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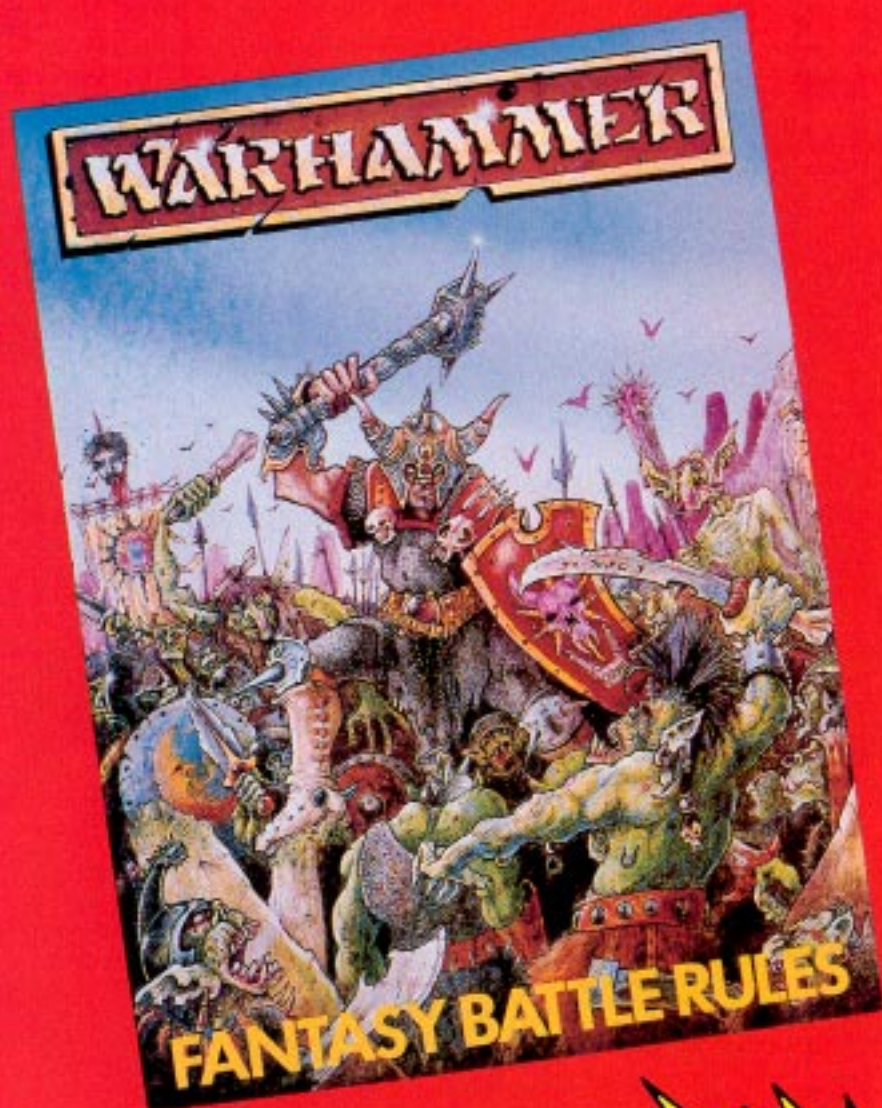


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43



11



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Mike Cook

*Editor-in-Chief*  
Kim Mohan

*Editorial staff*  
Patrick Lucien Price  
Roger Moore

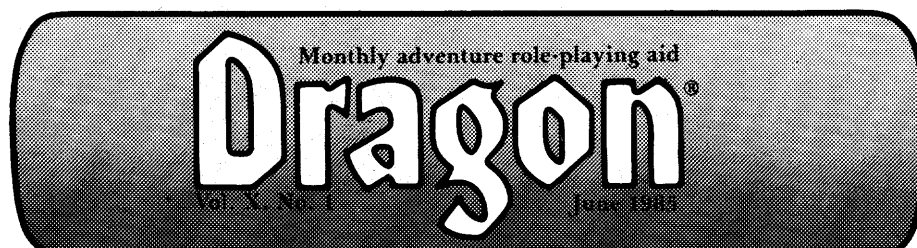
*Graphics and production*  
Roger Raupp

*Subscriptions*  
Georgia Moore

*Advertising*  
Patricia Campbell

*Contributing editors*  
Ed Greenwood  
Ken Rolston  
Katharine Kerr

*This issue's contributing artists*  
Denis Beauvais  
Keith Parkinson  
Jeff Easley  
Roger Raupp  
Bob Maurus  
Valerie Valusek  
Jim Holloway  
Dave LaForce  
Marvel Bullpen  
Tim Truman  
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## SPECIAL ATTRACTION

### 43 MUTANT MANUAL

A collection of creatures for GAMMA WORLD® game adventures

## OTHER FEATURES

### 6 DRAGONLORE: Our anniversary section

### 7 Tailor-made treasure — Roger E. Moore

A dragon's hoard of valuables should be variable

### 11 The magic of dragon teeth — Gregg Chamberlain

Dragon-men of mythology interpreted for AD&D® game play

### 14 Dragon damage revised — Leonard Carpenter

Different attack figures based on size and age

### 15 The dragons of Krynn — Roger E. Moore

Background for DRAGONLANCE™ campaigns

### 18 Creative magic items — Ken Hughes

Enchanted objects don't have to come straight from the book

### 22 Detailing a campaign world — Jim Dutton

Second in a series: How the AD&D™ PBM game was born

### 26 It's a neat idea, but . . . — John C. Bunnell

A review of *Dragonlance Chronicles* Vol. I and II

### 28 Knowing what's in store — Dave Rosene

Descriptions of shops that PCs often visit

### 34 Auctions aren't forbidding — Tim Stabosz

Basic facts of buying and selling

### 56 Authentic agencies, part II — Merle and Jackie Rasmussen

More real-world organizations for TOP SECRET® adventuring

### 62 The Forging of Fear — Ardath Mayhar

If you can't take the heat, stay away from the blacksmith

## DEPARTMENTS

### 3 Letters

### 36 The forum

### 38 World Gamers Guide

### 40 Coming Attraction

### 69 The ARES™ Section

### 86 Convention calendar

### 91 Wormy

### 92 Dragonmirth

### 93 Snarfquest

## COVER

"Allegory," the sixth painting by Denis Beauvais to appear on the cover of DRAGON Magazine, is a fitting way for us to embark on our 10th year of publication. Denis created the painting as an interpretation of what his studio looks like — and the hoard of "treasure" also bears a close resemblance to the load of paraphernalia we've accumulated in the offices of the magazine over the last nine years. Dragons *hate* to throw anything away. . . .

## The biggest April Fool of all

Right now I feel pretty . . . foolish. Sorry if that seems like an unnecessary play on words, but there's no better way to put it.

Some of the material in our April issue was not meant to be taken seriously. Obviously, I'm still filling this space with words every month, so you all found out in the May issue that April's column was a joke. But the next column couldn't come out in time to prevent quite a few people from going out of their way to compliment the editor's column. I got a lot of

(Turn to page 4)



# Letters

## Good, not perfect

Dear Editor,

"What good PCs are made of" (issue #96) by Katharine Kerr was a well-done article. It will add an enjoyable aspect to my campaign. However, it seems that the system outlined is only for humans. Do all characters lose at least three siblings before their adventuring careers? Also, on the subject of demi-humans, where do multi-classed characters fit in? Or monks or bard characters (bards from issue #56)? I would appreciate it if you could clear up these questions for me.

Paul Schreiner  
Lakeview, N.Y.

Dear DRAGON,

I have found a problem in the article "What good PCs are made of." In section C, part 2, there is a 60% chance in a noble family that the father died when the character was young. Would this not depend on if the father was a fighter (section F)? Any non-fighter landowner would have his serfs fight for him, and thus be out of danger of being readily killed. Thus, a noble father who was a fighter should have this 60% chance, and a non-fighter should have a lesser chance.

Also in this section, non-noble classes have only a 40% chance of the father dying when the son/daughter was young. In the very low class and possibly even in the low class, deaths would be quite frequent due to back-breaking labor in unsafe working conditions, and thus, the chance of death should be higher than 40%. Other than these problems, I find this system innovative and very helpful.

John R. Palmer  
Ingersoll, Ontario

*When we prepared Katharine's article for publication, I got the impression that "What good PCs are made of" was one of the strongest pieces of writing she had ever done for us. But, as good as it is, the article (and the system described in it) can't cover every conceivable aspect of character background. I suppose Katharine didn't try to include multi-classed characters in the system because of the enormous amount of complication that would have caused. Monks, by their nature, have a special pre-adventuring background which can't be expressed or described in a system of dice rolls. The bard class published in issue #56 (which allows a character to begin as a bard without progression through the fighter and thief classes) is not an official part of the AD&D® game system, so Katharine properly did not mention it in her article.*

*Do all characters have to lose at least three siblings while they're young? Does a non-fighter noble always have a 60% chance of dying while his child (the PC) is growing up? The answer to those questions, and any other ones of a similar nature, is no. You can appreciate and enjoy the system without necessarily adhering to all of its particulars. Change "three" to "two" or any*

*other number that seems reasonable. Change "60%" to "40%" or whatever. Don't expect any system like this one to be perfect for your taste exactly as it's presented in the magazine, and don't assume that it has to be used exactly as written or not at all. — KM*

## No brains needed

Dear Editor,

I read the article in "From the Sorcerer's Scroll" about the goristro (issue #91). It states that goristroi are "too stupid and bestial to do more than carry out their orders." It also states that they have spell-like powers. If they are so stupid, how can this be so?

Mark Whitten  
Inman, S.C.

*Intelligence is not a factor where innate magical ability is concerned. Type I and Type II demons have intelligence ratings of low, the same as the goristroi, and they also have spell-like powers. The key word is "like" — magical powers of this sort do not have to be cast the way a spell must be, but are simply used when desired. The effects of a spell-like power may be similar, or perhaps identical, to the effects of a certain spell — but technically, the use of spell-like powers and the casting of spells are two different things. — KM*

## No halflings allowed

Dear Dragon,

I am writing about "The Handy Art of Forgery" by Keith Routley (issue #96). In the "Modifications to base chance" table under the forger's race, it makes mention of all races but halflings. Considering that halflings get a +1 on their initial dexterity roll, I feel that they should not be excluded from this article. Would you please explain the author's reasoning in this?

Jim O'Connor  
Sea Girt, N.J.

*Forgery, as defined in Keith's article, is an activity that can only be practiced by assassins — and according to the Players Handbook, membership in the assassin class is open to any race but halflings. Within the game system, the only way to "create" a halfling forger would be to allow the practice of forgery by all thieves; then no racial restriction is implied, because a thief can be of any race. But Keith recommends in his article (and rightly so) that the art of forgery should not be used by thieves; for one thing, as he points out, "It is an unnecessary and uncharacteristic capability for regular thieves, who use physical stealth and dexterity-dependent skills to achieve their ends." And, from a game-balance standpoint, it would seem that thieves have enough special skills already without being able to imitate someone's handwriting. — KM*

## Positively negative

Dear Dragon:

Way back in issue #64 you featured new official creatures, one of them being the solar. In the *Monster Manual II*, it shows the solar with an armor class of 9, while in your magazine it shows it as -9. Which is correct? I'm assuming it's -9, but you know what they say about assuming. . . .

Andy Everett  
Lutz, Fla.

*There are assumptions, and then there are safe assumptions. For the record, the solar's armor class is -9. I hope that even someone who didn't have access to issue #64 would be able to determine that the book's listing is in error, by the nature of the solar itself (a very tough customer) and by the fact that the planetar — slightly less powerful than the solar — has an armor class rating of -7. — KM*

## Mystery guest

Dear Dragon:

This question is for artist Robin Wood concerning her cover painting for issue #97. Who is the shy individual reflected in the large scales in the lower right corner? Please don't tell me that the lovely young woman with the harp plays only as a diversion, while someone else pilfers coin in the shadows! What a rude trick that would be to play on a kindly old dragon.

Brian Murphy  
Kent, Ohio

*If we handed out prizes for observation skills, Brian would certainly be a candidate for this month's award. The reflected figure showed up pretty distinctly in Robin's original painting, which is about four times as large in area as the reproduction on our cover. And we (along with Robin, of course) could see it in the smaller-sized artwork, but I honestly didn't think anyone else would notice it.*

*I don't know who the figure is supposed to be, and I didn't think to ask Robin about it after she turned in the painting. Let's just assume that the off-stage individual is just there to enjoy the music — and, unless she wants to respond to this letter, let's allow Robin to keep the secret of the "shy individual" to herself — KM*

## Back to tracking

Dear Dragon,

It says in the article "Official changes for rangers" (issue #94) that when the terrain modifier is considered to be of the next lower category, and the modifier was already in the -50% category, then tracking is impossible. But what if a 10th-level ranger (110% base chance to track) is trying to track an ogre that passed through a secret door in an area that is frequently passed over by other creatures (-50% for secret door, -10% more for next lower category = -60%)? Subtracting the modifiers still leaves the ranger with a 50% chance — so why is tracking impossible?

Tommy Hendricks  
Dallas, Tex.

*The problem that Tommy had in interpreting the tracking rules stems from the example given (Turn to page 88)*



## The biggest April Fool

(From page 2)

positive feedback from people who took my announcement seriously — and even more from some people like Kristi Oakley (her letter's on your right) who understood it to be a joke but still figured a little praise wouldn't hurt.

All the kind words didn't hurt, but they sure did embarrass me. I'm sorry that so many of you got upset, but I'm also very grateful that you made an effort to get me to "reconsider." If I ever start to *really* think about ending this column . . . well, I think you've already talked me out of it.

Foolish confession number two has to do with the last five items in the Letters column. They were all jokes — yes, including the one about the photocopies. Some people, after reading Howe's letter, wrote in to request photocopies for themselves — something I should have foreseen, and if I had, we wouldn't have used the letter. I apologize to everyone we have to disappoint, for getting your hopes up and for "fooling" you when we didn't really mean to. And to anyone who took our so-called funny stuff seriously, I hope it helps to know that the biggest April Fool of all turned out to be . . .



## She got it!

Dear Kim Mohan,

I was quite amused to see your April column. I have always had a soft spot in my heart for backwards writing; I used to write letters to a friend backwards to keep her little sisters from reading them. I had a terrible urge to write this backwards, but I overcame it; I figure you have better things to do than stand in front of a mirror deciphering fan mail.

Yes, I said fan mail. I know your column was an April Fool's joke; I figured that out early on, remembering your column two years ago. April Fool's or not, though, you have a point: A little praise never hurt anyone, anyway. I quite enjoy your columns, and I read every one of them — usually even before the comics. I think it's a nice touch, and it gives the magazine a more personal feeling.

Kristi Oakley  
Pueblo, Colo.

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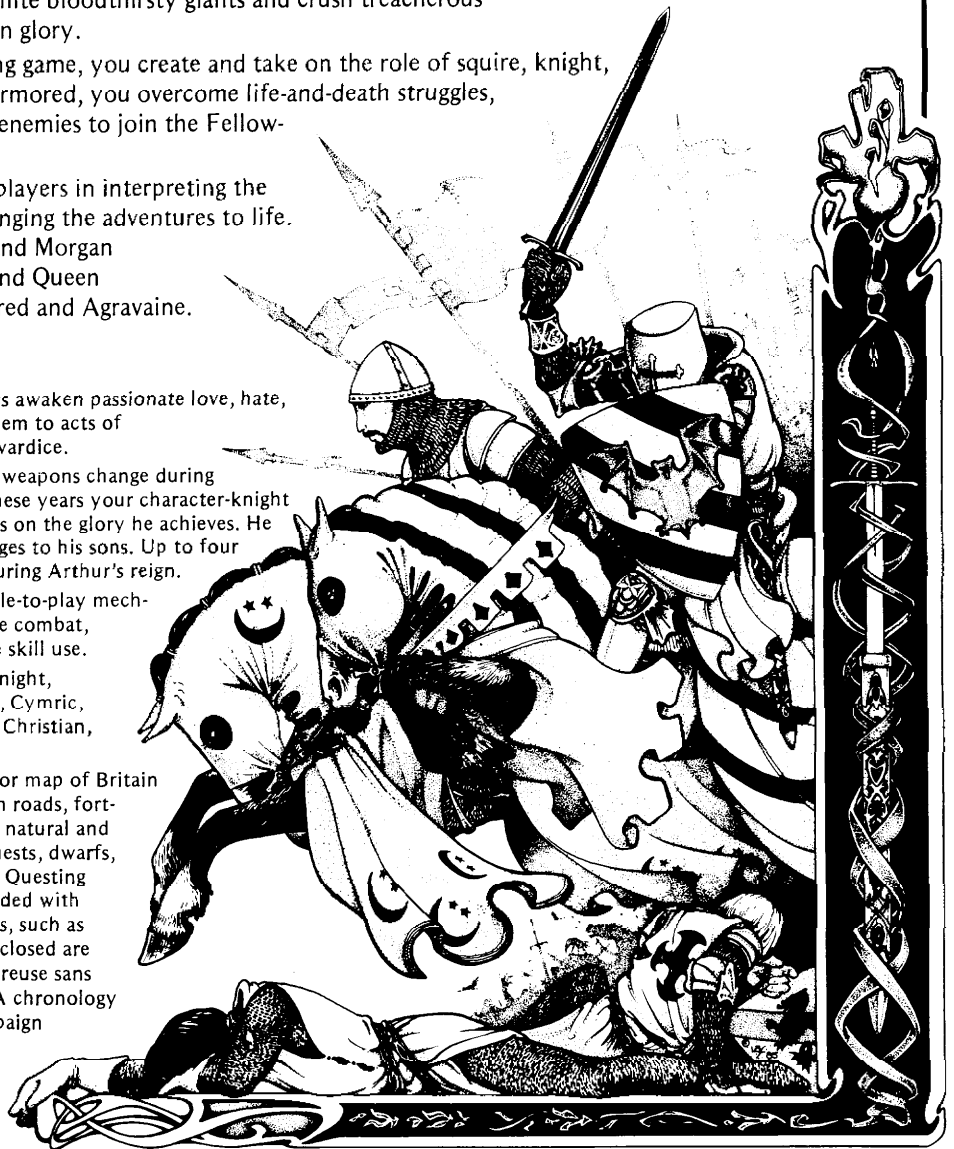
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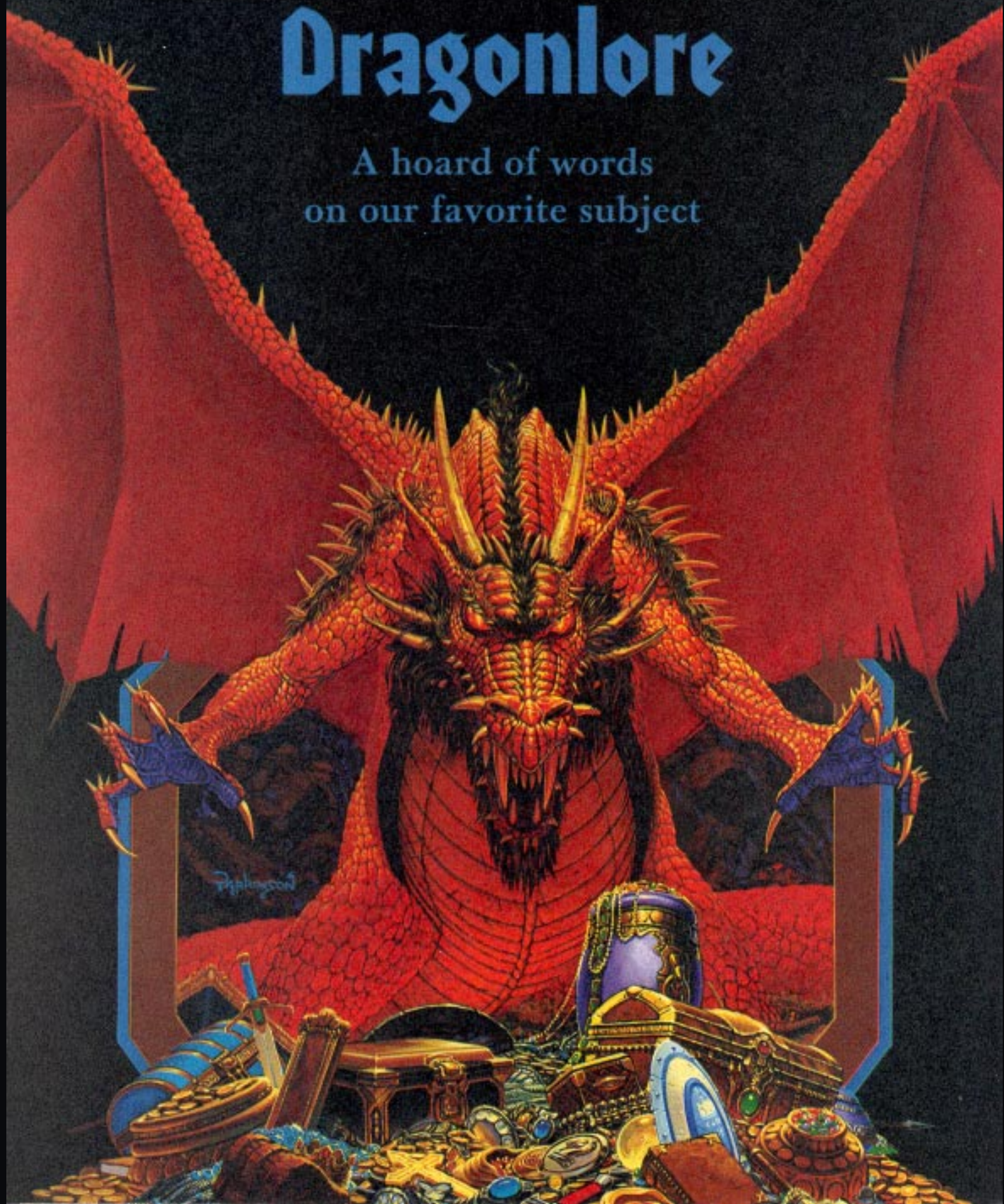


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# Dragonlore

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# Tailor-made treasure

## Develop different hoards for different dragons

by Roger E. Moore

There he lay, a vast red-golden dragon, fast asleep. . . . Beneath him, under all his limbs and his huge coiled tail, and about him on all sides stretching away across the unseen floors, lay countless piles of precious things, gold wrought and unwrought, gems and jewels, and silver red-stained in the ruddy light. . . . Bilbo had heard tell and sing of dragon-hoards before, but the splendour, the lust, the glory of such treasure had never yet come home to him.

from *The Hobbit*  
by J. R. R. Tolkien

Dragons, as everyone knows, hoard treasure. Their lairs are filled with magical swords, silver rings, golden coins, and brilliant gems. Wealth enough to support a barony for years fills the caves of the winged serpents. But *why* do dragons collect treasure, and what do they do with it? How and where do dragons get it? Are all hoards alike in content? And how can dragons keep their hoards safe from marauding adventurers and thieves?

### Treasure lust

. . . a certain Dragon . . . in its upland lair . . . kept guard over a treasure in a huge funeral barrow, under which ran a secret passage. Some man wandering near that pagan hoard found his way in and stole a great jewelled cup. When the Worm awoke, the trouble began. . . . it circled the barrow again and again, burning with anger, but nobody was to be seen in that deserted spot. Thirsty for revenge, it repeatedly went back to the mound to look for that precious cup.

from *Beowulf*  
(David Wright, trans.)

By Western tradition, dragons have always symbolized violence and greed. They may possess enormous mounds of treasure, and they'll defend their hoards with their teeth, claws, and powers. But why? What possible benefit does the average red dragon get from sitting on a mountain of gold pieces?

In modern times, we tend to rationalize everything in scientific terms. One might suppose that dragons keep their glittering treasures because of a particular instinct to do so, the same sort of instinctual affinity for shiny objects that many other monsters in fantasy games seem to have. This comes off as a rather shallow excuse, even when

bolstered by the supposition that dragons, like the Australian bowerbird, have mate-finding rituals in which the males collect brightly colored, shiny objects to attract females. It is rather demeaning to suppose that all of that gold serves the same purpose that designer jeans or perfume serve someone hanging around in a singles' bar. It's also illogical as well; if dragons collected treasure because it was shiny and pretty, why wouldn't they collect empty glass bottles, stained-glass windows, or brightly-colored quilts? Why wouldn't they plant flower beds outside their lairs or paint the insides of their caves in garish, fluorescent colors? (Well, maybe they do; after all, this is fantasy.) Besides, female dragons collect treasure just as males do, or at least they do in AD&D® and D&D® game worlds. And who's going to see all that shiny treasure if it's hidden in a dark cave?

