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Contents

Vol. VIII, No. 6 December 1983

SPECIAL ATTRACTION

Barnacus: City in peril.35
Intrigue for AD&D™ characters

OTHER FEATURES

The psychology of the doppelganger6
Looks aren't everything . . .

How many coins in a coffer?9
Solving the vexing volume problem

Five keys to DMing success.14
Reducing the work, increasing the fun

Dungeon Master's Familiar.17
Let your computer do the dirty work

Who lives in that castle?22
Every estate needs people to prosper

Treasures rare and wondrous30
A hundred unusual items of value

These guys really took their time54
Four gamers, four days, and four hours

A set of rules for game reviews56
Guidelines for writers — and readers

REGULAR OFFERINGS

Out on a Limb3
Letters from readers

Leomund's Tiny Hut.48
All-in-one tables for AD&D™ gamers

Game reviews:
Timeship60
Illuminati.61
Privateers & Gentlemen63
Man, Myth & Magic64

Off the Shelf66
Literary gift ideas

Gamers' Guide70

Convention calendar72

What's New.74

Wormy76

Snarfquest77

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Program plea

We've received more than a hundred submissions of computer programs in the last year and a half, since we first announced we were interested in printing programs for use in, and with, role-playing games. We've had to turn back all but a scant few because, as we developed a clearer idea of what we wanted, we discovered that we weren't getting what we had come to expect. Now our files of program submissions are practically empty, and at the risk of again being inundated with large envelopes containing printouts and diskettes, we're going to put out the clarion call once more. But this time the rules are more finely tuned. At *least* we have a pretty good idea of what we *don't* want, and I'm going to squeeze as many of the no-no's as I can into the space that remains.

We don't want programs (and here I mean mainly character-generation programs) that don't *exactly* follow the rules of the game for which they were written. That doesn't mean you have to include every rule for character generation; for a system like the AD&D™ game, a complete character generator might be larger than your computer's memory. Use the rules that you consider essential and important, and do it precisely by the book.

We don't want programs that use the computer as nothing more than a random-number generator and data selector, unless you can convince us that the program offers a substantial benefit in accuracy or efficiency for the user. This category includes things such as gems & jewelry tables and encounter tables.

We don't want programs that don't deserve to be programs all by themselves, such as routines that simulate dice rolling. Neither do we want massive masterpieces of programming, even if they're good, because most people couldn't cram them into their 16K or 32K systems. We'll look at programs for 48K or 64K systems, but they'll only be accepted if they *need* to be that long.

We don't want programs in any language except BASIC — preferably a version of BASIC that's easy for people to translate into other dialects of the language. Unless you know your statements can be easily translated, keep the PEEKs, POKes, and fancy graphics to a minimum, and you'll maximize your chances of getting printed.

We *do* want to publish FRP-related programs, but only if we can be reasonably sure ahead of time that they'll meet the expectations of our readers — who are, in the final analysis, even more picky than we are.



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ust about any night on the evening news, you can hear about the trials and tribulations of one city or another. Well, if you think

Chicago has troubles, or Cleveland has problems, wait till your travels take you to "Barnacus: City in peril." That's the title, and the topic, of this issue's AD&D™ adventure, which earned its creator, Francois Nantel, first place in category A-8 of our Module Design Contest. Getting through the gate is a snap, but after that things get a *lot* tougher.

If you want to think of this issue as a Christmas present, then you couldn't ask for better gift-wrapping than this month's cover painting. "Crystal Visions" is the latest in a long line of Clyde Caldwell creations to adorn our cover. Even though Clyde now works for TSR, Inc., and doesn't have a lot of time on his hands, he has promised to work on another cover piece real soon.

The features inside this issue range from the practical to the philosophical, with stops at several places in between. David Godwin wrote "How many coins in a coffer?" in an effort to keep a lid (so to speak) on the eternal acquisition of treasure that seems to be a fact of so many characters' lives: Remember, you've gotta keep all those gorgeous gold pieces somewhere — and you can't fit your life savings into the pouch on your belt. The number-crunchers among you will also enjoy *Leomund's Tiny Hut*, wherein Len Lakofka delivers unto us some revised and reorganized tables for combat, saving throws, and experience-point values. Unofficial, but very interesting.

The philosophical extreme is represented by Mike Beeman's article, "Five keys to DMing success." Perhaps it should have been titled "Five C's," for a reason that will become clear when you read it — and in our opinion, it should be required reading for anyone running a campaign.

The next installment of our "ecology" series isn't quite deserving of that label, which is why we call it "The psychology of the doppelganger." Fraser Sherman (at least we *think* it was Fraser Sherman) offers up this tale, which sheds a lot of light on those shady shape-changers.

Katharine Kerr, a frequent contributor who has emerged as our resident historical expert, asks the question "Who lives in that castle?" and then proceeds to answer it with an overview of the many types of people that every castle-owner needs to keep his manor, ahem, well-manored.

And, leaping ahead several centuries in time and technology, John Warren favors us with his "Dungeon Master's Familiar," a computer program designed to take the drudgery of DMing out of the hands of humans and put it into the circuitry of a computer where it belongs. — KM



Discipline problem

Dear Editor:

I would like to congratulate you on the whole issue of DRAGON #78. The articles on psionics were well planned out and well written. They cleared up many problems and misunderstandings, and the new class and its psionic powers make a new and different type of character (not a subclass).

The only question I have is this: Can a psionic person not of the psionist class use the major and minor disciplines under Table III, or are those limited to that class only?

Chris Beck
Tucson, Ariz.

Arthur Collins, the author of the article on the psionist class, created the new disciplines particularly for that class — "to flesh out the Psionist's abilities," as the article puts it. But that doesn't mean you can't consider them new disciplines usable by any psionic character. (Since the whole psionics system is optional to begin with, and the additions printed in the magazine are not official rules, you can pretty much do what you want, as long as it works for you.)

From a rules-structure standpoint, there's something to be said for including the new minor and major disciplines in the big list, since that brings the totals to 24 minor devotions and 20 major sciences and makes random rolling for disciplines a little easier. Be advised, though, as with all of the material in DRAGON® Magazine, that anything you use from an article or feature is not a rule change that would be recognized in any official tournament or competition; you won't be able to go to an AD&D™ Open Tournament (for instance) and play a psionist character, or a psionic character who knows the mental surgery discipline. Only when (and if) the information in an article is incorporated into an official rule book can it be considered "fair game" for tournament play and other official activities. — KM

Psionic repairs

Dear Editor:

A short note to pass on to you two corrections that need to be made to my Psionist article in #78.

First, on p. 27, the attack and defense modes were reversed in Table II. The Psionist starts out with 1 defense mode (*mind blank*) and 0 attack modes; not, as printed, 1 attack mode and 0 defense modes. The second paragraph on page 28 states this correctly, but the table had it reversed.

Second, on p. 32, the examples under *Severance* got confused. The text reads "30 points x the level of spell use severed," so the example should say that "the blocking of the ability to use 3rd-level spells would cost 3 x 30, or 90 points."

These are trivial, I know. And I must confess,

I've never had to send you a correction before for anything of mine you've published — all in all, a very good track record!

Arthur Collins
Indianapolis, Ind.

Die-sastrous!

Dear Dragon:

Fellows, the April issue is 6 months away. How did Mr. Weeks' article ("Be thy die ill-wrought?") wind up in the October issue?

First of all, who wants to test their dice for bias? Secondly, the computer program was all messed up (i.e., line 520 with goto 660, and no line 660!). Thirdly, who wants to roll their twenty siders 200 times each, and lastly, the formula doesn't work!

After typing in the program, I tested my 4-sider three times, and the result was biased. I then split the numbers into groups and did the whole thing over, and the result was no trace of bias! That didn't bother me much. So I tested a 20-sider and a 6-sider, and they all came up biased.

Seriously, if my first DRAGON copy I ever bought had that article in it, I would have never subscribed.

John Biederman
Ringwood, Ill.

Okay, John . . . first, apparently you want to test your dice for bias, because you did check out at least a few of the dice you own. (It does seem, though, like you were motivated by a desire to find fault with the procedure, instead of a desire to find fault with your dice.)

Second, you're right: the computer program was a little "messed up." We made our apologies for that, and fixed the mistake, in last month's letters column.

Third, I don't know of anyone who "wants to roll their twenty siders 200 times," but we were willing to play the odds. Out of the hundreds of thousands of people who read this magazine, we figured there would be at least a few thousand who'd be interested in going through the motions. Judging by the number of letters we got with questions about the mistake in the program listing, lots of people were interested enough to type in the program and use it. We don't expect to please everybody, but it seems like we pleased enough people so that we don't have to feel like printing the article was a bad decision.

And last, I don't understand why you came to the conclusion that the chi-square procedure doesn't work. Maybe the dice you tested were biased. Maybe you didn't repair the mistake in the program properly, so that it wasn't running properly when you put in your test results. And maybe your problem with the 4-sider arises from the simple fact that random generation can produce some strange results. For instance, the odds against a 4-sider coming up "1" twenty times in a row are very small, but it is possible.

And if your test rolls were very unevenly distributed, it stands to reason that the chi-square procedure would be thrown off accordingly

Sincerely, I'm sorry you didn't like the article, and (no offense) I hope there aren't too many other people who felt the same way. And last but not least, thanks for giving me a terrific idea for next April's issue. — KM

Tabletop troubles

Dear Editor:

King of the Tabletop, in issue #77, is a very good game. However, there are a couple of things which I wish to resolve.

First, the section on "Gold" states that "At the beginning of a turn, each player collects gold from the bank according to his holdings." Does that mean he collects gold equal to his/her gold value every turn, or gold equal to his gold pieces?

Second, in phase 3B, "Purchasing Tiles," for 1 tile it costs 2 gp; for 2 it costs 5 (or 2.5 gp each); for 3 it costs 10 (or 3.33 gp each); and for 4 it costs 20 (or 5 gp each). Why would it cost a lot more to buy several than to buy just one?

Pat Carroll
Pepperell, Mass.

The rest of the section on "Gold," including an example, completely answers your first question, Pat. A player's holdings consist of his land tiles, villages, cities, fortifications, and mines, which all have various gold-piece values. The gold pieces that a player currently holds are not part of his holdings, and have nothing to do with the amount of new gold he gains at the beginning of a turn.

Why does it cost so much more to buy multiple land tiles? Well, because of the way the economy works in Tabletop Land (and for the sake of game balance), players are discouraged from expanding their territory by simply paying to acquire new land — unless they're willing and able to pay at a higher rate for purchases of extra tiles beyond the first one. — KM

Index revisited

Dear Editor:

For several months I have been trying to dig through my collection of magazines and compile an index for my own sanity. I've actually gotten behind in reading current issues because of this obsessively compulsive venture. Then I began reading, and entering the articles of #76 — until I hit page 45! True relief and frustration! Now I have a new framework to add future articles on, and several lovingly organized pads of paper to throw away.

I have found a couple more errors/deletions (I think!) other than those shared by Steven Monte (issue #78): Where's the "Witch, witchcraft" article in "Best Of" Vol. I, page 58? Also, a possible typo — under "Undead, Lich," is that not supposed to be #26? I hope you are planning to publish another "Best Of" volume, but equally valuable would be an annual revision of the index (perhaps as a premium for us subscribers, or included in each January issue?). Now that you've got some framework to update, I'd hate to see you wait another 35 months to revise it!

Bill Sellin
Orange, Calif.

Sorry about your frustration, Bill — but if it's any consolation, we're frustrated, too, at learning about another index mistake. You're right, the "Blueprint for a Lich" article appeared in issue #26, not #36 — indexologists, take note and make the proper correction. As for the article on witches, it originally appeared in issue #3, and it is listed under "Character classes (unofficial)" in the index.

The only reason we haven't considered doing an update of the index every year is that we weren't sure how useful it would prove to be; adding 12 issues' worth of articles to an index that currently covers 74 issues, and reprinting the whole thing, doesn't seem like a substantial enough addition. On the other hand, waiting three years to update the index does seem like going to the other extreme. By the way, we printed the index in the August issue (instead of January or some other month) because that enabled us to include all the material through the end of our last full year of publication in June. We won't do a new index as a "premium for subscribers," as you suggest, because we don't print different versions of the magazine for subscribers and for store shelves — but we will consider putting out a new list of articles on a more regular basis than we have in the past. — KM

How many sides?

Dear Editor:

I appreciate the article about chi-squares, but I have one problem: How do you test the d4's that have 8 sides? Is the number of categories 4 or 8?

Marvin Somerman
Los Angeles, Calif.

You can solve this problem in one of two ways, depending on the results you want to get. If you want to test for the occurrence of each of the eight sides of the die, mark half of the sides (1A through 4A) so you can tell them apart from the other four (1B through 4B). Then test the die as if it was a d8 to see if each of the sides shows up with roughly the same frequency. Or, you can simply treat the die as a "normal" d4 (one with four sides) and test to see if each of the four possible number results comes up with the same

(Continued on page 80)

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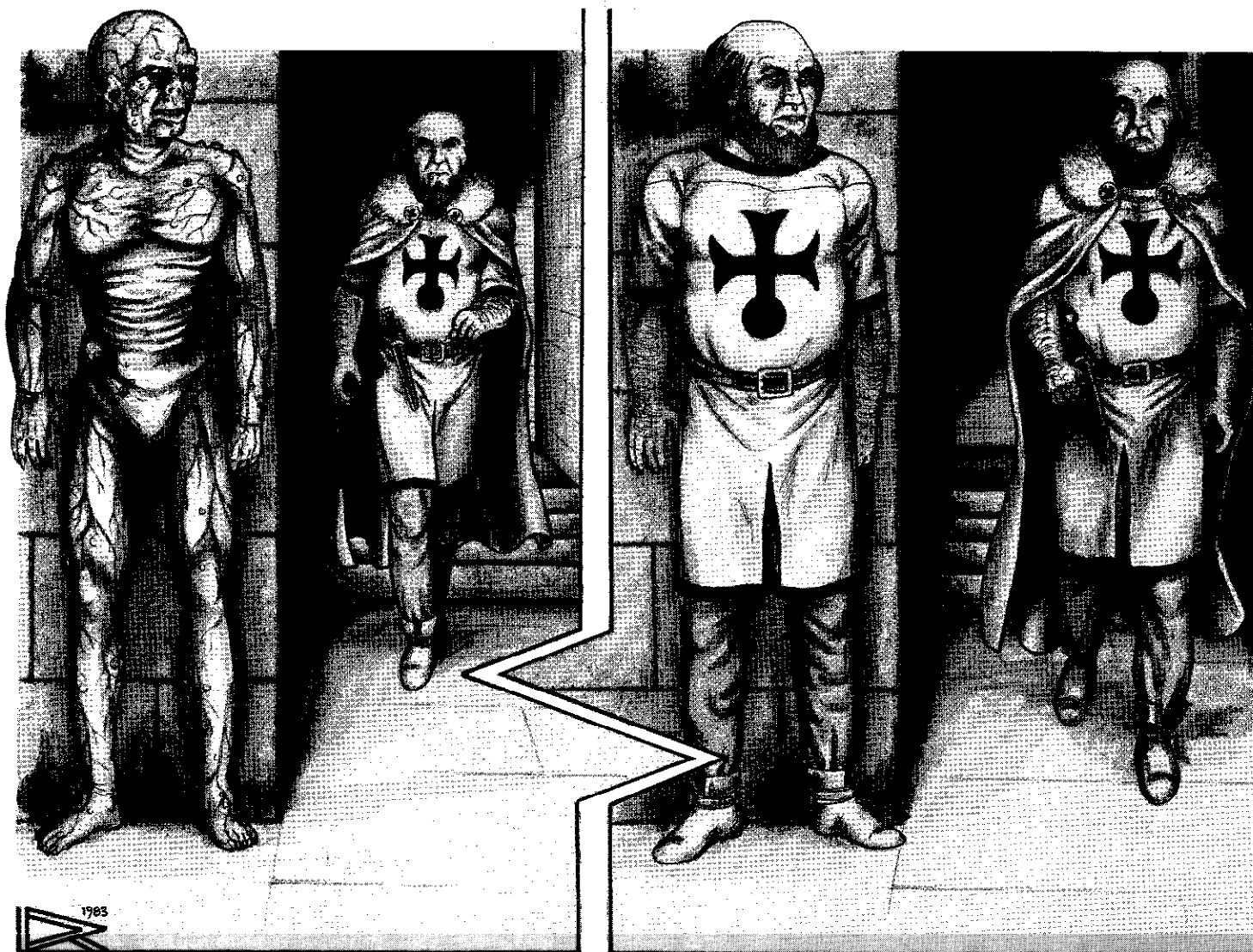
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The psychology of the Doppelganger

by Fraser Sherman

There were no guards at the door, which was as he wished it; no one must know that the captive had not been slain with its partner. Looking unusually nervous, Nyssan, Baron of Ker, swung open the door and stepped into the room, closing the door tightly behind him.

The chamber — a hastily cleared store-room — held two figures besides the Baron Alam Arijah, wizard, alchemist, and scholar, bowed low at the entrance of his master. Beside him, bound to its chair by a net of interwoven crimson threads, was a grotesque parody of a human figure, grey and pulpy; its blood-red eyes stared at Nyssan with open malice from out of its warty face. And then, almost in an instant, it changed . . .

"Good greeting, my lord." Nyssan froze in mid-stride, stunned to see his own image

staring mockingly up at him. "Alam, would you release me? I'd like to meet this man who resembles me so much."

"Silence!" Anger replaced shock as Nyssan's gauntlet smashed across the creature's face; up to the throat, twin to his own, he thrust a dagger. "Resume your own form, doppelganger — immediately!"

"As you will. . . ." The doppelganger's voice became more sibilant, less human, as it changed back. Nyssan sheathed the dagger, studying the creature grimly. He and Alam had found it with its companion as one of them prepared to replace the castle chaplain, and after a bitter struggle the baron overcame them. Their soft-looking bodies were surprisingly tough, and in battle they seemed able to anticipate his every move, dodging his attacks easily, then striking through his defenses with unbeliev-

ably punishing blows. And, Nyssan's determination to take one of them alive hadn't made the fight any easier.

"Can it break free, Alam?"

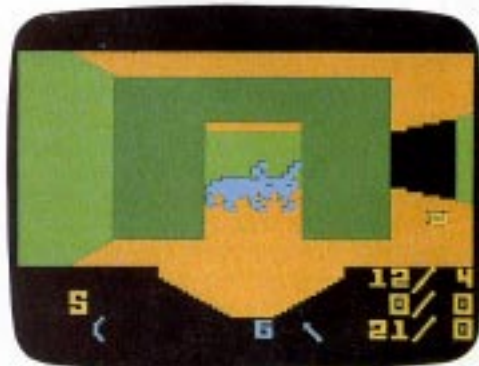
"Not from the Blood-Red Chain. Even if it duplicated my form, the Chain would spoil any spells it might draw from my mind." The wizard looked down at the prisoner in fascination. "If I could only duplicate its ESP powers — they're far beyond anything, magical or mental, that humans possess, operating almost constantly without conscious effort. But then, their brains are structured quite differently from ours — they can't be charmed at all, you know."

"Yes, I know." Alam had explained their powers before, as the baron now recalled: how a doppelganger could not only probe surface thoughts and knowledge but also tap

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things lying just below the surface, like knowledge of your own identity, and use what it learned and its polymorphing power to replace the victim. After that, it would draw constantly on the minds of its victim's friends, learning what they expected of its new form and changing its behavior accordingly. Some said that even made them more believable than the originals. Then, Nyssan broke off his reflections as he realized his wizard was saying something more.

"... and after seeing them fight, I believe they use their ESP in combat, sensing your planned attacks and your weakest points — it's this knowledge, not simply their strength, that makes their blows so damaging."

Nyssan nodded curtly. "Yes, that's interesting, I grant you — but it's not what I asked you to learn. Have you found what I sought?"

"Ah, yes, my lord!" Alam's eyes were shining. "I have made a discovery. This is the first time we know of that one has been dissected, because that rubbery flesh of theirs turns rock-hard once they have been dead for a time, making it impossible to cut them open without hacking them to pieces. But thanks to a necromantic preservative spell I cast—"

"Alam!" The baron interrupted, the wizard jumped, and Nyssan forced himself to restrain his temper. "I don't care how you did it — what have you found?"

"It is not the knowledge you sought, my lord, but it is remarkable nonetheless. My lord, the doppleganger is human!"

"What?" The baron stared at the creature, which was glaring at Alam with renewed contempt. "That . . . thing? Human?"

"My dissection of the one we slew leaves no doubt. There are several strange anomalies — the brain structure, for example — but their internal organs are basically those of a man. Perhaps it was some wizard's experiment that mutated them, perhaps not, though magic in the blood would explain why they are so resistant to spells. But I have no doubt that their ancestors were men. Oh, when I present this discovery, that fool Wegtha's theories will be—"

"Enough, Alam!" The wizard jumped again, and Nyssan struggled to stay calm. "I am overjoyed with your discovery, my friend, but — you say you learned nothing of what I wanted to know?"

"Nothing." Alam's jubilation dimmed. "It refuses to speak, and cannot be charmed. I am sorry, baron."

"Do not be — yet. It's my turn, now." He reached out and grasped the doppleganger's chin, forcing it to look up at him, but it jerked away angrily. "Unhand me, human!"

"Human? You heard Alam — we're both human!"

"Once, perhaps, but not now. Does a butcher claim kinship with the cattle he slaughters?"

Nyssan grabbed its chin again, hard. "Listen, my naughty friend, I stabbed one

of you to death yesterday and I won't hesitate to repeat the feat if you cross me!" He let his hand drop. "But if we reach an accommodation, you will live. You may even profit. So, bargain with your 'cattle' or die."

The doppleganger stared at its captor for nearly a minute; whatever it saw seemed to give it an answer. "Very well . . . human. What do you want?"

"Reasons, doppler — I want reasons! Why did you seek to impersonate my chaplain? Why do your kind always take the shape of men, or elves, or gnomes, or dwarves? What do you want?"

"We want what is ours!" The force of the reply made Nyssan back up a step. "I *chose* your chaplain — his life was to be mine! His wealth, his fine robes, his women — had you not interfered, they would belong to me!"

"So that's all it is. You prey upon our lives, usurp them for your own. Parasites!"

"For what else were we made? Your foolish wizard amuses me, babbling of magic and experiments. It was the gods who chose us to bear these powers! We are the select, the exalted — your lives are ours by right. Your only purpose is to serve us, to build up your lives and then surrender them to us."

"I see. . . ."

Nyssan was about to say more, but Alam spoke up, his eyes alive with eagerness:

"Wait a moment, doppler — oh, don't you have a name?"

"Not for such as you," spat back the creature.

"Doesn't matter. But what you said — about his women —"

"Alam! This is hardly the time!" scolded the baron.

"My lord, you don't understand. One of the anomalies I found was the absence of any reproductive organs, either on the dead specimen or this one. This has to mean—"

"You're quite clever, wizard." This time, the hissing voice was slightly less contemptuous. "No, we cannot reproduce except in your form. That is the other function of your species — to tend our young as birds tend to a cuckoo. We look completely human when we are born, though some of our organs do not function the same as yours. We grow, unsuspected, among you until maturity. Then comes the change, and with it our minds are filled with awareness of what we are."

Alam was almost ecstatic over this new revelation, but then he paused, suddenly thoughtful. Flushing, he turned back to the baron. "Forgive me, my lord; I digress from your goal again."

"Oh no, no, Alam, anything but!" Nyssan almost quivered with excitement as he grabbed the sorcerer's arm. "It's perfect! Everything I could have hoped for."

"Nyssan, I do not understand."

"You will, old friend, you will." Nyssan beamed down at the doppleganger; he was no longer nervous at all. "Doppler, tell me — how would you like for me to give you

your birthright? Luxury beyond your wildest dreams — gold, furs, servants, as much as you desire. If you choose, I can procure it all."

The doppleganger said nothing, but Nyssan looked into its eyes and smiled at what he saw. "Let me explain. On the morrow, Lohirin of Fearchor Keep comes to speak with me. His master, Duke Thysal, has made outrageous, impossible demands to me, claiming that half my lands belong to his dukedom by ancient right. Worse, the upstart has friends, powerful friends in the capital, friends who have the king's ear." Nyssan's face was a study in gloating triumph as he drew the dagger again — and this time placed it in the doppler's doughy, grey hand as a symbol of the baron's trust and confidence that this strange new ally would find the bargain attractive. "Lohirin of Fearchor is the Duke's trusted friend, the only man living who can enter his presence armed. Do you understand now what it is I want you to do?"

APPENDIX

Since the doppleganger's armor class and attack damage are partially derived from its *ESP* abilities, it will suffer against an *ESP*-proof opponent, such as a monk, or a character with the psionic discipline of *mind bar*. Against such foes, its armor class will equal leather armor (AC 8), and it will do only 1-6 points of damage per attack.

A doppleganger's *ESP* abilities are considerably different from the *ESP* spell or the psionic power of the same name. A doppleganger can continuously monitor the surface thoughts of any one character at a time, but can also probe more deeply into the character's mind, becoming aware of deeply hidden facts about the character's life, nature, and habits. This furthers the illusion that the doppleganger actually is whoever it is imitating, and adds to its combat abilities.

Dopplegangers have never been known to sleep; they appear biologically incapable of it, though in their altered forms they will, of course, pretend to be asleep when such action is appropriate, and/or when it will prevent them from being discovered for what they are.

Though dopplegangers can form their bodies into the appearance of clothing, equipment, weapons, etc., they generally avoid doing this because of the obvious problems they would have if asked to drop something they appeared to be holding or wearing. Often they simply borrow materials from the body of whomever they are imitating and wear or carry those.

Though listed as being neutral in alignment, dopplegangers might be more correctly viewed as neutral evil, or at least neutral with evil tendencies. They show little respect or concern for humanity and allied races, except when doing so benefits them. They are not prone to go out of their way to promote wickedness, however, and can act in a helpful manner . . . again, when it suits them.

How many coins in a coffer?

Don't forget, all that treasure takes up space

by David F. Godwin

The values and weights of the various coins in the AD&D™ game system are reasonably well defined. A coin of any type weighs approximately a tenth of a pound, or 1.6 ounces. But many DMs are continually faced with the problem of the volume of large numbers of coins. How many coins will fit into a coffer? A chest? If a room is filled with copper pieces to an average depth of one foot, how many cp are there in a 20-by-20-foot room? How big is a gold ingot weighing (or worth) 200 gp? (In the official modules, ingots crop up all the time.) Finally, the ultimate question: How many coins can you cram into a *portable hole*?

To solve these problems, we need to know the *size* of the coins. Nothing is said about the actual size in the AD&D rule books, although the Players Handbook says all coins are “relatively” the same size and weight. (It’s a line point, but does “relatively” mean *equal* with respect to one another, or *approximately* equal?) Having all coins of the same size and weight is very convenient, even necessary for game purposes, but it is fundamentally an absurd idea. Platinum weighs almost 2½ times as much as copper, so how can coins of equal size weigh the same? And if they weigh the same, how can they be the same size?

The *RuneQuest* game system manages to survive with a different encumbrance value for each of its three coins, but that system presents problems of its own. No way does silver weigh twice as much as copper! Of course, it doesn’t say all coins are the same size; the rules don’t mention size at all. For all I know, a gold wheel could be the size of a pinhead and a copper clack the size of an airplane tire. In the *Tunnels & Trolls*™ system, all coins weigh the same — a tenth of a pound, by some amazing coincidence — but nothing whatever is said about size.

The easiest way out is to reiterate that it’s only a game and isn’t supposed to be totally realistic. What’s realistic about fire-breathing dragons or alignment languages? How does that accord with the laws of biology and physics? There are quite a few of us out here in the boondocks who feel perfectly comfortable with basilisks, fireballs, illusions, the fact that a spell called “continual light” produces continuous light with nothing intermittent about it, and even the rule that clerics can’t use edged weapons, but who balk at the idea of a world where platinum, gold, electrum, silver and copper all weigh precisely the same for a given volume. And if we do say that all coin metals weigh the same, we are still faced with the volume question.

It would certainly be too complicated to have a different weight for each one of five coin types. Not only would that be playing “house rules poker” and give the DM a nervous breakdown, but the volume problem doesn’t come up often enough to make that the easiest solution.

One possible, halfway realistic solution is to say that all coins weigh 0.1 (one tenth) lb. each and have a diameter of about 1½”

(that of a silver dollar coin), but that the *thickness* varies according to the relative weight of the metal used.

The problem here is that having a different thickness for each coin involves computing the volume occupied by each different type of coin and applying it in each individual case. I have actually done this myself, as described further on in this article, but you would still have some fairly hairy — and unnecessary — calculations to make in order to apply the figures. The different-thickness solution summons the shunned demon of Needless Complication.

(In the D&D® game, all coins are supposed to be about the size of a half dollar, but even a platinum piece that small would have to be 3/8” thick to weigh a tenth of a pound.)

Another easy way out would be to say that the laws of nature as



we know them don't apply in the world(s) of AD&D™ gaming (for example, magic works) and all metals weigh the same. If you're sold on the dollar coin as a standard, including thickness (1.5 millimeters), you can even say that all coin metals weigh 24% more than platinum, one of the heaviest known substances on earth! (A new Eisenhower dollar weighs 24.59 grams; a tenth of a pound is 45.36 grams.)

One more possible and not altogether unreasonable solution is this: In the world of reality, we are faced with the totally unreasonable fact that light always travels at the same speed regardless of how fast you're moving with respect to the source. The light from a distant star strikes the earth with a velocity of about 186,300 miles per second. If the earth happens to be moving toward that star at 50,000 miles per second, the light from that star *still* has a velocity of 186,300 with respect to the earth, not 136,300.

So, in a hypothetical AD&D world, there may be a natural law to the effect that, although coins may be of different sizes or thicknesses, it takes the **same number** of coins to fill a given volume regardless of the type of coin or the volume of any individual coin. We already know that the volume held by a *Leomund's secret chest* varies with the level of the magic-user, regardless of the size of the chest. We can simplify matters considerably by saying that, due to the weird laws of physics in an AD&D universe — which allow magic to work — any container will hold, say, four or five coins per cubic inch, period, regardless of the size, shape, thickness, or volume of any individual coins.

Ah, but the resources of "logic" and "science" are not exhausted

yet! Who said that we are dealing with pure metals? A medieval technology, even with the help of dwarves and gnomes, can certainly not attain 100% purity in its refining processes. Therefore, we can easily say that all coin metals in the AD&D world weigh the same **because of impurities**. Even with modern methods, it's possible for refined gold to weigh more than refined platinum, even though pure platinum weighs about 10% more than pure gold. Of course, the impurities would have to be different from those naturally occurring on *this* earth, but we can always postulate substances like adamantite, mithril, or "gygaxite" to account for the fact that all refined metals wind up weighing the same and to average out the 7-to-3 weight difference between pure platinum and pure copper. (I wonder what sort of metal adamantite would be, since diamond weighs only 3½ grams per cubic centimeter. Very light and very hard, obviously, which accounts for its desirability.)

For that matter, there is no particular reason to insist that what we call copper (or silver, or gold, etc.) is the same thing as what the inhabitants of a fantasy world call copper, etc. Maybe it's just copper-colored gold . . .

Okay, so, by whatever method you want to use to explain it, all coins are the same size (diameter **and** thickness) and weigh a tenth of a pound each.

But **what** size is this size, and how many coins will fit into a given volume? The original question.

Since we're saying that all coins weigh the same, a good starting place would be to take the average of the specific gravities of the five pure metals. The specific gravity of a substance is how much it

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weighs compared to water. The specific gravity of water is 1. If something weighs twice as much as the same volume of water, its specific gravity is 2, and so on. (The specific gravity of diamond is 3.51.) The system is very handy if you use metrics, because a gram is defined as the mass of 1 cubic centimeter (cc) of water under normal conditions. Therefore, the specific gravity of anything is its weight in grams per cubic centimeter. (Mass equals weight for all practical purposes, under normal conditions of temperature, pressure, etc.) The weight in grams of 1 cc (that is, the specific gravity) of each of the five coin metals is: platinum, 21.4; gold, 19.3; electrum (average of gold and silver), 14.1; silver, 10.5; and copper, 8.9. So if a copper ingot weighed 8.9 lbs., a platinum ingot of the same size would weigh 21.4 lbs. — if you were dealing with pure metals.

The average of all these, and therefore the working specific gravity of any coin metal in our hypothetical world, is about 15. Things will wind up being simpler in the end, however, if we heavy things up a bit and call it 15.66. A tenth of a pound (about 45.36 grams) of any coin metal, therefore, would have a volume of 2.9 cc or 0.177 cubic inch. If the coin has the same diameter as our dollar coin, then it is 1½" (3.81 cm) in diameter. With a volume of 0.177 cubic inch, a coin would be almost exactly 1/10" thick, and you could stack 10 coins to the inch. (Now you know why we used 15.66 for specific gravity instead of 15. The lower figure would give us a thickness of 2.63 millimeters, or about 7/64".)

Of course, 15.66 is 176% of the specific gravity of pure copper, and the copper metal wouldn't be as heavy as this even if it were half platinum, even though an alloy of half copper and half osmium (the heaviest matter on earth with a specific gravity of 22.5) would be about right. We might note here that a copper piece, if made of pure copper and only as thick as an Eisenhower dollar, would have to be more than 4½" in diameter — a tad unwieldy, but that's how much pure copper it takes to weigh 0.1 lb.

The specific gravities of the pure, or nearly pure, metals being what they are, we could more plausibly use the idea of impurities to produce a system where 1 gp or 1 pp would weigh 1 gp, a copper or

silver piece would weigh ½ gp, and an electrum piece would weigh ¾ gp. But again, this seems like unnecessary complication.

We now have the following data for a standard, typical coin — regardless of metallic composition — in the AD&D game:

Weight: 0.1 lb. = 1.6 ounces = 45.36 grams

Diameter: 1½" = 3.81 cm

Thickness: 0.1" = 0.254 cm = 2.54 mm

Volume: 0.177 cubic inch = 2.9 cc

Specific gravity: 15.66

Now you cannot say that, because the volume of a coin is 0.177 cubic inch, a box with a volume of 177 cubic inches would hold 1,000 coins. It would hold that much solid coin *metal*, but not coins. Round coins take up the minimum amount of room if they are neatly stacked. By experiment, loose coins take up about 110% as much room as stacked coins. Now the volume effectively occupied by a stacked coin has to be figured as a rectangular solid 1½" x 1½" x 0.1" (0.225 cubic inch) because you can't put anything — certainly not coins — in the little empty spaces left because of the roundness of the coins. But you don't, really need to know all that, just the number of stacks and the height of each stack.

Since the figure for a loose coin is 110% of the effective volume of a stacked coin, the effective occupied volume of a loose coin is 0.2475 (99/400) cubic inch. There's nothing hard and fast about the 110% figure, so let's make that 0.25 (1/4) cubic inch, and there will very conveniently be 4 loose coins per cubic inch.

Before considering coffers and so on, let's dispose of backpacks and sacks. These things will physically hold a lot more coins than you can carry in them. A backpack, for instance, supposing it to be just the right size for a standard spell book (DRAGON® issue #62), is 16" x 12" x 6" (1,152 cubic inches), pretty close to the size of a modern camping backpack. Therefore, it ought to hold 4,608 loose coins, right? So what happens if you put 460+ pounds of gold in a leather backpack and pick it up (assuming you have a strength of 19 or better)? The straps come off and it comes apart at the seams! The same thing applies to saddlebags, and even moreso to sacks. So how



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many coins *can* you put in these containers without damaging them? The answers are nowhere to be found in the main AD&D rule books, although it is at least implied in the illustrative example on page 225, Appendix D, of the DMG that a large sack will hold 400 gp and a small sack 100 gp. These figures are confirmed by the data in the AD&D Character Folder, which also gives 300 gp for a backpack. Nowhere is anything said about saddlebags beyond price and encumbrance, but it's probably safe to assume 300 gp on the average, like a backpack.

Now back to the coffer: If the dimensions happen to be 5" x 7" x 1½", or 52½ cubic inches, the coffer will hold 3 coin stacks one way and 4 stacks the other way (assuming a coin diameter of 1 1/2"). That's 12 stacks 1 1/2" high at 15 coins per stack, or 180 coins. But, since the box is 1½" deep, you've still got room to make short stacks of coins turned sideways around the edges — three stacks 1/2" thick (5 coins each) and four stacks 1" thick (10 coins each) — so that's another 55 coins for a total of 235 coins. There is still an unoccupied volume of 1 1/2" x 1" x 1/2" in the corner, but you can't cram even one more coin in that. This space *will* be occupied if the coins are loose, however, but, at 4 coins per cubic inch, the coffer will only hold 210 coins if they are loose instead of stacked.

How many coins will fit into a chest 18" x 30" x 18"? This one's a little easier — 12 x 20 = 240 stacks 18" high with no room left over. (If the dimensions are up to you, make the horizontal measurements multiples of 1½" to avoid the "coffer problem.") The volume is 9720 cubic inches. Right away we see that the chest will hold 43,200 stacked coins or 38,880 loose coins. (Each stack has 180 coins; 180 x 240 = 43,200.)

If a 20-by-20-foot room is filled with copper pieces to an average depth of one foot, how many cp are there? (A similar problem cropped up in a module published in DRAGON Magazine last year.) If loose, as they almost certainly will be, there will be 2,764,800 cp, the monetary equivalent of 13,824 gp, almost enough to cover the living expenses of ten 7th-level characters for two *whole months*, and it *only* weighs a little over 138 tons!

Furthermore, since that's a volume of 400 cubic feet, you can't even get all those copper pieces in a *portable hole*, which has a volume of only about 283 cubic feet. (Of course, a 10th-level magic-user could *teleport* home with all of it by making only 1,106 round trips.)

Which brings us to the final question: How many coins *can you* put in a *portable hole*? Such an item is 10 feet deep and 6 feet in diameter, for a volume of 488,580 cubic inches. We'll consider only loose coins in this case; who's going to stack them? At 4 coins per cubic inch, the answer is: 1,954,320 coins.

Ingots are another problem altogether, and send us back to specific gravity. Take an ingot that weighs 200 gp. If it is pure gold, it will have a volume of about 28 2/3 cubic inches, which might be 2½" x 2 7/8" x 4". But that's pure gold. If all coin metals weigh alike, then, under the system developed here, an ingot weighing 200 gp (20 lbs.) would have a volume of about 35 1/3 cubic inches, maybe 2 5/8 x 2 5/8 x 5 1/8. If the specific gravity of any coin metal is, as we figured, 15.66, then it weighs 15.66 grams per cubic centimeter, which works out to about 0.035 lb./cc or about 0.566 lb. per cubic inch. Dividing 20 lbs. by 0.566 lb./cu. in. yields the 35 1/3 cubic inches.

If you want to be exact, you use this method of dividing by 0.566, which is the same as multiplying by 1.767. It would seem to be a heck of a lot simpler, though, just to multiply by 1.75 (1 ¾) to get an approximate volume, which is all you need anyway. In the case of a 20-lb. ingot, this would result in a volume of 35 cubic inches, neglecting only a third of a cubic inch — which ain't much when you divide it up between three dimensions.

Just for information, here are some data I've compiled for the system of different coin thicknesses (all diameters are 1 ½", all weights 0.1 lb.) for the pure metals. This system is much too complicated for game use, but might be of interest to somebody. The figures do show how the system of "all coin metals weigh the same due to impurities" as outlined here serves as a workable compromise among the actual pure metals involved.

