



SORCERER'S APPRENTICE

Special Oversize Issue!

FICTION

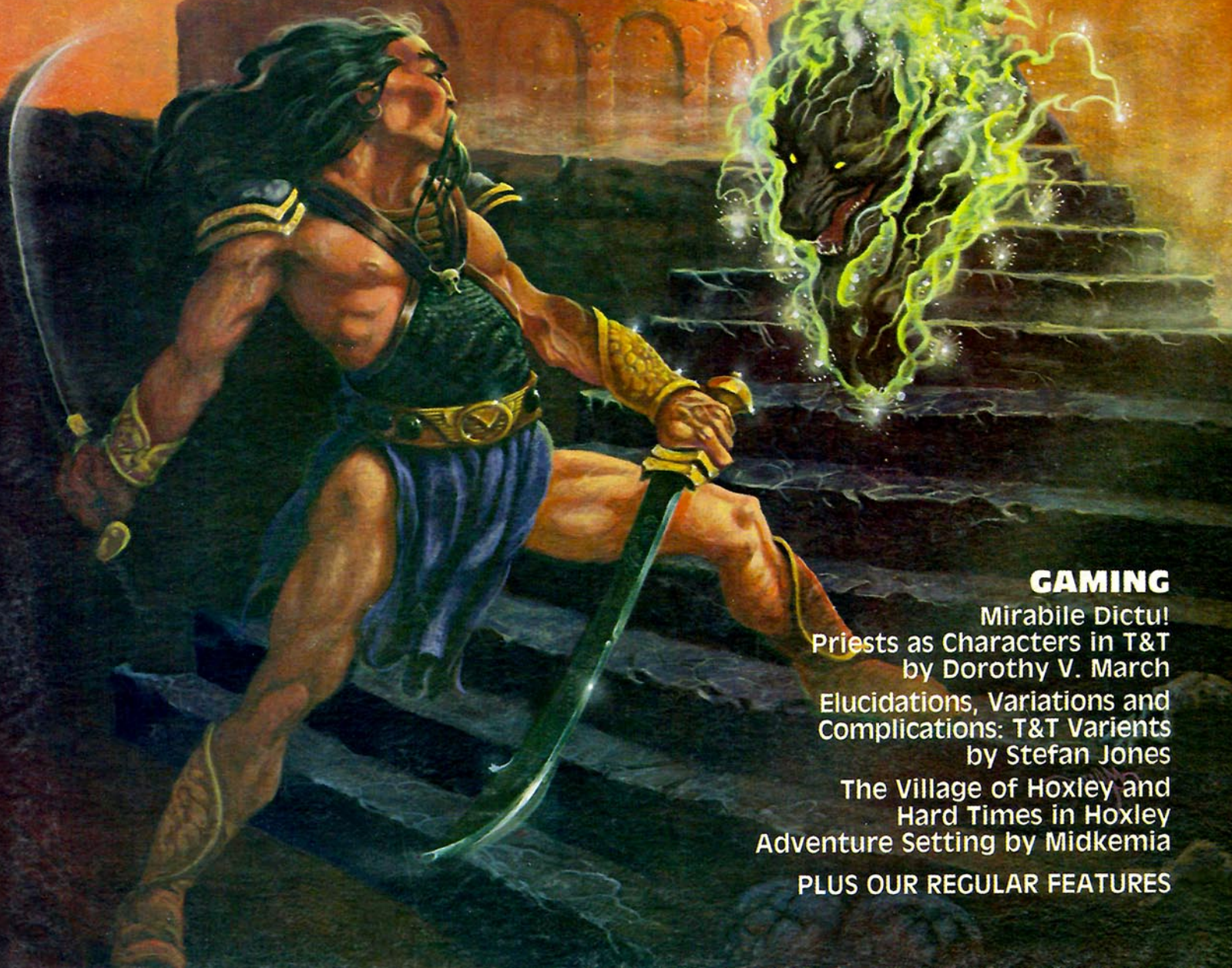
Misericorde

by Karl Edward Wagner

the first new Kane story in 6 years!

Plus a great contest — see inside!

ISSUE 17
U.S. \$4.95



GAMING

Mirabile Dictu!

Priests as Characters in T&T
by Dorothy V. March

Elucidations, Variations and
Complications: T&T Variants
by Stefan Jones

The Village of Hoxley and
Hard Times in Hoxley
Adventure Setting by Midkemia

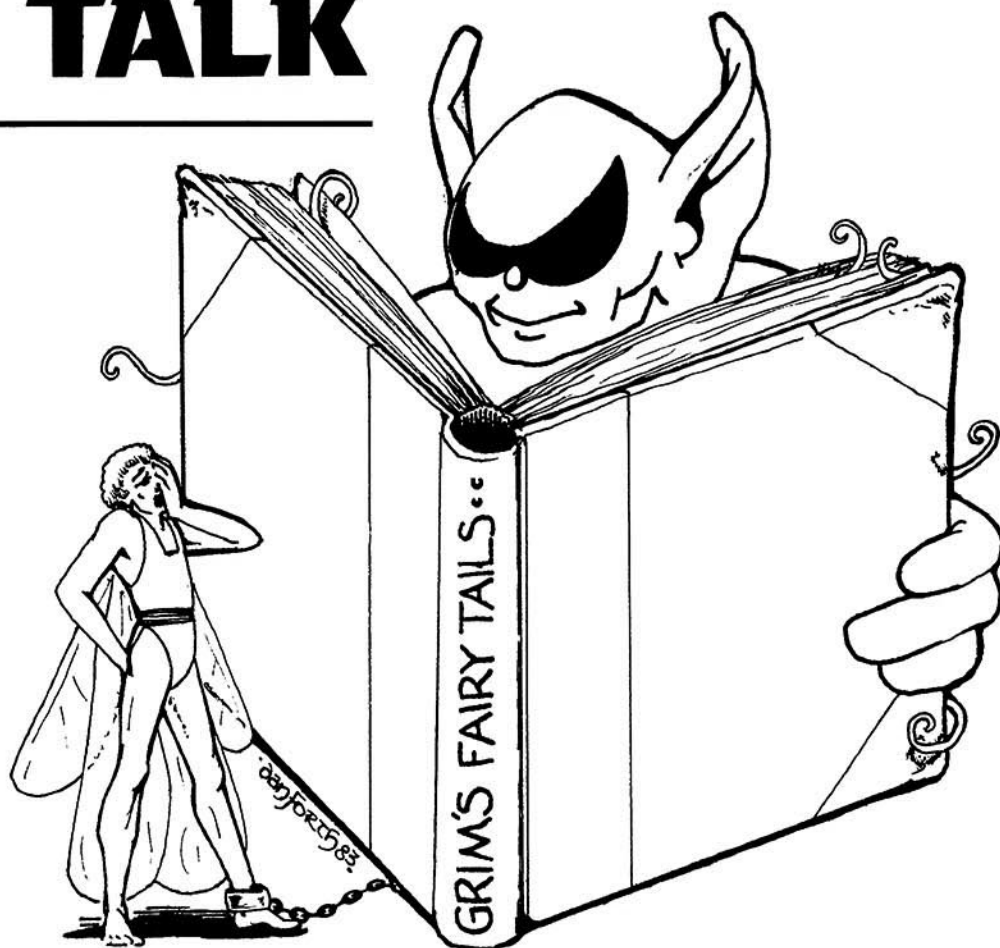
PLUS OUR REGULAR FEATURES

TROLL TALK

Once upon a time, there was this little game company that grew and grew . . . It tried hard to be a good company and produce fun games and good game aids. And for a long, long time, nobody noticed. Then one year, it put together *Citybook I: Butcher, Baker, Candlestick Maker*. Everyone who worked on it did their very best work, and when it was finished, everyone was very proud of it. And finally, someone noticed. As a matter of fact, quite a few people noticed, and *Citybook I* received the H.G. Wells Award as the Best Role Playing Adventure published in 1982 at this year's *Origins* in Detroit. Thank you all very much. What else can I say? We won't live contentedly ever after, because Grimtooth is a little upset that his collections of Traps never garnered that precious award — but he'll get another chance when the third (and last?) book of his delver dices appears. 'Course, there's apt to be a bit of continuing competition there, because *Citybook II: Port o' Call* is in hand and remains only to be put into publishable form. There will be such prestigious and capable designer/writers as Dave Arneson (co-author of the role-playing game *Dungeons and Dragons*®, a fact you're frequently reminded of because certain parties wish it hadn't so been proven in court . . . Dave was also named "Father of Role Playing" in a special *Origins* award), Allen Wold, Janrae Frank (both appeared in the last issue of SA), Stefan Jones, C. Bruce Hunter, Charles de Lint, Rudy Kraft, and — well, lots of others! All graced with a stunning cover from Carl Lundgren (see the back cover of this issue). The price tag won't be so high, and you should see it in the stores just before Christmas.

By the way, if you didn't notice when you bought it, this issue of SA is somewhat larger than usual (and if you were a subscriber, you'd be getting it for the same price as a normal size issue — our way of saying "Thanks for thinking of us ahead of time"). A larger issue was the only way we could bring you the biggest pieces in this issue: Karl Edward Wagner's *Misericorde*, and the game master's complete village of Hoxley and its scenario *Hard Times in Hoxley*. These would virtually fill a normal issue, leaving little or no room for anything else. Expanding to almost twice our normal size, we could bring you both, and lots more! There's an article on how to create a reasonable legal system in your FRP game settings, another article on FRP murder mysteries (a good reason to set up that legal system you'll need!), another *Rogues' Gallery* of NPCs for MSPE, a new *Weapons Shop*, and lots and lots of T&T-specific material.

Speaking of such things as what you should look for in SA, a question for you all: What do you want to see in SA — specifically? Don't tell me it's pretty much okay, or well, not exactly what I want but I read it anyway — give me some titles



that would suggest specific things you think should be covered. A magazine should perform a service to its readers, and the best way for SA to be of service to you is for you to let me know what you'd like to see here in the future. A postcard will do, and I always welcome letters, too.

Letters in the mail leads up to a request from our mailroom. If you're sending us a change of address for any reason, please tell us all the different places you might have a separate address listing with us. SA subs, game accounts, the Combined Small Wargames Mailing List, and others are kept separately. Mention them all. We receive the official Post Office cards with old and new address, but no idea which of numerous mailing lists to make the change on. So while you're filling out your COAs (which we do appreciate more than losing you entirely!), please make a note about where we should go looking for your name.

Thanks (The Overworked Mailroom People).

Finally, the red face department. In SA16 you might have had some problems with the "Hot Pursuit" mini-solo. To correct the error that snuck by, switch paragraphs 20F and 40C. Our most sincere apologies for that one.

So, until the next issue (which should be back to its normal size, featuring a new Tanith Lee story and plenty more — good luck, good gaming, and good times.

Liz Danforth
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SORCERER'S APPRENTICE

Issue 17

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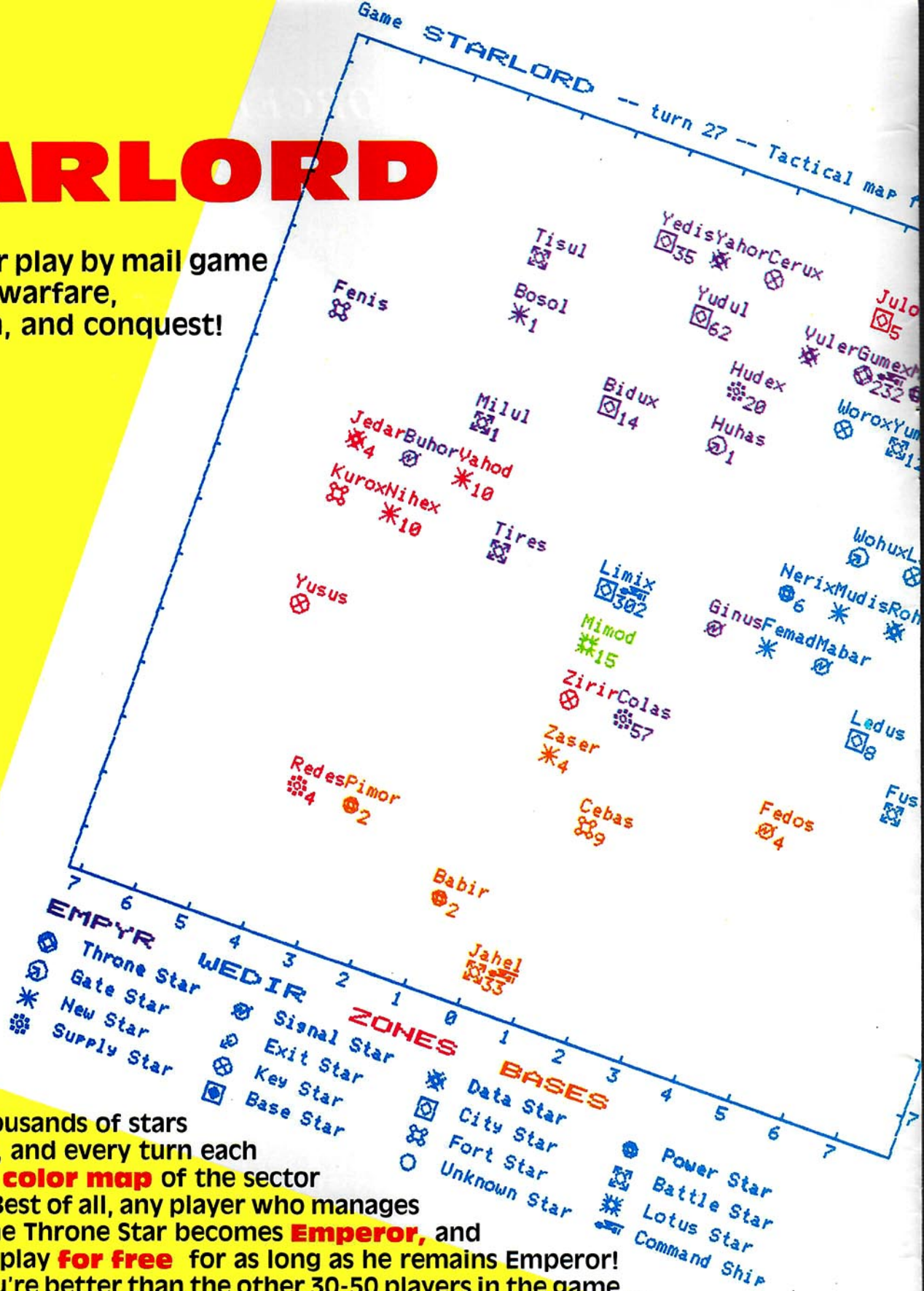
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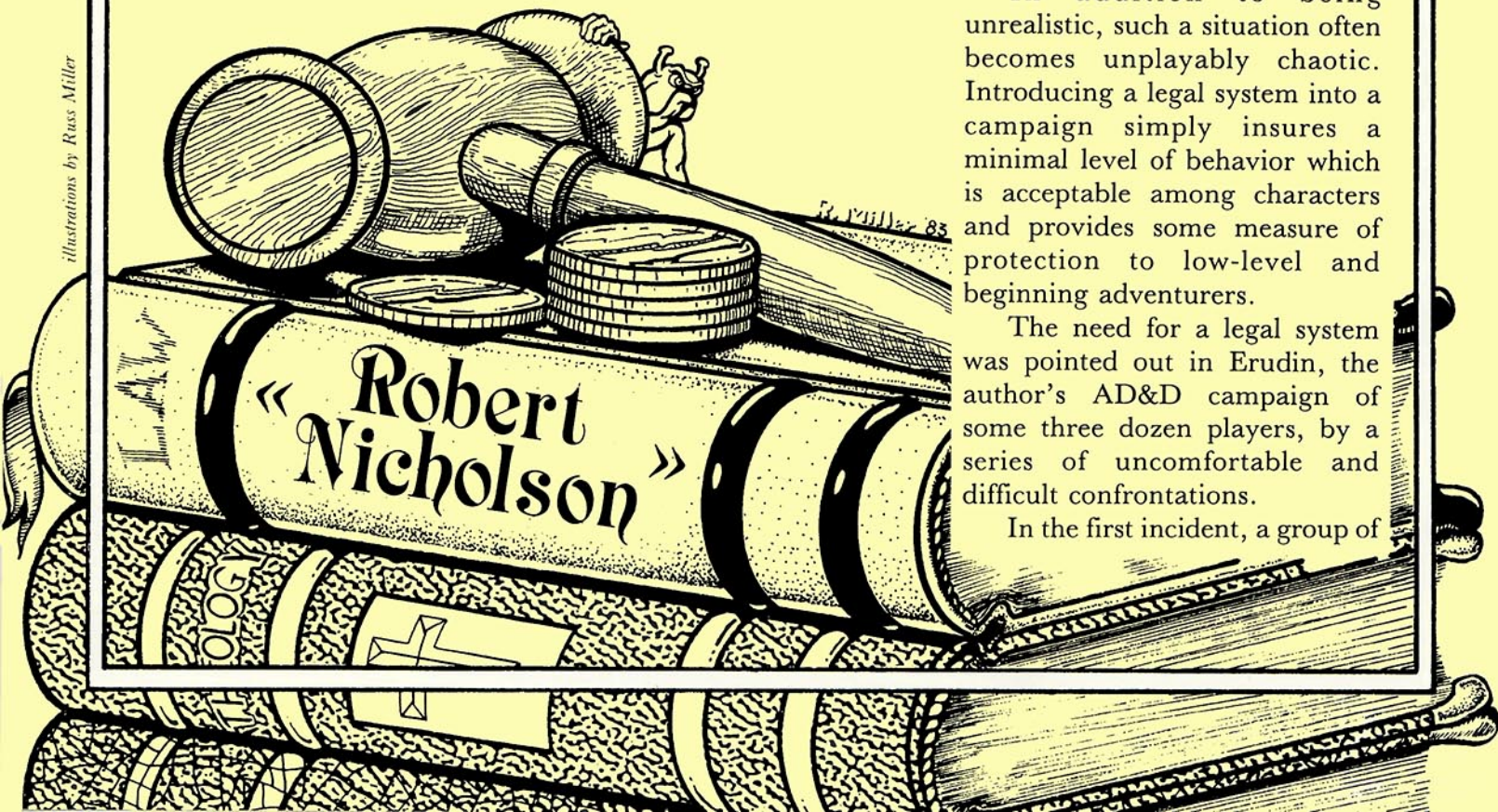
Creating a Legal System for a Fantasy World

In most fantasy role-playing campaigns, characters kill, rob, and generally terrorize those who oppose them with no thought of legal consequences. Further, when player characters are themselves victimized, they tend to seek personal revenge rather than legal aid.

In addition to being unrealistic, such a situation often becomes unplayably chaotic. Introducing a legal system into a campaign simply insures a minimal level of behavior which is acceptable among characters and provides some measure of protection to low-level and beginning adventurers.

The need for a legal system was pointed out in *Erudin*, the author's AD&D campaign of some three dozen players, by a series of uncomfortable and difficult confrontations.

In the first incident, a group of



adventurers were hired by a local lord to recover a stolen article; upon finding the object, the players refused to return it to the lord. He threatened to take the object by force, and the players in return threatened legal action. The Game Master was put into the situation of deciding, on the spot, the legal ramifications of the situation.

In another instance, players felt that they were being cheated by a local merchant and drew their weapons, threatening to skewer the man if he didn't return their money. The merchant called for help, and the local constable soon arrived and took charge. Fortunately, the players were able to negotiate a settlement, thus freeing the GM from deciding the penalties for fraud, armed assault, etc. However, by this time it was clear that the campaign needed at least a skeleton legal system to which both player-characters and GMs would have recourse when the need arose.

Since the Erudin campaign takes place in a medieval European setting, ample references existed for constructing a legal system. However, by keeping in mind a few basic goals a realistic legal code can be constructed for any fantasy or historical setting.

The Basis for Law

Most societies can be modeled as a balance of four forces: a central government (the State), the general populace, the economy, and the religious beliefs of the culture. Most laws in a society should be traceable to the interactions among these forces.

Of course, most GMs do not have the time or knowledge to create a complex social background as a basis for their laws; further, players will not want a huge tome of legal red tape to intrude on their gaming. Therefore, the process of creating laws must be simplified somewhat. First, decide what group in your campaign most closely represents each of the four forces. Next, decide what this group contributes to the society and what it expects in return. Finally, create a small set of laws for each group which codify these obligations and expectations.

The following pages illustrate how these rules were applied in creating the legal code of Erudin.

The State

In Erudin, the state is represented by a central King and a number of royal families holding hereditary fiefdoms. The goals of the state are very simple: to maintain a standing army to protect the state from outside attack, to protect the

privileges of the royal families, to collect taxes to fund the army, and to maintain open roads for purposes of communication and commerce. The King's Laws, shown in Table I, reflect these fundamental goals in only five statutes!

The mechanics of enforcement are equally simple: the King maintains a Court with branches in each major city to try violators of the King's Law as well as an elite military/police force called the King's Guard to enforce the Law and to collect taxes. The King's Guard may also be called upon by any fiefdom for aid in suppressing civil unrest.

Popular Law

The second major force in Erudin is represented by the civil laws. Civil laws are those laws mandated by the general populace to maintain and enforce standards of behavior. Such laws are almost always generated in a "bottom up" fashion. Although given some official sanction by the state in order to preserve the peace, they reflect the concerns of the local people and generally cover only a limited jurisdiction.

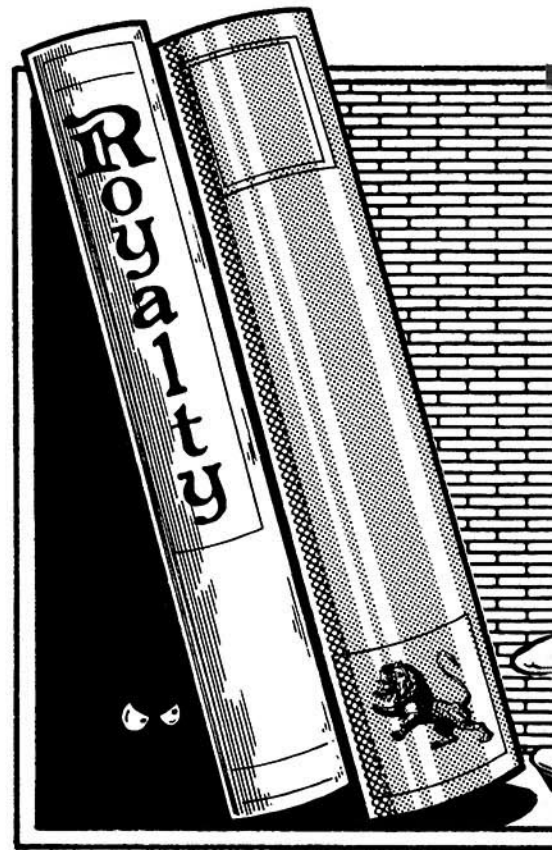
In Erudin, all fiefdoms, and most cities and townships, include in their charters a provision for a civil court. The chief officer of such a local court is called the Magistrate; in very small settlements, this office may be held by the Mayor or by the head of the town council. The Magistrate is given the duty of enforcing (with the aid of a small town guard or constabulary) the laws established by the town council, and of arbitrating all disputes between commoners.

Table II shows the Laws of South Wharton (a city of about 20,000), which are representative of many local legal codes. Note that these laws reflect the basic concerns of the community: protection of lives, property, and economic interests. Popular laws may also serve to enforce moral codes in societies where these are a major concern.

The Economy

In most societies, there will exist a class of merchants or traders interested in maintaining a smooth-running (and thus profitable) economy. In general, this class will enjoy some form of protection from the state and in return will provide a steady source of tax revenue.

In medieval societies such as Erudin, this force is represented by the guilds. Since the taxing of the guilds provides a very good source of revenue for government, the state is willing to grant the guilds exclusive rights to regulate commerce in certain areas. Thus, an independent craftsman will be required



by civil law to join the appropriate guild and, upon joining, "voluntarily" becomes subject to its guild rules.

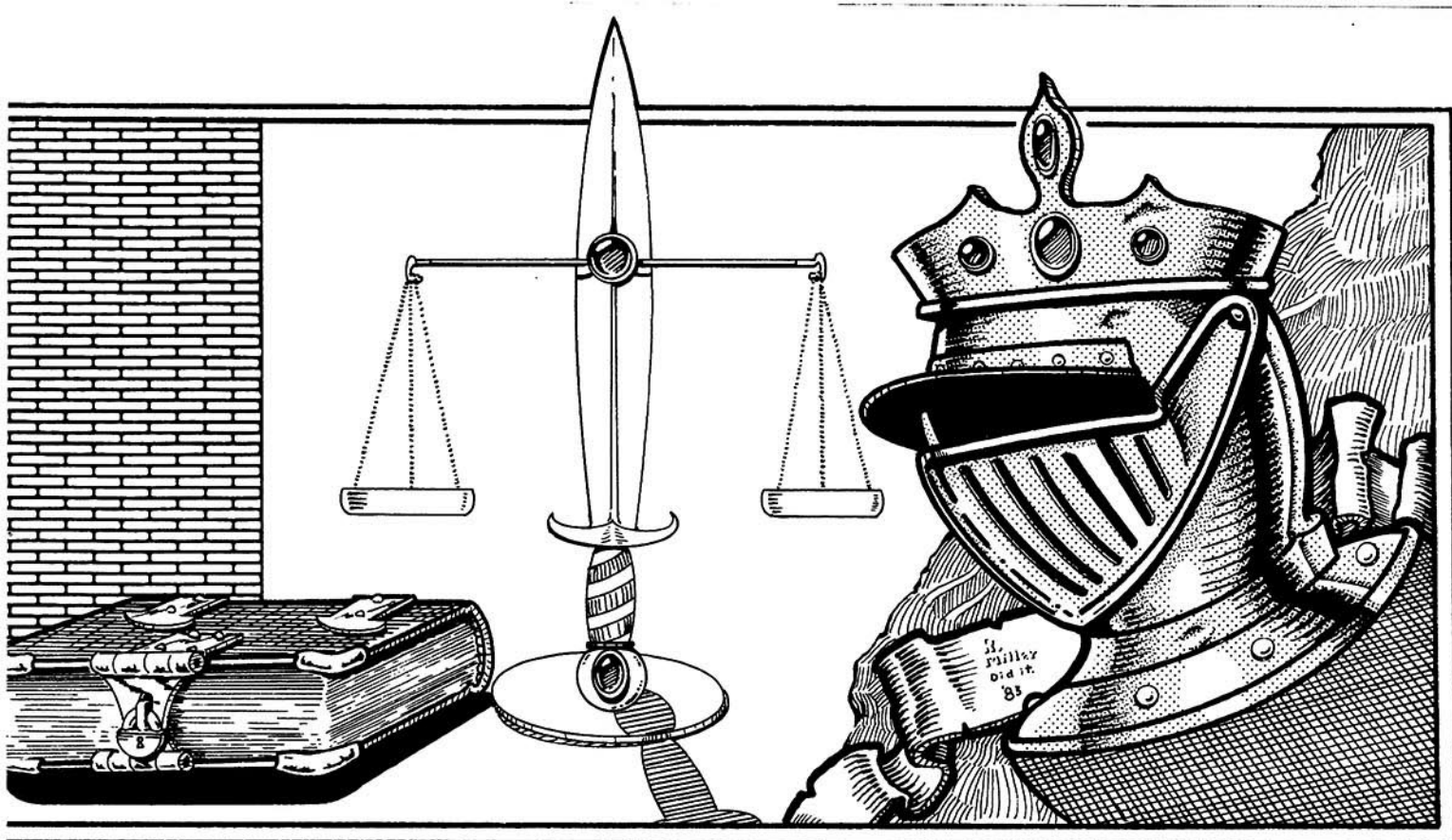
A guild's regulations are set and enforced by its Guildmaster or other officers. Most guild rules involve quality standards and pricing; penalties for violating the rules generally consist of fines or temporary loss of voting rights in the guild. In extreme cases, the penalty may be expulsion from the guild, which essentially robs a man of the right to practice his livelihood.

Note that economic rules exist even in very different societies: "price fixing" for barter goods was common among native American tribes, with preferential "exchange rates" going to the stronger families or tribes.

Religion

Religion plays a far larger role in most legal systems than might be apparent. The fundamental goal of most religions is to foster the worship of their deities; a secondary goal is persuading the general populace to obey the dictates of the religion. In exchange for favorable legal treatment, a religion may provide official sanction for the state (a common practice ranging from ancient Egypt to most medieval European states), or the promise of the blessings of the gods for the common man.

Religious laws may take a variety of forms: in some cultures, religious tithing is required by law; other societies



enforce extensive "moral codes" which force the general populace to obey the word (if not the spirit) of the religious doctrines; a few societies go so far as to ban all but the official state religion.

Religious law is probably the most affected by the milieu of the campaign. However, there are two general tradeoffs for determining what role religious rules should play in a campaign: (1) the more active the god(s) of the religion, the more that religion will influence the law and (2) the greater the number of competing religions, the less they will influence the law.

Conclusions

Creating a system of law for a campaign can be difficult, but it helps to make a more believable and playable fantasy world. It also helps the GM to think through the motivating forces in the society.

But perhaps the biggest advantage is having an answer already at hand when one of those sticky situations arises. Now, when a party of characters, hired by the King to investigate charges of treason, accidentally kills the city tax commissioner....

Table I: The King's Laws

Treason: any attempt, by word or deed, to undermine the lawful authority of the King or his appointed servants,

Punishment: death by beheading or exile (choice of the Court).

Assault Regale: any attempt to unlawfully harm bodily, to cause the death of, or to seize and hold against his will, any Royal Person. Punishment: death by hanging or life at hard labor (choice of the Court).

Felony: any act committed by a Royal Personage with the intent of unjustly harming his Peers, the Kingdom, or its subjects. Punishment: fine of 500-5000 g.p.s plus damages. At the discretion of the Court, loss of title, loss of lands, and/or exile.

Road Crime: any blocking of or assault upon a public highway for purposes of preventing traffic or trade, or of extracting unlawful tolls for passage, or of practicing the trade of the "highwayman." Punishment: death by hanging or 5-20 years at hard labor (choice of the Court).

Tax Evasion: any attempt to avoid the payment of any tax or tariff declared by the King. Punishment: confiscation of goods or property and 5-20 years at hard labor.

Table II: The Civil Laws of Southe Wharton

Petty Theft/Pickpocketing: theft of

any amount up to 50 g.p.'s. Punishment: repayment plus 5 lashes and 30-90 days imprisonment.

Theft: theft of over 50 g.p.'s. Punishment: repayment plus branding (arm), 10 lashes, and 1-5 years imprisonment.

Rape: any sexual act committed against an unconsenting citizen. Punishment: 20 lashes and mutilation.

Murder: any willful act which unlawfully causes the death of any citizen. Punishment: 20 lashes and 5-20 years at hard labor, or death by hanging.

Ensorcelment: an act of magic which unlawfully causes any citizen to act against his will to the detriment of himself or of others. Punishment: fine of 50-500 g.p.'s, plus 1-5 years imprisonment, plus punishments for any consequential crimes. May also result in Guild sanctions.

Debting: failure to pay lawful debts. Punishment: enforced payment or labor equal in value to twice the value of the debt (Magistrate's judgement of value).

Guild-Breaking: practicing any regulated trade without proper Guild sanctions or membership. Punishment: fine of 5 years guild dues, plus 30-90 days imprisonment. ■

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Illustration by Jan Sherrell Gebhardt

A black and white woodcut-style illustration of a scene from 'The Lord of the Rings'. A man with a beard and a crown-like headpiece (Aragorn) is seated on a throne, holding a sword. He is surrounded by several other characters, including a woman with long hair (Arwen) and a man with a beard (Gandalf). The scene is set in a grand, stone-walled hall with a large archway in the background.

decide who murdered Rattus — when, how, and why — and plant clues mundane and magical (if wizards are to play) throughout the house. As always, half-baked preparations will lead to a half-baked game.

The GM must decide who's the culprit. It may be a non-playing character, but everyone will have more fun if the murderer is one of the participants. Then one of the players will be trying to escape justice and perhaps pin the blame on an innocent party.

The GM must consult with the player who will act out the role of the murderer. They must go over everything together; the guilty party should have a fighting chance to hoodwink the others.

Let's say Rattus was killed by Thora the Shield-maiden, a wanderer from the North. He lured her into his chamber during the night and tried to have his way with her, threatening to expose her delving activities if she didn't cooperate. He went too far and received a dagger in the belly.

Only Thora's player knows what the GM has in mind. When the game actually begins, the other players think they've gathered to discuss an upcoming expedition. They shouldn't know in advance that they'll be asked to solve a murder (after the GM pulls a stunt like this a few times, the players won't know what to expect — thus injecting a healthy note of spontaneity into future games).

The game is almost ready to begin. But first let's take a closer look at the GM's preparations.

1) *Non-playing characters.* Drexus has a staff of servants who saw and heard things during the fatal night. The GM must prepare an index card for each one, indicating what information he may have to impart. The info on the card will look something like this:

IONA THE CHAMBERMAID

12:30 a.m. Went to Einar Bigmouth's room. Stayed until 1:15 a.m.

1:15-1:30 a.m. Visited the W.C. (privy).

1:30 a.m. Returned to her room, fell asleep. Wakened by noise at some indeterminate time before dawn. "Might have been a door slamming, or someone falling out of bed." Went back to sleep, woke shortly before 8 a.m.

Excellent references, has served Drexus for six months. Not known to lie.

2) *Players' alibis.* The GM must prepare another set of cards, one for each player, stating the players' activities and whereabouts during the night. Each player will keep his card secret, to facilitate lying. The GM will

have a master list, so he will know who's lying. A lie may be exposed by testimony of another player or a non-playing character. Players may lie to cover up potentially incriminating information, even if they're innocent. Being innocent is small comfort to anyone landing in the Imperial torture chambers. Below is a sample player's alibi card:

EINAR BIGMOUTH

12-12:30 a.m. Played dice with Rattus, in Rattus' room. Lost ten gold pieces, accused Rattus of cheating, and left.

