


SORCERER'S APPRENTICE



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**WINTER '82
ISSUE 13**

FICTION

The Last Tower
by C.J. Cherryh

Magician
by C. Bruce Hunter

FACT

The Magic of Erin
by Keith Taylor

GAMING

Elaborations on T&T Combat

Secret Societies in FRP
by Lewis Pulsipher

A T&T Mini-Solo Adventure

TROLL TALK

You might think this is a do-it-yourself workbook issue: you'll find quite a few places where you're being asked to pull out your pens, pencils, crayons and word processors, and get to work. Some requests are quite serious, and a few somewhat less so. However, just so you don't overlook anything, I'll note them all here for you.

1) On pages 19—20 is the **Sorcerer's Apprentice Reader Survey**. It's been a long while since the last one, and it's important that we hear from you — yes, *you* — to find out how we're doing presenting you with the magazine (and the products) you want. Please take the time to fill out this survey and send it in.

2) Another biggie: this is very important, folks. Page 36 has the **Origins Awards Nomination Ballot**. Nominations are made by the entire gaming community — you, in other words — and if you're enjoying the games and the magazine we produce, *SAY SO!* This is the place where you can make a lot of difference to *all* the companies who come out with the products you enjoy. Moreover, your letters keep telling us what great people we are, making wonderful games — so I say (without a breath of shamefaced apology), if you think we deserve it, nominate one of our products for an award. You're reading this magazine, right? So fill in #8 with "Sorcerer's Apprentice" for Best Professional Role-Playing Magazine, 1981. Do you like *Grimtooth's TRAPS*? It might not look quite right because it's a first-of-a-kind, but it fits under #6, Role-Playing Adventure. You say you don't like *TRAPS*? (All right, I promise I won't tell Grimtooth.) You can still nominate one of the solo adventures: *Sewers of Oblivion*, *Sea of Mystery*, *Blue Frog Tavern*, and *Mistywood* all qualify.

And in case you're worried, this ain't ballot-stuffing: I only suggest, not control, what you finally write. And in any event, you can nominate 3 items in each category, and I've only mentioned two categories. Just don't forget us!

3) Speaking of **TRAPS** ... you too can be a fiend in friend's clothing by writing up a secretive sinkhole of sinister death, i.e. a trap suitable for a book from the Terrible Troll. If you've seen *Grimtooth's TRAPS*, you know what sort of devious devices of delver destruction we're looking for. The selection of your trap(s) will net you a free copy of the new book when it's published, to say nothing of the infamy you'll be able to wallow in for being one of Grimtooth's "Associates".

4) Not only do we want new Traps, but we've asked you to **Vote On Your Favorite Trap** in the first book of *Grimtooth's TRAPS* ... right there on the Word from Grimtooth page, under the immortal line "Enjoy it or die, mortal" (remember that one now?). That little box with the littler words announced a contest we're running — write in by March 1st and tell us which trap in *Grimtooth's TRAPS* was your favorite. We'll draw a name from those who voted, and the winner will receive either some original artwork from the book or a selection of Flying Buffalo merchandise.



illustration by Liz Danforth

5) More things to write about! Take a good long look at the column you've known as **Queries & Quandaries** lo these many months. It's changed a bit, and we expect it to change quite a bit more. But again, It's Up To You! Your pencils won't bite, nor your typewriter either, so you've really no excuse not to write back.

6) Almost the last but not the least ... while you're thinking about everything above, consider something I mentioned last issue in the editorial: I really honest-to-gosh do want to hear from you about **RPGs by mail**, and I really honest-to-gosh expected to receive more than the note or two that wandered in. What's going on out there?! What games are good, what are not so good — I don't care if the games are run professionally or just for the price of the postage, whether the game is T&T, AD&D, Traveller, or something someone made up on their own: if it's role-playing and it's by mail, I want to hear what you think about it!

7) Lucky seven ... A change of pace for the solo T&T players: a **Fill-In-The-Blanks Solo** that I guarantee will be unlike any adventure your characters have ever seen!

8) And finally — keep sending in those limericks! We want good delving and adventuring-type limericks for our **Limerick Contest**, and we'll pay \$2.50 for each one we print. For our current selection of strange rhymes, turn to page 42. And if you have any sort of puzzles, word games, riddles, and so forth, send them to us for **Troll Teasers**.

That should keep you all off the streets for the next few months ... so until then, may your savings always roll!

Liz Danforth



SORCERER'S APPRENTICE

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The Legend OF THE

_____ (adj)
_____ (n)

a T&T mini-solo adventure
by Liz Danforth

You've probably seen party games where you're asked to supply words which are inserted at random into a story; the results are usually hilarious and occasionally downright weird. For a change of pace from the usual mini-solo adventure found in SA, this solo should supply you with a number of guffaws — and a singularly strange "adventure" for your characters, if played properly. Take note, however: *it is not in the least bit intended to be even remotely serious!* Anyone venturing within this solo should expect — and will deserve — absolutely anything ...

Before you start playing, you'll have to come up with a list of words and numbers. If you can get a bunch of friends to brainstorm words as you go along, all the better; however, since this is a "solo" game, you may have to do the hard part on your own.

□ Start with a list of about 20 **nouns**. Nouns are names of things. If you get stumped for ideas, try coming up with a noun starting with each letter of the alphabet. Don't worry about whether or not you think the words will make sense: you'll be using them randomly, and that's half the fun. Anachronisms like "typewriter" and "soccer ball" will make for interesting results as much as words like "Troll" and "sword" and "knee".

□ Make up about 10 **plural nouns**, like "pencils", "fingers", or "french poodles". Try to make them different from the singular nouns in the first list.

□ Now work on a list of about 15 **adjectives**: these are words that describe nouns, like "slimy", "pretty", "purple", or "plant-like". Although numbers can be adjectives, avoid them for this, as there's a separate section for numbers.

□ Next, you need a list of about 5 of the usual T&T **attributes**: ST, LK, IQ, DEX, CON, CHR — and don't forget SPEED! Don't worry about the order you write them down in, or about repeating yourself.

□ Now you'll need about 20 - 30 **numbers**. Make them large or small, but to make some vague sense try to avoid fractions and negative numbers. And unless you're determined to run a truly *huge* megacharacter, it's advised that you stick with smaller numbers ... just in case.

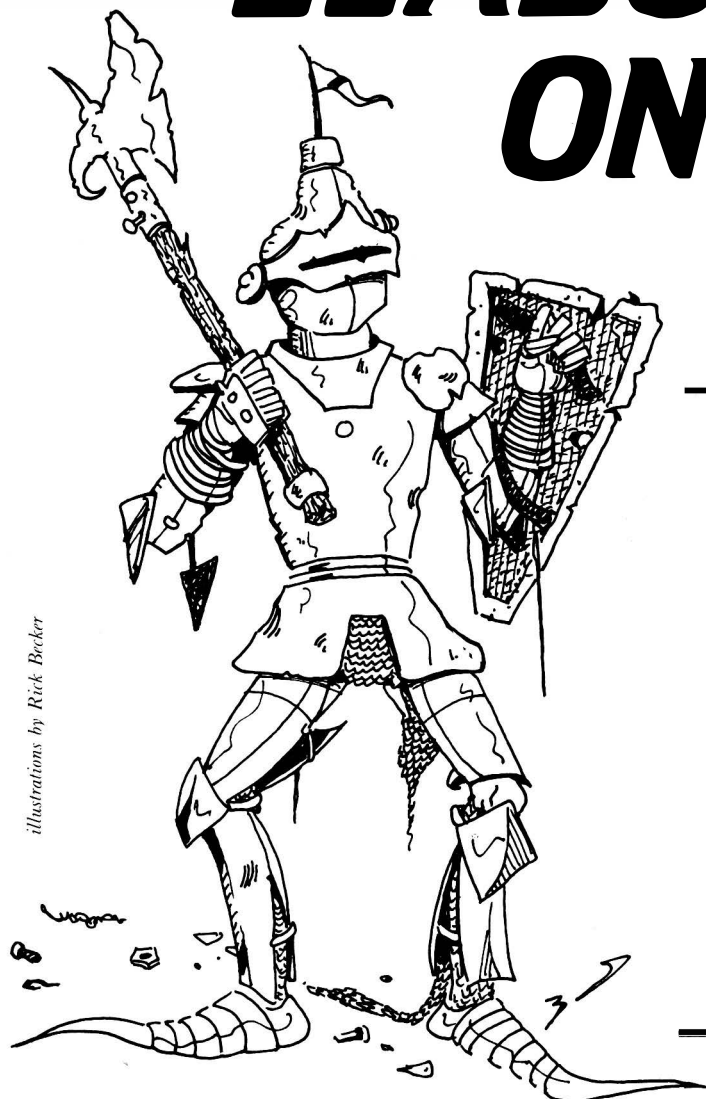
□ Last of all, come up with an assortment of about 5 **proper names** of whatever type you like: fantastical ("Conan the Cimmerian", "Brew'm Biber") or topical ("Ronald Reagan", "Ken St. Andre").

Now that you have all the lists, you can start playing by going to paragraph 8C. When you come to a blank, fill it in with the first word on your list of the appropriate type: Noun = [n], Plural Noun = [pl.n], Adjective = [adj], Attribute = [attr], Number = [#], and Proper Name = [name]. To play this correctly, you must use the words in the order you listed them! It is absolutely *not* fair to fill in the blank with the word you'd most like to see there. ("You fight 1[#] bunny[n] with a MR of 1[#] and get 5,000,000[#] experience points for it" is not kosher!) Check off the words as you come to them; if you use all the words on a list, you can make new lists or start over at the top again if you're still in the middle of an adventure. (You are *not* expected to "fill in the blanks" permanently ... any time you run a new character or a new adventure, make up more words!)

Good luck, and I hope you enjoy this very peculiar exercise in adventuring ... I guarantee your characters have never before seen its like.

[NOTE: For players concerned with an even, controlled growth of their characters when played in fair, balanced Solo and GM Adventures ... don't play this one for keeps! The experience gained by the random circumstances herein could destroy all your hard-earned work, and in no way is this considered "fair", or even remotely "balanced"! Forewarned ...]

ELABORATIONS ON T&T COMBAT



illustrations by Rick Becker

Armor Attrition

by Steve MacGregor

Spite Damage

by Roy Cram

Pulling your Punches and Calling your Shots

by Michael Stackpole

Armor Attrition

by Steve MacGregor

As currently written in the T&T rulebook, armor can cause an otherwise quick combat to come to a halt, and the participants may even die of old age before a final resolution of the battle! This elaboration offers one solution to this tangle.

The standard *Tunnels & Trolls* rules governing combat, weapons, and armor make possible an infinite-standoff situation: two characters fighting, each wearing enough armor to withstand any damage the other can dish out. One possible solution to this impasse is to have the characters wear down each other's armor, so that hits will eventually have to be taken on Constitution.

After the characters have made and compared their combat rolls, and the

loser has absorbed the difference with his armor (and possibly taken some hits as well), his armor makes a ... well ... call it a "saving roll" (for which the character receives no adventure points). The person playing the character rolls two dice (doubles add and re-roll). If the total is less than the difference in the combat rolls, then the protection rating of the armor is reduced by one.

For example, consider a fight between two warriors. Each is armed with a War Hammer (5 dice, plus 1 add), and each defends himself with a Target Shield (takes 4 hits, doubled to 8 for a warrior). The first warrior rolls 14, and the second rolls 21: the difference is 7, which is easily taken by the shield. But now the shield must make its "saving roll". If this roll is 7 or greater, no damage occurs to the shield. But if it is less, the protection rating of the shield drops to 3 (doubled to 6 for a warrior). Eventually, the

characters will begin to wear each other down; the winner may even have armor that is either slightly damaged, or completely destroyed.

If the character who takes hits has both armor and a shield, the damage is taken first on the shield. When it is destroyed, further damage is applied to the armor.

To make the process a bit faster, the Game Master may rule that the reduction will be the amount by which the roll was short (or one-fifth this amount, etc.), instead of just one.

To account for the fact that different types of armor can withstand more punishment (regardless of the amount of protection afforded), the minimum roll can be something other than the standard minimum of 5. The following table suggests the minimum roll for class of armor, versus class of weapon used against it (with additional GM discretion in the case of magic attacks).



	edged	pointed	blunt	magic
Cotton/Silk	5	8	4	8
Leather	6	7	4	8
Metal	5	5	5	5
Magical	4	4	4	7

When a character is fighting a monster, use the "edged" column if the monster is primarily using claws, "pointed" if primarily using fangs, and "blunt" if using bare trollish fists or the like.

When taking hits from missile weapons, use "edged" for a curved dagger (like a kukri), "pointed" for other sharp missiles, and "blunt" for rocks and such.

"Magical" armor means normal armor with a *Zapparmor* spell cast upon it, armor made of mithril, or magical protection such as the "Yuurk" sword from *Deathtrap Equalizer Dungeon*. "Magic" as a weapon means *Take That*, *You Fiend* spells and the like; enchanted physical weapons may be included or not, as the GM sees fit.

I hope this new elaboration, modified to your own tastes, will be as useful to you in your own dungeons as it is to me in the solitaire adventures which, so far, have constituted the major portion of my own enjoyment of *Tunnels & Trolls*. ■

Spite Damage

by Roy Cram

Even though the big bully always manages to beat up the 96-pound weakling on the beaches of the real world (!), it leaves the weakling hopelessly frustrated. Since the T&T combat system simulates the bully-beats-weakling situation, the player is often frustrated as well! "Mad" Roy Cram offers a method to get that "last act of defiance"

In the course of playing *T&T*, on numerous occasions I have watched in bored frustration as two heavily-armored and evenly-matched opponents wasted 20 or 30 rounds of valuable playing time, slugging it out toe-to-toe in a fruitless attempt to injure each other. I have also sadly consigned to the waste bin quite a number of characters who were done in by monsters they didn't have a prayer of hurting due to the great disparity between the character's combat ability and the monster's MR.

Neither of these situations made sense to me. In a melee or battle, regardless of level, ability, or protective spells or

clothing, I believe there is always a chance, be it ever so slight, that each combatant is going to catch a little fallout. Winners and losers alike can be the victims of serendipity, chance, fate, dumb luck, mistakes, or what have you. A really good roll deserves some measure of reward. I think that even the weakest of monsters and characters deserve to get a few licks in regardless of who or what they are fighting, in the form of spite damage: a sort of last great gesture of defiance.

Calculating spite damage is extremely simple. After each side has rolled their dice, they simply add up the total number of 6's rolled, and subtract 1. This resulting number represents the minimum damage they have inflicted on their adversaries in that turn, regardless of armor or other protection.

For example, if one side rolls a total of five 6's on their dice, their opponents will have to distribute randomly among their members 4 points of constitutional damage. And vice-versa: if the other guys rolled up five 6's too, they also get a minimum of 4 randomly-distributed hits on their foes.

Spite damage is never added as a bonus to any real damage scored, but is simply the minimum damage done to the other side in that round. It represents the injuries, bruises, abrasions, contusions, nicks, bites, scratches, bumps, and lumps incurred by chance during the fight. If real damage is scored, but is less than the spite damage, use the spite damage. If real damage is greater than spite damage, use the real damage. Situations can occur where neither side suffers any real damage, but one or both sides take spite damage.

This system gives back a grudging measure of respect to any creature worth more than one die in combat. No matter how well protected or powerful you are, that nasty little bugger you have cornered and are preparing to skewer, can still slip in under your guard and, out of pure spite, with his dying gasp, bite you. In close contests where the adversaries are evenly matched, spite damage can be a deciding factor. Also, players and judges whose characters or monsters are getting roasted in a fight will at least have the satisfaction of leaving some mark on the foe with good dice rolls.

Naturally, weapons which have been envenomed, or monsters whose attacks include poisonous bites or stings, will be at an advantage when facing foes who are affected by toxic substances. One system for handling this is to give all spite damage inflicted

by poison weapons or creatures the same bonuses or effects that would occur had real damage been done in the course of combat. However, those GMs who don't think this is fair, and who will point out the serendipitous nature of the injuries that constitute spite damage, can allow injured parties the benefit of an appropriate level SR on their Luck to see if the injury was from the envenomed weapon, or from some other accident of chance that occurred during the confusion of a knock-down, drag-out struggle.

Another question arises when magic protection and armor are taken into account. Since these items go beyond the normal limits of natural, non-magical protection, it is highly likely that they will also have some degree of effectiveness in protecting their wearer or user from the effects of spite damage.

I believe that spite damage should never be totally ruled out or eliminated. Characters who are protected by magic armor or spells should, at best, be allowed a saving roll on Luck at an appropriate level to see if they were hurt or not.

Another possible approach is to divide spite damage inflicted on opponents who are supernaturally defended by an appropriate factor (rounding fractions up or down, according to individual practice or preference). In no case, however, should the spite damage ever be lowered below at least one point.

A little experimentation with this system should make its advantages obvious to players and GMs alike. Spite damage is easy to calculate and, while it seldom inflicts serious injuries on characters, its gradual accumulation may become a very important factor in determining the individual's capacity for long-term survival in a dungeon or extended battle.

Spite damage returns hope to outclassed monsters and characters. It will be especially satisfying to the GM who has watched smug groups of armored adventures stroll casually through his carefully-contrived adventure, demolishing his beloved dungeon denizens with relative impunity. No longer will these mail-plated myrmidons be able to sneer at their adversaries—because with spite damage, the meanest goblin has the power to leave his mark on them. I think the spite damage system corrects some of the faults inherent in the T&T rules, returning a measure of realism that should make the game more fun and exciting for everyone who plays it. ■

Pulling your Punches and Calling your Shots

by Michael Stackpole

How do you avoid hitting somebody as hard as you are actually capable of, in order not to hurt them—or not hurt them too much? And how do you try to aim for specific areas of your foes' anatomy? The following elaboration offers some ideas on these two special combat situations.

Many gamers have made noises about the *Tunnels & Trolls* combat system and its lack of "realism". Such criticism stems mainly from the fact that

a character who is losing a fight is given no chance to kill his foe, because a tough character will *always* beat a weaker character. My real-life observations of fights between bullies and their victims has led me to believe that a stronger person can destroy a weaker person with little or no injury to himself, which in turn implies that the T&T combat system is the most realistic on the market! However, I can appreciate the problems that gamers face, and therefore I offer the following two ideas as possible solutions to the problem of "no realism".

Pulling Your Punches. Anyone who has playfully wrestled with children can understand the concept of pulling punches. When engaged in combat with



another person, it is possible to move a bit slower, use less strength, or ignore those lucky openings that present themselves in order to avoid hurting your opponent. And, as often happens, if you misjudge the other person's abilities you're in for a tense moment before you can make a compensating adjustment in Strength, Dexterity, or Luck.

At times, a T&T character might wish to capture or restrain an individual, rather than kill him. To fight someone without killing him, the character who wishes to lower his combat total (pull his punches) should state at the onset of the combat *how many* of his combat adds he will use. The character has merely decided to fight a bit slower: passing up lucky openings and easing off on the power behind some of the blows.

If a character wields a weapon, he still must use enough Strength and Dexterity to meet the minimum requirements for that weapon. (A Double-bladed Broad Axe requires a minimum ST of 21, a Strength which accounts for 9 adds. If a character is using that weapon, he must use at least 9 adds in combat.) When pulling punches, a character may actually allow his adds to go negative — but the wisdom of such a move is obviously questionable. Once the number of adds to be used has been determined, the combat totals are rolled up normally and compared.

8A There is a small crawlspace; a short distance inside, it opens so you can almost stand upright. The dankness of the under-earth reminds you of _____. [pl.n.], and you look nervously about. If you light a torch, go to 35B. If you try to back out the way you came in, go to 32C. If you feel around in the darkness, make a level ____ [s] saving roll on ____ [attr]. If the roll is successful, go to 26B. If you fail the roll, go to 39A.

8B They tell you that _____ [name] the Sorceress is accused of making wrong worlds cross and interlock. She's been ordered to realign them, but some people don't feel she's trying very hard to correct her mistakes.

There are two judges dressed like _____ [adj] officials, and the Nameless One. Their judgement system is unusual: everyone picks a number. The judges both pick ____ [s], the soldier picks ____ [s], and you pick ____ [s]. The Nameless One (just called _____ [name] by a judge) doesn't vote, but he totals the numbers. If the result is even, the sorceress is guilty; if the result is odd, she's innocent.

If she's guilty, she's taken away and put deep in a dungeon for ____ [s] years. If you're judged with her, you get the same treatment. She's in the cell next to yours, and her stories are worth ____ [s] e.p. for each year there (you can collect these at 34B).

If she's innocent, the Nameless One apologises to you both. He tells you his *real* name is _____ [name] (the knowledge is worth ____ [s] e.p.). He also gives you a pouch of ____ [s] g.p. and wishes you well. The sorceress knows something you don't ... she reaches out to tap you on the forehead and you collapse — go to 34B.

8C You're an adventurer wandering in hills you don't recognize; you don't even remember how you got here. A crescent moon disappears behind heavy clouds, and the air is filled with the smell of ____ [n]. A noise attracts you towards a gully; to investigate this, go to 37A. Dimly you also see ____ [pl.n.] glowing in the darkness: if you look into this oddity, go to 34A.