It might be that dragons, being *extremely* egotistical, selfish, and power-conscious (as well as power-hungry), measure status among their own kind according to the masses of treasure that each dragon has stolen or discovered, much in the same way we that measure status among ourselves by the types of cars we drive or the sizes of our bank accounts. For dragons (and us as well), wealth means power and influence. A dragon with a huge treasure hoard is assumed to be mighty in body, dangerous in battle, servant to none and ruler of all, and deserving of even more treasure. A huge mountain of gold serves as a warning to other dragons as much as it does to humans, dwarves, and other "lesser" creatures. Dragons have no need to spend gold (though it may come in handy for ransoming their lives, as it did for the dragon in J. R. R. Tolkien's *Farmer Giles of Ham*). Treasure serves its own purpose simply by existing and by being displayed as ostentatiously as possible.

The treasure that dragons collect is considered to be of extremely high value by many other creatures on their world, and dragons are fully aware of this. In fact, that's why they collect the kinds of things they do. It would be a good bet that if humans, elves, dwarves, and orcs thought that dog sleds were valuable, dragon lairs would be crammed with them. The more treasure a certain dragon collects, the more powerful it is assumed to be for having taken that treasure by force from other beings, or for having successfully defended it from the depredations of others. Smaug of *The Hobbit* destroyed an entire dwarven citadel and

much of the land around it in order to gain the treasure under Lonely Mountain; without question, he was one *tough dragon*.

The good "metallic" dragons of the *Monster Manual*, the Oriental dragons of the FIEND FOLIO® Tome, and the heavily magical dragons from *Monster Manual II* all share the same urge to collect treasure as that of the most evil white, black, green, blue, and red dragons. Only a few silver and gold dragons have managed to free themselves of the intense rivalry, greed, and status-seeking that motivates all other dragonkind. In the best and most benevolent dragons, the treasure-hoarding urge is satisfied in other ways, such as quests for knowledge or the doing of great deeds. Treasure, for such dragons, is often used to purchase goods or is given away to those who'll use it to the eventual advantage of all good beings (good dragons in particular, of course).

It has been said that a pitched battle between Tiamat and Bahamut would likely result in the triumph of the Platinum Dragon; but if both of them had their followers fight it out instead, and if Tiamat got one chance to bribe the forces of her nemesis, a far different outcome might result. Treasure lust, for whatever reason, runs deep within all dragons and their kin.

### Finding treasure

So my grandfather's halls became full of armor and jewels and carvings and cups. . . . Undoubtedly that was what brought the dragon.

from *The Hobbit*  
by J. R. R. Tolkien

Dragons have a number of ways in which they can amass their treasure hoards. Obviously, they can go out and steal it, bringing it all back to their cavern homes. This method has a number of disadvantages, not the least of which is the trouble and effort involved in transporting mounds of loose gold pieces overland or by air across distances of tens or hundreds of miles.

Dragons are not usually capable of building portable storage bins for the treasure they collect, which would make them look much like shoppers at a gigantic department store.

Nonetheless, a dragon on the wing that sees something valuable and easy to carry would probably not hesitate to snatch it up and bring it back to its lair. If a wagonload of precious silks and gems could be grasped without spilling the contents, the dragon could haul that away as well. Problems



occur when the dragon tries to grasp cursed or very small items such as rings, so this method would not be preferred. Many dragons, upon seeing a small mass of treasure that they know cannot be taken away to their own lair, will purposefully destroy it or bury it so that no one else may claim the valuables.

Dragons may also extort treasure from local baronies and kingdoms, threatening to lay waste to the countryside unless a few tons of gold are deposited outside their caves once a year. Aquatic dragons such as the dragon turtle and sea dragon (lung wang) often arrange for tribute to be dumped over the sides of any ships passing through their waters; no reason exists why land-going dragons cannot similarly extort caravans or even small armies that pass near their lairs.

If a dragon can force a small tribe or village of humans or humanoids to serve it, the creature could have its new helpers raid the countryside and bring all the treasure they can find back to its cave. More willing allies of a dragon would do the same in order to win its favor, and a dragon could request payment for services (of a good or evil nature) to be rendered in gold, gems, or other precious things.

The dragon mentioned in *Beowulf* had taken over a rich funeral barrow, and did not have to fight anyone for possession of it. Simply moving in and taking a readily available tomb or treasure vault is another option for treasure gathering, though this would usually only happen when the dragon was not picky about what sorts of treasure its lair possesses.

Finally, a dragon could attack a castle, citadel, or underground fortress which houses a great deal of wealth, and could (if lucky) gain all the riches therein for itself. Because of the great danger involved in attacking a fortified position, even for something as mighty as a dragon, only the strongest of dragons will even consider trying this. Smaug serves as a good example of the possible failings of this approach, because the takeover of Lonely Mountain indirectly led to his death. If a dragon takes something away, eventually someone will want to take it all back again.

### Contents of a hoard

... He entered the vault under the barrow . . . [and] exultantly took stock of the priceless jewels and gleaming gold that littered the floor, and the wonderful things hanging from the walls. Gazing upon the den of the Worm, the old night-flier, he perceived vessels standing uncared-for, with their decorations dropping off — the drinking cups of some bygone race; many a rusty old helmet and many a cunningly twisted arm-band. . . .

from *Beowulf*  
(David Wright, trans.)

One might question why it is necessary to talk about the contents of a dragon's hoard,

since the *Monster Manuals* immediately tell you that they usually have treasure type H, sometimes with types S and T, etc. This is a rather unimaginative approach, and DMs who like to take a little time to add more "atmosphere" to adventures may want to consider ways in which they can tailor such hoards to become more than a mountain of coins.

A number of factors influence the contents of the typical dragon's treasure pile. Rather than randomly rolling up a dragon's hoard from the treasure tables, it is suggested that the DM create several hoards, using the treasure tables and this article as guidelines, and place them within the campaign area in predetermined spots. Then a series of adventures could be generated in which low-level, characters would work their way up to a point at which they can challenge one of the dragons in its lair — hopefully with some degree of success.

Some of the most important considerations involved in determining the contents of a dragon's hoard are given below.

*Age:* The AD&D *Monster Manual* makes it clear that young dragons will have amassed very little treasure (if any), while older ones may have extreme amounts of it. Younger, smaller dragons, if they are collecting treasure at random, have had little chance to build up the kinds of fortunes that older ones have. They are also less able to attack major active treasure-storage areas, such as dwarven kingdoms or wizard's towers, and they are less able to defend whatever treasure they get from larger beings. A young white dragon would only be a nuisance at most to three or four frost giants, who would probably kick the dragon aside and take whatever they wished from its hoard. Older and more experienced dragons are less likely to be pushed around and have figured out better ways of hiding or defending their treasures. The bigger the dragon, the better able it is to take whatever it wants.

*Allies and enemies:* The allies and enemies that live in the vicinity of a dragon's lair determine the source of much of the material in some dragon hoards. A dragon living near and bullying a tribe of kobolds probably has some kobold-made jewelry and coins in its possession, as well as whatever little monies the kobolds can scavenge from the countryside to prevent the dragon from eating them all. A dragon who can raid caravan shipments from a dwarven mine will obviously have a lot of gold in its lair, as well as many dwarven-made weapons, armors, and so forth. Tougher dragons may have raided the lairs of other monsters, killing or driving off the owners and producing a mix of treasures inherited from several lairs.

Regardless of where a dragon dwells, the greatest enemy of a dragon is a thief. Dragons usually have an exceptional awareness of the entire contents of their treasure hoards, sometimes down to the proverbial last copper piece. The loss of any of this treasure is always regarded as a threat that

must be eliminated immediately. The slave's theft of the jeweled cup in the *Beowulf* saga and Bilbo's theft of a similar item from Smaug's caverns in *The Hobbit* should both serve as reminders of the possible outcome of stealing from dragons. This point is important in two respects. One, thieves may inadvertently add to the treasure hoards they sought to despoil (if they are caught in the act by the dragons who own the hoards). Two, dragons often try to find some items of treasure that can be used to better detect thieves and catch or slay them. This point is discussed in the section below on "power enhancement."

*Environment:* Dragons living near swamps and marshes will probably not gain the same kinds of treasure that dragons living on mountain tops or beside the ocean would gain. The local environment, which often determines what sorts of creatures live in the vicinity and what sorts of things they consider useful and valuable, has some effect on the contents of a hoard. A white dragon's arctic lair is more likely to have a *cube of frost resistance* in it than a *ring of water walking*, for example. Likewise, a mist dragon is more likely to have a *ring of water walking* (no doubt owned at one time by a sailor who tried to invade its cave).

One side note about white dragons: It isn't really logical that a dragon living in a frozen wasteland would have magical-potions in its hoard, since such liquids would probably freeze and thereby become worthless. Treasure type S should be dropped from the contents of white dragons' lairs, and a few gems, substituted instead. White dragons are the weakest of all dragonkind, and this is well reflected in the relatively poor hoards they collect. Besides, who has money in the frozen wastelands? White dragons are better off collecting dog sleds.

*Intelligence:* The more intelligent a dragon is, the more choosy it is about what types of treasure it picks up. A smart dragon goes for high-value items like gold, platinum, gems, jewels, and magic items. A dumb dragon is as happy with copper coins as with gold ones, and probably wouldn't know a magic item if it got bit by one. Items that can be used to better defend a lair are more likely to turn up in a smart dragon's lair — and, as one would expect, such items are put to good use by the dragon.

It is likely that more intelligent dragons also seek out and capture magical items which could be used against them, such as *dragon slayer swords*. These items, if they cannot be destroyed by the dragon finding them, will certainly be hidden away in the dragon's lair where no one will be able to recover and use them — especially not on the dragon itself.

*Power enhancement:* Western and Oriental dragons have varying powers, ranging from the *fear* aura that almost all dragons have to the specialized *scaly command* abilities of the Oriental ones. Magical items that grant dragons extra powers that they do not normally possess are treasured and

used by the more intelligent dragons (and even a few of the dumber ones). Of course, an item like a *gem of seeing*, which is not especially useful to a dragon that can automatically detect any invisible or hidden beings near it, is still nice to have. You might not think of collecting glasses if you have perfect vision, but you might want to have a pair of jewel-encrusted glasses once worn by Elton John. Even if they are relatively useless to the dragon (as swords would be, compared to a dragon's claws), items that someone else considers valuable are seen as valuable by a dragon as well, and would be tossed into its hoard.

Some good examples of items that dragons might collect to supplement their own powers include *bags of holding*, *efreeti bottles*, *ioun stones*, *medallions of ESP* (except for Oriental dragons, who can use *ESP* naturally), *periapts of wound closure*, and *stones of good luck*. Dungeon Masters should investigate the possibilities and give the player characters something to think about.

Those dragons capable of casting magical spells, particularly those that can read and can develop spell books, might desire more spell books and scrolls to supplement their own magical powers. Whether a dragon can cast a spell from a scroll or use the magic of a wand, staff, or rod is up to the DM, but the possibility should not be overlooked. Dragons who can *polymorph* themselves into human form are likely to collect human tools, weapons, armor, and so forth, in case they wish to disguise themselves for some mission. (Note that a red dragon with a 4th-level spell could, with the right teacher, learn to cast *polymorph self*.)

**Pre-existing hoards:** Aside from stealing from other civilized and monster-owned hoards, dragons may move in and take over already-existing treasure caches. Funeral barrows generally contain the wealth of dead kings and princes, and dwarven caverns are rich in worked metals, especially gold. Dragons could move in and destroy the inhabitants of orc, giant, and ogre lairs as well, thus gaining some very unusual treasures.

**Weakness compensation:** Certain dragons are more vulnerable to certain attack forms than others, as noted in the *Monster Manual*. Dragons recognize that anything they can do to make themselves less vulnerable is a step in the right direction, and the DM may pick out a magic item that a dragon with a weak spot may use to protect itself.

It is possible to graft special weaknesses onto a dragon, such as a particular form of insanity or phobia, a strong desire for a certain type of item of treasure (imagine a copper dragon who enjoys collecting copper pieces, and has them arranged in coin-collection form), or a disease that has weakened or debilitated the dragon.

Once the DM has established a certain dragon's background, strengths, weaknesses, environment, and so forth, he can look over the list of treasure that the *Monster Manual* gives as belonging to most

specimens of that type of dragon. The DM should also reread the *DMG*, pp. 91-92, on the placement of monetary treasures. Instead of just throwing in a pile of gold, silver, and copper pieces, add variety to the lair. Include a dozen or so old weapons (not magical in nature), lots of strange bones, some valuable furs, and anything else that could potentially be of value that isn't simple coinage. In one game I ran, the players were handed a long list of all the items that their characters uncovered after ransacking one particular treasure hoard; no items were identified as being magical unless the characters checked for it. Many items appeared to be useless upon first glance, but were they? Maybe one of the assorted rocks in the cave was a magical stone, or one of the bones was a wand. The sorting and identifying of treasure can prove to be as great a challenge as the killing of the monster that guarded it.

### Protecting the hoard

Cold gray light filtered into the room through a crack in the ceiling, shining on a large altar in the center of the circular room. On the floor surrounding the altar were masses of jewels, coins, and other treasures of the dead city. The jewels did not gleam. The gold did not glitter. The dim light illuminated nothing — nothing except a black dragon perched on top of the pedestal like some huge beast of prey.


from *Dragons of Autumn Twilight*  
by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman

Obviously, the first and foremost thing that one must deal with when trying to plunder a dragon's hoard is the dragon itself. And beyond the powers and abilities already attributed to dragons in general (in the AD&D rules), much may be done to further ensure that puny humans, greedy dwarves, and halfling thieves have no easy time of it when they invade the lair.

Dungeon Masters who have access to a copy of the Best of DRAGON® Magazine Anthology, Vol. III, should look up Gregory Rihn's article on "Self defense for dragons." A number of fascinating combat possibilities are explored, such as giving dragons tail lash, foot stomp, and wing buffet attacks. He mentions the possibility of allowing dragons to use the treasure they guard to defend themselves and their hoards (which is further explored in the sections above) and also urges the DM to determine (without die-rolling) when dragons use their breath weapons.

If a dragon is encountered *outside* its lair, the dragon could also elect to avoid direct claw-to-sword combat, instead remaining airborne while using its breath weapons on ground targets, uprooting trees and boulders and dropping them as aerial "bombs," and using its powerful wings to stir up blasts of wind to disorient or dust-blind opponents before attacking with claws and teeth. Who said dragons had to play fair?

Many other sneaky stratagems, in addition to the use of magical items mentioned



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above, are another possibility. A dragon with some wits about it might see the effectiveness of digging a moat around its cave lair, jamming sharpened logs into the earth to discourage horsemen from attacking, or setting up pit traps here and there; perhaps all this work would be carried out by slaves or allies. Dead-end tunnels, false leads and clues, ambushing bands of minor monsters, and well-armed guardians also do much to keep a dragon alive and its treasures safe.

## Role-playing dragons

Like a sword in sharpness but five times the length of any sword, the point of the dragon's tail arched up scorpion-wise over his mailed back. . . . Dryly [the dragon] spoke: "I strike no bargains. I take. What have you to offer that I cannot take from you when I like?"

from *A Wizard of Earthsea*  
by Ursula K. LeGuin

Another very effective defense for dragons, one that few *Dungeon Masters* consider, is talking your way out. A dragon is supposed to be very persuasive and dangerous when conversing. What sorts of things could a dragon tell you that would keep you from attacking it? What if it offered you a bribe, directions to another treasure hoard, the name of some enemy who was seeking you, or the recipe for an infallible love potion? It might be lying, but then again, what if it isn't? What if it can tell jokes?

*Dungeon Masters* should try the talking approach, especially if the dragon doesn't look like it will be able to stand up to the party. Role-play the dragon as if it were your most favored player character, pleading for its life. Sure, the dragon can break all of its promises later on and get revenge on the party, but the party doesn't need to know this, right?

Ah, but who said a dragon must always cringe and beg? Role-playing a dragon in a forceful and effective manner often does more to deter potential treasure-seekers than any tricks or traps that a dragon could set. During one game in which my player characters were involved, the DM set up a sudden encounter between our party's caravan and a red dragon, late at night. The dragon, to our surprise, was able to send out beams of light from its eyes wherever it looked, rather like Smaug. Though our characters had been going for their sword hilts before then, we suddenly became so intimidated that when the dragon asked for some treasure from us, we gave it all of our horses and our treasure, as well as our best wishes — and then we ran.

Little surprises like this go a long way toward making dragons as feared in the game as they would be if they existed in real life. Adventurers should give dragons a healthy degree of respect. If any creatures in a fantasy world deserve it, dragons certainly do. It makes taking their treasure all the more exciting.

# The magic of dragon teeth

## Pull them, plant them, and stand back

by Gregg Chamberlain

What do you do with a dragon once it's dead? Dragon claws strung as a necklace make a nice souvenir. The teeth can be used to make unusual handles for swords or daggers, or, if big enough, they can be made into drinking horns. An enterprising adventurer will find magic-users quite willing to pay for genuine dragon's blood and body parts, to be used in experiments.

Some mages have an even better use for a dragon's teeth than making ale cups out of them. With the proper spells and materials, the teeth can be used to create "the children of the dragon."

A dragon's tooth can be enchanted so that, when planted in the ground and given a command word (usually "grow!"), the tooth will sprout an armed warrior of an armor class and alignment appropriate to the dragon from whose tooth he grew. Each dragon-man will also have special abilities unique to his type.

Classical Greek mythology describes two separate incidents in which dragon's teeth were used for this purpose. Jason, as part of his quest for the Golden Fleece, had to prove himself worthy of the sacred fleece to King Aeetes of Colchis. His test was to harness the fiery bulls of the king, plow and sow a field with the teeth of a dragon, and then fight the crop of men that grew afterwards. The dragon's teeth sprouted armed warriors, ready to fight at the slightest provocation. Jason quickly tossed a stone at the back of one of the dragon-men, who thought his fellow sibling had struck him and so returned the blow. Soon, all the warriors were fighting each other; at length, they were destroyed.

Cadmus, founder of the Greek city of Thebes, slew a foul serpent that had killed all of his men with its poisonous breath. Obeying a divine inspiration, he gathered the dragon's teeth and planted them. Up sprang a host of fully armed and armored warriors, who immediately began to fight among themselves until only five remained. The five survivors made peace, and they agreed to follow Cadmus, to help him build and populate his city.

### Types of dragon's teeth

Some of the possible results of using teeth from each of the ten major dragon types from the *Monster Manual* are described below. Each tooth will create a fighter who possesses a level of fighting ability equal to one-half the number of hit dice his parent dragon had (round fractions up). Each warrior will also have half the number of hit



points that the parent dragon once had (again, round fractions up). The warrior will make all saving throws as a fighter or magic-user of equal level (whichever is more advantageous). A dragon-man is of the same sex as the parent dragon.

**Black:** An AC 3 warrior appears, dressed in black chain mail with shield and armed with a black longsword. Chaotic evil in alignment, with an average intelligence of 10 and a dexterity of 15, the warrior is immune to all acid-based attacks and can cast a *Melfs acid arrow* spell once per day (1d4 + 1 damage from arrow, 2d4 damage from acid with saving throws applicable, + 1 to hit).

**Blue:** An AC 2 warrior appears, accoutered in blue plate mail with shield and armed with a mace. Lawful evil in alignment, with an average intelligence of 12, this warrior is immune to all electrical attacks and can perform a *shocking grasp* spell (1d8 + 3 damage) once per day.

**Brass:** An AC 2 warrior appears, armored in brass plate with a shield and flail. Chaotic good with some neutral tendencies like his sire, this warrior has an intelligence of 14 and tends to be verbose and often selfish, just like a brass dragon. He is immune to *sleep* spells and can cast a *sleep* spell once per day (the spell has a duration of 5 rounds).

**Bronze:** An AC 0 warrior appears, wearing bronze" plate mail with shield and armed with two javelins and a short sword. He is lawful good with an intelligence and dexterity of 16, and is immune to electrical attacks. Once per day, he may cast a *lightning bolt* for 2d6 hp damage with a range of 40' (save vs. spell for half damage).

**Copper:** An AC 1 warrior appears, wearing copper-colored plate mail with shield and armed with a morningstar. He has a dexterity of 15 and an intelligence of 14. Like the brass dragon-man, he tends towards avariciousness despite his chaotic



good alignment. He is immune to slow spells and can cast that spell once per day, having a 4-round duration.

**Gold:** An AC -2 warrior appears, wearing gilt-edged plate mail and carrying a shield. He is armed with a knife, a brace of six darts, and a short (4') fisherman's trident. He is lawful good with an intelligence of 17 and a dexterity of 18 (+3 to hit with missile weapons). He may be immune to fire (45% chance), poison gas (45%) or both (10%), and he can cast one flaming *sphere* spell per day, of 3 rounds duration, for 2d4 damage.

**Green:** An AC 2 warrior appears, dressed in scale mail covered over with green vestments and carrying a bow, a full quiver of 20 arrows, and a hand axe. This lawful evil warrior has an intelligence of 11 and a dexterity of 18 (+3 to hit with missile weapons). He is immune to poison gas attacks and can cast a *stinking cloud* spell of 2 rounds duration once per day.

**Red:** An AC -1 warrior appears, dressed in red plate mail with a shield and carrying a broadsword. Chaotic evil in alignment, this warrior has an intelligence of 16 and a dexterity of 17. He is immune to all fire- and heat-based attacks, and he can perform a *burning hands* spell once per day for 1d6 + 1 damage.

**Silver:** An AC -1 warrior appears, accoutered in silver-gilt plate mail with shield and carrying a sabre. Lawful good in alignment, with an intelligence of 16 and a dexterity of

17, this warrior may be immune to cold (45% chance), paralysis (45%) or both (10%), and he can *cause paralysis* for 1d6 rounds by touch, once per day.

**White:** An AC 3 warrior appears, dressed in white splint mail with shield and carrying a battle axe. This is a chaotic evil berserker warrior with an intelligence of 8. In battle, there is a 50% chance he will go into *berserkergang* and gain +2 to hit and damage on offensive attacks and a -2 penalty on all saving throws and on his armor class. He is immune to cold. Once per day, he can do 1d10 damage with his *icy stare* (save vs. spell for half damage), similar to the attack of a frost man.

When discovered as part of a treasure trove, dragon's teeth may be found in a group of from 1-20, usually contained in a leather bag. A single dragon's tooth is usually between 3 inches and 12 inches in length. Dungeon Masters may use the following table to determine the type of teeth found:

Dice	Dragon type
01-04	Silver
05-12	Blue
13-20	Green
21-35	Brass
36-50	Black
51-65	White
66-80	Copper
81-88	Red
89-96	Bronze
97-00	Gold

Sometimes (10%), the bag may contain a mixed assortment of teeth, the different types determined using the above percentile rolls. In such cases, the teeth might be color-coded or marked in some fashion which the player characters may puzzle out for themselves. Each tooth has an experience point value of 100 xp per hit die of the warrior it will create, and a gold piece sale value of 1,000 gp per warrior's hit die.


Dragon-men will either obey or attack the person who caused the teeth to grow, depending on the alignments involved. Dragon-men of an alignment opposite to that of the possessor of the teeth (such as

lawful good vs. chaotic evil, or chaotic good vs. lawful evil) will refuse to obey the owner of the dragon teeth and will attack at once. If the owner's alignment either differs in only one respect from the dragon-men's (lawful good vs. lawful evil, for example) or is neutral, then the dragon-men must make a saving throw vs. spell to determine if they obey the owner. Failure indicates the warriors will obey, albeit reluctantly and without enthusiasm. Daily saves are made to determine continued fealty. A successful save allows the dragon-man to desert, and he may, if the opportunity is there, injure or discomfit the owner of the tooth in some way. Dragon-men of the same alignment as the possessor of the teeth are loyal to the death. (Dragon-men will continue to "live" until killed.) Being magical constructs, they and all their apparel and items disintegrate when slain, with no possible chance of resurrection or saving.

### Enchanting dragon's teeth

The dragon-men Jason faced grew from teeth that were enchanted in the normal fashion. It is likely that Aeetes himself spoke the command word to ensure that Jason would have to fight the dragon-men. In the case of Cadmus, the Greek gods caused the teeth to sprout, since Cadmus couldn't enchant them, and they also caused the dragon-men to light among themselves, for the purpose of selecting only the best warriors to serve Cadmus.

To be worthy of enchantment, a dragon's teeth must be in perfect condition — without chips, cracks, or splits due to age, careless handling, or extraction. A dragon, according to one source (*Dragons: An Introduction to the Modern Infestation*, by Pamela Wharton Blanpied, Warner Books, New York, 1980), has 64 teeth in its mouth normally. After being slain in combat, a dragon will have 2d8 teeth damaged from the fighting and the beast's death throes. Should adventurers decide to pull the remainder of the teeth for sale to a magician, then each remaining tooth must save as bone vs. *crushing blow* during the extraction (*DMG*, p.80). Failure to save means the tooth is damaged during extraction and is useless for enchantment.



