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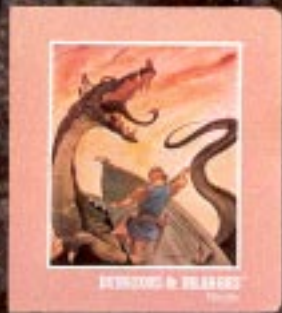
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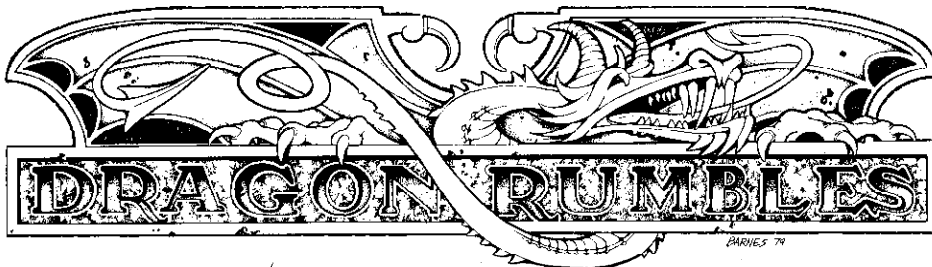
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Publishing a magazine requires the performance of a myriad of tasks besides editing and typesetting, not the least of which is complying with a government regulation requiring the publishing of a form called "Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation." In order to keep our second-class mailing permit, once a year about this time we are required to show who owns this magazine, who's in charge, and what our circulation is — not that any of these things are great secrets, and indeed we are quite proud of the information reproduced at the bottom of this column.

DRAGON™ magazine is now far and away the largest publication in the adventure-gaming field. Credit for this must go to Editor Kim Mohan, who performs the Herculean task of insuring that there is a DRAGON magazine each month, and to you, the readers, who are buying more copies of each issue than ever before.

* * *

In the "better late than later" department, this is the time to "officially" welcome Gali Sanchez as the newest mem-

ber of our editorial staff. Also, lest it go unnoticed and unrecorded, staff member Marilyn Mays recently became a bride and is now "officially" Marilyn Favaro. (In order to keep from confusing her dozens of fans, Marilyn has elected to retain her old name for professional purposes.) Congratulations to both, and we hope Gali's career and Marilyn's marriage are both long and happy.

* * *

Even though Mr. Deadline is beating on my office door and this piece of writing must be done in a matter of minutes, I find myself staring out the window at the trees of southern Wisconsin as they go through their annual changing of the hues. Soon, the snow will return to Lake Geneva. Thanksgiving is on the way. Then Christmas...

Christmas? Back to reality, Jake. Soon we'll all be inundated with radio, TV, and print-media ads urging us to buy this doll or that train set, or whatever. Well, we all expect that. But something different is happening this year.

Look in the Sears catalog, and you'll see DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game sets for sale. Watch the TV, and you'll see Mattel's new D&D electronic computer labyrinth game advertised. Can you believe it? Sears, Mattel, television, and adventure role-playing in the same breath!

This is big time, folks. Those guys don't waste time and money on anything less than a mass market that they think they can make a buck on. Which means that finally, *finally*, adventure role-playing is becoming accepted by the general public.

No more "What kind of a weird game is that?" questions. No more "Dungeons and what?" responses from store proprietors. I remember a similar phenomenon about 20 years ago (Boy, does that make me feel old), when a group of long-haired musicians from England were "a fad" and "weird." And how, after about their third gold album, the general public started saying, "Maybe there is something to those Beatle characters...."

It's been a long time coming.

Jake Jaquet

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he highlights of DRAGON #55, to a veteran reader, may well be the re-appearance of two authors whose work hasn't been in these pages for many months. Those of you who have joined the ranks of our readership in the last 11 months will be seeing one of DRAGON's specialties — a Niall of the Far Travels story by Gardner Fox — for the first time. Gar hasn't had a story published since 'way back in #44 (our fault, not his), and the tale that resumes the Niall series is, fittingly enough, the story of Niall's first adventure away from his homeland and how he came to possess his great sword. "The Coming of the Sword" begins with Thom Gillis' full-page illustration on page 24.

Gary Gygax has been "gone" even longer than Gar Fox. It's been more than a year since the creator of the AD&D™ game and former publisher of DRAGON has penned an edition of his column, "From the Sorcerer's Scroll." But there's one inside (page 17), and we have the promise of many more words to come in the immediate future from the master of Dungeon Masters.

So much for the triumphant returns. Now let's take it from the top: The cover painting you just got done looking at is an Erol Otus original — and original is certainly the word for that bizarre monster. Erol also provided the idea and the color art for the devil spider, which leads off this edition of Dragon's Bestiary.

All in all, this is perhaps the most colorful issue of DRAGON magazine ever. You'll find a small-size rendition of the cover of the FIEND FOLIO™ Tome on page 6, leading off a short section about the latest official AD&D volume. Contributing editor Ed Greenwood and reader Alan Zumwalt offer their views on what's good and bad about the book, and FF editor Don Turnbull takes the better part of a page to respond to their criticisms.

The next step along the way is Lawrence Schick's essay on revising the AD&D dinosaurs — unofficial recommendations on how to change the creatures' statistics to conform with new

scientific discoveries about the big lizards. (Or were they lizards?) That feature is accompanied by a couple of striking color plates from "The Dinosaurs," a new release from Bantam Books, and a review of that same book prepared by professional literary critic Chris Henderson.

Katharine Kerr, a frequent contributor to our "Giants in the Earth" column, is responsible for this month's "celebrity characters" — none other than Robin Hood and all the other men of Sherwood Forest, plus the nasty Sheriff of Nottingham.

The center eight pages of DRAGON #55 contain *The Creature of Rhyl*, Kevin Knuth's adventure for the D&D® Basic Set rules which won second place in the Basic division of our International Dungeon Design Contest. You need ingenuity, but not necessarily a lot of playing experience, to overcome the obstacles this adventure presents, which makes it ideally suited for beginning players and player characters as well.

Also to be found inside are Pat Reinken's courageous look at the ways and means to conduct a successful escape, when running away becomes the best course of action, and Jon Mattson's multifaceted examination of the "skill" system in *Traveller*. Glenn Rahman, designer of the DIVINE RIGHT® game, describes famous monuments of the land in the latest installment of "Minarian Legends," and John Prados' series on game design in "Simulation Corner" continues with an examination of the concept of "state of the art."

Our review section covers a lot of bases — taking in the whole Universe, not to mention the entire *Third Reich*, and a diverse collection of other new products in the gaming marketplace. Returning after a two-month absence (our fault, not Bill's) is Bill Fawcett's "Figuratively Speaking" feature.

And just ahead of our usual hodgepodge of humor at the back of the magazine, you'll find "Da Letter." If it isn't the most interesting communication we've ever received at this office, it's in the top two. — KM

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One monk too many

Dear Editor:

I've been a reader of DRAGON™ magazine for about a year now, and I really enjoy reading everything it has to offer. Issue #53, however, had an article that I hope doesn't become a trend.

Philip Meyers' article on monks for me was a bit of a letdown. I don't mind that he thought that the monk class was about the weakest there is (I disagree), but I did not like the article as a whole. I would have rather seen an article about the fine art of playing a monk character in addition to, or instead of, Mr. Meyers' article.

I think the subject of monks could have been better handled by following in the footsteps of the kind of articles on paladins in DRAGON #51 or the articles on clerics found in issue #52. I enjoyed those articles much more because they told you the best way to play, not to change, the particular class of character to add to the enjoyment of playing that kind of character.

Of course, I think it would be somewhat better if there were two such articles in a given issue of DRAGON. One article to explain the proper way to play a character class, in broad outline, and another article to suggest changes or revamping of a given class. I did find the question-and-answer articles concerning character classes useful, but on the whole I feel the outline articles were much better and more useful for helping a player to get out of the dark on how to best play his or her character.

I hope that future issues of DRAGON magazine will continue to publish the excellent articles that have hooked me as a reader.

Malcolm B. Maynard
Delta, B.C., Canada

'Some good and...'

Dear Editor:

I've been subscribing to DRAGON magazine for more than a year now, and in that time several items relating to the gaming hobby have accumulated about which I'd like to comment. Like everything, there is some good and some bad.

First of all, in relation to the RPG hobby in general, I am sick and tired of all the bickering about which game is best. Frankly, I couldn't care a kobold's worth that *Runequest* is superior to AD&D™, *Tunnels & Trolls*, or any of the other FRP games; nor do I see much sense in arguments for the opposite case. The fact is that each game has certain advantages and disadvantages and that each appeals to a slightly different audience. AD&D™ appeals, I believe, more to those who enjoy symbiotic relations between specialized classes rather than a game wherein all characters have very

similar abilities. The other games each offer something else of value, but all, I believe, can be equally enjoyed.

Turning to Advanced Dungeons and Dragons™ itself, it is my favorite among the FRP games for the reason I mentioned above: I like the idea of cooperating specialists. The rule books are thorough and generally well thought out. At the same time, the framework they set up is very flexible and allows for plenty of creativity on the part of players and Dungeon Masters. But, as always, there are problems. The books, while thorough, are at the same time carriers of confusion and glaring self-contradiction. Some examples:

First, regarding magic armor, page 28 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide* states that magic armor allows movement at the next higher base rate and that weight is cut by 50%. On page 164, we read that, for game purposes, "all magical armor should be considered as being virtually weightless — equal to normal clothing. This gives characters a base movement *equal to an unarmored man*."

Another area of confusion lies in the combat rules. The DMG on page 65, rule 2, states that attacks against spell-casters occur on the segment of the round indicated by the appropriate initiative die. But nowhere in all the AD&D volumes is there any mention of what the correct die is!!! Very frustrating for the DM.

Another problem is organization. Information which should all be in one place is scattered throughout the four volumes. If any player wishes to know all about the abilities and rules concerning his character race, he must dig through both the *Players Handbook* and the *Monster Manual*. This wouldn't be such a galling problem if the index were accurate and complete, but it isn't.

There are many other examples of organizational and clarity problems with the rule books, but there is no need to go into them now. What is truly needed is a major re-writing of all the volumes (with a complete index!!!) in order to eliminate all ambiguities, mistakes, and contradictions. All information pertaining to a particular subject should be written in a single place, whether or not it appears elsewhere. (After all, the information may be applicable to several different cases.)

The subject of the rule books leads to that of the various AD&D modules. Generally, I think that they are great. I often include them in my campaign, whether as a whole or cannibalized for ideas. The series modules are all excellent and exciting. I buy them as soon as they are issued. It's like being hooked on a soap-opera. However, there are again problems with quality control. I have in mind specifically the "A" series, which deals with an assault against slavers. In A2, for example, on page 14, most of a sentence has been left out. While it is easy to interpolate what was meant, such an error should not have occurred. A close examination of the *Tournament Char-*

acters list on page 38 will reveal many errors and critical typos. There are errors on the maps as well.

In any event, please understand that I enjoy TSR products immensely. However, it pains me to see such shoddy quality control. My criticism is the kind given by a fan who wants to see something great made even better.

I also enjoy DRAGON magazine immensely. Almost all the articles are very enjoyable and usually quite helpful. Sage Advice, Leonard's Tiny Hut, and the article on Kzinti (#50) immediately come to mind.

My final comments concern the people I've met in my few years of active gaming. Almost as a whole, the gamers I've met have been friendly, helpful, and basically a lot of fun to play with. This includes the hobby store owners I've met as well. Several people I've met through gaming have become good friends of mine. This is one area where I don't have any complaints (oddly enough, I do about everything else), and I owe AD&D and TSR Hobbies, Inc., a debt that I can never fully repay.

In the final analysis, then, I'm very happy with this hobby and with the company I have chosen to patronize. I only hope that all gamers will remember that our hobby is first and foremost meant to be fun, and that all the games around are supposed to be enjoyed for themselves, not to be promoted like political candidates.

Anthony Ragan
Los Angeles, Calif.

The other side

Dear Dragon:

We have recently finished reading issue #50 of DRAGON and thought it superb, aside from the first letter in the *Out on a Limb* column written by Steve Meyer. Steve's first expostulation was the fact that not all of the articles in a certain issue were useful. Perhaps somebody else found them useful . . . we did.

Mr. Meyer's next assault was on the *Temple of Poseidon* (issue #46). He states that "It probably won't be used in a campaign." I, however, enjoyed it greatly and can wait patiently until characters advance to the levels best suited for it.

Mr. Meyer seems quite upset that DRAGON does not publish wilderness and town adventures for his own personal benefit. Steve, if you would like such adventures, why don't you create one or tell a local DM to create one? It shouldn't prove too difficult for a good DM to produce a wilderness or town adventure that has a purpose and is still worthwhile for the players.

It appears that Mr. Meyer (as well as many other writers to *Out on a Limb*) should be reminded of those little words printed above "Dragon" on every cover of the magazine which read "Monthly adventure role-playing aid." Such publications as DMG, PH, and, of course, DRAGON only make up a skeleton in the immensity of role-playing games. It is entirely up to the DM to knit together the flesh and muscle of the system.

We have purchased every issue of DRAGON that we could get our hands on, well aware of the fact that not everything was written with our personal tastes in mind. This would be impossible as well as absurd.

We have yet to use TOP SECRET information but continue to bear with it as someone else does find it useful; therefore, such articles continue to appear.

In closing, we would like to thank DRAGON, TSR, and all responsible for creating the intensity of AD&D. We remain hopeful that AD&D will continue to live throughout these people and, of course, all DMs and players. Keep up the good work.

Jarome G. Wilson
J. Cory Dyer
Chino, Calif.

Saving throws

Dear Editor:

I have been an avid D&D® player for almost two years now. I have always been interested in devising new ways of making the game even more exciting for both the DM and the players, and to this end I wish to contribute a saving-throw conversion table.

I offer this scenario: Garth and Adalard, a ranger and thief, have been tracking an assassin (who murdered the third member of their party) for several days. They ride into town and wearily enter the first tavern, where they immediately spot the killer on the other side of the room. After a short chase through corridors and alleys, the assassin whirls, throws, and hits Adalard with a dagger tipped with, say, a Type A or B poison. The DM calls for a saving throw—whereupon Adalard rolls a 19, removes the dagger, and doesn't give another thought to the wound...

How can Adalard *know* that the poison will have no further effects upon him? For that matter, if the poison were of a stronger variety, how can Adalard be assured of surviving the night, even if he feels fine right now?

The point here is that many times (not always) a player character is required to save in a situation where he/she should not immediately know whether or not the save was successful. The purpose of a saving-throw conversion table is to keep players off balance with regard to what constitutes "good" and "bad" saving rolls. It is constructed of four columns of 20 entries each, with the numbers 1-20 randomly listed in each column. Each column is assigned a heading number (1-4).

To use the table, the DM rolls d4 to determine which heading to use for a particular save. The player then rolls a die for his saving throw and gets, say, a "7." The DM consults the 7th entry from the top in the appropriate column to find the number to be applied for that save in place of the "7." Bonuses and/or penalties are applied only after the conversion on the table has been made.

The table should be explained to players before beginning an adventure or campaign with it, since it is for their benefit; namely, to increase and hold their anticipation when making a save, as well as keeping them in suspense in cases when the success or failure of a save would not be immediately apparent.

I plan to incorporate the table into my next campaign because I believe it allows characters the right to determine their own fate without the ability to know that fate too soon.

Wayne A. Langguth
Findlay, Ohio

'Enough!'

Dear Editor:

Enough is enough! Just recently, I have encountered player characters which could probably beat Odin two out of three falls and still have the energy to knock off a Chicken Delight truck. Mr. Luna's letter in issue #52 of DRAGON was the final straw.

A lot of people seem to have a warped view of how to create a character. Some think you start off at 20th level with all the magic you can carry. Others have the strange notion that you get experience from taking damage. (A character in my world was nearly cut in half by a weapon hit and demanded he get experience for it: Why didn't he just beat his head against a wall until he achieved godhood?) Contrary to Mr. Luna's opinion, it doesn't take any imagination to create a high-level, near-invincible character, any more than it makes a campaign more interesting.

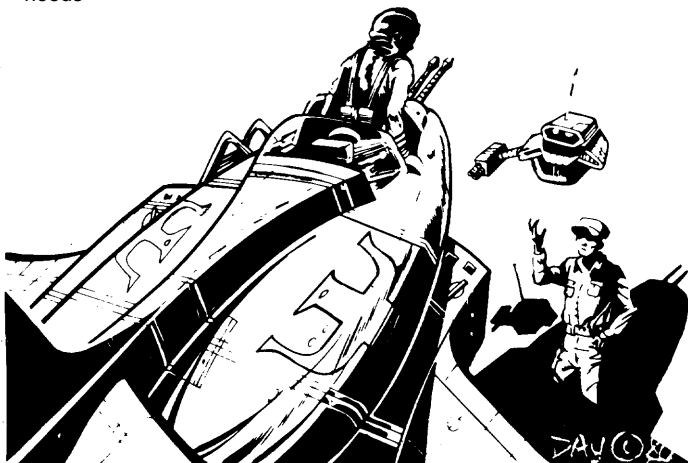
Also, some people fail to realize the limits for character stats. I've seen a multitude of characters with statistics as high as 25 and no lower than 20. When was the last time those numbers ever came up on three 6-sided dice?

If all this sounds like I am against high characters, you're right. But I have no objection to a moderately high-level character, achieved after years of play and hardship. My point is to use common sense, and know when to retire a character and start anew. High-level, super-powerful characters ruin a game, and I hope the staff of DRAGON continues to "preach" against them.

Greg Fox
Scotia, New York

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Flat taste didn't go away

by Ed Greenwood

Its cover was beautiful; I bought it eagerly, and retired from the din of the GEN CON® XIV dealer area to a dimly lit booth, to devour a pizza and my brand-new FIEND FOLIO™ Tome.

Four hours later, I set the book aside, hoping my views would change upon later reflection. Perhaps it had been the pizza.

Come later reflection, and much discussion with friends and other gamers at the convention: no change. The FIEND FOLIO was a disappointment. Not a crushing disappointment — a new collection of official AD&D monsters is not exactly a cause for sorrow — but irritating nonetheless. Perhaps it should have been a D&D® book, not one for the AD&D™ game.

The beauty of the AD&D rule system is its careful attention to detail, “serious” (i.e., treating monsters as creatures in a fantasy world, not as constructs in a fantasy game) tone, and consistency.

The FIEND FOLIO Tome mars this beauty. In its pages this DM finds too much lack of detail, too many shifts in

tone, and too many breaches of consistency. I do not know *why* the book has these failings—and I hasten to add that I do not know of Don Turnbull or British gaming beyond what one learns from a few contacts and magazines such as *White Dwarf* (which I’ve followed eagerly since its first issue) and *Trollcrusher*.

I suspect that most of the book’s flaws have come from viewing the AD&D game as one in which monsters are sudden new challenges to a party rather than creatures who live out an existence before — and sometimes after — a party encounters them. But perhaps it would be better not to speculate. Here, then, is what I find wrong with the book.

First and foremost, contradictions of, or inattention to, existing (official) AD&D rules. Careful editing should have prevented these mistakes — such as the mention of *raise dead fully* in the description of the Pernicon, and “anti-paladin” in the listing for Githyanki.

Minor quibbles? Not if the careful “international tournament standard” consistency of the AD&D game is to be maintained. Gary Gygax speaks of this as one of the reasons for creating the

game in the first place, and an official AD&D book such as the FF Tome should contribute to that sought-after consistency. In many places throughout the work, one is reminded more of the free-wheeling, decide-it-yourself D&D rules than the more specific and detailed descriptions of the AD&D game.

There are many incomplete or inadequate monster entries. Monsters such as the Al-mi’raj and the Hook Horror have strange appearances and little else; there is no depth to their listings. Certainly not enough information is given to ensure that one DM will present them in a manner similar to another DM’s handling. Similarly, one needs to know more of the real nature of the Dune Stalker, the Dire Corby, the Eye of Fear and Flame, and the race of Dark Creepers.

Why are the languages of the Dark Creeper and the Babblar incomprehensible? Many weird creatures in the Monster Manual have languages usable by other creatures through study and magic (i.e., a Tongues spell); DMs should be told why these two are special.

And phrases like “mysteries so far unexplained” (in the Berbalang listing) are

not good enough — in an official rule-book, complete listings should be required. The origin of the Achaierai, for instance, would seem to be Acheron ("infernal regions") but the exact home plane would be nice for DMs to know. The Guardian Familiar's plane of origin is likewise a mystery. The identity of the Vision's "own plane" is unclear, as are its powers when on that unknown plane. Explanations should be given for the humanoid appearance of plant life such as the Cifal and the Needleman, or the believability of such creatures suffers.

Other monsters seem to have no ecological niche, being merely "gamey" party opponents — such as the Adherer (originally the Gluey of *White Dwarf* #7) and the Enveloper. In the pages of *White Dwarf*, no rationalizations are required for the appearance of such things as the Russian Doll Monster, the Dadhi, and the Nilbog. When (as in the case of the Nilbog) these creatures are adapted and/or rewritten for inclusion in official AD&D rules, the results are sometimes clumsy or worse.

Some of the monster's names grate on the mind's ear; one cannot envision sweating adventurers fleeing a cavern with one saying, "Warily, now! That Protein Polymorph almost slew us, friends!" Try inserting "Caryatid Column" or "Symbiotic Jelly" into that sentence, and the result is the same. One would expect adventurers, and not 20th-century North American scientists, to have named such beasts. (I suspect this is the root of my disaffection with the "Adherer.")

There are two other major problems with the book. First, a host of new undead (specifically described as such) or undead-like creatures see print. Many contributors to the expansion of the AD&D rules have felt that there is no more room for additions to the undead class save under the "Special" heading; there is little one can add that is not a simple variation on, or overlapping of the powers of, existing undead.

The Penanggalan, the Revenant, the Skeleton Warrior, and the Death Knight — although possessing some abilities of existing AD&D undead — are well-developed and therefore distinct. But other of the book's contributions appear to be no more than skeletons with special powers tacked on, such as the Huecuva, the Crypt Thing, and the Eye of Fear and Flame. (The latter creature probably isn't undead, but the entry doesn't say enough to determine this with certainty.) One must know more of the origin of all of these creatures and their powers. The Sheet Phantom, in particular, needs more information to link it with already-existing undead. Is it a wraith or an undead lurker above? The listing hints at both, and in the end gives no reason for the formation of this monster.

The origin of the creature needs be a

part of every new undead write-up. An undead lacking an origin has the air of a one-shot "DM's special" variant concocted for an interesting party encounter ("Well, *this* mummy is green, and it drains levels . . . heh-heh, surprise, surprise!"). The "statement of origin" is the anchor that lends an air of legitimacy to other new undead entries in the FF Tome such as the Coffin Corpse, the Apparition, and the Son of Kyuss.

In all, the FIEND FOLIO Tome adds several good low-level undead to AD&D play (although I had hoped to see the very playable Blink Skeleton also make the leap from *White Dwarfs* Fiend Factory to the Folio). All of these should see yeoman service in AD&D campaigns; the three skeleton variants mentioned above need more depth if this expected heavy use is not to put too many DMs in the position of having to invent justifications for the creatures' existence.

The second large problem found in the Folio has to do with races: too many of them, that is. Some new races such as the Firenewt, Flind, Forlarren, Norker, Quaggoth and Skulk may assume a comfortable place in the AD&D bestiary rolls. Others, such as the Crabman, Booka, and Bullywug, leave one desirous of more information as to their social life and activities, but are adequate.

And then the problem is upon us. Too

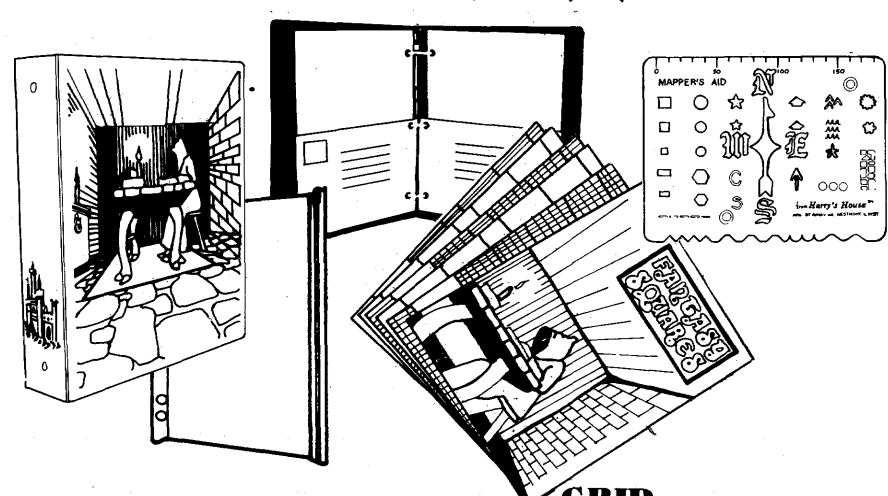
many races are incomplete — is the Frost Man human (as in "Men, Berserker" et al from the *Monster Manual*)? Is the Qullan race humanoid? What are their interests and aims? Why do the Lava Children — "offspring of a union between spirits of earth and fire" — appear human, specifically resembling the famous visage of Alfred E. Neuman of *MAD* magazine fame?

Too many races must be fighting for elbow room in the caverns and deep places beneath the earth; in addition to the Jermlaine, Drow, Kuo-Toa and Svifneblin (from TSR™ modules), found herein are the (deep breath) Gibberling, Grimlock, Hook Horror, Kenku, Killmoulis, Meazel, Meenlock, Mite, Snyad, and Xvart. All of these creatures have promise, but the Hook Horror and the Grimlock again seem incomplete.

The Xvart, a rewritten Svart from the Fiend Factory in *White Dwarf* #9, is redundant; the Factory original was a poor variant of Alan Garner's presentation (in the novel *Weirdstone of Brisingamen*) of the svart-alfar and lios-alfar of Scandinavian mythology. The svart-alfar are already in the AD&D rules; they were the model for Gygax's Drow. The Xvart, a 3-foot-tall beastie with no strikingly unique or colorful characteristics, is a prime example of needless overpopulation.

(Continued on 2nd page following)

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FIEND FOLIO Findings

by Alan Zumwalt

I was about to enter my friendly neighborhood hobby shop on my weekly visit to see if any new AD&D modules or accessories were in, when out of the corner of my eye I saw something in the store window. I did a double-take, then my eyes bulged out, and alarms went off in my head. At last it was here—the FIEND FOLIO had arrived!!! I had been waiting for it for a year, since I saw it mentioned in the DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ Cyclopedica. I grabbed a copy off the shelf and sprinted to the counter.

After I left the store, I sat down on the curb and started looking. It was a good-looking cover: a blue background with a hideous brown and yellow humanoid in the foreground (which I later found out was a githyanki). I would have liked to see more monsters on the cover (like the Monster Manual has), but the cover is not the most important part; the inside is. I quickly flipped through the pages and

Observations of a semi-satisfied customer

looked at the pictures — and boy, what pictures! Drawings of all sorts of new weird monsters — from tall, stilted birds that are mostly head, to lady vampires with no body. More illustrations than the Monster Manual. “So far, so good,” I thought. “All outward appearances look fine.” But are the words as good as the pictures? I looked further, and found most of the monster descriptions to be interesting and original, but...

But a few of them are just Monster Manual creatures that are changed or crossbred with other monsters. The Vodyanoi is a prime example. The Vodyanoi is an aquatic umber hulk that, instead of the ability to confuse, has the ability to summon electric eels. This monster is a cheap ripoff of the original AD&D monster, and shouldn't have been allowed in the book. Others I don't like for similar reasons are the Kamadan, the Lamia Noble, the Lizard King (I would accept this monster as a leader of lizard men, but not as a separate race), the Ogrillon, and all the new trolls. This book was going to have new monsters, I thought, not mutations of the old.

One pleasing thing to see, at last, was the establishment of some official neutral dragons. The Oriental dragons in the book are fairly interesting dragons (although I was sort of disappointed that some of them didn't have a breath weapon), but I did find three problems in their presentation that makes these dragon descriptions inferior to the ones in the Monster Manual.

First, the names of the dragons are given in the wrong order. If you look in the Monster Manual under the entry indexed as “Dragon: White” you would see at the top of the description, “White Dragon (Draco Rigidus Frigidus).” The Latin name of the dragon is put in parentheses after the English name. But in the FIEND FOLIO under “Dragon, Oriental” a subtitle will read, “Li Lung (Earth Dragon),” with the Chinese name first and the English name in parentheses. Now, who is going to call this dragon “Li Lung” when “Earth Dragon” is much easier to remember? The names should have been given in reverse form (Oriental name last) for the sake of convenience, if nothing more.

Second, these dragons are distinctly and undeniably Oriental in nature, and I don't think Oriental monsters fit very well into the European medieval-era environment that most AD&D campaigns use. I wish the game's official neutral

dragons had been constructed more similarly to the Monster Manual dragons.

The most important problem of all is the lack of a leader for the Oriental dragons, corresponding to Tiamat and Bahamat. A rulership structure of some kind for each type of intelligent monster helps lend credibility to the existence of that type of creature.

I discovered that many of my favorite monsters from past issues of DRAGON magazine and AD&D modules were not included. The only module monsters included in the Fiend Folio were from G3 and the D series. I realized the monsters from the more recent modules and issues of DRAGON could not be included in the FIEND FOLIO, but the S series monsters and some of the earlier *Dragon's Bestiary* monsters could have been included.

One of my favorite monsters in the book is the Slaadi. At last, creatures that live on the chaotic neutral planes! The race has leaders (unlike the Oriental dragons) and understandable names (except for the leaders). Reading about the different types of Slaadi brought a question to mind: Why no monsters for the lawful neutral planes or the lawful, neutral, or chaotic good planes? I would have liked to have all the planes around the astral plane “filled in” by having resident creatures among the listings in the second book of official AD&D monsters.

I also liked the Elemental Princes of Evil — but where are the Elemental Princes of Good? Surely there must be some, or else the Elemental Princes of Evil would just be called Elemental Princes.

In my first look at the end of the book, I was pleased to see a new random monster encounter table containing all the monsters from both books. But there isn't an ocean encounter table, although there were plenty of new sea monsters in the FIEND FOLIO Tome. This was probably an oversight, and I hope such a table will soon be offered. Tables for sea-shore encounters and underground-lake encounters would also be good.

This commentary has been predominantly negative; maybe that's because it's easier to put negative comments into specific words than it is to do the same with positive comments. As a whole, it is a good book, with a lot of interesting creatures that are destined to become someone's favorite monster.

How to sum it up? I would say the FIEND FOLIO Tome is like a basket of peaches: Most of it is pretty good stuff, but part of it is the pits.

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(Continued from page 7)

Including the other new races of small beings, the list (just of those who dwell in subterranean or related surroundings) is now comprised of goblins, kobolds, dwarves, halflings, gnomes, svirfneblin, meazels, mites, snyad, jermlaine, and kill moulis. The race of xuart need not have been added to the list.

Obviously, a DM need not use all of the above races in a campaign, but all now are now considered to officially exist in the AD&D multiverse. To their ranks the Folio adds yet another creature type not listed above: the mysterious Dark Creeper, about which too little is revealed to be certain of its nature. It is of dwarf height and wears clothing over its lower face in such a fashion as to cause one GEN CON attendee to disgustedly label it a "bedouin dwarf," and another to add, "No, it's a dwarf ninja."

Those descriptions are personal reactions, yes, but they are rooted in a real problem; either or both of them could be correct, given the vagueness of the FF description. Likewise, too many of the book's other entries offer too little information to play a creature without running into questions.

The Monster Manual has many truncated entries, but most of these cause no problems, since the creatures (for example, the dinosaurs, "Herd Animal,"

and "Cattle, Wild") need nothing more. The FF Tome has a few entries which can be taken care of with brief descriptions; the Rothe is one. But most of the book's creatures require longer, more carefully worded entries.

The only entries in the Monster Manual I have often heard criticized for incompleteness or lack of clarity are the beholder — Does the central eye produce the anti-magic ray? It would seem so, but there is room for argument — the rakshasa, the lich, and the vampire. (Speculation concerning the rakshasa usually centers on its place in the ranks of the demons vis-a-vis the demon princes and their orders, conjurations and the like.) Many DMs have filled in the details of these complicated monsters as they saw fit, or perhaps have followed the guidance of magazine writers. Similar salvage work is needed for many entries in the new book — more than there should need to be, given the advancement of the state of published AD&D rules between the release of the Monster Manual and the FIEND FOLIO Tome.

Other criticisms of the Folio fall into the category of personal disagreements over style. Every DM has these disagreements with many parts of the AD&D rules, but I have more with the FIEND FOLIO Tome than with any other of the official volumes. Here are a few:

If new dragons, why oriental dragons and not also the carefully composed neutral dragons published in DRAGON™ #37?

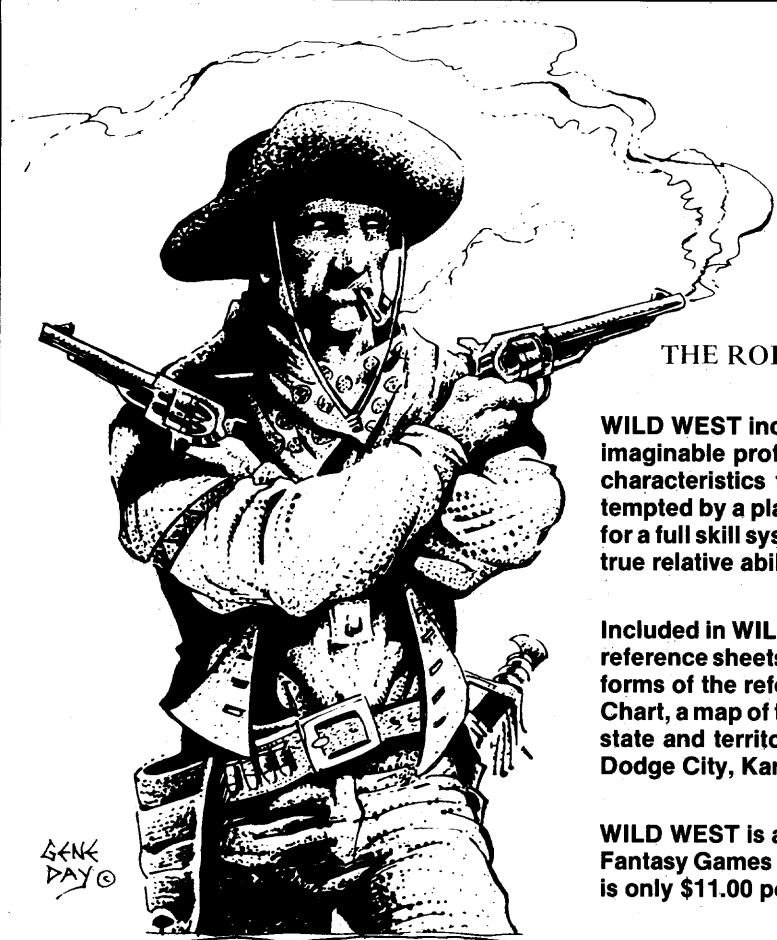
Why is a poltergeist lawful evil, when its behavior, both as described in the FF and as allegedly exhibited in the real world, suggests a chaotic evil, or at least chaotic, alignment?

Why are distinctly separate listings necessary for creatures which are essentially sub-races or variants of, or additions to, existing Monster Manual entries? Examples of these are the Lamia Noble, the Lizard King, and the Babbler. These could be sub-classified in the same manner as the Drow, the new Giant sub-races, and the new Demon and Devil are, so that the MM and FF are closely linked.

The Aleax entry is uneasily vague; it is of necessity not firmly tied to any deities, but I feel it should contain more directives for the DM as to what sorts of deities would and would not employ such a creature.

The Hell Hound from the Monster Manual is a familiar DM's friend, but adding the Death Dog and the Devil Dog to the canine community is perhaps too much of a good thing.

When some names such as "Screaming Devilkin" threaten to outstrip the monsters they describe, why must there



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also be such unimaginative names as "Gorilla Bear" or odd-sounding names such as "Ogrillon" (for an orc/ogre cross-breed)? But enough of style grievances; others will find reason for praise in the same things I complain about.

The graphics and overall layout of the FIEND FOLIO Tome are both beautiful and clear, making for ease of finding and reading desired information. Some illustrations are particularly effective — the Revenant scene on page 76 comes immediately to mind.

But many illustrations are irritating, in that they do not closely resemble depictions of the monsters already published in the official AD&D modules. The Mez-

zodaemon is one such example; so is the related Nycadaemon. Some illustrations are not as visually striking or as complete as those published earlier in the Fiend Factory (such as the Sheet Phantom, Tween, and Sandman) and the modules (the Kuo-Toa, Jermlaine, and Kelpie). Why the change, if it was not markedly for the better? Other illustrations are noticeably crude, particularly those of the Mephits and the Enveloper (which at first sight earned the nickname "Pillsbury Doughboy" among gamers at GEN CON XIV). But all in all, the artwork and design of the book are excellent.

Also on the positive side, there are some very good monsters here. It is nice

to see the Volt and the Necrophidius made official; new arrivals such as the Slaad, the Elemental Princes of Evil and the Penanggalan are also worthy additions to any campaign. Monsters from the modules such as the Drow and Kuo-Toa are expected attractions, but good to see nonetheless.

The FIEND FOLIO Tome has much promise; a revised edition which disposes of most of the omissions and problems mentioned above would win my warm welcome. Many thousands of people consider the AD&D game to be the best thing going; a revised and polished edition of the FF Tome would help reinforce that opinion.

Apologies — and arguments

by Don Turnbull

Managing Director of TSR UK, Ltd.

and

Editor of the FIEND FOLIO™ Tome

I will be more careful in future when passing Kim Mohan's door on my visits to Lake Geneva. He pounces! On this occasion, politely but firmly, he asked me to reply to the comments by Alan and Ed on the FIEND FOLIO™ Tome and not to leave the country until the job was done.

An Aleax, cunningly disguised as Kim Mohan, has struck; I have somehow transgressed the unwritten law; retribution and penance are sought. (Who, me? Behaviour outside alignment??)

Very well — I'll try.

Perspectives change, don't they? There never was a time when I regarded the Tome as perfect; anyone thus making himself a hostage to fortune deserves what he gets. But my view of "my" work has changed perceptibly over the years, and the years themselves are responsible for that change.

The fact is that, for various contractual reasons with which I won't bore you, the book was in a sort of legal limbo — untouched and untouchable — for nearly two years after completion. A very great deal happened in the AD&D™ world during that time, didn't it? For instance, the DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ Cyclopedica was born, raised to maturity, and published. For instance, DRAGON™ magazine advanced from issue 29 to the late 40s. (Editor's note: DRAGON #52 was on sale when the FIEND FOLIO tome was released at the GEN CON® XIV Convention.) For instance, a host of new modules made their debut.

These are the reasons why monsters from more recent modules were not included and why monsters from DRAGON™ magazine did not appear. It is also, at least in part, the reason for my *Raise Dead Fully* gaffe; for this I accept full responsibility and, red-faced, back off to the position of "I'm sure you know what I mean." (But not for "anti-paladin" — the full reference includes words which clearly deny any implications of official status.)

I suspect this information alone answers a number of questions in readers' minds. There has been some temporal distortion — enough to raise at least a flicker of curiosity but not enough (I sincerely hope) to detract.

Ed criticizes some entries on the grounds of incompleteness and inadequacy. This begs the questions — what is "complete"? What is "adequate"? I suspect these are, in the final analysis, matters of personal taste. For every person criticizing absence of information on these grounds, someone else will say that certain information actually presented is superfluous, and accusing me of padding. I have no god-like wisdom on this score (nor, I suspect, has anyone else) — only instinct about what

"feels" right within certain obvious boundaries. If my instinct differs from others, perhaps it's because we're only human.

Mind you, I don't accept what Ed says about certain languages being incomprehensible. If one admits to the existence of the *Tongues* spell, then surely it requires no further stretching of one's imagination to postulate a language which somehow has defied analysis. In like view, it would be a dull world (real or fantasy) if everything was explained and comprehensible.

A personal point of view, certainly, but one which I believe is shared by many. Once every problem is solved, every question has an answer, and every mystery has been explained, the imagination can turn up its toes and call an end to the matter, its work accomplished. A sad and boring death.

Names. Try inserting into Ed's quotation the Baluchitherium, Titanothero, or (this is a real beauty) the Ixitachitl. Or even the duck-billed platypus and many others from our real world. No, I did not name monsters with particular regard for the smooth flowing of the vocal chords. I imagine the word "man" might not flow too well off a Martian's tongue (or whatever organ is appropriate).

The Eye of Fear and Flame is **not** undead. If it were, it would be on the undead table (page 115). Nor is the Crypt Thing an undead monster. In neither case does the text leave any doubt — and even if it did, the undead table would resolve the matter.

No, the Frost Men are not human. The text makes it quite clear by saying they are "...in most respects very like normal humans..." and then going on to say in what respects they differ. The Qullan isn't human, either — it says in the text that they are humanoids. Ed, you are either not reading thoroughly or just trying to put words into my pen in order to criticize them. Tut — this is not worthy of you.