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Metal	Specific gravity	lb./cu. in.	Volume of coin cc	cu.in.	Thickness mm	in.
Platinum	21.40	0.784	2.12	0.129	1.80	0.073
Gold	19.30	0.697	2.35	0.143	2.10	0.081
Silver	10.50	0.376	4.32	0.264	3.80	0.149
Copper	8.90	0.300	5.10	0.311	4.50	0.176
Universal	15.66	0.566	2.90	0.177	2.50	0.100
Dollar	14.40	0.520	1.71	0.104	1.50	0.059

"Universal" is the common coin metal we've worked out in this article, included for comparison. Also included for comparison is "Dollar" — the U.S. Eisenhower dollar coin. Its specific gravity looks pretty good; why not use it? Well, to begin with, it only weighs 24.59 grams (0.054 lb.), about half as much as we need. Of course, it could be used as a base if you want to make it twice as thick, but

then we don't get nice, neat little figures like 4 coins per cubic inch, or 10 coins in a 1" stack. (The Eisenhower dollar is, of course, a "clad" coin, not one homogenous metal.)

Ambitious DMs who really get off on mathematical calculation might conceivably want to use the "different-thickness" method, but I'll let *them* figure out how many coins in a 1" stack and the effective occupied space of a loose coin for each different metal. I confess I have already figured it out and have the data, but I fear the editor would balk at including it. (*Editor's note: You're right, David.*) Besides, it's *much* easier to say all coins stack 10 to the inch, will occupy a given volume at 4 coins per cubic inch if loose, and measure 1½" in diameter by 1/10" thick, and that you multiply by 1.75 to get the volume in cubic inches of a certain number of pounds of solid metal.

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Five keys to DMing success

Make it easy on yourself and fun for your players

by Mike Beeman

Dungeon Mastering, if you're good, is not a hobby. It's a career. The creation and execution of a campaign that will completely engross players and keep them happy and eager to play more is a task on par with finding the Holy Grail. It's too much work. Besides, it's not exceedingly profitable.

So what can we do about it? Quit our jobs, leave school, and make the players support us? Unfortunately, no. What we do is find a way to skimp on the labor without cutting down on the excitement and suspense we work so hard to build up. Every good campaign has five basic elements: **continuity**, **character**, **competence**, **creativity** and **cooperation**. If you're able to maintain all five in your campaign then you're way ahead of most of us — and you're probably spending a lot of time dungeoneering (or wishing you were). There are shortcuts to achieving all five of the basic campaign elements that take some of the wear and tear off your overworked graymatter. They are necessarily of a general nature — specific suggestions are obviously impossible — but astute application of these principles can save loads of time and lots of browbeating.

I. Continuity

Continuity in a campaign is a very complex thing. It is that in a campaign which makes it more than just a series of dungeons, and that which ties all of the dungeons together into a cohesive whole. Many DMs have trouble with continuity. It requires more than a little preparation, often mundane, that is not directly linked to adventuring. A campaign consists of much more than a group of bloodthirsty adventurers going out and killing things, stealing their money and magic, then dropping by the local village only to be off again in a few days. There have to be solid reasons for adventuring above and beyond the joys of fighting and goldmongering. What about revenge? Fear? Altruism? The trick here is to make the characters' lives much more than an episodic smattering of unrelated activities, like some TV adventure series. You need to give them the continuity and uniformity of a good novel's protagonists.

This is all easier said than done. The most important thing to do is to plan in **sets** of actions rather than dungeon-by-dungeon. Have your dungeons linked together, either directly or indirectly. An excellent example of this is *the Against the Giants/Descent into the Depths* series of AD&D™ modules from TSR, Inc. Each dungeon logically follows its predecessor; the transitions are

smooth and the challenges widely varied. Many of TSR's AD&D modules have been published as sets, and this is not a bad example to follow.

Serially ordered dungeons are not always feasible, however, so there remains the problem of overall continuity. There are three tricks you can use here. The first is to throw in some mundane personality, event, or item that keeps cropping up when the character makes it back home, such as a wife, an ill mother, robberies in the character's home, etc. Make the player realize that his character has to live in a world where life goes on even when he isn't around; even the above-all-the-little-things-in-life heroes have little things going on in their lives. There is also the "old enemy," that scoundrel who pops in occasionally between adventures to make life difficult for characters. Players love old grudges. One party met up with a nasty fellow called Ollog when everyone was at first level — and they were seventh level before Ollog finally ceased to be a nuisance. Unlike the **anti-hero**, which we'll discuss a bit later, the old enemy is not part of actual adventuring. He is, rather, a byproduct of it who always manages to escape at the last minute.

The third trick is especially tricky. I call it "the hub of all activity." You come up with something, be it a magic item, prophecy, or personage, that is the center and cause of a party's activity throughout most of their adventures. The "hub" of one campaign is a mage called Amathar. The poor adventurers keep running into magic items of his creation, agents in his pay, old acolytes of his — and even the Archmage himself on occasion. They all hate him, but their most powerful magic was created by Amathar for Amathar: he is the hub of all activity. It is very important to keep up a thick veil of mystery about the hub. The interconnections between various adventures should be vague at best, and the players may not realize each piece of the puzzle is related to the whole until several adventures later. Be careful that the hub doesn't escape your control, because once you start it, it will quickly develop a life of its own. The party must be spiralled toward the hub gradually, over a period of years, and you should let it be known (if necessary) in no uncertain terms that a more direct path to the answer is one leading to sure destruction.

All three of these devices will spark continuity in the campaign; they let the characters know that their past really affects them as ours does us, and gives the impression of a whole to a life consisting only of fragments. Without that, players find it very

difficult to relate to and maintain their characters, and the whole campaign falls apart.

II. Character

Everybody has to be somebody. Good players will usually freely develop and faithfully play a character's personality in a role-playing game, complete with idiotic idiosyncracies and inexplicable personal preferences. Even so, a good DM will give every character a focal point for his life, or something that will make him feel important or special.

There are several ways of doing this, but in whichever method you choose, be extremely careful not to force the player into anything. If he feels you're trying to script the character's life, the player will lose interest in the game almost immediately. This is a major cause of character demise or "player dropout" in AD&D gaming. Many players are perfectly content to role-play a hero's companion, and when you try to make them become heroes, those players get upset. Players have been known to build their characters' personae around the fact that the characters always tried to be heroes but failed, and **then** the heroes came gallantly to their rescue. That's okay; it's the players' game. Let them play it as they will.

For those fledgling heroes, though, it is a great help to have something to grasp and mold their personalities around. Four options are immediately apparent: the **quest**, the **magic item**, the **anti-hero** and the **destiny**;

The **quest** is by far the least desirable of these options. There are several reasons for this, not the least of which is a quest's temporal nature. Quests should be accomplished fairly quickly; if not, they become tedious and boring. There is also the question of free will. If a character is **quested**, he loses much of his free will. His destiny is dictated by the quest and he is powerless to change it, which irritates the player to no end.

The other options are much more attractive. The **magic item** is the best. It offers the greatest variety of adventures that can be built around it and at the same time increases rather than restricts a player character's freedom. One of Amathar's creations in the previously described campaign served quite handily in this regard. An elven magic-user character was in a party with three paladins, and was getting something of an inferiority complex. He didn't fight well, and by the time he got his spells off the paladins had either destroyed or subdued

whatever it was he was magicking. Well, he came into the possession of an item called the *Strange of Amathar*, which changed all that. He is now the most powerful member of the party (and, accordingly, the most beset with problems) and has saved the entire group on numerous occasions.

It is necessary that the item be an original creation, with a background and potential befitting an artifact, so be very wary of its potential for upsetting the game balance. The item might increase or decrease in power as the character rises in level, or make its usage nigh as costly to the wielder as the victim. Charged items usually won't work for this purpose; they're too temporary, making them very ineffective unless they have absorption capabilities (e.g. *staff of the magi*) that recharge them.

The anti-hero is especially effective against fighters, although in my campaign two rival magic-users once destroyed half a city. You can create an incredibly nasty NPC that, without apparent provocation, devotes his life to making a player character miserable. The anti-hero torments, chides, and humiliates the character with a constant stream of affronts that may include assaulting and kidnapping family members and retainers, laying traps for the PC, spreading rumors about the PC, and so on. Unlike the "old enemy" described above, this nemesis' offenses are constant and precede any actual adventuring to the land in which the anti-hero resides. It should be several game

years before the character can effectively challenge his adversary, and the hatred between characters should be very real and very intense on both parts. Remember not to get carried away, which it is very easy to do. Make the character's pride the primary target, but don't humiliate the PC to the point where the player simply quits. Allow the character some retribution occasionally to keep him going.

The *destiny* is the hardest of all to DM, the most complex to prepare for, and the hardest to justify. But players love it. Basically, the DM creates a set of prophecies surrounding a character or an item that character possesses, and then administers its fulfillment. The prophecies must be vague and leave plenty of room for error because — I guarantee it — someone will do something that threatens to invalidate the entire thing. Once upon a time a PC in my campaign was prophesied to slay a pit fiend in an epic battle. He had to be a paladin, right? Wrong. He was a magic-user with a measly 28 hit points who, suddenly and with much bravado, leapt upon the devil and magic jarred it, magic resistance and saving throw notwithstanding. A good variation on the destiny theme is the "eternal champion" concept in which a great hero is continually reborn in new bodies — one of them a PC. What player wouldn't love being compared with Elric, Hawkmoon, Corum, and their ilk? You need to be very careful with this kind of

character history manipulation. One slip can take all the mystery out of the campaign, and players love finding that one tiny hole in your plans.

III. Competence

If you feel inclined to Dungeon Master, there are only two things you really need to be a pretty good one, aside from an active imagination. The first, of infinite import, is a working knowledge of the rules. You don't have to be a "textpert" capable of rattling off the stats of every single monster in both the Monster Manual and the FIEND FOLIO™ Tome: just know enough so that you know what you're doing. A player at OrcCon last year boasted of killing six Tiamats and three Bahamuts. Anyone who has read the books knows this is impossible.

The second requirement of a competent DM is a sense of the dramatic. A Dungeon Master has to know, often instinctively, how to build suspense and climax it for maximum effect. He has to lend variety and substance to as many as a hundred NPCs, perhaps more, in every session. A DM is basically a playwright for characters in need of a play. If the play is found lacking, the players will take their characters elsewhere. This is not to say that only good actors and good writers can be good DMs. We've all read enough and seen enough movies to have developed some sense of drama, but it takes time and practice to mature any talent. Simply keep the game moving at all

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times while you're at the playing table; don't let frequent digressions or breaks to look up the rules bore your players. If you're desperately unsure of something, then look it up, but don't be afraid to make some snap rulings. If you're wrong, there's usually no harm done. You should always have vital statistics (i.e. HP, AC, #At, etc.) written into the key. If, as play continues, you find an "official" rule inconvenient or awkward, then by all means develop your *own* way of handling the situation. Remember that "the play's the thing." No one grades your adherence to the rule books — in fact, I know of one group that plays AD&D adventures without *dice*.

If anything at all helps to keep the game moving and saves work, it is the efficient and frequent use of playing aids. You'd be surprised (or would you?) how many people spend money on aids and then don't use them. If you've got it, use it. A DM designing a campaign needs all the help he can get. Published modules are invaluable as both time-savers and gap-fillers, but never run a module straight off the shelf. Adapt it to fit your party's personality. Most modules can stand (and some need) great amounts of revision. For example, TSR's module L1, *The Secret of Bone Hill*, has as its primary mission the cleaning out of a mansion infested with humanoids and undead. The party I ran it on spent scant *minutes* in the mansion: their primary mission was to assassinate the Duke of Restenford. Although the module was excellently written, it didn't fit the personality of the party. Never be afraid to alter anything if you think it'll work better than the original presentation.

For those AD&D gamers just getting started, some playing aids are indispensable. Nothing will speed up a game more than a set of DM screens, be they homemade or storebought. You may want to make a supplemental screen for thief abilities, equipment cost, and spell charts, and wandering-monster tables. If you need a world to DM, there are many available at gaming shops. You'll also need a city. Judges Guild has several on the market; for general use *City State of the World* *Emperor* is the best. If you operate out of a particularly unruly campaign land, you may opt for *City State of the Invincible Overlord*, wherein trolls and rangers share tables in taverns. Without these, or comparable works of your own design, your campaign will be a pale shadow of what it could be.

IV. Creativity

Creativity is the cornerstone of AD&D gaming. If a campaign is to survive, it can't be a repetitive series of hack-and-slay forays into the underworld. There must be a wide variety of settings, goals, and obstacles to maintain player interest. A good hack-and-slay dungeon is by far the most popular type — I know a ninth-level paladin who endures his expeditions into the Nine Hells only if he can go off fighting orcs back home

— but these dungeons can get very dull very fast.

How can you make it easier to be creative? That's simple: plagiarize. Plagiarism is perhaps the Dungeon Master's most valuable tool next to his own imagination. I do *not* mean you should take your favorite fantasy book and convert it into a dungeon, which is very easy and appallingly common. All that will result is a lifeless rerun or an unmitigated disaster. Players never do what you expect them to do, and if you try to force them into a plot of your own devising, they'll do everything they can to make life for you unliveable. They won't do it on purpose, of course, but they'll manage.

When you feel the need to plagiarize, only glean a few of the best ideas from the book or movie, and work them into an original or modified setting or plot. This is called "creative plagiarism." Your job is to set up the general setting and plot, not dictate all the action. A series of campaign adventures can be a plagiarist's paradise — one I know of took its basic plot and setting from Stephen Donaldson's first *Covenant* series with a few items from the movie *The Vikings* and Roger Zelazny's *Dilvish the Damned* to confuse things. Players love romping in places and with people they've read about, but you have to maintain enough mystery and suspense to keep them guessing about what is going to happen next. Even though several players in the above campaign were familiar with the *Chronicles of Thomas Covenant*, they never found an easy solution to their problems. Keeping the challenge alive is the key to good plagiarism. Your own original creation will often be your best, and you should never be content to let others do most of the work. Keep the juices flowing, but when you do run into dry spells, don't worry about tapping another's imagination.

V. Cooperation

This is it, folks: the ultimate work-saver. Share the chores with somebody else. You can't do it all alone, believe me. If your players call every day to ask, "Can we play today?" and if you have as much trouble saying "no" as I do, then you'll soon be DMing completely off the top of your head, trying to referee half-formed adventures, and eventually spoiling the hard-won continuity of your campaign. Sharing the work will take a lot of pressure off you, both as creator and administrator. It'll give you a chance to play, and you do need to play to evolve properly as a DM. When one of two or more participants serves as Dungeon Master for a certain session, it'll give the other(s) a little time to relax and prepare what comes next.

There are two ways to accomplish this. You and the other DMs can each run campaigns independent of one another that occur in different time-space continuums, or you can share the same campaign. The first option allows unlimited freedom for all DMs. They can alter the laws and features of their respective universes at will without

endangering the other's work. The problem is in the human element. The players will undoubtedly prefer one campaign to the other and want to play it more and more frequently. This may lead to a group split, which is something no one wants.

The other option allows more interaction and idea-swapping between the Dungeon Masters, but it has problems of its own that fit neatly under the heading of consistency. It is imperative that consistency in the obstacle/reward ratio be kept. If one of you has a penchant for giving away megamagic and other DMs prefer the judicious and considered use of magic, then there will be a few problems, to put it mildly. The two (or more) of you should work to become acclimated to each others' gaming style and preference, so that problems will eventually work themselves out.

Another thing to watch for is rule uniformity. The most logical thing to do is stick to the books: no new character classes, no newly revised combat procedures, no new weapon proficiency rules, however "official" they may be, without the consent of the other DM or DMs and your players. If all of them fully understand the changes, then go ahead and use them. Don't make any major changes in procedure without consulting your comrades. If you keep up a consistent approach to the game, you'll find the transitions between Dungeon Masters perfectly natural.

Since cooperation is such a vital part of any successful campaign, here's a word of advice. Only play in campaigns with people you like. This does not mean people you can *tolerate* — tolerance wears thin in the heat of the game. If you genuinely like the people you play with, everything will be that much easier. Of course, playing with new people is a great way to make friends (especially at tournaments and conventions), but for day-to-day campaign play, keep it close.

Cutting down on your work load does not compromise your ability or your effectiveness as a Dungeon Master. The purpose of AD&D gaming is enjoyment and escapist entertainment. Let it stay that way. DMing can easily slip from the realm of gaming to the all-too-real world of work, and when that happens it's easier than not to forget the whole thing. You obviously take pride in what you do, or you wouldn't do it. The feeling you get when characters barely make it out of your labyrinth alive, struggling to haul up their just rewards, is unequalled in all of gaming, and that feeling can only be achieved if you practice these five principles in your campaign. That is never easy to do. The tricks of the trade offered here do not free you from the responsibilities of creation. Used properly, they will make creation much easier and emancipate you from much of the tedium and needless drudgery that accompanies creation. The success of your campaign rests entirely on your shoulders; it just shouldn't take so much work. After all, playing games is supposed to be *fun*, right?



Dungeon Master's Familiar

A program for computer-conducted combat

by John Warren

The room looked harmless enough, but suddenly, as the party enters, they are attacked by three skeletons as giant spiders drop on them from the rafters. If you think this bunch of adventurers is in trouble, consider what the poor DM is going through. There have been a few times like this when I've been sorely tempted to intone, "You have offended the gods. A thousand lightning bolts smash into you. You're dead."

Obviously, this is not the route to a long and happy relationship. Good DMs do what they can to mitigate the confusion by good planning. Now they have another ally in their constant battle with chaos — the computer.

I can hear the groans now. Computer fantasy games are disappointing to the dedicated gamer. The main attraction of D&D® and AD&D™ gaming is spontaneity and openendedness, and these are precisely what is missing in most computer games. However, what I'm suggesting isn't a game. Instead of playing to the computer's weaknesses, we are going to exploit its strengths — rapid calculation and data storage.

The witches of old had familiars. One of their less repulsive duties was to sit upon the witch's shoulder and whisper instructions and advice. So be it. In these modern times, we let printed circuits and memory chips replace spells and enchanted flesh, and we have the "Dungeon Master's Familiar."

This program was written to run on a Radio Shack TRS-80, but it can be used easily in any computer that uses a variation of

Microsoft BASIC. To use the automated combat segment, you need a disk drive; however, the manual combat and the dice-throwing segments work fine in any TRS-80. A computer should make things easier, not harder, so I've tried to set up procedures that mimic what any DM does naturally.

Dice throwing is the essence of AD&D gaming. It can also be a real pain. There is no finer proof for the continued existence of Murphy's Law than the number of times a die will find itself under a piece of furniture. It also takes up time which interferes with the smooth flow of the game.

The Familiar is a consummate dice thrower. Once the menu has appeared on the screen, just press the number 1 and you are ready to throw. He (my familiar is a he; you can re-sex yours as you see fit) asks only two questions: How many times, and which die do you want to throw? Both of these questions are answered by pressing the appropriate key. In the interest of speed, the familiar will accept most single-character answers automatically without the ENTER key being pressed. He prints out the results of each throw and the total of the series. Then he returns to his first question. If you are finished throwing dice, press "Q", and the computer will return you to the main menu.

Notice that the menu includes a coin flip (2-sided die) and a percentile dice roll as well as the more conventional models. The "C" code that activates the 20-sided die is a reminder that that is the determination most often used in combat resolution.

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The Familiar has an added advantage. It is so easy to use that you can while away the uneventful minutes by meaningless throwing. Then when the party approaches a trap, hidden tunnel or whatever, you won't alert them when you suddenly make the required detect/miss throws.

The Manual Entry Combat is selected by pressing "3" at the main menu. You are first asked what class of character is doing the attacking, its level and bonus to hit. If the attacker is a monster, a special screen appears and gives the level equivalents for hit dice. Once the attacker information is completed, the computer requests the armor class and defensive adjustment of the defender. At that point, it performs a roll and presents the result and the score that is needed "to hit." This is so you can make any corrections (defender surprised or hidden, attacker on slippery surface). that might not be reflected by the tables.

If the attacker has hit, the computer presents a dice table so that the damage can be calculated. If you wish to call a hit when the computer has displayed a miss, just press any letter to return to the beginning of the combat procedure, "Q" to return to the main menu, and "1" to go to the dice segment to calculate the damage. Then press "Q" and "3" to return to the Manual Combat routine. All this is much faster and simpler to do than to read, particularly since each of these commands are accepted by the computer instantly without the ENTER key being pressed.

The Automated Combat Sequence is both simpler and more complex than its manual counterpart. Before the play of the adventure or encounter begins, you must tell the computer about each character that is going to be present. In its present configuration, the Familiar will recognize 26 characters at a time. If you need more, it is possible to switch between sets (using the disk drive) fairly rapidly.

To describe the characters to the computer, select "5" at the main menu. The first thing the routine will ask is if you wish to expand an existing file or open a new one. This allows you to add new characters to an old file. Press "E" to add to an existing file or "O" (not zero) to open one. Next the program asks for the name of the file you want either created or added to. Like all minor deities, computers have rules that they insist you obey. In this computer's case, the file name may contain as many as eight letters and/or numbers,

and the first character must be a letter. If you wish you can add a suffix of three letters by typing a slash ("/") preceding the suffix. If you open a file with a name that you have used before, the computer will erase the old file.

As examples, the following are all proper file names:

```
A
FILE
FILE1/DUN
DUNGEON/CAS
```

(Be sure to choose a file name you will be able to recognize later.)

Once the file has been identified, the computer will ask you for much the same information needed by the manual sequence. I tend to enter my players first, followed by the denizens in alphabetical order. This will pay off later when the combat is hot and heavy. When you have entered all the information, press "Q" and ENTER. The computer will return to the main menu. If there are more than 26 total characters and monsters in the adventure/encounter, create another file, but remember that your players' characters must be in *both* files.

At the beginning of the adventure, hit "6". The computer will ask you what character file you want to load. Spell it correctly or the minor deity will be offended and you'll have to run the program again. The program will display the character names as it loads them into memory and will return you to the main menu.

In the Automated Combat Sequence, you get to relax. The computer displays a list of the character names with a letter to the left of each and politely inquires who is the attacker. Press that letter, and then the letter of the defender when the computer asks, and everything else is automatic. The only thing you have to do is add the attacker's damage adjustment (which is displayed) to the die roll in the event of a hit.

If you would like to look at a character's specifications, select "4" from the main menu. The computer will give you a combat-segment-type display, and you type the character's letter. If you have a printer and would like a permanent record, type "P" after the letter.

With the Dungeon Master's Familiar, I have been able to spend more time as a creative person and less as a bookkeeper for a bunch of bumbling barbarians.

The Dungeon Master's Familiar

```
10 CLS: CLEAR3000: DIMA(21,11), B(21,13), C(21,7), D(21,6),
E(21,8), C$(30,8)
20 PRINT@520, "LOADING COMBAT TABLES -- PLEASE STAND-BY"
30 PRINTTAB(10) "READING FIGHTER
TABLE": FORX=1 TO 21: FORY=1 TO 11: READ A(X,Y): NEXT Y, X: 'FIGHTER
TABLE
40 PRINTTAB(10) "READING MONSTER TABLE": FORX=1 TO 21
: FORY=1 TO 13: READ B(X,Y): NEXT Y, X: 'MONSTER TABLE
50 PRINTTAB(10) "READING THIEF TABLE": FORX=1 TO 21: FORY=1 TO
7: READ C(X,Y): NEXT Y, X: 'THIEF TABLE
60 PRINTTAB(10) "READING MAGIC USERS
TABLE": FORX=1 TO 21: FORY=1 TO 6: READ D(X,Y): NEXT Y, X: 'MAGIC
USERS TABLE
70 PRINTTAB(10) "READING CLERIC TABLE": FORX=1 TO 21: FORY=1 TO
8: READ E(X,Y): NEXT Y, X: 'CLERIC TABLE
80 CLS: PRINT@286, "MENU"
90 PRINTTAB(10) "THROW DICE-----1"
100 PRINTTAB(10) "AUTO COMBAT SEQUENCE-----2"
110 PRINTTAB(10) "MANUAL COMBAT SEQUENCE-----3"
120 PRINTTAB(10) "DISPLAY CHARACTER-----4"
130 PRINTTAB(10) "WRITE CHARACTER FILE -----5"
140 PRINTTAB(10) "LOAD CHARACTER FILE -----6"
150 PRINTTAB(10) "TO END PROGRAM -----7"
160 PRINT: PRINTTAB(15) "PLEASE MAKE SELECTION"
170 GOSUB1430: SE=VAL(Z$): ON SE GOTO 180, 360, 480, 630,
970, 1230, 1320
180 REM DICE THROWING ROUTINE
190 CLS: PRINT@342, "DICE THROWING ROUTINE"
200 PRINT "HOW MANY THROWS OR <Q>UIT AND RETURN TO MENU";
: GOSUB1430: X=VAL(Z$): PRINTX: IF Z$="Q" THEN BO
210 X1=0: PRINT "WHAT KIND OF DIE? 2 3 4 6 8 10=1 20=C
100=H ": GOSUB1430: PRINTZ$: IF Z$="C" THEN Y=20: GOTO 240
220 IF Z$="H" THEN Y=100: GOTO 240
230 Y=VAL(Z$)
240 FORX2=1 TO X
250 IFY=2 THEN GOSUB1350
260 IFY=3 THEN GOSUB1360
```

```
270 IFY=4 THEN GOSUB1370
280 IFY=6 THEN GOSUB1380
290 IFY=8 THEN GOSUB1390
300 IFY=1 THEN GOSUB1400
310 IFY=20 THEN GOSUB1410
320 IFY=100 THEN GOSUB1420
330 X1=X1+Z: PRINTZ, : NEXT X2
340 PRINT "TOTAL="; X1
350 PRINT: PRINT: GOTO 200
360 REM AUTOMATED COMBAT ROUTINE
370 CLS
380 REM DISPLAY MENU OF CHARACTERS
390 PRINTTAB(27) "SELECT COMBATANT"
400 PRINT: FORX=1 TO 9
410 PRINTCHR$(X+64); " "; C$(X,1); TAB(20) CHR$(X+73); "
"; C$(X+9,1); TAB(40) CHR$(X+82); " "; C$(X+18,1)
420 NEXT
430 PRINT: PRINT "INPUT ATTACKER CODE LETTER OR 0 TO RETURN
TO MENU "; : GOSUB1430
440 IF Z$="0" THEN 80 ELSE PRINTZ$: AT=ASC(Z$)-64
: AT$=C$(AT,2) : L=VAL(C$(AT,3))
450 PRINT "INPUT DEFENDER CODE LETTER "; : GOSUB1430
: DE=ASC(Z$): PRINTCHR$(DE): DE=DE-64: AC=VAL(C$(DE,4))+11: GOSUB
1450
460 CLS: PRINTC$(AT,1); " SWINGS AT "; C$(DE,1): PRINT
470 GOSUB 1680: GOTO 360
480 REM MANUAL ENTRY COMBAT ROUTINE
490 AT=0: DE=0: FORX=1 TO 7: C$(0,X)="0": NEXT
500 CLS: PRINTTAB(22) "MANUAL ENTRY COMBAT"
510 PRINT "ATTACKER INFORMATION"
520 PRINTTAB(10) "LETTER CODE FOR CLASS OF CHARACTER"
: PRINTTAB(15) "MONSTER = ?": PRINTTAB(15) "FIGHTER, PALADIN,
RANGER OR BARD = F": PRINTTAB(15) "CLERIC, DRUID OR MONK =
C": PRINTTAB(15) "MAGIC USER OR ILLUSIONIST = M"
530 PRINTTAB(15) "THIEF OR ASSASSIN = T"
540 PRINTTAB(15) "TO RETURN TO MENU = Q"
550 GOSUB1430: IF Z$="Q" THEN 80
```

```

560 C$(0,2)=Z$:IFZ$="?" THEN PRINT@64,"";PRINTCHR$(31)
:GOSUB 2000
570 PRINTTAB(10)"INPUT LEVEL OF ATTACKER AND PRESS ENTER
";INPUTC$(0,3)
580 PRINTTAB(10)"INPUT ATTACKER'S BONUS TO HIT AND PRESS
ENTER ";INPUTC$(0,5)
590 PRINT"DEFENDER INFORMATION"
600 PRINTTAB(10)"INPUT ARMOR CLASS OF DEFENDER AND PRESS
ENTER ";INPUT C$(0,4)
610 PRINTTAB(10)"INPUT DEFENDER'S DEFENSIVE ADJUSTMENT &
PRESS ENTER";INPUTC$(0,7)
620 L=(VAL(C$(0,3))):AC=VAL(C$(0,4))+1:AT$=C$(0,2):CLS
:GOSUB1450:GOSUB1680:GOTO480
630 REM      DISPLAY CHARACTER
640 C$=FORX=1TOD10
650 PRINTX;C$(X,1);TAB(20)X+10;C$(X+10,1);TAB(40)X+20;
C$(X+20,1)
660 NEXT
670 PRINT"INDICATE NUMBER. FOLLOW WITH <P>, IF PRINTOUT
NEEDED"
680 PRINT"TYPE <Q> TO RETURN TO MAIN MENU"
690 INPUTA$
700 IFAS$="Q" THEN 80
710 X=VAL(A$)
720 IFRIGHT$(A$,1)="P" THEN 840
730 CLS:PRINT @320, " ";PRINTTAB(10)"NAME ";C$(X,1),
740 IF C$(X,2)="?" THEN PRINT"MONSTER"
750 IF C$(X,2)="F" THEN PRINT"FIGHTER"
760 IF C$(X,2)="C" THEN PRINT"CLERIC"
770 IF C$(X,2)="M" THEN PRINT"MAGIC USER"
780 IF C$(X,2)="T" THEN PRINT"THIEF"
790 PRINTTAB(10)"ARMOR CLASS ";C$(X,4),"BONUS TO HIT
";C$(X,5)
800 PRINTTAB(10)"DAMAGE ADJ. ";C$(X,6),
810 IF C$(X,2)<>"?" THEN PRINT"LEVEL ";C$(X,3)
820 IF C$(X,2)="?" THEN PRINT "HIT DIE CODE ";C$(X,3)
830 PRINT:PRINT"PRESS ANY KEY TO CONTINUE";:GOSUB 1430
:CLS:GOTO630
840 LPRINTTAB(10)"NAME ";C$(X,1),
850 IF C$(X,2)="?" THEN LPRINT"MONSTER"
860 IF C$(X,2)="F" THEN LPRINT"FIGHTER"
870 IF C$(X,2)="C" THEN LPRINT"CLERIC"
880 IF C$(X,2)="M" THEN LPRINT"MAGIC USER"
890 IF C$(X,2)="T" THEN LPRINT"THIEF"
900 LPRINTTAB(10)"ARMOR CLASS ";C$(X,4),"BONUS TO HIT
";C$(X,5)
910 LPRINTTAB(10)"DAMAGE ADJ. ";C$(X,6),
920 IF C$(X,2)<>"?" THEN LPRINT"LEVEL ";C$(X,3)
930 IF C$(X,2)="?" THEN LPRINT "HIT DIE CODE ";C$(X,3)

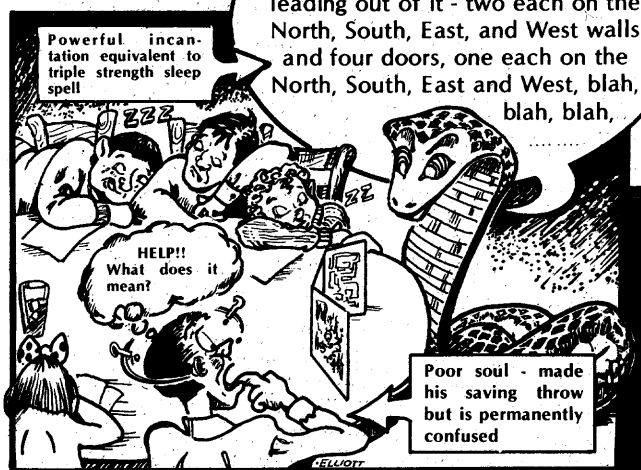
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940 LPRINT:LPRINT:LPRINT
950 GOTO 630
960 GOTO630
970 REM      PUT IDENTITIES IN FILE
980 CLS:PRINT"<E>XPAND PRESENT FILE OR <O>PEN NEW FILE"
:GOSUB 1430
990 INPUT"INPUT FILE NAME (FORMAT AAAAAAAA/BBB) ";Z1$
1000 OPEN Z$,2,Z1$
1010 PRINT:INPUT"NAME <Q> TO EXIT";A1$
1020 IF A1$="Q" THEN 1220
1030 INPUT"ARMOUR CLASS ";A4$
1040 PRINTTAB(10)"LETTER CODE FOR CLASS OF CHARACTER"
:PRINTTAB(15)"MONSTER = ?":PRINTTAB(15)"FIGHTER, PALADIN,
RANGER OR BARD = F":PRINTTAB(15)"CLERIC, DRUID OR MONK = C"
:PRINTTAB(15)"MAGIC USER OR ILLUSIONIST = M"
1050 PRINTTAB(15)"THIEF OR ASSASSIN = T":PRINT"INPUT
APPROPRIATE SYMBOL":GOSUB 1430:A2$=Z$
1060 IF A2$="?" THEN 1110 ELSE INPUT"INPUT LEVEL OF
COMBATANT";A3$
1070 INPUT"BONUS TO HIT";A5$
1080 INPUT"DAMAGE ADJUST";A6$
1090 INPUT"DEFENSIVE ADJUSTMENT";A7$
1100 GOTO 1200
1110 CLS:PRINT"MONSTER HIT DIE":A5$="0":A6$="0":A7$="0"
1120 PRINT"UP TO 1-1 =1      1-1 =2"
1130 PRINT"1 =3      1+ =4"
1140 PRINT"2-3+ =5      4-5+ =6"
1150 PRINT"6-7+ =7      8-9+ =8"
1160 PRINT"8-9+ =9      10-11+ =10"
1170 PRINT"12-13+ =11      14-15+ =12"
1180 PRINT"16+ =13"
1190 INPUT"HIT DIE (CONSULT TABLES)";A3$
1200 Z$=",";PRINT#2,A1$;Z$;A2$;Z$;A3$;Z$;A4$;Z$;A5$;Z$;A6$
;Z$;A7$
1210 GOTO1010
1220 CLOSE:GOTO 80
1230 REM      EXTRACT IDENTITIES FROM FILE
1240 CLS:PRINT@455, " ";INPUT"WHAT FILE DO YOU WANT TO
USE";Z1$
1250 OPEN"1",2,Z1$
1260 X=0
1270 X=X+1
1280 INPUT#2,C$(X,1),C$(X,2),C$(X,3),C$(X,4),C$(X,5),
C$(X,6),C$(X,7)
1290 CN=X
1300 PRINTCN,C$(X,1)
1310 IF EOF(2) THEN 80 ELSE 1270
1320 END
1330 REM      ROUTINE TO DETERMINE DIE ROLL

```

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```

1340 Z=1:RETURN
1350 Z=RND(2):RETURN
1360 Z=RND(3):RETURN
1370 Z=RND(4):RETURN
1380 Z=RND(6):RETURN
1390 Z=RND(8):RETURN
1400 Z=RND(10):RETURN
1410 Z=RND(20):RETURN
1420 Z=RND(100):RETURN
1430 REM INKEY ROUTINE
1440 Z$=INKEY$:IF Z$="" THEN 1440 ELSE RETURN
1450 REM ROUTINE TO DETERMINE COLUMN TO BE SEARCHED
1460 IF AT$="?" THEN AV=B(AC,L+1):C1=L+1:RETURN
1470 REM FIGHTER SUB-ROUTINE
1480 IF AT$<>"F" THEN 1540
1490 IFL=0 THEN C1=2:GOTO 1530
1500 IFL>17 THEN C1=11:GOTO 1530
1510 C1=(INT((INT(L/2)-1))+1)+1:IF INT(L/2)>L/2 THEN
C1=C1+1
1520 C1=C1+1
1530 AV=A(AC,C1):RETURN
1540 REM MAGIC USER SUB-SEGMENT
1550 IF AT$<>"M" THEN 1590
1560 IFL>20 THEN C1=6:GOTO 1580
1570 C1=(INT((L-1)/5)+1)+1:GOTO 1580
1580 AV=D(AC,C1):RETURN
1590 REM CLERIC SUB-SEGMENT
1600 IF AT$<>"C" THEN 1640
1610 IFL>18 THEN C1=8:GOTO 1630
1620 C1=(INT((L-1)/3)+1)+1
1630 AV=E(AC,C1):RETURN
1640 REM THIEF SUB-SEGMENT
1650 IFL>20 THEN C1=7:GOTO 1670
1660 C1=(INT((L-1)/4)+1)+1
1670 AV=C(AC,C1):RETURN
1680 REM COMBAT RESULTS DISPLAY
1690 PRINT"ATTACKER'S LEVEL IS ";L;". ATTACKER IS A "
1700 IF AT$="?" THEN A$="MONSTER"
1710 IF AT$="F" THEN A$="FIGHTER"
1720 IF AT$="T" THEN A$="THIEF"
1730 IF AT$="M" THEN A$="MAGIC USER"
1740 IF AT$="C" THEN A$="CLERIC"
1750 PRINTA$;" AND ";
1760 PRINT"DEFENDER'S ARMOR CLASS IS ";AC-11
1770 PRINT:PRINT"ATTACKER MUST ROLL A BASIC ";AV;" TO HIT";
1780 IF C$(DE,7)="0" THEN 1810 ELSE PRINT" WHICH IS
MODIFIED"
1790 AV=AV+VAL(C$(DE,7))

```