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Player character and NPC magic-users who wish to create enchanted dragon's teeth may use the following method to do so.

After a tooth has been prepared for enchantment, using the spell *enchant an item*, it is immersed in a crystal basin containing a broth composed of a mixture of the parent dragon's blood and at least one of the following ingredients, according to the type of tooth being enchanted:

**Black:** Black dragon acid, giant slug spittle, bombardier beetle glands, or large quantities of a very strong acid.

**Blue:** Several crushed electric eels, dust or gems from the body of a shocker, umpleby hair or skin, volt barbs, or the skeleton of a boggart.

**Brass:** The sleep eye of a beholder, teeth from a homunculous, sprite *sleep* ointment, glands from the leopard head of a kamadan, sandman sand, two handfuls of black lotus pollen, or bark from a black willow.

**Bronze:** A crushed chunk of pure amber (transparent gold in color) the size of two fists, storm giant blood, behir blood, or the lightning eye of a retriever.

**Copper:** The slow eye from a beholder, chips from a stone golem, mustard jelly venom, or large amounts of sloth blood.

**Gold:** Refer to the ingredients for red and green dragon-men. A mixture of one ingredient each from the red and green lists will guarantee immunity to both fire and poison attacks. Either ingredient alone will only result in immunity to fire or poison.

**Green:** Powdered ghaist bone, scent glands from several giant skunks, large amounts of wolverine musk, large amounts of uropygi (giant pedipalp) scent, vapor rat blood, retch plant juice, large amounts of fatty excretion of taer, or one cup of flumph spittle or of witherstench musk.

**Red:** Chimera blood, hell hound blood, salamander blood, magman blood, phoenix blood (one drop alone will suffice), a pyrolisk eye, fire drake blood, firenewt blood, or fire toad blood.

**Silver:** As with the gold dragon tooth, a silver dragon's tooth also requires one ingredient from the white dragon list in order to achieve the dual immunity to cold and paralysis. Venom from a carrion crawler, giant portugese man-o-war, giant wasp, crystal ooze, drider, tenebrous worm, assassin bug, fire snake, garbug, grell (large amounts), tentamort, or female tiger fly is also needed.

**White:** Ice toad blood, hoar fox blood, ice lizard blood, or a frost man's eye (the one covered by the patch).

After an appropriate ingredient is found and put into the basin, a low fire is kept burning under the basin, and the tooth is allowed to steep for one hour. The magic-user must then cast a *limited wish* over the tooth and let the tooth sit overnight in the mixture. Then the M-U may remove the tooth and perform an *identify* spell to determine if the enchantment was a success. □

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# Dragon damage revised

## Claw and bite attacks graded by size and age

by Leonard Carpenter

Dragons are among the most interesting monsters in the AD&D® game system. But one of the bothersome facts concerning dragons is that the claw/claw/bite damage done by a particular dragon type is always the same, regardless of the age or size of the dragon. A small, very young red dragon has the same damage potential as a huge, ancient red dragon. Dungeon Masters who have trouble accepting this "fact" regarding dragons can use the system described in this article, which assigns damage ranges for a dragon's physical attacks based on the creature's age and size.

The system assumes that as a dragon grows older, it continues to grow in size as well. The eight different age stages of a dragon's life are divided into three age categories:

### Age category Age range

A	very young to sub-adult
B	young adult to old
C	very old to ancient

If a Dungeon Master believes that a dragon stops growing in size when it reaches adulthood (age category B), then he should simply disregard category C and consider category B to include the range of young adult through ancient. Once the age category and the size of a given dragon are known, the table to find the appropriate claw/claw/bite damage is consulted.

The bite damage given for a specific dragon type in the *Monster Manual* is the "center" of the system; those figures are listed under age category B for average-sized dragons, and other values for bite damage are extrapolated out in both directions. As for claw damage,

I agree with Gregory Rihn (the author of "Self-defense for dragons" in Best of DRAGON® Magazine anthology, Vol. III) that the listed claw damage in the *Monster Manual* is too slight for any but the smallest dragons. The claw damage given in the rule book for a certain dragon type appears in the table here under the grouping of age category B for small dragons. If a DM prefers that claw damage be closer to what is listed in the *Monster Manual*, then he should simply use the listed claw damage for a dragon as that of category B and average size in the table, amending other claw damage ranges downward as he sees fit, though claw damage should never be less than 1-3 for any dragon.

The non-standard damage ranges given in the table are derived as follows: 3-14 is  $d12 + 2$ ; 4-14 is  $2d6 + 2$ ; and 9-30 is  $7d4 + 2$ .

The powers of the chromatic dragon and platinum dragon are also revised here, with an increase in their respective damage potentials. Each of Tiamat's heads is equivalent to that of a huge, ancient dragon of appropriate dragon type. Bahamut's damage is increased to reflect his great size and power.

Dragon type	Damage
Chromatic dragon	3-24/6-24/5-30/6-36/7-42/1-6
Platinum dragon	2-24/2-24/6-60

Using the system based on these tables, the youngest and smallest of dragons are naturally weaker and can be more easily introduced in a low-level campaign. The largest and oldest dragons are tougher, and they provide an even greater challenge to high-level characters, while Tiamat and Bahamut are truly fearsome opponents. □

### Claw/claw/bite damage for dragons by size and age

	Small	Average	Huge		Small	Average	Huge
Black dragon				Gold dragon			
A	1-3/1-3/1-10	1-4/1-4/1-12	2-5/2-5/2-16	A	2-5/2-5/3-18	2-7/2-7/4-24	3-9/3-9/5-30
B	1-4/1-4/2-16	1-6/1-6/3-18	1-8/1-8/5-20	B	1-8/1-8/5-30	1-10/1-10/6-36	1-12/1-12/7-42
C	1-6/1-6/3-18	1-8/1-8/5-20	2-12/2-12/6-24	C	1-10/1-10/6-36	2-12/2-12/7-42	2-16/2-16/8-48
Blue dragon				Green dragon			
A	1-4/1-4/2-12	2-5/2-5/2-16	2-7/2-7/2-20	A	1-4/1-4/1-10	2-5/2-5/2-12	2-7/2-7/2-16
B	1-6/1-6/2-20	1-8/1-8/3-24	1-10/1-10/5-30	B	1-6/1-6/2-16	1-8/1-8/2-20	1-10/1-10/4-24
C	1-8/1-8/3-24	1-10/1-10/5-30	4-14/4-14/6-36	C	1-8/1-8/2-20	1-10/1-10/4-24	2-12/2-12/5-30
Brass dragon				Red dragon			
A	1-3/1-3/1-10	1-4/1-4/2-12	2-5/2-5/3-14	A	2-5/2-5/2-16	2-7/2-7/2-20	3-9/3-9/2-24
B	1-4/1-4/3-14	1-6/1-6/4-16	1-8/1-8/5-20	B	1-8/1-8/2-24	1-10/1-10/3-30	1-12/1-12/3-36
C	1-6/1-6/4-16	1-8/1-8/5-20	2-12/2-12/6-24	C	1-10/1-10/3-30	2-12/2-12/3-36	2-16/2-16/7-42
Bronze dragon				Silver dragon			
A	1-4/1-4/2-12	12-5/2-5/2-16	2-7/2-7/2-20	A	1-4/1-4/2-16	2-5/2-5/2-20	2-7/2-7/2-24
B	1-6/1-6/2-20	1-8/1-8/4-24	1-10/1-10/5-30	B	1-6/1-6/2-24	1-8/1-8/5-30	1-10/1-10/6-36
C	1-8/1-8/4-24	1-10/1-10/5-30	4-14/4-14/6-36	C	1-8/1-8/5-30	1-10/1-10/6-36	2-12/2-12/7-42
Copper dragon				White dragon			
A	1-3/1-3/1-10	1-4/1-4/2-12	2-5/2-5/2-16	A	1-3/1-3/1-8	1-4/1-4/1-10	2-5/2-5/2-12
B	1-4/1-4/4-16	1-6/1-6/5-20	1-8/1-8/6-24	B	1-4/1-4/2-12	1-6/1-6/2-16	1-8/1-8/2-20
C	1-6/1-6/5-20	1-8/1-8/6-24	2-12/2-12/9-30	C	1-6/1-6/2-16	1-8/1-8/2-20	2-12/2-12/3-24

# The dragons of Krynn

## More background for Dragonlance™ campaigns

by Roger E. Moore

The dragons of Krynn (the world of the DRAGONLANCE™ saga) are similar to dragons common to most other AD&D® game universes — on the surface, at least. A number of important differences exist between dragons of most AD&D game worlds and those of Krynn, particularly in terms of personality, habits, and goals. Those gamers who are running campaigns set on Krynn that do not directly follow the DRAGONLANCE module series will find it helpful to have a clearer understanding of the history and motives of the dragons who live there.

### History and legends

Krynn is a world caught between the forces of two immensely powerful beings: The Queen of Darkness, Takhisis, and the Celestial Paladin, Paladine. Takhisis and Paladine are similar to (but *not* the same as) the dragon-gods Tiamat and Bahamut. Takhisis and Paladine exercise control only over the universe in which Krynn exists, and over their respective unearthly domains on other planes.

The Queen of Darkness had previously attempted to conquer Krynn through her underlings during the first three Dragonwars in the Age of Dreams. The final Dragonwar, as described briefly in module DL-5, *Dragons of Mystery* lasted three hundred years and ended only when Huma, a Knight of Solamnia, fought Takhisis and drove her from the world with his dragonlance. At least, that is what the legends say. Whether or not Huma had other artifacts or allies that enabled him to banish the Queen of Darkness (or even if Huma had anything to do with Takhisis's banishment at all) is a matter for sages to speculate.

Takhisis fled to an alternate plane of reality, one referred to as the Abyss (though probably not the same chaotic-evil Outer Plane which is the home of all demonkind). Here Takhisis raged over her defeat and laid plans for her return. All of the evil dragons were themselves forced into dragonsleep when Takhisis was banished from the world. Dragonsleep is a mystical merging of a dragon with the very earth and rock of Krynn, the material from which the dragons draw their substance and life. In dragonsleep, a dragon essentially remains in suspended animation for an indefinite period of time, until it is awakened.

Paladine and the good dragons also left the world at this time, though of their own free will. Paladine settled in a different

universe said to be "beyond the sky." He wished to preserve a balance in the world, and, with Takhisis's departure, the forces of good needed to be lessened. Most of the good dragons, at Paladine's bidding, sank back into the earth in dragonsleep. But a tiny number of good dragons remained active upon Krynn after the Age of Dreams. These few (Evenstar, from module DL-4, *Dragons of Desolation*, for example) were given tasks as guardians of powerful artifacts. They stayed out of reach of civilization and passed beyond the knowledge of mankind.

Legends and rumors persist that a few other good dragons fled the lands of Ansalon to a place known as the Isle of Dragons, said to be a mist-shrouded, garden island in an unknown location. Nothing more of this is known.

Only Takhisis and Paladine, it is said by some, could cause a dragon to awaken from dragonsleep. Whether it was actually Takhisis who awakened the evil dragons just prior to the Dragonlance War is not known, though the same agency or being may also be responsible for the introduction of draconians — a previously unknown reptilian race — to Krynn as well.

### Motives and goals

The evil dragons of Krynn are not like those of other worlds. They maintain close ties with humans, evil demi-humans, humanoids, and draconians, and they are highly organized under Takhisis's leadership. Their primary mission is to locate the individual variously known as the Green Gemstone Man, Berem the Wanderer, and Everman. Why the dragons are searching for this person is unknown to anyone, but the dragons; few people are even aware that this quest exists.

The secondary goal of Takhisis and the evil dragons is to achieve temporal power and rulership over other races; thus, they have brought war to Krynn. Dragons are *never* subordinate to anyone, even a Dragon Highlord commander, though they work on a more-or-less equal footing with the Highlords because they share a common goal — domination of Krynn. It has been conjectured that the alliance of evil dragons would fragment if their central lawful leadership were to be removed, but this appears to be a task beyond the capabilities of any being at this time.

The few good dragons that remain active on Krynn have little need to seek dominion over other beings. Instead, they forward the

causes of good and carry out their guardianship missions as described above. Why the good dragons have not joined the forces of good against the evil dragons is a question that the beleaguered people of Krynn would like answered.

Few dragons in Krynn will go off by themselves to hoard treasure and lead solitary lives. Any evil dragon found in a lair distant from other intelligent races is still likely to be serving some greater purpose or power. It may be acting as an advance scout for an army of draconians, or it may be a permanent spy set to watch a mountain trail, or it may be resting for a short time before completing some mission. It might have been wounded in a major battle; if it is able to recuperate without being disturbed, it will rejoin its old forces at a later date.

Up to the point currently being dealt with in the module series (through DL-6, *Dragons of Ice*), any good dragon encountered by an adventuring party has been reluctant to give help. A good dragon might give aid if the party's need is great, but such aid will be minimal at best. The dragon will not be able to give an explanation for its inability to help, though it will be quite distressed. It will only mention something about the "Oath" before retiring.

### Dragon Highlords

Dragons in the service of Takhisis will generally work with human, humanoid, and draconian armies. Nearly all of them will be paired with a human, humanoid, evil demi-human, or draconian Dragon Highlord, who serves as a more-or-less equal partner and ally. Dragon Highlords are typically lighters, clerics, thieves, assassins, magic-users, or illusionists. Each of them must be relatively powerful, ruthless, and rather egotistical. (The latter is handy when dealing with one's dragon partner — even small dragons have enormous egos, and they despise anyone who lacks will power and confidence.) Though Highlords tend to be quite varied in personality, skills, and appearance, they have some characteristics in common, as described below.

The Highlord should be of at least 6th level in ability or have at least 6 HD (the minimum level at which a dragon's *fear* aura has no effect). If no one of such power is available to fill a Highlord's slot, a Highlord of 3rd, 4th, or 5th level (or 3-5 HD) will be found; however, this lower-level Highlord will be seen with disdain by the dragon with which he or she is associated. Bozak draconians may serve as Highlords,



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since they (like all draconians) are immune to a dragon's fear aura. Sivak draconians (see module DL-7, *Dragons of Light*) also make good Highlords.

In general, a Highlord should be of a level roughly equal to the number of hit dice that his or her dragon possesses. Extreme cases, such as an 11 HD dragon being paired with a 3rd-level fighter, are virtually unknown.

All Highlords are either neutral or evil in alignment, most of them being evil. No Highlord can have a good alignment.

Dwarves, kender, and gnomes, by their nature, will never become Highlords, though certain evil dwarves might ally with them. Humans and draconians make up the majority of known Highlords. Renegade elves (often multi-classed) and hobgoblin

chieftains are occasionally seen as Highlords, but these types are quite rare.

### The current conflict

The two most common types of dragons seen during the Dragonlance War are blue dragons (currently pressing across northern and central Solamnia) and red dragons (crossing southern Solamnia and Abanasinia, heading for Tarsis). Few green dragons are known to exist, all of them serving as custodians for Silvanesti, and white dragons are known only far to the south of Tarsis, in the direction of the Ice Wall Glacier. Black dragon armies are not particularly unified and are currently supporting the red dragon armies in Abanasinia. Black dragons have also been reported from Nordmaar, apparently coming out of the Great Moors there.

The dragon armies are unified under Ariakas, a Dragon Highlord who styles himself the Emperor of Ansalon. Ariakas works most closely with the red dragons of Krynn, and it is thought that he receives his orders directly from Takhisis herself.

Sailors and coastal peoples (those who still maintain that legends of the existence of sea elves are true) claim to have heard rumors that monsters known as sea dragons have begun to appear in the oceans around Ansalon. It may be that a war unseen by land-dwelling peoples is raging beneath the ocean surface between intelligent sea folk and the sea dragons, but little is known of this conflict. II

## Guidelines

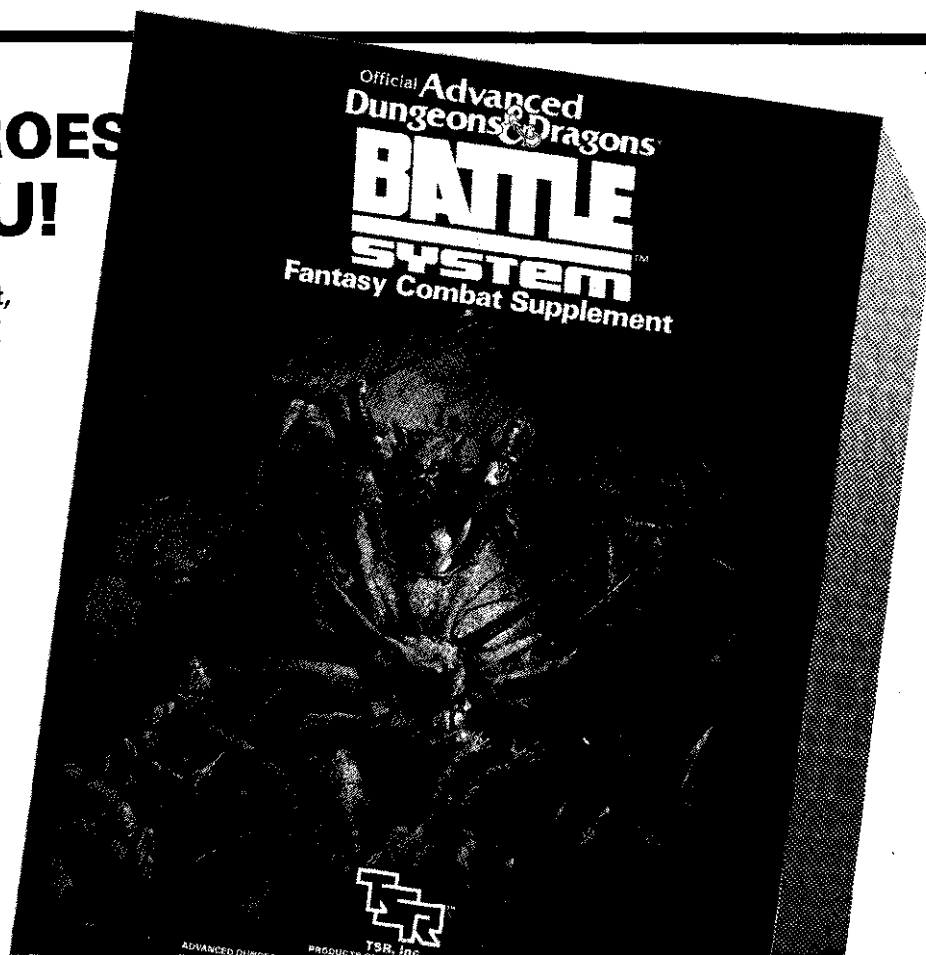
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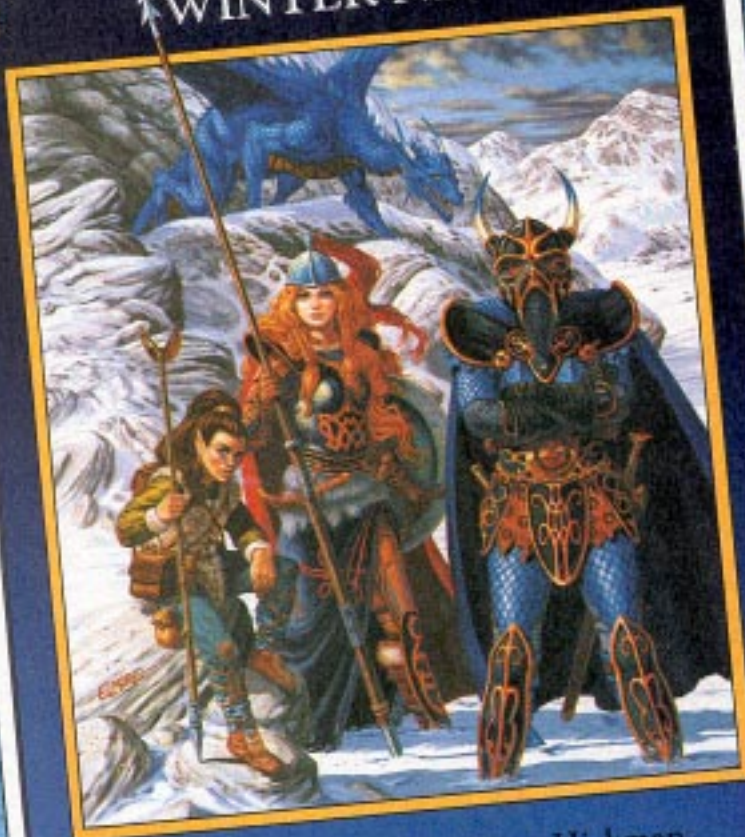
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# Creative magic items

DMs are not limited to what's in the book

by Ken Hughes

The magic items listed and described in the *Dungeon Masters Guide* are generally excellent, both playable and plausible. The inclusion of such well-known devices as *wands of fire* and *rings of invisibility* allows the use of many old, favorite tricks from folklore or fiction. Other items, such as the *cloak of displacement* or the *helm of brilliance*, fit in so well that they can be considered classics in fantasy gaming.

Of course, no arbitrary list of magic items can cover all of the DM's needs, no matter how long it may be. The AD&D® game thrives on creativity and the uniqueness of each campaign world. Sooner or later, the DM should consider supplementing items from the charts with some original creations of his own. Doing so increases the sense of his own world's special flavor, allows the player characters to rediscover the wonder of an unknown find, and lets the DM use exactly the enchanted object he wanted instead of making do with something close to it. Nobody can predict the range of another person's imagination.

Creating new magic items also means doing extra work and running the risk of producing things that will unbalance the game. As a result, some people are reluctant to stray from the listed charts. For these DMs, the following guidelines are offered.

## Turning old into new

In the sense of surprising the PCs, at least, an old item in a new form is a new item. Characters (and players) may learn all the powers of the known types of magical tridents — but what if a trident is capable of functioning as any one of the numerous magic items from the DMG's list? The DM could simply roll twice on the magic item tables to create a new item: once for form, and once for power. An amulet can dazzle as well as a *gem of brightness* can; a sword can act as a magic shield, if it were enchanted to parry blows; a cloak can have runes on its inner side which, when recited aloud, act as a spell scroll. Of course, a discriminating DM would not write down what he rolls up without thinking about it first. Over-randomizing is the bane of control, consistency, and just about everything else. The point is that, without even leaving the tables in the *DMG*, many untapped possibilities for creating new magic items exist.

What about combining powers? Of course, you have to be careful not to produce invincible amalgamate items that

provide seventeen different ways to obliterate a hapless ogre — and the campaign — but I doubt an item that gave silent movement (as per *boots of elvenkind*) combined with *protection + 2* (as per the ring) would unbalance things greatly. To make sure things are under control, one could create an item using only *part* of the original device's abilities, such as a talisman with *staff of curing* powers that could only *cure disease* and *cure wounds*, in addition to conferring *fire resistance* only against normal fires.

What about spells from the *Players Handbook* that aren't represented in the *DMG* list of items? A wand could produce *web*, *hold portal*, or any other type of magic within reason. The abilities of the various races and classes, such as *infravision*, tracking, or an assassin's knowledge of poisons, could be used as new magical powers. Why not use the *Monster Manual* for inspiration? A magic item might be able to project a dragonne's roar once a day, or *polymorph* the user into a slithering tracker on command. Perhaps an item could provide protection against a certain monster's talent, or against a spell or power from the *DMG*'s magic item list. It could also enhance one spell or power cast by a player character (-2 on the enemy's save vs. your *charm person* spells, for example), or even detect the use of certain powers by others.

## Selecting magical powers

With the plethora of possibilities provided for perpetration upon the player characters, the question now is how to choose between them. This is especially important when creating unique powers for an item, but a method of power selection is also useful when picking powers for a new item from the *DMG*'s offerings. (You weren't really rolling them up in completely random fashion, were you?)

The most important guide to creating a new item would be examining the circumstances of the item's creation. Why was the item made? Who made it, and from what materials? Applying these considerations increases your campaign's realism, clarity, and consistency.

Perhaps there was a mage with an advanced case of paranoia (and many doppelganger enemies), so he enchanted a ring that gave him a saving throw against *ESP*. A *sword +1*, *+2 vs enchanted beings* might be made for the bodyguard of a mage with many professional rivals. A druid may have always admired unicorns and so made

a belt that protected him from poison, increased his speed and endurance when running, and allowed him to speak the languages of the forest creatures. A powerful fighter who wished to cleanse the mountains of dragons might commission a shield that was +3, provided *feather fall* upon command, and gave a +2 bonus to saving throws against breath weapons. A set of arrows made for an assassin might teleport back to their quiver once they reached the end of their flight.

