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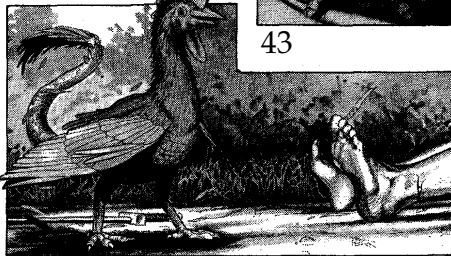
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# Dragon®

Monthly adventure role-playing aid

Vol. IX, No. 10

March 1985

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A tournament adventure for AD&D® game characters

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## COVER

Dean Morrissey, indeed the dean of all our cover artists, got the idea that there should be a place where people can bring their old metal items and have them fashioned into armor and weapons before embarking on the adventuring life. The scene that resulted is entitled "Toad's Cloak Armorsmith Shop," and there's more to it than first meets the eye.

## In defense of advertising

If you haven't read the first letter on the next page, please do so and then come right back. I don't intend to refute Dan's statistics or the method of his analysis. I won't take issue with his facts or most of his opinions. But I can't accept his basic assumption: that the magazine is worse because it carries more advertising than it used to.

The advertising in DRAGON® Magazine carries with it several benefits, some less obvious than others. For the readers, it's a way of getting information about what sorts of products are available in the gaming industry — information that may be interesting and helpful even if you don't intend to buy the products being advertised. A few people have actually written in to compliment the magazine's advertising; we don't expect everyone to be *that* crazy about it, but you shouldn't resent advertising for the space it takes, either. Try to appreciate its value to other readers even if you can't use the information yourself.

For the magazine, it's a way of making money, some income that partially offsets our operating costs so that we don't have to pay our bills by taking more of your money. The "explosion" of advertising that Dan has documented is one of the reasons why we've been able to maintain a \$3.00 cover price on the magazine for nearly five years — we'd rather get

(Turn to page 4)



# Letters

## Hard of hearing?

Dear Dragon,

Your magazine is the finest FRPG magazine on the market, but one aspect of your magazine bothers me very much. The aspect that I am speaking of is advertisements. A quick study showed me the following: In issue #62, there were 9 full page ads throughout the magazine, and only 7 altogether in the first 33 pages (I only searched the first 33 in the interest of saving time). Issue #72 showed an increase in full page ads from 9 to 12, but 26 ads were to be found in the first 33 pages.

Then issue #82 came along. Explosion! The full page ads stayed at 12, but there were 22 advertisements in the first 33 pages. Issue #92 showed a decrease of full page ads from 12 to 9, but 26 ads were to be found in the first 33 pages.

Finally, I received issue #93. You raised the subscription price from \$24 to \$30. The number of ads in the first 33 pages were lowered from 26 to 20, but the full page ads skyrocketed from 9 to 25.

In short, since issue #62, you have nearly tripled both the full page ads and ads throughout the magazine (if the first 33 pages are indicative of the rest of the magazine), put another publication inside your current one (virtually eliminating the benefits of your 16 page expansion), and, in my opinion, lowered the quality of both the magazine *and* the paper it is printed on. I can live with some advertisements, but at the rate you are going, we will soon be buying a magazine full of advertisements! People have made requests for fewer advertisements at a higher price, but no attempts have been made to rectify this. For a magazine that "listens to its readers," you seem to be getting hard of hearing.

Dan Fejes  
Aurora, Ohio

Well, Dan, you certainly came in loud and clear. For some editorial thoughts on the matter, see the column to the immediate left. — KM

## Un-conversion

Dear Dragon,

The article "The more, the merrier" in issue #92 was excellent, but I have some questions. If the NPC who was converted "comes to his senses" afterward, does the cleric lose some or all of the experience he earned? Also, can monsters be converted, and if so, will the monster lose hit dice (or experience) because of this?

Halina Adamski  
High Falls, N. Y.

If a player character kills a non-player character and receives an experience-point award for doing so, those earned experience points are not taken away if the NPC is later brought back to life. By the same reasoning, a cleric who performs a successful conversion does not have to forfeit

the earned xp if the convert later changes his mind or is converted again by a different cleric.

Although there are two sides to the issue, I think the conversion system should only be applied to "non-monster" NPCs — humans and humanoids that can be of any alignment in the spectrum, as opposed to humanoids (such as orcs) that are, by definition, limited to a narrow choice of alignments or no choice at all. An orc that was converted to the worship of a lawful good deity wouldn't really be an orc any more, not as we know 'em. And whether or not the orc suffers a reduction in level (hit dice) might be academic. I can imagine a deity like Gruumsh repaying a converted orc for his "loyalty" by striking him dead on the spot — and dead orcs all have the same number of hit dice.

The other side of the issue is the good old "nothing is impossible" argument. Sure, there could be such a thing as a lawful good orc, and allowing player-character clerics to try to convert monsters might work well in the campaign you run or play in. But the conversion system described in the article was not intended to be used for that purpose. — KM

## Ring removal

Dear editor:

In the Treasure Trove (issue #91), the Ring of the Eagle seems to have a contradiction. It states: "All the wearer's worn or carried possessions are merged with the giant eagle form while the ring wearer is in that shape." Doesn't that mean that the ring can't be removed because it has merged into the shape?

David Schwam  
Piscataway, N. J.

Exactly the point, David. The user of a ring of the eagle cannot take off the ring, or have it removed, while he is in eagle form. (If he could, that might be very hazardous to an ex-eagle's health.) The ring merges into the eagle form, just like all other possessions of the wearer, and stays that way until he calls upon the ring to change back to his true form. Then it's right back on his finger, and he can take it off any time. — KM

## Creature queries

Dear Dragon,

The description of the fachan (Creature Catalog, issue #89) states that the enchanted/treated hide of a fachan can be made into a magical glove or gauntlet. The next paragraph says that it [the fachan] will be either right or left handed, but how can the hide be right or left handed if the fachan has only one arm in the middle of his chest?

In the same issue, the only stated armor class for the glasspane horror is 2. Is that the armor class for all three forms? In its second form, is it solid crystal or just a crystalline image? And finally, is the horror a magically created being? If

that answer is yes, is it possible for a high level M-U to create one?

Bill Hill  
Orange, Calif.

Let's assume that the fachan has a typical humanoid skeletal structure, down to and including an opposable thumb on its upper extremity. For the thumb to work the same way as it does with other humanoids, it must be on either the right or the left side of the fingers it opposes. If the fachan didn't have this kind of hand structure, it would be implausible for the creature to be as strong as it is.

That's about the best I can do for a logical reason. Actually, Bill, you can answer this first question for yourself just by stretching your willingness to suspend disbelief a little bit further. If you can accept the "existence" of a creature with one arm in the middle of its chest, you should also be able to accept the "fact" that the fachan's single arm has either a right hand or a left hand at the end of it.

The glasspane horror is armor class 2 in any of its forms — hard to hurt no matter what it looks like. The second form is indeed solid, as anyone who's been hit by its fists can tell you. And no, the horror is not a magically created being, but a lot of magic-users probably wish it was that easy to get one. — KM

## Potion notions

Dear Dragon,

I have a question about the Potion of Mind Restoration (Treasure Trove, issue #91). Does it cure the effects caused by potions and magic items that affect the mind? Also I would like to know if it cures fear spells.

Brian Cope  
Neosho, Mo.

As described by its author, Mike Persinger, the potion seems to work against "intellectual damage" to the mind, as opposed to "emotional damage." It will cure any form of insanity a feeble-minded condition, and all but the most extreme forms of "intellectual damage" that a defenseless psionic might suffer. It is not good against, for instance, charm or fear magic, even though the mind is technically affected by such forces. The conditions that the potion works against cause physiological changes; forces such as charm spells or other will-force spells cause psychological changes, which the potion can't do anything about. To name a few others, the potion also won't work against a potion of delusion, to offset the effects of a rod of beguiling, or to counteract a helm of opposite alignment. — KM

## Quick fixes

When the problems are simple, the fixes are quick. Such as . . .

Issue #94: The second sentence of the second paragraph in the description of the lillend (p. 50) should have read as follows: "In addition, they may activate the following spell-like powers at will, one per round, at the 7th level of ability (where applicable): emotion (three times per day), fire charm (once per day), hallucinatory terrain (three times per day), knock, light or darkness (as a cleric), Otto's irresistible dance (once per day), pass plant, polymorph self (into humanlike form only), speak with plants, speak



with animals, and transport via plants (once per day)."

Issue #94: The last sentence under note 2 in "The ecology of the chimera" (p. 25) should read as follows: "A thessalmera's body is AC 0, except for the lion-head (AC 5) and the wings and dragon-head (both AC 2)."

Issue #93: Tierza Gudas, one of the non-player characters in "The Gypsy Train," should be outfitted with a sling and 12 bullets instead of her short bow and 12 arrows. This brings the character into accordance with the AD&D® game rules, which stipulate that a thief cannot use a bow. Optionally, the DM can leave the description as it stands and rule that Tierza is a special NPC, not bound by all of the same weapon restrictions that player characters must abide by.

Issue #93: The first sentence of the third paragraph in "Short hope and big drops" (p. 21) is followed by an unintelligible statement. Delete the words "It is also assumed at the critical second."

## Advertising

(From page 2)

our money from advertisers instead of from readers, and I think our actions have demonstrated that.

For the advertisers, it's a way of giving exposure to their products and services, targeted precisely at a very large group of people who are most likely to want what they're selling. DRAGON Magazine is a popular place to advertise because of you — because so many of you buy and read the magazine, and because you're exactly the people our advertisers want to reach.

Any page space that advertising has "stolen" from editorial material over the years has been more than offset by a combination of all these benefits. If you can't accept that the magazine is better as a result, at least try to see that things are better than they might have been. With less adver-

tising, we might have been forced to print fewer pages and possibly also raise the price. The "magazine full of advertisements" that Dan cynically foresees will never happen — but neither will the other extreme: an advertising-free magazine that prints a new 32-page issue every couple of months and sells a couple thousand copies to a scant few people who are rich enough and dumb enough to pay the \$12.00 cover price. Now *that* would be something to complain about.



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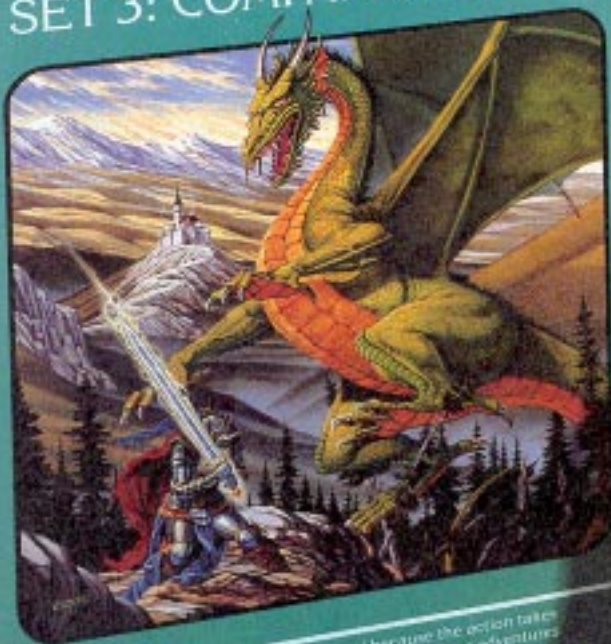
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I would like to respond to the points raised by Tim Nye (The forum, issue #94) concerning my article on heights and weights ("Realistic vital statistics," #91). Mr. Nye contends that the article is inaccurate, in that it ignores density as a factor in weight. In fact, density is mentioned explicitly no less than three times in the course of the discussion, and the point is made more than once that if dwarven, halfling, or gnome player characters are given the heights and weights indicated in the Dungeon Masters Guide, then they must be improbably thick, or improbably dense, or both.

Mr. Nye goes on to state that the shorter demi-humans (particularly dwarves) are given the weights of human children, and that this is an unfair disadvantage that reduces "playability." This is incorrect. For instance, the recommended weights for dwarves make them almost *twice* as heavy as humans in proportion to their stature. As for the disadvantage involved, it is really quite small: unarmed combat is not common in most campaigns, and weight isn't always a factor. (Particularly if, like Mr. Gygas himself, the DM uses some other system than the one outlined in the DMG. Many of these alternate systems downplay the importance of weight for the sake of simplicity.) Game balance is hardly endangered.

Another assertion, that reducing the number of oddly proportioned characters "interferes with the fun," is really a matter of taste. Some people like playing such characters, and some don't. It is noteworthy that the system described in the article does allow for unusual builds. If a player insists, the DM might alter the dice rolls a bit.

Mr. Nye's final objection, that the proposed system brings with it mundane considerations that he would rather ignore, seems to be at the core of his criticism. In answer to this, it might be pointed out that the AD&D system (like any fantasy game system) is crammed with thousands upon thousands of "mundane" details: swords are more dangerous than daggers, a big fall does more damage than a small one, people need to eat and rest, torches burn out after a while, gold is heavy, and so on. The question is not whether the real world should serve as a model for a fantasy world, but when to use the model and when to ignore it. This has been a source of contention for some time, and doubtless will be for years to come, since it is not the sort of question that can be solved to everyone's satisfaction. Though there may be a vague consensus, it is doubtful that any two people will draw the line in the same place each time. Some, like myself, are bothered by the implausibilities [in the standard system] mentioned in the article. Others are not. Similarly, some people are annoyed when a car squeals its tires on a dirt road in a scene from an adventure-oriented TV series. Others shrug it

# The forum

off, pointing out that most of the action is hard to believe anyway. Again, this is a matter of personal taste.

There is a further consideration, though, which merits some mention. Any work of fiction, whether a novel, a movie, a lie, or a game, is much stronger if it keeps the number of contradictions, unplanned complications, and *ad hoc* explanations to a minimum; it ought to be able to stand up to a superficial examination at the very least. For instance, if someone asks why dwarves are so heavy for their stature in the AD&D game, it might be answered (as Mr. Nye has suggested) that a dwarf has all of the physical components of a six-foot-tall man compressed into a dwarvish volume. This is plausible, of course (albeit only in fantasy), but it spawns a whole series of other questions: Are dwarves made of flesh at all? What are they made of? Does it *feel* like flesh? Why doesn't the extra density give them a better armor class? Don't they have trouble keeping afloat in water?

The questions might be ignored, but that would be an admission that the fantasy is not as well constructed as it could be. They could be answered, but each answer will surely give rise to more questions. It really isn't necessary to go to all that trouble, though. It's a lot simpler to assume that dwarves are like short, heavily built humans, and then go about altering the height and weight figures to fit that idea. Contrary to Mr. Nye's idea, there is nothing to be lost in doing this, and plenty to be gained.

Stephen Inniss  
Bradner, B. C., Canada

\* \* \* \*

After reading William Huish's letter on falling damage (issue #93), I'm glad to see that there are still DMs who wish to keep the game accurate but simple. I find his table works very well, except one item in taking a fall is not there — injuries such as broken bones. When a body falls from any height and impacts with a solid object there is a chance for broken bones.

The percentage chance for broken bones is controlled by two factors, the height of the fall

and whether the character is in control of the fall. Having a controlled fall is being able to land on your feet and roll or find some other way to absorb the shock. Controlling a fall involves whether the fall was taken willingly and if any obstacles were struck before hitting the ground.

Distance	Controlled	Uncontrolled
	% chance of broken bones	
10'	5%	10%
20'	10%	25%
30'	15%	40%
40'	20%	55%
50'	30%	70%
60'	40%	80%
70'	50%	90%
80'	60%	95%
90'	70%	98%
100'	80%	100%

Monks may subtract 2% per level because of their training; thieves can subtract 1% per level. Any character who is heavily encumbered must add 15% due to the fact that they are unable to roll to absorb the damage.

The bones broken most often in a controlled fall will be in the legs. With an uncontrolled fall, the break may occur anywhere. With a fall from over 20 feet the DM may wish to include a chance for head concussion.

This letter is not meant to criticize Mr. Huish. I have found his tables the most useful way of determining fall damage and offer this as an enhancement. I, like many DMs, am looking for ways to make the game accurate, but most of all easy to play.

Calvin V. Jestic  
Cincinnati, Ohio

\* \* \* \*

I have enjoyed the recent articles taking an in-depth look at character classes, the cleric articles in issue #92 included. But when I read the article on NPC conversion by Bruce Barber, I felt I had to express my disagreement on a fundamental assumption made in his system. Mr. Barber seemed to be implying that a non-cleric character can only worship one deity, and character and deity must have the same alignment.

In my game, I use the Greyhawk gods. I have each player declare a "patron" god for his character at the beginning of the campaign, this deity being the one the character will worship the most and would most likely call to in an emergency. But the characters were not limited to this one god. I do not feel that non-clerical characters should be expected to be as dedicated toward a particular deity as a cleric or cleric-related character such as a paladin.

Let us look at the case of a neutral evil female half-elf fighter-thief. Before attempting to scale a smooth wall, she might mumble a swift prayer to Olidammara, a patron of thieves. In the midst of a heated battle she might call out to Trithereon for fighting skill. If she married, she could pray to Berei to bless her marriage and future family. And if she went on a long journey, she might ask Fharlanghn to insure her safety and comfort.

The point of all this is that deities are meant to  
(Turn to page 87)

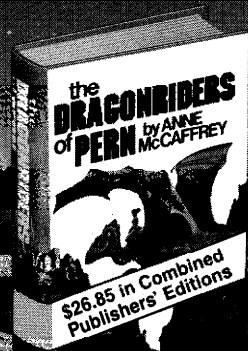
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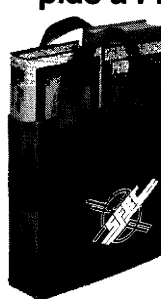
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# Demi-humans get a lift

## The last word on level limits and abilities

by Gary Gygax

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After long contemplation of the plight of dead-ended demi-human characters, and considerable badgering from players with same, it seemed a good plan to work up some new maximum levels for those demi-humans with super-normal statistics — and in a couple of cases just reward those with high stats across the board. Demi-humans were limited in the first place (in the original rules) because I conceived of a basically human-dominated world. Considering their other abilities, if most demi-humans were put on a par with humans in terms of levels they could attain, then there isn't much question who would be saying "Sir!" to whom. With that in mind, let's move along to the matter at hand.

### Single-classed demi-humans

If any player character demi-human operates within a single profession (class), then that character can exceed all stated experience-level maximums by two. For example, a player character dwarf with less than 17 strength who is a fighter (and only a fighter) can attain 9th level in that profession, instead of being forced to stop at 7th level; a half-elf who is a cleric (and only a cleric) can now rise as high as 7th level in that profession. Double-classed or triple-classed demi-humans must still abide by the level limits given in the Players Handbook for each of their classes; such is the price of diversity.

By no stretch of the rules can single-classed characters attain half again, or twice again, the number of levels shown (in the



rules). Although some DMs do allow this, such characters are not standard and can't be allowed in general campaign play. (What any given DM chooses to do in his or her campaign is their business, of course, but a standard campaign will find difficulty allowing demi-humans of such high level of experience into general play. For instance, if PCs can double the maximum experience level, then what about all of the other demi-humans with but a single class roaming about the countryside? Surely they too can likewise get double level! What then of their enemies, the humanoids? Beef them up too, you say? Then what about all those poor humans and demi-humans of zero level? A vicious cycle of escalation will begin which won't end before the whole campaign is destroyed!)

The following tables give revised level limits for single-classed demi-human characters with one or more exceptional prime requisite ability scores, depending upon the ability score(s) and sometimes also the sex of the character in question. Players and DMs alike should take note of an important new rule change which is alluded to herein: player characters can be members of certain

demi-human sub-races that are not permitted to PCs by the rules in the Players Handbook — namely, the valley elf, grugach, drow, duergar, and svirfneblin. More will be said about this new development in subsequent articles. For now, however, players who choose to have drow, duergar, or svirfneblin characters should heed this general stricture: The alignment of such a player character may be of any sort, but daylight adventuring must be severely curtailed due to the nature of these creatures. Without special eye protection and clothing, these three demi-human types will suffer sight problems and sickness due to exposure to sunlight.

Some of the ability scores listed in these tables are higher than those normally attainable by player characters. Their inclusion in this presentation is not meant to imply that player characters can customarily have such high scores. It may be possible, for instance, for a dwarf to have 21 strength (perchance through the successful employment of several dozen *wish* spells), but such a character would be very rare indeed, and except in the most extraordinary circumstances would be a non-player character.

### DWARVES

	Fighter		Assassin	
	Hill	Mountain	Hill	Mountain
Str 18(99)	8	9		
18(00)	9	10		
19	10	11		
20	12	13		
21	15	16		
Str/Int/Dex 18(99)/18/19			11	11
18(00)/or 19/or 19			12	12

### HALFLING FIGHTERS

	Hairfeet	Stout	Tallfellow
Str 17	5	6	7
18(50)	6	7	8
18(90)	7	8	9
19	8	9	10

*Special note regarding halfling PCs:* Allow Hairfeet +2 bonus to dexterity, give Stout characters additional +1 bonus to constitution.

### ELVES, DROW

		Cleric		Fighter		Magic-user	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Wis	M12/F18	4	U				
	M13/F18	5	U				
	M14/F18	6	U				
	M15/F18	7	U				
Str	M12/F14			7	9		
	M13/F15			8	10		
	M14/F16			9	11		
	M15/F17			10	12		
Int	M18/F18					12	5 <sup>1</sup>
	M19/F19					13	7 <sup>1</sup>
	M20/F20					15	9 <sup>1</sup>
	M21/F21					18	11 <sup>1</sup>

1: A very few female drow practice magic, but their ability at dweomercraft seems severely limited due to some quirk of their reasoning process.

## ELVES, GRUGACH

	Druid	Fighter
Wis/Cha 18/18	11	
19/18	12	
20/18	14	
21/19	17	

Str 18(75)		9
18(90)		10
18(99)		11
18(00)		12
19		13

## ELVES, ANY

	Assassin
Str/Int/Dex 18(99)/18/19	11
18(00)/or 19/or 19	12

## GNOMES, ANY

	Fighter	Illusionist	Assassin
Str 18(50)	6		
18(75)	7		
18(99)	8		
19	9		

Int 18		7	
19		8	
20		10	
21		13	

Str/Int/Dex 18(50)/18/18			9
18(75)/or 19/or 19			10

## HALF-ORCS

	Cleric	Fighter	Thief
Wis 14	4		
15	5		
16	6		
17	7		

Str 18(99)		10	
18(00)		11	
19		12	
20		14	
21		17	

Dex 14			8
15			9
16			10
17			11

## GOOD NEWS DEPARTMENT

It's time to be rid of a pain in the neck, as I'm sure all of you Worthy Enthusiasts will agree! The new material published within these pages — character classes, information on demi-humans, spells, and so on — should be contained in one handy volume. And that is precisely what will happen this summer, when a new hardbound AD&D game rule volume, entitled *Unearthed Arcana*, will appear in the stores.

What happened was this: I got so tired of trying to keep track of photocopies, notes, magazines, and whatnot, that I suggested to the Kindly Planners at TSR, Inc., that perhaps an interim volume to expand the *Dungeon Masters Guide* and *Players Handbook* would be appreciated by everyone who has suffered the same problems. Seeing as how the work on the full-scale expansion and revision of the system won't even begin for at least another year, everyone agreed.

Material to be contained in the new book includes updated and revised versions of virtually all of the articles written by Yours

## ELVES, OTHER

	Gray	Fighter High	Valley	Wood	Gray	Magic-user High	Valley	Wood
Str 18(75)	7	7	7	8				
18(90)	8	8	8	9				
18(99)	9	9	9	10				
18(00)	10	10	10	11				
19	11	11	11	12				
20	11	11	13	14				

Int 18					11	10	11	9
19					12	11	12	10
20					13	12	13	11
21					15	14	15	13
22					18	17	15	13

## HALF-ELVES

	Cleric	Fighter	Ranger
Wis 18	5		
19	6		
20	8		
21	11		

Str 18(90)		8	
18(99)		9	
18(00)		10	
19		11	
20		13	

Str/Int/Wis/Con 18(90)/18/18/18			9
18(99)/18/18/18			10
18(00)/18/18/18			11
18(00)/18/19/18			12
18(00)/18/18/19			12
18(00)/18/19/19			14
19/19/19/19			15

## This high and no higher

To put a cap on things, let us get something straight. Any statistics beyond those shown, for levels and ability scores alike, are virtually impossible. Spells and magic, even artifacts and relics, will not increase statistics beyond what is shown, and no further word is necessary. If some deity likes a character so much as to grant a higher statistic, then that deity should also like the character sufficiently to carry him or her off to another plane. (Rules for quasi-deities will, I suppose, now be in demand . . . sigh!)

Truly and published in DRAGON® Magazine over the last three years or so — the Cavalier, Barbarian, and Thief-Acrobat classes, the expansions and revisions of the Druid and Ranger classes, new weapons, new spells, and the information on demi-human level maximums in this very issue, to name a few. Also in the work will be a substantial amount of previously unpublished material, including a group of no less than 150 new magic items, and some selected offerings by other Esteemed Authors whose efforts have graced these pages. Watch for more information about the contents and the release date in these pages in the months to come.

## FILM SURVEY UPDATE

Some of the Generous Respondents to the survey carried herein (issue #93) about a D&D™ film expressed no small amount of concern about the quality of the proposed motion picture project. To answer these concerns, and to pass along information for all of you, I thought I should explain more.

The Dungeons & Dragons Entertainment Corp. (DDEC) is a subsidiary of TSR, Inc. I am the president of DDEC. Currently, we handle the cartoon show, the *Amazing Stories™* television project, and various other endeavors as well — some optioned, some merely in varying stages of completion, development, proposal, and so forth. Of course, the idea for a film based on the D&D® and AD&D® game systems is not new. I have worked with it in one way or another since 1979, and I am continuing this effort now.

What the survey aimed at was simply what you Good Readers have expressed. There is tremendous interest in a well-done, game-based feature. What I wish to proceed with is a set of premises for the film, with these works to be written by this Aspiring Writer and one or more other Knowledgeable Authors. This will transpire within a few weeks, and perhaps one of the production houses in California will view the proposal favorably.

I have, naturally, made a point of seeing



the fantasy films released to date. Their errors are manifold and apparent to our team. The generosity you all showed in replying to the survey will assist us in making this point to the studios: Fantasy isn't a losing genre for the motion picture, but bad film-making is bound to result in a poor showing at the box office. Thanks for your assistance, and please continue to wish us luck. Rest assured that you'll learn more as soon as we manage to get this project under way.

## LET'S BURY THE HATCHET

After the GEN CON® Convention closed last summer, I was chatting with one of several attendees from Tennessee, and the subject of the Origins convention came up. As it turned out, they, and many others too, stated that they had paid attention to what I had earlier said (in DRAGON® issue #65) about the two competing events — and they stayed away from Origins. Well, now the time has long since come to bury the hatchet.

In 1984, the GEN CON event had more than 6,000 paid attendees and more than 2,000 non-paying "walk-throughs." Note that isn't a figure for all days; the 8,000-plus total is a count of different people. That made the 1984 event the largest convention of its kind ever held, and in 1985 the GEN CON Convention promises to be better still. It is the oldest national gathering of game enthusiasts held annually, and

it is actually taking on a bit of an international flavor, too. When, in years past, the backers of Origins arrogantly disregarded a convention founded by gamers for gamers, and high-handedly discounted it, they trampled on the efforts of the "little guys." No matter that the GEN CON event is now run by TSR — for it didn't start out that way. TSR was concerned enough to pick up the banner and run the convention each year at a loss of dollars and a high cost in employee time, because the company cared about gamers.

There is no question that you, the core of game enthusiasts, recognized this. Your support of the GEN CON event over these many years has been terrific. The 1984 convention was the proverbial proof of the pudding. What has been said about the GEN CON convention remains true. It is run as a "thank you" for gamers, and we do our best to assure that the convention offers more at as low a cost as is possible for us to provide. The creators of the dispute between us and Origins have not admitted that their claims were so much hot air, but that would be anticlimactic anyway. *You* gave them the lie by showing that gamers thought the GEN CON convention was the best. Nothing greater can be said in the way of praise; no further claims can have as much validity.

Origins now has a different complexion, too. TSR never sought to do away with that event. In fact, we have always sought to

promote more and better conventions throughout North America — and the world, too, for that matter. Our hobby is small, and that is meaningful too. Rather than squabbling and bickering, all gamers, whether they favor role-playing, military simulation, or any other form of adventure gaming should be working together to build and expand the hobby. That way, we assure the continuation of the fine products now available, the creation of still better ones, and the opportunity to meet and enjoy the companionship of fellow enthusiasts in all parts of the country.

I urge you to support and attend all conventions — Origins, the GEN CON event, and all other good events whenever and wherever they are held. Thanks to all of you for your help in making the GEN CON convention the biggest and best. Now, let's all work together to build other events up as well, so that the whole of our hobby can prosper and grow stronger!

*E. Gary Gygax*

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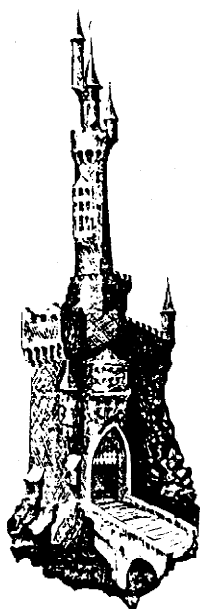
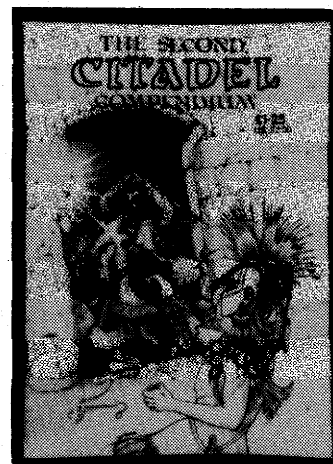
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# The influence of J. R. R. Tolkien on the D&D<sup>®</sup> and AD&D<sup>®</sup> games

## Why Middle Earth is not part of the game world

by Gary Gygax

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A frequently asked question — or assertion, in the case of those who don't bother to ask — deals with the amount of influence of J. R. R. Tolkien on the creation of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS<sup>®</sup> and ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS<sup>®</sup> role-playing games. The answer to the inquiry is complex, for there are two parts. The popularity of Professor Tolkien's fantasy works did encourage me to develop my own. But while there are bits and pieces of his works reflected hazily in mine, I believe that his influence, as a whole, is quite minimal.

As a child I was regaled nightly by fantasy stories created, on the spot, by my father. My mother read fairy tales to me from *Jack & Jill* magazine. I soon began reading the noted collection of the Brothers

Grimm, and others (I dimly recall) from a set called "Book Trails." Having read through Poe by age ten, I somehow gravitated into the realms of science fiction, fantasy, and horror. By the tender age of twelve, I was an avid fan of the "pulp" (magazines of those genres), and I ranged afield to assimilate whatever I could find which even vaguely related to these exciting yarns. Meanwhile, I was devouring ancient and medieval history, tales of the American frontier, historical novels of all sorts, and the "Hornblower" stories in the old *Saturday Evening Post*. Somewhere I came across a story by Robert E. Howard, an early taste of the elixir of fantasy to which I rapidly became addicted. Even now I vividly recall my first perusal of *Conan the Conqueror*, Howard's only full-length

novel. After I finished reading that piece of sword & sorcery literature for the first time, my concepts of adventure were never quite the same again.

From these literary fruits came the seeds which grew into today's most popular role-playing games. The concepts bloomed, producing their current forms, when fertilized by my early desire to play games of all sorts, my interest in devising my own, and my active participation in military simulation games. The last employed either miniature figures and models, or boards and counters, or combinations of all those. As a matter of observable fact, both game systems are still growing, ever changing, and I do not expect them to slow — let alone wither — for many years to come!

A careful examination of the games will quickly reveal that the major influences are Robert E. Howard, L. Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt, Fritz Leiber, Poul Anderson, A. Merritt, and H. P. Lovecraft. Only slightly lesser influence came from Roger Zelazny, E. R. Burroughs, Michael Moorcock, Philip Jose Farmer, and many others. Though I thoroughly enjoyed *The Hobbit*, I found the "Ring Trilogy" . . . well, tedious. The action dragged, and it smacked of an allegory of the struggle of the little common working folk of England against the threat of Hitler's Nazi evil. At the risk of incurring the wrath of the Professor's dedicated readers, I must say that I was so bored with his tomes that I took nearly three weeks to finish them.

Considered in the light of fantasy action adventure, Tolkien is not dynamic. Gandalf is quite ineffectual, plying a sword at times and casting spells which are quite low-powered (in terms of the D&D<sup>®</sup> game). Obviously, neither he nor his magic had any influence on the games. The Professor drops Tom Bombadil, my personal favorite, like the proverbial hot potato; had he been allowed to enter the action of the books, no fuzzy-footed manling would have been needed to undergo the trials and tribulations of the quest to destroy the Ring. Unfortunately, no character of Bombadil's power can enter the games, either — for the selfsame reasons! The wicked Sauron is poorly developed, virtually depersonalized, and at the end blows away in a cloud of evil smoke . . . poof! Nothing usable there. The mighty ring is nothing more than a stan-

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dard ring of invisibility, found in the myths and legends of most cultures (albeit with a nasty curse upon it). No influence here, either. . . .

"Ent" is interesting; Tolkien took the name from an old Anglo-Saxon word for "giant," and his treatment of them as sentient trees is inspired. This sort of creature appears in both game systems. "Orc" (from Orcus) is another term for an ogre or ogre-like creature. Being useful fodder for the ranks of bad guys, monsters similar to Tolkien's orcs are also in both games. Trolls, however, are not identified well by the Professor; these game monsters are taken from myth, influenced somewhat by Poul Anderson.

"Hobbit" is another folkword borrowed from legends, but Tolkien personified and developed these diminutive stalwarts extensively. They, and the name, are virtually unique to his works, and the halflings of both game systems draw substantial inspiration from them. Dwarves, on the other hand, are well known in Teutonic and Scandinavian myths; here, the Professor and I build upon the same foundation. Elves are likewise creatures of lore, and perhaps the most extensively treated of them all. In legend they are small or tall, good, evil, uncaring, silly, bright, and so on. Tolkien had them taller, more intelligent, more beautiful, and older than humans; in fact, he made them quite similar to the fair-folk, the fairies. The elves of the AD&D® game

system borrow two names (gray and wood) from the Professor's writings, and that is nearly all. They are shorter than humans, and not generally as powerful. There are various ethical alignments amongst them, though most are neutral-good in outlook with strong tendencies of individuality (chaos, in game terms).

The seeming parallels and inspirations are actually the results of a studied effort to capitalize on the then-current "craze" for Tolkien's literature. Frankly, to attract those readers — and often at the urging of persons who were playing prototypical forms of D&D games — I used certain names and attributes in a superficial manner, merely to get their attention! I knew full well that the

facade would be dispelled by the actualities of play. I relied on the power of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game to overcome the objections which would naturally occur when diehard Tolkien enthusiasts discovered the dissimilarity. This proved to be the case far more often than not. Tolkien fans entered the D&D game fold, and became a part of its eager audience, despite the fact that only a minute trace of the Professor's work can be found in the games. As anyone familiar with both D&D games and Tolkien works can affirm, there is no resemblance between the two, and it is well nigh impossible to recreate any Tolkien-based fantasy while remaining within the boundaries of the game system.

## HAVEN'T YOU HEARD?

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# The World Gamers Guide

We're proud of the fact that many of the people who read DRAGON® Magazine live in countries around the world. But we know, from letters we receive from some of them, that a lot of our readers in foreign countries are frustrated because few, if any, other players live close enough to them to meet them.

Our solution is the DRAGON Magazine World Gamers Guide, a feature that makes its second appearance in this space. Below are listed the names and addresses we've received since we announced several issues ago that this service would begin. Here's how the system works:

If you live outside the continental United States and Canada, you are eligible to have your name and address printed in the guide, free of charge. Put your name and full address on a postcard or in a short letter and send it to World Gamers Guide, c/o DRAGON Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147, USA.

Your address must be complete (including the country you live in) and legible; we won't publish something we can't decipher. (And we can't be responsible for a mistake or inaccuracy in someone's address — unbeknownst to us — that prevents a letter from reaching its destination.) As you'll notice, the addresses do not appear in any particular order. For the sake of simplicity and to save a little space, we will not list multiple names for a single address; only one name (the first one mentioned) will accompany any address. If you want to, you can also list up to three role-playing games that you enjoy, so that anyone who writes to you will know something about what you like. We will publish each name and address for three consecutive issues; if you want to be listed for more than three issues, you'll have to send us another postcard when your first listing expires.

Sorry, but we can't extend this offer to U.S. servicemen who live overseas, or to people who live in sparsely populated areas

of the United States or Canada, because there are still more gamers per square mile in places like Utah or Alberta than there are in countries like Japan and India. We can only afford to use a limited amount of space for the World Gamers Guide, and we would run into a severe problem if we tried to expand it any further.

Gaming preferences are abbreviated as follows: AD = AD&D® game; DD = D&D® game; SF = STAR FRONTIERS™ game; MSH = MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game; GW = GAMMA WORLD® game; RQ = RUNEQUEST® game; CC = CALL OF CTHULHU® game; TS = TOP SECRET® game; RW = RINGWORLD™ game; R = RECON™ game; C = CHAMPIONS™ game; T = TRAVELLER® game. These preferences, when stated by the sender, are given after his or her name, and should NOT be used as part of the mailing address.

And now, the World Gamers Guide for March 1985:

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# Convention Calendar

## COASTCON '85, Mar. 8-10

This annual convention will be staged at the Royal d'Iberville Hotel in Biloxi, Miss. Toastmaster for the convention will be Vonda McIntyre, and Alan Dean Foster will be among the guests of honor. Gaming activities, an art show, a costume party, and an auction will be some of the features available at the convention. For more details about this event, contact: Coastcon, P.O. Box 1423, Biloxi MS 39535.

## FAN CON '85, Mar. 8-10

To be staged at the Northpark Inn in Dallas, Texas, this convention will feature all aspects of the science-fiction and fantasy fields, from media to fantasy art, from comics to books and magazines. There will be a variety of programming, including a fantasy RPG tournament. George Takei and Majel Barrett Roddenberry, of "Star Trek" fame, will be guests of honor. Membership fees are \$15 at the door. For more details, contact: Fan Con '85, P.O. Box 380297, Duncanville TX 75138.

## LUNACON '85, Mar. 15-17

This science-fiction convention will be held at the Sheraton Inn at LaGuardia in Queens, N.Y. Writer guest of honor will be Gordon R. Dickson, and the artist guest of honor will be Don Maitz. An exhibit of sf books and magazines that were released this past year will be the main event. For more information, contact: Lunacon '85, P.O. Box 779, Brooklyn NY 11230.

## TRI-CON III, Mar. 15-17

This convention will be staged at the North Carolina State University campus. Guests of honor include Karl Edward Wagner and Orson Scott Card. A variety of tournaments will be offered. Admission is free. For details, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Tri-Con III, P.O. Box 50201, Raleigh NC 27650.

## FRONTIER WAR, Mar. 16-17

Sponsored by Dungeon Masters' Association South, this gaming event will be held at

the Scottish Rite Temple in Bloomington, Ill. Among featured activities will be a *Traveller*® tournament coordinated by Marc W. Miller, the game's creator. Registration fees are \$6 at the door; in addition, each event costs \$1. For further information, contact: DMA South, c/o Catherine Brennan, 1305 Heritage Road, East Normal IL 61761.

## MIDSOUTHCON 4, Mar. 22-24

This event will take place at the Airport Quality Inn in Memphis, Tenn. Fred Pohl will be guest of honor, and Keith Bardek will be artist guest of honor; other guests will include Sharon Webb and Suzette Haden Elgin. Admission fees are \$15. For more information, contact: Midsouthcon 4, c/o Richard Moore, 1229 Pallwood, Memphis TN 38122.

## NEO CON IV, Mar. 22-24

This gaming convention will be staged at the Gardner Student Center at the University of Akron. For more details about this event, contact: Neo Con IV, P.O. Box 7411, Akron OH 44306.

## ALASCON VI, Mar. 23-24

To be staged at the Fairbanks campus of the University of Alaska, this convention will feature a tournament dungeon, a miniatures painting contest, and much more. For more information, contact: Lance Roberts, P.O. Box 83449, Fairbanks AK 99708, or telephone (907)479-6375.

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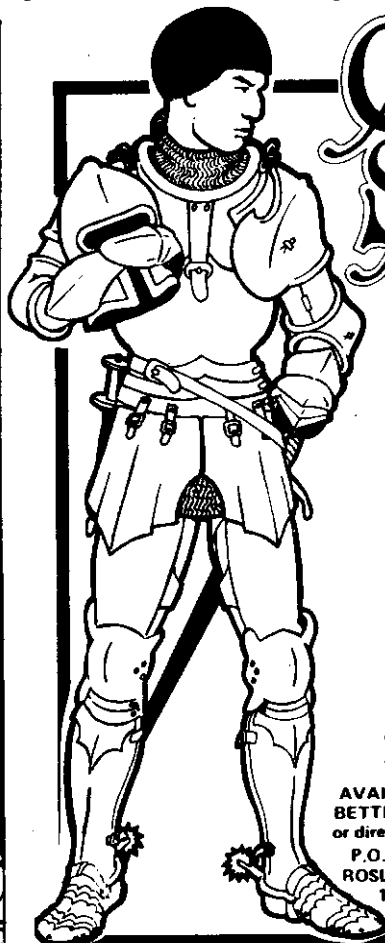
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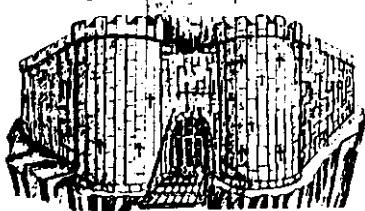
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## POINTCON VIII, Mar. 30-31

Sponsored by the Military Affairs Wargames Committee, this convention will be staged at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y. Board and role-playing games, tournaments, and demonstrations will be some of the activities featured at the convention. Note that admission to this event is free. For more information about Pointcon VIII, contact: Cadet John Surdu, P.O. Box 3206, West Point NY 10997.

