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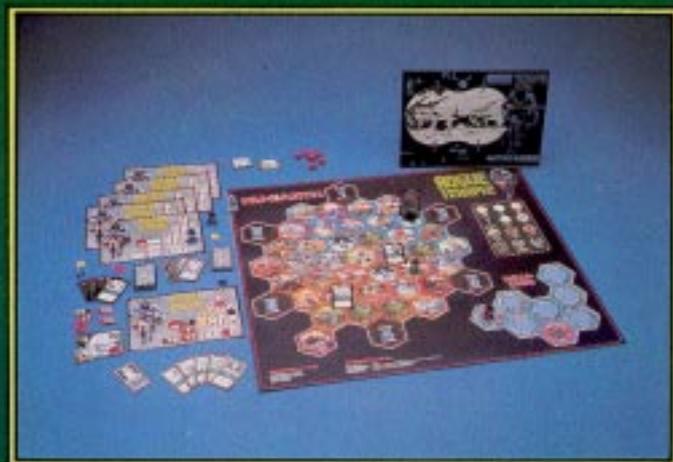


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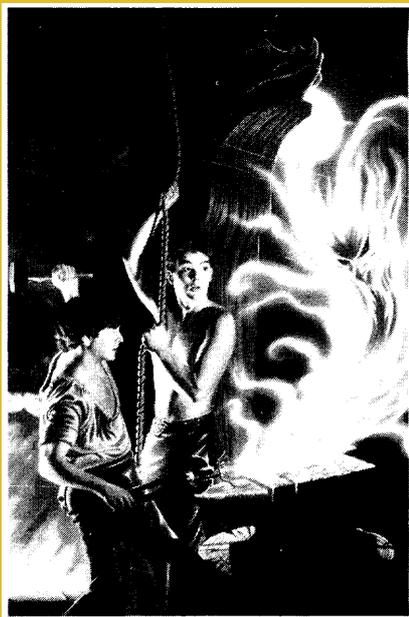
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COVER

On the night of a full moon, two youths forge a sword of great magical power — a *flame tongue*, perhaps, or a blade of elemental force. Donald Clavette, an artist from Woodbury, Connecticut, reveals the mystic glory of magic in his cover painting for this issue.

LETTERS

Cover art prints

Dear Dragon:

I enjoy the artwork on the cover of DRAGON® Magazine. I have purchased both of the covers which were sold as prints to the public. I would like to be able to obtain MANY of the prints from the covers. Is there any way to purchase these prints, either from the original artist or TSR?

Ronald D. Martin Jr.
Winterhaven, FL

Any reader interested in obtaining a color print of a particular cover from DRAGON® Magazine should write a letter addressed to that particular artist, then place it inside an envelope, along with a second stamped envelope with your return address and the artist's name, and send this material to: Cover Art Request, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. We will check the letter and forward it to the artist as quickly as possible. We cannot guarantee that the artist will have prints of his or her work available for sale, but the artists appreciate the feedback anyway. We cannot release the addresses of our artists as a matter of policy, but we can and do forward mail to the appropriate people. — RM

Where'd it go?

Dear Dragon:

As a player of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game, I feel that we D&D® game players have been almost forgotten by DRAGON® Magazine. Except for a couple of articles a year, there is hardly any mention of the D&D® game, the emphasis being on the AD&D® game. I was happy to see the article, "Out of the Stone Age," by Jake R. Patterson (issue #118), but it would be nice to see more about D&D® games.

Kevin Davies
South Gillies, Ontario

This is indeed a peculiar situation, and it has puzzled us for some time. The D&D® game sells extremely well, and the new edition of the game (Basic to Immortals Sets, revised by Frank Mentzer in 1983-1986) is a superb game system. For some reason, however, not many articles have been specifically dedicated to that game. (DUNGEON® Adventures has a similar problem with D&D® game modules.) Obviously this is rich territory for would-be writers. We need D&D® game articles. Nuff said. — RM

Oerth and Krynn

Dear Dragon:

I have been playing the ADVANCED DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS® game for five years. I have played on the world of Krynn and that of Oerth. Krynn, in my opinion, was the better of the two.

The article entitled "The Game Wizards," by Jeff Grubb [in issue #119], started to make me worry. If the Forgotten Realms™ are going to be the "home base" of both the first and second editions of the AD&D® game universe, what will become of other game worlds? I for one, would not want to abandon the world of Krynn for any other game world. Will modules still be created for worlds other than the Forgotten Realms? If modules were not created for other worlds, that wouldn't be fair to many AD&D® game players who would rather stay with their favorite world. If I had to transfer my interest and campaign to the Forgotten Realms, would it be possible to place my favorite characters from my current campaign to that of the Forgotten Realms without bending the rules severely?

Christopher DeGraffenreid
Wilkes-Barre PA

The answer to your question is no. TSR will not close up shop on Oerth and Krynn just because the Forgotten Realms is being set up. Both the WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ Fantasy Setting and that of the DRAGONLANCE® saga have a wide and loyal following, and it is our intention to keep producing material for these worlds over the years. For example, later this year, we will be coming up with the DRAGONLANCE® Adventures hardback. As "home base" for the AD&D® game, the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ setting is to be the home for all adventures not specifically designed for Oerth and Krynn; furthermore, it is laid out so as to serve as either a full campaign setting or an interesting "world next door" for your own existing campaigns (which may or may not be on Krynn or Oerth).

Now, if you or your players choose to take characters from their initial campaign and relocate them in the Realms, that has been provided for as well in the Realms boxed set. The Realms, as you may have gathered, has a wide variety of gates and portals to other planes, Prime Material and otherwise, and it is possible for your characters to either visit the scenic (deadly?) Forgotten Realms™, or make the new world their home for AD&D® games.

I've also been talking with Tracy Hickman, who pointed out that there is a reason that no super-high-level characters currently operate in Krynn. The Realms might take a number of individuals who are too powerful for Krynn or other worlds. — Jeff Grubb

ERRATUM

The DUNGEON™ Adventures subscription card in DRAGON® issue #122 contained an error. A one year's subscription to DUNGEON™ Adventures is for six issues, not twelve as noted on the card. We apologize for the error!

Harley

A letter came to the office the other day from a high-school student who had a problem with his gaming group. One of the players became upset because his character was kidnapped, and that player tore up his character sheet and left the game, claiming that the DM was being unfair. The writer (who had been the DM) wanted to know how to handle situations like that, to keep players from losing their tempers over something as silly as a game.

Well, sorry to say, there's no way to avoid it except to play with mature* gamers, and there's no way to test for game maturity among the players just before you start a game. This problem is hardly unique to role-playing, as anyone who has played bridge, poker, chess, or the MONOPOLY® game well knows. Some time ago, a marriage counselor made the news with his claim that the TRIVIAL PURSUIT® game was responsible for several broken marriages. Games are games, but people are people.

Nonetheless, role-players everywhere can probably sympathize a little with the angry gamer who has lost a favorite character, even if everyone thinks the gamer shouldn't have acted in the way he did. I, for one, read the letter and thought of Harley D. Quinn.

Harley Davidson Quinn was a gnome, the first D&D® game character that I ever managed to get to 6th level. This was an incredible achievement for me at the time, since I had been going through one player character a week at our gaming sessions at Fort Bragg, N.C. Harley, though, hung on. He found magical weapons, magical armor, henchmen, money, treasure — Harley hit the big time. He was great.

Then, in the middle of one of our longer dungeon-crawls on Saturday evening, the party ran into some tough opposition and some of our better fighters got mangled. The group caller was looking over the character sheets to figure out what to do next when he spotted Harley's current level.

"Hey!" he yelled. "How come this guy's walking in the middle of the party?" With a start, I realized that Harley was, indeed, one of the toughest fighters we had. I was accustomed to putting all of my characters in the middle of the group to keep them alive just a little

(continued on page 40)

The Overseas Military Gamers Guide

If you are a member of the American Armed Forces serving overseas, and if you enjoy role-playing games, you can be listed in the Overseas Military Gamers Guide. (We're taking suggestions for a shorter and better column title, too.) Just send us your name and full address, plus your gaming preferences (just as is done in the World Gamers Guide). Write to: Overseas Military Gamers Guide, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. The OMGG will appear every other month in alternation with the World Gamers Guide. Be sure to include other information necessary to insure delivery of your mail.

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We will print each listing at least once in the OMGG. Please do NOT send in a listing for the OMGG if you have six months or less until you change your station or address; wait until you have reached your new post before sending in your listing.

When listing gaming preferences, write out the complete title of the games you most enjoy. For the purposes of this column, the abbreviations listed below will be used (more will be added as necessary).

AD: AD&D® game
BS: BATTLESYSTEM™ Supplement
BT: BATTLETECH® game
CC: CALL OF CTHULHU® game
CH: CHAMPIONS™ game
CL: CHILL™ game
CW: CAR WARS® game
DC: DC™ HEROES game
DD: D&D® game
DW: Doctor Who game
EPT: Empire of the Petal Throne game
G: GURPS® game
GHO: GHOSTBUSTERS™ game
EQ: ELFQUEST® game

GW: GAMMA WORLD® game
JB: James Bond 007 game
JD: Judge Dredd game
MERP: MIDDLE EARTH ROLE PLAYING™ game
MSH: MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game
OA: AD&D® *Oriental Adventures* system
P: PARANOIA™ game
PEN: Pendragon game
RC: RECON® game
RQ: RUNEQUEST® game
SF: STAR FRONTIERS® game
SFB: Star Fleet Battles game
SM: SPACE MASTER™ game
ST: STAR TREK®: The RPG
T: TRAVELLER® game
TMNT: TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES® game
TN: TOON® game
TS: TOP SECRET® game
T2000: TWILIGHT: 2000™ game
T2300: TRAVELLER: 2300™ game
VV: VILLAINS & VIGILANTES™ game

The following listings are from the World Gamers Guide. See the article on World Gamers Guide Listings on page 46 of this issue.

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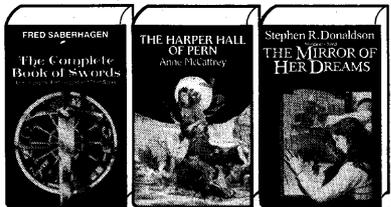
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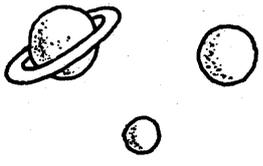
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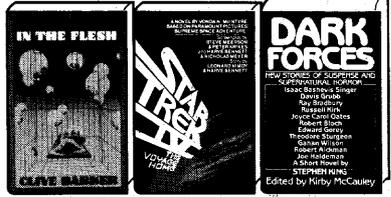
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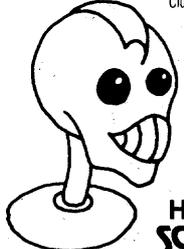
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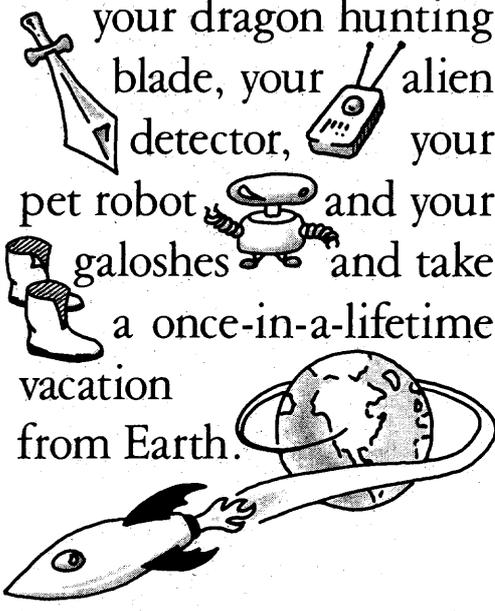
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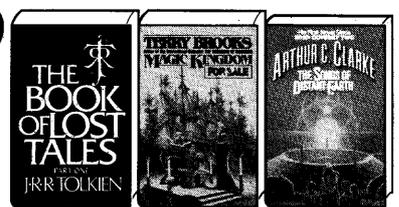
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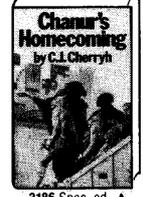
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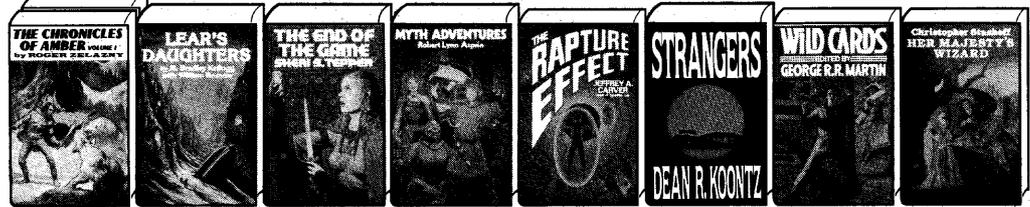
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FORUM

I am writing in response to a "Forum" letter written by Mr. Sides in issue #119. I strongly disagree with his opinions of weapon specialization and nonweapon proficiencies. I think specialization is a needed booster to the fighter class. It allows a fighter to pick a weapon and concentrate his abilities on using it. The bonuses given are sensible, and the fighter does have to pay the penalty of using up proficiency slots to become better with the desired weapon. The increase in fighting power allows the DM to put in harder monsters for the PCs to fight. If the PC fighters insist on constantly using their specialized weapon, then make some diverse encounters. For example: if the PC fighter specialized with a melee weapon, have some giants bombard the party with boulders from the top of a hill. If your fighters are specialized with a missile weapon, limit their power by having monsters sneak up on the party before the PCs can use their missiles. This will quickly get the party to change its ways and pick more diverse weapons.

Note that PCs are not the only ones who can specialize. NPC fighters may also specialize. For example, a 10th-level half-ogre fighter your party runs into happens to be double specialized with a bastard sword (which he can use to full effect in one hand). He uses a large shield in the other hand. With the not-uncommon 18/00 strength of the half-ogre, this opponent will be able to do a maximum of 34 hp damage in one round. Note that this is without any magical bonuses, which could increase damage greatly.

About nonweapon proficiencies, Mr. Sides states that all 1st-level characters will take healing and blind-fighting. But most fighter types (including cavaliers and paladins) will not be able to take these at 1st level for lack of proficiency slots. If they do take them at the first opportunity, they will be in for a rude awakening. For example: A party is being chased by a large band of hobgoblins, but blocking the escape route is a deep river. Since no one has taken the swimming proficiency, the party is forced to turn and make a stand.

In another instance, the party has been on a long expedition to find and kill a dragon that lives hundreds of miles from any civilization. They reach the dragon and manage to slay it. Much to their chagrin, they realize that their supplies are exhausted. Since no one has any food-obtaining proficiencies, they will undoubtedly perish in the wilderness. As is obvious, there is more to AD&D® game life than healing and blind-fighting.

Nathan Perkins
Highland Park IL

I recently read the "Spell Books" section of *Unearthed Arcana* and discovered, in the words of W.S. Gilbert, "a most ingenious paradox." *Unearthed Arcana* states that the encumbrance of a medial (16" X 12" X 6") standard spell book is 450 gp, while the *Dungeon Master's Guide* states that the encumbrance of a "Book, large metal-bound" is only 200 gp (Appendix O, "Encumbrance of Standard Items"). This discrepancy can be explained in various ways, so

let us turn to a detailed scrutiny of the physical aspects of standard and traveling books as described in *Unearthed Arcana*. The following analysis will focus on the largest and smallest recommended sizes for standard books (18" X 12" X 6" and 12" X 12" X 6" respectively):

1. 12" X 12" X 6" standard book: volume = 864 cubic inches;
2. 18" X 12" X 6" standard book: volume = 1,296 cubic inches;
3. 12" X 6" X 1" traveling book: volume = 72 cubic inches; and,
4. 9" X 9" X 1" traveling book: volume = 81 cubic inches.

The relative spell capacities are also out of line. Depending upon which sizes of standard and traveling books are used, a standard book has 11-18 times the volume of a traveling book, but only four times the spell capacity. In other words, a traveling book has up to 4½ times the per-unit-volume capacity of a standard book.

The sturdier construction of the standard book can explain part of this discrepancy — or can it?

Unearthed Arcana states that a standard book of median size (i.e., 16" X 12" X 6") weighs 150 gp. Therefore, a size 1 book (1/4 less volume) should weigh roughly 115 gp and a size 2 book (1/8 greater volume) should weigh roughly 170 gp. A traveling book of either size weighs 30 gp. The smallest standard book thus has almost 11 times the volume of the larger traveling book, but weighs less than four times as much. Even with the unmodified 150 gp weight, the standard book would weigh only five times as much as the traveling book. The clear implication is that traveling books are much more sturdily constructed than are standard books.

It is not reasonable for a traveling book to have both a greater unit-volume capacity and a stouter construction than a standard book. Such a state of affairs is a logical paradox and makes "standard" books obsolete. I am therefore forced to conclude that the specifications given in *Unearthed Arcana* are flawed. As a result, I suggest the following revisions:

1. Reduce the size of a standard book to 10" X 10" X 4" (roughly the size of CRC's *Handbook of Chemistry and Physics*, for example);
2. Reduce the weight of the standard book to 130 gp and the encumbrance to 300 gp; and,
3. Use only the larger traveling book (9" X 9" X 1"), and reduce weight and encumbrance to 20 gp and 40 gp, respectively.

Using these proposed values, a standard book would have five times the volume of a traveling book and would weigh 6½ times as much. This is consistent with both the stouter construction of standard books and the higher relative capacity of traveling books.

I have one final suggestion: Since the vast majority of magic-user and illusionist spells require one segment per spell level to cast, the capacity of a spell book should be expressed in spell levels. Why should the average first-level spell require as much space as the average

third-level spell? Expressing capacity in spell levels, based on *Unearthed Arcana's* assessment of the number of ninth-level spells a book can hold, yields the following schedules:

Standard book (eight ninth-level spells = 72 spell levels)

72 cantrips
72 first level
36 second level
24 third level
18 fourth level
14 fifth level
12 sixth level
10 seventh level
9 eighth level
8 ninth level

Traveling book (two ninth-level spells = 18 spell levels)

18 cantrips
18 first level
9 second level
6 third level
4 fourth level
3 fifth or sixth level
2 seventh, eighth, or ninth level

There is a precedent for capacity based on spell levels — the magic item *Boccob's blessed book* has a capacity of 45 spell levels. The capacity schedules based on total spell levels are actually less generous than *Unearthed Arcana's* schedules with regard to fifth- and sixth-level spells, while being more generous with regard to the lowest level spells. *Unearthed Arcana's* schedules are admittedly simpler than what I propose, but only marginally so.

Eric Krein
No address

I am writing in protest of the use of banded mail in the AD&D® game. Banded mail is a type of armor known only in illustrations of the 12th and 13th centuries. These illustrations reveal alternate rows of linked solid disks, which is manifestly impossible. Many people have tried to explain banded mail, but all these explanations have a serious problem.

One explanation suggests the armor was made with rings sewn on linen in overlapping rows. It was then covered on both sides with strips of leather with the stitching passing between the rows of rings. The lower edges of the leather would be turned up and would cover the upper edges of the strips beneath. This would increase the thickness of the leather between the rings sixfold.

Another explanation is that banded mail is simply normal chain mail with leather thongs drawn through the links. Oriental mail that is very similar to this explanation is in existence, and has considerable resemblance to some of the illustrations mentioned in the opening paragraph.

The serious problem with these explanations is that all of the construction methods that have been proposed make for very stiff armor, and in the old illustrations this fact tends to be shown most widely in the areas that need the most flexibility (e.g., elbows, neck, and knees). As a matter of fact, no suit of mail looking like that in the pictures has ever been found. It is most likely that the different methods of picturing mail all represent the same thing and were used to prevent monotony.

What does this mean in game terms? That is a matter of opinion. In my campaign, I have banished banded armor completely. My players must be content with having their characters

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look at pictures of banded mail in books and drawings. If banded armor is to be kept in any campaign, the 9" move base stated on page 27 of the DMG is ridiculous. It should be changed to 6" at the very fastest. The weight, however, does not need to be changed.

The loss of banded mail does not mean very much, as splinted mail provides the same armor class, costs less, and can be made more quickly. In my mind, there is no place for "mythical" armor in a game where the equipment is supposed to simulate reality and be realistic in terms of equipping a character. I would, however, be interested in hearing the opinions of others who know something about armor.

Alan Ristow
Saline MI

Larry Paisley's suggestion in the "Forum" of DRAGON® issue #119 was an interesting one indeed. However, it was difficult to ascertain what kind of videotaped "gaming session" he was referring to. His first paragraph seems to suggest an actual gaming session, while his last paragraph indicates a "how-to" videocassette.

I, for one, would greatly enjoy watching another DM's gaming session — not for instructional advice, but just for entertainment. It would be interesting to compare my campaign to campaigns of other DMs around the country, as well as comparing player reactions, role-playing, etc.

An instructional videocassette, on the other hand, wouldn't be as exciting as an actual gaming session (what "how-to" training ever is exciting?), but it would be very helpful to inexperienced DMs and players.

On the whole, Mr. Paisley's suggestion seems to be a very good one and I would greatly appreciate any progress towards a D&D videocassette.

After reading Patrick Sieff's "Forum" letter in the same issue, I felt compelled to speak my mind. Mr. Sieff states that encounters with bands of orcs were resolved in the campaigns he played in "amidst general laughing and joking," and that the encounters were a waste of game time. If I had read this letter five or six years ago, I would have agreed. The characters in my campaign roamed the corridors of various dungeons slaying dozens of orcs at a time. My solution to the problem was simply making a larger band of orcs to combat the players. However, I found this a poor solution, at best, as these high-level hackers just accumulated undeserved experience points.

One better solution is to take advantage of the laughing and joking during the battle. Just tell the character that "while giving your steed a pedicure (as is the case in Mr. Sieff's example), you fail to notice an orc sneaking up behind you, who then slips a garrot around your neck." Certainly this will make characters a bit more aware of the orcs.

So what? Then the battles are finished quicker since full attention is now directed at the orcs. The answer to this is simply (although tritely) put as: Quality is better than quantity. The orc clans in my campaign can achieve fighter status of low level. Such clans typically have war bands consisting of 3rd-level or higher orc warriors, and clan leaders go sometimes as high as 7th level. Just watch your players rant and rave when the sword thrust which would have killed three normal orcs doesn't even kill one!

These situations will certainly inspire more respect for orcs and will create the "higher orc awareness" mentioned in Mr. Sieff's letter.

Steven Van Veen
Midland Park NJ

I do not intend for this letter to be another "realism" letter. I want to point out something very important that many people seem to have missed. Everyone knows that the AD&D game cannot be called realistic. Yet fantasy role-playing games *can* be realistic! There is nothing about the addition of magic or dragons that means that the rules of the real world can no longer apply.

What people are missing is the fact that not only is the AD&D game not realistic, it was designed from the start to be UN-realistic. In the real world, we are faced with certain unromantic facts. If (in the real world) a great hero fought one orc, he would win. If he fought two, he would probably still win if the orcs did not take full advantage of their ability to encircle him. If he fought three at once, he might win, but smart money would be on the orcs. If he was faced with four orcs at once, he would be chopped apart in short order. The crushing reality is that no amount of experience or skill is going to make you any less vulnerable to a sword. Agility and experience alone cannot make a Beowulf-type hero without becoming totally ludicrous.

Here we find the most important difference between the AD&D game and reality. Experienced, skilled characters DO receive super-toughness. We have always wanted super-heroes, people who were so great that the life-threatening dangers of lesser people become no more than annoyances to them. Moreover, we wish to become such people ourselves!

Hit points represent mostly sheer, super-human toughness, not the character's added agility. AD&D game heroes impress us with their power, not by how possible they are in the real world. Some RPGs entertain us by placing us in a wholly reasonable but totally different world. The AD&D game is not one of those, nor do I believe that it should be.

Tommy Sronce
Long Beach MS

I would like to congratulate Margaret Foy for her excellent article, "High Seas" in issue #116. The waterborne adventure is an always-neglected area in the AD&D game. Foy's article provided useful information for DMs to design their high seas adventure.

But the article noted: "there is no reason why an advanced nation of a fantastic world could not produce ships much like the 'big sail' craft popular during that era. Sailing ships should evolve in magical worlds as they have in our technological one."

I think most DMs will agree with me that the fantasy world is a pre-gunpowder world. Otherwise, our fighter will find his *full plate armor* +5 cannot save him from a .38 revolver.

The development of gunpowder is an important part in the evolution of human civilization, and it also played a decisive factor in molding the shape of modern naval architecture. Cannon had been used in naval warfare as early as the 16th century. The introduction of cannon aboard ships drastically changed the way that sea battles were conducted, going from ramming, grappling, and boarding battles to cannon shooting. This was reflected in the design of the naval vessels. Before the introduction of gunpowder, the ship was designed to facilitate traditional tactics. The cog and the carrack had high stern castles that provided final strong holds for the crews if their boarding battle was lost.

After the introduction of gunpowder, ships of the line had many decks to accommodate as many cannons as possible. Though Ms. Foy

reflected this by substituting artillery engines for cannons, these earlier weapons don't have the same effect as cannons. In order to win a naval battle, it is still necessary to rely on the old ways: ramming, grappling, and bloody boarding battles.

Therefore, I believe that the post-16th century ship design is not good for the fantastic magic world. But, if any DM insists on using these large ships, he must have a solid idea how sea wars will be conducted in his game world. Otherwise, his Lord Nelson, while aboard his flagship *Victory*, will be told by his crew that the French "ramming" fleet is heading right on them, and he only has his weak artillery engines at His Excellency's disposal.

Leung Chi Kong
Hong Kong

More classes and more rules are exactly what the AD&D game system does not need. Most of us are having a hard time keeping the basic rules from the *Players Handbook* and *Dungeon Master's Guide* in our game, much less all the new rules available when two new books like the *Survival Guides* come out. What most of us want are new ideas to use in our systems, not so many changes to the playing systems we use that we end up wondering which rule is right. Almost all players of the AD&D game have a system which they use and like. What do I mean by system? I mean poison rules, a ranger class, and a combat system we already use.

Now, what do I mean by ideas we can incorporate into our systems? Issue #118 had perfect examples of this. It had new ideas for play; I had never thought of using gladiatorial combat or archery contests in my campaigns before. What I don't mean or want are rules which change my system. I don't want class or rule changes that leave me saying, "Should I make my players redesign all their rangers, and should I also change all my campaigns so as not to cause a landslide in game balance?"

The standard reply to this is: "If you don't like it, don't use it!" That is the problem. I suggest giving more ideas for adventure plots, and changes for the "basic rules" only occasionally. In short, give us ideas to expand our game; not disrupt its foundations. A good idea for this might be a page or so filled with descriptions for adventures, each about a paragraph long. Just a little advice from a reader who pays good money for your magazine.

Uriah Blatherwick
Memphis TN

Even dedicated gamers can forget that the AD&D game is just a game. All games need rules to distinguish them from others and to make playing fair for every participant.

Paul Griffin (issue #118) seems to think rules aren't important. If all players were trustworthy and honest, I might agree with him, but I know better. He says alignment rules are very restrictive. Of course they are! Letting a player do good deeds when he wants to and sometimes do bad deeds in order to survive invites selfish players to misuse the rules. Phrases like "sometimes" and "when he wants to" tend to give players a fantastic base to their arguments.

Restricting a character's alignment may not accurately reflect morals in the real world, but it keeps a certain balance to game play. These rules make the classes what they are. Who trusts a Good assassin anyway? What would happen if everyone wanted to play a paladin with "free alignment?" I mean: "Get out of my way — I don't want to do any good deeds today!" just isn't the paladin we all know and

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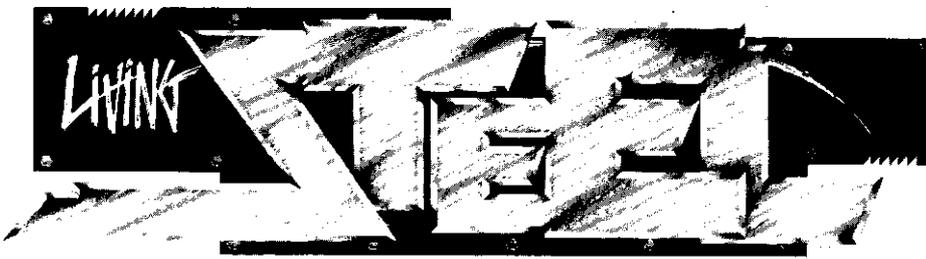


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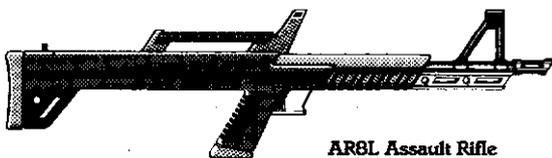
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love. Certain classes have been assigned alignment restrictions to emphasize game balance. In general, the AD&D game stresses Good, and the most powerful classes should be Good.

Too many people try to make the game realistic. Try to remember that the AD&D game is a fantasy game. Fantasy is only as real as one imagines it. Of course, Mr. Griffin has the choice of using or not using his "free alignment." After all, it's his game, too.

Adam Dray
 Lordstown OH

In issue #119 of DRAGON® Magazine, Mr. Jeff Klein made some remarks about the status of women in Oriental culture that were, at best, misleading. It is the purpose of this letter to correct the erroneous statements and hopefully put the issue in a more correct perspective.

Mr. Klein states: "Women were most definitely *not* encouraged to become great warriors in feudal Japan." This reflects a poor knowledge of Japanese history and culture. It should be pointed out that the supreme deity in the Japanese pantheon is Amaterasu, a female. Further, the gods Izanagi (she who invites) and Izanami (he who invites) were the warriors responsible for creating the islands of Japan and were accorded equal status. The earliest chronicles of Japanese history speak of warrior queens leading armies into battle, not the least of whom was the Empress Jingo, who personally led an army in a campaign against Korea (c. 360 A.D.). In the late Heian period (12th century), we see the example of women such as Tomoe, wife of the famous Minamoto Yoshinaka. She occasionally joined her husband on the battlefield, killed many enemy warriors single-handedly, and on at least one occasion presented the head of an enemy general to her lord. Many samurai deferred to her superior skills in horsemanship and weapons.

Off the battlefield, but still in positions of power, were many women of the court. The influence of empresses or court women such as Lady Murasaki cannot be overemphasized. And let us not forget that women as well as men were ninjas; in fact, a woman's skills and position in society might well make her a better spy or assassin. Japanese history is full of the sudden and timely deaths of great generals or leaders — too sudden and timely to all be coincidental. It was also not unknown for women to be members or leaders in Japanese organized crime: the Yakuza.

Mr. Klein states: "Female Oriental characters should not really be samurai or the like." Again, history proves this statement to be false. Any woman of the buke (samurai caste) was still regarded as samurai. A samurai woman was just as loyal to her clan and lord as were her husband, brothers, sons, etc. She would commit ritual suicide to avoid capture by enemies or to protest an injustice to her superiors. She was trained in the use of many weapons and was expected to use them if necessary.

Mr. Klein asks the question: "Who would have trained them?" They were trained by masters of the art, of course. While samurai women might be trained in swordsmanship, they were especially adept at the yari (straight spear), naginata (curved spear), and tanto (dagger). In Japan, to this day, there are schools where women are trained in these weapons, just as there are schools which teach men kendo. There are local and national rankings to reflect the skill of those who practice the art. Few men learn naginata — those who do are consistently outranked by women. One would typically expect to find more women who practice martial arts in Japan

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or China than in America. Therefore, the remark: "... female warriors just don't fit into an Oriental culture" is patently untrue.

While it may be reasonably argued that the role of women in Oriental, especially Japanese, society is unequal to that of men, women in these cultures were not by any means without influence. History teaches us that many Japanese women possessed not inconsiderable power; some even ruled the nation, either directly or indirectly. But doesn't one have to dig almost as much through the crowd of faceless men to find a hero? And isn't that what fantasy gaming is all about — namely, the exception rather than the rule?

Finally, to Mr. Klein's comment: "Any full-blooded medieval Oriental male would feel a great loss of honor [sic] serving a woman," I can only cite the example of the Osaka campaigns of 1614-1615. I cannot believe that the tens of thousands of warriors who died in the service of Yodo-gimi, mother of the Hideyoshi heir Hideyori, died in dishonor. The word samurai means "those who serve" — not "those who serve men," but simply, "those who serve."

T. Fujiwara
Leominster, MA

This letter is in response to Jeff Klein's letter about Chinese women in issue #119. I disagree with Jeff's statement that a woman cannot become a samurai. I am Chinese myself, and I visited China last summer. After I returned, I studied about medieval China. A very famous woman named Fa Mook Lan was in one of the interdynasty wars. She led her father's dynasty to victory. It is true that in medieval China, men were considered more important than women, and women usually stayed home to sew and cook. To disguise herself, Fa Mook Lan dressed as a man. I think DRAGON® Magazine should print an article on women in medieval China. It will interest the public and add more spice to the AD&D® game.

Derek Ho
Sherborn, MA

I am really tired of hearing sexist males sound off about females characters. One recent letter completely discounted the possibility of female Oriental characters. This would be well and fine if all Oriental characters were played strictly according to what is known about ancient cultures, but do any of you actually believe that any Oriental warriors had abilities and powers such as evinced by the typical high-level samurai? And just how much magic do you all really believe existed in old Oriental cultures? If you're going to stretch your imagination in regard to these facts, why not in regard to female characters? Why couldn't an Empress of China, for example, have commissioned an elite troop of female warriors? Remember, this is a game bound only by the limits of your creativity, not by the limits of reality.

Another point — if you realists insist on limiting female character strength, then you must penalize male characters' constitution and dexterity, since every scientific survey done on the subject documents the fact that, pound for pound, women have more endurance, stability, and stamina than men, and are more nimble and agile as well. But I have yet to see any minuses on any abilities for male characters.

So, make both sexes equal in play, or penalize both equally, and let's have no more partiality toward males!

Pat Pitcavage
No address

I am writing in response to Jeff Klein's letter which appeared in the "Forum" in issue #119. Mr. Klein argued that female warriors do not fit into a realistic *Oriental Adventures* campaign. I have found that historical evidence does not support Mr. Klein's argument. Medieval Oriental cultures were, in fact, more egalitarian than their European counterparts.

Take, for example, the stories of Ng Mui and Yim Wing Chun. Ng Mui was a student at a Shaolin monastery during the Ch'ing Dynasty in China. She studied several styles of kung fu but found that, because she was smaller than most of her opponents, these styles were not effective for her. So, she invented her own form of kung fu. She traveled around the country challenging many of the best fighters of her time. Her success in these fights made her style quite popular. Ng Mui's best student was also a woman, Yim Wing Chun. After Ng Mui's death, Yim Wing Chun continued to teach the form, and it eventually became known as Wing Chun kung fu. This is the style in which Bruce Lee was trained, and it is still regarded as one of the deadliest forms of martial arts.

But Yim Wing Chun and Ng Mui are not unique examples. In feudal Japan, the art of *naginata-jutsu*, the use of the naginata, became known primarily as a woman's art. A woman named Itagaki was one of the greatest masters of this weapon. She became a general and commanded an army of 3,000 samurai. Certainly, these men suffered no loss of honor for serving under such a great warrior.

Women were also readily accepted into the ranks of the ninjas. In fact, female ninjas were so common that special training methods were developed for them.

Finally, a look at Oriental mythology and fairy tales shows women playing a much more active role than in European folklore.

A Dungeon Master who has examined the facts should find no legitimate reason for excluding female characters from even the most realistic Oriental campaign.

Richard Silva
West Roxbury, MA

This letter is in response to Jeanne McGuire's letter in issue #120. I agree that female players are often discriminated against and that this is wrong, but I disagree with some other points your letter makes.

In your letter, you say that "isolating a broad group of people . . . often harms more than it helps." Then you go on to do exactly that by saying that campaigns run by 14-year-old males, like myself, are "endless streams of mayhem, often with crude pornography interjected. . . . I suppose if you are a 14-year-old boy, this sort of thing is fun." For your information, my campaigns are not endless streams of mayhem. In my campaign, there was a gamer who often turned ordinary situations into pornography. He no longer plays with my group. I do not find disgusting, hack-and-slash campaigns fun.

In your letter, you do to 14-year-old boys what you are telling others not to do to female gamers. You should apply what you stated about women to all players, whatever their age, sex, or previous experience with AD&D® games is.

Jeremy Sacco
Needham, MA

The issue of female players and DMs has stirred up a hornet's nest of controversy. As a woman who has been playing in D&D® and AD&D® game campaigns for almost nine years, I can't understand why anyone would make a

fuss about a player's sex. I play in a group of four men and two women, with another woman who sometimes joins us. We are all in our early to mid-thirties. I have played both male and female characters, and so has one of the men. The woman who plays regularly and I are DMs of separate campaigns; only two of the men are DMs. Each campaign has a different emphasis. One of the men plays a straight neutral DM and is devilishly cunning; the other is a chaotic-good DM whose crazy sense of humor is always creating enjoyable and amusing predicaments for us. The other female DM tends to be lawful and sticks to the rule book; I'm usually neutral good and use the rules as suggested guidelines, although I remain consistent in my choices. The other woman plays very strong and strong-willed characters such as fighters and rangers; I prefer magic-users, druids, and thieves. The mix of male and female players, characters, and DMs adds much diversity and excitement to each campaign. I feel sorry for those who exclude women from games. They miss a great deal of interesting fun in D&D® games and in life.

I introduced my daughter and two sons to the D&D game about five years ago. My daughter and oldest son play regularly at their schools strategy club. All my children and four of the neighborhood kids "dungeon" together once a month with me as DM. I think role-playing games are wonderful for them. They have to think and reason their way through the campaigns I create, and they learn cooperation. Of course, I get exasperated occasionally when they fight among themselves, but every game gets better. They are learning how to make reasonable choices and consider all sides of an issue before plunging into danger. I hope more girls will discover how exciting and enjoyable the D&D® game is.

D. Laslie Millitello
Brighton, IL

I've been a faithful subscriber to DRAGON Magazine for many years, and whenever I could read this magazine, I always turned to the "Forum" letters to see if anybody would discuss the TOP SECRET® Espionage role-playing game. However, I have been disappointed for many months now, because nobody had written any discussions, arguments, criticisms, or complaints about this excellent espionage role-playing game. Therefore, I decided to write to "Forum" instead of waiting around for someone else to talk about my favorite role-playing game.

First of all, if anybody out there is new to this game, I bet you are frustrated about the low margin of error allowed to the players. In other words, one single mistake in this game can be your last. Many players in my campaign argued that this game system is a bit too close to reality. However, the TOP SECRET® game is meant to put players in the world of espionage, and in this type of living, player characters play fast and live even faster.

In my opinion, this "modern-day" role-playing game gave us a chance to deal with realistic dangers and actual world problems in our changing world. Also, I suppose that a few of the scenarios in my campaign are so realistic that I wonder if the situations that occur in these adventures can possibly happen or have already happened.

Michael Estus
San Antonio, TX

Music of the Forgotten Realms

*Background notes (ahem)
for all FORGOTTEN REALMS™
AD&D® game campaigns*

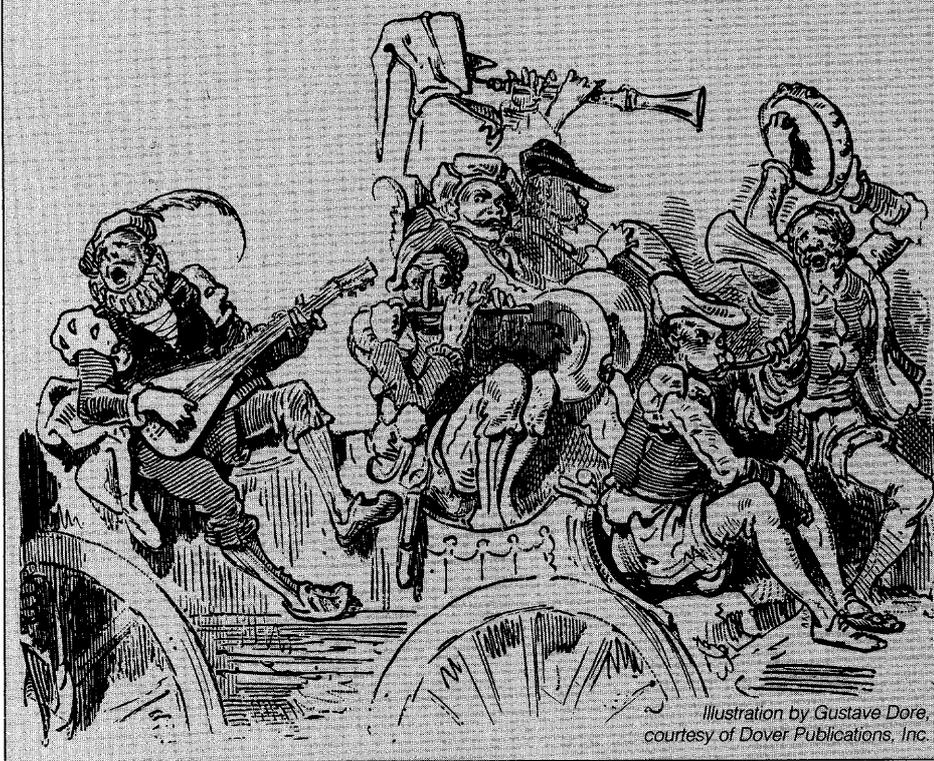


Illustration by Gustave Dore,
courtesy of Dover Publications, Inc.

by Ed Greenwood

The Forgotten Realms display as rich and varied a selection of music as does our own modern Earth, from the drums and wailing horns of orc tribes to the eerie tone-bells of dwarves and gnomes, from the whistles and tantans of halflings to the haunting nosepipes and harps of the elves. To describe even the ballads of the humans of the North would take an entire book, so a summary must suffice.

Most music of the Realms sounds to our ears akin to late Medieval and Renaissance dance airs — mellow and sprightly, with the melody carried by a horn or harp (or

both, interweaving counter-melodies), and rhythm marked by deeper horns or drums. Both ballads and instruments in the Realms suggest widespread intercommunication between that plane and this in the past; many instruments known to the musicians of our past are commonly used in the Realms. These include the bandore, cittern, dulcimer, harp, lute, lyre, mandolin, psaltery, and shawm (the double-reed instrument that was the ancestor of the oboe and bassoon). Other instruments employed in the Realms would be immediately recognizable by musicians of Earth, but are known in the Realms by different names. These include the flute (longhorn), guitar (yarting), panpipes (birdpipe),

recorder (songhorn), and tambourine (tantan).

However, some instruments of the Realms have no identical counterparts on Earth, although most would be readily understood (though not readily mastered) by musicians of Earth. These include the glaur, hand-drum, thelarr, token, wargong and zulkoon, described below.

