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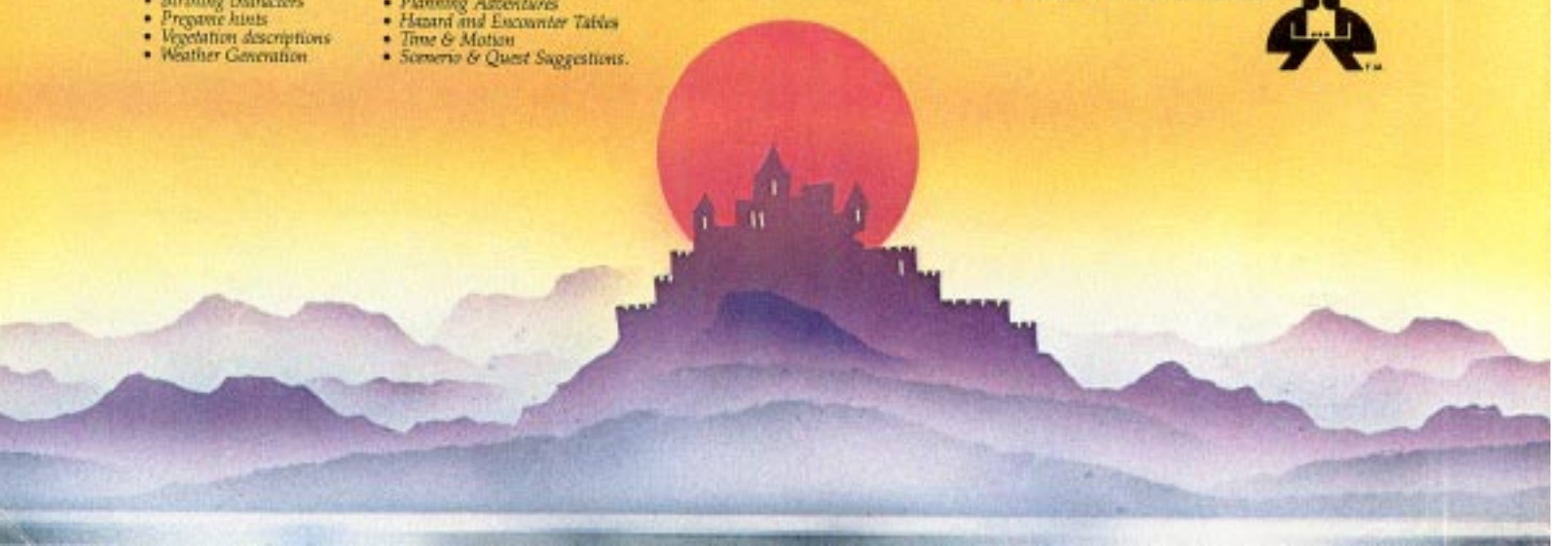
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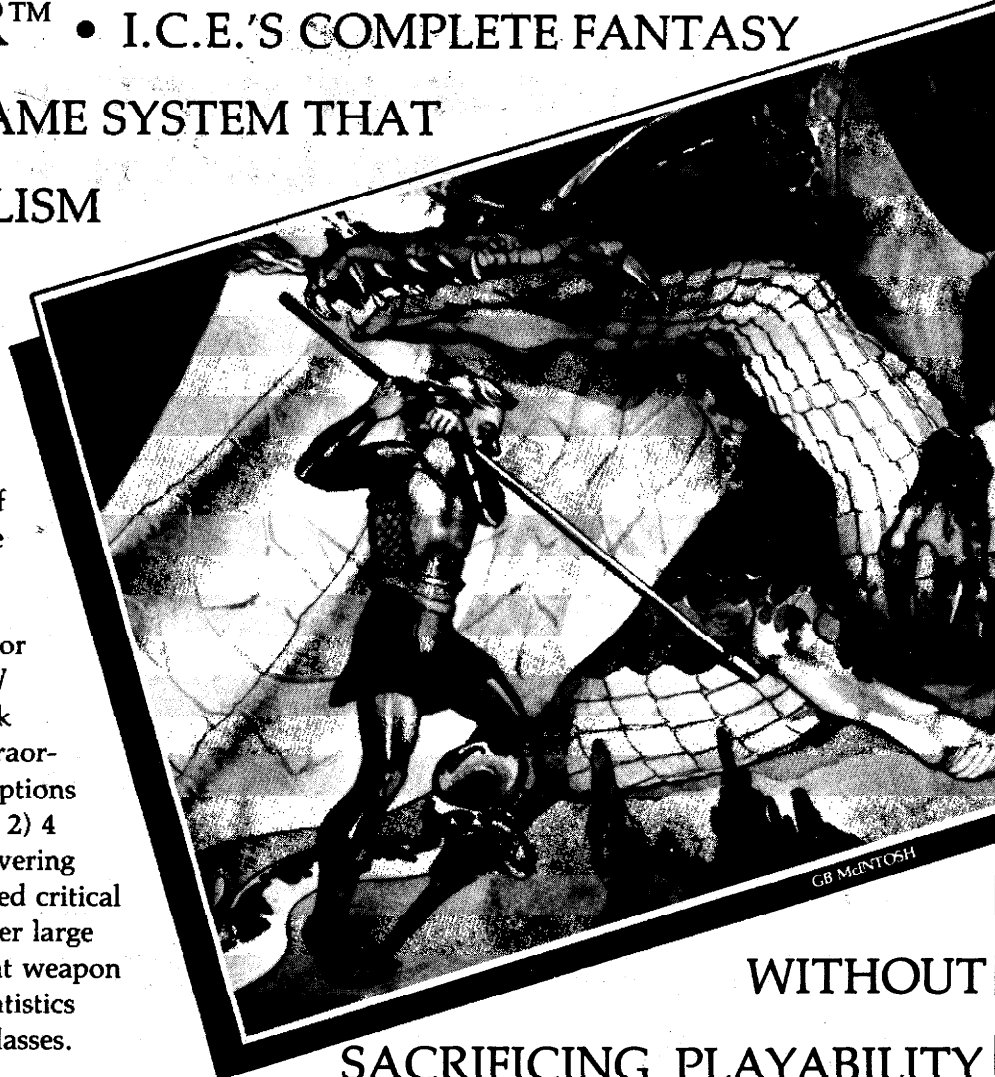
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## Quiet celebration

Birthdays don't hold as much meaning for us any more as they did when we were younger. That statement is true for just about all of us, of just about any age, and it's true of this "old" magazine, too.

June 1983 is the seventh anniversary of the first issue of DRAGON™ Magazine. In one way or another, we made a pretty big thing of birthdays one through five — if you have those issues, you know what I mean. Birthday number six came and went without quite as much fanfare, and now, for number seven, we've decided on a quiet celebration. (Maybe we'll have a few friends over to the cave, but that's about it.)

This is as good a place as any to note the occasion, and it is now so noted. Have a quiet celebration of your own on our behalf, if you've a mind to, and I hope you'll all still be with us for number eight, number nine, number ten, . . .

Mary Kirchoff knew before she came to Dragon Publishing that in this business things don't always get done when they ought to be done. As evidence of that fact, here is Mary's official welcome to the DRAGON editorial staff — a month late.

Those of you who faithfully read the small print in the column to the left of this one will have noticed that Mary joined our staff as of issue #73. She is still the editor of the POLYHEDRON™ Newszine published by the RPGA™ Network. But now, she's also filling the vacancy on our staff created when Gali Sanchez made a switch to the Games Division of TSR Hobbies, Inc.

Needless to say, Mary tends to keep busy. Needless to say, she likes it that way. We're glad to have her on board.

Those of you who have enjoyed Roger Moore's writing in this magazine will be happy to hear that this is Roger's last issue as a contributing editor.

Huh? Is there a catch? You bet there is: Effective with the next issue of DRAGON magazine, Roger Moore will be a member of our editorial staff.

Yes, Roger will still write articles for us, at least as long as his four-foot-long list of ideas holds out. And the big advantage in having him on the staff is that he'll be right around the corner instead of 'way down in Loo-vull (which, I am informed, is the way the natives say it), so we'll be able to use his skills in lots of other ways to keep this magazine getting better — not just older.



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his issue's special inclusion is brought to you through the efforts of the guy who invented the wheel. Without that idea to pave the

way, we wouldn't have been able to take two wheels and turn them into the (drum roll, please . . .) DRAGON™ Magazine Combat Computer. Now, instead of going around in circles trying to determine who hit whom, all you AD&D™ Dungeon Masters can get a "to hit" reading with a simple twist of the two cardboard discs. Better make plans now for what to do with all the time you're going to save. . . .

. . . For instance, you could put together a mission for player characters to find one of the "Seven swords" described for us by Ed Greenwood's old friend, Elminster the sage. . . .

. . . And maybe this scenario will involve a trip through the home territory of one of the "Landragons" created by Ronald Hall — or the electrum dragon, another new species of dragon-kind from the imagination of the aforementioned Mr. Greenwood.

Then, when the characters succeed at the tasks you've placed before them, they'll probably come home with lots of loot. That's the time to invoke the principles of Lew Pulsipher's article, "A player character and his money . . ."

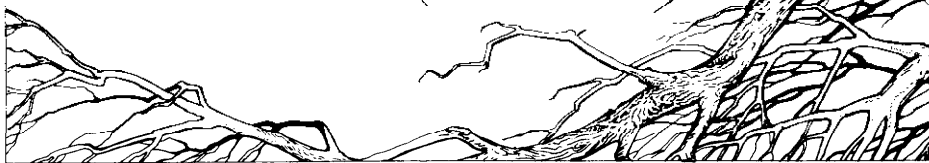
Maybe someone will want to spend some cash to buy a new horse and be sure it's properly attired, in which case Gary Gyax's *From the Sorcerer's Scroll* column on "Warhorses and barding" will come in handy. Maybe someone will want to line the pockets of a bureaucrat, or pay to help a politician get elected; if so, the semi-facetious figures outlined in *Leomund's Tiny Hut* can inspire you to create characters to fit those circumstances.

We've been promising our readers — and ourselves — that sooner or later we'd start publishing full-scale computer programs dealing with role-playing games. All things do eventually come to pass: Inside is an article on "Programmed character creation" plus a BASIC language program for use with the D&D® game — the first of many "computer packages" we're planning for the months to come.

Secret agents in the crowd (that's okay, you don't have to raise your hands) will get a kick out of Arlen Walker's three-piece feature on the origins and organization of those famous adversaries, UNCLE and THRUSH.

All of that, and more, awaits you inside — plus a 32-page insert filled with everything you need to know about the GEN CON® XVI Game Fair. You're gonna need all the time you can save, just to finish this issue in time for the next one. — KM

# OUT ON A LIMB



## 'I finally disagreed'

Dear Editor:

"Up on a Soapbox" has always been one of my favorite columns in DRAGON, and I've never really had any arguments with the opinions expressed in it over many issues. However, after reading John T. Sapienza, Jr.'s essay in issue #72, "Level titles don't do justice," I finally disagreed.

I don't argue with his objections to the technical applications of level names; it would be silly to speak of a Tibetan bishop or a Catholic lama, but the idea is for titles to represent a progression from 1st level onwards — if some titles are inappropriate, then that is because it is difficult to find technically appropriate names that would accurately describe each level and also fit into any campaign culture.

I admire Mr. Sapienza's proposed abbreviation system for character stats, and plan to use it in the future. But I also like the character class level names, and plan to continue using them. I take pride in having my paladin enter a town and announce himself as "Medraut the Defender," and hope to raise him to where he may call himself a Paladin — a title he will have earned through many adventures and noble deeds.

In short, Mr. Sapienza put forth a good argument in defense of his point, but I doubt anyone will be "hurt" by the continued inclusion of level titles, and I don't think it was necessary [for him] to get "Up on a Soapbox" to demand their withdrawal.

Christopher-Michael DiGrazia  
Lawrence, Mass.

## 'Disturbing trend'

Dear Editor:

I would like to express my concern over what I see as a disturbing trend in the last several issues of DRAGON: a greatly increased emphasis on charts, tables, statistical comparisons and the like. Specifically, "Charting the classes" and "Weapon statistics" (#69), "The hull truth about speed" and "A second volley" (#70), and "Who gets the first swing?" (#71), to cite only a few of many examples.

I've also noticed the introduction of a plethora of new character classes and the needless reworking of older ones, such as the recent articles on illusionists and druids, for example.

You tout your magazine as a role playing aid, and although the articles I mentioned above are all well written and well intentioned, they do not further the cause of role playing.

It is difficult enough for Gamemasters to wean players from their beloved handbooks and charts and [get them to] play their characters as individuals rather than puppets tethered to a leash of polyhedra dice. Is fantasy role playing really served by an article interpreting the classes on a strictly numerical basis?

Again, the articles were well done. I applaud the quantum jump in professionalism of recent articles over some published in years past by DRAGON. Yet, I see a letter like Tim Henke's (in issue #64), asking that DRAGON do his creative thinking for him, and I can't help but wonder what attitudes newer readers are gleaming from your publication of number-oriented articles.

Mark Kreighbaum  
Berkeley, Calif.

*To thoroughly respond to Mark's letter would take more space than I can afford to use here. And, a comprehensive answer is doubly difficult to come up with because Mark hasn't offered any examples of what he likes: Just what is an article that "further the cause of role playing," as opposed to one that does not? But, if you'll take that into consideration, I'll give it a try.*

*My first reaction upon reading that phrase in Mark's letter was to say, "Hey, we print a lot of articles that further the cause of role playing." And then I looked back to his complaint about the "needless reworking" of character classes, and I realized that I would consider our articles on the illusionist (#66) and the druid (#48) as ones that "further the cause." Yet Mark apparently doesn't, so we aren't on the same wavelength.*

*So what does "further the cause" mean? Articles on how to perform the act of role playing — that is, practical instructions on how to adopt a "persona" for some purpose or another — are pretty dry reading, and probably belong in a more scholarly journal than this one. This can't be the sort of article Mark wants, can it? I hope not, because we can't tell anyone, in general, how to "get into character," nor will we try. For articles on "how to play a role," you'd better look elsewhere.*

*But articles on how to role-play within the context of a game system are another matter — and I maintain that this is the kind of article that appears on most of the pages of most of the issues of DRAGON magazine.*

*Some of these articles are written from a broad, philosophical base, and may come close to being the sort of general "how to" article described earlier. (For a good example of this kind of writing, see Lew Pulsipher's essay on "The vicarious participator" on pages 38-39 of this magazine.)*

*Other articles we print also "further the cause of role playing" — even if they happen to include numbers, charts, and tables to illustrate or support the points they make. In fact, to the extent that a "world" can only be fully understood if it is fully quantified, it could be said that the charts-and-tables articles we publish do as much to "further the cause" as any other sort of article.*

*I'd appreciate hearing from anyone who agrees with Mark, or who feels I'm not understanding what he's trying to say. We'd like to keep you all happy if we can. —KM*

(Turn to page 70)



# Warhorses and barding

## From light to heavy, leather to plate

by Gary Gygax

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Warhorses are, of course, simply mounts which have been trained for combat. The horse has served as a means of transportation for mankind since history began to be recorded. The use of the horse in warfare began only a few centuries thereafter; first horses were used for pulling chariots, and later they also served as mounts for soldiers.

As herbivores meant to run from predators, horses tend to be nervous and skittish even in domestic state. It takes careful selection and training to create a true warhorse. The warhorse is obedient, inured to the noise and confusion of battle, and does not shy at sudden movement, nor become nervous at the reek of spilled blood. Furthermore, the warhorse is tough, has stamina, and will certainly be aggressive in battle. A perusal of the AD&D™ Monster Manual will show that ponies, draft horses, and wild equines have an attack form. This is the bite. Warhorses, however, are carefully trained to not only use their powerful teeth as weapons, but also to strike with their forehooves when in melee.

The selection of warhorses is possible for any character trained in mounted combat. The creation of warhorses is another matter altogether. A knowledgeable and skilled handler and trainer must carefully choose candidates (in most cases stud colts), train these candidates for several years, and then pass them on to individuals who will introduce them to battle. In so-called civilized states, such activity will be accomplished by military personnel and independent enterprises as well. In so-called barbaric areas, the whole process will typically be taken care of by the young boys and warrior men of the group, the process being part of the training to manhood and normal adult

activity of the group. In this latter case, the animals will almost certainly be light warhorses, with the most sophisticated of groups breeding and training medium steeds as well, but only on a more limited basis. (The Mongols are a prime example of this latter case.)

A light warhorse was referred to as a *courser* in medieval Europe. Such a steed was relatively light, quite fast, and had great endurance. A typical light warhorse would be from 14 to 15 hands high, depending on the availability of stock and the size of the rider.

A medium warhorse was little more than a larger, stronger light warhorse. The typical example would be at least 15½ hands to about 16½ hands high. Such animals were the steeds of the elite Mongol lancers, Saracen elites, and general cavalry of Europe.

The heavy warhorse, the *destrier*, was a huge animal of 18 or more hands in height and massive bulk. The famous Clydesdales which you see in certain beer commercials on TV are horses of this type. The power and size of heavy warhorses allowed the heavily armed and armored feudal knights and nobles to crush all opponents not likewise equipped and mounted, until the longbow and pike proved themselves . . . in the hands of expert troops.

The light warhorse will certainly force a non-warhorse to move aside. A medium warhorse will overbear a light one, and the heavy warhorse will push aside, at the very least, any lesser steed. Mounts trained to combat will not only attack fiercely, but they will await a dismounted rider's return to the saddle, even going so far as to protect him or her from enemy attacks. A well-trained horse might even be able to bear a seriously wounded rider

from the field/encounter to the home place.

**Barding:** This is simply the term for the armor used to protect the mount. The armor so used covers the head, neck, and body of the warhorse. The main types of barding are:

Leather — adds 1 factor to AC, weighs 160 #

Scale — adds 2 factors to AC, weighs 250 #

Chain — adds 3 factors to AC, weighs 350 #

Plate — adds 4 factors to AC, weighs 500 #

Leather barding includes various forms of padded barding.

Scale-type barding includes various leather studding and ring mail armors.

Chain barding includes various metal bands and plates, so the class includes banded barding.

Plate barding is principally various pieces of plate with chain mail support in other areas.

In addition to the weight which the horse must carry in order to gain the protection of barding, the armor will also reduce the base movement rate of the mount, as shown on this table:

### Barded warhorse base movement rate:

Warhorse	Barding type			
	L	S	C	P
light	21"	15"	NA	NA
medium	17"	15"	12"	NA
heavy	15"	14"	12"	12"

L = leather; S = scale; C = chain;

P = plate; NA = not allowed.

**Endurance:** The effect of wearing barding will be seen not only in relative base



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movement rate but also in the overall endurance of the mount, provided that the animal must wear the barding while traveling. As a rule of thumb, use the base movement rates on the preceding page to find the total number of miles the mount can travel in one day.

*Magic Horse Barding:* It is possible that magical armor for horses and other sorts of mounts can be fashioned. Such protection would be rare in the extreme. It would be worth at *least* five times the cost of comparable armor (by type, not class) for a character. The value of such magical addition can *never* exceed +3. Of such barding, 65% would be +1, 25% +2, and 10% +3. The type of magic barding found would be: Leather 10%, Scale 15%, Chain 25%, Plate 50%.

*Elfin Chainmail for Unicorns or Griffons:* Protection of this sort can be allowed by the DM at his or her option. Weight and movement rate effect is equal to leather barding. Protection is equal to chain barding.

*Barding for Other Types of Steeds:* As a general rule, steeds able to fly are able to wear only leather (or elfin chainmail) barding. Movement rate should be reduced by one-eighth for such protection. Aquatic steeds cannot be effectively barded. Other types of mounts, such as elephants, for instance, can be barded, and only plate barding would have any significant effect on movement rate. Plate barding will reduce the movement rate of a very, very strong mount by from one-fifth to one-eighth, with an elephant's movement reduced by the least, or one-eighth.

## SEEING IS BELIEVING

The visual spectacle of D&D® and AD&D™ games is not usually striking. In fact, it is most likely to be quite the contrary. A group of people sitting around with books, note paper, character sheets, pencils, mapping paper, dice, and possibly a few painted miniature figures is less than exciting-looking to the uninitiated. Even if there are some printed floorplans and a monster or two in miniature, the spectacle is low-key.

Is this important to anyone other than media people covering the "odd phenomenon" of fantasy role-playing games? Yes and no. Because most of us are habituated to the purely mental visualization of game action, we make do with any sort of markers for people, places, and things. Most hard-core enthusiasts will have a fair collection of character figures, and a few DMs have an assortment of monsters as well, but the majority of us have few, if any, painted miniatures. However, this lack does not detract from our enjoyment of the game!

If the question is put a different way, perhaps a point — an important one —

can be raised. Would spectacle add to our enjoyment of the game? This is worth consideration, and TSR has been considering it for some time. For some, at least, and I include myself, the addition of the proper sort of spectacle would add considerably to involvement, visualization, and enjoyment of the whole.

We began to license firms to produce official figures in order to promote at least the basics of visual adventures. We are now ready to take this farther. The overall result will be better and more exciting than anything you have seen before.

Many of you Gentle Readers will recall that Duke Seifried joined TSR about a year ago. The Learned Gentleman is an expert in the production (and sculpting, of course) of not only miniature figurines, but of other sorts of visual items as well. Under Duke's aegis, TSR will soon be producing white metal castings of fantasy figures in 1" (25mm) scale. These official castings will be of the highest quality and detail — but don't take my word for it — see for yourself when they become available.

Although these figurines will be superior to any previously available, that in and of itself is nothing more than news of a minor sort. We are doing more still! A whole series of 3-dimensional materials is planned for release soon — castles, dungeons, and the like, plus plastic as well as metal figurines. Our game division is likewise planning to support these offerings with more visual material, and there are various R&D investigations underway to add still more to the perceptual element of adventure gaming.

The products are scheduled to begin appearing in late spring and early summer. New, different, and unusual items will follow from time to time over the years to come. While all gamers will not necessarily love the visual and other additions to the game systems, I believe that the majority of players and DMs will find that the addition of visual aids and other components to their gaming builds excitement and enhances enjoyment of the whole activity. I, for one, can hardly wait to get my hands on the new products — even if I am obligated to write the scenarios for playing the new 3-D modules! Some of the other plans currently under investigation are at least as interesting and pose as many new aspects for game enjoyment. Remember that you heard about it here first.

DRAGON™ magazine is currently studying the possibility of running a regular column or series of features on the whole subject of miniatures, visuals, and other things which augment the conducting and enjoyment of fantasy gaming, and I am informed that the Kindly Editor is generously disposed to the inclusion of such material in the precious space he has available. If you support such plans, please be sure and let Kim know!

## ENTERTAINING DEVELOPMENTS

Now, it's time to update all Loyal Readers on the course of events in the Wonderful World of Entertainment Media. Most of you know that TSR has a script, written by Academy Award recipient James Goldman, for a theatrical motion picture which is intended to capture the essence of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game.

The script is a remarkable piece of work, one which could well lead to a film as successful as *STAR WARS* or *E.T.* It will do a world of good for our hobby . . . and then could come the series of "hard core" fantasy films we have all dreamed about. I, for one, was tired of mere dreaming. I was in Hollywood recently, and here is a summary of what happened during the trip:

TSR and Marvel Productions have put together a Saturday morning cartoon series, *THE DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™ CHILDRENS SHOW*. It will be fun — especially for the younger kids who don't yet play the game. Could be some of you will get a kick out of the program, too, even though this Humble Designer had a fair amount of input into the project. CBS has slated the series to run opposite the *Smurfs* and *Pac-Man* shows. If I may be so bold as to crave a favor from you, please do write to your local CBS station and let them know how happy you are that they will be running a program based on the D&D® game. This will not only make certain that detractors of role-playing games find it impossible to mount a successful hate-mail campaign, but it will help to get more and better fantasy shows on the air. In short, I was not idle during my trip — even when I sat in the fabled Polo Lounge and quaffed foaming jacks of scotch and soda or beakers of silver bullets.

We are entertaining proposals for a multi-media stage production — and that also looks good! We are seeking an interested party for a television production of fantastic nature and high adventure, authored by Yours Truly and the worthy Buck Rogers man, Flint Dille — and there is interest! While all this is going on, we are also plotting a swashbuckling series of AD&D™ game films, and with a bit of luck I'll be returning to sunny California soon to turn outlines into scripts and scripts into films.

The projected success of these other endeavors assumes that the "biggie" — the cartoon series — goes over, and this in itself seems a likely event. When you write to CBS, be sure to mentally wish us luck, and we'll take it from there!

As a final note, I had the opportunity to talk with the owners of the *Conan* property. They too regret the initial release, and promise that the next will be different. There is an outside chance that technical consulting will be sought from certain well-known-fantasy game sources. We shall see. . . .



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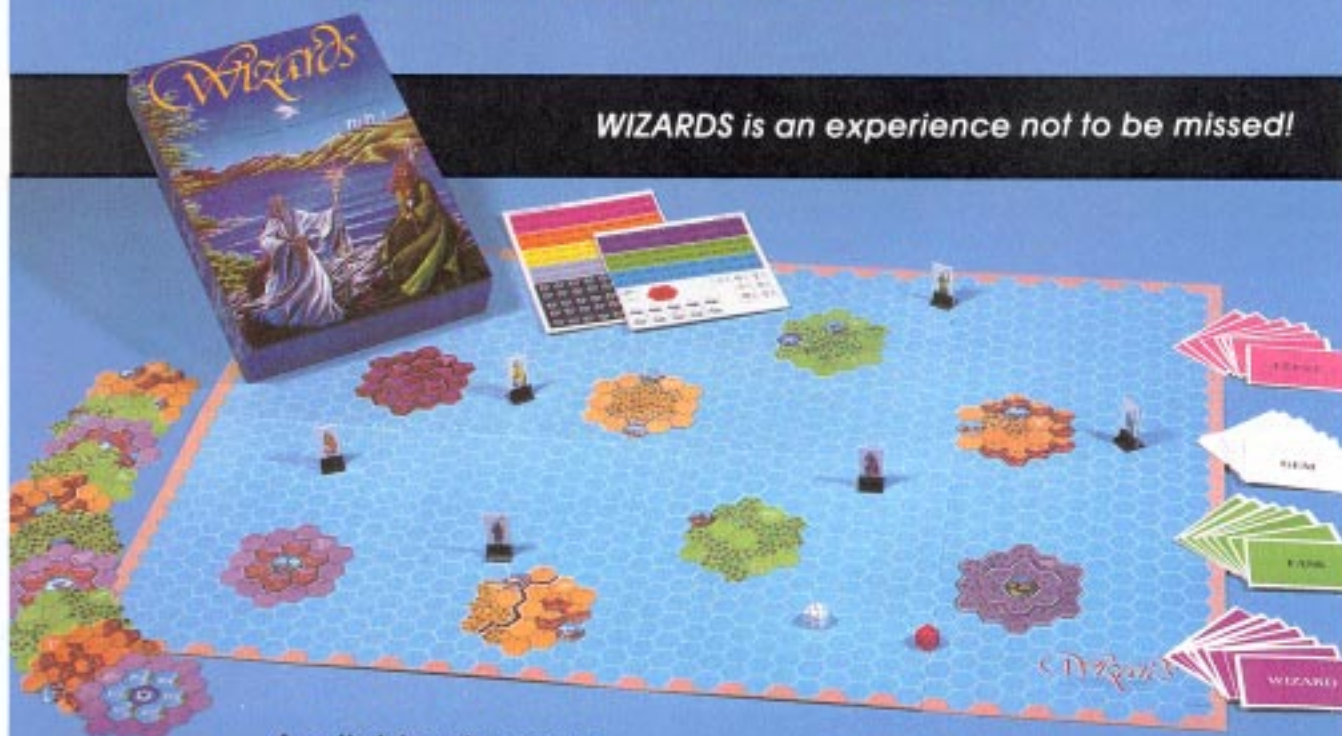
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# LEOMOND'S TINY ADVENTURE

by Lenard Lakofka and Brad Nystul



## Bureaucrats and politicians

The bureaucrat tends to be hopelessly average. To determine his or her characteristics, roll 2d6 of different colors (let's say red and white). All physical characteristics (strength, dexterity and constitution) use a base of 10, while non-physical characteristics (intelligence, wisdom and charisma) use a base of 11. If the red die comes up 1 or 2, add the result of the white die to 10 or 11, as applicable; if the red die comes up 3 or 4, subtract the white die from 10 or 11; if the red die comes up 5 or 6, the white die is ignored and the characteristic remains at 10 or 11, as applicable. A bureaucrat must have intelligence or wisdom of at least 11 to rise any higher than first level (Clerk).

Bureaucrats do not wear armor, but may use or wear any magic items of protection. They are poor with weapons, fighting forever as a zero-level character regardless of bureaucrat experience level. (See exception noted below for those who were adventurers before becoming bureaucrats.) They may employ daggers, clubs and "blunt instruments" (inkwells, candlesticks, etc.) as weapons. They throw any weapon at -2 to hit. However, they obtain the saving throws of a cleric with respect to spells, paralyzation, poison, death magic, rods, staves, and wands. They save as a fighter versus petrification, polymorphing and breath weapons, using their level as a bureaucrat (not their effective fighting level) for the save. Thus, if someone tried to poison an Official (6th level bureaucrat), the victim's saving throw would be 9. If a dragon breathed on him, his saving throw would be 13.

### Bureaucrats' special skills

**Produce trance:** This attack form comes from the bureaucrat's ability to speak fluent Bullroar. The language is basically unintelligible to most beings, but its constant drone tends to place a victim at ease. Such an at-ease victim is *entranced* if the bureaucrat makes the required percentile roll and the victim (only one target at a time) fails his or her saving throw.

An entranced victim will take any suggestion or meet any demand made by the bureaucrat that pertains to the issue at hand. This issue typically concerns payment to the bureaucrat for a service, such as the purchase of a license or permit, or perhaps an order or a writ to legalize something. Once the speech ends, the entranced victim will carry out the given order or suggestion (pay the asked-for price, for instance) unless someone else (if another non-entranced character is present) can talk him or her out of it. A successful second saving throw by the formerly entranced figure means that someone else has convinced the victim not to buy the document in question.

An entranced person will not give up magic items or tell secrets under the influence of this droning speech.

**Lose (and find) paperwork:** This innate ability shows up in all bureaucrats who handle documents or get anywhere near a filing system. (In other words, all bureaucrats.) Documents given to a bureaucrat for filing or safekeeping will be lost as soon as they are received, if the bureaucrat makes the necessary roll on percentile dice.

The lost paperwork will be found again upon another successful percentile roll, if someone is first successful in urging or ordering the bureaucrat to look for it. The first roll to find a lost document cannot be made sooner than one working day after the document was lost (these things take time). Succeeding rolls to

### BUREAUCRATS EXPERIENCE TABLE

Experience points	Experience level	4-sided dice for accumulated hit points	Level title
0 — 1,150	1	1 + 2	Clerk
1,151 — 3,250	2	1 + 4	Supervisor
3,251 — 5,350	3	1 + 6	Manager
5,351 — 8,450	4	1 + 8	Chief
8,451 — 12,550	5	2 + 8	Obstructionist
12,551 — 18,650	6	2 + 10	Official
18,651 — 26,750	7	2 + 12	Bureaucrat
26,751 — 38,850	8	2 + 14	Authority
38,851 — 54,950	9	3 + 14	Commissioner
54,951 — 75,050	10	4 + 14	Board Member
75,051 +	11	5 + 14	Chairman

### BUREAUCRATS SPECIAL SKILLS TABLE

Level	Produce trance	Lose paperwork	Confuse	Captivate	Infuriate
1	15%	22%	10%	04%	20%
2	19%	26%	14%	08%	24%
3	24%	31%	19%	13%	29%
4	30%	37%	25%	19%	35%
5	37%	44%	32%	26%	42%
6	45%	52%	40%	34%	50%
7	54%	58%	49%	44%	60%
8	64%	61%	59%	55%	70%
9	73%	63%	69%	66%	77%
10	80%	64%	79%	77%	83%
11	85%	65%	89%	88%	90%

find the lost paperwork, if required and desired, can be made at one-working-day intervals thereafter.

Once a particular document or sheaf of paperwork has been found, that particular bureaucrat will never lose it again — but paperwork does get passed on from bureaucrat to bureaucrat, and the next one to handle it might be higher level, and thus even better at losing it!

**Confuse:** This ability produces befuddlement in the victim unless he or she makes a successful saving throw from spells. The bureaucrat must make an actual attack to *confuse*; when he does so, his *produce trance* attack (if it was being employed) is lost. *Confusion* will cause the victim to leave the bureau office or board meeting, totally forgetting why he or she ever went there in the first place. The victim obtains a new saving throw daily or if he or she can be talked to by someone who knows why he or she went to the bureaucrats' lair in the first place.

**Captivate:** This attack form can only be cast on multiple figures; a single figure is immune. To *captivate*, the bureaucrat must be allowed to blather on for a full ten minutes, without interruption, about what must be done to produce a desired result. At the end of the ten minutes the victims each obtain a saving throw (vs. spell) at -2. Those who fail it are temporarily insane and will walk away drooling. Their wits will return if a new saving throw is made (saves are allowed every ten minutes)



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"He's dead, Jim." Famous last words.

Every episode of Star Trek, James Kirk lost one or more men to the unknown. Although James T. Kirk was probably the most celebrated Starfleet Captain, he wasn't Starfleet's finest.

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I know, because I'm Captain Chris Summers.

For a few hours every month, I shut off this Earthbound mortality and become a Starfleet officer. Meeting adventure and danger in far flung space. With my First Officer Jame Laurette and Science Officer Annikia 'Niki' Hendershott, I meet and successfully (most of the time) overcome incredible odds to right the 'mistakes' in UFP space.

How? I'm a player in a play-by-mail Star Trek role playing game. The only authorized play-by-mail Star Trek adventure game by ECI.

ECI stands for Entertainment Concepts, Inc., and until recently was virtually unknown.

In August of 1981, ECI was created by Jim Dutton and his wife Betty, and they began with a small home computer, an ad for their SILVERDAWN game in a gaming magazine, and launched into the play-by-mail gaming business. Their SILVERDAWN game, which was based on traditional medieval fantasy role playing games, was so successful that by their first anniversary they had hired two more gamemasters and obtained three more computers.

Beginning with 300 correspondents in 1981, SILVERDAWN now is played monthly by more than 1,200 people.

Meantime, with such a success in SILVERDAWN, Jim Betty, and new gamemasters Raymond Maddox and William Peschel decided to start a second game. They petitioned Paramount for the rights to Star Trek.

In July of last year they obtained those rights. Offering in the October issue of STARLOG the game to the general public for the first time, THAT WAS ALMOST A MISTAKE! New game players doubled, tripled. Why such success? Because every single penny spent playing the game is worth it.

As a beginning player, you get the option of being Jim Kirk or choosing a new character and ship of your own. Only 20% of existing players choose the Enterprise. That means, most of the players like being "themselves." Initial cost is \$6.00, which gets you a 24-page rule booklet, a unique 420 crewmember (no two are the same) roster (you get to name your own officers, crewmen are named for you), specifications on your own unique ship, and orders for your first move. Also players get a monthly newsletter (a miniature Star Trek fanzine named "Priority One" featuring some of the players better adventures, Star Trek interviews and info and cash contests.

Each move thereafter consists of Starfleet orders, which outline a scenario and describes the current situation. The narrative details what happens to you and your crew to a point. There, faced with one or more problems, you are left to solve them with your "move."

Your "Movement" (because the rules are not complex) begins with your



own imagination. You simply write a short story on how you and any members of your crew you wish to use, would react and "solve" the problem.

Talk about incredible fun! Your gamemaster uses your characters, by name, and his knowledge of the situation to give you the following counter move. Records are kept with the aid of a computer, so that ECI has a complete 'novel' of your adventures, as you do.

And your move can consist of up to 3 pages of narrative, detailing anything under the sun you want to try. Your response will consist of three to four pages of narrative and a "status report" on the condition and status of your ship and crew.

I usually savor every moment of it...I tend to linger over my moves, thinking through my solutions. I interject a sense of drama into my adventures and breathe life into my characters. Then, impatiently, I await a response to see how successful I am. I have never been disappointed, even though at times my "solutions" have only caused "new problems."

So, all you armchair Fleet officers out there, who have ever sat through 79 episodes of Star Trek and said, "Gee, I wish I could do that..."

NOW YOU CAN.

Just write to Jim Dutton, c/o ECI, 6923 Pleasant Drive, Charlotte, NC 28211, and tell them that you were recommended for a Starfleet commission by Captain Chris Summers of the U.S.S. Apogee, NCC1735, or better yet, enclose \$6.00 and give them the name of a ship you'd like to command.

Oh, yes. where was I? Oh, I remember now. "Suddenly I was dumped on the floor of my little cabin. It took me only a moment to remember where I was. I felt along my shoulder for the halberth wound. 'Damn Klingon,' I thought. It had been several days, and although modern medicine had closed the skin, the wound was still tender. I could tell by the vibration under my feet that the Apogee was doing at least Warp Eight.

'Bridge,' I said, reaching for the com on the wall. 'This is your Captain, what the hell is going on up there? Why are we doing Warp Eight?'

'Captain,' the voice was that of my Communication officer Cmdr. Bromah Lomidak. 'We're pursuing the planet Aleshire that has suddenly jumped out of orbit and is headed into restricted Romulan space.'

'What?' I countered, then reached for the com a third time. 'Disregard that what. I'll be right there.' Whew! Such is the life of a Starfleet Captain."

— Gary Lee Stuber

ECI is using the acclaimed SILVERDAWN move system to bring you the science fiction role playing game of your dreams! The STAR TREK Player's Kit is \$6, plus \$4 for each additional Starship. Each move thereafter is \$4. If not completely satisfied, you can return the Player's Kit for a full refund.

