

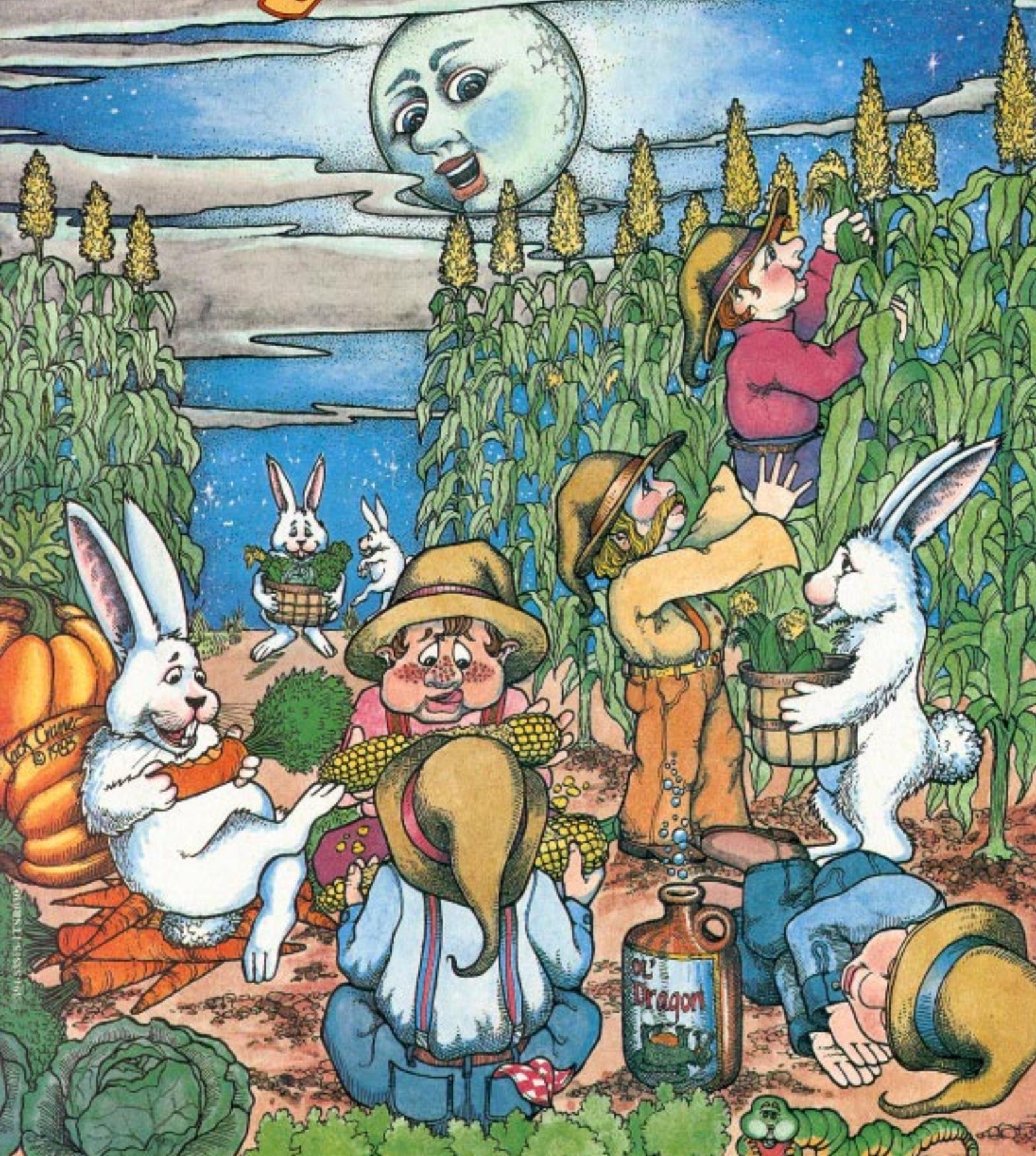
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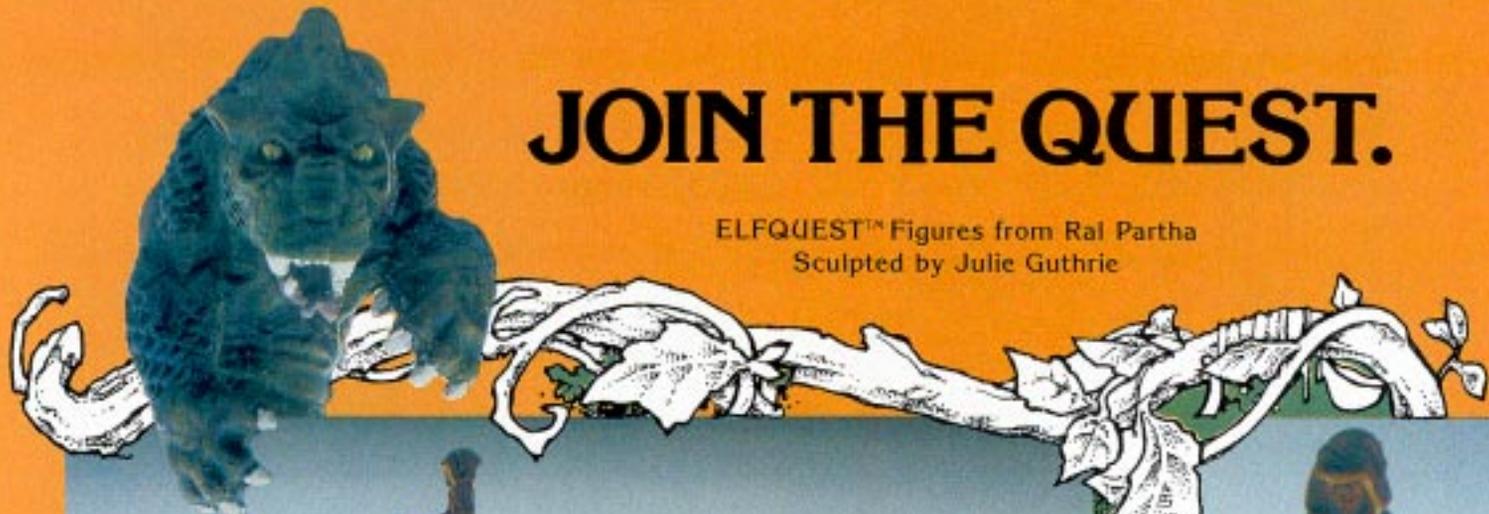


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# Magazine in motion

It's often said that in this world, and in this business, standing still is equivalent to going backward: In order to keep up with what's going on around us, we have to keep changing and growing. So, although this issue of DRAGON® Magazine isn't exactly hopping around in your hands, it is very much a magazine in motion. More changes are just around the corner, and I'd like to use this space to tell you about a couple of them.

First, a change that some of you may have already noticed: Some of the stories in this issue look different from the rest. That's because we're working into using, and getting used to, a new typesetting system. By this time next month, we will have mastered (*ha!*) the new technology that now resides in TSR's Graphics Arts Services department. The result will be a cleaner, and we hope a more exciting, look to the design and layout of the magazine.

Next, a change that we aren't hinting at in this magazine, but which we're promising nonetheless: Beginning either next issue or the one after that, we're going to give *you* — our readers — a much more important role in determining the content of DRAGON Magazine. Instead of just spending a page or so on letters to the editor, we're going to rely on your opinions and observations to fill a much larger space, in a yet-to-be-named column that will serve as a forum for all of you to exchange ideas and philosophies with each other.

This new offering won't replace "Out on a Limb," because there's still a need for that feature as well, to answer questions about specific points raised, and specific mistakes made, in articles we've printed. But the forum will be a much better vehicle for communicating thoughts such as those contained in Jonathan Heiles' excellent letter in this issue's "Limb" column. And, as Jonathan correctly suggests, providing a forum for readers' thoughts will help make DRAGON Magazine into more of the kind of publication you seem to want. Certainly, you have opinions, lots of 'em and on lots of different topics related to fantasy role-playing and the AD&D™ system. It's high time that we gave those opinions the publicity and exposure that they deserve; if you care enough to write out your feelings and spend good money to get them to us, we should care enough to spend some of our precious page space on getting them in front of the eyes and into the minds of the rest of the FRP community. So, keep those cards and letters coming — if *you* stand still, you know what'll happen . . . .



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hat do an amusement park and a role-playing adventure have in common? Obviously, they're both designed with enjoyment in mind. So, it

logically follows that a role-playing adventure set in an amusement park is doubly enjoyable. In the hope that all of you TOP SECRET® players out there will feel the same way, we present *Wacko World*, the first scenario for spies we've published in about a year and a half.

After you've gone on all the rides and sampled the Florida Fried Frog at Wacko World, shift back into "fantasy mode" to enjoy the rest of this month's issue.

The longest feature article inside is actually two companion essays. In "The fights of fantasy," veteran author Lew Pulsipher explains how big-scale battles in a fantasy world wouldn't work the same way as they did in medieval days. Then, on a smaller scope, Lew sets forth guidelines for how a group of adventurers should think and act to best assure themselves of living to fight another day. "Be aware and take care" is the title of this piece, and that phrase is a pretty good summation of what the article's about — words to live by, you might say.

For AD&D™ game tips of a more concrete, rules-oriented nature, check out Scott Bennie's description of saints, and our home-brewed message on magic resistance. The former article is designed, as Scott says, to fill a gap in the rules: The AD&D books mention that there are such things as saints, but not until now have we seen an attempt to define just what those characters can and can't do. The latter article was a collaborative effort by three TSRians: Penny Petticord, Jon Pickens, and Roger Moore, with some final-version fiddling courtesy of yours truly. It's not official, but until something else comes along, we hope it will help answer some questions and clear up some confusion on the subject.

In our continuing effort to add depth and detail to the AD&D universe, this month's "ecology" article talks about the treant. We don't know if author Susan Lawson actually talks to trees, but it would seem that at least she listens.

With a salute to the thousands of our readers who are in the armed forces, we somewhat nervously present Gregg Chamberlain's manuscript on gremlins, those little critters who have been perplexing to pilots and nasty to navigators ever since aerial warfare, so to speak, took off. Here's hoping that they don't decide to start making mischief with magazines.

And, as a diversion from our regular column on unpainted miniatures, we hope you'll like seeing what some first-class finished figures look like. It's plain to see that the winners of the GEN CON® Miniature Open didn't have any gremlins grabbing their brushes when they turned out their colorful creations. — KM



## 'Theme of the game'

Dear Editor:

I suspect that Lenard Lakofka will draw quite a bit of mail regarding his comment "on the theme of the AD&D game" (Leomund's Tiny Hut, DRAGON #76). This letter is part of that mail.

Len, I will say that, in specifics, I agree with you. I heartily favor those AD&D campaigns you refer to as "well-played." I, too, have qualms with the assassin player character class, although for slightly different reasons. I, too, feel uncomfortable in an evilly aligned party.

But not you, not I, not even TSR Inc., has the right to say how a group of players should or should not play. It is the responsibility of the DM to entertain his or her players. If the players would enjoy playing an evil-aligned party, "Len Lakofka doesn't like the idea of evil PCs" is not a sufficient reason for the DM to deny their request. There are enough disadvantages for an evil party (such as the weighting of magic items towards good and the *know* alignment spell) to offset the "benefits" of skullduggery.

AD&D is not set up — as far as I can tell, and you are admittedly in a better position to say — as good player characters against a foul and evil world. It can be this, and this is the situation I most enjoy, but it can also be lawful characters versus a chaotic world, or evil player characters wreaking havoc in a good or neutral world. That is a decision between a DM and his or her players; if everyone wants to run an evil party (which, despite your underlying assumptions, can be truly cooperative between its members), then why not?

However, you are certainly correct in saying that a death master is inappropriate as a player character. So is the assassin. So are the unofficial anti-paladin and bounty hunter. Why? Not because of alignment, but because these characters are loners. Why should a professional assassin spend most of his or her time doing something else? I know of no parties who constantly need assassins or bounty hunters. Regarding the death master, why should a character that can create an army of wights and ghosts need a fighter ally? In a like vein, I would find a paladin inappropriate in an evil-oriented party.

To sum up, I believe you have assumed that the way you like AD&D to be played, a group of good guys trashing evil, is the way to play the game. An individual DM must fall back in his or her own decisions, not "official" word from others. There can be no buck-passing. Therefore, I submit that you should not condemn those worlds not like your favorites, for they may be the favorites of others.

Christopher Mortika  
St. Louis, Mo.

*Christopher, I don't think Len will mind if I answer on his behalf; first of all, I don't plan*

*to turn this into a long debate, and second of all, we have a bit of experience in dealing with this subject.*

*We got an avalanche of letters a couple of years ago, after we printed Brian Blume's essay on why player characters shouldn't be evil. Most of the letter writers disagreed with the viewpoint of the article, sometimes in words that aren't as tame as yours. Now, we're all in favor of freedom of choice and freedom of opinion. (People in the publishing business tend to be that way.) But the underlying fact here — which is not an assumption — is that the AD&D game is a game. It has rules that must be adhered to, in spirit if not in the literal sense, if the game is to "work" the way it was designed. And in fact, from what I've been told and been able to learn, the AD&D rules are designed principally for a world that pits good players against evil non-player adversaries. Yes, it is possible to run an evil-oriented party of player characters — but that is a tribute to the versatility of the rule system, not a sign of its weakness or an indication that it should be used that way.*

*We can't keep people from using the rules in any way they see fit, and we don't particularly care how people use the rules, as long as everyone involved enjoys what they're doing. The only assumption we make is that people are more likely to have a good time if they are the good guys, and not the guys the good guys are fighting. — KM*

## Important points

Dear Editor:

The single most important part of issue #76 was Len Lakofka's sermon, which made two important points: that players should not play NPC classes, and that players should not be evil, either in alignment or in deed. I am sick and tired of greed spoiling an otherwise excellent adventure, or of supposedly "good" characters killing helpless prisoners and then claiming they should get experience points. Keep publishing the excellent articles.

Steve Bibas  
Austin, Tex.

## Missing line

Dear Dragon:

In issue #78 you had a program to calculate the chi-square values. On line 520 you referenced line 660, but line 660 was not in the source code. Could you please tell me what line 660 says?

Bret Bradford  
Torrance, Calif.

*Our apologies to you, Bret. . . and to anyone else who tried to make the program work the*

way it was printed. We tried to consolidate some program lines in the printed version, for space-saving purposes, and wound up making a very basic mistake (no pun intended). There was a line 660 in the original program, containing the PRINT statement that comprises the second part of line 650. We combined the two lines into one, not realizing that this would mess up the program. (Simply changing line 520 to read "GO TO 650" won't solve the problem, because then the program would be jumping to a NEXT statement without encountering the FOR statement that precedes it.) To solve the problem, just create a line 660 that contains the second part of line 650, make line 650 read "NEXT J" and the program will run the way it's supposed to. — KM

## Plane articles

Dear Editor:

When I noticed the article on "The Nine Hells" I was very pleased. I had been looking for some information on any of the Outer Planes for some time. After reading the article, one question came to mind. Are you planning on printing any more articles on the Outer (or Inner) Planes? I would appreciate it greatly to see some articles on that topic.

Simon Dunsmoor  
Clearwater, Fla.

*We aren't really "planning" more articles on other planes of existence, simply because we don't have any manuscripts on those topics right now, and we learned a long time ago to not anticipate that we'll get certain kinds of*

*submissions. But, as a general rule, we are partial to other-planes articles; if and when we receive such a manuscript that's well written and comprehensive, we'll probably make a big effort to publish it as soon as possible. With the recent release of Monster Manual II, the body of information on other planes (particularly the Abyss and Nirvana) has been greatly expanded. Maybe some ambitious writer will take advantage of that fact to turn out something of the same quality (if not quantity) as the "Nine Hells" material. — KM*

## One to a customer

Dear Editor:

I'm writing about the Combat Computer that appeared in issue #73. I found that it worked quite well. I would like to know how I could get another for my group without having to buy another magazine.

Robbie Dean  
Mt. Carmel, Term.

*We're glad the Combat Computer got such a good reception. Unfortunately, we can't make it available separately from the magazine. We assume that in a gaming group of any substantial size (say, more than three people), it's likely that more than one of those group members buys DRAGON® Magazine, so "the group" probably has no trouble obtaining more than one copy of a certain article or a special inclusion. If you're a DM who insists that your players not be allowed to see what's in the magazine (and your players are willing to go along with that condition), then you*

*won't be able to obtain multiple copies of something we print without buying multiple copies of the magazine it appeared in. — KM*

## 'An acquired skill'

Dear Editor:

Mark Kreighbaum's letter in issue #74 of DRAGON strikes a number of responsive chords, about half of which are sympathetic. Mr. Kreighbaum objects to the emphasis in recent issues on charts and statistics. I must admit I have just recently returned to reading the magazine and so have not seen most of the articles he cites. I am, however, familiar with the situation.

In my mind, one of the two most important qualities a gamemaster needs is impartiality. Everyone who has run a world knows the temptation to fudge in favor of preferred players and to interpret the rolls against the ones who really deserve to be blue-bolted into oblivion. It is inevitable that opinions color decisions, but the better the gamemaster the harder he or she fights that temptation. My experience is that the greatest weapons in this struggle are charts and statistics. When you have a rigidly defined system, there is no fooling yourself; the roll means one and only one thing. There may, of course, be special circumstances, and the referee has complete authority to be creative in these instances and modify the rules.

Creativity is the other characteristic important in a good gamemaster. Articles reworking character classes and introducing new ones are prime manifestations of creativity. They

(Continued on page 80)

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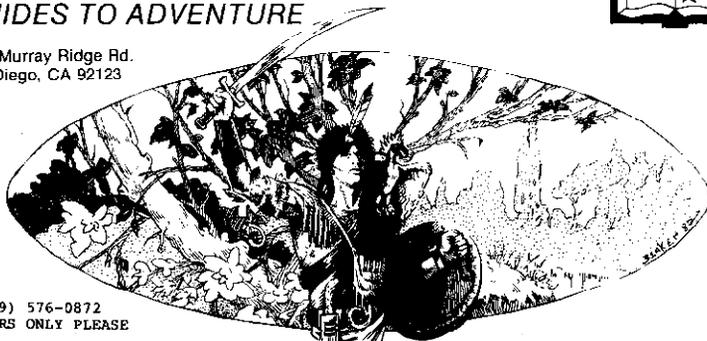
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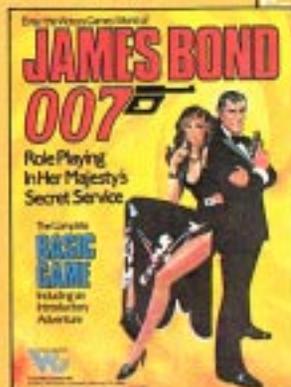
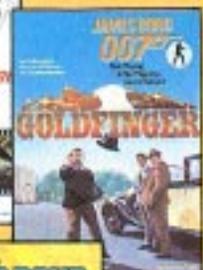
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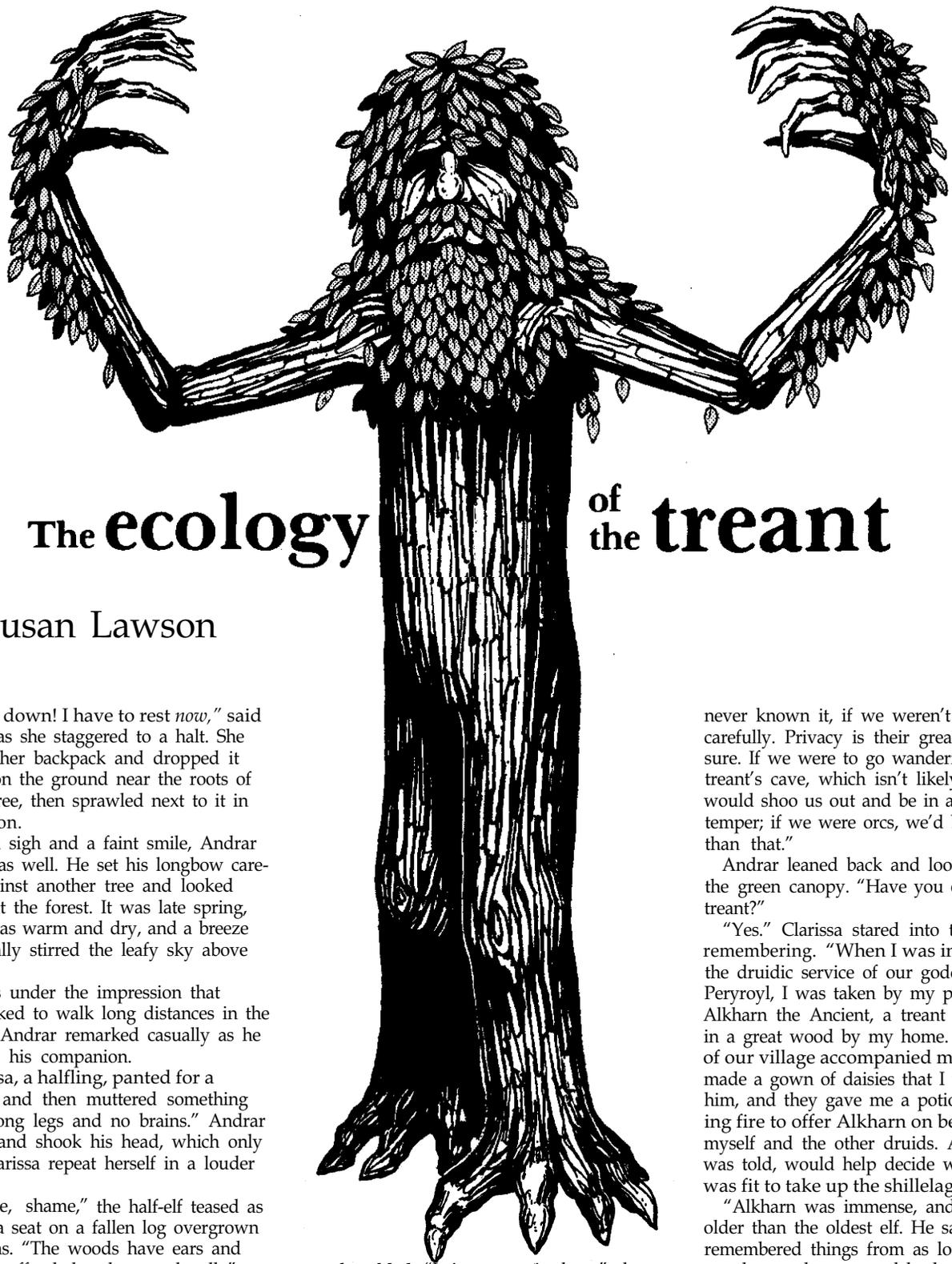
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# The ecology of the treant

by Susan Lawson

"Slow down! I have to rest *now*," said Clarissa as she staggered to a halt. She unslung her backpack and dropped it heavily on the ground near the roots of an oak tree, then sprawled next to it in exhaustion.

With a sigh and a faint smile, Andrar stopped as well. He set his longbow carefully against another tree and looked around at the forest. It was late spring, the air was warm and dry, and a breeze occasionally stirred the leafy sky above them.

"I was under the impression that druids liked to walk long distances in the woods," Andrar remarked casually as he surveyed his companion.

Clarissa, a halfling, panted for a moment and then muttered something about "long legs and no brains." Andrar grinned and shook his head, which only made Clarissa repeat herself in a louder voice.

"Shame, shame," the half-elf teased as he took a seat on a fallen log overgrown with ferns. "The woods have ears and might be offended to hear such talk."

"They do, for a fact, and I don't care," said Clarissa. She sat up and shrugged out of her green cloak. "I hurt all over from trying to keep up with you. We're not going to a party or something; we're just here to look for mistletoe. We don't *have* to hurry."

Andrar grinned at her again. "I apologize," he said, then continued in a less serious tone, "Do you really think the trees can hear us?"

Clarissa rubbed her shins as she looked around at the seemingly endless wood,

and nodded. "It is very quiet here," she said. "We've seen no sign of evil in this forest, and the trees are well tended. No broken limbs, no blight, the undergrowth is thinned away, and there are no signs of fire damage anywhere." She paused, both for a breath and for effect. "Treants. At least one travels here, probably more."

Andrar looked around with considerably more interest now. "Can you tell where they are?"

The young druid shook her head. "They know where they are. We could have passed a dozen of them already and

never known it, if we weren't looking carefully. Privacy is their greatest treasure. If we were to go wandering into a treant's cave, which isn't likely, they would shoo us out and be in a bad temper; if we were orcs, we'd be worse off than that."

Andrar leaned back and looked up into the green canopy. "Have you ever met a treant?"

"Yes." Clarissa stared into the distance, remembering. "When I was initiated into the druidic service of our goddess, Sheela Peryroil, I was taken by my parents to see Alkharn the Ancient, a treant who lived in a great wood by my home. The druids of our village accompanied me. They made a gown of daisies that I wore to see him, and they gave me a potion of resisting fire to offer Alkharn on behalf of myself and the other druids. Alkharn, I was told, would help decide whether I was fit to take up the shillelagh.

"Alkharn was immense, and he was older than the oldest elf. He said he remembered things from as long ago as ten thousand years, and he knew the names of all the kings of the land in all that time, of every race. In order to help him recall them all, he had made the names into a long verse, a memory-helper . . . a nem-something . . ."

"Mnemonic," offered Andrar, proud of himself. If Clarissa noticed the smirk that came over his face, she ignored it.

"That's the word I was looking for. It was a *great* poem. Alkharn said that treants have to create these poems. They have long memories anyway, but they live so long that they'd still forget things if

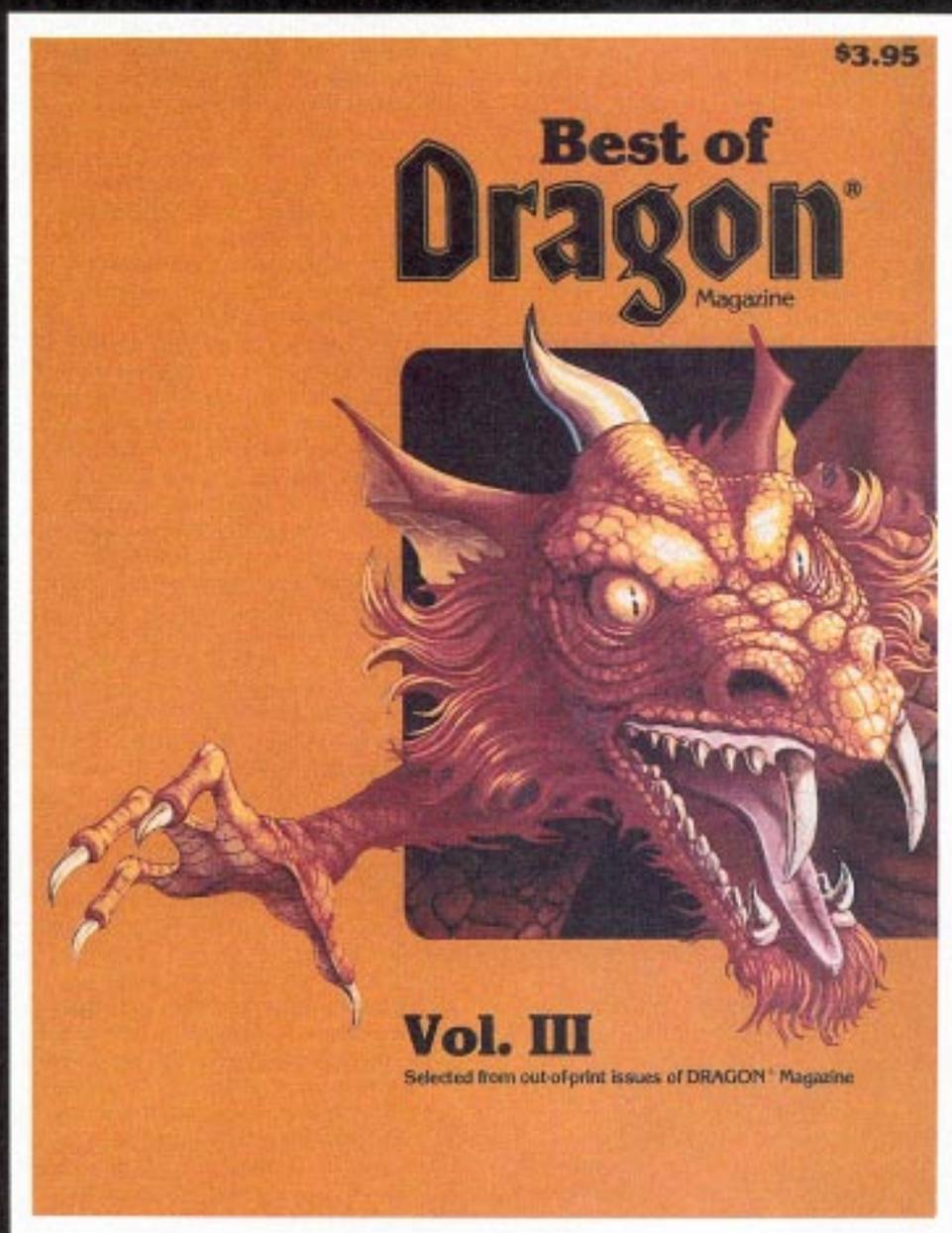
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it wasn't for their mnemonics. I remember part of what he recited to me:

*'Hero-king, Telaring, silver-eyed,  
elven-born,  
Goblin-foe, steady bow, ruled long  
the North.'*

"The poem went on and on. It was almost frightening to think of all the ages of time he had seen, and how things had changed so much since his earliest memories. He knew more about his own woods, though, than about any human or elven empires. The rest of the world was a vague memory to him, but Alkharn knew the names of every tree in his wood, and all the ones that had been there since his time began.

"He even recited part of his great poem where he had remembered the names of the trees he had met, but he said it all in his own language and I couldn't understand a word of it. When he spoke to me in my language, it was in a slow and rhythmic drone that I had trouble understanding, but it sounded very relaxing."

Clarissa absent-mindedly smoothed the hair on her feet and brushed the dust from her legs as she continued. "Alkharn said that treants knew many languages, even those of the bears, the birds, and the druids. He told me about the special language that treants share with trees and other treants — nothing spoken, but they wave their limbs and leaves, and touch and make rustling sounds, and all of it just to say 'Hello, how are you?'"

Andrar broke in, remembering one of Clarissa's earlier remarks. "Why did you say treants lived in caves?"

"They don't, really; they live in the outdoors most of the time, but groups of treants keep large caves, in which they store mementoes, brew their drinks, and stay safe from their most feared enemies, lightning and fire. The treants know that fire is often good for a forest, but this is true only for those forests that have no treants moving about to clear away thick undergrowth and decayed wood."

For a moment Andrar was silent, then thought of a story he heard long ago. "My father once told me there was great power in the drinks of the treants. Some who were allowed to drink from their wooden bowls found that they grew stronger, or that they could speak with plant life, and some lived far longer than they and others expected them to. My father said that one of his friends drank from a treant's bowl when he was wounded, and found himself healed of his injuries within seconds."

Clarissa nodded. "Your father's friend was blessed to share drink with them. Only those they trust completely are allowed to do that. Usually, they don't even communicate with ordinary folk, unless one is of the druidic profession like myself, or perhaps a ranger-type, or a bard, and they generally prefer to share their forests with elves, rather than humans or dwarves — or even halflings."

"I didn't think that treants were able to create magical things, though," said Andrar. "That has always confused me. How can they make these potions?"

Clarissa chewed her lower lip, searching for words. "It's hard to say, and I guess no one really knows *exactly* how. Treants make their potions from their own living sap, and add many sorts of materials that they find in the forest or receive in trade from friends like elves and dryads. Some say the drinks must age for many years before they are ready to be consumed. The effects the potions have upon people like you and me are probably related to the effects they have upon the treants themselves. A draught made to give a treant energy would gift me with the strength of a giant. I could throw boulders, bend bars, poke bothersome companions in the nose . . ."

Andrar grinned and tossed a twig at her. "Have your fun. But tell me more. Where do treants come from?"

"They just appear, as far as anyone knows. A young tree that has grown up straight and strong might someday start waving its two largest branches like arms, blink two eyes that were once just thin spots in its bark, and shuffle forward on a trunk that has split into two legs. When it does these things, it has become a treant, but no one — not even the oldest elf or the wisest druid — can predict if any particular tree will do that.

"Any sort of tree can become a treant, and treants have seeds like a tree. But those seeds do not grow into treants. The seedlings grow into trees, and only a few of them ever develop into treants. Then, as a treant gets larger and much, much older, it reaches a time when it turns back into a tree once more, forever. It takes thousands of years for a treant to pass to this stage, and they do not fear it as we fear death. For all we know, they simply fall asleep and dream, for as long as their tree-lives continue.

"This very tree," she said, patting a gnarled and dirty root beside her, "may once have been a great treant. The tree is certainly big enough, and the trunk seems to have a division where legs might have been, here near the base." Clarissa gave the root a final absent-minded pat and then stood up abruptly. "Well, that's all I have to say, and we're supposed to be looking for mistletoe."

Andrar, now the reluctant one, got to his feet slowly, then turned and on impulse called out to the forest. "Hail, treants! My blessings for your work! The gods grant that you may yet walk another thousand years among us!"

His exhortation over, Andrar reached for his bow — and froze. A rustling sound grew in his ears. The leaves above the halfling and the half-elf moved as if stirred by a quick wind, and then the sound rose into a storm of nature-noise: branches rippled, squirrels chattered, and birds called out to one another. The two

travelers felt no breeze against their faces, yet the blast seemed to stir every tree in the wood. After a few minutes, the display subsided except for the calls of the excitable sparrows and larks.

Clarissa's eyes were wide. "By Sheela's daisies! They *did* hear us!"

"I thought you *knew* they were listening," said Andrar, just as shocked.

"I was just guessing, or hoping," she said, picking up her pack slowly. "No need for us to be afraid. The treants are watching out for us, and they wanted us to know that. They just startled me." She hoisted her backpack onto her shoulders and sighed. "Back to mistletoe hunting."

With some of their composure restored, the companions set out again into the woods. This time, it was Clarissa who remembered her manners. She paused at the edge of the clearing they were leaving, picked a daisy from her pocket, and tossed it back the way they had come.

"Good-bye! We'll be back sometime!" she called. Then she and Andrar disappeared into the trees.

## APPENDIX

The list below can be used to determine which potions are found in a treant lair, and what their effects on characters would be if they were consumed. Note that any of these treant "drinks" can affect any character who imbibes one, regardless of class.

1. *Extra-healing*
2. *Giant strength* (Hill, Stone, or Frost)
3. *Growth*
4. *Healing*
5. *Longevity*
6. *Plant control* (this potion has no effect on treants or trees controlled by treants)

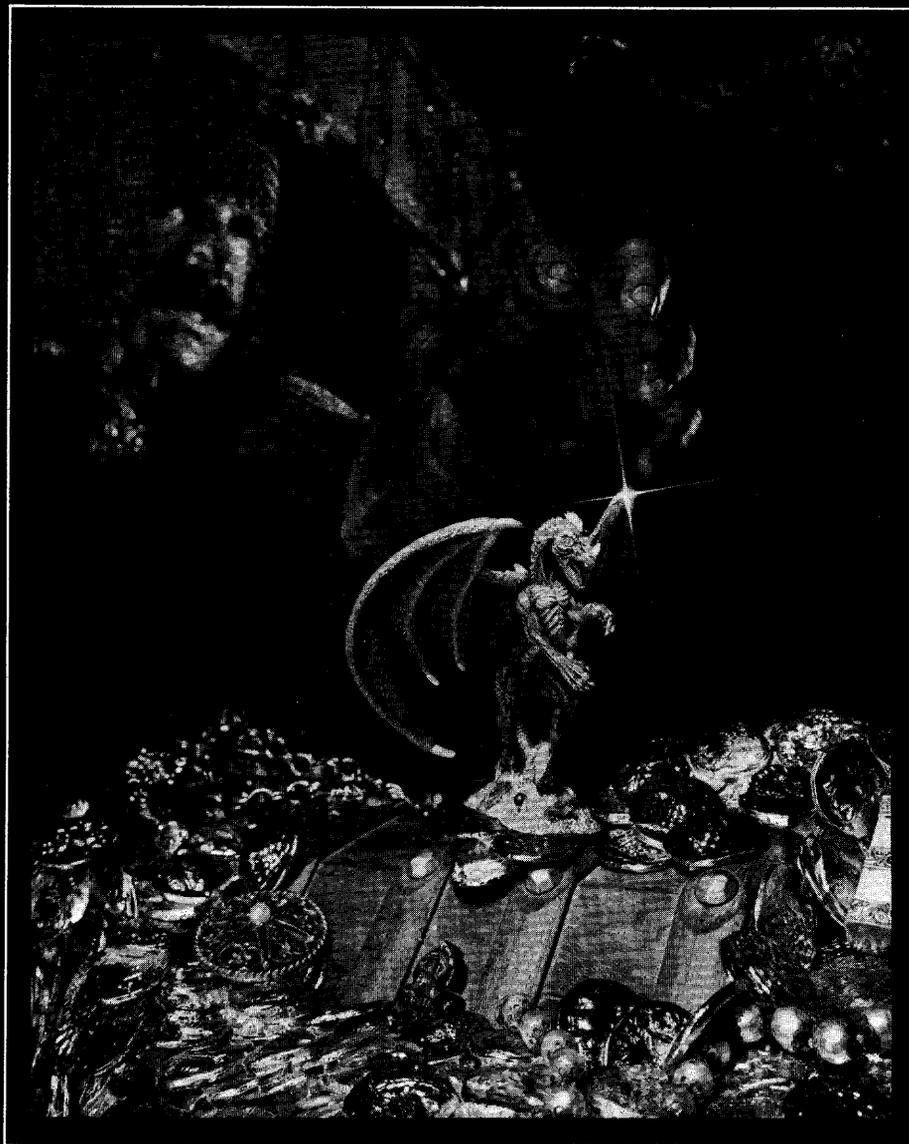
Treants vary widely in appearance, having variable numbers of branch-like fingers or root-like toes, different types of leaves, and so forth. Individual personalities may vary widely as well, from joyful and outgoing to quiet and introspective.