12:30-1:15 a.m. Met Iona the Chambermaid in the North Hall, entertained her in his room.

1:45-2 a.m. Went outside, was ill.

2-8 a.m. Slept intermittently, feeling queasy. Heard "a loud thump" sometime after 3 a.m., too sick to think about it (his room is two doors down from Rattus'). Wakened by commotion attending discovery of the murder.

He can prove he was sick all night by displaying his wash-basin and its odiferous contents.

3) *Clues.* The GM must also have a list of clues which he has planted for the players to find. Some of them are misleading. For example, an examination of Drexus' books reveals that his senschal, Fred, has diverted tax payments into his own pocket. This information could be extremely prejudicial to Fred and/or Drexus.

But some clues must point in the right direction. A bloodstain on the dress Thora wore at the banquet, or on her nightshirt; the location of her room, which would give her an opportunity to visit Rattus unobserved (this can be shown on the map); fingerprints on the handle of the murder weapon; a bloody rag used by the murderer to wipe his hands, found in a waste receptacle in the hall — things like this will lead to a solution of the crime.

The more clues the GM makes available (including red herrings), the livelier the game will be.

4) *Supernatural clues.* There's no point in playing detective in a fantasy world if magic doesn't come into the case somewhere along the line. Wizards may use magic to gain access to information not available to other players; magical implements may be found and used by non-wizards; or the crime itself may have been committed by occult means.

But the GM must not make it too easy for the wizards. No fair laying a

truth-spell on everyone and simply asking who did the deed.

A wizard, for example, may try to summon Rattus' ghost for questioning. If Thora has any brains, she'll try not to let this method succeed. On the other hand, Sid the Dwarf may have an amulet which enables him to detect the presence of drying blood. Or Rattus' vengeful ghost may appear and utter a cryptic message. Creativity will be required here.

The game begins. The guests interrogate the servants and each other. Some search for physical clues while wizards look for a supernatural solution. An astrologer consults a suspect's horoscope. Accusations are exchanged. Tempers flare. And the deadline draws near.

Sid the Dwarf, having used his magic amulet to track down Thora's blood-stained gown, and eliminated the other suspects through shrewd questioning, makes a formal accusation and puts his case to Drexus (played by the GM) and the other players. Thora is convicted by consensus and sent off the Yastrenskium in chains.

Or maybe Thora has planted the incriminating nightshirt in another character's room, and after much debate, an innocent woman is offered up to appease the wrath of the Emperor.

Or maybe there are two prime suspects, and the players decide to try the matter by combat. Anything can happen.

The game is over. The GM awards Experience Points (and perhaps a monetary reward, if one has been offered). Afterwards, he may or may not confirm the players' solution to the crime. But a grand time has been had by all, and that's the point.

The system proposed above will require careful plotting and meticulous paperwork on the GM's part. But it seems worthwhile to allot him the extra time he needs to prepare a unique and challenging scenario.

There are those who will resent the miscegenation of genres implied here. I'm a mystery buff, so I don't mind admitting a little crime into my fantasy world. But it doesn't have to be a murder that spices up the activities of an FRP group that's gotten bogged down in routine. The T&T system may also be adapted to politics (the King is missing, leaving no heir; who'll be the first to seize and hold the throne?), sports (wizards might enjoy an Olympics of magic), and all other fields of human (and non-human) endeavor.

The limits are as broad, or as narrow as the imagination of the participants. ■

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QUERIES & QUANDARIES

44

Once again the superiority of Troll over Human has been proved beyond the shadow of a doubt. Last issue I recaptured the helm of this noble experiment and the results were fantastic. This Q&Q had a higher, more erudite assortment of answers than any one previous. I only regret that not enough space has been allotted to display all the answers (someone has paid for that, naturally). If such response continues, perhaps I'll just demand that Q&Q bleeds over into less useful items like Arcane Grafitti and the editorial.

But enough of this prattle. On to the answers for our last questions — and then some new questions. I do expect answers to those as well.

—Grimtooth

Traps...how do you solve them, and how much risk will you take — or is it fair to inflict it on another, less powerful than yourself?

Thorough examination and a lot of imagination can usually avoid any trap. As a last resort, throw an inanimate object into the trap to set it off. A good GM always leaves one way out of a trap. A good gamer can usually find it and has the confidence that he can. To depend on "trap fodder" is to show a lack of that confidence.

—Scott Thorne

When a trap or puzzle is such that the characters can try several different solutions, they generally take a trial-and-error approach. As a player, I expect the GM to give some hint to warn characters of exceptionally dangerous traps, or of puzzles that allow only one attempt. As a GM I provide those hints, though seldom in any obvious fashion.

The idea of using low level characters for cannon fodder shows a terrible sense of role playing. However, there are other solutions open to the creative. One rather sadistic character purchased several piglets from a local farmer, packed them into the trap, and proceeded to use the poor porkers as (ahem) guinea pigs.

—Brad Richards

Solvable traps and puzzles fall into two categories: the *think-'em-outs* and the *guess-'ems*. The former remind one of Rube Goldberg or Lewis Carroll — sophisticated combinations of ropes, pulleys, hingepins, pressure plates, cages, trapdoors, illusions, mirrors,

poetry, movie trivia, Monty Python, Ian Fleming, and Wile E. Coyote. The latter remind one more of Monty Hall — pick Colored Light #1, Colored Light #2, or Colored Light #3.

The first type can be dealt with by creative snow-jobs; if a plan sounds like it might work, the GM will at least give you a chance. Acting like you know what you're doing is often as important as actually knowing. The second type of trap is sheer guesswork; good luck.

—Thomas Smith

Having large batches of hirelings about tends to slow down play, and having them killed off too frequently gives a party a bad reputation. But a good player does more than roll dice and say "I rolled a 12, did I find the trap?" When I GM, I require that my players give me a description of what they're searching and how. When I play, I try to give a fair amount of detail as to what exactly I'm doing with an object. This way, both GM and player know what's going on. I always use traps in which I know exactly what is going to happen, to whom, and why, so that through description I give the player a fair chance of finding it. If they don't look in the right place, that's their tough luck. If there's a time limit attached to solving the particular puzzle, I actually make them do the puzzle in that time. If I can find the trigger for a particular trap, I prefer to toss rocks, coins, chunks of meat, and/or captured orcs at it to find out what it does.

—Dorothy March

It is definitely *not* fair for one high-level character to bring six or seven low-level "lab-rats" and, as they are blasted to bits, sit back and ponder on how to get past the danger.

The name of the game in FRP is danger. Besides, do you really think the mega's entourage of "assistants" would continue to follow such a leader? If so, I would insist that the mega give up *all* the treasure to the experimenters — or, far more likely, their heirs — and *all* experience, plus extremely high wages. After all, the usual way of getting a reward in FRP is by risk — and the mega-character here just isn't taking any.

—Eric Saberhagen

As a GM, I punish methods like using trap fodder. I feel only the characters who brave the traps should reap the fortunes. One idea I've used successfully is making some traps magical, triggered only at the approach of a mighty enough prey. Thus, when the traps fail to spring on the lower-level characters, they will assume the traps are duds — until the high-level cowards push forward to divide the treasure. . . .

—John E. Todd

When the group I play with runs into a trap or puzzle in the dungeon, we usually let the best qualified character figure it out — not the most experienced player. If he can't do it, we all pitch in and help. We collect what facts we can, think logically about the thing, then do what seems best. Sometimes it works out and sometimes it does not.

We do not use low level player characters to keep our higher levels out of trouble. This is not fair play. We do use (sometimes) NPC Henchmen or Monsters that have been captured, to test a trap. Usually someone will volunteer to test the trap. We take what measures we can to protect him/her and hope for the best. Low level characters are not monster bait, they are players like everyone else and deserve a fair chance to survive.

—Dale Blessing

"Slash and hack" playing — how do you cure a player of it? Is there a place for it in your campaigns?

There are souls who persist in "hacking" everything in sight. The quickest (and most permanent) way to halt this involves a serious accident severing an arm.

A less drastic method immediately suggests itself. Merely point out to the players that engaging the fifteen mountain nomads in glorious combat will alert every creature in the nearby hills. The possibility of continuous assault by assorted nasties generally dampens the blood-lust of even the most dedicated "hack 'n slasher."

—Scott Thorne

Hack and slash can be a fun diversion, and I do enjoy a session which has one good battle. But I really dislike

characters who attack anything in sight (and my characters have played practical jokes on characters who charge everything). As a player, one can discourage H&S by setting a good example, demanding foes not be killed so they can yield ransom or information, negotiating rather than risking life and limb. A GM can give NPCs information the characters need. Hopefully the hackers and slashers will learn that dead men tell no tales. I also set up situations in which the characters would be suicidal to fight. If they lose, I'll tell them they weren't intended to fight. If they win, I'll shake my head and mutter about revenge. By discouraging H&S, and by designing scenarios to emphasize other aspects of role playing, H&S can be kept to an appropriate minimum.

—David Dunham

I only allow a player to play one character at a time. This creates more player/character identification, and also causes the player to be more careful, since if his character is killed, he is pretty much out of the game. That limits the kamikaze tactics often used by hack'n'slicers.

Second, I place as many nonviolent situations in the character's path as I can, without losing the player's interest. These can range from a riddle which takes a week to solve to an intriguing conversation with the bartender in the local tavern. Also, not all encounters with monsters or other groups need be hostile. Perhaps not even most of them.

Altogether, this may be a long and sometimes frustrating process. However, it is well worth the pain if the person involved is a good friend you don't want to isolate from your gaming.

—Brad Richards

Though [hack and slash] has never been a real problem with any of my players, there was one time they butchered an innocent farmer to steal his gold. They were never caught but it was brought to their attention when they reached the nearest town. When I told them of the response by the townsfolk to so base an offense, they felt some guilt at the deed.

This is how I feel it should be handled, to play on their sense of fairness and morality. Though it sounds corny, most players still think of themselves as goodguys. And if the GM attempts to follow some moral code for his civilized encounters, then half the battle is won.

—Kevin Woods

Another brand of the mindless matter-muncher relies solely on a particular method of attack, such as a magic or

technological weapon, or a powerful spell. Often these characters are rather weak and defenseless without this method. Nullifying or removing the item or spell can be quite effective. Perhaps Wimpy Willie won't be quite so aggressive after Lightfingers the Leprechaun chumps his Fireball ring.

—Pat Hollister

The best way to cure a player of the hack & slash syndrome is to *force* him to roleplay. For example: the character wakes up in a cell after a night of partying. Later, ten armed guards come to escort him into what appears to be a courtroom. He is locked in a chair and surrounded by guards. A group of people (looking like a jury) come in, followed by the judge. The character is informed that he is on trial for murder. However, the victim happens to *not* be one of the dozens that has fallen under his sword — he is innocent! The player must role-play (and convincingly) to save his neck. This will take planning on the Game Master's part, but it will be worth it. Sometimes one just has to resort to "hacking and slashing." But role playing comes first, trickery next, and killing last.

—Corte Cicala

I play FRP games as a means of "blowing off steam." I am a "hack and slash" player. But I do not mindlessly slaughter everything in sight. But there's a time to break heads and a time to baffle them. Every type of character and most types of players should have something to do in *every* adventure. Mages should be given a chance to use their great brains, rogues should be given a chance to be roguish, and everyone (not just warriors) should have a chance to "break their bones."

If the character (not the player) is a mindless murderer, then the character pays the price. Friends of the victim, the local authorities, or the other player characters take care of that. Usually, as GM, I don't kill such a character outright. I make him/her pay off the family, do some time in the local jail, or go on a quest to pay for the crime.

If it is the player who is the mindless one, then I warn him or her and explain what I disliked about the behavior. I give only two warnings, then (as GM) lower the boom. Usually I kill their character. The mindless player can then roll up a new character and start over in the adventure. Usually doing this once to a player is enough to break him/her of the habit of being a mindless murderer. I rarely have to do this, as the other players will take care of an uncooperative player's character. They do this

by gentle persuasion or outright threats. These are usually done "in character" and not to the player.

—Dale Blessing

Players who are developing a tendency to hack'n'slash their way through [their adventures] will usually respond to some unsubtle hints from the GM during the after-game bull session. If discussions on how much you hate that style of play and how much fun it is to do something original for a change don't sink in, the player's characters should find themselves in situations where the worst possible thing to do is charge in with sword at the ready. Force him to think. Any campaign should be balanced with some hacking and some brainwork anyway, especially if there is any hope of continuing on a longer-term basis. The person who tries to hack his way through life in the real world rapidly ends up in a padded cell; in medieval times, they weren't nearly so lenient. Sending a psychotic character to the scaffold is admittedly a last-ditch effort, but if *that* doesn't get through to the player, nothing will. Just as a side note, the two best individual sessions I've ever played were marked by one unusual feature — there was not a single instance of combat in either one. Just a lot of good, solid role playing.

—Dorothy March

• • •

Here are the new questions for you to ponder — and respond to — before the next issue.

1. *How do you, as player or GM, go about getting someone really involved in role playing? Anyone can be invited to a game, but not all participate. How do you teach or encourage them to actually participate?*

2. *How far does role playing go? If a character, given his personality, would walk into a trap that will kill him, can you as a player force him to move against his personality? If so, do you then saddle the character with the consequences of his "change of heart," or does he continue blithely on as he was before?*

As with the last issue, I demand your responses. We will offer you our standard contributor's rates for your submissions, as well as a copy of the issue in which your answer appears. And as for those of you who feel secure, or brave, or foolhardy enough not to send in answers, well, my list is long — and my memory is longer. Someone, after all, has to test the traps that will be included in my next magnificent tome. . . .

Arcane Graffiti

- news, clues and reviews

- MICHAEL STACKPOLE

News for the fantasy and gaming world: upcoming events, club announcements, the latest games and playing aids, and conventions are featured, reviewed and discussed in Arcane Graffiti. Personal ads and trade enquiries will be printed also, at 10¢/word (20 word minimum). Mail your news and review material to: Michael Stackpole/Arcane Graffiti, c/o BLADE, PO Box 1210, Scottsdale, AZ 85252.

This issue of *Arcane Graffiti* is being written in early September. Many of the games I'll review came out at Origins (back in mid-July) though some of them have not made it to various stores in our area yet — so maybe you haven't gotten to see them yet, either.

At Origins, Blade released two items. The first was a set of **Character Record Folders** for *Mercenaries*, *Spies and Private Eyes*. The sheets fold to provide easy access to all the information, and there's a pocket for storing notes and clues about any particular adventure. The Character Folders also have 24 character portraits that can be photocopied so you can place the one that looks most like your character on the front of the sheet. While they are not vital for playing MSPE, you might take a look at them. They are something fresh — but most of all, useful — in the way of character record sheets.

Blade also released **Nuclear Escalation**, the long-awaited sequel to *Nuclear War*. This game features a special glow-in-the-dark die, with a mushroom cloud for the "one" pip. The card deck includes Spies, Cruise Missiles, B-1 Bombers, Space Platforms, and Killer Satellites. *Nuclear Escalation* can be played by itself or in combination with *Nuclear War*. It was well worth the wait!

Hero Games has started releasing a small-format magazine **Adventurers' Club**, containing ideas, comments and other stuff for their superhero game, *Champions*. Check it out if you're a *Champions* player.

Nova Game Designs, Inc. (PO Box 1178, Manchester, CT 06040) has released **Lost Worlds**, a series of fantasy fighting booklets with a

system akin to their *Ace of Aces* system. These games, which come initially in two-book sets, have to be the best release of the summer from any game company. The first pair of books features a Man with A Sword and a Skeleton with a Scimitar; the second pair has a Giant Goblin with Mace and a Dwarf with Polearm. The games play quickly and easily, the foes are interchangeable (Human can fight Human, if you have two books), and each being has a different fighting style. I've had a great deal of fun with these booklets and I heartily recommend them. I cannot imagine anyone who likes gaming who would not enjoy these.

Columbia Games Inc. (PO Box 8006, Blaine, WA 98230) has produced **Harn**. Harn is a product for which the authors have created a great fantasy world. The package includes: a large full-color map; "Harnview", a booklet that serves as a GM's overview and guide to running Harn; and "Harndex", a glossary and reference work for Harn, to provide background and more information than "Harnview." All in all, the product looks good, and is an excellent presentation of a fantasy world. I would urge all of you who want a cohesive fantasy world to consider Harn; I think you will find it worth the investment.

The Companions (245 Water Street, Bath, ME 04530) has released two more fine role playing products. **Brotherhood of the Bolt** is an adventure in which characters are called upon to stop Morlach from assuming the leadership of the brotherhood of necromancers, for if he does so, he will raise a veritable army of undead. This module, which

contains a full color map of the locale and a map suitable for use with 25mm figures, ties into the previous modules from The Companions.

Street of Gems is a module set in a port village. The characters become involved when one or more of their members are attacked by a press gang, a scene which is depicted on the cover. As the characters deal with that problem, they discover other things about the village of Sontra that will eventually lead them to the second Gem scenario, *Gems of Death*. This latter scenario has not yet been released. This product also includes maps suitable for use with 25mm figures.

Both of these scenario adventures are useful for any FRP campaign, and they are constructed to encourage a great deal of *role playing*. While they lack certain graphic niceties (like typesetting), the quality of the content more than makes up for it. These books are a bargain and anyone could do much worse than choose one of these scenarios.

FASA (PO Box 6930, Chicago, IL 60680-6930) has sent three items for review. **Traitor** is another in their series of *Thieves' World* adventures. It has nothing to do with the Chaosium product by the same name — except it happens in the same locale. It is touted as a "true role playing adventure" because everyone playing is supposed to take the role of a character living in Sanctuary. The center 14 pages tear out, providing the players with a description of their characters. The character sheets are two-sided, and one side has a bit more information (details on why *that particular character* is or would be the traitor). I think the same thing could have been accomplished by having the GM brief each player before the game. Then, if necessary, allow photocopying of a character description sheet. As it stands, you get *each of seven pages printed THREE times* in the booklet, with virtually no change between them. That's 21 pages of a 60 page booklet, and that's quite a hefty chunk. If you are still interested in this, you might have to look closely to be able to spot it — it bears the same artwork as the other two *Thieves' World* products they have done.

Witness for the Defense is an adventure for *Star Trek*. It is a murder mystery on Janus VI, the setting for the TV adventure "The Devil in the Dark" (remember the Horta?). The

booklet includes details on the mystery as well as the full set-up of the mining station on Janus VI for use in other adventures. FASA recommends the adventure be used with the players taking the roles of Enterprise crew members, though with some work it could be adapted over to an existing campaign. It looks good.

Combots is a game that pits robots against robots in gladiatorial combat. The most fun aspect of this game is that you actually get to build your robot as a playing piece. Two Combobot miniatures are provided, and the players mix and match weapons systems by actually mounting pieces on their figures. Then the robots try to tear each other apart. The game looks fairly simple and appears to be a great deal of fun.

Fantasy Games Unlimited has released a number of items since last issue. Perhaps the biggest release is the new edition of **Chivalry and Sorcery**. It now comes in three booklets, neatly boxed, and it has been rewritten from top to bottom. Everyone who has purchased it says that it is very much improved, and this edition has put some life back into some C&S campaigns in our area. If you are looking for complexity and depth in an FRP game, this is it.

Another second edition from FGU is **Heart of Oak**. The game was first published in 1978; then the author, Jon Williams, began his *Privateers and Gentlemen* series for Dell. *Heart of Oak* is a set of naval miniatures rules for fighting in the age of sail. It looks fairly comprehensive and even includes rules for campaign games. Definitely worth a look.

FGU has also turned out three products to support some of their role playing games. **Daredevil Adventures** is a collection of three short scenarios for *Daredevils*. Each of them is well presented and should be fun. **MERC Supplement 1** adds to the *MERC* system things that never made it into the final version of the original game, and includes more skills and specialties. This booklet will be of great help to those who want to shape up their *MERC* campaigns. **Operation Morpheus** is an *Aftermath!* scenario set in an Australian university, and was written by an Australian gamer. It seems fairly well thought out and is filled with material that could make it useful in other campaigns, even if your group isn't

playing *Aftermath!* Take a look at it.

Game Designers Workshop (PO Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61701) has released three items for *Traveller* as well as two other games of interest. **Adventure 8: Prison Planet** is just what every campaign needs. It sets up a prison for those characters who have transgressed against the law — and what character hasn't? The object of the adventure, of course, is to escape, but that will prove more difficult than imagined. **Supplement 13: Veterans** is a listing of characters for use with *Traveller*. The characters are presented as a list of stats that will take some fleshing out, but it could be useful for NPCs, or to provide pre-generated characters for replacing experienced characters lost in an adventure. **Tarsus** is a boxed *Traveller* product with a colorful world map, a booklet of description for the world Tarsus, and five different scenarios that can be played out there. The lack of artwork does hurt, especially where new animals or plants are being described, but aside from that, this is a very good product. Anyone who has longed for a good world on which to set adventures has got one in Tarsus. I recommend it.

The other two games of interest are **Blue Max** and **The Brotherhood**. *Blue Max* is a WWI airplane wargame, and normally I'd not review a straight wargame here — but I'm a sucker for WWI airplane games. This one is simple to play, has very good full color artwork on the counters, and is enjoyable. If you are looking for an easy game for a change of pace, or figure you were a flying ace in some past life, this is a game worth buying. *The Brotherhood* is a beer-and-pretzels game where players control a mob family and attempt to amass as much of a fortune as possible in one year. This game is a re-issue as *The Brotherhood* was purchased from another company. It is great fun and worth a look.

Steve Jackson Games has released several products this summer. **Car Wars Expansion Set 2** provides duplicate countersheets for *Car Wars*, *Sunday Drivers*, and *Truck Stop* as well as a Turning Key that makes those difficult maneuvers easier. They have also released the **Car Wars Reference Screen** that contains all the charts needed for the game, and includes new larger sheets for vehicle construction; there's also a brand new collision system.

A unique product that is a supplement for two games is **Autoduel Champions**. It provides the way to combine *Car Wars* and *Champions* for even greater fun! It is a massive, comprehensive work, complete with two full pages of Cardboard Heroes and a map for playing out the scenario presented. This is definitely a product for enthusiasts of both games.

Also released are two new sets of Cardboard Heroes. **Fantasy Set 11** has more player characters (fantasy types all), all of them very good and long overdue. **Fantasy Set 12** features Japanese characters and they also look very good.

Lastly, a bit of bad news for SJ Games: Aaron Allston, once editor of *The Space Gamer* and *The Fantasy Gamer*, has decided to resign from his position. Aaron is going to go freelance in the world of game design. The work on *Autoduel Champions* and the work he has done with Steve Peterson and myself on *Justice Inc.* would indicate he'll do well. Good luck, Aaron.

Bard Games (PO Box 7424, Greenwich, CT 06836) has produced two FRP supplements that are designed to be adapted to any game system. Both **The Compleat Spell Caster** and **The Compleat Alchemist** show a great deal of work. They are easily adaptable to most games, including T&T, and will add depth and color to a world or campaign. The booklets cost \$7.50 each, and are available by direct mail from Bard Games. I think that *The Compleat Alchemist* will probably slip into ongoing campaigns easier than will its companion, but both appear to be worth the money.

Gamelords, Ltd. (18616 Grosbeak Terrace, Gaithersburg, MD 20879) has a number of new products out that I have failed to mention in a while. Continuing their *Thieves' Guild* series, they have released **Thieves' Guild VI**, which features rules and adventures for pirates; **Thieves' Guild VII** which includes an excellent scenario involving the recovery of a magical item from a caravan, and **City of the Sacred Flame**, a city set in the campaign world of Haven. All of these booklets continue in the excellent tradition that Gamelords started with. Their products show imagination and creativity, and will fit into existing campaigns with ease. They have also produced a *Traveller*

licensed product, **Lee's Guide to Interstellar Adventure, Vol. 1**, which presents 11 different scenario settings for *Traveller* adventures. Each setting is introduced with an excerpt from the journal of Aramais P. Lee, noted galactic wanderer. This and all the products mentioned above are worth taking a long look at.

Entertainment Concepts Inc. (PO Box 13190, Charlotte, NC 28211) has sent two products for review. **The Village of Peddler's Ferry** is a booklet describing a village within the Silverdawn campaign, as is the other booklet **Long Live the King**. Silverdawn is a play-by-mail fantasy campaign that is run by ECI. Each booklet costs \$3 and offers the Silverdawn universal RPG system to explain the stats in the work. The two projects read easily, but are a tad thin — even for only \$3. They tend to provide background for a campaign, and perhaps the lack of explicit detail will make them easier to use in ongoing campaigns, but I would still prefer a little bit more in the way of detailed adventures drawn from the descriptions presented. Still, for the price (plus 50¢ handling) a Game-master can afford to take the time to add detailed scenarios for actual play. They're worth a look.

Chaosium has released two new products. **The Runequest Companion** is a collection of stories, articles, history, and play aids for *Runequest* campaigns. It literally has a little bit of everything, and is worth the reading if you're into *Runequest*. For *Call of Cthulhu* Chaosium has released the massive scenario booklet **Shadows of Yog-sothoth**. It has nine different scenarios, is illustrated well, and looks like it would be great fun. Anyone in a *C of C* campaign should seriously consider investing in it.

Reilly Associates (PO Box 17144, Rochester, NY 14617) has sent two products this direction. The first, **Journey to the Cloud Castle**, is an FRP adventure where characters are hired by a dragon to clean out his lair of the vagabonds who are stealing his treasure. A minor complication... the "lair" is a floating castle which the dragon recently discovered! It provides an interesting twist on the normal dungeon delve. **Aboard the Death Ship** is a science fiction adventure that appears to be a combination of *Alien*, *The Andromeda Strain*, and *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Even

so, it looks like a scenario that will challenge the players; it looks like fun.

And now a Word from our Sponsor:

What do you, the readers, want in *Arcane Grafitti*? I am not sure if I am doing the sort of job you want me to do. I look at products from the point of view of, "Do these products justify their price; do they offer their money's worth to the average gamer?" I suppose this is a fallacy because I judge the games as to whether or not I would buy them, and with as little time as I have to learn new game systems, I don't buy that many games. I often rely on the opinions of people I trust when reporting on items that they understand or have actually played. I also refuse to mention some items that I think are beneath mention, and/or beneath contempt.

But I need to know if that is what you want. Would you prefer a rating system (maybe more skulls?) for the games? One skull = killing a tree or even using recycled paper for this thing is a crime against the Universe; ten skulls = sell your wife/husband and kids to get your hands on this one. Or does my evaluation come through enough for you to make your own assessment? I want to make this part of SA as useful as possible for you.

Keep in mind that with SA's quarterly — and slightly erratic — schedule, not all reviews are as fresh as they might be. However, some products listed here will be less than 2 months old when you read this — the same speed a monthly magazine can offer. Short of making AG a weekly newsheet (*gasp), speed of review is something I have minimal control over. How much does this hurt? Should I not mention the older products? Or is it a case of better late than never?

Also, would you like to know more about *Blade* through AG? Do you want news about gaming personalities, here and elsewhere (though I refuse to turn this into a gossip column). Do you want to know about the people here? Where we think *Blade* is going? What projects are "in the works" and how far along? Do you want the scores of our soccer games???

I can — and probably will — keep plowing through the piles of games that grow unexpectedly high on the shelves of the offices here. I'll try to let you know what I think is worth your consideration and your money, but

I'd like some feedback. Tell me how I can make AG better for you, and thereby I'll know I'm doing the best job I can. Thanks! —Mike

ads

CLASSIFIEDS

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FOR SALE: An adventure for mega-characters, *Agent of Death*, is now available directly from the author. Save Lerotra'h'h's empire and get my autograph at the same time. Send \$4 per copy to Ken St. Andre, 3421 E. Yale, Phoenix, AZ 85008. Retail enquiries also welcome.

cons

CONVENTIONS

To publicize your convention in this magazine, send us a flyer or progress report. We assume no responsibility for the accuracy of the following listings. A ■ beside the listing means *Flying Buffalo/Blade* has made definite plans to attend.

□ October 14-16. **Suncoast Skirmishes '83.** Tournaments, demos, all gaming. Info: Suncoast Skirmishes '83, 4006 Wallace Ave., Tampa, FL 33611.

□ November 25-27. **Fantasy Festival.** Round-the-clock programming; guests include Roger Zelazny, C.J. Cherryh, Brad Foster, George R.R. Martin and many more. \$10 advance ticket. Info: Dallas Fantasy Festival, 1017 Birchwood, Garland, TX 75043.

□ January 13-15, 1984. **Crusader Con III.** Gamecon with tournaments incl. *Diplomacy*, *Kingmaker*, *Traveller*, *Car Wars*, *Star Fleet Battles*, others. Info: Auraria Gamer's Club, Metropolitan State College, 1006 11th Street, Box 39, Denver, CO 80204.

■ February 10-12, 1984. **DundraCon.** San Francisco Bay area gaming convention.

■ February 10-12, 1984. **Gateway.** Anaheim, Los Angeles area gamecon.

□ March 9-11, 1984. **CoastCon '84.** G.O.H. Robert Adams, other guests include Steve Jackson and Alan Dean Foster. 24 hour gaming room. Membership \$10 before Dec. 31. Info: CoastCon '84, PO Box 1423, Biloxi, MS 39533. ■



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A limited quantity of the first run games are still available. These are numbered 1 to 1000 and are autographed by the designer. If you would like to own one of these collectors items, send \$20.00 plus shipping (plus 80 cents tax for NC residents) and ask for an autographed copy. They will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis. The difference will be refunded when the supplies run out.

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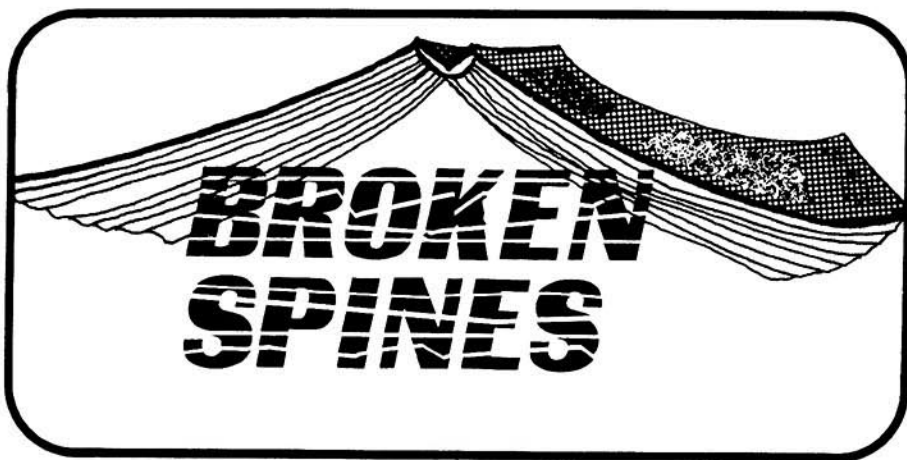
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BROKEN SPINES

□ *The Hanging Stones: A Novel of Silver John* by Manly Wade Wellman (Doubleday Science Fiction, hardbound, 172pp). Reviewed by Michael A. Stackpole.

The Hanging Stones is the latest of Manly Wade Wellman's novels about John the Balladeer, a.k.a. John the Wanderer or Silver John. John is a natural man with a silver-stringed guitar. He wanders about the hills and valleys of the American south making friends, singing songs, and rooting out evil wherever he finds it. John appeared in SA11 in the story "Can These Bones Live?" though he is more famous for his exploits chronicled in the short story collection *Who Fears the Devil?* The previous trio of Silver John novels, also from Doubleday, are *The Old Gods Waken*, *After Dark*, and *The Lost and The Lurking*.

The Hanging Stones is the best of these John novels. In it, John decides to visit Teatray Mountain where a very rich man, Noel Kottler, is building a tourist attraction called New Stonehenge. John quickly decides he does not like New Stonehenge, a feeling shared by Esdras Hogue (a seventh son of a seventh son). Neither does Judge Keith Hilary Pursuivant, nor do a group of werewolves who have used the mountain as a place for their rituals for a very long time. When the werewolves cannot scare John from the mountain, they kidnap his wife, Evadare, and try to force John to leave. Needless to say, this does not work to their satisfaction. From that point, the novel begins to rush to its climax.

Wellman's knowledge and use of Americana, southern folklore, and arcane wisdom makes this book a joy to read. The advent of Judge Pursuivant, one of Wellman's occult detective characters, is especially thrilling when John and he team up to fight the werewolves. I must admit I have a soft spot for stories where heroes, known to each other only by reputation, finally get to meet. In *The Hanging Stones*, the meeting is much more than a gimmick — it serves to advance the plot and its ultimate resolution.

In RPG terms, this novel really offers two elements that could help any campaign. First of all, Wellman is able to create a moody atmosphere by merely hinting at suspicions of evil. When John first sees the abandoned church where later he will find his wife, the doors open by themselves; John refuses their invitation. We instantly know that if John refuses to enter there, it must be truly evil and nasty. A similar effect can be worked on players in campaigns of all settings when the GM goes to the effort of careful description. Overt scare tactics need not be necessary.

Secondly, this novel is (in FRP terms) a crossing over of Judge Pursuivant (a hero of many tales in his own right) into Silver John's campaign. Both of them know each other by reputation but this is the first time they have met and each seems thrilled by the other's presence. If this degree of camaraderie can be encouraged when characters cross from one campaign to another in FRP, the quality of role playing will climb — and the adventures could be that much more enjoyable for all.

This book and the other John novels will be available in paperback from Berkeley; only *Who Fears the Devil?* made it into paperback before now. You may have to order *The Hanging Stones* through a local bookstore, but it is more than worth the trouble and expense. I heartily recommend it if you enjoy books with interesting characters, regional color, and adventurous action.

□ *The Wind from a Burning Woman* by Greg Bear. (Arkham House, 1983, 270pp., illustrated). Reviewed by Ken St. Andre.

Arkham House has never been known for its hard science fiction. That is going to change. With this collection, August Derleth's old publishing house has put out an excellent anthology.