## GAMES PLUS DAY, Mar. 30

To be held at the Mount Prospect Holiday Inn, this gaming convention will feature numerous events, including a large D&D® tournament. Admission fees are \$5. For more details, contact: Games Plus, 20 W. Busse Ave., Mount Prospect IL 60056, or telephone (312)577-9656.

## TIPPY-CON IV, Mar. 30

This convention will take place in the Economics Building of the Tippecanoe County Fairgrounds in Lafayette, Ind. For further agenda information, contact: Tippy-Con IV, P.O. Box 5596, Lafayette IN 47904.

## CONTRAPTION, Apr. 19-21

To be held at the Holiday Inn in Troy, Mich., this convention promises many interesting events. Contact: Contraption, 327 Orion Terrace, Lake Orion MI 48035.

## EXPLOR-O-CON '85, Apr. 19-21

This convention will offer many gaming activities, including numerous RPG tournaments. Gamemaster, dealer, and speaker inquiries are invited. For more information, contact: Explor-o-con '85, P.O. Box 435, Gardner MA 01440-435, or telephone (617)632-9588.

## WIZARDCON '85, Apr. 20

This gaming convention will be held in Ferris Booth Hall at Columbia University In New York, N.Y. Events will include demonstrations, panels, and role-playing and board game tournaments. Although there will be no admission charge, a nominal entry fee will be required for each tournament. For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Columbia Games Club, 301 Ferris Booth Hall, Columbia University, New York NY 10027.

## ALTI-EGOS, Apr. 26-28

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be staged at the Sheraton Denver Tech Center in Denver, Col. Guest of honor will be acclaimed author Anne McCaffrey. Featured events will include a writer's panel, an art show, a variety of gaming activities, science-fiction and fantasy films, and a model contest. Registration fees are \$25 until March 1, and \$35 at the door. For more information about this convention, contact: Alti-Egos, P.O. Box 261000, Lakewood CO 80226.

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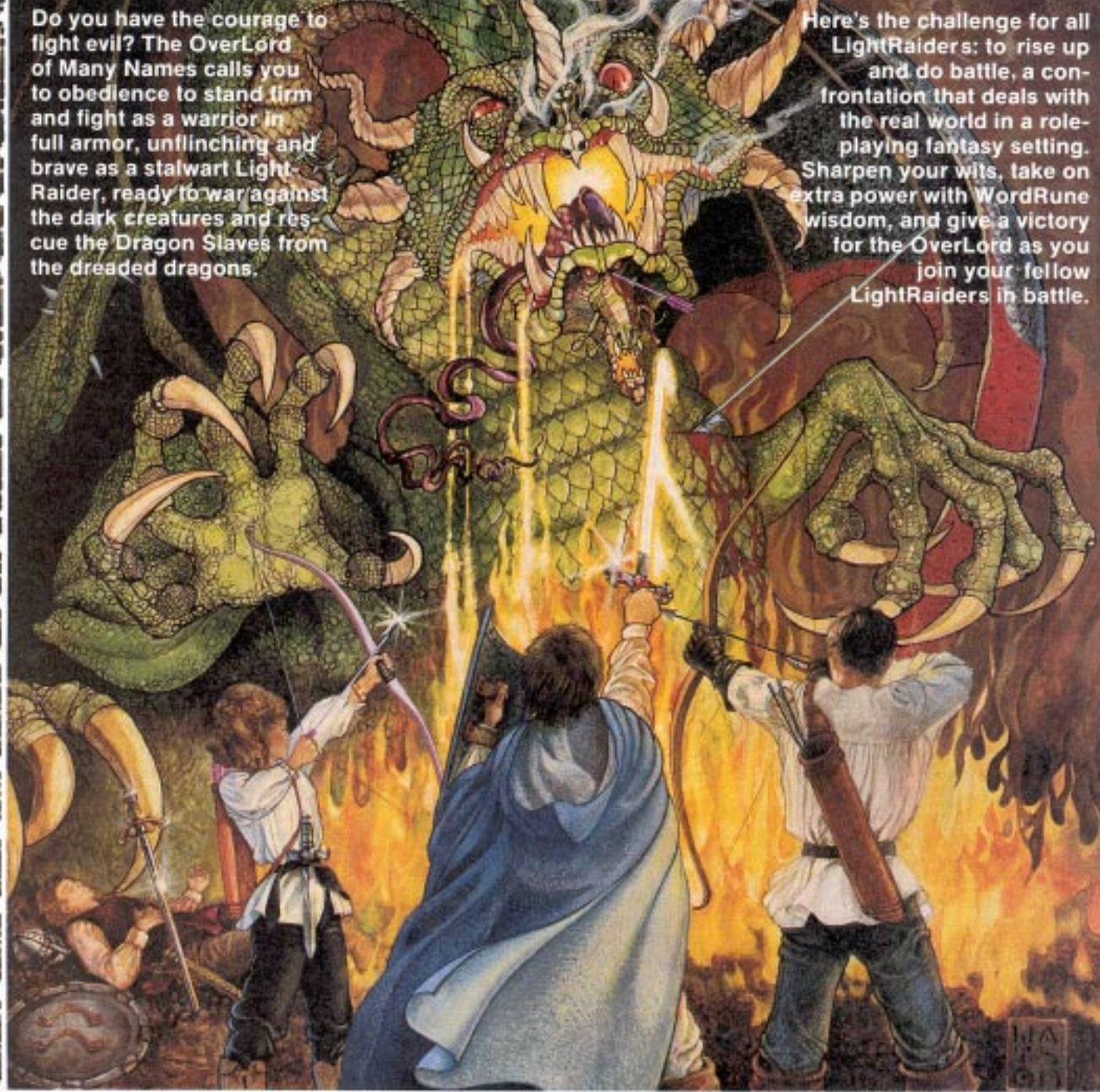


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# How taxes take their toll

## The king's collectors don't have it easy, either

by Arthur Collins

An interview with His Excellency, Algoras Stanheort, Chancellor of the Exchequer, serving His Royal Majesty Cynefyr, Bretwalda of Feldren

*(DRAGON® magazine would like to thank Arthur Collins for performing this interview on our behalf. In addition, we express our appreciation to the Royal Censor's Office of Feldren for allowing this transcript to appear without prior review. Thanks also are given to the staff of the Exchequer, which arranged for the Chancellor to take part in this important dialogue after payment of only the most usual of bribes.)*

DRAGON MAGAZINE: Many thanks to you, Your Excellency, for agreeing to be interviewed.

ALGORAS STANHEORT: My humble thanks to you, Sir Examiner, for your most welcome invitation. Truly, we who care for the weighty concerns of royal finance appreciate the opportunity to convey to the world at large somewhat of our view of things.

DM: Financing a kingdom must be very difficult. Do you find it so?

AS: Indeed, young man, indeed. Unlike your country, of which I have learned somewhat prior to this interview, our financial system draws no distinction betwixt the expenses and revenues of the kingdom at large and those of the ruler himself. Although there indeed exists the Office of the Royal Chamberlain, who has care of the Household accounts, the separation between our functions is very ill-defined. Then, too, we live in a violent world, and the defense of the kingdom requires heavy expenditures to maintain our navy, our military, our castles, and so forth. Is it not so in your land?

DM: I think not to the degree that you experience in Feldren, Your Excellency. Yet defense is a heavy expenditure in our land, too.

AS: As it should be in every well-governed kingdom, Sirrah! But yet I could wish that every government, mine own included, were as resourceful in finding ways to acquire revenue as they seem to be in finding ways to disburse it. Alas, it falls upon me and my very inadequate staff to garner the treasure that all the King's other men compete to spend. Since we are vastly outnumbered by the scatters of His Majesty's store, we must compensate by being vastly more inventive than they, finding novel ways to gather it in.

DM: It must be very interesting work, I would think. And he who does it must be a very powerful individual.

AS: Indeed the work *is* fascinating, youngling. Entirely fascinating. And the power you speak of simply makes it more so. Perhaps the most compelling aspect of the work of royal finance is being so near to the center of things. As they say in your country, "Nothing exists that is sure but the Dark Angel and the Revenue Collector."

DM: "Death and Taxes" is the way we express it, Your Excellency.

AS: Said I not so, Sir Broadsheet? Truly no business is so essential to the governing of a kingdom than the business of death and taxes. A strong sword and a full moneybag — these maketh a kingdom to prosper.

DM: How then is it done, Your Excellency? Where does the money come from to run the kingdom?

AS: Most of it indeed comes from the coffers of the King. You must understand, Master Scrivener, that the King is the greatest landowner and magnate in the realm. Were it not so, he might be in trouble with those who could outbid him in the auction of power. And in order to insure that his Royal Majesty maintains his exalted and well-endowed state, it is sometimes necessary to exact payments from those who would acquire too much of this world's goods.

DM: So you are saying that beyond the normal revenues of the King — by which you mean mostly rents and farm income — taxes are instituted mainly to curb the advance of nobles? To keep everyone in his place, so to speak?

AS: Ah, how quickly thou has grasped at this kernel of wisdom! Yet this kernel is but a mere portion of the whole of taxation theory. Of course it is necessary to keep the barons and other magnates in their places, as it is necessary to do a great many other things for the good of the Kingdom. We must maintain bridges, build roads, and enclose towns with redoubtable walls. We must maintain our armies and our merchant marine, purchase weaponry, train the yeomanry, conduct diplomacy, and yet more. Taxation factors in all of these activities. Some we make to pay for themselves. Others we support with the general funds of the Kingdom. Yet other activities we maketh others to pay for.

DM: For instance?

AS: As for instance: the building of towns and castles. The King rewards service with a grant of land. Yet it is not the land alone

that is granted, for certain rights and obligations are attached. The building of a castle provides defense. A town increases trade. And a bridge may be built to carry the King's gallant men.

DM: I see. Well then, in what ways do you tax the people?

AS: Ere I attempt to answer your question, let me ask you two others. By *people*, mean you only the common folk, or do you intend to that designation the nobles and religious institutions as well? Further, in asking how we tax them, do you refer solely to my office, or do you desire a larger discussion on all the ways in which people are taxed in Feldren?

DM: Forgive me, Your Excellency. How very perceptive of you to enlarge upon my question. Allow me to rephrase it: Would you be so kind as to expound all the main ways in which taxes are paid, including by whom and to whom?

AS: I thought that to be your aim, Master Must-ask-about-all. Well, by the Gamble of St. Gaz, you at least have the wit to ask one who could tell you what you want to know, albeit briefly. There are the occasional taxes, which people pay on certain goods or only on certain occasions. Then there are the regular monthly taxes, and beyond these the seasonal taxes, which are assessed four times a year. And it seems that one could also include under your heading those licenses that persons are required to obtain for certain purposes, and also the bonds and fees required to perform certain actions. Finally, there are monopolies and benevolences, granted by or to the King.

DM: That's an awful lot of taxes to load on the people's backs, is it not, Your Excellency?

AS: If Providence had not intended the people to bear such expenses upon their backs, then they should not have had such broad backs upon which to bear them, think you not? *(At this point His Excellency permitted himself a chuckle.)*

DM: Quite so — I suppose. What are the monthly taxes, then?

AS: Well, now. There is the Consumption Tax assessed in all cities and towns. It is assessed at 1 farthing in the shilling on all sales. *(Note: A farthing in AD&D® game terms is ¼ copper piece. Other Feldren currency is roughly equivalent to AD&D game currency as follows: 1 penny = 1 copper piece; 1 shilling = 1 silver piece; 1 pound = 1 gold piece.)* Certain goods are designated as luxuries and are subject to the Luxury Tax of 1 penny in the shilling.

There is a general Inheritance Tax of 1 shilling in the pound. And of course, we collect tariffs on goods imported from other lands. These rates vary, depending on the state of our relations with the kingdom in question, but they probably average about 1 penny for every 100 pounds of weight of the goods.

DM: Any others?

AS: Oh, you tax *me*, Sirrah! You tax my poor recall. Oh, yes — we have the tolls collected at booths on certain bridges and roads.

DM: How much is the toll?

AS: A mere trifle. Hardly enough to pay for the upkeep. A person on foot pays 1 penny, as does a beast or a cart, while a coach or chariot pays twopence. Yet it all adds up.

DM: You also mentioned certain monthly taxes, Lord Chancellor. What are they?

AS: Primarily, there are two. A Market Tax is assessed on every adult and every beast to enter a walled town on the monthly Market Day, of a penny each. And then there is the Alien Tax. Resident aliens are required to pay 1 shilling for each adult each month, and non-resident aliens pay twice that. Diplomatic personnel are exempt from such taxation, of course.

DM: Is the Alien Tax an example of using taxation to keep people in their places?

AS: To some degree, sire. To some degree. Yet consider also that it is sometimes

wise to tax those who have no legal recourse to complain against their taxation, not so?

Further, it is not our design to have the Kingdom overrun with subjects of other kingdoms, so we keep down their numbers a bit by taxing them for being here.

DM: What about the seasonal taxes, Your Excellency? What are they?

AS: Oh, various, various. Indeed, they are probably the backbone of our taxation system. They yield the greatest revenue, and the most regular. In the spring, every hearth is taxed, from the meanest cottager's hovel to the greatest lord's castle. Then in summer, the Land Tax is due. Every acre of the kingdom is assessed: a tribute to my staffs perspicacity and enterprise! We also collect the Nobility Tax at that time.

DM: You tax the nobility just for being noble?

AS: Oh, no! Such were never our intention. But each family displaying tokens of nobility, such as crests, coats-of-arms, household uniforms, and the like, pays 5 pounds for the privilege. It is a mere trifle, yet as I said before, it adds up.

DM: I see. Pray go on, Your Excellency.

AS: Where was I? Hearth Tax, Land Tax . . . Ah, yes. In autumn the Holy Synod collects the Tithe: two shillings in the pound on all produce, rents, and profits from the land. Sad that it is so steep, and none of it goes into His Majesty's coffers. But you did ask to know of all the taxes our subjects have to pay. The Synod collects the Tithe,

and we collect the Income Tax at the same time.

DM: Isn't that quite a lot at one time?

AS: No, I think not. The Tithe covers mostly profits from land, while the Royal Income Tax is mostly assessed against merchants and such. There is very little overlap. And the tax on incomes is a mere penny in the pound.

DM: How do you know what a person's income is for a given year? Do they file reports?

AS: Does my staff seem of adequate size to deal with such a mountain of documents as would be produced by such a demand? No, no, Master Not-so-clever-after-all. We leave it to the discretion of the Agents of the Exchequer. Each one is given a Shire to collect, with a goal to return. He in turn sees that the tax is collected, and the proper amount paid in to the Exchequer's coffers.

DM: Doesn't that leave open the possibility of great corruption?

AS: I follow you not. What is corrupt about it?

DM: Pardon me, Your Excellency, but isn't it an invitation to extortion when you simply require your agents to collect a lump sum of money from the people? Won't they charge more than is required, so as to gain a profit? Couldn't an agent merely hire others to do his collecting, with them extorting more even than he does, so that all have a profit? And without knowing the precise income of a subject, how is it determined how much tax he should pay? A penny in the pound may be the legal assessment, but is it possible that many are forced to pay more, while others could get out of paying anything at all?

AS: I see what you mean. But this is a concept new to me, and a doubtful one. The agents are paid the merest stipend. Of course they are expected to make a profit out of collecting the revenues due His Majesty. As long as His Majesty has his proper income, and none is so oppressed as to make rebellion, what matters it who is assessed precisely what? We look upon the penny in the pound as a goal to be realized, not a dead weight to drag us all down. No, I am afraid you do not understand the ways of our revenue system after all, sir. By my troth, it works very well, indeed.

DM: I understand better now. Well, are there any taxes due in winter, Lord Chancellor?

AS: Indeed, indeed! Winter is the very season of taxes. There is the Poll Tax assessed on every head in the Kingdom, the Magic Tax on all magical items, the Sword Tax on every edged weapon, and the Henchmen Tax on all who have retainers. (Once again, His Excellency permitted himself a chuckle.) What we fail to get in the warmer seasons, we recoup in winter, you see. Hiding and running away are far more difficult in the depth of this frigid season, and so taxes are far easier to collect. Pay or freeze, Master Scribe! Oh, yes, that is their choice! Pay or freeze! Oh, yes. Quite.

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DM: How much do all of these seasonal taxes add up to?

AS: Eh? How much? Lords of Destiny, man, ye don't expect me to know that from the very top o' my head, do ye? I'll get you a list. *(His Excellency summoned a clerk and gave him instructions to find a rate sheet on the seasonal taxes. The information on the sheet is reproduced below.)*

*Poll Tax:* Adult, 2p; child or marketable beast, 1p; riding horse, 1sh.

*Magic Tax:* Potion, 1p; scroll, 1sh; book, 3sh; ring, 5sh; wand, 10sh; miscellaneous item, 12sh; weapon, 1 pound; artifact or relic, 20 pounds.

*Sword Tax* (on all edged weapons 9 or more inches long): 1p for every 2 inches of edge plus 1p for each pound of weight.

*Henchmen Tax:* every henchmen, 2sh; every hireling, 1sh.

*Hearth Tax:* simple dwelling, 1p; simple dwelling in town, 2p; simple dwelling in walled town, 6p; large dwelling, 1sh; large dwelling in walled town, 3sh; inn, 10sh; manor, 1 pound; castle, 10 pounds.

*Land Tax:* per acre under cultivation, 1p; per acre lying fallow, ½p; per acre of woodland, 3f; per acre of barren land, 1f; per acre of pond or lake, ½p; per acre of townland, 6p; per acre of fortified land, 1sh.

DM *(after briefly looking over the rate sheet):* It would seem that you are very inventive in finding ways to make people pay.

AS: And why should they *not* pay, I ask you? Do we not defend them from enemies? Do we not provide them with the pride of being subject to the greatest of all kings, our Lord Bretwalda Cynefyr? Eh? Do you get off so much cheaper in your own land? *(Here a short but awkward pause ensues.)*

DM: You mentioned some other sorts of taxes and fees that the people pay, Your Excellency. Could you tell me what they are?

AS: Certainly, My Lord of Many Questions. Royal licenses are required of all who would engage in certain trades. A pedlar's license to sell his goods costs a penny per market day, while a beggar's license costs a penny each season.

DM: Beggars have to obtain a license to beg?

AS: But of course! 'Tis a most profitable trade, and one that yieldeth us much.

DM: Are there penalties for not obtaining the proper license?

AS: You jest with me, sir. However, if you do desire to know about particulars, I refer you to my Lord Chief Justiciar. He could detail for you the penalties and procedures for those who flaunt the King's Law.

DM: Yes, I'm sure he could. What other licenses are there?

AS: A manufacturer's license is 2 pounds per year, a scholar who desires to operate a school must pay a pound per year, while vintners, brewers, bakers, and such pay 2 pounds per year, as does a monopolist.

DM: Yes, you mentioned monopolies before. How do they work?

AS: To realize a revenue on the many goods and services produced in the kingdom is a mammoth task. And there are always those who render the King good service, and rightly expect some reward for their pains. So the King grants certain monopoly rights to his favorites, and all such as deal in the goods or services specified in the grant must pay the monopolist the price that he proclaims. In return, the monopolist must pay the King 2 pounds a year.

DM: What sort of goods and services are offered by monopolies?

AS: Oh, the usual. Salt, wool, silk, iron, hawking and fencing schools. . . . a wide variety of things.

DM: What other means of revenue do you have?

AS: We have the usual legal fees and duties. A small list.

DM: Such as?

AS: For the privilege of bringing suit in a royal court, 10 shillings. And if a suit is argued in the royal court, the King gets ten percent of the amount sued for, or a minimum of 30 shillings, from the person who is adjudged in the wrong — in addition to what the loser must pay to the winner, whose damages recovered are taxable as income. Harborage in any port is 1 shilling a day. To import certain items costs 20 pounds, while to export certain items not at your exclusive risk is 10 pounds. A bond of 10 shillings is required to leave the country. Naturalization costs 15 shillings. To practice the profession of magic-user costs a person 15 pounds a year. Non-humans must pay 5 pounds a year. These last two assessments are bonds for their good behavior, you understand. And, to purchase a writ from a Royal Justice costs 5 shillings. Money-changers and lenders are charged five percent of their profits a year. 'Tis a varied list, to be sure. Yet we leave no stone unturned, for who knows what may be underneath it?

DM: Well, that covers about everything, except the subject of benevolences. What is a benevolence?

AS: A benevolence is a grant of money given out of sheer good will. On occasion, the King must needs ask for such from the Synod, or his nobles, or such other class of folk. And they search their hearts, and find that they love the King. So they freely offer to the King what he needs. On occasion, the King himself will give a benevolence to some other institution or person. But everyone loves the King, and is glad to see that his expenses are met. Is it not so in your government?

DM: I am not qualified to say, Your Excellency. Are there other ways you have to raise money?

AS: Oh, yes. Are there not always yet a way or two more to extract money from the coffer? To knight a son, a fee is required, usually 50 pounds or so. If an heir is a minor when he cometh into possession of his estate, then the Office of Wards runs his estate for him and realizes all gain from the land and possessions until he reaches his majority. And of course, in time of need,

the King may offer other honors in his possession for a consideration.

DM: Such as?

AS: Oh, offices, titles, the right to marry a certain noblewoman. I believe another saying of your land is, "Everything has its price." And so does every man. Part of our task in the Exchequer is to take deep thought and discover the price of things and men. And I trow we do it well.

DM: I see. Anything else?

AS: There are levies.

DM: What are they?

AS: Emergency taxes, mostly. Yet certain ports pay a regular levy of ship money to the Exchequer, which helps support the navy. Nobles, towns, villages, and guilds are required to provide the King a set number of archers, infantry, cavalry, and supplies each year at their own expense. And the list could go on — but, alas, I cannot. I am afraid I must end our very pleasant discourse now. Affairs of State, you know.

DM: Indeed, Your Excellency. You have been more than kind to grant me the time you have. But please allow me to pose one last question. The man who invented the system of taxation in my land once described it as "discovering the way to pluck the most feathers from the goose with the least amount of squawk." Would you say that the same applies to your system of taxation?

AS: A wise man, he who said that, but I would amend it in only one particular. As applied to our system of producing revenue, let me say that we have discovered the value of a minimum of deafness in plucking the goose. More feathers can be collected if you mind less the squawking.

DM: Thank you very much, Chancellor.

AS: Indeed, 'twas my pleasure, Sir Gentle Inquisitor. My clerk will show you out.

*(At this juncture, the clerk came in and motioned the interviewer toward the exit. At the same time, through another door, a very tall young woman with amazing features and a still more amazing costume entered. Affairs of State, you know.)* ✕

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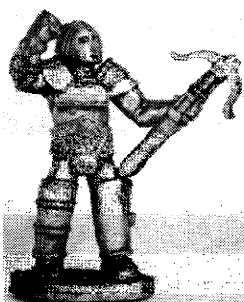
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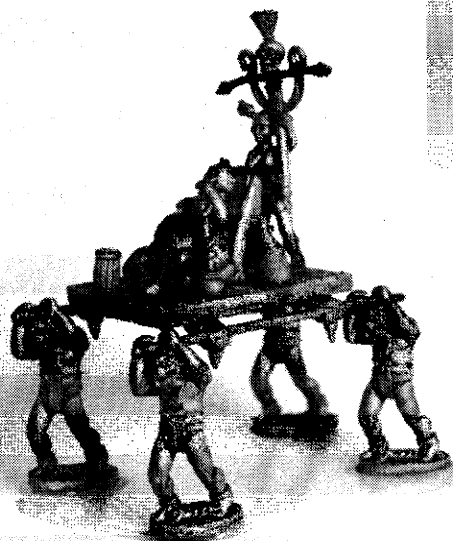
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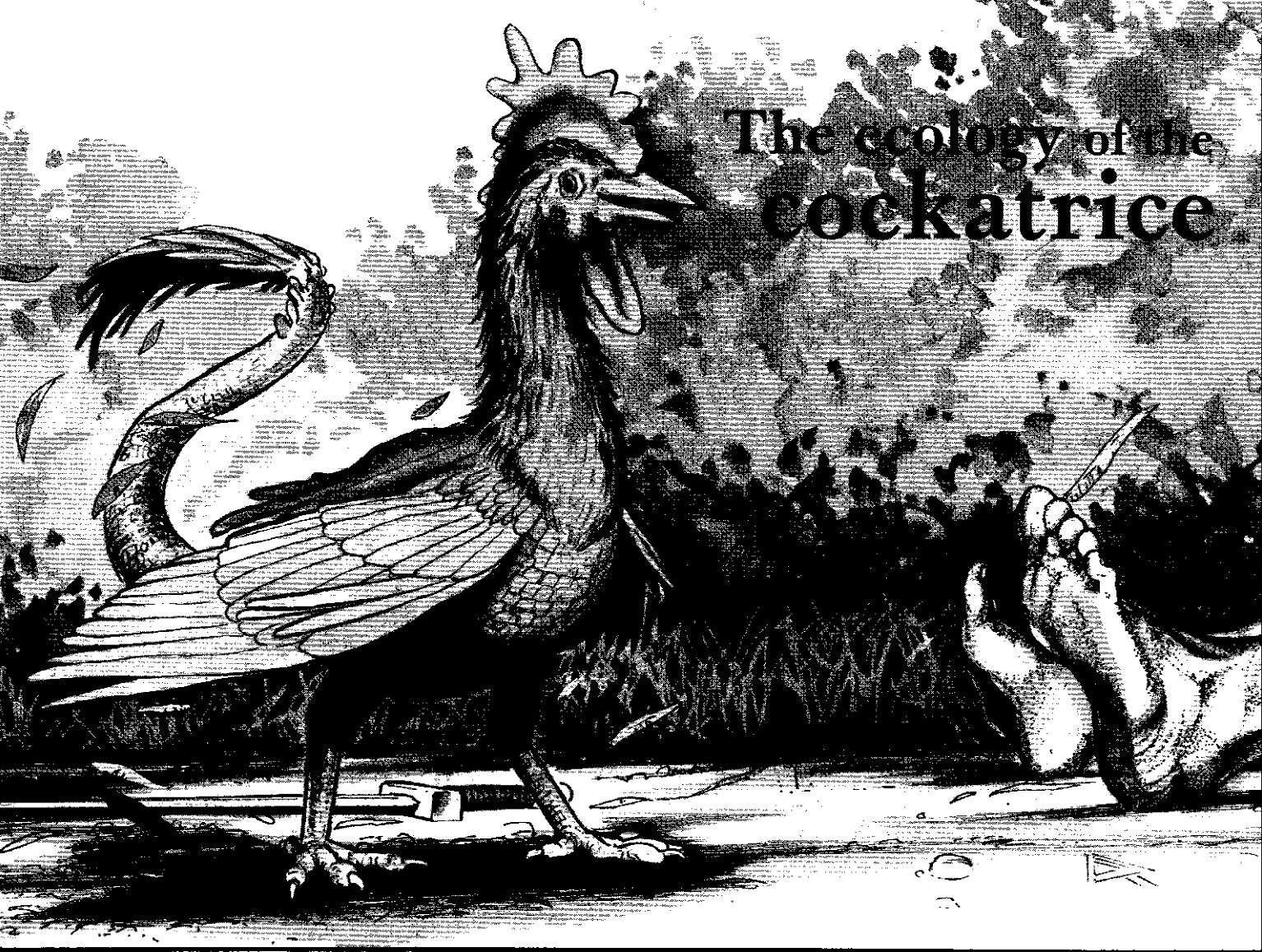
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# The ecology of the cockatrice

by Ed Greenwood

Recently, I asked Elminster if he knew of any folk tales of the Realms involving cockatrices. He thought for a while and then said, "Aye, many mention them briefly, turning some poor unfortunate to stone, but none dwell on their lives and habits. They are thoroughly nasty creatures and presumably are both avoided and ignored as much as possible." Then his face brightened a bit, and he continued:

"Oh, there's one good story. It concerns King Verovan of Westgate (in those days when Westgate had a king), who was a famous sea-master." Following is the tale, just as the old sage related it to me.

King Verovan delighted in rowing-races against any and all who would oppose him, wagering lands, jewels, and shiploads of wine against the freedom of the opposing crew. The king never lost, but delighted in the racing more than the winning. He needed the armies of men he won to replace those of his own rowers whose hearts, arms, or backs had given out under the furious strain of the competition.

There was no place he liked better than the tall afterdeck of his galley, the ship

cutting through the waves while his slaves below heaved and grunted and sometimes screamed at the rowing-benches, and the stroke-drum thundered its beat, and the long whip in his hand leaped as though it was alive, to mark with red the sweating backs of even the prow-bench rowers as he urged his men on.

He raced, and won, for a dozen years, ranging far and wide over the seas and lakes and rivers of the Realms, until he challenged the wizards of Thay, who had, men said, a boat of magic that sat above the waves so that it flew like a bird and its hull and holds stayed dry.

Verovan wanted such a boat, if it did indeed exist, but as a mariner, he wanted to see its strengths and shortcomings first. He thought it might fare ill in a storm, for the winds could blow it about helpless as a leaf severed from its tree — and so, on the eve of a storm, he sent his challenge to the wizards. They accepted, and asked in return for the wager of their ship merely the wager of his own. Moreover, they promised, to settle any fears of magical trickery, that only the merest of their apprentices would crew the magical vessel.

Verovan agreed, delighted at such fairness and courtesy (for the wizards of Thay

had a fell reputation), and the race began. Across a great gulf of the Inner Sea, round an island by a certain headland, and back again to the harbor where the wizards had received Verovan's challenge was the route, and although the strengthening wind blew in great gusts, Verovan plied his whip so eagerly that his suffering men had built up a lead of a league or more before the storm broke.

When the storm came, it was a horrible wall of wind, howling waves, and slashing rain, and Verovan saw with some satisfaction that the grey sails of the wizards' vessel were down in disarray, and the ship was being swept aside by the storm, while Verovan's rowers fought steadily on against the waves and made headway.

The waves grew mighty and broke over the rowers, running down the decks. Verovan seized a set of empty rowing-chains and fastened himself to the lashings of the great steering oar only minutes before an enormous wave swept over the afterdeck, carrying all thereon with it except for the helmsman, the stoker (who, clutching his drum, fetched up in a groaning tangle against the rail), and the king. Verovan's whip and helm were gone, swept out of his hand and off his head by the mighty wave.

The king turned to a chest nearby where spares of these items were kept, and outfitted himself once again — failing to notice that the whip he now grasped was slightly different in appearance from the one he had lost. Verovan resumed his place with angry yells, kicking the stroker upright and urging him on with shouts. The rowers picked up their cadence again, and Verovan held the whip at his side for a while, satisfied with the progress his men were making under the stroker's call.

Shortly after the worst of the storm passed, the king's galley drew abreast of a string of six jagged, rocky islands — which the still-terrible winds and waves sought to drive the ship against. The rowers roared and pulled as though demented, and Verovan again began to ply his whip like a landsman threshing grain.

But the men, it seemed, had been pushed to their limit. The more he struck them now, the more their efforts lessened, and the boat swept down rapidly, sideways on, to the crashing surf about the base of the islands. Verovan redoubled his lashings in fury — and then stopped in sudden horror as the smiling face of the wizard he had challenged appeared in the storm-wracked air before him. The visage looked at him, but did not move or speak.

In a moment Verovan was over his initial shock and had regained his usual cruel composure. "Do you mock me?" the king snarled, cutting through the image with his whip, to no effect. And then, looking away from the evil smile on the face of the wizard-image, Verovan noticed for the first time that most of his men sat at their benches motionless, as though carved of stone — and the rocks were drawing nearer.

"What has come over you?" Verovan bellowed at the statues that were once his men. "Row! Row!" he raged at them, but they did not seem to hear.

Verovan raised his whip yet again — and as the tip of it flew through his field of vision, he saw that the end of the whip bore a barb, shaped like a hawk's tail, made of feathers — cockatrice feathers! The stone-like figures on the benches grasped their unmoving oars, and now the rocks were close enough that escape from them would be impossible.

For the first time, the wizard's smiling face changed expression, breaking into a deep laugh. Then the wizard-image spoke. "It appears that the touch of your new whip is more merciful than the touch of your old one, Verovan. You cannot win the race, and so — you must forfeit your ship."

And with that, most of the galley vanished into thin air — except for a portion of the afterdeck, including the massive steering oar that Verovan was still lashed to. The king's screams were lost in the howling wind as he and the oar crashed into the waiting rocks. And it was in this way that Verovan of Westgate lost his last race.

Elminster sat back, finished with the tale, and I sighed. "A good tale, Elminster,"

I said, "but how can it be true? The wizards of Thay, as you admit, are not to be trusted. Is this not a mere minstrel's fancy?"

The sage shook his head. "Nay, for the stroker survived, thrown up onto one of the isles with his drum, and it is from his lips that the tale comes down."

"It is true, then," I conceded, "as much as such tales ever are. But this says little of cockatrices themselves, only that the wizards placed a magical whip in Verovan's gear — a whip of cockatrice feathers that petrified as though the creature still lived."

"Aye, I have details of that process," Elminster replied. "And I can tell thee something about the creatures themselves, besides." He then did so, and I made careful notes, so that I can summarize his remarks as follows:

The cockatrice is an unintelligent, nasty, avaricious creature, about the size of a large goose or turkey, that often flies into a fit of rage. The creature is infamous for the (permanent) *flesh to stone* power of its touch, but man is not its deliberate prey. Its habitat and habits are little known, and much confused by myth and old wives' tales. What follows is, however, known to be true, as far as it goes.

Males are more numerous than females (which lack the wattles, and have much smaller combs), and the latter are very seldom without a mate — or several mates, who will fight constantly among themselves over the female.<sup>1</sup>

Cockatrices are immune to their own and fellow cockatrices' petrification powers, and spend much time strutting, fighting among themselves, or foraging. A male-and-female pair (or the more unusual grouping of one strong female with several "consort" males) will mate often and noisily, screeching and cackling all the while. The female will lay a clutch of 1 or 2 eggs a month, at the waxing of the moon, which she guards watchfully while the male (or males) hunts food for her. The eggs are brownish-red, flecked with rust-red speckles, and they have hard, brittle shells. An egg that is fertile<sup>2</sup> will hatch in 11-19 days. An immature cockatrice is small (roughly fist-sized), but otherwise identical in appearance to its parents.<sup>3</sup> Such chicks grow to mature size and attain full powers in four to six months. They are then driven away by the parents, left to fend for themselves.

Cockatrices are vain, bullying creatures, and amongst themselves there is a constant battle for status. Nesting pairs consider themselves above solitary creatures or those who do not have a nest, and once a lair has been found, the cockatrice pair will build a permanent nest and continually enrich it (and thus their individual status) by lining it with treasure.

Status increases with the shininess and quantity of treasure, and there must always be the yellow gleam of gold somewhere among it for the owner to achieve true "class." Cockatrices are thus always foraging for food and treasure. Their preferred

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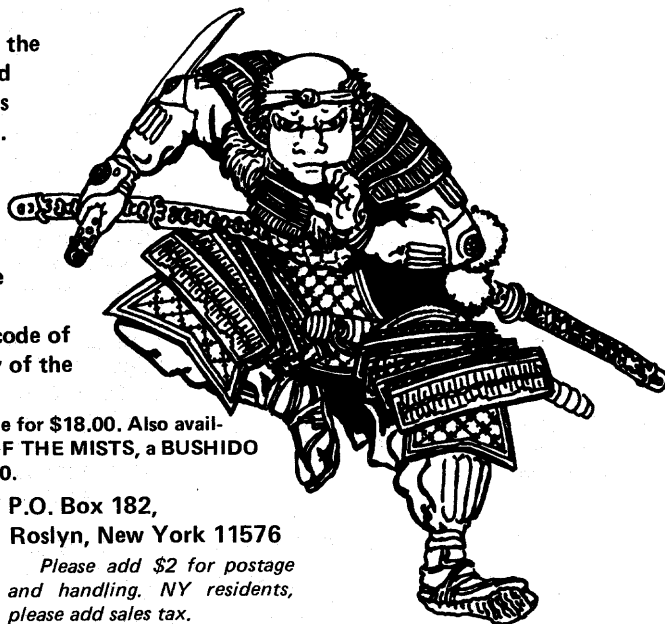
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diet consists of large, juicy beetles, small lizards, and snakes, although a cockatrice will eat all small reptiles, birds, mammals, seeds, fruit, and even fish it can catch, often subsisting largely on rodents.

It is important to note that the cockatrice can choose not to petrify by its touch (if it could not, it would never be able to eat), but this is a conscious, deliberate act of will on its part, and at all other times its touch automatically petrifies.<sup>4</sup> Be aware, however, that the *flesh to stone* power of the cockatrice is just that — its touch only affects the actual flesh or body of a creature, and does not work through (or upon) clothing, armor, or other inanimate objects. Thus, someone covered in head-to-toe armor has little to worry about — but someone with any sizable patch of flesh showing is in danger, for the cockatrice knows instinctively where to strike to bring about the “stoning” effect, and will aim for the vulnerable spot.<sup>5</sup>

Cockatrices are not strong flyers, but prefer to fight in the air against foes they deem dangerous, because they move more quickly when airborne than when on the ground. They can grapple opponents while flying, petrifying them upon a touch — whereupon most foes fall helplessly to earth.<sup>6</sup>

Cockatrices will never leave a nest unguarded, and will fight to the death to protect eggs or young. If a clutch of eggs happens to be entirely infertile, the parents

will leave that nest (and its treasure) and go elsewhere to nest, never returning to the former location, which they seem to hate and fear; apparently they consider it cursed, bad luck, or somehow contaminated.

Large groups of cockatrices encountered are usually young driven from the nest, all of one sex and temporarily together for safety and mutual hunting strength, or several males who have located, and are now vying for the attention of, a female.

The most feared foe of the cockatrice is the pech. This creature, being immune to petrification, hunts cockatrices with impunity both for food and trade. This trading, conducted via *svirfneblin*, results in a few secretive sales of live cockatrices to alchemists, paranoids of all types seeking guardians, jaded collectors of exotic pets (cockatrices sell for 500-1000 gp, eggs for 300-600 gp each), and so-called sculptors. (A famous “sculptor” in Waterdeep once plied his trade by drugging human models, posing them, and then releasing his pet cockatrice upon them.) Cockatrices are generally too stupid to be easily trained, but they can be taught (by repetition) to recognize their owner and carry out the simplest of commands given by that owner, so long as those commands do not go against the creature’s basic nature.

#### Notes

1. The cockatrice depicted in the *Monster Manual* is a male (males outnumber fe-

males 65% to 35%). Cockatrices may live as long as thirty winters, but the normal lifespan (assuming the creature survives infancy) is 16-20 years.

2. There is a 65% chance for each cockatrice egg laid that the egg is fertile and will hatch. This chance drops by 5% if the egg is abandoned by the mother or she is slain before it hatches. Eggs that do not hatch are eaten by the growing chicks.

3. The only substantial difference between an adult and an immature cockatrice is that the petrification effect of an immature cockatrice’s touch is saved against at a +3 bonus.

4. The willful switch from petrification to non-petrification or vice versa is effectively instantaneous (taking less than 1 segment), and is believed to be both a mental and a chemical change. The direct touch of any part of a cockatrice’s body causes petrification within 2 segments (unless the victim makes a successful saving throw). A cockatrice has a partial, intangible existence on the Astral and Ethereal planes as well as its corporeal existence on the Prime Material. This intangible existence consists of an aura corresponding in shape, size, and location to its physical form, and its aura petrifies on the Astral and Ethereal planes just as its body does on the Prime Material.