```

1800 PRINT"TO A ";AV;" BY THE DEFENDER'S DEFENSIVE
ADJUSTMENT OF ";C$(DE,7)
1810 AV=AV-VAL(C$(AT,5))
1820 IF C$(AT,5)="0" THEN 1840 ELSE PRINT:PRINT"THE
ATTACKER'S BONUS TO HIT OF ";C$(AT,5);" FURTHER MODIFIES"
1830 PRINT"THIS TO A ";AV:PRINT
1840 IF SE=2 AND C$(AT,6)<>"0" THEN PRINT"ATTACKER HAS A
DAMAGE ADJUSTMENT OF ";C$(AT,6)
1850 GOSUB 1410:PRINT:PRINT"THE ROLL IS ";Z;" AND IT IS A
1860 IFAV<=Z THEN PRINT"HIT" ELSE PRINT"MISS"
1870 PRINT
1880 IFAV<=Z THEN 1900
1890 PRINT"PRESS ANY KEY TO CONTINUE":GOSUB 1430:RETURN
1900 PRINT:PRINT"SELECT MAXIMUM DAMAGE FOR WEAPON BEING
USED ";PRINT" 2 3 4 6 8 10=1 20=C ";:GOSUB
1430:PRINTZ$
1910 IF Z$="2" THEN GOSUB 1350:GOTO 1980
1920 IF Z$="3" THEN GOSUB 1360:GOTO 1980
1930 IF Z$="4" THEN GOSUB 1370:GOTO 1980
1940 IF Z$="6" THEN GOSUB 1380:GOTO 1980
1950 IF Z$="8" THEN GOSUB 1390:GOTO 1980
1960 IF Z$="1" THEN GOSUB 1400:GOTO 1980
1970 IF Z$="C" THEN GOSUB 1410
1980 PRINTZ;" HIT POINTS OF DAMAGE HAVE BEEN DONE BY
ATTACKER"
1990 PRINT"PRESS ANY KEY TO CONTINUE":GOSUB 1430:RETURN
2000 REM MONSTER LEVEL SUB-ROUTINE
2010 PRINTTAB(20)"LEVEL EQUIVALENT FOR MONSTERS"
2020 PRINT"UP TO 1-1 = 1 2-3+ = 5
10-11+ = 9"
2030 PRINT" 1-1 = 2 4-5+ = 6
12-13+ = 10"
2040 PRINT" 1 = 3 6-7+ = 7
14-15+ = 11"
2050 PRINT" 1+ = 4 8-9+ = 8
16+ = 12"
2060 RETURN
2070 REM FIGHTER COMBAT TABLE
2080 DATA -10,26,25,23,21,20,20,20,18,16,14
2090 DATA -9,25,24,22,20,20,20,19,17,15,13
2100 DATA -8,24,23,21,20,20,20,18,16,14,12
2110 DATA -7,23,22,20,20,20,19,17,15,13,11
2120 DATA -6,22,21,20,20,20,18,16,14,12,10
2130 DATA -5,21,20,20,20,19,17,15,13,11,09
2140 DATA -4,20,20,20,20,18,16,14,12,10,08
2150 DATA -3,20,20,20,19,17,15,13,11,09,07
2160 DATA -2,20,20,20,18,16,14,12,10,08,06
2170 DATA -1,20,20,19,17,15,13,11,09,07,05
2180 DATA 0,20,20,18,16,14,12,10,08,06,04

```

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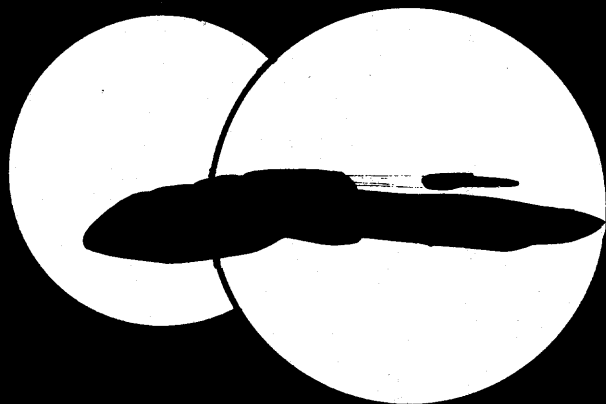
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2190 DATA 1,20,19,17,15,13,11,09,07,05,03
 2200 DATA 2,19,18,16,14,12,10,08,06,04,02
 2210 DATA 3,18,17,15,13,11,09,07,05,03,01
 2220 DATA 4,17,16,14,12,10,08,06,02,01,00
 2230 DATA 5,16,15,13,11,09,07,05,03,01,-1
 2240 DATA 6,15,14,12,10,08,06,04,02,00,-2
 2250 DATA 7,14,13,11,09,07,05,03,01,-1,-3
 2260 DATA 8,13,12,10,08,06,04,02,00,-2,-4
 2270 DATA 9,12,11,09,07,05,03,01,-1,-3,-5
 2280 DATA 10,11,10,08,06,04,02,00,-2,-4,-6
 2290 REM FILE FOR MONSTER COMBAT
 2300 DATA -10,26,25,24,23,21,20,20,20,20,19,18,17
 2310 DATA -9,25,24,23,22,20,20,20,20,19,18,17,16
 2320 DATA -8,24,23,22,21,20,20,20,20,18,17,16,15
 2330 DATA -7,23,22,21,20,20,20,20,19,17,16,15,14
 2340 DATA -6,22,21,20,20,20,20,19,18,16,15,14,13
 2350 DATA -5,21,20,20,20,20,20,18,17,15,14,13,12
 2360 DATA -4,20,20,20,20,19,17,16,14,13,12,11
 2370 DATA -3,20,20,20,20,19,18,16,15,13,12,11,10
 2380 DATA -2,20,20,20,20,18,17,15,14,12,11,10,9
 2390 DATA -1,20,20,20,19,17,16,14,13,11,10,09,08
 2400 DATA 0,20,20,19,18,16,15,13,12,10,09,08,07
 2410 DATA 1,20,19,18,17,15,14,12,11,09,08,07,06
 2420 DATA 2,19,18,17,16,14,13,11,10,08,07,06,05
 2430 DATA 3,18,17,16,15,13,12,10,09,07,06,05,04
 2440 DATA 4,17,16,15,14,12,11,09,08,06,05,04,03
 2450 DATA 5,16,15,14,13,11,10,08,07,05,04,03,02
 2460 DATA 6,15,14,13,12,10,09,07,06,04,03,02,01
 2470 DATA 7,14,13,12,11,09,08,06,05,03,02,01,00
 2480 DATA 8,13,12,11,10,08,07,05,04,02,01,00,-1
 2490 DATA 9,12,11,10,09,07,06,04,03,01,00,-1,-2
 2500 DATA 10,11,10,09,08,06,05,03,02,00,-1,-2,-3
 2510 REM THIEVES AND ASSASINS
 2520 DATA -10,26,24,21,20,20,20
 2530 DATA -9,25,23,20,20,20,19
 2540 DATA -8,24,22,20,20,20,18
 2550 DATA -7,23,21,20,20,19,17
 2560 DATA -6,22,20,20,20,18,16
 2570 DATA -5,21,20,20,19,17,15
 2580 DATA -4,20,20,20,18,16,14
 2590 DATA -3,20,20,19,17,15,13
 2600 DATA -2,20,20,18,16,14,12
 2610 DATA -1,20,20,17,15,13,11
 2620 DATA 0,20,19,16,14,12,10
 2630 DATA 1,20,18,15,13,11,9
 2640 DATA 2,19,17,14,12,10,8
 2650 DATA 3,18,16,13,11,9,7
 2660 DATA 4,17,15,12,10,8,6
 2670 DATA 5,16,14,11,9,7,5

2680 DATA 6,15,13,10,8,6,4
 2690 DATA 7,14,12,9,7,5,3
 2700 DATA 8,13,11,8,6,4,2
 2710 DATA 9,12,10,7,5,3,1
 2720 DATA 10,11,9,6,4,2,0
 2730 REM MAGIC USERS
 2740 DATA -10,26,24,21,20,20
 2750 DATA -9,25,23,20,20,20
 2760 DATA -8,24,22,20,20,19
 2770 DATA -7,23,21,20,20,18
 2780 DATA -6,22,20,20,19,17
 2790 DATA -5,21,20,20,18,16
 2800 DATA -4,20,20,20,17,15
 2810 DATA -3,20,20,19,16,14
 2820 DATA -2,20,20,18,15,13
 2830 DATA -1,20,20,17,14,12
 2840 DATA 0,20,19,16,13,11
 2850 DATA 1,20,18,15,12,10
 2860 DATA 2,19,17,14,11,9
 2870 DATA 3,18,16,13,10,8
 2880 DATA 4,17,15,12,9,7
 2890 DATA 5,16,14,11,8,6
 2900 DATA 6,15,13,10,7,5
 2910 DATA 7,14,12,9,6,4
 2920 DATA 8,13,11,8,5,3
 2930 DATA 9,12,10,7,4,2
 2940 DATA 10,11,9,6,3,1
 2950 REM CLERICS, DRUIDS AND MONKS
 2960 DATA -10,25,23,21,20,20,20,19
 2970 DATA -9,24,22,20,20,20,19,18
 2980 DATA -8,23,21,20,20,20,18,17
 2990 DATA -7,22,20,20,20,19,17,16
 3000 DATA -6,21,20,20,20,18,16,15
 3010 DATA -5,20,20,20,19,17,15,14
 3020 DATA -4,20,20,20,18,16,14,13
 3030 DATA -3,20,20,19,17,15,13,12
 3040 DATA -2,20,20,18,16,14,12,11
 3050 DATA -1,20,19,17,15,13,11,10
 3060 DATA 0,20,18,16,14,12,10,9
 3070 DATA 1,19,17,15,13,11,9,8
 3080 DATA 2,18,16,14,12,10,8,7
 3090 DATA 3,17,15,13,11,9,7,6
 3100 DATA 4,16,14,12,10,8,6,5
 3110 DATA 5,15,13,11,9,7,5,4
 3120 DATA 6,14,12,10,8,6,4,3
 3130 DATA 7,13,11,9,7,5,3,2
 3140 DATA 8,12,10,8,6,4,2,1
 3150 DATA 9,11,9,7,5,3,1,0
 3160 DATA 10,10,8,6,4,2,0,-1

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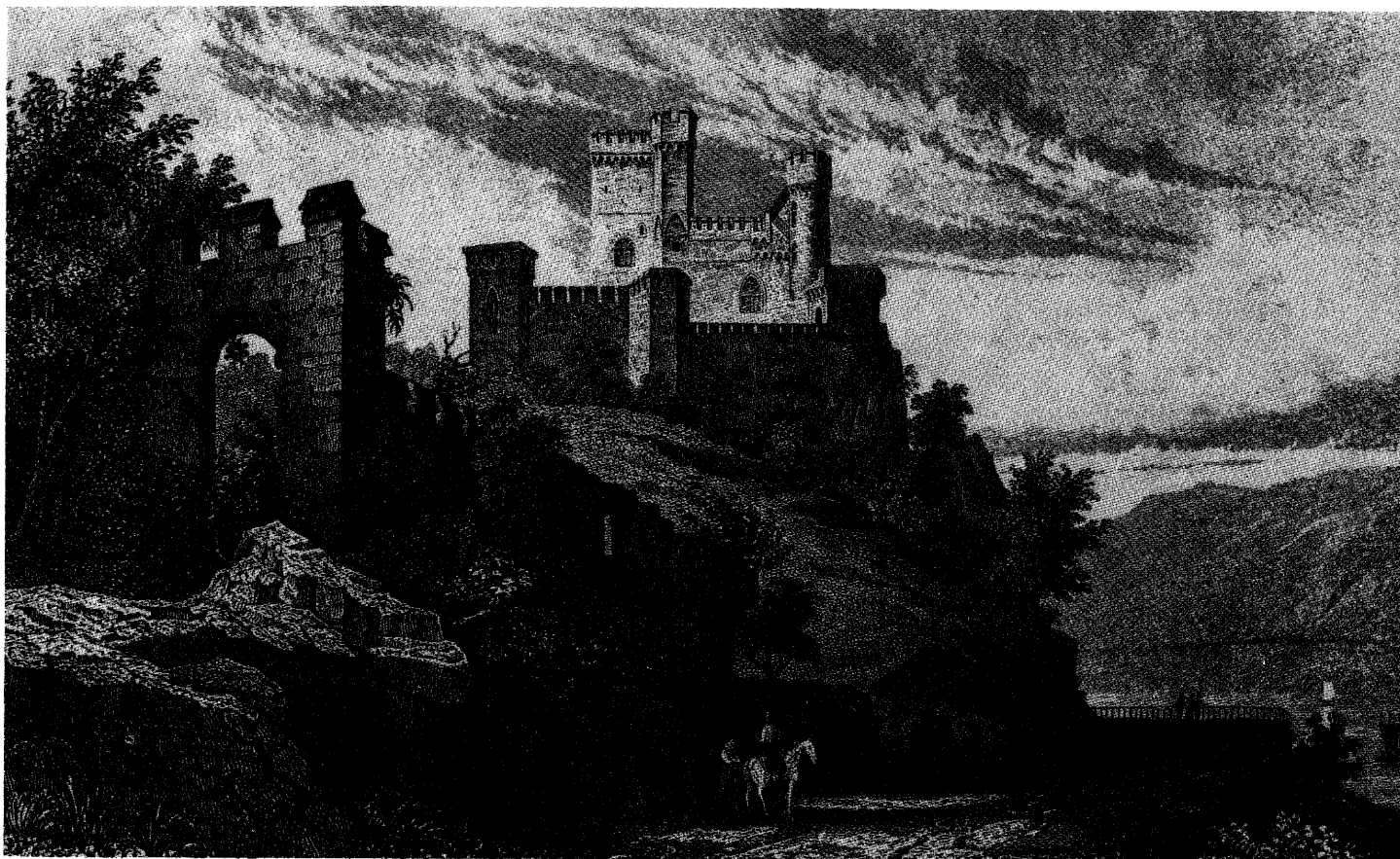
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Who lives in that castle?

Building it is one thing, running it is another

by Katharine Kerr

In any role-playing game set in a medieval-style world, no matter how vaguely developed, the castle has an important place. The very sight of a lonely keep, rising above the mists on a hilltop, is one that promises adventure. In game systems that provide for player-character strongholds, a castle is usually the first thing a player thinks of when his character obtains the means to build a stronghold. And if the campaign has important non-player characters of noble blood, the gamemaster has to create castles for them.

Although by using historical sources or gaming aids it's easy to design the actual castle buildings, stocking the castle with characters requires more thought. Living in and maintaining a castle requires many servants and officials, most of whom live in the castle with its lord. By describing the typical medieval castle household, this article offers guidelines for players and GM's alike who need to build a castle and set up its staff.

What is a castle?

A great many different buildings are loosely described as castles, ranging from ghastly stone houses built by nouveau riche film people to walled cities or military forts.

Properly defined, however, a castle is the personal fortification of either a king or a member of the nobility. The true castle serves two purposes: it is a dwelling for a noble family in times of peace, and a fort in times of war. Thus, neither garrisons for professional soldiers nor public fortifications such as walled towns can be counted as castles.

The true castle is always supported by the profits from a manorial estate (also called a manor or a seigneurie). At root, the manor is simply a holding of agricultural land, worked by dependent tenants who live upon it, and granted to a fighting man to feed him and his family while he serves his king or some other powerful noble. From that root, however, grew many vast estates where the lord ruled in his own name and thought about the king as little as possible. At the same time, many manors were little more than large farms.

The land of a typical manor is divided into three parts. The first, the lord's demesne, is technically the only property that he actually owns. Although the demesne is worked by his tenants, all produce from these fields belongs to the lord. The second division, the holdings of his tenants, belongs to them in a kind of invol-

untary lease — that is, they may not leave the land without the lord's permission, but neither may he expel them from their farms. The remaining land is common pasture and forest, theoretically shared by lord and tenants, but in practice controlled by the lord.

The size of the manor varies so widely that it's impossible to give exact figures for creating them, but in general, the more powerful the lord, the richer his holdings. The richness of the manor depends as much on soil fertility and climate as it does on size. Thousands of acres of moor and fen cannot support a baron as well as a modest holding of good river-valley land.

At the bottom of the scale is the small fief of a single knight. As a rough estimate, it takes the labor of fifteen to thirty peasant families, working a holding of forty to one hundred hectares, to support one knight, his family, and his warhorse. (A hectare is 10,000 square kilometers, or about 2½ acres.) On such a small manor, the knight lives little better than his peasants.

Rich manors, however, cover thousands of hectares and are worked by several thousand tenants. In medieval France, for example, the average manor of a lord of the baronial class was about three hundred

square miles. About one third of this estate was under the personal control of the baron or count, while the rest was parceled out to his knights in small fiefs of varying size. (This process of giving out pieces of a manor is called subenfeoffment.)

When setting up a manor to support the castle for either a PC or an NPC, the GM must remember that large tracts of good land are necessary to support a lord in any kind of style. Medieval-level agriculture is extremely labor-intensive and inefficient; thus the surplus, which goes to the lord, is going to be small.

Kinds of castles

Possessing the revenue from a large tract of land is also necessary to build the castle in the first place. Building a large stone fortification is expensive, even when much of the labor comes from unpaid peasantry. Let's look at the cost of some English castles in the 12th century. At that time, the English pound was divided into 240 silver pennies, and 30 of those pennies would buy a healthy ox or a warhorse. To build the small castle of Scarborough cost the king 656 pounds; to expand Wark on Tweed from a small castle to a medium-sized one cost 383 pounds; to build the elaborate castle at Orford cost 1,222 pounds — the equivalent of 9,776 warhorses!

Thus, not every petty knight living on a manor of 50 hectares is going to have a castle, even though possessing a proper castle is the ardent desire of every nobleman. Poor knights or PC's beginning to build a stronghold are more likely to have either a fortified manor house or a fortalice.

The fortified manor can take many forms, but its distinguishing characteristic is the use of wooden defenses instead of stone. The most common type is the motte-and-bailey. A wooden house sits at the top of the motte (a mound of earth heaped up, or a small natural hill). At the base of the motte, a palisade of heavy logs encloses the bailey (an open space useful for sheltering peasants in case of attack). Although the palisade is vulnerable to fire, a well-defended motte-and-bailey manor can withstand siege for several days, long enough for some ally or overlord to come to the rescue. Building and supporting a fortified manor house requires 40-60 hectares of land; a motte-and-bailey, about 100 hectares.

The fortalice is a step up for the wealthier noble. Such a fortification has a simple curtain wall of stone, enclosing a large ward, and perhaps has a fortified gatehouse. Inside the wall is a simple keep — usually a tall donjon tower, either round or square — that both houses the noble family and serves as a last-ditch defense if the wall is breached. A holding of around 150 hectares of land is necessary to build and support a fortalice.

The fortalice grades into the small castle proper. Although the small castle may have a separate dwelling house beside the donjon, most lords prefer to put the extra money into its defenses, adding ramparting

and a barbican tower. It will take at least 200 hectares of land to maintain a small castle.

The true castle, with its rings of walls, multiple towers, and stone dwelling-houses, requires a manor of at least 500 hectares and is thus usually the property of a lord of the baronial class. It may also belong to a king, who can support more castles than he can live in by taxes from the royal demesne as well as from the manor attached to each castle. Such royal castles have a military purpose, like guarding an important bridge, and will house a castellan and his family — a nobleman sworn personally to the king but holding his position by hereditary right.

The noble inhabitants

Castellans, however, are the rarest sort of castle inhabitants. Most will be lords from the baronial class, which includes any noble above the simple status of knight — barons, counts, dukes, margraves, and so on. During the actual Middle Ages, these various noble titles were considered equal in rank, rather than being graded into the strict hierarchy of later times. What truly determined a noble's status was the size of his manor and the strength of his holdings.

The lord and his immediate family live inside the donjon in a small castle, or in a palais (a separate dwelling-house) in a rich one. Besides his wife and children, the lord's family includes any younger brothers or sisters still dependent on him and probably his widowed mother, the dowager. Since noblemen lived short lives, on the whole, usually the eldest son inherited the manor before his siblings were grown. He was then responsible for raising them and either making good marriages for the sisters or finding land and a position for the brothers. (How well selfish lords fulfilled these duties is another question.)

Although the lord's primary duty in life is war, in peacetime few lords live idle lives. They are, after all, the administrators for vast estates with power over many lives, and the typical lord actively takes a hand in

running his land. On any given day, he is just as likely to be found discussing business with his bailiff and provosts as he is training with arms or hunting. Since the lord of the baronial class usually has the right of high justice over his tenants and dependents, he also spends much time acting as judge and jury for every legal dispute, crime, or petty squabble on his land, right down to arguments among peasants over a chicken or hog.

A word must be said about the typical noble lady of a castle. Although under medieval law a woman had few rights and was barred from most activities — she could neither own property nor bear arms, for instance — in practice such legal cavils were ignored. Usually the lady also takes an active part in running the estate; many important officials report directly to her, and she is responsible for all the daily accounts and doings of the servants. She is also her lord's hostess, which is a very important job in a world where a lord's reputation depends on his generosity.

Furthermore, the noble lady is also trained to hold her castle against siege while her husband is gone on campaign. During such crises, the men-at-arms and household knights obey her without question. Some ladies have even been known to take the field of battle, armed like men, to rescue their husbands from imprisonment. Thus, rather than the fragile flower depicted in modern romances, the feudal lady is a person with an air of command. If her husband is the commander of their domain, then she is his most trusted general, with true power over the household.

Retainers and officials

Any good-sized castle shelters a surprisingly large number of servants of varying degrees of rank. Since generosity is one of the marks of true nobility, supporting a large household brings status to the lord of the household. The lord will maintain as many people as he can feed, far more than necessary to do the actual work. A wealthy





'Any good-sized castle shelters a surprisingly large number of servants . . .'

baron, for example, might have three hundred people living behind his walls.

The most important member of this crowd are the retainers and officials of noble rank. In medieval society, there was absolutely no shame attached to performing the most menial services for a person of higher rank — to the contrary, it was an honor to be chosen for the task. Likewise, having retainers of noble blood increases the status of the castle's lord. It is the goal of powerful lords to have as many noble retainers as possible, even for such mundane jobs as falconmaster. Exactly how many castle officials will be noble-born depends, of course, on the castle-holder's wealth and reputation.

Even the poorest lord has at least one noble retainer, his squire. (Wealthy lords have three or four squires, for status.) The squire is a boy of noble blood who at age twelve or thirteen comes to live in another lord's family to receive his final training in arms and courtesy. Common opinion holds that no man can train his own son properly, because he would go easy on the boy, rather than being as harsh as a warrior's training demands. While living with his lord, the squire acts as both valet and companion. He helps his lord dress in the morning, waits on him at table, tends his personal horses, and runs whatever errands the lord needs to have run.

Just as the lord has his squires, the lady has her waiting women, girls of good family who are usually friends more than maids. The waiting women dress their lady, take care of her clothes, help with the children, and join her in the endless sewing of clothes that's such a large part of life for medieval women. Since a lord gains status by supporting many waiting women for his wife,

the usual lady has a retinue of many girls around her at all times. Most of these will eventually marry, but some waiting-women prefer to remain with their lady to avoid an unwelcome marriage. Such a woman will be the lady's chief confidante and thus a person of power within the castle.

Other noble-born retainers act as officials, coming between the lord and the actual servants. The exact number and positions of these officials will of course vary, depending on the wealth and size of the castle. A poor knight will only have one man to scurry around and do whatever he has time to do, while a rich baron will have the full staff listed below.

The chief officer in a large castle is the seneschal, who has many varied duties. He is the lord's right-hand man, the overseer of the fief as a whole, the lord's companion in battle, and his trusted political counselor. He disburses monies or food to the other officials, keeps an eye on their accounts, and solves whatever disputes are beneath the notice of the lord. In wartime, he is the second-in-command of the men-at-arms and vassals in the lord's army. If only one official in a household is noble-born, that one will be the seneschal.

The steward, overseeing the butler, cellarer, and cooks, is responsible for feeding the castle household — no easy job with three hundred people at table! He oversees the provision and storage of food from the actual farmland, sets the menus with the lady of the castle, gives orders to the cooks, and organizes any feasts or festivities. At mealtimes, he becomes a head waiter, coordinating the servants who are bringing in the food.

The chamberlain is responsible for the household work exclusive of food prepara-

tion. He supervises what little cleaning gets done, the hiring of common-born servants, the purchase and care of furniture and hangings, and the dispensing of any gifts the lord and lady care to make. He also has the important task of tending to the comfort of any guests. Both the steward and the chamberlain report directly to the lady.

The marshal, or equerry, is in charge of the stables, which are the core of the lord's military power in a cavalry-dominated world. The marshal supervises the stable boys and the groom, buys or trades horses as necessary, and assigns the horses owned by the lord to whomever needs to use them. Since most noble lords spend a lot of time discussing their beloved horses, the marshal usually has personal influence over the lord and thus great personal power.

Another person of great influence is the lord's chaplain, the priest who lives in the castle and performs religious services for all its inhabitants, noble or common. Beyond his religious duties, the priest knows the common law and is expected to advise the lord when he is dispensing justice. He also acts as the castle's almoner, dispensing charity to the poor who show up at the gates. In a fantasy world with pagan societies, this priest will not be a Christian father, of course, but most lords will keep a priest of their favorite god close at hand.

A wealthy lord also maintains as many men-at-arms as he can afford to keep in his barracks. Particularly if this force contains archers and pikemen, the men-at-arms are likely to be from the yeoman (free middle) class, but at their head will be at least one household knight of noble birth. In areas where there is constant warfare or danger from bandits and suchlike, the lord will maintain as many household knights as he

can afford, but in peaceful regions, he will enfeoff his knights on part of his manor.

The average household knight is a poor noble, usually a younger son with no chance at an inheritance, who spends his whole life in the lord's castle for what amounts to room and board — and the all-important chance to prove himself in battle. Some knights, however, are vagrant adventurers — noble-born, of course, but kicked out by their families for one shameful reason or another. These lesser knights own their own horses and equipment, rather than receiving them from the lord, and thus are paid a small fee in addition to their maintenance. In the castle hierarchy, these knights-errant, as they are called, come near the bottom as necessary evils, not to be trusted unless under the firm control of the seneschal.

In fantasy-world castles, great lords also have a personal wizard or sorcerer living with them. Such a magician is expected to use his skills in his lord's defense during war and to influence political events during peace. He also gives the lord counsel from his arcane lore and interprets omens that are beyond the range of the priest. Kings and particularly powerful nobles will have a personal alchemist in their castle as well.

Servitors and servants

Among the ranks of common-born servants in the castle there is a further distinction — between servitors, who have a certain amount of respect and position, and

the crowd of peasant servants who do the actual daily labor. The servitors have a craft to offer, such as blacksmithing, cookery, or hunting technique. These skilled laborers hold their positions by hereditary right, passing the job down to their sons or daughters as long as they have heirs. Servitors are generally proud of their position and very loyal to their lord if he's any kind of a decent man at all.

The servants, recruited from the peasantry on the manor, are treated like valuable farm animals. Kicks and curses are their daily lot from those above them in the hierarchy. They sleep wherever they can find a spot, usually on the floor or on a table in the lord's hall, or out in the stables. For wages, they receive food, one suit of clothes a year, and a few small coins at Christmas. Yet, odd though it seems to modern minds, being a servant in a castle is a sought-after job. Since status demands that the lord have more servants than are necessary for the work, no single servant works more than three or four hours a day — a much better lot than breaking one's back on the farm. Servants are also assured of getting enough to eat, which is not the case for other peasants.

A great castle will have close to a hundred servitors, counting their wives, and another hundred or so servants. Following are descriptions of some of the most important servitors, who will be found in any castle of decent size.

Working under the seneschal are those responsible for the security of the castle, the chief porter and the watchmen. Although the watchmen are recruited nightly from the men-at-arms, the chief porter has a hereditary job. Usually he and his family live in a gate-house, which is either just inside the gates or built into the wall over them. He is responsible for greeting — and scrutinizing — every person who comes to the gates and for deciding whether or not to admit them. If the visitor is noble, the porter must greet him with the ritual courtesy due his rank. If the visitor is judged undesirable, the porter must turn him out — by force if necessary. Thus, porters are trained in the use of weapons.

A lord who dispenses justice has an important servitor in the person of the sworn executioner. Although not the most popular man in the castle, the executioner is treated with respect. He's responsible for hanging or otherwise dispatching criminals, "persuading" suspected criminals to reveal evidence, and putting minor infractors in the stocks or flogging them. Oddly enough, the executioner also serves as a doctor for broken bones and wounds. Since he's trained to break bodies, he knows a good bit about repairing them as well.

Another person who serves as a doctor from time to time is the barber, sometimes known as a barber-surgeon. Although he shaves the noblemen of the household and cuts their hair like a modern barber, he also

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knows much primitive medicine and can dispense herbal potions for various ailments. His most common treatment, however, is bleeding the sick, either by opening a small vein or by applying river leeches to suck out the "bad blood."

Since the hunt is a very important part of castle life, providing not only amusement but much-needed meat, every castle has a staff of servitors devoted to hunting. The kennelman cares for and trains the lord's hounds; during the hunt, he supervises the pack. The falconer tends the falcons and hawks; he also has the unenviable job of raiding nests to steal young birds. The average falconer will have many scars on his face. The master huntsman tends and repairs the special hunting weapons, trains the beaters and netmen, and tracks game when the hunt is up.

Another crucial part of the castle's food supply is the garden, tended by the chief gardener and a crew of peasant servants. This garden supplies vegetables, pot herbs, and medicinal herbs as well as flowers. The flowers, however, are considered a "necessary luxury," because they are a bright spot of color in an otherwise drab life. Even the most battle-hardened lord will wear flowers in his hair for special events like weddings.

Even if a castle is near a town, the lord prefers to keep his own craftsmen within his walls. After all, one can't send to town for supplies during a siege! Every castle will have a carpenter, a tinker, a potter, and a stone-mason, but the most important of these servitors is the blacksmith. In fact, a large castle is likely to have two smiths, who, besides shoeing the small herd of horses within the castle, also produce nails, bolts, arrowheads, lance heads, shield bosses, and even chain mail. The smiths also repair broken weapons and horse-gear.

Working cloth is another important castle industry, because every piece of clothing or blanket used by those who live there is produced by the household. The castle's lady supervises a large staff of women who spin wool from the lord's sheep, weave it into cloth, dye it with herbal dyes, and then sew it into clothes to be dispensed as wages or gifts. The lady herself will sew her lord's clothing, perhaps adding a touch of fancy needlework if she has the time.

Head cook, baker, head groom, dairyman, poultryman — all are important servitors, and all will have lesser servants to help them at their work. The bailey and ward of a large castle are actually a village, filled with wooden shacks and workshops, housing the people who turn the produce from the land into the necessities and sometimes the luxuries of life.

Who pays for all of this?

Whether bushels of wheat or silver coins, disposable wealth has to come from somewhere, and the "somewhere" of the manorial economy is the labor of the tenant peasants, or serfs, as they are commonly known. Although many lords have subsidiary incomes from bridge tolls, river rights,



'Every castle has a staff servitors devoted to hunting.'

or town taxes, the bulk of their wealth comes from the land.

As mentioned above, about one-third of a manor is the lord's own land, the *demesne*. All produce from the *demesne* belongs directly to the lord. The tenants holding the rest of the manor also work on the lord's *demesne*, usually for three days a week. This service, called the *corvee*, is paid only by the head of each tenant family, but it is strictly enforced.

The other members of the family are then technically free to work their own land for their own profit, but in practice, the lord skims off a large share of their labor. For starters, each peasant has to pay an annual head tax, the *chevage*. If the lord has justice rights over the peasants (and most do), each family pays a further annual tax, the *taille*. Whenever the head of a family dies, his son must pay the lord a further tax to inherit the land.

Most onerous of all, however, are the *banalites*, duties and fees that must be paid constantly in order to live daily life. Peasants must grind their grain in the lord's mill, bake their bread in his ovens, use only his bull and stallion to stud their cows and mares, cross only his bridge at the stream — on and on, and all for a fee. These charges are enforced by physical violence, such as floggings or even maiming.

The French historian George Duby has estimated that the total charges upon a peasant amounted to 50% of his family's total output, and this is over and above the *corvee*. (And you think the IRS is bad?) The average peasant family, therefore, lives close to starvation. Their clothes are torn and filthy; their hut is tumbledown and drafty; their children die with heart-breaking regularity from malnutrition and small fevers. Most peasants also live in a state of sullen resentment that at times breaks out into open rebellion, but the lord's armed justice is swift to torture, maim, or kill any protestor. At its most basic level, the manorial

system resembles nothing so much as that well-known gangster ploy, the protection racket.

To keep the peasants in line and to extort all these fees, the lord requires a number of manorial officials, sometimes noble-born but more usually middle-class servitors, again holding their positions by hereditary right. At the top of the hierarchy is the bailiff, who might live in the castle, but who more likely lives in a farmhouse on the estate. The bailiff is the working overseer of the estate, making his daily rounds on horseback to collect work-gangs for the *corvee*, make decisions about plowing and planting, and supervise the collection of taxes and fees. Since they must make detailed annual reports to the lord and the seneschal, most bailiffs can read and write.

To help him, the bailiff has a varying number of assistants, the provosts. (Some lords dispense with a bailiff and have the provosts report directly to them.) The provosts directly supervise the *corvee*, and some do actual physical work as well, such as loading the taxes onto carts or tending the lord's horses when they are brought outside to graze.

Two other important estate officials are the forester and the game warden. The forester keeps track of all firewood cut from the lord's forest and of course imposes a fee upon the peasant for cutting it. The game warden's primary duty is to make sure that no one poaches any wild game from the estate. All deer, rabbits, and boars are the lord's property; any peasant who kills so much as a rabbit, even to protect his crops, will be summarily hanged.

The player character's castle

Now that the GM understands the requirements of a working castle, he is in a better position to supervise any players who wish to have their characters build strongholds, a process far more complex than the modern procedure of buying a piece of real

estate and hiring a contractor. At all stages, the GM should retain firm control of the process and put plenty of realistic obstacles in the character's way. In a sense, the GM will be role-playing the entire medieval environment and property system.

The first problem is acquiring enough land — not merely for the actual castle itself, but also for the manor to support it. Most players will protest that their characters don't need a manor, because they plan to support their castle with the coin from adventuring. Unfortunately, all the coin in the world can't buy food that isn't there to buy. Medieval agriculture is so inefficient that it's highly unlikely that the neighborhood peasants will have any food to sell after fulfilling their obligations to their lord.

Besides, their lord will probably outright forbid any sale of food to the adventurer in the neighborhood because any new castle is a rival for power. Even free farmers will sell only what food they can spare, leaving the character's castle vulnerable to bad harvests. Thus, the PC's castle requires a manor to feed it.

Buying land outright for coin is unheard of in a medieval-style world. At the most, a PC could obtain a small amount of land on a perpetual lease by paying a money rent, but it is far more likely that any manorial estate will come enfeoffed or entailed in one way or another. There are two kinds of land available for new manors: virgin territory, or farmland from a great lord's already existing manor.

Any virgin territory within a kingdom is considered the property of the king; squatters will have a war on their hands. Legally settling virgin territory requires a royal charter granting and establishing the new manor. In the case of manorial land, the lord who has rights to it must be persuaded to subenfeoff it to the PC. In both cases, the granter of the manor will wangle as many obligations as he can from the PC.

To obtain a manor from an overlord, whether king or baron, the PC has to acquire the lord's favor and convince him that he will be a loyal vassal in the future. Here's where all those coins and jewels can come in handy. Besides giving lavish presents to the overlord, the PC will have to bribe his important officials to get them on his side and perhaps even to get an audience with the overlord. Once the grant of land is offered, the PC has to swear homage to his new overlord, or suzerain, as it was often called.

In homage, the PC promises to become the overlord's vassal for the rest of his life (the PC's life, that is) and to perform certain services in return for the land. The minor ones can be widely varied, but the most common small obligations are to visit the overlord's court once a year, to entertain him sumptuously whenever he appears at the vassal's castle, and to help him with the expense of wedding or knightings of the lord's children when they come of age.

The major obligation, of course, is military service. The vassal must provide a

specified number of soldiers and their provisions for forty to sixty days a year. Whenever summoned, the vassal must personally fight at his lord's side. In some cases, it's possible to get out of this service by paying scutage, a money payment sufficient to hire and supply as many men as the vassal is failing to provide. The GM should decide whether the overlord in question will accept scutage. In a real emergency, the overlord will not.