Perhaps I don't read enough real science fiction these days, but it seems that true inventiveness in hard SF is very rare. Only a couple of writers like Fred Pohl and John Varley have the ability to come up

with science fiction that is really mind-stretching, really original. Add Greg Bear to that select group. I've always been in favor of vivid imagination, whether in fiction or gaming. In that light, I want to recommend two stories in this collection.

"Mandala" is the story of an earth colony world that has gone wrong. On this world, the cities are completely automated, intelligent, self-aware, mobile, built to serve men — yet they have no men living in them. All have been ejected as unworthy to live in the paradise of the cities. Such humans as survive outside manage to live a barbaric existence at the cultural equivalent of Dark Ages Europe. Read it. It would make a really great environment for a post-holocaust game campaign.

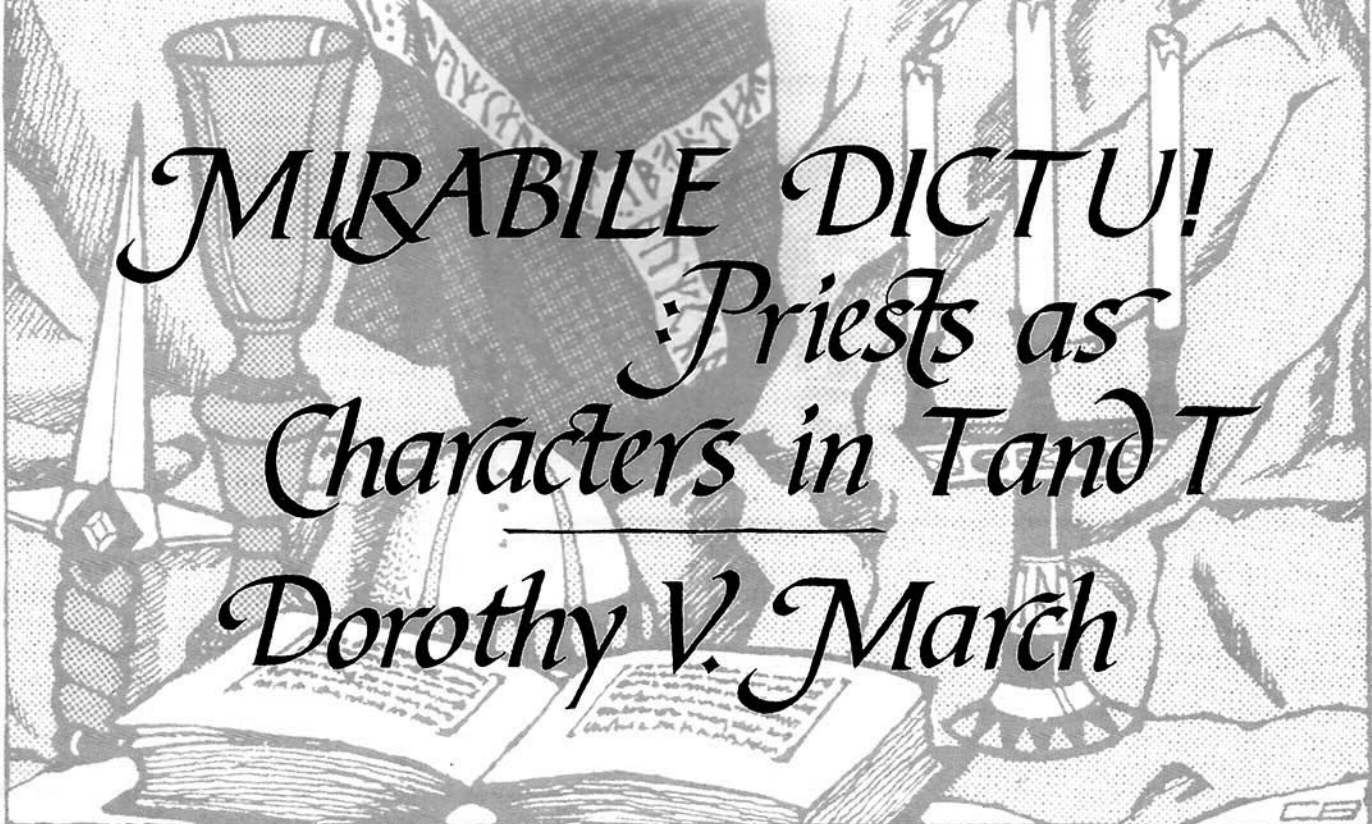
"Hardfought" may be the ultimate space war story. An evolved Humanity, so culturally different from us as to be almost an alien species, is engaged in a galaxy-wide conflict with another star-spanning culture, the Senexi. The Senexi are totally alien, classic BEMs. They evolved to galaxy-wide dominance before life even appeared on Earth. Nevertheless, the galaxy isn't big enough for them and carbon-based lifeforms, too. Humanity and Senexi find themselves locked in a death struggle that lasts for tens of thousands (with the implication of millions) of years.

The story is told from both sides of the fence — with both human and alien viewpoints. This is fairly unusual in itself. When did the Eddorians ever get a chance to defend their viewpoint against Doc Smith's Civilization? By the end of the story, you will probably find yourself sympathizing with the alien, Aryz.

Here's just a couple of the concepts explored by Bear: (1) clone warriors endlessly duplicated from the pattern of Earth's most successful fighters of the past; (2) starships made of water; and (3) 5-year-old human warriors who fly through interstellar space and alien environments with no protective equipment but a couple of force fields and an internal bio-mechanical computer ticking away inside their heads.

I'm not sure if *Traveller* or *Space Opera* or *Universe* could accept Greg Bear's visions of the future. The games' basic premises are too 20th Century in scope and design. But an innovative GM could certainly get some tremendous ideas!

There are four other stories in the book: "The Wind from the Burning Woman", "The White Horse Child", "Petra", and "Scattershot." I've seen "Scattershot" before now, in some Best Of The Year collection. They are all excellent, but not as strong as "Mandala" and "Hardfought." Even though it costs almost \$14, I recommend it highly. ■



MIRABILE DICTU!

Priests as Characters in T&T

Dorothy V. March

illustrations by Cortina Bandolero

T&T has collected some disagreements over the variety — or lack thereof — of character classes. Often cited as being noticeably missing is the lack of a priest class. Dorothy March, an experienced and capable GM and player of many systems, has devised a way to integrate a priest class smoothly into any T&T world.

For thousands of years, one of the prime interests of humans, and a major factor in their lives, has been religion. Generations of people have had their lives shaped, guided, controlled and often ruined or ended by religion. The wars that have been fought over religion have affected all of human history. And all of this has been despite the relative paucity of authentic miracles. Faith in the otherworldly and the miraculous seems to be an integral part of human make up, even when that faith is opposed by modern science (which has itself become almost like a religion for some).

Since religion has been so important to people in all human civilizations, should it not then be just as important to the worlds of FRP, which are based upon those civilizations? In a world where mankind is daily exposed to magic, is it not even more likely that your average peasant-on-the-street will believe in gods and have reason to do so than it is in our own universe? If nothing else, an active religious establishment would be needed to balance the power of the Wizards' Guild and/or that of the government, as the power of the Church stood to

balance the power of royalty during the medieval period of Europe.

Many, if not most, of the existing games systems incorporate some sort of framework for religion; it seemed only logical to me to draw up such a system for Tunnels and Trolls. The religious aspect of the game described here is the way I work it in my own world, and is quite suited to it. Individual GMs who wish to use any of this work may have to modify it somewhat to make it fit into their campaigns, or may simply use it as a jumping off point in developing their own Priestly character.

Anything said here applies equally to male and female Deities and Priests, as well as to hermaphrodites, neuters, and non-humans of all types (sapient beings of whatever form are quite likely to have Gods and Priests).

First of all, it must be understood that Gods are *real* if any religion is to have true power. The Gods draw power from the worship and sacrifices mortals offer to them, and "invest" some of this power back into miracles and special powers for their Priests in order to get more people to worship them so that the Gods will get more power, and so on *ad infinitum*. A God's power will decrease as the number of his worshipers grows smaller; a God may even die if no one at all offers worship or sacrifice for a long enough time. The Greek and Egyptian Gods passed on in this fashion, and the mighty Tuatha de Danaan dwindled to

become the Sidhe and the diminutive fairies so popular in folktales. They draw their power these days mostly from the willingness of small children to believe in fairies.

It is interesting to note that the Gods of a people often become the devils, demons and evil spirits of the people who supplant them. The great and powerful Gods Baal and Moloch of the Canaanites became the devils of the Judeo-Christian faiths which followed them into the Middle East. In the same way the druidical worship of the Horned God and the Earth Mother underwent drastic changes, with the Horned God becoming identified with Satan, and his rituals changing into the Black Mass. Interestingly, the worship of the same God's partner, the Earth Mother, who had ruled equally with him, went underground and has only recently emerged in the relatively unchanged form of Wicca, or White Witchcraft. In the case of the Horned God, Baal and others, the nature of the Gods themselves changed according to the manner in which they were worshipped. Though starting out as the essentially good protectors of their people, they changed to evil pursuits over the course of the centuries, and are now truly as evil as they are reputed to be. The Earth Mother, on the other hand, did not grasp for new sources of power when her worshipers became fewer, but guarded carefully what she did have, granting just enough power to mortals to make sure

of her continued supply. It remains to be seen which was ultimately the more successful strategy.

The endless religious wars of the human race, in this light, may be seen to reflect the efforts of the gods to increase their personal power.

Religion and wizardry do not mix at all; *no one person may practice both*. This is because of the attitudinal differences and learned thought patterns of the Priest and the Wizard. The Priest knows that his powers are a gift from the Gods, and his main purpose is to channel power between the Gods and man; he does not seek to control the flow and, in truth, cannot control it. The Wizard, on the other hand, deals with forces which must be tamed and broken to his will; he must be in active control. This is even more apparent in game systems such as T&T, which postulate magic as a psionic talent. Here, magic is necessarily something over which the individual Wizard must seek to gain control, since it is an extension of his own mind.

These two modes of thought are essentially antithetical. Even if a Priest or Wizard should attempt to give up his own class for another, he would never be able to change completely. A defrocked Priest could never be more than a Rogue in dealing with the magic arts; a Wizard who "got religion" could never be more than an Acolyte.

So much for metaphysics.

Individual GMs should design their religions with the same care they would use in setting up political systems for their worlds, or perhaps even more, since religion is likely to be one of the most powerful cultural influences imaginable. As many FRP cultures are based on medieval European traditions, religions are most likely to be pseudo-early Catholic or Classic pagan in nature, though this is by no means always the case.

On only one small planet the human race has managed to turn out an incredible variety of religious beliefs, varying phenomenally from time to time and place to place. In all the times and places the FRP multiverse has to offer, there is room for the highly conventional and the exceptionally weird, and anything else the GM can dream of. This variety can almost overwhelm, without even considering the Gods that a completely alien being might worship. The GM must remember, however, how strong an influence religion is on a culture. This is obvious after minimal study of existing and historic cultures. The nature of the religion, then, must be

carefully geared to the nature of the culture desired (or vice versa). Basing a fantasy religion on an actual one thus can be seen to have strong advantages, in that its relations to a society have already been worked out. Works of fantasy and science fiction are also excellent background material, as most GMs are already aware. However, doing it all by yourself and coming up with something completely unique is most satisfying emotionally, and will be greatly appreciated by the players.

The first level Priest is assumed to have spent time in his youth receiving intense religious instructions and undergoing rituals leading to consecration and ordination. As there are many different types of gods, so there are many different types of Priests. The Priestess of Aphrodite who wears little besides jewelry and worships in ways best not described in a magazine likely to be read by minors is just as much a Priest as the ascetic celibate hermit who lives in a cave in the wilderness and spends his days rapt in prayer. Likewise, there is room for individual sects within religions; witness the endless orders, schismatic groups, and subdivisions of Christianity in the Middle Ages and in modern times.

The GM should inform the player who wishes to run a Priest of the nature of the religion(s) available to him, his duties, and anything else required. Player input is advisable in constructing a specific sect, if desired. It is up then to the Priestly character to observe these rules; his God will favor him or not depending on how well he follows the guidelines. Player character Priests are assumed to be of a sect which encourages its members to travel and gain converts, treasure and renown for God and temple. Members of cloistered orders may be encountered as NPCs.

In a detailed religious system there should also be some duties devolving upon the layman to attend services, offer tithes or sacrifices, etc. These also should be worked out by the GM and adhered to by the players. Most contact between God and man should be through the Priest, though it is not impossible that a revelation or miracle might be worked through a layman. Such occurrences should be *extremely* rare, however.

The addition of the religious factor to T&T involves the introduction of a seventh Prime Attribute, Devotion (DEV or DV), and the character class of Priest, with a possible Acolyte class as a further option.

DEV reflects the attitude of the character towards the Gods in general, and his capacity to generate power in a form usable by the God. A character with a high DEV is likely to have been selected early in his youth to become a Priest. The Priest calls upon his God for Minor Miracles in the same way a Wizard casts spells. DEV points are given up temporarily to power the prayers and regenerate in the same fashion as ST points do for a Wizard. If a Miracle requires more DEV than a Priest has at the time, the excess may be made up by drawing upon ST at the cost of 2 ST points for 1 DEV point. In this case, or at any time DEV is reduced to 0, DEV will not start to regenerate until the Priest has gone through a period of prayer and meditation requiring at least six full turns of uninterrupted concentration (one hour in game terms). Lost ST will regenerate at 1 ST point per turn, *only after* DEV is *completely* restored. For some rituals the Priest may draw on the DEV of Acolytes or laymen of the same or similar religions who are willing to help. This is most likely for exorcisms, banishments, resurrections and such where group prayer is most likely to be effective. Some GMs may not allow this at all; it depends upon individual preferences. In any event, no more than one half of the necessary DEV may be obtained in this manner.

Priests may be skilled in the use of any one *class* of weapons, of a type sacred to or associated with their God. For example, a Priestess of Diana the Huntress would logically be skilled in the use of the bow, while a follower of Thor would prefer a war hammer. Priests may also use any form of armor unless it is precluded by the tenets of their religions.

Obviously any weapons and armor used must be non-magical. Special armor and weapons of a religious nature should be made available, though the Church might jealously guard their use.

All Priests will carry a Religious Symbol of their God. This is used as a focal point for concentration when working Minor Miracles, and if it is desecrated, the Priest may not do Miracles until it is cleansed and purified or destroyed and replaced. A Blessed Symbol will act as a staff ordinaire; a Holy Symbol is the equivalent of a deluxe staff and will be harder to acquire; they are not for sale on the streets. A mission to recover a lost Holy Symbol would not be uncommon, and the Priest recovering the Holy Symbol would then have to

hope and pray that his Church will allow him to use it. Both types of symbols reduce the DEV cost for a Miracle in the same way a staff reduces the ST cost of a spell for a Wizard. Priests are likely to carry at least one vial each of Holy Water and Holy Oil for emergencies, and perhaps incense and a brazier, or a sacrificial knife. True Holy Water and Holy Oil may only be obtained at temple, churches or similar holy places.

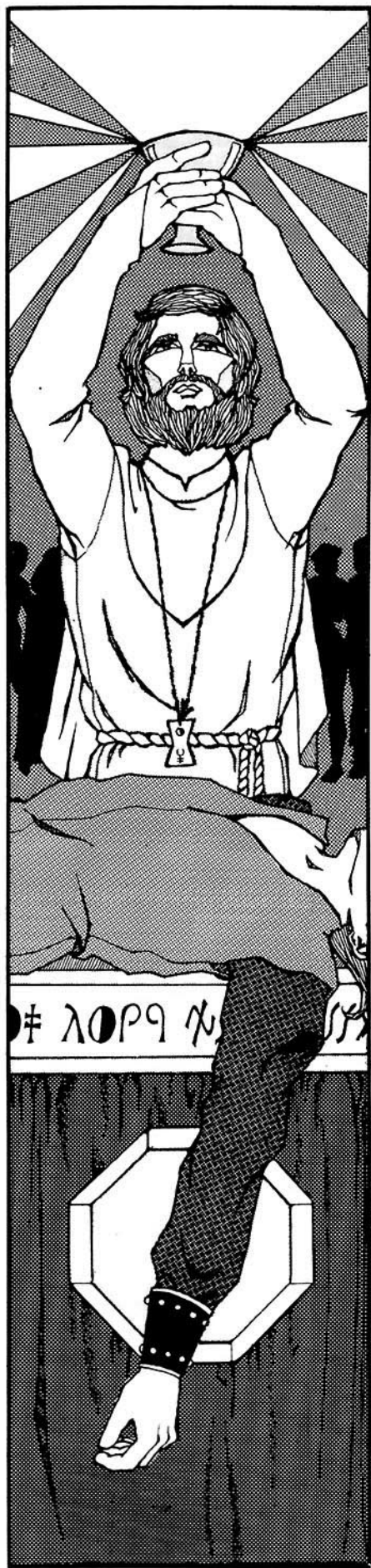
The following table covers some of the more common types of religious items, giving suggested minimum costs. For specialized items, the GM will have to determine costs. Further elaboration on some of these items will follow the table.

Plain Religious Symbol	10 gp
Blessed Symbol	100 gp
Holy Water, 1 vial	15 gp
Holy Wine, 1 vial	20 gp
Holy Oil/Salve, 1 vial	30 gp
Incense, 1 stick or block	1 gp
Incense burner, brass	5 gp
Sacrificial dagger	20 gp
Plain Priestly vestments	30 gp
Chalice or bowl, bronze	15 gp

These prices may be adjusted upwards for quality of workmanship, value of materials used and so on. It would not be uncommon for a Priest to need more ornate items as she moves up through the hierarchy of her church.

A Priest is presented with a Religious Symbol at ordination, free. If this is desecrated or destroyed, the Priest must buy a new one at a temple and have it Sanctified (see the Miracles below) so he can use it. Plain Symbols are also sold to the devout layman. Blessed Symbols are sold only to Priests who the church finds deserving of such an honor. Holy Symbols, as mentioned before, are purchased more dearly. An effort by the Priest for his church is necessary before they will entrust a Holy Symbol to him. It would not be uncommon for a Holy Symbol to have some other power associated with it beyond the normal benefit of a Holy Symbol, which does something to explain the reluctance to pass them out to just everyone.

Other Blessed or Holy items may be obtained at temples, Holy weapons being very popular. These items may have special properties, such as glowing when Undead are present, or getting extra damage against certain types of monsters. A Blessed item will sell for 10 times its normal cost; Holy items will be farmed out in accordance with the rules of the sect that owns



them, the power of the item ruling the frequency and ease with which it is obtained. Major Holy items, relics and such should be made available only as the goal of a long and arduous quest or testing. Blessed or Holy items may drain DEV from their users in order to make their special powers work.

Each different religion will have its own list of recommended supplies for their Priests. The GM should make the list known to the Player Priests and help them obtain the equipment within limits of the religion, money and other cultural taboos.

Unlike Wizards, Priests have no minimum IQ or DEX required to cast Miracles. However, a certain minimum CHR is required. This minimum CHR is 10 for first level Miracles and increases by 2 for each succeeding level (12 for level 2, 14 for level 3 and so on).

To learn new Miracles a Priest may buy them from the temples or churches of his God. Payment may take any number of forms, from donations of money or supplies to the conversion of new worshipers or the solving of some problem plaguing that parish. A Priest may also learn new Miracles from reading religious tomes made available to him during his adventures. His God may also grant him new Miracles as direct dispensations; this knowledge may be permanent or strictly on a one-shot basis.

In casting Miracles some form of prayer or ritual is required. Obviously, for battle use, a fast prayer of the "Oh-Lord-I-Beseech-Thee-Blast-This-Critter" variety is all that's necessary. There just isn't time for anything else. However, Miracles which can and should be cast in a more leisurely manner will include a ritual of length appropriate to the level of the Miracle, and include an invocation to the God and a pledge or immediate sacrifice. Invoking a God is a simple ritual used in all the Priest's normal duties; it may involve a simple material component, such as a mixture of wine and sea water to invoke the Sea God or a ritual gesture or movement such as making the sign of the Cross or facing towards Mecca. Sacrifice may then be made immediately, if the God so demands, or pledged for a later time. The amount and nature of the sacrifice may be decreed by the GM or even suggested by the players themselves in some circumstances. (This takes some of the work off the GM's shoulders and sometimes the players even overcharge themselves). If the immediate beneficiary of a Miracle is someone other than the Priest himself, it would

be logical for that person to pay for the sacrifice, but the Priest must still take the time to do the offering correctly.

As can be seen, this procedure makes no difference in a combat situation, but makes the exercise of non-combat powers slightly more costly and time-consuming for the Priest than for the Wizard. On the other hand, Priests have a greater advantage in their choice of weapons so it all evens out in the long run.

A Priest may, at any time, pray for a Major Miracle to occur. Whether or not this is granted is entirely up to God, the GM. The God may require certain sacrifices or devotions as a price for the Miracle (up to and including the self-sacrifice of the Priest!), may only partially fulfill it, may ignore the request entirely, or even punish the Priest for making an inappropriate request or for bothering the God once too often. Asking for a Major Miracle is not lightly undertaken. Few Priests are granted more than one in a lifetime. Major Miracles include such things as calling an earthquake to swallow an enemy temple or army whole, a plague of locusts to cover an entire country, etc.

Priests gain experience like anyone else, and may gain extra points through casting Miracles (1 e.p. per DEV point used) and scrupulously exercising their functions. Extra attribute points gained through experience may be added to DEV, or ½ to DEV and ½ to ST.

The Acolyte is to the Priest what the Rogue is to the Wizard. He has had some religious training, and can perform Priestly Miracles up to the fifth level, unless otherwise indicated. He is not restricted in his use of weapons, though he will tend to prefer those associated with his God. His vows to his God will be less severe than a full Priest's vows (e.g. a vow of chastity rather than total celibacy).

An Acolyte differs from a Rogue in that it is possible for an Acolyte to achieve full Priestly status. GMs should not make this easy, and should test the would-be Priest's determination quite thoroughly. Requirements for ordination should be designed in keeping with the religion. The new Priest would then have access to all first-level Miracles and whatever he had learned as an Acolyte. He must also observe all Priestly restrictions.

The special powers called Minor Miracles will vary from religion to religion and sect to sect. Each God should have a few Miracles that are unique to his Priests (designed to fit in

well with the campaign) and unsuitable Miracles from the following lists should be altered or dropped for Priests of that sect. (The Sea God is not going to give Miracles that have flaming results.)

My lists are based heavily upon the Wizard Spell lists in the T&T Rules, but many have been altered. I have also drawn from other game systems, and from religious and secular readings. Since, as stated earlier, religions are quite likely to be based on Judeo-Christian models, I have included some obviously Biblical powers. Others I made up out of the clear blue. For any Miracle that is to be treated in effect like a Wizardly spell you will be referred to that spell for a description of the effect and limitations on it.

Some Miracles may be worked at a higher level than their listings. A # next to the Miracle's name means that it may be used at higher levels for greater effect; a * next to the name means higher levels will extend the Miracle's duration. The same rules apply as for Wizard's spells in the rules.

Some of these Miracles may be reversed to cause either harm or good; these are indicated in the lists. Each form must be learned separately, since their differing intents require different wording of the prayer. For example, an evil Priest could reverse the *Consecration* ritual to desecrate a good Priest's Religious Symbol, or *Cause* instead of *Cure Blindness*. However, the reversed form of a Miracle is not inherently good or evil; only the Priest's use of it is (remember the way Saul was struck blind on the road to Damascus; that is a prime example of a reversed Miracle used for good intents).

Many different religions will have prayers and rituals designed to grant the same Miraculous effects, since these have been, traditionally, the most likely to be of use in situations encountered by wandering Priests. However, it must be noted that each religion will have its own specific ritual to grant any effect. Priests must learn their Miracles from temples, tomes or other sources of their own religion.

MINOR MIRACLES

LEVEL ONE

Priestly Duties (Cost: Special) The normal rituals a Priest is likely to perform from day to day. Includes namings, marriages, funerals,

witnessing vows, simple blessings, initiations to adulthood, etc. These duties may not be carried out by an Acolyte. Cost is 1 DEV from Priest and 1 from each other participant.

Detect Holy/Unholy/Undead (Cost: 0 for Priests, 1 for Acolytes) Inherent talent of Priests; detects religious emanations, either good or evil, on items, places and to a limited extent, people; detects the presence of Undead within 100 feet without giving away number or exact location of the Undead.

Detect Magic (Cost: 2) Detects magical effects on people, places or things. (Note: wizards should be given an analogous spell, Detect Miracle, for a cost of 2 ST.)

Halo (*, Cost: 1) Creates a globe of golden light around the Priest's head if not otherwise specified. Can be cast on hand, staff, Symbol, etc. Brightness is that of 1 candle; lasts for 1 turn.

Priestly Lock/Unlock (Cost: 2) Treat as Knock Knock/Lock Tight.

Fist of [God] (Cost: 6) Fill in name of your God and treat as a Take That You Fiend.

Healing (Cost: 2 DEV for 1 CON) The laying on of hands to cure wounds or injuries. Cannot raise CON above normal level.

Blessings (*, Cost 5) For weapons, multiply the basic die roll by 1.5 before adds are figured in. Multiply the die roll by 2 if the weapon is of the same class as the Priest uses. Will not affect magical or Holy weapons.

For armor, multiply the damage taken by 1.5. Will not affect magical or Holy armor.

For a person, multiply personal adds by 1.5. The cost of a personal Blessing rises, the DEV points required being equal to the number of adds the character has divided by 10 (round up).

The normal duration of Blessings is 1 combat turn.

Turn Away (#, Cost: 7) Treat like an Oh Go Away which takes effect only on undead.

Consecrate/Desecrate (Cost: 5) Will render normal substances suitable for presentation as a sacrifice to Priest's God. Reversed Miracle renders substances consecrated to another God into their normal equivalents.

Sanctify Symbol (Cost: 1) Turns an ordinary Religious Symbol into a make-shift Blessed Symbol. Does not test Symbol's reliability (Make L1SR on Priest's LK when first used). Does not last beyond burnout (it can work Miracles in number up to twice the Priest's CHR at the time the Symbol is sanctified). Cannot be resanctified.

Mentor (Cost: 3) Teaches Acolyte (only) 1 Miracle of the teacher's choice.

All first level Priests will know all the first level Miracles.

LEVEL TWO

Holy Visions (Cost: 5) Treat like an Omnipotent Eye, except applies only to religious artifacts, not magical ones.
Cloak of God (*, Cost: 6) Treat like a Hidey Hole, except is cast on one individual only, who is able to move about while still hidden.

Conversion (Cost: 8) Can be cast only on previously subdued sentient monsters/foes, or on willing persons. Converts will become totally dedicated to the religion of the Priest and follow the Priest's instructions devotedly, except if the Priest directs the converts to do something totally against the philosophy of his religion. Effect will last as long as the convert's total IQ, CHR and DEV are less than Priest's total of those attributes, or MR is lower in the case of a creature rated that way. When the MR or the attribute totals exceed those of the Priest, either through increases in the convert or decreases in the Priest, the Miracle is unwrought.

Purify Food and Drink (Cost: 9) Will make spoiled, rotten or otherwise unusable food or water fit for consumption. Will not render poisonous or poisoned food non-toxic. Will purify enough for three humans (or one hobbit) for one meal.

Cure Disease (#, Cost: 9) Will cure normal, organism-induced diseases. Diseases like cancer or a magically-induced disease will require a higher level Miracle to cure. The level needed should be determined by the GM, taking into account factors like advanced state of illness or the effects, good or bad, of medical treatment already visited upon the patient.

Moses' Staff (Cost: 1 per combat turn) Treat like Magic Fangs.

Sanctuary (*, #, Cost: 10) Creates a shimmering, translucent dome of force about the Priest which will reflect material objects or magical spells, but not light or sound. Dome lasts for two combat turns and is twelve feet in diameter. Higher levels either increase the size of the dome or its duration.

Walk on Water (*, Cost: 8) Enables one to walk on the surface of any liquid for 1 full turn. The walker is supported by surface tension but is not immune to harmful effects of the liquid. A

walker can still take damage from fire when walking upon molten lava, for example, and would fare little better strolling across sulfuric acid.

Godly Weapon (Cost: 10) Treat like a Whammy.

Curse/Remove Curse (#, Cost: 8) Causes a debilitating but not immediately fatal effect or disease on victim. May be suggested by Priest but final determination is up to the GM. Higher level curses have more debilitating effect. Diseases caused in this way must have Curse Removed before they can be cured. Curses must be removed at one level above the level of the Curse.

LEVEL THREE

Neutralize Poison (Cost: 7) Treat like Too Bad Toxin.

Levitate (Cost: 9) Treat like Upsidaisy.

Negate Miracle (#, Cost: 9) Treat like Dispell.

Hellfire (Cost: 8) Treat like Blasting Power. Not a Miracle properly available to Priests of Sea Gods.

Hellfreeze (Cost: 8) Treat like Freeze Pleeze. Not available to Priests of Fire/Volcano Gods.

Sleep (Cost: 11) Treat like Rock-a-bye. Double the duration for Priests of gods like Morpheus.

Silence (*, Cost: 7) Casts a pall of silence over a being or an area ten feet in diameter. Persons under a Silence or in a Silenced area may not hear or speak or make any other sounds. It lasts for three turns. The Miracle may be cast over an area no further from the Priest than ten feet times his level number in distance.

Darkness/Light (*, Cost: 8) Casts impenetrable darkness or blinding light upon a being or over an area ten feet in diameter. Beings in the area of either effect will be unable to see or be seen. Light may dazzle those not in the immediate area of effect as well. The Miracles are not available to Priests of Sun/Night Gods respectively. The Miracle may be cast over an area no further from the Priest than ten feet times his level number in distance. Lasts three turns.

Wards (Simple) (Cost: 6) Enchants doorways, cross-section of tunnels, etc., of an area not to exceed 100 square feet, so that Priest casting the Miracle will be immediately alerted if anything passes through warded area. Wards last until triggered, cancelled by Priest or until the death of the

Priest. Will alert Priest whether awake or asleep, no matter where he is. Beings passing through a ward will not be aware of that fact.

Clear Vision (*, Cost: 7) Enables caster to see through obscuring mists, haze, or dazzle effects for one turn (e.g., seeing through sparkle on water and muddy water to look at the ruins on the bottom of the lake.)

Control Animal (Cost: 10) Places non-sentient animal under control of the Priest unless the animal can make a saving roll on Luck at the Priest's level. A controlled animal cannot be compelled to act in a way clearly leading to self-destruction, but will obey other commands. Resistance may be more difficult for the animal if it is connected with the god of the Priest, or the god may prevent the domination of that animal because it is sacred. Control will last for 1-6 days.

LEVEL FOUR

Cure/Cause Blindness (Cost: 11) Cures organic, congenital, and some forms of magical blindness. Reverse forms opaque scales over eyes which may not be removed by physical means.

Flight (Cost: 10) Treat like Fly Me.

Divination (Cost: 15) Treat like Dear God.

Optical Illusion (*, Cost: 14) Treat like Mirage.

Auditory Illusion (*, Cost: 14) Caster projects any sounds, noises or voices he wishes, which will seem to emanate from thin air. Effect lasts one regular turn; voices will be able to speak only languages caster knows.

Wards (advanced) (Cost: 18) Like Simple Wards, except any one Miracle of Priest's choice may be bound into it, to be triggered when the ward is passed through. DEV cost for the second miracle is added to the 18 cost at the time of the casting. Wards will last until triggered, cancelled or until the death of the Priest.

Speak with Dead (Cost: 17) Summons spirit of a recently deceased person into his corpse to speak. Communication only is possible, not animation. Spirit will remain for one full turn, and is compelled to answer questions truthfully (to the best knowledge of the deceased person.) Answers probably should not get too complex. In the case of a wizard or Priest, the revenant cannot cast a spell/miracle.

Control Plants (Cost: 15) Places non-sentient plant life under control of the

Priest, who may then cause movement of stems, leaves, use the special powers of the plant, etc. at will. An example would be using vines to entangle foes. Will not cause plant growth or enable them to uproot and move. Effects last 1-6 hours.

Double Trouble (Cost: 18) Treat like Double Double.

LEVEL FIVE

True Sight (*, Cost: 23) Treat like Second Sight.

Teleport Item (Cost: 35) Treat like Zingum.

Teleport Person (Cost: 14) Treat like Wink Wing.

Mind Tap (Cost: 20) Treat like ESP.

LEVEL SIX

Cure/Cause Paralysis (Cost: 18) Cures organic, congenital, and some magically-induced paralysis. Venoms or other poisons must be neutralized before the effects can be reversed with this miracle. Reverse causes quadriplegia.

Mobile Illusion (*, Cost: 30) Permits motion of illusion, which is non-tactile and non-auditory. Illusion lasts 1 turn or until touched, at which time it vanishes.

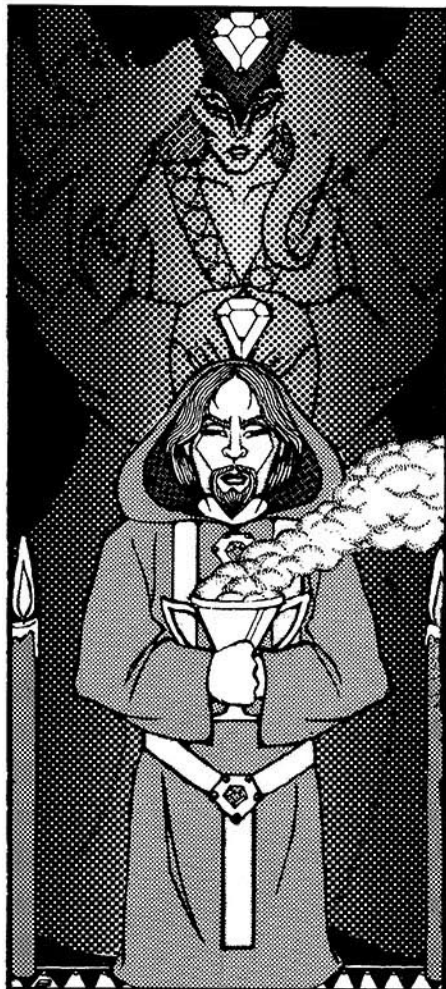
Suspended Animation (*, Cost: 40) Puts any one being into a state of suspended animation. All life processes, including progress of poisons or disease through system, are halted for the duration of the Miracle. Lasts one day or any portion of one day; may be broken by caster at any time prior to termination. Hostile subjects should make a saving roll on the average of IQ and CON at the caster's level to avoid effects of the Miracle. (A near miss on the saving roll might suggest a shorter duration for the Miracle.) Characters in Suspended Animation will be "outside time" as far as the game is concerned. They may be moved, but no harm may be visited upon them. For example you could not use the Miracle on the dragon, cut out his heart and then terminate the Miracle.