Also consider where the item is to be found in the campaign, and, if it isn't in its creator's hands at present, why: The item's history may be simple (a mage made the item for his chief henchman) or very complex, listing dozens of people who found, lost, stole, sold, gave away, and warred over some object of power. In general, items are found where they are useful. A fighter would not keep a *wand of fire* for long once he discovered he couldn't use it; he'd sell or trade it for a weapon he could use. Since everybody wants a powerful item, a powerful person is likely, sooner or later, to find one and keep it. If a band of five orcs has any magic, the treasure was probably found on minor raids and won't be particularly noteworthy.

Consider, too, the goals of the campaign, present and future. If the party is preparing to hunt werewolves in the Forest of Dread, it may be time to let a couple of *infravision rings* appear. But, if the party is about to be infiltrated by an assassin, think twice about letting *ESP* items into the game.

Another point to consider is that a mage can only put so much power into his magic items. The results of the item-creating magics are, like many other spells, proportionate to the caster's level. If you can get a feeling for how powerful any given item is, and how much power the least and greatest (non-artifact) magic items you want to use in your campaign will have, the simplest way to decide what a certain-level mage can create is to also rank the potential enchanters of your world, figuring out the maximum possible level of magic-use to be found in the lands. Then simply compare the two scales. If the mightiest magic items in your campaign were made by a 25th-level Archmage, then a 12th-level Wizard will make items of roughly half that power at best.

When a mage decides to enchant, he has to consider what his limits to creation are. He may need to save a little magical energy here and there in making an item. Magic

items do not combine form and function at random; there are physical or symbolic reasons why some powers are best given to certain objects. A ring might summon an energy-blade equivalent to a magic sword, but it would be easier and more sensible to make a staff which transformed into the same weapon, and easier and better still to simply take a real sword and enchant it. A sword might be made into a scrying device, but a shield would be better since it has a larger surface for the user to view, and a *crystal ball* is preferable to either because it lacks the symbolic function of combat. Most mages will prefer to use the traditional item-shapes, those from our folklore, but they can use other forms if they really want to allot the extra power, time, and effort to the task.

Special limitations on an item's powers, conditions for its use, and assorted troublesome side effects may either increase or reduce the amount of power needed to make a magic item, depending on whether they work with or against the item's total nature. Perhaps a *ring of fire resistance* normally makes the wearer especially vulnerable to cold attacks, and a mage who creates such a ring can save power by not neutralizing this effect. On the other hand, a mage would have to expend more magical energy to make a sword unable to harm magic-users, because such a function contradicts the sword's nature to harm *every-one*. Creating the item so that its magic is

not permanent, using charges or a limited number of uses in a given length of time, will also save power and production costs.

### Limiting magical power

The question arises of whether or not a newly created magic item is really right for the players. An experienced DM usually knows what is too powerful for comfortable game use, but many newer ones do not. I believe the key is to develop a rule of thumb about designing magic for *your* campaign, then stick to it, only altering it when it fits a particular situation.

Concentrate on making enchanted items interesting, balanced, and fitted to the campaign, instead of simply assuming they must be powerful to be noteworthy. A torch that never burns out, a suit of armor that you can swim in, or an amulet that gives +1 *protection* only from weapons with wood or stone in them is not liable to upset the game. A simple item can be made more fun by adding an unusual ability instead of more raw power — such as a *shield* +1 that will give off a sudden burst of light whenever a magical weapon is used against it. Also, adding nonmagical and intangible details can give an item flavor without increasing its power at all. An unusual appearance, a set of runes carved on the item with an interesting message, or a legend about the item (which may or may not be accurate, and may or may not affect the game) can make the find unforgettable.

Many items, other than weapons and protective devices, could have an activation requirement of some sort — either a command word or phrase, or some gesture or special action (these may or may not be recorded on or near the item in some way). It probably requires more energy to have an item triggered by mental command than by a set word or gesture, making the latter kind of items more common. Of course, an activation requirement gives an item more character in the long run, as well as limiting its use.

Not all items appear magical. Magic items will not always glow when picked up, and they are not always functionally weightless, as are magical armors. Although objects to be enchanted need to be made of the finest possible materials, they don't have to *look* as if they were valuable. Items that appear to be normal, nonmagical objects may be overlooked by treasure-hunters, an interesting limitation on the "findability" (and, thus, the usability) of magical items. Then, too, a vain player character may not wish to use the rather drab *sword* +3 he's uncovered, preferring instead his *sword* +2 that is brilliant gold in color and sings Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries" when drawn.

Specific pitfalls to avoid when creating magic items include the following: 1) Especially powerful effects that supposedly won't happen very often (what if the characters save their item's one *power word kill* per

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month for a really important NPC, or take their *belts of serpent control* to your Temple of the Snake God?); 2) Effects that work too often (an item that *detects secret doors* at all times will make the whole concept of hidden passages obsolete); 3) Loopholes in an item's interpretation (will those *belts of serpent control* affect 20 HD snakes? What about couatl? Type V demons? the Snake God itself?); 4) Items which are dangerously cumulative with other items and effects (an item producing a vulnerability to fire is much more difficult to control when combined with an item granting fire resistance; a lord who gets a protection-from-blades item could combine it with magical armor); 5) Items that supplant a PC's once-valuable skills (a *chime of opening* makes the local thief unnecessary); 6) "Rare" items that show up in every second dungeon; and, 7) Perhaps above all, items that are boring.

NPCs can have powerful items which are either too dangerous for the party to use, are aligned against the party, or are much desired by an unscrupulous person or power. If the PCs get such items, they may wish they hadn't. For that matter, PCs who get overwhelmingly powerful items can quickly be separated from them should some high-level thief decide the thing is too valuable — and too poorly guarded — to ignore. Thieves should make a point of sparing the characters' lives, of course, but the PCs' only chance to keep such items would be to use them sparingly and in secret. The more often the item is used, the better the chance of attracting attention to it. The party could sell such powerful items to a powerful, good, and honest person — but if they get a fair price for them, the group may have a problem keeping the gold a secret, too!

### Curses

Cursed items follow a different principle. Some simply result from an error in the enchanting process (such as the many in the *DMG* that resemble beneficial items, but have the opposite effect), but most are intentionally designed to be, in certain carefully chosen ways, a pain in the neck. Some have straightforward touch-and-be-zapped triggers, while others may have

useful powers as a lure to make them more dangerous. If the curse involves mind control or alignment changing, that's all the worse. Some cursed items may actually be useful and good, the curse having been attached to keep the use of the item under control.

The specific nature of a curse, just as with other items, stems from its creator's desires, ability, and the question of what curse would likely have been used. Potent curses can leave a long trail of bodies on the road leading away from that treasure chest. Some curses attempt to fit the punishment to the crime — a sword that damages its wielder as much as its opponent may teach hack-and-slash fighters the error of their ways. Many others apply some technique of mischief and malevolence that their creator personally favors. One mage might prefer curses of physical pain and injury, while another prefers to slowly torture the victim by forcing him to perform acts contrary to his alignment. Yet another may want to entrap a servant to guard his crypt. Some curses are so subtle that the victim may not know he's being cursed, some strike instantly, and others drag their results out for months or years, being all but impossible to remove.

Which brings us to the business of removing curses. Many cursed items will either leave their curse with the victim when the item itself is put aside, or will not allow themselves to be removed physically from the victim's person. Both of the above effects can be undone by magic. The DM should consider exactly how to remove a given curse, as some would be subject to spells other than the basic *remove curse* dweomer. The following guide to the basic anti-curse magicks is offered.

*Remove curse* negates most malevolent items' effects, since they work similarly to the *bestow curse* spell (usually those items that produce a direct change in the victim or have bound themselves to his person).

*Dispel magic* is a more general anti-magic, less likely to work against a curse. It does work well against many items that do not directly ensorcell the victim, such as a *rope of constriction*, and it may dispel the lingering effects of items already removed.

*Exorcism* frees the mind of charms, possession, and similar forms of magical control.

*Atonement* sometimes negates mind-related curses, usually those involving alignment or such transgressions as greed (consider the *jewel of attacks*).

*Restoration* undoes shock or weakness to the mind and spirit — level drains, insanity, confusion, or memory loss — but not actual charms.

*Heal* cures many physical injuries, and also some mental ones as well, although it is not as reliable as *restoration*. (Other cure spells, specific or general, may sometimes give a reprieve from physical curses, but they rarely remove the item itself.)

*Dispel evil/good* works only against curses originating from the lower/upper outer planes, and only against curses cast by relatively low-level items.

*Wish*, *limited wish*, and *alter reality* will undo just about any curse effects, except those cast by certain artifacts and by all beings of demigod level or above.

Some curses may require a certain spell to be cast by a high-level caster, a level-vs.-level roll (as per *dispel magic*), or several spells cast in unison or consecutively. In the last case, the wish-related spells will act as any combination of spells with a total of seven spell levels (nine for the full *wish*), even if the caster does not know which ones are needed. Occasionally, curses call for an unexpected spell, because they were designed to work in roundabout ways to baffle any would-be removers — such as a cursed item granting *vulnerability in combat* that requires *exorcism* rather than *remove curse*, because it works by making one dodge slightly into the blow (acting as possession).

### Destroying magical items

Call me biased, but I believe magic items should be very hard to destroy. A great deal of time and effort went into building a magical cloak or belt. Is it likely that such things could be finished off by a flask of oil and a spark? Protective spells should be a basic part of the enchantment process, and the more power an item has, the harder it should be to destroy. I suspect that lesser items of cloth, wood, or crystal should be about as durable as bronze or steel, while items of greater hardness and durability (including most weapons and armor) might require dragon's breath or an 18th-level *fireball* to damage them.

A powerful item can generate no end of scenario ideas. Such an item could be destroyed by using the forces that helped create it against it (tossing it into the forge it was made in, or seeking out its maker to have him reverse the enchantments) or by exposing it to a greater force with opposing powers (smiting fire-related items with the magical sword of the ruler of frost giants, or touching a soul-stealing rod to the altar of the Hidden Temple of Light). Some items might retain their magic if they were incompletely destroyed, and may be remade with powers intact if the pieces can be gathered. □

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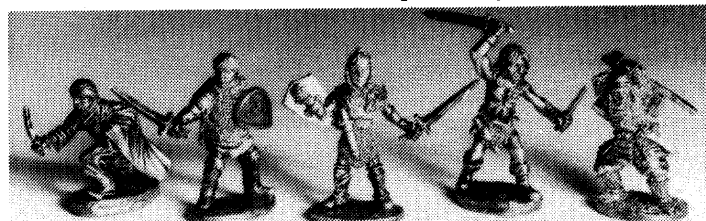
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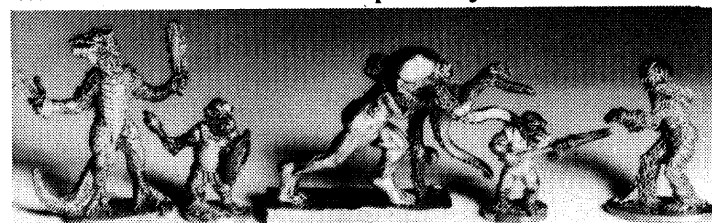
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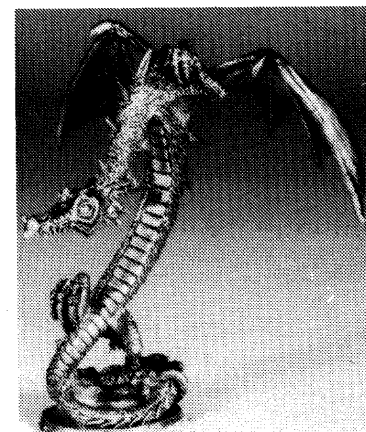
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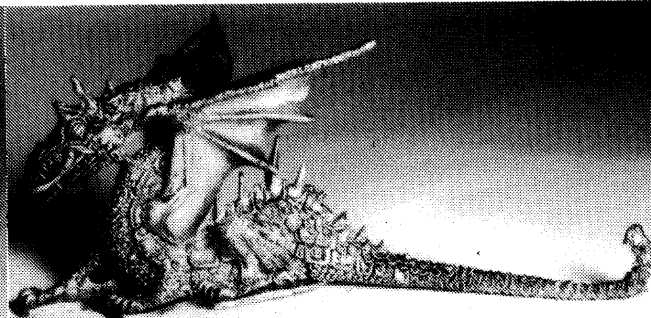
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# Detailing a fantasy world

## After mapping comes mixing and fixing

by Jim Dutton

President, Entertainment Concepts Inc.

Last month, the first article in this series described how to organize a campaign from the very first stages. (*Editor's note: See "Blueprint for a big game," DRAGON® issue #97.*) Although a lot of what you go through in creating the framework of the campaign is enjoyable, creative work, it is not nearly so much fun as the more detailed work that is the next step in filling out your fantasy world.

The point at which we resume the discussion is at the completion of mapping your campaign world. You should make sure you have the room and terrain needed for all the elements you want to include in your campaign. By this time, you may have made up a rough history for your world, constructed cities, and made a rough determination of how larger political divisions will be placed in the world. You may also have made some notes to yourself about the personalities, classes, and levels of some of the leaders and their circles of powerful associates.

Now is a good time to make some more detailed decisions about the politics and alignments of broad areas in your world. (I recommend getting a loose-leaf notebook to keep one page of notes for each of the political areas you are about to work on. Organization is all-important!) When doing this, remember that one of the goals in creating your campaign is to provide plenty of variety for the player characters to experience. If every quest they undertake involves a villain of the same personality type or alignment, the players of those characters will eventually begin to lose interest in your campaign. Therefore, as you develop the countries, empires, and city states in your campaign, make sure that many grades and differences in alignment from one area to another are built-in.

As you are developing the political views of leaders in your campaign, decide which could eventually become targets for your PCs' adventures and which ones will provide havens and support for the adventurers. Of course, this element of the campaign is not one for low-level characters, since they rarely start out meddling in the affairs of heads of state. Even so, now is the easiest time, in terms of organizing your campaign, to make these decisions. As the PCs gradually grow stronger and they start looking for certain types of rulers to become involved with, you'll know exactly where they should look!

It is all too easy to turn these haven communities into places where characters can rest without fear of unexpected trouble and

with the certainty that they can always find help or support there — but you should resist the temptation. These types of areas sound very inviting to a harried group of adventurers, but after a short time, they will also become *boring!* The safe haven, the court of unquestioning support, will become a crutch that players and their characters will soon take for granted, much to the detriment of the campaign.

### Villains and heroes

You may have a chaotic evil ruler in one area of your campaign whose society makes widespread use of slavery and gladiatorial arenas. He routinely uses his army to cruelly put down any expressions of discontent with his rule. You might have a lawful evil ruler who imposes strict and cruel laws and taxes on his subjects, penalizing them for even the smallest of infractions. These types of bad-guy rulers are easy to make up in a campaign, and the reasons for quests to eventually develop to depose them and end their reigns are obvious and plentiful. But, if your campaign is composed of *only* these types of adversaries for their characters to encounter, players will quickly get tired of asking, "Okay, which downtrodden populace are we going to save this time?"

How can you make villains and other adversaries more interesting, less stereotyped, more challenging, and less predictable? One good idea, not used often enough in fiction or AD&D® game campaigns, is the *noble villain*. The noble villain has a goal which is diametrically opposed to that of the characters, but he is a *good guy*, no question about it! How can this be? Maybe he is misguided. Possibly, he has been strongly convinced by someone he trusts that one of the characters or their allies is a villain who must be disposed of through capture or combat. He is so convinced of this that normal attempts at persuading him through conversation will never change his mind. This noble villain, and any helpers he employs, will be on an ongoing quest to eliminate their enemies — much to the player characters' dismay.

Another variation on this theme is the villain with a grudge against a character or a character's ally, based on some childhood prank or unintentional slight. This device is much more common than the first, but still underused in campaign settings. A third variation might be the rival questor. The characters may have undertaken a quest in behalf of a sponsor to retrieve or accomplish something unique which is vital to the well-

being of the sponsor or his subjects. In the course of the adventure, the players run across an NPC party hired by a rival sponsor for the same purpose. Again, the adversaries may be very nice people, but the party still must overcome them. Accomplishing their goals and dealing with their adversaries at the same time becomes a ticklish problem.

Noble villains are easily set up as heads of state. The possibilities for two heads of state to both be good guys and still at odds over some issue are myriad, and such are well documented in our own histories. In fact, in many cases, the adversary involved could be a rival in one adventure and an ally in another in which he and the player characters had no cross purposes. The same ideas can be carried through into the development of less important NPCs that the players will more frequently encounter.

Of course, you do want to have some *bad* villains in the campaign as well — personalities whose deeds cry out to be righted by the player characters. However, these bad villains have no inherent need to be stereotyped. You can make surprisingly strong and interesting personalities out of this type of foe by giving each one his own codes of honor which he will always follow. Other methods of spicing up such NPCs include making them highly personable and charismatic so that the characters are tempted to like them despite their reported deeds, or having them do something very laudable now and then so that the characters begin to gain admiration for their foe, even though they are basically against him. When you are using these methods to develop NPCs with positions of power within the campaign, make their personalities as complete as you can.

Even the good guys can be made much more interesting by establishing more than one dimension to their personalities. Some examples of this might include a sickly benefactor whose court physicians won't always let the characters in to see him, no matter how badly they need to do so. You might have a king with a terrible temper who throws the characters out of his throne room when he is mad at someone else entirely. Then, there is the ruler who sponsors the characters on quests, but consistently fails to tell them all of the dangers involved — a commonly used device. Yet another kind of perplexing benefactor is the one who always drives a hard bargain with the PCs, offering them valuable assistance in return for dangerous services or long-term loyalties

that will make them think twice before accepting the aid he offers. Here again, the element of unpredictability will keep some mystery in the game for players, and that certainly helps to maintain their interest in and enjoyment of the campaign.

Finally, the neutral countries and their leaders must be considered. Neutral (neither good nor evil) leaders may help the characters at times, but if the situation in which the characters are involved is too controversial or dangerous, they will usually be very reluctant to get involved. On the other hand, you could have a ruler who normally might be willing to help the characters and deal with them, but who will occasionally see such a potential profit for himself in the situation that he and his forces will actually become rivals of the player characters!

Druid-governed lands are also an interesting addition to campaigns, and they would naturally be neutral lands. Although druidic societies might normally stay neutral in the struggles between other nations, the effort to sway them to support one side or another in a dispute between other nations or factions can add volumes of mystery and intrigue to your campaign.

#### Non-human countries

One important part of establishing the political structure and leaders in your campaign is the establishment of homelands and nations for the demi-human races used in

the AD&D game. You'll first need to decide just how populated with demi-humans your world will be. For example, in the **WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ Fantasy Game Setting**, there are areas where demi-humans are commonly and widely intermixed with the human population. In these cases, the *Gazetteer* gives the percentages of human and demi-human populations in each area. It's a good idea to have at least one such area of racial intermingling in every campaign. This gives you a place to start player characters in groups composed of diverse racial types.

However, this still doesn't answer any questions about demi-human homelands. The AD&D game is designed for campaign worlds where humans are the dominant player-character race, so this seems to suggest that demi-human homelands are best limited in number and size. Not only is this approach consistent with the AD&D system, but it is also consistent with the bulk of popular fantasy fiction. This is for good reason. Demi-humans are special beings with distinctive and fanciful skills and abilities. Making them a dime a dozen cheapens their value to the campaign (or to a fiction story) as a source of mystery and wonder.

And let's not forget humanoids and intelligent monster races. Strategic placement of societies of these elements of the game is important to creating campaign-wide conflicts in which the player characters will eventually become involved. Dotting the

map with a few tribes of orcs and goblins gives you plenty of latitude in creating trouble for the characters to clear up whenever you need something to occupy them, and it also gives a random encounter with these creatures some logical basis. However, there's no need to try to pre-locate every camp or lair for every type of intelligent monster. Just decide which ones you wish to be the most common in your campaign and which would likely have complete civilizations of their own.

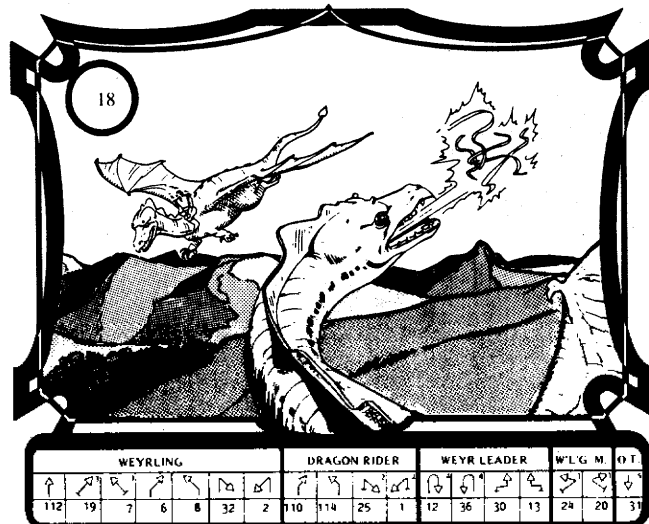
#### Detailing cultures

When you have finished with the development of a major element of your campaign, take a few minutes to stop and review what you've just done. In this case, you would want to make sure that the nations and city states you've set up in the world will provide plenty of variety for the players, and that the leaders are of a variety of personalities and represent only a limited number of stereotypes. You'll want to make sure that you have provided homelands for all the demi-human races and placed monster civilizations in the campaign to stir up some trouble.

Now you've got a complete map. You know where your political divisions are and something about what each nation or city-state is like. Before you move away from work on world politics, you should consider individualizing cultures.

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this article, you've been making notes about each of your creations on a separate sheet of notebook paper. Go back to each one of those sheets and decide on several customs or laws for each society, city, or country that will make that area unique and interesting. This gives characters a continuing challenge each time they enter a new area of the world — something that's legal and proper on one side of a border may be just the opposite on the other side. Customs and laws often differ from area to area on such subjects as proper dress, protocol when dealing with certain members of society, curfews, the carrying of arms, acceptable behavior during local holidays, differences in language, what deities are worshiped, how taxes are collected, local rules of chivalry, and so forth.

Broad lifestyles of the populace of an area of your world fall into this category. In plains areas, you may create nomadic cultures that follow animal herds for their food. In desert areas, you might have small societies clinging to oases, constantly battling each other for larger shares of the meager, life-sustaining resources available. The opportunity also exists in campaigns to recreate other interesting cultures that you might find on Earth, such as Polynesian ones. Of course, a culture that you make up uniquely for your campaign, if carefully thought out, will provide more interest for players than exotic cultures copied from real life. Some examples might be tree dwellers

who live in a forest with trees of immense height, or cultures based on some unique terrain feature such as an extensive area of hot springs or an area of land that is flooded for half the year.

Taking the time to note these unique customs and allowing the characters to experience them will add a wealth of interest to the campaign. At the same time that you're developing cultures, you can make some notes about how well each nation or city-state gets along with its neighbors, and if there is rivalry, just what the points of contention are between them. These notes will serve you well as the campaign progresses and as you find the need to start wars of armies or espionage that will involve the players' characters.

### The Talaran campaign

What approach did we take with these areas in developing the AD&D™ Play by Mail Game? First, as stated above, we took care to give the Talaran campaign a wide variety of alignments, government types, and personalities in its political divisions. Many of the major cities in the most heavily populated area operate as a loose confederation of city-states. They cooperate under normal circumstances, but are not above competing for reasons of need or greed. We've also provided aboriginal cultures with different languages, and a strongly knit empire at a location remote from the starting areas of the PCs. The empire men-

tioned also has a different language. The theme of our campaign history called for a rather young human society derived from a common set of colonists, so we've put some limitations on the variety in the player characters' starting areas. We've placed a good amount of the "action" in areas that the player characters will have to travel to, and the majority of these new areas will be shrouded in mystery until the players experience and deal with those areas.

Our demi-human homelands were placed in remote areas, and their influence in terms of area controlled is not nearly as great as that of the humans. The demi-humans in the Talaran campaign are old races that were present through several failed attempts by humans to tame and civilize the continent. They are not presented as vital, motivated elements of the world population, even though certain individuals within the respective demi-human cultures (i.e., player characters and certain NPCs) are exceptions. It is often the view of fantasy literature that demi-human races will help adventurers on certain quests, although they are somewhat picky about who they help to do what and when. We will be following this view in the Talaran campaign, giving players a chance to lobby for powerful or unusual aid when they need it. But there is always the chance, on any long journey to demi-human homelands, that their requests will be rejected.

Our approach to humanoid cultures is slightly different from the possibilities presented in the general approach discussed above. Rather than having large nations of humanoids, we've located them in individual settlements and as wandering tribes. As the campaign begins, they will not present a strong, unified political force to existing human and demi-human nations, but they may combine to establish such a political force as the campaign progresses. Of course, the individual goals and accomplishments of the characters in the Talaran campaign will have a great deal to do with how this element of the game progresses.