If the character who pulls his punches has grossly underestimated his foe, he may be injured. In any case, he'll have to wait until the next round to adjust his adds and attack again. If a very powerful character *grossly* underestimates his enemy and dies as a result of the misjudgement, the GM should decide if that character can make a saving roll to avoid death. Frankly, I'd be inclined to let characters lie in beds they make for themselves, but a last-second burst of strength might well allow such a character to avoid death.

If a character who pulls his punches has hurt — but not killed — his foe, the foe can be called upon to surrender, avoiding the rest of the fight as a needless exercise in martial skills. On the other hand, if the character has *overestimated* his foe, and even only one of the pulled punches is too much for him to handle, the foe may well die.

Magic and missile attacks cannot be "pulled". In T&T, there are spells which will allow for capture as well as killing. Pulling DEX would make it tough to hit a target with a missile weapon — and the arrow is notoriously poor at following commands to ease off and not hurt its target. However, shooting someone in the arm, by targeting it, might accomplish roughly the same thing.

Calling Your Shots. There are times when a character may wish to disarm or wound his foe, rather than kill him. While a monster might be too big to kill, hamstringing it might slow it enough to allow escape. Still other creatures might have partial armor or a chink in their armor that should be attacked to kill them. By calling shots, any character can choose a portion of a foe and do damage to it — regardless of winning or losing the combat round.

The method for calling what portion of a foe a character wishes to attack is much like choosing a target for a missile attack. Various portions of the anatomy take on sizes for targets — and the length of weapons become ranges. If a DEX saving roll can be made, the attack will be delivered to that portion of the character's anatomy, doing anything from blinding him to flicking his weapon out of his hands.

Because of the closeness of this type of fighting, sizes and ranges must be re-defined for calling your shots. All target sizes and ranges will retain their saving roll levels or ranges as presented in the rules — you just use them the same way you would for figuring out saving rolls to hit with a missile weapon. As for missile-weapon saving rolls, no experience points should be awarded for called-shot saving rolls.

► *Tiny targets* are eyes and coins, as in the current rules. This category is expanded to include hands, feet, noses, ears, and cigars, as well as anything else that would be as difficult to hit.

► *Very small targets* become daggers, heads, hearts, and the body parts defined as "tiny targets" on creatures larger than human size (e.g. trolls and ogres).

► *Small targets* include the torso — not because of its size, but because most weapons and shields cover it and make it harder to hit. Shields also fall into this class; if double damage is done to them, they can be destroyed.

► *Large targets* include weapons larger than daggers, as well as undefended backs or torsos.

► *Huge targets* encompass arms and legs because of the large area they cover in the course of the fight, and the fact that limbs tend to be involved in the defense of the rest of the body.

Ranges are redefined according to the size of the weapon used:

► *Pointblank* is for weapons less than 2' in length, and include hands and feet.

► *Near* ranges cover any weapon between 2' and 6' long.

► *Far* range includes weapons from 6' up to and including 8' in length.

► *Extreme* range will cover anything over 8' long.

A rough rule of thumb is: Pointblank — daggers, Near — swords, Far — spears, and Extreme — pole weapons.

Obviously (and justifiably) it will be easier to take out an eye with a dagger than it will be with a pole axe. When someone wishes to call a shot, he should announce to the GM what he wants to hit. The level of the saving roll is determined and attempted before the combat is rolled up. Once the roll has been made or missed the combat totals are computed — however, DEX adds are ignored for anyone attempting to target a body part. (This is because that person's Dexterity is being used to hit the specific portion of the body targeted.)

One of four situations will result from combat. The best situation is to make the saving roll and win the round. If that happens, all of the damage is directed against the target, wounding the foe or disarming him. If the saving roll is missed and the round is won, this indicates that the foe did no damage, but the character failed to hit his target. In this case, the loser takes no damage.

If the character loses the round but hits his target, his combat roll (less any damage he took) is done to his foe. In this case he always does at least one point of damage per die of his weapon. If the loser of the round also missed the saving roll, he takes damage normally and does no

damage in return.

Disarming a foe is easily worked out. If the damage done to the weapon in that one round is more than half of the Strength rating used by the foe that round, the weapon is flicked from his grasp. (A magical weapon that will not leave its owner's grasp is exempt from this rule.) Shields and armor pieces that are targeted take one point of damage for every point that their damage rating is exceeded. (Example: A buckler is targeted and hit. 5 points of damage is done to it. The buckler can absorb 3 hits, but the extra 2 come off its damage rating. The next turn it will be able to take 1 hit; if 2 points of damage are done, the buckler will be destroyed.)

Targeting a foe's head can lead to the question of how much damage must be done to a head before the body attached dies. This is a judgment call for each and every GM. I think it's fair to assume that if damage equal to 25% of the target's original CON is done to a foe's head with one blow, unconsciousness would result. Anyone thus assailed would be out for the number of combat turns equal to the amount of damage done . . .

Let me run through a quick example of how this will work. Fred the hobbit is fighting a minotaur who wields a double-bladed broad axe. The minotaur

does a total of 35 hits while Fred decides to target the minotaur's knee. He's using a dagger, and the knee is a "very small" target. Fred rolls a 10, his DEX is 25 and a 35 is needed to hit — so he does. On the other hand, his combat total is 11 so he takes 24 hits. Those hits cancel the majority of his damage, but Fred does do 2 points of damage to the minotaur's knee.

If Fred survived the 24 hits, and the GM decided to deduct the 2 hits from the minotaur's Speed as well as his CON, Fred might be able to get away. When targeting a body part, the largest weapon a person is using is the one that must be used to target; and while the damage from a smaller weapon can be used in the combat roll, only the damage from the targeting weapon will be used against the target.

Armor still protects a targeted area, but the defense value of shields is figured into the size factors for targets and for that reason may be ignored. Shields will only take damage if the shield arm is targeted, or if the shield is slung over the back like a piece of armor. In both cases, the armor will take one hit.

I hope both of these elaborations upon the T&T combat system will provide you with some ideas that can be used to make your fights more realistic. Enjoy. ■



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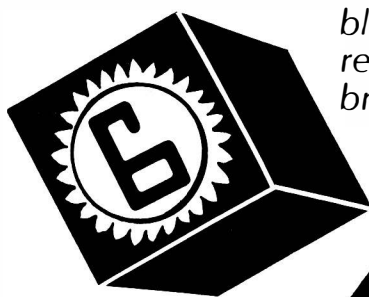
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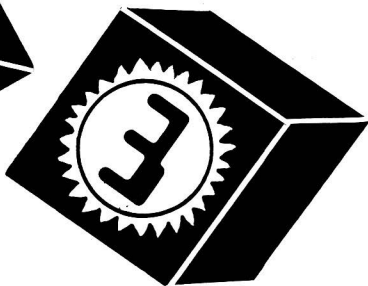
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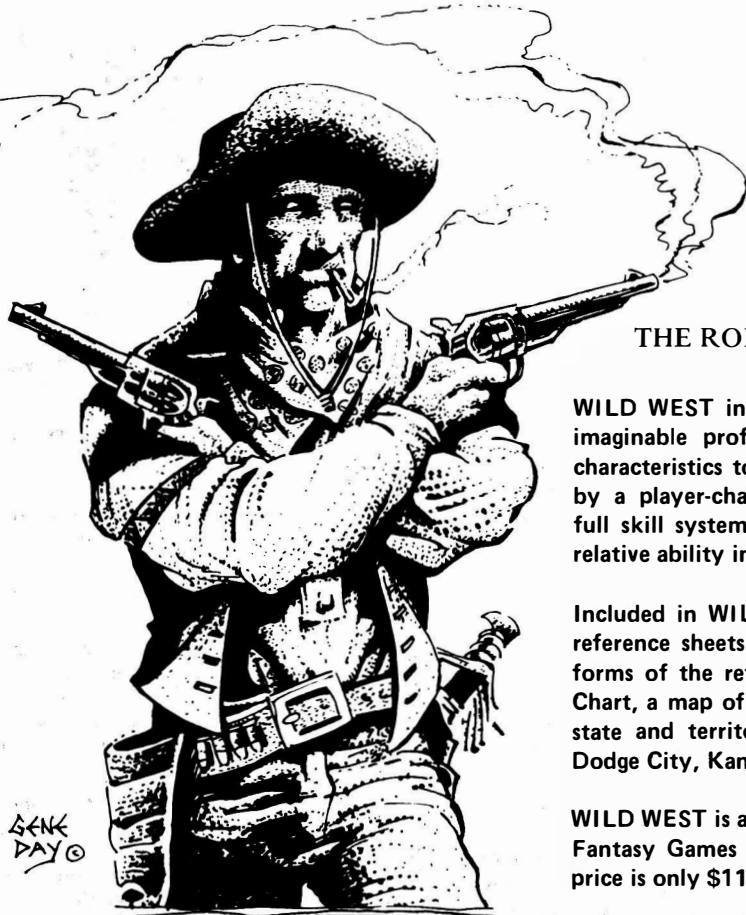


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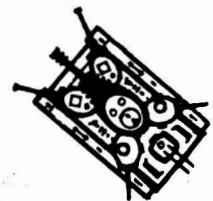
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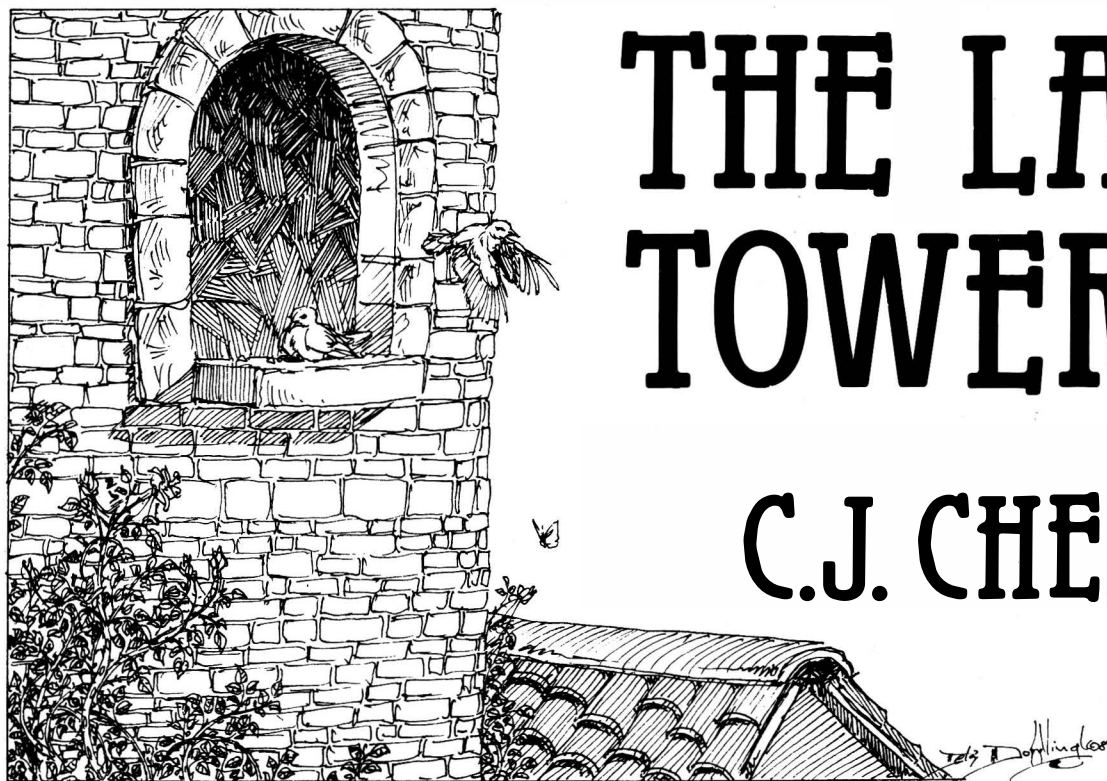
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THE LAST TOWER

C.J. CHERRYH

C.J. Cherryh, a talented writer of science fiction and fantasy, is best known for her linked epics: the Faded Sun series of novels, or the stories of Morgaine and her mission to seal the ancient qhalur Gates. This short tale is a seldom-seen side to the stories labeled "heroic fantasy".

The old man climbed the stairs slowly, stopping sometimes to let his heart recover and the teapot settle on the tray, while the dormouse would pop out of his sleeve or his beard and steal a nibble at the teacakes he brought up from the kitchen. It was an old tower on the edge of faery, on the edge of the Empire of Man. Between. Uncertain who had built it — men or elves. It was long before the old man's time, at least, and before the empire in the east. There was magic in its making . . . so they used to say. Now there was only the old man and the dormouse and a sleepy hedgehog, and a bird or two or three, which came for the grain at the windows. That was his real talent, the wild things, the gentle things. A real magician now, would not be making tea himself, in the kitchen, and wasting his breath on stairs. A real magician would have been more — awesome. Kept some state. Inspired some fear.

He stopped at the halfway turning. Pushed his sliding spectacles up his nose and balanced tray, tea, cakes and dormouse against the window-ledge. The land was black in the east. Black

all about the tower. Burned. On some days he could see the glitter of arms in the distance where men fought. He could see the flutter of banners on the horizon as they rode. Could hear the sound of the horses and the horns.

Now the dust and soot of a group of riders showed against the darkening east. He waited there, not to have the weary stairs again — waited while the dormouse nibbled a cake, and in his pocket the hedgehog squirmed about, comfortable in the stillness.

The riders came. The prince — it was he — sent the herald forward to ring at the gate. "Open in the king's name," the herald cried, and spying him in the window: "Old man — open your gates. Surrender the tower. No more warnings."

"Tell him no," the old man said. "Just tell him — no."

"Tomorrow," the herald said, "we come with seige."

The old man pushed his spectacles up again. Blinking sadly, his old heart beating hard. "Why?" he asked. "What importance, to have so much bother?"

"Old meddler." The prince himself rode forward, curvetted his black horse under the window. "Old fraud. Come down and live. Give us the tower intact — to use . . . and live. Tomorrow morning — we come with fire and iron. And the stones fall — old man."

The old man said nothing. The men rode away. The old man climbed the stairs, the teaset clattering in his

palsied hands. His heart hurt. When he looked out on the land, his heart hurt him terribly. The elves no longer came. The birds and the beasts had all fled the burning. There was only the mouse and the hedgehog and the few doves who had lived all their lives in the loft. And the few sparrows who came. Only them now.

He set the tray down, absent-mindedly took the hedgehog from his pocket and set it by the dormouse on the tray, took a cake and crumbled it on the window-ledge for the birds. A tear ran down into his beard.

Old fraud. He was. He had only little magics, forest magics. But they'd burned all his forest and scattered the elves, and he failed even these last few creatures. They would overthrow the tower. They would spread over all the land, and there would be no more magic in the world. He should have done something long ago — but he had never done a great magic. He should have raised whirlwinds and elementals — but he could not so much as summon the legged teapot up the stairs. And his heart hurt, and his courage failed. The birds failed to come — foreknowing, perhaps. The hedgehog and the dormouse looked at him with eyes small and solemn in the firelight, last of all.

No. He stirred himself, hastened to the musty books — his master's books, dusty and a thousand times failed. *You've not the heart*, his master would

say. *You've not the desire for the great magics. You'll call nothing — because you want nothing.*

Now he tried. He drew his symbols on the floor — scattered his powders, blinking through the ever-shifting spectacles, panting with his exertions. He would do it this time — would hold the tower on the edge of faery, between the Empire of Man and the kingdom of the elves. He believed, this time. He conjured powers. He called on the great ones. The winds sighed and roared inside the tower.

And died.

His arms fell. He wept, great tears sliding down into his beard. He picked up the dormouse and the hedgehog and held them to his breast, having no more hope.

Then she came. The light grew, white and pure. The scent of lilies filled the air — and she was there, naked, and white, hands empty — beautiful.

"I've come," she said.

His heart hurt him all the more. "Forgive me," he said. "I was trying for something — fiercer."

"Oh," she said, dark eyes sad.

"I make only — small magics," he said. "I was trying for — a dragon, maybe. A basilisk. An elemental. To

stop the king. But I do flowers best. And smokes and maybe a little fireworks. And it's not enough. Goodbye. Please go. Please do go. Whichever you are. You're the wrong kind. You're *beautiful*. And he's going to come tomorrow — the king — and the armies . . . it's not a place for a gentle spirit. Only — could you take *them* . . . please? Mouse and Hedgehog — they'd not be so much. I'd not like to bother you. But could you? And then you can go."

"Of course," she said. It was the whisper of wind, her voice. The moving of snow crystals on frozen crust. She took them to her breast. Kissed them in turn, and jewels clothed them in white. "Old man," she said, and on his brow too planted a kiss, and jewels followed, frosty white. White dusted all the room, all the books and the clutter and the cobwebs. She walked down the stairs and out the gate, and jewelled it all in her wake. She walked the land, and the snow fell, and fell, and the winds blew—till only the banners were left, here and there, stiffened with ice, above drifts and humps of snow which marked the tents. The land was all white, horizon to horizon. Nothing stirred — but the wolves that hunted the deer, and the birds that hunted the last

summer's berries.

Death drifted back to the tower, and settled there, in the frost and the lasting snows, where the old man and magic slept their lasting sleep.

She breathed kisses on him, on the little ones, and kept watch—faithful to her calling, while the snows deepened, and even the wolves slept, their fur white and sparkling with the frost. ■



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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, 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 to: Michael Stackpole/Arcane Graffiti, Flying Buffalo Inc., P.O. Box 1467, Scottsdale, Arizona 85252.

What, you wonder aloud, has Flying Buffalo been doing since last issue of SA? We've been acting much like a caterpillar in a cocoon: you don't see much coming out of the cocoon until a butterfly appears. We're working very hard on a number of projects, the first of which will debut with the new year.

Mistywood, solo 16, is now at the printers. The major disaster that I hinted might keep it out of stores did happen: some sort of plague (or perhaps an entropy field) ripped through the office and left us without several key personnel for over a week and a half. However, *Mistywood* will be out by the time you read this — and Roy Cram, the author, has already warned us that he has another solo in the works.

In addition to **Berserker!** and **WEB** (see last issue — both games are progressing nicely); we have still more projects in the works. The **Citybook** project (a working title) is a collection of business establishments (including well developed NPC personalities) that could be found in any FRP city. These buildings and businesses can be conveniently slotted into any of your existing cities, or may be combined to form an entirely new city. In addition, the book will provide an easy-to-understand and easy-to-use system for adapting these buildings into any FRP system.

Monsters! Monsters! is being rewritten and slightly expanded. We'll probably release the new version when our present inventory runs out. Also, the Lower Level of *Uncle Ugly's Underground* is actually half in house. John is turning it over to Paul O'Connor one room at a time. Larry DiTillio has completed a rewrite of **Darksmoke**, so it nears completion, destined to be our largest GM adventure yet. **Fleur De Morte** by Stefan Jones is being edited

by Paul and will also come out as a GM adventure of note.

Standard Games and Publications, Ltd. (Arlon House, Station Road, Kings Langley, Herts., UK) gave me three products at Games Day last September. The first is a game called **Cry Havoc**, a simulation of medieval melee combat on an individual level. The game is easy to learn and fun to play, and its strong point is the counters: each individual in the game is represented by two dual-sided counters. The artwork on the counters and the maps surpasses any artwork on any boardgame in the business today. This is a game that everyone should have.

The other two products are the finest addition to the miniatures substitution market I have ever seen. **Card Warriors** is the name given to this line of products (Sheet #F1 is for Dungeon Adventures, Sheet #DA1 is the Saxon Army). These two-sided figures are designed to be cut out and glued to a base sheet so they will stand up. The detail on these pictures blows away anything else in the market; using these *Card Warriors* will greatly enhance your adventures or games. If you are thinking about using playing pieces in your games, write to this company to find out the cost to mail the sheets to you here. Even if they cost \$10 a sheet, they'd be worth it.

Normally, the games I talk about here hang around the office until *Arcane Graffiti* is written. **Chaosium's Thieves World** was so good that I took it home and didn't have it available to review last issue! *Thieves World* is probably one of the best FRP game aids ever produced. Instead of saying, "it's adaptable to any FRP system," the Chaosium got people to stat characters and things for nine FRP games (Ken St. Andre did the work for T&T). If you haven't read the *Thieves*

World books, do so. If you have read them, you'll want to run out and get this game aid to set adventures in Sanctuary. Get it — it's that good!

Patrick Stephens Limited (Bar Hill, Cambridge CB3 8EL, UK) has sent us a copy of the book entitled **Fantasy Wargaming**. Paul passed it to me because it's more a rules book than a novel for *Broken Spines*. Through detailing the development of their own fantasy world, the authors manage to discuss a number of different ideas in the area of game design and fantasy game philosophy. The book also includes a large number of rules systems for handling various game problems. It's interesting and could well help people expand their worlds in a logical and fun direction.

Fantasy Games Unlimited has finally released **Chivalry and Sorcery Sourcebook 2**. This book covers everything from the construction of doors and picking locks to magical items and strategic naval warfare. The information gathered here might prove to be of general interest to all fantasy gamers as well as the C&S enthusiast.

Not content to leave the countryside unmarred by treasure hunters, **Metagaming** has released the second of three scenarios detailing the hiding place of a real treasure. **Treasure of Unicorn Gold** is a Microquest (#6) involving a search for the secret of the Unicorn Gold. In addition to pleasing the accomplishment-minded gamer, the solution will reveal the location of the real Unicorn Gold — and the recovery of the gold Unicorn statuette will net a check for \$10,000 from Metagaming. Happy hunting.