The **glaur** is a short, broad-mouthed and flaring curved horn, resembling a cornucopia in shape and fashioned of silver (which gives the clearest tone), electrum, or brass. A glaur is almost always fitted with a row of tubular valves like those of a trumpet, so that the sound it makes can be varied in pitch. Those glaur without valves are known as gloon, and are always played by large groups of musicians, each having a gloon that sounds a different note so that tunes may be fashioned or fanfare chords assembled. A glaur's tone is a brash, bright, metallic roar. By mouth action, a glaur-player can make it snarl. The valves of a glaur do not change the horn's sound by distinct changes of note as they are manipulated (if the horn is winded continuously), but rather cause the instrument's tone to swoop or soar from the note presently played to that newly selected. A group of glauren (the plural form of "glaur players") can make a continuous, swirling, melodic tone, somewhat reminiscent of bagpipes.

The **hand-drum** is a cylinder of thick, polished wood, sometimes of pieces bound together with iron bands and soaked to warp into a curve before being sealed, but ideally an intact section of hollowed-out trunk of ash, ironwood, or cherry tree. Both ends of the drum, which is typically 1-2' long and 6-8" in diameter, are covered with tightly stretched hide to form an instrument like a conga drum. It is typically slung on a shoulder strap and played by beating and slapping. Its tone can be muted by clasping the instrument to the chest or in the crook of one arm. It is used to hold rhythm or sometimes to indicate danger, the sound of feet, and (by beat) emotions in the telling of tales in taverns.

The **thelarr**, or whistlecane, is a long, canelike reed cut from swamps throughout the Realms, where it grows in standing water up to 40' or more (but rarely more than a dozen feet above the water's surface). Only that portion of the reed that develops above the water's surface can be used. When severed, typically in 4-5' lengths, and dried slowly on rocks near a fire of coals (or by being laid on exposed rocks or other sunlit surface in hot weather), the reed forms a long pipe instrument. One end is blown into, producing a tone varying in pitch according to the length of the particular pipe. A player may use several pipes laid on a rack close to hand, but these are never fastened together like panpipes, as the vibration of one reed causes all the others to sound, and the resulting cacophony is painful to hear. A thelarr's tone always has a sawlike, buzz-

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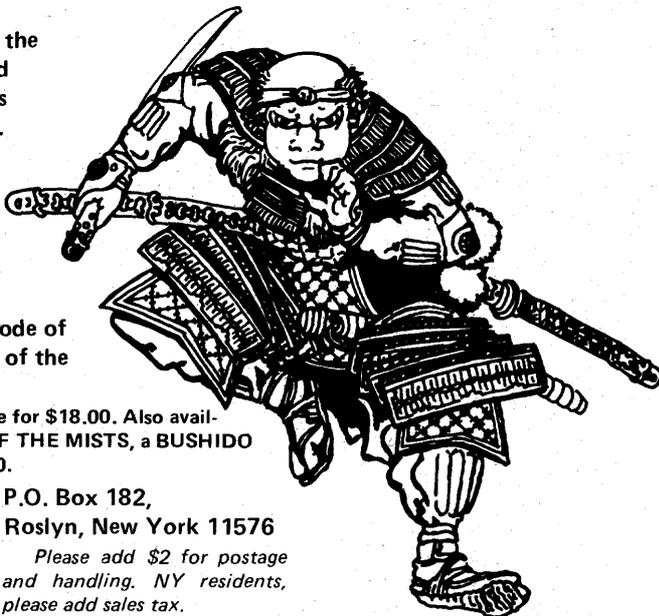
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ing quality, produced by the dry fibers within the reeds hollow interior. The hard outer shell of the cane always remains slightly flexible, and a skillful whistlecane-player can vary the pitch of the tone very slightly, causing a warbling effect, by clamping down on the cane with his hands at differing distances from the blown end of the instrument.

The **token** is a set of carved oval, open-ended wooden bells of graduated sizes, hung in a row from a section of cane or branch (which may in turn be affixed to a straight or arched pole). It is played like a xylophone, by striking the bells with a wooden rod. Token are sometimes fashioned of brass in the South, but such specimens are sneered at in the North (roughly, north of the latitude of Amn all across the Realms in this case, from the Inner Sea to the Sword Coast) as being "cowbells," not having the subtle tone of carved wood.

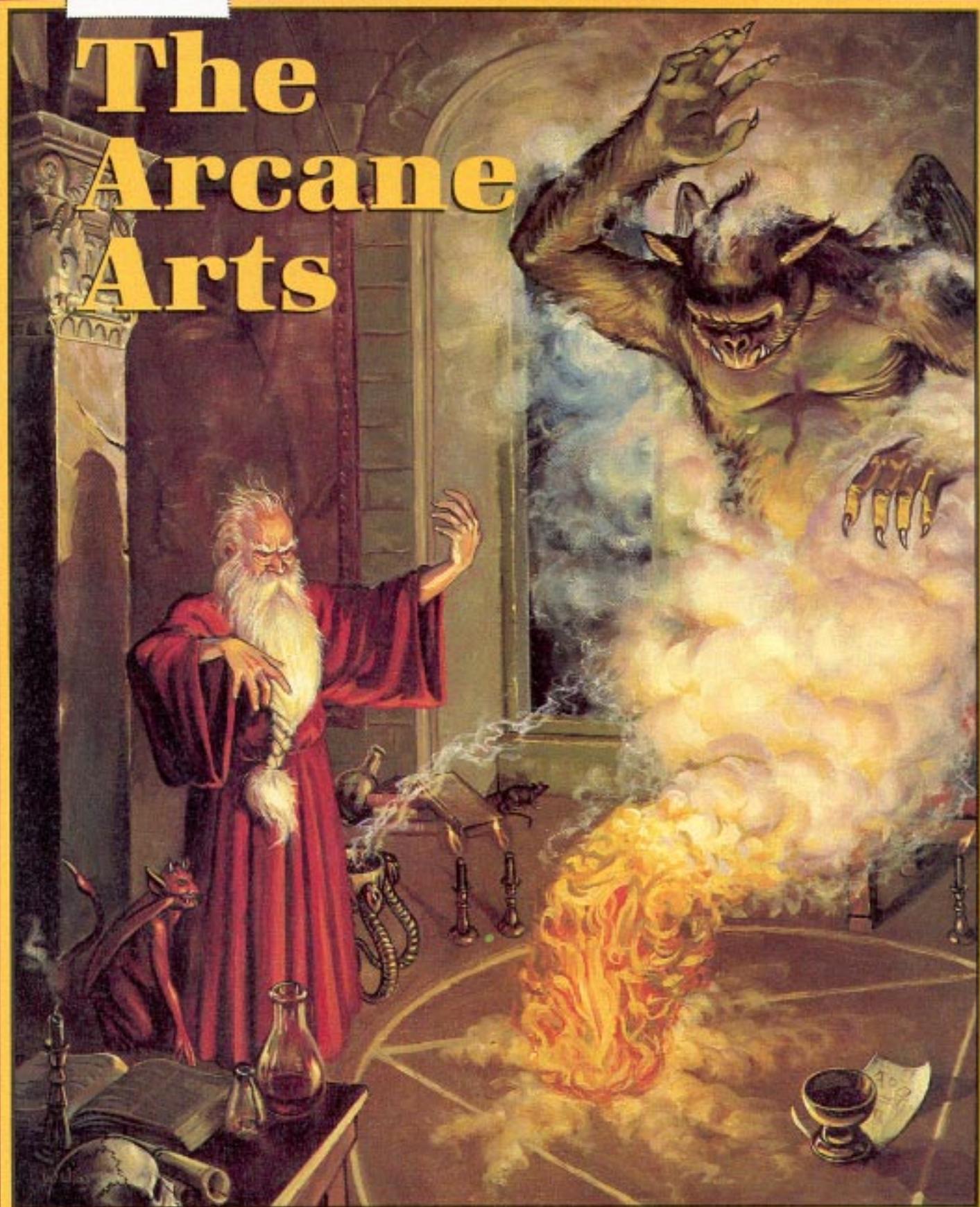
The **wargong**, or shieldgong, is an instrument sometimes fashioned of the battered metal shields of vanquished enemies, but more often made of massive, beaten brass circles, varied in tone by weight, thickness, curvature, and the number and pattern of cutouts — holes of varying shapes pierced through the metal. Wargongs are hung from tripods (when in the field), suspended from overhanging horizontal beams at a minstrels' gallery of a court hall, or borne on carved wooden yokes on the shoulders of musicians in a parade or when marching to war. They are struck with wooden mallets wrapped in cloth or strips of rubber-bark, and are used for sudden effect (like our Oriental gong) or tapped lightly and rhythmically to produce a continuous, deep, rolling sound audible for miles — making them useful for signaling. A row of towers on a fortified wall in the Realms (such as those on the Wall of Giants, which defends Aglarond from Thay) employs such instruments as signal gongs.

The **zulkoon** is a long, rectangular, wooden box that narrows at the top. Its bottom has an accordion-bellow of heavy hide that has a tendency to rupture (creating an annoying whistle and loss of "wind"), which the player rests upon the ground (or litter or chariot, if mobile) and pumps with a foot-treadle. The wind thus created goes up the zulkoon's body and emerges at a number of holes, which are overlaid by ivory or bone keys and metal strings, strummed or flipped by the player to create sounds, so that the zulkoon functions something like an accordion, with an underlying droning sound. Zulkoons require five or six arms to play properly, if their controls are at all complex, and some permanent court specimens are larger than the norm and are played by two musicians (plus two or more bellows-pumpers). Organs are rare and treasured instruments in the Realms, and are never portable; the zulkoon serves as a rudimentary organ when a true organ cannot be found.



WIZARDS

The Arcane Arts





The Mystic College

Magical academies for AD&D® game sorcerers

by James A. Yates

Even in the fantastic multiverse of AD&D® games, there comes a day when each person must pause and consider what lies ahead. What does the future hold in store? At 8th level, a cleric can construct a place of worship and attract a body of fanatically loyal followers; at 9th level, he can set up an ecclesiastical state. At 9th level, a fighter can establish a freehold and attract a force of men-at-arms. At 10th level, a thief can organize a thieves' guild and draw in a group of lesser thieves. A humble monk of only 8th level can open a monastery and attract a few lesser monks for his disciples. At higher levels, the rangers, druids, and assassins may gain special followers, while cavaliers and paladins commence attracting retainers or men-at-arms as low as 4th level. But what about the magic-user?

A magic-user can't begin to carve out a holding until he attains 12th level. This goal requires 750,001 experience points, many times more than most other classes must have before they can attract followers or begin territorial development; only the assassin requires more experience points before he can organize his guild. And the magic-user still doesn't attract any followers. Granted, magic-users should not be permitted to attract men-at-arms in the same manner as fighters or clerics, but why not a few of their own kind, as thieves, assassins, and monks do among themselves? A remedy to this situation would be to give the magic-user an interim goal to work on before he begins any territorial development. Thus is born the school of magic.

The school of magic

The notion that educational centers exist for the training of magic-users is a fairly common theme in fantasy literature, be it a school of magic, college of wizardry, academy of sorcery, university of necromancy, or whatever thaumaturgical institutional combination the phrase-fertile mind can produce (see the two DBAGONLANCE® trilogies for a specific example). Many PCs and NPCs have their alleged origins in such establishments, and it isn't so far-fetched an idea to suppose that some of them might wind up running such institutions later in their careers. In fact, establishing a school of magic could turn out to be the wisest career move that any magic-user could ever make.

At any time after reaching 9th level (sorcerer), a magic-user may opt to establish a school of magic. Ninth level was selected as the minimum level for this purpose because it is low enough to be within grasp of most magic-users (135,001 xp), yet it is sufficiently high to command respect and to be a challenge to attain. Establishing a school of magic is completely voluntary; no magic-user is ever required to become a pedagogue.

Once a magic-user has decided to establish a school of magic, he or she discovers that quite a task lies ahead. First, a suitable location for the school must be found, which might entail obtaining permission from the local residents to allow the school to be built. Once this has been accomplished, the actual construction, furnishing, equipping, and advertising of the school must be undertaken. After all of this has been accomplished, the magic-user attracts the faculty and students for his school of magic, and he adopts the

appellation of "Chancellor," as in sorcerer-chancellor, wizard-chancellor, etc.

Selecting the proper location for the school of magic is a critical decision for the magic-user involved. Many towns and cities aren't excited about having a school of magic located in the midst of their communities. The results of an unfortunate accident or experiment gone awry could be catastrophic — a situation not unlike living down the road from a nuclear power plant. In spite of this, a goodly number of municipalities won't deny a magic-user the right to open a school of magic within their jurisdiction, provided sufficient guarantees of safety have been made. This usually includes some sort of insurance payments to the community. Some municipalities might even encourage the magic-user to set up a school of magic within their environs. Such places are populated by people who can appreciate the potential advantages (increased wealth, power, and security) of having such an establishment within their community; they might even go so far as to offer the magic-user some inducement to locate in their community: perhaps a tax break or lower construction costs for the school itself.

On the magic-user's part, he may consider the hustle and bustle at the center of a thriving community an inappropriate locale for the school of magic. The time-consuming and mentally taxing research and study that goes on in such an institution requires a great deal of peace and quiet for those involved. However, the school requires a steady supply of food and other necessities, and being located in or near an urban center can facilitate this. Then there is the problem of security; a school of magic situated behind a stout city wall, protected by a competent watch or militia, has considerably less need for guards and other security measures than a school located in the wilderness. It is because of these overriding concerns that most magic-users are compelled to construct their schools of magic in or near an established community. Only the most powerful wizards (or the most foolhardy, desperate, or secretive lesser magic-users) would dare to attempt the establishment of a school of magic isolated deep in the wilderness.

After the location of the school of magic has been determined, the magic-user must next decide upon the general size of the institution he intends to found. Does he plan to organize an intimate academy to pass on his arcane knowledge to a select few, or a medium-sized college that might attract the attention of the surrounding communities? Perhaps he intends to found a great university which will spread his fame throughout the land! The general



Illustration by Gustave Doré,
courtesy of Dover Publications, Inc.

size chosen for the school of magic has a profound effect upon its cost and the size of its student body. While it is best left to DMs and players to determine the actual size of any schools of magic in their campaigns, some reasonable limits must be established. If the system set forth later in this article is used to advance students through the school of magic, the book-keeping for even a few dozen students could easily become a major chore. Table 1 sets down some general guidelines for establishing a school of magic. All of its entries are explained later.

Once the size of the school of magic has been set, the magic-user can begin to tackle the problems of constructing and furnishing the building, along with harnessing the considerable costs of these operations. The person controlling any PC magic-user, or the DM operating any NPC magic-users, is responsible for selecting the form the school of magic takes. The academy could be housed in a large stone building, a tower, a moat house, or even a small castle. A plan of the school must be drawn up, which may be as simple or as detailed as those involved can agree upon. Cost for the construction of the building can be determined by consulting pages 106-108 of the DMG.

The design of the school of magic is something that DMs and players must wrestle with themselves. Nevertheless, here are a few parameters which might prove helpful. The building should have separate living quarters for every member of the faculty, plus a few extra quarters for possible future expansion of the faculty or guests. Individual living quarters for the maximum number of students allowed by the school's size are also required. This insures each student and faculty member the isolation and quiet they must have for proper study and meditation, Living quarters for any guards and servants who reside at the school must also be taken into account.

The schools educational needs should include at least three laboratories: one for the chancellor's personal use, at least one for the faculty and students (the size of the school should determine this number), and one for the alchemist attracted to the school. The school may require two libraries: one for the faculty and students, containing as much universal knowledge as possible (and as many duplicate volumes as can be reasonably obtained); and a private library for the chancellor, containing his private collection of those tomes which he isn't prepared to share with the entire school. The school should contain at least three classrooms, one for each grade of students.

Furnishing the school of magic involves much more than simply purchasing and

arranging the furniture. Numerous books and tomes have to be obtained for the school's library, and massive quantities of magical supplies and other paraphernalia must be procured for its classrooms and laboratories. Then there is the matter of packaging the school and advertising its existence near and far, in order to attract the faculty and students. Again, this is a matter best left to DMs and players; numerous adventures could come as a result of this one step!

Table 1 lists basic outfitting costs based upon the size of the school of magic in question. Establishing a school of magic should be a very expensive undertaking — even for a small school. Considerable costs are incurred over and above the mere construction of the building itself.

Residents of the school

After the magic-user has fulfilled all of the requirements for establishing a school of magic, he takes the title of chancellor and enlists an alchemist, a number of lesser magic-users, and a body of students whose number is determined by the size of the school built. These followers are considered a special type of henchman, and do not count against the limit on the number of henchmen allowed by the chancellor's charisma score. All of these followers (except the students) must be paid a monthly wage commensurate with their class and level; the details of this are left to the discretion of DMs and players (100 gp per month per level of the NPC is suggested at minimum). This and the treatment meted out to them by the chancellor chiefly determine the sort of loyalty these characters have for their chancellor. Any guards, servants, or other hirelings must be sought out and engaged by the chancellor or his henchmen in the normal fashion.

The alchemist is an important, indeed vital, member of the faculty of the school of magic. Considering the amount of magical research and study that goes on in such an institution, the chancellor would be hard-pressed to keep it operating without an alchemist. The DM has three choices in this matter, depending upon the sources available to him. The easiest method is to use the alchemist described on page 29 of the DMG. A DM may also use the more detailed alchemist presented in DRAGON® issue #45 ("NPCs for Hire," by Georgia and Roger Moore) or in issue #49 ("A Recipe for the Alchemist," by Lenard Lakofka). If the last version is used, the alchemist should be of a level equal to two-thirds that of the school's chancellor (rounding 1/3 down and 2/3 up), with a minimum level of 6th and a maximum of 11th. Using these guidelines, a 10th-level

necromancer-chancellor would attract a 7th-level alchemist (two-thirds of 10 is 6 2/3, rounded up to 7); while a 24th-level wizard-chancellor would attract only an 11th-level alchemist, because that is as high as he can go. The alchemist comes to the school of magic for a secure place to practice his trade at good pay.

Of no less importance to the school of magic are the lesser magic-users attracted to it. It is these lesser magic-users who are the principle instructors of the school's students. The highest level of any lesser magic-user attracted to the school of magic is equal to half the level of the schools chancellor (rounding any fractions up), but never higher than 6th level if a PC is establishing the school (the reason for this is explained shortly). Using this system, an 11th-level PC wizard would receive a 6th-level magician (half of 11 is 5½, rounded up to 6) as his highest ranking lesser magic-user. A 16th-level NPC mage would attract an 8th-level warlock. The level of this top-ranking lesser magic-user was intentionally kept low, in relation to the chancellor, so that he could not pose any serious threat to the chancellor's position as headmaster. At the minimum of 9th level for a chancellor and 5th level for his highest-ranking lesser magic-user, this gap is not so pronounced, but as chancellors go up in level, the difference in power becomes quite overwhelming. High-level magic-users of evil alignment can best appreciate this limitation, for they must constantly remain on guard against the hazards posed by having a powerful magic-user for an assistant.

After determining the highest-level lesser magic-user received, the chancellor also attracts one additional magic-user for every level below that. For example: a 9th-level sorcerer receives a 5th-level thaumaturgist, plus a 4th-level theurgist, a 3rd-level conjurer, a 2nd-level evoker, and a 1st-level prestidigitator. This gives even the lowest of chancellors a fair number of supporting faculty with a good spread of powers.

Finally, a number of students are also attracted to the school of magic. Table 1 lists the numbers of students initially attracted to each size of school. The figures given assure that the faculty won't be teaching to empty classrooms, but allow space for later enrollment. Some might still argue that the number of students is too small; however, aside from the aforementioned bookkeeping obstacle, it should be remembered that the toughest modern law or medical school would be a breeze compared to any school of magic. Only a small percentage of the population possess the necessary gifts to qualify for the school of magic; these students require the utmost attention of the faculty, which they

could not receive in a school with hundreds of students.

All students attracted to a school of magic established by a PC are zero-level neophytes. This should also apply to any school founded by an NPC of less than 12th level. Schools founded by NPCs of at least 12th level are assumed to have been established some years past, and have students of higher grade (initiates and apprentices). The ratio of students in such schools should be along the lines of three neophytes for every two initiates for every one apprentice. Thus, the school of a 14th-level wizard-chancellor with 18 students would have nine neophytes, six initiates, and three apprentices. This ratio can be altered to suit personal tastes.

The race of lesser magic-users and students is determined by consulting Table 2, determining the appropriate line for the chancellor in question, and rolling percentile dice. The alignment of lesser magic-users and students attracted to the school of magic is up to the DM, although it is reasonable to assume that most would be of the same morals as the chancellor, if not necessarily the same ethics. Consequently, good attracts good and evil attracts evil. Chancellors of extreme alignments, such as lawful good or chaotic evil, might be very restrictive about who is allowed to enroll. Those of neutral alignments are not so pedantic; they permit both good and evil initiates to join them, although this could well lead to friction between these factions within the school.

The age of any teacher or student attracted to the school of magic is entirely up to the DM in each case. Far too many variables exist to be able to give any sound advice on the subject. Are all of the students just starting out in life? Have some been around for many years and are only now taking up magic? Are the faculty members young Turks whose careers have blazed from the beginning, or are they older types who have spent long years climbing in levels? The addition of demi-human magic-users only complicates the matter more.

It might appear to some people that Table 2 is slanted in favor of humans; it is. Humans form the bulk of characters in any campaign, and are thus the majority of inhabitants of any school of magic. The smaller numbers of half-elves and elves, and the low birthrate and great longevity of the latter race in particular, dictate that humans dominate schools of magic just as they dominate all other aspects of the game.

Benefits and obligations

Thus far, a neat picture has been sketched of the school of magic and its residents. About now, someone is surely

asking: "So what? Why would any magic-user expend so much time and money just so he can call himself chancellor? Why would the lesser magic-users and students be willing to tie themselves down in such a place for years on end? What do they get out of it?"

The chancellor's primary motive in establishing the school of magic is probably to use it as a means of increasing and extending his power. The chancellor can use the lesser magic-users and students as extensions of himself, enabling him to project his power to more than one place at the same time. A desire for security might also be behind the founding of a school of magic. Many a high-level magic-user who's been resurrected once too often would leap at the opportunity to settle down and surround himself with a circle of fellow magic-users. Then again, some chancellors may have a genuine desire to pass on the mystic secrets they have acquired over the years to a new generation of magic-users.

Power is also a strong lure for the lesser magic-users attracted to the school of magic. The sorcerer, necromancer, or wizard who founded the school is much more powerful than they, and he has many spells that the lesser magic-users would want to add to their own spell books. These lesser magic-users might even have some spells the chancellor lacks, so the association could prove mutually beneficial on that count alone. Some of these lesser magic-users might also have found the adventuring life a tad too strenuous for them; thus, the prospect of teaching in a safe, warm school of magic could have substantial appeal. Others might feel that a few years' association with a school of magic might be a good career move — one that could bring potions, scrolls, and perhaps even magical items their way, for faithful service to the chancellor.

These are motives for NPC lesser magic-users. If a DM is operating a school of magic, PC lesser magic-users of the proper levels might be permitted. In such cases, PCs have their own motives. Being part of a school of magic, but not actually running it, could prove an interesting change of pace, and would get the PCs away from overly familiar dungeon or wilderness adventures for a time.

Students join the school of magic because they wish to learn the art and science of magic. Once again, power is the key motivation: the considerable power bestowed by mastering magic. Some may find themselves enrolled in the school of magic to serve the purposes of others or as a last resort for a career. Parents may commit their children (young adults, actually) to schools of magic because, for reasons of birth, tradition, or physical

makeup, these children are unable to become fighters or clerics. Towns might sponsor students so that they may later return and use their magical skills in the service of the community. Some students may be attracted because of their insatiable thirst for knowledge of matters arcane.

The chancellor of the school of magic has the hardest job of all: He must see to it that the school continues to function. He is in charge of every aspect of the school's operation, and he is the one who must pay the bills. The chancellor must provide all the lesser magic-users, alchemists, and hirelings with a monthly wage. In addition, the chancellor must pay an annual cost for upkeep as determined on Table 1. This upkeep cost is a percentage of the total original cost of the school of magic, including all construction and original outfitting costs. The actual amount varies for the size of the school and may fluctuate from year to year.

Aside from these basic financial obligations, the chancellor wears many hats. He is the final arbitrator of what is taught in his school. The chancellor oversees the education and discipline of the students and looks out for the welfare of all concerned, although a chaotic-evil chancellor might have some unique views on these matters. The chancellor also has the primary responsibility for any relations the school has with the outside world.

All lesser magic-users attracted to a school of magic must prove their commitment to the project by paying the chancellor a one-time entry fee of 500-1,000 gp per level of each lesser magic-user. The exact amount of this faculty assessment is determined by the DM or player operating the chancellor of the school of magic. Alignment may play a part in this decision. Lesser magic-users won't be rejected out of hand simply because they can't come up with the money. Any reasonable deal (or even unreasonable ones) can be worked-out between the chancellor and a poverty-stricken potential faculty member. Such a contract could stipulate forfeiture of salary until the fee has been paid, a cut in salary until the fee is paid, a longer commitment to the school of magic in lieu of the fee, or a payment of something besides money (such as spells or magical items).

Any lesser magic-users attracted to the school of magic are bound to its chancellor until they attain 7th level (enchanter). At this point, most lesser magic-users depart from the school to further their own independent careers. There is a base 70% chance at 7th level that any lesser magic-user will depart from the school of magic, but this inclination to go solo drops off rapidly at higher levels: 50% at 8th level, 30% at 9th level, and only 10% at 10th

level. Any magic-user remaining at the school of magic at 10th level continues to stay there unless events force him to leave. This illustrates the likelihood that the longer a magic-user remains with the school of magic, the less likely he is to move on. It also explains why an NPC chancellor can initially attract a lesser magic-user of higher than 7th level; such a magic-user would represent a character who rose above 6th level but decided to remain at the school of magic. These guidelines can, of course, be modified to suit any situation that might arise. A lesser magic-user might abandon the school of magic before reaching 7th level if mistreated by the chancellor. Another lesser magic-user might have his chance of leaving the school of magic greatly reduced, or even eliminated altogether, if the chancellor offered him sufficient inducement to stay (such as naming him as the chancellor's eventual successor).

How does the faculty spend its time? The following system is suggested. While bound to the school of magic, most lesser magic-users must spend eight months out of every year doing nothing except instructing students. These lesser magic-users are the ones who must hammer home the fundamentals of magic, while the chancellor tutors the students on the finer points of the mystical arts. Lesser magic-users of higher than 6th level do not have to spend as much of their time teaching. Those of 7th and 8th level need spend only six months each year teaching, and those of 9th level or higher need teach for only four months each year. This lightened teaching load, which grants these higher-level, lesser magic-users more time for their own research or adventures, is a major reason for why lesser magic-users remaining at the school of magic beyond 6th level are increasingly likely to continue their own research or adventures, is a major reason why the lesser magic-users remaining at the school of magic beyond although he probably teaches more than that if he wants his students to progress quickly.

When not teaching, the chancellor can concoct potions, pen scrolls, go on adventures, and possibly fabricate magical items. Most lesser magic-users are limited to adventuring in the months they are away from teaching duties. During that time, they are not truly free; the chancellor still has authority over them and may require that they perform other services for the school of magic. It is up to the DM or player running the school to devise a teaching schedule showing which instructors (chancellor and all lesser magic-users) are on and off duty during each month of the year. The only restriction is that there must always be at least one instructor for

each grade of students — neophytes, initiates, and apprentices — that the school currently has (most schools won't have initiates and apprentices until later on). The alchemist has a year-round job, but any reasonable leave of absence should be granted by the chancellor.

All new students attracted to the school of magic have to pay a one-time tuition fee of 100-500 gp. The actual amount depends upon the size of the school, the alignment of its chancellor, and the whims of the person playing the chancellor. As with the lesser magic-users, lack of money doesn't necessarily deny any student enrollment in the school of magic. Scholarships could be offered for a few promising students, and the chancellor might accept the occasional charity case for a variety of reasons: a desire to show his magnanimity, a liking for the student in question, etc.

Upon enrolling in the school of magic, each student is assigned to a lesser magic-user of at least 3rd level. This lesser magic-user becomes the student's principle instructor and advisor — his mentor, in essence. Exactly how the students are apportioned among these lesser magic-users is another problem for DMs and players. The mentors might pick the students, the students could select their mentors, it could be decided by lots, and so on. In a small school of magic, each mentor should have no more than three or four students assigned to him; in a large school, each could have a dozen or more. The chancellor usually selects a few of the most promising students (usually no more than 2-5, depending upon the size of the school of magic) and acts as their personal mentor himself.

The minimum requirement of 3rd level to qualify as a mentor was chosen so that the mentors would be magic-users of some experience. Any magic-users of less than 3rd level at the school of magic cannot become mentors until they attain 3rd level. At that point, all new students are assigned to the newly promoted mentor until he has a number of students roughly equal to the other mentors. Should any mentor leave the school of magic, his students are reapportioned among the remaining mentors.

A close and special relationship quickly develops between a student and his mentor. The mentor is the one who takes charge of the student and oversees the bulk of his magical education, although all of the magic-users at the school have a hand in this. After all, the mentor is not likely to be present all the time. The mentor is also the one directly in charge of seeing to the discipline and well-being of the students in his charge. Again, the alignment of the school's chancellor sets the tone for these activities; thus, doings

that could result in expulsion from a school of magic with a lawful-good chancellor might be tolerated or even encouraged by a chaotic-evil chancellor.

To the student, a mentor is a sort of big brother or sister, as well as being a primary instructor and guidance counselor. The students attend their mentors as servants, assist them in their research and experiments, and may even join them on adventures as they progress. No single person at the school of magic, aside from the chancellor, has a more profound effect upon their future, and a good relationship with one's mentor is a prime requisite for the success of any student of magic. Unfortunately, this relationship can be ruined or perverted by even good students and mentors.

Students attending the school of magic are pretty much stuck there, as the school is a year-round endeavor for them. Still, most schools of magic don't operate as prisons. A student could be granted a short leave of absence (usually no longer than a fortnight) from time to time, to return home for holidays, to attend religious festivals, or to handle important family matters. Of course, any prolonged absence from the school affects the student's studies. Students who leave the school without permission, as well as those who remain away longer than the allotted time, had best have a good excuse for their actions. Such delinquent students could face fines, expulsion, corporal punishment, or worse, depending upon the intentions, goals, and alignment of the school's chancellor.

Student advancement

All students of the school of magic begin with a negative experience-point total, in much the same manner as the two classes of zero-level cavaliers (horsemen and lancers). Like the zero-level cavalier, the magic student must reduce this negative experience-point total to zero before becoming a 1st-level character. For the magic student to do this, he must pass through the three grades of zero-level magic students described in Table 3. Promotion through the three grades is based upon experience points earned from studying the mystic arts and from possible adventuring later on.

Upon enrollment in the school of magic, the beginning student becomes a zero-level neophyte. To reiterate, the neophyte starts with a deficit of -2,000 xp, has but 1 hp (plus any constitution bonus), and makes all saving throws as a 1st-level magic-user, but with a penalty of -3. Even with this penalty, the neophyte's saving throws are superior to an ordinary zero-level human in almost every case — a good indication as to how well suited he is to be

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a magic-user. Neophytes, and all zero-level magic students for that matter, attack in combat as if they were zero-level humans (which the combat tables show is just as good as a 1st-level magic-user).

Shortly after admission to the school of magic, each neophyte is presented with his book of cantrips, which can hold a maximum of 36 of these simple spells. A neophyte can learn as many cantrips of each type as the number of spells of each level he can learn due to his intelligence score. For example, a student with an intelligence of 12 could learn a minimum of five and a maximum of seven cantrips in each category of useful, reversed, legerdemain, person-affecting, and haunting cantrips. Magic students with high intelligence are capable of learning most, if not all, of the cantrips in each category.

Cantrips must be learned just as spells are, though they are far less complicated than even the simplest 1st-level spell. Because of this, all students add 20% to their percentage chance to know each cantrip based on their intelligence. This means that a student with an intelligence of 9 has a 55% chance of learning each cantrip, instead of the normal 35% chance to know each spell. The maximum chance of knowing each cantrip is 95% for students with an intelligence of 17 or more; there must always be a chance for failure. Cantrips may be learned at the rate of one per month for neophytes and two per month for initiates and apprentices. High intelligence has no affect upon this, although it does help determine how rapidly students rise from one grade to the next. Neophytes use one cantrip per day.

The framework of the school of magic is not as rigidly structured as the medieval or modern college, and the students are not as strictly regimented in their scholastic endeavors. Students of the school of magic do not attend classes at regular hours on a daily basis. Instead, they attend irregular lectures and symposia held by the schools chancellor and lesser magic-users two or three times per week. Additionally, the students meet with their mentor several times a week, sometimes for a very short while, at other times for hours on end.

Basic indoctrination of the neophytes is assigned to the school's 1st- and 2nd-level magic-users. They have the often tedious tasks of teaching the neophytes the various theories of magic and the fundamentals of spell-casting, the verbalizations required, proper somatic gestures, and correct use of spell components. The embryonic knowledge gained from these lectures is expounded upon by the mentors during their frequent meetings with their students. Here, students put into practice what they have learned, and the

mentor helps them to overcome any difficulties which might arise. The mentor also instructs his students in any general knowledge that he feels appropriate to their education (if it is allowed by the chancellor).

In some respects, passing beyond the grade of neophyte is the most difficult step in graduating from the school of magic. Aside from attending lectures and meeting with their mentors, neophytes must do much studying on their own time, as well as help keep the school of magic clean and tidy, and perform any other menial tasks which they might be assigned. Also, since they are restricted to the general confines of the school, it is virtually impossible for neophytes to reduce their negative experience-point totals by any means other than studying.

At the end of each month, all students of the school of magic can reduce their negative experience-point totals by a variable number of points gained from studying and practicing the arcane sciences. This number is determined by rolling 1d6, multiplying the result by the student's intelligence score, and applying any of the following bonuses or penalties which are appropriate:

- 5 points if the student attends a large school;
- +5 points if the student attends a small school;
- +5 points if the student is a half-elf;
- +10 points if the student is an elf; and,
- +10 points in any month the chancellor personally taught the student.

The bonuses for elves and half-elves reflect those races' natural affinity toward magic. The school modifiers represent the likelihood that students in a small school receive more attention from their instructors than those in a large school. The bonus for the chancellor teaching reflects the fact that students tend to learn more from his instruction. Whether this is due to his greater experience and teaching ability or the students' awe or fear is irrelevant.

For example: In his first month studying at the school of magic, Nicomedes the neophyte rolls a 3 on 1d6, which is multiplied by his intelligence score of 14 for a total of 42. Add +5 to this because Nicomedes is a half-elf, another +5 because he attends a small school and +10 because the chancellor taught that month. This gives Nicomedes a total of 62 xp, which drops his negative experience-point total from -1,990 to -1,928.

Using this system, the luckiest, most brilliant elven magic student who ever lived, attending a small school of magic run by the most dedicated chancellor of all time, could glide through the three grades of magic students and reach 1st level in

only 15 months! The densest, most pathetic human student of all time might spend 25 years or more plodding through a large school with an indifferent chancellor. A student of average luck and intelligence, attending an average school with an average chancellor, might make it through the school of magic by study alone in about four years. Fortunately, students in the two higher grades (initiates and apprentices) can earn experience points by means other than studying.

Once a student has reduced his negative experience-point total to -1,000, he becomes a zero-level initiate. Initiates have 2 hp, make all saving throws as 1st-level magic-users at -2, and can use two cantrips per day. During this secondary stage of their education, the school's 3rd- and 4th-level magic-users take over their weekly lectures, sometimes assisted by the alchemist. This instruction comprises the basics of more complicated spell-casting, elementals of magic reading, the chemistry of magic, and location and identification of spell components found in nature. The mentor also continues the personal tutoring of any of his students who become initiates.

At this grade, initiates are permitted to leave the school for brief outings of no longer than a week, in the company of a 3rd- or 4th-level magic-user, their mentor, or the chancellor. These jaunts, which are not normally worthy of the title "adventures," are not unlike the modern class field trip. Often, the students might also be accompanied by a druid or ranger friendly to the school of magic, who sometimes assists in fulfilling the purpose of the outing. Sometimes these outings take the form of testing, such as having the initiates locate and obtain a certain spell component. At other times, these trips are staged to visit local fighters or clerics, who demonstrate to the students the position held by magic-users in the world around them, and expose them to the duties that might one day be expected of them.

During these short trips, initiates may supplement their study by earning experience points in the field. Normal points are awarded for any monster killed or defeated, but the magic-user in charge of the outing has complete control over any distribution to students of any treasure acquired during the trip, and is not required to give any initiate so much as a single copper piece. Fair-minded instructors usually dole out some monetary treasure or other minor tokens to the students, to whet their appetites and give them a glimpse of their possible future. Common sense must prevail in these dealings; should the members of the outing, by some stroke of fortune, come across several thousand gold pieces worth of trea-

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sure, the magic-user in charge is not going to give any initiate enough treasure to make 1st level. Even within these restrictions, the fortuitous find of a few small gems or some other valuable piece of merchandise could be worth more to an initiate than a couple months of intense study. A DM could logically declare that magic students receive no experience for treasure found, as they have no opportunity to spend or use it.

When a magic student has reduced his negative experience-point total to -500, he becomes a zero-level apprentice. Apprentices have 3 hp, make all saving throws as 1st-level magic-users at -1, and can use three cantrips per day. The final stage of the magic students' education is conducted by the school's lesser magic-users of 5th level or higher, the mentors, and the chancellor. Apprentices are allowed to work in the laboratory, assisting the magic-users in research and experiments. At this point, they are exposed to the formulae for concocting potions, the process of penning magic scrolls, and much more. During this time, the apprentices are inundated by the chancellor, their mentors, and all the other magic-users with as much of the legends and lore that they possess and are willing to share with others. The magic students must absorb as much of this as they can, for it will assist them later to have as much knowledge as possible concerning everything from the lowliest potions to the most powerful artifacts.

At this stage, apprentices also study and practice something else which will be of use to them in their later adventuring lives: a nonweapon proficiency. Upon enrolling at the school of magic, all students have only two nonweapon proficiencies. These represent knowledge or skills gained by the student in his previous life. If the DM wishes, any of these proficiencies may be higher than normal. For example, Fionulla is a human who decided to become a magic student at age 27. However, before that she was a gemcutter of some repute and has a skill level of 3 in that nonweapon proficiency. An apprentice begins work on his third nonweapon proficiency and becomes proficient in it upon attaining 1st level. This third nonweapon proficiency must be an adventuring or wilderness proficiency requiring only one slot. Aside from these restrictions, it may be any nonweapon proficiency the DM feels the apprentice could acquire at the school of magic.

Apprentices may go on outings like initiates and may accompany their mentors on short adventures during the mentors' months off from teaching. Such adventures should be no longer than a fortnight in length, although some leeway

could be granted concerning this. If any apprentice is away from the school of magic for more than a week, he may not roll for experience points earned from studying during that month. Because of this penalty, the apprentice must carefully weigh the possible gains of adventuring against the lost study time. Of course, most students will jump at the chance to go adventuring, and few will ever truly examine the consequences. The mentor retains absolute control of any division of treasure to apprentices, but due to their special relationship, he is likely to be somewhat more generous than with an initiate.

Once a student has reduced his negative experience-point total to zero, he is considered a graduate of the school of magic and becomes a 1st-level prestidigitator. He then rolls 1d4 for hit points but ignores the roll and retains the hit points he had as an apprentice unless a four is rolled. The school holds a celebration in his honor, at which the chancellor congratulates him, welcomes him as the newest member of the faculty, and presents the newly promoted prestidigitator with his book of first-level spells. This first spell book is along the lines of those described on page 39 of the *DMG* and page 79 of *Unearthed Arcana*, with certain changes. The spell book cannot contain any spell which is not currently known by at least one member of the school of magic. Logic also dictates that the prestidigitator would have reviewed its contents with those who prepared the spell book, to insure that he is capable of knowing each spell placed in the book.

The prestidigitator is now considered a 1st-level magic-user in all respects, and he may cast one 1st-level spell (or four cantrips, if he requested to retain them in place of one of his initial allotment of 1st-level spells) per day. However, upon graduation from the school of magic, the student is not yet free, as the school of magic demands service from its graduates. All 1st-level prestidigitators who have graduated from the school of magic are required to remain there for a period of two years to assist in the teaching of the students, just like any other lesser magic-user. The chancellor pays them a monthly salary; in their off months, they might be allowed to go adventuring. At the end of two years, these graduates are free to do what they will, including remaining at the school of magic, if that is their wish.

The rules presented here for advancing a student through the school of magic were designed primarily for NPCs. As it can take four years or more for the average student to graduate, it was felt that most players would be reluctant to operate such a character. However, should

someone wish to play a student of the school of magic, here are a couple of ideas which could speed up the process. First, give the student a PC bonus of +25 xp each month, which could knock a year or more off the time required to graduate. The second method is to assume the student had some prior private tutoring in magic, and can qualify for enrollment in the school of magic as a 2nd-grade initiate.

Whenever a student is promoted to the faculty of the school of magic, the word gets around, and there is a chance that a new student soon arrives to fill the vacancy. Also, at the start of each new year, there is a chance that one or more new students are attracted to the school of magic. The exact percentage chance of these events occurring, and the number of students involved, are determined by consulting Table 4. The only restriction on results from Table 4 is that the school may never have more students than the maximum number allotted for its size on Table 1. Should the school of magic find itself with fewer than its minimum requirement of students, one new student is automatically attracted each month until the minimum requirement is met.

Faculty advancement

There are two methods by which faculty members of the school of magic can gain experience points and rise in level: teaching and adventuring. Teaching can be slow and laborious, but can be spiritually (if not financially) rewarding. Adventuring is mostly what the AD&D® game is about; the bold who survive gain a great profit in a short time. The school of magic creates a balance between the two, enabling weary adventurers to recuperate in the relative safety of the classroom while still earning experience, yet allowing the bored pedagogue the opportunity to cut loose, venture forth into the world, and get some excitement.

All faculty members at the school of magic, including the chancellor but excluding the alchemist (his teaching is very minimal), earn experience each month that they teach equal to 10% of the total number of experience points earned by all the students at the school of magic. For example, a school of magic has 32 students who earned a total of 1,620 xp in a given month, which means that every member of the faculty who taught that month would earn 162 xp (round all fractions to the nearest whole number). Additionally, each mentor, including the chancellor, gains an additional 10% for the experience earned by his circle of students during each month he teaches. Using the above example, seven students belonging to one mentor earned 387 of the 1,620 xp, resulting in another 39 xp for their mentor, who

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earned a total of 201 xp for teaching that month.