Wall of Blades (*, Cost: 25) Puts a wall of whirling knife blades between caster and foe: 2d6 times 10 blades will appear, each of the 20-120 blades having a MR of 10. Anyone attempting to pass this immobile wall must either destroy it or have armor enough to take the damage from it.

Wall of Darkness (*, Cost: 20) Causes

a wall of solid darkness to form between caster and foe. Bitter cold, it can be breached only by brilliant light or sufficient heat. The wall is considered to have a MR equal to double the caster's current CON.

Wall of Light (*, Cost: 20) Forms a wall of solid light between caster and foe. Automatically repels creatures of



darkness, such as vampires; does radiation or burn damage if touched or passed through. The wall is considered to have a Monster Rating equal to double the caster's current CON.

These three Walls are immobile once created, and are subject to all restrictions of magical Wall spells as described in the T&T Rules.

LEVEL SEVEN

Invisible Wall (*, Cost: 27) Treat like Invisible Wall.

Holy Weapon (*, Cost: 24) Treat like Zappathingum.

Animate Dead (Cost: 30) Treat like Zombie Zonk. Note: This spell is not

apt to be available to Christian type Gods, though their foes will be likely to use it easily.

Lightning (Cost: 34) Calls down a bolt of lightning that gets twice as many dice as the user's level number into a general area. Bolt will tend to be attracted, for obvious reasons, to heavily armored beings. Aim is difficult, a luck saving roll for the targets perhaps being the best way to see who gets hit.

LEVEL EIGHT

Holy Armor (*, Cost: 30) Treat like Zapparmor.

Neutralize Undead (Cost: MR of creature being neutralized or the total of its STR and CON.) Negates the power of the undead. Will dissipate ghosts, slay vampires, withdraw the power of movement from zombies, etc. MR or total of STR and CON should not be revealed before the Miracle is cast. If the Priest does not have enough DEV to pay for total destruction of the creature, proportional damage should be done to the creature.

Shapeshift I (Cost: 25) Treat like Mutatum Mutandis.

Vortex (Cost: 40) Creates a small inter-dimensional vortex like a whirlpool, which is invisible and will draw matter into itself, to a total of 1,000 weight units times the caster's level. A vortex may be placed anywhere within 100 feet of the caster, and will remain stationary thereafter. It will absorb anything passing within 20 feet of it until it reaches its limit, then it will vanish. If an item is larger than its capacity to absorb it, the appropriate amount of the item will be removed and the remainder of it will stay in this world. Note: placing a Vortex in a 10 foot wide corridor will not act to block the corridor. Building materials will be sucked in and quickly fill it, leaving only a hole in the walls to show where it had been. No one quite knows where the things sucked into it go.

LEVEL NINE

Shapeshift II (Cost: 27) Treat like Mutatum Mutandorum.

Raise Dead Temporarily (Cost: 35) Temporarily reunites soul with body, creating, in essence, a self-willed zombie. The being's IQ and LK remain the same, STR and CON double, DEX and Speed are halved, Charisma becomes a maximum of 8

and decreases 1 point per day of animation. Effects last 1-6 days, after which the person dies again and may not be further effected by the Miracle. Use of this Miracle does nothing to halt decay of the corpse.

Sudden Death (Cost: 40) Treat like Death Spell #9.

Anathema (Cost: 26) A high-level curse which will cause all associates and beings encountered by the victim to shun him/her/it and attempt to drive him away. Only the Priest casting the Anathema is unaffected by it, and may remove it at no extra cost. Otherwise it will require a tenth level Remove Curse to get rid of this effect. The Anathema does not wear off, even after the death of the Priest who cast it.

Sight & Sound (*, Cost: 38) Treat like Hollow Vision.



LEVEL TEN

Hellblast (#, Cost: 34) Treat like Hell Bomb Burst.

Rapid Transit I (Cost: 28) Treat like Blow Me To.

Scapegoat (Cost: 36) Removes curses, magical afflictions, etc. from a party of up to ten beings and places them all on one victim designated by the caster.

Visions of Hell (*, Cost: 45) Causes victim to see whatever it is most afraid of, or a vision of the Priest's Hell. Victim must make a saving roll on IQ at the caster's level; if failed, vision will be believed utterly and damage done by the illusion *will actually be inflicted on the victim*. If the roll is made, the victim will still see the images, but illusory wounds will terminate along with the vision. Visions last 1-6 turns at the caster's option, and may be terminated at any time by the caster. Visions are not perceived by any other beings except the victim.

LEVEL ELEVEN

Rapid Transit II (Cost: 35) Treat like Blow You To.

Astral Travel (Cost: 45) Caster leaves body behind in a comatose condition and travels in immaterial form, still able to cast Miracles, but DEV won't regenerate until caster returns to body. Astral Traveler is invisible to normal vision, but may be detectable by paranormal senses.

Regenerate (Cost: 40) Causes lost parts of the body to regenerate. Will require 1-6 weeks to grow to full size

and regain full function.

LEVEL TWELVE

Quest (Cost: 40) Treat like Seek Ye.

Temporary Resurrection (Cost: 55) Brings CON or MR back to 1; damage due to wounds must be healed in other ways. A person raised this way lives for as many days as the caster's LK rating. This Miracle may be renewed, but the restoree must make a saving roll on his own Luck at his own level, or it will not work again. Each time it is renewed, the saving roll is one level higher than the previous, or at the new level of the character, whichever is higher. In any event, the Miracle may not be renewed more times than the character's original, first level, CON rating.

LEVEL THIRTEEN

Tongues (*, Cost: 60) Allows the caster to speak and understand any language. Lasts 6 turns.

Summon Divine Servant (Cost: 50) Summons a servant of the caster's God (angelic or demonic) with an MR equal to caster's prime attributes plus 25. The summoned being may be armed with an appropriate weapon, or may fight with MR hand to hand. The being will perform one task set for it or fight one combat to the best of its ability. Demonic types must be forcibly controlled when first summoned; its summoner must make a Level 13 saving roll on Charisma to avoid attack. Angels need not be controlled, but may refuse a task they feel is not appropriate.

LEVEL FOURTEEN

Animate Object (*, Cost: 42) Will cause any material object to become animate in the service of the caster or those designated by the caster. For example, a sword may be commanded to fight on its own, etc. Effect will last 1-6 turns, or until the death of the caster, whichever is first.

Mystic Mending (Cost: 48) Will cause broken, ripped, shattered or otherwise destroyed materials to become whole, as if they had never been damaged. Magical powers may or may not be restored by this, at the GM's option. Does not work on living tissues; one casting will restore up to 2,000 weight units of damaged materials. Essentially this is a highly localized time reversal effect.

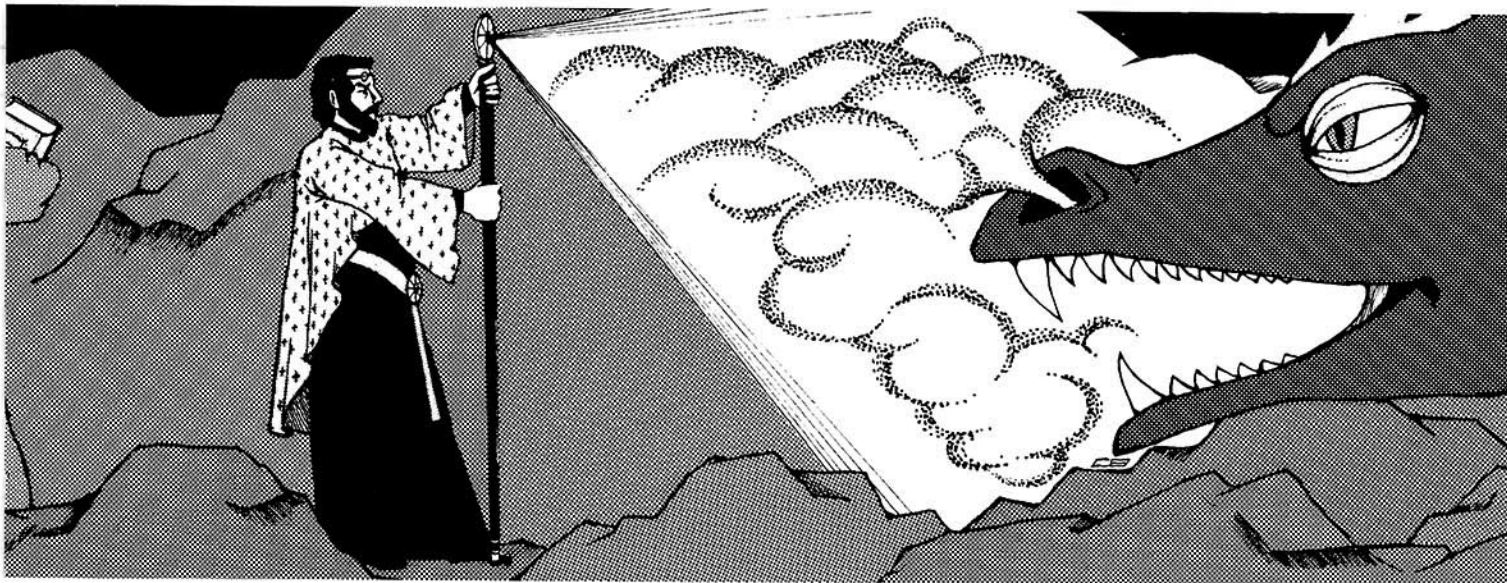
LEVEL FIFTEEN

Exorcism (Cost: MR of being or total of its prime attributes.) May be used to banish minor demons/angels summoned by Priests of opposing religions. May also banish imps, demons, etc. summoned by Wizards. MR or attribute total should not be revealed before Miracle is cast.

Control Weather (Cost: 75) Offers limited control over climatic effects. (Will not cause a blizzard in June, but can cause a thunderstorm if the clouds are present, etc.)

LEVEL SIXTEEN

Reincarnate (Cost: 85) When this ritual is done over a corpse the soul of



the person will be attracted to the nearest non-player character and attempt to use that body. Sentient creatures other than undead must make a saving roll on IQ at the caster's level to avoid being taken over. If the creature makes the save, the soul will seek to enter the next nearest creature, and so on, until a suitable body is found. Alternately the soul can be directed into an unborn child without needing the saving roll. The character then will have to grow up again. The reincarnated being will retain all his memories, IQ, DEV, and Luck as well as having all the powers and abilities natural to his new body (and the restrictions). Undead and non-sentient creatures have no save. Reincarnating someone into a rock will not provide a mobile stone body — the person will just be an ordinary rock... forever.

LEVEL SEVENTEEN

Summon/Banish Major Divine Servants (Cost: 100) Summons a demonic or angelic being *whose name is known to the caster*. A Priest seeking to control one of these beings must make a saving roll on IQ at the being's own level (all named demons or angels should be treated as being at least 15th level). Summoned beings of this sort will be able to use all spells or Miracles (but not both) possible for a creature of its attributes. GMs should make a list of named spirits of this type which he wishes to make available and their attributes or powers, if any. (The list need not be very long.) Note: An evil Priest must control an angelic being the same way a good Priest would have

to control a demon. To banish a being summoned by another Priest, the one seeking the banishing must make a saving roll on IQ at one level higher than the being's level. A being so banished may not enter the same world for a period of one year and one day.

LEVEL EIGHTEEN

Shatter Symbol (Cost: Double the total attributes of the victim.) Used to destroy Holy Symbols. Requires twice the total attributes of the Priest whose symbol is being attacked as DEV cost. If the spell is unsuccessful, the caster will not be able to function as a Priest for a full year of game time, which must be spent undergoing intense purification rituals in the temple or church, and will reduce him one level.

LEVEL NINETEEN

Earthquake (Cost: 100) Causes a minor earthquake centered at any point the Priest desires, but not more than $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile from himself. Earthquakes will affect an area of $\frac{1}{4}$ square mile. GM should determine severity and effects on underground caverns, buildings, ports, etc. (Try rolling 1d6 to simulate the Richter scale).

LEVEL TWENTY

Resurrection (Cost: 150) Reunites soul with body permanently, bringing CON to 1. Additional damage must be

healed by other means. A character may be restored as many times as he had CON points at first level. If the body is totally destroyed, only direct Divine intervention can save the person. (Major Miracle time...).

• • •

Costs for learning the Minor Miracles are the same for any given level as the cost of Wizards' spells; however a Priest may also use "conversion points" to earn new Miracles. Conversion points are the total of a being's attributes or MR when that being is converted to the faith of the Priest, whether forcibly or willingly. (Willing converts, provided the conversion is true, earn the Priest twice the conversion points he would have gotten normally.) These points may be applied against the cost of a Minor Miracle as if each point was a gold piece.

It is quite likely that, during the course of a game, a Priest character may make a prayer to his God that is not one of the systematized Miracles listed. Such prayers must be dealt with on an individualized basis by the GM. (Non-Priest characters may make such prayers, too — their chances are vanishingly small of ever getting such a prayer answered, though it has been known to happen).

Priests of the Seventh Level and above may formalize additional Miracles for their religions, but this requires intense research and meditation in the temple.

I hope that this system will be of use to those wishing to bring religion into their games. Feel free to fiddle with it to make it suitable for your own world, and enjoy, enjoy! ■

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*... featuring weapons and armor of unusual nature, items not often well-defined in fantasy role-playing games. Values marked with * are those which seemed closest to how such a weapon should be treated under the T&T rules. If you play other game systems, the descriptions should help you adapt the weapon to suit your own requirements.*

SAI a Weird Weapon

Michael von Glahn

Origin: possibly Indonesia, time unknown (archaic)

Length: total length: 40-52 cm.

haft: 15-20 cm.

flanges: 7-10 cm.

* **Weight:** appx. 20 weight units (2 lbs.)

* **Cost:** 600 gold pieces for set of three

* **Dice:** 2 each.

* **Hits taken:** 2 each.

* **DEX required:** 13 to use pair.

* **ST required:** 5 to use pair.

CONSTRUCTION

The sai are a set of weapons which look something like daggers. Sai are customarily made of solid metal, usually iron or steel. Handles are occasionally wrapped to provide a better grip. The main shaft tapers like a trumpet from the pointed tip to the blunt, lipped handle. There are two harp-shaped flanged (quillions) which curve to point upward toward the tip. Like the tip, the flanges are pointed but have no edge. Cross-section is approximately circular.

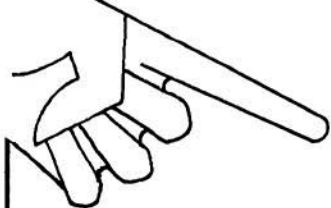
COMMENTS

The sai are primarily defensive weapons, good against blades, staves, or weapon-directed martial arts attacks. They can be used to block, parry, or deflect weapons, as indicated in the illustration. In offensive use, they are always used as a truncheon, never as a blade. They can pierce, but not cut. Some masterful users were reported to be able to pin an opponent's foot to the ground with a sai pitched suddenly downwards. However, the ordinary character could not simply find a sai and use it as a projectile weapon — this would necessarily require considerable practice even for someone with twice the given DEX requirement. Range would be quite short, no more than 5 yards. It was customary to carry 3 sai: 1 in each hand and 1 as a spare tucked into a belt or waistband. Sai would not be used in conjunction with any other type of weapon — no one would use a sai in one hand and a sword in the other. ■



illustration by Jerrod Wallace

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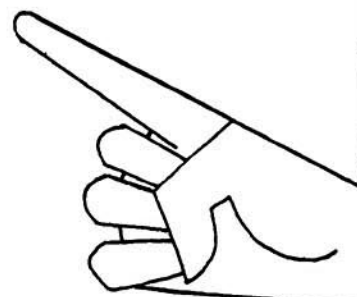
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LETTERS



Illustration by Mel. White

Well, another issue of SA falls into my greedy hands and I must say that it was a hallmark issue. I was both pleased and displeased with issue 16. One of the things that pleased me was the superb art that graced the cover and interior of the magazine. The colored background for pages 4, 5, 37, 44, and 45 was a good idea but it made the type rather hard to see.

As for the articles...weeelll...good and not so good. "Those Changers of Shape" was an article that has been needed for a while. The only real problem with the article was that Mr. Taylor needed to go a little deeper into his subject and present the reader with a bit more information. Otherwise it was good. "Amazons of Antiquity" was a decent article although at times it became a little *too* wordy and detailed.

I do have to take the time out to take back what I said last issue because "Hot Pursuit" surely tops the list for the best mini-solo of the year. Mike Stackpole has outdone himself this time.

The only real complaint I have about the issue was that, again, there was no GM's adventure. The only other complaint I have is really vague. The issue seemed to lack the...oomph?...pizzaz? Whatever you guys and girls were doing before, I certainly wish that you would start doing again.

Michael Jarrell
Tel-Aviv, Israel

Several people commented on the colored pages being a problem — some of them, in stronger terms than you used! We were — and are — still experimenting. That's one experiment we need not repeat, though we'll be trying some other things. Some will work, I suspect, and some may not. We'll try to keep down the ones that don't work.

I sincerely hope this issue shows the oomph and pizzaz of previous issues! We're

inordinately proud of some of the contents (the Wagner story with Fabian illustrations especially), and there's even a GM's adventure for you this time (Hoxley).

I just received issue 16 of Sorcerer's Apprentice (now SA) and overall it was great. I enjoyed "Carrion Troll" very much. It had an intriguing ending. The articles "Oathbreaker" and "Dramatic License in FRP" were very helpful.

I have a question about you folks at Blade/FBI Inc. Have Ken St. Andre, Liz Danforth, or Mike Stackpole ever tried their hands at professional writing? If so, what? I'd be very interested in reading it.

John Warner
Canandaigua, NY

You mean professional besides all this gaming stuff??? Actually, yes. Ken St. Andre and Mike Stackpole each had a short story published in a magazine called Oracle last year, and Mike has also had fiction published in Olympus and (did you miss it?) The Space Gamer. Ken seems to be concentrating most on gaming material, and Mike's ultimate aim is to write fiction full time (and make a living at it, to boot)! Me? I'm an artist, thank you, more than a writer.

SA just keeps getting better and better. The art, the articles, the fiction, the graphics — everything comes together to make the best magazine in any genre. What's probably the biggest telling factor about the quality of the magazine is that lately I've had to restrict my playing to Champions, but still I found nearly everything in SA16 of interest. What I thought were best were the story "Carrion Troll," and the two non-game-specific articles "Oathbreaker!" and "Dramatic License in FRP."

As for the art in ["Dramatic License"], I like the drawing on page 40

a lot; that's a classic that should be put alongside the old "Nyah! Missed all my vital spots!"

I like the idea of cross-statting your adventures with Hero Games. This gives the GM more for his money when he buys the game, and enables a lazy GM to use published adventures more frequently.

Bob Greenwade
Monmouth, OR

Only MSPE and Espionage! are being cross-statted at this time, and we've generally had positive response from gamers and dealers alike. Proves that cut-throat competition isn't an absolute necessity in our hobby — which must come as a surprise to Some People™!

A few brief comments on SA16. As always, the art was very good. The colored pages were rather hard to read, though I don't mind the idea. I would have preferred more information about the NPC personalities in Stackpole's MSPE piece: I have no idea what the numbers mean, as I haven't even seen the game.

David Dunham
San Antonio, TX

Then obviously you need to see the game! MSPE is being well received, and "Rogues' Gallery" seems popular enough to be a regular feature in SA. It has also spawned Mugshots, a book full of NPCs for use with MSPE (and Espionage! also, of course). Mugshots should be available before Christmas. Take the time to look through a copy of MSPE!

The issue was up to your usual very high standards, if not exceeding them. The articles by Janrae Frank, Keith Taylor, and David Nalle were very good. I also thoroughly enjoyed the T&T mini-solo adventure by Mike and the short story by Allen Wold. I have only read one story by Janrae Frank, but it was a really good one in the anthology Amazons a few years ago. Ever since then I have looked for novels or story collections by her, but no such luck. Do you know of any? What could you tell us of Allen Wold? This is the first time that I have heard of him from any source.

Don Scott
San Diego, CA

Janrae has had a number of small press publications, chapbooks and such, all of which, she tells me, are now out of print. I think if you keep an eye out, you'll see more and more of her work as time goes on, and not just in SA, either! As for Allen Wold...he's a full-time writer hailing from North Carolina. He's had at least two science fiction novels (that I know of) printed in hardback editions; "Carrion Troll" was actually his first short story sale.

A NOTE FROM GRIMTOOTH

It has been drawn to my attention by those of you who have purchased my second tome of traps that the encoded message might be too difficult to decipher. Leave it to mere mortal minds to stumble over the most simple of problems, and complain when things fail to come easily to hand. I steadfastly refuse to publish a *solution* to the code, but the incessant mewings of befuddled mortals has driven me to reveal some *clues* to my code. The price for this solution, as you will all soon come to regret, will be a third collection of my top-notch torturous traps!

The code is a simple substitution cipher, where a symbol takes the place of a letter in your clumsy common tongue. Those of you intelligent enough to have gotten that far will nevertheless have detected over *thirty* different symbols in the code — more than the twenty-six letters you commonly use. This is because there are two punctuation marks in the message, and separate symbols for common two-letter combinations like “th”, “ng”, and “oo.”

Perhaps obvious only to one who is unaccustomed to viewing your scrawlings, the very code symbols are drawn from the *shapes* of the letters used in your written language. An “A” has a tent-shape, and so do “K”, “M”, “N” and “X.” The other letters were similarly grouped, even as birds of a feather (or humans of a clan, so to speak).

Perhaps most odd is that no one has complained about the 102nd trap cipher used. It is based upon a common human



cipher that is almost impossible to break without the key. The numbers refer to page, paragraph, and a word in that paragraph. The book used for the code must be one owned by both the sender and the receiver of the message. *Imagine what book that might be. . . .*

I trust these clues will not overburden your minds with their complexity. Fear not, in my next tome of traps (for which I am deigning to entertain submissions, for all you trolls in human clothing) there will be no codes. Instead, I'll have something to keep your little idle hands busy, busy, busy. . . .

—Grimtooth

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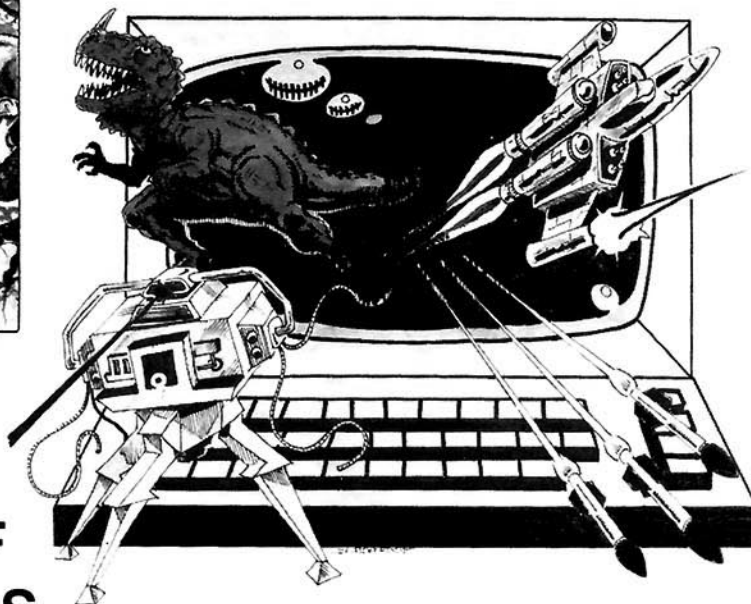
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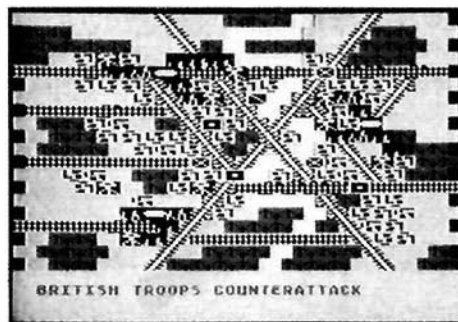


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ASTEROID ZERO-FOUR



TASK FORCE COMPUTER GAMES™ are strategy games rather than reaction games. They allow a player time to think out his best move. The game program is recorded on a cassette tape, and complete instructions are included for loading and play.

All **TASK FORCE COMPUTER GAMES™** require an Atari® 400 or 800 16K computer and an Atari® 410 Cassette Player. Some require joysticks. A program version which allows the game to be replayed without reloading from the cassette tape is included for players with a 32K machine.

New Strategy Games for Atari 16K Cassette from
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ROGUES'

Rogues' Gallery is a feature that provides different NPCs for use in games and campaigns of Mercenaries, Spies and Private Eyes. These are interesting people for players to run into, and the personalities and professions may suggest new scenarios. Game-masters are encouraged to add details to bring these characters in line with their own games.

■ Esteban Cordova "Padre Mano"

ST:12 IQ:13 LK:13
CON:5 DEX:10 CHR:12
SP:9 HtoH adds: +1 MW adds: 0
Sex: M Age: 49 Race: Caucasian
(Mexican-American). Nationality: U.S.
Employment: Runs La Casa Tierra
Seguro (halfway house). Level: 3
APs: 6700 Money: \$20 carried; \$150
stored in La Casa.

Cordova had an inner-city upbringing and a calling to religious training. Dissatisfied with "official" help in his old neighborhood, set up La Casa. Tries to steer kids off streets, alcohol, crime and drugs; keeps in touch with youth underground. Some help with medical aid and discrete enough to have earned some trust among the gangs. Saving the life of one kid threatened by an unexpected chemical spill, Cordova's hands and forearms were bleached white with scar tissue; this earned him the name "Father Hand." Unfortunately, the chemicals are having a further effect and Cordova is fighting cancer which will take him out of his work in the next year or so. He wants as much work done as he can before he dies. 5'9", 140#, dark brown eyes, short black hair greying. BA, MA in Theology. Languages: *Spanish, English.

Skills (level/APs): Urban Survival 3/3050; Diplomacy 1/750; Leadership 4/13,900; Bureaucracy Master 2/2400; Elocution 2/1300; Medic 2/2650; Photography 2/1400; Electronics 3/6250; Rec Skill — Chess 4/8050; Rec Skill — RPGs 2/2800.

■ Ginger Scott

ST:7 IQ:16 LK:23

CON:12 DEX:13 CHR:13
SP:12 HtoH adds: +7 MW adds: 0
Sex: F Age: 14 Race: Caucasian
Nationality: U.S. Employment: Student
Level: 2 APS: 1300 Money: \$15 carried;
\$145 saved.

Independently-minded young hellion and general getter-into-trouble who fancies herself treading the footsteps of the likes of the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew. An insatiable curiosity, little caution, but enough luck to get her out of scrapes — and thus encourage another go-around! Height 5'3", 95#, short light brown hair, hazel eyes. Language: *English, learning Russian.

Skills: Acrobatics 2/1150; Horsemanship 2/2050; Lariat 1/100; Self Defense 1/150; Forest Survival 1/650; Urban Survival 1/200; Confidence 2/1350; Computer 2/2800; Silent Movement 2/1900; Tracking/Tailing 1/850; Lockpick 1/400; Observation 2/1450; Photography 2/1300; Disguise 1/300; Sleight of Hand 1/700.



■ David Holbein

ST:12 IQ:20 LK:14
CON:11 DEX:16 CHR:17
SP:15 HtoH adds: +6 MW adds: +2
Sex: M Age: 31 Race: Caucasian
Nationality: U.S. Employment: Pilot
For Hire Level: 4 APs: 11,960 Money:
\$80 carried; \$420 saved; \$300/week avg.
wages, but very variable.

Quiet, competent, with a good sense of humor, has an affinity for the mechanical. Trained as pilot and mechanic during Vietnam. Owns small prop plane and can get helicopter (co-op ownership). Some college education, varied. Height 6'0", 145#, unruly collar-length brown hair, blue eyes. Language: *English.

Skills: Pilot for Commerical Prop (2/2900), Private Prop (6/33,000), Helicopter (5/22,700), Combat Jet (3/4550), Yacht (2/1250), Train (1/700); OS-small engine mechanic (handles best: cars, private prop, helicopter) 4/13,500; Clip Pistol 3/4800; Assault Rifle 2/1750; Martial Arts (kung fu) 6/na; Knife Fighting 3/4750; Combat Shooting 3/9950; Fast Driving 4/14,000; Jungle Survival 2/2950; Gambling 4/11,700; Confidence 3/3300.

Weapons: Hunting Knife (2 + 2), .44 Automag (8). Usually carries hunting knife; carries gun only when on an "unusual" run or into backcountry.

■ Honorée Catherine Dezolty

ST:16 IQ:27 LK:17
CON:11 DEX:20 CHR:12
SP:16 HtoH adds: +17 MW adds: +5
Sex: F Age: 41 Race: Caucasian
Nationality: (created as needed)
Employment: Assassin Level: 8
APs: 88,465 Money: up to \$1000
carried; \$90,000 saved in various places.

Dezolty grew up being handed from relative to relative, traveling around the world in an almost gypsy fashion — sometimes on small ships, with explorers, smugglers, and such. Her background has a dose of almost everything imaginable and her languages

GALLERY

by
Liz Danforth

reflect her mixed upbringing. Her education is eclectic and she reads to fill in "bare spots" in her knowledge. Some of her relatives operated on the wrong side of the law and she developed a taste for the same, eventually finding that assassination paid better than most jobs and that she enjoyed being inventive at it. Height 5'6", 130#, brown hair, light brown eyes; is neither striking nor remarkable (which would make her memorable, a deficit in her jobs). Languages: *English was the most common denominator (thus qualifies as "native"), but she can handle herself in all modern major languages (at least basic conversation).

Skills: Martial arts (karate) 5/na; Tracking/Tailing 6/27,000; Ambush 7/55,050; Confidence 9/135,700; Lockpick 6/38,000; Seduction 8/87,000; Research 6/44,600; Tactical 5/21,900; Acting/Mimic 3/4500; Disguise 8/95,000; Electronics 4/10,500; Electronic Countermeasures 2/2750; Sleight of Hand 4/9200; Alarm Neutralization 4/11,950; Demolitions 3/660; Private Prop Pilot 5/17,500; Poison 8/76,850; Archery 4/7050; Knife Fighting 2/2500; Knife Throwing 3/3500; Assault Rifle 4/8550; SMGun 6/31,000; Clip Pistol 9/131,050; OS-Sublegal Contacts 10/165,000.

Weapons: Has contacts to obtain necessary equipment and supplies, "special order" or otherwise — knows a gunsmith in Amsterdam, a poison supplier in Cairo, etc. Owns a number of small weapons and favors Walthers of various calibers. At any given time is likely to carry a small handgun and some other "protection" (probably of a poisonous variety).

The characters presented here may be slipped into campaigns or used as the centerpiece of individual games with minimal additional work by the GM. Backgrounds suitable to the campaign must be devised, and skills adjusted for time-frame (if you're playing in 1931, Ginger Scott will not be a computer whiz, and Dave Holbein won't be flying combat jets).

Esteban Cordova is a focus for trouble and an excellent source of information, provided it will not jeopardize his relationship with the youths he is trying to work with. Padre Mano is a very earnest, dedicated, and intense hard worker who will take poorly to interference, but who can usually use any sincere help he can get. Players who cultivate his trust (and don't misuse it) will have the means to reach into areas of society they may not ordinarily be able to get to at all. Cordova may be used by the GM to get players involved in a scenario by asking for help with a particular problem; he may also be protecting a suspect that he thinks will not get fair treatment.

Ginger Scott is a character to have fun with. She's tailor-made to be a pest, and to pop up like a jack-in-the-box when she's least wanted or expected. Her photography hobby means she's got pictures of all sorts of things — and those involved might not want such pictures around. She's a magnet for trouble, but delights in the ruckus she can cause — and can usually slip out of, perhaps leaving the player characters holding the bag. She's smart as a whip and well-intentioned, but somewhat lacking in good sense. A home-town girl — to have her appear elsewhere around the world, age her about 4 years (and boost the skills) and have her traveling to "broaden her mind" — she can still be as much a curious trouble-maker, and get involved in bigger capers.

David Holbein is an ideal NPC to transport player characters from one place to another, and then serve as backup when they arrive. Pushed back in time, he's a suitable bush pilot. He's likely to have information about places he's been, unusual things he's seen, and cargoes that have been transported (by himself or others). He'll know people anywhere there's an airfield. His combat abilities mean he's a good person to have at your back. He's got a weakness for gambling and all kinds of risk-taking (but

manages to do reasonably well all the same) and a quiet self-assured manner that makes the most unbelievable stories easy for his mark to swallow.



Honoré Dezolty can work easily into any type of game — mercenary (rebel leader's lady, or out to kill him), spy (assassinate a courier, ambassador, or another spy), or private eye (what is the intricate way the Governor was killed? And *who* could do it?). She enjoys being devious, and the GM should give her the credit of having reached the level of expertise she has — she's *good* at her work, and hasn't been caught yet. She won't take jobs dangerous to her continued existence, but is likely to take something just for the thrill of it, if a good case can be made to her. She can be found in any part of the world, and in most time periods. She's capable of doing less "dirty" jobs for good pay, if it's interesting. She's most likely to be at odds with player characters but could be on a parallel course, depending on the scenario devised.



*Kane. The name is familiar, chilling, timeless.
Karl Edward Wagner's fell hero walks again,
and leaves no promised work undone, to the undoing
of others. If this is your introduction to Kane,
settle in for the best reading you've had all year.
If not, you know how it will affect your dreams.
The tale begins.*

MISERICORDE

Karl Edward Wagner

The close chamber smelled of stale flowers and staler love. Tamaslei shook the agate phial petulantly, found it drained of her favorite scent. Crossing her bedchamber with long-limbed strides, she ripped aside a silken curtain and tossed the phial through the window. She drew a deep breath. Cold mountain air puckered her bare nipples. Distantly, the phial smashed against stone.