Task Force has sent us **Ultra-Warrior**, a game of Knights-Errant of the 23rd Century. Movement is regulated through an impulse system and moves quite quickly because of the "duel" nature of the game. Each Ultra-Warrior has a suit of powered armor packed with weapons that are capable of destroying an opponent or converting the terrain your foe was in. All reports I have heard indicate that the game is great fun even if you end up only destroying the landscape.

Reilly Associates (P.O. Box 8144, Rochester, NY 14617) has released two items of use to RPG GMs. The first is **The Dungeon Trap Handbook**, a collection of random tables for the generation of traps. While I tend to prefer the well-thought-out and engineered type of trap, this booklet could provide traps and inspiration for many GMs. The second product, **Enchanted Treasures**, has forced me to reverse my general dislike of books

of 'standard' treasure. This is a collection of 36 well-thought-out and interestingly-presented treasure items. Even if you don't want to use these specific items, I'm certain that they will inspire variations to delight and terrify dungeon delvers. Both items retail for \$2.95 and should be available from the above address.

As always, **Judges Guild** has a good selection of products for this AG. **The Tower of Indomitable Circumstance** is a module designed for use with all FRP games. Again it is best suited to *D&D*, but the reason I mention it is because the cover says it can be played solo. By this, JG means "One player and a Judge". Be careful.

Masters of Mind is a set of rules for adding psionics to almost any FRP game. The system seems to be based on twenty-sided dice but is readily adaptable to six-sided dice if one wishes. It looks interesting as it details psi abilities and combat rather thoroughly. This is one you might want to look at.

JG has released two products approved for use with *Traveller*. The first is titled **Marooned on Ghosting**, which details the planet Ghosting. Aside from horrible artwork and a city design that looks strangely like Chicago, the product seems to be useable. It includes a poster-sized map backed by a hex sheet. The second product is **Amycus Probe**, another in the Border Prowler Series. It seems to be more tightly conceived and written than *Ghosting*, but is still full of awful art and large-type pages to eat up space. Look these over very carefully before you decide to plunk down \$5.98 for either of them.

JG has also released four products for use with *AD&D*. **House on Hangman's Hill**, **The Illhiedrin Book**, **Trial by Fire**, and **Zienteck**. I am not well enough acquainted with the *AD&D* system to make cogent comments about their suitability for play — but I think my above remarks still apply.

Game Designers Workshop has released three products for review. **Marooned / Marooned Alone** (Double Adventure 4) is a scenario detailing the adventures of a group of bodyguards hired to aid an aged eccentric in his flight from enemies. The Marooned group escapes an enemy-laden luxury vessel in a lifeboat; the eccentric asks them to deliver a package for him, and then dies. Their lifeboat, damaged, lands 15,000 miles from the nearest starport. The *Marooned Alone* adventure takes

care of the one member of the group sent to disable the gunnery turret on the luxury craft to prevent it from blasting the lifeboat to pieces. He or she gets a reentry-capable vacc suit and has to make it to the spaceport alone. Both adventures look good and only require the basic *Traveller* rules.

Adventure 6, **Expedition to Zhodane**, requires *High Guard* as well as *Basic Traveller*. It involves a group of characters who are shanghaied onto a mining ship. They discover a ship which was used by a sociologist; it contains his only daughter. After helping her repair the ship, they head off to rescue her father from Zhodani captivity. It also looks like great fun.

Invasion: Earth is a new boxed SF game from GDW. The game system is akin to *Fifth Frontier War* but breaks down into a tactical invasion of one planet. The Imperium must race against time, attempting to deliver troops into the Sol system while the Earth builds up to repulse them. It's a well-balanced game; everyone asked really enjoyed playing it. Look for it.

Dungeon Sharing Services (c/o Ed Harding, 104 East Hamilton Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20901) provides an interesting solution to the problem of not having scenarios available. GMs send in scenarios and receive 5 times the value they give in merchandise. The merchandise consists of adventures copied at the price of 10¢ a page plus 50¢ handling. That 50¢, in coin or stamps, will also bring you a listing of what DSS has to offer. Look into it.

The Morrow Project (from *TimeLine Ltd.*, 31316 Carmody Dr., Warren, MI 48092) is a role-playing game set in a post holocaust world of frightening reality. It suggests that each player character was cryogenically frozen to be revived after a holocaust in order to aid in the rebuilding of civilization. The destruction of the prime Morrow Project base has delayed the awakening of the survival team for 150 years, bringing them from sleep into a hostile world. The game has a very tight weapons package and a realistic combat system. It has rightfully been described as the best post-holocaust game system around.

Castle Perilous (produced by *West Wind Simulations*, P.O. Box 128, Verona, MO 65769) is a fantasy role-playing system specifically designed to promote the story-telling aspect of FRP games. The CP system offers 9 character classes, each loosely defined so that the players and Marchwarden can work out what type of character

the player wishes to use. Players are encouraged to construct a background for their characters according to guidelines suggested in the rules — and to even go to the lengths of designing and wearing costumes appropriate to their characters when playing. The magic system depends upon the magician characters making the appropriate gestures to launch a spell; the effects being jointly worked out and described by the MW and the player.

The rules are fairly well organized and spiced with the tales of Barbosa (a character on an adventure), and include a complete adventure and commentary on how it should be run. The rules retail for \$5.95 and present some interesting game ideas for those who wish to pick it up for ideas alone.

We have received a press release from each of the two game companies involved in the struggle over who owns *Ogre* and *G.E.V.* As you may know, the games have been pulled from the market by a court battle. These press releases hint at a peace in the battle, though with their conflicting reports, it may merely become a very short cease-fire. They are presented below in the order we received them.

Metagaming (Nov. 17, 1981)

"The *OGRE/G.E.V.* lawsuit has been settled. A "take nothing" judgement has been entered.

"The terms of the settlement include reversion of copyright publishing rights to the designer. Metagaming retains rights to the trademarks *OGRE* and *G.E.V.*

"Metagaming will release a new game in its *Supertank* series with the *OGRE* title. The new *OGRE* will become Microgame #1 and should be available in very early 1982.

"The settlement also resolved several other minor issues.

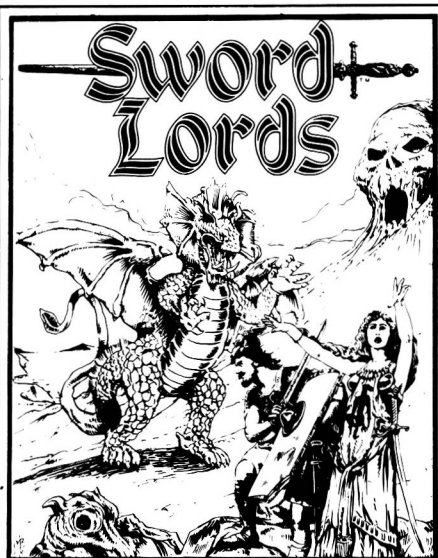
"Metagaming is pleased with the settlement and happy to get back to the job of producing fun games full time."

Steve Jackson Games (Nov. 26, 1981)

"*OGRE* and *G.E.V.*, the best-selling games about super-tank combat in the year 2085, have gone into a new printing and will be available at this year's HIA show.

"The games had been off the market for some time, due to legal questions between the designer (Steve Jackson) and the original publisher (Metagaming). However, in a compromise agreement dated Nov. 17, Metagaming recognized Jackson's ownership of all rights in the two popular titles.

"Both games are considered classics; nearly 100,000 copies are in



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print, and the games remain tournament standards even though copies have been hard to find in stores for over a year! **OGRE** and **G.E.V.** also remain highly-ranked in the *Strategy & Tactics* ratings, and have received many favorable reviews. They have often been referred to as the first, and best, of the small games.

"The new editions will be upgraded, with larger full-color maps, back-printed counters, revised rules, and other play aids. The size and price will remain suited for any gamer's pocket."

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 a listing means *Flying Buffalo* plans to attend.)

□ January 16—17. **Son of Genghis Con.** Arapahoe Community College, Littleton CO. Boardgaming (incl. tournaments and demos) on Sat.; rpg on Sun. Info: Denver Gamers Assoc., Box 2945, Littleton CO 80161.

□ February 5—7. **Gencon South '82.** For info, write: P.O. Box 16371, Jacksonville, FL 32216.

□ February 5—7. **Viking Con 3.** Western Washington University and the Holiday Inn, Bellingham, WA. Exhibits and presentations on space, video games, FRP, short story work, more. Info: The Sceice Fiction & Fantasy Club, Viking Union 222, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225.

□ February 13—15. **ORCCON.** *Strategy game convention and exposition.* Info: ORCCON, PR Dept., P.O. Box 2577, Anaheim, CA 92804.

□ March 26—18. **Goddess Rising.** *An educational, informational conference about the Great Goddesses and Witchcraft.* Cal Expo, Exhibit Halls A&B, Sacramento CA. Info: P.O. Box 19241, Sacramento CA 95819.

□ April 8—11. **Science Fiction Weekend.** *SF, Fantasy, and FRP convention.* The Registry Hotel, Irvine CA. Info: call (213) 337-7947 — 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. weekdays and Saturday.

□ April 24—25. **Space-Trek 1.** Henry VII Inn & Lodge, St. Louis, MO. Info: 5046 S. 37th St., St. Louis MO 63116.

□ May 28—31. **GrimCon IV.** *Fantasy-science fiction gaming convention.* Oakland Hyatt House, Oakland CA. Info: P.O. Box 4153, Berkeley CA 94704.

□ May 30. **M.I.G.S. III.** *A free day of wargaming in all its myriad forms.* Kitchener-Waterloo Regional Police Association Recreation Centre, Ontario Canada. Tutorials, seminars, painting contests, boardgame and miniatures tournaments. Presented by the Military Interests and Games Society. Info: Les Scanlon, President M.I.G.S., 473 Upper Wentworth St., Hamilton, Ontario L9A 4T6, Canada.

□ June 5—6. **Genghis Con IV.** Auraria Student Center, Metro State College, Denver CO. Info: Denver Gamers Association, Box 2945, Littleton, CO 80161.

□ July 2—5. **WesterCon 35.** *Science fiction convention.* Adams Hotel, Phoenix AZ. Info: WesterCon 35, Box 11644, Phoenix AZ 85064.

■ July 16—19. **Flying Buffalo PBM Convention.** Info: Flying Buffalo Con, P.O. Box 1467, Scottsdale AZ 85252.

■ July 23—25. **Origins '82.** Info: P.O. Box 15405, Baltimore MD 21220 (include stamped self-addressed envelope)

CLASSIFIED ADS

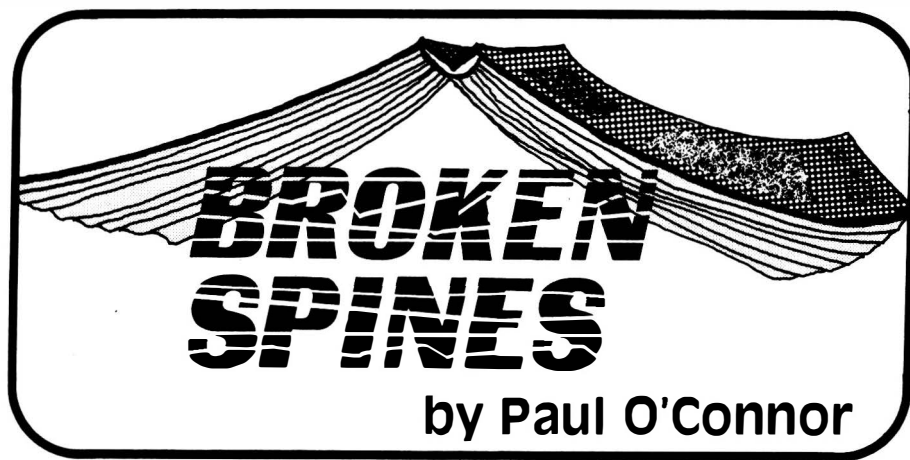
(Personal ads and trade enquiries,
10¢/word, 20-word minimum.)

WANTED: Doug Malewicki (the designer of the *Nuclear War Card Game*) does not have a copy of the original version of his game, and would like to have one (this is the one in the *black box*). If you have a copy, write to Rick Loomis at Flying Buffalo and tell him how much you are willing to sell it for.

NOTICE: I, Kinsing arn-Sink, call blood-feud upon Jerikki. Blade of my father, raise thy voice in song! House of Sink gather; Brotherhood march! (Inquiries invited: Twisted Tail, Mistral-on-Tap).

STILL AVAILABLE: Danforth's Fantasy Art Portfolio. A limited run of 100 copies, signed and numbered on the first plate. Send \$10 plus \$1 postage (\$5 for overseas airmail). Please make check or M.O. (U.S. funds only) payable to Elizabeth Danforth; mail to: E.T. Danforth, P.O. Box 5192, Phoenix AZ 85010.

WANTED: Six hundred experienced mercenaries for light security duty on hidden island fortress. Good benefits—opportunities for adventure, travel, and first-hand experience in advanced psychological warfare. Report to: The Island of the Insidious Dr. Wang (somewhere in the Pacific).



BROKEN SPINES

by Paul O'Connor

- *Shadowland*, by Peter Straub.
(Berkley Books, \$3.50)
- *A Glow of Candles*, by Charles L. Grant
(Berkley Books, \$2.25)
- *Dark Forces*, edited by Kirby McCauley
(Bantam Books, \$3.50)

This time, *Broken Spines* takes a little side trip from the field of heroic fantasy, walking down the darkened hallways of the realm of dark fantasy — or horror, if you will. Horror is an increasingly popular form of fiction, attracting scores of new readers and authors almost daily. Dark fantasy is a growing and vibrant field, and one not to be overlooked—either by the reader or the gamemaster. What follows are my thoughts on three recent releases in this field.

The first book I'll cover is the one you're most likely to have heard of: Peter Straub's *Shadowland*. Berkley Books has spared no expense in promoting and distributing this novel — window banners, numerous press releases, and advertisements in the backs of their recent releases. The result of all this is that you should be able to find *Shadowland* in supermarket check-out lines across the country.

Peter Straub is known for his best-selling novel *Ghost Story*. I haven't read *Ghost Story*, so I can't say how *Shadowland* compares with that work. I can say, however, that *Shadowland* is a well-written and enjoyable novel. I would not agree with the novel's cover blurb, however, which proudly hails *Shadowland* as "the ultimate masterpiece of modern horror." There are times when I feel the true horrors in the field of dark fantasy are not found in the novels themselves, but instead lurk within the offices of whoever thinks up this trite cover design garbage.

Shadowland is about magic. Both the performing kind and the "flash bang" kind. The two are heavily dependent upon one another in *Shadowland*. The very best magicians, Straub tells us, are masters of more than just sleight of hand and card tricks—they have the ability to

levitate, cloud men's minds (apologies to Lamont Cranston), and create illusionary images out of thin air. Not all magicians possess these powers, mind you — only the very best of magickers: perhaps two or three men in all the world.

The heritage of master magicians resides in Shadowland, the world of magic. The supreme magician is the master of Shadowland. For the master of Shadowland, all things are possible.

Shadowland begins innocently enough. The setting is an Arizona private high school, circa 1959. It is here that most of our main characters are established: naive schoolboys, mostly, with a few notable exceptions. Those exceptions are magicians—willingly or unwillingly—people attuned to Shadowland in one or more of its many forms.

The "horror" is very effective here. Against the universally familiar setting of a high school, the bizarre events that take place seem more disturbing than they should be. While there are few (if any) "open" displays of the supernatural, the overall tone of the story leaves you with the inescapable feeling that *something isn't right*. The effect is unsettling—the writing is excellent.

The novel then shifts settings to Shadowland itself. For me, this section of the novel was a disappointment. The atmosphere becomes far more unreal. More open attempts are made to shock the reader. The novel begins to run away with itself with special effects—in many cases, things seem to occur simply because Straub thinks it would be interesting to do so. The "horror" is far less effective here.

Shadowland resolves itself poorly, leaving many questions unanswered and a number of characters unaccounted for. I'm afraid that *Shadowland* screams for a sequel—a feature I can understand, given today's publishing market, but one I am not overly fond of.

Despite my complaints, I can easily recommend *Shadowland* to you. Straub is

a fantastic story-teller, and deserves to be read. If you want to learn a little about the inner workings of magic, and the nature of realms beyond ours, then I suggest you give *Shadowland* a read.

Next is *A Glow of Candles*, a fine collection of short stories from Charles L. Grant. There is no new material here—most of the stories in this collection have already seen print in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. The author has written a brief introduction to each piece concerning the story's history and origin.

Grant has a fantastic style. Poetic to the point of excess at times, Grant is wordy in the extreme. But his characters are real people; his settings and situations are real places and circumstances. Grant will make you smell the fire burning in the hearth, feel the summer breeze upon your exposed neck, and hear the call of the werewolf with your own ears. The stories in *A Glow of Candles* are very involving — it is quite easy to get caught up in this man's work.

A Glow of Candles is an excellent sampler of Grant's many fictional mythos. Here you'll find tales from Oxrun Station, the resort community of Starburst, and Grant's future history chronicled in *The Shadow of Alpha* and *Ascension*. You'll also find a tale set in a dark and forbidden London, and a story inspired by Grant's experiences in Vietnam.

I give *A Glow of Candles* my highest recommendation for stories about people, and the horrifying things that happen to them when things start to go wrong. Excellent reading for a dark winter night. Buy this one and read it with the doors locked—it might not give you many ideas for role-playing, but it just might keep you up at night.

Dark Forces is a collection of original horror tales edited by Kirby McCauley, containing 23 stories by authors such as Stephen King, Ray Bradbury, Robert Bloch, Charles L. Grant, Gahan Wilson, Manly Wade Wellman, Karl Edward Wagner, Gene Wolfe, and many others.

This is all new material, written especially for this volume. Stephen King's contribution, "The Mist", is actually a short novel, and the remaining works are short stories. The fiction here is generally quite good; I especially enjoyed the stories from Stephen King and Davis Grubb. The collection carries itself off well. It is not overly self-important — Kirby McCauley seems content to let the stories speak for themselves, keeping his editorial introductions brief and to the point. All too often I've seen a fine anthology ruined by an egomaniac editor. No such problem intrudes upon *Dark Forces*.

Dark Forces is an excellent book with
(continued on page 41)

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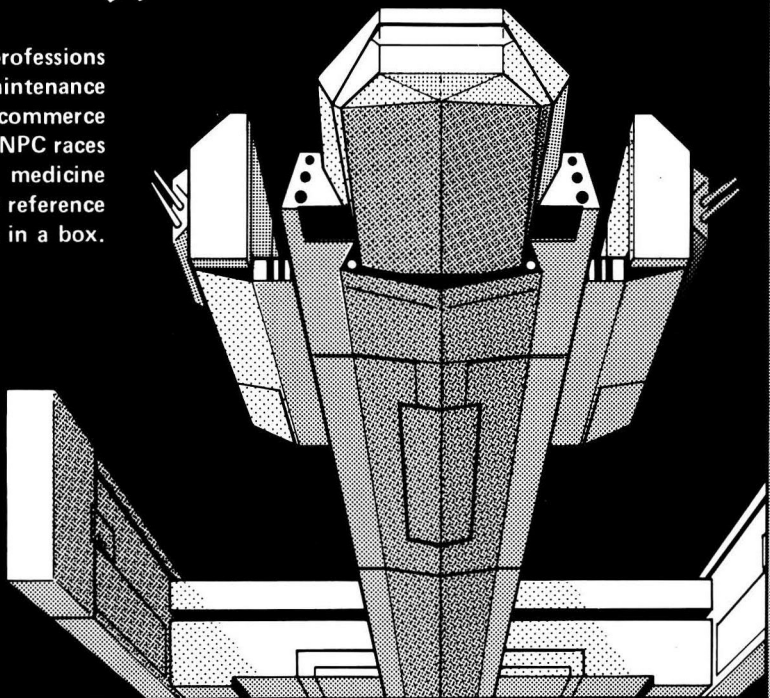
Martigan Belt: An adventure in the Asteroids. \$5.00.

Probe NCG 8436: A Contact Service adventure. \$5.00.

Alien Base: A first contact adventure. \$5.00.

STARSHIP DATA:

Seldon's Compendium of StarCraft 1: Merchant shipping
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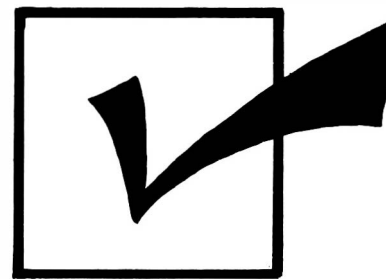
CASTLE PERILOUS



P. O. BOX 128 A
VERONA, MO 65769



reader survey



It's time again for you, the readers, to give us some feedback about what you expect of *Sorcerer's Apprentice* and of Flying Buffalo, and also to let us know a little bit about you. We've presented SA the way we think you want it — so here's your opportunity to let us know what we're doing right, and what we're doing wrong. If any of these questions offend you, just skip over them — we'll manage without. In any case, the survey is completely anonymous. And if there is anything we haven't covered, feel free to sound off in an accompanying letter!