This could add up to a lot of paperwork for a large school with a great many students, but you were warned. It could also be argued that it is wrong to give experience points to magic-users for sitting in the comfort of the classroom and teaching, but characters should be able to earn experience from activities other than "kicking the door and killing the orc." The faculty members of the school of magic spend three to eight months each year teaching, performing a valuable service and honing their magical skills, and it is only right that they gain from this experience. Adventuring remains the prime source of experience points; those gained by teaching are few in comparison to those gained from adventuring, and it would take all but the lowliest of magic-users many years of teaching to gain enough experience to rise even a single level.

The chancellor of the school of magic has a great influence upon the adventuring activities of his faculty. It is he who decides who may leave the school of magic to go adventuring and for how long. At any rate, no more than one-third (round fractions of up or down to the nearest whole number) of the school's lesser magic-users may be absent from the school at any one time. Thus, the chancellor of a school of magic with six lesser magic-users would normally require four of them to be present at all times. Also, in most cases, the highest-ranking lesser magic-user is expected to remain at the school of magic whenever the chancellor is absent.

The right to go adventuring is a privilege for which lesser magic-users must pay their chancellor. After all, he provides them with bed and board, a monthly salary, protection, and the benefits of his vast knowledge of magic. It is only fair and proper that these lesser magic-users give their chancellor something in return. A chancellor of good alignment often demands no more than one-third of any monetary treasure gained by his lesser magic-users on their adventures. A neutral chancellor might insist upon one-third or one-half of any treasure gained, depending upon his bent. An evil chancellor claims up to two-thirds of any treasure. Of course, these figures are suggestions; any deal could be worked out between a chancellor and his lesser magic-users.

The chancellor also has the right of access to any magical treasure obtained by his lesser magic-users during their adventures. This does not mean that the magical treasure is simply handed over to the head of the school of magic. On the contrary; no henchman would ever be willing to just

hand over his hard-won spoils to any master, nor should be expected to do so. What the chancellor does get is the right to examine the magical items captured by his lesser magic-users, perhaps to read over (and possibly copy) a scroll containing a spell the lesser magic-user could not normally use or to attempt the discovery of the powers of some unusual item.

The changing of ownership of these treasures between the lesser magic-users and their chancellor is a matter for DMs and players to resolve. However, no chancellor is going to hand over all his spells and secrets to his lesser magic-users simply because they have gained a few levels. Besides, a newly acquired magical item could well be the key that unlocks the chancellor's spell books for a highly coveted spell. Evil lesser magic-users could conceivably attempt to hold out on their chancellors in this matter, but they must be prepared to suffer the consequences should he learn of their deception. Similarly, a chancellor might just take a magical item he wants. Again, the ramifications of this could be unpleasant for all concerned.

Territorial development

The cost of maintaining a school of magic, in day-to-day running expenses and the annual upkeep payment, can get very expensive. Some chancellors could find themselves hard-pressed to pay the bills unless they and their lesser magic-users undertake a considerable amount of adventuring. Another possible way to augment the chancellor's income is with tax revenue. In order to do this, the chancellor must first establish a magical freehold similar to that described on page 25 of the *Players Handbook*.

Starting at 12th level (wizard), or anytime thereafter, a magic-user may elect to establish a magical freehold — or weirding hold, as it is often called. In order to do this, the wizard must construct a stronghold of some sort (a school of magic is ideal for this) and clear the surrounding territory of hostile creatures for a radius of 10-20 miles (or an area of 300-1,250 square miles, if irregular in shape). It should be clearly understood that no wizard is ever compelled to establish a school of magic before he sets out to organize a weirding hold, although doing the former first would probably make the latter task much easier. Either of these projects may be undertaken independently of each other, without each other, in any order, or simultaneously. However, should a wizard decide to establish both a weirding hold and a school of magic at the same time, he is forced to establish his school of magic at some distance from the nearest community.

As with the school of magic, the costs of

constructing the wizards stronghold can be determined by consulting pages 106-108 of the DMG. To this must be added another 1,000-4,000 gp (exact amount at the DM's discretion) to advertise in the surrounding lands for a wizards sword arm, a fighter who becomes the chief military officer of the weirding hold. If a wizard has already established a school of magic, he can move the school to his new stronghold in the weirding hold if the hold was designed to contain it. This entails moving most of the equipment and paraphernalia from the old school, but there is also a minor outfitting cost added on to the basic construction of the new stronghold. This outfitting cost is equal to 10% of the total cost of the new stronghold and is added to form the new total upon which the wizard-chancellor's annual upkeep for his school of magic is based.

A wizard takes this major step for a variety of reasons. Chancellors may find the school of magic has lost some of its challenge, and they may desire another goal to work for. Some do it to expand their power and to give them subjects to rule, thereby gaming a population base for military forces. Certain wizards see this as a single step towards greater conquest; others might take over an area in an attempt to prevent its conquest by other forces. Whatever the reasons, success in establishing a weirding hold makes a wizard far more powerful than his level might indicate.

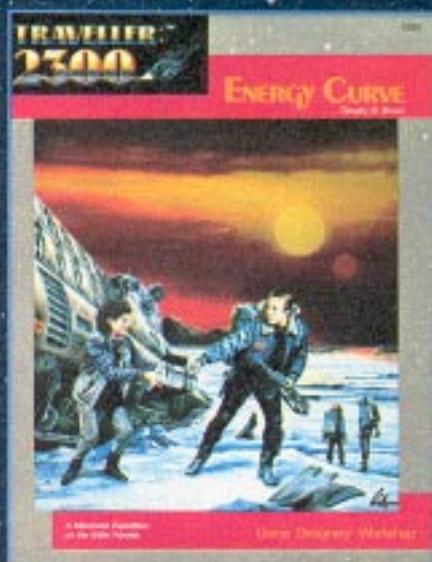
Once the wizard has fulfilled the requirements for establishing a weirding hold, he gains the right to collect taxes from every person residing within his territory. The wizard also attracts a type of fighter known as the wizards sword arm, who has come to join him in response to his expensive advertising campaign. The wizards sword arm may be drawn to the weirding hold for any number of reasons of his own. Perhaps he is old and tired, and seeks what he thinks is a comfortable position. It may be the wizards magic or the thought of future conquests emanating from the weirding hold which lure him. Then again, the wizards sword arm may have some deep, dark reason of his own for coming to the weirding hold.

The wizards sword arm must be a fighter, ranger, or cavalier. He is considered a castellan (see page 34 of the DMG) in all respects except that his command is the entire weirding hold. Depending upon his class and level, the wizards sword arm may not have any followers or men-at-arms, and the wizard must provide such troops or send his sword arm out to recruit them. This is another theme which runs through much of the literature of swords and sorcery: the story of the great

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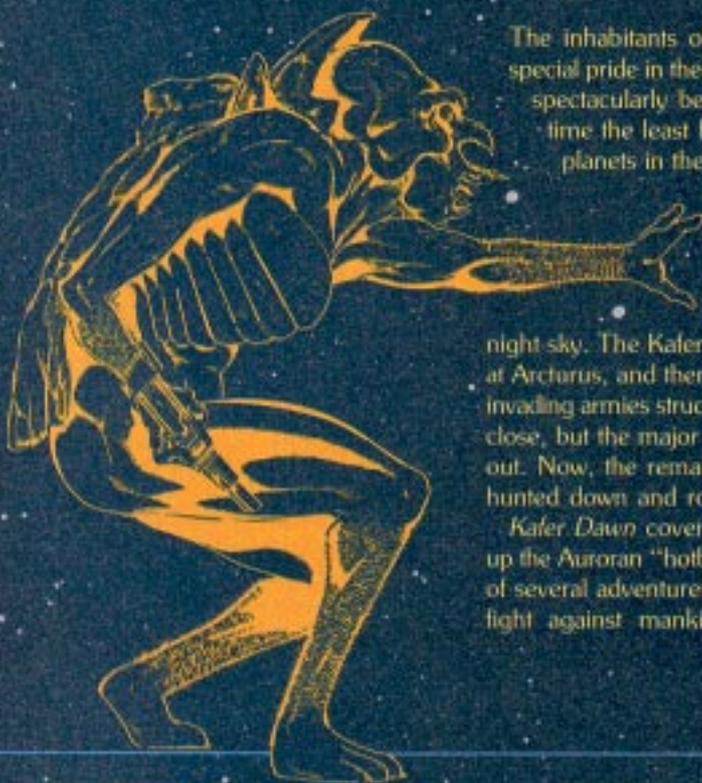
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Table 1
Guidelines for Schools of Magic

Size of school	Outfitting costs	Annual cost for upkeep	Maximum no. students allowed	Initial no. of students attracted
Small	10-30,000 gp	2-5%	15	7-12 (1d6 + 6)
Medium	30-50,000 gp	3-6%	30	17-24 (1d8 + 16)
Large	50-80,000 gp	5-10%	50	31-40 (1d10 + 30)

Table 2
Race of Lesser Magic-Users and Students

Chancellor is:	Percentile dice score
Good human	01-85 human; 86-95 half-elf; 96-00 elf ¹
Neutral human	01-80 human; 81-90 half-elf; 91-00 elf
Evil human	01-95 human; 96-98 half-elf; 99-00 elf ²
Half-elf	01-60 human; 61-80 half-elf; 81-00 elf
Elf	01-30 human; 31-50 half-elf; 51-00 elf

¹ All elves and half-elves who are faculty have a 25% chance of being double-classed, and a 10% chance of being triple-classed. It is up to the DM to determine any other classes possessed by such demi-human magic-users. The exact alignment of the school's chancellor should be considered in this decision; a lawful-good chancellor isn't likely to attract very many lesser magic-users with the other class of thief.

² An elf received by an evil human is actually a drow, but only if a lesser magic-user is being rolled for. If no drow exist in the campaign, or if rolling for a student, treat this result as a half-elf. Some may object to giving an evil chancellor a half-elven assistant or student, yet there is nothing that prevents a half-elf from being evil, nor a neutral half-elf from serving certain evil chancellors.

³ Half-elves are included as chancellors on this table due to the changes made on pages 8-9 of *Unearthed Arcana*, which now enable exceptional half-elven magic-users to rise as high as 10th level — more than enough to qualify as a chancellor for a school of magic.

wizard who makes an alliance with a fighter to brandish the sword that he could not wield. The classic version of this is that of Merlin and King Arthur.

The wizards sword arm is of a level equal to two-thirds that of the wizard establishing the weirding hold, plus or minus one level. Simply multiply the level of the wizard in question by 2/3 (rounding fractions up or down to the nearest whole number), then roll percentile dice. A score of 01-40 means the level drops by one, 41-80 means it remains the same, and 81-00 means it goes up one level. For example, a 14th-level wizard attracts a base sword arm of 9th level (two-thirds of 14 is 9 1/3, rounded down to 9). Percentile dice are rolled, resulting in a score of 17, which means the wizards sword arm is dropped a level to 8th level. This method of determining the wizards sword arm assures the wizard of getting a sword arm worthy of his level, while adding a bit of uncertainty and variety.

Another way in which the wizards sword arm differs from a normal castellan or other mercenary officer is that he is considered a normal henchman and may

continue to gain experience and levels. This enables PCs to get into the act and become a wizards sword arm, which is actually an excellent position for an ambitious fighter or cavalier. The sword arm is the man or woman in charge of the day-to-day administration of the weirding hold, thus freeing the wizard for more important magical activities. He is charged with the security of the realm, the collecting of taxes and other tributes, and enforcing the wizards will. This choice position could possibly have more than one claimant; when a PC applies for the job, the DM might decide to make him earn it by fighting for it.

When the wizards sword arm is an NPC, use Tables 5 and 6 to determine his race and class. For the purposes of the wizards sword arm, all demi-humans have only a 15% chance of being double-classed and only a 5% chance of being triple-classed, where appropriate. The reasoning behind this is the fact that the wizards sword arm may be required to be quite high in level; also, operating in more than one class greatly restricts the ability to rise to high levels for all but the most exceptional

demi-humans. It is up to the DM to decide if any wizards sword arm can fit into his campaign. If he doesn't fit, the DM may just roll again. For example, let's say that a 19th-level arch-mage attracted a high-elven sword arm, who turned out to be a cleric/fighter/magic-user. Even with a strength of 20, the highest level a high elf can attain as a fighter is 11th, yet the arch mage is entitled to a 13th-level fighter for his sword arm. In this case, the DM could roll for another sword arm, or he could decide that being a cleric and a magic-user was sufficient compensation for being a level or two short as a fighter.

Any sword arm attracted who is a cavalier or paladin has his normal complement of retainers or men-at-arms, who are required to swear allegiance to the wizard whom their master has decided to serve. This holds true for any rangers of a high enough level to have attracted their band of followers.

Policies and growth

The basic fact that the ruler of the weirding hold is a mighty wizard has a powerful influence upon every aspect of life within the holding, and it might even affect its relations with its neighbors. A wizard with a weirding hold, and especially one with a school of magic within the holding, is far more likely to rely heavily upon magic than upon the sheer brute force of men-at-arms. This is even more evident when the wizard is an elf or half-elf, or has a large population of elves or half-elves residing in the weirding hold.

While magic may be the driving force behind the weirding holds basic philosophy, it is still the ruling wizard who determines the policies under which it is governed. These policies are simplified statements of how the wizard views his subjects, his neighbors, and the world in general. A wizards policies can affect every facet of life in the weirding hold, but the most apparent influence is in the areas of taxation and population growth. The policies and their effects upon those two subjects are listed in Table 7. These are admittedly very basic pronouncements upon a great variety of possible policies. Even so, these policies tend to capture the essence of any possible outlook a wizard might have.

Table 3
Grades of Zero-Level Magic Students

XPS	Grade title	Accumulated hit points ¹	Saving throw penalty ²	Cantrips usable per day	Cantrips learnable per month
- 2,000 to - 1,001	Neophyte	1	- 3	1	1
- 1,000 to - 501	Initiate	2	- 2	2	2
-500 to -1	Apprentice	3	- 1	3	2

¹ Remember to add any constitution bonus.

² Zero-level magic students make all saving throws as a 1st-level magic-user, with the indicated penalty. In no case is their saving throw ever worse than that for a zero-level human.

inely care about the subjects they have come to rule. Such wizards take an active role in the many mundane affairs of the weirding hold. They truly desire promoting the well-being of their subjects and normally levy only enough taxes to help them maintain their stronghold and school of magic (if they have one). Relations with most neighboring states could be cordial or even close, although the alignments of the wizard and any neighboring rulers might determine otherwise.

There is much in a weirding hold to attract new settlers. Some people may be drawn by an interest in magic or an appreciation of what magic may provide for them. (Elves and half-elves can appreciate this more than most other races.) Others might be attracted by the low tax rate and the knowledge that their future liege is a benevolent ruler who is attempting to make life easier for them.

No restrictions should be placed on who may select this policy. Any good wizard could select it, as well as any neutral one. A lawful-evil wizard may well be benevolent towards those he rules, as long as they remain in their place. Even a chaotic-evil wizard could choose this policy, if it suits some purpose he has in mind.

Indifferent wizards are those who don't really care about their subjects (or much else for that matter, except magic). All they are truly interested in is magical research and study; the weirding hold is established only as a means for providing additional funds and security for their endeavors. An indifferent wizard delegates most of the administration of the weirding hold to his sword arm. In such a holding, this warrior may become the most important figure in the state, as far as the subjects are concerned. Relations with neighboring states may fluctuate because the wizard has no desire to offend them nor to curry their favor. Any wizard may select this policy, although it is difficult to envision a lawful-good wizard choosing it.

People who object to government playing too large a part in their lives could be

Table 4
Enrollment of New Students

Size of school	Replacement student	Annual new enrollment
Small	25%	60% for 1
Medium	35%	70% for 1-2
Large	50%	80% for 2-4

Table 5
Race of Wizard's Sword Arm

Wizard is:	Percentile dice score
Good human	01-85 human; 86-90 half-elf; 91-95 elf; 96-00 dwarf
Neutral human	01-80 human; 81-90 half elf; 91-00 elf
Evil human	01-85 human; 86-95 half-orc; 96-98 half-elf; 99-00 elf ¹
Elf	01-30 human; 31-50 half-elf; 51-00 elf

¹ This elf is actually a drow; if no drow exist in the campaign, treat this result as a half-elf.

attracted to a weirding hold run by an indifferent wizard. The key here is how the wizards sword arm runs things, because the indifferent wizard has given him free reign to do much as he wills. Others could be drawn here to harbor under the protection of a powerful wizard, and conduct affairs that might not be welcomed under the rule of a benevolent wizard, assuming the wizards sword arm is amenable.

Malevolent wizards are those who actually prey upon their subjects and neighbors. Their sole purpose in life is to increase their personal power, and they do their utmost to crush anyone or anything that stands in their way. Malevolent wizards burden their subjects with high taxes and oppress them with their harsh rule. Neighbors are viewed only as potential threats or as stepping stones to even greater power. Only evil and certain neutral wizards should be allowed to select this policy.

Few settlers are attracted to a weirding

hold ruled by a malevolent wizard. Those that are are of the same ilk as the wizard mostly evil humans and humanoids. These creatures risk throwing in their lot with the malevolent ruler because they desire much the same as he does, and hope that he will use them to oppress others.

No wizard is committed to the same policy forever, and he may change his policy at the beginning of any new year. A change of policy is a serious matter, though, and there should be a sound reason for any change. The initial policy selected by a wizard tends to affect the sort of creatures attracted to the weirding hold, and a radical change in policy could result in some unpleasantness, to say the least. Take the case of an evil wizard with hordes of humanoids dwelling in his weirding hold. If he were to wake up one bright morning and decide to become a benevolent autocrat, he might well find himself besieged by these erstwhile allies by lunchtime. On the other hand, an indif-

Table 6
Class of Wizard's Sword Arm

Sword arm is:	Percentile dice score
Human	01-75 fighter; 76-85 ranger ¹ ; 86-00 cavalier ²
Half-elf	01-85 fighter; 86-95 ranger; 96-00 cavalier ³
Elf	01-80 fighter; 81-90 ranger; 91-00 cavalier
Dwarf/Half-orc	01-00 fighter

¹ If the wizard is evil, treat all results of rangers as fighters.

² If the wizard is lawful good, there is a 25% chance that any cavalier attracted is actually a paladin.

³ See notes in text regarding demi-human sword arms.

Table 7
Weirding Hold Policies

Wizard's policy	Basic tax rate	Population growth modifier
Benevolent	5 sp	+1%
Indifferent	6 sp	0%
Malevolent	8 sp	-1%

ferent wizard who knows his weirding hold is in the path of a barbarian migration might change to a benevolent policy (in order to attract more new settlers and to rally the support of his neighbors) without unduly upsetting his subjects.

The basic tax rate is exactly that: the basic amount of taxes which may be collected from each individual residing within the weirding hold per month. The wizard has the option to raise or lower this rate by 1 or 2 sp, although few malevolent wizards are inclined to cut taxes. This variable tax rate gives the wizard some room to maneuver, enabling him to react to any situation that might arise.

Most populations tend to grow, and those of the weirding hold are no excep-

tion. During the time frame of the typical AD&D® game campaign, it would take a series of calamitous natural disasters, continuous warfare on a massive scale, or a real maniac for a ruler to actually cause the population of a state to decline. Once the original population of the weirding hold has been determined for tax purposes, the DM has the base number from which to determine population growth. The basic annual growth rate for a weirding hold is 2-5%. This figure may be modified by the wizard's policy in force during the previous year, and the following terrain modifiers:

+ 1% if the weirding hold is in the mountains or on the coast, due to the healthy climate; or,

- 1% if the weirding hold is in a marsh or desert, due to the unhealthy climate.

Use of all modifiers can result in an annual population growth for a weirding hold of 0-7%, depending upon the wizard's policy and terrain.

Example 1: A benevolent wizard rules a weirding hold in the mountains with a population of 2,240. At the start of the new year, 1d4 is rolled, resulting in 2, which is raised to 3 for the basic growth rate; + 1 is added for the wizard's benevolent policy and another + 1 because the weirding hold is located in the mountains. This results in a total population growth of +5%, meaning 112 new babies or immigrants are added to the population of the weirding hold.

Example 2: An indifferent wizard has a weirding hold in a forest with a population of 1,700. The 1d4 roll results in a score of 3, which is increased to 4, but no more because there are no additional modifiers which apply to this situation. The population of this weirding hold rises by 4%, adding 68 new residents.

Example 3: A malevolent wizard rules his desert weirding hold of 4,500 souls with an iron hand. The 1d4 roll is 2, which is increased to 3, then reduced to 2 because of the wizard's malevolent policy, and finally reduced to 1 because the weirding hold is in a desert. Population growth is 1%, or 45 new inhabitants.

As the population of the weirding hold grows over the years, the wizard might decide to increase his armed forces by enrolling some of his subjects into a standing militia. (This is another matter that must be worked out between DMs and players.) Wizards are not meant to be warlords, however; any build-up of domestic military forces should be kept quite small. Foreign mercenaries may still be hired in any number.

Incorporating schools of magic and weirding holds into a campaign is a good way to liven up the magic-user class. These institutions give higher-level magic-users something to work for other than the creation of magical items. They also open new vistas for lesser magic-users and even fighters. DMs find that whole new areas of campaigning open up before them. The chancellor of a new school of magic might discover that he has inadvertently infringed upon the territory of another school of magic, resulting in possible friction, competition, or even hostility between the two schools. The attempt to establish a weirding hold could be the center of a battle between good and evil for control of a certain area. Indeed, a penultimate battle between two weirding holds, each with its own school of magic and opposing alignment, gives the term "final exam" a brand new meaning. Ω

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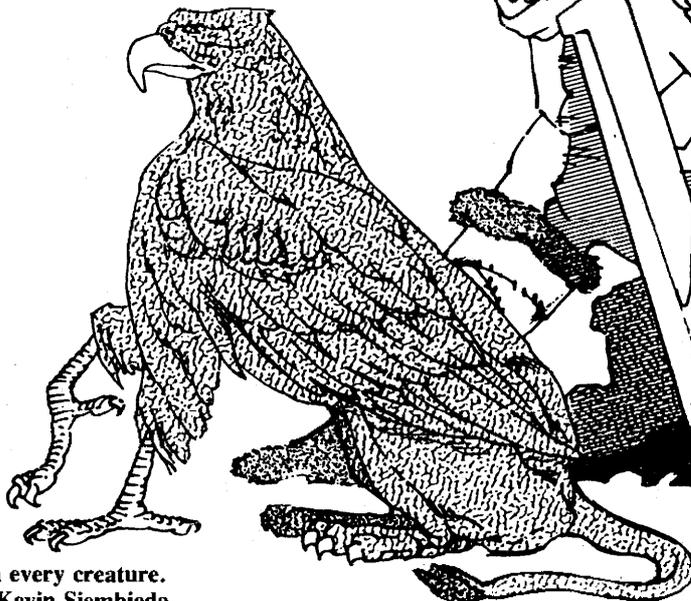
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Fire for Effect!

Magical fires are a lot hotter than you'd think

by Richard W. Emerich

Have you ever participated in an AD&D® game in which a magic-user's *fireball* is as selective as a cruise missile in its choice of targets? In which a *lightning bolt* arcs unerringly to hit only the monster among the circle of your attacking party members? In which the *flame strike* cast by the party cleric burns the monsters to ash, but leaves their possessions in an unaltered, cool-to-the-touch condition, failing to set the wooden furniture and wall paneling on fire?

Oftentimes, the DM and the players concentrate only on the damaging aspects and capabilities of the energy released from magical spells or natural abilities, disregarding other, inherently unavoidable results of their release. These "unavoidable" results are defined, examined, and discussed in this article in a game context, with a focus on the consequences of the released energy against the characters, their possessions, and their environment. A secondary focus is on gaming considerations for a more accurate, and perhaps safer, handling of energy-releasing magic and abilities by the player characters, and includes some recommendations for the DM concerning a more thorough handling of these treatments in the game. Two main categories of energy-releasing magic will be examined: *fire-based*, including spells such as *fireball* and *flame strike*, and abilities like red dragon breath or demon immolation; and *electricity-based*, such as the spells of *lightning bolt* and *call lightning*, as well as abilities like blue dragon breath.

Spells, breath weapons, and magical-device discharges all have prescribed ranges, durations, damage allotments, and areas of effect laid out in the *Players Handbook*, the *Dungeon Masters Guide*,

and the other official AD&D game books. Almost all DMs abide faithfully by these written constraints: a *lightning bolt* cast by a magic-user has a range of 60' plus an additional 10' per level of his experience; a red dragon's breath weapon extends in a cone 90' long; and a *fireball* from a *wand of fire* does precisely 6d6 hp damage against the recipients who fail to make their saving throws. These rules are usually followed, but what happens after the recipients of the *fireball's* heat mark off the damage on their character sheets? Do the PCs continue on or does the DM inform the players that they are now faced with the problem of putting out the fires which are consuming the PCs' clothing and leather goods, and have heated their armor to an intolerable level?

A good DM recognizes that the area of effect of a spell or ability is a *nonselective* characteristic, meaning that everything and everyone within it is unavoidably affected by the energy released. A poor DM allows a character to cast a *fireball* into a wooden building and not set the place on fire, lets a magic-user cast a *lightning bolt* as if it were laser-guided, and neglects to tell the unarmored recipient of a red dragon's breath that not only has he suffered serious wounds, but his clothing and gear are ablaze! In short, the nonselectivity of the energy-releasing magic's area of effect must be remembered when it comes time for the DM to judge who and what are affected by the released energy.

Into the inferno

In the case of fire-based magic, heat makes up the largest percentage of the energy released, and so characters and material goods within the area of effect suffer damage caused by heat exposure. A character's wounds are handled easily enough — the DM rolls the appropriate dice and calculates the character's damage. Too often, though, the process stops here.

The area of effect is *nonselective* by definition, so it should also affect the character's clothing, gear, treasure, and his immediate surroundings.

But how? There are no published, quantitative temperatures for the heat generated by something like a *fireball*, red dragon's breath, or even a normal bonfire. There are only some qualitative phrases in the AD&D® game books, such as the heat "will melt soft metals" and will ignite "all combustible materials within its blast radius."¹

To quantify and define the temperature ranges and capabilities of these fire-based magics, consider the temperatures at which normal fires burn. In the *DMG*, under the description of a *ring of fire resistance*, a "normal" fire is defined as the temperature at which torches or bonfires burn.² Using untreated wood as a guide, which burns at temperatures of 250-300°C (480-570°F),³ one can assign "normal" fires this range based upon the *DMG's* description. At these temperatures (up to three times the boiling point of water), cotton, wood, hemp, wool, and some leathers burn easily, so that a character forced to endure a "normal" fire soon finds his skin, clothing, and gear are burning!

Now, consider the category of "very large and hot" fires, listed as being produced by molten lava, demon immolation, or a *wall of fire* under the same description.⁴ Molten lava, depending upon its type and proximity to the volcanic crater, can be up to 750-1,100°C (1,380-2,000°F).⁵ Thus, according to the listed comparisons, a *wall of fire* and the like must produce an average temperature of about 925°C (1,700°F).

The last mentioned description qualifier under this reference is "exceptionally hot" fires, some examples of which are *fire storms*, *flame strikes*, *fireballs*, red dragon's breath, etc.⁶ Assuming that the increment between "very large and hot" and "exceptionally hot" fires is about the same as between "normal" and "very large and hot," one can assign a temperature range of 1,250-1,950°C (2,280-3,540°F) to "exceptionally hot" fires. On the average then, this classification of fire has a temperature of about 1,600°C, or 16 times that needed to boil water, with a peak of close to 2,000°C!

Think of what this means to a character caught in such an infernal environment! He is breathing superheated air sufficient to severely damage his lungs. Exposed clothing, leather goods, rope, armor, and treasure all conduct this heat, and those materials which reach or exceed the temperature needed for their combustion (i.e., flash point) burst into flames. This almost always includes the nonmetallic items carried by a character or in the immediate

vicinity of the area of effect, whereas metal goods probably suffer from superheating and melting. The character himself also conducts this heat and suffers wounds since his body cannot possibly stand such high temperatures.

Another ramification often overlooked or simply ignored when magical energy is released is the effect of this heat on the character's surrounding environment. Raising the temperature of a room filled with wood products from room temperature (20°C) to over six times its flash point, even if only for the brief time it takes to detonate a *fireball*, is more than sufficient for combustion to occur. Thus, fire-based magics, when used in most medieval homes and buildings, or outdoors within timberlands or brushlands, not only wound any opponents caught within the conflagration but may cause major (possibly uncontrollable) fires. This has the potential of bringing much harm down on the party of characters. Thus, PCs should carefully consider not only when and how to use such energy-releasing magic, but also what the effects and aftereffects are, and how to make preparations for dealing with them.

As previously mentioned, these temperatures can also affect metal goods by heating, rather than by igniting them. These metal goods can burn a character who attempts to handle or wear them. Temperatures can also affect metal goods by causing melting and deformation. Basic, unrefined iron, such as that often used in fashioning armor, weapons, and building materials, suffers melting and deformation in the extreme temperatures of "exceptionally hot" and, to some degree, "very large and hot" fires. Iron has a melting point of 1000-1,300°C, depending upon the purity and presence of trace elements.⁷ Metal doors, door frames, iron bands around crates, doors, gates, metal bracings, and metal weapons made of iron are all affected.

Imagine your party of PCs is trapped inside a room because the group's magician cast a *fireball* into the hallway on the opposite side of an iron door. The action separates the group from an overpowering force of nasties, but also deforms the door and causes it to stick fast from the intense heat! It's a horrible fate, but it and similar applications of the high temperatures produced by energy-releasing magic should be kept firmly in mind by the players as well as the DM.

Iron is not the only metal that suffers melting or deformation. Most treasure is made up of precious metals that have melting points in the same range as iron, and should be handled in a similar manner. Picture the following scenario:

After several grueling days in the dark-

ness of the catacombs, a party of adventurers near their goal: the lair of a huge, black dragon where untold treasure awaits! The thief scouts ahead and reports that the dragon is currently eating, lying on one side of a pile of gold and goodies.

The party moves quietly down the passage to a point at which the party sorcerer steps forward, *invisible* and wearing the thief's *boots of elvenkind*. He casts a *fireball* at the dragon to "soften him up." After the detonation occurs, the fighters charge up to do hand-to-hand combat, while the sorcerer prepares to zap any unobstructed part of the dragon with his *wand of lightning*.

The dragon, angered by this interruption of its dinner, turns toward the charging fighters and sprays its acid breath on one, then engages the others in hand-to-hand combat. The sorcerer sees an opportunity to use his wand and zaps the dragon's exposed flank, which rests atop the pile of treasure.

Soon, through team effort, the dragon is defeated. Now is the time to leisurely scoop up the loose treasure. . . .

If the DM allows the characters to simply "scoop up the loose treasure," then he has not fully recognized nor considered the effects of the magical energy released during the battle. Reviewing the temperatures produced by a *fireball*, an average of about 1,600°C, it is seen that the heat is sufficient to melt copper, gold, tin, and even platinum, to some degree, as described in the table appearing later in this article. In an impure state, as would be the case with metals of a medieval society, metals melt at considerably lower temperatures — perhaps as low as 100-400°C less. Silver, which has a pure-state melting point of 961°C and boils at about 2,000°C,⁸ becomes a liquid at the temperatures associated with "exceptionally hot" or "very large and hot" fires. If the heat persists for any length of time, as with a *fire storm* or *flame strike* spell, this liquid has a chance of flowing and coming in contact with other metals or objects, fusing the lot together upon cooling. Therefore, if any of these metals are present along the extreme edges of a pile of treasure and are exposed to these fires, the result is a melted, fused, and utterly deformed outer layer which, after cooling and hardening, requires a concerted effort on the part of the characters (with the appropriate tools) to chisel apart into manageable chunks. In the future, the players may wish to make different combat plans based upon these postulated temperatures and the applications of them on the characters and material goods, now that a more involved and definitive handling has been discussed.

Some shocking news

This brings us to the second main category of energy-releasing magic originally put forth: that which is based on electricity. The energy released in this case usually takes the form of a discharged bolt of raw power, such as that produced by a *lightning bolt* spell, blue dragon's breath, or by a spell of *call lightning*. Treatments of these forms of electricity usually stress the heat- and force-generating capabilities more than the voltages associated with these forms in the AD&D® game.

Like fire-based energy releasing magic, no quantitative listing of the temperatures associated with a *lightning bolt* or blue dragon's breath are provided by the AD&D® game books. Instead, phrases explaining that such attacks will "melt metals with a low melting point" and "set fire to combustibles"⁹ do not give the DM or player a good handle on the temperatures produced by an electrical discharge. They do, however, show that any such attack will "sunder wooden doors" and "splinters up to one foot thickness of stone,"¹⁰ thus clearly qualifying its force-generating power.

It should be safe to assume that, because lightning attacks (like *fireball* spells) melt metals with low melting points such as "lead, gold, copper, silver, and bronze,"¹¹ the temperatures produced by a discharge of lightning should be roughly equivalent to an "exceptionally hot" fire. Therefore, lightning bolts from spells and nature, and those produced by an innate ability, should all cause the same effects already discussed for the fire-based ones, as well as create a powerful force on impact. Use simple common sense to determine what this force might feasibly do against a wall, a suit of plate mail, a large shield, a wag on, or a wooden gate. Also remember that most of these magic spells and abilities, like their fire-based counterparts, affect anything within their areas of effect to some degree.

Note the use of the phrase "to some degree" in the previous paragraph. This is used because the rules stipulate "that magic items and even normal items and weapons must be saved for"¹² and that a saving throw "represents the chance for the figure (character) to avoid the cruel results of fate"¹³ The point of defining the approximate temperatures of the fire- and electricity-based energy releases is to allow a more thorough handling of the effects and aftereffects set off by the DM and the players. It is not meant to imply that saving throws are no longer useful nor applicable. Saving throws are an important aspect of the game and should be used, but this does not mean that the DM needs to roll to determine the fate of every piece of equipment, furniture, cloth-

Melting and Boiling Points of Pure Metals and Alloys

Metal	Melting point (°C)	Boiling point (°C)
Pure metals		
Copper	1,083	2,595 ¹⁵
Gold	1,064	2,700 ¹⁶
Iron	1,000-3,000 ^a	3,000 ¹⁷
Lead	327	1,740 ¹⁸
Platinum	1,774	3,827 ¹⁹
Silver	961	2,000 ²⁰
Tin	232	2,507 ²¹
Zinc	420	908 ²²
Alloys		
Brass, red ^b	985-1,000	2,435-2,450 ²³
Brass, yellow ^c	931	2,400 ²⁴
Bronze, high ^d	1,000-1,017	2,483-2,500 ²⁵
Electrum ^e	1,000	2,500 ²⁶
AD&D® game alloys		
Adamantite ^f	3,410	5,900 ²⁷
Iron, meteorite ^g	1,500	3,300 ²⁸
Mithral ^h	1,800	3,900 ²⁹

^a Depends upon the trace elements present.

^b Alloy composed of 80% copper and 20% zinc. Melting point varies due to trace elements. Boiling point is estimated.

^c Alloy composed of 70% copper and 30% zinc. Boiling point is estimated. Red brass was commonly used in medieval society.

^d Alloy composed of copper and up to 25% tin (plus traces of silicon). Melting points vary by tin and silicon content (the low figure means more of each is present). Boiling points are estimated.

^e Alloy composed of gold and silver. Melting and boiling points are estimated, based upon data for gold and silver.

^f Alloy composed of mithral silver and iron (meteorite or other). Melting and boiling points are estimated, based upon data for titanium.³⁰

^g Alloy composed of iron and carbon, among other rare or unknown metals. Melting and boiling points are estimated, based upon data for iron.

^h Alloy composed of adamantite and iron (meteorite or other). Melting and boiling points are estimated, based upon data for tungsten.³¹

Note: A temperature of X°C may be converted to Y°F by the formula: (X + 17.78) X 1.8 = Y

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 105.

¹³ *Dungeon Masters Guide*, p. 80.

¹⁴ *Players Handbook*, p. 73.

¹⁵ *The Merck Index*, p. 358.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 648.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 735.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 776.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1085.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1221.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1353.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 1455.

²³ *Perry's Chemical Engineers' Handbook*, secs. 23-5, 23-41.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, secs. 23-5, 23-42.

²⁶ *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, p. 402.

²⁷ *Dungeon Masters Guide*, p. 164.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *The Merck Index*, p. 1356.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1402.

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Ω

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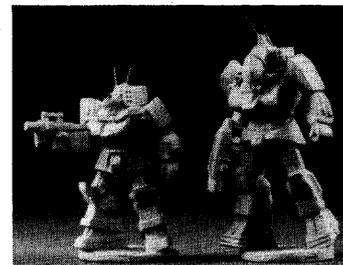
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by Harold Dolan

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All submissions to this column should be on clean white paper, double-spaced, in clear type or word-processor print. Particular spells may be tied to a previously published world in an AD&D® or D&D® game product — such as Oerth, Krynn, the Forgotten Realms, or Kara-Tur of the AD&D® game; or the Known World and Blackmoor lands of the D&D® game. Spell descriptions should each be no more than five pages long, and the pages should be numbered and fixed together with a staple or paper clip. The authors address should appear on the first page of each submission. We may sort out spells and print them in various groups (all magic-user spells, all spells dealing with water, etc.), so don't count too much on seeing all of your submissions run together as their own group.

Spell descriptions should be complete and carefully worked out to cover all possible uses (and abuses), and each spell should be balanced in terms of level and effect. Please send no more than six spells per submission. Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you wish your material to be returned; we cannot be responsible for submissions without SASEs. Magical items, unless closely tied with the spells given, are used in the "Bazaar of the Bizarre" column. — RM

The Arch-Mage Avissar Fire-Eye is remembered as one of the most powerful magic-users of legend in his world. Tales

tell of his many adventures and exploits, but it is a little-known fact that late in his life, when he grew weary of traveling, he settled in the Valley of Lanshaw and founded a school for wizards there. Avissar specialized in pyromancy — magic dealing with fire, smoke, heat, and light. As a result, the school came to be known as the Academy of Fire Magic.

Avissar recorded on scrolls many of the spells created by himself and his pupils. On his death, he was succeeded as Master of the Academy by Mellix Kabiryn, his greatest student. The Academy prospered in Mellix's time; many scrolls of spells were added to Avissar's collection, and they became known as the Fire-Eye Scrolls.

Mellix was succeeded by Fallion of the Torch, who was fated to be the last of the Academy's Masters. Fallion was fond of experiments, and his goal was to develop the ultimate magical explosive. In the end, he half succeeded; he lost control of his experiment, and the resulting explosion was colossal. The entire Academy was destroyed, and the surrounding countryside was devastated by fire.

But the Fire-Eye Scrolls survived, for they were stored in a great trunk made of steel and enchanted to resist all harm. The trunk was found in the ruins of the Academy by a band of adventurers. It passed through many hands, and a great many scrolls were lost or stolen before the chest was purchased by the Mages' Guild of the city of Val Dalya.

Only nine of the original Fire-Eye Scrolls remain in the library of the Mages' Guild. Eight of the scrolls contain spells invented by the pupils and Masters of the Academy of Fire Magic. The last scroll contains a description of the *Fire-Eye*, a magical item of great power once possessed by the Arch-Mage Avissar Fire-Eye himself. Avissar was always very possessive and secre-

tive when it came to the *Fire-Eye*, and it was never discovered after his death. The description was scribed by Mellix Kabiryn, who had the confidence of the Arch-Mage and doubtless knew of the Fire-Eye's powers, but even Mellix could not discover the whereabouts of the item after Avissar's demise.

Descriptions of the eight spells and the great *Fire-Eye* follow.

Flare (Evocation)

Level: 1
Range: 0
Duration: 1 segment
AE: *Special*

Components: V,S
CT: 2 segment
ST: None

Explanation/Description: This spell is typically used for long-range signaling outdoors. It produces a streak of intense light that shoots straight up into the air from the caster's index finger and remains visible for one full segment. It is equally visible in daylight or darkness, and can be seen from as far away as 5 miles, plus 1 mile per level of experience the caster has attained.

A *flare* may be used to indicate the position of the magic-user and his party, or it may be used to transmit simple messages. Since the *flare's* color is controlled by the caster, a simple code may be devised for signaling between an army and its scouting parties. For instance, a red flare might indicate that an enemy is near, a yellow one might mean that the enemy is retreating, etc.

Smokescreen (Evocation)

Level: 2
Range: 8"
Duration: 2 rnds/lvl
AE: 10'/lvl-radius sphere

Components: V,S,M
CT: 2 segments
ST: ½

Explanation/Description: This spell causes a large sphere of thick, black smoke to appear. The smoke created always floats 2' above the ground, so that creatures outside this area may breathe normally. Otherwise, creatures in the area of effect take 2-5 hp damage per round due to smoke inhalation; half damage is taken if a save vs. spells is successful.

It is not possible to see into or through the area affected by a *smokescreen*, and visibility within this area is reduced to 3'. This reduced visibility makes combat difficult; "to hit" rolls are made at - 3 on the dice.

A *gust of wind* repels a *smokescreen* but cannot disperse it. The material component of this spell is a pinch of soot.

Enchanted Torch (Alteration)

Level: 3
Range: *Touch*
Duration: *Perm.*
AE: *One torch*

Components: V,S,M
CT: 1 round
ST: None

Explanation/Description: The material

components of this spell are an ordinary torch and a pinch of phosphorus. When the spell is cast, the phosphorus is sprinkled over the torch, causing it to be ignited with a flame that burns indefinitely. The torch illuminates a 40' radius.

An *enchanted torch* cannot be extinguished by wind, or even by a *gust of wind* spell; nor will it go out if the torch is dropped. It may be extinguished by submersion in water, lack of oxygen, or *dispel magic*. The enchantment of this spell is not transferable; i.e., a torch, campfire, or pool of oil ignited by an enchanted torch burns and can be extinguished just as an ordinary fire would.

Mellix's Fire Mouth (Alteration/ Evocation)

Level: 3 Components: V,S,M
Range: *Touch* CT: 3 segments
Duration: Special ST: ½
AE: *One object*

Explanation/Description: Mellix Kabiryn devised this interesting variation on the second-level magic-user spell *magic mouth*. When this spell is cast, an object is empowered with an enchanted mouth which suddenly appears and breathes fire when a specific condition is met. The cone of fire emitted by a *fire mouth* is 15' in length, and measures 1' at the tip and 10' at the base. The cone is always emitted perpendicular to the surface upon which this spell is cast, so its victim must be standing directly in front of it to be affected. The spell is activated when a specific type of creature (named beforehand by the caster) passes directly in front of the enchanted object, which could be a statue, chest, wall, door, or whatever. Alternately, if no specific creature is named beforehand, the spell activates the first time any creature steps in front of it. The victim struck by the cone of fire emitted by a *fire mouth* takes 3-18 hp damage, plus 1 hp per level of the caster.