If Ed reads *White Dwarf* as carefully as seems to be the case, he knows the Xvart is far from redundant to some, since the monster features quite prominently in a "mini-module" in the magazine's pages, and furthermore, a mini-module which I am assured is very popular. Are the dinosaurs (5 pages) in the Monster Manual redundant? I doubt if one answer suits all.

As for the Elemental Princes of Good (or of Neutrality, or of any of the nine ways), the leaders of the oriental dragons (if they have any; they could simply be real democrats), the inhabitants of the other planes Alan would like to populate and literally hundreds of other new and not-so-new monsters which would have been included... well, perhaps next time.

There are three types of complaints. In one category I retire red-faced; in another I fear the critic is mistaken. But in the third — and largest — category I think we have conflicts or less major differences in personal opinion (and for this reason I haven't commented on every example cited). If my personal opinions don't align with yours, I'm sorry. What more can I say?

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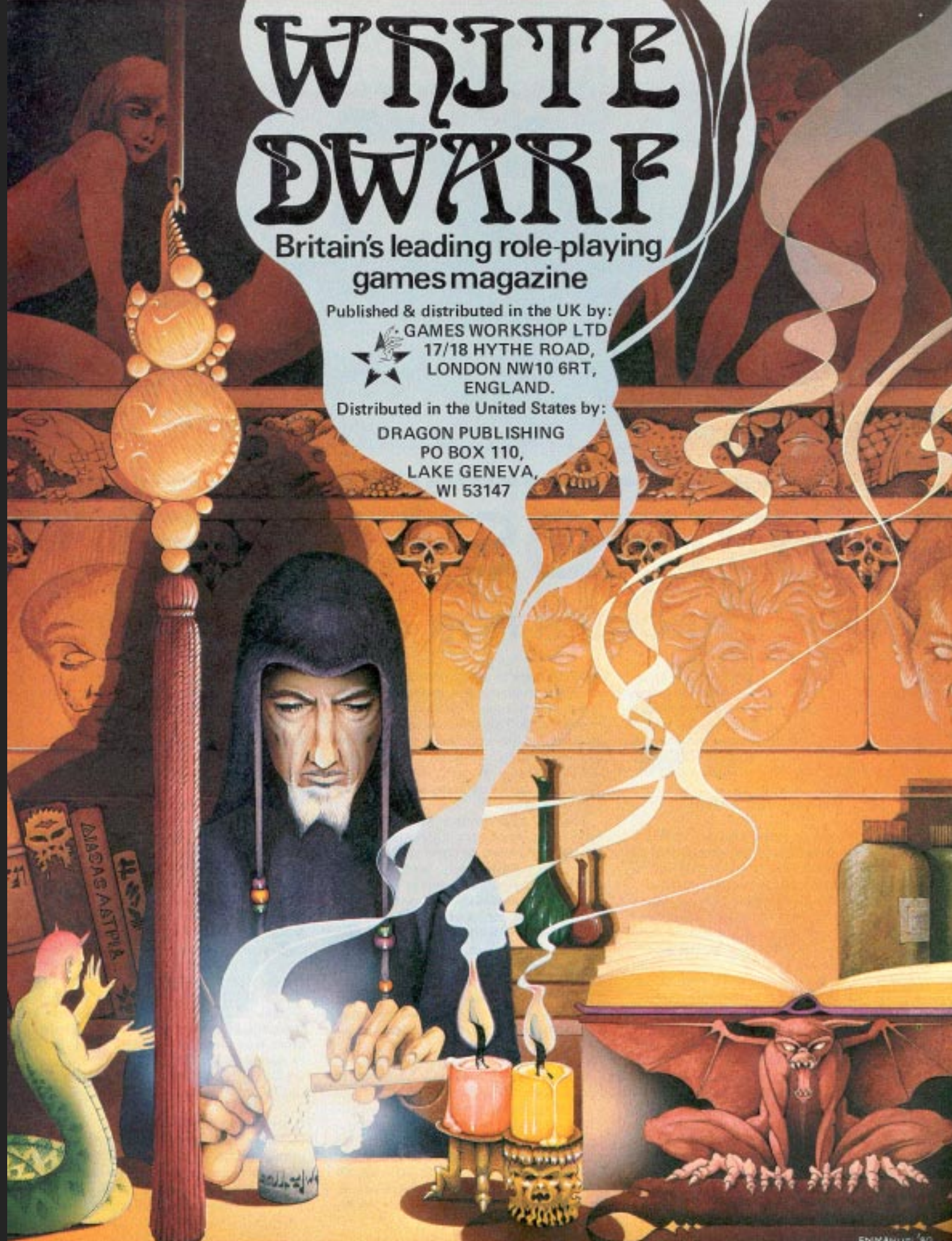
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A herd of brontosaurus stomps across the plains of Utah in search of food

DINOSAURS

NEW THEORIES FOR OLD MONSTERS

(Editor's note: This article is a discussion of dinosaurs as depicted for use in the AD&D™ game, with regard to recent additions to the body of scientific knowledge about the creatures. It is not an official alteration to the dinosaur listings in the AD&D Monster Manual.)

by Lawrence Schick

The sages of paleontology have discovered a great deal of information about dinosaurs and their habits in the last 15 years. The new knowledge is not reflected in the AD&D Monster Manual. Many of these new ideas can have a bearing on the play of dinosaurs in the game.

For example, debate is currently underway among scientists over whether dinosaurs are ectothermic (cold-blooded) like reptiles, endothermic (warm-blooded) like mammals, some of each, or something in between. Regardless of how this question is eventually resolved, it seems certain that dinosaurs are not the slow-moving, slow-reacting sluggards they were once commonly thought to be. The best compromise at present is to play them as energetic creatures that don't quite have the stamina of mammals.

The comparatively small size of dinosaur brains has long led the sages to assume that dinosaurs must be extraordinarily stupid creatures, living practi-

cally on instinct alone. However, recent analyses indicate that their brain sizes are proportionately correct for reptiles of their size. This still makes them a lot more stupid than mammals, but not quite the unthinking, senseless brutes they were originally thought to be. Regard their intelligence as at the level of alligators or snakes.

There are hundreds of known distinct species of dinosaurs. Obviously, these are more than can be covered in a magazine article. Fortunately, however, most dinosaurs belong to a family of similar creatures, and statistics for one member of the family can usually be applied to other members with little alteration. This is why the dinosaurs covered in this article have been grouped into families rather than listed alphabetically. In each section, general traits are covered first, followed by statistics for the best-known or most interesting group members.

Use of dinosaurs in AD&D games

Dinosaurs will generally be found in areas completely separated from the ecologies of the human-inhabited world. This is just as well, for a full-grown specimen of the larger dinosaur species makes a formidable adversary, one that few humans can cope with. The big dinosaurs, particularly the meat-eaters, are suitable opponents only for middle-

or high-level parties. An adult allosaurus can wipe out a low-level party without even working up a sweat.

This doesn't mean that low-level characters should never encounter dinosaurs; but DMs should use good judgement when picking an adversary. Most dinosaur families have creatures of every size from 3 feet tall on up. The individual species detailed here are generally among the largest of their types. Similar creatures in smaller versions are not uncommon. The DM can use these unnamed cousins if their larger relatives would be too tough. For example, if an encounter table indicates a party of characters averaging 4th level meets an allosaurus, the DM can decide the party instead encounters a much smaller megalosaurus, perhaps with only 1/3 the hit dice and 1/3 the damage potential of an allosaurus. (This might be a small ceratosaurus.) Optionally, the DM could just make it an immature allosaurus, similarly scaled-down. After all, big dinosaurs aren't born colossal — they have to start out "merely" large.

Common statistics

Certain standard AD&D monster statistics are the same for all dinosaurs. These are given here to avoid repetition in the listings that follow.

(Continued on 2nd page following)

A BOOK EVEN T. REX WOULD LIKE

THE DINOSAURS

Bantam Books 01335-1 \$12.95

Reviewed by Chris Henderson

Every kid loves dinosaurs; no one knows why. Whenever the family goes to the museum, the spot everyone stands in the longest is the one in front of the biggest skeleton in the place.

No matter what their age, everybody loves the gigantic lizards of our past. Their movies make money; the bad handling of their characteristics sells novels and comics; dinosaurs helped to make the reptile species more loved, hated, and misunderstood than any other.

For those people who openly admit to loving the dinosaur, there is a new book, creatively entitled "The Dinosaurs."

It is the work of many hands; it has been packaged and edited by Byron Preiss, narrated by William Service, illustrated by William Stout; and introduced and kept scientifically accurate by Dr. Peter Dodson. Together these men have crafted a truly remarkable look at one of mankind's favorite subjects. And, although in any joint venture everyone should share equal credit, there is no doubt that what makes this newest dino-

saur book distinctive and very desirable is the fantastic art of William Stout.

Given 70 full-color pages to play with (and dozens of black and white ones), Stout shows the everyday life of the dinosaur — herd life, play, birth, duels, hunts, childhood, bathroom habits, etc.; their reactions to danger; their movement through the elements, across the land, over the seas, through the air; their bodies, eyes, plates, claws, teeth, bones, feathers; their neighbors: the climates they lived in; and much, much more.

The narration and scientific commentary flow nicely with Stout's ever-present art. What is also nice is the range of the illustrations. Stout travels the gamut from basic comic-book style sketches to masterful finished pieces, each one perfect for the area it is in.

Is the book perfect? No. It is not a deep, ponderous tome which goes into detail on each phase of life for every dinosaur that lived. Rather, it is an overview, one which links all of the great saurians through their common traits, and then goes into their differences. It is a book to be had more for its beauty than its brawn.

This is not to downplay the work of Bill Service and Dr. Dodson. Their informa-

tion is (as far as this reviewer knows) correct and up to the minute. Many of the theories put forth have only come to light in recent years. But the text portion of the book is fairly brief: Of the slightly more than 150 pages, many are full-page illustrations, and on the average at least half of each page is art.

At best, from a literary standpoint, "The Dinosaurs" is an excellent introduction to most of what is known about dinosaurs today. From an artistic standpoint, however, it is grand, maybe the ultimate dinosaur art book. It does, as the back cover copy proclaims, show dinosaurs as never seen before.

As Ray Bradbury says in his introduction to the book:

"...the fact is, we *all* love dinosaurs! There isn't a man, woman or child in the world, who if I built it, wouldn't rush to climb in a Time Machine to jump back and be devoured by a Tyrannosaurus Rex or stomped on by a friendly local Brontosaurus...."

Science will have to make a great step forward before we will be able to see dinosaurs in the flesh. Fortunately, we have Bill Stout's masterful interpretations to tide us over until that day arrives.



A corythosaurus cavorts with its smaller prehistoric playmates

Color plates courtesy of Bantam Books, from THE DINOSAURS (see review on this page), ©William Stout/Byron Preiss Visuals



Triceratops digs in against Tyrannosaurus Rex

(Courtesy of the Field Museum of Natural History)

% IN LAIR: *Nil*

TREASURE TYPE: *Nil*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*

CARNOSAURS

The listing will start with the carnosaurs (meat-eating dinosaurs), since many players and DMs find them the most interesting. All dinosaurs belong to one of two groups: the *saurischians* (lizard-hipped) or the *ornithischians* (bird-hipped). All carnosaurs are saurischians, or *sauropods*. In general, carnosaurs walk on two legs, with the body held forward horizontally (not up at a 45-degree angle). The tail is held out behind as a counterweight; it does not drag on the ground unless the creature is at rest or moving very slowly. Occasionally in its search for prey, a carnosaur will stop and rear up to its full height to get a better view. Carnosaurs rely on sight to find their victims.

A carnosaur is always hungry, but like most modern predators it will always take the easiest food it can catch: the young, the weak, the small, and the slow. Like a lion, a carnosaur usually won't pursue a fleeing target for more than a few hundred yards. A carnosaur faced with fighting dangerous prey will almost always give it up if easier prey is offered.

Allosaurus

FREQUENCY: *Uncommon*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: 5

MOVE: 15"

HIT DICE: 12

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6/1-6/3-24

SIZE: L (30' long)

Though it weighs several tons, allosaurus is easily one of the quickest and most agile of the large carnosaurs. Its forelimbs are strong compared to those of the tyrannosaurs, and are useful for helping to hold and tear its prey. However, allosaurus' long teeth are its primary

armament. When on the move, an allosaurus's tooth-filled head is held about 10 feet above the ground.

Allosaurus is one of a group of species called *megalosaurs*, a family that includes carnosaurs like megalosaurus (naturally) and ceratosaurus. These creatures are all similar to allosaurus, though slightly smaller. (Megalosaurus is about 10 HD, ceratosaurus about 8.)

Deinonychus

FREQUENCY: *Uncommon*

NO. APPEARING: 2-12

ARMOR CLASS: 6

MOVE: 21"

HIT DICE: 3

NO. OF ATTACKS: 5

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-4/1-4/1-6/1-6/1-6

SIZE: M (12' long, 175 lbs.)

The sages have recently discovered a remarkable group of carnosaurs called the dromaeosaurs. These are all smaller carnosaurs, in the range of 6 to 15 feet long, but with some outstanding features: very keen eyesight (binocular vision in some cases), strong grasping hands with long clawed "fingers," and most importantly brains far larger than those found in other dinosaurs. As intelligent as large birds, they must be many times more cunning than their average prey. The best known of the dromaeosaurs is deinonychus.

For its size, deinonychus is one of nature's most savage killing machines. First, it has long, strong arms with clawed hands suitable for grasping or slashing (inflicting 1-4 points of damage each). Next, it has a head full of teeth for ripping its prey (for 1-6 points damage). Finally, each of the powerful legs ends in a foot equipped with a huge upward-curving slashing claw, like a curved disemboweling knife. Deinonychus slashes upward with these in powerful kicks, one after the other, meanwhile balancing on its tail and its other leg. Worst of all, this highly coordinated killer hunts in packs. Typically, several pack members will keep their prey busy from the front while others leap in at its back. Deinonychus reaches 4-5 feet off the ground running, but rears to 6-7 feet in height attacking.

Teratosaurus

FREQUENCY: *Uncommon*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: 5

MOVE: 18"

HIT DICE: 6

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6/1-6/2-16

SIZE: L (20' long)

A quick ancestral carnosaur, teratosaurus has good stout forelimbs in addition to the usual battery of big nasty teeth. A teratosaurus weighs 1,000-1,500 pounds and is 7 feet tall when moving.

Therezinosaurus

FREQUENCY: *Uncommon*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: 5

MOVE: 15"

HIT DICE: 15

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-12/2-12/3-18

SIZE: L (40' long)

This murderous large carnosaur took rather a different route from the usual carnosaur reliance on large teeth. "The slasher" relies at least as much on its claws as on its fangs.

Most large carnosaurs have small forelegs, but therezinosaurus' "arms" are an incredible eight feet long, terminating in two-foot-long claws curved like scimitars. The creature stands 12 feet tall when moving.

Tyrannosaurus Rex

FREQUENCY: *Uncommon*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: 5

MOVE: 15"

HIT DICE: 18

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 5-50

SIZE: L (50' long)

It hardly needs to be said: Tyrannosaurus rex is the largest, most formidable natural carnivore ever to walk the face of the earth. In tyrannosaurus rex, the huge head and teeth typical of the carnosaur are taken to their furthest extreme. Its pathetic forelimbs are useless for combat. Despite its bulk (up to 8 tons), its powerful legs can bear it quite swiftly for short distances. Its head is carried about 14 feet from the ground when moving. Tyrannosaurus rex is the largest member of the family of tyrannosaurs, a group that includes tarbosaurus (15 HD) and gorgosaurus (12 HD).

SAUPODS

This group includes the huge herbivorous (plant-eating) dinosaurs, which are all saurischians like the carnosaurs. Though their ancestors were all bipedal, the great size the sauropods attained forced them to return to standing on four legs. There are many types of sauropods, but most of them are similar to the well-known types described below.

Sauropods are herding beasts, constantly searching food. Previously placed near lakes and streams, recent analyses show they are land dwellers. Sauropods live an elephant-like existence in the scrublands and forest (kept open by their passage), browsing on trees and thinning out vegetation. Their heads are set on long necks, and they can munch on the tops of very tall trees.

Sauropods' tails are held out behind them to counterbalance their necks. They rely on their huge size to keep safe from most carnosaur. They defend themselves clumsily by rearing up and kicking with their forefeet, but are poor fighters and attack at a level equal to one-quarter of their number of hit dice. (A 40HD sauropod, for example, attacks as a 10HD monster.) If a herd is stampeded by a big carnosaur (the only thing these creatures fear), they will probably crush everything in their path.

Apatosaurus (Brontosaurus)

FREQUENCY: *Common*

NO. APPEARING: 1-12

ARMOR CLASS: 5

MOVE: 9"

HIT DICE: 21-40 (d20x20)

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-20

SIZE: L (up to 70' long)

Apatosaurus (also known as brontosaurus) is among the most famous dinosaurs. Weighing up to 40 tons, it fears no carnosaur less than 20' long. Allosaurus is its arch enemy. There are many other members of the brontosaurus family, such as camarasaurus (about 25HD).

Brachiosaurus

FREQUENCY: *Uncommon*

NO. APPEARING: 1-8

ARMOR CLASS: 5

MOVE: 9"

HIT DICE: 31-50 (d20 + 30)

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-30

SIZE: L (up to 60' long)

Brachiosaurs are the heaviest and tallest sauropods. Their forelegs are much longer than their back legs, giving them a greater reach and a more powerful kick than other sauropods. Recently, paleontologists have found evidence of members of the brachiosaur family even more gigantic than brachiosaurus. These creatures have been tentatively dubbed "supersaurus" (up to 60HD, move 6") and "ultrasaurus" (up to 70HD!).

Diplodocus

FREQUENCY: *Common*

NO. APPEARING: 1-12

ARMOR CLASS: 5

MOVE: 9"

HIT DICE: 21-30 (d10 + 20)

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-16

SIZE: L (up to 90' long)

Diplodocus is among the most attenu-

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ated of the sauropods, with a long thin neck and a long tapering tail. Otherwise it differs little from the brontosaurus.

Plateosaurus

FREQUENCY: *Uncommon*
NO. APPEARING: 2-16
ARMOR CLASS: 5
MOVE: 12"
HIT DICE: 5
NO. OF ATTACKS: *Nil*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *Nil*
SIZE: L (20' long)

This early sauropod can move on two or four legs, but it goes on two legs when in a hurry. Members of the herd take turns watching for predators while the others eat. Fleeing is their only defense.

HADROSAURS

These prolific ornithopods are found nearly everywhere. They collect in herds, relying on their senses of sight, hearing and smell to warn them of approaching carnosaurs. They are the main diet of killers like the tyrannosaurs, and will run in panic at their enemies' approach. Though most can go travel on four legs when convenient, they run on two legs.

Anatosaurus (Trachodon)

FREQUENCY: *Common*
NO. APPEARING: 2-16
ARMOR CLASS: 5
MOVE: 15"
HIT DICE: 8
NO. OF ATTACKS: *Nil*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *Nil*
SIZE: L (30-40' long)

Anatosaurus is among the largest of the duck-billed hadrosaurs. It can usually be found rooting around in lakes and rivers.

Iguanodon

FREQUENCY: *Common*
NO. APPEARING: 2-8
ARMOR CLASS: 5
MOVE: 12"
HIT DICE: 8
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-4/1-4
SIZE: L (30' long)

An early hadrosaur, iguanodon can defend itself — if it must — by stabbing with its two "thumb" spikes.

Parasaurolophus

FREQUENCY: *Common*
NO. APPEARING: 2-16
ARMOR CLASS: 5
MOVE: 15"
HIT DICE: 6
NO. OF ATTACKS: *Nil*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *Nil*
SIZE: L (24' long)

Parasaurolophus is one of the many crested hadrosaurs, a family that includes corythosaurus, pachycephalosaurus, and lambeosaurus. These dinosaurs' skulls are topped with elaborate bony

crests. The creatures' nasal passages wind through the crests, giving them very acute senses of smell. Crested hadrosaurs can only be surprised on a 1.

OTHER ORNITHOPODS

This catch-all group includes all of the armored dinosaurs. These herbivores rely on armor and bony defenses instead of speed to protect themselves from carnosaurs. They are all quadrupeds.

Ankylosaurus

FREQUENCY: *Uncommon*
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: -2
MOVE: 6"
HIT DICE: 7
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-24
SIZE: L (15' long)

The ankylosaurs are the most heavily armored of all the dinosaurs. Built low to the ground, these slow grazers resemble turtles or armadillos. When attacked, they squat down to hide their limbs and defend themselves with their tails, which usually have horny spikes or knobs on them. There are several types of ankylosaurs, including paleoscincus, whose armor is fringed with sharp spikes (thus increasing armor class to -4).

Ankylosaurus is the best known of these living tanks. Ankylosaurus' short but powerful tail ends in a heavy bone knob, which it uses as a bludgeon to fend off attackers. An ankylosaurus usually ignores anything that doesn't attack it.

Triceratops

FREQUENCY: *Common*
NO. APPEARING: 2-8
ARMOR CLASS: -2 (head)/5 (body)
MOVE: 12"
HIT DICE: 12
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-24
SIZE: L (25' long)

Triceratops' design promotes the idea that the best defense is a good offense. Its head is up to 7 feet long (comparatively huge for a plant-eater) and covered in a shell of bone with a solid "frill" over the neck. Three sharp horns jut forward from its massive head, a short one from its nose and two long ones from the bony ridge above its eyes. Carnosaurs interested in making a meal of a triceratops will have a hard time getting past those deadly horns.

Triceratops is a plains dweller. Each small herd keeps to its own territory. Though it generally ambles slowly over the plains, cropping vegetation, a triceratops can charge like a rhinoceros if threatened, building up great speed for short periods. A triceratops which has had at least 50 yards to build up speed will do double damage when it hits.

Triceratops is among the largest of the many species of ceratopsians. Others

include styracosaurus (10HD), with one horn (3-18 damage) and a spiked frill, and monoclonius (8HD), with one horn (2-16 damage) and a somewhat smaller frill.

Stegosaurus

FREQUENCY: *Common*
NO. APPEARING: 1-4
ARMOR CLASS: 4
MOVE: 12"
HIT DICE: 9
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-16
SIZE: L (20' long, 8' tall at the hips)

Stegosaurus is a heavy four-footed herbivore of wide distribution. Its most outstanding feature is the double row of upright bony plates that line its back. Paleontologists are uncertain of the plates, exact function; they seem to have something to do with the creature's biological heating/cooling system. They are certainly placed too poorly to function as armor, though they may provide some slight protection against carnosaurs taller than stegosaurus. The four long spikes on its tail provide a better defense: when it is threatened, stegosaurus hunkers down and slashes at its enemy with its tail.

PTEROSAURS

Pterosaurs are in a class by themselves, and are not strictly dinosaurs as such. Flying requires a great deal of energy, so the pterosaurs are the best candidates for being endothermic. Also, their bodies are covered with a fine, furry down — insulation unneeded by ectotherms. Pterosaurs would be remarkable if only for their intelligence, which is on par with that of the dromaeosaurs and modern birds. Flying also requires a lot of nervous coordination.

Pterosaurs come in all sizes, from animals no larger than sparrows to the largest natural creatures ever to fly. The smaller pterosaurs are actually wing-flapped flyers, but the larger pterosaurs are primarily gliders, capable of no more than an occasional weak flap to help them in the right direction. The smaller pterosaurs are of little consequence to adventurers (except possibly as pets), so the descriptions will deal only with the larger ones.

Pteranodon

FREQUENCY: *Uncommon*
NO. APPEARING: 1-12
ARMOR CLASS: 10
MOVE: 3"/18"
HIT DICE: 1
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6
SIZE: M (4' tall, 25' wingspan)

This large pterosaur eats fish which it gulps into its pelican-like throat sack or spears with its toothless beak. A ptera-

(Turn to page 72)

More "meat" for Greyhawk

by Gary Gygax

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Not much magical ink has flowed from cockatrice quill to parchment for this column for a year now. Truth be known, a combination of other demands, a bout of illness, and sheer procrastination are responsible for the hiatus. At GenCon XIV, however, I had the opportunity to talk with many of you good folks again, and a message came out loud and clear. It is high time that I got busy and finished the **TEMPLE OF ELEMENTAL EVIL** module and started producing regular information regarding the **WORLD OF GREYHAWK™** Fantasy World Setting.

Those readers who attended my two seminars at GenCon XIV, or otherwise spoke with me about developments on Oerth, know that the revised and expanded edition of **WORLD OF GREYHAWK** Fantasy World Setting will contain a score or so of the deities popular in the Flanaess. Len Lakofka has done those of the Suel people, while I detailed those generally served in the area from the Grand Duchy of Geoff to the Great Kingdom. There is the first bit of good news for those who are chaffing for more information. I am also hopeful that the Kindly Publisher and his Esteemed Editor will see fit to publish the data on those deities herein, so as to obviate the need for all who own original editions of the campaign setting to purchase the new. (If they seem recalcitrant, Good Readers, a bit of pressure will surely smooth the way...)

Because TSR needed a competition level module (originally planned for release this fall, but now to be held until early 1982), the effort needed to finish the second hundred or so pages of **ELEMENTAL EVIL** went into preparation of **THE LOST CAVERNS OF TSOJCANTH**. The scenario was initially done for a convention tournament, but the new product has an extensive outdoor adventure and a completely new series of encounters, so the effort wasn't wasted, I believe, and I hope you will agree.

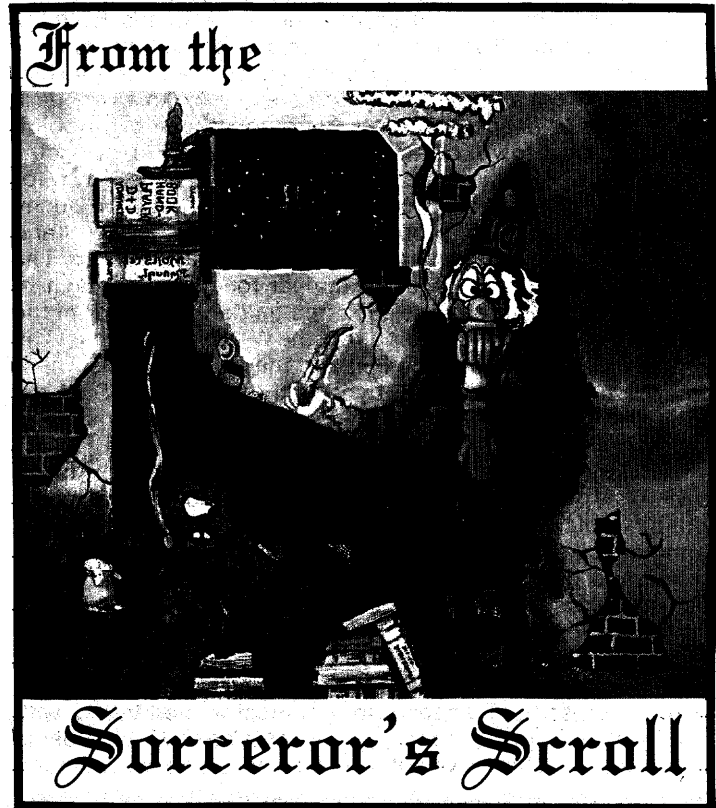
Then, in clearing the decks to take on the **TEMPLE**, other chores popped up: The last-minute refining of the deities, and the development of a couple of dozen creatures, frittered away another month's worth of designing time. This effort steals from **ELEMENTAL EVIL** too, but because what follows over the next few issues will be quite helpful to those utilizing the **GREYHAWK** world setting, it is hoped that the few extra weeks added to the eventual release time for **TEMPLE** will be forgiven. (Yes, Virginia, I *am* working on it, and T2 will be out no later than GenCon XVI!)

Finally, I had heartening news recently. Rob Kuntz, after a long stint away from **AD&D™** gaming (reputedly due to a case of reveling in royalty income) has again returned to the creative fold. Being first one of the original participants in my Greyhawk campaign, and eventually its co-DM, Rob is eminently qualified to assist in the production of the storehouse of material and information which you are asking for. Rob and I have sat down several times over the past few weeks to discuss how we should go about this production in order to assure an orderly and useful flow of new things. Here is the tentative list we are now aiming at:

A. Regular **WORLD OF GREYHAWK** game information via the "Sorcerer's Scroll" column — you have the first here!

B. Completion of the **CITY OF GREYHAWK** map and gazetteer. Rob, Terry Kuntz, and Eric Shook are now at work on the project.

C. Detailed, smaller-scale maps of important areas of the Flanaess, complete with important residents and some encounters. The same team has ruled off the world map,



and as soon as **CITY OF GREYHAWK** is finished, I expect this project to move ahead with force.

D. Miniatures rules for large-scale battles between the states of Oerth — in limbo now, although Steve Carpenter of Minifigs has mentioned that he is working on possible rules for this use.

E. **GREYHAWK CASTLE & DUNGEONS** production — at this point, this is only in a very general discussion stage, because of the other projects and the fact that the existing is only suitable for use by Rob and I. (As with most extensive dungeon complexes, much is developed and kept in the head due to actual play, and some areas are so difficult as to be impossible for those not used to our DM style.) So, initial work is unlikely to begin on this effort until sometime late in 1982.

This column will keep you up to date in the meantime. It should also give a fair amount of information not otherwise detailed in commercial releases, so if you have a campaign taking place in the Flanaess, be sure and stay tuned here.

For openers, I offer the following regarding racial types and dress. Future columns will deal with regional and national events, as well as smatterings of information on reported political plots and the like.

RACIAL TYPES OF THE FLANAESS

There are few "pure" racial groups extant on the Flanaess, save perhaps at the fringe areas of the continent. Of course, the races of demi-humans are relatively unmixed, but humankind, as is its wont, has industriously intermixed in the central regions to form a hybrid type which has actually become the norm.

Baklunish: The Baklunish people have golden-hued skin tones. Eye color is commonly gray-green or green, with gray uncommon and hazel rare. Hair color ranges from blue-black to dark brown. Ekbir, the Tiger Nomads, Ull, and Zeif typify the

straight Baklunish strain. The Wolf Nomads are intermarried with the Rovers of the Barrens, so they show the darker Flan blood. Ket is so mixed with Suel and Oeridian blood as to be the least typical of the Baklunish race, for the people of Ket are pale yellow or golden-brown or tan in skin color, with virtually any hair color possible save the lightest yellows and reds. Both the Paynim tribes and Tusmit show occasional admixture also.

Flannae: The Flan race have bronze-colored complexion. This varies from a lighter, almost copper shade to a very dark tone which is deepest brown. Eye color is commonly dark brown, black, brown, or amber (in declining order of occurrence). Hair coloration is black, brown-black, dark brown, or brown. Also, Flannae tend to have wavy or curly hair. The Duchy of Tenh are pure Flan, proud of their bronze color. Geoff and Sterich, despite mixture, show strong Flan racial influence. The Rovers of the Barrens are of the copper-toned sort of Flannae, although the western tribes show the golden skin color of the Baklunish due to interbreeding with the Wolf Nomad tribes. The people of the Hold of Stone Fist and the citizens of the Theocracy of the Pale are primarily hybrids, the former Flan/Suel, the latter Flan/Oeridian. The inhabitants of the Pale are particularly handsome.

Oeridians: The Oeridians have skin tones ranging from tan to olive. They have hair which runs the gamut of color from honey-blond to black, although brown and reddish brown are most common. Likewise, eye coloration is highly variable, although brown and gray are frequently seen in individuals: Unmixed Oeridians, despite claims of the Great Kingdom, are most common in Furyondy, Perrenland, the Shield Lands, and in the east and south in North Province, Medegia, and Onnwal and Sunndi.

Suloise: The fleeing Suel folk were scattered in a broadcast fashion across the Flanaess, so that most tended to mix with other groups. The Suel race is very fair-skinned, some being almost albino. They have light red, yellow, blond, or platinum-

blond hair. Eye color varies from pale blue or violet through deep blue, with gray occasionally occurring. Curly to kinky hair is common. The inhabitants of the Duchy of Ernst are nearly of pure Suel race. The Frost, Ice, and Snow Barbarians are perfect specimens of unmixed Suloise blood; the nearly albinoid Snow Barbarians are the best example. The Suel folk are quite predominant in the island groups off the eastern coast of the Flanaess as well as in Tilvanot Peninsula (Scarlet Brotherhood region). Those bands that migrated into the vast Amedio Jungle and Hepmonaland are so altered as to be no longer typical of the race; they are tan to brown with heavy freckling.

The predominant racial strain and particular admixtures of each of the major states of the Flanaess is given in the list which follows. The first letter is the predominant strain. Thus, "OSf" would mean an admixture of Oeridian with a strong Suel strain and a weak Flan mix, as the "f" is uncapitalized. Had it been "OSF" (with a capital "F"), the indication would be that the Flan influence was only scarcely less than that of the Suel.

Almor: OS	Rel Astra: Os
Bandit Kingdoms: OFSb	Sea Barons: So
Bissel: OSB	Sea Princes: SOf
Bone March: (SO)	South Province: Os
Dyvers: OSfb	Spindrift Isles: So
Gran March: SOf	Sterich: OFS
Great Kingdom: OS	Ulek, County: OFS
Greyhawk: OSfb	Ulek, Duchy: (Sfo)
Highfolk: Os	Ulek, Principality: (SO)
Idee: OS	Urnst, County: SO
Irngate: Os	Valley of the Mage: OBf
Keoland: SOf	Veluna: Osf
Lordship of the Isles: So	Verbobonc: Ofs
Nyrend: Os	Wild Coast: Sof
Pomarj: (SO)	Yeomanry: SOf
Ratik: Sof	



The inixture of Oeridian and Suel (expressed as "(SO)" in the above list) tends to develop a skin coloration similar to that of Earth's European. The original Flannae stock shows up with either Oeridian or Suloise or both as a coppery or bronze overtone. Oeridian and Baklunish develops a fairly light complexion, but the skin coloration is true yellow, as opposed to the vague yellow-brown of Earth's oriental race. A hybrid of Baklunish and Flannae gives a golden-copper or golden-bronze color which is possibly the most attractive complexion of any of the admixtures of the basic races.

In general, the skin color of an individual is of no particular importance. The dark Flan complexion shows up quite often in most nations. By contrast, the nobles of the Great Kingdom are proud of being light-skinned, just as the rulers of Tenh are overly conscious of the supposed superiority of their deep bronze color. In the central region of the Flanaess, from western Urnst Duchy to Geoff, there is little heed paid to either skin color or racial type, whether human or demi-human (or even humanoid in some places. The main exception to this is the demi-human kingdoms where humankind is judged inferior, especially in Celene.

Racial/national dress

Oeridians typically favor checks and plaids. Aerdi and Nyron-del houses tend to wear plaids, while the southern and western Oeridians favor checks, often of a diamond pattern or similar variation from the standard square. Clothing tends towards tight-legged trousers, close-fitting upper garments, and capes or cloaks.

Suloise folk have long used solid colors. Aristocratic houses have two or more such colors in their dress, so parti-colored garments are not uncommon. Similarly, the Suel people tend to favor display of emblems or tokens on their garments, typically of a contrasting color to their basic one. Dress was originally loose pantaloons topped by a baggy blouse. This form of dress has been changed to meet the needs of the varying climates, so the northern Suloise barbarians wear furs and skin garments, while those in the southernmost area have replaced the blouse with vest-like upper wear.

Flannae once wore brightly hued body paints, with yellow ochre and vermilion being the favorites. While the Rovers of the Barrens still use considerable body painting (where their high boots, loincloth and chest and arm leather don't cover them),

the more civilized Flan dress in the mode currently fashionable in their portion of the continent. Garments, however, tend to be of solid primary colors, with very bright hues predominant.

Baklunish peoples are of two sort. The northern branch favors bright patterns and gaudy colors. They wear gowns and robes, or else short breeks and flowing coats. The poorer folk even wear gaudy prints, although their garments are typically a one-piece coverall with whatever additional garb they can add. The southern branch likes parti-colors of a more pastel hue. Their dress is complex and full of many puffs and slashes when adorned for special events. They commonly wear rough hide and cloth when traveling or at war, with shields and banners showing clan colors.

Dwarven folk love shades of brown, red, and gray contrasted with a bright splash of color and picked out with as much precious metal as they can possibly wear. Leather is a favorite material, with wool being popular also. Dwarves wear clothing similar to that of the Oeridians.

Elves of the Sylvan ilk dress similar to Suloise, except their colors are pale tints of green, fawn, ecru, and dove gray. High elves are similar in mode of apparel, but they add blues, lilacs, and purples to the more natural forest hues of their woodland kin. Hunting and war garments are brown, russet, or tan. Gray elves wear very complex and flowing garb of pure white, sun yellow, silver and gold lame' set off by polished leather of contrasting colors and highlighted by jewels. All elvenkind wear cloaks, especially when traveling. These garments are neutral gray or gray-green.

Gnomes and halflings dress in a similar fashion, often replacing their trousers with knee-length britches. The gnomes favor more stolid colors — brown breeks, a tan blouse, green boots and belt, with a dark brown jacket or coat. A halfling in the same garb might have a yellow shirt and top off with a cap of green with a bright yellow feather in it. Both races will often wear striped clothing. When hunting or at war, they likewise favor garb of a curiously mottled sort, with greens and browns intermixed.

Next issue we will deal with events in the north central steppes and the areas below — the Horned Society, Bandit Kingdoms, and the Duchy of Tenh. Until then, avoid staredowns with medusae.

Convention calendar

ALPHACon III, Nov. 14-15 — A science-fiction and gaming convention to be held at the Ramada Inn, Ithaca, N.Y., Alphacon will feature a film program, displays, computers, and tournament competition in the D&D® game, Diplomacy, and other games. Convention membership is \$9 at the door. For more information: Alphacon III, c/o Bill Freebairn, 310 N. Sunset Drive, Ithaca NY 14850.

RICON '81, Nov. 14-15 — Rhode Island's first fantasy role-playing convention will be held at the Howard Johnson's motel in Warwick. Further information is available from RICON '81, P.O. Box 171, Lincoln RI 02865.

CONTRADICTION, Nov. 20-22 — A science-fiction convention to be held at the Buffalo Marriott Inn, Amherst, N.Y. For more information, contact Linda Michaels, 27 Argosy Street, Amherst NY 14226.

WINTER GAMEFEST, Nov. 20-22 — The annual event sponsored by the Metro Detroit Gamers which was formerly known as WinterCon. It will be held in Cobo Hall in Detroit for the first time. More information can be obtained by writing to Metro Detroit Gamers, P.O. Box 787, Troy MI 48099.

WINTER FANTASY, Jan. 9-10, 1982 — Role-playing games, miniatures battles, mah jongg, an auction, hot dogs and a fun time with the TSR Hobbies gang. Held at the American Legion Hall, 735 Henry St., Lake Geneva, Wis. Admission \$2 daily, \$3 weekend. Write to Winter Fantasy, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

GEN CON® SOUTH, Feb. 5-7, 1982 — The Cowford Dragoons and TSR Hobbies, Inc., again sponsor this wintertime retreat at the Jacksonville Beach (Fla.) Convention Center. For more information write GEN CON® SOUTH, P.O. Box 16371, Jacksonville FL 32216.

MANNHEIMERCON, Feb. 19-22, 1982 — Sponsored by the Grenadierstrasse Kriegspiel Society, the second Mannheimercon will be held at a site in Mannheim, West Germany. Tournament games to be held are: AD&D, Traveller, Civil War miniatures, Napoleonic miniatures, modern and WWII micro armor, naval miniatures, Battle of the Bulge, Dallas, Magic Realm, Panzer Leader, Wizard's Quest, Russian Campaign, Victory in the Pacific and Squad Leader. For more information, contact Grenadierstrasse Kriegspiel Society, c/o Raymond Norton, 181st Trans. Bn. APO New York 09166 or call Mannheim Civilian 731-575 or Mannheim Military 8281.

Publick Notice
 Ye olde **REWARD**
 200 gold pieces
 for the head of

Robin Hood

by Katharine Kerr

Many of us derive our image of Robin Hood from the movie versions of his story, where he is portrayed as a noble lord, the Earl of Huntingdon, living in the late 12th century. Although it makes for a good cinema plot, this version has nothing to do with the body of ballads and popular poems that tell the real legend of Robin Hood. It depends on one portion of the work of a very late (1627) writer who was prey to the typical British feeling that any hero has to be an aristocrat.

In truth — if there is any truth about Robin of Nottingham — he and his Merry Men were solid, middle-class yeomen who took to the forest because of the chaotic social conditions of the late 1300s. In those times, weak kings could not check their barons, who raised their own illegal taxes and hired men like the Sheriff of Nottingham to keep their private peace, not the King's.

In 1354, in fact, civil documents record a certain "Robin Hood" as being in prison, awaiting trial on charges of poaching and forest trespass. Since there is no record of his having been hanged, one may assume that he escaped — into legend, if not back into the forest.

As a general note, the proper setting for the following non-player characters is, of course, Sherwood Forest, just to the north of the little farming town of Nottingham. The forest should be a long strip, about fifteen by forty miles, of virgin oak, thick with underbrush.