If the PC has received a grant of manorial land that's already being farmed, he can proceed to building the castle. In the case of virgin territory, however, the PC will have to find farmers to work on the new manor. Peasants on an existing manor are usually willing to become colonists if they receive a better deal than they're already getting — an easy enough matter, considering their lot. It was common for colonizing lords to allow — reluctantly, of course — their colonists to lease the new land with rents due instead of full feudal service.

Since serfs are legally free men, not slaves, buying them out of serfdom is a ticklish business. While trying to keep up appearances, their former lord will try to get as much coin as possible per head. Lords will never risk underpopulating their own lands, of course, and thus will probably only allow 10-15% of their serfs to leave at any given time.

Once the farmlands are settled, the PC will also have to acquire servitors from the

middle classes and whatever noble officials or henchmen he can attract. To build the actual castle requires skilled, well-paid craftsmen brought out from towns. Most fantasy-game systems have prices in their rules for the actual cost of building. Craftsmen will demand to be paid in coin, not produce, but they will take part of the wages in living expenses while actually working.

The process of settling a manor and building a castle should take game-years, not months. The PC isn't slapping up a modern condominium of lath and sheet-rock, but building in stone for the ages. The GM will probably have to rule that the PC doesn't have the resources to build his dream castle all at once but must either adventure again or wait until the land begins producing enough revenue to finish the work.


Most PC's, in fact, will have to start a stronghold as a fortified manor or fortalice. Although players will gripe about this, the GM should hold firm. After all, a recurring problem in long-running campaigns is the rich and incredibly powerful PC who unbalances the game by his very presence. First building, then maintaining a castle is an excellent way to drain off not only wealthy but playing time from such a PC.

First of all, the PC will have to spend playing time fulfilling his obligations to his overlord. The military service will always come due in summer — prime adventuring

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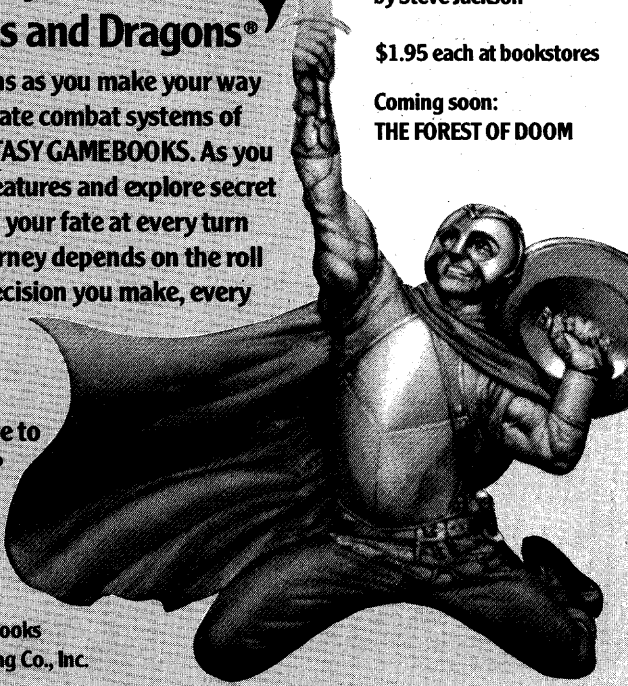
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weather. An overlord's visit will cost a great deal of money for the lavish feasts and entertainments that are necessary to keep the overlord's good favor.

Second, running a large manor takes time. If the PC is away from home too often, the officials are likely to turn dishonest and begin stealing revenues, or turn so ruthless that they cause a peasant revolt. The PC must also maintain a court of justice and be at home to receive taxes and homage from those below him.

Finally, a powerful PC on a rich manor is going to cause envy, and thus enmity, among his neighbors. Petty feuds and envious disputes are common in a medieval-style society, and they're always settled by the sword. Fighting a local war is a much better use of a powerful PC's talents than is stripping hapless dragons of their wealth.

The castle in the campaign

Since building and maintaining a castle is such a difficult proposition, castles aren't going to exist in every hex of the campaign map. The common pattern, in fact, will be one powerful castle for every, two or three hundred square miles, surrounded at intervals by the fortalices of the rich lord's vassals. Royal castles will be even rarer. In a kingdom with a weak central government, there may be no royal castles at all except for the king's personal dwelling.

Because of the large number of servants, servitors, and retainers who live in a castle, drawing up a castle minutely for an NPC is as much work as creating a small town. Fortunately, unless the NPC has a crucial central role in the campaign, or the GM wishes to run a series of scenarios in a particular castle, there is no need to create every single inhabitant and give them full stats. After all, unless the player party is a bunch of murderous brigands, they are unlikely to engage in combat with the blacksmith's wife or the pig-boys.

As a starting point, the GM should write a descriptive paragraph for each truly important inhabitant in the castle, such as the lord and his family, the noble officials, the chief household knight, and such servitors as the player party is likely to meet, such as the chief porter. Here's an example

of such a sketch: "Sir Gervase, the senechal, is a strong middle-aged man with great skill with weapons. He uses his quick wits and considerable worldly wisdom loyally in the service of his lord." Then, if stats are necessary at some later time, the GM can either roll them up or simply decide them within the parameters of the sketch.

Lesser servitors and servants can be merely listed and noted, for instance: "twelve serving wenches, two very pretty," or "Hubert the blacksmith; lives in the bailey; strong arm with war hammer."

When it comes to running the castle, impressionistic story-telling will fill a lot of gaps. For example, let's suppose a player party is entering a castle for the first time. After an actual encounter with the chief porter, they go through the gates. The GM can say something like this: "Out in the bailey, you see a large number of wooden sheds and huts. Servants hurry around carrying food and firewood; a couple of grooms are currying horses by the main well; you hear the clang of a blacksmith's hammer over the general din." Such a scene-setting gives the feel of castle life without stats and continual dice rolls.

When mapping out the manor for an important castle, likewise, the GM should indicate where the peasant villages are and how many families live in them, but it's unnecessary to make a detailed placement of every hut and field. The map can indicate the lord's forest, major streams, and other such natural features on a simple hex-by-hex basis. If the player party is the sort that's likely to get into trouble, by poaching on the lord's forest preserve or robbing someone, then the GM can set up the daily route of the bailiff, provosts, and gamekeeper and give them some combat stats.

The time spent working up a realistically populated castle will pay off in the fun of running it. All these assorted NPC's provide opportunities for encounters and character interaction beyond the usual combats — love affairs, resentments, friendships, diplomatic squabbles — all in a fantasy setting that will still seem "real" to the players. A truly well-realized setting adds enormously to everyone's enjoyment — and that's what fantasy role-playing is all about!

A note on further reading

GM's and players who are interested in more detail about castle life can find many books available these days, some in paperback. One of the best is *Life on a Medieval Barony* by William Stearns Davis (Harper and Row, 2nd ed. 1953). Serious role-players, especially *Chivalry and Sorcery* fans, will find that reading this or some similar book adds enormously to their fun. Hard-working GM's who want more information about the manorial system and the sizes and population of average holdings should gird their loins and attack *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, Volume I: *The Agrarian Life of the Middle Ages*, edited by M. M. Postan (Cambridge University Press, 1966).

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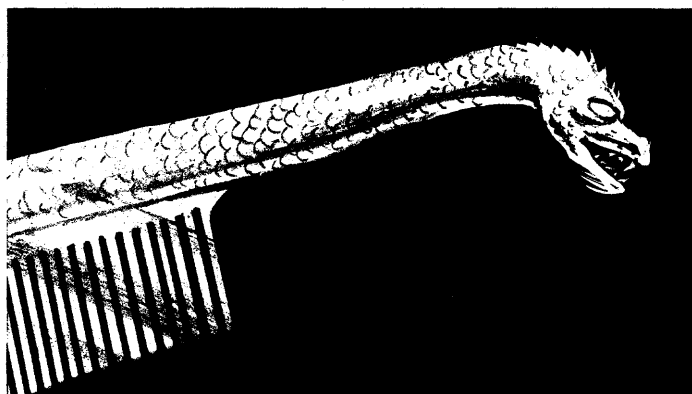
Treasures rare and wondrous

by Ed Greenwood

DMs who customarily roll up treasures on the spot when player characters find a trove are thankfully becoming fewer; most have come to realize the interest, improved play balance, and spur to player creativity, of individualized finds. But for those who remain — and for all DMs who find themselves “winging it,” as most do from time to time — here follows a table of specific goodies to liven up a humdrum pile of gold pieces. (If any result seems inappropriate, simply roll again.)

Percentile dice roll	Item description	Approximate market value
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01	Belt buckle with flaming sword device, of silver, lightly tarnished.	1 gp
02	Scroll tube, carved ivory with gold-plated metal end caps.	3 gp
03	Boot heel, silver-plated, with embossed ornamental scrollwork design, battered.	1 gp
04	Bowl, large and in good condition, of chased and pierced gold worked in design of leaping dragons fighting spear-armed warriors.	30 gp
05	Bracer, electrum worked in mock-scales with four circular bosses about it, the center of each boss being a claw holding a (20-gp value) bloodstone.	150 gp
06	Comb, golden, handle carved into dragon's head with (1,000-gp value) ruby set as eye.	1,100 gp
07	Tooth, gold, “rough filling” fashion.	2 gp
08	Coffer, 6' high x 1' wide x 2' long, with gold hinges and catch, of carved ivory worked into a beveled top, with a gigantic battle scene covering sides and top, all figures individually cut and exquisitely detailed.	75 gp
09	6-sided die, 1' cube of beaten gold stamped with holes.	10 gp
10	Fingerpick for stringed instruments, oval of polished section of abalone shell affixed to a moon-and-stars design crownpiece.	2 gp
11	Whistle, pipe-style, of fluted design with ring at top for chain or cord, of reddish gold.	3 gp
12	Ring of pierced coins (brass ring with 26 sp).	27 sp
13	Eyepatch (sans chain or thong ties); rhomboid of beaten gold set with a mock “eye” of a sapphire (1,000-gp value) surrounded by two crescents of polished moonstone (value 75 gp each), pierced in all four corners for ties.	1,500 gp
14	Death mask, of noble, bearded male visage, of beaten gold.	44 gp
15	1-8 silver bars (each a flat rectangle, 2' thick x 2' wide x 10' long, untarnished).	25 gp ea.
16	Dagger with gilded hilt, inset with gem of seeing (DMG, p. 145).	(magic)
17	Belt buckle, crescent moon device, of electrum.	4 gp
18	Scroll tube, carved ebony with silver-plated end caps, each cap inset with a large (1,000-gp value) faceted half-emerald.	2,300 gp
19	Corkscrew, gold-plated, with a (50-gp value) bloodstone set into each end of the handle.	125 gp
20	Cloak pin of silver, fashioned in shape of a griffon's head (side view, facing right) with a (1,000-gp value) ruby as the eye.	1,100 gp
21	Bottle stopper, of cork fastened by an ornate wire twisting to a large, brilliantine-faceted topaz (of 900-gp value).	900 gp
22	Pendant; fire opal (1,400-gp value) with a gilded, fine twist-link neck chain.	1,500 gp



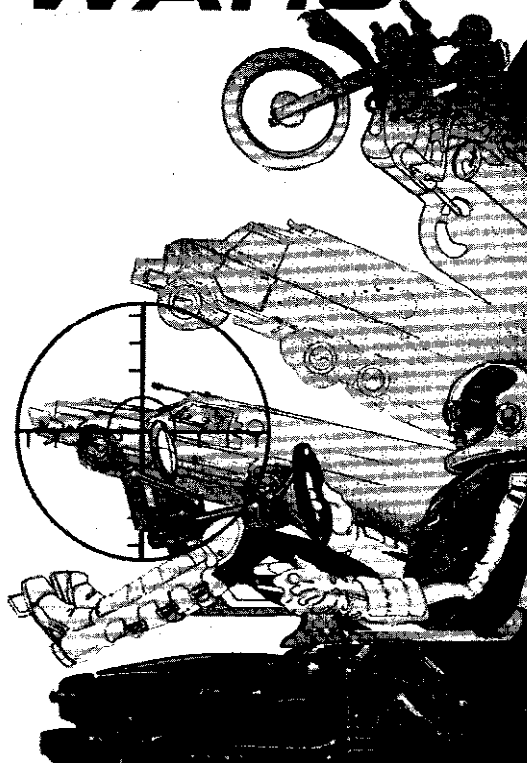
#06: Golden dragon's head comb

23	Monocle; polished glass lens in gold frame, with hooked and pierced side-handle, sans ribbon or cord.	30 gp
24	Thieves' picks and tools, 1 set (universal lock-picks, prybar, waxed cord with 2 hooks and 6 thin steel spikes, whipsaw, cutters, two small black velvet bags, black leather gloves and mask, iron grapnel with 2' shank and end-ring).	30 gp
25	Quill pen case, gold, with clasp, chased into scene of scribe writing in tome, sitting on stool amid stacks of parchment.	6 gp
26	Earring; gold spring clamp with chain holding large, polished, irregular piece of clear sapphire (5,000-gp value): detects alignment of any creature touched, by turning color: LE=black, CE=red, NE=orange, N=brown, CN=gold, LN=steel grey, NG=green, CG=blue, LG=white.	(magic)
27	Chain: 6' length of ornamental, gold-plated, triple-interlaced link (heavy, and strong!).	80 gp
28	Rotting leather-and-silk chatelaine with gold-plated scissors (3-gp value), gold-plated thimble (1 gp), 6 silver-plated keys (2 sp each), brass key ring and leather thongs.	6 gp
29	Jewel-coffer of chased silver, with catch, depicting wooded scenes with birds in branches on back and sides, maiden combing her hair while looking into pool at her reflection on top.	15 gp
30	Medallion, electrum inlaid with copper, in design of phoenix rising from flames, spherical, 4' diameter.	4 gp
31	Staff, fire-blackened oak shod with adamantite (25-gp value) at foot. Head carved in shape of fanged serpent with two (500-gp value) rubies as eyes (non-magical, but — DM's choice — may have Leomund's trap cast on it).	10,025 gp
32	Bracelet; 46 tiny (70-gp value) white pearls strung together on gilded wire, fastened with barbed hook and loop.	3,220 gp
33	Helm; ornamental skullcap of beaten gold, cut in the shape of curling, floral vines meeting, curling away and meeting again.	66 gp
34	Cup, of the thinnest beaten gold set with a lip-ring of 12 tiny (500-gp value) emeralds, chased and embossed in rings of abstract pattern (interlocked rings, vertical and horizontal bars interwoven with them).	6,250 gp
35	Statuette, of solid gold, a flowing-haired maiden riding a rearing unicorn.	90 gp

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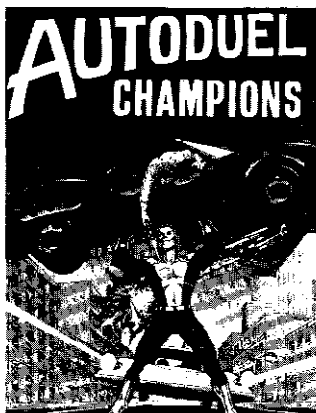
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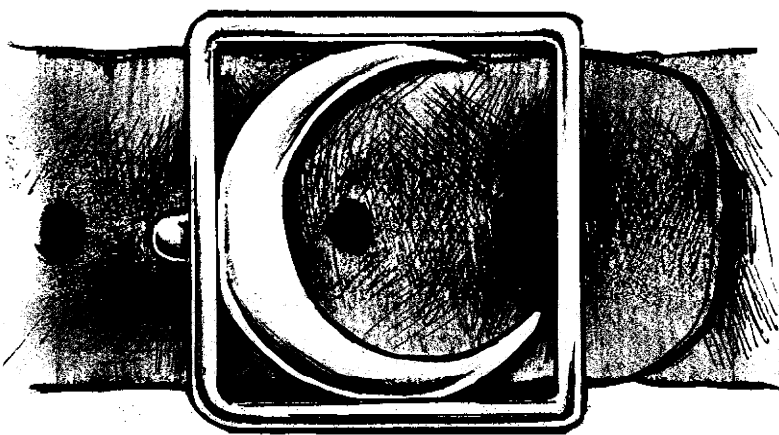


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#17: Crescent moon belt buckle

Percentile dice roll	Item description	Approximate market value	
36	Bell, with clapper, of carved, polished rose crystal (bell, 900-gp value; clapper, 160-gp value; set intact, 1,200-gp value), joined with line gold wire.	1,200 gp	
37	Candelabra, heavy (100-gp weight), solid silver, black-tarnished, with four stepped branches beaten into the appearance of curling stems, with open flowers to hold candles.	5 gp	
38	Bangles (2-20 4'-diameter gold hoops, with rounded edges) for wrist and bicep wear.	5 gp ea.	
39	Ball, dimpled from use but still brightly polished; 3'-diameter sphere of solid gold.	100 gp	
40	Statuette, carved of solid ivory; of an armored warrior leaning on a great broadsword.	40 gp	
41	Garter; 9 gold coins linked with gold wire, from which hangs an electrum mesh fringe extending down in six triangles to (at the tip of each) a claw-held, cabochon-cut jacinth (5,000-gp value each), the whole backed with a (rotting) black leather band.	30,014 gp	
42	Salt cellar, ornately carved gold with cork stopper in bottom; shaped like a slumbering gold dragon curled around a pile of gold.	60 gp	
43	Sword-hilt, of intricately carved gold with an enamelled painting of a hawk in flight in the center of the grip; pommel fashioned into a hawk's head. Ornamental; too soft (solid gold, not plating on a stronger metal) for battle use.	30 gp	
44	Flagon, of clear rock crystal polished glass-smooth; flaring tulip-shaped vessel with heavy, bulbous base; safe to drink from, holds 1 pint.	120 gp	
45	Beer stein, 1 foot tall, tapered, of pewter set into a gold-plated iron frame with gold handle and pierced gold decorative side-panels depicting huntsmen in the chase, winding horns, and with their dogs harrying a stag. Safe to drink from, holds 2 quarts; 130-gp weight.	85 gp	
46	Book with steel-edged, beaten gold covers, embossed and painted in fine, intricate repeating-pattern borders, having a central scene of a warrior with sword battling a dragon, which he is grasping by the throat. The book, written in archaic Common, is a Roll of Heroes; a list of now-forgotten names, their birth and death dates, titles and ranks, and their deeds.	300 gp (materials) or 900 gp (value to a sage)	
47	Gorget, crescent-shaped and sans strap; of steel plated with mirror-smooth, lightly tarnished silver, bearing a fine linecut design of a star.	3 gp	
48	Hairpins, gilded and with bloodstones (each worth 50 gp) as heads; 2-8 in number.		51 gp ea.
49	Drinking jack; polished black-and-white horn with silver cap and base.		25 gp
50	Ring of 12 keys (to chests, doors, etc.); ring gold-plated; 3 gold-plated keys (each worth 3 gp), 6 tarnished, ornate silver-plated keys (each worth 1 gp), 3 electrum-plated keys (each worth 2 gp); ring separately worth 6 gp.		27 gp
51	Flute, golden, of delicate work and mirror-smooth finish.		200 gp
52	Urn, golden, chased and cut with relief designs of flowers, painted with scarlet blossoms. In excellent condition, 6' tall, will hold a flower stem (e.g. rose), weight 10 gp.		15 gp
53	Orb; 5' diameter sphere of solid gold cut with a relief design of four sylphs, amid clouds, holding up a mirror (polished area), the eyes of the sylphs being tiny cabochon-cut rubies (1,000-gp value, each).		8,680 gp
54	Crown; circlet of yellow gold with six slim spires, a large (90-gp value) zircon set at the base of five of the spires, and a gigantic (2' high, 1,000-gp value) amethyst set at the base of the tallest (front) spire.		1,700 gp
55	Half-mask of black velvet backed by leather, the lower edge trimmed with tiny teardrop citrines, 16 small (50-gp value), and 6 slightly larger (70-gp value).		1,220 gp
56	Anklet; 12 tiny plates of gold linked with gilded wire, fastened by a hook and eye; from each wire loop save the fastening depends a hanging, wire-mounted gem, 11 in all, as follows: 4 white pearls (each 100-gp value); 6 violet garnets (each 500-gp value); 1 deep blue spinel (of 500-gp value).		3,950 gp
57	Chessman or gaming piece, of carved ivory with two amber beads (value 20 gp each) as eyes/adornment.		50 gp
58	Ring, carved and beaten gold in curlicue design with mock beast claw holding a large spherical aquamarine (of 1,000-gp value).		1,025 gp
59	Fishhook, ornamental, of beaten gold studded with gems, 6' in overall length (of religious or ceremonial nature), gems as follows: 6 moonstones (each 50-gp value); 8 amethysts (each of 100-gp value); 2 red garnets (each of 100-gp value); 2 pink pearls (each of 300-gp value); 2 green tourmalines (each of 100-gp value); 6 tiger eyes (each of 10-gp value).		2,500 gp
60	Door handle, of steel plated with gold, fashioned into the form of a curling snake.		12 gp
61	Bodkin, of tempered steel with a wire twist (and threading loop) mounting holding a tiny, crown-faceted carnelian (of 25-gp value).		26 gp
62	Glove, right-hand, large male human size, with embroidered back of hand, in curling tendril design utilizing beads and few gemstones as flower buds, as follows: 8 white pearls (each of 100-gp value); 1 peridot (of 500-gp value); 9 rock crystal "tears" (teardrop-cut, glassy-polished, each worth 60 gp); 1 opal (1,000-gp value); of leather, in good condition.		2,850 gp
63	Copper (chamber?) pot, chased and embossed in relief design of rampant, stylized dragon, with two gems (1,000-gp emeralds) as eyes.		2,010 gp
64	Vestments, cloth-of-gold, M-sized loose cape with under-tunic (ankle length if worn by 5' tall human), bell sleeves, intricate embroidery; religious in nature but lacking specific deity symbols or colors . . . in somewhat frayed, age-stained condition.		150 gp

Percentile dice roll	Item description	Approximate market value		
65	Ring, ornately and skillfully worked electrum, set with two obsidian chips (each of 5-gp value), as eyes of laughing imp.	15 gp		
66	False hand, solid and unjointed, of silver with crescents of ivory as nails (3 of 1-gp value, 1 of 2 gp-value, 1 of 10-sp value).	30 gp		
67	Pouch, tobacco or herbal (faint musty, unidentifiable odor, empty), of shabby leather with ivory toggle catch, and large (200-gp value) amethyst ornament surrounded by rings of beading, now worn and missing in spots.	200 gp		
68	Peg-leg, of gilded wood set with 3 large cut ovals of amber (200-gp value each).	620 gp		
69	Arrowheads, silver, 1-6 in number.	5 sp ea.		
70	Pin: large (4' diameter sphere) ornamental bodice pin of polished brass worked into shape of sleeping unicorn, chalcedony inset (70-gp value) depicting its horn (overall weight 12 gp).	75 gp		
71	Tapestry: wall hanging of 20' drop x 15' width worked in dyed wool; coarse threads on a background of scraped and sewn-together animal hides. Mildewed, moth-eaten, dirty and water-stained, but still impressive: a gold-colored entwining-snakes border encloses a scene of a crowned, bearded, noble king spearing a boar from horseback, surrounded by his courtiers. Nine black doves fly in a circle in the sky overhead, and from the boar's mouth are falling sparkling gems. The origin and meaning(s) of the work are unknown.	20 gp (700 gp to a sage)		
72	Shield, beaten gold bolted to a wooden underlay, finely worked and enamelled in a scene of an armored warrior rising rampant on horseback, brandishing a curved blade (saber or tulwar rather than a scimitar), while enemies flee toward the bottom of the shield. Many castles and maidens are depicted within the border surrounding this scene, presumably possessions won by the warrior. This shield is undamaged, and obviously not for battle use (it is both too heavy and too fragile). It is magnificent in appearance and of large (4' tall) size. Its origin, and the identity of the warrior depicted, are now lost.			500 gp
73	Set of three identical silver-plated (on a steel base), finely balanced throwing knives, with plates of polished sardonyx (each plate worth 150 gp) set on both sides of the tang to form a grip. Of magnificent appearance, but practical weapons rather than merely ornamental.			320 gp ea.
74	Ankus (beast goad); gold-plated iron rod with hook at end; other end capped with a large (6') square faceted ruby.			9,300 gp
75	Mirror; of reflective-polished electrum set in a silver frame, back panel chased in a design of a smiling, elfin female face, pretty of features (mirror designed without a handle).			40 gp
76	Tray; giant scallop shell, gilded and affixed to a gold mock "claw" base in which are set four "nails" of black obsidian (10-gp value each).			80 gp
77	Perfume, cut crystal bottle 6' tall, with 2' long stopper, flares from base to wide facet, and from there tapers to a thin neck. Contents: unknown, musky but pleasant perfume (liquid scent, green and viscous). Sealed with wax.			12 gp

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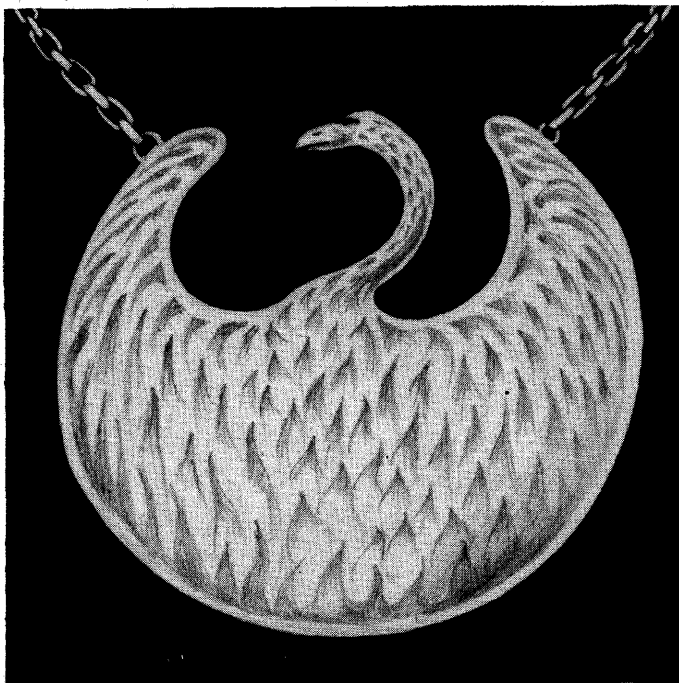
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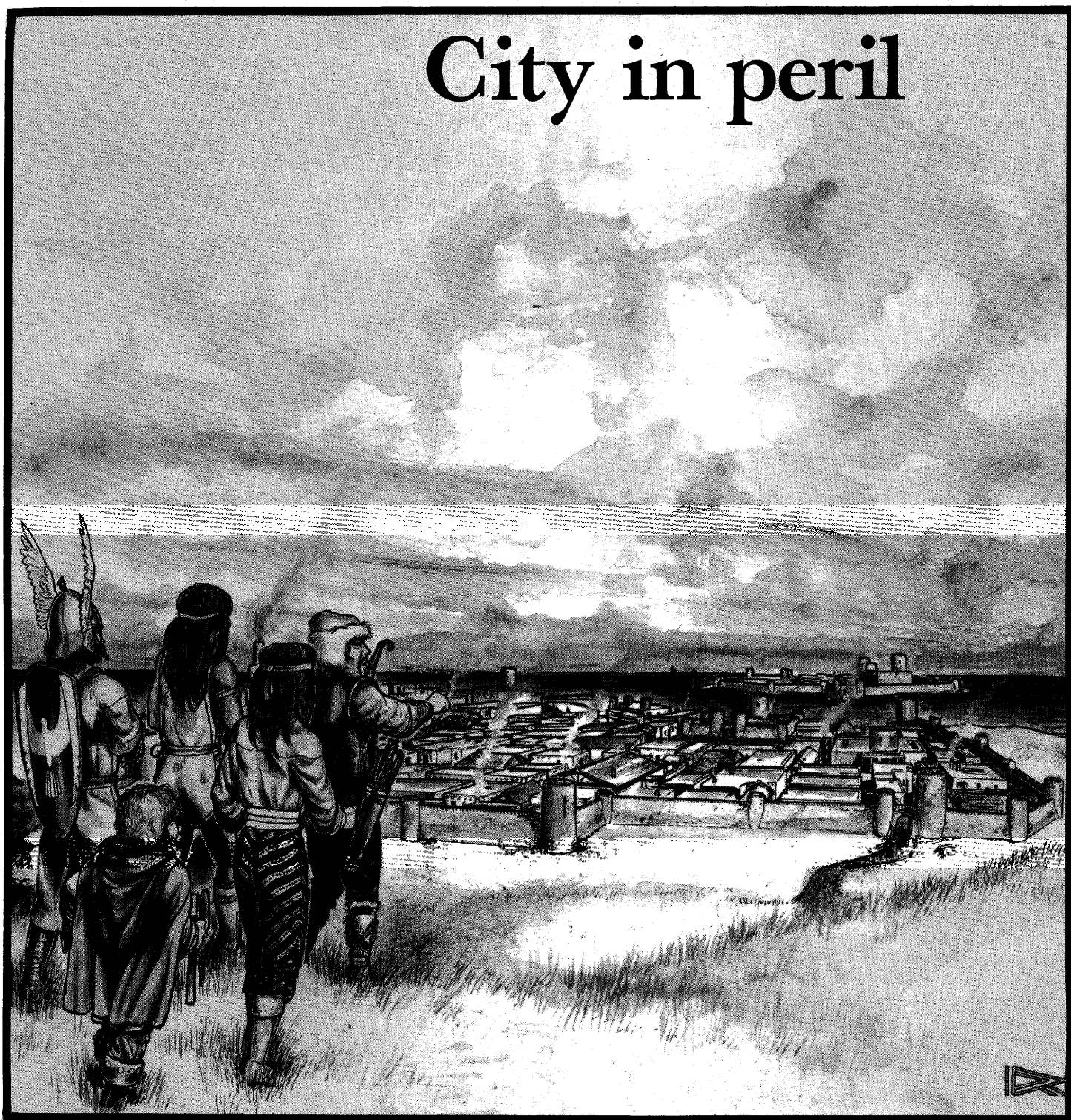


#30: Electrum 'flaming phoenix' medallion

Percentile dice roll	Item description	Approximate market value
78	Harp (of what we would call "Irish design") with ivory-inlaid bridge and inset with two zircons (each worth 50 gp) as eyes of carved head at peak of instrument, with 40 strings, intact and playable, with a beautiful sound. The name "Aurelin" is carved in Common down the spine of the instrument. It is constructed of wood of an unknown type, and is non-magical.	500 gp (up to 6,000 gp to a bard)
79	Scepter; 2' rod of bronze inlaid with silver circles and 16 violet garnets (worth 500 gp each), topped with a huge deep blue spinel (worth 900 gp). The other end is a gold knob.	8,120 gp
80	Cornet; slim band of steel plated with electrum, and set with 2 cabochon-cut star sapphires (worth 1,000 gp each), 2 cabochon-cut opals (worth 1,000 gp each), and a huge, central black opal (worth 2,000 gp).	6,020 gp
81	Ewer, of gold; flare-mouthed pitcher with 2 handles, one to a side, outside worked in abstract horizontal-curves design.	45 gp
82	Platter, of chased and pierced gold. Delicate, easily damaged, but in good condition. Large (oval, 2' long x 1' wide at widest point).	300 gp
83	Crown; thick, soft band of beaten gold, set with 4 large (2' diameter, half-relief cabochon-cut) aquamarines (each worth 800 gp).	3,500 gp
84	Tapestry; of wool and animal hair with a few strands of spun gold; large (6' width x 12' length), depicting 3 maidens in skirts standing in a moonlit garden beneath seven stars. Origin and meaning of scene now forgotten. Mediocre condition.	400 gp (800 gp to a sage)
85	Bracelet, of heavy gold set with 6 blue-white diamonds (5,000-gp value each), edges cut in curlicues.	30,100 gp
86	Tiles, 1-4, of baked and glazed clay, painted with scenes of swimming fish, white pearls (100-gp value) inset as eyes (1 fish per tile).	120 gp ea.
87	Mail shirt, M-size, of mithral, triple-linked and oiled, in top condition.	400 gp
88	Armor plate (horse barding, rump skirt plates), chased in floral curlicue design; of fine blue steel (i.e. better than available from any present-day human smith).	700 gp
89	Sarcophagus/casket of bronze sheathed with electrum, worked in an effigy-shape of sleeping form. Face fashioned of gold inlay, eye-sockets once held gems, but these are missing. Casket contains human bones, but no treasure.	900 gp
90	Wand; thin, gilded wooden stick, straight and smoothly cylindrical, capped with a gold open-petaled flower at one end, and a crescent-moon of gold at the other. Non-magical.	18 gp
91	Ring, of red gold, beaten into a long knuckle-coil, to resemble a miniature snake coiling about wearer's finger. Two tiny rubies (each 90-gp value) are set into its head as eyes.	190 gp
92	Sword, of steel plated with silver. Simple cross-hilted blade with a cabochon-cut piece of jet (500-gp value) set into the center of the tang where the quillons meet it. A non-magical longsword.	530 gp
93	Toy warrior, of bronze with wire sword (broken off and missing). Eyes of warrior are tiny faceted turquoises (5-gp value each). Shield of warrior has silver inlay. Very finely worked, with detailed features and armor.	20 gp
94	Pectoral; gold chain necklace attached by gold wire to 6 plates of electrum, shaped in matching pairs to cover upper chest/collarbone area of M-size humanoid, each plate set with a large, faceted sapphire (1,600-gp value each, all perfectly matched in size and cut), and from these plates depending 4 pyramid-cut, matched chrysoprase danglestones (emerald green, worth 80 gp each).	10,000 gp
95	Mug of brass, cut and chased in a broad ring of floral branches, picked out in red enamel. Ornamental; if wine is drunk from this, it will react with the metal to produce a dangerous poison (Ingestive Type B). The handle of the mug has light-green jade inlays, carved in the shape of a djinni (see Monster Manual illustration for pose).	400 gp
96	Silk, 1-8 rolled bales bound with leather thongs and canvas outer wraps. The outer layers of silk are rotten and black, the inner areas still usable. Faint pastel shades, usable area of each bale approximately 4' x 21' long.	2 gp ea.
97	Sickle; silver-plated steel blade, gold-plated handle; handle worked into the configuration of a many-leaved branch.	25 gp
98	Mantle; black silk lining, black velvet outer face, adorned with beaded stars and curlicues, moonstones set into the center of each star — 36 moonstones of 50-gp value — sized for tall M-size humanoid; needs pin to be worn.	1,801 gp
99	Furs (mink, ermine, seal, wolf, sable); cleaned and cured pelts, sewn together into wide-sleeved, open-fronted overcloaks for winter and northern wear; number and condition as determined by DM.	(Varies; see DMG, p. 27.)
00	DM's choice: magical item (refer to DMG tables), artifact/relic (refer to DMG), demon's amulet (refer to Monster Manual or FIEND FOLIO™ Tome), devil's talisman (refer to MM or FF), or the like. It is suggested that the item be unique (i.e. of the DM's invention, or drawn from sources — modules or magazine articles — not perused by the players). Failing such sources, roll three times more on this table, ignoring rolls of 00.	(—)

Barnacus:

City in peril



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Barnacus: City in peril

BACKGROUND

In the kingdom of Keystone, at the mouth of the Manyforks River, stands the port city of Barnacus. It was founded two hundred years ago, and its strategic military and commercial location has made it the second most important city in the kingdom. The city is under the rulership of Haermond II, Duke of the province of Elcadan, a half-elf of high esteem who has been in charge for more than a century. His outstanding commercial politics have made the city very prosperous; almost every trade company in this part of the continent has a counting house in the port of Barnacus. Because of this prosperity, the city has suffered many pirate raids, and thieving activity is a fact of life for residents and visitors alike.

NOTES FOR THE DM

This ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® adventure is designed for a party of 4 to 8 characters, each of 1st to 5th level. For balance of play, the total of the adventurers' levels should not exceed 20. The party should contain at least one thief and one magic-user. Evil-aligned party members are not recommended. It is essential that the DM be very familiar with the module before beginning play, because of the size of the city and its complexity.

ENCOUNTERS: There is a 65% chance in the daytime and a 15% chance at night of the party, or any individual or group from the party (if they have split up), encountering someone (or something) in the streets. Check each turn that adventurers are traveling the streets of Barnacus, and if an encounter is indicated, roll on the table(s) below to determine the specific creature or character type encountered. Additional information on many of the special character types from Encounter Table 2 may be found in the Dungeon Masters Guide under "City/Town Encounters," pages 190-194. Note that many of the encounter descriptions are similar to the relevant passages in the DMG; use specific information from the DMG only when it does not conflict with what is given here. Also note that, although most of the encounter descriptions are written to refer to male characters, this does not mean that females are excluded from consideration; when appropriate and/or logical, many of the groups encountered can be composed entirely or partially of female characters.

For encounters marked with an asterisk (*), roll d% again to determine race: 01-06, dwarf; 07-15, elf; 16-18, gnome; 19-25, half-elf; 26-29, halfling; 30, half-orc; 31-00, human. (For simplicity, it can be ruled that all the members of an encountered group are of the same race.) If an entry does not

have an asterisk, the race is assumed to be human, although in some cases the DM may dictate otherwise.

Creatures on the Special Encounter Table marked with a number sign (#) will not be encountered along with residents; if such a creature is indicated on the roll following a "Resident & Special" result from Table 1, ignore the roll and treat the encounter result as one of "Resident."

Encounter Table 1: General

Die roll	Type of encounter	Number
Day	Night	
01-85	01-60	Resident
86-90	61-80	Resident & Special
91-00	81-00	Special

Encounter Table 2: Special

Die roll	Type of encounter	Notes
Day	Night	
01	01-03	Assassin
02-04	04-07	Bandit
05-15	08-12	Beggar
16-23	13-23	City guard
24-27	24	City official
28-29	25-26	Cleric
30-31	27-29	Druid
32-33	30-36	Drunk
34-37	37-38	Fighter
38-39	39-40	Gentlemen
40	41-46	Giant rats
41	47	Goodwife
42-43	48-50	Horseman
44	51	Illusionist
45-47	52	Laborer
48-51	53	Peddler
52-53	54	Magic-user
54-56	55-58	Mercenary
57-63	59-61	Merchant
64-65	62-63	Monk/bard
66-67	64-65	Noble
68	66	Paladin
69-72	67-69	Pilgrim
73	70	Press gang
74-75	71-74	Rake
76	75	Ranger
77-79	76-80	Ruffian
-	81	Shadow
80-84	82-89	Thief
85-95	90-96	Tradesman
96-00	97-99	Wererat
-	00	Will-o-wisp

Encounter explanations Table 1

Resident: These are the normal (0-level) inhabitants of the city. Use the reaction table if they are asked for information; if the table result is "hostile," the resident or residents will simply ignore the character.

Resident & Special: The number given (1-10) is for residents only, and should be

added to the number of members of the special group to obtain the total population of the assemblage encountered by the party. In some cases (the Noble, for instance), it is not reasonable to assume that all of the characters encountered are actually traveling together (since a noble would not normally associate with ordinary residents); in these instances, the encounter may need to be treated as if it is taking place with two groups at the same time, considering the residents and the special group separately.

Table 2

Assassin: There will be 1-2 encountered in the west side of the city, or 1-4 in the east side, each assassin being of 1st to 4th level. They will usually ignore the party, but if the group looks weak or only one character is being encountered, there is a 10% chance (50% at night) that the assassin(s) will attack if there is no one else in the street.

Beggar: Only one will be encountered. He will approach the party and ask for charity. There is a 5% chance that the beggar is actually a thief (level 1-4). There is also a 5% chance (roll separately) that he knows useful information, but he will give it out only if he is asked for it and paid in advance.

Bandit: In daylight, bandits will look and act like ordinary fighters, but at night, they are quite different in outlook. The group will consist of 3-12 regular members (each O-level), and a leader who is a 3rd-level fighter. Each member of the group will be wearing armor of up to chainmail quality, and the group will have an assortment of weapons as per the Monster Manual.

City guard: The city guard consists of six O-level men-at-arms (HP 4 each) with studied mail, short sword and shield; two 1st-level fighters (HP 8 each); and a 2nd-level fighter (HP 16). The fighters will each be equipped with chainmail, broadsword, and shield. The city guard's duty is to question suspicious characters and arrest law-breakers.

City official: This individual may be a bureaucrat, military officer, chamberlain or magistrate. The official will be of 2nd-5th level. Select a profession (class) and level desired, or roll randomly on d4 to determine level and/or whether the official is a (1) fighter, (2) cleric, (3) magic-user, or (4) thief. The official will be accompanied by from 2-5 fighters, each of 1st or 2nd level, as personal guards.

Cleric: This indicates an encounter with a cleric of 2nd to 9th level, accompanied by 0-3 lesser clerics, each of 1st to 3rd level (as appropriate, depending on the level of the first cleric). The alignment and reaction of the cleric(s) is at the DM's discretion.

Druid: This encounter will be with a druid of 4th to 9th level, accompanied by

0-3 lesser druids (50%) or 1-4 lighters (50%), each of 1st to 3rd level (as appropriate). The group will generally avoid contact with the party, unless the party makes this impossible.

Drunk: This will be a solitary person (50%) or a group of 1-4 revelers (50%). If an individual is encountered, he will be a normal resident 75% of the time and a special (classed) character 25% of the time; if the latter is indicated, roll on Encounter Table 2 to find a suitable character type, or select one as desired (excluding character types only found in groups, and those accompanied by followers or bodyguards).

Fighter: This encounter will be with one fighter of 2nd to 8th level, with a 60% chance of him being accompanied by 1-4 fighter henchmen, each of 1st to 4th level.

Gentleman: This encounter will be with either a O-level city resident (20%) or a lighter of 4th to 7th level (roll d4+3 for level). If the gentleman is offended, a fighter will challenge the offending individual personally, while a O-level gentleman will march off with malice in his heart and later send a champion (fighter of 3rd to 6th level) to challenge the offender.

Giant rats: These will be encountered only in dimly lit, isolated places. (If the encounter takes place in a location that does not meet this description, roll again on Table 2 for a new encounter.) There will be 1-6 of them in the day and 2-20 at night.

Goodwife: This encounter is with a solitary female resident, who will only react in a friendly manner if she is approached with great caution. She will flee on an adjusted reaction score of 55 or less, and on a score of 25 or less she will seek the help of a city patrol to apprehend the adventurers who "scared" her (whether they actually did or not). The party will encounter this patrol within the next three turns, and the guardsmen will not be inclined to be friendly or neutral. There is a 20% chance that the goodwife will possess useful information, which she will freely divulge to party members if she is befriended first. She will be offended by an offer to pay her for what she knows.