This spell normally functions but once, then expires, but it may be used in conjunction with the eighth-level spell *permanency*. The material components are a drop of oil, a pinch of sulfur, and one tooth or scale from a red dragon.

Fallion's Fabulous Fireball (Evocation)

Level: 5 Components: V,S,M
Range: 10" + 1"/level CT: 4 segments
Duration: *Instant* ST: ½
AE: *Variable (see below)*

Explanation/Description: The wizard Fallion devised this variation of the third-level magic-user spell *fireball* for use in close quarters or in twisting dungeon passages. It differs from the original *fireball* in two respects:

First, the area of effect is variable, ranging from ½-2" radius sphere. This allows

the caster to use it in cramped areas without fear of being engulfed in his own spell. The exact area of effect must be stated during spell-casting, but it need not be specified before memorization of the spell.

Second, *Fallion's fabulous fireball* may maneuver around corners prior to detonating. The *fabulous fireball* may turn one corner for every two levels of experience the spell-caster has attained. The magic-user must specify the path which the *fabulous fireball* is to take during casting, but (again) this need not be known prior to memorization. Thus, the magic-user might state that the *fireball* is to travel 50', turn 90° to the right, travel 20', turn 45° to the left, travel 30' more, then detonate. If the *fabulous fireball* contacts an object before completing its path, it detonates there. Living beings caught in the path must individually save vs. spells to avoid the spell's path, saving a second time against its effects if the first saving throw is failed. Duration is considered to be instantaneous no matter how complex the *fireball's* path is to be. Range may never exceed the maximum limit of 10" plus 1" per level of the caster.

In all other respects, including damage, material components, and saving throw, this spell is identical to the 3rd-level spell *fireball*.

Fire Phantom (Conjuration/ Summoning)

Level: 3 Components: V,S,M
Range: 3" CT: 1 round
Duration: 3 rnds/lvl ST: None
AE: *Special*

Explanation/Description: This is a spell used to summon one of the weaker types of fire elementals: the fire phantom. The summoned creature has 2 +2 HD, AC 5, MV 12", and can be hit by ordinary, nonmagical weaponry. The fire phantom attacks once per round for 1-8 hp damage, and can ignite any combustible materials upon contact. The physical appearance of a fire phantom is a fiery outline of a vaguely humanoid form, 7' in height. The phantom must always remain within 30' of the spell-caster; if it moves beyond this range the spell expires. Materials set aflame by the fire phantom continue to burn normally after the phantom is gone.

The fire phantom (being of low intelligence) follows all commands given by its summoner as long as the magic-user concentrates on controlling it. If the spell-caster's concentration is broken, the phantom immediately attacks the summoner. Otherwise, the fire phantom remains until it is destroyed or until the spell's duration expires, whereupon it vanishes. Note that any more powerful creature from the Elemental Plane of Fire can dismiss the fire phantom at will, or

even turn it upon its summoner, regardless of other circumstances.

The material component of this spell is a pint of oil which must be poured out and ignited during the casting of the spell.

Avissar's Flaming Weapon (Alteration)

Level: 8 Components: V,S,M
Range: *Touch* CT: 1 round
Duration: *See below* ST: None
AE: *One weapon*

Explanation/Description: The Arch-Mage Avissar himself created a spell which can cause any nonmagical, hand-held, bladed weapon to perform with the powers of a sword, + 1 *flame tongue* (as per the weapon in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, page 165). Thus, the weapon temporarily gains a + 1 enchantment and has a + 2 bonus vs. regenerating creatures, + 3 vs. cold-using, inflammable, or avian creatures, and +4 vs. undead. A weapon so enchanted sheds light upon command, and its flame easily ignites oil, burns webs, and sets fire to parchment, paper, dry wood, etc. The magic-user may cast this spell on another's weapon as easily as on his own. The material component is a ruby of at least 1,000 gp value, which vanishes upon expiration of the spell's duration. If cast upon weapons other than swords (i.e., cutlasses, daggers, knives, etc.), the base damage of the weapon is retained, and the magical bonuses are simply added to it.

Hellfire (Evocation)

Level: 9 Components: V,S,M
Range: *Touch* CT: 1 round
Duration: *Perm.* ST: None
AE: *One creature*

Explanation/Description: The Arch-Mage Avissar is also said to have personally devised this deadly enchantment; further, it is said that the Arch-Mage met his end on the vengeful point of the sword wielded by the brother of the spell's first victim. Thus, the spell is often referred to as *Avissar's Bane*.

Hellfire may be cast but once per week due to the strain placed on the spell-caster. It requires that the spell-caster touch his victim (as a hit in melee), and it may affect any single creature, subject to the following conditions: It will not affect creatures that may be hit only by magical weaponry; fire-based creatures, undead, and creatures from planes other than the Prime Material Plane cannot be affected; and, the victim's hit dice/level may not exceed the spell-caster's level.

There is no saving throw vs. *hellfire*; however, magic resistance is effective.

The victim of *Avissar's Bane* suffers the following effects:

1. The victim's hit-point total is reduced to 1 permanently; thus, any wound results in unconsciousness or death.

2. The victim is in constant agony; he feels as if he is being burned alive, and he sweats continuously.

3. The victim is exhausted, and any fighting is done at -4 on "to hit" and damage rolls.

4. There is a 15% (noncumulative) chance per hour that the victim will be overcome by pain and become unconscious, only to awaken 1-4 hours later, still in agony. This chance increases to 40% if the victim engages in combat or other strenuous activity for more than 15 minutes of any single hour. Each time this occurs, there is a 1% cumulative chance per round thereafter that the victim dies.

These effects are permanent and will end only with the death of the spell's victim. The effects of hellfire cannot be negated, save by an act of the gods, a wish spell, or by the will of the magic-user who cast the spell originally. The material components are a drop of oil, a pinch of sulfur, a powdered ruby of at least 5,000 gp value, and the horn of a greater devil (horned devil, ice devil, or pit fiend).

The casting of this spell is considered an evil act, as it draws negative heat energy from the Nine Hells directly into the victim

for purposes of causing suffering. Use of this spell might entail severe consequences if alignment is violated.

The Fire-Eye

Avisar Fire-Eye derived his name from a powerful and unique magical item of his own devising. The Fire-Eye is a monocle fabricated by the Arch-Mage and endowed with unique powers. Its lens is smooth and transparent, and measures 1" in diameter; it is reputed to be a gemstone of unearthly origin, dug from the crater of a meteorite. This lens is enclosed in a circle of mithral and the whole is hung on a mithral chain of the finest craftsmanship. The gem and chain alone are worth 7,500 gp if sold, but if the monocle's magical properties are known it can be sold for up to 75,000 gp.

The eight magical functions of the *Fire-Eye* are detailed below. Unless otherwise noted, all spell powers are performed at the 18th level of ability.

1. Mere possession of the monocle confers immunity to the harmful effects of normal fire and gives the possessor a +3 bonus to all saving throws vs. magical fire attacks,

2. When the monocle is worn over the

right eye, the wearer gains the use of *infravision* and *detect invisibility*, as per the magic-user spells of the same names at the 18th level of ability.

The next three powers may be used at will, one at a time, but only when the monocle is worn over the left eye.

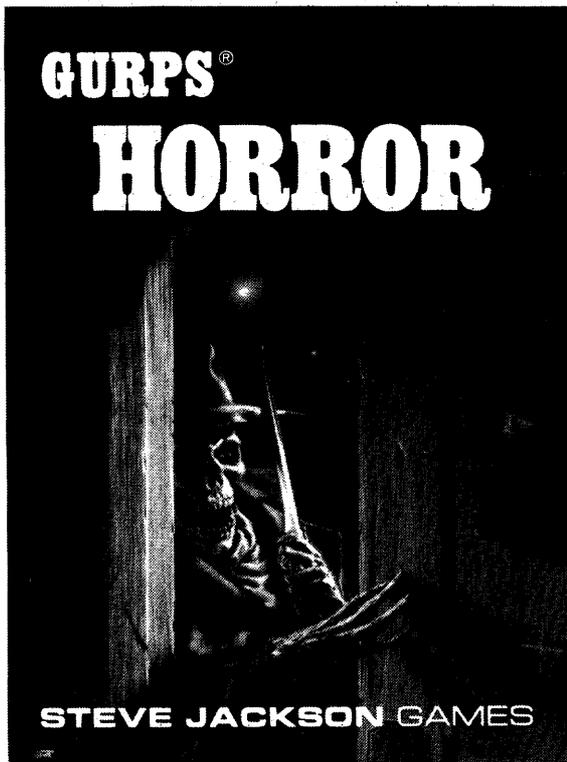
3. Twice per day, the Fire-Eye can emit a 9-HD *fireball* with a 9" range.

4. Five times per day, the monocle can emit a *ray of fire* which ignites any nonliving, combustible material it contacts (save vs. magical fire applicable). The range of a *ray of fire* is 12"; duration is instantaneous.

5. Three times per day, the *Fire-Eye* can emit a *ray of melting*. The range of the *ray* is 9", and it persists for up to five segments. It can melt 4 cubic feet of normal ice, or 2 cubic feet of magical ice, per segment.

6. If the *Fire-Eye* is held by the end of its chain and slowly rocked back and forth, it hums softly and glows. If it is then held before the eyes of any single creature, that creature must save vs. spells at -4 or become hypnotized, remaining motionless and staring at the monocle for one full turn. During this time, the victim is sub-

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ject to a single suggestion (as per the illusionist spell hypnosis) from the monocle's wielder, with no saving throw vs. spells applicable for the *suggestion* itself. This enchantment is so powerful, however, that it is possible for the Fire-Eye's wielder to become entranced as well. Whenever this power is used, the possessor must save vs. spells at +3. If he fails, he is entranced for one turn and is therefore unable to make any suggestion to his victim; if the save is successful, he is unaffected.

7. When it is clutched and a command word uttered, the monocle can *teleport* its possessor once per week as per the magic-user spell of the same name. There is no chance of error, and up to 10,000 gp weight may be *teleported* along with the possessor of the monocle.

8. The monocle generates a magical field which nullifies the power of all other magical items held by its possessor. Such items regain their former powers after being outside the monocle's field of influence for one full day. This last function seems to be an innate power of the alien gemstone which forms the lens of the *Fire-Eye*, as Avissar would certainly not have desired such a baneful power himself. Ω

(continued from page 3)

longer in melee (not that it helped).

Everyone joined in with mock outrage, and Harley was quickly moved up to the lead position in the party. Battered but still hanging in there, the group moved on — and then we found The Door. It looked like any other dungeon door to us, and we listened to it and, heard nothing behind it, so we figured it was safe. With a great show of confidence, Harley opened The Door, and a giant snake came out and bit him, and Harley died.

I was mad. I was mad at everyone for making Harley walk in front of the group, I was mad at the DM for having a stupid giant snake in the dungeon, and I was mad because it hurt to lose the only character I'd ever had that was worth a darn. I said something in a mad tone of voice and walked off into the kitchen to watch several other gamers fight a naval miniatures battle.

It took some time to cool off, and when I did, something slowly began to dawn on me.

I was being a jerk.

It was a game. Harley was a piece

of paper (a beloved piece of paper, yes, but still a piece of paper). The gamers in the other room were my friends. The DM was one of my friends, too. Everybody else had lost at least one character in the past just as beloved as Harley, but they still enjoyed themselves.

I went back and rolled up another character, carefully putting Harley's character sheet away in my notebook (I never did like tearing up character sheets). I forget whether I remembered to apologize for being a jerk; I hope I did. And I went on to have a good time anyway.

That was 10 years ago, and it is strange to think that I actually learned something about maturity in a role-playing game, but you have to grab your lessons when you can. A few years ago, I was playing in another group when my 16th-level half-ogre Grond was made into a crispy critter during a minor altercation with a death slaad and an arch-mage, and I remember the looks on the other gamers' faces when they watched for my reaction. I felt a little sad, but it didn't matter. Grond had had a good life. I asked

(continued on page 93)

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Yoshitsune



by Matt Iden

Few things are more interesting in a culture's mythology than that culture's heroes, and few civilizations have a richer list of heroes than those of the Orient. An article such as this would have been of little use in the AD&D® game a few years ago, but with the advent of *Oriental Adventures*, many new avenues were

opened. Although the following heroes are but a small sample of the Oriental store of mythos, these and the ones in *Legends & Lore* should keep a Dungeon Master quite happy. Any one of these heroes can be used as mentors, partners, or even as opponents for characters at higher levels.

The following are four heroes, three of which are Japanese. Many Chinese heroes ascend into heaven long before death, thus narrowing the list of available characters

By popular demand, we are starring a new DRAGON® Magazine column for role-playing gamers: "Lords & Legends," a collection of heroes and heroines for use in all TSR role-playing game campaigns as NPC adventure generators or as special PCs, at the DM's discretion. "Lords & Legends" is open to submissions from our readers, though these guidelines must be followed:

All submissions to this column should be on clean white paper double-spaced, in clear type or word-processor print. If references were used to create the characters, the references must be included with the submission. We cannot and will not accept characters taken from copyrighted sources. Thus, we prefer either PCs or NPCs from role-playing campaigns. Characters may be tied to a specific game world — such as Oerth, Krynn, the *Forgotten Realms*, or Kara-Tur of the AD&D® game; the *Known World* and *Blackmoor* lands of the D&D® game; the *Earth of the GAMMA WORLD®* game; and, the *Frontier of the STAR FRONTIERS®* game.

from that source. Hsu Hsun is the one Chinese hero listed herein; he reached hero status long before his ascension.

Note that *Oriental Adventures* characters are very complex. The special abilities

Yoshitsune

Male human

13th-level kensai, 6th-level monk

ARMOR CLASS: 0 (*kensai* abilities; no armor)

MOVE: 20" (*monk* ability)

HIT POINTS: 95

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 (*with katana*) or by *martial-arts style* (plus ½ additional attacks)

ATTACK BONUSES: + 7 to hit (*for strength and kensai abilities*)

DAMAGE/ATTACK: **By weapon type** (*katana*, + 8 *for strength and kensai skill*) or by *martial-arts style* (+2 hp damage)

SPECIAL ABILITIES: + 3 on initiative; +4 on AC bonus; can do maximum damage 13 times per day with ki power; + 2 to *psychic duel*; immune to fear, haste, slow, and disease; surprised on 1 in 1d6; whirlwind attack vs. all within 10' once per day; can use two weapons simultaneously; cause fear as a samurai; meditate as a shukenja; use ki to reduce magical attack effects six times per day;

Legends

characters and adventures

Benkei

Character descriptions should each be no more than five pages long, and the pages should be numbered and fixed together with a staple or paper clip. The author's name and address should appear on the first page of each character submission. We may sort out characters and print them in various groups (all thieves, all halflings, all mutant squirrels, etc.), so don't count on seeing all of your submissions run together as their own group.

Descriptions should be complete and contain notes on personalities, special abilities, goals, and possible adventures relating to that character. Please send no more than six characters per submission. Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you wish your characters to be returned; we cannot be responsible for submissions without SASEs.

POLYHEDRON™ Newszine has a feature similar to this one, called "The New Rogues Gallery." If you wish your submissions to be considered for that periodical as well as for this one, please note this on your cover letter. — RM

particular to the classes noted herein have not been completely outlined, and the appropriate sections of *Oriental Adventures* should be studied before using these characters.

Speak with animals; 74% resistant to ESP; can fall 30' without injury if within 4' of a wall; can simulate death for 12 turns; +1 on all saving throws (+3 vs. will-force attacks)

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful neutral*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

MONK ABILITIES:

OL: 47% FT: 45% MS: 47%

HS: 37% HN: 20% CW: 90%

S: 18(75) I: 16 W: 16
D: 19 C: 17 CH: 18 CO: 16
HONOR: 96

Yoshitsune, the youngest brother of two other warriors, was destined to be a hero. Yoshitsune's family lost a civil war to a rival family; as a result, young Yoshitsune was banished to a monastery by the Pacific Ocean. There, under the assumed name



Ushiwaka, he vowed to avenge his family's humiliation. Knowing that the first step to revenge was in becoming an accomplished swordsman, the young boy practiced in a forest outside his monastery each night.

One night, during this strenuous regimen, Yoshitsune was visited by a chief of the supernatural tengu, So-jo-bo. Admiring the boy's perseverance, So-jo-bo assigned his best swordsmen to teach him. Owing to Yoshitsune's previous practice and sub-

stantial abilities, he was soon more than a match for any of the tengu. He was then taught the ways of military strategy by So-jo-bo himself.

Now a complete warrior, Yoshitsune did not forget that the divinities would play a large role in his scheme. To appease these divinities, Yoshitsune traveled to Miyako, the town outside his monastery, every night after his tutorship with the tengu to pay homage to the gods. To hide the fact



that he was a monk, Yoshitsune wore a veil, something which intrigued all of the people of Miyako — particularly a sohei named Benkei (q.v.).

Benkei, wanting to know if this was some supernatural creature, challenged Yoshitsune. The tengu's training came in handy, and Yoshitsune easily defeated Benkei without harming him. Benkei then humbly asked to serve as Yoshitsune's retainer.

With the aid of his two older brothers, Yoshitsune went on to exact his revenge and crush the rival family. Unfortunately, this was the peak of his career, as his eldest brother became jealous of his success and drove Yoshitsune out of the country. From that point on, Yoshitsune's life became a series of misfortunes. Yoshitsune's tale is not remembered so much for these problems as for the nobility and stoicism with which he faced them.

Yoshitsune, if encountered by the characters, will be seen as a quiet but very noble person. If the above story is used in the lands of Kozakura, Yoshitsune could well be encountered anywhere, since he and his few retainers often wear disguises to avoid his brother's wrath. Otherwise, Yoshitsune (and his retainer, Benkei) can

be encountered as any other noble or adventurer would.

Benkei

Male human
8th-level sohei

ARMOR CLASS: 2 (*dexterity and chain mail*)

MOVE: 9" (*chain mail*)

HIT POINTS: 65

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3/2 (*with weapon*)

ATTACK BONUS: +1 to hit with katana, or as per other device

DAMAGE/ATTACK: By weapon type (*katana, +2 for strength and weapon of choice bonus, or as per other device*)

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Focus ki for 1 turn/day for numerous attack and defensive bonuses, as per sohei; use ki for fanatic combat past 0 hp

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful neutral*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

S: 17 I: 14 W: 14
D: 17 C: 16 CH: 16 CO: 12
HONOR: 81

Benkei is Yoshitsune's sidekick and retainer. He is totally faithful to him (his last action is to be killed while battling his master's enemies). Although a sohei, Benkei left the monastery to look for adventure. As a result, he cannot cast any spells nor attract other sohei; his loyalty to his master, though, allows him to use his ki power normally and to fight on after reaching 0 hp. His sohei weapon of choice is the katana, but he also possesses a *rod of smiting*.

Benkei is a jovial man and serves as a light counterbalance to the solemn Yoshitsune. He welcomes tales told by travelers and is quite friendly, though cautious after years of being hunted.

Hsu Hsun

Male human
23rd-level wu jen, 9th-level shukenja

ARMOR CLASS: 5 (*dexterity and studded leather armor*)

MOVE: 12"

HIT POINTS: 52

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 (*with weapon*) or as per spell

ATTACK BONUS: Nil unless with magical device or spell

DAMAGE/ATTACK: By weapon type (*any allowed*) or by spell

SPECIAL ABILITIES: May cast wu jen spells while wearing armor (*unique ability*); 45% chance to remove any curse; use ki to add +3 to saving throws nine times per day, as per shukenja; can meditate and sanctify area as per shukenja; immune to first- and second-level illusion/phantasm spells due to high intelligence; use ki to add +3 to initiative for 1 round/day and to cast any one spell at maximum effect once per day, as per wu jen; spell bonuses for 18 wisdom; +4 saving throw vs. will-force attacks

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 25% (*unique ability*)

ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic good*

PSIONIC ABILITY: 300 (*unique ability*)

Attack/Defense Modes: All/All

S: 10 I: 20 W: 18
D: 16 C: 16 CH: 18 CO: 16
HONOR: 100

Hsu Hsun's early life had quite an innocuous beginning when compared to the power he eventually achieved. Although he studied the occult arts as a young boy, Hsu Hsun was required to interrupt his studies to take up the office of magistrate. This did not last for very long, and soon Hsu Hsun returned to his home. From there, he went to a range of nearby mountains to study the magic that had been taught to him by his mentor. After a time, Hsu Hsun perfected the art and was thus able to help his province, slaying dragons and ending a drought by having a rock gush water.

Hsu Hsun is confident of his powers, but he is not particularly aloof; he is willing to help those in trouble. Hsu Hsun does not appreciate characters invading his mountain home, however, and deals with them as any angry magic-user would. Hsu Hsun places little value on wealth, though he does own magical items which he keeps for their utility rather than their worth. This collection includes a *diamond mace* and a *mallet of luck*.

Miyamoto Musashi

Male human
15th-level kensai

ARMOR CLASS: 0 (*kensai abilities; no armor*)

MOVE: 15" (*unique ability*)

HIT POINTS: 121

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3 (*with katana and wakizashi or with boku-toh; unique ability*) or 5/2 (*with any other sword*)

ATTACK BONUSES: +10 with *katana, wakizashi, or boku-toh (unique ability)*; +8 with any other sword

DAMAGE/ATTACK: **By weapon type** (*katana and wakizashi, or boku-toh — +11 for strength and kensai skill*)

SPECIAL ABILITIES: +3 on initiative; +4 on AC bonus; use ki to do maximum damage 15 times per day; +2 to psychic duel; surprised 1 in 1d6; whirlwind attack vs. all within 10' once per day; can use two weapon simultaneously; cause fear as a samurai; meditate as a shukenja; immune to fear; +1 on all saving throws (+2 vs. will-force attacks)

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful neutral*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

S: 18(00) I: 14 W: 15
D: 19 C: 18 CH: 16 CO: 14
HONOR: 100

Miyamoto Musashi, also known as the Sword Saint, is perhaps the greatest hero in Japanese history. The tales of his prowess and swordsmanship have been commemorated in numerous paintings, diaries, and folk tales. Even after 300 years, Musashi is still a popular figure in Japanese literature. Though he actually lived, his legend has grown larger with the passing of time.

An orphan from age seven, young Musashi was raised by his uncle, a sohei. His aggressive nature was encouraged by his uncle, and it led Musashi to learn the ways of kendo (swordsmanship). Using his newfound skill well, Musashi claimed his first victory at the age of 13. Musashi's next victory came at 16 — at which point, he embarked on his warrior's journey across all of Japan.

This journey took up most of Musashi's life, leading him to more than 60 individual encounters (all of which he won) and



sending him to war six times. At the age of 20, Musashi stopped using real swords, opting for a pair of boku-toh instead. In this way, Musashi devoted himself to finding the Way — the spiritual aspect of kendo. Eventually, after traveling and fighting for many years, Musashi took up residence in a cave and wrote his life's testament, *A Book of Five Rings*, the final summary of all his knowledge.

Depending on the time period in which the DM places Musashi, PCs may have a tough time recognizing him as a swordsman, let alone a master. In his later years, Musashi's appearance reflects his single-minded dedication to learning the Way; at this point in his life, he appears as a rough, uncouth man — perhaps an unemployed bushi. Musashi rarely has time to do anything but learn, but like most nobles, he has other, more delicate interests as well. He is a skilled poet, artist, and sculptor, and enjoys talking to shukenjas.

Musashi's favorite weapons are swords, particularly the katana and wakizashi, which he uses together. As stated above, after a certain time period, Musashi

resorts to using a pair of boku-toh (which are dangerous enough in his hands). While never refusing a fight, Musashi will not usually initiate a psychic duel.

Although constantly learning himself, Musashi is not averse to teaching what he knows. Any kensai or samurai who is hardy enough to keep up with Musashi will gain 200 xp per week of travel with him for up to four weeks' time (and will be assured of seeing some action). Musashi must, however, be courted just as a martial arts master (page 106, *Oriental Adventures*), since he knows just how valuable his teaching can be.

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Gamers Around the World



Putting the World Gamers Guide to use

by Heather Gemmen

For DRAGON® Magazine readers who live too far away from other gamers to play role-playing games regularly, or who live where there are few (if any) other gamers, the World Gamers Guide is a source for contacting gamers in the same

situation. Whether through conversing at conventions or by writing letters, meeting fellow gamers is rewarding. The latter isn't as easy, however, and can be intimidating. This article offers advice on approaching that first letter, with mailing information and letter etiquette, and explores the benefits of corresponding with other gamers.

Getting started

The first letter in any correspondence is always the toughest. If you don't believe that you can write an interesting letter, deciding what to tell a stranger living in another city or country will be difficult indeed. Try the following:

1. *Introduce yourself.* More likely than not, your reader won't be able to tell by your writing whether you are a high-

school student, college graduate, or retired executive. Therefore, do the reader a service and include your age, future plans, and current interests (in addition to gaming) in your first letter. Gamers are interested not only in meeting gamers, but in getting to know *people*. Write about your other hobbies, future plans, and your schooling or occupation.

When writing about your gaming inter-

ests, describe your gaming group, your gaming background, and other gaming-related topics. In my first overseas letter, I admitted that I'd never read a Tolkien novel, but find gaming inspiration in the works of Piers Anthony and Katherine Kurtz. In response, a gamer in New Zealand recommended Ursula Le Guin's *Earthsea* trilogy as the best fantasy he'd ever read.

You've probably never visited the country to which you're writing, and you may know little about it and where it's located. Having access to a world map solves the location mystery and lets you know that your letter has a destination other than that of the mailbox. A glance through an atlas, almanac, and current newspaper or news magazine also helps.

Many of the city names found in the Guide aren't printed on a world map, because the listed gamers live in small towns and suburbs. If you live in a small town, referring to neighboring cities will help your reader pinpoint your location. One gamer boasted that he had my home town pinpointed to within 10 km, but added that his map tells nothing of what the place is like. I filled him in on local details in my next letter.

Give your reader an idea of "where you're coming from" by describing your home town. This shouldn't be limited only to population density and how many gas stations are nearby. Include famous local personalities, little-known legends, some geography, and the area's history.

2. *Start a conversation.* Take the initiative and share some gaming stories in the first letter. Otherwise, it will take another letter — and paying the postage — to use the Guide for its intended purpose. Write about your favorite character's exploits or how you, as the DM, refereed a complicated encounter. You can improve your own playing by reading about other gamers' experiences. I learned how to handle PCs with powerful magical items when I read how a low-level cleric was required to give a newly-found relic to a crusading member of his religious order.

After telling your story, ask your reader to share some. Also, ask a direct question or two: where he gets his ideas for adventures, or what type of adventure she enjoys the most. Give your reader the opportunity to tell what's going on in local games.

3. *Write to several addresses.* I wrote to six initially, two years ago. Since my first letter, I correspond regularly with two of those gamers. One gamer I wrote to never responded, two wrote a few times, and one wrote five times, then stopped.

Since you have no guarantee that any one particular gamer will reply, pay the extra postage and write to three or more. Admittedly, this takes some expense, but if you can find a gamer with the same zeal for writing as you have, with whom you can establish a running discussion, it will be worth it.

4. *Use a word processor if possible.* If you have access to a word processor, use it. They are practical if you write long letters, and you won't offend anyone by seeming impolite or impersonal. When I first used the Guide, I wrote six letters — by hand. If I had used a word processor, I would've saved myself a lot of time and writer's cramp.

As well as being efficient, a word-processed letter is much easier to read than one written by hand — no misinterpretation of handwriting is likely. If you're battling the language barrier with only a year of German from high school, a mistake caused by illegible penmanship could cause you — or your reader — ample problems.

Another attraction to the word processor is that you can print a copy of the letter for yourself. I have photocopied handwritten letters for my records, but this requires a trip to a photocopy machine, with the loss in time and copying expenses. A month or more may pass before you receive a reply, during which time you might forget what you've written. Keeping a copy of your letters in a file gives you quick reference to keep your discussion alive.

Letter etiquette

You should follow a few guidelines when writing a letter. Unlike penning a thank-you note to a rich aunt after your birthday, corresponding with gamers should be *fun*: you're writing about something you both enjoy, and your letter should reflect this.

First, write legibly if you don't use a computer or typewriter. If this means writing slowly, do it. Hieroglyphics went out centuries ago; don't expect your reader to decipher your penmanship or understand your abbreviations.

Second, use proper grammar and spelling. I don't mean you should study a grammar book before you write, but by making sure each of your sentences completes its thought and follows the previous sentence in a logical sequence, and by using a dictionary when you're unsure of a word's spelling or meaning, you'll get your ideas across and have less difficulty.

After writing your letter, proofread for errors. I misspelled *module* in a letter once, and it wasn't until after the letter was mailed that I noticed I had spelled it "modual."

Third, don't write with cautious formality. Be conversational, friendly, and polite. Write as if you were talking to the reader in person, using proper grammar and a conversational tone. How do the two mix? In spoken conversation, the speaker frequently interrupts himself and leaves thoughts incomplete. Obviously, a letter must be organized and its ideas must flow in a fairly logical pattern, or the reader will become lost. This may happen when you're writing about an adventure long past, and your memory of the event is

hazy. If you keep clarifying yourself with "but before that" and "I forgot to say,,,," the reader won't be able to follow the disrupted order of events. (Using a word processor to edit your work helps here.)

Fourth, good letter etiquette requires a reply to a letter within a week. However, this is the ideal turnover time; realistically, I've found that gamers take from two weeks to a month to reply, and I have waited six months for a letter to arrive in one case.

How long should your letters be after the first one? This depends on your writing ability and the length of the replies you receive, which may range from a single page to three or more. If you can easily fill three pages on gaming, and if you like to write, send longer letters to those who send the same to you. Likewise, write brief letters to those writing you only a page. You should wait until after receiving a second letter, though, instead of basing your decision on only one reply.

Just because you can't write a long letter, or don't have time to write one, does not mean you shouldn't use the Guide. In my correspondence I receive lengthy letters from one gamer, and brief letters from another — only he's written twice as many times as the other guy.

Mailing procedures

There are two types of mail: domestic and international. Since domestic mailing procedures differ from country to country and should already be familiar to you, this article deals only with the international mail system.

Basically, only one international mail class pertains to World Gamers Guide correspondence. The "Letter and Letter Packages" class covers personal letters and packages accompanied by personal correspondence, of up to 4 lbs. or 2 kg weight. Airmail rates in this class are set by weight and are subject to change; special rates apply for some destinations, so check with your post office for current rates. For example, the airmail rate for a letter from the United States to Europe is (as of this issue's date) US\$.44 per .5 ounce up to 2 ounces, but to the Caribbean Islands the rate is US\$.39 per 5 ounce up to 1.5 ounces. From New Zealand to South America, letters to 10 grams are NZ\$.130, with each additional 10g NZ\$.50; to the South Pacific, NZ\$.80 up to 10g, each additional 10g NZ\$.20.

Surface rates are slightly lower than airmail rates, but surface mail may take weeks to arrive. Aerogrammes, which can be folded into envelope form and sent by air to all countries, cost less than letters and are more convenient for short letters.

You can speed delivery of your letters by writing clearly (or typing) the address in the following manner: On the first line, print the name of addressee; on the second, the house number and street name. City, province, or state names, and postal code belong on the third line. Finally, print

the country of destination in capital letters on the fourth line. Always include your return address on the envelope, and again on the top right corner of the letter's first page.

In my experience, an airmail letter takes about a week in transit between the United States and Europe or Australia, based on the postmark on the envelope and the date I receive it. A letter may lie around for a few weeks before it is answered, so consider this when you wait for a response.

For more information on international mailing procedures, requirements, and postal rates, consult your post office. The U.S. Postal Service offers a free booklet (Publication 51) detailing international rates and fees. Gamers in Canada and other countries can pick up a guide to inland and overseas postal services from their local post offices.

The benefits

1. *Idea exchange.* Creating adventures that will keep the players interested is demanding on DMs — it demands their imaginative energies and their time to organize for a well-planned adventure. In addition to the encounters necessary for the PCs to complete their quest, the DM must generate motivated NPCs and unique "side" encounters. But preparation time for DMs is limited, and so their NPCs are usually stock characters — merely statistics, physical descriptions, and an alignment which determines whether they help or hinder the party.

If you have some interesting NPCs that you use in your campaign, ask your reader if he or she would like to exchange NPCs in your letters. When you prepare an NPC, write statistics, background, and belongings on an index card, notebook paper, or whichever form you have agreed upon, so your reader doesn't have to transfer the information onto another paper.

The same applies to short encounters designed for PCs to meet on the road or in the dungeon: present the encounter in a way that the DM can fit it into his adventure notes easily.

2. *Creative outlet.* Keep in mind that letter-writing does not always have to be factual. Adding a bit of fiction, through narration, makes reading and writing letters more enjoyable. You might picture in your mind a situation in which your PC was the hero, as quick-witted as a character in a fantasy novel. Your group already knows about it (they were there!) and nongaming friends and relatives probably don't want to hear about it. You could report the event ("I needed a 17 to hit the monster with a +1 short sword . . ."), or you could tell the story ("Dyvin Taavar slew the sahuagin baron, found his stolen amulet in its treasure room, and left the caverns before they filled with tidewater"). Players love to rehash old adventure highlights, whether around the gaming table

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or through the mail, and your reader will likely swap a tale to match yours in his next letter.

3. *Gaming by mail.* Although gamers can enter many different play-by-mail adventures, correspondence offers another opportunity for gaming through the mail. Instead of describing an encounter you created for your players, present the information in such a way that your reader can run a character through it — and experience the encounter firsthand. With a short encounter, use index cards; set the scene on the first card. At the bottom, offer two or more choices with directions: "If you enter the tower, turn to card 3; if you search around for a turn, go to card 2." Include monster statistics, penalties or bonuses for combat, and other adjustments. It runs a lot like a multiple-plot, solo-adventure book, like those found in most bookstores.

Maps depicting the adventure area on each card can be drawn on slips of graph paper and taped onto the back of each card, or drawn directly onto the card. If desired, the player can compile the map segments on a sheet of graph paper. For longer encounters or complete adventures, full sheets of notebook paper work better.

4. *Cultural and real-world inspiration.* How does real-world culture fit into a fantasy setting? A nation's history, folklore, and customs can be adapted to characters, fantasy nations, and adventures. In other words, a whole campaign world can benefit from a cultural exchange: knowledge which can be gained not through reading an encyclopedia, but through reading letters written by someone who actually lives there.

Through letter-writing, you can add flair to your character and a new atmosphere to your campaign. European folk tales are rich with knights on quests, medieval pageantry, and castles. Explorers of the American continents have provided stories of encountering age-old civilizations and of battling the elements on a new frontier.

For the DM, nationality differences can give his NPCs color to their actions and thoughts. If the party travels through a young country that recently experienced a successful rebellion, they could encounter NPCs who were active in the rebellion, or others who sided with the mother country and who aren't at ease with their newly won freedom. Imagine the impression you would get if you visited Boston during the American Revolution, from talking with a Yankee Doodle from Washington's camp or with a Tory tea merchant.

It might be that you aren't able to write pages on gaming, so feel free to write about other things. After a sentence or two, the ideas will come, and you can delete anything you wish to exclude. Writing letters to fellow game-players will bring you closer to other gamers, other countries, and will help you improve your gaming. How can you lose? Ω

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Monthly adventure role-playing aid

Dragon

The Ecology of the Giant Leech



*Not all assassins
kill with their hands*

by Anthony Gerard

Slowly, like a drugged man regaining consciousness, the sun rose over the dead water. The quavering calls of the night birds, the croaking of the frogs, and the hidden plops and gurgles were slowly replaced by the drone of the day insects and the songs of distant sparrows. The sun began to burn away the night mist, revealing the thousands of shades of green in the vast swamp of the Wet Maze.

Jaffang watched it all and hated it. It was the wrong place for a full-blooded orc. He hated the birds, the frogs, the insects, the green of the plants. Most of all, he hated Sasher.

He looked at his silent companion. Sasher squatted motionless, looking out across the water; only his yellow eyes moved. A myriad of gnats and mosquitoes swarmed around his face and arms, but he made no effort to slap them away. On either forearm were curious Y-shaped scars — probably the brand of the thieves' or assassins' guild. Sasher *liked* it here. Jaffang knew he did. It was the human half of him. Sasher liked it here, and he probably liked it that much more because he knew Jaffang hated it. Jaffang hated him that much more for it.

Sasher stood up slowly. Taking an onion

from a leather belt pouch, he rubbed it vigorously over several spots on his pants and shirt before he took a bite. That was also the human in him — afraid to eat a dirty onion. What more could one expect of a half-breed?

Drawn by his companion's gaze, Sasher looked at Jaffang. Jaffang tried to smile, but it didn't work. He thought of running his spear through Sasher and the smile came, but by that time Sasher had turned away.

"Light enough. Better take off your armor," Sasher said, as if to no one in particular.

Jaffang's immediate suspicion was slowly replaced by the realization that he couldn't swim well, and that armor would just be a bother. As Jaffang removed his armor, Sasher arranged a wooden box on a shield-sized raft, then waded out waist-deep in the swamp's green water, probing with the butt of his spear as he went. "You bring the box," he said.

Jaffang started to curse but caught himself. With Sasher in front, the half-breed would be the first to meet any possible danger. Jaffang contented himself by watching the place between Sasher's shoulder blades — the place where one day an orcish spear would rest.

For now, Sasher was necessary. Soon, Jaffang would learn the secret of making



blade venom from the leech's spit, the venom which could make a man bleed to death from a single cut. Then, by One Eye's Spear, they'd all have reason to fear Jaffang. And he would kill Sasher first — of that he was certain.

The water was warm, almost like fresh blood. Jaffang's bare feet sank ankle deep into the receptive ooze on the bottom. He pulled the raft along the trail Sasher created as he pushed through the water plants. Suddenly, Jaffang tripped on an underwater snag, fell headlong, and came up sputtering. Sasher looked back and laughed out loud.

Laugh now, Jaffang thought. He decided to kill Sasher slowly. But first he needed to learn about the leeches and the blade venom.

"Where do we find these leeches?" Jaffang asked, to cover his rage more than to get a response.

Sasher maintained his distant gaze. "We don't," he replied. "They find us."

Jaffang looked suspiciously at the water, belly-deep on him. "Ragshaf says they're bigger than a man." It was more of a question than a statement.

"Ragshaf's a fool. Besides, he's only seen one." Sasher seemed more talkative than usual. So much the better.

"When?"

"Not long after I got into the guild." Sasher rarely talked about anything at all, much less about guild activities. "Me, Ragshaf, and a couple of other boys from the canting crew were supposed to pop a smuggler coming down river at night."

Sasher smiled as he stared into the distance. "O' Jandamon was along to guide us. We were in a boat on the river, not

knowin' exactly when he'd come by, so we decided to draw lots for a watcher while the others slept.

"Anyway, after a while Ragshaf — it was his watch — got spooked over something and woke us, all but Jandamon. We went to wake him, but he's as limp as a worm. When we rolled him over, there was a leech as big as your leg and just as thick, hanging on his neck. It must have crawled over the side. Killed him while he slept, and he never so much as squeaked. And him such a warrior and all. We laughed so hard our prize heard us, and we lost him. Ragshaf killed the leech with the boat gaff, which was a real waste."

"I thought the leeches breathed water."

"They don't have to. They live just fine as long as they're wet, so they come out at night or in a rain. Good climbers, too. Watch for some on the tree trunks — it's still early enough yet."

Sasher stopped. From a fallen tree, a sinuous, mottled gray-brown form lazily sculled across the stagnant water toward them.

"A leech! A leech!" Jaffang cried as he readied his spear. Now that they had found their quarry, he was not sure what to do next.

"It's a marsh adder," Sasher said, leaving the word "fool" unspoken. He reached for an arm-long cane tube slung across his back. As the adder swam slowly past, he put the tube to his lips and puffed his cheeks. After what seemed to be the longest seconds Jaffang could remember, the snake convulsed violently and disappeared underwater.

"A leech wiggles up and down when he swims, not side to side like a snake," Sasher murmured, putting the blowpipe away. "Leeches swim fast, too."

Jaffang stared at the water where the adder had vanished. "Can one swim down a man?"

"Probably could, but they don't. Leeches sit and wait for something to pass by. They only swim to get away from something."

"What would a giant leech need to get away from?"

"Big snapper turtles, garfish, lots of things. Kobolds spit 'em on a stick and roast them like a rack of lamb — when the runts can catch 'em, and if the leeches don't eat the kobolds first."

"How many people wade through here for leeches to eat? They must have a long time between feeds."

Sasher smiled crookedly. "You think they eat nothing but people and orcs? I've never seen a swamp troll without a couple on him — 'course, trolls don't care. A leech'll eat other things than just blood, too — frogs, mud dragon eggs, eels, and the like. Mama leech feeds her brood on small frogs. They may suckle on her, too; I'm not real sure. After a good meal, they just find a hiding place and lie low for a time."

Jaffang sneered. "Mama leech? You expect me to believe that a big worm takes care of its babies?"

Sasher spat. "Better mother than my own — they ride their babies on their bellies, like little piglets on a sow."

Sasher was making fun of him now. Big mother worms riding their babies around! Damn him for a half-human anyway! Soon enough, he'd wish he'd been respectful.

Jaffang asked no more questions, and Sasher lapsed into his usual silence.

The sun was straight overhead as Jaffang jerked the raft across yet another snag. The full sunlight hurt his eyes, and his jerkin and pants were heavy with mud and water. He had begun to fall further and further behind Sasher. Often, he lost sight of the half-breed altogether and was left with only the trail through the water weeds to follow. He would eventually come upon Sasher sitting on a fallen log or leaned against a tree. Sasher would immediately lead out again, without time for a rest, but always with an amused smile. *By the Cave Mother's Claws*, Jaffang thought, *You'll eat that smile and choke on it*. He was going to love killing Sasher.

Sasher was ahead of him again and out of sight. Jaffang began feeling the heavy press of exhaustion. This was worse than the forced march on the Dunlands last year. Jaffang shoved the raft through a thick mat of cattails. Following through, he found Sasher sitting cross-legged on the bank, eating an onion. Why was this place so familiar . . . no!

It was the place from which they'd started! Sasher had played him for a fool! Jaffang had hauled the damned raft through a swamp all day for no reason, and Sasher was smiling about it!

He'd kill Sasher *now* — to the Hells with the blade venom! Tired as he was, Jaffang knew he could still handle any half-human dog.

Dropping the raft rope, Jaffang advanced purposely toward the bank, clutching his spear. Then it hit him — something was wrong. He hefted his spear to throw, but he fumbled it in clumsy fingers. The spear fell and splashed into the green water. Jaffang swayed but managed to stagger forward again, pulling his dagger free with a nerveless hand. Something. . . something was very . . . very . . .

Sasher watched Jaffang come toward him. The fool meant to kill him. The fact that he was still walking was a credit to his race's endurance; he might even have to be finished by a dart in the throat. Perhaps it would be wise to . . .

