definition, a wall is described as any man-made vertical surface, whereas a natural surface is any vertical surface created geologically. Examples of each surface exist in both subterranean and above-ground settings.

With recent rules additions, an allowance has been made for a trade-off between the two abilities: a thief has a better chance to climb natural surfaces as a result of his ability to climb walls, and a nonthief has a slim chance to climb walls in some situations. For example, both the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide* and the

*Wilderness Survival Guide* state that a nonthief character has a basic Climbing Rating of 40%, as compared with the basic 85% rating a thief gains at 1st level.

In addition to this, the *WSG* states that a character with Mountaineering proficiency has an 80% base rating to climb natural, rocky terrain using spikes and climbing tools. This type of surface corresponds most directly to the *rough/natural* surface described in Vince Garcia's article, "The Art of Climbing Walls." Other outdoor slopes are accounted for in the *WSG* with regard to both thieves and nonthieves; referencing this section on outdoor climbing conditions offers further options to the DM (see pages 34-35 in the *WSG*). Note that Mountaineering skills only apply in climbing natural slopes and cannot be performed without the use of climbing tools.

In subterranean settings, success in climbing natural slopes can be determined by the rules established in the *WSG* for nonthieves and thieves, or by the table provided in Garcia's article. Although that table is provided for use in a thieves' attempt at climbing a wall, the DM may elect to use this table for nonthieves climbing natural surfaces as well. For the sake of simplicity, using Garcia's table for all classes and all surfaces may save both time and energy during AD&D® game play.

The modifications provided by the various AD&D game rule books can be dispensed with at the DM's discretion if they impede the progress of the overall game. If modifications are made due to encumbrance, armor type, surface condition, and so forth, these modifications are made to

the character's base Climbing Rating. This modified number is the indicator number Garcia's table; from this number, the various chances of climbing on different surfaces and under different conditions can be determined.

The *DSG* offers a variety of guidelines for climbing for both thieves and non-thieves. On the whole, the information provided in Garcia's article corresponds with the information provided in *DSG*: climbing surfaces, rates of climbing, and so forth are all reflected therein. Some of the information listed in the *DSG* may be of use in determining climbing modifications for unique surfaces, such as trees with branches, poles, and so on. On the other hand, some of the information provided conflicts with information listed in earlier works. For example, it is advised that climbing modifiers by race be determined by the table provided on page 28 of the *Players Handbook* — not by the guidelines listed in the *DSG*. These racial modifiers should apply to nonthieves' Climbing Ratings as well. Other information that may be useful in respect to climbing walls includes the description of climbing tools and their uses — particularly, the use of a grapple and its chance of success.

Regarding climbing modifications due to encumbrance, the information in the *WSG* (pages 30 and 35 is particularly useful. This system is similar to the basic description of encumbrance that appears in the *Players Handbook* (pages 101-2): these classifications are listed as *normal gear*, *heavy gear*, *very heavy gear*, and *encumbered*. For the sake of definition, encumbrance is described as the the weight and volume (or bulk) of items carried. Encumbrance figures are calculated in gold pieces (10 gp = 1 lb.) and correspond directly to the encumbrance table listed in the *WSG*. On the *WSG* table, at an average strength rating of 8 to 11, the following classifications are equivalent respectively to those listed in the *Players Handbook*: *light*, *moderate*, and *severe*. Using the classifications in either the *Players Handbook* or the *WSG*, the modifications for these encumbrances are listed on page 35 of the *WSG*. For easy reference, these figures are: no penalty for light or none (normal), -5% for moderate (heavy), -10% for heavy (very heavy), and -20% for severe (encumbered). These figures apply to nonthieves and are made in regard to climbing natural outdoor surfaces, although they can be applied to subterranean walls as well. In any event, modified Climbing Rates are then used as base figures on the chart listed in Garcia's article, as modified due to surfaces and other conditions. Further notes on encumbrance in relation to climbing appear in both the *DSG* (page 15) and the *WSG* (page 35).

Another system for modifying a character's Climbing Rating is based upon type of armor worn. Certain types of armor re-



strict a character's movement and his ability to climb. In utilizing this type of modification, two systems are available. The first appears on page 22 of *Unearthed Arcana* and deals with the effects of armor on a thief's chance of climbing a wall. The second appears in both the *WSG* (page 35) and the *DSG* (page 16); these systems are applied to nonthieves in the *WSG* and to all characters in the *DSG*. The figures in each are the same, although there is some conflict in regard to modifying ratings for thieves and nonthieves. Quite obviously, it is up to the DM to decide which system to use. Using one system, such as that presented in *Unearthed Arcana*, excludes the use of the system listed in the *DSG*. The system in *Unearthed Arcana* and the system in the *WSG* can be used concurrently as long as it is understood that the system in *Unearthed Arcana* applies only to thieves and their ability to climb walls, and the system in the *WSG* applies to nonthieves and their ability to climb natural, rough surfaces. If so desired, a DM could apply each system to the other class in the event of a thief climbing a natural surface or a nonthief climbing a wall.

A shorter method might be to simply apply the rules in the *WSG* and the *DSG* to all natural surfaces for all classes, and apply the rules in *Unearthed Arcana* to all walls for all classes. To keep this system simple, climbing walls cannot be performed in any kind of plate mail armor, and no shield can be carried in hand (as per the *DSG*, page 16). In addition, no character is able to climb in splint, banded, or scale mail armor, because of the inflexibility of that armor. Climbing a wall in chain mail can be attempted at -40% to the base Climbing Rating. On all natural surfaces, the armor restrictions established on page 35 of the *WSG* apply. To save both time and trouble, the DM may advise characters that they are only able to negotiate walls and difficult surfaces by removing any armor other than leather, studded leather, padded, elfin chain mail, or chain mail. Outdoor climbs on natural surfaces is limited by percentage modifiers as listed in the *WSG* on page 35.

As a final note, when climbing short sections of walls or rough surfaces, only one Climbing Rating check is made. As stated in the *Players Handbook* (page 28), this check is made at the midpoint of the climb (halfway up the wall or surface). Over longer distances, such as high walls or cliff faces, three climbing checks are made - one within the first 10', one at the halfway point, and one within the last 10' (page 35, *WSG*). According to the *DSG* (page 15), nonthieves have one chance to climb a surface. A failed roll on a nonthief's Climbing Rating means the character can never climb that surface. With regard to thieves, it is up to the DM to determine whether or not a character receives another attempt at a failed climb.



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of a robe, a thief uses nothing more than his bare hands. However, sometimes the object of his desire is fully contained within something, and it is necessary to slit open the bottom of a purse or cut a couple of drawstrings to get what he's after. A coin with part of its edge filed to razor sharpness can be very useful at such times. Of course, a knife or any other sharp-edged object cuts just as well, but a sharpened coin is very easily concealed and can be palmed, out of sight of the intended victim, until the moment when it's needed. A gold or electrum coin is too soft to hold a sharp edge, but silver and copper do just fine.

A thief using a sharpened coin to recover something from inside a soft container (purse, pouch, etc.) has the same chance of success as for a bare-handed pickpocketing attempt. If a thief wants to steal something from inside a container without slitting open the container or cutting it loose from the victim, he must make two consecutive, successful rolls to pick pockets — the first to loosen the strings or open the purse, and the second to retrieve what is inside. If the victim is stationary, both rolls are made normally. If the victim is moving and the thief must also move to keep pace with his target, the chance of success on either roll is half as great as normal, rounded up to the nearest 5% (15% for a 1st-level human thief with 15 dexterity, 55% for the same thief at 13th level, etc.).

### Opening locks

Under any but the most unusual of circumstances, there is no way a thief can open a lock without using the item described in the rules as "thieves' picks and

tools." If a thief is not carrying a set of picks and tools, he simply is not able to attempt opening a lock. (This does not negate the possibility of the thief trying to open the lock at a later time after he acquires the tools, whether or not he has risen in experience level in the meantime.) This set of equipment is priced at 30 gp, and does not add to a thief's encumbrance when it is carried. Conceivably, a thief might be able to open a very large and very simple lock without using picks and tools, but he would still need some sort of implement to manipulate or exert leverage against the lock's mechanism.

Another tool that comes in handy for opening locks is a small magnifying lens. If at least part of the lock's mechanism is exposed to view and illumination is sufficient for the thief to see what he is doing, the use of a magnifying lens adds 5% to the thief's chance of success (up to a maximum of 99%). Using this magnifying lens to find traps adds a 5% bonus to this ability as well.

Even the most proficient thieves sometimes run up against a stubborn lock which defies their best attempts at picking. For these occasions, a thief may carry a small vial of metal-eating acid. Pouring this liquid inside the lock mechanism gives a thief a chance of opening the lock in 3-12 turns (this amount of time must be allowed in the event of either success or failure). This chance is expressed as a function of an item's ability to save vs. acid, as illustrated on page 80 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (use the "metal, hard" category when referencing this table). Failure to save against acid indicates a successful opening of the lock; a successful save means the lock is unaffected, and hence remains unopened. Note that only acids of an extreme potency, such as black

dragon or giant slug spittle, work on lock mechanisms. Since these chemicals can only be transported in glass containers, they are highly susceptible to damage from bumpy passage and normal blows — a disadvantage the DM should keep in mind.

While relying upon picks and tools most of the time, a thief may sometimes employ other, less skillful methods for opening locks. In this case, any of the thief's climbing spikes may double as a lock chisel, to be used with a small hammer. This action takes one turn for each attempt and may be attempted more than once. To successfully perform this action, a character must roll successfully on his strength-based ability to open doors. Since this is an unskilled action, it is open to all characters and is based purely upon strength rather than upon dexterity. Of course, this method of opening locks is very noisy and increases the chance of encounters by three times the normal figure. Note that this action only works on padlocks and not on the internal workings of a door lock. Any attempt to use this method (or the filing method described hereafter) on the internal mechanisms of a door lock causes a 40% chance per attempt of damaging the lock, and thereby making the door unopenable except by removing the door or its internal mechanism (a difficult task, requiring great effort and time).

If a thief is unable to pick a lock and hammering the lock free is undesirable, the thief may opt to use a file instead. This method is excruciatingly slow, taking 6-36 turns to complete, and attracts encounters at twice the normal frequency. As stated before, this action only works on padlocks and not on the interior workings of a door lock. Furthermore, the availability of files (and other tools discussed later) varies



according to the discretion of the DM. Availability is mainly determined by the technological level of a fantasy society.

### Finding/removing traps

Finding a trap requires no special equipment, but removing or nullifying a trap is rarely performed with one's bare hands. If the trap is of an intricate nature or if it is combined with some other mechanism (such as a poisoned-needle trap placed within the lock of a chest), the thief must use picks and tools to have a normal chance of disengaging or nullifying the trap. If he attempts to remove a trap with his bare hands when it would be more prudent to use tools, his chance of success is half as great as normal (rounded up to the nearest 5%).

### Moving silently

The chances of success given for this ability assume that the thief is barefoot or wearing soft-soled boots — the latter of which, from this standpoint, are considered equipment. If a thief is wearing hard-soled boots or any other footwear that might make noise when impacting with a hard surface, his chance of being able to move silently is half the normal chance of success (rounded up to the nearest 5%). A thief can offset this disadvantage by choosing to move at half speed (6' per round instead of 12'), in which case his chance of success is the normal amount. (This benefit for moving at half speed does not apply when the thief is not wearing hard-soled footwear.)

In cases where moving silently is essential, the creaky wooden floor of a sleeping merchant's room can be extremely frustrating. To minimize this problem, the thief may decide to carry a pair of 3' leather straps; the placement of these straps distributes the thief's weight over a larger area, thus preventing the annoying creaks. The thief's movement, however, is slowed to half speed (as above), as he must pause repeatedly to move the strap behind him to the front of the one on which he now treads.

### Hiding in shadows

Hand-in-hand with moving silently is the thief's ability to remain undetected in

areas of poor lighting. Some thieves rely heavily on their natural skills to avoid altercations and often forgo the use of armor in an operation. In these instances, the thief may opt to wear a dark-colored utility suit to blend into darkened areas better. This light-weight linen outfit is similar to that used by the ninja in an *Oriental Adventures* campaign; it can easily be stored in a regular backpack or worn under normal clothing. This outfit provides an additional 5% to a thief's ability to hide in shadows, with a maximum chance of 99%.

Few things are more bothersome to an exceptionally pale-skinned thief than to have the moonlight glint off the thief's milky skin while attempting to hide from prowling guards. To darken those exposed regions of the body, a lump of charcoal or a small bag of chimney soot can be a thief's most inexpensive friend. Using soot or charcoal lends a thief an additional 2% to the ability to hide in shadows, with a cumulative maximum chance (when a utility suit is worn as well) of 99%. Identification of a thief decorated in this manner is also made more difficult.

### Hear noise

This action is usually performed by placing an ear against a door or wall to hear what is on the other side. In certain circumstances, however, a thief may also rely on a small brass or copper hearing cone to amplify otherwise undiscernable sounds. Using such a device gives a thief a bonus of 5% to his ability to hear noises. A thin wire mesh over the wide end also prevents ear seekers from making their way into the thief's inner ear.

### Climbing wails

For climbing purposes, a thief's kit might include a small hook secured to a 20' length of fine line (possibly braided horse-hair). This climbing aid can bear the weight of an unarmored thief (200 lbs., or 2,000 gp weight) and an additional 250 gp of encumbrance. It is easily concealed and difficult to spot when left in place on a wall. Vastly greater weights can be supported by a regular grappling hook and rope; this tool is, however, much bulkier and much more obvious in its use.

Ten small climbing spikes can be included in the kit, which the thief then hammers into handy cracks to facilitate climbing smooth surfaces. Lastly, tiger claws, similar to the Japanese nekode, may be added to the thieves' kit to provide a surer grip on walls and other surfaces. [For further information on the use of these tools in climbing and their modifications to the ability to climb walls, consult Vince Garcia's article "The Art of Climbing Walls" in this issue. — Editor]

Beyond these, a thief has a variety of optional tools to aid him in his profession.

For example, a human thief needs a light source for those times he plies his trade in a darkened house. One or two candles can be tucked away in his kit, along with a tinderbox. For a price, the thief may also invest in a miniature shuttered lantern which casts a tight beam for a distance of 15', keeping ambient light to a minimum, and burning for two turns per load of oil.

A good utilitarian knife has its place in the thieves' kit, as does a lump of clay or beeswax for fashioning an impression of a key to be duplicated.

If a thief can get a chest with a difficult lock back to his stronghold, he may have a set of drills and chisels for removing the lock. Removing a lock in this manner takes from 1-4 turns and spring any concealed traps that have not been removed from the lock prior to this activity. If the thief has the money and the patience, he may purchase the proper equipment for fashioning keys (including files, molds, blanks, etc.), with a chance of success equal to his open-locks percentage. Of course, the thief won't know if the duplicated key fits the lock until he actually tries it. The availability of drills and key duplication materials depends upon the discretion of the DM and upon the technology of the fantasy campaign in question.

The following table suggests the cost and encumbrance of each item listed. Generally speaking, the thieves' basic kit consists of picks and tools; all other equipment listed herein are optional additions to that kit.

It pays to know what you're getting for your 30 gp.

Item	Cost	Encumbrance
Belt pouch (to store picks)	1 gp	10 gp
Sharpened silver coin	1 sp	1 gp
Picks and wires	30 gp	0
Magnifying lens	7 gp	1 gp
Metal-eating acid	100 gp	10 gp
File	5 gp	5 gp
Leather straps	10 sp	50 gp
Boots, high, soft	1 gp	30 gp
Boots, low, soft	8 sp	30 sp
Utility suit	5 gp	25 gp
Charcoal/soot	1 cp/free	5 gp
Hearing cone	5 gp	5 gp
Climbing hook and line	10 gp	50 gp
10 spikes and hammer	2 gp	60 gp
Tiger claws, pair	30 sp	5 gp
Candle	1 sp	5 gp
Tinderbox	1 gp	2 gp
Miniature lantern	20 gp	30 gp
Knife and sheath	1 gp	5 gp
Clay/beeswax	1 sp	3 gp
Drills and chisels	75 gp	350 gp
Keymaking set	150 gp	250 sp



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# Hammer of Thor,

## *Weapons of choice for clerics*

by James A. Yates

The AD&D® game volume *Unearthed Arcana* contains two sets of rules for improving the combat abilities of certain character classes: weapon specialization for fighters and rangers, and weapons of choice for cavaliers and paladins. By employing the rules for weapon specialization and double specialization, any fighter or ranger character can now have a personal say in determining just how good he is with the weapon in which he specializes. A character's choice, rather than the luck of the dice, now has an important impact upon his combat skills. In much the same way, a cavalier or paladin can now determine a major degree of his skill in three different weapons of choice.

While reflecting upon the merits of these two systems, it occurred to me that a similar system might be useful for the cleric class. Such a system would help illustrate the different combat capabilities of the clerics of the various cults and religions, and even those following different gods within the same pantheon. In turn, this might add more diversity to clerics in combat who, restricted to only a few blunt weapons, tend to look and perform much alike in battle.

The first question was which of the two

systems would be used for clerics. After some thought on the subject, a straightforward system of weapon specialization was ruled out because, with the demands upon their time for prayer and meditation, clerics have far fewer opportunities than fighters to practice their weapon skills. This meant that a system using weapons of choice would have to be used. Arriving at this conclusion brought up another problem, producing a rationale to explain why clerics have weapons of choice. Why would certain clerics possess superior combat skills than other clerics?

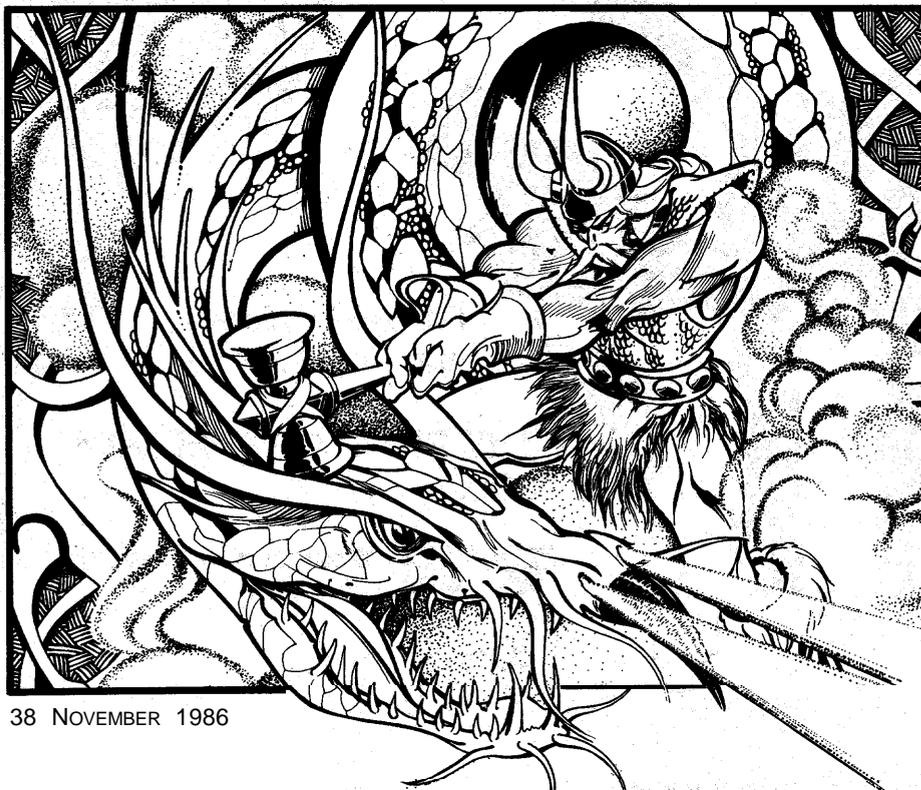
Several explanations could be presented in response to this question, and many factors — race, mythos, geography, politics, and even personal preference — play a part in these answers. Demi-human and half-orc clerics are more likely to pay greater attention to combat skills than most human clerics because of their intense racial hatreds and constant warfare with humanoids (for demi-humans) and demi-humans (for half-orcs). It would also be logical to assume that clerics of those deities who have province over war or battle would be more likely to place some additional emphasis on combat skills than clerics of other deities. Clerics belonging to temples located in wilderness regions,

or in areas threatened by war or civil disorder, might also spend more time practicing combat skills, for reasons of self-preservation and the protection of their temples, than clerics in settled, peaceful lands. Finally, some clerics may make the choice for themselves to improve their combat skills. Friar Tuck is an excellent example of such a cleric.

Once the basic rationale for the system had been justified, two more questions arose. What would determine the weapon of choice for each cleric? And which weapons could be chosen as a weapon choice? If clerics were to be restricted to the eight basic clerical weapons, there wouldn't be a lot of choice in the system. On the other hand, allowing clerics to use edged or pointed weapons would violate one of the basic tenets of the game. Was this to be allowed? Fortunately, the answer to the first question also provided the answer to the second one.

A cleric's weapon of choice is determined by the weapon(s) that cleric's deity uses in combat. Nothing could be more natural than for a cleric to emulate his or her god (the cleric's ultimate role model) in combat. Also, it is the divine favor of the cleric's god which grants him the superior combat ability with his weapon of choice, no matter what weapon that might be. Gary Gygax himself has set several precedents for this, by easing the restrictions against clerics using edged or pointed weapons in his series of articles on the gods of Greyhawk (*DRAGON® Magazine* issues 67-71). Two examples of this change in attitude are the clerics of Trithereon and Nerull. The 4th-level clerics of Trithereon may wield spears, and those of 8th level may use broad swords; the clerics of Nerull are allowed to use a sickle in combat at 1st level and the hook-fauchard at 5th level. What was produced for this article was a simple, universal system for permitting some clerics to use edged or pointed weapons.

It could be argued that the gods of Greyhawk are an exception, and that most of the gods of the multiverse would not permit their clerics to break what might be considered one of the basic laws of nature by allowing their clerics to use edged or pointed weapons. Being gods, they are above these "laws" — Athena, for instance, may use a spear in combat and still demand that her clerics use only blunt weapons. This is a powerful argument and, if you agree with it, you needn't read any further. However, if you feel that it is equally possible for the immortal gods to bend these laws for the benefit of their



# Spear of Zeus

faithful servants, then read on.

Basically, there are two reasons why a deity would allow clerics to use edged or pointed weapons. Many deities derive their power, in some incomprehensible manner, from their worshipers. Anything that increases the power of these worshipers also increases the power of the worshiped deities, and allowing clerics to use edged or pointed weapons makes them more powerful. Also, most gods have a vanity in proportion to their immense powers and abilities. Even the goddess Athena, the most lawful-good deity in the Greek pantheon, once turned a lady named Arachne into a spider for daring to boast that she could weave as well as the goddess. It appeals to these gods' vanity when their clerics attempt to emulate them in combat. Employing the same weapon in battle that one's deity uses is flattery of the highest order (as long as one doesn't get carried away and begin to compare their prowess to that of the deity), and all the gods love to be flattered.

The weapon of choice of any cleric, and the benefits derived from employing that weapon in combat, depend upon the deity the cleric worships. Unlike cavaliers and paladins, clerics may know only one weapon of choice; if the deity in question uses more than one weapon, the DM may either allow any players with cleric characters to select their weapon of choice, or he may restrict them to a weapon of choice of his choosing. For example, the American Indian war spirit Tobadzistsini employs a short bow and spear for his weapons; a DM could allow clerics of Tobadzistsini to select either weapon as their weapon of choice, or he could restrict them to either the short bow or the spear.

Unlike fighters, rangers, cavaliers, and paladins, clerics do not gain any initial benefits from their weapons of choice. Instead, the cleric must sacrifice and then prove himself worthy to receive the benefit of a weapon of choice. In order for a cleric to select a weapon of choice, he must sacrifice one weapon proficiency slot; that is, the cleric may choose only one weapon to count for the character's initial allotment of two proficient weapons. This one weapon must still be a standard clerical weapon — a club, flail, hammer, lasso, mace, sap, staff, or staff sling — even if the cleric selects an edged or pointed weapon as his weapon of choice. Once the cleric has made this sacrifice, he must then prove his worthiness to use the weapon of choice by attaining the 5th level of experience, at which time the cleric receives the

weapon of choice in place of a third weapon of proficiency.

If the weapon of choice is a standard clerical weapon, the cleric receives a +1 bonus "to hit" when using that weapon in combat. This bonus does not apply to damage, nor does it allow the cleric to hit a creature that can only be hit by magical weapons. If the weapon of choice is an edged or pointed weapon, then the cleric merely earns the right to use that weapon with no nonproficiency penalty.

Further sacrifice and proof of worthiness increases the benefits of a weapon of choice at each level that the cleric can learn a new weapon. If a cleric sacrifices his next weapon proficiency slot at 9th level, he gains a +2 "to hit" bonus with a standard clerical weapon of choice, or +1 "to hit" bonus with an edged or pointed weapon of choice. At 13th level, these bonuses rise to +3 and +2, respectively, and this progression continues at higher levels. Such progression must be continuous; a cleric of Anu could not select a staff as his initial weapon and the mace as his weapon of choice, become +1 "to hit" with the mace at 5th level, select the flail as a third weapon of proficiency at 9th level, then become +2 "to hit" with the mace at 13th level, instead of learning a fourth weapon of proficiency.

The following is a list of all the deities presented in all the mythologies worshipped by humans, demi-humans, and half-orcs, from *Legends & Lore* and *Unearthed Arcana*, and the weapons they employ in combat. In those cases where little hard information was given as to the exact weapon type a deity uses, the decision was based upon the description of that deity and the historical weapons used by the worshipers of that deity. A few weapons were arbitrarily selected to add a bit of variety to some of the pantheons. Where a deity uses a weapon not covered in the AD&D game, the closest equivalent weapon was listed, with the actual weapon following in parenthesis.

A deity that does not employ a weapon that could be used by a mortal in combat, such as Ishtar's blue crystal rod or Surya's shaft of light, has no weapon of choice, and its listing is followed by NA (not applicable). Clerics of such deities may never have a weapon of choice. While this may seem unfair to players with such clerical characters, there is nothing that can be done about it, as even the immortal gods can bend the rules only so far.

This use of weapons of choice is nothing more than another special ability possessed by certain clerics. It is not so far

removed from the directional bonus for spellcasting received by all Central American clerics, or the special powers against snakes possessed by clerics of Bast, or the rapport with hellhounds that the clerics of Hecate have, and so forth. The ability to have a weapon of choice is just another way in which the clerics of different deities and different pantheons are shown to be exactly that: different.

## American Indian mythos

Raven — NA  
Coyote — NA  
Hastseltsi — hand axe, throwing knife  
Hastsezint — short bow, hand axe, lance  
Heng — short bow, lance  
Hotoru — NA  
Shakak — spear  
Snake-man — NA  
Tobadzistsini — short bow, spear

## Babylonian mythos

Anu — mace  
Anshar — NA  
Druaga — mace  
Girru — mace, battle axe  
Ishtar — NA  
Marduk — NA  
Nergal — NA  
Ramman — hammer (mallet)



### **Celtic mythos**

Dagda – club  
Arawn – club  
Brigit – staff  
Diancecht – spear  
Dunatis – NA  
Goibhnie – spear  
Lugh – NA  
Manannan Mac Lir – trident, broad sword  
Morrigan – spear  
Nuada – long sword  
Oghma – NA  
Silvanus – hammer (mallet)

### **Central American mythos**

Quetzalcoatl – NA  
Camaxtli – NA  
Camazotz – NA  
Chalchiuhtlicue – NA  
Huhuateotl – NA  
Huitzilopochtli – battle axe  
Itzamna – staff  
Mictlantecuhtli – NA  
Tezcatlipoca – NA  
Tlaloc – NA  
Tlazolteotl – NA  
Xochipilli – hand axe

### **Chinese mythos**

Shang-Ti – NA  
Chao Kung Ming – spear  
Chih-Chiang Fyu-Ya – composite short bow, broad sword  
Chih Sung-Tzu – mace  
Chung Kuel – broad sword  
Fei Lien & Feng Po – broad sword  
Huan-Ti – halberd, broad sword  
Kuan Yin – NA  
Lei Kung – hammer  
Lu Yueh – NA  
No Cha – spear  
Shang Hai Ching – NA  
Tou Mu – composite short bow, spear, broad sword  
Wen Chung – broad sword  
Yen-Wang-Yeh – broad sword

### **Dwarven mythos**

Moradin – hammer  
Clangeddin Silverbeard – battle axe  
Vergadain – short sword  
Dumathoin – hammer (mattock)  
Abbathor – dagger  
Berronar – mace

### **Egyptian mythos**

Ra – NA  
Anhur – lance  
Anubis – NA  
Apshai – NA  
Bast – NA  
Bes – khopesh sword  
Geb – staff  
Horus – khopesh sword, lance  
Isis – NA  
Nephthys – NA  
Osiris – mace (scepter)  
Ptah – mace (scepter)  
Seker – halberd, mace

Set – spear  
Shu – staff  
Tefnut – NA  
Thoth – NA

### **Elven mythos**

Corellon Larethian – short bow, long sword  
Rillifane Rallathil – NA  
Lolth – hand-held crossbow  
Skerrit – short bow, spear  
Aerdrie Faenya – NA  
Erevan Ilesere – long sword  
Solonor Thelandira – long bow  
Hanali Celanil – NA  
Labelas Enoreth – NA

### **Finnish mythos**

Ahto – falchion sword (sickle)  
Hiisi – club  
Ilmatar – NA  
Kiputyttö – NA  
Mielikki – NA  
Loviatar – dagger  
Surma – club  
Tuonetar – NA  
Tuoni – club  
Ukko – broad sword  
Untamo – club

### **Gnomish mythos**

Garl Glittergold – battle axe  
Baervan Wildwanderer – spear  
Urdlen – NA  
Segojan Earthcaller – NA  
Flandal Stoneskin – hammer

### **Greek mythos**

Zeus – spear  
Aphrodite – NA  
Apollo – composite short bow  
Ares – spear, long sword  
Artemis – composite short bow, dagger  
Athena – spear  
Demeter – spear  
Dionysus – staff (thyrsus)  
Hades – long sword  
Hecate – NA  
Hephaestus – hammer  
Hera – NA  
Heracles – composite short bow, club  
Hermes – NA  
Kronos – falchion sword (sickle)  
Nike – NA  
Pan – NA  
Poseidon – trident  
Prometheus – NA  
Tyche – NA

### **Halfling mythos**

Yondalla – NA  
Sheela Peryroyl – staff (shillelagh)  
Arvoreen – short sword  
Cyrrollalee – NA  
Brandobaris – dagger

### **Indian mythos**

Indra – long bow, broad sword  
Agni – battle axe  
Kali – broad sword  
Karttikeya – broad sword  
Lakshmi – NA

Rudra – long bow  
Surya – NA  
Ushas – NA  
Varuna – spear  
Vishnu – mace  
Yama – mace, garrot (noose)

### **Japanese mythos**

Amaterasu Omikami – NA  
Ama-Tsu-Mara – battle axe  
Daikoku – hammer (mallet)  
Ebisu – staff  
Hachiman – two-handed sword, throwing knife  
Kishijoten – NA  
Oh-Kuni-Nushi – two-handed sword  
Raiden – morning star (spiked mace)  
Susanowo – long sword  
Tsukiyomi – pike

### **Nehwon mythos**

Death – long sword  
Gods of Lankhmar – NA  
Gods of Trouble – NA  
Hate – NA  
Issek of the Jug – NA  
Kos – broad sword, hand axe  
Nehwon Earth God – NA  
Rat God – NA  
Red God – scimitar (saber), dagger (dirk)  
Spider God – NA  
Tyaa – long sword  
Votishal – NA

### **Norse mythos**

Odin – spear, composite short bow  
Aegir – club  
Balder – two-handed sword  
Bragi – broad sword  
Forseti – broad sword  
Frey – two-handed sword  
Freya – long sword  
Frigga – NA  
Heimdall – broad sword  
He1 – bastard sword  
Idun – NA  
Loki – NA  
Magni – hammer  
Modi – broad sword  
Sif – long sword  
Thor – hammer  
Tyr – broad sword  
Uller – composite long bow, two-handed sword  
Vidar – NA

### **Orcish mythos**

Gruumsh – spear  
Bahgtru – NA  
Shargaas – NA  
Ilneval – NA  
Yurtrus – NA  
Luthic – NA

### **Sumerian mythos**

Enlil – battle axe  
Enki – mace  
Inanna – hand axe  
Ki – NA  
Nanna-Sin – battle axe  
Nin-Hursag – NA  
Utu – NA



# GAMMA WORLD®

August, 1986

TO: MICHAEL DOBSON, DIRECTOR OF GAMES DEVELOPMENT  
FROM: HAROLD JOHNSON, PROJECT COORDINATOR  
RE: GAMMA WORLD® RULES SUPPLEMENT

Writing to tell you that the 3rd Edition of the all new GAMMA WORLD® game has finally gone to the printer! However, in an attempt to produce the most comprehensive science fantasy role playing game of all time, we greatly overwrote the rules. Due to scheduling constraints and price considerations, we had to leave out a lot of this material.