"I will not love a coward," she said to the night.

Upon her bed, Josin stirred uneasily. The agate phial of scented oil had been another of his gifts. He had given it to her the night before he had killed her previous lover.

"I would do whatever you wish. You know that."

"Do I?" Tamaslei laughed derisively and considered her reflection in the dressing table mirror. Her glossy black hair hung in tangled masses. She flung its coils back across her white shoulders and gathered them at her nape with a gold-chased cord. Tamaslei studied her eyes, as her strong fingers crushed belladonna berries against an onyx mortar.

Josin arose anxiously. He stood behind her, hiding his sudden detumescence from the mirror.

"What you ask is death."

"What I ask is danger. A risk. Surely no *man* would hide his face and creep away on his belly at a simple request from his lady?"

"You ask — you demand," Josin lowered his voice as he glanced at the opened window, "that I steal the ducal crown of Harnstern from the Vareishei clan."

"They stole it easily enough when milord Lonal was fool enough to lead an expedition against them."

"Stripping a coronet from a dead man's bloody pate is a bloody different game from stealing it from an outlaw stronghold."

"You always said you were the cleverest thief of all Chrosanthe." Tamaslei discovered an errant eyelash, pitilessly plucked it.

"And so I am," Josin reassured her.

"It's only a dingy old fortress," Tamaslei pressured him, "an uncouth band of robbers."

"Who have held these mountains under their command since the assassination of King Janisavion ten years ago," Josin reminded her.

"Who wears the coronet might well claim rulership of Harnstern," Tamaslei mused. "Our lamented duke was slain without direct heir. It will be years before Chrosanthe has exhausted all plots and deposed all pretenders. What the people want now is power — rather, the assurance of power, the symbols of power. I need not remind you that my own family is one of our city's oldest, for all our fall from grace during these recent civil troubles."

"With the ducal crown — and an alliance with the man bold enough to wrest it from these mountain bandits..." Tamaslei applied scent to the vale of her breasts.

"The Vareishei guard their stolen treasures well."

"And you say that you are a thief."

"I say that I am your lover."

"And I say that I will not love a coward."

Josin shrugged his capable shoulders. His mustache made a sad smile into the mirror. He had climbed this far. Dare he climb farther still? He *was* the best. Of thieves. Of lovers. Of ambitious adventurers. Of all this, he was certain. Against the Vareishei? No man had ever won out.

"You shall have this coronet," Josin promised.

"And you shall have my love."

It was a fortnight later.

Two ravens had been cawing at her window.

Tamaslei at last awoke. She climbed from her cold bed. Upon her window ledge rested a shrivelled lump of muscle.

She knew it for her lover's heart even before she learned that his head stood atop a pole just beyond the walls of Harnstern.

It was then that she sought out Kane.

I. Four Names in Blood



"I am told," Tamaslei said to the half-blind lamplighter, "that for a certain amount of gold one may procure the fulfillment of her most fanciful wishes, here in the back streets of Harnstern."

The lamplighter trimmed the wick and applied his flame. Closing the lozenge-shaped pane, he stepped down from his footstool and hefted his can of oil. He stank of oil and soot, and it seemed that a chance spark might set the old man and his tattered garments ablaze.

"There are many wishes."

"My wish is to speak with a certain man. His name is Kane."

"Dead. Dead, so I have heard. Dead, these many years."

Tamaslei counted gold coins from one palm to another. Josin had once told her that the old lamplighter knew more of the affairs of Harnstern's underworld than did its denizens.

"But then," said the lamplighter, flipping back his eyepatch to gloat upon the roll of gold pieces, "I *might* know someone who *might* know where Kane *might* be found..."

Tamaslei permitted a gold piece to drip from her fingers. It rolled into a pile of horse dung beside the old man's filthy boots.

"When I have spoken with Kane in my chambers in the Tameiral Mansion," she said, nodding toward the decaying district where Harnstern's wealth once dwelt, "You shall have five golden companions to clink against this one."

The lamplighter grubbed for the coin as she turned away.

"If you live past that tête-à-tête," he mumbled to his beard.

Tamaslei tossed her cloak to a maid and entered her private chambers. She considered the muck that smeared her boots and decided that a bath might remove the stench of the streets from her nostrils. First though, a drink to calm her unease.

Crossing to the decanter of brandy upon her sideboard, Tamaslei started pour for herself — some indication of



the urgency of her need — when she noticed that one of the matched set of crystal goblets was missing. In vexation, she glanced about the chamber, already preparing a tongue-lashing for the servant who had not cleansed and replaced the goblet — and a worse sort of lashing if it had been broken.

The goblet, intact and only just now emptied, was held in a hand that almost engulfed it. Tamaslei splashed brandy onto the sideboard, staring open-mouthed at the man who watched her from the shadows of her chamber.

He was huge — it seemed incredible that she hadn't noticed him instantly upon entering the room, until she thought of how beasts of prey seem to merge with their surroundings. He was dressed entirely in black, from his high boots and leather trousers to his close-fitting leather jacket. As he leaned against the wall, a swordhilt protruded above his right shoulder, showing a complex filigree against the dark panels. A closely trimmed red beard softened the planes of a brutal face, but the cold blue eyes that studied her from the shadow made Tamaslei choke back the outcry that shuddered in her throat.

"Shall I pour?" suggested Kane.

Regaining her composure, Tamaslei promised herself to take pains with the servant who had failed to inform her of Kane's presence. "You came here quickly."

"Bad news travels quickly." Kane measured brandy into their goblets. Close to her, his size was even more forbidding, which made the polished grace of his movements all the more sinister.

"You are Kane." Tamaslei's inflection was not questioning. "Josin spoke of you to me. He called you his friend."

"A man of great promise — and, one would have thought, of keener judgment than to attempt to steal from the Vareishei clan. I drink to a comrade departed."

"And I, to a lover." Tamaslei briefly touched her lips to her goblet. "I imagine you will have guessed why I have summoned you here."

Above the rim of his goblet, Kane's eyes were watchful.

"Josin told me that you were the best, the very best. He said that just as he was greatest of thieves because he stole for the thrill of it, so were you greatest of assassins because you killed men for the sport."

"And for a price," Kane reminded her.

"They say that for ten marks of gold one may purchase a life from you — the life of anyone."

Kane set aside his goblet. Tamaslei looked into his eyes, and no other answer was needed.

"I wish to purchase a life," she said. "Four lives."

She unclasped a key from the belt of her gown and unlocked the iron-bound door of a massive oaken aumbry. From within she withdrew a pair of leather almoners. Carrying one in either hand, she deposited them upon the sideboard. Returning to the aumbry, she placed two more heavy purses beside the first pair. The decanter and crystal goblets vibrated in elfin cries to the sullen clink of gold coins.

"Each purse contains ten marks in golden coins. For each purse, I demand a life. When four lives are taken, these four purses shall be yours." Her smile challenged him. "Or would you think to take them from me now?"

"I did not come here to steal," Kane told her.

"Because even assassins have their code — and their pride — just as thieves like Josin do."

"Certain rules of the game are essential," Kane replied. "Otherwise it isn't a game. For the true adept, wealth is not the object. If I am offered a fee to perform a certain assignment, I will not accept that fee until I have accomplished it. Taking a fee by force — or accepting an assignment without the certainty that it will be carried out — would be pointless, a bore."

"Then you *will* accept this assignment?"

"I am bored with the ordinary, and already this problem has surpassed the ordinary. It remains for you to tell me the names of the four lives you desire, and the problem shall be solved."

"Josin once told me that a certain etiquette is involved," Tamaslei said. "I, too, believe in doing things correctly."

She thrust her hand into her boot-top and unsheathed a thin-bladed dagger. Setting its point to her thumb, Tamaslei drew a bright rivulet of blood. Using the dagger as a pen, she wrote a name in blood upon each leather almoner.

Wenvor. Ostervor. Sitolvon. Puriali.

"The Vareishei clan," Kane's face showed interest.

"The Vareishei clan." Tamaslei's eyes were as pitiless as Kane's. "They killed my lover. I want their lives."

"I'm fascinated." Kane's smile suggested some secret jest.

"Further," Tamaslei chose her words carefully, "there is the matter of a certain crown that dear Josin sought to steal for me. Should you chance upon the ducal crown of Harnsterm after the

Vareishei no longer have need of it, I shall pay you a most generous price."

"So be it," Kane agreed. "You have purchased four lives — and a crown. I had meant to conclude other business this night, but instead I shall give immediate attention to this problem."

"You will find me most appreciative," promised Tamaslei.

II. Fortress of Fear



Northwest of the Southern Kingdoms, Chrosanthe was a heavily forested, mountainous region of many small villages, usually situated within the protection of an overlord's fortress. Over the years, some of these clustered villages had grown together into fortified cities under the general control of the lord of the castle, who now vied for power with the city mayors. Such a city was Harnsterm, well isolated within the deep valleys and rocky summits of the Altanstand Mountains, but a city of wealth and power for that it had developed along the main trade routes through the mountain passes and across the frontier.

It was a land where central power was difficult to maintain, and only the strongest of kings had ever successfully controlled the wealthy cities and the mountain-guarded fortresses of the powerful lords. Since the assassination of King Janisavion a decade before, Chrosanthe had known only anarchy and civil war that threatened to endure forever. Beyond the security of city walls, Chrosanthe was a lawless wilderness, ravaged by the private armies of the powerful lords and plundered by marauding bands of outlaws. Often the distinction was of little consequence, if it could be drawn at all: the Vareishei were a case in point.

It was generally agreed the Altharn Keep had guarded the major pass through the Altanstand Mountains between Harnsterm and the frontier for centuries before Harnsterm had grown into a city. Other legends, according to one's credulity, suggested that the stone fortress had always scowled down from the precipice there, that its ancient walls were raised upon older walls and yet older foundations — a monastery abandoned for uncertain reasons, a temple to a forgotten deity, a castle raised and toppled in an age lost to history, perhaps a prehuman edifice from the ruins of the Elder Earth. Whatever its history, Altharn Keep was not a congenial locale, and the lords of

Harnsterm had not been long in shifting the seat of their authority to a new castle, built along the trade routes somewhat farther within the lands of Chrosanthe, which with the passage of generations became the city of Harnsterm. Altharn Keep, of undeniable strategic importance, had remained under the control of Harnsterm — the command of the fortress and its garrison usually bestowed upon lesser scions of the ruling house.

It was not a holding such as younger sons plotted murder to possess. In the settled years of King Janisavion, no one thought it unusual that Lonal, duke of Harnsterm, had given command Altharn Keep to a bastard brother, Vareishei. Presumably Vareishei's excesses would have soon demanded intervention, even had not civil war and its ensuing anarchy given Vareishei a free hand to indulge his despotic whims. To pass beyond the Altanstand Mountains meant to pass below Altharn Keep; where previous wardens had collected taxes and duties, Vareishei took whatever he desired. As lawlessness spread and caravans grew fewer, Vareishei turned his attentions to the surrounding countryside and villages, extending his depredations to the shadow of Harnsterm's walls. Lonal at last had led an expedition against his mutinous half-brother. Some of his army returned with tales of red massacre beneath the sombre heights; Lonal never returned at all.

Vareishei might well have claimed lordship of Harnsterm, had he long survived his half-brother. Popular ballads had it that Lonal had given Vareishei his deathwound, that their skeletons lay locked together in eternal combat upon the field of battle. Those who claimed to have fought in the battle swore that Vareishei had ridden away unscathed. Regardless, Vareishei was not seen again following that battle, and some said he had died of his wounds, and some said he had vanished from his chambers on a stormy moonless night. Some few hinted that his children might know the truth of Vareishei's fate, but this was never said above a whisper, and often never a second time.

For some years now Altharn Keep had been held by the Vareishei clan. There were four. Wenvor was the oldest son, powerfully built and a man to be feared in battle. Sitolvon, the sole daughter, was of a subtle mind, and her poisons were subtler still. Ostervor, her younger brother, had some of Wenvor's talents and some of Sitolvon's, and it was not wise to turn a back to him. The fourth, Puriali, was a half-brother, born



to a girl Vareishei had abducted from a lonely mountain cottage; Puriali was the only of his bastards that Vareishei knowingly spared, and some said it was out of love for his mother and others said it was out of fear of her. It may have been out of fear of Puriali, for his mother had guided his footsteps upon darker paths.

As central power and the rule of law fast became a distant memory, much as a cancer victim dimly recalls a life without pain, the Vareishei clan assumed absolute rule of the mountains beyond Harnsterm. Altharn Keep was unassailable; Harnsterm dared not spare more of its own soldiers to defend its holdings. The Vareishei demanded heavy tribute from those they spared, and those they chose not to spare might only beg for a quick death. Where their father had been ruthless, the Vareishei clan were malevolent. The people of Harnsterm looked to their walls and prayed against the evil day when tribute would not suffice.

Kane smelled death long before he came upon the caravan. The fresh mountain breeze brought the musty scent of stale blood, the sweetness of torn flesh, and an acrid stench of burning. Moving silently beneath the stars, Kane's black stallion stepped from the edge of the forest and onto the weed-grown trail. Once this had been a well-

traveled road, but that was in days when corpses did not dangle from tree limbs to mark the way.

As Kane passed between the rows of the dead, he heard the sound of hoarse breathing, and paused. One, a boy barely into his teens, was still alive — although, from the blood that yet trickled from his mutilated loins down his legs and into the earth, he would not see the sunrise. Kane cut him down from the limb over which they had bound him. His eyes opened as Kane stretched him out upon the trampled ground.

"The Vareishei?" Kane asked, more to prompt than to question.

The boy answered mechanically, like someone speaking from a trance. "We thought to slip past them under cover of darkness. They caught us at daybreak. They said they would leave us here as warning to those who would cross their domain without paying tribute."

"And afterward?"

"They carried away all to Altharn Keep. They took my sister."

"Doubtless to be held for ransom. Now, let this powder dissolve upon your tongue; it will ease the pain."

The first was a lie, and the last was not, for Kane was seldom needlessly cruel. The artery beneath his fingertips pulsed weakly until he had counted to twenty-seven, then the heart shuddered and stopped.

Remounting, Kane resumed his

journey to Altharn Keep. The clods of turf torn by his stallion's hooves fell soundlessly, for the dead cannot hear.

Puriali absently chewed at a tidbit of raw liver as he searched the girl's entrails. His surgery was quite precise, for all that his captive had continued to struggle until a moment gone. Her virgin blood made scarlet rivulets across the polished slab of pale-pink marble.

"There is danger for us."

His half-sister licked her lips. "Do you actually give credence to augury such as this?"

"Not really, Sitilvon," murmured Puriali. "But I know that it pleases me. And you."

Puriali wiped his hands against his trouser legs, mingling red with less certain stains as he stared upward into the night skies enclosing the tower's summit. "Merely a supportive exercise. The stars cannot lie. They warn of death."

Wenvor snorted and tightened his fist about swordhilt. Ostervor shifted his feet and considered his wine cup. The brothers were both tall and black-bearded, though Wenvor's meaty shoulders would have made two of Ostervor; their sister might have been a clean-shaven twin of the younger brother. Puriali, who somewhat favored his mother, was shorter, slighter, with a spiky shock of reddish hair and a face too pockmarked to grow a full beard.



The two brothers wore leather trousers and stained hacquetons, having shed their mail. Sitilvon had thrown a fur cloak about her ankle-length gown, but Puriali stood bare-chested despite the chill mountain wind.

"The stars cannot lie," Puriali repeated.

"Another thief?" Wenvor laughs and nudged his sister. "I hope better sport than the last."

Ostervor did not share their mirth. "I have heard certain reports that Josin's bereaved mistress has made inquiries about Kane."

There was no more laughter.

"Kane may well be dead," Wenvor scoffed finally. "Nothing has been heard of Kane in years now. Some say he's fled the land; some say he's grown old and left his trade."

"And some say he's withdrawn solely to perfect his art," Ostervor said.

"Whatever arts they may be," added Puriali.

"Does it matter?" sneered Sitilvon. "Kane or any other foe — if they come against us, they die. If the stars give us warning, then let us heed them. Let him enter Altharn Keep, if he dare. Others who have tried have scarcely outstayed their welcome."

Purali pointed upward. "Look."

As if swept over by a black wave of mist, the stars had vanished. Only a pallid sickle of moon interrupted the absolute

darkness that enclosed Altharn Keep.

III. The Summoning



Wenvor hunched his broad shoulders and blew upon his hands. Beneath the flaring cressets, frost sparkled upon the massive stones of the merlons. The eldest Vareishei scorned cloak or gauntlets as he continued to pace the darkened battlements of Altharn Keep. Save the measured challenge of an unseen sentry, the thin scuff of his boots marked the only sound of his progress.

Altharn Keep controlled the gorge through the Altanstand Mountains from atop the high cliff, beneath which a narrow roadway crowded passage between sheer walls of stone and thunderous white-water rapids. More than two-thirds of the fortress walls rose above a breathless precipice falling several hundred feet onto the eroded boulders where the river pounded through its bend. Approach to Altharn Keep's heavily fortified entrance curled along the steep ridge that completed its perimeter. Armies had attempted assault along this slope throughout the ages, and their bleached bones could be found entangled in the thickets of heather and rhododendron.

No one in memory had forced the

gates of Altharn Keep. Guards had always maintained harsh vigilance over those who were permitted to pass through its gates, and with the deepening civil chaos their attentions only grew less restrained. Josin had managed to scale the walls with a climbing rope, but this initial success had not repaid him. It was always possible — just possible — that an intruder might attempt to enter Altharn Keep by ascending the sheer face of the escarpment and scaling the less well-guarded battlements that crested the precipice. Over the ages a few rash fools had attempted this, and where the river had rolled their shattered bones no one knew.

Wenvor, while he might not be his siblings' equal in guile, was never one to misjudge an enemy, and he did not discount the tales he had heard of Kane. Thus, Wenvor permitted himself a thin smile of vindication when he heard the soft clink of metal against stone.

With surprising stealth for a man of his bulk, Wenvor closed upon the source of the sound: a darkened stretch of the parapet, a hundred feet or more between sentry posts, guarding the most treacherous face of the precipice. Only an eye alert to discover that which the mind knew must be there would have seen it: a steel grapnel lodged against one crenel.

"I would have expected no less of you," Wenvor said softly, even as his

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broadsword swung downward through the darkness and parted the taut cord of knotted silk. The cord sang like a snapped bowstring, the slack grapnel fell to the parapet with a tiny clatter, and the rush of the river swallowed the sounds of whatever might have fallen far below.

Wenvor sighed and straightened.

He heard again the soft scrape of metal against stone.

Wenvor turned. The sickle moon, the distant cressets, together they gave light enough to see the hulking figure in black, idly touching the tip of his broadsword to the battlement. Eyes of the coldest blue caught the wan light as chillingly as did the frost.

"Your sentry," said Kane.

"Damn you!" said Wenvor and lunged.

Wenvor's only emotion, as Kane's blade checked his own downward stroke, was one of rage. While Kane's physical presence was formidable, Wenvor was himself a man of overawing stature, and he had never seen his equal in swordplay. Their broadswords warred together as if the storm gods gave battle above the clouds — flickering sudden explosions of bright sparks, shattering the night's stillness with tearing clangour of steel against steel. Driving against each other, their powerful two-handed blows jarred through muscle and bone with stunning force, all but smashing swordhilts from nerveless fists.

Wenvor's breath shook in hoarse gasps, and, as he began to listen for the clamour of onrushing guardsmen, he knew that he felt fear. And with that knowledge, Wenvor's desperate parry failed by a fraction of a second, and Kane's blade drove into his shoulder with crushing force.

Even the best mail cannot withstand stress beyond its limits; enough links held to save dismemberment, but Kane's sword bit deep into Wenvor's flesh with bone-shattering force. Wenvor's blade rang against the parapet, even as he was driven to his knees. Numbing, sickening pain racked him, and he knew instinctively that in another instant would be surcease.

Kane, however, disdained the killing blow. Weaponless, his hands reached out for Wenvor.

"Wenvor, come with me."

Ostervor held his breath, gradually increasing the pressure of his shoulder against the black oak panel. He felt his bones begin to creak in protest, then the section of wall pivoted inward, corroded hinges rasping under their first movement in more than a century. Cobwebs hung



with the dust of another's ancestors curtained the aperture, but the darkness within welled outward with the cold breath of frosted night beyond.

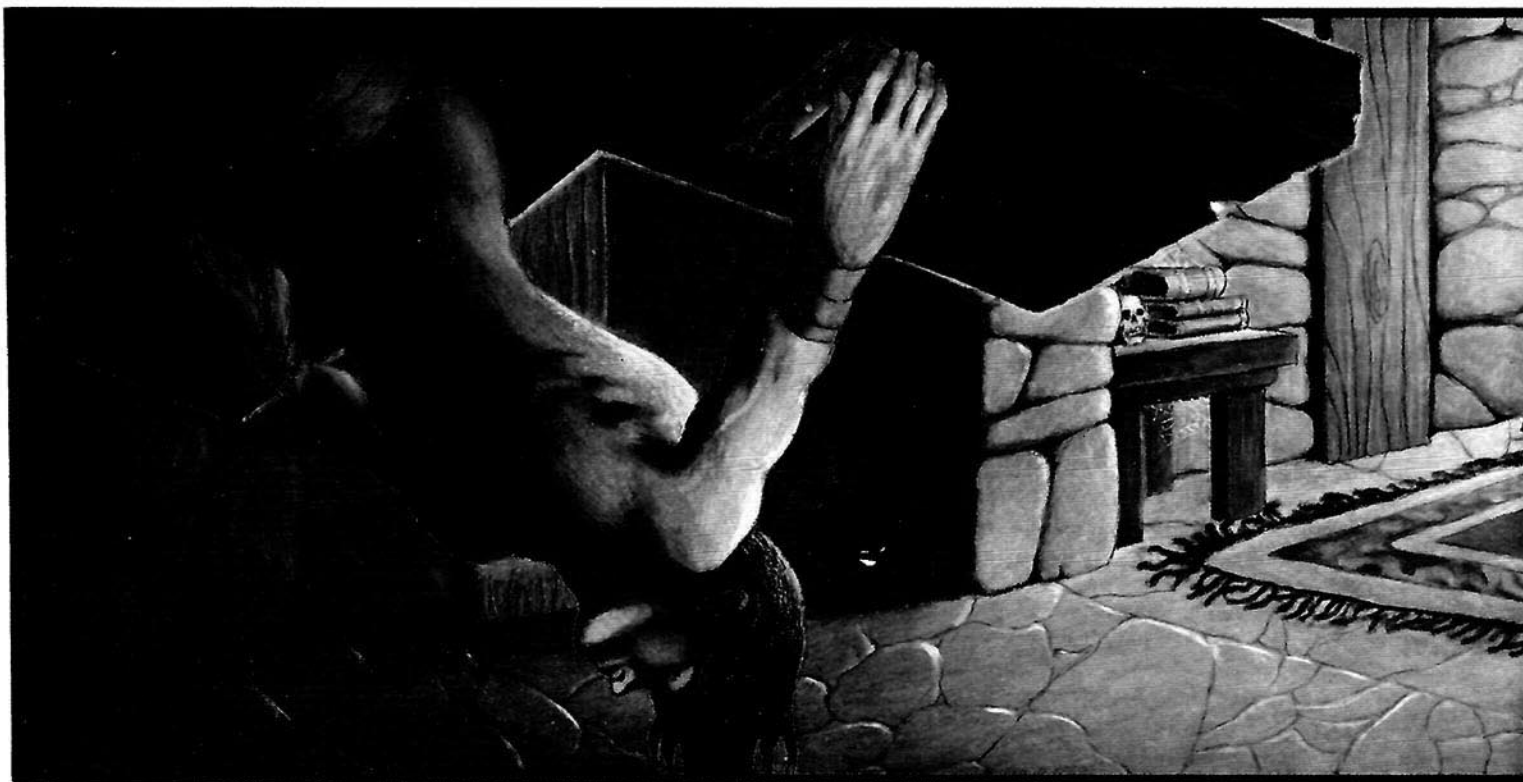
Ostervor smeared sweat from his forehead with a dusty forearm, considering the three depressed inlays in the parquetry of the chamber's floor. Reputedly haunted, the north wing of Altharn Keep had remained untenanted throughout living memory. Ostervor, who had long ago mastered the hidden passageways that crept through the other sections of the fortress, congratulated himself upon his having solved this final mystery. The doggerel inscription upon the chamber's mantel — *One for the Bold, Two for the Gold, Three for the Hold* — had seemed nonsensical to generations of inhabitants. Recent perusal of a centuries-old journal in Altharn Keep's mouldering library had provided Ostervor the essential clue, with its archaic pun on *bold* and *hold* in reference to the coat-of-arms stylized in the parquetry. Other allusions as to the treacherous pitfalls within the north wing's secret ways had determined Ostervor to pursue its exploration after appropriate deliberation. However...

Ostervor did not discount his half-brother's premonition of doom, no

more than did he dismiss his own spies' reports that Josin's mistress had sought out Kane. Granting Kane a cunning almost equal to his own — if the lurid tales bore any credence — Ostervor hardly expected their nemesis to present his shield at the fortress gate. Given Kane's reputation — even allowing for the inevitable exaggerations and embellishments — Ostervor assumed that the assassin would seek to enter Altharn Keep by stealth of the most devious sort. The ancient citadel was honeycombed with hidden passageways, all of which (now that the north wing had given up its secrets) were intimately known to Ostervor. It would be a fatal underestimation of their enemy to assume that Kane would not be privy to these secret ways as well.

Nonetheless, it quite unnerved Ostervor to discern recent footprints etched upon the passageway whose dust should not have been disturbed in more than a century.

Ostervor hesitated, scowling at the damp bootprints that strode boldly through the smear of light his candle shed. He had already seen to the citadel's other hidden passages, most of which were known only to himself; a score of deadly traps — six of his own devising and



installation — meant certain death for any intruder. Yet, here in this passageway whose secrets Ostervor himself had only lately mastered, another had already gained entry.

Ostervor touched a finger to one bootprint, recovering a fragment of lichen, flakes of frost still melting upon it. The intruder had passed this way only a moment before. Ostervor pulled off his boots and unbuckled his sword. The narrow passage was no field for swordplay, and the heavy dirk that he now drew had served him well in close quarters many times before. He placed his candle upon the floor outside the pivoted doorway. Silently, unseen, Ostervor would follow Kane through the north wing passages, trusting to his own fragmentary knowledge of its pitfalls. Kane, obviously, could not attempt their traverse in darkness; he must show a light, and then Ostervor would creep upon him from behind.

Ostervor, however, had not expected the panel to swing shut as he passed through it.

He counted slowly to fifty, his eyes pressed shut, before he moved. Other than the spectral groan of hinges as the doorway closed, there was no other sound. At least, he told himself, he wasn't backlit by the feeble glow of the candle in the chamber behind the wall. Kane — and Ostervor had earlier peered into the passage for a gleam of the assassin's light — had likely passed beyond ear-reach in search of a hidden

entrance to the Vareishei's private quarters. Ostervor withdrew a fresh candle from a pouch at his belt — there was yet another, and a tinderbox to strike fire — and tied a neckscarf about it for bulk. This he wedged against the now-closed doorway, marking its location. Silently counting his paces, Ostervor felt his way along the pitch-dark passageway, following the direction Kane's footprints had taken.

He had counted only seven paces when Ostervor's outthrust fingers encountered a stone wall.

Ostervor halted before the unexpected barrier, puzzled by its presence. He knew to expect the trapdoor paving at thirty paces, to be wary of the pivoting steps midway down the first staircase, to avoid the spring-loaded spears just beyond the second turning — these and other deathtraps were described in the fragmentary journals he had discovered. There was no reference to a blank wall, such as he now confronted.

A later modification, Ostervor decided. At some point the citadel's master had walled off this series of passageways. And yet, Kane's footprints had led this way. It was impossible that Kane could have passed him upon returning; therefore the assassin must have known of another exit from the passage. Or had his returning footprints, no longer damp from the night beyond, left marks unnoticed at Ostervor's first glance?

Stealthily Ostervor retraced his way along the passage, seeking Kane in the other direction. Ten paces beyond the point of his entrance, Ostervor's outthrust fingers encountered a stone wall.

Ostervor swore silently, beginning to know fear. Feeling his way carefully across the blank wall and back down the passageway, his toes nudged the candle knotted within its scarf.

The flicker of his tinderbox was blinding, and his hand shook as he applied its flame to candlewick. Its light was more than sufficient to disclose that the passageway had been walled up at either end.

The doorway by which Ostervor had entered the passage refused to open for all his cunning attempts to activate its hidden mechanism, nor did the thick oaken panels yield to his frantic pounding.

Ostervor wasted most of his one remaining candle seeking some other means of egress. Kane's bootprints, maddeningly obscured by his own footprints, somehow seemed to lead in either direction and into nowhere. Giving it up, Ostervor began to hew upon the oaken panels through which he had entered. His last candle gave light long enough to disclose the steel plating sandwiched within the paneling, but it was little joy to Ostervor that he had solved the mystery of the hidden doorway's solidity.

In the long darkness that followed, Ostervor's kicking and pounding



brought no more response than did his screams. The north wing, of course, was reputedly haunted, and seldom was it visited. In time his shouts became a hoarse croaking, his hands raw and bleeding, his body an agonizing mass of bruises from useless rushes against the unyielding walls.

The choking dust only made his thirst come upon him the sooner, so that the torture of his thirst for some time obscured the realization that the air in the passage was growing bad. Whatever circulation might exist, it was inadequate for his needs, and Ostervor was slowly suffocating inside this crypt. He lay motionless, conserving strength, only his brain furiously at work on the problem of escape. Time became a meaningless interval between useless efforts to open the door; it may be that he slept, for the choking darkness gave no indication of the hours that passed. The poisoned air now hurt his lungs worse than the agony of his parched throat.

Rising from a hopeless stupor, Ostervor knew his strength was failing. He forced stale air into his chest for one last jagged howl of despair and flung his pain-racked body against the unyielding doorway.

The doorway instantly pivoted before his weight, and Ostervor fell headlong into the chamber beyond. Upon the floor beside his face, the candle he had placed there was still burning.

"Time, after all," said Kane,

reaching down for him, "is only relative."

Ostervor's hoarse breath melted the flecks of frost upon Kane's boots.

"Ostervor, come with me."

Sitalvon liked to refer to the cellar chamber as her studio. Seated at her writing table, she stared thoughtfully at the half-covered page of parchment before her. Her pen had dried again, and she absently wet its tip with her tongue to keep it from blotting — a habit that left her with a blotchy sort of mustache when she kept late hours in her studio. She considered the now-still body of the youth strapped head down upon an X-shaped frame in the center of the chamber. Beneath his dangling head, a large silver bowl was nearly filled with blood-tinged vomit. Sitalvon reread her notes of earlier that evening, then dipped her clean pen into her inkwell and concluded her notes.

"Subject 3 is young male of sound physique and good health. Force-fed vomitus concentration from Subject 2, placed upon frame. Severe convulsions observed by second hour, increasing intensity with total vomiting of stomach contents by third hour, decreasing soon thereafter. No observable signs of life after fourth hour."

Sitalvon frowned and continued to write.

"There seems little point in continuing this line of study. Despite common belief, it is demonstrable that a combination of arsenic and mercuric salts does not increase in toxicity as the poison is recovered from the vomitus of one victim to the next."

"Obviously you were only diluting its virulence," commented Kane, reading over her shoulder. "One might as well maintain that a blade grows sharper each time it hews flesh and bone."

Sitalvon's pen shook a spatter of ink upon the page, but she gave no other outward sign of disquiet.

"The poison might have absorbed certain essences of death from each victim," she said calmly.

"What? Heavy metal salts?" Kane was derisive. "Rank superstition."

She rose slowly from her chair and faced Kane, gaining considerable assurance from the fact the assassin had not simply cut her throat once he had crept upon her unseen.

"I had thought I had given orders not to be disturbed. Shall I call in my guardsmen?"

"They are rather less capable of obeying you now," Kane said.

"What do you want?"

"I should think you must know that answer."

Sitalvon knew, but she also knew that while they talked, she remained alive. She smoothed the folds of her gown across her hips and faced him coolly. While she scorned to take pains with her appearance, she knew her features were good, her figure exciting to her occasional lovers — and Kane, after all, was only a man.

"You are no common assassin," she told him, "or you would have slain me from behind."

"I was interested in your conclusions to this experiment," Kane said. "I had earlier amused myself by reading through your journal. Truly remarkable."

"One would assume an assassin would be interested in the practical, if not the theoretical aspects of toxicology," Sitalvon smiled, edging toward a credenza. "May I drink a glass of wine?"

"It would be rude to refuse you," Kane acceded. "The notes where you established the toxic characteristics of each portion of the monkshood plant were particularly methodical. Forty children — fascinating!"

"Will you drink a glass with me?" Sitalvon invited. "This vintage has lain in our cellars since it was pillaged before my father's day. None of us has been able to identify it."

She poured two ice-clear goblets with heavy, tawny wine, and then handed one to Kane.

Kane had been watching her every movement. "The other goblet, if you please," he said, ignoring the one she proffered.

Sitalvon shrugged and made the exchange. "As you please."

She took a luxuriant sip from her goblet, then noticed that Kane was still watching her, his own wine untasted.

"I'm sure you'll understand if I exchange goblets with you once again," Kane smiled, giving Sitalvon his wine and taking hers.

"Under the circumstances, I can understand your caution," Sitalvon returned his smile above her goblet. She drank deeply, and Kane followed suit.

Sitalvon drowned her laughter in the wine. Both of their glasses were poisoned, for the decanter from which she poured was steeped with enough distillate of the amber poppy to kill a hundred men. Sitalvon, whose addiction to the same rare drug had established an enormous tolerance, considered this tainted liqueur no more than a pleasant nightcap. For Kane, the sleep would never be broken.