You can tear this page out of the magazine if you like, or photocopy it. We need your responses by May 1, 1982; mail your completed survey to: **Flying Buffalo Inc., SA Reader Survey, P.O. Box 1467, Scottsdale, AZ 85252-1467.**

SORCERER'S APPRENTICE

1. Where do you obtain your copy of *Sorcerer's Apprentice*?

- ☐ subscription
- ☐ game / hobby store
- ☐ bookstore
- ☐ other store
- ☐ gaming convention
- ☐ other _____

2. How often do you buy SA?

- ☐ every issue
- ☐ occasionally
- ☐ depends on what's inside

3. How many people (including yourself) read your copy of SA?

- ☐ one
- ☐ two
- ☐ three
- ☐ four
- ☐ five or more

4. What kind of articles would you like to see in SA?

- ☐ science fiction game articles
- ☐ fantasy game articles
- ☐ play-by-mail game articles
- ☐ general gaming information
- ☐ strategy articles
- ☐ game reviews
- ☐ factual information
- ☐ campaign articles
- ☐ cartoons / comics series
- ☐ variations on T&T
- ☐ miniatures reviews / discussions
- ☐ humor
- ☐ other _____

5. What magazines do you read often?

- ☐ Different Worlds
- ☐ The Dragon
- ☐ Gryphon
- ☐ Pegasus
- ☐ White Dwarf
- ☐ Journal of Traveller's Aid Soc.
- ☐ The Space Gamer
- ☐ The General
- ☐ Moves
- ☐ Strategy & Tactics
- ☐ Flying Buffalo Quarterly
- ☐ Interplay
- ☐ Analog
- ☐ Amazing / Fantastic
- ☐ Fantasy & Science Fiction
- ☐ IASFM
- ☐ Omni
- ☐ Starlog
- ☐ The Gamer / Top Puzzles (UK)
- ☐ other _____

6. What features of SA do you specifically look for in each issue?

- ☐ Editorial (Troll Talk)
- ☐ Fiction
- ☐ Artwork
- ☐ Know Your Foe 101
- ☐ Mini-solo adventure
- ☐ Game Master adventure
- ☐ T&T articles
- ☐ Broken Spines
- ☐ Queries & Quandaries
- ☐ Arcane Graffiti
- ☐ Weapons Shop
- ☐ Troll Teasers
- ☐ Letter column
- ☐ General articles
- ☐ other _____

7. What do you think about Broken Spines, our book review column?

- ☐ I like it and think it's useful
- ☐ I like it but have no use for it
- ☐ I dislike it, but think you should continue it
- ☐ I don't like it; dump it!
- ☐ No opinion

8. What do you think about game reviews in SA?

- ☐ Arcane Graffiti does a fine job
- ☐ I'd like longer reviews
- ☐ I'd like longer reviews *plus* AG
- ☐ Reviews don't interest me

9. Would you be interested in a regular Flying Buffalo works-in-progress report in SA?

- ☐ Yes, definitely!
- ☐ No opinion
- ☐ You shouldn't print one

10. Do you like the non-game-specific approach to many of the articles in SA?

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no
- ☐ no opinion

11. Do you find this non-game-specific approach useful?

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no
- ☐ no opinion

12. How useful is *Sorcerer's Apprentice* to your gaming?

- ☐ I use almost all of the material found in every issue
- ☐ I use some material
- ☐ I use it occasionally, but ignore almost everything
- ☐ I rarely find material I can use

13. What do you think about the amount of text on SA's cover?

- ☐ Needs more words/description
- ☐ OK as is (example: this issue or last two issues of SA)
- ☐ Fewer words/description — it clutters up the cover
- ☐ no opinion

14. I think SA could be improved by:

READER PROFILE

15. Age: _____

16. Sex:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

17. Occupation (if not student)

18. Are you still a student?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

19. Formal education:

- ☐ less than 9 years
- ☐ 9 to 12 years
- ☐ Pre-university (degree _____)
- ☐ University (degree _____)

20. Annual household income:

- ☐ less than \$5,000
- ☐ \$5,000 to \$10,000
- ☐ \$10,000 to \$20,000
- ☐ \$20,000 to \$30,000
- ☐ over \$30,000

21. Religion _____

22. How religious are you?

- ☐ very religious
- ☐ somewhat religious
- ☐ indifferent

23. What state do you reside in? _____

24. How long have you been gaming?

- ☐ less than a year
- ☐ 1 to 2 years
- ☐ 2 to 3 years
- ☐ 3 to 4 years
- ☐ 5 years or more

25. On the average, how much do you spend per month on games and game-related materials?

26. On the average, how much do you spend per month on science fiction or fantasy materials (such as books, movies, conventions, and other activities)?

27. On the average, how many science fiction or fantasy books do you read each month? _____

28. On the average, how many books (total) do you read each month? _____

29. Which role-playing game(s) do you play the most?

- ☐ Dungeons & Dragons
- ☐ Advanced Dungeons & Dragons
- ☐ Tunnels & Trolls
- ☐ Monsters! Monsters!
- ☐ Runequest
- ☐ Chivalry & Sorcery
- ☐ Arduin Grimoire
- ☐ Dragonquest
- ☐ Adventures in Fantasy
- ☐ High Fantasy
- ☐ Traveller
- ☐ The Fantasy Trip
- ☐ Space Opera
- ☐ Top Secret
- ☐ Stormbringer
- ☐ Universe
- ☐ other _____

30. What do you use miniatures for?

- ☐ fantasy gaming
- ☐ wargaming
- ☐ science fiction gaming
- ☐ painting / collecting
- ☐ other _____
- ☐ I don't use miniatures at all

31. Which edition(s) of the Tunnels & Trolls rules do you own?

- ☐ none
- ☐ 1st edition
- ☐ 2nd edition
- ☐ 3rd edition
- ☐ 4th edition
- ☐ 5th edition
- ☐ British edition

32. Which did you buy?

- ☐ T&T rulebook (alone)
- ☐ T&T Boxed Set

33. Do you play any of our solitaire adventures for T&T?

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no

34. If you play solo adventures, do you play them:

- ☐ rarely
- ☐ occasionally
- ☐ frequently
- ☐ exclusively (no face-to-face)

35. Which is your favorite T&T solo adventure, and why? _____



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Based on the immensely popular novels **Thieves' World** and **Tales From the Vulgar Unicorn**. You can now adventure through the city of **Sanctuary** with this fully authorized adventure pack usable with the best role-playing systems available. Best of all, no conversions are needed. Each major, and many minor, characters are fully presented in each system's format and style. Dave Arneson (for Adventure Games, Inc.), Eric Goldberg (for SPI), Rudy Kraft (for Metagaming), Wes Ives (for Fantasy Games Unlimited), Steve Marsh and Lawrence Schick (for TSR Hobbies, Inc.), Marc Miller (for Game Designers Workshop), Steve Perrin (for Chaosium Inc.), and Ken St. Andre (for Flying Buffalo, Inc.) all combine their notable talents and present the statistics for each company's role-playing system. The pack includes two 16-page Players' Guides, one 64-page Gamemasters' Guide, one 64-page Personalities book, one 20"x30" map of the city and two 11"x17" maps of the Maze and the Maze Underground. Cover art is the same as on the first book (by Walter Velez), interior illustrations are by Victoria Poyser. City encounters are by Midkemia Press. All this, boxed, for \$15.95.

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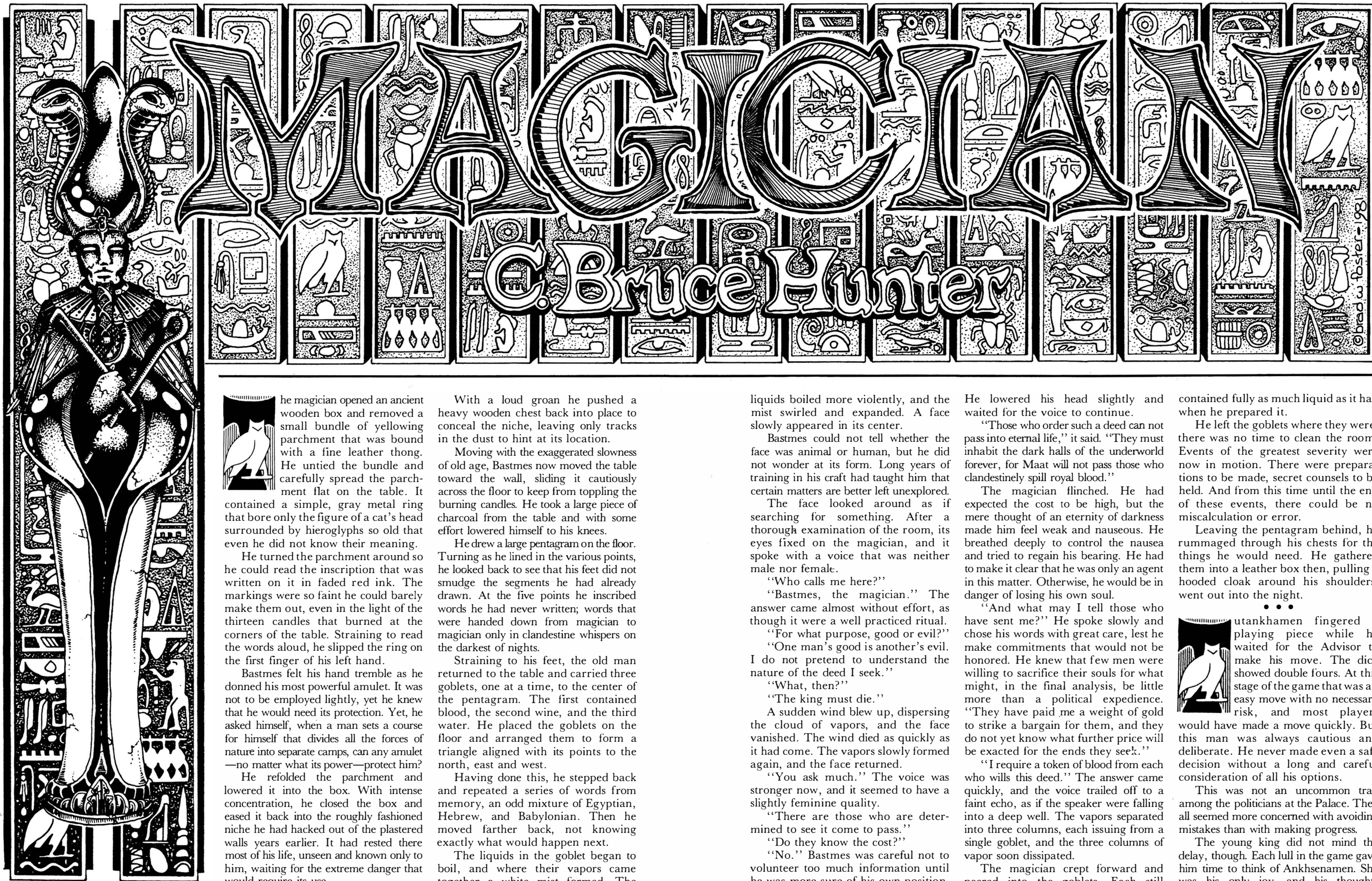
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he magician opened an ancient wooden box and removed a small bundle of yellowing parchment that was bound with a fine leather thong. He untied the bundle and carefully spread the parchment flat on the table. It contained a simple, gray metal ring that bore only the figure of a cat's head surrounded by hieroglyphs so old that even he did not know their meaning.

He turned the parchment around so he could read the inscription that was written on it in faded red ink. The markings were so faint he could barely make them out, even in the light of the thirteen candles that burned at the corners of the table. Straining to read the words aloud, he slipped the ring on the first finger of his left hand.

Bastmes felt his hand tremble as he donned his most powerful amulet. It was not to be employed lightly, yet he knew that he would need its protection. Yet, he asked himself, when a man sets a course for himself that divides all the forces of nature into separate camps, can any amulet—no matter what its power—protect him?

He refolded the parchment and lowered it into the box. With intense concentration, he closed the box and eased it back into the roughly fashioned niche he had hacked out of the plastered walls years earlier. It had rested there most of his life, unseen and known only to him, waiting for the extreme danger that would require its use.

With a loud groan he pushed a heavy wooden chest back into place to conceal the niche, leaving only tracks in the dust to hint at its location.

Moving with the exaggerated slowness of old age, Bastmes now moved the table toward the wall, sliding it cautiously across the floor to keep from toppling the burning candles. He took a large piece of charcoal from the table and with some effort lowered himself to his knees.

He drew a large pentagram on the floor. Turning as he lined in the various points, he looked back to see that his feet did not smudge the segments he had already drawn. At the five points he inscribed words he had never written; words that were handed down from magician to magician only in clandestine whispers on the darkest of nights.

Straining to his feet, the old man returned to the table and carried three goblets, one at a time, to the center of the pentagram. The first contained blood, the second wine, and the third water. He placed the goblets on the floor and arranged them to form a triangle aligned with its points to the north, east and west.

Having done this, he stepped back and repeated a series of words from memory, an odd mixture of Egyptian, Hebrew, and Babylonian. Then he moved farther back, not knowing exactly what would happen next.

The liquids in the goblet began to boil, and where their vapors came together a white mist formed. The

liquids boiled more violently, and the mist swirled and expanded. A face slowly appeared in its center.

Bastmes could not tell whether the face was animal or human, but he did not wonder at its form. Long years of training in his craft had taught him that certain matters are better left unexplored.

The face looked around as if searching for something. After a thorough examination of the room, its eyes fixed on the magician, and it spoke with a voice that was neither male nor female.

"Who calls me here?"

"Bastmes, the magician." The answer came almost without effort, as though it were a well practiced ritual.

"For what purpose, good or evil?"

"One man's good is another's evil. I do not pretend to understand the nature of the deed I seek."

"What, then?"

"The king must die."

A sudden wind blew up, dispersing the cloud of vapors, and the face vanished. The wind died as quickly as it had come. The vapors slowly formed again, and the face returned.

"You ask much." The voice was stronger now, and it seemed to have a slightly feminine quality.

"There are those who are determined to see it come to pass."

"Do they know the cost?"

"No." Bastmes was careful not to volunteer too much information until he was more sure of his own position.

He lowered his head slightly and waited for the voice to continue.

"Those who order such a deed can not pass into eternal life," it said. "They must inhabit the dark halls of the underworld forever, for Maat will not pass those who clandestinely spill royal blood."

The magician flinched. He had expected the cost to be high, but the mere thought of an eternity of darkness made him feel weak and nauseous. He breathed deeply to control the nausea and tried to regain his bearing. He had to make it clear that he was only an agent in this matter. Otherwise, he would be in danger of losing his own soul.

"And what may I tell those who have sent me?" He spoke slowly and chose his words with great care, lest he make commitments that would not be honored. He knew that few men were willing to sacrifice their souls for what might, in the final analysis, be little more than a political expedience. "They have paid me a weight of gold to strike a bargain for them, and they do not yet know what further price will be exacted for the ends they seek."

"I require a token of blood from each who wills this deed." The answer came quickly, and the voice trailed off to a faint echo, as if the speaker were falling into a deep well. The vapors separated into three columns, each issuing from a single goblet, and the three columns of vapor soon dissipated.

The magician crept forward and peered into the goblets. Each still

contained fully as much liquid as it had when he prepared it.

He left the goblets where they were; there was no time to clean the room. Events of the greatest severity were now in motion. There were preparations to be made, secret counsels to be held. And from this time until the end of these events, there could be no miscalculation or error.

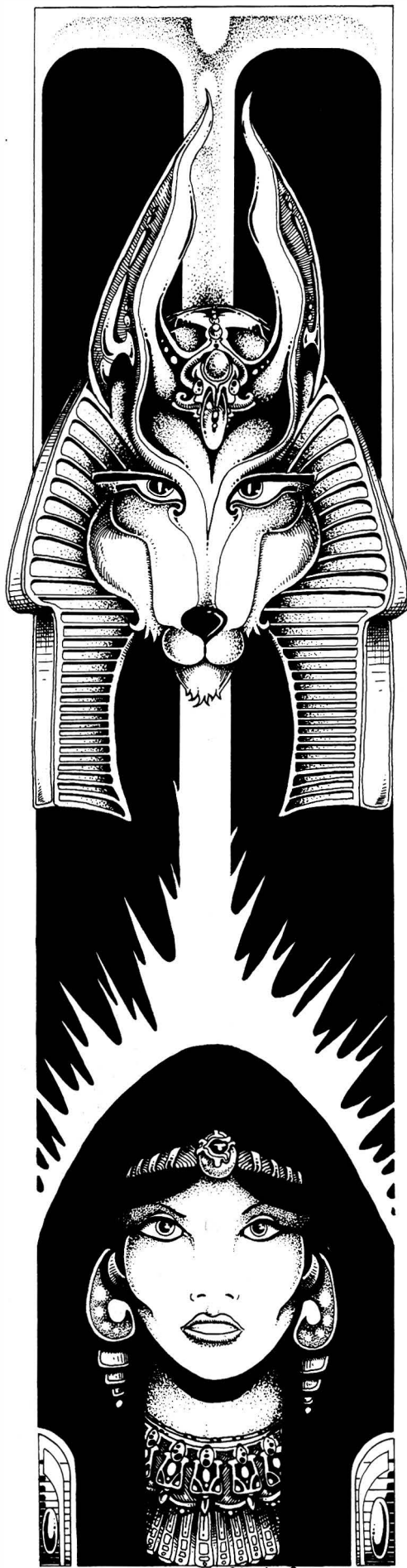
Leaving the pentagram behind, he rummaged through his chests for the things he would need. He gathered them into a leather box then, pulling a hooded cloak around his shoulders, went out into the night.

utankhamen fingered a playing piece while he waited for the Advisor to make his move. The dice showed double fours. At this stage of the game that was an easy move with no necessary risk, and most players

would have made a move quickly. But this man was always cautious and deliberate. He never made even a safe decision without a long and careful consideration of all his options.

This was not an uncommon trait among the politicians at the Palace. They all seemed more concerned with avoiding mistakes than with making progress.

The young king did not mind the delay, though. Each lull in the game gave him time to think of Ankhsenamen. She was his only joy, and his thoughts



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always returned to her whenever the pace of his duties slackened.

He leaned against the arm of his chair and looked across the room at her. She sat on a divan before the east window, her legs curled under her, painting a small figurine with water colors from the palette in her lap.

The light came from behind, glistening on her bare shoulders and the finely woven silk of her skirt. It mingled with her hair to cast a burnished gold halo around her head, as if the morning rays were a tribute from the love goddess Hathor to the child-bride's grace and beauty.

The queen was lost in concentration. She turned the figurine in her hand as she lined in the pleats of its robe. It was a likeness of her husband, and she took special care with the details that would make it seem alive. Changing brushes, she added shadow to the eyes and tipped in the fingers and toes.

In a few seconds she became aware that the clatter of the game had stopped. She looked up, glancing first at the Advisor, then at Tutankhamen. It was a scene she knew well. The age and wisdom of the politician played against the youth and gaiety of the boy-king—it was an accustomed part of life in the Palace.

Ankhsenamen surveyed the board to see who was ahead. Then she looked at the king with the enigmatic smile that had so often graced her countenance in recent months and returned to her painting.

The king smiled, partly at her and partly at himself. At first he had resented their marriage. It was a political convenience in which neither of them had had a voice. But as the years unfolded a wonderful love had grown, and their lives had been inseparably mixed.

Perhaps it was because they had been two children thrown into a world of politicians and schemers. While the Palace seethed with intrigue, only the two of them had found the time to play and enjoy the beauties of nature. Thus they had been bound together by common interests and a lack of other friends.

Over the years that bond had grown increasingly strong. Whenever they were not occupied with state duties, they spent all of their time together. They walked through the Palace gardens, holding hands or embracing among the palm trees. They bathed in the Nile and played children's games. In the cool evenings they talked and laughed and explored their bodies, and shared fantasies of remarkable beauty.

When the king was busy with the never-ending rituals and ceremonies,

Ankhsenamen wrote poems to him. And when he returned from the day's work, she would bathe him and recite her expressions of love.

Although the world changed and others grew older, they seemed to keep their youth. Their isolation held them in a blissful paradise that must have resembled the Garden of the Hebrew legends. They were able to maintain their innocence because they lived in an artificial world inadvertently created by their keepers. But, unlike the Hebrew legend, there was no serpent in this garden to drive them from their bliss.

They were secure in the peaceful knowledge that their world would continue to be beautiful. They would mature without corruption, and their love would grow with their maturity.

The clink of playing pieces called the king's mind back to the game. After a long and careful review of all the alternatives, the Advisor had made a move that was perfectly safe and predictable. With it he had gained little, but had not left himself open to attack. Then, with a complacent smile of accomplishment, he leaned back and waited for the king's reaction.

Tutankhamen picked up the dice and rolled them across the brightly painted hardwood board. When they came to rest against the backstop, two black dots stared up at him like the eyes of a serpent.

...



Captain Hui of the Palace Guard was as white as a piece of chalk. The High Priest, more accustomed to the demands of the gods, was merely silent. His priestly facade concealed any emotions he might have felt.

"I didn't know . . ." The captain was the first to speak, but his words were only to release tension. He did not fully understand the bargain he was about to strike. The consequences, however, were clear and the shock of their finality played across his face.

"It is not too late," the magician explained.