The only substance besides their potions that treants consume is pure water, which they drink through their "feet" (roots) and mouths. They have no great like for other liquids, and cannot tolerate salt water. Drinking is important enough to them that their words for "understanding" and "listening" are derived from their word for "drinking."

One of the greatest gifts that may be offered to a treant is a *potion of fire resistance*. In exchange for such, treants may offer their services, anywhere within their woods, to good or neutral characters. This offer will be quickly and forcefully revoked if the recipients are careless with fire, cruel to the forest, or prove themselves later to be of evil intent.

Treants and algooids will cooperate if both reside near a lake or swamp. The algooids' immunity to *fireballs* and *lightning bolts* makes them valuable allies. m

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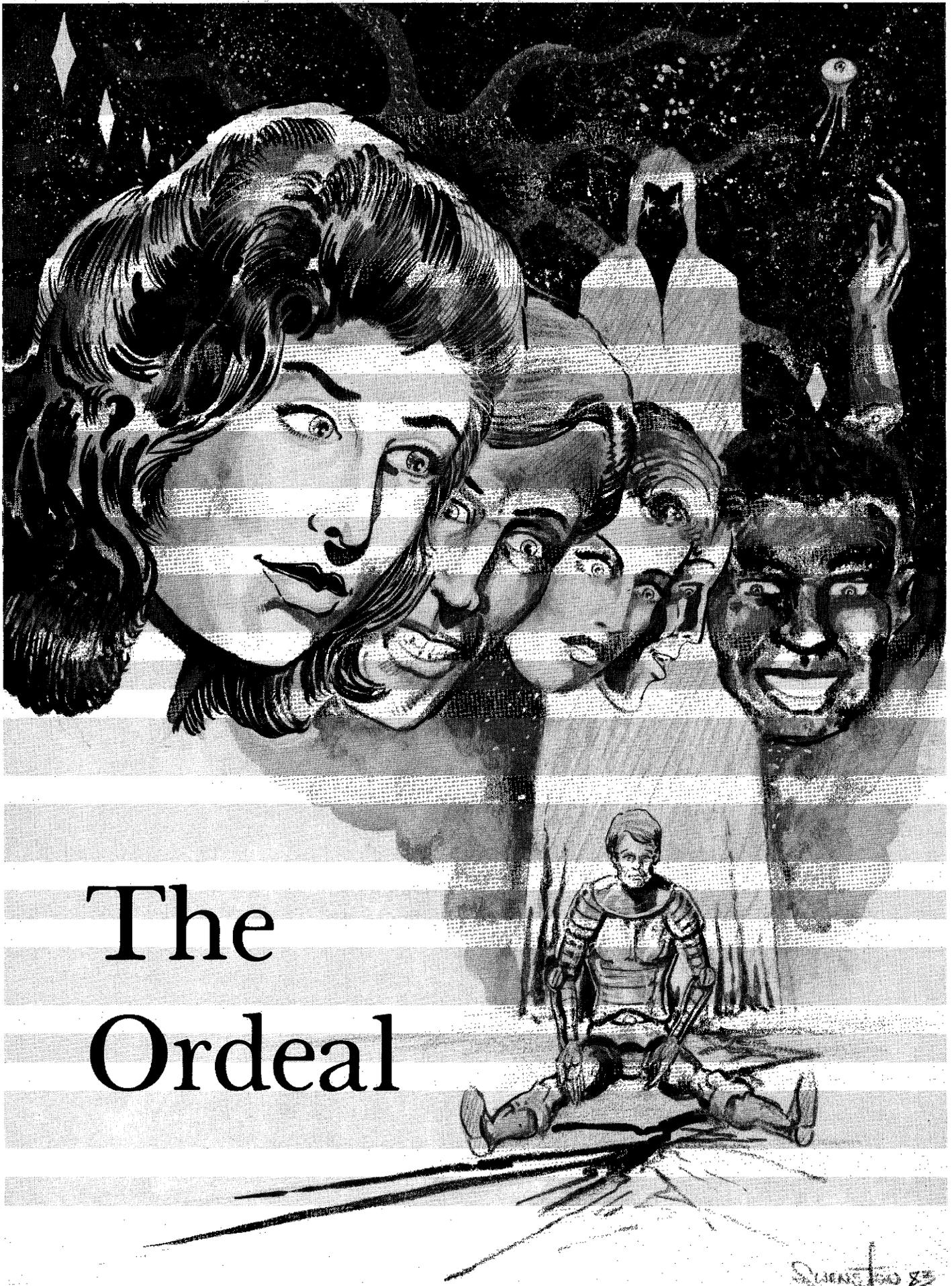
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# The Ordeal

QUINN 83

"Sir Hawksbane is a spell-snared knight on a doomed quest. As he listens to the idiot slobbering of ripples on the shore of the mouldering, putrescent tarn, his blood-fouled armor . . ."

"Wart!" we shouted in protest.

". . . drips with . . ."

"Wart," Duval asked with chilling calm, straightening the dungeon map precisely, "is Sir Hawksbane going to try to spear the beast, or isn't he?"

The Wart rose, towering over Duval angrily. Duval is small, lithe, quiet, and black, with an incandescent grin. He has the highest charisma in the town's four gaming groups, and is the only one of us who can keep the Wart, and his vocabulary, under control. The Wart is the size and shape of a professional basketball player: thin, nervy, overdramatic, with a froth of pale brown hair. We call him the Wart because of his language, which isn't the prettiest. The rest of him we can stand.

"Sir Hawksbane's accursed lance, glistening with ichor, thrusts . . ." The Wart, still standing, was no longer challenging Duval, but staring into the repulsive vistas of his imaginings.

"Wart," said Duval, "sit down. This is a game, not one of your novelettes. Try to get yourself together by the next turn. I'm going to skip you this time. Now, Dawn?"

I shot a flaming arrow into the beast and Crystal, our elf-maiden, killed it with a Word of Power. By that time the Wart had stalked out of the house, slamming the door.

After we had polished off another beast from the tarn, Duval closed his DM notebook. "We've got to do something about the Wart," he said.

We waited expectantly.

"I think I've got something," Duval finally added. "It's getting close to Halloween. We'll have a party anyway. We may as well have a haunted-house party. I know, you think I'm going to tell you that by draping sheets around the place and feeding the Wart peeled grapes for eyeballs, he'll be so scared that he'll get instant maturity. I know better than that.

"You know how, outside the gaming room, any mention of the supernatural makes the Wart uncomfortable. It's all right if *he* talks about undead and unclean spirits, but if we do, it puts the gooseflesh on him.

"So, I'll summon a demon."

Some of the newer guys looked at Duval pretty dubiously. The rest of us knew that Duval always follows through.

"Crystal, I'm going to summon you."

Crystal looked blank for a moment, then blushed with a visible "I get it" expression.

Crystal is shy, mouse quiet, mouse blonde. You wouldn't think it to see her, but she can act. When she is psyched up and ad libs, she's remarkable. She's the only person I know who can do a mad scene well. She has the sense to underplay it. Sometimes she'll seem to see things that aren't there, the way a cat will, until your mouth is dry and your heart half chokes you. But she has to be psyched up, or nothing happens.

Duval explained the things he and Crystal were going to do. I know it put the gooseflesh on me. Maybe it wasn't just that Duval was telling it, and telling it well, as he always does. It was two in the morning, when a person seems to have twice as many nerve endings, and a high wind outside was doing all the sound effects of a Ray Bradbury October.

In the daylight, driving to City College, I wasn't so sure. Okay, the idea wasn't to reform the Wart, just to get even. It would have been simpler to throw him on a manure pile and keep him there until he gave us five hundred adjectives for its sensory qualities. Still, the Wart is too big to throw. He might even be proud of enduring an ordeal on a muck heap, though he'd prefer a vigil in a ruined tower or in catacombs.

We're too rural to supply either of those things. What we got was a barn.

I arranged it with Old Man Moody, who has let me ride his horses since I was all puppy-fat and pigtails. After I had assured him all of six times that no, nobody would smoke (because of the hay) and we wouldn't play loud music or drive past the second gate, he rented us the barn for most of our pun-fund. (We bring in a couple of bucks a game at a nickel a groaner.)

As far as the Wart knew, or the other groups for that matter, we were having a haunted-house Halloween party for the four gaming groups, with grotesque stuff to eat, costumes, and a skit or two.

As parties go, it was pretty good. We couldn't have candles because of the hay, but Duval had rented some fairly fancy stage lighting and had good scrim and false cobwebs. We were in ghost or supernatural costumes, no space cadets, no knights and damsels — except for the Wart, who wore rusted, blood-stained armor cut from a Volkswagen

at his uncle's wrecking yard. I wore nine yards of Victorian widow's weeds with lace and flounces, because I really do get tired of jeans.

Duval wore really impressive Ethiopian dress, white jodhpurs and tunic and a terribly dignified toga and a skullcap. The only uncanny element was a staff he carried, which had an animal's skull on it, perhaps a large rat's.

For music we had some East Indian ragas on tape, which sound like cars losing their hubcaps at first, but eventually make your scalp creep.

The Wart drank green lemonade and recited chunks of a novelette he's working on, which has all his pet themes, and, as far as we can tell, no plot. We teased him as usual about its ophidian slime and membranous, rotting wings and all, so he wouldn't suspect anything.

We were half-relaxed and half-anticipating when Duval announced his skit. He stood out in the center of the dirt floor with the music off and only the wind whining through the cracks in the boards. Behind him, tattered scrim and ropes hung from the rafters. The baled hay around the walls hardly showed in the dim light.

"In the village where my grandfather lived," he said matter-of-factly, "were the old style of priests, half pagan, half Coptic. They believed themselves descended from King Solomon and possessed of his wisdom. They gave the people what they wanted: blessings, baptisms, absolution, love philters, and curses on their enemies. They worked their powers through the spirits of maidens who had drowned themselves and whose bodies had never been recovered so they couldn't have a proper burial. The summoning of such a spirit is done rather like this." He turned and very meticulously scratched a circle of heiroglyphs in the dirt floor with the blunt end of his staff and encircled them with a line of hideous stuff that might have been cold oatmeal. Then, with no warning at all, he dumped a quart pitcher of undeniably real blood in the middle. You could smell it. (I know Crystal's father has a meat-packing plant, but that was the farthest thing from my mind at the time.)

We hardly noticed Crystal step in. We were so distracted by the blood, she might as well have been conjured. She wore yards and yards of wet, tattered, algae-scummed gauze draped around her and over her face, and you could smell the sourness of a swamp on her. She tracked through the blood as if she didn't see it, and it made her hems ghastly. She clenched and unclenched her hands, stared around her as if she didn't know where she was, and clawed unseeingly at her veil. The people who weren't in on the plot looked surprised, knowing how shy Crystal was. Obviously everyone recognized her, as they were

## Fiction by Atanielle Annyn Noel

intended to, but the skit was shaping up better even than had been anticipated. The Wart simply looked uncomfortable.

Duval made a complicated gesture to Crystal, beckoning, and cut through the circle in front of the Wart. I saw the Wart startle, a shudder like a horse makes when a fly lands on his withers.

Crystal only took a couple of steps toward him, and looked at him with that absolutely blank, unseeing stare with which junior-high girls look at their ex-boyfriends. He jerked his eyes to the side once or twice and licked his lips. The onlookers became more interested, thinking it was rehearsed and he was in on it.

Then Crystal spoke.

She spoke in a sick monotone hardly above a whisper, with a lot of hesitations, not as if she'd forgotten her lines, but as if her mind was way out of touch. Sometimes when she hesitated she'd twitch slightly on one side of her body, like people whose nervous systems are out of order.

"You are standing . . ." she whispered unseeingly to the Wart, "in blood-drenched halls . . . where the stones themselves exude unspeakable defilement. Nameless beasts fight over purulent carcasses . . . their spined wings stir the ashes of black bones . . ." She went on and on, paraphrasing every revolting theme with which the Wart had

ever annoyed us. It was awesome and loathsome and horrifying.

Finally, in one of her pauses, the Wart said, "Omigod," and walked out. At first I couldn't tell if it was "Omigod" as when you drop your books during lecture, or as when you hear about a death. But he was walking unsteadily, and it scared me. Everybody else mobbed Crystal, congratulating her, but I ran out after the Wart. I remember when the Stevens boy left the prom because of what his girl did, and shot himself. He walked like that.

I got to him just as he was opening his car door. I knew he shouldn't drive the way he was. He was pale and shaking, whether from fear or rage or disgust I don't think even he knew. I sort of wrestled him away from the car door. Most girls want a guy who is upset to talk about it before it's time, or the girls tell the guys what the girls think the guys feel, which makes it worse. I shoved a lot because it was important to me, with no half-snuggles or anything. Most guys understand being pounded better than being talked to.

He started to talk then, leaning against the car door, which he had scratched some with his armor. "You all hate me. You always have. I see myself as an accursed knight doomed to an endless, hopeless quest, humiliated and reviled by all whom I encounter. I would rather be destroyed, the blood forced from my

body, than once more face humiliation and dishonor." He was at once ludicrous and pathetic. Angry at being mocked, he was still unwilling to admit that his vocabulary was deserving of mockery.

"Wart," I said carefully. "we admire your imagination, but you've gotten too predictable. We know you have better potential, so we tried to jolt you out of your rut." I didn't feel like too much of a hypocrite, because he really must be some kind of a genius to become a walking Roget's Thesaurus of the Macabre.

Some time after I'd said *genius* once too often, he kissed me, and I could see he was thinking of giving me his school ring, but instead he promised to lend me his manuscripts.

The Wart's manuscripts were pretty revolting, but I lent him some books on essay style and the short story, and his work has gotten a lot more coherent and fairly original, even in its grotesquery.

Crystal has gotten popular, which makes her more shy.

The Wart has written a terribly serious play for drama class about rotting Vikings in a barrow, but it *is* coherent, and he's getting Duval to do the scenery and lighting, so it probably won't absolutely flop.

Because he survived an ordeal, so to speak, we don't call him the Wart any more, but Sir Hawksbane. He loves it.

# TARSUS

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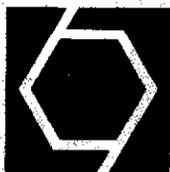
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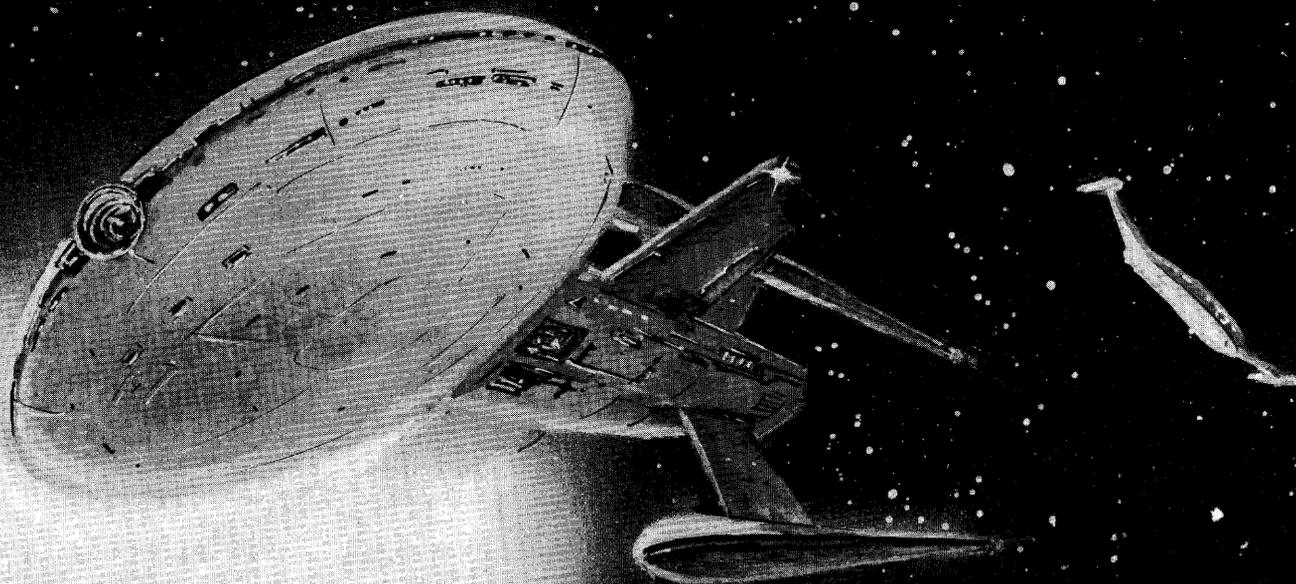
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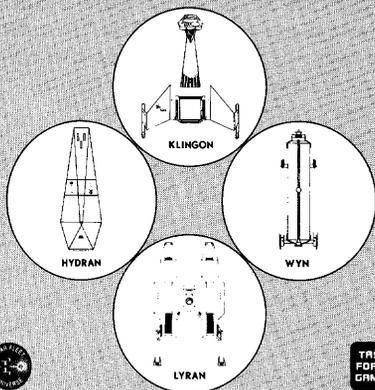
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"Just put them over there," said the sage. I backed the pick-up to the desired location behind the sage's grass hut and began shoveling letters out on the ground. "That's fine," he called. "Scatter some over by the peonies. I need a little more mulch there."

"Don't you ever answer these things?" I panted, grabbing an armload and flinging them out in a cloud of notebook paper.

"Sure," he replied, picking up a letter that had fallen close to him. He studied it a bit, laughed, and then buried it. "Someone wanted to know if barbarians . . ."

"Save it," I told him. "Write a column answering some questions readers ask about articles in DRAGON® magazine, and I'll pick it up next week."

"Whatever you want," he said. As I drove off, he was starting to work on the peonies.

**In "A Player Character and His Money" (issue #74), are PCs supposed to get one experience point per silver piece or one x.p. per gold piece?**

Characters get one x.p. per gold piece. The "silver standard" described in the article will make it more difficult for characters to buy very valuable items (especially magical ones), but this contributes to game balance.

**Concerning landragons (issue #74): Do they have any claw attacks, and do they like water?**

Landragons do not use their feet to claw at opponents in melee; they have developed their own special attack routines, and while their claws might be effective weapons, they are rarely if ever employed. Their experience with water is limited to shallow wading, though they can swim for short distances.

**Is the "Combat Computer" in issue #74 designed for actual use in AD&D™ gaming?**

Yes. It has been playtested, and from the mail readers have sent to DRAGON magazine, it appears to be working very well in AD&D games.

**What are the minimum wisdom and charisma scores necessary for a duelist character (issue #73)?**

The duelist, a fighter subclass for NPCs, should have a minimum score of 6 in each of these characteristics. This assumes that NPCs must also abide by the "5 or lower" rule that player characters must follow. A score lower than 6 in either ability would force the character to be a thief (if wisdom was 5 or lower) or an assassin (if charisma was 5 or lower). In the duelist article, ability-score

requirements were listed only for those characteristics that have a minimum higher than 6.

**Why are duelist NPCs unable to use flails? This weapon has been used in fencing training.**

The sage has been unable to locate anyone or any source that mentions the use of flails in fencing training; at any rate, the NPC classes described in DRAGON magazine do not have to correspond exactly to one particular concept of what a class should be like.

**In issue #73, the catoblepas is noted for being able to kill by its breath; this contradicts what's in the Monster Manual. Which source is correct?**

The Monster Manual is the final authority here. The article on the catoblepas, like all the other articles in "ecology" series in this magazine, is an attempt to work out some of the monsters from the AD&D game system in a logical fashion with regard to their habitats, mentalities, behaviors, and so forth. This material is unofficial, offered for the entertainment of (and possible use by) DMs and players alike.

**Couldn't the water-creating pill, item #26 in the article on "Non-violent Magic Items" (issue #73) be used as a poison?**

If misused, this item could harm or kill a careless character. (The same might be true of other items described in the article.) But it was not intended for combat purposes and is technically "non-violent." It does not count as a poison in any event.

**In issue #73, half-ogres are said to have trouble using magical boots; however, the**

**DMG says that magic boots will expand to fit creatures of up to giant size.**

The DMG also notes, for *boots of levitation* and *boots of speed*, that heavier creatures will make these devices less effective. Certain other sorts of magical boots will work for half-ogres, but some won't. The half-ogre's exceptional size and weight need to be carefully considered when they use many sorts of magical items like these.

**"Gems Galore" (issue #72) does not say how some of the gemstones described in the article may be found.**

DMs may create their own random-roll tables as extensions of the ones given in the DMG (p. 26), for gemstones found in treasure hoards in their campaigns; the gems described in the article may be included therein.

**In the Sage Advice column in issue #71, it was stated that lycanthropes cannot change their shape on the Astral Plane because there is no natural darkness there. However, the DMG states that after six years of experience, lycanthropes can change at will. Which is correct?**

The Sage Advice answer in #71 should be amended as follows: Lycanthropes of any sort found on the Astral Plane will assume wereform only as a result of melee injury or the casting of certain spells (as noted on p. 22, DMG) if the creature has had lycanthropy for less than six years. Those having lycanthropy for more than six years will, in addition to the above circumstances, be able to change into wereform at will.

**Several questions regarding the astral module "Fedifensor" (issue #67): Githyanki knights in the module are**

apparently normal fighters, while the FIEND FOLIO® Tome notes them as being anti-paladins; why is this so, and what are an anti-paladin's powers? Do githyanki have clerics or shamans? Why were there not more knights at the outpost, since the FF notes that githyanki astral fortresses have 40 knights?

The "anti-paladin" reference in the FIEND FOLIO Tome should not be taken literally; actually, there is no official anti-paladin class. The phrase, as used in the githyanki text, should be taken to mean that githyanki knights act very much the opposite of how a paladin would act (i.e., they are chaotic evil). Githyanki knights have powers normally associated with regular fighters. Githyanki have no clerics or shamans, since the "deity" they worship (like the one ruling the githzerai) is not a true deity or demigod and cannot grant spell powers to any followers. There were not more knights at the outpost because it was an outpost, not a fully equipped fortress.

**"Thrills and Chills" (issue #68) noted that there would be assassins operating during the Ice Age. How is this possible?**

Assassins could be thought of as a form of commando warrior, used by various tribes as scouts, spies, or advance assault fighters who slay from ambush or by surprise. Assassins could also perform their

usual sorts of tasks (getting rid of undesirable tribesmen), at the direction of a chieftain or other "boss."

In issue #66, Leomund's Tiny Hut lists some interesting lower-level monsters. But one of them, animal skeletons, cannot apparently be made using the spell animate dead as described in the Players Handbook.

It is conceivable that evil clerics could develop a spell similar to animate *dead* that would allow for the animation of animal skeletons. Such a spell would likely be of third-level power and similar in most respects (such as casting time and so forth) to the other spell.

In "The Missing Dragons" (issue #65), which describes the "color-wheel" theory of dragonkind, it was said that mating a blue and yellow dragon will produce a green one. Doesn't this contradict the AD&D rules, where it is said that Tiamat spawns all of evil dragonkind?

If the "color-wheel" theory is used, one could assume there are three ways to create green dragons: two adult green dragons can mate and have young, an adult blue and an adult yellow dragon could mate and produce green young, or Tiamat could give birth to green young and drop them off on the Prime Material Plane. All three methods could work simultaneously. This would also work in

a related fashion for the orange and purple dragons described in the same article. Remember, once again, that this article was unofficial and does not have to be used in a campaign, but can be adopted if a DM so desires.

The article revising the Celtic myths in issue #65 lists some of deities as having druidic powers of over 14th level. How is this possible?

Deities do not have any of the restrictions placed upon them that mortals have. A good-aligned deity may be able to use assassin powers; neutral gods may have paladin powers. The deities in issue #65 with druidic powers of greater than 14th level should have the given level apply where applicable for spell ranges, areas of effect, and so forth that depend upon the spell caster's level. Taking a cue from E. Gary Gygax's writings on 15th-level druids in the same issue, a deity with an effective druid level of more than 14th should have the ability to cast 6 spells of each level per day, plus as many bonus spells as the deity's wisdom score will permit.

Concerning "Evil Dragon Armors" (issue #62): Can someone make shields from dragon hide with special powers? Why are the armor classes of the dragon armors so low? What special powers would suits made from other sorts of evil

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dragons (e.g., yellow, orange, purple, chromatic) have?

Much of this would be up to the DM to arbitrate. A shield made of dragon hide might give a bonus to the saving throw of the user against the breath weapon of the dragon-type the shield is made from, if the shield was properly enchanted. Such a shield would otherwise be like any other type of magic shield, benefitting the user's armor class. Only one or two shields at most could be made from any single dragon hide, under the same restrictions as mentioned in the original article. The AC of the dragon armors is low because live dragons have thick layers of fat and muscle beneath their scaled hides, which adds to their AC. Armors made from other types of evil dragons can be created by interested players and referees, within the restrictions of the original article; the powers that such armors would possess are up to the DM to decide.

The jester NPC class (issue #60) seems to allow certain races like dwarves and halflings to get the ability to cast magical spells they could not normally use. Also, some races are noted in the Players Handbook as being able to learn only a few extra languages due to their intelligence, while jester NPCs are supposed to gain a new language every other level.

Jesters were designed to be unusual NPCs; however, if a DM finds some of

their abilities to be too unusual, then of course some changes in the class may be made. DMs might consider having only humans and gnomes be jesters if they wish to restrict the class only to those beings who can use illusionist magic, possibly including half-elves if one wanted to stretch it a bit, but this is all up to the DM. As for the second question, there are other character classes like druids and bards who are able to learn a number of languages over and above any racial or intelligence limits; the jester is free to do so, too, by the same token.

#### What is a cantrip?

Cantrips are minor magical spells for magic-users and illusionists, often referred to as "0-level" spells. Typical cantrips include *polish, sweeten, curdle, knot, flavor, (summon) mouse*, and (produce) *belch*. These spells were described in issues #59-61 of DRAGON Magazine, and are reprinted in the Best of DRAGON® Vol. III anthology.

In the game "Flight of the Boodles" (issue #60), does the Boodle wizard hit on a 1-3 or 1-4? The text contradicts itself.

They hit on a 1-4, according to the original rules, so two of the charts in the game need to be corrected accordingly.

In "Modern Monsters" (issue #57) the speeds given for modern automotive vehicles in AD&D terms seem awfully low (example: 70"/round is about 8 mph). Why was this done?

As mentioned in that article, the speeds of such vehicles were scaled down by as much as a factor of ten; this was done partly for game balance, and because off-road speeds will be much slower than normal and game scenarios may have overland travel involved. DMs using this material may wish to increase these speeds, but should be careful in doing so to preserve game balance.

In issue #48, in the section on undersea magical items, there seems to have been a misprint of some kind.

The confusion can be cleared up by

reading "+" where "=" appears, so that the names of the items are "Dagger +1/+2 vs. Dolphins" and "Trident +1/+3 vs. Elemental Beings."

What is a balrog, and what are the statistics for it?

A balrog, as described in the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy by J.R.R. Tolkien, appears to be similar to lower planes creatures like demons in the AD&D system. (Note that the original rules for the D&D game did include mention of creatures such as the balrog and the hobbit, but those references were changed or deleted in subsequent editions of that game, and the terms do not appear in the rules for the AD&D system.) The Type VI demon in the Monster Manual resembles the balrog, but is probably not as powerful as a true balrog would be. If something meant to be identical to a balrog is to be used in a variant AD&D game, the DM will have to invent his own game statistics for the monster after carefully reading the various Tolkien books.

With regards to AD&D module S3, *Expedition to the Barrier Peaks*, would a shield spell stop a laser shot?

No; the *shield* would have no effect.

Would blasters or lasers from GAMMA WORLD adventures be able to harm creatures only affected by magical weapons, such as gargoyles?

Yes; such energy attacks would harm nearly all AD&D monsters or characters. Use the "Mutants & Magic" section of the DMG to arbitrate details of such combat.

What are the following weapons like in AD&D gaming: great axe, great bow, great sword?

The great axe is a bardiche or halberd (which are both poleaxes); the great bow is a long bow or long composite bow; the great sword is a two-handed sword.

Do real barbarians eat quiche?

Real barbarians would hack and slay anyone who offered them quiche to eat, and would then stomp the quiche until it was totally flat. Barbarians are like that. ☹

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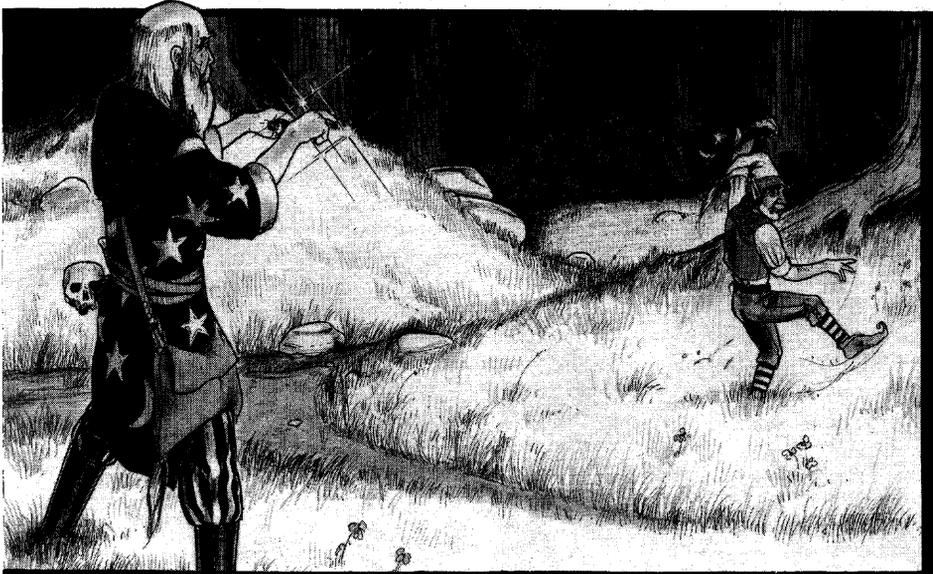
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# Magic resistance

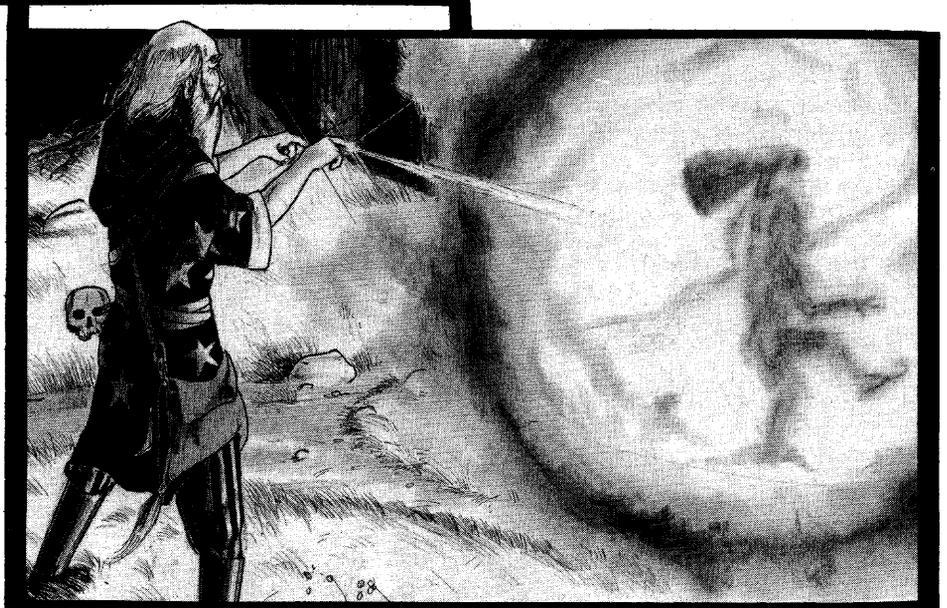
## What it is, how it works

The concept of magic resistance has an appeal that can be . . . irresistible. But many DMs who try to use magic resistance in a playing session find it raising more problems than it solves: When does it operate? When, if ever, does it not? Exactly how does it work? This article attempts to answer those questions, and more, about the effects of magic resistance and how it is used in the AD&D™ game.

Standard magic resistance, which is what player characters and most monsters have, simply means that the being concerned makes a saving throw when subjected to most magical influences. (Unconscious or surprised creatures do not always get a saving throw.) For those who make the saving throw, it means somehow dodging the magical blow; withstanding it through the rage of combat or the will to win; calling upon divine intervention to partially deflect the spell; or perhaps using one's own "inborn" magic to dissipate the spell's power (in the cases of thieves, fighters, clerics, and magic-users, respectively).

However, many creatures (demons, devils, and the like) have a chance of not being affected at all by a certain magical force, and this form of magic resistance may vary according to the level of the caster hurling the spell at the magic-resistant creature. This sort of "percentage" magic resistance is explained in the FIEND FOLIO® Tome and the DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ Cyclopedia (and less well so in the Monster Manual). A specialized form of this magic resistance, possessed by creatures like nycadaemons, takes into account the level of the spell, not of the caster.

Another specialized form is *uniform* magic resistance, where the percentage value listed applies against all spell levels and all levels of casters. (See Heward, Keoghtom, and Murlynd in "Greyhawk's World," issue #71.) Note that all magic-resistant creatures are allowed a regular



saving throw (when applicable) if their magic resistance roll is failed.

Magic resistance is effective against magical spells and spell-like abilities that would otherwise directly affect a creature, including potions. It applies against druid, illusionist, and cleric spells as well as magic-user spells, and the procedure for determining success (resistance) or failure (vulnerability) is the same for all types of magic.

Magic resistance applies only to the creature or object that possesses it, and to things the being wears or carries, and has no range as such. In special cases, such as when a magic-user has a pseudodragon familiar, magic resistance is transferable to someone else even if the two figures involved are not physically touching. These cases, of course, are rare in the extreme.

The Monster Manual implies (on p. 5) that any spell cast in the presence of a magic-resistant creature will fail, but this is false. The effect of the spell has a chance of failing, but generally *only with*



respect to the magic-resistant creature. A magic-resistant monster caught in the area of a *fireball* spell, as the DDG book points out, might not be affected by the spell though all the orcs around it are burned up at once: the spell still goes off.

However, if the magic-resistant monster was the *fireball's* primary target, the *fireball* will fail to go off entirely if the monster makes its magic-resistance roll. If its magic resistance fails, the monster (like any other creature) will get a regular saving throw against the spell. (The orcs get to save, too, but would probably get toasted.) If a spell normally allows no saving throw (*magic missile*, for instance), then the spell will have full normal effect on the creature if its magic resistance fails.

When a magic-resistant creature is potentially able to be affected by magic cast from an item (a wand, staff, rod, or similar device), the creature will resist the magic just as if it came from the casting of a spell. The level of magic-use can be determined for certain items; wands operate at the 6th level of ability, staves at the 8th level, and so forth.

Spells cast from certain items that have no level of magic use assigned to them (such as a *charm* spell cast from a magical sword) are assumed to come from a 12th-level magic-user (the lowest level of magic-user who can manufacture magical items) unless the magic would obviously

come from a higher-level caster (*power word, kill*, for instance). Higher-level spells are assumed to come from a spell caster of the minimum level needed to cast such a spell, unless otherwise stated in the history of the item. A rod that can cast *incendiary cloud*, for instance, is assumed to have been made by a 16th-level M-U, the minimum level required to cast such a spell, unless the item is noted as having been made by someone of higher level.

For certain items, like artifacts, it's up to the DM to decide the level of the caster who created the device in order to determine its spell effects. This may be done on a case-by-case basis without much trouble. Generally, very high levels (16+) of spell use are involved.

Other magical powers (like the effects of a *chime of hunger*) do not seem to have a correlated spell or spell level to match with them. This is a property of many non-weapon items like *ropes of entanglement*, and of many things that must be worn or swallowed to be effective (potions, rings, and assorted miscellaneous magical items). The effects of these items will be resisted if the creature they are used on makes its magic-resistance roll as if its resistance were *uniform*; for example, a night hag is always 65% resistant to being affected by a *rope of entanglement*.