Kane drained his goblet. "This is one of the sweet white wines that could be had from regional vineyards where the Southern Kingdoms border Chrosanthe," Kane decided, "until the killing blight of a century past destroyed the grapes there. Its precise vineyard and perhaps its exact year I might have told you, had the wine not been so heavily laced with a tincture of amber poppies."

Sitilvon's eyes grew wide with fear.

"The stimulant I swallowed as you poured for us is quite sufficient an antidote," Kane said gently. "After all, I've had time enough to peruse your journal — and to partake of your sideboard. The opium of the amber poppy is no stranger to me."

Sitilvon realized that her heartbeat was too rapid, too erratic, even for fear. Pain lanced through her chest.

"When you switched goblets with me..."

"Actually, it was in your inkwell," Kane explained.

Her pulse was shaking her entire body. Sitilvon clutched at her writing table, her legs nerveless. Kane's hands reached out for her.

"Sitilvon, come with me."

Puriali dipped his brush of maidens' eyelashes into the jade cup of infant's blood and completed the final astrological symbol within the pentacle's inner circle an instant before the last weakened cry of the newborn. Difficult in the extreme, each step had been, but then the stakes were the highest, and Puriali knew he was too accomplished an adept to fail. He gathered his magician's robes close to his bony knees — it would be catastrophic should one of the lines be obliterated at this hour — and stepped carefully outside of the pentacle. Its outermost circle of power touched the threshold of the tower chamber's door and encompassed half the room. Puriali seated himself at his desk in view of the only door. A block of tarry substance with which he had formed the outer circle lay in his fingers, and his hand hung down only inches from a short gap that broke the outer circle. His lips barely seemed to move as he crooned a low chant in an archaic tongue.

The wait was longer than Puriali had anticipated, but in time Kane slipped past the open doorway and stepped into the circle of the pentacle. Puriali lashed out with his dubious chalk and closed the circle. Kane halted at the sudden movement, watching the sorcerer.

Puriali nodded a complacent greeting. "By now," he said urbanely, "it would no doubt be facetious to

inquire after the well-being of my paternal siblings."

"Do you really want to know?" Kane asked.

"Surely you couldn't have thought I bore them any brotherly affection. They would have rid themselves of me long ago had we not needed one another. The solution to the problem is that I was first to realize the others were superfluous."

Puriali's smirk bespoke private jests. He watched Kane pace about the pentacle, seemingly studying its artistry with the detachment of the connoisseur.

"I imagine you may be curious as to why I have summoned you to me," Puriali suggested.

Kane ceased his pacing and regarded the sorcerer attentively. "I was awaiting a polite opportunity to ask."

"I know everything about you, of course," Puriali assured him with benign humor. "Everything."

"Everything?"

"Which is both why and how I summoned you here." Puriali held up a hand to forestall protest. "No doubt you are thinking that you were sent here to carry out the vendetta of some bereaved whore with grandiose dreams. You should have understood by now that apparent free will is only a delusion."

"You were summoned here through my own arts, Kane. I knew my half-siblings hated me, plotted as one to be rid of me whenever it seemed that my arts were more of a danger to them than an asset. Why not? Together we killed our father when his usefulness was outlived. But this time theirs was the error of judgement. I was already too powerful to require their continued existence."

Puriali withdrew a glittering coronet form beneath his robes and jammed it down upon his shock of red hair. "The ducal crown of Harnstern," he crowed, regarding Kane through over-bright blue eyes. "Fits rather well, don't you agree?"

"Gold can be bent to any shape," Kane remarked.

"Very pithy, to be sure. No doubt your unsuspected wit will provide me with much needed amusement while you serve my will."

"You were about to explain..."

"Why, I should imagine it is all obvious to you by now, Kane." Puriali adjusted the crown. "Who else could have murdered Wenvor and Ostervor and lovely Sitilvon? They were far too vigilant to give me the chance."

"And now?"

"And now you shall serve me. With the others dead I shall require a loyal henchman — one who can lead men into

battle as expertly as he can weave political intrigue. For this reason I have spared you. With you to carry out my commands, Harnstern is only the first step toward conquest of this strife-torn land."

"An ambitious scheme," Kane commented, "if not particularly original. However, I regret that my own immediate assignments will make such an alliance impossible."

"Alliance?" Puriali laughed. "Not so. It is servitude I demand of you, Kane — although you will find that I am a kind master to those who serve me well."

He rose to his feet and gestured sweepingly. "By now you will have examined the pentacle into which you so obligingly blundered. Still believe in freedom of will, Kane? I summoned you tonight, willing you to slay the others, then to come to me in my tower. You are imprisoned now within the pentacle, held there by the symbols of power that represent the innermost secrets of your existence. You cannot escape the pentacle until I set you free, Kane — and this I will do only after I have bound you to me through certain irrevocable oaths and pacts that not even you dare break."

Puriali savored his triumph. "You see, Kane, I know that you are no common assassin and adventurer, no matter how uncommon your abilities. I know who you are."

The sorcerer gestured impressively. "Kane, son of Adam and born of Eve, you are within my power and my power alone. For centuries beyond counting you have followed your accursed fate, but after this night you shall follow only the dictates of my will. I have seen your destiny in the stars, and the astrological symbols of your nativity bind you powerless within the pentacle."

"Most impressive," Kane admitted. "Your work would do credit to a far older sorcerer whose wisdom would transcend this provincial backwater. You have committed only a few mistakes, but regrettably this is not an art in which one learns through experience."

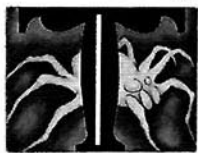
"In time even the stars change," Kane explained, casually stepping out of the pentacle, "and yours are not the constellations of my birth."

Puriali shrank back against the tower wall, seeking in vain for an avenue of escape.

"And it's ironic that you hadn't known Eve was only my step-mother," Kane continued, reaching out for Puriali, "Inasmuch as I rather suspect there's some trace of my blood in your veins."

"Puriali, come with me."

IV. Payment in Full



Tamaslei awoke from dreams of Josin to discover Kane seated beside her bed. It was not a pleasant

prospect, and she clutched the fur robes protectively about her silk-clad shoulders. Remembering the thin-bladed dagger sheathed just behind the headboard, she regained composure.

"What do you want, Kane?" Her voice was surprisingly level.

"Payment. I have completed my part of our bargain."

Tamaslei turned up the wick of her bedside lamp, increasing its companionable glow to brightness that split the chamber into shadows. Her figure was supple beneath the translucent silk.

"No doubt there is proof?" Tamaslei's eyes were upon the large bag that Kane carried. Its leather folds seemed too flaccid to contain the evidences she expected.

Kane's tone was formal, but without rancor or scorn. "Tamaslei, I give these to you in accordance with our agreement."

He took her hand and dropped several bright objects onto her palm.

Tamaslei's first thought was that they were jewels, then she saw they were something more. They were four oblong sigils carved of some crystal resembling jet, approximately the size of the first joint of her thumb, unusually heavy for their size and curiously warm to the touch. Each bore a carving upon its flattened side, and each carved figure was different: a dragon, a spider, a serpent, and a scorpion.

"I'm not certain I understand the jest, Kane. I hired you to kill the Vareishei clan, and unless you have brought me their heads as proof that you have fulfilled our bargain, I insist upon awaiting news of their deaths before I give you payment."

She had expected protest, but Kane's voice was patient. "You did not ask me to kill the Vareishei clan; you said you wished to purchase their lives. You were most explicit."

"Come to the point of your jest, Kane."

"There is no jest. You made a contract to purchase four lives. I took four lives. You hold them in your hands: Wenvor, Ostervor, Sitilvon, Puriali."

"Do you think me a fool!" Tamaslei slid closer to the hidden dagger.

Kane took the serpent-carven sigil from her hand and pressed it to her forehead. Tamaslei stiffened for a moment, then flung herself away with a violent shudder.

"The secret is all but lost," Kane said, "but I assumed you understood when you agreed to our contract, and I took from them their lives as I promised to do."

"And what of their physical bodies?" Tamaslei no longer doubted.

Kane shrugged. "Lifeless carrion. Perhaps their followers were of a mind to burn their bodies upon a pyre of their stolen riches, perhaps they left them for the ravens. Their life-force remains imprisoned within these sigils."

"And what shall I do with them?"

"Whatever you wish."

"If I smash the sigils?"

"Their life-force would be released to reanimate their former flesh, such as may remain of it. However transient that experience might be, it cannot be a pleasant one."

Tamaslei rose from her bed and seated herself at her dressing table. One by one she dropped each sigil into her onyx mortar, smashing brutally downward with its pestle. The crystals shattered under her determined blows, suddenly disintegrating into thousands of dull granules. The sound of their shattering was like a cry of anguish.

When she had finished, Tamaslei seemed to remember Kane's presence, like one recalling a long-ago dream. "And the coronet?" she asked, coming to herself.

Kane produced the crown of Harnstern from the depths of his bag. "The Vareishei no longer had need of it."

Tamaslei snatched it from his hand and gazed into her mirror. Her eyes glowed as she adjusted the crown upon her head.

"There remains the matter of

payment," Kane reminded her.

"Of course! And you shall find me more than generous."

"I only demand payment as agreed upon. A game is pointless if one disregards its rules."

Tamaslei unlocked the iron-bound door of her aumbry, as Kane held open his bag. One by one she drew them out: four bulging leather almoners, a name written in blood upon each heavy purse. One by one they disappeared into the black depths of Kane's bag.

"I have kept these forty marks of gold in readiness for you, as promised," Tamaslei explained. "I insist on paying you full value for this crown as well. However, I don't have enough gold on hand to make fair payment. Tomorrow evening, when you call upon me, I shall have obtained the full payment you have earned."

Tamaslei judged that by that time she could obtain half a dozen sufficiently competent and considerably less expensive assassins to lie in wait for Kane.

"The crown is yours to keep," Kane said unexpectedly. "I rather think Josin would have wanted you to have it."

He pointed toward the depths of the aumbry. "If you will just pull out the false nailheads immediately above and below the middle shelf at the left, that will release the lock on the false bottom. Hand me as payment what you find within, and this most interesting assignment will be completed."

Tamaslei bit her lip in anger, wondering how Kane could know of the aumbry's secret compartment. But he was not as clever as he thought, for the false bottom concealed nothing of real value — it was luck that Kane had not learned of the hidden space beneath the hearth.

To her surprise, her fingers closed upon a thick leather purse. In wonder she dragged it out. It was a fat almoner, heavy with gold, just the same as the other four. Tamaslei gaped at it, turning it about in her hands.

There was a name written in blood: *Tamaslei*.

She remembered the thin-bladed dagger beside her bed, then saw that it was now held in Kane's hand.

"Josin knew you were sending him to almost certain death," Kane told her, stepping near. "Josin came to me before he set out, and we made a contract."





CONTEST

Scenario Design
based on *Misericorde!*

Grand Prize:
\$250 and publication
of your design!

Second Prize: \$100

Third Prize: \$50

With the publication of *Misericorde*, the first new Kane story to appear since 1977, Blade is sponsoring a contest for anyone who wishes to enter. The contest: to design the best adventure — a *solitaire* OR a *GM scenario* — that takes place in the fortress of the Vareishei, as described in Wagner's story *Misericorde*. The story has more than enough description of rooms and places to make the actual definition of those places easy to describe in detail; there are enough hints and implications about the rest of the fortress to provide grist for the mill of creative imagination.

Solitaire adventures must be designed for the *Tunnels & Trolls* game system. Game Master scenario adventures may use the T&T system OR they can be designed in the Catalyst system, using descriptive ratings such as those found in *CityBook I* and the two books of *Grimtooth's TRAPS*.

All submissions should be typed and double-spaced. Submissions will be judged by the staff of Blade, and judges' decisions are final. Designs will be judged on the basis of good game design, clarity, imagination in design and writing, and faithfulness to the story. Blade reserves the right to award no prize or prizes if no submissions are judged to be worthy of an award. Blade reserves the right to edit award-winning manuscripts. All award-winning submissions become the sole property of Flying Buffalo Inc. If any manuscript but the grand prize winner is subsequently published, the designer will be paid at our normal rates for the work. You may submit more than one design although you will be competing against yourself, as no individual may be awarded more than one prize.

Any non-winning submission you wish to have returned must be accompanied by a Self-Addressed Stamped Envelope large enough to hold the manuscript. Entrants are urged to include a stamped postcard with their submission if they want to know if the package arrives. If you feel you must send it "Return Receipt Requested" or via "Express Mail" (we'd rather you didn't because of long Post Office lines), please send the manuscript to our street address: Kane Contest, c/o Flying Buffalo Game Store, 915 S. 52nd St. Suite 3, Tempe, AZ 85281. Winners will be announced in the next available issue of SA after the contest ends.

Contest Deadline: January 31st, 1984. Address entries to:

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End.: 13
Agil.: 12
Int.: 14
Char.: 11
Dam. Mod.: +1
Acc.: +1
Hit Pts.: 9
Heal: 1.2
Car. Cap.: 320
Basic HTH: 1d6
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ELABORATIONS VARIATIONS AND COMPLICATIONS

~ *Stefan Jones*

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY IN TUNNELS & TROLLS

La tuta mondo parolas multajn lingvojn, ĉu ne? Probably not — but in Tunnels & Trolls characters can learn additional languages at the drop of a hat. Stefan Jones starts his sequence of game suggestions and variants with an examination of the language-learning abilities of T&T characters.

One of the more neglected aspects of life in T&T-land is the learning of languages. As it stands, the rules provide a good system that allows easy play without lots of bookkeeping. This variant adds some complexity that will enrich T&T campaigns.

The current rules allow a character to have one language for each point of IQ over 12. This is logical since the attribute most concerned with language is IQ. But in times past and today, people of average and below average IQ have learned other tongues out of need and convenience. Most immigrants to the USA either know English or learn it in a short time. Children of immigrants are even faster learners. It stands to reason that some characters will know one or



more alien languages at the start.

Wizards are a special case in almost every instance; they're noted as we go along. To determine the languages available to a character, the player and the GM must try to develop a background for the character. If the character is a wizard or the son of a noble, he or she may have been taught a few languages. A gypsy or merchant child may have picked up another tongue in his or her travels. On the other hand, a character from an isolated jungle tribe with little contact

with the outside may only know his native dialect. *When all possibilities have been determined*, the player must try to make a first level saving roll vs. IQ. If made, the character has the language in question. Some languages should be automatic, as in the case of a dwarf or hobbit who *must* know the human tongue to get along in a human world.

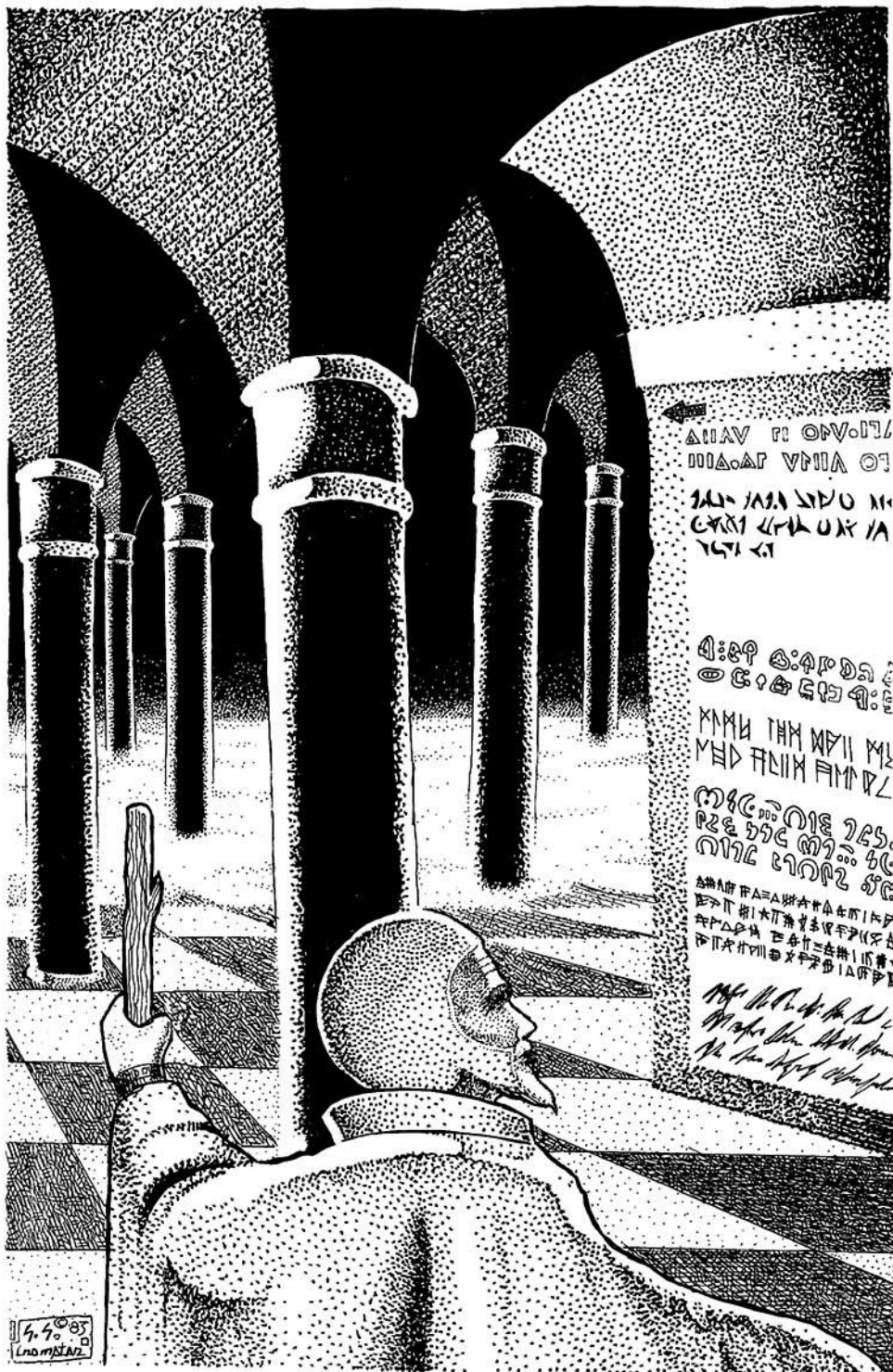
When a character starts going up in levels, the number of languages known may be increased by hard study. The total number of *new* languages may not

exceed the character's level (tongues learned in childhood are not affected by this rule). This is a rule to learn a new language and account for the time and effort spent: when a character goes up a level, he has that new level number in options to raise his attributes. Instead of assigning them all to attribute raises, he must use one level number to learn the new language. □ Example: John Doe-smasher is a third level fighter who earns a living as a mercenary. After a few bad experiences, John learns that brawn is not all and decides to learn the language of the Ph'Doot nation. When he reaches fourth level, he would normally have four "level numbers" to determine the number of points he can use to raise his attributes. John uses one of these points to learn a language, leaving three more to raise his Strength, Luck, etc., just as if he'd gone to *third* level, not fourth.

Whether the level bonus point is expended or not, as an added restriction (that also emphasizes the importance of IQ), the GM may require the character to make an IQ saving roll to learn the new tongue. The level of the roll may depend on things like the character's level, the difficulty of the language, and the number of *extra* level points put into linguistic study.

Literacy is related to linguistic skill. Unlike languages, skill in writing and reading multiple languages is rare, especially in the medieval past when books and teaching were scarce. Even one's native language may seem as alien as Sanskrit when it is seen in written form. Therefore (other than wizards), every character must make a first level saving roll vs. IQ to be skilled in reading and writing his or her native language. Other learned languages may be learned in their written form by spending *two* level numbers per language (one to learn the spoken tongue, one to learn the written tongue). If the GM wishes to further elaborate, the cost to learn a language and its written form may be variable, depending on the level of vocabulary, depth of understanding, and skill at writing and oratory.

Wizards are a special case to all of the above. They must know various arcane languages, both in written and spoken form. In addition to all languages that may be learned as noted above, each wizard will know one arcane, possibly dead language per IQ point above 10. These lost languages are used to write magical scrolls, secret messages, and spell books; the GM may wish to make up a list of these used in the world being played in, and note which is being used when a wizard finds a new magic book or mysterious inscription.



DELVING FOR DOLLARS The Cost of Living in T&T

In SA 9/10, Paul O'Connor gave some consideration to the problems of the T&T characters who have to shop for a loaf of bread with a wheelbarrow full of gold pieces. Stefan Jones takes a further look at what an adventurer can do with all his hard-earned booty. . .

When running a one-shot adventure where the characters have little or no background and the time scale of the campaign is loose (if not non-existent), the problem of how much T&T characters pay for their upkeep is unimportant. But if the GM and players wish to take on the task of running a full-blown campaign complete with a fully delineated map and calendar, some sort of economic system will be necessary. Through extrapolation and comparison to present-day life, I've come up with some guidelines as to how much a character will need to spend whilst recovering and resting (not to mention living it up) between dungeon trips.

Krugerrands in the A&P

A quick look at the "General Supplies" section of the T&T rules reveals that a day's worth of food weighs two pounds and costs ten pieces of gold. Rather expensive! Of course, the food in a bag of provisions is probably light-weight trail grub such as hard tack, beef jerky, and pemmican. The raw materials for these foods are very cheap, but preparation and greedy shopkeepers add a lot to the price. After subtracting 1 g.p. for matches and miscellany, a rough figure of 3 g.p. per meal is obtained. This is the basic price for a meal on the road or in the dungeon.

Food in inns will be slightly cheaper, perhaps 2 g.p. This includes tipping and some wine. Fancy food might cost 4 g.p.; cheap stew and a hunk of dark bread may be only 1 g.p. In dangerous stretches of the wilderness, prices will be higher, quality lower.

If you have a house or other permanent dwelling (more on that later), you can buy food raw to prepare at home: a meal might cost half of the inn rate if you cook it yourself. A week's worth of food could be bought for about five times the usual price per day. If a character decides to rough it and tries to live on cheap food, he or she may lose Strength and Constitution points due to hunger pangs and poor nutrition. One point of each attribute would be lost per week on such a subsistence diet, until $\frac{1}{2}$ the normal attribute totals are reached. Recovery requires at least two weeks of a normal food diet, or one week of "high living." A character who lives high on the hog might also suffer from a pot belly; how this is handled is up to the GM.

Hovel, Sweet Hovel

Unless a character takes great enjoyment from the night air and the carefree life of a bowery bum, he or she will need a place to sleep and store his/her swag. To a footloose adventurer, an inn is usually the best choice. An inn in a small town might cost 3-7 g.p. a night, with extra charges for stable service and strongboxes for loot. An inn deep in the woods would cost more — guards must be hired and defenses maintained against brigands. Hostels in large towns and cities would also cost more, perhaps 5-10 g.p. a night; the neighborhood flop house is always available in cities at 1-2 g.p. a night, but watch out for the vermin

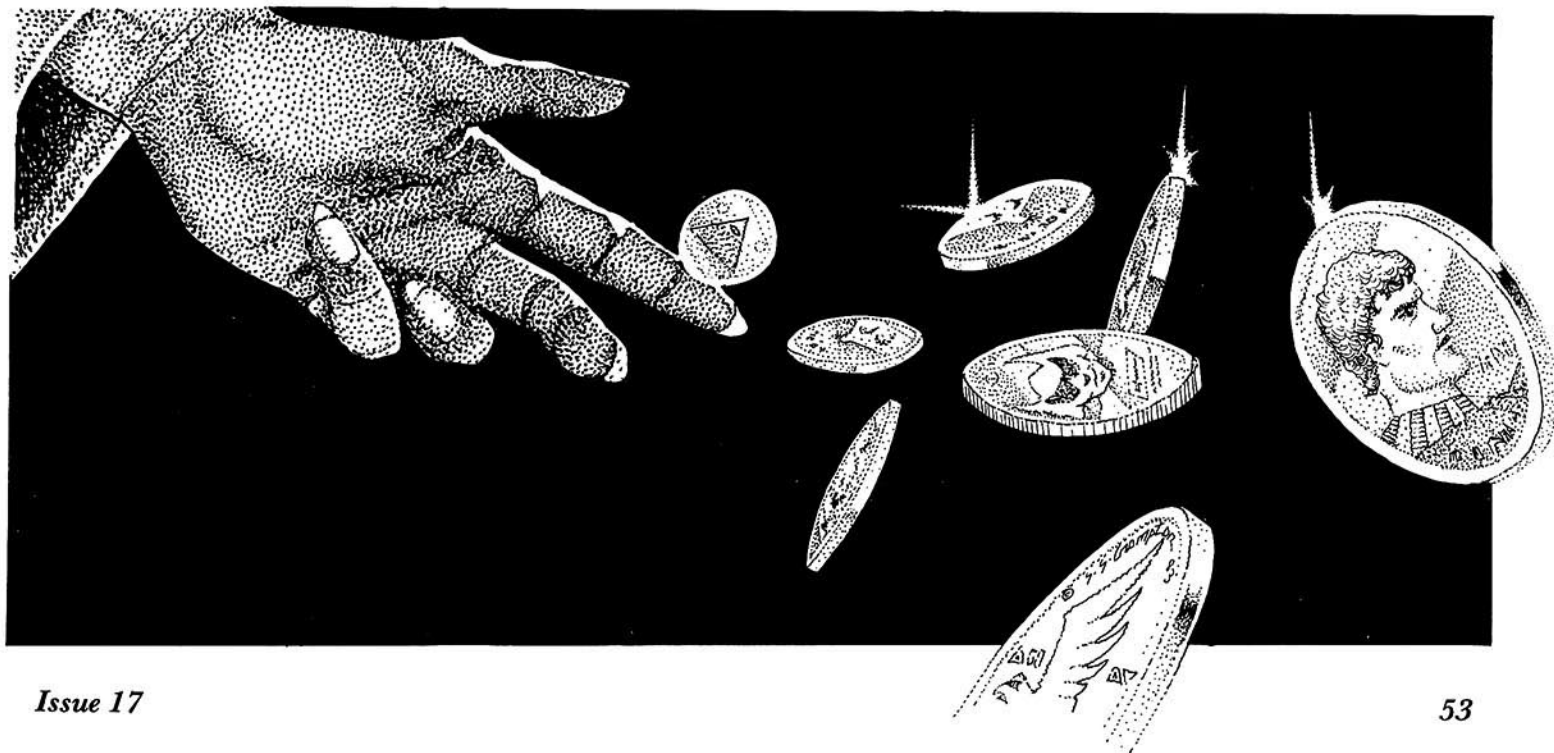
(insect, rodent, and human)! Inns often have special services available, such as messengers, healers and companionship.

Characters who have decided to settle down will need permanent shelter. The cheapest form of housing is the cave, but these are often inconvenient and offer little security. A shack in the woods can be built for the price of an axe and 100 g.p. in nails and other building materials, but make sure you aren't building on some noble's hunting spot! Property in wilderness areas might cost anywhere from 100 g.p. to 10,000 g.p., depending on arability, location, and accessibility to roads and rivers.

Living in a town is more expensive but much more convenient. A cheap hut outside the city walls might cost 100 g.p. outright; a flat in a tenement might set a character back 60 g.p. a month. Buying a house is cheaper in the long run: a townhouse would cost 30,000 g.p., a home in a small town 10,000 g.p. Upkeep, servants, etc. costs 10 g.p. for a low-class hovel per month, 30 g.p. for an above-average townhouse (anyone living in their own house is above average in medieval days), 50 g.p. or more for fancy living.

The Taxman Cometh

In France just before the revolution, taxes on merchants and peasants reached 60% of a family's annual income! In the less demanding days of the medieval era, taxes were *somewhat* lower. To simulate this, each character will have to pay taxes once a year. The amount should be determined thus: figure out 2% of the value of all the character's money. Then figure out 1% of the value of all other belongings — weapons, armor, horses, magical goods, etc. Add those two values together (get "tax value"). Roll 2d6 and



multiply the result times the "tax value." That result is the amount the character owes the local government. If there is a church in town and it is supported by the king/duke/etc., another 10% (of total belongings) is taken as tithe. If the character can make a Charisma saving roll on his level, he/she can subtract his IQ in % points from the tax burden this year. (For example, a character with CHR of 20 can subtract 20% of the total taxes actually owed).

There are other ways to avoid paying taxes: being a noble, a local politician, or simply someone too powerful to drag away to jail can all help! The GM should use discretion in these cases. If a fight is brewing, make up some tax collector for the king's army to use in the adventure.

Taxes are also possible on the road: a few coppers may be charged to use a turnpike, more if you're riding a horse or can afford it. Some nobles tax the people who pass through their estates, using the local fountains, hitching posts, out-houses, and so forth.

Clothing

Clothing was an important symbol of rank in medieval times: a peasant wearing nobles' clothing, or vice versa, was looked down upon. Characters should wear and buy clothes appropriate to their wealth and style of living. High-class clothes cost 100 g.p. or more per year, cheap peasant rags 10 g.p. or less. Adventurers can buy all the flamboyant clothes that they want, but should be forced to "live up to" their purchases. If a character is a foreigner, he or she may find his life difficult if he/she continues to wear the garb of his/her homeland. The GM should adjudicate the effects of improper clothing as he or she sees fit: a dirt farmer impersonating a noble in an inn in the wilderness will not be scrutinized as closely (or punished as severely) as in a city hostel.

In closing, it should be noted that all of the above are optional rulings; don't be afraid to change things to fit your own campaign! Also note that most of the above expenses are *minimal*. If a player wants a character to *really* live it up, the GM should compute the costs of doing so. The author has found that a *VERY* rough estimate of 1 g.p./\$5 can be used to find the cost of entertainment, property and labor costs. If a character's actions seem interesting enough to be played as an adventure, by all means do so! A character's social activities can play an important part in how much influence he or she has, not to mention giving a clue to the tax collectors on how much money he or she has. . . .

VARIANT COMBAT FOR T&T

The thing that most separates one role playing game from another is the method used to simulate combat. The options vary from blow-by-blow, move-by-move "realism" to thoroughly abstract, quick'n'dirty, let's-get-back-to-the-adventure simplicity. There are as many combat systems in FRP as there are gamers, each one having his or her own preferences. When tastes collide in the same group, it's best to have some alternatives to compromise on. For those whose tastes want more combat details, Stefan now offers ideas to players and GMs alike.

One of the much-voiced complaints about *Tunnels & Trolls* is about the rather simplistic combat system. In many ways this is a fair gripe: the current system is the simplest and most abstract of the RPG combat systems. Most of the problems stem from the "all or nothing" method of distributing damage: either you win a combat round and go unharmed, or you lose and take all of the damage generated by the fighting. The variant system below attempts to solve this. It will also makes fighters' and warriors' combat skills more formidable and less abstract than the armor doubling ability, and it allows easier integration of miniatures.

Attack and Defense

In each combat round, the beings involved in the battle being simulated choose who he, she, or it is going to attack. Of course, a given character or monster can only attack an opponent within easy reach. Miniatures or cardboard counters are helpful in visualizing the tactical situation, but are not absolutely necessary. If the GM wishes, he or she can add things like initiative and surprise factor to further quantify the situation.

Once all of the choices of target have been made, each being in the combat generates his or her *Attack Total* (AT). Find this by rolling weapon dice, adding weapon adds and personal adds, just as in standard T&T combat. If the weapon being used has some sort of magic on it which would increase the chance to hit — such as a *Vorpal Blade* or *Whammy* spell — the effects are figured in now. Poison and magic which increases damage will be factored in later.

Next, the *Defense Total* (DT) of each target is figured. This is equal to the defender's personal adds plus the number of dice of the weapon that the defender is using (weapon adds are not added) plus the value of any armor and/or shield the defender is wearing. If the defender's weapon is more than two

feet longer than the attacker's weapon, the defender will get a bonus of 3 points per foot over two feet that his/her weapon is longer. . . this makes the formerly effective tactic of using two daggers to increase fighting power much less effective, as the defender can simply hold off such an attacker by using a spear or long sword. Daggers are treated as having a length of one foot. The GM can give a bonus to DT if the defender is in some advantageous position, like being on a higher level than his/her attacker.

To find the base number of hits, DT is subtracted from AT. Negative numbers do not put hits on the attacker! This base number is multiplied by any factor due to poison, or damage-causing magic (i.e. if a broadsword spits flame or drips acid during combat, the effect would be to increase damage).

Example #1: Meet Roc Guano, 5th level warrior. Roc's attributes are: ST:20, IQ:12, LK:18, DX:18, CON:20, CHR:17. He gets 20 adds in combat. He wields a heavy flail (4 dice +4) and wears leather armor and uses a target shield (total of 10 points of protection). *Note that fighters lose their armor-doubling bonus under this system.* Roc's DT at the moment is 20 for his adds, plus 4 for the number of dice his weapon gets, plus 10 for his armor. . . a total of 34.

Roc is strolling through the halls of a underground city when he meets an orc. The orc gets 4 dice for his weapon, plus 15 adds. He is wearing ragged armor worth 5 points. The orc's DT is thus 24. Roc decides to attack the orc; he readies his flail and charges.

Roc gets a total of 15 from his flail's dice roll, which becomes 39 with personal and weapon adds figured in. Roc's AT = 39.

The Orc rolls a big 20, for a AT of 35.

At the end of the first round, the orc has taken $(39 - 24 = 15)$ fifteen hits, while Roc took $(35 - 34 = 1)$ 1 hit. If the orc's sword had curare on it, this would become 2 hits. End of example #1.

The above system works fine for simple one-on-one combats. The elaborations below will help regulate larger battles.

Splitting Your Attack

If a situation arises where two opponents must be attacked, or if the attacker has such a high AT that "using it up" on one opponent would be wasteful, an attack can be split. A Warrior can split his or her attack in the number of ways equal to $\frac{1}{2}$ his/her level, rounded up, plus 1. Thus, a first



level warrior could split his attack into two parts: $1 \div 2 = \frac{1}{2}$, rounded up to 1, $+1 = 2$. Non-fighters, such as rogues and wizards, can only split their attack into [their experience level $\div 3$] ways, rounded up. Thus, a fourth level rogue could attack *two* opponents at one time: $4 \div 3 = 1 \frac{1}{3}$, rounded to 2.