"No," the Priest said. "Most of the power is already in the hands of the king's advisors. They are capable men, but there is a limit to what they can do while he lives."

"There are poisons," suggested the magician, still trying to find an alternative.

"Under normal circumstances they would do," Hui said, "but there must be extreme caution here. The embalmers are masters of their art.

They might detect signs of poison—a discolored organ or abnormal constriction. The army will support this change of government, but only if there is absolutely no chance that the plot will be uncovered.”

The High Priest nodded his agreement. “It *must* be done. While the king lives, the Empire flounders, and it must survive at any cost.”

With this, Bastmes opened the leather box he had brought with him. From it he took an alabaster cup, a small onyx knife, and some strips of linen. The cup and knife had been shaped and polished by stone, so that no iron had ever touched them, and the linen had been torn by hand.

He placed the cup on the table and handed the knife to the Priest, who took it in a trembling hand.

With a twitch of his cheek, he made a deep cut across the second finger of his left hand and held the finger over the cup. Large drops came quickly and fell heavily into the bottom of the white-stone vessel, where they formed a widening pool of dark liquid that seemed to shimmer in the uneven light of an oil lamp that hung from a hook on the wall.

When the magician was satisfied that the pool of blood was large enough, he handed a strip of linen to the Priest. The Priest handed the knife to Hui, then wrapped the linen tightly around his finger. He pressed his thumb against the bound cut to stop the blood.

The captain hesitated. He was accustomed to following orders, but decisions of this gravity were far beyond his experience. He waited for a full minute as if pondering his options, but in fact his mind was a blank. Finally he spoke, more to himself than to the others.

“Our souls will be small enough price to pay for the glory of the Empire.” With this he ran the onyx knife across his palm and let his blood mingle with the High Priest’s. Then he held the knife out to Bastmes, who waved it away.

“I am not a party to this,” he said calmly. “My part is only to summon the powers you require to do your bidding. If this token satisfies those powers, the deed will be done, and you will be held accountable.”

“Will we two be enough?” the High Priest asked, his voice now trembling more than his age demanded.

“I believe you will,” the magician answered. Then he covered the cup with a piece of red leather and bound it with a string. He lowered the cup slowly into the box and without further discussion turned on his heel and walked quickly from the room.



Bastmes unwrapped the alabaster cup and placed it on the floor in the center of the triangle of goblets. He had not disturbed the pentagram since the apparition had vanished, and everything was the same except for a few specks of dust that had settled onto the surface of the liquids in the goblets.

As soon as the white cup of blood was in place, the boiling began again, and the magician jumped back quickly.

The vapors formed again, but this time no face appeared. Instead, horrible sights came and went—visions of death and disease and war.

For many minutes Bastmes was unable to look away. He was utterly fascinated by the scope and magnitude of the evils he was witnessing.

The visions slowly faded, and the vapors dissipated. When the vapors were finally gone and an intense quiet had filled the room, he moved forward and looked into the center of the pentagram. The three goblets were empty, black and charred. The alabaster cup, also empty, was spotless white, both inside and out.

• • •



The young king removed the trappings of his office and prepared for his bath. The day had been unusually hot, his duties rigorous, and he was glad the evening had finally come. He wondered, though, why Ankhsenamen was not in the chamber as she usually was.

He had looked for her in the garden that adjoined their rooms, but it was empty except for the gurgling fountain

at the base of a pomegranate tree. The tree’s orange-red blossoms were beginning to fall, adding to the colors of the grass and flowers and gravel that carpeted the garden.

Ankhsenamen was not in the garden, nor was she in the bedroom or on the terrace. Apparently he would just have to wait for her return.

Tutankhamen busied himself washing his hands and face with the perfumed water that rippled in a shallow silver bowl on his bed table. A cool breeze from the river was drawing the day’s heat from the room, and the water was cold and sweet smelling. It rinsed the oil and salt from his face, leaving only a faint scent of flower petals on his skin.

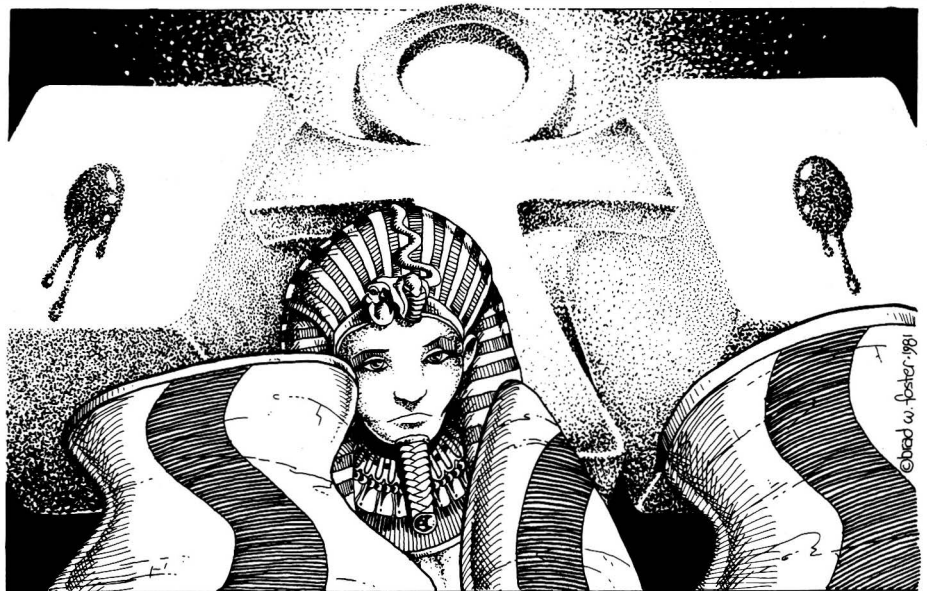
Just as he finished wiping the water from his eyes, the king heard a rustling sound on the terrace. He turned to embrace his queen, but the woman who stood at the door was not Ankhsenamen.

She was tall and thin and wore a long dress of bleached white linen that brushed the floor when she walked. She moved with the smoothness and grace of a cat. Her complexion was pale, and her hair was a hue of silver-brown the king had never before seen on a woman. It seemed finer than hair, more like a silky fur.

Without speaking or bowing, the woman walked toward him, moving so smoothly that she seemed to be gliding across the floor without touching it.

As she came closer, Tutankhamen felt a cold he had never experienced before. It started in his legs and spread slowly up through his body.

Now only a few feet away, the woman held out her arms to embrace the young king, and the chamber gradually became



darker. The sounds of the fountain in the garden faded until he could no longer hear them. He felt light-headed. The cold in his legs became a numbness, and soon he was not sure whether he was standing or reclining.


Through the increasing darkness a figure approached him from a great distance. It was lighted as if by unseen lamps, and although its gait was slow it approached with great speed. It had the body of a man, tall and broad shouldered, but in the dim light it seemed to have the head of a dog.

As the figure came closer, the young king recognized it. It was Anubis, and its lips parted in the semblance of a smile. It bowed deeply in a show of great respect and spoke with a voice of canine quality.

"Lord of the two lands, beautiful god, beloved of Osiris and Hathor, you are welcome. Come. Maat awaits."

Smiling, it took the king's hand and led him into a vast hall, on whose walls was painted the history of earth and heaven, and whose floor was crowded with the gods and demigods who had gathered to see the arrival of the king.

• • •



The High Priest sat cross-legged on a papyrus mat. His desk was littered with his writing kit and letters in various stages of preparation. A small wine spill had been mopped to one side with a blotched letter, and drops of red and black ink stained the unacquainted wood of the desk.

Slipping a bitter wine, the Priest was composing a letter to his temples. With the impending death of the king, the priesthood would play a central role in leading the nation through a calm period of mourning and a peaceful transition. It was imperative that they be given an adequate briefing, and he had labored for hours to compose a suitable message.

The air suddenly felt very cold. It might have been an evening breeze from the river, but there was something odd about it. There was a smell of sulfur, faint at first, but gaining strength. And this breeze came from behind; the evening breeze would have come from the other direction. The odor of sulfur was now much stronger, and the Priest turned to see what could cause such a cold and odorous air.

Something moved from behind the painted silk curtain that screened the door of the chamber. Just as the Priest started to rise, the curtain burst into flames. And as it disintegrated into ashes, a hideous shape appeared in the doorway.

Taller than a man, it had a large, grotesque head and arms that reached to the floor. Its body was covered with running sores infested with lice. Its mouth and nostrils exuded a yellow haze that enveloped much of its body and wafted through the room.

The Priest gagged at the sight and smell of the thing. He tried to speak but couldn't. When the demon moved closer he jerked backward, turning over the desk, spilling wine and ink and burning lamp oil onto the floor.

The demon made a sound. At first it was only a gravelly hiss that pierced the Priest's ears and dug into his brain. Then the sound formed itself into words.


"Your god has forsaken you, priest."

The High Priest tried to scream, but a paralyzing fear held the sounds in his throat. He staggered backward, crushing an ink bottle underfoot, tripping and falling over his broken desk. And the demon came closer.

Mercifully the end came quickly. The demon reached out a hand of rotting flesh clinging to dried bones. Its eyes flashed red. The Priest barely felt its touch as the breath rushed from his lungs.

His body crumpled to the floor, where a ring of burning lamp oil haloed his head.

• • •



captain Hui had removed his breastplate and was scratching his back with a carved piece of acacia wood when he sensed that he was not alone. He turned around, but no one had entered the tent. The camp outside was quiet and no unusual motion could be heard, but the feeling would not go away.

He stepped to the tent's entrance and raised the flap. Nothing was out of the ordinary. The sentries were in place, and the smouldering fires, waiting to be built up for the night, sent columns of smoke into the still air. The red sun cast

its usual glow on the tents and reflected against the bronze heads of orderly rows of stacked spears.


The captain dropped the flap and turned back into his tent. Then he saw it. It was little more than a shadow at first, but as his eyes readjusted to the dim light, the form took on a definite shape.

Unaccustomed to panic, Hui reacted quickly. He pulled his sword from the scabbard that lay across his cot, but as soon as he grasped the hilt it became a glowing coal. He dropped the sword, flinching at the sear of pain it left in his hand. The flesh of his palm had burned away, and the bones were scorched.

He held out his hand and stared at it in shock. The pain spread up his arm and throbbed into his shoulder. He cradled his wrist in his left hand to keep it from trembling. He did not see the demon move closer. It slowly extended its arm and took his hand in its hand.

He tried to call for help, but he no longer seemed to have a throat with which to scream. His last sensation was a hissing laugh that sounded as though it came from deep within himself.

• • •



he demon moved unseen and unheard into the magician's chamber. Smudges on the floor marked the place where the pentagram had been drawn. Where its center had been, Bastmes sat reading an old manuscript by the light of a double-wicked oil lamp.

As soon as the demon entered the chamber, he sensed that it was there and turned to confront it. He quickly raised his hand, thrusting the ancient, gray metal ring between the intruder and himself.

When the demon saw the ring it stopped and hovered silently for a few seconds. Then its lips parted in a smile that revealed shreds of flesh clinging to flashing white teeth. Its voice was a quiet growl.

"Fear not, magician to Bast, you will meet no harm from me. Your protectress is too strong."

Bastmes breathed deeply. He did not trust the words. Careful not to let down his guard, he asked, "What do you want with me?"

The demon's smile twisted. It exhaled a sulfurous yellow haze as it spoke.

"Though you are invulnerable to me, magician, your cause is lost. Your conspiracy is broken. Look to your safety, magician, for though I cannot harm you, you are not protected against your own kind."

As soon as it had finished speaking, its face flashed with a brilliant light that

26A Before you is a great castle, and you see shadowy _____ [pl. n] going in and out. You see a window lit with a flaming _____ [n]; there are no guards in sight. To head for the main entrance, go to 37B. To enter by a side door, go to 39B.

26B You've just stumbled upon the famous _____ [n] of the great warrior _____ [n]. This item is worth at least _____ [g.p.] to the _____ [n] Clans of the Northern Marches. However, it will take you _____ [months] to reach them if you want to sell it there. (If you sell it anywhere else, you'll only get 1/_____ [th] of its value.) This strange object may be stolen from you as you travel, as well. Make a level _____ [saving roll] on your _____ [attr] for each month you must travel. If you ever fail the roll, it is lost. However, owning this _____ [adj] treasure for a while is worth _____ [g.p.] e.p. After you complete your journey, go to 34B. If you'd rather look around some more, go to 39A. If you try to back out of this hole the way you came in, go to 32C.



burned the magician's eyes. He threw his arm up to shield his eyes, and when he lowered it, the demon was gone.

• • •

The demon flowed across the terrace and into the queen's bedroom, its presence announced only by the odor that wafted ahead of it.

Ankhsenamen lay on a large bed in the middle of the room, her body naked against the heat of the night, her arms and legs twisted into the pose of a restless sleep. A small roll of papyrus had fallen from her left hand—it wavered precariously on the edge of the bed—and her right hand held a large, blue stone amulet tightly to her breast.

The demon moved silently across the room and bent over the queen. Its head tilted to one side as it surveyed her beauty. The slime that dripped from its legs fell onto the cool tiles of the floor, where it vaporized to form a putrid cloud.

A smile spread across the creature's face, and through its parted lips seemed to rise the muffled screams of a thousand damned souls. Its eyes flickered, their light playing across Ankhsenamen's small breasts like a lamp light filtered through red glass.

Slowly the demon raised its gaze, and

the pulsing light moved to the queen's face. Her wet eyes and tear-stained cheeks glistened in the ruddy flickering.

She moved restlessly in her sleep, and a raspy sigh marked her waking. Her eyes opened to the shadowy darkness of the bedroom. They adjusted gradually to the ripples of moonlight that reflected from the river and danced on the walls of the chamber.

When she became aware of the shape hovering over her she gasped and drew back. Her fingers dug into the bed as she jerked upright and flinched away from the demon. She swallowed hard and breathed deeply to clear her mind.

She sat very still for a long time, with her eyes fixed on the demon. Her muscles tightened. Her delicate features took on a cold, marble-like set, and finally she spoke.

"Are the deeds done?" Her voice was thin and it broke slightly as she forced out the words.

"Yes, my queen," hissed the demon, stepping back and lowering its head.

Ankhsenamen looked around for the papyrus roll, whose spell she had chanted through the night until fatigue and grief overtook her. It was still on the edge of the bed, and she retrieved it carefully. Then she pulled herself wearily from the bed and walked across the room toward her dressing table. The demon gave way as she passed.

"I only regret that you could not save my husband's life," she said. Shades of sleep lingered in her voice and mingled with the traces of sadness she was unable to repress.

"Hell's hierarchy is rigid," the demon explained. "It is not within my power to circumvent that which is already written."

Ankhsenamen removed the blue stone amulet from a gold chain that hung around her neck. She held it firmly in her tiny hand and turned to face the demon. It saw the gratitude in her eyes and bowed in response.

Turning back to the dressing table, she carefully wrapped the amulet in the papyrus roll, placed them in a carved wooden box and slowly closed the lid.

The demon began to glow with a white light. It bowed again and lowered its head.

The queen set the wooden box in a burnished gold case into which it fitted perfectly. The demon started to shrink, and its size soon became obscured by the haze that enveloped it.

"I await your call, my queen." The demon's hiss receded into the distance as it spoke.

As Ankhsenamen closed the gold case, a tear splashed on its polished surface. She turned and walked back to her bed, and the sound of her small feet on the cold tiles seemed to fill the silent Palace.

GRYPHON, *grif'in*, n. [Fr. *griffon*, It. *grifone*, < L. *gryps*, *gryphus*, griffin, Gr. *gryps*, a griffin, < *grypos*, hook-beaked.] *Classical mythology*. 1) A large, winged creature combining the keen eye and sharp wit of an eagle with the independence and courage of a lion. 2) A Science-Fiction Fantasy Gaming magazine with the same qualities.



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— Michael Stackpole

You won't find "Queries and Quandaries" quite the same column it has been. This issue, we're trying something a bit different. After all, T&T is your game — and we want to know how you play it! We hope you'll take the time to look it over — and respond with your ideas and suggestions.

It was a dark and stormy night. Bang! A shot rang out. Paul O'Connor hurried up from the basement and found Mike Stackpole standing over the Q&Q letters box, a smoking 1916 Mauser in his hand.

"My god! You've shot Q&Q!" Paul exclaimed. Something akin to a growl wandered past Paul from the stairwell. "Ah, the Troll wants to see you; you just missed his Ming vase."

The Mauser leaped from Stackpole's hand like a live thing. Both men slowly descended the stairs to Grimtooth's lair; the dull glow of lamplight from below illuminated the stairs enough for them to navigate without incident. They found Grimtooth seated in an overstuffed chair closely examining the aforementioned vase.

"Paul, be seated." Stackpole nervously noticed he was not included in the invitation to relax. "You," Grimtooth began, fixing Stackpole with a glance that made the bearded man shudder, "came close to destroying the vase..."

"Honest, sir, I was only doing ballistics tests for *Mercs*..."

Grimtooth, seemingly satisfied with the uninjured status of his Ming vase, returned the vase to its original resting place beneath the Van Gogh, who twitched reflexively. "You know how I hate anachronisms, and flimsy untrue excuses. What is the problem?"

Stackpole knew he was caught. He had to tell the truth or just hope Grimtooth was not hungry. "It's *Queries & Quandaries*, sir. All of the questions I'm getting now are niggling

little things. How am I supposed to know the answers?"

"True, you *are* a mere human," the Troll noted. "Tell me, why are these questions directed at you, if they are merely small problems? Why don't they answer them themselves?"

"Grimtooth, I think that many people out there want to have the 'right' answer," Paul chimed in. "The 'right' answer as given them from Mike or anyone else at Flying Buffalo. They don't realize that an answer that works fairly is the right answer."

"He's hit the nail on the head," Mike added. "Many people out there think we have some massive tome in the office, containing all the answers to all the questions. When a question comes in they assume we look up the 'correct' answer."

Grimtooth frowned. "What do you do when you get a question?" he asked. Paul recognized the thoughtful tone of the Troll's voice from working on *Traps* and knew Grimtooth was concentrating on Mike's problem.

"Well, generally we just ask around for anyone who's dealt with a similar problem — or we just consult the rules for a point someone has missed," Mike said. "On rare occasions, like the 'half-breed' question in the *SA*#11, we do a bit of research and come up with what we feel is an interesting way of dealing with the problem. Our solutions could have been thought up by anyone, if they felt they could formulate a 'right' answer."

Grimtooth grimaced impatiently. "As always, your small mind overlooks the obvious answers. Why don't you ask the readers the questions and have *them* come up with answers? You said anyone could come up with the answers you have, and that their answers would have just as much validity as yours. After all, imagination is the key to these 'games', is it not?"

Stackpole realized that Grimtooth's suggested solution was not a *suggestion*.

"That might work," he replied with a weak grin.

"Of course it will. Now, you're going to play cards next Friday, aren't you?" Grimtooth asked, his question an order.

Stackpole shuddered. "Only if Ignxx doesn't play. He cheats."

The troll smiled wickedly. "He says the same about you..."

There you have it, folks. Grimtooth has ordered that I stop answering your questions and *YOU* start answering your questions. "There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to play..." state the T&T rules. Many of the answers that have been offered at conventions or in letters are as good as (if not better than) the solutions we can offer. A fine case in point is the series of articles on combat in this issue.

In the new Q&Q, questions will be offered each issue for you the readers to answer! Just start writing on a question and send your results to us. If we use it, we'll pay our standard contributor's rates for your answer; if you get inspired to write a full-length regular article, we'll pay for that, too!

We need your input. Without it, T&T can become stagnant; with it, T&T will become even more dynamic!

You won't see any of us answering or writing on questions presented here. Too many people find it convenient to take our answers as 'The Law' and this just isn't so. My method of handling a problem is often quite different from Ken's, or Liz's, or Bear's. (Some of the multiple-solution answers to questions run in the past are an indication of differences of opinion among the staff here.) If we print someone's solution to a question and you don't agree with that answer, write to us and refute it. While we don't want to promulgate any long feuds, a little give-and-take is fine.