When a cockatrice chooses not to petrify, all parts of its body (and on the Astral and Ethereal planes, all parts of its visible aura) become “safe” (and invisible on the Astral

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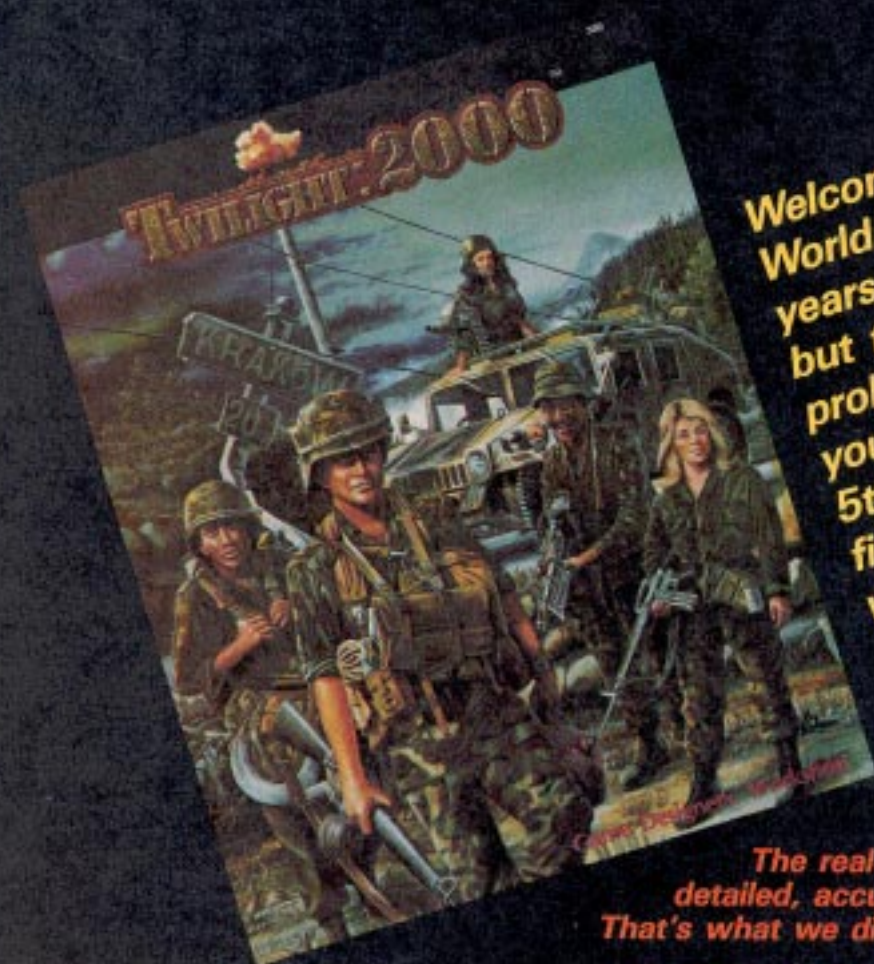
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A Major New Challenge in Roleplaying:  
Survival in the War-Torn World of

# TWILIGHT: 2000



Welcome to 2000 AD. World War III began five years ago. It's still going on, but that's the least of your problems. A few days ago, you were soldiers in the U.S. 5th Division. Now you're just fighting to survive while the world falls apart around you.

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**Combat:** Everything from a kick in the head to an artillery barrage on an M1E2 tank is settled by answering three questions: did you hit? where did you hit? and how hard did you hit? Coolness under fire is a major factor in combat—inexperienced characters may panic and freeze.

**Skills:** There are nearly 50 skills. Any task can be resolved by determining its difficulty and the applicable skill or attribute. Many tasks are described in the rules, and it's easy to resolve others. Skills can be improved by experience, study, and observation.

**Survival:** Rules are provided for everything needed to keep people and vehicles running: finding food and fuel, repair and maintenance, avoiding radiation and disease—everything from alcohol distillation to grenade fishing.

**Encounters:** Immense variety of encounters results from a few die rolls: people of all kinds—enemy units, traders, bandits, refugees—plus towns and farmhouses, animals, wrecked vehicles, and more. Rules for NPC motivations quickly flesh out important NPCs with complex motives.

**Equipment:** All kinds of equipment—the advanced military gear of 1995 and the primitive makeshifts of 2000—are covered. Because vehicles are rare, they can be described in great detail without slowing the game.

**Background:** Extensive background notes are included: a lengthy chronology of the war's first five years and notes on conditions in central Europe. A beginning adventure, *Escape from Kalisz*, forms the basis of a whole campaign, with information on enemy units, nearby towns, rumors and prisoner interrogations, and radio traffic, plus an account of the death of 5th division and the division's last issued intelligence briefing.

**Modules:** GDW will be issuing a series of adventure modules, with new background information for your campaigns. Watch for the first soon: *The Free City of Krakow*. With a large city militia (once the Polish 8th Motorized Division), working factories, and—so the rumor goes—electric power, Krakow is strong enough to declare its neutrality. It's a major center for what trade remains and—like Istanbul in the 30's—is crawling with the espionage services of both sides.

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and Ethereal planes) — except for the feathered end of its tail. This remains active at all times, able to petrify all living things it touches. Note that a cockatrice is well aware of this, and — not wishing to petrify its food — has careful and exact physical control and precise knowledge of the location of its tail. Note also that if a group of two or more cockatrices is encountered feeding, only one at a time actually “turns off” its petrifying power and eats; the others stand guard.

The cockatrice’s petrification power does not “turn off” automatically when the creature falls asleep or is rendered unconscious, but a dead cockatrice does not retain the power — except for the uncontrollable “stoning” power of its tailfeathers, which remains in effect for 1-4 days after the creature’s demise. (Saving throws against petrification by the tailfeathers are made at +1 if the cockatrice is dead or the feathers have been separated from the creature.)

Some mages (see Elminster’s tale, above, and AD&D® game module WG5, “Mordenkainen’s Fantastic Adventure”) have devised means of preserving the petrifying powers (and physical integrity) of cockatrice tailfeathers. One such method (from the notebooks of Arbane the Mighty) is reproduced here:

For the making of whips, hats, cloaks and the like adorned with cockatrice tailfeathers, the feathers must be magically preserved. To do this, take a cauldron, and into it pour equal parts of *oil of etherealness*, *aqua*

regia, and human tears (at least half an ounce of each). Mix this liquid well with a glass or crystal rod, and heat it to boiling while stirring in at least 6000 gp worth of powdered agate and either six whole (live or dead) cerebral parasites or the blood (7 drops or more) of a slaad, a githyanki, or a nightmare.

Stir this mixture until the solid components are dissolved, and then immerse the cockatrice feathers in the liquid while it is boiling. (A *mending* spell must be used beforehand on the feathers if they are broken, bent, or crumpled.) Take the cauldron away from the heat immediately after putting the feathers into the liquid, and let the cauldron stand until the liquid evaporates.

The cockatrice feathers will then be intact, resilient, and flexible, and will remain so forever (unless damaged or destroyed), retaining the power to permanently petrify living creatures (save vs. petrification at +1) by touch.

Feathers preserved in this fashion can only affect other creatures by direct contact on the Prime Material Plane or on the plane occupied by the bearer of the feathers; they cannot simultaneously affect creatures on the Astral or Ethereal planes or any other plane except the one that the feathers are physically present on.

5. If the flesh of a cockatrice’s opponent is revealed to any substantial degree (bare arms or bare legs, for instance), it can be assumed that a hit by the creature in melee

has struck the vulnerable part of the target’s body, and thus petrification is possible. If a would-be victim is almost entirely covered (only showing a bare head, bare hands, or bare feet, for instance), then the Dungeon Master must use judgment to determine the outcome of a cockatrice strike. For instance, it might be ruled that after a successful “to hit” roll, the cockatrice has a chance of striking exposed flesh, and that chance is equal to the approximate percentage of the victim’s body which is uncovered (perhaps 10% for bare feet, 15% for bare head, 25% for bare arms, etc.). Then, if that percentage is achieved on a second roll, the cockatrice has succeeded in striking the exposed flesh. (If more than one quarter of a target’s body is exposed, it can be assumed that the cockatrice automatically lands its strike in that area.) The victim is always allowed a saving throw to avoid the petrification effect, but even if the save is made the target will take damage from the strike of the cockatrice’s beak.

6. Cockatrices are of maneuverability class C, and must rest for at least 1 turn after 2-5 turns of flight. (How fast each creature tires depends upon the strength, weight, age, and present condition of the individual cockatrice.) Note that the creature’s aerial movement rate is fully three times faster than its ground movement; the cockatrice is well aware of this, and often uses short, flapping flights to pursue prey or escape immediate danger.

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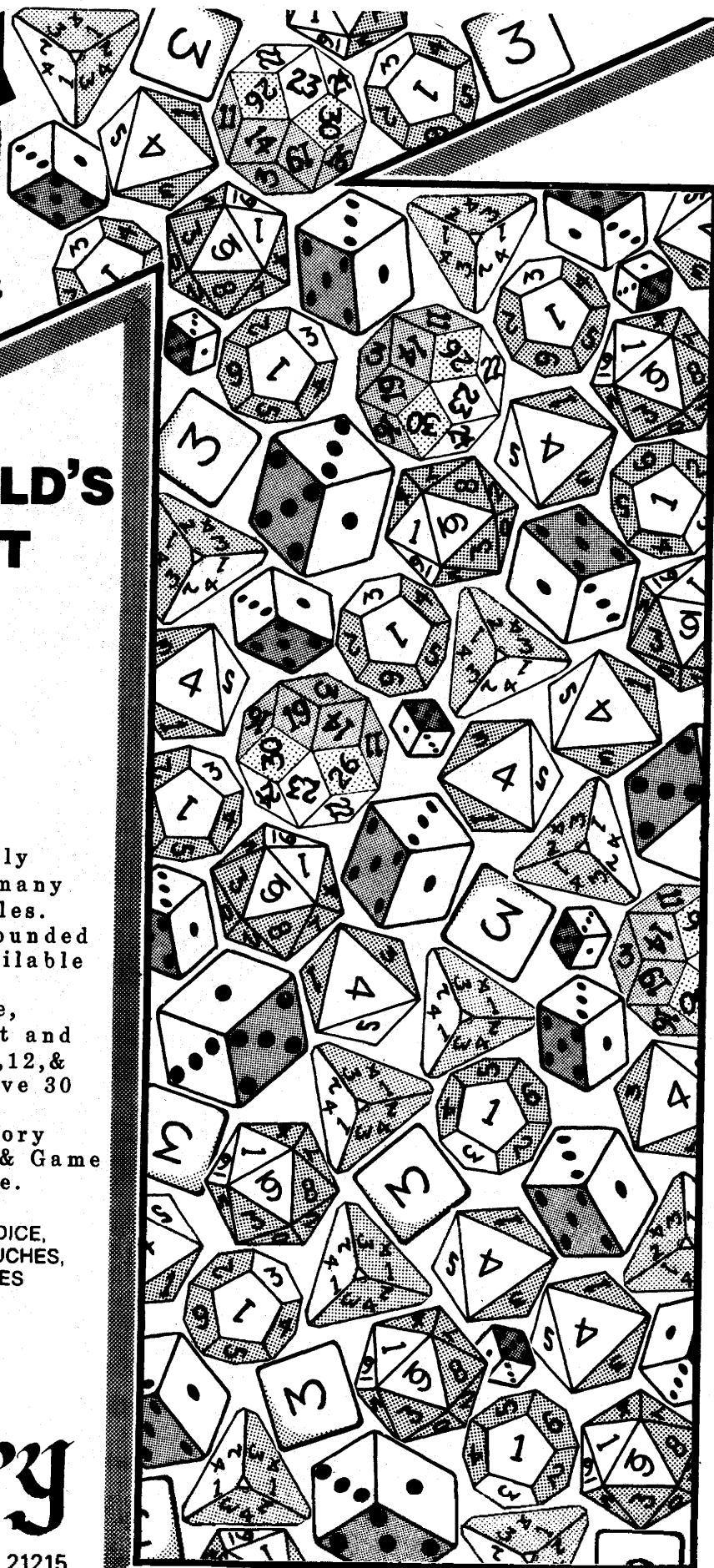
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# Prices for the Roaring 20's

## A way to measure PCs' purchasing power

by Glenn Rahman

The early twentieth century is the setting for more than one popular fantasy role-playing game. The 1920s is the prescribed time period in Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu*® game, while many scenarios of TSR's GANGBUSTERS™ game, Fantasy Games Unlimited's *Gangster*, and Flying Buffalo's *Mercenaries, Spies and Private Eyes* can be set within that decade. Each of these games provide price guides for equipment that an adventurer might find useful, but in each case the number of different items listed must be restricted because of space limitations and other considerations. This article offers an extensive listing of clothing, tools, devices, and accessories available in stores and by mail order in the mid-1920s. This article is specifically modeled as a supplement to the "Prices and Cash" chapter of the "Sourcebook for the 1920s" in the *Call of Cthulhu* game, but by its nature shall prove useful to any early twentieth-century adventurer.

The sheer number of items manufactured in the 1920's rules out any attempt at a comprehensive listing. This writer has made selections on the basis of what is both inadequately covered in existing price lists and what would potentially prove handy to a gangster or monster-hunter during the period in question. Firearms and other weapons have been omitted because of the degree of attention lavished on them in most existing rules systems. Other things such as farm machinery, silverware, toys, china, infant care items, etc., have been ignored because the space required to treat them cannot be justified by the likelihood of their use in a role-playing scenario.

For many of the listed items, a range of prices is given. Different prices for the same basic item can occur because of differences in size, quality, material, workmanship, and so forth. A table radio may be reasonably priced, while a cabinet-style radio that complements the decor of a room would cost much more. All listed prices, however, may be assumed to represent products within reach of the average consumer. The extra expense of rare imports or luxury items is not considered. Where only a single price is given, this indicates the writer's judgment of what an item of average quality and durability most usually cost in the 1920s. From one locale to another — even one store to another — prices could and often did vary considerably.

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Sweater . . . . . 2.00 - 8.00  
Socks (1 pr.) . . . . . 0.30  
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Pants, work . . . . . 2.25  
Shirt, work . . . . . 1.00  
Socks, work . . . . . 0.15  
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Paste, paper (7 oz.) . . . . . 0.30

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Pitcher, milk (1 qt.) . . . . . 0.65  
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Pan, cake . . . . . 0.15  
Pan, bread . . . . . 0.35  
Plate, pie . . . . . 0.10  
Bowl, mixing . . . . . 0.40  
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Paint, house (1 gal.)	2.25
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Trap, wolf	0.70

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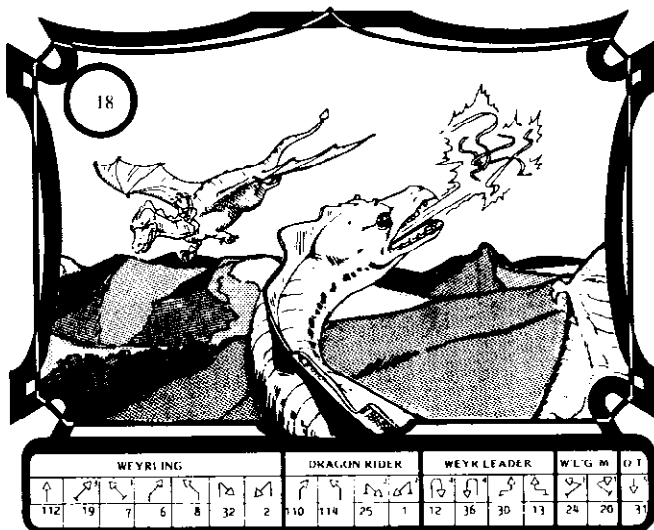
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## Elaborating upon the experience-point rules

by Katharine Kerr

The good old hack-and-slash campaign — anyone who plays the AD&D® game knows all about it. The main activity is killing monsters, preferably by the dozens, and looting their worldly goods. Whether action is set in a dungeon or above ground, what counts to the players and the Dungeon Master alike is the body count at the end of the session — the more dead orcs, dragons, and demons, the better. Because killing the same old thing stops being fun after a while, this kind of game produces some of the most unbelievable and biologically impossible monsters that never walked the earth.

An endless string of search-and-destroy missions produces a particular kind of player — one whose main motivation is sheer greed. Although in theory his paladin is devoted to the true, the good, and the beautiful, and her magic-user wants arcane knowledge for its own sake, show them enough treasure and they loot and kill like half-starved mercenaries. Eventually, this kind of player presents the DM with a genuine problem — the extremely powerful character who can blast or bash everything in sight and sees no reason to refrain from doing so. After all, heaps of dead monsters and treasure translate directly into a vast amount of experience points. In the “right” circumstances, it doesn’t take long for players to build up characters who take artifacts away from the gods as easily as they would lift a drunken sailor’s purse.

In DRAGON® Magazine and other publications that serve the gaming hobby, many writers have addressed the problems of hack-and-slash gaming. DMs have written many letters complaining of overly powerful characters and single-minded players. Yet, as good as these articles and letters have been, most have concentrated on the campaign world rather than on the rules of the game itself. We need to ask ourselves if there’s something in the very structure of the AD&D game rules that encourages hack-and-slash scenarios and “sheer greed” players. The answer, unfortunately, is yes. Any DM who tries to expand the game action beyond simple-minded banditry is immediately faced with a major problem: reconciling this effort with the rules for awarding experience points.

After all, experience points are the real goal of players and characters, even more than treasure or mayhem. All players want their characters to amass as many points as possible. Not only are high-level PCs fun to play, but low-level PCs are incredibly

vulnerable in the dangerous game world. For players, that extra hit die granted upon the attainment of each new level means survival as much as power.

In the AD&D game rules, there are only two ways of gaining these coveted experience points: slaying and looting. (My references here and subsequently are the *Players Handbook*, pages 106-107, and the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, pages 84-85.) The rules explicitly state that all experience points are to be awarded on the basis of monsters killed and treasure gained. Although the DM has some leeway about awarding bonus points, even these points may be given only for actions directly related to the gaining of treasure.

With these limits, it’s no wonder that players want as many chances for their characters to kill and loot as possible. In all fairness, likewise, DMs feel obliged to provide PCs with the opportunity to gain experience points. The end result is that any campaign based strictly on the rules will have to center around treasure hoards guarded by monsters, or similar situations. A well-run campaign provides unusual variations on this basic scenario and other kinds of action between the looting sessions, but ultimately the players must have plenty of opportunities for gaining treasure and killing opponents if their PCs are ever to advance.

Let’s look at an example of a scenario that provides plenty of game action but gives the DM no opportunity to assign experience points under the rules. An NPC who is well-known and well-liked by the PC party is kidnapped and sold into slavery in a distant city. The party members decide to rescue him, but, upon arriving at the city, they discover that their friend’s owner refuses to sell him back. Attempting violence in the well-guarded city would mean their arrest. The PCs, however, are given the chance to make the owner sell their friend back to them by using guile if they either gather information to blackmail the owner, seduce his daughter, or both. In this scenario, not only does using violence mean failure, but the PCs are going to have to pay out gold, not gain any, to rescue their friend. How, then, is the DM going to reward the party members if they successfully think their way through the problem?

By now, the nature of the difficulty should be clear. As they stand, the rules for assigning experience points reward hack-and-slash gaming and penalize (or, at best, ignore) intricate and nonviolent types of

play. DMs who want to expand their campaigns beyond simple search-and-destroy scenarios have to modify or even downright change these rules in order to reward player characters fairly. The most obvious way of making these changes is to draw up a list of new reasons for awarding experience points, such as clever thinking, out-talking an NPC guard, and so on.

I’m sure that many DMs have already made up such lists for their own campaigns, but this method has real problems. After all, even if we choose to revise the experience-point system drastically, our revisions have to be consistent with the structure of the AD&D game, not merely a graft from some other game system or a jury-rigged addition that runs counter to the intent and structure of the game. Any new rules for assigning experience points have to take into account the rationale for and the parameters set by the old rules. This article first analyzes the rules for assigning experience points, then offers some suggestions about expanding them to cover new kinds of scenarios without doing violence to the principles underlying them. (The suggestions here are, of course, strictly variants, not additions to official rules.)

### What are experience points?

On page 106, the *Players Handbook* gives a long defense of the experience-point rules, a defense which is restated on page 85 of the DMG in a slightly different way. The argument is divided into two parts. First, the system of using monsters and gold pieces is simple, playable, and should be accepted on faith as a rule and nothing more. As long as play is confined to the dungeons for which these rules were primarily developed, there is no way or reason to quibble with such an argument. However, once a campaign expands in ways not envisioned or accounted for in the original rules, situations come up which those rules cannot cover. Thus, the rules are no longer playable, and we are justified in examining them more closely.

The second part of the defense is more interesting and offers us a way out of our dilemma. The DMG points out that the actual ways in which PCs would refine their skills are simply quite boring — long hours spent in practicing fighting, rehearsing prayers and rites, or studying in arcane books. No one would want to play out every detail of this practice in order to gain an experience level. This argument shows that “experience” is defined at root as a matter



of skill and proficiency in a number of abilities.

Experience points are awarded when a PC has shown that he can successfully use the skills of his class by completing an adventure. The assumption is that if the PC can successfully accomplish the goals of a number of scenarios, he has improved his skills enough to advance to the next level. Adventuring thus becomes a test situation that allows PCs to display their skills, and experience points are rather like marks or grades in school. They are given when PCs use their skills to achieve a goal. In the early days of game scenarios, these goals were always slaying monsters and gaining treasure. Thus, the number of corpses and coins was indeed a fair measure of the player characters' success in completing the scenario.

The experience point system of the AD&D game is an abstract way of judging skills, because many different skills are subsumed into the PC's profession(s). When a PC goes up a level, he increases his abilities with all his skills at once. The abstract nature of the system requires that experience points be awarded on the basis of reaching one large goal, rather than on the successful use of individual skills. If the goal of a scenario is killing monsters and gaining treasure, then all of the PC's many skills are considered to be bent toward that two-faceted goal. If a PC is killed by a trap, for instance, he won't be around to gain the treasure; therefore, escaping or avoiding the trap is considered part of the work of achieving the goal and is not independently rewarded.

Since this point is important, let's make it clear by contrasting our abstract experience system with its opposite. The *RuneQuest*® game developed by the folks at Chaosium includes rules that offer a specific method of gaining experience. Every time a PC uses one of his many skills, he gets a chance to increase his level with that specific skill and that one only. The PC progresses by getting better at the specific skills which the character's player chooses to emphasize. There are no experience levels at all, no across-the-board increase in a whole group of skills subsumed under a character class.

If, therefore, we are going to revise the rules for assigning experience points in the AD&D game, our revisions are going to have to be abstract, not specific, or else they will be inconsistent with the system of experience levels and character classes. This need for abstraction is the reason that we can't simply make up a list of new awards and assign an unvarying point value to them. If, for instance, we say that slipping past a guard is worth 500 points or using magic to acquire information is worth 250, then we are awarding points for specific skills rather than judging a PC's abstract success in using all of his skills to achieve an overall goal. Trying to incorporate a specific skill system into the AD&D rules could seriously unbalance the character classes, which were carefully designed to have

approximately equal strengths and weaknesses. For instance, in our example of the NPC sold into slavery, the terms of the scenario combined with a specific experience-point system would mean that the thieves and magic-users in the party would have more chances to use their skills — and thus to gain experience points — than the fighters.

What really counts in awarding experience points, then, is the struggle of the PCs to succeed in whatever task the scenario sets for them. The only reason that the experience-point system as it stands is so limited is that it was designed to judge a very limited type of scenario — the dungeon adventure or its above-ground equivalent. Our problem arises when the goals of the scenario have nothing to do with armed enemies and loot, but we can expand the basic principle of using the goals of the scenario as the basis of awarding points to cover a vast number of different kinds of game actions.

Before we do, however, there is one more aspect of the rules as they stand that we must consider, namely, that the PCs must use the skills of their particular character classes in completing the adventure. The *Players Handbook* puts it concisely: "If the characters gain treasure by the pursuit of their major aims, then they are generally entitled to a full share of earned experience points . . ." By implication, a PC who acts outside of his class or who doesn't use the skills specific to his class is not entitled to a full share of the points awarded by the DM.

At first thought, this rule seems difficult to apply to scenarios that don't follow the dungeon pattern. Let's again consider the example of the PC party attempting to rescue a friend from slavery. Since one of the stipulations of the scenario is that violence is forbidden, how can the fighter in the party pursue his major aim, which is to fight? In this and similar situations, we need to extend the concept of the major aim of each class to include staying in character and drawing upon the skills and background of the class. After all, a PC is much more than a mere chess piece limited to a single type of move.

In this example, a fighter could draw upon the skills of his class in many ways. If the party were gathering information from underworld types, the scowling presence of a well-armed fighting man would not only keep the party safe but help intimidate their sources and induce them to cooperate. Likewise, he could guard their goods from thieves, take care of any local bullies in the tavern, and generally threaten force in subtle ways to advance the party's cause. As long as the player of the fighter PC worked to stay in character this way, the DM would certainly be justified in awarding the fighter a full share of experience points, even if he never drew his sword.

#### New goals need new awards


As we've seen, the current experience point rules in the AD&D game are limited

because they were designed to judge a scenario with goals that almost invariably involve killing monsters and gaining treasure. To expand beyond a hack-and-slash campaign, however, the DM needs to emphasize new kinds of action, such as wilderness exploration, political intrigue, and play in cities. In such a campaign, the goals will often be something intangible, such as gaining honor in the eyes of a king or finding a crucial piece of information. Since we can no longer use dead monsters and gold pieces as convenient measures of success, we need a new way of translating such goals into experience points. As long as we put the emphasis on the overall goal of the scenario — not on specific actions within the scenario — we will be staying within the abstract experience system of the AD&D rules.

Since the goals of scenarios that fall outside the dungeon pattern are so varied, it's impossible to give a set of tidy tables and lists covering all of them. What we can do in this article is discuss some general principles that will allow the DM to tailor experience point awards to many different scenarios. Let's start by examining a long example of a scenario that cannot be fitted into the dungeon mode. Once we have a concrete example to refer to, it will be much easier to set forth a procedure and some rules of thumb for awarding experience points.

In our example, a small kingdom is ruled

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by a weak young king who has fallen under the influence of a group of corrupt, self-serving advisors. A local priest, fearing that the populace will rebel, asks a good-aligned PC party to free the king from this influence. Simply marching into the palace and killing or denouncing the evil crew will get the PCs no farther than the royal gallows; what they must do is worm their way into the court and try to gain enough favor with the king to open his eyes to the misdeeds of his counselors. Fortunately, the local priest can give them letters of introduction that will get them a place in the court.

Once the PCs are there, the DM (in the personae of various NPCs) scatters useful information about the ways the party can gain favor. The king is fond of tournaments, and he lionizes successful fighters. The queen is very ill, and perhaps the cleric in the party can heal her where the court physician has failed. Documents exist that will blackmail the most corrupt advisors if only the thief can steal them — and so on. Meanwhile, the evil counselors aren't going to take this situation lying down once they realize the party's intentions. They'll do their best to trip the party up and eventually resort to hiring an assassin if it looks like the king is getting too fond of these interlopers.

When setting up an experience-point award for the successful completion of this scenario, it's tempting to break it down into a series of small victories. For instance,

each opponent that the fighter faces in a tournament could be assigned experience points like a standard monster. Unfortunately, this way of working soon fails us. If the cleric heals the queen, for instance, how can we assign points to her recovery? It's much better, therefore, to find the broadest goal possible and subsume all other successes and failures under that heading. In our example, the central goal is to expel the counselors from court. Thus, we can treat the counselors as "monsters" and award points to be shared by the party as a whole for each counselor successfully sent into exile or imprisonment.

Let's start by considering the experience-point table for monsters on page 85 of the DMG, to see if we can find its underlying principles. This table awards monsters a point value based on four categories: the level of a human or humanoid monster or the hit dice of a non-humanoid; the hit points of the monster; its special abilities; and its exceptional abilities. In the footnotes, the table gives examples of special and exceptional abilities — missile attacks, low armor class, paralysis attacks, and so on. In short, this table assigns monsters an experience-point value on the basis of their combat ability and little else. If the party's only goal is killing the monster, this basis is perfectly logical, because the monster's combat ability is its main means of preventing the party from reaching that goal.

If we expand its categories by analogy, we

can use this table for our purposes. What counts is the monster's ability to prevent the success of the PCs. Since the PCs in our example want to expel the counselors, not kill them, we simply need a different set of measures for the counselors' abilities to thwart the party's plans.

Since experience level is a general measure of a character's skill at facing life's problems, we can start with the level of each counselor and use the point award right off the table. The next category on the table, hit points, refers to a personal characteristic of the monster. We can thus use the other personal characteristics that directly influence the counselor's ability to defend himself in this situation. Intelligence may allow the counselor to outwit the PCs, and charisma is a good measure of how much influence a counselor has over the king.

When it comes to the categories of special and exceptional abilities, we will have to make a more subjective judgment as to what qualifies as such an ability. We need to choose those things that will actively hinder the PCs from reaching their goal — that is, those things that will make the counselor in question harder to oust. One might have been highly praised by the king's father, making it harder for the PCs to convince the king that something is amiss; another might have a network of palace spies; a third might find a piece of unwelcome information about one of the PCs, and so on. On the other hand, if a counselor owns a vast country estate, it will have little bearing on his ability to stay at court, and thus that fact should not be considered.

Let's look at a detailed example of this system of awarding points. Sannar, one of the evil counselors, is a 10th-level astrologer (a variant NPC class) with 15 intelligence and 13 charisma. His mistress, one of the serving women, will spy on the PCs for him. Since the queen is superstitious, Sannar is constantly called upon to give her good advice — a situation he can use to his advantage by uttering dark warnings about the PC party. Consulting the experience-point table, we find that the basic value for a "monster" of Sannar's level is 900 xp. Then we substitute the total of his intelligence and charisma scores in place of hit points, and multiply by 14 (the xp/hp value for a 10th-level monster). This total is 392 (28 times 14), bringing Sannar's xp value up to 1,292 so far. Next, we decide that his spy counts as a special ability for 450 xp more. And his access to the queen is certainly an exceptional ability — so exceptional, in fact, that it should be worth double the usual award (as allowed for in the rules accompanying the table). After adding these two bonuses (a total of 1,650 xp more) to the base total, we determine that Sannar has an experience-point value of 2,992 — the amount that the PCs will receive if the astrologer is exiled or imprisoned through their efforts.

In scenarios of this sort, it's also possible to be flexible when awarding bonus points. In our example, we might decide to give a

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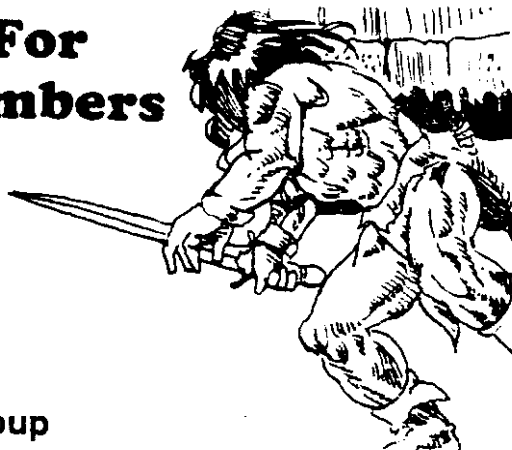
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bonus if the party not only removes the counselors but also helps the king become a better ruler by making sure he realizes the lesson in what's just happened, or — in the context of a long-running campaign — if gaining this king's favor will help the party later on. To make this award part of the game rather than a lump sum of abstract points, we could put it in the form of a reward from the grateful citizens (or the king himself) in easily countable gold pieces. Or, the priest who originally put the party up to the job might offer to resurrect one of them free of charge if such a service ever became necessary — a reward that could be kept "as is" or cashed into experience points on the basis of the normal cost for the casting of such a spell. Whatever the bonus, the important thing is to make it a part of the world rather than a mere DM's award.

### Another kind of monster

In our example of the corrupt advisors, experience points were fairly easy to assign because overcoming the counselors, each of whom could be treated as a monster, was the stated goal of the scenario. The big difference between this scenario and a standard dungeon was that the "combat" was subtle, tricky, and nonviolent. In many scenarios, however, the goals will be much less clear-cut and the opposition much less easily defined. One example of such a scenario is a wilderness journey, where the real enemy of the PCs is the environment itself.

Let's work out a scenario where the environment is paramount. The PCs here are two high-level thieves who are imprisoned in the top cell of a tall tower, the donjon of the local duke, who intends to make a spectacular example out of them at the next market day court. Since the duke knows that he has a tricky pair on his hands, he's set guards and traps throughout the tower to prevent their escape. Fortunately for the PCs, their brethren in the thieves' guild have managed to smuggle them their lock picks, one dagger, and some information about the tower. The thieves' goal is simple: to get out.

The opposition seems at first glance to be made up of three parts: the tower, the guards, and the traps. On further reflection, though, we can see that dividing up the opposition in this way makes it difficult to assign points in a way consistent with our abstract experience system. If each guard is assigned a point value based on his combat ability, for instance, then what happens if the PCs successfully use their thieving skills to evade all the guards? That course of action would be greatly superior to combat, especially considering that the thieves have only one dagger between them. So, it's preferable to treat the tower itself as the opposition, and the guards and traps as "special abilities" of the tower designed to help prevent the escape of the imprisoned thieves.

What we can do with this scenario, in short, is to personify the tower and treat it

as a "monster" to be overcome by the PCs. By treating the tower as a monster, we can allow the PCs great freedom of action and reward them for thinking, not slashing, while still playing by the AD&D rules, not the rules of some other system. The first thing we have to do is to assign the tower a "level," corresponding to a monster's hit dice or experience level. Since the use of the word "level" is already confusing enough in the AD&D rules, let us make the level of an inanimate object more specific by calling it the "level of difficulty."

Assigning a level of difficulty to a piece of terrain or other inanimate object (such as a bank vault, for example) is bound to be a subjective business, but we can get some guidelines from the real world. First, we need to ask exactly how the object is opposing the PCs. In this case, since the PCs want to get down from its top, the tower's height and the smoothness of its walls can be measures of the difficulty involved in overcoming it. To further illustrate this concept with another example, let's say that the PCs are trying to cross a desert. In this case, the heat of the desert, the distance that must be traversed, and the amount of available water would all be factors in determining how difficult it is to cross.

Now, returning to the duke's donjon, we next consider towers in the abstract. If we define a one-story tower with rough walls as a "first level of difficulty" tower to climb, we can set a 500-foot-high tower made of

slick obsidian at the other end of scale — say, at the fifteenth level of difficulty. The duke's tower is "only" 100 feet high but has very smooth walls; somewhat subjectively, we decide that it's an object at the tenth level of difficulty.


Since inanimate objects and terrain have no personal characteristics as such (no "hit points" or standard abilities), we will eliminate the step of finding a correlation to the xp/hp category on the DMG's experience point value table and concentrate on the categories of special and exceptional abilities. The table tells us that a tenth-level monster has its point value increased by 450 for each special ability and 600 for each exceptional ability. We decide that the guards count as special abilities and the traps as exceptional abilities, because the guards are easier to see, hear, and thus evade than the traps. The duke has placed ten men on guard and set up six traps. Therefore, if the thieves make a successful escape, they will have a total of 9,000 xp's to divide between them: 900 (base award) + 4,500 (10 x 450) + 3,600 (6 x 600).

We can treat a dangerous piece of natural terrain in the same way. Suppose we have a group that knows of a magic item buried on a small island in the middle of a swamp. To recover the item, they have to cross the swamp, which then becomes their main opponent to achieving their goal. Scattered through this lovely bit of real estate are natural traps like quicksand and a variety

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of monsters. Rather than treating the monsters as separate enemies with a separate award of experience points for each one, we should consider them as special and exceptional abilities of the swamp as a whole. The PCs are trying to reach the island, not clear the swamp of monsters; if they can evade the monsters or trick them by using their brains instead of their swords, so much the better.

Conversely, what if the goal of the PC party was indeed to kill a particularly dangerous monster that lived in the swamp? We could then treat the swamp itself as one of the monster's exceptional abilities, because living in a difficult-to-penetrate swamp makes the monster harder to kill. If the swamp is particularly dangerous, we could give it a point value as if it had more than one exceptional ability. And if we did so, we could not award points independently for the defeating of any minor monsters living in the same swamp, giving the characters the option of tricking or evading them rather than wasting their strength before the main combat. This kind of bonus rewards characters (and players) who think first and slash second, while remaining true to the abstract nature of experience points in the AD&D rules.

#### Some rules of thumb

Now that we've analyzed some example scenarios, we can outline a procedure for determining the experience point awards of

scenarios in general. By following the steps below and referring to the examples in this article, a DM should be able to develop a feel for awarding experience points that will be more valuable in the long run than any set of lists and tables.

1. *Make sure that the material for the adventure is indeed one single scenario.*

Since we've decided to make our point awards on the basis of a goal accomplished in a given scenario, it's important to make sure that we're not short-changing the PCs by cramming too much action and danger under one heading. Generally speaking, a single scenario should be no longer than the amount of material that can be played through in one six-hour gaming session, but there will, of course, be some exceptions to this. Consider the first example in this article, where the PC party was attempting to rescue a friend sold into slavery. Since the party already knew the whereabouts of the friend, this scenario had a suitable goal. If the problem was "your friend has disappeared; you must find out where he is and then rescue him," we would be dealing with enough material for at least two scenarios, not just one.

2. *Define the major goal of the scenario.*

The DM should first examine the scenario to decide what its central point is, then define this point in terms of a goal that requires the use of PC skills. In our example of the donjon tower, defining the goal as "reaching freedom," while true enough, would not exactly suit our needs. Defining it as "using thieving skills to escape from the tower" gave us a solid basis on which to award the points.

The goal should also be defined in such a way as to cover the entire scenario. As another example, consider a scenario where the PC party is sent to rescue someone held prisoner in a dangerous jungle by a pack of bandits. Bringing this person back out of the jungle alive is the real goal of the scenario, not merely getting him out of the hands of the bandits.

3. *Determine the opposition to the goal.*

Generally speaking, it's the difficulty of the opposition to achieving the goal that determines the actual experience-point award. The term "opposition" here covers both persons and monsters actively trying to thwart the PCs and terrain that passively makes a goal hard to reach. In many, if not most, scenarios, both kinds of opposition will be present. The DM needs to decide which one is primary, as we did in the case of the two imprisoned thieves when we decided that the tower was the primary opposition rather than the traps or the guards.

4. *Personify the opposition if necessary as a single "monster"*

If the primary opposition is passive, it's much easier to award experience points if the DM first personifies the situation by assigning it a level of difficulty. The two main criteria for assigning this level are the deadliness of an environment or object and what may be called its frustration, factor.

Obviously, any kind of terrain where the PCs can be killed by one wrong move should be of a higher level than one where dangers are more easily avoided. At times, physical danger may not be the real issue, as, for example, when the PCs are trying to find information in a city where the inhabitants are indifferent to them. In that case, the DM should consider the "frustration factor" of the situation. If the inhabitants of the town in our example are inclined to keep their mouths shut, the information will be harder to ferret out than if the inhabitants are the open, easy-going sort.

5. *Use the table in the DMG to determine the actual point award for the personified opposition.*

Although the four categories of this table can only be a rough guide, they at least give the DM a place to start.

6. *Determine bonuses, if any.*

The DM might well decide that the special conditions of the scenario merit a bonus if the PC party achieves certain secondary objectives or does a splendid job of fulfilling the main objective. These bonus awards should never be more than 25% of the main award, and there should rarely be more than two of them.

7. *Keep in mind the "measure of challenge" rule in the DMG.*

The "measure of challenge" is a firm part of the AD&D game's experience-point system. Briefly, the DMG states that if the party is ten or more levels above the level of the opposition, then the experience-point award should be halved — unless the opposition outnumbers the party by at least twenty to one. In scenarios that don't follow the dungeon pattern, "being outnumbered" has to be a flexible concept.

In our example of the island in the swamp, for instance, if the swamp were at the fourth level and the party at the fifteenth, the party's award would be cut unless the place was swarming with monsters and traps. On the other hand, if the monster population was thin, but the swamp so large and grueling that the party risked losing levels to exhaustion, then the DM might decide to award the full amount of experience points anyway.

When all else is said and done, remember that creativity is the key to enjoyable gaming. Since the system for awarding experience points outlined here is designed for creative and unusual scenarios, the DMs who use it will have to be creative themselves and adapt it to their own needs.

In closing, I strongly urge DMs to remember the abstract nature of the AD&D game's experience-point system. They should stay firmly within it by awarding points only for major goals that require the use of many PC skills to achieve. Although it's tempting to give point awards for specific actions, such awards really do run counter to the spirit of the game. While creativity is the most important thing a DM needs for good gaming, a sound and consistent system of rules runs a close second. ✕

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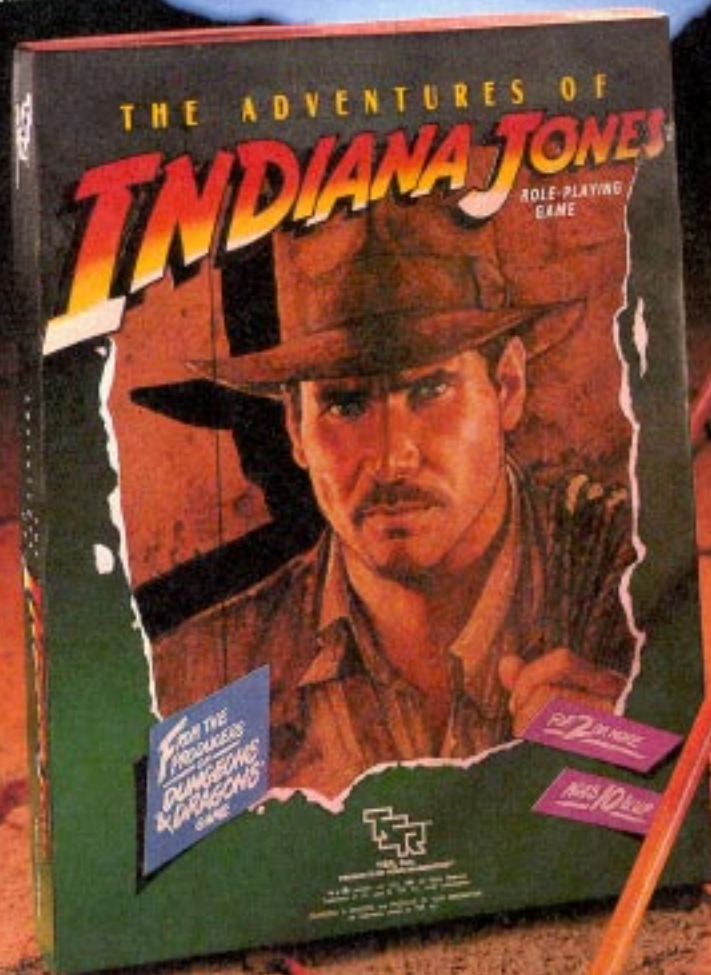
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# The many shapes of apes

## Giving primates the attention they deserve

by Stephen Inniss

Most groups of large mammals have been thoroughly described in the AD&D® game rules. For instance, all of the major kinds of big cats have been detailed, including some species that are extinct in the real world. The same applies to canids (dogs and wolves), rhinos, elephants, and other big-game animals. Apes, however, have not received such attention. Aside from some imaginary or fanciful ape-like creatures (the dakon, the gorilla bear, the yeti, and the carnivorous ape), there is only the rather truncated description of the gorilla in the *Monster Manual*. To further broaden the scope of AD&D game adventures, here are given new descriptions of three types of apes, plus a somewhat lengthier treatment of the gorilla.