What we have is a lot of additional material that there was literally no room for in the product! Sure we could wait to present this material in later product, but not all references to these sections were deleted from the rules and this will cause some confusion. We have a hot idea to propose, which will capture the public's attention and take advantage of the game's debut. Why wait a year to complete the game, let's give it to the public now! Here's what we propose.

- Release a GAMMA WORLD® game supplement for FREE!
- All a customer needs to do is mail a postcard with their name and address to:

GAMMA WORLD® Supplement  
The Mail Order Hobby Shop  
P.O. Box 756  
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

- We can use this chance to get one step ahead of the game by using this opportunity to correct the inevitable errata we discovered at the start.

Everyone here is really excited about this edition. The product plans are great and are already completed! The mysteries of the Ancients and the unknown Tech V devices should tantalize the players, not to mention the great goal of reaching the legendary Cities of Man. And once the great saga of the Sky Chariot is solved, Project Omega will really blow their doors off!

This booklet would be in addition to our current plans to launch the great saga to build a Sky Chariot, which begins with GW6 - Alpha Factor, and the discovery of the memory core of the world's greatest computer at Mindkeep.

With what they gain here, the saga continues on through:

- GW7 - Beta Principle, a quest for the spacecraft's hull.
- GW8 - Gamma Base, an active military complex of the Ancients, a perfect place to assemble the great ship.
- GW9 - Delta Fragment, an adventure to recover the knowledge needed to fly the great ship and beyond.

This product will also feature the first rules expansion, including new artifacts, creatures, and advanced rules for skill specialization; as well as the first inking of the power of the mysterious crystalline technology.

And this is just the tip of the iceberg! All leading to the climax with Project: Omega!

All this will be followed by support articles and other rules expansions in the pages of DRAGON® Magazine and the POLYHEDRON® Newsletter of the RPGA™ Network. All those fans who wrote us demanding the game's return, will look to their favorite gaming magazine for more support and coverage of their game!

Consider producing this surprise supplement. It can only earn us good will from the gaming public.

-HJ

Harold - Radical idea!  
Go for it! (but the  
expense is coming out of  
your paycheck).  
Michael

# Sharper Than a Serpent's Tooth

*Adding variety to snakes in AD&D® gaming*

by Ray Hamel and David Hage

As long ago as the Garden of Eden, the snake has been a representative of fear and evil. With its silent means of locomotion, its quiet and mysterious living habits, and its lethal means of defense, the snake is one of the most highly feared creatures in nature.

Enlarged to the proportions of the giant snakes encountered in an AD&D® game adventure, even the bravest of fighters is likely to be petrified at the sight of one of these reptiles. Unfortunately, the number of snakes listed in the *Monster Manual* is rather limited, and the variety given does not adequately represent the variety nature has provided in the different types of snakes and the various threats that snakes pose.

Basically, dangerous snakes can be divided into two large groups — the non-poisonous (or constrictors, if you will) and the poisonous. While there are a large number of snakes under either category, we have selected six constrictors and five poisonous snakes of various capabilities in an attempt to cover the spectrum without writing a book-length treatise on the subject. Because many of the constrictors act and kill in the same manner, invention has been used in that area adapting several of the constrictors from ancient African legends — even a little reshaping of Kaa, the python from Kipling's *The Jungle Book*. The poisonous snakes are pretty much the way you would find them in mundane nature.

We've even managed to throw in a little insight on the sea snake and the spitting snake, which are listed under their own headings in the *Monster Manual*. Those who are inclined to invent some additional snakes of their own, we have included a bibliography of some of the finer books we encountered in our research. If you have difficulty finding them, any good college library will provide a herpetology

textbook with information on snake biology, and any good nature encyclopedia provides pictures and descriptions of the various snakes of the world.

## Snake biology

The body of the snake is not slimy as many think it is; it is covered with dry scales. The scales on the belly of the snake are like large individual plates. Larger scales form a shield about the head of the snake. The skin of the snake is shed about three times a year, as the snake grows larger. A similar rejuvenation occurs with the fangs of the snake, which are replaced every three weeks as they tend to wear out rapidly. These worn-out fangs are then swallowed. An observant hunter could find the remains of these in the feces of the snake.

The powerful belly muscles of the snakes are used for locomotion. Most snakes' primary means of travel is by rectilinear locomotion, also known as "caterpillar locomotion." This form of locomotion involves the advance of the body in a straight line, moving belly plate by belly plate. This type of movement is usually associated with the inchworm, although the humping of the body is not as prominent with the snake.

On smooth or flat surfaces, snakes move either by sidewinding locomotion or telescopic locomotion. Sidewinding locomotion involves swinging the body into an S-shape, so that the belly plates act like treads on a bulldozer, pulling the snake along. Telescopic locomotion involves movement by extending the entire front half of the body, and then drawing up the rear.

The tongue is the primary sense organ of the snake. It not only picks up scents but also acts as a heat sensor. Since most snakes cannot see beyond 3', they use this sensor to locate and hunt down prey, in light or darkness, up to 100' away. It is believed that a venomous snake can detect its victim among a group because the smell of the victim is slightly altered by the

presence of snake venom in its body.

All snakes are deaf. They lack not only an external ear appendage but an internal eardrum as well. Some are able to detect extremely loud noises through the sensitive tip of the tongue. Snakes do not have a voice box, which is why the loudest sound they ever make is a hiss. Of course, this silence only makes their stealthiness all the more effective. Since they cannot hear, snakes perceive an approaching creature through the vibrations of the ground, which can be detected through the bones of their skulls. They are unable to detect movement by the motion of air currents; birds of prey take good advantage of this disability.

As a cold-blooded creature, the snake is unable to maintain a constant body temperature. Instead, its body temperature changes as the external temperature of its environment changes. Therefore, the snake can live in a limited range of temperatures — usually 40-100° F. If a snake is subjected to a temperature greater than this, it overheats and dies. Temperatures lower than 40° F cause the snake to become sluggish, eventually slowing down to a deathlike state. Extreme cold eventually leads to the snake's death. If there is an extreme in temperature in a snake's environment, the snake usually attempts to burrow underground using the earth as an insulator to regulate the snake's body temperature.

## Constrictors

The constrictor attacks with its fangs, inflicting minor damage but establishing an anchor. The snake then wraps its body around the victim and begins to "shape" the victim's body for consumption, effectively squeezing the life out of the prey in the process.

The major damage that occurs from this constriction comes from cracked ribs, burst blood vessels, ruptured organs, and the inability to breathe. Player characters receiving 25% of their total hit points in damage must make their saving throws at

-1 to prevent broken ribs. At 50% damage, broken ribs are inevitable, and a saving throw must be made to prevent the bursting of major blood vessels. Burst blood vessels cause an additional 1-6 hp damage per round. At 75% damage, the player character must make a saving throw to prevent the rupturing of body organs (spleen, lungs, etc.). Failure produces unconsciousness in 2-8 rounds.

The fangs of the constrictor are curved backward into the throat. The only way to remove a bitten finger is to slide the finger farther into the snake in order to slide the finger off the fang. You can see how hard it would be to try to do the same if the snake bit a player character in the leg.

When swallowing something as large as a human being, giant snakes can unhinge their jaws. This can be done because of two movable joints between each jaw and the back of the snake's head. The two halves of the lower jaw are also separated by an elastic ligament allowing it some stretching capability. Once the jaw is unhinged, the snake uses its throat muscles to swallow the victim, aided by the fangs which pull the victim into the gullet to be devoured.

Some specific types of constrictor snakes follow.

*Rock python:* This yellow-brown snake is often found near water. One of the largest of the constrictors, it has been known to devour prey as large as leopards or human beings.

The female of the species spends two months out of the year guarding her nest of eggs, and there is a 10% chance of running across such a female. The female attacks anyone within approaching distance of the nest. The nest can contain 10-100 eggs. When they hatch, the young are about 2' in length.

Indian legend has it that a dying rock python spits out a gem just before it expires. The gem is valued at 10-60 gp value.

*Ram python:* This reptile, colored brownish-gray with lighter diagonal markings to mask it when it hides in trees, coils around a low-hanging branch waiting for prey to pass below it. As its victim passes, the snake springs away from the branch and swings down in a clublike manner, ramming the creature with its AC 3 head for 3-10 hp damage. This attack can be used only if the python has surprise, and then only in the initial round of battle. The ram python gains surprise on a 1-4 on a d6 roll.

If the ramming attack is unsuccessful, the ram python resorts to biting, as its other relatives do.

*Boa constrictor:* Possibly the most familiar of the constrictor class, the boa is pale tan, dark brown, or black in color, with saddlelike markings on its back. The boa prefers dry regions.

This snake is extremely irritable, which is attributed to the fact that 75% of all

boas are infested with ticks on over half of their bodies. This makes the bite of a boa constrictor potentially infectious as well (as per giant ticks). If cornered, the boa is able to hiss loudly, and it attempts to scare off captors by doing so.

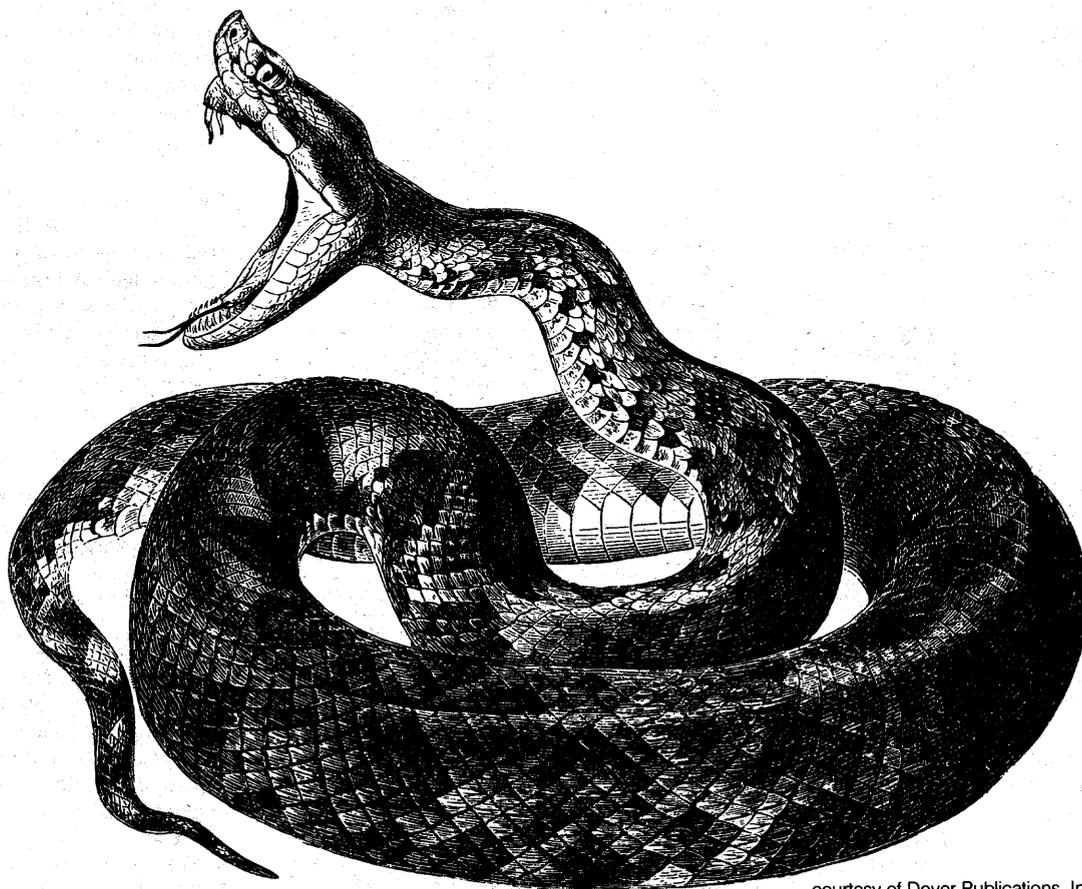
The boa constrictor probably has the best eyesight for any snake, with a 10' infravision range. Boas give live birth, with the young being 2-2½' in length.

*Anaconda:* An extremely large snake, African legends have the anaconda reaching lengths of 200' with its thickness equal to a man's height. The majority of anacondas reach a length of slightly less than 70' long. Because they are so large, anacondas have overwhelming bone-crushing ability.

Anacondas spend most of their lives inhabiting rivers or swamps, attacking the birds and other wildlife on shore. There is a 5% chance of finding an anaconda on shore, usually sunning itself in a tree. As water snakes, the larger varieties of anaconda may qualify as a variety of sea snake.

*Ringed snake:* When attacking, the ringed snake raises its head and, by staring into the eyes of its victim, effectively hypnotizes it into a catatonic state. It then constricts the paralyzed victim.

The ringed snake eats its prey legs-first, instead of head-first as most snakes do. Since its diet consists largely of toads and



courtesy of Dover Publications, Inc.

<b>King cobra</b>	<b>Black mamba</b>	<b>Gaboon viper</b>
<i>Uncommon</i>	<i>Uncommon</i>	<i>Uncommon</i>
FREQUENCY:		
NO. APPEARING:	1-4	1-6
ARMOR CLASS:	5	5
MOVE:	15"	15"
HIT DICE:	4 + 2	4 + 2
% IN LAIR:	0	0
TREASURE TYPE:	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1	3
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-4	1-3/1-3/1-3
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	<i>Poison</i>	<i>Poison</i>
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	<i>Standard</i>	<i>Standard</i>
INTELLIGENCE:	<i>Animal</i>	<i>Animal</i>
SIZE:	L (25')	L (15')
ALIGNMENT:	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Neutral</i>
PSIONICS:	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>
<b>Rattlesnake</b>	<b>Flying snake</b>	<b>*Sea snake</b>
<i>Common</i>	<i>Very rare</i>	<i>Uncommon</i>
FREQUENCY:		
NO. APPEARING:	1-8	1-6
ARMOR CLASS:	5	5
MOVE:	15"	15"/21"
HIT DICE:	3	4 + 2
% IN LAIR:	0	0
TREASURE TYPE:	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1	1
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	<i>Poison</i>	<i>See text</i>
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	<i>Standard</i>	<i>Standard</i>
INTELLIGENCE:	<i>Animal</i>	<i>Animal</i>
SIZE:	M(6')	M(6')
ALIGNMENT!	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Neutral</i>
PSIONICS:	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>
<b>Rock python</b>	<b>Ram python</b>	<b>Boa constrictor</b>
<i>Common</i>	<i>Uncommon</i>	<i>Common</i>
FREQUENCY:		
NO. APPEARING:	1-3	1-2
ARMOR CLASS:	5	3/5
MOVE:	9"	9"
HIT DICE:	6 + 1	6 + 1
% IN LAIR:	0	0
TREASURE TYPE:	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-4/2-8	1 - 3 / 2 - 8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	<i>Constriction</i>	<i>See text</i>
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	<i>Standard</i>	<i>Standard</i>
INTELLIGENCE:	<i>Animal</i>	<i>Animal</i>
SIZE:	L (20-40')	L (7-12')
ALIGNMENT:	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Neutral</i>
PSIONICS:	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>
<b>Anaconda</b>	<b>Ringed snake</b>	<b>Saw-edged scaled</b>
<i>Uncommon</i>	<i>Very Rare</i>	<i>Very Rare</i>
FREQUENCY:		
NO. APPEARING:	1-3	1-2
ARMOR CLASS:	5	5
MOVE:	9"	9"
HIT DICE:	7-12	6 + 1
% IN LAIR:	0	0
TREASURE TYPE:	<i>N i l</i>	<i>Nil</i>
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-6/3-18	1-4/1-4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	<i>Constriction</i>	<i>See text</i>
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	<i>Standard</i>	<i>Standard</i>
INTELLIGENCE:	<i>Animal</i>	<i>Animal</i>
SIZE:	L (20-70')	M (7')
ALIGNMENT:	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>N e u t r a l</i>
PSIONICS:	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>

frogs, this manner of devouring pushes the air out of the victim (preventing the formation of painful intestinal gas).

When on the defensive, the ringed snake can feign death by total motionlessness and a stiffening of the body, even if picked up. However, if it is captured, it possesses stink glands that release a foul-smelling odor designed gag those who do not make their saving throws vs. poison; this effect lasts for 2-8 (2d4) rounds. If given the opportunity, the ringed snake can escape by swimming, as it is an excellent swimmer.

The ringed snake has a black body with a 1" -wide yellow-orange ring around its neck and a yellow-orange or red belly.

*Saw-edged scaled snake:* This constrictor is covered with tiny needlelike spines that it uses as an aid in locomotion and in killing constricted prey. The scales appear normal until raised through muscle contraction by the snake. The scales puncture the intended victim during constriction. The sawlike edges of the scales are double-barbed, and it is impossible to pull them out of the skin without pulling out chunks of skin as well. The scales can be removed by the snake by a simple relaxation of the muscles that control them. No additional damage is received if the removal occurs by the action of the snake. If the scales are forcibly removed, the victim receives an additional 4-24 hp damage. If they are carefully removed, the damage drops to 1-6 hp. If the snake is killed, the muscles controlling the scales remain taut.

The saw-edged scaled snake is jet black in color. Though based upon the primitive Asian wart snake, which has individual scales instead of the usual arrangement of overlapping scales, the saw-edged snake is found only in fantasy worlds.

### Venomous snakes

In nature, one-fifth of all species of snakes are poisonous. Since the poisonous snake's digestive process is so slow, and the victim is swallowed whole, the digestive process must begin as soon as possible. The venomous snake uses its venom as saliva, beginning the digestive process outside the snake's body. The venom not only kills the victim but also begins the breakdown of the proteins that serve as the nutrients for the snake. The snake lets its victim lay for a time before relocating and devouring it, allowing time for the digestive process to begin.

The venom causes several symptoms in the victim: burning pain and swelling, followed by cold sweats, nausea and vomiting, sleepiness, and a feeble pulse. This can lead to difficulty in breathing as the breathing muscles become paralyzed, a comatose state, and perhaps death. The time and severity of effect varies from snake to snake.

Except for the cobra, all poisonous snakes listed here are immune to their own poisons.

*King cobra:* The king cobra prefers the densest of jungles near water. It is a highly aggressive snake known to actually pursue humans. When attacking, the snake rears its head 5-6' off the ground and spreads its ribs to form a menacing hood behind its head. Because of the cobra's deadly reputation, NPCs who see the upraised cobra must make a saving throw vs. spells (wisdom bonuses applicable) or become paralyzed with fright.

The cobra must strike forward and downward when attacking. It is unable to strike upward. When the snake bites, it continues to stay attached to the victim, chewing the skin to increase the amount of venom introduced into the victim's bloodstream, until it is knocked away. The chewing causes an additional 1-2 hp damage per round.

The bite is highly venomous, capable of causing instant shock to the bitten victim, with death by asphyxiation following in 15 minutes. The failure of a save vs. poison indicates that the victim is immediately rendered unable to function.

The king cobra is a black snake with grey bands.

*Black mamba:* The jet-black mamba lifts its head off the ground and opens its mouth threateningly when it plans to attack. It is astonishingly quick and is capable of striking three times in rapid succession in one round. Its venom can kill in 20-25 minutes.

*Gaboon viper:* This snake may reach only 7' in length, but its thickness can be that of the human calf. Although it attacks humans, it is not known to devour them.

The Gaboon viper is equipped with 6-9" fangs that sink deeply into the bitten victim. The viper's venom is dangerous because it not only causes paralysis of the breathing muscles, but it also acts as a hemotoxic agent that causes severe hemorrhaging, negating the effect of any possible antivenom. The bitten area becomes swollen and blackening of the skin occurs within one hour. Death follows in six hours.

The Gaboon viper is colored with carpetlike markings which camouflage it on the jungle floor. It gains surprise on a 1-4 on d6 roll.

*Rattlesnake:* The smallest and least dangerous of the venomous snakes, the rattlesnake is found in dry or rocky terrains. When surprised, it coils its head slightly raised in an S-shape for striking. It also (95% of the time) vibrates the rattle on the tip of its tail, making a buzzing sound that alerts the approaching character of its presence.

The venom of the rattlesnake affects the nervous system, sometimes causing death through paralyzation of the breathing muscles. The amount of venom introduced

into the system depends a great deal on the amount of movement made by the bitten victim. The symptoms of the venom last eight hours for every point of difference between 20 and the victim's dexterity. At this point, a saving throw is made, equal to the player character's dexterity. If the player character has limited his movements, then the saving throw is made at -1. If the player character has been moving as much as he normally would, the saving throw is at -3. If the player character's movement has been restricted to practically nil, he gets a normal saving throw. If the saving throw is made, the process reverses, with the same amount of time for recovery as the lapse covered. If the save is not made, the player character dies from asphyxiation.

The rattlesnake actually has a market value, as it is hunted for its rectangular-patterned skin which can be used as boot leather, and for its meat which is considered a delicacy. Each "pelt" would be worth 1-4 gp to the right buyer.

*Flying snake:* With a longitudinal ridge on either side of its belly, the flying snake can glide from tree to ground (or tree to tree) from a height of 100'. The flying snake is also an excellent climber.

The bite of the flying snake causes paralysis (saving throw vs. poison at +3) but not death. The effect of the paralysis is usually one hour for every point of the difference between 20 and the victim's dexterity.

The flying snake is colored in a combination of black, green, and red bands.

*Sea snake:* There are actually two types of sea snakes. Those usually called "sea serpents" are the larger variety of sea snake, actually an anaconda of the 8-12 hit die variety.

The poisonous sea snake is a smaller snake with a flattened rudderlike tail that enables it to move swiftly through the water. The poisonous sea snake attacks anything that is violating its territory. The bite of the sea snake is like a pinprick, and 50% of the time it goes unnoticed until the symptoms of the poison begin to occur.

The venom causes paralysis in 3-6 rounds, leaving the victim to drown in the following melee round.

The poisonous sea snake is yellow or light blue in color.

The statistics for the larger of the sea snakes can either be taken directly from the *Monster Manual* or derived from the stats given for the anaconda.

*Spitting snake:* A member of the cobra family, the spitting snake bites when attacking, spitting only as a defense when cornered. The spitting cobra launches a cone-shaped mist that can hit a target up to 10' away; the snake is usually aiming for the victim's eyes. A player character hit by the venom is allowed two saving throws vs. poison. The first determines whether or not blindness occurs. If the saving throw is not made, the blindness lasts 2-12 turns. At this point, the second saving throw is made to determine if the blindness becomes permanent.

The bite of the spitting cobra causes instant death unless a saving throw vs. poison at -1 is made. As with all members of the cobra family, the spitting cobra is not immune to its own poison.

The statistics for the spitting snake can be found in the *Monster Manual*. m

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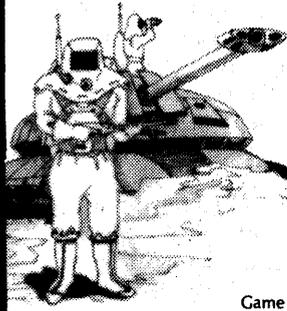
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# Airs of Ages Past

## *Nine magical harps from the Forgotten Realms*

by Ed Greenwood

Many magical harps were devised by elven, half-elven, and human craftsmen of skill in the long-ago days of the glory of Myth Drannor; a few of these instruments still exist and retain their powers. Elminster the Sage has located descriptions of nine such types of instruments in his library, and I set them down here for bards and other interested parties.

Harps of Myth Drannor resemble Irish harps in appearance, having a roughly triangular shape formed by carefully crafted pieces of wood. A robust body arm leans against the player's shoulder and is covered by a tapering sound-board, down the center of which the harp strings are set, knotted to pegs which fit into holes in the soundboard. An upward-curving neck of wood holds the tuning pins at the top ends of the strings and stretches between the top of the body outwards to form the top of the harp, joining the outward-curving, prowlike forepillar, which curves down to the base of the body and completes the harp. Most Myth Drannan harps are small, 2-3' in overall height, and have copper, brass, and electrum strings, twenty to thirty-six in number. These harps require great skill to play pleasantly, for the strings are closely spaced and very resonant; half the skill of playing lies in dampening the sound of certain already-plucked strings but not others. Nevertheless, the magical properties of Myth Drannor harps do not require the hand of a bard or even a trained musician to be unleashed. For this reason, they are sought after by bards and nonbards alike, Myth Drannan harps retain their powers when restrung; the magic does not lie in the strings. All were initially of finely wrought appearance, with ivory and gilt inlays on black and dark red glossy-polished wood; all radiate a faint good and magical dweomer. They may be used without harm or penalty by all creatures able to stir their strings (regardless of race or alignment), and have powers and properties as described below. Bards who employ Myth Drannor harps increase their chances of *charming* as follows: a

base chance bonus of 9% plus 1% additional bonus per bardic level.

### **Azler's Harp**

When struck, the tones of this harp soothe *rage* of all sorts, and drive away *fear*, *hopelessness*, and *despair* of natural or magical origin within one round of being heard. The harp's maximum range about 8", or more if played in caverns, in a breeze (downwind only), or in a quiet place. While it is played, all *charms* and mental controls of any sort are blocked (*not removed or ended, but held in abeyance*) in all creatures hearing the harp's tones — and no new *charms* or *suggestions* can be successfully laid on those listening to the harp, even by a bard using the harp for such a purpose. The strings of the harp glow with *bluelight* (as in the magic-user *cantrip*) while they are being played.

### **Methild's Harp**

The music of this harp parts all *webs*, opens all locks, breaks all bonds, and unties all knots within 1" of the harp (as per multiple uses of *knock*). Magical locks and knots gain a saving throw vs. breath weapon to avoid being affected; anything thus saving against such a harp is forever immune to the effects of that particular *Methild's Harp*. All *webs*, bonds, locks, and knots affected by the harp are outlined with an orange *faerie fire* from the moment of their being affected (within one round of being within effective range of the harp's playing) for one turn. Magical barriers such as protective symbols and pentagrams, *shields*, *walls of force*, *force-cages*, and the like, having no designed opening, are not affected by the harp. A *rope of constriction*, *rope of entanglement*, or *rug of smothering* within 1" of the harp when it is played cease to function for 1-4 rounds and release any creatures they have entrapped — although a creature actually entrapped by such an item could not itself play the harp to free itself.

### **Esheen's Harp**

The tones of this harp cause all glass and metal within 3" to ring and resonate, "singing along with" the playing of the harp; this is an eerie and attention-gathering effect. When the harpist plucks the lowest string on the harp, all glass and crystalline objects up to 3" distant which face the harpist must save vs. crushing blow or shatter instantly into tiny shards. A single metallic object within this range may be affected as well. Magical armor, bracers, weapons, and other magical items (note that the metal or glass vial containing a magical oil, ointment, or potion is *not* itself magical) gain a bonus on their saving throws of +1 or whatever their magical "plus" may be to avoid being affected by the harp. The harp *can* shatter items that have saved successfully against its effects on earlier rounds, but the harpist cannot choose to affect some items in the harp's path of effect and not to affect others, save for choosing the metallic item to be destroyed. The harp can be so used once per round.

### **Nithanolor's Harp**

The music of this harp affects only its player and all things held or carried by the player (including the harp itself). The player is instantly protected for as long as the harp is played as though by a *stoneskin* spell (as per the fourth-level magic-user spell); the harp and all things worn or carried, no matter how fragile, are similarly protected, making them almost immune to physical attack. In addition, a moving field of protection exists about the harp and the player's arms, so that it is extremely difficult to physically prevent or restrain the harpist's playing. Note that magical attacks are unaffected, and the harp's protection is ended by a *silence*, *15' radius* or a *hold person* cast upon the harpist. No other creatures or items can be protected by the harp's music, even if touching the harpist.

### **Dove's Harp**

The playing of this harp causes a gentle soothing in the minds of all within 2" who

hear it. This soothing quells *insanity* while it is being played, and instantly (and permanently) calms listeners, dispelling *fear*, *despair*, *discord*, *rage*, and *hopelessness* of any sort, and lightening black moods or grief for a time.

The music of *Dove's Harp* can also *cure light wounds* once on any listener within 2' who hears the harp's song for at least two full rounds in succession, such curing being effective in that creature only once every nine days. The harp cannot otherwise combat the effects of poison. While the music of *Dove's Harp* is aiding a being as described above, the harp and harpist (*not* the being aided, unless the harpist is that being) radiate a faint white *faerie fire* or *nimbus*.

### Zunzalor's Harp

The tones of this instrument create a 3' - radius globe of pearly-white *continual light* centered upon the harp. This radiance lasts as long as the harp's strings sound, and within this radiance the following effects are present: *dispel illusion* (as per the fourth-level magic-user spell), *dispel invisibility* (all sorts except psionic), and *reveal glyph or symbol*. This latter power reveals things all magical or illusionary runes, marks, or inscriptions, including *wizard mark*, *illusionary script*, *unreadable magic*. It also uncovers protected writings, *glyphs of warding*, *symbols* and the like, revealing them in outline in a luminous blue so they can be precisely located or even tentatively identified or drawn for later study. The harp's music does not trigger such magicks and cause them to visit their effects upon persons studying them. The harp does *not* prevent the normal operation of such magical things, and they may be triggered by being touched or in some other prescribed manner). Shadows, tweens, and other hard-to-see creatures are made clearly visible, outlined in blue radiance, if they pass within the harp's globe of radiance. A mage employing *duo-dimension* appears as a thin vertical line of blue radiance in midair while within the sphere of effect of *Zunzalor's Harp*.

### Jhantra's Harp

The playing of this harp causes the harpist and any other creatures touching him or her, up to a limit of four creatures, to be concealed. This occurs after the playing of the harp continues for one round. Those hidden are *invisible* even to animals, infravision, and ultravision, and they cannot be scented or tracked. They can also *pass without trace* (as in the first-level druid spell) and move and speak while cloaked in silence, even though their speech and movements are clearly audible to one another. This protection lasts for as long as the harp is played (its own music can be clearly heard, but it always sounds far off and as though coming from all directions). Any creature losing even momentary contact with the harpist instantly

becomes audible and visible, and cannot regain this protection even if touching the harpist or other protected creatures again until the harp has been stilled. When it is so stilled, and playing begins anew, a full round of playing must always occur before the harp's concealment is renewed. Spellcasting is possible when under the harp's concealment, but at the instant of the spell's taking effect, the caster appears even if contact with the harpist has not been lost: A creature cannot play the harp and cast spells or cantrips of any sort simultaneously, nor activate and control magic items.

### Rhingalade's Harp

The tones of this harp cause the harpist to *blink* (as in the third-level magic-user spell) for as long as desired, and the harp is played. In addition, 1-4 *mirror images* of the harpist are instantly created, and these *blink* in the same manner as the harpist at slightly different times, so that the harpist (or rather, at least one image of the harpist) is always in view. Such images vanish forever when struck by a weapon (using the harpist's own armor class), but they otherwise remain in existence until the harp is stilled. The harpist cannot cast other spells or make attacks during this time, for when the harping ends, so do its effects, and they cannot be recreated until

the *harp* rests unplayed for at least three rounds.

### Valarde's Harp

The player employing *Valarde's Harp* can, at will, cause either of two effects to occur, each taking effect at the end of one complete round of play: a *gust of wind* moving outwards from the end of the body piece of the harp, or a *wind wall* of 2' square, lasting for three rounds, although the harper can end it sooner if desired. Tiny points of radiance flicker, dance, and wink out on the strings of *Valarde's Harp*, and about the brow or head of the being playing it, while its strings are in motion.

Elminster believes that a score or more of each of these nine types of harps may still exist, with powers intact; others that have lost their powers — usually by having the wood frame of the harp smashed (for even if repaired, the *dweomer* is gone after such a mishap) are known to be in the private collections of mages and kings. If anyone does find an intact harp of one of the types described, Elminster is interested in acquiring it. m



courtesy of Dover Publications, Inc.

# “There’s Something on the Floor . . .”

## *A little ingenuity in dungeon floor design*

by Reid Butler

Before any Dungeon Master mentions a phrase akin to the title, he must be prepared for the consequences. Statements such as these send players into a blind panic, when all you wanted was to add a little interest to your game. If you mention that there’s something unusual about the floor, the players will understandably want an explanation that is concise and descriptive. If you aren’t ready with it, the chorus of arguing voices soon deprives you of game control. In extreme circumstances, players may get carried away and assail the weaker characters or NPCs (magic-users and thieves, in particular), binding and gagging them in order to test the effectiveness of any possible traps concealed in the floor. Events such as these can ruin your game for the sake of a well-conceived diversion or trap, and it is to avoid such perpetual chaos that this article was written.

As the DM, you can’t really blame the players for their irrational behavior (unless their characters start sacrificing their lackeys and shield bearers, of course). In any scenario, people get nervous if they can’t trust the floor they’re standing on. I’ve had similar experiences as a DM, and the pandemonium resulting from an ill-prepared idea bordered on insanity. It was those attempts at spicing up my games that inspired me to create a list of alterations and modifications that can add spice to your dungeons and citadels, increasing the excitement involved in casual explorations of otherwise bland or empty rooms, while at the same time instilling fear into your players with a few quicksand floors or other specialized traps.