For Nottingham, the Dungeon Master can use any small-town module by simply designating the largest secular build-

ing as the Sheriff's house and dungeon keep. The only road to town should run directly through the forest, ensuring Robin's band of a ready supply of cash.

The DM should also keep in mind that hunting in a lord's preserve like Sherwood Forest is considered poaching, punishable by hanging — a law that applies to player characters as well as Merry Men.

ROBIN HOOD

12th-level fighter

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic good

HIT POINTS: 70

ARMOR CLASS: 7

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2/1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8 (+1)

HIT BONUS: Special

MOVE: 12"

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

STRENGTH: 16

INTELLIGENCE: 17

WISDOM: 14

DEXTERITY: 18

CONSTITUTION: 16

CHARISMA: 17

When pressed for information about his background, Robin will only joke that he was in trouble with the law — or the law with him — at a very young age. One may assume he was born into a respectable farming or craftsman's household. His great skill with weapons implies that at some time he served (or at least trained) as a yeoman archer with the King's armies. Some folk say that he returned home to find his family victims of the Sheriff's grasping violence. Others say that he was goaded into killing one of the King's deer on a wager and then out-



lawed. Whatever the reason, he has lived in the forest for the past five years, since the age of twenty, with the price of two hundred gold pieces on his head.

Robin is tall, slender and good-looking, with dark, untidy hair and an engaging smile. His usual clothing is a faded green tunic over torn hose, a studded leather doublet for armor, and leather boots. He wears a broadsword with a dagger at his belt, has a quiver of arrows slung over his back, and carries a yew longbow. He moves quickly and restlessly, rarely still for a minute unless lying in ambush. He talks fast, too, sometimes in a compulsive string of jokes or idle chatter which lasts until one of the band makes him hold his tongue.

There are two main motivations in Robin's life: his love of total freedom and his hatred of injustice. Both combine to

drive him to his rebel's life of robbing the rich to give to the poor. Like most chaotics, however, he cares little for any abstract principle of justice or equality. He centers his hatred on the person and specific unjust acts of the Sheriff of Nottingham.

He gives his stolen gold to whatever poor person happens to need it at the moment. Fomenting a social rebellion would be the last thing he'd think of. He will lend his aid and his men to a good cause, but only if it is glamorous or directly aimed at the Sheriff. Once Robin has given someone his friendship, he is very loyal, willing to risk his life to save a friend from harm. He is not, however, above pulling low practical jokes on the same friend.

Robin robs strangers first and makes friends later. Since he has scouts placed at the edge of the forest, a party characters using the road through it is certain to be ambushed by Robin, Little John, Will Scarlet, and 4-24 (4d6) of the Merry Men.

The band is so practiced at forest movement that there is only a 15% chance (25% for elves) of a party member hearing them in time to be warned. If unwarned, the party will suddenly find itself surrounded on all sides by men with drawn bows. Robin will step out into the road and demand the party's surrender. He will promise that they'll come to no bodily harm if they simply turn over their gold and jewels. If a player character asks his name, Robin will answer readily and add that he should go straight to the Sheriff to report this outrage. At that, his men will all laugh raucously.

If the player characters recognize his name and express admiration or interest, or if they merely submit to being robbed without a fight, Robin will turn affable and begin asking them questions

about themselves and their travels while two of the men are stripping the party of their valuables. Once the party is robbed and disarmed, Robin will play one of his standard jokes. He will tell the party that since they're paying for the feast tonight, they should share it. Party members have no choice in this matter—the men will surround the party and march them off to the forest hideout. If Robin likes the party, or if he feels that they are engaged in some good cause, he will return their valuables in the morning. (The DM will have to role-play Robin here; dice rolls aren't adequate for this decision.)

If Robin dislikes the party, he will have them escorted back to the road after dinner — a good bit poorer for the experience. If the party attempts to find him for revenge, they have a 5% chance, cumulative per consecutive day of searching, of finding the hideout again.

Robin will never knowingly befriend an evil character. He has a base chance of 60% of guessing evil alignment, and the DM should increase this chance if the character in question is acting in an outwardly evil manner or has some obviously evil symbol about his or her person.

Unless his life is in danger, Robin will never kill an evil character (or anyone else, for that matter) in cold blood. He will simply do his utmost to humiliate that person, leaving him or her alive for a fair fight later. For instance, he's been known to make a fierce warrior put on a woman's dress and walk into town so attired. He's tied the sheriff's men upside-down to trees and left them there for their boss to find; he's stripped pompous clerics down to their underwear for the walk into town. (DMs, please note: If you have one of those obnoxious players in your group, Robin's pranks offer a sa-

tisfying way of teaching him or her a lesson.)

Although Robin is normally proficient with a sword, his weapon of choice is the longbow. His uncanny talent has been so refined by years of practice that he has an extra "to hit" bonus as well as his adjustment for high dexterity. The DM should allow Robin +1 to hit on moving targets and +2 to hit on stationary ones. Though all his men are proficient with a bow, no one else has his skill.

With, hand weapons or in weaponless combat, Robin is far from the best fighter in the band. His intelligence, high spirits, and eloquence have won him his place as leader — not his fists.

At all times, Robin carries a horn at his belt; three blasts on it will summon the Merry Men as fast as they can possibly reach him.

The Merry Men

The traditional number for the ranks of Merry Men is nine and thirty archers, not counting the lieutenants profiled below, but the DM may adjust this number downward if a large troop will unbalance his or her campaign. The Merry Men are all 5th-level fighters, wearing leather armor and armed with sword and longbow. They are all fanatically devoted to Robin (+25 on any loyalty check, plus Robin's charisma bonus).

Contrary to opinion created by the cinematic versions, none of these men have horses. (It is extremely difficult to feed horses in a forest, not to mention hide them. If Robin and his band owned a herd of forty-odd horses, the Sheriff would have to be blind and possess a -2 intelligence to avoid finding their trail. If Robin needs horses, he merely steals them, then gives them to some poor farmer. when the need is past.)

WILL SCARLET

8th-level fighter

ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic good*

HIT POINTS: 48

ARMOR CLASS: 8

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8

HIT BONUS: None

MOVE: 12"

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

STRENGTH: 15

INTELLIGENCE: 15

WISDOM: 11

DEXTERITY: 16

CONSTITUTION: 16

CHARISMA: 13

Will, Robin's closest friend and most trusted lieutenant, joined the band because he hates the sheriff as much as Robin. During one particularly bad winter, Will's family was close to starvation. When Will shot a deer to feed them, the Sheriff put a price on his head. Having little choice, he fled to the wilderness,

where he became Robin's first recruit.

Somewhat moody and withdrawn, Will has a hot, quick temper. If he feels his honor is being insulted, he will challenge the offender to a duel. Robin, however, will intervene and suggest an archery contest or non-lethal combat, with a large forfeit and much good-natured teasing in store for the loser. Will is also likely to get carried away by enthusiasm and find himself in dangerous places, such as at the head of a charge with the others still twenty yards behind. But his temper makes him extremely brave. In morale checks, the DM should always allow Will a +15 bonus.

Will is something of a dandy when the fortunes of the road allow. He has a fondness for silk shirts, stripped from an arrogant lord's back, embroidered doublets, and fine jewelry. Anyone who teases him about his clothes will be challenged to a fistfight. Will carries a sword and is also proficient with the longbow.



LITTLE JOHN**10th-level fighter**ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic good*

HIT POINTS: 76

ARMOR CLASS: 8

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8 (+3)

HIT BONUS: +3

MOVE: 12"

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

STRENGTH: 18/00

INTELLIGENCE: 12

WISDOM: 10

DEXTERITY: 14

CONSTITUTION: 18

CHARISMA: 14

Little John's given name is John Little. The nickname comes from one of Robin's jokes: John is seven feet tall, barrel-chested, and fairly bulging with muscles. Blond and bearded, he dresses much the same as Robin, but his leather doublet is unstudded, and he carries a heavy oak quarterstaff instead of a bow. If pressed, John can fight well with a sword, but the staff is his weapon of choice.

It was his skill with a quarterstaff, in fact, that won him his place in the band. One day as Robin and Will were hunting in the forest, they came to a narrow bridge over a stream. John was just stepping onto it to cross from the other side. When Robin demanded that John retreat and give him precedence, John



challenged him to a duel with staves. In record time, Robin was flying through the air and into the water. Much impressed, Robin asked John to join the band. Since John has no love for the Sheriff (and several poaching charges on his record), he agreed.

Generally, John is easy going and good-natured, but at times Robin's constant

teasing drives him wild. John then quarrels bitterly with Robin and walks off in a huff. The conflict lasts until Robin apologizes or some danger threatens. No matter how angry John may be with Robin, he will always go to his leader's rescue if needed. Since John tends to belittle his own intelligence, he follows Robin's orders without question, occasionally with unfortunate results when Robin is in a daredevil mood.

FRIAR TUCK**7th-level cleric**ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic good*

HIT POINTS: 46

ARMOR CLASS: 8

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6

HIT BONUS: *None*

MOVE: 12"

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

STRENGTH: 15

INTELLIGENCE: 15

WISDOM: 17

DEXTERITY: 14

CONSTITUTION: 17

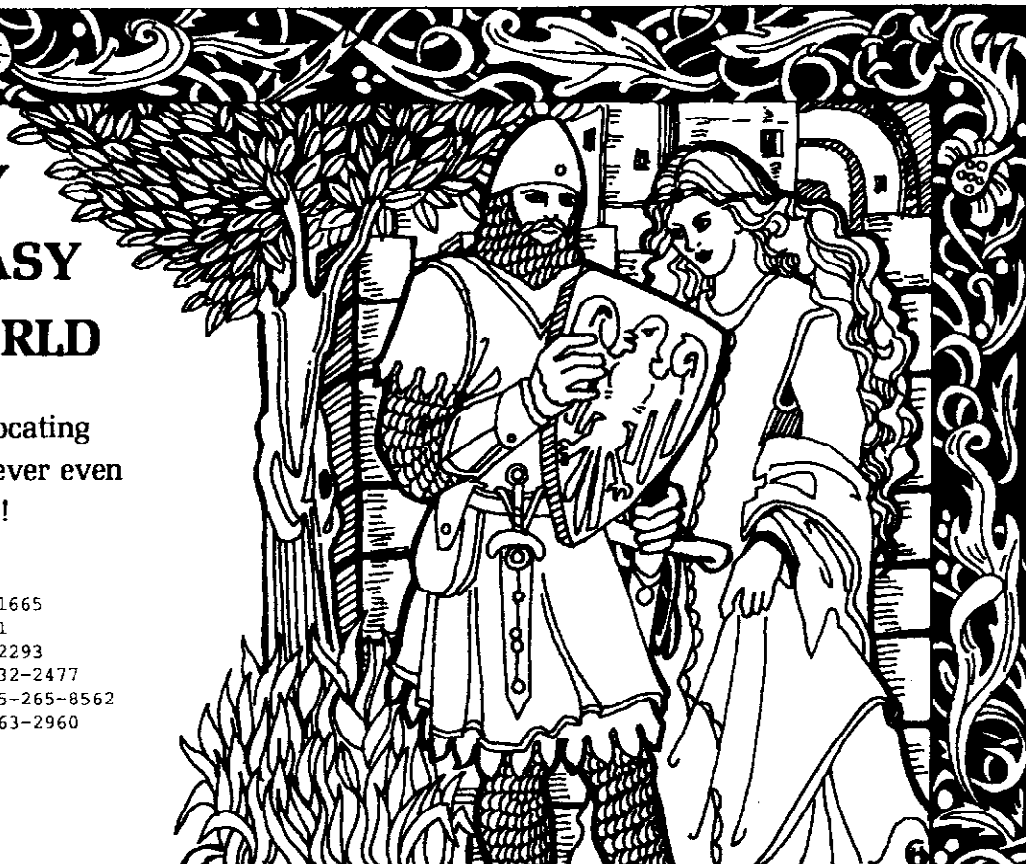
CHARISMA: 13

With his scraggly tonsure and dirty brown monk's robe, Friar Tuck looks like a figure of fun, especially since he is enormously fat. Men have often underestimated him—to their detriment—just as Robin and John did at their first meet-

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ing with the friar. At that time, Tuck was living alone in the forest — he says as a holy hermit, but the folk say as a refugee from his abbot's wrath. (Tuck had the unpopular idea that alms should go to the poor, not to the abbot's personal treasury.)

SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM

6th-level fighter

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

HIT POINTS: 41

ARMOR CLASS: 7

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8 (+1)

HIT BONUS: *None*

MOVE: 12"

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

STRENGTH: 16

INTELLIGENCE: 15

WISDOM: 8

DEXTERITY: 15

CONSTITUTION: 17

CHARISMA: 7

Gray-bearded, lean, and scowling, the Sheriff of Nottingham dresses in rich black velvet tunics, ermine-tipped cloaks, and fine leather boots, with rings on his fingers and the heavy gold chain of his office around his neck. His leather doublet is studded with jewels as well as iron protection points. At his side, he has a broadsword in a jeweled scabbard and carries a beautiful polished staff with a heavy gold finial. All this finery, of course, has been paid for by taxes extorted from the poor.

Though the Sheriff is close to 40 years of age, he is still a formidable opponent in combat, especially since he fights dirty whenever he can. His unusually high constitution enables him to withstand the drubbings, dunkings, and other pranks that Robin continually plays on him.

The Sheriff's hatred of Robin Hood is the ruling passion of his life — stronger even than his greed, since he has put some of his own money into that price on Robin's head. Though generally cautious

Robin and John came upon him just as the friar was sitting down to a lunch large enough for three ordinary men. When Robin began mocking his greed for food, Tuck challenged him to a wrestling match, which Tuck won handily, passing his version of Robin's "trial by combat" membership test.

Besides being an expert wrestler (use the grappling table on page 72 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, not the special monk's combat), Friar Tuck is highly skilled with a quarterstaff. He also fights well with a bench or a piece of firewood, which the DM should treat as clubs in his hands. Though he cannot use a bow, he has a good eye for a thrown missile, such as an ale pitcher or tankard — and tankards and ale pitchers are never far from the good friar's reach.

Though he'll fight to defend the camp or his friends, Tuck takes no part in the robberies of the band. As a precaution, though, he wears leather armor stretched tight over his fat paunch. Robin often remarks that Tuck's fat is as good as another layer of armor, but only he can

and suspicious, he will impulsively follow any stranger who claims to know the whereabouts of Robin's lair.

The Sheriff will, of course, take his men-at-arms along with him on these hunts. In fact, he is so afraid of Robin that he never goes anywhere alone. If met in town, the Sheriff will have an escort of ten 5th-level fighters, each armed with swords and daggers and wearing studded leather.

If met on the road, the Sheriff will be accompanied by his full troop, which includes, besides the men above, ten 4th-level fighters armed as above and ten more 4th-level fighters armed with longbows. These men are mounted and have no qualms about running a helpless opponent down in the road. They also torture prisoners and strip them of their valuables, regardless of whether the accused is guilty or innocent.

The Sheriff is employed by the evil Sir Guy of Gisborne, an archetypal absentee landlord. Sir Guy visits Nottingham only once a year — to browbeat his estate steward, pick up his share of the taxes, and get disgustingly drunk with the Sheriff. Since he is terrified of Sir Guy, the Sheriff admires him and serves him faithfully.

The Sheriff is in general a typical lawful evil type, a nasty bully to those below him and a lickspittle to those above. If a party of player characters intimidates him, he will aid them as long as he's under their direct supervision, but he will never give up his pursuit of Robin or knowingly aid Robin's friends.

Bibliography: The legend of Robin Hood is comprised of popular ballads

say such things without being challenged to a wrestling bout.

Though none of the ballads ascribe any magical powers to Friar Tuck, the DM may give him the following clerical spells if he/she wishes:

First level: *Bless, Cure Light Wounds, Detect Evil.*

Second level: *Chant, Find Traps, Know Alignment.*

Third level: *Cure Disease, Create Food and Water.* (The DM may also modify this latter spell to *Create Food and A/e.*)

Fourth level: *Cure Serious Wounds.*

Some readers may wonder why Robin and his lieutenants don't belong to the ranger sub-class. The reason is simply that the magical spell abilities allowable to rangers are totally foreign to the spirit of the old ballads.

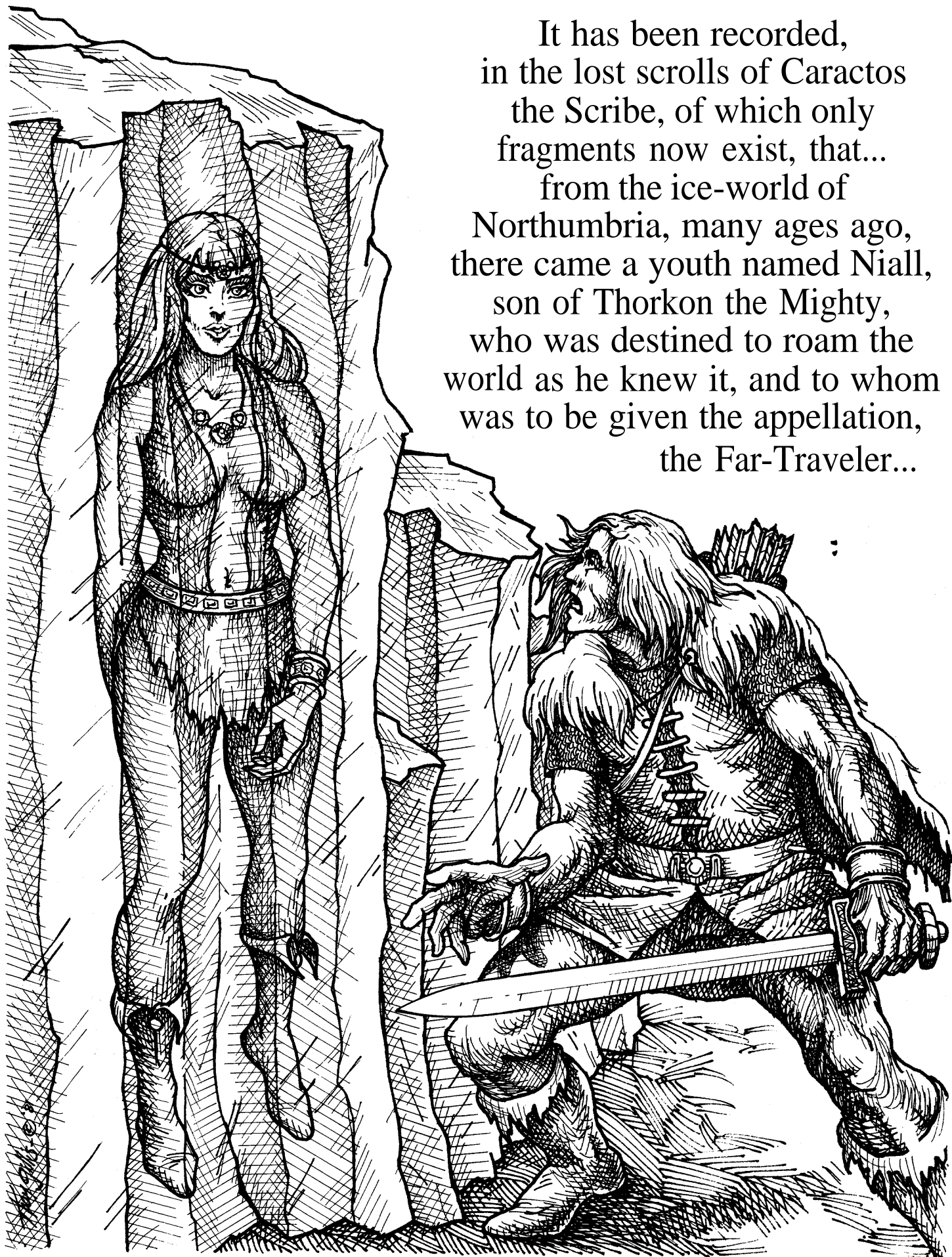
In *DRAGON* magazine #45, Len Lakofka describes a variant NPC class, the Archer. Any DM who wishes can easily fit Robin and Will Scarlet into that class at their respective levels. Little John should remain an ordinary fighter.

and anonymous poems dating roughly to the 15th century. The best collection of the 39 stories and their variants is in *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* by F. J. Child, which has recently been reprinted by Dover Books and which should be available in any good-sized public library.

When it comes to modern retellings, there is remarkably little material available on an adult level. Persons who have access to a university library might find J. Ritson's *Robin Hood*, first published in 1795 but last reprinted in 1885. There are a great number of children's books available on Robin Hood, but all of them are prettified and most are stories retold in pseudo-archaic language. Making an effort to find Child's compendium of ballads is well worth it.



It has been recorded,
in the lost scrolls of Caractos
the Scribe, of which only
fragments now exist, that...
from the ice-world of
Northumbria, many ages ago,
there came a youth named Niall,
son of Thorkon the Mighty,
who was destined to roam the
world as he knew it, and to whom
was to be given the appellation,
the Far-Traveler...



The coming of the Sword

Fiction by Gardner F. Fox

For many days he had trotted across the ice field, always straining his gaze ahead, ever seeking the figure of the man he hunted. He was close now, so close that he needed no longer to stare at the ground in search of footprints. For there ahead, revealed in the weak sunlight of this northernmost region, was the man, Gunthar.

Niall grinned wolfishly. Soon would Gunthar face the death he deserved for the attempted rape of lovely young Althia, who was sister to Niall and daughter of Thorkon the Mighty. In less than an hour, Niall would be up with him, would draw his sword and take the vengeance that was due his family.

Niall shifted the white bearskin which covered his side shoulders. Under that skin he wore a mail shirt, covered by a leather kaunake. Around his middle was a broad leather belt from which hung a dagger and a sword. Over his shoulder was his horn hunting bow and a quiver of long war arrows.

Niall disdained the arrows and the bow. He wanted Gunthar face to face, to know — before cold steel killed him — what it meant to assault the daughter of Thorkon the Mighty. Niall trotted faster; his long, thickly thewed legs ate up the ground that lay between him and the man he hunted.

Suddenly the ground under his boots shifted, rolled, began to rise and fall rhythmically, as might the waves of the Cold Sea. Niall staggered and grunted.

"May the gods grant I catch him in time," he muttered.

He ran faster, and yanked out his sword. As though the still-distant man heard that scrape of blade against scabbard, he looked back. Gunthar had moved into a passage with no exit; to one side was the eternal ice of a mighty glacier, to the other a massive rock wall rising upward to an unscalable height.

It might be that Gunthar realized the futility of further flight, for now he stopped, turned and drew his own sword. Niall ran toward his quarry, shouting in exultation.

The ground still rolled and pitched, yet Niall ran across it swiftly, balancing him-

self. He was used to the plunging, churning deck of a longboat on the Cold Sea, and this motion of the ground was not unlike the roll of giant waves.

Gunthar waited, pale and somewhat grim. He knew Niall, knew the ferocity of his swordplay, understood that few men could stand against him — without luck. Gunthar prayed to Loki, god of mischief, hoping that the god would come to him in his moment of need.

Niall hurled himself forward, lips parting in a snarl of fury. His blade swept around, clanged against the weapon Gunthar lifted to parry its deadly sweep. Steel sang. Almost instantly, Niall was driving in again, beating back that sword which opposed him. He drove Gunthar back on his heels, making him give ground.

The earth shuddered beneath them. Ice cracked. There was a muted rumble off to one side. It was as if the very world shared his fury, Niall thought, as he beat down the sword which faced him.

"This is the day you die, Gunthar," he growled.

"I did no harm to Althia," the other panted. "She screamed, and others came to stop me. I fled..."

"You fled to your death! You know the law! To him who transgresses against a priestess of Freya, there is only one reply! Death!"

The ground rolled upward, cresting where they fought, pitching them toward the mouth of the pass and onto softer ground, where tall grasses grew. Niall bellowed his war cry and raised his sword.

"Death, Gunthar!" he roared.

His blade flashed downward. It made an arc of light where the sunlight caught it. It slanted into Gunthar's steel, brushed it aside, then continued downward into the man's neck, cleaving through flesh and bone. Gunthar's eyes rolled up into his head and he fell backward, mouth open in a soundless scream.

And in that very instant — The ground rose, pitching Niall forward, over the body of the man he had been fighting. There were

the screams of tortured ice and grinding stone. The earth shook wildly.

Niall clung to the tall grasses into which he had been toppled. "Great Thor! Save me!" he breathed.

Yet the earth went on quaking and rolling. Behind him he heard stone crashing on stone, and he listened as great blocks of ice came free of the glacier and plummeted to the ground nearby.

Long he clung to the grasses, which held fast in the earth under them. Not until the last of the sounds had drifted away, until the ground had stilled, did he lift his eyes to stare about him.

Great Wodin," he gasped. The pass was no more. It was blocked now with crumbled, splintered masses of stone, with awesome slabs of glacial ice. No one could travel through that pass. It was closed forever. He would not be able to return to the stead of his parents — at least, not the way he had left it. He was excluded from the home he had known for all his seventeen years. The youth was an outcast, thrust into a strange land.

And yet it was not the tumbled mixture of rock and ice which caught and held Niall's attention. There was something else, something *within* the glacial ice itself. Niall growled low in his throat.

What was this thing he saw? Covered with ice, yet it had human form. He could see an arm, and the glint of sunlight revealed what seemed to be a golden bracelet adorning that pallid arm.

Niall took a few steps forward, his flesh crawling with wonder and readiness.

Could it be human, that which he was staring at? Now he could see golden hair, lighter even than his own, appearing white rather than yellow. There was pale flesh, covered in some way by a fur garment.

And — blue eyes, wide open! Staring at him!

Those eyes pleaded! They called to him, begging!

Niall shook himself. "I dream," he murmured to himself. "There is no woman in that ice. And if there is — she must be dead! Long dead!"

Aye! How long ago must she have toppled into that ice? Or — been put there?

Was she a witch? A lamia?

No matter! For now he saw, as he moved closer to that ice barrier, that she was lovely, more beautiful than any woman he had ever seen before. Her eyes were blue, her mouth like a round, red fruit. Her body was full, her hips pleasantly rounded.

His hand lifted to touch the ice that held her.

Close were her eyes now, even more urgent the message they seemed to be sending. *Free me! free me, man of the outer world! free me — and know my gratitude!* It was as though her voice whispered in his mind.

Niall raised his sword and began hacking at the ice. Frozen chunks flew. Long he worked, and carefully, because he did not want to harm the white body that lay encased in this frozen sepulchre.

For hours he worked, stabbing with great care at the ice. After a time he could reach around the sides of the body, slashing with his dagger, using it as a pick. Slowly he freed the unknown woman.

Yet there was ice still close about her body. And now Niall paused, knowing that if he cut deeper into the ice, he might harm her. He turned and began cutting some of the tall grasses, arranging them in a pile about the icy statue.

He set fire to the grasses and watched as the yellow flames began to lick upward. Drops of water formed, glistened, ran down the ice. He cut more grass, piling it higher, growling as the water from the melting ice dripped and put out some of that fire.

When the fire had done its work, only a thin coating of ice remained.

The woman's body moved slightly. Some of the thin ice-crust cracked and fell away. Seeing this, Niall gripped the edge of another hunk of ice, tugged at it until it cracked and dropped.

And then the woman moved a leg. Both legs. Her arms lifted, freeing a hand on which a ring glinted. Niall worked faster, chipping away gently with his dagger so that more and more of the ice fell away.

First all of her body was free, and at last the ice fell away from around her head and shoulders.

Her blue eyes gazed upward into those of Niall. Her full mouth trembled, curved into a smile. "My thanks, stranger. Accept the gratitude of Clovia, who was once — many years ago — queen in Hellios."

Niall shook his head. "Hellios? I've never heard of it."

Clovia smiled wryly. "Is my fame so quick to fade? Once I was mistress of a mighty fleet, a great army. Kings and emperors paid me homage, until..."

Her lovely face darkened, her features twisted in anger. "Until a magician came out of the East and worked his magicks in my city, and by them caused me to be borne away and imprisoned in that ice!"

She drew a deep breath, and her eyes roamed the grasslands. "Have you any idea what it was like, buried in cold and darkness — still alive! — for so many years? So many years!" Her eyes focused on him. "What is the year?"

Niall shrugged. "The year of the Boar, the month of the Ice Gods."

Clovia rubbed her hands up and down her arms. "That means nothing to me. Ah, well... This is a different world than the one I left, I know that. Even that magician is no longer alive. Dalvuus, his name was. Ha! If I could get my hands on him..."

She looked hard at Niall. "What about you? From whence came you?"

Niall explained how he had followed Gunthar, how he had killed him, how the earth had shuddered. His hand gestured at the fallen rocks and tumbled blocks of ice.

"I can go home no more. The way is closed. I must reach a seaport and find a ship to take me back to Northumbria."

Clovia eyed him musingly. "Stay with me, Niall. Be my guard, my warrior. Travel with me to Hellios, where I will make you rich."

Niall grinned. "Lady, your kingdom may no longer exist. You are an outcast, like myself." He hesitated, then said, "Still, I have a fancy to wander about this warmer world, to sip its ales and wines, to taste its foods. It might be that I will walk with you, take you to this Hellios."

Swiftly she twisted off the great emerald ring that graced her finger. To go with it, she took off a bracelet encrusted with diamonds. "Take these as first payment, warrior! They are but a small part of what Clovia will give you if you escort her safely to Hellios."

Niall chuckled, waving a hand, "Keep them, lady. They look better on you than they would in my pouch. Time enough for reward when I do what you ask — if I can."

He turned to stare out over the grasslands, which extended as far as he could see. Niall knew nothing about this corner of his world. He knew not which way to walk, did not know even what direction Clovia wanted to go. He turned to her and saw her frowning slightly as she, too, studied the vast prairie for a clue.

In almost inaudible words she was muttering, "This would be the region called Styglinia on the maps I have known. If that is so, then there will be a river running through it. But how far away?"

Niall grinned. "And when we come to this river, if we do, where will it take us?"

She turned to smile at him. "Eastward, toward the city Hellios. The river is named

Thangara. It is long and winding, running across half the world. Could we but fashion a raft..."

Her words drifted off. Niall shrugged his muscular shoulders and said, "It isn't around here, so let's go find it."

He began to walk, and after a moment Clovia followed. They walked the sun out of the sky, pausing at last when the shadows lengthened and darkness began to creep across the grasses. They found refuge close by a rock formation.

Niall gathered sticks from the fallen branches of some trees that grew near that stone bulwark, set them together and made a fire, scraping a bit of flint against his dagger blade. From his pouch he took a bit of meat, some cheese, a little bread. Hunkered down, he offered half of what he had to Clovia.

They ate, and then they lay at arm's length, both within touching distance of the fire. Overhead the stars glinted in black space, and a cool wind roamed the grasses. Niall slept soon and soundly.

For or three days they traveled south. The great bow and the arrows Niall carried were put into use, felling a deer and then a boar, so that the young man and the woman ate well. His companion was given to moody silences, or so it seemed to Niall. She brooded long and often, her blue eyes slightly veiled.

To Niall, it was a pleasant time. This was a new land, and there was much to see. The unchanging horizon extended as far as his eyes could reach — and he had excellent vision — but as the days went on, it became monotonous.

Something of this he said to Clovia, adding, "Even my northland gives me a new view every so often. A bear might rush out at me, or a giant elk, or even a man who had been outlawed. But here..."

His huge shoulders lifted and fell. "...there is nothing to stem the boredom."

Clovia turned her head and smiled faintly. "Do not be too sure, Niall. Slowly, oh so slowly, I have been remembering. We are not far now from the river — and from the underwater lair of the sea serpent Xithalia."

"Sea serpent? I've heard of them. Some of them dwell in the Cold Sea. But I've never known any to swim about in rivers."

"The river Thangara is deep, very deep. It sweeps in from the ocean, and there are caverns inside its stone walls where Xithalia dwells."

Niall stiffened his shoulders. He did not like this talk of sea serpents. By Wodin! How could he fight off a sea serpent from the deck of a raft?

Three days later, they came in sight of a river. Its waters moved sluggishly between grassy banks rimmed with trees. As far as they could see, there were no habitations, neither

the tents of prairie dwellers nor the mud huts of men who had been outlawed from the cities.

With his sword, Niall hacked down all the saplings he could find, trimmed them and then lashed them together with tough vines that grew nearby. With Clovia helping to twist the vines and saplings together, they built a serviceable raft, though Niall eyed it dubiously. It would have to do; they had no boat, nor any prospect of finding one in these remote regions.

They launched the raft, balanced themselves carefully on it, and pushed out into the river, Niall poling them along. The sun grew warmer as they made their way between high banks covered with wildflowers. Then they moved into an area where trees all but shut out the bright sky overhead.

Clovia sat quietly, seemingly lost in thought. Niall stared about him, his heart beating to the pace of this land where he was a stranger. How vast it was! He had never imagined that his world was so huge. All he had known until now were the cold sea waves and the little strand where his father had his stading. What wonders was he now to see?

All day they rode the river, landing at dusk to make a little fire and cook the fish Niall caught with a hook and some thin cord from the pouch on his belt.

When they were done eating, Niall asked, "How far do we have to travel to reach this city where you were queen?"

Clovia smiled grimly. "Many, many more days. We are now in a country where my people never went. Why should they? There is nothing here to tempt the merchants."

They had been traveling on the raft for four days when they saw the sailing ship. It was in the middle of the river, its sail billowed out, yet it did not move. Then Niall saw something wet and shiny moving slowly alongside the vessel. Thick and massive — and menacing — was that something.

Clovia cried out. "Xithalia! He has come from his rocky lair to feast on human flesh, to fill his belly and then retire to sleep."

Niall sought purchase for the pole, to make the raft move faster. As he did, Clovia turned a frightened face to him. "What are you doing? You're taking us toward that thing! Try to go around it. It may not see us."

"Those people aboard that ship may need help."

Clovia stared at him, her eyes wide. "What is that to us?"

The youth glared back at her. "It may be nothing to you, but I can't run away to let those folk face death."

He could see the head of the serpent now, as the beast moved out from behind the sail which had hidden it from his view. Vast was the head, wide its mouth. The creature slavered as it poised above the deck, where a group of terrified people stood huddled.

Niall reached for his bow. He knew arrows would be useless against such a creature, unless...

He pulled his bow, sent an arrow winging through the air. It hit the scaly hide of the serpent's neck and fell away. Niall grunted, lifted another arrow to the string. He took more time, studying the distant creature's movements, before he let fly again.

The arrow arced high, then as it began to descend it drove into the eye of the serpent. From its open throat came a scream of agony. Up reared Xithalia, its head turning one way and another as it sought out the cause of its pain.

Clovia hunched down upon the raft's deck. Her white hands were clenched into fists. To her continued amazement, Niall was poling feverishly, urging the raft toward that nightmare monster, and shouting as he worked.

"Have you gone mad?" Clovia yelled.

"No, no. Look — The beast is leaving the ship. It is starting to turn, to come toward us."

Niall moved to the edge of the raft,



balancing himself carefully. He drew his sword and waited as Xithalia glided through the river toward him.

"What can you hope to do with that puny weapon?" Clovia panted. "He will open his mouth, gobble you up!"

Niall grinned. "That's what I hope he does."

The great head was over him now, its jaws wide apart. Long teeth glinted in the red cavern of a mouth. For a moment Xithalia paused, then its head darted downward.

Clovia screamed.

Niall sprang upward to meet the gaping jaw, his sword held up before him as if he meant to fend off that gaping mouth.

The jaw snapped almost shut—just as Niall fell sideways into the river. But before he fell, the thrust lodged his sword in the jaw of the sea serpent, with the point puncturing the roof of its mouth and the pommel lodged up against its bottom jaw. Even though impaled on the sword, those jaws gaped wide.

Xithalia bellowed. It thrashed its head and its vast body, straining to force the sword back out the way it came. When light caught the edge of the blade, it could be seen in the beast's throat cavity, lodged at an angle that made the serpent roar every time it moved its jaws up and down. Water foamed and flew about.

Niall swam to the raft and hoisted himself upon it. His booming laughter rang out. "Try now to swallow me, eater of men! Maybe now you'll starve to death."

He took up the pole, thrust it into the soft bottom of the river, and propelled the raft toward the ship which now sat sideways in the river, the people on it staring and crying out to him. Clovia rose to her knees, then to her feet, all the while eyeing the injured and enraged serpent, convulsing as it sought to free itself from that sword. Xithalia lost interest in its prey, and its thrashings carried it farther and farther away, until after a few moments it dipped beneath the surface of the water and was gone.

Almost in awe, Clovia shifted her gaze to stare at Niall. "You saved me, barbarian. You saved me."

"I saved myself," he grinned.

Ropes were flung from the ship's deck. Niall caught one, grabbed Clovia with his other arm, and leaped. His feet found the side of the boat, and willing hands grasped them and raised them upward until the deck planks were underfoot.

Sailors were running here and there, preparing to get the ship under way. The sail filled with wind, the hull turned about until it pointed into the current, and the river waters again began to glide past the hull as the vessel moved on with the raft in tow.

A man with a beard came toward them, smiling broadly. "My thanks to you," he happily growled at Niall, clasping the

youth's hands. "You saved our lives and the vessel itself. I'll not be ungrateful."

Niall shrugged. "Just tell me where I can buy a little boat. I'm tired of pushing a raft along."

The captain chuckled. "You'll buy nothing. A boat shall be my gift to you." He hesitated. "But where do you plan to go upon the river Thangara?"

Niall glanced at Clovia, who said, "We travel to Hellios."

"Hellios? Where's that?"

Clovia stared. "Hellios is the most magnificent city in the world. From its docks, ships ply all the nine oceans. Its merchants eat from plates of gold."

The captain grinned. "Lady, I wish you only the best, but — Hellios? There is no such place. I know this river from the ocean to the mountains."

The captain walked away and Clovia stared at him, frowning.

Two days later the ship pulled into a wharf before a riverside city. Niall was at the railing, staring at the many rooftops, at the distant shine of sunlight on a golden dome. This was the first city he had ever seen. In his country there was no more than small steadings, or perhaps a gathering of steadings together with warehouses in which merchants stored their goods.

"You find it exciting?" Clovia asked from where she stood beside him.

"I've never seen anything like it," Niall told her, not taking his eyes off the scenes before him.

Her lips curved into a smile. "Wait until you glimpse Hellios. *There* is a city, a city that houses thousands upon thousands of people."

"The captain says there is no such place. I've spoken with him. He knows this river as he does his own home."

Clovia snapped, "The man is mad. I tell you, I *know* Hellios! I reigned there, as did my father and my forefathers."

Very gently, Niall murmured, "But that was a long time ago; Clovia. A very long time ago...." He put his arm about her. "How long were you inside that river of ice?"

"I — I don't know. But Hellios must still live. It must!"

"If it does, we'll find it."

Niall did not notice the sadness in her eyes, nor did he pay any attention to the manner in which she pulled her cloak about her. And though he sensed it when she shivered, he put that down to the cool wind blowing off the land.

They went with the captain, whose name was Dalamar, to his big stone house on a hillside north of the town. Clovia would have preferred to be alone with Niall, but the shipmaster would not have stood for that. The two were to be his guests, to enjoy his hospitality.

They met his wife and children, they feasted at a huge table, they enjoyed the

warmth of a great log burning in the huge fireplace. They shared bowls of rich wine, and when the children had been put to bed Dalamar brought out narrow wooden tubes which held maps.

These maps he unrolled on a table, and as Clovia and Niall bent over them, the captain's finger traced the route of the river Thangara from the mountains to the sea. On those parchment scrolls, there was no mark to point out the city Clovia called Hellios.

Her face grew paler as she examined the parchments. Her finger trembled as she pointed, "There is where Hellios should be. There!"

Dalamar's face wore a puzzled look as he stared at where she indicated. He drew a deep breath and said, "Lady, there is no city there. True, there are strange stones standing about — I've never put ashore to look at them closely — but only the wind roams between those stones. There are no people, there is no city. Believe me."

Clovia turned suddenly and walked across the room to stand at a window and stare out into the dark night. She stood there, motionless, for many minutes before she turned and came back to them.

"I have been gone far longer than I had believed," she whispered. "Far longer. When I was taken out of Hellios and put into that glacier by the magic of the wizard Dalvuus, Hellios was the greatest city in my world. Now it is dust and dead stone."

Dalamar cleared his throat. "But you still live, lady. There is much to be seen in this new world. You both must stay here with me and my family."

Clovia smiled and shook her head. "I thank you, but — no. I must look upon Hellios once again, or at least upon what remain's of it."

Then she gazed at Niall. "Will you come with me? Or do you choose to stay here, or to wander elsewhere?"

"I agreed to see you safely to Hellios," the youth replied. "I will keep my word."

The next morning Niall went with Dalamar to the docks, where the captain pointed out a small boat with a mast. "It's a cockboat I sometimes take with me when I sail out upon the ocean. It's fast, it moves well. I'll provision it for you, and give you a new sail."

"Accept my thanks, Dalamar," Niall said briskly and sincerely.

The captain chuckled. "If you hadn't come to fight the serpent, I wouldn't be here now. Speak no more of thanks."

Two days later Niall and Clovia pushed away from the wharf, with Dalamar seeing them off. The wind was brisk. It filled their sail and sent the craft speeding through the water. Niall waved once more to Dalamar, then set his face to the east and his big hand on the tiller.