Just as in our real world, apes in the AD&D game world occupy an ambiguous position. They are not really animals, but neither are they full-fledged persons. In the game, they are subject to such spells as *Speak with animals*, *Conjure animals*, *Locate animals*, *Hold animal*, *Animal summoning*, and *Animal growth*, but they are unaffected by *Animal friendship*, and the more intelligent individuals among them are not fooled by *Invisibility to animals*. Though they have an intelligence rating of *low*, just as some humanoids do, apes do not make weapons, containers, or shelters — other than very crude implements for breaking open or poking into things, or the nests they weave to rest in at night. Neither do they have a

proper language, though their understanding of gestures allows a considerable degree of communication. Nevertheless, they are inventive and inquisitive, and can plan ahead and foresee consequences as can more humanlike creatures. If *Speak with animals* is used, they might be instructed in the operation of simple tools, though they are unlikely to become proficient with weapons.

Typically, apes have no fixed abode, though they move from place to place within a home range. They keep no treasure. Generally, apes will not fare well where humanlike creatures are found (especially humanoids), and they tend to keep to sparsely settled or wilderness areas. They have certain other common features as well, summarized here in the form of *Monster Manual* statistics:

ARMOR CLASS: 6  
% IN LAIR: Nil  
TREASURE TYPE: Nil  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 3  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Rending*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*  
INTELLIGENCE: *Low*  
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*  
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil  
Attack/Defense Modes: Nil

Though not especially quick when moving over open ground, apes are not hindered by difficult terrain so much as humans are, and can usually outdistance humans over rough ground or through the jungle despite their otherwise unimpressive movement rates. Apes weighing 200 pounds or less are also superior climbers. Male apes are generally larger than females, and armed with longer fangs, though the extent of this difference varies with the type of ape. All apes have surprising strength in their arms and shoulders. If an ape hits with both hands in combat it may do additional rending damage equal to its bite damage.

### CHIMPANZEE

FREQUENCY: *Rare*  
NO. APPEARING: 2-20  
MOVE: 12" @ 9"  
HIT DICE: 1 + 1  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-2/1-2/1-2 (females)  
or 1-2/1-2/1-3 (males)  
SIZE: M (5' tall)  
LEVEL/XP VALUE: II / 28 + 2/hp

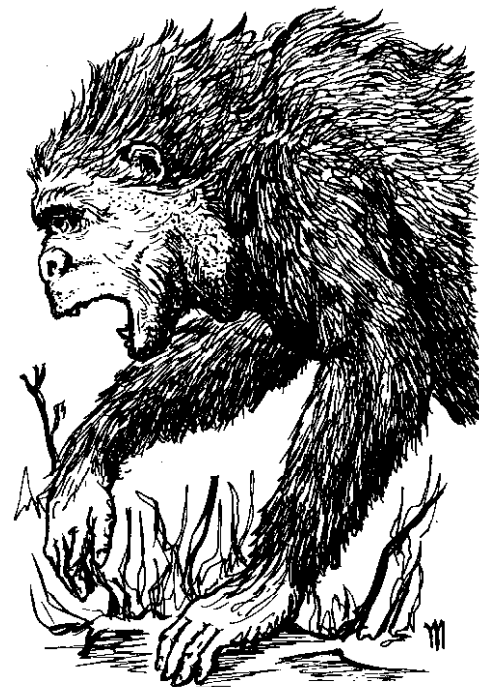
Chimpanzees are found in all types of tropical wooded areas, ranging from dense

forest to open woodland. They live on fruit, vegetables, insects, and some small game. A band of chimpanzees will include equal numbers of males and females. One fifth of the total will be young chimps with no effective attacks. Chimps will generally flee from an encounter with characters if they have had prior experience with humanlike creatures, though some of the larger males might confront a group that does not appear overwhelmingly large or dangerous. If they are attacked or cornered, chimps will fight with surprising ferocity (optional +1 "to hit" in such cases). A chimpanzee weighs somewhat less than the average human, but each individual has a strength rating of 16 (females) or 17 (males). Though they are only a little larger and a little stronger than the females, males have a more formidable bite (1-3 damage instead of 1-2).

### GIGANTOPITHECUS

FREQUENCY: *Rare*  
NO. APPEARING: 1-20  
MOVE: 12"  
HIT DICE: 4 + 4 (females) or 5 + 5 (males)  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-4/1-4/1-6 (females)  
or 1-6/1-6/1-8 (males)  
SIZE: L (8' tall, very broad)  
LEVEL/XP VALUE: females III / 130 + 5/hp; males IV / 225 + 6/hp

Gigantopithecus are huge prehistoric apes. Unlike other apes, they are found in tem-





perate as well as tropical climates, and may frequent fairly open country. They live on seeds and tubers as well as on bits and pieces of the local greenery, and those on the edge of civilized territory may raid farmers' fields. Gigantopithecus are sometimes confused with ogres, which they resemble only in size; their appearance is actually like that of a gorilla rather than that of a man. A band of gigantopithecus consists of a single male and a number of females with offspring. One in five of the members will be an immature individual with no effective attacks. Gigantopithecus are peaceful, and are not dangerous if given a wide berth, though they will defend themselves aggressively if too closely approached, since they tend to err on the side of suspicion in encounters. They fear few things other than fire or large numbers of humans. Female gigantopithecus weigh about 600 pounds, males somewhat more than that. Females have troll-like strength (18), while males are as strong as hill giants (19).

### GORILLA

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1-20

MOVE: 12"

HIT DICE: 3 + 1 (females) or 4 + 1 (males)

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-3/1-3/1-4 (females)  
or 1-4/1-4/1-6 (males)

SIZE: M or L (up to 6' tall and very broad)

LEVEL/XP VALUE: females III / 85 + 4/hp; males III / 130 + 5/hp

Gorillas are found only in undisturbed tropical forests, where they live in small bands, moving from clearing to clearing in search of succulent plants. Each band consists of a number of females with their young (one-fifth of any group are individuals too young to have effective attacks) and



a single adult male. Gorillas will try to drive away intruders with a display of force, and anyone who does not move away, or who moves quickly — even to flee — is likely to be attacked. Female gorillas weigh about 200 pounds and have strength ratings of 17 or 18. Males are twice as heavy as females and have strength ratings of 18 or 19.

### ORANGUTAN

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1-3

MOVE: 9" @ 12"

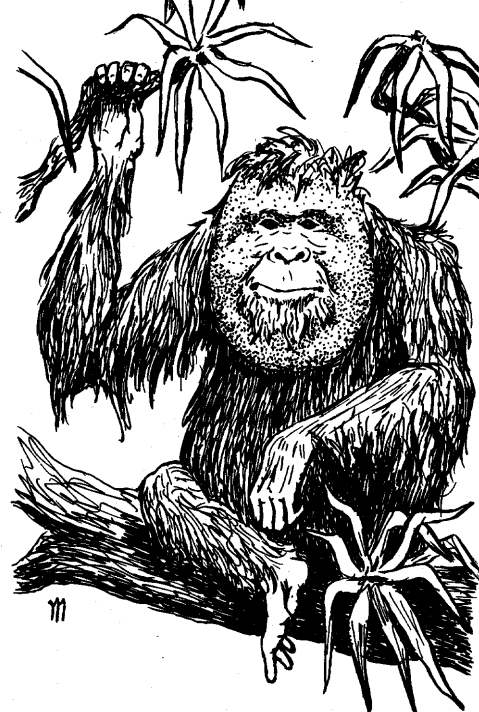
HIT DICE: 1 + 1 (females) or 2 + 1 (males)

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-2/1-2/1-2 (females)  
or 1-3/1-3/1-4 (males)

SIZE: M (4' to 5' tall and very broad)

LEVEL/XP VALUE: females II / 28 + 2/hp; males II / 50 + 3/hp

Orangutans are solitary, tree-dwelling apes. They live deep in tropical forests, and eat mostly fruit. They dislike being approached or followed by humans or other humanlike creatures, and if *Speak with animals* is used they are almost invariably surly and evasive due to their unsociable nature. An orangutan has intimate knowledge of the surrounding terrain, especially with regard to fruit trees. If two orangutans are encountered, they will be a female and an infant. A group of three will be composed of either a female with an infant and a half-grown child, or a female with an infant and a male consort (50% chance of



either grouping). Though orangutans are generally unaggressive, 15% of all solitary males will be so enraged at an invasion of their privacy that they will attack immediately. Male orangutans have 17 or 18 strength and weigh about 200 pounds. Many males are so heavy that they must travel on the forest floor rather than through the branches. Females weigh no more than a small human and have 16 strength.

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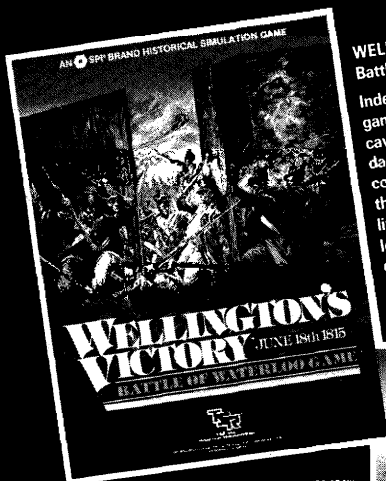
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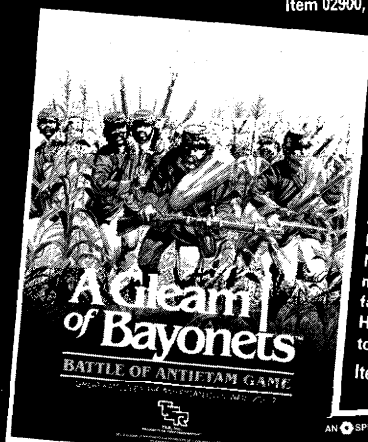
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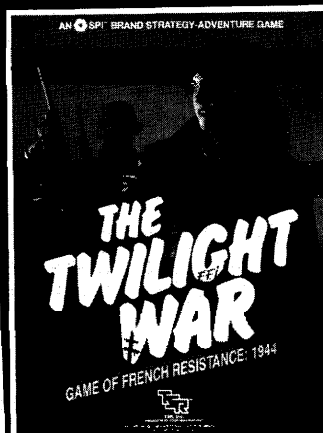
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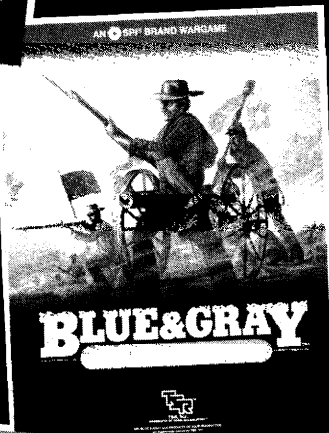
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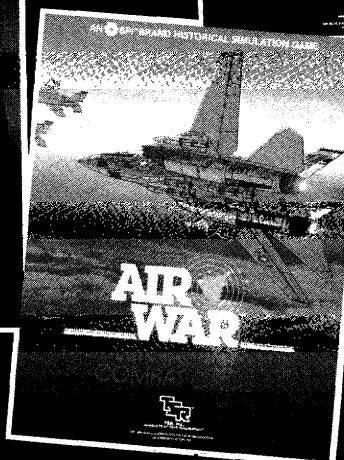
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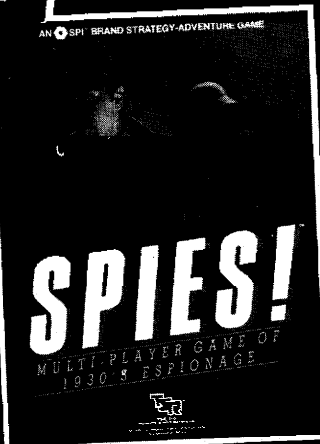
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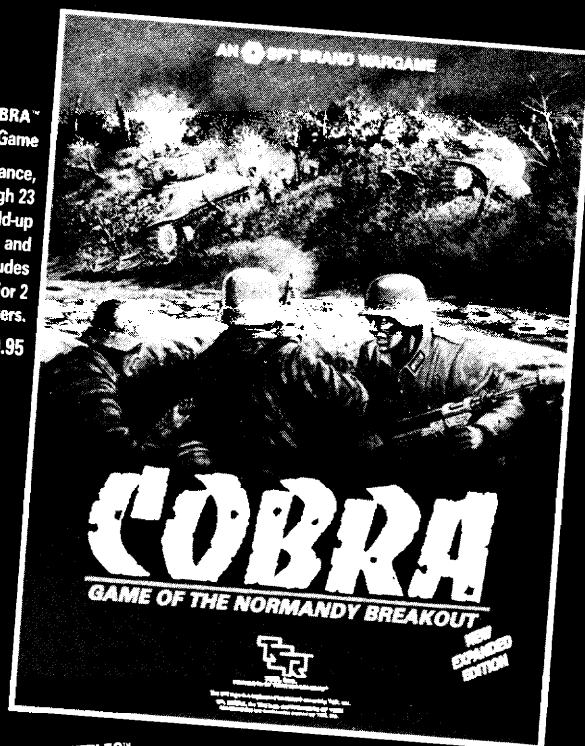
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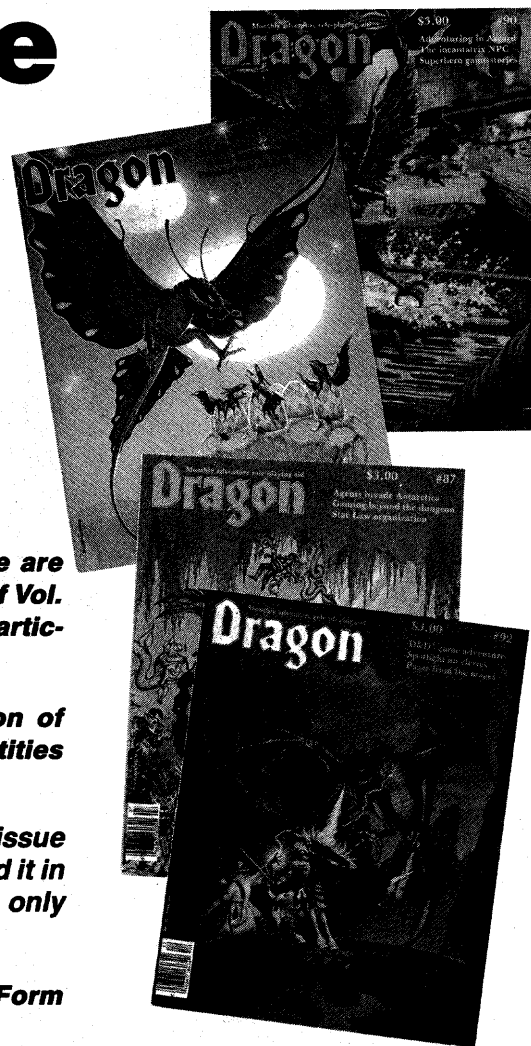
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# Into the Forgotten Realms



# Into the Forgotten Realms

A tournament adventure for the AD&D<sup>®</sup> game

Designed by Ed Greenwood

## Editor's introduction

*Into the Forgotten Realms* is a tournament module for the AD&D<sup>®</sup> game which was used at the GEN CON<sup>®</sup> XVII Game Convention in August 1984, designed to be played through by ten player characters. A time limit of four hours (real time) is placed on completing the adventure for scoring purposes.

The accent in this module is on role-playing and creative problem-solving. The players and the Dungeon Master are encouraged to think of it as a campaign playing session rather than as a competitive obstacle course. Players should try to imbue the characters provided with life, role-playing them as they think the characters would act, given their situation. Only one special tournament rule exists for characters in this dungeon: *Don't split up*.

It will become apparent to most referees that the characters could be easily destroyed by the single most powerful monster in this dungeon. The monster is, however, limited in its responses to the party, and part of the test of the characters is the quality of their response to the presence of the monster. The characters may evade the monster, play along with it, or even find some way of successfully destroying it (though this would be *very* dangerous).

Characters are initially provided with spell lists, but as the adventure progresses (assuming the characters stay in the dungeon for more than a day's time), new spells may be selected.

The scoring system is a modified RPGA<sup>™</sup> Network system. The Dungeon Master and players will provide weighted votes for best, second-best, and third-best role players (players can vote for themselves), and the DM will award additional points for instances of excellent role-playing and excellent performance in dungeon situations. The setting is the Dalelands of the Forgotten Realms, a fantasy world often featured in DRAGON<sup>®</sup> Magazine in many articles written by our tireless contributing editor, Ed Greenwood.

## Players' information

The following text should either be read to the players or distributed to them on paper before the start of the tournament.

The Dalelands of the Forgotten Realms have been your homes, as well as your adventuring grounds, for many years. The following events are common knowledge

among you and have weighed heavily upon your thoughts for months.

Lord Lashan, recently made ruler of the tiny coastal land of Scardale (so named because it lies within a long river gorge, or "scar"), raised armies to conquer the surrounding Dales, and he nearly succeeded. It has been a long, bloody year of battles up and down the Dales, and most of them — Harrowdale, Battledale, Deepingdale, Tasseldale, and Featherdale — have felt Lashan's rule during it, while the remainder have had to fight off warriors in their very streets.

In the end, Lashan's military power was broken by the combined might of the kingdoms of Sembia to the south and Cormyr to the west (both of whom preferred a cluster of peaceful, independent Dales as neighbors to a tyrant's warrior kingdom), by the remaining Dales and the magical powers they could muster, and by Lashan's heavy reliance on mercenary troops. The tide turned at the battle of Mistledale, where the Lord of Shadowdale, Doust Sulwood, and his companions held off Lashan's forces until the other armies attacked his holdings in the south, and thereby prevented all the Dales from being swept by Lashan's troops. Relentlessly have Lashan's foes pressed him these last two months, and the empire he carved has melted away to nothing. Lashan himself has not been captured.

In all the hurly-burly of war, the elves, who for centuries barred men from entering their vast woods, suddenly vanished. The Elven Court formerly adjoined the Dales on the north and east. Rumor has it that all of the elves have traveled west overseas to Evermeet, the island kingdom of the elves, to be shut of men forever. Their disappearance leaves the Elven Court open to exploration — and deep within it lies the lost, fabled city of Myth Drannor, once a center of magical knowledge where men and elves worked together. It is thought to still contain much mighty magic in the surviving, underground halls of the School of Wizardry there. Lashan was known to have sent two expeditions (their fate unknown) into the woods during the past year to reach it. The Dalesfolk fear he is hurrying to Myth Drannor now with the last of his warriors, seeking magic to defeat his foes and conquer the Dales once again.

You are a diverse band of adventurers hastily assembled from taverns, temples, and gaming houses of Shadowdale and Mistledale. Shadowdale lies nearest to the lost city, and its lord, Mourngrym (for

Doust Sulwood and his friends have left Shadowdale to seek adventure), has gathered you to get to Myth Drannor before Lashan does, and destroy, bear away, or bury forever any magic there, to keep it from the conqueror. You will be well rewarded by all the Dales, Mourngrym promises (and you know him for a man of his word, a cavalier of courtly manners and true honor) — but he warns you not to covet much magic for yourselves, for some of it is fey and dangerous. He would hate to have to battle you, instead of Lashan, come spring.

You set out hurriedly and travel through that vast wood for two days without meeting or seeing a living creature. Frost is in the air; winter is almost come — a winter in which Lashan, if successful, will try to build his power again. An ancient map supplied to you by the sage Elminster leads you through the ruined, overgrown city of Myth Drannor to an empty, high-ceilinged hall whose doors are fallen and whose spired towers are no more. Within lies a stair leading down to the School of Wizardry. Time is running out, and you need to gather all of the magic you can and destroy the rest, to prevent Lashan's return to power. The adventure has begun.

## Dungeon Master's information

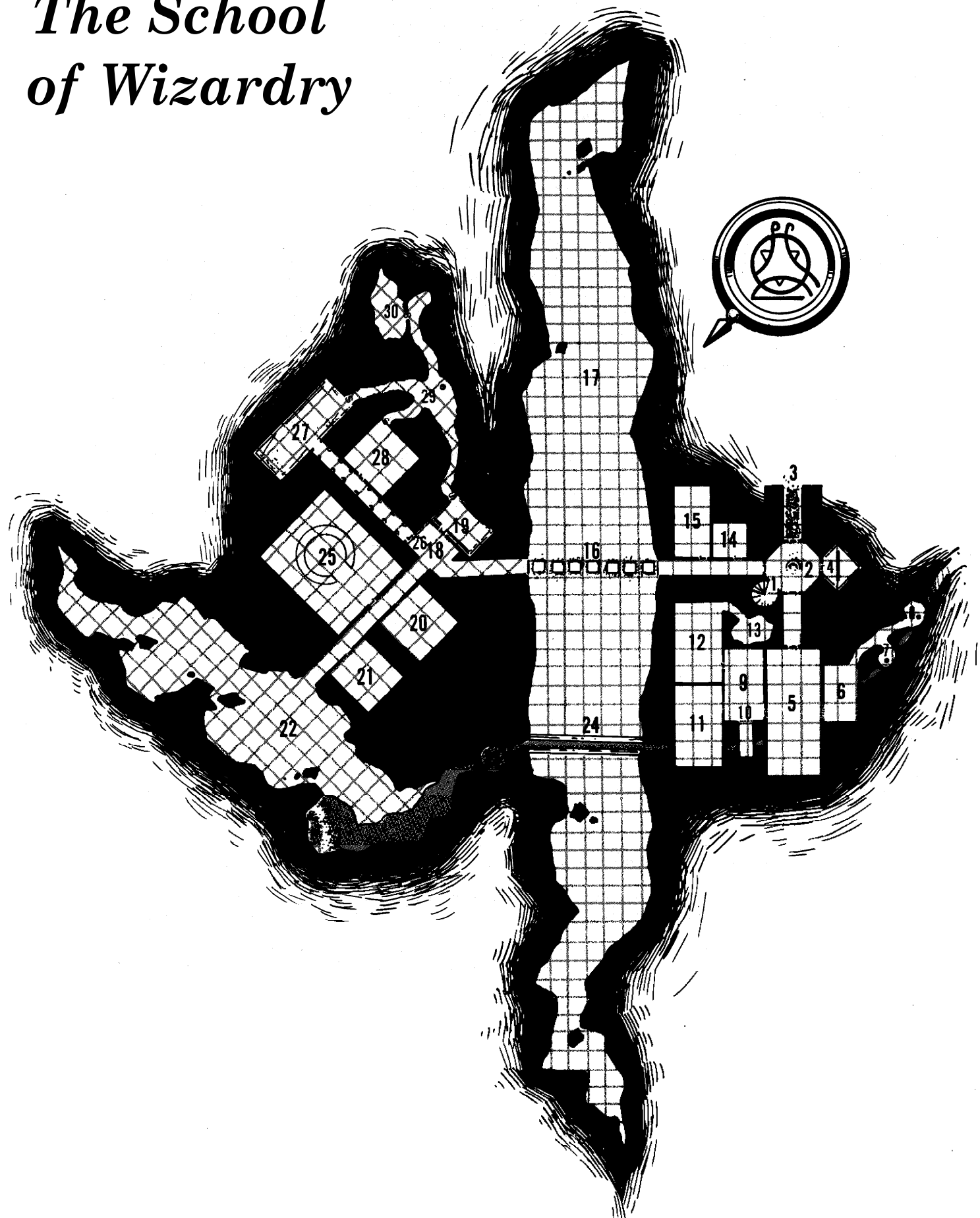
Unknown to the party, Lashan has already beaten them to Myth Drannor's School of Wizardry — and he has paid a high price for it, too. Lashan and a picked group of bodyguards entered the underground school and discovered that it was inhabited by the former head of the School of Wizardry until it was abandoned three hundred years ago when the city above it was taken in a war. The archmage was left in the school at his own request, to pursue his own increasingly evil experiments and summonings.

At long last the archmage, named Azimer, became a lich. He has also become gradually more and more insane, and even now as a lich he has but a tenuous grasp on reality. Azimer believes he is still a living human being and has continuous hallucinations and delusions that the school is active, that he is its leader, and that the world is his to command. He also believes there are unseen "enemies" constantly trying to get into the school, though he has done little to fortify the school over the years.

When Lashan discovered Azimer, the lich at first believed that the warrior was one of his sorcerous pupils and asked Lashan to



# The School of Wizardry



Scale: 1 square = 10 feet

perform some errands. Though Lashan's terrified bodyguards fled, attempting to escape the dreadful apparition of the lich, the hot-tempered and foolhardy Lashan elected to attack, and he easily wounded Azimer with his magic sword: Azimer became instantly convinced that Lashan was one of the "enemies" who wanted to slay him, and he quickly destroyed the ex-tyrant and all of his followers.

Azimer has calmed down since then and will, if carefully treated, prove relatively harmless to an adventuring party unless provoked. He will not automatically attack anyone unless he is attacked first. See the description of area 28 for more details on his current personality.

### The School of Wizardry

1. In the center of the high-ceilinged, dusty hall is a spiral stairway with no rail, the stone steps corkscrewing down into darkness. The stairs are littered with dust, cobwebs, tiny skeletons of rats that crunch underfoot, and fragments of stone fallen from the ceiling far above. The stairs are dry, cold, and smooth, sculpted of single blocks of stone. They descend for 60 feet.

As the characters descend the stairs, the first character carrying a light source will notice that someone else has come down these steps within the last few days, probably a group of several men judging by the number of boot prints visible on the dusty stone steps.

Unless otherwise stated, all doors in this dungeon complex require a normal door-opening roll. (Azimer routinely bypasses all doors with his *dimension door*, *knock*, and *wizard lock* spells.)

2. The stairs end in an octagonal room, apparently carved out of solid rock. Four closed, featureless stone doors with brass pull-rings are visible, one in each of the diagonal walls of the room. In the center of the room is a circular, moated pool that looks as if it was once a fountain, now dry and choked with stony rubble. All is dark, silent, and still. Against the wall between the doors leading to areas 3 and 16 stands a g-foot-tall stone humanoid statue, facing the center of the room. The statue is motionless, its eyes closed and its hands at its sides.

In the rubble in the fountain is a brass key (which fits no lock in this complex) and a tarnished, green silver piece. The "statue" is a stone guardian (AC 2, MV 10", 4 + 4 HD, 36 hp, 2 attacks for 2-9/2-9, size M). It can *detect invisibility*; it is immune to poison, cold, *charms*, *holds*, normal missiles, and fear; it takes one-quarter damage from edged weapons, half damage from cold, fire, and electricity. The guardian can be slain instantly by *dig*, *stone to flesh*, *transmute rock to mud*, or *stone shape*. The stone guardian will attack anyone forcing open the door to area 16. (All doors open outward, into this room.)

If the door to area 16 is touched, a *magic mouth* will appear on it and say, "You dare

disturb the one who rules Myth Drannor? Give his name, or you shall not pass." The answer is "Azimer" (see area 28). Anyone calling out this word will find the door easily opened; it will be locked (non-magically). Forcing the door open (requiring a bend bars roll, as the lock cannot be picked) will wake the stone guardian. If the door to area 16 is not molested, the guardian will remain still unless attacked.

Lashan and several soldiers from his fallen army entered the Myth Drannor complex less than a day ago. Having heard that the last known ruler of the mages' school was an archmage named Azimer, Lashan gave the correct response and was allowed to pass through, unaware that Azimer was still around (see area 28). Lashan stationed two guards here (see area 5). Anyone can tell from looking at the floor that a number of men recently walked through this area, some going to area 16 and some to area 5.

3. This door opens to reveal a solid wall of stone rubble, which will spill into the room with a roar and a cloud of dust. The more rubble that is dug away by the party, the more rubble that will fall into the space cleared. This formerly led to the living quarters of the mages and apprentices. (This area may be cleared and expanded for non-tournament campaign play if the Dungeon Master desires.)

4. This door opens into a smaller room with garments hanging on the walls. Stone benches are placed in the center of the room and run all around the walls of the room beneath the clothing. Small cracks are visible in the walls, and something small may be seen moving under a bench in the far corner.

The moving being is a harmless gray lizard (AC 6, MV 12", 1 hp). If disturbed, it will blunder straight out at the party and then run for the safety of a wide crack in the wall. The room is a former wardrobe; the benches are rotten, with rotten boots beneath them, and hanging from wooden pegs are rotting cloaks and hats. A small brass ring (not magical) will be found sewn into the hem of one cloak.

5. The door from area 2 is already open, leading into a featureless 30-foot-long stone passage which leads to another open stone door. This last door opens into a 30' x 70' room with a 50' ceiling that was once a feasting hall. Rotting, long, wooden tables march in two lines down the room, with fifteen wooden chairs on either side and a high-backed seat at the far end. Archways open in the middle of the walls on the right and left, blocked by cobweb-shrouded curtains.

At the far end of the room hangs a rusty iron bar high up on wall brackets; from the bar hang long tatters of mildewed, black fabric — once some sort of vast tapestry covering most of the wall. Not enough is left to tell what it depicted.

Two bodies (slain within the last few days) will be discovered in this room. Both of the bodies are human males, wearing chainmail armor and carrying broadswords. Their military dress identifies them as followers of Lashan, from Scardale. One has a +2 *dagger* on his belt in a plain sheath; the other has no other equipment. Each of them was apparently struck by something on the face, arms, and chest that produced frostbite and killed them; they bear scars that resemble bony hand marks. They were apparently trying to flee from something coming from area 2 (see areas 2 and 15).

What struck each of these formerly 2nd-level fighters was, of course, Azimer, who was enraged by Lashan's successful attack upon him and in a killing frenzy (see area 28). If *speak with dead* is used on either of the two men, he will shriek in terror, crying out about "The cold! The cold!" If asked who slew him, the man will answer, "The bones! The walking, cold bones!" The DM should play this up for the maximum horrific effect on the party.

6. The archway on the left opens into a smaller (20' x 30') room, with a single long table and five chairs drawn up around it. This was once an exclusive dining area for the teaching wizards, the Masters. A passage leads off to the south.

If the furniture is examined carefully, a 1-foot-long, tapering wand of wood (stained to match the table) might be found slipped into ring-like holders on the underside of the table. It is a *wand of wonder*, with its command word ("Zamper") engraved on the butt. The *wand* will only be noticed by a *detect magic* or *detect invisibility* spell, or if anyone specifically searching the table rolls a 1 on a d6.

7. Garderobe (toilet). This room contains only a wooden seat with a hole in it, a torch bracket above and a shelf beside it, and a peg in the wall for coats. The hole leads down into a stream far below; if one lifts the seat from its ledges, one can get down into the stream using a rope. Trying to climb down the narrow tunnel to the stream without a rope leaves a 40% chance for anyone (except a thief) to slip and fall, doing 2-12 hp damage to himself.

If any characters drop into the stream below, which flows to the south, see area 24 for further information.

8. Garderobe, identical to area 7 except that anyone trying to climb down into the stream below will become stuck. A thief has a chance equal to his *climb walls* roll (one attempt only allowed) to get free and continue on down the shaft.

9. This was a kitchen, with a chopping-block table and a beam ceiling with iron hooks overhead. All utensils are gone. A large, sooty stone hearth and chimney are also present. In the end wall on the characters' left is a low, arched opening that begins 2 feet up the wall. Two heavy wooden

# Into the Forgotten Realms player character sheets

(Permission is granted to photocopy these pages for personal use)

## THELVAR

7th-level cleric

Hit Points: 32

AC: 3 (front)/5 (rear)

Alignment: Chaotic good

Move: 9"

STR: 16 +1 to damage, 1-3 open doors, 10% bend bars

INT: 14

WIS: 18 +4 to save vs. will-force spells, bonus spells

DEX: 15 -1 def. adj.

CON: 14 88% system shock survival

CHA: 17

Armor: Chain mail and shield

Deity: Tyche (goddess of luck)

Languages: Common, chaotic good, elven

Weapons: flail (2-7/2-8) in hand, mace (2-7/1-6) on belt.

Description: 32-year-old human male, 5' 11" tall, 154 lbs., right-handed.

**Thelvar** is a cleric of Tyche, the goddess of luck. He is a devout and energetic worshiper of The Lady (Luck) — which means that he prays to her often, and puts enthusiastically into practice her doctrine of "Go for it!" He acts on impulse, is not afraid to gamble, and trusts in chance to run in his favor. He is never cautious or conventional, and always seems optimistic of his own (and all other followers of Tyche's) chances at performing dangerous, reckless deeds. He tries to never show fear or fatigue, appearing to his fellow adventurers as a boundless and vocal source of pep-rallying, all the while urging his comrades on and trying to boost their morale.

Possessions: Holy symbol, belt, small helm, boots, backpack (holds 250 gp wt), 2 small sacks (hold 50 gp wt each), tinder box, small pouch with 24 gp and 51 sp, iron rations for 3 days, 4 torches (each burns for 3 turns, 40' radius light).

Spells: *command*, *cure light wounds* (x2), *detect magic*, *remove fear*, *augury* (x2), *chant*, *find traps*, *speak with animals*, *locate object* (x2), *speak with dead*, *neutralize poison*, *tongues*.

## ILMURKAH

7th-level thief

Hit Points: 33

AC: 4 (front)/8 (rear)

Alignment: Chaotic neutral

Move: 12"

STR: 14 1-2 open doors, 07% bend bars

INT: 16

WIS: 9

DEX: 18 -4 def. adj., +3 react/attack

CON: 15 91% system shock survival

CHA: 13

Armor: Leather

Deity: Mask (god of thieves)

Languages: Common, chaotic neutral

Weapons: club (1-6/1-3) in hand, longsword (1-8/1-12) on belt, dagger (1-4/1-3) strapped to thigh.

Description: 23-year-old human female, 5' 5" tall, 121 lbs., ambidextrous.

**Ilmurkah** is an acrobatic, flamboyant thief, with a sadistic sense of humor and a love for stupid pranks. She will often be found clowning around in the depths of a dungeon, or wisecracking in the faces of potential enemies. She likes to insult people whom she regards as "stuck up" (which includes clerics of all sorts, loud-mouthed braggarts, and people who act like snobs or are richly, gaudily dressed). She is greedy, and not above picking the pockets of friends — and she loves to hide treasure before others get to it, so that they never know what they've missed. Ilmurkah is (secretly) very sacred of magic, and won't argue with or insult magic-users, for fear of being turned into a toad — or worse.

Possessions: 3 large sacks (each holds 150 gp wt), boots, belt, thieves' tools, money purse containing 22 gp (kept inside armor), bloodstone gem (50 gp value) in right boot, vial of holy water (hidden in one large sack), no food or drink, 2 torches (burn for 1 hour each, 40' radius light).

Thieving skills: 70% pick pockets, 67% open locks, 55% find/remove traps, 65% move silently, 53% hide in shadows, 25% hear noise, 94% climb walls, 35% read languages.



## RAVVAS

### 5th-level cleric

### Hit Points: 45

AC: 2 (front)/3 (rear)

Alignment: Chaotic neutral

Move: 6"

STR: 17 +1 to hit and damage, 1-3 open doors, 13% bend bars

INT: 13

WIS: 17 +3 to save vs. will-force spells, bonus spells

DEX: 13

CON: 18 99% system shock survival

CHA: 14

Armor: Plate mail and shield

Deity: Tempus (god of war)

Languages: Common, chaotic neutral

#### Weapons:

flail (2-7/2-8) in hand

hammer (2-5/1-4) on belt

Description: 24-year-old human male, 6' tall, 148 lbs., right-handed.

**Ravvas** is a cleric of Tempus, the god of war. He prides himself in, and enjoys, being a skillful fighter and an accomplished thinking-on-his-feet battlefield tactician, or "general." He makes a hobby of collecting unusual weapons, and he tries to retain the arms of defeated enemies as trophies for his temple. At the same time, Ravvas is compulsively honest, finding it difficult to be dishonest or even diplomatic. He is always blunt, open, and truthful, even when it hurts himself or his friends. He expects unquestioning obedience from all worshipers of Tempus (except clerics of a higher rank than himself), and will be enraged if he does not receive it.

Possessions: Holy symbol, belt, large helmet, boots, backpack (holds 250 gp wt), 2 large sacks (each holds 150 gp wt), iron rations for 1 day, 2 water skins, rock with *continual light* cast upon it (60' radius) kept in pocket.

Spells: *cure light wounds* (x5), *find traps* (x2), *hold person*, *know alignment*, *silence 15' radius*, *dispel magic*, *remove curse*.

---

## KORTUL

### 6th-level fighter

### Hit Points: 50

AC: 2 (front)/4 (rear)

Alignment: Chaotic neutral

Move: 6"

STR: 18/02 +1 to hit, +3 to damage, 1-3 open doors, 20% bend bars

INT: 14

WIS: 12

DEX: 15 -1 def. adj.

CON: 16 95% system shock survival

CHA: 11

Armor: Splint mail and shield

Deity: Tempus (god of war)

Languages: Common, chaotic neutral

#### Weapons:

spear (1-6/1-8) in hand

broadsword (2-8/2-7) on belt

dagger (1-4/1-3) on belt

Description: 26-year-old human male, 5' 9" tall, 162 lbs., right-handed.

**Kortul** is a berserker — no, not in the Monster Manual sense; instead, when he fights, he screams, yells, spits, claws at people, slashes at targets wildly, smashes furniture and surroundings without care for their value or who owns them, and indeed, doesn't care very much *who* he hits! He is not mad or out of his mind when fighting, though, and will avoid attacks and dangerous situations with a high regard for his own safety. He is a braggart, and openly contemptuous of those who use spells when swords will do . . . but he believes that magic-users should be fought with magic, and undead should be fought by clerics. He is shy around women.

Possessions: belt with pouch (1 gp, 6 sp, 3 cp), boots, horned helm, long cape, backpack (holds 250 gp wt), mallet and 6 iron spikes, tinder box, whetstone, 3 torches (burn for 1 hour each), no food or drink.

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## AUTAMMA

### 7th-level fighter

### Hit Points: 60

AC: 2 (front)/5 (rear)

Alignment: Neutral good

Move: 9"

STR: 16 +1 to damage, 1-3 open doors, 10% bend bars

INT: 11

WIS: 13

DEX: 16 -2 def. adj., +1 react/attack

CON: 17 97% system shock survival

CHA: 16

Armor: Chain mail and shield

Deity: Tempus (god of war)

Languages: Common, neutral good, elven

#### Weapons:

mace (2-7/1-6) in hand

longsword (1-8/1-12) on back

dagger (1-4/1-3) on belt

Description: 21-year-old human female, 5' 11" tall, 145 lbs., right-handed.

**Autamma** is a fighter, and a good one — she has had plenty of practice defending herself from various would-be suitors since she left home and took up arms. She is out to make herself a fortune, serve Tempus by acquitting herself nobly in a few great battles, and win herself a warrior-husband of wealth, stature, and noble courtesy. She's not expecting to find one on this expedition, but is here out of a sense of duty to the Dales and the hope that she will fight valiantly in the defeat of Lashan (and thereby attract the attention of both the Dale lords and the priests of Tempus). She respects her companions, especially the obviously capable fighting men, but holds herself somewhat distant from them all. Perhaps one will prove an enjoyable companion. . . .

Possessions: belt, cloak, boots, small helm, backpack (hold 250 gp wt), 1 large sack (holds 150 gp wt), 1 small sack (holds 50 gp wt), small oil lamp (cannot be carried while lit, burns for 4 hours per oil flask), 3 flasks of oil (flammable), fresh rations for 2 days (will spoil after 48 hours), leather waterskin, whetstone, pair of soft leather shoes and gloves.

# ELMAER

## 6th-level magic-user

Hit Points: 31

AC: 7 (front)/10 (rear)

Alignment: Neutral good

Move: 12"

STR: 10      1-2 open doors, 02% bend bars

INT: 17

WIS: 17      +3 to save vs. will-force spells

DEX: 17      -3 def. adj., +2 react/attack

CON: 16      95% system shock survival

CHA: 12

Armor: None

Deity: Mystra (god of magic)

Languages: Common, neutral good

Weapons:

2 daggers (1-4/1-3) on belt

Description: 48-year-old human male, 5' 8" tall, 158 lbs., left-handed.

**Elmaer** is a magic-user of some accomplishments. He is daring, an enthusiastic experimenter with and seeker after magic, and goes on adventures to gain more — primarily to win for himself all the magic items and written spells (books and scrolls) he can find, and secondarily to gain enough wealth to support his experiments and explorations. He loves using magic, too — exulting in blasting some poor victim with an offensive spell. He enjoys being "dark and mysterious," and will make cryptic remarks if asked about his powers or his past.

Possessions: Warm "street" clothing, belt with pouches for spell components and 13 cp, boots, backpack (holds 250 gp wt), spell book (50 gp wt, in backpack) with all spells given below (plus *read magic*, *write*, *burning hands*), portable oil lantern (burns for 3 hours on one oil flask, 30' radius light), 2 flasks of oil (flammable), needle and thread (30-yard ball).