Magic resistance only applies against

spells that would have a *direct* effect on the magic-resistant creature — generally those effects that threaten to change the creature in some way. Magic resistance does not apply against magical armor, shields, or weapons: a suit of +2 armor worn by a demon will still work like +2 armor. This is because these items' effects apply only to the items themselves, and do not *directly* affect the wearer.

For the same reason, a magic-resistant being could use a *wand of magic missiles* against other creatures, but might have trouble shooting the missiles at itself.

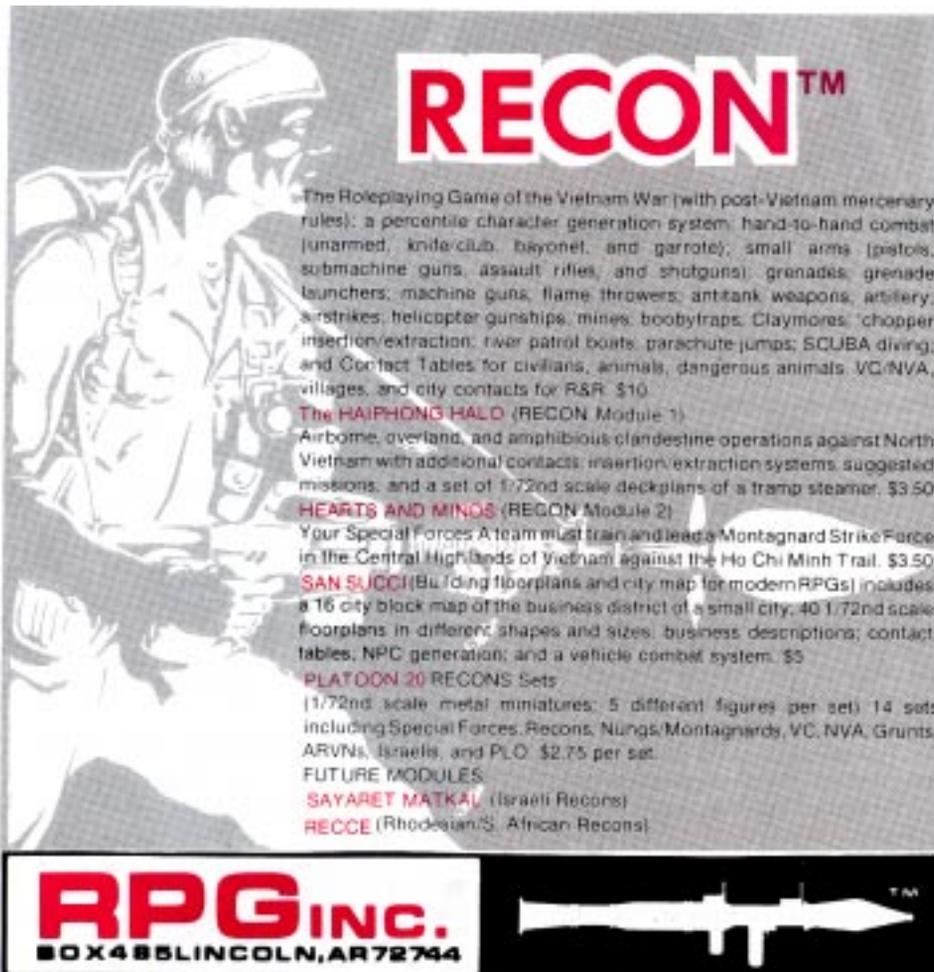
By contrast, magic resistance *does* apply against any effect that would add a bonus or penalty to a creature's normal saving throw, armor class, "to hit" roll, and so forth.

Magic resistance does not negate the magical bonuses of a weapon — *ever* — and if a weapon has special powers on successful hits (e.g., the sharpness or life-draining power of some swords), magic resistance will not help against that power. If a sword can cast spells like a wand or similar device, then magic resistance is usable, and may cancel out the spell effects.

Magic-resistant creatures have a measure of control over their ability. In some cases, a creature can voluntarily nullify its magic resistance in order to take advantage of the effects of a beneficial spell or spell effect. Nullifying one's own magic resistance requires total concentration. Achieving the state of vulnerability requires one round; the state can be maintained by continued concentration for as long as the creature engages in no other mental activity, and no physical activity at all. (Knowing how to concentrate in this fashion is an ingrained trait of all magic-resistant creatures, and is not a function of intelligence.)

Voluntary nullification of magic resistance must be performed by the spell recipient during the round in which the casting of the spell is completed, or (in the case of a magic-using creature employing innate abilities) in the round during which the spell-like power is directed at the intended recipient. The target creature does not need to maintain concentration on negating its magic resistance after the magic gets a foothold. (When magic resistance "clicks" back on, the spell effect is trapped within the recipient, and the magic will run its course. Magic resistance works from the inside out as well as the other way around.)

During the round (or longer) that a magic-resistant creature maintains concentration on negating its resistance, it is completely vulnerable to any magical effects (not necessarily beneficial) directed toward it. Not even a saving throw is allowed, since any saving throw against any form of magic is essentially (as pointed out earlier) just another form of magic resistance.



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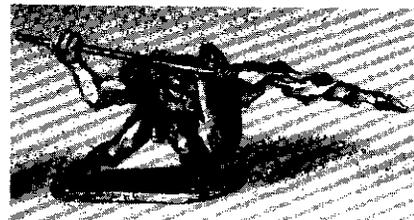
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Also, it is possible for a magic-resistant creature to be affected by a magic item, and to benefit from the wearing or carrying of such an item. A creature attempting to put on and make use of a *cloak of displacement* or *girdle of giant strength*, for instance, must simply touch the item and then make a normal MR roll. If the creature's magic resistance fails (on this check), the item can be donned and worn, with all of its effects occurring to the wearer as if that creature had no magic resistance. If the magic item is touched, carried, or worn continually from that point onward, its effects will keep operating for at least a week. The creature must make a MR check once a week, as long as the item is being worn or carried. If these "followup" magic-resistance rolls also fail, the item continues to affect the bearer.

If the creature does not fail its MR check at the outset (when first touching the item), then the creature's magic resistance has worked immediately, and the item becomes ineffective to that creature. If desired, second and subsequent attempts can be made by simply releasing and then re-touching the item in question (each contact meaning another MR check). Sooner or later, a creature with high magic resistance will fail a MR check (as long as the creature's effective magic resistance is less than 100%) and be able to use the item as described above,

subject to the once-a-week check to see if the creature's magic resistance "kicks in" after the fact.

To illustrate the above, here is an example of melee involving magic resistance rolls. A drow cleric and a githzerai warrior are preparing to attack two mind flayers. The cleric throws a *flame strike* spell targeted on the ground between the mind flayers, while the githzerai warrior, who that morning had put on a *girdle of frost giant strength*, throws a +3 hand axe at a mind flayer close to him. The mind flayer, taken by surprise, still get their MR rolls; one makes it and lives, while the other fails, gets no saving throw afterward due to the surprise condition, and dies. Because the githzerai failed his MR roll when the girdle was put on, it operates at full strength; his axe strikes the surviving mind flayer and injures it greatly.

In the next round, the mind flayer gets initiative, reaches for a *wand of magic missiles* on a nearby rock, and uses it to cast a bolt at the warrior. The githzerai fails his MR roll and takes full damage from the bolt, since the *magic missile* spell allows for no saving throw. Both drow and githzerai charge to the attack, swinging magic weapons that operate normally without the need for magic-resistance checks. The drow misses her attack, but the githzerai swings his *sword of sharpness*, hits, and severs the mind

flayer's head from its body (the sword's ability is not affected by the mind flayer's magic resistance).

The battle over, the drow offers to give the warrior a *cure light wounds*; agreeing, the githzerai concentrates, drops both his magic resistance and normal saving throw, and the cleric touches him to complete the spell. However, unknown to each of them, a githyanki magic-user happens by. With surprise, in the same round that the *cure* is cast, the magic-user lets go with a lightning bolt, frying the githzerai (who was a sitting duck) . . . and the war goes on.

One other thing should be noted about magic resistance. It does not allow a creature to disregard illusions, see beings who are hidden magically, or otherwise allow the creature to have any control over existing magical influences, spells, or powers that only affect other creatures. An elf wearing a *cloak of elvenkind* will still be as hard for a demon to find as a human; a devil cannot negate the effects of a *bless* spell cast upon its opponents, or bring down or ignore a *wall of force*.

There are certain spells, however, that if cast upon an area may not be triggered by the passage or touch of a magic resistant creature. *Magic mouths*, *symbols*, *glyphs of warding*, and *fire traps* will not be activated if the creature makes its MR roll, but will still be present and may be activated later.

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# GEN CON<sup>®</sup> Miniature Open '83

Text by  
Kim Eastland

Photos by  
Dan Sample



Hundreds of people gathered inside the sweltering room, and the crowd of people was as diverse as the creations they had brought to exhibit. There were knights, starfarers, soldiers, 1920's mobsters, cavalrymen, and monsters — lots of monsters.

All of these warriors, weirdos, and wizards were brought to the GEN CON<sup>®</sup> XVI Game Fair by their owners with one thought in mind: to win. But the competition was settled not with force of arms,

but with force of brushes. The warriors were made of metal, and the competition involved how well they had been painted and presented for the Third Annual GEN CON Miniatures Open.

This year's contest attracted some of the most memorable entries to date, some of which are pictured in color on these pages. As might be expected, the quality of the entries and the caliber of the competition was even higher than in previous

contests. The figures that were judged the best, and the people who created them, are listed on the following pages.

*Julie Guthrie's ravenous Madcoil (above left) leads off this photographic presentation. An individual picture (above) and a group shot (below) of Jim Zylka's Celtic Nobles shows the detail and authenticity that earned him first place in the Masters category.*



### Historical Units

1st place: *Edward IV With His Lords* by Gene Elsner, created from a collection of 25mm Ral Partha knights.

2nd place: Matt Slagter's 15mm *Achaemenid Persian Chariotry*.

### Personality

1st place: *Master Ranger* by Julie Guthrie, who originally sculpted this figure for Ral Partha and then decided to try her hand — successfully — at painting it.

### Monsters

1st place: *Winged Leopard* by John S. Goff. John took this Ral Partha figure and turned it in to a masterpiece with some of the most detailed shading and spotting ever seen. This entry was also named Best of Show, a rare honor for such a small-sized and simply presented entry.

Honorable Mention: *Madcoil*, an Elf-quest figure painted by Julie Guthrie.

### Fantasy Diorama

1st place: *The Rescue* by Alan Patton. This excellent diorama features a fearless  
(continued on next page)



Even in this small photograph (above), one can see the great attention to detail in Alan Patton's winning Fantasy Diorama. Torch burns and spilled water and blood are some of the special effects Alan used to make his entry as realistic-looking as possible. Mike Jaecks' portrait of Orcus

(below left) is a masterpiece of alteration techniques; the original figure does not have wings or horns. A superb rendition of a Superior Models knight (below right) won an Honorable Mention award; unfortunately, the owner's ID card was misplaced, so his or her name is not known.





band of adventurers breaking in on a magician and his band of skeletal servants.

#### General Diorama

1st place: *Entering the Tomb* by Judy Brown. For this scenario of 1920's adventurers exploring an Egyptian crypt, Judy used Grenadier's Call of Cthulhu™ set.

#### Juniors

1st place: *Orcus Demon Prince* by Mike Jaecks, a beautiful conversion job on a Grenadier Large Dragon.

2nd place: *Apocalypse No!* by Dan Edwards, a historical diorama of rice-paddy combay in Viet Nam.

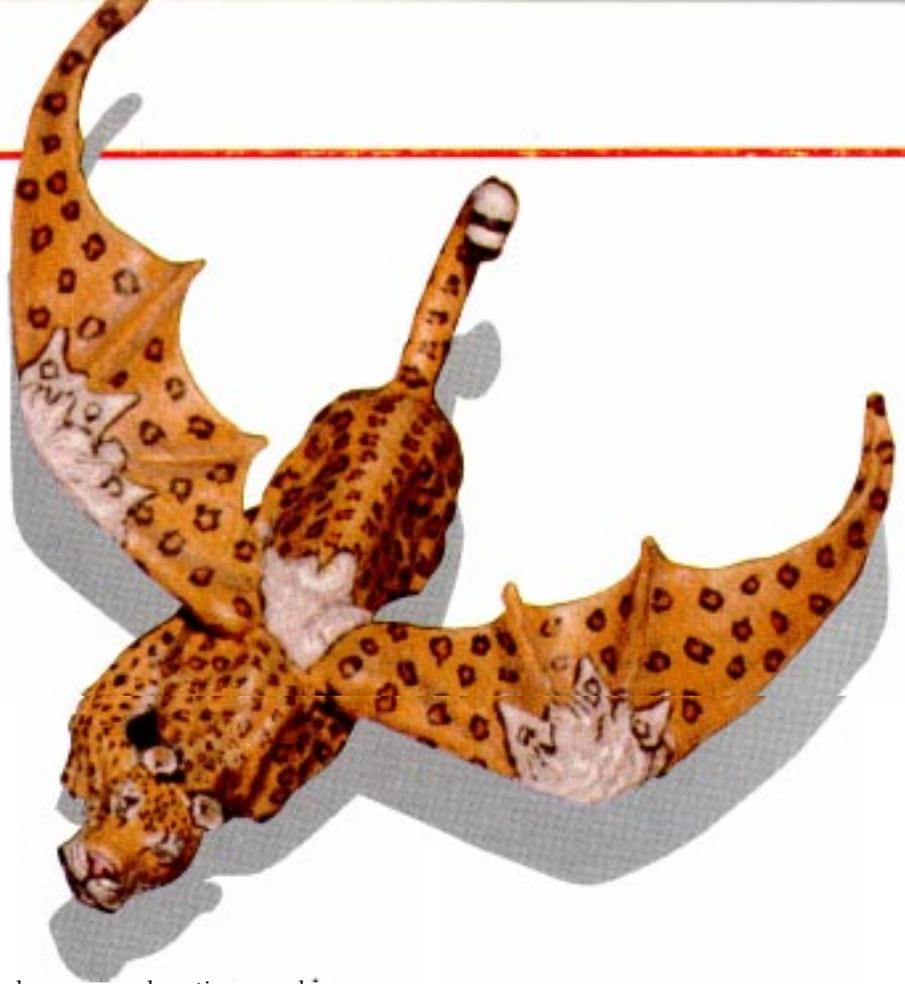
3rd place: *Wizard* by Jon Iwamasa, a fine personality entry.

Honorable Mention: *Orc With Weapons* by John Selzer.

#### Masters

Winner: *Celtic Nobles* by James Zylka, a colorful collection of infantry and cavalry.

New Masters: Gene Elsner, John Goff, Julie Guthrie, and Alan Patton were recognized for their achievements by being promoted into the masters category for all future competitions.



their dangerous donations and support, the following companies (listed in alphabetical order) deserve a round of thanks from the organizers of the GEN CON Miniature Open, on behalf of those who won, competed, or just looked on and oohed and aahed:

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Notice the shields that adorn Gene Elsner's winning collection of knights (below). The designs match those in Avalon Hill's Kingmaker™ game, so these figures double as gaming pieces when they're not on display. Judy Brown's diorama (above left) features well-painted figures, authentic-looking walls, and a definite feeling of impending doom. Swooping down on this page (above) is the winner of the Monster category and the Best of Show award, John Goff's Winged Leopard. Each individual spot was shaded separately, then outlined. The face alone is a work of art.



# Blame it on the gremlins

## Militaristic mischief-makers

by Gregg Chamberlain

When sorcerous experiments go awry, what do magicians blame? Gremlins.

When a perfect heist falls through, what do thieves curse? Gremlins.

Distantly related to the pixie, sprite, leprechaun, and other members of the "wee folk," the gremlin is a natural follower and enforcer of Murphy's Law: If anything can go wrong, it will — at the most inopportune time and in the worst possible way.

Gremlins are not native to the AD&D world; they are recent immigrants from our own real world. They first came to our attention during World War I, when they plagued Britain's Royal Naval Air Service pilots. The poor pilots found themselves targets for such amusing gremlin jokes as drinking a plane's fuel during reconnaissance flights, plucking wing struts until the wires snapped, and playing teeter-board on the ailerons during a student's solo. This last resulted in a flight that seemed to be nothing but Immelmann turns and loop-de-loops.

At the time, the Allied pilots did not know what was causing their problems, but they probably blamed the other side. (It is not known if the German forces were also troubled by gremlins, but it is very probable.) It was not until 1922 that gremlins were actually "discovered." During a routine R.A.F. flight, a pilot called the weather station at Le Bourget Field in Paris for a weather report. He was warned, "Gremlins sur la manche." His radio then died.

Since then we have become very familiar with gremlin activities. During World War II, gremlins were blamed for overturning a Sunderland bomber while it was patrolling over the Bay of Biscay; changing the positions of the stars in the sky to confuse navigators; shorting out electrical equipment; and generally making things difficult for pilots.

There was a popular belief among airmen that the gremlins had undermined every aerodrome in England and underpinned the runways with hydraulic-jacks. A gremlin kept watch over the jacks and, when a student-pilot was about to come in for a perfect three-point landing, would pull a lever and either raise or lower the runway by 10 feet or so.

Gremlins are very technology-oriented and are fascinated by any new advances in science. Thus, they flew with the planes that dropped the first atomic bombs in 1945 and were present at every nuclear test conducted during the 1950's. When these nuclear devices exploded, the energies released tore rifts in the space-time fabric. Some of the gremlins observing the explosions were caught in the ensuing vortices and hurled through the rifts, landing in the AD&D world.

Confused at first by the strange circumstances they found themselves in, the gremlins quickly adapted and eventually found certain gates which led back to their original world. They then organized groups of gremlins to migrate to the new world they had discovered.

Every gremlin is either chaotic neutral with good tendencies (Type I) or chaotic neutral with evil tendencies (Type II). In our world, gremlins are believed to be hybrids of the races of dwarf and sprite, with Type II gremlins also exhibiting some influence from lesser demons and imps.

Type I gremlins have been known to help humankind on occasion, at least in our world. A passage on page 466 of Vol. I of the *Funk & Wagnalls Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend* states that "Many times gremlins have banded together to assist a pilot fly home in a small percentage of the plane he was issued only a few hours before." Type II gremlins, however, take great delight in tricks which seriously injure or even kill their victims.

A Type I gremlin stands about 12 to 20 inches in height and

	Type I	Type II
FREQUENCY:	<i>Uncommon</i>	<i>Rare</i>
NO. APPEARING:		1-11 or more
ARMOR CLASS:		5
MOVE:		6"
HIT DICE:		1-4 hit points per rank
% IN LAIR:		5%
TREASURE TYPE:		S, T, V, X
NO. OF ATTACKS:		1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:		<i>See below</i>
SPECIAL ATTACKS:		<i>See below</i>
SPECIAL DEFENSES:		<i>See below</i>
MAGIC RESISTANCE:		<i>See below</i>
INTELLIGENCE:		<i>Exceptional</i>
ALIGNMENT:		<i>Chaotic neutral</i>
	<i>(good tendencies)</i>	<i>(evil tendencies)</i>
SIZE:	S (12-20 inches)	S (6 inches)
PSIONIC ABILITY:		<i>Nil</i>
Attack/Defense Modes:		<i>Nil</i>
LEVEL/X.P. VALUE:		II / 61 + 1/hp

weighs about 17 pounds. Physically, it resembles a North American jackrabbit crossed with a bull terrier. It has been described as having the facial expression "of an A.C. 2 who has just been advised that his 48-hour pass has been cancelled" (*Funk & Wagnalls Dictionary*, page 465). The Type I gremlin dresses in green breeches and a red jacket, sometimes with ruffles, and wears spats and a top hat. In the AD&D world, this costume may be somewhat different.

Type II gremlins, seen less frequently than their cousins, are usually decked out in aviator's clothes, wearing black leather suction boots.

Even though individual gremlins are chaotic in behavior, gremlin society is militaristic and strictly organized. Young gremlins, or widgets, live with their parents until they become young males, known as grunts (this is also the lowest rank in the land-arm of the Gremlin Forces), or young females known as fininellas. They are then inducted into the Gremlin Forces and assigned to whatever division suits them: land, sea, or air.

Land gremlins live in underground burrows similar to those inhabited by halflings. The entrances are concealed or camouflaged to look like the entrance to a giant rat warren or some wild animal's burrow.

Marine gremlins have webbed feet with fins on the backs of their heels. They have a set of secondary gills which enable them to breathe underwater and live in grottos and undersea caverns.

The spandule is a species of gremlin which lives entirely in the upper reaches of the sky. Spandules either ride on the backs of large flying creatures such as rocs, or live on high mountain peaks.

Starting at the bottom of the heap, the gremlin works his way up through the ranks (see Table 1) until he either perishes in the line of duty or retires. Retired gremlins usually take the rank of Warrant Officer and become specialists.

The ultimate authority among gremlinkind is the Chief, who presides over a council of 10 of the highest-ranking gremlins. The Chief is chosen by the council members from among themselves and rules for a term of somewhere around four years; the council promotes a lower-ranking officer from among the brass to take the seat vacated by the newly-elected Chief. Re-election is possible and has occurred before; one Chief held the post for three terms before illness forced him to retire. Chiefs who are not re-elected will retire and become Inspector-Generals.

Gremlins generally work in groups of two or more, though certain individuals do like to strike out on their own. The most common grouping is the squad, which is led by one of the Sawj classes (see Table 2). The Sawj is the highest rank that non-gremlins have ever seen, and a louder, meaner, more ornery and foul-mouthed being never existed. Rumors abound of the existence of Looeys, Cap'ems, Jayjeez, Teks, and other higher-ranking gremlins, and logic seems to dictate that these ranks exist, but only the gremlins themselves have ever seen them.

Gremlins are amazingly strong (18) for their size, easily rivaling most humans. But they tend to avoid combat, preferring trickery instead. They also have certain natural magical abilities at birth, possibly a genetic holdover from their former magical might during Earth's younger days. They have both infravision and ultravision. They can turn invisible at will, and can *feather fall* whenever they wish. They have one peculiarity in this respect: they like to keep their heads pointed downward (toward the ground) when *feather falling*. Frequently gremlins will form chains, linking arms and feather falling as a group, much the way skydivers form patterns as they fall.

Magic resistance varies according to rank, starting from a basic resistance of 5% for grunts and civilians and increasing by 5% for every two steps in rank up to a maximum of 50% for a Jenrul.

As mentioned previously, gremlins are fascinated by technology. Upon introduction to a magic-based universe, they immediately set about learning the ways of sorcery and have become quite adept at using magic to confound and confuse the victims of their practical jokes.

As widgets, gremlins learn certain magic-user cantrips (see Table 3) which aid them in bedeviling non-gremlins. Upon joining the Forces, gremlins are taught certain higher-level spells (see Table 4) so that they might continue making life more and more miserable for others.

Gremlins are not dependent on spells to carry out their disruptive duties. Since they are able to draw on generations of

mechanical and technological knowledge gleaned from gremlin and human experiments, gremlins view magic as simply a supplement, an additional aid to be used only when a task really requires it.

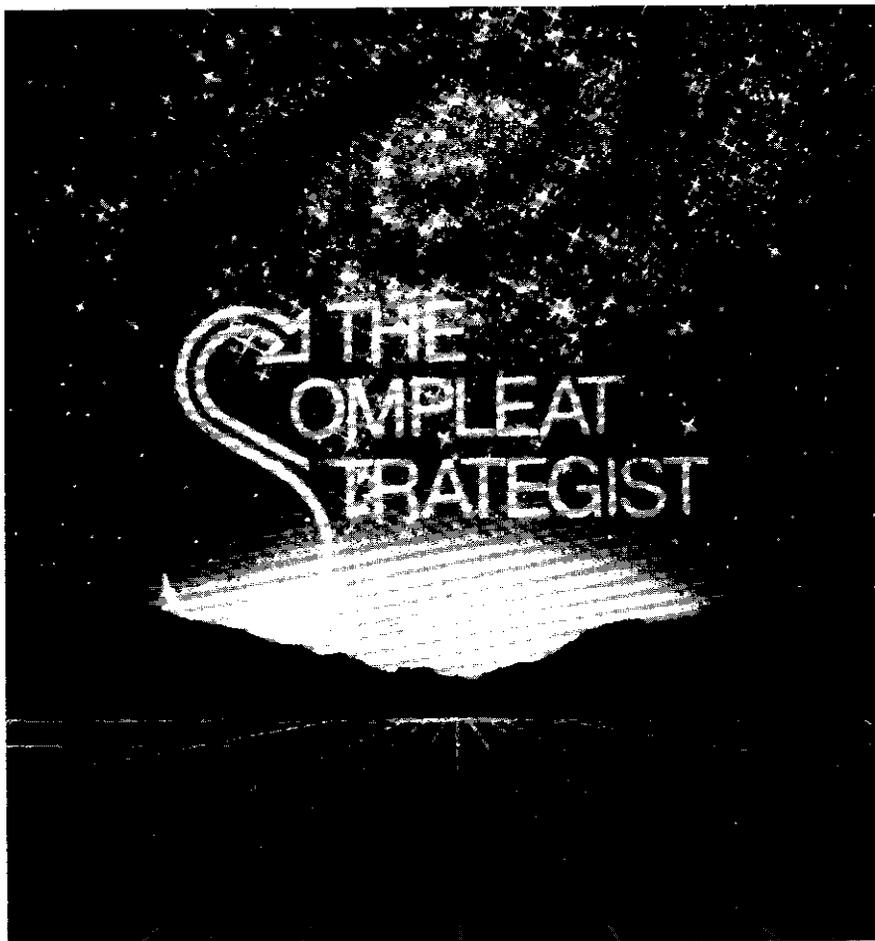
Gremlins find simple pranks to be the best. Some favorites are: tripping people at the top of a darkened stairwell; blowing out a party's torches just before an encounter with a monster; giving false or inaccurate information by pretending to be the voice of a "magic" mirror or some other object; removing arrowheads from their shafts; and drinking up all the lantern oil a party may be carrying.

Any adult gremlin, regardless of rank, can function as a 5th-level thief, though generally the only thieving abilities gremlins make use of are moving silently, climbing walls, and picking pockets.

Gremlins do not carry treasure on their persons, and they rarely have magical items. They have no use for gold, jewels, and other such things valued by the other races, though type II gremlins sometimes use gold as a lure. Any magic items picked up are taken to Stores and looked after by the Quartermaster Gremlin. The Quartermaster, a Sawjmayjer, will refuse any attempt to requisition items, forcing gremlins to either steal from Stores (which is considered good practice for their other pranks) or do without.

Of all the other races, gremlins like humans the best. Humans in the AD&D world remind them of the humans back home: natural patsies, to use a gremlin term. Dwarves are another favorite target because of their dour disposition. However, gnomes do not seem to be plagued as much by gremlins, perhaps because gnomes and gremlins seem to share a common attitude; both enjoy a good joke at someone else's expense. Gremlins are also fond of annoying flying creatures.

Of the different character classes, gremlins especially like bothering magic-users most, mainly because magic-users provide so many opportunities for a gremlin to ply his trade. Thieves are



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second in popularity for much the same reason. Clerics are third on the list. Gremlins are no respecters of religion, but are very careful not to provoke divine wrath; they do not interfere with healing and resurrection spells and the like.

Fighting men are the least preferred targets of a gremlin. Because of their own military background and the history of relations between gremlinkind and soldiers in our world, gremlins have developed a special fondness for the common warrior and easily identify with him. They are reluctant to play tricks on a fighter when another target is within easy reach. Fighters, however, are not exempt and may find themselves on the receiving end of a gremlin gag if no one else is available.

Sometimes a gremlin will "attach" himself to a character for a period of time. DMs may roll d20 at their option and, if the result matches or exceeds a character's charisma, the gremlin "likes" the character. Then roll d8, doubling the result, to determine the number of days (2-16) the gremlin will stay with the character. At the end of this time period, the DM may choose to again roll d20 vs. charisma to determine if the gremlin will stay on longer.

During times of war, siege, and other major human and humanoid undertakings, the entire gremlin force will be mobilized to harry both sides. Such mobilization will also include all gremlin support personnel, including a medical corps using clerical healing spells granted by the gods of chaos and mischief.

DMs are advised that not all disasters and mishaps which befall an adventuring party are due to gremlins. At least half of such occurrences are the fault of player characters and/or plain bad luck. If player characters suspect gremlins, by all means the DM should let them wear themselves out looking for them, even if there's not a gremlin within 50 miles. It makes setting up an encounter with the band of ogres lurking around the corner much easier.

**Table 1: Gremlin ranks**

Land	Sea	Air
Grunt	Grunt	Grunt
Buck	Pup	Flyboy
Peefsee	Seadog	Ayefcee
Corp	Peeohthree	Sawj
Sawj	Peeohtoo	Stafsawj
Sawjrustclass	Peeohfust	Tek
Massersawj	Seenyerseepeeoh	Cheefsawj
Sawjmayjer	Masserseeppeeoh	Massersawj
Sekenlooeey	Ansen	Sekenlooeey
Loeey	Jayjeez	Loeey
Cap'em	Loeey	Cap'em
Mayjer	Loeeyseeoh	Mayjer
Loeeychik	Seeoh	Loeeychik
Chik	Cap'em	Chik
Brigdeer	Lowadmerl	Brigdeer
Mayjerjenrul	Highadmerl	Mayjerjenrul
Loeeyjenrul	Viceadmerl	Loeeyjenrul
Jenrul	Admerl	Jenrul
Chief (highest rank, held by election)		
<b>Retirement ranks:</b>		
Warrant Officer (all ranks)		
Inspector General (retired Chiefs only)		

**Table 2: Levels of command**

Name	Numbers	Leader
Squad	11 (including one medic)	Sawj
Platoon	40 (including five medics)	Loeey
Company	200*	Cap'em
Battalion	500-1,200*	Loeeychik
Brigade	3,000-5,000*	Chik
Division	10,000*	Mayjerjenrul
Corps	15,000-20,000*	Loeeyjenrul
Field Army	25,000*	Jenrul

\* - includes required support personnel.

**Table 3: Gremlin cantrips**

Useful	Reversed	Personal Affecting
Chill	Curdle	Belch
Color	Dirty	Cough
Dampen	Dusty	Giggle
Dry	Hairy	Nod
Flavor	Knot	Scratch
Salt	Ravel	Sneeze
Spice	Sour	Twitch
Sprout (weeds)	Spill	Wink
Tie	Tangle	Yawn
	Tarnish	
	Wilt	
Personal	Haunting	Legerdemain
Bee	Creak	Change
Bug	Footfall	Distact
Firefinger	Groan	Hide
Gnats	Moan	Mute
Mouse	Rattle	
Spider	Tap	
Tweak	Thump	
Unlock	Whistle	

Cantrips are minor magic spells, also referred to as zero-level spells. Gremlins employ certain cantrips normally available to magic-users; although special cantrips also exist for illusionists, none of those are in the gremlins' inventory. For detailed information on the gremlin cantrips listed above, see the original articles in *From the Sorcerer's Scroll*, issues #59 and #60 of DRAGON® Magazine, or the reprinted articles in the Best of DRAGON® Vol. III anthology.

**Table 4: Gremlin spells**

First level	Fourth level
Dancing lights	Confusion
Detect magic	Fumble
Erase	Hallucinatory terrain
Push	
Ventriloquism	Fifth level
	Teleport
Second level	Sixth level
Audible glamer	Control weather
Fools gold	Move earth
Pyrotechnics	
Scare	Seventh level
Shatter	Reverse gravity
Stinking cloud	
Invisibility	Eighth level
	Incendiary cloud
<b>Third level</b>	Maze
Dispel magic	Otto's irresistible dance
Gust of wind	
Phantasmal force	Ninth level
<b>Suggestion</b>	Time stop
Tongues (reverse)	

See p. 26 of the Players Handbook, "Spells usable by class and level - magic-users," for the number of spells a gremlin of a certain rank (level) is able to use. Grunts are always 1st level; jenruls and admerls are level 18.

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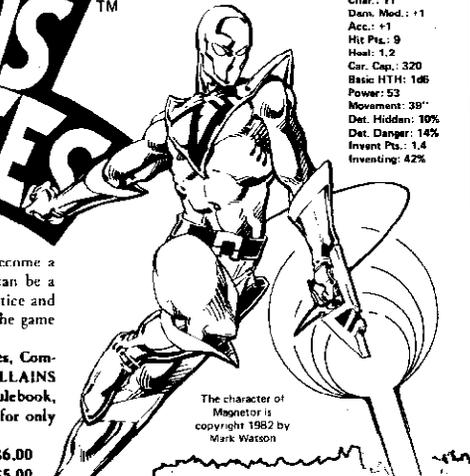
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# Setting saintly standards

## Friends of the gods deserve special powers

by Scott Bennie

The Dungeon Masters Guide mentions "saints" in several places, but no system is given for defining sainthood or classifying the precise abilities or capabilities of a saint. Looking at the real world and at saint-like characters in mythology and modern epic fantasy, we might make the following statements about saints in AD&D™ gaming:

Saints are the most powerful servants of a deity on earth, the absolute embodiment of their religion, and as such are given abilities that far surpass those of ordinary mortals. Saints are almost always clerics, since that character class provides the most service to the gods, but occasionally a fighter, particularly a paladin, will be elevated to sainthood. Saints are usually of good alignments (the word "saint" is derived from the Latin *sanctus*, meaning holy, as in "sanctuary"), but there have been occasions when the vilest deities or the vilest kings of the netherworld have awarded their dark champions with saint-like power, resulting in a "dark saint" or "anti-saint."

It has been said that becoming a saint is the most difficult goal to which a mortal may aspire. It requires that the saint serve his (or her) deity faithfully in every action he performs, and that he follow all the rules of the religion unquestioningly. In addition, the saint must constantly quest for and smite the enemies of the religion, and be willing to die at any moment for the sake of the religion's goals without hope of rebirth; the saint must also do deeds of great valor against great odds, and be universally recognized as a champion of the religion.

A saint should be far above ordinary mortals in power, with characteristics much greater than normal and levels of ability close to the peak of human attainment (e.g., at least 16th level for fighters and clerics). The saint may be on very close terms with the gods, and will be well versed in divine politics so he can deal with other divinities and their servants to best advantage.

If a mortal fulfills these criteria, then his deity or a group of sponsor deities, *provided that they need a champion*, will empower the saint with a spark of divine essence so that he is no longer truly mortal, his power being on par with a quasi-deity (see DRAGON® issue #71). As a non-mortal, the saint *must* be a non-player character. If a player character somehow manages the near-impossible and is truly worthy of becoming a saint, then the player should be satisfied with his character's achievement, and must let the character pass into the capable hands of the DM, to be used forever more as an NPC.

While the abilities of a saint are as varied

as the gods themselves, each saint being a unique individual, there seem to be some abilities, listed hereafter, common to all saints. The number in parentheses after a listing indicates the number of times per day each of these spell-like powers may be used. Powers followed by an asterisk (\*) are those that are used in reversed form by an evil saint (for instance, *continual darkness* instead of *continual light*).

*Command*, 1 round effect, no saving throw (1)

*Continual light*\* (3)

*Cure disease/cure blindness*\* (6 each)

*Dispel evil*\* (1)

*Heal*\* (1)

Immunity to death magic spells and powers

*Know alignment* (at will)

*Protection from evil*, 10' radius\* (at will)

*Raise dead*\* (1)

*Reduced aging*<sup>1</sup>

*Remove curse*\* (3)

*Summon* (1)<sup>2</sup>

*Tongues/Comprehend languages* (at will)

*True seeing* (1)

Notes:

(1) The saint will have 5 to 10 times the lifespan of an ordinary mortal, in addition to being able to use life-prolonging aids available in the AD&D universe (such as a *potion of longevity*). Upon his death, a saint will go to reside upon an Outer Plane appropriate to his alignment and religion.

(2) A saint can *summon* one creature of the same alignment of not more than 12 hit dice. This power is usable once per week, as opposed to all other "numbered" powers, which are usable the specified number of times per day.

In addition to these powers, a saint has the ability to inspire *awe* in creatures of 1 hit die/level or less, as if the saint were a divine being with a charisma of 19. This *awe* ability is not dependent on the actual charisma of the saint, and he may activate this power at will. This power also allows high-level characters/creatures to be aware that the saint is a being of more-than-human power.

As a demi-deity, a saint has a saving throw of 3 in all categories. A saint is likely to have magic items of a unique nature (minor artifacts) or ordinary magic items of the greatest power.

Not all religions have saints, while some religions have a large number of "patron saints" who serve as intermediaries between the deity and the deity's worshippers on a number of matters. A patron saint is the most powerful variety of saint, and actually

receives worship through shrines located in the major temples of the patron deity. Those saints who generate enough interest that cults are eventually formed to honor them may become demi-gods.

Saints, being of such great power, should be relatively few in number on any one world; a saintly encounter is rare for even the most travelled party. Saints make interesting acquaintances — or deadly enemies — for player characters. As examples, following are four descriptions of saints from my own campaign: St. Ceril, who is of about average power for a saint; St. Bane, a patron saint who approaches demi-god status; St. Kargoth, a paladin gone wrong; and St. Eleador, who achieved sainthood extremely early in his mortal existence.