(Continued on 3rd page following)

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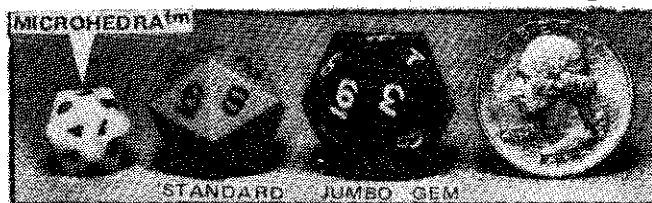
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Clovvia sat in the prow, leaning forward, staring ahead of her as if she were trying to will the little craft to go even faster. She was huddled beneath her cloak, and every so often she shivered.

For five days they sailed, pausing only to sleep for a few hours each night along the deserted riverbank. Always, Clovvia urged speed. It was as though something inside ate at her and would not be satisfied until she stood again in Hellios. They ate their meals in the boat as it scudded along; Clovvia would not hear of stopping for a midday rest.

On the fifth afternoon she straightened suddenly, lifted her arm and pointed ahead. "See there, Niall! That tongue of rock jutting out into the river. My sailors called it Norban's Tongue, for the river god Norban whose tongue licks up the souls of dead sailors and carries them away to the worlds ruled by the gods. Hellios is not far now."

Niall merely grunted in acknowledgment. He was enjoying this trip. This was his chance to see more of this world into which he had been catapulted by the fates — though there was little to see, outside of the river and the plains and the forests through which they sailed.

He hoped Hellios would prove be in-

teresting, though he suspected it would not. What was so interesting about a lot of ancient buildings? Yet he could understand why Clovvia wanted to walk there, to set her eyes on those places she had known so long ago.

The little sloop seemed now to run faster through the waves. It left Norban's Tongue far behind and approached a mass of tumbled blocks of stone along its banks.

Clovvia stood and cried out, "This was the harbor!"

Niall moved the tiller delicately, and the boat crept between huge boulders jutting out of the river. His eyes scanned the land, saw here and there places where buildings might have stood in the distant past. Judging by the view from the river, which was obstructed by boulders and debris, no one would suspect that a mighty metropolis had once graced this shoreline.

He ran the cockboat in against a big flat rock, tossed its anchor about a jutting piece of stone, then stepped up onto the rock and helped Clovvia ashore.

Tears were in her eyes and running down her cheeks.

"Gone," she whispered, so softly that Niall could scarcely hear her. "All gone, all the ships, all the riches. Forgotten by the world. No more do the armies march,

no more do the golden banners wave in the breezes. Dead. All dead!"

Niall did not speak. He looked out over the ruins which, from this vantage point, extended as far as he could see. From the river, a man could not glimpse the extent of what had been the glory of Hellios, but from atop this high rock the truth of Clovvia's memories was plain to see.

The woman moved away, walking from the rock to the earth of the shore itself, striding slowly forward on what had been paving stones but which were now half-buried under dirt and grass. She went with bowed head, and Niall knew that she was weeping.

The youth shrugged. He might as well go along with her. Who knew? Perhaps he might find something here to take away with him: a bit of buried gold, or even a rare gem or two. He needed money to live, to eat and drink until he found service somewhere as a warrior or a laborer.

Clovvia wandered along what might have been a great boulevard many years ago. From time to time she would pause to run her eyes this way and that way, and the wind blew her pale hair about her face as though to hide the tears that streaked her cheeks.

"There stood my palace," she said to





Niall, pointing. "Its walls were high, its buildings the glory of our city."

The young Northumbrian muttered. "There must be some gold left, somewhere around here. You would know the location of the vaults. Take us there."

She shook her head slowly. "They would have taken all the gold, the jewels, when they abandoned Hellios. There will be nothing left."

"How can you know unless you look? You know nothing of what happened here. You were locked inside the ice,"

Clovia smiled abruptly, holding out her hands to him. "You are right, as always. I have been so sunk in my sorrow that I have forgotten I am alive, and that I will need gold to go on living — if I choose to do so, that is."

"Well, I choose to live," Niall grumbled.

Laughter rang out — the first time he had ever heard such a sound from her. "Yes, Niall. You are my warrior, my army. And it is the duty of a queen to care for her warriors. Come along!"

She took but one step, and then his hand shot out to catch and halt her. He lifted his other arm and pointed,

"I saw something, some sort of movement. There may be wild animals here, Clovia. Get behind me."

He drew the sword Dalamar had given him — his old blade, he suspected, was still caught in the serpent's jaws — and

held the blade out before him as he moved forward, with Clovia following close behind:

Suddenly a shrieking sound split the air from ahead of them. From behind the tumbled stones of the dead city rushed half a dozen men. They held clubs and rusted swords. They wore the barest of rags, and their feet were bare. They looked like less than a match for the burly young Niall, but they also looked determined and desperate.

Niall roared a battle cry and ran to confront them. He easily ducked under a thrown club, and a second later he was in the midst of them. His sword lifted and fell, sliced and thrust, and suddenly three of the ragged men were down, their blood staining the grass and stones.

As he struck and parried, Niall scanned these men, seeing something besides their rags and rusted weapons. Some of them had thick bracelets on their arms, one or two possessed rings, and all of the adornments seemed to be made of solid gold.

The three men still alive whirled and fled but Niall ran after them, bellowing in his battle-lust. Where two walls stood close together he cornered them and moved in with sword swinging.

The overmatched men fought grimly, savagely, but within moments they lie on the ground, dead or near death.

Niall stood over them as Clovia came running up.

"You killed them all," she accused. "They might have told us something!"

"What could such as these have told you? They're carrion eaters, and I would guess they eat human beings, too. Still, I think they have told us a little."

"What do you mean?"

He knelt, stripping golden rings and armbands from the dead men, and held them up to Clovia, who stared at them with incredulous eyes.

"Those were made in Hellios!" she said. "I know that workmanship." Her words tumbled over themselves as she sought to explain. "This ring was made by Frondag, who fashioned jewelry for me. Ah, and this armlet by Rogonor, whose artistry in gold has never been challenged. But how can this be? It was so long ago!"

"Gold doesn't die," Niall reminded her.

She shook her head impatiently. "No, no. I didn't mean that. Where did they find these things? That's what I want to know. If they stumbled on some lost hoard of gold, so can we!"

Niall grinned exultantly. "Now where would such a hoard be hidden?"

"In the palace, of course. And it is just over there."

They ran to where colored columns and tinted stone blocks lay in mad disarray. Clovia began to search with Niall at her side. They turned over stone blocks, they dug where she suggested, but the ruins were too heavy, and too much earth had blown into what once had been stairways.

Niall stood at last, scowling. "There is a different way into the cellars. There has to be. Those ragged men I killed would never do any digging. Besides, if they had, we'd see some sign of it."

Clovia sat on a fallen column. "Yes. There's a way in that is not blocked by rubble. All we have to do is find it."

They searched until hunger sent them back to the boat for the leathern sacks that held their food and drink. As the sun sank, Niall built a fire in the shelter of two standing walls, and there he cooked a meal.

While they were eating, Niall heard the beating of wings. Outlined against the darkening sky, he saw small flying things. He was about to put more meat in his mouth when he sprang to his feet instead.

"Those bats!" he shouted. "They can show us the way in!"

Clovia stared at him. "What?"

"Bats nest in caves — or an underground place like a treasure house. Or a corridor that will lead us beneath your palace."

Clovia licked her lips. "Then let's go find it."

"Not until the bats return," Niall responded. "Now, you sleep. I'll watch for them."

When the woman had rolled up in the cloak and fur wrap which Dalamar had given her, Niall sat back against a stone pillar and let his thoughts roam. He liked the excitement of this strange land into which he had come. Even more, he liked the idea of finding treasure. For hour upon hour he yielded to his dreamings, staying alert but preoccupied.

With golden coins, he could travel leisurely about this land, discover its deepest secrets, know its fairest women. There might be jewels too, and a mere handful of pearls or rubies or diamonds would make him a rich man.

Niall chuckled. As a rich man, he could return home to Northumbria, he thought, but then he scowled. Northumbria held no secrets from him; he knew it too well. Instead, he would roam this world into which he had been cast by the ground itself, and he would make a name for himself.

He was reflecting on this when he heard a stone roll across other stones. Instantly he was ready, rising quietly, lifting out his dagger. If death or danger came crawling forth in dawnlight, he would meet it.

Then it came, a nightmare-thing with five legs and three arms, hunched over so that it seemed to be a ball of black leather with red, glowing eyes.

The thing moved in the direction of the sleeping Clovia, and Niall saw fangs glint in the dying firelight.

He rushed forward, putting his body between the leathery thing and Clovia. His shoulder hit the beast's body as he swung his dagger in a short, vicious arc.

The short blade bit deep. The beast-thing bellowed, lunged for Clovia and missed her by inches as Niall forced it to one side. They landed hard on stones and turf. Quickly Niall was back on his feet. Now he had time to yank out his sword, and he drove forward with it.

A clawed hand swiped at him. Niall ducked as he saw and felt his sword slash into a leathery shoulder. Then their bodies were twined together as he sought to free his steel from the beast-flesh where it was lodged.

The body of the thing he fought was hotter than a man's body, as if heated from within. Its breath was nauseating. Niall twisted, partially freeing himself of the grip of those mighty arms and taking scratches across his shoulders from the long, sharp claws.

Then his sword blade came free. Niall glanced at it and gasped. It looked as though acid had eaten at it. The flat of the blade was pocked with pits and holes. And its once-sharp edges were now dulled and eaten away.

"Wodin All-Father!" he gasped.

Niall dropped the sword, and in the same motion reached for a paving stone. He slammed the rock against the face of the awful being. Fierce was that blow,

driven by all the power of his brawny arm, and flush against the forehead of the beast-thing it landed.

The creature bellowed. Its mouth gaped wide, showing fangs that threatened but could not penetrate Niall's defenses from such close range. Niall lifted the rock and hit with it again and again. He drove the creature backward with the rock-blows, never giving it a chance to steady itself for a counterattack.

"Water!" Clovia's voice cried from behind him. "It cannot stand the touch of water!"

Niall feinted another attack with the stone, then suddenly leaped toward the beast, his arms spread wide. He grabbed the leathery beast around the lower part of its torso, bore it backward, and rolled over and over on the ground with it. The river was not far away.

The young warrior snarled. He struggled to regain his feet and lift the thing off the ground. While straining to raise it, Niall began to move forward.

The monster's arms and claws raked at him, digging into his arms and shoulders. Niall grunted in response to the pain, but did not lose his grip. Now he was able to walk carrying the beast-thing. The river was closer... closer.

Within a few feet of the bank, Niall left his feet in a lunge. Still clinging to the leathery creature, he toppled into the water.

Immediately there was an awful hissing. A stench rose into the air. Niall choked and felt nausea all but overwhelm him. The thing he clung to was weakening quickly. Its struggles were not so savage, and in a moment it was all but inert in his grasp.

Niall felt the touch of hands from behind him, trying to help draw him upward out of the churning water. He released his grip on the beast's body and allowed himself to be dragged back onto solid ground.

He stood tottering at the river's edge. Clovia was beside him, gripping his arm tightly as she stared into the water.

The creature was disappearing — dissolving in the water! Fumes rose from the bubbling river, fumes that made Niall curse and draw Clovia away from the river bank.

He drew a breath. "How did you know that water would slay that thing?"

In a voice trying to be calm, Clovia replied, "It was a thordio, a thing that had come to my city from some forgotten world long ago. In my time it was only a legend. Something seems to have summoned it back now. But why?"

She stared at the ruins of the city and asked harshly, "What is there to protect here? What purpose would there be in summoning the thordia out of its own world to roam these ruins?"

To Niall, the answer came quickly. "Treasure."

"No. Something more important than gold or jewels," Clovia murmured, shaking her head. Her fingers tightened once again upon his arm. "Come! This has restored hope to me. There is something here, something waiting — sleeping, perhaps."

The big barbarian shrugged. "I care not for anything like that. What good would that do us?"

Clovia glanced at him slyly, smiling faintly. "Ah, but there will be treasure, young man. Treasure so great ten boats could not carry it. Are you interested?"

Niall grinned, putting his hand on her shoulder and squeezing it. "Lead on, lady. We'll forget about waiting for the bats."

Clovia walked forward, at times almost breaking into a run. It seemed as if her memory were coming back to her, as if in her mind's eye she could see Hellios as she had known it when she had walked its streets. Niall followed at a strolling pace, keeping up with her, fingering his again-empty scabbard. He felt partly naked without a sword at his side. Ever since he had been twelve years old — and a huge child for his age — he had walked with the weight of a sword dragging down his belt.

Clovia went between still-standing walls and broken columns, following an unseen path. Twice she hesitated, standing motionless and staring about her, frowning, before she resumed her stride.

At length she came to what must have been a big building. Between its walls she walked, on ornate paving stones half-hidden under grass and wildflowers. Then she paused at a place where two walls met, and Niall could glimpse a larger paving stone set among the others.

"Lift this," she said, tapping the stone with a foot.

Niall knelt and slid his fingers beneath the bluish stone. Rising from his knees, he straightened his back until his arm and shoulder muscles bulged. Slowly, the stone came up. It was well over a minute later that he had raised it high enough to topple it, revealing a narrow stairway beneath where it had lain.

"Let me enter," Clovia said.

But Niall held her back, drawing his dagger. "There may be dangers down there, lady. Let me go first. You follow."

He put his feet to the stone of that ancient staircase, descending into almost total darkness. The sun's rays did not penetrate far, but they showed the barbarian the shape of a tunnel stretching out ahead of him.

Clovia was right behind him, fingertips touching his back. "Search along the walls. There ought to be torches thrust into iron holders."

By groping in the darkness, Niall discovered a length of resin-soaked wood. With flint and a bit of steel from his pouch, plus some tinder, he made a

flame and ignited the torch. Holding it high, to cast the light as far as possible into the tunnel, he moved on.

It was dim in this tunnel, even with that torch, but there seemed to be nothing dangerous lurking within. At length they came to an oaken door, barred in iron and with a rusty lock.

Clovia said, "This is the treasure house of my people. Stand aside, Niall."

From her pouch she drew a small length of steel. At Niall's questioning look, she smiled wryly. "This I took with me — unknown to Dalvuus, naturally! — when they stole me from my palace."

She fitted the key into the lock, but could not turn it. Niall grasped her upper arms, moved her aside, put his hand to the key and, after grunting a bit from the exertion, turned it. His big hand pushed the door wide.

They looked in at a big room, fitted out with chests and coffer of varying sizes. As Niall strode forward, holding the torch before him, he saw what appeared to be a corpse lying atop one of the biggest chests. But it was not the sight of the body that his eyes rested on last.

Thor!" rumbled Niall. "What a sword!" It lay beside the corpse, its haft glittering from the torchlight, its scabbard revealing the jewels with which it was emblazoned. Its blade was partly out of the scabbard and shone brightly, unaffected by rust or decay.

Niall sprang to that sword, caught hold of the scabbard, yanked free the blade. He held it up, staring at its length. Never had he seen such a weapon as this; he had not believed that one could exist.

Clovia said softly, "That is the weapon called Blood-drinker. It belonged to my father, to his father, to all my male ancestors who were emperors and kings in Hellios."

"I claim this as my reward," Niall exulted. "Just this! With it I can gain all the gold I'll ever have need of!"

Clovia gasped, fell against Niall. "Niall! Look! By all the gods of Hellios — that thing is alive!"

A rustling drew his attention to the body on the chest. The hairs on the back of his neck rose up stiffly as he saw the thing stir, move, begin to sit up. Eyelids opened, and reddish eyes peered at them from under hairy brows.

"Who disturbs my slumbers? Who comes to the treasure room of long-dead Hellios?"

Clovia moved forward, eyes wide, her lovely mouth distorted in a mixture of horror and hate. "Dalvuus! You — still — live!"

"Slay him! Slay him!" Clovia screamed.

Niall lifted Blood-drinker, but in that moment — even as he tensed himself to leap forward — he found himself frozen. The reddish eyes of Dalvuus fastened on him, held him as helpless as any babe.

He could not move a muscle.

Laughter shook the corpse-like being. Dust rose from the half-rotted garments that clothed it. "Foolish youth, foolish queen. Think you so easily to overcome Dalvuus the Mage? Pah!" He raised a hand. "I banish you both to oblivion! Be-gone, the two of you!"

Niall felt himself being lifted upward, then plunged into cottony clouds that pierced his flesh with cold. He was vaguely aware that Clovia was beside him, screaming with terror rioting in her veins, and he reached out through that cloudiness to grasp her arm, draw her closer to him.

Like that, they fell through nothingness...

Niall opened his eyes to stare upward at a yellow sky, a sky in which no sun glowed. He rose up on an elbow and saw Clovia lying beside him, unconscious but breathing normally. He lay upon ground that was brown, riven here and there by fumeroles from which steam rose into the air.

This world was hot, wherever it was. Already, Niall could feel sweat oozing from his pores. He lifted himself to his feet, realizing that his fist still held Blood-drinker.

He looked around. Everything was desolation here. Ruin, emptiness, There was no life, except for himself and the woman who had been queen in Hellios.

"Tartarus," breathed a voice at his feet.

Niall looked down at a haggard Clovia, then put out a hand to yank her to her feet. She shuddered and great tears rolled down her cheeks.

"The gods have abandoned us," she wept. "There is no hope now. We will die here, without food and water."

Niall scowled blackly. He was not one to admit defeat so easily. He had been put here, true. Yet where he had entered, he could leave.

"Think, woman!" he urged. "If you know of this place, you must know more about it. If there is any way out of here — any way at all! — it's up to you to remember what it is."

She stared up at him, eyes rimmed by tears. She shuddered, rubbing her hands on her arms. "No one has ever returned from here. No one!"

Niall growled, "That's no answer. What is this place? What do you know of it?"

"Tartarus is a magic region created by great wizardry. Only the mightiest magicians know the way to and from it." Her eyes widened. "From it... Yes, there is a way out, but I know it not. When I was queen in Hellios, I studied the history of many magicks, as a pastime..."

She broke off, stood with bowed head, deep in thought. Niall eyed her for a moment, then took to studying his sword. It was a splendid blade, the finest he had

ever seen. Its edges looked sharp enough to shave the hair from his head. He moved it back and forth, getting to know its feel.

Clovia said dreamily, "There is a guardian over this dead world, placed here eons ago by those who created this place. His name is...his name is...I cannot recall!"

"Try! If ever you would return to our own world, woman — think!"

Clovia looked up at him, eyes wet, tears running down her cheeks. She shook her head, her misery plain to see. "It's no use. I just can't remember. Dalvuus has won!"

Dalvuus?

It was a word from out of the very air. Niall grunted, lifted his sword and stared about him. Clovia gasped and clung to his side.

Who is it who speaks of Dalvuus?

A vast green shape appeared high above them, seeming to grow in size even as it lowered itself to the bare brown ground where Niall stood with Clovia. The greenness was a vast cape or cloak, or appeared as such, with a hood beneath which was utter blackness.

What know you mere mortals of Dalvuus? Long and long ago did Dalvuus live!

Niall found his tongue. "He lives still, back in that land from which we came! He sent us here, to perish."

The darkness under the hood seemed almost to meditate. The cape which surrounded that darkness swirled as though blown about by mighty winds. From it stabbed an arm tipped by a dark hand.

Would you return to where it is Dalvuus lives? Would you slay Dalvuus?

"I would," Niall rasped, "if by his charms and incantations he gave me a chance to use this sword on him!"

Only I can send you back to that world. And only I have the power to draw you back here — should you fail in your quest!

The strange voice paused, as though the black being in the vast greenish cloak were thinking. Niall spoke into that silence.

"Return us and I'll kill Dalvuus for you!"

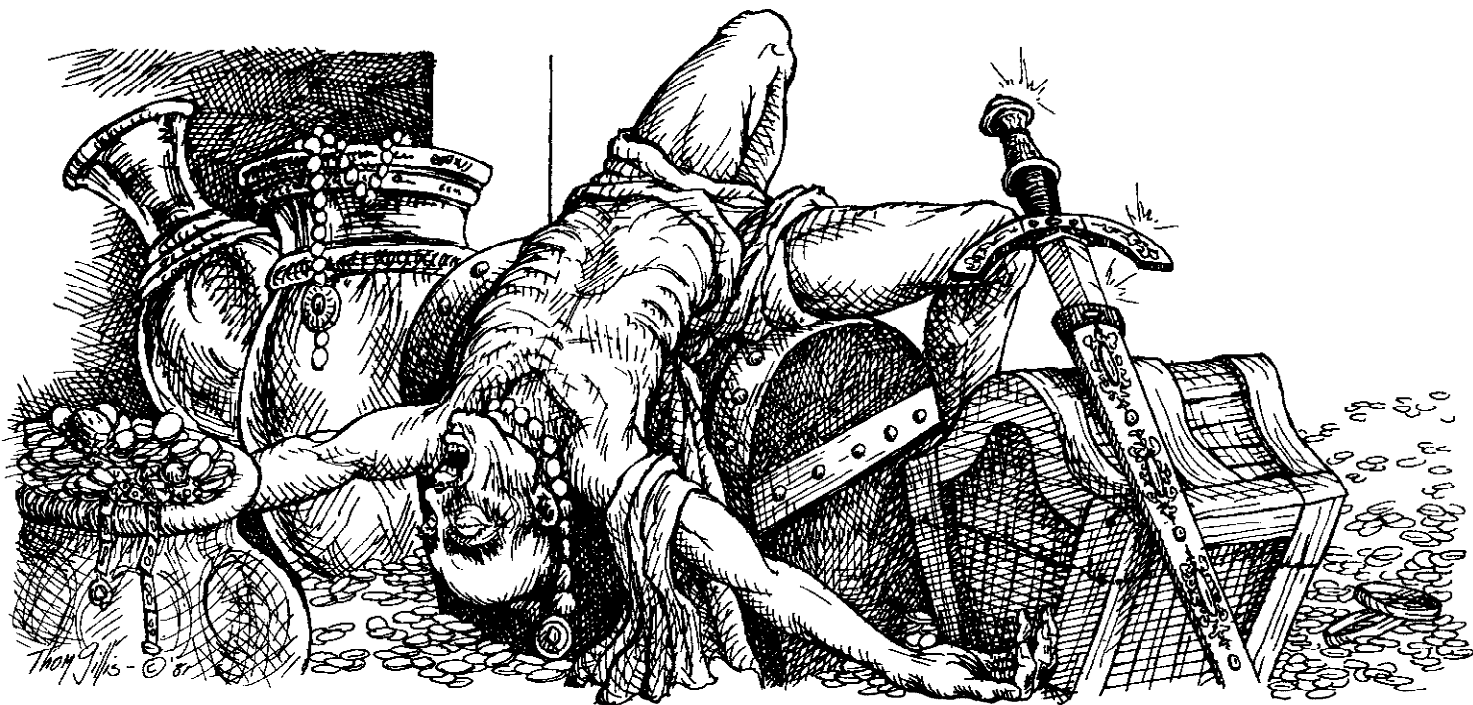
Eerie laughter rose from the seemingly empty hood.

Rash mortal! Dalvuus cannot die.

Oh, yes — as you know death, he can. But should you slay him, his soul would come here to me, Tartarus. Ah!... I have waited long for that, to exact my vengeance!

Go then — back from whence you came! With my protection!

Niall felt the world shift about him, knew an instant of queasiness, and then he stood upright in the treasure chamber of the



kings of Hellios, and beside him, her arm in the crook of his arm, was Clovia. His fingers tightened about the haft of Blood-drinker.

His eyes swept the chamber. All was as it had been when they had entered it, except that the magician had vanished. The woman shuddered.

"He's gone," she whispered.

"But not far," Niall bristled. "Come on!"

He ran along the corridor, touching the wall blindly, for Dalvuus had taken the torch. In utter blackness he ran, listening to Clovia crying out his name and stumbling after him far behind. Up ahead he saw faint light, and he ran as might the leopards of Poranga, so swiftly that his feet seemed scarcely to touch the stone floor.

Up the stairs he leaped, into daylight.

His booted feet slid to a halt. "Wodin," he breathed, and stared around him.

No longer were there ruins here. No! Upward around him rose the wails of a mighty palace. Great marble columns ran here and there, upholding a ceiling on which glinted gold leaf and brilliant paintings. There was a throne at the far end of this vast chamber, and at the other end, massive doors opened onto a sun-drenched street.

Clovia sobbed behind him, half in and half out of the stone stairway, "Hellios," she breathed, "as I remember it! What magic is this, Niall?"

He growled low in his throat. "Dalvuus is behind it. By some great spell, he has made that which was, now be again. But where is the swine?"

They heard the tramp of sandalled feet from outside the huge doors. Niall knew the tread of soldiers when he heard it. He swung about, lips lifted in a silent snarl, and he held Blood-drinker ready.

Ten men in mail shirts came marching into the throne room, and Niall viewed them with narrow eyes from a hidden vantage point. A man followed them inside. It was Dalvuus — but what a change there was in his appearance! No longer did he wear age-rotted garments, but now he strode along in an ankle-length garment of ebon blackness on which were sewn thaumaturgic symbols in silver thread. A golden cloak hung from his shoulders.

Niall bellowed and leaped out of hiding, placing himself between the guards and Clovia.

Instantly Dalvuus halted. His eyes went wide, his mouth fell open. Just for a moment he was paralyzed by amazement. Then his arm came up and he cried out orders to the marching guards.

"Slay that man! And the woman with him!"

But before any of them could react to his voice, Niall was upon those warriors. His blade darted once, twice, and two men dropped. Nor did he pause, but came on like a maddened elephant, his sword out before him, slashing, cutting.

"Abaddon," chanted Dalvuus. "Great Abaddon, hear me! Slay this man who kills my soldiers. Slay him and —"

Dalvuus paused for breath. Six of his men were down, and Niall was fast upon the others. Like a Styrethian lion, he moved here and there, out of reach of the blades that sought to sap his life's blood, always slashing back in return and slicing through flesh and bone.

Dalvuus turned to flee, his robes flapping as he ran, and after him went Niall, blood dripping from his sword. Niall could run like a frightened deer, but there was speed in the magician, too. He fled up one hall and down another, never pausing to glance back.

Up to a blank wall Dalvuus ran. His hands went out to the cold stone — and where he touched, the stone slid back. Dalvuus leaped through the opening, and the stone wall closed just as Niall arrived. The warrior cursed silently as he heard faint, mocking laughter from inside the passage.

From behind him came the sound of sandals slapping the stone floor. He whirled, swordpoint thrust up so that Clovia almost ran herself upon it. He let the blade drop and caught her in his arms.

"He's escaped me," he growled.

Clovia tried to catch her breath, shaking her head. At last she said, "No, no. Just a trick. A trick I know. Let me at the wall."

She reached to the wall, touched it with her fingertips as Dalvuus had done. "See? It operates in this fashion. Hidden valves force air into locks and — see! The stone turns."

Niall caught her up and leaped through the opening. Into a small antechamber he ran, still carrying the woman. Ahead was an oaken door, reinforced with iron. Setting Clovia down, Niall ran forward.

He leaped at the door, boots upraised, and slammed into it with all the fury his massive body could muster. He heard wood give way, heard and felt the screech of twisting metal . . . and the oak door burst open.

Niall stood in the open doorway, staring into a chamber fitted out with strange vials and alembics, with hornbooks and palimpsests on racks and shelves. Standing before an altar of black stone, his back to the door and arms upraised, was Dalvuus.

"Great Abaddon, do not abandon me in my time of need! Heed my call, great lord of evil! Come to —"

"Foul slug," bellowed Niall, running forward. "Prepare to die — and to be welcomed into Tartarus by one who has waited a long time to get his hands on you."

Dalvuus swung about. Utter fear was etched on his face. His lips were drawn back, his eyes distended.

"Begone, creature of this world! Begone, into that world of Tartarus where once I sent you!"

The mage lifted his arms, made mesmeristic passes with his hands. Yet still did Niall come for him.

Now Dalvuus screamed, sought to escape by dodging behind the altar. His hand lifted a vial of purplish liquid and hurled it at Niall.

Clovia screamed shrilly. Niall ducked under that hastily hurled glass tube, heard it fall and break on the floor behind him. Purple, searing flames leaped upward from the spot, and Niall knew that had that vial broken on his body, he would have been burned alive.

Dalvuus whirled and fled as soon as he threw the vial. His hands reached for a corner of the wall, and that wall also turned as he touched it, revealing a narrow passageway. Dalvuus leaped for the opening.

The magician was swift, but Niall was fast as lightning. No sooner had the magician entered the narrow opening than Niall was at his heels. Dalvuus stayed in the lead as the pair threw themselves up the narrow stairs leading to the top of the tower they were in.

Dalvuus ran into the topmost room of the tower and his hands went out toward a metal canister that stood upon a stone table.

His hands grasped that metal alembic, sought to tear away its cover. Niall did not know what power was in that thing, but he knew it would be deadly to him.

He caught the mage from behind, fastened his big hands on Dalvuus' wrists, and exerted just part of the strength of his mighty muscles. Abruptly, Dalvuus' fingers were pulled from the metal top. Then Niall whirled Dalvuus' body around and drove his fist into his face.

The magician reeled back several steps, affected by the blow although he was apparently using some form of magical protection. Such a blow would ordinarily have crushed the skull of a man his size. He retreated until his back touched the cold wall of the tower-top. In a daze, he raised his hands.

"Bythagm noith juglasteros..." he began to recite.

Niall felt a coldness begin to form in the tiny room. His lips pulled back. He had had his fill of sorcery.

The young warrior drew Blood-drinker and thrust with it before the magician had time to finish his incantation. The weapon's full length went into the body

of the magician. Dalvuus stiffened, his eyes went wide.

Still with that sword thrust into him from chest to back so that a foot of steel protruded from his spine, he staggered forward. Toward the canister his halting steps took him, hands outstretched.

Stop him, barbarian!

Niall leaped between the mage and the alembic he was after, intending only to forestall the magician until he must certainly succumb to the sword upon which he was impaled.

Dalvuus laid his hands on Niall, sought to push him aside. His eyes were wild, pleading. Niall did not know why, but that voice he had heard was warning enough. He stopped him: His big hands came up, caught Dalvuus, held him motionless — and in that instant, the magician collapsed and died. Niall's grip relaxed, and the magician's dead weight sifted through Niall's grasp and crumpled to the floor.

A blackness was now in the tower room, gathering slowly. Niall knew what that blackness was, and he shrank from it.

Yet that darkness held no menace for the big Northumbrian. It crept toward Dalvuus, slowly, and as though aware of its coming, the mouth of the dead magician opened as if to scream.

Then the blackness touched Dalvuus, embraced him.

And Dalvuus — or that essence which still lived within him — *did* scream. His body had dropped, yet some part of Dalvuus struggled as the blackness took over. Was this an act of Dalvuus' soul? Niall did not know, did not want to know.

Go, earthly being! Flee! And take with you my gratitude!

Niall yanked his sword from the cadaver that lay upon the stone floor, then ran. Swiftly had he run up those narrow stairs in pursuit of the mage. More swiftly still did he run down them, back into the room where he had left Clovia.

He said no word but snatched her up, still running. He bore her over his shoulder as he ran, with Clovia yelling questions, asking if he were mad.

Downward he ran, downward until he stood on the ground floor of what had been a palace thousands of years before, and was now again — at least for the time being. As Niall ran, he saw that the walls and floor, although still seeming solid, were shimmering and fading.

Just as he started to lower Clovia to the paving stones outside, the buildings disappeared, and they once again stood on the grass-infested debris of a ruined Hellios.

Slowly he lowered the terrified Clovia to the ground. Her eyes stared up at him, mutely questioning.

"What was it?" she quaked. "Why did you run so fast? What frightened you so?"

"The thing we saw in Tartarus. It — came for Dalvuus! It caught his soul — or something — in its grasp and carried him off."

Sweat was running down Niall's face. With a brawny arm he wiped it away, and then a grin rose on his face.

"He has what he wanted, that one. Now we shall take what we want."

Clovia asked, "And what is it you want, Niall?"

"Gold! Gold and jewels to see me on my way in this new world — new, at least, to me — into which I have been tossed." His arm went about her, hugging her. "Together, we can be rich, Clovia. We can hire a boat to take us to the south-land, into rich cities."

Clovia brooded. "I don't want to go."

Niall stared at her. "Not go? What will you do, then? Die here?"

Her shoulders lifted in a shrug. "It matters not to me. Hellios is dead. I might as well be dead, too."

"Nonsense. Come along! Feast your eyes on treasure and you'll change your mind."

He drew her unresisting toward the narrow stairway, relighted the torch Dalvuus had dropped, brought her with him back to the treasure chamber of the emperors and kings of Hellios. Clovia watched as Niall emptied out a section of the leather pouch he carried at his belt and began to fill it with the biggest gold coins, diamonds, rubies and pearls he could find, making his selections carefully. When his treasure pouch was full, he turned to the woman who had sat on a chest and watched him, vacantly smiling.

"Aren't you going to take anything?" he asked. "You'll need money in that world outside."

Slowly she shook her head. "I will remain here. You go, Niall — with my thanks. You helped destroy Dalvuus. You brought me here, to my birthplace. Here I shall stay, at least for a while."

He tried to argue, but she was adamant.

She walked with him to the cockboat, watched as he tossed the anchor into the boat and then entered it himself. The wind had picked up; the sail filled rapidly.

"Come," begged Niall, making one last plea. "Come and see this world which will be new both to you and me."

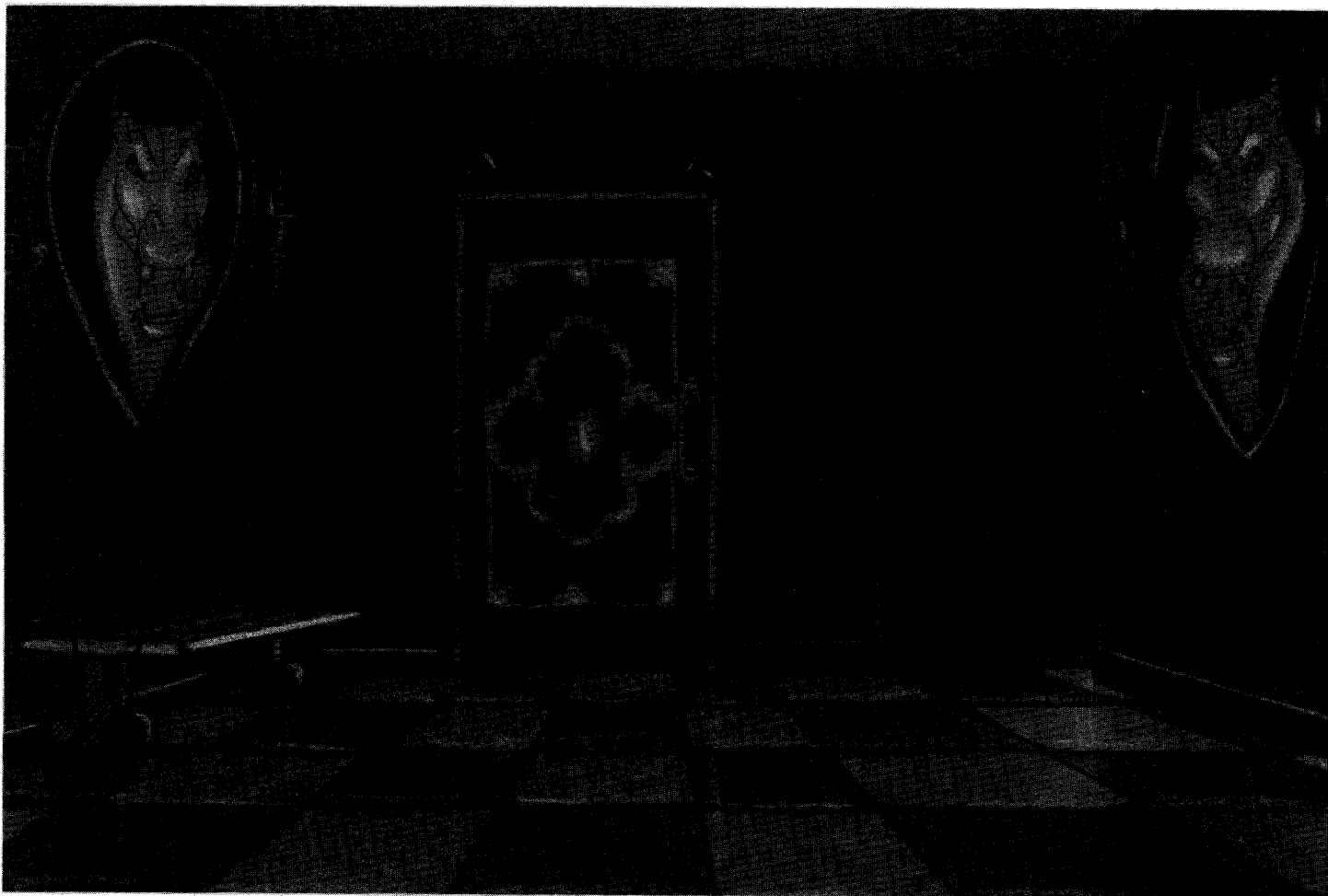
Clovia only shook her head, and in that instant, Niall realized how very old she was, though her flesh was that of a mature woman only. She lifted a hand and waved it, and as she did, the breezes caught the cockboat's sail and bore the craft out into the middle of the river.

Niall turned back once, as the wind whipped her garments about her body and she walked back to the ruins of what was mighty Hellios, long and long ago.

Niall could not see the glistening tears as they ran down her cheeks. Nor could he hear the silent sobs as they shook her body....

The CREATURE of RHYL

A Basic D&D® adventure by Kevin Knuth



Background for players

The country of Rhyl has been beset nearly every night for many years by a large, terrible creature that flies out from the mountains near the city of Asereht. The creature soars over farmland, picking up livestock or an occasional unfortunate farmer and carrying the victim back into the mountains. After the creature appears, the early-morning air in Asereht is unusually cold and misty.

Nearly a year ago the creature broke through the wall of King Namreh's castle and carried off the king's son, Prince Laechim, along with a large amount of the royal treasure. Since that incident, which did not seem like the act of an unthinking creature interested only in food, King Namreh has suspected that the creature is somehow under the influence of the mad magician Astylis, who is believed to reside in the mountains in a vast complex at least two days away on foot from Asereht.

After the creature's raid on the castle, King Namreh ordered his army to search the mountains and discover Astylis' complex. The soldiers made two forays into the mountain wilderness, but each time were harassed and eventually driven back by goblin raiders. Since the failure of the second assault, the king has taken to commissioning small parties of mercenaries and adventurers, sending them into the mountains with promises of great reward upon the completion of the rescue mission, and hoping that a small body of searchers will be less likely to attract the goblins' attention along the way.

For reasons which the king has never found out, none of these rescue parties has ever returned to Asereht. Your party is now attempting to be the first.

The trek through the wilderness has been, amazingly enough, uneventful. No goblins, and little else of note except for some harmless wildlife. Some members

of the party are beginning to wonder what *did* cause the other missions to fail if it wasn't the goblins and the wilderness. Finding Astylis' residence was a simple matter; the skeletons and possessions of some of those who had gone before were littered through the mountain passes like a trail. And Astylis, if he was inside, was making no attempt to discourage intruders. The entry to the complex, as well as the stairway leading up to it, is found to be free of traps and unlocked.

Your mission, as prescribed by the king, is to go to Astylis' complex (so far, so good), rescue Prince Laechim plus the royal sceptre and crown and the *Rod of Cancellation* and *Medallion of ESP* that were also taken, and kill the fearsome creature that seems to be under the wizard's control. After taking one last look around at the outside — and hoping you will see it again soon — you turn toward the entrance and step inside.

The CREATURE of RHYL

Notes for the Dungeon Master

This adventure, designed for use with the D&D® Basic Set rules, can be played by as few as two or three characters or as many as half a dozen. Some of the rescuers can be first-level characters, but a strong party would probably include at least one third-level spell-caster or a pair of non-spell-casters (fighter types) of at least second level.

The structure of this module provides an opportunity for the Dungeon Master to embellish the environment with more detailed descriptions of "empty" areas, and perhaps introduce a few new challenges for a formidable party. (For instance, the trip through the mountains doesn't *have* to be uneventful....) In some places, it may actually be necessary for the DM to fill in particulars at the players' request. For this reason, anyone intending to DM this adventure for a party of player characters should read the text thoroughly to develop a "feel" for the places where imagination and ingenuity might be needed.

Standard dungeon features

All doors in this complex are eight feet in height, four feet wide, and one foot thick. All doors are made of oak. All walls are two feet thick unless otherwise indicated on the map. The corridor ceilings are 10 feet high.

Wandering monsters

In the upper level, roll for wandering monsters every three turns. An encounter occurs on a 1 in 12. Then roll d4, treating a roll of 1-2 as 1 and 3-4 as 2:

- 1) 1-3 goblins (HD:1-1; #AT:1; D:1-6; AC:6; SA:None).
- 2) 1-3 giant rats (HP:1-4; #AT:1; D:1-3; AC:7; SA:Anyone bit has a 5% chance of contracting a serious disease).