(continued on page 41)



Judges Guild



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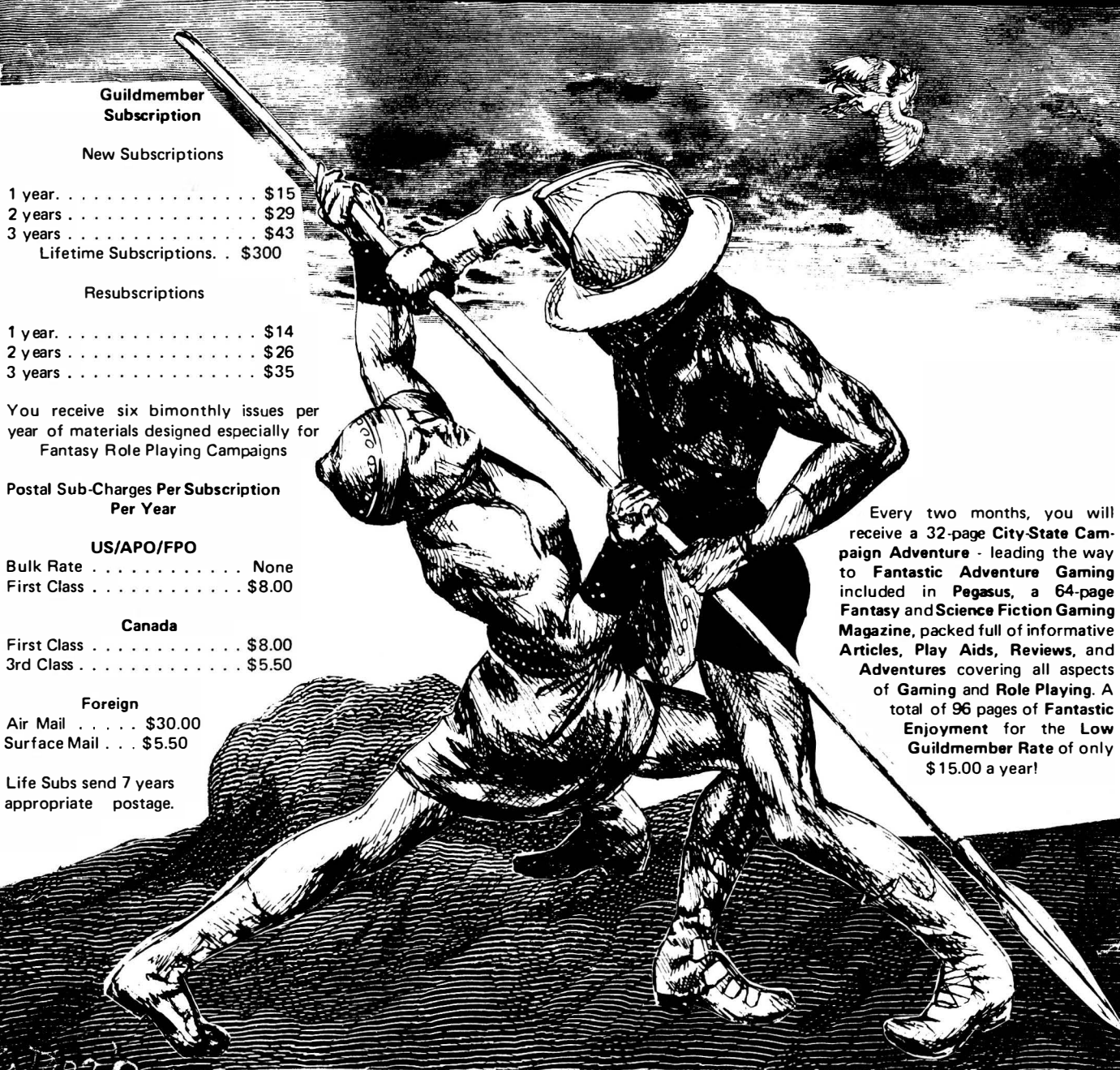
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“It is not a question of race,” said George Moore. “It is the land itself that makes the Celt.” Moore spoke of Ireland, of course, the most distinctively Celtic country left in the world.

Although the vikings were a scourge to the country from 800 to 1000 A.D., they never conquered it. The vikings had introduced minted coins and founded Ireland’s first towns, and eventually became as Irish as the natives.

The same thing happened to the Norman invaders under Strongbow, in the time of Henry II. The Anglo-Norman knights and their sons did not take long to adopt Irish dress, customs, and language, or to defy English rule. The process was still operating in Tudor times. Spenser wrote plaintively, “Lord, how quickly doth that country alter one’s nature!”

If we can believe the ancient legends and mythological cycles, this was nothing new, nor did it begin with the Danes and Normans. The *Lebor Gabala Eireann*, The Book of Invasions, describes how a series of prehistoric and half-mythical races came to Ireland and struggled to possess it. Always, one way or another, it possessed them.

The first group of people to arrive was led by a woman, Cessair. It included forty-nine other women and three men: Cessair’s father Bith, her consort Fintan son of Bochra, and their ship’s pilot Ladra. The legend says that Fintan was the lover of sixteen women besides Cessair, and that Bith took Cessair’s companion Bairrthind and another sixteen, whereas Ladra was left with a mere sixteen and felt slighted. If that wasn’t a case of unreasonable greed and desire outstripping capacity, there has never been one.

Why such a huge discrepancy of the sexes, the legend doesn’t say. I suppose the most likely reason is that there had been a war somewhere, and a remnant of the beaten tribe fled across the sea, leaving most of its men dead. In any case Ladra died before long, leaving Fintan and Bith outnumbered twenty-five to one. Bith travelled north with his entourage and was the next to die, so the women who had been with him rejoined the other group.

Fintan left, “afleeing before all the women”. Who’s to blame him? What he had may be every horny adolescent’s dream, but the reality would surely prove a bit intimidating. He went into

hiding at a place called Tul Tuinde, The Hill of the Wave, and in time there was a deluge. Fintan was the only survivor, living for a year in a cave beneath the waters.

The story later became mixed with the biblical story of the Flood. Cessair’s father Bith was represented by monastic writers as a fourth son of Noah. As for Fintan, he went through many incarnations, living in the shapes of a salmon, a stag, a black boar, and an eagle, witness to all the invasions of Erin that followed.

There are several versions, all vague in patches. But the next race to enter the country must have been the Fomors, as all the succeeding peoples had trouble with them. The Fomors are generally described as a race of misshapen demons, although at least one of them, Bress, was famous for beauty.

A group led by a man named Partholon appeared next. He was an outlaw who had fled his homeland after killing his father; plague destroyed him and all his people, so they left no lasting impression either. But before vanishing from the scene they fought at least one battle with the Fomors.

The next invaders, led by Nemed, stayed longer and increased consider-

ably. Under Nemed's leadership they defeated and slew two Fomor kings, and won three battles. After he died, they were beaten themselves and suffered oppression from the Fomor leaders Morc and Conand. They were forced to pay a crushing tribute, which included two-thirds of their children. Not surprisingly, they rebelled.

Their revolt began with a success. They took the fortress of Conand, but when Morc came to his aid with sixty ships the Nemedians lost the day. The few survivors of the slaughter that ensued were scattered beyond the sea.

Until then, Ireland hadn't proved a lucky place at all for anyone but the Fomors. The next people to try their fortune in it were the Fir Bolg, said to be descendants of the Nemedians driven out by the Fomors. One version of their story has them spending the intervening generations in Greece; another tells of their exile in Spain, which sounds more likely. If a 'real' people at all, they probably were dark Iberians who came to Ireland by sea. The legend says they had existed in serfdom for a long time, carrying earth up hillsides in leather sacks to make terraced fields. Fir Bolg is supposed to mean "the people of the leather bags", but it may mean "the people of the leather boats", to describe the hide-covered currachs in which they made their sea passage. Whatever their name means, the Fir Bolg arrived in Ireland, fought the Fomors to a draw, and settled down to prosper.

32A You dislodge the _____[n]-like item, and realize this was a bad idea. A _____[adj] gas gushes up at your _____[n], and you must take _____[#] hits directly off your CON. If this would ordinarily kill you, instead you find yourself at paragraph _____[#]. A of your favorite solo dungeon! (If no such paragraph exists, go to 37C.) If you live, the _____[n] which came off appears to be solid silver. It weighs _____[#] units, but is worth _____[#] g.p. on the open market.

All this scrambling about has made a strange hole. It seems _____[adj] and you know that means magic. To enter the hole, roll 1 die: if you roll 1—3, go to 8A; if you roll 4—6, go to 39A. If you wish, you can rest here until sunrise — go to 34B.

32B Each creature has a MR of _____[#]: if you die under their _____[adj] attack, go to 37C. If you live, you locate _____[#] golden ornaments attached to their scabrous _____[pl.n]; each one is worth 5 g.p.

Now you see a pale light hovering nearby. If you follow it, go to 34A. You also see what seems to be a _____[n] in the distance — to head for it, go to 26A.

32C You exit into the starlight and see red glowing _____[pl.n] circling the entrance! A _____[adj] noise startles them, and they attack. There are _____[#] of them; each has a MR of _____[#]. If they kill you, your _____[n] is consigned to the _____[adj] underworld, never to be freed by _____[name], guardian of the vanquished.

If you manage to kill them all, you must make a level _____[#] saving roll on _____[attr] to remain conscious. For when these things die, they leave a stench like _____[pl.n], which no human (or humanoid) can stand. If you miss, you fall unconscious, and go to 34B. If not, you can investigate the shape that looms nearby by going to 26A.

The next race to arrive was the superhuman, magical one known as the Tuatha De Danaan. The name means 'People of the Goddess Danu', the Great Goddess, the Earth Mother. They came to Ireland from the sky, or the land of the dead, or the north, or an island or group of islands, location unknown; take your pick. They were brilliantly skilled in all the arts, and as wizards, supreme.

They brought four treasures with them from their original home. One was the invincible sword carried by their then leader, Nuada; the others were an irresistible spear, a cauldron which could feed a limitless number, and a stone that shouted in a human voice when the rightful king stood upon it. (The last, named the Lia Fal, is supposed to have been taken to Scotland in later centuries, to become the Stone of Destiny of the Scottish kings, and removed at last to England by the conquering Edward I . . . which if true would certainly make it a well-travelled articulate rock.)

Eriu, a princess of the Tuatha De Danaan, gave her name to Erin. Two others, Banba and Fodhla, also bestowed their names on the land, but Eriu was promised that hers would be pre-eminent. As it is.

Nuada, the king who led the Danaan invasion, lost his right hand to the Fir Bolg champion Sreng, at the first battle of Moytura. Lacking his right hand, he had to abdicate, as a king was required to be physically perfect.

Bress the Fomor became king in his place. Although handsome, he proved grasping and inhospitable; during his reign, crops were bad and seasons harsh. Then he made the mistake of insulting Cairbre, the bard of the Tuatha De Danaan, by his meanness. He lodged his visitor in a miserable dark room with no fire, no lamps, and a wretched pallet instead of a bed. The food was equally bad.

Enraged, Cairbre made a satire against the king which was so scathing it caused Bress's face to erupt in unsightly blotches. That made him ineligible for kingship, and he was deposed.

Meanwhile, the Danaan physician Dianecht had made an artificial hand of silver for the maimed Nuada. It answered his will as though it was his own flesh and bone, the legends say. He became king again, and was known as Nuada of the Silver Hand from then on.

Bress went to his kin, the Fomors, and raised them in war. There was a Second Battle of Moytura, in which Nuada was killed, even though his side won.

A later king of the Tuatha De was

the Dagda. He'd been present at both Battles of Moytura. With Mider and the sea-god Lir, he was among the oldest of the Tuatha De, and a mighty if not always dignified figure. One of his titles was "Lord of Life and Death."

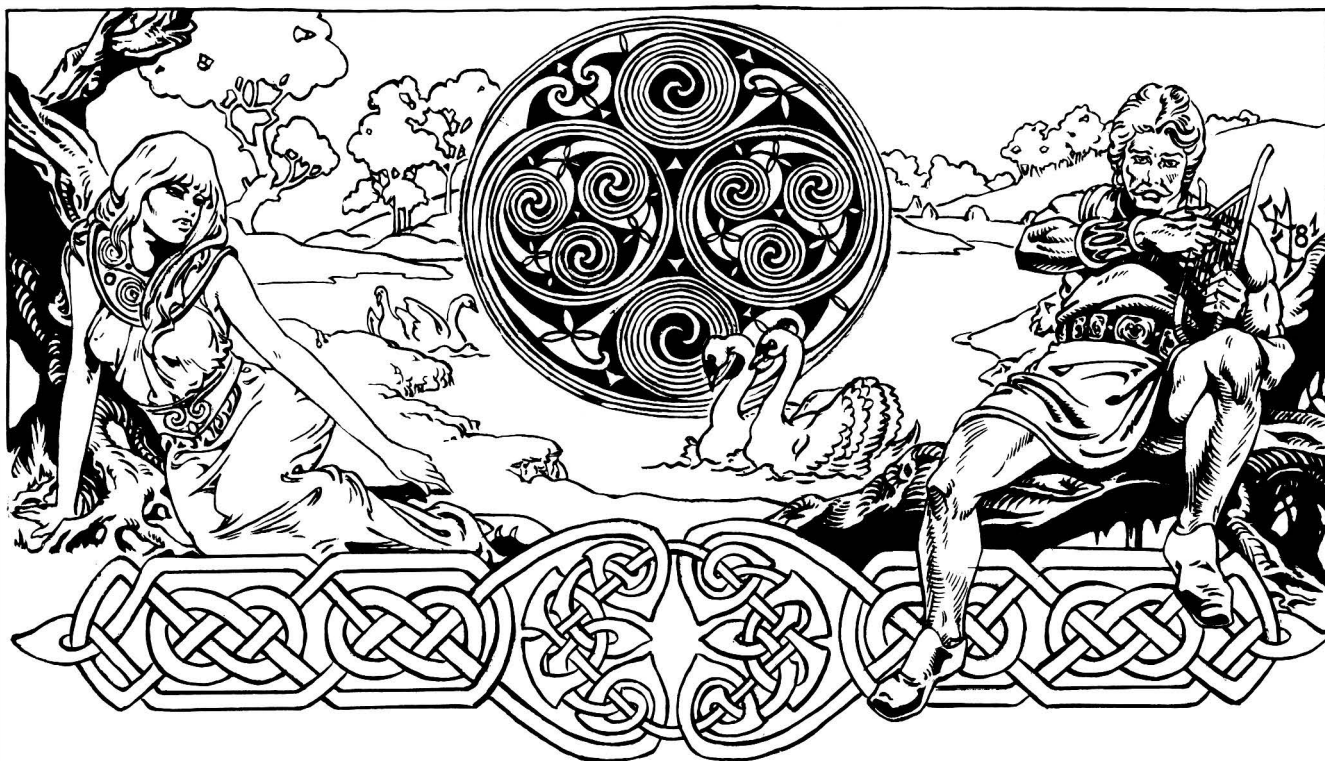
Like his ancestress Danu, the Dagda was a god of the earth and fertility. Heavy, powerful, and grey, he's described as wearing the clothes of a peasant: a leather tunic, short hooded cloak, and horse-hide boots with the hairy side out. He had an immense club no one but he could lift alone; he dragged it behind him on two wheels when he wasn't using it, leaving a track on the ground like a territorial boundary. He could kill nine men at a sweep with it, and restore them to life by touching them with the other end. Undry, the magic cauldron, was also in his keeping. When food was prepared in it, none went away unsatisfied.

The Dagda's oak harp played by itself. Its music made the seasons come and go in order, more evidence that he was a nature god. He was a formidable fighter, too. When all the chieftains of the Tuatha De Danaan were asked, before the Second Battle of Moytura, what part they would take in it, the Dagda replied: "I will fight both with force and craft. Wherever the two armies meet, I will crush the bones of the Fomors with my club, till they are like hailstones under a horse's foot."

So much for the force. He doesn't seem to have been as specific about the craft he'd boasted he would use. Still, he must have been a fair builder and engineer, because while his people were under Bress's grasping kingship, the Dagda's work was making fortresses.

Boann, the goddess of the River Boyne, which took its name from her, was the Dagda's wife. She had been the custodian-priestess of a sacred spring with nine hazel trees growing around its edge. Salmon of infinite knowledge lived in the spring and fed on the nuts as they dropped from the trees; but when Boann neglected her duties the spring burst up in a gush and pursued her, flooding all the way to the sea, which is how the Boyne was created.

The story has the sound of a male slander like Eve and the apple, or Pandora's box. A similar tale is told about the Shannon, in the west of Ireland. Most great Celtic rivers have goddesses associated with them, and there are many other stories of lakes or rivers welling up because of human (or superhuman) actions — which isn't surprising, considering how waterlogged much of Ireland is. The same



theme can be seen in the story of Fintan the Ancient, who fled from over-many women and a great inundation at the same time.

The Dagda and Boann had several children. The best known are Brigit, Angus Og, Mider, Ogma, and Bodb (pronounced Bove) the Red. Brigit was a goddess of fire and the domestic hearth, but also of poetry, which to the Celts was a very important accomplishment and a subtler form of fire. Her brother Ogma was another god of poetry and eloquence, the inventor of Ogham script, which like the Norse runes was made entirely of straight lines so that it could be easily carved on stone and timber for memorial inscriptions, and for making spells. Besides being a patron of poetry and magic, Ogma was his people's battle champion.

Angus Og, 'The Young God', personified love and beauty. Like his father, he had a harp, but his was of gold, not oak, and no one could hear his music without following the sound. It's told of him that his kisses became birds which flew invisibly over Erin to inspire lovers. He sounds an ingenuous sort of fellow, but he wasn't. He had considerable cunning. On one occasion he gave his father, the Dagda, valuable advice on how to get fair pay for his services from the niggardly King Bress. On another, he conned the Dagda out of one of his two supernatural dwelling-places, since Angus at the time had none. And when he was lovesick for a beautiful woman he had

seen only in a dream, he managed to find her and obtain her hand, even though she'd taken the shape of a swan in a group of three times fifty others. That couldn't have been easy.

Mider, almost as old as his father, was a god of the Underworld. Like the Dagda, he owned a magic cauldron — perhaps the same as the Cauldron of Rebirth which belonged to Mider's rough British equivalent, Arawn. But that's far from certain; there is a confusing number of harps and cauldrons in Celtic legend.

Patrons of most other arts and crafts are found among the Tuatha De Danann. There was Diancecht, the god of medicine, who made Nuada's artificial hand, and who could cure any wound except an amputation, or an injury to the brain or spinal cord. Two of his children, Miach and Airmid, brother and sister, were physicians like their father — and even surpassed him in skill. The jealous Diancecht killed his son because of this, although he had to try four times before inflicting a wound that Miach couldn't cure. Three hundred and sixty-five previously unknown herbs grew on Miach's grave, each a certain cure for a different illness. Airmid picked them all, arranging them with care on her spread cloak according to their virtues, but her jealous father snatched the cloak and scattered the healing herbs.

Goibniu the smith was another god of the Tuatha De. His craft was one of the most important, and one of the

most potent in magic. Iron-working has always been associated closely with magic, and conversely with protection against it. A prayer attributed to St. Patrick implores the protection of God

*Against the false laws of heretics
Against crafts of idolatry,
Against spells of women and smiths and Druids,
Against every knowledge that defiles men's souls.*

Besides Goibniu, the Tuatha De had Credne the bronze-worker, Luchtaine the wood-worker, Cairbre the bard and harper, Mathgan the wizard (although they were all great magicians in their particular fields) and the three terrible war queens, Morrigan, Macha, and Nemain. The war queens and their attendant spirits were collectively known as the Badb — in some versions, that is. In others, Badb Catha is

33A You come to a room where you find some people huddled around a small fire. One of these strangers wears a _____ [n] which indicates he's the one in charge: a _____ [adj] sorceress is crouched over the fire.

The person with the odd clothing says, "Ah, another to help with the judgement ... or are you here to be judged?" If you are with the soldier, he says you are here for judgement: go to 40A. Otherwise, you're expected to help: go to 8B.

33B You notice something _____ [adj] coming towards you. To confront it, go to 40B; otherwise, hurry on to 26A.

33C You touch it and *POOF!* the illusion melts into a _____ [n]. Its MR is _____ [#] and it attacks. If you fall to its _____ [pl. n], go to 37C. If you survive, a nearby _____ [n] catches your eye. You pry it apart and find a magical _____ [n]. It causes _____ [#] points to be subtracted from your _____ [attr] but you get _____ [#] c.p. If it wasn't so _____ [adj] you'd have been able to sell it for _____ [#] gold pieces. In this condition, though, you can get _____ [#] for it. To leave this room, go to 35A.

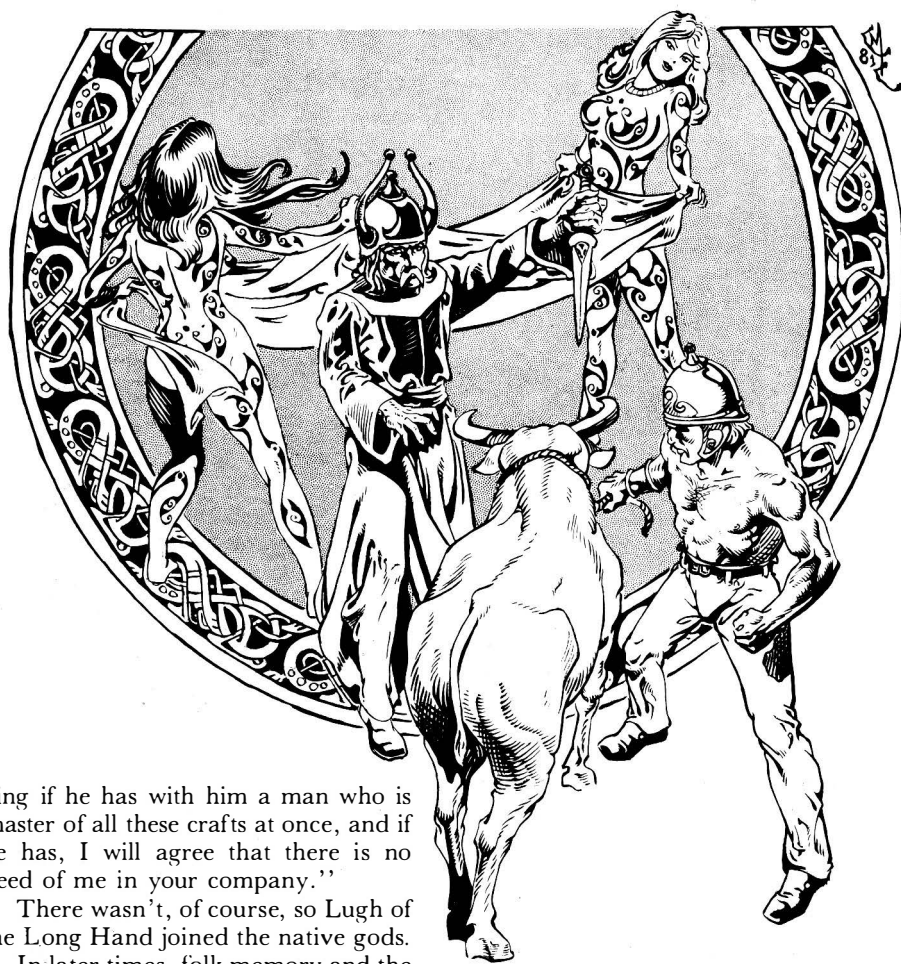
named as an individual war queen, and another called Fea is also known. But by whatever names, the war queens are always grouped in a triad.