Spells carried: *magic missile* (x4), *ESP*, *invisibility*, *fireball* (x2).

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# BRAVIN

## 7th-level fighter

Hit Points: 62

AC: 3 (front)/5 (rear)

Alignment: Lawful neutral

Move: 9"

STR: 17      +1 to hit and damage, 1-3 open doors, 13% bend bars

INT: 9

WIS: 13

DEX: 15      -1 def. adj.

CON: 17      97% system shock survival

CHA: 13

Armor: Chain mail and shield

Deity: Tempus (god of war)

Languages: Common, lawful neutral

Weapons:

longsword (1-8/1-12) in hand

hand axe (1-6/1-4) on belt

2 daggers (1-4/1-3) on belt

and in left boot

Description: 33-year-old human male, 5' 10" tall, 177 lbs., left-handed.

**Bravin** is a grim, grudge-holding warrior. He swaggers a bit, and always speaks as though doom is at hand, and all present must go down fighting — with dignity, mind you. He despises cowards and any who would avoid fights ("scarperers," he calls them). Although he sees the prudence of not attracting an enemy's attention when one is weak, and of retreating before superior foes, he is disgusted by, and will not stand for much of, sneaking around avoiding battles or stealing from a person without fighting him. He mistrusts magic and magic-users, and is terrified of undead creatures to the point of trembling and stuttering (-1 to hit on such occasions, but no effect on his willingness to fight).

Possessions: belt, boots, small helm, backpack (holds 250 gp wt), 2 large sacks (each holds 150 gp wt), 1 vial of oil (flammable), 2 candles (each burns for 3 turns), tinder box, fresh rations for 1 day (will spoil in 48 hours), leather wineskin.

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# SHARDIN

## 5th-level fighter

Hit Points: 38

AC: 4 (front)/4 (rear)

Alignment: Lawful neutral

Move: 9"

STR: 18/77      +2 to hit, +4 to damage, 1-4 open doors, 30% bend bars

INT: 13

WIS: 14

DEX: 14

CON: 12      80% system shock survival

CHA: 13

Armor: Banded mail

Deity: Tempus (god of war)

Languages: Common, lawful neutral

Weapons:

battle axe (1-8/1-8) in hand

hand axe (1-6/1-4) on belt

dagger (1-4/1-3) in right boot

Description: 35-year-old human male, 5' 6" tall, 196 lbs., left-handed.

**Shardin** is a veteran fighter, a grizzled adventurer. Surly and cynical, he is quick to notice treachery, unfairness, and cowardice in his companions — but is fearless in battle, calm amidst danger, and shrewd in his timing when dealing with traitors and cowards. Cheat him of his share of treasure or try to rob him and he will attack immediately, striking to kill — but he will break off such hostilities if rewarded sufficiently. Shardin values money, good food, and protective magic above all else. He likes a good fight and an occasional night in the tavern, and both admires and covets well-made weapons. Nothing else matters to him; he cares nothing for Lord Lashan or for rescuing the Dales, only for what reward he will realize from the adventure.

Possessions: belt, boots, large helm, backpack (holds 250 gp wt), 2 large sacks (each holds 150 gp wt), pewter drinking mug (20 gp value), 5 candles (burn 3 turns), 4 torches (burn 1 hour each), tinder box, whetstone, several small rags, mallet, 6 iron spikes, iron rations for 2 days, leather wineskin.

# Into the Forgotten Realms player character sheets

(Permission is granted to photocopy these pages for personal use)

## RINDAL

### 8th-level thief

### Hit Points: 42

AC: 5 (front)/8 (rear)

Alignment: Neutral

Move: 12"

STR: 15      1-2 open doors, 07% bend bars

INT: 14

WIS: 14

DEX: 17      -3 def. adj., +2 react/attack

CON: 16      95% system shock survival

CHA: 15

Armor: Leather

Deity: Mask (god of thieves)

Languages: Common, neutral

Weapons: longsword (1-8/1-12) in hand, 2 darts (1-3/1-2) on belt, daggers (1-4/1-3) in each boot.

Description: 35-year-old human male, 5'8" tall, 129 lbs., ambidextrous.

**Rindal** is a slim, quiet, soft-voiced man, given to sampling wines and enjoying the company of women as often as his finances will allow. He dislikes dirt, hard labor, and fighting, but enjoys stealing — especially if he can filch something undetected from a person he meets casually in the street. He makes a point of *never* stealing from friends or companions, to avoid distasteful conflicts and ruined relationships (for he values his friends — among them Kortul, Elmaer, and Ravvas of the present party). Rindal intensely dislikes loud noises and arguments, and tends to drift away from them.

Possessions: soft leather gloves, boots, belt, 150' of fine cord (supports up to 4 men at once), grapnel hook (on cord), 2 large sacks (each holds 150 gp wt), thieves' tools, 8 metal spikes, cloth-wrapped stone (serves as a mallet), fine chain necklace with pouch containing 16 gp (kept under armor), iron rations for 4 days, 2 water skins.

Thieving skills: 70% pick pockets, 67% open locks, 55% find/remove traps, 67% move silently, 54% hide in shadows, 25% hear noise, 96% climb walls, 40% read languages.

## MYRUNE

### 7th-level magic-user

### Hit Points: 28

AC: 8 (front)/10 (rear)

Alignment: Chaotic neutral

Move: 12"

STR: 13      1-2 open doors, 04% bend bars

INT: 18

WIS: 14

DEX: 16      -2 def. adj., +1 react/attack

CON: 15      91% system shock survival

CHA: 15

Armor: None

Deity: Mystra (god of magic)

Languages: Common, chaotic neutral

Weapons: quarterstaff (1-6/1-6) in hand, dagger (1-4/1-3) on belt.

Description: 53-year-old human male, 6' tall, 130 lbs., right-handed.

**Myrune** is a diplomat, reconciler, compromiser, peacemaker. He hates to see conflict (between people he knows, at least), and wants everyone to be contented and carefree. He will always try to settle or end arguments between companions — if necessary, by distracting the combatants' attention, or by threatening them with his own magical might or punishment at the hands of other party members. He is confident of his own magical abilities and wants to increase them — and is irritated by the "pushy" nature of Elmaer, the other magic-user in the party. He is fascinated by gems and magic items, and will seek to win ownership or custody of any he finds.

Possessions: long robes, belt with 2 pouches (each holds 30 gp wt, currently full of material components), 22 sp in left pouch, boots, backpack (holds 250 gp wt), spellbook (in pouch, weighs 80 gp wt) with all spells given below (plus *read magic*, *write*, *identify*, *detect magic*), 4 quills, 1 vial ink, 20 pages of parchment, tinder box, gold coin with *continual light* cast upon it (in hand, 60' radius light).

Spells carried: *jump*, *protection from evil*, *shield*, *sleep*, *continual light*, *detect evil*, *web*, *dispel magic*, *haste*, *wall of fire*.



doors (with diagonal framing) face the characters on the wall ahead. If anyone inspects the chimney closely, a shrieking, purple, yellow-eyed bat will fly out of the chimney right at the characters. It's an ordinary bat (AC 8, MV 1"/24", ¼ HD, 2 hp, bites for 1 hp damage plus disease, as per cause disease, if a save vs. poison is not made). A character may climb up the chimney if he possesses any climbing ability; otherwise, a character has a 40% chance of successfully climbing the chimney passage. The chimney exits into the ruins of Myth Drannor overhead, serving as an emergency escape route (though it is a filthy one, too).

If the chopping-block table is closely inspected, it will be found to be covered with a peculiar, gummy ichor. A large meat cleaver is lying on the tabletop, its blade also covered with the ichor. This is the place where Azimer has been killing larvae brought to him by summoned demons and night hags, which helps him to maintain his lichhood (though he no longer sees himself as a lich at all).

10. This 10-foot-wide, 20-foot-deep root cellar has a low, arched stone-block ceiling and a fairly level solid stone floor. In it are bunches of old, mouldering onions, a spongy, pungent-smelling keg of beer (now spoiled), a large pile of straw, and a row of six empty earthenware jugs. A seventh jug has rolled into a corner and still has its stopper in place. It is heavy, and sloshing noises come from inside when it is moved.

The jug once contained potent root wine; however, it and the beer have both spoiled and are now poisonous (loss of 2 hp, plus wracking pains and nausea for 1 turn if any amount of these is consumed; no spellcasting, attacks, or defense possible during this time), though neither tastes bad.

Hiding under the straw in the cellar is a larva (AC 7, MV 6", 1 HD, 8 hp, bites for 2-5 hp damage). The larva escaped from Azimer a week ago when brought over to the kitchen (area 9), and Azimer, in his addled state, never thought to look for it again. If discovered, the larva will plead for mercy, spewing forth any number of lies and false promises to help the party. It only wishes to escape the dungeon. It will claim to be a paladin cursed by Azimer to look like a worm, but will not say anything more about Azimer except that the mage is crazy. The larva will make no reference to Azimer's lichhood.

11. The door to this room is latched but not locked. It creaks loudly when opened to reveal a long, bare room that smells faintly of herbs, apples, onions, and the like. The floor is strewn with damp, rotting rushes, among which comes a phosphorescent glow at the far end of the room. The glow is from a small (1 foot long), harmless glowworm. Nothing of value is here. This room was a pantry.

12. A room identical to 11 (another pantry), but without the glowworm. If the

chamber is searched thoroughly, a narrow gap may be found in the walls at the back (leading to area 13). The gap will be found by a character on a roll of 1-3 on a d6 if the room is searched for at least 5 rounds.

13. A dark, rough-walled, natural stone passage, with uneven footing and slick with damp and harmless molds and lichens, leads to a natural cavern. The cavern smells of wine and some unidentifiable rotting substance.

The floor has a secret door in it (detected on a 1 on a d6 roll by any character searching for it; roll once per turn of searching). If the door is opened, a small pit will be discovered in which the mouldering remains of several larvae and some minor treasure are stored. A *potion of fire giant strength*, 120 gp, and a *wand of magic missiles* (with 3 charges) will be found here.

14. The door to this room is made of stone and locked (it must be picked or forced open with a bend bars roll to get in). Within is a 20' x 20' empty room, once used as a storeroom.

15. Another storeroom with a stone door, but this door's lock has been picked. Opening this door will still require a bend bars roll, since material has been shoved against the other side of the door to jam it shut.

Inside the room is the body of another of Lashan's men, an elf fighter/thief in leather armor who was probably the last of Lashan's men to die inside the mages' school. The elf escaped from Azimer as the lich chased and killed the rest of the men in the northern end of the dungeon across the chasm (area 16); having made it across the chasm, the elf discovered that Azimer had used *dimension door* to arrive in area 2 (judging from the screams of the guards there). The elf took refuge in area 15 after picking the lock, but Azimer found him anyway with another *dimension door*. Azimer, still enraged from Lashan's successful attack on him (see area 28), immediately slew the elf with his freezing touch. Frost-bitten scars in the shape of skeletal hands appear over the elf's face, arms, and chest.

If searched, the elf will be found to have a set of thieves' tools, a pouch inside his armor with two gems (both worth 100 gp), a pass identifying the bearer as an agent of Lashan's army, and a *ring of water breathing* (as per the druid spell, with indefinite duration). A *speak with dead* spell will reveal the elf's spirit to be rational, but very calculating and angry that he has been slain. He knows it was a lich that killed him, but will not tell this to the party out of sheer maliciousness (he was a neutral evil elf). If he thinks he can mislead the party, he will try to do so.

16. The corridor ends on the lip of a vast, dark chasm: a natural underground rift lit here and there by glowing patches of yellow fungi. Some 70 feet away, on the other side of the cavern and slightly lower, the corridor

opens out again. The rough, stalactite-studded ceiling of the cavern is visible overhead; the bottom is shrouded in darkness. (A pebble or other item dropped down will take 2 seconds to hit, indicating a depth of about 60 feet.)

The chasm is crossed by a row of seven glowing, pearly-white squares, apparently made up only of light, each 7' x 7' and separated from the next square by a 3-foot gap (or 1 ½ feet from the tunnel floors on either side). All is silent. Far to the left (90 feet away), some sort of arched bridge or viaduct can be seen, paralleling the squares of light (see area 24); the sound of rushing water comes from the bridge.

The chasm is 60 feet deep, measuring from the level of the squares; any character falling into it takes 6d6 damage and must make a system shock roll in order to escape becoming lame (move at 3" speed permanently). Roll percentile dice whenever a character moves from one square to the next, with a result of 00 indicating that the character has slipped on a square's slightly slick surface and fallen. Do not roll when a character crosses from a tunnel to a square, or from a square to a tunnel mouth. A running character has a 10% chance of slipping off when jumping from square to square. A character will normally cross the chasm in 3 rounds, taking half a-round (5 segments) to cross from one square to another; crossing from a tunnel to a square or vice versa is considered to be automatic. Running across the chasm successfully takes only half a round.

If struck solidly by a monster (see below) while on one of the squares, a character has a 5% chance of falling off per hit point of damage inflicted on him. The light squares will solidly support characters without dipping or moving, regardless of how much weight is put on them. A *dispel magic* cast on a square will cause it to wink out of existence instantly, dropping whatever is on it to the chasm floor.

When the foremost member of the party reaches the center square over the chasm, a doombat (kept as a guardian by Azimer; AC 4, MV 18", 6 + 3 HD, 33 hp, bites for 1-6 hp and lashes for 1-4 hp, shriek ruins all spellcasting attempts and causes all "to hit" attempts to have a -1 penalty; *light* spells will keep it from attacking) will attack by swooping past the party, biting and tail-lashing as it shrieks for 5 rounds. The doombat, after it finishes the 5-round shrieking attack, will then start attacking characters by snatching at them with its feet (roll to hit as a 6 HD monster to grab victim) and dropping them into the chasm. Once someone has fallen into the chasm, the doombat will fly down and attack the character there continuously until the victim is slain.

The doombat cannot enter the tunnels leading out of the chasm. It is famished from lack of food and will never retreat once its attacks have started. Anyone hearing the doombat's cries has a 5% greater chance of falling when moving from square to square.

When the foremost member of the party reaches the square closest to the northern tunnel entrance, a piercer (AC 3, MV 1") 4 HD, 20 hp, 4-24 hp damage from drop, 95% likely to surprise) will fall on him or her (normal "to hit" roll required).

17. The chasm is dark, with a rocky floor strewn with sand (there was once an underground lake here), bones from the doom-bat's and piercer's victims, and some minor treasure. Glowing molds and fungi can be found here, and harmless crickets and cave snakes nest in the shadows. The shell of a long-dead giant scorpion rises ship-like at the eastern end of the chasm floor, and the remains of several humans litter the ground under the light squares. (All fell from the walkway above.) Only the most recently dead human may be contacted using a *speak with dead* spell; he will prove cooperative, but only if his body is given a proper burial (his religion requires his body to be immolated). He knows about Azimer's lichhood, having been in area 28 when Lashan attacked the former archmage, but he ran from the scene before he knew of Lashan's fate.

One skeleton wears rotten leather armor, with a *shortsword* +1, +2 vs. *magic-using* and *enchanted creatures*, and two normal silvered daggers (one at belt, one in left boot). It wears a gold ring (worth 10 gp) and has 60 feet of waxed cable looped around its waist as a belt. Beside this one is a skeleton in rusty but usable chainmail, with a crumpled metal shield under it, a longsword belted to it, and a handaxe fallen nearby. It has a tinder box, two large empty sacks, and a broken lantern.

A skeleton in tattered robes is close by, wearing a brass ring (a +3 *ring of protection*) and clutching a broken staff. In its backpack are a stoppered stainless steel vial (a *potion of healing*, restores 2d4 + 2 hp), 3 broken candles, 2 quills, a bottle of ink, and a spellbook with 16 pages in it. The last three are blank; the others are *burning hands*, *enlarge*, *identify*, *jump*, *read magic*, *shield*, *spider climb*, *write*, *continual light*, *invisibility*, *knock*, *locate object*, and *dispel magic*. Material components packaged in cloth bags, for the castings of all of these spells, can be found in the pockets of the robes.

Near the northern end of the chasm is a skeleton in red robes, with studded leather armor underneath and an iron helm. A shattered wooden pendant (probably once a holy symbol) hangs from its neck, and a smashed lantern is gripped in one hand. Two shattered glass flasks are in a pack on its back, and a hammer hangs from its left wrist by a looped strap. A +1 *mace* is in a wrapped sheath at its belt; this glows (equal to a crimson *faerie fire*) when grasped.

A freshly dead human in plate mail, with intact metal shield, helm, and armored boots, lies on top of the cleric's remains. A dagger is at its feet, a broadsword in its hand, and a (broken) javelin slung across its back. The human's shield has the insignia

of Lashan's army upon it (see above for more information). His belt purse contains 15 gp, 2 ep, and 5 cp.

18. Two featureless stone doors (to areas 19 and 27) and a corridor open out from this chamber, which contains an empty torch bracket set into the wall in one corner and a sigil in red mosaic tiles inlaid in the center of the pale gray floor. The mosaic pattern is that of the wizard's school that once flourished here. Anyone who searches this area for 1 turn will successfully detect the trap on the sigil if that character makes a roll of 1 on a d6 after that time has elapsed.

The two doors are *wizard locked* (19th level). If the sigil is stepped on or disturbed in any way, a hole will silently open in the ceiling above it and an iron cobra (AC 0, MV 12", 1 HD, 8 hp, bites for 1-3 plus poison (sleep for 1-2 hours), saves as 12th-level magic-user, immune to all will-force spells and *webs*, takes half damage from normal weapons, 49% chance to hide in shadows, moves silently) will strike down out of it at anyone and everyone in area 18. The actual lair of the iron cobra is a 5' square alcove above area 18.

19. This 20' x 30' room is lined with deep, floor-to-ceiling shelves covering all four walls (except for the door). In the center of the room is a sturdy trestle table and two high stools. The shelves are crammed with stored material components for spells and equipment, including 16 brass braziers, a pot of pitch, 8 intact turtle shells, and a wide assortment of jars containing the following: coal, charcoal, salt, soot, glow-worms in fluid, powdered iron, powdered brass, powdered silver, owl feathers, duck down, sticks and blocks of incense, dried basil, dried savory, catnip, 500 copper pieces, 100 pearls (each 100 gp value), fleece, wool, 600 crystal prisms, sand, rose petals in water, glass rods, crystal beads, human eyeballs in fluid, giant octopus ink, giant squid sepia, wax blocks, string, snakes' tongues, straws, gloves, nutshells, twigs, pebbles, bark chips, caterpillar cocoons, black dragon's blood, quartz crystals, powdered bone, 400 tiny crystal cones, sesame seeds, 50 tiny silver whistles (each worth 2 gp), 50 silver horns (each worth 120 gp each), powdered diamond (400 gp worth), varicolored thread, wood sticks, mercury, 300 parchment cones, bat fur, candles, dried insects, 66 citrine gems (50 gp each), iron pyrite lumps, leather thongs, loadstones, honeycomb in fluid, parchment strips, human finger bones (from undead skeletons), mica chips, ox hairs, skunk cabbage leaves in fluid, spiderwebs, flints, oil (flammable), wing feathers (eagle), clay in fluid, brass rods, fine dust, and human eyelashes.

If the shelves are examined closely, a doorway-wide section in the south-east corner will be found to have joints in it (breaks or seams in all the shelves). If pulled, this section will swing out to reveal a dark passageway behind it.

20. This 30' x 30' room has an unlocked, open stone door; it contains only a wooden armchair and circular table, with a ring of eight stools around it. All are rotting and somewhat rickety.

21. This area is similar to area 20, except that the door is closed and *wizard locked* (19th level). The walls of this room are covered in illegible scrawl, written with a charcoal stick. Azimer, in his madness, believes he is creating a new potion formula that will give him immortality and godlike powers; in truth, as any magic-user of 8th level or higher will be able to tell, it is meaningless.

22. This large (60' high x 170' long x 40' wide at its widest) irregular, natural cavern has a sandy floor, and a clear-watered, cold, swift-flowing stream at its west end. The water falls down the rock face from clefts high up, collects in a tiny pool, and flows swiftly to the southwest where the cavern narrows. It is large enough for characters to swim across. The room is lit by a faint *faerie fire* radiance cast on the ceiling above the stream.

Two of Lashan's men escaped as far as this cavern when Azimer became enraged, but their bodies lie in the northeast end of the cavern, slain by *magic missiles*. Each man is dressed in chainmail and carries a broadsword; neither possesses any equipment of consequence. If contacted by a *speak with dead* spell, either man will prove talkative, but neither of them knows of Lashan's fate.

23. The stream rushes rapidly along a natural passage, a rough-walled chute with 4-6 inches of dank airspace between the stone ceiling and the water. Characters swimming the icy stream will become numb almost immediately; they will find it hard to hold things, their coordination becoming slow, imprecise, and weak (reduce dexterity by half, dropping fractions). This effect will last for 5-10 rounds after a character leaves the stream.

Between the cavern (area 22) and the viaduct (area 24), the swimmers will be swept into a skeleton lodged against an old iron grating (which is twisted to one side, allowing easy passage past). Examination of the skeleton, which is that of a magic-user, will reveal a brass *ring of feather falling* and a silvered dagger in a belt sheath. The skeleton has a single pearl on a chain about its neck, a *pearl of power* which recalls a 3rd-level spell if worn by a magic-user.

24. The stream is carried across the chasm here by a 4-foot-high walled viaduct, before it plunges once more into a rocky tunnel. If the stream is followed further, the party will find it passes underneath two shafts or holes — the garderobes of areas 7 and 8 — before sweeping on for miles under the earth to join the River Ashaba just north of Mistle-dale. The cold water will quickly paralyze any unprotected character who is even

partially immersed in it, with this effect beginning as soon as a character passes the shaft leading up to area 8. Any paralyzed character who does not have some means of breathing underwater will drown; those who survive will be swept along in the stream until they are deposited in the river after some 5 hours of travel. It is possible for a character to walk against the current, but only if some sort of protection from cold is employed (such as a *cube of frost resistance*, a *ring of warmth*, or a *resist cold* spell).

25. The door to this room is made of stone and is *wizard locked* (19th level). Within lies a 50' x 65' chamber carved from solid rock, containing a huge crescent-shaped table fashioned of black wood, with thirty-three straight-backed chairs of the same material drawn up around it. Three globes of glowing, immaterial light hang in midair on the far (east) side of the room, and each has an item hanging suspended in it: a staff, a large egg-shaped spheroid, and a crown. Three freshly slain human bodies lie on the floor around the table, each badly mauled and partially eaten. Overhead floats a huge brainlike monster with a parrot-like beak and ten tentacles, each as long as a man is tall. Four gemlike stones circle about its head, out of reach of the characters. It floats toward the characters, writhing its tentacles.

The monster is a grell (AC 4, MV 12", HD 5, 35 hp, 10 tentacle attacks for 1-4 (plus save vs. paralyzation at +4) and bite for 1-6, flies by *levitation*, immune to lightning) that will attack anyone entering the room. It did not kill the three humans who lie about, having been fed them instead by Azimer (who keeps the monster as a "pet"). The condition of the bodies indicates that they were slain only within the last few days, in the same manner as the dead in areas 5 and 15. They were former warriors of Lashan.

Treasure is scattered about the room, and consists of a shortsword, 3 daggers, 4 iron spikes, a wooden mallet, a 60' rope, a bullseye lantern, a *wand of enemy detection* (4 charges left), a purse with 6 gp, a +2 *broadsword*, a hammer, a spear, 3 sets of chain mail, 2 blankets, 2 darts, a scroll of two *magic missile* spells (at 6th level of ability), and 5 flasks of flammable oil. Azimer had no use for such items (or so he believed).

Floating just above the grell are four *ioun stones*. The first is a pale green prism (adds 1 level of experience), the second a pearly white spindle (regenerates 1 hp of damage per turn), the third a pale lavender ellipsoid (absorbs spells of up to 4th level, burns out to dull gray after absorbing 10 spell levels), and finally a dull gray ellipsoid (burned out). The second and third stones function normally when whirling around the grell.

The three floating items in the globes of light are trophies. (This was an audience chamber and meeting room.) The glowing globes of air are merely permanent stasis fields; they hold any object placed in them motionless, *levitated*, and protected from

decay. Characters reaching into the globes of light will not be harmed. The items are a *staff of curing* (4 charges left), a red dragon's egg (fertile and hatchable within 2 weeks, value 1500 gp), and a crown of silver (worth 550 gp) set with six black sapphires (value 5000 gp each) and a 5000 gp-value clear red ruby, set in a spire in the center front of the crown. This ruby is actually a *gem of seeing*.

26. This hallway is lined on both sides with a total of fifteen life-sized stone statues, standing on 1-foot-tall blocks of stone. They are all extremely lifelike and all radiate a faint dweomer, but are merely well-sculpted statues of famous magic-users, nothing more.

(Dungeon Masters using this module in a regular campaign may consider having a few, or even all, of these statues be petrified magic-users, powerful mages who taught at the school and elected to wait in this way for apprentices to "wake" them in times of need.)

Two closed, *wizard locked* (19th level) stone doors are set in the walls of this hallway, one at the east end, and one at the south wall (leading to areas 27 and 28, respectively).

27. This 20' x 60' room was once the library of the School of Wizardry; now it is a fire-scarred ruin. Ashes and crumbling, charred shelves line the walls and litter the floor in the center of the room, where remnants show that three tables, with four chairs at each, stood here. Dust lies thick on the ashes; the fire was not a recent thing, and surprisingly few ashes are on the shelves.

Close examination will reveal that the books and scrolls of the library were almost all gone or removed before the fire occurred. Walls, floor, and ceiling are all blackened by smoke, and if these are looked at, the outlines of a narrow door can be seen on the south wall, in the corner where it meets the west wall. If this area is pushed, it will slide noiselessly away to reveal a dark, silent passage.

28. This room is 30' x 30', and furnished with a massive carved wooden arm-chair, an oval side-table with a large book on it, and a purple tapestry on the south wall adorned with a golden sigil identical to the one on the floor of the central hallway (area 18). The room is illuminated by a brightly glowing ball of green fungus that sits in a bowl full of what looks like water and old, black blood. A skeletal hand, still blotched with scraps of rotting flesh, is visible, projecting half out of the bowl; the fungus is growing on the carrion. The bowl is under the table.

Sitting in the chair is a skeleton with shriveled skin still adhering to it; it is wearing rotting robes, and its eyes are two cold, twinkling white points of light. It gestures at the characters to approach.

This is Azimer (AC 0, MV 6", HD 19,

76 hp, attacks for 1-10 (plus save vs. paralyzation), causes *fear* in all creatures below 5th level or 5 HD, struck only by magical weapons or attacks, immune to *charm*, *sleep*, *enfeeblement*, *polymorph*, *cold*, *electricity*, *insanity* (see below), or *death spells/symbols*). Though as a lich he is immune to further attacks causing insanity, Azimer's mental illness predated his conversion to a lich, and his insanity cannot now be cured by any means.

Azimer is still well equipped with spells, and his condition still allows him to cast them (though he has a 1% chance per level of a spell attempted of blowing the spell so that it does not "go off"). His current spells are as follows: *magic missile* (x3), *read magic*, *shield*, *continual light*, *ESP*, *levitate*, *magic mouth*, *wizard lock*, *dispel magic*, *gust of wind*, *hold person* (x2), *suggestion*, *dimension door* (x2), *fire trap*, *wall of fire*, *wall of ice*, *cloudkill*, *feeblemind*, *hold monster* (x2), *wall of force*, *anti-magic shell*, *death spell*, *repulsion*, *cadodemom*, *power word stun*, *reverse gravity*, *Otto's irresistible dance*, *power word blind* (x2), and *imprisonment*.

Note that Azimer's *magic missile* spells (each firing ten missiles that do 2-5 hp damage apiece) may be directed at separate targets if the lich so wishes. Azimer will employ these first, interspersing them with any defensive spells he deems necessary (e.g., *feeblemind* on spellcasters, *hold person* or *hold monster* on charging attackers, or *reverse gravity* on a group of attackers, *anti-magic shell* if he faces many spellcasters, and so forth). Azimer will use *dimension door* to get into area 29 if seriously threatened.

All of Azimer's spells are written in the book on the table. (This is his final spellbook, which he no longer needs but which he keeps for sentimental reasons.) The book has a *fire trap* cast on it (5' radius explosion doing 19 + 1d4 damage when opened, unless the proper saving throw is made).

Azimer will at first greet the characters in a brusque manner, demanding (in a ghastly whisper) to know where the characters have been, why they haven't been studying their spellbooks, and scolding them for not seeming to care about how important their work at the school is. He will then get up and become more friendly and patronizing, continuing to treat the characters as favored pupils in his "magic school" and calling them by the names of magic-users long dead who lived at the school. He will avoid touching the characters unless one of them appears to be belligerent or talks back to him; then he might gently rap the character once (doing normal damage from his cold touch) and continue with his business.

Azimer believes he is a living human being, and cannot be convinced that he is really a lich. He will treat any comments to the contrary as some sort of joke or insult, depending on how such comments are framed. If attacked, he will defend himself as described above. Though he continues



to summon night hags and demons to collect larvae, enabling him to maintain his lichhood, he believes this will help him to achieve godhood (which will never occur).

No sign of Lashan will be seen in the room, and there are no signs of a scuffle. If Lashan's description is given to the lich (he was 6' tall, dark haired with a heavy beard, very muscular, and had green eyes), or if he is named, Azimer will become agitated and curse Lashan as a traitor, backstabber, thief, liar, and cheat. The lich will heap abuse upon Lashan, eventually stopping to give out a horrifying giggle and admit that Lashan now "sleeps at the center of the world." After *stunning* (with a *power word stun*) and *paralyzing* Lashan with his touch, Azimer used an *ESP* on the unfortunate tyrant, learned about his life, and then cast an *imprisonment* spell on him.

The Dungeon Master may have Azimer perform any number of bizarre behaviors and say nonsensical and "crazy" things when interacting with the party. Azimer has no desire to leave his underground home, and if left alone he will eventually waste away and his spirit will perish within a few hundred more years. Though he is evil and may certainly be dangerous, he is for the most part harmless — unless aroused.

**29.** Here all the secret passages meet. A 1-inch-diameter hole is in the ceiling of this

chamber, and within it is a slightly smaller keyhole. A 2-inch-diameter round hole is in the floor, extending down 3 feet. At the bottom of the hole in the floor can be seen a long, gold key, if a light is directed into the hole.

If the party figures out a way to get the key up out of the hole (various spells will work, or some sticky substance — pitch from a burning torch, for example — can be applied to the end of a staff, a stick of wood, or a rope) and inserts it into the keyhole in the ceiling, the door leading into area 30 will open. The lich will flee here if pressed, using a *reverse gravity* spell to get at the key, which is the only unfixed object in this chamber.

**30.** The passage here is guarded by a piercer (1 HD, 7 hp, does 1-6 hp damage) that hangs directly over the secret door entrance.

This last irregular, natural passage apparently leads to a dead end; but shortly before its end, on the east wall, is a secret door (see area 29) leading into a natural rock cavern, once the quarters of the Master of the School. This cavern room is lined with books; most are light reading in rather archaic common and elven tongues, but spellbooks (one book per spell level) may be found, containing all known magic-user spells except for those named spells (like the

*Bigby's hand* spells) that are peculiar to the WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ Fantasy Setting.

Also present are two wooden armchairs, a wide cot with cotton sheets and a wool blanket, a rug, a table, a chamber pot, two (empty) wooden kegs, two pewter tankards, an oil lamp and sixteen flasks of oil (on a bottom bookshelf to one side), two crystal decanters of sherry, a pack of (normal) playing cards, a silver *horn of Valhalla*, an *alchemy jug*, a *wand of negation* (6 charges left, command word "Arbraer" engraved on the butt), a *helm of comprehending languages and reading magic*, 4 *potions of healing* (each restores 2d4 + 2 hp), and a *necklace of adaptation*. None of these items is labeled or in any way identified, and all are usable by any character class.

Here endeth the description of the School of Wizardry. The characters who have the sense to run like blazes or to play along when they encounter the lich may come out quite well endowed with what they find. The place is rather heavy on magic for campaign use, unless one adds a few more monsters and makes getting out again a little harder (perhaps blocking the front entrance and forcing use of the chasm-crawl or the stream). The spellbooks listing all magical spells may be removed if such would unbalance a campaign. ✕

## Into the Forgotten Realms scoring system

When this adventure was run at the 1984 GEN CON® Convention, players were scored on a point system that somewhat resembles the RPGA™ Network scoring system. All participants in each session, players and DM alike, voted for best, second best, and third best role-players among the playing group. In addition, players received points for having their characters accomplish particular actions related to success in the adventure.

If you're using this adventure as part of a campaign, it may not be appropriate to use the scoring system at all. Or, if you modify certain parts of the environment, or certain conditions for success in the adventure, you may find it necessary to modify the point values given below, or change or add to the ways in which points can be scored.

The player judged to be the best role-player in the group by the DM earns 25 points, with 15 points going to the DM's choice for second best role-player and 10 points to the DM's choice for third best role-player.

Each player also votes for best role-player, earning 10 points for the player named as best, 5 points for second best, and 3 points for third best. Players may vote for themselves.

In addition, points are awarded to players (and the characters they ran in the adventure) for accomplishing the following things:

- 10 points for attacking the stone guardian in area 2 before it is activated.
- 10 points for searching the furniture in area 6, whether the wand is found or not.
- 10 points for discovering that either garderobe (areas 7 and 8) leads to the stream.

- 10 points for successfully climbing the chimney in area 9.
- 10 points for volunteering to go first across the squares in area 16.
- 10 points for being the first to reach into one of the "air globes" in area 20 and take an object from it.
- 10 points for deducing what happened to Lashan.
- 10 points for figuring out a way to get the key out of the hole (area 29).
- 15 points for deducing the existence of a lich in the dungeon before crossing over the chasm into the northern end of the dungeon, or before talking to the dead man in area 16.
- 20 points for devising a method of dealing with the lich without causing it to attack the group, and having that method adopted and used successfully by the party.

# Battles above the dungeon

Basic combat tactics for the wide-open spaces



*Mobility: If you can get a flying steed, use it.*

by Tim W. Brown

In a dungeon, adventurers usually have only two options when a battle is imminent: they can fight or they can flee. If they take the first option, the biggest, meanest fighters step to the front, with a good magic-user or two behind them, and everyone duking it out toe to toe. Victory goes to the strongest or most powerful. If they take the second option, everyone runs away as fast as they can, along an escape route that is usually narrowly defined, and victory (or survival, in this case) goes to those with the swiftest feet.

The battle tactics in a dungeon are pretty straightforward. Often, the challenge in a dungeon adventure lies not in how a battle is conducted (or not conducted) as much as in the characters' cleverness at figuring out traps, trick rooms, and other mysteries of the environment.

Out in the great outdoors, though, the tactical possibilities change as dramatically as the scenery. Danger can approach from

any direction, and visibility can be measured in miles (in daylight) rather than mere feet. Characters can run, or attack, in any direction rather than just back and forth along a narrow corridor. The ability to move quickly becomes crucial, sometimes even more important than the protection of heavy armor.

Issues #87 and #88 of DRAGON® Magazine carried an excellent two-part article by Katharine Kerr about outdoor adventuring in general. This article offers some hints on how to plan for the battles that are sure to take place during those adventures. A party that refuses to use any tactical sense is going to be easy prey for the adversaries set before them by a careful and clever Dungeon Master.

And it works the other way, too. A little simple tactical planning by the DM can easily multiply the effectiveness of any group of NPCs. Many DMs, when confronted with the task of providing opposition for a powerful party of player characters, will just throw more and bigger

monsters in the PCs' path: a hundred orcs instead of twenty, or a demon instead of an ogre. While this may challenge a party's raw power, it is a clumsy way to do so since it is really just a repeat of earlier encounters, only with a bigger budget.

Tactical planning can be simple. For instance, rather than doubling the size of a group of orcs from 25 to 50 and lining all of them up in front of the party, have 15 of those 25 engage the party from the front and send the other 10 around to the rear. The first time this happens, be ready for screams of protest from the players when orc arrows suddenly start plunking into the backsides of their characters. If the party wins this kind of battle, the characters will have certainly earned their experience points.

And of course, what works for NPCs works equally well for player characters. Tactical planning, and the successful execution of those tactical plans, can work wonders for a party's effectiveness (and ultimately its chances for survival) in a

combat situation. Player characters who get outflanked by the enemy will quickly learn to turn the tables and come up with a few tricks of their own. As move and counter-move develop between a PC party and its adversaries, the adventure becomes more fun and more challenging for all involved. After their characters have been through a few open-field skirmishes, players will realize just how confining the stone walls of a dungeon can be.

The subject of tactics has filled hundreds of books throughout history. With an eye toward simplicity and applicability to fantasy gaming, the important principles can be summed up in five concepts: 1) Mobility — the ability to move quickly; 2) Firepower — the ability to attack from a distance; 3) Intelligence and communication — knowing the enemy, and sharing information with allies; 4) Terrain — using the lay of the land to best advantage; and 5) Organization and morale — keeping it together, both as a group and on an individual basis.

### 1) Mobility

There are two goals related to the concept of mobility: to give yourself as much freedom of movement as possible, and to hinder or stop the enemy's movement.

With freedom of movement, you can react to any situation quickly. Mobile troops can move in to attack whenever they wish, rather than waiting for the enemy to take the initiative. A fast-moving character or group can circle around an enemy, disrupting his plans and perhaps causing morale problems for him. Fast troops can often attack an enemy's weak points and get away before the opponents have a chance to react. If two parties are racing for a single objective, the faster one has an obvious advantage. And while it may sound cowardly, a mobile force can retreat more quickly than a slow force. Sometimes there is no reasonable choice other than to get out of a battle as fast as possible.

The first thing to look at when trying to increase your mobility is your load of armor and equipment. Plate armor provides excellent protection, but it slows you down. In a dungeon, protection is usually more important than speed. But when you have to charge a group of archers in open terrain, your slower speed will let them get off a few extra shots before you can engage them with hand-held weapons. Lightly armored troops with bows can lead heavier troops on a merry chase — shooting arrows until the opponents get close, then using their superior mobility to put more distance between the forces while still staying within firing range. (Read a history of the Crusades for some real-life examples of this tactic.) Extra sets of iron spikes, lanterns, torches, picks, hammers, and so forth may be useful underground but are rarely necessary in the wilderness. Consider leaving some of those heavy tools behind, or at least get a mule to carry them for you.

Get everyone on horseback if at all possible. (Dwarves and halflings may not like it,



*Firepower: He could attack three times before coming to blows with an opponent.*

but they can usually be persuaded to ride horses or mules. One dwarf in my campaign designed a goat-powered chariot so he could keep up with the rest of the party.) Even if characters don't fight from horseback, at least they'll be able to quickly move into position to attack. With the extra visibility afforded them above ground, characters often have a choice between going into battle or avoiding it. Superior mobility allows a party to catch an enemy group or keep out of its clutches as necessary.

If you can get a flying steed, use it. An airborne character can obviously cover a long distance quickly and has a very wide field of view. Airborne creatures can spot an enemy from a long way off — but, of course, they can also be seen from an equally long distance.

Once a battle begins, don't stop moving. Attack from two or three directions at once. This will force the enemy to divide his force to offer resistance on all fronts. Always be sure you can get out, though — if you're too slow, he may be able to concentrate his efforts on one part of your force before the rest of your group can get there to lend a hand. In military terms, this tactic is called "defeat in detail": destroying the enemy one small piece at a time. There's no law that says you have to attack an enemy's front line; by using a speed advantage, you can go around the side and engage the enemy at a weak spot in his force.

The ultimate in mobility in a fantasy environment is teleportation — the ability to go from one place to another without having to physically traverse the intervening obstacles. This is not an ability to be employed casually, because it's so valuable, but if the fight looks like it's going to be close, go ahead and use that *teleport* spell or magic item to get behind the enemy in the twinkling of an eye.

Attacking from more than one direction with the intent of splitting the enemy's power has the effect of limiting his mobility; he has to stay in one place or risk leaving part of his force behind. Spells of *darkness* or *fog* thrown over enemy troops will also

slow them down. A *transmute rock to mud* spell or an *entangle* spell can stop a charge in its tracks. Spells such as *wall of stone*, *wall of iron* or the like will keep opponents from going where you don't want them to go. The less freedom of movement the enemy has, the less easily he will be able to respond to your moves.

### 2) Firepower

In the context of this article, the term "firepower" refers to any means of attack with a reach or range longer than that of a pike. A force that possesses firepower has the ability to strike at the enemy from a distance. Thrown weapons (spears, axes, daggers, etc.) are the simplest and least effective forms of firepower. Bows and arrows are better because of the longer range the bows provide. The most powerful form of firepower is magic — the long-range and wide-area weapons such as *fireball* and *cloudkill*. Many spells and magical effects can be considered firepower because they are able to affect the enemy from a distance. Just because a spell doesn't directly cause damage doesn't mean that it has no use in combat.