In the lower level roll for wandering monsters every two turns. An encounter occurs on a 1 in 6. Then roll d4:

- 1) 1-7 goblins (HD:1-1; #AT:1; D:1-6; AC:6; SA:None).
- 2) 1-5 giant rats (HP:1-4; #AT:1; D:1-3; AC:7; SA:Anyone bit has a 5% chance of contracting a serious disease).
- 3) 1 shrieker (HD:3; #AT:0; D:O; AC:7; SA:Emits a piercing screech which has a 50% chance of attracting other wandering monsters).
- 4) 1-3 giant ants (HD:2; #AT:1; D:1-6; AC:3; SA:None).

ASTYLIS' COMPLEX

Upper level

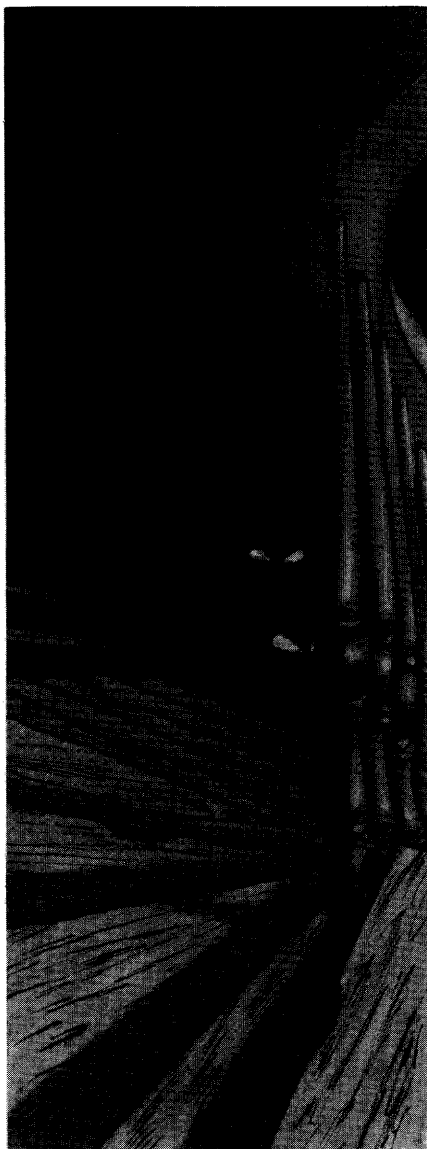
Area A: Before you is a door. Painted

on the floor in front of the door is a green circle.

Area B: Ahead of you is a large fire pit. You cannot see what is beyond it. (The fire pit is an illusion and when anything touches it, it will disappear.) Painted on the floor is a red circle.

Area C: Painted on the floor in front of the wall is a blue circle.

Area D: You see a long corridor leading into the darkness. (The corridor is an illusion. After the party advances 10 feet east into the corridor, they will fall into a pit. When they fall into the pit, the illusion disappears and each member will suffer 1-4 HP damage from the fall.) Painted at the bottom of the pit is a large yellow circle. The pit is 30 feet deep, 20 feet long and 10 feet wide.



1. Entry Hall: As you enter this room you see a doorway in the center of the north wall. To the right of the door is a passageway that seems to angle off toward the northeast. Lining the east and west walls are sconces which hold the remains of burnt-out torches. On the east and west walls are hung shields bearing the image of a dragon. Above the doorway on the north wall is a pair of crossed swords. Against the west wall is a wooden bench.

2. Storage Room: This is a small room containing four chairs, a bench and a round table. On the table, covered with a thick layer of dust, is a wooden box of nails, a hammer, 30 feet of rope and a lantern. Next to the table is a large box filled with scrap wood.

3. Guest Room: Against the northwest wall are two beds, their canopies yellowed with age and laced with spider webs. Next to each bed is a nightstand. On one of the nightstands is a lantern and an hourglass. There is nothing on the other nightstand. Against the southwest wall is an empty chest of drawers. There are two doors on the southeast wall.

4. Guest Room Closet: Except for a shelf and some pegs in the wall, the closet is empty.

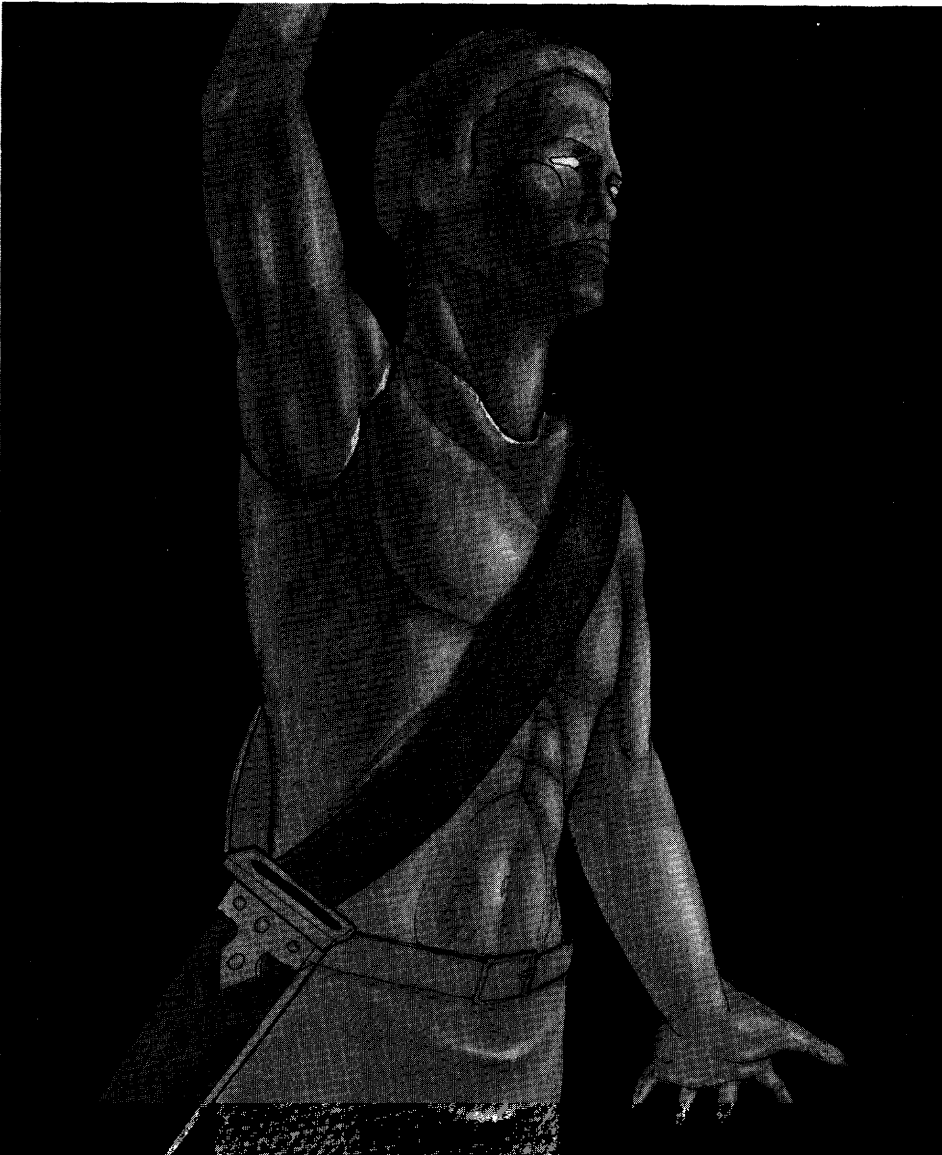
5. Guest Room Closet: In this closet is a chest which is empty, a shelf and some pegs in the wall.

6. Privy: This room is empty. Along the east wall is a trench which slopes from either side toward the center. In the center is a hole in the floor about one foot in diameter.

7. Stairway: A stairway descends 30 feet into darkness. Lurking at the bottom of the stairs are two goblins (HP:6,6; #AT:1; D:1-6; AC:6; SA:One has a +1 war hammer).

8. Guard Room: This is a small, irregularly shaped room. There are beds against the north and southwest walls, each with a blanket, a mattress and a pillow. There is a chest of drawers, which is empty, located against the northeast wall. There is a lantern on one a nightstand next to the bed on the north wall. There is a door on the south wall.

9. Guard Room Closet: In this closet there is a shelf lying on the floor. There are pegs in the wall, from which are hung



a blue robe and a leather pouch. (In the leather pouch is a *Giant Strength Potion*.)

10. Guard Room: This is a small, irregularly shaped room. There are beds on the north and southeast walls. Next to one bed is a nightstand with an hourglass on it. (Concealed in the sand at the bottom of the hourglass is a +1 Ring of Protection.) In the middle of the room is a large round table and four chairs. There is a small chest of drawers against the south wall, which contains trousers, a cap, underclothing and a robe.

11. Guard Room Closet: In this closet is an empty shelf and a suit of leather armor hanging on a peg. On the floor is a locked chest. (The chest contains a gold medallion worth 50 gp, a gold ring worth 5 gp, and — in a secret compartment which must be searched for — 5 platinum pieces.)

12. Guard Room: This is an irregularly shaped room. Against the south wall is a bed with a pillow, a blanket and a straw

mattress. Next to the bed is a nightstand. Against the southeast wall is an empty chest of drawers. On top of the chest of drawers is a lantern and an hourglass. In the middle of the room is a round table with six chairs. (Under the mattress on the bed is a +3 *Sword vs. Dragons*.)

13. Guard Room Closet: In this closet is a single chest on the floor and a leather pouch hanging on a peg. The pouch is empty. (In the locked chest are two gold medallions worth 50 gp each, a jeweled armband worth 20 gp, and — in a secret compartment — 20 platinum pieces.)

14. Guard Room: This is an irregularly shaped room with beds on the northeast and south walls. Each bed has a mattress and a blanket. (Under the bed on the floor along the south wall is a +1 *Shield*.)

15. Guard Room Closet: Besides an empty shelf and some empty pegs in the wall, the only thing of note in this closet is a large locked wooden box on the floor. It is also empty.

18. Diamond Room: This is an octagonal room, 30 feet from side to side. The walls, ceiling and floor are constructed of shining white marble. There are four identical doors to the room, including the one through which you entered. In the center of the room, facing the way you entered, is a gold-colored statue of a human fighter holding a sword raised above his head in his right hand. Its eyes are of clear crystal and there is a bright green light emanating from them.

Shortly after entering the room, you notice that the green light in the eyes of the statue fades and turns to red. A few seconds later the red light fades and turns to blue, then to yellow, then to green and red and so on.

After the players enter this room, the entire diamond-shaped section, which includes Rooms 8 through 16, begins to slowly rotate. As the section rotates, the doorway at Area A rotates as well, contacting in sequence corridor B, then C, then D, then A again, and so on. The eyes change color according to the corridor the doorway is facing out onto, matching the colors of the circles in each of those corridors. The rotation will be noticeable to the players, but since they are near the center of the rotation, their ability to move about will not be greatly hampered. They will be unable to stop the rotation, except by the method described below, but it will not be harmful to them. Note: The statue does not rotate.

The rotation will stop as soon as one of the party members succeeds in opening one of the four doors. (How to accomplish this is described below.) The doorway which started out being at the end of corridor A will end up in front of one of the four corridors, and the statue's eyes will glow with the color of the circle in that corridor. The stopping point of the doorway is determined randomly by rolling d4: 1 is A; 2 is B; 3 is C; and 4 is D. (Note: The only access to the diamond-shaped section is the single doorway. If the party reaches the lower level of the complex by a means other than the elevator in this room, the chamber below will be empty and there will be no way of causing the elevator to operate from the lower level.)

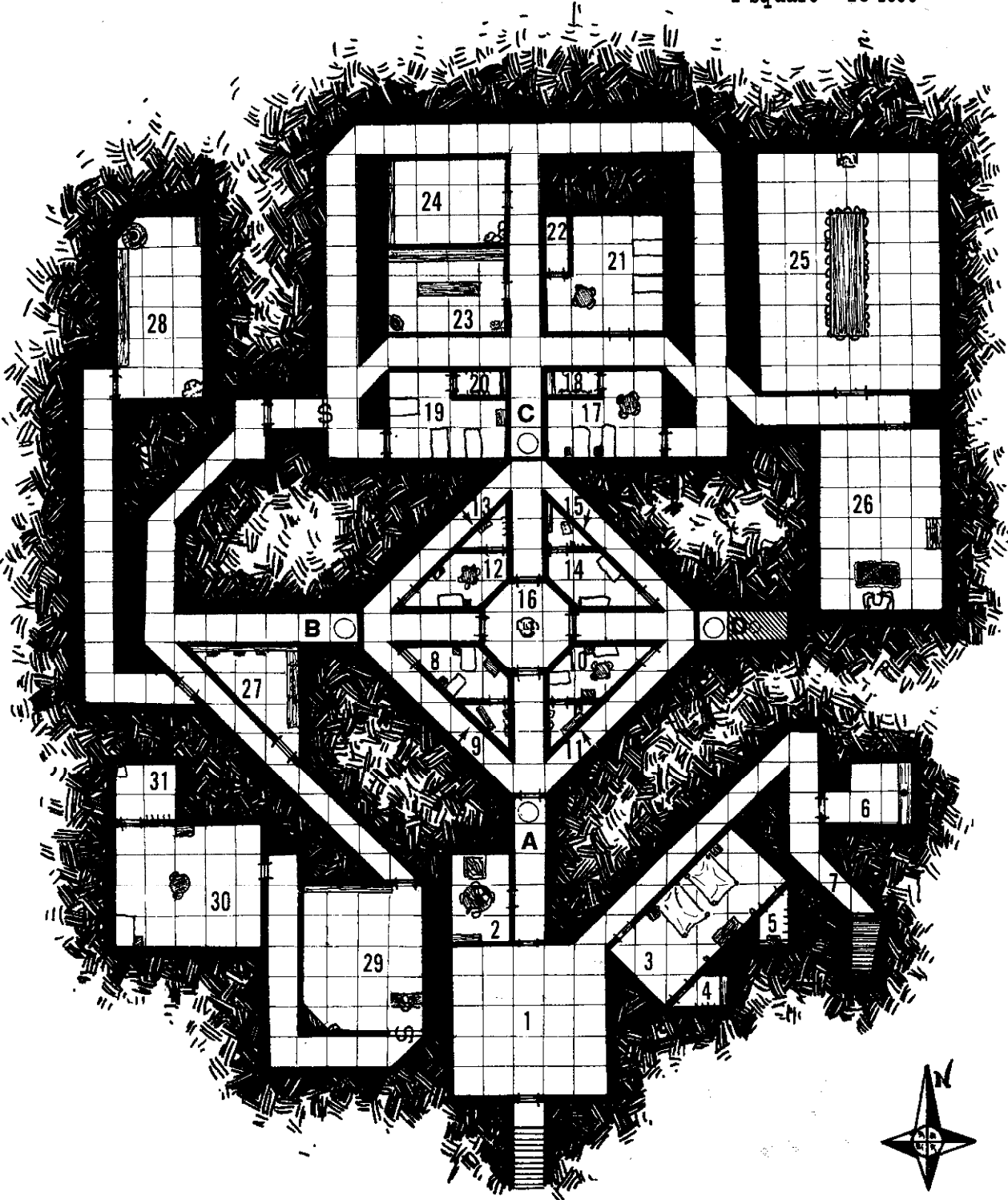
If party members examine the statue closely, they will notice a small groove-like separation around its neck. The statue's head can be turned to face any door in Room 16. (All doors in the room are locked from the inside after the party enters and cannot be opened by any means unless the head of the statue is turned to face the desired door. However, any of the four doors to Room 16 can be opened from the outside.)

A similar groove-like separation can be seen around the statue's right shoulder. The right arm of the statue can be pulled downward by one character with a strength of 17 or more, or by two char-

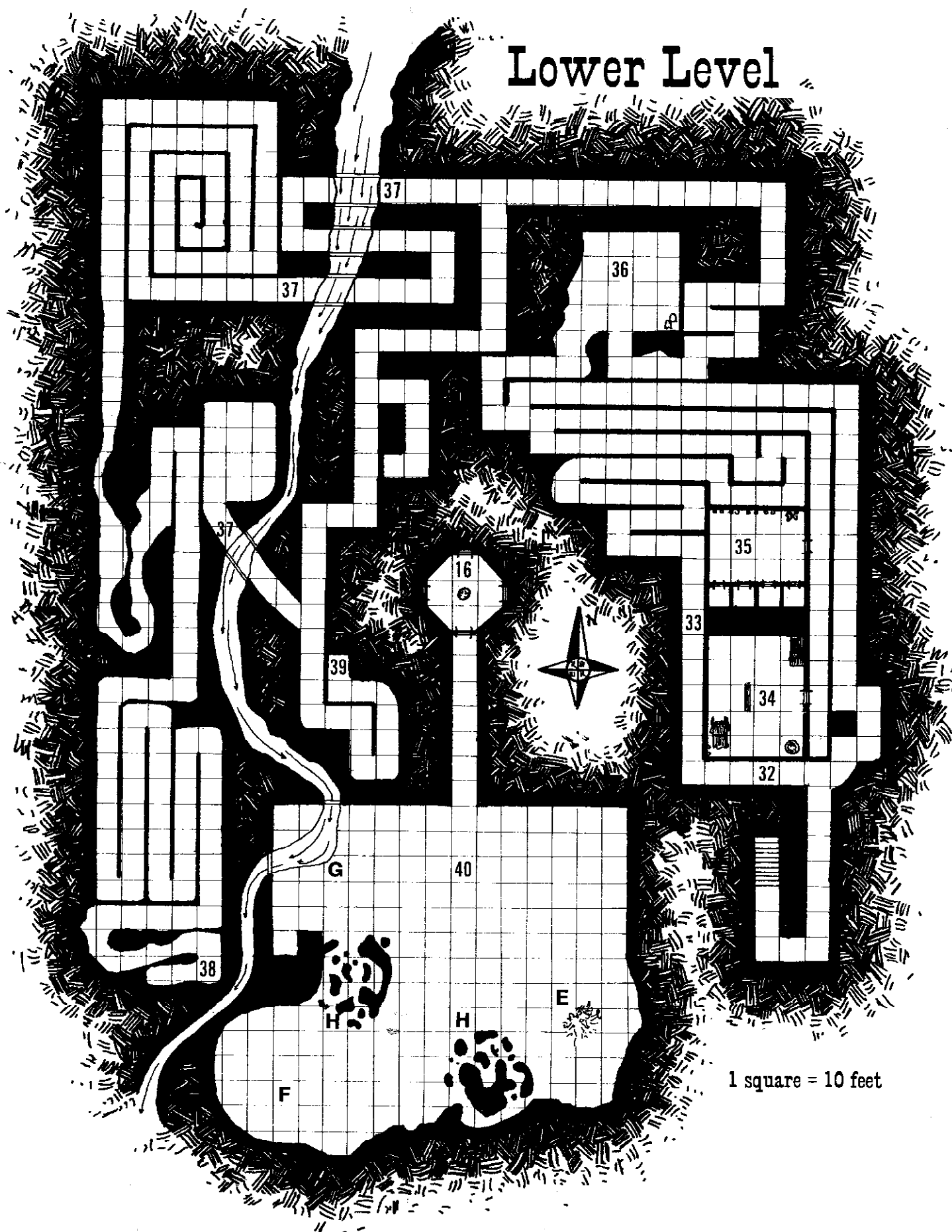
Upper Level

- Door
- Secret door
- Stairs up
- Stairs down

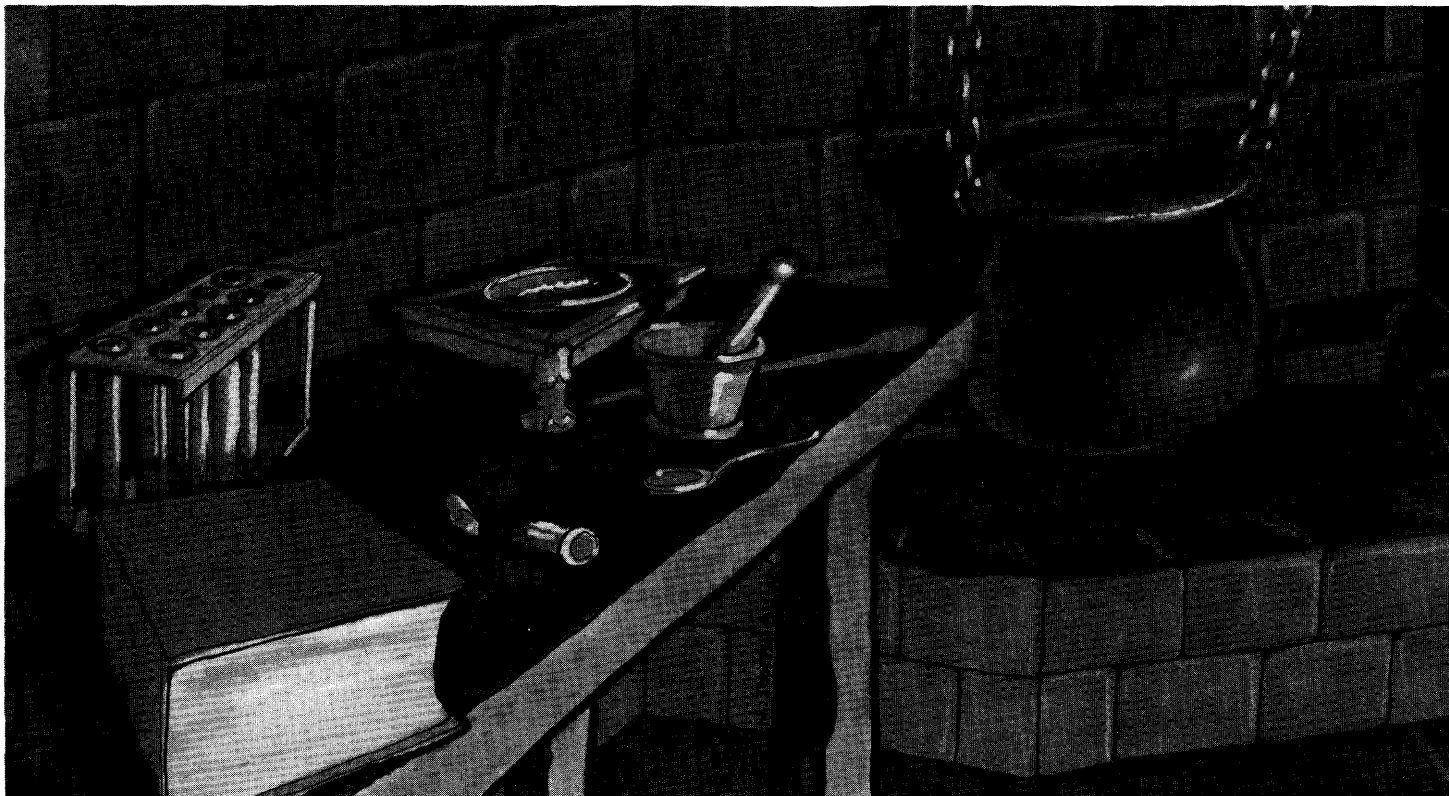
1 square = 10 feet



Lower Level



1 square = 10 feet



acters with a combined strength of 25 or more pulling together. Accomplishing this action is the last step in the process that turns Room 16 into an elevator which goes down to the lower level of the complex.

To begin the operation of the elevator, the doorway of the diamond-shaped section must be facing corridor B, and must be held in that position by keeping the door to Room 16 which points in that direction open. (To accomplish this, players must stop the rotation at the right time, open the proper door, and devise a means of keeping that door open. The passage will shut and lock if the door is not secured in an open position. After that preparation, pulling down the right arm of the statue will cause the elevator to descend. The arm will move down at any other time when sufficient strength is applied to it, but nothing else will happen if the elevator has not been activated.)

17. Menservants' Quarters: Against the south wall are two beds, each with a pillow, mattress and blanket. Next to each bed is a nightstand. On one of the nightstands is an hourglass, and on the other is a lantern. In the middle of the room is a large round table with four chairs. On the table are two small leather pouches. In one of the pouches is a gold ring worth 5 gp, and a small vial filled to the top with a clear liquid. This is a *Haste Potion*. The other pouch, which is empty, is a *Bag of Devouring*.

18. Menservants' Closet: On the wall is

a small shelf. Hanging on pegs on the wall are three robes and a black cloak.

19. Maidservants' Quarters: There are two beds against the south wall and another against the east wall. Each bed has a blanket, a pillow and a straw mattress. There is an empty chest of drawers against the west wall. On top of the chest of drawers is a comb, a silver mirror worth 15 gp, and a lantern. Hidden under the chest of drawers is a small wooden chest (with a simple lock) containing two gold earrings worth 5 gp, a necklace worth 20 gp, and a bracelet worth 25 gp.

20. Maidservants' Closet: On the east wall of the closet is a shelf on which there is a metal comb. Hanging on the south wall on pegs are two coats and a robe.

21. Cook's Quarters: Against the east wall are two beds. Each bed has only a mattress. In the middle of the room is a table and four chairs.

22. Cook's Closet: This room is empty.

23. Kitchen: In the southwest corner is a firepit over which hangs a large iron cauldron. Along the north wall is a long table with a drawer. In the drawer are spoons, forks, and knives. On top of the table is a tray, a plate, some moldy food and a butcher knife. Above the table are cupboards which contain plates, bowls, mugs and two trays. There is a 10-foot-long table in the middle of the room. On the table are some bones, dried bread and an empty jar.

In the southeast corner of the room are the remains of a goblin. Around its waist is a wide leather belt with a small leather pouch. In the pouch is a ring worth 5 gp.

24. Pantry: On the west wall is a shelf. In the southeast corner of the room are four sacks of flour.

25. Banquet Room: Against the north wall is a throne. In the middle of the room is a 40-foot-long table with 30 chairs.

26. Worshipping Room: Located against the south wall on a stone pedestal is a gold-colored statue of a demon god. In front of the statue is a prayer rug. Engraved in the walls are unholy symbols and writings. Behind the prayer rug is a kneeling bench. In the northwest corner is a sacrificial altar. Hanging on the wall above the altar is a golden, jeweled dagger worth 100 gp. Against the east wall is a table on which there is an incense burner and a candelabra with 13 candles.

27. Astylis' Storage Room: This is a triangular room. Along the east wall is a 30-foot-long table. On the north wall is a shelf. Below the shelf are three large boxes. The first box is empty. In the second box are some candles, a tinderbox, two flasks of oil, a torch, and some scrap wood. In the third box is a crucible, a pair of tongs, a ladle, a funnel, two bowls, an empty flask, and a brazier. In the northwest corner is a large iron cauldron. On the table is a balance with weights, two beakers, three empty scroll tubes, and a

pair of tweezers. On the shelf is an empty jar, a roll of wire, a measuring spoon, and a humanoid skull.

28. Astylis' Laboratory: There is a 40-foot-long table against the west wall. In the northwest corner of the room is a large iron cauldron hanging from the ceiling over a firepit which is 10 feet in diameter. The pit contains a large amount of ashes. There is a small shelf on the east wall. Standing on a small pedestal in the southeast corner is a large stuffed griffon. Scattered about on the table are an alembic, a small burner, some glass tubing, a measuring spoon, a wooden stirring rod and a waterclock. Next to the burner is a candle stub and a mortar and pestle.

A shelf on the east wall holds seven bottles. One contains a clear liquid which is pure ethyl alcohol. A slight taste of this will intoxicate anyone with a constitution of 10 or less for 1-10 turns. Anyone with a constitution of 11 or more will have a 50% chance of intoxication for 1-6 turns. Anyone who drinks the entire contents of the bottle will fall unconscious and will have a base 50% chance of dying from alcohol poisoning. The chance of surviving increases by 5% for every point of constitution above 10, but a character who survives will still be incapacitated for 5-10 turns.

Another of the bottles contains a thick, red liquid (human blood). Another bottle is filled with a clear, odorless liquid (water). Another contains a yellow powder (sulfur). The other three bottles on the shelf are a Gaseous *Potion* and two *Healing Potions*.

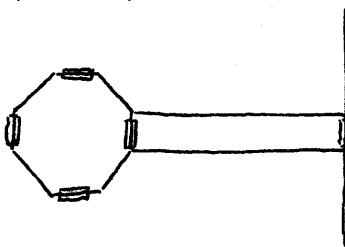
29. Astylis' Study: Against the north wall is a bookshelf. On the bookshelf is an old, faded book and an onyx idol. The book contains notes and sketches which appear to be plans for some sort of elevator system. In the southwest corner is a three-drawer desk with a chair behind it. On the desk is a lantern with scented oil, a pile of papers, an hourglass, a quill, and a bottle of ink. Partially concealed in the pile of papers is a *Ray of Enfeeblement Scroll*. In the top drawer of the desk is a quill, some papers and a *Wand of Fireballs* (3 charges). In the middle drawer is a piece of chalk, a quartz crystal, a scroll tube, and a vial filled with a grayish liquid. If the vial is opened the liquid vaporizes, filling the room with sleeping gas. The characters must each make a saving throw vs. poison or fall asleep for 1-6 turns. The bottom drawer is empty.

In the southeast corner of this room is a fireplace. Imbedded in the wall next to the fireplace is a golden lion's head with a silver tongue. If the tongue of the lion is pulled away from the wall, the fireplace will pivot and face the desk, exposing a secret passageway.

Hanging on the east wall is a vast ta-

pestry depicting a magician and a large white dragon.

30. Astylis' Bedroom: There is a bed in the southeast corner of this room with a straw mattress, a pillow, and a blanket. Next to the bed is a nightstand on which stand an empty mug, a spoon, and a kerchief. Leaning against the nightstand is a wooden cane. Against the north wall is a chest of drawers containing kerchiefs, two cloaks, underclothing, a cape and a hat. In the middle of this room is a round table with two chairs. On the table is a lantern, a quill, a bottle of ink, and a parchment showing what appears to be a map or floor plan:



31. Astylis' Closet: In the closet is a large unlocked wooden box on the floor and pegs in the wall. Hung on one of the pegs is a spacious leather pouch. In the box is a stuffed owl, a humanoid skull,

and a small cage. Inside the stuffed owl is a +2 *Dagger vs. Goblins and Kobolds*. In the pouch is a flask of oil, 50 feet of rope, a bud of garlic and one iron spike.

LOWER LEVEL

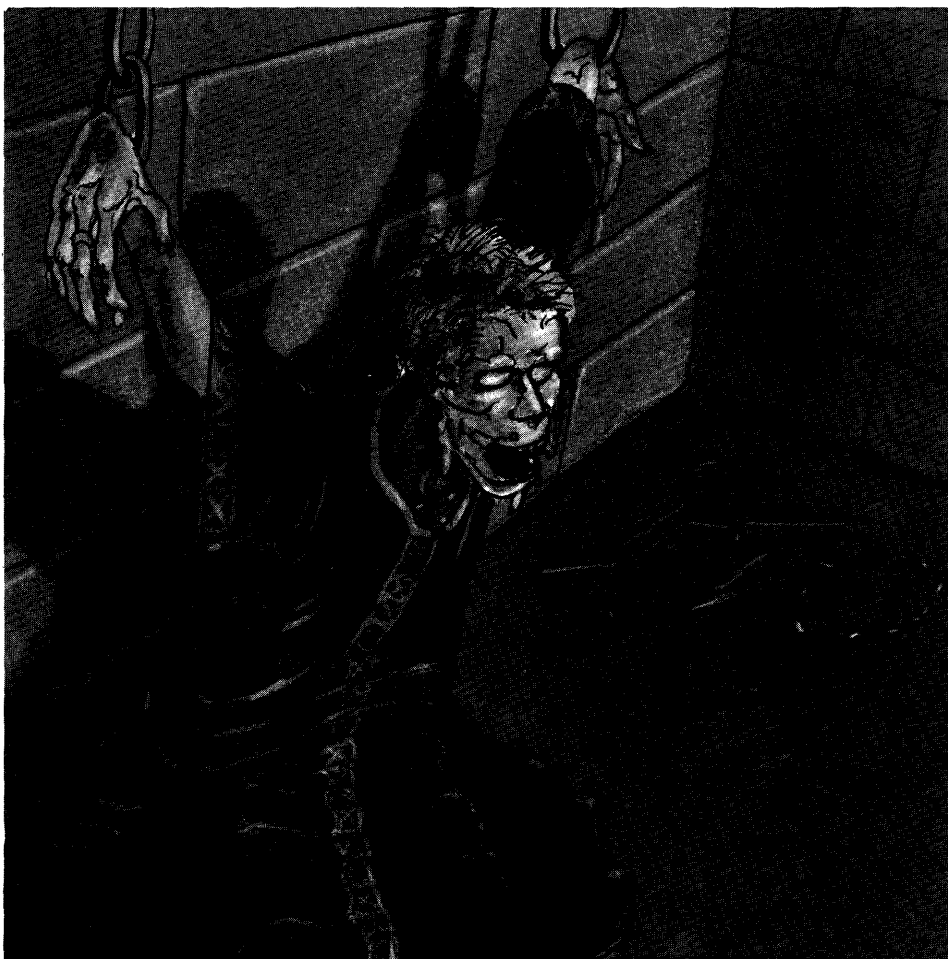
32. Corridor: Walking toward you are three goblins (HP:3 each; #AT:1; D:1-6; AC:6; SA:None).

33. Corridor: On the west wall of this corridor is what appears to be a portion of some strange rune-like writings:



(DM: These are fragments of the words, "Beware Dragon.")

34. Torture Chamber: In this room are five goblins (HP:6,6,5,2,2; #AT:1; D:1-6; AC:6; SA:None). They are torturing two dwarven fighters, one in a stock in the center of the room, and the other on a rack in the southwest corner. In the southeast corner is a firepit. Next to the firepit is a brazier in which two branding irons are being heated. In the northeast corner is a table. On the table is a knife, a



whip, a pair of thumbscrews and a vise. If the stock is examined closely, the shape of an octagon can be seen engraved into its front surface.

35. Dungeon: Fastened into the north wall are five pairs of chains. Chained by the wrists in the northeast corner is the corpse of a man wearing a royal robe. (This is Prince Laechim.) Beneath the body, lying on the floor, is a gold-colored ring which is a +1 Ring of Protection. Roughly engraved on the floor next to the body is a symbol of a human figure with a raised arm holding a sword. Beneath the arm is an arrow pointing downward. In front of the man-figure is a circle drawn in blood. There are four 10x10-foot cells along the south wall, all empty and open.

36. Under construction: This is a room that appears to have been recently dug out of rock. Standing between the entrance and the exit is a goblin (HP:7; #AT:1; D:1-6; AC:6; SA:None). In the southeast corner are two wooden boxes filled with food, two pickaxes, a hammer, 50 feet of rope, a tinderbox, three flasks of oil, six torches, and a leather pouch. Inside the leather pouch are 150 gold pieces.

37. Stream: Ahead of you is a swiftly moving stream 15 feet across and appearing to be about 10 feet deep. (A

character with strength of 16 or more can swim across, if unencumbered, without coming to harm. A character with strength of 15 or less, or any character who attempts to swim across while wearing armor and gear, will have a chance of being swept downstream and, unless rescued in time, will end up in Area G. The chance of successfully swimming across the stream for such a character is equal to his strength x 5 expressed as a percentage; i.e., a 50% chance for a character of 10 strength.) The stream runs through a tunnel in the wall of the corridor and out another tunnel in the opposite wall.

38. Dead-end Chamber: A minotaur, having heard the approach of footsteps in the section of the maze near this chamber, has retreated to this area and is lying in ambush. The minotaur (HP:20; #AT:3; D:1-6; AC:6; SA:None) will attack immediately as soon as a party member rounds the last turn before the dead end.

39. Dead-end Chamber: At the end of this twisting corridor is a nest of 5 giant rants (HP:4,3,3,2,1; #AT:1; D:1-3; AC:7; SA:5% chance of contracting serious disease).

40. Creature's Lair: This is an enormous chamber that has been carved or blasted out of the surrounding rock.

Area E: Lying here is a sleeping white

dragon (HD:6; HP:24; #AT:2 claws and 1 bite; D:1-6 claw, 4-24 bite; AC:3; SA: Cold breath weapon which does 4-24 HP damage if saving throw not made, 2-12 HP damage if saving throw is made). Beneath the dragon, visible if it is awakened and rises from its resting place, is the body of a man in sorcerer's garb — presumably the magician Astylis himself. Around the dragon's sleeping place, intermingled with the bones of cattle and humanoid figures, is a great amount of treasure. The horde consists of 500 pp, 350 gp, 4 gems worth 100 gp each, and all four of the items the king wants returned: a sceptre worth 180 gp, a crown worth 150 gp, a *Rod of Cancellation*, and a *Medallion of ESP*.

Area F: This is a large tunnel in the ceiling of the cavern. It goes up 350 feet and comes out on the side of a very steep cliff. The dragon uses this tunnel for its exit and entrance into the cavern.

Area G: This is the stream that passes through the corridors of the northern portion of the lower level. The dragon uses this for drinking water, and occasionally fishes an easy meal from the rushing waters.

Area H: These are large columns of rock which were not completely cleared away when the chamber was excavated. Many of the barriers are large enough to provide one or more characters with a place of refuge from the dragon's breath weapon.



The Adventurers from Ral Partha.

98-001 Wizards and Clerics (8)

98-002 Adventurers (8)

98-003 Monsters (6)

98-004 Goblins (8)

98-005 Fantasy Knights (4)

98-006 Dungeon Party (8)

(shown below)



RAL PARTHA

5938 CARTHAGE CT. • CINCINNATI, OHIO 45212

Crudely carved mossy steps lead down...down...down...
until darkness swallows them. Chills run up your spine as you
begin your descent.

Suddenly—you are struck from behind! You fall endlessly;
cruelly tumbling down rough-hewn steps. . .

You awaken with a start. A torch flickers above you, dimly
illuminating an impenetrable door. From the blackness comes a
menacing low hiss and the rasp of scales sliding on stones...



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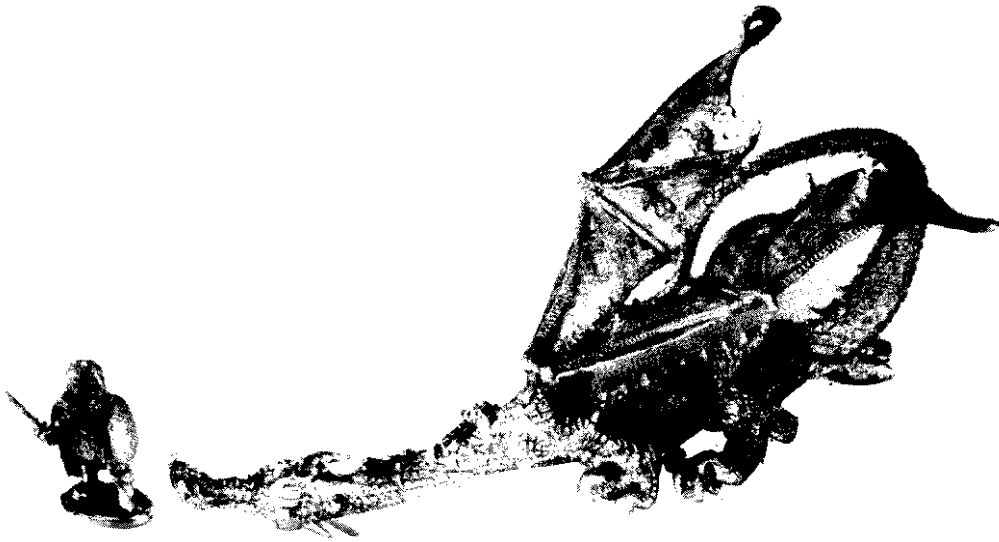
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THE ELECTRIC EYE

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY AND TERMINOLOGY

by Mark Herro

It's time to plug in the answers to last month's computer quiz and see how you did. The correct choices are as follows:

Part I

- 1) a 2) c
3) d 4) c
5) d

Part II

- 6) a 7) d
8) a 9) c
10) b

Part III

- 11) d 12) b
13) a 14) c
15) c

Part IV

- 16) a 17) c
18) b 19) c
20) a

Part V

- 21) d 22) a
23) b 24) c
25) c

Scoring

22-25 correct answers: They couldn't all have been lucky guesses. You must know a lot about computers.

15-21 correct: Above average. There are at least 10 answers that wouldn't be known by someone who hadn't at least done some reading on computer history.

8-14 correct: Average. A good score, for instance, for a student who has been exposed to modern-day computers but hasn't learned a lot about their history.

0-7 correct: You might have had better luck having a computer pick your answers at random.

Debugging the Time Keeper

For the benefit of those who have yet to see the "Time Keeper" program in DRAGON #49 and might try to key it in to a terminal: Be sure to change lines 5 and 11, replacing the colon after the input string with a semicolon. Without the changes, the program will get hung up at line 5 when a run is attempted.

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EARTH EDITION

Discounts Available... Story on page B4

The Martian Chronicle

Factory Avoids Disaster

Phobos Publishing

INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT IN MARTIAN PLANT AVERTED

(Martian Wire Service) Only the quick thinking of a senior supervisor prevented a major industrial disaster at the Martian Metals Processing Plant. The possibility of Venusian industrial sabotage has not been ruled out yet by the authorities or by the operating/production staff at Martian Metals.