### ST. CERIL the Relentless

ARMOR CLASS: -7

MOVE: 12"

HIT POINTS: 98

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3/2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type* (+2)

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

SIZE: M (7 feet tall)

ALIGNMENT *Lawful neutral*

SYMBOL: *Three upward-pointing arrows*

CLERIC/DRUID: *19th level cleric*

FIGHTER: *7th level fighter*

PSIONIC ABILITY: VI

S 18 (+1, +2), I 16, W 19, D 18

C 16, CH 19, CO 20

Ceril was an altar boy for his religion in a village where the entire population, including his parents, was slaughtered by toad-like creatures. Ceril, the lone survivor, vowed to avenge their deaths. He spent fifty years trying to accomplish this, consuming little food or water, hardly sleeping, sustaining himself only by an unceasing fury. Finally he found the murderers, a group of renegade Slaadi. After a great battle, Ceril singlehandedly slew their leader, a very powerful Death Slaad. Impressed by his devotion and perseverance, Ceril's deity awarded him with sainthood.

Ceril has several special weapons, the greatest being *Chaosbreaker*, a +5 *long sword* that does double damage against any creature of a chaotic alignment. His +3 *plate mail* cannot be destroyed or rusted, and has the combined abilities of a *ring of swimming*, a *ring of free action*, a *necklace of adaptation*, and a *helm of underwater action*. His +2 *shield* will, on command, reflect a spell as does a *ring of spell turning*, seven times daily, one spell per melee

round. He also has a plethora of minor magical items.

Ceril appears to be a man of about 40 years of age, despite the fact that he has lived for more than 250 years. He has golden hair, a short beard, and grey eyes. He is highly charismatic, and can cast a suggestion spell (once per round) on any creature of up to 6 hit dice/levels merely by speaking with the creature. He is often found *questing* against chaos, and wandering from place to place preaching the importance of strict devotion to order and the need to battle chaos, a cause for which he will occasionally employ (and willingly sacrifice) mortals as pawns.

### ST. BANE the Scourger

(Patron saint of those who hunt undead)

ARMOR CLASS: -5

MOVE: 18"

HIT POINTS: 143

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3/2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-12 (+9)

SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard

SIZE: M (6 feet tall)

ALIGNMENT: Neutral good

SYMBOL: Flaming black trident

CLERIC/DRUID: 22nd level cleric

FIGHTER: 10th level fighter

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

S 18/22 (+1, +3), I 20, W 21, D 18

C 17, CH 19, CO 16

Saint Bane was the high priest of a religion whose main precept is the extermination of the undead. As a first level cleric, Bane incredibly managed to slay three vampires, and as he rose in power he battled deadlier foes. Finally, Bane was responsible for the death of the witch-ghoul Khuul, one of Orcus' greatest servants, and he attacked and nearly slew Orcus on his home plane. For his valor, Bane was rewarded with sainthood.

Bane has the standard abilities of a saint, and a lifespan ten times longer than an ordinary mortal; he appears to be about 70 years of age. Any undead of low intelligence or less that even glances at Bane must save vs. death magic at -4 or crumble into dust; undead of higher intelligence must make the same saving throw or flee in terror. Bane is immune to aging, *fear*, charms, paralysis, or life-level loss.

In battle, Bane wields a +6 *flaming trident* that does a base of 3-12 points of damage (+9) and triple damage against undead. His +2 *plate mail* makes him immune to fire, cold, and lightning attacks, slow spells, and *magic missiles*; his +1 *shield* will deflect any normal missile fire hurled at him, including boulders thrown by giants, and it has a 35% chance of deflecting missiles with a magical bonus. He has a few other magic items of minor power. Bane's armor, shield, and trident are *transdimensional*; they do not vary in power or ability on different planes.

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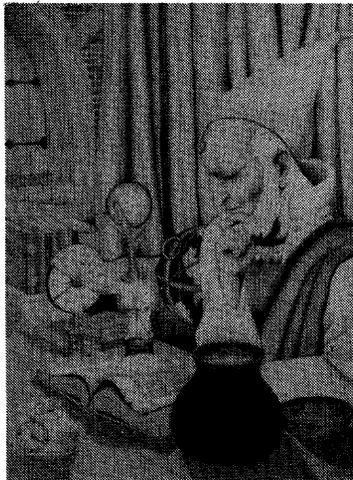
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Bane has a fairly widespread cult, particularly in places heavily infested with undead. While he only has a small and rather weak priesthood (maximum 4th level clerics), his clerics and those who serve Bane's patron god that gain Bane's personal blessing before questing against undead have a 75% chance of gaining +1 to all undead-turning rolls, while those who pray at Bane's shrine have a 15% chance to gain a +1 to turn undead. This blessing lasts for the duration of the quest.

Bane is a wanderer of the planes, and often makes sorties into the Abyss. His plans are subtle and far-reaching, and he will often use mortals in his schemes. He appears as a man with wild white hair, who often rides a white beast with the specifications of a nightmare of maximum hit points but which is neutral good in alignment. Bane has made a vast number of powerful, evil enemies; those who ally with his cause are asking for a lot of trouble.

### ST. KARGOTH (King of the Death Knights)

ARMOR CLASS: -5

MOVE: 15"

HIT POINTS: 136

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type (+8)*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 90% (*see below*)

SIZE: M (7 feet tall)

ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic evil*

SYMBOL: *Glowing green skull*

CLERIC/DRUID: *12th level cleric*

FIGHTER: *16th level fighter*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

S 20 (+3, +8), I 18, W 15, D 18

C 18, CH -1, CO -6

Kargoth was a great paladin, until he unleashed a demonic terror on the Prime Material Plane in a mad bargain for personal power. The grateful demon prince transformed Kargoth into the first and most powerful Death Knight. When the forces of good rallied and drove away the horror, Kargoth exalted in his newly won power and performed many deeds of great malevolence and harm to the forces of good. Finally the scale of his atrocities grew to a point where the gods of chaotic evil alignment could not help but recognize his achievements; needing an agent to counter the saintly agents of good (such as St. Bane), they endowed Kargoth with saint-like abilities.

Kargoth's powers are many and terrible. He automatically commands any undead he encounters except those directly serving Orcus, and can *summon* two Death Knights (see FIEND FOLIO™ Tome) at will once per week, in addition to his saintly summoning ability. He has 90% magic resistance, and there is a 65% chance that any spell successfully cast at him will be reflected back upon the spell caster.

Kargoth wears +4 *plate mail* and wields a variety of magical swords of great power,

though he lusts for even more powerful weaponry. The only sword in his long career that came close to satisfying him was *Gorgorin the Shatterer*, which does 2-20 (plus strength bonus) hit points damage; each victim it strikes must save vs. death magic or be disintegrated. Fortunately, the *Shatterer* was lost when Kargoth battled the legendary Hainard of the Whiteguard. Kargoth has never stopped looking for the sword since, and dark shall be the day that Kargoth and his beloved sword are at last one again.

Kargoth rides a glowing green chariot driven by six nightmares, each of maximum hit points. While in the chariot, Kargoth generates *fear* in a 120' radius; outside the chariot, Kargoth generates *fear* in a 30' radius, continuously. He is capable of the following additional powers, usable one at a time and one per round: *wall of ice*, *dispel magic*, *darkness 20' radius*. Thrice per day, Kargoth can do each of the following: *gate* in a Type III (50%), Type IV (35%), or Type VI (15%) demon, with a 100% chance of the *gate* opening; use any of the *power word* spells, a *symbol* of pain or fear, and toss a 20-dice *fireball*. These are in addition to his other saintly abilities.

Kargoth's physical body was driven from the Prime Material plane centuries ago, but in his undead form he is still able to venture to the Prime Material plane to wreak havoc. While he serves Demogorgon willingly, his power is believed to approach that of his master's, and his actions in the complex rivalries of the Abyss require close scrutiny.

Kargoth appears to be a Death Knight of massive size and build, except that his skeletal features are a baleful, glowing emerald color.

### ST. ELEADOR the Survivor

ARMOR CLASS: -4

MOVE: 12"

HIT POINTS: 88

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type (+1)*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

SIZE: M (6 feet tall)

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral good*

SYMBOL: *Golden chimera*

CLERIC/DRUID: *17th level cleric*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *VI*

S 16 (+0,+1), I 18, W 20, D 16

C 16, CH 16, CO 15

Eleador was a young priest who was thrust into circumstances far beyond his control, where he and a small band of adventurers were the only ones who could prevent the unleashing of a monstrous evil. Overcoming unbelievable odds, he managed to thwart the evil, and several deities gratefully rewarded him with sainthood.

Eleador does not enjoy combat, preferring peaceful resolution of conflicts to bloody violence. This makes him all the more dangerous when aroused, and he will not hesitate to attack the most evil of foes.

Under *no* circumstances will Eleador surrender or submit to blackmail; he is willing to see those he loves die before he compromises his principles. In a battle, Eleador wields the *Mace of Aruru*, a +3 mace of disruption which dispels evil on a natural "to hit" roll of 18 or better; he also owns a talisman of pure good with double the usual number of charges. Like St. Bane, Eleador is a powerful foe of the undead, gaining a +3 to his die roll to turn undead creatures.

Eleador's greatest power, however, is his gift of *timesight*. When Eleador sleeps, he is able to gaze into the past and the future in his dreams. The source of this power is *not* psionic; it has been speculated by some sages that a link exists between St. Eleador and the Plane of Time. It is possible that because of this link the gods have taken a great interest in his affairs, which resulted in his elevation to the sainthood at a comparatively low level of experience and with a relatively weak reputation.

Eleador often wanders from plane to plane, but rarely uses disguises. He appears to be a man of about 30 years of age, with blond hair and blue eyes; he wears deep blue robes over his chain mail with the insignia of a golden chimera on his chest. He has been known to ride an extremely powerful Pegasus (AC 3, MV 12"/48", HD 6+6, HP 54, #AT 3, D 2-12/2-12/1-4, SD 10% magic resistance, immune to petrification) which he befriended on a particularly harrowing adventure. m

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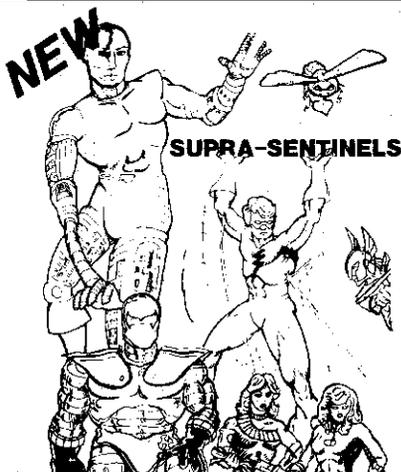
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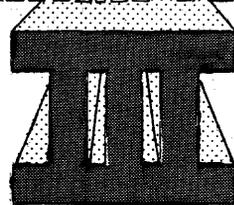
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- January 1982.** "Unsound Variations" by George R.R. Martin; Theodore Sturgeon, Manly Wade Wellman; Lloyd Biggle interview.
- March 1982.** "The Cheese Stands Alone" by Harlan Ellison; Brad Linaweaver, Barry Malzberg; A. E. van Vogt interview.
- June 1982.** "The Story of a Dadar" by Darrell Schweitzer; Charles L. Grant, David Bunch, Wayne Wightman, Asimov classic reprint; Charles L. Grant interview.
- September 1982.** Marvin Kaye, Parke Godwin, Alan Ryan, David Bunch, George Alec Effinger; Michael Shaara interview.
- November 1982.** The first Scithers issue! Michael Whelan cover; long fiction by Jack Williamson, Larry Niven, Robert Silverberg; short stories by Gene Wolfe, John M. Ford, Nancy Springer; Silverberg's "Opinion"; Ford's games column.
- January 1983.** Kelly Freas cover; "Aquila Meets Bigfoot" by

Somtow Sucharitkul; novelet by Poul Anderson; stories by Tanith Lee, Jack C. Haldeman, Michael McCollum; Avram Davidson's "Adventures in Unhistory"; Silverberg column.

**March 1983.** Jack Gaughan cover; part 1 of *Against Infinity* by Gregory Benford; Bill Pronzini, Darrell Schweitzer, Sharon Webb, Damien Broderick; poetry by Thomas Disch; "The Amazing Years" by Cele Goldsmith Lalli; A. Bertram Chandler interview.

**May 1983.** Kelly Freas cover; *Against Infinity* by Benford concluded; "Aquila: The Final Conflict" by Somtow Sucharitkul; Gene Wolfe, Alan Dean Foster, William Wu; features by Silverberg, Ford, Catalano, Coulson.

**July 1983.** Thomas Kidd cover; "The Lord of the Skies" by Frederik Pohl; Avram Davidson, Ron Goulart; Silverberg column.

**September 1983.** "Pine Castle" by R. A. Lafferty; Tanith Lee, Reginald Bretnor; R. A. Lafferty interview.

**November 1983.** George Barr cover; stories by Avram Davidson, Robert Silverberg; science fact by Ben Bova.

## FANTASTIC:

**January 1980.** "The Cliffhanger Sound" by Paul Dellinger; "Never Argue with Antique Dealers" by Darrell Schweitzer; classic reprint by Murray Leinster; analysis of TV adaptations of Ray Bradbury.

**October 1980.** "The Amorous Umbrella" by Marvin Kaye; Darrell Schweitzer, Wayne Wightman, Tom Easton, M. Lindholm.

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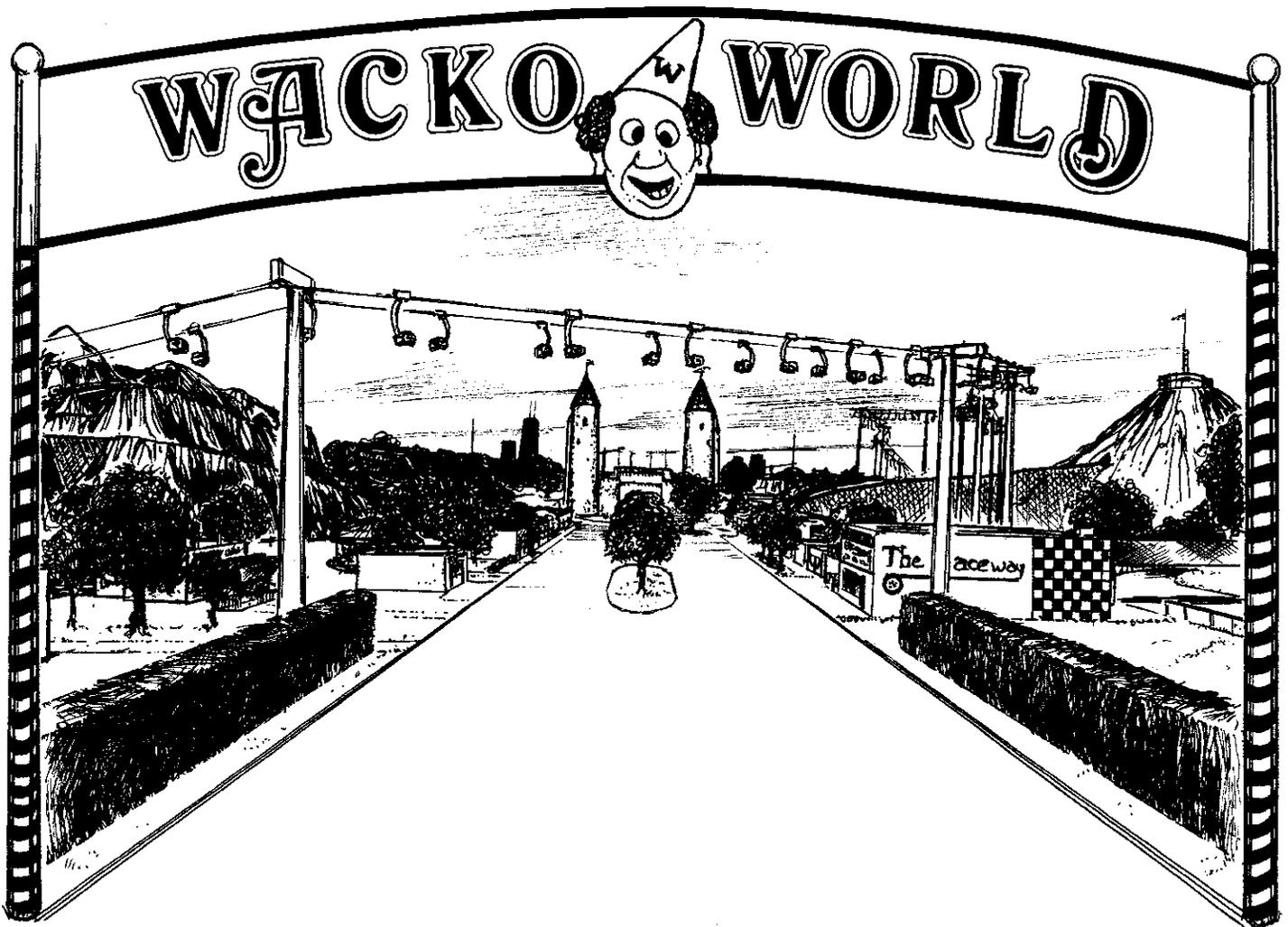
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TO: Investigation agents  
FROM: Agency headquarters  
RE: Hydra

For some time, this agency has been aware that a new criminal organization has been formed in Florida. This group, which calls itself Hydra (no relation to the CIA computer system of the same name), does not appear to have any political aspirations at the present time, and is primarily geared toward the extortion, sabotage, and protection rackets.

Recently, several owners of amusement parks in the state have contacted state and federal law enforcement agencies, asking for assistance. All had received threats from Hydra, stating that if the owners did not pay large amounts of cash to Hydra, their park facilities would be bombed at a time that would cause considerable loss of life as well as destruction of property. Because of the apparent far-reaching scope of this extortion setup, this agency has been asked to assist in preliminary investigations of all the parks that are involved.

You are one of the teams being sent to scout the amusement parks that have received extortion notices. The location of your assignment is a park called Wacko World, near the city of Orlando. As with all of the parks involved, it is possible that Wacko World is actually a front for Hydra's operations, but we have no conclusive evidence to support that suspicion.

Your mission is to uncover such evidence, if it exists, or to determine beyond a reasonable doubt that Wacko World is not directly involved with the extortionists. You will enter the park, posing as ordinary tourists, and perform whatever observation and surveillance you can undertake without revealing your actual identities. Do not instigate any direct confrontation with Hydra personnel, unless that cannot be avoided. This must be a "clean" mission in every way, to be accomplished without injuring anyone and without damaging or destroying any property. You have one day to collect whatever information you can before reporting back to headquarters. You will be issued special surveillance equipment and simple firearms, to be used only if your lives are in immediate danger. Good luck.

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*Designed by*  
*Al Taylor*

*A TOP SECRET® mission for 4-8 players*

# WACKO WORLD

## This information for the Administrator's eyes only!

### INTRODUCTION

WACKO WORLD is an adventure designed for a group of 4-8 TOP SECRET® agents, most or all of whom are working in the Investigation Bureau. The Administrator should read through the scenario carefully before beginning play, and should be thoroughly familiar with the physical layout of the park and the characteristics of the non-player characters who populate the scene of the action.

Two new traits for agents, Observation and Perception, are used in the administration of this mission. These skills were originally described in Module TS004: *Fastpass*, and are outlined below. Agents will need to make use of these skills in the adventure, and should be briefed on what the skills are and how they are employed.

#### **Observation** = (Willpower + Knowledge)/2

This trait reflects an agent's ability to notice and remember events and details. An agent with a high Observation score has sharp senses and an acute memory, pays close attention to the details of his surroundings, and has an "internal clock" that allows him to keep track of the passage of time.

An agent with an Observation score of more than 100 has a photographic memory and a sense of direction that functions even indoors or in darkness. Such agents seldom get lost, and can easily retrace their paths through complicated routes and passageways. All of an agent's physical senses are used in Observation, and the hampering of any of those senses may lower the agent's effective Observation score until the deficiency is corrected. An agent's Observation score cannot be increased by the use of a telescope, magnification device, or amplifier.

A player must inform the Admin each time an attempt is made to use the agent's Observation trait.

#### **Perception** = (Courage + Observation)/2

This trait is used to detect booby traps, hazards, camouflaged or concealed items, forgeries, counterfeits, and coded messages. It is also used to spot pursuing agents, disguised persons, the carrying of concealed weapons, lying, and cheating at games of chance. An agent with a high Perception score has a special sense for knowing when something is not right, or when a situation is dangerous.

If an agent is attempting to conceal or smuggle a weapon or other item on his person, the smuggler's Deception score is adjusted for the Deception modifier of the item before being compared to the Perception score of the observer. For example: If an agent with a Deception score of 45 attempts to conceal a .45 caliber U.S. Government revolver (Deception modifier 8) from a guard with a Perception score of 69, the percentage chance of discovery is  $69 - (45 - 8) = 32\%$ .

A player must inform the Admin each time an attempt is made to use the agent's Perception trait.

### MISSION PREPARATION

Each agent on this mission will be provided with a special phone tap that transmits all conversations it picks up on a scrambled frequency to a tape recording system built into the car the agents will drive to the park. The tape recording system is activated by remote control and need not be manually operated by someone in the car, although a manual override is available and can be used if desired or necessary. The tap will also broadcast a signal to a special set of earphones which can be made to look like a headphone radio, hearing aid, or other everyday device. Each agent's tap broadcasts on a different frequency from all the other taps; the broadcasting range is one-half mile. These taps should be planted as promptly as possible once agents arrive

at the park. They may be disconnected and taken away at the end of the mission, but this is not necessary.

Agents will have access to other types of equipment, which can be supplied to them as desired by the Admin, or at the request of an agent. These items include the usual lock-picking kits, miniature tape recorders and microphones, cameras (which do not have to be concealed in a place like Wacko World, where many people carry them), and related investigative materials.

Each member of the mission team will be issued a small pistol with appropriate ammunition, and under no circumstances will they be allowed to take explosives, grenades, or automatic weapons into the park. Bulletproof vests are also not recommended, since they can be easily detected under clothing, especially the light attire that tourists would be wearing in the Florida climate. Personal communication devices (walkie-talkies, etc.) may be taken along at the agents' discretion. The Admin should remember, and should remind agents if necessary, that this is "only" an investigative mission, not a shoot-'em-up confrontation. Agents should be discreet, low-key, and unencumbered with heavy gear or bulky clothing.

The group will be given the use of an agency car containing the tape recording equipment described above. (If more than 5 agents embark on this mission, a second vehicle will be provided to avoid crowding everyone into a single car, but this second vehicle will not be specially equipped.)

The success or failure of this mission will depend in large part on how well the agents employ their skills of Observation and Perception. The Admin should take special care to explain those skills to agents before they begin, so that they fully understand them and are willing to use them.

### ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTES

Of course, things at Wacko World are much more complicated than they might seem at first. In fact, the park is used as the main base of operations for Hydra, and some (but not all) of the park employees are members of that organization. The park manager, Alex Katakis, is the leader of Hydra; Donald Duckworth (also a Hydra employee), who holds the title of assistant manager, actually takes care of the day-to-day operation of the park. Wacko World is a publicly held corporation with a board of directors and stockholders, and Hydra isn't actually involved in the ownership of the park; however, the organization has infiltrated the park's operation, using it as a cover and as a source of revenue (skimming off some profits here and there).

Early in the morning on the day of their mission — before they arrive at the park, but after they've received all their equipment — agents will learn (from a news broadcast or some such source) that Wacko World will be visited by a foreign dignitary on that day. The celebrity is Lady Elenore Mayhall of England, who is in the United States on a special diplomatic mission (see below). Her intention to visit the park was not announced in the media until after the agents received their briefing on their mission. Lady Mayhall will be highly visible during the time she is at the park, because she has an entourage of aides and media representatives around her, and because she presents a striking image all by herself. She is an exceptionally attractive woman who dresses impeccably and stands out in a crowd — especially a crowd of informally attired tourists. While at the park, she will be continually accompanied by two women and a man (her personal aides), and will be trailed by a cameraman and a reporter from a local television station.

Also present at the park on this day, unannounced and unobserved by media, is Lt. Mohammed Abdul Ahmed, the young son of a Saudi Arabian oil magnate. Lt. Ahmed is on leave from Patrick Air Force Base in Florida, where he is taking jet pilot

training through the U.S. Air Force as a foreign national. He is in uniform, and is visiting the park simply to enjoy himself. An agent will recognize him on a successful Perception roll. (The lieutenant is included in this adventure only as a distraction for agents; he is in no way involved with Hydra, and knows nothing of the existence of such a group.)

Also at the park on the day of the agents' mission, unbeknownst to Hydra, the agents, or anyone else, is a plain-looking young woman named Mary Nolan. She is in her mid-30's, short and slight, with close-cropped brown hair. She is wearing jeans and a simple tank top, and when she enters the park she will be carrying a large shoulder bag.

Mary Nolan is an international terrorist. Her purpose for being at Wacko World is to kill Lady Mayhall in a spectacular manner that will draw attention to the cause of her group. Lady Mayhall came to the United States to campaign against certain "charity" organizations that use the funds they gather to purchase weapons and equipments for terrorist groups operating out of West Germany. Mary Nolan belongs to the British branch of one of these groups. She has been trailing Lady Mayhall and her party for the last few days, waiting for an opportune moment to make her presence felt — and today is the day.

Mary Nolan is well known to most intelligence agencies as "The Bombing Lady," and is universally regarded as fanatical and dangerous. Any agent with a Perception score of 60 or higher who takes notice of her will see that she seems somewhat paranoid in appearance and behavior, and is very protective of her shoulder bag, careful to not let anyone brush against it. Any agent who makes a successful Perception roll after noticing her will immediately recognize her, if she has not yet disguised herself. To determine what happens if she is disguised, see the following section on "Disguises."

Within two hours after the agents arrive at the park (see the "Timetable" section), operatives of Hydra will discover Mary Nolan's presence and will attempt to capture or kill her. Hydra

can easily guess at her reason for being in the park, and the group does not want face the federal investigation that would certainly follow if she gets a chance to blow up someone or something. Mary Nolan, being naturally paranoid and irrational, will do everything possible to avoid capture and accomplish her mission — up to and including suicide, as long as she can take Lady Mayhall with her when she goes.

### DISGUISES

At Wacko World, there is a small stand called the Makeup and Magic Shop which, for a fee, will make facial disguises to order for customers. Although most of the disguises available are amusing and designed to attract attention (clown faces, for instance), customers can also request to be disguised in a more inconspicuous fashion, so that they don't look unusual but do look different from their normal appearance. This is the sort of disguise that Mary Nolan will request and receive when she enters the Makeup and Magic Shop during her stay at the park.

For agents involved in this mission, the chance of discovering and penetrating another person's disguise is determined by this procedure: Subtract the disguised character's Deception value from the observer's Perception value. The result is the percentage chance that the observer will "see through" the disguise. A result indicating success means that the observer will know that a disguise is being used, will be able to tell what the person's normal appearance is like, and will be able to know the identity of that person if that appearance is familiar to the observer.

### TIMETABLE

This section lists the major events that occur at Wacko World on the day the agents come to the park. The Administrator should keep a careful account of the passage of time while agents are in the park, and should combine this information with movement rates and other factors to constantly keep track of the locations of agents and other important characters.



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If an agent is in the vicinity of a certain event when it is scheduled to occur, he will notice the occurrence if he attempts and makes a successful Perception roll. Exceptions to this would include detecting certain telephone calls, which only a properly placed phone tap will reveal.

- 8:00 Wacko World opens gates to public.
- 8:45 Player character agents arrive at park in car(s).
- 9:35 Lady Mayhall and company arrive at park in motorcade.
- 9:45 Lady Mayhall & co. go to Huck & Tom's World.
- 10:05 Mary Nolan and Lt. Ahmed arrive on bus at front gate of park.
- 10:10 Lt. Ahmed goes to Rocky Mountain Railroad; Mary Nolan goes on a slow stroll northward along central boulevard, looking for Lady Mayhall's group.
- 10:40 Lady Mayhall & co., on impulse, go to Skylift at southern end of park and ride to northern end.
- 10:42 Mary Nolan reaches entrance to Future Train ride and sits down on bench, watching crowd. Lt. Ahmed leaves Rocky Mountain Railroad and goes to Florida Fried Frog, where he encounters and speaks to a friend.
- 10:44 Lady Mayhall & co. disembark from Skylift at northern end of park, then look over their map of the park briefly before going to the Haunted House.
- 10:45 Hydra employee from Shooting Range, on break, recognizes Mary Nolan (still at Future Train area) and walks back to his booth to telephone his superior. Mary Nolan, correctly sensing that someone has been staring at her, quietly gets up and moves off southward.
- 10:50 Mary Nolan enters Makeup and Magic Shop, gets counter assistant to change her looks. Lady Mayhall & co. enter Haunted House.
- 10:57 Special telephone alert goes out to Hydra operatives around park to hunt for Mary Nolan; her location is unknown but a description (of her undisguised

appearance) is provided. Orders are to apprehend her and take her to the security post at King George's Castle. Situation described as "urgent."

- 11:05 Lady May hall & co. leave Haunted House, head south.
- 11:10 Lady Mayhall & co. enter King George's Castle; Lt. Ahmed walks off to Star Mountain and stands in line.
- 11:15 Mary Nolan, wearing heavy makeup and a cheap wig (from the Makeup and Magic Shop) and a different blouse (from her shoulder bag), leaves the Makeup Shop and heads north.
- 11:25 Mary Nolan reaches southern end of circular walkway around King George's Castle and sits on bench to wait. Lt. Ahmed enters Star Mountain ride, where he will be for the next five minutes.
- 11:40 Lady Mayhall & co. leave King George's Castle and are spotted by Mary Nolan, who gets up and follows the group at a distance of 50-75 feet, pretending to be looking at scenery.
- 11:53 Lady Mayhall & co. arrive at Rocky Mountain Railroad and get in line waiting to board; Mary Nolan stands a few feet behind group, clutching her shoulder bag.
- 12:02 Having seen all he wants to see, Lt. Ahmed walks south and leaves the park for the day.
- 12:14 Unless agents have acted prior to this time to prevent it, Mary Nolan will enter one of the railroad cars just after Lady Mayhall's group boards another car in the same train. She will drop her shoulder bag and push it under the seat, then pretend to be ill and attempt to leave the train quickly. Since their attention will be focused on Lady Mayhall's group, non-agents (including Hydra operatives) will not see this as anything unusual. Agents with a Perception value of 60 or more who are in the vicinity at this time will sense that "something is wrong" when Mary Nolan flees; any agents with a Perception score of 80 or more who are within 30 feet of

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the railroad car she boarded will immediately focus their attention on Mary Nolan and the direction she is running from. Unless some action is taken to prevent it, a large bomb in her shoulder bag will detonate shortly after this point in time; see the following section on Mary Nolan in "Major Characters" for more details. For information on what happens if the bomb goes off, see the "Aftermath" section.

#### MAJOR CHARACTERS

**Alex Katakis**, who serves as the park manager of Wacko World, is the leader of Hydra. He chose the name "Hydra" because the leaders of his organization have trained their underlings to take over for them in case they are incapacitated. In effect, when one "head" of the organism is cut off, another will grow up in its place. (For more information on Alex Katakis, see the description of area 22.)

Hydra was formed in 1981 by several dissatisfied members of an organized crime syndicate in Miami. They envisioned an opportunity to make big money by "going legit" through the operation of an amusement park, Wacko World, which was having serious financial problems at the time. The syndicate members managed to bail the park out of its money troubles, have a number of their own people installed as park directors and employees, and in time severed all connections with their parent syndicate.

For a criminal organization, Hydra is not very large. Though it uses terrorist-like methods, it is not political and is motivated entirely by the promise of financial gain. Hydra does not have access to "fancy" technology beyond what is currently and commonly available, but it will try to use its limited resources to the fullest.

**Donald Duckworth**, the assistant manager of Wacko World, is the highest-ranking Hydra official who actually knows something about how to run an amusement park. As such, he makes

most of the straightforward operational decisions. He was coerced into joining the organization because of his professional experience in park management, and has remained silent and subservient to Hydra out of fear for the safety of himself and his loved ones if he betrays or attempts to subvert the intentions of the criminal organization. If he becomes aware that agents are on the premises, and if he is confident that he can reveal himself to those agents without recriminations, he will agree to do whatever is in his power to get the agents the information they seek. (For more information on Donald Duckworth, see the description of area 23.)

**Lady Elenore Mayhall** is a pleasant, calm individual who doesn't panic easily. She has set out on a deliberate crusade against terrorist activities, particularly those involving British nationals or those that have intentions of affecting British territory or property. Although she has the full support of her government and the majority of American and European citizens, many observers feel that her outspoken nature and her forceful attitudes will eventually get her into trouble. In fact, she has received numerous death threats, but she has ignored them.

**Mary Nolan** is a member of the Red Dawn, a terrorist splinter group based in Liverpool, England. The group has accomplished little in its brief lifetime, but has now decided to try to thrust itself into the world spotlight by assassinating a public figure. Mary Nolan volunteered for the mission, and flew to the United States three days ago to pick up the trail of Lady Mayhall. During those three days, she has tried twice to get close enough to Lady Mayhall to plant and detonate the one-pound plastique bomb in her shoulder bag, but has been frustrated for one reason or another.

The bomb has a 30-second timer attached to it, and contains an amount of explosive sufficient to destroy all non-concrete or non-armored materials within a 20-foot radius, while causing great damage to objects out to a 60-foot radius or more. Any person within 10 feet of the blast center will be killed immediately

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unless that person makes a saving roll of 00 on percentile dice, indicating that the person somehow survived but now has an effective Life Level of 1. Those within 11-20 feet of the blast will take 10 + 1-10 points of damage, and those within the 21-30 foot range will take 1-10 points of damage each. Persons within the 31-60 foot range will each take 1 point of damage from flying splinters.

The only weaponry Mary Nolan carries besides the bomb is a .22 caliber self-load Beretta concealed in her boot. She will use this firearm in a life-or-death situation, or if it will help her escape or avoid pursuit. If she is approached by a Hydra operative or an agent, she will attempt to flee into a crowd of people, putting innocent bystanders into the line of fire. If cornered, she will draw her pistol and open fire, possibly using bystanders as hostages or shields. She cares little for anyone's life other than her own, but will also be willing to give her own life for "the cause," especially if the alternative is capture. Her first priority will be to escape, by any route and using any means at her disposal. If she hasn't had a chance to plant her bomb before being discovered, she would not mind using the bomb to help cover her escape and possibly kill her pursuers, although she would have to start the timer and then delay dropping the bomb until the last possible instant, while still giving herself time to run clear of the blast area.

#### AFTERMATH

If Mary Nolan fails to get her bomb planted, the Administrator can use the details given above to guide him in completing the scenario. But, if she succeeds . . .

The bomb explosion will immediately panic the crowd at the park, and most of the people within 150 feet of the blast will head for an exit as fast as they can. Mary Nolan will do all she can to escape in the confusion, pushing people aside if necessary in her haste to get to and through the front gate. (She will not be distinguishable by virtue of this, however, since at least dozens of other people will be pushing and shoving just as vigorously.) Any agent with a Perception score of 80 or more who is within 20 feet of her at any time during her attempted escape will sense something unusual about her hasty departure from the park, and may try to follow and/or apprehend her.

The explosion will destroy the Rocky Mountain Railroad shortly after it leaves its starting point, killing everyone aboard the train (a total of 42 people) *except* Lady Mayhall, who will be seriously injured and will require immediate treatment and hospitalization. This incident will only serve to further fire her desire to eradicate terrorism, perhaps leading to future adventures involving her and the player-character agents.

Some park employees — but only if they are not Hydra operatives — will rush to the scene of the explosion just after it occurs (just as many tourists will do, causing extreme crowding in the immediate area of the train ride). Within 10 minutes after the blast, a telephone alert will go out to all employees who are associated with Hydra, warning them to prepare to leave the

park shortly. They are to collect their papers, weapons, and portable equipment and make their way to the administration buildings at once. Contact with police and other (non-Hydra) park personnel is to be avoided. Any agent who is within 30 feet of a Hydra operative and makes a successful Perception roll will notice that some park employees, rather than trying to help at the disaster, are collecting belongings and heading in the opposite direction. If an agent uses his Perception skill directly on a Hydra operative, he will notice that the person in question is very nervous and appears to be watching for someone in pursuit.

Once all Hydra personnel have assembled at the administration area, they will be told to flee to a meeting point in Atlanta, Georgia. Each operative will take a different route to get there, according to a prearranged escape plan. This will put Hydra out of operation for at least two weeks, but the organization (being as small and flexible as it is) will be able to re-start its criminal operations fairly easily, provided that none of the leaders are captured or killed.

Local police will begin arriving at the park 10 minutes after the explosion, when one car bearing two officers will be admitted through the wide gate at the front entrance. Three other local police cars (two officers apiece) and two ambulances will arrive within five minutes thereafter. Two State Police cars and five more ambulances will arrive 20 minutes after the bomb goes off. The first goal of the police and ambulance workers will be to treat the wounded; at least 20 people, and perhaps as many as 40, will be suffering lacerations and abrasions caused by flying debris. The police will do nothing to prevent people from leaving the park; the officers aren't numerous enough to practice effective crowd control anyway. But they will make informal attempt to question people to find out what happened, and they will listen to anyone who is willing to talk (such as an agent, or a cooperative employee). If a gun battle or chase is in progress when police arrive, they will attempt to capture or incapacitate everyone involved and take them into custody for questioning.