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or if a rational person can talk to them for ten minutes. While temporarily insane, victims are totally harmless, but also entirely useless.

*Infuriate:* This attack can only be accomplished if the victim has fallen prey to any of the bureaucrat's other attack forms, i.e. been *entranced*, been *confused*, been *captivated*, or had his or her *papers lost*. Now the bureaucrat will explain that it wasn't his or her fault. The victim(s) then must save vs. spell or go into a rage for 1-20 rounds. This outburst usually takes the form of physical violence against the surroundings, as the victim(s) tries to wreck the bureau by throwing things, ripping up papers, and tipping over furniture. When the rage is over, the victim may find that the bureaucrat has summoned authorities to have him arrested. The friends of a victim will find that calming him can only be done over the course of 1-4 rounds of constant persuasion, after which the victim must save again, this time at -2.

### Other abilities and characteristics

Bureaucrats obtain a magic resistance to *charm* spells of 65% which they may apply prior to their normal saving throw.

A bureaucrat obtains experience points only from doing his or her job; that is, performing one of the five available special skills. The amount of experience gained for a successful act is equal to the bureaucrat's percentage chance of performing the skill. Thus, if a 7th level bureaucrat manages to *lose paperwork* on a project he is working on, he will obtain 58 experience points. Note that all "attacks" of the bureaucrat, explained hereafter, are purposeful with the exception of *lose paperwork*, which he or she does subconsciously. *Purposely* losing paperwork will cost a bureaucrat the applicable number of experience points.

A bureaucrat who takes a bribe can add the value of the bribe to his experience points, using one-tenth (rounded up) of the g.p. value of the bribe. The experience gain is limited in all cases to 100 points per bribe, so it literally doesn't pay to offer a bureaucrat a bribe of more than 1,000 g.p.

### Alignment alterations

Bureaucrats begin as lawfully aligned characters (20% lawful good, 20% lawful evil, 60% lawful neutral). With each promotion in level, all non-neutral bureaucrats must save vs. spell or change alignment. A bureaucrat of lawful good persuasion may become lawful neutral or neutral good; lawful neutral may become lawful good, lawful evil, or true neutral; lawful evil may become neutral evil or lawful neutral. Neutral evil and neutral good characters must revert back to lawful evil and lawful good, respectively, with the next level/alignment change. Bureaucrats who become true neutral will remain that way forever.

Former members of adventuring classes may become bureaucrats if they fit the ability score requirements and are of some lawful alignment when they become a bureaucrat. The former adventurer must not have progressed above 4th level, or he or she cannot then ever become a bureaucrat. A former adventurer may never wear armor as a bureaucrat, but may use any weapon allowed to the former class, and fights at a level equal to the highest level he or she attained in the former profession.

### Unseasoned sage ability

Bureaucrats, because of the vast amount of information that passes by them daily, have some minor sage abilities in various areas of knowledge. Their information is rarely as specific or exacting as that of a real sage. Each bureaucrat will dabble in two of the following fields of knowledge, determined at random:

- 01-07 Specifics on any town business: income, taxes, prices, profit, etc.)
- 08-11 Specifics on any town proprietor: class and — if and only if class is known — possibly level, with a margin of error of two either way
- 12 Ownership of magic items in town: limit one item per person asking; 15% chance of having such knowledge about any specific item

- 13-15 Specifics on any other town bureau or board: inner workings, procedures, purpose, effectiveness, accomplishments, problems, etc.
- 16-17 Specifics on the town nobility, if any: begin with lowest level noble and move up, giving bureaucrat a 25% chance to know some valuable information; upon failing once, his knowledge ends. (A bureaucrat will know the names and titles of all nobles in his town.)
- 18-19 Specifics on town officials, mayor, aldermen, sheriff, etc.
- 20 Specifics on shady town occupants: assassins' guild, thieves' guild, bully gangs, protection rackets, press gangs, waterfront bars, etc.
- 21-23 Local heraldry
- 24-25 Signs and sigils
- 26 Cryptography
- 27-34 Demography of humans, demihumans, and humanoids in town
- 35-47 History of town or city
- 48-50 History of county or country
- 51-55 Legends and folklore of area
- 56-65 Local laws
- 66-74 Town customs
- 75-77 Genealogy of prominent citizens
- 78-80 Source of maps of town showing sewers, old construction, proposed construction, etc.
- 81 Maps of buildings in town — not necessarily depicting the interior, or all the rooms, of a structure
- 83-84 Information on "monsters" in the locale
- 85 Timetables for ships, barges, wagons, coaches, etc.
- 86-87 Knowledge of town tariffs, taxes and levies
- 88-90 Knowledge of local dialects and languages; the ability to translate them
- 91-95 Specific facts on local temples and their occupants
- 96 Information on local magic-users and illusionists
- 97-98 Information on rangers or paladins in the area
- 99-00 Knowledge, of one of the above sorts, of another town or city in the area; reroll on the list, disregarding results of 99-00, for the type of knowledge

The chance for a bureaucrat to know the answer to a question in one of his fields is calculated as follows: The question is judged to be general, specific, or exacting (see pages 31-33 of the AD&D™ *Dungeon Masters Guide* for information on these terms). When giving the answer, consider the alignment of the bureaucrat before forming the answer and stating it.

The first area of knowledge rolled for a bureaucrat is his or her minor area of specialty. In this area, the chance to know a single answer is:

- General information: 2% per level of the bureaucrat
- Specific information: 1% per level
- Exacting information: ½% per level (round down)

For example, a 7th level bureaucrat is asked a question about "monsters" in the locale (his minor field). If 1-14 is rolled, the information he can give in an answer is only general; if 15-21 is rolled, his knowledge is specific; and if 22-24 is rolled, his knowledge on the subject is exacting. If 25-00 is rolled, his answer will be wrong.

The second area of knowledge rolled for a bureaucrat is his or her major area. In this area, the chance of knowledge is:

- General information: 5% per level of the bureaucrat
- Specific information: 3% per level
- Exacting information: 1% per level

The exact cost of information will depend on whether the bureaucrat knows something. However, any bureaucrat will need at least one gold piece per level just to "break the ice." General information will cost at least 1 g.p. per level, specific information 3 g.p. per level, and exacting information 6 g.p. per level of the bureaucrat. The upper limits are usually 5 g.p., 10 g.p., and 20 g.p. per level respectively for such information.

DMs note: Don't give away too much information if it is going to ruin some phase of play in town! You can overrule the result of a dice roll at any time!



**THE POLITICIAN** is a sub-class of bureaucrat. To become a politician, the character rolls up scores just as for a bureaucrat, except that physical abilities have a base score of 9, not 10, and non-physical abilities have a base score of 12, not 11. (See the bureaucrat class description, page 8, for an explanation of dice rolling.) A politician must have a score in intelligence, wisdom, or charisma of 15, and must have this score in two of the three abilities in order to advance beyond 4th level.

Not all countries will have elections, and therefore might have little use for politicians. The most common elective offices in a town are the aldermen and perhaps a mayor. A few countries might elect sheriffs and other "county" officials, who would be members of the politician class. A sheriff is 85% likely to be a former member of an adventuring class, with some type of fighter being the most common (80%).

### Different special skills

Politicians have none of the special skills of their parent class. If they are to succeed, politicians cannot afford to have it appear as though they are confusing or infuriating the public the way a bureaucrat does. Instead, certain other particular abilities are available to them.

Politicians who are not ex-adventurer types have a 45% resistance to *charm* spell attacks, and those who win office have a chance to cast a *suggestion* spell in any speech they make before a group of five or more people. The audience (each member considered separately) is only 35% likely to be susceptible. Those in the audience who are susceptible still obtain a normal saving throw against the *suggestion*. Those who fail the saving throw will make every effort to act out the suggestion if it is possible. *Suggestions* to give up more than 100 g.p. (in money, goods, or services) allow the victim a +2 bonus on the saving throw. Any suggestions to give up a magic item or more than 250 g.p. in currency allows the victim(s) a +5 bonus to the save. Politicians generally will *suggest* that the listener(s) contribute to his or her next campaign fund.

Politicians who have won three elections (not necessarily all for the same office) gain the ability to perform these skills:

*Stuff the ballot box:* This ability will add 10% to the politician's vote total in any election when it is tried, and it can only be detected by examination of the individual ballots. The person(s) looking at the ballots must make a saving throw vs. spell to notice the fraud.

*Enthrall:* Similar to the suggested new cleric spell *enthrall* described in issue #58 of DRAGON™ Magazine. The politician can *enthrall* all members of an audience who can understand the language the politician is using, and who fail to make a saving throw vs. spell. The ability is activated after the politician has spoken for one full round; all listeners eligible to become *enthralled* must make a saving throw each round thereafter, for as long as the politician continues speaking, to avoid being taken in. The *enthrallment* is broken as soon as the politician stops talking. It cannot affect anyone with 4 or more hit dice, or anyone with a wisdom of at least 15.

Those who fail a saving throw and become *enthralled* will stand in awe of the politician, treating him or her as if the speaker had a charisma of 21. However, *enthralled* figures will not undertake action, such as they might if they were under the effect of a *suggestion*.

*Sixth sense:* This is an ability that manifests itself in several specific ways. First, an accomplished politician has a way of "knowing" where and when a noteworthy event will occur, and will make him or herself available in the hopes of being seen favorably and thus have a chance to gain votes, recognition and perhaps donations. The chance to employ the "sixth sense" successfully for the purpose of *being in the right place* is 5% per level, one attempt per day.

Politicians can employ their sixth sense to see through clouds of smoke and fog, including such things as a *cloudkill* spell, a *stinking cloud*, smoke from a fire, a *wall of fog*, a *fog cloud*, *pyrotechnics*, and the like. The chance of success is 10% per level, once per cloud, twice per day maximum.

## POLITICIANS EXPERIENCE TABLE

Experience		4-sided dice for Experience accumulated hit	
points	level	points	Level title
0 — 1,200	1	1 + 2	Reliever
1,201 — 2,400	2	1 + 4	Party member
2,401 — 4,800	3	1 + 6	Speaker
4,801 — 9,600	4	1 + 8	Orator
9,601 — 20,000	5	2 + 8	Politician
20,001 — 60,000	6	2 + 11	Chairman
60,001 — 120,000	7	2 + 14	Leader
120,001 — 240,000	8	2 + 17	Vice-president
240,001 +	9	3 + 17	President

Politicians have a 7% chance per level to *detect lie* and an equal chance to successfully manage an *undetectable lie*, just as for the 4th level cleric spell of the same name.

### Other abilities and characteristics

A politician can be of any alignment except true neutral. A politician attacks as a magic-user at all times and obtains the saving throws of a magic-user as well. He or she may fight with dagger, club, blackjack, or mace, beginning with one weapon and obtaining a new weapon of proficiency at 7th level. The politician's non-proficiency penalty is -5.

A politician can wear protection items but not armor, except for a breastplate that can be employed to make him resistant to fired missiles. The politician cannot wield most magic items, though he or she can use the following specifically:

Potions — those of *animal control*, *clairvoyance*, *clair-audience*, *delusion*, *dragon control*, *ESP*, *extra healing*, *gaseous form*, *healing*, *human control*, *longevity*, *oil of slipperiness*, *philter of love*, *philter of persuasiveness*, *plant control*, *treasure finding*, and *undead control*.

Scrolls — None, although neither will any kind of scroll have an effect on the politician. A cursed scroll, for instance, would be gibberish to the politician and would not work against him.

Rings — those of *djinni summoning*, *contrariness*, *delusion*, *human influence*, *mammal control*, *protection*, and *X-ray vision*.

Rods, staves, or wands — none but the *rod of beguiling*, *rod of rulership*, *stuff of command*, and *wand of enemy detection*.

Miscellaneous magic items — only the *amulet of proof against detection and location*, *bracers of defense*, *brooch of shielding*, *crystal ball*, *cube of force*, *cubic gate*, *eyes of charming*, any type of *dust*, *helm of comprehending languages* (but cannot read magic with the helm), *medallion of ESP*, *medallion of thought projection*, *rug of smothering*, *rug of welcome*, *tome of clear thought*, *tome of understanding*, and *tome of leadership and influence*.

Magic armor and weapons — No magical armor or swords allowed; however, a politician can employ any magical dagger or mace, except for a *mace of disruption*.

Politicians gain experience from two sources: votes, and money taken in during campaigns. Money found in a dungeon or similar sort of adventuring environment can count toward experience for a politician, but killing an enemy (monster) gains a politician nothing. Election experience is awarded at the rate of one experience point for each vote received; however, a politician can never gain more experience points from one election than the minimum necessary to advance to the next level. Thus, a first-level politician could gain no more than 1,201 experience points from winning an election, even if he received more votes than that. Politicians who lose elections always lose experience points and drop back to the midpoint of the next lower level.

Gold pieces found (contributed) also are equated to experience points on a one-for-one basis, again limited by the fact that gold can only "buy" one level at a time. And for gold to be counted as experience, it must be spent by the politician in an effort to be elected to some office (a campaign within the campaign). Excess money can be used any way the politician sees fit. Politicians of non-good alignment can make and take bribes at any time. **II**

**T**axonomically, dragons have always been considered an isolated group. According to the Monster Manual, they are all members of the same genus (*Draco*) and, apparently, only distantly related to the reptiles. However, from faraway Drogasia comes word of a form that is obviously related to the Draconian dragons, but also merits distinction as a separate group.

The Drogasian land dragons, or "landragons," as they are called by the natives, have breath-weapon abilities like their cousins do, but they lack the ability to fly. However, they have stunted wing appendages (often put to use for purposes other than flight) that serve as evidence of the strong evolutionary link between the two groups. Other noteworthy differences between the types include the bulkier build of the Drogasians, the shorter, thicker tail, often used as a defensive weapon, and a different growth pattern from that of all flying dragons. Also, few of these flightless dragons show the intelligence associated with their better-known counterparts.

stray into their area, as well as wild prey. In their encounters with humanoids, they will be very territorial and defensive. The arack will bluff and charge "half-heartedly," with crest and wings expanded, trumpeting the call that gives the beast its name, attempting to drive off anyone who comes within its domain. If the intruders run away, the dragon(s) will generally not pursue, unless especially hungry (1 in 6 chance). If cornered or the target of a charge, these beasts will attack at once, using the breath weapon in the defensive mode while doing so.

These great "lizards" grow fairly slowly but continually throughout their lives. Newly hatched young average 4' in length (nose to tail) and thereafter they grow at a rate of about 3' every 10 years until they are 120 years old. Beyond that, during old age, no further growth occurs.

Dragons of this species can live to be about 150 years old. As they grow, they gain hit points and earn increases in their melee attack ability. They are hatched with 1d10 hit points and gain

# LANDRAG

These differences have led sages to place the three documented species of "landragons" of Drogasia in a separate genus, that being *Drogas*. Dragons of this genus have the same fear aura ability as their flying cousins, but they never possess any magical ability. All three species have developed strong physical abilities, of both offensive and defensive nature, to offset their lack of flight and magic, and overall they can be at least as formidable as the Draconians.

A land dragon found outside its lair will not be asleep. One (or more) will be asleep whenever encountered inside a lair (usually a cave or an old dungeon), unless the party awakens the dweller(s) of the lair in its approach.

## ARACK (*Drogas amagia*)

**FREQUENCY:** Rare

**NO. APPEARING:** 1-4 (50%: 1 only)

**ARMOR CLASS:** 1

**MOVE:** 15" (climbing: 9")

**HIT DICE:** 1-10

**% IN LAIR:** 50%

**TREASURE TYPE:** B

**NO. OF ATTACKS:** 3

**DAMAGE PER ATTACK:** up to 1-8/1-8/5-30

**SPECIAL ATTACKS:** Breath weapon, tail

**SPECIAL DEFENSES:** Breath weapon

**MAGIC RESISTANCE:** See below

**INTELLIGENCE:** Semi- to low

**ALIGNMENT:** Neutral

**SIZE:** L (up to 40' long)

**PSIONIC ABILITY:** Nil

**Attack/Defense Modes:** Nil

The appearance of the arack dragon, and its use of a breath weapon, make it an obvious relative of the Draconian ("true") dragons. Its lizard-like body with slightly stunted wing appendages is somewhat bulkier than the bodies of the flying dragons, but its size and mobility on land make it a formidable opponent. This species has blue-grey scales and a deep red underside matched in color by the crest on the head and neck and the membranous ligatures on the malformed wings. The wings have three slender "fingers" of unequal length, one with a long nail. These are the "wing spears" the beast uses as a secondary weapon in melee.

Arack dragons are found in rocky areas on the outskirts of civilization. They feed on domesticated cattle, sheep, and goats that

## Wingless wonders of a faraway land

by Ronald Hall







one hit-point die with every 4 feet of growth; hence, the length of a particular arack can be used to determine its number of hit dice (length divided by 4, rounded down).

A newly hatched arack dragon has no breath weapon, its wing spears are unusable in attack, and its bite does only 1-6 points of damage. When it reaches 10 years of age, the creature gains the use of both its wing spears and its breath weapon; at this point, the wing spears do 1-3 points of damage per hit each, and the gas emitted by the breath weapon has full effect but only covers an area within a 14' radius to 7' high.

As the dragon grows thereafter, the area of effect of its breath weapon grows as well, with the height always equal to the dragon's length and the radius twice as large. The wing spears do 1-4 points of damage at age 40, 1-6 points at age 80, and 1-8 points at age 120. The damage figure for the beast's bite increases as well (as shown on the accompanying growth table), going up by 1d6 for, roughly, each 27 years up to age 106.

ARACK DRAGON GROWTH TABLE

Age (yrs.)	Damage:				Length
	Hit dice	Wing spears	Bite		
0-9	1d10	none	1-6		4'-6'
10-12	1d10	1-3	1-6		7'*
13-26	2d10	1-3	1-6		8'-11'
27-39	3d10	1-3	2-12		12'-15'
40-52	4d10	1-4	2-12		16'-19'
53-66	5d10	1-4	3-18		20'-23'
67-79	6d10	1-4	3-18		24'-27'
80-92	7d10	1-6	4-24		28'-31'
93-106	8d10	1-6	4-24		32'-35'
107-119	9d10	1-6	5-30		36'-39'
120-150	10d10	1-8	5-30		40'

\* — Breath weapon capability gained at age 10.

The breath weapon of the arack dragon is a gaseous cloud, nearly transparent but faintly visible in daylight (but *not* under torchlight, moonlight or magical light short of a *continual light* spell). The size (area of effect) of the breath weapon, as mentioned above, is a direct function of the dragon's size. The height of the cloud is equal to the length of the dragon's body, and the radius it covers is equal to twice that number.

The breath weapon is usable only twice per day but does not dissipate quickly; the cloud normally persists for 10 turns. Living creatures (except for the arack) within the gas will notice a sticky dampness and a stifling lack of oxygen (described by the DM as "stuffiness"). This causes the loss of 1 additional hit point, cumulative, for each round that a victim is in the gas cloud: 1 point for the first round, +2 points in the second round (for a total of 3), +3 points in the third (total of 6), and so on.

If a victim retreats out of the cloud and remains out of its area of effect for a number of rounds equal to the time he or she was inside, then the cumulative effect is "reset" (to 1 point) if the cloud is re-entered. If the "time out" is not as long as the last period of "time in," then the cumulative damage will continue to increase, counting upward from where the count left off, if the cloud and the victim again come into contact. A character who retreats out of the cloud and stays out long enough to "reset" the cumulative damage receives a saving throw (vs. poison), success indicating only half (of the total accumulated) damage was taken from the character's last time in the cloud.

The other effect of the arack's breath weapon is a damping effect that it has on magic. The gas reduces the combat effectiveness ("to hit" and damage figures) of all magical weapons by 2, and has an adverse effect on certain spells. A +1 or +2 weapon becomes, in effect, a +0 weapon, still magical in nature (with its other special properties intact) but having no enhanced combat usefulness at the moment. A +3 weapon becomes "worth" only +1, and so forth. Cantrips and first-level spells will fail automatically in the casting, or cease to operate — regardless of the level of the caster — if their area of effect coincides, in whole or in part, with the gas cloud. A character attempting to cast a spell of higher than first level must make a saving throw, using the

proper row of the following chart, for the casting to succeed — but this save is only necessary if the spell is targeted into or through the breath cloud. (This is in addition to all other rolls that might be necessary to determine spell success or failure.)

If a magic item having charges is within the area of the breath, the DM may (optionally) secretly roll a saving throw for each charge remaining in the item, assuming in this case that the gas dissipates charges from the item upon exposure of the item to the gas, but does not prevent it the item from operating (except, possibly, by dissipating *all* of its charges). Artifacts and relics will not be affected in any case, their spells work normally within the gas, and they may not be discharged while in the gas.

Spell saving throws

Spell level	Saving throw
Cantrips	Fail automatically
1st	Fail automatically
2nd	20
3rd	17
4th	15
5th	12
6th	9
7th	5
8th	1
9th	Succeed automatically
Rings	7
Rods	15
Staves	14
Wands	16

In melee, the arack can be a formidable opponent. If a fight is imminent, the beast will use its breath weapon to create a cloud of gas in a convenient area, then step into the cloud to fight the humanoids threatening it. The gas does not dissipate or spread under normal conditions (short of a *gust of wind* spell or the like), so anyone trying to fight it must suffer the effects of the breath unless it can be blown away. The effects are not always obvious, however, since the gas is nearly invisible, even in daylight. Meanwhile, the arack will attack with its mouth and wing spears against anyone in front or alongside it (on three separate targets). The neck is supple, able to attack on either flank, and the beast is quick about turning to face those who think they are behind it. In battle, it sweeps its tail back and forth continually and with some velocity. Anyone to the rear of the dragon will have to contend with the tail as they attack; a successful hit by the tail (rolled as for any other "to hit" chance) knocks the opponent down, does no damage, but causes the victim to take a round to get back to his or her feet.

SCINTILLATING DRAGON (*Drogas radiatas*)

- FREQUENCY: *Very rare*
- NO. APPEARING: 1 (10%: 1-6, family group)
- ARMOR CLASS: 1
- MOVE: 12"
- HIT DICE: 2-12
- % IN LAIR: 20%
- TREASURE TYPE: D
- NO. OF ATTACKS: 2
- DAMAGE/ATTACK: up to 1-8/6-36
- SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Breath weapon*
- SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Fear at -3 (see below)*
- MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
- INTELLIGENCE: *Low to average*
- ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*
- SIZE: L (up to 45' long)
- PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*
- Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*

This land dragon has a more muscular body than the flying types, with an agile, snake-like neck and a short, thick tail. The dragon's scales are luminescent and iridescent; its body is colored



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*The scintillating dragon sees humans as a good source of protein as well as a threat to its own existence, and will attack a human-dominated group with virtually no provocation, unless the dragon senses itself to be vastly outclassed. Anyone who ventures into the home ground of a scintillating dragon is considered, literally, fair game.*

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in rainbow tones that sometimes seem to ripple across the scaly surface. The scales have a soft glow of their own, which intensifies the “moving rainbow” effect and actually turns the dragon’s appearance into a sort of natural weapon.

The dragon’s strange appearance will entrance some adventurers. Upon sighting the dragon, all humanoids must attempt to save by rolling their intelligence or less on d20, with a –3 modifier to the die roll. Those failing this roll will either run away in panic (if the roll would have failed without the adjustment) or stand entranced by the flashing colors. Those thus enraptured will continue to watch the dragon until they are attacked or until the dragon moves out of view.

The entrancing effect will be negated if victims are forcibly turned to face away from the dragon or blinded in some way (a hood, for instance) and kept from viewing the dragon for one round. Likewise, it takes one round for characters to “snap out of it” after the dragon leaves their viewing area. But if an entranced character is attacked, the trance is broken immediately. The entrancing effects of the dragon’s scintillating hide can only “charm” a character upon first glance (when the saving throws are rolled). Those who make this saving throw will not be affected as long as the dragon remains in viewing range. However, a new round of saving throws would be required if the dragon moved out of, and then back into, viewing range.

This land dragon is not unintelligent and will usually attempt to eat or disable immobile, entranced victims (attacking at +4 against such defenseless creatures). The scintillating dragon sees humans as a good source of protein as well as a threat to its own existence, and will attack a human-dominated group with virtually no provocation, unless the dragon senses itself to be vastly outclassed. The beast seldom seeks out civilized areas for its depredations, but will if its normal sources of food are depleted. Anyone who ventures into the home ground of a scintillating dragon is considered, literally, fair game.

As with other members of this genus, the growth of this species is slow but sustained. At the time of hatching, a young dragon is only 6’ long (including the tail). Growth for the first 60 years of the dragon’s life is at the rate of 1 foot every 2 years, to a length of 36’ at age 60. Then the dragon’s growth slows to 1 foot every 10 years, to a maximum length of 46’ attained at 160 years of age. Individuals of the species have reportedly lived to age 200.

The scintillating dragon’s abilities in all respects are reflected by its size, with damage, hit dice, and hit probability increasing as body length increases. A newly hatched dragon has 2d10 hit points, a bite that does 1-6 points of damage, and a tail that does no damage. As the dragon grows, it gains 1 hit die for every 4 feet of growth.

At 16 years of age (14’ in length), the dragon’s bite damage increases to 2-12 points and the bludgeon-like tail is strong enough to do 1-2 points of damage. This is also the age when the dragon acquires its breath weapon capability. With every 8 feet of additional growth, the bite damage increases in damage by 1d6 and the tail by 1 point of damage at the maximum (skipping the ranges of 1-5 and 1-7). The beast’s breath weapon ability

increases as a function of hit points, in the manner described following the table.

#### SCINTILLATING DRAGON GROWTH TABLE

Age (years)	Hit dice	Damage:		Length
		Bite	Tail	
0-7	2d10	1-6	0	6-9’
8-15	3d10	1-6	0	10-13’
16-23	4d10	2-12	1-2	14-17’*
24-31	5d10	2-12	1-2	18-21’
32-39	6d10	3-18	1-3	22-25’
40-47	7d10	3-18	1-3	26-29’
48-55	8d10	4-24	1-4	30-33’
56-79	9d10	4-24	1-4	34-37’
80-119	10d10	5-30	1-6	38-41’
120-159	11d10	5-30	1-6	42-45’
160-200	12d10	6-36	1-8	46’

\* — Breath weapon capability gained at age 16.

The breath weapon of the scintillating dragon is a shimmering beam of energy, 10 feet wide and with length equal to five times the length of the dragon (up to a maximum of 230 feet). The presence of the beam is practically undetectable; the beam itself is invisible, but when it is in use the affected area resembles thousands of glinting dust particles in a strong beam of light. Damage is computed by rolling one d6 for each hit die the dragon has (up to 12d6), with a saving throw vs. breath weapon for half damage. The dragon can use this breath weapon up to 3 times per day.

The damage from this breath manifests itself in an unusual form. Only half the damage is felt immediately (round down), as “burn damage.” The remainder appears over the course of the next two days (half of the remainder each day) as the victim gradually weakens (losing 1-3 strength points each day) and breaks out in large burns. Non-magical healing from these wounds doesn’t begin until the fourth day after infection and proceeds at only half the usual rate. Magical healing applied on the day of the attack heals only half the damage rolled for at the time of the healing, but the remaining half of regained hit points will be applied against the delayed damage.

Only after the victim’s healing is completed (by magic, time or a combination of the two), the victim may become aware of the worst effect of this insidious ray: Short of the use of *regeneration* or a *limited wish* spell, not all of the damage done by the breath weapon will heal. Permanent damage to a victim is reflected in a reduction in the victim’s number of recoverable hit points.

To compute the amount of permanent damage, roll percentile dice and multiply the result, as a percentage, times the amount of delayed damage incurred by the victim (round down). This gives the number of hit points that may not be recovered thereafter without the use of high-level magic. If the hit points or strength points of a victim drop below zero at any time during the “delayed damage” process, he is dead.

The loss of strength points is independent of the amount of damage taken, even if more than one breath attack is used on the same figure. The lost strength points will be recovered at the same rate as lost hit points (one every 2 days), and magical cures will not help this (except for *regeneration*). When a healing/curing spell is used on a character who has also suffered damage of another sort, the other damage is recovered first, before applying any of the healing power to the breath damage.

*Example:* Kasanati the Unwise, sixth level fighter, and his party are involved in a melee with a scintillating dragon 39 feet long. During the fight, the dragon breathes on Kasanati, doing 10d6 of damage. Kasanati successfully rolls his saving throw, cutting the damage in half, but still suffers 14 points of damage. Seven points are applied immediately. The party’s cleric casts a *cure light wounds* spell, expecting to heal about 4 points of damage, and is puzzled when only 2 points are cured. (The spell actually *did* heal 4 points of damage, but only half of the healing points are applied immediately.)

The next day, as they travel, Kasanati feels weak (he has lost 1

strength point) and, by day's end, he has lost another 3 hit points (4 minus 1 of the "healing points") and large blemished areas are appearing on his skin.

The next day, Kasanati loses another d3 of strength (2 points this time) and 2 more points of damage (3 minus the last "healing point").

Kasanati does not die, since his original hit-point total and strength score were high enough to stand these losses. The DM now rolls percentile dice for permanent damage, getting a 68. This means that the unlucky fighter will be unable to recover 68% of the hit points he lost to the "delayed damage" effect of the dragon breath. The delayed loss was 7 hit points (simply half of the total damage; the effect of the *cure* spell does not enter into this calculation).

So, of the hit points Kasanati lost to delayed damage, four are lost forever (68% of 7 = 4.76, rounded down to 4) and the other three can be recovered. The maximum number of hit points Kasanati can have when at full strength is now four less than it was before he decided to engage the scintillating dragon (as if he had never rolled those four hit points in the first place). This reduction can only be offset by *regeneration*, *limited wish*, or *alter reality* spells.

Since the effect of its breath is so damaging and long-lasting, the scintillating dragon is usually treated with great respect by

all creatures that live within its area, and the dragon moves about with self-assurance. It expects most of those it meets to flee (either by being panicked by the "scintillation" attack, or through real fear of what it can do), or be chewed up if they are unlucky enough to be entranced.

If several characters attempt to fight it together, the dragon will be offended — not afraid — and if attackers are clustered it will use its breath weapon (if possible) to "burn" all who stand in its way, hoping to garner one or two to satisfy its nearly constant hunger. If forced into melee, it will use its large mouth to bite (again, bringing its breath weapon into play if several opponents are within a potential area of effect), while beating its tail back and forth to cover its rear. Anyone hit by the tail must make a saving throw vs. breath weapon or be knocked to the ground and unable to attack in the next round.

If more than one scintillating dragon is encountered, it will be a family group consisting of a female and her brood. The hatchlings of this species remain with their mother for protection until they are capable of using their breath weapon and fending for themselves. The female will be at least 30' long and the juveniles all 15' or less. (Sometimes one of the young will remain with the mother for a year or so after acquiring use of the breath weapon at 14'.) The mother will be very defensive and will attack at the slightest provocation in an encounter.

## NIGHT DRAGON (*Drogas retinosis*)

**FREQUENCY:** *Rare*

**NO. APPEARING:** 1-6 (20%: family groups of 2-8)

**ARMOR CLASS:** 2

**MOVE:** 15"

**HIT DICE:** 2-8 (d8)

**% IN LAIR:** 60% (100% in daylight hours, 20% at night)

**TREASURE TYPE:** Dx2

**NO. OF ATTACKS:** 1

**DAMAGE/ATTACK:** Up to 4.32

**SPECIAL ATTACKS:** *Breath weapon*

**SPECIAL DEFENSES:** *Hide in darkness*

**MAGIC RESISTANCE:** *Standard*

**INTELLIGENCE:** *Average to high*

**ALIGNMENT:** *Neutral evil*

**SIZE:** L (up to 32' long)

**PSIONIC ABILITY:** *Nil*

**Attack/Defense Modes:** *Nil*

The night dragon gets its name from its nocturnal hunting habits and is well adapted for this style of attack. Its scales are black with grey streaks, camouflaging the creature in any underground or after-dark environment. Night dragons are almost never encountered in daylight, spending their days in their caves, or other dark lairs. For this reason their range of vision includes both infravision and ultravision, but their vision is rather weak in the normal spectrum.

The beast's quiet movement and the ability to stand perfectly still when approached provide it excellent cover. In any encounter in the dark, a night dragon will be 90% undetectable at a range of over 3" unless it is backlit or within the radius of a *light* spell (or *faerie fire*, etc.). When within 3" of a party, a night dragon will attack, usually with surprise, unless the dragon has already been detected. If strong light is used by its opponent(s), the dragon will be at a slight disadvantage (-1 "to hit" on all of its attacks, including its breath weapon).

Night dragons are quite intelligent and sometimes hunt in groups of 2 or more. These hunting packs are especially fearsome since they will act in concert, to the maximum disadvantage of their prey. Such tactics as baiting an enemy into an ambush (with ambushers hidden in the dark), attacks from the rear, and group breath attacks are not unknown.

This species of dragon exhibits increasingly powerful capabilities with age, as do others of this genus (see the Growth Table below). Hatchlings are 3' long including the short, thick tail,

with 2d8 for hit points and a bite that does only 1-4 points of damage. The night dragon grows at the rate of 1 foot every 4 years. At the age of 20 years (8' in length), the dragon gains the use of its breath weapon, and the damage from its bite increases to 1-8 points. The dragon gains one hit die for every 20 years of age thereafter, and an additional 1-8 points of damage for its bite every 40 years, to a maximum of 8 hit dice at age 120 and 4-32 points of bite damage at age 140. The dragon does not grow or experience an increase in power beyond age 140; individuals have been reported as old as 160 years.

**Night Dragon Growth Table**

Age (years)	Hit dice	Bite damage	Length
0-19	2d8	1-4	3-7'
20-39	3d8	1-8	8-12'*
40-59	4d8	1-8	13-17'
60-79	5d8	2-16	18-22'
80-99	6d8	2-16	23-27'
100-119	7d8	3-24	28-32'
120-139	8d8	3-24	33-37'
140-160	8d8	4-32	38'

\* — Breath weapon capability gained at age 20.

The breath weapon of the night dragon is an extremely bright beam of light only ½" in width, effective out to a length equal to the length of the dragon converted to scale "inches." Hence, a 25-foot-long dragon can use his breath weapon to a distance of 25", converting to 250 feet indoors or 250 yards outside). When the breath weapon hits an enemy, the light causes damage equal to the dragon's number of hit dice, except that damage is rolled with d6's instead of the d8's used for hit dice; thus, the breath weapon of a 120-year-old night dragon will do 8d6 damage. A successful saving throw vs. breath weapon allows half damage.

In addition — only if the saving throw is failed — the breath weapon will *cause blindness* in victims by damaging their eyes. A character blinded by a night dragon will remain sightless for 2 days, unless magical aid (such as *cure blindness*) is used to restore vision. At the end of the 2 days, the victim can regain his or her lost sight by making a save vs. poison. Failing this saving throw means that the victim is permanently blind unless magical aid is employed.

Family groups of these dragons will typically have 1-4 adults (60+ years old) and 1-4 juveniles (each less than 40 years old). The juveniles will only attack if directly threatened, preferring to remain motionless so that they may go undetected while the adults lead the threat away from them.

□



# The electrum dragon by Ed Greenwood

**FREQUENCY:** *Rare*  
**NO. APPEARING:** 1  
**ARMOR CLASS:** 2  
**MOVE:** 12"/24"  
**HIT DICE:** 7-9  
**% IN LAIR:** 60%  
**TREASURE TYPE:** *See below*  
**NO. OF ATTACKS:** 3  
**DAMAGE/ATTACK:** 1-4/1-4/3-24  
**SPECIAL ATTACKS:** *Breath weapon + possible magic use*  
**SPECIAL DEFENSES:** *See below*  
**MAGIC RESISTANCE:** *Standard*  
**INTELLIGENCE:** *Exceptional*  
**ALIGNMENT:** *Neutral good*  
**SIZE:** L (36' long)  
**PSIONIC ABILITY:** Nil  
**Attack/Defense Modes:** Nil  
**CHANCE OF:**  
   Speaking: 100%  
   Magic Use: 100%  
   Sleeping: 40%

The electrum dragon (*Draco Magus electrum*) is a rare, solitary creature who dwells far from civilization, usually in mountainous areas, and always lairs in a cavern or stone building. It is usually peaceful and philosophical in nature, but can be a formidable fighter if aroused.

An electrum dragon fights with its breath weapon or by spell casting, in addition to possibly employing its physical (claw/claw/bite) attacks, and may direct these four attacks against multiple targets in any round of combat.

Its breath weapon is a unique, unstable gas emitted in a cone 4" long by 3" by 3" high, which reacts with air and loses its effectiveness after 1 round. This gas causes *enfeeblement* (effects last for 1 turn), *confusion* (for 9 rounds), or both. All creatures in the affected area must save twice vs. breath weapon to avoid both effects.

An electrum dragon begins life able to *detect magic* and *read magic*, gains the ability to *identify* items on touch — without any ill or cursed effects — upon growing to Young state, and upon becoming an Adult, gains the power to *dispel magic* once per day. A Very Old electrum dragon can *dispel magic* twice per day. These are all natural abilities (the former two usable at will without limitation), rather than spells.

In addition to these abilities, an electrum dragon gains the ability to cast spells as follows: Very Young specimens can cast one 1st level magic-user spell

each 24 hours; Young ones can cast two 1st level spells a day; Sub-Adults, two 1st and one 2nd level spell per day; Young Adults, 3 1st and 2 2nd; Adults, 4 1st, 2 2nd, and 1 3rd level spell; Old 4, 2, and 2; Very Old: 4, 3, 2, and 1 4th level spell; and Ancient, 4, 3, 3, and 2.