It is presently assumed that someone activated the realism switch on the Bopper production line, thus setting off a chain reaction of Jack Boppers jumping Dive Boppers, which were swimming all over the Tiny Boppers, which were expanding their efforts to take over the Big Boppers, which were trying to switch off the Light Boppers before the Light Boppers lit the fuses on the Rocket Boppers.

The supervisor's quick action limited the damage to only a small testing lab used by the quality control officials. He released a full complement of Ogre Mk. Vs and accompanying vehicles, such as

G.E.V.s, Heavy Tanks, and Missile Tanks into the Bopper Quality Products Area. They eliminated the problem by eliminating the Boppers.

The supervisor was rewarded for his solving of the problem with a fully paid round trip vacation on the King Richard luxury liner. His parting words were, "Where's the boss when we really need him,..."

The only civilian casualty seems to have been a large fire-breathing dragon that was hit by an errant rocket fired by a Rocket Bopper. A para-medical received some minor burns giving the dragon mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. The admission form listed the dragon as suffering from system shock and broken tail. He serves as a watch-dragon in the Martian corporate offices, when not modeling the latest in fashions for Martian Metals publicity.

anything of the sort could have happened. "After all," he stated, "They're Only Metal."

For some, however, this explanation is not enough. Martian Metals has received letters from people complaining that their Martian Metals figures have staged battles, parties and the like while they thought their owner was asleep. Again, the Boss Martian denied this, along with denying accusations of including a special Martian ingredient in their figures. For as the respected Leadsmith Leeper so profoundly put it, "Wee ar norbl."

At this, one employee commented, "That about says it all."

crazy system we decided to change ours. So for those of you holding this ad and/or magazine upside down please turn it over so that it will be easier for your Earth eyes to read. This change of policy may be blamed on Timothy J. Kask for the time being. So let's hear it for him.

For a catalog of all Martian Metals products send 50¢ to:

A METAL FOR THE GENERAL

Three month-old mystery solved

The mysterious disappearance of Star General Klogotz has been solved by the roving reporter, Raltha Stonogin.

Three months ago, while touring the Olympus Mons Territorial Metal Miniatures factory, the General apparently disappeared. An immediate search was begun and when it failed to locate him the Martian Investigative Team Imperial (MITI) was called in. A more extensive search was begun all the The Imperium, even to such remote spots as Mithril and the Two-Thousand Worlds. The possibility of a Venusian plot was probed and hefty rewards were posted. However, all seemed in vain, and the search was finally given up.

At this point Roving Raltha stepped in. The following capsule report was submitted; "I rifled through our comment files and came across a strange case from

a Mr. Karl Orn of Deimos. It seems that Mr. Orn had received a rather strange, larger than normal miniature in a surprise package. It had previously been dismissed as another of the ever-popular TRAVELLER figures.

Mr. Orn was only too happy to let me chip away at the figure, and sure enough, there was the General! It seems that he had accidentally fallen into a vat of preservative pre-mix while touring the factory. The General is currently recovering from his three month fast at Chryse General Hospital."

The Boss Martian, speaking for his employee, Raltha Stonogin, made an official statement from his office at the Oly Plant, "Of course, Raltha will not except the 100,000 Dosh reward for finding the General. He did it for the glory and honor of Mars."

Raltha's reply is unprintable here.

TRAVELLER EXPANDS

Martian Metals has added more packs of figures to its Traveller range and has added 15mm scale vehicles. Figure packs are as follows;

- 2015 Beast of Burden
- 2016 Droynae
- 2017 K'kree Military (TL10-12)
- 2018 K'kree Military (TL10-12)
- Vacc-suit
- 2019 Zhodani Military (TL12-14)
- Battle dress
- 2020 Sword World Military (TL9-12)
- 2021 Imperial Stryker Force (TL9-12)
- Combat Vehicles
- 2100 Light Grav Tank (TL12-15)
- Imperial (2)
- 2101 Medium Grav Tank (TL12-15)
- Imperial
- 2102 Recon/Command/Scout (TL12-15)
- Imperial
- 2103 Medium Grav Tank (TL12-14)
- Zhodane
- 2131 Recon/Command/Scout Pod (TL12-14)
- Zhodane (2)

All figure packs retail for \$2.95 each and contain approximately 12 figures except 2015 which contains the beast and a rider. The combat vehicle packs retail at \$4.95 each.

If placing an order from this ad, include \$1.50 for shipping.

VERMITHRAX RELEASED

Martian Metals has just released a monster dragon for all dragon lovers and devious gamemasters. The dragon is the one and only VERMITHRAX PERJORATIVE from the movie "DRAGONSLAYER" (sound familiar?). This new figure looks just like the "real" dragon from the movie but remember it's only metal. It has a whopping 24" wingspan and is 12" in length. It comes in nine (9) pieces and the kit includes Ulrich the Wizard. All this for a measly \$29.95. Ask for VERMITHRAX at your local game or hobby store or write to the Martians for more information. Truly the most incredible dragon ever manufactured.

GUESS YOUR OWN NAME WINNERS

The following earthlings have correctly identified their own names and addresses and will receive a figure manufactured just for them by Martian Metals. Joey P. Brown of Seattle, Wa. Laurence McNamara of Moorestown, NJ Richard Dufresne of Great Lakes, IL. Albert Dietz of Baltimore, Md. These individuals are now eligible for Martian citizenship and all are being drafted into the Martian army. Congratulations.

LEADSMITH LEEPER SAYS: Don't turn your back on Vermithrax

RUMOURS DENIED BY BOSS MARTIN

by Patrick Barber

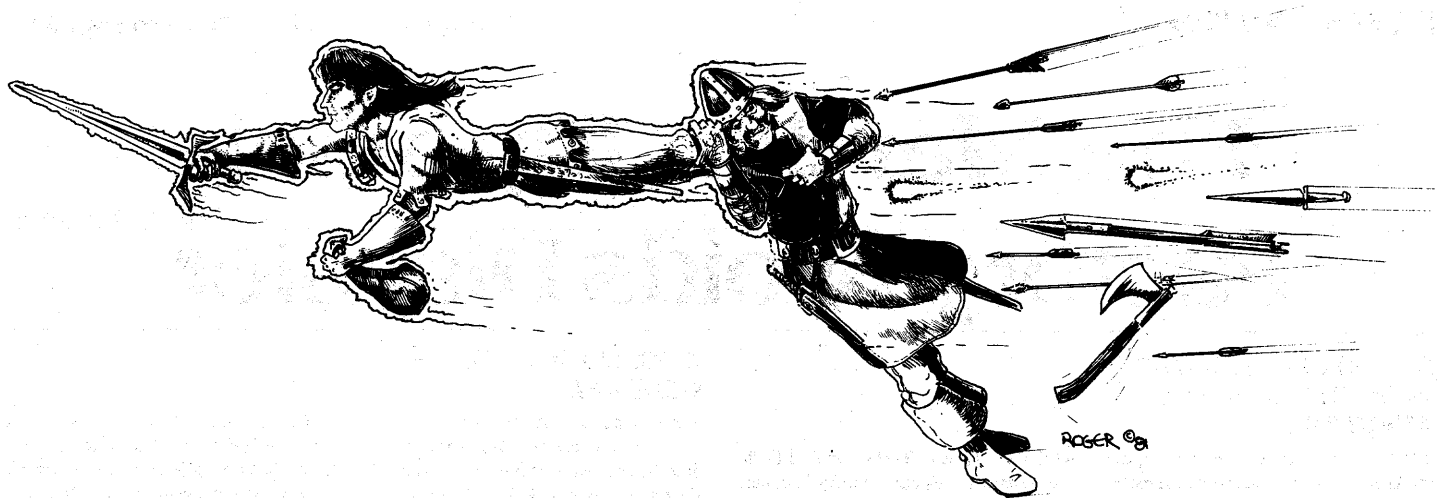
Over the past months, a few interesting rumours have come up at Martian Metals, like in July, when Clonemaster Zepeda and Michael Bledsoe (mc) were held hostage by DRAGONSLAYERS and TRAVELLER figures. The arrival of the Robot Boppers Microturs from RIVETS brought another rumour with it. Supposedly during the night a giant OGRE cybernetic tank escaped from its display box and reportedly attempted to wipe out three armies of Boppers.

When the Boss Martian was questioned about this, he fiercely denied that

A CHRONICLE HEADACHE

As you may have noticed this ad is upside down. This is due to the fact that we have hired an Earthling to compose our ads. We have had trouble with your Earthling publishers printing their magazines in the proper fashion, that is, right side up. So rather than try to change your

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The many ways of getting away

Methods and magic to keep your character out of the crypt

by Pat Reinken

Role-playing games are quite an outlet from everyday life. They allow a person to slay fantastically powerful creatures and gain fabulous riches and wonderful allies while doing so. They let a player use his wits to outsmart his monstrous foes and become a famous hero.

And they give everyone an opportunity to die at the hands of those fantastically powerful creatures and monstrous foes.

Yes, players, our characters can all bite the dust as we strive to reach our goals and fulfill those dreams. It's happened to nearly every person who plays role-playing games. Sometimes it strikes the older, more valuable and experienced characters, sometimes the young, promising ones. But it all turns out the same way: Another sheet of paper is moved to the notebook of deceased characters, or, worse yet, goes to that great metal basket in the corner.

In a few instances, fighting to the death is unavoidable. In a great many more, however, combat should be avoided — but isn't. Why not? Because players have not fully developed one of the most valuable skills they can possess. They have not mastered the art of running away.

Running away is not to be scoffed at. It can prove to be a lifesaver for even the most powerful character. While pursuit and evasion of pursuit are covered in the *Dungeon Masters Guide* (pp. 67-68), actual escape methods and certain aids and magic items are not discussed.

The old standby

One of the most popular methods of

fleeing is the simple, direct approach: running away. But remember that running away will not only cause tiredness and possible exhaustion but can lead to getting lost as well. Because of the impossibility of mapping while running away, combined with the confusion of the moment which makes memory unreliable, parties are often split up and lost in a maze of tunnels after an every-man-for-himself escape.

It is also wise for players to take into consideration the movement speeds of each member of the party before any of them runs too fast for too long. It is rare that every member will be able to match the running speed of the fastest character, and no one likes to run panting around a corner only to discover that his "buddies" have vanished in the darkness.

Boots of speed are probably the best aid to running. They provide a base movement of 24 and also give a two-notch improvement to the armor class of the character.

Boots of striding and springing are also helpful, especially to a character whose base movement rate is less than 12". These boots raise it to 12", regardless of the size or weight of the wearer, and also increase armor class by +1.

A **Potion of speed** is only so-so as a means of increasing the chance for a getaway. Although it does double the user's base movement rate and number of attacks, the potion ages a character one year and only lasts for 5-20 rounds. If he's being chased by a long-winded enemy, a character accepts the risk of having the effects of the potion wear off before the monster wears out.

If a character is lucky enough to have a horse, it would be wise for him to buy (or

otherwise acquire) either **Horseshoes of speed** or **Horseshoes of a zephyr**. The speed shoes are generally preferred for escape purposes, because they allow the horse to move at twice its normal rate. The zephyr shoes allow a horse to travel without touching the ground, thus making it able to pass over natural barriers such as rivers, but zephyr shoes do not change the speed of the horse.

Up, up and get away

Flying is an alluring, glamorous prospect. To fly away from an opponent somehow seems more exciting and courageous than running from the same opponent. But flying has its drawbacks, too. Although exhaustion from flying is rare, it does sometimes happen — and the fall can hurt more than what happens afterward.

Mapping is still virtually impossible when flying, and the speed difference between individuals in the party still shows up. Because every member of a party does not usually have the same ability to fly as the other members (if they have it at all) and those who are able to fly cannot always carry those who are unable, some characters are left behind.

The duration that an airborne state can be maintained is also a major factor in fleeing by this method. If durations differ greatly, some characters will end up facing the enemy anyway, while the others sail into the sunset.

The **Broom of flying** is the best magic item to use for a flying escape. Its movement speed is 30", although this drops by 1" for every 14 pounds carried over the 182-pound normal load. It will also travel alone to any destination named and will move up to 30" to reach its

owner when a command word is spoken. The only major problem with the broom is its length, which makes it cumbersome to carry and a possible hindrance during activity.

Carpets of flying, which vary in size, carrying capacity, and speed, are not as cumbersome as the broom but, if torn, will lose their magical capabilities until repaired by special weaving techniques. However, carpets have a greater carrying capacity than most of the other flying devices. The 5'x7' carpet, for example, which moves just as fast as the broom, can carry 3 people (app. 450 lbs.).

Wings of flying are better than the other flying items in one respect: They can be worn like a cloak and are thus out of the way when not in use. The wings, which enable the wearer to fly at speeds from 12" to 32" (depending on the duration flown) have one terrible disadvantage when being activated by the command word. The grayish material opens up into bat-wings that have a very large (20') span. Needless to say, any character opening these in a narrow passage and expecting to fly off is in for a rude shock. The wings also can cause exhaustion if used for the longest duration.

The **Potion of flying** is a last hope for potential soarers above. Identical to the third level magic-user spell *Fly*, it is possibly the worst of the magical flying aids for escape purposes because of its slow speed and the unknown factor for its duration. The speed, which is only 12", is the slowest of all airborne magic items. The duration, which the Dungeon Master must determine, is unknown to the character, and this obviously presents a great risk to his continued safety.

There are many other magical ways to fly, most of which are designed by the DM (such as, perhaps, a ring of flying), that have virtually the same effect as the M-U spell.

For making an escape from a creature that can fly, characters are often better off staying on the ground. Characters employing magic items and not accustomed to airborne movement should never attempt to outfly a flying creature; it has the advantage all the time and can probably fly circles around a character.

Flying in cramped quarters (even in a dungeon tunnel) is possible but extremely difficult, especially if the flier is using an unfamiliar item. Remember that even though a character can fly to a great height and think that he is out of danger, an opponent who is fairly good with a missile weapon might not hold the same opinion.

if you can't get out, hide out

Hiding is another method of running away. Actually it is not a method, but instead can be a wise thing to do before, during or after running away. This topic involves everybody's favorite spell, *Invis-*

ibility, and its related magic items.

The major problem that arises when hiding is trying to mask body odor. Most creatures will have an sense of smell sensitive enough to sniff out a character within a short distance, so it is almost impossible to hide from a monster indefinitely without doing something about odor. The best chance is to hide next to something (not usually another character) that really lets off a terrible stench.

Invisibility is long-lasting relief for the character with something (himself) to hide. It can come in many forms, the most popular probably being the spell and the ring. However, it also has its drawbacks. Anyone under the influence of invisibility can be heard or smelled as usual, and will become visible if he attacks.

Dust of disappearance is a better means of invisibility than the spell or the ring. This magical powder bestows invisibility on anyone who covered with it. It also has the added benefit of not revealing the user when he attacks an opponent. This benefit can turn into a disadvantage, however, if the character is knocked unconscious while under the effects. This in itself would not be too bad except that the dust bends light of all sorts, making infravision and ultravision useless as well. Many a turn has been spent looking for characters under the effects of the dust while they were unconscious.

The **Cloak of elvenkind** is for those who do not wish to spend time casting spells or dusting themselves. It enables the wearer to be nearly invisible when it is worn with the hood drawn up around the character's head. The only major problem with this item is that the wearer is not *totally* invisible (extent is determined by the Dungeon Master), and that to maintain even partial invisibility, the wearer must move slowly and cautiously.

A **Robe of blending** is another useful garment to have when hiding. This robe allows a character to appear as a different creature, part of a wall, etc., and duplicates the coloration, form and even odor of the object. This would successfully conceal a character, except that the robe does nothing to cover body heat. If the player wished to appear as a creature of the type that is following him, he would still have a major problem because the magical garment does not bestow knowledge of languages.

A **Potion of diminution** offers a way of hiding without becoming invisible. The potion makes the consumer approximately 5% of his original size (50% if only half a dose is quaffed). Small size can be a detriment if the character doesn't already have a place of safety for his diminutive frame, because the danger of being stepped on or crushed becomes very real. The effects of the potion wear off in a certain number of turns — and the

character must be careful not to be hiding in too small a place when the effects stop.

The **Portable hole** is potentially one of the best methods of short-term hiding. This can be unfolded (if there is sufficient time) to provide a convenient hiding place when the hole is pulled in after the character. The shortage of oxygen is the only real disadvantage, allowing only enough air to breathe for one character for one turn (unless magical breathing assistance is being used). This will still probably be enough time to allow any undesirables to pass.

Other last resorts

The **Potion of climbing** gives a character the ability to climb as a thief. There is a chance of slipping, but the real risk with the potion concerns its duration. If there is a possibility that the involved character may remain in a high place for much more than one turn, don't risk using this potion.

Gauntlets of swimming and climbing are better for escape than the climbing potion. As the name implies, these gloves have an added plus: They enable the wearer to increase his swimming speed.

A **Potion of water breathing** is very useful for swimming as it allows its consumer to remain under the water for over an hour.

Rings of swimming and water walking are beneficial during an escape that runs across a body of water. The swimming ring gives a bonus to swimming speed and breathing abilities while underwater. The water-walking ring allows a character to move across any liquid, thus making it possible to place a natural barrier behind him.

Levitation for escape is usually accomplished through the use of the second level Magic-User spell of the same name, the potion of the same name, or with **Boots of levitation**. The potion and the spell offer a better weight allowance than the boots, however.

Other magic items can be handy to have in getaway emergencies. **Oil of etherealness** and its companion in the hard-cover form, **Plate mail of etherealness** are nice to have in desperation. Their close relatives, the **Amulet of the planes** and the **Cubic gate** follow in right behind the ethereal magicks. All of these have the same risky factor: Being trapped in the 666th layer of the Abyss is not a substitute for a successful escape.

The **Helm of teleportation**, or any of the other teleportation devices, is a very good item to have when being chased by a great number of unfriendlies. Thirty thousand gold pieces, however, is a lot to pay for an armor hat which, at best, can cause a wicked case of motion sickness or possibly even jet lag. Other more mundane means of escape should be sought by those of low constitution.

Filling in SKILLS

Experience, service-switching make *TRAVELLER* more ability-oriented

by Jon Mattson

The *Traveller* game system, over the passage of years, has metamorphosed in many ways. Not only has it developed and changed noticeably with the addition of various supplements, but it has also been transformed to suit the style and creativity of each individual referee. *Traveller* is very open-ended in this respect: It can easily be added to or changed to come up with one's own version of the "ideal" science fiction role-playing game.

When all is said and done, the thing which has probably undergone the most transformation in my campaign without changing the premise of the system greatly is the prior service and skills procedure. The skill system in the *Traveller* rules is a double-edged blade: On one hand, it is easy to utilize and fits very well with the rest of the game system (and many other science-fiction game systems, for that matter) but, on the other hand, when used directly as is, it can be a source of several problems and much misuse. The ideas presented below are an attempt to solve some of these problems.

Experience

Probably my biggest complaint with the *Traveller* system right from the beginning was its lack of some form of experience system. Basically, once a character is generated with his prior service and skills, he changes very little, if at all, through the course of his adventures. Since the player cannot improve his character, one of two things often occurs: Either he becomes somewhat disinterested in the character after several adventures (certainly the worst possibility in role-playing games, which depend for success on a player's ability to relate to his character), or his motives quickly turn from improving himself to improving his financial situation (which also usually results in the discontinuation of the character if and when he becomes rich and his player gets bored).

I have experimented with several systems of "learning by doing" experience, trying to keep them simple, with a minimum of paperwork and an optimum amount of realistic playability. The following system seems to work the best and seems generally the most acceptable to players.

During the course of an adventure, whenever a player's character uses a skill successfully in a trying situation (hits an opponent in combat, flies a ship through hazardous conditions, etc.), he notes this on his character sheet (a small tick mark for each successful usage pencilled in beside the skill listing is the easiest way to do this). Then, after the adventure, when he has time to relax and learn from his experience, the character may attempt to improve the skill in question by one level. This will require a number of days of practice equivalent to the number of the skill level being practiced for. (For example, to advance from level 2 to level 3 in a skill area takes 3 days of practice.) A maximum of two skills can be practiced in this manner at one time. At the end of this practice period, the player makes an experience roll to see if he has improved the skill by one level.

The experience roll required is equal to:

$(3 - \text{Present skill level}) + (\# \text{ of times skill was used})$

The player must roll this number or less on 2d6 to successfully make the experience roll. A DM of -1 is applied if the character's intelligence is 8 to 12, and a DM of -2 if it is 13 or more. The referee may also award any other reasonable DMs he sees fit (some skills would be easier to increase than others). In any event, a roll of "2" is always successful (as long as the skill was used at least once since it was last raised), and a roll of "12" is always failure, regardless of DMs.

Example: Jor Roger's, galactic merchant with an intelligence of 9, uses his Bribery skill (present level of 2) three times during an adventure. Thus, his basic roll is 4 or less to learn from experience (3 minus 2 plus 3). He rolls a 5, which would normally be a failure, but subtracts one from the roll because of his high IQ, to get a modified result of 4. He has successfully made the roll and increases his Bribery skill level to 3.

Players should note that when they take the experience roll is totally at their option, as long as they take the required practice time just before it. Thus, a player could save the roll for several adventures, hoping to increase his chances of making it by using the skill more often (although getting fewer total rolls because of this). There must always be at least one adventure between each roll, and rolls cannot be "saved up," although the chance of making any single roll can be increased by waiting as noted above. (Waiting for three adventures does *not* entitle a

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player to three rolls, only *one* roll with a better chance of success.)

Optional combat rule: Referees may rule that for combat skills (only), the "number of times skill was used" should be halved (rounding fractions up) in the above formula. Otherwise, it may become too easy to assure oneself of improving a combat skill just by participating in one long battle. Or, instead of doing this, the referee may rule that, regardless of the number of times a character hits an opponent in combat, each battle (not each hit) counts as only one use of the skill (and then only if the character hits at least once). Either method is acceptable, but the referee should be consistent.

Limitations on skills

When judging how adept a character is with a given skill, the referee must make some kind of decision about just what each skill level represents. In my campaign, I have rated each skill level as follows:

Novice, skill level 0: The character has no real knowledge of the skill in question and may receive certain penalties (especially in combat) because of this, as noted in the *Traveller* rules:

Inexperienced, skill level 1/2: The individual may have some vague knowledge of the skill in question, but has no formal training in it. This level will not give him bonuses, but will prevent him from receiving non-proficiency penalties in combat, as noted in *Traveller*.

Above average, skill level 1: The individual has an above-average knowledge of the skill in question, enough to use it in an elementary manner.

Knowledgeable, skill level 2: The individual has a good background knowledge of the skill and can use it fairly well (with a reasonable bonus) in most situations.

Adept, skill level 3: The individual has a good back-

ground knowledge of the skill in question and has mastered some of the more intricate workings of it. He is qualified to obtain a job using this skill.

Expert, skill level 4: The individual has profuse knowledge of almost all areas of the skill in question and has no difficulty finding a job using this skill if one is available.

Master, skill level 5 or higher: The individual is a veritable encyclopedia of knowledge on the skill in question and understands its most intricate workings with ease. He will be a leader in any field involving the use of this skill and may well be much sought after. He does not need to look for jobs using this skill; they are *made* for him.

Obviously, when considering skills in this light, there must be some realistic limitation on how high a skill level can be increased, either through the prior service tables or through experience (if the experience rules above are used). Thus, the following rule:

Once a character begins increasing a skill beyond level 5, it will no longer go up by a full level for each increase. Instead, it will increase by a fraction. To move from level *x* to level *y* when *x* is 5 or more will take a number of steps, according to the formula:

$$\text{Skill Increase} = 1 / (x / 2)$$

The amount of level increase is the reciprocal of one-half the lower level, *x* (fractions rounded down when halving). This means that the number of steps needed to rise from one whole-numbered level to the next one increases as the skill level increases.

Thus, a character increasing a skill from level 5 to 6 would only add one-half a level per increase; the reciprocal of 2 (half of 5, rounded down) is 1/2. Going from level 5 to level 6 would take two steps: going from level 6 to 7 and from level 7 to 8 would take three steps, and so on. The fraction of increase is noted on the character sheet each time one is achieved, but the improvement

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has no effect on the skill's usage until it is increased to the next higher whole number.

Jack-of-all-Trades

"Jack-of-all-Trades" is without a doubt the least used and yet most misused skill in *Traveller*. More often than not, players who attempt to use their Jack-o-T skill will be met with one of two reactions from the referee: He will either let them get away with murder ("Well, you do have Jack-of-all-Trades-1 so I guess you could fix the computer while piloting the ship at top speed through the asteroid belt..."), or he will ignore the possible effects of the skill entirely ("Aw, that doesn't mean you can do anything..."). For those referees who cannot decide how to use this skill arbitrarily, I offer the following system.

When a character wishes to use his Jack-o-T skill to assist him in an endeavor, rate the difficulty of the task at hand on a scale of 1 to 3 with 1 being the least difficult (fixing a slightly damaged radio, driving an unusual vehicle) and 3 being the most difficult (piloting a ship through an asteroid belt when your pilot skill is only 1, or piloting a ship *at all* if your pilot skill is only one-half). Subtract this difficulty rating from the character's Jack-o-T skill (minimum result of zero), and the remaining number represents the effect the Jack-o-T skill will have. This number can be used in one of three ways, depending on the situation:

1: If the player has skill of at least level 1 in the field in question (for example, if he is trying to shoot down enemy ships and has Gunnery of at least 1), the number can simply be added to this skill level temporarily.

2: The number can be used to modify any dice rolls involving the situation to which the player has applied his Jack-o-T skill.

3: The number can be used to represent the chance out of 6 (i.e., this number or less must be rolled on 1d6 to succeed, and a roll of "6" is always failure) that the character will be able to gain the advantage in a given situation. This generally results in the character temporarily acting as if he had a skill level of 3 in an applicable skill. For example, for a character trying to pilot a ship through an asteroid belt, the applicable skill would be either Pilot or Navigation, at the referee's discretion.

The referee must decide which of the above three methods of applying the modifier should be used in each situation.

Multiple services

I have often wondered why a character cannot, after leaving one service, join another one. In terms of playability I can understand this rule to some extent: A character who goes into more services will get too many skills. Yet, all things considered, this argument doesn't hold much water: If it is all right for a character to go into one service for six terms and get a large amount of skills there, why shouldn't he be able to go into two or more services for less time and get an equal number of skills? In terms of realism, age must certainly be a factor, as must training. A 50-year-old man will obviously have trouble getting into some services (such as the military), and a barbarian could not usually become a doctor. But why couldn't a young belter become a merchant or a scout?

Obviously, if multiple services are to be allowed, they must be limited to certain combinations for realism and playability, but, equally obviously, a character should not be restricted to one service all of his life.

The table below lists which services can be combined and under what conditions. These combinations have, for the most part, been playtested and work quite well; however, the referee may suit his own views. Note that only services from *Traveller Book One* and *Citizens of the Imperium* are included here (although Army and Marines are considered to be as of Mercenary, and Navy is considered to be as of *High Guard*). Also note that, using this system, it is possible for a character to enter even more than two services (though age limits him to one or two terms in each); in this case, all Enlistment DMs are cumulative.

Service	Possible prior services	Max. age	Enlistment DMs
Merchant	Military	22	-1
	Pirate	22	-2
	Belter	26	0
	Bureaucrat	22	-1
	Rogue	22	-2
Scout	Navy	26	+1
	Merchant	22	0
	Belter	22	0
Other	Rogue	26	0
	Barbarian	22	-1
Pirate	Any*	22	-1
	Navy	22	+1
	scout	26	0
	Other	22	0
	Merchant	26	+1
Belter	Rogue	26	+1
	scout	26	0
	Merchant	22	0
Diplomat	Educated	26	-1
	Bureaucrat	30	-1
	Noble	34	0
Doctor	Educated‡	30	0
	Navy-Medical Branch	38	+2
Bureaucrat	Educated		0
	Noble	+1	+1
Rogue	Any*	26	0
	Other	30	+1
	Pirate	30	
Noble	Any*	22	-3†
	Diplomat	26	-1†
	Doctor	26	-1†
Scientist	Educated	22	-1
	Doctor	30	0
Hunter	Army	26	0
	Barbarian	26	+1
	Any*	22	-1

* — Except for other services listed specifically under the same heading.

‡ — Requires one term spent at a medical school (maximum age for enrollment is 26). This is treated in all respects like Navy Medical School (see *High Guard*).

† — Assume that the basic Enlistment Roll for Nobles is 2+, but a minimum Social Standing of 10 is still required.

Military is a group heading which refers to Army, Navy, Marines, and Scouts.

Any is a group heading which refers to all services except those also listed under the same service heading.

Educated is a group heading which refers to any service which is able to receive at least "+1 Education," either on its skills table or as a mustering-out benefit, but which is not already, listed under the same service heading.

Example: Flash Indapan, after having spent two terms in the Scouts, fails his re-enlistment roll and is given the boot. He decides that he would like to become a Belter now and try to make his fortune mining asteroids. From the table under the service heading of Belter, it is found that a Scout can indeed become a Belter as long as he is 26 or younger. Flash is 26, so he has no problem there. He attempts to make his enlistment roll with no modifications ("0" under *Enlistment DMs*), and manages to enter the new service. He would then continue in the Belters normally as if he had entered that service in the first place, except that he already has 8 years of experience behind him.

THE BIG APPLE TIMES

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SUPERVILLAINS SEIZE CITY

BY "SCOOP" RICHARDS

The Human Flame has struck again, this time killing 247 and seriously injuring 30 more, by derailling the 12:04 subway from the Bronx.

Bystanders report seeing a man strolling casually onto the tracks as the train approached.

"I thought he was dead for sure," one woman, in

near hysterics, reports. "Everyone was screaming. It was horrible. But then the man bent down, just as calmly as you please, and took hold of the tracks."

The woman goes on to state that bright flames erupted from the man's arms and hands, burning the tracks in two almost instantly.

He then twisted a section of track back upon itself, according to the woman, while the group of 42 commuters stood by in silent shock.

The Human Flame fled the scene as the train derailed, killing all of the passengers aboard, as well as five commuters standing on the platform, waiting

for the train.

One man reports seeing the Human Flame dash into an alleyway near the site, and moments later emerge soaring across the sky in the arms of his supposed girlfriend, Fly Woman.

Police are at a loss as to what can be done to end this reign of terror. This is the fourth incident this week involving these so-called super-beings, or Supervillains.

MAYOR THREATENS RESIGNATION

The mayor threatened to resign today, unable to cope with the threat of the Supervillains.

"Supervillains are going to kill us all," he shouted, laughing hysterically, and dancing around the room.

By this time the mayor was pulling his hair and making unintelligible noises like a mad dog.

(SEE
SUPERVILLAINS,
PG. 2)

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The monuments of Minaria

by Glenn Rahman

The Altars of Greystaff

In the far southeast of Minaria, amid the craters of Blasted Heath, looms a great grey pillar. An array of broad stone altars stands at its foot. From them — even if they have seen no sacrifice in years — blood endlessly drips. Philosophers, scholars and sorcerers have pondered the sinister nature of Greystaff, but no one has conclusively defined its nature, be it of god, demon or natural spirit. What is known about Greystaff is cried into the sleeping minds of mediums the length and breadth of Minaria — that its altars crave blood, and in exchange for it Greystaff shall grant power over the elementals.

A myth of the South Plains maintains that man was created on the eighth day of the world. To test man's obedience, the Maker God created Greystaff to tempt him. Alas, on the tenth day of the world, one of the two tribes of men approached Greystaff, threw half its members upon the altars, and called down a firestorm to destroy the other tribe the god had made.

The Maker was outraged by man's perfidy; he poured out a black vat of ills across the world, expecting the flawed creation to despair and commit mass suicide. Once again he was thwarted; even in the face of all the physical and emotional ills that oppressed mankind, it perversely clung to life.

The most plausible theory of the origin of Greystaff comes from a little-known manuscript written by the unnamed "Mage of Jipols" in the tenth century. How this late source came by knowledge of ancient doings is not explained in the manuscript as we know it.

According to the Mage, when the Scarlet Witch King rose against the Lloroi Empire, he employed many blasphemous magicks that challenged the harmony of the natural universe. The lawful spells of the Lloroi magicians and priests were ill-matched against such mad conjurations. It seemed that no spell or army could stem the Witch King's relentless advance.

The Mage says that the great of the realm agreed to a project of the utmost desperation. It seemed as if the powers arrayed against them had to be matched by powers of the same type. So by means of soul-wrenching incantations, over a period of several years, the wizards of the Lloroi raised a pole of negative mic power. They threw crowds of war prisoners across its altars and enlisted the powers of evil into the cause of the



Lloroi Empire. Afterward, the Witch King's victories ceased and his power was eventually beaten down.

Ancient historians have often conjectured that it was the practicing of forbidden sorcery that brought about the great Cataclysm. If the Mage of Jipols is correct, the Altars of Greystaff may have contributed to the catastrophe. Indeed, earthquakes, hurricanes and all manner of natural disasters have been correlated with sacrifices at the Altars. For example, when the tyrant of Adeese sacrificed to Greystaff in the year 1250, volcanoes erupted in the Barriorr Mountains, a tidal wave devastated the Sea of Drowning Men and severe flooding struck the kingdom of Immer.

It can be justly said that the king who invokes the power of Greystaff for short-term gains only risks disaster in the long run.

The Faces to the Sea

Many civilizations have come and gone on the face of the Minarian continent. It is one of the most regrettable features of Lloroi rule was that they cared so little for preserving knowledge of the ancient states which they overcame.

The Faces to the Sea are relics of one of these early cultures. The giant heads, sculptured to the shoulders, have features resembling no race that lives today on the continent of Minaria. A legend of Parros says that as long as the Faces watch the sea, no invasion from that direction will ever overthrow Minaria. It seems unlikely that this is the true reason the Faces were built; in the days of the Lloroi Empire, the Faces were much farther from the seacoast than they are today.

The lost culture that created these,

heads seems to have been widespread. In 1340-43 a long drought troubled the Ercii people of the Wetlands (the Ercii being a hybrid race which lives by hunting, trapping and hiring out as military scouts in times of war). Their other hunters discovered that the dropping water level had revealed a series of sculptures much like the Faces to the Sea. But before qualified scholars could study the discovery, the drought broke and water hid the objects once more.

The Isle of Fright

In ancient times, the Isle of Fright was part of the peninsula of Umiak. When Umiak went into the sea, a high plateau remained as the focus of a strange vortex of water called the Spiral Current. This current, drawing in waters from the whole of the Sea of Drowning Men, carries many strange things to the beaches of the Isle of Fright.

The flotsam that comes to the Isle does not wholly consist of junk. The masts, ribs and planks of many a noble vessel find their resting place here. So do the disassociated bones of the countless sailors who have lost their lives in the storms and accidents of the sea. Of even more interest is the treasure and valuable cargo litters the beaches and the stony reefs that ring the mysterious islet.

The Isle of Fright received its name partially from the vista of ruin and death upon its shores. Then too, pirates and freebooters, who have been visiting the island for centuries, have tried to ward off other treasure hunters by telling frightful tales of selkies and mermen which haunt its outlying shoals.

But the secret of the Isle of Fright is long out. Minarians are now more familiar with selkies and mermen and do not

fear them so much. It is also well known how much treasure the island holds; fleets from civilized nations commonly engage in salvage operations off its reefs.

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the isle holds its dangers. The unpredictable currents have forced many a vessel to wreck upon the rocks; others have been lost to the pirates who know its hidden channels. These pirates, when not engaging in drunken treasure-hunts, keep a lookout for the castaways whose rafts are inevitably drawn in by the Spiral Current. The rich captains and nobles usually are ransomed back to Minaria. Less happy is the lot of common sailors captured, who are worth no more than their bid price on the auction block of Slave Island.

The Lost City of Khos

For more than thirty-four centuries the city of Khos has stood deserted by man, shunned by the tribesmen and nations of eastern Minaria. According to the travelers who have visited it, there is majesty in the ruins of Khos — but also mystery and danger.

For the last few centuries, the danger has issued from the strange race of flying beings which lives in the cave-filled hills to the north of the city, arid which comes to roost in the crumbling towers at sunset. A colony of gargoyles these are, a type of creature that has long inhabited the Wastes of Folmar in Giron.

No one knows what forced the gargoyles' ancestors to make the long migration from their own country, but they are hated by the dwarves and the men of Pon. Too many thefts, of livestock and women can be laid at their door. Then too, their numbers are increasing; lately they have organized enough to name themselves a king.

But before the gargoyles came, Khos still evoked awe in the hearts of its visitors. The dwarves, a people accustomed to placing their emotions in verse, have left us a fragment of a tenth-century poem, attributed to Aether, the semi-legendary warrior-bard:

The work of Giants, the stonemasons

*Frost cloaks the gatetowers, frost on
mortar
Well-built this wall; fate broke it
The stronghold burst, the stout wall
breached*

*Roofbeams snapped, towers fell
Shattered are the battlements, roofs
ruined*

*Age undermined them; time their
undoing*

*Came days of pestilence, on all sides
men fell dead*

*War fetched off the flower of the
people*

*The hosts who would build again
shrank to earth*

*Therefore are these courts dreary,
rime-laden*

These many feasthalls, empty...

The dwarf who composed these lines was moved by the spirit of the place, but likely did not know anything of its real history — those facts are lost in time. Tradition has it that Khos was the capital of a state that predated the Lloroi conquest. The Khosites supposedly practiced blasphemous sorceries and defied Lloroi rule. This led to a centuries-long struggle.

The Khosites must have been a heroic people: Even after the young men of Khos perished in battle, their wizard-priests brought their vengeful spirits back to continue the struggle. These

wraiths, the Ghost Troops of Khos, won their greatest victory when they annihilated a Lloroi army south of the city. The specters drove the Lloroi soldiers to their deaths with terror; visitors can still hear the crazed laughter of the vanquished Lloroi drifting over the old battlefield. Hence the name of the place — the Field of the Laughing Dead.

Despite the wraiths, the Lloroi eventually destroyed the city of Khos. But by some chance, the spell to summon one of the Ghost Troops is preserved today in Minaria; therefore, the kings of Minaria can sometimes rally the spirits of these ancient heroes for their own warlike causes.

The Spires to the Sun

Before the demise of the Lloroi Empire, the most sacred ceremonies of the official state cult were conducted in the slender pyramids called the Spires to the Sun. The noble Lloroi sent their offerings to the Spires continuously for centuries, until the several temples of the god Taquamenau equalled the Imperial Palace in opulence.

Although the Emperors trusted in the protection of the Sun God, they did not fail to maintain a unit of personal guardsmen — The Order of the Hippogriff. These were recruited from among those who distinguished themselves in the Im-

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perial army. Their mounts were hippogriffs — strange offspring of horses and eagles, whose courage and agility exceed even that of the thunderbirds and wyverns which the Lloroi sometimes trained for war.

Man for man, the knights of the Order were the best fighters in Minaria. They were trained in taking strength and guidance from a mystical source called the "Flow." It was this same power that a wizard had to tap to work his magic, but the knights were drilled in making the Flow part of their nature, and shunned vulgar thaumaturgy.

Once, when the renegade warrior Sir Morholt stole the one hundred and nine lenses from the Spires to the Sun, he eluded capture for three years. Finally he was run to ground — by the Order of the Hippogriff, which had been unerringly guided to its quarry by the Flow.

When the Cataclysm struck; the Sublime Emperor perished in his submerging palace. Fortunately, some of the Order of the Hippogriff were on hand to lift High Priest Winabiigo out of doomed Niiawee — no mean feat, since a hippogriff will invariably balk at transporting one whose scent and voice is unfamiliar to it.

They escorted Winabiigo to the Spires to the Sun, but he was already dying of remorse for the shattered empire. Before his death, he gave the Spires over to the safeguarding of the Order and placed a blessing upon them. The men would never lack for dedicated heirs, he said, who would carry on their fathers' tradition. Neither would the flock of hippogriffs fail to increase with the needs of the knights. Seemingly the priest's words flew straight to heaven, for in the thirteen centuries since his dying, all he promised has come to pass.

During the dark centuries following the Cataclysm, the worship of the Sun God was forgotten in Minaria. Even the people of the South Plains who held onto civilization rejected Taquamenau in favor of local cults. The knights of the Order are the god's last congregation.

Throughout the long years, the knights have obeyed the promptings of the Flow and fought for justice. Sometimes this has meant taking sides in war, such as the War of the Three Tyrants and the Wisnyo War, in both of which the knights figured prominently.

More often, however, the knights have performed individual feats of daring while gliding over the face of Minaria, going where the Flow might lead them. Often the Flow has led a knight to his destined fate — perhaps to be beleaguered by villains or monsters. Or, perhaps there is a village being ground down by a rapacious baron, a parish terrorized by an evil witch, a countryside menaced by rampaging beasts: All of these are jobs for the Order of the Hippogriff.

Winabiigo promised that the Order would never die, and there are few persons in grateful Minaria who do not hope that the gods will continue to grant the priest's dying wish.