Unusual floors make for interesting traps as well, giving players an alternative to the ever-present grey ooze, trappers, green slime, and yellow mold. Characters who show no respect for your dungeons

will have their humility meters adjusted and may start prodding the floor with spears or rolling small expendable objects down the corridor. This should not always betray an unusual floor, but if one or two traps are so triggered, your players will sit up and take notice. Many of the special floors in this article are just mind-teasers, designed to make players more interested in the game.

A word to the wise: Too many rolls from this special chart and your dungeons will become too difficult to traverse, even in going from one room to the next. In addition, your players will become very paranoid and may eventually become bored with the surprises in every other room. One surprise carpet trap for every 25 rooms is ample, as you could throw in other traps that aren’t triggered when players set foot in the doorway.

As the DM, it is your task to apply your good judgment in placing any room that could cut characters off from another level. Some floors are not meant for kitchens or barracks. Avoid putting teleporter floors in lavatories unless you’re certain your players are in good spirits, but this could be a suitable humiliation if your players are in the habit of picking up copies of DRAGON® Magazine and memorizing player aids before you do. You can’t make them forget any DMG tables, but you can make them regret their sins.

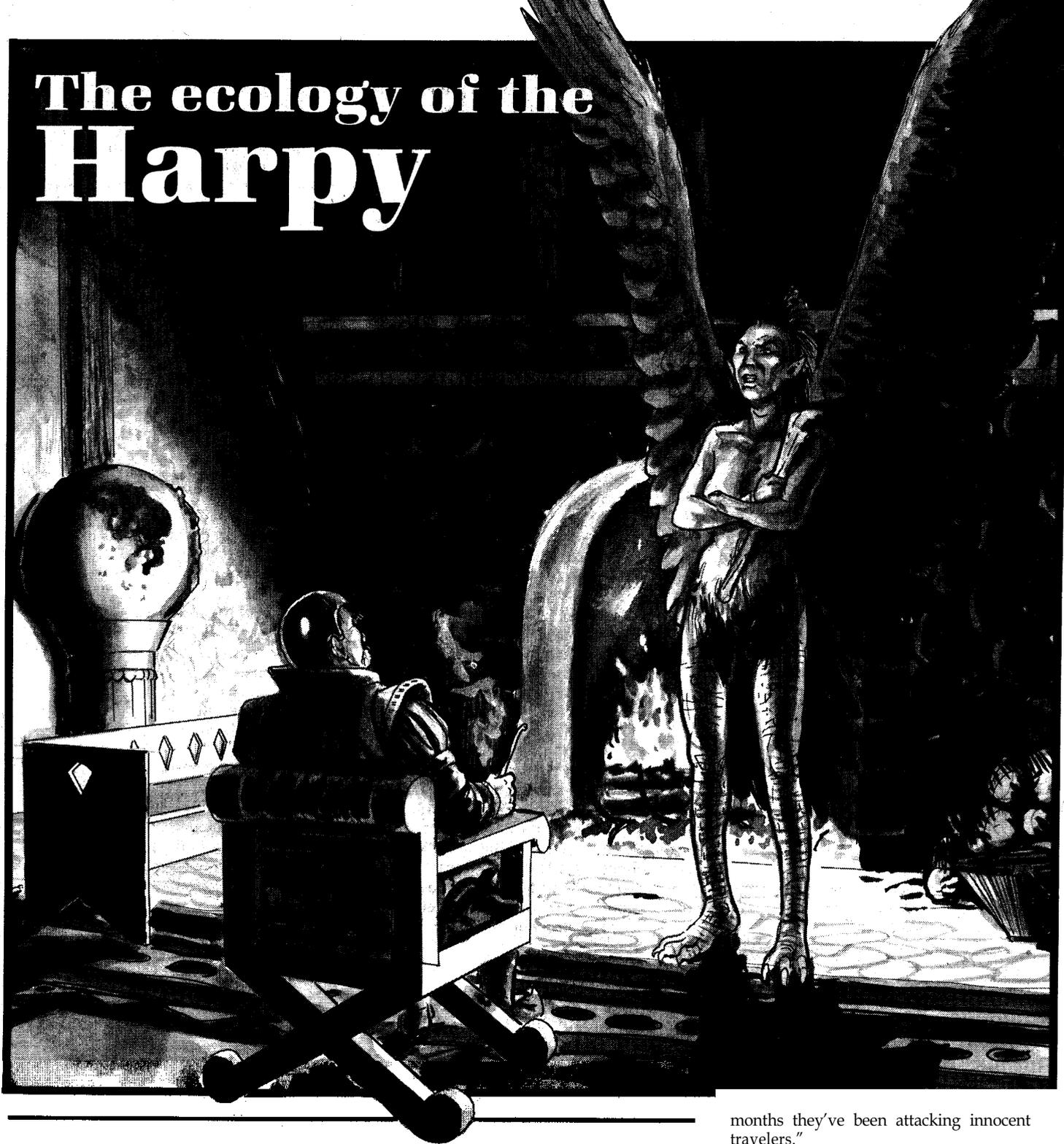
Assume that only one in 20 rooms (roll of 20 on a d20) has an unusual floor. Use the following tables in that event. Some die rolls require secondary rolls for details. There is also a secondary table with new ideas for modifying the average pit trap.

### Unusual floor creation table

Dice roll	Property of floor	
01-02	Contact with floor causes concentric waves to spread out across its surface, like the surface of a pond	14
03	Floor constantly rolls in a tidal, wavy fashion	15
04	Floor temporarily retains footprints on its surface for 1-8 rounds, after which footprints disappear	16
05-09	Floor is an illusion (roll 1d6): 1-2 – <i>illusion</i> of safe floor over a pit 3-4 – <i>illusion</i> of safe floor over (roll again) 5-6 – <i>illusion</i> of an unusual floor over a normal floor (roll again for appearance)	17-19
10-12	Floor is covered with a layer of skin/scaled skin/cloth	20
13	Floor is covered with/comprised of thick, tangled vegetation (10% chance it is still alive)	21
	Floor is a giant mirrored surface	22-23
	Floor is the surface of a pool of some molten substance (1-3’ deep)	
	Floor is a horizontal <i>wall of force</i>	
	Floor is a net/web suspended at the level where a floor would be (with appropriate weight limit, if desired)	
	After a given period of time, the floor folds along its center and snaps shut like a book 1-4 rounds later, doing a specified amount of damage to those caught within it	
	Floor absorbs the sound of anything making direct contact with it (i.e., footsteps, prodding poles, skidding chairs, etc.)	
	Floor is partly/entirely removed (roll 1d4): 1 – the only remaining floor is a path around the room’s perimeter	

	2 – there is no floor, but there are stepping stones suspended in midair, 2-5' apart		(i.e., square peg in a round hole)	71-76	Floor has a trap door leading to a set of stairs or subchamber
	3 – while there is no floor at all, a character will be telekin-sized to the point in the room that he or she wishes to go	49-52	Floor has a painting or mosaic on it (1-10% chance it is prophetic or magical, portraying players in combat, etc.)	77-79	Floor is metallic and gives off echoes when walked upon with hard boots or metal-shod feet
	4 – there is no floor; a series of tightropes connect any doors present	53	Floor appears solid, but is similar to a trampoline when stepped upon	80	Floor is covered with <i>dust of choking</i>
24-26	Floor has an alignment and only allows those of similar alignment to touch it (others suffer cause <i>light wounds</i> )	54-55	Floor is divided into sections of varying heights (10% chance that these sections rise and fall at random)	81-84	Floor gives an electrical shock (damage and saving throw potential determined by the DM)
27-32	Depending on the nature of the room (i.e., whether it is a prayer room or a vault for gold), the floor can cast a malevolent or benevolent spell on those who enter the room (automatically so for those effects which are harmful, and a percentage chance determined by the DM for those spells which are of benefit; beneficial effects should only be checked once per day at the most, regardless of time spent in the room by characters). Harmful spell effects (at 12th level of ability; roll 1d10) include:	56	Floor is divided into tiny squares that record the portraits of characters over zero-level who enter the room	85	Floor is transparent/translucent, and acts like a (one-way?) window to the next level
	1 – <i>fear</i>	57-61	Portion of floor is magnetic	86-87	Floor is quicksand, made to look like sandstone
	2 – <i>paralyzation</i>	62	Sections of floor are removed; the holes serve as viewing/entry portals from other planes of existence	88	Floor makes random, unusual noises when touched
	3 – <i>suggestion</i>	63	Floor is shaped like (roll 1d4):	89-92	Floor is phosphorescent
	4 – <i>teleport</i> (no save)		1 – a bowl	93	Under certain conditions, floor emits <i>sleep gas</i>
	5 – <i>repulsion</i> (no save)		2 – an inverted dome or bubble-shape	94-95	Runes or glyphs carved into floor's surface (5% chance that each party member reads a different writing)
	6 – <i>slow</i> (no save)		3 – pyramid	96	Persons standing on floor begin to speak a different, random language (as per <i>tongues</i> , reversed)
	7 – <i>maze</i> (no save)	64-67	4 – upside-down pyramid	97-98	Objects (and, optionally, people) in the room that are in contact with the floor <i>blink</i> (as a blink dog) at random intervals to random locations
	8 – <i>cause blindness</i>	68	Floor is covered with a jagged, crystalline growth	99-00	Floor alternates between two different states; roll twice and apply results as desired
	9 – <i>cause critical wounds</i> (no save)	69	Anything touching the floor is rendered <i>invisible</i>		
	10 – <i>feblemind</i>	70	<i>Invisible</i> caltrops on floor		
	Beneficial spell effects (at 12th level; roll 1d8)		Floor alternates from solid to semisolid state at a given interval (like a <i>transmute rock to mud</i> spell)		
	1 – <i>dispel exhaustion</i>				
	2 – <i>cure light wounds</i>				
	3 – <i>slow poison</i>				
	4 – <i>protection from evil/good</i>				
	5-8 – <i>bless</i>				
33	Floor rises to meet ceiling in one round under specific conditions, doing exceptional crushing damage			43-45	One wall of pit is actually a stone golem, stone guardian, or caryatid column, and it attacks the victims in the pit
34-38	Floor dumps characters into pit (roll 1d4):			46-55	Pit has ethereal spikes that come into phase when victim hits the floor
	1 – floor opens like a pair of shutters			56-65	When something hits bottom of pit, a horizontal portcullis slides out, separating party from victim(s)
	2 – floor slides under walls like a pair of elevator doors			66-69	As above, but portcullis is replaced by a <i>blade barrier</i>
	3 – floor unlocks and spins on a central axis, spilling unfixed objects			70-79	Pit is enclosed in a <i>silence</i> spell, as are its victims
	4 – portion of floor over pit goes temporarily <i>ethereal</i> or <i>astral</i>			80-89	Pit is 50-75% (45 + (5 x 1d6)) filled with (roll 1d100):
39	Floor lowers like a ramp/elevator platform to the next level	21-26	Pit is cylindrical and spins victims who fall inside, pressing them against sides of pit		01-60 – water
40	Floor is an opaque block of ice	27-36	Pit narrows as it descends		61-66 – acid (1-8 hp damage/round of exposure)
41-42	Floor (and ceiling and walls) are carved and painted to look like a monster's mouth	37-38	Pit appears to be (and might actually be) bottomless		67-73 – grey ooze/green slime/other mold
43-48	Floor's size and shape are inconsistent with those of the room	39	Persons making contact with the pit bottom of the pit are <i>plane shifted</i> (save vs. spells allowed)	90-96	74-90 – garbage
		40-42	Pit has a guardian monster which is released when someone falls into the pit; monster immediately fights party (could be used in conjunction with a locking-and-flooding pit)	91-00	91-00 – <i>webs</i>
					A mischievous creature teases victims in the pit (roll 1d4):
					1 – doppelganger
					2 – leprechaun
					3 – pixie or sprite
					4 – unseen servant (performing automatic activities)
				97-00	Victims who fail to save vs. spells undergo a gradual alignment change

# The ecology of the Harpy



## Songs of beauty. . .

by **Barbara E. Curtis**

"So . . . you seek something from me." The silver-haired sage chuckled to himself as he poured a cup of mulled wine for his guest. "It must be quite important, for I have very few visitors."

*I don't doubt that,* Colin thought, recall-

ing the long miles of barren wasteland he had crossed to reach the sage's dwelling. It had been hard going even for a ranger. "People from the Northlands say that you've studied animals and their behavior. I need some advice. Some strange creatures have made the main road into my village their home, and for the past three

months they've been attacking innocent travelers."

"Do you know what these creatures are called?" D'driand asked, his tone a bit more businesslike as he handed Colin the cup of wine and sat in the carved chair across from him.

"I think someone told me they were called harpies," the ranger said. "I've never actually seen one myself, but those few who have seen them and lived to tell of it after have said that a harpy has the face and upper body of a hideous woman, and the lower body and wings of a vulture."

"Those indeed sound like harpies, my friend," D'driand said. "Three months, you say? You might have more of a problem

than you've bargained for — they probably have claimed that area as their tribal land."

"Tribal land?"

"I had not heard that there were any harpies in the Northlands, but it's possible that they've moved north because their old hunting lands have become depleted," D'driand said, intertwining his fingers thoughtfully. "If the entire tribe has settled there, you have a definite cause for worry. An average tribe consists of fifty to two hundred members. They aren't very bright, but they're smart enough to realize there's safety in numbers."

"Not very encouraging," Colin grunted, staring into his cup. "How do you get rid of harpies?"

"Drive them away," D'driand replied. "It's not easy, but far easier than trying to kill them all off. At this point, you have one of two choices: move your village to a safer location, or show enough power that the harpies will flee. They aren't known for their bravery."

"But I think we're dealing with a very small tribe. I haven't heard of any group larger than a dozen."

"Tribes are rare," D'driand said, "but not unknown. Harpies usually exist in smaller packs, or 'screams,' and almost never hunt in groups larger than twelve. In cases of extreme necessity, however, harpies have been known to band together in small tribes. In fact, unless you had spent as much time as I have studying the harpies, you wouldn't even know they were tribal at all. Since their hunting grounds usually spread over a five- to ten-mile radius, no more than a dozen will ever be seen at one time. Their lairs are grouped together, but that's all."

"Would the village be part of their hunting grounds as well?" Colin asked.

"I'm not sure. Have any of the farmers in your area lost grazing animals?"

"Jarlath, a farmer right on the edge of the village, said that he lost about ten sheep last week."

D'driand nodded. "Just as I thought. Be careful of grazing animals as well. Harpies have voracious appetites and will eat just about anything. The road into your village probably has a lot of travelers on it daily, so it presents an almost constant supply of food. Men, women, children, beasts of burden — nothing is safe." D'driand stretched his feet out in front of him, sighed, and continued. "Harpies are strictly carnivores. Oh, I have heard that in times of famine harpies will eat vegetation, but only when meat has been unavailable for some time. They prefer fresh meat, especially that of humans, humanoids, and demi-humans. Elf is a particularly rare treat, for reasons I shall explain later. However, harpies could hardly be termed fussy eaters and will eat just about anything, including carrion."

"If they have such ravenous appetites and will attack anything to eat it, why don't they attack large groups?" Colin

asked. "We have caravans passing through on their way to Rhelmar by that road, but I've never heard of even one harpy attack on them."

"As I mentioned before, harpies are generally quite cowardly and won't get into a fight they don't believe they can win."

"But there are so many females," Colin said. "I've never heard of even *one* male harpy. Do harpies live forever and never need to reproduce?"

"The males look like females; the only difference between them are the actual biological functions of reproduction," D'driand explained, taking Colin's empty cup to refill it. "Despite the fact that all harpies have the appearance of breasts on their upper bodies, that is all it is: an appearance. Harpies do not nurse their young. Instead, young are fed in the same manner as are bird fledglings. Actual roles of males and females in the tribe are identical. Both hunt and both care for the fledglings. And harpies hardly live forever — perhaps twenty-five or thirty years at the most."

"How much bigger will a tribe become?"

"A healthy female becomes fertile by the age of two and may lay as many as twenty eggs in her lifetime, though only an average of three may live to maturity. Many of the eggs simply won't hatch. If a harpy is born with any obvious deformities, its parents kill it shortly after hatching. If there are more than one fledgling in the nest, the stronger of them always kills the weaker ones. The harpies see this as completely natural; the weak have no right to live. This works in the opposite way as well: when a harpy grows too old and feeble to hunt on its own, becomes crippled or sickly, or is in any other way incapable of taking care of itself for any period of time, other tribe members kill it, for it is a burden to the tribe." D'driand handed Colin the refilled cup. "If left to nature, a harpy tribe won't become significantly larger," he added as he sat down again.

"Well, I have a pretty good idea of what they are and why they have been attacking," Colin said, pushing aside a stray wisp of dark hair. "Here's the real question: *how* do they attack?"

"If they had been forced to rely on their teeth, claws, and wits, they never would have survived very long. Whatever evil caused the harpies to be created also saw to it that they were given a unique and terrible attack. A harpy has a song that would put all the birds of the world to shame — a song that makes listeners risk life and limb to find the creature that produces such a beautiful sound. Some do resist the charm, but not many. Once they are under the effect of the harpy's song, the victim seeks out the harpy that charmed him and stays under the effect even when he sees how ugly the harpy actually is. The victim won't actually engage in combat since he does not realize

what has happened, but he may try to persuade his companions that the harpy means them no harm."

"Can the charm be broken?"

"Yes; but there are only three ways I know of doing so," D'driand told him. "First, if one of the victim's companions is unaffected by the spell, he might call out to the victim and try to convince him of the harpy's intent, though there is no guarantee that this will work. The second way is for a sorcerer or holy man to cast a spell to rid the victim of the charm or the magic that caused it. The last way is to kill the harpy itself."

"In case the song didn't work, or if the person has broken the song's charm, there is another way that a harpy can charm its victim. More powerful than the song, this way makes the victim see the harpy as a beloved friend worthy of his protection. It is a magical touch that sends a powerful charm through the victim."

"Can you use the same ways to break this type of charm as with the song-charm?"

"The only way to remove this type is to kill the harpy responsible, for this charm puts a stronger hold on the victim than the song does." D'driand picked up a fireplace poker and began to stir the glowing embers. "In this case, the person will physically try to defend the harpy and thwart any attempts to kill it, so this can be a major problem. If you plan on taking a group of people to defeat them, it would be to your benefit to take those with elven blood, for they have a natural resistance to the powers of the harpy. This is why harpies find them to be such a delicacy, for elves are difficult to charm and are therefore a rare treat."

"If a person is under the effect of the song-charm and is touched by a harpy, does this strengthen the spell it has over its victim?"

"No. The power isn't cumulative. The only way for a harpy to strengthen it to that point is to break the song-charm and then touch its victim. Harpies can break the charm immediately — all it takes is for it to physically attack its victim. However, it likes to wait until there is no one around to help its victim and no chance for the victim to escape once the charm has been released. It disarm its prey first, and once its victim is completely vulnerable, it attacks and gains an early advantage."

"If people have broken the charm once, can they do it again later?"

"Not exactly." D'driand replaced the poker and carefully placed another log on the fire. "However, those who have been taken by harpy charm and have broken it themselves seem to be more resistant to it in the future. People cannot be charmed by the same type of charm twice in one battle."

Colin nodded. "Good. I think I have a good idea of how to defeat them." The ranger suddenly looked sad and stared into his cup. "Would that it was not sooner.

More travelers' lives could have been saved. One thing was very odd. A few of us ventured to find some of the missing people; we found a few remains, but apparently none of their belongings were touched."

"That's very typical," D'driand said. "Harpies do not care for treasure for treasure's sake. What use is it to them? They take only one item from each victim back to their lairs as a memento of the kill, for having many items from victims is a sort of status symbol in harpy society.

"If you went to a lair of a harpy, you probably wouldn't find much of value. Most of their victims are wayward travelers and pilgrims — people who would not have much of value in the first place, perhaps a ring or a pouch of coins. Never would you find gold, platinum, jewels, and magical items of any worth or great power. There is no reason for a harpy to prefer a large gem over a tinderbox. A harpy might take a small weapon such as a dagger that it could carry and use in flight, and may even make weapons out of the bones of victims. Most likely what you would find are worthless items: remains of victims, dung, feathers, or whatever the harpy might have dragged in for one reason or another. They aren't the cleanest of creatures."

The old man's gray eyes lit up as he rose to unlock an ornate wooden chest next to him. "I have something that might help you on your most laudable quest. It will help you far more than it will ever help me." He opened the lid and fumbled inside the chest, taking out curious objects that Colin longed to inspect but was polite

enough not to touch. D'driand stood and handed the young ranger a bone scroll case. Colin began to work the stopper from the top of the case, but the sage stopped him.

"Not yet," he warned. "Reading the scroll inside will protect you and your companions from the charms of the harpies — but take care! Time your reading well, for the scroll's power does not last forever."

"I'll do that," Colin said with a grin, stuffing the case into his pack. "I cannot tell you how much I appreciate your help, and how much my people will appreciate it. But I can't stay any longer — every minute I am away is another minute for the harpies to gain their hold." He slung the pack over one broad shoulder and handed the sage a small pouch of coins. D'driand walked with him in silence to the door. As the ranger disappeared into the light fog that had settled, he waved and called back, "I'll tell everyone what you've done for them. Good-bye, and thank you!"

The sage waved back, but his expression darkened as he turned back into his home and walked to the parlor. Next to the hearth, a winged humanoid warmed its hands by the fire. It turned and eyed the sage suspiciously, and began to speak in a garbled tongue that was filled with bird cries and twisted human speech. "What did you tell the human about my people?" she asked.

"Doesn't matter," D'driand replied, answering pleasantly in the same odd language. "I gave him a scroll that will make him completely open to your charm, Thanata. Your feathered folk will be able to finish settling in as planned."

in the clearing looking about, swords out and uncertain. Then a soft, feminine call came from the tree above him, startling Melazzar to no end. He stood immobile as several of his fellows came towards the tree, peering about and calling wary greetings. Then the branches above danced as something large spread wings and glided out into the clearing; and Melazzar saw other things launch themselves from the trees about, angling down towards his comrades.

"Look out!" he yelled, then. "An attack! Brorim! Helmar! They attack from the air!" and he drew the knife from his belt. From the air above came shrieks of anger and a strange snarling, spitting speech — and hurled daggers that flashed in the moonlight as they struck down the luckless Brorim before Melazzar's eyes. Helmar was more fortunate; he got his blade up and got under a tree, and his attackers circled away. Across the clearing, however, one of the merchants — a fat man called Yhelger — was dragged into the air in the grip of two of the flying creatures; Melazzar saw with a shock that he seemed not to want to resist them. Further, he saw that these monsters had the faces and forms of women, with the wings, claws, and tails of birds!

There was a flash of light in the air above the clearing, and another, and Melazzar saw that the senior merchant in the caravan, Crommor the Theurgist, had arrived. The *pyrotechnics* was of his making, and before it the creatures shrieked and flapped away. Yhelger was carried aloft with them, although Crommor was gesturing and muttering like a madman. Before the merchant disappeared above the trees, a globe of radiance grew about him from nothingness to a calm, steady glow. "Follow that light!" Crommor roared. "Head for high ground!" Helmar, Melazzar, and all the others plunged into the trees, crashing through branches and waving their blades and staves.

They soon lost sight of Yhelger, and Crommor rather grimly called off the search. They buried Brorim and returned to the camp to find the fire low. Crommor said only, "You stay up until morning, boy. Helmar, stay with him and see he stays awake. If you hear those calls again, play on your harp loud, and sing, too — anything loud, mind; just make a noise!"

The calls did not come again that night, and in the morning Crommor said, "Now we seek their lair — we faced harpies last night, and Yhelger is a dead man by now. If we do not find the harpies now — and beware their touch! — they will follow us and attack by night, taking us a few at a time. Come on!"

The entire band left mounts and wagons and set off into the woods. Crommor directed them towards a row of rocky crags some miles away — for that, he said, is where their lair must be. And he was right; in a rift between Dark Crag and the next one, they found ten of the grotesque

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## ... Songs of death

by Ed Greenwood

"A foul creature, the harp," Elminster said, drawing on his pipe, and made flapping motions with his hands to underline the pun. I groaned obediently (the things I do for the money!) and made sure the tape recorder was on. "It's also called the siren, you know," he added grandly.

"Oh, really?" I replied with feigned astonishment, and passed him the cookies. He took one, bit into it, and thus heartened, covered me with a fine spray of tiny chocolate chip cookie particles (thank goodness it wasn't chip dip) as he began the tale of the bard Melazzar and the harpies of Dark Crag. Here's an edited version (without the cookie spray):

Melazzar of Waterdeep, now old and respected, was once a young wanderer learning his minstrelry about the inns and taverns of the North. One fall, he was

traveling with a small caravan in the deep woods betwixt Silverymoon and Triboar, and during a late night around the campfire, he drank far too much and wandered off into the trees by himself, feeling very ill. He was leaning against a tree, sweating and feeling as if he might die, when he heard a soft, unearthly maiden's call from the darkness beyond. Melazaar was astonished and listened intently; it came again, and from the fire he heard some of his companions get up and come to investigate. He crouched very still behind a tree and watched four of his fellows go right past him — and was then very sick.

When he had recovered somewhat, he followed, for the curious, haunting calls continued — from farther off in the forest, it seemed. At length, the moonlight grew stronger ahead, and Melazzar saw that there was a small clearing. About it large creatures seemed to be perched in the trees — it was hard to see exactly what in the darkness — and his companions stood

creatures, and what was left of Yhelger. The creatures rose into the air with shrieks, but Crommor's magic and the hurled weapons of the caravaners felled six harpies, and the rest fled. So Melazzar first met harpies, and composed his first ballad, which is generally considered pretty bad – but this is not surprising, considering the difficulty of finding pretty rhymes for "Crommor" and "Yhelger."

When his tale was done, I questioned Elminster closely about harpies in hopes of passing on what I could to you, and this is the result.

### Notes

1. Harpy songs draw prey as follows: All creatures who hear a single call are alerted to further calls; they strain to hear more, even if asleep. Such calls are typically audible up to 190' distant; wind and storm lessens or ends their effectiveness. Upon hearing a second such call, creatures must save vs. spells or proceed toward the origin of the call. Creatures who are prevented or restrained seek to win past such restrictions, though they are not "entranced." Any fighting that occurs angers an allured victim, but he listens to warnings; if he manages to investigate the calls further, he will be normally alert. Only one person can be affected by one harpy at any one time, for this is a bond that requires some concentration on the part of the harpy. If the victim breaks the *charm*, the harpy is free to *charm* another victim. Saving throws against the lure of harpy calls are made as follows:

- +6 if the allured character is a bard;
  - +5 if the character is affected by magical *fear* when the call is heard;
  - +4 if the character is experienced with harpies – having heard such calls before and found out the source;
  - +1 if the character has, within the last year, made a successful saving throw against a harpy-touch *charm*;
  - 1 if character has, within the last year, failed to save against a harpy-touch *charm*;
  - 3 if character is asleep or drowsy;
- and,
- 3 if character is warned about or has never heard of harpies.

All saving throw modifiers are cumulative. Note also that creatures under the influences of *feblemind*, *stun*, *charm*, and *confusion* spells are immune to the effects of harpy calls. This is true also of some forms of insanity; although a kleptomaniac is affected by harpy calls as normal, a catatonic is immune to them. It is up to the DM to decide which forms of insanity and mental disorder are applicable.

If the save vs. spells is unsuccessful against the song-*charm*, the victim falls under the influence of the *charm* as described above. The victim won't directly aid the harpy, for the spell cannot create that strong a bond. A second save vs. spells at -4 may be given if one of the victim's companions, not affected by the

*charm*, tries to convince the victim of the harpy's intent. This can only be done once per individual affected. A *remove charm* or *dispel magic* also work.

Bards instantly realize a harpy call for what it is. A bard may have some suspicions if he has never heard the call before, since it is easy for the bard to distinguish it from human singing or calling. As a result, the bard still maintains his resistance to the call. The musical playing and singing of a bard of any level negates the charming powers of a harpy call for all who are within hearing range of the bard. Any skilled singer can vocally negate harpy calls with a 25% chance of success, since sheer volume is often enough to negate these effects. Such chances of success increase by 5% for each previous occasion upon which the singer has successfully offset the effects of a harpy's call.

In a like manner, the playing of a *lyre of building*, the legendary *Heward's mystical organ*, or any *instrument of the bards* offsets harpy calls (the player need not be a bard in such instances). Thunderclaps or sounds of battle similarly disrupt the lure of harpy calls, as does the deliberate use of items such as a *chime of opening*, any magical *biwa* or *bell*, a *ring of human influence*, *staff of command*, *rod of beguiling*, or *rod of rulership*. None of these items, however, prevent *charm* effects from a harpy's touch. A *ring of contrari-*

*ness* prevents both the lure and the *charm* of a harpy's call from taking effect; a *wand of enemy detection* reveals calling harpies or harpies attempting to *charm* characters by touch. *Oil of disenchantment* breaks a harpy *charm*, but it won't prevent the lure of harpy calls.

Beings who are deafened, comatose, or in a deep sleep or trance are immune to the lure of harpy calls; as previously mentioned, beings already under a *charm* or hypnotic *suggestion* are similarly unaffected. A harpy touch *charm* breaks such existing *charms* or suggestions, but won't be useful in charming the character after that point. Nevertheless, a harpy is allowed a subsequent *charm* attempt in such cases. Use of a *ventriloquism* spell or a *potion of ventriloquism* gives a character capable of imitating a harpy call a 70% chance per round to offset harpy calls by making counter-calls in the opposite direction. This tactic always brings bewildered and furious harpies to investigate. A *silence* spell also prevents the effects of a harpy *song-charm*. Note: harpies are themselves immune to bardic or other magical, musical *charms* or *suggestions*, and their own ability to *charm* gives them a 90% magic resistance to *charm* spells cast upon them.

2. Harpies can cast *charm monster* by touch; this is an act of will and of limited natural magic, and is usable without limi-

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tation. Touch-charm is more powerful than a song-charm, and is therefore much more difficult to accomplish. For a touch-charm to be successful, the harpy must get a firm hold on the intended victim — in other words, it must score a hit on the victim two points over the required “to hit” number. No damage is taken when the intent is to use a touch-charm, and a harpy may make no other attacks or actions while the *charm* is being attempted. All target creatures are allowed a save vs. spells to avoid *charm* effects by touch, and any creature that saves against or throws off a harpy’s *charm* becomes immune to all subsequent *charm* attempts (whether by the same harpy or another) for 6-9 turns, as a harpy’s *charm* cannot affect an aware, excited, and opposed will.

Harpies typically *charm* prey and get such prey to freely allow the harpies to carry them off to the harpy lair — typically along a circuitous route, involving short “hops” made at low altitudes, so that observers won’t be able to follow the harpies to their lair. Once a *charmed* victim is in the lair, the harpy disarm him of all obvious weapons, and there is a 50% chance that it also searches for concealed weapons or other items and removes them as well. Other *charmed* victims, if any are around while this is going on, remain oblivious to the situation. Remember that the *charm* is broken once any harpy makes a physical attack upon the victim. If a person under the touch-charm of a harpy is carried bodily away by his companions before the *charm* is broken, he attempts to escape at the first opportunity to find the harpy again. The only way to remove this type of *charm* is by killing the harpy that touched the victim. If the spell is not broken, it wears off after one week.

Favorite prey among harpies include shepherds or herdsmen: once the handlers are taken care of, the livestock become easy, plentiful prey. Such disappearances are often blamed on bandits or raiding brigands; as a result, searchers and possessors never expect to find the harpies actually responsible. Only when the prey is safely in the lair will a harpy attack and torture it, thus breaking the *charm*. Harpies are exceedingly cruel and enjoy inflicting pain, but many activities described as torture by survivors and observers are actually used as training lessons for harpy chicks. Under the guidance of their elders, chicks are taught the various attacks and hunting techniques employed by their species. For example, a favorite tactic demonstrated to chicks to teach them cooperation is the slaying of prey between two harpies, lifting it into midair and pulling it apart by flying in opposite directions. Other tactics include dropping rocks from above while flying and raking prey with weapons captured from earlier prey as they pass over the victim. Large or especially powerful prey is often carried to the lair under the effects of the *charm* and dropped onto the rocks below, to disable the creature

before the harpy moves to close combat for its final attacks.

3. In battle, harpies often plummet and rake with their claws, but prefer to drop rocks or hurl weapons at their victims from a safe distance. A harpy lights upon its prey and bites only when the prey appears disabled or weak. A harpy bite does 1-6 hp damage; if a wound causes 2 + hp damage, it has a 3% chance of passing on a blood, cardiovascular-renal, or connective-tissue disease of an acute, severe nature (see the *DMG*, pages 13-14). Contact with harpy filth carries a 6% chance of contracting a parasitic infestation (see the *DMG*, pages 13-14). Harpies befool only what they cannot take back to their lair; they are sloppy, filthy creatures, but they do not deliberately foul their own lairs.