These spells are never automatically known. They must be acquired from scrolls or spell books or through training with a magic-user. An electrum dragon must experiment with a written spell for some time in order to successfully modify it for entirely verbal casting. (Refer to the AD&D™ Monster Manual for aging and other details of dragon nature.)

Electrum dragons enjoy trading, bargaining, and philosophical debate. They hoard things of beauty (such as finely crafted items) rather than wealth *per se*; a typical electrum dragon's hoard might contain statues, a harp or two, tapestries, and gems and jewelry, but few coins of any metal. Electrum dragons mate approximately every 100 years, the female producing 1-4 rubbery, foot-long eggs a year after mating. These eggs are laid and left untended; each egg (if it remains unmolested) is 75% likely to be fertile, and will hatch in a matter of days. □

## DISASTER HAS STRUCK!

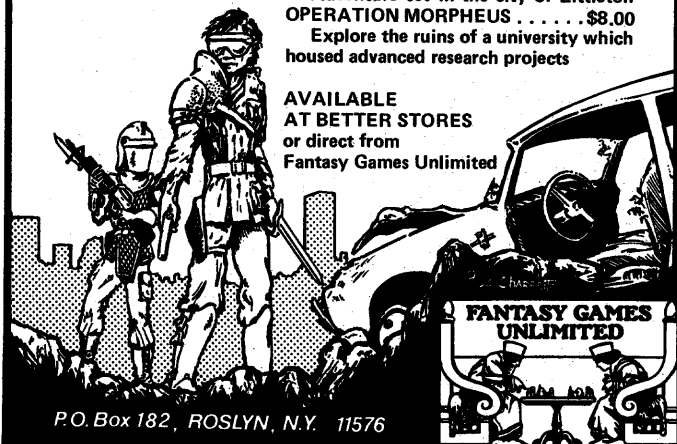
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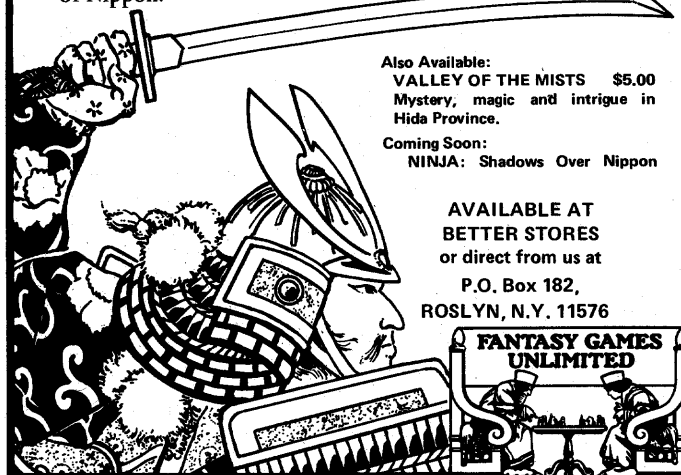
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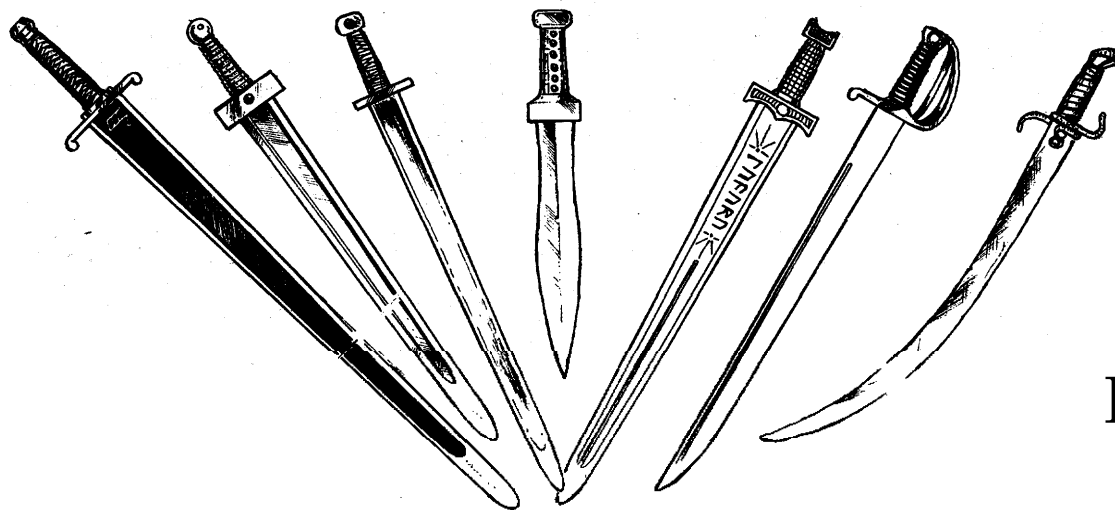
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# Seven swords

by  
Ed Greenwood



Blades  
of the  
Realms

"No spells tonight," Elminster said with a smile. "It is of swords I would speak."

"Swords? Magic swords, I take it?" I asked, settling myself in the chair across from him.

Elminster grinned through his curling beard. "As ever, your mind runs swiftly on a narrow track. Yes, magic blades — but only after you tell of the famed swords of this world, for I am most interested in the to-ing and fro-ing betwixt both our worlds . . . mayhap some blades have made the journey."

"No problem," I replied, reaching for this, that, and other books from the shelves surrounding us both. Thus armed, I told the old sage of King Arthur's *Excalibur*, and *Arondight*, blade of Sir Lancelot of the Lake.

I spoke of Charlemagne's *Joyeuse* and *Flamberge* (= "the flame-cutter"), and the swords of his stalwart paladins Roland (*Durandal*), Oliver (*Glorious* and *Haute-claire* = "very bright"), Rogero (*Bali-sarda*), and Rinaldo (*Frusberta*).

I turned to Siegfried, and told the sage of that hero's swords *Gram* (= "grief"), *Mimung*, and *Balmung*.

I read aloud from Spenser of the blades *Chrysaor* and *Sanglamore*, and then passed on what I could find of the Cid's blade *Tizona*; Ogier the Dane's *Courtain* (= "the short sword") and *Sauvagine*; Sir Bevis's *Morglay* (= "big glaive"); and almost a hundred more. I read from old books, modern fantasy stories, and guidebooks to royal regalia until the night had quite gone, and Elminster had filled his pipe almost forty times.

When I ran down, he nodded approvingly at me in the grey half-dawn. "Your

tongue proved even longer than I had hoped," he said. "I recognized no blade of the Realms with certainty in all your gabble, but no matter. In return, I will tell you of seven blades of power — oh, yes, there are countless others, but only seven this time, mind; blades that I have seen with my own eyes, in the Realms."

What he said thereafter I have set down below.

*Name(s): Adjatha, "The Drinker"*

*Description:* Adjatha is a +2 longsword of fine blue steel, hilted with steel in single cross-quillon and a plain, spherical polished knob pommel. Set in the heart of the tang, where the quillons meet just above the fine chain-wrapping of the grip, is a large (one-inch diameter) cabochon-cut black sapphire (worth 6,000 gp). There are no known markings or runes on the blade, and it does not shed any radiance.

However, upon touching any magic item (not including scrolls, but including potions if these are poured over the blade or it is immersed in them), Adjatha siphons off magical energy, causing the item in question to glow, shedding a pale green-white radiance, until the item is drained of dweomer or the sword and the item are separated.

The Drinker can never permanently drain an artifact, but it can steal the magic of lesser items. In all cases, the touch of Adjatha causes one power or effect (per round of contact) of the item to be nullified for 1-4 turns after contact. If the item has limited charges, or operates but once, sufficient contact with Adjatha can drain it entirely of magic. The blade absorbs the dweomer into itself in a

peculiar way, retaining magical energy to protect itself and its bearer.

Per charge drained or round of contact (many lesser items of magic will be drained after 13 or so rounds of contact), Adjatha gains 2 "hit points." It has 9 "hit points" worth of personal strength, and may add any magically drained points to its own, without (known) limit. Any attacks on Adjatha or its bearer must exhaust these phantom "hit points" before they can harm the physical entities of blade or bearer. When reduced to its original 9 hit points, Adjatha cannot absorb further damage to its bearer, and is itself vulnerable. Anyone grasping the grip of Adjatha can receive its "hit point" protection; there is room for a maximum of two bare human hands to grasp the grip at one time.

Adjatha, it must be noted, cannot repeatedly drain the vitality of the same item; after two contacts with any single item, The Drinker cannot drain anything more from it — but note also that a contact, if uninterrupted, can continue for up to 1 turn before any bearer must withdraw or risk the onset of *feeblemindedness* due to magical backlash (10% chance each round beyond 1 turn of continuous contact). Drained "hit points" gained by Adjatha in no way *cure* existing damage to its bearer, but merely absorb all further attacks until exhausted.

Adjatha cannot drain or negate spells cast at it or its bearer, and confers no special magic resistance except immunity to psionic *domination*, *charm* spells, and similar direct mind-control spells. This immunity does not extend to *sleep*, *suggestion*, *ESP*, and the like.

*Lore:* The Drinker is first known to





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have existed more than four hundred years ago, in the reign of Kurskos Ironhand; it was the sword of that monarch's herald and chief councilor, Amrok of the Dwarves. Kurskos slew Amrok in a night of revelry after one Shieldmeet, and took Adjatha the Drinker — plus the enmity of the Dwarves — as his own. Amrok was of almost human stature, and it has often been said Adjatha is of human and not dwarven manufacture, for it is of full size and heft for a strong, long-armed swordsman.

The stories of its making are many and colorful — and most are doubtless as fanciful as the tale told by Thyri of Amn, who stole Adjatha from the palace vaults in the sack of Aumreayum upon the death of Kurskos. Thyri held that Adjatha was given to his grandfather by the gods, and made any of the family who wielded it invulnerable in battle.

Thyri was easily — almost contemptuously — slain by the first man who challenged him, a merchant from Calimshan. That merchant, whose name is lost, was slain while on caravan soon after by a mischievous kenku. In like manner, The Drinker has often changed hands over the years, usually remaining with any one owner only a short time.

Elminster saw Adjatha forty winters ago at the court of Nesker of Mulmaster, when the sorcerer-king was studying it to increase his own arts. It disappeared

before Nesker's death and came to light briefly in reports of fighting in the Shaar, apparently being wielded by one of the nomad chieftains. The sword was stolen from him, and despite sending agents far afield, he was unable to recover it. The present whereabouts of the blade are unknown.

**Name: Albruin**

**Description:** Albruin is a broadsword, of a steel/electrum/silver alloy, demonstrably as effective as silver against undead and other creatures who suffer particular effects from contact with that metal. It is +1 to hit and +3 on damage. It sheds an eerie blue radiance (up to 1" radius) when drawn from its scabbard. It is of chaotic neutral alignment (intelligence 17, ego 13), communicates by speech (alignment tongue, common, elvish, drow, thieves' cant), and can read languages and magical writings.

Albruin's bearer can, at will, activate — and maintain by concentration — the sword's power to *detect invisible* objects in a 1" radius. Albruin can also *neutralize poison* once every 3 days, and *heal* its bearer once every 12 days. These powers are evoked at the will of the bearer, or by the sword if the bearer is unconscious and Albruin deems it advantageous to itself to activate either power. Physical contact between Albruin and the flesh of the bearer is necessary for the powers to work.

**Lore:** Albruin is believed to be the creation of the long-dead smith Surdee, who was famous in his day for the craftsmanship of the work that came out of the forges of icebound Glistler, where he worked ore fresh from the mines above the city on the edge of the glacier. The blade itself evades questions as to its origin; there are no markings or definite touches of workmanship that identify Albruin as the work of anyone in particular.

Albruin was held for decades in the royal house of Cormyr, kept as a family treasure but seldom (due to its alignment) borne by the kings of that land. It was stolen from the palace at Suzail some ninety winters ago by the thief Nyparr ("Nipe"), a halfling who was soon arrested at Wheloon by soldiers of Cormyr and slain when he attempted escape. Nipe did not have the blade when seized, and did not reveal its whereabouts. It was rumored amongst the thieves of that place that he had sold it to a "grey trader" ("fence") by the name of Blusken Shtult, who had a merchant barge on the Wyvernwater, and that Blusken had sailed from Wheloon up to a port on the northern shore of the Wyvernwater and delivered the blade to a waiting buyer.

The blade's whereabouts were uncertain for some twenty-four winters, until a lady of high birth in Selgaunt, one Shamur, found the blade left behind in her bedchamber by a visitor fleeing the city guard. He never returned, and Shamur sold it when she married. It was bought by an adventurer visiting the city of Selgaunt on matters of trade (gold for mercenaries), and wielded thereafter in several minor skirmishes about the Eastingreach before its owner died in an ambush. His slayer, the adventurer-prince Thaum of Telflamm, used Albruin to help him take the lands of Impiltur forcibly from his father's rule and found his own kingdom. Thaum eventually died by magic (hired by his father Kuskur, who was unable to regain control of the lost lands), and Albruin was acquired by one of Thaum's warriors, who fled the dead king's keep and took the blade back westward into the Dalelands.

This warrior, one Adjuz by name, perished at the hands of brigands on a northern road, and Albruin disappeared from view — but not before Adjuz had sought out a sage (Elminster, of course) in Shadowdale to learn the blade's true nature and powers.

After the death of Adjuz, the trail of the sword is hidden for some eight winters, but it is known to have been in the hands of the mercenary general Malakar on his visit to Zhentil Keep in the spring of the ninth year thereafter, and was identified again by the sage Murail of Sarbreen when a mercenary warrior sought him out to learn the blade's properties in that city some six winters beyond that time. From then to now, the whereabouts of

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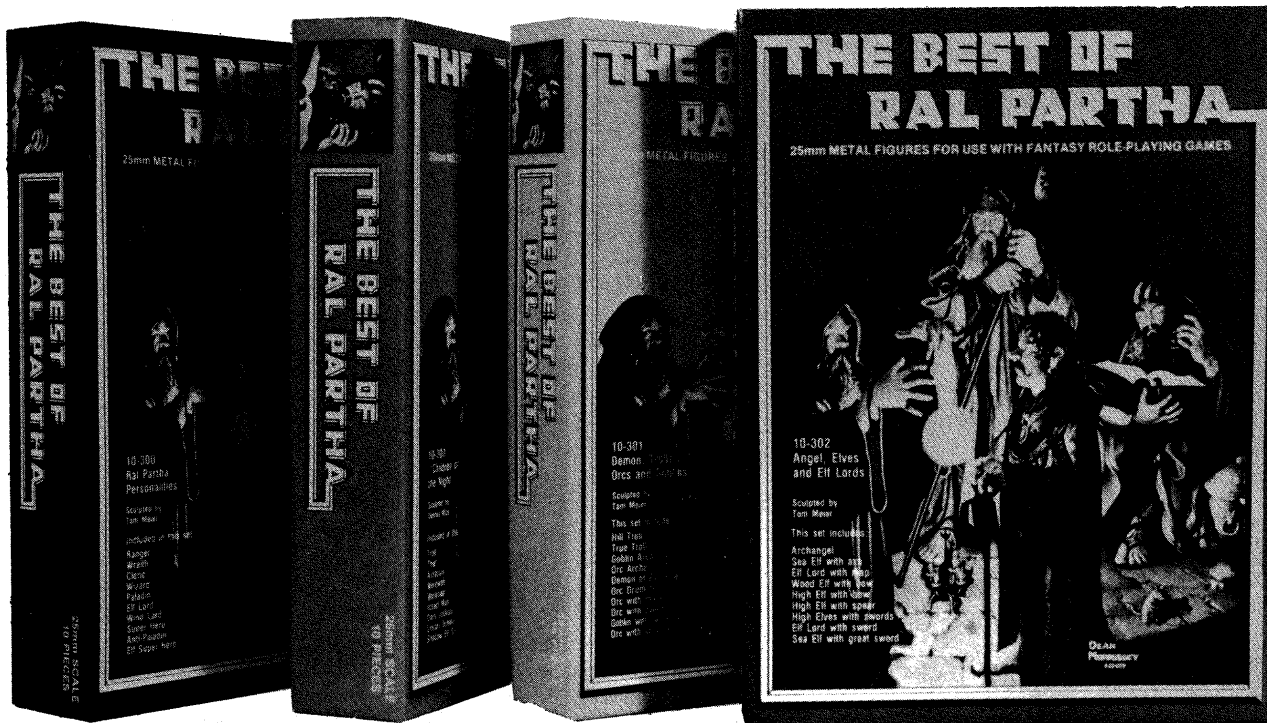
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Albruin are unknown, but Elminster is careful to remind us that its plain appearance and its ability to control many of its bearers would contribute to this anonymity.

**Name(s):** *Ilbratha, "Mistress of Battle"*

**Description:** Ilbratha is a bronze shortsword with a row of six matched bloodstones set into the helve of the blade on its left face. Each bloodstone is worth 70 gold pieces; as an undamaged set of stones, they might bring 500 to 600 gold pieces if sold shrewdly. Ilbratha does not glow and bears no inscriptions. It is +1 to hit and +1 on damage, and when grasped by a fighter of any alignment, its powers will be communicated telepathically to the holder. This is a feature of its magical manufacture; it is not sentient.

Ilbratha gains its nickname from its powers, which are very useful in combat. When grasped (flesh to handgrip) and mentally ordered, Ilbratha can with its bearer *jump* (as in the spell; 1 leap only) three times per day, blink itself and its bearer once per day, and create a *mirror image* of itself and its bearer once per day.

It also rings like a struck chime or tubular bell when it is touching magic; this includes spell effects from devices and physical contact with enchanted items, but not physical effects (such as a *stinking cloud* or *gust of wind*) caused by an already-cast spell. This power is a warning only, and is in no way a protection against magic.

**Lore:** Ilbratha was created by unknown hands at the behest of Azoun I, long-dead king of Cormyr. He bore it once into battle, at Ithmong in his war with Tethyr, and then lost it in a storm that wrecked his ship on the rocks of the Neck.

The sword was found by fishermen of Teziir and sold to a rich merchant, Sevan of Amnwater. He took it west on caravan along the Trader's Road and the river Chionthar to Scornubel, where he sold it to Phelas Urm, a merchant of Thentia. Phelas brought it overland through Cormyr, where it was recognized in Arabel. Agents of King Azoun attempted to recover it, and slew Phelas, but in the confusion the blade was lost (or stolen by one of the agents for himself).

All trace of it was lost until, two hundred winters later, the sage Thallastam of Procampur was offered the blade for 1,500 gold pieces by a peddler from a nearby town who seemed ignorant of its true nature. Thallastam brought the blade to Elminster in Shadowdale, the only fellow loremaster interested in swords whom Thallastam trusted.

Elminster identified the blade from the writings of Azoun I (the old king's great-grandson had then just come to the throne), and Thallastam bore it back toward Procampur by way of Tilver's Gap and Essemra. But he was never seen again, and did not reach Procampur. His ruined diary, his staff, and a skeleton

were found some years later when the Pool of Yeven in Battledale was dragged, but the sword was not found. Elminster believes it is in the hands of brigands, or perhaps mercenaries, who have not since drawn the blade in battle near the Dales.

**Name(s):** *Namara, "The Sword That Never Sleeps"*

**Description:** Namara is a longsword (+2 to hit, +4 on damage) of fine steel forging. It glows with a pale mauve radiance when drawn, and spits white sparks when striking other metal. On one side of the blade is etched in common: *Namara*, and on the other face *Never Sleeps*. The bearer may, at will, evoke the sword's power to emanate *silence 15' radius*.

Namara is as heavy as a normal weapon, but will float on top of any liquid — fresh water, brine, oil, wine — it has so far been dropped into. The sword has no alignment or sentience.

**Lore:** Namara appears in many legends and tall tales, but the term "The Sword That Never Sleeps" appears to be derived only from the inscription on the blade and does not refer to any specific property of the sword. Its origin is unknown; Namara appears to have existed for as long as tales have survived, wielded by such mythic heroes as Eth and Brensyl the Tall. Even the most critical of sages (Kumur the Skeptic, First Speaker of Evernoster) cannot determine Namara's probable time or place of origin, or find any references in the tales of a world to a time "before Namara was forged."

Within the last five hundred years, Namara has been the blade of Serrus the Great, founder of Amn, and a blade borne there by his descendants for three generations; the fourth, Ereskas, bore Namara north to found the city of Mirabar.

Ereskas died without issue, and Namara was carefully preserved atop his tomb in the city. There it remained for sixty winters, until Mirabar was overrun and plundered in the Goblin Wars. The goblin chieftain Nethaug seized the sword and bore it back to a ravine so deep in the mountains that the goblins, who were subsequently almost eradicated from the North, still hold this ravine today.

The blade remained in goblin hands for almost two hundred seasons, until a goblin named Ghaur was slain by a band of adventurers known as the Company of the Gryphon. The leader of the band, a warrior called Flarr, gave the blade to Thulmar One-Eye of Port Llast in exchange for training some eighty winters ago.

Thulmar bore the blade until his death in the Cold Winter, whereupon it passed to the Mistress of Port Llast, Stormraven the Proud Queen. Stormraven, who rode and fought at the head of her men with her jet-black hair flowing wildly about her, briefly made Port Llast great. She is remembered fondly by old warriors, and

will live long in fireside tales. At length she married a former foe, Parldulph of Neverwinter, and gave Namara to her son Rivenhelm.

Rivenhelm, who became one of the greatest knights, passed the blade on to Tamper Tencoin, an adventurer. Tencoin stood over the wounded knight in battle with the mercenary company of the Flaming Fist for most of a day in a vain attempt to save Rivenhelm's life. The tiny band held on till nightfall, when the mercenaries fell back and drove in their tracking dogs to ravage the wounded enemy. Rivenhelm handed Namara to Tencoin in the darkness and said "This is yours now." Leaving a trail of blood behind him, Rivenhelm crawled forward to choke the life out of one dog and died under the jaws of half a dozen more.

Tencoin lost the blade when he was poisoned in the Whistling Wizard Inn four winters ago. The poison made him mad for days, and when he returned to his senses, Namara was gone. Elminster, who saw the blade when Tencoin visited Shadowdale some years before this event, believes it was stolen by local thieves and will soon turn up again. And when it does, Tamper Tencoin will come looking for it.

**Name:** *Shazzellim*

**Description:** A scimitar of rather poor steel but keen edge, with a guard of iron curved into rearing serpents. Its grip is of leather, dyed red, but this may now have been replaced. Shazzellim is neutral evil, has an intelligence of 16 and an ego of 14, and communicates by speech (alignment tongue, common, thieves' cant, orcish). It is +1 to hit, can *detect magic* in a 1" radius if the bearer so wills while wielding it unsheathed, and in like manner can *locate object* in a 12" radius. It can also detect secret doors in a 1/2" radius at the bearer's will, and read any non-magical languages or maps. It will *heal* its bearer once per day, at the bearer's will, and has a special purpose: to slay bards. Any bard struck by Shazzellim strikes will be *disintegrated* unless the victim saves vs. spell.

**Lore:** Shazzellim was created by (or at least under the orders and with the assistance of) Lauzoril of the Red Wizards of Thay, in order to destroy his enemies the Harpers. Little is known of the Harpers; they consist of bards and a few rangers, are known by the device of a silver moon and a silver harp, operate in the northern regions on both sides of the Great Desert, and are a secretive organization rather than a band or race of people. Of the bards of great power, only Mintiper is thought not to be a member, and of the high-level rangers, only Thulraven and Estulphore are believed to be independent of the Harpers.

It is not clear if the Harpers are anything more than a private club or fellowship at present, although in the past they have acted in concert to keep kingdoms in

the northern lands and in the Dalelands small in power, and on at least two occasions have forcibly prevented the expansion of farms and settlements into elven woods. The cause of Lauzoril's enmity toward the Harpers is unknown.

Elminster saw Shazzellim when Ahlzul, a captain of the armies of Thay, brought it to Archendale to slay the ranger Dove. Mistakenly Ahlzul attacked the wrong woman — the knight Jasilmer — and was himself slain. Ahlzul's men recovered Shazzellim and their captain's body, but were later killed by men of Archendale over a code-of-conduct dispute.

Shazzellim disappeared from view briefly, was later identified by the sage Helavaster of Hillsfar when brought to that city by the caravan master Lhemako Tarsakh, and subsequently passed into the hands of Lhemako's superior, Meer. The scimitar does not appear to have passed on to Meer's superiors in Zhentil Keep (unless one of the lords of that city is hiding it from his fellow lords for some reason), and may have been stolen, hidden, or passed to another by Meer before his disappearance. The blade's present whereabouts are unknown.

*Name(s):* Susk, "The Silent Sword"

*Description:* Susk is a slim longsword of fine make and good (oil-) slaked steel, devoid of adornment or inscription. It does not glow of itself or even reflect

light, so that it does not appear to be metal from afar. Its nickname comes from its magical silence: The sword never rings, clatters, scrapes or emits any sound. A blade struck against it may ring, but Susk itself remains silent. This silence in no way affects creatures, spells, objects or any area about the blade.

Susk is +3 to hit, but does normal damage (1-8/1-12). It has no apparent intelligence or sentience, and only one other magical property — it levitates involuntarily. That is, it can never rise, fall, or move in any way by itself, but always remains stationary when released, even if in midair. It can be moved while so floating by being struck with other objects, or by magical effects (such as *telekinesis*), but will stop quickly when such force is removed.

Susk cannot therefore be effectively hurled at an opponent, or tossed away to prevent its capture — it will stop mere inches from the point of release and hang in midair. There is no known limit to, or way to nullify, this power. Any creature may grasp (and, if not a spell caster to whom cold steel is forbidden, wield) Susk without harm. It confers no magic resistance or spell immunities upon the bearer.

*Lore:* Susk is a blade mentioned repeatedly in tales and legends of the north. Its origin is unknown — and curiously, never mentioned in any folklore — but it seems to have always been around in the

hands of someone or another. Its present whereabouts are a mystery; the sage Elminster can speak of its location with certainty only over a short span of time beginning some twenty winters ago, when he recognized it in the hands of Abadda, a northern prince of the Fallen Kingdom, who was then a proud wanderer and bandit-leader.

Abadda was challenged by Distyl of Nesme at the court of Alustriel, High Lady of Silvermoon, in Elminster's presence. During the fight that followed, Elminster and at least one other — the adventurer Urnen of Yartar — recognized the blade for what it was.

Abadda was slain in combat, and Distyl rightfully took the blade. Shortly thereafter he was found dead by his campfire on the Trollmoors, and Urnen was seen in Longsaddle not much afterward, brandishing a blade that was demonstrably Susk — to Urnen's eternal dismay: When he let go of it involuntarily in the middle of a tavern brawl, it hung in mid-air, beyond his grasp, as he was dragged to the floor and stabbed to death.

A local bully, Usk Harpell, claimed the blade, but was found dead in a nearby alley within the night, the blade gone. It disappeared from view at that time, but recent reports from Shadowdale (some six winters back) and Mulmaster (two winters ago) suggest that the strange blade is still "changing hands the hard way"



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*Name(s): Taragarth, "The Bloodbrand"*

*Description:* Taragarth is a bastard sword, of steel fire-blackened along the length of the blade so that only the sharpened edges gleam. On the base of the blade, just ahead of the simple crossbar guard, is a rune etched into the metal. The rune is non-magical and evidently the mark of the blade's maker, but who the maker was has been lost over time.

Taragarth requires strength and stature to wield, but while it is held unsheathed, the bearer is protected from fire (effects equal a *ring of fire resistance*) and will be protected by a *feather fall* if descending 10' or more precipitously.

Taragarth strikes normally but does +3 damage. It does not glow and is not sentient. While gripping Taragarth (even sheathed), the bearer is protected from *ESP* and *detection* spells (including *know alignment*). Such spells will simply have no effect. This protection does not affect *charm*, *sleep*, other control-related spells, or psionic attacks.

*Lore:* Taragarth was forged by Elfgar of Silverymoon in the early days of the North, and was given to the champion Aeroth when he led the armies of the kingdoms of the North against the trolls of the Evermoors. The might of the trolls

was broken at the Long Battle (of nine days duration) across the moors, and Taragarth was brandished aloft bloodily so often by the valiant Aeroth that it was dubbed "The Bloodbrand."

Much later, when Aeroth was grey-bearded, Rayuth of Silverymoon died, and the throne passed to his son. Aeroth, grieving for his lord (and none too fond of the sadistic, proud Tulven, Rayuth's son), took ship west from Waterdeep, sailing first to the isle of Toaridge-At-The-Sun's-Setting and later to the Moonshae Isles. There, with his wife and six sons, Aeroth founded the city of Vlan. His descendants, the nucleus of a group swelled by other disenchanting or dispossessed mainlanders, were to become the feuding merchant houses of the Moonshae Isles.

But Aeroth's sword was not seen on his voyage, and most legends hold that he left it in Silverymoon, where it has been lost in some concealed hoard or in one of the many warren-like caverns beneath the city. A few sages know that, in truth, Aeroth hid the blade in a ruined well on the isle of Toaridge so that his argumentative sons would not fight over it.

There it lay while ages passed, until an exploration party of illithids found it and carried it to their underground city on the mainland near what is now Beregost. There it was studied for only a short time before a band of adventurers plundered much of the city and gained it.

The names of the band are now lost; one was a fighter who later took service in the merchant-guards of Amn and died battling bandits on the banks of the Sulduskoon river. It seems likely that he bore Taragarth, but no word of it can be found after it (presumably) fell into the hands of the bandits, until a wandering peddler offered it for sale in a market at Berdusk. It brought 400 pieces of gold from an adventurer who recognized it, but he mistakenly told a companion what he thought the sword was, and was dead by the next morning. So was the companion, murdered in turn by the assassin Turl.

Turl carried the blade north to the city of Scornubel, using it to pay off a debt to his guildmaster Iritan. Little is known of Iritan, who evidently ruled the guild with an iron hand for more than twenty winters, but one spring he appeared in Waterdeep, dying of poisoned wounds, and gave the blade, plus more wealth, to the wizard Marune. Much of Marune's wealth was lost in subsequent upheavals, and The Bloodbrand fell into the hands of an unknown someone in Waterdeep. Where it traveled then is not known, but four winters ago it was brought to Elminster when he was visiting Westgate, for examination, by a swarthy, much-scarred fighting man of Calimshan who gave his name as Vulph. The present whereabouts of Vulph and of the blade Taragarth are unknown. □

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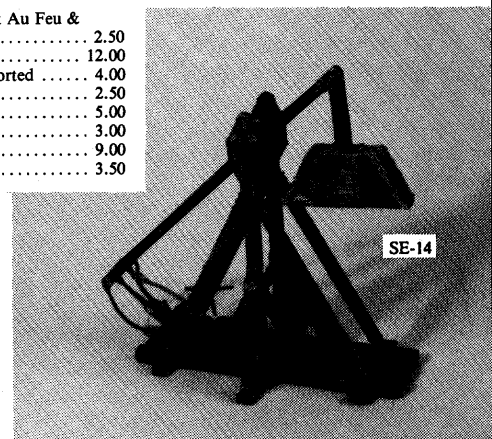
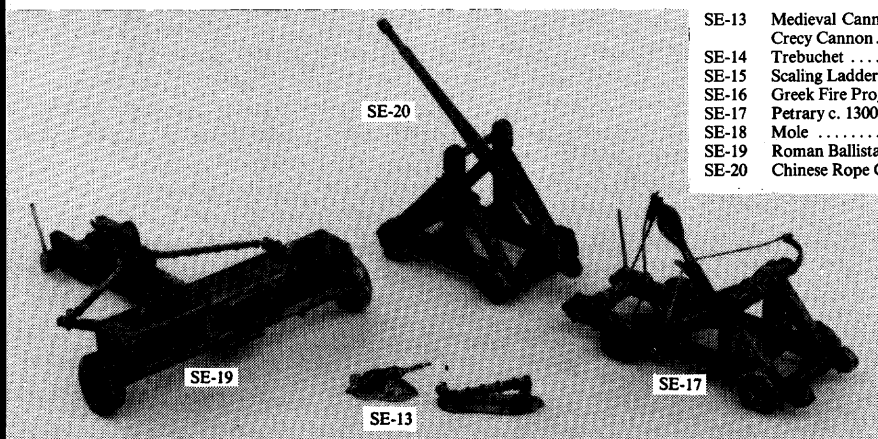


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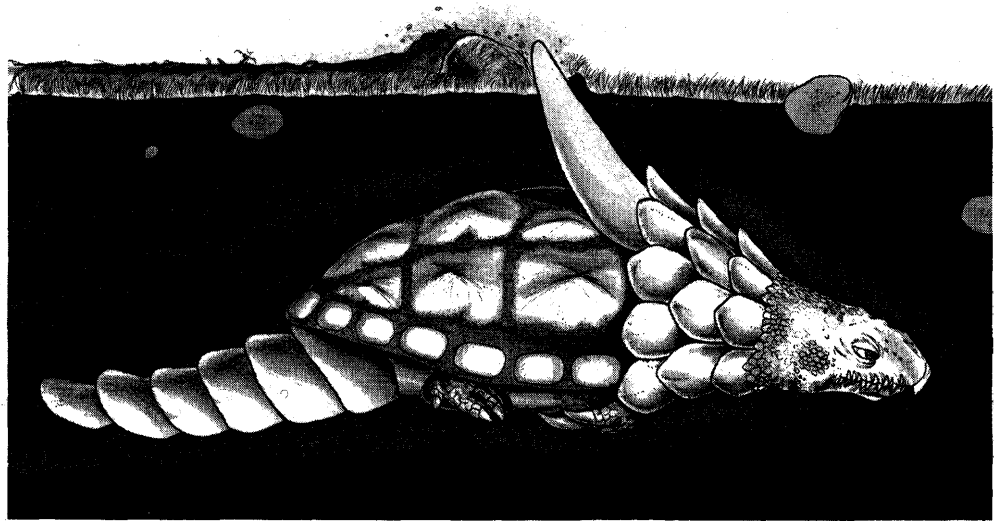
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# The ecology of the Bulette

by Chris Elliott  
and Richard Edwards



*"Brethren of the Guild of Naturalists!"*

The hum of conversation in the hall fell to an expectant hush as the speaker, a short, balding man in the robes of a Guildmaster, raised his arms for silence.

"For untold years, there has been no sighting of the Teeth in the Earth, more prosaically known as the Land Shark, and even in the Guild there were many who dismissed the tales of this spawn of sorcery as little more than legend.

"Tonight, however, we have with us a man who has not only seen one alive and been within three poles of the behemoth, but actually hunted it for trophy!

"From the land of Morn — A'ahb the Hunter."

The Guildmaster stepped back, his place taken by a tall, rugged man in sandy-colored robes; black-bearded, hook-nosed, burnt and weathered by sun and wind. Without preamble, he addressed the expectant Guildsmen.

"I've hunted all kinds of game, but like most of you I never thought the bulette, the land shark as you call it, was anything but the stuff of legend. How could such a beast swim through the earth like a fish through water, even if it was magical?

"Then, five years ago, I was in a little known and even lesser traversed area of Morn when I heard rumors of tribes that tracked such a beast, digging the earth from where the bulette had passed, taking the mud that they found, and smearing it on their plows.

"I asked the reason for this strange practice and was told that it made the plows cut the earth like the prow of a boat cuts the water. I began following the source of these rumors, to the east, deeper into the interior of the sparsely populated wilderness.

"I was approached by the headman of a native village shortly after my arrival on his premises. He confirmed the stories I

had heard, and from what he said I began to get an idea of the nature of the beast.

"It existed — that much seemed certain — and its uncanny powers must come from an ability to secrete a slime from its skin that works like the potion for transmuting rock to mud, known to some wizards and alchemists. But this secretion must be weaker than the potion in strength and duration, and it seems to work only on earth, not rock.

"The headman said that he was glad I had come this way. His village was being terrorized by an enormous rogue bulette, an albino of the species, that the natives called 'Mobh Idich' — The Great White One. Many warriors had tried hunting it, but it would either pick them off singly, or, gathering speed beneath the surface, it would burst forth upon a small group, just as a porpoise leaps out of the water, and devour them all.

"The headman asked me if I thought I could kill it. I didn't know if I could or not — but I knew I wanted to try. . . ."

The hunter paused, perhaps savoring the anticipation that he knew his audience was feeling.

"When I first saw a bulette on the surface, it fitted all the partial descriptions I had heard. Its body was articulated, and covered in thick, scaly plates that built up into a carapace on its back. Part of this shell could be extended to become the horny fin that produces the weaving furrows that criss-cross the land shark's domain. Its stocky, powerful limbs can be retracted while its muscular tail is propelling the beast through the earth. The mouth opens almost to a right angle, revealing a gaping maw filled with rows of dagger-like teeth.

"The beast is warm-blooded and breathes air, surfacing to do so. It is likely they bear live young, but if so this is done beneath the surface. As far as I know, a pregnant female has never been seen.

"I can tell you are wondering how I got close enough to the beast to find out all of this without being eaten. Well, you can find out these things from a *dead* one just as well — and I found a way to *kill* the bulette that has worked for me time and again since the first.

"From what I had been told, I figured that the bulette hunts by tracing vibrations in the earth, rather than by scent. So, I caught myself a kobold. A horse would work just as well, but they're much too valuable to use for bulette bait. I found a solitary tree, tied the kobold to the trunk on a short rope, and nestled myself in the branches with my heavy crossbow in hand.

"The kobold circled frantically. I sent an occasional reminder in its direction with my crossbow when it started to slow down, and after a while the constant movement of the kobold in the small area had done its task. I sighted a large fin weaving across the plain. It circled the tree, spiraling inward, and then abruptly made its final rush.

"As it burst from the earth, jaws wide open and mud streaming off its flanks, I let fly with a large quarrel smeared with poison — right down its gullet.

"What's that? Yes — only one shot, thanks to the poison. Really, once you've got the technique down, it's quite easy. I've killed others since the first day, but there's always something special about the first one. I still keep the hide of The Great White One as a memento. . . ."