Horseman: Although many of the other character types encountered *might* be on horseback (at the discretion of the DM), this character will always be mounted, on a horse that is trained to help protect and defend its master in the face of a threat. This character is always encountered as an individual; he will be a O-level resident (40%), a fighter of 1st-4th level (40%), or a thief of 1st-4th level (20%). There is a 15% chance that he knows some useful information, but he will give it only if rewarded.

Illusionist: This encounter is with an illusionist of 3rd to 8th level, with an 80% chance of being accompanied by 1-3 apprentices, each of 1st or 2nd level.

Laborer: This will be a group of 2-12 peasants or fishermen, all of 0 level. They will be rough in appearance and manner, and will not answer most questions.

Magic-user: This encounter is with a

magic-user of 3rd to 8th level, accompanied by 1-4 fighters, each of 1st to 3rd level (40%), or 1-3 magic-user apprentices, each of 1st or 2nd level.

Mercenary: The group will include 3-12 members, plus a leader of 2nd to 5th level if more than 6 are encountered. There will be a 25% chance that the group is currently unemployed and looking for a job.

Merchant: This character is a city resident who is better off than most, and looks it. He will be escorted by 0-3 mercenaries (2-8 at night).

Monk/bard: On a roll of 1-4 on d6, this encounter will take place with a 3rd to 6th level monk and 0-3 companions (also monks), each of 1st to 3rd level. On a roll of 5 or 6, this encounter will be with a bard of 1st to 8th level with the skills of a 7th-level fighter and an 8th-level thief. In the daytime, there is a 75% chance that he will be dancing and playing an instrument while being followed by 2-12 children.

Noble: The encounter will be with a male (75%) or a female (25%) noble, being escorted by 1-4 fighters, each of 1st to 6th level. The group would be very difficult to differentiate, by appearance alone, from the retinue of a city official or a rich merchant.

Paladin: This encounter takes place with a lone paladin of 2nd to 7th level.

Pilgrim: This is a group of 3-24 pilgrims on their way to a religious site. From 1-4 of them will be of unusual type (magic-user, fighter, etc.)

Press gang: This is a group of 2-16 soldiers or sailors, all 0 level, led by a 3rd-level fighter, each armed with a short sword or a club. They will try to overpower and capture any characters they meet, intending to draft them into the local army or navy.

Rake: This is a group of 2-5 fighters, each of 1st to 6th level. They are aggressive and will argue with almost anybody. There is a 30% chance that they will be drunk.

Ranger: This encounter is with a ranger of 2nd to 8th level with 0-3 fighter companions, each of 1st to 4th level.

Ruffian: This is a group of 3-12 fighters, each 2nd level, of shabby appearance and carrying concealed clubs and daggers.

Shadow: These creatures (2-5) are only encountered in dark, isolated areas (roll again if necessary).

Thief: The encounter takes place with 1-4 thieves, each of 2nd to 7th level. All of them are members of the town's guild.

Tradesman: This is a group of 2-8 city residents, all 0 level. They are well known and highly respected people, because of the town's dependence on business and commercial matters.

Wererat: A group of 2-5 of these creatures will be encountered. There is a 95% chance that they will be in human form in the daytime, but only a 20% chance at nighttime. In either case, they will be in rat form only if encountered in isolated areas.

Will-o-wisp: This encounter takes place only in dark and isolated areas. Only one will-o-wisp will be encountered, and it will not pursue those who flee it.

THE SITUATION

At some point after arriving in the city, the adventurers will hear or read about a "job opening" that has been posted by the Duke of Elcadan, Haermond II. The notice includes the information that any group interested in taking the job should report to the army barracks (building 6) between midmorning and midafternoon. A patrol will escort the party from there to the duke's palace on Hasding Island, southeast of the mouth of the river. When the characters express interest in being hired by the city (as they must, for this adventure to run its course), they will be taken for an interview with the duke.

Haermond II is a half-elf fighter/magic-user (6th/8th level; 266 years old; S:8, I:18, W:15, D:11, C:13, CH:18; lawful neutral; HP 34). Aside from several minor magical potions and scrolls, he owns a **+6 ring of protection** (+1 on saving throws), a ring of spell **turning**, and a +3 broadsword. He is not inclined toward adventuring any more, and will not engage in combat unless his personal safety or his reign is directly threatened. The spells he normally carries, on a day-to-day basis, are **charm person**, **comprehend languages**, **detect magic**, **read magic**, **detect evil**, **invisibility wizard lock**, **hold person**, **protection from normal missiles**, **suggestion**, **fear**, and **minor globe of invulnerability**.

In the discussion with the adventurers, Haermond II will tell them of his increasing concern about the activities of bandits and pirates in and around the city. He and his ministers believe that an independent ring of spies is somehow discovering information on the city's defensive plans for caravans and merchant shipping entering and leaving town. This is causing more effective raids to be mounted on the merchants, and is harming trade greatly.

Haermond II wants the adventurers to scout around the city and discover who is responsible for the spying attempts, so those responsible can be arrested. The ruler has come under intense pressure to recruit some "outsiders" who aren't involved in the current government or militia, which is why the job offer was announced in the first place. Other groups of visitors have tried to take the duke up on his offer, but they have all been unsuccessful for one reason or another, yielding no information that Haermond didn't already know. The duke is more anxious than ever to discover the truth, since his reputation is suffering; because the raids have been increasing in frequency and severity, and no criminals have been apprehended, some merchants have begun to think that Haermond himself is behind the raids — and he is eager to prove he is not. As a reward for their services, the characters will receive 2,500 gp each if they successfully accomplish their mission within the next two weeks.

At the end of the interview, Haermond II declares the adventurers qualified and fit to take on the job, and hands each of them a ring engraved with the seal of the city of

Barnacus. Each ring permits its wearer to move freely within city government and military buildings, including the palace, as long as no laws or regulations are broken. The ring also puts the city guards at the disposal of the wearer, unless that person abuses this privilege or causes legal difficulties, and permits the wearer to be boarded free of charge at any inn within the city. The rings must be returned to Haermond II at the end of the two-week period or when the job is completed, whichever comes first; failure to do so will bring the full force of the city guard and the military down upon the offender(s).

The Dungeon Master may role-play this situation as he or she sees fit. However, under no circumstances will Haermond give the party any magical items or expensive equipment; the adventurers must make do with items and equipment they already possess, or things they can purchase or otherwise obtain in the city itself.

RUMORS IN BARNACUS

It is fairly common knowledge among the people of Barnacus that the raids on the caravans and shipping have been far more effective than one would normally expect. Most townspeople believe that a spy ring is operating in town, and they suspect that the spies work for one of the highly competitive merchant houses that do business throughout the city. Some other residents believe that Haermond II is supporting the spies, and the group that holds this view is increasing in size as the raids continue.

The referee should compose a number of rumors and bits of gossip that the group will pick up as they travel through Barnacus. Most rumors would be either very vague ("There are spies about, I just know it.") or false ("That Haermond fella, I bet he's tied up in this somehow.") Once in a while, the adventurers should hear a rumor about the "haunted house" (building #80), but no one will connect the building to any spying activity. If adventurers suggest this connection to city people, they will generally downplay this possibility ("What, the spies are hiring ghosts to do their dirty work? I doubt it.") There will, of course, be the usual series of local tall tales and scandals to listen to, none of which furthers the party's mission in the slightest.

THE SNAKE PIT

The Snake Pit is a spy organization composed of 18 members, all under the command of Klekless Racoba, ruler of the Wizards' Guild. (Statistics for Racoba are given below in the description of building #21.) The Snake Pit sells the information it gains concerning merchant caravans and shipping schedules to bandit and pirate gangs in the vicinity. It is an independent organization without political ties; it exists for the sake of making its members rich at everyone else's expense.

The spies have made good use of a system of underground tunnels and chambers they discovered beneath the city. They can

hold meetings in secret, and they have enlisted the aid of a band of jermelines to help them gather information from the citadel on Hasding Island. (Fortunately for them, the adventurers' first conversation with Haermond is not overheard — but if any of the adventurers meets with the duke a second time, the jermelines *will* be eavesdropping, and the members of the Snake Pit will be informed shortly thereafter that they have a new group of adversaries.)

THE CITY

Many of the buildings in Barnacus are briefly described below. Because of the size of the city, further detailing in this text is not practical; this, however, frees the DM to create interiors for the buildings, should characters wish to have a better description of their surroundings. More detail may be developed by the DM on the personalities and traits of the many NPCs in Barnacus as well.

Buildings that are not numbered represent residences, abandoned shacks, and other minor structures that are left to be specifically defined by the DM if necessary.

1. GATEWAYS: Passage through these sets of gates is the only way to enter the city by land. Each of the two gateways consists of one double door, made of heavy wood and reinforced with bronze bindings, with a portcullis that can be raised and lowered on the outside of the door. At night, the doors and the portcullis are closed; entry through the gateways is only permitted from sunrise to shortly before sunset. The permanent guard force stationed at each gate consists of six O-level men-at-arms (HP 4 each) equipped with studded mail, short swords, and shields; two 1st-level lighters (HP 8 each); one 2nd-level fighter (HP 16); and a 3rd-level fighter (HP 23) who will be at one gate or the other (determine randomly or by selection). Each of the fighters wears chainmail and uses a broadsword and shield.

In addition to the forces at the gates, the city's defenses also include sentry towers set along the outer wall at regular intervals, plus a smaller wall setting off the area just south of the market square. In normal, non-crisis situations (like now), only certain towers (marked "x" on the map) are occupied. Each tower is manned by a O-level man-at-arms who is equipped and armed like the men-at-arms in the gate guard forces. Each sentry's job is to watch for suspicious persons approaching the city, or for intruders trying to scale the wall, and to cry out if he needs assistance from a larger force. If such an incident takes place, soldiers will begin arriving on the scene within three rounds of the time the alarm is sounded.

2-5. INNS

2. The Circled Star: This establishment is run by a family of four dwarves. Accommodations cost 2 gp per night. This is the most luxurious hotel in the city, and it has enough rooms available to house the adventuring party.

3. The Dragon's Lair: 10 sp per night, fair accommodations, many vacancies.

4. The Castle: 15 sp per night, good accommodations, few vacancies. Four of the ten rooms in this inn are currently occupied by a band of 1st-level fighters (two to a room), all lawful neutral, who are looking for employment. They are not willing to apply for the spy-hunting job by themselves, feeling that they would be overmatched if they did run into trouble, but some or all of them may be receptive to hiring on as assistants to the adventurers, if they are promised some compensation in advance and a share of the reward if the party's mission is accomplished.

5. The Night House: 13 sp per night, good accommodations. This inn is operated by a 5th-level human thief (leather armor, 2 daggers, HP 23). If a rich-looking character sleeps here, he'll have a little visit during the night.

6. ARMY BARRACKS: Each of these buildings houses a force of 30 men, two thirds of which are O-level men at arms (HP 4 each) with studded mail, short sword and shield. Each group also includes six 1st-level lighters (HP 8 each), three 2nd-level lighters (HP 16 each), and the leader, a 3rd-level fighter (HP 23). The fighters are all equipped with chainmail, broadsword, and shield.

Six of the seven barracks on the mainland are located near the two city gates, in groups of three; one building in each of these groups will be empty at any given time, when the soldiers assigned to that building are on duty (either serving as gate guards and sentries or out on patrol). The seventh is behind the wall in the southeast section of the city; it contains 30 men-at-arms, instead of 20. This force is primarily responsible for the security of the area behind the wall and the immediate vicinity of the market square (area #68).

7. STABLES: The city has four stables. The one in the northeast part of the city, adjacent to a barracks, is for army use only; the one in the southeast section, behind the guard wall surrounding the barracks and warehouse, is for the use of soldiers and merchants. The other two are public stables, where proprietors will take care of any kind of horse or ox for 7 sp a day.

8. WAREHOUSES: These buildings are stocked with trade goods. They can be entered only by authorized persons. Each of the warehouses is under the watchful eye of a permanent guard unit of four O-level men at arms (HP 4 each) with studded mail, short sword, and shield, and a 2nd-level fighter (HP 16) with chainmail, broadsword, and shield. The warehouse behind the wall south of the market square is used for stockpiling army supplies and the goods of some of the more renowned merchants and tradesmen who visit the city. The two warehouses on the island are used for storing the personal belongings and supplies of Haermond II and his staff, and may be used for the safekeeping of very valuable goods and items that might be in greater

jeopardy if they were stored on the mainland. All other warehouses are for use by the general populace.

9. CITADEL GARRISON HOUSE: This is where the citadel garrison resides. The force is composed of 70 men, 50 of them 0-level men-at-arms (HP 4 each) with studded mail, short sword, and shield. They are supervised by 12 1st-level lighters (HP 8 each), five 2nd-level lighters (HP 16 each), and two 3rd-level fighters (HP 24 each), all equipped with chain mail, broadsword, and shield. The soldiers are led by a 5th-level lieutenant (HP 40) with plate mail, shield, and +2 broadsword. The garrison is under the command of Haermond III, son of the current ruler and heir to his title and holdings. Haermond III is a 6th-level half-elf fighter, S: 18/37, I: 12, W: 14, D: 15, C: 17, Ch: 15, HP 62, lawful good. He wears +2 plate mail and uses a +1 **luck blade** broadsword (no wishes) and a +1 long bow.

10-11. MONEYCHANGERS: Possession of foreign coins is prohibited in the city. All such currency must be exchanged within 48 hours of the bearer's arrival; otherwise the money will be confiscated if the bearer can't prove he arrived within the last 48 hours. Merchants in the city will only accept local currency.

10: The fat human who works here will change any kind of foreign money, but will keep 5% for the city tax and 5% for himself. He is neutral evil (0-level) and has a personal guard of two 4th-level fighters (HP 26, 22) with chainmail and halberd.

11: This change house is run by a very old man who will not handle copper or silver currency. He keeps 5% for the city tax and 3% for himself, and has a personal guard of three 2nd-level fighters (14 HP each) with banded mail, long sword, and shield. The old man is a 3rd-level magic-user (HP 8), lawful neutral in alignment, with the following spells: **magic missile, shield, rope trick**.

12. PRISON AND TREASURE HOUSE: Protected with deadly traps and magic spells, this building contains most of the town's treasure as well as cells that are reputed to be impossible to escape from.

13. PALACE: This is the residence of Haermond II, Duke of Elcadan and ruler of the city of Barnacus. It is a two-story building with only one entrance, a massive double door of oak with a pair of 2nd-level fighters (HP 16 each) with chainmail, broadsword, and shield stationed on each side. Only authorized persons are permitted to enter the palace; if an audience is granted, the visitor(s) will be escorted by one guard to the audience chamber, where they will be received by the duke.

14-19. TAVERNS: Like any city, Barnacus has its share of establishments for drinking, eating, and socializing. The detailing of these six taverns is left to the Dungeon Master; the following text only mentions a few particular facts that the DM should consider when the details are added.

14. The Dancing Wolf: See "The Black Eagle" (#18).

15. The Wine Dragon: This tavern does not accept elves, dwarves, halflings, or other any kind of non-human as guests.

16. The Drinking Werewolf: This is the favorite tavern of the members of the city's thieves guild. If a non-thief comes in, he may leave with his pockets empty.

17. The Sea of Wine: The tavern most often frequented by magic-users, because of its proximity to the wizards' guild hall.

18. The Black Eagle: Because this tavern and the Dancing Wolf (#14) both border the market square, they are in constant competition for the patronage of merchants and purchasers who come to that area.

19. The Party House: The rowdiest tavern in town, frequented by a lot of visitors to Barnacus because of its location between two inns.

20-23. GUILD HALLS

20. Fighters' Guild: For 25 gp per month, a fighter can use this place for weapons practice, meeting friends, and organizing expeditions. It is under the command of a 12th-level ranger.

21. Wizards' Guild: Accessible only to magic-users or illusionists, the guild consists of libraries and laboratories for magical experimentation. The membership cost is 75 gp per month, plus any cost for materials and expenses to repair damage from unsuccessful experiments. The guild is controlled by Klekless Racoba, who is also the leader of the Snake Pit spy gang.

Racoba is a 9th-level human magic-user, S: 10, I: 17, W: 15, D: 11, C: 15, Ch: 13, alignment lawful evil. He possesses a pair of **bracers of protection** (AC 4) and a **staff of striking**. He knows and is able to use the following spells: **read magic, enlarge, shocking grasp, ventriloquism, mirror image, ray of enfeeblement, stinking cloud, blink, feign death, lightning bolt, wall of ice, wizard eye, passwall**.

22. Thieves' Guild: All thieves who take up permanent residence in the city, or who visit the city for longer than three weeks, must become members of the thieves' guild or take the chance of being run out of town or worse. Members must pay weekly dues equal to 30% of their proceeds at 1st level, 25% at 2nd level, 20% at 3rd level, 15% at 4th level, and 5% at 5th and higher levels. The guild hall is always occupied by 3-24 thieves (various levels) at any time.

23. Assassins' Guild: Just as with the thieves guild, all assassins in the city must have membership in the guild; if someone performs an assassination on his own, he'll receive a warning that he must either join the guild or be prepared to die by another assassin's hand. Members pay weekly dues equal to 45% of any fees or proceeds at 1st level, 35% at 2nd level, 25% at 3rd level, and 15% at 4th level and higher. Members can buy certain poisons, and get information about possible jobs, through the guild.

24-25. TEMPLES

24. Poseidon's Temple: Ruled by a 9th-level cleric, this temple is visited regularly by sailors (and as such is a good place to enlist the aid of a ship and crew if one is

needed). See DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ Cyclopedia for details of the worship of Poseidon.

25. Forseti's Temple: This place is known as the hall of justice. Most criminal cases are dealt with in this temple, which is the most important religious and legal building in the city. It is under the command of an 11th-level cleric. See the DEITIES & DEMIGODS Cyclopedia for details of Forseti's religion.

26-28. GAMBLING HALLS: As with the taverns of Barnacus (buildings #14-19), the details of each of these establishments are left up to the DM to develop if such detailing becomes necessary. Each of these three houses is open to the public (for private clubs, see buildings #29-31), and the latter two employ staffs of "peacekeepers," lighters of 2nd-4th level, to discipline or expel unruly customers.

26. The Fortune Cart: A low-class establishment that does not serve intoxicating beverages (to better keep the clientele on good behavior) and is only open during the day. It offers unsophisticated games of chance, most of them for low stakes, but the games are rigged so that the house gets at least 10% of the day's wagers in profit.

27. The Jackpot: At the other extreme from the Fortune Cart (building #26), this is the favorite gambling hall of the well-to-do citizens of Barnacus. The games are expensive, enabling the owners to make a tidy profit even though the house's share is only 3% of a day's wagers. It is open from midday to midnight.

28. The Red Dice Club: A middle-class establishment, with a house share of 5%. It is open from sundown until well past midnight each day.

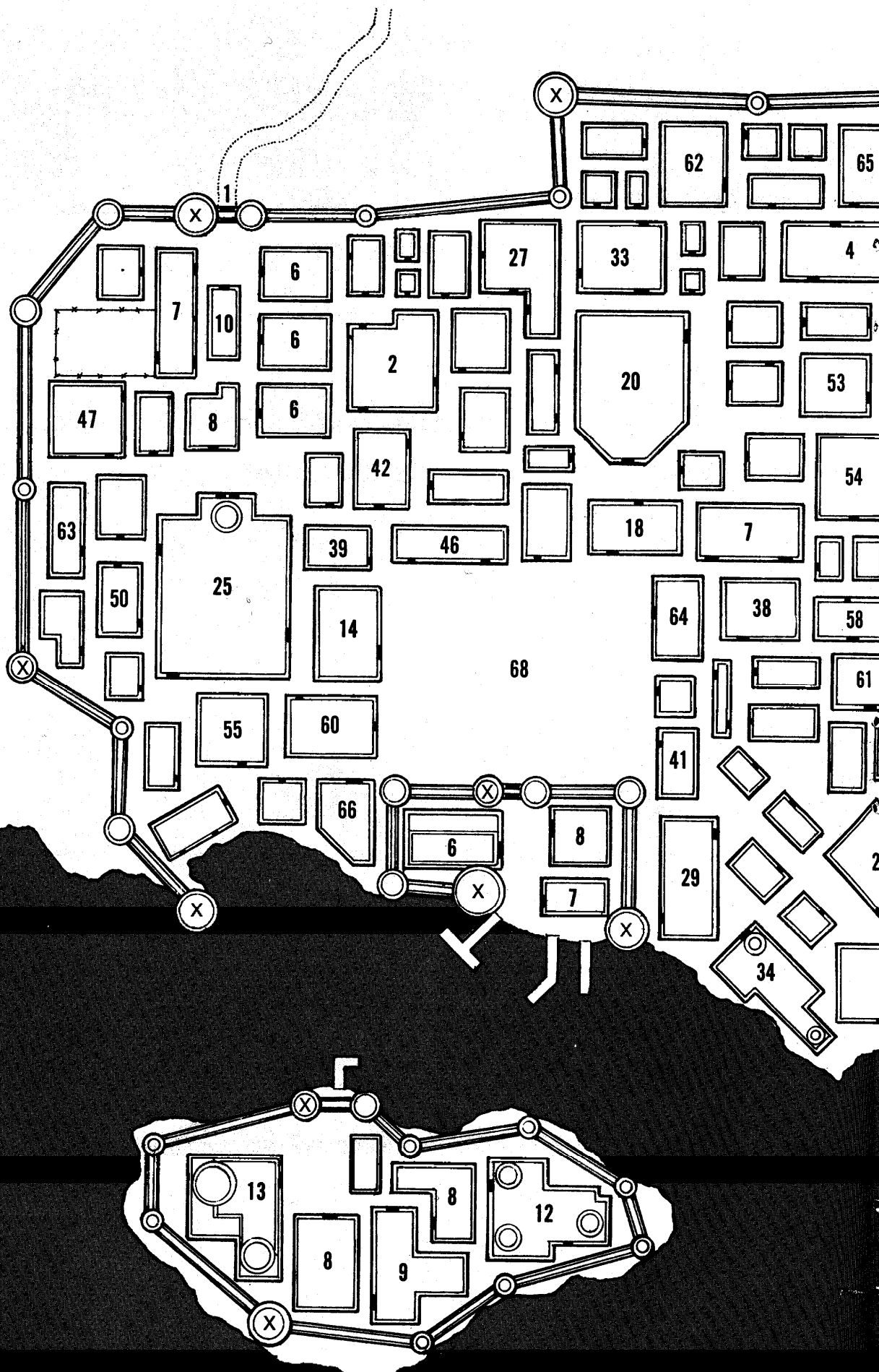
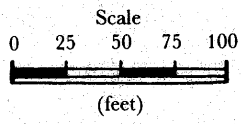
29-31. PRIVATE CLUBS: These establishments are basically similar to the public gambling halls (buildings #26-28), except that they are open to members only, and they primarily cater to nobles, rich merchants (both residents and visitors), and soldiers (it always helps to be on the good side of the army).

29. The Shoreside Club: Members of the citadel garrison (see building #9) are liable to be found here on payday. Although Haermond II is a member of all three clubs (as might be expected), this is the one he favors because it is the closest to Hasding Island.

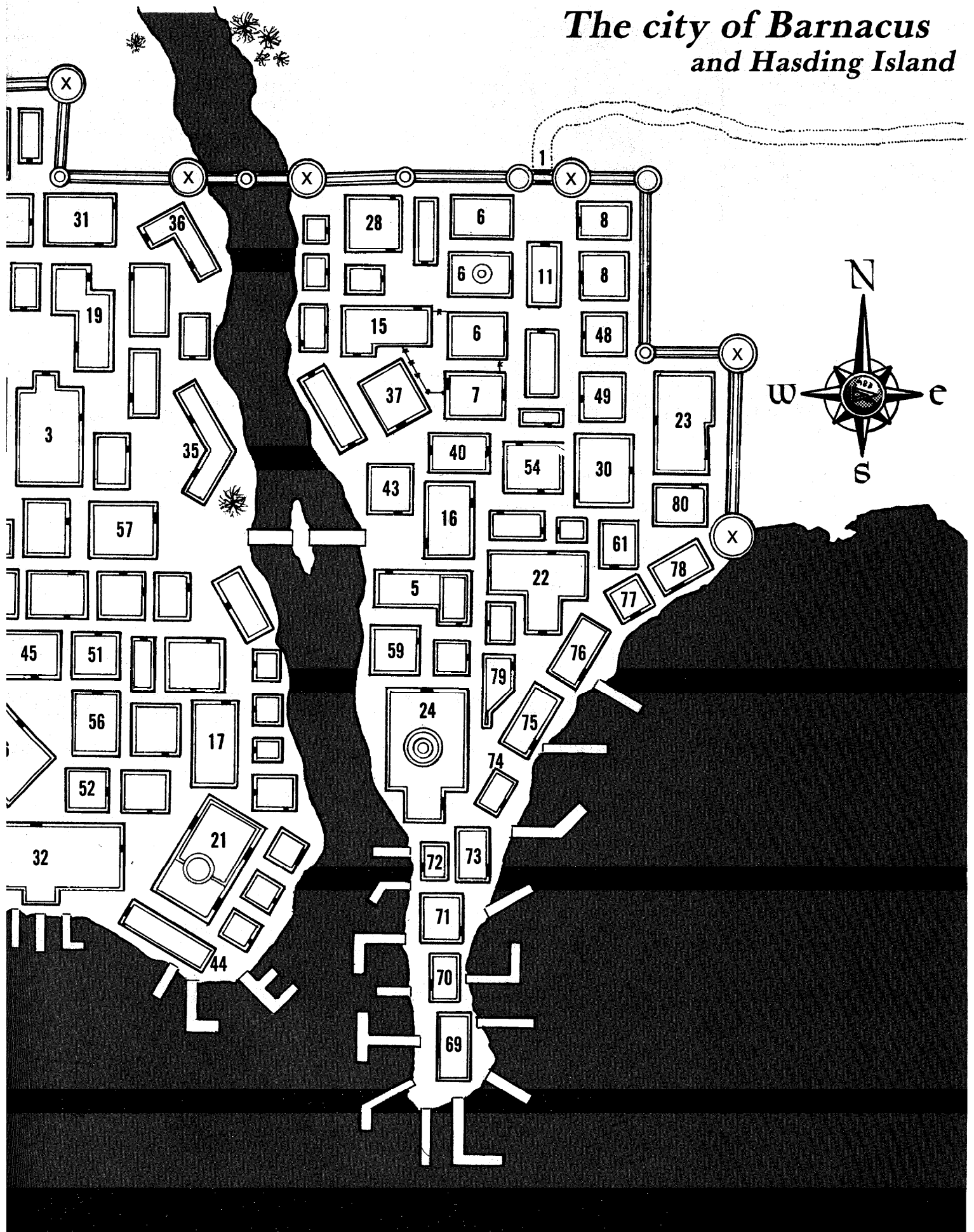
30. The East Side Club: This club has several high-ranking assassins among its members — not a place to go for an evening of light-hearted fun.

31. The Pleasure Palace: This club has more non-residents among its membership than the other two clubs combined. It caters particularly to merchants and tradesmen who are frequent visitors to Barnacus and like to spend time (and money) in a raucous atmosphere.

32. IMRAELL'S MANSION: This is the home of a retired merchant who is the richest man in the city. He has a personal guard consisting of 10 1st-level fighters (HP 7 each) with chainmail and halberd, all



The city of Barnacus and Hasding Island



commanded by a 5th-level fighter (HP 43) with plate mail and a +2 bastard sword. He is also guarded and assisted by a 3rd-level magic-user (HP 10) who can use the following spells: *read magic*, *protection from evil*, and *detect evil*.

33. WINE SHOP: Managed by an elf, this shop sells any kind of intoxicating beverage.

34-39. ARMOR & WEAPON SHOPS

34: This armorer, a human, sells any kind of armor except plate mail and plate armor. He also sells broadswords and bastard swords, at prices of 13 gp and 30 gp respectively.

35: The dwarf who works here sells splinted, banded, and plate mail, plus shields and blunt weapons of excellent quality.

36-37: These two shops, both owned and operated by humans, sell every kind of weapon that can be found in the Players Handbook (at standard prices) except for bows, arrows, crossbows, and bolts.

38. Bowyer: The halfling proprietor of this shop sells long bows, light crossbows, and very fine short bows for standard prices.

39. Fletcher: Managed by a high elf, this shop sells arrows and bolts of all kinds, except bolts for heavy crossbows.

40-43. LEATHER SHOPS: In these places can be found quivers, pouches, leather armor, saddles, or any other kind of leather items. Humans are in charge of these shops, and prices are all standard.

Building #43 is a shop that specializes in shoes and leather sacks for personal use. The proprietor, an old shoemaker, loves to make conversation. If a party member asks him about any strange or unusual locations or incidents, he will talk about the abandoned house (building #80) at the extreme east end of the city. Three days ago, when he was in the neighborhood at night, he saw a light shining from one of the second-floor windows — a strange occurrence indeed, because the house was abandoned four years ago and is said to be haunted.

44-46. FOOD STORES: Standard and iron rations can be purchased here. These are also good locations for picking up local gossip and rumors, since virtually all of the lower-class and middle-class residents of the city come to one of these stores at least once every couple of days.

47. ALCHEMIST: In this building lives and works an old alchemist who does a lot of work for the duke; his services are also available (for a fee) to anyone who comes through the front door. For 50 gp, he will identify any kind of potion with an 85% chance of success. He will concoct any potion listed in the Dungeon Masters Guide, if the customer first provides him with the primary ingredient(s) of the potion, and pays a fee equal to twice the standard gold-piece value of that potion. There is a 20% chance that the process will fail and produce a useless liquid; the alchemist informs his customers ahead of time that he doesn't give guarantees — or refunds.

48. GYPSY'S HOUSE: A very old gypsy lives here. For 25 gp, she will tell a character's future (but her predictions are 95% likely to be inaccurate). If she is asked for information about the spies and "persuaded" with a payment of at least 25gp, she will suggest that the questioner "go where the rats live."

49-51. SCRIBE SHOPS: Scribes can be used to identify scrolls, write down official documents, make maps, etc.

52-53. FUR SHOPS: These shops sell almost all kinds of fur coats, belts, carpets, tapestries, etc.

54-56. TAILOR SHOPS: These shops offer many sorts of new clothing. Two of them (#54 and #55) also repair ripped clothes for 1-20 sp per garment.

57. JEWEL SHOP: The owner of this shop is an 8th-level human magic-user (HP 30, alignment lawful neutral) with the following spells: *magic missile*, *charm person*, *read magic*, *friends*, *web*, *ESP*, *wizard lock*, *hold person*, *phantasmal force*, *suggestion*, *polymorph other*, *fear*. He has a personal bodyguard force consisting of seven 3rd-level fighters (HP 18 each) equipped with plate mail and bastard swords. Each night, the magic-user puts all his shop's merchandise in a secret room inside the shop that has a *wizard lock* and a *glyph of warding* (cast by a cleric friend of his) on the door. The *glyph* does 16 hit points of electrical damage to anyone affected by it.

58. GEMCUTTER: Living here is a very skilled dwarven gemcutter who is employed by the owner of the jewel shop. He is a 6th-level fighter (HP 42) with +3 chain mail and a +2 battle axe. At night, he always put his gems into the secret room inside the jewel shop.

59-60. TRINKET SHOPS: These are the strangest businesses in the city; each shop sells almost anything imaginable that is not marketed by some other merchant, even including some arcane objects whose uses have not been discovered. Each of the shops has a rather questionable reputation, and only the courageous and the desperate are likely to patronize them. They are owned and operated by a pair of thieves, each 3rd level.

61. SPICE MERCHANT: This store sells common herbs and spices from all over the continent, and even has for sale some very rare herbs that the proprietor says have magical properties. The proprietor, a 2nd-level thief, is of lawful neutral alignment with evil tendencies; he is well aware that the rare herbs are fakes, and aren't magical at all.

62-63. CARTWRIGHTS: These two shops are run by 3rd-level fighters who have more than their profession in common: They are mortal enemies of each other, each considering his competitor the main reason why his business isn't doing as well as it ought to. They can't even see each other or pass each other on the street without engaging in a fistfight. Neither one is willing to take the chance of attacking the other with a

lethal weapon, and each of them is trying to save enough money to hire an assassin.

64. COOPER: This business is one of the oldest in the city; it has been in operation for more than 75 years. The owner is a gnome who has retired from the adventuring life and has the abilities of a 4th-level fighter/illusionist. His assistant, also a gnome, is a 2nd-level fighter who enjoys an occasional adventure and who might be persuaded to take a short leave of absence to join in a party's mission if the promise of reward (both for himself and his boss) is attractive enough.

65-66. FURNITURE STORES: At these places can be purchased wooden furniture, chests and beds, but none of the merchandise is of especially luxurious quality.

67. BRIDGE: This is a large wooden toll bridge maintained and operated by the city. The fee for crossing is 2 cp per customer, including any animals or vehicles the customer is leading, riding, or driving. The bridge is wide enough and strong enough to allow passage of any vehicle up to the size of a large wagon being pulled by two horses. Two-way passage is only allowed if all the customers are on foot and not leading animals; otherwise, traffic is only permitted in one direction at a time.

The toll-takers, located on either side of the bridge, are members of the city guard who are 1st-level fighters (HP 8 each) with chainmail, long sword, and shield. Each of them has a horse tethered at his toll booth; in the event of a disturbance on one side of the bridge, the guard on the other side will immediately ride off to sound an alarm at the nearest army barracks. The bridge is not manned at night, and passage is free, with customers left to work out right-of-way problems by themselves.

68. MARKET SQUARE: Every day this place is crowded with merchants and farmers who come from the countryside to sell their merchandise produce. This place is a paradise for thieves; there is a 10% chance per hour that any character on the premises will be the target of a pickpocketing attempt by a 1st to 4th level thief.

69-79. PORT From 12-36 boats are anchored at the port each day. Each of the numbered buildings in the area of the docks represents a counting house for a wholesale company that is not based in Barnacus but maintains offices here to conduct business with the shopkeepers and merchants of the city. Each building is guarded by a staff of 13-32 (d20+12) mercenaries. These "caretakers" are men-at-arms (HP 5 each) with leather armor and spear. The leader of the mercenaries is a fighter of 2nd to 5th level (depending on the number of men-at-arms he is leading) with chainmail, broadsword, and shield. This is a typical guard force; specific weaponry and armor of each force will vary from building to building, depending on the value of the merchandise being guarded and the ability of the employing company to pay good wages. The staff of each counting house also includes several ordinary (O-level) employees: clerks, stock

handlers, drivers, and a supervisor who has the abilities of a 3rd-level fighter (HP 22), wearing banded mail and carrying a short sword and dagger.

Following is a list of the companies that own each counting house, and the general type of merchandise that each company deals in:

69: Colossus Lumber Co. — raw materials, especially wood and parchment.

70: Trustworthy Suppliers — finished wood products, furniture parts.

71: The Strong Corporation — raw materials, mainly cut stone and metal ore.

72: Elcadar Jewel Importers — finished metal items (buttons, fittings, etc.), some semi-precious gems and jewelry, but — despite the company's name — very little in the way of exceptionally valuable items. This building is small in size but very heavily guarded nonetheless.

73: Handsome Hides — unfinished leather, pelts, and skins.

74: Keepers of the Cloth — raw materials, especially textiles and fabrics.

75: Keepers of the Cloth, auxiliary warehouse. This building is roughly half filled with stockpiled goods, locked up tightly, and guarded by a single man-at-arms.

76: Invincible Armor Co. — finished metal parts used in the manufacture of armor and weapons: sword and dagger blades, arrowheads, pieces of plate metal, chain links, etc.

77: The Finest in Wines — Although still owned by the company whose name it bears, this building is abandoned and virtually empty. The wine importers went out of business recently after being hit by several incidents of piracy in a short period of time. The building is locked and boarded up, but not guarded.

78: Merchants of Mystery — A general importing company that handles a wide variety of special or unusual items; the major supplier for the city's trinket shops.

79: Foods from Afar — A wholesaler who handles foodstuffs and ingredients that are not available naturally in the surrounding area. None of the merchandise is perishable, and none of it has magical properties. This business, like the wine-importing

company in building #77, has fallen on hard times lately, from a combination of thieving and piracy and a declining demand in the city for this sort of merchandise. The building is occupied by only a staff of three workers, their supervisor, and a squad of two mercenaries with a 2nd-level leader.

80. THE ABANDONED HOUSE:

Standing at the far east side of the town, this house (formerly a residence) was abandoned by its owner four years ago. It is rumored to be haunted because of the strange sounds that are sometimes heard coming from within it, and because of what has happened to some people who have gone inside. Many courageous or glory-seeking people have entered the house, hoping to shed some light on the mystery that surrounds it. On three separate occasions in the last year, small groups of "ghost hunters" have ventured inside and never been heard from again. Others who have entered the house and returned to tell about it have never found anything inside except the remains of an empty, decrepit building.

In actuality, this house is used by the Snake Pit; a secret door in the basement leads into a set of passages and chambers (constructed in the past for some now-unknown purpose) that the Snake Pit has confiscated for its own use. A small tribe of jermelines (see the FIEND FOLIO™ Tome) lives in the catacombs, and the creatures have been "recruited" by the spies to make their way into the palace on Hasding Island and steal military and commercial secrets. The jermelines are paid for their help with gems, and they are very happy with the arrangement.