Harpies always try to cripple the wings of flying prey before making other attacks (they have no desire to fight an aerial creature on equal terms), and usually screech warnings and instructions to each other during battle, secure in the knowledge that their language is obscure and difficult to translate. Harpies are dangerous carnivores, but they are essentially cowards. Many potential victims have escaped their clutches by scaring the harpies with displays of magic or a show of superior force. Harpies overcome this innate cowardice by hunting in packs known as “screams,” which number from 2-12 harpies. From this hunting pack, the phrase “a scream of harpies” has been derived. Harpies have poor infravision (4”) and only slightly better ultravision (6”); in daylight, their sight is equal to that of a man, although they notice movements on the ground much more keenly when aloft.

4. Within a scream, female harpies lay eggs if their numbers ever fall to four or less. Within larger tribes, harpies pair off normally, laying eggs when the tribe decreases to fifty or less. If too many young result during hatching, the weaker harpies are slain by the other members of the scream or tribe. When strengthening the numbers of the scream or tribe, harpies lay 1-3 eggs each, once every 40 days. Only 30% of the freshly laid eggs are fertile; these eggs must be sat on to keep them warm (a task shared in rotation by all of the adult members of the scream) for 11-20 days before they hatch. Eggs that do not hatch after a month are devoured by the members of the scream. Young harpies are born with 1+1 HD, no ability to *charm*, attacks of 1/1/1-2 hp damage; and are unable to fly. The young are defended with great ferocity by their parents and are seldom molested by the rest of the scream unless they appear deformed. When harpy young are present, the scream hunts almost endlessly so that the chicks can grow rapidly and assist the scream in hunting. A chick grows to its full size and capacity of attacks, and develops skill in its use of song and power to hold prey under the influence of its

*charm*, in 1d4 + 14 days. A month after its birth, the harpy gains the ability to *charm* by touch. When the young harpy finally learns to fly (a process that takes an additional week or so and is characterized by a comical series of hops and tumbles about the lair), it makes its first venture out of the lair. A harpy can always make at least a few short flying hops before it ever leaves the safety of the lair. Harpies are clumsy fliers at best, since their flight is often a matter of heavy flapping, short swoops, and quick exhaustion if forced to fly long distances. Harpies possess maneuverability class C. Young female harpies are able to lay eggs of their own after they are two years of age, and are known to live up to 60 winters in extreme cases, although their dangerous lifestyle usually warrants a longevity of 12 to 20 years. If a scream grows to more than a dozen, the group breaks into two or more units. In these circumstances, the newly formed scream only remains within the territory of the former scream if both are a part of a larger tribe. Otherwise, the weaker scream is driven from the territory to establish its own lair.

5. A harpy lair is frequently found in a chasm, in a series of caves, or in a set of ruins. When establishing a lair, harpies seek a large, sheltered area that is safe from the molestation of men, yet within range of a well-stocked supply of food. The area is usually situated so that it is nearly impossible for prey to escape from it on foot. Also, the lair is usually large enough to allow harpies to fly about inside it and has rock ledges, projections, or tree limbs to provide a perch for each member of a scream or tribe. Harpies tend to stay in the same general area (a circle approximately 30 miles in diameter or a coastal strip approximately 60 miles in length) and learn the lay of the region and its natural features so they can utilize the structure of the land to ambush prey and to escape and hide within in case of trouble.

A harpy lair is strewn with the bones of harpy prey — all sorts of creatures ranging from livestock down to large rats, although smaller prey is uncommon due to the harpy’s poor sight and limited dexterity. Medium-sized creatures are a harpy’s favorite prey because they are easy enough to *charm* and carry, and because they provide a reasonably filling meal. The discarded treasure of such prey (excluding weapons) are often strewn about the floor of the lair, for harpies have no use for what they cannot eat. Some harpies, however, have come to realize that the presence of large quantities of shiny metals draw more humans and demi-humans to their lairs, and thus use the materials as bait with which to trap the victim. Harpies cannot easily grasp or carry individual coins, or anything smaller than a chest, staff, or statuette. They are fairly adept at plucking at and snagging leather purses, straps, baldrics, and-the like as they flap past.

# Elven Armies and Dwarves-At-Arms

## *Troop tables for demi-human lords*

by James A. Yates

*Unearthed Arcana* changes many aspects of the AD&D® game, all for the better. One of the most dramatic changes is to allow many demi-human fighters with the proper statistics to become lords. Since there is virtually nothing in the *Dungeon Masters Guide* covering troops for demi-human lords, and very little about it in my previous article "Tables and tables of troops" (DRAGON® Magazine, issue #99), this article has a go at designing troop tables for most of the demi-humans that may now become lords. This article concerns itself only with those demi-humans who dwell primarily above ground, because the deep-dwelling demi-humans operate under greatly different circumstances, and they don't really fit into this article.

When a demi-human fighter reaches the 9th level of experience, he or she may opt to establish a freehold. This is accomplished by constructing a stronghold of some sort and then clearing out any hostile creatures in a radius of 20-25 miles. Having fulfilled these requirements, the lord automatically attracts a body of troops of the same race and gains the right to collect taxes from every being residing within the territory of the freehold.

As with human lords, many factors affect the number and types of troops a demi-human lord receives. The size of the area cleared for the freehold, the lords alignment, and other personal factors all play a part. One notable exception is terrain; demi-humans are strongly associated with certain types of terrain, and you may never find an elven lord setting up house in a desert. In short, terrain is already factored into any demi-human troop table by the race of the demi-human lord in question. Racial prejudice affects only half-elves, who are looked upon with a little suspicion by both elves and humans. High charisma in a half-elf certainly overcomes this slight prejudice.

All demi-human lords draw their troops from their clans, tribes, bands, etc., which reside in their freehold, and they take primary responsibility for the defense of

all. These lords have fewer troops than most of their human counterparts because demi-humans are rarer and found in fewer numbers than humans. Despite this, most of these tables are quite powerful, as they contain many fighters of 1st level or higher and some multi-classed individuals.

### Summary of modifiers

*Territorial modifiers:* These approximate the size of the freehold the lord has established. The figures in square miles have been rounded off to the nearest 50, and are used for those lords who weren't obliging enough to clear a perfect circle around their castles.

Area cleared has a radius greater than 45 miles or is more than 6,350 square miles = +5%

Area cleared has a radius greater than 40 miles or is more than 5,000 square miles = +2%

Area cleared has a radius less than 40 miles or is less than 5,000 square miles = 0%

Area cleared has a radius less than 35 miles or is less than 3,850 square miles = -2%

Area cleared has a radius less than 30 miles or is less than 2,800 square miles = -5%

Area cleared has a radius less than 25 miles or is less than 1,950 square miles = -8%

### *Alignment modifiers:*

Lawful good = +3%  
Lawful neutral = +2%  
Lawful evil = +1%  
Neutral good = 0%  
Neutral = 0%  
Chaotic good = -1%  
Chaotic neutral = -2%  
Neutral evil = -3%  
Chaotic evil = -4%

### *Characteristic modifiers:*

Each level above 9th = +2%  
Each point of charisma above 13 = +1%

Each point of charisma below 9 = -2%

Half-elf = -5% on any appropriate human or elf table (but not both)

Half-elf = -35% on both any appropriate human and elf tables (the half-elven lord must have a strength of 18+ and charisma of 17+ in order to roll on both tables); humans and elves do not always get along well within a group

All modifiers are cumulative, although some may only apply to NPCs (a chaotic-evil dwarf, for instance). Any modified score of less than 01 is treated as 01, and any modified score greater than 00 (100) is treated as 00.

A 9th-level chaotic-neutral grugach (wild elf) lord with a charisma of 12 who has cleared a mere 2,500 square miles of territory would have a negative die roll modifier of -7% on the grugach troops table. A 10th-level lawful-good hill-dwarven lord with a charisma of 15 who has cleared 5,100 square miles of territory would have a modifier of +9% on the hill-dwarven troop table. An extraordinary chaotic-good 12th-level half-elven lord with a strength of 20 and charisma of 18 who has cleared over 7,000 square miles of territory would have a negative modifier of only -20% on both any appropriate human and elf tables.

### Demi-human leaders

Most demi-human lords do not usually roll for leaders; instead, they receive officers according to the number of troops they receive. The number and level of these officers varies by race as follows:

Hill dwarves receive an additional 3rd-level dwarven fighter to serve as a sergeant for every 20 dwarves received. For every 40 dwarves received, there is an additional 4th-level fighter to serve as a lieutenant. If the lord has 60 or fewer dwarves, he or she receives an additional 5th-level fighter to serve as captain; if 75-90 dwarves are commanded, a 6th-level fighter; and, if 105 or more dwarves, a 7th-level fighter. In addition, no matter how many dwarves the lord receives,

there is also a 3rd-level dwarven cleric/fighter to serve as chaplain.

Elves receive an additional 2nd-level elven fighter to serve as a sergeant for every 15 elves received. For every 30 elves received, there is an additional 3rd-level fighter to serve as a lieutenant. If the lord has 55 or fewer elves, he or she receives a 4th-level fighter/5th-level magic-user to serve as captain or, in the case of a grugach lord, a 4th-level druid/fighter. If 60-75 elves are commanded, a 5th-level fighter/6th-level magic-user or 5th-level druid/

fighter. And, if 80 or more elves, a 6th-level fighter/7th-level magic-user or 6th-level druid/fighter. In addition, no matter how many elves the lord receives, there is also a 3rd-level elven cleric/fighter/magic-user to serve as chaplain. Grugach lords do not receive this bonus.

Gnomes receive an additional 2nd-level gnomish fighter to serve as a sergeant for every 25 gnomes received. For every 35 gnomes received, there is an additional 3rd-level fighter to serve as a lieutenant. If the lord has 60 or fewer gnomes, he or

she receives an additional 4th-level fighter to serve as captain; if 75-90 gnomes are commanded, a 5th-level fighter; and if 105 or more gnomes, a 6th-level fighter. In addition, no matter how many gnomes the lord receives, there is also a 3rd-level gnomish cleric/fighter to serve as chaplain.

Half-elves roll for leaders (and all modifiers apply) as in per "Tables and tables of troops" in DRAGON issue #99, if they roll on a human table. If the half-elf rolls on an elf table, he or she receives officers as does any other elven lord. Some half-elves



may roll on both tables, and would then use both methods.

Halflings receive an additional 1st-level halfling fighter to serve as a sergeant for every 10 halflings received. For every 25 halflings received, there is an additional 2nd-level fighter to serve as a lieutenant. If the lord has 55 or fewer halflings, he or she receives an additional 3rd-level fighter as captain; if 65-75 halflings are commanded, a 4th-level fighter; and if 90 or more halflings, a 5th-level fighter. In addition, no matter how many halflings the lord receives, there is also a 2nd-level halfling cleric/fighter to serve as chaplain.

All demi-human officers have the following chance per level of having magical arms and armor (typically +1 in power):

Shield: 16%

Leather armor: 16%

Chain mail: 15%

Banded mail: 12%

Plate mail: 10%

Dagger: 5%

Edged weapon (select type): 15%

Blunt weapon (select type): 7%

Pole arm (select type): 9%

Missile weapon (select type): 6%

Miscellaneous magic item: 4% (10% for any magic-user, rolling until a useful item is obtained)

All officers, captains, lieutenants, sergeants, chaplains, and any special scouts above 1st level are allowed separate rolls to see if they possess the various sorts of magical accoutrements: a shield, one type of armor (of the DM's choice), a dagger, and one miscellaneous magic item. Captains roll for two types of weapons (both of the DM's choice); all others roll for only one type of weapon (again of the DM's choice). Multi-classed officers use their highest level to determine any magic items obtained. Racial restrictions apply, and no halfling, gnome, or dwarf should have a long bow, two-handed sword, or similarly large weapon.

Multiply the level of the officer in question by the percentage chance to possess a particular item, then roll the percentage dice. If the score rolled is equal to or less than the percentage, the officer has the item. If any officer has a percentage chance greater than 100% of having an item, the percentage above 100% is the chance of the item being +2 in power. Only demi-human captains of 7th level have any chance of receiving a +2 item, typically a shield, a suit of leather or chain mail armor, or an edged weapon. If no magic armor or weapons are received by an officer, the DM may outfit that officer with any armor and weapons appropriate to his or her race. However, an elven officer in this situation should be given at least a 50% chance of having a suit of normal elfin chain mail.

No specific weapons were listed so as to assure the maximum variety of weapon types amongst the various officers. This is

even more important when dealing with demi-humans than with humans because many of them have racially associated weapons which tend to dominate their militaries. By giving the DM a free reign to select the specific weapons, it guarantees that dwarves can fight with battle axes and elves with bows, although no DM has to equip any demi-human with their "standard" weapons.

### Using the troop tables

First, the player or DM (if creating a freehold for an NPC) finds the appropriate troop table. Roll the percentile dice and apply any relevant modifiers. The final result shows the number of troops of various types which form the nucleus of the lords fledgling army. The higher the result, the more and better equipped the troops will be. A very high score gains a bonus of troops who improve the quality of the lords forces. These special scouts are optional; if the DM feels they should not be given, then they are not. Also, DMs should feel free to alter these tables in any way they see fit.

### Troop Table X: Hill Dwarf

This table is very similar to Troop Table VIII in "Tables and tables of troops," but that table was for mountain dwarves. The table for hill dwarves is slightly inferior to that for mountain dwarves because hill dwarves can not become as powerful as mountain dwarves and do not have as many hit points as their stronger cousins. Even so, it is a very powerful table, having plenty of troops who are at each least 1st level (having 5-8 hp).

### Dice Result

01-40 45 infantry — 30 with chain mail, shield, battle axe, and hammer; 15 with ring mail, shield, sword, and spear

41-65 60 infantry — 30 with chain mail, shield, battle axe, and hammer; 15 with ring mail, shield, sword, and spear; 15 with ring mail, light cross-bow, and sword

66-85 75 infantry — 35 with chain mail, shield, battle axe, and hammer; 20 with ring mail, shield, sword, and spear; 20 with ring mail, light cross-bow, and sword

86-95 90 infantry — 45 with chain mail, shield, battle axe, and hammer; 20 with ring mail, shield, sword, and spear; 25 with ring mail, light cross-bow, and sword

96-00 105 infantry — 50 with chain mail, shield, battle axe, and hammer; 25 with ring mail, shield, sword, and spear; 30 with ring mail, light cross-bow, and sword; and, five pony-mounted infantry\*

\* These pony-mounted infantry are all 2nd-level dwarven fighters with chain mail, shield, battle axe, and mace. They use their ponies only for transport and do

not fight as cavalry. These troops are considered special scouts and may roll for magic equipment. They can be used as scouts or as a special bodyguard for the hill dwarven lord.

### Troop Table XI: Gray Elf

This is undoubtedly the most powerful of all the elven troop tables. It doesn't have as many troops as some others, but if the special scouts are used, they are more than ample compensation. All soldiers are at least 1st level (having 6-9 hp).

### Dice Result

01-40 35 infantry — 25 with chain mail, shield, sword, and spear; 10 with chain mail, sword, and bow

41-65 45 infantry — 30 with chain mail, shield, sword, and spear; 15 with chain mail, sword, and bow

66-85 10 hippogriff-mounted cavalry with chain mail, shield, lance, and sword; 40 infantry — 25 with chain mail, and shield, sword, and spear; 15 with chain mail, sword, and bow

86-95 15 hippogriff-mounted cavalry with chain mail, shield, lance, and sword; 45 infantry — 30 with chain mail, and shield, sword, and spear; 15 with chain mail, sword, and bow

96-00 15 hippogriff-mounted cavalry with chain mail, shield, lance, and sword; 55 infantry — 35 with chain mail, shield, sword, and spear; 20 with chain mail, sword, and bow; and, special scouts\*

\* The special scouts are 4 1st-level fighter/magic-users led by a 3rd-level fighter/magic-user. All are mounted on griffons and have elfin chain mail, shield, lance, sword, and bow. It is assumed that these elves have enough sense to keep these griffons well-fed, so they won't go munching on the hippogriffs.

### Troop Table XII: High Elf

High elves are not as rare as gray elves and are found in slightly larger numbers. All troops are at least 1st-level fighters (having 6-9 hp).

### Dice Result

01-40 45 infantry — 30 with scale mail, shield, sword, and spear; 15 with ring mail, bow, and dagger

41-65 10 light cavalry with chain mail, shield, lance, and sword; 45 infantry — 30 with scale mail, shield, sword, and spear; 15 with ring mail, bow, and dagger

66-85 15 light cavalry with chain mail, shield, lance, and sword; 50 infantry — 35 with scale mail, shield, sword, and spear; 15 with ring mail, bow, and dagger

86-95 20 light cavalry with chain mail, shield, lance, and sword; 55 infantry — 35 with scale mail, shield, sword, and spear; 20 with ring mail, bow, and dagger

96-00 25 light cavalry with chain mail, shield, lance, and sword; 60 infantry — 40 with scale mail, shield, sword, and spear; 20 with ring mail, bow, and dagger; and, special scouts\*

\*90% of the time, the special scouts are four 2nd-level fighters led by a 3rd-level ranger. All are mounted on medium war horses and have elfin chain mail, shield, sword, and bow. The other 10% of the time, they are four 1st-level female elf fighters led by a 2nd-level female elf fighter/magic-user. All are mounted on unicorns and have elfin chain mail, shield, sword, and bow.

#### **Troop Table XIII: Valley Elf**

Numerically, this is the weakest of all troop tables, but it is also the strongest table, fighter for fighter. All troops are at least 1st-level (having 7-10 hp). The table also includes cooshee dogs as guards.

#### **Dice Result**

01-55 25 infantry — 15 with chain mail, shield, sword, and spear; 10 with chain mail, sword, and bow; 2 cooshee

56-90 35 infantry — 20 with chain mail, shield, sword, and spear; 15 with chain mail, sword, and bow; 3 cooshee

91-00 10 light cavalry with chain mail, shield, lance, and sword; 30 infantry — 20 with chain mail, shield, sword, and spear; 10 with chain mail, sword, and bow; 4 cooshee; and, special scouts\*

\* The special scouts are five 1st-level gnome fighters led by a 2nd-level fighter/illusionist. All have ring mail, shield, short sword, and spear.

#### **Troop Table XIV: Wild Elf**

This is another relatively weak table because grugach are found in fewer numbers than most other elves, but it has a couple of twists in it. All grugach are at least 1st level (having 6-9 hp).

#### **Dice Result**

01-40 30 infantry — 15 with ring mail, shield, sword, and spear; 15 with studded leather armor, bow, and dagger

41-65 35 infantry — 10 with ring mail, shield, sword, and spear; 10 with chain mail, shield, spear, and dagger; 15 with studded leather armor, bow, and dagger

66-85 10 stag-mounted cavalry with ring mail, shield, sword, and spear; 35 infantry — 15 with chain mail, shield, spear, and dagger; 20 with studded leather armor, bow, and dagger

86-95 10 stag-mounted cavalry with ring mail, shield, sword, and spear; 40 infantry — 20 with chain mail,

shield, spear, and dagger; 20 with studded leather armor, bow, and dagger

96-00 15 stag-mounted cavalry with ring mail, shield, sword, and spear; 45 infantry — 20 with chain mail, shield, spear, and dagger; 25 with studded leather, bow, and dagger; and, special scouts \*

\* Special scouts are three 2nd-level fighters led by a 3rd-level fighter/druid. All have ring mail, shield, sword, and bow.

#### **Troop Table XV: Wood Elf**

Wood elves will be found in larger numbers than gray elves, yet in slightly less number than high elves. All are at least 1st level (having 6-9 hp).

#### **Dice Result**

01-40 40 infantry — 10 with ring mail, shield, sword, and spear; 10 with ring mail, shield, spear, and dagger; 20 with studded leather, bow, and dagger

41-65 50 infantry — 10 with ring mail, shield, sword, and spear; 15 with ring mail, shield, spear, and dagger; 25 with studded leather armor, bow, and dagger

66-85 10 light cavalry with ring mail, shield, lance, and sword; 45 infantry — 20 with ring mail, shield, spear, and dagger; 25 with studded leather armor, bow, and dagger

86-95 15 light cavalry with ring mail, shield, lance, and sword; 50 infantry — 20 with ring mail, shield, spear, and dagger; 30 with studded leather armor, bow, and dagger

96-00 15 light cavalry with ring mail, shield, lance, and sword; 60 infantry — 25 with ring mail, shield, spear, and dagger; 35 with studded leather armor, bow, and dagger; and, special scouts\*

\* The special scouts are three 2nd-level fighters led by a 3rd-level fighter/magic-user. All are mounted on light war horses and have ring mail, shield, sword, and bow. Additionally, the fighter/magic-user is accompanied by an elven cat.

#### **Troop Table XVI: Gnome**

This is another fairly powerful table, as all gnomes are at least 1st level (having 5-8 hp).

#### **Dice Result**

01-40 50 infantry — 20 with ring mail, shield, short sword, and spear; 20 with ring mail, shield, spear, and hammer; 10 with studded leather armor, buckler, sling, and dagger

41-65 60 infantry — 25 with ring mail, shield, short sword, and spear; 25 with ring mail, shield, spear, and hammer; 10 with studded leather armor, short bow, and dagger

66-85 75 infantry — 30 with ring mail, shield, short sword, and spear; 30 with ring mail, shield, spear, and hammer; 15 with studded leather armor, buckler, sling, and dagger

86-95 90 infantry — 35 with ring mail, shield, short sword, and spear; 35 with ring mail, shield, spear, and hammer; 20 with studded leather armor, short bow, and dagger

96-00 105 infantry — 40 with ring mail, shield, short sword, and spear; 40 with ring mail, shield, spear, and hammer; 25 with studded leather armor, buckler, sling, and dagger; and, special scouts \*

\* The special scouts are four 2nd-level gnome fighters led by a 3rd-level fighter/illusionist. All have ring mail, shield, short sword, and hammer.

#### **Troop Table XVIII: Halfling**

Even under the new rules, a halfling lord is an extremely rare individual and is looked upon with something close to awe by other halflings. This is a somewhat weak table compared to the other demi-human troop tables because most halflings are 0-level fighters (having 4-7 hp).

#### **Dice Result**

01-40 45 infantry — 20 with padded armor, shield, short sword, and spear; 15 with padded armor, shield, spear, and hand axe; 10 with leather armor, sling, and dagger

41-65 55 infantry — 25 with padded armor, shield, short sword, and spear; 15 with padded armor, shield, spear, and hand axe; 15 with leather armor, short bow, and dagger

66-85 65 infantry — 25 with padded armor, shield, short sword, and spear; 20 with padded armor, shield, spear, and hand axe; 20 with leather armor, sling, and dagger

86-95 75 infantry — 30 with padded armor, shield, short sword, and spear; 25 with padded armor, shield, spear, and hand axe; 20 with leather armor, short bow, and dagger

96-00 90 infantry — 35 with padded armor, shield, short sword, and spear; 30 with padded armor, shield, spear, and hand axe; 25 with leather armor sling, and dagger; and, special scouts \*

\* If the halfling lord is of the hairfeet subrace, the special scouts are five 1st-level gnomish fighters, led by a 2nd-level fighter/illusionist. All have ring mail, shield, short sword, and spear. If the lord is a stout, they will be five 1st-level dwarven fighters led by a 3rd-level fighter. All have chain mail, shield, battle axe, and hammer. If the lord is a tallfellow, they are five 1st-level high elf fighters led by a 2nd-level fighter/magic-user. All have chain mail, shield, sword, and bow.

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# Door Number One, Door Number Two, or . . .

by Dan Snuffin

This article is about doors, but not just any old doors. The doors included in this text have all been trapped or altered in some inventive way as to make them different from the norm. Below is a list of fifty such doors, some common, others original. They are numbered for reference only and should not be randomly selected from this list, for while some are mere oddities, others can be deadly. Sets of statistics (for damage, etc.) have been given for most items, so you may pick one which suits the situation or level of your AD&D® or D&D® game dungeon. Feel free to improvise as you see fit.

1. This is a standard false door.
2. This door is *wizard locked* by a 3rd- to 18th-level magic-user.
3. This door gives off an electric shock for 1-4 to 1-20 hp damage.
4. The door is *invisible*. Player characters take 1 hp damage for walking into the door (1-3 hp if running) and may have some difficulty opening it.
5. The door is a *permanent illusion* at the 12th- to 19th-level of ability.
6. This door is strongly magnetized; weapons, armor, and other metallic objects stick to the door. A strength roll of some sort (requiring an open doors roll, a *bend bars/lift* gates attempt, or a combined minimum strength of 15 or more) is required to pull objects from the door. Some objects may already be stuck to the door when encountered.
7. This warm door is red hot. Those who are foolish enough to touch it take 1-6 to 1-20 hp damage.
8. This door is hinged at bottom, held upright only by the door latch. Opening the door releases it to fall and hit the floor with a resounding thud (possibly squashing someone). The noise alerts all within a 150' radius, incurring two additional wandering monster checks. Player characters have a 40% chance of noticing the difference in the door's makeup, 15% if it has false side hinges. Anyone struck by the door takes up to 2-12 hp damage (if the door is of solid steel).

9. The character who touches this door automatically trades places by teleportation with the creature (DM's choice) in the cell-behind that door. A trapped character remains so until some other unlucky soul trades places with him.

10. The door is soaked with a thick, clear acid. Those touching it take 1-4 to 1-20 hp damage.

11. The good old poison-needle-in-the-lock trap is present (up to 1-20 hp damage, with temporary reductions in attributes or death also resulting).

12. This door simply disappears when closed, gone forever.

13. A glass door has been *glasstealed* (*Players Handbook*, page 90) here.

14. This is a heavy revolving door covered with sharp spikes. Anyone who gets caught in this one (10% chance per use) takes 1-4 to 1-10 hp damage per round. Characters must roll their dexterity or less on a d20 to escape.

15. For all the listeners out there, here's a door that makes its own noises. What the noises are is up to the DM, but I'm sure that they won't be the same as those coming from what's actually behind the door! Suggestions for sounds: groans, growls, melee. An ear seeker nest wouldn't be a bad idea, too.

16. This door is locked, and any weapon that tries to open it by smashing it to pieces shatters instead. Magic weapons save vs. crushing blow, plus what ever "to hit" bonus they might have.

17. This door is locked and cannot be opened or damaged. The only way to open this door is to knock (politely) before entering.

18. This ancient door is so old and rotten that any attempts to open it cause it to collapse (letting the openers fall through). The clatter of wood and metal bindings merits an additional wandering monster check.

19. This door opens easily, but as the first character enters, the door slams in his face (take 1 hp damage with a broken nose).

20. Carved into the wood of this locked door is a staring gargoyle. If the door is forced or the lock is picked, the gargoyle lets out a shrill scream, alerting all within a 200' radius. At least two additional wandering monster checks should be made.

21. No door here — only a mirror. However, this mirror opens like a door. Characters have a 10% chance of discovering it if they are actively searching for secret doors.

22. The character that touches this door is *teleported* to the door's other side.

23. The door revolves on a horizontal bar set in its middle.

24. This short door is dwarf-, halfling-, or gnome-sized. Man-sized characters may have to shed armor and equipment to squeeze through.

25. This door bursts into flames when touched. The character who sets off this trap takes 1-4 to 1-8 hp damage. The door continue to burn until it goes out (in 2 turns) or it is put out.

26. The door happens to be 5-10' above the floor.

27. This door opens 5-10' above the floor on the opposite side, by means of a *dimension door* spell. Any character who doesn't look where he's going falls and takes the appropriate amount of falling damage.

28. Under the knob of this door is a sticky contact poison. The characters have a 10-30% chance of noticing the poison, which has variable effects as the DM desires.

29. This tightly fitting door only opens in toward its room. It has no knobs or handles on the other side of the door, so when closed, the only way to leave the room is to smash the door.

30. There is a skeleton hanging on the back of this door. It could possibly be animated to attack, but that's up to the DM.

31. A *continual light* spell has been cast on both sides of this door for the adventurers' convenience.

32. This door has a permanent silence, 10' *radius* spell cast upon it. Whatever makes noise on one side of the door cannot be heard on the other side.

33. The door frame of this door is hollow and spring-loaded with bolts. When the door is opened, these bolts shoot out and automatically hit the first person to walk through the doorway. The door frame contains 1d10 + 10 bolts that do 1-2 to 1-6 hp damage each; they fire either individually or all at once.

34. A password is required to open this door. The password should be made accessible to the player characters earlier in the game adventure.

35. The door is covered with blood by some awful creature that has marked its territory.

36. When a character touches this door, it gives off a repulsive rotting odor. Player characters must save vs. spells or wretch and vomit for 5-10 rounds.

37. This door is set upon an *invisible* wall. Characters take damage (see #4 above) if they walk into the wall.

38. Door is very sticky, and those touching it become stuck. A strength roll (see #6 above) is required to pull free.

39. No door here, just a curtain of complete darkness that cannot be seen through.

40. Door comes complete with an illusionary backdrop, dispelled when someone enters. Common backdrops include an empty room, a bottomless pit, or enough treasure to satisfy any dwarf.

41. To open this door, one must stick a blade in the slot in the door as a makeshift key. The required blade might have to be a certain type of sword (e.g., broadsword, magical sword, dagger, scimitar, etc.), or maybe any sword does the trick.

42. This door can only be opened after a missing part of the door (the doorknob, gold leaf, ornament or some sort, etc.) is replaced.

43. A *Leomund's trap* has been cast on this door that causes the player characters to believe that something is just not right with it. Of course, there is nothing wrong with this door — maybe.

44. This door does not swing open; characters have to slide it up into the ceiling.

45. A strange music plays when this door is opened and stops when the door is closed (I prefer weird flute music).

46. This wooden door is fireproof, and it may also be resistant to acids and other attacks.

47. This door is inscribed with a *glyph of warding* that goes off when the door is opened.

48. This door repels all metals. A character must remove all armor, swords, and so forth to open the door, but once this door is opened, metal items may be carried through normally.

49. This door is protected by a demon of the DM's choice. There may be a protective pentagram on the other side of the door, if one can get to it.

50. The first person to open this door simply cannot go through it. Some unusual force (perhaps *antipathy*) holds him back.

Traps triggered by opening a door have not been included in this article, as it only deals with the doors themselves and not the infinite number of surprises that can be set off by their opening.

The ideas above are presented to add a

little color to the often-forgotten door. They are only examples, hopefully serving as inspiration to the DM. The best ideas are your own, which certainly fit in with the rest of your work.

™



# Stayin' Alive

## Developing your agent in TOP SECRET® gaming

by John J. Terra

The TOP SECRET® game, when played correctly, is very intense. The Administrator has the difficult task of running a campaign encompassing the whole world. Similarly, the agents have just as hard a job trying to survive in a place where one mistake could be their last. The margin for error is slim, and players have to remind themselves that they do not have curative spells, wishes, battle armor, mutations, or a frantic "Beam me up, Scotty." to fall back upon when things go bad.

This article attempts to give those who play TOP SECRET game agents a collection of tried and true suggestions designed to reduce character casualty rates and give agents the chance to advance beyond 4th level. Though this is by no means an exhaustive treatment, there should be more than enough tricks and such to give any Administrator nightmares.

### Creating the agent

Any role-played character is more than just numbers on a sheet of paper, and TOP SECRET game agents are no exception. After all the character-generation rolls are finished (and there's usually many of these, especially with the introduction of the TOP SECRET Companion!), the player should ask some basic questions.

1. What sort of background did this character come from?
2. Based on this background, what is this character's personality?
3. What are the character's likes, dislikes, and interests?
4. How and why did the character get involved with espionage?
5. Did this agent have any unusual incidents in his or her life?
6. When the mission is over and everyone goes home, where does this agent go and who does the agent hang around with?

Each character, in the context of the game, was born, went to school, and had other experiences that shaped that agent's personality. Giving the character these extra dimensions adds a generous touch of realism.

The fourth question given above is especially important, and it's one which many people never consider. Espionage can be dangerous work, and it seems very unlikely that someone went to their guidance counselor in high school and, after talking it over, decided to become a spy.

The motivations to enter espionage can range from the noble (a strong sense of national duty) to the dishonorable (greed for money and power, or a desire to harm people). Motivations can sometimes interfere with a mission, especially if two agents' motives are in conflict. Incidentally, this opens up excellent opportunities to do some good role-playing of your agent.