We have also done a great deal of work individualizing each society, noting differences of language, culture, architecture, principal economic base, form of government, ethical philosophy, and several other things. Player characters are given information about the city they begin play in; after that, they must learn about other areas.

All the above covers quite a bit of ground, but it won't necessarily take a lot of time and effort to accomplish. Of course, the time required to complete the political aspect of your campaign grows with the volume of detail you decide to develop for each of the areas of your political world, and with the size of your campaign world. But, if you only take the minimum steps suggested herein, and if you aren't building a 1,000,000 square-mile campaign like we did for Talaran, then an evening or two of thought and jotting down notes should suffice to create this colorful aspect of your AD&D® game campaign.

II

**KALI:** An American super-villainess with a background in crime and mysticism. She is wanted and has a long criminal record.

Identity: Sheena Grey      Age: 20  
Side: Evil      Level: 1

**Powers:**

1. Heightened Expertise: Martial arts, +4 to hit
2. Special Weapon: Power-chuks, HTH +3 to hit, +1d6 damage, carries a Power Blast
3. Heightened Defense: -4 to be hit

**Other Weaponry:**

- 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  
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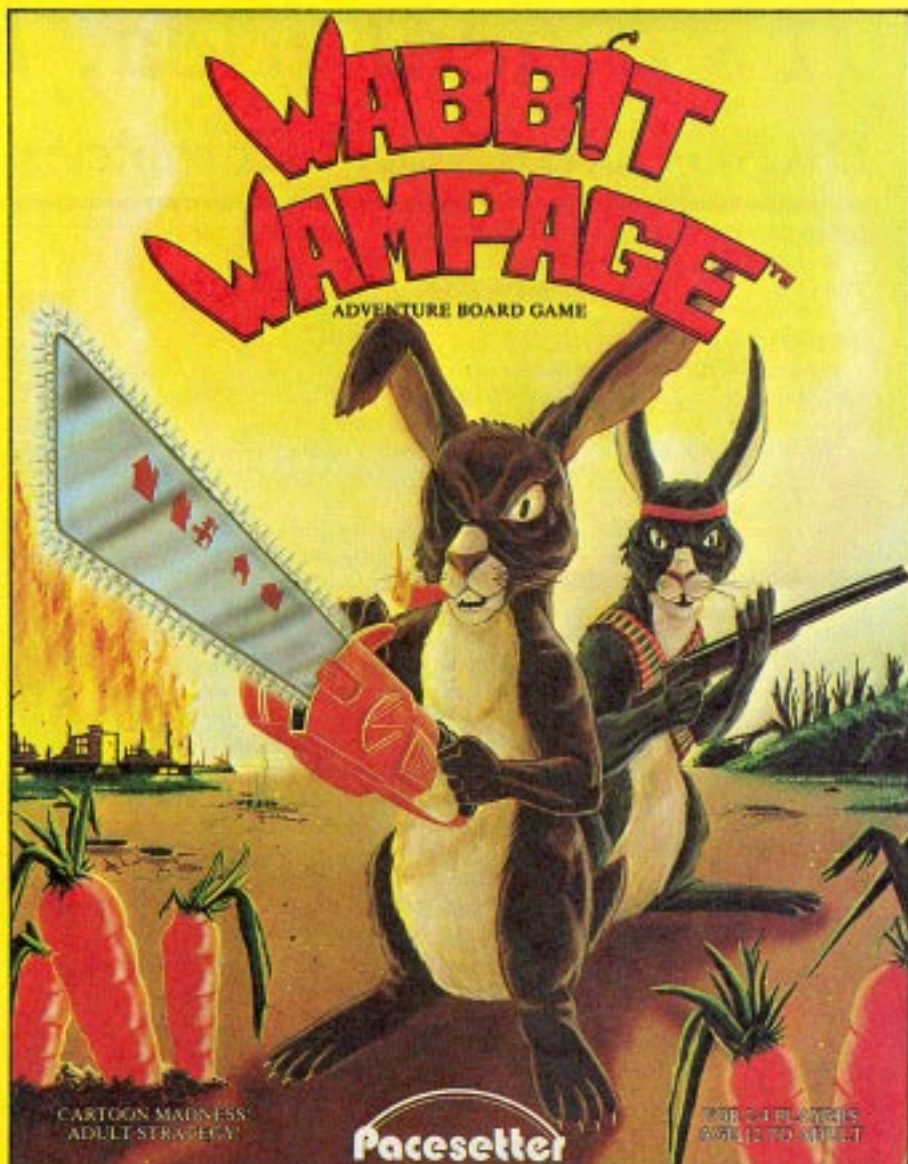
● *Play Farmer Brown.* Stomp the rabid rabbits right back into their holes. Hire a handyman with a blowtorch, call the hare-hungry hunters with shotguns, even send out the dog with a chainsaw. . .

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# *It's a neat idea, but. . .*

## DRAGONLANCE™ Chronicles Vol. I and II

### **DRAGONS OF AUTUMN TWILIGHT**

Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman  
TSR, Inc. 0-88038-173-6 \$2.95

### **DRAGONS OF WINTER NIGHT**

Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman  
TSR, Inc. 0-88038-174-4 \$3.50

"It's a neat idea, but it's just a gimmick. It can't possibly be any good." That's the instinctive reaction to the *DRAGONLANCE™ Chronicles*.

That casual observation, however, is wrong on two of three counts. True, the books are a neat idea, but tying the series to AD&D® concepts is more than simply a gimmick, and both of the trilogy's first two volumes prove to be very good reading.

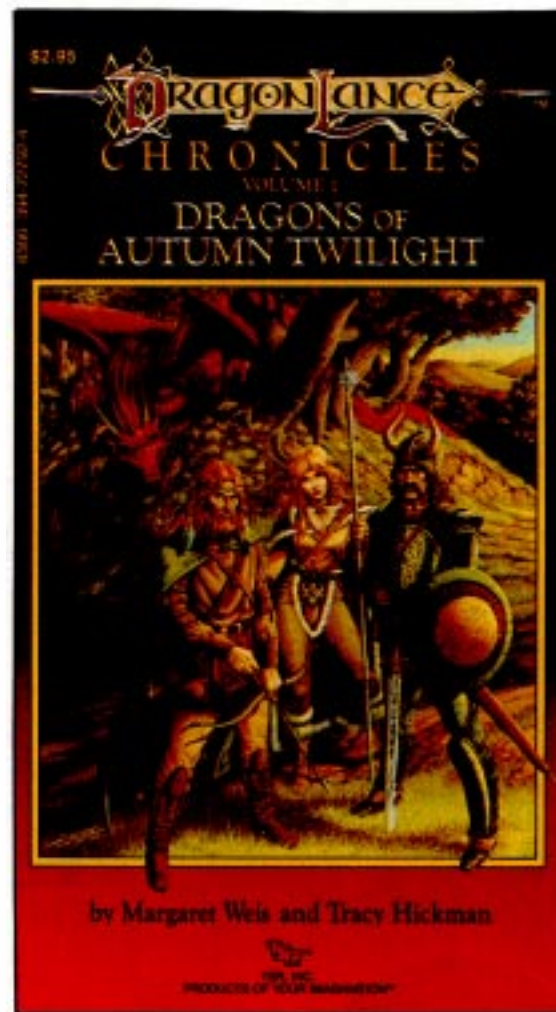
Making that statement and explaining it properly, though, are two different matters entirely. To begin with, reviewing two-thirds of any trilogy is a tricky business. There's the question of whether you're discussing two books, a single entity, or a portion of a work-in-progress. There's the problem of providing enough details about the plot without giving away secrets left unrevealed in the first volume. Then, there's always the risk that whatever you conclude will be proven completely erroneous when the third book appears.

Reviewing two-thirds of the *Dragonlance Chronicles* is even trickier. They are, after all, fantasy novels based on a role-playing game which was itself inspired by fantasy novels, and, at first glance, the middle link in that chain seems superfluous. Besides, the idea of basing a series of novels on AD&D game adventure modules sounds more like a suggestion from a high-powered merchandising strategist than an idea for an artistically inspired literary work.

Their origins aside, the trilogy's first two volumes are fiendishly difficult to consider as a unit. *Dragons of Autumn Twilight*, which begins the *Chronicles*, is essentially complete in itself. Its successor, *Dragons of Winter Night*, leaves several crucial plot threads deliberately untied as it concludes, presumably so they can be woven together in the final book. The two novels also employ distinctly different storytelling styles, a fact partly dictated by the second tale's wider-ranging plot. And yet, since both books are set in the same world and feature the same central characters, they share the rich atmosphere and texture of those carefully developed creations.

One point is very quickly made clear in both volumes: The world of Krynn is definitely a part of the AD&D multiverse, in which the game's concepts and restrictions govern the behavior of men, nature, and magic. In particular, authors Weis and Hickman have emphasized this last fact, documenting the mechanics of magic as well as its effects. Some spells have material components, wizards must restudy their books daily, and the narrative is sprinkled with incantations and command words in what is referred to (perhaps once or twice too often) as "the strange spidery language of magic." In addition, spells do occasionally misfire — one memorable incident in the first book involves a dramatically unsuccessful attempt to invoke a *feather fall* enchantment.

The unique temperaments of the various demi-human races are also kept firmly in focus. As *Dragons of Winter Night* opens, company leader Tanis Half-Elven is intensely uncomfortable as a result of having spent too much time underground. His dwarven hosts, by contrast, are in fairly high spirits. Weis and Hickman do especially well in illustrating the carefree attitudes of the halfling-like kender, who have little concern for personal property and consider a family heirloom "anything remaining in a house longer than three weeks."



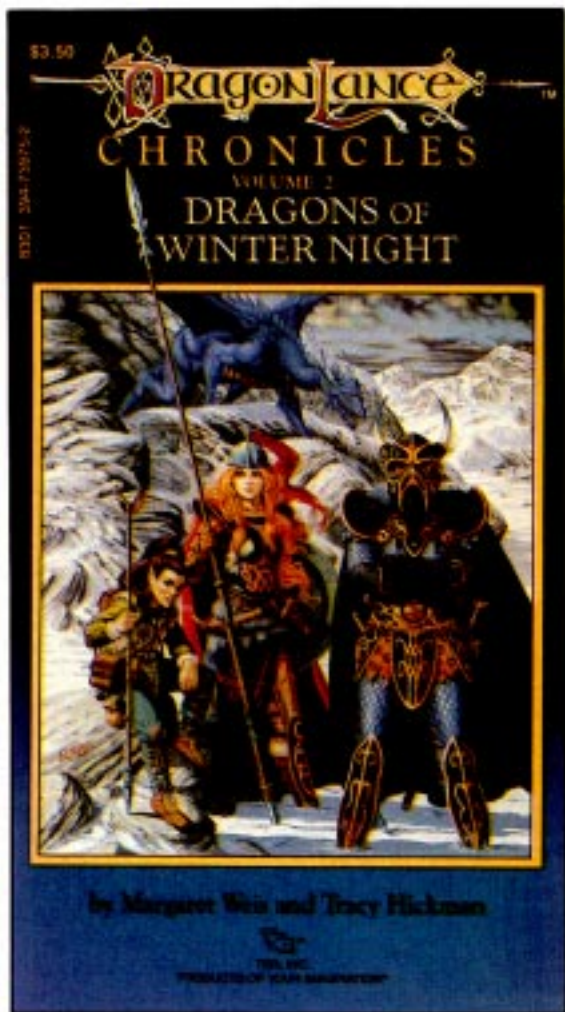
They are less successful, however, in giving an even-handed portrait of gnome society; instead, the glimpse of gnomish culture we get in *Dragons of Winter Night* seems to exist mostly for the purpose of providing comic relief.

But, perhaps what is most distinctly gamelike about these tales is their intricate attention to the interplay between the members of the adventuring band which dominates the narrative. The effect is most apparent during rapid-tire action and combat sequences, in which party members must both tight their own battles and work as a cohesive unit, but this effect can also be felt in lighter scenes and more thoughtful discussions. The *Dragonlance* books, in short, present a superb example of an adventuring party at work. It's possible to step back from the events unfolding around the characters and view the books as guides for gamers interested in seeking a glimpse of how AD&D games ought to be played. Readers who are also players in the DRAGONLANCE™ game modules may have an especially good chance to benefit from these insights, though they



# ... *NOT* just a gimmick

Reviewed by John C. Bunnell



generally won't learn enough from the books to control the outcome of their own adventures.

It's in making the transition from modules to novels that the two books begin to diverge from each other. *Dragons of Autumn Twilight* makes the jump smoothly and ingeniously by shifting from the necessarily plot-oriented, module-presentation style to an almost completely character-oriented focus. There is virtually no pure exposition in the introductory volume. While descriptions are by no means absent, they are typically brief and nearly always given through the eyes of a character rather than through those of a narrator or referee. A side effect of this approach is that plot developments and events unfold at a brisk, constant pace. Adventurers never stop simply to watch a scene go by; they're involved every step of the way.

Weis and Hickman are able to pull off this stylistic feat largely because their heroes remain more or less side by side throughout the tale. The story opens as members of a long-divided fellowship of

adventurers reunite at an inn. Among the party's members are Tanis Half-Elven, who is struggling to reconcile the two halves of his heritage; Tasslehoff Burrfoot, a lively kender whose innocent manner conceals a variety of skills; Sturm Brightblade, member of a rigidly governed order of knights whose reputation has declined in the recent past; and Raistlin, a wizard prematurely aged by the ordeal that has given him much of his power.

Increased in numbers after meeting two refugees from a dying tribal culture, the party discovers that a bizarre race of draconians is plotting to enslave the world, a goal made all too possible by the fact that true gods have not been known in Krynn for many years. *Dragon of Autumn Twilight* chronicles the quest that leads to a very dramatic discovery: Both dragons and gods are reappearing in the world.

*Dragons of Winter Night* begins as the heroes — and the various free cities and demi-human realms of Krynn — start to react to the crisis. The central characters scatter in several different directions on various missions, and readers begin to appreciate the larger political and cultural conflicts that threaten the known world. For example, there are three separate races of elves on Krynn who exist in a tense state of cold war. The Knights of Solamnia are a powerful political force, but they are torn by internal power struggles. And the tactically important free city of Tarsis has succumbed to draconians because its rulers distrust the Knights.

As a result, the tight attention to character viewpoints is strongly diluted in *Dragons of Winter Night*, and there is instead a definite narrator's presence throughout. Further, a number of episodes occur offstage, so to speak, and are reported either by the narrator or by characters themselves after the fact. In some cases, these offstage adventures are left largely untold, which has the effect of disrupting the novel's pacing and leaving readers uncertain as to the relative importance of the bypassed incidents in the larger framework of the trilogy. (For instance, the recovery of one of the dragon orbs is chronicled only in a poem, and much of the time characters spend in the mysterious Foghaven Vale is passed over completely.)

Yet, there is also power in the trilogy's second volume, for in broadening the scope of the tale and dividing the central characters, Weis and Hickman have added depth to the personalities of several of the heroes and heroines. Where *Dragons of Autumn Twilight* concerns itself chiefly with Tanis's psychological conflicts, its successor provides insights into the struggles of nearly all the major players. Even the usually carefree and unflappable Tasslehoff doesn't escape being tested.

Stylistic differences aside, both books are absorbing and sometimes thought-provoking reading, enhanced considerably by their artistic presentation. Though the maps in both volumes show visible signs of having been designed for hexagonal grids, they are clear and helpful. The illustrations that begin each chapter are a welcome plus for which artist Denis Beauvais deservedly gets title-page credit. Also worthy of note is the unusual and meticulously crafted poetry sprinkled throughout; Michael Williams does an exceptional job of writing in poetic forms practiced today only by a very few.

In the final analysis, the *Dragonlance Chronicles* — or, at least the first two-thirds of them — are without doubt a great deal better than many readers are likely to expect, and they are good enough to stand alongside much of the material available from the field's more established publishers. More than that is hard to assess. While the books make no real effort to transcend the boundaries of the fantasy genre, they do represent energetic new growth from some of its oldest traditions. ■

# Knowing what's in store

## Read this before your PCs' next buying spree

by Dave Rosene

In a scenario I was DMing recently, one of the characters strolled into the local blacksmith shop to have a little repair work done. To his surprise, he became the object of a seemingly unprovoked attack by the owner of the establishment. Luckily for him, his opponent was not very bright and he was able to escape in one piece. Luckily for me, he did not decide to stand his ground and fight with whatever was available. I had little idea of what was inside the shop other than a forge, a hammer and an anvil. To avoid being caught in a similar situation in the future, I did some research on four kinds of shops likely to be frequented by adventurers. Before examining any individual establishments, however, we should first go over a few points that may be so obvious that they are overlooked during the construction and stocking of a workshop or store.

Any business requires a certain population from which to draw its clientele. Those

customers must also be willing and able to pay for the service the craftsman is offering. There is the possibility of exporting, but not always at prices competitive with those of local craftsmen. As a rule (to which there are always exceptions), shops located in larger centers of population will have a greater stock on hand, will produce higher-quality goods, and will tend to be more specialized. In cities and sometimes even on a regional basis, craft guilds maintain certain quality standards and price levels. A guild member found guilty of either manufacturing substandard products or of over- or under-pricing could be stripped of his guild membership. He would then be unable to practice his craft within the area encompassed by that guild without risking the guild's retaliation.

Most shops have some features in common. If the shop is actually a structure, and not a booth in a bazaar (a possibility not to be overlooked), there will be items found in

any household: lamps, candles, oil, a sharpening stone, rags, etc. Some material components for spells may also be found in places other than those specializing in such items. A craftsman may unknowingly have a much-needed component on hand which can be acquired at little or no expense.

However, the craftsman's workshop is not a supermarket. If a smith caters to the farmers in his area, he is not likely to carry a large selection of swords. Near a castle a smithy would be occupied with the manufacture and repair of weapons or hardware for the castle. Wealthy residents of a city would demand ornate items that were less utilitarian.

All but the richest craftsmen live behind, above, or at best next door to their shops. This is partly a matter of convenience, since they often put in long hours and usually work six days a week. Some or all of their apprentices also live either in the shop or in their master's home. On the whole, the craftsman is a hard-working, respected member of the community.

Remember, the existence and features of any business must be dictated by the economic, political and cultural environment in order to maintain a believable campaign. In the following sections we will browse four shops, seeing them through the eyes of an elven adventurer named Retgar. As we travel from one shop to another, put yourself alongside Retgar. Take in the atmosphere. What do you see, hear, smell, and feel? Keep these impressions in mind when designing shops of your own. Following each description is a short passage listing accessory items that are typically found in that kind of shop. (Keep in mind, though, that not every shop will contain every item listed.) Items denoted by an "S" can be used as material components for spells. It should be possible for an adventurer, stripped of virtually all his wealth and possessions, to reoutfit himself in a rudimentary fashion by visiting shops such as these.

### The anvil's ring

The sun had not yet set as Retgar reached the last ridge. Clinging to the base of the foothills was the harbor city of Stonepoint. Here he would find a smith to put a new edge on his sword. But he decided that the task could wait until morning, since he had no desire to spend the night in a city controlled by the overlord Zagus, who had put a price-on Retgar's head.

At sunrise the next morning, Retgar entered the dusty, winding streets. He fol-

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lowed the ringing of iron on iron until his eyes picked out a weathered wood-frame building at the far end of the street, adorned with a faded sign in the shape of an anvil. Smoke drifted up from the rough stone chimney and settled around the shop. His horse snorted at the smell of burning charcoal as they reached the open double doors. Sunlight streamed past them, quickly losing its intensity in the hazy interior. Each strike of the hammer bounced tiny bits of fiery metal off the heavy leather apron worn by the muscular smith. Retgar hailed him during a momentary lapse in the rhythmic clanging on the anvil and showed him his badly notched sword. The smith examined the blade, quickly determining that a new edge was needed, and slid it into the hot coals of the forge.

"We have few enough of you elves in town. So I'm sure you're not from these parts. What news have you from lands beyond?" As Retgar recounted some recent events of which he had knowledge, he let his eyes become accustomed to the dim light in the room and examined his surroundings.

Opposite the door was a stone forge in which charcoal glowed like a red sunset. Through an open back door a young boy entered carrying a bucket of charcoal he had taken from a pile visible just outside. He added a shovelful to the forge, carefully arranging it with a long poker. Once satisfied, he pulled down on the handle of the leather bellows, sending sparks dancing up the chimney. Retgar felt the sweat beading on his forehead as the smith interrupted the elf's discourse.

"Wesson, do not make it breathe as a dragon or you will destroy the temper." While the smith explained the boy's mistake, Retgar leaned against the heavy planked workbench and surveyed the implements scattered across the surface. There were punches and chisels of various sizes

and swages to mold the iron into shapes such as rods and spikes. The square shaft on the base of a swage was made to fit into a square hole in the face of the anvil. As the hot iron was held on the swage, it was hammered into whatever shape was cut into the surface. What's the name of that hole in the anvil, thought Retgar. . . . Of course — a hardie hole. And somewhere there had to be a wide chisel with a square shank. The chisel, or hardie, was inverted with its handle in the hole. Then, heated iron was cut by laying it across the upturned edge and striking it with a hammer.

And there was certainly no shortage of hammers in the shop. Nearly two dozen, each weighing anywhere from a couple of pounds to over thirty pounds, lay on and around the workbench. Several of these were unusual in that the handles were more crude; the heads were flatter and not as well balanced. One of them, lying next to the hardie (chisel) that he had located, had a corrugated face. This was not a hammer but a fuller. It was struck with a hammer to help flatten a piece of metal. The other "hammers" were called flatters and were used in much the same way. Retgar lifted one of the flatters. Noting that it had a concave face, he looked about for the armorer's anvil with which this was used. He spotted the large, convex-faced anvil across the room. A loud hissing brought his attention back to the smith, who had just placed a piece of hot metal into a half-barrel filled with brine. This slack tub was used to cool and temper the metal that was being worked.

"Excuse the interruption. You were saying something of the trouble Duke Earlin was having with his half-brother," said the smith.

As Retgar resumed his monologue, the smith's hammer started clanging on the anvil again, this time to put a new edge on

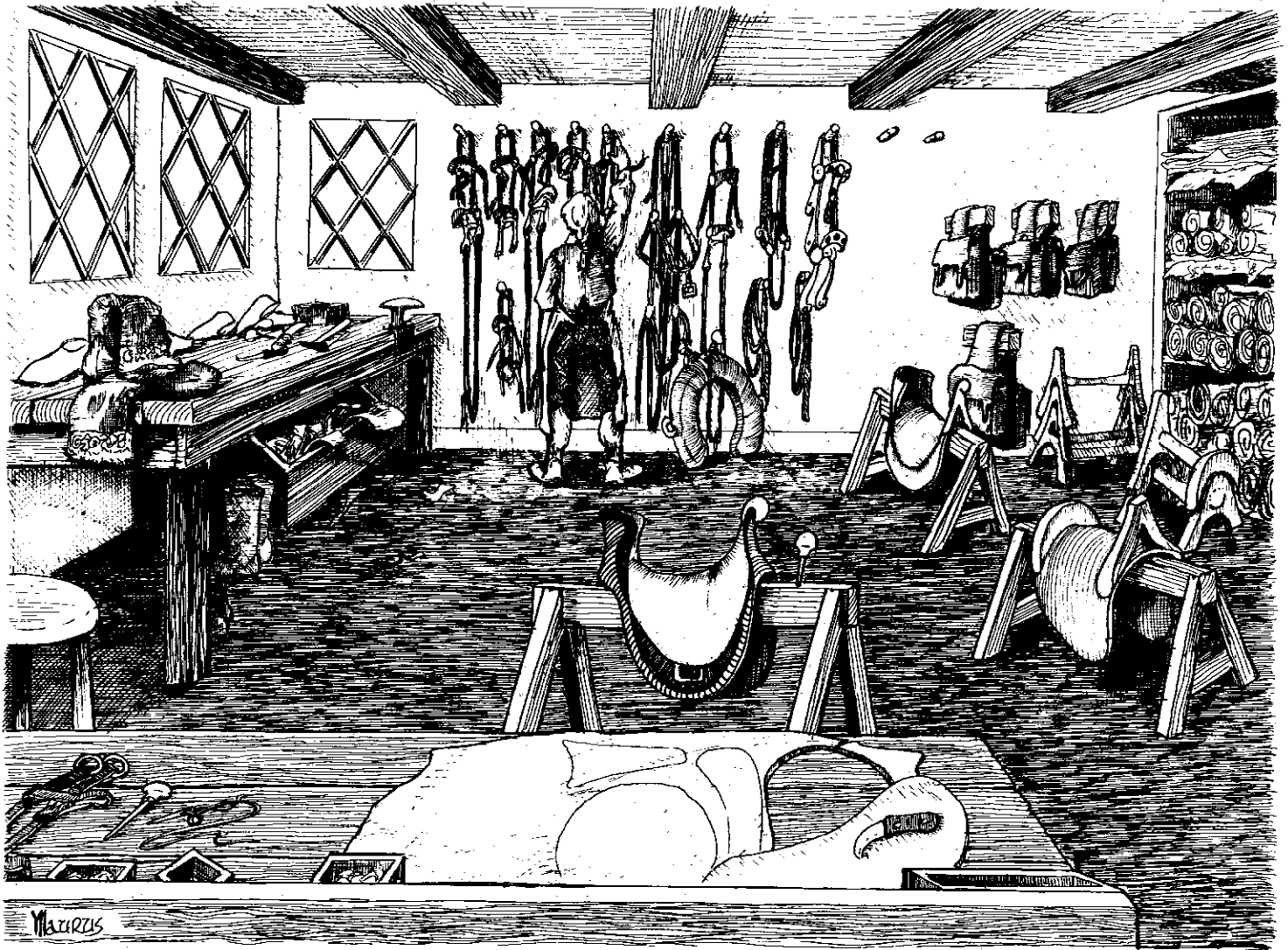
Retgar's sword. As the elf talked between hammer-blows, he wandered across the rough stone floor and poked about in a rusting pile of broken weapons and farm tools. From these, the resourceful smith would craft new items. No one would have guessed that the tools and weapons hanging on the wall had once been pieces of scrap from this pile.