If adventurers explore the house at night, there is a 25% chance that they will be surprised by spies #1, #2, and #3 (60% of the time) or spies #4, #5, and #6 (40%). Statistics for all the spies are given in the text at the end of this adventure. The former group will be preparing to enter the underground passage, and will be encountered one round after the adventuring party descends to the basement. The latter group will be returning from the catacombs, and will surprise the party just as the adventurers reach the bottom of the stairway leading

to the basement. In either case, the spies will be hiding under the stairway, in the extreme southeast corner of room 15 (see description below).

GROUND FLOOR

1. Entrance Hall: The door opens into a dusty entrance hall. There is a double door in the middle of the north wall and a 5-foot-wide corridor leading east from the northeast corner of the chamber. There is nothing in this room except dust. If a ranger checks for tracks, he'll find two sets of them that can be identified. One trail of a single person's footprints, very old, leads up to the double doors; the second set, made within the last 24 hours by two or three individuals, leads into the corridor.

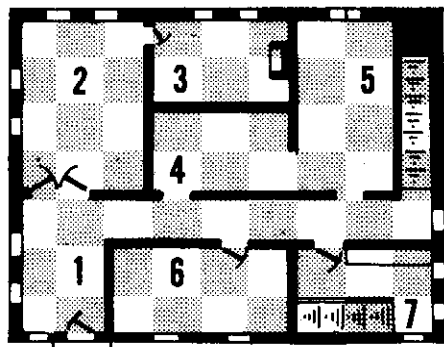
2. Dining Room: A battered and broken table and the remains of six chairs are strewn about in the center of this room. In the northwest corner is a large patch of webs covering a piece of canvas that is partially draped over a skeleton. Inside the webs are a pair of large spiders (AC 8; MV 6"15"; HD 1+1; HP 8,6; #ATT 1; DAM 1; SA poison, save at +2). They will attempt to attack anyone who approaches within 5 feet of the skeleton. The spiders have no treasure. The skeleton is that of a vagrant who wandered into the house a year ago.

3. Kitchen: This room is dirty and dusty with patches of harmless mold everywhere. A fireplace on the east wall is half-filled with old ashes. In the northeast corner is an old barrel about one-third full of rotted kindling. Several broken bottles are littered around the floor in front of the fireplace.

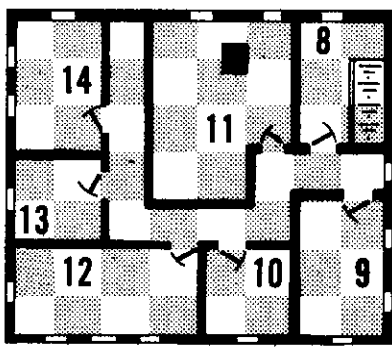
4. Sitting Room: This chamber is full of dust and dirt, like every other room in the house, but otherwise empty.

5. Living Room: This area has piles of debris almost everywhere, as if all the furniture had been broken up. It is even more dusty and dirty than the other rooms. This is the "resting place" of the house's former owner, who was killed four years ago and soon forgotten about. (Everyone believed he had abandoned the house.) The owner's spirit has become a poltergeist (AC 10; MV 6"; HD ½; HP 4; #ATT 1; DAM Nil; SA fear; see FIEND FOLIO Tome for details).

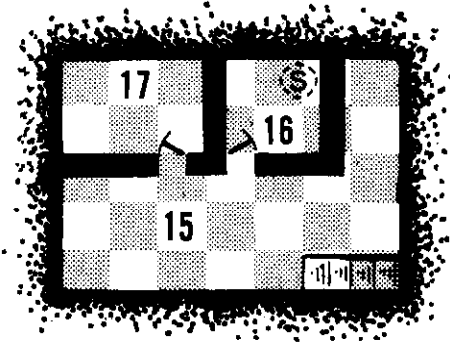
The abandoned house



Ground floor



Second floor



Basement

Scale: 1 square = 5 feet

The members of the Snake Pit learned long ago to avoid the poltergeist, and they never enter this room.

6. Study: This room contains few items of interest. It has a broken desk along the west wall and an unlocked chest between the two windows. The chest contains a candle box with three candles left inside, an old shawl that is full of holes, and a book of poetry with many of its pages ripped or missing.

7. Workshop: This area was evidently used as a work area of some sort. The only recognizable feature is a workbench set along the north wall; the chamber is otherwise empty of things of note, except for the stairway along the south wall that leads down into the cellar. The tracks leading from room 1 into the corridor come through the doorway into this room and then lead across the room and down the stairs.

UPPER FLOOR

8. Empty Chamber: This room contains nothing of interest, except that it is the place where the stairway from the ground floor opens onto the upper story.

9. Guest Room: This room appears to have been a guest chamber. A torn mattress lies crumpled in the southeast corner, its contents spilled all over the place. The chamber also includes a small, empty desk, a broken mirror, and a broken chair.

10. Empty Chamber: This room is empty of furnishings and other major features. A thief, or any other character who uses some sort of ability to detect traps, will notice that the floor doesn't look very safe. Any character weighing more than 100 lbs. who walks more than 5 feet past the doorway will fall through the rotting floor and drop to the ground floor (into room 6), suffering 1-6 points of damage from the 10-foot fall.

11. Bedroom: This looks like it was the owner's bedroom. It was very well furnished, but now all the furniture and decorations in the room are broken and rotten. Identifiable items include a bed, a desk, a stuffed chair, and a chest containing a few items of old, rotten clothing. The floor in the northwest quadrant of the room is rotten and will collapse if someone weighing over 120 lbs. walks on it, causing 1-6 points of damage from the ensuing fall to the ground floor (room 3).

12. Library: This was once an extensive and fairly valuable library, but the books are now nearly all rotted away or chewed into uselessness by rats and ticks. If a search of the shelves is conducted, there is a 10% chance per character per turn of searching (cumulative) to find a *scroll of protection from lycanthropes* tucked inside the front cover of a book about werewolves.

13. Empty Chamber: This room is empty of everything except dust and dirt.

14. Bedroom: The floor in front of the door is rotten but will not collapse. (Especially if the adventurers have already encountered one of the other rotten floors, the DM can add some suspense here by rolling dice or doing something else to make the collapse of the floor seem imminent.)

This room seems to have been a valet's bedroom. The remains of a small bed are in the southwest corner, and piles of debris are almost everywhere. There is nothing of interest in the room.

BASEMENT

15. Cellar: This large chamber is pitch dark even in daylight, since the basement has no windows. Investigation will reveal a small pile of firewood in the northeast corner, a set of empty shelves jutting out from the south wall, and two doors leading to other rooms off to the north.

16. Wine Storage: This room contains eight empty wine barrels, most of them clustered along the north wall to help conceal the secret door that leads into the catacombs. This secret door, located in the floor 5 feet from the east wall, can be detected normally, but the passage behind it can only be safely negotiated by detecting and removing *two* traps. The first trap is detectable when characters are at the open doorway. If it is not found and removed, a scythe blade will spring out from the wall when the first character goes 10 feet down the ladder into the passageway. The blade will do 4-9 points of damage to the character hit by it, and 30% of the time will cause the wounded character to lose his grip and fall 10 feet further to the bottom of the ladder. The second trap is detectable by someone who pauses a step or two above the bottom rung of the ladder; if it is not found and removed, the first character who steps on the bottom rung will cause a panel at the top of the passageway to open, releasing a large load of debris that rains down upon anyone on the ladder. The falling debris will do 1-6 points of damage to anyone caught beneath it, and will knock a character off the ladder if he fails to roll his strength or less on d20. (Roll for falling damage as the result of either trap, if applicable. Assume that any character who falls after being hit by the scythe blade does not hit the bottom rung of the ladder and set off the second trap.)

The secret door is hinged so that it opens in either direction (down into the tunnel or up into room 16). Both traps can be deactivated at the doorway by first dropping the secret door all the way down and then pulling it all the way up into the room. (The traps will reset if the secret door is closed; they can be deactivated from inside the catacombs by pulling up on the bottom rung of the ladder before ascending.)

17. Food Storage: The door to this room appears to have been recently nailed shut. If the adventurers open this door, they will smell an awful odor. This room was once a food storage area, but now everything has gone rotten or been eaten by rats. There are 10 giant rats in the room (AC 7; MV 12"//6"; HD ½; HP 4,4,4,4,3,3,2,2,2,1; #ATT 1; DAM 1-3; SA disease 5% chance), and they will attack the party if they are disturbed. If six or more of the rats are killed, the rest will flee through a small hole in the north wall. The rats have no treasure.

THE CATACOMBS

There are two types of corridors in the catacombs: primary passages, which are 10 feet wide and 7 feet high, and secondary passages, which are 4 feet wide and 5 feet high. All of the corridors are damp and dirty, with areas of standing (salt) water in most of the floor's low spots little stream of salty water in the middle of them. No members of the Snake Pit or any other humanoids will be met in the catacombs, except in the circumstances described below.

Wandering monsters: Anyone venturing into the catacombs has a 10% chance per turn of encountering a group of wandering monsters. If an encounter is indicated, roll d6: 1 = jermlaines (5-8); 2 = giant rats (3-12); 3 = giant centipedes (2-8); 4 = grey ooze (1-2); 5 = large spiders (1-8); 6 = galltrits (1-3).

Jermlaines: These nasty creatures will not immediately attack the party or allow their presence to be known if they can help it. Two of them will go up into the city to warn the members of the Snake Pit of the intrusion, while the rest will follow the party and try to disturb and harass them as much as possible without being discovered.

Giant rats: These creatures will not attack the encountered party unless it consists of three or fewer persons, or if more than half of the party members have each lost 25% or more of their hit points.

Giant centipedes: These monsters will attack anything and fight to the death.

Grey ooze: These creatures will always attack, either from the floor (60%) or ceiling (40%) of the passage. They will surprise the party on a 1-5 in the latter case.

Large spiders: These creatures dwell on the ceiling and will drop on any passing character(s), surprising on a 1-4.

Galltrit: Each of these creatures will silently fly to an unarmored neck, there to attach themselves and begin feeding.

SECTION I

1: This section is directly below the secret door in room #16 of the abandoned house. A ladder descends for 20 feet through a narrow (one person at a time) passageway that opens into a 30-by-40-foot room. This chamber is empty and featureless except for two doors, one on the east wall and one on the north wall.

2: There are four war dogs (AC 6; MV 12"; HD 2+; HP 15,12,11,11; #ATT 1; DAM 2-8) in this room. They have been trained to stay silent until they are encountered, whereupon they will (surprise on 1-4) attack anyone who doesn't give a secret command known only to members of the Snake Pit. They have no treasure.

3: This room looks like a guard room. It has no occupants but contains one table, four chairs, a mostly empty barrel of wine on the floor, and four cups on the table. A large lever set into the south wall is currently in the "up" position; if it is pulled down, it will lock shut the panels over the pit traps in the corridor (see area 4).

4: The aforementioned pit traps are each

10 feet deep. The floor panels will come open when any weight is put on them, unless the traps have all been deactivated by pulling the lever in room 3. Anyone who drops into a pit will suffer falling damage of 1-6 points and will be immediately set upon by one poisonous snake (AC 5; MV 15"; HD 4+2; HP 26; #ATT 1; DAM 1-3). The snake may get an automatic attack (20% of the time) against anyone who falls into its pit. A character who is bitten must save vs. poison or die; a successful save indicates 1-6 points of damage from the poison.

5: This room is damp and full of debris. It contains 14 giant centipedes (AC 9; MV 15"; HD 1/4; HP 2 each; #ATT 1; DAM 0; SA poison, +4 on save) that will attack anyone who searches this room. In various places around the chamber are the remains of four fighters. If at least two party members search the chamber for one turn or longer, they will find the following items at the rate of one item per turn of searching, in this order: A rotten leather purse containing 55 sp; a golden ring worth 50 gp; one 10-gp gem (turquoise).

SECTION II

6: This room is the lair of an apparition (see the FIEND FOLIO Tome), the undead form of a slain adventurer (AC 0; MV 24"; HD 8; HP 33; #ATT 1; DAM special, magical weapons). It will not leave this area to pursue party members if its treasure is not disturbed. If the party members dispose of the monster and search the room for at least two turns, they will find the following treasure: A sack containing 600 gp; nine 50-gp gems (jaspers); one *potion of extra healing*, one *scroll of protection from undead*.

SECTION III

7: The entrance to this room is blocked by an iron gate. The lock has a keyhole in it and can be picked by a thief. The key has been lost for years. The room looks like a strange underground garden, with colorless (and harmless) fungus growths and mush-

rooms everywhere. There is nothing dangerous in this area.

8: This room is full of fungus, like area 7, and also contains six shriekers (AC 7; MV 1"; HD 3; HP 15 each; #ATT 0; DAM 0; SD noise) arrayed in a line along the north wall. They will sound off if there is light within 30' or movement within 10' of their location, increasing the chances for wandering monsters accordingly.

9: This room is empty. A layer of dust on the floor is crisscrossed with footprints moving toward and away from a spot on the center of the north wall. The secret door is a pivoting wall that opens into a passage going east.

SECTION IV

10: The walls of this room are decorated with bas-relief sculptings of giant demonic figures; a magical aura radiates from the walls, forcing lawful good clerics to save vs. spell or refuse to enter this room because of fear. Chained to the north wall of this room is an eye killer (AC 5; MV 9"; HD 4; HP 27; #ATT 1; DAM 1-6; SA death stare). See the FIEND FOLIO Tome for details of how it will react if someone approaches to within 50 feet while carrying a torch or other light source. A bandolier filled with 10 daggers is lying just to the north side of the western doorway. (Members of the Snake Pit seldom have occasion to visit this area, since the passage out of the room leads to a dead end. If they have to move through this room, they do so by extinguishing all light sources and following the west and south walls from one doorway to the other, relying on touch to guide them.)

SECTION V

11: This room is dry and seems to have been cleaned regularly. There is a large table in the center of the room with 19 chairs around it. On the west wall is a 15-by-10-foot map of Barnacus with strange signs and marks drawn on most of the buildings.

12: This is a bedroom used by Klekless Racoba when he spends the night in the catacombs. It contains a crude bed in the southeast corner, a shelf holding an unlit candle on the south wall, and a small closed chest on the floor in the northeast corner. The chest is trapped; if it is opened without deactivating the trap, a cloud of gas will fill the room and cause all within it to *sleep* for two hours (save vs. poison at +2 to avoid this effect). The chest contains 15 obsidian gems (10 gp each) and seven rock crystals (50 gp each), intended to be used as payment to the jermlaines for their services.

13: This room is stocked with dried food, barrels of wine, hard bread, and other foodstuffs and supplies.

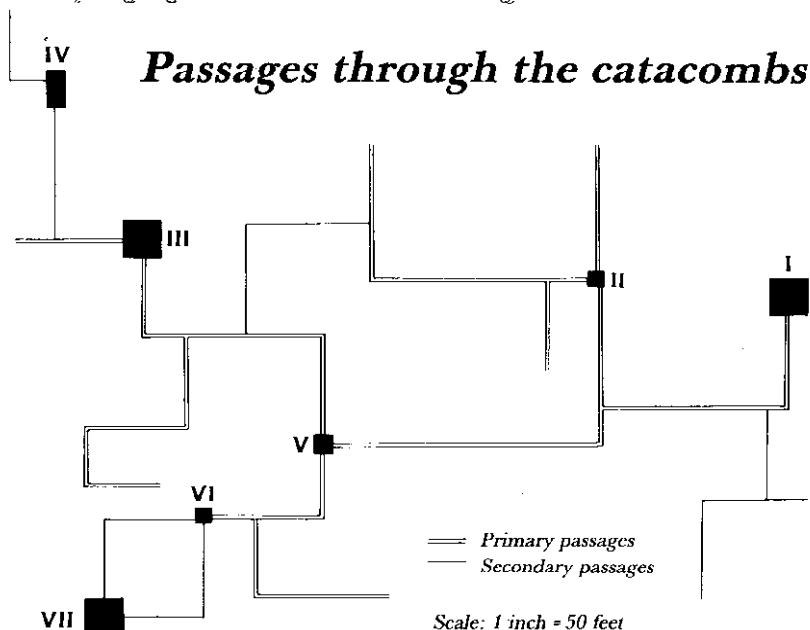
SECTION VI

14: The floor of this room is empty. Each wall is adorned with the sculpture of a demon-like face with its mouth open and tongue sticking out. A sign painted (in an old but readable form of the common tongue) over the portrait on the west wall reads, "Make the gods talk to find the way." If the tongues of the seven portraits are pressed down in clockwise order, starting with the southeast wall, the secret door on the south wall will spring open. The door can otherwise be detected only by magical means (*detect invisibility*, *find traps*, *locate object*, etc.). A very small one-way door that opens from the other side is set into the base of the east wall. It can be detected from this side, and may be smashed or forced open, but will reveal a passageway that is far too small for any humanoid to enter. (See area 15 for more information on this door.)

SECTION VII

15: This room is an abandoned temple. A black altar stretches across the floor of the chamber near the south wall; behind it on the wall is a 30-foot-square bas-relief sculpture of a demon's head. Before the adventurers notice the altar and sculpture, they will already have been spotted by two jermlaines who were standing guard just outside the door to the north and peeking through a hole in it. They will immediately run off to warn any spies they can find in the catacombs that intruders are about. (The jermlaines will take the small, narrow secondary passage leading north and east back toward Section VI and get into that chamber through the one-way door.)

16: This is the place where the Snake Pit makes contact with the jermlaines. If the party is exploring the catacombs at night and if spies #1, #2, and #3 were not encountered and captured or slain inside the abandoned house, these spies will be found here. The room contains one table, five chairs, and a barrel of ale plus drinking cups. A 1-foot-diameter hole leads out of the west wall. This hole connects with the jermlaines' lair, which is home to 30 of the creatures (AC 7; MV 15"; HD 1/2; HP 3 each; #ATT 1; DAM 1-2 or 1-4). Three of them speak and understand common (10%



chance for each particular creature, until three such checks are made successfully). If a character is magically reduced in size or somehow able to enter this small tunnel and the caves beyond, he will locate the jerm-laines' treasure, which consists of 12 rock crystals (50 gp each), 3 zircons (50 gp each), 37 malachites (10 gp each), 2 aquamarines (500 gp each), and 1 emerald (1,000 gp). The visitor(s) to the lair will also find out that the jerm-laines' complex has tunnels that lead into the citadel on Hasding Island, and that almost every room in the citadel can be entered from these tunnels via a mouse hole or a secret door. Jermlaines are very cowardly and will never openly attack a party unless it looks very weak, or if the opposition consists of only one lightly armored character.

17: This is the Snake Pit's treasure room. It has a double-locked iron door, and Klekless Racoba carries the only key. Inside are three locked and trapped chests. If a chest is opened without finding and disarming the trap, a cloud of concentrated gas will be released, causing everyone within the room to **sleep** for 12 hours (save vs. poison at +2 for "only" 6 hours of sleep). The chests contain this treasure: #1, 200 sp and 250 ep; #2, 1,500 gp; #3: 500 gp, 75 pp, and 20 gems worth 50 gp each.

18: This is a cell. Inside is a starved and nearly dead dwarf. He is a 3rd-level fighter, lawful good, currently having 6 HP (normally 24), who was captured two weeks ago

while he was exploring the catacombs. He is still alive only because the spies think (incorrectly) that he has information of use to them.

19: An empty cell.

20: A third cell, this one containing the body of the dwarfs companion, a human who was captured with him. He couldn't stand up under the spies' cruel treatment and died a few days ago.

COUNTER ATTACK

When the Snake Pit discovers there are intruders in the catacombs, they will launch a major attack and try to eliminate the party. This is an intelligent and well-organized gang, and they will have fairly elaborate defensive plans; the DM may use his imagination for specifics. In general, the spies' strategy will be to try to capture one or two characters for interrogation and kill the rest. They will enter the catacombs through the abandoned house three hours after the party is discovered by the jerm-laines in area 15, or three hours after a band of jerm-laines is randomly encountered inside the catacombs. The members of the Snake Pit will fight to the death as long as Klekless Racoba is alive. If he is killed, check morale for the other spies as per the guidelines in the DMG.

The Snake Pit:

Chief: Klekless Racoba (see information and statistics above, in description of build-

ing #21). In addition to his weapons and magic items, Klekless Racoba also wears a gold necklace worth 500 gp and carries the only key to the treasure room (area 17). If he becomes involved in a fight, he will stay in the background, preferring to cast spells. He will save his **wall of ice** spell as a last resort and cast it just before attempting an escape.

Spy #1: A 2nd-level fighter, lawful evil (AC 4; MV 9"; HP 14; #ATT 1, DAM broadsword) with chainmail and shield. He carries 15 gp and an engraved silver bar worth 10 gp.

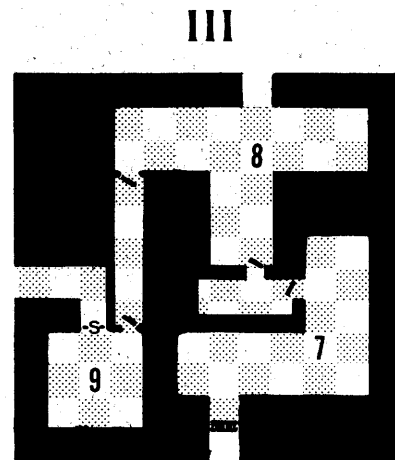
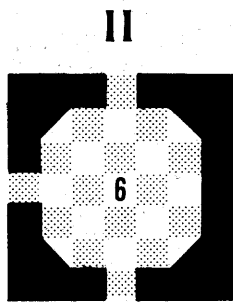
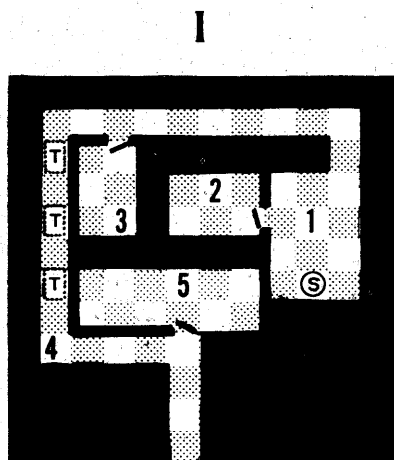
Spy #2: A 2nd-level thief, dexterity 16, neutral evil (AC 6; MV 12"; HP 7; #ATT 2, DAM 2 daggers) with leather armor. He carries an azurite gem worth 10 gp.

Spy #3: A 2nd-level thief, lawful evil (AC 8; MV 12"; HP 10; #ATT 1; DAM long sword) with leather armor. No treasure.

Spy #4: A 2nd-level fighter, strength 17, lawful evil (AC 7; MV 12"; HP 17; #ATT 1; DAM broadsword) with leather armor and shield. He carries 11 sp and 20 ep.

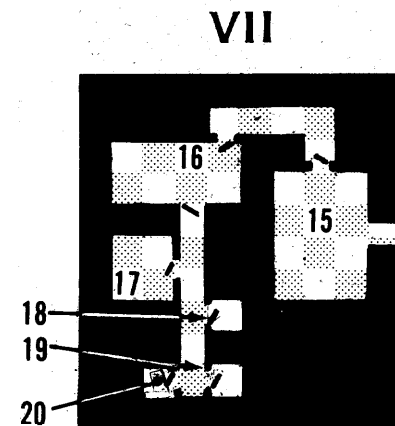
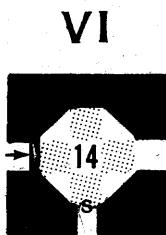
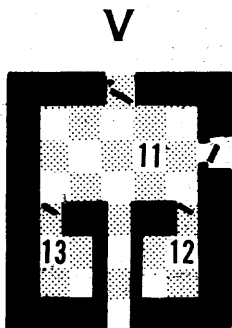
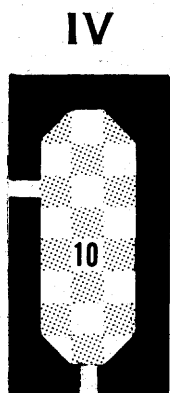
Spy #5: A 4th-level assassin, dexterity 17, lawful evil (AC 4; MV 12"; HP 20; #ATT 1; DAM shortsword +1) with leather armor. He wears a **+1 ring of protection** and carries a golden amulet worth 750 gp.

Spies #6-#18 (all identical): Mercenaries, all O-level men-at-arms, neutral evil (AC 7; MV 12"; HP 4; #ATT 1; DAM broadsword) with leather armor and shield. Each one carries 2-8 sp.



Chambers in the catacombs

Scale: 1 square = 10 feet



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LEOMOND'S TINY AD7

by Lenard Lakofka



New charts, using the '5% principle'

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Foreword

The following material is not official, but is provided for your study and comment. Gary Gygax has said that an expanded combat results table is certainly desirable, so perhaps that part of the following information will eventually be made part of the official rules. However, the suggestions on how to change the experience-point chart are entirely of my own devising.

Restructuring the combat charts

The combat results table in the DMG for fighters can be altered to give a 5% better chance to hit as the character gains each new level of experience, as per the "Special note regarding fighters' progression." The principle outlined in this note can be used

to expand the combat charts for all character classes and monsters, and at the same time to place all of this information on a single chart. I have expanded the charts in this manner, and the result appears below. It shows the combat result tables for each class and all monsters as well. The four small extrapolations I have made from the five charts in the DMG are given hereafter, but they would only affect low-level magic-users, peasants, monsters with only 1 or 2 hit points, and clerics of 19th level or higher. Purists can easily alter this chart to make it exactly conform to the DMG.

This expanded chart will give a character a 5% better chance "to hit" in melee on virtually every level promotion, instead of having to wait for some number of levels to gain a 5%, 10%, or even 15% increase. This chart will also better demonstrate why

the current experience-point award system needs some minor alterations.

To parallel this chart, all of the matrices for saving throws have also been modified accordingly and placed on one chart, as illustrated hereafter. An examination of this chart, too, will bring to light some of the problems in the current experience-point award system.

Notes on the attack matrix:

This combat results table is true to Tables I.A., I.B., I.C., I.D.1., and II on pages 74 and 75 of the DMG, with the following exceptions (these can be changed back to the original form if you so desire):

1. A 1st-level magic-user hits AC 10 on a roll of 12; on the DMG chart, the same character would hit on a roll of 11. The revision makes it tougher for a 1st-level

ATTACK MATRIX FOR ALL CHARACTER CLASSES AND MONSTERS

Monster (HD)	1-2	1-4	1		1+1	1+4	2+4	3+4	4+4	6+4	7+4	8+4	9+4	11+4	13+4	15+4	
	hp	hp	1-1		1+3	2+3	3+3	4+3	6+3	7+3	8+3	9+3	11+3	13+3	15+3	& up	
Fighter (level)	0	M @ A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Cleric (level)			1-2	3	4-5	6	7-8	9	10-11	12	13-14	15	16-17	18	19+		
Thief (level)		1-2	3-4	5	6-7	8	9-10	11-12	13-14	15-16	17-18	19-20	21+				
M-U (level)	1	2-3	4-5	6-7	8-9	10	11-12	13	14-15	16-17	18-20	21+					
Opponent's AC:																	
-10	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	20	20	20	20	20	19	18	17	16
-9	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	20	20	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	15
-8	25	24	23	22	21	20	20	20	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14
-7	24	23	22	21	20	20	20	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13
-6	23	22	21	20	20	20	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12
-5	22	21	20	20	20	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11
-4	21	20	20	20	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10
-3	20	20	20	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9
-2	20	20	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8
-1	20	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7
0	20	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6
1	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5
2	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4
3	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3
4	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
5	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
6	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
7	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1
8	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2
9	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3
10	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4

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magic-user to engage in physical combat and better separates that character from other 1st-level characters who hit AC 10 on a roll of 11 or 10.

2. The man-at-arms is a separate entry on the revised table (ranking between O-level characters and 1st-level fighters), while such characters are not specially accounted for in the DMG. The capability of the true non-combatant (O-level) human is moved down one more notch, so that he hits AC 10 on a roll of 12 instead of 11.

3. Monsters with 1-2 hit points are distinguished from those with 1-4 hit points, making the former 5% less likely to hit.

4. Clerics of 19th level and higher hit AC 10 on a roll of -2, while the book calls for -1.

Notice that the categories for monsters are defined differently than in the DMG; for instance, creatures of 3+4 to 4+3 hit dice are grouped together. This is in accordance with the note under Table II, page 75, saying that "Any plus above +3 equals another hit die."

An all-in-one saving throw matrix

Below is a chart that spells out a suggested set of saving throws for all classes, using slightly different numbers from those given in the DMG matrix, on page 79, for levels (or hit dice) 1 through 15. For instance, a cleric of level 6 or 7 needs an 11 to save against a petrification attack. In the rules, the cleric's save vs. petrification goes

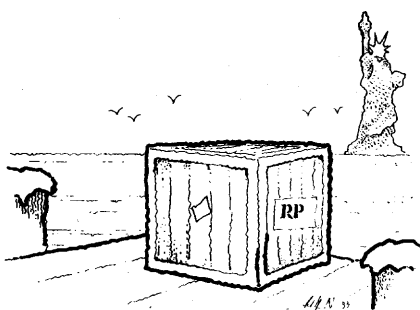
from 12 (at levels 4-6) to 10 (at levels 7-9) without stopping at 11 at all. It seems more logical to have a character's saving throws improve by one-number (5%) increments, just as the character's "to hit" ability increases by 5% at a time in this new system. The two left-hand columns are new, one for 0-level characters and one for monsters of less than one hit die. The numbers given in those columns are simply extrapolated from the saving throws for 1st-level characters, adding one for the "1-1" column and another one for the "0" column. The chart given here is not carried out to levels higher than 15, but an enterprising DM could easily do so by applying the "5% principle."

SAVING THROW MATRIX FOR CHARACTERS AND MONSTERS

	Level (or hit dice) of the character or monster																
	0	1-1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Paralyzation, poison or death magic																	
Clerics	12	11	10	10	10	9	9	8	8	7	7	6	6	6	5	5	5
Fighters	16	15	14	14	13	13	12	11	10	10	9	8	7	6	5	5	4
Magic-users	16	15	14	14	14	14	14	13	13	13	12	12	11	11	11	11	11
Thieves	15	14	13	13	13	13	12	12	12	12	11	11	11	11	10	10	10
Petrification or polymorph																	
Clerics	15	14	13	13	13	12	12	11	11	10	10	9	9	9	8	8	8
Fighters	17	16	15	15	14	14	13	12	11	11	10	9	8	8	7	6	5
Magic-users	15	14	13	13	13	12	12	11	11	11	10	10	9	9	9	8	8
Thieves	14	13	12	12	12	12	11	11	11	11	10	10	10	10	9	9	9
Rod, staff or wand																	
Clerics	16	15	14	14	14	13	13	12	12	11	11	10	10	10	9	9	9
Fighters	18	17	16	16	15	15	14	13	12	12	11	10	9	9	8	7	6
Magic-users	13	12	11	11	11	10	10	9	9	9	8	8	7	7	7	6	6
Thieves	16	15	14	14	14	13	12	12	12	11	10	10	10	9	9	9	9
Breath weapon																	
Clerics	18	17	16	16	16	15	15	14	13	13	13	12	12	12	11	11	11
Fighters	20	19	17	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4
Magic-users	17	16	15	15	15	14	14	13	13	13	12	12	11	11	11	10	10
Thieves	18	17	16	16	16	16	15	15	15	15	14	14	14	14	13	13	13
Spells																	
Clerics	17	16	15	15	15	14	14	13	12	12	12	11	11	11	10	10	10
Fighters	19	18	17	17	16	15	14	14	13	12	11	11	10	9	8	8	7
Magic-users	14	13	12	12	12	11	11	10	10	10	9	9	8	8	8	7	7
Thieves	17	16	15	15	14	14	13	13	12	12	11	11	10	10	9	9	8

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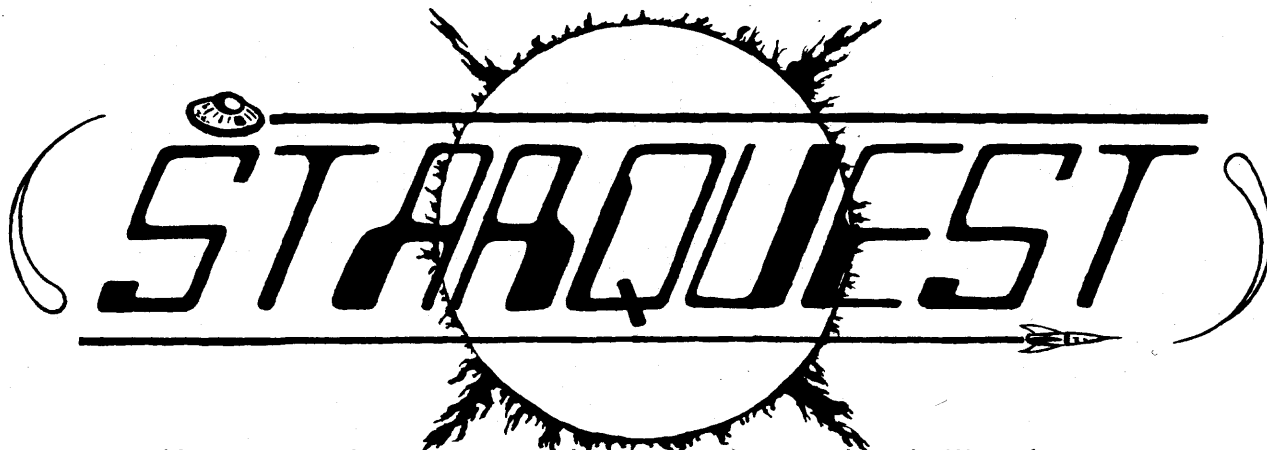


Awarding experience

One of the Dungeon Master's most important functions is to award experience points to the party after an adventure or an evening of play. To do this properly, one must reevaluate the chart on page 85 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide*.

When we look at the experience-point values for monsters given on page 85 of the DMG, we see that monsters are generally grouped in a pattern $x+1$ to y (e.g., 4+1 to 5). This pattern, however, does not properly reflect that a monster's "to hit" probabilities change between 4+3 and 4+4. That is, a 4 HD monster hits on the same number as a 4+3 HD monster does, but a 4+4 HD monster hits as a 5 HD monster.

The rules on saving throws (page 79,



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You and your partners go over what seems like the hundredth set of scanning reports. You're trying to locate the daughter of Bradon Harkman, a VERY wealthy industrialist. Her ship was lost in this area, and he hired YOU rather than turn to his own corporate resources because you specialize in this type of thing, and you're GOOD at it! This is the only habitable planet in the sector, tho it remains uncolonized due to the severely lethal life forms native to it. If Harkman's daughter DID get here in a lifepod, finding where it landed will be the EASY part!!

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DMG) specify that a 4 HD monster (one that is primarily a "fighter" type) saves as a 4th-level fighter, while one with 4+1 to 4+4 hit dice saves as a 5th-level fighter.

These two facts taken together mean that the experience-point award for a certain monster is based more upon that monster's saving throws than upon its ability to fight. That seems like backwards logic.

A simple solution would be to make the combat tables and the saving-throw matrix both progress in the same fashion; i.e., a 3+4 HD to 4+3 HD monster saves as a 4th-level fighter, while a monster of 4+4 to 5+3 HD strikes 5% more often and saves as a 5th-level fighter.

If that becomes the rule, then designing a

new chart for the experience-point value of monsters becomes an easy matter. Following the chart are lists of characteristics and abilities that should be classified as special

or exceptional abilities. Many of the individual listings are taken directly from the DMG; suggested alterations and additions are printed in *italic* type.

EXPERIENCE POINT VALUES OF MONSTERS

Experience level or monster's hit dice	Basic X.P. value (BXPV)	X.P. per hit point (XP/HP)	Special ability X.P. bonus (SAXPB)	Exceptional ability X.P. addition (EAXPA)
1-6 hp	5	1	2	25
1-1 HD (Lvl 0)	7	1	3	30
1 HD (man-at-arms)	10	1	4	35
1+1 to 1+3 HD (Lvl 1)	20	2	8	45
1+4 to 2+3 HD (Lvl 2)	35	3	15	55
2+4 to 3+3 HD (Lvl 3)	60	4	25	65
3+4 to 4+3 HD (Lvl 4)	90	5	40	75
4+4 to 5+3 HD (Lvl 5)	150	6	75	125
5+4 to 6+3 HD (Lvl 6)	225	8	125	175
6+4 to 7+3 HD (Lvl 7)	375	10	175	275
7+4 to 8+3 HD (Lvl 8)	600	12	300	400
8+4 to 9+3 HD (Lvl 9)	900	14	450	600
9+4 to 10+3 HD (Lvl 10)	1100	15	575	725
10+4 to 11+3 HD (Lvl 11)	1300	16	700	850
11+4 to 12+3 HD (Lvl 12)	1550	17	825	1025
12+4 to 13+3 HD (Lvl 13)	1800	18	950	1200
13+4 to 14+3 HD (Lvl 14)	2100	19	1100	1400
14+4 to 15+3 HD (Lvl 15)	2400	20	1250	1600
15+4 to 16+3 HD (Lvl 16)	2700	22	1400	1800
16+4 to 17+3 HD (Lvl 17)	3000	25	1550	2000
17+4 to 18+3 HD (Lvl 18)	3500	27	1825	2250
18+4 to 19+3 HD (Lvl 19)	4000	30	2100	2500
19+4 to 20+3 HD (Lvl 20)	4500	32	2350	2750
20+4 and up (Lvl 21+)	5000	35	2600	3000

Typical special abilities:

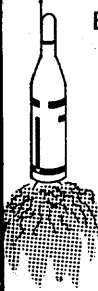
Three or more attacks per round; missile discharge; armor class 0 or lower; special attacks (blood drain, hug, crush, etc.); special defenses (regeneration, hit only by special and/or magic weapons *of +1*); high intelligence which actually affects combat; use of minor (basically defensive) spells; *attack multiple opponents in the same round; immunity or resistance to a particular common attack form (fire, lightning,*

cold); using +1 armor (or any shield); using +1 weapon; using minor offensive/defensive magic item; ability to do more damage than like monsters (or characters) due to exceptional strength (but see below).

Typical exceptional abilities:

Energy level drain; paralysis; poison; major breath weapon; magic resistance; spell use; swallowing whole; *ability to cause weakness; attacks causing maximum damage greater than 20 singly, 24 doubly, 28 trebly or 32 in all combinations possible in 1 round; special purpose weapon; hit only by +2 or better weapon; using protection item (cloak, ring) of +1 to +3.*

This new experience-point chart will give fair awards based on a monster's ability to hit and damage plus its special and exceptional abilities. The awarding of experience points for killing character types (as NPCs) involves very complex calculations. Be sure to award extra experience for magic carried and employed and for the ability to cast more and more powerful spells (due to ability or carried magic); for instance, the spells of a wizard are much more potent than those of an enchanter, and assigning a double exceptional ability would be a good way to reflect this.



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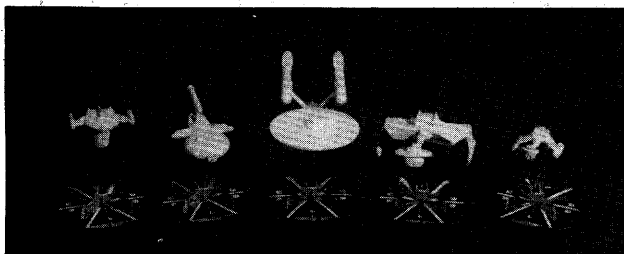
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Dungeon Master Tom Cottone and players Bert Garcia, Anthony Lewis, and Sam