At this point A'ahb the Hunter pulled on a cord, and a cloth behind him fell away to reveal a huge skin stretched on a frame. The meeting dissolved in chaos as members of the Guild fought to be the first to examine it.

(An earlier version of this article appeared in *Dragonlords — Yet Another Fantasy & Sci-Fi Roleplaying Magazine*.)



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# Tracing THRUSH's nest

The place: London The time: 1894

by Arlen P. Walker

*"Footfalls echo in the memory  
Down the passage we did not take  
Towards the door we never opened  
Into the rose garden  
Shall we follow  
The deception of the THRUSH? Into  
our first world."*

— T. S. Eliot, Four Quartets

The year was 1891. The single largest threat to the peace and freedom of the world had just been eliminated. James P. Moriarty, professor of Mathematics, Napoleon of Crime, lay now at the foot of the falls at Reichenbach. He had been removed, and the price was the life of only one man. Yet this price was a dear one. True, the prime force of evil in the world was no more, but neither was the prime force of good. In dealing with the professor, Sherlock Holmes had paid the final price. He, too, now lay at the foot of the Reichenbach.

So much was made known to the world by the late John Hamisch Watson, M.D. Yet, something more was now happening, unbeknownst to our favorite doctor.

The passing of Holmes had led many to begin to weave elaborate webs of crime and treachery. Once such group met in the Northumberland Hotel shortly after that fateful day.

Scotland Yard had rounded up most of Moriarty's gang, and with the help of the evidence in "Pigeonhole M" of a desk in Baker Street, successfully prosecuted those they had arrested.

But there were yet some who were too smart for the Yard, which no longer had Holmes' sure guidance. These men, knowing Holmes was now out of the way, met to plan the building of an empire of crime the like of which the world had never seen. It was at this meeting that Colonel Sebastian Moran appeared, breathless from his hasty return from Europe, with the news that Watson had lied: Holmes still lived!

The topic of the meeting rapidly changed. Holmes alive!! That meant they could not operate openly, that they must stay well submerged beneath the surface of society. Their plans must all be long-range, now. But the aim would stay the same — to conquer, to control, to remove any obstacles that stood in their way.

Moriarty was an eminent mathematician, a scholar, and he gathered many fine minds about him. These were the men who served as the planning committee for this new organization.

They called their new organization THRUSH — the Technological Hierarchy for the Removal of Undesirables and the Subjugation of Humanity. As the name suggests, THRUSH recognized Science and Technology as the wave of the future; and they were the first organization to support their vision with permanent staff for research and development.

Their first order of business: find a foolproof method of planning their operations. This was of paramount importance now that Holmes was known to be alive. Moriarty had been their leader, and he had planned many a foolproof job. But in the end he proved to be only a man, he failed to outwit Sherlock Holmes, and that failure cost him his life.

From this incident the Ruling Council learned two lessons. Lesson one was that no human planner was to be fully trusted. Humans could fail, and no one could hope to predict how or when with accuracy. Lesson two was that the proper reward for failure was death.

The first commission of the R & D department at THRUSH was the construction and testing of The Computer. To the agents of THRUSH, it will always be known simply as The Computer. Charles Babbage had been one of Moriarty's mentors. Babbage, in fact, had shown Moriarty the plans for his computing machine. Moriarty had remembered them, and had been at work himself on perfecting it. Not satisfied with knowing that it *would* work if only the materials could be properly made, he set himself the task of designing the materials. This work was almost completed at the time of his unfortunate demise. His cohorts remembered the many times he had boasted that when this work was finished, it would be the only thing in creation that was smarter than he was.

Smarter than Moriarty, and a machine — and therefore not prone to making mistakes. That was precisely what they needed! So the top brains of THRUSH set about deciphering Moriarty's notes. And building. And testing.

Finally, three years later, it was ready. The council fed it all of the information about the present time — 1894 — and waited. The Computer gave its first order, for the surveillance of 221B Baker Street and the execution of Sherlock Holmes.

Colonel Moran bumbled his assignment and paid the penalty, but he went like the soldier he was, without a hint of

what lay behind his attack. The Computer then revealed that it had expected Moran to fail and had given him this assignment to eliminate what it judged was a weak link in the mighty chain the machine was forging. As the council sat and waited, The Computer revealed its plan for the conquest of the world.

It directed that THRUSH should form shadow governments throughout the world. But these governments would not correspond with the official ones. National borders were irrational, illogical barriers. Instead, the world was divided into regions, each having some common factor unifying the territory it covered. These divisions were called satraps.

Because the people and governments within each satrap have their own flavor. The Computer selects as the director of a given satrap the person it considers best able to work in that area. The satrap is then, for the most part, left to govern itself. While each satrap therefore shares the same aims as the others, it may go about achieving those aims differently.

Sometimes rivalries may spring up between directors as personalities clash. If the two satraps cannot be made to coexist, at least on the surface, both directors will be replaced.

Above the directors of the satraps are the councilors. There are thought to be 26 councilors, each one taking as his title a letter of the alphabet. The ruling Council of THRUSH meets periodically in its capital city to review the progress being made on the projects assigned by The Computer.

This capital city of THRUSH (which goes by the same name) is unique in that it has no particular geographic location. The Computer realized that a city is nothing more than its people, and that the major weakness of a city is its immobility. The Computer decreed that THRUSH, then, would be an entirely portable city. The elements of the city move with it to each location so skillfully that no one has ever been able to say with certainty just where it is currently.

But THRUSH is a complete city, for all its portability. It has a standing army, as well as a force of civil servants, both dedicated to the movement and protection of the city. Its security has never been penetrated by any who survived the visit. As far as is known, this is the only major espionage center that can make this claim.

There does not seem to be any area

where the city cannot go. It has left traces of its existence in an underground cavern in the southwestern United States, as a floating city on the Atlantic, encased in a dome submerged in the Pacific, even in the Himalayas. One report even claims it was floating in the air.

As with all century old-firms, some traditions have grown up with THRUSH. For one thing, the council members seem to be patterned after the professor who had, albeit unwittingly, designed their entire organization. The council members all have a very prominent place in the everyday world as well. There have been a few statesmen and diplomats, but by and large, the council members were and are world-renowned scientists.

The members of THRUSH are dedicated to the accumulation of power. This is the "drug" they use to recruit most of their members. In return, these members are loyal, for they realize that only through THRUSH can they acquire the power they seek. There are very few defections from THRUSH, and virtually none from the upper echelons. No councilor has ever been known to defect.

"Thrush" can be the name of a bird as well, and the group member seems to have taken to their namesake quite readily. Some of their uniforms include decorative feathers and wings. The field headquarters are called nests. And above and beyond all, they are experts in aerial operations. It has been said that if a place is accessible by air, THRUSH can break in — and probably already has. And if it can't be reached by air, they've probably been there, too, just to find that out.

Missions are planned with little or no regard for human life. If it costs a thousand lives to achieve The Computer's aims, so be it. The aim *will* be achieved. Agents are always implanted with a monitoring device linked to The Computer. If The Computer decides the agent is about to betray the organization, it detonates an explosive device housed within the monitor. The agent, of course, dies.

The average man on the street will have no knowledge of THRUSH, but if a citizen is found who has heard of it, the chances are the contact left him with a good impression; the aims of THRUSH are apt to be persuasive if presented in public. Their aim is world peace. Also, they seek an end to petty national rivalries, world hunger, and pestilence. They have been known to sway idealists with this line, and some directors honestly believe this is what they're working toward.

That some traditions have arisen over the years within THRUSH does not, however, indicate that it is hidebound. The Computer has realized that as times change, it must change too. As new technology has arisen, either on the open market or in THRUSH's labs, The Computer has absorbed this new technology into itself. And as a result, it has grown

tremendously in thinking power over the years.

In the past, it had insisted on being transported with the city of THRUSH, but now, in an age of instantaneous worldwide communication, it has decided it must remain constantly awake, ever vigilant for an opening it may exploit in its opponents' defenses. While The Computer's exact location is not known, it is believed to be somewhere in the East Sixties in New York City.

The Computer has not limited itself to physical changes. As the multinational corporations came into being, it realized that in them lay a great opportunity. It began to penetrate them, and through judicious moves in the international financial arenas, The Computer has even built one or two multinational entities of its own. There are reports that a few multinationals have even been awarded the status of satraps.

While THRUSH has changed much over the years, some things remain constant. Its policy on failure is one. If an operation should go awry, it is not the fault of the plan. The Computer did not err; the *plan* was perfect. It was the *human* who failed to carry it out. And if you fail, you are unworthy of serving the perfect planner. There is a short trial by the councilors, after which the "failure" is disposed of.

THRUSH agents have a number of

weapons, and the agents are quite difficult to disarm, because there is always one more device hidden somewhere. One of the most popular is an exploding tooth. If one is taken from an agent, look again; they usually carry two. Some agents are immunized to truth drugs, but that is usually reserved for those in the highest echelons.

Of late, there have cropped up in the world many terrorist organizations whose sole aim, it would seem, is to destroy. These organizations, while useful at times to THRUSH — mainly as diversions — do not fit in with the organization's plans. THRUSH has no intention whatsoever of destroying the world: How can they rule a burned-out cinder?

Members of THRUSH have even been known to cooperate with their arch-foe UNCLE (about which more will be said in the article that follows this one) in foiling a group which had that aim. THRUSH's preference is to conquer without firing a shot, but they will kill as long as the spoils remain intact.

THRUSH has come a long way since its inception in 1891; from the broken remnants of Professor Moriarty's gang, to the super-secret, super-powerful organization of today. And they may have a long way yet to go, but they are willing to wait. For them, it is only a matter of time until the final act is played out in the century-long plan of The Computer. □

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# In trouble? Say UNCLE

The date: New York City The time: now

by Arlen P. Walker

UNCLE's Headquarters building is not easily located. We won't be able to find it in any phone book. However, we can begin by prowling around Third Avenue in New York, a location where many UNCLE agents have been spotted.

As we travel along Third Avenue in New York's East Forties, we come to a public parking garage. If, at this corner, we turn left we will see a row of brownstones and, at the far corner, a three-story white building.

The first two floors of this building are given over to a "key club" (a private club whose members identify themselves by showing a key at the door) called The Masked Club.

The Masked Club gets its name from the fact that — in deference to the privacy of its members — all those inside (including the waitresses and staff) must wear masks. The patrons all are businessmen "unwinding" after a busy day. The club also has a dance floor and band, and banquet rooms are available.

On the third floor of this building are the offices of an agency known simply as UNCLE. The offices are modest, consisting mainly of desk after desk of earnest-looking young people, all of whom are busily telephoning.

If we stand inside the door for a while looking lost, the receptionist will come to our aid. If we ask what UNCLE is, she will explain that it is an organization that attempts to aid the hungry and oppressed all over the world. She will then recite facts and statistics of deaths from famines and floods, and the torture of political prisoners in various countries. If we offer to donate to the cause after she finishes her spiel, she will tell us that UNCLE has been entirely funded by an eccentric billionaire, but that if we really feel we must donate, she can take a gift from us to forward to another organization less fortunate than UNCLE.

The rest of the brownstones are fairly nondescript; most are residences. The most prominent of the non-residences is Del Floria's Cleaning and Tailoring.

Upon entering Del Floria's we find it to be a small, comfortable establishment. To the left, against the wall, are many bolts of the excellent fabrics which will upon request be made into equally excellent suits. To the right are racks of suits already made. Against the far wall is a row of changing rooms, with a small light above each door that comes on if the room is occupied.

Occasionally a man will enter the shop, go to a rack and select a suit, and head for the changing rooms at the rear. As he approaches the rooms, the light over the third door will wink out, and that will be the room he enters. After he has entered the third booth, the light will again come on. A few minutes later he will emerge, return the suit to the rack, look around a bit more, and leave.

But at Del Floria's, things are seldom what they seem.

Del Floria himself is a mild-seeming man in his late fifties. It might be hard to imagine, but he is also a highly respected member of UNCLE's Section VI. He is a guardian, and his shop is a secret entrance to the inner chambers of UNCLE Headquarters. He is the only member of UNCLE below Section I who knows all the members of UNCLE by sight. He is also a capable guardian, this route to headquarters having only been penetrated once in the history of UNCLE. (He offered to resign on the spot when this happened, but Waverly wouldn't hear of it.)

This is what actually happened "behind the scenes" in the incident described above: An agent came to report in through Del Floria's. He selected a suit as an excuse to use the changing room. The light is always on over the third cubicle, insuring it will always be available when an agent needs it. Del Floria, recognizing the man as an agent, makes any excuses necessary to allow him (Del Floria) to get to his desk. Once at his desk, he operates a hidden switch, turning the light over the third door off. The light going off is a signal to the agent that Del Floria has recognized him and it is safe to enter. Once in the cubicle, he twists the clothes hook at the back, and a panel slides aside, giving him entry into a brightly lighted corridor leading to a desk. At the desk, a receptionist hands him his identity badge and takes the suit he selected from the shop. She puts this suit on a table beside another agent who is busily making himself up to look like the agent who has just come in. When his disguise is complete, the second agent takes the suit, returns through the cubicle, places the suit back on the rack, looks around a bit more, and leaves, returning to HQ (if he desires) through a secret door in the parking garage. Meanwhile, the agent who received the ID badge from the receptionist pins it on his lapel and goes his way through the labyrinthine corridors of UNCLE HQ.

UNCLE — the United Network Command for Law and Enforcement — is divided into six sections, each one overlapping slightly the duties of the sections (if any) that are above and below it. If the Policy Board is captured or eliminated, control of the network will pass to each section in turn. If any of the lower sections are eliminated, the other sections will take over their duties.

*Section I: Policy and Operations.* This is the head of UNCLE, the section that controls the network. At the top is the Policy Board, a council of five men. These men do not live on the same continent as one another, making the capture or control of them as a unit as difficult as possible. Alexander Waverly, who was involved in the founding of UNCLE in 1946, is the current Chairman of the Policy Board. He is therefore the sole member of the board residing in North America, and his office is in UNCLE HQ in New York. The Policy Board never physically meets in one location, and only in extreme emergencies do even two of the members meet face to face; sessions of the board are held over an encrypted satellite link.

Policy Board members are the only personnel permanently assigned to Section I, but many members of other sections are temporarily attached to Section I to carry out support functions and special missions. No one in UNCLE can hold a higher clearance than a Section I clearance, which is sufficient to open any file in UNCLE. Only Policy Board members have a Section I clearance full-time, although temporary Section I access may be granted in extreme cases.

*Section II: Operations and Enforcement.* At age 33, Napoleon Solo was the youngest man ever to become Chief Enforcement Officer, a position which shares with the Operations Chief full control over Section II. Only UNCLE's top agents, the ones able and ready to kill, are found here; these are UNCLE's shock troops. When there is an enemy stronghold to break into, Section II will always be found leading the way.

*Section III: Enforcement and Intelligence.* This group gathers the hard-to-obtain data and takes on the high-risk intelligence operations as planned by Section II. Covert actions will be carried out from here. The agents in this section are strongarm artists, but they do not have blanket authority to kill, as Section II agents have. Killing is a viable option for

Section III agents only if there is no other way to achieve a necessary end, and any deaths they cause must be satisfactorily explained to headquarters. Since headquarters frowns on killing done by agents below Section II, this will not be easy.

**Section IV: Intelligence and Communications.** These people are the work horses, the data-gatherers. They monitor transmissions worldwide, break the information down into its essential components, and feed it to the main computer to be made into the reports Section I receives daily (or more often, if the news received is judged pertinent to an ongoing operation or represents an imminent danger). Very little happens in the world which is not noted by Section IV. People from this section have the responsibility to brief the Policy Board, as well as those agents temporarily attached to Section I for special assignments, on all facts even remotely connected to a case.

**Section V: Communications and Security.** This is the gadget shop of UNCLE. The spy pens, hidden radios, bombs, and guns used by agents in the field are designed and built in this section. The encryption of the satellite link between Policy Board members is handled by technicians from this section temporarily assigned to Section I. In addition to devising the codes UNCLE agents use, this section also has the responsibility of breaking enemy codes. The covers

UNCLE agents use are devised here, and work is always going on to build new covers to be used in future missions, or in current ones if covers are blown.

**Section VI: Security and Personnel.** These are the policemen of UNCLE, whose jobs are to ensure the physical security of UNCLE installations around the world. They are always listening on emergency wavebands for cries of agents in trouble. The emergency plan (Plan 9) is always being changed by them, so an enemy will never know from which direction the cavalry is coming, but it always involves the agent requesting assistance to decoy his followers into a prearranged ambush. They also perform security investigations of all personnel newly employed or promoted by UNCLE, as well as maintaining complete files on every world leader and the members of his government.

The entire block housing UNCLE Headquarters, from the public parking garage to the white stone building containing The Masked Club, is owned by UNCLE. All of the buildings have walls of steel-reinforced concrete, enclosing the three-story headquarters. On the roof of the brownstones are television antennas and billboards, just like on other brownstones around the city. The difference is that the TV antennas are false, and the billboard disguises a high-powered

shortwave antenna connected to elaborate sending and receiving gear attuned to every part of the world.

The identification badges supplied by the receptionist are individually keyed for each agent with a specific combination of chemicals. In every area of UNCLE there are sensors which detect one or more of these chemicals. If someone enters an area while not wearing a badge containing the chemical or combination of chemicals which the area allows, alarms will sound in Section VI and steel curtains will close off the area.

While the headquarters building is three floors tall, there are no stairways. Four elevators handle the vertical traffic. There is also a basement to UNCLE HQ, housing most of the code-breaking operations, and beneath the soundproofed basement floor is an underground channel to the East River. At the underground docks there, UNCLE keeps several cruisers (some up to sixty feet long) moored.

There are four known entrances to UNCLE — Del Floria's, the parking garage, the UNCLE office in the white stone building, and the river entrance — but a fifth is suspected. If it does exist, it is known only to Waverly, and used only by him. Only two of these entrances have ever been penetrated, and by far the most serious penetration was by way of the river. Since then, security in that area has been increased, and it is thought that the

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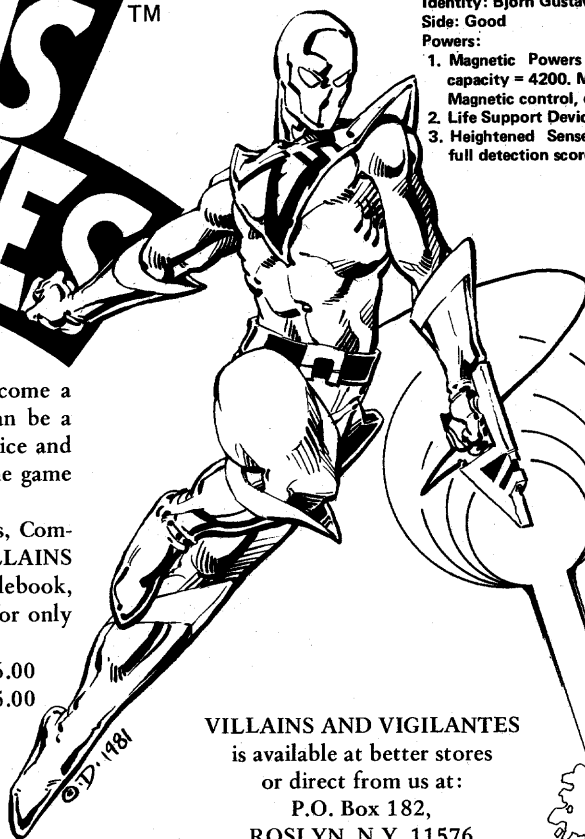
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river entrance would now be the hardest to break through.

The first and second floors of UNCLE Headquarters are taken up by the staffs of Sections II through VI. The third floor contains Waverly's office, as well as other offices for agents temporarily attached to Section I, and some other high-secrecy projects. The third floor, for instance, is where a daily radio message from the Himalayas is received and processed — a message so secret it is never written down anywhere.

Access to UNCLE's third floor is seldom granted. In addition to the chemical code required, badges allowing third floor access are color-coded as well; the current color for third-floor access is white.

The most prominent feature of the third floor is Alexander Waverly's office. It is a very large room, in part because of his importance as a member of the Policy Board and in part because it doubles as a briefing room for those missions run personally by him. Centered in the wall is a breathtaking view of the United Nations building, a symbol of Waverly's own belief that the nations of the world must learn to cooperate, or the world is doomed. Although the view is lovely, it is not seen through a window; rather, his "window" is a projection screen for a picture picked up by a remote camera.

Waverly himself is something of an

enigma to those who work for him. No one sees him leave his office, but he has frequently been seen strolling the corridors of UNCLE observing his people at work. Many thousands of people have worked for him, and while he always hesitates before calling anyone by name (perhaps a holdover from times when he dared not use anyone's real name), he has never been known to forget any name. Every morning he reads newspapers from every major city of the world, and he has an uncanny knack for being able to put facts from several papers together and discover some new danger to which UNCLE must respond quickly. He claims to be in his fifties, but his war record stretches back more years than that allows for. No one knows Alexander Waverly's real age, but it is almost certain he is past UNCLE's mandatory retirement age — a fact that even UNCLE's central computer doesn't dare call attention to.

Waverly doesn't make as many forays into the field as he once did. On one of those trips he was captured by THRUSH; that organization attempted to extract information from him, but found he was immune to every truth drug they had. Waverly remains the Policy Board member with the highest profile.

UNCLE's main goal is to secure the peace and freedom of the world. The organization tends not to get involved in national disputes unless they threaten the safety of the world. UNCLE's main opponent is THRUSH, although it has encountered other groups whose goal was world domination (and one, DAGGER, whose object was world destruction). UNCLE agents have a strong reputation for fairness and impartiality, which has influenced many of the world's other intelligence organizations to assist UNCLE when such assistance was needed.

The second goal is secrecy. UNCLE tries to keep as low a profile as possible, hence its philanthropic front. The reasons for this are twofold. First, if a new

group threatens the world, UNCLE will have the advantage of surprise. The group will probably not be prepared for an organization as far-reaching and efficient as UNCLE. Second, if the general public knows nothing about the actual nature of UNCLE, it will be more difficult for some headline-hunting demagogue to use UNCLE as a scapegoat for the world's troubles. Also, if the general public knew of UNCLE's true purpose, it would know of the danger that UNCLE is always fighting, which could lead to a world-wide panic.

The actions of UNCLE agents will be predicated on these two major goals. They will not interfere with the domestic affairs of any country, and they will keep as low a profile as possible.

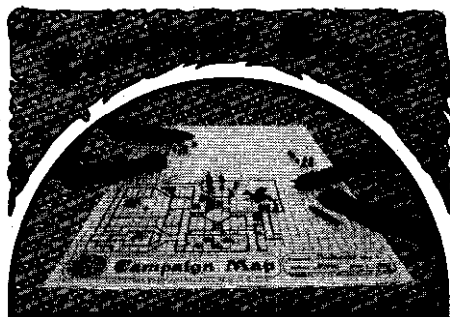
The requirement to keep a low profile means agents will seldom kill. When an agent of Section II kills in the course of an assignment, a special UNCLE clean-up squad is called in to tie up loose ends before civilian authorities can discover them.

While its repeated confrontations with THRUSH have forced UNCLE to design and build a super-computer of its own, there remain some major differences between its and THRUSH's. UNCLE did not have access to the single-minded purpose of THRUSH's technology, and as a result UNCLE's computer is not the equal of THRUSH's. In addition, the UNCLE computer does not run the organization, but is subservient to the human members of Section I. The computer only suggests, it does not order.

There have only been two defections in UNCLE's history; one a security team member who went insane, the other a communications tech from Section V. There has never been a defection from above Section V.

There have been security breaches, though. Most have occurred because of bad judgement by station heads in various parts of the world. Some have been quite damaging, but none has resulted in lasting harm. The penalty in UNCLE for a security breach is dismissal.

II



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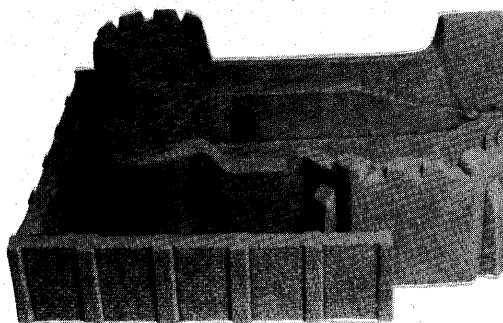
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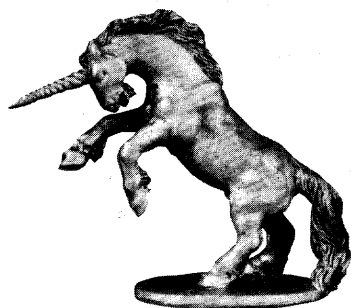
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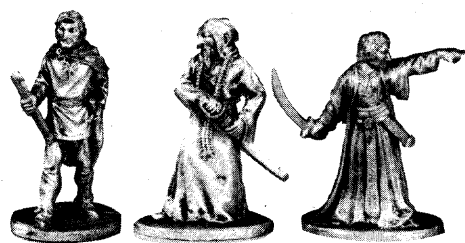
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# RAL PARTHA

# Spying on the spies

## Author's notes: A struggle with sources

by Arlen P. Walker

After reading the foregoing articles, you are probably wondering where all this information came from. Most of it came from published sources, but some of it, I must confess, I manufactured myself. If the division between the two is not readily apparent, I have succeeded, and I thank you for the compliment.

There were three "official" sources: personal memories of The Man From UNCLE television series (MGM-TV), The Man From UNCLE paperbacks (Ace Books), and The Man From UNCLE Magazine (published by Leo Margulies and edited by Sylvia Kleinman). The bibliography at the end of this article is not a complete list of available sources; the entries represent only the books and magazines to which I had access, either from my collection or from the public library.

Writing the preceding articles was not as easy as merely going through the books, jotting down relevant facts, and presenting them. The Man From UNCLE was, first and foremost, a television series, and television series are not noted for their consistency. Many writers worked on the TV episodes, and as a result, many contradictions appeared in the show. Del Floria's didn't seem to be in the same location, or have the same neighbors, all the time. Contradictions appear in even greater number in the magazines, most likely attributable to the pressure of grinding out 20,000+ salable words each and every month.

How then to resolve the contradictions? I decided the paperbacks should be my primary source, since they were (presumably) produced at greater leisure, with the magazines secondary (I still would have something on paper I could quote from if necessary), and my memory would serve to fill in the gaps. In all cases I reserved the right to break this rule to accept an item which seemed especially intriguing, and to improvise if none of the alternatives seemed artistic enough. With these ground rules established, I began to pursue that elusive bird, the THRUSH.

Perhaps the most interesting facet of THRUSH (and the centerpiece of the article) was its connection with Professor Moriarty. Was THRUSH ever explicitly linked with the Napoleon of Crime? Not in so many words, but here is a quote from *The DAGGER Affair* (see the bibliography for complete reference on this and other quotes):

"The First Council was made up of survivors of an unnamed organization

which had been built entirely from nothing by one of the most brilliant men the world has ever known. The Professor was a genius in two slightly related fields — mathematics and crime. In 1879 he began to construct a web of power which covered all of Europe and was extending its tentacles into America by the time he was killed in 1891."

True, never a specific mention of Moriarty. But can there really be a doubt? Is it possible there were *two* mathematics professors intent upon building an international criminal organization? . . .

The turning of the aims of the organization from crime to world control is documented by another quote from *The DAGGER Affair*:

"(The members of THRUSH) were aware of a few things the Professor had not seen. Crime, per se, does not pay as well as it used to. And money is no longer hard to get. The true wealth, they knew, lies in personal power. They set for themselves the goal of unification of the entire world into the image they foresaw, with all inefficient, non-productive or anti-productive members of society eliminated, and the efficient, productive members producing at their direction."

So we now have Moriarty's crew aimed at world control. Next, we turn to The Computer. In keeping with the Moriarty motif, I introduced it with the same phrasing Watson used to introduce Irene Adler. But The Computer does exist and does direct THRUSH, as documented by more references than I have room to quote. It is described as the Ultimate Computer. But who built it?

Here I ventured onto less firm ground. Its designer has never been named, or even hinted at, but a computer that complex must have been designed by a genius with a high degree of expertise in mathematics. Does this unknown designer begin to resemble someone I have already named?

Where did Moriarty acquire his interest in computing machines? How did he learn their design? He might have learned about them by studying the designs of Charles Babbage — but a more artistic solution began to take shape. Babbage lived until 1871. What lover of mathematics would not desire to meet the inventor of the "difference engine"? We have already seen Moriarty's penchant for

turning desire into reality, so we may assume such a meeting occurred. Babbage, upon seeing Moriarty's interest and recognizing his obvious talent, would naturally wish to get Moriarty to continue his work on computers.

Moriarty would accept the challenge, and was not one to let a lack of tools hinder him. Hence, he came up with the design and plans for the construction of The Computer, even though he never lived to see it completed.

The date I have given for THRUSH's founding is 1891, while in *The DAGGER Affair* it is given as 1895. Why did I change the date? Well, Holmes was thought to have gone into the Reichenbach in 1891. Yet the writer of *The DAGGER Affair* would have us believe that Moriarty's organization did nothing until 1895, four years later. This clearly was inexplicable; with the one man dead who could hope to oppose them, the founders of THRUSH should have sprung into a frenzy of action. Why were they silent? Clearly, because they knew Holmes still lived.

But how did they know this? Mycroft surely would never have let slip such a secret, and he was the only man whom Holmes told. But there *was* one other man who knew Holmes had survived: the confederate of Moriarty who stood atop the cliff as long as he dared and rolled rocks down upon Holmes. In "The Adventure of the Empty House" Holmes tells Watson he was sure it was Moran who gave him that "evil five minutes" out on the ledge.

If Sherlock Holmes was sure, who am I to argue with him? Therefore, we know that Moran knew Holmes was still alive. As Moriarty's chief lieutenant and heir apparent to his organization, it was clearly Moran's duty to return and inform the others — and so he did. While the members still at large in London were planning their crime wave, Moran arrived with the news that doused all their hopes: Sherlock Holmes still lived!

If they were still to exist, the masterminds of THRUSH needed a counterforce for Holmes; hence, their insistence on prompt completion of The Computer. Moran was not of high enough caliber to run the organization, so The Computer sent him on his suicide mission against Holmes. There might perhaps have been yet another motive for Moran's assignment, though: Maybe The Computer was already securing its position of authority

within the group by eliminating the one candidate who might possibly challenge its domination. At any rate, it was only after Moran's elimination that the serious business of world domination could get under way. Since we know that Holmes returned in 1894, Moran was probably executed late that year.

The first meeting of THRUSH proper, the group that was out to rule the world, could only take place after Moran's execution, so the THRUSH leader's assertion of 1895 could be correct, since that would have been the time of the first meeting using the name THRUSH. But moving the formation of the organization back to 1891 solves the problem posed by the quietude of Moriarty's henchmen for four years after his death.

The remainder of the details of the organization, tactics, and goals of THRUSH are mainly straight from the sources, with only minor points which could easily be deduced from the facts given used to fill in the gaps.

The best source of information on THRUSH is *The DAGGER Affair*, which recounts the only time (as far as I know) that UNCLE and THRUSH ever cooperated. Working alongside THRUSH gave agents Napoleon Solo and Ilya Kuryakin a great many insights into that organization — insights which are shared by the readers.

UNCLE, on the other hand, was a

much more difficult and less rewarding row to hoe. While much of the information on THRUSH came from one author, no single writer contributed nearly as large a share of the pool of knowledge about UNCLE. So many different authors contributed, and so poor was the editing of their work, that there are almost more contradictions than data! It would seem that no one could agree on section names used within UNCLE, how many secret entrances there were to UNCLE HQ, or where these entrances were.

I finally accepted the section names from *The Thousand Coffins Affair*. My reasoning was that there was not as much

time pressure for this, the first UNCLE paperback, as there was for the rest, so there was more time to get the details right. Also, the first book of a series tends to be more tightly planned, in order to set the stage for future adventures.

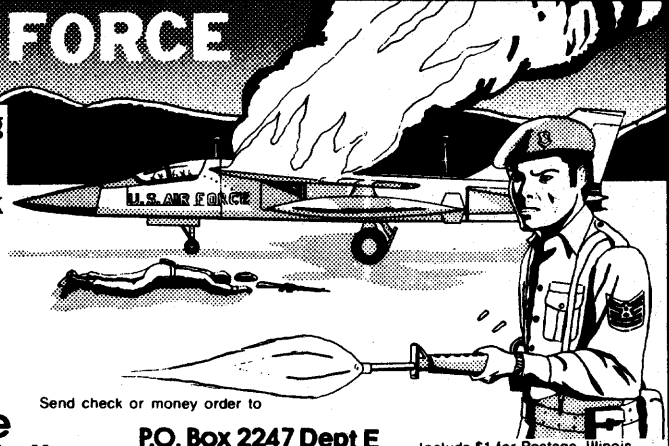
The duties of the various sections within UNCLE are about half documented, the remainder being logical deductions from the names of the sections. The reason for the overlapping of duties between sections was never explained, so the one I supplied was pure guesswork.


The physical location of UNCLE HQ is well documented, as well as the secret

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entrance through Del Floria's. The remainder of the block, except for the white stone building and the garage, is never detailed. The indoor furnishings of Del Floria's and the UNCLE office on the third floor of the white building are from my imagination and memory.

The operation of the secret entrance at Del Floria's is never adequately explained, and the button which frees the back panel of the changing room is located in many different and mutually exclusive places, so I guessed at these things. The agent check-in procedure is fairly well documented, except for the conduct and re-entry of the agent who is assigned to cover the home station. These were just surmises on my part. Nowhere could I find a better identification of the key changing room than "the third" — whether from the right or the left is never mentioned. I have a vague memory of it being the left, but since I wasn't sure enough to call it absolutely, I decided to let UNCLE retain some secrets.

THRUSH's penetration of Del Floria's is recounted in "The Thrush From THRUSH Affair," a title that was a TV episode as well as a magazine story. "The Thrush" was a female agent highly placed in Interpol who, through contacts in Interpol and UNCLE, learned UNCLE's recognition signals and codes. Del Floria did not recognize her, but let her in on the strength of the codes she

knew. Waverly spoke to him later, and while we are not privy to what was said, my guess that Del Floria offered to resign is consistent with UNCLE'S penalty for breaches of security. That the resignation was not accepted is obvious from the fact that he is still around at the beginning of the next episode.

The color- and chemical-coding of the badges is well documented, as is the alarm sequence. There is no mention anywhere of the codes changing, but anyone with experience of secured areas knows that such codes are changed regularly.

The activities presented as happening on the different floors of UNCLE HQ, except for Waverly's office and the underground wharf, are my own guesses. Since a special pass is required for access to the third floor, I placed the sensitive operations on that floor, to take advantage of the additional security.

The data on Waverly is well documented. The view of the United Nations from his office is, in my view, definitely a projection of a view from a remote camera. In the literature there is considerable waffling on this point. My decision was based on two observations: Having a connection to the outside world is bad enough, but to have it connect straight into Waverly's office is unthinkable. Secondly, how could this window be disguised? The lights are on at all hours in his office, and he never closes the curtains. No, it has to be a projection.

Taking you on this guided tour of the creation of an article has been fun, and to be sure I expect to get paid for it. But there is another reason for doing it. By showing you the decisions I made and giving you access to the facts I used to make them, I'm hoping to encourage you to make up your own mind. If you don't like some of what I've written about UNCLE or THRUSH, you also have access to the facts, and you can second-guess me. In any case, I hope what's written here helps you and yours get more enjoyment out of espionage role-playing games.

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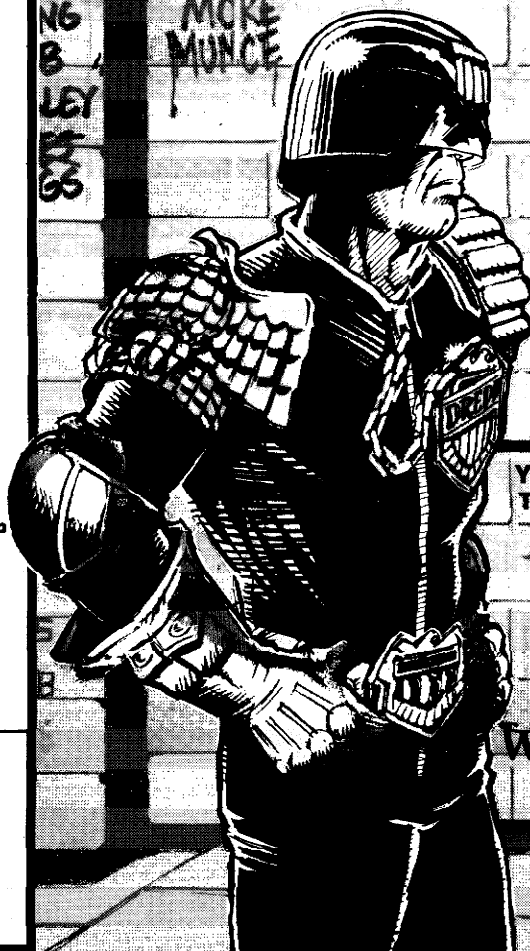
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# The vicarious participator

## Take the middle ground in role-playing style

by Lewis Pulsipher

In the early days of fantasy role-playing (FRP) gaming, many players did not role-play in any significant sense of the word; that is, they did not pretend or imagine that they were in a real world different from our own. Instead, they made a farce out of FRP, and their characters tended to act like thugs or gangsters, if not fools. Pursuit of power, without regard for anything else, was typical.