Jaffang dropped his dagger. As Sasher relaxed and watched, the life drained from the orc's eyes like liquid from a slashed wineskin. The orc stumbled ashore and fell face forward onto the grassy bank.

Sasher finished his onion. Tossing the core aside, he waded out and retrieved the raft. Taking a large heavy canvas sack out of the box, Sasher dumped its contents of rocks. Returning to Jaffang's body, Sasher drew a dagger and slit the orc's mud-

stained jerkin up the back.

"Oh, ho, now!" he murmured. "Don't you boys look fat and happy!"

Attached to the middle of Jaffang's back were two glistening leeches, each mottled red and green, and each a forearm in length. Sasher found a third of similar size on Jaffang's calf.

Sasher removed a small pouch from around his neck and took out a pinch of salt. Gently, he sprinkled the salt over one of the leeches. The passive leech released its hold and began a series of wild undulations. Sasher splashed a handful of water over the leech and quickly worked the parasite into the bag.

Where the leech had been attached, a neat Y-shaped cut began to well up with thin, watery blood. Sasher repeated the operation for the other two leeches.

Wasting no time, Sasher removed a smaller leech from a pouch on his belt and put it in the bag with the others. Each time he was well ahead of Jaffang, Sasher had searched himself carefully for leeches. The onion had worked well; only one had dared get near him.

Sasher turned to go but stopped short. Out from a tangle of roots at the water's edge, a leech worked its way up the bank. The leech's head waved back and forth as it followed the thin stream of blood which ran from Jaffang's body. Sasher gently placed the opening of the bag in the leech's path, and the leech obligingly crawled inside.

Five leeches. It had been a good day's work, even if he did have to spend it making conversation with an orc.

Notes

1. Leeches (both the small variety of our world and the giant variety of AD&D® game worlds) are segmented worms. The posterior and anterior segments of leeches are modified into suction disks. The posterior disk is larger and is used only to hold the leech in place against rocks and the like. The smaller anterior disk contains the leech's mouth, which is equipped with three jaws of teeth which make a clean, Y-shaped incision.

A leech's saliva contains an anesthetic; because of this, a leech bite is painless and almost always goes unnoticed. This viscous saliva acts immediately upon contact with the victim's skin, and is only removed by alcohol, ether, or similar liquids. Additionally, leech saliva contains an anticoagulant (hirudin) and a substance which enlarges the blood vessels in the area of the bite (a vasodilator, in medical terms) for increased blood flow. Some leech saliva even contains a substance which dissolves pre-existing blood clots.

Due to these anticoagulants, blood continues to flow from a leech bite much longer than from a normal wound. Characters bitten by a leech lose blood at the rate of 1-4 hp per melee round for 1-12 rounds after the leech is removed (or until the wound is bound). Clerical healing

spells negate this excessive blood loss, as may other actions at the DM's discretion. As an example, some swamp-dwelling races commonly use spider webs to help clot leech bites.

In addition to anticoagulants and vasodilators, a leech's saliva contains antibiotics, so leech bites rarely become infected. It is suggested that the Monster Manual section dealing with increased chance of disease from leech bites be disregarded, and that leech bites should be treated as any other wound for chances of infection.

2. Not all leech species are blood-sucking parasites. Many are predacious species which feed on other animals, and many parasitic species eat other animals on occasion. Some leech species also eat carrion.

Leeches typically rest attached to plants and other underwater objects, waiting for prey to pass by. Extremely sensitive to vibrations, leeches become restless and attempt to locate the source of the vibrations by stretching and waving their anterior disk through the water.

A leech may thrive for months on a single meal. Once sated, a leech typically finds a sheltered place and stays relatively inactive for a time. A well-fed leech cannot be induced to feed again for weeks.

It has long been known that blood in a leech's digestive tract does not coagulate. This knowledge may be exploited by some

evil forces in the AD&D® game world to keep blood used in ceremonial liquids for a longer duration.

3. A leech's eyes typically consist of groups of light receptive cells (ocelli) which register light intensity but cannot see images. Leeches often react when light conditions change, such as when a shadow is cast by a passing boat, fish, or a wading person.

Receptor cells on the leech's skin are sensitive to slight amounts of certain chemicals. This keen sense of "smell" allows leeches to home in on substances or organisms attractive to the leech or to avoid those which may be harmful.

Blood-sucking species may be attracted to bloody areas in the water. In AD&D® game terms, the chance for encountering giant leeches should be doubled for wounded characters.

4. Leeches have two main modes of locomotion. The most common is an "inch-worm" movement, by which the leech stretches forward and attaches its anterior disk, then moves the posterior disk forward and attaches it in turn. This method is slow (3"/round) but very efficient. A leech can climb any vertical or overhanging surface in this manner, although it generally avoids those that are potentially harmful (such as one covered with thorns or salt). Additionally, a leech may swim very rapidly (12"/round) by employing

vertical undulations, but it will not attack prey in this manner.

Leeches do not bite in self-defense. If attacked while unattached, a leech tries to escape as soon as it is wounded. An escaping leech swims away or attempts to crawl into a protective tangle. Since leeches are invertebrates, a relatively large leech can crawl through a very small space.

5. While attached to prey, leeches are very unresponsive to outside stimuli. Salt, ashes, or other dehydrating substances cause them to release their hold quickly, as will an open flame. An attached leech which is slain continues to draw blood at the normal rate for an additional 1-4 rounds.

6. Leeches are hermaphroditic, but they cannot fertilize their own eggs. Eggs may be laid in protective cocoons attached to underwater rocks or logs, or buried in the bottom ooze. Some species of leech carry their eggs in membranous sacs on their underside. In such cases, the young live for a time attached to the parent's ventral surface, although they gain no nourishment from the parent in this manner.

7. Leeches are very sensitive to traces of metals in the water. Copper in their water always proves fatal to captive leeches. Additionally, captive leeches must be provided with a rock or other rough surface to rub against, in order to slough off old skin. Ω

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Time Flies . . .

. . . but these tables will pin it down for you

by Lisa Cabala

If AD&D® and D&D® game characters wore digital watches, timekeeping would be a lot easier for their Dungeon Master — but they don't. In campaign worlds where sundials, solar reckoning, and hourglasses prevail, it's up to the DM to let characters know when it's time to stop and eat, when they're getting too sleepy to go on, when darkness falls, or when a new day dawns.

Charting time in a campaign world can keep a DM scrambling after stray bits of paper. Often, these scraps are covered with so many scribbles and notes that they have become as indecipherable to the DM as a ninth-level spell is to a novice magic-user. There is a better way.

The grid tables presented here will allow you to keep track of time, either year-by-year, month-by-month, day-by-day, hour-by-hour, or turn-by-turn. To use the tables, first accept the statistics to the right (many of which will be familiar to users of the AD&D® game system).

The year has been shortened to 360 days, with 12 equal, 30-day months to allow a date to be generated randomly by a die roll. To determine a date, roll 1d12 and 1d30. The result will give the month and day. (This method can be used to determine a character's date of birth.)

The year chart is primarily useful in long campaigns or for extended wilderness travel. To use it, tick off four marks in each day square, as checks for random monster encounters are made: morning, afternoon, evening, and night. On the back of the year chart, spaces are available to record the year, campaign area, adventure module currently being used, and the Dungeon Master's name. Twelve large boxes on the back of the year chart provide space to record important dates upon which an event will occur or to record general monthly information.

Suggested information to be recorded under this section includes the following: general weather conditions for the month

1 year	= 360 days = 12 months = 60 weeks
1 month	= 30 days = 5 weeks
1 week	= 6 days
1 day	= 24 hours
1 hour	= 60 minutes = 6 turns = 60 rounds = 600 segments
1 turn	= 10 minutes = 10 rounds = 100 segments
1 round	= 1 minute (60 seconds) = 10 segments
1 segment	= 6 seconds

(when winter, fall, summer, or spring begins); when natural or man-made disasters occur (i.e., earthquakes, floods, famines, wars, plagues, etc.); the dates of annual celebrations and festivals; or when a ruler came to power.

The month chart is useful both in short wilderness adventures and with individual dungeon modules. To keep track of time, tick off six marks in each hour square. Each mark will represent the passing of a turn (10 minutes). These marks should be color coded to provide information at a glance:

Red: When a torch or fire was lit.

Orange: When a lantern was lit.

Yellow: When a candle was lit.

Blue: When a character goes under water, when water begins to rise, or when rain begins to fall.

Black: When a character dies.

Grey: When a character is knocked unconscious.

Green: The onset of disease.

Brown: When a journey begins.

Purple: When a spell is cast.

A pink line should be drawn horizontally across the month table at the time of sunrise and sunset for a particular month. A dotted blue line drawn horizontally across the month table can be used to mark high and low tides.

The back of the month table provides spaces for recording the month (common names, like "January" can be used), campaign area, adventure or module being played, and the name of the DM. The 30 numbered spaces provide room for recording information pertinent to a particular day.

Suggested information to be recorded under this section includes: major religious celebrations or festivals; when a character is released from servitude or prison — or is executed; tithe collection or census days; when a disease (e.g., lycanthropy, insanity) manifests itself; when visitors arrive at a town; when a caravan reaches its destination; on what days it rains (plot this out in advance for the month); when a spell that requires several days to be cast takes effect; when the moon is full and provides enough light to see by, etc.

To use the turns grid tables, first note that a turn (10 minutes) is represented by one large, divided box. A round (one minute) is represented by one of the smaller squares that this box is divided into. Each AD&D® game segment (six seconds) is represented by a single tick mark. The turn grid tables can therefore be used either to keep track of rounds (a single tick in each small square will do) or to keep track of segments (recorded as 10 ticks to the small box).

By using these tables, timekeeping is made easy and the month, year, or hour that something will occur can be determined quickly. You'll even be able to satisfy those characters who insist on strapping an hourglass or sundial to their wrists so they know the exact hour. Ω

MONTH CHART

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
Midnight																															
1AM																															
2AM																															
3AM																															
4AM																															
5AM																															
6AM																															
7AM																															
8AM																															
9AM																															
10AM																															
11PM																															
Noon																															
1PM																															
2PM																															
3PM																															
4PM																															
5PM																															
6PM																															
7PM																															
8PM																															
9PM																															
10PM																															
11PM																															

30 days/month 6 days/week 5 weeks/month 6 turns/hour

MONTHLY DETAIL

Month _____

Campaign _____

DM _____

Adventure _____

1.	2.	3.
4.	5.	6.
7.	8.	9.
10.	11.	12.
13.	14.	15.
16.	17.	18.
19.	20.	21.
22.	23.	24.
25.	26.	27.
28.	29.	30.

Just Making Time

No two calendars (like worlds) need be alike

by Roger E. Moore

Establishing a consistent fantasy calendar is not usually a high priority when creating a campaign game world. Everyone (including the Dungeon Master) tends to make the assumption that the game world is Earthlike in all respects, with one large moon, a year of 12 months (365.25 days, each 24 hours long), and so on.

However, the previous article by Lisa Cabala has demonstrated that a calendar can be useful, workable, and original, as long as it is carefully created. But not all calendars are alike. What if the worlds year *isn't* 365.25 days long? And there's no law that says a year *has* to have 12 months. In fact, of the various fantasy campaign calendars produced by TSR, Inc., no two are alike. However, the same principles governing the layout and design of timekeeping record sheets, as in the previous article, can be applied to these calendars as well. The *Wilderness Survival Guide* (page 107) makes this same point about variable calendars, though it is assumed that most calendars produced would still resemble the one with which we are familiar — e.g., a year with 365 days, or a year with 360 days and 12 months, each with 30 days.

The WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ Fantasy Setting has a well-defined calendar that falls together rather neatly. Greyhawk's world of Oerth is an Earth-sized planet with a 24-hour day, and it makes one revolution around its sun every 364 days, exactly. Oerth is gifted with two natural satellites: the Great Moon (also known as Luna), which has an orbital period of exactly 28 days; and the Handmaiden (Celene), which is small and has an orbital period of 91 days.

As with our own Earth, the year's division into 12 months has nothing to do with the Great Moon's cycles. Instead, the passage of the local sun through Oerth's zodiac (which has the "standard" 12 constellations) determines the months. Some groups on Oerth might use a lunar-based yearly calendar of 13 months of 28 days each; the rest of the planet, however, probably divides the 12 months into eight

months of 30 days and four months of 31 days. Each season (marked out by the phases of Celene) would have two months of 30 days and one month of 31 days. Just which month has how many days is not noted in the Glossography booklet for the WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ Fantasy Setting boxed set (pages 18-20) or in the Guide booklet in the same set (page 4).

The FORGOTTEN REALMS™ Fantasy Setting has another calendar system, first outlined by Ed Greenwood in "The Merry Month of . . . Myrtul?" (DRAGON® issue #47, reprinted in the Best of DRAGON® Magazine Anthology, vol. 5). The world of the Realms, like Oerth and Earth, has a giant natural satellite with a 30-day period. The year is 365 days long, and a lunar-cycle system is used for month-marking, so there are 12 months, each with three 10-day weeks. The five additional days given are "monthless," serving as special occasions (Midwinter, Greengrass, Midsummer, etc.). Because of these five days, the phases of the moon of the Realms fall progressively further out of cycle with the months as the year advances.

However, the Realms were not blessed with a clockwork-perfect calendar as were the lands of Greyhawk. Every fourth year in the Realms is a leap year, at which time an extra day is added to straighten out the fractional remainders in the calendar.

Kara-Tur, on the other side of the world from the Realms, has a calendar of its own, as shown on page 107 of *Oriental Adventures*. Eight months of 30 days and four months of 29 days make up the year. The monthly cycles were created by the local inhabitants from a 12-part zodiac (as revealed in conversation with David "Zeb" Cook, the designer). The number of days only totals to 356, but a nine-day festival, held after the last day of the month of Tu and prior to the first day of Tsou, accounts for the rest. By imperial decree, this festival time can be extended by one day every four years (i.e., for leap year). The festival is even accounted for in the zodiac; the Kara-Tur system of astronomy leaves an unclaimed space between two of the constellations on the zodiac, which legend says is jointly owned by all other constellations and celestial powers.

The world of Krynn, from the

DRAGONLANCE® saga, has a zodiac of 12 constellations, so its year (which is 365.25 days long, necessitating the use of a leap year day) has 12 months with either 30 or 31 days apiece. However, Krynn also has three moons: white Solinari (which governs the use of good magic), red Lunitari (governing neutral magical effects), and black — hence, generally invisible — Nunitari (governing evil magicks). The orbital periods of these satellites are not listed in any of the modules, but it is assumed that astrologers, sages, and wizards monitor the progress and cycles of these moons, since the very nature of magic on Krynn depends so heavily upon their movements.

The Known World of the D&D® game is, in fact, a prehistoric parallel Earth. The *DM's Guide to Immortals* (page 5) notes that the continental positions on the Known World maps were meant to be similar to the broken-up land masses of Pangea. But the Known World has a year of only 336 days, as revealed in *GAZ 1, The Grand Duchy of Karameikos* (page 33). The months are based on a lunar cycle of 28 days each (again, the major visible satellite is an analog of the Earth's Moon). Magical and Immortal-caused phenomena are common in the astronomical and astrological records of the Known World, as they are on Krynn and Oerth (and possibly the Forgotten Realms™ as well), but the calendar is quite consistent despite them.

If all of this seems very confusing, consider the real-life horrors of our own calendar system and the process through which it developed. The 1987 editions of the *Information Please Almanac* and *World Almanac and Book of Facts* are sufficient to send even the hoariest Dungeon Master into a fit with their comments on local civil time, Julian vs. Gregorian calendars, past and future attempts at calendar reform, Caesar's 445-day year, and so on. The effects of natural satellites on the tides and harvesting seasons, of the campaign worlds solar orbit on its year and climate, of axial tilt upon seasonal variations — this is stuff for only the strongest and most obsessive stomachs.

Calendar building, in short, can be as simple or complicated as the DM wishes it to be. Simple calendars are usually the best if accurate and easy timekeeping is desired, and most players (sadly enough) don't care if the campaign world has one moon; nine moons, or no moons at all. A creative Dungeon Master with a pocket computer and some astronomical references could create a work of art guaranteed to dazzle even the most jaded dragonslayer — but how easy is the calendar to use in game-related timekeeping? Playability will eventually win out over originality and complexity for gaming purposes. Thus, the simpler calendars are indeed best — and the basics of Ms. Cabala's system should serve everyone's needs.

SAGE ADVICE

by Skip Williams

If you have any questions on the games produced by TSR, Inc., write to:

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This column continues our focus on the D&D® game, with a look at the Masters and Expert Sets. Future columns are open to questions on the AD&D®, TOP SECRET®, GAMMA WORLD®, STAR FRONTIERS®, and MARVEL SUPER HEROES® games, as well as any other TSR™ game products.

D&D® Masters Set

A horse's natural armor class is 7. Why, then, does leather barding also give a horse an armor class of 7? What's the point of using leather barding?

Use the following table for equine armor classes:

Barding type	AC
Joust	- 1
Field	1
Plate	2
Banded	3
Chain	4
Scale	5
Leather	6

The encumbrance and cost of each type of barding remains unchanged (see the D&D® *Master Players' Book*, page 15).

What is the effect of a light catapult on a castle? How about on creatures?

Light catapults and other siege engines are covered in the *Masters Players' Book*, pages 23-32.

What exactly are the differences between light crossbows and heavy crossbows?

Light crossbows have ranges 60/120/180 and can be fired once per round. Heavy crossbows have ranges 80/160/240 and can be fired once every two rounds unless the user has an 18 strength, in which case the heavy crossbow may be fired every round. Light crossbows cost 30 gp and have an encumbrance of 50 cn. Heavy crossbows cost 40 gp and have an encumbrance of 70 cn. See the *Master Players' Book* (pages 17, 18, and 20) for more information.

If a bastard sword is used one-handed, does the user still lose initiative?

You lose initiative when using the sword two-handed, but not when using it one-handed. See the *Master Players' Book* (pages 19 and 21) for more details.

What is a war hammer, +3 boomerang? Can it be thrown?

Yes, it can be thrown. See the *Master Players' Book*, Weapon Mastery Section. The war hammer is listed in the Weapons Charts under "Hand-Held Weapons Rarely Thrown." A war hammer, +3 boomerang is just what the name implies — a +3 weapon that returns to the user when it is thrown. Use the war hammer statistics from the Weapons Charts in the *Master Players' Book* (pages 20-21) for range and damage.

D&D® Expert Set

How much damage does a lance do? Can thieves use lances?

A lance is a one-handed weapon, and it is usable by thieves. Note, however, that a lance can be used only from the back of a charging mount. In all other cases it is treated just like a spear (except that a lance cannot be thrown). A lance does 1d10 hp damage when used from the back of a charging mount.

What is a javelin and how much damage does it do?

A javelin is a light throwing spear. It does 1d6 hp damage and has the following ranges: 30/60/90.

The combat charts on page 29 of the Expert Rulebook show saving throws different from what the individual character listings show. Which is correct?

Page 29 is correct.

The water movement chart on page 43 of the 1983 Expert Rulebook shows some split numbers on the Miles/Day column. Why is this, and which numbers should I use?

The split number indicates a craft with both oars and sails. The number before the slash is for movement with oars only; the number after the slash is movement with sails and oars.

How much food is actually gained when foraging or hunting?

Each foraging character finds enough food to sustain himself for one day if the foraging is successful. Each hunting character obtains enough food to sustain two people for one day if the hunt is successful. Actually amounts of food collected vary widely, depending on what sort of food was found.

What is the special damage done by storm giants?

A storm giant's special attack is its ability to call down lightning, as per page 50 of the *Expert Rulebook*.

What are a roc's saving throws?

A roc saves as a fighter of 3rd, 6th, or 18th level, depending on its hit dice (see page 55, *Expert Rulebook*).

Does a lightning bolt always expand to its full length if it strikes a solid object before going its full distance? Or does it "double back," possibly leaving the caster unharmed? Or does it bounce like a billiard ball, flying off at an angle from the object it struck?

Your first guess is technically correct and in common use. A lightning bolt has a fixed length and width, and it must expand to its full length just as a fireball fills its fixed volume. That is, a lightning bolt is always 60' long and 5' wide. If it hits a solid object, it extends back 60' from the point of impact in a direct line to the caster. If the caster is less than 60' from the point of impact, then he gets fried.

Some DMs prefer the "billiard bounce" method. Here's some advice if you decide to use it: 1) The angle of incidence equals the angle of reflection. 2) The bolt might strike a target more than once if it bounces around a confined space, but the bolt can only deliver its stated damage, never more. For example, a 22-hp lightning bolt that hits a character three times still only delivers 22 hp, or half if the character saves. You may opt to have the character save each time the bolt strikes, taking the worst result. This method can lead to some sticky situations; take extra care to adjudicate them fairly and accurately.

The invisible stalker spell is subject to considerable abuse in my campaign. Isn't this spell over-powered?

An invisible stalker always tries to subvert any long and onerous mission that it is given. If told to serve a character until he dies, a stalker might promptly fetch the character's slippers, run his bath water, and do the dishes, but will refuse to fight, track, or carry treasure. Personal servants, after all, are domestic in nature. If ordered to protect a character and keep him from all harm, the stalker will try to carry the character off to the Elemental Plane of Air, the stalker's home plane, where protecting the character will be much easier.

Ω



Palimpsest



They raided the palace of the Earl of Magerber in the height of the two-hour day: seventeen men clad in iron chain mail, their crossbows loaded with quarrels of illegally wrought steel. In the searing light the walls of the stronghold were no more substan-

tial than mist, and the raiders smashed the gate like a man brushes away a spiderweb. It broke with the sound of tearing parchment, the gate's arm-long splinters hovering on the afternoon breezes.

Several elves woke from their deep slumber, but they moved in slow motion, their swords turned to wands of springy willow, and their strongest enchantments were only mumbled words.

Winslow found the earl in one of the deepest halls, his naked body reclining on a mound of freshly turned earth. The faintest hint of magic still lingered, and the damp walls seemed hung with spectral goblins, the threads of fairy gold gleaming dully.

Winslow stepped forward to study his enemy. The skin was very pale with the silvery hue sometimes found on the wings of certain moths. The earl's face seemed a clever mask of ivory, but a more precious ivory than any human would ever handle. Peering closer, Winslow noticed that the skin was ivory-smooth, too. No pockmarks disfigured the slender body, and it was devoid of pores. Clearly, the elves were made of finer stuff than their subjects. Still, they could be killed like any living thing.

Winslow touched the pulsing jugular with the tip of his dirk, and the elflord opened his eyes: cloudy orbs of twilight blue, seemingly blind in the light of the torches. His pupils were contracted to pinpricks, tiny flaws in the aquamarine of his eyes.

"You come in the rough glare of burning firs. The humblest tree, fit only for trolls and mortals. You carry iron fashioned from the bones of the First Hag. You come to take my life." His voice was low and melodious, and the words issued from the thin air, the carved lips of the earl never moving once.

"Such is the case," Winslow replied. "I won't bore you with the enumeration of your crimes. I doubt if you would even understand why they are crimes. In some ways you're innocent. Like the wolf is innocent of any wrongdoing when he savages a little child."

"Yet you kill wolves."

"Certainly. But I don't have to hate them. It is just something that should be done."

"I see."

Winslow didn't have to clean his dagger: the ruby blood evaporated the moment it was touched by the rays of the sun. The raiders opened leather sacks of finely ground iron and seeded the hill. The misty walls crumbled, sinking in the sedge. The central tower wavered and turned into a gnarled oak. A cloud of pale bats rose, chittering.

Winslow felt the magic dissipate, the coarser stuff of daytime reality filling the void.

by Tais Teng

"They'll never rebuild," Manfred, the blacksmith, said. "We poisoned their damn hill. No more hell-music to lure our maidens."

Winslow nodded absently, gazing at the sun, which moved perceptibly across the sky. Twenty minutes left. At most.

"We'd better hurry. Twilight is pretty close, and we want to be deep in the forest before they discover the Gosamer Palace is gone." He stopped one of the younger boys before he upended their last sack of iron fillings. "We'll need that. Dust our footprints. Cold iron will confuse their wolves."

"The caverns aren't that far," Manfred objected. "We'll be there before twilight falls. Better use the dust where it will do some good."

"We're not even sure if the dwarfs will give us sanctuary. True, they have no reason to love the elves, but we have swindled them often, too. Perhaps too often. We may have to flee a long way."

Twilight found them halfway to the caverns. The sky hung low: a sheet of grainy indigo, shot through with green flickerings. The stars circled like trapped fireflies. The stench of magic gradually filled their nostrils: freshly turned earth, mouldering copper, night-blooming orchids.

In the distance the elfhorns sounded.

"We'll give them a hard time," Manfred said, his voice gone flat with despair. "Nothing magic can penetrate iron." He threw a handful of filings in the air. They ignited, each mote burning with a yellow flame that feebly mimicked sunlight.

Once again the haunting tones drifted through the forest. They didn't sound distant at all.

"I think we'd better halt," Winslow said. "Make our stand here. Before we're totally winded."

They spread their last iron dust in a circle and cocked their crossbows. *I wonder how many we killed, Winslow mused, Perhaps all twelve times twelve of them. We had a lot of dust.*

He sneezed and blinked his eyes. Iron dust covered the raiders and made their eyes burn. A haze of drifting motes surrounded the humans, negating the omnipresent enchantments for a moment. He glimpsed the sky, and the twilight stars were frozen in fixed patterns, no longer circling. They seemed impossibly remote, farther even than dragon-infested Cathay, and somehow huge. Yet he once had seen elves gathering those same stars, dislodging them with long wands of carved bone.

The dark boles of beechs surrounded them like the pillars of a pagan temple, their tops lost in the gloom. Most of the clearing was lit by the ghostly glow of reacting iron, so they clearly saw their doom.

They came in a dark tide, streaming across the fallen leaves. They were quite small individually, but there were millions of them.

Ants have no reason to fear iron.

2

The sound of hoofs, converging on the hidden village. The neighing of fairy steeds. Followed by a sudden,

horrible silence, more oppressive than any sound.

Strangely enough her first panicked thought was: I hope they don't wake the baby! But Thomas slept on, his head cradled on the red rag doll. Joseline Winslowswife opened the door a crack, peering in the troubled twilight. The elves had halted at the improvised hedge of barbed wire, steering their horses away from the poisonous metal. She threw the door completely open and stepped outside. Joseline noticed the hiss of indrawn breath, but the other doors remained closed. Indistinct forms moved behind the windows of pigs' bladders, but the villagers seemed quite content to let her act as spokeswoman.

She recognized one of the elves: Gespalidor of the Bottomless Well. Reputedly the sire of the Earl Magember, though elves seldom acknowledged the bonds of blood. Still, in this case . . .

She clutched the jade amulet between her breasts, finding a measure of the comfort in the smiling face of Jezus of Nazareth, the Gentle Sage Who Loves All Men. She could hope for little gentleness from these stern lords, who had nothing to learn from the Saviour, being born soulless. For a moment she yearned for a more savage guide, for there was no strong magic in dying at three years and thirty, surrounded by disciples and well-wishers.

She lifted her head and looked Gespalidor right into his unhuman eyes. It disturbed her to find no hate there, only sadness.

"I suppose they're dead," she said quietly.

It wasn't even a question.

The elflord nodded. He gestured with a pale hand. "See."

A stir at the edge of the wood: seventeen skeletons, their bones gleaming in the cold moonlight, stepped into the clearing. Some still carried their crossbows.

"They murdered Earl Magember and all of his followers. The elfhill is blighted for a thousand years. I suppose they had some justification for their crimes. The reign of my son seems to have been needlessly harsh. The Unnamed gave us dominion over the Garden of Eden, over the mute animals and the animals that speak and feel. We're meant to be the gardeners of men, and according to the testimony of the dead, Earl Magember behaved more like a wolverine."

One of the skeletons stepped closer. With a pang of horror she recognized the copper ring on his fleshless finger. The dead man raised his hand. "All my passions are spent. I have killed, and I have been killed. This is my counsel: let these awful deeds fade in the past. Hate breeds hate, and a drop of blood spilt in anger can drown a world in a crimson flood." Winslow pointed his finger at the elflord: "You, Lord Gespalidor will foster my son, Thomas, forging a bridge between man and elf. The village will renounce all use of iron and show the elves the hidden veins of ore so suitable warding spells can be set."

"I'm willing," the elflord said almost instantly. He looked very noble and wise, and Joseline hated him with a raging yellow repugnance.

She scowled. "I don't think we have much choice, eh? Of course, we agree."

* * *

She waited for three months until she was quite certain that the fickle elves had lost all interest in the rebel village.

The graveyard lay in a hollow, the thick boughs of oaks sheltering the dead from the alien sky. Winslow's marker was still bare of moss, a rough slab of granite, his name deeply etched and filled with yellow clay. The small mimosa she had planted in front had died, the flowers having shriveled to brittle brown husks.

She laid her amulet in the damp moss, the smiling face downward. The Gentle Sage frowned on the dark arts and would no doubt have urged her to forgive, to turn her other cheek. But there were other, more forceful, gods left from the ages when the sun still shone for half of each day and twilight was but a fleeting moment.

She placed three stalks of ripe corn on the cold stone, crushed a handful of berries. She next took an iron pin from her tresses and jabbed her wrist. Blood dripped on the ears of corn, mingled with the purple berries.

She had but scant knowledge of magic, but her hate was strong, and hate had always been the most vital ingredient of the dark enchantments.

"I call you from the sunny lands, the far lands. I call you from the elfless lands, promised by the Martyred Friar. Anubis, unlock for him your toothed gates, for he was a virtuous man. Helios-Ra, light his long way. Winslow my husband, by your seed that made my womb blossom, by the kisses we shared, come to me. My love will be your bridge, my hate will be your mantel. Rise, like Lazarus rose." Her voice lowered to a whisper: "Or take the darker road, the earthen tunnel that nosferatu travel."

The moonlight yellowed, the stars froze in their course, and a dark form stood at the edge of the wood, his face a lump of clay, his hair a shock of brittle grass.

"Joseline." His voice was a low rumble, joyless, tired. "Blood calls to blood," he said. "I came for the love we once shared. But be warned. Though the dead are wise, their wisdom is a heavy and useless burden and seldom profits the living."

She hissed in anger. "The first time you counseled us, we lost all able-bodied men. The second time, you stole my son! Tell me, did your fleshless skeleton speak the truth or were you but a puppet of the elves? Your bones manipulated by elvish enchantment?"

"You want to destroy our overlords. I tell you, it is an easy thing to do. But it would avail you nothing and take away what little humans still have left. Know that the world, all of reality, is a palimpsest. A lie written over older, awful words that are horribly true. You live a dream, you *are* a dream. Don't force the world to wake, for you will stand with empty hands and even those hands will fade."

"So you wanted me to lose my only child. How you must have hated me! Go! Go! My love is ashes."

"Children are not meant to be swords, Joseline."

She made the gesture of dismissal, and the moonlight coloured silver.

Thomas was twelve years old when he awoke in the middle of the day. His sleeping pattern imitated that of the elves, and he had learned to dislike the short intervals of searing glare punctuating the long twilight of the elfish realm.

A soundless voice had spoken his name. It wasn't the first time. Nor, he feared, the last.

He kept his eyes closed for almost twenty minutes, fighting the compulsion, and listened to the dry scrambling of bats, the slow drip of a hidden well. Rest eluded him, and the earth felt unbearably lumpy and damp. He finally opened his eyes and scratched his belly. A long-legged spider walked across his left arm, and he flicked it away with a sweep of his hand.

The Hall of Peaceful Dreams became suddenly an oppressive and cramped place, with the rows of elves lying like bloodless corpses in the dim glow of mushrooms.

She waited just outside the gate. His mother seemed older than the last time, her face a furrowed field, grey invading her black tresses. Or it might be just the merciless glare of the sun, which hid nothing and always seemed intent on highlighting the world's imperfections.

She eyed his pale body with some distaste, noticing that the white of his eyes had acquired the slightest tinge of elfish blue. "I see you have learned to fear the sun."

He shook his head, but not in negation. "Why do you keep troubling me, Mother? I'm happy here. Almost. At least happier than I would have been grubbing the earth in your village. I'm learning important things."

She tried to smile. "Elf magic. I suppose that's quite fascinating. Still, they wouldn't show a mere human the truly important things."

"They hide nothing! I'm one of them!"

"Ah. Even so, there are secrets they wouldn't care to show a human changeling."

"Such as?"

"Their mining spell for instance. The words they use to refine the rocks in aluminum, copper. The words that call the gold from the hidden veins."

He snorted. "That was one of the first things they taught me. It's easy." He tore a lumpy rock from the grass, spoke three words in the liquid syllables of the elves. The stone flowed like wet mud, separated in tiny nuggets that gleamed in the sun. "Copper," he said. "I could as easily call forth silver or black carbon."

"A multipurpose spell? How ingenious. Must be hard to do. For a mere human."

"Not at all!" His face shone with enthusiasm. "Look." He repeated the first part of the spell. "Now the final word, it says how heavy the stuff is you want to have. If you say seventy-nine, you get gold. Eighty-two gives you lead."

He smiled, and his smile was almost elfish. "I know what you're thinking. But the moment a human uses the spell to refine iron the elves will know." He had no illusions about his mother, but he saw no reason to dislike her on that account. Crafty treachery had always been admired by the elves, and he liked her unbroken spirit. Also,

she *was* his mother.

They strolled for some time along the White Way, a road of stone slabs that showed many cracks and sagged in several places where the once molten stone was overlaid with a dark glaze. He once again marvelled at the differences between the sunlit world and the elvish realm. In starlight no trace remained of the White Way. Nor of the crumbling ruins that lined the road.

They parted at the edge of the forest while the sun sank like a ruby moon behind the treetops. A single kiss, almost a token, and he saw her walk away in the gathering shadows.

If only she could forget, he thought. Or forgive.

The starlight changed the book she had found in the ruined daytime library into a slab of moldy wood, the title becoming no more than a meaningless tracery or wormholes. It didn't matter, she knew it by heart.

The Wonderful World of Chemistry, an Introduction.

Page 23, describing Magnesium, especially fascinated her: "An extremely light and common metal, magnesium combines with oxygen in an actinic flare. Its ultraviolet radiation has been used in the early photographic processes because it so clearly resembled sunlight."

A common metal, found everywhere. Captive sunlight! And unshielded sunlight would gravely harm and finally kill an elf.

5

Thomas read the passage again, frowning. The Latin seemed archaic and strangely matter-of-fact. Not at all like the ornate language of the more recent *Lives of the Saints* or *Devotions of a Grasshopper*.

"Returning with an additional three legions, Julius Caesar crossed the borders of Faery. He was victorious in the first engagement, the battle taking place in the afternoon. But the moment twilight fell, the elves returned, armed with fearful sorceries, and not a single soldier was left alive.

"Now the Empire of Faery had grown somnolent and weary, the elves caring little for the affairs of mortals. Caesar's invasion woke them from their long slumber, and they left their hills, swarming over the forest of Gaul. Vanishing in the light of day, ever victorious in the twilight, it took them a scant three years to conquer the Roman Empire and make the lands of Man a part of their twilight realm.

"Let the name of Julius Caesar be reviled, for his greed has brought us calamities untold and a bondage sore!"

Looking up from the brittle parchment, Thomas found the librarian studying him. He liked the ancient elf who tended the catacombs, feeding the sluggish spiders juicy ants and ladybugs. "This here, it's true?"

The elf smiled. "To some degree. It describes what happened, but not all things that happened were true."

Thomas shrugged. "And I suppose it'll take me another thousand years to understand what you mean with that riddle?"

"Hardly. Perhaps you noticed that I filed the *Rise and*

Fall of the Roman Empire in the section with tall tales, fancies, and songs, while it clearly should be placed on the shelves for genealogy and natural philosophy?"

"So? You never let me read those."

"I think the time has come to enlighten you. You know the word 'palimpsest'? If you reuse an old piece of vellum, you scrape off the words that are already written there and ink your own words. But it's hard to clean the vellum completely. Most of the time you can still read the old words. Thus, it is with our own world. We're but a thin film over words already written there. Words that are more true."

"The sun? The short day? That's part of the first script?"

"It's the shadow of the true words, distorted by our sorceries." He took a black mantle from a peg and a silver mask, the eyeholes covered with thin lenses of black obsidian. "I'll show you the truth. The sun rises soon, and in her light it's often terribly easy to see the lineaments of the true world."

6

They crossed the dry meadow and walked half a mile along the White Way. The ruins were almost hidden by the trees.

The librarian gestured. "Even the endless forest where the mortals hide, even her green leagues are part of our dream." He stamped on the crumbly grey stone. "Less real than this, though the Way vanishes in twilight and the ruins are seen no more."

They climbed a cobweb-garlanded stair, and the librarian halted in front of a tiny round window. The purplish glass had miraculously been left intact. He scratched the caked dust away. "Part of the first world, it annuls our enchantments. See the true world, my child."

He stepped aside, and Thomas gazed outside.

The forest was gone, the sky altered to a brooding purple dome with scudding, storm-torn clouds the color of gall. Ruins dotted the ashen plain. Nothing grew.

Thomas searched the indistinct horizon: the mountains seemed too low and had a molten, scorched look. Ice rose beyond them in dirty grey turrets, circling the plain.

"The mortals fought a war, unleashing the powers of the sun herself. You killed the world. Not a single animal was left alive, no seed survived.

"A horrible void was left, and the mighty stream of Time itself halted. We filled that void. We are dreams, history that should never have happened. A second-choice reality that is quite improbable and very, very fragile." The elf nodded. "If any mortal had been left alive, he would have called it World War Three."

"Dreams," Thomas mused. "You're all figments."

"Just like you."

7

Joseline intoned the words, the nineteen village leaders standing in front of her. A tiny movement, the earth stir-

ring. Five lumps coalesced from the loam. Lumps of a dull silvery grey metal.

"Magnesium," she said. "Hand me a torch."

The lumps ignited with a dazzling flame, a glare so fierce it left pulsating afterimages.

One of the leaders started to laugh, his eyes streaming. "Iron? Who needs iron when we have this! They'll burn like moths in a candle flame!"

8

Thomas woke to impossible sunlight. Tall shadows danced through the sleeping hall, brandishing copper swords.

Trolls! was his first thought, and he grabbed his sword. A ray of horribly bright light swept the hall and touched his weapon. His magic sword shuddered and reverted to a stalk of dry weed. For three heartbeats he stood frozen, stupidly staring at his useless weapon.

A spear nicked his left arm, and he jumped back. The glare wavered and died, and his elf-learned night vision returned. He stepped back in a niche, searching the hall from the sheltering overhang.

All the elves had died. Their naked bodies were covered with deep, smoking burns, their skin blackening and peeling. Human warriors swarmed through the hall, an old woman exhorting them from the gate with shrill cries.

Two warriors squatted, cursing in front of several metal poles, striking sparks from a disc of flint. A spark arced into the dry moss and rose in a wavering flame. They shoved their poles in the flame, and the metal ignited promptly. The sun returned.

He draped his shuddering body with the blood-soaked mantle of a dead invader and stumbled to the entrance of



the hall. In the confusion, nobody tried to stop him: anyway, he was clearly too short to be an elf.

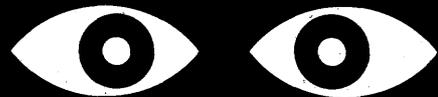
Thomas took the steps three at a time. He felt strangely light, as if gravity was relinquishing her hold on his body, rejecting his reality.

He turned the last corner and glimpsed a segment of blue sky. For an impossible short moment, the window framed the silhouette of a swallow. It was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen.

The sky turned a dull red, and the temperature dropped sharply. He halted. He knew too well what he would find outside. Only the nuclear Fimbul winter, the empty ruins.

Raising his hands, he noticed that they had already grown quite transparent. *If only she could have forgiven*, he thought. And then, with melancholy curiosity, for he had become more than half-elf, *I wonder what the Hand will write next. . . .* Ω

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The Whole-Earth Ecology

Building a better alien in the STAR FRONTIERS® game

by Danny Kretzer

Glakket and his Yazirian companion slashed their way through the dense jungle. Suddenly, a gigantic bird swooped down, claws flashing. In an instant, the Yazirian was gone, leaving the Vrusk explorer alone. . . .

"Whaaaaat?!" cried the player. "How could a giant-sized bird even budge something with a Yazirian's mass? And how could it find room to fly, much less swoop, in the middle of a dense jungle?"

"Well, I guess there was a break in the branches," replied the referee, nervously ignoring the first question.

"This jungle is miles in diameter! Why would a creature spend time flying above it in hopes that another creature would be in one of the few clearings at the same time it flew over?"

The referee simply shrugged.

"Well, where is its natural habitat?"

"Um . . . in the mountains to the south. But sometimes it goes hunting over the woods," said the referee.

"So, it does fly over this extremely dense jungle in hopes that a meal will conveniently pass through the clearings. But it's a fact that birds need to eat their weight or more in food each day, so there's no way that a giant flying bird could survive in these circumstances and have strength to pick a hireling out of a jungle. In real life, that bird would not have the strength to lift its own head off the ground due to lack of nourishment!"

The referee sighed. Perhaps it was time to try a fantasy game. No one ever questioned giant flying birds there.

All too often in STAR FRONTIERS® games, I see creatures that are so poorly

adapted to their environment that players begin to wonder how these creatures manage to survive. Referees create exotic plants and animals which could never really live together in one environment. The presence of unrealistic alien ecologies often cause players to wonder if there is any special reason for the flaws they perceive. The first thing players will suspect is that Sathar may have tampered with the ecology of the planet, sending the PCs off the track of the actual adventure in search of a Sathar base. Keeping the game on track and keeping the game balanced and believable are good reasons for a well-planned ecology.

When designing other-worldly creatures, the referee should add the following guidelines to those given in the STAR FRONTIERS® Expanded Game Rules. Note that these are very general guidelines, and numerous exceptions could exist for each such suggestion.

Appearance: Creatures often have the same colors on their dorsal sides as their surroundings ("dorsal" means the back of a creature), with white or pale colors on their ventral sides (i.e., the underbelly of a creature). Many small creatures, such as insects, are brightly colored when concealment is of minor concern or color is important for social identification. How well any natural camouflage works is completely up to the referee, though it should usually be helpful.

Consider, too, the location of a creature's eyes. As a general biological rule, predators have eyes on the fronts of their heads (to coordinate their attacks with binocular vision), and their prey have eyes on the sides of their heads (to detect predators over wide visual areas). The location of the eyes helps the referee determine how easily a creature can be surprised.

Nearly every mammal has fur or hair, serving as insulation for the creature and, if thick enough, as armor (to a limited extent). Fish, birds, and amphibians have no fur, but the referee may wish to have lizards, for example, grow fur in arctic regions. Some dinosaurs are believed to have had fur or feathers.