Retgar finished his discourse at about the same time as the refurbished sword made its final dip in the slack tub. The elf examined the blade's new edge, noting that it would need an hour or so with the sharpening stone, and returned the sword to the sheath at his side. As he paid the smith for his services, Retgar decided that his purse was much too light for his future needs. Perhaps he would make a stop at the silversmith's shop before he left town.

Any small town would have its blacksmith shop. If two or more shops are present in a large town, each of them would probably specialize in some aspect(s) of smith work. These special occupations include farrier (horses), wireworker (chain-mail), cutler (edged implements), and armorer (only a few of whom are also able to make barding).

Items of interest for game purposes: charcoal (S), hammer ( $\frac{1}{2}$  to 40 lbs.; depending on weight, some may be usable as warhammers at -1) long tongs (adds three feet to reach), chisel (useful on locks in lieu of thief), anvil (50 to 200 lbs. weight), shovel, hole punch, file, sharpening stone, any fabricated items in stock (90% of items in scrap pile are useless), small pieces of iron (S), soot (S), powdered iron (S), powdered brass (only if the smith is specialized in ornate work; S), small nails (S), sheet iron (S), iron filings (S), pieces of steel (S), brazier (used as a portable forge in a market; S), and pieces of tin (S).





### Bent for leather

The wooden, saddle-shaped sign that hung above the door to the two-story wood-frame building indicated even to the illiterate that this was a saddle shop. For Retgar, the sign was unnecessary; from three doors away he had been beckoned by the smell of freshly cut leather. He stood in the open doorway for a moment, taking in the aroma. The shop was well lighted from the many windows on all four walls of the spacious room. To the left of the door stood a large worktable. Here an apprentice was using a curved knife to cut out the pieces of a saddle previously marked on the leather. There were knives, hammers and charcoal pencils along the back of the bench as well as half a dozen small bins. These contained rings, buckles and rivets needed for saddles and harnesses. Another young man at the far end of the bench was stitching a ring onto a bridle.

In the center of the hard-packed earthen floor an older man bent over a saddle that was resting on a wooden sawhorse. The man, whom Retgar assumed to be the master of the shop, was fastening a silver buckle on the elaborate saddle. More saddles in various stages of completion were stacked on other sawhorses. Along the back wall hung bridles, harnesses, and other tack as well as saddlebags. In one of the far

corners were large shelves well-stocked with uncut pieces of leather. A neat pile of wooden saddletrees used as the framework for saddles was on the floor beside the shelves.

Retgar selected the largest set of saddlebags he could see and slung them over his shoulder. Turning, he noticed a worktable at one end of the room. It was not until Retgar took an interest in this worktable that the saddler approached him.

"I can see that you appreciate good craftsmanship," said the softspoken man as Retgar picked up one of the boots on the table. The inside was lined with doeskin. The outside had an intricate design tooled just below the rabbitskin that formed the upper edge. "The saddles I make to earn a living. These I make for the pleasure it gives me."

Spread out on the table were knives, needles, heavy linen thread, beeswax and a small hammer, all laid within easy reach of the lasting jack mounted to the workbench. A little wooden box on the back of the bench held tiny nails that were used to fasten heels on boots. To hold the pieces of other shoes together, linen thread or leather strips were used.

Across the back of the bench were half a dozen wooden foot molds in various sizes. If you didn't have the money for custom-fitted

shoes (and most people did not), then the smallest of these sizes that fit comfortably would have to do. Small pieces of soft leather, rabbitskin, doeskin, and fleece were kept in a bin below the bench to be used for linings in boots and shoes.

Trying on a good-looking pair of boots, Retgar was pleased to find that they fit. After paying for his purchases, he slid his old boots into the saddlebags and tossed them up behind his saddle. Now, it was on to replenish his nearly empty purse.

Leather workers in a city will be specialized as saddlers, harnessmakers, bootmakers, armorers, and cobblers. Small towns will probably not have a leather worker or will share one with a neighboring village.

Items of interest for game purposes: lasting jack (small anvil weighing about live lbs.), leather, skins, finished leather goods, hammers (too small to be effective weapons), hole punches, knives (most are usable as a dagger at -1), rivets, small nails (particularly treacherous to barefoot opponents; S), metal rings and buckles, beeswax (adds body to ointments), fish oils (or other oils for waterproofing, also good as a base for ointments and as a lubricant), needles (S) and heavy thread (emergency first aid), metal studs (many uses, mainly for studded leather armor).

### The silver chalice

Retgar had no difficulty finding the silversmith's shop. The two-story building was constructed of grey cut stone. In the wall facing the street was a single barred window that could be shuttered and an iron-bound oak door. Over the door hung a silver-colored sign shaped like a goblet at the base of which was printed, "The Silver Chalice." The mark and initials on the sign were identical to those on the base of the chalice he carried in his pack. Retgar stepped from the busy street and opened the heavy wooden door.

Inside was a small, tidy room sparsely furnished to display the items for sale. Across the back wall were shelves lined with cups, candlesticks, pitchers, vases, bowls, platters, and various utensils. Most of the items were made of silver, although a few were gold or had gilded edges. A finely crafted wooden table stood in front of the shelves. At the table sat a young man etching a design on a bowl. Retgar showed him the chalice he had brought and was directed through a door in the side wall.

The pleasant coolness of the front room disappeared as soon as Retgar entered the workshop, which seemed to take up the rest of the building. Sunlight shone through the barred windows, forming banded patterns of light on the flagstone floor. Despite the open windows, the room was uncomfortably warm and smelled of hot metal. The source of the heat was a small forge or furnace with an open hearth next to it. Both were attached to a bellows on which a young boy pulled in a slow, even rhythm. A tarnished

metal hood channeled the smoke from the open hearth into the brick chimney. The furnace was also made of brick and had cast iron doors. A tall man sweating heavily took an urn from the furnace with a pair of long-handled tongs and placed it on a grate under the metal hood. He then slid another urn into the furnace and closed the door. With a long-handled ladle he dipped the hot, shimmering liquid from the first crock and poured it into a wooden mold which was set on the workbench behind him.

The workbench was one of many, each of which had a lit oil lamp suspended over it. All of the benches were cluttered with tools. There were nearly a dozen men of various ages etching, engraving or hammering designs into articles made of silver. The noise of this activity was exceeded only by the din of the blacksmith's hammer and the hawkers in the bazaar. Over the noise Retgar heard a deep voice ask, "Can I be of some assistance?" The question came from a slightly plump middle-aged man seated at a workbench at the far side of the room. He appeared to be the man in charge of the numerous artisans.

Retgar wove his way between the tables and workers. As he reached the master's table, the silversmith was dipping the goblet he had been engraving into a weak solution of sulfuric acid or "pickle" to give it a final cleaning. The goblet had the same hallmark and initials on the base as the chalice that Retgar unwrapped and set before his host. The almost imperceptible twinkle in the smith's eyes told Retgar he would get a higher price here than at any other shop.

They finished their transaction, and Retgar stepped back into the busy street, tucking his now-full purse beneath his tunic. He had one more stop to make outside of town, and he wanted to hurry because the sun would be setting soon.

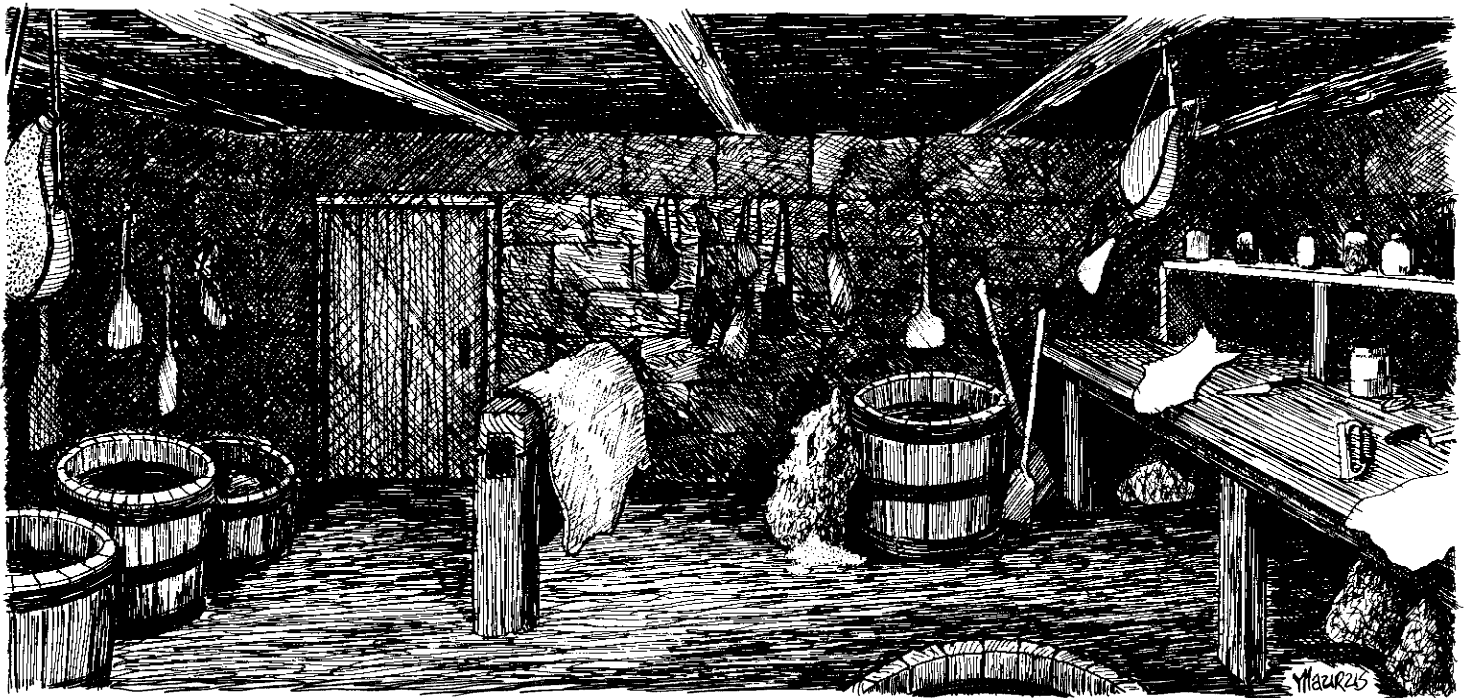
The value of most silver items was in the silver itself, so items were often melted down and recrafted. A whitesmith (one who works any metal other than iron) could normally work with any of the precious metals but would usually concentrate on one. Smiths often would specialize in chasing, engraving or embossing. A whitesmith would seldom be found outside a city.

Items of interest for game purposes: small hammers (most under ½ lb.), acid (one vial will do one point of damage to exposed flesh or will corrode cloth and similar materials), charcoal (improvised blackface; S), soot (S), powdered brass (S), powdered silver (S), brazier (S), small engraving tools (might double as crude thieves' tools), shovel, long-handled dipper (useful for testing unknown liquids at arm's length), scraps or sheets of precious metals, and finished items. Some specific spell components that can be manufactured by a silversmith include: a small silver horn, a tiny silver whistle, a small silver rod, and a miniature platinum sword.

### The tanner's hide

Retgar stepped easily from stone to stone as he crossed the stream. Plants growing at the water's edge dangled their brown, withered leaves in its bubbling surface, which was poisoned by tanning wastes from up-





stream. He paused long enough to assure himself that no surprises awaited him at the grey stone building cradled in the side of the hill. The skins and hides stretched on frames beside the door revealed this as the home of Sandler the tanner. The salted hides had been brought out from the back room deep within the hillside, where they had been stored since last fall. As Retgar pushed open the low wooden door, a cool rush of air assaulted his face, bearing with it an overpowering smell of leather and vinegar. After crossing the threshold, he waited for his eyes to adjust to the dimness.

The tanner was nowhere to be seen, but Retgar knew he wouldn't be far away. Then he heard the sounds of movement outside the shop, and realized that Sandler was nearby. Keeping one eye on the outside door, Retgar moved around the interior of the room and took note of what he saw.

Scattered around the room were barrels and tubs of tanning solutions. Some hides were soaked for months, being shifted to progressively stronger solutions until the process was complete. Retgar crossed to the long table at one end of the room. He poked around curiously at the strangely shaped knives with his dagger. Most were toothed or had dulled edges to avoid cutting the hide when scraping off hair or flesh. Some were even made of wood for more tender skins like those of rabbits. Above the table was a shelf of jars holding crushed herbs to dye the leather. On the floor at the far end of the table was a barrel of vinegar, a neutralizer for the lime used to remove hair. Salt spilled on the dirt floor from a large sack propped against the vinegar.

Picking up one of many long-handled stirring paddles, Retgar raised a piece of leather from the tannic acid and let it slip back into the dark bath. Turning, he brushed against a group of leather flasks hanging on the wall. He didn't need to uncork them to know that at least one of the

flasks held fish oil used to waterproof leather. Undoubtedly there were other oils in the remaining skins that were less aromatic. Stepping around the smooth horizontal beam over which leather was draped while being worked, he pushed open the door to the back room. The air was cool and heavy with the stench of salt-cured hides that had been stored here awaiting tanning. Retgar slipped inside, closed the door, and glanced quickly about the room. Just then, the sound of approaching horses caused Retgar to flatten against the wall and strain his ears to catch any conversation from outside. He heard enough to know that the troops were employed by Zagus, and they were questioning Sandler the tanner to find out if he had seen Retgar traveling toward the city. In fact, Retgar had entered the city and already left it; by arriving in the area one day earlier than he had been expected to, Retgar had helped to insure his own continued safety.

When the sound of the men and horses had again faded into the distance, the tanner came inside and resumed working on the leather hung over the wooden beam. Retgar slipped out of the back room, silently stepped up behind Sandler, and pressed his dagger against the tanner's throat. He whispered, "You would have sold me to Zagus just as if I were one of your skins. But now, I want the bulette hide that you have concealed here. I paid for that hide with my own blood — and unless you want the captain of the guard to find you stretched and curing on one of your own racks, I suggest you deliver what is mine."

"Zagus will be most displeased," said the tanner weakly.

"His emotions are not my concern," growled Retgar. "I can guarantee your fate if you do not do as I tell you."

A little more pressure with the sharpened steel soon had the tanner outside digging through the pile of leaves and bark he had

collected to make tannic acid. He finally unearthed a package wrapped in leather. As Retgar opened the bundle, the grayish-blue scales glistened in the now fading sunlight.

"The workmanship is as fine as you had promised, although the service is less than desirable. Since I am a man of honor, unlike some of those you deal with, here is the payment I promised," said Retgar.

He tossed a bag of coins at the tanner's feet, turned, and was soon lost in the growing darkness. He was one step closer to an armored vest that would be the envy of every other adventurer he knew — and he was still one step ahead of the revenge of Zagus.

Tanneries are located near water and outside of town due to the foul odors they produce. A cool storage area is usually necessary to hold skins until a sufficient quantity is obtained to begin tanning.

Items of interest for game purposes: coarse salt (application to an open wound loosens a prisoner's tongue; S), barrels, brushes, fish oil (masks scents), other oils and fats (good base for ointments), dyes (can darken or lighten hair or skin; S), beeswax (good lubricant), vinegar (astringent), lime (helps neutralize acids; S), knives (only a few useful as weapons), tannic acid (not strong enough to do damage, but will discolor skin), pitch (S), grain alcohol (S), bark chips (S), and pieces of uncut leather and skins.

The preceding descriptions are intended as a guide for fleshing out similar shops in your campaign. Each establishment is unique and reflects not only its political, cultural, and economic environment, but also the tastes and habits of the owner.

The services offered by a craftsman need not be handed to player characters on a silver platter. Shopping can be as much an adventure as any other part of a campaign. □



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# Auctions aren't forbidding

## Who and what to expect

by Tim Stabosz

Many gamers have attended conventions without getting involved in one of the most enjoyable and economical activities that can be found at such a gathering — the gaming auction. It is an enjoyable and economical event because one can save big bucks on his gaming needs while sharing in the comradeship and competitive atmosphere of this age-old activity.

### What it's all about

A gaming auction is, simply, an established forum for people to sell their games and accessories that they no longer want. Obviously, there are people who do want these items, and that's where the bidding process comes into the picture.

In most gaming auctions nowadays, bidders (people who wish to buy auctioned items) are given a card to fill out with various information such as their name, address, phone number, and sometimes even their driver's license number. After this card is filled out, the auction house (sponsoring body of the auction) will give the bidder another card with a number written on it. This card is used by the bidder to identify himself when he tries to purchase something. When the auction house brings up an item to be auctioned, the auctioneer states the minimum acceptable bid, which is the lowest amount of money that the person who is selling that item will accept. At this point, anyone who is willing to pay the minimum bid puts his card up. If no one puts his card up, then the item is not sold; if one person puts his card up, he has agreed to buy the item at the minimum bid; and if more than one person raises his card, the auctioneer begins to increase the price of the item (usually in increments of less than a dollar, although this can vary depending on the minimum bid and the number of bidders who are interested in the item). When a person with his card up feels that a price has become too high for him, he takes his card down, thereby withdrawing from the bidding process. The price-raising continues until only one person has his card up. This is the high bidder, who has agreed to pay the price that the auctioneer last stated.

If you want to sell items, the organization conducting the auction will have you fill out some kind of form for each item. On this form, you write down your name, the name of the item, a description of the item, and the minimum amount of money you will accept as a sale price. This form is then taped or in some way affixed to the item. Generally, if your item sells, most auction houses will keep 10-20% of the selling price. (Be sure you know what this percentage is before putting something up for sale, and take it into account when deciding the minimum price you will accept.) If your

merchandise does not sell, in most cases you get the item back with no fee charged.

The policies of auctioneers and auction houses may vary to some extent from what is described above. Do not bid or put items up for sale until you are fully aware of the specific bidding and selling terms of that particular auction.

### Some tips for bidding

The best thing to do when an item that you want comes up for sale is to immediately ask yourself the maximum price that you would be willing to pay for that item. Then, if the price goes higher than this amount, immediately lower your card. In general, you should avoid the temptation of bidding more than you were originally willing to pay. Of course, there will be exceptions to this, such as when the bidding gets down to you and only one other person and it looks like you might be able to get what you want by going a little higher than you had planned to. But be careful not to do this too often, or you'll end up regretting a purchase even if it was something you really wanted. If you're fortunate enough to be the only bidder left, and the price is no higher than your maximum figure, then you just bought what you were after.

Some no-no's of bidding include fanning yourself with your card and (in the process) accidentally buying something you didn't want or can't afford. Don't throw dirty looks at the people who are bidding against you; you're not going to intimidate anyone by scowling at them or making sour faces when they want the item just as much as you do. In fact, it is more likely that they will stay in the bidding longer because of your boorish activity. Finally, only bid on an item if you really want it; hardly anything bothers an experienced bidder more than people who hold their card up just for the sake of raising the price of an item.

### The competition

Three types of buyers are most prevalent at gaming auctions: the capitalist, the consumer, and the collector. An individual buyer may fall into more than one of these categories at the same time.

The easiest type of buyer to recognize is the capitalist. The only thing that interests the hard-core capitalist is making money. For example, if the auctioneer announces that the item currently up for bid retails for twenty dollars and that the minimum bid is fifty cents, the capitalist will bid on the item if he can get it this cheaply, and then he will try to resell it (perhaps at the next auction he attends) for a higher price than he paid for it. Some capitalists even bid up the price of their own items. This is possible because the auctioneer doesn't usually announce

who owns the item that is being bid on (although this information might be revealed in some cases, with the permission of the owner). But bidding on your own property can also be dangerous, because if you're not careful you could end up having to buy something that's already yours. (You don't actually "pay yourself," of course, but you do end up giving the auction house a free commission.) The purebred capitalist is not interested in using the item he has purchased. He's not happy or proud to own the item for what it is — he may never even open the box it comes in. All he cares about is the "investment potential" of the item, seeing it solely as a way of making some money for himself.

The collector is, in some respects, the opposite of the capitalist. He's not afraid to run up the price of something to an outrageous level so that he can add the item to his collection. Most of the time when fierce bidding occurs between two or more people, those people are collectors. One example of this that I witnessed at an auction involved a copy of the original edition of the D&D® game Module B3 put out by TSR, Inc. From a starting price of \$10, the item was bid up to a final price of more than \$300. The last two bidders were collectors who felt that they just *had* to have this extremely rare product to add to their collections. To a dedicated collector, this kind of money is not too much to pay to be "the only one on his block" to own a rare item.

Most of the people who attend gaming auctions are consumers — a general term for the "ordinary" folks who want to buy games for the sake of *playing* them — not as investments or as additions to their collections. They may go after items that are no longer for sale in stores, but aren't rare enough (yet, at least) to be *bonafide* collector's items. Or, they may bid on items that are still available in the marketplace, but which they can purchase as used merchandise for a price that's lower than the retail price. (It's certainly okay to be interested in "making money" in this way, even though you're not actually a capitalist.)

Some people may classify themselves as a combination of two or all three of these types, and that's certainly possible. Sometimes a bidder's motivation depends on the item that's up for auction — you may be interested in something for its possible investment value, something else as an addition to your collection, and something else simply for the sake of playing it. There's nothing that makes one kind of auction-goer more "right" or "wrong" than any other kind. All three types of buyers are likely to be present at any auction, and that fact is what makes a gaming auction such an interesting experience. □

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# The forum

I just read the Forum column of issue #96 and am impressed with the thoughtful insights offered by the author on the problems with "official rules." The publication of his letter clearly called for further comment from readers, so here are my thoughts on the subject.

It is absolutely true that several of the "official rules" are too unrealistic, unplayable, cumbersome, or, worst of all, simply not fun. As mentioned previously, the hand-to-hand combat rules published in the *Dungeon Masters Guide* are a good example of this.

There is no doubt that Mr. Gygas is a renowned authority on the game, and he deserves the title "Sorcerer." The game system that he put into print is simply awesome, and the vast majority of the rules are fine. The fact remains, however, that he is one individual, who, like the rest of us non-demi-humans, is prone to making mistakes as well as building better mousetraps.

Another example of a mistake in the rules is a portion of the "specialist rules" for fighters, which were published in an earlier "Sorcerer's Scroll" column. My group reviewed the "official" rules and dutifully incorporated them into a new campaign starting at first level.

The campaign started with TSR module N1, *The Cult of the Reptile God*, which I have DM'ed three times. That module is probably one of the most challenging products ever published by TSR, Inc., because it involves a variety of adventures in a town, outdoors, and a dungeon, and offers a terrific mystery. When we played it with the specialist rules, however, combat was a crashing bore. At the front of the party was an elfen bow specialist with a good strength and dexterity; anything that he shot at was slaughtered or maimed. The main villain of the module, who is supposed to be *tough*, died on the second or third arrow. (I don't recall which and it doesn't matter, because it was on the first round of melee anyway.) In short, the group was not challenged, because of the death-dealing elf who nailed any monster before it closed to engage in melee. It was simply an exercise of the elf shooting arrows, the party mopping up what little was left, and the looting afterwards.

As a result of this experience, we kept the specialist rules for *melee weapons only*. These rules are well thought out and Mr. Gygas should be given credit for dramatically improving the fighter class with a fun and playable rule change. The "official" bow specialist rules were discarded because they destroyed game balance. We *did* allow bow specialists, but under much different rules (+2 to hit, in addition to racial and dexterity bonuses, and +1 to damage per level of experience). This made the bow specialist a good character, but not so formidable a character as to eliminate the challenge of a good adventure. We sacrificed much of the realism of the "official rules," but did so in order to have fun.