By all means, include things in your character's background such as hobbies, eccentricities, phobias ("Why did it have to be snakes?"), bad habits ("Stop biting your nails! You're driving me nuts!"), and even philosophies of life. The TOP SECRET game has no moral alignments, but this should not prevent people from giving their agents personal honor or codes of ethics. [See *Merle Rasmussen's alignment-profile statistic in DRAGON® Magazine issue #92, page 34. — Editor*]

The Areas of Knowledge that a character gets can also be prime material for developing background. Someone with a profusion of engineering skills could be an MIT student who is now a top TECH bureau operative. The character with the high Charm and superior Photography AOK may be a model. The high Agriculture score could mean that the agent was raised on a farm, but remember that the superior AOKs need not always correspond with occupations. That high Literature AOK could mean the agent spouts off great literary quotations incessantly. The 120 in Home Economics may mean that the computer programmer is also an excel-

lent chef. The high Religion score could mean that the character is a born-again Christian. You could even roll up an agent with a high Fine Arts score, choose "electric guitar" as his specific interest, and make him a punk rocker. (Hey, why not? Who would suspect a new-wave rocker is really a spy?)

When rolling up AOKs, also remember that you have a 15% chance of selecting your own. This is the perfect chance to give your agent some continuity. Fine Arts and Arts & Crafts go well together, as do all the engineering skills. Biology and Medicine are logical companions, as are Religion and Philosophy. The following are the most popular AOKs in our campaign, starting with the most commonly chosen: Military Science (to be eligible for most forms of unarmed combat), Aeronautical Engineering (to fly and repair aircraft), Computer Science (to break into enemy computers and get information), Transportation Engineering (to drive vehicles expertly and repair them), and World History/Current Events (to know what's going on).

Beware when selecting languages. Make your choices sensible and believable. Try to come up with reasons why your agent can speak a particular language. We have a Vietnam vet who knows Vietnamese, a Canadian who speaks French and English as two native languages, and a Scotsman whose native language is Scottish Gaelic. My own character went to a Catholic school and had Latin forced upon him; it may seem useless at first glance, but remember that Latin is the basis for Portuguese, Spanish, French, Italian, and Romanian. A smart Administrator will not allow my character to translate major portions of these five languages, but he may permit my agent to get some idea of what's being said. Of course, Russian and Chinese might prove useful, too.

As a side note, I recall running an adventure set in Columbia and having someone roll up a new character, deliberately choosing Spanish just because this particular adventure took place in a Spanish-speaking country. Fortunately, Spanish is a popular world language. I hate to think about what would have happened if the adventure had been set in Latvia. Do not generate your character so that he becomes a know-it-all in one small geographical area. If the campaign shifts to another country or continent, which is a common occupational hazard in espionage (especially if your cover is blown), you'll be left high and dry. ("Parlez-vous Serbo-Croatian?")

One unusual idea you can try, as long as the Administrator permits it, is to have your character be a double agent. It certainly gives your Administrator some interesting material to work with. Just keep in mind that this can be risky, especially if your teammates find out. Your double agent need not even belong to a hostile power; what belonging to about a

rival "allied" organization? One of my players arranged to have his agent work for the CIA while joining ICICLE, the central organization in my campaign. The premise was that the CIA wanted to know more about ICICLE, which is a very secret group. [See *DRAGON® Magazine issue #109, page 64-8, for more information on this group.* — Editor]

Finally, do all things in moderation. There is no need to make every single aspect of the character into a melodramatic masterpiece; one or two interesting things should suffice. Of course, more interesting aspects can develop as the character runs into all sorts of interesting people, places, or things. Such is the life of a SPY

### Job precautions

As mentioned earlier, the TOP SECRET game is one in which a single mistake can be your last. Though overcautiousness is boring and tedious, there are some very simple precautions one can take to better the odds of character survival.

Though the character sheet does not seem to encourage this, by all means adopt more than one alias. This helps preserve anonymity and frustrate a possible investigation.

An agent should never trust any place that he stays for the night, no matter how ritzy. He should check for bugs just for safety's sake, and keep his room door bolted shut at night. He should also never set booby traps in his hotel room. Agents get no experience points for blowing up maids.

An agent should use his Observation and Perception scores whenever possible. Do not just sit around and wait for the Administrator to point things out for the character, since most of them won't. In our own campaign, we had some confusion over what constitutes Observation and Perception. We put it this way: when you climb your front stairs, Observation tells you how many stairs there are. Perception tells you that one of the stairs looks like it's about to give way. Usually, you perceive only what you have already observed. Therefore, after successfully using an Observation score, follow it up by using Perception.

When leaving a rented room, an agent can place a strand of hair in the door jamb, near the floor. Upon returning, the agent can tell if someone has been in the room if the hair has moved — unless, of course, the agent is up against experts. In the latter case, the agent is in for it anyway.

All agents should have the means to communicate with each other if they happen to split up. Buying a pen radio or asking the agency to lend one is well worth it. A pen radio can also be used as a bugging transmitter if the agent is near the place he wants to stake out. A pen looks innocuous enough that it can be left in an enemy agent's room, while the

player characters listen on another pen radio in the room across the hall.

Establish a routine when approaching a strange door, especially if you happen to be breaking into a hostile complex. Listening at the door, checking for alarms and traps, seeing if the door is locked, and looking under the door to see if any lights are on are good starting procedures. It cuts down on surprises.

When a team is going to break into a building, it is wise to keep one or two people as back-ups, usually with an escape vehicle handy. Though it may be boring for the players whose characters are stuck with this duty, usually a considerate Administrator will have something cooked up to keep them busy. This idea is recommended only if the break-in is just a small part of the adventure. No one wants to sit for four hours of real time just waiting for their fellow players to finish the exciting mission.

There may be times when your agent is assigned to follow a courier on a route through several drop points. Never interrupt the drop unless you are certain no one is running interference on the goods. Otherwise, your agent may find out the hard way that several enemy agents have been keeping an eye on the package to prevent others from interrupting the route. Hang back and follow the package all the way to the terminal point.

Finally, if your agent ever visits a country governed by a dictatorship or police state, he should never assume that the local populace is going to come to his aid if the secret police drag him away. He will be lucky to find three people who will admit that the incident even took place!

### Equipping the character

A good mission requires about 75% planning and 25% execution. If you take into consideration the things agents may run up against and plan for them, you will have fewer nasty surprises come up in the actual mission. Some players call this boring. These players are easy to spot, since they can be found rolling up a new agent every third game or so.

One of the first things a new agent selects is a weapon. Obviously, you want something that is reliable, accurate, fast, and concealable. This is why buying an Uzi or an M-16 as your agent's initial weapon is pretty silly. Rifles, carbines, submachine guns, and shotguns are not concealable on one's person and are more of a liability than an asset. If your Administrator is following the availability rules in the TOP SECRET Companion, however, this is a moot point for beginning agents.

Select a gun that is fairly fast and packs a good punch. Looking through the list of pistols in both the rule book and the Companion, I'd select either the FN Browning, P-08 Luger, one of the Walther models, the .45 automatic, the Makarov, or the Stechkin as the best overall pistol, though the last two may draw suspicion from other

Western intelligence agents who see you with them. (Try explaining to the Mossad what you are doing in Jerusalem with a Soviet-made pistol. I wish you luck.)

A silencer is also a good investment, but remember two things. First, silencers are illegal in most nations. Secondly, they do not work on revolvers, since revolvers are not self-enclosed guns and allow explosive gases to escape.

Of course, weapon subtlety is irrelevant if the mission is a daring raid or assault. In that case, a good submachine gun or assault rifle fits the bill nicely. The Uzi or the British Sterling come to mind as favorites. The Uzi is somewhat concealable and has gotten lots of favorable publicity in the last few years. The Sterling has the special advantage of a side-mounted magazine that can be quickly reloaded if two magazines are attached opposite each other.

The Soviet AK-47 is another popular, high-performance weapon, though it is unfortunately popular among terrorist and guerilla groups. Once again, a well-meaning Western ally may see your character with an AK-47 and come to a wrong conclusion that may prove fatal.

Some agents in my campaign have become fascinated with the Beretta 9 mm 93R machine pistol. It packs a nasty punch, is fast and concealable, and the nine-shot rate-of-fire makes it a devastating weapon. I strongly recommend that this TOP SECRET game version of the *vorpal sword* be kept under very strict control by Administrators everywhere. The thing has no drawbacks.

For those agents in the assassination business, may I recommend the Donzo Special, named after the player who put this fine weapon package together. Take a .22 Galil semiautomatic rifle, attach a 6x scope and a silencer, and the agent has a weapon that fires two shots per phase and has no long-range negative modifier. Total cost: \$475.

The .303 Lee-Enfield is another popular choice, since it could very well be used for hunting (a useful cover). The agent must get an expensive-looking rifle bag and a hunting permit, but he might very well get away with carrying the weapon through a check point. Please keep in mind that this ruse won't work if the country has no game animals; no one will believe someone would go to Libya to hunt bears.

For a close-in weapon, a throwing knife in a neck sheath or a stiletto in a boot is sufficient. Even a jackknife in a rear pocket is better than nothing. A second pistol never hurts, provided it is small, like a .22 Beretta or even a .22 pen.

Of course, the type of mission an agent gets influences what sort of equipment he buys or borrows from the agency. But there are certain items that virtually bear the tag line, "Don't leave home without it."

As mentioned before, communication is important, especially considering the possibility of agents separating during a mission. Nothing is more frustrating (and

dangerous) than a few agents becoming trapped and outnumbered in a firefight while the rest of their team is out of earshot, with no one having any way of calling for help.

A lockpick set is also a must for every agent, whether or not he or she is a confiscator. Remember that every agent has a Deactivation score, so every agent can try to open a lock. Keep a pair of gloves handy, too; fingerprints can be traced. If gloves are too conspicuous or awkward given the situation, a simple handkerchief will do.

It makes sense to get equipment that relates to an agent's superior AOKs. A high Computer Science score could justify acquisition of a portable terminal or modem. Use your imagination, tempered with common sense. A high Aeronautical Engineering score does not mean an agent must own an F-16. A specific example of this involves my wife's main character, Dr. Evelyn Ashford. This agent has a high Medicine/Physiology score, so along with the character sheet, my wife uses a large index card labeled "Evelyn's Medical Bag." She has specifically listed all the things her character carries around on this card. You would be surprised how many small (but useful) things can fit in a doctor's bag. She has hypodermic needles, sodium pentathol (truth serum), ether (to knock out surprised enemies), basic first-aid items, and several nasty things hidden inside or disguised as innocent items. Furthermore, since the character is a licensed medical doctor, the bag passes easily through customs.

Other mundane items have uses in executing a mission. A can of normal aerosol spray, carried along on break-in missions, can detect electric eye beams without setting them off. The agent need only spray a mist when coming to a doorway. The moisture reflects the electric beam. A penlight can mean the difference between being able to work in an unlit area and stumbling around uselessly in the dark. A favorite tactic of mine is to have four pens in my agent's shirt breast pocket: one pen radio, a .22 pen gun, a pen light, and a normal pen. (Okay, so it seems a bit nerdy. What matters is that it works!) A ping-pong ball can be used as a distraction (something to throw to draw attention) or as a means of disabling a car by dropping the ball in the gas tank to cut off the fuel line. A 35 mm camera, the tourists' staple, is also a good espionage tool. Put a telephoto lens on it, and it will function in a limited way as a telescope. Of course, we can never forget the camera's most obvious use.

Never assume that your character has everything he needs all the time. One of the most frustrating things for an Administrator arguing with someone who claims that because his agent has a particular occupation, it means the agent just so happens to have a piece of corresponding equipment just lying around. Write all

your character's equipment down! If it doesn't all fit on your character sheet, then attach a piece of paper to it. Never allow yourself to be limited by a one-page character sheet!

Concealing equipment can also be a challenge. This is especially true when crossing international boundaries, and even more so when entering Eastern Bloc nations. The following are proven methods of concealing that piece of equipment that otherwise raises the eyebrows of the customs officer and wins you a free interrogation session. The good Dr. Ashford has a glass cutter amidst the scalpels of her medical bag, with plastique and smoke bombs hidden in rolled-up bandages. The bag has a false bottom with a dart gun and sleep darts. Someone else in our campaign who picked up on the doctor bag idea disguises sleep gas capsules as cold capsules. Some agents put thin blades in the collars of their shirts or blouses, code books inside other books, ether in bottles of nail polish remover, plastique in lipstick cases, and sleep gas in deodorant spray cans. An agent can hide a phone bug on the back of a watch, or a hypodermic syringe in a walking stick. Piano wire can be stored in a belt or shirt collar.

Pistols pose more of a problem when it comes to concealment. Metal detectors are awfully good at picking up hidden guns on one's person. Aside from taking a weapon apart and hiding the individual pieces, an agent can get by customs with a weapon by having a job cover that allows guns. A private detective, a security guard of some sort, or even false ID for a well-known enforcement agency (such as Interpol) would help. These covers should only be used if traveling within Western bloc nations, since they may arouse suspicions elsewhere.

Some agents who know exactly where they will be staying in a foreign country (a rare luxury) have mailed their weapons to the address. Although one would be trusting a prize weapon to the mail system, this tactic is usually successful.

A more expensive idea, but a good one if your agent constantly goes to the same international airports time and time again, is to hire out lockers in those same airports, stashing weapons and other gear in each of them.

No one in real life has exactly the same possessions as anyone else. The personality of the agent should be reflected in what sort of equipment he owns. Nowhere in the rules does it say that an agent *must* have a gun. Tailor your equipment to fit the agent. Do not hesitate to include things which have no immediate espionage value. A dapper agent may pack his own Yves St. Laurent tuxedo, for those lavish international parties he expects to attend, while his female partner contributes to the subterfuge by taking along expensive jewelry and a mink coat.

Let's look at a more disgusting example. The agent I play (the one who speaks

Latin) has an interesting inventory written down on his sheet, including such bizarre things as "cheese danish in left front coat pocket," "steak-and-cheese sub in right front coat pocket," and "battered old Fedora on head." As for a gun, this agent (called Mike) totes a 1918 vintage 9 mm Mauser. Now, the Mauser is not what you would call "the perfect gun." It is big, expensive, and a pain in the neck to conceal. But that doesn't matter. Mike loves big guns. Who cares about maximum efficiency? The guy likes his Mauser!

Incidentally, when Mike goes on missions in the U.S.A., he doesn't drive a BMW, a Trans-Am, or a Porsche. No, Mike drives a chamois-colored 1973 Buick LeSabre with a faded black vinyl top, rust spots, and numerous dents. People can relate to this, since it is a normal, everyday sort of car. It makes Mike seem believable. It also makes Mike seem like a slob, but that is exactly the personality that I gave him.

Speaking of automobiles, this can be a trap for people who enjoy fantasy shopping. If your agents are going to rent a car, please don't take a lot of game time and actual time selecting some ridiculously special car. Fancy cars attract attention, which is exactly what agents are trying not to do. Get something simple and dependable that won't fold up like an accordion when cars and trucks ram it. Note that this eliminates most Japanese cars and all Corvettes.

After you have equipped your agent, have him carefully check all equipment. Try out the radios and electronic devices. Clean out the pistol and make sure it can fire. Align the telescopic sights on the sniper rifle. The reason for this is that some Administrators enjoy inflicting a specific complication found in the TOP SECRET game book: equipment failure. Hopefully, this precaution will prevent most such incidences. Nothing can be as embarrassing (and fatally so) as pointing a loaded gun at an enemy agent, saying good-bye, and pulling the trigger — only to discover the gun has jammed.

### Mission execution

The only way an agent is going to know what he is expected to do is by being briefed. During this time, the Administrator reads off the who, what, when, where, and why of the situation. If there is any time when the players should be alert, it is now. Listen especially for details, inconsistencies, or other clues to investigate. Take notes. A briefing can tell you a considerable amount. This is not the time to order pizza or noisily open up a bag of chips.

Upon being briefed, the team should pick a leader. This person would probably also be the caller who tells the Administrator what the group intends to do at any given time. This is especially important considering that all characters have a percentage chance of successfully doing a number of different tasks, and it is hard

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for the Administrator to listen to eight different players trying to deactivate several doors and alarms at the same time.

When selecting a leader, keep the following in mind. The highest level agent is not necessarily the best candidate for leadership. An assassin who has 3,500 experience points is a level four agent, while an investigator with 3,800 points is only second level. Theoretically, the investigator is the more experienced agent. If you base leadership ability solely on level, the assassin wins out, perhaps undeservedly.

Neither is the person who has played the greatest number of role-playing games the best candidate. A person may play 25 different role-playing games, attend a dozen game conventions, and subscribe to three role-playing game magazines, but all it may mean is that he is terrible at 25 different games and likes to travel and read.

In general, avoid the people who are proud, dominating, or loud. Not only will the players resent being under such a leader, the Administrator will frown on having to deal with this person on a continuous basis, and may take it out on the group as a whole. "Partykill" is not a term found in AD&D® gaming alone.

A leader commands trust and respect; in this game, these qualities should be in both the player and his agent. The leader has to be able to inspire cooperation and give orders without coming across as an egotist. Let's face it, a leader who cannot get people to obey his orders is a liability, since even his good ideas may be challenged or disobeyed out of principal or spite. Look for the people who are organized, polite, and not prone to knee-jerk reactions to difficult situations. Oddly enough, the best candidates for leadership are the ones who usually do not insist on leading.

Once this is done with, set the goals for the mission. A mission is sometimes open-ended enough that the party could very well accomplish more than one thing. Pace yourselves. Set up a timetable if the mission has no immediate time constraint. If you have four days to catch a traitor, perhaps the goal for day one could be to stake out his hotel room and try to discover his routine. Day two's goal could be to find and eliminate anyone who is assigned to aid the traitor, and so on. Never try to cram everything into one day. You may miss out on some truly interesting things.

Once all the planning is out of the way, get your team to the mission area. If your Administrator is thorough and detail-conscious, he may play you through the traveling part of the mission. Try not to let things drag. Make getting from here to there as simple and quick as you can.

Keep a low profile. Draw as little attention to your agent as possible. Do not travel first class in flamboyant style. Remember, your agents are spies, not jetsetters. Be inconspicuous. If you wish, have

the agents dress up as tourists — anything to keep suspicion away.

As mentioned earlier, if agents need to rent transportation, get something simple and dependable. A distinctive model or color of car is useless if an agent wants to tail someone without being seen. Blend in with the environment. After all, one does not see real spies running around with gimmicks plastered all over them, driving a silver Corvette with a license plate saying "I-SPY" and a bumper sticker declaring "I brake for defectors."

If the mission involves a break-in, keep a few points in mind. Night is the best time to attempt this action. If breaking into a business building, agents have far fewer personnel to worry about.

Watch for the guards' patrol patterns. Use Observation and Deactivation liberally. Keep some food in your pocket just in case you run into a guard dog. Nastier characters might lace the food with something poisonous.

Another approach is to have someone infiltrate the place as a customer, candidate for group membership, or solicitor, and disable the locks and alarms from the inside. Of course, it is considerably more dangerous than the first method.

Remember to keep a person or two on hand with the escape vehicle at the ready, in case a quick getaway is needed. Keep in touch with everyone by pen radio.

If agents can get blueprints to the break-in target, all the better. A bit of research at the city hall or library can help here, revealing some little-known entrances. We live in an information-saturated society, and your agents can certainly benefit from this. All it takes is knowing where to look for what you want.

Whatever you do, always check for alarms. Security techniques have improved considerably over the years, and the most inconsequential doors can be alarmed or otherwise secured. Make sure agents have several sets of tools and lock-picks among them. If an agent springs an alarm, he should run like heck. The old adage about discretion being the better part of valor is extremely appropriate in this event.

Security also entails possible encounters with NPCs, and this makes it a convenient time to switch to a more controversial topic: violence and its use. Anyone who has read this magazine faithfully over the past year will notice the long, drawn-out debates on AD&D game alignments and the playing of evil characters. The TOP SECRET game has no such ethical limitations, which can be a blessing, but sometimes it opens the game up to some bad practices.

Violence and sex are two very commonplace aspects of our world. One need only open a newspaper to see this. Since the

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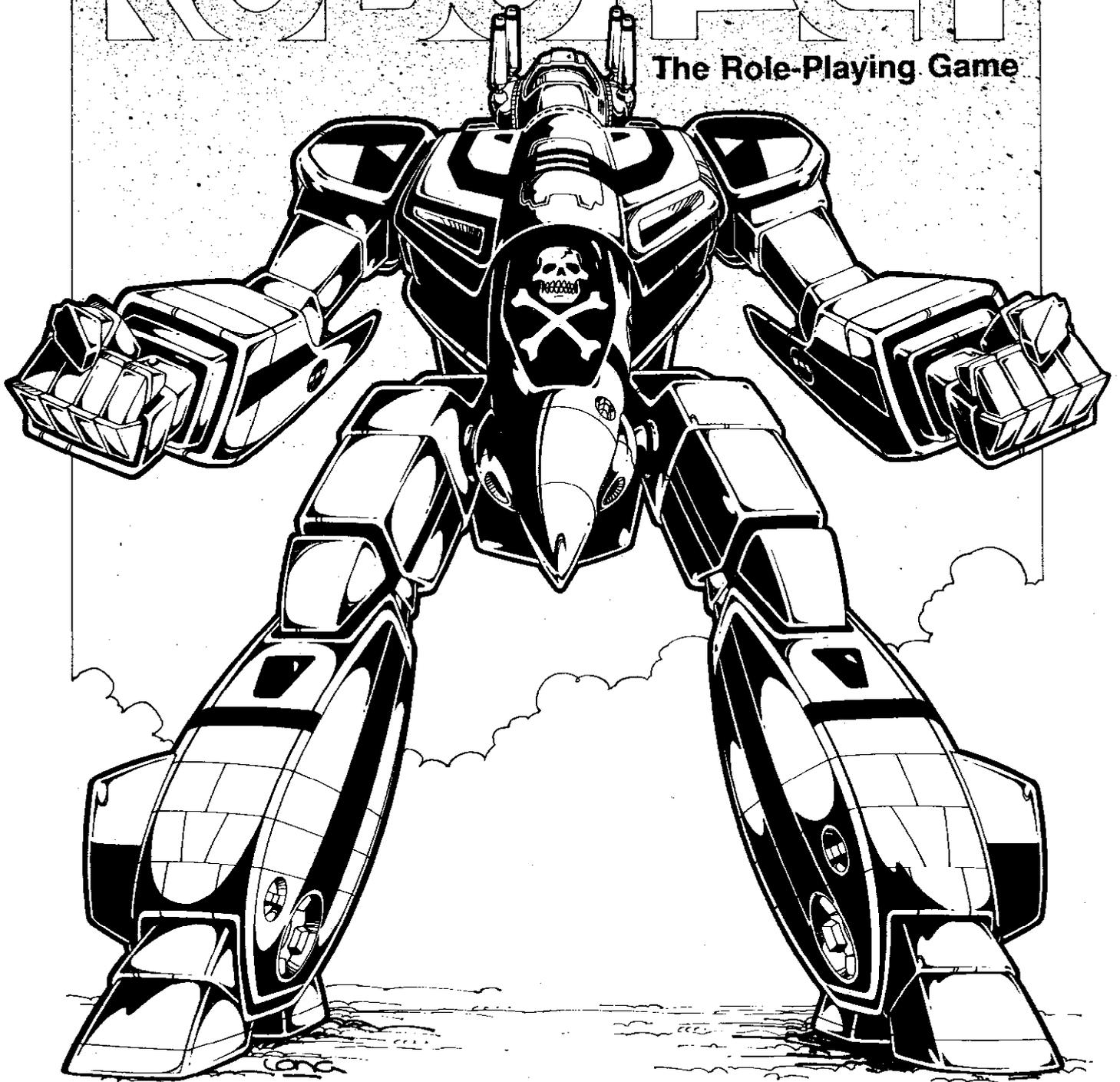
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don't have him rush the three machine-gun-toting guards who have a bead on him. Have him bide his time. Administrators eventually get careless and he may have a chance to escape, especially if you have him pull a trick so unexpected that you manage to surprise not only the Administrator's NPCs, but also the Administrator himself!

If your agent is locked in a cell, make the Administrator tell you in detail what the surroundings are. Get to know every part of the place of confinement, and use your imagination in finding commonplace items to aid in an escape. Has anyone reading this ever watched McGyver? That character makes useful weapons out of the most ordinary items. Draw upon your agent's AOKs. Even if you do not know something, your character with the AOK of 144 in Chemistry may know just the thing needed to escape. If all else fails, you can always hope for a prisoner exchange. This may take time and could mean keeping the agent out of play for a long time.

Assuming escape is no problem, one's next concern is covering one's tracks. This helps especially in avoiding those nasty complications that the Administrator, humiliated by your ease in solving the problem, springs upon your unsuspecting characters. This is one aspect of the game where graphic detail has its place. Your agents may have to make an assassination look like an accident or death by natural causes. In the latter case, the old trick of dousing the late victim with alcohol, putting him in his car, and rolling it over a cliff can draw suspicion away from what really happened. Of course, even this is not foolproof. ("Major Kirov never drank in his life! He doesn't even own a car!")

The techniques are many and do not bear coverage in great detail. The Companion offers much useful advice in covering your tracks; invest the time to do so. Do not let elation over completing a mission cause your agent to become careless. Hired assassins have a knack for finding complacent agents.

If any hostile NPC happens to survive the adventure and knows some of the teams' faces, agents should respectfully ask their case officer for a transfer to another continent until things cool down. A group in my campaign who let themselves get seen by one KGB officer too many are now serving in ICICLE's Australian substation.

### Anything can go wrong

Despite all the time you can spend planning a mission, there is always the element of the unknown. The agency's briefing could be inaccurate, a teammate could bungle something, or a totally unplanned circumstance could arise.

The first thing to do in the event of a crisis is to avoid panic. If you think that the situation could not get any worse, think again. If an agent does something incredibly hasty and stupid, then you'll

SEE just how worse things can get. Keep a cool head and remember, game time is not actual time. Take a few extra seconds and plan actions and reactions. Think through your moves, and make sure the Administrator's descriptions of the situation are accurate in every detail.

If your agent's cover has been blown, then the restriction of keeping secrecy is lifted. There are times when whatever else you do could not get you into worse trouble. At times like these, desperate moves are allowed.

If the mission objectives were achieved when the agent's cover is revealed, he should proceed with all possible haste back to safe ground, casting aside all subtlety. Ramming a border crossing gate with a bus is appropriate here. Besides, it adds drama.

However, if your agent still has not met his goals when discovered, then reconcile yourself to the possibility of a mission failure. Failures do happen and unless your organization punishes failure by death, your agent may get another chance to do it right. "He who fights and runs away, lives to fight another day" applies amazingly well in TOP SECRET games.

The Deception score can help if someone triggers an alarm inside an enemy's complex. If attired much like the occupants and can speak their language fluently, then agents may use "they went thataway" trick, especially if the complex has so many people that it is impossible for anyone to know everyone.

### Conclusion

Finally, just a few parting words about playing the game. Essentially, you are probably teamed up with a group of diverse individuals who are trying to accomplish some difficult task. No one can do it alone. Teamwork is imperative if you want any chance of success. Certainly, you may have some minor goals that pertain only to your agent — but, all in all, you are supposed to work together as a group. Do so. Your survival depends on it. There is no place for "chaotic neutral" characters in TOP SECRET gaming.

Remember to role-play your character. Though the TOP SECRET game has no system for awarding experience points for playing your character, a decent Administrator should throw in some extra points for good characterization. Even if he doesn't, it still adds some color to the game.

Do not let yourself get stuck in a rut. Give your character originality, especially in solving problems. Keep the Administrator guessing, giving you the chance to give him a taste of his own medicine. Take a precaution or two and write it down on a separate piece of paper, keeping it folded up but in sight of everyone. Then, when the Administrator pulls off a surprise, reveal the secret that your character has been keeping, if appropriate. In essence, an Administrator can allow himself to be

influenced by what he already knows of your characters. Keeping a secret or two from him, by recording it and placing it where he can see it and know that you have not hastily rewritten your precaution, can give you the chance to surprise him right back! Be warned that not all Administrators will accept this tactic.

The TOP SECRET game is not played like the AD&D game, and vice versa. Hack-and-slash is not welcome in a world in which laws prevail and discretion is mandatory. For every spy account we read in the newspaper, there are hundreds that are unreported or unknown. That's because real spies work behind the scenes. Make sure your spies do, too.

Avoid red herrings. TSR, Inc.'s TOP SECRET game modules are notorious for including false leads and blind alleys. Keep in mind your mission, and do not let yourself get sidetracked. Treat such distractions as you would wandering monsters in AD&D games. Avoid them, since their only purpose is to wear your force down by attrition.

I have purposely avoided talking about Fame and Fortune points until now. My only advice is make the excuse you use when invoking one of these points a plausible one, and never use the same excuse twice. Do not be surprised if an Administrator rejects your reasoning and declares an agent dead despite your protests. There will come times when all the luck in the world cannot save your agent. Furthermore, consider using Fame and Fortune points in critical situations that are not necessarily a direct threat on your agent's life. Such situations should be rare and very important, affecting the overall success of the mission.

Keep your sense of humor. Spy stories and television shows abound with everything from slapstick humor to dry British wit. A small bit of silliness keeps the atmosphere relaxed. Do not be afraid to give a character a weird sense of humor. Someone in my campaign has a British character with an alias of Monty Cleeze, code-named Python (get it?).

Finally, keep things above board and tasteful. There are too many people out there who are only too glad to criticize something they know little about, such as role-playing games. They are already having a field day blaming the world's ills on sword-and-sorcery role-playing games. Let's not give them the opportunity to do the same for espionage games.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people in my TOP SECRET game campaign, who gave me the ideas that made this article possible: Ellen (Dr. Evelyn Ashford) Terra, Bryan (C.C.) Villareal, Don (Nick Danger) Manning, Sophia (Jan Davis) Beidel, Kevin (Andre Komaneche) Wells, Doris (Sara Hunter) Wells, Bob (Peter Reynolds) Worsham, and Kevin (Reverend Huss) McBride.

# The Role of Books

by John C. Bunnell

## LORDS OF THE MIDDLE DARK

Jack L. Chalker

Del Rey 0-345-32560-5 \$3.50

Jack Chalker's new science-fiction series has something in it for almost any sf gamer. Whether it is the GAMMA WORLD®, PARANOIA™, or even the TRAVELLER® game, something from *Lords of the Middle Dark* is bound to apply somewhere.

This first book, at least, takes place mostly on Earth, where civilization is trapped in pockets of generally pre-industrial culture. There are no real dangers from radiation, but the atmosphere is not dissimilar.

The reason for this state is Master System, a sentient computer which has been running the planet for the past several hundred years. Master System was originally intended to protect humanity from the prospect of nuclear holocaust, but its inventors failed to realize the extent to which the computer would go to carry out its orders.

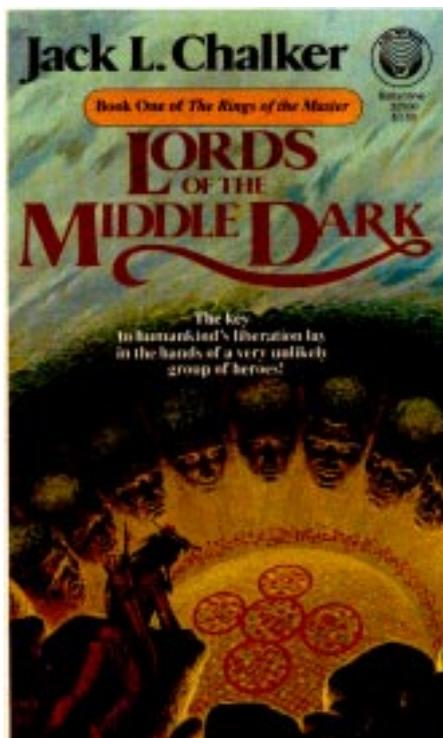
Spaceflight is also a part of Master System's universe. The immediate solar system is well within range, and interstellar traffic continues to exist, though more tenuously. Together with star-roving abilities, Master System has provided mankind with genetic shuffling intended to adapt the species to various extraterrestrial locales. (The results have been generally successful, but tend not to be much to look at.)

Quite accidentally, a Hyiakutt Indian called Hawks discovers that there is a way to turn off Master System — a fail-safe mechanism built into the programming by the designers. Doing so requires the use of five gold rings containing hidden microchips, rings which Master System may not destroy. Nothing, however, requires Master System to make things easy for its opponents, and Hawks soon finds himself a target for all manner of harassment.

The other protagonist of *Lords of the Middle Dark* is Song Ching, a dangerously brilliant Oriental girl who spends most of the book undergoing enforced personality changes — some of which are decidedly bizarre. There are also enough supporting players to staff a medium-sized spaceship, which is precisely what they finally end up doing. Chalker never lets the action stop, and it's clear by book's end that the

quest for the wings will lead the group all over the known galaxy.

In general, the reading is smooth and enjoyable, but the size of Chalker's cast and the complexity of his setting are a



trifle intimidating. Then, too, not much really happens in this book in terms of the overall quest. Most of the volume is background material, which, though interesting, is just too substantial to absorb easily. Future books in the series may prove otherwise, but for the moment *Lords of the Middle Dark* can't be regarded as Chalker's best work.