Physical form: Certain creatures might not be completely solid in form. Invertebrates such as the slug, worm, jellyfish, and medusa have no rigid internal structure; some creatures could almost be liquids. Such creatures would usually dwell in oceans or other mediums which would support their weight.

Attack forms: Almost all creatures have one or more methods of attack. Carnivores would usually attack with jaws or claws, and sometimes with a tail slap or sting. Herbivores generally attack only with limbs (like a horse's hooves) or by ramming and goring (like a rhino's horn). Sometimes, if large enough, herbivores can trample. Herbivores may bite but rarely do so by preference.

Plants that attack might have mouthlike leaves like those on a Venus flytrap. Alien plants would likely "attack" with thorns (perhaps poisoned) or with poisonous spores.

The referee should feel encouraged to create brand new attack forms, such as an acid spray, special venom, or maybe a sonic boom. However, attack forms should be suited to the creature using them, and should reasonably be expected to work against the creature's worst biological enemy. Avoid completely ridiculous attack forms unless you can find an analog for them in Earthly biology.

Defense forms: All creatures have one form of defense or another. Herbivores and omnivores usually have more effective defenses since they need them the most. Defense forms include protective shells, thick hides, heavy fur, increased speed, and sharpened senses. The referee should decide what bonus the creature should get from a defense; for example, a creature with a fur coat 5 cm thick might get a bonus of -15 to the attacker's hit roll with melee weapons, and it could take 5 points off the damage roll from nonenergy weapons. Large carnivores living on a planet that has no intelligent weapon-wielding predators will likely not be well defended

unless they need protecting from their preys' attacks or from other carnivores.

Speed: Small creatures would usually be fast or very fast. The referee should keep in mind that defenses like armor plating or heavy fur impede the speed of a creature and should only be given to large creatures that usually move slowly anyway.

Herbivores that are medium- to small-sized should never be any slower than medium speed, unless the predators are equally sluggish or unless the herbivores have a powerful defense form. Likewise, this rule should apply to carnivores. Giant- and large-sized creatures are usually slow-

er (unless they can fly), as are herbivores of this size, since they have more weight to move around.

Flying: Carnivorous flying creatures usually hunt prey on the open ground or on the surface of water. The terrain over which they are found usually helps determine their size. In the opening instance with the Yazirian-eating bird, the creature's size would impede its flight capability through the trees, and it couldn't see very well through the branches to catch its prey. In the woods, flying carnivores should never be larger than medium at best, and only that large in extreme cases. Larger flyers generally stick to the mountains or open areas. Smaller flyers will stay away from exceptionally windy areas, since they would be blown around like leaves. And please note that even the largest flying creatures in existence today would be unable to lift a medium-sized dog, much less a grouchy Yazirian with full combat/exploration gear!

Numbers: Tiny and small creatures are often found in large groups if they are social, especially if they have attack forms which can be combined to be dangerous to larger creatures. Medium-sized creatures might also be found in packs and herds. Medium carnivore numbers vary, since some travel in packs (like wolves) while others will hunt alone (like mountain lions). Hunting techniques may thus dictate group sizes.

Large- to giant-sized creatures might be found in smaller groups if they are herbivores, but carnivores will rarely be found in groups larger than packs or prides of eight individuals or less. This is because large carnivores that must hunt and bring down prey cannot stand great competition for food. Imagine the food requirements of a herd of tyrannosaurs!

On a planetary scale, there should be a great many small creatures serving as prey, a good number of medium prey and small predators, few large prey and medium predators, and very few large predators. The referee should remember this when he is making a random encounter table and make large predators a less likely encounter. This guideline, the food-chain ratio, is rarely applied but is critical if a realistic ecology is desired.

Special abilities: When a referee decides to give any creature a special ability, he should take into account the following: size, special attacks or defenses, intelligence, and dietary type (carnivore, herbivore, or omnivore). A large, intelligent carnivore with a poison sting should have few and limited (if any!) special abilities. A small herbivore of low intelligence without any attack or defense to speak of can have more and better special abilities. Herbivores or omnivores that are preyed upon will usually have special abilities keyed toward defense or camouflage.

Restrictions: Most, if not all, creatures have some type of restriction. If a carnivore has a restriction (which it should),

then its prey is bound to take advantage of it. To give a modern example, killer whales cannot survive on land. When one attacks a group of penguins, they quickly swim to land or a floating ice floe. This prevents the whale from completely wiping out the penguins, though a few penguins are usually caught anyway, thus allowing the orca to survive; both prey and predator benefit from the restriction, since a loss of prey means a loss of predators. The restrictions don't always have to be as obvious as this example. Restrictions should never allow every member of the prey's group to survive, or else the predator dies out. Of course, clever characters will observe the restrictions of different creatures and use them in their favor.

Intelligence: Almost every highly intelligent creature I've seen in any game adventure has been roughly man-sized and humanoid in design. Just because it happened that way on Earth doesn't mean it has to be that way on other planets. I've never seen a tiny creature or an aquatic or fishlike creature be the most intelligent race on a planet. And look at Vrusk and Dralantes! Challenge your players with a civilization of tiny lizard creatures that can talk and fight.

I've also rarely seen a newly created race of intelligent aliens that have developed firearms or motor-powered transports. It's likely that sooner or later the UPF will uncover a planet with beings that have developed technology to a point where they have sophisticated inventions and weapons or even early space exploration. Hours of exciting roleplaying are possible when a group of PCs uncovers a technologically advanced planet and tries to get them to join the UPF. For example, a group of PCs and NPCs exploring a remote star system in a game I ran discovered a crude exploration satellite with primitive photography equipment attached to it. This led them to a medium-sized planet, second from its sun. When they passed over it, they discovered the world was covered with settlements — some as large as cities. When they landed, the PCs met the planet's military forces. Once their poly-voxes were adjusted to the aliens' language and they had established their peaceful intentions, they were brought before the world's ruling council. This was an interesting point in the game, as the PCs discovered that they had allies and enemies on the council. They worked to convert those who were opposed to them. In the end, after much intrigue, the PCs got the planet to join the UPF. This got the PCs promoted in the UPF fleet. More important, it gave the players hours of fun. Now they knew how the aliens who come to Earth in the movies might feel!

The above example is one of several adventures in which I had the native aliens possess firearms. On another occasion, the Sathar got to the planet first and armed the natives, giving orders to kill anyone in UPF uniforms. To further com-

plete matters, the Sathar also told the natives that Sathars were gods who had to be obeyed. It was a challenge for the PCs to take on a bunch of armed alien religious fanatics who weren't talking and could easily beat the PCs in combat.

Parasites: Parasites are found on all planets. These are creatures that feed on larger creatures called hosts. Parasites have many ways of entering or attaching to a host; one way is through the digestive system (swallowing). Once inside, the parasite feeds off one or more of the host's natural features (blood, flesh, etc.). The parasite's feeding should affect the host in at least one way; for example, a parasite might lower a character's reaction speed by 10. The parasite should rarely be capable of killing its host, since this is against its best interests. If the host dies, then the parasite dies with it. Parasites should be a minor annoyance to the PCs and not a fatal threat.

Microorganisms: Earth is crawling with bacteria and other organisms that are microscopic. It seems very likely that other planets would be host to similar organisms. Only a relative few microorganisms on Earth cause harm to humans; this resistance evolved over millions of years of exposure to these organisms. However, microorganisms on planets that humans or other PC races have never visited before have a greater likelihood of being harmful to PCs (remember *War of the Worlds*, by H.G. Wells?). I've only seen one occasion on which a microorganism was a threat to the PCs in a STAR FRONTIERS® game adventure.

Microorganisms can become a very interesting problem for the PCs and can affect them in several ways. The first and most obvious is to have an effect similar to poisons, diseases, or infections, as shown in the Expanded Rulebook. The second is to give exposure to the microorganisms a bizarre effect, such as causing insanity or psychological deterioration. The third and most terrifying effect is (obviously) swift onset of illness and death. This should only be used when the bacteria are in an area in which PCs wouldn't normally encounter them: a depressurized drifting hulk, for example. If this type of effect is used, the referee may wish to introduce new anticontamination equipment to the campaign. The effect should usually become obvious upon exposure to NPCs or lab animals (don't kill off PCs too rapidly). In a recent adventure I ran, the PCs discovered a hulk full of dead bodies. When they brought a corpse back to their own ship, a careless NPC exposed himself to the body and its bacteria, and subsequently died. The PCs spent the rest of the adventure fighting faulty equipment and each other in an attempt to find a cure for the disease.

The last type of effect that microorganisms can have is to damage equipment, weapons, or even starships. This can leave the PCs stranded on a planet if the referee

chooses. *The Andromeda Strain*, by Michael Crichton, makes useful reading.

Microorganisms don't have to affect all races. In fact, there may be a type of microorganism that only affects the Sathar. The UPF would want to get their hands on it so they could use it to make new weapons (like grenades) for the Star Law Rangers to use against their foes. Corporations may also want to market a new pesticide and send PCs to collect samples.

The native animals on certain planets should have a very small chance of being affected by the microorganisms of their own planet since they probably would have developed immunity. But, if exposed to PCs or brought to another planet, aliens may die from contact with seemingly harmless microorganisms (again, as in *War of the Worlds*).

Microorganisms are almost always found in great numbers, and they usually move by wind or water currents. Some microorganisms cause harm only under certain circumstances. For instance, an alien bacteria may only take effect when inhaled, but can attach itself to skin and be carried by the victim even if he is wearing a gas mask. Other microorganisms are only effective when they are swallowed or enter the bloodstream through a cut.

Not all microorganisms have to be dangerous. Some may act as a cure for the

damage done by others. They can even be a mixed blessing, like one that raises a PC's Stamina but impedes his vision ("Hey, who turned out the lights?").

Lairs: In nature, a lair usually serves as a place to raise young, sleep, and eat food. Some creatures may store items that they consider valuable in their lairs. If the creature lives on a planet where there are large deposits of a valuable mineral, it may collect that mineral and even compete with prospecting PCs for control of a mineral deposit. Unintelligent aliens might keep valuable items for odd reasons, like the Australia bowerbird that builds a nest of shiny objects to attract female bowerbirds.

Uses: When the referee creates a creature, he should decide if there are any possible ways in which PCs could use that creature. Wild animals could be ridden by the PCs or used as pack animals on overland trails. The referee should decide how fast a creature moves while burdened with a rider or gear (or both), and what penalties are assessed against encumbered beasts.

A creature can also be used for food. Some creatures that are preyed upon (most notably insects) have toxic chemicals in their bloodstreams that are most effective against their natural predators. These poisons may or may not affect the PCs.

Intelligent creatures may act as guides

or mercenaries, but the PCs must have something of value with which to pay the creatures. Credits aren't likely to be accepted by aliens who have no contact with the UPF!

Summary

By using the guidelines above, referees should be able to create more realistic alien lifeforms. The referee should use the following rules in particular:

1. There should be more weaker creatures than powerful ones in a world's ecology.

2. The ecology should allow both predator and prey to survive.

3. Intelligence should not be restricted to man-sized creatures, nor should technology be so restricted.

4. Most important, just because something hasn't happened on Earth doesn't mean that it can't happen on other planets. In other words, the referee should not allow his imagination to be limited by the way things are here on Earth. If a creature is believable and consistent in its own environment, the game will be improved.

(Note: One excellent reference book for ecology- and alien-builders is Dougal Dixon's *After Man* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), which depicts a future ecology on Earth, 50 million years after the extinction of mankind. It's hard to beat for imagination and detail. — RM.)

Ω

Once upon a time...

...there were three adventurers.
The first was a powerful fighter.
He thought he could slash and hack
his way out of anything...



He's dead now.

The second, a great magician, thought
his spells would deal with any
threat...



He's dead, too.

The third wasn't the best fighter, or
the best magician. In fact, he wasn't
the best at anything. But he read
Tricks of the Trade...



And he lived happily
ever after.



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Labyrinth

STAR(S).....	G	AP DISTANCE.....	36
POP. VALUE.....	13	GRAVITY.....	Heavy
ATMOSPHERIC DENSITY.....			Standard
ATMOSPHERIC HAZARDS.....			None
UNUSUAL CHARACTERISTICS.....			None
NATIVE POWERS.....			None
GOVERNMENT TYPE.....			Bureaucratic
INDUSTRIAL LEVEL.....			5

Labyrinth was selected by the UP as the replacement prison planet for Takron-Galtos. Originally a mining colony world whose rare earth deposits were heavily exploited, Labyrinth is a planet honeycombed with tunnels. These underground caverns, alleged to be structurally stable, are scheduled to be used as living quarters for the prisoners since the surface of the world would require extensive terraforming to make it suitable for human life.

The prison's control center, erected by the Legionnaires and armed with state-of-the-art energy weaponry (Starbolt [Stun]: 18; three batteries), is the only structure currently on Labyrinth's surface.

In preparation for its new role, Labyrinth has been provided with an improved version of Brainiac 5's original planetary force shield design (Force Field: 45; Flame Immunity: 18; Sealed Systems: 35). The energy to generate the force shield is drawn directly from the system's smaller star.

The job of being Warden of the UP's prison planet is perhaps the most pressure-packed and unrewarding assignment the Science Police has to offer. Over the past three years, at least four different individuals have held this position. Each had apparently divergent viewpoints on proper prison administration techniques. The latest in this line is Warden Tsaquin, a blond-haired, greenish-skinned male of normal humanoid size and appearance, save for the disconcerting feature of the single elongated eyestalk that extends from the center of his brow. Tsaquin's assignment as Warden began with the arrival of the prisoner ark on Labyrinth; only time will tell how effective or lasting his tenure in this position will be.



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The Marvel[®]-Phile

by Jeff Grubb

Before plunging into the matter at hand, it's time for yet another general-interest question. In the past, such questions have brought forth a huge amount of mail on various subjects; so — not learning from our mistakes — I'm going to do it again.

I've gotten some letters over the past few months requesting Scourge, a vigilante who went around popping off the majority of the third-banana villains (and a couple of important ones as well) in the Marvel Universe. However, these requests

are not only for Scourge (who appeared in MA2, *Avengers*[™] *Coast-to-Coast*), but for *all* the people he's bumped off. A lot of these latter individuals are minor characters who, all together, had only a handful of appearances and are unlikely to receive



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mention in any upcoming TSR product. The rub is that there are almost 30 of these ex-villains, ranging from such long-standing foes as Miracle Man, the Melter, and Hammer and Anvil to lesser lights such as Turner D. Century and Megatak.

If we are to do the rogue's gallery of all of Scourge's victims, it will have to be a major section in DRAGON® Magazine – a total of 12- or 16-pages, possibly run in two or three issues. Whether we do this or not depends entirely on your feedback. If you want to see it, send in your mail, care of DRAGON Magazine (P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147), to me or Roger

"Justice Is Served" Moore. While you're at it, include any other individuals you want to see in this column (we've covered a lot of them, but there are a lot more left).

Okay, then, on to new business. As shown above, being dead does not necessarily prevent a hero or villain from being covered in the Marvel®-Phile. Back in the early history of this column, in DRAGON® issue #92, we covered three of the recognized Heralds of Galactus – one of whom, Terrax, is among the deceased. Now, we finally get to handle the other half of the group.

AIR-WALKER™

Gabriel Lan of Xandar

F	AM (50)	Health: 275
A	MN (75)	
S	AM (50)	Karma: 155
E	UN (100)	
R	RM (30)	Resources: n/a
I	MN (75)	
P	AM (50)	Popularity: 0

Known Powers:

Power Cosmic: Air-Walker had the ability to gather, channel, and manipulate vast quantities of cosmic energy with Monstrous ability, within a range of 2,000 miles. Air-Walker could perform the following power stunts with this power:

- * Create energy attacks of Monstrous force;
- * Generate heat, magnetism, and electricity of Monstrous levels; and,
- * Enhance any one of his personal abilities to the Unearthly rank, once per day, for 1-10 rounds.

Air-Walker was capable of manipulating matter at the molecular level, as Silver Surfer can, but it is not known if he was as proficient at this as the Silver Surfer is. Air-Walker would manifest this Power Cosmic as a set of crimson and gold "wings" issuing from his back.

Flight: Air-Walker could move between the stars at Class 5000 speeds, but usually curtailed his movement within planetary atmospheres. He could also hover in place. Unlike Terrax, Firelord, or the Surfer, Air-Walker required no additional paraphernalia in order to fly.

Body Armor: Air-Walker had Amazing protection from energy and physical attacks, which he could boost to Monstrous levels for 1-10 rounds. He was invulnerable to heat and cold (with Class 1000 resistance) and could survive in space for extended periods of time without need of food or air.

Horn of Galactus: Both the original Air-Walker™ and his robotic replacement were provided with a golden, trumpetlike device which issued a hyper-space signal. Both used the trumpet to summon Galactus to planets which looked suitable for Galactus's "dinner."

The Air-Walker Robot: After the death of Gabriel Lan, Galactus built a robot, then invested it with the Power Cosmic and the remains of Lan's personality. This robot had statistics similar to those of the origi-



DESTROYER™

nal Air-Walker, and in addition had repair circuitry allowing it to heal as a living creature. The source of the robot's power was its winglike "cloak," which gathered cosmic energy. The Air-Walker Robot was - 1CS in all of its abilities if unable to use the cloak.

Air-Walker's story: Gabriel Lan was a native of the now-destroyed world of Xandar, and was the captain of the space ship *Way-Opener*. The *Way-Opener* made contact with Galactus's ship when the Eater of Worlds was seeking a replacement for his first Herald, the Silver Surfer. Sensing Lan's spirit, Galactus teleported him into his presence and offered him the Power Cosmic. Given the opportunity to explore the universe as Galactus's Herald, Gabriel accepted and was invested with the Power Cosmic.

Gabriel Lan served Galactus faithfully for several years until he returned from a new-found planet suitable for Galactus's needs and encountered a fleet of Ovoid warships. The fleet had been on patrol and was aware of Galactus's presence in their part of the galaxy; they were also carrying weaponry which was designed to slay Galactus. They fired at Air-Walker instead, killing him.

Galactus found his dying Herald, but had no available power to save Air-Walker's life. Instead, he transferred the bulk of

Gabriel's consciousness into a robotic duplicate. While this duplicate served admirably, it lacked the curiosity and drive of the original Gabriel Lan, so that Galactus finally dispatched it to Earth to retrieve the then-imprisoned Silver Surfer. This attempt to recover the former Herald met with failure, resulting in the destruction of the bulk of the Air-Walker Robot, leaving Galactus without a Herald again.

The Air-Walker Robot was retrieved by the robotic servants of the Machinesmith, a human/robot villain, who sought to use the powerful robot as a servant. Unfortu-

nately, the Machinesmith could not understand the Air-Walker Robot's alien wiring. The Machinesmith did manage to activate the self-repair circuitry in the ex-Herald, however, allowing Air-Walker to rebuild itself. Seeking vengeance against the Silver Surfer, Air-Walker instead encountered and fought Thor, who destroyed it and apparently ruined its repair circuitry. The robotic remains of the Air-Walker were taken into space by the former Herald Firelord, who buried them on an asteroid in the Xandar system.

FIRELORD™

Pyreus Kril of Xandar

F	MN (75)	Health: 325
A	UN (100)	
S	AM (50)	Karma: 110
E	UN (100)	
R	RM (30)	Resources: n/a
I	AM (50)	
P	RM (30)	Popularity: 0

Known Powers:

Power Cosmic: Firelord has the Power Cosmic of Uearthly rank, and he usually chooses to channel it into the form of fiery effects. In deep space, Firelord has Class 1000 flame-generation and fire-control

powers, but within inhabited solar systems he restricts himself to the Uearthly ranks. In addition, by using the Power Cosmic, he may project and control light, sound, gravity, and radio as power stunts. He may be able to use the healing and matter-manipulation ability of the Silver Surfer, but he has never demonstrated them (treat these abilities as first-time power stunts, if used). The fire-based manifestations of the Power Cosmic, including Firelord's flaming hair, cannot be smothered by water, though a sufficient amount of water or flame retardant may reduce their effects.

Body Armor: Firelord has Amazing body armor against physical attacks and may superheat his body (as a power stunt) so that normal weapons and materials vaporize on contact with him, leaving him unharmed. Firelord is immune to disease, aging, and the effects of starvation and vacuum. Firelord cannot be slain save by the complete scattering of his molecules (apparently a new power common to Heralds since the death of Air-Walker).

Flight: Like all Heralds of Galactus, Firelord can fly at Class 1000 speeds and enter hyperspace at will. In planetary atmospheres, he flies at Uearthly speeds.

Firelord's Staff: Firelord can wield his fire-generating power through a 5'-long staff, allowing him a +1 CS to hit targets. This staff is made of Class 1000 materials and may be used as a striking weapon, inflicting Monstrous damage in Firelord's hands.

Firelord's story: Pyreus Kril was the first officer on the *Way-Opener*, under the command of Gabriel Lan (Air-Walker). Captain Lan was teleported away from the ship into Galactus's presence, and Pyreus and his crew followed to retrieve their captain. Pyreus caught up with Galactus after the destruction of the Air-Walker Robot, and the Eater of Worlds volunteered to reveal the fate of Gabriel Lan if Pyreus would agree to serve as his Herald. Pyreus did so and was transformed into Firelord.

Firelord served Galactus for a short time, until Thor had him released from service by exchanging the Asgardian con-

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struct known as the Destroyer for Kril's freedom. Firelord retired to Earth, the site of the Air-Walker Robot's death. Following Thor's battle with the reactivated Air-Walker Robot, Firelord took that construct's remains and buried them in the Xandar system. Firelord wandered extensively, but following the destruction of Xandar by the mercenary Nebula, joined the former Avenger Starfox to hunt for this space marauder.

DESTROYER™ Construct of Odin

F	UN (100)	Health: 3,275
A	MN (75)	
S	UN (100)	Karma: 0
E	CL 3000	
R	n/a	Resources: n/a
I	n/a	
P	MN (100)	Popularity: - 100

Known Powers:

Animation: The Destroyer is an enchanted suit of armor which may capture the consciousness of its user in order to gain movement and direction. Such a consciousness may be a willing entity within 10' of the empty armor, an unwilling entity who touches the armor and fails a Psyche FEAT of Monstrous rank, or a willing and powerful entity with magical abilities who can project his astral form into the armor. In any case, the body of the consciousness occupying the armor remains inactive until the spirit leaves the Destroyer armor and returns to its original body (which does not need to be in contact to make the switch).

Anyone occupying the Destroyer armor gains the attributes listed above, adding his own Reason and Intuition scores to the appropriate areas. He must make a Psyche FEAT against the Destroyer's own Monstrous Psyche each time he uses one of the construct's powers or makes a FEAT roll using the armor. The failure of this FEAT means the user's personality is consumed by the Destroyer's own will, and the Destroyer becomes a juggernaut of destructive power.

Body Armor: The Destroyer is made of metal enchanted beyond the levels of Adamantium itself, making it Class 3000 protection against *all* forms of attack, including physical, energy, force, mental, and magical powers. Its "wearer" has no need to breathe, eat, or sleep.

Weaponry: In addition to its powerful attributes and near-invulnerability, the Destroyer has a number of powerful, inherent weapon systems, including:

- * Energy bolts of Shift Z power;
- * Force bolts of Shift Z power;
- * Flame generation of Shift Z power;
- * Magnetic generation of Shift Y power;
- * The ability to transmute and arrange

elements and molecules, as well as to alter densities of substances, at Class 1000 power; and,

* A disintegrator beam that takes two rounds to charge, but once activated, fires a beam of pure disintegrating force with a 5-area range and Class 1000 power. Inanimate items of less than Class 1000 material strength are immediately destroyed, while living beings must make an Endurance FEAT against the intensity of the blast to avoid a similar fate.

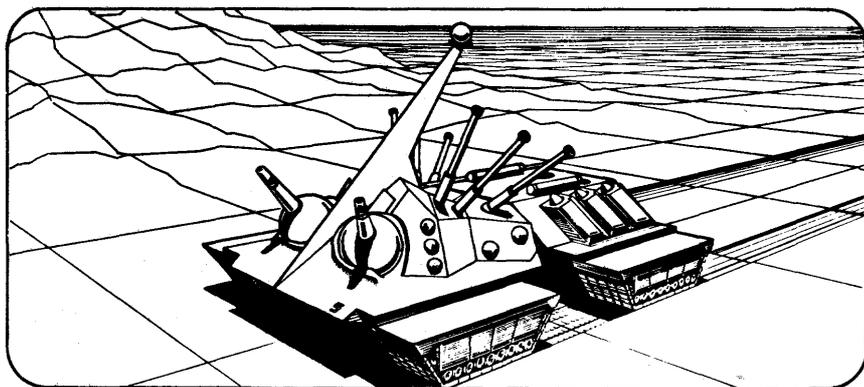
The Destroyer's story: The enchanted Destroyer armor was created by Odin's finest craftsmen from an unknown Asgardian element stronger than Adamantium or Uru, and was further enchanted by Odin and the other leading "gods" of various pantheons with its present powers. The Destroyer was built by these entities as a trump card in the eventuality of war with the Celestials, a race of space-gods whose powers equalled or exceeded those of Odin, Zeus, and the other deities. The Destroyer was created only to destroy, and those who are absorbed into the armor eventually become killing machines devoid of any other desire.

Odin hid the Destroyer armor in an underground temple in Indochina, where it was located in later years by Loki. The God of Mischief used the Destroyer on several occasions as a pawn in his battles

with both Odin and Thor. Thor, unaware of Odin's true purpose in creating the Destroyer armor, eventually bartered it to Galactus in exchange for Firelord's freedom. The Eater of Worlds accepted, but the need to animate the armor fully and its overly destructive tendencies caused Galactus to place the armor aside — at which point, Loki stole it back for yet another plot against Asgard.

With the arrival of the Celestial Fourth Host, Odin summoned the life-forces of all the gods of Asgard (except Thor) into the Destroyer and, wielding the Odinsword, took on the Celestials. The Destroyer was quickly beaten by the Celestial Host, but something as invulnerable as the Destroyer was not entirely destroyed, and its form was (again) located and rescued by Loki. On this occasion, Loki gave over the Destroyer armor to Thor during a squabble with Loki's daughter, Hela. The Thor-powered Destroyer demolished a large section of Hela's realm before the Norse death-goddess surrendered. As a last act, Thor used the armor's matter-manipulating abilities to encase itself in a thick prism of unbreakable (Class 5000) crystal, as a monument to Hela's folly.

The Destroyer was the only one of Galactus's official Heralds that was an unliving thing, and thus did not agree with its transformation into a Herald. As such, it never wielded the Power Cosmic. Ω

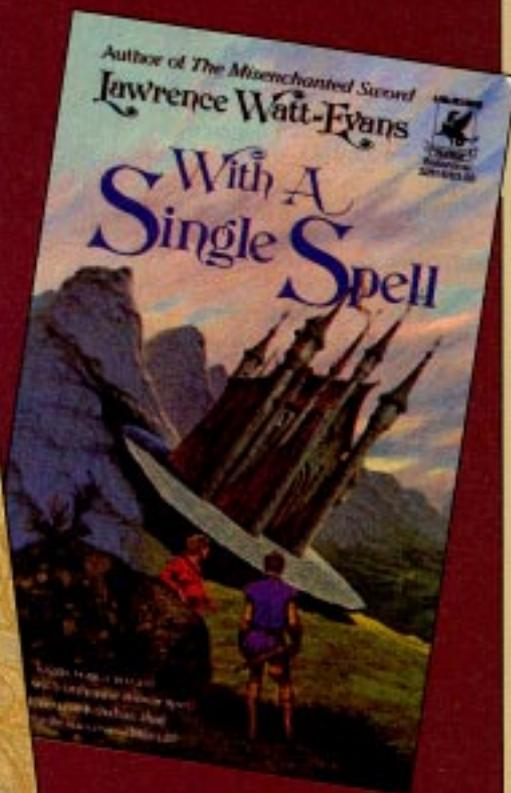
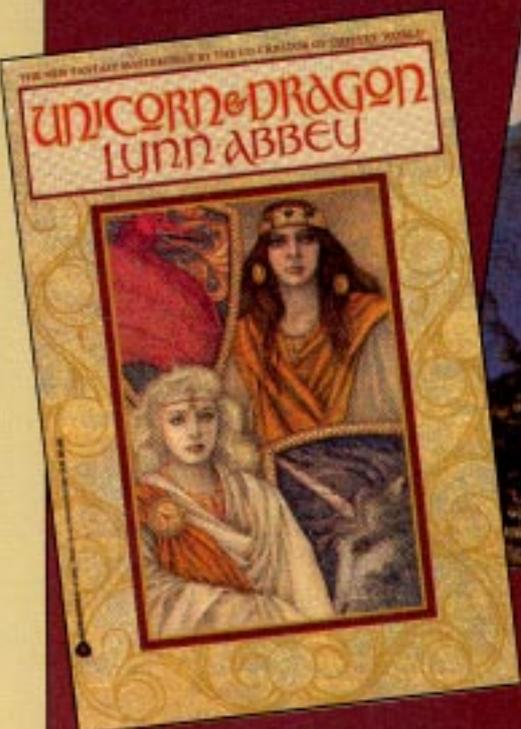


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The Role of Books



*Murdercon, Pern's return,
and dragon-slaying the easy way*

by John C. Bunnell

THE KING OF SATAN'S EYES

Geoffrey Marsh

Tor 0-812-50650-2 \$3.50

It's appropriate that the typography for the title of this book recalls the Indiana Jones movie logos. If anything, *The King of Satan's Eyes* is an even more direct descendant of the old movie serials and pulp novels than are Steven Spielberg's films.

In fact, only occasional touches of the 1980s keep readers from mistaking Geof-

frey Marsh's book for pulp fiction written 40 years earlier. The tale has all the classic hallmarks: death-dealing cliffhangers concluding each chapter; beautiful women, sometimes trustworthy and sometimes not; world-spanning trails of evil henchmen and obscure clues; and a dangerously powerful object out of legend to tie the chases together.

The present-day elements are somewhat more subtle. Hero Lincoln Blackthorne lives between adventures in a sleepy New Jersey town and divides his time there between crafting expensive suits and

fending off marriage plans from the girl across the street. His sidekicks also call Inverness home, but they're old enough to get senior citizen rates at hotels and restaurants. And the situations Lincoln must face include a modern skyjacking and jungle ambushes.

If the description of the novel sounds like the formula for thousands of adventure movies, novels, and games (the TOP SECRET® or *Mercenaries, Spies & Private Eyes* games in this case), it shouldn't be a surprise. Marsh is indeed writing a formula book, but his gift is to lend a crisp execution to the text that barely gives readers time to notice. Plot, pace, and scenery interlock with fine-tuned precision, and the result is an excellent example of how this kind of yarn ought to be put together. Game masters and writers who can figure out how Marsh does it have long and successful careers ahead of them.

WITH A SINGLE SPELL

Lawrence Watt-Evans

Del Rey 0-345-32616-4 \$3.50

About a year and a half ago, a series of letters in the "Forum" column debated whether a powerful dragon could survive the onslaught of 25th-level characters with +5 everything. *With a Single Spell* makes the debate irrelevant, as Lawrence Watt-Evans offers a tale in which the requisite dragon is slain through what amounts to the use of a *firefinger* cantrip.

That particular episode, though, is only part of what makes Watt-Evans's latest novel especially intriguing to players of low-level magic-users. The adventures of Tobas of Telven are a veritable warehouse of ideas for gamers who want to inject variety and a degree of realism into the process of advancing to the rank of mage.

Tobas starts the book with only the aforementioned spell in his repertoire — it's the only one his master has taught him, and old Roggit has just died. Desperate to learn more in order to launch his career, Tobas tries to open Roggit's spell book, but the tome explodes and ends up destroying the dead wizards cottage. That sends Tobas out into the world seeking his fortune, and a series of adventures quite naturally begins.

Watt-Evans uses a brand of magic slightly removed from the D&D® game norm, but there are enough parallels so that most of the novel's wizardcraft can be translated effectively. In particular, the use of "order" rather than "level" to refer to a spell's relative difficulty is a good touch, and Tobas's problems with material components show dramatically how DMs might resolve similar situations. Even the nonmagical plot twists (especially the reward offered for slaying that dragon) are neatly and logically unveiled.

With a Single Spell is set in the same realm as its predecessor, *The Misenchanted Sword*, and like the earlier book, takes a low-key situation and a plausible, sympathetic character from humble ori-

gins to a satisfying conclusion. Perhaps having offered readers a wizard and a warrior in this context, Watt-Evans will try a healer's or thief's tale next. If so, the stories are likely to be rewarding, since the author has now proven his ability to tell them twice over.

BIMBOS OF THE DEATH SUN

Sharyn McCrumb

Windwalker/TSR 0-88038-455-7 \$2.95

It's not exactly a murder mystery (like the author's three earlier books), an insider's guide to science-fiction and fantasy conventions (though it tries hard), or a fantasy adventure (as it's described on the spine). Yet *Bimbos of the Death Sun* contains elements of all three categories, and the ingredients blend into a smooth combination. Does that mean Sharyn McCrumb has written a successful novel?

The convention setting is the primary ingredient, and while the overall atmosphere is skillfully conveyed, it suffers from curious inconsistencies. The mythical Rubicon takes up most of a large hotel and attracts crowds of folksingers, *Star Trek* fans, fanzine publishers, and (of course) gamers. Yet it is apparently run by a single person, the programming seems to omit tournament gaming or a formal masquerade entirely, and the only professional guests of any sort are two authors — one whose Norse barbarian is a cult hero, and one whose first hard science-fiction novel has just been published by an impossibly inept paperback house. The paradoxes become more puzzling when McCrumb displays specific knowledge of genre authors, fanzines, and folk lyrics in one scene, then misspells a *Star Trek* character's name in the next.

The murder mystery suffers less from logical flaws than from inattention. The murder itself doesn't occur until halfway into the story, and sharp readers will solve it in the sentence before it happens. Oddly enough, though, the thin puzzle doesn't detract much from the story, which spends most of its time chronicling the crazier situations occurring during the convention weekend.

That emphasis is what qualifies *Bimbos of the Death Sun* as fantasy adventure. McCrumb's knowledge of fandom may have gaps, but her characterizations are uncannily accurate and her sense of humor is likewise in tune with the chaotic convention setting. In addition, the snatches of actual gaming incorporated into the tale do ring true, though the "ultimate role-playing climax" promised by the cover copy is fortunately implausible in real life.

Few readers are likely to be totally satisfied with McCrumb's novel — seasoned convention-goers will spot too many technical glitches, whodunit fans will wish for a more devious puzzle, and gamers won't find enough specific D&D® game action. However — and this is a major *however* — most readers should enjoy the book enough to make it worth reading anyway,

because it is one of the few novels around that treats the world of science-fiction fandom in serious, if lighthearted, fashion.

ARROWS OF THE QUEEN

Mercedes Lackey

DAW 0-88677-189-7 \$2.95

The story told in *Arrows of the Queen* is an engaging one, and future volumes of the trilogy it begins will be worth reading. But there is a catch: Mercedes Lackey seems to have three kinds of stories in mind, yet tells only one of them in her chronicle of the Heralds, defenders of a kingdom threatened from within by intrigue and from without by rumors of war.

One missing story involves the potential conflict between the psionic disciplines of "Herald's magic" and the supposedly lost power of "real magic." While Lackey hints at the presence of real magic in one critical phase of the plot, she raises the question only to leave it unexplored — save perhaps in the next book. The other overlooked conflict concerns a faction of dissident nobles which engineers a narrowly aborted coup, is eventually discovered, and finally faces the death penalty, all offstage with barely so much as a Hitchcock-style cameo appearance.

Instead, the tale focuses squarely on Talia, a girl rescued from a hard life on the outskirts of Valdemar and brought to the Herald's Collegium for training. Some of her lessons are academic or physical, while others gradually transform Talia's dangerous reticence into the skilled self-assurance she will need as the Queen's Own Herald in a kingdom where danger walks with unusual subtlety.

The story Lackey has chosen to tell has some very strong echoes of Anne McCaffrey's *Dragonson* and *Dragonsinger*. Like McCaffrey's Menolly, Talia is a roughly raised girl thrust into an academic environment which is both unfamiliar and fascinating — and the Heralds' Companions, intelligent horses from an unknown world, have psychic abilities which resemble those of McCaffrey's dragons.

But despite the structural resemblances, *Arrows of the Queen* stands up reasonably well on its own. Lackey's characters are almost unrelentingly likable — even the obnoxious ones — and Lackey takes her tale in different directions than those McCaffrey pursues. There are occasional problems, including some awkward viewpoint shifts and the rather abrupt dismissal of Talia's family, but on the whole, the novel is well told and captivating. Gamers should find the concept of Heralds especially intriguing, with definite potential as a character class.

The book's best feature, though, may be that it is reasonably self-contained, so forthcoming sequels can spin new stories rather than repeat the one already told. Lackey clearly has more threads to unravel, and the pattern of her tapestry can only improve from their addition.

To THE HAUNTED MOUNTAINS

Ru Emerson

Ace 0-441-79558-7 \$2.95

The *Wilderness Survival Guide* provided the rules and statistics for DMs to expand and refine wilderness adventures in their campaigns. Now Ru Emerson's second novel, the first in a trilogy about the realm of Nedao, provides the atmosphere.

Emerson's yarn has barely started before the journey begins. Nedao's capital has been sacked, and its heir must flee to a distant refuge over a difficult mountainous route. Complicating the trek are companions including Princess Ylia's old nurse and the partly bespelled daughter of a noble house, neither well prepared for the arduous travel. But the party does have unusual resources, in the form of Ylia's awakening magical Gifts and of Nisana, a being who is rather more than Ylia's cat and who also carries a share of sorcerous power.

The character of Emerson's wilderness is authentically rough and realistically populated with a balance of streams, rugged woods, and rocky ground. Both the book's dedication and the author's comments at a spring science-fiction convention reveal the solid, on-the-spot research that underlies Ylia's journey.

The personalities voyaging through the book's terrain are a somewhat different yet no less intriguing matter. The story itself is told in a slightly musical, strongly cadenced prose that manages to combine a distant-sounding tone with occasional thrusts deep into her characters' thoughts

a style that makes distinctive but vaguely unsettling reading. The third-person text, meanwhile, is matched with short commentaries from the cat-character Nisana which begin each chapter. It's a device that generally works well, for of all the cast, Nisana is probably the most interesting, but it isn't quite clear how the two narratives (Nisana's and Emerson's) are supposed to relate to each other within the context of the story.

What emerges from the blend of authentic outdoor setting and unusual storytelling style is a tale that has much to recommend it, yet is probably something of an acquired taste. The very things that make *To the Haunted Mountains* better-crafted and more skillfully told than many current fantasies require readers to give more concentration to Emerson's tale than they would to a pure adventure yarn. Still, the rewards are generally worth the effort, and the Nedao trilogy promises to be a fascinating addition to the genre's ranks.

WINTER OF MAGIC'S RETURN

Pamela F. Service

Fawcett Juniper 0-449-70202-2 \$2.50

It's been five centuries since a nuclear attack blasted the British Isles, and while much of English civilization survives, life is neither overly comfortable nor very reliant on technology. Into this world of mutants and military schools comes the

slow rise of magic, in one of the most unusual Arthurian tales to appear in quite a while.

Pamela Service's novel postulates rather less confusion about its nuclear holocaust than does the GAMMA WORLD® game, but there's a similar flavor nonetheless. And her borrowings from the Arthurian legends draw more on romance than on history, yet they remain entirely plausible as they are introduced. The blend is unusual, but it's presented matter-of-factly enough to suppress most quibbles.

Even the most daring aspect of the story, Merlin's return as a teenaged orphan hampered by a bout with amnesia, is persuasively woven into the fabric of Service's narrative. Joined by a pair of young people who also don't fit in at their Welsh boarding school, Merlin embarks on a race with his old enemy, Morgan, to reach Avalon and the faerie kingdom where King Arthur waits to face his new destiny. *Winter of Magic's Return* is billed as a young adult novel, but the writing is straightforward rather than simple, and the story will hold readers of all ages. Service keeps her overt moralizing to a minimum and includes a few references teenage audiences may not catch. At the same time, though, her relatively light tone and realistically young-minded heroes combine so that the novel doesn't quite transcend its origins — it's not the equal,

for instance, of Susan Cooper's *Dark Is Rising* books.

But the story need not be a classic to be worth reading, and Service's adventure should interest a much wider audience than the one that typically haunts the "young adult" racks at bookstores. (There is also room for sequels, and in a world as distinctive as Service's, any new tale is worth hoping for.)

UNICORN & DRAGON

Lynn Abbey

Avon 0-380-75061-9 \$5.95

First, a truth-in-advertising notice: there are neither unicorns nor dragons in *Unicorn & Dragon*. The title is purely symbolic, referring to the two young women who are at the center of Lynn Abbey's novel. Second, a historical note: Abbey's book is set in England just before the invasion of William the Conqueror. Third, a warning: Despite a considerable effort to sustain a detailed image of manor house life in that place and time, the book is ultimately more confusing than valuable.

The problem is quite simply that Abbey has too many stories to tell and seems not to know which one to give center stage. There is the struggle between Normans and Saxons for political control of England, in which Geoffrey Hafwynder is caught and forced to shed his carefully maintained neutrality. There is the magical mystery of Lady Ygurna, the manor's domestic manager, whose waning powers come into conflict with those of an even more obscure sorcerer who has allied with the Normans. There is the romantic relationship which finds both Alison and Wildecant, daughters of Hafwynder Manor, drawn toward a wounded courier who seeks refuge in their household. And there are the questions surrounding the parentage of both girls that leave the manor's succession very much in doubt.

Abbey does sustain the atmosphere of an early medieval manor with reasonable effectiveness, describing a variety of useful points ranging from details of house-keeping and medical lore to the nature of local peacekeeping in Hafwynder's day. At times, in fact, the plot seems less important than the presentation of another tidbit gleaned from medieval lore.

Although gamers might logically be interested in Abbey's reconstruction of 11th-century England, it just isn't worth wading through plot developments piled one after another with little real advancement, or trying to understand characters who seem to take their cues from the author's typewriter rather than from any internal motivation. Abbey may describe her setting well, but she simply fails to make it interesting.

A word about the physical presentation of *Unicorn & Dragon* is also in order. On the plus side, Robert Gould's cover and drawings are attractive and hauntingly styled, but the book is on the small side

for a trade paperback, and the interior illustrations seem a bit undersized for the pages — rather as if they were created with a mass-market edition in mind. If readers are interested in the historical aspects of the novel, they will lose very little by waiting for the less expensive edition to appear.

Recurring Roles

The best news in the continuing-series category this month is Patricia Wrede's *Caught In Crystal* (Ace \$2.95). Wrede returns to the world of Lyra with a story that combines her usual knack for intriguing magical mysteries and the worries of a mother who must take her two children on a complex quest. (Who says adventurers have to retire when they start a family?) It's light adventure fare, but Wrede's writing is practiced, and the plusses include a more complete map and new chronological background for Lyra.