Defending Against Multiple Attackers

When two attackers are fighting one defender, they *do not* add up their ATs to overcome the DT of the defender. Each attacker must compare his AT with the defender's DT separately. Of course, when enough people are attacking, the defender will have to split his or her attention so much that he/she becomes vulnerable to attacks from behind or to the side. The maximum number of opponents a character's level divided by three, rounded up, plus one. For Warriors, this is equal to character level, divided by two, plus one.

When the character is backed against a wall, he can effectively protect his back. Situations like this must be administered by the GM.

Example #2: Roc, having bested the orc, continues down the passage. Eventually he meets up with a pack of the orc's friends seeking vengeance. On the first round of combat, four orcs catch up to Roc. Since Roc can fight off four enemies (5th level, $\div 2 = 2 \frac{1}{2}$, $+1 = 3 \frac{1}{2}$, rounded to 4) without becoming vulnerable, he can use his full DT in defense.

The next round, Roc is attacked by 3 more orcs. The three can flank him, and they need only beat his reduced DT of: (6 each for DEX and LK adds, plus 6 for his armor) 18. Since the orc's average AT roll is 29, Roc is in it deep. End of example.

Combining Attacks

Normally, each attacker has to beat the DT of the defender separately. In some cases, however, puny creatures such as rats or rabid chickadees will not have *any* chance of getting past a defender's armor/defense. The same holds true for men-sized creatures fighting dragons and dinosaurs. Unless there are a lot of puny attackers, their attacks will not harm the defender. Under these circumstances, the AT of the attackers may be added. A defender may deflect a number of "puny attackers" equal to his level times two. For *warriors*, this number is equal to his level times three. When the number of puny attackers exceeds this limit, the AT of further attackers are added together into one overwhelming Attack. The GM must, as always, use his or her discretion when using this rule: a horde of rats will be a lot easier to drive off than a pack of cave wolves.

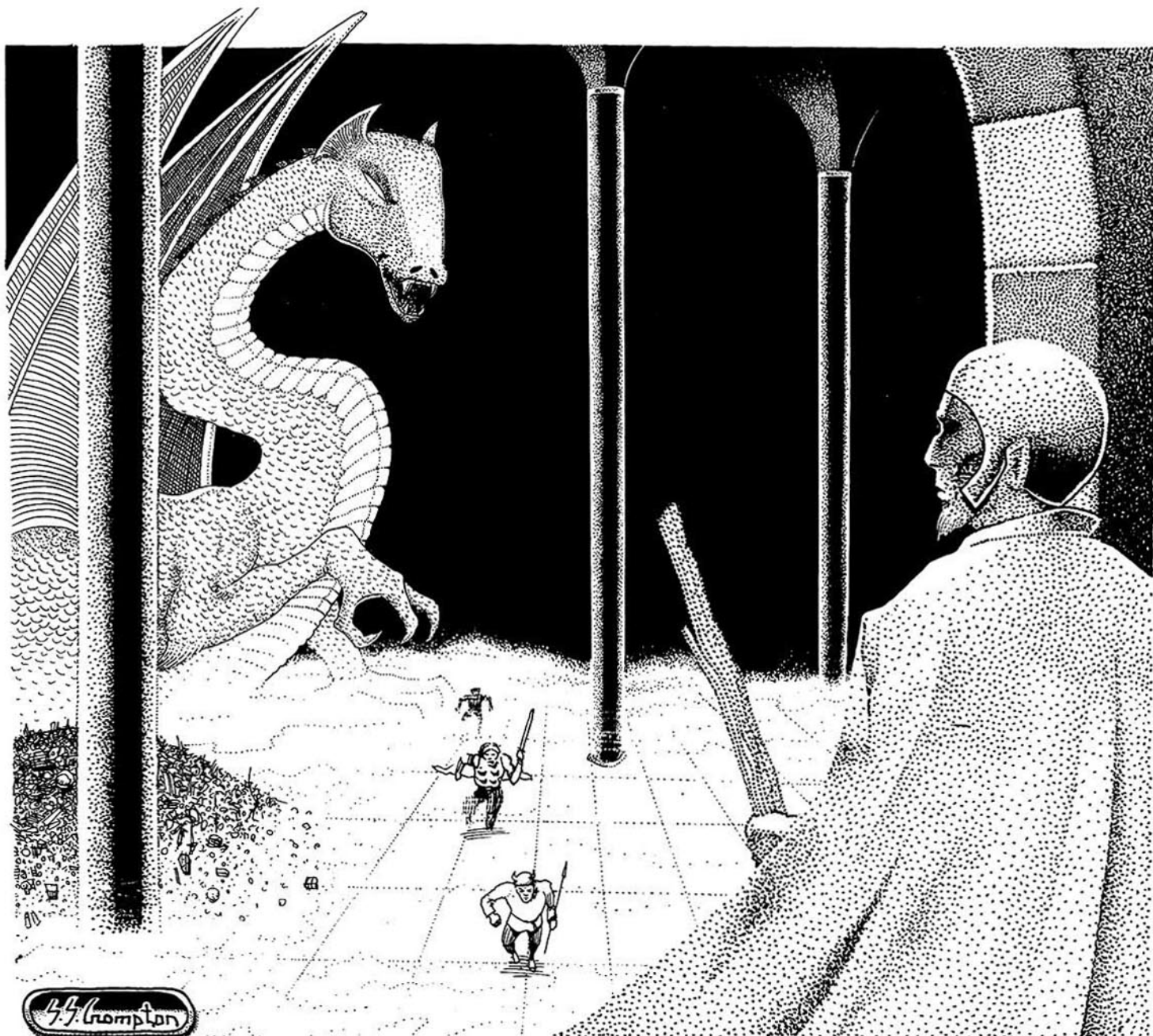
Example #3: Roc, having escaped from the orcs, continues his adventure; he is passing through a exceptionally grubby part of the dungeon when a pack of white cave wolves bounds toward him. The wolves' maximum AT is 18

each, so they can not damage him even if his flank is attacked. The GM rules that the wolves can combine their attacks. Roc, being a fifth level warrior, can hold off a whopping 15 wolves at a time ($3 \times 5 = 15$). The GM reduces this to 8, as the wolves are harder to repulse — they are skilled at pack-attacks. If Roc can get in a corner, he could hold off the lupines for quite a while. End of example three.

Acrobatics

Occasionally, a delver will have to perform feats of athletic skill during combat to avoid some horrible fate. Examples include jumping over a charging bull, or ducking away from the club of an enraged giant. Warriors receive training on how to do these stunts in fighter school. Thus, a warrior has a bonus when attempting them: the saving rolls to accomplish these feats are reduced by one for every three levels the warrior has achieved.

Example #4: Roc, having driven off the wolves with a well-placed molotov cocktail, continues his trek. He happens upon a large underground theater, packed with goblins. On the stage, he spies a comely maiden about to be sacrificed. Roc grabs a nearby rope and swings down to the stage from a balcony to attempt a rescue. The GM decides a 4th level SR on DX would be appropriate. Roc's level reduces this to a second level roll. Roc rolls to beat the 7 needed, and rolls a 3. He crashes into



the orchestra pit, crushing many goblins and not a few musical instruments. End of example four.

With a little practice, the above system can be run as easily as regular T&T combat. Characters should have their AT and DT listed on scrap paper to facilitate things. The GM should give each monster or NPC a level and class...to make things easy, a monster could be assumed to be a fighter of a level equal to that of the level of the dungeon he is encountered on.

Handling Lots of Dice

When many creatures are involved in a T&T melee, the number of dice rolled can be inconvenient. If some large beastie, like a dragon or balrog, is involved in a battle, the amount of rolling can really slow things up. This

variant reduces the amount of rolls to one or two dice per being.

For each combatant, the GM or player must figure out the being's *minimum* combat roll, the *average* combat roll, and the *maximum* possible combat roll. The average number is computed by multiplying the number of dice rolled by 3.5, adding the adds due to weapon and personal attributes and rounding the total up to a whole number. Minimum and maximum rolls are computed by treating all the dice rolls as ones and sixes, respectively.

When the time comes to find a creature's combat total, roll one die: a roll of one (1) indicates that the *minimum* possible roll (and resulting combat total) is used; rolls of 2-5 indicate that the *average* roll and total is used; a roll of six (6) indicates that the *maximum* roll is used. If a being uses more than one

weapon, roll the die for each separately.

Example #5: Snort Snottson has personal adds of 10 and uses a broadsword in combat. His minimum roll is 17 (3 for the minimum die roll + 4 for the weapon adds + 10 for Snort's personal adds), the average roll is 25, and the maximum roll possible is 32.

Snort is fighting Yukkyukk, an orc with 12 personal adds who fights with a battered scimitar. Yukkyukk's min/avg/max rolls are 16/26/36.

On the first round of combat, Snort's player rolls a four, the GM controlling Yukkyukk a six. The result: Snort loses by eleven points.

Not every one will find these variations to his or her tastes, of course, but try them out using a solo like *Arena Of Khazan*: you may find it to your liking. ■

The Name

Rebecca Lyons

Raaaaouull! Raaaaouull!

Up the temple steps and through,
Down the hall where candles' light
Outlines a blasphemous mouse or two.
No human eyes to view this sight.

Raoul!

Stone god, cold world —
Wait!

Slowly the jet-stone head lifts,
Green eyes glimmer....

Prancing lightly down the steps,
Now on two legs, now on four,
Past the sacrilegious mouse,
Stone-dead from his sin and more.
Past the letters carved austere —

But pronounce my name — I hear.

In the street now, human-formed,
Green eyes glimmer....

Cat-headed dicties, human-carved,
Could a feline ever pronounce their name?

Dogs go crouching as he passes,
Cardiac-arhythm'ing the rats,
He steps between a fight or two,
And foes, staring, forget their spats,
Green eyes aglimmer....

To the rooftops, four legs now,
Silhouette against the sky.

Old shadows of the Night nestir
Any human passing nigh.

Witch god. Old god.
Familiar with the Night
Shadow, substance, this then that.
Sacrificial right.
And the stars glimmer....

Raoul!

Nearer now.

Raoul!

But fainter.

Off the rooftops now, substance now,
Land on two legs, draw up straight.
Pad on soft boots, flexing
Unfamiliar thumbs.
Turn but this corner, and now —

Raoul?

Marmalade child, cold and hungry
There are so many, why this one?

But pronounce my name....

Scoop with unfamiliar thumbs
A crying child, shook with fear.
What? No mother? Orphaned? Here

Now a search of doorways,
Not this, not that, one more right.
He wears two forms, after
all, this thing of Night.

Satisfied, he closes near
A darkened doorway. Child set down.
Starts awailing, no need to scratch.
(Though he does, again, again, on darkened door)

Human noises, candle light —
"What? Poor kitty, left alone? Here,
Come inside, I'll get you a bowl
of milk."

No need to cajole.

Past dead mice and crouching dogs,
Now on four legs, now on two,
Scurrying past the fading night,
Up the temple steps and through,
Past shades that flee the gathering dawn,
To settle into place again
In time.

Jet-stone statue, jade-cold eyes,
Awaits the early morning
faithful legs of two or four,
And the next pronunciation of
the name.

THE VILLAGE OF HOXLEY
HARD TIMES IN HOXLEY

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FOUL LUTHER AT THE SLEEPING WOLF TAVERN

Game master adventures usable in any game system are few and far between — at least if they're good ones. The people who make up Midkemia Press have been turning out adventure scenarios which are more easily adaptable than most, and they've been doing a superb job. The village of Hoxley, and its scenario Hard Times in Hoxley, should fit well into your present fantasy campaigns, providing a fine setting for many adventures, or just a place to rest up from days and nights in the lairs of monsters!

Hoxley is a fully populated human village designed to be compatible with most of the currently available fantasy role-playing games. Hoxley should be placed on a tributary of a river or on a creek, along a major trading route, at least a week's travel from the nearest major city, and in a light to medium woodlands area.

In addition to the village itself, a scenario — *Hard Times in Hoxley* — is included at the end of the village description section, outlining a ready-to-play adventure. Many of the scenario specifics are attached to the building descriptions in Hoxley itself.

In order to avoid repetition, codes have been added to help GMs run the scenario *Hard Times in Hoxley*. Material following the “****” in each paragraph is specifically for use in the scenario. Non-player characters have numbers in parentheses after their names (such as “George (30)”). This means George's residence is Building #30 on the map (see page 69). If the number is in brackets (“George [30]”), the character's residence is still Building 30, but he/she is being held hostage. Sometimes the character's name appears in brackets: this indicates the NPC is being held captive in the Mill. The notations “(D)” and “(N)” mean “Day” and “Night” respectively. When this notation appears after a character's name, it means the character is only at this location during the specified time period. Finally, in the scenario sections (following the **) three percentage figures are given. These represent, in sequence, the chances that the NPC will 1) tell the player characters what's going on in town (% tell); 2) report to the bandits about characters snooping (% rpt); 3) help the characters in any way (% help).

History of Hoxley

Hoxley began as a stop-over point along the caravan route between the major city north and the port town to the south. Years ago, the founders of the town received a Town Charter from the old baron of the area to establish Hoxley. The town has slowly but steadily grown

over the years, a convenient market for the local farmers as well as a comfortable stop-over for overland caravans. Except for occasional attacks by bold brigands or goblins, Hoxley is a quiet place where little news of the outside world intrudes except what comes with the caravans passing from the north toward the port.

Social Order in Hoxley

Hoxley is governed by a mayor who handles tax collection, local disputes, and all orders, warrants, and writs coming from the baron. He receives a small allowance from the village for these functions. There used to be a constable, but he died several years ago of old age and, as no one has applied for the job, it is vacant. Otherwise there are no other village officials. Most disputes are handled privately between villagers, and on the very rare occasions when outsiders have caused trouble, the locals have banded together to run the strangers out.

The Village of Hoxley

1. Shed. This building is the storage shed for Miller Shodwhite's (4) mill. Here he keeps his equipment, tools, and empty grain sacks. Journeyman miller Douglas Fringle, his three pet cats (Herbert, Henery, and Boots), and apprentice miller Alan the Halt, Jergun the Fisher's (30) lame son live here. **Swinegarth, Rolly Gilfren (D); Zack, Avery (N). **Townsppeople:** Douglass Fringle [1], Alan the Halt [1], Matilda Shodwhite [4], Barney Crugle [8], baby Johanna Shandon [11], Jenny Semple [13], Drusilla Swilvey [17], Rafe Broom [22], Lauren Harguen [27], George Turney [30], Beth Fowler [33], and Ronald are all hostages being held in the second story storage area among the sacks of flour. **Event:** Any player character approaching the mill area *on the path* will cause Swinegarth to approach them before the player character can reach the building. He will say he is the journeyman miller and will tell the player character that no one is allowed to visit the mill without the miller's permission. He will direct anyone who asks to the miller's home (4). If anyone tries to force past Swinegarth, he will attack them, calling the alarm to Rolly Gilfren who will be standing watch at the top of the stairs. Rolly Gilfren will fire the building. Player characters may approach the mill undetected from the woods (30% chance they will hear a baby's crying), but if they burst through the mill or shed door Rolly or Swinegarth will fire the mill within 1d4 minutes unless killed. After dark when Rolly and Swinegarth are not in the mill, Zack Muldoon will be on duty with Avery. If

Avery is killed, there is a 65% chance Zack will not fire the mill and kill the children. If Avery is not killed, Zack will fire the mill in 1d8 minutes. Avery will only fire the mill if Zack is killed; then he will do it as soon as possible. **Note:** Time given for fire is when it is burning out of control. It is assumed the fire is set at once, but may be extinguished before the indicated time passes.

2. Mill, The Hoxley Mill. Hoxley's Mayor, Algenon Shodwhite (4), operates this successful mill. Farmers from all over the area bring their grain here to sell. Mayor Shodwhite inherited this mill from his father, along with the job of town mayor, which has gone to the miller for the last fifty years. The townspeople rightfully have determined that the miller, being one of the few men in town who can read, is the one best able to deal with the occasional legal matter coming from the baron and being the richest man in town, he makes a fine tax collector (taxes stay low). Journeyman miller Douglas Fringle (1) oversees the mill operation, assisted by Alan the Halt (1).

**Swinegarth (D) or Avery (N) have a 65% chance of being in the mill itself or in the apprentices' quarters during the time they are on watch.

3. Res., Jon the Hermit. Odd John, as he is known to the locals, lives here. He is a strange, thin fellow with a drooping moustache and wild cast to his eyes. He intersperses his conversations with occasional wild cackles. He spends most of his hours wandering about the river banks looking for “special” herbs and mosses, which he uses to make his brews. What these brews are good for no one has determined, but the strange and usually unpleasant odors which issue from Jon's hut contribute to his isolation. No one has the stomach to build within several hundred yards of his hut.

Jon has created a potion to control rats which he is trying to sell to the miller. Other potions in his possession are 1) *potion to lure fish* (only works 30% of the time), 2) *potion to repel crows* (40% chance will attract them) which he sells to farmers, 3) *potion to cure warts*, and 4) *potion X* (it's a potion of invisibility, but as no one's ever been around when Jon's tried it out and he doesn't own a mirror, he has no idea what it does).

**0% tell, 0% rpt, 25% help — 2 doses of invisibility lasting 20 minutes each — 45% characters will notice vial if nosing around.

4. Res, Mayor Algenon Shodwhite. Miller Shodwhite (2) and his family — wife Gertrude, son [Reginald], and



daughter [Matilda], live here. The mayor is the town's richest man, due to the success of his mill, and also acts as the local tax collector, judge, constable, sheriff, Baronial Agent, and any other official capacity needed. He is a very good miller and only passingly competent at the other offices. His tax tallies have been off for the last thirteen years, but as the amounts sent to the baron are so trifling, no one from court has ever bothered to audit him. A stout, florid faced man, Mayor Shodwhite is given to holding forth nightly at the Riverside Inn (34), where he can be heard speaking on nearly any topic imaginable.

Gertrude is a dowdy woman of ample girth who seems to have one occupation in life, making Algenon suffer for some past indiscretion. Any who pass the mayor's home late in the evening can hear her bellowing at Algenon about his "idling away the night."

Reginald has dreams of taking service in the baron's army, an idea which brings down the wrath of both his parents whenever he mentions it. Reginald is a homely boy of indifferent wits who has failed miserably as a miller's apprentice, and his father is just about resigned to his becoming the first Shodwhite in generations not to be a miller or town mayor.

For reasons not understood by anyone, Matilda is both bright and beautiful, a young girl already the object of much male attention in the area. She is keeping company at present with Nelson Grooms, the son of Herbert the Boatwright (28).

Buried under the floor boards of the home is Algenon's treasure: gems and gold amounting to over 2500 GP.

****Outlaws:** Silent Kamal, acting the part of a servant (D). **Event:** As the mill is his livelihood and his daughter is a hostage, the mayor will not let anyone go to the mill and will use any excuse to hurry player characters out of town. He will offer no threats, but he will make up stories like crazy about treasure, jobs in other locations, gold in the streets of north, etc. It should be apparent to the player characters that something strange is going on, but no hint of what it is will come from the mayor. There is a 15% chance Foul Luther will be at the Mayor's home during the day the first time player characters go there, and he will be introduced to the player characters as the mayor's cousin. 95% rpt, 2% help, 0% tell.

5. Farmer, Hoggie Burns. Hoggie Burns and his sons — Wilfred, Sigfred, and Jake — live here. All three Burnses are tall, broad-shouldered, rugged looking fellows. A widower, Hoggie has allowed the house to become terribly rundown, though the farm is still profitable. This has caused the mayor (4) and Henny Briggs (7) to both become upset, as they own the two nicest homes in Hoxley. They don't mind the lack of paint upon the building as much as the goats living in the house. The level of complaints tends to increase and decrease depending upon wind direction. The three boys are all good workers and Wilfred, the eldest, is looking about for a wife and a farm of his

own, in that order. **95% help, % rpt, 5% tell.

6. Shrine, Silban. This is the local shrine to Silban, the "Bringer of Harvests," worshipped by most of the locals as the "Earth Mother," goddess of the harvest and forests. Brother Timothy, a red-headed, bushy bearded, thin fellow, oversees the care of the shrine and leads worship services when needed. At all other times he is in the Riverside Inn (34). While he is a non-drinker, he loves to go there and argue with Algenon Shodwhite (4) — and anyone else around — about most any topic. Timothy has a warhammer and a coat of leather armor in a chest "somewhere" in the shrine loft. **0% rpt, 5% help, 15% tell.

7. Farmer, Henny Briggs. Farmer Briggs is the richest farmer in Hoxley, owning his own full team of horses which he rents out to the other farmers when needed. He also is the only man in town to "oppose the policies" of the mayor (4), which is to say he wants the job. As no one else in town cares, he hasn't been able to develop any political clout. Henny is a thin, small fellow with a receding hairline. He lives alone and is something of a regular at the Sleeping Wolf Tavern (20). He has a hired man, Malcom, who lives with the horses and does most of the heavy work in town.

****Event:** Henny will offer the player characters 2000 GP in reward to chase the bandits from town before Obara arrives, as long as he gets credit (he wants to be mayor). And he will order his hired



hand Malcom to help out. He has a list of who is inside the mill (except Ronald) and knows where each bandit is. 0% rpt, 80% help, 100% tell.

8. Store, Odds & Ends. Jeremiah Crugle — an affable, bushy blond-haired, itinerant trader — and his wife Marcella run this general store. Jeremiah is out selling to distant farmers and villages about half the time (50% chance he is absent), at which times his wife and son, [Barney], run things. Marcella is a happy, slightly heavy woman of middle years, and Barney is a bright youngster of thirteen years who wants to be a trader like his father. Jeremiah buys whatever he can from passing caravans (that they'll sell cheaply) and tends to have an odd selection of items around for such a small village. There are always broken, repairable weapons about (75% chance of normal class weapons), and he sells them cheaply. There are also a lot of "one of a kind" artifacts purchased from travelers, many of which Jeremiah has no idea of what they do. There is a 45% chance of any normal, non-weapon, non-armor, non-magical item being for sale in the store, and a 10% chance of a used weapon or armor (roll once for each request by type) being for sale. Among his goods at present are: 1) a broken spinning wheel; 2) a book in an unknown language (*Book of Healing*, written in the temple language of those who follow LaTimsa the White); 3) an intricately feathered headband worth 1000 GP if sold to a collector in a city; 4) an interesting, carved lump of clay with an

undiscovered Dragon's Breath Stone (a gem of many colors found only in the northern jungles) inside, worth 4000 GP uncut. **10% rpt, 45% tell, 0% help.

9. Barn. Henny Briggs keeps his farming equipment, his team of four plowhorses, and one riding horse here. His hired hand Malcom — a dark, heavy-browed man who scowls a lot — sleeps in the loft and is always ready (and more than able) to fight off horse thieves. Malcom is a very strong ex-fighter and keeps an old but serviceable shortsword in the loft, as well as a leather shield. **5% rpt, 50% tell, 90% help.

10. Carpenter/Lumberer. Horace DeGrace, a rotund bald man and the local carpenter, lives over his shop. His wife Rowena, a thin, stern-looking woman, keeps house for him and their sons, Arn and Bill. Both sons, heavy-set and blond, are apprenticed to their father. Horace also harvests trees from the surrounding forests when his carpentry business is slow, and when he has stockpiled enough lumber, he sells it to passing caravans. His business is steady if not spectacular. He keeps a chest with 322 GP buried under the floor of his workroom. Arn is nearly old enough to become a journeyman carpenter and Bill has just become an apprentice, being only 14 years of age.

**0% tell, 10% rpt, 5% help. They will appear very frightened.

11. Farmer. Richard Shandon and his twin brother Ronald live here with their wives, Margret and Betty. Both have infant children, John and [Joanna] respectively. The brothers — tall, good-looking men with thick black beards — are presently looking for a good piece of farmland to start a second farm, though there is some tension between them over who is going to move out. The two wives, both pretty brown-haired women, get along well. Their garden behind the house provides Hoxley with most of its cabbage and turnips. **0% tell, 5% rpt, 10% help.

12. Farmer. Jonathan Semple, father of Ralph (13) and Albert (14), lives here with his wife Jennette and his younger children, 15-year-old Robert and 13-year-old Charlotte. Jonathan is a craggy-faced, grey haired authoritarian who runs his family with an iron hand. His two eldest sons still bow to their father's every wish, and all three families farm a common area to the east, under Jonathan's direction. **20% tell, 0% rpt, 0% help. Jonathan will order Albert not to help if approached.

13. Farmer. Ralph Semple, son of Jonathan (12) and brother to Albert (14), his wife Rebecca and their children Sarah and Jenn, live here. Ralph, an otherwise happy-looking man, is still under his father's control. Rebecca, a pretty but stern-looking woman, would like her husband to stand up to his father now and again. Ralph is the best farmer in the family and does most of the work (his father has arthritis and his brother is not very bright). Ralph, an ex-fighter, was a soldier for a few years and has a usable broadsword hanging over the fireplace. **40% tell, 2% rpt, 5% help.

14. Farmer. Albert Semple, son to Jonathan (12) and brother to Ralph (13), lives here with his wife Gretchen and their infant son Morgan. Albert, shorter and stouter than Ralph, leaves the farming to the others whenever he can get away to hunt. He is the town's best hunter and is excellent with his longbow. Gretchen, a plain but warm and friendly woman, is unhappy with the way Albert lets his father order him around, but Albert is unwilling to talk back to him. **40% tell, 1% rpt, 80% help (unless Jonathan has ordered him not to).

15. Farmer. Garret Mullins, a quiet dark-eyed man, his wife Ann, daughter Mary, and son Garth live here. Garret's father, Morris, lives with them, occupying a small room to the side of the house. Garret grows vegetables in the large garden outside his home, which accounts for the largest part of his income. Otherwise, he and his son Garth work on other farms as day laborers. Garth, who is quiet like his father, is a fair bowman who provides the family with game. Ann and Mary work as seamstresses to add to their income. Garret and Morris are veterans of the baron's army, and are expert (if somewhat rusty) swordsmen. Both have broadswords, shields, and leather armor locked away in a chest. **10% tell, 0% rpt, 90% help.

16. Res. Tom Jenks, a homely but well thought-of man in town, is the stableman and handyman for the Sleeping Wolf Tavern (20) and lives here. He is courting Susan Woolfrey, daughter of Solomon Woolfrey the Boatwright (28), who appreciates Tom's gentle nature. Tom cares for animals left at the Sleeping Wolf stable (21) and does general repairs around the tavern. He supplements his income by helping Horace DeGrace (10) from time to time. **90% tell (if bribed), 10% rpt, 10% help. He will be at (20) during the day.



17. *Farmer.* Randolph Swilvey and his family — wife Carla, son Randolph the Younger, and daughters Hilda and [Drusilla] — are newcomers to Hoxley, having been in town only a year. All brown-haired and dark-eyed, they purchased their farm from Harley Brown (18) and found the land well suited for growing... rocks. After a lean year of clearing the land, they've turned things around and are doing fairly well (much to Harley's chagrin); their farm is now out-producing his. Carla and the girls are excellent spinners and make thread from wool purchased from local farmers and herdsman. Randolph was a caravan guard in his youth and is expert with a shortbow, crossbow and falchion. Randolph the Younger is also an excellent bowman, having learned from his father. He has a falchion, leather armor, and a crossbow. Both Randolphs have shortbows. **3% tell, 90% rpt, 0% help. Very afraid for his children.

18. *Farmer.* Harley Brown and his wife Helen live here with their son Morgan. Harley is a conniving fellow with a reputation as a hard bargainer, despite his open face and blue-eyed innocent looks. He has never cheated anyone outright, but comes so close on occasion that only his large size and capabilities as a brawler have kept him from being assaulted. His son Morgan takes after his father in size and strength, as well as brawling skills, and is something of a town bully. *0% tell, 5% rpt, 75% help.

19. *Farmer.* James Greggor, a widower, and his son Michael run this farm. James is a hard working, quiet man of ruddy complexion and deep brown eyes; he is well respected by nearly everyone in Hoxley. Michael is as hard-working as his father (whom he resembles) and their farm does well. Michael is expecting the arrival of Alice, his fiancée, sometime soon, and is building an extra room onto the house in anticipation. He met Alice years ago when traveling south with his father; the lovers have been corresponding ever since. Aside from Algenon Shodwhite (4) and Brother Timothy (6), Michael is the only other person in town who can read and write with ease, having learned from Brother Timothy. Michael is seen as a likely candidate for the next mayor when Shodwhite retires, as everyone agrees that Reginald Shodwhite just isn't suited for the job. **30% tell, 0% rpt, 90% help.

20. *Tavern, The Sleeping Wolf.* Algren Barrett, a stern faced, narrow eyed, former soldier-of-fortune, runs this tavern, the newer of the two in town.

Most of its clients are travelers, as the locals tend to frequent the Riverside Inn (34). Barrett runs a loud, happy inn when caravans stop over in Hoxley, complete with pretty tavern wenches who have been known to offer certain "accommodations" to travelers with gold to spend. Algren arrived in Hoxley several years ago after surviving an expedition in the northern jungles. He is close-mouthed about himself, though he has said that he chose Hoxley to settle in because "it's quiet and my family would never think of looking for me here." Every time a newcomer arrives at the inn, Algren lurks behind a door into his office until he's certain it's not a relative of his. No one knows what he did to become the black sheep of his family, but everyone agrees it must have been something spectacular. Algren has an understanding with several of the caravan owners who pass through Hoxley on a regular basis. He offers discounts on rooms for repeaters, and also holds "special merchandise" for others to pick up. He is, in fact, a major fence for stolen goods passing between the nearby cities. His "relatives" are the Mockers (the thieves' guild) of the baron's city, and he is accused of betraying the Upright Man, head of the Mockers, to the baron's guard. He sleeps with a dagger under his pillow, a crossbow under his bed, and a bull mastiff (an ex-warhound) named Grorsfang never leaves his side. The real reason he took up innkeeping is that he's not a very good thief. His mistress, Natasha, is a former assassin who escaped Carse with Algren. Natasha has black hair, dusky skin, and while not pretty in the common sense, is considered very attractive by most men who see her. Anyone who resembles a member of the Mockers (2% chance for any player's character entering the inn for the first time; 15% chance for thieves) will be poisoned by Natasha at the first opportunity. Algren has a small chest of 1200 GP hidden in his room, and the bulk of his treasure, 20,000 GP, is secreted in an oil-skin wrapped chest lying at the bottom of his well outside the inn. Algren is an expert thief and is excellent with dagger, crossbow, and can command Grorsfang to attack. Natasha, a very good assassin, is an expert with poisons as well as an experienced and capable courtesan.

****Outlaws:** Foul Luther, Harland Quick (D/N)*; Jurgen Holt**; Swinegarth (N). **Townpeople:** Algren Barrett [20], Natasha [20] (D/N), Tom Jenks [16] (D), Richard and Ronald Shandon [11] (D), Hilmut Broom [22] (N), Nelson Criss [Out-of-town farmer,

only after Timed Event #3] (D/N). **Event:** Any attempt to discuss plans here will mean Algren Barrett turns in the PCs to the bandits. If the characters enter this inn after Jergen Holt has come to town (see below), there is a 40% chance they will be recruited by Luther, as long as there are no slavers (he's a former slave, remember) in the group.

21. Stables (S2). These are the stables for the Sleeping Wolf Inn (20). Guests' mounts are stabled here, and all services are provided by Tom Jenks (16). ****Characters will notice an abnormally large number of horses stabled here. No one is about.**

22. Res. Hilmut Broom the sheepherder lives here with his wife Gertrude and son [Rafe]. Hilmut is a short, slight man who is chronically sunburned. His wife is a happy, homely woman who likes to talk. The Brooms graze their small herd on the meadow to the west, clearing away the animals on Market Day. The townsfolk don't mind the sheep being this close to town as they keep the meadow cropped close. Hilmut also trains sheep dogs on the side, mostly as a hobby for there is little demand for them. He has a pair of sturdy guard hounds which watch over the flock each night. Gertrude cards wool which she sells to Carla Swilvey (17) to spin. ****50% tell, 5% rpt, 75% help.**

23. Res. Arthur Klugle, the town jack-of-all-trades, lives here. He helps out as a farm hand, fisherman, laborer, and general handy-man around town. He lives alone and is a happy, large boned man with a booming laugh who everyone likes. Arthur occasionally visits the Riverside Inn, though he doesn't drink. He avoids it because when he used to drink he flew into violent rages. He is a former caravan guard who is skilled with sword and polearm. He keeps no weapons in his home, but is very formidable in hand-to-hand fighting because of his size and awesome strength. ****10% tell, 10% rpt, 70% help — he will be at #34 during the night.**

24. Res. Wendle Kincade, a crusty ex-soldier and occasional assistant to Jorge the Smith (25), lives here. He speaks slowly and tends to mumble his words a bit. He is a former sharpener of weapons in the army who now spends much of his time sharpening tools and the occasional weapons brought him by the locals and caravans passing through town. Wendle is expert with a dagger and has a broadsword, shield, and jack armor in his room. ****50% tell, 5% rpt, 80% help.**

25. Smithy. Jorge, the town smith, lives and works here. Jorge is a quiet man, tall and well muscled. He is married to Lewella, a sour faced woman who is always nagging him to build a home removed from the forge. Jorge is helped by his son Bascolm, who is growing to match his father in size, and by Wendle Kincade (24) from time to time. Jorge is very strong. ****5% tell, 5% rpt, 0% help — but will help if the fighting has already gotten started.**

26. Healer/Herbalist. Granny Shanks, a dried up, wizened old crone, is the local healer and lives here with her thirteen cats. Despite her grizzled appearance, she is a warm, kindly woman who is well liked by everyone in Hoxley. Granny grows all manner of herbs in the garden behind her house, from which she makes poultices, potions, and medicines. She has a fair amount of talent and can cure most any common ailment as well as set broken bones and sew up minor cuts. She is always on the lookout for strange herbs and mosses, though she can't pay very much (1-6 SP per item). When not at home or in her garden, she can be found in the marshes looking for herbs. She is the only person in town who can understand Odd Jon (3), and she seems oblivious to the smell of his hut. ****100% tell, 0% rpt, 0% help — will give the characters two doses of sleeping potion which has a 15% detection chance and lasts 6 hours.**

27. Res. Harmond Harguen, a fisherman, lives here with his wife Lila and his daughters, Rachel and [Lauren]. Harmond is a leathery faced man of wiry build. He owns his own boat and hires on occasional help from time to time (20% chance he will hire a stranger for 1-6 days work). Both girls are of marriageable age, but as they are rather homely, there are no takers in town. Both are sweet tempered like their mother, and talented cooks and housekeepers. Even if he doesn't have work, Harmond might invite handsome young men to spend the night to give his daughters a chance at husbands (20 + % depending upon character's appearance). ****5% tell, 85% rpt, 0% help — Rachel will tell the characters if her father reports them.**

28. Boatwright. Herbert the Boatwright builds and repairs boats for the local fisherman as well as repairing the occasional boat passing along this branch of the river. He does quality work at fair prices, and is helped in his work by his son Nelson, who is presently keeping company with Matilda Shodwhite (4), daughter of Algenon the Miller. Herbert

and Nelson are both thick bodied, dark haired men with happy expressions most of the time. **10% tell, 5% rpt, Herbert 0% help, Nelson 85% help.