Such were the Tuatha De Danaan, the People of the Goddess Danu. One account describes them as "the most handsome and delightful company, the fairest of form, the most distinguished in their equipment and apparel, and their skills in music and playing, the most gifted in mind and temperament that ever came to Ireland. That too was the company that was bravest and inspired most horror and fear and dread, for the Tuatha De excelled all the peoples of the world in their proficiency in every art."

For all their power and accomplishment, they were dispossessed of Erin at last by a new race of invaders. These newcomers were the Milesians, and their chief weapon against the Tuatha De Danaan was their enchanted "swords of light". This may be a folk memory of the arrival of the Celts, with their iron weapons and ploughs, their sun worship and their chariots, which would make the Tuatha De the gods of some pre-Celtic people, taken over by the newcomers. In that case, the iron-worker Goibniu must have been added to the Danaan ranks after the fact.

The sun-god Lugh certainly was. Even his legend makes him a late-comer. He's described as arriving at the gate and asking to be admitted while Nuada of the Silver Hand celebrated his return to the kingship. Lugh was told that no one might enter who was not a master of some art or craft. He began to enumerate his many skills, and each time he was told that the Tuatha De had the services of a master in that line already. A carpenter? They had one. A smith? They had one. A warrior? They had several mighty champions. A harpist? Cairbre was their harpist and bard. An expert cup-bearer? They had nine such. A physician? Diancecht was their physician. A sorcerer? They were hip deep in those.

At last Lugh said, "Then ask the



king if he has with him a man who is master of all these crafts at once, and if he has, I will agree that there is no need of me in your company."

There wasn't, of course, so Lugh of the Long Hand joined the native gods.

In later times, folk memory and the Church's teachings reduced them from pagan gods to the Sidhe (pronounced *Shee*), or fairy race. They were still described as splendid and beautiful, riding horses shod with silver, and skilled in magic; but they were not worshipped as they had been.

Not that the Church triumphed over the old gods at once. It was two hundred years after St. Patrick's mission before the kings of Erin began to be converted. Before and after, old ways flourished beside the new.

The Druids (and Druidesses; women belonged to the cult) remained. Not nearly enough is known about them, but sun and nature worship was part of their religion. They were greatly respected for their learning, which included law, history, and genealogy, all taught by word of mouth. One of their functions was the reading of auguries and omens. They were famous as magicians; it was believed that they could induce madness in a man by their incantations, raise a mist that would darken the land at noon, or bring down showers of fire.

Stories often show the Druids as baffling people with false appearances or illusions. In *The Fate of the Sons of Usnech*, as Naoise and his brothers were escaping

from the House of the Red Branch with Deirdre, Cathbad the Druid "worked enchantment on them, so that he put the likeness of a dark sea about them, with hindering waves. And when Naoise saw the waves rising he put up Deirdre on his shoulder, and it is how the sons of Usnech were, swimming on the ground as they were going out of Emain, yet the men of Ulster did not dare to come near them until the swords had fallen from their hands."

In many stories, a magician uses his or her art to create such glamour. The daughters of Calatin make thistle-stalks and dead leaves appear to be bands of armed men, to lure the hero Cuchulain to a battle in which it has been foretold he will die. When that fails, one of them assumes the appearance of Cuchulain's mistress Niamh, and releases him from a promise he made Niamh to stay where he was. In the *Mabinogi*, the British sorcerer-prince Gwydion tricks a foreign king into exchanging his pigs — at the time a new kind of domestic animal — for superb horses, hounds, and shields which are really masses of fungus with a glamour placed on them. By the time this false appearance fades, the swindler is well on his way home.

34A The glow recedes before you, then glides into the side of a _____ [n]. To go inside after this will o' the wisp, go to 8A. You also notice a _____ [adj] castle not far away; approach it by going to 26A.

34B You open your eyes to the warm sun falling on your face and realize you've had the most extraordinary dream of your life. No wonder everything was so bizarre ... Still, the world is a strange place of many realities, so perhaps it wasn't as much of a dream as it seemed ... the treasures you found are there beside your bed. You stretch happily and welcome a _____ [adj] new day!

Much of Celtic magic was based on illusion, glamour, the difference between seeming and reality: a thing which fascinated the Celtic mind. But all transformations were not changes of appearance only. Heroes and heroines were often "really" turned to swans, like Angus Og's dream-love, or to other creatures. The heir of Gwydion, Lew Llaw Gyffes, became an eagle after being struck a treacherous deathblow. Gwydion himself was once successively changed into a hart, a boar, and a wolf for the crime of rape. Fintan the Ancient lived in form after form, finally being reborn as a man.

This belief in reincarnation, that people could become beasts and beasts people, appears throughout the Celtic world. Classical writers say the transmigration of souls was a Druidical doctrine, and compare the teaching with that of Pythagoras. The legends, though, don't always distinguish clearly between rebirth in a new form and shape-shifting in a single life. Both are depicted quite matter-of-factly as happening. Irish legend abounds with shape-shifters: swan-men and maidens, the selchies or seal-people, stag-men, boar-men, horse and crow goddesses. Nor is shape-shifting limited to the animal kingdom. A reverence for trees and plants seems to have been part of the Druids' doctrine. The word *druí* has been derived from a Celtic word for "oak". In the British *Mabinogi*, an event called *Cad Goddeu*, "The Battle of the Trees", is mentioned. Whole forests of trees are turned into warriors to meet the threat of invading armies from Annwn, the British Hades.

The association of Druids with oak groves and mistletoe is well known. Oak is not a common host for mistletoe, which more often attacks apple and linden. The combination of oak and mistletoe was probably sacred partly because it was rare. As an evergreen, mistletoe became a symbol of life; its berries were believed to be aphrodisiac and a cure for sterility. It was cut from sacred oaks with a ceremonial sickle (which cannot have been gold, as the legends say; gold would have been too soft, although it may have been gilded bronze) to celebrate the winter solstice. The plant was not allowed to touch the ground, but was caught in a white cloth. Two white bulls were sacrificed at the same ceremony. Our use of mistletoe as a Christmas decoration, and the custom of kissing under it, is carried over from these old beliefs.

The fear of Druid incantations went

with the strong Celtic belief in the power of the spoken word. It was a power shared by bards and story-tellers, also a special class with special privileges, trained in the use of words. An inspired bard could fill an army with the battle-frenzy, or, if motivated the other way, destroy its morale. On an individual level, he might wreck a man's reputation and even his health with a satire. In a culture like Erin's, the most common grounds for a satire were meanness and lack of hospitality. The bard Cairbre satirized King Bress for that reason, and cost him his kingship.

A king might also be deposed for handing down faulty or dishonest judgements. Wisdom in litigation was a needed quality. The *Testament of Morann* says optimistically, "For so long as he preserves Truth, good will not be lacking in him, and his reign will not fail." There is a story of a king who gave a wrong judgement, and the house in which he gave it promptly began to slide down the hill, only to stop when he reversed his verdict and gave the true judgement instead. King Cormac mac Art, famous for his judicial wisdom, had a cup which would break in pieces when three lies were told over it, and become whole again if three truths were told. The legendary jurist Morann made a golden collar for judges to wear, which would tighten and throttle any who gave a dishonest award. Some judges who sit on the benches today might be all the better for wearing it.

Bards also abused their privileges in many cases. Their demands for "generosity" and "hospitality" were often as bad as extortion. Nor were they always generous themselves. The Cuchulain saga includes a vivid description of one man who wasn't.

"That is Aithirne, the poet and satirist," said Fergus. It was said now of that man that he was very covetous, and that he would ask the one-eyed man for his one eye, and that the rivers and the lakes went back before him when he made a satire on them, and rose when he praised them. And one time when the men of Ulster were fighting to protect him against the men of Leinster, that he had stirred up, and were shut up in Beinn Etair, he had plenty of cows himself in the fort, but he would not give a drop of milk to man or boy, or to a wounded man itself, but left them without food and without drink, unless they would eat the clay or drink the salt water of the sea."

The poets' behavior grew so bad that at the three-yearly Feis of Tara, late in the sixth century, it was

seriously debated whether or not to exile them en masse. "For the men of Ireland were on the point of banishing them because of their great number, their sharp tongues, their oppressiveness and their intolerable language. They had in fact satirized Aed, son of Ainmire, King of Ireland. And why? Because he could not give them a valuable heirloom that belonged to his royal line. This was a golden brooch, in which a gem of precious stone was set, so lustrous that it shone as brightly by night as it did by day."

By that time, though, most of the clergy were native Irish, with an inherent respect for their country's traditions. It's said that the poets were saved on this occasion by St. Columcille, who interceded on their behalf. The native and imported learning later reached a compromise so fruitful that, in Dorothy Dunnett's words, "the great music of the bard . . . played in the austere tradition of the monasteries, stretching from Pavia to Roth . . . once made the music of Ireland free of every harpstring in Europe." (*Queens' Play*)

Music, beauty, sorcery and splendid horsemanship: these were the characteristics of Erin's gods, the Tuatha De Danaan. They might have retreated into Otherworlds beyond the sunset, below the earth or the sea, but they remained in the Irish imagination. The great pagan ceremonies of Beltaine (May Eve) and Samhain (November Eve) were still celebrated, dividing the year into winter and summer. Spirits of the dead and other supernatural powers were supposed to pass freely into the human world at Samhain, often to make trouble there . . . and like the mistletoe, that belief has its remnant today, in the costumes and games of Halloween. ■

35A Around a corner comes a soldier in a bright shiny [n] who shakes his [n] at you and asks why you're here. If you apologize, he tells you to go away — so wander off to 33A.

If you attack this man, he steps back and blows on his magical [n] which knocks you unconscious for [n] turns. However, it also knocks him out for [n] turns.

If he wakes first, he takes you to be judged by his master — go to 33A. If you wake first and search his body, you find [n] shiny copper [n], but not the magical dohicky. You'd better get out of here while you can: leave the castle by going to 34B.

35B Before you looms a forgotten tomb with [n] scattered about. You find [n] gold pieces that bear the profile of [name] the First. You know the coins may be hard to use among the superstitious, for that name is cursed and the coins may be also. You'll get only half their value at best.

You hear a snuffling at the entrance: something seems to have followed you! You also keep seeing something out of the corner of your eye — when you turn, it isn't there. If you try to chase down the elusive spot, go to 39A. If you want to charge outside and attack what sounds so [adj], go to 32C.

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The Origins Awards, presented at Origins each year, are an international, popular series of awards aimed at recognizing outstanding achievements in Adventure Gaming. They comprise the Charles Roberts Awards for Boardgaming, and the H.G. Wells Awards for Miniatures and Role-Playing Games. An international Awards Committee of 25 hobbyists (some professionals, but primarily independents) directs and administers the awards system. The nomination ballot is open to all interested gamers. YOUR VOTE can make a real difference! A final ballot is prepared by the committee and voted on by members of the Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts & Design. Academy membership, \$2/year, is open to active, accomplished hobbyists, both pro and amateur. Membership guidelines are available for a SASE from the addresses given below. Correspondence should be sent to the USA address. Present members may renew by sending their check with this ballot. Canadians may send \$2 Canadian, payable to Mike Girard. UK and European members may send 1 pound sterling payable to Ian Livingstone. US and all others may send US \$2, payable to Bill Somers.

The Academy and the Awards Committee as well as the Origins convention itself, function under the overall direction of GAMA, the Game Manufacturers Association. Direct correspondence to Paul R. Banner, % GDW, Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61701.

Instructions. Read Carefully: Print legibly or type your nominations. Ballots that are messy, not filled out correctly, or show attempts at stuffing will not be counted. You may list three nominees per category. It does not matter in what order you list them. To keep the voting as meaningful as possible, do not make selections in unfamiliar categories. **YOU MUST SIGN THE BALLOT!** And include your address. You may vote only once, and send only one ballot per envelope.

Nominations should be for products produced during the calendar year 1981. Exceptions are permitted for older products which gain significant exposure and acclaim during 1981. Miniature figure series nominations should be for product lines which are either new or have been substantially expanded in 1981. All Time Best nominations are not restricted to 1981, of course.

This ballot may be reproduced and circulated by any means available, provided its contents are faithfully copied. Magazine editors and publishers should plan to include the ballot in an issue of their publications due to come out during the interval from late 1981 to mid-March 1982. Clubs and other organizations should circulate copies among their members shortly after the first of the year.

All Adventure Gamers are encouraged to vote!

Deadline— March 31, 1982.

**THE H. G. WELLS AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING
ACHIEVEMENT IN MINIATURES AND ROLE-PLAYING
GAMES**

1. Best Historical Figure Series, 1981: _____
2. Best Fantasy/SF Series, 1981: _____
3. Best Vehicular Series, 1981:
(includes any man-made conveyance,
chariots, wagons, cars, trucks, tanks,
ships, aircraft, spacecraft, etc)
4. Best Miniatures Rules, 1981: _____
5. Best Role-Playing Rules, 1981: _____
6. Best Role-Playing Adventure, 1981:
(dungeons, campaign modules,
scenarios, etc)
7. Best Professional Miniatures
Magazine, 1981: _____
8. Best Professional Role-playing
Magazine, 1981: _____
9. All Time Best Miniatures Rules for
20th Century Land Battles _____
10. All Time Best Miniatures Rules
for pre-20th Century Naval Battles: _____

19. Adventure Gaming Hall of Fame: _____

(Previous winners of the Hall of Fame are Don Turnbull, James F. Dunnigan, Tom Shaw, Redmond Simonsen, John Hill, Dave Isby, Gary Gygax, Empire, and Dungeons & Dragons).

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Address: _____

City/State or Province/Zip or Postal Code: _____

Send in your ballot by March 31, 1982 to only one of the following addresses:

Canada:
Awards, % Mike Girard
RR 1
South Woodslee, ONT
Canada, NOR 1V0

UK and Europe
Awards, % Ian Livingstone,
27-29 Sunbeam
London NW10
United Kingdom

USA and all else
Awards % Bill Somers
PO Box 656
Wyandotte, MI 48192

**THE CHARLES ROBERTS AWARDS FOR
OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN
BOARDGAMING**

11. Best 1981 Pre-20th Century Boardgame: _____
12. Best 1981 20th Century Boardgame: _____
13. Best 1981 Science-Fiction Boardgame: _____
14. Best 1981 Fantasy Boardgame: _____
15. Best 1981 Initial Release of a Boardgame: _____
(referring to the first release of a
boardgame by a new company)
16. Best 1981 Professional
Boardgaming Magazine _____

The following categories recognize outstanding achievement
in Adventure Gaming in general.

17. Best 1981 Adventure Game for
Home Computer: _____
18. Best 1981 amateur Adventure
Gaming Magazine: _____
(amateur magazines are non-profit
efforts, not of professional quality, not providing income for their staffs or
not paying for contributions)

Letters



illustration by Rob Carver

As I leaf through SA 7—11, I find that your editorial section (Troll Talk) is alive, fresh, and slightly off-the-wall. SA11 was the real subject in which I wanted to delve, though. I thought “Can These Bones Live?” was a little stale, certainly not up to SA’s normal excellence. The Arduin article by Ken St. Andre was per his natural fineness; it helped me out a great deal with a recent dilemma of mine. The “Sleeping Champions” article and “Monsters of the Cthulhu Mythos” proved to be very intriguing — keep the Lovecraft pieces coming, as I am an admirer of the unique and the bizarre.

Finally, give Michael Stackpole a huge T*H*A*N*K*S for another superb adventure, this one being a GM scenario as opposed to his mini-solo in SA7. In fact, I would like to see an eventual addition to it, something into which you could incorporate the Black Dragon Tavern — maybe an eventual city ...

George Weinstein
Laurel, MD

The Arduin character article in SA11 was good. T&T is short of variants. A treatment of clerical or priestly types would be nice.

“The Black Dragon Tavern” GM adventure was a nice change from mini-solos. Why isn’t there a ‘Space Invaders’ game in the corner?

The “Cthulhu Mythos” monster article was good reading — creepy stuff. The ‘Antarctic Ones’ mentioned were not covered. I assume they are the weirdies that live in the Mountains of Madness? (And are called the Old Ones in typically confusing fashion.)

Stephan Jones
Locust Valley, NY

If you want a ‘Space Invaders’ game, do it! But with that crew of hooligans, and so many other ways to spend your coins, would you think it truly advisable?

I enjoyed the “Vampyre Quest” article. (Michael failed to mention his resounding exclamation upon discovering the first ‘Ray’ headstone: “Son of a Bitch!”) The additional information was a lot more satisfying than the initial account, and I’m glad [Stackpole] was able to do as well as he did, in researching the Ebenezer estate. I quite agree that with the idea that perhaps ol’ Eb had a more conventional name (middle or nickname) that he used in place of the somewhat unwieldy ‘Ebenezer’.

Stephan Peregrine
Poughkeepsie, NY

Each and every SA is getting better. The new issue was *GREAT* and well worth it. I also like the new dungeons put out (*Sea of Mystery* and *Blue Frog Tavern*). My only suggestion would be to take the junk out of the cover [of SA] and just leave the title and the magnificent artwork!

Words on the cover; no words on the cover ... can’t seem to satisfy everybody, can we? Anyone else have a comment? Better yet, fill out our Reader Survey on pp.19-20 of this issue and send it in!

My compliments on a fine cover and a fine article on “Sleeping Champions” to go with it. I assume you got the author to do the article after getting the cover painting. The hard part, of course, is getting it done well.

John Sapienza
Washington D.C.

Actually, the cover art was done to compliment the article, not the other way around — that’s how all the art in SA is done. To get it done well, one relies on capable, talented artists!

Concerning Paul O’Connor’s article on using promissory notes (in SA 9/10), I think that it is an interesting possibility. However, there is also the

possibility of using cut gems that have been marked with a specific value by royal coiners. This would also serve the purpose of lightening the belt pouch.

Also, in keeping track of time in a campaign, I write down whatever the date is for the role-playing year and advance it as often as necessary for healing, traveling, etc. Those characters not engaged in any activity in essence lose the time. However I presume they are doing something that will pay for their meals, etc. This, of course, causes characters to age rather rapidly and spend most of their time healing, especially since they heal only one CON point every three days. This does solve a lot of problems, though.

Meng Chan
Brighton, MA

Why not write a universe for T&T and make your cities, towns, and villages under one roof (so to speak)? Consider it.

Tony Jones
Tullahoma, TN

Actually, we have and are. We’ve held off so long because, you crazy people, YOU are the gamers, the players, the creative and imaginative! In other words, why aren’t you out there creating your own worlds, building your own cities and baronies, engineering the great world-wonders of your own planets and empires? You’ve got the smarts and the talent and it’ll mean a lot more than anything off the shelves of a store.

Still, this letter is one of a great many. I’m certain that before too much longer there will be a project which will put everything ‘under one roof’ ... but in the meantime, get out there and make your own world live!

37A You climb down into a damp streambed and cannot find anything which might have made the sound you heard. The only unusual thing you see is a small [n] which resembles a [n]. If you pick up this unusual item, go to 32A. If you keep looking for the source of that [ad] sound, make a level [n] saving roll on your [attr]. If you succeed, go to 33B; if you fail, go to 40B.

37B You find yourself in the [n] room of the castle: the crest above the door tells you this is the home of the baron called “The Nameless One” (although he sometimes absently answers to [name]). The room is decorated with [pl.n], among which you spot a [n] which you can investigate by going to 33C. There is also an enormous [n] which smells [ad]. If you’d like to leave this room to look elsewhere, go to 35A.

37C You gasp and thrash about, then realize you’re dreaming. But you’re still asleep, and it’s said that some people die that way. It appears that that is what is happening to you. If you can make a level [n] saving roll on your [attr], you can wrench yourself awake, but you collect nothing at all from this adventure, because the shock has removed all traces of this [ad] experience from your mind and reality. If you miss the roll, a friendly neighbor, concerned for your welfare, eventually finds your body twisted in your own blankets.

SECRET SOCIETIES IN FRP GAMING

illustrations by Alan Burton

by Lewis Pulsipher

The following article may not provide you with a detailed blueprint for using secret societies into your campaigns, but the ideas presented here should give you a fair start. After all, there's more to secret societies than little-known handshakes and funny hats.