Almost as successful is *The Fisherman's Curse* (Questar, \$3.50), M. Coleman Easton's sequel to *Masters of Glass*. This time glass-mistress Kyala must face distrustful fisher-folk, a three-bodied sea monster, and the prospect of falling in love. Easton's ideas are as interesting as ever, but his characters have devoted very little energy to thinking out their religious systems, and Easton appears to have no more grasp of the problem than his cast does. It doesn't help that he seems to have run out of good names in this book — there are some exceptionally bad ones floating about. Another volume seems likely, which may be a mixed blessing.

From the author of the highly amusing *The Duchess of Kneedeep* comes — of all things — a science-fictional sendup of Edgar Allen Poe mysteries in *Murder on Usher's Planet* (Avon, \$2.95). While the yarn is easily as funny as its predecessor, the mystery element is less polished. A critic once described Poe as "three-fifths of him genius and two-fifths sheer fudge"; in this case, the proportions seem to be reversed, and most of the genius has gone into the gags. Still, players of humorous science-fiction games should have fun, and Atanielle Annyn Noel, the novel's author, retains a fair amount of writing skill.

In the case of Michael Jan Friedman, matters are more puzzling. *The Glove of Maiden's Hair* (Questar, \$3.50) departs from Friedman's variant Norse cosmos to offer the tale of a New York college professor and a warrior elf from another world who are drawn into a romantic triangle. The book's advertising correctly pegs the novel in the same cubbyhole as much of Barbara Hambly's work (while misspelling Hambly's name), but not one of Friedman's characters emerges as sympathetic, and his ending is as close to tragic as anyone has tried to come in a long time. This novel misfires badly, which is a surprise coming from Friedman.

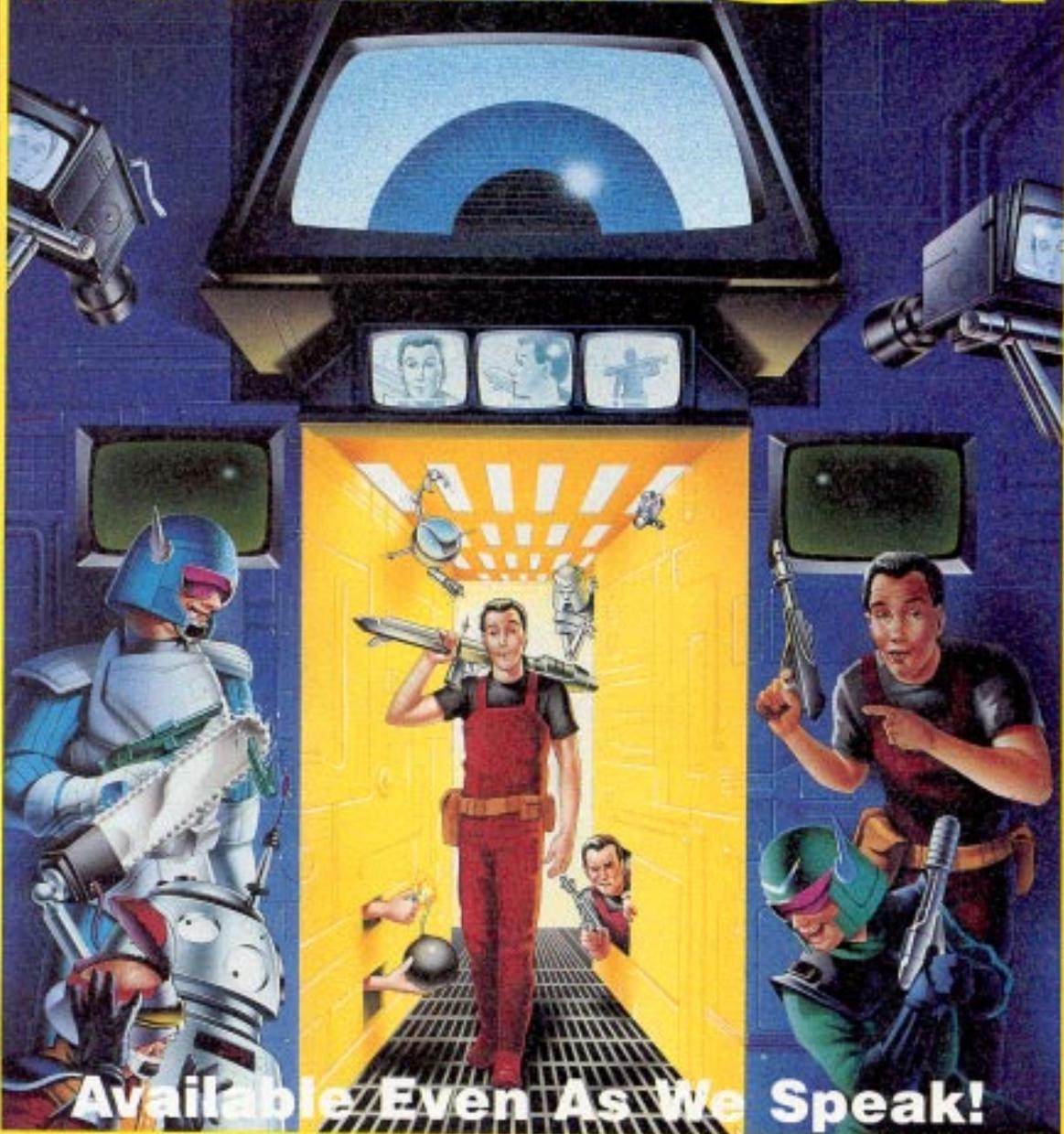


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In *Paranoia*, you play a Troubleshooter in service to The Computer. You are The Computer's trusted agent.

How did I get to be a Troubleshooter?

You turned in a friend for treason. He was executed for betraying The Computer. The Computer rewarded you for your loyalty.

What is a Troubleshooter supposed to do?

Your job is to root out all traitors and execute them. In other words, to find trouble... and then to shoot it.

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I'm a... traitor?

That's right. All Troubleshooters would be eager to unmask you as a traitor and execute you. You work with many Troubleshooters. All of them carry powerful weapons.

Let me get this straight. I'm a traitor. The punishment for treason is death. My job is to hunt down and kill traitors. I work

with other people, who have the same orders.

That's about the size of it.

If they learn that I'm a traitor, I'm dead. So I want to prove that they're traitors before they can prove that I'm a traitor. And if I don't... I'm history.

Precisely. Watch out! Traitors are everywhere!

Are you sure this is going to be fun?

Certainly, citizen! Of course it will be fun. The Computer says so, and The Computer is your friend. Can you doubt The Computer?

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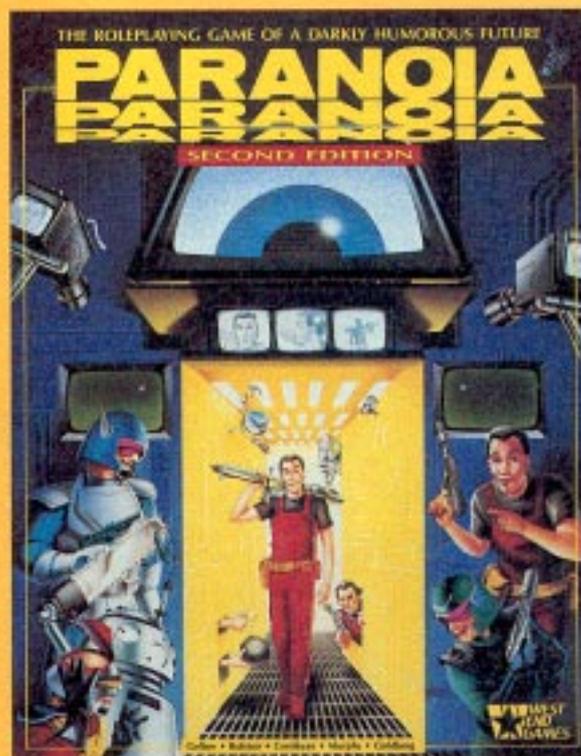
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OPERATION: ZONDRAKER

Part 2: Lunar campaign building
for the TOP SECRET® game



by Merle M. Rasmussen

The following "future history" is an example of a space-oriented campaign background that a dedicated TOP SECRET® game referee could set up for his players. A space-related campaign could be run as an alternative to a normal modern-day spy campaign, providing players with an excuse to have their characters roam further afield on their missions than dull, boring places like London, Paris, or New York City.

Campaign background

Renewed interest in lunar occupation began with the launch of *Zond 9*, a lunar polar orbiter by the Soviet Union in late 1989. The European Space Agency, unable to interest the United States in projects other than Space Shuttle flights and satellite deployments, decided to join the Soviets in their quest for occupying the Moon. The Soviets desired a southern launch facility in order to economically launch their massive payloads by heavy launch vehicles, and they quickly agreed to the joint venture. Early in 1991, two more Soviet lunar polar orbiters, *Zond 10* and *Zond 22*, were launched from the ESA's facility at Kourou, French Guiana.

Construction began on the Soviet manned lunar spacecraft as D-class rockets carried *Luna 25* and *Luna 26* aloft in 1991. With the aid of the three orbiting lunar satellites, both automated soil retrievers touched down on the Moon's Far Side and were shut off for later use. Two more soil retrievers were launched in 1992 and ordered, via the still-orbiting satellites, to land 25 kilometers from the waiting soil retrievers. Following orders from Earth, *Lunokhod 3* and *Lunokhod 4* traveled toward their respective retrievers, picking up interesting soil samples along the way. They transferred their samples to the retrievers and drove back toward their descent stages. Meanwhile, the activated retrievers fired their ascent engines and returned the collected samples to Earth three days later. Not only were these automated activities technological successes, proving the Moon's Far Side could be reached, they assured the U.S.S.R. of lunar occupation.

Soyuz L3-1, with its international crew of three, was launched by a heavy lift vehicle; 27 years after the *Apollo 11* mission. On cue, the stubby-legged spacecraft touched down near Crater Kepler on the Ocean of Storms, August 16, 1996. It was the first Eurasian moon landing. The descent stage of the spacecraft became Soyuzskaya (Union Base), a self-contained lunar station. Gagarinskaya was founded within a year at the south lunar pole with the landing of *Soyuz L3-2*. Gagarinskaya is within the Moon's latitudinal libration zone and is without line-of-sight communication with Earth for 14.8 days of the

month. This success prophesied good fortune for the founding of Titovskaya in the exact center of the Far Side, on August 14, 1998. Able to communicate with Earth only through communication satellites, Titovskaya is the most remote manned base from Earth to date.

Awakened by the *roar of Zond 9*, the U.S.A. sought a partner to help pay for lunar base research and construction beyond its space program budget. Japan, seeing a ripe opportunity to apply its technologies and make further advances in its space research, agreed to a joint U.S. venture. While the Soviets and the ESA flooded the world's headlines with their successes, the Japanese and Americans toiled with off-the-shelf space hardware to create a lunar base as economically as possible. Using data and hardware which had been neglected since the Apollo and Skylab eras, the two nations jointly developed the Lunar Lander, a Skylab-sized cylinder supported by Lunar-Module-style legs and topped by a Lunar Module ascent stage. Solar panels and antennas sprouted from each Lunar Lander, as required by its interior hardware. A different internal configuration was developed for each Lander which became a part of the finished base. One Lander contained the living quarters and storage, another communications and power generation, a third the astronomy and geology laboratory, and a fourth the life support and biological laboratory. The bases could be expanded by landing additional units. Each Lander also carried part of a geodesic dome which increased the base's living space and served as a hub connecting the separate units.

Armstrong Base was founded by the Living Quarters Lander touchdown near Crater Alphonsus, less than seven months after Gagarinskaya's founding. Other Lunar Landers soon arrived, and the base dome was erected within six months of its founding. Nearly two years later, Shepard Base was founded near the crater Aristarchus. The Near Side sites were chosen for their geothermal proclivities and because direct Earth communication could be made without the extra trouble and cost of orbiting lunar satellites — a critical point to the cost-conscious Americans.

The Moon: 1999 A.D.

The Soviet/European bases are stark and ascetically furnished. Surface structures have curved ceilings which are elegantly high: an old-world extravagance. Surface structures include cylinders and spheres built on the spot and wrapped in reflective gold foil. The cramped but warm underground quarters were blasted out of solid rock by pyrotechnic devices. Plastic explosives are used for further excavations. The bases keep in touch with Earth and each other by orbiting polar communication satellites and *Salyut 10*, a moon-orbiting space station. Soyuz landers and one-person "go-carts" stand beside the bases,

ready for immediate use.

Although small, Soyuzskaya seems to be the friendliest of the bases, with lots of camaraderie, singing, laughter, English gin, and French wine. The most "European" of the U.S.S.R./ESA bases, Soyuzskaya has developed a reputation for its hospitality, hot apple crumb cake, orange marmalade, and competitive darts. The six-member team at Soyuzskaya specializes in geothermal research, maria exploration, Earth and solar observation, and direct Earth communication.

Gagarinskaya, the base named in honor of the first human in orbital flight, is located on the Far Side near the south lunar pole, with the libration problems noted earlier. This positioning allows the base astronomers to change their focus from long-range spectrography to Earth-watching, as desired. Other base duties include polar exploration plus biological and agricultural experimentation. Chemists, biologists, physicians, and medical technicians make up the remainder of the lo-member base population. A major area of biological research involves altering human circadian rhythms.

Titovskaya, the base named in honor of the second Soviet cosmonaut in space, is a radio astronomer's paradise. Centered on the moon's Far Side and sheltered by 2,000 miles of solid rock, Titovskaya is shielded from Earth's everpresent radio static. A "pure science" outpost, Titovskaya is known for its luxurious accommodations, which include a steam bath. The 14 occupants of Titovskaya are mostly astronomers, selenologists, and physicists.

Lunar cosmonauts are primarily military personnel from the Soviet Union and its allies, plus several European nations. The cosmonauts have tablecloths, coffee tables, crystal glasses, vodka, cognac, and plenty of hearty food. They barter clothing, equipment, books, liquor, food, and water for things they need from the Americans. Being much less militaristic than their Earth-orbiting fellows, they drink toasts to the Moon, space exploration, and the memory of astronauts and cosmonauts who have died. The European contingent is a multilingual group that enjoys language classes, classical music, light gambling, and fine cooking. They are friendly, do not discuss Earth politics, and allow free inspection of their bases at all times. Cosmonauts work seven days a week. They relax with movies, reading, dominoes, chess, and by listening to daily broadcasts from Radio Moscow and the ESA command center. They think the American bases have too many personnel and not enough work. This situation, they say, leads to daydreaming, which leads the Americans to psychological problems.

The American/Japanese bases are clustered villages of cylinders sprouting solar panels. One astronaut described Armstrong and Shepard Bases as "grounded fleets of Skylabs standing on stubby legs." Cables and inflated tunnels connect each

Lunar Lander with others and the centrally located dome. Since the Moon has no ionosphere, all communication is by line-of-sight, and the two bases cannot communicate directly. Both bases communicate directly with Earth or via visiting Apollo Command Modules in lunar orbit. Apollo Lunar Modules and "moon buggies" stand on the outskirts of each base ready for use. Stored inside the bases are a few experimental "jet packs," individual rocket propulsion systems used for short hops. Explosives are used for seismic research.

Armstrong Base, named in honor of the first human to walk on the Moon, is much larger than Shepard Base. Armstrong personnel boast of having the first lunar golf course with quarter-mile links. Its occupants are a mixture of 18 medical experts, astronomers, physicists, chemists, selenologists, and administrators. Nine personnel are from Japan. Base activities include geothermal exploration, astronomy, biomedical research, and industrial engineering.

Shepard Base, named in honor of the first American in space, is primarily an American outpost. Its 12 occupants are mainly military personnel working as engineers, physicists, chemists, astronomers, and selenologists. Base activities include geothermal exploration, Earth observation, biological experimentation, and civil engineering.

The astronauts, primarily civilians from the United States and Japan with a few foreign guests, eat a wide variety of good quality food. They drink both beer and wine, and relax by reading, listening to music, building models, watching movies, playing cards and table tennis, or shooting pool. The Japanese contingent enjoys seafood, saki, hot baths, and computer video games. Astronauts are friendly, do not discuss Earth politics, and allow free inspection of their bases at all times. The Americans think the Russians are driven by toil, and they feel the living conditions at the Soviet bases are harsh. The Japanese think (but never say) that the Americans could stand to work a little harder, and regard the Soviets as their major future competitors in space; they doubt America's dedication to the space effort.

As noted in DRAGON® issue #122, American and Japanese "space-pionage" operations on Earth's Moon unofficially come under the heading of Operation: Zondraker. "Zondraker" is a name given to any politician fearful of Soviet activities in space, or to an intelligence officer assigning agents to lunar missions. One particularly zealous operator was codenamed "The Wizard of Oz." The program was first named by someone with tongue in cheek, combining the early Soviet lunar program project (*Zond*, meaning "sound") with the *Moonraker* book and movie title.

Adventuring on Earth's Moon

Three possible lunar missions for Zondraker operators are given below. Others

could be developed with a little creative effort from the Admin (and the help of a few good references).

Code Name: STARFALL

Mission: Soviet crash-site investigation (Collecting Data and Communication).

Cover: No cover necessary.

Team: As needed; at least one Investigator is suggested.

Duration: As needed.

Point of Embarkation: Armstrong Base.

Equipment: Lunar roving vehicles, cameras, and other devices as needed.

Target Site: Luna 15 crash site, Seas of Crises 17°N latitude, 60°E longitude, Near Side, Earth's Moon.

Briefing: The Soviet Union has never revealed the purpose of *Luna 15*. The spacecraft was launched three days before *Apollo 11*, performed 52 lunar revolutions, changed lunar orbit four times, and crashed into the Sea of Crises after Armstrong and Aldrin had walked on the Moon. It appeared the Soviets wanted to upstage or at least downgrade the importance of the first manned lunar landing. There is still argument as to whether *Luna 15* was a soil retriever, a rover lander, an animal experiment with a dog as a passenger, or an actual manned attempt.

Assignment: Agents are to travel to the *Luna 15* crash site and determine the spacecraft's purpose. The craft reportedly impacted at a velocity of about 480 KPH (300 MPH). Fragments of wreckage should be strewn around the cratered impact site. Any information obtained should be recorded by camera and transmitted to the appropriate home government(s). Soviet permission is not required. Soviet objection is not expected, but the Soviets may attempt to conceal the evidence if the agents' intentions are revealed.

Administrator's Notes: One and a half miles from the crash site, a tiny red rectangle appears on the horizon beside a grayish-green sphere. On closer inspection, the red rectangle turns out to be a flag of the Soviet Union, unfurled beside a large, damaged lunar lander. The spherical lander has crushed its four landing legs and pressed them into a small crater created on impact with the lunar surface. Between the flag and the lander is a rectangular pile of stones, approximately one meter wide by two meters long. Crisp boot prints, not made by NASA lunar boots, connect the lander to the pile of stones and the flag.

At the base of the flag is a small metal plaque, inscribed in Russian and bearing a picture of the Earth showing the eastern hemisphere and Earth's Moon connected by an arc of light. If any agents can read Russian, the plaque states: "On this site, human beings from the planet Earth set foot on Earth's natural satellite. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics sends peaceful greetings to all who read this."

Standing at one end of the pile of rocks is a piece of metal with the following,

scratched by hand on its surface in Russian: "Nikolai L. Kuzmin — 21 July 1969." If the stones are removed, the space-suited body of a Soviet cosmonaut is discovered. Upon close examination, it appears the male cosmonaut died instantly of multiple bone fractures, concussion, and internal bleeding.

If the crushed capsule is inspected, the reclining body of a second cosmonaut is found in his wrecked seat. His suit is covered with lunar dust. He appears to have died of asphyxiation from lack of oxygen; all air tanks aboard the craft are empty, and the radio is ruined. In his right hand, the cosmonaut holds a lunar rock.

The revelation that *Luna 15* was a manned mission would certainly astonish American space experts, many of whom questioned the Soviets' ability to place men on the Moon. Soviet cosmonauts on the Moon would immediately move to take possession of the crashed vehicle and the bodies of its crew. American and Japanese agents are not required to prevent the Soviets from doing so, but the Soviets would not appreciate learning that the craft was unnecessarily damaged or the bodies stolen.

Code Name: ARIES (The Ram)

(This mission is a continuation of the mission entitled Code Name: ARIES, from DRAGON issue #121.)

Mission: Hardware information and retrieval (Collecting Data, Stealing, and Transportation of Goods).

Article IV of the UN's 1967 Outer Space Treaty forbids the establishment of military bases on the moon. It states in part: "The establishment of military bases, installations and fortifications, the testing of any type of weapons and the conduct of military manoeuvres on celestial bodies shall be forbidden. The use of military personnel for scientific research or for any other peaceful purposes shall not be prohibited." Due to the large percentage of military personnel and increased security at Soyuzskaya, it is suspected the Soviets may be in violation of this treaty.

Actual Assignment: Agents are to visit Soyuzskaya to determine if the 1967 Space Treaty is still in force. If the treaty is being violated, the agents are to confiscate any hand-held weapons and photograph any fixed weapon system or military activity. Photographic intelligence (photint) is to be transmitted immediately to their home government.

It is expected that if weapons exist, the Soviets will try to prevent exposure of this fact. Any confiscated evidence is to be securely held until the next USA/Japan flight back to Earth. Proceed with caution.

Cover: Diplomatic Inspection (overt surveillance).

Thanks to Article XII of the 1967 United Nation's "Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, Including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies," lunar

bases can be inspected at any time. Article XII states that all stations, installations, equipment and space vehicles on the Moon and other celestial bodies shall be open to representatives of other states who signed the treaty on a basis of reciprocity. Such representatives should give reasonable advance notice of a projected visit, in order that appropriate consultations may be held and so maximum precautions may be taken to assure safety and to avoid interference with normal operations in the facility to be visited.

Cover Assignment: Agents are to determine the number and activities of personnel stationed at Soyuzskaya, and to transmit the information to their home government. Reasonable advance notice is determined by convention to be 24 hours for internal inspections, but no limit is set for external observations.

Team: As needed; at least one Investigator, Confiscator, Logistician, or Technician is suggested.

Duration: As needed.

Point of Embarkation: Armstrong or Shepard Base.

Target Site: Soviet lunar base, Soyuzskaya, Crater Kepler, Near Side, Earth's Moon.

Equipment: Lunar roving vehicles, cameras, and other devices as needed.

Briefing: The Soviets have reportedly developed space suits and equipment for combat purposes in space and on Earth's Moon. The assignment is to verify the report and, if possible, obtain the hardware for the agents' agency to analyze.

Complications: Exterior surveillance of the base reveals nothing out of the ordinary. Internal Soviet security at Soyuzskaya, however, is very tight. Although cosmonauts are quite cordial, outside visitors are not greeted with open arms. The chilly reception and red tape involved in entering the base buildings seem out of place on the Moon. It seems as if the agents have stepped back into the 1950s' Cold War on Earth, and their every move is scrutinized; things were not this unfriendly in previous visits to this base. Even the ESA cosmonauts seem distant.

Administrator's Notes: It is up to the Admin whether the Soviets have and are using weapons. If they are using weapons, detail one or more pieces of Soviet equipment to be discovered or confiscated at Soyuzskaya. The equipment is being worn by armed Soviet cosmonauts who cannot be bribed or coerced into giving up the equipment. Typical items of experimental Soviet equipment would include an extravehicular helmet with blast shield, chest protectors, bulletproof shields, recoilless devices for rifle, laser targeting devices, and wide-angle scope eyepieces for use with space helmets (see DRAGON® issue #122).

Unknown to the rest of the world, the latter two Lunokhods did not cease functioning at the times reported by the Soviets. Instead of running out of battery

power or falling into a ditch on the Far Side as claimed, the wheeled robots roamed the Moon and performed Near Side exploration. In 1995, by plain dumb luck, *Lunokhod 3* spotted a selenologist's dream: the mouth of a cave. Such vertical openings are hidden from orbital observation and routinely dismissed as rock overhangs. Only observation from the Moon's surface could spot such a find.

The celestial body which created Crater Kepler had crashed through dome-shaped caverns formed by hot subsurface gases beneath the Sea of Storms. The honey-combed rock was an ideal location for storing condensed gases, and the meteor or comet may have supplied some additional gaseous and frozen material.

Lunokhod 3 entered the mouth of the cave and sampled rock from the cavern floor. The very discovery of a cave on the Moon was already under a news blackout. When the soil retriever *Luna 25* reached Earth, its samples were analyzed under the tightest security. Among its samples, a substance more precious than petroleum, uranium, or gold was found. *Lunokhod 3* had discovered water ice.

Lunokhod 4 was immediately directed to the cave opening to verify the existence of the buried ice and to measure the extent of the caverns. It became apparent that the cavern was one of a series of interlocking chambers ringing Crater Kepler and running along fissures deep in the lunar crust. Dropping an antenna dish at the cave's entrance, *Lunokhod 4* went inside and began exploring. Project development time and political priorities stalled further exploration until 1996, but the landing sight was a foregone conclusion: Crater Kepler.

Currently, only the cosmonauts at Soyuzskaya and a tiny handful of Soviet and European scientists and politicians on Earth are aware of the discovery. The landing parties are kept small, and the team members carefully selected to reduce the chance of a news leak. The major work of the cosmonauts at Soyuzskaya is cave exploration, mapping, hydrologic experimentation, and civil engineering. If the caves can be sealed and pressurized, ready-made living quarters and work places for many cosmonauts would be available. The wealth of ice can be converted into both water and oxygen, supplying the essentials of human habitation. Colonization and large-scale mining operations will soon follow with the chance that the Moon will be claimed, or at least controlled, by the Soviet Union. Unknown to everyone but the Soviets, the ESA cosmonauts present actually work for the KGB as moles, and may eventually renounce their own countries to work directly for the U.S.S.R.

The Soviets at Soyuzskaya are understaffed and working against time. They know their discovery cannot be kept secret forever. The future colonization and exploitation of the mineral and solar

wealth of Earth's Moon (as well as the rest of the Solar System) are at stake. The Soviets are not likely to want any nation's diplomats snooping around the area. Two access hatchways beneath two different lunar shelters lead to the series of underground caverns. The only cavern maps are carefully guarded by the Soviet cosmonauts against intrusion by Zondraker personnel (the purpose of the current visit by Zondraker astronauts was learned by the Soviets in advance).

Code Name: **COMETTAIL**

Mission: Soviet lunar base inspection (Full Investigation)

Actual Assignment: Agents are to visit Titovskaya to determine why the base is under radio silence. If members of the Soviet lunar base are in distress, the agents are to aid them to the best of their abilities by any means available. If the base members are not in distress, the agents are to investigate and report the reason for the radio silence to their home government or agency.

Cover: Article XII of the 1967 United Nation's Outer Space Treaty (See Code Name: ARIES, above).

Team: As needed; at least one Investigator, Technician, or Protector is suggested.

Duration: As needed.

Point of Embarkation: Shepard Base.

Target Site: Soviet lunar base Titovskaya, Crater Mendeleev, Far Side, Earth's Moon.

Equipment: Lunar roving vehicles, cameras, rescue equipment, extra supplies, and equipment as needed.

Briefing: The cosmonauts of Soyuzskaya and Gagarinskaya reported separately to Moscow that neither base had received a radio transmission via satellite from Titovskaya in the past 24 hours. They both wanted to know if Moscow had received any transmissions via satellite from the Far Side. The last word Moscow had received was a routine "wake up" call the day before. Everything sounded normal. Later that day, no messages were sent from Titovskaya, and no transmissions from Earth were acknowledged. Fearing the worst, Moscow ordered the cosmonauts from Soyuzskaya and Gagarinskaya to attempt to raise Titovskaya on various emergency radio frequencies. So far, Titovskaya remains silent. Neither the Soviet/ESA consortium nor the US/Japan alliance have a launch vehicle ready on Earth which can reach Titovskaya in a hurry. Neither the Soviet/ESA Near Side base nor the South Pole base have adequate surface or suborbital capabilities to visit the silent base.

Complications: It is highly irregular that Titovskaya has not reported in at all. Radio failure is usually reported using emergency backup systems. A complete power failure is unlikely due to solar energy and battery storage. Meteor bombardment is mathematically improbable but possible (however seismic monitors have not noted

any large meteorite strikes recently). Lunar satellite photos reveal no damage to the base and nothing out of the ordinary. Architectural and mechanical safeguards prevent all sections of the base from simultaneously losing atmosphere or being filled by some noxious gas. Food poisoning or the rapid spread of a virulent disease are possible but improbable. Deliberate sabotage is also possible, but mutiny is more advantageous to space-weary cosmonauts. Defectors would likely contact US/Japanese bases soon after leaving or overpowering loyal comrades.

Administrator's Notes: The reason for Titovskaya's silence is monumental. Soon after transmitting their routine "wake up" call to Earth, base personnel reported to their work stations. One of the radio astronomers focused the crater-sized receiver, called "Big Dish" by the cosmonauts, on a star cluster in the constellation Taurus. The usual radio wave chatter was collected — and the signal-translating computer noted that a strange, nonrandom signal was being received that matched no known radio source. Wishing to rule out any natural anomalies such as pulsars, the antenna was meticulously focused on each star in the cluster separately; most registered normal, regular radio patterns. By concentrating on the section of sky with the higher probability of signal origin and taking into account interference and drift, a single source in the Pleiades was located which spiked the graph and demanded attention. The signal appeared to be artificial in origin — i.e., the Soviets had found *aliens*. The radio astronomers were ecstatic, but they decided for practicality that their finding be further recorded and researched before being announced prematurely.

In an effort to contain the excitement generated by the discovery, the base commander in charge of Titovskaya ordered the radio communications transmitter shut down and put under guard temporarily. Security at Titovskaya is extremely tight. Although any outsiders will be freely admitted, they will not be permitted to leave the base or transmit any message until allowed by the officer in charge. He will allow outside contact when the authenticity of the intelligent extraterrestrial radio signal is verified. After all, not only is this a moment of staggering historical significance for the entire human race, but Soviet political and scientific pride are at stake!

Bibliography

An assortment of books and references for general information on the space programs of the United States and other countries follows. Most were used in writing this article series. See the reference list given in "Operation: Zenith" (issue #120) for other useful books on this topic. Certain references are especially recommended and are so noted.

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Fiction and home video

The following are a few fictional accounts of space missions, highly useful for creating new adventure plots. — RM

Caidin, Martin. *Marooned*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1964. Originally written for the Mercury program, this details the rescue of a stranded Apollo crew in Earth orbit, with Soviet and American spacecraft participating. Fairly good.

Carter, Nick. *Death Orbit*. New York: Charter Books, 1982. Spies, the Space Shuttle, and a stealth-capable Salyut with nuclear weapons mix it up. Good spy thriller.

Cussler, Clive. *Cyclops*. New York: Pocket Books, 1986. Superb thriller with a secret American Moon base, lunar warfare, and more — in 1989, no less.

Drury, Allen. *The Throne of Saturn*. New York: Avon Books, 1971. Written in the Apollo era, this concerns Soviet and American rivalry (and sabotage) in the race to land on Mars.

Fleming, Ian. *Moonraker*. New York: Jove, 1979. James Bond's only rocket-related exploits in novel form, concerning an ICBM attack against London. Good reading.

Hay, Jacob, and John Keshishian. *Autopsy for a Cosmonaut*. New York: Little, Brown, & Co., 1969. A Gemini mission is launched to examine a "dead" Soviet spacecraft which might have an atomic bomb aboard. Excellent story.

Michener, James. *Space*. New York:

Random House, 1982. A "what if?" account of an Apollo mission which ends in disaster on the Moon. Good reading and interesting ideas.

Rosenberger, Joseph. *Operation Skyhook*. New York: Pinnacle Books, 1981. Though badly written, this has useful ideas (but only a few). Agents battle for a downed Soviet killer satellite in Indonesia.

Searls, Hank. *The Pilgrim Project*. New York: PBI Books, 1979. A 1960s novel of a crash American lunar program. Well written; has some interesting scenario ideas (what if such a thing was secretly tried?).

Administrators with home VCRs may also wish to view the following video movies with space and space-espionage themes. They certainly make the adventures seem much more real! Admins should note that the James Bond movies bear virtually no relationship to the novels by Ian Fleming. — RM

Capricorn One. VHS, 123 minutes. Capricorn One Association, 1978.

Distributed by Magnetic Video Corporation. NASA fakes a Mars landing, then tries to kill off the "crew."

Countdown. VHS, 102 minutes. Warner Brothers — Seven Arts, 1967. Distributed by Warner Home Video. Concerns a crash American lunar program, hard-pressed by the Soviets. Based on *The Pilgrim Project* (see above).

Marooned. VHS, 134 minutes. Columbia, 1969. A space rescue story involving an Apollo crew, with both American and Soviet teams racing to the capsule. Much like the book, but very slow in places.

Moonraker. VHS, 126 minutes. United Artists, 1979. Distributed by CBS FOX Video. The ultimate espionage-in-space movie, starring (ahem) Roger Moore as James Bond. A private corporation attempts to destroy humanity using germ warfare, Space Shuttle technology, and its own space station. Some interesting space-combat scenes.

2001: A Space Odyssey VHS, 139 minutes. MGM Inc., 1968. Distributed by MGM/UA Home Video. Contains some interesting material for lunar and post-2000 era missions. The STAR FRONTIERS® game module based on this movie (which goes by the same name) is of help, since it contains blueprints for the *Discovery* spacecraft and maps of the lunar surface.

2010: The Year We Make Contact. VHS, 116 minutes. MGM/UA Entertainment Company, 1984. Distributed by MGM/UA Home Video. This movie, too, contains some interesting material for near-future, deep-space missions. Also produced as a STAR FRONTIERS® game module (*2010: Odyssey Two Adventure*) with even more blueprints of the advanced spacecraft involved and space maps as well.

You Only Live Twice. VHS, 117 minutes. United Artists, 1967. Distributed by CBS FOX Video. James Bond fights SPECTRE, which is skyjacking American and Soviet spacecraft with its own manned missions.



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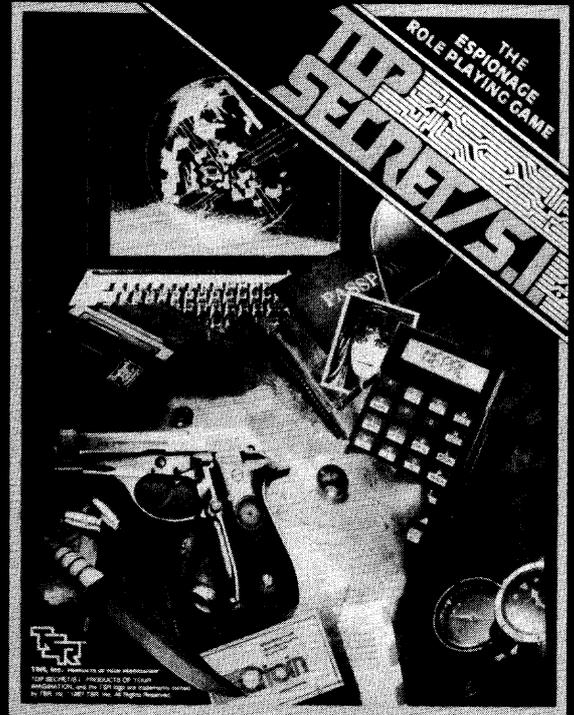
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WARREN SPECTOR

Before Warren was even seated for this interview, he had started talking. This interview is in good order, but if you want to know how the story was REALLY told, get out your scissors and cut out each of these sentences. Put them in a hat, then draw them out one by one. That would be an accurate simulation of the story of Warren's life as told by Warren.

Warren Spector, TSR's newest game editor, started life on October 2, 1955. Plunked in the middle of Manhattan, Warren was forced to battle his way to school in a hostile environment where "short, pudgy, Jewish kids didn't fare well."

Early obsessions with dinosaurs and airplanes gave way to an interest in law by the time Warren was in sixth grade. This was the beginning of a life filled with intense devotion to whatever topic caught his fancy at a particular time. By high school, Warren's obsessions were movies, cars, and basketball.

At the age of 13, Warren decided he wanted to be a film critic. He later attended Northwestern University in Illinois with those very same intentions in mind. "I really came into my own in college," Warren says. "I knew more about movies than a lot of my teachers." A Bachelors degree in Radio-TV-Film was followed by a Masters degree at the University of Texas at Austin in 1980. "I spent seven years in grad school and I almost have my Ph.D. Sorry, Mom."

Warren enjoyed playing games all through college. "I played Avalon Hill games mainly, and a lot of OGRE® and G.E.V.® games, and *Rivets* from Metagaming. It was all boardgames until I became friends with science-fiction writers who were into D&D® games, so I gave the game a try. I was hooked."

Warren went on to teach several classes of "450 screaming undergraduates" at the University of Texas at Austin. His subject was the history, theory, and criticism of film, and he showed movies to the class to illustrate his lectures. Some of the movies were especially useful because they were so bad; *Bela Lugosi Meets a Brooklyn Gorilla* was a favorite.

In 1983, he got a job at a research library as an archivist in charge of the David O. Selznick collection. Unfortunately, the position ended after a few months. "I was sitting around, wondering how I was going to pay the next month's rent, when I got a call from Chris Frink. He was a writer for a



weekly entertainment magazine I used to edit in college. Anyway, he said that he was now editor of *Space Gamer* magazine and asked if I wanted a job. So, in the fall of 1983, I started as an editor."

Space Gamer magazine was owned and published by Steve Jackson Games. Within a short time, Warren became the editor-in-chief for all Steve Jackson Games products. "I supervised game development, typesetting, and the art and graphic departments," Warren explains.

"Toward the end of 1983, Greg Costikyan submitted a game that just knocked me out talk about potential! This is the project I think I'm most proud of working on so far. It was the TOON® game, which has been quite successful for Steve Jackson Games."

The following year, Warren met Caroline Chase at a comic-book store in Austin where she was employed. As soon as he saw her, he said, "This is it! That's the one!" As coincidence would have it, Caroline got a job at Steve Jackson Games shortly afterwards, and shortly after that, a romance began. On April 11, 1987, Warren and Caroline were married.

Warren was hired at TSR in March 1987. "They made me an offer I couldn't refuse," he says with a sigh. Warren is currently hard at work editing the new TOP SECRET/S.I.™ espionage role-playing game. "The rules for this new game make it easy to play. Things move fast, so play never gets bogged down."

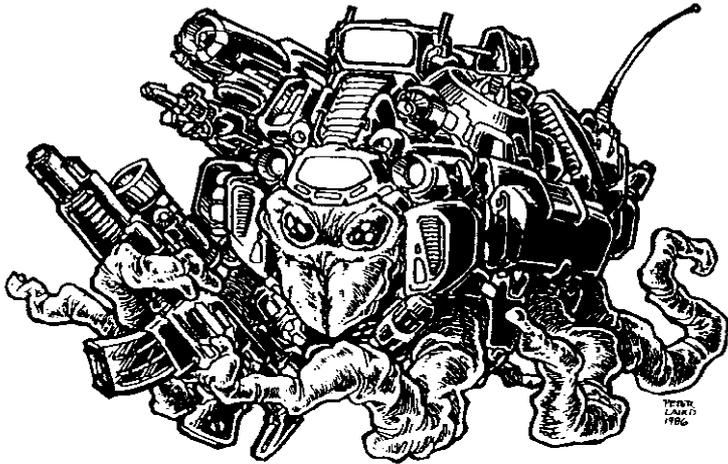
An accomplished author, he has also written MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Game-

book #5, *One Thing After Another*, due out in June, and, with Tracy Hickman, is working on TS1, *Operation Starfire*, the first TOP SECRET/S.I. game module (TS1 will be out in September). He and Caroline are also teaming up to write MX3, *Reap the Whirlwind*, for use with the MARVEL SUPER HEROES® Advanced Game rules.

When Warren has free time, he enjoys reading science fiction; trashy thriller espionage books, and car magazines. He is a rabid fan of the New York Knicks and the University of Texas Longhorns. "My obsessive personality has most recently kept me occupied with chess. Maybe someday I can win a game with Caroline," he says sadly.

Warren's advice? "Hook 'em, Horns!"

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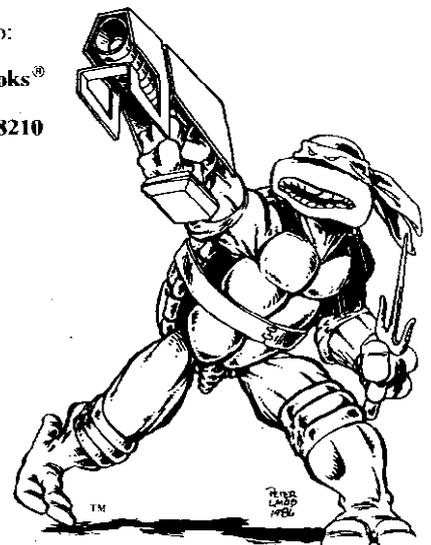
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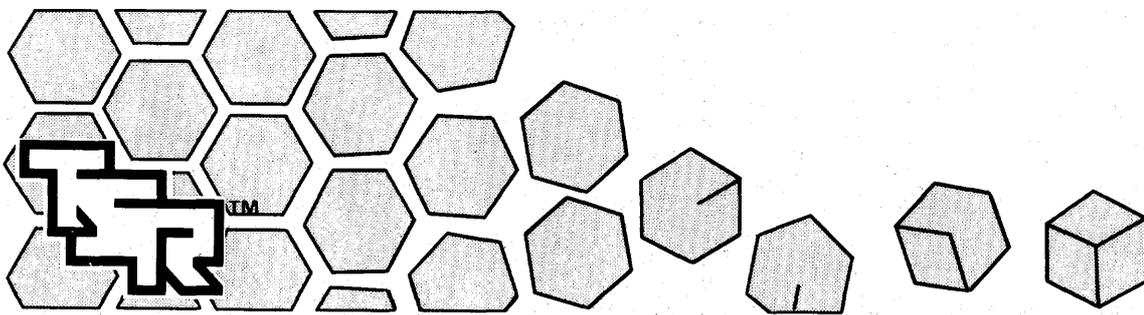
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(continued from page 40)

the DM if I could role-play Grond's hench-ogre instead, and he agreed, and we went on to have a pretty amusing evening. Grond was eventually brought back to life, but it wouldn't have mattered if it had turned out otherwise. I wanted to enjoy myself, and I did.

We all like to win, we all hate to lose, and we all feel the hurt some-

one feels when he can't enjoy a game for what it is: goofing off and having a good time with friends. Why else do people play games of any kind? If things go wrong in a game nowadays, and everything looks like it's about to go to the dogs, I think of Harley, and everything turns out okay anyway.

Harley was a good gnome. He taught me a lot.