The Tombs of Olde

When the Emperors of the Lloroi ruled from the city of Niiawee, the Tombs of Olde were named the Necropolis of Minjekahuan. Here, in a gleaming grave-city of alabaster and jacinth, the embalmed bodies of deceased Emperors and high priests were lain amid lamentation and flawless ritual. The last Emperor to be interred in Minjekahuan was Nibagisis; his unfortunate successor had his resting place in the Sea of Drowning Men.

Antiquarians have collected an abundance of myths about the Tombs; some have even dared to visit the city of sun-scorched mausoleums. They have found that the ancient Lloroi planned well for the protection of their high-born deceased, with mechanical devices, curses, and guardian demons. And beyond these technological and supernatural terrors, they invested the Necropolis with a living menace.

From the faraway corners of Girion, the Lloroi brought strange, ghoulish beings called "kutrubs" to Minjekahuan. At home surrounded by sorcery and death, these creatures were entirely obedient to the charm-spells of the Lloroi priesthood. Lest they increase and spread beyond the tomb city, the priests wrapped a confining spell around the outer perimeter of Minjekahuan.

But it seems that the old, confining spells have faded. For some centuries the kutrubs have been expanding into the nearby Waste of Vah-ka-ka. Until recently they did not constitute more than a local hazard to lone travelers and small groups. But by the early fourteenth century they had grown numerous enough to drive the nomadic tribes of the Vah-ka-ka into the Dry Mountains and the Banished Lands.

Many are the legends of doom surrounding the fate of tomb robbers who seek the treasure and magical devices buried in the crypts of the dead. One such tale speaks of Monju, king of Zefnar, who sent a host of slaves into Minjekahuan with picks and shovels. They brought back no treasure; in fact, none are known to have come back with their lives. Neither did Monju escape the anger of the funerary spirits: After the expedition, a foul, unknown wasting disease took him slowly to his deathbed.

But the curses of old may have waned with time. One modern expedition has had impressive success. Hulon, king of Shucassam, braved the bad reputation of the Tombs and had his servants assail one of the largest mausoleums. They poured boiling vinegar between the limestone blocks to weaken them, then

applied picks and sledgehammers. Within two years the Shucassamites had extracted an emperor's ransom in Lloroi grave goods and furniture from the tomb. Never during this time had the expedition's death rate due to kutrub attacks and other causes exceeded fifty percent per year — which was apparently considered within acceptable limits. Nor was Hulon's death — which occurred exactly one year after the first looting of the crypt — ever positively attributed to angry spirits.

The Witches' Kitchen

At the very edge of known Minaria, stands a valley of geysers, healing springs, boiling pools and bubbling mud. Long before civilized man suspected it, barbarians of the north feared the valley as a place of angry earth spirits.

The Witches' Kitchen was discovered in 1186, when Muetarian hunters were fleeing from a war party of barbarian savages. They feared the blades of the men behind them more than the eerie, steaming vista that lay ahead. Fortunately, the barbarians would pursue no farther than the valley's rim. A few days later it was safe for the hunters to leave.

The story they told was of immediate interest to the sorcerers and alchemists of the civilized cities. Already before the end of the century, some of these men had made the hazardous journey northward, daring the perils of wolves, undead things from the Shards of Lor, and marauding nomads.

The scholarly pilgrims found some of the springs invigorating and youth-restoring. The sulfur and other minerals from the hot springs were of unsurpassed purity for sorcerous needs. Likewise, the heated ponds of the valley stayed at a perfectly even temperature — ideal for the delicate potions of the highest types of magic. Moreover, the gods of magic seem to favor spells worked in the rainbow-lit valley, and the wizards' record of success with experiments worked in the Kitchen is truly remarkable.

At first the wizards fought fierce duels for possession of this or that corner of the Witches' Kitchen. For a time in the thirteenth century, the mage Zhronдор and his coven dominated the valley to the exclusion of all others. Since Zhronдор's fall, a council of elders have governed the place, keeping order, but allowing the wizards who use the Kitchen's facilities considerable freedom.

In late years the Kitchen has drawn students who go to the valley to attend a lyceum conducted by accomplished old wizards. Its graduates are common in the cities of Minaria and testify to the wisdom of their teachers. However, the chief sorcerers of Minaria — the Eaters of Wisdom — spurn the lyceum. "Charlatans!" they say, "And prancing hedge wizards with rattles and bones!"

Dragon's Bestiary

Devil spider

Created by Erol Otus

FREQUENCY: Rare
 NO. APPEARING: 1
 ARMOR CLASS: 2 (*except underbelly, which is AC5*)
 MOVE: 18 *12
 HIT DICE: 13
 % IN LAIR: 75%
 TREASURE TYPE: H
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 3
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-10 and 1-10 (2 claws) plus 2-12 (bite)
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: 25%
 INTELLIGENCE: Average
 ALIGNMENT: Lawful evil
 SIZE: L (10' legspread, 5' high)
 PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil
 Attack/Defense modes: Nil

This creature's true name — if it has one — is unknown. It has come to be known by the name "Devil spider" because it certainly is some type of spider, and because it is devilishly evil in its attempts to capture prey and treasure.

The devil spider usually makes its lair in a chasm or large pit, or in an open area near a well-traveled path or under a bridge. It will spin a web which spans an open area (minimum 10'x10', maximum 100'x100') and will then lurk nearby, waiting for a potential meal to arrive on the scene. A spider may attack from ground level, or may descend on a victim from above, suspended by a single strand of webbing material.

The web is made of non-glossy, nearly transparent strands which cannot be detected by torchlight from farther than 5 feet away. And if a victim gets close enough to see the web, the spider will automatically attack. The devil spider will surprise an adversary on a roll of 1-4.

If at least one character or creature is no more than 10 feet away from the web, the devil spider will not usually make a normal attack but instead will attempt to shove the character nearest the web into the strands. If it has a choice, the spider will go for the target which is smallest or looks weakest. On a result of 11 or higher on a d20, this "push attack" will succeed. The die roll is modified by the following factors:

- Target smaller than man-sized: -2
- Target larger than man-sized: +2
- Target surprised: -2



Target secured in position (using rope, spikes, or other devices): +1 to +4

Target in precarious position (clinging to cliff wall, etc.): -1 to -4

The strands of the devil spider's web are very strong. Any particular strand will be broken only if it takes 10 points of damage in a single round, from one or more hits on the same spot. If a web strand takes less than 10 points of damage in a single round, it will be able to absorb up to 10 more in a subsequent round, because the attacker(s) is not able to hit precisely the same spot with attacks in two different rounds. It takes 40 points of damage to sever a web at the intersection of two strands, where the material is much thicker, but damage to a web intersection is cumulative over more than one round.

Blunt weapons do only half damage to the web. It is fireproof, but takes double damage from cold-based attacks.

The web strands are coated with a clear, glue-like substance. A character whose body contacts the web will be immobilized by the sticky goo, but may pull one or two extremities free. If a roll of d20 is equal to or less than the average

of the character's strength and dexterity (round fractions down), one limb (victim's choice) is freed. A victim can roll to try to partially escape once per round, but no more than two limbs can be pulled loose in this manner. The spider will attack at +2 "to hit" against a victim in the web, and the victim (if able to fight back) will be at -4 "to hit" as long as he is in the web.

A devil spider is reasonably intelligent, and its course of action will always be dictated by circumstances rather than instinct. However, the creature is somewhat predictable. It will always begin a combat situation by making repeated attempts to push a target into its web, as long as a target is available. Then it will assault the victim, trying to kill or weaken it so it cannot escape. During all this time, the spider will generally ignore attacks on its body, but if its hit points are reduced to less than half of the original number, it will either turn to take on the ones doing the damage, or it will attempt to flee (depending on its estimation of the strength of its enemies). After it has captured one victim, it will not attempt to push another one into the web until the first victim is killed or freed.

Dragon's Bestiary

Surchur

Created by Jeff Brandt



FREQUENCY: *Very rare*
 NO. APPEARING: 1
 ARMOR CLASS: 2
 MOVE: 6"
 HIT DICE: 5-7
 % IN LAIR: 60%
 TREASURE TYPE: *U,V,W,Z*
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 5-20
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: 20%
 INTELLIGENCE: *Average*
 ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*
 SIZE: *L (9-10' tall)*
 PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*
 Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*

This loathsome creature has no redeeming physical features. Vaguely humanoid, the creature's body is light brown to tan in color. Protruding from the upper front of the body are eight

slimy, brownish-green tentacles. These tentacles range from 6-8 feet in length, depending on the creature's body size.

The mouth of a surchur doesn't have teeth, but is lined with rows upon rows of sticky cilia that secrete a chemical which digests the flesh of humans and demi-humans. Two stout horns protrude from the middle back of the beast. They are not unlike those of a bull, but somewhat larger. The horns are composed of an ivory-like material which is generally of good quality. Each horn can be sold for 100-600 gp, depending on its quality and the size of the surchur it came from.

The surchur will typically attack first by trying to grab a victim in its tentacles; if an 18 or higher is the result of the monster's "to hit" roll, the victim is caught and immediately takes 5-20 points of damage. During the next two rounds the surchur will attempt to pull the captured victim into its mouth. The victim may attempt to break free in each round, with a base chance of 20% for success, plus 10% for each plus "to hit" the character may have due to high strength. While the surchur is holding a victim it cannot attack another figure.

A victim which is dragged into the surchur's mouth will take 2-8 points of damage per round from the digestive juices until the victim or the monster is dead.

A surchur cannot put more than one victim in its mouth at one time. However, it prefers fresh food if it has a choice. A second victim can be grabbed and held while the first is in the mouth. When the tentacles have immobilized another victim, the first one will be expelled from the mouth cavity even if it isn't dead, and the new victim will be engulfed instead.

If the surchur does not succeed in grabbing a victim, it will still do damage to an adversary within range of its tentacles by hitting with the tentacles themselves. A surchur which is not injured will be able to effectively attack with a bunch of five tentacles at once, with each tentacle considered to do 1-4 points of damage on a successful hit. Any blow which is aimed at a tentacle, hits it, and does at least 3 points of damage will sever a tentacle. A surchur with fewer than 5 tentacles intact will do correspondingly less damage from a strike, and a surchur with fewer than 4 tentacles will not keep its grip on a victim as easily; the chance to escape per round is increased to 60% against a surchur with 4 tentacles, +10% for every tentacle less than four.

If a surchur is very hungry, it will continue to attempt grabbing victims as long as it is able. If its appetite has been at least partly satisfied, it will attempt to flee when seriously injured. A surchur's lost tentacles will grow back in 3-6 days.

The typical climate in which surchurs are found is jungle-like, but they can be found in just about any environment except extreme cold.

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Dyll

Created by Ed Greenwood

FREQUENCY: *Rare*
 NO. APPEARING: 30-300
 ARMOR CLASS: 7
 MOVE: 6"/18"
 HIT DICE: 1-3 hit points
 % IN LAIR: 45%
 TREASURE TYPE: See below
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-3
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
 INTELLIGENCE: *Animal*
 ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*
 SIZE: *S (4-8 inches long)*
 PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*
 Attack/Defense Modes: **Nil**

The bloodsucking swarms of the dyll occasionally descend upon herds of cattle or small settlements, and are greatly feared. Dyll are small, leech-like creatures. Teardrop-shaped and glossy silver in color, they wriggle in the manner of worms when on the ground, but prefer to fly upon their rubbery "wings," darting about with great maneuverability (Flight Class A).

Dyll locate their prey by sensing vibrations, by, smell, and by homing in on sources of heat. These senses act in combination, and are effective up to a range of 6". Dyll swarms will attack creatures of any size, surrounding their victims in a blinding, hampering cloud. Creatures in the cloud attack at -1 "to hit" and are unable to read spell books,

scrolls, or inscriptions, for these are obscured. Such a swarm will always contain at least 30 dyll and perhaps as many as 100. Groups of more than 100 dyll are extremely rare, and if such a large group attacks it will always form at least two swarms.

A swarm can hamper as many as three human-sized victims at a time, if they are within 5 feet of each other. Within the swarm, from 2-24 dyll will attempt to strike at each victim every round. Solitary dyll will attack only motionless (i.e., sleeping or disabled) creatures.

A dyll is covered with thousands of microscopic, hollow spines. Using these, it sucks 1-3 hit points worth of blood from a victim each round. The initial strike of the dyll does 1 point of damage as it attaches itself. It begins draining blood on the round thereafter.

A dyll gains strength from the blood it ingests, at the rate of 1 hit point for each 2 points of blood-draining damage it causes. It will remain attached and continue to drain blood until it is killed or until it reaches 9 hit points, whereupon it will loosen its grip and fly away.

Dyll typically lair in rocky areas or caverns, usually near water where creatures come to drink. Such lairs often contain the drained husks of past victims, and any treasure borne in by those unfortunates.

One dyll in every 10 creatures will be able to cast a *Sleep* spell affecting creatures with up to 3 hit dice when attacking a victim. If its initial strike is successful, the spell is cast. *Sleep* spells cast by dyll striking in the same round are cumulative; thus, a pair of dyll may strike and sleep a creature of up to 6 hit dice, three dyll can affect a creature of 9 hit dice, and so on.

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Poltergeist

Created by Craig Stenseth

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1-4

ARMOR CLASS: -3

MOVE: 12"

HIT DICE: 6

% IN LAIR: 20%

TREASURE TYPE: C, Q x 5

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *+2 or better weapon to hit*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%

INTELLIGENCE: *High*

ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic neutral*

SIZE: S (3' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

Attack/Defense modes: *Nil*

Poltergeists are the spirits of chaotic gnomes from Limbo and Gladsheim sent to the Prime Material Plane to spread the influence of chaos. They enjoy jokes and tricks, and their magical nature makes it difficult to do anything to stop them. And when they are provoked by someone trying to spoil their chaotic fun, they become as single-minded in their purpose as a berserker.

Poltergeists can use several spells of an illusionary nature. At will, they can perform the following feats of magic, at the 8th level of spell-use ability: *Audible glamor*, *Hypnotism*, *Invisibility* and *Ventriloquism*. They have infravision (60') and can teleport with no chance of error up to once per turn.

The creatures are immune to cold-based attacks and are unaffected by *charm*, *hold* and *sleep* spells and attack forms. A poltergeist only takes half damage from electrical and fire-based attacks, which is reduced to one-fourth if it makes a successful save.

Poltergeists will be armed as follows: 15% with club & sling, 30% with club & spear, 40% with short sword, 15% with short sword & spear. There is a 15% chance for any poltergeist carrying a club or sword that the weapon is magical (+1).

The chaotic nature of poltergeists makes it difficult to describe them in terms of general characteristics. They tend to show hatred for the same creatures that gnomes hate (goblins, kobolds and orcs in particular), but will not hesitate to attack or beleaguer any character they encounter.

Poltergeists cannot be forever slain when encountered on the Prime Material plane; one whose body is killed will have its essence banished to Limbo or Gladsheim for a time and will then be able to reappear.



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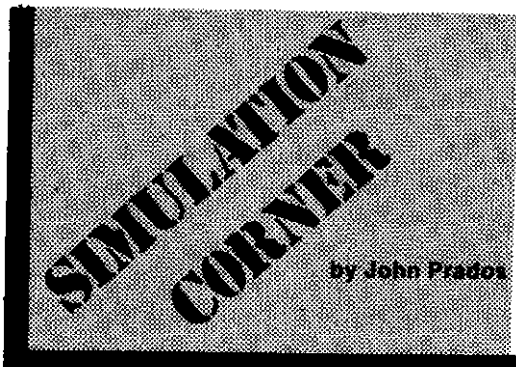
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Practicing Game Design

IV: State of the art

This is the fourth of a five-part mini-series in *Simulation Corner* that gives a detailed but non-technical answer to the question of how to make a game. The series discusses this question in regard each of the various steps of game design, starting with the selection of a topic. Last month's segment covered ways and means of designing for realism. This month's intention is to move beyond that point to discuss the notion of "state of the art" in game design.

The series is based upon the experience of professional game designers drawn from three sources: interviews in the hobby media; my own experience; and the testimony of a panel of game designers who were asked to give their opinions on these subjects.

The expert panel was composed of Jay Nelson, noted for his designs *Bridge Too Far* and *Highway To The Reich*; Jack Greene, author of the exciting new *Ironbottom Sound* (Quarterdeck Games) as well as the Avalon Hill update of *Bismarck*; and Stephen Newberg, veteran innovator with his *Lee At The Crossroads* and his WWII naval trilogy *IJN-Torpedo-Kriegsmarine* (all games by Simulations Canada). These highly qualified designers are together responsible for roughly two dozen published game designs.

In an earlier column ("State of the Art," DRAGON #42), *Simulation Corner* analyzed two games on the same subject by the same company done ten years apart. We found that the newer game had a much more sophisticated approach, to modeling a number of game elements and concluded from this that there has been a improvement in the general "state of the art" with respect to game design.

Among professionals there is incomplete agreement on this point. Jack Greene, on the one hand, sees the state of the art as "moving forward certainly," while Jay Nelson cautions that "state of the art is an amalgam of inspiration and stealing (not to mention some inspired stealing). Unfortunately, many times 'state of the art' is only thought to be that which is new. Many games which are no longer played contain ideas which are even now 'state of the art.'"

Here is the first point: What is "state of the art" may not necessarily be *new* in games. State of the art may mean that a traditional element of a game system has been handled with excitingly different mechanics. Or it may mean that the design has found ways to present things ignored or factored out in previous designs.

While it is not possible to give a precise definition for "state of the art" as a concept, it is relatively easy to identify state of the art in retrospect. The rule of thumb to identify a state-of-the-art change is to ask whether the game design contains one or more new elements that future designs on similar topics cannot get along without.

Designing for state of the art is not the same as designing for realism, although the design tools (game mechanics) used in the service of both objectives are the same. A game need not be realistic to attain state-of-the-art distinction, but a realistic game will either attain the state of the art or else it will be perceived as too complex for comfortable play.

Thus, the task for the designer in achieving state of the art is different than in his quest for realism. Whereas in designing for realism the creator of a game must seek to identify all the elements relevant to the situation, in designing for state of the art the task is to see if those elements can be handled reasonably without overloading the overall design. Although in reality these are complementary design tasks, for ease of understanding it may help to think of realism as a stage of, *including* elements and state of the art as a stage of *excluding* things.

Why is state of art being defined in this essentially negative fashion? Isn't "state of the art" a process of modeling more things more accurately in games? Yes, but... The problem is that the term can be used in different senses: "State of the art" can denote the outer limits reached by design technique in modeling processes, or it can be used to mean an average level of modeling sophistication in games of a certain type or period.

As a general question for game designers, it is this second meaning that is now our concern. This is why "state of

the art" is presented here as a process of exclusion: The problem is to create a game system with the highest possible level of "average" modeling sophistication without overburdening the game as a whole so that it is perceived as excessively complex. The mark of excellence in game design is the elegance with which inclusion and exclusion decisions have been made, and the measure of the quality of a game is how high its "average" sophistication remains despite the accommodations that must be made to retain the desirable feature of playability.

As with the perennial problem of the quantifications that underpin game capabilities, a trouble with inclusion/exclusion decisions is the subjective nature of the beast. There is no rule a designer can use to simplify his decisions on these matters. But it may help to consider for a moment the *other* meaning of "state of the art": the outer limits of design technique. Clearly a relationship exists between the topic of a game and which elements in its system will be at issue when a gamer looks at the design to see if it achieves this "state of the art." Because of this, the designer has a guide to where he should focus his detailed game mechanics. Here is the second point to mark: *Focus* the game mechanics on design elements that contribute to the state of the art in that type of game.

The third point to mark is to always conceive of the game as a totality. From the beginning of the innovation process, the designer should have in mind a given level of complexity for the whole game and he should keep in mind how each rule, mechanic, or subsystem builds toward that level. If the total "design load" of the game system exceeds the designer's original intention then something in the system should be pared down, or the designer treads on thin ice.

In *Highway To the Reich*, for example, Jay Nelson recalls that the use of numbers in the game became so prevalent that finally "the numbers took control, not me." This is a predicament to be avoided unless the intention is expressly to design something like *Campaign for North Africa*.

Let's take this notion of a "design load" and make it more concrete. The essence of game mechanics and subsystems are created by the rules, so it's a fair assumption that there is a relation between the complexity of a game and the length of its rules. In practice, the typed manuscript for a "simple" game should work out to less than twenty pages, that for a "moderately complex" one to no more than forty.

Of course, this last proposed solution is a mechanical formula. It is subject to manipulation in a way that does not ensure the continued quality of the game system. Much better is for the designer to confront his design problems squarely, by working with each major subsystem until that rule briefly expresses a game mechanic that deals with some real element in a satisfactory way.

Mechanical solutions or rules of thumb are useful, but the best designers, in addition to knowing "the book," also know when to throw "the book" away. This is true both in the initial design stages and at the advanced game-development level.

The best way to gain a feeling for this instinctive solution-finding is through obtaining and following a conscious philosophy of game design. In the last installment of the "Practicing Game Design" series next month, *Simulation Corner* will turn to this issue of design philosophy.

There's more!

Proud as we are of this issue of DRAGON™ magazine, we're pretty pleased with what we've done in the past. And apparently, so are our readers, because most of our back issues are sold out. We do have copies of some magazines for sale, including issue #22 and issues #40 through #54.

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Universe is an artistic triumph

by Jeff Swycaffer

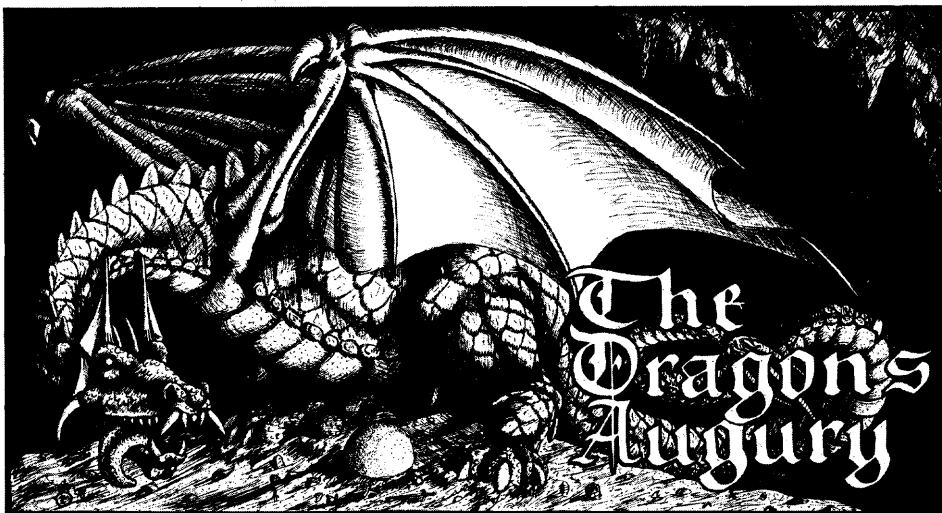
With precision typical of SPI, the game *UNIVERSE* was released exactly when the public seemed most ready for it. It's a big game, of wide scope, and SPI has big plans for it.

The first thing one sees upon examining the box — after the price (\$20 for the boxed version, including the *Delta-Vee* tactical combat system) — is the cover illustration: a family snapshot of a pair of adventurers and their trusty robot, all busily engaged in shooting their way out of a heavy ambush. It seems somehow typical of the far future that the woman is busily firing her pistol at some unseen threat while the man and the 'bot take time out to smile at the camera.

The hopeful gamer moves on to the components, and here the first reward is striking: the four-color star map. Similar to the map for SPI's *StarForce*, this map is a true three-dimensional display of all known stars within thirty-one light years of Earth, shown in brilliant colors against the deep black of space. The grid is rectangular, as opposed to hexagonal — a change that subtly enhances the believability of the situation. As in the *StarForce* map (the most beautiful piece of artwork SPI had ever produced, as of the time of its release), the stars here are small, colored points, accompanied by a brief label that names each star and gives its spectral class. Gone — and good riddance — are the ugly poker-chip stellar displays of *Freedom in the Galaxy* and *Sword and the Stars*. The effect here, as opposed to those latter maps, is a chilly, naturalistic, and usable depiction of the far heavens. Another bonus: Only a portion of the mapsheet beyond the map is taken up with charts and tables, and these are useful ones, referring to the map itself. In one corner, marring the overall effect, is yet another reproduction, making three in all, of the cover-art family snapshot, robot and man posing with wide smiles while the woman fires to stage left.

But all other types of art pale in comparison when the rules are opened: Here is art to be appreciated with another portion of the mind altogether. Character generation takes up nearly half of the 76-page rule book, and comprises the most complex and complete character-generation system that role-playing has yet developed.

The system is nearly as complex as character generation would be in real life; nevertheless, most desired results are within reach. Even the most difficult character type to obtain, the character that is powerfully psionic, doesn't take



more than five or six runs through the system to produce.

Slightly annoying is the standard SPI obsession with play balance: For every advantage and bonus a character is given, there is a corresponding disadvantage. The result is overall equality . . . but certainly not mediocrity. When considered in the light of the many, many role-playing gamers who manage, against all odds, to roll 18/00, for example, the cautious SPI approach makes sense; and it is certainly true that a character supreme, with a 185% chance of succeeding at any given task, is ultimately a boring one to role-play. Designer John Butterfield doesn't seem to have gone too far in the other direction, but he certainly has gone far enough.

A character's generation is affected by his choice of a general area of study, such as the military or the humanities, and it is this choice that determines the skills and personal characteristics that the character under development is most able to improve. The fields of study of, for example, the body and the military are most beneficial to such characteristics as strength and agility, while theoretical and applied sciences give a big boost to intelligence. These choices, as many as six for characters with low overall potential, or as few as two for characters who were well born and very healthy, also determine what skills the character will be eligible to acquire later.

And the list of skills is substantial. From Agriculture and Ambush to Vehicle Tech and Weapons Tech, each skill is well described and documented, and each has some reasonable application to normal adventuring. Various applications of these "preferred skills" are outlined, and the exact throws needed (on percentile dice) to achieve any given effect are described.

Skills have levels, and usually the square of the skill level is the bonus to the percentage chance for success listed for a certain task. If the base chance to ambush a party, for instance, is 30%, then a character with Ambush-6 has a 66% $[30 + (6 \times 6)]$ chance, and a character with Ambush-7 has a 79% chance. Although other modifiers apply, such as agility and battlefield skill, it is the preferred skill, when squared, that gives the greatest contribution to success.

There seems to be quite a bit of psionics in this game, far more than a strictly materialistic referee might be able to swallow. True, the power of these favored and somewhat rare people is kept within reasonable limits, so that no psionic strongarm ruffian can take over the game. And true, the power is written into the game so that it can, with effort, be deleted, but far too many basic game systems are based upon the existence and use of psionic talent. Interstellar navigation is based on psionics, guaranteeing that there will be at least one of these not-quite-humans aboard every starship; this will be unacceptable to many gamers.

On, then, to robots and equipment. Unlike any system previous to *Universe*, robots are built according to a simple "shopping-list" approach, with money being the main limiting factor. Fortunately, not all that many different robotic systems are available, leaving it impossible for a player to produce anything too grotesque. As always, play balance is uppermost in the designer's mind. Personal equipment is fairly standard — if useful — stuff. Most of it is cash and carry, but a few very useful and needed items have a waiting time for acquisition.

The world-generation system is superb. Everything from a planet's position in the orbital sequence to its size, number

of moons, civilization level, and proper place in the overall Federation is covered; mapping the planet's surface is handled in a manner far more realistic and useful than the system of icosahedron/hexagons that other systems apply. The new system gives larger planets more actual area, rather than simply increasing the scale on one standard map. This may well be the game's most outstanding feature. Due to the fact that a standard — and real — star field has already been generated (by nature, and not by any mapper's art), no system is included for generating a new stellar map. On the other hand, one won't be needed during the course of play, so nothing is lost.

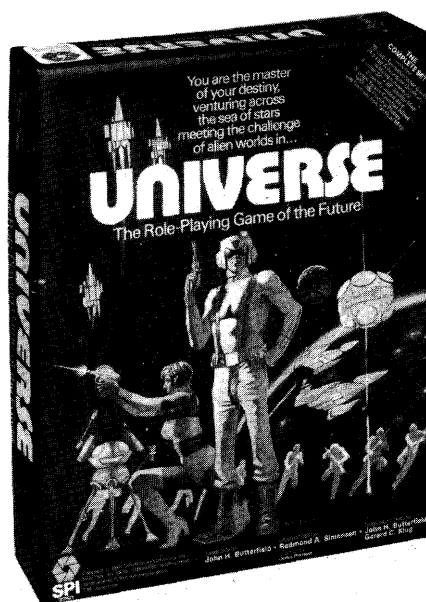
The section following this in the rules may well be the game's worst: Character Action. The action sequence is dense, slow, and, for referees without a computer, just about useless. The calculations aren't complex at all; there are simply too many of them. It has long been the primary fault of percentage-based game systems that every action that could possibly add even as much as one percent to the probability of success of a given task must be taken into account.

The end result of this is not realism, it is death by detail. If *UNIVERSE* doesn't suffer from this as much as does TSR's TOP SECRET® game (including the designer's additions, official or not), it does suffer from this fault more than TSR's BOOT HILL™ game or SPI's *Dragon-Quest*. This fault in this section by no means makes the game unplayable; it does raise the complexity level overall a little more than was necessary.

The *Delta Vee* tactical system

Delta Vee, as a space combat system, is unparalleled — the best space combat system on the market, narrowly beating out GDW's *Mayday* and *High Guard*.

The *Delta Vee* system is, by its nature, unrealistic, and that is one of its greatest assets. Rather than trying for a simulation of true zero-gravity maneuver, as was done in *Vector-3*, SPI and Butterfield have developed a free-wheeling, yet controlled system, more like an air battle than anything else. Since in all of the big-name movies and television series we've come to love, the space combat is



essentially World War II air combat, this simplification is not only acceptable, it is nearly ideal.

Both *Mayday* and *Vector-3* suffer from the perfectly realistic fact that to slow down in space takes as much time as to speed up. Because of this, players constantly overshoot their targets, their objectives, and the edge of the map while trying to line up the perfect bead on the fleeing enemy.

In *Delta Vee* a number of unrealistic, yet necessary, game devices are employed to keep the speeds down. Now, cleverness and a little foresight can offset the advantage an enemy might have even with a bigger ship and heavier engines. Combat is by missiles and by beams, with a pleasant variety of each; there aren't many instant deaths out there, with one ship blowing another into component atoms, but the damage to a hit ship is satisfyingly severe, and is not repairable (as opposed to *Mayday*, in which repair rolls can make the effects of any hit meaningless, and in which winning means getting a dozen or so hits on one section of the target over several hours of play). There are no computer rules for *Delta Vee*, a slight omission but not a disheartening one.

Perhaps the less said about the counters, the better. Better counters, while

not adding much to the game, could have been expected. True, the counters serve their purpose, and true, the real record-keeping is in the paperwork on the players' clipboards at their sides. But, all in all . . . better could have been expected.

The big question

How does the *UNIVERSE* system compare with *Traveller*? The question practically begs to be answered. SPI asks it on the feedback card that accompanies the game. Players will ask it upon opening the box. The noble worthies at GDW will endeavor not to ask it at all, trying to avoid calling all that more attention to it.

Well, how do they compare?

Details come first to mind. *Traveller* ships are built within a hull; *Universe* ships use interchangeable pods.

Traveller has fewer concerns with robots; *Universe* cares less about the military. Both systems use a variation of teleportation for interstellar travel; both systems feature psionics, swords, the concept of law being equivalent to totalitarianism, free trade between planets, and so on.

The essential difference, it seems, is this: *Universe*, in what it offers, is superior. The character-generation and space-combat systems are superlative. The world-generation and mapping systems are unexcelled. Probably, many currently ongoing *Traveller* games will have these and other systems adapted for use in those campaigns.

But it will be *Universe* that is adapted into a *Traveller* campaign, not the other way around. Because *Universe* does not yet offer a grand scope, like the Imperium of *Traveller*, and does not offer the militaristic splendor that *Traveller* players have come to love, it will be hard put to become more than just a *Traveller* supplement.

In conclusion, and without fear of overstating an essentially pretentious view, *Universe* is highly recommended, simply because if it cannot be appreciated for itself, it can be viewed as the best *Traveller* supplement on the market. In time, with proper supplementation of its own (SPI has great plans for add-on elements), it has promise of becoming far more. Buy it.

A classic is given more class

by Tony Watson

THIRD REICH is Avalon Hill's game of World War II grand strategy in the European theater. It was first published in 1974, and since then has garnered some awards at Origins conventions as well as the accolades of a number of reviewers and gamers. This praise is well deserved; the game is excellent. This

reviewer plays very few WWII titles, but despite this game's relative complexity and length of play, my gaming group always manages to get together for two or three campaign games of THIRD REICH every year.

The original rules were marred by a lack of clarity and a number of ambiguities; this led to a second-edition rule book in 1976. This second effort made only minor changes in the

substance of the rules, primarily fine tuning aimed at eliminating perfect plans and unusual situations.

A strong testament to THIRD REICH's continued popularity is the fact that Avalon Hill has decided to take another look at designer John Prados' game. This result is the third edition of THIRD REICH, and this time wide-ranging and fundamental changes have been

made. If the second edition was fine tuning, the third edition is a major overhaul.

THIRD REICH is a strategic level game of the war in Europe 1939 to 1945. The large map depicts Europe from Lisbon to the Caspian Sea and Alexandria to most of Scandinavia. The units are approximately corps size and come in armor, infantry, and airborne (all land units) as well as air and naval units. The actual movement and combat mechanics are not overly complex, but take a bit of practice to master. Players have the option of making attrition attacks on a given front, a sort of all-inclusive summation of the operations in a region, or of taking an offensive, during which attacks are made on an odds-chart CRT between adjacent units and nearby air fleets.

The turn sequence is move-combat-exploitation, the final phase being a second movement and combat opportunity for armored units that did not attack in the first combat phase and were adjacent to attacking units that eliminated their defenders and advanced after combat. It is this exploitation segment that really gives the game a great feel for mechanized warfare. Combined with air units, armored forces can truly recreate the *blitzkrieg* of rapid advances and massive encirclements. Naval units operate a little more abstractly, but can still perform their historic functions of ground support, naval transport, amphibious assault, and foiling of enemy naval missions.

While THIRD REICH's mechanics are interesting enough, the game has another whole level of play that forms an intense backdrop to the operational/military aspects of the game. Players not only assume the role of general staff, plotting out and executing offensives, but they must also take on the mantle of grand strategists, making the political and economic decisions of when and where to fight. Clausewitz's maxim that war is an extension of politics is aptly illustrated. The players are given basic criteria for victory (such as the control of a certain number of objective cities, or conquest of a number of enemy powers) but are left pretty much on their own as to how to do it. For example, while it might be wise for Germany to attack Russia on or before summer of 1941, the Axis player is never compelled to do so by an arbitrary rule. There is no rule compulsion to attack minor countries such as Norway, Holland or Belgium, but the Axis (or perhaps even the Allies in rare instances) might find it advantageous for reasons of position or economic aggrandizement. The options and strategies are variable and flexible.

Economics plays a large part in the game. Basic Resource Points (BRPs) are granted to each country; more can be obtained through economic growth or absorption of other nations. They are expended in purchasing units from a country's force pool or for paying for declarations of war and offensive options.

Aficionados will be pleased to know that the 1981 version is essentially the same as the one they own, but they may be curious as to what they will be getting for the \$9 price Avalon Hill is asking for an update kit, containing a new board, scenario cards, and rule book.

The main reason for the high price is the new mapboard. Functional differences from the old map are relatively minor. Sevastopol is now a fortress, Aachen has been renamed Bonn, and The Hague has been moved north one hex. Constantinople is now a Black Sea port as well as a Mediterranean port, giving the Turkish fleet something to do if the Russians invade. The mapboard is more aesthetically

pleasing; the blue used for the water has been muted, and the coastlines are thinner and thus more defined.

In the new force-pool cards, France and the U.S. now have separate cards instead of being backprinted, so that both nations can be in the game at the same time — if, for some reason, France should survive until 1942. The force pools have not been altered, and the original counter mix is still used.

The biggest changes are in the rules. Although basic concepts remain the same, there has been an almost total rewrite, and the effort has paid off. Of the three rulebooks for the various editions, this is the most intelligible.

Some of the mechanics have been altered. For example, an armored unit does not have to survive and advance into a hex during combat to achieve a breakthrough, but it does have to participate. This makes breakthroughs a little easier to effect.

The biggest rule changes have been made in air and naval combat. The old system was rather simple; no die rolls were required, and losses were extracted on a more-or-less even basis, though modified in favor of the larger force. In the new system, both sides roll a die; their die rolls are modified either up or down for such factors as numerical superiority and nationality. The modified results are compared, and the difference (in units) is lost by the lower roller, with the victor losing half as many units. The impact of this change on the game is considerable, especially in the air war, which is a crucial adjunct to land combat. It is more difficult for the offensive player to insure the destruction of the defender's air power, for one thing, and the air factors of both sides tend to survive a little longer than in the original game. More importantly, the introduction of a luck factor into the resolution process allows the possibility of a smaller force defeating a larger, something not possible before. Air attacks against fleets have been changed as well, now bloodier for both the navy units and the attacking planes.

Other changes include a reduction in the BRP loss to Britain for the Axis capture of Suez; the penalty is down from 50 BRPs to 25 BRPs, but Gibraltar is worth 25 now. The process for resolving Murmansk convoy attempts has been updated as well.

Russia is always the deciding front for the war, as the Soviet Union represents the most formidable obstacle to Axis victory. In the original rules, the USSR was conquered when reduced to less than 75 ground, air or naval factors. The third edition lowers that requirement to 50, but prevents the Soviet player from counting his fleets in his total. The Germans must have a 3:2 ratio in factors to Russian strength inside the USSR proper, a bit more than previously required. The net result is that the Germans can concentrate on attacking Russian units and not have to worry about chasing down the Soviet fleets.

A new section of rules dealing with foreign aid has been introduced. This allows the major powers to make BRP grants to minor powers in an attempt to influence their activation. For example: Rumania, normally an Axis minor that activates in summer of 1941, could be prevented from doing so by BRP grants from Russia, which would modify an activation die roll in favor of the Soviets. The Germans, of course, could spend BRPs to counter the Soviet diplomatic effort.

Also new is the intelligence table, used in conjunction with the campaign game variant

table. Players may expend BRPs and roll in hopes of discovering or possibly nullifying the enemy's variant chit.

The strategic warfare rules, which cover the U-boat campaign against British shipping and the bombing of German industry, have undergone some major changes. For one thing, the Allied ASW no longer eliminates Axis subs on a one-for-one basis; starting in 1943, ASW factors take out increased numbers of the opposition, preventing the Germans from enjoying quite the runaway success that strategic warfare afforded them previously.

There is also a new provision that in a strategic warfare phase when Allied bombers get through, the Axis must remove an air fleet from play for that year and convert it into interceptors. This keeps both sides on their toes and give incentives for the construction of both bombers and interceptors, units that had before been largely ignored in favor of U-boats and anti-submarine warfare factors.

This review includes only the most salient changes made in the third edition of THIRD REICH; numerous smaller alterations were made and even veteran players should reread the rules to insure catching them.

One might ask if all the effort expended on a third edition of this venerable game was worth it. I would have to answer yes. Though some of the new rules take a little getting used to (the new air warfare sections are a prime example), once they are understood they prove out to be changes for the better. It would seem that it is possible to improve upon a good thing, and the folks at Avalon Hill should be commended for caring enough to take another look at one of their products.



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New gaming accessories: Useful, durable, original

by Kim Mohan

I remember the days when the only things a game magazine reviewed were *games* — the days before people like Tim Orisek, Chuck Kennedy, R. B. Zajeski and some guy named Polly S started to carve out their own niches in the adventure-gaming market.

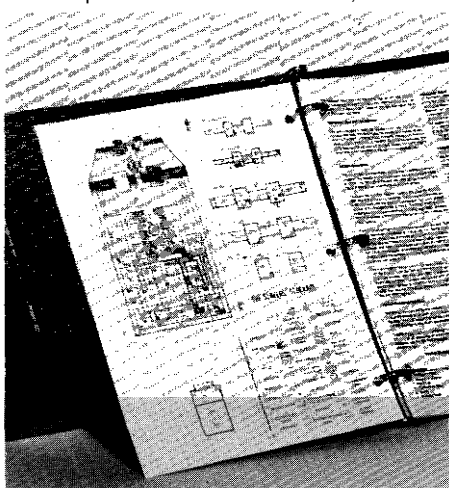
They don't do games, you see. They do game *accessories* — things that aren't games themselves, but are supposed to be used with a game to make the game itself easier or more enjoyable to use. Making game accessories is a good way for a manufacturer to get a slice of the game-playing consumer's dollar without going to all the trouble of creating a new game (and cluttering up things with yet another set of rules for something or other).

Does this mean that game-accessory manufacturers are trying to take advantage of the public's enthusiasm for the hobby by giving people more ways to spend their amusement money? Well...yes.

But that doesn't mean they're crooks or clods — particularly not the manufacturers mentioned above. The gaming accessories they've produced are an asset to the hobby because they satisfy three important criteria: They're useful, they're durable, and most important of all, they're original.