In reaction and rebuttal to this, some players went to the other extreme. They believed that characters, through their players, should imagine themselves as fulfilling a role in the real world, and further declared that each character should be a personality completely separate from the player, so that the player becomes more of an actor than a participant in a game. For several years these people were voices crying out in the wilderness, but as more people gained FRP experience or heard about this "improvisational theater" (or "persona-creator") school of role-playing, and as the more articulate and vociferous of the "persona" extremists found an audience for their views, this extreme attitude about role-playing has spread so widely that it, instead of not role-playing at all, seems to have become the standard.

Unfortunately, because initially they had to express their views about role-playing with maximum emphasis just to be listened to, many of the people in this second group have become intolerant of other views. One occasionally runs into remarks at conventions or in articles which disparage anyone who does not create an elaborate persona for each of his characters, each different from his own personality. The most hard-line advocates of this school of thought refuse to believe that there is any other "proper" way to play, and they measure the skill of a role-playing gamer in accordance with how closely he or she meets their notions of role-playing as theater.

There is a third group, with an attitude that lies between the power-mad, thug-character players on one hand and the persona-creators on the other. The viewpoint of these people, who may be called "vicarious participators," reflects the original intent of role-playing gaming. They (and I number myself among them) believe that the point of a role-playing game is to put oneself into a situation one could never experience in the real world, and to react as the player would

like to think he would react in similar circumstances.

In other words, the game lets me do the things I'd like to think I would do if I were a wizard, or if I were a fighter, or perhaps, even, if I decided to take the evil path. Consequently, it would be foolish for me to create a personality quite different from my own, because it would no longer be *me*. The game is not a matter of "Sir Stalwart does so-and-so" but "*I* do so-and-so." In my imagination, *I* am the one who might get killed — not some paper construct, however elaborate it may be. (Of course, because these are games played by people with adult mentality — even if not of adult age — no one ever becomes overinvolved emotionally.)

Notice, also, that I didn't say "as I would act," but "as I would *like to think* I would act." Few FRP gamers are made of the stuff of heroes, but we *like to think* we are when we play the game. The game allows us to live out our fantasies about being heroic, or saintly, or evil, although we in our personal lives will never reach nor probably aspire to any of these extremes. As one player put it, if *he* were actually in a dungeon he'd be scared silly and would flee in utter panic — but *his character* does not, because the character can have attributes (courage, in this case) which the player does not have.

The difference between this view and the persona-creator's view is fairly clear-cut, though it would be hard to define a line dividing one style from the other. The vicarious participator lives an adventure through his character, which tends to be a lot like he is himself. But he accepts that his character must undergo some changes in attributes and personality from the player's, whether these changes are imposed by the player himself, by the game rules, or by the nature of the referee's "world," to help him enjoy events he could never experience in the real world.

For example, he will accept the requirements of an extremely good alignment and crusading zeal of a paladin, or the requirements of a character who is evil, or even a character of the opposite sex. To him, the question is "What would I (like to) do if I were such-and-such in a fantasy world?"

The persona-creator, on the other hand, places himself at a distance from his character, regarding it as a separate entity almost with a life of its own. He is not interested in what *he* would do, but in what a creature of such-and-such race,

intelligence, likes, dislikes, etc., would do in a given situation. If his character dies, his reaction is not overly emotional, though he'll certainly regret the loss of all the work he put into the character.

The difference between the two styles is manifested in many small ways. For example, a persona-creator playing a character of low intelligence will play dumb. If he has a good idea, he probably won't mention it to the other players, since his character wouldn't have thought of it. A participator, on the other hand, doesn't always care what his character's numbers happen to be. It's really him in there, anyway, and he'll use his *own* brain and other faculties to the fullest to keep his character alive and accomplish his goals.

This difference can be generalized to show the attitudes of the two types of role-players to the aspect of luck in character generation. The persona-creators are not much concerned with being able to choose aspects of the personality of their character. In a sense, they try to be like the most versatile film and stage actors, who can play any role well. Consequently they would not mind, and might even prefer, playing a game like *Chivalry & Sorcery*, in which virtually everything about a character — alignment, race, even horoscope — is determined by dice rolls. On the other hand, vicarious participators want to have some choice in the role they play. They prefer an activity such as the *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®* game, in which only the ability scores are determined by chance, while race, alignment, social status, and so on are largely matters of choice. The participators resemble film or stage actors who have specialized in a type of role; in this case, they specialize in being some variant of their idealization of themselves.

As stated before, one cannot draw a definite line between the two styles. As participators play more characters in different situations, they begin to approach the persona-creators in effect. They play many different roles, increasingly different from their original notion. Many persona-creators, on the other hand, do not care to play a persona they have not created themselves; that is, they put much of themselves into the character. There is still a fundamental difference in attitude, however, between "I am doing it" and "This character is doing it." Persona-creators, even of this limited sort, have been known to write stories about their characters and develop plot lines which



do not arise from any game or any referee's action. Participators would never bother with this.

How does the vicarious player differ from the power/thug gamer? Again, there is no sharp dividing line between them. In some cases the power/thug players are simply indulging in infantile fantasies — they haven't matured yet, or they don't bring their maturity to their gaming sessions. Vicarious players realize that in this and every world there must be limitations on what a person can do, but those limitations are different in the game than they are in real life. For example, I have never met a participator who could believe in (or tolerate) a situation in which mortal characters defeat gods. Yet such scenarios occur frequently in "power" games. The power/thug players are quite content to ignore all limitations on their characters, and they find referees who allow or encourage them to act in this manner. Some role-players sneer at this attitude, but many people enjoy playing this way. However, while persona-creators and vicarious players can co-exist in a campaign, provided they are aware of their differences, neither type can practically co-exist with the thugs.

The most important point I want to make is that there is nothing superior about the persona-creation method of role-playing. Vicarious participation is neither less mature, nor less intelligent,

nor less "true blue" than persona-creation, though all these claims have been made at times. Persona-creators should accept that many players simply do not want to become actors. Refereeing requires quite enough acting for most of us, for the referee *must* separate himself completely from his non-player characters or he cannot be objective and impartial — he *must* be a persona-creator in order to be a good referee. Perhaps this is the clearest indication that persona-creation is no better than vicarious participation: Many excellent referees, who are necessarily excellent persona-creators, nonetheless prefer vicarious participation when they play. The vicarious style is a matter of choice, not of inability to act. □

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and rules spread out before them — and players must wait to know the outcome while the DM is referencing and cross-referencing all of his charts and tables.

Now, help is at hand. The DRAGON™ Magazine Combat Computer, reproduced on cardboard stock in the center of this issue of the magazine, is designed to help the DM save time and prevent mistakes when determining “to hit” numbers for missile or melee combat. It's easy to assemble, and almost as simple to use.

## HOW IT GOES TOGETHER

Carefully separate the sheet of cardboard from the rest of the magazine by pulling it gently away from the staples, or by prying up the ends of the staples, pulling the cardboard out, and re-closing the staples to keep the magazine pages properly bound. The larger of the two discs is the *base*, and the smaller disc is the *plate*.

Your Combat Computer will be stronger and more durable if you glue a second sheet of cardboard to the unprinted side of the magazine cardboard. Be sure the adhesive you use forms a tight seal around the outer edge of each wheel, and around the edges of the windows that are cut out of the plate. For even more durability, you may choose to have the discs laminated after they are cut out.

## HOW IT WORKS

The Combat Computer offers a quick way to cross-index the armor class of the defender with the experience level or hit dice of the attacker, which yields the attacker's base “to hit” number.

To determine this number, line up the pointer on the edge of the plate with the number on the inner ring of the base that represents the defender's armor class. Look at the colored bands on the plate, known as the Class/Level Arc. (The divisions, reading from the outside in, are for fighters, monsters, clerics, thieves, and magic-users.) Find the colored band and the level or hit-dice range that applies to the attacker, and refer to the “break line” (to the left of the

Cut around the outside of each disc along the heavy black outline, using a scissors and a steady hand. Then use a modeling knife, if you have one, and a straightedge to cut out the gray blocks outlined in black on the front of the plate. These holes are the windows through which the armor class adjustments for various weapons are read.

Use a sharp pointed object to punch a small “starter” hole in the center of each disc. Then push a small brass paper fastener through the holes to hold the plate against the top of the disc. Turn the assembly over and spread the tabs of the fastener flat against the back of the base. Turn the assembly face up again and slide the discs around a few times to be sure they move freely.

arrowhead) for that section of the colored band. Follow this line toward the edge of the base, and it will point to the base number needed “to hit” for that attacker against that defender.

Example: A 3rd level fighter is attacking an adversary armored in chain mail (AC 5). Line up the pointer on the plate with the number 5 on the inner ring of numbers on the base. Locate the section of the fighter band (colored red) that pertains to 3rd-4th level characters and follow the path of that section's break line toward the edge of the base. The break line points to the number 13, which is the fighter's base chance “to hit” in this situation.

## ARMOR CLASS ADJUSTMENTS

One of the most often overlooked parts of the AD&D combat system is the Armor Class Adjustment section of the weapons table on page 38 of the Players Handbook. It stands to reason that someone using his bare fist, for instance, ought to have a better chance to hit (and thereby do damage to) against an unarmored opponent than against an opponent wearing plate mail. Although most of the armor class adjustments for weapons are much more subtle than the bonuses and penalties for using a bare fist, they are all important; failure to take them into account during the resolution of melee can mean the death of a

character or creature who otherwise would have survived.

Unfortunately, the Combat Computer can't automatically *compute* these adjustments, but it does display them. This is where the “weapon windows” on the plate come into use. When the Combat Computer is correctly aligned to yield a base “to hit” number, each window reveals the bonuses and penalties that apply for all the weapons listed in the Players Handbook. Without moving the plate, find the window that displays the adjustment for the weapon in question, and *either* subtract the number given from the character's base “to hit” number, or add it to the player's

actual “to hit” die roll before determining success or failure. (Remember that subtracting a negative number is the same as adding a positive number of the same value.)

Example: Our 3rd level fighter from the previous example, facing an opponent armored in chain mail, has a base “to hit” number of 13. His weapon of the moment is a battle axe. By looking in the proper window (immediately

counterclockwise from the pointer, in this case), the DM notes that the battle axe brings with it a -1 penalty “to hit” against armor class 5. To account for this, the DM can either subtract -1 from the character’s base “to hit” number (making the number needed 14 instead of 13), or add -1 to the player’s actual roll (decreasing the result) before announcing whether a hit has occurred.

## APPARENT VS. ENHANCED ARMOR CLASS

Anyone who has turned the plate too far in one direction or the other has already seen by now that something “goes wrong” when a defender’s armor class is better (lower) than 2: That is, the “weapon windows” don’t line up properly with the columns of numbers beneath them. Does this mean that the Combat Computer only works for armor classes of 2 through 10?

No — but to use it for combat involving armor classes of better than 2, or for any melee involving characters having bonuses or penalties to their AC, it’s necessary to distinguish between *apparent* armor class and *enhanced* armor class.

Regardless of the actual armor class a piece of equipment provides its wearer, the *apparent* AC of that armor is the same as for all armor of that type. The armor class adjustments given in the Players Handbook, and reproduced on the Combat Computer, only apply to apparent armor classes — those between 2 and 10 inclusive.

For example, a man in +3 chain mail has an armor class of 2, for combat purposes. But the apparent AC of his armor is 5, just as for all types of chain mail. The armor class adjustments for weapons apply to all objects of a certain armor type, magical or not.

A character’s actual armor class may be *enhanced* by a number of objects and factors: dexterity (high or low; “enhancement” works both ways), magic items, magic spells, possibly such things as physical condition. Whenever a defender’s armor class is enhanced for any reason, using the Combat Computer becomes a simple two-step process:

First, line up the plate and the base according to the defender’s *apparent* armor class. Read the proper “weapon window” to obtain the armor class adjustment, if any, that applies to the attacker’s weapon.

## OTHER ASSISTANCE

Printed on the plate in note form in various places are many commonly used “to hit” adjustments, taken from the pages of the Players Handbook. These notes enable the DM to have at hand virtually all of the information needed to properly resolve a combat situation. Of course, many particular magic items and spells have an effect either on either the defender’s armor class or the attacker’s “to hit” number. These effects cannot be taken into account by a device such as the Combat Computer, and will have to be notated and allowed for by the DM when they are present.

## CREDITS

Design and development: Laura and Tracy Hickman  
Graphic design: Roger Raupp  
Text editing: Kim Mohan

Then rotate the plate until the pointer is opposite the defender’s *enhanced* armor class number and read the proper “break line” of the Class/Level Arc to obtain the attacker’s base “to hit” number against that armor class. Take into account the armor class adjustment for weapon type determined in the first step, and the result is an accurate “to hit” determination that takes less time to perform than to describe.

Example: Our 3rd level fighter won’t know it for a few more seconds, but his opponent is actually decked out in +4 chain mail. This gives his foe an actual (enhanced) armor class of 1, but still an apparent AC of 5, just as if the chain mail was not magical. To resolve the matter, the DM first lines up the Combat Computer as in the previous example, noting the “weapon window” and establishing that the fighter has a -1 penalty “to hit” with a battle axe against chain mail (apparent AC 5). Now he turns the plate so the pointer is lined up with armor class 1 on the inner ring of the base, and then reads up from the proper line on the Class/Level Arc. This reveals that the fighter’s base number “to hit” against armor class 1 is 17; this number is then modified either before or after the die roll to take the -1 penalty into account.

As a double-check against accidentally lining up the plate and the base improperly, a black patch will appear in one or more of the “weapon windows” whenever the pointer on the plate is rotated beyond the range of armor classes 2 through 10. If black shows through any of the windows when you’re looking for a “to hit” number, that means you’re dealing with an enhanced armor class; to obtain the correct armor class adjustment for the attacker’s weapon (if you haven’t done that already), you’ll have to “back up” the plate to the defender’s apparent armor class so the correct adjustment will be displayed.

The Combat Computer, when used by itself, will prove to be a time-saver for the DM and also will serve as assurance to players that their characters’ “to hit” numbers are being calculated accurately and consistently. When used in conjunction with an AD&D Dungeon Masters Screen, or with the reference charts on page 124 of the Players Handbook, the Combat Computer will still help to speed up play by putting most of the essential information literally at the DM’s fingertips. Learn how to use the Combat Computer, and you’ll soon be playing a round of combat in almost as short a time as it takes to swing a sword!



# Q: What do you get when you cross a Dungeon Master with a computer?

## A: Programmed character creation — without human hesitation!

Article and program by Joseph C. Spann

It cannot be simply coincidental that there are so many role-playing game enthusiasts among our nation's rapidly growing number of "computer hackers." Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say "so many computer hackers among the ranks of RPG players," as evidenced by the presence of computer-oriented columns and information in gaming magazines like this one. At any rate, the balance of this commentary consists of some speculations concerning this commonality of interests.

While the advantages of computer technology seem to hold a great deal of promise for utilization in our kinds of games, the exact manner of its implementation is unclear, and several false starts have already been made.

Perhaps some insight might be gained by examining what it is that attracts so many people to both role-playing games and computers. Certainly, an active mind is required for both of these activities. How tempting it would be to flatter ourselves and attribute this combination of interests to a high order of intellectual capacity.

Unfortunately, this notion won't stand up under close scrutiny. We all know very intelligent individuals who have absolutely no patience for role-playing games, or anything else they view as impractical or "silly and childish." By the same token, we also know people with average mental attributes who nonetheless enjoy and succeed at hacking and conjuring their way out of the dungeon that lies deep beneath the citadel.

Intelligence, by itself, is also no touchstone for success in computer programming. One may have an encyclopedic knowledge of all the commands and functions of a programming language, but without the imagination to envision how a problem can be expressed and solved using that language, the knowledge is useless.

No great amount of intelligence or education is needed for a game player to understand that a rapidly approaching hobgoblin must be dealt with promptly and thoroughly; but unless the weight of the shield and the slick oak of the spear shaft can be felt, role-playing gaming is a pretty dull exercise in dice rolling and will be only a diversion instead of a regular pastime. From the player's standpoint, one's imagination needs to be working on a full-time basis to get the most out of a role-playing game.

Imagination can be more than a way of setting a mental mood, as it should be and often is used in role-playing games. Imagination is used constructively by a gamer, or a computer programmer — the way more commonly known as "using your head." Many a good carpenter has asked "what if . . .?" and then built a building in a better way. In the last game I refereed, I saw two students from the local university (one in accounting and the other in art), a welder, a shop foreman, an auto parts clerk, and a high-school student all immersed in solving a problem that could not exist in any known universe. Yet, in their imaginations, they saw a peril nearer and clearer than nuclear

holocaust. And, by using their imaginations, they solved it.

This reasoning obviously leads to the point that possession of a good, active imagination is the common link between those who enjoy both computer programming and fantasy role-playing games. Assuming this thesis is correct, let's see if any of the insights we seek flow from it.

Industrial automation, the incredible exploits of NASA, the revolution in all phases of business and governmental record-keeping, and even the way this article was drafted have all depended upon the availability of computers. As amazing as all of these advances have been, not a single one of the many enormously sophisticated mainframe computers used to effect these wonders has ever shown the slightest trace of any imaginative thought!

Little wonder, then, that efforts to use computers in our gaming environment of bizarre beasts, colorful architecture, and mostly non-group-centered behavior have been less than successful. Those of us with enough years behind us to clearly remember the heyday of radio can see a certain parallel with the advent of television. In our mind's eye, we had no difficulty observing the perilous descent of Buck Rogers' space ship, described on radio as it threaded its way down through the craggy mountains of Venus in a blinding mist. This same scene, when viewed on the seven-inch screen, was far more likely to provoke youthful giggles and speculations regarding whether the show's producer had blown his whole budget on five pounds of dry ice or was simply puffing cigar smoke at the toy space ship, held up by wires that glinted off the spotlights.

Using all of our mental senses in a role-playing game, with the help of a skilled Dungeon Master or module writer, we can smell the rank odors from the nearby swamp, hear the dry scrape of the dead leaves as they blow across the stones of the courtyard in the cold wind, see the eerie glow of the torches as the procession draws nearer and nearer through the yellow fog. Computer graphics can be great fun, but they really can do little more than suggest this kind of detail. . . . Excuse me for a moment while I pull my cloak a little closer.

Computers, with all their grand capabilities, simply cannot substitute for quality modules and referees. True enough, some computer games are available which are basically narrative. An objective judgement of these games will reveal that they are not the equal of a good printed D&D® or AD&D™ scenario. They have only novelty to offer, and that at a very high price. They are limited in the number of players who can participate, and are almost invariably of the "enter the room — fight the monster — get the treasure — find the way out" type of adventure, which is of interest only to those who have never fought and thought their way through a really well-conceived scenario.

In fairness, an individual who really badly wanted to play a fantasy role-playing game and did not know a qualified DM or

any other possible players might enjoy this kind of game in computer format. Beggars can't be choosers. If cost were absolutely no object and programmers who were very well versed in the techniques of role-playing adventuring were utilized, it might be possible to adapt some of the artificial intelligence methods to produce a reasonable imitation of a well-run game. The main problem with this concept is that the things that the computer does well, it is not asked to do, and vice versa.

Well, surely there must be some way to use our expensive and generally very useful electronic friends in the furtherance of our fantasy role-playing interests. Of course there is! Read on:

All of the fears of our society notwithstanding, modern computers have taken over only those tasks which are too dull and repetitive or benefit from superhuman speed, strength, or patience. It seems only logical to computerize tasks which are not fun but have to be done with regularity. This applies to a D&D campaign just as it does to the other aspects of our lives. For instance, it doesn't take too long for the fun to evaporate from the seemingly endless dice rolling and arithmetic required to generate a party of adventurers. Also, scrabbling around through the charts and rules to determine a character's saving throws, special abilities, and so forth, is of limited appeal after you've done it for a year or two. This is the kind of activity that needs a helping hand from Silicon Valley.

As an illustration of what this helping hand might look like, included with this article is a program that has been a great time saver for me in working up parties of adventurers.

The "Dungeon Master's Personnel Service" provides ready-to-use adventurers, lacking only names (which are provided by the operator). It has also proven extremely useful for working up non-player characters.

Briefly described, the program makes all the 3d6 rolls needed to determine player ability scores; makes all the adjustments arising directly from them (number of retainers, adjustments to armor class based on dexterity, etc.); and prints the character's basic abilities on the screen so that the player or DM may decide to keep or discard the character. Each character paraded by for inspection is numbered so that a player who is choosing his own character knows how many chances he has left. If players are operating the program to generate their own characters, I give them the option of looking at a certain number of characters as they unfold on the screen. Once rejected, a character is gone forever. The counting function built into the program simply tells players how many chances they have left.

If the decision is made that a character is viable, and the player or DM wants to use it, the program will ask the operator to input data regarding the character's race and/or class, sex, and name, plus the experience level at which the character will begin. Based on this information, the program then calculates hit dice, hit points (adjusted for constitution), saving throws, and skill levels for cleric and thief abilities, and prints this information to the screen. It is not difficult to modify the program to direct the output to a printer, if you have one. By doing so, a great deal of time can be saved by not having to manually copy the material.

The data provided by the program is presented for review and manual copying one more time before the operator is queried regarding his desire for another character. All of these calculations are made in strict accordance with the methods described in the D&D rule books — with one exception. The computer's speed is harnessed to eliminate a problem that has irritated me since I began playing this game. This difficulty arises when the dice describe a player with a strength of 17 and a constitution of 4. Strength and endurance are closely enough interrelated that this sort of thing is absurd. It is just as bad when constitution is very high and strength very low, or when a similarly disproportionate relationship exists between intelligence and wisdom. It is not practical to attempt to do anything about this situation when dice are being used. To roll these abilities, compare them, roll again, etc., would mean an enormous waste of time in developing most characters. However, it is a simple operation to insert a checking algorithm in the program to be sure that these

factors are in a rational relationship. If the computer produces a constitution score that is less than two-thirds of the strength score or more than one and one-half times as great as the strength score, it is instructed to try again and keep on trying until the conditions are met. The process is repeated with the intelligence/wisdom relationship. What would take a great deal of time to perform manually usually requires only a fraction of a second in the computer. Only rarely is any delay even perceptible.

If the operator selects a character on the basis of race, class may be entered later; the converse is also true. Fifth is the highest "starting level" offered, but this seems a reasonable cutoff point when we consider that "new" characters are being created. Characters of extremely high level don't just "pop up" in an adventure or a campaign.

Using this program, it is not difficult to create a high-quality party of six players with a good mix of classes in 20 minutes, including the time necessary to copy the characters' data from the screen. If a printer is used, 10 to 15 minutes will suffice. These characters are ready to go, needing only to spend their "starting money" — the amount of which was also calculated for them by the program.

This program was originally written in Microsoft's BASIC 80™, a very complete version of the language. However, the commands and functions used in this program are of the most elementary sort, and will be included in any BASIC dialect worthy of the name. The idea, of course, was to develop a program that can be implemented on almost any computer as written.

Screen display considerations were carefully considered, and the decision was made not to exceed a width of 40 columns in this version. There is a considerable amount of tabular material, and it is just nearly impossible to get it in less than 40 columns. This width will accommodate most Commodore PET, Commodore 64, Apple, Atari, and TRS-80 users. And of course, those with Heathkit, IBM, or other 80-column CRT displays will have no problem at all. Those of you with Commodore VIC-20's and other units with less than 40-column display capabilities can perhaps use shorter abbreviations, or even break the tabular displays up into two parts and display them consecutively. It is just impossible to fit the peculiarities of every piece of hardware with any useful program.

The existence of so many TRS-80 computers did pose one problem which was solved with that type of computer in mind. Although these machines use a 64-column line, which is good, they only display 16 lines, whereas most displays have at least 24 lines available. Consequently, this program is written to display a maximum of 16 lines at a time.

Although the program is rather long, it will fit into a 16K memory with plenty to spare, if a few precautions are observed when typing the program into your machine. First, do not include anything before line 1140 or the REMarks. They are of no use once the program is copied and debugged. Although you will not be copying the REMarks, do not change the other line numbers: simply skip the REM statements.

Some BASIC dialects require the RANDOMIZE operation and others do not. Check your manual to see if you need to include this operation to get a new random number seed. The only other command or function which may vary from machine to machine, so far as I can tell, is PRINT CHR\$(12). This is simply an instruction to clear the screen and home the cursor.

Copying a long program like this can be very tiring, and the possibility of a mistake grows as fatigue increases. It would be better to type it in over three or four sessions than to try getting it done all at once.

Following is a brief description of the program:

- |    |           |  |
|----|-----------|--|
| 1. | 1000-1130 | Title block  |
| 2. | 1140-1160 | Dimensions array variable PS, gets new random number, and clears screen. |
| 3. | 1170-1320 | Screen title   |
| 4. | 1360-1460 | Rolls 3d6 and assigns scores to ability areas.                           |

5. 1530-1640 Prints strength score and calculates and prints adjustments due to strength.
6. 1680-1720 After checking for balance with strength, repeats above procedure for constitution, except printing of adjustments is deferred.
7. 1760-2080 Prints intelligence score, calculates and prints adjustments due to intelligence.
8. 2120-2300 Process is repeated for dexterity.
9. 2340-2470 After checking for balance with intelligence, process is repeated for wisdom.
10. 2510-2610 Process is repeated for charisma.
11. 2650-2920 Race/class choice is made and screened for consistency with ability levels.
12. 2960-3040 Number of sides for hit dice is assigned, based on class.
13. 3090-3240 Character level is input, and hit dice and hit points are calculated and printed.
14. 3280-3460 Cleric skills assigned based on level.
15. 3500-3670 Thief skills assigned based on level.
16. 3720-3790 Characters are counted, count displayed, and selection made to keep/reject the character.
17. 3830-3920 Character's name, class, race, gender input.
18. 3960-4010 Character's money is calculated.
19. 4060-4130 Switching operation to obtain printout of skills appropriate to each class/race.
20. 4180-4280 Program ends.
21. 4330-4470 Subroutine for calculating hit points, based on hit dice and constitution.
22. 4510----- Prints out data based on character's level, class, race, etc. in a recap format. The balance is obvious.

#### Screen formats — sample run:

Note: The small displays shown below are not intended to be exact replicas of the manner in which text and inputs are displayed on the screen, but they are essentially accurate. Characters printed in *italic* type inside square brackets are operator inputs.

(# 1)  
RANDOM NUMBER SEED (-32768 to 32767)?

(# 2)  
DM'S PERSONNEL SERVICE  
PRODUCES CHARACTER ABILITY SCORES  
FOR DUNGEONS & DRAGONS(R)  
IF YOU ARE READY FOR THE 1ST  
CHARACTER, ENTER A ONE? [1]

(# 3)  
CHARACTER'S STRENGTH IS 13  
\*ADD 1 TO ROLLS TO HIT, DAMAGE, OPEN DOORS  
CONSTITUTION SCORE IS 13  
CHARACTER'S INTELLIGENCE 12  
\*LITERATE IN NATIVE TONGUE  
\*45% TO KNOW SPELL — MIN/MAX PER LVL: 5/7  
CHARACTER'S DEXTERITY IS 11  
CHARACTER'S WISDOM IS 11  
CHARACTER'S CHARISMA IS 11  
\*CAN HAVE 4 RETAINERS WITH MORALE OF 4  
IF YOU HAVE THIS DATA AND ARE READY TO  
PROCEED, ENTER A ONE? [1]

(# 4)  
CLASS/RACE LIST

- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| (1) FIGHTER    | (4) HALFLING |
| (2) MAGIC USER | (5) ELF      |
| (3) CLERIC     | (6) DWARF    |
|                | (7) THIEF    |

SELECT THE RACE/CLASS THAT YOU WISH  
YOUR CHARACTER TO HAVE AND ENTER THE  
NUMBER FROM THE TABLE ABOVE? [1]

(# 5)  
(Same as #4, plus:)  
CHARACTER LEVEL RANGE... ONE (1) TO FIVE (5)  
AT WHICH LEVEL WILL CHARACTER START? [4]

(# 6)  
YOUR CHARACTER HAS 4 HIT DICE  
YOUR CHARACTER WOULD HAVE 19 HIT POINTS  
THIS IS CHARACTER # ( 1 )  
DO YOU WANT THIS CHARACTER (Y/N)? [Y]

(# 7)  
WHAT IS CHARACTER'S NAME? [OTHO THE FIERCE]

(# 8)  
(Same as # 7, plus:)  
WHAT IS CHARACTER'S RACE? [HUMAN]

(# 9)  
(Same as # 7 and # 8, plus:)  
WHAT IS CHARACTER'S GENDER? [MALE]

(# 10)  
(Same as # 7, # 8, and # 9, plus:)  
WHAT IS CHARACTER'S CLASS? [FIGHTER]

(# 11)  
RECAP OF CHARACTER ABILITIES  
NAME OTHO THE FIERCE  
RACE HUMAN HIT DICE: 4  
GENDER MALE  
CLASS FIGHTER HIT POINTS: 19  
LEVEL 4

NOTE!! COPY THIS AND THE INFORMATION THAT  
FOLLOWS TO THE CHARACTER RECORD  
SHEET NOW. IT WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE AGAIN!

TO CONTINUE, ENTER A ONE? [1]

(# 12)  
OTHO THE FIERCE'S STRENGTH IS 13  
\*ADD 1 TO ROLL TO HIT, DAMAGE, OPEN DOORS  
OTHO THE FIERCE'S CONSTITUTION IS 13  
\*LITERATE IN NATIVE TONGUE  
OTHO THE FIERCE'S DEXTERITY IS 11  
OTHO THE FIERCE'S WISDOM IS 11  
OTHO THE FIERCE'S CHARISMA IS 11  
\*CHARACTER MAY HAVE 4 RETAINERS, MORALE OF 4

TO CONTINUE, ENTER A ONE? (1)

(# 13)  
SAVING THROW TABLE  
DEATH PARALYSIS RODS  
RAY OR MAGIC OR TURN DRAGON STAVES  
POISON WANDS TO STONE BREATH OR SPELLS  
10 11 12 13 14  
MAY WEAR ANY ARMOR AND USE SHIELD  
MAY USE ANY WEAPON  
NO SPELLS, BUT MAY USE MAGIC ARTICLE  
THIS CHARACTER HAS 110 GOLD PIECES

ANOTHER CHARACTER (Y/N)? [N]

The character used for this sample run is the first one that turned up when I ran the program; no attempt was made to find a more interesting one. If the character had been generated with ability scores appropriate to a thief or a cleric, and this role had been chosen for him or her, then we would have seen a printout of a chart showing the cleric's table of rolls needed to turn the undead, or the thief's special skill roll requirements. □



# Dungeon Master's Personnel Service

```

1000 REM *****
1010 REM *
1020 REM *      DUNGEON MASTER'S PERSONNEL SERVICE      *
1030 REM *      ( 40 COLUMN BY 16 LINE CRT DISPLAY ONLY ) *
1040 REM *      SAVE AS "D&DCRT.BAS" - VERSION 1.2      *
1050 REM *
1060 REM *****
1070 REM *      GENERATES PLAYER CHARACTERISTIC FOR FANTASY *
1080 REM *      ROLE - PLAYING GAME "DUNGEONS & DRAGONS" Tm *
1090 REM *****
1100 REM *      WRITTEN BY: JOSEPH C. SPANN - MONROE, LA.   *
1110 REM *      "DUNGEON MASTER'S PERSONNEL SERVICE"-ver 1.2(C)LAIRTECH *
1120 REM *      "DUNGEONS & DRAGONS" Tm BY TSR HOBBIES INC. *
1130 REM *****
1140 DIM PS(7)
1150 RANDOMIZE
1160 PRINT CHR$(12)
1170 PRINT
1180 PRINT "      DM'S PERSONNEL SERVICE"
1190 PRINT "-----"
1200 PRINT
1210 PRINT"      PRODUCES CHAR. ABILITY SCORES"
1220 PRINT
1230 PRINT"      FOR"
1240 PRINT
1250 PRINT"      DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Tm"
1260 PRINT
1280 PRINT"      IF YOU ARE READY FOR THE 1ST"
1290 PRINT"      CHARACTER, ENTER A ONE (1)."
1300 INPUT C
1310 ON C GOTO 1320
1320 PRINT CHR$(12)
1330 REM*****
1340 REM BEGIN 3D6 ROLLS FOR ABILITIES
1350 REM*****
1360 L=L+1
1370 Z=INT((RND(1)*6)+1)
1380 Z2=INT((RND(1)*6)+1)
1390 Z3=INT((RND(1)*6)+1)
1400 ZZ=Z+Z2+Z3
1410 IF L=1 THEN 1530
1420 IF L=2 THEN 1680
1430 IF L=3 THEN 1760
1440 IF L=4 THEN 2120
1450 IF L=5 THEN 2340
1460 IF L=6 THEN 2510
1500 REM*****
1510 REM      CALCULATIONS FOR STRENGTH

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1520 REM*****
1530 PRINT"CHARACTER'S STRENGTH IS ";ZZ
1540 ST=ZZ
1550 IF ST=3 THEN SF=-3
1560 IF ST > 3 AND ST < 6 THEN SF=-2
1570 IF ST > 5 AND ST < 9 THEN SF=-1
1580 IF ST > 8 AND ST < 13 THEN SF=0
1590 IF ST > 12 AND ST < 16 THEN SF=1
1600 IF ST > 15 AND ST < 18 THEN SF=2
1610 IF ST=18 THEN SF=3
1620 IF SF=0 THEN 1360
1630 PRINT"*ADD";SF;"TO ROLLS TO HIT,DAMAGE,OPEN DOORS"
1640 GOTO 1360
1650 REM*****
1660 REM CALCULATIONS FOR CONSTITUTION
1670 REM*****
1680 CO=ZZ
1690 A=ST/CO
1700 IF A < .67 OR A > 1.5 THEN 1370
1710 PRINT"CONSTITUTION SCORE IS ";ZZ
1720 GOTO 1360
1730 REM*****
1740 REM CALCULATIONS FOR INTELLIGENCE
1750 REM*****
1760 PRINT"CHARACTER'S INTELLIGENCE";ZZ
1770 IN=ZZ
1780 IF IN < 9 THEN IZ$="INTELLIGENCE TOO LOW FOR MAGIC USER."
1790 IF IN=9 THEN IZ$="35% TO KNOW SPELL-MIN/MAX PER LVL:4/6"
1800 IF IN > 9 AND IN < 13 THEN IZ$="45% TO KNOW SPELL-MIN/MAX PER LVL:5/7"
1810 IF IN > 12 AND IN < 15 THEN IZ$="55% TO KNOW SPELL-MIN/MAX PER LVL:6/9"
1820 IF IN > 14 AND IN < 17 THEN IZ$="65% TO KNOW SPELL-MIN/MAX PER LVL:7/11"
1830 IF IN=17 THEN IZ$="75% TO KNOW SPELL-MIN/MAX PER LVL:8/14"
1840 IF IN=18 THEN IZ$="85% TO KNOW SPELL - MIN/MAX PER LVL:9/18"
1850 IF IN=3 THEN 1870
1860 GOTO 1880
1870 I$="* DIFFICULT SPEECH-ILLITERATE"
1880 IF IN>3 AND IN<6 THEN 1900
1890 GOTO 1910
1900 I$="* EASY SPEECH BUT ILLITERATE"
1910 IF IN>5 AND IN<9 THEN 1930
1920 GOTO 1940
1930 I$="* BARELY LITERATE."
1940 IF IN>8 AND IN<13 THEN 1960
1950 GOTO 1970
1960 I$="* LITERATE IN NATIVE TONGUE."
1970 IF IN>12 AND IN<16 THEN 1990
1980 GOTO 2000
1990 I$="* LITERATE AND FLUENT 2 LANGUAGES"