About 30 minutes after the explosion, television and newspaper reporters will arrive on the scene to add more confusion to the surroundings. Reporters may hamper the efforts of agents or police who attempt to gather information by following anyone whom they think looks suspicious or is acting strangely.

#### WACKO WORLD: GENERAL NOTES

The park is surrounded by an 8-foot-tall chain-link fence with a small barbed-wire overhang at the top. The fence is normal in all respects (not electrified, equipped with sensors, etc.). If an agent tries to climb over the fence, the Admin should make Observation rolls for any Hydra operatives in the vicinity who might have a chance of spotting the intruder. If a fence-climber is seen, security guards will ask him to halt, and if that doesn't bring the proper response, they will fire over his head as a warning. Signs posted at 20-foot intervals along the outside fence announce that the park is patrolled at all times, and no admission to the public is allowed except through the front gate.

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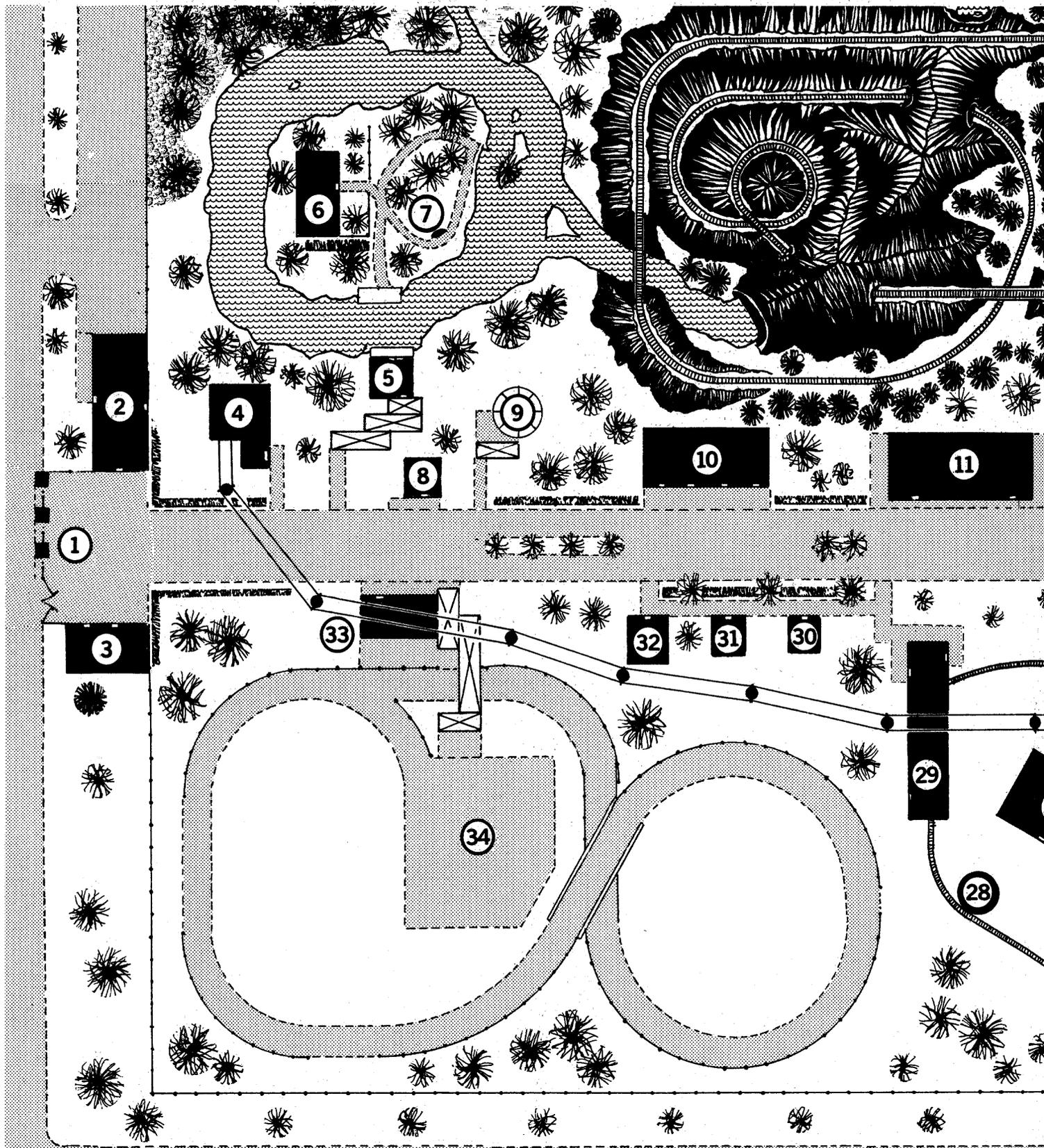
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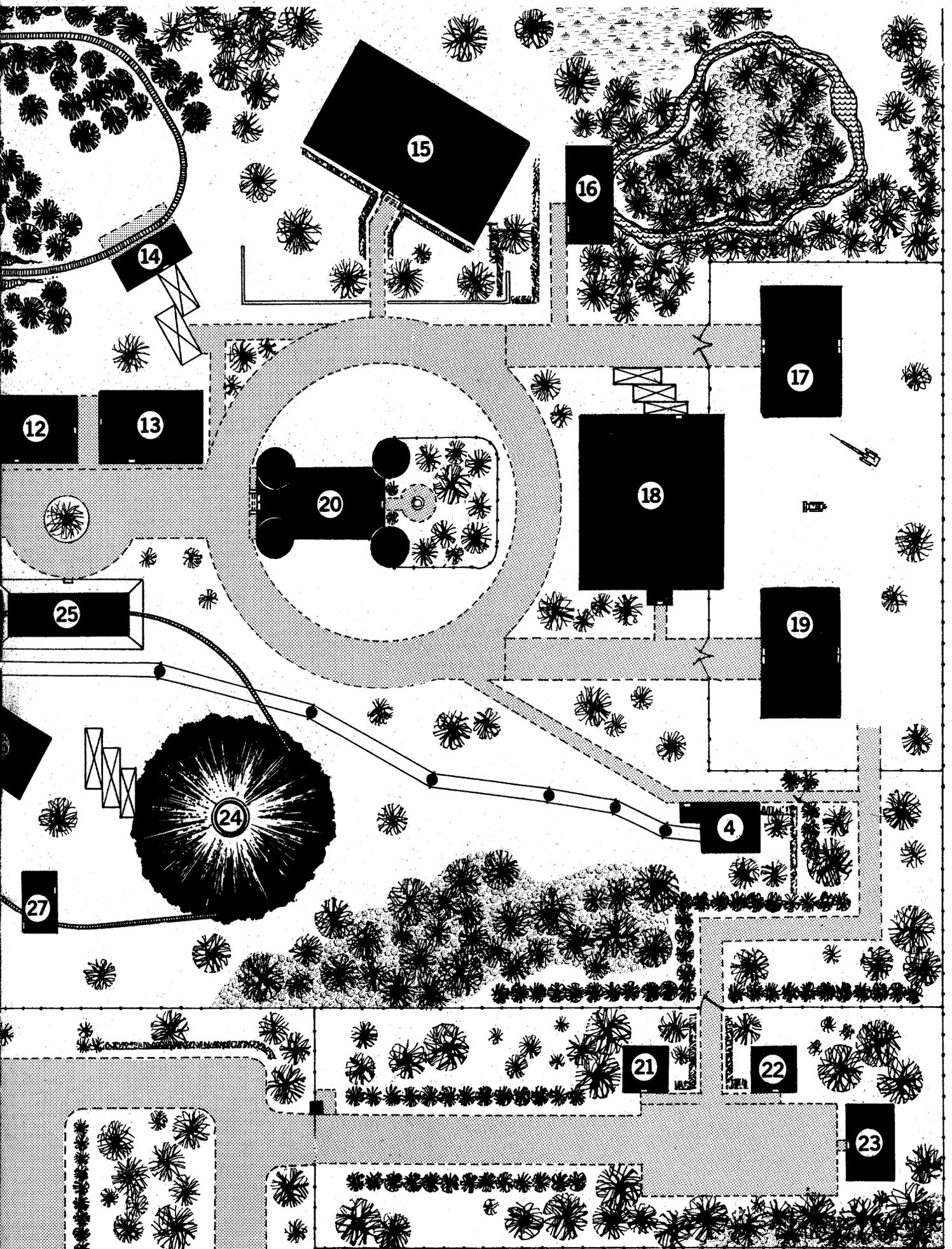
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# WACKO WORLD

Scale: 1 inch = 100 feet



*(This page has been left blank so the Administrator can remove the map of Wacko World from the center of the magazine and Lay it flat for use during play, without obscuring any of the text information.)*

All employees of the park who are not Hydra operatives are aware that some of the "regular" park employees carry guns and wear bulletproof vests. They have been told, however, that these workers are special plainclothes security men, and they are the only ones allowed to use the red telephones in the park (see the section on "Telephones and Taps").

Furthermore, normal employees have been ordered not to reveal to outsiders which of the park workers are undercover security men. However, if an agent presents some identification, a non-Hydra employee may be willing to identify some or all of the gun-toters for him. (Every park employee, Hydra and non-Hydra alike, wears a name badge with his or her correct name on it.) To determine the outcome of such an attempt to get information, compare the agent's and the employee's Charm traits and index the result on the Contact Reaction Table in the TOP SECRET rule book. If the agent fails to "fascinate" the employee he contacts, that employee will instead notify the "security" men that someone tried to get this information. Following that turn of events, a telephone alert to Hydra personnel will go into effect, and a Hydra operative will be assigned to follow the agent. Hydra wants to avoid a gun battle or other physical confrontation inside the park, and most Hydra operatives will go to considerable lengths to avoid this — up to and including "allowing" an agent to leave the park property before directly approaching that agent.

#### PARK EMPLOYEES

All regular park employees wear tan pants, a tan zippered jacket (very light fabric) with name badge and park emblem, and black shoes. Those who are obviously security men wear green pants and jackets, with walkie-talkies and gun holsters at their belts and bulletproof vests under their jackets.

The "special security" employees described above wear tan outfits, but with bulletproof vests and shoulder holsters under their jackets. An agent who makes a Perception roll while

observing such an agent will notice the telltale bulges and outlines of the vest and holster, and will recognize them for what they are. If enough of these people are observed, it should strike the agents as odd that so many employees are heavily armed and armored, seemingly far beyond any reasonable need for security.

The average statistics for non-Hydra park employees are found on the Master Characteristics Chart accompanying this text. All employees who are Hydra operatives are individually listed and described on the same chart.

#### TELEPHONES AND TAPS

Three kinds of telephones are inside Wacko World: normal pay phones, black "internal" phones, and red "security" phones. The pay phones (25 cents for a local call) are the only ones the public is normally permitted to use; park employees will not use them except in emergencies. The black "internal" phones are mainly for use by employees to contact another extension within the park, although they can be used for outside calls as well. Hydra operatives rarely use the black phones.

The red phones are for the exclusive use of Hydra operatives. They are "internal" phones much like the black ones, except that they can be made to all ring at once during an alert, or at a time when the park manager wants to contact all Hydra personnel simultaneously. If the number "00" (two zeroes) is dialed on any red phone, all other red phones will ring at the same time. Hydra employees often use the red phones for personal conversations, both within the park and to outside locations.

Each of the park telephones has its three-digit extension number printed clearly on the face. An adhesive sticker on each phone lists all other extensions in the park (both black and red phones). Black phones may be used to call a "red number," but only at the cost of a reprimand (or worse) for the employee who performs such an action.

There is a 50% chance that any park employee will allow a tourist to use a black telephone in a non-emergency situation (in

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the interest of good will) and upon request of the tourist. No employee, Hydra operative or otherwise, will permit the use of a red phone by a tourist, and all non-Hydra employees know better than to try to use the red phones themselves.

If agents attempt to put taps on park telephones (which they are expected to do, to perform their mission), the process of bugging one phone takes only 10 seconds. If a black phone is tapped, there is a 20% chance for each 10-minute period thereafter that it will be used and the conversation on that phone can be overheard and recorded. Nothing useful will be gained by bugging a black phone, although some interesting local gossip may be heard.

If any red phone is bugged, there is a 10% chance during each 10-minute period thereafter that the phone in question will be used. If a conversation takes place, the Admin may choose one of the three possible types of conversations listed below, select another topic altogether, or roll on the following table:

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 1-3  | Hydra agent calling a non-Hydra park employee on unimportant business (what time is it, wanna go out with me, how about a card game tonight, etc.).  |
| 4-8  | Hydra agent calling another Hydra agent inside park on unimportant matters; 50% chance that some passing reference to Hydra will be made.  |
| 9-10 | Hydra agent calling another Hydra agent on a matter directly related to the organization (when's the next weapon-cleaning session, any word from Mr. Katakis on plans for the future, any money coming in from blackmailed parks, etc.). |

Whenever something unusual or threatening (fistfight, purse-snatching, etc.) occurs inside the park, a Hydra agent will use the nearest red phone to call the park manager's office and the security posts at King George's Castle and the front gate; dialing "123" will connect the caller to all of those sites at the same time. There won't be any unusual occurrences at the park on the day of the agents' visit, unless the agents themselves are the cause.

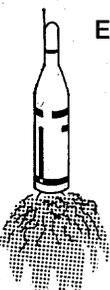
#### CROWD DENSITY

If a gunfight breaks out between Hydra and the agents (with or without Mary Nolan), it will be vital to find out how many tourists are in the way of the bullets. There are essentially three levels of crowd density in Wacko World, according to the following table:

Density	Locations	Effects on gun combat
Heavy	Near any ticket booth or entryway to a park attraction; around any restaurant or auditorium; anywhere children and adults would congregate	-10% to hit; any missed roll of 10 points over score needed to hit means bystander was wounded or killed
Moderate	Walkways, through the park; areas behind buildings	-5% to hit; any roll of 91-95 means bystander was wounded or killed
Light	The administrative section of the park; the parking lots; anywhere that few or no people would be around (off paths or away from park buildings)	Treat as normal gun combat

#### AREA DESCRIPTIONS

**1) Main Gate:** This is where the public enters and exits Wacko World. Tickets are purchased here (\$8 for adults, \$5 for children under 16). This is also the only checkpoint in the park; visitors are asked here to surrender all food, drinks, pets, alcohol, and drugs before entering. The possession of weapons in the park is, of course, illegal for anyone except security guards. Normally, no one is searched, and attendants at the gate give only a cursory once-over look at those entering (5% chance of spotting an agent's shoulder holster or some other abnormality). Anyone



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identifying himself as an agent will be referred to the security station adjacent to the main gate area. The four attendants at the front gate know nothing about Hydra, and the ticket booths do not contain telephones. (In the event of a disturbance, the security station is within easy shouting distance.)

**2) Security Station and Pet Kennel:** This station is manned by one receptionist (non-Hydra) and eight security guards, who are all Hydra operatives. The security men wear green uniforms (as described under "Park Employees"). At any given time, six of the eight guards will be wandering the park grounds individually, checking the fences and generally making sure all is well. All security men carry .357 snub-nosed revolvers and wear bullet-proof vests under their jackets; they are described by number in the Master Characteristics Chart.

The security station is divided into a pet kennel, a receptionist's area, a waiting room, and a security office where the guards rest and take coffee breaks. The security office has a red phone, a file cabinet, and a desk littered with paperwork, but none of the documents offers anything revealing about Hydra. A large map on the wall, however, contains markings that indicate that "Injun Joe's Caverns" is significant in some way; any agent who makes an Observation roll while examining the map will notice this. The security alarms in this building (Admin's choice of type) are turned off during the day.

**3) Locker Rooms:** This building contains hundreds of individual lockers that park visitors may rent for \$1 per day to store their personal valuables while they are at the park. It also has a pair of rest rooms and two public pay phones. Two park employees, one male and one female (both non-Hydra) monitor the locker rooms. Anything left unclaimed in the area for more than a week is turned over to park security.

**4) Skylift:** This is an elevated cable-car ride that goes from one

end of the park to the other. The lift sends one car out every 60 seconds, operating automatically, and it takes 4 minutes for a car to reach the other end of the park. The cars are lifted to a maximum elevation of 50 feet and maintain this height above the ground for most of the trip, making them excellent observation posts. Two employees work at each end of the lift; none of them are Hydra operatives. There is a black phone in each of the buildings at either end of the lift.

**5) Huck and Tom's World:** Visitors are taken on a short boat ride across a "river" to an island where life in the 1880's is depicted. Three employees work at the boat docks, none of them Hydra agents. A small workshop is in the building by the docks, containing rescue equipment, rafts, tools, and one black phone.

**6) Fort Sioux:** This is a large wood-and-fiberglass replica of an Old West army fort, with an ice-cream stand and gift shop inside its walls. Three of the eight people working here (Bruce, Dave, and Carol) are Hydra operatives. Each of the three carries a .357 snub-nosed revolver in a shoulder holster and wears a bullet-proof vest. The gift shop has three pay phones, one black phone behind the counter, and one red phone in a small alcove for employees only.

**7) Injun Joe's Caverns:** Essentially a man-made cavern dug out of a hillside, this attraction doubles as an armory for Hydra. A secret door, set in one wall of the cave, is protected by a security alarm. The door can be detected by an agent who searches the cavern and makes a successful Observation roll at a -40% penalty. This roll can be attempted once per turn for as long as the search continues. An agent who locates the secret door has a chance of finding the hidden alarm at the same time, equal to that agent's Observation score minus 30%. The alarm has an efficiency rating of 60%, so deactivating it requires a percentage roll of an agent's Deactivation score minus 60.

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If the alarm is triggered, it will set off small beepers on the belts of each of the three Hydra agents in the area (see the area 6 description). One of the operatives will telephone for assistance, while another gets on the intercom system wired into the cavern and asks everyone inside to leave quietly (claiming that there is some sort of ventilation problem). The third agent will stand near the cave entrance and look over the exiting tourists, ready to draw his or her weapon and fire if necessary. Once everyone has left the cave (or this seems to be the case), the three agents will enter the area and carefully examine it, then make a report to their superiors on the red phone inside Fort Sioux.

Beyond the secret door is a short tunnel leading to a 20-foot-square room stocked with various weapons, particularly a number of M-16 rifles. The serial numbers on these weapons, if examined and checked out, will be evidence of the fact that they were stolen from a unit at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, about six months earlier. The Admin may add other weapons and ammunition to this stockpile as desired, within reason (no heavy artillery or nuclear weapons, of course).

**8) Makeup and Magic Shop:** For a price of \$5, visitors to this small building can have themselves disguised by one of the four employees inside (none of them Hydra agents). This price includes only the application of makeup; other disguise elements such as hair dye (easily washed out), wigs, and articles of clothing are available at additional cost. It takes five minutes for an employee to apply one simple makeup job, perhaps longer for more detailed requests. The building contains one black phone.

**9) Merry-Go-Round:** This ride has two attendants (non-Hydra) and, if examined, will be found to contain nothing of interest to agents. There is no telephone on the premises.

**10) Sutter's Mill Gift Shop:** This building contains a gift shop, a game room with video machines, a snack bar, and a first-aid station. Of the eleven people working here, only one (Dr. Barnes) is a Hydra agent. The doctor's nurse, Jane Blake, has noticed that the doctor keeps a gun in his desk but thinks nothing of it; she has also noticed that the doctor is quite distant and difficult at times, having to go away "on business" fairly often. Actually, the doctor is the "pick-up man" for some of Hydra's extortion schemes. There are black phones in the gift shop and snack bar, a red phone in the first-aid station, and three pay phones next to the snack bar. The doctor has a .22 small-frame revolver, fully loaded, and 11 extra bullets.

**11) Mystery Maze:** This is a building with a mirrored maze inside. It has one employee (non-Hydra) and no telephone.

**12) Moon Walk:** Two employees (both non-Hydra) work at this building, which is simply a giant inflated tent with air bags on the floor for visitors to bounce around upon. There is no telephone on the premises.

**13) Shooting Range:** Two Hydra agents (Fred and Manfred) work here, monitoring an electronic shooting gallery; the guns fire light beams, not bullets. Neither of the attendants is armed, but hidden under each of the side counters on either side of the range is a box containing six bulletproof vests, a loaded .357 snub-nosed revolver, and three boxes of additional ammunition. The area has one red telephone.

**14) Rocky Mountain Railroad:** This is a miniature train ride, one of the more popular features of Wacko World. A typical ride lasts for 4 minutes; during this time animated cows, cars, and bandits will appear on or around the ride to entertain passengers, and the route includes sharp curves and tunnels to add to the excitement. Two employees man the electronic controls for the train, and one other worker acts as the "engineer," supposedly driving the train. Actually, the "engineer" has no control over the speed of the train; all he can do is use the brakes to stop the train if someone tries to get off when it's moving. None

of the employees are Hydra agents. The control booth has a black telephone.

**15) The Haunted House:** A huge building with walkways built through it in the manner of a fun house, the Haunted House includes highlights such as meetings with famous monsters, a ride in buggies pulled by phantom horses, and the usual ghosts, skeletons, and vampires. Although there is nothing exceptional about the Haunted House, one of the workers (Ralph) is a Hydra operative. He has a careless habit of scratching at his bulletproof vest, adding +20% to an agent's chance of detecting that he's wearing one. He carries the standard "Hydra issue" .357 snub-nosed revolver, fully loaded. The work station here has both a red and a black telephone.

**16) The Wild Jungle Ride:** Visitors here can get into canoes and paddle around a small watercourse to be attacked by crocodiles, have monkeys drop Styrofoam coconuts on them, be sprayed by elephants, and have angry natives shout at them from the banks. All of the "perils" are mechanical, of course, and harmless. The canoes actually run on tracks just below the surface of the water, and cannot be forced to leave their courses. Anyone taking this trip will be drenched by spray from the mechanical elephants (which is one of the reasons that visitors are required to check their valuables at the front gate). Four employees (all non-Hydra) work here, and the area has no telephones.

**17) Under Construction:** This building and several others near it are not completed, and are not even finished enough to reveal what sorts of structures they are supposed to be. A mobile crane and a bulldozer are parked between this building and area 19; either vehicle may be started and operated by an agent with an AOK of 50 or more in either Construction, Mechanical, or Transportation Engineering. There are no workers here at this time (they are only present during off hours) and no telephones.

**18) Pirates of the Bahamas:** This attraction, a fun house similar to the Haunted House, has been closed for repairs since being damaged in a recent thunderstorm. There is nothing of interest to the agents on the premises; the building contains a red and a black phone, but both are disconnected for the time being.

**19) Under Construction:** See area 17 for details.

**20) King George's Castle:** The castle building contains a large auditorium, dressing rooms, bathrooms, a gift shop, a janitor's storage area, and a lounge that sells mildly alcoholic drinks. A kitchen and fast-food stand are also present, and each of those two areas has a black telephone. A "lover's lane" park with a fountain is behind the castle, accessible only by passing through the castle area.

A stairway next to the gift shop leads to the second floor of the castle, where an auxiliary security station for the park is located. This station is a single room, 30 feet by 40 feet, containing two desks, a red phone and a black phone, a 10-foot-square holding cell, and a rest room. The station is normally manned by three Hydra operatives, each outfitted with a .357 snub-nosed pistol and a bulletproof vest. One of the three, John Olsen, is the chief of park security and the second-ranking agent in Hydra behind Alex Katakis. The other two guards are Marac and Tom.

**21) Employee Lockers:** Park employees, both Hydra operatives and otherwise, store their personal gear in this building when they come to work in the morning. There are no guards on the site, but there is a 10% chance whenever the building is entered that someone (30% Hydra, 70% civilian) will be inside, either taking something out of a locker or putting something away.

All park employees have a key to the outside door of the building and a key to one of the lockers inside. They are required to have both keys in their possession at all times. The building is protected by a house-style, door-tripped alarm (as per the TOP

SECRET rule book). An agent can detect the alarm system before opening the door by rolling his Observation score, at a penalty of -15%. If it is tripped, the alarm is very loud and cannot be turned off except by putting a key in the outside lock. Nothing in the building or in any of the lockers will be useful to the agents as evidence. Each locker that is in use has a 30% chance of containing money or valuables worth \$10-100; all of the lockers are closed and locked, but only one third of them (32 out of 100) are presently being used. The building has no telephones.

**22) Park Manager's Office:** This small building contains a receptionist's desk, the manager's office, and two rest rooms. A black telephone is on the receptionist's desk and a red one in the manager's office. Alex Katakis will be in his office during the day, reviewing plans that Hydra has developed for setting up a drug-smuggling operation in the Caribbean. In his desk, behind locked drawers (to which only he has a key) are plans and notes relating to the currently operating extortion ring and several minor criminal operations that Hydra has pulled off in the past. Katakis uses a .45 revolver which is normally stored in one of his desk drawers.

Katakis' receptionist is Martha Collins, a Hydra operative who also has a .45 revolver (hidden in her purse). She wants to further herself in the organization, and has no intention of telling anyone the truth about Wacko World and Hydra. If anyone investigates and obviously doesn't have any hard information to go on, she will direct their attention to another nearby park, Clown Town, claiming that the manager of that park is the one behind the extortion scheme. She will plead with any agent she tells this to, asking that she not be revealed as the source of that information because she fears reprisals from the "criminals." She will not attempt to use her weapon unless someone draws on her first; then she will attack at first opportunity, shooting to kill.

Anyone who gets a close look around the manager's office will see that there is almost nothing about the environment that

seems to be concerned with the daily operation of the park, not even an openly displayed map or schedule of events.

The building has a sonic motion-detector alarm system that is turned off during the day when the site is occupied.

**23) Administration Office:** This building contains the office of Donald Duckworth, the assistant manager of the park, plus a receptionist's area, rest rooms, and an employee lounge with vending machines. No one except Duckworth and his receptionist is normally present for any length of time during a working day. The receptionist's desk has a black phone, and Duckworth's desk holds both a red and a black phone.

Nearly everything in Duckworth's office is related to the management of Wacko World. However, in one drawer of his desk (left unlocked by accident) are papers containing references to the extortion plot. If confronted with these papers by an agent, Duckworth will confess his involvement in Hydra and ask for help in getting "unstuck" from that organization. (See the other details about Duckworth under the "Major Characters" section above.) He has a .357 snub-nosed revolver in his desk, but won't use it. His receptionist is not a Hydra employee and is unarmed. The building has a sonic motion-detector alarm that is turned off during the day.

**24) Star Mountain:** A miniature roller coaster ride is set into a large fiberglass "mountain," and tourists are treated to many amusing scenes using animated dolls. At one point, the ride becomes completely dark, and passengers are then exposed to brilliant, multicolored lights. The ride lasts for five minutes. It is manned by four employees (all non-Hydra), and the ticket booth contains a black telephone.

**25) Future Train:** This is a slow monorail train ride, with the track 12 feet off the ground. The train holds up to 24 people at one time, and the ride lasts for 10 minutes, including scenic stops

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along the way. The monorail is completely enclosed, and no one can leave the train between the start and finish of the ride. The train passes through Star Mountain via a tunnel, and passes over several other areas of interest as well. The loading station is staffed by four employees, and two others ride the train, serving as engineer and announcer; all are non-Hydra. The booth at the entrance contains a black telephone.

**26) Bumper Car Ride:** An ordinary attraction of its kind, monitored by two non-Hydra employees. There is no phone.

**27) Silversmith:** Future Train riders can look on as four young craftsmen (all non-Hydra) practice the art of silversmithing in this elevated building. It contains no telephone.

**28) The Swinging Vines:** This is a carousel-like ride using passenger chairs suspended by ropes from a revolving wheel. Two non-Hydra employees work this attraction; it has no phone.

**29) "Admin's Choice":** This amusement area has been left "undeveloped," for the Administrator to add a personal touch to the park. No Hydra agents work here, and the Future Train makes a stop here before returning to the station. The area contains one black phone.

**30) Movie House:** Although this theater can seat 250 persons, rarely are more than 40% of the seats occupied for a show. Today's film is "Our Friend the Alligator." The movie runs for 25 minutes, and shows start at half-hour intervals. The marquee promises that next week's movie will be "Those Incredible Walking Catfish." Four ushers and a projectionist work this area, none involved with Hydra. The projectionist's booth has a black phone, and there are two pay phones in the lobby.

**31) Empty Booth:** This appears to have been a cotton-candy vendor, but it now contains no personnel and only a couple of pieces of machinery. The park management has plans to install some other attraction here soon.

**32) Florida Fried Frog Restaurant:** "Lip-Lickin' Good!" reads the motto, although tourists and agents may feel differently about that. The area has five employees (non-Hydra) and a black phone.

**33) Raceway Car Show:** This building displays eighteen race cars, mostly either Indy-style (open-wheel) or stock cars. Three civilian employees and two Hydra operatives work here. One of the Hydra agents, Jamie, carries a .45 revolver and wears a bulletproof vest under his jacket. Neil, the other operative, carries a .357 Police magnum and also has a bulletproof vest. If an agent draws a gun on either of these persons, they will both pull out their weapons and fire at once, then try to flee the park as quickly as possible. Any agent making a Perception roll when seeing either of them will recognize the person in question as a professional killer; they are wanted in Washington, D.C., and Kentucky, respectively, for murder. The building has one red and one black phone.

**34) The Raceway:** This is a special raceway track for tourists to drive midget "race cars" on. The racers cannot exceed a speed of 10 mph, and can only be driven by adults. The area is monitored by Larry, a Hydra operative who has a .45 revolver and a bulletproof vest. He will react like Jamie and Neil (see area 33 description) if someone draws a pistol on him. An agent who makes a Perception roll when viewing him will recognize Larry as a hired gun who is wanted in Kentucky. He is also a master of martial arts.

MASTER CHARACTERISTICS CHART

	SX	PS	CH	WI	CO	KN	CD	OF	DP	EV	DE	OB	HH	SU	PR	MV	LL
Alex	M	70	94	86	83	98	79	81	89	87	89	92	158	176	88	235	16
Donald	M	56	63	60	73	85	41	57	68	52	63	73	108	120	73	157	12
Martha	F	58	50	89	94	83	59	77	72	55	71	86	113	127	90	206	15
Guard #1	M	94	83	64	74	79	99	87	79	92	90	72	186	171	73	352	16
Guard #2	M	69	40	72	88	61	73	81	61	57	67	67	126	118	78	214	14
Guard #3	M	89	93	99	99	75	69	85	87	81	72	87	170	168	93	251	19
Guard #4	M	79	62	75	46	43	83	65	54	73	63	59	152	127	53	237	15
Guard #5	M	76	44	76	52	71	58	55	49	51	59	74	127	100	63	206	15
Guard #6	M	46	78	92	38	94	42	40	58	60	68	93	106	118	66	176	14
Guard #7	M	93	51	87	71	91	63	67	59	55	77	89	148	114	80	243	18
Guard #8	M	62	52	77	80	76	45	61	66	47	61	77	109	113	79	180	14
Dr. Barnes	M	37	48	79	75	70	40	58	62	44	55	75	81	106	75	156	12
Average (non-Hydra) employee	M or F	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	100	100	50	150	10
Lady Mayhall	F	31	97	98	97	85	67	82	97	82	76	92	114	179	95	196	13
Lt. Ahmed	M	92	83	87	82	65	88	85	83	86	77	76	178	169	79	267	18
Mary Nolan	F	68	70	00	96	72	98	97	83	84	85	86	152	167	91	266	17
Bruce	M	51	62	37	30	93	48	39	46	55	71	65	106	126	48	136	09
Dave	M	70	89	45	88	56	65	77	89	77	61	51	147	138	70	180	12
Carol	F	46	46	68	61	50	80	71	49	63	56	59	109	119	60	194	11
Fred	M	96	64	96	96	31	74	85	80	69	53	64	165	149	80	266	19
Manfred	M	85	93	73	71	40	98	85	82	96	69	57	181	178	64	256	16
Ralph	M	52	55	85	65	50	54	60	60	55	52	68	107	115	67	191	14
John Olsen	M	89	44	65	90	43	85	88	67	65	64	54	154	132	72	239	15
Marac	M	86	31	32	00	98	72	86	66	52	85	65	100	118	83	152	12
Tom	M	40	45	80	60	80	92	76	53	69	86	80	109	122	70	212	12
Jamie	M	96	94	93	99	89	85	92	97	90	87	91	186	177	95	274	19
Neil	M	90	93	98	97	99	91	94	95	96	95	99	186	191	98	279	19
Larry	M	99	00	90	96	86	00	98	98	00	93	88	199	193	92	289	19

SX: Sex  
PS: Physical Strength  
CH: Charm  
WI: Willpower

CO: Courage  
KN: Knowledge  
CD: Coordination  
OF: Offense

DP: Deception  
EV: Evasion  
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# Page Advice II: Getting started

The flood of letters received by TSR, Inc., in response to the "Page Advice" article in issue #76 of DRAGON® Magazine was overwhelming and encouraging. However, it is apparent from those responses that the vast majority of readers who sent for the TSR submissions packet have had no experience with freelance design. To help solve that problem, this followup article deals with how to get started.

First, you need the *desire* to write — not just the desire to see your work in print. Writing is hard work for most of us, and writing module designs for a specific audience, under a deadline and with specific guidelines to follow, is harder yet. Remember when you composed your first 30-page term paper for a school assignment? Multiply that size by four, and you have a standard-sized commercial module manuscript.

In addition to coping with the size of the project, you are expected to adhere to the rule system and be creative at the same time. Also, publishers are more interested in a designer who produces material regularly than in an amateur who turns out one design and disappears. Thus, you also need the compulsion and

the discipline to produce material on demand.

Second, you need extensive *game knowledge*. You have to know the game system well enough to know what works — how to challenge a party of a particular level of experience, including knowing how such a party is likely to be equipped. You have to know what new elements can be used in, while maintaining the consistency of the original rules, and (this is the tricky part) you have to understand what the original designer intended when he wrote the game system. This sort of in-depth knowledge comes only with experience. In the event that a rule system has not been out for long (for example, the STAR FRONTIERS™ game or the GANGBUSTERS™ rules), a new designer does not have as much of a disadvantage, because others are probably not that far ahead of him in their understanding of the game system.

Third, you should put together a *reference shelf* if you don't already have one. This should contain books on writing, works of history and science, related fiction, and commercial products.

Tops on the list of "books on writing" is a dictionary: Get one, and use it. Pick up a copy of *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White — an invaluable book. Also, the booklet *Constructing Scientific Fiction & Fantasy* by Ashmead, Schweitzer and Scithers (available from Dragon Publishing for \$1.00) is worth its weight in gold to a beginner. Absolutely any book you can find on "how to write" will do more good than harm. Writing is a craft, a skill that must be developed, and it is essential to know the basics and practice the skills if you want to succeed at it.

The works on history and science that you select will depend on the general historical period you choose to write about. They range from technical, data-oriented works to books on general history, economics, politics, and other such topics.

The more facts you incorporate into your work, the more "real" your module will seem to the people who read it and play it. This section of your shelf will grow as you research more and different topics.

Fiction is the seed from which the hobby of role-playing games grew. It is also a source of enjoyment and inspiration in its own right. In addition to your favorite authors and stylists, try to locate sources that inspired the original designer of the game system, such as Vance's *The Dying Earth* for the D&D® system, or Lanier's *Hiero's Journey* for the GAMMA WORLD® rules. A well-developed and extensive fiction bookshelf is a definite asset to the serious module writer.

The last type of material on your shelf should be sample modules and rule sets. These will show what the game publisher has done in the past, and may be used as a rough guide to the format of a module if you don't have any other information. First and foremost, of course, is a copy of the rule system for the game you intend to write about. Although the following list is by no means exhaustive, a TSR reference shelf might also include:

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S1 — A tough, dangerous puzzle dungeon.

\*S4 — Overland/underground module.

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### D&D modules

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M1 – “Invisible ink” solo module.

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### Other systems

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GAMMA WORLD 2nd edition – An impressive rework of a classic game.

\*BH2 – A good variety of short BOOT HILL® adventures.

\*TS003 – A solidly designed commando raid for TOP SECRET® play.

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\*SF2 – A good treatment of the clash of large forces in a role-playing context.

(\* – Indicates a module which is a good illustration of format for that product line.)

The one thing every beginning designer must do, even after you've acquired and studied all of these reference materials, is *practice*. Books can point you in the right direction, but there is no substitute for writing, rewriting, and

more rewriting. No one puts together perfect, polished text the first time he sits down at a typewriter. Finished text is an achievement most of us can only attain after long hours at the typewriter, word processor, or other similar implement of 20th-century torture.

Following from that is the fourth requirement: You need either a typewriter or word processor. Copy should always be typed; editors and typesetters have enough eye trouble already without having to wade through someone's illegible scrawling. Copy should be double-spaced, so the editor has room to insert additions and comments between the lines. For most of us, a typewriter is fairly easily acquired or borrowed; if you can't afford one or can't find someone to lend you one, then you're in the wrong line of work. A word processor, hooked up to a computer, makes editing your own text a lot easier, but the machinery and software you need may be too expensive, unless you plan to get into writing in a big way or you have other uses for the computer.