29. Cheesemaker. Samuel Garf is an enterprising man of middle years who has found a clever way to make his fortune. He buys whatever cows' and goats' milk is available in town and makes a unique and tasty cheese which he sells to passing caravans and the local taverns. Samuel is tall and gaunt, and is always rubbing his hands together when nervous. Samuel's relatively sudden wealth has caused him to become overly suspicious of strangers, thinking someone will rob him sooner or later. He has 846 GP hidden behind a false stone in his fireplace. **0% tell, 10% rpt, 0% help; he's obviously terrified.

30. Res. Maxwell Turney, a fisherman, lives here with his wife Juliana and his children — Natalya, Horace, and [George]. Maxwell is red haired, green eyed, and of average build. His children all resemble his wife, being dark haired and brown eyed. He owns his own boat and is quite adept at his work. He also knows the currents along this stretch of river and how to navigate the marsh across the river. **0% tell, 15% rpt, 10% help — his wife and children will burst into tears.

31. Potter. Jaxon Greggson, a quiet, thin man, is the town potter. He spends the time to find the best clay around and his pots are all of the finest quality. He sells them at bargain prices. He lives with his wife Louise. They have no children, and Jaxon is looking for an apprentice. **0% tell, 5% rpt, 0% help.

32. Leatherworker. Gerard Redmond, a stocky, black-bearded man, is the town tanner and leatherworker. Due to the strong odors of the tanning agents used, he tans his leather down near the creek (35). He often spend his evenings at the Riverside Inn (34) and is a somewhat accomplished lute player though he is self-taught.

**0% tell, 5% rpt, 0% help — will confirm story if told by characters.

33. Fowler. Martin the Fowler lives here with his wife Wendy and their children Luke, Griff, and [Beth]. Martin is a quick, slight man with prematurely grey hair. His wife is pretty, with blond hair and blue eyes, and the children are all bright and happy. Besides hunting marsh birds, he makes and repairs nets for the local fisherman as well as himself. **0% tell, 0% rpt, 75% help — will help

but they aren't fighters.

34. Inn. The Riverside Inn (L2, F3). This is the oldest inn in Hoxley. Jonathan Burris caters to most of the locals as well as a few travelers who want a more sedate lodging than in the Sleeping Wolf (20). Jonathan is a stout, happy man of advancing years, and when not working can be found in the tap room, smoking a long pipe and ready to hoist a flagon of ale and converse with anyone handy. His wife, Anita, is the best cook in Hoxley, and dinner is always first rate. Josh the stableboy lives out back and tends the guests' mounts.

****Outlaws:** Avery, Zack (D); Rolly, Kamal (N); **Townspeople:** Jonathan and Anita Burris [34] (D/N), Brother Timothy [6] (D/N); Algenon Shodwhite [4] (N); Henny Briggs [7] (D); Jorge the Smith [25] (N); Gerard Redmond [32] (N). **Event:** No one will speak of what is going as there is always an outlaw present. If fighting breaks out in the Inn, Brother Timothy will jump in against the outlaws, and if any fighting breaks out in the streets, he will run and arm himself in 8 minutes, then join in.

35. Tannery. Gerard Redmond the tanner (32) does his tanning here. His apprentice, Harvey, a very intelligent but lazy young man, sleeps here to keep wild animals away from the curing hides. He is great with the shortbow and hunts whenever he has the time. **80% tell, 0% rpt, 80% help.

HARD TIMES IN HOXLEY

HARD TIMES IN HOXLEY is an adventure scenario designed for four to eight player characters of low level. If more or less characters or higher level characters are to be played, the Gamemaster (GM) should adjust the number and levels of bandits accordingly. The GM should be familiar with the village of Hoxley, the non-player characters (NPCs) in Hoxley, and the scenario before attempting to use this scenario. Understanding the situation in Hoxley and the normal attitude of NPCs is vital.

A rationale for the characters' presence in Hoxley has been provided for by including a NPC, Ronald (see below).

There are two types of events in this game, *Timed Events* and *Keyed Events*. The Timed Events are those that occur at a pre-established time, regardless of where the player characters are and what they are doing (exception: if the player characters have created situations which make the Timed Event impossible, then

skip it; nothing happens until the next event is scheduled). □ Example: if a NPC is scheduled to spread a rumor at sundown the second day, but a player character has killed him the first day, then no rumor is spread. Keyed Events are those that occur when prompted by a player character's actions. □ Example: if any player character enters a certain building, a lookout activates a kidnap attempt on that character three hours later.

Background

A bandit chieftain, Obara the Dread, has been ravaging the countryside in the Hoxley area for several months. The day before the arrival of the player characters, a group of seven bandits appeared in town, informing the townsfolk that they were members of Obara's band, reputed to number over eighty brigands. They said they were an advance unit and Obara would follow with his entire company two days after the player characters arrival. A caravan, carrying some special cargo, is due to pass through the day Obara arrives. No one in town knows what this cargo is supposed to be, nor do any of the bandits.

To insure the cooperation of the town until his chieftain arrives, Obara's chief lieutenant, Foul Luther, has locked up some of the town's children in the mill (2). They've threatened to burn the mill down with the children in it if anyone causes any trouble. All those with children in the mill and the miller/mayor are cooperating. Those without children seem unsure of what to do, for even though the fighting men in town and the rough farmers outnumber the bandits, the fear of reprisals from Obara and for the safety of the children keeps everyone under control.

What Foul Luther doesn't know is that Obara's entire company of bandits was destroyed by elements of the baronial garrison before the bandit chief could come to Hoxley to capture a caravan reputedly carrying gems. Obara was executed publicly the day before the player characters arrive in town. Additionally, two other caravans will pass through Hoxley the same day as the gem caravan.

Bandit Specifics

1. Foul Luther. Foul Luther is the senior lieutenant in Obara's company. He is a former baronial soldier who was sold into slavery for murdering another soldier. He escaped from the quarry where he worked and joined Obara's band, quickly rising in rank. He is without fear or compassion and would burn the town's children without a second's thought. He is a dark haired, dark eyed

man with a drooping moustache and a violent temper. A prominent scar on his cheek shows where he cut away his slave brand with his own knife. Luther, an excellent fighter, wears chain armor whenever he is not asleep, and uses a broadsword and metal shield.

2. Silent Kamal. Silent Kamal is from the far south by ancestry, evidenced by his dark skin. He is a mute, his tongue having been cut out when he was a slave. He is fiercely loyal to Luther, as Luther took Kamal with him when escaping from slavery and fought a duel with Obara's former lieutenant over whether Kamal should be allowed to join the bandits or sold back into slavery. Kamal, a very good fighter, is a giant man, nearly seven feet tall, who wears lacquered leather armor of strange design. He carries a falcion and has exceptional strength.

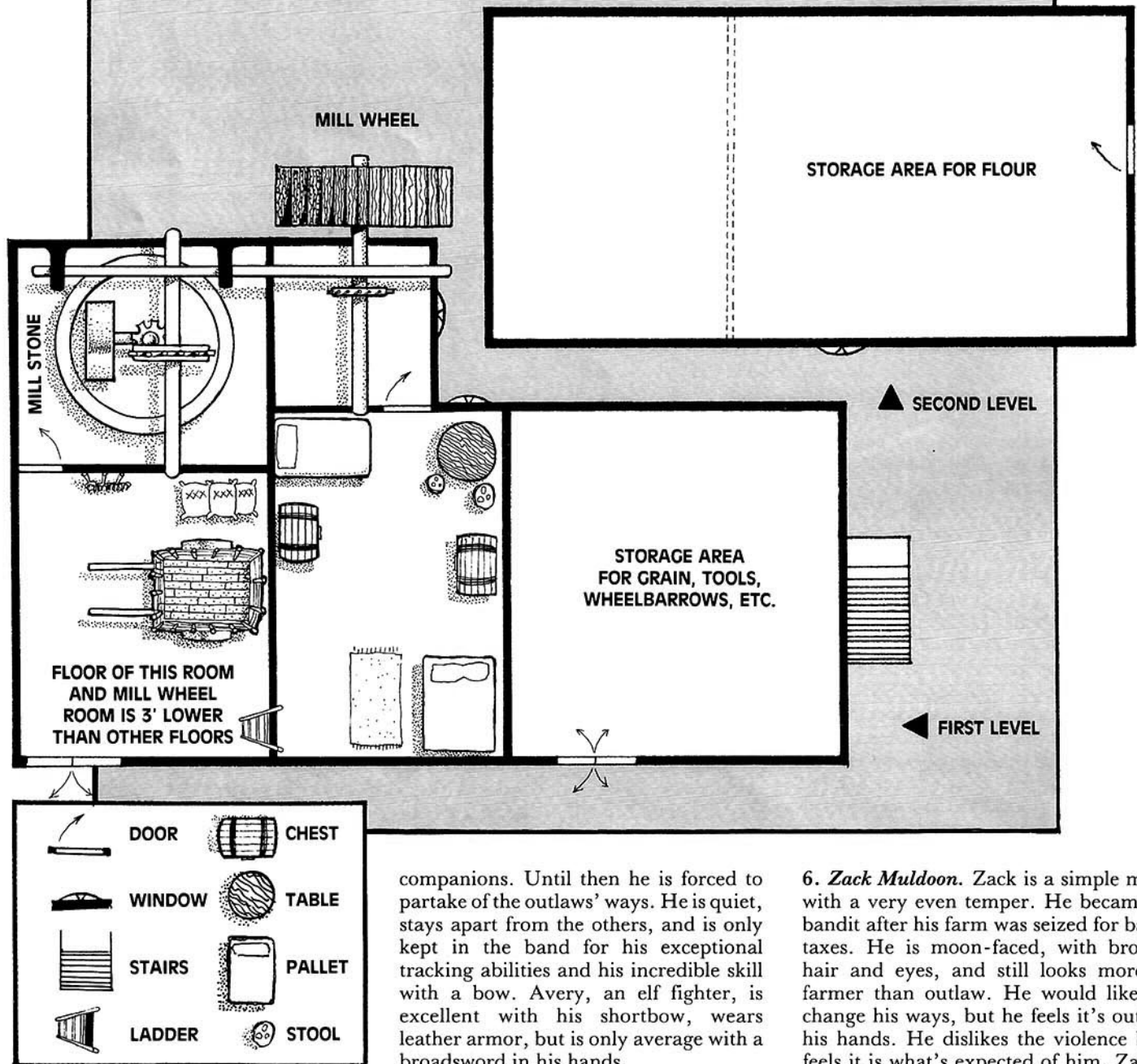
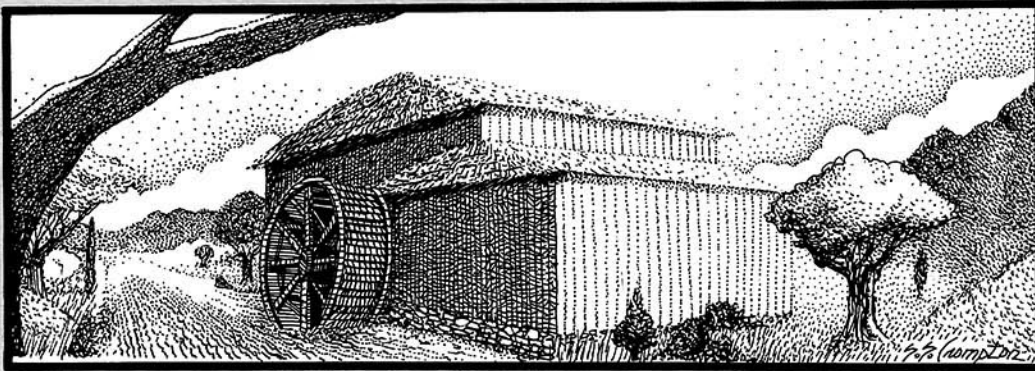
3. Harland Quick. Harland is a thin, weasel-faced, little man who is as fast and deadly as a viper. He is also Obara's secret agent in Luther's band, as the brigand chieftain doesn't trust any of his lieutenants. He doesn't care for Luther and is just waiting to catch him in a foul-up so he can take his place. He will tend to ignore any activity by the townspeople that causes Luther trouble, though he will prevent them from disrupting Obara's plans to capture the caravan. Something that would cause enough trouble to discredit Luther but would not force the townspeople to drive out the brigands would suit Harland perfectly. Harland, a better than average thief, wears leather armor.

4. Swinegarth. Swinegarth is an ugly, fat, loud man with the strength of a giant. He is hard to keep under control and only obeys orders because he fears Luther's quick blade and quicker temper. He hates Kamal, for the fighter is the only man in Obara's band who rivals Swinegarth in strength. Swinegarth is prone to drunkenness and rape, and has already accosted several of the townswomen, though Luther has mostly kept him in line so far. Swinegarth, a good fighter, dresses out in leather armor and uses a hand-and-a-half (bastard) sword.

5. Avery of the Green Heart. Tall, slender with light brown hair and green eyes, Avery is a renegade elf warped to outlawry by a curse laid on him over a century ago. He is prevented from speaking of the curse, but he will hint at it to any cleric he meets, hoping to find someone to remove the curse. Should the curse be lifted, he would gladly kill all his



LAYOUT OF THE MILL IN HOXLEY



companions. Until then he is forced to partake of the outlaws' ways. He is quiet, stays apart from the others, and is only kept in the band for his exceptional tracking abilities and his incredible skill with a bow. Avery, an elf fighter, is excellent with his shortbow, wears leather armor, but is only average with a broadsword in his hands.

6. Zack Muldoon. Zack is a simple man with a very even temper. He became a bandit after his farm was seized for back taxes. He is moon-faced, with brown hair and eyes, and still looks more a farmer than outlaw. He would like to change his ways, but he feels it's out of his hands. He dislikes the violence but feels it is what's expected of him. Zack,

a good fighter, wears leather armor and uses a broadsword and shield.

7. Rolly Gilfren. Rolly is a hot tempered, blond young man, new to the brigands and eager to prove his worth. As a result he is quick to provoke any fight which will raise his stature in the eyes of his companions. He is impulsive, quick to anger, and what he lacks in fighting skills he makes up for in youthful enthusiasm. Rolly uses a shortsword, shortbow, dagger, wears leather armor, and is only an average fighter.

8. Jergen Holt. (This character is only active after Timed Event #7 below occurs). Jergen is a sickly looking, pale young man of little ability, other than his speed. He is often used as a runner by Obara and has developed the talent for memorizing messages. Jergen is good with a shortbow and dagger but poor with a sword and wears leather armor.

The Situation

The player characters have agreed to be bodyguards for Ronald, the nephew of an important merchant from the city to the north. Ronald is nine years old, very bright, and something of a pain, being talkative, nosy, and opinionated. The boy is being sent away to stay with his uncle whom he dislikes intensely, and Ronald has been uncooperative every step of the way. Ronald will run away the night before the party arrives in Hoxley, and his tracks will lead to the village.

When Luther's men rounded up the children, Ronald blundered into town and was taken to the mill with the other kids. Only the kids in the mill and the outlaws know Ronald's there, and only the local kids in the mill know Ronald's not a local. None of the villagers know a thing about Ronald being in town, for no one's seen him.

When the player characters arrive in town after Timed Event #1 below near sundown, they will find the populace subdued and closed-mouthed. No one will give a hint anything is out of the ordinary the first evening the characters are in town. If they ask for rooms at the Riverside Inn (34) they will be told the inn is full and sent to the Sleeping Wolf (20) where Luther is staying, so the player characters can be watched. From this point on, the GM must use discretion in deciding what takes place beyond the timed and triggered events outlined below.

PCs will be given a list of rumors common to the area they just came from, many of which are false, and the GM must decide how to work them in to the preparation for the adventure. Those marked false may be changed to true for the purpose of creating other, new adventures around Hoxley.

Rumors

1. A caravan was lost coming out of north. It was believed taken by a roving band of Moredhel (Dark Elves). *True.*
2. A band of outlaws has been active in

the area. *True.*

3. The northern garrison has fought an engagement with a famous outlaw, Obara, within the last week, destroying the band and hanging Obara. *True.**

4. A caravan was robbed near Hoxley thirty years ago and much of its treasure was buried. *False.*

5. Joralth, a famous wizard, is rumored to have been buried with his wealth and magic somewhere in this area. *False.*

6. Somewhere in the forest to the southeast of Hoxley, a magic spring is reputed to exist. *False.*

7. A shipment of valuable gems is due from the north sometime within the next month. *True.*

8. A ship put in at port south a few weeks ago, carrying plague. It was burned and the crew quarantined until they died or survived. *False.*

9. A strange light was seen burning deep within the forest to the east of Hoxley for five nights running, then suddenly stopped. No one knows what it was. *False.*

10. Business along the river is good this year and there are plenty of jobs to be had for workers. *True.*

* Repeating this rumor to any outlaw will



result in the rumor being reported to Luther as soon as possible. There is a 60% chance Luther will disbelieve it. If he believes it, he will react as in Timed Event #7 below.

Timed Events and Location of NPCs

Note: There is a 30% chance each time player characters are in the street of being approached by Henny Briggs as in Keyed Event #7, above.

1. Day 1 The party awakens to discover Ronald is missing. He has slipped away during the night and has left a lumpy backpack in his sleeping roll, which looks like a child until it's pulled back. After searching the area, the party finds signs leading to a path in the woods that parallel the main highway. Following the path, the player characters find themselves at the edge of fields, across which they can see the town of Hoxley. All signs so far point to Ronald having come this way. They come up the south road into town.

2. Day 1 — Sundown — player characters arrive in Hoxley and are sent to the Sleeping Wolf. Luther will engage the player characters in conversation, checking them out. He will say nothing about himself, other than he is the Mayor's cousin.

3. Day 2 — Morning — When the player character(s) first leave the inn, they will discover Swinegarth dragging off a man towards the mayor's house. If they ask, they will be told the man is a friend of the mayor's cousin. The man, Nelson Criss, is a farmer from some distance out of town and will say nothing, appearing to be frightened. He will then go the the Sleeping Wolf Inn until the caravan arrives. He has been told what will happen to him if he speaks and like all other farmers in the area, is terrified of the mill being burned as it is necessary for his livelihood. If player characters bully him when no outlaws are around, he will spill his guts, but only after several threats have been made. Until then, he knows nothing.

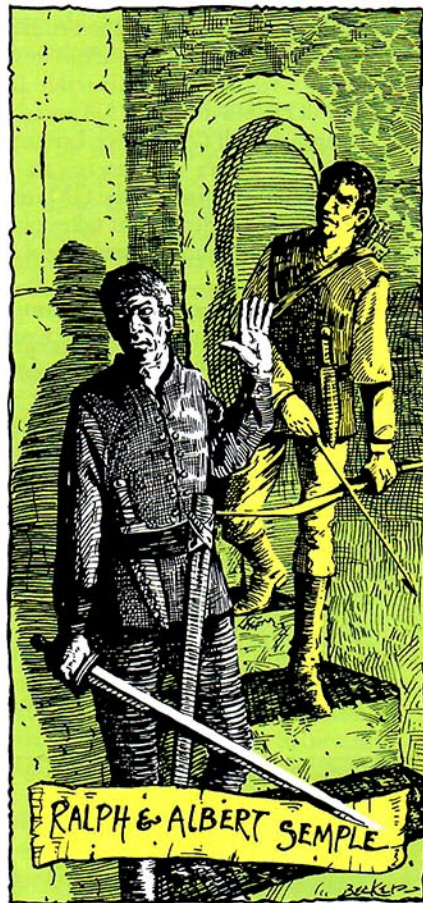
4. Day 2 — Mid-day — Player character's notice everyone in town is staying close to home or at one of the inns. No one is working a field, at the forge, tending the herds, etc.

5. Day 2 — Afternoon — A ruckus in the street will cause any arriving player character to see Foul Luther (or Harland Quick if Luther is somewhere else) breaking up a fight between Rolly Gilfren and Morgan Brown. Rolly threatens to kill Morgan, saying "As soon as the boss gets here and we're finished with this pest hole village, I'll get you." He is ordered back to the mill, and

the player characters are not noticed by the outlaws in the crowd unless they hang about or call attention to themselves. If noticed go to event #6 below.

6. Day 2 — Midnight — Barney Crugle slips away from the mill and finds the player characters in their rooms, telling all.

7. Day 3 — Sunrise — Jurgen Holt arrives with news of Obara's defeat. Foul Luther will try to recruit the player



characters to his side, offering shares in the caravan. If refused, he will say "no hard feelings" and set a trap for one hour (or first chance after one hour) later when all eight bandits will ambush the player characters (if they outnumber them). If he can pick the player characters off one at a time, he will; otherwise, it's an all out assault. If the player characters react badly to the proposition, it's an all out attack immediately by all the outlaws but those at the Mill.

8. Day 3 — Morning — First Caravan arrives in Hoxley (Roll percentile dice: 01-50 = Caravan A; 51-85 = Caravan B; 86-95 = Caravan C; 96+ = Patrol)*.

9. Day 3 — Mid-day — Second Caravan arrives in Hoxley (Roll percentile dice; 01-25 = Caravan A; 26-85 = Caravan B; 86-95 = Caravan

C; 95+ = Patrol)*.

10. Day 3 — Mid-afternoon — Third Caravan arrives in Hoxley (01-05 = Caravan A; 06-20 = Caravan B; 21-95 = Caravan C; 95+ = Patrol)*.

* Caravans: After a caravan is rolled, it is eliminated from further rolls. If it is rerolled, roll again. *Patrol consists of members of the baronial garrison and is large enough that Luther and the outlaws will get out of town.* If the player characters were not involved with Luther, there are no problems for them. If the player characters became involved with the outlaws in the plot to hit caravans, the player characters must deal with angry townsfolk and a patrol too large too defeat (if necessary because of heavy-weight, high level player characters, tell them it is a regiment).

Caravan A = Two wagons with drivers carrying pig iron scraps. Four guards, all average fighters, are wearing jack armor, armed with swords, spears, and shields. As soon as one is killed, the rest will flee.

Caravan B = Four wagons with drivers, carrying mixed goods: three bolts of fine silk worth 1000 GP each; a finely carved box of acacia wood worth 1000 GP; seven sacks of buckwheat flour worth 7 GP; five used shortbows worth 12 GP each (one is magic, +1); seventeen casks of wine worth 50 GP per cask; eleven bales of linen at 10 GP each; a box of nine books in foreign languages (one is a magician's book of common spells worth 5000 GP); the balance is to be dilled in by the GM, to fill four wagons with essentially useless trade goods. There are eight guards, 3 very good and the rest average positioned two per wagon, each armed with sword, leather armor, and shields. They will fight until three are killed, then they will flee.

Caravan C = Four wagons with drivers, carrying unmilled grain. Under the grain in wagon number three is a chest with 50,000 GP worth of mixed rare gemstones from the Sunken Lands. Eight guards, 4 very good and 4 good, are all wearing chain armor, carrying broadswords, shields, and shortbows. They will fight to the death.

End of Game

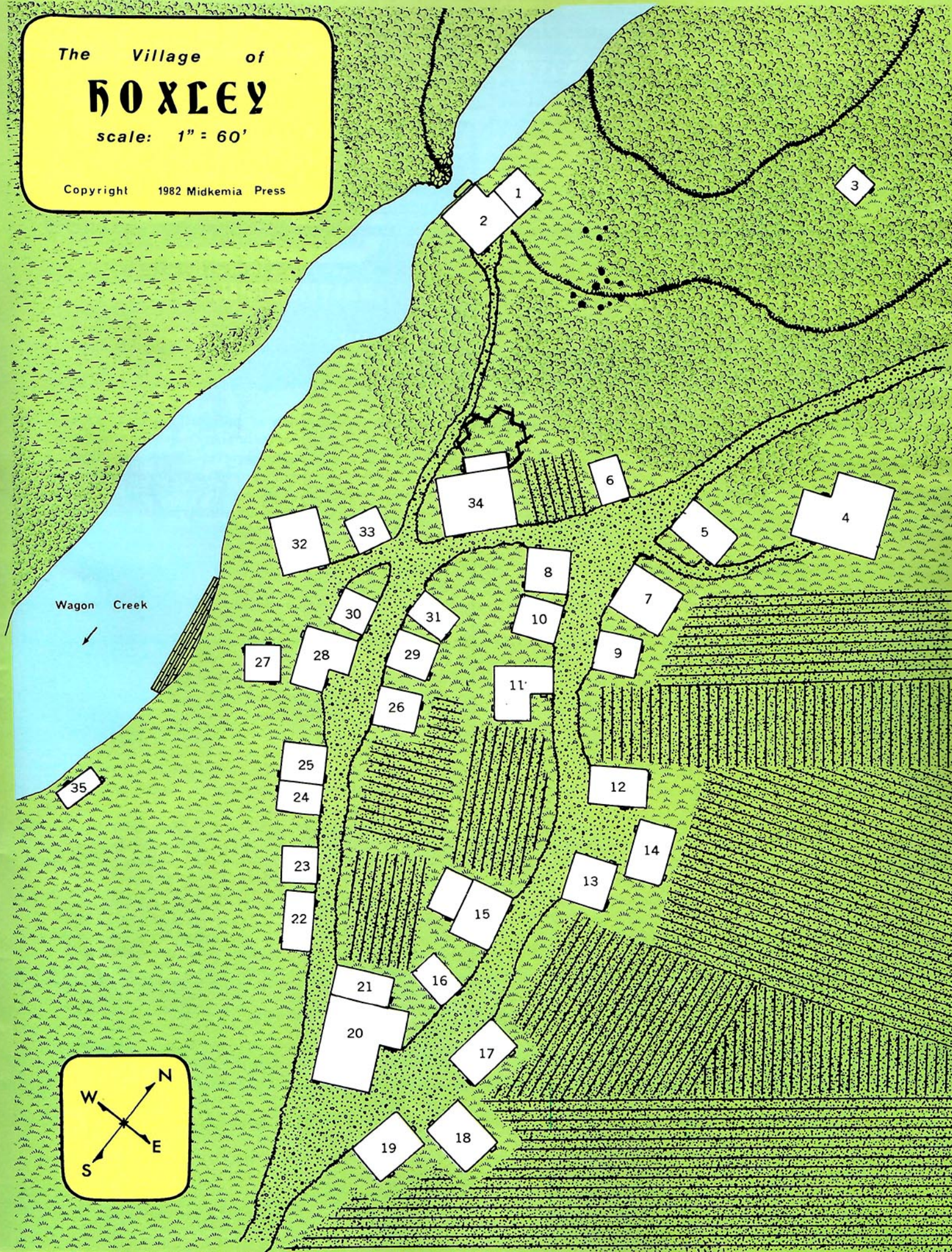
If the player characters defeat the outlaws, the townsfolk will give them 1000 GP in addition to what Henny Briggs offered. If the player characters join with Luther to take the caravan (and survive) Luther will turn on them (he doesn't want to split the loot) if he and his men outnumber the player characters. If there are more player characters, he will run off from them at the first chance. ■

The Village of

BOXLEY

scale: 1" = 60'

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TROLL • TEASERS

The Secret Agent's Alphabet

by Catherine DeMott

A's for Assassin, who's hopefully neat,
 B is for Bombing, which wrecks half a street,
 C's for Conceal, which we do with much skill,
 D is for Double, an agent we'd kill,
 E is for Eavesdrop, a way to gain news,
 F is for Fleeing, good route when you lose,
 G is for Garrote, a thin, useful wire,
 H, for Helicopter, a dexterous flier,
 I's for Information, what we all seek,
 J is for Judo, defense for the weak,
 K is for Killing, oft done for a fee,
 L is for Lockpick, an all-purpose key,
 M is for Marksman, one skilled with a gun,
 N is for Nightfall, when most work's begun,
 O's Operation, the task of the hour,
 P's for Plastique, an explosive of power,
 Q is for Quinine, a tropical drug,
 R is for Roundhouse, an arm-swinging slug,
 S is for Secret, which most our tasks are,
 T is for Triumph, a fast English car,
 U is for UZI, of machine guns the best,
 V is for Victim, quite often a pest,
 W's for Whisper, of speech a safe mode,
 X is for Xerox, for copying code,
 Y is for Yacht, and the cargo one stows,
 Z's for Zero-in, on targets and foes,
 And that's how the spy's secret alphabet goes.

Room for just two limericks — we'll have more next time, if you keep sending them in! Fantasy or spies, either one is okay! — Ed.

The inspector said "I admit
 This job does give me a fit.
 I have suspects galore,
 Motives, weapons and more,
 But no crimes; so, Captain, I quit!

—Greg Gordon

You may know my face: the name's Bond.
 Of gold, guns and girls I'm quite fond.

I really must dash —
 Could you lend me some cash?
 I lied; you're a fool, you've been conned!

—Peter Yearsley

The Adventure of the Nine Dwarves

by Richard A. Brooks

You have been sent down into the mines of Moria by King Durin VI. The squad you command is to enter a branch mine operated by nine dwarves and arrest the sorter and the two wheelbarrow men. They have kept back part of the tribute owed to the King.

You need to question all nine to find the guilty ones. Fortunately the guilty dwarves lie about everything except their names, while the innocent dwarves always tell the truth. Dwarves aren't very talkative, so you only have the statements below to use to find the criminals.

Can you pair up each dwarf with his job for your report to the King?

1. Bifur: Fundin is the sorter.
2. Narvi: Dwalin is not 4th pick.
3. Narvi: Thrór is not 1st pick, 3rd pick, or 1st shovel.
4. Grór: Kili is 3rd pick.
5. Grór: Bifur says Dwalin is not 2nd pick.
6. Fundin: Ori is 4th pick.
7. Dwalin: Mim says Fundin is 3rd pick.
8. Dwalin: Kili says Thrór is 4th pick.
9. Kili: Mim is 1st pick.
10. Kili: Bifur is 4th pick.
11. Thrór: Kili is not 1st wheelbarrow.
12. Thrór: Fundin says Grór is not 1st pick.
13. Mim: Bifur is 2nd wheelbarrow.
14. Ori: Narvi is 2nd shovel.

ANSWER TO The Adventure of the Nine Dwarves:
 Dwalin is 1st pick. Thrór is 2nd pick. Fundin is 3rd pick. Ori is 4th pick. Mim is 1st shovel. Narvi is 2nd shovel. Grór is 1st wheelbarrow. Kili is the sorter.
 First find the three liars:
 Statements 10 & 13 yield Kili and/or Mim lie. 10 & 6 yield Kili and/or Fundin lie. 6 & 8 yield Kili and/or Dwalin lie. 8, 10 & 13 yield Kili or (Mim and Dwalin and Fundin) lie. (since there are only three liars) 1 & 7 yield Bifur and/or Dwalin and/or Mim lie. 4 & 7 yield Grór and/or Dwalin and/or Mim lie. 1 & 4 & 7 yield Dwalin and/or Mim and/or (Bifur and Grór) lie. If Kili is 1st pick (12) and Mim is 1st pick (9), which is impossible. Mim also cannot be 1st pick if he is a liar. So Kili is one liar. Since Grór said Kili is 3rd pick (4), Grór is the second liar. If Grór is a liar, Bifur must be a liar too (1, 4 and 7). So the other six dwarves are the truthful ones. Then Bifur is 2nd wheelbarrow (13). Kili is not 1st wheelbarrow (11), so he is the sorter. Grór is then 1st wheelbarrow, by elimination. Narvi is 2nd shovel (14). Fundin is 3rd pick (7). Ori is 4th pick (6). Thrór is not 1st pick or 1st shovel (3), so he must be the 2nd pick. Mim is not 1st pick (9), so he must be 1st shovel. Which leaves Dwalin as 1st pick.



THE DAME

WHO'S GOT IT?

BLADE'S GOT IT!



THE VICTIM

Mugshots

TM

NPCs for MSPE

"So yer lookin' for someone, eh? Someone you saw at the murder?" I liked looking at the well-dressed blonde sitting on the other side of my desk. "Can you tell me what he looked like?"

She was tense and nervously cleared her throat. "No, but I'd know him if I could see him again."

I sighed. Dis was goin' to be a tough case. How could I nail the murderer if the only witness couldn't get another look at him? If only I had a book of all the local hoods, the villainous masterminds, the crazies and the conmen! She'd spot 'im quick and then we'd have our man. . . .

Then it hit me like a lemon meringue pie! BLADE had a book full of all the bad guys, good guys, and in-between guys and dames around — it was just what I needed! So I went down to the local game store and picked up my copy of MUGSHOTS, the lady picked out the culprit and the coppers picked 'im up, and I picked up the dinner tab.

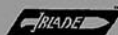
The case was closed.



SUSPECT #1

MUGSHOTS™ is a book of 48 fully-described non-player characters for use in modern role playing games. By Michael Stackpole, designer of "Mercenaries, Spies and Private Eyes"™ Includes stats for MSPE and "Espionage!" by Hero Games. Available from BLADE this winter.

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