```

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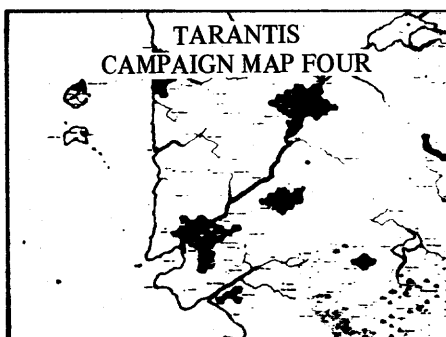
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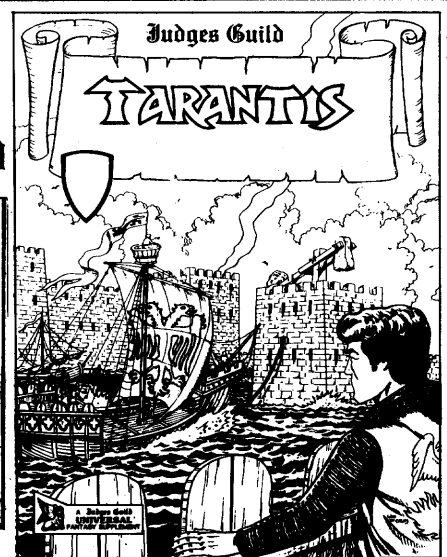
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2000 IF IN>15 AND IN<18 THEN 2020
2010 GOTO 2030
2020 I$="* LITERATE AND FLUENT 3 LANGUAGES"
2030 IF IN=18 THEN 2050
2040 GOTO 2060
2050 I$="* LITERATE AND FLUENT 4 LANGUAGES"
2060 PRINT I$
2070 PRINT IZ$
2080 GOTO 1360
2090 REM*****
2100 REM CALCULATIONS FOR DEXTERITY
2110 REM*****
2120 PRINT"CHARACTER'S DEXTERITY IS ";ZZ
2130 DX=ZZ
2140 IF DX=3 THEN DF=-3
2150 IF DX > 3 AND DX < 6 THEN DF=-2
2160 IF DX > 5 AND DX < 9 THEN DF=-1
2170 IF DX > 8 AND DX < 13 THEN DF=0
2180 IF DX > 12 AND DX < 16 THEN DF=1
2190 IF DX > 15 AND DX < 18 THEN DF=2
2200 IF DX=18 THEN DF=3
2210 IF DF=-3 THEN GOSUB 5320
2220 IF DF=-2 THEN GOSUB 5340
2230 IF DF=-1 THEN GOSUB 5360
2240 IF DF=1 THEN GOSUB 5380
2250 IF DF=2 THEN GOSUB 5400
2260 IF DF=3 THEN GOSUB 5420
2270 IF DF=0 THEN GOTO 1360
2280 PRINT "ADD ";DF;"TO MISSILE FIRE ROLLS 'TO HIT'"
2290 PRINT " " ;X1$;X2$;X3$;" ARMOR CLASS."
2300 GOTO 1360
2310 REM*****
2320 REM CALCULATIONS FOR WISDOM
2330 REM*****
2340 WI=ZZ
2350 B=IN/WI
2360 IF B < .67 OR B > 1.5 THEN 1370
2370 PRINT"CHARACTER'S WISDOM IS " ;WI
2380 IF WI=3 THEN WF=-3
2390 IF WI > 3 AND WI < 6 THEN WF=-2
2400 IF WI > 5 AND WI < 9 THEN WF=-1
2410 IF WI > 8 AND WI < 13 THEN WF=0
2420 IF WI > 12 AND WI < 16 THEN WF=1
2430 IF WI > 15 AND WI < 18 THEN WF=2
2440 IF WI=18 THEN WF=3
2450 IF WF=0 THEN 1360
2460 PRINT"ADD";WF;"TO ROLL-MAGIC BASED SAVING THROW"
2470 GOTO 1360
2480 REM*****
2490 REM CALCULATIONS FOR CHARISMA
2500 REM*****
2510 PRINT"CHARACTER'S CHARISMA IS ";ZZ
2520 LET CH=ZZ
2530 IF CH=3 THEN XF=1
2540 IF CH > 3 AND CH < 6 THEN XF=2
2550 IF CH > 5 AND CH < 9 THEN XF=3
2560 IF CH > 8 AND CH < 13 THEN XF=4
2570 IF CH > 12 ND CH < 16 THEN XF=5
2580 IF CH > 15 AND CH < 18 THEN XF=6
2590 IF CH=18 THEN XF=7
2600 PRINT"*CAN HAVE ";XF;" RETAINERS WITH MORALE OF " ;XF"
2610 L=0
2620 REM*****
2630 REM RACE/CLASS SELECTION & CHECKING
2640 REM*****
2650 PRINT" IF YOU HAVE THIS DATA AND ARE READY TO"
2660 PRINT" PROCEED, ENTER A ONE (1). "
2670 INPUT VG
2680 ON VG GOTO 2690
2690 PRINT CHR$(12);PRINT
2700 PRINT " CLASS/RACE LIST"
2710 PRINT "-----"
2720 PRINT " (1) FIGHTER (4) HALFLING"
2730 PRINT " (2) MAGIC USER (5) ELF"
2740 PRINT " (3) CLERIC (6) DWARF"
2750 PRINT " (7) THIEF"
2760 PRINT
2770 PRINT"SELECT THE RACE/CLASS THAT YOU WISH"
2780 PRINT"YOUR CHARACTER TO HAVE AND ENTER THE"
2790 INPUT"NUMBER FROM THE TABLE ABOVE";CN
2800 IF CN=4 THEN 2820
2810 GOTO 2870
2820 IF DX < 9 OR CD < 9 THEN 2840
2830 GOTO 2870
2840 PRINT" DEXTERITY AND/OR CONSTITUTION"
2850 PRINT" TOO LOW FOR HALFLING"
2860 GOTO 2770
2870 IF CN=5 AND IN < 9 THEN 2890
2880 GOTO 2900
2890 PRINT"INTELLIGENCE TOO LOW FOR ELF.":GOTO 2770
2900 IF CN=6 AND CO < 9 THEN 2920
2910 GOTO 2960
2920 PRINT"CONSTITUTION TOO LOW FOR DWARF.":GOTO 2770
2930 REM*****
2940 REM HIT DICE ASSIGNED BY RACE/CLASS
2950 REM*****
2960 IF CN=1 THEN HF=8
2970 IF CN=2 THEN HF=4
2980 IF CN=3 THEN HF=6
2990 IF CN=4 THEN HF=6
3000 IF CN=5 THEN HF=6
3010 IF CN=6 THEN HF=8
3020 IF CN=7 THEN HF=4
3030 IF CN=0 THEN 1160
3040 PRINT

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3050 REM*****
3060 REM CHARACTER LEVEL ASSIGNED AND
3070 REM HIT POINTS CALCULATED
3080 REM*****
3090 PRINT "CHARACTER LEVEL RANGE..ONE(1) TO FIVE(5)"
3100 PRINT
3110 INPUT"AT WHICH LEVEL WILL CHARACTER START";LL
3120 IF LL > 5 THEN PRINT "NUMBER TOO LARGE: RE-ENTER":GOTO 3110
3130 PRINT CHR$(12)
3140 PRINT
3150 PRINT"YOUR CHARACTER HAS ";LL;" HIT DICE"
3160 PRINT
3170 IF CO=3 THEN PF=(-3 * LL)
3180 IF CO > 3 AND CO < 6 THEN PF=(-2 * LL)
3190 IF CO > 5 MD CO < 9 THEN PF=(-1 * LL)
3200 IF CO > 8 AND CO < 13 THEN PF=0
3210 IF CO > 12 AND CO < 16 THEN PF=LL
3220 IF CO > 15 AND CO < 18 THEN PF=(2 * LL)
3230 IF CO=18 THEN PF=(3 * LL)
3240 GOSUB 4330
3250 REM*****
3260 REM CLERIC SKILLS ASSIGNED BY LEVEL
3270 REM*****
3280 IF CN=3 THEN 3300
3290 GOTO 3500
3300 IF CN=3 THEN 3320
3310 GOTO 3500
3320 CZ$=" CLERIC VS. UNDEAD TABLE (1D20)"
3330 CU$="SKEL ZOMB GHOU WIGT WRAI MUMM SPEC VAMP"
3340 PRINT CZ$
3350 PRINT
3360 PRINT,CU$
3370 Z1$=" 7 9 11 -- -- -- --"
3380 Z2$=" T 7 9 11 -- -- -- --"
3390 Z3$=" T T 7 9 11 -- -- --"
3400 Z4$=" D T T 7 9 11 -- -- --"
3410 Z5$=" D D T T 7 9 11 -- --"
3420 IF CN=3 AND LL=1 THEN PRINT Z1$
3430 IF CN=3 AND LL=2 THEN PRINT Z2$
3440 IF CN=3 AND LL=3 THEN PRINT Z3$
3450 IF CN=3 AND LL=4 THEN PRINT Z4$
3460 IF CN=3 AND LL=5 THEN PRINT Z5$
3470 REM*****
3480 REM THIEF'S SKILLS ASSIGNED BY LEVEL
3490 REM*****
3500 IF CN=7 THEN 3520
3510 GOTO 3720
3520 TY$=" THIEVE'S ABILITIES"
3530 TA$="PICK REMV PICK MOVE CLIM HIDE HEAR"
3540 TB$="LOCK TRAP PKCT SILT SURF SHDW NOIS"
3550 PRINT TY$
3560 PRINT TA$
3570 PRINT TB$
3580 K1$=" 15% 10% 20% 20% 87% 10% 1-2"
3590 K2$=" 20% 15% 25% 25% 88% 15% 1-2"
3600 K3$=" 25% 20% 30% 30% 89% 20% 1-3"
3610 K4$=" 30% 25% 35% 35% 90% 25% 1-3"
3620 K5$=" 35% 30% 40% 40% 91% 30% 1-3"
3630 IF LL=1 THEN PRINT K1$
3640 IF LL=2 THEN PRINT K2$
3650 IF LL=3 THEN PRINT K3$
3660 IF LL=4 THEN PRINT K4$
3670 IF LL=5 THEN PRINT K5$
3680 REM*****
3690 REM CHARACTER COUNT DISPLAYED AND
3700 REM DECISION TO USE IS MADE.
3710 REM*****
3720 CC=CC+1
3730 PRINT
3740 PRINT" THIS IS CHARACTER #[";CC;"]"
3750 PRINT
3760 INPUT"DO YOU WANT THIS CHARACTER(Y/N)";D$
3770 IF D$="N"THEN 1320
3780 IF D$="Y"THEN 3790
3790 CC=0
3800 REM*****
3810 REM OTHER CHARACTER DATA IS INPUT
3820 REM*****
3830 PRINT CHR$(12)
3840 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT
3850 INPUT"WHAT IS CHARACTER'S NAME";NA$
3860 PRINT
3870 INPUT"WHAT IS CHARACTER'S RACE";RA$
3880 PRINT
3890 INPUT"WHAT IS CHARACTER'S GENDER";SE$
3900 PRINT
3910 INPUT"WHAT IS CHARACTER'S CLASS";CL$
3920 PRINT CHR$(12)
3930 REM*****
3940 REM CHARACTER'S GOLD CALCULATED
3950 REM*****
3960 PRINT:PRINT
3970 LET M1=INT((RND(1)*6)+1)
3980 LET M2=INT((RND(1)*d)+1)
3990 LET M3=INT((RND(1)*6)+1)
4000 LET MT=M1+M2+M3
4010 LET GC=(10 * MT)
4020 REM*****
4030 REM SEPARATION BY RACE/CLASS FOR
4040 REM FINAL DATA CALCULATIONS.
4050 REM*****
4060 IF CN=1 THEN GOSUB 5470
4070 IF CN=2 THEN GOSUB 6130
4080 IF CN=3 THEN GOSUB 5580
4090 IF CN=4 THEN GOSUB 5690

```

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```

4100 IF CN=5 THEN GOSUB 5800
4110 IF CN=6 THEN GOSUB 5910
4128 IF CN=7 THEN GOSUB 6020
4130 GOSUB 4510
4140 PRINT
4150 REM*****
4160 REM 'END' OR 'CONTINUE' AND CLOSE
4170 REM*****
4180 INPUT"ANOTHER CHARACTER (Y/N)";GB$
4190 IF GB$="Y" THEN 1320
4200 PRINT CHR$(12)
4210 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT
4228 PRINT "  THANKS FOR USING ME!"
4230 PRINT
4240 PRINT"IF YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND AND"
4250 PRINT"WANT ANOTHER CHARACTER,JUST"
4260 PRINT"ENTER THE WORD 'RUN' - BYE."
4270 CLEAR
4280 END
4290 PRINT
4300 REM*****
4310 REM SUBROUTINE TO CALCULATE HIT PTS
4320 REM*****
4330 Y=Y+1
4340 PS=INT((RND(1) * HF)+1)
4350 PS(Y)=PS
4360 IF Y <> LL THEN 4330
4370 FOR Y=0 TO LL-1
4380 PS=PS+PS(Y)
4390 NEXT Y
4400 PT=PS + PF
4410 IF PT=<0 THEN 4430
4420 GOTO 4440
4430 PT=LL
4440 PRINT "YOUR CHARACTER WOULD HAVE";PT;"HIT POINTS!"
4450 PRINT
4460 Y=0
4470 RETURN
4480 REM*****
4490 REM      RECAP DISPLAY BEGINS
4500 REM*****
4510 PRINT CHR$(12)
4520 PRINT
4530 PRINT"      RECAP OF CHARACTER ABILITIES"
4540 PRINT
4550 PRINT "NAME....";NA$
4560 PRINT "RACE....";RA$;TAB(22)"      HIT DICE: ";LL
4570 PRINT "GENDER...";SE$
4580 PRINT "CLASS...";CL$;TAB(22)"      HIT POINTS: *;PT
4590 PRINT "LEVEL...";LL
4600 PRINT
4610 PRINT "N O T E !! COPY THIS AND THE INFORMATION"
4620 PRINT "      THAT FOLLOWS TO THE CHARACTER"
4630 PRINT "      RECORD SHEET. IT WILL NOT BE"
4640 PRINT "      AVAILABLE AGAIN!"
4650 PRINT
4660 INPUT"      TO CONTINUE,ENTER A ONE(1)";KK
4670 ON KK GOTO 4680
4680 PRINT CHR$(12)
4690 PRINT NA$;"S STRENGTH IS.. . . .";ST
4700 IF SF=0 THEN 4720
4710 PRINT "*ADD";SF;"TO ROLL TO:HIT,DAMAGE,OPEN DOORS"
4720 PRINT NA$;"S CONSTITUTION IS..";CO
4730 PRINT NA$;"S INTELLIGENCE IS..";IN
4740 IF CN=2 THEN PRINT IZ$
4750 PRINT IS$
4760 PRINT NA$;"S DEXTERITY IS...";DX
4770 IF DF=0 THEN 4800
4780 PRINT "*ADD";DF;"TO MISSILE FIRE ROLLS 'TO HIT'"
4790 PRINT "*/;X1$;X2$;X3$;" ARMOR CLASS."
4800 PRINT NA$;"S WISDOM IS.....";WI
4810 IF WF=0 THEN 4830
4820 PRINT "*ADD*";WF;"TO ROLL-MAGIC BASED SAVING THROWS"
4830 PRINT NA$;"S CHARISMA IS.....";CH
4840 PRINT "*CHAR MAY HAVE";XF;"RETAINERS - MORALE OF";XF
4850 IF CN=3 THEN 4900
4860 GOTO 4960
4870 REM*****
4880 REM DISPLAYS CLERIC'S SKILLS
4890 REM*****
4900 PRINT CZ$:PRINT CU$
4910 IF CN=3 AND LL=1 THEN PRINT Z1$
4920 IF CN=3 AND LL=2 THEN PRINT Z2$
4930 IF CN=3 AND LL=3 THEN PRINT Z3$
4940 IF CN=3 AND LL=4 THEN PRINT Z4$
4950 IF CN=3 AND LL=5 THEN PRINT Z5$
4960 IF CN=7 THEN 5010
4970 GOTO 5070
4980 REM*****
4990 REM DISPLAYS THIEF'S SKILLS
5000 REM*****
5010 PRINT TY$:PRINT TA$:PRINT TB$
5020 IF CN=7 AND LL=1 THEN PRINT K1$
5030 IF CN=7 AND LL=2 THEN PRINT K2$
5040 IF CN=7 AND LL=3 THEN PRINT K3$
5050 IF CN=7 AND LL=4 THEN PRINT K4$
5060 IF CN=7 AND LL=5 THEN PRINT K5$
5070 INPUT"      TO CONTINUE,ENTER A ONE(1)";PK
5080 ON PK GOTO 5120
5090 REM*****
5100 REM DISPLAYS SAVING THROW TABLE
5110 REM*****
5120 PRINT CHR$(12):PRINT
5130 PRINT "      SAVING THROW TABLE"
5140 PRINT"DEATH :      :PARALYSIS:      : RODS"