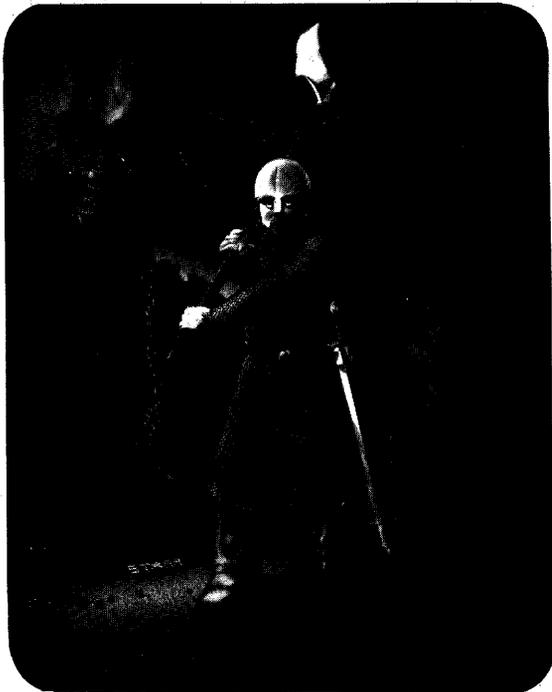
At this point, you have the physical materials you need – but you're *still* not ready to start writing in earnest. Before you start to turn out finished text, write to the publisher who will be reviewing your work. Find out what he wants – because if he isn't buying, you aren't selling. All publishers have different needs and desires. Find out what they are, cater

to them, and your chances of getting published will increase many times over.

TSR, Inc., for example, is looking for very polished manuscripts of high quality that fit some fairly specific physical requirements. These restrictions are imposed by time and manpower constraints, as well as by the physical printing processes we use. A sprawling epic of 1,000 pages has a much smaller chance of being looked at seriously than a 120-page manuscript of equally high quality. We are partial to manuscripts with developed story lines, internal consistency, and unusual tactical or situational “twists.” As a side note, we have a certain number of production “slots” in a season; after a certain point, we must stop taking material, regardless of its quality, until our reserves are depleted to the point where we must look for more manuscripts. (We are *not* at that point now.)

If you are serious about freelance design and intend to try to succeed at it, you must realize up front that you're in for a lot of work. And the bottom line, first and always, is to write, write, and write some more – and then revise, revise, and revise some more. There is no way to get around that requirement, and those who live up to it will have a much better chance of reaping the ultimate reward for all that effort – publication, and the fame and fortune that go along with it.

III



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# The fights of fantasy

## Good generalship from a non-medieval viewpoint

by Lew Pulsipher

Picture this fantasy episode: Somehow, the inhabitants of a world have been warned of an impending invasion by natives of another, evil world. They learn where it will occur, and approximately when, and set up a variety of traps – including an interdimensional gate of their own – in the projected path of the invaders. The day arrives. The invaders stream out of an inter-world gate; first, scouts who are trapped or shot with arrows (none of them escape), then flyers who are caught by invisible traps in the air as they avoid the ground traps, then thousands of orcs who pour out of the invaders' gate and right into the defenders' gate – which leads to oblivion. For hours the invaders come, and all are caught. Finally, there are no more, and the invasion is annihilated without loss to the defenders.

I understand that this actually happened, more or less, in a D&D® game. It is a good example of excellent generalship by the defenders, and appallingly bad generalship by the attackers (who were, it must be said, controlled by a referee rather than by a self-interested player). It also helps to illustrate how generalship in a fantasy universe, subject as it is to magic and a greater variety of creatures and capabilities than in our own mundane world, is very different from the historical generalship we know. The subject of this article is not the "principles of war" as such, because they are so abstract, but a discussion of how strategy and battle might be different in a fantasy game, and why, so that referees and players can make the necessary adjustments. The article uses examples from the AD&D™ game "universe" because that is one of the most magic-rich and creature-rich games.

### Fantasy battles aren't medieval battles

Some people have suggested that warfare in a fantasy game would be much like medieval warfare, and fantasy miniature battles rules tend to reflect this view. Somehow, one notion goes, the magicians and heroes ("adventurers") will cancel each other out while the armies get on with the battle. This is hogwash. Relatively inexperienced adventurers may be too weak to significantly affect a big battle, but more experienced ones will make a great deal of difference. True, if the adventurers on each side are of equal strength and numbers, the *outcome* of the battle – winning and losing – may turn out the same as if no adventurers were

present; but the course of the battle will be quite different. And if one side has stronger adventurers, as will ordinarily be the case, that side will have a big advantage.

Magic strongly affects tactics. The only way to counter the effects of large-scale magic or bestial power (such as dragon's breath) is dispersal and long-range weaponry. In effect, in the fantasy world the analogue of heavy artillery is the magician, and the powerful monster resembles a tank. Battles in a highly magical environment are probably less like a medieval battle than like an 18th-century or perhaps 19th-century battle, where units spread out both within themselves and in their relation to the rest of the army. But the speed with which events can happen, when magicians and monsters are involved, means that individual initiative of unit commanders counts for more than it would in an 18th-century battle. In fantasy warfare, a well-trained, experienced army has an even greater advantage over a less well-prepared army than in medieval warfare.

Flying creatures also change warfare radically. In effect we have the opportunity for air-mobile cavalry in a short-range weapon environment. Commanders or other valuable persons, objects, and places must be heavily guarded against airborne raids. Commanders tend to be within an army rather than behind it – in a place where they're less likely to be seen and singled out by the enemy "artillery" (magicians). Flying creatures also change strategy because small units of great potential power can move rapidly from place to place.

A well-known military maxim asserts that "He who would defend everything defends nothing." This applies particularly well to most fantasy role-playing universes, where so much power can be concentrated in a small area or in a few individuals. In the real world, one battalion used to take up as much space as another, with about the same combat power. But there's no comparison in strength between a thousand orcs and ten adult dragons, though the latter group is smaller and moves much faster.

The strategy of medieval (and some ancient) warfare was based on the more-or-less impregnable castle. Yet, because magic is so prevalent in fantasy games, a medieval castle is unsuitable as a fortress, and certainly far from impregnable to assault. That topic is discussed later; the point here is that generalship in a fantasy

world will not be like medieval generalship because forts are much easier to capture. Also, because of flying creatures and teleporting, supply lines for small forces are easier to maintain in fantasy than in the medieval world. Even if fantasy forts could be as strong as medieval castles, they would have less effect on strategy because supply lines are harder to cut.

Another difference is that feudalism need not dominate the fantasy world in the way it dominated Europe in the Middle Ages. This is partly a consequence of the weakness of fortifications, since magistrates cannot safely retire to their forts and defy authority. It is also a consequence of possibly quite different social premises. There is nothing in fantasy role-playing that necessitates a feudal setting rather than, say, a setting like the Roman empire, the successors of Alexander the Great, or the Renaissance. Warfare in these eras was highly organized and professional, in contrast to the less well trained, of ten nonprofessional armies of the Middle Ages.

### Fortresses

Where fantasy warfare most differs from mundane warfare is in the concentration of vast power and abilities in individuals. This makes it harder to protect a specific person or place, despite the aid of defensive spells. When one person or creature can blow away dozens of orcs, strategy and tactics change.

This change is most obvious in the decreased defensibility of fortresses. The medieval castle was not invulnerable, but a well-built castle was sufficiently defensible that an attacking force – *whatever its numbers* – would need many weeks or months to capture it. Most castles, even when defended by 100 or fewer men, fell to protracted siege operations or treachery if they fell at all; a successful immediate assault of a castle was almost unheard of.

The strategy of the builder was to provide multiple lines of defense in the castle, both to slow the attacker and to reduce his forces by attrition. Then the attacker would run out of time before his army melted away through disease, starvation, or return to the harvest. Or, the attacker would lose heart, or his losses would be so great that the defender could (ordinarily with outside help) defeat the attacker in open battle. Even if the castle fell, it could still accomplish its purpose by delaying the enemy while defenders elsewhere in the country gathered an army or received help from allies. (Later

castle-builders changed their strategy. While still providing multiple lines of defense, the idea was to enable all defenders to concentrate missile fire on the point of attack and slaughter enough attackers to force them to give up the siege.)

Why was it nearly impossible to rapidly take a castle? The walls were simply too high and too thick to get over or through without extensive "softening up." Because flame was effective against wooden castles (though less effective than one might think), stone was the principal building material. A few defenders, well protected on stone battlements, could defeat any ladder assault by firing from protected positions, by dropping rocks and boiling water on defenders, and by pushing the ladders away. Consequently, the attackers had to build siege towers, various missile-throwing engines, rams, and protective "penthouses." Often they needed to tunnel under the walls to create a breach because no other method was as safe or as certain, but mining was extremely slow work, and could be unsuccessful if the defenders detected the mine. Once a wall was breached or a gate opened, the attack usually succeeded — only to face the next line of defense.

#### Over, under, or through

The reason castles are more vulnerable in fantasy gaming is that attackers have many means of going over, under, or

through walls rapidly. Some of these means are magical, some monstrous or natural. First, going over: At night, a thief adventurer can scale a wall undetected if he's lucky, something virtually no one in the mundane world would try to accomplish. Two or three thieves, or a single very accomplished thief, could open a postern or other gate, let attackers in, and effect the fall of the fortress. The result would be similar to the effects of treachery in medieval times, when someone in the castle opened a gate to the attackers in return for financial or other rewards.

Any creature that can fly may accomplish the same thing, though beating wings are likely to be heard by those on watch. But not everyone needs wings to fly; picture a 5th-level fighter/m-u employing *invisibility* and a *fly* spell in a raid of this kind at night, or a group of ten fighters on hippogriffs.

Magic can help its users gain entry in many ways. *Invisibility* is enormously useful. A *knock* spell may break open a barred door, such as a postern or the door to a tower. *Dimension door* or even *teleport* allows a brave magician to penetrate deep into the fortress. *Gaseous form* or *etherealness* enables an attacker to slip into the fortress.

Magic can also help ordinary soldiers get over walls rapidly. For example, a *fireball* will sweep defenders from a wall

section so that attackers can climb ladders unmolested by defenders on the wall. In a well-made fortress, the hoarding or brattice work along the battlements will protect defenders from fireballs, unless a fireball goes in through a slit; in that case, it would expand inside the hoarding and sweep an entire wall clear of defenders.

"Unnatural" powers can also help force a way through walls. Dragons and giants may break down gates in minutes. Stone-digging monsters can breach a wall in a short time. Some very powerful spells may breach walls, though in general lightning bolts and such will bounce off or hardly scratch a stone wall. A *passwall* spell would be great for getting through thin walls, but most walls of a castle would be too thick; every gate would be vulnerable, however. Nonetheless, going through rather than over or under is probably the least likely method of breaching a castle, except for an army with extremely powerful monsters.

Going under (mining) will be quick if an *umber hulk*, a trained or charmed giant boring beetle, or another sort of digger can be used. Dwarves, orcs, and most other non-humans are better tunnelers than men. Medieval forces rarely tunneled into a fortress in order to invade it, preferring to break down a wall; but attackers of a fantasy fortress, thanks to the concentration of power in individuals, could employ this tactic. Imagine a

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force of highly skilled fighters following an umber hulk into the enemy keep while the rest of the attackers create a diversion outside. The defenders would be devastated morally, at least, to see their keep invaded (if not captured) by the enemy.

#### Defenders' options

Granted, defenders of a fortress may have magical or other unnatural help. But in most cases the defenders will be vastly outnumbered — the strategic value of the castle was that a small force could delay the enemy — and will have far fewer adventurers and monsters to counteract the attacking force.

Defenders can partially compensate for fantasy elements by altering the construction of the fortress. One alternative would be a large earthen fortress such as those built by the French engineer Vauban, but unless the defender has some weapon analogous to canister-firing artillery this won't do: the walls will be too long to defend. And although the walls will be too thick to go through, and invulnerable to mining, they won't keep the enemy from going over.

The other alternative is a completely enclosed stone fortress, much of it underground. Flying or climbing creatures would be stopped by the roof. Someone could enter via a spell, or through the slits with the help of magic, but the gates would be less vulnerable to surprise. This

fortress would be smaller than a full-fledged castle, more like a tower-keep of several layers. It would allow less extensive fields of fire to defenders, and could be held by a relatively smaller garrison unless it extended far underground. It would be easier than a regular fortress for attackers to surround it and starve the garrison into submission unless the designer included long subterranean tunnel-networks in the fortress plan. If much of a fortress is underground, it will be less vulnerable to many of the unnatural powers of the fantasy world — but it would be generally easier to neutralize. And nothing can protect completely against underground approach, though a fortress dug into hard stone would be invulnerable to attack by most digging monsters.

All in all, the abilities that fantasy adds to the real world favor the offense, with the result that fortresses will be more vulnerable, and fantasy strategy will be quite different from medieval strategy.

#### The indirect approach and game theory

The foregoing applies largely to battles and strategy involving hundreds or thousands of creatures. The following discussion applies equally in principle to smaller pitched battles and to the strategy and tactics of successful adventuring.

Some military writers, led by B. H. Liddell Hart, have argued that the essence

of strategy is indirection — to act at a time, in a way, at a location, with forces that the enemy doesn't expect, to strike the flank rather than the front, to go over the hills rather than through the pass, and so forth. Liddell Hart called this the "strategy of indirect approach."

It is not always easy to figure out what the proper indirect approach would be in a given situation, but the basic idea applies to every conflict, whether a great war or a set-to in a dungeon. In a dungeon, for example, the last thing you want to do is charge right into the enemy soldiers' barricade and spears, unless you can find no other way to accomplish your goal. And even if you *must* take this route, you might try to draw the enemy out by some trick. Don't let megalomania control you. No matter how tough you are, you can't lose by finding a more efficient way to defeat the enemy.

My magic-user characters look at it this way: Hacking and chopping lacks finesse compared to clobbering the enemy from a distance; and fireballs and lightning bolts, though sometimes necessary, lack finesse compared to other means of incapacitating the enemy. Why risk life and limb if you don't have to? Sooner or later you'll be forced into a desperate hand-to-hand fight; why not put off the evil day as long as possible?

Another way to look at strategy is through game theory, which is primarily a mathematical analysis of game-playing strategies. The important aspect is this: The best strategy is one which attempts to maximize your minimum gain while minimizing your enemy's maximum gains (the "minimax" strategy). You assume that the enemy is a perfect player. Then you maximize your gain by picking the strategy which results in the largest minimum gain for you, *regardless of how the enemy reacts*. In other words, even if the enemy does this, or that, or the other, I'll still accomplish at least such-and-such: that's maximizing your minimum gains. If the enemy plays less than perfectly, your gain may be greater than the anticipated minimum. Similarly, you play so as to minimize the maximum gain the enemy can make. No matter what he does, if you do such-and-such he can't gain very much.

In game theory, choosing the best strategy involves complex calculations which usually include a weighted random determination, strangely enough. Game-theory calculations can't practically be used in a role-playing game, which is much too complicated, but you can use the principles. In general, the minimax strategy encourages caution rather than chance-taking, but calculated risks are a vital part of good strategy. The key is to calculate, to consider what the possible consequences may be, including the worst. Chucking a fireball into an enemy-occupied room as soon as you open the door might be a good strategy if the room

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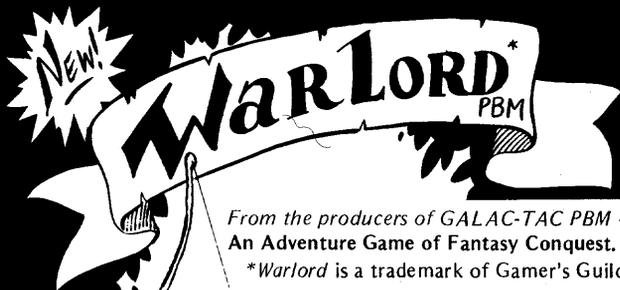
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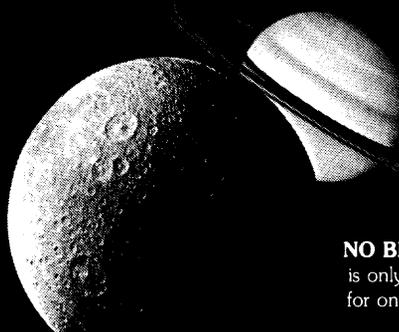
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is large, but if it's small the fireball will expand out the door and fry you as well as the enemy. The obvious thing to do is find out how large the room is before you open the door. If you can't do that, think about the possible consequences and you may decide not to throw that fireball.

### Intelligence gathering

Napoleon is supposed to have said that "The greatest general is he who makes the fewest mistakes." Gathering information is the best way to avoid mistakes. The more you know about the enemy, the more chances you have to take advantage of his weaknesses and avoid his strengths. In the example at the beginning of this article, if the defenders had not learned when and where the invaders would appear, they would have lost.

In fantasy role-playing we have far more opportunities to gain accurate information than, say, medieval commanders did. Taking the AD&D rules for illustration, we have *communies* with a deity, *contact other plane*, and *legend lore*, among others, as pure information-gathering spells. (Questions should be worked out before casting the spell, so that none are wasted.) *Clairaudience* and *clairvoyance* powers can act as substitute spies. Among magic items, *crystal balls* are the premier spying devices. Conversely, every general desires an amulet to prevent enemy spying.

In the fantasy world, there are ways to be certain of extracting information from prisoners — methods that were unavailable in the real, medieval world. Mind-reading and truth potions come immediately to mind, and certainly the imaginative general can think of others.

The task of individual scouts is much abetted by the availability of non-human helpers, whether familiars, demons summoned to gather information, intelligent beast spies, or flying steeds. The last, alone, makes an enormous difference, as both sides discovered in World War I when widespread aerial reconnaissance was first used.

Strangely, in most games and certainly in the AD&D game, magic rarely improves communications or mass transportation. True, if you have a herd of pegasi or dragons you can carry around a commando force a la air-mobile cavalry, but beasts won't help you move an entire army faster. Flying creatures improve speed of communication somewhat, but there's a lack of spells or magic items for long-distance, two-way contact. If two parties have *crystal balls* with *clairaudience* or *ESP*, they can communicate, provided they use the magic at the same time, but this can be hard to arrange, since no standardized timekeeping devices exist, and cosmological events such as sunrise and noon vary in time from place to place.

Information is even more vital for the adventuring party than for any army. The worst thing that can happen to adventurers is to be totally surprised in a strange place which is the home of the opposition. Adventurers should try to obtain information about an area before going there, from storytellers, sages, spells, or, most important, prisoners. A large number of players fail to even attempt to take prisoners. Those who inadvertently do, for instance with a *sleep* spell, usually slaughter them out of hand. The players, through their characters, show a lack of interest in learning about a situation, and the characters (and players) often pay for it later. Adventurers should take prisoners whenever possible. You can tie them up

or, if it suits your frame of mind, kill them after you've extracted what they know, but at least try to find out what's going on first.

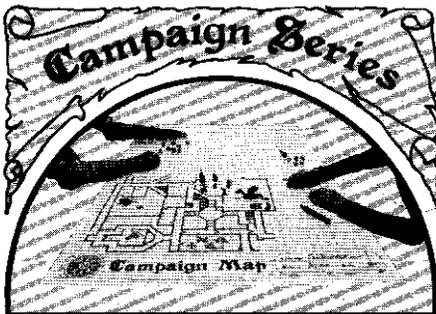
### The course of wars and battles

It would be nice if this article could describe just how wars and battles would go in a fantasy world, but it can't: Too much depends on the power-level of magic and on the level of military technology. For example, a battle between well-trained ancient troops, with magic added, would progress quite differently from an early medieval-style battle between troops untrained in group tactics. The presence of wide-area spells such as fireballs in game rules make a big difference in tactics. However, a few generalizations can be made.

Warring forces will probably spread out rather than concentrate in one place for a big battle, at least until one side is worn down. Skirmishes may be more common, especially between the most mobile (flying) elements of each side as they attempt raids against supply depots, treasuries, kings, and princesses. Each side will rely on dispersal and deception to counteract information-gathering spells and scouts. Professional forces, either mercenaries or a standing army, and non-human forces will dominate warfare; levies of farmers will be nearly useless. Warfare will be mobile rather than necessarily centered around castles.

In pitched battles, spell casters will tend to "hide" in the midst of large units, where the enemy will be unable to spot them. Rather than expose themselves to archery and action by enemy adventurers, spell casters will often cast one spell, then move elsewhere before casting another.

Non-spell-casting adventurers, on the other hand, will probably be the moral leaders of the army; that is, they'll participate in charges, rally troops, and generally put themselves in the thick of battle. Their positions must be well known if they are to affect their troops. But some of these people may have the task (self-imposed or otherwise) of seeking out and slaying enemy spell casters and leaders, or



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# ENDLESS PLANS (DUNGEONS AND CAVES)

at least of incapacitating or neutralizing them. Insofar as spell casters have adventurer bodyguards, hand-to-hand fighting between individual adventurers may result. Leaders may fight one another so that the winner can gain a big morale advantage over a loser's force. But such fights have a tendency to end with one man's troops rescuing him, or with the larger battle separating the antagonists before they finish their business.

Important individuals — often adventurers — will be captured more often than killed in battle. First, that may be a more effective way of demoralizing the enemy force. There'll be no revenge motive because the leader isn't dead, and greater despondency among the troops because seeing one's leader captured is more ignominious than seeing him killed. Second, an adventurer surrounded by dozens or hundreds of enemy troops is almost certain to surrender or to be overborne and captured for ransom. Third, adventurers who are incapacitated by spells will be captured rather than killed, for the purpose of obtaining information if not for ransom.

The use of "flashy" magic will be preferred to magic which quietly gets the job done, because in battle one doesn't win by killing the enemy but rather by breaking his will to resist. The fright value of an advancing *cloudkill* will be more important than the number of enemy actually killed by it.

Obviously, the larger the ratio of troops to adventurers, the less effect the adventurers can have on the battle, other things being equal. (In this respect, powerful monsters are the equivalent of adventurers.) One 10th-level fighter, say, or a giant, can do a lot more to sway a battle in which units consist of 10 men than when units are 200 men each. And finally, magic, or the fright-value of monsters, is most likely to sway the course of a battle. Regardless how skilled a human fighter is, he just can't generate a comparable effect on enemy morale.

Adventurers *may* devote their efforts to killing or neutralizing enemy adventurers, or they may concentrate on affecting

enemy troops. This decision will make a lot of difference to the course of the battle, but no one can say that one choice or the other will ordinarily be the better one.

#### Naval strategy and tactics

Magic allowing long-distance communication would radically change naval strategy, since fleets could still work toward a common goal even when divided. In the absence of long-range communication other than with flying creatures, naval strategy might not be affected much, but tactics would be radically different.

In games in which fireballs or lightning bolts will set ships afire, the effect will resemble the historical effect of Greek fire, a combustible and nearly inextinguishable substance which could be catapulted or sprayed at the enemy. The Byzantine navy, with the knowledge of how to make Greek fire, consistently defeated stronger Arabian navies thanks to the secret, and thereby preserved Constantinople and Europe for centuries from the Moslems. If both sides have many fire-causing spells, naval battles will be much bloodier, and ships will sink more often, than was the case in medieval or ancient times.

As a referee, I rule that spells rarely set ships afire, especially ships not under sail, and when they do the crews are often able to extinguish the fires. Nonetheless,

ships must be built carefully to minimize the effects of such spells. For example, every ship must have a full deck, with strong hatches, so that a single fireball cannot slay half the occupants. During battle, hatches must be kept closed and locked so that a flying, perhaps invisible, magic-user cannot dump a fireball down a hatch to slaughter all the oarsmen in a galley.

The presence of flying creatures will alter naval battles, both because of their ability to scout and because they can be used to "bomb" important ships or board the enemy flagship.

Aquatic creatures that can travel underwater will have enormous effects, particularly if someone is able to control groups of unintelligent creatures (such as whales or sharks). One may doubt how well thin-hulled galleys would survive in battle against an enemy using large numbers of underwater creatures. While most large water creatures could not seriously harm a strongly built "round ship" (merchant) or Atlantic-style galleon, such a creature would be able to ruin an ordinary galley. Galleys also have a low freeboard, allowing swimming creatures to climb aboard with relative ease. The more involvement that swimming creatures have in a naval battle, the heavier and higher the ships must be, to counteract their presence and their potential.

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MILITARY MINIATURES

# Be aware and take care

## Basic principles of successful adventuring

by Lew Pulsipher

This is not an article about the secrets of successful fantasy role-playing, for the simple reason that there are no secrets. The qualities that characters, and the players of those characters, must exhibit to succeed in a fantasy adventure are founded on the ideas of common sense and cooperation; virtually all of the advice set forth in this article is derived from one or the other, or both.

The following text normally assumes that the players know each other and have played together at least a few times, although most of the advice applies equally well to a party of strangers. It also assumes that the objective is for everyone in the party to live and prosper. The adventuring party's best chance of survival occurs when everyone in the party survives.

*Elementary precautions.* Make sure you have sufficient equipment and food for the trip, extra horses if you're riding, spell books, and so forth. Try to have a balanced set of professions (classes) and skills in the party so that at least one character can meet any problem you might encounter. Think defensively. As long as you stay alive you can "win" in the long run. In a choice between firepower and protection, lean toward the latter. Sure, the best defense is a good offense, but all the big-hitting spells in the world are no good if the enemy incapacitates you with his first attack because you lacked protection. In an AD&D game, for example, I like to have two or three *dispel magic* spells in a powerful party, in case one of the spell casters is charmed, possessed, or otherwise magically incapacitated. A *dispel magic* can be worth a lot more than a *fireball* or *lightning bolt*. You can always run away as long as all members of your party retain free will and free movement.

*Whom do you trust?* Let's hope you trust your fellow adventurers; but how do you know you can trust everyone in the party? I've seen players introduce new (evil) characters into a party and betray the rest at a crucial moment, if only by fleeing during a battle. And a subtle referee can introduce ringers, dopplegangers, or other evil types disguised to look like trusted party members. After all, your character can't constantly keep tabs on what other player characters do between expeditions, in town or elsewhere; there are many opportunities for substitution. No one in his right mind will agree to adventure with someone he knows nothing about, but on whom he

might depend for his life. In a world fraught with the pitfalls of possession, control, and disguise, who wouldn't at least informally test his "buddies"?

The methods used will depend on the rules. In the AD&D game, for example, *know alignment* is a great spell, as is *detect charm*. *ESP* is also very useful, but can be deceived in some worlds. Alignment language can be employed as a recognition code. And what happens when a character drinks holy water of the opposite alignment? Pass some around and find out. (Some referees will allow a character to drink holy water, or hold a sword of opposite alignment, and suffer injury without showing it in any way. Don't be too quick to believe that someone has passed your test.)

In games that don't provide such convenient tests, long conversations may reveal a ringer's lack of knowledge of "his" own past. Although it isn't likely, metaphysical or religious discussion might draw out an evil character. In some universes, asking a suspected character to pray aloud to his supposed god might force him to give himself away.

Similarly, if you "rescue" someone during an adventure, be suspicious. A doppelganger may look like a damsel in distress; a werewolf may look like a lost or victimized farmer; a prisoner of an evil character isn't necessarily good. Try putting silver manacles on the farmer; use detection spells; don't let that "damsel" get into a position dangerous to you.

*Know your objective and stick to it.* Each expedition should have a particular objective, beyond the typical desire to eradicate evil and gain a little gold on the side. Perhaps on a past adventure you found a treasure map or riddle; your objective could be to follow that map, or to acquire information which will enable you to solve the riddle (and thereby gain whatever advantages accrue). Or you may have stumbled onto an orc lair, or a dragon lair, on a past adventure. Organize your expedition, then, with the specific purpose of looting this lair.

If you don't have any information to lead you to a specific goal, then make this adventure a scouting expedition. But that means you should gather information, not get into fights. Your spells and the composition of your party should be arranged with a particular objective in mind, such as scouting; if you try to accomplish something else you'll have less than optimum chances of success. The worst thing you can do, from the

standpoint of survival, is wander about with no particular purpose in mind. You'll manage the standard encounters all right, but when it comes to the really tough tasks, you'll be on the losing end.

*Gather information.* The more you know about the obstacles between you and your objective, the better your chance of success. These obstacles may be psychological, social, economic, or political, as well as physical. Show me a party that sets off for parts unknown as soon as the members are given a mission by the referee, and I'll show you a party that wouldn't survive in a tough world (including the "real" one). How you gather information will vary with the rules of the game. In any game, you can seek information from rumor-mongers and storytellers, from local inhabitants and sages, from libraries and old inscriptions. Even the bartender might know something important. Bits of information can add up to important revelations. Write down those bits, and look them over occasionally to discern patterns or juxtapositions you didn't notice before.

*Keep a monster chronicle.* A really avid player-tactician will keep a notebook of important facts about monsters — for example, the immunity of demons to certain types of attacks. While most referees don't allow players to consult rule books during play, they are unlikely to prohibit *characters* from keeping notebooks about monsters. At worst, the referee may require a player to keep a separate notebook for each character, putting in it only information gained through role-playing that character. In this case, the player's characters should frequent places where adventurers meet, in order to gather information. They should also search libraries for relevant memoirs and bestiaries.

*Provide for rescue/escape.* This is easier said than done, of course. The idea is to try to arrange with local politicians or with adventurers who aren't on the expedition to rescue you if things go wrong. Think about how you might escape if the expedition collapses. If you're hunting a dragon in an AD&D adventure, for example, you don't have any means of escape except *teleport* or (in some situations) *dimension door*. But if you're stalking a gang of orcs in a dungeon, you might take along an apparatus which will enable you to shut a door as you flee through it; or you might take a *web* spell earmarked for blocking a corridor if you need to retreat.

*Equipment.* The most insignificant bits of material can save lives. For example, a hollow tube to breathe through while under water could allow a character to elude pursuit. (*Editor's note: For a long discussion of specialized adventuring equipment, see the article "More than a Sword" in issue #69 of DRAGON® Magazine.*)

*Security in camps.* In many campaigns, one of the worst ordeals is to suffer a night attack when encamped, because the referee won't allow anyone to sleep in armor. What can be done to minimize the danger of night attacks?

First, try to buy, borrow, or steal a magical sleeping bag that enables you to sleep in full armor! If necessary, commission someone to make the item. Anyone who has, in AD&D terms, fought in AC 10 or AC 7 instead of AC 0 or better knows how much difference armor makes, and there's no game in which the difference isn't significant.

Second, use alarm spells, such as *magic mouths*, set around camp or in the center if only one is available. Put a wire or rope perimeter around the camp, suspended about six inches above ground, with lots of small bells attached.

Third, don't make a fire — it attracts monsters — but keep some coals burning in covered pots or other contraptions so that a fire can be started quickly to drive off animals. It's a good idea to have the

makings of a large fire ready to be ignited at need.

Fourth, put impediments around the camp. Barbed wire would be wonderful, but I know of no referee who allows it; anyway, it would be difficult to pick up in the morning. A number of bear traps can at least indirectly provide some warning of attack, and may even incapacitate an attacker. Large caltrops can do the same job. You can carry more caltrops than bear traps, but bear traps are easier to retrieve the next morning. In either case, you might be wise to leave at least one unobstructed path in the protective circle through which to flee unimpeded.

It would really be nice to build a fortified encampment as the Roman legions did, but unless you travel with a hundred slaves you won't be able to do much. You could dig some pits or foxholes around camp, but this requires time and effort sufficient to reduce your travel distance for the day.

Horses and other domesticated animals should be securely tied in a location within the protective perimeter of the camp. If anyone in your party is especially good with horses, say a druid or beastmaster, let him sleep nearest the animals. If you have some horses trained to fight, and other which aren't, separate them. You could tie the untrained horses less securely, since they're going to bolt anyway and are less valuable. Your hope

is that the untrained horses won't carry the trained ones along with them if and when a stampede occurs.

#### Behavior during the adventure

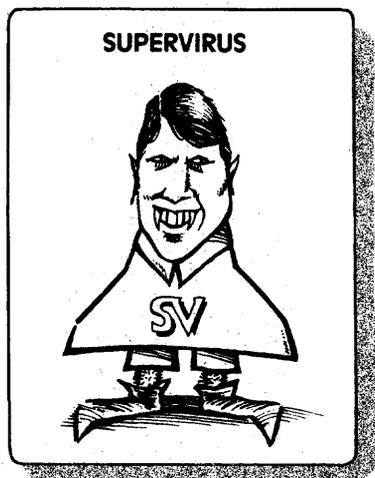
*Avoid mental passivity in battle.* While it's unhealthy to make bad moves, it's often worse to make no moves at all. Once a battle begins; a player may forget that there is still something he can do to improve the position of his party, to influence the battle favorably.

Much of this attitude is caused by over-excitement. When the battle begins, players are eager to throw the dice for the next attack, to heroically slaughter the enemy sword-to-sword. Unfortunately, they forget about other, usually more sensible options. He who lives by the sword — *when something else will work better* — will sooner or later die by the sword. And even in hacking and slashing, it is often possible to move more attackers into a line, or to fall back to gain a better position, or to sneak behind the enemy.

If each player controls only one character, options of this sort will usually be noticed by the players whose characters presently have nothing to do. But if, as in the majority of cases, each player controls two or three characters (whether player characters or NPCs), it is common for a player to forget about his characters who aren't presently engaged. When the dread diseases "dice-itis" or "hackitis" strike,

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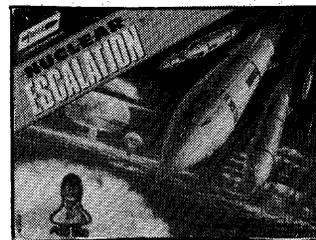
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the player forgets even to move the character in the battle, let alone any others that might not be currently engaged.

A remedy to this is simply to slow down and make sure you look at the tactical situation, to choose the best maneuvers before you start the next round of attacks. A tactical display, with miniature figures or cardboard to represent adventurers and monsters, helps players see what they need to do.

Another remedy is to make a list of all magic items, or at least the major ones, the party possesses. Then, even if the owner forgets that he has an item which may be useful in a given situation — and we all know this *does* happen — at least one of the other players will notice it on the list. The list is a wonderful stimulus to creative planning. Just look at the items and combinations, and all kinds of wild, but occasionally useful, plans come to mind.

*Coordinate efforts.* It should go without saying that the key to survival in most adventures is cooperation among the characters, with the group utilizing each character's skills to best advantage. In an AD&D adventure, for example, the party has the advantage of "combined arms" cooperation between offensive spell casters (magic-users), defensive spell casters who double as infantry (clerics), physical combat power (fighters), and stealth (thieves). If players spend more time suspecting one another than they do watching out for monsters, they'll be in big trouble in the more dangerous places. While some referees arrange their places of adventure to take suspicion and backstabbing into account, most do not.

Merely negative action — that is, not attacking each other — is insufficient. The characters must actively work together to achieve their ends. If the thieves wander away on their own, if each character does what seems to him to be the best idea at the time, the adventurers may get nowhere and they may even accidentally kill each other. Take, for example, a party of thieves, fighters and magicians on a plain of tall grass, encountering a group of men. Some of the fighters move into a nearby forest and then shoot anything that moves with their bows. The magicians turn invisible, move around a bit, and prepare to cast fireballs. The thieves and other fighters start sneaking through the grass, individually rather than in a group, trying to surprise the enemy. No rendezvous is set, no one knows what anyone else is doing. The enemy could leave the area and the party might still lose several members, as archers shoot at moving grass, thieves inadvertently backstab their own sneaking fighters or magicians, and the magicians burn up areas occupied by the sneaking characters.

*Keep reserves in reserve.* In a fantasy adventure fight, especially one outdoors, the side with the last surviving reserves

usually wins. This is often true of great battles, but adventurers tend to forget the principle of reserves — in particular, spell-casting reserves, who can remain hidden one way or another, then intervene at a crucial moment. Thus, at least one magic-user should become invisible and hang back, or work his way behind the enemy. At least one character, preferably two or three, with *dispel magic* spells should be free to use them if the party is hit with incapacitating magic. The reserve magician, meanwhile, should look for enemy reserves, particularly invisible ones, and should try not to reveal himself until he's sure he knows where all the enemy are. In effect, the main party is helping to "fix" the enemy in position, a la the Napoleonic French, while the reserves become the hammer striking the anvil.

In this connection, a party of mid- to high-level characters in a dungeon in an AD&D game, or any other game with fireballs or the like, should maintain considerable separation between two or three groups, so that any detrimental magic will affect only one group. Why put everyone on ground zero for a *fireball* or *web* spell, for example? The likelihood of becoming permanently separated is relatively small, particularly if there's a thief in the middle area to help maintain contact. Signals with light and sound can be arranged, but generally the separation need not be so great that the two groups can't see and hear one another. The length of the separation depends entirely on the propensities of the referee. Some referees would never fireball a party, but love to divide it. Others never try to split up a party but have no qualms about tossing fireballs and lightning bolts. The party should stay much closer together in the first case than in the second.