### The A.I. Gang Books

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Jim Lawrence

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#### #3: ROBOT TROUBLE

Bruce Coville

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The A.I. Gang series appears to be a hybrid of several modern book packaging ideas — it's part adventure series, part

reader-participation contest, and part "whiz kid" computer story. What makes this sequence distinctive is that, for the most part, it doesn't read like a series written for young adults.

Bruce Coville, author of the first and third books in the series, has the annoying habit of slipping "had they but known" observations into the narrative every so often. But his tactic of shifting focus between the anonymous villains and the teenaged heroes and heroines works remarkably well, and he doesn't pull punches when it comes to setting up dangerous climaxes. And Coville focuses firmly on the adventure, refusing to stray into romance or family conflicts.

The premise for the series is short on realism, but the sheer daring of the idea makes up for much of the loose science. (It also doesn't hurt that both writers take the setting very much for granted rather than try to explain it in depth.) Half a dozen eminent computer scientists are abruptly summoned to Ancoteague Island, site of an abandoned Air Force base, to join a mysterious research project. Along with them come an assortment of teenagers who are nearly as brilliant — but who haven't been officially let in on the secret. Before long, parents and kids alike are working on their own designs for computers with artificial intelligence (hence the A.I. monogram). At the same time, they must cope with elusive saboteurs, pirate legends, and a spy on the project staff.

Coville's two books stick close to the developing struggle between the young people and the double agent, whose identity remains a mystery throughout the first three tales. As a result, they're more interesting than Jim Lawrence's *The Cutlass Clue*, which spends most of its time on a basic buried treasure puzzle and very little on the main espionage plot line. Still, the series as a whole is quite acceptable as adventure fare, especially for computer gamers with dreams of saving the world.

### FIND YOUR FATE™ Books:

Doctor Who

#### #1: SEARCH FOR THE DOCTOR

David Martin

Ballantine 0-345-33224-5 \$2.50

#### #2: CRISIS IN SPACE

Michael Holt

Ballantine 0-345-33225-3 \$2.50

The only safe generalization to be made about this newest twist on the multiple-plot concept is that the idea is certifiably weird. No other explanation is possible.

*Doctor Who*, of course, is the long-running British science-fiction TV series. Unlike all published *Doctor Who* fiction to date, these books appear to be of American origin. Yet there are puzzles. David Martin is a veteran *Who* scriptwriter and the co-creator of K-9, one of the show's most popular characters. And the books are divided into individually numbered sections (like Steve Jackson's *Fighting Fantasy* Gamebooks) rather than numbered page by page to be consistent with earlier multiple-plot titles. Both books also include occasional dice rolls as part of the decision-making process.

Ordinarily, none of this would be enough to justify mentioning these books in this column. But mysteries aside, *Search for the Doctor* accomplishes something quite remarkable: it's both a credible gamebook and a solidly written science-fiction adventure. The story, in fact, is almost good enough to equal those in the full-length novelizations of televised *Doctor Who* serials. David Martin makes good use of *Doctor Who* folklore and deftly avoids the usual awkwardness of second-person narration often by focusing the story on the Doctor himself. His tale easily transcends the normal audience of multiple-plot books and is worthwhile reading for *Who* devotees of all ages.

Unfortunately, Michael Holt's follow-volume is so far below acceptable standards that it would be unfair not to make note of it. Holt's writing style is far too breezy both for *Doctor Who* and for wordplay, and companions Peri and Turlough are both badly misdrawn. It also isn't clear which Doctor the story is meant to feature; the Time Lord's sixth incarnation is pictured on the cover, but internal *Who* chronology places the tale in the fifth Doctor's era.

The uneven quality of these two books only adds to the mystery surrounding their appearance. American readers should be grateful that they are now receiving original *Doctor Who* adventures in any form, but they should hope that future books in this series resemble the first volume more closely than the second.

## GOD GAME

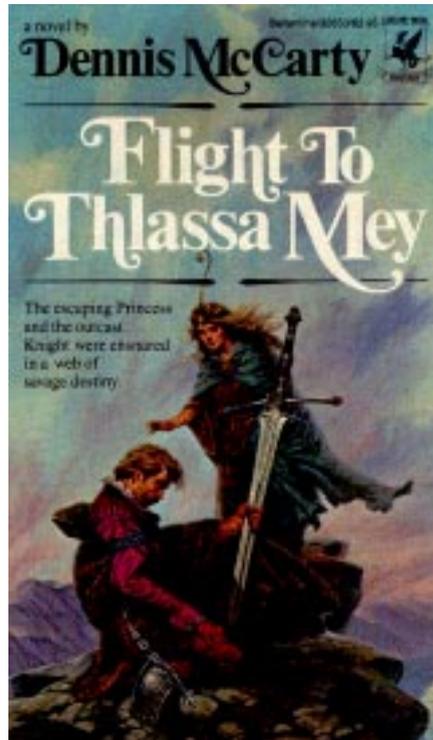
Andrew M. Greeley  
Warner & Tor 0-446-51264-8 \$16.95

On the back of the dust jacket of *God Game*, Anne McCaffrey claims she can't find enough adjectives to properly describe the book. That's not surprising, because Andrew Greeley's novel refuses to fit neatly into any one category. It's certainly science fiction, but the "science" in question is theology, which makes comparisons difficult at best.

Greeley's premise involves a computer adventure game whose characters are as

sophisticated as those in many role-playing games. While the protagonist is testing the game, lightning strikes a satellite dish connected to the system, plugging him into an alternate world where the game characters are real. Through the computer, however, he remains in control over events in that world — effectively taking on the role of God.

Just to make things more complicated, the novel's first person narrator both is and isn't Greeley himself. Like Greeley, the protagonist is a Catholic priest and novelist, and his books feature Greeley's characters. But to quote one of several author's notes mixed into the text: "Consider how long it takes him to realize that I have cast him in the God role. Does that sound like me? Could anyone with a Ph.D. be *that* dumb?" As author, Greeley clearly



enjoys raising paradoxes, and it shows in the amusedly forthright tone in which he discusses "his" situation.

That very forthrightness makes it almost impossible, however, to judge the novel by literary standards. Greeley's narration preempts interpretations of underlying meanings by openly asking theological questions rather than implying them, and the questions are profound enough to lack safe general answers. Readers are quite reasonably left to draw their own conclusions.

Yet while *God Game* defies academic criticism, it remains a lively and absorbing yarn blending elements of intrigue, adventure, and comedy. Greeley's wide-ranging eye for detail reveals itself in character descriptions and in a very thoroughly created game milieu. He also demonstrates a broad knowledge of the computer games from which he extrapolates, and twists his plot tightly back and forth between the

game world and that of his narrator.

Combined with Greeley's well-honed writing skills, the religious aspects of *God Game* make the novel a unique if sometimes unsettling reading experience. The intellectual debate never gets in the way of unfolding events, with the result that this story about playing God is much more fun than it has any right to be.

## FLIGHT TO THLASSA MEY

Dennis McCarty  
Del Rey 0-345-32653-9 \$2.95

Average cover art and undistinguished promotional copy initially pushed *Flight to Thlassa Mey* to a place near the bottom of the ever-growing pile of new books on my desk. That's too bad because the bland exterior of Dennis McCarty's first novel conceals a singularly fascinating fantasy with highly unusual literary ancestry. Not many writers are ambitious enough, after all, to openly emulate William Shakespeare.

Even fewer writers are audacious enough to put nearly all their dialogue into Shakespearean blank verse.

The formal language and distinctive cadence take some getting used to, particularly since the strongly metered dialogue is combined with smooth but definitely modern prose narration. The book is a novel, not a play, and the contrasting writing styles sometimes grate against each other. McCarty, however, generally succeeds in conveying the slightly dramatic, slightly thoughtful, yet vaguely brisk mood that characterizes the adventure.

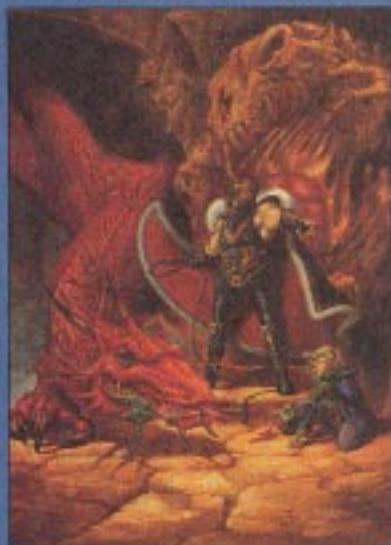
The novel's plot also owes something to Shakespeare, though it's well within more contemporary traditions. In part, it's the straightforward story of Princess Berengeria's quest to return to her native kingdom from the far-off realm of King Lothar the Pale, dodging Lothar's troops and those of the mad wizard Alyubol along the way. But the tale's hero is Palamon, the former Knight of Pallas who joins the princess and whose shadowy past is pivotal to the story. Palamon engages by turns in colorful battles and quiet introspection, and as the novel concludes, he is the subject of a whole series of well-crafted revelations.

Shakespearean borrowing is most evident in the characters of Lady Aelia and the hermit sage Reovalis — both have ancestors in the Bard's late plays — and in an amusing reference to an ancient order of students and librarians. For gamers, however, the sources of McCarty's inspiration are less important than his execution. Most of the atmosphere with which he invests his world is a product of the careful use of language, and it lends an intriguing new dimension to the too often predictable patterns of sword and sorcery. (Besides, there's an excellent chance that requiring characters to speak in blank verse will bring the more obstreperous players in line once and for all. . . .)

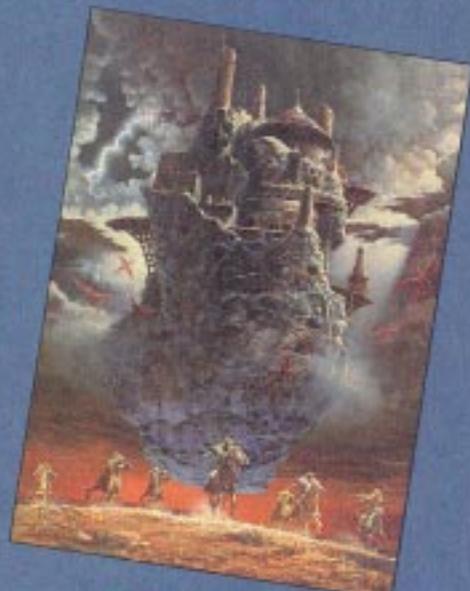
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## THE THRONE OF SCONE

Patricia Kennealy

Bluejay 0-3 12-94424-1 \$16.95

David Gerrold often describes the Klingons of Star Trek as "Mongol hordes with spaceships and ray guns." It only stretches that idea a little bit to term Patricia Kennealy's Keltiad sequence as "Gaelic fantasy with spaceships and ray guns," and as absurd as the concept sounds, Kennealy brings it off with considerable style.

More specifically, the series is based on the assumption that Earth's Keltic population fled the planet in A.D. 453, using technology developed before the fall of Atlantis, to set up its own civilization some thousand light-years distant. As the story opens some three millennia later, Keltia encompasses seven planets and has developed a culture in which unobtrusive high technology is blended with ancient traditions of art, architecture, and magic.

*The Throne of Scone* picks up the tale at the height of disaster. A would-be conqueror holds Keltia's throneworld, adding an air of uncertainty to recently renewed contacts with Earth. Aeron, Keltia's ruler, has vanished on a tenuous quest for the lost treasures of King Arthur, which may be able to turn the tide of the war. And even more uncertainty surrounds the intentions of the Fomori, once (but perhaps no longer) the Kelts' most dangerous enemies.

Kennealy provides battles and magic in abundance, adding an unexpected dimension in the conventions she sets down for interplanetary war. Characters and Keltic lore are also in generous supply, and there are times when the author seems bent on squeezing in references to every major magical tradition in the British Isles. Yet somehow everything comes together, and readers will be reluctant to abandon the adventure once they have been hooked. Luckily, *The Copper Crown* (Signet, \$3.50), which precedes the current novel, is newly available in paperback so that readers have access to the complete tale.

The attractions of the Keltiad should be evident to any gamer who has despaired of mingling science-fiction games with a fantasy campaign. But one item remains an irritant: the note that ends *The Throne of Scone* indicates that Kennealy's next novel will be a "prequel" to the first two, detailing events alluded to previously. Yet there seems no compelling reason for the trilogy to have been written and published out of order, and the decision to do so seems merely confusing.

## MERLIN'S BOOKE

Jane Yolen

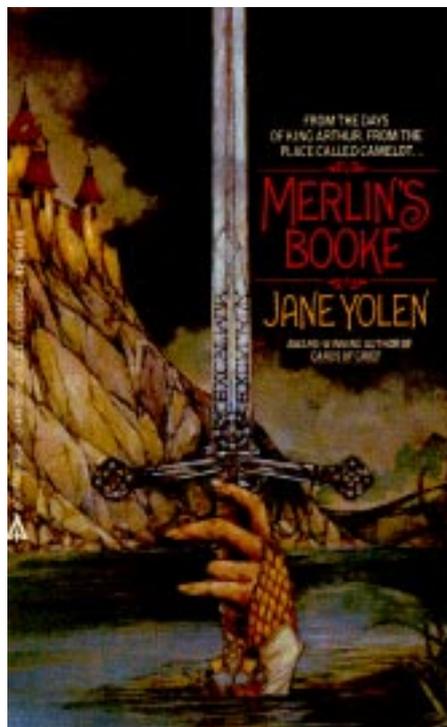
Ace 0-441-52552-0 \$2.95

Those gamers who are involved in Arthurian campaigns of one kind or another have one reason to read *Merlin's Booke*. But even those whose game worlds are built from scratch should profit from Jan Yolen's diverse collection of stories about

Merlin, court wizard to Camelot and legend in his own right.

As Yolen notes in her introduction, each tale depicts Merlin in a different light, with no attempt made to strike a consistent tone. The mage is the central figure in some of the stories, while others find him standing quietly yet unmistakably in the background. Though unconnected, the stories are arranged chronologically so that the first describes Merlin's birth and the last recounts the discovery of his tomb by a modern-day Prince of Wales. Yolen has also added several well-crafted poems to her mixture, together with quotations from the original Arthurian chroniclers.

There is a satisfying air of completeness about the book as a result, so it takes on some of the characteristics both of legend and biography. Yolen's prose expertly



balances elements of lyricism and matter-of-factness, and her verses carry the sound of poems meant to be spoken rather than merely read. (This is one case in which the testimonial quotes on the flyleaf are entirely on the mark.)

What makes *Merlin's Booke* important to gamers is a slightly different matter. Though mages and wizards are perennial fantasy characters, rarely are they the main focus of the stories in which they appear, and most of the exceptions are somehow restrained from exercising their powers at peak efficiency. Not all of the tales in this collection are strictly tales of magic, and Merlin is not always in charge of the magics described, but Yolen's collection is still an invaluable source book for players and referees in search of ways to make life for spell casters more interesting.

A line from the book itself, borrowed from some of the poetry, may be its own

best recommendation: "Touch magic, pass it on."

## RECURRING ROLES

Those readers who disapprove of cliff-hanger endings to series books had best avoid *War of the Twins* (TSR, \$3.95), which closes on a cliff-hanger of literally cosmic proportions. Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman, however, are still in excellent form, and the second *Dragonlance* trilogy continues to be well worth reading.

*The Armet of the Gods* (Del Rey, \$2.95), by contrast, continues Lloyd Eshbach's practice of writing self-contained stories, though it is also the second of a planned four-book sequence. Like the first book, Eshbach's new tale is well thought out, and certainly among the best recent examples of the "modern man transported to magical realm" category.

Also in that group is *The Hidden Land* (Ace, \$2.95), Pamela Dean's sequel to *The Secret Country*. Here, though, Dean's protagonists are younger and there is more humor. This second tale is somewhat darker in tone than the first, and though the ending is somehow both ambiguous and conclusive, the book is a definite success.

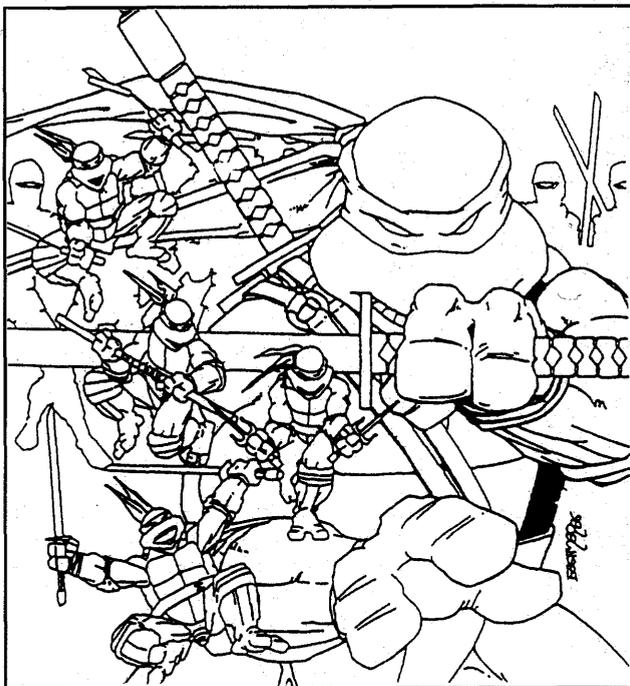
The same cannot be said of *The Unicorn Dancer* (Signet, \$2.95). There is not much about unicorns in R. A. V. Salsitz's second novel, and there is entirely too much of the Corruptor (whose very name is not spelled consistently throughout), a standard lichlike villain who misses a perfect opportunity to end the tale in mid-book. If anything, the tale is a step down from *Where Dragons Lie*, with too many characters and a barely coherent plot.

Elizabeth Scarborough offers a better bargain in *The Drastic Dragon of Draco, Texas* (Bantam Spectra, \$3.50), a thoroughly absurd yet straight-faced blend of sophisticated fantasy with Old West storytelling. *Boot Hill* and AD&D players alike will be delighted with this chronicle of a would-be lady journalist and an Aztec dragon, which expands Scarborough's: range substantially.

Expansion of a different kind is the goal of *Deryni Archives* (Del Rey, \$3.95). This short-story collection fills in assorted gaps in Katherine Kurtz's histories of the Deryni universe as well as telling tales with new central characters. Yet, though the stories are generally satisfying, the collection somehow seems both short and a touch too loftily oriented, especially for the price.

*Jinian Star-Eye* (Tor, \$2.95) brings Sheri Tepper's saga of the True Game to a decisive conclusion at an unexpected price. Tepper injects more visible "literary substance" into this last volume, yet retains all the attractions of the earlier books — which may turn out to be among the most underrated series of the last few years. What remains to be seen is what she will write about next.

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# When Only the Best Will Do

*Heckler & Koch weaponry  
for TOP SECRET® gaming*

by Kevin Marzahl

In 1945, the Germans lost the Second World War, and for the second time since the turn of the century, they were forced to disarm. When West Germany was allowed to rearm itself in the mid-1950s, the remains of the Mauser factory in Oberndorf were given to a new firm for weapons manufacturing — Heckler & Koch. Because it had no traditional designs and methods behind it, H & K was open to new ideas and advanced manufacturing techniques. The result was impressive. Since its first contract (the G3 assault rifle for the West German government), H & K has turned out a range of excellent pistols, a versatile submachine gun, assorted rifles and machine guns, and even a combat shotgun. In the last three decades, H & K has become, arguably, the finest and most respected small-arms manufacturer in the world.

It is not surprising, therefore, that H & K weapons would find their way into espionage and related activities. One of the preferred weapons of the British Special Air Service is the HK MP5, an accurate, reliable, and compact submachine gun available in many forms. Even James Bond has had occasion to use the HK VP70 (see John Gardener's *For Special Services*) and HK P7 (Gardener's *Icebreaker*). Here are the gaming statistics for the H & K line of weaponry, as well as notes on each weapon.

## Weapon notes

**HK 4:** This is the smallest of the H & K pistols. It is unique in that it may be chambered for .22, .25, 7.65 mm, or 9 mm short ammunition in a matter of minutes, simply by changing the barrel, magazine, and recoil spring. This operation can be

carried out in the field, provided that the user has the proper tools.

**P9S:** Although designed as a military sidearm (which accounts for its greater weight than the other H & K pistols), it is an ideal police and security weapon. It has a double-action lock, which allows it to be carried with a bullet in the chamber and the hammer forward. In game terms, this gives a shooter a +3 modifier to his net speed during first-shot determination.

**PT (PSP):** The "Polizei Selbstadepistole" was specifically designed for police forces. Two different magazines are available, an 8-round and a 13-round. It is a common weapon among West German border guards and other security forces.

**VP70M:** The only H & K pistol capable of true automatic fire, the VP70M is an excellent weapon. Its holster doubles as a stock. With the holster stock attached, the pistol is capable of firing S-round bursts. A civilian model, the VP70Z, is available, but without the S-round burst mechanism. It can, however, be fitted with a stock, as can all of these pistols.

**PSG-1:** As a precision, semiautomatic sniping rifle, this weapon is almost unequaled. It is normally made for single-shot firing, with a special silent bolt

closing mechanism. However, a 15- or 20-round magazine feed is optional. Fitted with a telescopic sight, it is deadly.

**MP5:** When H & K decided to add a submachine gun to its line of weapons, it used the G3 as the basis for their design. The result is the MP5. Its trigger mechanism is fitted with a special burst-control device, allowing for 2-, 3-, or 4-round bursts. No less than four magazines (for 10, 15, 20, or 30 rounds) are available. In addition, it has many variants. The model A2 has a permanent plastic stock, the A3 has a telescoping metal butt, and many others are arranged with varying combinations of sights, silencers/suppressors, and stocks. I chose to include the MP5K as a separate weapon, as it is completely buttless, has a shortened barrel, a foregrip, and a higher rate of fire (3-, 4-, or 5-round bursts), having been designed specifically for antiterrorist use.

**G3:** As the main rifle of the Bundeswehr since the 1960s (to eventually be replaced by the G11, the second most popular rifle in NATO, and H & K's principal product, the G3 is obviously a fine assault rifle. It is actually a derivation of the Spanish CETME assault rifle. Its variation, the HK33, is for all practical purposes, identical to the G3, save for the fact that it is chambered for 5.56 mm ammunition, and thus was not included as a separate weapon. A civilian model, the HK91, is also available, but with a rate of 2.

**G11:** NATO began new weapon trials in 1977, and H & K, not surprisingly, was given a contract. It chose to produce something completely different — 4.3 mm assault rifle using caseless ammunition. After encountering some problems, the round was changed to 4.7 mm caseless. The weapon itself resembles a carrying case with a trigger more than a rifle but, nonetheless, it is an effective weapon and ahead of its time. Most importantly, the G11 does not receive any modifiers from the Automatic Weapons table (Hit Determination Chart, page 24 of the TOP SECRET rule book). The reasons for this deal with the weapon's firing mechanisms are quite detailed; basically, the rifle was designed to counter the muzzle rise inherent in all automatic weapons. Thus, it fires three rounds at the incredible rate of 2,200 rpm and can place them within a 3(FM) circle at 500 yards, or

**Table I: Heckler & Koch weapon weights**

QRC	WP	WK	QRC	WP	WK
ah	7.39	4.25	br	5.4	2.45
bm	1.06	.48	bs	4.4	2
bn	1.94	.88	bt	7.93	3.6
bo	1.73	.79	bu	18.28	8.3
bp*	1.81	.83	bv	11.89	5.4
bq	15.86	7.2	bw	9.5	4.31

QRC — Quick reference code; see Table II for details.

WP — Weight in pounds

WK — Weight in kilograms

\* These models come with a holster stock: WP-2.81, WK-1.28



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**Table II: Heckler & Koch weapons**

QRC	Weapon	PWV	P	B	S	M	L	WS	Rate	Ammo	Cost	Decp	A	C	F	P	R	HWV	
<i>Pistols</i>																			
bm	HK 4 multicalibre																		
	.22, .25	46	0	-41	-141	X	VF	1	10	400	-8	5	2	5	4	6	4		
	7.65 mm, 9 mm <sup>1</sup>	48	0	-39	-139	X	VF	1	8	—	—	5	2	5	4	6	—		
bn	9 mm P9S	47	0	-37	-140	X	VF	1	9	375	-10	6	1	5	4	6	5		
bo	9 mm P7 (PSP)	43	0	-40	-143	X	VF	1	8,13	350	-10	6	1	5	4	6	4		
bP	9 mm VP70M	53	0	-41	-144	X	VF	1	18	450	-11	6	1	6	4	6	5		
	with stock	60	1	-25	-97	X	F	3	—	—	NC	6	1	6	4	6	8		
<i>Rifle</i>																			
bq	7.62 mm <sup>2</sup> High Precision Marksman	88	+6	0	-3	9	-9	1	S	1	*	600	NC	26	0	5	3	6	16
<i>Submachine guns</i>																			
br	9 mm MP5A2	68	+4	-24	-92	-242	A		*	*	475	NC	14	0	6	4	6	12	
bs	9 mm MP5K	60	+4	-21	-84	-240	A		*	*	425	-13	7	1	6	4	6	8	
<i>Assault rifles</i>																			
ah	7.62 mm G3	70	+5	-7	-53	-153	s	5	20	300	NC	20	0	5	3	5	14		
bt	G11 (4.7 mm caseless)	80	+6	-9	-50	-100	s	3	50	1000	NC	23	0	6	2	6	18		
<i>Machine guns</i>																			
bu	7.62 mm 21A1GPMG	93	+9	-1	-33'	-93	VS	9	50	925	NC	20	0	6	3	6	21		
bv	5.56 mm 13LMG	85	+6	-6	-37	-97	S	7	25	850	NC	20	0	6	3	6	19		
<i>Shotgun</i>																			
bw	CAWS	93	+9	-5	-64 <sup>3</sup>	X	S	3	10	1,000	NC	20	0	6	6	6	18		

<sup>1</sup> Short; all other 9 mm weapons use standard ammunition  
<sup>2</sup> NATO; all 7.62 and 5.56 mm weapons use NATO ammunition  
<sup>3</sup> At medium range, shotgun range modifiers are as follows:  
 51'-150' — Halve the listed modifier  
 151'-300' — As shown  
 Shotguns have no effect beyond 300'.  
 \* Special, see weapon notes

a 6' circle at 1,000 yards (a variation of about 1.5 mils, for those familiar with the system).

**21A1 GPMG and 13 LMG:** H & K's general-purpose machine gun is the 21A1, which can be fitted with a bipod (near the front of the barrel) or a tripod. It generally takes metal-link, 50-round (7.62 mm NATO) ammunition belts, although the feed system can be taken out and replaced with a magazine housing that will take the G3 magazine. This change must be carried out by a professional in a proper workshop. The 21A1's little brother is the HK13 light machine gun. It fires 5.56 mm NATO ammunition from 25-round magazines, not belts.

**CAWS:** There is a growing interest in automatic shotguns in the police and military circles. The Close Assault Weapons System was developed by H & K and Olin/Winchester primarily for the military. It fires 12-gauge ammunition (which cannot be fired from any other shotgun), loaded with shot, flechettes, or slug. It is incredibly lethal at close ranges and is still under development. It bears a resemblance to the G11, both weapons having smooth, snag-free bodies (resembling a carrying case, as the barrel is not visible) with a carrying handle over the grip.

**Final words**

First, fine weapons, especially those which are automatic, should not be easily

attainable by agents. This should be especially true of the G11 and CAWS, as they are experimental and very new. A system for equipment acquisition is found in the TOP SECRET Companion, and I highly recommend that Administrators use it, particularly in the area of weaponry.

Second, some readers may be aware that in the module TS 008, *Seventh Seal*, statistics are given for the VP70 which differ from those presented here. The differences are intentional, as I do not agree with those statistics. I believe that the version presented here is more realistic, but readers may choose which they prefer.

Third, some of you may notice that the ACFPR ratings do not tally to match some of the PWVs of certain weapons. This is primarily because I used the guidelines given in DRAGON® Magazine issue #69 (see the bibliography). This was done to provide a more varied and balanced set of weapons.

Fourth, machine guns are potent weapons. If they are used in your campaign, Administrators should use the guidelines given in DRAGON issue #102, page 38 ("Now that's firepower!"). For those using those guidelines, the Penetration Factors for the HK21A1 and HK13 are 20 and 17, respectively.

Last, weapon design and conversion into gaming format is difficult. In research, differing (sometimes even conflicting)

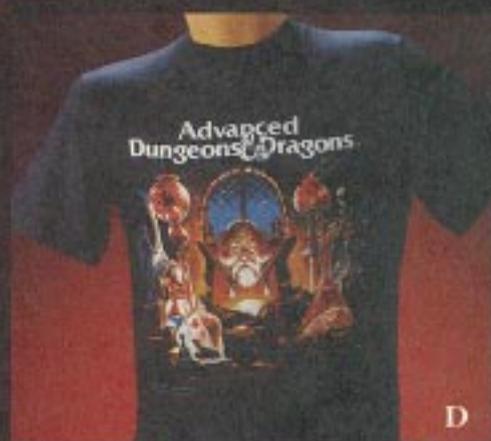
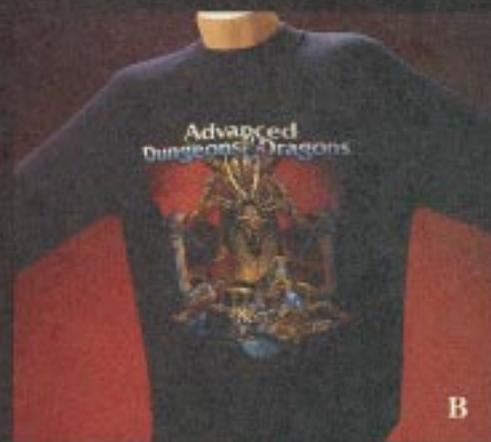
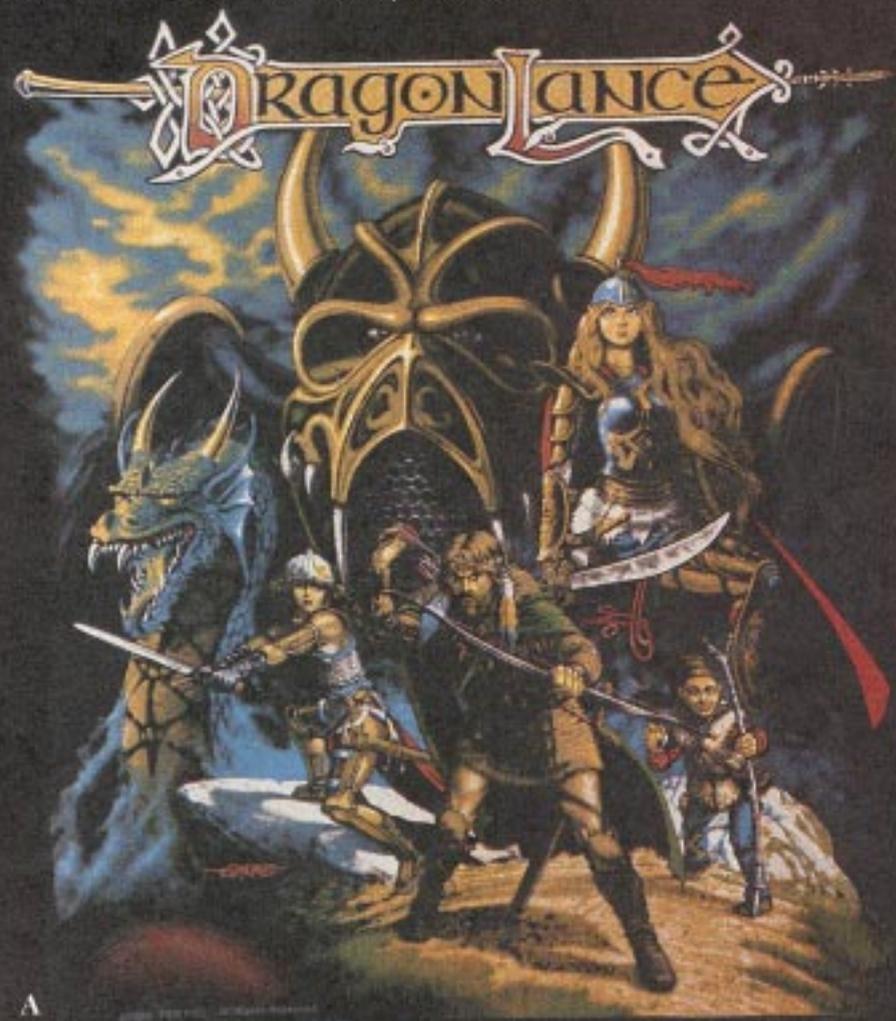
information is found. The stats given here, I feel, are accurate. But some weapons (namely the G11, CAWS, and, to a lesser extent, the VP70) are very new with little use behind them; the only way to be completely accurate on them would be to fire those weapons myself, and automatic weapons are not easy to come by. Readers may modify these statistics if, because of experience or knowledge, they believe that their versions would be more accurate. In any case, when you don't want to take chances, break out the H-&Ks.