```

```

5150 PRINT"RAY OR:MAGIC: OR TURN :DRAGON:STAVES"
5160 PRINT"POISON:WANDS:TO STONE :BREATH:OR SPELLS"
5170 PRINT"-----:-----:-----:-----"
5180 PRINT ST$
5190 PRINT P1$
5200 PRINT P2$
5210 PRINT P3$
5220 PRINT P4$
5230 PRINT P5$
5240 REM*****
5250 REM DISPLAYS PLAYER'S GOLD SUPPLY
5260 REM*****
5270 PRINT "THIS CHARACTER HAS";GC;" GOLD PIECES."
5280 RETURN
5290 REM*****
5300 REM DISPLAYS WISDOM ADJUSTMENTS
5310 REM*****
5320 X1$="ADD " :X2$="3":X3$=" TO"
5330 RETURN
5340 X1$="ADD " :X2$="2" :X3$=" TO"
5350 RETURN
5360 X1$="ADD * :X2$=" 1 " :X3$=" TO"
5370 RETURN
5380 X1$="SUBTRACT " :X2$="1":X3$=" FROM"
5390 RETURN
5400 X1$="SUBTRACT " :X2$="2":X3$=" FROM"
5410 RETURN
5420 X1$="SUBTRACT " :X2$="3":X3$=" FROM"
5430 RETURN
5440 REM*****
5450 REM SAVING THROW & MISC.-FIGHTER
5460 REM*****
5470 IF LL < 4 THEN ST$="..12....13.....14.....15.....16
5480 IF LL > 3 AND LL < 6 THEN ST$="...10....11.....12.....13.....14.
5490 P1$="MAY WEAR ANY ARMOR AND USE SHIELD."
5500 P2$="MAY USE ANY WEAPON."
5510 P3$=" "
5520 P4$="NO SPELLS, BUT MAY USE MAGIC ARTICLE."
5530 P5$=" "
5540 RETURN
5550 REM*****
5560 REM SAVING THROW & MISC.-CLERIC
5570 REM*****
5580 IF LL < 5 THEN ST$="..11....12.....14.....16.....15"
5590 IF LL=5 THEN ST$="...9....10.....12.....14.....12"
5600 P1$="MAY NOT USE EDGED WEAPONS."
5610 P2$="MAY WEAR ANY ARMOR AND USE SHIELD. "
5620 P3$="MAY USE SLING "
5630 P4$="HAS ABILITY TO 'TURN' UNDEAD."
5640 P5$="USES CLERICAL SPELLS ONLY. "
5650 RETURN
5660 REM*****
5670 REM SAVING THROW & MISC.- HALFLING
5680 REM*****
5690 IF LL < 4 THEN ST$="...8....9.....10.....13.....12"
5700 IF LL > 3 AND LL < 6 THEN ST$="...6....7.....8.....10.....10"
5710 P1$="CANNOT USE LONGBOW OR 2 HANDED SWORD."
5720 P2$="ADJUST MISSILE ATTACK 'TO HIT' BY +1."
5730 P3$="ADJ AC BY -1 VS. MORE THAN MAN-SIZE OPP."
5740 P4$="ONLY 10% CHANCE OF DETECTION IN WOODS."
5750 P5$="REMAINS UNSEEN IN DUNGEON ON 1-2 (1D6)"
5760 RETURN
5770 REM*****
5780 REM SAVING THROW & MISC. - ELF
5790 REM*****
5800 IF LL < 4 THEN ST$="..12....13.....13.....15.....15"
5810 IF LL > 3 AND LL < 6 THEN ST$="...18....11.....11.....13.....12"
5820 P1$="HAS 60' INFRA-VISION."
5830 P2$="DETECTS OR SECRET DOORS ON 1-2(1D6)."
5840 P3$="IMMUNE TO PARALYSIS FROM GHOUl ATTACK."
5850 P4$="SPEAKS ELVISH,ORC,HOB-GOBLIN,AND GNOLL."
5860 P5$="MAY USE SPELLS AND MAGIC ARTICLES."
5870 RETURN
5880 REM*****
5890 REM SAVING THROW & MISC. - DWARF
5900 REM*****
5910 IF LL < 4 THEN ST$="...8....9.....10.....13.....12"
5920 IF LL > 3 AND LL < 6 THEN ST$="...6....7.....8.....10. . . .10"
5930 P1$="HAS 60' INFRA-VISION."
5940 P2$="DET'S TRAPS,DUNGEON ANOMALIES,@ 1-2(1D6)"
5950 P3$="SPEAKS DWARVISH,GNOME,KOBOLD,AND GOBLIN."
5960 P4$="MAY NOT USE A LONGBOW OR 2-HANDED SWORD."
5970 P5$=" "
5980 RETURN
5990 REM*****
6000 REM SAVING THROW & MISC. - THIEF
6010 REM*****
6020 IF LL < 5 THEN ST$="...13....14.....13.....16.....15"
6030 IF LL=5 THEN ST$="..12....13.....11.....14.....13
6040 P1$="LEATHER ARMOUR ONLY-NO SHIELD"
6050 P2$="BACKSTABBING ADDS +4 TO 'TO HIT' ROLL"
6060 P3$="BACKSTABBING DOES TWICE NORMAL DAMAGE"
6070 P4$="SEE TABLE FOR OTHER SKILLS."
6080 P5$=" "
6090 RETURN
6100 REM*****
6110 REM SAVING THROW & MISC.-MAGIC USER
6120 REM*****
6130 ST$="      13      14      13      16      15"
6140 P1$="MAY NOT USE A SHIELD OR WEAR ARMOR."
6150 P2$="MAY USE ONLY A DAGGER AS A WEAPON."
6160 P3$="CHECK INTELLIGENCE FOR ABILITY TO"
6170 P4$="LEARN SPELLS AND # OF SPELLS/LEVEL"
6180 P5$=" "
6190 RETURN

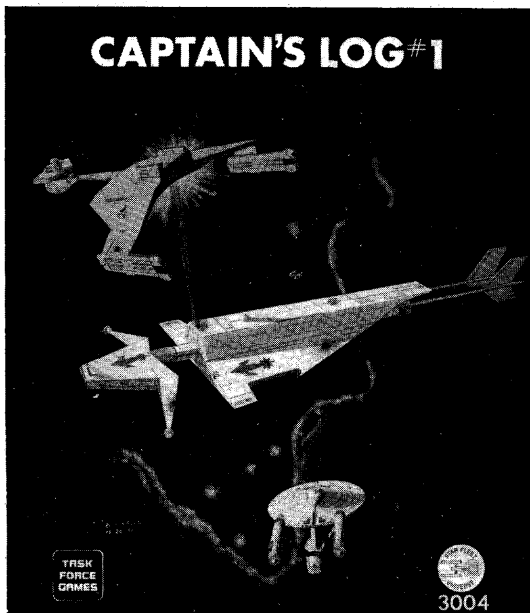
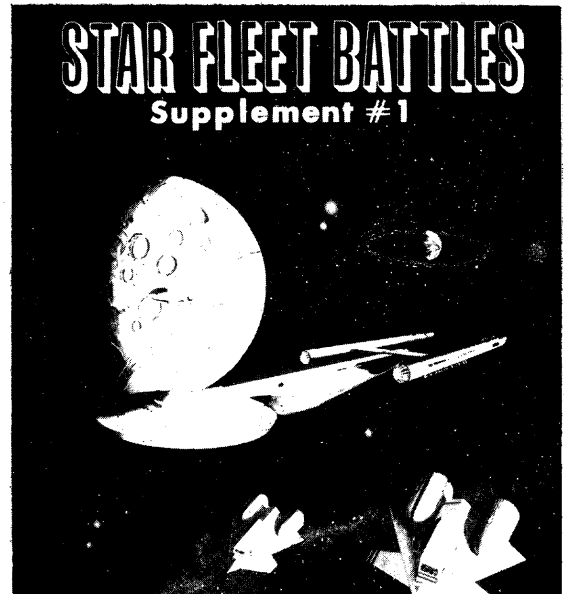
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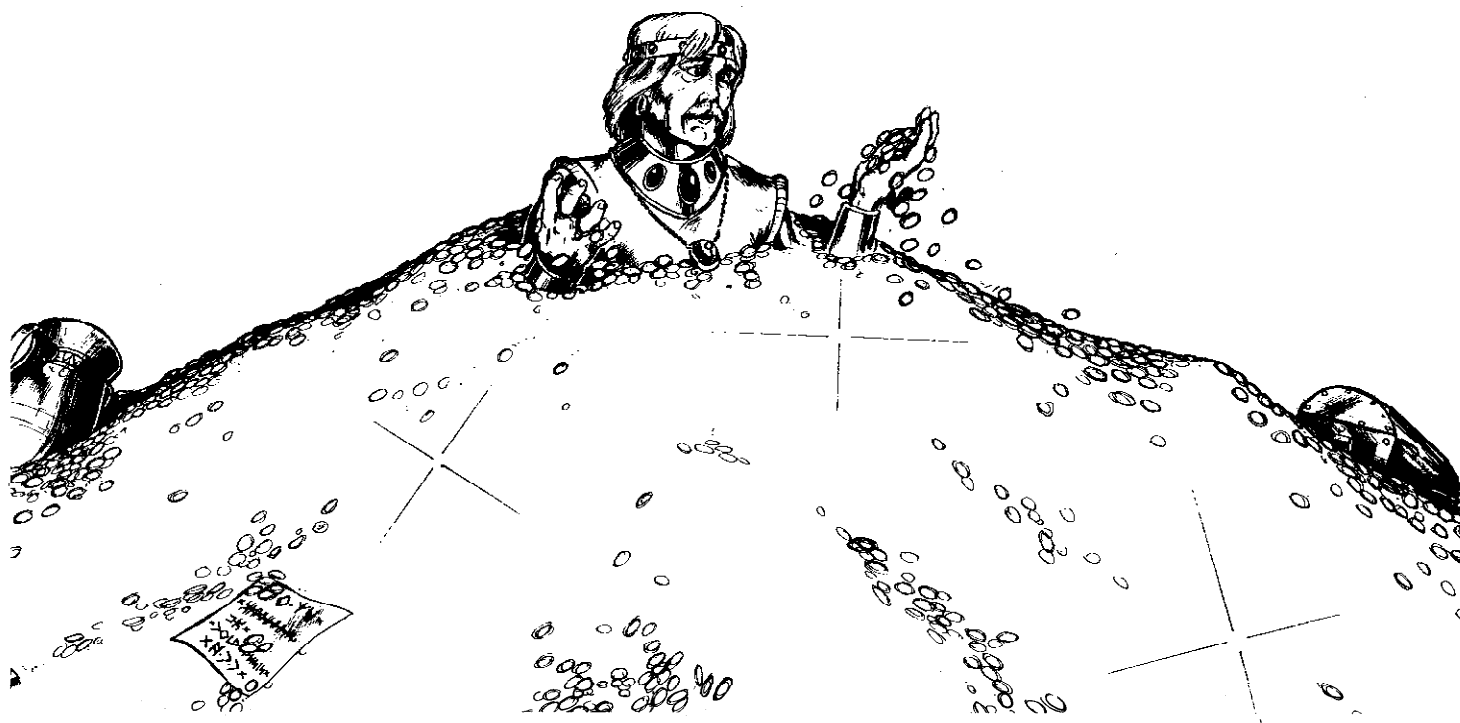
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# A player character and his money. . .

by Lewis Pulsipher

It has frequently been noted that in some fantasy role-playing games the amount of money available to, and actually possessed by, player characters is unbelievably enormous — impossible to transport, or to store in anything smaller than a castle. Even a relatively inexperienced character can, after not too long, afford almost anything he can carry, and such things as towers and ships are within the range of a character's pocket-book before not too much longer than that.

Some gamemasters go to great lengths to describe goods and services in their campaigns in terms of their "real" (that is, medieval) prices — very low rates to someone with several pounds of gold coins. Typically, suggestions for the "toning down" of a game's monetary system are met with two retorts: first, it is a "fact" of the campaign that the area frequented by adventurers is experiencing rampant inflation; and second, that this is an *adventure* game, after all, and huge piles of gold are part of the heroic milieu.

This article approaches the subject of money from two angles — first, suggesting a means of simplifying monetary transactions while making treasures more believable and easier to store or carry; and

second, describing some ways in which a referee can coax treasure away from adventurers once they've discovered it.

## The silver standard

The first part is easy. In any description of a hoard of monetary treasure, replace the word "gold" with "silver." (But *don't* change prices or values given for goods or services.) Adopt the "silver standard" which actually prevailed in late medieval times. A gold piece (arbitrarily set equal to 10 silver pieces to make calculations easy) becomes really valuable. And silver, once sneered at as "too cheap to carry," takes its rightful place as the wealthy man's mode of exchange. Maintaining the proportion between gold and silver, the value of a silver piece is set equivalent to 10 copper pieces. The copper piece is small change, certainly, but not such a minuscule piece of currency as it is in some games.

In a world where silver "replaces" gold, medieval prices for ordinary goods and services are reasonable, and the net result is either unchanged or decreased spending power for adventurers.

Concerning the size and weight problem, a display of medieval coins in a museum will show that coins minted

prior to the modern era were very small, rather like an American dime or British half-penny (new pence). Consequently, in bygone days it was possible to carry a small fortune without risking a permanent back problem from the weight. Try setting the size and weight of a coin (copper, silver, or gold) equal to the size and weight of a dime. When this standard is used instead of, for instance, the AD&D™ game standard (where coins weigh a tenth of a pound each), someone who could carry a sack of 300 gold pieces (30 pounds) in the old system can carry 6,584 gold in the new system (1 dime = 35 grains, or 219+ coins/pound). And gold is far more valuable per piece, because the silver standard is used. (And this system for size and weight can *only* be used if the silver standard is also employed.)

Now, personal fortunes are no longer impossible to carry, and adventurers don't need magic bags or mules in order to carry a decent sum away from an adventure (or a theft).

## The origin of treasures

Why, since gold circulated so freely in the ancient world, did it virtually disappear in the Dark Ages? Much was hoarded (e.g., buried) and lost. Some was successfully hoarded for centuries. Most of the remainder flowed to the eastern world via trade. For a time, even silver was so rare that most transactions were by barter rather than purchase. In a sense, adventurers are discovering lost hoards when they take treasure from monsters. If the history of your fantasy world is like that of Earth, having a Dark Age or Age of Chaos, there may justifiably be a severe shortage of gold (hence its great value) in the years that follow this period. Most personal wealth will be in goods, not money, and consequently it will be relatively difficult for a thief to transport or



dispose of his gains. Except through barter, one can't "spend" a fur coat or obsidian necklace. Unless player characters are astute, they may sell such "liberated" items for far less than their nominal worth.

#### A player character and his money . . .

What means are available in the campaign to separate player characters from the treasure which, sooner or later, they will accumulate? A few games provide a formal system for forcing expenditures. In the *Runequest*® game, characters spend money for training and learning spells. (Why they don't teach each other for free I am unsure.) In the AD&D game, characters are supposed to spend money for training when they rise a level. This system seems unusable at low levels, where a character must spend half his time adventuring without gaining experience just to gain sufficient funds to reach the next level. So what do you do if your game has no such system, or you don't like the one provided? Here are some possibilities:

**Theft:** The obvious way to relieve characters of their burden of wealth is to simply steal it (rather, have it stolen), but this can create tensions outside the game. If players aren't used to losing money to unseen and undetected thieves, they're going to be very unhappy, and may think

the referee is unfair. In other cases, players won't mind theft so much, provided that 1) they have a chance to catch the thief and 2) their precautions against theft reduce the frequency and success rate of such attempts.

To illustrate the first point: If the referee simply says one day, "You can't find your money pouch," the player will have virtually no chance to stop or catch the thief. If, however, during the course of discussions at an inn or on the street, the referee casually refers to someone bumping into or jostling the character, the player has a chance to react to the theft (if he thinks about the possibility). Or if a theft occurs while the character is sleeping, he may be able to find some clues to help track down the miscreant.

As for the second point, precautions: A character who conceals rather than flaunts his wealth should be less vulnerable to theft than one who becomes known as a big spender. Furthermore, some players make lists of precautions to be observed by characters when in towns or other areas frequented by thieves, while others take no precautions. The latter are more likely to be successfully robbed.

A character can be conned out of his money — for example, when he buys a magic spell scroll which turns out to have flaws — but frequent con games and similar forms of deceit are no fun for referee or players. Moreover, players soon

become extremely wary, making it almost impossible to "fairly" con them. But most important, con games, more so than ordinary theft, are too personal. This feels too much like the referee, rather than the monsters and NPCs, against the players, obstructing the ideal of the referee as an impartial arbiter. For this reason alone, deceit is not a satisfactory way to relieve characters of their treasure.

Players soon become so wary of ordinary theft that the referee cannot successfully steal large sums without resorting to strongarm tactics — for example, an extortioner who happens to be a high-level assassin. Once again, this results in an adversary relationship likely to sour the game, if not personal relations outside of it. Theft is not enough.

**Upkeep:** Since adventurers spend only a small part of their time out adventuring, they must spend money for a place to stay, food, clothing, and amenities — all expenses that are not reflected in buying equipment for adventures. Some rules assume that the more experienced a character is, the more money he will spend. This is almost universally true, but still somewhat inaccurate; though there is a tendency in most people (and characters) to spend more when one has more to spend, an adventurer's rise in income can often far outstrip his expenditures.

Adventurers will always have to pay a



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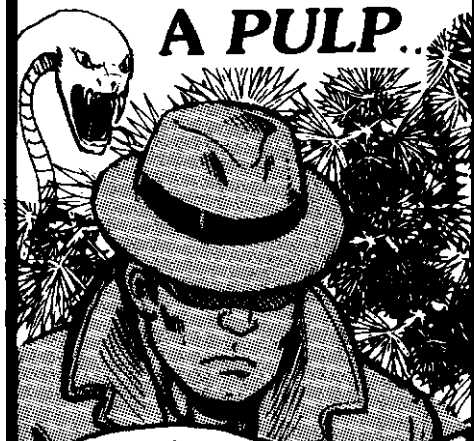
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minimum amount for upkeep, with additions according to the extent of largesse and luxury they wish to enjoy. Armor and weapon repairs, oil and rations, and other matters of equipment replacement, often ignored by players, can be subsumed in upkeep. And the more expensive a city's prices are, the higher upkeep costs will be for residents in the city. Here is where the idea of local inflation — the "gold rush boom town" with very high prices for ordinary goods — can come into play.

**Henchmen and hired help:** Along with personal upkeep comes payments to henchmen and loyal followers, including (but not limited to) their upkeep. This total expense can be much greater than personal costs.

Novice and near-novice adventurers are unlikely to have such expenses, but veterans who may wish to hire skilled craftsmen must pay what the market demands, regardless of the "list price" given for a service in the rulebook. If only one armorer in town can make plate, and several adventurers or lords want to hire him, the armorer may charge an unusually high fee.

(It should be noted for medievalists, however, that in the Middle Ages many fees were set by a guild or by the city government and could not be exceeded. Supply and demand, as we know it, did not operate to change prices, though it might lead to a devaluation of coinage through reduction of the metal content.)

Adventurers' followers and henchmen, if they're to remain loyal, must be very well paid; otherwise, many will strike out on their own. A character who owns a stronghold, even a simple blockhouse with tower, will have to pay troops and other skilled personnel to garrison it. They must be paid well enough to remain loyal, or the character may find when he returns from an adventure that he's excluded from his stronghold, or that it has been sacked, by the garrison.

**Acquiring a stronghold:** Perhaps the greatest expense any adventurer will face is the cost of buying or constructing a personal stronghold. An adventurer may buy or build several strongholds in the course of a long, successful career. The first may be a small tower, or just a stone house or villa, either in or near a town.

Unless he has obtained a large grant of land as well, the character may prefer to move to another area to build a full-scale castle, rather than expand his single tower. And later he may trade territories (not uncommon in the Middle Ages) or find a better place to build his master "festung" in which to spend his remaining years. Such great stone edifices are extremely expensive, especially if the adventurer wants it built rapidly rather than over the course of five years. Moreover, expenses do not stop when the

stronghold is completed. Maintenance costs, both for material and personnel, are anything but negligible — and the older the stronghold, the more maintenance of the structure will cost.

If life is too easy for characters while they stay in a town, they'll have no incentive to obtain a stronghold. The more they're harried by thieves, assassins, punk sword-slingers looking for a reputation, and so on, the more they'll look on spending money for a stronghold as a gain, not a loss.

**Religion:** Religion should drain a significant sum from adventurers, staying more or less proportional as income rises. In most fantasy worlds the gods are real, and if not omnipresent, they at least affect the world through manipulation of followers and minions. Most adventurers will actively worship one or more gods, if only "just in case, you know..." Active worship entails contributions, if not tithes (10% of all income) or offerings of animals and goods of the worshipper. And if the local temple is destroyed, the wealthy worshippers (that is, the adventurers) will be expected to provide money to rebuild it.

**Taxes:** In the medieval or the modern world, citizens of a town are expected to pay taxes according to the value of their property — including money, in the Middle Ages — and non-citizens are targets for special levies, unless the town is particularly eager to persuade the foreigners to stay. This eagerness is conceivable if the town is threatened from the outside and the foreigners (adventurers) offer the best defense.

A character's stronghold may be taxed by the overlord of the area. If the character holds the land in fief, he may be exempted from many taxes, but on the other hand he'll have feudal obligations to his overlord. This often includes the providing of troops, which means that the character must hire extra men, and pay for upkeep of troops on campaign, even if he doesn't go himself. This will be true whether the troops take an active part in the campaign or march on a crusade to a faraway land.

**Pets:** The animal companion(s) of an adventurer, especially if they are big pets, can be a drain on the character's income as he pays for housing, training, and feeding the creature. Perhaps outside of town the fighter's pet griffon or hippogriff can feed on kills — provided it doesn't take down some farmer's domestic animal — but when the fighter stays in town, he'll need to buy animals to feed his mount.

Training young animals may cost even more than feeding them, because the ability to train is so rare and the act requires so much time. But the biggest expense of all could be buying the young animal (or

egg) in the first place. Encourage players to have pets, if only well trained (and thus expensive) war dogs. Sooner or later the pet will be killed, and in the meantime it may cause much amusement for the referee, and difficulty for the owner. On the other hand, if his pet saves his life just once, the owner will think it well worth the expense.

**Equipment:** Not all equipment is created equal. That is, some suits of (non-magical) armor are more protective than others, some swords are stronger than others and hold an edge better, and so on. The "ordinary" price for a piece of equipment given in rulebooks could not be for the highest quality product. Consequently, another way to bleed funds from characters is to offer the opportunity to buy exceptional, but non-magical, armor and weapons. The best of this might even be equivalent in protection or striking power to the weakest sort of magical armor and weapons; you, as the referee, must judge where the line is drawn.

Or, if you prefer, you may simply make "ordinary" equipment somewhat unsafe to use, in order to encourage player characters to buy better materials. For example, a dice roll can be taken at the end of each adventure (or each battle) to determine whether armor or weapons have broken or worn out — and more expensive equipment wears out much less often. Or, stipulate that when a player rolls a 1 when attacking, there is a chance that his weapon breaks, and when an attacker rolls a 20 (or 100) there is a chance that the target's armor is damaged and his armor class is lessened by one. The size of this "chance to be damaged" will vary with the quality of the equipment. The players can either periodically buy or repair cheap stuff, or they can buy high-quality products and rest more easily.

Of course, a referee *could* have someone sell magical equipment to characters, but in most worlds the price should be so prohibitive that no adventurer could afford anything but a trade of magic items, rather than a purchase. Who would be crazy enough to sell a permanently endowed magic item, such as a sword or shield?

**One-use magic:** While permanent magic items such as armor will not be available for purchase in most campaigns, except between players, one-use magic will be more plentiful. Alchemists manufacture potions to sell them, since they can't use most potions themselves. Retired magicians may make a living creating and selling scrolls and recharging some magic items.

Allowing for the purchase of "one-use magic" can be a wonderful way to drain money from adventurers without unbalancing the game; in fact, it offers players one more way to make a "good move" in

the game by purchasing the most important types of one-use items, such as scrolls for healing or neutralizing poisons.

If a character finds a fairly good magic item, such as a wand of magic missiles or a wand of weak fireballs, he can hardly afford to allow the thing to run out of charges, yet he'll probably use it frequently. Consequently, he'll be willing to pay out large sums to a magician to restore some charges to the item. It's not unknown for several members of a group of adventurers to contribute money toward recharging a wand owned by one of them, because the wand helped all of them survive.

**Information:** The "facts of the matter" should be a valuable commodity in the campaign, something characters will buy at a high price. This information can come in many forms, from stories told in taverns ("Have another drink and tell me more") to accounts told by rumor-mongers and oral historians, to the purchase of ancient books and the expertise of sages. Education and training for the adventurers themselves is a form of information which will cost significant sums early in a campaign; later, adventurers will teach one another their skills, and will learn few new ones.

The more accurate a piece of information is, the more it should cost. Experts, especially, are always expensive — think

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of a sage as the fantasy equivalent of a "consultant," with the high fees that occupation demands, rather than the equivalent of a reference librarian or a university instructor. And although there were no detectives in medieval times, it is possible that someone would set himself up in the "information gathering" business — not quite a detective, but not a spy either. Such persons would charge high fees because their service is nearly unique.

**Politics:** It is almost impossible to become a wealthy, successful adventurer without getting involved in politics: wealth and prestige bring enemies and hangers-on. The more a character participates in politics, the more it will cost to acquire and retain supporters, to obtain information, to bribe.

Well-known adventurers may be expected to spend a season at the court of the ruler of the region. The travel, retinue, finery, and gifts this entails will not be balanced by any monetary gain, although the increase in prestige and favor may help the character later.

Tournaments (jousts and duels) can be expensive for adventurers who are expected to participate in such events, although in some areas the prizes offered may more than offset the cost.

And if a character is *really* serious about politics, he may have to bankroll a private army!

**Bribes:** This is a way to soak up money in an accumulation of small amounts. Most readers will have heard of countries in which every official, minor or otherwise, expects a bribe in return for accomplishing what is nominally his everyday job. Why can't a fantasy society be afflicted with the same inefficiency? It's a matter of the size of the bureaucracy, the way it's recruited, and the expectations of the society.

**Research:** Magical research, whether to discover new spells or to determine the nature of found magic items, takes money. Don't let characters pay a meager sum in order to find out everything there is to know about a newly obtained item. Bleed their money away, giving a little more information for each input of funds. After all, magicians are rare and should be paid appropriately for their valuable research time.

Of course, player characters may decide not to pay, but that's their choice; it may be possible to discover the relevant information through rumors, libraries, and knowledgeable non-magicians.

The more complex a magic item is, the more characters will have to pay to determine exactly what it does. More than one level of performance, or more than one power, is desirable in an item — even items with (unbeknownst to the player characters) only one power — so that players may continue to pay money in an attempt to learn about additional powers of an item long after all of its powers and levels of ability have actually been revealed.

For example, one researcher may be able to determine one of the powers of a wand. Another research expert may know a command word, not necessarily relating to the known power. Further research may reveal another command word and a second power, perhaps a variation of the first one. And, the wand may be found to occasionally weaken the user; finding out how to avoid that effect — or even if there is a way to avoid it — would cost even more than finding out about one of the wand's beneficial aspects.

**Investments:** Bad investments will cost characters large sums. There ought to be a few good investments available, but most should be bad — just as in the modern world. Ways to spend invested money may include schemes to manufacture new inventions, property deals, money lending, and most likely, mercantile ventures. While a smart mercantile deal may net a character a return of more than 100% or 200%, most will result in a poor return or a loss. Characters may attempt to literally "protect their investments" by accompanying a vehicle or caravan picking up or delivering goods, thereby giving the referee opportunities to create mini-adventures connected with the trade routes and destinations.

**Gambling:** This is a good way to separate incautious characters from their fortunes, in the long run. Just make sure the odds favor the house — if the game isn't actually fixed — and remember that a really big winner may make enemies of the owners of the gambling establishment, or of the losers in a private game.

A referee can encourage gambling by making participation a matter of prestige in the locale, and by providing means of obtaining information — rumors, at the least — unique to the gambling establishment(s). If you challenge the "manhood" (or "womanhood") of the player characters in connection with gambling, some of them will respond unwisely — that is, they will gamble to "prove" themselves.

#### Small treasures, big spenders

The more opportunities player characters have to spend money, in small amounts or large, the more they'll spend. Some combination of the methods described above should allow the referee to reduce the fortunes of all but the most miserly adventurers. But the most important single method of doing this is to make treasures small, so that characters can't accumulate large fortunes. Whether this stringency fits the "heroic" mold is a matter that only each referee and his or her players can decide. □

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# SF/gaming convention calendar

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Sponsored by the Forest Gamers Club, to be held at the River Forest Community Center, 414 Jackson, River Forest IL 60305. For more information, write to the above address.

## UNICORN I, June 10-12

The first fantasy gaming convention ever in Lexington, Ky., to be staged at Lexington Catholic High School. For registration information, contact convention coordinator Steven J. Isert, c/o Unicorn Adventurers, P.O. Box 12666, Lexington KY 40583.

## X-CON 7, June 10-12

Author Poul Anderson will be among the guests of honor at this SF convention, to be located at the Olympia Spa and Resort in Oconomowoc, Wis. Registration fee is \$15 (half price for children under 12), payable to X-Con 7 at P.O. Box 7, Milwaukee WI 53201. A brochure and other information can be obtained by writing to the above address.

## HUNTCON II, June 16-18

This second convention effort of the Dragon Hunters' Guild is sponsored by

the Fountain Hobby Center in Winfield, W. Va. Several AD&D tournaments are scheduled, plus other contests and special events. Admission is \$1 per day or \$2 for all three days. For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to HuntCon II, c/o Keith Payne, Rt. 1, Box 794, Winfield WV 25213, or call (304)757-9519.

## GENGHIS CON V, June 17-19

A gathering for gamers in Denver, Colo., featuring board games, role-playing games, miniatures, and computer gaming events. Reasonable on-campus housing is available. For details, contact the Denver Gamers Association, P.O. Box 2945, Littleton CO 80161, phone (303)798-1404.

## KOMMAND CON '83, June 18-19

At the Ohio National Guard Armory in Mansfield, Ohio, this event has something for every type of gamer. For more information, write to the Kommander's Wargaming Club, P.O. Box 2235, Mansfield OH 44905.

## STARS, SPELLS & SHELLS, June 18-19

A mini-con staged by the Gamemasters' Guild of Waukegan, to be held at the Zion Leisure Center, 2400 Dowie Memorial Drive, Zion, Ill. Admission is \$2 per day or \$3.50 for the weekend. Contact the Gamemasters Guild, 1413 Washington St., Waukegan IL 60085, or call (312)336-0790 after 2 p.m.

## SEAGA '83, June 24-26

A wide range of gaming activities is scheduled for this event, sponsored by the Southeastern Adventures Gaming Alliance. It will be held at the Atlanta Dunfey Hotel, located at I-75 and Howell Mill Road in Atlanta, Ga. For information and registration details, write to SEAGA '83, P.O. Box 930031, Norcross GA 30093.

## EASTCON, June 24-26

More than 4,000 gamers are expected to attend this gathering at Glassboro State College in Glassboro, N. J. (See advertisement on facing page.) The organizing group is a combination of the people who have helped stage Origins, GEN CON® East, and PennCon conventions over the past several years. Seminars, demonstrations, and tournaments will be offered involving most major games and gaming activities. For more information, send SASE to EastCon, P.O. Box 139, Middletown NJ 07748.

## POLYCON '83, June 24-26

Sponsored by the Society of Wizards and Warriors of Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, this event promises a large variety of games and related activities. More information can be obtained by writing to the Society of Wizards and Warriors, P.O. Box 168, Julian A. McPhee U.U., Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo CA 93407.

## TEXCON 1983, July 2-4


An extensive schedule of games and related events will be offered at this convention in Austin, Tex. For details, send SASE to David Ladyman, 8028 Gessner, Apt. #1805, Austin TX 78753.

## EXPO '83, July 8-9

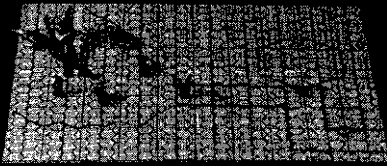
A convention oriented toward miniatures and models, staged jointly by the Tampa Scale Modelers and Suncoast Military Miniatures Association. The event will be at the Ramada Inn North, at the intersection of I-275 and Busch Blvd. in Tampa, Fla. For information, write to Bill Hogan, 14707 Carnation Drive, Tampa FL 33612, or call (813)961-1995.

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#### **OMACON 3, Aug. 5-7**

Described by the organizers as a "science-fiction, gaming, & space support convention," this event will feature Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle among its guests of honor. It will be staged at the Sheraton Inn S.W., 120th and 'L' St., Omaha, Neb. Registration is \$13 until July 23, \$15 thereafter; one-day memberships at reduced rates are also available. For details, send SASE to OmaCon 3, 2518 S. 167th St., Omaha NE 68130.

#### **ATLANTA FANTASY FAIR, Aug. 5-7**

The Omni Hotel and the adjoining Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta will be the location for this SF/fantasy gathering. Special guests include *Elfquest* creators Wendy & Richard Pini and animator Chuck Jones. Memberships are \$16 until June 30, \$19 thereafter and at the door. For more information, write to Atlanta Fantasy Fair, P.O. Box 566, Marietta GA 30061.

#### **ADVENTURE EXPO '83, Aug. 6**

Sponsored by the Adventure Unlimited gaming club and the Wizzards and Warriors Guild of Michigan City, Ind., this one-day gaming event will be held at the National Guard Armory in Michigan City. Admission is \$4 for pre-registered guests, \$5 at the door. Contact: Adventure Unlimited, 2707 S. Franklin St., Michigan City IN 46360, phone (219)879-2781.

#### **KAL CON I, Aug. 6-7**

A game convention to be held at Moore Park in Westfield, N.Y. For more information, contact James Pacanowski II, 44 E. Second St., Westfield NY 14787.

#### **MYSTICON 2.5, Aug. 12-14**

Science-fiction author Orson Scott Card will be guest of honor at this SF and gaming convention, to be held at the Jefferson Inn in downtown Roanoke, Va. Memberships are \$10 each; for more information, send SASE to MystiCon, P.O. Box 1367, Salem VA 24153, or phone Calvin Yates at (703)362-3562.

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Stephen R. Donaldson will be a Guest of Honor at this event, otherwise known as the 14th Annual Mythopoeic Conference. The theme of the conference is "Mythic Structures in (the writings of) J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and Charles Williams." It will be held at Scripps College in Claremont, Calif. Registration is \$20; for details, write to Mythopoeic Conference XIV, P.O. Box 711, Seal Beach CA 90740.

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# The SF 'universe'

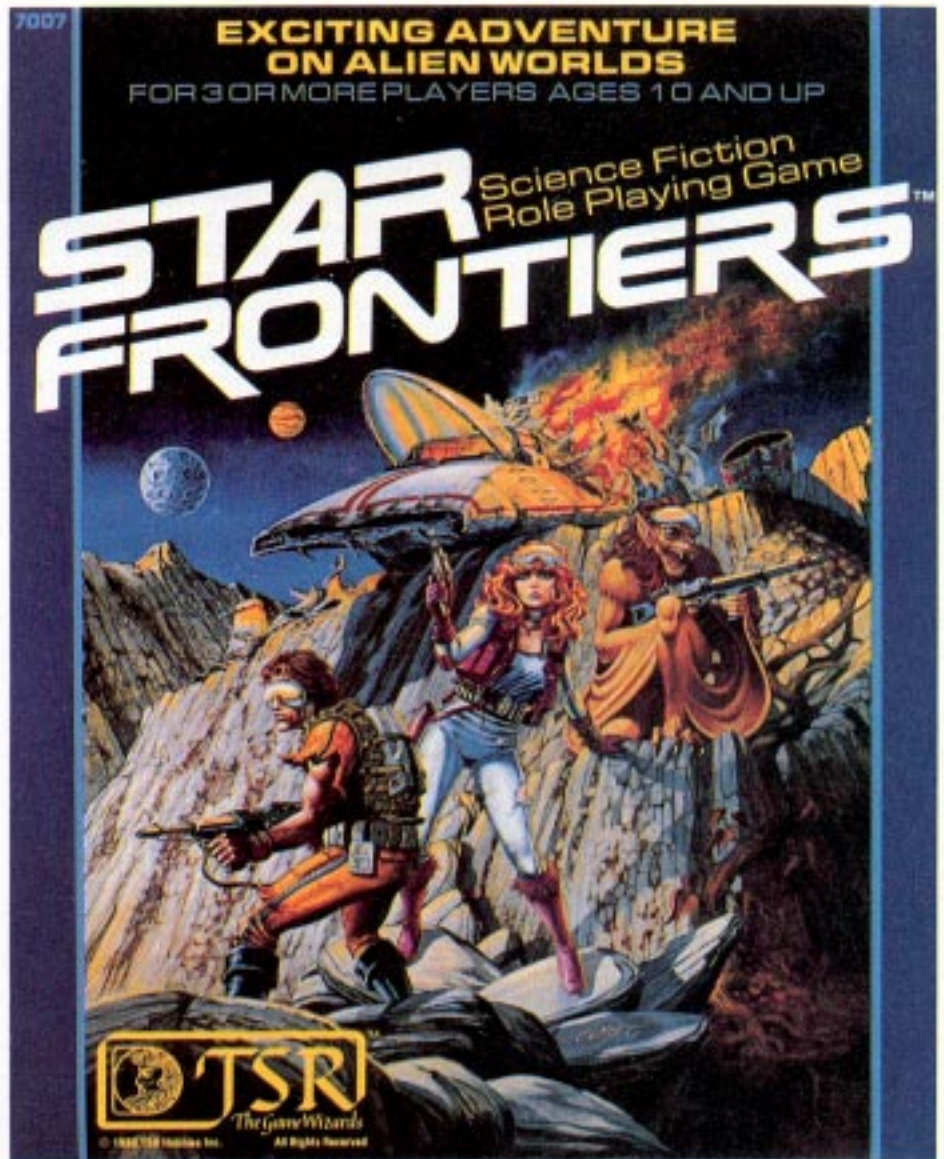
*An in-depth examination of the STAR FRONTIERS™ game:*

*Rules and systems*

*The game 'world'*

*Components  
and more*

by Tony Watson



The entry of the STAR FRONTIERS™ game into the science-fiction RPG field is a lot like man's entry into interstellar travel: Maybe man wasn't the first race to go into space, but now that he's there, he intends to make his presence felt.

Likewise, the STAR FRONTIERS game certainly wasn't the first science-fiction role-playing game on the market, but in its first year of existence it has moved into a position of popularity alongside some of the older front-runners.

The reasons for this popularity, and some thoughts on why the game's popularity isn't as high as it might be, are outlined in the text that follows.

## Background

TSR had previously published SF-oriented role-playing games, most notably the GAMMA WORLD® game and the METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA game, but these two games are post-apocalyptic visions of the future. GW is set in the

United States after a holocaust. MA takes place on a gigantic colony starship in which the technical and social order has broken down.

While they are certainly interesting, and undoubtedly SF in nature, neither of these games fully realizes the potential of a science-fiction setting. A star-spanning civilization, interstellar spacecraft, strange aliens, and adventures on a myriad of bizarre and challenging new worlds are the elements of a classic SF

framework. The possibilities for adventure in such a "universe" are nearly limitless. The STAR FRONTIERS game, unlike its predecessor SF titles from TSR, is able to appreciate these possibilities.

A variety of science fiction RPGs have appeared over the last half dozen years or so. Comparisons between all of them and the STAR FRONTIERS system are inevitable. And on a comparative basis, it's fair to expect good things from STAR FRONTIERS. The game's late entry into the "outer space race" should entitle gamers to expect a more polished and tighter design than exhibited in some games that have come before. TSR had a fairly long time to mull over its product, at the same time giving other games the opportunity to go first, blaze the trail, and have the first chance at tripping up. As things turned out, some of the earlier SF role-playing games didn't trip up too badly, TRAVELLER® being the most obvious example of success, and the STAR FRONTIERS game will have to acquire and maintain a good reputation among the game-playing public to have a shot at edging out some of the firmly entrenched old-timers.

#### The setting

It has always been this reviewer's opinion that the setting of a role-playing game is just as important as the design itself. An effective combat system and an

intelligent character creation and development process lose their utility if coupled with a poorly thought out or inadequately described background. The mechanics of a role-playing game are of course very important, but they are, in the final analysis, just ways for the players and the gamemaster/referee to explore, confront, and challenge the dangers and opportunities posited by the game's setting. The fictional framework of any RPG is what attracts the players and latches on to their imaginations; game mechanics are merely modes of inquiry into the game's possibilities.

An enterprising and imaginative referee can get by with a minimum of background material, relying instead on his own hard work, but every set of game rules needs some sort of conceptual skeleton. At the very least, the background can provide some useful parameters for the rules: What is possible and what is not. A fantasy game, for example, is very likely to have some element of magic and the supernatural present; what that power can do is as much a part of the background as the actual limitations placed upon the power by the rules. If the designer sets his fantasy RPG in a world where magic commonly manifests itself, wizards and magical artifacts will abound, and the rules will (or should) reflect this. At its best, an interesting background will give the players a real sense of the imaginary world the designer has created, as well as suggest possibilities for adventures and the style of role-playing and refereeing the participants should employ.

The STAR FRONTIERS game is set in another galaxy than our own, one where the stars are closer together. Despite this non-Terran "future history," a race of Humans, nearly identical to ourselves, serve as the focal point in the game. Sometime before the time frame of the game, these people were able to contact three other starfaring races: Vrusk, large, ten-limbed insectoids; Yazirians, a race of somewhat ape-like humanoids with large, wing-like membranes; and Dralasites, amorphous creatures something like large amoebas, capable of forming variable numbers of limbs and changing shape.

The four races first met in a region of space known as the Frontier, and there formed a multi-cultural civilization. The needs of the society were met by a large interstellar corporation, the Pan-Galactic Corporation, an entity not unlike some of the charter companies active in colonial areas during the age of exploration in North America.

The four races formed a political body, the United Planetary Federation, when they encountered the worm-like Sathar, who seemed intent on destroying the civilization that had grown up in the Frontier sector. The Sathar are the heavies in the STAR FRONTIERS universe. Unable to defeat the UPF in a straight

military confrontation, they have resorted to the employment of agents from the other races to disrupt commerce and harmony in the Frontier. The Sathar are a good bet to be behind any major plots against the UPF, and thus a fine rationale for any number of scenarios.

To combat the Sathar, the UPF has created a law-enforcement arm, the Star Law Rangers. This is where player characters come into the action, as Star Law Rangers. Playing the roles of Rangers insures that the players' characters will always be in the thick of an adventure situation, and this aspect of the setting aids the referee greatly in setting up scenarios and rationalizing player involvement.

#### Components

"Everything you need is in this box," says the text on the back of the STAR FRONTIERS package. Statements like this are often suspect, but it's not hype this time. STAR FRONTIERS is complete, including everything necessary to begin play. The amount of material is especially surprising considering the cost; at \$12, the game is a bargain, and compares favorably with other games of this ilk in this regard. The components, briefly described, are these:

Basic game rules — A 16-page, 8½" by 10¾" rule book containing introductory material, the basic game rules, and several beginning adventures. The back cover doubles as a character record sheet and must be photocopied for game use.

Expanded game rules — This 60-page book, of the same page size as the basic rules, contains material on the four character races and the Sathar, a listing of skills and their uses, and guidelines for character development plus extensive advanced combat rules, rules for vehicles, guidelines for the creation and use of creatures, and listings of weapons and equipment. In addition, the book includes brief sections on Frontier societies, how to referee, and the design of adventures.

Game map — This attractive item is one of the nicest features of the game. The 23" by 36" sheet is double-sided for maximum utility, printed in full color throughout. One side shows the downtown environs of Port Loren, a star-city on an unnamed UPF planet in the Frontier Sector. The map has a truly extensive display of buildings of various sorts, park areas, monorail tracks and stations, and so forth. The reverse side is a composite of seven different maps of various types of terrain: craters, mountains, forest, ruins, desert, a fort, and a large-scale map of a town. The wide selection of terrain types should insure that one will be suitable for any given encounter. All maps are overlaid with a half-inch grid to facilitate the use of the combat rules.

Counters — The STAR FRONTIERS game includes 408 counters for use with

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the encounter and combat rules. The countermix breaks down into five broad categories: 1) the four character races and NPCs; 2) aliens; 3) creatures and animals; 4) robots; and 5) vehicles. Counter varieties are easily differentiated by color background; each counter also bears an identification number and a drawing (not a silhouette) of the being, creature, or machine represented. I am particularly pleased with the latter feature, since the drawings add considerably to the tactical feeling of encounters, in much the same manner as miniatures do.

Introductory Module SF-0, "Crash on Volturnus" — Beginning players can immediately get involved with the STAR FRONTIERS game in campaign form through the inclusion of this introductory module. The booklet is 30 pages long, surrounded by a stiff "cover" that is actually a double-sided, full-color foldout map. One side depicts the bridge and surrounding cargo bays and staterooms of the starship *Serena's Dawn*, and the other is a detailed hexgrid of a large land area of the planet Volturnus. The module includes encounter materials, descriptions, rules, and a 12-page pullout section of creatures and background information on Volturnus.

Dice — Last but not least are a pair of ten-sided percentile dice, in different colors, and a crayon for filling in the numbers. Since the game uses only these

dice (a commendable choice, given the ease with which odds for endeavor attempts and occurrences can be rendered in percentages), the purchaser is ready to play the game right away and does not need to buy more special dice.

#### Artwork

In the last analysis, artwork in a game has only aesthetic value. An ugly game can be a good game, but it's much nicer if it's pretty. The artwork and graphics used in a game help to set the tone for play and jump-start imaginations into picturing the scene and the action.

Graphics and illustrations used on the STAR FRONTIERS maps and counters are well done and entirely in keeping with the mood of the game. Colorful and illustrative, they are both attractive and functional. The game rules are profusely illustrated. Many of the drawings are purposeful as well as decorative, such as the diagrams of each of the main races and the pictures of creatures.

Since several artists contributed to the work, the styles and quality vary. Most of the interior work is adequate, though Timothy Truman's all-too-few pictures seem a cut above the rest. Also noteworthy is Larry Elmore's contribution, especially the box cover. The depiction of two humans and a Yazirian defending themselves before their wrecked vehicle on some barren world superbly catches

the tone the game is trying to set: flashy, colorful, and action-oriented.

#### The basic game rules

Unlike most role-playing games, STAR FRONTIERS has a set of basic rules. Apparently, TSR is aiming the game toward newcomers to RPGs or people coming over from D&D® game playing, and the company has decided that a set of simple rules will serve to get the players involved quickly. The rules are simple enough that the game could be played as soon as an hour after the gamebox is opened. The term "basic rules" is no misnomer: They are *very* simple, but this is good; players will be able to get into the swing of things right away.

The rules begin with a storyboard-style recounting of a brief adventure, and then get into the meat of the matter with a section on character creation. Like nearly all other role-playing games, the STAR FRONTIERS system uses dice rolls to determine characteristics and abilities. The eight qualities possessed by player characters are grouped into the four "ability pairs" of Strength/Stamina, Dexterity/Reaction Speed, Intuition/Logic, and Personality/Leadership. The abilities in a pair have a clear relationship to one another — the second being a derivative of the first, which is more of a characteristic, or quality.

The character's score in each category

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is determined by rolling the dice and consulting a table. Scores run from 30 through 70 in increments of five; the average is 45, and 50% of the results will be either 40, 45 or 50. Unfortunately, a sentence in the early part of this section gives the impression that the range can run from 1 to 100. This is clearly not the case; although the upper limit of 100 can be obtained through character development (and it would take quite a while), there's no way a player character could be so unlucky as to have a score of 1.

Ability values for aliens (as in the D&D® and AD&D™ games, humans are the norm) are adjusted for certain characteristics. Yazirians, for example, tend to be bright and dextrous, but are lacking in strength and stamina. The differences between races are not radical, but sufficient to establish certain tendencies.

Tactical movement and combat are the topics of the rules section following character creation. At this point in its "development," the game is very much like a simple, man-to-man, tactical combat game. Movement and range are governed by the maps' square grids. In each turn, a character may move and fire, reload, or do nothing; each turn represents only six seconds of game time.

Movement is very simple: Each race may move a given number of squares per turn, either walking or running. Curiously, diagonal movement is at the same rate as horizontal or vertical, a distortion attendant to the use of a square grid. Buildings, skimmers (hovercars) and the monorail track (on the Port Loren map) all have an effect on movement.

The combat procedure is equally simplistic: Fire combat is straightforward, and hand-to-hand and melee weapons are ignored. Fire combat is a function of the type of weapon used, the range and the firer's dexterity. A character's dexterity is his base percentage chance of hitting a target at point-blank range. Decreasing chances of success at longer ranges are accounted for by subtractions from this base score, depending on weapon type.