*Don't take separate routes.* There's often a temptation to go separate ways; don't do it unless you have planned it from the start in order to defeat a known enemy, and only if you haven't suffered damage. The sum of the parts of a party is greater than the whole, because of "combined arms" cooperation. An 8-man party can be ready for anything, while two 4-man parties will suffer from severe weaknesses of position if nothing else. For example, if the only spell caster in your 4-man party is *held*, what can you do? If he's in an 8-man party, the other spell caster(s) can use a *dispel* to free him. And how can you protect the "soft-skinned" members of a 4-man party? There's no way to block both rear and front if the enemy wants to get at your middle. In an 8-man party you have enough armored characters to completely block both ends. (Inside a building or dungeon, anyway; the problem is more difficult outdoors.) In order to provide reserve capacity in case some party members are killed or unconscious, an adventuring party ought to include at

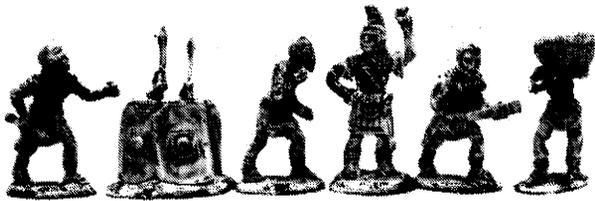
least eight characters, unless the prescribed mission specifically dictates a different party size.

*Concentration of attacks.* How should individual attacks be directed in a large skirmish? Ordinarily, each character has little choice but to attack whatever is in front of him. But let's say that there's more freedom of movement — perhaps an archery duel out in the open with little cover. Typically, a player will have his character shoot at "whichever one shot at me" or "whoever plugged me last round." The effect is that each character fires at a different target in most cases. Now this would be fine if the targets were battleships, insofar as accurate fire would force the enemy out of the battle line and throw off its aim. But if the target is a human or monster, the incoming missile is unlikely to affect his shooting unless the referee is one of a small minority who takes such things into account.

If it will take two or more successful shots to kill one opponent, spreading the party's fire among many targets means that it will be a while before any target is incapacitated. A better method is to concentrate attacks on one target at a time, or two if there are many attackers, until that target is taken out. Then all adventurers should shift to the next target down the line. (In an archery duel, for example, everyone shoots at the nearest enemy, or the leftmost enemy if all are equidistant.) Granted, this method may waste a shot or two if the target is hit several times simultaneously. But by concentrating attacks, you assure yourself of eliminating one enemy as soon as possible, and that means one less adversary shooting at you. The sooner you shoot down an enemy, the sooner the enemy group as a whole may be subject to morale failure.

The same principle of concentration of attacks applies in melee combat. For example, if you're fighting two giants, and you can send three characters against each or four against one and two against the other, the four-and-two tactic is likely to finish off one giant sooner than otherwise. In either case, each giant is going to attack just one character. A possible drawback of the concentration scheme, as employed here, is that either of the two characters fighting the one giant is more likely to take damage than any one of the four characters fighting the other giant; and after several rounds of battle one of the pair of characters may have to drop out of the fight, leaving just one character to face that giant.

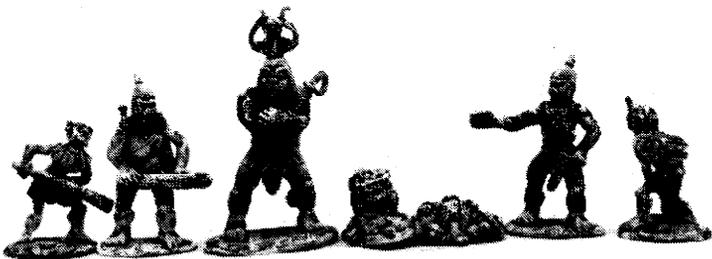
*You can't beat everything.* This is axiomatic, regardless of the style of your referee, because there's always somebody stronger, if only the gods, and sooner or later you'll run into this somebody. When you do, recognize that you're licked, cut your losses, and *run*. But this needs to be a group decision. The worst thing that can happen to any party is that half stay to fight while half run away. Both groups



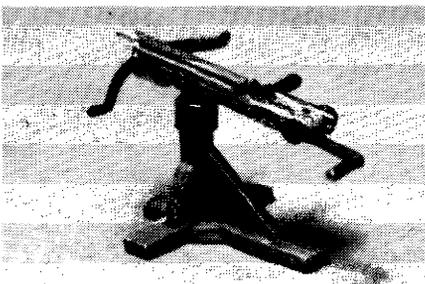
SE-24 Roman Crew



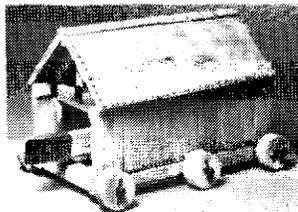
SE-21 Dwarf Crew



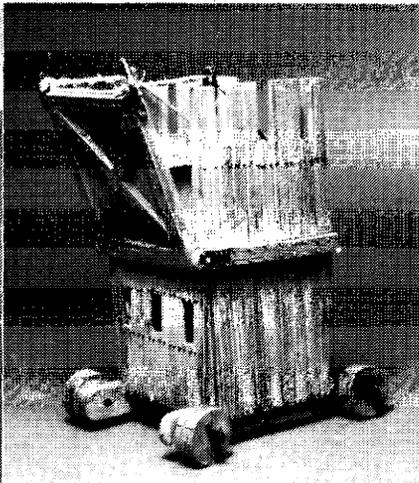
SE-22 Goblin Crew



SE-3 Small Catapult



SE-11 & 12

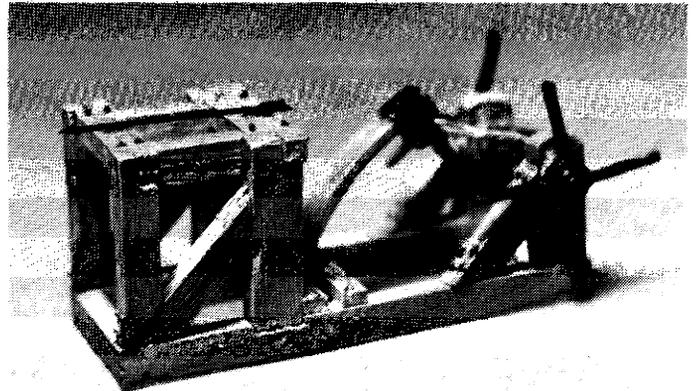


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are much weaker, confusion reigns, and death will probably follow. The single quality that most separates good tactical play from bad is the ability to recognize when the odds are too much against you, when it is time to avoid a fight.

Sometimes a situation which is too difficult for a partially depleted or unprepared party can be adequately dealt with by the same party after the members have rested and prepared. You might not have memorized the right spells to use against a particular menace. If you go away, to return later with different spells, you're much more likely to win through. Or perhaps the menace requires lots of hand-to-hand fighting, and you have a party with lots of magicians. Go away, come back with a fighter-heavy party, and slay the enemy. Furthermore, if you leave the first time without alerting the enemy, you can gather information (from storytellers, *commune* spells, etc.) that may make a difference between victory and defeat when you try again.

*Get out while you have some "bottom."* In most fantasy games, the ultimate power is the magic spell. Don't continue your adventure after you've begun to run out of useful spells, and be sure to take a spell inventory frequently. The temptation to try just one more room, or go over just one more hill, kills as many adventurers as anything else. You must always assume that you'll have to fight at

least one battle after you leave the place of adventure but before you reach a place of safety or replenishment. When you're down to one-battle-capability in spells, it's time to head for shelter. If your fighters are heavily wounded, get out.

A party is like a boxer. A punch which wouldn't hurt much at the start of round one could knock out the tired, hurt boxer in the thirteenth round. Your "boxer" should end the adventure before late-round vulnerability sets in.

*Never flee into unknown areas.* In my campaign, the only time an ochre jelly (which I rarely use) ever killed anyone was when a party fleeing from undead ran down an unexplored corridor, rather than back the way they'd come. Before they could stop, two magicians ran into the jelly and died. When you're exploring, your escape route should be straight back the way you came. If you have good reason to believe that there's a shortcut available to your pursuer, you could try to take it yourself, but in most cases the only safe retreat is the route you already know about. Also, when you plan an attack make sure that each attacker has at least one escape route, and preferably two, in case something goes wrong. If you're in tunnels and need to flee into unknown territory, follow a definite pattern of travel so that you can find your way back. Alternately turning left and right is better than always turning in the

same direction, which is liable to take you in circles.

*Don't back yourself into a corner.* In virtually every case, it is better to have too many options than too few. This is related on one hand to the military principle of alternate lines of approach and action, of contingency plans. On the other hand, it is related to the fundamental idea behind good play in any game — that a player should control the course of the game, not let the game control his actions. As long as you have alternative courses of action, you can hope to control your fate. When you are reduced to only one choice, you are probably in big trouble.

*Guard your spell casters.* This seems elementary enough, but some parties don't seem to practice it. It won't help to have spells left if your spell casters can't use them. The magicians, in particular, should not be in the front or back line indoors, or in the outer line outdoors. Magicians are your last resort, your "out pitch" when the bases are loaded against you. If you let the enemy get to them, you've taken the first step into the underworld (that is, death). And it's not enough to guard the front and rear. Intelligent enemies know who in a party is most dangerous, and where they're likely to be. If possible, they'll drop someone into the middle of your party to kill magicians, or at least stop spells from being cast. Keep a decent melee-capable character in the center of the party to fight off such intrusions. In an AD&D adventure, for example, a cleric or brave thief will do.

*Make lists.* The more things you think about and write down ahead of time, the fewer problems you'll have during a game. I have a list of special and not-so-special equipment to give to the referee before the adventure; a list of reminders for questioning prisoners or talking to charmed monsters or characters so that I don't, for example, forget to ask him who his boss is or if he knows where any treasure is; a list of creatures I might polymorph into, with the advantages of each form; and a list of precautions I customarily take when staying in a city, town, or a place where I can't expect to be protected by other adventurers keeping watch. (This last I put together after a friend, who had taken no unusual precautions while staying alone in an inn, was assassinated.) Also, I have a checklist of pre-adventure and post-adventure safety checks, used much as an airline pilot uses his checklist. Finally, in games using *wish* spells, you should write down a wish ahead of time, in case you're suddenly given the chance to make a wish provided you do it quickly.

*Other precautions.* There are some seemingly minor precautions you can take during an adventure, rather tedious but occasionally life-saving. For example, always look for evidence of regeneration,



even if the creature you've just killed doesn't normally regenerate. As a general practice, it doesn't hurt to cast *remove curse* on the body of an irrevocably dead comrade, lest he return as an undead. Caution now can prevent catastrophe later.

#### Staying alive after the adventure

One of the more dangerous times for the adventurer is the period directly following the "end" of an adventure. The character has relaxed, and is looking forward to rest, recuperation, and remuneration (for treasure items found). He is off guard, and his friends have spread throughout the village, town, or castle to attend to their private concerns. This is the time when secret foes and hidden dangers encountered during the adventure may manifest themselves. One of the party may be possessed or charmed; an enemy who escaped may send an invisible stalker or an assassin after the party; a slithering tracker might be following the party. Now, the enemy strikes one adventurer at a time.

There are ways to avoid some of these dangers, and other problems which may occur after the adventure. A cautious party should go through a routine to try to root out these problems before the members split up. This routine can be divided into three sections: the search for enemies, the search for hidden treasure,

and the examination of magic items. The examples below use spells from the AD&D rules, but other games also have spells that are useful after the adventure.

Search for enemies. Gather in a large clearing. First, use *know alignment* and *detect charm* on all party members to ascertain that they are not doppelgangers, polymorphed demons, or possessed or charmed friends. *ESP* might help. Be ready for a fight if the enemy realizes that he's been discovered. Next, use *detect invisibility* and *detect evil* to search for nearby hidden enemies. If you're in a clearing during this action, the enemy might watch you from out of spell range, so you might want to move into some terrain that will force the enemy closer. In some situations a *detect magic* might reveal something.

Now try to get back "home" (if you're not there already) by a devious route which will help you lose any pursuer. At some point, stop and set up an ambush for the hypothetical pursuer. A dusty area that will reveal the passage of a slithering tracker or an invisible monster is ideal. Depending on how your referee interprets an invisible stalker's prowess, a trip on a river or across a lake might help throw such a monster off your trail, but generally this is too bothersome unless you have reason to feel that one is after you.

*Search for hidden treasure.* This will take several days, but who's in a hurry?

Ideally, you should check all the coins you've obtained for numismatic value. A "mere" copper coin might be worth 50 gold pieces to a collector, if your referee has been diabolical enough to create such "treasures." Check random coins for counterfeiting or gold plating over copper. Cast *detect magic* (and possibly *detect illusion*) on the entire monetary treasure. Some referees create magical coins or gems which are mixed with ordinary treasure. Look for secret compartments in what appear to be standard magical items. (I once found a magic ring in the handle of an otherwise ordinary war hammer. If I had tried to use the "magic" hammer against a monster, it would have been a waste of time.) *Detect magic* may help you discover dangerous treasure.

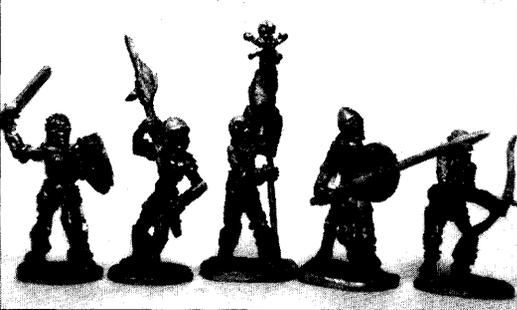
*Examination of items.* Cast *detect evil* on swords and other items which may be intelligent. Cast *neutralize poison* on items you haven't touched yet, as an antidote to contact poison. Cast *remove curse* on scrolls — and other items, for that matter — and don't forget to look for explosive runes. When someone must pick up an item to test it, you have two choices: strip him of his equipment and tie him up so that he can't do anything to harm the rest of you, or load him up with gear so that he'll have a chance to take care of himself if he is suddenly transported elsewhere or must fight a monster



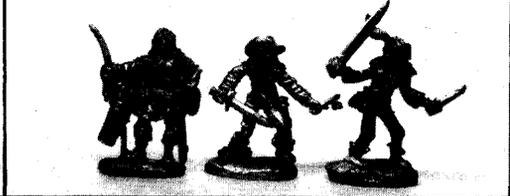
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singlehanded. If there's a *ring of regeneration* around, the magic-tester should be wearing it. Always *ESP* the tester to ascertain whether he retains possession of his own mind.

The foregoing discussion assumes that you're not crazy enough to try to test, or even touch flesh to, magic items during the adventure (if it's a one-day trip), and that your referee hasn't been soft-hearted enough to provide you with cheap, reliable, and wholly trustworthy analysis by a local magician or alchemist. If you do use an analyst, remember that a powerful magic item may tempt him to try to switch it with a look-alike.

#### Using magic wisely and well

Never employ magic to accomplish something that can be done safely by non-magical means, unless time is short. The spell you use now may be greatly missed later. For example, in a variant of the D&D game that I recently played, magic-users were allowed to choose spells at the time they cast them, rather than memorize them before the adventure. During the adventure, a magic-user was told to open a stubborn secret door with a *knock* spell. He refused; soon afterward, the door was forced. Later, the magician used the spell capability he had retained to cast a *web* which saved the party from an orc horde — and this was his last spell. If he had wasted it by casting the *knock* spell, at least some adventurers would have died.

*Deception an place of magic.* Whatever game you play, you should be able to devise ways to duplicate the effects of magic by using weaker magic, or no magic at all. My favorite ploy of this kind is a fake truth potion. Carry with you a liquid mixture of oddities in a standard potion container (if there is such a thing). Use a bit of blood, rust, or whatever to make it look, feel, and smell like a real magic potion. If possible, add a mild drug so that the "potion" actually makes the imbiber feel abnormal.

Now, when you take a prisoner, try to get him to say something, even if you think he's lying; at least, loosen his tongue. You may want to give him quite a grilling if there's time. Then feed him the potion. (Hold his nose so that he can't breathe and he'll have a hard time not drinking, if he wants to live.) Now tell him, in the most positive manner you can muster, that he has just ingested a truth potion. As long as what he says is true, he'll live, but if he lies, the potion will kill him inside of 24 hours.

The prisoner now faces a horrible dilemma, especially if members of your party have made the whole thing more believable by remarking about how much fun it is to watch the potion kill a liar, or perhaps talking about how they'd rather torture the prisoner. (Good-aligned characters might argue about how un-good it is to condemn the prisoner to a slow

death.) The prisoner can either tell the truth, take his life in his hands and lie, or say nothing at all. The latter will be harder to do if he's already been talking. If too many prisoners take the last option, then tell the next prisoner who drinks your "potion" that he *must* tell the truth; if he keeps silent, the potion will kill him anyway.

The potion trick will be more likely to succeed if you can confront the prisoner with the appearance that another prisoner has lied and died. For example, before the intended victim returns to consciousness or enters the room, render another prisoner dead or unconscious without leaving evidence of how this was done. Strangling might do in some cases; poison is best. (Of course, many characters will be unable to go to these lengths, owing to alignment or personality.) Use a potion bottle that is half empty. Then bring in the prisoner, give him the remaining potion, and show him what the potion did to someone who lied. Imagine yourself presented with such a scene, and think about whether you'd lie.

The success of this ploy depends on how the referee plays his part (usually, that of the prisoner). But it helps if you can be sure that no one who is questioned in this manner lives to tell of it, because once someone lies and gets away with it, the story could get around. For this reason, you should use the trick sparingly if your characters cannot allow prisoners to be killed in cold blood.

The more realistically your referee plays the monsters and non-player characters, the more effective "deception magic" is likely to be. For example, if your party lights some colored candles, the more thoughtful non-players are going to wonder whether these are magical, and perhaps hesitate or waste time dousing them. The unthinking NPCs will just dash ahead. Why, you might even be able to block or delay pursuit merely by lighting some funny-smelling candles, or by throwing colored flour ("dust of sneezing and choking") on the floor. On the other hand, sometimes the best tactic in a sword-and-sorcery fight is to dash in before the enemy has a chance to prepare his magic; so who knows when these tricks will work?

*Phantasmal forces* and *illusions* work best when they reinforce expectations of the observer. For example, if you use a *knock* spell to blow open a door from a distance, and follow it directly with an illusion of someone pushing the door, the image will be more believable and may draw enemy fire. Once, I (my character) put a skull in a sack at my belt; when I met a chimera, I cast *phantasmal force* and pulled the skull, now looking like a medusa-head, from the bag, averting my eyes at the same time. What happens then depends on the referee, but it can be interesting.

Given the variety of spells available in

most games, it should be possible to misinform potential but unknown enemies, such as assassins hired by those you've despoiled, "gunslingers" looking to make a reputation, and ordinary thieves. This will help protect you when you're not adventuring. For example, you might want a false rumor to be spread. You could simply ask friends or acquaintances to spread the word around, but in some cases the rumor will be so unbelievable that your enemies might use magic or other means to check its accuracy. Why not, then, *hypnotize* your agents so that they truly believe what you've told them? When the enemy checks, they'll find that your agents are telling the truth — as they know it.

*Imaginative use of spells.* Read through the spell descriptions of your game's rules to look for new ways to use magic. For example, take the *minor globe of invulnerability* in the AD&D rules. If you have a wand of fireballs or lightning bolts, you can become a one-man wrecking crew by casting the *minor globe* on yourself. Enter an enemy lair, accompanied by a couple of fighters to keep the opposition from hitting you, and dump fireballs all about. It'll be messy, but the enemy won't last long, and you and your friends will be safe. Or, cast the *globe* and *polymorph* into a flying creature to scout the enemy lair or to get into position for more violent business.

If you don't know one spell, you may be able to duplicate its effects with another. For example, if you don't have *Nystul's magic aura*, which creates a bogus dweomer on an object, you can do the same thing if you turn it invisible, then paint it. Or, put a *magic mouth* on it with orders never to speak — some referees rule that a *magic mouth* does register when *detect magic* is cast.

Use magic to save effort. For example, *charm* an orc, then *polymorph* it into a more powerful monster: If it retains the orc's mentality, won't it still be *charmed*? You can also try tricks like charming rodents or dogs in order to *polymorph* them into big monsters. A friendly cleric or monk can speak with the "dog" using *speak with animals*. If you have a pet dragon or griffon to feed, *polymorph* an insect into an elephant or a horse; why spend a lot of money?

If you have powerful magic you can use it for protection in the wilderness. Spells of *hallucinatory terrain*, *plant growth*, or semi-permanent *walls of stone* or the like (arranged in a circle), will protect against most unintelligent menaces.

In some worlds adventurers never have trouble getting through doors or gates, but in others some guile and magic is required when strength is unavailing. For example, *passwall* your way through, or use a *knock* spell. *Polymorph* into an ant, black pudding, or other creature that can

go under the door. *Dimension door* will get one or two party members through. Presumably, once someone is through, he can open the door from the other side by pulling the lever, unbarring the door, or whatever. A *gaseous form* potion or something producing *etherealness* will also get someone through. Lacking these means, something more destructive might serve. For example, turn an area of stone beside or below the door to mud (*transmute rock to mud*) and quickly dig around the door or gate. A conjured earth elemental is a last resort.

Some spells can help troops of slaves build fortifications faster, for example *wall of stone* and *conjure elemental*. For a hiding place, use a *passwall* and dig out a small room at the end. It is sealed when the *passwall* expires, and can only be reached by use of that spell or by *dimension door*. (I've heard of referees who allow characters to create a *passwall* in the floor under an enemy, then use *dispel magic* to get rid of it, leaving the enemy entombed in solid rock. In my opinion, this goes too far to be allowed.)

Use spells in new ways to affect the morale of opponents. For example, cast *invisibility* on a person, but not on his armor. The "ghostly" apparition of an animated suit of armor may frighten savages and others ignorant of magic. A skull in conjunction with a *ventriloquism* spell can accomplish the same

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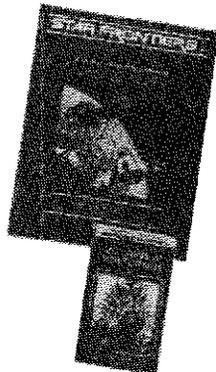
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purpose — the skull is a “demigod” or some such.

*Dimension door* or *teleport* capability is great for getting behind an enemy, not just for getting away. I have a magic-user character who levitates with magic boots, puts a magic broom between his legs, casts *invisibility* and other *protections*, and finally *dimension doors* into the air well behind the enemy, while the main party comes at them through a tunnel or other narrow access. The magic-user can look around for enemy reinforcements hiding out of sight of the tunnel, then either cast spells or move around with the broom. It's not the safest of maneuvers, but it seems to work well.

I've heard of a group of characters who like to put *explosive runes* on paper, fold the paper into an airplane, and throw it at the enemy. If an opponent looks at the runes, boom. I would rule that nobody in the world knows how to make paper airplanes, nor would they even think of the idea, but others might be less strict.

Some readers may feel that treating an adventure as a tactical exercise is somehow wrong. We don't ordinarily see the hero of a novel planning ahead in this way, calculating every move, so why should our characters do it? Well, the literary heroes are heroes partly because they take these precautions naturally, not even having to think about them. And, let's face it, literary heroes are incredibly

lucky, much luckier than our characters can expect to be. The average soldier of fortune *must* look for every trick to keep himself alive; must strive for every advantage, however small; must always be thinking. To the average *player*, it's just a fun game; to the *character*, it's his life. In short, the suggestions made here are a summary of how a smart, wary character would approach an adventure, not merely a litany of good moves in a game. This may be too realistic to fit some ideas of heroic fantasy, but that doesn't make it wrong.

### Adventuring and referees

The advice given here cannot possibly take into account the preferences — perhaps demands — of individual referees. One referee may expect or require player characters to act in order to succeed in a manner which would be suicidal if performed with another referee. One referee may set up his adventures with the preconception that the players will always go forward, regardless of how difficult the opposition seems to be. This referee will, in all likelihood, take good care of the player characters by fudging things so that they will survive. A different referee may expect his players to withdraw, regroup, and return with a more suitable force if and when the opposition looks too tough. In such conditions, if players continue forward despite evidence that their characters are in above their heads, those characters will probably die or be captured.

In either case, players should always take the course more likely to result in survival: pull out. Unfortunately, a referee of the first type may be so annoyed by this reaction that he'll double the enemy's strength in the interval before the characters return. He may even ambush them on the way back, as “punishment.” In many other ways, some as fundamental as this, referees differ in what they consider to be good play. Consequently, the first rule of good tactics in role-playing may be to “Know thy referee.”

In connection with this problem of differences between referees, you may come across a referee who is an habitual “fudger.” He tends to set up a vague adventure and then alters and adds to it as the game progresses in order to make the adventure easier or more difficult. Frequently he fudges in favor of, rather than against, the player characters in order to enable them to survive an adventure in which an objective observer would say they should have died. This kind of referee discourages good tactics, because regardless of how well or how badly you play, the outcome is roughly the same — you survive.

How can a player accustomed to pursuing good tactics cope with this kind of referee? First, continue to try to use good tactics. Complain when the referee may be fudging against you, trying to help the

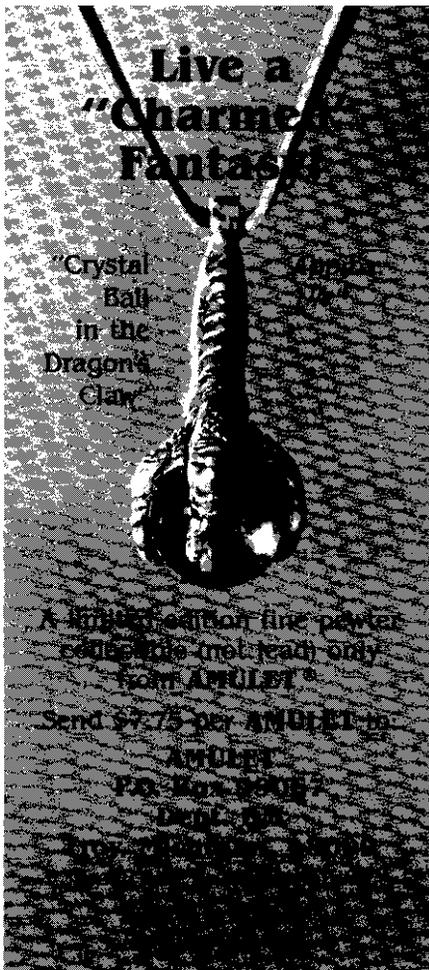
monsters when your tactics are too good for them. And most of all, “play the referee.” Whether you'll want to say flat out that he fudges is up to you. But when things don't seem to be going well, try to think of events which might occur that would help your side. Talk about them — try not to be too obvious in suggesting them to the referee — and perhaps he'll adopt one as a “piece of fudge” to be used in your favor. Keep talking; do your best to convince the fudger that your side needs help, that the adventurers are in bad shape, so that he won't help the monsters. When something occurs which might be a fudge for the enemy — the fortuitous appearance of additional monsters, or of a secret door the monsters use — then work on the ref by hinting that he's being unfair. And when you're really in dire straits, think of *anything* that might help, even if it sounds a little silly, and meanwhile complain about how impossible the adventure has been.

The most blatant “fudge” I've experienced was when a referee allowed a few war horses to start a fight with a group of su-monsters after all the adventurers had been knocked out. The horses managed to drive away the surviving su-monsters and save the party. In this case the referee knew he'd been too tough, and was looking for a way out. When a player happened to ask if the war horses were going to attack on their own, that was all the referee needed to get started.

You should never give up until you're dead *and* gone in any game, but especially not when the referee is a fudger. And hardly any referee *never* fudges . . .

Another example: A character was captured, partly his own fault. The enemy, which is to say the referee, asked the character if there was anyone who might pay a ransom for him. Obviously, the referee was looking for a way to keep this experienced character alive. The player controlling this character should have lied, hemmed and hawed, thought of other reasons why he should be kept alive, anything to give the referee a chance to fudge — *anything* but his actual answer, which was “No.” The enemy executed the character, of course.

Any role-playing game is a verbal contest as well as a game. You'll find that you can help your character by purely verbal means, by subtly influencing the referee. This works with any referee, not just a fudger, insofar as virtually any referee doubts that he's always fair to the players. You work on those doubts. For example, in a situation not defined by the rules, the referee must decide what is likely to be the result of a given action. If he's unsure of the matter, or is groping for a word, and you can supply something that sounds reasonable, he may accept your suggestion. If you wait for him to come up with something, chances are it's likely to be worse than what you would have suggested.



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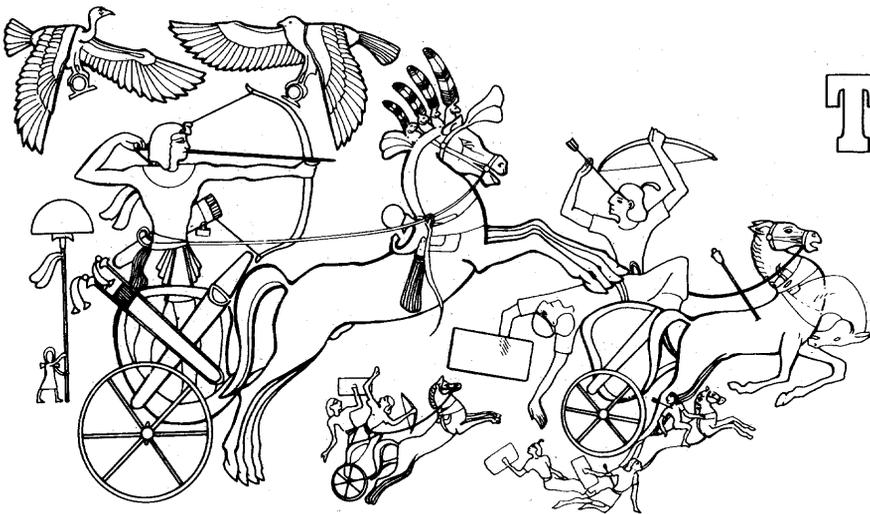
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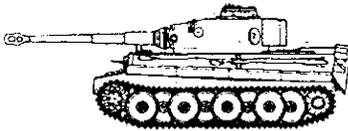
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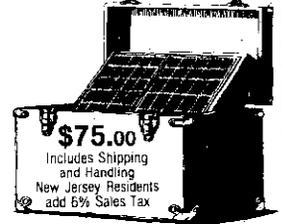
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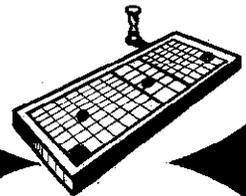
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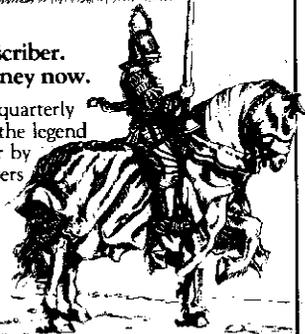
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# SF/gaming convention calendar

## **UTHERCON 2, Nov. 12**

This one-day convention offers 18 hours of continuous activity, with at least 10 events always going on at any time. To be held on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin. Advance registration is \$5 (event fees not included). More information is available from UtherCon, 3212 Red River #109, Austin TX 78705, or by calling (512)477-1704.

## **CONCENTRIC 83, Nov. 18-20**

A fantasy/SF/gaming convention to be held at the Holiday Inn West in Columbia, Mo., featuring Jack Chalker as guest of honor. Contact: ConCentric, P.O. Box 7514, Columbia MO 65205.

## **CONTACT '83, Nov. 18-20**

A gathering for SF fans and gamers, sponsored by the River City Science Fiction Association, to be held at the Evansville Airport Sheraton Inn on Highway 41 North in Evansville, Ind. For more information: ConTact '83, c/o RCSFA, P.O. Box 3894, Evansville IN 47737.

## **FANTASY FESTIVAL, Nov. 25-27**

The Sheraton Park Central Hotel in Dallas, Tex., will host fantasy and SF celebrities and fans on Thanksgiving weekend. The list of more than a dozen special guests includes Roger Zelazny, C. J. Cherryh, Alan Dean Foster, and Richard Pini. Memberships are \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door, and a one-day ticket is \$5. Contact: Dallas Fantasy Festival, 1017 Birchwood, Garland TX 75043.

## **MICRO WARS '83, Dec. 3-4**

The first gaming festival to be held on the campus of California State University at Dominguez Hills. The pre-registration fee is \$8.50 if paid before Nov. 13; admission at the door is \$10. For more information, contact MicroWars '83, c/o School of Humanities & Fine Arts, 1000 E. Victoria, Carson CA 90747.

## **FANTEK EVECON, Dec. 30 - Jan, 2**

For gaming and SF enthusiasts, to be held in Reston, Va., and sponsored by the FanTek (Fantasy Technics) organization. Pre-registration fee is \$12 before Dec. 1 (\$10 for members), and admission is \$15 at the door. Contact: FanTek, P.O. Box 128, Aberdeen MD 21001.

## **DRAGONCON, Jan. 6-8**

A gaming event to be staged in Portland, Maine. For details on registration and other information, contact The Dragon's Keep, 93 Ocean St., South Portland ME 04106, phone (207)767-5086.

## **CRUSADER CON III, Jan. 13-15**

To be held at the Metropolitan State

College Campus in Denver, Colo. Registration fee is \$8 until Jan. 1, \$10 thereafter. For more information, write to The Auraria Gamers Club, Metropolitan State College, 1006 11th Street, Box #39, Denver CO 80204.

## **PIRATE CON, Jan. 28-30**

At the Ramada Inn in Amarillo, Tex. For details, write to Pirate Con, c/o Starbase Amarillo, P.O. Box 30961, Amarillo TX 79120.

## **WISCON 8, Feb. 24-26**

Noted writers Jessica Amanda Salmonson and Elizabeth A. Lynn are guests of honor for this SF/gaming event at the Inn on the Park in Madison, Wis. Memberships are \$11 until Feb. 1, or \$16 at the door. Children under 12 are admitted free if accompanied by an adult member. Contact: WisCon 8, P.O. Box 1624, Madison WI 53701, phone (608)251-6226 (days) or (608)233-0326 (evenings).

## **GAME FAIRE '84, Feb. 25-26**

A wide variety of gaming attractions is offered at this fifth annual event, held on the campus of Spokane Falls Community College. Proceeds from the weekend will be donated to a local charity. Dormitory housing is available at the site. Prepaid admission to the convention is \$7 for a weekend pass; prices at the door are \$9 for the weekend and \$5 per day. For more information: Shannon Ahern, Book and Game Company, West 621 Mallon, Spokane WA 99201, phone (509)325-3358.

## **GOLD-CON II, March 3-4**

At the Omni Auditorium, Broward Community College-North, Pompano Beach, Fla. Gaming events, films, and Civil War re-enactments are among the scheduled attractions. Advance registration is \$4; admission at the door is \$5. For more information, write to John Dunn, Library, B.C.C.-North, 1000 Coconut Creek Blvd., Pompano Beach FL 33066, or call (305)428-8832.

## **COASTCON '84, March 9-11**

This seventh annual SF/fantasy convention will again be held at the Royal d'Iberville Hotel in Biloxi, Miss. The organizers anticipate attendance of more than 1,000 persons. Authors Robert Adams (guest of honor) and Andrew Offutt (toastmaster) will be among the celebrity guests. Continuous film and video shows, a 24-hour game room, an art show, and a "meet the guests" party are some of the scheduled offerings. Memberships are \$10 through Dec. 31, \$12.50 after that until March 8, and \$15 at the door. For information, write to CoastCon, Inc., P.O. Box 1423, Biloxi MS 39533.

## **MUGG-CON I, March 9-11**

A benefit SF/gaming convention to be staged at the Americana Resort Hotel in Lake Geneva, Wis., sponsored by the Multi-Universal Gamers' Guild (MUGG). A 72-player AD&D™ tournament, nearly 100 other gaming events, and other special attractions are on the schedule. All proceeds will be turned over to the American Red Cross. For more information, send a business-size SASE to MUGG-Con Convention Committee, c/o R. Nathaniel Waldbauer, 56 West Walworth Ave., Delavan WI 53115.

## **GEN CON® SOUTH VIII**

### **GAME CONVENTION, March 16-18**

All aspects of contemporary hobby gaming will be featured at this event, co-sponsored by the Cowford Dragoons and TSR, Inc., to be held at the Thunderbird Resort Hotel in Jacksonville, Fla. For details: GEN CON South Information, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

## **STELLARCON 9, March 23-25**

A SF/gaming event to be held at the University of North Carolina's Greensboro Campus. For more information, contact the Science Fiction/Fantasy Federation, Box 4, Elliott University Center, UNC-Greensboro, Greensboro NC 27412.

## **NOVA 9, March 24-25**

Free movies, gaming, an art show and auction, a costume party and contest highlight this convention, to be staged on the campus of Oakland University in Rochester, Mich. For registration information and other details, send SASE to: The Order of Leibowitz, P.O. Box 61, Madison Heights MI 48071.

## **AGGIECON XV, March 29 - April 1**

This SF convention, featuring L. Sprague de Camp and Catherine de Camp as guests of honor, will be held on the campus of Texas A&M University. Among the other personalities scheduled to be present are Don Maitz, James P. Hogan, and Wilson "Bob" Tucker. For more information, write to AggieCon XV, P.O. Box J-1, College Station TX 77844, or call (409)845-1515.