Notably, I have not been to a convention where an "official" bow specialist was one of the pre-rolled characters, and I don't think anyone will ever see one in that setting. If you do, keep him close to the head of the party with an arrow nocked and a good line of fire, and you should have few problems with monsters.

The point is this: My group is no different from any other group. We are not so locked into "official rules" as to discard them when they do not work or when they detract from playing the game with fun. So what if we do not use all of the official rules? We are still playing the AD&D® game, not something else.

For that matter, I have been to several conventions and tournaments, and not once have all of the "official rules" been used in the conduct of a tournament. Even at the GEN CON® XV convention, when I participated in the "official" AD&D tournament, the rules on weapon speed were not used, even though there were several opportunities to use them. In another tournament at the same convention, the DMs used an initiative system very different from that in the *DMG*. Heresy, you say? The fact was that it made the action more realistic without sacrificing playability, and it gave further credit to the individual character's dexterity. We still use this system today.

I do agree that the *game system* should not be changed in ways involving *major rule* changes. It is a shame, however, that certain gaps and unworkable situations in the rules are left to linger for so long for those who want to play as "pure" as possible. Again, I do not know why excellent ideas promulgated in *DRAGON® Magazine* are not referred to Mr. Gygas (better yet, a committee; two or more heads are better than one) for the issuance of an official rule change.

This point is illustrated by the excellent article by Katharine Kerr in issue #96 on creating character histories. What an outstanding idea it would be to require every player to maintain a background history of his character, to include an account of how each magic item was obtained, plus certification by the DM that the story was authentic. Not only would this tend to make certain players more honest (you know who you are), it would alert a DM on the experiences of a new character to determine whether he/she fits into the milieu. More importantly, it would tend to encourage real role-playing, which is difficult for many players, particularly some of the younger players under 18. Best of all, such a rule would probably further the educational development of the younger players by encouraging them to write and to write well. In short, nothing but good could come of this.

The question here is why Ms. Kerr's article was not presented in the context of an official rule change requiring the writing of player histories, even though she did not advocate this as a rule. Specifically, why wasn't there at least some consideration given by someone to the thought of making such an "official" rule?

Some readers, I am sure, will disagree with the requirement that they write a history for each of their characters, but that is because I am one person with one opinion. (Maybe Ms. Kerr will make the count two.) The point is that as long as only one person with one opinion continues to have the final word on what is "official" and what is not, there will be flaws in the rules, and sometimes these flaws will be major ones. There must be some flexibility in adjusting to the improvement of the game as it becomes more fa-

mous. TSR, Inc., should recognize that other folks are capable of having good ideas, too, and that these ideas should be considered for the status of "official rules." In short, there can be no monopoly on creativity; just review a few issues of *DRAGON Magazine* and you will see what I mean.

In the meantime, all players and DMs will do what they have always done: "Official" rules that are poor will not be used no matter how official they are, and other rules will be used in their place to allow for a more enjoyable time at the gaming table. "Official" rules that are well thought out, playable, and, above all, fun will always be used. Having fun, after all, is what the AD&D game is all about.

Paul F. Culotta  
Snohomish, Wash.

\* \* \* \*

I would like to reply to Joseph Dombierer's letter to the Forum in issue #96, concerning rules, approximations, and the AD&D game system in general.

In his letter, after presenting an astounding string of past experiences, Mr. Dombierer concludes his treatise with the question: "Do people really use the 'nitty gritty' rules, or do they just 'guesstimate' a lot?" Well, since he so kindly asked the readers. . . .

In all my years of role-playing, one thing has become very clear to me concerning *Dungeon Masters*. A very good one runs a game with a complete knowledge of the rules, yet tempers play through intelligent estimations that allow events to retain their inertia.

Assuming that everyone participating in the game is honestly trying to prove their playing skills, a campaign of any merit will be very complex. It will have individual character histories, idiosyncrasies, and interactions. There will be detailed maps, intriguing current events, and important missions for the players to perform. So, if such a game is being run, how can one person, responsible for all this and keeping the players interested, active, and assertive, manage this without making any estimations? The answer is: He could not. No one is a perfect computer for whom such a plethora of statistics, numbers, and events would be child's play to monitor and compute. Even if arranged on charts for easy reference, this would be no easy task; basic combat alone requires a chart for each character class, so imagine the tower of paper required to run an entire game exactly by the rules! And what about the time involved?

For this reason, I think approximations and estimations are imperative, and common sense is more than essential. All too often, I have been in games where either the rules are strictly obeyed, almost totally disregarded, or where approximations were over-used. Imagine a DM roughly estimating your favorite paladin's "to hit" versus an evil lich, and getting things so incorrect that the situation becomes laughable!

The obvious answer to this dilemma, albeit a difficult one to achieve, is an equitable use of both rules and estimations. I use approximations and common sense to solve rule disputes, game discrepancies, and to expedite play. I use the rules to keep estimations within the confines of the game system. I use both to present an extremely interesting, exciting, and constantly moving game.

It has taken me over eight years to get to the point where I can estimate logically, without a significant loss in the AD&D game structure. Yet even I am not perfect, and still have a long way to go. For those who wish to start on the path to



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# The forum

this lofty goal, I recommend conservative play, where the DM thinks carefully before relating the consequences of the players' actions, using logic and estimation if logic and rules are not applicable. Accept player criticism, and use it to help your common sense solve game-related problems. I guarantee that your games will be more fascinating and consistent if the DM and players strive to use rules and estimations in a logical manner.

Richard W. Emerich  
New Canaan, Conn.

I would like to offer an answer to Joe Dornbier's letter to the Forum in #96. While I'm sure there are a number of people who will agree with me, there are probably the same number who won't.

From my experience in playing the D&D® and AD&D® games (approximately 9 years), I have found, in my opinion, that adherence to all of the guidelines as published is the most accepted and best method of play.

Granted, all the additions and changes do make things a trifle hard to keep up with, and one is tempted to change things a bit to make it easier, but I think I have some very good reasons not to do so.

1) *Differences in DMs*: When you have more than one DM in a playing group, there are always going to be some differences in opinion

and interpretation. But the situation worsens when, for example, DM #1 plays by the accepted guidelines, DM #2 utilizes double damage rolls for hits, and DM #3 uses a critical hit table either made up or taken from another fantasy game. When a situation like this occurs, DMs #1 and #2 (when acting as players under DM #3) will, in most cases, be at odds during game play and detract from the overall enjoyment of the other players. While different interpretations will and do exist, these add an enjoyable amount of flavor to each different campaign, if made with moderation and overall game balance in mind.

I have found that if one or more DMs play in a group that uses the guidelines as printed, there seems to be more cooperation. Unless hidden circumstances prevent it, the players help the current game master when combat or some other type of action gets particularly heavy. I once played in a group like this in which there were 2 DMs and 5 players. While one DM ran the scenario, the other was keeping track of time, thus relieving the game master of one tremendous burden. Players that fully understand the combat system outlined in the *DMG* also prove invaluable to smooth game play.

2) *Player's point of view*: In careers such as Joe's and mine, long-term settlement is out of the question, as the military requires us to move once, on the average, every three years. When we relocate, in most cases, a character brought from one campaign to another is not allowed to continue play. I quite understand not allowing a 32nd-level paladin join a party of 2nd-level adventurers, but that isn't the only reason used in a lot of cases.

I am more concerned with players who are afraid of using their characters in a new campaign because of critical hit tables or some other such nonsense that they are not expecting. If you've been playing an official AD&D game in one locale, then move and watch your character die in the first melee because of a critical hit, your reaction will probably be to walk out — mine would be.

If everyone used the official "guidelines," exclusive of any mutations, relocating would not be a terror but an opportunity to experience different campaigns and playing styles, without worrying about that 32nd-level ninja/cleric/magic-user dusting off your character.

3) *Tournament play*: I have been to only four fantasy role-playing tournaments featuring AD&D games. If you come from a group that plays AD&D games without other additives, you're not going to feel "inhibited" by the rules that are enforced by the better judges. I have noticed that the people whose only experience is from mutated games sometimes have a hard time adjusting to certain things, like a saving throw of 1 always being a miss no matter what the adjustments.

So, in a rather large nutshell, here is one answer your question. I encourage your efforts to play official AD&D games and would like to see feedback from other people on this issue.

Dennis E. Jones, Jr.  
Loring AFB, Me.

\* \* \* \*

I enjoy the articles written by Katharine Kerr. Her recent contribution, "What good PCs are made of," gave an excellent description of what it was like to grow up in a historic medieval society. However, such a description only partially applies to an AD&D medieval society. The reason is magic. The presence of magic makes growing up very different from Ms. Kerr's description.

(Turn to page 90)

## The World Gamers Guide

If you live outside the continental United States and Canada, you can be included in the World Gamers Guide by sending your name and full address, plus gaming preferences, to World Gamers Guide, *DRAGON*® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147 USA.

Abbreviations in parentheses after a name indicate games in which that person is especially interested:

AD = AD&D® game; DD = D&D® game; DQ = *DRAGONQUEST*™ 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; ST = *STAR TREK*™; The Role-Playing Game; T = *TRAVELLER*® game.

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Colin Andrews (DD)  
3 Alfred Sheat Street  
Richmond, Nelson  
New Zealand

W.J. Poulter (AD, DQ)  
35 Coronation Road  
Hellesdon,  
Norwich NR6 5HB  
Norfolk, England

Thomas Haas (AD)  
Am Forsthaus 30  
6078 Neu-Isenberg 2  
West Germany

Richard Holmstrom (AD,  
CC, GW)  
Regnbagsgatan 8B  
802 30 Gaule  
Sweden

Rainer Nagel  
Heinrich-von-Meissen-Str. 21  
6500 Mainz 42  
West Germany

David Baker (DD, AD)  
55-457 Moana St.  
Laie, Hawaii 96762

Adrianne Harris  
70 Thompsons Road  
Coffs Harbour 2450  
New South Wales  
Australia

Dewa Mann (AD,  
MSH, GW)  
142 Sublime Point Road  
Leura 2781  
New South Wales  
Australia

Robert E. Seutter (AD, GW)  
Fluor Arabia Ltd.  
P.O. Box 3241  
Damman 31471  
Saudi Arabia

Christian Raute (AD,  
SF, GW)  
Calle 126 A #24A-54  
Apt. 202  
Bogota, Colombia  
South America

Maya Matsudaira (MSH,  
AD)  
1915-23 Kamariya-Chu  
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Yokohama City, Japan

Peter K. Campbell (DD, AD)  
R. S. D. 40,  
Moriarty Road  
Latrobe 7307  
Tasmania, Australia

Timothy Steinberg (AD, SF)  
Einener Str. 60  
4410 Warendorf 31 Einen  
West Germany

Winfried Hohn (AD, TS)  
Seitzstr. 7  
6900 Heidelberg  
West Germany

Steven McKeown (DD, SF)  
4 Harbourview Flats  
Strand East  
Whakatane  
New Zealand

William Vernon (AD, CC)  
Avenida Sojo  
Residencias El Escorial  
1º piso, No. 12  
Urbanization El Rosal  
Caracas 1060 Venezuela

Jens Kruuse (AD, RQ T)  
Ericavej 170  
2820 Gentofte  
Denmark

Colin Heathcock (AD, TS)  
Berta Bratensvei 1  
1347 Hosle  
Norway

A. S. Bradford (AD, RQ)  
Am Raestruper Bahnhof 32  
4404 Telgte  
West Germany

Stu McNeilly (DD, SF, ST)  
17 Parkview Road  
Fairlight 2094  
Sydney, Australia

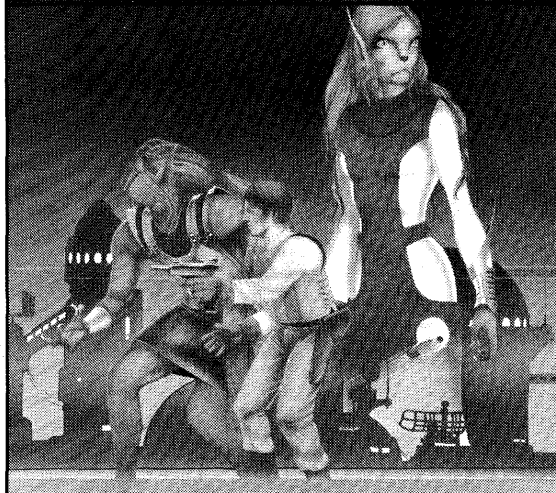


# Which Alien Is Dangerous?



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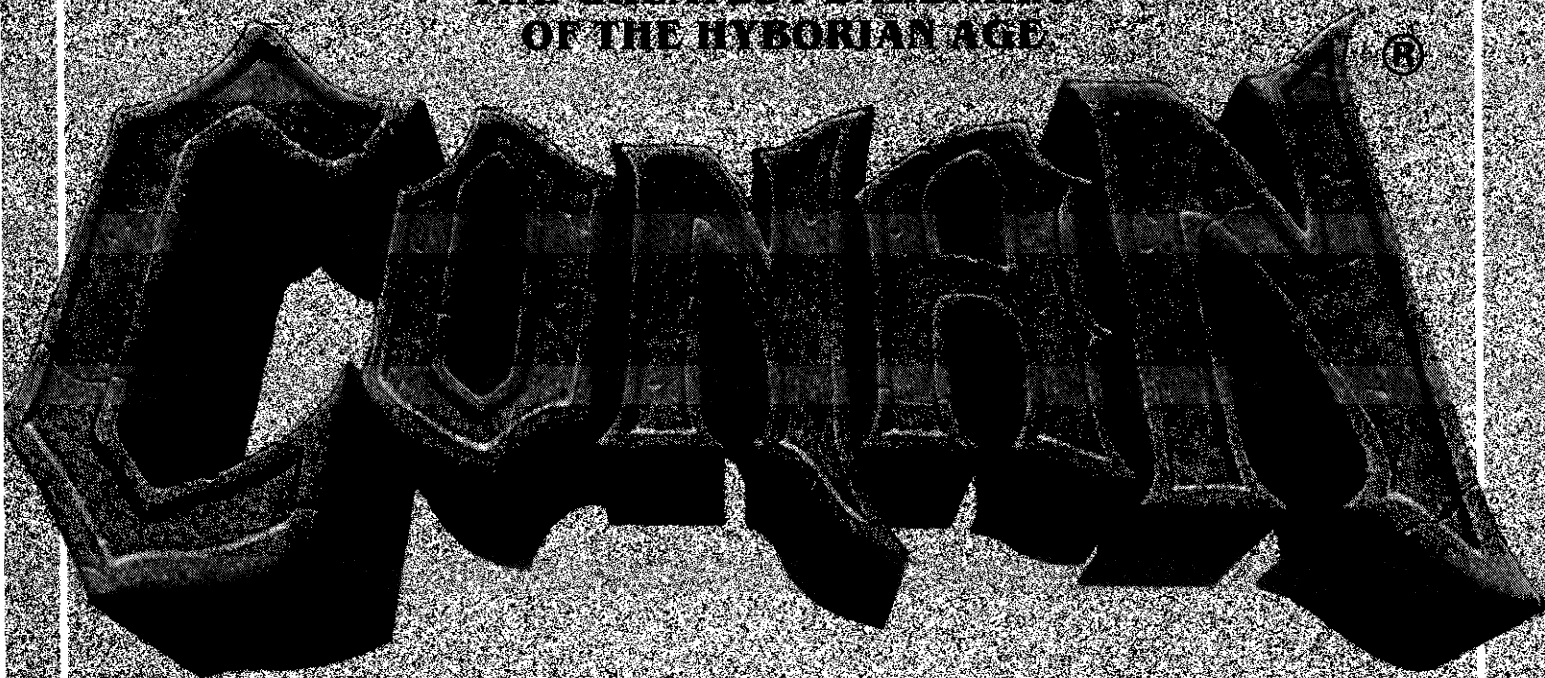
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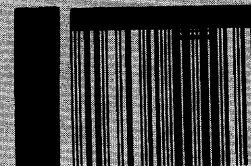
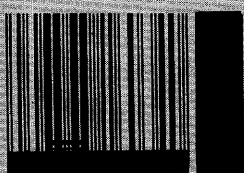
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# Mutant Manua



An ARES<sup>™</sup> Section  
**SPECIAL**



The GAMMA WORLD® game system presents a wide assortment of human and animal mutants for adventurers to encounter in the course of their travels. It is remarkably easy to create a mutant; the hard part is to create a mutant that's more than just a random collection of powers. A mutant should be logically developed and should have a special place in the world.

The GAMMA WORLD Mutant Manual is a collection of reader-created material which describes a number of new mutants that may be encountered in GAMMA WORLD game settings based in North America. These "monsters" represent the best of the submissions that the ARES™ Section has received, and we hope you enjoy using them as much as the authors enjoyed creating them.

If the game referee allows, players may use some of these creatures as player character races. However, some (like the aerosquid and spitter) will prove better as NPC or "monster" encounters. Referees should use common sense in working out these points.

Three previous articles describing new GAMMA WORLD mutants have appeared in DRAGON® Magazine, and they are still available in back issues. "Mutants, Men (?), and Machines" (issue #75) described the Hydragen, Radium, Cycloptron, Cyber-Netter, and Nitro-djinn. "Gamma Hazards" (issue #85) presented the Fungimal, Humbug, and Jungle Lurker. Finally, "A Field Guide to Lunar Mutants" (issue #87) described various mutant plants and macrobes at Tycho Center on the Moon.

The expanded format for mutant descriptions was derived from previous articles by John M. Maxstadt.

### Author acknowledgements

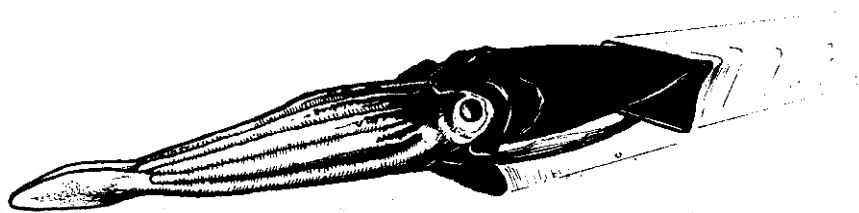
**Randy Johns** — Blade Whales, Hogarts, Mountain Men, and Sifoners

**Douglas A. Lent** — Garrels and Marloks

**John M. Maxstadt** — Aerosquids, Crusteans, Encroaches, Harmony Trees, and Juggernauts

**William Tracy** — Dracs, Flips, Howlers, and Jests

**James M. Ward** — Blaster Blossoms and Spitters



### Aeroscoids (Sky Walkers)

**NUMBER:** 1

**MORALE:** 10 (cannot be recruited or hired)

**HIT DICE:** 3d100

**ARMOR:** 3

**SIZE:** 25+ m long

**AIR SPEED:** 20/1500/30

**WATER SPEED:** 10/1000/30

**MS:** 1d6 + 6

**IN:** 1

**DX:** 1d10 + 5

**CH:** 1

**CN:** 1d6 + 15

**PS:** 4d20 + 80

**ATTACKS:** 2 tentacle slaps for 9d4 damage each; 8 tentacle grab-and-constricts for 3d6 damage each; and, 1 bite for 8d4 damage

**ORIGINAL STOCK:** Giant squid

**MUTATIONS:** *New body parts* (air-breathing organs), *physical reflection* (electromagnetic), *taller telekinetic flight* (improved)

**HABITAT:** See below

**DIET:** Large animals, humanoids, fish

**DESCRIPTION:** The aerosquid is an amphibious predator, equally formidable in or out of water. Its *telekinetic flight* ability is constant: it essentially swims through water and air with ease. An aerosquid does not need to return to the water except to mate, so it may be encountered over all sorts of terrain in all climates but the coldest, as well as in the ocean depths. It has no need to sleep, although it will rest after a large meal. The small and completely aquatic infant form of the aerosquid is exceedingly vulnerable, so the adults are happily rare.

A hungry aerosquid is an eating machine that will devour any form of animal life it can get its tentacles on. Two of its tentacles are very long and end in horny, paddle-shaped appendages 3 m in diameter. The others are shorter and lined with suction cups. The aerosquid will bat at creatures on the

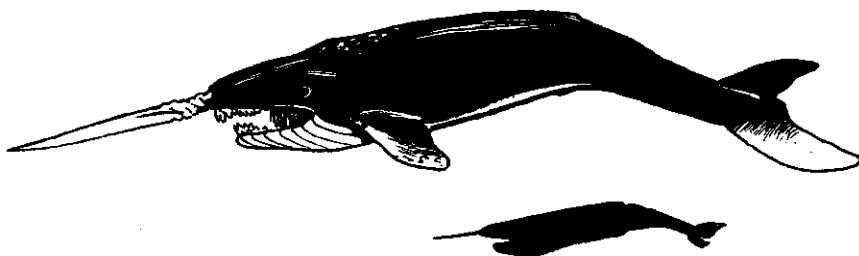
ground or in the air with the two longer tentacles while it grabs other creatures with the other eight. It can use only one tentacle per man-sized opponent, but all such targets are considered AC 10 (dexterity and size modifiers apply, however). Constriction damage does not begin until the action turn after a successful grab, and then only affects creatures not in plastic or metal armor or a *total carapace*.

Two action turns after the first successful grab, it will pull one victim (at random) to its mouth for a bite (at +4 to hit). It will continue to bite one victim until damage equals double the victim's hit-point total (i.e., the victim is dead and devoured). After that, it will bite another victim, if it has grabbed more than one. Constriction damage to a victim does not continue while the aerosquid is trying to bite that victim. Creatures weighing 800 kg or more can try to break free of a constricting tentacle by rolling their combined strength and dexterity or less on a doubled percentile roll. Each character may try this only twice (one attempt per action turn).

The aerosquid is a mollusk and has no brain as such, so it is immune to *empathy*, *telepathy*, *mental control*, *beguiling*, *confusion*, *mental blast*, and *mental paralysis*. On the other hand, it is stupid, so it can often be avoided by rudimentary camouflage or even simple immobility (80% and 30% chance respectively, modified by circumstances as the GM sees fit). It will also attack things it cannot eat, such as robots, androids, borgs, and vehicles in motion. To hold such an opponent requires one constricting tentacle per 50 kph maximum speed of the machine. The aerosquid will in any case throw away any machine (including a closed vehicle containing living organisms) after one bite.

Due to its size, an aerosquid surprises only on a 1, but it can only be surprised by flying creatures (or swimming creatures in the water). Such creatures will surprise on a 1-3, since the aerosquid's only functional sense is sight.





### Blade Whales (Rammers)

**NUMBER:** 1d4 - 2

**MORALE:** 1d6 + 2 (10 if fighting ships)

**HIT DICE:** 25d12

**ARMOR:** 4

**SIZE:** 30 m long

**WATER SPEED:** 27/800/36

**MS:** 1d6 + 10

**IN:** 3d6

**DX:** 1d8 + 3

**CH:** 1d6

**CN:** 1d10 + 11

**PS:** 2d20 + 80

**ATTACKS:** 1 bite for 10d4; or, 1 ram for 10d10 damage

**ORIGINAL STOCK:** Blue whale

**MUTATIONS:** *Force field generation, kinetic absorption, mental blast, new body parts* (carnivorous jaws and digestive system, bladelike horn)

**HABITAT:** Oceans of the world

**DIET:** Marine animals (see below)

**DESCRIPTION:** For centuries, mankind killed whales for his own needs or for sport. Though many people protested these killings, they continued until only the smartest and strongest whales survived. With the ecological warfare of A.D. 2321 and the "Apocalypse Week" holocaust of the following year, it was assumed that all great whales had finally become extinct.

However, the weapons used during the Social Wars had mutated the last remaining whales. The whales developed powerful mutations, particularly the huge bladelike horns that were able to split even the largest ships in half. Remembering the treatment their race suffered at the hands of human beings, the blade whales began attacking all surface and undersea shipping they could find. As often as not, any crewmen cast into the sea by a blade whale's attack would be eaten.

With the explosion of new mutated life in the oceans of the world, the blade whales have recovered their population and developed the roots of a world cul-

ture. They speak a complex ultrasonic language and are quite sociable. Once a year, blade whales gather in large herds to find mates and to discuss the activities of the "enemy" surface dwellers who threaten the seas. These large herds contain about 40-60 individuals and stay together about 2 weeks, after which males and females pair off and go their separate ways. Blade whales have no fixed lairs and prefer to roam the seas freely.

Prior to ramming a ship with its horn, a blade whale will activate its *force field* and have the force of the attack absorbed by its mutational protections. Damage equal to half the damage inflicted by the ramming blow will be inflicted on the blade whale. An injured whale will rarely continue an attack if the ship it struck has been destroyed or is sinking, though it may wait around to eat any survivors.