If a hit is scored, the weapon does a certain number of dice worth of damage, which is subtracted from the target's stamina, an ability which functions as hit points in this regard. Unfortunately for the play of the basic game, the weapons do a surprisingly small amount of damage, no more, than one or two dice. Figuring the average of 1d10 as 5.5 and the average stamina as 45, characters will have to be hit about four to eight times (depending on weapon strength) to be knocked unconscious — and this without benefit of defensive armor! Because of this relationship between weak weapons and strong characters, firefights can get a bit monotonous and drag on and on. Not only is this somewhat "unrealistic," but it slows the game down precisely when it should be at its most fast-paced and exciting. The combat section also covers

incidental but important topics such as grenades, ammunition reloads, and cover.

The amount of equipment available to characters in the basic game is small. Four types of firearms (gyrojet, laser and needler pistols, and laser rifles) are available, all illustrated. Some simple items such as communicators, coveralls, pocket tools, rations, and a first aid kit are mentioned. A cost table for all items, including the prices for hospital stays and transportation, is included.

To aid in the understanding of these simple rules, and get the players going right away, the basic rule book has several brief adventures. The first (and longest) of these, "Pan-Galactic Security Breach," is a programmed adventure; one player is chosen to take the part of the "reader," sort of a proto-referee, who will guide the others through the fourteen numbered paragraphs of the story. Each paragraph represents a juncture where the players must make a decision. There is usually a short descriptive passage to set the scene, a listing of any pertinent actions that take place or happen to the player characters, and a set of possible choices for the players to make. Depending on the action selected, a new paragraph is consulted, and so it goes until the adventure is complete.

The scenario story is simple enough: The players are called upon to stop a party of raiders who have breached PGC's security. As the action unfolds, players will use all forms of movement and engage in several firefights.

A second scenario, "Alien Creature on the Loose," is not a programmed adventure. This story involves a gigantic monster rampaging through Port Loren. The scenario can be played several times, using rules for varying the monster's characteristics and powers. Following this mini-adventure is another page and a half of ideas and guidelines for creating new adventures.

A final bit of interesting information is carried on the inside back cover, where a surprisingly complete glossary appears. It defines important terms and often-used concepts, such as initiative modifier or range modifier. This is a handy list that will save some time for beginning players.

The STAR FRONTIERS basic game rules, while hardly a satisfying base to build a science-fiction role playing campaign on, serve admirably to introduce the rudimentary mechanics of the game. The game is simple enough to get even absolute novices involved in play with a minimum of effort and problems, which seems to be its purpose. At this purpose, it excels.

### The expanded game rules

Again, the title is no misnomer. These rules are a considerable embellishment and expansion of the basic game. They provide the basis for conducting much

more involved and interesting adventures. One of the major changes is the greatly increased emphasis on the role of the referee. More now than just a simple reader of programmed paragraphs, the referee is expected to handle the myriad of administrative and scenario development tasks we have come to associate with the title. Secondly, the rules greatly elaborate on character abilities and development, combat, and equipment.

While ability scores are rolled up in the same manner as the basic game, players are allowed to shift up to 10 points between the two scores in an ability pair, offering a greater diversity among player characters and their capacities. The eight character abilities are treated in greater depth, and their use in the game is better explained.

The nature of the various races is also dealt with in greater detail. Each of the four player-character races, plus the Sathar, has an entire page devoted to its description. This includes a drawing of the being, with accompanying details of any special features, as well as sections on physical appearance and structure, senses, speech, society and customs, attitudes, and special abilities. The information is quite comprehensive and, taken as a whole, very intriguing. For instance, the Vrusk — despite their insectoid structure — have an internal skeleton. Their culture is based on independent corporations which serve a sort of clan role. The Vrusk get along well with the other three races, and are great lovers of art and beauty. In contrast to that are the shape-changing Dralasites, philosophical creatures with strange senses of humor. Smell is their most important sensory ability, and they breed by hermaphroditic budding.

Unique racial characteristics are translated into game terms via the section on special abilities. Because of their elastic body structure, Dralasites may form new limbs at will, while Yazirians may attempt limited glides using their wing-like membranes. The listings provide the necessary information (die rolls and the like) for implementing these abilities in game play. I found these five pages to be among the best in the rulebook. They flesh out the various races very nicely, imparting to the reader an understanding of the physical structures and capacities, as well as the cultural background, of each. Judicious adherence to the material should enable the players to "get into character" that much faster and enhance the referee's ability to run non-player characters.

In one major respect, the STAR FRONTIERS system follows in the tradition of games like TRAVELLER®, in which the acquired skills (as opposed to innate abilities) of a character are important parameters of what that character can accomplish. The game lists thirteen skills that player characters can learn, grouped into three primary skill areas



(PSAs). These are Military (including Beam Weapons, Demolitions, Gyrojet Weapons, Martial Arts, Melee Weapons, Projectile Weapons, and Thrown Weapons); Technological (Computer, Robotics, and Technician); and Biosocial (Environmental, Medical, and Psycho-social).

Each of the thirteen primary skills is further divided into subskills. The number of subskills within a primary skill varies; for example, the skill of Beam Weapons allows the possessor an advantage when firing certain types of weapons; the way the term "subskill" is used in the rules, each specific weapon within the Beam Weapons category is not a sub-skill. However, the Computer skill is divided into eight distinct subskills: operating computers, writing programs, defeating security, bypassing security, displaying information, manipulating programs, interfacing computers, and repairing computers. Similarly, the Technician skill involves tasks such as operating and repairing machinery; Medical skill covers diagnosis, surgery and the administering of drugs. In total, there are nearly 50 subskills covering a great variety of tasks the characters might attempt.

Subskills are translated into game action by the use of "success rate" formulas. These are based largely on the character's level in that skill (more on how levels are attained in a moment). An example: A character with Medical skill level 2 is attempting minor surgery on a wounded compatriot. The success rate is equal to  $40\% + 10 \times \text{level}$  ( $=20\%$ ), or 60%. In addition, if the surgery is taking place in a hospital, 20% is added. Thus, the medic's chance to succeed is either 60% or 80%, depending on the circumstances. This number, or lower, must be rolled on percentile dice for the surgery to produce the desired results.

All applications of skills work in a similar manner, although the base chance may vary from 10% to 100%, and the accompanying paragraph to a "success rate" formula may place special constraints on the application of the skill, such as the availability of tools or drugs. The system is clever in its simplicity; the difficulty of the task is combined with the level of expertise in a simple-to-use method of determining success. The list of skills is complete for the areas covered, though one can think of a number of areas that are ignored, such as most of the "soft" sciences and humanities, and anything to do with spacecraft.

A character's skills, and also his or her eight basic abilities, may be upgraded via the character improvement process. Experience points (XPs) are awarded by the referee after each adventure, or at the end of a session of play, but these points don't come in clumps of hundreds or thousands as in many other games. The rules recommend that the referee award no

more than *three* (3) XPs to a single character at the end of an adventure, and then only to a character who performed excellently and made a great contribution to the success of the mission. Characters who simply survive an adventure without doing anything outstanding are assured of receiving at least *one* (1) XP for the effort.

And this is why XPs are so few and far between, and so valuable: Experience points may be traded in for increased ability on a one-for-one basis; that is, an ability score can be raised one point by expending one XP. Alternately, XPs can be used to learn new skills or raise the character's level of competence in a skill already known. The level of knowledge of a skill can be raised to a maximum of 6, with increasing costs at higher levels.

The character development rules allow players to improve their characters by expanding their abilities and knowledge. While the characters are not locked into certain skills, branching out into different areas is done at relatively high expense, which seems to make sense. The number of points necessary to go up levels in skills is not so prohibitive as to prevent appreciable growth in a campaign game, nor is it so cheap as to encourage the rapid evolution of super-characters.

While the skill rules are among the most interesting in the game, they are certainly ill served by the character record

sheet printed on the outside back cover of the basic rule book. While spaces are provided for recording personal data, weapons and chances to hit, movement rates, racial abilities and current medical status, no provisions are made for registering skills and levels. Given that these are important aspects of a character's makeup, on a par with the ability scores, the suggestion to "record skills and equipment on reverse side" is hardly satisfying. The sheet could have easily been restructured to allow room to note skills and expertise.

The combat rules in the expanded game are considerably more complicated than those introduced in the basic book. Almost a quarter of the book's pages are devoted to combat and supplementary rules.

For the most part, the basic game combat rules are used as the foundation, and then built upon. Where the basic rules considered only a few factors in determining a character's chance to hit with a weapon, the expanded rules mix in such things as target size and movement, bursts and careful aim, skill levels, even using the wrong hand. Special situations such as opportunity fire, more than one shot a turn, and shooting at targets in crowds are addressed. The rules are complete enough to cover damage to structures. The procedure, is a bit ponderous, but players can speed things up as they get



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familiar with using it. On the plus side, the combat system is quite flexible and covers just about any situation that is likely to crop up.

Damage is handled in a much more acceptable manner than in the basic game rules. Because of increased rates of fire and the opportunity to change energy settings on beam weapons, characters can do considerable damage with their weapons in the expanded game, putting excitement and a real sense of danger into combat situations. In addition to damage taken against stamina, some weapons can cause unconsciousness. To help the characters out in this suddenly more dangerous environment, there are several types of defensive suits and screens that can absorb damage from certain types of attacks.

Although I have only mentioned ranged weapons, the expanded rules treat melee attacks with equal thoroughness. Twenty types of melee weapons are listed, from chairs and bottles to sonicswords and vibroknives. The procedure for their use is much the same as that for ranged weapons.

Unlike those in many other role-playing games, the combat rules in STAR FRONTIERS are not abstract. Rather, they are nearly as precise and as detailed as those one would find in a boardgame. Given the emphasis the game's design places on combat, this is understandable.

Vehicles receive an equally detailed treatment. The problem of movement along the square grids of the maps (acceleration, deceleration, turning, special maneuvers and the like) require complete coverage. The problem is intensified at the same time it is being covered; in addition to the "normal" ground cars and hover transports, the rules deal with glijets, aircars and other forms of flying transportation. The role of vehicles of all types in combat situations is also covered.

One of the weak points in the rules is the sections dealing with creatures. Encounters with strange and alien animals are part and parcel of SF adventure, and I think the design of the STAR FRONTIERS game could have dealt with this topic in more depth.

My main criticisms are aimed at the results and examples of creatures provided, rather than the process itself. The randomness and silliness that would result from a system based on die rolls is rejected in favor of guidelines following an almost Socratic method. The referee asks himself a series of questions: What is the creature's purpose? Its size? Its speed? How does it attack and defend? Does it have special abilities? The referee then uses these guidelines to create his beastie, although finishing the creation still makes quite a demand on the referee's imagination.

Ten sample creatures, with all the necessary statistics, descriptions and illustrations, are offered in the rule book. The fantastic nature of some of these examples seems to fly in the face of any sort of biological rules, and some of them remind me of the sort of "homemade" creatures that might pop up in a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® scenario. What's acceptable in a fantasy game can seem a bit odd in a science-fiction setting. But some could turn this argument around on the premise that strange, other-worldly environments could cause creatures stranger than these to evolve, so it's largely a matter of individual taste.

The next major section of the rules surveys the equipment available to adventurers. Two pages of tables list weapons, defenses, toolkits, robots, computers, power sources and miscellaneous equipment, along with their cost and mass. Seven pages of text and descriptions accompany them. Despite their simplicity, I found the rules for computers and robots to be useful and innovative.

The four-page section on Frontier societies raises some questions about completeness. This should be the text that fully fleshes out the Frontier Sector, but the information given is a bit sparse. One full page is a map of the sector. Sixteen systems are listed, coded for population, trade characteristics, and gravity. Curiously, the number of moons circling a planet is given, but a planet's atmosphere — certainly a critical aspect — is ignored. A few slender notes on some of

the planets accompany the data listing, but overall, the amount of information about the Frontier Worlds is rather skimpy. Perhaps a future supplement, devoting itself to a description of the sector, will rectify the situation.

The final parts of the rule book deal with a number of "how to" questions: how to referee, create an adventure, or deal with non-player characters. This sort of information is quite valuable, especially to referees just starting out who might find the task of creating and running an adventure rather formidable. The advice, while often obvious, is sound.

The back cover of the rule book contains one of the most important features of all: a complete index to the rules.

### The introductory module

"Crash on Volturnus" is a structured introductory module for use with the expanded game rules. It is intended to start a campaign off, as well as introduce all parties involved to procedures and the style of play. Everything is carefully explained for the referee, and by following these instructions his first attempt at running an adventure should go smoothly. "Crash on Volturnus" also appears to have the secondary goal of providing an example for referees to emulate; it seems to be representative of the sort of adventures one can expect in a STAR FRONTIERS campaign.

Random encounters and planned encounters are joined by a pullout section on NPCs, creatures and special locales. A blank map to help the players keep track of their travels is provided, while the referee has his own full-color display of a large section of the planet Volturnus.

The scenario plays smoothly, thanks to the care that the designers have taken with it, and problems are few. The emphasis is on action. The players will skip from one danger to another, and encounter strange creatures and aliens. They'll be forced to battle for their lives on numerous occasions, and the scenario is certainly tense.

"Crash on Volturnus" seems to succeed on all counts, both as a learning process for players and referee and as a exciting adventure. While some players may balk at several of the premises (a surprising number of alien races dwell on Volturnus, for example) a little willing suspension of disbelief should get everyone into the spirit of things.

### Closing comments

Like any good role-playing game, STAR FRONTIERS has a lot about it to like, and a bit to dislike as well; just what will appeal to whom depends on individual preferences and ideas about what a role-playing game should be. The following constitutes this reviewer's general opinions of the STAR FRONTIERS game system.

One of the best aspects of the game is

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its approach to character creation and development. The choices made for abilities seem intelligent, and the question of skills is handled very well. Skills, because of the broad range of subskills and the easy method of their application, add considerably to the game without any real bother. Combine these features with the backgrounds and special abilities for aliens, and you have a system that easily lends itself to character differentiation and role-playing. The procedure for development and new skill acquisition seems fair and reasonable.

The STAR FRONTIERS combat system is extensive and complete. It is certainly one of the key aspects of the game; only character creation seems to be of equal importance. The emphasis on armed confrontation in the rules seems to be an accurate reflection of the design philosophy behind the rules. The STAR FRONTIERS game is very action/violence oriented, more so than most science-fiction role-playing games. One may come away from reading the rules with the impression that the rest of the game was built around the combat system; even so, many opportunities to ameliorate this tendency to "shoot 'em up" may present themselves to thoughtful referees.

On the other hand, the rules have one glaring omission that should strike any science-fiction gamer right away: the almost total absence of anything to do with spacecraft?

The rules devote a couple of paragraphs to space travel, consisting of guidelines on travel time, schedules, and passage costs aboard starliners. But no provisions are made for players owning starships, nor are there any rules for their design, movement, or use in combat.

The referee will have to either improvise, or accept space travel in the manner in which the game defines it: a simple means of getting from one world to another. True, most activity in a game campaign will take place on planets rather than between them. But other science-fiction role-playing games such as UNIVERSE™ and TRAVELLER have devoted lengthy sections of rules to starships, and to good effect. By ignoring this aspect of the science-fiction genre, the designers of the STAR FRONTIERS system have limited not only their fictional universe, but the possibilities open to the players as well. The hope is that this situation will be rectified soon.

Similarly, the material on the United Planetary Federation and the Frontier Worlds in particular is a bit skimpy. If one accepts the points contended earlier about the importance of setting and context, four pages (one of them a map) is too little to build a campaign upon. A supplement the size of the "Voluturnus" module could quite nicely add the missing planetary maps, plus data and notes on society and economics, and would certainly be a worthwhile project.

The completeness of the sections on aliens, the expanded combat rules, and the equipment lists is certainly noteworthy. The physical quality of the game is quite good, and the maps and counters are attractive as well as useful.

The STAR FRONTIERS game certainly has a different feel from that evoked by TRAVELLER. Some of the weaker aspects of the TSR game, such as background and starships, are strengths of the TRAVELLER system. GDW's game seems a bit more solid and serious in its approach. Comparing the two is like comparing the movies *Star Wars* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*: both very good, but very different, facets of science fiction. The STAR FRONTIERS system, for its part, improves upon the concept of skills as important components of a character, and has a more versatile combat system than the TRAVELLER rules. The TSR game is the new kid on the block, while TRAVELLER has had five years to entrench itself as the front runner.

A final question remains: Is the STAR FRONTIERS game just a D&D game in space? The pedigree is evident, but I think TSR has managed to avoid trading magic for technology, swords for lasers, and orcs for aliens. The emphasis on action and some of the design philosophy belies the kinship of STAR FRONTIERS to the D&D game, but it is innovative and original in its own right. The similarities will make it easy for D&D players to shift over to STAR FRONTIERS as their first science-fiction role-playing game. This may be the largest single body of STAR FRONTIERS buyers. One very important advantage in the TSR connection is that players can count on the company to support the game with accessories, and TSR's wide distribution network should make these products easy to find.

The STAR FRONTIERS game is fast-paced, accessible, and playable. The design shows thought and imagination, and the product is quite a bargain. While not without its weaknesses, it's certainly a contender in a competitive market and probably a good choice for newcomers to this facet of role-playing. II

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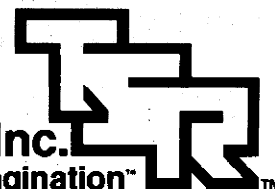
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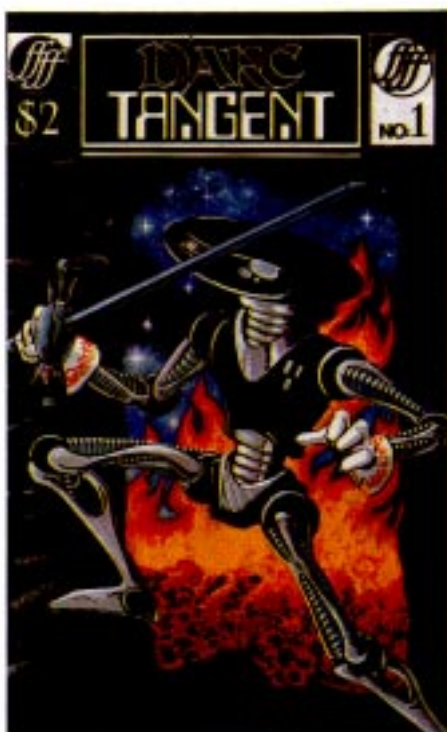




# Off the Shelf

## Of comics, chaos, and 'classics'

Reviews by Chris Henderson



### **D'ARC TANGENT**

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Rarely is a comic magazine reviewed in this column, simply because good literature in comic-magazine format is rare. However, when a magazine like *D'Arc Tangent* is published, it deserves attention. Unlike its peers which tend to have an eternally evolving plot, that of *D'Arc Tangent* will unravel itself in just sixteen issues — four per year for four years.

As the story begins, senior field agent Avari T and her partner/mate compose a team of explorers who scan the universe under the direction of an inter-galactic starfleet. Early in the story, Avari loses her partner to the hostile creatures of an insane planet, which the duo has recently discovered. Unable to live without him, Avari begins to die.

In addition to the violent world on which Avari's mate was killed, the fleet has found only one other planet where random violence is favored naturally over empathy: Earth. In order to understand the depression which threatens to kill her, Avari's robots take their mistress there. Upon reaching Earth, the drama thickens

as events get wildly out of hand.

Though a science fantasy, the characters of *D'Arc Tangent* are not the usual cardboard images prevalent in this genre. Instead, the characters have been developed slowly, so that their personalities and motives are clearly understood. An element of levity is balanced with that of gravity, creating humorous and poignant scenes that appear real to the reader. If such literary quality continues, *D'Arc Tangent* could be for comics what the *Foundation* trilogy was for science fiction: an opus of respectability for a genre which has been accused of being childish for too many years.

Finally, to evaluate any comic magazine accurately, one must consider the art. The quality of illustration in *D'Arc Tangent* rivals anything else being done in the industry today. In terms of textures, wood and brick have the rough quality inherent to them, while metal shines and gleams. Clothing drapes naturally, and the folds and creases create shadows and depth. Character faces abound with those emotions that appropriately define the events around them. The angles used in each panel indicate that the book is intent on supplying as much cinematographic detail as possible.

With such fine art and intriguing plot-line, *D'Arc Tangent* should prove to be one of the best amongst its competitors.

### **PRELUDE TO CHAOS**

Edward Llewellyn

DAW Books

0-87997-800-7

**\$2.75**

Though the topic of anarchy is not new to science fiction, Llewellyn still developed a fascinating novel from the subject.

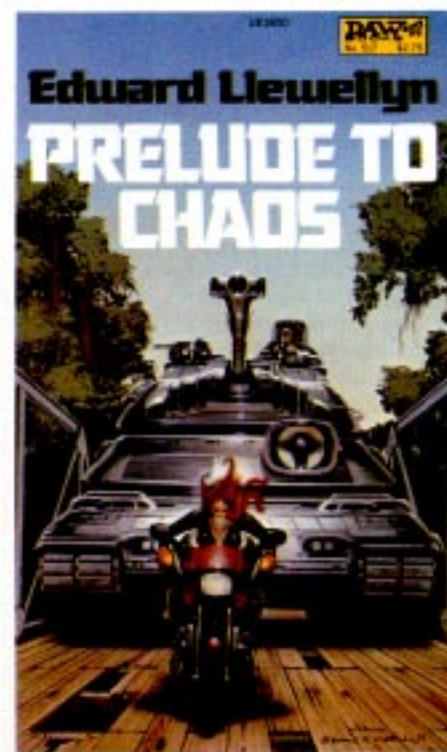
In a not-so-future America, Gavin Knox, an ex-bodyguard to a now assassinated president of the United States, resides in the most advanced maximum-security prison ever devised. Knox's only crime is that he knows too much about the people who assassinated the president. Fellow inmate Judith Grenfell, a neurobiologist, suffers from a similar fate: too much knowledge of the people and facts related to a government-sanctioned birth-control device which is accidentally sterilizing the entire country. Together, they deduce that the country is heading for civil war and anarchistic collapse. And, unless they can escape and warn the

appropriate parties, innocent people will be slaughtered by the horrors to come.

Knox is a tough, determined, strong-willed man who believes only in himself. As an intelligent, self-assured woman, Grenfell keeps her strong religious convictions and her duty to those she loves in calm balance. Together, the pair escapes prison, fights with the government and each other from state to state, and attempts to alert the correct people of the upcoming danger.

As the narrator of the story, Knox recounts the details of events in a blunt, matter-of-fact language; thus, each scene is described concisely and quickly. This sense of honesty characterizes both Knox and Grenfell as stubborn, willful types. Though each is competent in his own field, each feels lost in the other's. But the urgency of certain situations forces both of them have to cross their respective lines of expertise: Knox performs surgery; Grenfell kills.

By the story's end, Knox and Grenfell become lovers. Watching them get to that point, though, makes this book surprisingly intelligent. And, it is this careful study of characterization that makes this novel worthwhile. As the protagonists



attempt to save various people, the reader becomes aware that those being saved are no better than the people from whom they are being rescued. In truth, the moral fiber of the protagonists is as questionable as that of the antagonists. Such being the case, it often becomes difficult for the reader to tell the factions apart.

Though several chapters do bog down a little, a study of human nature is always worth reading. And since *Prelude to Chaos* falls into this category, the reader should find it to be a fine, but quick read.



**THE THREE-LEGGED HOOTCH DANCER** (*Tales of the Galactic Midway* #2)

Mike Resnick  
Signet Books 0-451-120832-5 \$2.50

Mike Resnick's new *Tales of the Galactic Midway* series is a contender against Barry Longyear's *Circus World* series for popularity amongst science-fiction fans. Though both deal with a planet-hopping circus, Resnick's series is not as dramatic as Longyear's, since Resnick is primarily interested in making people laugh as long and as often as possible.

Directing Resnick's bizarre carnival crew is Thaddeus Flint, a small-time producer who has sought the big time all his life. Traveling in space with his broken-down carnival, Flint discovers that what made his performers unique and interesting on Earth makes them boring and incomprehensible on other planets. The best example of this misfortune is Butterfly Delight, a lonely, not so attractive stripper named Gloria. Her only claim to fame is that she strips well. But, on other planets, no one seems too interested in watching a human being take off her clothes.

Besides Gloria's constant crying, Flint is inundated with other difficulties: animal acts which can't get used to changes in gravity, legal hassles, a front-man who likes being a slug better than a human being, and a lack of decent beer. Therefore, trying to make it through each day proves to be just as much a challenge to Flint as attempting to make a profit, to pay performers, or to balance the books for the intergalactic corporation that hired him.

Although serious on occasion, *The Three-Legged Hootch Dancer* is a gently funny book, one of the few science-fiction comedies of the year. Other than Keith Laumer's *Retief* series, the use of constant humor in the science-fiction field just doesn't exist. Too many writers of the genre have avoided comedy, hoping to be taken seriously by critics and consumers alike. Luckily, Resnick is not so insecure. *Sideshow*, the first in this series, was just as funny as his second effort, but a little less controlled. Hopefully, *The Three-Legged Hootch Dancer* is an indication of a promising future for the element of comedy in science fiction.

**THE WALLS OF AIR**

Barbara Hambly  
Del Rey Books 345-29670-2 \$2.95

The cover to *The Walls of Air* calls the book "the chilling sequel to" *The Time of the Dark*. Sequel it is, but chilling may be a bit misleading. Very little in the way of chills or horrors appears within this new release. However, the book contains a new approach to the same old fantasy characters we have seen so many times in the past.

*The Walls of Air* is one of those sequels so tightly written that it can stand on its own, without reference to what preceded it. This volume provides all the details necessary to understand what takes place therein.

Gil and Rudy, two California residents, are transported into another dimension by the magics of Ingold Inglorion, a standard, mysterious old wizard. There, Rudy learns to control and use the magic he is capable of summoning, while the scholarly Gil joins the Guard, laying aside her researcher's habits for those of a hack-and-stab warrior-woman. The three do their best to stop the Dark, a form of single-celled, vaporous evil which intends to destroy all that exists in Ingold's world.

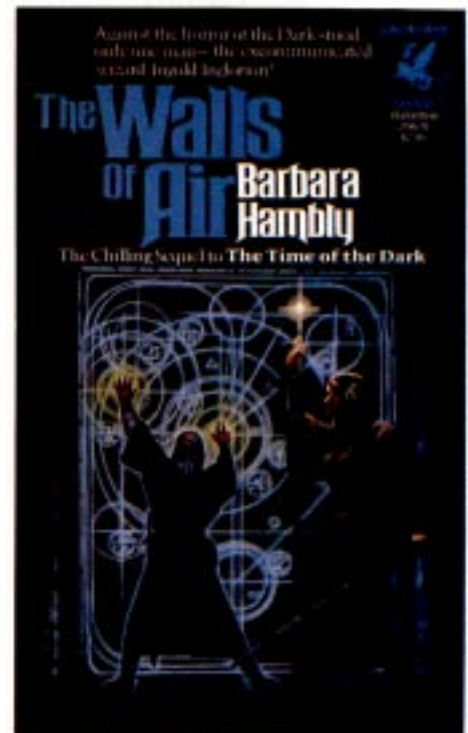
Hambly's obvious enthusiasm for her characters adds a dimension of reality to the story. By giving Gil and Rudy contemporary backgrounds, touches of humor and nostalgia make scenes and dialogue constantly refreshing, rather than tiresome. Unlike other female writers, Hambly does not make her women all knowing, all loving, all everything. If Gil is considered smarter than Rudy, she is still no more determined to try and save

this world than Rudy is. Similarly, Ingold's character is balanced by that of the female head of the Church of his world. Both people show strength and endurance, wit and compassion. As fantasy wizards must be, Ingold is always one step ahead of the Church leader. Since she would see all wizards banished or buried, he had better stay that way.

Hambly also creates a number of groups within her world which are as fascinating as the individuals. In particular, the White Riders are especially well-crafted. Hambly gives the Riders a fairly complete culture, taking as much space as necessary to develop them as human beings rather than mere stereotypes.

Hambly's command of past knowledge serves her in good stead, too. Small facts abound in her work, giving many of her scenes much more flavor than one usually receives in today's sword-&-sorcery epics.

Hambly's basic appeal resides in the degree of reality her world and characters assume. Those who have read *The Time of the Dark* will not be disappointed by *The Walls of Air*, for the author has maintained this appeal. Those who have read neither should track them down as quickly as possible, for these two novels represent the best of sword-&-sorcery fiction on the market today.



**ORION SHALL RISE**

Poul Anderson  
Timescape Books 0-671-46492-2 \$16.95

Anderson has long been respected as an author of both science fiction and fantasy. His last novel, *The Devil's Game*, was a curious combination of both genres. *Orion Shall Rise* reflects a similar case.

Set in Earth's future, the story describes what happens after a nuclear war which causes the political structure of the planet



to completely change. The superpowers once in charge no longer exist; little of their cultures or philosophies have lasted, either. Mindful of the horrors unleashed on the Earth in the past, the world is now manipulated by ecologically oriented superpowers who watch the activities of the barbarian energy-burners.

*Orion* is the code word for the Dream of the Lodges, a project coordinated by the energy-burning peoples. Hopefully, this project can shift the balance of power on Earth so that men will be free once more to travel to the stars. However, the space platform known as Skyholm could prevent success of the project. As the only space station which survived the nuclear holocaust, Skyholm is equipped with the power to stop any foe on Earth; therefore, the platform is viewed a means by which to control political competitors.

*Orion Shall Rise* takes place over an entire generation, illustrating how the crimes and plots of the parents come to fruition in their offsprings. From religious battles to political strife, from love affairs to power plays, Anderson molds and develops his characters. If Anderson does manipulate the reader, it is not with blunt statements, but with facts about events and characters, which permit the reader to get a notion of what is going on. Taking his reader behind the scenes, Anderson shows how the complexities of backroom politics really shape worlds and their wars. By allowing the reader to observe events in such a way, the book offers an opportunity to comprehend real life.

*Orion Shall Rise* is a compelling study of human nature and possible political events. As such, this highly enjoyable and timely book ought to cause a renewed interest in science fiction as literature.

### THE MISTS OF AVALON

Marion Zimmer Bradley  
Alfred A. Knopf, Inc 0-394-52406-3 \$16.95

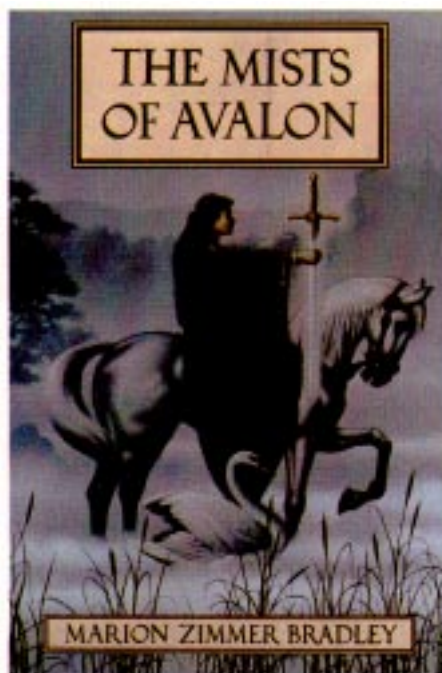
As Anderson is equated with excellence in the genre of science fiction, so is Marion Zimmer Bradley with that of fantasy literature. Her latest, *The Mists of Avalon*, is a testimony to this statement.

The Camelot she presents is *not* the hollow wonderland of Lerner and Lowe, but rather a place peopled by religious zealots, bestial men, promiscuous women, insufferably ignorant clerics, and ageless fairy folk. In Bradley's Camelot, lust is a recurring theme; purity and chastity are pictured as desirable, but rarely attainable virtues.

The action revolves primarily around Morgaine. First seen at the age of seven, Morgaine is neglected by her husband-worshipping, priest-fearing mother, and is entrusted with the care of her tiny brother Gwydion. However, when her mother's sister Viviane, High Priestess of Avalon, discovers Morgaine has the Sight, she whisks the child away to Avalon

to be initiated into the cult of the Goddess. Since Viviane has no female heir yet must provide a successor to her position, Morgaine is the obvious choice.

The young Morgaine leads the ascetic, celibate life of a novice until she has to participate in the Great Marriage, a ritual the future kings of Britain undergo to ensure the allegiance of the Tribes of the North to the people of Avalon. What Morgaine does not know is that this particular future king is Gwydion — now called Arthur — whom she has not seen since early childhood. Consummating the rite in darkness, neither realizes until the next morning what has happened. That this union results in an offspring remains unknown to Arthur until late in his reign. Their child Mordred assumes his role as heir to the throne only when Lancelot's son, named successor by Arthur, is killed. Mordred's birthright, incestuous though it is, is then revealed.



Another usual interpretation of the legend is the battle for religious control of Arthur's court. This becomes a major motivational force as the story and the characters evolve. Within the time frame of the novel, the peaceful co-existence of the Druids and the Christians becomes increasingly strained. As Christianity encroaches upon the once pagan territory, Druids and priests swear an oath never to take up arms against the other, despite the clashes of their religious beliefs. The Druids are able to accept some of the tenets of the religion they oppose. The Christians, not so open-minded, decry the Druid faith, calling for an end to heathen practices. Complicating matters further is their idea that political control of Britain goes hand in hand with religious control

of the monarchs. The ensuing scramble for dominance over the court sets the stage for a dramatic renunciation of Arthur as protector of the Tribes by Morgaine in her position as Lady of the Lake.

Bradley recounts the Arthurian tale leisurely, allowing the reader an opportunity to observe the main figures mature to adulthood. The reader partakes of the events, thoughts, and emotions that shape the characters' lives. All characters are allowed to vacillate occasionally between good and evil. Even the best among the cast is capable of jealousy, cruelty, and childish retribution.

The author's description of the rituals and lifestyle of the Druids is compelling. The care with which she has researched the topic is evident. The contrast between the earthy, seductive rites of the Druids and the stilted, mournful ceremonies of the Christians is vivid. Maybe too vivid, for the author's bias shows clearly. As a result, the total effect is less convincing.

It is within this religious context that the only real flaw in the work lies. Had Bradley's evocation of the religious atmosphere been as well balanced and presented as the personalities of her protagonists, the novel would be a masterpiece.

Nevertheless, the novel is still a far more enjoyable experience than one could have hoped. Written with a fervent, natural style, the plot unfolds gracefully. Morgaine's thoughts, interspersed throughout the novel as commentaries, function well as a plot device and are often insightful and moving. After all the tellings and retellings of Arthurian legend, it is more than justifiable that the story be finally recounted by female characters.

### REPRINTS AND COLLECTIONS

In past months, several science-fiction and fantasy works have been reprinted or reissued. The titles of those works are categorized below according to the publishing company; publishing firms are listed in alphabetical order.

Ace Books: *Heroic Visions*, Jessica Amanda Salmonson, Editor, \$2.75.

Avon/Bard: *Benefits*, Zoë Fairbairns, \$2.95.

Bantam Books: *Tales of Nevèrÿon*, Samuel R. Delany, \$3.50; *The World Inside*, Robert Silverberg, \$2.50.

DAW Books: *Mutants*, Gordon R. Dickson, \$2.95; *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, Philip K. Dick, \$2.50.

Del Rey Books: *Foundation/Foundation & Empire/Second Foundation*, Isaac Asimov, \$2.75 (each); *Sector General*, James White, \$2.75.

Donning/Starblaze: *The Colors of Space*, Marion Zimmer Bradley, \$5.95.

Signet Books: *Eyes of Amber*, Joan D. Vinge, \$2.75.

Warner Books: *In a Lonely Place*, Karl Edward Wagner, \$2.95. □

# OUT ON A LIMB

## 'Male oriented'

Dear Editor:

I am a new subscriber to your fine publication and would like to commend you on a job well done. However (isn't there always a however?), I am quite bothered by the very male oriented nature of your writing and illustrations. I realize that most of your readers and, indeed, most gamers are male. But I fail to see how you plan on gaining any female players and readers by the continual ignoring of them.

In defense of my point: issue #72. Yes, there are two female warriors on the cover and a

drawing of a female cavalier. But so what? Throughout the rest of the magazine we see all male warriors and jesters, hunters and magic users. To top it off, Roger E. Moore's story is wholly from the male perspective. Are there only succubi? Where are the incubi? Surely you know that this fiend has no true gender but rather appears in the image of the desired creature for the victim.

Theresa A. Reed  
Portland, Ore.

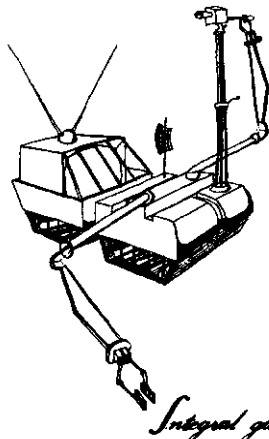
*Parts of Theresa's letter make sense to me, and those parts I can respond to. Other parts of her letter make me wonder if she's reading the*

same magazine we're printing. At the risk of devoting more words to this often-debated subject than it warrants, I submit the following in "defense" of what we've done lately:

Yes, the cover of issue #72 pictured two female warriors. In fact, seven of the last 10 covers we've published (not counting this magazine) have included a female character. I won't count the number of times we've portrayed females in artwork on the inside pages during those 10 issues — but I will point out that issue #72 has a picture of a female barbarian (on page 27), in addition to the female cavalier (on page 10) that Theresa mentions.

As for Roger Moore, I don't think he'll mind me pointing out that he writes "from the male perspective" because he is a male. If he tried to write from a female perspective or from a dual perspective — especially for a story about "sex in the AD&D™ world" — he'd be even crazier than he is already. And where are the incubi? Well, to be technical about it, they're not in the "AD&D world" (the succubus is listed in the Monster Manual, but not the incubus), and therefore incubi were not within the "territory" covered by the article. And, heck, the whole thing was for a laugh anyway, right?

I don't mean to sound flippant. I think we've done okay when it comes to representing the roles of both sexes in the realm of role-playing games, and we'll continue to try to look at the "female perspective" whenever we can. Like it says in the response to the letter on page 3, we really do want to try to make everyone happy. If you agree with Theresa's point of view, please let us know, and (I know this sounds high-falutin' — but it's true anyway) you can play a part in shaping the future of this magazine. —KM



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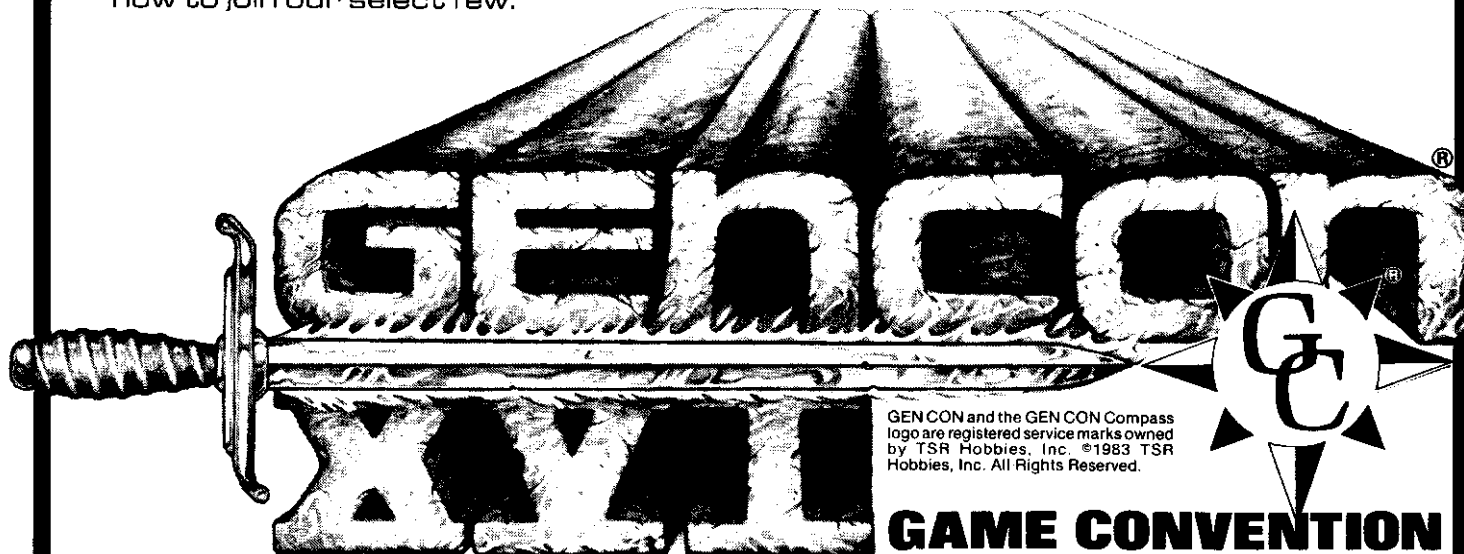
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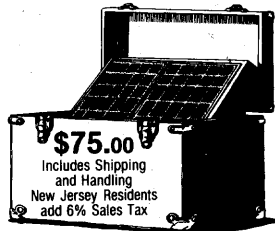


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Letters

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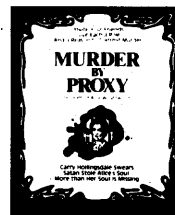
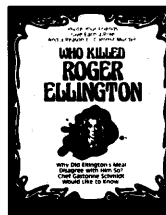
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YOUR MISSION-SHOULD YOU CHOOSE TO ACCEPT IT...

ESPIONAGE IS NOT LIKE ANY OTHER PROFESSION IN THE WORLD... EXCEPT MAYBE ACTING.

OKAY, KID- WE'RE LOOKING FOR SOMEBODY WHO CAN IMPERSONATE AN EXPATRIATED RELIGIOUS FANATIC.

THAT'S MY SPECIALTY! I SERVED AS THE AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI'S STAND-IN FOR THE PEACOCK THRONE FUND RAISER MARATHON IN PARIS!

OH? WHAT DID YOU DO?

IRAN!

AND, LIKE ACTING, NOT EVERYBODY CAN MAKE IT...

SORRY, KID- YOU'RE FINE IN WEAPONS, STRATEGY, AND INFILTRATING, BUT THERE'S ONE AREA WHERE YOU JUST CAN'T MAKE IT.

OH? WHAT'S THAT?

SIP

CHOKES!  
GLAFFS!

DETECTING TRAPS.

TRUE ESPIONAGE IS AN IMPOSSIBLY TANGLED WEB OF CROSS, DOUBLE CROSS, TRIPLE CROSS AND SO ON - OFTEN TO THE POINT OF TOTAL CONFUSION.

TAX THIS, AMERICAN LACKEY!

HERE'S A TASTE OF THE LEAD, WHITE AND BLUE, IVAN!

HA! YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD HIDE YOUR ORIGINS BY DESTROYING THE ENTIRE RECORDS DEPT! WE WERE FOOLED UNTIL WE FOUND... "THE BLUE Book!"

YOU SHOULD TALK! IT WASN'T UNTIL WE TRIED TO FIND YOUR "SISTER" AND INSTEAD WE FOUND... "AGENT 47!"

YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT!? THEN MY COVER'S BLOWN!

SOCIALIZE THIS - - COMMIE RAT!

SUCK SOVIET STEEL, AMERICAN DOG!

YOU GET THE IDEA.



PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF ANY ESPIONAGE OPERATION IS THE CONCEALING AND PASSING ON OF INFORMATION.

WELL, AGENT 5- ARE YOU ALL SET?

YEZZIR-DEY SURGIGLY IMPLANDED DA CYPHER KEY IN MY NAZEL PAZZAGEZ.

OH, IS THAT WHY YOU'RE TALKING ODD?

YEP, I GOT A CODE IN MY NOZE.

SIR, THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE ... I WAS TOLD I'D BE RELAYING THE SECRET FLEET LOCATIONS, BUT ALL THEY GAVE ME WAS THIS JAR OF APPLE CIDER.

NO MISTAKE, #12, THE INFORMATION HAS BEEN CODED INTO A PROTEIN MATRIX HIDDEN IN THE CIDER, SO DON'T DRINK IT- OR WE'LL LOSE THE FLEET!

SIR?

COME, COME, #12, YOU KNOW THAT? "JUICE SIPS, SINK SHIPS."

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SINCE DEATH AND DESTRUCTION ARE SUCH AN IMPORTANT PART OF THEIR PROFESSION, SPIES HAVE TO KNOW ABOUT ALL KINDS OF WEAPONS

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HEY ED- GOTTA PEN?

WHA- YEAH- HERE.

**BOOM!**

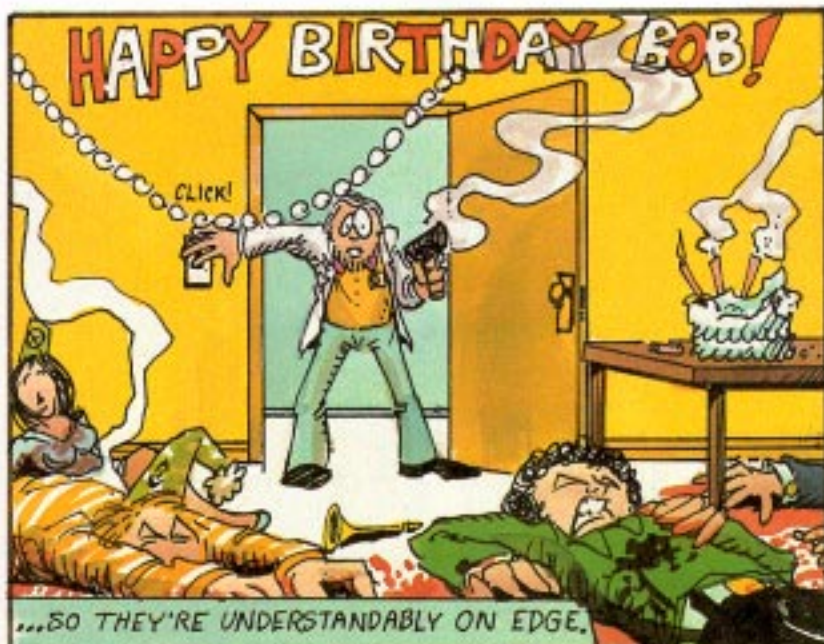
AH... LOOK, CAN I CALL YOU BACK?

THE LIFE OF A SPY USUALLY CONSISTS OF A PERSON ASSUMING A FALSE IDENTITY FOR MONTHS AT A TIME, NEVER KNOWING WHEN HIS COVER MIGHT BE BLOWN, NEVER KNOWING WHEN AN ASSASSIN'S BULLET MIGHT COME.

THERE'S SOMEBODY WAITING IN MY APARTMENT WITH THE LIGHTS OUT!

I'LL ONLY HAVE ONE CHANCE...





SPIES RARELY DO RETIRE, HOWEVER, INEVITABLY THEY FALL AFOUL OF ENEMY AGENTS.

WAIT A MINUTE—  
YOU GUYS ARE  
I.R.S. AGENTS—  
WHAT DO YOU  
WANT WITH  
ME?

WE WANT YOU TO COME DOWN-  
TOWN AND EXPLAIN THIS  
DEDUCTION FOR SIX ASTON  
MARTINS, 12 EXPLODING-  
FOUNTAIN PENS AND THE  
TOPPLING OF A SMALL LATIN  
AMERICAN GOVERNMENT ON  
YOUR LAST TAX RETURN.



BUT THE FUNNIEST THING  
ABOUT ESPIONAGE IS...

**HOLD  
IT!**



OKAY, THAT'S  
FAR ENOUGH—  
LET'S GO.

BUT... BUT... WE'VE  
STILL GOT A JOKE  
TO FINISH!

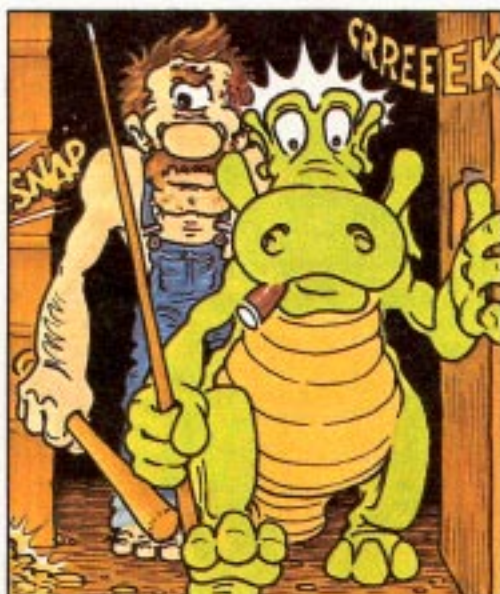
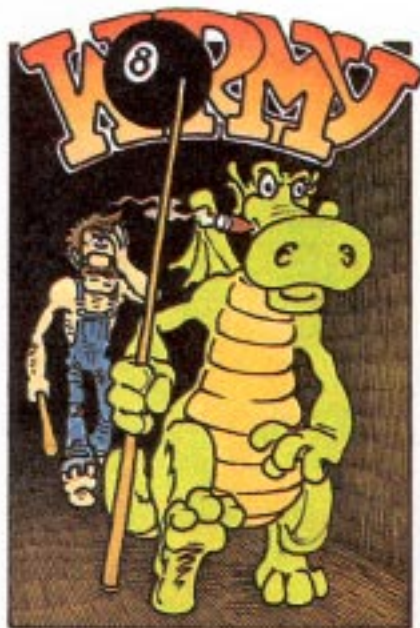


**WARNING: THIS JOKE HAS  
BEEN CLASSIFIED. ★**

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