Trapani accomplished what they believe to be a world record when they kept a D&D game going for 100 hours straight over the Labor Day weekend.

The four are members of the Broward Game Players Club in Hollywood, Fla., which sponsored the endurance test as a way of celebrating the club's first anniversary. The event was also a benefit for the Muscular Dystrophy Fund. Although that was a strong incentive, the main motivation was to set a mark that club manager Bill

Crane hopes will qualify for inclusion in the Guinness Book of World Records.

Four players actually began the marathon, but the ranks were reduced by one when Lonnie Volat was forced to drop out four hours after the game began. Although the group had intended to make it through the stretch without losing any members, the others decided to keep going since Lonnie's departure was not voluntary.

In order to qualifying for world-record consideration, everyone in the group had to keep playing continuously. (They took a five-minute break every hour, which by Guinness record standards is permissible during marathon attempts.)

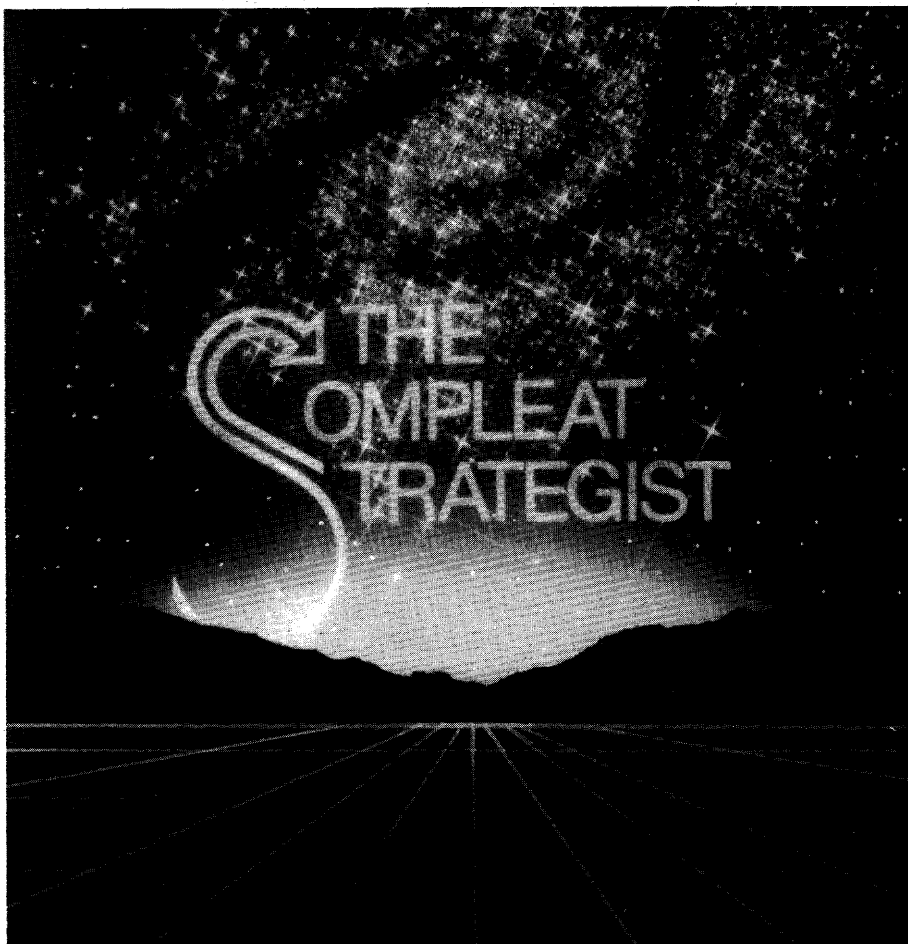
To keep the players' minds active, Cottone put them through a series of four large-scale adventures with a number of smaller scenarios mixed between and among the bigger plots. Most of the time, their enthusiasm was also fueled by the attention of spectators and official witnesses. All of them had enough energy and interest to keep going until 6 p.m. on Labor Day, when they reached the 100-hour mark at the same time that the annual Muscular Dystrophy Telethon ended. The record doesn't show what they did at 6:01 p.m., but it isn't too hard to guess. . . .

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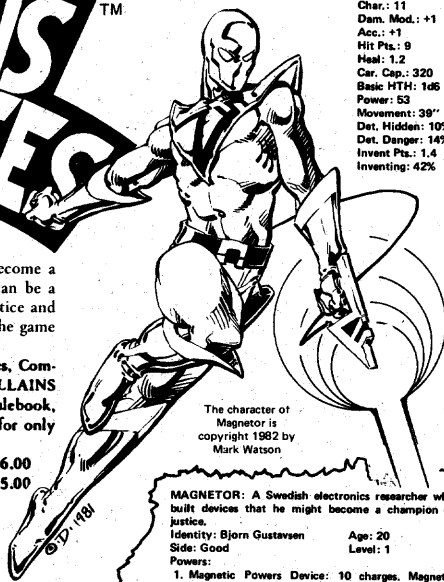
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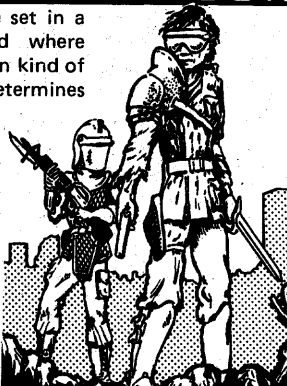


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A set of rules for game reviews

Guidelines for the writers — and the readers

by Ken Rolston

A reviewer of games assumes a great responsibility. Though it is said with some truth that even a negative review will sell more games than no review at all, the impact of a bad review on the career of a game designer and the reputation of a publisher can be very harsh, while a good review can increase sales. When money and reputations hang in the balance, the integrity and professionalism of the reviewer must be above reproach.

Unfortunately, little has been said in print about the standards a reviewer should observe in his work. The purpose of this essay is to open a discussion of reviews and criticism of games, and of the responsibilities incurred by reviewers, editors, and publishers. The essay is directed not only at those who write and print reviews, but at those who read them, on the theory that those who understand the issues involved will be better able to judge the quality and reliability of the reviews they read.

How important are reviews?

Ironically, the delay between the release of a product and the publication of a review is too great to offer purchasing guidance for most readers. For many of the game products in this industry, 50% or more of the product's sales come in the first quarter (three months) after release, and most reviews are not published until at least 3-4 months after a product's release. Most gamers like to get new releases, preferably as soon as they are available. Such purchasers are at the mercy of skillful promotion and advertising. They may have been bombarded with colorful and enticing ads for months in the magazines; compared to inspired advance ad campaigns, a review that appears many months later has predictably a proportionately small impact on the purchasing behaviors of game fans.

In this sense, there is a good case for discounting the importance of reviews. I infer that the relative dearth of articles, essays, and opinion papers published on the subject of game reviews is a result of a pragmatic resignation on the part of most would-be critics and theorists in game reviewing and criticism. After all, why make so much of a fuss if reviews have so little significance?

It would be difficult to compile reliable data on the relationship between reviews and sales, though common sense suggests that reviews must have some effect. Even more intangible is the influence reviews have on the reputations of designers and publishers. There is no way to measure the

dollar value of a reputation, but a gamer is more likely to recognize and purchase a game by a designer or publisher whose products consistently receive good reviews, even to the point of the development of cult followings for the acknowledged leaders in the field. Most important, readers of reviews may receive benefits from reading reviews; if they are patient enough to wait until they've read reviews before they buy games, it may help them to avoid wasting money on turkeys or items that turn out to be something other than what they appeared to be. Further, reviews can inform the reader about the publication of games he will find enjoyable.

These readers are the heart of the matter, and the primary reason why we should consider how to improve the professionalism of game reviewing. Discussions of whether reviews are important or not too often center on the effects of reviews on the game industry; when viewed from the perspective of the individual consumer, the issues are much clearer. To those who read reviews, they are undeniably important. It is to those readers, and the reviewers who care about them, that this essay is directed.

Three types of reviews

The interests of getting a review published promptly are directly in contradiction to the interests of getting a detailed and reliable review. The more thoroughly a game is studied and playtested, the more reliable the critical judgement of the reviewer; but careful, critical reading and playtesting of game rules and supplements takes a great deal of time. There is no such thing as a full-time, professional games reviewer; most reviewers are fans or game designers who do a little reviewing on the side. Many games require hours to learn the rules, then hours to play, and one may only find or recognize a serious flaw in design after half a dozen playings. This may be too much effort to expect of even the most conscientious reviewer.

Role-playing games are particularly difficult, considering the volume of text, complexity of rules, and the need for several playtesters. Further, the enjoyment of these games is greatly dependent on the quality and imagination of the gamesmaster and players. How clearly can a reviewer distinguish between a flawed game and uninspired playtesters?

On the other hand, an experienced gamer develops a feel for a good game which is less dependent on extensive study and playtesting. He can often tell whether a game is a

winner or a stinker just by spending a half-hour examining it. His approach to evaluating a game is less systematic and detailed, but may be just as reliable a method of judging a game's value. Nonetheless, a game designer or publisher might justifiably resent a pronouncement based on such a cursory examination.

To better serve the needs of readers, I suggest three different types of game reviews, each with its own particular objectives and acknowledged limitations:

1.) **The capsule review.** This review comes out as soon after release as possible. It should be very brief (100-1,000 words), making no pretense at exhaustive analysis or playtesting. The reviewer need not apologize for not having spent hours with the game before arriving at his judgement; his function and the limit of his responsibility will be implied by the brevity of his analysis, and should also be stated explicitly in comments at the beginning of his review. This will permit the reviewer to handle a larger number of reviews with a minimum of invested time. His review should primarily address any distinctively new features of the game and consider whether the reader will feel justified in spending his money on the package. The reviewer must be a very experienced gamer, confident enough to "shoot from the hip," with a strong feel for game quality. He should accept the premise that initial impressions may be deceiving, and that he may blow a call from time to time; he must console himself with the fact that he provides prompt and valuable information to a prospective buyer.

2.) **The feature review.** This is a more extended review (1,000-3,000 words) which assumes a greater reviewer responsibility for analysis and playtesting. Ideally the reviewer should have done most of the analysis and playtesting, but he may rely heavily on the comments of others who have also read and played the game. This review would not be expected to be written any earlier than one or two months after the release of the product, when there has been some time to judge the response of purchasers to the product. Such a review would be appropriate only for "important" or "significant" games. (Assessing what is "important" or "significant" is not an exact science, and need not imply good quality. Unhappily, a successful advertising campaign for a terrible game may qualify it as a very important game . . . to be avoided.) Ideally this review will offer commentary into useful strategies, applications, or game variants — subjects of interest to

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the reader that don't fall strictly within the function of a game reviewer, but which are valuable in their own right.

3.) **The critical review.** These detailed and substantial pieces would address the classic masterpieces (and occasionally the classic turkeys) of gaming. They would usually be written by an acknowledged fan or critic — someone thoroughly familiar with the game and its place in the history of game development. For new gamers, these articles would provide necessary background for understanding the current state-of-the-art game, while introducing them to treasures they may have missed. For experienced gamers, such articles might stimulate waves of nostalgia and a desire to pull out that old chestnut and give it a second look. For game professionals, it will consider the question of "what is a good game," and from study of its virtues, and analysis of its limitations, new games and game systems may evolve.

The reviewer and his audiences

As a reviewer prepares his commentary, he should keep in mind the three types of readers he may be addressing. Each has particular interests that should be taken into account in shaping the review. The writer should also keep in mind the background and sophistication of the specific audience of the magazine he is writing for, neither patronizing the readers nor baffling them with unfamiliar and specialized jargon.

1.) For the reader who has already bought the game, the reviewer should help the purchaser to evaluate his own response to the game. Many of us are unclear about our own standards and motivations when we buy a game. We may feel vaguely pleased or ripped off, but it may take another's analysis and verbalization to give us a handle on our real attitude toward a game. For example, I may be initially pleased by the style and flavor of an FRP supplement I have bought, but feel puzzled and disappointed as I notice it gathering dust on the shelf. A reviewer may draw attention to the limited utility of such a package, in spite of its surface qualities that may be attractive, and may enable me to more carefully shop for products that I can use easily in the future.

2.) For the reader who is a prospective purchaser, the reviewer should give guidance on how to get your money's worth. The writer should attempt to counterbalance the impact of hype and advertising, and draw the reader's attention to the difference between substance and appearance. He should particularly inform the reader about superior products from small companies with limited advertising budgets and small distribution networks. I think of this as a sort of "people's lobby," an attempt to encourage publication of quality games by providing publicity and support for companies, based not on the basis of the capital they marshal, but on the quality of the

games they publish. The reviewer should also offer suggestions to the reader on how the usefulness or flexibility of the game may be increased. Particularly with FRP supplements, a product's adaptability to various systems is of particular interest to a reader. Derivative, unoriginal games that are misleadingly marketed as new releases are a specific class of turkeys that a reader must be warned against.

3.) A small but significant portion of the audience addressed by a reviewer is the collection of serious fans and amateur and professional game designers and publishers who are interested in the art and craft of game designing itself. For this audience, the reviewer speaks to acknowledge achievement, encourage improvement, and criticize flaws and faults in game design. Word-of-mouth, sales, comments from peers and competitors are all important sources of feedback to designers and publishers, but formal reviews probably have the greatest impact on reputations when viewed from outside the inner circle of fans and professionals.

Features to assess in a review

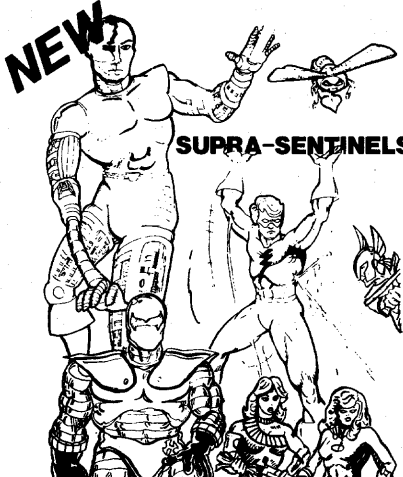
The following is a list of characteristics which should be discussed in a review. Depending on the length and purpose of the review, not all of these features would receive comment. (This list reveals my predominant familiarity with role-playing games; for historical wargames and boardgames there may be important features I have overlooked.)

- 1.) Time and effort necessary to learn.
- 2.) Playability.
- 3.) Presentation (layout and illustration, writing and editing, game design and development).
- 4.) Game quality (originality, effectiveness of simulation, dramatic potential, general effect).
- 5.) Rules quality (completeness, originality, organization for reading and reference, clarity and freedom from ambiguity).
- 6.) Complexity (intentional level of detail — not to be confused with games that are "complex" because they are badly designed or organized).
- 7.) Explicit and implicit applications.
- 8.) Description of contents (in terms of perceived value: Does it seem like a reasonable value in terms of the price?).

Style guidelines for reviewers

1.) The first paragraph (preferably the first sentence) should contain a clear indication of the reviewer's opinion of the game. It should also mention the designer(s), publisher, and cost, and briefly describe the content and purpose of the product. (In-depth and critical reviews, because of their greater length and broader purpose, are less obligated to observe this dictum than the capsule review.)

2.) The final paragraph should summarize the reviewer's opinion and support for that opinion. Any reservation about his judgement (due to his lack of playtesting or



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admitted preconceptions or prejudices) should be stated here. If appropriate, the reviewer may wish to call the reader's attention to other products by the same designer or manufacturer.

3.) The length and detail of a review ought to be some indication of the significance of the product. A review of 500 words should not be sufficient to discuss a new role-playing system; neither should 3,000 words be needed to discuss a routine game supplement.

4.) That a reviewer has read a game ought to be taken for granted. That he has playtested the game in many cases may be less than obvious. If a reviewer omits mention of his playtesting, it may be inferred that he has not playtested the game. If the game has been played more than once, that fact ought to be mentioned. If a reviewer is unwilling to admit in a review that he has not playtested the game, he shouldn't be reviewing the game.

5.) Too much style and ego-tripping will certainly interfere with the quality of a writer's commentary, but considering the work and responsibility he assumes; and the relatively small reward he can expect, it is fair to indulge him somewhat in these matters. If a reviewer can be entertaining and still perform his primary functions, all the better, but entertainment is not a necessary feature.

6.) Unless the target is undeniably deserving, ridicule and derision are inappropriate critical modes. No matter how appalling a product, there are equally effective alternatives to spitting and invective. (I must confess to a fondness for satire and irony, but the emotional responses they evoke may obscure the critical purposes of the review.)

7.) Never underestimate the fan's innocent ignorance or his willingness to be instructed.

Editor and publisher responsibilities

Ultimately, the editor and publisher is responsible for judging the professional qualifications and performance of a reviewer. It is the editor and the publisher who must decide whether a review will be published. These persons must be very careful to screen all reviews to the best of their ability. They should solicit reviews whenever possible from those who have established their credentials as reliable reviewers. Unsolicited reviews must be judged on their own merits, and should receive close scrutiny by the editor until he is satisfied with the reviewer's reliability.

An editor has no responsibility to review a game just because he is sent a free copy. He must make the practical decisions about how much space will be devoted to reviews, and what products ought to be reviewed in that limited space. There are many more games published than can be reviewed in a single magazine. It is the editor's responsibility to decide which materials are important enough to be reviewed. He is also responsible for specifically soliciting and

assigning reviews for more important releases; he must therefore keep current his knowledge of new products as they reach the market. An editor should also publish designer's or manufacturer's rebuttals and corrections to reviews when they are reasonable in their statements and length. These designer and publisher responses deserve respect and publication, even though they are inevitably self-serving. They are an important form of feedback to readers, editors, and publishers concerning the reliability and accuracy of their reviewers.

An editor is ultimately responsible for the quality of the reviews in his magazine, but it is very difficult to judge the accuracy and reliability of a reviewer without feedback from readers. If a reviewer writes clean, reasonable, literate copy, it may get past an editor even if it is blatantly inaccurate and unfair. It is the reader's responsibility to help an editor judge the quality and usefulness of a reviewer.

Examples to support opinions

Because of the limited space allotted to most reviews, particularly in a capsule review, there are practical reasons for not supplying detailed support for statements of opinion. One or two examples will usually be sufficient to illustrate the virtues or weaknesses of a game. A review is a value judgement; the reviewer must not get caught in the trap of believing his judgement to be a simple matter of fact and logic. I have seen extensive, closely reasoned rebuttals of reviews from game designers and manufacturers to support conclusions directly contrary to those of the reviewer. The point is not the facts or the logic, but the interpretation made by the reviewer, and though a reviewer's judgement must be ultimately rooted in fact and logic, it cannot thereby be irrefutably established.

Final notes to readers

Readers: Remember that reviews are no substitute for the other important methods of evaluating games. And these are:

1.) Examine the contents of the booklets and boxes. Go to your game store or local game convention and look through the package before you buy. Don't grab the game with the flashy cover and the humdrum contents. Don't succumb to the shrink-wrap intimidation device; if the only way the merchandiser can sell a game is sight-unseen, you may have good reason to wonder about the quality of the game.

2.) Play the game first. Go to a demonstration at a store or a convention, or borrow your friend's copy.

3.) Check the other informal "reviewing services" — word-of-mouth and fanzines. Buttonhole people in the stores or at conventions and inquire politely about their opinion of the game.

4.) Don't let your money burn a hole in your pocket. (Unless you have enough to burn, and you enjoy burning it, which I freely admit is a lot of fun.) Rarely do you really need to have that game or supple-

ment as soon as it's published. Too often we submit too easily to the lust for ownership; instead, cultivate a lust for quality and utility, even if you aren't the first one on the block to own the product.

The skeptical reader

Finally, the reader must take each review with a grain of salt. Carefully separate statements of fact from statements of opinion. Make sure that statements of opinion are supported with at least some examples. For instance, a comment that a product is "badly written" is useless unless the reviewer makes it clear what he means by using examples. Less weight should be given to reviews that predominantly express general opinions without supplying supporting description or analysis. More weight should be given to a review which shows evidence of careful playtesting; many games only reveal their virtues (and surmount their flaws) under regular play conditions. The more familiar you become with the style of a specific reviewer, the more useful he will be in helping you evaluate a product's value. Over a series of reviews it is easier to determine accurately what the reviewer's tastes and standards are, and you will have more opportunity to compare them with your own tastes and standards.

(Author's note: My sincere thanks to Bill Herdle and Bill Watkins for their helpful suggestions and criticisms as I developed this essay.)

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A really time-consuming game

TIMESHIP is an open-ended, loosely structured role-playing game that permits players to seek adventure in the historic past or the imaginary future. Despite its weaknesses in game design, it is original and imaginative, and perfect for an evening of light entertainment. Published by Yaquinto for \$12.00, the package contains a 48-page combination rulebook and adventure pack, a referee's screen printed with rule references, a pad of about 50 player character sheets, a group of maps and illustrations for the adventures, and two percentile dice.

The idea of one set of FRP rules covering adventures in the mists of prehistory, the amply and not-so-amply documented periods of man's history, and the endless possibilities of the science-fictional future is a very attractive concept, and long overdue on the market. Further, this game permits a player to journey in his own persona. He can be himself, modern man, set loose on the time stream by a marvelous device. Such is the stuff of thousands of daydreams and fantasy adventure stories.

FRP gamers have come to expect complicated and comprehensive rules. This game eagerly advocates replacing all those pages of charts and labyrinthine game mechanics with the common sense and practical judge-

ment of the referee and the players. The intent is to make FRP gaming accessible to those impatient with the intimidating rules volumes, and to put the adventuring back in the hands of the referee and players.

The great virtue of **Timeship** is its simplicity and appeal to common sense. A game of such scope would be impossible without it. Players roll dice for their Personal Energy allowances for each adventure. The sum of the Personal Energies of the players on that adventure is the Group Energy. Group Energy must be expended to open the Gateways to the period of the time adventure. Personal or Group Energy must also be expended to ship supplies and equipment through the Gateway. Group Energy can also be transformed into Personal Energy once the party reaches the selected time period.

This Group Energy provision is the mechanic by which the gamesmaster controls what players can carry with them into the past or future. Each Gateway has an energy requirement set for transport to the appropriate time period; whatever energy is left over is available for transport. Each item has a transport cost in Personal or Group Energy. In general, the more anachronistic and powerful the item, the more expensive it is to transport. For example, you can bring a bazooka or a submachine gun to the Middle Ages, but only at a cost of one player's entire allotment of Personal Energy.

The mechanics of combat, healing, and movement are extremely simple. Characters are surprisingly durable: A severed head is not necessarily fatal, nor will it cause unconsciousness or loss of mental functions. The rules also provide for shapechanging at the cost of Personal Energy — necessary to permit visiting certain settings without being conspicuous. There is a provision for Wild Talents — the occasional incidence of psychic powers; how common these Wild Talents are, and how they work, is pretty much up to the referee (the "Timelord").

The term used locally to describe the level of sophistication of the mechanics of **Timeship** is "goofyworld," a generally positive term suggesting wild and crazy action, with fast-and-loose judgements left pretty much in the hands of the referee, under the assumption that there is little competitive pressure and that the referee is basically out to show the players a good time. In this context, **Timeship's** mechanics are clever and simple, yet at the same time they provide the necessary minimum limitations on what the players can do.

However, I have some reservations about the style of presentation for the rules. Herbie Brennan has tried hard to create a sense of presence and atmosphere for the game, maintaining the fiction that this is not a game at all, but a powerful ritual discovered in ancient scrolls; this effort seems strained at times. What Brennan intends as a humorous and informal tone is often irritatingly cute and self-indulgent, and the rules of play themselves are difficult to read and reference because of the idiosyncratic style. On the other hand, Brennan's suggestions to the referee for running the adventures with common sense and personal judgement are exceptionally lucid and well-spoken. The reader should restrain any initial impatience at auctorial excesses and give the rules a complete reading before making judgement.

The rationales for some of the arbitrary rules restrictions were annoyingly weak. This is not to imply that any other rules system is less arbitrary or more poorly rationalized, but in a game with a real-world context, where the trappings of the experimental universe are often close at hand, the irrationality stands out in higher relief. A further annoyance is the fact that some of the rules printed on the Timelord's screen are not discussed in the rules text; there are not even references in the text to the appropriate sections of the screen. This is symptomatic of a less-than-careful rules organization, a fault in game design not

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excused by the flexible philosophy toward game mechanics.

Three introductory adventures are provided with the game. The first, "Murder at the End of Time," is pretty silly, though it is certainly imaginative, providing encounters with simulacra of Dracula, Little Red Riding Hood, and Don Giuseppe Cagliani.

The second adventure, "The Destruction of Gomorrah," is a charming tour of Sin City, complete with naked couples in the bushes and live sacrifices of young girls to the god Moloch. The players can free the slaves and sacrificial victims, and even find and deactivate the device that eventually destroys Gomorrah. This adventure will not please members of the Legion of Decency, but publishing such a product is an unusual venture in a market generally characterized by self-censorship in the interests of delicate and immature sensibilities.

The third adventure, "Assassinate the Fuhrer!" is the most detailed and credible, requiring the time travelers to locate the

bunker where Hitler is hiding and to ensure his timely demise. The background of Berlin in the last days of the war is portrayed through random encounters with Nazis and innocent citizens; the backdrop contains bombed-out buildings, refugees fleeing the city, and a constant rain of Allied bombs and shell-fire. Conspicuously missing from all the adventures are bibliographies of selected references on the historical periods. With the scarcity of detail in the scenario backgrounds, many Timelords will wish they had other suggested sources for information.

Whatever reservations I might have had originally about *Timeship* were dispelled when I playtested the game with our local weekly gaming circle. I don't believe I've seen FRP gamers have so much fun in years. Everyone was quite enthusiastic about the concept of the game, and the players were quite willing to overlook any faults in the rules, content to apply common sense whenever the game system broke

down over an unanticipated issue. As a gamesmaster, I was surprised at how smoothly the session ran, despite my original impression that the encounter descriptions in Brennan's scenario were not very detailed.

Timeship is a reasonable value for several reasons. First, it is a distinctive example of simpler, rather than more complex, FRP game mechanics. Second, the central idea of the game, time travel, is marvelously fertile soil for FRP gaming, and this is the first game to attempt to cultivate it. Finally, I believe this game may be more accessible to those not already addicted to games; the simplicity of the mechanics may permit fast-paced play that avoids games-jargon and tiresome rules references. It is nowhere near a perfect game — the organization of the rules is confusing and the style is occasionally unpalatable — but the flexibility inherent in its design philosophy makes its limitations easier to tolerate.

— Reviewed by Ken Rolston

Illuminati: It's a conspiracy!

"... It's all so simple, don't you see. *The Society of Assassins (no, the real Assassins, the Hasheesheen of old) controls the South American Nazis, the C. I. A. (which itself runs the Trilateral Commission), the Pentagon, and the Mafia (who control the Nuclear Power Companies).* Now, they're up against the Gnomes of Zurich, who control the Tobacco and Liquor Companies, the Preppies, the Video Games, and the International Cocaine Smugglers. Through the Smugglers they also control California and the I.R.S. Nobody knows what the UFO's want, but we know they control the Flat Earthers, the Joggers, the Underground Newspapers (and through them the Antiwar Activists), and Madison Avenue (which controls the Punk Rockers). All of these are under constant attack by minions of the Servants of Cthulhu. The Servants rule the F.B.I. (which controls the Post Office, which runs the Morticians), the Trekkies, the Libertarians, and the Moonies (and of course the Moonies control the Goldfish Fanciers) . . ."

Of course! It's all so simple . . . Waitaminnit! The Servants of Cthulhu control the Moonies, who dominate the Goldfish Fanciers?!? What *is* this, some kind of elaborate plot????

Of course it is; isn't everything? **ILLUMINATI**, from Steve Jackson Games (and designed by Mr. Jackson), is the ultimate game of paranoia and conspiracies. Especially with the two Expansion Sets, the player is linked into every wild-eyed theory ever spawned by persecutees of the Left, Right, and Radical Middle: including those conspiracies which one has reason to fear are all too real. Each player (up to a recommended maximum of six, although eight or even more are theoreti-

cally possible) represents a secret cabal of anonymous (they may not even be of this world) conspirators who plot to *rule the world!* by various devious means involving the control, manipulation, and/or destruc-

tion of other conspiracies and their unwitting pawns.

The game mechanics are fairly simple. Each group of Illuminati can control up to 4 other groups, who in turn can control from

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0 to 3 further groups, in a chain theoretically limited only by the skill (and luck) of the player. During his turn, each player garners the income of controlled groups, then may choose to transfer monies, change chains of command, and/or attack. An attack may be in the form of an attempt to seize control of an organization and those it controls (whether that organization is neutral or an opposition-controlled group), to neutralize an opposition puppet, or to annihilate a group.

The essence of the game is the struggle to control, both directly and indirectly, the various organizations, regions, and power blocs which make up the game universe. Each of the Illuminati groups can win simply by controlling enough lesser groups; **lesser** groups in this context include the International Communist Conspiracy, the C.I.A., the Pentagon, the Federal Reserve, the Mafia, the U.N., and the Multinational Oil Companies. In addition, each band of Illuminated Ones has its own hidden agenda: The Gnomes of Zurich want to accumulate money; the Discordians seek to control Weird groups; the Servants of Cthulhu wish only to destroy groups, great or small; the Bavarian Illuminati strive for raw power; and so on.

Complications are introduced by the fact that the lesser groups, though they are being manipulated and used by all of the Illuminati, are chiefly concerned with their own purposes and goals, and have their

own alignments. Thus, while one **could** control the Semiconscious Liberation Army through the Fred Birch Society, it would be easier to use the Clone Arrangers or even the Mafia for the same purpose. Many of the lesser groups have their own special traits; for instance, controlling Science Fiction Fans gives you a bonus for controlling other Weird groups, while if you control the Phone Phreaks you have a bonus for doing **anything** to the Phone Company.

As to the groups included and their designations, it is probably pointless to quibble, but the absence of mention of black, Hispanic, and other ethnic blocs is startling, and the caricatures of "Feminists" and (far worse) "Hairdressers & Interior Decorators" are both stereotyped and offensive.

What Jackson and crew have created here is one of those games whose mechanics are fairly easily mastered, so that we can then enjoy the infinite variations of interactions among players. The rules have provisions for agreements (and their violation); for shared victories; for bribery; extortion; and all the other joys of life in the so-called "real world." The Expansion Sets each give you a new Illuminati group, several new lesser groups, and further "evil Play techniques." The first also gives you a membership card in the original Bavarian Illuminati, while the second set comes with an "I've Been Illuminated" button.

In general the physical parts are well done (although the cut-them-out-yourself

money chits are time-wasters), but after only three openings and two closings the hinge on my Expansion Set 2 box has already broken! Since the Expansion Sets were not meant to stand alone, the consumer might have been better served if SJC had put them in some sort of plastic bag and priced them each somewhat less than the full cost of the game itself; or else put them both into a single kit, boxed or in a bag, at a lesser price. (I carry all the cards, money chits, instruction sheets, ID card, and two six-sided dice, in just the original game's box.) The artwork, primarily the highly impressive cover paintings for each box by David Martin, is a pleasure to behold.