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## ROGAR of MOORIA



Roger E Moore



# Profile

The product of intense scientific experimentation, Roger E. Moore was mutated from the cells of an Idaho potato on July 11, 1955, in a small and highly secretive laboratory in Winchester, KY. The last of the Rogar of Moorria series, Roger has proven himself one of the moore successful models of an antiquated line. "Clones or no clones," says Roger, "originality is the sum total of a man's thinking or his writing. I think Isaac Bashevis Singer said that."

After spending the early part of his childhood moving around Kentucky, Roger's family eventually settled down outside of Louisville (mispronounced "LOO a vul"). During his years at Fern Creek High School, Roger proved himself a child prodigy and garnered a mild degree of local fame. "I was one of the first people to get our U of L computer linkup to print out Playboy centerfolds," claims Roger.

Seeking to explore strange new worlds, Roger entered the University of Kentucky, where he majored in *Starship Troopers*, *StarForce*, and other science-fiction games. Midway through his college career, Roger changed his major from Astronomy to Psychology, and married fellow student Georgia Skowlund. After a mishap in which he was mistaken for an Abnormal Psych specimen, Roger graduated from college and joined the Army to better apply his talents as a Mental Health Counselor.

"The place I worked at in West Germany was a combination mental-health clinic/pizza parlor/ham radio shack and library," muses Roger. "It was once a panzer barracks, too. I was quite bored, so I started writing articles for DRAGON® Magazine. I gamed heavily and met some other gamers who now write or work for magazines." Following a number of submissions to DRAGON Magazine, Roger became a Con-

tributing Editor. "I had a lot of time to write at work, mostly when clients were too busy to show up for appointments. I did articles on the D&D®, AD&D®, and TRAVELLER® games — just about anything I could find." During his five-year tour of duty at Ft. Bragg, N.C. and Mannheim, West Germany, Roger received the Army Commendation Medal and other awards.

After three years of duty in Mannheim, Roger returned to the U. of Louisville to work toward a Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology (a degree most of his present co-workers feel should have been conferred purely on the basis of personal experience). "I wanted to work with the space program as a human-factors engineer," says Roger. "After awhile, I realized that wasn't what I wanted, so I called up Kim Mohan and asked if he needed any help on his staff." Thereafter, Roger was hired to the position of Editorial Spud in the spring of 1983: a position held in high esteem at TSR, Inc.

"I lerned alot from Pat Price an Kim Mohan an picked up the majorty of my editing skills from them an learned to pay more attention to grammer and speling then I used too pay to," he says now.

Over the next few years, Roger wrote consistently for DRAGON Magazine, publishing a wide variety of articles on almost every game topic imaginable. (Roger's credits are far too voluminous to list in this brief space). In August of this year, Roger began editing DUNGEON™ Adventures for TSR — a bi-monthly periodical which specializes in D&D and AD&D game modules. Earlier this month, with the resignation of Kim Mohan, Roger was promoted to Editor-in-Chief of DRAGON Magazine — a position he is expected to fill quite easily.

Writing, however, is not the only focus of Roger's life. "My favorite memory at TSR was the ELFStrike Watergun Massacre of all the game designers and editors in 1985, which I designed and coordinated, but without a doubt, the favorite event of my life has been the birth of 'J-Boy' — my son, John Michael, now a feisty 16 months old."

As a final note to Roger's successful career, Bozoid Clones, Inc. has agreed to reinstate the line it discontinued back in 1955. Can licensed Roger Moore® dolls, games, and t-shirts be far behind?

# Profiles

Bill grew up in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, midway between the bluffs and the Mississippi River. "A great place to grow up," he said. "We used to play hooky and go up on the bluffs or hang out by the river."

When he was three, he was hit by a car and had his front teeth knocked out. "As I was having convulsions in my father's arms, a neighborhood kid came over and asked for the teeth for his collection," he reminisced.

"I walked to school every day from grade school through college, through rain, mud, and snow. You young whippersnappers have it easy; you don't know what it's like to have to start fires by rubbing two sticks together. Why, as I once told George Washington at Valley Forge..."

"I played football and basketball in high school (yes, they had been invented by then). I attended the University of Wisconsin at La Crosse, majoring in English in the School of Secondary Education. I was a

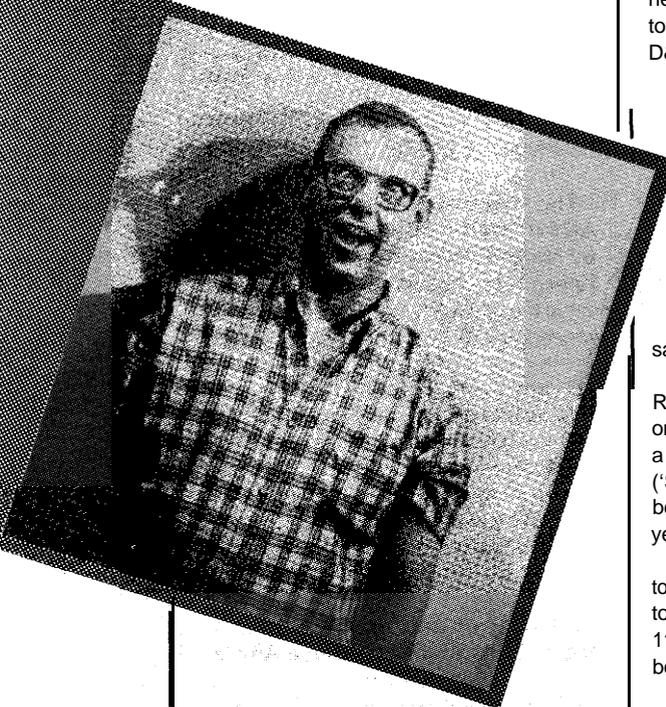
member of Lambda Tau Gamma, better known as the drinking frat..."

"After college, I taught high school English for four years, then wised up and left education. I got a job with Western Publishing Company, in Racine, Wisconsin, which is the nation's largest publisher of juvenile books, games, and activity books. They did Golden Books, Big Little Books, Dell Comics, Whitman Books, and many other lines. I was the editor of the TRIXIE BELDEN MYSTERY SERIES for fifteen years, through nineteen books—it was the second largest girls' series in the country. I even started to think like Trixie after a while...it was downright spooky!"

Right after college, Bill married Karen Nelsestven (pronounce *that* if you can), a first grade teacher. "She went backward in her career: first she taught first grade, then kindergarten, and now she's director of a day care center?"

He has three children, Chris, 24, Andy, 9, and Dan, 17.

"Chris is an accountant with the state government. Andy is studying art in Chicago. Dan is now a senior in high school; he's a state champion power lifter. He used to be a D&D player, and once ran a 24-hour D&D marathon game at our house. I never



*William A. Larson*

## BILL LARSON

Bill "Grampa" Larson, a voice from the recent Stone Age, is TSR's token "senior" citizen.

"Wait just a minute! I'm not that old," interrupted Bill. "All right, I was born in 1938, but that's still in modern times. There were already electric lights, telephones, and flush toilets, though few people had refrigerators yet. I used to sneak out of bed to listen to 'Inner Sanctum' and, 'I Love A Mystery' on the radio.

"But I'm *not* old!"

saw so much pizza eaten in my life!

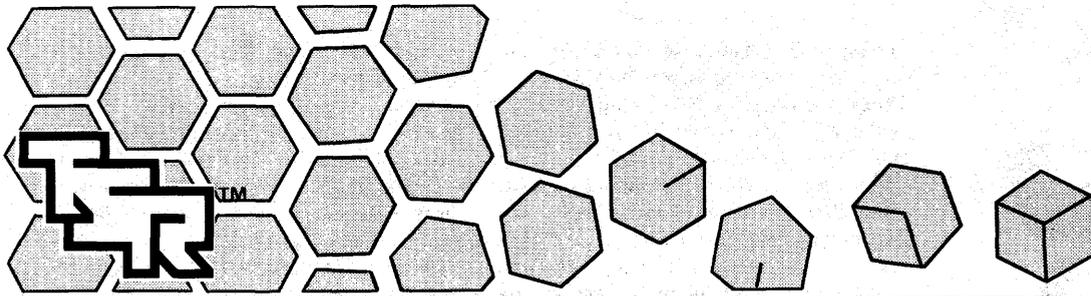
"My taste runs more toward games like Risk, Monopoly, and Scrabble. I've only lost one Scrabble game in ten years. I also play a German card game called *Shafskoph* ('Sheepshead') every other week. We've been playing with the same group for 25 years."

Bill came to TSR in 1983 as a Book Editor. He's edited ENDLESS QUEST® Books 7 to 36, AD&D® Adventure Gamebooks 1 to 11, all the MARVEL SUPER HEROES Gamebooks, and many more.

Bill is known as a very literal-minded man. Once, his brother-in-law told him to jump in the lake, and he did. Bill is also a magnet for psychic phenomena. "I once went over to an unabridged dictionary on a stand to look up a word, and suddenly the pages started riffing—and the page that it stopped at was the one with the word I wanted on it!"

We asked Bill if he had any good advice for the readership of DRAGON® magazine. He looked thoughtful for a minute, as he sifted through his many years of experience, then brightened. "The best advice I can give anyone is Alfred Hitchcock's life-long credo: Stay out of jail."





# P R E V I E W S

## NEW PRODUCTS FOR DECEMBER 1986

### M3 Twilight Calling

**D&D® Master Game Adventure**  
by Tom Moldvay

Venture into the desolate, glowing wasteland of the Broken Lands...and from thence into the Pits of Banishment to keep an age-old terror from menacing the Universe.

Suggested Retail Price: \$8.00  
Product No.: 9174

### RS1 RED SONJA® Unconquered

**AD&D® Game Adventure**  
by Anne G. McCready

The beautiful but deadly swordswoman from the movie screen and from the novels of Robert E. Howard blazes a trail of flame across the deadly lands of Hyboria in this high-level adventure for the AD&D game.

Suggested Retail Price: \$8.00  
Product No.: 9183

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### Clash of the Sorcerers

**AD&D® Adventure Gamebook #11**  
by Morris Simon

The exciting conclusion of the KINGDOM OF SORCERY Gamebook Trilogy! From College Arcane on Seagate Island, Carr Delling launches his ultimate assault on the vengeful sorcerer Arno, and must face a threat from beyond the grave before he can win the legendary Robe of the Archmagus.

This book can be played by itself or as part of the KINGDOM OF SORCERY trilogy.

Suggested Retail Price: \$2.95  
Product No.: 8961

### THE WOLVERINE™ in Night of the Wolverine

**MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Gamebook #3**  
by Jerry Epperson and James M. Ward

Everybody's favorite homicidal maniac is the star of this exciting Marvel gamebook. Be there...or else! \*Snikt\*

Suggested Retail Price: \$2.95  
Product No.: 8023

### FANTASTIC FOUR™ vs. DOCTOR DOOM™ in The Doomsday Device

**ONE-ON-ONE™ Gamebook #8**  
by James M. Ward

Doctor Doom™ has devised a giant robot capable of leveling cities. Now, he plans to send his creation against the world...once he eliminates his most hated enemies, the Fantastic Four™!

Suggested Retail Price: \$5.95  
Product No.: 8468

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## NEW PRODUCTS FOR JANUARY 1987

### H2 The Mines of Bloodstone

**AD&D® Game Adventure**  
by Michael Dobson & Doug Niles

Unparalleled high-level dungeon excitement in the first adventure that includes the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide* rules! After defeating the armies that menaced the small mountain village of Bloodstone (in *H1, Bloodstone Pass*), the heroes must uncover the secret menace in the depths of the bloodstone mines. We won't tell you who's down there, but he is best known for this wand he carries...heh, heh.

Suggested Retail Price: \$8.00  
Product No.: 9168

### DA2 Temple of the Frog

**D&D® BLACKMOOR™ Game Adventure**

by Dave Arneson and David Ritchie  
The infamous "Temple of the Frog" scenario from the original D&D® BLACKMOOR™ Supplement comes to life as a ferociously deadly high-level adventure by D&D® game co-creator Dave Arneson! Deep in the Great Swamp lurks Steven the Rock and his strange brotherhood of monks...and few who visit ever return alive.

Suggested Retail Price: \$8.00  
Product No.: 9175

### N4 Treasure Hunt

**AD&D® Game Adventure**  
by Aaron Allston

An adventure for 0 level characters! That's right...zero-level player characters! Can you survive a mad treasure hunt across the grounds and buildings of an abandoned manor house that has become a battleground in a war between goblins and orcs? A uniquely weird challenge for skilled players-don't miss it!

Suggested Retail Price: \$8.00  
Product No.: 9185

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# P R E V I E W S

# An Interstellar Armory

*New defenses and weaponry for  
STAR FRONTIERS® Knight Hawks gaming*

by Gus Monter

Veteran Knight Hawks gamers may find the usual fare of interstellar combat goes better with a touch of the unexpected. This article presents a number of new devices for starship battles in the STAR FRONTIERS® game setting, all of them experimental in nature but certainly worth a try.

## New Defenses

### Energy shield

Energy shields (E-shields) do not so much deflect attacks as absorb them. This defense activates a plasma field that neutralizes destructive energy entering it. However, the plasma itself is neutralized when it absorbs the barrage. In this way, the shield overloads and becomes useless after so many attacks. E-shields are effective against all laser weapons, shatter drones, and disruptor-beam cannons. An E-shield acts as a reflective hull when activated.

The shield must tap energy directly from the ship's generator in order to function. The total amount of SEU that can be drawn for a shield is equal to the ship's hull size (HS) times 50. The following table indicates how many SEU are required to absorb one hull point of damage from a weapon. Weapon types are from this article and from the Knight Hawks Tactical Operations Manual, page 14.

	LP <sup>1</sup>	LB	LC	SD <sup>2</sup>	DC
SEU	5	10	20	40	30

<sup>1</sup> Laser piston (see below)

<sup>2</sup> Shatter drone (see below)

For example, a light cruiser finds itself in the unfriendly company of two corvettes, which promptly fire their laser cannons at it. The player of the light cruiser announces that he is activating his E-shield at an SEU of 200. The corvettes both roll hits, then damage is rolled and totalled to



the sum of 10. The shield can absorb (200/20 = 10) 10 hp damage, so the shield is wiped out in absorbing the full barrage. However, the ship still has 400 SEU to place in the E-shield (HS 12, 12 x 50 = 600, 600 - 200 = 400).

### Masking field

This is a form of cloaking device that effectively camouflages a ship from detection systems. However, due to the delicacy of its effect, the field instantly drops if the masked ship moves or fires any weapons (this includes the launching of probes, decoys, shuttles, and fighters). It cannot be reactivated until two turns later. Also, the field has a tendency to create 1-4 ghostly holographic images of the hidden ship within a one-kilometer radius of the ship, on a 1% cumulative chance per turn of operation. These images cannot jam detectors, but they work well in fooling them. Of course, once an enemy sees a "ghost ship," it knows that a real ship is in the area as well. . . .

### Mine damper

The mine damper is essentially like an E-shield, except that it is only effective against mines. It must be activated before the player's ship enters a mined hex. For a normal mine, 20 SEU are required to absorb a point of damage. It takes 100 SEU to absorb a screen mine.

### Reinforced hull

This additional internal framework of struts and bulkheads adds greatly to the ship's ability to handle internal stress. When a ship is down to half its hull points, a -15 modifier is added to the ship's chance to break apart (see Tactical Operations Manual, page 13, "Hull Hits").

### Seeker jammer

A seeker-missile jammer is a device that broadcasts a charge which causes a seeker missile to detonate in its current hex. The device has 1-3 charges and has an effective

**New defenses: Table of equipment**

Defense	Cost (Cr)*	MHS* *	Availability	Program level	Function points
Energy shield	3,000	6	1	3	12
Contact deflectors	1,000	5	1,2,3	2	9
Masking field	4,000	3	1	5	18
Seeker jammer	1,500	4	1	3	6
Armor plating	1,500	6	1,2	NA	NA
Armor plating (heavy)	3,000	12	1	NA	NA
Reinforced hull	800	1	1,2,3	NA	NA
Mine damper	2,000	1	1,2	2	9

\* The price listed must be multiplied by the ship's hull size for the final cost.

\*\* Minimum hull size

range of 20,000 km per charge (i.e., it can have a range of 60,000 km if all the charges are used up). The jammer works as long as it is in range of the seeker missile. A charge only affects one seeker missile.

**Armor plating**

This is a relatively common form of protection on warships. The armor is made up of two layers of plasteel beneath tritanium surfacing. It is effective against laser pistons, laser power torches, rocket

batteries, and mines, giving these weapons a -15% chance to hit. It adds 200 structural points to the hull.

The heavier form of armor is essentially the same as the lighter one, except it has a special ceramic alloy between the two plasteel layers. It adds 300 structural points and is also effective against laser cannons, laser batteries, and electrical beam batteries, giving these weapons a -15% chance to hit and penetrate, -20% against the attack forms affected by the lighter armor plating described above.

**Contact deflectors**

This is a precautionary device used by starships entering combat, asteroid belts, gas clouds; and uncharted regions. Basically, it insulates the ship from contact with minor asteroids, meteorites, crashing ships, and other forms of space debris. When passing through an asteroid belt, a ship with contact deflectors adds a bonus of 30 to the result in step A in the asteroid movement procedure (see the Knight Hawks Campaign Book Expansion Rules, page 34).

**New weapons: Table of equipment**

Weapon	Cost (Cr)	MHS	Avail.	PL	FP	DTM	HDR	FF	RD	MPO	LTD	RA
Laser piston	1,500	1*	1,2,3	1	3	0	1-5	FF	RD			6
Tractor beam	35,000	6	1	4	5	0	0		RD	MPO		3
Fusion bomb	3,000	1	1	1	2	-20	5d10			MPO	LTD	0
Screen mine	5,000	7	1	4	3	0	0				LTD	0
Maxi-missile	3,000	5	1,2	1	2	-5	3d10	FF		MPO	LTD	5

Abbreviations at the top of table are: cost in credits, minimum hull size (MHS), availability, program level (PL), function points (FP), damage table modifier (DTM), hull damage rating (HDR), forward firing (FF), range diffusion (RD), moving player only (MPO), limited supply (LTD), and range (RA).

\* Maximum hull size of 2

**New combat table**

Weapon	Percentage chance to hit against this defense									
	No	RH	PS	ES	SS	MS	AP	AP (h)		
Laser cannon	75	60	75	75	75	25		-15		
Laser battery	65	50	65	65	75	20		-15		
PB battery	60	60	25	70	40	50		-15		
EB battery	60	60	70	25	40	50		-15		
Disruptor cannon	60	60	50	50	40	50				
Torpedo	50	50	50	50	75	50				
Assault rocket	60	60	60	60	60	60				
Rocket battery	40	40	40	40	40	40	-15	-20		
Mine	60	60	60	60	80	60	-15	-20		
Seeker missile	75	75	75	75	90	75				
Laser piston	60	45	60	60	60	15	-15	-20		
Fusion bomb	70	70	70	70	80	70				
Screen mine	60	60	60	60	80	60				
Maxi-missile	50	50	50	50	70	50				
Tractor beam	60	60	60	60	50	60				

**Weapon Percentage chance to hit using gunnery skills**

Weapon	No	RH	PS	ES	SS	MS
Laser piston	55	40	55	55	55	10
Fusion bomb	60	60	60	60	70	60
Maxi-missile	40	40	40	40	60	40
Tractor beam	50	50	50	50	40	50

In other cases (including ramming), dice are rolled, and a score of 15 or less indicates the ship has been hit – but the contact deflectors were useless because the ship was hit head-on. This outcome can be avoided by using the pilot's evasive maneuver ability (3% x pilot skill level) or a ramming pilot's chance to maneuver (10% x pilot skill level). However, if the roll was higher than 15, the deflectors have a 20% chance to avoid ramming damage. For this rule to apply, the ramming ship must be HS 4 or less.

For example, a fighter is down to 2 hull points and the ship's level -4 pilot decides to ram a destroyer head-on, thereby making the destroyer's contact deflectors useless. The base chance is 15%; after adding the pilot's skill (10 x 4 = 40, 40 + 15 = 55), it becomes a 55% chance; but the destroyer's level -5 pilot attempts to evade (3 x 5 = 15). Therefore, the ramming pilot has a 40% chance to hit head-on. He fails his rolls; the destroyer player rolls a 15, so the fighter ship explodes harmlessly against the destroyer's hull.

### New Weaponry

#### Laser piston

The laser piston is essentially a miniaturized version of the laser cannon. This

weapon is often used on vehicles, from fighters to hovercycles. A fighter using a laser piston must forsake any other weapons except a fusion bomb or an assault rocket.

#### Tractor beam

The tractorbeam is not really a weapon. It is a powerfully energized electromagnetic beam which draws large metallic objects toward it. The object is held just within the beam's range-and can be drawn in at a rate of two hexes per turn. The beaming ship must cut its speed to zero before it can draw in the "tractored" object. Spaceships can use this device on any ship eight hull sizes less than the beaming ship's own hull size. The beam must make a roll to hit (modified by the defending ship's pilot's chance to evade), after which the tractored ship can only break free by accelerating to a rate of 10 hexes per turn, at which point the captured ship moves away at one hex per turn. Accelerating to further multiples of ten allows the captured ship to move away at rates reduced to 10% of the ship's acceleration; thus, a ship accelerating at 20 hexes per turn moves at two hexes per turn, etc.

For example, a light cruiser chasing an Imp-class yacht comes into beaming range and, after a successful roll, locks onto the yacht. Because it was not at top speed and

its ADF matches the light cruiser's, it is doubtful that the yacht can escape in time before it is boarded. Instead, it fires its laser battery at the beaming ship, which will draw the yacht into boarding position in about one turn.

#### Maxi-missile

The maxi-missile is essentially a rocket with 3-5 warheads. Therefore, while it has a lesser chance to hit than an assault rocket, it does more damage on contact.

#### Fusion bomb

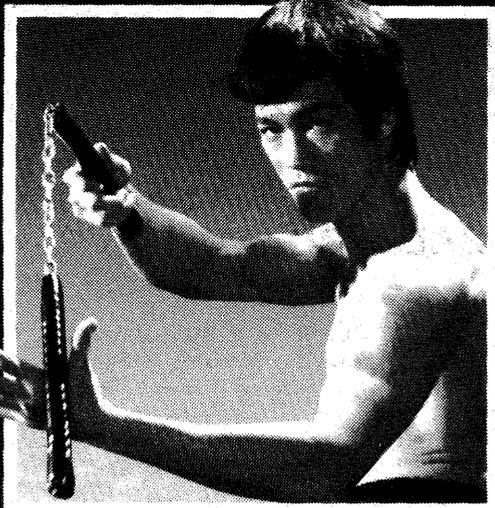
The fusion bomb is so deadly a weapon that it is "dropped" rather than fired at an enemy. The bomb's unstable nature is such that reaction drives places near it could trigger the bomb before it reaches its target. Thus, the range of this weapon is merely the same hex as the launching ship. A popular fighter ship tactic is to make repeated bombing runs along a larger vessel, with the result being a chain of explosions eventually consuming the target.

#### Screen mines

Screen mines operate like other mines, save that their effect upon contact is to destroy any activated screens, fields, or E-shields.

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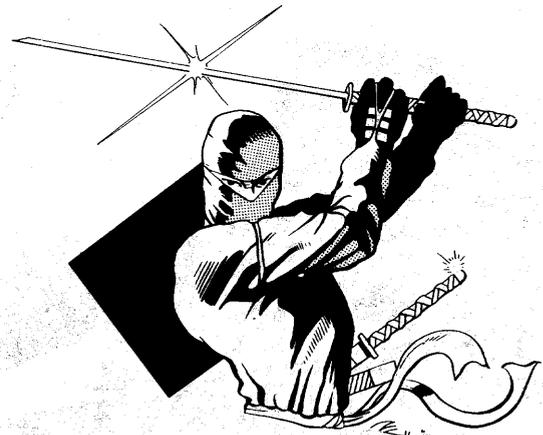
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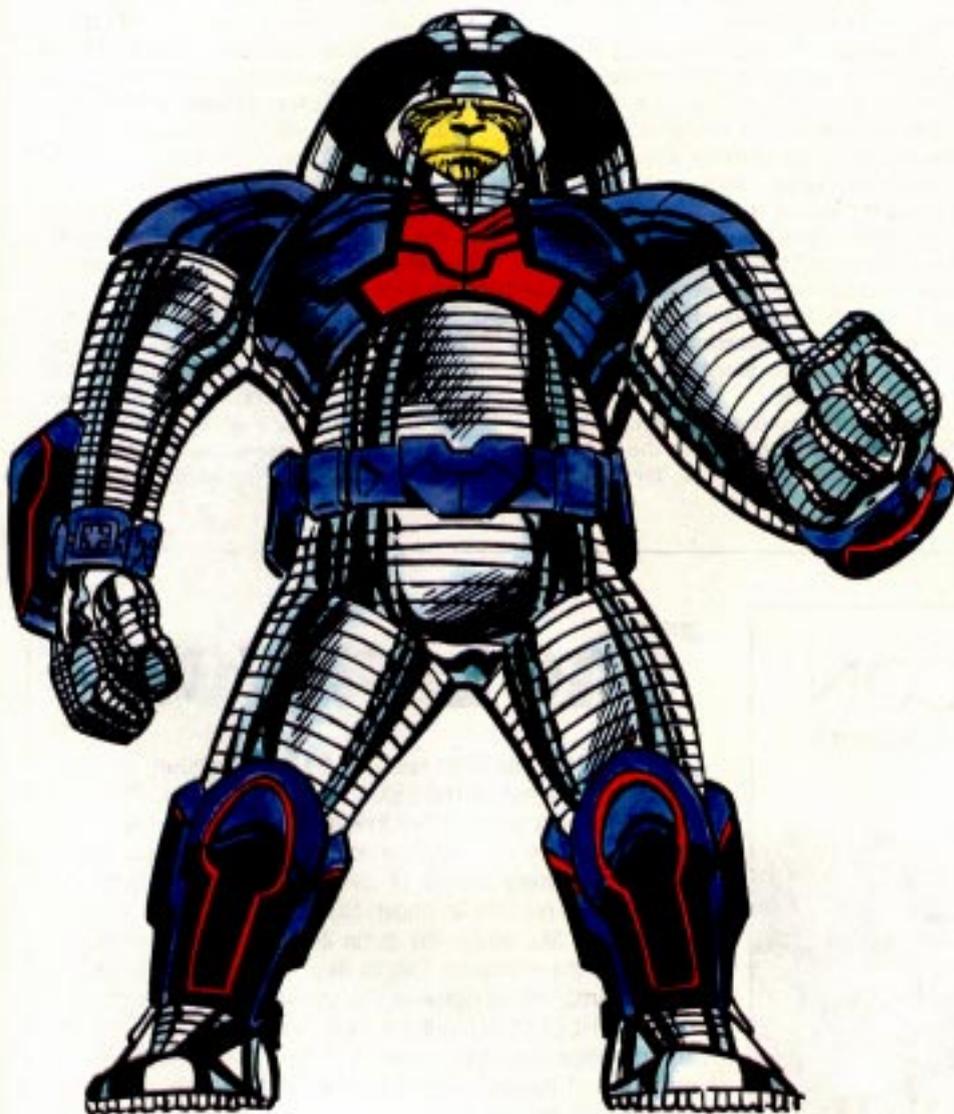


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# The Marvel®-Phile

*And now, Terminus™. . . .*



by Jeff Grubb

The Marvel Universe® has an amazing range of powerful inhabitants, from wall-crawling wonders to thunder gods. While there are a large number of low-powered villains to match against wall-crawlers, heroes with Unearthly-and-up abilities

may need a little more to challenge them than the likes of Scorpion™ or Rocket Racer™. It's for that latter group of more powerful heroes that the following villain is intended. Let him into your campaigns at your own risk; fighting him is the equivalent of inviting Galactus™ over for brunch.

## TERMINUS™

F	UN (100)	Health: 4200
A	UN (100)	
S	CL 1000	Karma: 250
E	CL 3000	
R	MN (75)	Resources: CL 3000
I	MN (75)	
P	UN (100)	Popularity: -500 (where known)

The above statistics and the powers listed below are for Terminus in his giant robot armor. Terminus's statistics, if deprived of this armor, are as follows:

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
GD	GD	AM	CL 1000	MN	MN	UN

### KNOWN POWERS:

*Body Armor:* Terminus's robotic body is 150' tall and made of a resilient, Unearthly-strength material an average of 12" in thickness. This armor provides Shift Y protection from physical and energy attacks, and Class 1000 protection from radiation, heat, and cold, allowing him to travel through space and make planetfall without harm. Terminus's robotic body can travel through space at Class 1000 speeds, but it is not known if it may travel through hyperspace.

*Energy Lance:* Terminus carries a 240' lance that fires bolts of Class 3000 energy with interstellar range (he inscribed his "claim" to Earth from another solar system, accurately writing across the United States with a beam a half-mile across). Terminus uses this lance to ignite a storm of atomic energy that surrounds his robotic form; the storm extends up to 10 miles from his body. This atomic storm is of Class 1000 strength and reduces the molecules in his immediate vicinity to their component atoms, creating an area of Monstrous intensity radiation and Unearthly heat in the process. Terminus may summon his energy lance from any distance, as long as it may reach him physically.

**TALENTS:** None revealed, though it may be deduced he has Business Skill on an interstellar scale.

**CONTACTS:** None revealed. Though it may be surmised that Terminus has "buyers" for his plundered resources, his relationship with them has not been revealed.

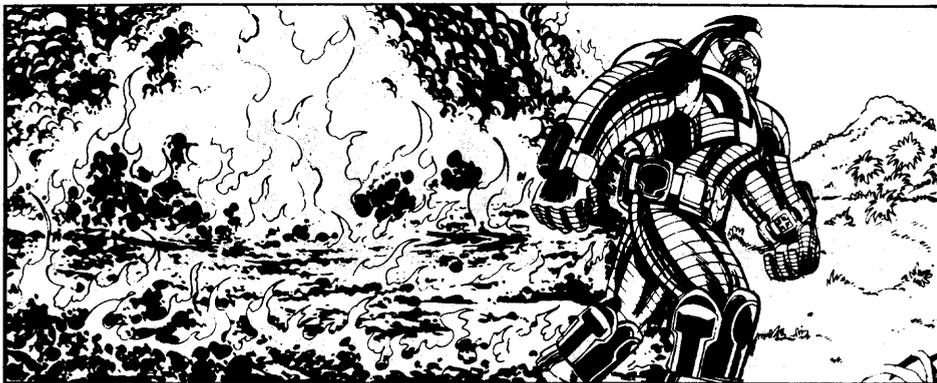
**BACKGROUND:** Terminus's origins have yet to be revealed. His first appearance on Earth followed his claiming of the planet, scrawling across North America with his lance: "I claim this world—Terminus." He landed soon after and declared his intention to sell Earth's technology, enslave its people, strip its resources, and reduce its mass to its component elements. This seems to be standard procedure for this

interplanetary scavenger, and he has destroyed a number of planets in this fashion.

Terminus was directed to Earth by an alien scientist that Terminus enslaved after destroying the scientist's world. Knowing something of Earth's potential to produce supremely powerful beings (the planet had repulsed the attacks of Galactus several times), the scientist directed Terminus to Earth. On his arrival, Terminus was less than pleased with Earth's bounty (he landed in a southwestern desert of the United States) and flung the scientist to his death.

The dying scientist told the Fantastic Four™, who were on the scene investigating the writing, about Terminus and his intention to destroy the Earth. Reed Richards™ was able to delay Terminus by using an invention that halted the invader's motion relative to the Earth, driving Terminus into the planet's mantle near the core. Terminus was separated from his lance in this battle, and he had to spend some time digging himself out.

Upon reaching the surface again, beneath the South Atlantic, Terminus summoned his lance and resumed his investigation of his new planet. He encountered the Antarctic havens of Pangea™ and the Savage Land™, and soon ignited his atomic storm, destroying the habitats and environmental machinery that maintained



them. Lord Kazar™ and Sheena™ were among the few survivors of the destruction of the Savage Land.

The Avengers™ fought Terminus, though they arrived too late to prevent the destruction of the Savage Land. At this time, it was discovered that Terminus's body was a robotic transport for a smaller being in the robot's head. The Black Knight™ severed the arm of the robot with his ebon blade, depriving the creature of his lance. Hercules™ then attacked the armor itself, ripping it apart to reveal the helpless alien beneath. Hercules left the dying alien in the gathering blizzards that were already reducing the once-tropical Pangea to an Antarctic waste.

Terminus's physiology, however, might allow the creature to survive the killing temperatures. Furthermore, Terminus

may have some sort of rescue plan, though he had never before met resistance such as he encountered on Earth. It should be noted that the Savage Land and Pangea were maintained as tropical oases by ancient Atlantean technology, some of which may still survive Terminus's rampage. Finally, it should be noted that several terran criminal and scientific organizations, such as A.I.M.™, are aware of the existence of the Savage Land, and may discover and revive Terminus to fit their own ends.