Since combatants in an aboveground battle often first spot each other from a considerable distance, the first few exchanges of the conflict will be entirely dependent upon mobility and firepower. Don't give the enemy a free shot by denying yourself missile weapons. Try to make sure that everyone in the party has some kind of ranged attack at his disposal. Sometimes smaller groups of NPCs will not be equipped in this way, but any large force should have a few archers among its ranks. In a player-character party, each fighter should carry, and be proficient with, a bow or a crossbow, or at least one throwing weapon in addition to any hand-held weapons. Thieves can use slings to fill the need for a ranged weapon, and may also hurl daggers or darts. Clerics have only a few mediocre choices for a weapon they can throw (but clerics in the D&D® game can use slings), and although they do have



spells, few of them are really useful in combat. In most cases, a cleric's spell-casting ability is best saved for healing and curing after combat. Magic-users can carry extra daggers for throwing if it seems like a good idea, but their firepower is obviously centered in their spells. Except in an engagement involving a relatively small number of combatants, daggers (as well as many other hand-held weapons that can be thrown) don't have the range or the damage potential to make much of a difference in a battle. One character I ran used four weapons: a crossbow for long-range sniping, a spear that he used when closing with an enemy, an axe which could be thrown or swung as needed, and a broadsword for the final slugfest. Without stopping to reload, he could attack three times before coming to blows with an opponent.

In a party of PCs, it's a good idea to designate one or two characters as "missilemen" whose job in a fight is to stay out of melee and pepper the enemy continually with arrows or spells. This is the natural military function of magic-users, and is also a good way to make use of weak or heavily wounded fighters. Missilemen can contribute to the combat effort without directly risking their lives by getting involved in a melee. The extra hits they can score by fighting from a distance will in most cases more than make up for their absence from the front lines.

The top-priority target for missilemen is the enemy's missilemen, especially magic-users. These are the only opponents who can pose a real threat to the party's missilemen, and keeping them under fire will force them to take cover before continuing the fight. With the enemy archers and spellcasters dead or hiding, your own missilemen can fire at will. Second priority usually goes to the enemy commanders. Since officers usually direct a battle from a position behind the front lines, firepower is often the only way to injure them. Whatever target your missilemen choose, have each of them concentrate on a single target at one time; because wounded opponents can still strike

back, it's usually important to reduce the enemy's numbers in order to reduce his ability to counterattack.

Firepower and superior mobility make a powerful combination. Airborne archers can sail over an enemy, picking out targets behind rocks and trees that would otherwise be unassailable. Firepower used wisely can make up for limited mobility; the range of a bow is several times greater than an enemy's movement rate, for all but the fastest of creatures. A force with good firepower can win a battle without crossing swords, simply by staying away from face-to-face contact with the enemy and shooting at him.

### 3) Intelligence and communication

The attribute of intelligence, in this context, doesn't mean the magic-user's prime requisite. Tactical intelligence involves knowing who (or what) your opponent is, what his abilities are, and what his plans are. This is one factor that can sometimes work in favor of NPCs, because the DM knows the ability, location, and other important information about each individual on both sides. But if the DM is playing fair and not giving "his" NPCs the benefit of knowledge that they would not logically have, then there's a lot that a group of PCs can do to confuse the enemy while they gather facts to find out what sort of opposition they're up against.

One obvious trick is to use invisibility. This enables you to scout enemy forces, sneak around behind them, and attack with surprise. The best kind of character for confusing the enemy is an illusionist; deception is his bread and butter. An illusionist who can't think of anything more creative during a battle than conjuring up images of monsters should be drummed out of his adventuring party. An imaginative illusionist has lots of possibilities at his disposal. He can put up an illusory pit between the opposing front lines, which will serve to discourage the enemy from charging into battle or trying to outflank your forces. He can throw up a veil of *darkness* or a *fog*

*cloud* to thwart enemy missilemen. He can manufacture an illusory wall to keep opponents from getting any closer (at least until someone runs into it and discovers it wasn't there to begin with). Illusions that look like very powerful spells can scare off enemies — and the "lookalike" spell doesn't even have to be an illusion; as stated in its description, a *fog cloud* spell has the appearance of a *cloudkill* and can certainly be a deterrent even if it can't actually do any damage. No illusionist should ever sit on his hands for lack of things to do, as long as he has any spell power left.

Airborne troops are obviously great for intelligence work, because they can fly over an enemy force and find out who's where and how many of them there are. Thieves, with their ability to move about silently and inconspicuously, can get close to enemy lines (or even behind the lines) to gain information that would be otherwise unobtainable. And spellcasters should not overlook the value of talking to the native wildlife — animal and vegetable — by using the various "speak with" spells. It can be dangerous to travel through an area "controlled" by a druid, because the druid can find out what's happening by conversing with the various flora and fauna.

Many forms of magic are useful for surveillance and information-gathering. Familiars can make good spies; spells such as *clairvoyance* will come in very handy when probing enemy forces; and the use of a *crystal ball* makes intelligence efforts almost too easy for words.

Communication is rarely a problem for player characters under normal circumstances, since the players running those characters can simply discuss their plans and exchange information across the table. The DM may put some limits on what the PCs can talk about — if two characters are located 100 yards apart on the field of battle, their players shouldn't be able to conduct a normal conversation. Conversely, the DM has to be careful not to take advantage of information he overhears but which the enemy would have no way of knowing.

For NPCs, communication consists mainly of a commander shouting orders at his troops. A cleric with a *silence 15' radius* spell can shut him up from as far as 120 yards away. Or, a clever illusionist might imitate the enemy commander's appearance and voice to trick the enemy troops into following false orders.

History is replete with instances where battles were won or lost not only because of what took place on the field of combat, but because of what happened — or didn't happen — before the battle was joined. If you know what you're up against, you're less likely to get a nasty surprise once the fighting starts. Use the time before a battle to your advantage by assessing the enemy's capabilities, sorting out his strengths and weaknesses. You may not learn enough to turn a probable defeat into a likely victory — but you never know until you try.



Communication: Spellcasters should not overlook the value of talking to the native wildlife.

#### 4) Terrain

Always look for ways to use terrain to your advantage. This tactic can be as simple as hiding behind a tree, or as complex and devious as positioning your forces so that the enemy has to travel over a patch of quicksand to get to you. Thick forests, jungles, and areas of tall grassland are prime locations for an ambush. By moving carefully through areas that provide good cover and concealment, you can become effectively invisible to an enemy force positioned just a short distance away. If a battle is unavoidable and you're on the defense, try to locate your forces where the opponent has to attack across open terrain to get at you; without the benefit of cover, he'll have to expose his forces to your firepower before he gets close enough to start a melee.

Rough or uneven terrain can reduce your mobility; don't pick a fight on rocky ground or in hilly territory unless you're convinced that the terrain will be more of a disadvantage for the enemy than for yourself. If you're traveling cross country, consider going around a mountain instead of climbing it. You may have to travel a longer distance in doing so, but because you can travel more rapidly on the roundabout route, it may actually save time — and you won't risk being attacked on the mountainside, when you might have your hands full (so to speak) just staying on your feet. Don't get caught with your back to a river or a cliff; when you're pinned down like this, your freedom of movement is severely curtailed even if your forces are faster than the enemy's.

A prepared battlefield, where one side is holding and defending a particular piece of land, can be very hard on an attacker. The defender may have constructed pits, tripwires, walls, and fences to blunt an assault. The ultimate prepared battlefield is the castle, against which a direct attack is often fruitless and only a siege would serve to wear down the defenses.

When you're on the attack, use natural cover as much as possible. Choose an approach route that will give you maximum

protection from the defender's firepower. In a forest or other type of terrain that affords a high degree of concealment, it's usually a good idea to try a flanking maneuver, sending a small force around the side of the enemy's force to get at him from behind.

One of the best tactical tricks is possible only in a fantasy environment: If you don't like the terrain, change it! Spells such as *wall of stone* and *transmute rock to mud* are useful for this purpose, as discussed earlier. A neat trick, if you can pull it off, is to conjure up an illusion of a boulder or a grove of trees in the middle of a battlefield before the enemy arrives. Then, when his troops move forward to take advantage of the cover, dispel the illusion and let your missilemen fire away.

#### 5) Organization and morale

One of a PC's biggest advantages over an NPC is that the player character can act as an independent unit. Anyone who's role-playing an individual character should be expected to take some initiative in deciding what that PC will do, and in carrying out that decision. But unless there's a certain amount of organization and mutual trust among a group of player characters, battles will be little more than a collection of isolated brawls — and even a band of orcs should fight with more tactical sense than that.

In any group of players, one person's character should be designated or elected as the battle leader — preferably a character belonging to a player who has some tactical skill (wargamers and members of the military are usually good in this capacity). This player (and character) is responsible for planning and handing down directions to the others. An organization should be established and implemented long before a battle begins. Discussing tactics at length in the middle of a battle slows down the game and leads to confusion — and there simply may not be time to argue about who's going to do what when a band of goblins is breathing down your necks.

Set up "fire teams," groups of two or

three PCs who complement each other, combat-wise, and who can support one another by fighting side by side or back to back. If the PCs stick to this kind of organization, no individual is likely to get isolated during an ambush. This tactic will also forestall arguments about who goes where with whom, since the whole idea of a fire team is for the members to stick together during a battle. Partnerships will build, encouraging role-playing and deeper characterization, and the members of each fire team will work out special tricks and tactics of their own to use in combat.

Non-player characters have less individual initiative than player characters; that's why they're NPCs. But they, too, can benefit from careful organization. A large force can be divided into missile squads, heavy troops (those with chainmail or heavier armor), and light troops (with leather or less protection). Each unit can then concentrate on what it does best: missile squads provide firepower, light troops can move quickly to intercept or encircle the enemy, and heavy troops provide the "punch" for the main attack. The basic formation of this force, then, would be heavy troops in the center of the line, light troops on either side, and missile squads behind the front lines to support both types of other troops.

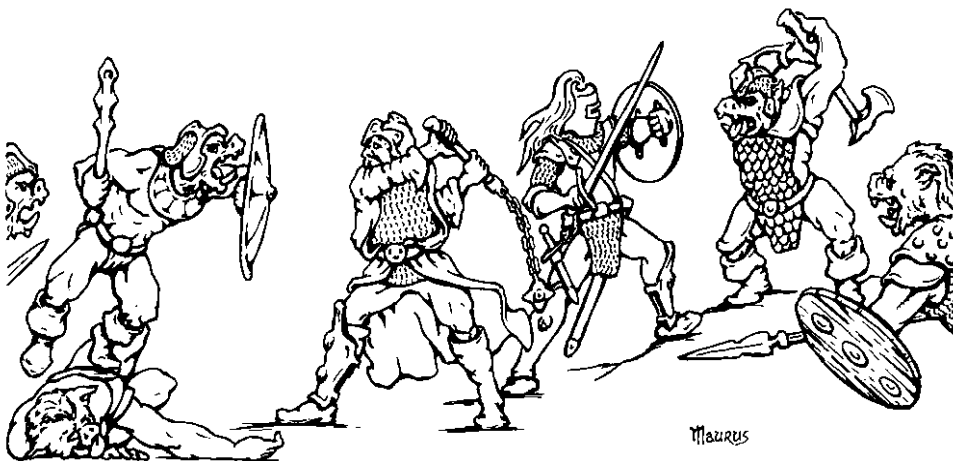
Complex or subtle variations on this basic formation may be employed, depending on how smart and skilled the NPCs are; in general, for instance, a force composed of (or at least commanded by) human NPCs would be more creative and more flexible in its attitude toward organization than a force of humanoids. Orcs will generally only use the simplest of tactics, while the Imperial Guard may employ several different formations, feints, false retreats, and other tricks of the trade that any student of military history would be familiar with.

If the organization of an NPC group is centered around a single leader, then silencing or disposing of this leader should reduce the troops' ability to act with initiative, and may cause a morale check that will send them running. Lieutenants will lessen this vulnerability; even if the commander is taken out of the picture, they can continue to lead their own sub-groups, and one of them may even step in to take command of the entire force. Lawful groups are generally less vulnerable to collapse from losing their leader than chaotic groups are, since they are more likely to have an organized chain of command and plan of succession. Chaotic groups, especially evil ones, will be less likely to cooperate without the presence of a strong leader. Often, the capture of an NPC leader is more morale-shaking than the killing of one; a dead leader sometimes inspires berserk vengeance, but troops may act with more uncertainty and hesitation if their leader is captured, because an all-out assault might cause the death of the leader that they would hope to rescue.

Player characters don't need to check morale. This alone makes them more effective than NPCs, since aside from *fear* spells



*Terrain: Thick forests are prime locations for an ambush.*



Organization: Set up "fire teams," PCs who can support one another.

and similar powers, nothing can prevent a PC from standing up against overwhelming odds if he so chooses. Player characters should take every opportunity to try to shake the enemy's morale. The use of illusions, spectacular or unexpected attacks, capturing enemy commanders, and other such moves can all induce opposing troops to decide to quit the field. Use every chance you have to display your superiority, whether actual or illusionary. If the enemy becomes convinced that you're more powerful than he is, he won't want to continue fighting in a losing cause.

#### Fairness and trust

As in any situation that might occur in a role-playing adventure, the DM must be fair when moderating a battle between two groups of adversaries. If a certain monster or NPC has a reputation for intelligence or tactical brilliance, then the DM should play it that way. On the other hand, stupid monsters should act stupidly — but within reason. An ogre may not know any other tactic than a screaming charge, but no ogre is going to run headlong into an open pit or charge a dozen men in full armor. NPCs should base their actions on what they would realistically know and assume. Any special knowledge that the DM happens to have should not affect the course of events unless an NPC is possessed of extraordinary intelligence or wisdom, or has *clairvoyance* or some similar ability. But, for the sake of the game, the DM should be careful even when doing this — the idea is to challenge players, not frustrate them — and one of the most frustrating things in the world is to come up with an original, well-thought-out plan, only to have the opponent devise a perfect counter-plan before the fight even starts.

Players and their characters have to trust each other, too. If even one character refuses to cooperate with a battle plan, this resistance can doom the plan to failure. A group of characters who all act in their own interest is guaranteed to be confused, disorganized, and much less effective than a party of characters who are organized and acting with a common goal in mind.

The basic principles described here are only a beginning; each of them can be refined and expanded upon, and the application of all the principles will certainly be different in every group of PCs. Take a good look at the abilities of each character in the PC group; tailor the responsibilities of each one so as to take full advantage of the character's strong points and minimize the disadvantage of his weaknesses. Developing creative, custom-designed tactics will make the party more powerful when they must do battle as a group, and the result will be a more challenging and more satisfying experience for players and DM alike. ✕

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HE BUZZING ORIGINATED FROM A thick cloud of horseflies in the center of the forest path. Their activity obscured a corpse the size of a sheep. Captain Marya scowled; something was amiss. This was no land for grazing.

She reined up sharply. Leather breeches creaked against saddle as she leaned forward for a better view. A few flies rose toward her broad, flat-nosed face, attracted by the sweet odor of dye. Her hand shot out, capturing three; she crushed them against her thigh. Most of the winged scavengers were, however, too busy gorging themselves to react to the pounding hooves and raised dust of a dozen horses.

Captain Marya turned to her second-in-command. Her mouth snapped shut. Without waiting for the commands of her captain, Lieutenant Luca was already signaling a halt to Sergeant Orvus and the guards. The captain's scowl deepened as, without a word, the long-limbed lieutenant dismounted to approach the body on foot. Luca's commission was a few hours old; it was too soon for her to anticipate her superior's orders, too soon for her to act independently. The captain would have condoned — no, expected — Lieutenant Calbot's taking such initiative, but Calbot had been Captain Marya's aide for more than five summers. Marya would not be on this path, with a new lieutenant and a hand-picked troop of guards, if Calbot hadn't gotten himself killed.

Dressing down Luca before her subordinates, though, would undermine the lieutenant's authority before she'd had a chance to establish it. Without that respect, Luca would be useless. Marya decided to save the chewing-out until they returned to Pellnoran.

Luca stood by the writhing black mass that hid the body, wrinkling her nose in distaste although there was little stench. The thing had not lain here long. She drew her sword and passed its flat a hand's breadth above the object, scattering flies in a rush of air.

From the speed with which the color drained from Luca's normally ruddy face, Marya perceived that her lieutenant regretted the act. So did several of the guards, retching noisily behind her. Yet it had been necessary. They needed to be sure.

"Yes, that's Brogan," Marya announced as the flies returned. "I recognize his tattoo."

Luca repressed a shiver. "I remember the night he had it done. The design was supposed to protect against demons. Chaos, that used to be his chest!"

"Then obviously demons didn't get him, eh, Lieutenant?"

Luca stiffened at the captain's harsh tone. Realizing that her sword was still drawn, she sheathed it. "Yes, Captain."

Good recovery, Marya thought, but better had there been no outburst of weakness. "You were closest, Lieutenant. From here, Brogan's remains did not much resemble those of Lieutenant Calbot."

"I would agree, Captain. The limbs have been hacked away; gruesome, but not unusual." Whereas, as

# Desperate Acts

by Gordon Linzner

every man and woman on that path knew, Calbot's body had been deposited outside Marya's quarters and stuffed in a chest no larger than a loaf of bread, apparently intact save that it lacked a skeleton. The presence of his lieutenant's baton had enabled Marya to identify the crumpled mass of skin and tissue; that, and Derik's taunting note.

"Brogan was inexcusably careless for a scout. His orders were to report back at the first hint of danger. There's no reason for this."

"I doubt he planned it," muttered a tangle-bearded guard.

Marya turned in her saddle, gray eyes flashing, face seeming as crimson as her uniform tunic. "I heard that, Hargin! You're on night watch for a month! And you can bury the scout." She shifted her gaze to the slim, dark-skinned man to the left of the outspoken guard. "Sergeant Orvus!"

The sergeant urged his horse forward the few paces to his captain's side. "Orders, Captain?"

"Issue a shovel to Guard Hargin. Half of your guards are to scour the woods for Brogan's limbs, but with extreme caution. The balance will strike camp in the last clearing."

Orvus' eyebrows crawled up his high forehead, but Marya offered no explanation, and he was not one to question orders. With a brisk salute, he turned his horse around and rejoined the troop to assign men and women their tasks.

Even as a sergeant, however, Luca had not been that inhibited. She'd regained her steed, so when the captain turned their eyes met on a level. Marya's lips tightened; she could see the question on Luca's face before the latter spoke.

"Brogan's not yet cool. Derik must be near."

"I know he is, Lieutenant. I know now that he will be exactly where he said he and I should meet."

"Then why make camp at midday? We should be in pursuit!"

Marya glared. "Don't overreach yourself, Lieutenant. No rank is permanent."

Luca bowed an apology. A fly crept up her neck, tried to slip underneath her leather helmet. She did not bat it away until the captain spoke again.

Marya glanced at the troop. The exchange had apparently gone unheard. She wondered if Luca was the right person for this position, after all. Perhaps no one in the Pellnoran Guard was capable of replacing Calbot.

"We will discuss protocol later, Lieutenant. I will answer your question only because you need to know my plans, and I'd have told you anyway. I'm going to do what I should have done in the first place, what I *would* have done if the regulations concerning vendettas hadn't hampered me. I'm meeting Derik alone. You're in charge until I return."

Luca's eyes went wide. "Captain, if I could —"

"I said alone, Lieutenant. I'm the one he's after; his letter said as much. I'll waste no more lives."

"Except your own." Luca bit her lip, lowered her eyes again, but it was too late. The words were spoken.

Marya's response was icy.

"Worried the council won't confirm your promotion if I'm killed, Lieutenant? I may be getting long in tooth, but Derik was no match for me two months ago, and he's no match for me now."

"Bother the council!" Luca snapped back, stung by the unjust accusation. "If Derik uses sorcery —"

"We've no proof of that. For B'or's sake, don't stir up the troops with that damned rumor! I'll be back by sunset . . . or not at all." Marya pressed her horse's flanks and moved on, ignoring Luca's salute.

Pursing her lips, Luca observed how stiffly the captain rode, how tense her shoulders were beneath her tunic. Luca had requested assignment to this unit over a year ago because Captain Marya was reputed to be scrupulously fair as well as tough. Until today, the newly promoted lieutenant considered that reputation well-founded.

Calbot's brutal murder obviously hit the captain hard, too hard. Naturally, personal attachments formed between members of the Pellnoran Guard. They were thrown together for weeks or months at a time, held each other's lives in their hands, were isolated physically and psychologically from common folk and even ordinary soldiery. They were the cream. As such, they were expected to put individual considerations aside when these could interfere with duty. Captain Marya often stressed this point.

Perhaps, Luca mused, she'd forgotten it herself.

The lieutenant watched until her captain vanished at a twist in the path, not once looking back. Well, why should she? Luca turned her own steed around and found herself staring into the impassive face of Sergeant Orvus.

"Something to report, Sergeant?"

"Arm and a leg recovered so far, Lieutenant, just beyond the roadside brush. Our friend Derik was in a hurry. I'm sure we'll find the rest of our scout shortly."

"Good, Sergeant."

"Guard Hargin thinks otherwise. With each find, he has to make the grave that much larger."

Only when Luca laughed did Orvus smile at his own joke.

"It's not my place to say, Lieutenant, but I hope the captain will reconsider Hargin's punishment. He was just letting off a bit of steam. You know how it is when a fellow guard is murdered."

Luca nodded. "I'll put in a word for him, Sergeant, though I'm afraid I don't carry much weight with the captain myself."

"Thank you, Lieutenant. That's all I can ask." Orvus saluted, taking his leave.

"Sergeant?"

He paused. "Yes, Lieutenant?"

Luca cleared her throat. "You were present when that chest was opened. You saw Calbot. I only read the note, later. Was he slain by sorcery? Or was Derik bluffing? It seems incredible that he could have obtained such knowledge in the last two months, yet he never used such talents in his thievery."

The sergeant shifted uncomfortably in his saddle.

"That's hard to say."

"Come on, Orvus. Last week we drank together as equals. You're not on trial. I only want an opinion."

"Well," he began.

She leaned forward, smiling encouragingly.

"The nastier wizards are not averse to leaving a filleted human or two lying about in warning. An unpleasant sight, you know. However, the spell itself is not difficult. Of course, I'm speaking from hearsay."

"Of course. Doesn't it take years of study, though, for a would-be sorcerer to perform even simple illusions?"

"Normally. Some take to it naturally. But you needn't know anything, if you've gold enough. It's rare, but not unknown, for former sorcerer's apprentices, who've run away or failed their examinations, to eke out a living with minor magicks. In fact, there was a one-armed lad hanging about the south market place a few weeks back, peddling ancient secrets."

"So Derik could have hired this youth?"

"With sufficient coin. He also could have done the surgery without mystical help. It's time-consuming and tedious, but not beyond one's power if the victim's already dead. Unfortunately, Captain Marya did not take time to arrange an autopsy, so whether the body showed any other signs of violence . . ."

Luca sighed. "In other words, you don't know, either."

Orvus spread his palms helplessly. "I didn't see him killed."

"All right, Sergeant. Return to your duties."

Orvus shifted his stance uneasily.

"Something else?" asked Luca.

"Well, if you're thinking of sending someone to follow the captain — just in case — well, I'm available."

A smile flitted across Luca's lips. "You know me too well, Sergeant. . . . No, I need you here, to supervise in my absence."

Orvus sighed. "I thought you might say that. Still, two would be safer than one. . . ."

Luca shook her head. "I haven't held this rank long, Orvus — and I'm not sure I would miss it much if I lost it. But one of us had better stay in the captain's good graces. If she sees me, but not you . . . then maybe next time you'll get a chance to pull rank on me."

Orvus saluted again and left. Lieutenant Luca gazed up the path that her captain had taken. In the still air, dust settled quickly over the single set of hoofprints.

**A** LINE OF OAKS ON HER LEFT THINNED abruptly, and the murmur that had gradually underscored bird songs and insect hums became a roar. The Targot River appeared in full torrential fury, white foam breaking high over the boulders that dotted its treacherous bed. Here the path widened; it was part of the river's floodplain in the spring. Humus gave way to hard-packed, pebble-strewn surface.

Captain Marya reined up. Summer heat had touched her even in the shaded forest. She removed her leather

helmet to wipe her brow, noting with distaste that the inner lining was streaked with black dye. If there had been no need to impress council members and civilians, she would have let her hair gray naturally, for disguising signs of age somehow made them more alarming.

She replaced the helmet and dismounted. Her goal was a five-minute walk farther, so why risk a stone in a hoof at this point? Therefore, she loosened the cinch, allowing her horse to graze and drink in comfort, but did not remove the trappings. She did not expect to be gone long.

She patted the beast's smooth neck, ordering it to wait. As she started walking toward the Targot, Marya felt eyes upon her, which meant that Derik was probably observing her.

Her initial concern was that Derik would try to steal the animal. But then she realized that he would not have such an opportunity. He'd be in for a surprise; a common thief could not twice elude the bite of Captain Marya's steel. She rubbed the haft of her sword reassuringly.

While spray from the rapids spotted her leather breeches, Marya fingered her swordhilt nervously. The blade was fully sheathed, safe from moisture, as was the dagger at her other hip. She did not reach for the second dagger, but she felt it resting at the small of her back, hidden under the tunic.

Keeping to the bank of the Targot gave Marya the widest view, which would help counter any plans Derik had for taking her by surprise as he'd taken Brogan. The disadvantage was that the thundering flow overwhelmed all other sounds, even the crunch of her hard leather soles on the rough road.

She could not possibly hear the footsteps paralleling hers, beyond the screen of oaks to her right.

Marya halted at the spot, knees bent, feet apart, hand on sword, and scanned the path ahead and behind, peering particularly into the woods. Derik must be hiding there. In the afternoon sun, one's sight could not easily penetrate to that which may be hidden within the foliage. Still, Derik would have to cross at least two meters of open ground to reach her. More than enough warning.

It was here that Derik had attempted a daring leap across the Targot River. The best riders in the seven kingdoms would have balked at such a jump, even in winter when the river was at its narrowest. Close pursuit breeds desperate action. Marya could pick out the precise spot where Derik had gone down — or thought she could, which was the same thing. Amazingly, the thief's horse did not drown. They dragged it from the river, but its forelegs were shattered. Marya's own blade ended its agony.

Had it been outrage at this waste of horseflesh, or some deeper instinct, which had urged Marya to camp here then for three days while Lieutenant Calbot directed her troop to search the banks for Derik's waterlogged corpse? She wondered. He was no court traitor or assassin to merit such care in establishing his death, only an ordinary thief whose extraordinary run



of good luck had finally given out.

There were still bare spots in the thin grass cover of the cleared patch of forest where she'd struck her tent and waited for word. It was Lieutenant Calbot who'd persuaded her to abandon the search. She agreed because there were no compelling reasons to continue.

Well, Lieutenant, she thought now, I was right and you were wrong. What good does it do either of us?

She whirled suddenly. It was not the scratching of worn leather on stone that alerted her, for that was swallowed in the river's rush, but a slight change in the tenor of that same roaring as Derik's body came between herself and the Targot.

Of course it was Derik, though draped in a coarse, brown, cotton robe with a cowl that hid his face. Who else would climb from the river to reach a hidden hand toward her throat? Water dripped from the outstretched sleeve, seemed to ooze from every fiber of the garment.

Marya's blade sang out of its sheath. From the folds of his robe came Derik's weapon. Despite his bulky, sodden apparel, he moved quickly, parrying Marya's attack and following with a counterthrust. Marya retreated from the bank. There were fewer stones on the forest side of the road and, therefore, better footing.

Derik kept pace, jabbing whenever her guard seemed to waver. When she held her ground, he halted just out of reach.

"Been waiting long, Derik?"

"I've learned patience, Captain Marya." Derik's voice was thick, lethargic, barely intelligible over the river's roar. He must have suffered some throat injury, likely from the near-drowning. Marya would have to guard against straining to understand the garbled speech. Distraction could be fatal.

"A clever ambush," she admitted. "I suppose you clung to the bank just below the surface, breathing through reeds. Not an easy task in current that swift."

"The Targot and I are intimate."

Marya looked to Derik's feet and posture in order to determine his next move. The soaked robe dragged to the ground; all she could see was one scarred boot. She would have to rely on his weapon's movements. That was a sloppy, dangerous way to judge an opponent, but it was the best clue offered.

"Is that how you escaped last time?"

"If you wish."

Marya grimaced. This conversation led nowhere. What was he waiting for?

"You're a fool, Derik. Even a thief has some small chance for reprieve, and since you were presumed dead, you could have wandered the seven kingdoms freely. Lust for vengeance is your undoing. There's no reprieve for a murderer of two Pellnoran Guards, one an officer."

"Then I've nothing to lose." He lunged.

Marya saw the blade's edge turn at the last moment and caught it with the flat of her own. It still came close enough to score her breeches. She pushed up and away. Derik staggered. Her sword descended and sank solidly, satisfyingly, in her foe's middle. Upon

slamming her left foot into his hip, she yanked her sword free. Derik spun, collapsing on his side.

Marya took a deep breath. Another. She knelt beside the fallen man and pulled off her helmet, shaking her short-cropped hair freely. Then she smiled.

"Easier than I thought." She wiped her sword clean on the robe, noticing that the weapon was stained not with blood, but with a foul, gray-green ichor.

Something gripped her ankle; she felt its chill through thick leather. Dropping the helmet, she turned to slash at whatever snared her. Derik pulled. Marya's stroke went wide as she sprawled on her back. The hilt of her spare dagger pressed painfully on her spine.

Derik rose to his knees. His grip on her ankle was firm; his other hand retained the sword. Marya blocked the killing stroke millimeters from her neck, but it took all her strength in that awkward position to hold death at bay. Only Derik's reluctance to free her ankle kept him from bettering his leverage and ending her life.

Marya's uncaptured leg shot up, the bony knee smashing into Derik's crotch. The force alone was enough to unbalance him. She rolled free as he toppled. A moment later Marya was on her feet, trying to ignore the muscle strain in her sword arm.

Incredibly, Derik regained his footing before she could strike again. Her blow should have left him writhing for minutes — unless she hadn't hit him where she'd thought.

"Those damned robes!" she gasped. "Too bulky to allow a clean blow, and I can't risk entangling my sword with a surer stroke!"

Derik seemed to nod as his blade licked out. Marya's parry was slow, but she'd been moving back. The weapons barely touched. Water from Derik's robe made her tunic cling uncomfortably, and this gave her an idea.

"That sodden cloth must be a hindrance, though. Doesn't that extra weight press on your back, weary your arm? . . ."

"No." He jabbed. A red line appeared along her ribs, under the slashed tunic.

So much for psychology, Marya decided, as her battle-trained body rushed into the opening Derik's attack had left. This time she aimed higher, and the weapon cut deep where cowl met robe. This time Derik landed face down.

A drop of sweat hung from her nose-tip. She brushed it off and straddled the prone form. With both hands on her sword, she stabbed down until the weapon's tip scraped the stony path. She added a vicious twist, withdrew the blade, and rolled Derik onto his back with her foot.

"Fool me once. . . ."

The sentence faded on her lips. Half the cowl dangled loose, exposing the left side of Derik's face. The flesh resembled raw meat, save where ivory bone protruded. Marya froze. The rapids could do this and more to a body trapped in the current, smashed against the rocky bed and bank. But how could Derik have

survived such a battering?

He turned his head to look at her.

Captain Marya backed off in shock as Derik pulled himself erect. His sword still jutted from the right sleeve, was held in a grip of iron. His free hand pulled down the remainder of the cowl. The right side of his face had even less skin, and the back of the head was naught but his skull and three stubborn clumps of colorless hair.

Marya swallowed to regain her voice. "You can't be alive. Not like that."

"No. I can't." Derik spread his arms; his sleeves slid back to reveal an equally skeletal structure to his hands and forearms. Marya saw the filigree on the swordhilt for the first time.

"That's Lieutenant Calbot's weapon."

"And he belonged to you. There's a balance."

Captain Marya was no stranger to sorcery; she knew that what she saw was not possible. Any trained necromancer could reanimate a corpse, but none she'd ever heard of could restore the dead mind. Always the revenant was an empty shell, a puppet of limited uses.

Supporting herself against a tree, its bark cut through her tunic and scraped her back. She forced the terror to the bottom of her mind. To battle the impossible required different tactics. Forget the ordinary killing stroke. She had to cripple Derik, cut him to pieces. It could be done, if she did not falter from exhaustion while battling the untiring dead.

First she had to see what she was doing.

With a snarl, Marya pushed away from the oak, twisting to one side. Her sword sliced the robe at waist height from stomach to spine, barely touching Derik. He swung awkwardly, surprised by the unorthodox attack. The flat of his blade smacked her shoulder, numbing her sword arm to the fingers. But she did not drop her weapon nor even slow until once more beyond his reach.

Following, Derik stumbled over the torn, hanging cloth. Marya moved in. Derik recovered. She dodged back as his sword lashed out. Quickly, Derik shrugged off the robe. His thin frame seemed held together by odd chunks of flesh, tendon, and viscera. Marya unconsciously took another step backward.

Derik chuckled. "Losing your nerve? I thought Captain Marya of the Pellnoran Guard never showed fear."

"I fear nothing!"

Derik snorted. "What terror do you see in my shape, Captain? Is it death? Your doom?"

Marya's move had torn wider the cut on her side, and a bruise would soon appear at her right shoulder. She fought to block the pain, keep up her guard. "I shall not shun my fate . . . when the time comes."

"Might that time not be now?"

"Not at your desiccated hands, thief!"

"Why not? There is one thing you fear, Captain: growing old."

She closed her eyes, but only for an instant, not long enough to give Derik an advantage. "Nonsense."

"Captain Marya. Always in command. So self-possessed. You know I speak the truth. Your powers

are waning. You can hardly catch your breath. Your arms ache after a few minutes of swordplay. You color your hair to hide the gray, use special salves to disguise wrinkles —"

Marya growled and attacked. Her weapon bit through a goblet of thigh muscle, scraped the bone beneath. Derik sliced open her sword arm. Marya gasped and tightened her sweat-slick fingers. Her left hand whipped out the dagger at her side, and she plunged it into Derik's chest.

He staggered but stayed erect. He was learning to brace himself better, even though Marya's blows were weakening. He did not bother to remove the dagger.

Marya paused out of reach, free hand clamped over the fresh cut, trying to staunch the blood that oozed between her fingers. Derik laughed.

"You see? What happens in a few summers, Captain, when your legs become so feeble you cannot climb a flight of stairs? When you cannot even rise from bed without help? When your body betrays you with incontinence?"

Marya blanched at the thought of such humiliations.

"No! I am in good health! I will not age gracelessly!"

"That's not what you told your lieutenant."

Marya licked her lips, tasting salty sweat. Yes, she had confessed her secret fears to Lieutenant Calbot during a long and stressful siege on an assassins' den. She hadn't meant to, but Calbot was, after all, trustworthy.

"So you've stolen his memory as well as his sword."

"You'd be amazed at what I've gained from your aide." Derik lowered the sword a centimeter. "Or would you? Come, Captain. Submit, and you need never fear becoming ancient and helpless. You will be spared the indignities of such an ending. Drop the sword. I will be swift."

"Yes." Marya's blade scraped the ground. Derik closed, poised for the fatal stroke. She saw the razor-sharp edge catch the light of the afternoon sun.

"No!" she screamed, racing forward, slashing at his leg while her free hand reached to retrieve the dagger. Derik's icy fingers circled her left forearm. Revolted by the touch, Marya slammed the pommel against his wrist. There was a sharp snap. She plummeted on, nearly falling.

When Marya turned, Derik was staring at his left hand, which hung, limp and useless, by a tendon. She hurried back, sword arcing high. Now she knew what she must do.

Derik forgot his disabled hand as he warded off a flurry of thrusts and slashes. Again and again Marya slipped under his guard, and although he knew she could do little real harm, he was forced to retreat simply to keep enough distance between them for his own attack.

The Targot's roar filled his ears. She was trying to force him into the river! "Foolish captain! I'll only climb out again!"

Marya did not reply.

Scrambling for footing, Derik swung wide, and Marya had the opening she wanted. She threw her sword aside and drove her unbruised shoulder into

Derik's stomach, ignoring the fetor from his burst intestines. Derik sprawled again on the ground.

Lungs burning with each breath, Marya jammed a knee into his ribs, snapping one off and cutting her thigh on the ragged end. Her hands gripped a stone the size of a man's skull. It was almost too heavy to lift, with an injured arm, but that's what she wanted. Tears of agony and strain blinded her as she struggled with the clumsy weight. Then she brought it down on the elbow joint of Derik's sword arm. An unnerving crunch rewarded her, and Calbot's sword slipped from those dead fingers at last.

Derik hissed. "What . . . are you . . . doing?"

"Did I hurt you, Derik? I thought dead men were beyond pain!" She pushed herself off his chest, spun around, lifted the stone again, and crushed his right kneecap.

"Ack! This won't . . . help . . . submit. . . ."

Snap! A bone of the left knee popped free, bouncing into the river. Derik's limbs flapped at bizarre angles.

"You'll . . . regret . . . your —"

The rock slipped from her fingers. She missed the skull, but shattered the jawbone. Close enough, for it shut him up.

Marya sat heavily beside her foe, oblivious to the stones that jabbed her buttocks. Her tears were of relief now. She gulped in oxygen. She wiped her cheek with a bloodied hand, streaking her face red, and watched Derik's jerking form go still. The pounding of her heart was louder than the rapids.

When her breathing steadied, she tried to stand, but the movement made her dizzy. Instead, she crawled to the bank and lay on her stomach, sucking air sharply as she dipped her wounded arm into the frigid water. When the cut was sufficiently clean, she tore a strip from her tunic for a bandage and tied another about her midriff for the less serious slash along her ribs.

Now she wanted her sword again. First, though, she wanted Calbot's for burial with his remains. She looked to where Derik lay. Yes, there it was, but whose meaty hand was encircling its hilt?

"Damn!" swore the thick-set, square-jawed man. "I didn't want you to see."

Marya looked up with a gasp. "Lieutenant Calbot!"

Calbot shrugged. "Well, it was a sentimental gesture, anyway. Doesn't really matter." He limped toward her.

"Lieutenant, thank B'or you're alive! Are you hurt?"

"It'll pass. I didn't realize a mental link could work both ways. When those kneecaps went . . ."

Marya rose to greet him, but her legs would not cooperate. The best she could do was sit up. "I think I understand. Well, you're free of Derik's sorcery now, Lieutenant. I'd appreciate your helping me to my horse."

Calbot towered over her. His lips curled sadly. "You're making this difficult."

"It's not hard, Lieutenant. Give me your hand."

He ignored her gesture. "That thing you called Derik couldn't control a fly. I controlled him. I was his voice."

Marya's hand sank back in her lap. "Lieutenant, you're still befogged. Derik used you to get close enough to Brogan to kill him, but he knew your loyalty to me was too strong to overcome. Besides, he wanted the satisfaction of killing me himself."

"I killed Brogan. My idea. Too bad, since he wasn't a bad fellow at gaming."

Marya felt overheated, despite the shredded tunic and the chill river water that still beaded her right arm. "That can't be. You . . . I chose you to succeed me. I groomed you to take over my captaincy."

Calbot sneered. "After how many years, Captain? How long was I to remain Marya's pet? That's what the troops called me! I could have had the promotion two summers ago, but you would neither step down nor authorize a transfer."

"You weren't ready."

"Chaos I wasn't! You just don't want to let go!"

Marya looked at the foaming river. "I can't believe this conversation. I will not believe it. Derik's sorcery scrambled your wits. The palace wizard will undo that. Say nothing to the others at camp, and they'll never know."

Calbot shook his head. "Strong, infallible Captain Marya. You always have to be right. You can't even imagine that someone could tire of your posturing, that a man you selected would get his fill of the taste of your boots."

The captain glowered up at him. "You've said enough, Lieutenant."

He grinned. "Yes, I'd decided there'd been enough talk some time ago. That's why I hid Derik's body in a cave and told you the search was futile. That's why I also paid my life savings to a one-armed former necromancer's apprentice from Camarck, so he would animate the corpse and teach me how to use it. Not that he got much enjoyment from my money. I knew you'd be too eager to avenge me to examine *my* body and discover it was short a limb. Then, when I had to kill Brogan, I decided to mutilate the carcass, just in case."

"You're not making any sense, Lieutenant. I advise you to hold your tongue. I'm retiring from the field this coming winter. You can still have my command."

"As you retired last year? And the year before? 'Fool me once,' you said not long ago. No, Captain. I'm arranging your immediate and permanent retirement."

His blade lifted for the death blow.

"You're being fool — Lieutenant! Put up your sword!"

"That's right, don't look directly at me, that makes it easi . . ." Calbot's jaw sagged. His sword dropped from nerveless fingers halfway through its descent. He looked down. A centimeter of cold sharp steel protruded from his chest, with a red trickle beneath it staining his tunic. When he attempted to speak, blood spattered his lips.

Calbot sank to his knees before his captain, then he slipped sideways. One arm dangled in the Targot, its lifeless fingers waving in the current.

Marya stifled an unbidden moan. She reached

forward, pressing the back of her hand to the dead man's cheek. Already, warmth was fleeing. Gently, she closed the lids of his glassy, unseeing eyes.

"Are you all right, Captain?" asked Lieutenant Luca as she cleaned fresh blood from her blade.

Captain Marya's face turned from pale ivory to crimson, almost purple. Outrage gave her the strength to stagger to her feet. "You're on report for disobeying orders!"

Luca started to smile, bit her lip to stifle the impulse. The captain was not joking. She rarely did. "You put me in charge in your absence. I used my discretion."

"You abused your position, Lieutenant. Make that Sergeant. You ignored a direct order!"

"Out of concern for your safety and loyalty to the unit. And you did not explicitly forbid me to follow!"

"Chaos with that! I mean now, when I ordered you to put up your weapon!"

"My weapon? Weren't you speaking to Calbot?"

"Calbot was helping me to my feet."

"Calbot was helping you to your grave!"

Marya took a shaky step forward. "Sergeant, you're in trouble enough as it is. Killing a fellow officer is treason, punishable by quartering!"

Luca could not trust herself to reply. She turned and walked several paces, stepping around Derik's ruined remains, counting slowly to twenty. Then she looked back.