The man in chainmail looks down the street, then slips into a narrow alley entrance almost invisible in the twilight shadows. He stops, looks back, knocks with a peculiar rhythm on what seems to be part of a wall. A few mumbled words later the secret door opens to admit the man. Inside, he and a heavily armored seven-footer exchange a strangely awkward handshake and formal embrace; the man walks down a narrow stairway into a stone chamber occupied by several quiet, solemn figures. A huge red lotus is depicted on the wall above a dais, where the newcomer takes his place. "We are met here tonight to worship the Holy Lotus, and to choose our new victim in the outside world..." Now the meeting of the Cult of the Red Lotus begins in earnest...

In these days of Freedom of Information, democracy, even rampant egalitarianism, most people don't realize how important secret societies once were in a Europe of poor communications, suspicion, and plots against governments. The ancestors of the seemingly harmless Elks, Moose, and especially Masons were once believed to be powerful organizations working for good or ill—usually the latter. Many of the great (though ridiculous) conspiracy theories—that the Masons were plotting to take over the country, or that Jewish Secret Masters actually controlled all European governments—centered on some secret or not-so-secret society. Recently the *Illuminatus* trilogy

by Shea and Wilson took this tendency to see conspiracy everywhere to its (il)logical limit.

Whether the relatively well-known "secret" societies such as the Masons, or the truly secret ones which few know about, actually had any power or influence, whether they were anything more than a substitute father figure (or a womb) for their members, is not in question. The "man on the street" often believed that such organizations could affect his and his family's lives. This tradition is occasionally carried on in fantasy fiction, but because secret societies were usually thought to be evil, they are depicted only distantly, as an adversary, in most heroic fiction.

In fantasy role-playing campaigns, where player characters may be less than paragons of virtue, and where non-player characters play an important part in the lives and adventures of the the player characters, secret societies can add variety to the game and call for skills not often used by the players to defeat more typical dangers. Setting up a secret society requires some work by the GM, but the result is worth the effort. Secret societies help flesh out a city or area in your campaign, and can provide the impetus for mini-adventures, quests, and involvement of characters in the politics of the territory in which they live. Below I'll describe the kinds of secret societies which might exist in a campaign, and then give some specific examples of how they can affect players.

Forms of Secret Societies

Secret societies can be categorized according to the form of organization. Perhaps the most common "secret society" isn't secret at all. Everyone has heard of the Masons, for example,

and many Masons freely admit their membership to their acquaintances. What remains secret are the particular forms of identification and meeting procedure used—and I suspect many former Masons have revealed even these "secrets".

This kind of society is merely a debating or drinking club, a kind of male-only (or female-only) club with a few trappings of exclusivity. There might be secret passwords, a secret handshake or other greeting, a secret knock, a secret initiation ceremony, perhaps some secret knowledge (about persons, places, things—quite possibly not actually true). This form, which we might call the "non-secret society", often has a religious purpose, or did when it was founded. The members are worshipping together in their own peculiar, stylized way.

In a sense, most organized religions are non-secret societies, with the difference that most want to recruit as many members as possible, while a typical secret society is cautious about recruits. Although it seems to be harmless, some people will suspect this kind of society of abominations or illegal activity, and in some cases it may actually be a "doublethink" front for a society which has a more devilish purpose. What is more natural to this kind of activity than a secret society within a secret society? Finally, there is at least one non-secret society today, the Ku Klux Klan, which openly espouses a destructive if not devilish goal. Evidently, it wants to recruit as many members as possible.

The second type of secret society—let's call it the "standard" type—is a smaller group which operates "underground", meeting at secret locations. Its name and purpose may be known to the populace, but members will not

admit their involvement with the organization, nor will details of its secret procedures be known to non-members. It will have some definite purpose, often one antagonistic to the local authorities. It may be an illegal group, perhaps hunted or persecuted by the government.

In such circumstances a cellular, hierarchical organization may be adopted to minimize the number of members who may be betrayed if a member or local cell is questioned by the authorities. In other words, each member will know only a few members of similar rank, plus his immediate inferiors. His superior may be only a false name or contact point, or a man behind a mask. He may also know a member of similar rank in a cell in an adjacent area, to whom he would report if his own cell, or his leader, is captured by the police.

But this standard secret society will strive to recruit more members, to increase its size in order to further its purpose, despite the danger of discovery by the authorities or those opposed to the society. The strength of purpose of the members—loyalty—will be such that torture, not mere questioning, will be required to gain information about the society: and even that may not work. A tinge of fanaticism will often touch the members. A good example of this kind of society is the early Christians in Rome, meeting in the catacombs, persecuted by the government, but always attempting to increase its membership.

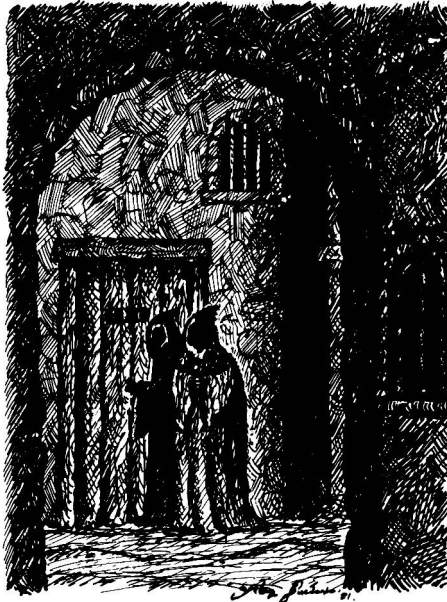
The third form—the “super-secret society”—is the other extreme of the continuum. Most people will never hear of this society, unless it suddenly accomplishes its purpose, such as the overthrow of the government. Both collectively and individually the society will have a strong, dominating, usually violent purpose which, if it is ever attained, will signal the end of secrecy.

The super-secret society is almost certainly an illegal group, with a cellular organization and frequent weeding out of members deemed insufficiently strong of purpose. The victims disappear, never to be seen again. There is little interest in recruiting: prospective members usually seek out the society after somehow stumbling onto evidence of its existence.

Such a society often has its own secret language. A strict hierarchical system limits how much of the language a member may learn, just as the hierarchy determines all other actions.

Each member is expected to follow orders to the letter. The ultimate ranking member, the chief of the group, will be known only to a few, and he may hide himself behind a mask or other disguise so that no one knows who the leader is in the real world. This form of society is the stuff of conspiracy legends and is particularly favored by scripters of superhero comic books and illuminatus mysteries.

Readers will have noticed that these comments about the form of a society describe several parameters. When a



GM creates a secret society, he should ask himself the following questions; when he has answered them, he will have determined most of the important facts about the society.

□What is the purpose? (The next section describes this in more detail.)

□How strong is the purpose, both for the society and for individual members? That is, will the society forge ahead toward its goal regardless of opposition, or will it adopt a different purpose if persecuted or opposed? Will a member die for the cause, or do members drift in and out of the society little caring what they reveal about it and whether they advance its purpose?

□How large is the society? Generally, the larger the memberships, the less secret the society is and the more active its recruiting efforts.

□How visible (secret) is the society? In other words, how much (or how little) does the man on the street know of it? Could a streetwise resident of the shady side of town tell you much about it? Would it be easy for the “secret police” to infiltrate agents into the society—that

is, how difficult is it to join?

□How strongly hierarchical and cellular is the organization?

These questions all tie together: as a society is larger, and consequently more visible, it tends to have a weaker purpose and a looser organization, and it is easier to join or learn about. In addition, you can ask yourself questions about details such as secret procedures, membership eligibility, social class of typical members, and so on.

Purposes of Secret Societies

What purpose might a secret society have in a fantasy campaign? One of my characters once thought about creating a secret society dedicated to destroying a so-called neutral empire, which he hated, from the inside. But he was dedicated to law and order, and even if he had been otherwise the difficulties of setting up an efficient secret society in this particular area were more than he could face. Nonetheless, a group dedicated to revolution is one of the most common kinds of secret societies. The Bolsheviks in Russia, dogged as they were by the secret police, are a good historical example. The organization in Robert Heinlein’s *Revolt in 2100* (“If This Goes On”) is an example of a very large and successful secret society of this kind.

In some cases, the society will aim at overthrow of an entire system of government; in another situation it may only intend to eliminate one man, or one group, which seems inimical to the otherwise satisfactory government. In either case, the society members may have some idea of what they wish to replace the deleted elements with, or they may think no further than the act of violence. Some societies of this kind are hardly more than terrorist groups with no hope of success, but who refuse to adopt any less violent means of change.

Probably the most common purpose is religious. The early Christians, persecuted by Rome, have already been mentioned. They had a secret

39A You locate the hole, and know you have only your _____[n] to lose by going in. You have time to regret your decision before finding yourself suddenly in another place. Roll a die: 1-2, go to 37B; 3-4, go to 34B; 5-6, go to 8C.

39B The place is colder than anything you could imagine: it seems even supernaturally frozen. However, through a door to the next room you see a tiny flickering fire and some shadows to indicate other people not far away. You start to move forward, but a single _____[n] scoots underfoot and disappears into a small opening in the far wall. If you investigate the fire, go to 33A. If you examine the far wall where the _____[adj] critter disappeared, follow it through a stomach-wrenching magical hole to 8A ... but don’t be surprised to find yourself where you weren’t!



symbol — the fish — and a secret knowledge passed to them by the apostles. Unlike many other secret societies, they were completely non-violent; and unlike most, they won through in the end. But a religion need not be as benevolent as early Christianity. More commonly, a cult requiring human sacrifice will be a secret society. The thuggee, in India, were a semi-religious order dedicated to more or less random ritual murders. And there are secret societies of flying-saucer believers—a form of religion, surely.

A sub-class of religious society is one devoted to some perversion, such as demon-lovers. Whether it is bestiality, blood-lust, or merely (in some worlds) homosexuality, those who practice it must go underground.

The most common modern kind of secret society is that which is intended only to comfort members in their leisure time, whether through literary association, “manly” male companionship, or some other purpose which everyone deems harmless. Some college fraternities (and sororities) are examples. This kind of purpose is unlikely to have much impact on a fantasy campaign, though an individual

character may become involved in some such group.

Finally, there is the “power behind the throne” group. Known to few if any outsiders, this group controls an incompetent, fearful, pliable, or otherwise controllable ruler or group of rulers. The nineteenth century Jewish Masters who were supposed to control all of Europe’s governments—and who turned out to be the invention of a rabid anti-Semite—are an example of this most powerful of all secret societies. There is much scope, particularly with the option of involving gods and demigods, for using this kind of society in a fantasy campaign.

A variant of the power behind the throne is the group attempting to become that power, or which wishes to gain power and influence in its own right. The assassins’ or thieves’ guilds in some areas may choose this purpose, though more commonly they wish only to enrich their members without arousing the wrath of the local government. If you think about it, both thieves and assassins must have begun as standard secret societies which might gain sufficient power and influence to allow them to come above ground, to become non-secret without risking persecution and prosecution.

Player Characters and Secret Societies

How will players come to interact with secret societies? Initially, a player character (PC) may become acquainted with a non-player character (NPC) who is a member of a society. The NPC may, for a variety of reasons, try to interest the PC in the society, perhaps even invite him to join. He may be acting on orders for reasons he

doesn’t know himself.

A secret society might teach a skill which the PC wishes to acquire. For example, a knightly religious order might teach members how to increase resistance to certain spells, or how to use an unusual weapon or magic device.

The PC might encounter the society only when an agent of that society tries to capture or kill him. When the assassins’ guild is given an open-ended contract on a PC—“keep trying until you kill him”—the PC may become the victim of some act of violence or theft he committed weeks before, which is now being avenged. Perhaps in an adventure the PC unwittingly thwarted the secret society.

A PC may desire to set up his own secret society. The average player won’t be interested, since this requires a lot of thought and effort without immediate tangible benefits. Those who enjoy role-playing are most likely to think about this line of action, especially if the GM encourages such thoughts. The more common secret societies are, the more likely a player will try to start one of his own, unless an existing group exactly suits his purpose.

On the other hand, the PC may try to destroy a secret society which is evidently thwarting his own purposes. The target of an open-ended contract may try to destroy the local assassins ring before they destroy him. A power-wielding secret society may tax the PC, rob him, prevent him from gaining the honors or position in society which he thinks he deserves, and so on. The secret society may espouse an evil or perverted religion, such that it will be the duty of a good, civic-minded PC to destroy the society. In this case the PC may become one of the authorities or “secret police” hunting the society; but things can become complicated in a predominantly neutral area where a good character is trying to eradicate an evil society, for both sides may get in trouble with the “law”.

Take some time and mix it with a little imagination and you’ll have a dozen scenarios for introducing secret societies into adventures. You don’t have to be a member of a real secret society, or know anything about the Masons from the inside, or research the historical role or nature of the secret society. For our purpose, the fantasy role-playing campaign, it is enough to know the bare legends and take it from there. You might discover some details of procedures through research; on the other hand, if a society really was *secret*, you won’t be able to learn much about it, will you? ■

40A The Nameless One (the person who wears a _____ [n] as his badge of office) tells you no one is allowed to wander in from the moors. He offers you a choice: you can be judged with the sorceress, and accept her fate, or you can take the Test of the _____ [adj] _____ [n]. You ask what that is, and he points to a hovering spot of blackness. “You must enter that,” he says. If you agree to be judged with the sorceress, go to 8B. If you’d rather enter the spot of blackness, go to 39A.

40B Unaware of what’s going on around you, you’ve been surprised by _____ [pl. n]! They carry sharp _____ [pl. n]. If you want to flee from these, try to make a level _____ [pl. n] saving roll on Speed; if you succeed, flee to 26A. If you miss, or if you want to stand and fight, go to 32B.

Broken Spines (from page 17)

which to test the field of dark fantasy for the first time, as it contains work from most of the important writers in the field. A reader of this book can get a feel for the styles of the authors involved, and decide if he wants to pursue a particular author further. For someone well-read in the field, *Dark Forces* is an excellent collection of new material from old favorites.

I recommend *Dark Forces*, for a taste of different worlds and as an introduction to authors you might not otherwise encounter. Well worth reading.

Due to Space Considerations, and the fact that I can't spend twenty hours of my day reading (I must have time to incite riots, and tap dance for The Troll), there are a number of books that cross my desk that I can't review. Still, you should know that these books have been published, so I'll list a few of these releases at the end of each month's column. For some of the titles, I may also include a few of my impressions of the book—bear in mind, however, that these opinions have been developed after only a light perusal of the work in question. In other words, take anything I say here with a grain of salt.

Thus, also received but not reviewed: *Savage Empire* by Jean Lorrach; *Tomoe Gozen* by Jessica Amanda Salmonson; *War Games* by Karl Hansen; *Galaxy Volume 2* edited by Pohl, Greenburg and Olander; *Ironbrand* by John Morressy; Book Three of the Phoenix Legacy; *House of the Wolf*, by M.K. Wren; *The Eternity Stone* by Aden Foster Romine and Mary Cox Romine; *Silent Galaxy* by William Tedford; the three books of the War of Powers series by Vardeman and Milan: *The Sundered Realm*, *The City in the Glacier*, and *The Destiny Stone* (I tried several times to read this series, but I simply couldn't force myself any further than the first hundred pages or so of the first book); *Sunwaifs* by Sydney J. Van Scyoc; the second book in the McGill Feighan series, *Reefs*, by Kevin O'Donnel; another Haven book from Graham Diamond, *The Beasts of Hades*; the second Starhawks book by Ron Goulart, *The Cyborg King*; and *Merlin*, by Robert Nye, which claims to be "a very adult fantasy", but which I found to be childish in the extreme.

That's all for this time. I'm supposed to escort The Troll to a cat bludgeoning match this evening, so I've got to be off. Break a few spines to celebrate the new year, and I'll see you next issue (unless The Troll takes a bath with his bets at the match, and decides to pit me against a tiger). ■

Queries & Quandaries . (from page 29)

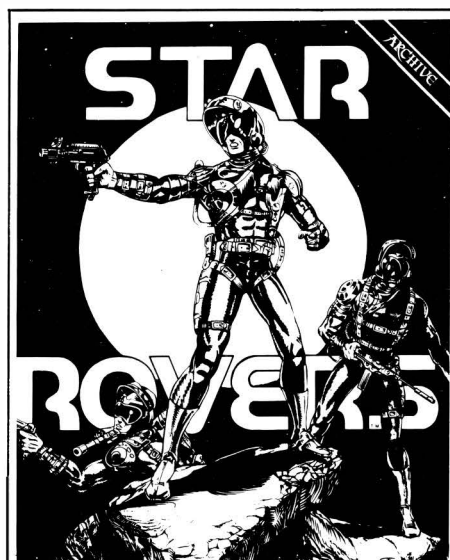
We've always felt that T&T players tend to be brighter and more inventive than the majority of gamers. Letters and conversations at conventions bear this out. We've also always maintained that T&T is *your* game, to play with in a manner that gives you pleasure and in a manner that entertains you. This philosophy is maintained in the forthcoming games *WEB*, and *Mercenaries*, *Spies*, & *Private Eyes*. Here is your chance to share your insights into the game with other players, to get some dialog started to enhance your gaming.

Grimtooth, Paul, Liz, and I have come up with two questions we hope will get this new Q&Q off the ground in a hurry. (Please help me! During the poker game I foolishly made a bet with Grimtooth that I could make a go of this . . . and I've never really liked the idea of being cooked over an open fire.) Any and all responses, at any length, are openly solicited. Each will be read and those selected will be credited and paid for with real money. If you want your answer returned to you in the event it is not used, please include a self-addressed stamped envelope. You can also suggest questions to be dealt with in the future.

1. Do you think that characters developed in face-to-face play are more important than characters played through the solo adventures? Do you allow the two types to mix freely — and do you allow solo characters into face-to-face adventures? Why or why not? What are the problems with solo characters versus playing face-to-face characters, and why do these problems exist? How do you deal with it?

2. This is a question about Game Mastering styles. When you design a trap and know "The Solution," how do you react if another workable solution is presented? Do you question the party's ability to know certain facts that they might not know? Do you automatically disallow that solution? Do you grin and bear it, awarding experience points for quick thinking and good problem-solving?

This is your chance to make your mark in the development of T&T and/or Role-Playing in general. You can speak your mind with no one to tell you that you are 'right' or 'wrong'. This is your chance to help others understand the game better and to play better because of your insights. (This is your chance to save me from Grimtooth. Ah, no, I don't mind spicy barbeque sauce — but slow turning will make me dizzy...) ■



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 S F F I R G O P P I H B T N K P N A R I W N A A S Y L E S H Y T S E A B A
 J U B J U B B I R D S I M U M M Y E T I N G B L B Y T T E H T A R N V H B

Word Search by Patrick Hollister

Air Elemental	Gargoyle	Living Skeleton	Snollygoster
Balrog	Ghost	Living Statue	Sphinx
Bannik	Ghoul	Medusa	Spider
Banshee	Giant	Merperson	Troglodyte
Bats	Giant Slug	Minotaur	Troll
Black Hobbit	Gnoles	Mummy	Unicorn
Boojums	Goblin	Octopi	Vampire
Cannibals	Gorgon	Ogre	Warg
Centaur	Gorilla	Oni	Warlock
Chimera	Gremlin	Orangutang	Water Elemental
Chinese Fox	Griffin	Orc	Wendigo
Cockatrice	Half Orc	Pythons	Werething
Dark Elf	Harpy	Roc	Witch
Demon	Hippogriff	Satyr	Worm
Dragon	Hydra	Shadowjack	Wyvern
Dwarf	Jubjub Bird	Shoggoth	Yale
Earth Elemental	Kobold	Slime Mutant	Yeti
Fire Elemental	Lamia	Snark	Zombie

LIMERICK CONTEST

In SA #11 we promised you the start of a limerick contest ... an exercise in lunatic rhymic creations, rewarded with a \$2.50 payment for each limerick printed. Here's the first assortment, but it isn't stopping here! We want more, more, MORE! So write some good delving and adventuring-type limericks, send 'em in, and we'll print them and make you famous! (Well, maybe infamous...) You have to stick with the rhyme and meter of limericks, but aside from that, tap into that creative imagination that made you a fantasy gamer in the first place!

There once was a merry old troll
Who thought it exceedingly droll
To bake treasure won
Into one giant bun
And then call it his saving roll.
— Jill D. Weber

A perverted wyvern named Kate
Favored ogres and trolls as her mates
This preference confusion
Led to her dissolution
When she took Grimtooth out for a date.
— Stefan Jones

There was a young man who would boast
That he could defeat a great host.
Till he met a small dragon
With cute tail a wagging
And a breath that turned him to toast.
— Vic Melucci

A kindly old wizard named Bilk
Faced a dragon and some of its ilk,
But his magic did tell
When a seldom-used spell
Drowned the creature in decade-old milk.
— Andrew Solovay

There once was a delver named Mac
Who carried all of his gold in a sack.
For want of his loot
And his Seven League Boots
He was constantly under attack.
— Patrick Hollister

There once was a wizard from Knor
Who owned his own general store.
He zapped him a fly
And gave a great cry!
For he'd blown a great hole in his floor.
— Robbie Webber

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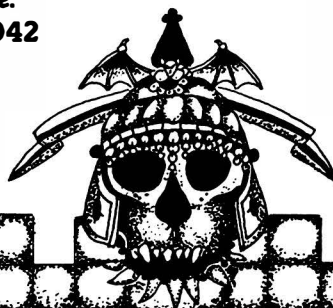
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