* * *

Orisek Industries is a company that makes "How come nobody thought of that before?" products. The people who brought the third dimension into gaming with Counter Clips and Nebelwerfer Smokescreens have now come up with SPELLBINDERS™, Orisek's



trademark for an assortment of vinyl notebooks. The flagship of the line is an 8½x11-inch, three-ring looseleaf binder that doubles as a storage place and a DM's screen. When the notebook is opened out, the cover can be tilted away from the center spine and the binder will stand up to keep its contents shielded from eyes on the other end of the table.

The big SPELLBINDER notebook has a suggested retail price of \$8.95, which sounds

a little steep for what is essentially an ordinary looseleaf binder with a gaming-oriented gimmick. But it appears to be very sturdily constructed and is covered in a tough plastic coating that doesn't seem likely to split at the seams. It'll last for a long time.

Another \$8.95 will get you two smaller SPELLBINDERS designed for the computer-game enthusiast. Covered with the same gold vinyl as the big notebook, the smaller binders are for storage of computer mini-disks and tape cassettes. The disk depository measures 9x12 inches. The inside has four simple, clear plastic pockets to accommodate an equal number of mini-disks. The cassette container is 7x10 inches, with four tape-shaped rectangles of molded plastic on one of the inside surfaces and a sleeve opposite it where documentation or rules can be stored.

All of the SPELLBINDER products have a valid purpose, but perhaps some purposes are more valid than others. Maybe it's because I don't happen to own a multitude of disks and cassettes, but I can't see the computer-game SPELLBINDERS being snapped up by everyone who's into that aspect of the hobby of gaming. For the price of a couple of binder sets, you can pick up some new blank disks or cassettes instead, and I have a feeling that's what a lot of people are going to do...

Contact Orisek Industries, P.O. Box 52, Hinsdale IL 60521, for more information on SPELLBINDERS or any of the company's other products.

* * *

Chuck Kennedy is the head of Creative Conceptions and the purveyor of a new playing aid called the MAGNE=MELEE™ Magnetic Graphic System, which is —

Heck, there's no way around it. It's a cookie sheet, folks. A *deluxe* cookie sheet, to be sure, with the other equipment and instructions you need to make moving miniatures around easier and more exact.

The product's conceptual claim to fame is something called the Diamo Dot™ pattern. The underside (where the cookies don't go) of the 11"x17" metal sheet is printed with the outline of a grid of larger diamonds and smaller dots. The diamond grid is set out in 1" squares, corresponding to 5 feet scale distance in 25mm. Each four-square-large section of the diamond grid contains 25 smaller squares defined with dots. Each of the smaller squares (7/16") represents a distance of 1 meter in 15mm scale. The overall pattern, while difficult to describe in words, is not confusing to behold on the back of the sheet. There aren't a *lot* of diamonds and dots, only as many as necessary to properly outline the playing area. It's easy to orient your eyes and "see" only the pattern you need for the scale of your figures.

The MAGNE=MELEE Basic Set includes a strip of pliable magnetic material which can be cut into ½-inch squares and temporarily fastened to the bases of figures (one side of the magnetic strip is self-adhesive) so they'll stay where they're put, plus a couple of

patches of magnetic stuff that can be chopped into chunks as desired and used to mark the location of stationary objects.

Magnetized characters are given a sense of direction by the use of a special marker supplied with the kit. It's called a dry erase marker, and it produces a dark brown line. Walls, doors and other terrain features can be drawn on the grid, and as characters move into different locations the DM can quickly redecorate by wiping away the walls that don't belong and drawing in the ones that do. The process is not as tedious or time-consuming as it may seem; step-by-step changes usually involve only a few lines' worth of re-drawing, and the marker is erased very easily by a finger wrapped in a piece of tissue. (A finger not wrapped in tissue will erase a line just as easily; chances are if a number of players are moving figures around the sheet at one time, somebody will accidentally wipe out a wall with his thumb once in a while.)

The marker leaves a slightly visible residue on the metal after the fluid is wiped away, but the dingy buildup seems to come off easily with soap and water. The instruction sheet mentions, almost in passing, a point that should have been more strongly emphasized: Standard felt-tip markers will not work. If the fluid from a non-erasable marker is put on the surface and allowed to dry, it won't come off easily if at all.

The three pages of instructions are very complete — so much so that a lot of the suggestions will seem self-evident to anyone with a bit of experience in playing with figures. The MAGNE=MELEE Basic Set is available for \$11.95 plus \$1.95 postage from Creative Conceptions, P.O. Box 33, So. St. Paul MN 55075. You can also get an expansion kit (black, blue, green and red markers plus more magnetic stuff) for \$4.95 plus \$.95 postage, and the colored markers are sold as a set by themselves for \$3.85 plus \$.65 postage. (Apparently to get another Diamo Dot sheet, you have to buy another Basic Set. Try making 'em an offer.)

MAGNE=MELEE is a good idea and a convenient, simple system. But I'm afraid that if a customer's initial reaction is, "12 for a cookie sheet?!" then his money is liable to end up in some other company's coffers. Chuck Kennedy doesn't attempt to ignore the origin of the playing surface; he brings it up in the instructions, and also points out that "it helps us provide serious gamers with an effective graphic system at a reasonable price."

Maybe if the original product exhibits enough (ahem) attraction, Creative Conceptions would be able to sink some money into a new version with specially prepared board sections that could be added to one another in modular fashion. The scale size of the playing surface (40x70 feet) in 25mm is not sufficiently large for many encounter areas, and the obvious way to expand is to join two boards together. And if you've never tried to butt the edges of two upside-down cookie sheets together, go out to the kitchen right now and satisfy your curiosity.

After you've stood up your notebook and drawn out your map on metal, you can click on your DRAGONBONE™ and get ready for action. Now a DM can decide a character's fate with the flick of a switch and push of a button — and no more fishing around in the

shag carpet for that cute little 5mm micro-die that just tumbled off the table for the twentieth time. DRAGONBONE makes die rolling electronic without the use of a computer.

The device is made by R. B. Zajeski and DB Enterprises, 14030 S. Laramie, Crestwood IL 60445. It is a sturdy plastic cylinder about an inch in diameter and 7 inches long, with a dial on the bottom and a double column of little red lights down one side of the cylinder. The dial can be set to simulate a roll of d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, d20 or percentile dice, and when a button is pressed one of the lights (two, if you're rolling d%) within the specified range comes on.

The marrow of DRAGONBONE is an electronic clock that cycles 2,000 times per second. Different numbers are generated depending on when the pushing of the button interrupts the cycling of the clock. Thus the number generation is not literally random; it's a function of the time between button-pushes. But there's no way to beat the system unless you can estimate elapsed time with accuracy to 1/2000 second.

How do you playtest a product like this? You push a lot of buttons, trying to find out if the numbers seem to be random. They seem to be. You wait for the machine to make a mistake, like giving you a result of 12 when you roll a 10-sider. It didn't.

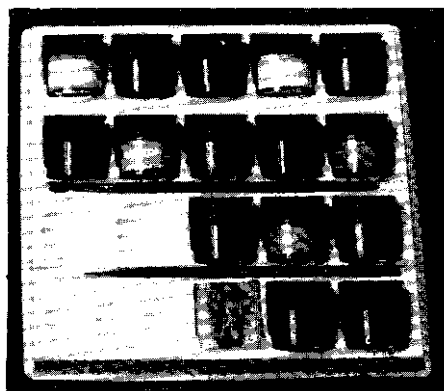
DRAGONBONE does what it's supposed to. I hope Son of Dragonbone, if there is one, does more. The machinery needs to be upgraded, if it can be, to allow for one-shot generation of numbers from more than one die. You can get a new number as quickly as you can push the button again, but it's a pain to go "click" over and over to calculate a 6-die fireball when you can pick up a handful of dice and get it over with in one motion. DB Enterprises is reportedly at work on an improved model; if technological and financial considerations do not prevent it, maybe the "ultimate" hand-held random-number generator will be upon us soon. DRAGONBONE is certainly a big step in the right direction. It can be had by mail for \$21.95 plus \$1.50 postage.

* * *

It takes a lot of effort to keep up on developments in the world of fantasy gaming. Something as ordinary as a color chart from a paint company can provide a wealth of new information about a game—when the chart is from the new ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Color Series by the Floquil-Polly S Color Corp.

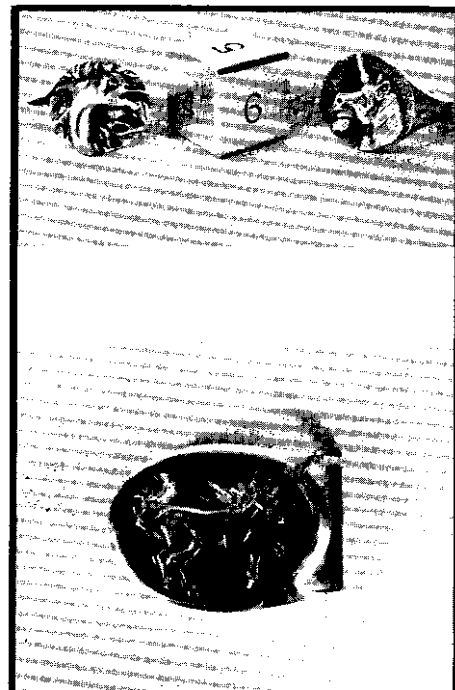
The 54 colors and (presumably) their names were developed by Polly S in cooperation with TSR Hobbies, Inc., and the line is licensed as an official AD&D™ product. The colors are available individually in the company's standard 5/8-oz. bottles, and 15 smaller containers of basic paints are packaged in the Polly S AD&D Fantasy Paint Set.

If you want to consider the colors and names as official AD&D rule additions (and why not?), we now know the body colors of some creatures whose descriptions in the Monster Manual don't even tint at an answer. The series includes Carrion Crawler Lt. Green, Couatl Orange, Hippogriff Yellow, and Djinni Lt. Blue, among others. At last we know what the "nauseous" Mind Flayer Mauve looks like. And, mysteriously, we learn of the existence of Basilisk Dk. Green. (The Monster Manual says basilisks are "usually dull brown," so this must be what color the unusual ones are.) The major humanoid races, up to and including giants, are all represented by a shade depicting their appropriate skin color — at last, a definitive statement on the difference between Dwarf Flesh and Gnome Grey/Brown.



The list goes on — and I would be remiss in not noting Beholder Body Fuchsia, Ankhheg Underside Pink, Remorhaz Blue/Green, and Bulette Head — all the colors you never knew you needed until you found out they existed!

The Fantasy Paint Set comes with a couple of brushes, a 25mm wizard figure from Genadier Models' official AD&D figure line, and little bottles of metal primer and clear gloss finish in addition to a good selection of starter colors. The whole thing is packaged in an official plastic tray that includes mixing wells for blending your own shades. Look for the Fantasy Paint Set, or the larger display of the entire line, in your store — if only to find out what color a cockatrice is supposed to be.



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Figuratively Speaking

Reviews by
Bill Fawcett

Photographs by
Kathy O'Donnell



MASTERPIECE MINIATURES

The Great Dragon Drax

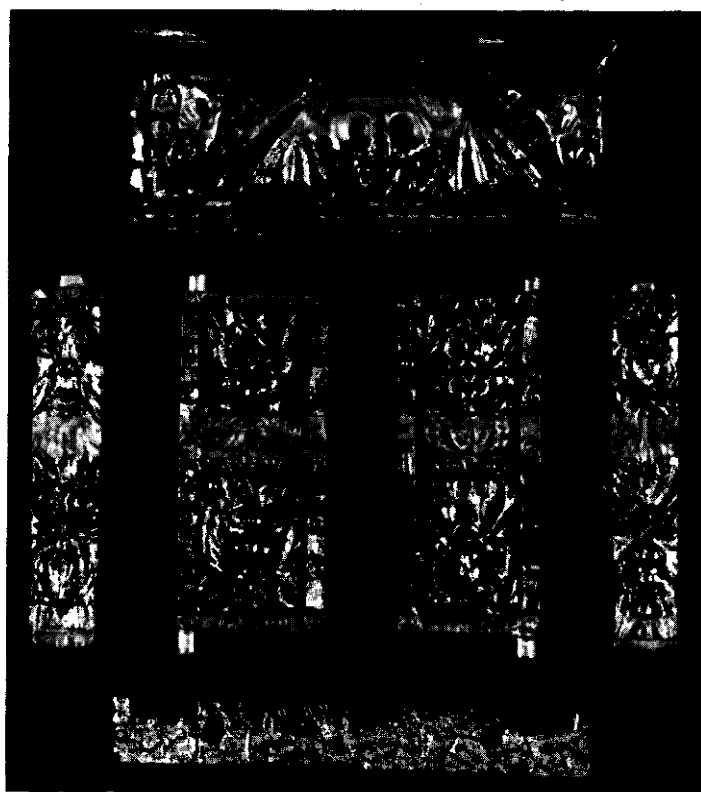
Prop: 5 Det: 6
Anim: 8 Tech: 8

The expression on the face of this large figure hints of wisdom. Detail on the mouth and scales is nicely done. The claws are poised as if to strike or grasp.

Red Dragon

Prop: 8 Det: 6
Anim: 8 Tech: 6

The pose and sense of movement of this figure are outstanding. Some flash marred the casting, but was easily cleanable. A most suitable figure for a gold dragon.



Doorway

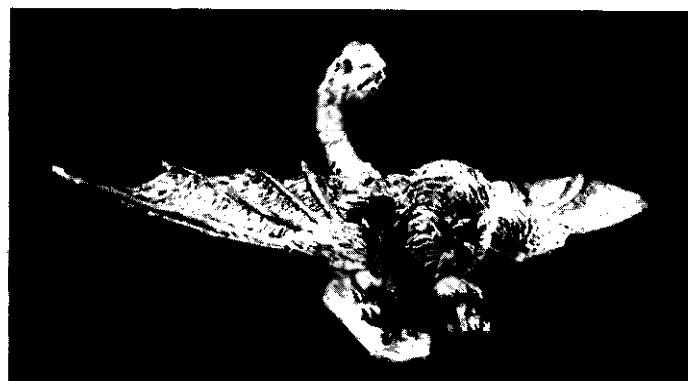
Prop: 7 Det: 8
Anim: 7 Tech: 7

This six-piece set which assembles into a double door is nicely to scale. The decorative surfaces are deeply inscribed with faces and wing-shapes. The parts fit together with little trouble, and the unit is self-standing when assembled.

We show 'em, they sell 'em

Letters from readers concerning this feature are appreciated, but unfortunately *Figuratively Speaking* cannot provide more information to potential buyers of the figures which are reviewed, such as addresses of the manufacturers. Those who want to contact a figure manufacturer or dealer are encouraged to look through advertisements in this and other magazines. Your local hobby shop is also a good source for this sort of information.

ARCHIVE MINIATURES



Manticore

Prop: 7 Det: 7
Anim: 7 Tech: 8+

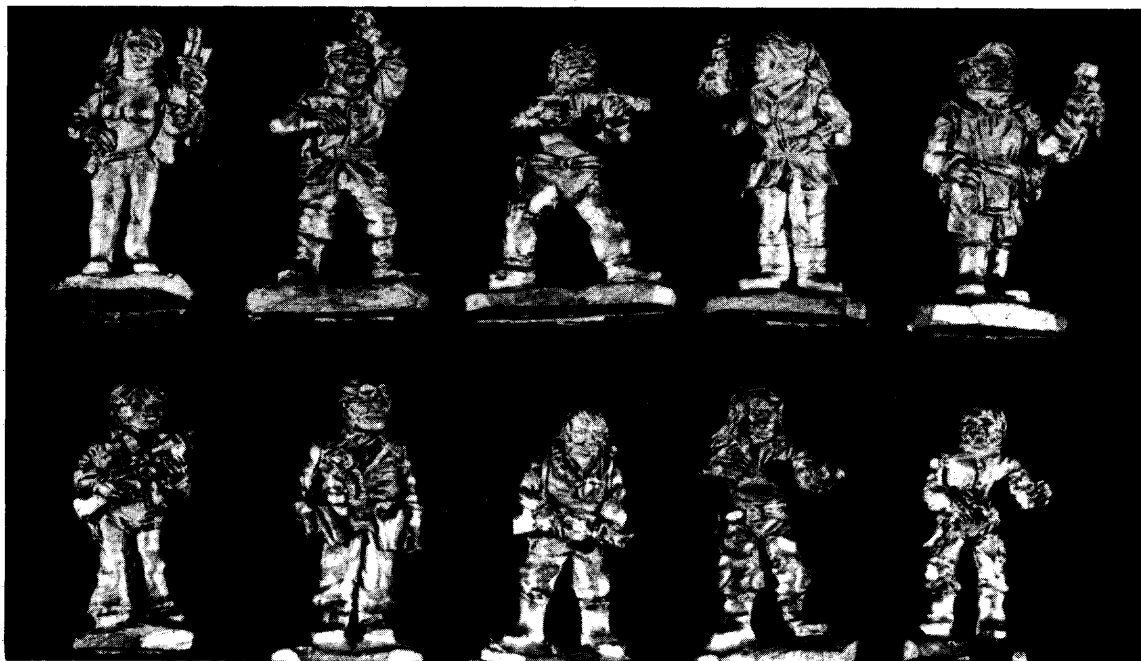
The high technical rating for this figure is due to the excellent system Archive uses to attach such parts as the wings and tail of this creature. The parts are cast with a peg which fits into a hole on the body, making them easy to assemble and able to withstand normal handling.



Gorillasaurus

Prop: 7 Det: 6
Anim: 8 Tech: 7

This creature looks like a cross between a rhinoceros and a gorilla. The body plating is well done, and the figure has an air of muscular power about it. Again, the system used to attach body parts makes it a breeze to assemble.



FANTASY GAMES UNLIMITED

15mm Science Fiction figures

Prop: 5

Det: 7

Anim: 7

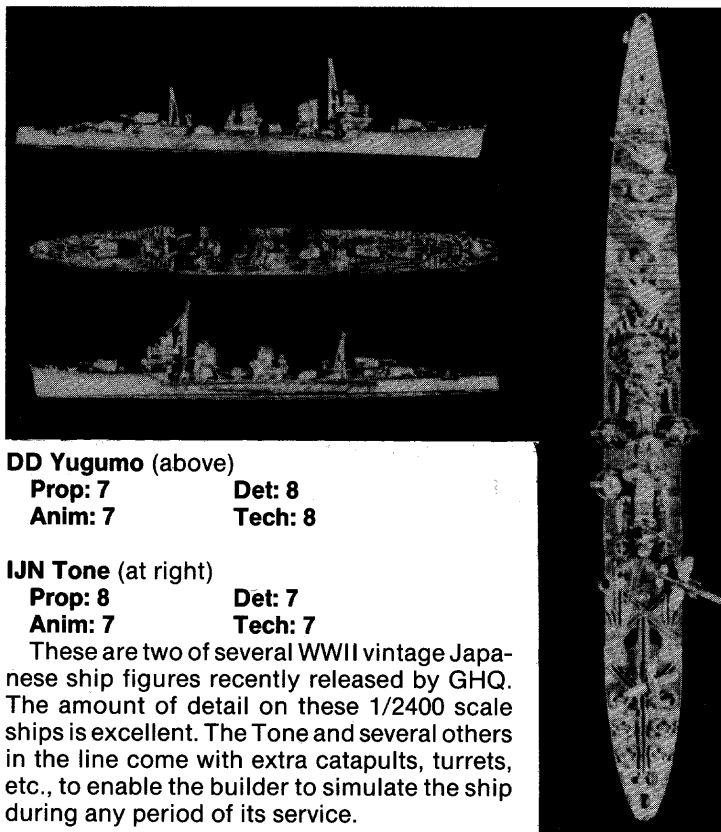
Tech: 7

FGU is now marketing its own line of 15mm figures, suitable for use with any SF game using

miniatures rules for that scale. The figures are generally well posed, and are armed with a good variety of lethal-looking weapons. FGU expects to be issuing more figures in this line shortly.

GHQ

Japanese ships



DD Yugumo (above)

Prop: 7

Det: 8

Anim: 7

Tech: 8

IJN Tone (at right)

Prop: 8

Det: 7

Anim: 7

Tech: 7

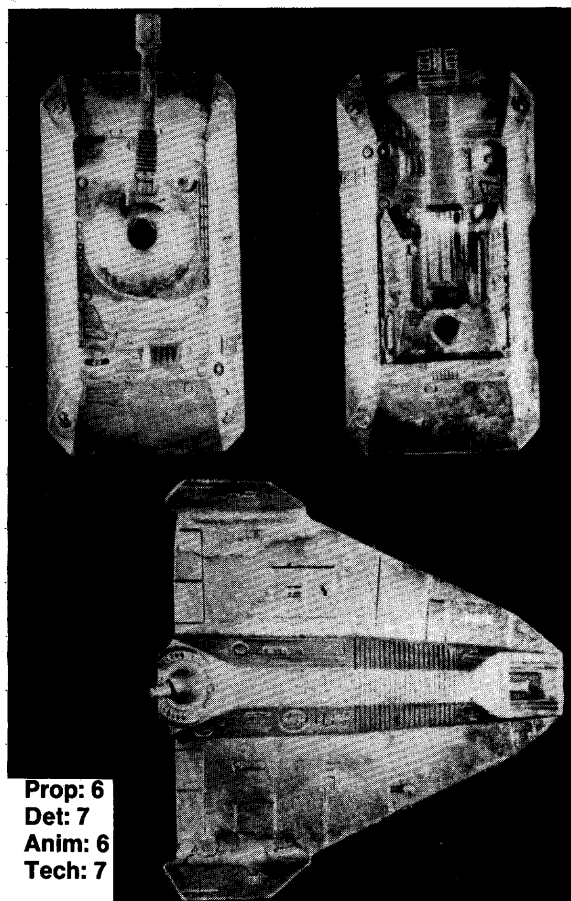
These are two of several WWII vintage Japanese ship figures recently released by GHQ. The amount of detail on these 1/2400 scale ships is excellent. The Tone and several others in the line come with extra catapults, turrets, etc., to enable the builder to simulate the ship during any period of its service.

Winner of the losers

B. L. Simonsen of Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif., has been announced as the winner of the auction following the miniatures battle played at the GEN CON XIII convention. Ral Partha's team beat MiniFigs in the competition, and the losing side's figures were put up for auction by sealed bid. Proceeds from the sale were donated to the United Fund.

T-REX

Ground & Air Equipment for Space Opera



Prop: 6

Det: 7

Anim: 6

Tech: 7

These tanks and aircraft are appropriate for SF gaming of all types. They are roughly 1/72 scale and have a good amount of fine detail.

DINOSAURS

(Continued from page 76)

nodon weighs about 50 pounds, and can lift off to glide in only a moderate breeze. It uses the blade-like crest on its head as a rudder and stabilizer while flying. It cannot carry anything weighing more than a few pounds. A pteranodon is in trouble if it is caught on the ground or on the surface of the water by a predator, for its hollow bones and thin wing membranes make it highly vulnerable to attack. However, an entire flock will dive to attack anything which threatens its cliff-side nest.

Quetzalcoatlus

FREQUENCY: *Rare*
NO. APPEARING: 1-3
ARMOR CLASS: 10
MOVE: 3"/15"
HIT DICE: 3
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-10
SIZE: L (40' wingspan)

This huge pterosaur is an awesome sight as it sweeps across the sky. But though it is 15 feet long with a 40-foot wingspan, quetzalcoatlus weighs less than 100 pounds! It eats carrion and small prey. With a good wind, a full-sized quetzalcoatlus might be able to carry off a small child or light halfling.

MARINE CREATURES

Below are the most interesting-and well known of the marine animals contemporary with the dinosaurs. Not all of these are dinosaurs but will be encountered in the same time and place. Not covered is the megalodon, which is found in the Monster Manual under "Shark."

Archelon

FREQUENCY: *Uncommon*
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: 2
MOVE: 3"/12"
HIT DICE: 6
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8
SIZE: L (12' long)

Archelon is actually a giant prehistoric marine turtle. It feeds on swimming creatures smaller than itself.

Crocodile, Marine

FREQUENCY: *Uncommon*
NO. APPEARING: 1-4
ARMOR CLASS: 5
MOVE: 15" (water only)
HIT DICE: 4-9 (d6 + 3)
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-12/3-18 (4-6HD)
or 2- 16/5-20 (7-9HD)
SIZE: L (15'-40' long)

Crocodiles and giant crocodiles are

common in the dinosaurs' world. Less well known is this species of fully marine crocodiles, with flippers instead of feet. The first attack listed is a whack with the tail; the second is the bite.

Dinictys

FREQUENCY: *Common*
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: 6
MOVE: 18"
HIT DICE: 7
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-24
SIZE: L (25' long)

Dinictys is a giant hunter fish with a huge mouth. It will attack anything smaller than itself.

Elasmosaurus

FREQUENCY: *Common*
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: 6
MOVE: 15"
HIT DICE: 8
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-18
SIZE: L (40' long)

Elasmosaurus is among the largest of the plesiosaurs. Though 40 feet long, over 20 feet of this is neck. Its long, needle-like teeth are made for catching fish, but it could also easily reach into a small boat and snatch a sailor.

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Metagaming's fourth MicroHistory is a rollicking game of plunder and pillage, depicting a viking raid on a medieval coastal village. Plunder, kidnapping, berserking, sacking, looting and all of the other good things in life are here for historical and adventure gamers.

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SECURITY STATION



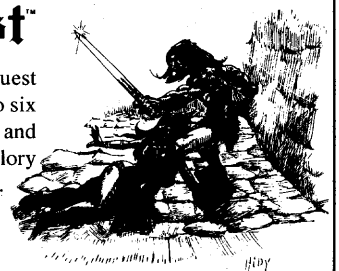
This is Metagaming's fifth MicroQuest. Security STATION is an adventure in a high technology labyrinth for group or solitaire play. TFT: MELEE rules required.

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Ichthyosaurus

FREQUENCY: *Common*
 NO. APPEARING: 1-20
 ARMOR CLASS: 8
 MOVE: 24"
 HIT DICE: 2
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6
 SIZE: *M (7'long)*

A classic case of convergent evolution: An ichthyosaurus looks so much like a dolphin that a character who hasn't seen one before is 90% likely to mistake it for a dolphin. Unlike dolphins, these marine reptiles are savage predators, and are far more likely to attack a swimmer.

Tylosaurus

FREQUENCY: *Uncommon*
 NO. APPEARING: 1
 ARMOR CLASS: 6
 MOVE: 18"
 HIT DICE: 7-12 (*d6 + 6*)
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-20 (*7-9HD*)
 or 3-30 (*10-12HD*)
 SIZE: *L (20'-40'-long)*

Tylosaurus is a mosasaur, a giant marine lizard (not a dinosaur). It is propelled through the water both by flippers and by its powerful tail. It has a large head and mouth, shaped like a lizard's rather than a carnosaur's. Other mem-

bers of the family of mosasaurs include mosasaurus and nothosaurus.

Plesiosaurus

FREQUENCY: *Common*
 NO. APPEARING: 7-6
 ARMOR CLASS: 7
 MOVE: 15"
 HIT DICE: 4
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 7-8
 SIZE: *L (10' long)*

Plesiosaurus is representative of most plesiosaurs, being 10 feet long, of which 5 feet is neck. Like elasmosaurus, its main diet is fish.

DINOSAUR ENCOUNTER TABLE

When characters in an AD&D™ game are adventuring in dinosaur country and the DM is using this article as a reference, this updated encounter table will prove more appropriate than the one found in the Monster Manual.

Creature name and type	Plains	Scrub	Forest	Marsh	Creature name and type	Plains	Scrub	Forest	Marsh
Allosaurus (carnosaur)	01-04	01-04	01-04	01-04	Parasaurolophus (hadrosaur)	51-54	52-58	53-60	59-67
Anatosaurus (hadrosaur)	05-08	05-11	05-08	05-13	Plateosaurus (sauropod)	55-62	59-65	61-68	68-73
Ankylosaurus (ornithopod)	09-12	12-15	09-12	---	Pteranodon (pterosaur)	63-66	66-69	---	74-76
Apatosaurus (sauropod)	13-16	16-22	13-20	14-19	Quetzalcoatlus (pterosaur)	67-68	---	---	77-79
Brachiosaurus (sauropod)	17-18	23-26	21-24	20-25	Stegosaurus (ornithopod)	69-76	70-76	69-76	80-85
Crocodile, Marine	---	---	---	26-37	Teratosaurus (carnosaur)	77-80	77-80	77-80	86-91
Deinonychus (carnosaur)	19-22	27-30	25-28	38-40	Therezinosaurus (carnosaur)	81-82	81-84	81-84	91-94
Diplodocus (sauropod)	23-26	31-37	29-36	41-46	Triceratops (ornithopod)	83-94	85-93	85-92	---
Iguanodon (hadrosaur)	27-38	38-44	37-44	47-52	Tyrannosaurus rex (carnosaur)	95-96	94-96	93-96	95-96
Misc. small dinosaur*	39-50	45-51	45-52	53-58	Other creature†	97-00	97-00	97-00	97-00

* — "Miscellaneous small dinosaur" includes all dinosaurs deer-sized or smaller. They are edible, but of no other interest to adventurers.

† — When "Other creature" is rolled, the DM should employ one of the following:

A standard AD&D fantasy monster.

A monster that might be found on dinosaur turf if it were real (lizard men, giant toads, giant snakes, etc.)

A new kind of dinosaur of the DM's creation, previously unknown.

A highly evolved dinosaur; for instance, an intelligent dromaeosaur with "hands" (two fingers and a thumb) instead of mere clawed fingers.

As previously mentioned, the DM should use judgement about how tough the encounter should be. It may be desirable to use a species similar to, but smaller than, the one rolled up. Crocodiles may be normal or giant-sized, depending on the circumstances.

Da story of "Da Letter..."

by Kim Mohan

I've met Larry Elmore, and he would agree with me that he's not the kind of person who stands out in a crowd. But he has two real good ways of getting attention: He paints terrific pictures, and he draws terrific letters.

"Da Letter," which begins on the page following this one, arrived at the Dragon Publishing World Headquarters after a payment to Larry was, er, somewhat overdue and he decided we deserved a little poke in the ribs (or wherever it is you poke someone who owes you money).

The story actually started a few weeks before Larry's reminder arrived, when I wrote to Larry to inform him that the painting he had sent us was indeed acceptable for publication, and (like it says on page 2 of Da Letter) "the money will be coming soon." After "soon" had long since passed, Larry drew the following pages and sent them to us. His distinctive way of communicating didn't go unnoticed or unappreciated: He got his money, and we got a great little set of comic-strip pages that I wished there was a way to publish...

Well, where there's a madness, there's a method. Sure we can publish it, I said. All we have to do is wait 'til the calendar is released, so people will understand what it's all about, and . . . to avoid giving away the big finish, I'll stop there and hope it all becomes clear after you see the next four pages.

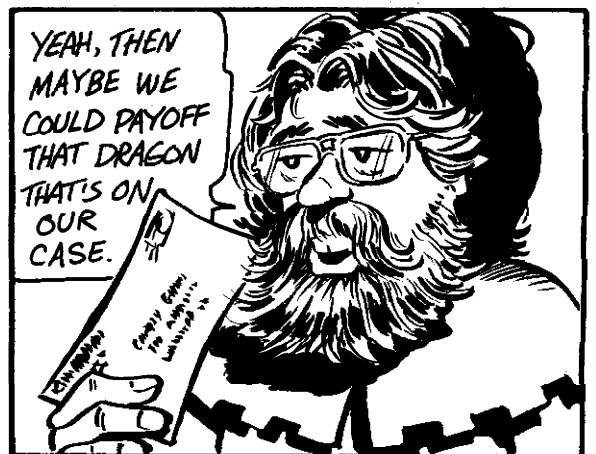
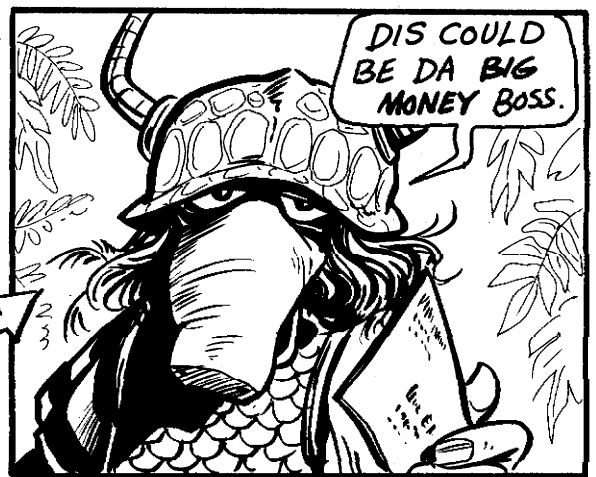
The story has an epilogue, which we're happy to relate because it means (among other things) that you're liable to see

more of Larry Elmore's artwork in the pages of DRAGON magazine in the months to come. The folks at TSR Hobbies, Inc., (our parent company) were so impressed with the painting Larry did for Dragon Publishing that they offered him a job as a box-cover designer and illustrator for TSR Games products — and he took it.

Which means he's just down the street now, instead of all the way down south in Leitchfield, Kentucky. And an editor doesn't have to have an intelligence of 18 to take advantage of a situation like that. I won't be able to keep myself from crossing the threshold of his office with a plea for an illustration for this article or that short story, and we may try to talk him into flexing his fingers on a regular comic strip. And if Larry ever shows us another color painting as good as the one on the cover of our calendar, you'll all see it real soon after we do.

On second thought, maybe I shouldn't have said soon. . . .

DA LETTER.....







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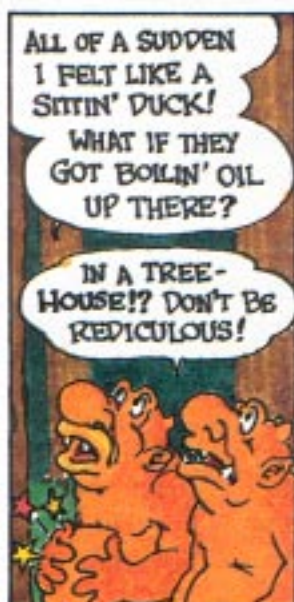
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So go dragon hunting. Find the 1982 DAYS OF THE DRAGON calendar wherever you buy DRAGON magazine, or send \$7.00 (includes postage and handling) to receive one by mail order from Dragon Publishing (a division of TSR Hobbies, Inc.), P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147.



WORMY



WHAT'S NEW?

HI FOLKS! PHIL FOGGIO AND DIXIE NULL HERE!

AND NO, DESPITE APPEARANCES- THIS IS NOT OUR STRIP ON "SEX AND D&D".

WE'RE WAITING FOR SOME EXTRA EQUIPMENT, SO MAYBE NEXT MONTH.

THIS MONTH WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A NEW IDEA FOR MINIATURE WARFARE.

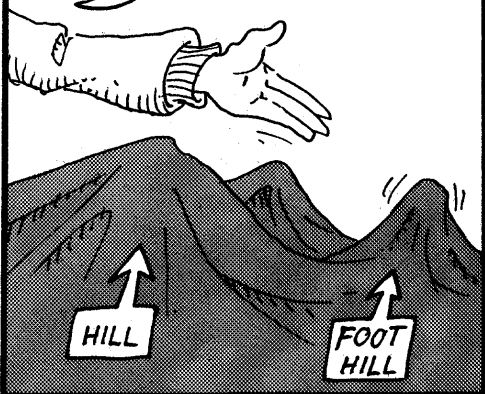
IT'S A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE TRADITIONAL SAND-TABLE: YOUR BED! BLANKETS DRAPED OVER A PERSON CREATE HILLS, VALLEYS, ETCETERA.

AND IF YOU OR YOUR OPPONENT IS SHAPED LIKE GETTYSBURG OR BUNKER HILL- SO MUCH THE BETTER.

IT'S CHEAP, SIMPLE, TAKES UP NO ADDITIONAL SPACE AND HAS MANY OBVIOUS ADVANTAGES...

FINE- YOU STUDY YOUR POSITION ALL YOU WANT, WAKE ME WHEN YOU'RE READY TO MOVE.

HMPH



IT ALSO ENABLES PLAYERS TO BRING THE FORCES OF NATURE INTO PLAY...

HAI! I'VE GOT YOU SURROUNDED! YOUR POSITION IS HOPELESS!

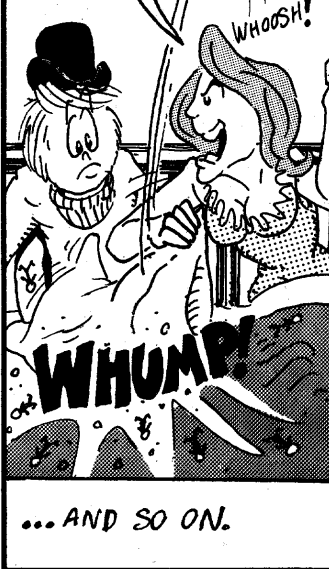
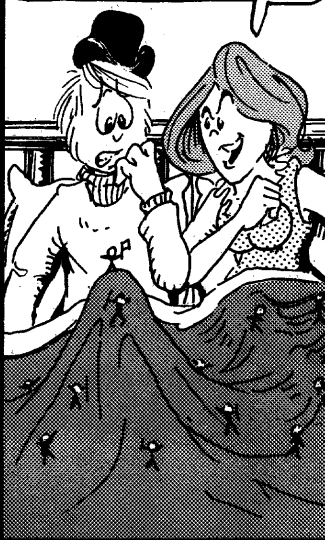
BUT LOOK! AN EARTHQUAKE HAS JUST DEMOLISHED YOUR LEFT FLANK!

OH YEAH? WELL A GIANT WHITE METEORITE JUST DESTROYED YOUR COMMAND CENTER!

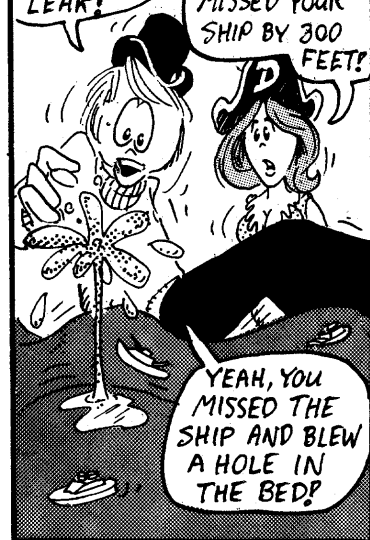
ONE FINAL WORD OF ADVICE: WATERBEDS DO NOT MAKE GOOD FIELDS FOR NAVAL ENCOUNTERS.

AVAST! WE'VE SPRUNG A LEAK!

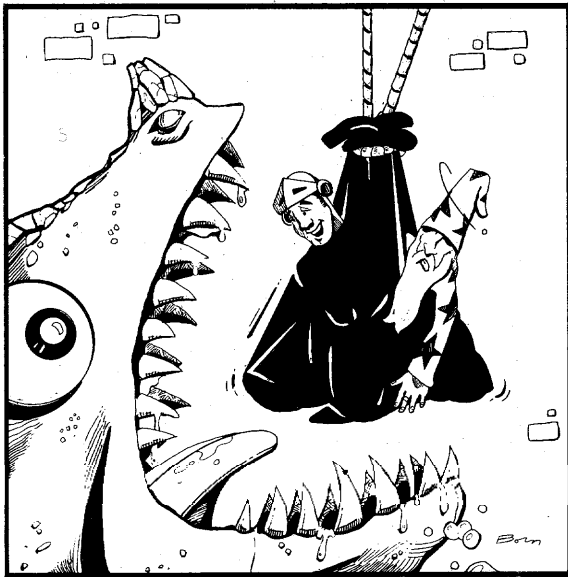
WHAT? THAT LAST SHOT MISSED YOUR SHIP BY 300 FEET!



... AND SO ON.



YEAH, YOU MISSED THE SHIP AND BLEW A HOLE IN THE BED!

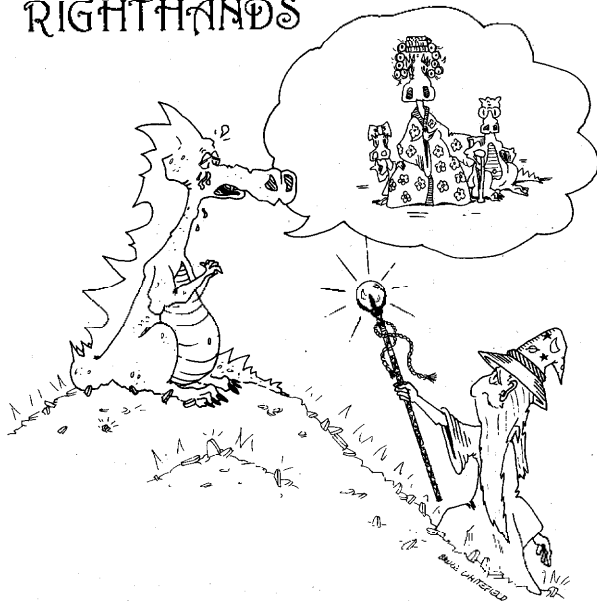


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DOES A WIZARD
PUT OUT THE CATS?"



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