"Captain, I am as shocked by Lieutenant Calbot's duplicity as you, but I heard what he said and how he said it. Perhaps you heard it differently, through witchery or wishing, but he fully intended to kill you."

Marya's legs felt like damp cloth, but they carried her to Luca's side. "I order you to be silent."

"He was right about one thing: You can't admit you made a mistake. You can't deal with the fact that your hand-picked successor betrayed you!"

Marya slapped the sergeant, not as hard as she'd intended. The sting only fueled Luca's anger. The hand still holding the unsheathed sword began to shake. Luca willed the trembling to cease, then turned again to march down the road.

Marya tried to keep pace, saw it was beyond her, stood in the center of the road and screeched, "You're under arrest, *Sergeant* Luca! Put yourself in Sergeant Orvus' custody! I'll see you at your court-martial!"

Luca spun around. "We'll see who's on trial. . . . Captain! Beware! Watch out!" The ex-lieutenant said no more, saving her breath for combat.

Marya sneered at such a childish prank, even as she thought, I've pushed her too far. Calbot was an unlikely traitor, but Luca? Yes, always pushing, testing her limits. Why else would the woman now run toward her, blade swinging, face twisted in loathing?

Marya cursed. She had forgotten to pick up her own sword. Still, Luca would find no easy prey. Marya's left hand slipped behind her back.

Luca was almost upon her when Marya's dagger flashed from its hiding place, the razor edge slicing deep and clean into belly. Luca stumbled, dropped her weapon, scrabbled with both hands to keep her insides inside. Marya put out her arms to ward her off, and Luca collapsed against her.

The dying woman's eyes were wide. A single word hung on her lips, but she could not speak it.

"The guilty are most eager to accuse, eh?" mocked Marya. "Thought yourself a match for your captain? You? Your blade didn't even come close! What a poor reflection on *my* training!"

Luca shook her head. Her eyes drifted from the captain's hard features to gaze past her shoulder. "De . . . de . . ." The pupils dilated, then dulled.

"Dead you are," Marya muttered. Unable to support Luca's full weight, Marya let her fall, twisting out of the body's path. As she turned, she saw at last what Luca'd seen.

A groan escaped her.

Derik's shattered body was moving again. Incapable of standing, he crawled on thighbone and elbow. Derik still could crush Marya's windpipe with a heavy bone, crack her skull with his, or even smother her in his rotting flesh.

At this point, she lacked the strength to wield even a fist-sized stone effectively.

Captain Marya knelt beside the woman she'd killed, realizing now the true target of Luca's charge and why her blade had been so wide of the mark. "Derik," she said to the dead woman. "Your dying word was *Derik*. Why in Chaos didn't you say so before?"

Luca always had taken too much for granted.

Marya still held the bloody dagger. She pointed it at the creeping obscenity. She would go down fighting.

Her features went slack. Derik had only *seemed* to be crawling toward her, hampered by his awkward locomotion.

"No, damn you! This way! Finish it!"

Derik plunged from the river bank to sink without a trace in the swirling Targot. The corpse had been freed from Calbot's control at the latter's death, but it remained animate. With no necromancer handy to cancel the spell, there was but one way for the revenant to know rest: Derik's mindless shell returned to its grave.

Captain Marya could no longer deny to herself the reality of Calbot's attempt on her life and the tragic error that Luca had paid for in blood. She ached, then, to follow Derik. How easy it would be! Let Sergeant Orvus untangle the mystery of what had happened, if he could.

Yet Captain Marya made no move toward those tempting rapids. She had not gained her proud reputation by shirking her responsibilities; she would not end her career by doing so. This was her mess.

Slowly, like an old and ailing woman, Captain Marya struggled to her feet. Her horse was waiting.





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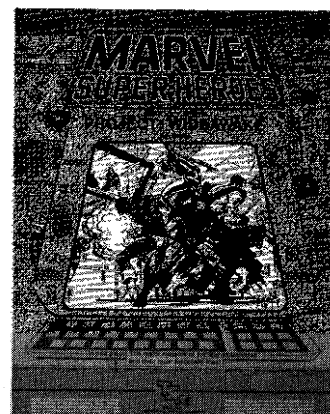
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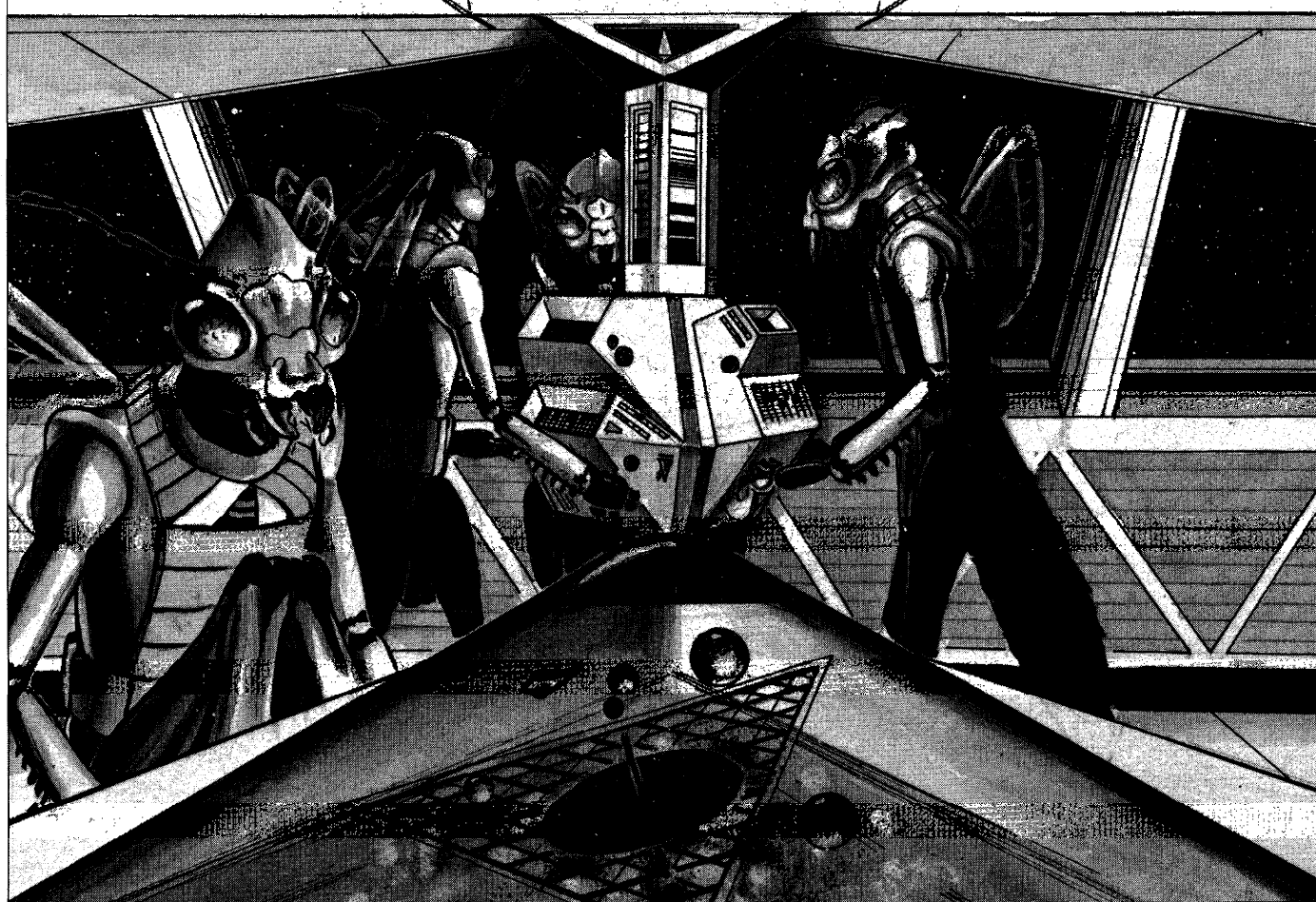
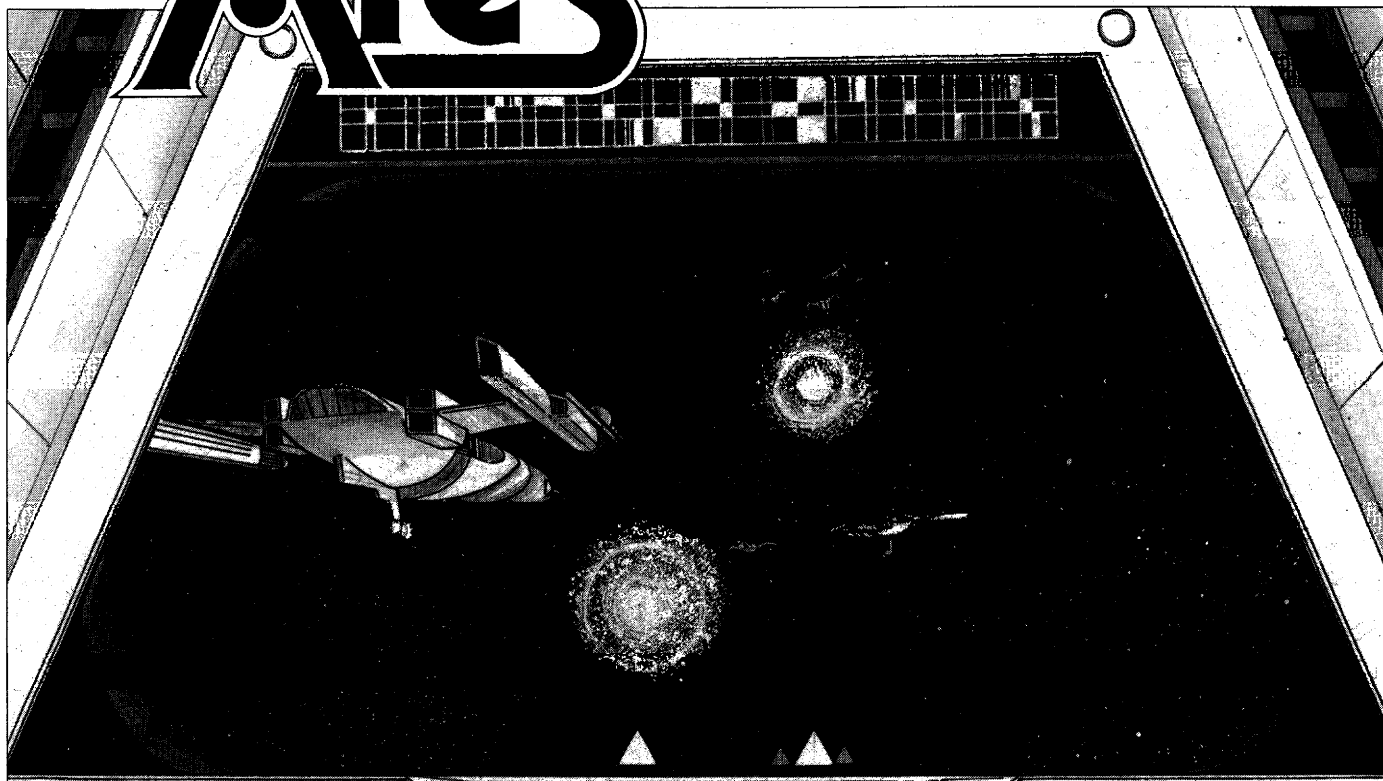
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## SCIENCE-FICTION GAMING SECTION



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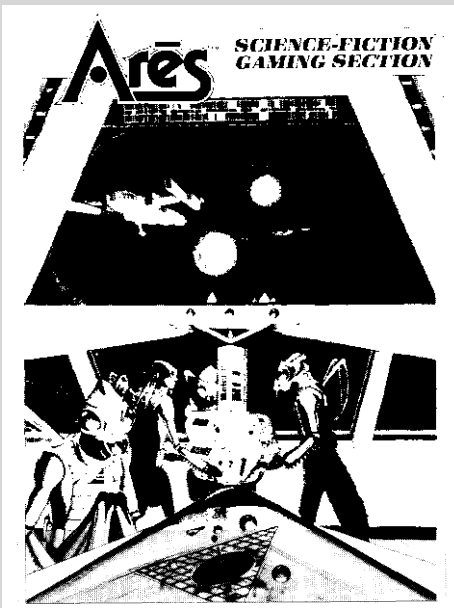
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#### ON THE COVER

A Zuraqqor strike force flies in to attack a UPF convoy trying to reach Volturnus. The starships used by the Zuraqqor in their raids and wars are detailed on p. 71.  
Cover art by Roger Raupp.

This ARES™ Section promises to be another well-rounded one. The "Big Four" science-fiction games are represented with articles on new alien starships, new space weapons, Shell-head's suits of armor (part 1), and the StarQuestions column. In addition, Larry Niven's *Ringworld* game makes its first appearance here with details on creating dolphin space explorers. You didn't think they were only good for circus tricks, did you?

A few random notes follow. STRATEGY & TACTICS® Magazine, the older sister of DRAGON® Magazine, celebrates its 100th issue this month. If you'd like to know more about it, see the subscription ad elsewhere in this issue.

Plans are underway for putting together collections of new weapons, equipment, vehicles, monsters, and mutants that readers have sent to us, in the form of center sections in the magazine called the GAMMA WORLD® and STAR FRONTIERS® Companions. Be looking for them sometime later this year.

As noted in last month's Log, I have the itch to know what was the worst science-fiction game that you ever played. Drop a postcard or index card to the ARES Department, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Publishing, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147, and write down the one worst science-fiction game you ever played, as well as your name and address (please print clearly). Also write down WHY that game was the worst; be specific with your comments.

Three winners will be drawn at random from the pile of mail received here, each to get a special prize. Only one entry per person. The contest ends 1 April 1985.

See you next month.

*Roger E. Moore*

#### ARES™ Section 95 THE SCIENCE-FICTION GAMING SECTION

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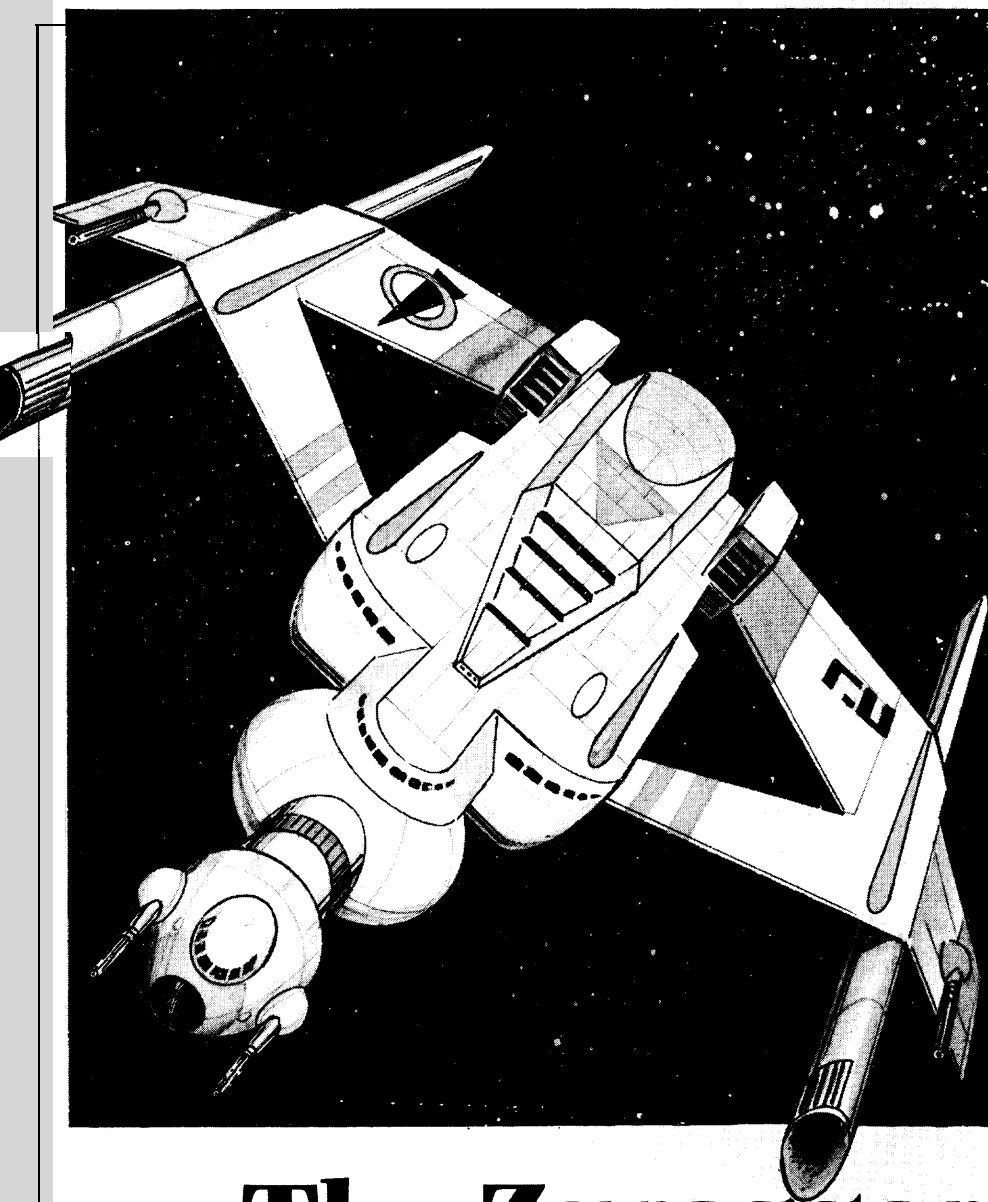
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# The Zuraqqor Strike Back!

*Alien starships for STAR FRONTIERS®  
Knight Hawks gaming*

by Brian Valentine

Knight Hawks, like any other game, needs variety to keep it exciting. This article can add some of that needed variety by reintroducing the Zuraqqor, one of the Sathar's allies. The Zuraqqor first appeared in the STAR FRONTIERS® mini-module *Assault on Starship Omicron*. They are a race of intelligent, bipedal insects, each having small, vestigial wings, two compound eyes, and two antennae. Zuraqqor are thought to originate from a world near Zebulon, as all assaults on Federation shipping have been made in that area since the new trade route was opened.

Zuraqqor culture was well described in *Assault on Starship Omicron*. Only a few relevant details will be repeated here, Zuraqqor society has five classes: worker, warrior, technician, king, and queen. Technicians perform all technological labor, and their political power rivals that of the Zuraqqor kings and queens.

The kings rule the warriors, each Zuraqqor hive having one king. All hive kings vote on a district king, and district kings vote on a planetary king. All planetary kings vote on a planetary organization that the kings have. Zuraqqor are very

group oriented and will rarely, if ever, be found alone or acting individually.

Zuraqqor warships consist of two main types: battle cruisers and fighters. Four classes of cruisers are known to exist and are classified as classes A, B, C, and D (class A being the largest). Zuraqqor fighters are also known as "ground strafers" because of their frequent use in planetary assaults.

All cruisers are built large and slow: large because the Zuraqqor believe that their shipboard crew organization should resemble the hive organization as closely as possible, making the cruisers resemble huge, floating fortresses; and slow because the Zuraqqor see no need for speed. Cruisers use ion engines, while all fighters use small atomic engines.

Though slow, cruisers are nonetheless very maneuverable. They usually travel in groups of four, except during certain war situations in which much larger groups have been used. Because no space stations have been detected around Zuraqqor worlds, these warships are assumed to be built on small moons or asteroids. Ships the size of their cruisers could never lift off from a planet of any major size. Cruisers are thought to take several years to build.

Class A cruisers are each equipped with a mine-neutralizing mechanism that deactivates all mines within 30,000 kilometers (three hexes) of the ship. This device cannot be duplicated by any other race at this time. Class A cruisers also each have one fighter bay that can carry one to five fighters.

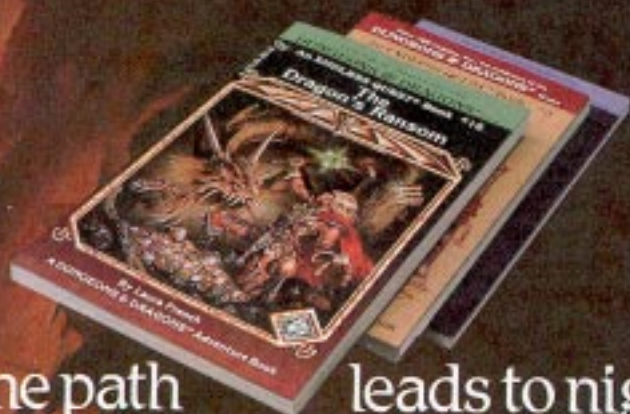
## Zuraqqor ship statistics

Zuraqqor Battle Cruiser, Class A  
HS 15 HP 80 ADF 1 MR 2 DCR 150  
Ion engine type A (x4)  
Weapons: 2 LC, LB, EB, PB, DC, S (x2),  
T (x4), RB (x8)  
Defenses: RH, EPS, SS, MS (x2),  
ICM (x8)

Zuraqqor Battle Cruiser, Class B  
HS 13 HP 75 ADF 1 MR 3 DCR 120  
Ion engine type B (x4)  
Weapons: 2 LC, LB, EB, PB, DC, T(4),  
RB (x6)  
Defenses: RH, ES, PS, MS (x2), ICM (x6)

Zuraqqor Battle Cruiser, Class C  
HS 11 HP 70 ADF 1 MR 3 DCR 100  
Ion engine type B (x3)  
Weapons: LC, LB, EB, PB, T (x2),  
RB (x4)  
Defenses: RH, ES, MS (x2), ICM (x6)





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Zuraqqor Battle Cruiser, Class D  
 HS 9 HP 65 ADF 1 MR4 DCR 75  
 Ion engine type B (x2)  
 Weapons: LC, LB, EB, T (x2), RB (x4)  
 Defenses: RH, MS (x4), ICM (x4)

Zuraqqor Fighter  
 HS 2 HP 10 ADF 5 MR 5 DCR 50  
 Atomic engine type C (x1)  
 Weapons: AR (x4), LB  
 Defenses: RH

## Scenario 1: The Zebulon Raid

In this scenario, the UPFS ships are making a run to a military base on Voltumnus (off the right side of the star map), and they begin the game in formation near the left-hand side of the star map. They only want to get to Voltumnus and will try to escape any attacks. On the other hand, the Zuraqqor's orders are not to return until the UPFS ships are destroyed. Ship statistics for most of the UPFS forces may be found in the boardgame rules for the Knight Hawks game.

### UPFS Forces

UPFS *Arcturon* (destroyer)  
 Location: hex 0618  
 Speed: 5

UPFS *Arrow* (assault scout)  
 Location: hex 0821  
 Speed: 5

UPFS *Remora* (assault scout)  
 Location: hex 0522  
 Speed: 5

UPFS *Anaconda* (freighter)  
 HS 17 HP 85 ADF 2 MR 1 DCR 71  
 Weapons: T (x4)  
 Defenses: RH, MS (x2)  
 Location: hex 0521  
 Speed: 5

### Zuraqqor Forces

ZMS (Zuraqqor Military Ship) *Brtz'krgr*  
 (class-B cruiser)  
 Location: hex 3439  
 Speed: 7 (heading toward hex 3338)

All UPFS ships are heading horizontally across the mapsheet. The Zuraqqor ship is moving along a diagonal to intercept the UPF convoy.

Any UPFS ship that makes it off the right side of the map is assumed to have safely outrun the Zuraqqor cruiser. The Zuraqqor ship wins if all UPFS ships are destroyed or suffer over 50% loss of their hull points. The *Anaconda* and at least one other ship must survive for the UPFS player to win. Note that it is possible for both sides to win in this scenario. (Such are the fortunes of war.)

## Scenario 2: The Voltumnus Incident

This battle occurs a month after the Zebulon Raid. The Zuraqqor are attacking the only station in orbit around Voltumnus, effectively cutting off the on-planet mines and military installations from the PGC and Galactic Task Force. The statistics for the Pan-Galactic ships were previously given in the DRAGON® Magazine issue #88 ("Yachts and Privateers Return"), but are repeated here for the benefit of those who lack that issue.

The planet Voltumnus is located in hex 1520 on the star map and does not move during the course of the game. The *Tarnagis* just leaving Voltumnus, having undocked from the space station and pulled out of orbit.

### Pan-Galactic Forces

PGSS *Tarnag* (Nova-class yacht)  
 HS 5 HP 25 ADF 2 MR 2 DCR 35  
 Weapons: LC, LB, RB  
 Defenses: RH  
 Location: hex 1921  
 Speed: 1 (heading toward hex 2021)

PGSS *Brigadoon* (Condor-class privateer)  
 HS 13 HP 65 ADF 3 MR 3 DCR 59  
 Weapons: 2 LB, EB, PB, DC, T (x4)  
 Defenses: RH, SS, ICM (x8)

Location: hex 1519

Speed: 0 (docked at space station, in orbit, moving counterclockwise)

PGSS *Drag Net* (Thruster-class privateer)  
 HS 2 HP 10 ADF 4 MR 5 DCR 26  
 Weapons: AR (x4)  
 Defenses: RH  
 Location: hex 1519  
 Speed: 0 (docked at space station, in orbit, moving counterclockwise)

PGSS *Miner's Central* (PGC-owned space station at Voltumnus)  
 HP 30 DCR 23  
 Weapons: 2 LB  
 Defenses: RH, MS (x4), ICM (x4)  
 Location: hex 1519 (in orbit, moving counterclockwise)

### Zuraqqor Forces

ZMS *Ktr-Bltz* (class-B cruiser)  
 Location: hex 5420  
 Speed: 8 (heading toward hex 5320)

ZMS *Drlp'mrzt* (class-C cruiser)  
 Location: hex 5523  
 Speed: 8 (heading toward hex 5423)

The first side that destroys or inflicts over 50% damage on all of the other side's ships wins, with the PGC station counting as a ship. Neither side can retreat from the star map.

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# StarQuestions

## *Answers and advice on the GAMMA WORLD<sup>®</sup> game*

by Penny Petticord

**This time the column takes another look at the GAMMA WORLD<sup>®</sup> science-fantasy game. If you need some answers to help your gaming campaign, write down your questions and mail them to StarQuestions, Dragon Publishing, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.**

Q: Would it be possible to reprint old science-fiction articles from DRAGON<sup>®</sup> Magazine or ARES<sup>™</sup> Magazine in the ARES<sup>™</sup> Section?

A: We can reprint old articles if we have requests for a particular one; we will also consider putting some science-fiction articles in a Best of DRAGON Magazine anthology. Send your article requests to us at the ARES Department.

Q: When a character attacks on Physical Attack Matrix II, what does the GM use for the hit dice column?

A: Use the character's constitution score, since that represents the number of dice you must roll to determine the character's hit points.

Q: The descriptions of mini-missile damage in the Basic Rules Booklet and on the chart in the Adventure Booklet are contradictory. Which is correct?

A: The mini-missile does 10d10 points of damage to everyone within its 30-meter Blast Radius, as stated in the Basic Rules Booklet. The entry in the Weapons Chart is incorrect.

Q: How is it possible for a primitive weapon like a club or mace to harm a person wearing powered armor?

A: One person armed with a club or mace could not possibly harm an opponent in a functioning suit of powered armor. Even the wimpiest powered armor absorbs up to 20 points of damage per Action Turn, and a club or mace can only do 1d6 points of damage per hit. On the other hand, if 4 characters with clubs all managed to hit an opponent

in powered scout armor on the same turn, they could collectively inflict more than the 20 points of damage it can absorb per turn and actually harm the wearer (although not much). So if you're stuck with primitive weapons, just gang up on the opponent!

Q: Can a character armed with a vibro blade cut off an opponent's limb or damage his weapon in combat?

A: Not as the game system currently stands. The GAMMA WORLD game system has no provisions for determining hit location. In other words, when you score a successful hit, you don't know where the blow has landed — only that it has done damage. Hit location systems, while they do add to the realism of the game, tend to make for much slower play due to additional dice rolling. If you don't mind the slower pace, there is no reason you could not design a hit location system for use in your own campaign. Otherwise, the only way to be sure of hitting a specific part of the opponent's body is to strike while he is prone.

Q: Are *radiated eyes* given a weapon class, or are they covered in Physical Attack Matrix II?

A: Radiation Eyes are not weapons, and therefore do not have to score hits as physical attacks. The radiation beam will affect any creature within range that is directly in the line of sight when the attack goes off.

Q: Are characters with constitution scores over 16 considered to be 16 HD creatures on Physical Attack Matrix II?

A: Yes.

Q: How many attacks per turn at most are allowed to a character?

A: A character may perform only one action per Action Turn. Use of unconscious mutations does not count as an action, and movement

such as charging to attack is considered all one action. Certain NPCs, however, can perform multiple separate attacks each round (see the individual creature descriptions for details).

Q: Where is the Apocalypse Base? What was the nature of that organization?

A: This is information that may appear in a future GAMMA WORLD game article in the ARES Section; the more requests we get for it, the sooner it may appear.

Q: Will a supplement be published which lists all of the changes between the first edition and the 1983 edition of the rules?

A: No; the 1983 edition must be purchased to see how the game has been altered.

Q: Do prisons exist in the "Gamma World," and if so, who runs them and who is kept in them?

A: Presumably, prisons or like establishments exist wherever groups of intelligent beings are found. Any race capable of rounding up and confining troublemakers will probably do so to protect the common good, although the type and duration of confinement will vary widely according to the cultural habits of the beings involved.

Of course, it is conceivable that a prison from the days before the "Social Wars" exists somewhere on the continent. Perhaps its inmates or their descendents are still there, but they are doubtless as mutated as the rest of the world is. Such a concept could be worked up into a viable adventure if you want to develop it further.

Q: Do any other Cryptic Alliances besides those listed in the rules exist?

A: Probably, but not in the rules themselves. Cryptic Alliances are social and cultural groups. Any lively campaign world will develop more

of these groups from the social needs of the individual campaign world. The Alliances described are dedicated to concepts integral to the game system, and thus should be usable in any campaign. The referee can create whatever other Alliances he or she deems fitting for use in the individual "Gamma World." [See, for example, "New Brotherhoods," in DRAGON issue #93 —Editor].

Q: How can I order GAMMA WORLD game materials? I don't live near a hobby shop.

A: If the GAMMA WORLD game and materials are not available in your area, you can order them through the Mail Order Hobby Shop. Write to the following address for a catalog:

Mail Order Hobby Shop  
P.O. Box 756  
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

Q: Is radiation damage taken immediately or some time after one is exposed to it?

A: All results from exposure to radiation are applied immediately, with the exception of background radiation such as is present in the Deathlands. The referee will determine the effects of exposure to background radiation at the end of each day of exposure and apply the results at that time.

Q: Are there any GAMMA WORLD game posters for sale by TSR, Inc.?

A: No. TSR Inc. did once produce a GAMMA WORLD game poster as a promotional item, and it was offered for sale to the public. But there are no more left, and none have been produced since the revision of the system came out.

Q: How much status should be awarded for slaying creatures?

A: Each surviving party member is awarded a number of Status Points equal to the total Hit Point scores of all opponents, divided by the number of party members present when the combat began.

Q: Should players be free to consult the rulebook whenever they want to during a game?

A: The referee has the option of allowing rules consultation during play in his own campaign. In most cases, play flows faster and is more interesting for all if the books are put away during the actual game. Players should look up all items,

weapons, and mutations of their characters before the game session so that play is not slowed down.

Q: When do we find out what happened to the rest of the Solar System and the worlds that humanity colonized before the Social Wars?

A: "A World Gone Mad" (DRAGON issue #86) and "Before the Dark Years" (issue #88) contained some material on the fate of the other Solar System colonies. As of yet, nothing is known of the extra-solar colonies established before the Social Wars. Future articles may reveal more information if readers request it.

Q: Where can my character find a starship on the planet?

A: An abandoned and functional starport might have shuttle vehicles that could take characters into space to meet an orbiting starship, but no true starships may be found on Earth. Starships are immense in size and cannot be landed on high-gravity worlds like Earth. Very few starships are left in the Solar System, and all of them are in unknown locations in planetary or solar orbit.

Q: Did ARES™ Magazine ever have any GAMMA WORLD game articles?

A: The following articles appeared in the magazine (issues of which may still be available from TSR, Inc.): "It's All In Your Mind" (15 new mental mutations) and "The Equinoid" (a new mutant race), both by James W. Ward, appeared in ARES Magazine Special Edition #2. "Fun Among the Mutants" (a tongue-in-cheek look at what mutants do for amusement) was printed in issue #17; it was also written by Jim Ward. A boardgame set in a post-atomic America, the OMEGA WAR™ game, appeared in issue #14. GAMMA WORLD game fans might wish to check this one out as well.

Q: What GAMMA WORLD game articles have appeared in POLYHEDRON™ Newszine? Where can I get copies of that magazine? (I'm not in the RPGA™ Network.)

A: GAMMA WORLD game articles started appearing in POLYHEDRON Newszine #10, and have appeared in every issue from #14-#19. Those from issue #15 on have been part of a series, Cryptic Alliance of the Bi-Month, describing in detail the history and characteristics of these secret societies.

Unfortunately, POLYHEDRON Newszine is not available to non-members. It is part of the membership and is not sold separately. The only way for a non-member to get a copy is to talk a member into parting with one, or join and order them as back issues (which is probably easier and cheaper in the long run).

Q: Will the GAMMA WORLD game rules ever come out in hardback volumes, with a Players Handbook, Gamemasters Guide, and Mutant Monster Manual?

A: Not in the foreseeable future. The revised boxed set contained organized tables and a special section with creature descriptions, so that should serve the purpose better than a more expensive hard-bound supplement.

Q: Were the Social Wars just a "U.S. vs. U.S.S.R." atomic war, or were they fought by other nations?

A: The Social Wars were fought by all major nations of Earth; see "Before the Dark Years" (DRAGON issue #88) for more information on the wars and their background. The Soviet Union and the United States, as such, do not exist in the future history of the game system.

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The first things that the average game player does with a new game are to learn it, to absorb it, and to play it. Then he fiddles with it. The TRAVELLER® game is one of the best games for tinkering, being built on a bold enough and broad enough framework to support variants without losing either playability or enjoyability.

On the other hand, the TRAVELLER game is one of the few role-playing games actually designed with game balance clearly in mind. Book 5, *High Guard*, is especially complex, offering a space combat system that is carefully balanced. Any variant that destroys that balance cannot be a good one.

range to close range. The players must keep track of each mine laid, eliminating them as each is used. The missile attack factor must roll to hit and penetrate as normal.

*Tractor/pressor beam:* A tractor beam is a 100-ton bay weapon (Tech Level 14) that costs ten Energy Points per 1,000 tons of the ship upon which it is mounted. A ship may, in addition to its other combats in a turn, use a tractor beam to pull any one enemy ship of 1% or less of its own mass from long range to close range. A pressor beam may be used to push an enemy ship of 1% or less of the firing ship's mass from close range to long range. Only one tractor or

*Antimissile cluster:* Fired from any missile turret or bay in place of any missile battery that does not fire ordinary missiles in that turn, a cluster of antimissile dartlets may be unleashed with the same firing factor as the missile battery. Incoming missiles must penetrate these on the Missile Attack Table as if trying to penetrate sand or beam defenses.

*Beam weapon superchargers:* Since most of the energy that goes into any beam weapon is wasted, being expelled as waste heat, dispersed photons, and so forth, an attempt may be made to render such weapons more efficient with some mixed results. Any energy beam

# Antimissiles and roundshot

*Variant ship-to-ship weapons for TRAVELLER® gaming*  
by Jefferson P. Swycaffer

New weapons are fun to experiment with. What balance is best between offensive and defensive weapons? If two ships that are both built on offensive-intensive weapon balances enter combat, the combat will be brief and bloody. If the ships are defensively built, the combat might be interminable.

Of the weapons types in *High Guard*, the spinal mount weapons will most often dominate the battleboard. These are terrifically powerful weapons. Do we actually need them? If the provision for spinal mount weapons is deleted from *High Guard*, the tone and pacing of the battles becomes more reminiscent of a World War I or World War II naval battle. Some of the science-fiction movie spectacles we've come to love have the same feel to their space combat. Spinal mount weapons are, for some of us, jarring.

Some variant weapons with which to experiment in your TRAVELLER campaigns are given below in general form.

*Minefields:* Minefields can be openly planted in one turn by any missile turret or weapons bay that does not fire in that turn. In any subsequent turn, the same missile strength can be used to attack any enemy ship that closes from long

pressor (and never both) may be fired in one turn by any one ship, no matter how many are installed. A "to hit" roll must be made on the same table and with the same die modifiers as a laser beam weapon.

*Solid-shot weapons:* Though the idea may seem strange ("Shiver me timbers, Cap'n, they're pegging roundshot at us!"), hitting a projected cloud of roundshot at several thousand kilometers per second is not as funny an idea as it might sound. A solid-shot weapon would be a turret weapon, identical in characteristics to a sandcaster. Make the "to hit" rolls as if the weapon were an energy beam (i.e., not effective at long range), with the added rule that any ship hit by solid shot may negate the hit and bypass the roll on the damage tables by moving to long range at the next range determination step.

This weapon and the tractor/pressor beam may cause affected ships to violate the *High Guard* rule that states that all ships should be at the same range from the enemy. Ships pushed or pulled by a tractor/pressor beam or those attempting to escape a solid-shot cloud must rejoin their fleets at the "regular" range in the next turn.

or laser turret or bay may be equipped with a supercharger.

A supercharged beam will have either a +1, +2, or +3 on the penetration roll on the beam weapon table (but not on the "to hit" roll), with the complication that, if the bonus value or less is rolled on a single six-sided die, that battery is reduced one factor as if hit in combat. A laser battery of factor 9 taking a +3 on its penetration rolls will be reduced to factor 8 on a roll of 1, 2, or 3 on a d6. Superchargers cost Cr 1,000,000 for each weapon so equipped, and all weapons in a battery must be equipped with a supercharger for the battery to fire with a bonus. No extra energy is consumed by supercharged fire. The option is left to the player as to whether the bonus will be +1, +2, or +3, or even no bonus in each particular turn.

Many other weapons variants are possible, but one guideline should be kept in mind: no system should ever gain something for nothing. There should be no "super weapons" against which defense is not possible. Game balance is still the senior admiral aboard any warship.

# The MARVEL®-Phile

*Pumping Iron, Part 1* by Jeff Grubb



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About a month back I received a letter from Mr. David D'Agnolo of Nacogdoches, Texas. David sent in a battery of questions on his favorite armored hero, Iron Man™, noting various issues where Shell-head used some device that was not listed in our official stats.

This got me to thinking. To date, our descriptions of Iron Man have been limited by the space available in the modules (MH-Special, *Secret Wars*™, and the ever-popular MH AC 2, *Avengers*™ *Assembled!*), and have been based upon Shell-head's entry in the Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe™. Long-

time fans of the golden avenger know that Iron Man has often pulled quite a few technological rabbits out of his hat over the years, functions of the armor that have never been mentioned until they are needed on a mission. Some are armor modifications that have since been removed to make room for newer modifications, while other devices have been retained for long periods of time.

Since I am an Iron Man fan, I sat down with my back issues (by no means a full set) and dug into Iron Man's past, finding all the major equipment he has used on more than one occasion. I also located information on other suits: the

Space Armor, the Stealth Armor, and the new/old suit that Tony has recently come up with. To make a long matter short, I ended up with much more material than Roger had room. For this reason, I've broken the article down into two smaller ones. The first article provides the stats for the two current occupants of the armor, Tony Stark and Jim Rhodes, and the "full" stats on the Iron Man suit with which most people are familiar. The next article will cover Tony's new armor, such variations as the Stealth and Space Armors, and the story behind the Iron Man armor itself.

Ladies and gents, the Invincible Iron Man.



## **JAMES "RHODEY" RHODES™**

**Soldier, pilot, mercenary**

Fighting: GOOD (10)  
Agility: GOOD (10)  
Strength: TYPICAL (6)  
Endurance: TYPICAL (6)  
Reason: GOOD (10)  
Intuition: EXCELLENT (20)  
Psyche: TYPICAL (6)

Health: 32  
Karma: 36  
Resources: TYPICAL  
Popularity: 5

**Talents:** Pilot and navigation

Rhodey was given the Iron Man armor by Tony, and is the current possessor of the gold and red suit listed below.

## **TONY STARK™**

**Inventor, businessman**

Fighting: TYPICAL (6)  
Agility: TYPICAL (6)  
Strength: POOR (4)  
Endurance: TYPICAL (6)  
Reason: INCREDIBLE (40)  
Intuition: EXCELLENT (20)  
Psyche: TYPICAL (6)

Health: 22  
Karma: 66  
Resources: GOOD  
Popularity: 19

**Talents:** Engineering, business, and electronics

Tony is the original inventor of the Iron Man armor, and served as Iron Man for several years before passing on the suit to James Rhodes. He is a reformed alcoholic and is subject to the rules on alcohol and drug abuse given in the Marvel-Phile in DRAGON® Magazine issue #91.

## **IRON MAN™ ARMOR**

**As worn by James Rhodes**

Fighting: EXCELLENT (20)  
Agility: EXCELLENT (20)  
Strength: INCREDIBLE (40)  
Endurance: MONSTROUS (75)  
Reason: GOOD (10)  
Intuition: EXCELLENT (20)  
Psyche: TYPICAL (6)

Health: 155

### **Known Powers:**

**BODY ARMOR:** Rhodey's suit provides Amazing protection from physical damage and most energy attacks; and it has



Unearthly resistance to radiation and Remarkable resistance to heat, cold, and acid. The armor also has Unearthly resistance to electrical attacks and can absorb them (see below).