Robert Moore

* Notice that I said "mature" and not "adult." I've gamed with 11-year-olds who had more maturity than some 35-year-olds I've met.

CONVENTION CALENDAR

Convention Calendar Policies

This column is offered as a service to our readers around the world. Anyone may place a free listing for a game convention here, but the following guidelines **must** be observed.

In order to ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be either typed double-spaced or printed legibly on 8½" X 11 paper. The contents of each listing should be short, succinct, and under 150 words in length.

The information given in the listing **must** include the following information, in the following order:

1. Convention title and dates held;
2. Site and location;
3. Guests of honor (if applicable);
4. Special events offered;
5. Registration fees or attendance requirements;
6. Address(es) and telephone number(s) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, brochures, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements run the risk of not being considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. **No** call-in listings are accepted. Domestic and foreign conventions are welcome.

WARNING: We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Our wide circulation ensures that up to a quarter of a million readers see each issue. Accurate information is your responsibility!

Convention listings should be mailed by the copy deadline date to Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147. Copy deadline dates are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. For example, the copy deadline for the December 1987 issue is the last Monday of October 1987. Plan ahead; early listings pay off!

If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been cancelled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, **please contact us immediately!** For any questions or changes related to this column, please call either Robin Jenkins or Roger E. Moore at (414) 248-3625.

☆ indicates an Alaskan convention.

* indicates a Canadian convention.

indicates a United Kingdom convention.

LIBERTYCON 1, July 10-12

This science-fiction convention will be held at the Sheraton City Center Hotel in Chattanooga,

Tenn. Guests of honor include L. Sprague and Catherine Crook de Camp, Vincent di Fate, and Wilson "Bob" Tucker. Programming includes panel discussions, autograph sessions, two dances, a sanctioned Singles Bridge Tournament, a miniatures-painting workshop, an art show and auction, and a dealers' room. Preregistration is \$15 before July 15 and \$20 thereafter. Registration is limited to 750 people, so advance registration is advised. For more details, contact: LIBERTYCON, P.O. Box 695, Hixson, TN 37343.

COLONIAL CITY GAMEFEST V, July 11-12

The Mount Vernon Gamers Association will hold this convention at the Memorial Building on East High Street in Mount Vernon, Ohio. A wide variety of role-playing and boardgaming events and a game auction are sponsored. Preregistration fees are \$4 for the entire weekend; regular fees are \$3 per day. For more information, write to: Mount Vernon Gamers Association, 205 West Gambier Street, Mount Vernon OH 43050, or call (614) 397-3785.

EMPEROR'S BIRTHDAY CONVENTION XVI July 11-12

This gaming convention will be held at Indiana University in South Bend, Ind. Events include miniatures competitions, RPGA™ Network AD&D® tournaments, and a number of other gaming competitions. The first-round RPGA™ event begins at 10 A.M. on Saturday; the second-round event takes place at 3 P.M. that same day. For preregistration packet and information, send an SASE to: R. Hagerty, 227 North 2nd Street, Apt. G, Elkhart, IN 46516. For information regarding RPGA™ events, contact: The Brigade Gaming Group, P.O. Box 252, Elkhart, IN 46516.

DOVERCON III, July 1 18-19

This year, DOVERCON will be staged at the University of New Hampshire's Memorial Union Building (MUB) in Durham, N.H. Featured games include AD&D®, CALL OF CTHULHU®, CAR WARS®, DIPLOMACY®, GURPS®, D&D®, MERP™, PARANOIA™, Star Fleet Battles, STAR TREK®, and TOP SECRET® games, and a host of others. Registration for events is on a first-come basis. A flea market, film festival, miniatures-painting competition, art contest, and open-gaming area are also provided. Preregistration rates (which must be received by July 1) are \$7 for both days; at-the-door rates are \$8 for both days and \$5 for one day. There is a \$1 entry fee for each event. Vendor and game master inquiries are welcome. For further information, write to: Information, DOVERCON III, P.O. Box 622, Dover, NH 03820.

CON-VERSION IV, July 24-26

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Carriage House Inn, 9030 MacLeod Trail South, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Joan D. Vinge is the guest of honor and Jim Frenkel is toastmaster. Special guests include Jack Williamson and William Gibson. Scheduled events include panel discussions, an art show

and auction, the Nazgul Tavern, a 24-hour video room, a costume contest and bacchanal, a dealers' room, and a gaming area. Membership rates are \$16 (in Canadian currency) until July 1 and \$20 thereafter. For more information, write to: CON-VERSION, P.O. Box 1088, Station M, Calgary, Alberta, CANADA, T2P 2K9.

MYTHCON XVIII, July 24-27

The 18th annual Mythopoeic Conference will be held at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wis. The theme of the convention, "Looking Back From Weathertop: A 50 Years' Retrospective," celebrates the 50th anniversary of The Hobbit. The guests of honor are John Bellairs, author of *The Face in the Frost*, and Christopher Tolkien, editor of *The Silmarillion* and *The History of Middle-Earth*. Special events include many papers and presentations on fantasy literature, especially that of Tolkien, Eddison, Peake, and the Inklings, as well as displays of Tolkien's manuscripts and artwork, a dealers' room, and an art show. Registration fees are \$45 and \$15 for the banquet, or \$160 for the entire packet; this covers room and board from Friday afternoon to Monday noon, registration, and the banquet. For more information, write to: MYTHCON XVIII, P.O. Box 537, Milwaukee WI 53201, or call (414) 273-1616.

CANTON CON III, July 25

Canton's only gaming convention will be held at the Memorial Civic Center in Canton, Ohio. Featured events include a variety of board, card, computer, and role-playing games. There is also a games auction for both new and used games, as well as a dealers' room full of game displays. For more information, write to: The Ohio Tournament Association, c/o Steve Robinson, 4605 12th Street NW, Canton, OH 44708, or call (216) 478-2910.

CAPITOLCON III, July 25

This gaming convention will be held at the Prairie Capital Convention Center in Springfield, Ill. Boardgames, miniatures games, and role-playing games are sponsored. For more information, write to: Bill Wilson, 3320 Gaines Mill Road, Apt. 4, Springfield IL 62704, or call (217) 787-7092.

KINGCON III, July 25

This one-day convention will be held in the Lewis Building at the City Park in Mount Vernon, Ill. This gaming event runs from 8 A.M. to 8 P.M., and features a two-round AD&D® tournament, a miniatures-painting contest, continuous movies, a dealers' room, and a variety of role-playing games and boardgames. Preregistration is \$5 until July 1; thereafter, registration is \$6.50 for the day. For more information, send a SASE to KINGCON III, Rt. 1, Box 202, Kell, IL 62853.

WINDSOR GAMEFEST V, July 25-26 *

This gaming convention takes place at the Ambassador Auditorium in the University Centre at the University of Windsor. Featured events include role-playing and miniatures games, boardgames, free movies, and a dealers' area. Registration for this event is \$10 for preregistered admission, \$12 for regular registration, and \$7 for a daily pass. For further information, contact: W.R.P.A., P.O. Box 2055, Walkerville Station, Windsor, Ontario, CANADA, N8Y 4R5. Telephone inquiries can be made by contacting Kristine Sheffield at (519) 734-1150 or John Schippers, Jr. at (519) 735-5233.



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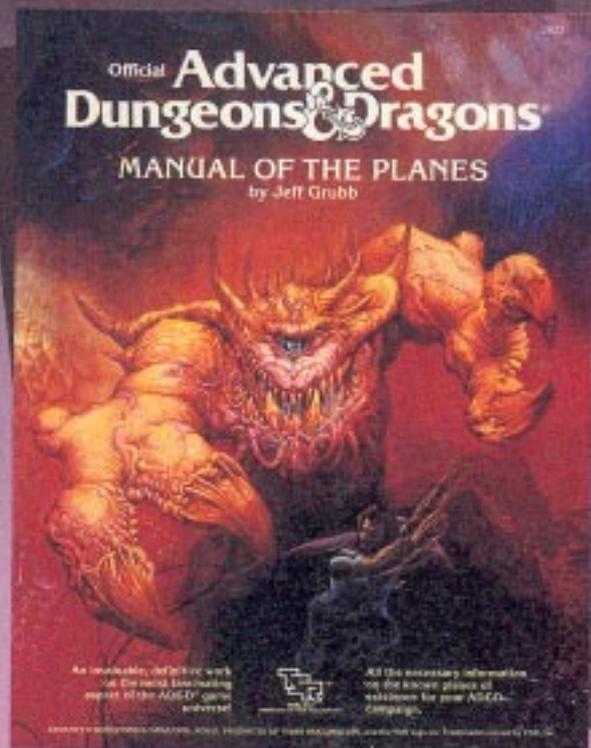
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ATLANTA FANTASY FAIR '87

July 31-August 2

This fantasy fiction and gaming convention will be held at the Omni Hotel in Atlanta, Ga. Room rates for this event are at a flat rate of \$65 for single, double, triple, and quad accommodations. Guests of honor include Darwin Bromley (Mayfair Games), Alan Hammack, Chris Marrinan and Pete McDonnell (pencilers on the CHAMPIONS® comics), John Nathan-Turner, Nichelle Nichols, Jenette Goldstein (Vasquez of *Aliens*), Tom Savini (special effects/make-up artist), and Boris Vallejo. Only at-the-door registrations are currently available; these are \$30 for all three days, \$20 for Saturday and Sunday, and \$10 for Sunday only. To register, please send checks, money orders, or SASEs to: The ATLANTA FANTASY FAIR, 482 Gardner Road, Stockbridge GA 30281, or call (404) 474-6102.

OMACON 7, July 31-August 2

This science-fiction and gaming convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Central at 72nd and Grover St. in Omaha, Nebr. Numerous gaming, science-fiction, and pro-space events are scheduled. For convention and registration information, write to: Craig A. Cleaver, 9738 Brentwood Road, Omaha NE 68114, or call (402) 397-0159.

WEAPONSCON, July 31-August 2

The first annual North American Science Fiction and Fantasy WEAPONSCON will be held at the Holiday Inn Alanta Airport, North Virginia Avenue off I-85. L. Neil Smith is the guest of honor, and John Maddox Roberts is master of ceremonies. Other guests include Robert Adams, Jerry and Sharon Ahern, David Drake, Jim Morris, and Sharon Webb. A western quick-draw exhibition features Floyd Hamlett and Melvin Wood. Special events include 48-hour con suites, science-fiction and fantasy weapons programs, two masquerades, two art shows (regular and weapons), martial-arts demonstrations, a dealers' room, and much more. Convention guests *must* wear a weapon at this con at all times, even if it's only a paper dagger. A liability waiver/agreement must be signed at the door (by parents of guardians, if under 18) in order to attend. Tickets to the banquet are \$15 until July 11, and \$20 thereafter. There are only 150 seats available, so buy your tickets early. For more information, send a SASE to: Irv Koch, 835 Chattanooga Bank Building, Chattanooga TN 37402, or call (404) 767-7360.

WESTCON III, August 1-2

This gaming convention will be held at the Departure Bay Community Center in Nanaimo, B.C., Canada. Events include AD&D®, CAR WARS®, and BATTLETECH® games, as well as a LAZER TAG™ tournament, a miniatures contest, and a full-scale maze. Registration for this convention is \$3 for one day or \$5 for the weekend. For more information, contact: WESTCON III, P.O. Box 231, Cedar B.C., CANADA VOR 1J0, or call (604) 722-3269 or (604) 753-3054.

PROJECT...GENESIS, August 2

A PATCO Protoriginal, this convention will celebrate its beginnings at Chimenello's Hall, 2221 N. Webber in Fresno, Calif. Featured tournaments include events in BATTLETECH®, AD&D®, Star Fleet Battles, DC™ HEROES, and CHAMPIONS™ games, and more. Open gaming is available to all, along with a swap meet for those wishing to buy, sell, and trade old games, game materials, books, or whatever (table space is required). Preregistration for this event is \$3 for the day if paid before July 20; after that,

registrations are \$5. Tables cost \$10 for a whole table or \$6.50 for a half. PROJECT...GENESIS needs judges for a number of events; those accepted receive a refund on their registration fees. For more details, write to: PATCO, c/o Tony Barber, 2203 E. Harvey, Fresno CA 93701, or call Phil Pittz at (209) 255-4682.

VULCON XIV, August 6-9

This 14th annual science-fiction and fantasy festival will be held at the International Hotel, 300 Canal Street, New Orleans, La. Guests of honor include Tom Savini and Richard Herd. Events include a costume contest and dance, a dealers' room, open gaming, and a host of other activities. For more information, contact: VULCON, P.O. Box 8087, New Orleans, LA 70182, or call (504) 454-0963.

HOUSTON FANTASY FAIR, August 7-9

Sponsored by Bulldog Productions, this comic-book, science-fiction, and film supershow takes place at the Houston Marriott Astrodome. This event includes appearances by dozens of comic-book artists, writers, editors, and publishers, as well as a number of film personalities. Other features include a huge dealers' room, a professional art show, an art contest, an art auction, video rooms, a masquerade, numerous workshops, previews of upcoming motion pictures, and a variety of gaming events and open gaming competition. Tickets for this three-day event are \$20 through July 15 and \$25 thereafter. For more information, contact: Bulldog Productions, P.O. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382, or call (214) 349-3367.

ORLANDO SKIRMISHES '87, August 7-9

LISTING CHANGE: SKIRMISHES presents this role-playing/wargaming convention at the Omni International in Orlando, Fla. Events include AD&D®, TRAVELLER®, Star Fleet Battles, and CAR WARS® games, with Napoleonic and various boardgaming competitions. Preregistration is \$12 until July 1, and \$18 thereafter. Hotel reservations may be made by calling (305) 843-6664. For further information regarding convention events and registration, contact: SKIRMISHES, 1803 Third Court SE #A, Winterhaven FL 33880, or call (813) 294-9166.

GEN CON® 20 GAME FAIR & TRADE SHOW August 20-23

This year's original gaming convention will be held at the MECCA Arena in Milwaukee, Wis. For preregistration materials or for judging forms, write to: GEN CON® Game Fair, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. Please indicate on the envelope which information you are requesting (i.e., "Pre-reg info" or "Judging info"). For information on assisting the RPGA™ Network Tournament Headquarters, write: RPGA™ Network HQ PO. Box 509, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

SL RALLY '87, August 22-23

This rally is for all Squad Leader gamers. The ON ALL FRONTS 3rd National Tournament takes place at the Holiday Inn on Rt. 65B in Conway, Ark. Four rounds of round-robin tournaments are played over these two days in each of the following: Squad Leader, Cross of Iron, GI: Anvil of Victory, and Advanced Squad Leader. Prizes are awarded for these events. Other events include a scenario design seminar, games sales, and various other activities. Registration is \$6 before July 15 and \$8 thereafter. For registration forms and more information, write to: ON ALL FRONTS, P.O. Box 265, Marshall, AR 72650, or call Terry at (501) 448-3066.

CONSPIRACY '87

August 27-September 1

The 45th World Science Fiction Convention takes place this year at the Brighton Centre and Metropole Hotel in Brighton, England. Thus far, the guest program includes Alfred Bester, Doris Lessing, Brian Aldiss, Boris and Arkady Strugatsky, Larry Niven, Robert Silverberg, Gene Wolfe, Ursula K. Le Guin, John Brunner, Fred Pohl, and many others. Events include a major art exhibit and auction, a stunning laser show (provided by Laser Creations of London), a costume contest, spaceflight exhibits, computer games, wargames, and much more. Membership rates as of August 1 £38.00 for all six days and £10.00 for a single day. (Exchange rates for pounds and dollars are available from most banks.) For more information on this event, please write to: 45th World Science Fiction Convention, PO. Box 43, Cambridge, CB1 355, United Kingdom.

GATEWAY 7, September 4-7

The seventh running of this Labor Day convention will be held at the LAX Hyatt Hotel. Featured events include role-playing games, wargames, family games, and computer games tournaments. Other events include seminars, demonstrations, auctions, flea markets, and an exhibitors' area. Preregistration is \$16 until August 21, and \$20 at the door. For more information, contact: GATEWAY '87, c/o DTL, P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808, or call (213)420-3675.

NANCON-88 IX, September 4-7

This annual, four-day gaming convention will be held at the Ramada North West Crossing in Houston, Texas. Tournament events include AD&D®, PARANOIA™, Squad Leader, Star Fleet Battles, and Nuclear War games, and a variety of others. A large dealers' room and open-gaming room are also provided. For more details, send a SASE to: NAN'S GAME HQ, 2011 Southwest Freeway, Houston TX 77098 (Attn: NANCON).

PACIFICON '87, September 4-7

The 11th annual PACIFICON gaming convention will be held at the Dunfey Hotel in San Mateo, Calif. Special room rates are available from the hotel for convention participants. Featured events include role-playing and boardgaming tournaments, a flea market, seminars, movies, miniatures-painting contests, auctions, miniatures gaming, open gaming, SCA demonstrations, and a dealers' room. For further information, write to: PACIFICON, P.O. Box 2625, Fremont CA 94536.

WINGAMES VIII, September 4-7

This gaming convention will be held at the University Center on the University of Manitoba campus in Winnipeg, Man. This convention usually draws around 300 gamers. All inquiries should be directed to: WINGAMES VIII, PO. Box 80, University Center, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Man., CANADA R3T 2N2.

GOLD CON '87, September 5-6

This gaming convention will be held at the OMNI Auditorium in Coconut Creek, Fla. For more details on scheduled events and registration rates, write to: GOLD CON '87, OMNI Auditorium, B.C.C. North, 1000 Coconut Creek Parkway, Coconut Creek FL 33066, or call (305) 973-2249.

MIRACLECON '87, September 12

This one-day gaming convention will be held



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from 9 A.M. to midnight at the Day's Inn in Springfield, Ohio. Sponsored events include an AD&D® tournament, a dealers' room, a miniatures-painting contest, a game auction, and a variety of other gaming programs. Registration is \$5 for the day, with no additional fees for separate events. For more details, contact MIRACLECON '87, c/o Timothy A. Riley, 308 West Church Street, Urbana OH 43078, or call (513) 653-7848.

SAN ANTONIO FANTASY FAIR
September 18-20

Sponsored by Bulldog Productions, this comic-book, science-fiction, and film supershow takes place at a location which has yet to be announced. This event includes appearances by dozens of comic-book artists, writers, editors, and publishers, as well as a number of film personalities. Other features include a huge dealers' room, a professional art show, an art contest, an art auction, video rooms, a masquerade, numerous workshops, previews of upcoming motion pictures, and a variety of gaming events and open gaming competition. Tickets for this three-day event are \$15 through September 1 and \$20 thereafter. For more information, contact: Bulldog Productions, P.O. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382. or call (214) 349-3367.

SPYCON 5, September 18-20

This special convention should be of interest to all fans of spy/undercover police TV shows.

Held at the Mount Prospect Holiday Inn at 200 East Rand Road in Mount Prospect, Ill., SPYCON 5 features a dealers' room, art show, film room, and a host of other events. Featured programs include episodes from *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*, *The Avengers*, *Rat Patrol*, *The Professionals*, *Get Smart*, and a wide variety of others. Registration fees are \$18 through Sept 18, and \$20 at the door. For more information, send a SASE to: SPYCON 5, 2710 Rohlwing Road, Rolling Meadows IL 60008.

UNICON I, September 26-27 ☆

The Anchorage Community College Gamers Association and the University of Alaska, Anchorage Gaming Society are proud to introduce UNICON I, which will be held on the University of Alaska, Anchorage/Anchorage Community College Campus. Tournaments include AD&D®, GAMMA WORLD®, Talisman, RISK®, Blood Bowl, and Advanced Squad Leader events, as well as a miniatures-painting contest, open gaming, and other activities. The convention is open from 9 A.M. to midnight on Saturday and from 9 A.M. to 8 P.M. on Sunday. Preregistration is \$4 for UAA/ACC students and \$5 for all others until September 12. Thereafter registration is \$8 for both days or \$5 for one day. For more information, send a SASE to: UAA Gaming Society, University of Alaska, Anchorage, 3211 Providence Drive, Anchorage AK 99508, or call Greg Gibbs at (907) 786-7770.

CONTRADICTION SEVEN, October 2-4

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Ramada Inn 401 Buffalo Avenue, Niagara Falls, N.Y. Anne McCaffrey is the pro guest of honor, with Mike Glicksohn as fan guest. Other guests include Joan Vinge, Nancy Kress, Jim Frenkel, and T.S. Huff Events offered include a costume contest (\$25 for best costume), an art auction, videos, parties, a people and thing auction, panels, wargaming, filksinging and other fannish activities. Registration is \$13 until July 11, \$16 until Sept. 12, and \$20 thereafter. For more details, contact: CONTRADICTIONS, P.O. Box 2043, Newmarket Station, Niagara Falls, NY 14301. Please send a SASE if you require confirmation.

SUNCOAST SKIRMISHES '87, October 2-4

LISTING CHANGE: SKIRMISHES presents the seventh annual production of this gaming extravaganza at the Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel in Tampa, Fla. Events include historical miniatures, role-playing, and boardgaming competitions Live-action tournaments, a dealers room numerous seminars, and a host of other events are also sponsored Preregistration for this three-day event is \$12 until Sept. 1: thereafter, all registrations are \$18. Hotel reservations may be made by calling (813) 873-7900 For more information and registration packets, contact: SKIRMISHES. 1803 Third Court SE #A, Winterhaven, FL 33880, or call (813) 294-9166.

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O o p s !

When, in the course of human events, the editors make mistakes

Of course, editors NEVER make mistakes. We just — okay, we make mistakes, and we need to set the record straight on a few things concerning REF4, *The Book of Lairs*.

One of the best things about REF4 was the number of people involved in the design and editing. "Many hands make light work." Except, of course, for the coordinators of those many hands. Keeping all the names with their proper contributions was a major headache, and while we were out taking our Tylenol, some of them moved. We didn't see it happening until it was too late.

Without further ado, here are the correct authors:

John Terra Wrote the lairs for Gnomes and Beholder;

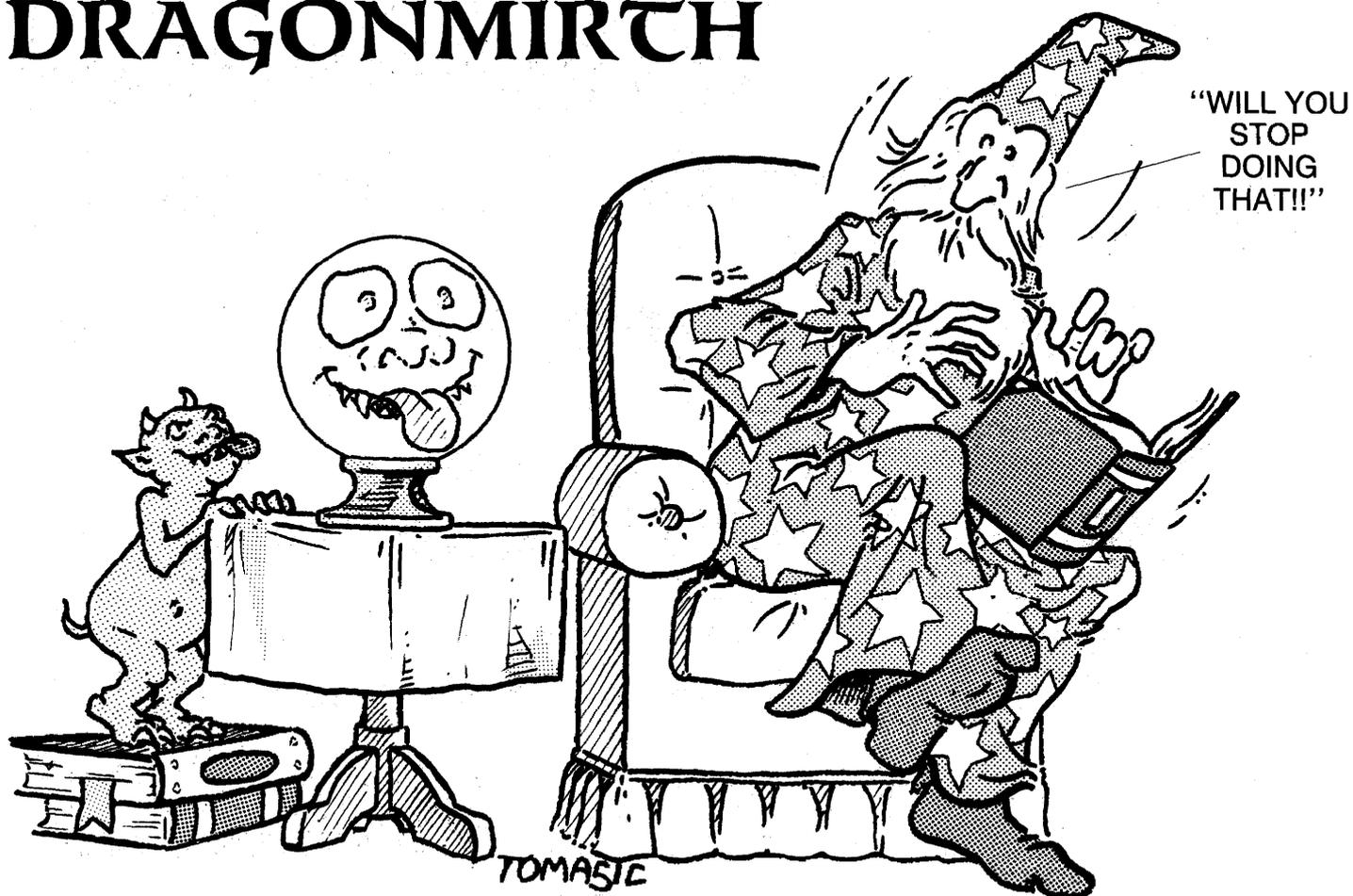
Bruce Nesmith Wrote the lairs for the Efreeti, Hippogriffs, and Mer-men; and,

Warren Spector was inadvertently left out of the master author list at the front of the book (but WAS credited correctly for the Displacer Beast lair, on the page where that appears.

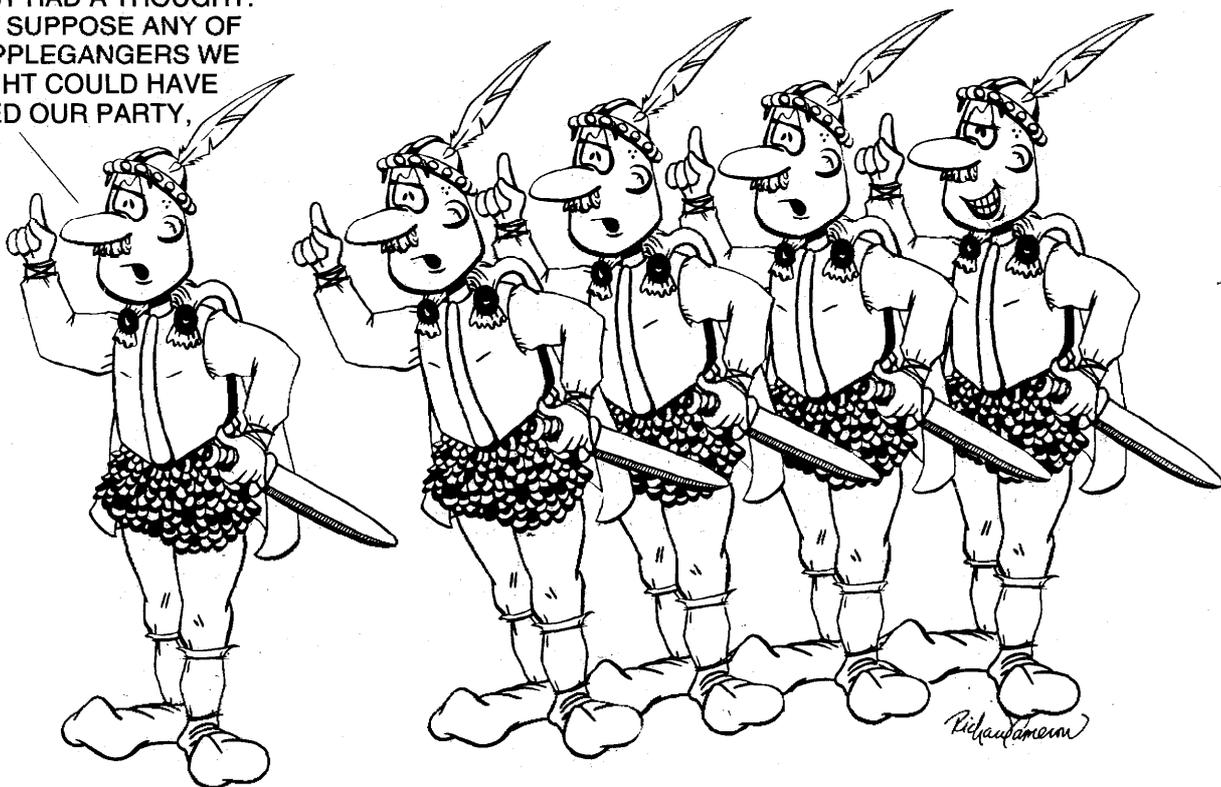
Our sincere apologies to those who were slighted — we didn't mean to upset anyone. Honest.

Karen S. Martin
Freelance Editing Coordinator
TSR, Inc.

DRAGONMIRTH



"HEY, I JUST HAD A THOUGHT. YOU DON'T SUPPOSE ANY OF THOSE DOPPLEGANGERS WE JUST FOUGHT COULD HAVE INFILTRATED OUR PARTY, DO YOU?"



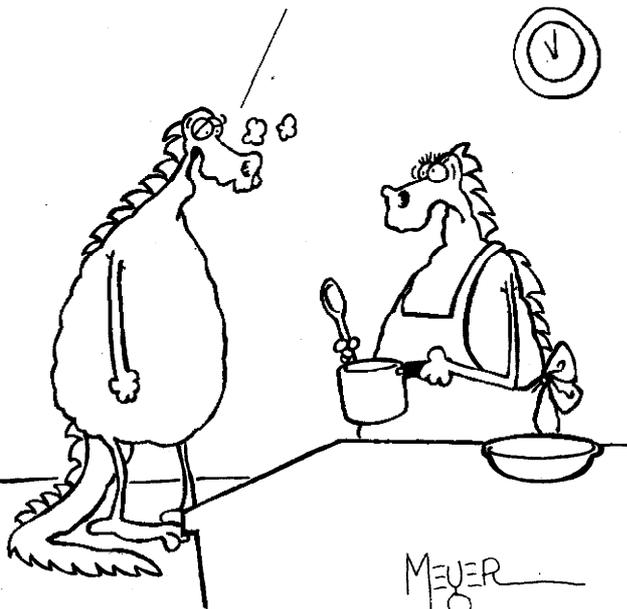


"... AND YOUR SIDEBURNS
AIN'T EVEN EITHER, ROGER.
BOY, I HATE IT WHEN
THAT HAPPENS."

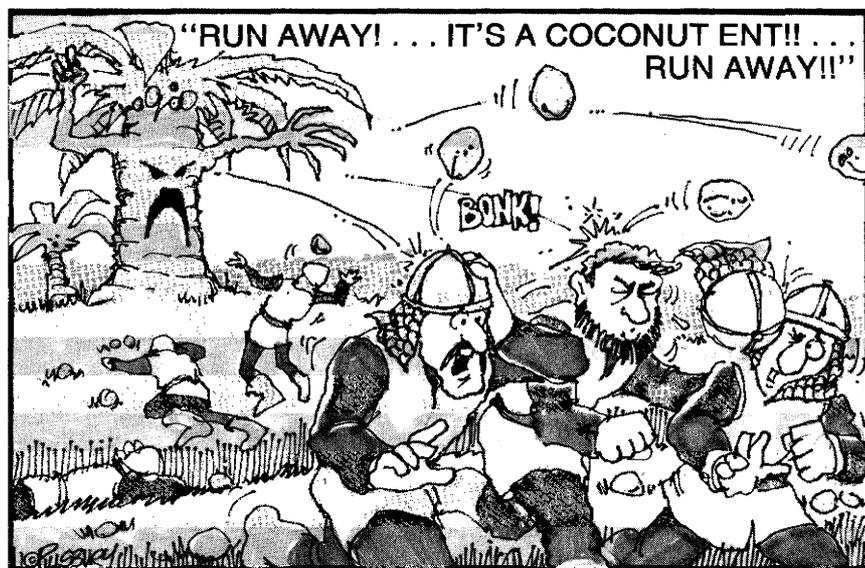


"I'LL TRADE YOU
THIS BEAUTIFUL
BOW FOR THAT
RUSTY OLD SHIELD!"

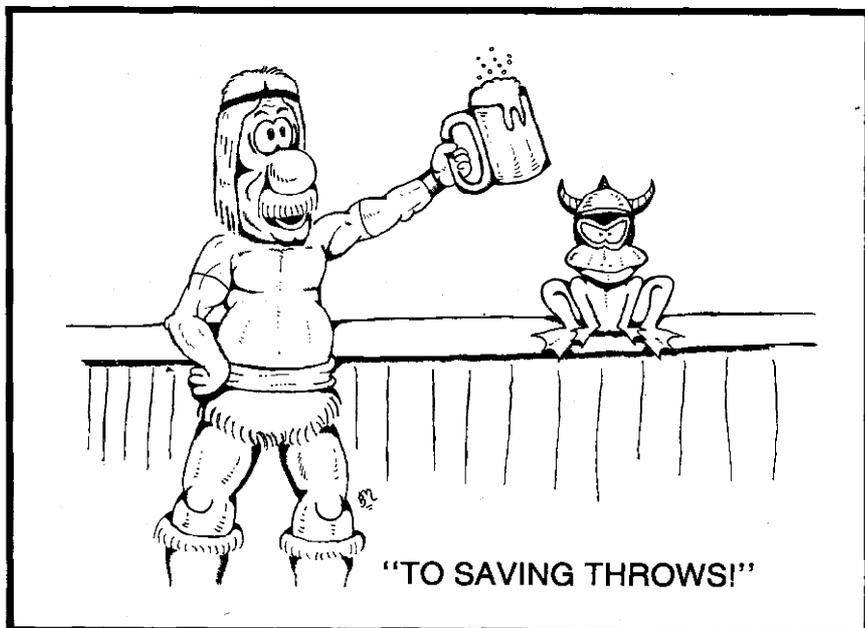
"THE DOCTOR TOLD ME TO CUT
DOWN ON MY SMOKING!"



MEYER



"RUN AWAY! ... IT'S A COCONUT ENT!! ...
RUN AWAY!!"



"TO SAVING THROWS!"





AS SOON AS WE FINISH DA IRON KEEP.

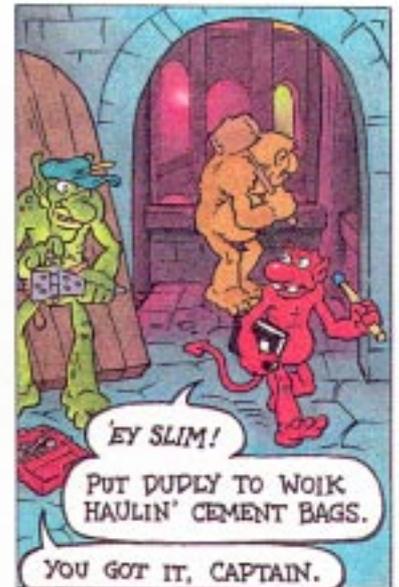
GOOD LORD!



IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO TO HELP?

YA EVEH DONE ANY MASONRY WOIK?

NO, BUT I'M A MEMBER OF THE MYSTERIOUS BROTHERHOOD OF TROLLS.



'EY SLIM!

PUT DUPLY TO WOIK HAULIN' CEMENT BAGS.

YOU GOT IT, CAPTAIN.



HEY IRVING!

YEAH?

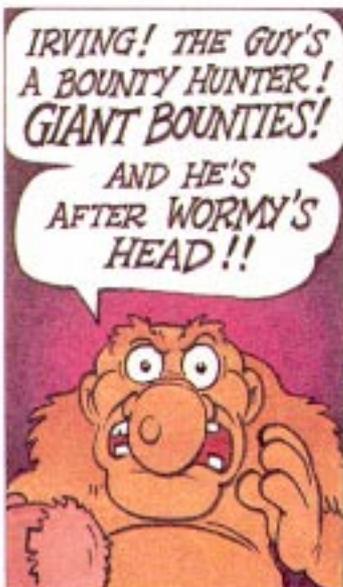
C'MERE. THERE'S SOMETHIN' YOU OUGHTA KNOW ABOUT.



YOU KNOW THAT TROLL DOWN THERE IN THE BLUE JERKIN, WITH THE HELMET THAT COMES DOWN OVER HIS EYES?

JEDD? SURE.

HE'S DA BEST FOREMAN I GOT WOIKIN' FOR ME.



IRVING! THE GUY'S A BOUNTY HUNTER! GIANT BOUNTIES!

AND HE'S AFTER WORMY'S HEAD !!



DAT GUY RIGHT DOWN DER?

DON'T POINT, IRVING! HE'S WATCHING US.

HE'S AFTAH WOIMY??

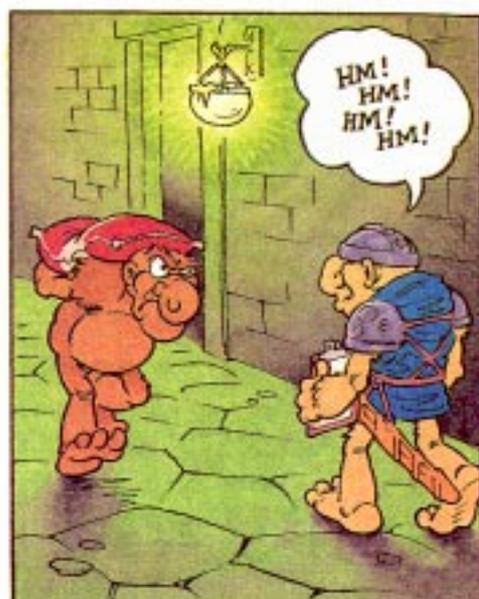
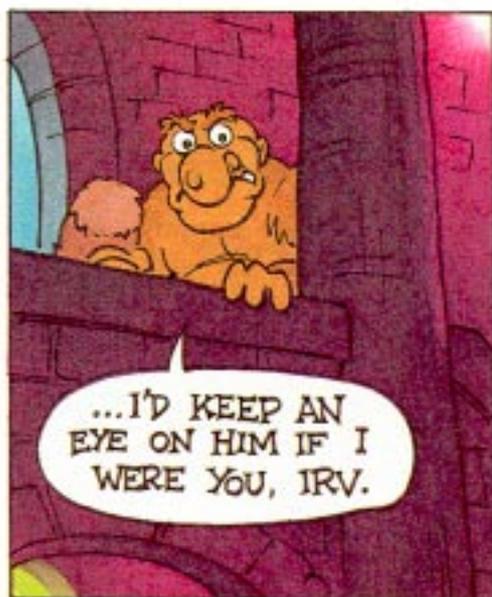
SHHH!



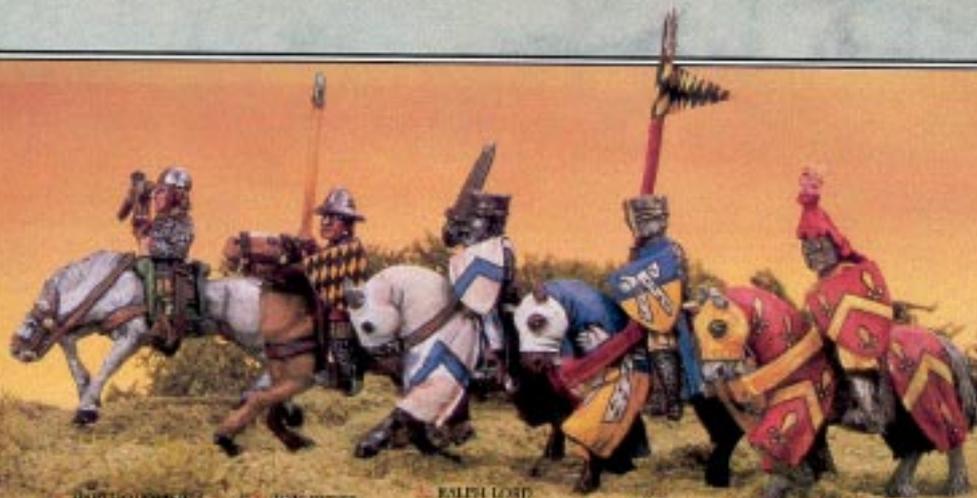
HEH HEH HEH... YER PULLIN' MY TAIL, AIN'TCHA?

NO! IT'S TRUE!

HE'S GOT A WANTED POSTER WITH WORMY'S PICTURE ON IT! AND HE WAS ASKIN' ABOUT WORMY UP AT THE STUMP!



Painted by
Dave Andrews



SIR GEOFFREY

TORN HYDER

ELISH LORD
WILFORD

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FITZGERAN

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• THE
EUROPEAN
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| 2. BERTRAND THE RED | 7. LACKLAND | 12. VOLK THE BRAVE | 17. GEORGE EAGLEHELM |
| 3. LORD ROBERT | 8. TAIN SIGMARSON | 13. FLAGELLANT | 18. IMPERIAL GUARD |
| 4. BASIL THE GOOD | 9. REIK GUARD | 14. WEINER | 19. FORESTER |
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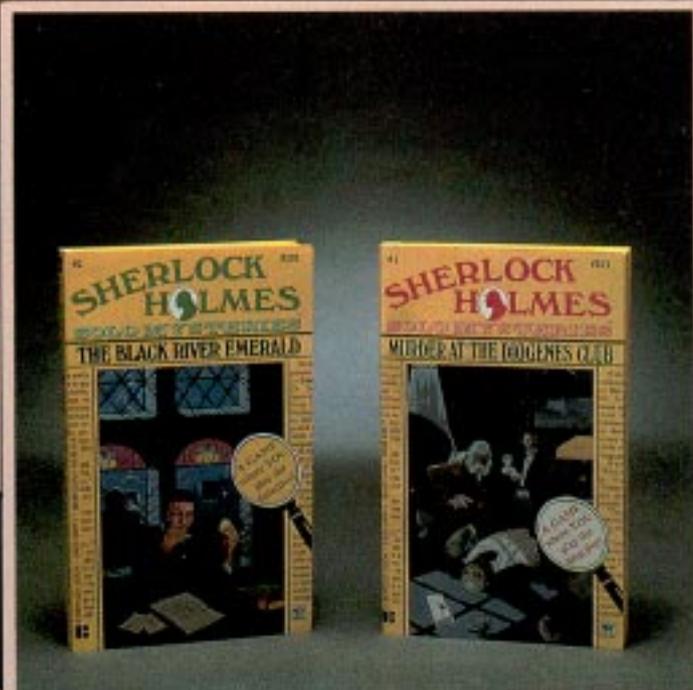
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