## **ONOCON '84, May 4-6**

Described by the organizers as the largest fantasy/SF/gaming convention in the central New York area, this event will be held at the Sheraton Inn Convention Center in Syracuse, N.Y. Guests of honor will include Frederik Pohl, L. Sprague deCamp, Randy Elliott, Carl Lundgren, and Jay Jay Klein. More information is available by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: OnoCon '84, P.O. Box 305, Syracuse NY 13208.



# Off the Shelf



## Art, science, dinosaurs, and more

### THE ART OF AL WILLIAMSON

James Van Hise

Blue Dolphin Enterprises, Inc. \$7.95  
0-943128-04-8

Al Williamson has been kicking around science fiction and fantasy's art world for a long time. In that time, he has made a lot of friends in the field. They must be friends, because they have nothing but the best to say about him in *The Art of Al Williamson*.

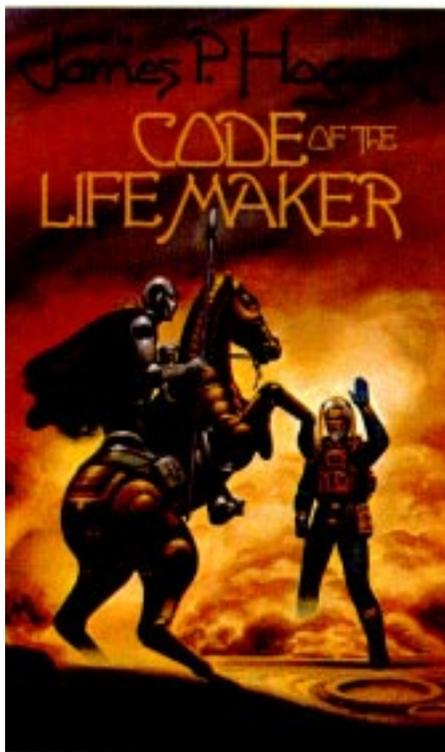
The book is a collection of interviews (with Gray Morrow, Frank Frazetta, Roy Krenkel, Ray Bradbury, and others), essays (by William Stout, Robert Strauss, and others), photos and, of course, a large number of examples of Al's work.

Unlike most fantasy/comic book artist's art books, this one lets the reader know a lot about its subject. The interviews tell a great deal about Al over the years, from his first days at E.C. comics to his latest work on *StarWars*. His friends and co-workers of the past thirty years have a lot of stories to tell. In the essays, the approach becomes much more serious, as each writer attempts to critique Al's work and style as they have developed over the decades.

In some ways, the photos are the most interesting part of the book. Instead of the normal collection of home scrap-album pictures which normally accompany this type of book, Van Hise has carefully chosen a number of photos from the vast reference library Al has built up over the years. Far from the usual fare, many of the stills in the book feature Al, along with friends like Frank Frazetta, Angelo Torres, George Woodbridge, and others posing for shots which Al would later use as panel and shadow reference in his work. Some of the book's best fun is captured in photos with scenes like Frazetta piloting an E.G. rocket ship, or Al in a cheap 'bald' wig posing as Ming the Merciless.

Beyond all the words or snapshots, though, is the reason one would buy this volume, and that is obviously the art of Al Williamson. Examples abound; the book is filled with sketches from throughout his career, as well as a number of complete comic stories, and many daily episodes from both his *Star Wars* and *Secret Agent Corrigan* newspaper strips.

Various sections of the work were done by Al with someone else (such as *The Vicious Space Pirates*, a six-pager by Al and Frank Frazetta), but most of it is pure Williamson. His is a style born of over 30 years of observation and collaboration, and loads of hard work. Although there are elements of



Frazetta and Krenkel to his work (which is just the same as saying there are elements of Williamson in *their* work), what emerges is a uniform look all his own. Much cleaner in his line work than most of his E.C. contemporaries, Williamson has become a master of shadow play. One cannot assume that working in the black & white medium of newspapers has forced him to develop this style; there are plenty of artists doing daily newspaper strips in the business, some longer than Al, who have seemingly never bothered to learn the first thing about shadow work.

Al Williamson has bothered, though, and practiced. His figures are always anatomically correct, and yet there is just enough slack in his lines to keep his art three-dimensional. He is a craftsman from an old school. His recent comic book work disrupts all the rules, the quality of his strokes breaking through most of Marvel's attempts to subdue them with the flat colors they use on their Grade Z pulp paper.

Williamson is not a rebel, or a bold experimenter. He is a hard worker, a dedicated illustrator, and, in the words of his peers as quoted in the book, "Al Williamson is one of the few grand masters of comic art" whom "nobody ever topped, and damn few ever matched."

### CODE OF THE LIFE MAKER

James P. Hogan

Del Rey Books \$13.95 345-30935-1

Quite simply, this is the best book to date this year.

A lot of things wind up on the shelves in libraries and bookstores under the title "Science Fiction." Burroughs' Mars books are always there; the same for Clifford D. Simak's and Ray Bradbury's pastoral novels. Doc Savage, the Shadow, and even Tarzan are often found there. The truth to tell, though, very few *science* fiction novels are ever written. One of the few people who still writes them is Hogan.

In *Code of the Life Maker*, he sets up a civilization on Saturn's moon, Titan — a civilization composed entirely of robots. Without a lecture, he gives us all the details of this strange race, showing how they evolved as thinking, rational beings, complete with a god mythos.

Of course, the robots are not all there is to the tale. Evidence of life on Titan has reached Earth, and a shipload of researchers is sent there. None of them know they are on their way to Titan, though; they have been told their mission is to study one of the Mars colonies. It is not long, however, before they know the truth, and begin to prepare to study what they will find on Titan.

Like any Hogan novel, things get much more complicated than can be described here. The author has set the stage to take careful shots at religion, government, the military, and society in general. His characters constantly discuss the stupidity of those around them; the thing is, both the humans and the robots seem to be making the same points.

Hogan makes his points, one after another, with eyebrow-lifting precision. With little mercy for anyone without the common sense to think things through, he blasts our present world again and again, knocking over icon after icon in his seemingly never-ending struggle to make people think. Although not as harsh or pointlessly cruel as someone like Harlan Ellison, Hogan nevertheless holds up much of our own world's history to ridicule by doing no more than representing it without the usual pomp of the ministers and history books which first taught it to us.

If the hardback price is too much for you, wait for the paperback, but do *not* miss this one. The purpose of science fiction is to present plausible futures. These futures should tell a story, and present the reader

with a series of alternatives by which they can lead better lives, or at the least, enjoy themselves by reading. As always, Hogan has accomplished this in spades.

So, for those who skip to the end of a review before reading the start, I will restate that this is one not to be missed — *Code of the Life Maker* is the finest example of science fiction released so far this year. Maybe last year, too.

### THE UNTELEPORTED MAN

Philip K. Dick

Berkley Books \$2.75 0-425-06252-X

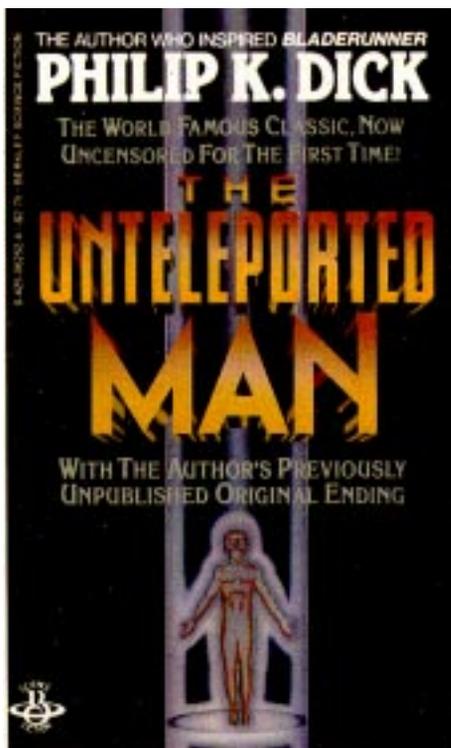
The policy of this column is to list collections and reprints at the end, excepting special occasions. This is one such occasion.

When Phil Dick's *The Unteleported Man* was first published, 30,000 words were cut from the ending for "commercial" reasons. Now, Berkley Books has reprinted this bizarre classic, with all of the missing pages that could be found put neatly back in place.

The novel is about Rachmael Ben Applebaum and his credit problems. It is also about a German controlled U.N., a machine called the Telpor which can teleport matter supposedly only one way, and a host of other things which do not seem as if they all belong in the same book.

Applebaum, being driven out of business by the conglomerate, Trails of Hoffman, Ltd., is getting desperate. Applebaum owns an interplanetary shipping company THL owns the Telpor, and is putting him out of business at a crushing rate. Applebaum suspects THL is lying about the Telpor's one-way limitation, and that all the people disappearing through it to new colonized land and its promises of a new, great, clean, wonderful world are actually being abducted for some terrible purpose. Resolutely, he decides to take the only starship of his fleet which has not been repossessed on the 18-year journey to new colonized land to discover the truth for himself.

With the aid of the most unusual science-fiction police force ever created, Applebaum sets off, only to be called back before he is out of our own system. The novel breaks off a dozen different realities at this point,



leaving the reader to flounder in an ever-changing sea of points of view. Dick, who was a master of the unusual tale, may have told his most convoluted story in *The Unteleported Man*. Now that it is finally available in its entirety, it is one not to be missed.

### DINOSAUR TALES

Ray Bradbury

Bantam Books \$6.95 0-553-01484-6

Just as a reprint with 30,000 words reinserted (see the foregoing) is not really a reprint, so a collection half-filled with never-before-seen material is not really a collection. For those who like Bradbury, for those who like illustrated books, and for those who like dinosaurs, this is another exceptional occasion for this column.

Bantam has taken every word Bradbury ever penned about dinosaurs, from his early classics to his newest pieces, and bound them together with illustrations by some of the field's top people to create a solid tribute to a well-respected master.

Each story and poem has been given a different look. For *Besides a Dinosaur, Whatta Ya Wanna Be When You Grow Up*, illustrator David Wiesner chose a cloudy, greying style to go with the tale's dream-like qualities. Sharply in contrast is the fine-line, almost comic-book look Bill Stout used for the illustrations of the classic *A Sound of Thunder*.

The rest of the artistic talent—James Steranko, Moebius, Overton Loyd, Ken Smith, and Alex Jay — were also equal to their tasks, all of them working in completely different styles and yet each of them capturing the flavor of the piece they worked with.

Although many publishers have talked of collecting all of Bradbury's dinosaur tales in one place, no one has ever done it before. After this volume, unlike so many other types of collections, no one will ever have to do it again.

### THE GENERAL'S WIFE

Peter Straub

D.M. Grant Publisher, Inc. \$25  
0-937986-54-2

This one, as is obvious from the price, is for dedicated Straub fans. Fortunately for those who are dedicated Straub fans, this one is worth the money. In it we find Andy and Phil Rivers, an American couple temporarily living in the United Kingdom. For Andy, London is beautiful and seductive, while her marriage to Phil is becoming increasingly intolerable. In an attempt to enjoy herself, while also removing herself from her husband for a while, Andy sets about looking for a job.

And, despite her husband's cynical reactions, a job seems to have been looking for Andy. On two occasions, a want ad uncannily suited for her seems to leap off the page of the magazine she is reading. The ad takes her to a musty, aging building inhabited by a retired, senile old general. He lives with a strangely ageless man named Tony, whom he introduces as his grandson. Andy's job is to read and edit the general's memoirs, translating the French portions into English.

The memoirs prove to be pedestrian, except the French portions, which Andy finds charming at first, and later overwhelmingly intense. The more she reads, the more her own identity seems to slip away, to become entangled with the lives of the general, Tony, and the general's deceased wife. She dreams of drowning at night, and during the day she is accosted by images/hallucinations of death and putrescence as she walks a path which seems to have been predestined for her.

*The General's Wife* was originally a chapter in Straub's *Floating Dragon*. The chapter was cut before publication by mutual agreement between the author and his editor (Straub fans will recognize Andy as Patsy McCloud). One should not be fooled by this bit of the book's history, however; *The General's Wife* is more than

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mere recycled leftovers. This chiller stands on its own. One who not only reads it, but who also has read *Floating Dragon*, will not only agree, but will also see it was indeed totally out of place as a chapter in the novel.

As he borrowed from the works of Hawthorne and James in *Ghost Story*, so here has Straub fashioned this tale after a story by Mexican author Carlos Fuentes. Interestingly, Straub seems at his best when cribbing bits and pieces from other authors. This story holds together far better than the more ambitious, and often rambling, novel from which it was taken. All in all, though, it is a fine example of Straub's talent for convincingly twisting the mundane into the horrific.

Coupling the better than average writing with the illustrations by Thomas Canty, and fitting it all within an extremely handsome package of green leather, signed by the author and the artist, makes this a collector's item worth looking into for any Straub fan.

### THE WORTHING CHRONICLE

Orson Scott Card

Ace Books \$2.75

0-441-91810-7

There have been more science-fiction and fantasy stories that used one form of telepathy or another than anyone could ever count. For decades, no one ever bothered to think about what a person who was telepathic might feel, how they would interact with less powerful humans, or more importantly, what lesser beings might think of and do to them.

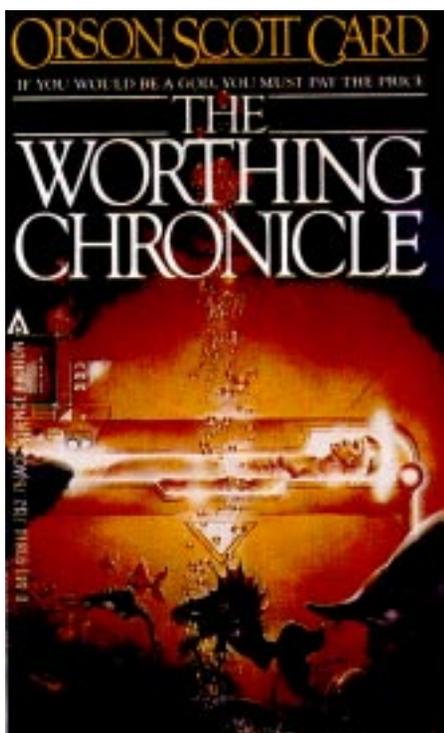
In the middle '60s, though, this oversight was rectified as dozens of writers began to explore these possibilities. Exhausting this vein quickly, these lesser talents moved off to find other science-fiction cliches to "humanize," leaving telepathy to gasp for breath on the shore where they threw it.

Enter this year Orson Scott Card, who apparently decided to take the idea of telepathy to its logical conclusion as well, but did it without the bleeding-heart, self-pitying approach used by many of his predecessors.

*The Worthing Chronicle* is the story of Jason Worthing, as written down from dreams by young Lared, a boy who — along with his entire world — did not know pain and death existed until the summer in which the book opens. The novel spans thousands upon thousands of years, as does Jason's life story.

When Jason was a boy, telepaths were hunted down and removed from society. Tests were given to any children even mildly suspected of extra powers, and turned over to "Mother's Little Boys" if their tests proved positive. Jason manages to escape this destiny, however, and disappears from mortal sight, with the aid of a bored man with immeasurable political and financial power. This man wants to remake society into something worthwhile; Jason becomes another of his tools for doing this.

Things do not work as Jason's benefactor would have them work, however, and Jason soon finds himself on a ship filled with



misfits, hoping to be able to colonize a new world. Using deep sleep and his superior mental powers, Jason accomplishes this over a period of centuries, and then finally takes what he figures to be his last deep sleep. But, he is awakened by his descendants fifteen thousand years later, coming into a world so completely different from anything he could have imagined that he has no idea what to do.

*The Worthing Chronicle* is one of the most interesting science fantasies ever written. It is preachy parable for our times, and yet it is one of those "I couldn't put it down" books one always wishes for and so rarely finds. Told mostly in dreams and flashbacks, and flashbacks within flashbacks, it is an extraordinarily intricate, and yet tight piece of fiction which moves forward at a breathless pace. Unlike Foster's *The Man Who Used The Universe*, which cannot cover one normal lifespan without the harshest of transitions, *The Worthing Chronicle* covers years in bunches of hundreds and thousands without causing the reader to bat an eye.

It is an adult book — "adult" in the sense that the more mature the reader, the more he'll get out of the exploration of emotions within. This is one of the best books to come out this year, perhaps second only to the masterpiece by James Hogan which is described on the first page of this column.

### The MAN WHO USED The UNIVERSE

Alan Dean Foster

Warner Books \$2.95 0-446-30870-6

Those familiar with this column may be tempted to skip over this entry. Seeing an Alan Dean Foster title listed seems such a certain way to be presented with a negative review, that many might simply ignore it to go on to the next selection. But for once, that's not the case.

*The Man Who Used The Universe* is Kees Vaan Loo-Macklin, brilliant criminal, businessman; entertainment mogul, and manipulator of galaxies. As a boy, he takes over a number of underworld rackets on a backwater planet. Selling out his connections to the police, he uses his newfound fame and legit connections to rise upward in the legal world. Taking over the planet of his childhood in a matter of years is not nearly enough for him, though. Casting his webs in all directions, it is not long before he is a leading figure on every human world through one form of commerce or another.

This should be enough to satisfy anyone, but not Kees. For some reason, he seems to have hardly begun. Reaching out past the boundaries of humankind, he makes contact with the Nuel, man's most hated enemy.

What is Kees after? Could he hope to singlehandedly stop the Nuel? Might he be planning to sell out all of mankind the way he has done to numerous people throughout his life? Or is there *really* a third race of dangerous beings in the universe, one he plans to sell out both man and Nuel to? No one knows; only one suspects the truth, and he is a young Nuel no one will believe.

And this is only the first third of the book! *The Man Who Used The Universe* may be Foster's best novel. Fast-moving, mysterious, and capable of throwing the reader off the track with the turn of every third page, this is the kind of book Foster should have been writing since the start.

### NOTABLE COLLECTIONS:

#### THE COMPASS ROSE

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Bantam Books \$3.50 0-553-23512-5

#### WHISPERS IV

Stuart David Schiff, Ed.  
Doubleday \$11.95 0-385-18028-4

#### UNIVERSE 13

Terry Carr, Ed.  
Doubleday \$11.95 0-385-18288-0

### NOTABLE REPRINTS:

#### KIOGA OF THE WILDERNESS

William L. Chester  
DAW Books \$2.95 0-87997-847-3

#### EMPIRE OF THE ATOM

A.E. Van Vogt  
Timescape Books \$2.95 0-671-46144-3

#### CITY AT WORLD'S EDGE

Edmond Hamilton  
Del Rey Books \$2.75 345-30987-1

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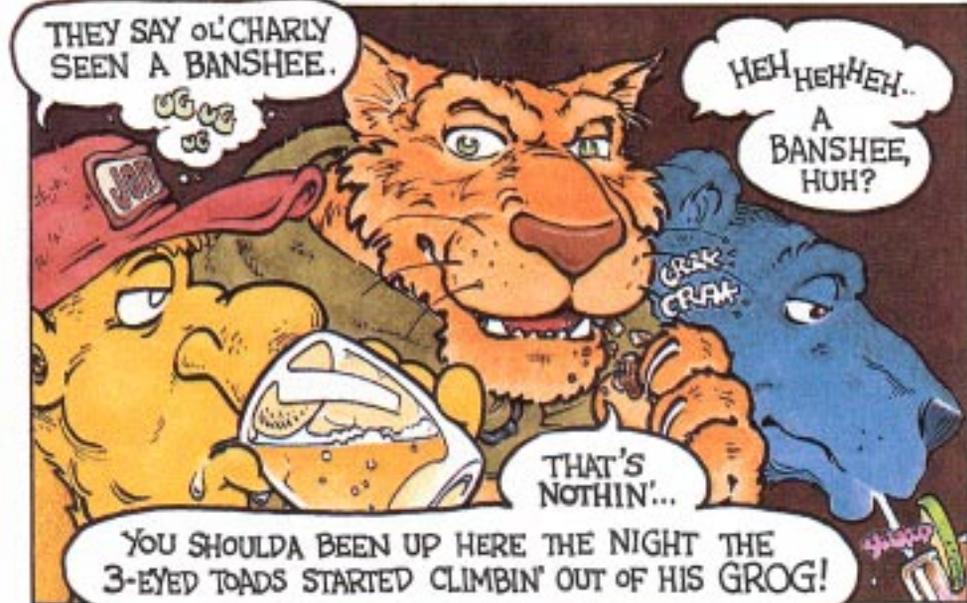
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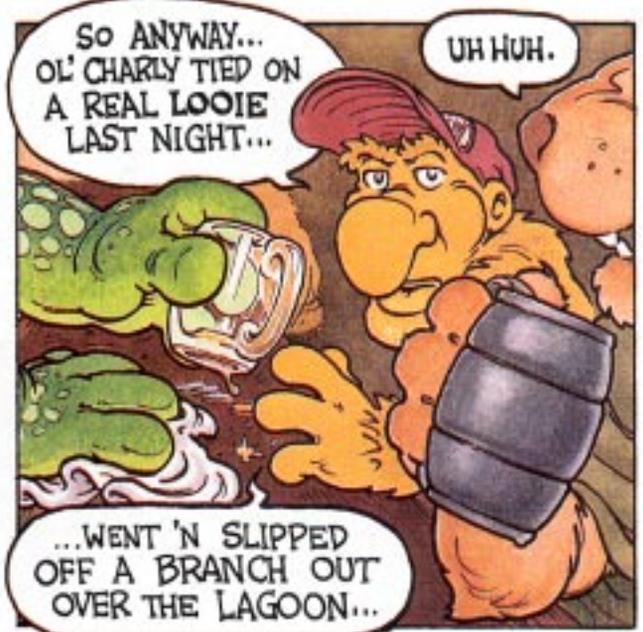
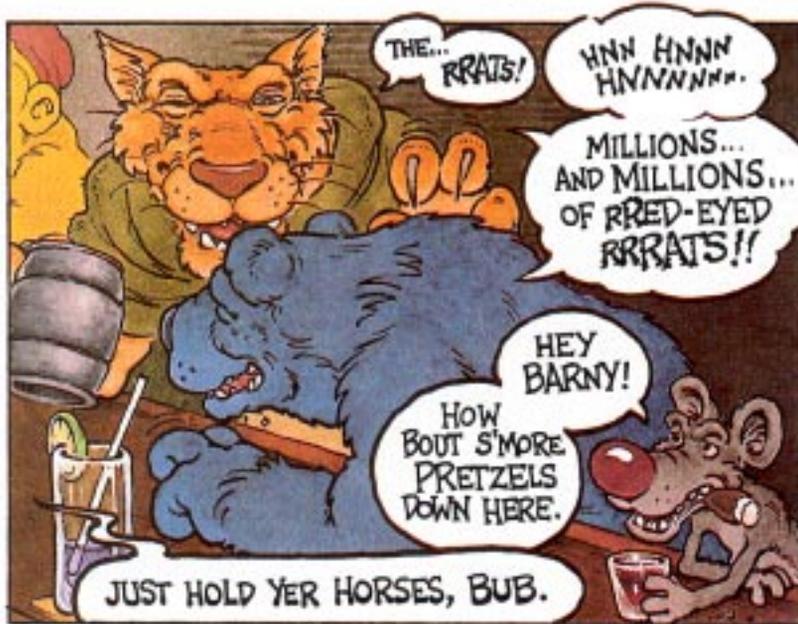
#### NIGHT WINDS

Karl Edward Wagner  
Warner Books \$2.95 0-446-30812-9

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A. Bertram Chandler  
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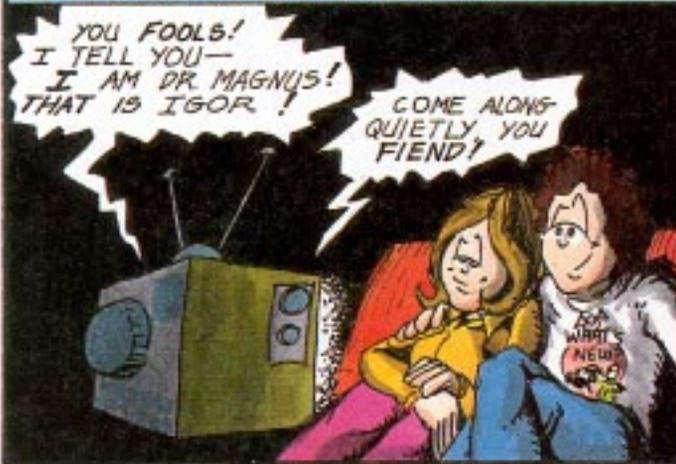
FOR INSTANCE, A 6 1/2 FOOT TALL MAN IS NOT REALLY GOING TO BE ABLE TO THINK LIKE AN ELF.



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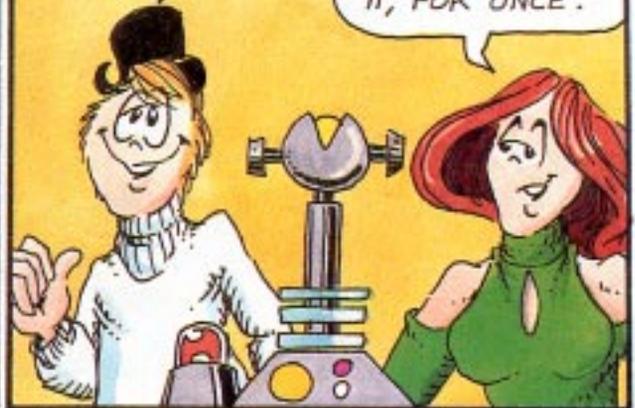
YOU FOOLS!  
I TELL YOU—  
I AM DR MAGNUS!  
THAT IS IGOR!

COME ALONG  
QUIETLY YOU  
FIEND!



OUR FIRST TEST SWITCH WILL BE BETWEEN IGOR... I MEAN DIXIE, AND MYSELF.

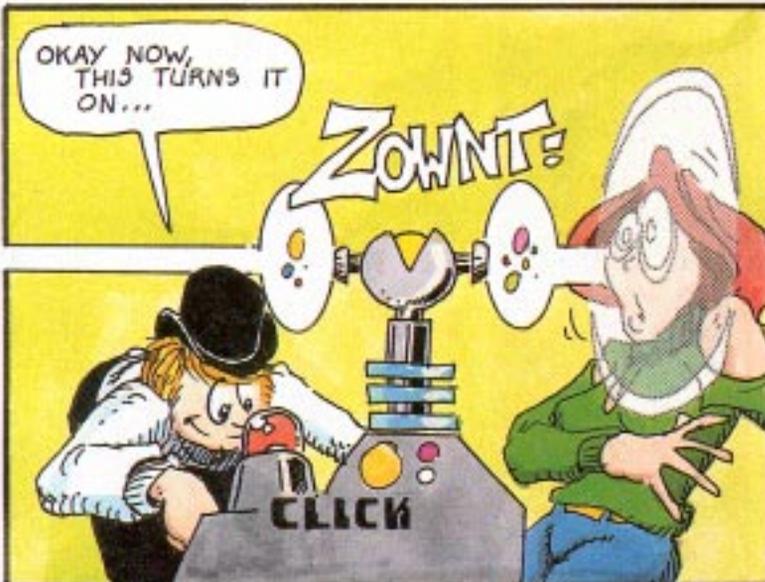
I HOPE YOUR BRAIN WILL BE ABLE TO COPE WITH SOMETHING IN IT, FOR ONCE.



OKAY NOW,  
THIS TURNS IT  
ON...

## ZOWNT!

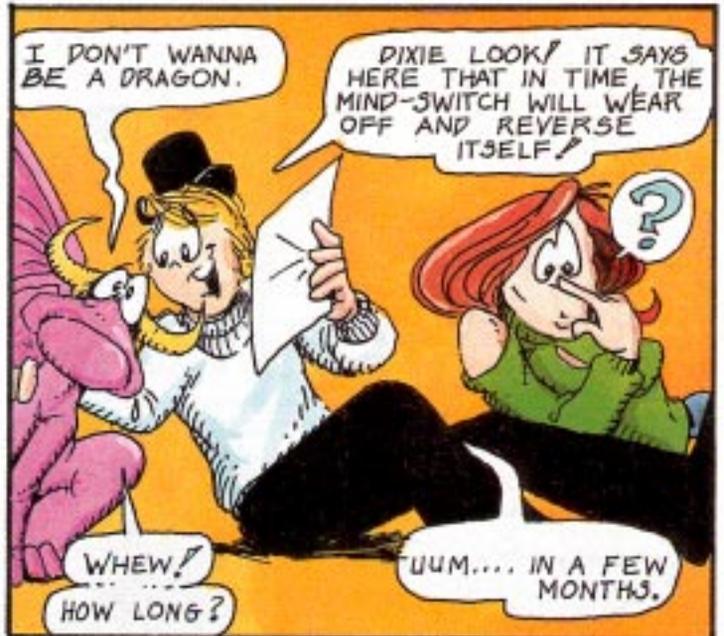
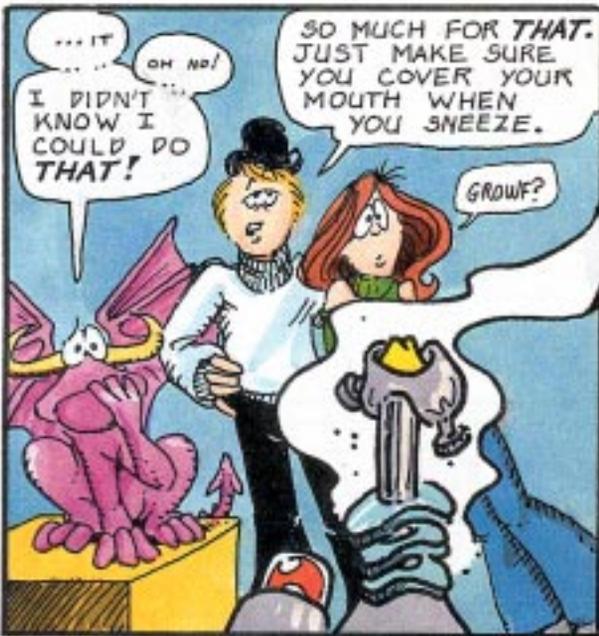
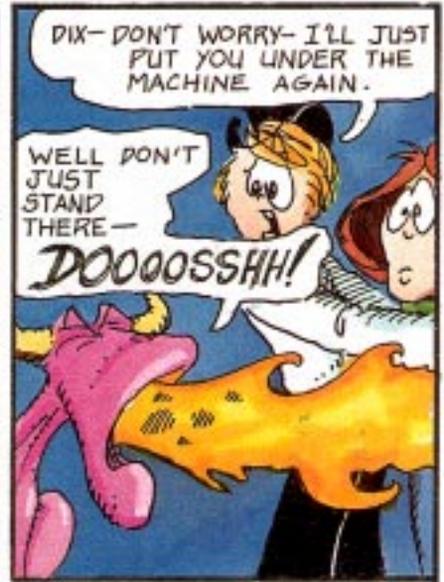
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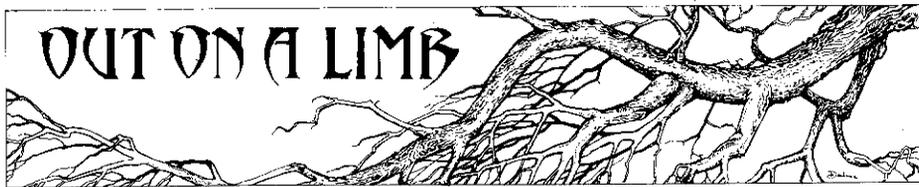


OH NO! ARE YOU OKAY?!  
THE BEAM MISSED!

NO IT DIDN'T.







(From page 4)

represent other people passing on good ideas. They are an inspiration for less imaginative gamemasters. I suspect it is rare for anyone to use material verbatim from these pages; personal (*creative*) additions are the rule.

Mr. Kreighbaum claims that DRAGON is not adequately expanding the horizons of role-playing games. This is true to some extent; the magazine is not all it can be. You respond to him by complaining that "furthering the cause" is ill-defined, and then (negligibly considering the meaning of the phrase) insist that you do fulfill this mission of manifest destiny. Now, I'll offer my own ideas on the role of magazines in fantasy role-playing.

Role-playing is an acquired skill. It must be cultivated in players by an experienced gamemaster and fed by contact with other approaches to the game in other campaigns. This contact, however, is difficult except for players in large cities or on college campuses. Gaming magazines, like trade magazines and scientific journals, fill this gap by acting as a clearinghouse for information and as a forum for ideas. Both aspects could use further development in this publication. None of us are authorities on everything. We all need advice in areas out of our training and experience. I was delighted to see Bruce Evry's "The Hull Truth . . ." in issue #70 for this reason. As for the forum idea, every Dungeon Master has a unique philosophy of the game. In its capacity as a mouthpiece of TSR, this magazine almost has a responsibility to be a medium for discussion of these philosophies in AD&D.

Another responsibility that DRAGON has is to provide guidance for the less experienced gamemasters. Mark Kreighbaum cites a letter from someone "asking that DRAGON do his

creative thinking for him." (Editor's note: *Those were Mr. Kreighbaum's words, not the words of the original letter writer.*) This is a serious problem among the youngest generation of DMs. Mr. Kreighbaum echoes the situation when he complains of new players' dependency on the literature. All too little attention is given to the wisdom of the DMG's afterword. Gamemasters are frequently afraid to stray from the rules. It must be emphasized (and emphasized often) that it's all right to be creative.

Dover Plains, N.Y.

Jonathan Heiles

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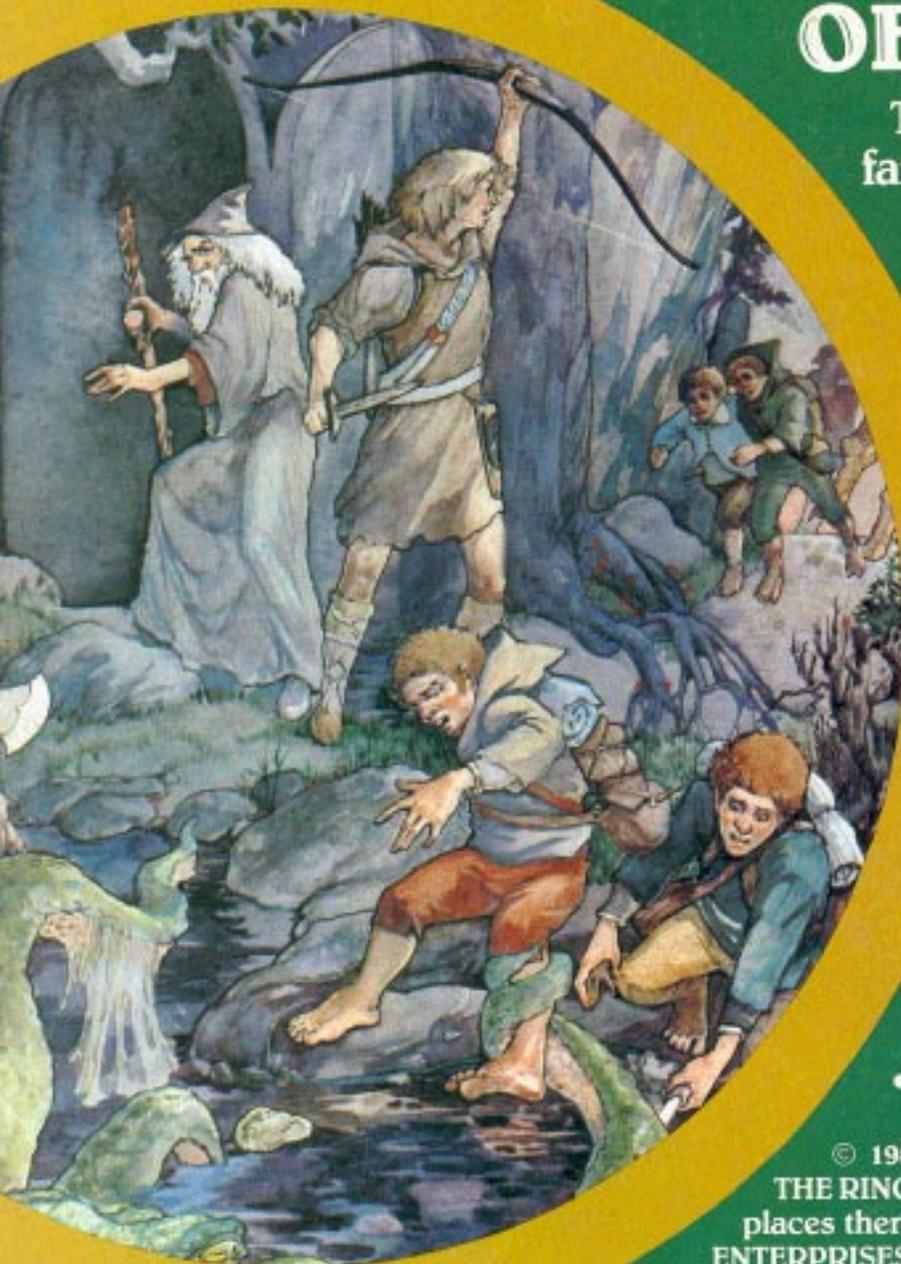
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