**FLIGHT:** The suit is equipped with gyro-stabilized boot-jets and can reach Monstrous speeds. The boot-jets have been used in the past as weapons, doing Incredible slugfest damage to one target in the same area as the wearer.

**REPULSORS:** The main weaponry in Iron Man's arsenal, these medium-density plasma projectors can inflict, within a range of 10 areas, up to Amazing damage. The repulsors may be fired at separate targets (requiring a Yellow Agility FEAT to hit), but if both are directed at one target, they may not inflict more than Amazing damage.

**UNIBEAM:** The high-intensity lamp mounted in the center of Iron Man's chest allows Iron Man to illuminate an area up to three areas away in normal darkness. The light can also blind an unsuspecting opponent for 1-10 rounds. (The target must make a successful



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Endurance FEAT to avoid blindness.) Finally, the beam can be narrowed to create a laser capable of inflicting Incredible damage with a 3-area range. In this mode, it is used as a backup for his repulsors. The Unibeam also can also project ultraviolet and infrared light.

**AIR SUPPLY:** When sealed, the armor contains enough air for 2 hours either underwater or in total vacuum.

**FIRE EXTINGUISHER:** The armor can spray foam within one area. This foam reduces fire damage by a Remarkable degree.

**ENERGY ABSORPTION:** The armor can absorb up to an Unearthly amount of electrical energy in one round, with no ill effect on the wearer. The storage pods in the suit will function for three rounds while absorbing such Unearthly energies before overloading and exploding for Monstrous damage. The electrical energy can be redirected through the repulsors, inflicting up to Monstrous damage in this manner. The armor is not designed to absorb other forms of energy, but can be modified to do so. (This requires a Reason of Incredible to perform the modifications.)

**OVERRIDE:** Iron Man can remove the armor's safety interfaces to channel all his power into giving him Unearthly strength or Unearthly repulsor damage. Following each round that he does this, however, make a Yellow FEAT roll on the Shift 0 column, with failure indicating that the armor is immobilized by fused circuitry and must be repaired.

**ENERGY PODS:** Iron Man stores his excess energy in two disc-like pods, one on either side of his waist. These pods can be detached, though they are still connected to the armor by their cables. They can be used to create a broad-spectrum induction field that acts as a Remarkable-strength force field within his area, and they can also overload electronic machinery with their variable fields. Iron Man can overload normal electronics by making a Green FEAT roll. Machinery with an endurance rank (including robots and battle suits) must make an Endurance FEAT. Finally, the pods may be fully disconnected from the armor and thrown for up to five areas, exploding for Amazing damage. For each of the two pods thrown, Iron Man's Strength, Endurance, and Damage from other attacks drop one rank until the pods are replaced.

**SONIC ATTACK:** Iron Man can project sound waves up to 3 areas, inflicting

Amazing damage to everyone within those areas (requiring an Endurance FEAT to avoid being Stunned for 1-10 rounds; allow column shifts for characters with proper protection or who are hearing-impaired, such as Hawkeye™).

**TRACTOR BEAM:** The armor has a small tractor beam capable of lifting objects up to 400 lbs. (Good Strength) at a range of 1 area.

**NIGHTVISION LENS:** A recent addition, the nightvision lens allows Iron Man to see in normal darkness up to three areas away.

**SENSORS:** Rhodey's suit is equipped with combined radar, sonar, and heat detectors that allow him to detect invisible or camouflaged opponents up to ten areas away. In addition, Iron Man can track individuals by their vital life signs and unusual energy readings up to ten miles away.

**FREON TABLETS:** Mounted in each epaulet of Iron Man's armor are dispensers of super-cooled tablets of freon gas. These tablets have such a short range that they are only effective in close contact (i.e., when Iron Man has his opponent in a wrestling hold). The tablets do Monstrous cold damage to the target. Tony has in the past used these tablets on non-living attackers, as they freeze robotic machinery. (An Endurance FEAT is required to avoid this.)

**MULTI-BAND RADIO:** Mounted inside Iron Man's helmet, this radio allows him to monitor AM/FM, short wave, CB, and navigation bands within a 200-mile area, as well as contact his support team (Morely and Cly) on a private wavelength that is known to S.H.I.E.L.D.™ (See the article on this organization in DRAGON® issue #94.) The radio can also tie in with satellite and computer networks, and has an emergency beeper that can be tracked within 200 miles.

**SONIC DISTORTER:** This mechanism, installed in the helmet, cuts out the high and low frequencies of the wearer's voice, distorting the user's voice sufficiently to make other people unaware of who is occupying the armor. (This is why even close friends of Iron Man such as the Avengers™ were unaware of the change from Tony to Rhodey.)

**ELECTRONIC COUNTER MEASURES (ECM):** The standard suit possesses such Good quality ECM that standard radar will not usually detect Iron Man when the system is engaged. In addition, his circuitry has Monstrous protection from being overridden by external signals — a

modification made soon after Justin Hammer overrode Stark's control and caused the suit to kill an innocent bystander.

**REVERSE MAGNETISM:** The oldest of Iron Man's tricks, it is not used as often now as it was earlier in his career. Iron Man has such Incredible control over magnetism that he can pull guns out of people's hands or reverse the course of thrown metallic objects. (Treat the reversed object as a thrown object, using Iron Man's Agility.)

**ROLLER SKATES:** Iron Man can reach Excellent speeds by means of a set of skates that he uses in level, enclosed areas.

**EYE PROTECTION:** The suit has polarized eye-shields that provide Monstrous protection from being blinded. These shields drop into place should the ambient light level rise to a damaging level. This sudden polarization does cause 1 round of blindness for the wearer, until his eyes have adjusted to the sudden darkness.

**IMAGE PROJECTOR:** The armor can create as many as a dozen visual duplicates of Iron Man at one time. All images are perfect visual matches: their actions will duplicate those of the true Iron Man, and Iron Man's voice will seem to come from all of them. Any ranged attacks directed against him will hit either Iron Man or an illusionary target (chosen at random). Only after the target is hit can it be seen as an illusion. Radar, scent, or detection of life energies will reveal the true Iron Man.

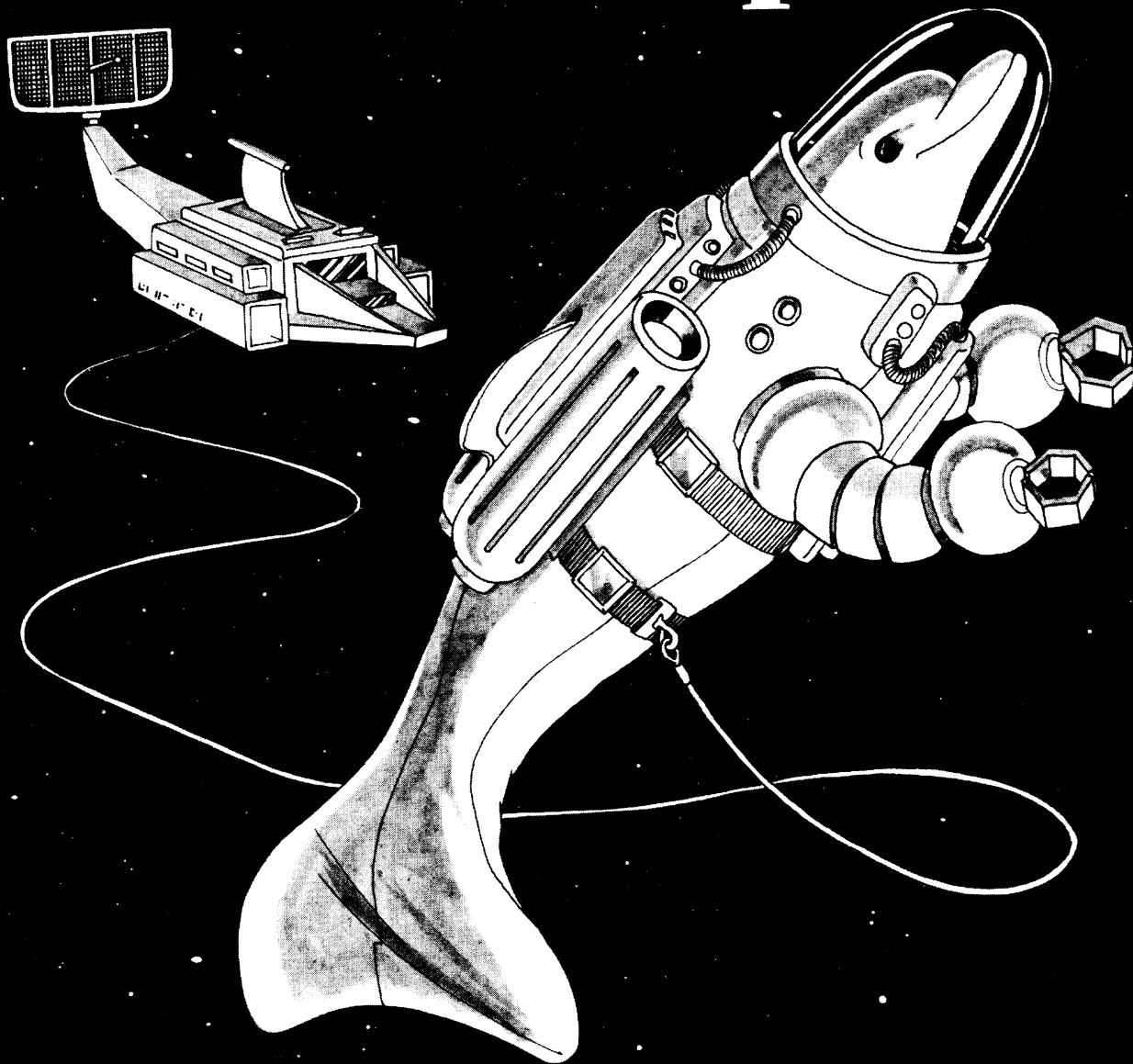
**DIGGING ABILITY:** Iron Man has used several earth-moving attachments over the years, including rotating-stud gloves and a hand-held, earth-boring device. These devices allow Iron Man to move through the earth at Good speed. Rhodey's suit has these modifications, but he has not used them to date.

**BRIEFCASE:** This suit of armor can be folded to fit conveniently into a specially constructed briefcase when not in use. The case itself is made of Incredible strength material, with thumbprint locks (keyed to Stark and Rhodes) of Amazing complexity. Failure to use the locks properly will result in the case exploding for Amazing damage in one area, destroying the interior circuits of the armor and rendering it useless.

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Next time: Space Armor, Stealth Armor, the newest Iron Man, and Iron Man's story.

# The Dolphins of Known Space



A new race for the *Ringworld* game  
by Sherman Kahn

©1985 by Chaosium, Inc.

Dolphins have played a number of important roles in Larry Niven's future history of the Ringworld (see, for example, Niven's *World of Ptaav*s). With this article, gamers can generate their own dolphin characters and explore the undersea depths of the Ringworld with their human counterparts.

Players using this article should also read the essay on dolphins in the *Ringworld* game Creatures Book (pp. 3-5). Creators of dolphin explorers should be familiar with human explorer creation, as the format for this article parallels the character generation systems given in the Explorer Book.

**Name:** As the Creatures Book (p. 4) notes, humans hear dolphin speech as a "rapid stream of high-pitched clicks, whistles, squeaks, grunts, moans, bleats, quacks, wails, creaks, hoots, toots, burps, and burbles." Typical dolphin names include Pszzzz-Tweeee, Bra-a-ack, and even more complicated and unpro-

nounceable titles. Players with dolphin characters should choose an appropriate-sounding name, one that can be easily voiced by a dolphin. If the name is difficult for humans to pronounce, also choose a nickname by which the dolphin's human associates can refer to him or her.

**Gender:** Dolphin explorers may be of either sex, male or female.

**Home world:** Most dolphins (like most humans) hail from Earth, but some come from other human-colonized homeworlds. To determine a dolphin explorer's home world, roll d100 and consult the table below.

Homeworld Table

d100	planet	gravity class
01	Belt	light
02	Canyon	light
03-05	Down	normal
06-87	Earth	normal
88	Gummidgy	normal
89-92	Home	normal
93	Margrave	normal
94-97	Silvereyes	normal
98	We Made It	light
99-100	Wunderland	light

Dolphins from light gravity home worlds subtract 1 each from their MAS and STR and add 1 to DEX. If a dolphin is determined by the referee to come from a high gravity world (not listed above), subtract 1 from CON and add 1 to both MAS and STR.

**Dolphin defects:** To determine a dolphin's genetic defects, roll d100 and consult the table below.

Defects Table

d100	defect
01-50	no defect
51-70	claustrophobia
71-80	xenophobia
81-90	hyperspace blindspot phobia
91-95	transplant resistance
96-00	cybernetics resistance

**Claustrophobia:** Dolphins with this defect cannot stand to be confined in small spaces for longer than a few moments. Claustrophobic dolphins dislike Walker Suits and must remain in stasis for the duration of all spaceflight.

**Xenophobia:** Dolphins with this defect fear and distrust representatives of any other species. Xenophobic dolphins have difficulty showing the cooperation with humans needed to operate on land and in space.

**Hyperspace blindspot phobia:** Though they suffer from it much less than

humans do, dolphins can get blindspot phobia. Dolphins say that this condition feels like the sensation brought on by the darkness and high pressure of very deep water.

**Transplant resistance:** Transplant resistant dolphins cannot tolerate replacement limbs or organs, and they must rely on prosthetics.

## As a species, dolphins are devoted to conservation and living in harmony with nature.

**Cybernetics resistance:** Dolphins with this defect cannot use Hands or any other cybernetic tools, making it very difficult for them to function in modern dolphin society.

### Characteristics and attributes

Dolphin explorers have the same eight characteristics that human and other explorers have, though of course the die rolls are altered to reflect the differences between dolphins and other creatures.

Characteristics Table

characteristic	abbr.	normal	roll
Strength	STR	3d6 + 8 *	
Mass	MAS	3d6 + 12 *	
Constitution	CON	2d6 + 6 *	
Intelligence	INT	2d6 + 6	
Power	POW	3d6	
Dexterity	DEX	2d6 + 6 *	
Appearance	APP	3d6	
Education	EDU	See below	

\* May be altered if explorer comes from a high or light gravity home world.

Education points are determined in the same way as for humans, but a dolphin's EDU cannot exceed its own age minus 3.

A dolphin's damage modifier, general hit points, attribute rolls, and action ranking are all determined in the same way as for human explorers. A dolphin also has 2 points of natural armor due to thick skin and blubber. Hit locations are presented for in the following table.

Hit Location Table

d20 location	armor/percentage of HP
01-02 flukes	2/25%
04-08 hindbody	2/30%
09-13 forebody	2/35%
14-15 right fin	2/25%
16-17 left fin	2/25%
18-20 head	2/30%

**Speed:** Dolphins move normally in water at a speed of 7 meters per impulse. A dolphin can double this speed using the Athletics/Swim skill, which for this purpose works like the human skill of the same name. On land in a Walker Suit, a dolphin can move at 2 meters per action rank.

**Aging:** Some dolphins use boosterspice, while others decline for philosophical reasons. Dolphins not protected by boosterspice begin to feel the effects of aging at 40 years old. Dolphins who have used some amount of boosterspice begin to feel the effects of aging when they reach a physiological age of 40. Dolphin boosterspice was not developed until approximately 200 years before the Ringworld era, so dolphins with chronological ages over 200 may not have physiological ages less than their chronological age minus 200.

Dolphins mature earlier than humans, and this is reflected on the table below. If a dolphin uses boosterspice, roll 1d8 and consult the table; if he or she does not take the drug, roll 1d4.

Aging Table

d8/d4	age in UNS years
1	1d6 + 12
2	1d6 + 18
3	1d6 + 24
4	1d6 + 31
5	1d6 + 37
6	1d6 + 42
7	1d6 + 49
8	1d100 + 55

**Psionics:** Dolphins as a species have no innate psionic power, though an occasional individual may exhibit a particular psionic gift. The gamemaster can determine if a dolphin explorer has a psionic ability during play. Dolphins



with POW above 14 can learn the Hyperdrive skill.

## Occupation points and pursuits

Dolphins receive their general education and then move into their lifetime pursuits. Dolphin education is more intense than human education, allowing them to begin reaping occupation points from their education after only 5 years. Consult the table below to determine occupation points for each dolphin explorer.

### Occupation points table

derivation	formula
Education	(EDU - 5) x 20
Pursuits	(Age - (EDU + 3)) x 20
Special interests	INT x 10

Dolphins can gain from education all the skills that humans can. Use the table in the human explorer generation section (Explorer Book, p. 61 for reference). Dolphins can follow any pursuit that humans can. Use the human Number of Pursuits Table and the human Pursuits Table (Explorer Book, p. 7) to determine dolphin pursuits. All the skills for dolphin pursuits are identical to those for humans, except in cases where dolphin physiology does not allow this. To use some skills, dolphin explorers must use Hands or wear a Walker Suit. Each dolphin receives his or her INT X 10 in occupation points applicable to any entry on the skills list.

Occupation points convert to percentiles as per the human system, and the standard sacrifice of 10 occupation points will convert a root skill maximum into a xenologically qualified counterpart (or up to the xenology maximum).

**Skills:** All dolphins start with a 90% Athletics/Swim skill. In addition, dolphins have a highly advanced Listen skill with which they can navigate in deep water and tell minute differences in size, shape, and physical makeup of objects around them, particularly underwater. Humans can simulate the dolphin Listen skill using a device called Dolphin's Ears (Technology Book, p. 15), but they can never receive the full value of the dolphin hearing and navigational ability.

Dolphin root skill maximums are the same as for humans. For xenology qualifier maximums, use the table for humans (Explorer Book, p. 10), but substitute "Human" for the "Dolphin" entry and add 25% to entries for other cetaceans.

**Wealth:** Dolphin explorers start with 1d10 x 10 stars in wealth. With a successful luck roll, double the result of the wealth roll. Each dolphin explorer will start with a Walker Suit and set of Hands (unless he or she is cybernetics resistant), and each also has a choice of two items from the human equipment lists.

**Combat:** A dolphin's flukes and fins suffer the same effects from damage as do human arms. A dolphin's hindbody suffers the same effects as the human abdomen, the forebody the same as the human chest, and the head the same as the human head.

A dolphin can ram a target if it is in the water with the dolphin. The ram does 1d10 damage, and the dolphin has a 50% base chance of a successful hit.

## Equipment

### Walker Suit

MASS: 850 kg  
VOLUME: 3 cubic meters  
SPEED: Maximum 12 m/im; cruising 4 m/im  
ENERGY USED: 75/im cruising speed; 120/im maximum speed  
POWER SUPPLY: Fusion 2 generator  
HIT POINTS: 50

d20 location	armor/HP
01-03 right tread	10/10
04-06 left tread	10/10
07-12 pedestal	10/25
13 right arm	7/5
14 left arm	7/5
15-19 bowl helmet *	5/10
20 auxiliary equipment per item **	

\* Once the bowl helmet has been destroyed, hits on this location will damage the dolphin directly.

\*\* Includes any extra equipment carried by the dolphin, such as a comdisc, weaponry, or a stasis field generator. If more than one item is carried, roll randomly to see which item is hit.

APPLICABLE SKILL: Ground Vehicle  
COST 600 stars

The Walker Suit is a massive device which allows a dolphin to function on land. A dolphin wearing this suit resembles the mid-20th century conception of a robot. The suit has two short legs which move by means of independent treads that can be lifted slightly to help the dolphin cross difficult terrain. The dolphin's body is cradled within the trunk, or pedestal, of the suit, and the

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head projects out into a transparent bowl helmet that allows 360 degrees of vision. With a flick of the tail, a dolphin can turn around inside the suit. The treads can move the suit in both directions. The suit is equipped with sensitive sonic transceivers allowing the dolphin to hear nearly as well as when swimming freely.

The dolphin is kept wet in the suit and can breathe normally. The wearer can adjust the pressure inside to satisfy his or her desires. Food is provided to the wearer through a tube in the bowl helmet.

The inner layer of the suit is self-repairing memory plastic. If the suit is breached, the wearer will not lose moisture. If the bowl helmet is destroyed, the wearer will slowly lose moisture and become increasingly uncomfortable without periodic immersions in water.

The Walker Suit allows the wearer high speed travel across clear terrain; cut the speed in half for broken or difficult terrain, where it is difficult for the dolphin to lift the treads.

Most dolphins use a Lift Belt with their Walker Suit. The controls for the belt can be placed inside the bowl helmet and operated with the dolphin's mouth, freeing the Hands (if worn) for other uses. If the suit is knocked over on its

side, the dolphin will be stranded unless he or she is wearing a Lift Belt.

## Hands

MASS: 1 kg per Hand

SIZE: Varies (similar to human arms)

ENERGY USED: Draws energy from the wearer

POWER SUPPLY: The wearer

HIT POINTS: 20 each

COST 500 stars per pair, 300 stars for a single Hand

Hands are psionic-cybernetic devices which allow dolphins to use tools. Hands resemble human arms and hands. They are attached over the dolphin's flippers, where the Hands can receive signals from the nerve-endings which correspond to the dolphin's residual fingers. Hands operate with a DEX of 15 (or the wearer's DEX, whichever is less). In most ways, they function just like human hands.

Hands can only be attached to an area with proper active or residual nervous connections to the brain. For example, a human cannot attach a set of Hands onto his or her chest because the proper nervous connections don't exist in that location. Hands can be manufactured to replace lost human limbs.

To use Hands, a dolphin must have sockets installed in his or her flippers by an autodoc. The sockets allow the Hands to be both donned and removed relatively quickly. When the Hands are not worn, the sockets automatically cap themselves using memory plastic hinges.

## Role playing dolphins

Dolphins are not human, and they have nonhuman attitudes, motivations, needs, hopes, and desires. Some differences between dolphin and human outlooks are outlined below.

Dolphins are social creatures, seldom happy when denied the company of their own kind. Human friends will suffice, but it is unusual for a dolphin to embark on a space voyage with no other members of its species aboardship.

Dolphins have close-knit families. In most cases, they will try to stay in touch with family members when traveling (sending hyperwave messages home, for example). It is very common for a sole-surviving member of a dolphin family to refuse boosterspice, preferring to let his life end naturally rather than live alone.

Renowned for their sense of humor, dolphins often find comic elements in events that humans take very seriously, and most dolphins enjoy playing occasional practical jokes.

As a species, dolphins are devoted to conservation and living in harmony with nature. Humanity's contact with dolphins in the early 21st century averted a disastrous destruction of resources as the dolphins taught humans new methods of interacting with nature. In the Ringworld era, dolphins are instrumental in maintaining the natural balances which allow the trillions of creatures on Earth to survive.

Dolphins relish wide expanses of water in which to swim, and even dolphins who are not claustrophobic find it difficult to remain pent up with no swimming space for long periods of time. During space travel, many dolphins relieve the anxiety and aggressiveness produced by close-quarters living by taking periodic "swims" in deep space.

Dolphins from Earth are accustomed to the highly technological and cosmopolitan nature of the seas there. Some dolphins emigrated to colony worlds to live more natural lives, and most dolphins from the major colony worlds have so adapted to their new environments that they would never consider making a permanent home on Earth again.

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3. Heightened Defense: -4 to be hit

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- Katana, HTH +2 to hit, +1d6 damage
- 6 Shuriken, HTH +3 to hit, +1 damage, with a 13 inch throwing range.

Weight: 130 lbs.

Strength: 16

Endurance: 13

Agility: 13

Intelligence: 12

Charisma: 15

Dam. Mod.: +1

Accuracy: +1

Hit Points: 9

Heal: 9

Car. Cap.: 351

Basic HTH: 1d6

Power: 54

Movement: 42"

Det. Hidden: 10%

Det. Danger: 14%

Invent. Pts.: 1.2

Inventing: 36%

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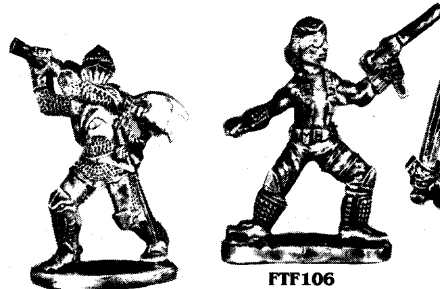
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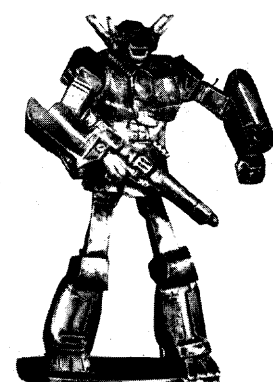
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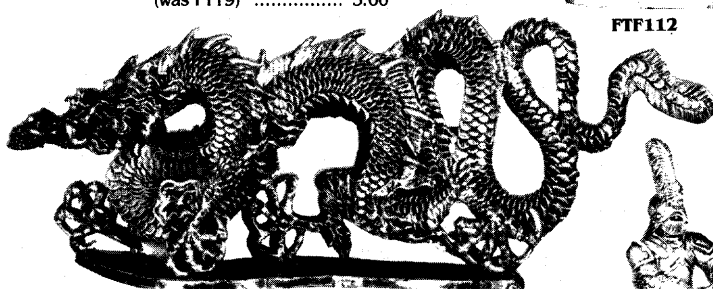
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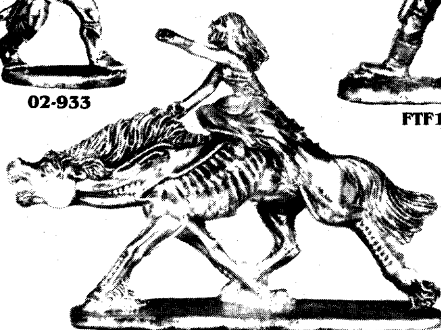
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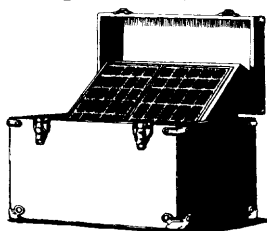
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## The forum

(From page 6)

be the controllers or sources of power for various aspects of the world our characters live in. No deity in the realm of the AD&D game is the god of everything. It is ridiculous in my mind to expect the average character to be so obsessed with one aspect of life that he would only worship one deity. The obvious exception to this is the cleric class.

Mr. Barber seemed to also imply that to change deities is to change alignments. Yet the descriptions of many deities make it clear that worshippers of several alignments are welcome. In my game, I don't force characters to confine themselves to praying only to deities whose descriptions include worship by their alignment. If they desire, they may pray to any deity. Of course, it is up to the DM to decide if the prayer is listened to or ignored.

Is a system of religious conversion a viable part of the AD&D game system? All things considered, I am not sure. Mr. Barber's system allows for the conversion of clerics and paladins, which is a highly unlikely occurrence. And if other DMs are like me, they will consider "what's good for the NPCs is good for the player characters."

What player would be happy to find that his paladin was just converted to the service of a chaotic evil god? I realize that the article stated the system was for NPCs only, but is it fair to assume that the player characters are of such incredible willpower that they are invulnerable to such temptations, while everyone else is not? The conversions or persuasions of NPCs should be decided on a case-by-case basis, not by the random rolling of dice.

Finally, I'd like to ask Mr. Barber's own question again: Why have a conversion system? The only logical reason I can think of is to boost the cleric's ego. Any system that gives a character a set chance of persuading an NPC to pray to that cleric's god is a bit unrealistic. However, I believe that it is possible, but a percentile roll is not the answer. We DMs have a tendency to get lazy and let the dice do our thinking for us.

And I cannot accept Mr. Barber's reasoning that a deity's power depends on the number of worshippers they have. People draw their power from the deities, not vice versa. To quote Gary Gygax from the WORLD OF GREYHAWK guide, "In general, the greater gods are too far removed from the world to have much to do with humanity, and while they are worshipped, few people hold them as patrons." I agree more with Mr. Gygax than I do with Mr. Barber.

Leslie G. Gillis  
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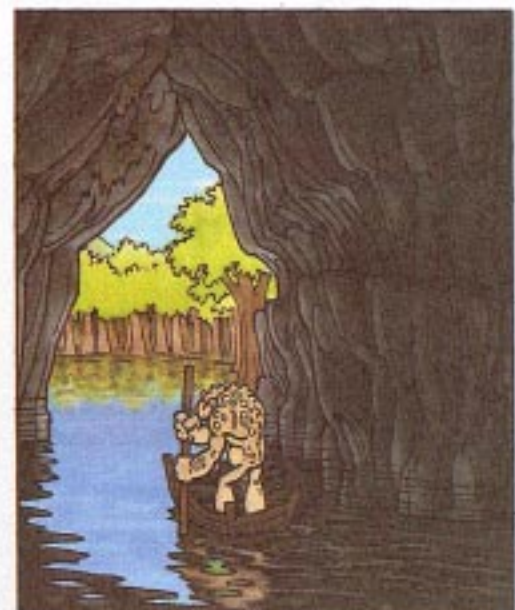
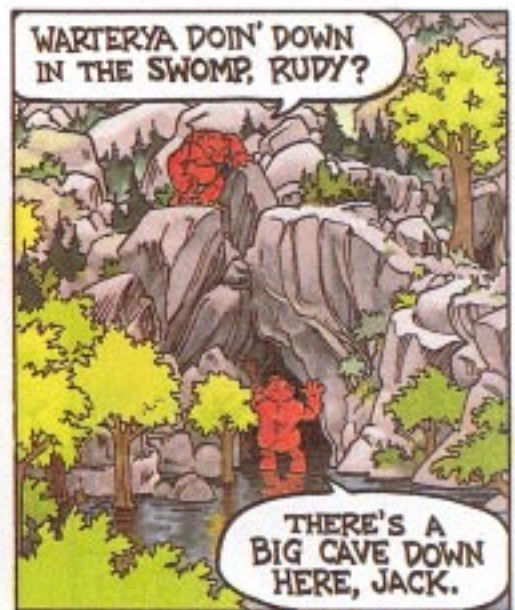
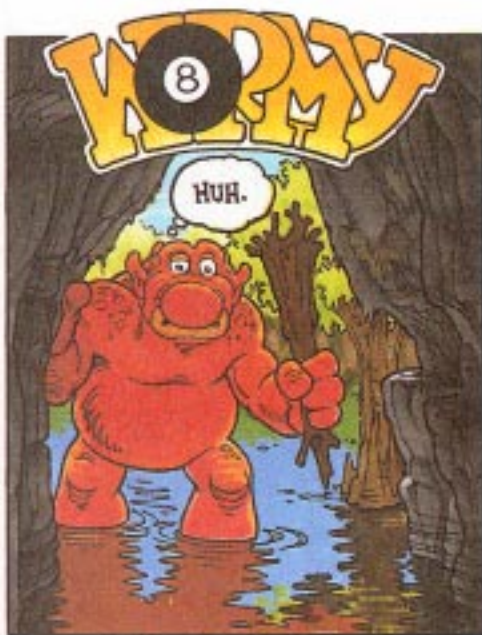
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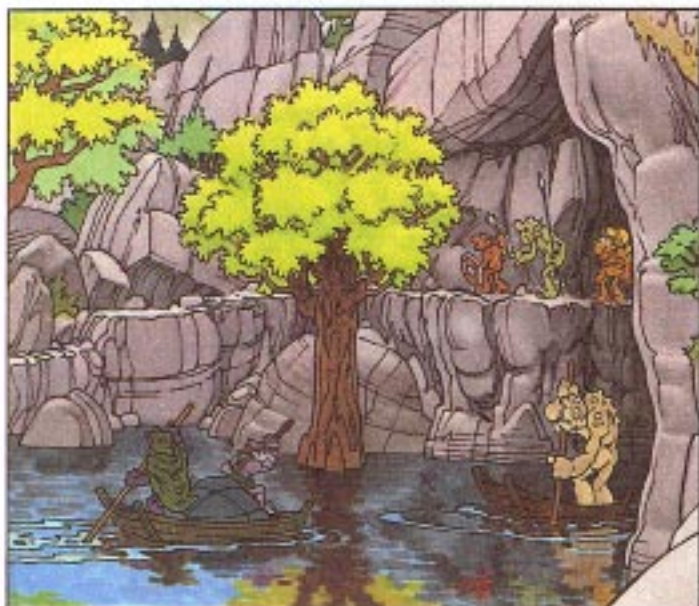
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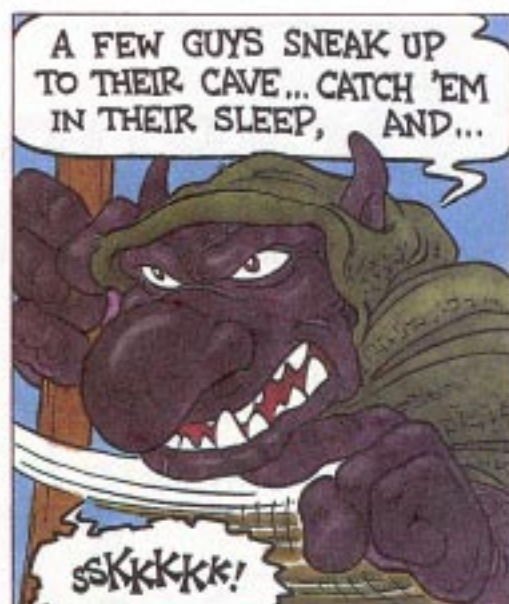












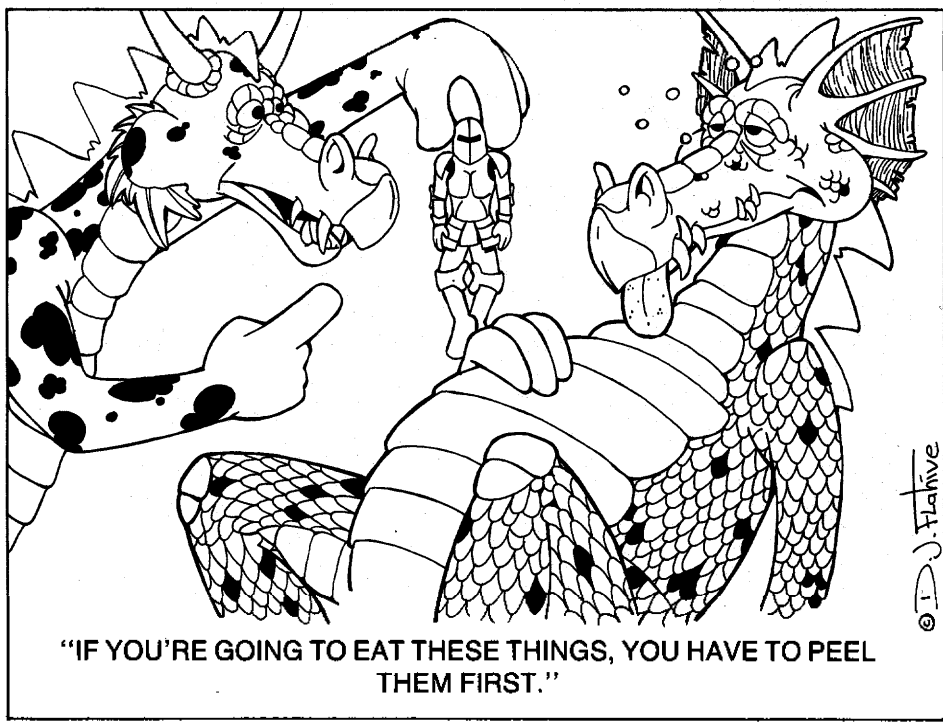


# Dragonmirth

PARDON ME,  
BUT ARE YOU  
BASIC SET  
OR  
ADVANCED?



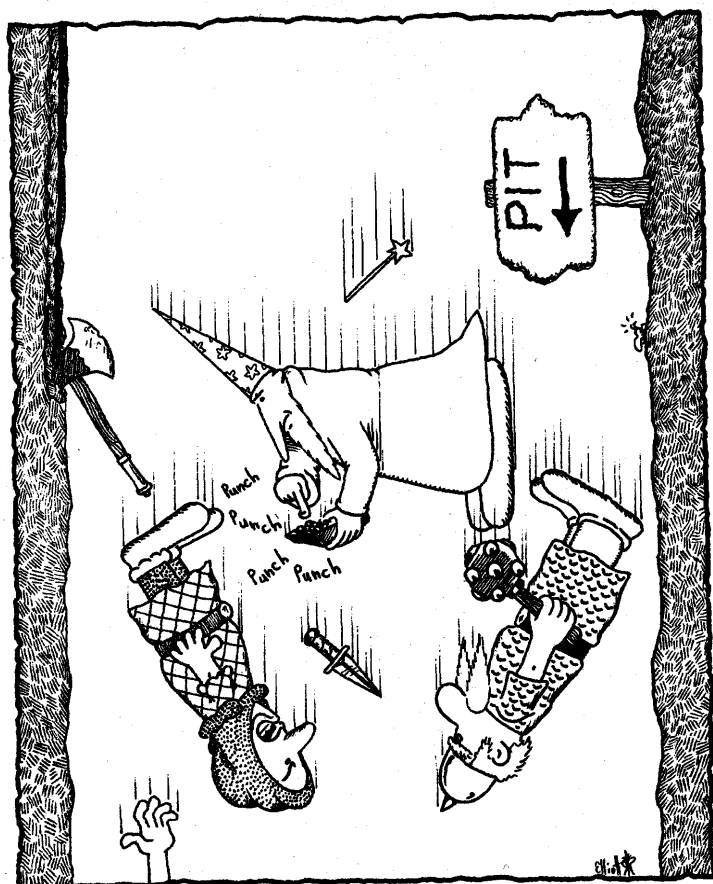
TOMASIC



© J. Flanive

*A* dour old dwarf named Fritz  
Was burned right where he sits.  
That happens, they say,  
When you get in the way  
Of a dragon just as he spits.

— Toni Leigh Perry



"HE'S CALCULATING OUR FALLING DAMAGE."

## PUNK ROC



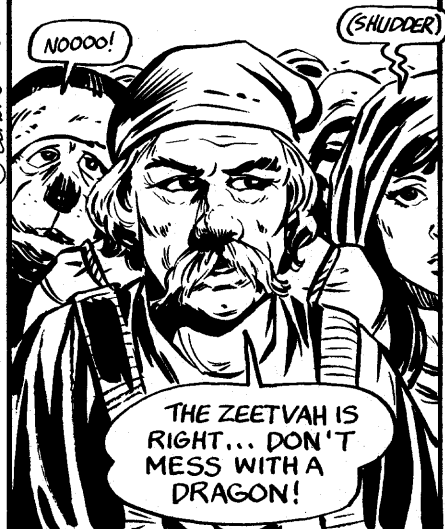


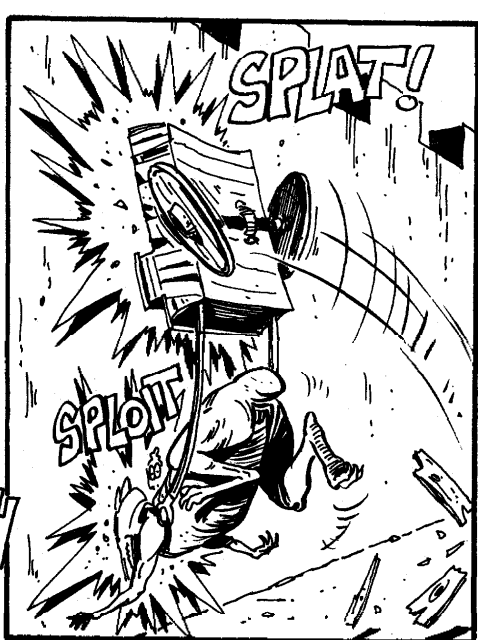
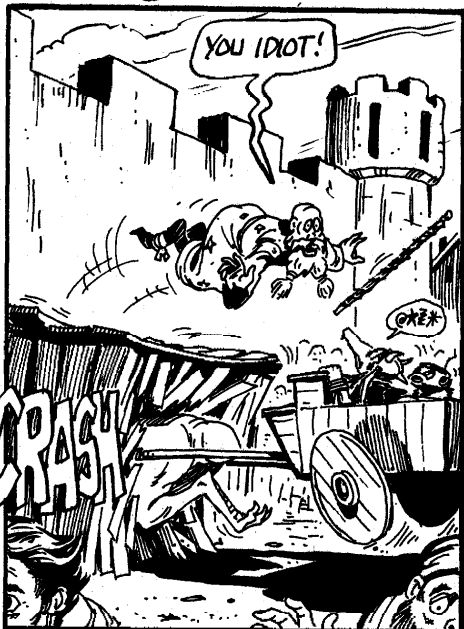
# SNARFQUEST

# 20

BY ELMORE

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...STAY ALERT!... TRUST NO ONE!...  
...KEEP YOUR LASER HANDY!...

# PARANOIA

A ROLE-PLAYING GAME OF A DARKLY HUMOROUS FUTURE

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The Computer wants you to be happy. If you are not happy, you may be used as reactor shielding.

The Computer is crazy. The Computer is happy. The Computer will help you become happy. This will drive you crazy.

Being a citizen of Alpha Complex is fun. The Computer says so, and The Computer is your friend.

Rooting out traitors will make you happy. The Computer tells you so. Can you doubt The Computer?

Being a Troubleshooter is fun. The Computer tells you so. Of course The Computer is right.

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**Keep your laser handy!**

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You will play the part of one of The Computer's elite agents. Your job is to search out, reveal and destroy the enemies of The Computer. Your worst fear is that The Computer will discover that you are one of these enemies.

PLAYER HANDBOOK

PARANOIA



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