Should Terminus return, his very existence poses a threat to every living being on this planet, which Terminus considers his conquered property. Unlike Galactus, who destroys planets out of a need to maintain his own existence, Terminus eradicates life solely out of greed. m

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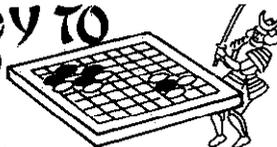
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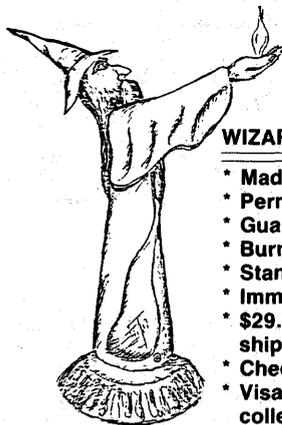
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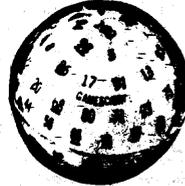
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## Index to Advertisers

Adventure Systems .....	13
Bard Games .....	90
Chaosium, Inc. ....	5
DBE, Inc. ....	17
Diverse Talents Inc. ....	21
DRAGON® Magazine .....	66
DUNGEON™ Adventures. . .	33, 91
Fantasy Games Unlimited .	33, 53, 68
FASA Corporation .....	23
Game Designers' Workshop .	8, 80
Game Systems Inc. ....	45
Games Workshop U.S. ....	25, inside front cover
Greenfield Hobby Distributors	.100
Iron Crown Enterprises, Inc. . .	1, back cover
Leading Edge Games. ....	13
Mayfair Games .....	77, inside back cover
Milton Bradley .....	7
Palladium Books .....	59, 69, 75
R. Talsorian .....	6, 7
Steve Jackson Games. ....	65
Tharla Enterprises. ....	73
TSR, Inc. ....	41, 79, 88
TU-E Games .....	87
West End Games. ....	37

# CONVENTION CALENDAR

## SCI-CON 8, Nov. 7-9

This science fiction convention will be held at the Sheraton Beach Inn in Virginia Beach, VA. Guests include C.J. Cherryh, Mike Kaluta, Marty Gear, Allen Wold, Kelly and Polly Freas, Colleen Doran, Curt Harpold, and Kay Reynolds. Sponsored events include panels, movies, videos, open gaming, an art show, a costume contest, and much more. Memberships are \$15 until Oct. 1 and \$18 thereafter. Dealers' tables are \$50 (including one membership). For further information, contact: SCI-CON 8, P.O. Box 9434, Hampton, VA 23670.

## NEW ENGLAND REGION CONVENTION, Nov. 8-9

This gaming convention, which is sponsored by the Newburyport Wargamers Association, will be held at the D.A.V. hall on Route 1 in Newburyport, MA. Events, which include historical miniatures, fantasy role-playing, and other games, are sponsored from 8 a.m. to 1 a.m. on Saturday, and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday. For membership information and further details, contact: Newburyport Wargamers Association, Public Relations Office, 88 Purchase St., Newburyport, MA 01950.

## TRICON, Nov. 8-9

This comics/gaming convention will be held at the Dunfey Hotel in San Mateo, CA. Guests include Howard Chaykin and Paul Gulacey. Featured activities include role-playing games, wargames, and boardgames; contests and a dealers' room are also offered. Pre-registration is \$12, and \$2 for each tournament. For more details, contact: Tricon, 1311 El Camino Real, #196, Millbrae, CA 94030.

## CONQUEST V, Nov. 15-16

This gaming convention will be held at Michigan State University at the MSU Student Union, in East Lansing, MI. Events include role-playing games, miniatures events, a miniatures painting contest, an auction, a dealers' room, and more. For more information, write to: ConQuest V, 2300 N. Grand River Ave., Lansing, MI 48906.

## CAROLINA MODEL AND HOBBY EXPO, Nov. 29-30

The Expo will be staged at The Merchandise Mart in Charlotte, NC. Special guests include Tom DeSalco and Ron Frenz. Gaming tables are available for open gaming; gamers are invited to bring along their favorite games and meet a few opponents. Events include demonstrations of historical miniatures wargaming, a comics collectors' show, model plane, ship, car, and train displays, and numerous wargames. Daily admission for this convention is \$2.50 for adults, and \$1 for children age 6 through 12. For more details, write to: Carolina Hobby Expo, 3452 Odell School Road, Concord, NC 28025.

## MANATEE FANTASY FAIR '86, Nov. 29-30

This comic book, fantasy, and science fiction convention will be held at the Manatee Civic Center, which is located at the intersection of

U.S. Hwy 41 and the Manatee River in Bradenton, FL. Doors open to the public at 10 a.m. each day. Admission to this event is \$3 a day, or \$5 for both days. Dealers can rent display tables for the weekend for \$40 for the first table, and \$35 for each table thereafter. For further information, contact: The Time Machine, 3320 Manatee Avenue, M., Bradenton, FL 33505, or call Henry Raines at (813) 748-4879.

## TROPICON V, Dec. 5-7

The South Florida Science Fiction Society will host this weekend event at the Howard Johnson's Ocean Resort in Deerfield Beach, FL. Gardner Dozois is the guest of honor. Events include panels, movies, a costume contest, a banquet, an art show, trivia, and gaming. Registration is \$10 until Oct. 31, and \$15 thereafter. For further details, contact: SFSFS Secretary P.O. Box 70143, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33307.

## S.A.G.E. III, Dec. 27

The "Simulation Adventure Game Expo" will be held at the Airport Holiday Inn in Visalia, CA, from 9 a.m. to midnight. This event features role-playing, board, miniatures, and computer gaming, and offers a dealer's room and a used game auction. Memberships at \$5 at the door. For more information, send a SASE to: S.A.G.E., c/o Galactive Productions, P.O. Box 4517, Visalia, CA 93278-4517.

## EVECON 4, Jan. 2-4

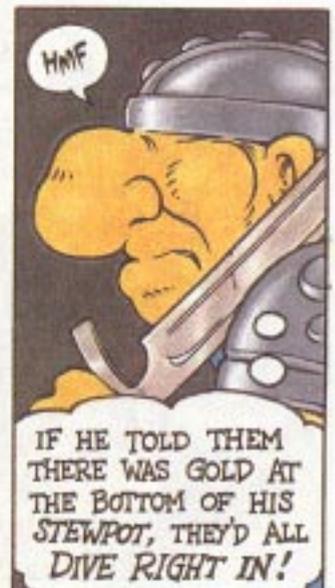
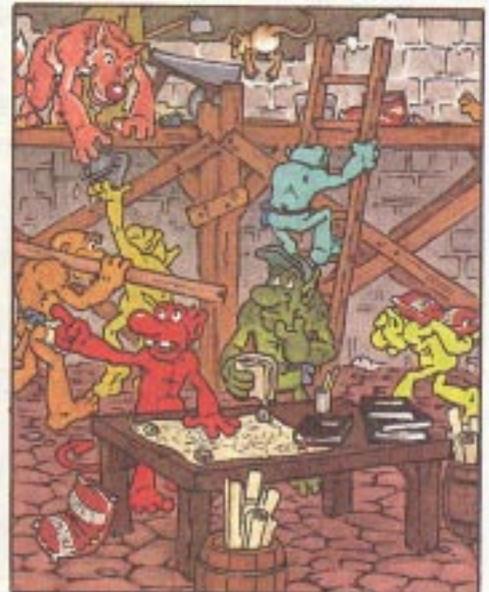
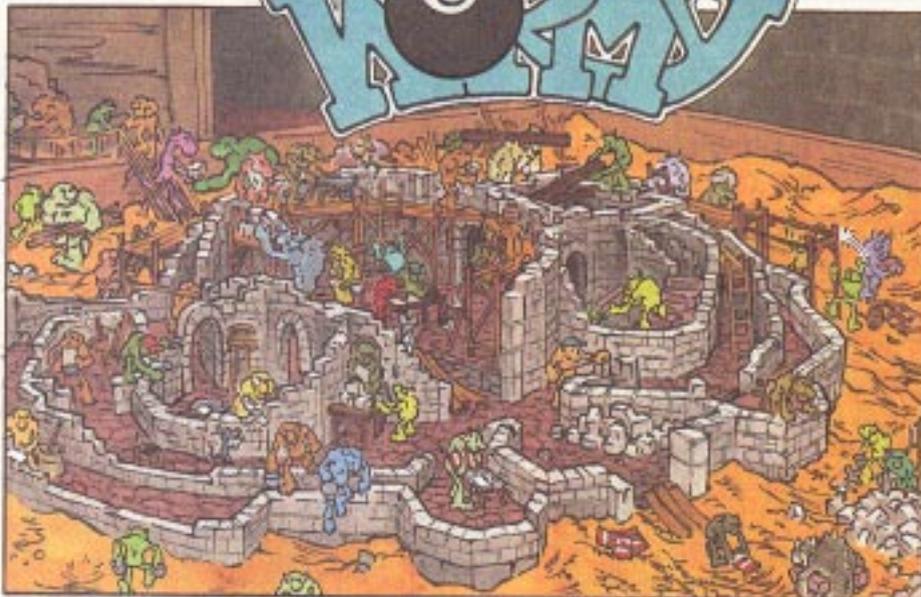
This fourth annual national convention, which is sponsored by FanTek, will be held at the Stouffers Concourse Hotel in Crystal City, VA. Featured events include all types of games, Cinemascope movies, music, an art show and sale, a Merchants' Bazaar, and a host of other activities. Pre-registration is \$15 until Dec. 10, and \$20 the day of the event. For further information, send a SASE to: EveCon 4, c/o Bruce Evry, Box 128, Aberdeen, MD 21001, or call (301)422-1235.

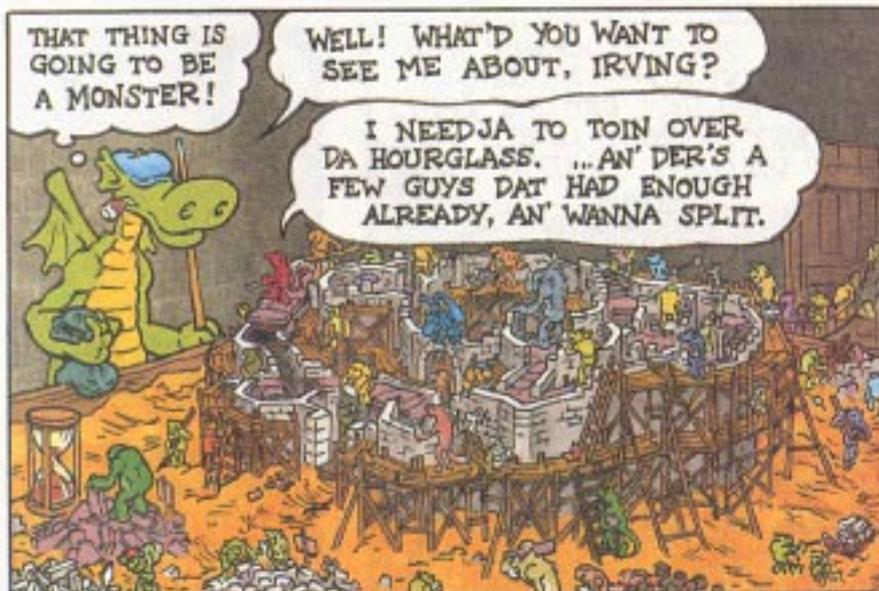
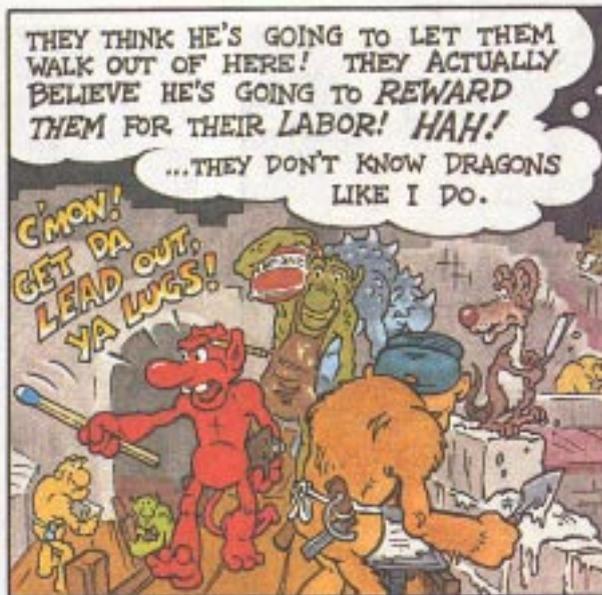
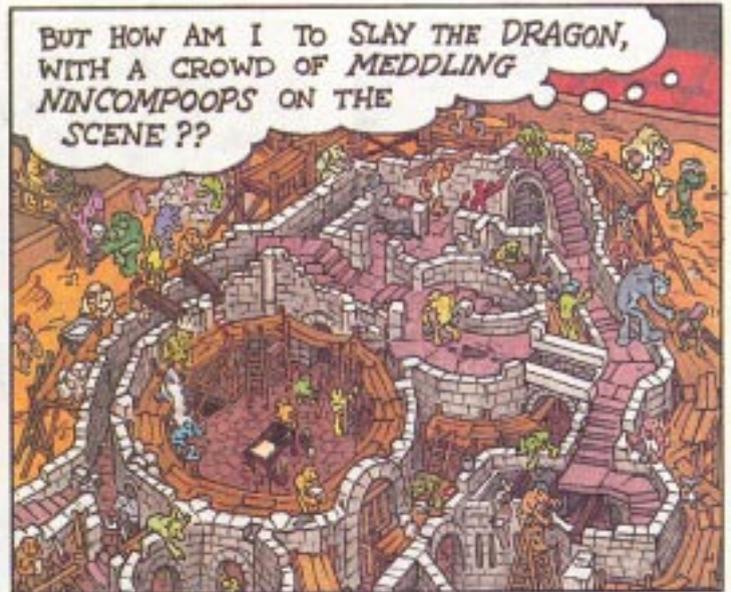
## NEW YEARS CON™ '87, Jan. 3-4

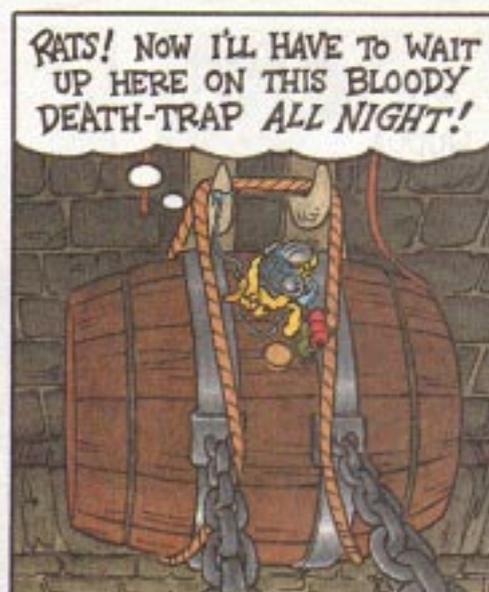
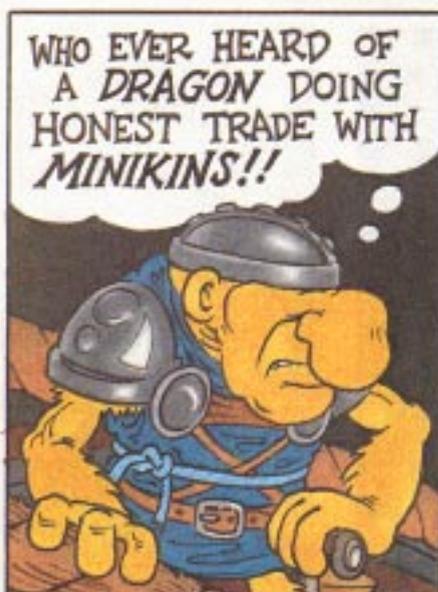
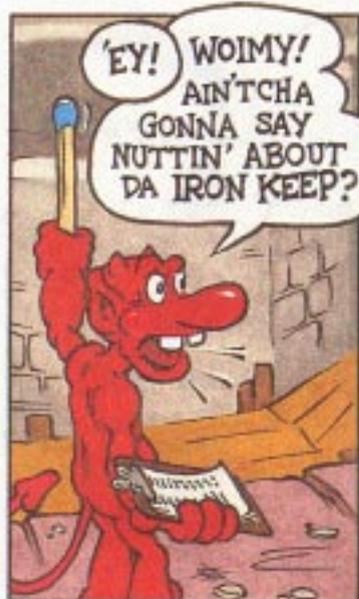
This event will take place at the Americana Resort in Lake Geneva, WI. Guests of Honor are Jim Ward, Frank Mentzer, Penny Petticord, Tom Wham, and Harold Johnson. Special events include RPGA™ Network Tournaments, 30 mm Napoleonic, 25 mm Circus Maximus, and 15 mm Ancients miniatures events, an Axis & Allies tournament, and a Fortress America tournament. There is also a dealer's room and a game auction. Hotel reservations should be made by Dec. 15 by calling the Americana; large discounts on room rates are given by stating your attendance at the convention. Pre-registration for this event is \$8, and must be paid before Dec. 15. All other memberships are \$8 for the weekend and \$5 for the day. Judges running convention events listed in the program are admitted both days free. These events must be registered in writing no later than Dec. 5. For information, send a SASE to: New Years Con, Rt. 5, Box 18, Apt. 1, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

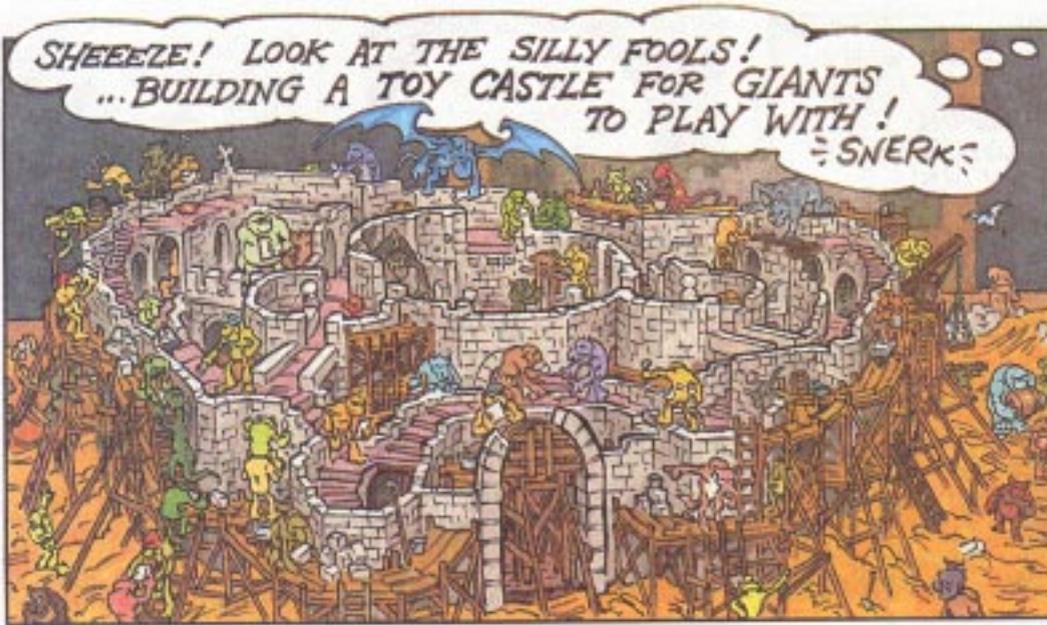


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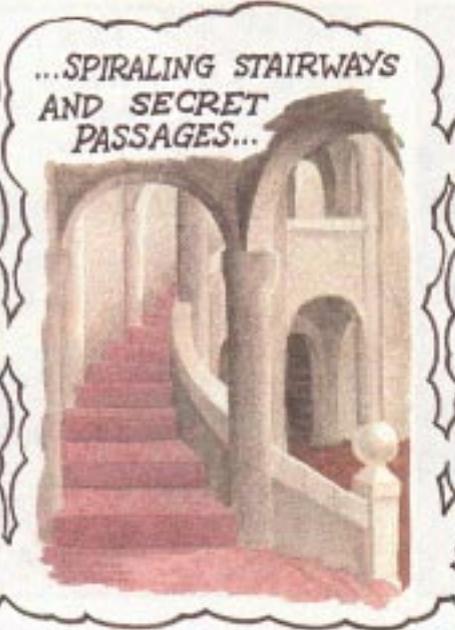




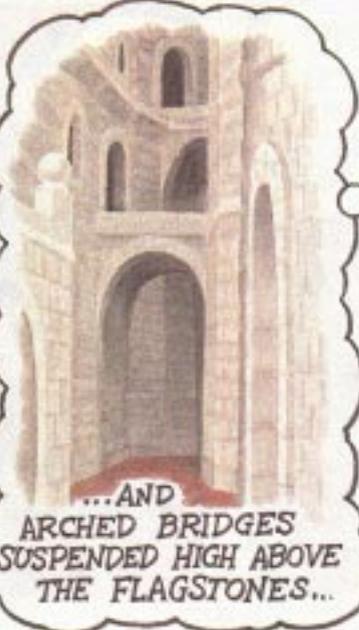
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 TO PLAY WITH!  
 =SNERK=



... CONSTRUCTING  
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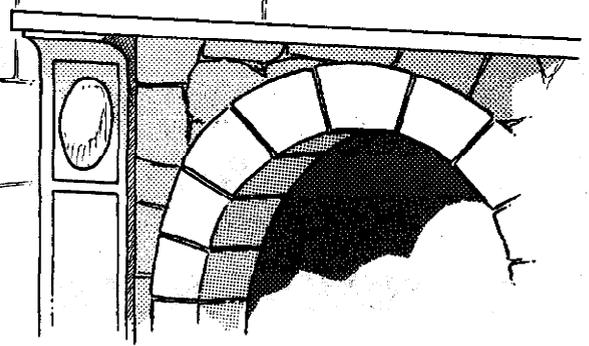
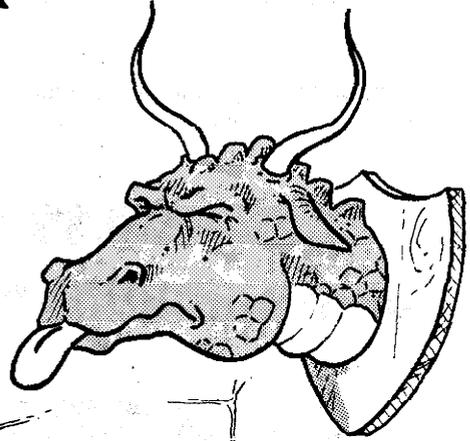


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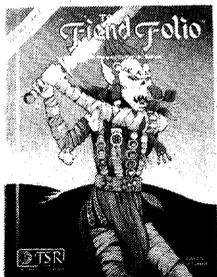
"YES, HE WAS  
DEFIANT TO THE  
VERY END."



"WHOA! GOOD THING WE SET THE  
VELCRO TRAP LAST NIGHT!"



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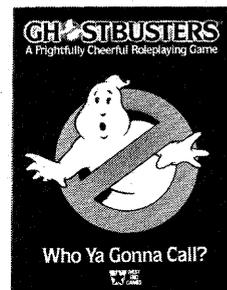
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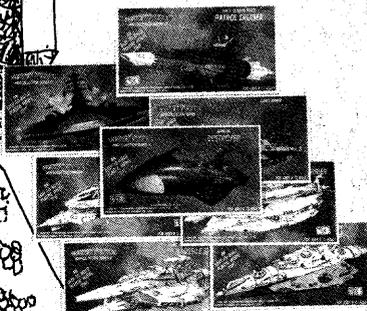
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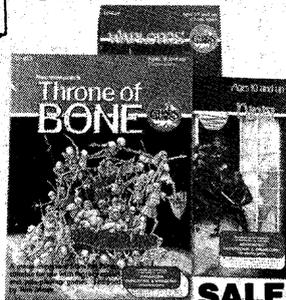
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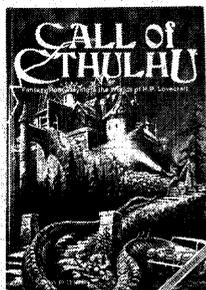
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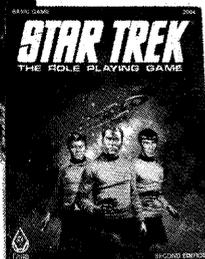
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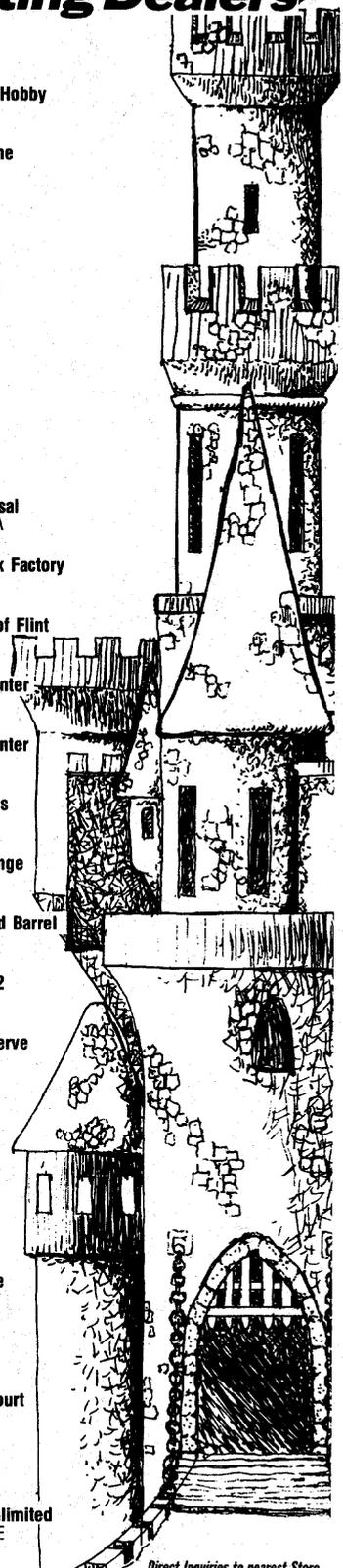
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# SNARFQUEST

#40

BY ELMORE



SO NEWFERT BROUGHT BACK A DRAGON!! I'M BEATEN! NEWFERT WILL BE KING!



STHNARF, ISTH DAT YOU? QUACK

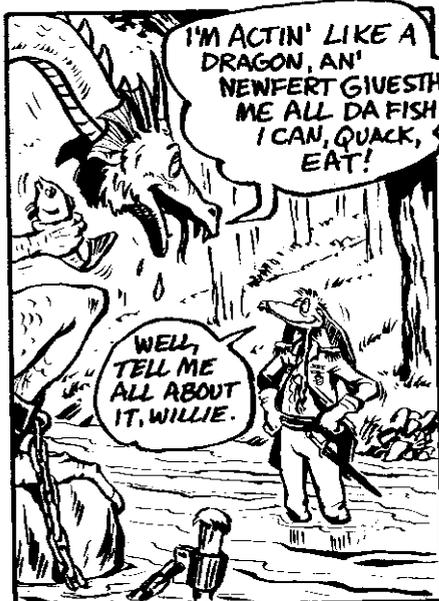
WILLIE?!



LONG TIME, NO STHEE. HEY STHNARF, I'M PLAYIN' ANOTHER GAME!

DON'T GIVE ME AWAY, OK? QUACK...

WHAT KIND OF GAME, WILLIE?



I'M ACTIN' LIKE A DRAGON, AN' NEWFERT GIVESTH ME ALL DA FISH I CAN, QUACK, EAT!

WELL, TELL ME ALL ABOUT IT, WILLIE.



CHEETH! ZAT SNARF KNOWS WILLIE, ZE DRAGON. OUR PLAN VILL BE RUINED. I GOTTA TELL NEWFERT!



AN' JUS' WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU ARE GOING, DUDE?

OUTTA MY WAY, SLIME BUCKET!



SSHHHHH

LOOKS LIKE SNARF AN' THAT OL' MONSTER ARE OLD FRIENDS.

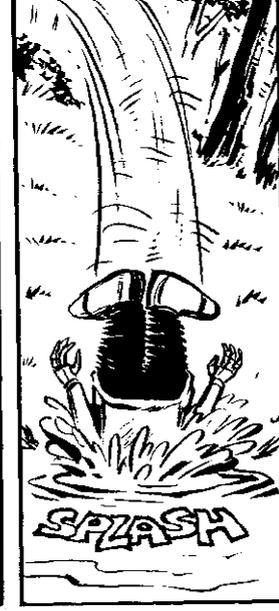
SO WHAT!



GO TELL IT TO DA FISH!

RIAP

HEH, HEHE.



SPLASH



LISTEN, I WANT YOU TO TELL DIS STORY TO ALL DA VILLAGERS AN' I'LL GIVE YA ALL DA FISH YOU CAN EVER EAT.

AN DAT ISTH HOW I MET NEWFERT, AN' DAT, QUACK, ISTH WHEN HE CAME UP WITH DISTH GAME.

DATSTH A DEAL!

READY! HERE HE COMES.

I ALWAYS KNEW DAT NEWFERT IS A SLEEZY CHEATIN' COWARD.



EAT BARK!

DIS STORY WILL BURST HIS LIL' BUBBLE, I CAN'T WAIT GAK!

NOW DAT SHOULD SHUT 'IM UP...

NICE SHOT, BOSS!

GAG 'IM, PUT 'IM IN A SACK AN' THROW 'IM SOME PLACE OUTTA DA WAY...

MY PLEASURE.

I'VE GOTTA THINK OF A PLAN.



LATER

VILLIE, I KNOW YOU ARE A DUCK...

BUT I WANT YOU TO PRACTICE ON BECOMING MORE LIKE A REAL DRAGON, ZIS SACK IZ FULL OF MEAN SNAKES!

STHNAKETH! QUACK! QUACK! QUACK!

SHUTUP! SOMEVON MAY HEAR YOU, I WANT YOU TO TRY AN' BREATHE FIRE ON ZES SNAKES, LIKE A REAL DRAGON!

FIRE?

BUT I CAN'T, I ISTH A DUCK... DUCKSTH CAN'T BREATHE FIRE!!

HERE, I HAVE A... EH... ER... A MAGIC ROCK, WITH A LIL' PRACTICE IT VILL MAKE YOU BREATHE FIRE!

JUS' SWALLOW ZE ROCK.



LATER





TM

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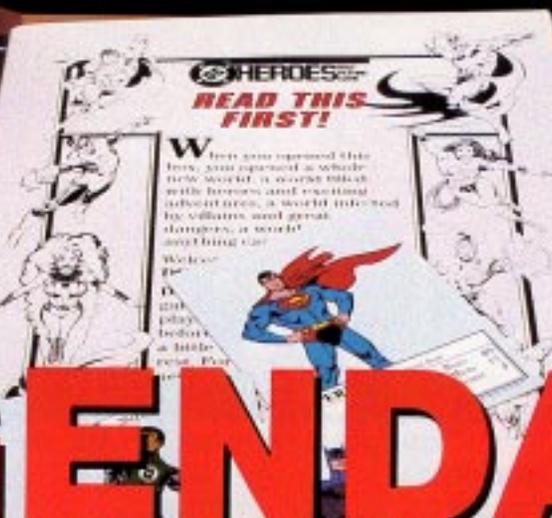
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DC HEROES

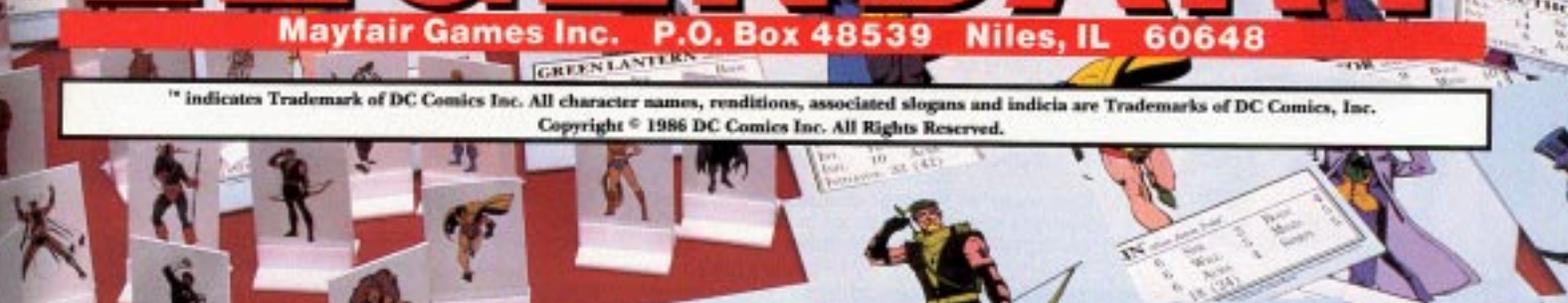
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