I think Jackson has a definite potential classic here, and one which, properly marketed, could appeal to folks who will never play a wargame in their lives. I played a game with a local political office holder, who beat me in seven turns and then scurried off immediately to buy a copy of it. As for the Expansion Sets, I would advise you to wait and see how you like the game itself before shelling out all that extra cash; you may decide it's worth it, or maybe not.

(You realize, of course, that I would never have written this review if the Secret Masters of Fandom had not threatened to unleash the Corflu Cultists . . . NO! NO! NOT THAT! . . . ka-chunk, ka-chunk, ka-chunk, ka-chunk . . .)

— Reviewed by Michael Lowrey

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Yo, ho, ho, Horatio!

PRIVATEERS AND GENTLEMEN is a combination of tactical miniatures rules and role-playing game for the age of Fighting Sail, the age of the historical Admiral Horatio Nelson and of C. S. Forester's fictional Horatio Hornblower. The sense of adventure in the sailing ship combat and the role-playing opportunities derives directly from the ample historical and fictional literature covering this period. The enthusiasm for historical detail illuminates this game as it does the literature that inspires it. The rules systems strive for a sense of dramatic realism, though the designer, Jon Williams, explicitly chose simplicity and playability as his ultimate goals.

The rules are not particularly well-presented or well-organized. Reading them and playing them in the playtest of the miniatures rules was frustrating at times, though the energy and drama of the game was strong enough to overcome the greater share of my discomfort.

Ambiguities, difficulty of reference, and disorganized presentation of procedures will be noted by students of game design, though the strengths of Williams' material, research, and writing ability compensates for these formal flaws.

The power of the game is its sense of action, drama, and history. I found it fascinating reading with its detailed discussion of the social and political setting. The miniatures system is fast-paced and exciting. The tense strategic maneuvering for a sailing advantage, holding your first broadside for maximum effect, the exchanges of broadsides, the shattered hulls, the crew casualties, the desperate withdrawal of the battered loser — I was drawn completely into the fantasy. The conflicts are on a human scale — one ship against another — and the setting is limited enough to permit emphasis on an atmosphere of historical details. A reading of the rules makes it clear that Williams knows a great deal about his subject, and it is worth noting that the fiction writers in this genre often are histori-

cal experts in the period; the dedication to the drama of history is a solid foundation. for the fictional fantasies that form the backdrop of this game.

The role-playing system closely resembles the *RuneQuest* fantasy system with its character skills and deadly combat system with attack, parry, and hit location. Healing is not a likely prospect for the wounded, however; Williams has chosen the grim and historically accurate likelihood that an injured seaman or officer will die or end up a hopeless cripple.

Players take the roles of officers. There is no need to create long lists of NPCs, since the actions of the crew are generally abstracted. When a PC takes part in a boarding action, the referee can simply roll on a chart of likely opponents. This will require some quick improvisation of NPC stats, but eliminates the tedium of extensive referee preparation.

Both the miniatures and role-playing rules are marred by the lack of scenarios — a surprising omission in the case of the miniatures rules, where a series of interesting historical engagements would have been particularly welcome. The lack of a scenario is even more unfortunate in the case of the role-playing game; the referee must develop his own adventures without a model of materials organization or preparation. The inclusion of at least a brief introductory adventure should be a feature of any new role-playing system. Though I did go through the process of creating a character with little difficulty, the absence of a scenario discouraged me from playtesting most of the role-playing systems. The mixture of tactical combat rules, campaign systems, and character combat systems seemed appealing, though the same disorganized game design problems that cropped up in the miniatures rules are evident in the role-playing booklets. One specific feature I recommend is the section on Cardboard Characters; Williams, a fiction writer and experienced characterization technician, has

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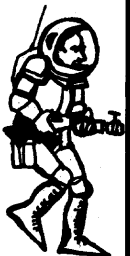
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developed a lovely pair of charts which I frequently use when playing with other game systems.

Fans of sailing-ship fiction and those interested in historical role-playing games will be very happy with this game. It sacrifices detail of simulation for action and drama, but the tradeoff still retains a strong atmosphere with an effective mixture of heroic romanticism and grim realism. Because of the occasionally puzzling rules presentation, some patience and common sense will be required.

Good historical games often have problems of organization when they struggle to provide a broad range of systems designed

to handle numerous "atmospheric" details that are important for a complete setting, though they may have relatively little importance in the resolution of most scenarios. Since the atmosphere of *Privateers and Gentlemen* is a prime virtue, historical gamers will probably overlook the less-than-perfect rules presentation.

Privateers and Gentlemen is published by Fantasy Games Unlimited. It contains three booklets: "Heart of Oak" (the miniatures rules, 40 pages plus 8 pages of referenced tables and ship cut-outs), "Promotions and Prizes," and "Tradition of Victory" (the role-playing systems, 32 pages apiece), a 6-page referee screen with reference charts,

and a character sheet. For \$17, the product will give pleasure and value. Its great strength is Williams' writing. He has great respect for the historical period and communicates it effectively with humor and enthusiasm. He has an effective sense of character, setting, and drama, and both the miniatures rules and the role-playing systems reflect these virtues. The presentation and organization of the rules is unremarkable, and the lack of miniatures and role-playing scenarios is a disappointing oversight, but on balance, I am very happy with it, and I'm sure that many others will be similarly pleased.

— Reviewed by Ken Rolston

Man, Myth & Magic is a miss

MAN, MYTH & MAGIC is a disappointing fantasy role-playing system intended to be used with the settings of historical Earth over a 5,000-year period starting at 4000 B.C. Despite an effort to appeal to novice gamers and an emphasis on atmosphere and drama in the adventures, the poor game design and wordy style make the game unpleasant reading, comparing unfavorably with most other published FRP game systems. The scenarios depend a great deal on the gamesmaster leading players by the nose along the given narrative line, and as gaming aids their presentation is not up to industry standards.

This is not a role-playing historical simulation game; it makes no claim to be. There has been a market for boardgame simulations of history for many years, and using historical Earth as the background of this game seems to be a good idea, but there is little attempt to stick to historical or plausible events in the systems or scenarios — it is truly a fantasy role-playing game. For example, a player party might be composed of an African witch-doctor, a Greek Sybil, and an Oriental shaman. Further, since the player characters' nationality and character class are initially determined completely at random, the likelihood of a historically implausible party composition is very great. Anyone who mistakenly buys the game expecting historical accuracy or simulation will be disappointed. It is not that there is no history at all in the game; to the contrary, there is a great deal of historically accurate material about the men, myths, and magicks of ancient Earth. The problem is that there are too many distracting anachronisms and fabrications (like a tyrannosaurus in Rome) to take the historical material seriously. Further, the scenarios emphasize the magical and fabulous at the expense of the realistic — it is, after all, a fantasy system.

The fantasy, unfortunately, doesn't work. Most role-playing games come from literary adventure genre models, and there is no

such foundation for this game. I can't think of any fantasy-adventure fiction which features a party of gladiators, leprechauns, and druids on a quest. This is not to say that it is impossible, just that it hasn't caught the popular imagination in same way that fantasy and science fiction (the roots of the two major FRP game genres) are established imaginative backgrounds for adventures. I have no idea where one would find material to base a campaign on. There are plenty of interesting historical settings, but what would a Hebrew priest, a British apothecary, and an Egyptian warrior be doing together in the first place? Some features of the game system are remarkably unreasonable; for example, certain spells are common to all character classes that have magic as one of their abilities, regardless of their cultural or occupational background. Every magic user can find any gold pieces within 50 yards, can detect falsehood in any one given statement, become invisible, or cast a magic web. This is all in fun, and presumably supposed to give the players ample powers to play with, but it is going to play havoc with anyone trying to create a coherent setting based on a historical or legendary earthly setting. Further, the magic system is completely unsystematic; there is no suggestion of its rationale or mechanics. This is not fertile soil for logical, self-consistent fantasy campaigning.

Herbie Brennan, the game's designer, has extensive credits as a writer and expert on the occult, and this is reflected in many aspects of the systems and scenarios, but it apparently has not prepared him for game design. *Man, Myth, & Magic* is a first-generation system, having learned little from the flaws and strengths of other FRP games. Brennan has published short fiction in first-rate SF magazines, but he is apparently not skilled in FRP scenario design. The style of the rules booklets and scenarios is wordy and disorganized. Those who expect clear and concise rule presentation will find the game's style irritating and

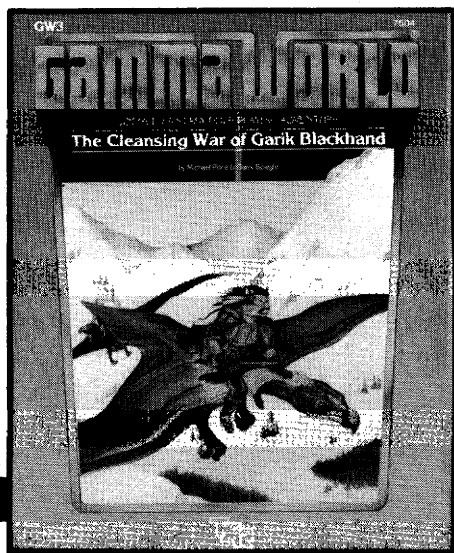
unprofessional. Brennan seems to have insight into the art of gamesmastering; the best section of the rules is "The Function of the Loremaster," full of practical and intelligent guidelines for FRP gamesmasters. Unfortunately, that insight is not successfully translated into useful game systems or scenarios in *Man, Myth, & Magic*.

A detailed comparison of the game and the scenarios with other FRP games on the market would be overkill. I have read and played more than fifteen different role-playing game systems, and I've found no other system as disappointing. I did not enjoy reading the rules or the scenarios, and I never felt tempted to playtest the game with my local circle. I know of no other local gamers who use the system, and I could not even find a scheduled game at any of the three major summer game conventions. In fairness, I suspect that a skilled gamesmaster could make the rule system and scenarios work; I simply found the design and presentation so unattractive that I couldn't develop any enthusiasm for the game.

I cannot even recommend the game as an ambitious failure — there is little new or unconventional in the systems or design. The scenarios are unusual and distinctive, and may be worth looking at for that reason, though I feel that they are poorly organized and verbose, not up to industry standards. The idea of a historical role-playing game is good, but does not seem to be the idea of *Man, Myth, & Magic*, and in any case the execution of the concept is unimpressive. The game, published by Yaquinto for \$19, contains three booklets: "Basic Rules," "Advanced Rules," and "Adventure Booklet," and also contains a number of prepared maps, a supply of character sheets, and two percentile dice. I strongly recommend that the game be carefully examined by any prospective buyer; there is a good chance that the purchase will be a disappointing one.

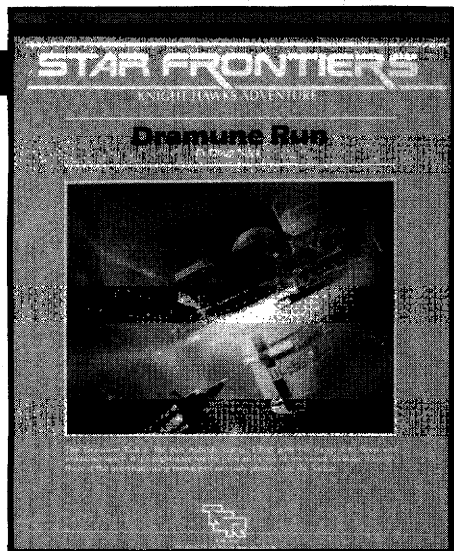
— Reviewed by Ken Rolston

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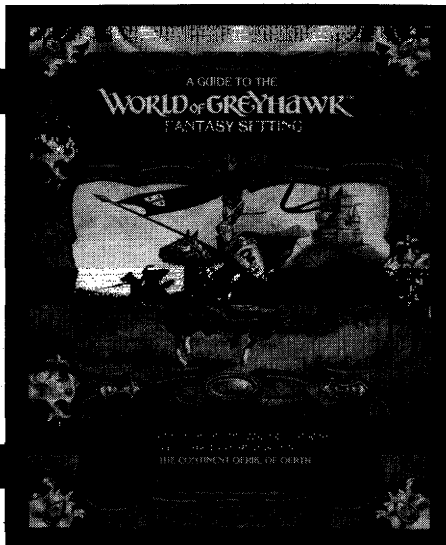
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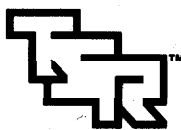
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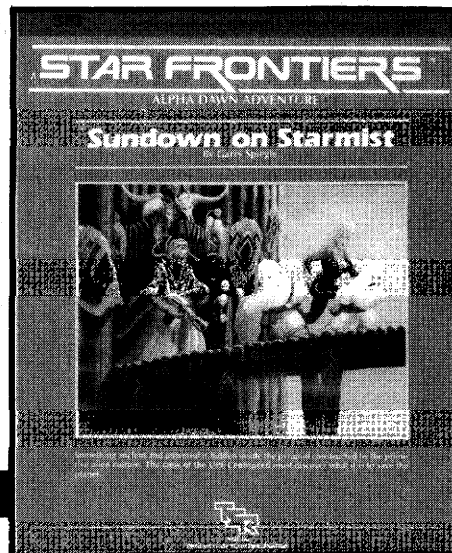


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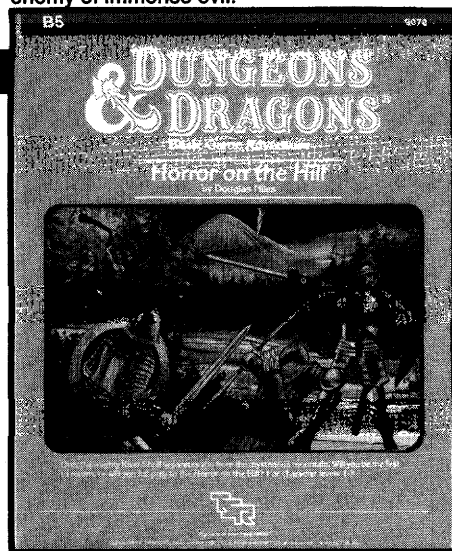


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Sundown at Starmist **By: Garry Spiegle**

On the primitive planet Starmist, an adventurer finds an artifact of a higher civilization. The crew of an exploratory vessel must discover the source of the ancient artifact. In doing so, they uncover an enemy who threatens to destroy not only them, but Starmist and the UPF as well. They must use alien artifacts to combat and destroy a hidden enemy of immense evil.



Horror on the Hill **By: Douglas Niles**

What lives on the mysterious and distant hill beyond the river? No one knows. Rumors say a powerful and evil witch lives there—but no living adventurer has ever returned to confirm or deny that story. Only the river separates you from the answer—do you really want to know it?

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Gift ideas for the holiday season

Reviewed by Chris Henderson

As Christmas time approaches, it's only appropriate that I discuss those new books or reprints which are worth purchasing and those which are not. This way, shopping for that right gift book for a family member or friend becomes a whole lot easier.

THE ANUBIS GATES

Tim Powers

Ace Books \$2.95 0-441-02380-0

One of the best books to appear on the shelves this year is *The Anubis Gates* by that relative newcomer Tim Powers. This book is full of freshness; Powers' style is so enjoyable that it becomes intoxicating. The inventive means by which he explains time travel, or the complicated twists he adds to almost every character, may be the cause of the book's intense appeal.

During this decade, a method of time travel is discovered. Certain time fields become linked with other fields due to the disruption of the time fabric. These links create holes in the time continuum, creating a pattern branching from a central focal point throughout the stream of time. A businessman discovers the linkage of these time fields and proposes to take a group of scholars back in time to listen to the poet

Samuel Coleridge for a price of one million dollars apiece. This feat is accomplished, apparently without incident, and the scholars return to the present.

At this point, it would seem that the book should end. However, as things never are as they appear, an unexpected occurrence does take place: one of the Coleridge party is kidnapped. A group of sorcerers, who wanted to bring back the gods of ancient Egypt to the present, are responsible for the kidnapping. The sorcerers were watching and waiting for someone to pass through one of the time-field holes; when they encountered a member of the Coleridge party, and not an Egyptian god as they hoped, they knew their attempt had failed.

In addition, the businessman and his henchmen purposely remain in the past. Wanting to take control of the world and desiring to remain immortal, the businessman contemplates his plans for world domination. However, success can only occur when he finds a creature known as Dog-Face Joe — a creature killed more than once, and also sought by the sorcerers.

Besides the fascinating plotline, Powers has added another interesting element: several historical personalities. Coleridge and Lord Byron are so accurately portrayed that the reader begins to wonder which characters are real, which events actually happened. Using the diaries and letters of the two poets, Powers has created a remarkable background for his novel.

The Anubis Gates is one of those rare books — a solid, mainstream fantasy novel. So if there's a fantasy lover in your family or among your acquaintances, purchase this novel as a gift.

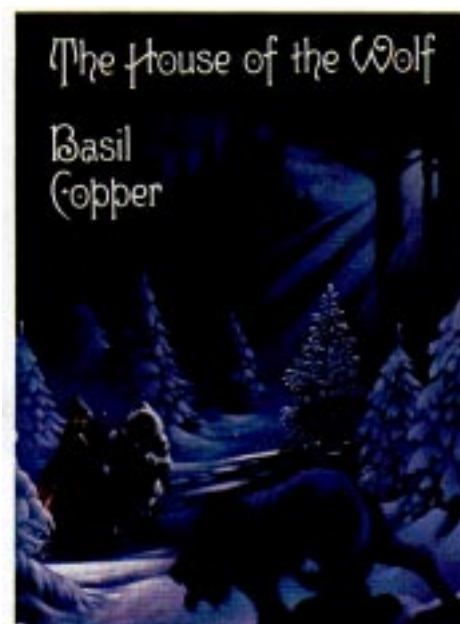
THE HOUSE OF WOLF

Basil Copper

Arkham House \$14.95 0-87054-095-5

Basil Copper has accomplished the near impossible: he has written a new, almost fresh, werewolf story. Though *The House of Wolfowes* a lot to the dozens of lupine novels that have gone before it, there is something unique about this book which puts it in a class by itself.

The House of Wolf has all the right elements: the rich, progressive Count, who protects his peasants while trying to enrich their lives; the vivacious, beautiful women; the old woman who seems to know more than she'll tell; gypsies, complete with carnival and performing bear; a convention of men of science; the murder; the strutting chief of police; and just about every other



possible cliché. Though these characters may appear trite, Copper depicts them in such a fashion that they appear fresh and stimulating. Copper forces his characters not to see the truth, denying evidence simply because it disturbs their preconceived notions of what can and cannot be. As you and I would, Copper's characters examine every angle, trying their best to disprove the existence of werewolves. Such attempts give these characters an air of realism.

In addition, Copper depicts the setting of his novel in such a way that the spirit of the time is conveyed with remarkable clarity. He paints his world with the true flavor of the back regions of Europe, detailing the peasants as accurately as he does the aristocrats. No small point escapes his eye.

On top of all this, Copper spins a first-rate mystery yarn. Who, or what, is stalking the Count's conference is not readily deciphered. Many suspects come and go before the truth is unraveled.

Besides the story's content, a number of fine black-and-white illustrations by Stephen Fabian enhance the quality of the book.

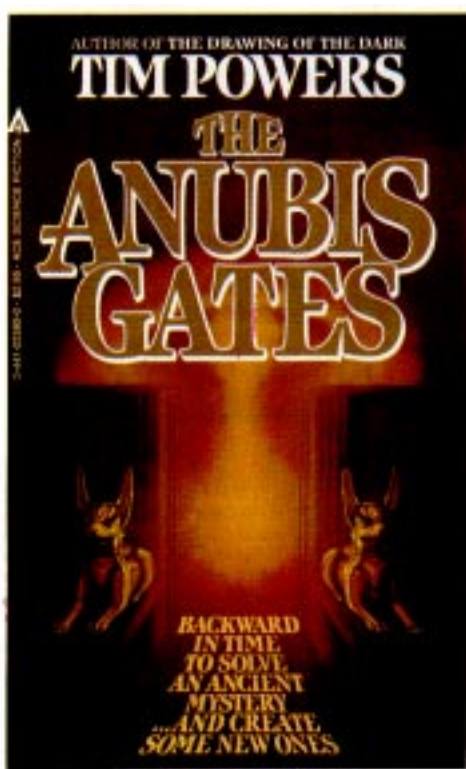
For that fan of horror stories in your household, this novel is a must.

THE RIGHT STUFF

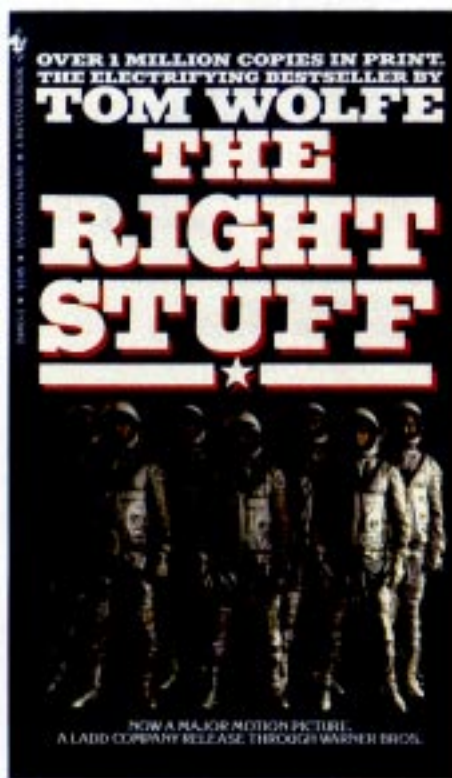
Tom Wolfe

Bantam Books \$3.95 0-553-24063-3

Though the first hardback editions of this novel came to bookstands in 1979, *The Right Stuff* is still making an impact on the market.



On the surface, *The Right Stuff* is a history of the U.S. space program from the period right after World War II up to the mid 1960s. But, obviously, the novel is more than a historical account of our pioneers into space. The book gives a cynical look at the era and events that shaped the lives of the men and women who lived through the dangers and anguish of the space race between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Wolfe describes that correct mixture — that right stuff, if you will — that makes up a hero. He presents the Mercury astronauts as warriors, challenging the Russians for the dominion of the heavens and the moon. Wolfe shows how one man, test pilot Chuck Yeager, changed the way every pilot thinks about himself, handles himself in the sky. And so, the novel is a celebration of heroism and self-worth. Most of all, however, Wolfe gives everyone who has ever had a lifelong dream the feeling



that they are not alone, and that their dream can actually be fulfilled.

This masterpiece of romantic reporting reads like a testament to American fliers and to those responsible for putting Americans into space. Such a powerful book as this deserves to be read by anyone who can find a copy. It tells the true story, but in a lush, grand manner — one which could only have been penned by a craftsman like Wolfe.

WHERE THE EVIL DWELLS

Clifford D. Simak

Del Rey \$2.75 345-29751-2

With *Where the Evil Dwells*, Simak has accomplished something impressive: he has written a fantasy novel that appeals to both the fans of Tolkien and Howard. This is a magically good and insightful novel — the kind Simak fans have come to expect from the author.

The action takes place in a lost dimension, where the Roman Empire still exists, though its influence is beginning to wane. Between the lands of the empire and those occupied by barbarian clans lies an area known as the Empty Lands; here evil dwells. Trolls, ogres, and other horrors — as well as such magical beings as fairies and unicorns — live in these Empty Lands. The creatures of this place act as a buffer between the nomad hordes on one side and the Roman civilization on the other.

Though people rarely travel through the Empty Lands, the novel concerns four people who decide to enter this realm of evil. Harcourt, the first member of the group, goes into the Empty Lands, hoping to rescue his love who was abducted seven years earlier during a battle between humans and monsters. Accompanying Harcourt is the Knurly Man — a member of a non-human race. The Knurly Man keeps a watchful eye on Harcourt, making sure his friend doesn't get into more trouble than he can handle. Thirdly, there is the abbot, who seems to have a dual purpose for sojourning with the others. On the one hand, he wishes to free the soul of a great saint from the clutches of evil; on the other, the abbot realizes that such an accomplishment would bring glory and prosperity to his abbey. Finally, the girl Yolanda joins the group. These four people come together as would any group undertaking a noble cause. But, as the events around them evolve, the original intent of the mission changes, and the party has to keep re-evaluating its goals.

But, this is not the only lesson that Simak gives his readers. He also points out the fact that beautiful things may be dangerous and evil, while those that are ugly may contain a hidden sense of beauty. The passage wherein the adventurers encounter unicorns at play truly demonstrates this concept. Simak is warning against preconceived notions and the danger in righteous thinking.

Where the Evil Dwells is a subtle and well developed novel. But like so many of Simak's books, the end leaves you wishing for more.

THE ZEN GUN

Barrington J. Bayley

DAW Books \$2.50 0-87997-851-1

The cover of this most unusual novel bears the single quote: "The most original SF writer of his generation." From someone like Michael Moorcock, this is quite a statement. After reading *The Zen Gun*, however, it's not so surprising.

In the far future, planets are considered less important to the galactic empire that now controls them than backwater islands were to the British Empire at the pinnacle of its imperialistic reign. It is a time when artificially raised animal intelligence populates the armed forces, because most humans are too busy with their hedonistic lifestyles. Due to such problems as the rise of rebel forces, attacks by space pirates, and a possible military coup, this galactic empire is on the verge of its downfall.

Into such a conglomeration of difficulties, Bayley places his hero, Admiral Archer, leader of one of the last imperial fleets. Hoping to do his job well, Archer must contend with the pressures that come to play against him. Although jokes and laughs appear regularly in *The Zen Gun*, Archer's confrontations allow Bayley to strike out against the government, excessive personal freedoms, liberals, technology, and more — he even attacks science-fiction writers at one point.

But Bayley's main targets are sloppy thinkers, as witnessed in the character of Pout. This half-man, half-ape chimera marvelously personifies the hedonist. Pout is a self-centered, pleasure-seeking, vengeful opportunist. He cares nothing for anyone else, except in cases where such may serve him. Into his hands comes the zen gun, and Pout uses it to fulfill the pettiest of his



desires. Of course, Archer must confront Pout so that he can get the zen gun and save the empire.

The Zen Gun is a highly unusual, thought-provoking book. Though not an easy read, the novel is excellent for those readers seeking a tale with a bit more substance than other science-fiction stories.

BUG JACK BARRON

Norman Spinrad

S.F.B.C. \$5.98 Order Number 33258

If you know of someone who is a Spinrad fan, or if you're just looking for a good reprint, this novel is highly recommended. It has recently been re-released by the Science Fiction Book Club.

Every Wednesday night — in the future, of course — television is dominated by a show that has over 100 million viewers. "Bugged?" cries the announcer, "Then go

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Bug Jack Barron is a classic study of the powers of media and politics. It attacks every virtue and ideal we hold dear, but also demonstrates that the only way to combat power is with a sense of honor and justice.

If you belong to the Science Fiction Book Club, or know someone who does, consider purchasing this book. It'll make a superb stocking-stuffer.

LEST DARKNESS FALL
L. Sprague de Camp
Del Rey \$2.50 345-31016-0

This novel, appearing in its shorter form in 1939, was one of the first literary pieces to help launch the author's long career. It is also one of the best ideas de Camp ever had, coupled with one of his finest executions.

While trying to find shelter from a rainstorm in modern Rome, archaeologist Martin Padway is suddenly transported in

time to the Rome that existed just before the start of the Dark Ages. At first, Padway merely tries to keep himself alive and earn a living. Soon he realizes that maybe he can keep the faltering civilization on an even keel by introducing the proper inventions and advancements. This, along with his knowledge of events that will lead to Rome's demise, gives Padway the edge he needs to save Rome from its ensuing collapse.

Lest Darkness Fall is one of those rare, write-what-you-know books. De Camp, himself an archaeologist, has taken his knowledge of the era and blended it with a few pet dreams, creating a top-notch adventure. And like all classics, it's good to see this novel back in print again.

THE SEA OF THE RAVENS
Harold Lamb
D. M. Grant, Publisher
(Trade Ed.) \$15.00 0-937986-58-5
(Deluxe Ed.) \$35.00 0-937986-57-7

This story continues the adventures of Sir Hugh of Taranto. With Durandal, the legendary sword of Roland, Sir Hugh fights his way through the history of the Middle East. Weaving truth and fiction together, the author concocts a tale so plausible that one would swear the entire story must be true.

In **The Sea of Ravens**, Sir Hugh allies himself with the forces of Genghis Khan. While they ravage the Middle East, the great Khan seeks the Muslim emperor that he ordered executed. The historic atmosphere is

so rich that Robert E. Howard admitted it fired his imagination when, as a boy, he first read the works of Lamb.

Besides the wonderful plotline, this novel has lavish color and black-and-white illustrations, prepared by fantasy artists George Barr and Alicia Austin. The fullness of detail that they depict in each illustration is more than appropriate to go alongside Lamb's intoxicating prose.

NOTABLE REPRINTS:
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by Kevin Siembieda

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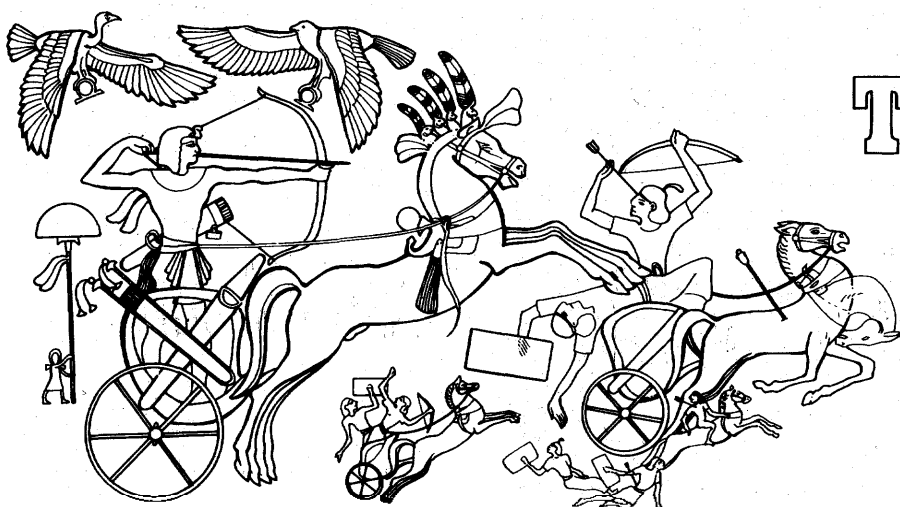
Already acclaimed for its innovations and thoroughness, the Magic System incorporates areas of magic which have never been explored. The Diabolist and the use of mystic symbols, wards, and ruins. The Summoner utilizing power words, and a multitude of magic circles. The Warlock master of the four elements, Witch, the deciple of evil; Mind Mage, master of mind and body; as well as the Wizard, the not so traditional spell caster.

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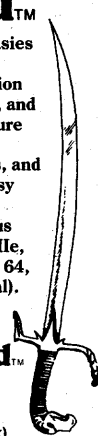
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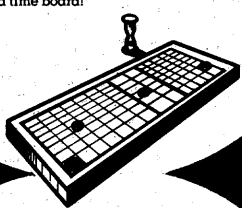
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For further information, contact national advertising representative **Bob Dewey**, 1836 Wagner Rd. Glenview, IL 60025, phone (312) 998-6237.

SF/gaming convention calendar

MICRO WARS '83, Dec. 3-4

The first gaming festival to be held on the campus of California State University at Dormitory 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 Concourse Hotel 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 convention, held on the campus of Spokane Falls Community College. Proceeds from the weekend will be donated to a local charity. Those needing dormitory housing will find it 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, contact: 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 additional information, write to John Dunn, Library, B.C.C.-North, 1000 Coconut Creek Blvd., Pompano Beach FL 33066, or telephone (305)428-8832.

COASTCON '84, March 9-11

This seventh annual SF/fantasy gaming 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 Crawford 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.

TRI-CON II, March 16-18

A SF/gaming convention to be staged at the North Carolina State University campus in Raleigh, N.C. For more information, send a SAS envelope to: N.C. State Gaming Society, P.O. Box 37122, Raleigh NC 27627.

ALASCON V, March 17-18

The organizers of this convention call it the biggest and best gaming convention in Alaska. A tournament dungeon, miniature painting contests, and more will be featured

at the event. The convention will take place at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks campus. For more information, or for pre-registration materials, write to ALASCON V, c/o Ken Mayer, P.O. Box 82374, College AK 99708.

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.

CAPCON '84, April 6-8

This seventh annual gaming convention will be staged at the South Terrace of the Ohio Union on the Ohio State University campus in Columbus, Ohio. Cost is \$2, for Saturday and Sunday only. Events include miniatures battles, and fantasy and historical gaming. Contact: Paul T. Rigel, c/o War Game Designs, 6119 E. Main Street #202, Columbus OH 43213, or call (614)863-6635 between 2 p.m. and midnight.

ONOCN '84, May 4-6

Described by the organizers as the largest 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 de Camp, Randy Elliott, Carl Lundgren, and Jay Jay Klein. More information is available by sending a SASE to: OnoCon '84, P.O. Box 305, Syracuse NY 13208.

TRI-STATE CON 1984, May 4-6

This gaming convention will be staged at the Cincinnati Technical College in Cincinnati, Ohio. For further details, contact: Tri-State Con '84, c/o Boardwalk, 1032 Delta Ave., Cincinnati OH 45208, or call (513)871-2110 or (513)351-9920.

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VAMPIRES ARE DIFFICULT TO SHOP FOR. THEY'RE THE MONSTER WHO HAS EVERYTHING. WE SUGGEST EITHER A WAKE-UP SERVICE, OR, SINCE THEY HAVE THIS PROBLEM WITH MIRRORS - A PORTRAIT.



ZOMBIES ARE ALSO HARD TO BUY FOR. WHAT DO YOU GET AN INDESTRUCTIBLE DEAD PERSON? GET THEM A TIE. ZOMBIES ARE TERRIBLE DRESSERS.



WERE WOLVES, ON THE OTHER HAND, ARE EASY TO SHOP FOR. MUSIC USUALLY HEADS THEIR LIST - GOOD HOWLING MUSIC. RECOMMENDED ARE "WOLFMAN JACK PRESENTS" OR ANYTHING BY THE ANIMALS. ANOTHER BIG HIT IS "HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DOG THRU SELF-HYPNOSIS".



EVIL SORCERERS ARE A TEDIOUS LOT. ALL THEY WANT IS POWER. PERIOD, THAT'S IT. GIVE THEM SOME ALKALINE BATTERIES.



TROLLS LIKE A GOOD SUN-SCREEN LOTION AND THEIR OWN BOOTH.



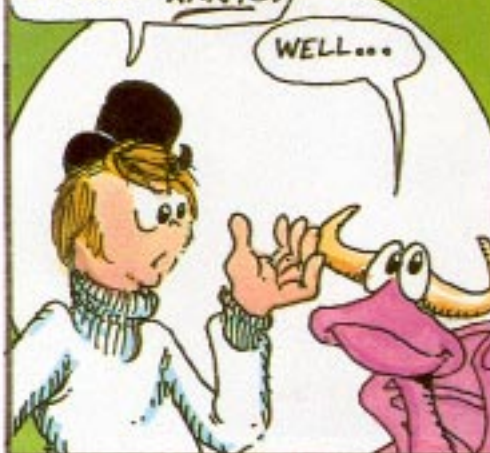
THE ONLY BLOB WE WERE ABLE TO GET AN ANSWER OUT OF, WANTED A WRISTWATCH... WITH THE WRIST STILL IN IT.



DEMONS ARE VERY KEEN ON GETTING YOUR SIGNATURE FOR SOME REASON - GET THEM AN AUTOGRAPH BOOK.



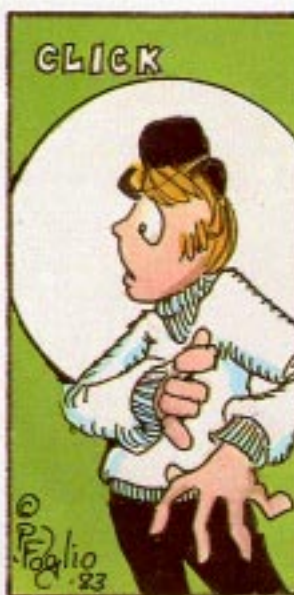
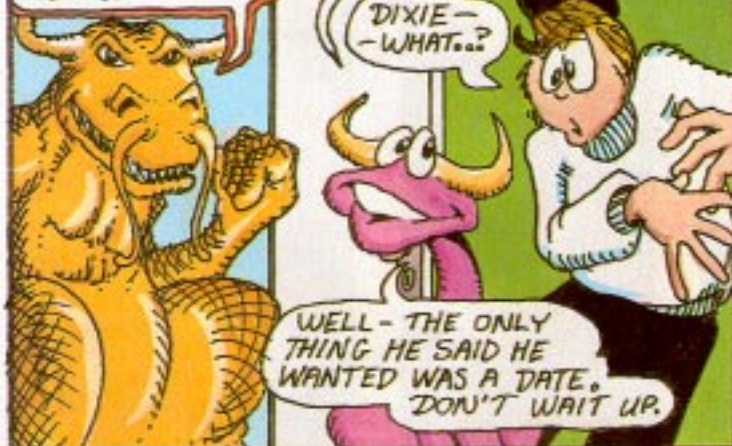
AND FINALLY WE COME TO DRAGONS-AND YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD ME WHAT A DRAGON WANTS.



KNOCK KNOCK



HELLO DIXIE - THAT GODZILLA FESTIVAL STARTS IN A HALF HOUR.

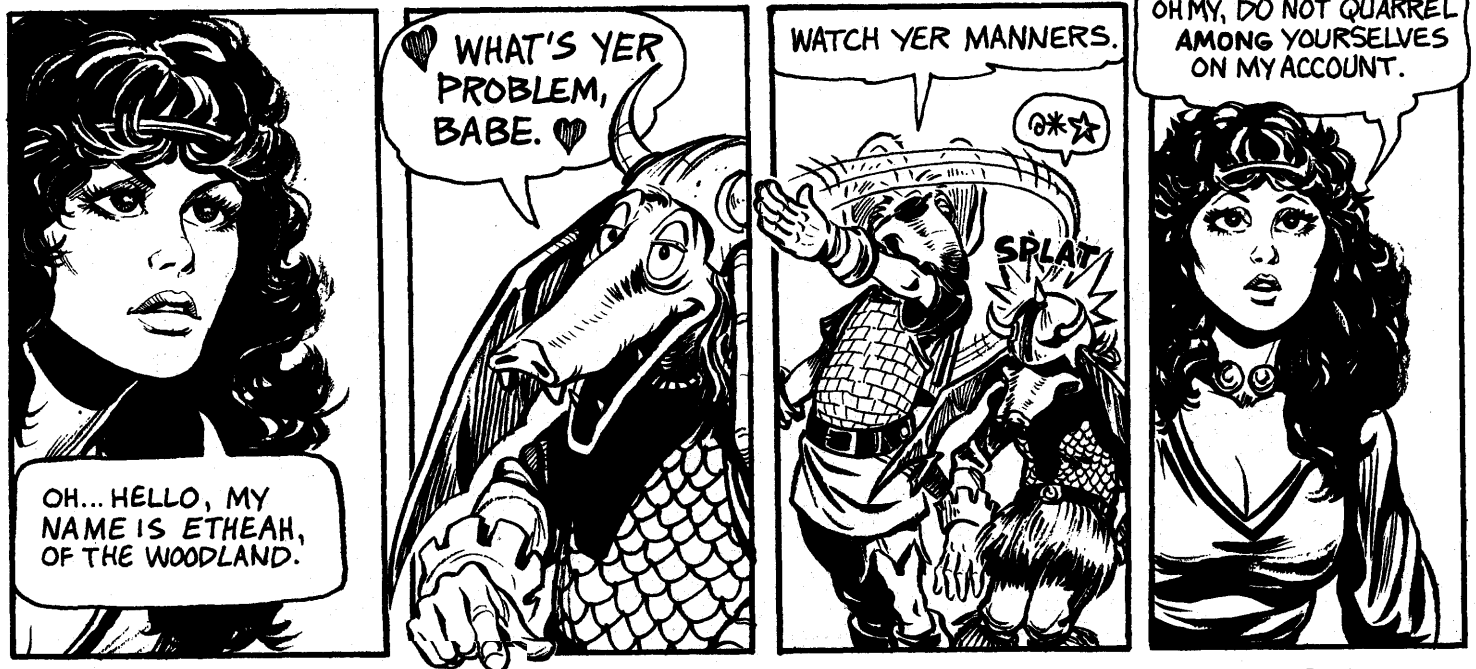


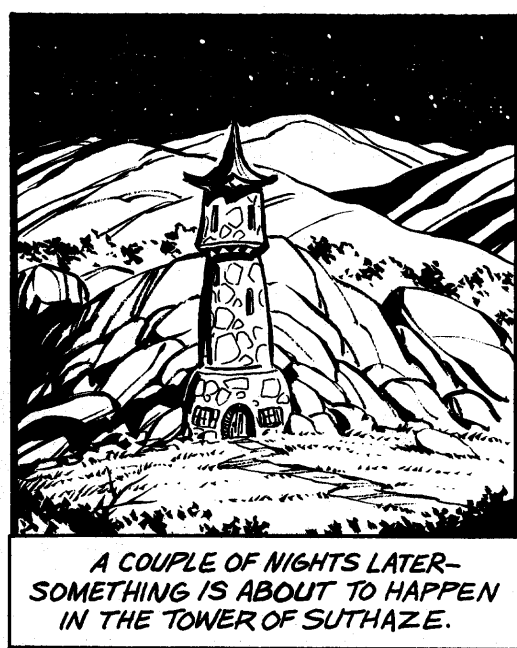


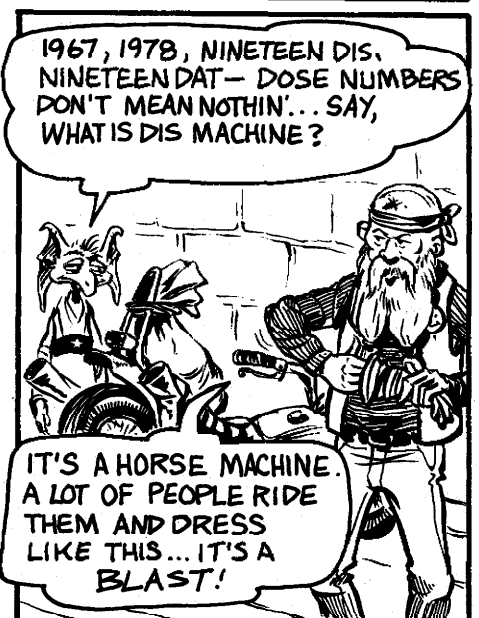
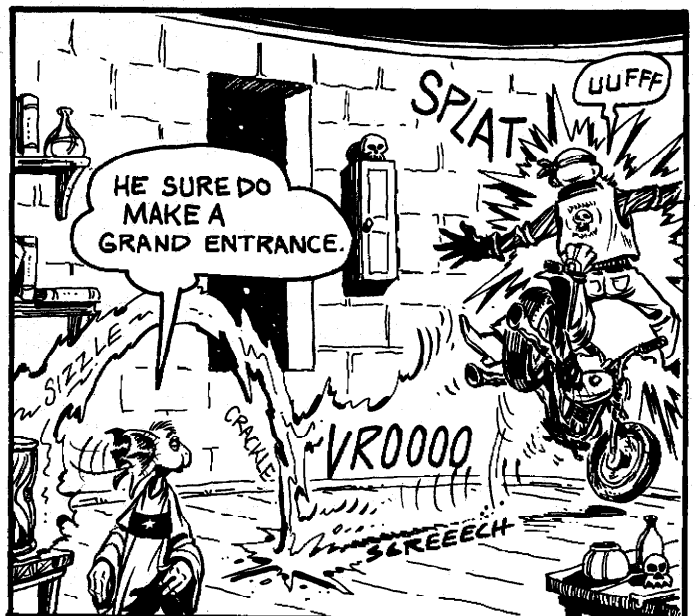
SNARFQUEST

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(From page 4)
frequency I'd recommend the second method, since what you're interested in is how often a certain result occurs, not how often a particular side is showing. — KM

Ever since issue #70, you have been using the zodiac symbol for that month to denote the ends of articles. Is there some symbolic significance, or is it just a whim someone at Dragon Publishing started just for the heck of it?

Shawn Hartley
Knoxville, Pa.

The answer is somewhere in between your two questions, Shawn. After several people wrote in to suggest that we mark the ends of stories with some kind of symbol, we decided to do just that. We chose the signs of the zodiac because (a) they look interesting, (b) they're different every month, (c) no other magazine we know of was using them for the same purpose, and (d) we wanted to have a little fun. Do the end-of-story marks have any symbolic significance? No, not in the astrological sense — but for the people who have to lay all those chunks of type down on all those pages, it's a very significant occasion every time we get another story ready to send to the printer. — KM

Missing letters

Dear Editor:

"Citadel by the Sea" (issue #78) is a very good adventure, but I found one small mistake: In room 41, the text lists invisible orcs at points A, B, C, and D, but those points aren't given on the map. Where are they?

Geordie Robertson
Guelph, Ontario

Would you believe that A, B, C, and D are on the map, but they're invisible? . . . Okay, would you believe we forgot to put them in?

The places that should have been marked are the corners formed by the diagonal walls, 10 feet inside the doorway, and the midpoint of the north and south walls about 25 feet inside the doorway. Of course, you can put the letters just about anywhere without spoiling the adventure — which, we assume, is why Geordie was the only reader who wrote in to ask about the map. — KM

Our symbol system

Dear Editor:

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Index to advertisers

Name of firm	Page(s)
Amulet	20
Bard Games	61
Berkeley Game Company	33
Chaosium Inc.	28, 68
Citadel Miniatures	4, 50, 63
Companions, The.	12
Compleat Strategist, The.	54
Dell Publishing.	27
Diamond Dice	62
Dragon Publishing	Inside back cover
Dragontooth Inc.	15
Dunken Company, The	68
Endless Games	52
Entertainment Concepts, Inc.	51
Fantasy Games Unlimited.	21, 55
Fantasy Unlimited	52
FASA Corporation	11
Game Designers' Workshop	25
Game Towne	4
Gamelords, Ltd.	54
Gamemasters Hobbies, Inc.	33
Gamers' Guide	70, 71
Games Plus	59

Name of firm	Page(s)
Grenadier Models Inc.	47
Hobby Game Distributors Inc.	29
Iron Crown Enterprises.	1, back cover
Judge Software	19
Judges Guild.	58
Kabal Gaming Systems.	13, 60
Mattel Electronics	7
Midkemia Press	62
Nova Game Designs, Inc.	17
Palladium Books.	69
RAFM Co.	57, 73
Ral Partha Enterprises.	Inside front cover
St. Martins Press	12
Steve Jackson Games	31
Superior Simulations	49
Task Force Games	53
Tin Soldier, The	28
Tri-Tac Inc.	63
TSR, Inc.	65
Victory Games, Inc.	5
Wizard's Corner, The	13
Wizard's Workshop, The.	60
Yaquinto Publications	20

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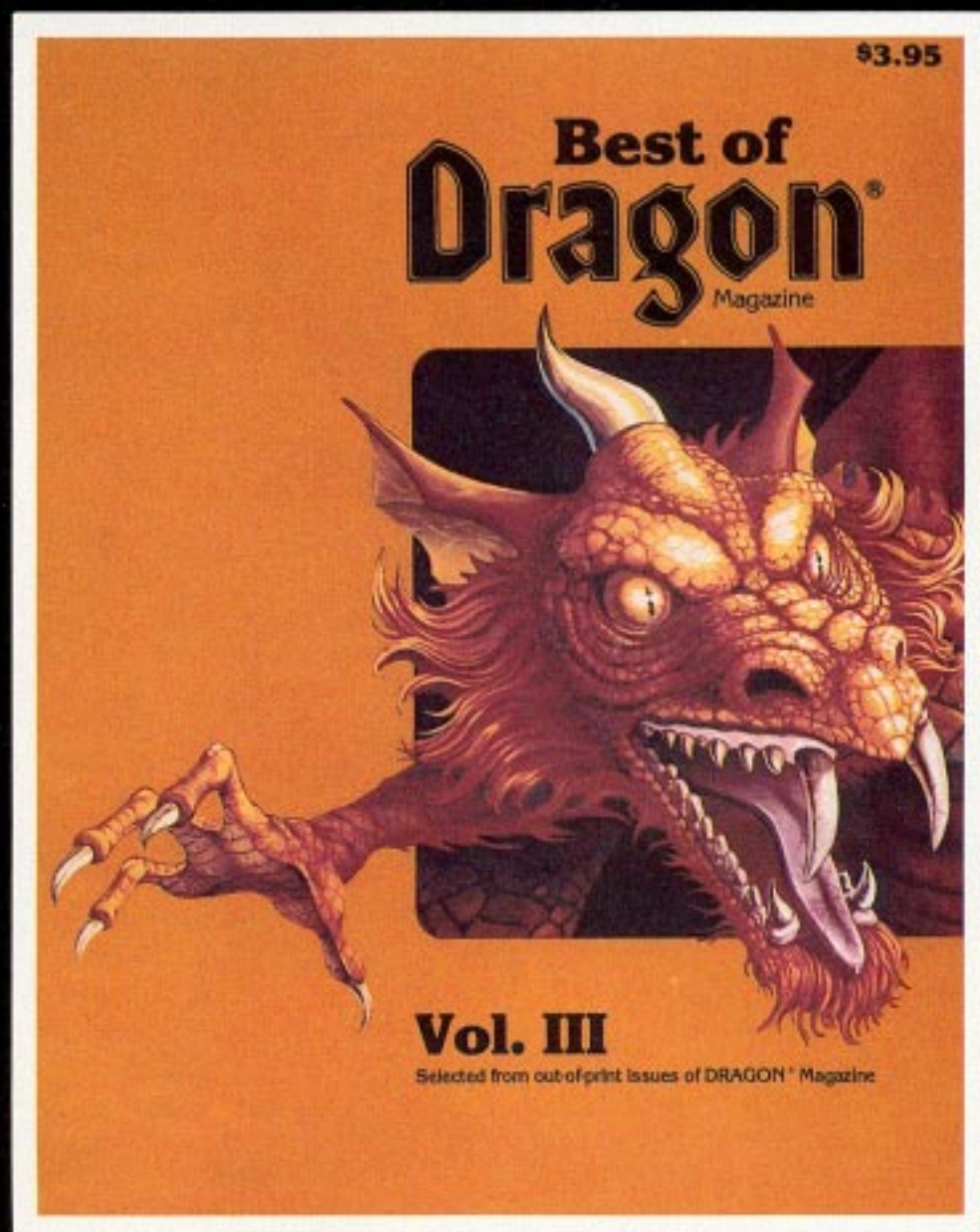
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