### Blaster Blossoms (Zappers)

**NUMBER:** 1d10

**MORALE:** 1d4

**HIT DICE:** 10d6

**ARMOR:** 7

**SIZE:** 2 m tall

**LAND SPEED:** Does not move

**MS:** 1d4

**IN:** 1

**DX:** 3d4

**CH:** 1

**CN:** 3d6

**PS:** 3d4

**ATTACKS:** See below

**ORIGINAL STOCK:** Orchid

**MUTATIONS:** *Spore cloud*, various mutational powers (see below)

**HABITAT:** Known only at Tycho Center, the Moon

**DIET:** Nutrients from soil or slain victims

**DESCRIPTION:** The few expeditions that have made it to the lunar surface and back tell dreadful tales of the

strange life forms that developed after the inhabitants of Tycho Center, the Moon's only manned base, were slain by disease. (See "A World Gone Mad," DRAGON® issue #86, and "A Field Guide To Lunar Mutants," DRAGON issue #87.) One of the mutant plants now found at Tycho Center is the so-called blaster blossom, a mutant orchid.

The blaster blossom is a reactive mutant, using its powers whenever it is touched. It has two attacks. The first is a *spore cloud* (treated as intensity 17 contact poison) that can slay victims with relative ease. This is fired whenever anything touches the blossom. The second attack is actually a series of random energy attacks, fired whenever any metallic object (such as a robot) touches the plant. In a random manner, it will use one of the following attacks (roll 1d4, one attack for one action turn):

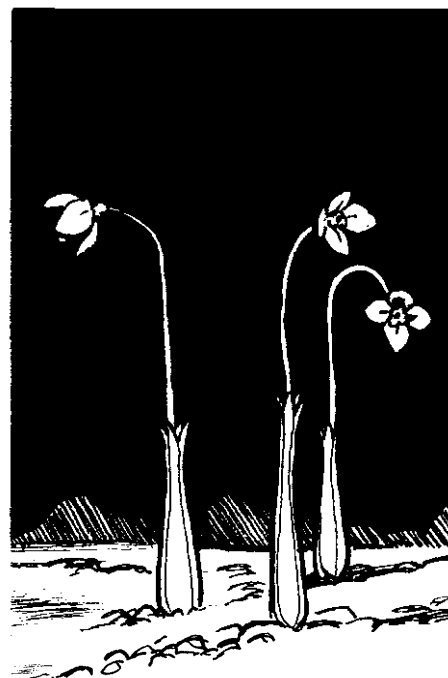
1) inflict 3d10 heat damage up to 3 m from the blossom's flower stalk, in the direction of the thing that touched it;

2) fire an electrical bolt doing 2d26 damage up to 10 m from the blossom's flower stalk, in the direction of the thing that touched it;

3) fire an energy-draining bolt that instantly reduces all power cells within 5 m of the blossom to half energy; or,

4) *energy negation* activated for 2-20 action turns, within a 15 m radius.

If the spores ever kill the creature who touched the plant, they will grow in the dead body and become 1-3 new blaster blossoms within three days.





## Crusteans (Crusty 'Uns)

**NUMBER:** 1

**MORALE:** 1d4 + 4

**HIT DICE:** 6d4

**ARMOR:** 6 (-2 to be hit due to size)

**SIZE:** 30 cm diameter

**LAND SPEED:** 1/250/5

**WATER SPEED:** 1/150/3

**MS:** 1d8 + 8

**IN:** 1d8 + 10

**DX:** 1d6 + 12

**CH:** 1d6

**CN:** 1d6 + 4

**PS:** 2d6 + 4

**ATTACKS:** 2 pincers for 1d6 damage each.

**ORIGINAL STOCK:** Coconut crab

**MUTATIONS:** *Heightened balance* (improved), *heightened taste*, *heightened strength*, *light wave manipulation* (limited), *new body parts* (speech and hearing organs), *symbiotic attachment* (limited), *thought imitation*.

**HABITAT:** Beaches, lake shores, deserts (particularly around oases), ruins, and occasionally populated cities in warm climates

**DIET:** Fruit and nuts (especially coconuts and palm-nuts), and even garbage in bad times

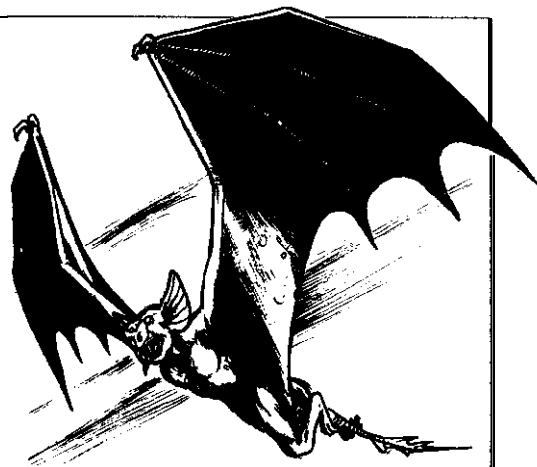
**DESCRIPTION:** These solitary, omnivorous scavengers can be encountered in a wide variety of places, as indicated above. In populated cities, they live around garbage dumps, their *heightened taste* enabling them to distinguish which leavings are safe to eat. They generally try to stay out of the way of bigger creatures, preferring to spend most of their time buried in sand or fine gravel with only their eyestalks exposed. When encountered, crusteans will be invisible unless surprised (on a 1 only).

Crusteans are both articulate and

intelligent. They have no natural enemies, and they are generally well-equipped to avoid encounters, but occasionally one will get lonely and take an opportunity to join a group of intelligent creatures for a time. Crusteans appreciate company and often enjoy helping strangers in distress, but their cranky, irascible nature often prevents them from expressing themselves properly. Even with long-time friends, a crustean's conversation will generally alternate between griping and sarcasm, especially when it is performing a kindness.

A crustean will automatically climb an opponent to find a spot that the opponent cannot conveniently reach (between the shoulder blades of a human, for example), and will attempt to pinch with both claws. If it hits, it will try to hold on until its *symbiotic attachment* takes effect (which does not begin until the round after the crustean is attached). It takes a physical strength of at least 12 to pull a crustean loose if one claw is attached, or at least 16 if both are attached. If a creature cannot grasp the crustean, it may try to knock it off. This requires a combat hit at -4 and a minimum physical strength as noted above. This all assumes that the crustean is attached in a highly inaccessible spot — a crustean will be very reluctant to attack a creature with no "back." A crustean forcibly removed from an opponent has a 50% chance of losing the claw or claws that were attached. It can regenerate these when it sheds its shell (see below), but not until at least a week has passed.

Crusteans can climb almost any vertical surface with great speed, even if the surface is moving (in the case of an opponent). However, the surface must have some cracks, crevices, or footholds in it. Crusteans' *light wave manipulation* has no effect on lasers or black ray guns. They must shed their shells once a month (sooner if they lose a claw), and will regrow new shells and claws in 8-13 days. They can only shed their shells underwater and are extremely vulnerable while doing so. They must also mate underwater. A crustean can hold its breath for a long time (4 hours), but it is not a water-breather and so will not be encountered in deep water. Crusteans have no interest in treasure and artifacts, although they understand other creatures' desire for them. A visible crustean looks like a brown-and-black mottled crab about the size of a derby hat, with long legs and very large, powerful claws.



## Dracs (Bat Folk)

**NUMBER:** 1d8

**MORALE:** 1d8 (see below)

**HIT DICE:** 6d6

**ARMOR:** 7

**SIZE:** 1.5 m tall

**AIR SPEED:** 14/900/18

**LAND SPEED:** 2/300/6

**MS:** 1d8 + 10

**IN:** 1d10 + 4

**DX:** 1d10 + 11

**CH:** 1d6 + 2

**CN:** 1d8 + 4

**PS:** 1d8 + 4

**ATTACKS:** 1 bite for 1d4 damage (see below); and, and 2 claws doing 1-2 damage each

**ORIGINAL STOCK:** Vampire-bat

**MUTATIONS:** *Beguiling*, *dark dependency*, *fear generation*, *infravision*, *intuition*, *new body parts* (hands and long legs), *regeneration*, *sonic blast*, *weather manipulation*

**HABITAT:** Underground caverns (in the daytime); roam freely at night

**DIET:** Mammalian (including human and humanoid) blood

**DESCRIPTION:** Dracs are mutant, humanoid-shaped bats, with hollow bones and wings allowing them to fly normally. Their hands form part of their wings, so they cannot grasp an item and fly at the same time.

At night dracs go in search of mammalian prey, locating it from the air and surrounding their victims with fog using *weather manipulation*. They will then use *infravision* to aim *sonic blasts* at their victims while staying out of reach. If cornered, they will use their *fear generation* talent to defend themselves. They will flee rather than fight, if at all possible. After a victim is dead or disabled, dracs will land and use their

hollow fangs to draw all the blood from the bodies, draining 1d4 hit points per action turn from living victims until twice the number of hit points a victim possesses has been drained (leaving the victim dead and without any blood).

It has been suspected that dracs were purposefully engineered by unknown beings, given their strong resemblance to the Ancients' concept of vampires. Whether or not this is so remains to be seen. They do not appear to work for any "higher" power.

Dracs will usually not carry any tools or equipment, though a rare one, usually the leader of a hunting pack, will have some equipment of Tech Level II. Dracs will only associate with their own kind. They will never become hirelings or followers.

### Encroaches (Them)

**NUMBER:** 10d100

**MORALE:** 10 (cannot be recruited or hired)

**HIT DICE:** 1d4

**ARMOR:** 9 (-8 to be hit due to size and speed)

**SIZE:** 6 cm long

**LAND SPEED:** 0/90/18

**MS:** 1

**IN:** 1

**DX:** 4d6 + 4

**CH:** 1

**CN:** 1d8 + 13

**PS:** 1

**ATTACKS:** None

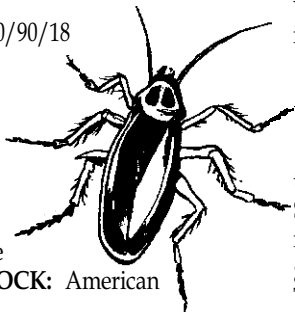
**ORIGINAL STOCK:** American cockroach

**MUTATIONS:** *Physical reflection* (greatly improved; see below)

**HABITAT:** Ruins in all climates

**DIET:** Prepared food (fresh and spoiled) and garbage

**DESCRIPTION:** Encroaches are found wherever food to their liking (i.e., food prepared for humans) is available. They inhabit ruins instead of populated cities because of their talent for turning populated cities into deserted ruins. They are prolific and voracious, and there is virtually no way to remove them from any sort of building. Furthermore, they frequently (GM's option) carry terrible diseases similar to those used by plants with the *bacterial symbiosis* mutation. Encroaches are very fast for their size, but they are unintelligent and generally do not move more than a few meters in a straight line. It is their habit to spread their kind by hitching rides on more



mobile creatures when the local population reaches saturation point or the food supply is exhausted (which is virtually always).

Character parties will encounter encroaches in abandoned storerooms and kitchens. The little insects will pour out of cupboards and containers and try to crawl all over the party. They can be outrun by creatures faster than themselves who are not surprised. Otherwise, nothing will prevent each and every character from being literally covered with encroaches. Encroaches are immune to all forms of electromagnetic, thermal and nuclear attack (and to poison as well); only direct kinetic force (squashing) will harm them. It is futile attack them *en masse*, since each one that is killed will be replaced tenfold. Slapping, picking off and stomping, rolling on the ground, and similar strategies will kill all but 1-10 per character. These will remain on a character's person or in his or her gear until they are brought to a new environment (which need not be too far away from the old environment) where there is food. Meanwhile, the encroaches will devour any carried food supplies that are not perfectly sealed.

Any character who has housed encroaches for an hour or more will have 1-10 encroach eggs laid on his or her person, clothes, or gear. These eggs will hatch in two days, producing new encroaches ready to mate and start a new colony. The eggs will inevitably be in an inaccessible location (if that is in any way possible), but they can be killed with a fresher or energy bath, or disposed of by leaving the gear behind.

Cities that have had experience with encroaches will ordinarily have devised horrible forms of execution specifically for any person or creature that infests the town with them.

### Flipp's (Clicker Fish)

**NUMBER:** 2d4

**MORALE:** 1d8 + 1

**HIT DICE:** 7d6

**ARMOR:** 8

**SIZE:** 2 m in length

**WATER SPEED:** 24/1800/36

**MS:** 1d10 + 11

**IN:** 1d10 + 11

**DX:** 1d6 + 12

**CH:** 2d6 + 4

**CN:** 3d6

**PS:** 3d6

**ATTACKS:** 1 ram for 1d6 damage

**ORIGINAL STOCK:** Bottlenose dolphin

**MUTATIONS:** *Actual metamorphosis, directional sense, dual brain, empathy, heightened hearing, heightened intelligence, intuition, radar/sonar (improved over natural talent), sound imitation, temporal fugue, time distortion, time manipulation (see below), time suspension*

**HABITAT:** Oceans of the world

**DIET:** Plants and small fish

**DESCRIPTION:** The flipp's true physical form has not changed at all from its ancestral dolphin shape. Like its ancestor, it attacks by ramming victims in the water at high speed with its snout.

Though these intelligent mammals have no technology, they possess their own culture and society. They have been known to save Pure Strain Humans and humanoids from drowning, though they are indifferent to the plight of mutated animals. Flipp's have never joined the Zoopremists' alliance.

Flipp's have been known to use their *actual metamorphosis* mutation to join parties of land-dwelling adventurers that they have befriended. Of course, they must somehow acquire weapons and clothing on their own. If turned into



their true form (as per the *actual metamorphosis* mutation), they will take 4 points of damage per round while out of water, until they are able to assume a new form or reach a water supply to keep their skins from drying out.

Only 2% of all flipps encountered will have the *time manipulation* mutation. For many years, flipps have been trying to improve their time-related abilities through selective breeding so that flipps with time manipulation can attempt a series of time jumps to reach a period before the Social Wars. There they try to warn humans about the wars in an attempt to alter history, but apparently they are not being taken seriously since the future Gamma World still exists. Still, all the flipps with *time manipulation* will eventually try to go back and warn of the danger to come.



#### Garrels (Sneakers)

NUMBER: 1d4  
 MORALE: 1d4 + 1  
 HIT DICE: 2d8  
 ARMOR: 8  
 SIZE: .6 m tall  
 LAND SPEED: 6/900/72  
 CLIMBING SPEED: -/-/36

MS: 1d6 + 2  
 IN: 1d4 + 4  
 DX: 1d8 + 10  
 CH: 1d4  
 CN: 1d6 + 4  
 PS: 1d4 + 1

ATTACKS: 1 bite for 1d4 damage  
 ORIGINAL STOCK: Common gray squirrel  
 MUTATIONS: *Displacement*, *stunning force*, *teleport object*  
 HABITAT: Temperate forests  
 DIET: Various nuts, fruits, and grains

**DESCRIPTION:** Garrels are agile mammals of reasonable intelligence that have developed several special skills to foil predators. They are intensely curious beings, and they love to collect small pieces of both metal and plastic, especially if they are shiny, have strange shapes, or are in some other way attractive to the garrel. Because of this, garrels often unwittingly have one or two small artifacts in their possession, making them targets for treasure hunters (especially for Archivists). However, it is unlikely that the garrels need fear extinction at the hands of such as these.

When not gathering food, a garrel is always on the lookout for new items to add to its "collection." Anyone who camps in or near a forest inhabited by garrels can expect at least one of these creatures to be lurking nearby, just out of sight. The garrel will wait until it sees something attractive that's also unguarded. It will then use its *teleport object* ability to gain possession of the item and will then return to its lair, most often a hollow tree trunk or a small burrow, where the garrel will put the item with the others it has accumulated.

If a garrel is attacked, either by a predator or by angry beings whose equipment has been "borrowed," its first reaction will be to flee, holding any treasures it has acquired for as long as it can, using its speed, agility, tree-climbing skills, and any available foliage to speed its escape. Garrels prefer forests with a thick blanket of undergrowth so that they can lose pursuit with a minimum of effort. During the chase, the garrel will trust its *displacement* ability to send it to safety if it is at any time in imminent danger of being killed.

If *displacement* cannot be used, the garrel will then use its *stunning force* to buy time. Garrels are immune to the effects of another garrel's *stunning force* attack. If both of the previous powers have been used and the garrel is still in danger, it will then attack its pursuer, biting with its sharp teeth and never relenting.

#### Harmony Trees (Friendlies)

NUMBER: 1(20% chance of 1d20)  
 MORALE: 1d4 + 6  
 HIT DICE: 12d10  
 ARMOR: 4  
 SIZE: 10 m tall  
 LAND SPEED: Does not move

MS: 1d8 + 10  
 IN: 1d8 + 6  
 DX: 1d4  
 CH: 1d10 + 8  
 CN: 1d10 + 8  
 PS: 1d4

ATTACKS: See below

ORIGINAL STOCK: Jujube tree

MUTATIONS: *Allurement* (improved), *new body parts* (intelligent brain), *poison fruit*

HABITAT: Open to semi-open tropical rain forests

DIET: Nutrients from soil

**DESCRIPTION:** The harmony tree is extremely handsome — graceful and straight, with large yellow flowers, red plumlike fruit, and lush, glossy green leaves the year around. Any creature with intelligence between 2 and 16 (not including robots or androids, but including cyborgs) that comes within 20 m of a harmony tree must defend vs. a mental attack or become psychologically dependent on the tree. Victims are overcome with a feeling of great peace and harmony, and will be totally unwilling to leave the euphoric atmosphere of the tree or see it harmed in any way. Vic-



tims must be killed, stunned, or otherwise subdued if they are to be removed from the tree's influence. Once out of range, the victim will recover his or her normal senses. However, victims of a harmony tree are immune to *fear generation*, *mental control*, and *empathy* while under the tree's control.

Creatures under a harmony tree's control feel no need to eat, and they would shudder at the mere idea of hurting any living thing, especially the tree itself. They will not even fight to defend themselves if attacked (but see below). However, if a victim is attacked and hurt, the tree must try to regain control (a mental attack at + 2); if the victim is brought to 10% of his or her hit points, the tree may attack again at no bonus. If this attempt to control the victim fails, the victim is free to escape.

If anyone tries to harm the tree, all its victims will attack the offender in a frenzy of blind hatred, using the most effective available attack form at + 4 to hit. In this frenzy, victims will ignore damage to themselves, and can be injured and killed without the tree having to renew its control over them at all. Victims of a harmony tree that are not attacked and killed will slowly, happily starve to death.

A harmony tree will keep an entourage of as many creatures as possible, since this is its only means of defense. These creatures are often quite varied and even naturally hostile to each other, but they will lie down lovingly together at the base of the harmony tree (this being one way to identify the latter). If a victim is killed or starves to death, the tree will cause the survivors to hide the corpse by burying it or throwing it as far as possible, according to their abilities. However, it will have them keep any weapons on the body, as well as any weapons they have themselves, as the "guardians" may be called upon to use these in defense of the tree. Victims will hide weapons among the branches of the tree or play with them peacefully until someone attacks the tree. In general, the tree uses the senses of its victims, but they are guided entirely by its intelligence, which may be higher or lower than their own.

In any harmony tree encounter, the GM should decide what sort of entourage the tree should have, based on the size, status, and overall power of the player character party. There may be nothing but a few dead bodies under the tree, or up to a dozen assorted creatures including a few humans or humanoids with artifacts. Something should almost

always be under a harmony tree, since no one can bury the last victims if they all die.

The fruit of the harmony tree is intensity 7 slow poison. If the tree captures a victim too small to use in its defense (5 HD or less), it may force the victim to eat a fruit and then walk or fly away at normal speed to die within 1-3 hours, starting a new tree. Even after it leaves the 20 m range of the tree, the victim will not regain its senses unless it survives the poisoning, being overcome with misery at having been "cast out." This is the way in which the harmony tree propagates itself. A free-willed character that eats a ripe harmony fruit (indistinguishable from an unripe one) will gain four points of mental strength for one hour. Eating unripe harmony fruit will not increase a character's mental strength. At any given time, 10% of the fruit on a harmony tree will be ripe. All of it will be poisonous, and of course a character must survive the poison to gain the mental strength. The poisonous effects of all harmony fruit eaten in one day are cumulative, so two harmony fruit will act as intensity 14 poison.

### Hogarts (Thunder Birds)

**NUMBER:** 1d4 - 2

**MORALE:** 1d4 + 5

**HIT DICE:** 10d12

**ARMOR:** 5

**SIZE:** 30 m long

**AIR SPEED:** 24/1800/36

**LAND SPEED:** 0/30/3

**MS:** 1d10 + 11

**IN:** 1d6 + 10

**DX:** 1d10 + 2

**CH:** 1d6

**CN:** 1d10 + 11

**PS:** 2d20 + 40

**ATTACKS:** 1 bite for 6d8

**ORIGINAL STOCK:** Garter snake

**MUTATIONS:** *Heightened sense* (vision), new body parts (feathered wings), *sonic boom generation* (see below), taller

**HABITAT:** Arctic and subarctic regions

**DIET:** Most large animals of all types

**DESCRIPTION:** This mutant snake has changed beyond recognition since the Social Wars, and it now lairs in mountainous regions and near the north and south polar areas. Being clumsy and slow on land, the hogart prefers to stay aloft and avoids contact with almost all other creatures.

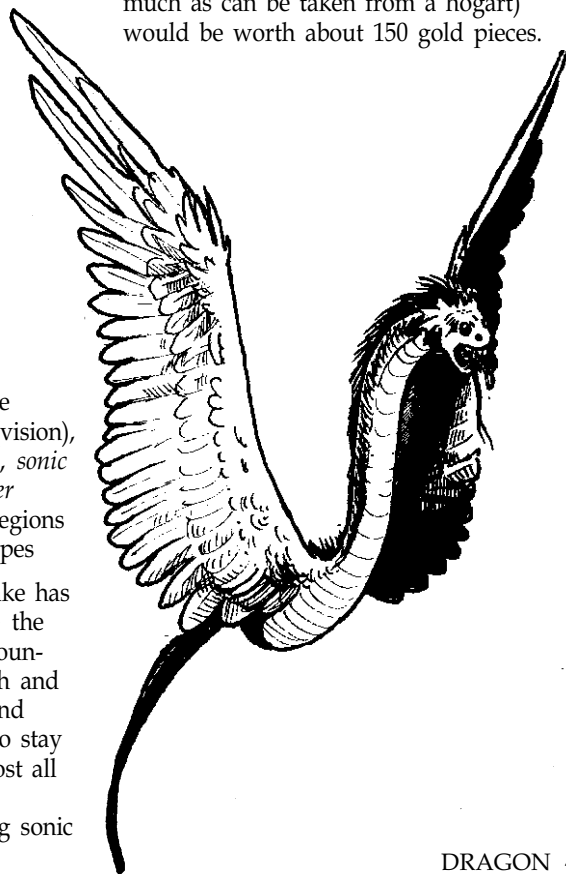
The hogart is capable of creating sonic

booms from snapping its wings. *Sonic boom generation* is a conscious physical mutation, useable three times per day, and it will affect all those within a 20-m radius in front of the hogart. The sonic boom blast causes 6d6 points damage, and all those who fail a constitution check (CON x 5) will become deaf for 24 hours. A hogart will only attack out of hunger or if attacked first.

The hogart has learned to use its *heightened vision* to scan intelligent parties carefully from high altitudes, thus avoiding the more dangerous opponents. If necessary, a hogart will delay attacking an enemy until the opponent is engaged in combat with another creature or until the opponent is asleep. The hogart will then drop out of the sky like a rock, coming to a sudden halt directly over the victim as it snaps its wings and generates the sonic boom. It can then hover and continue to generate the sonic boom every action turn thereafter.

Hogarts can sometimes (if carefully approached) serve as guides, for they know the territory around their snowy lairs very well. Hogarts do not like yexils for some reason, and often attempt to blast them out of the sky.

Hogarts have snow-white scaly skin and feathered wings, with a coarse blue mane running from the backs of their heads to their tails. Their wing feathers are highly prized for decorative purposes, and four sacks full of feathers (as much as can be taken from a hogart) would be worth about 150 gold pieces.





### Howlers (Wolf Folk)

**NUMBER:** 1d4 - 2

**MORALE:** 1d6 + 4

**HIT DICE:** 10d6

**ARMOR:** 6 (9 in Pure Strain Human form)

**SIZE:** 2 m tall

**LAND SPEED:** 9/900/72 (or 12/900/18 in Pure Strain Human form)

**MS:** 3d6

**IN:** 3d4

**DX:** 1d8 + 12

**CH:** 3d4

**CN:** 1d10 + 11

**PS:** 1d10 + 11

**ATTACKS:** 2 claws for 1d6 damage each; and, 1 bite for 1d8 damage

**ORIGINAL STOCK:** Timber wolf

**MUTATIONS:** *Body structure change* (allergy to silver), *directional sense*, *heightened senses* (hearing, smell, and vision), *regeneration*, *shapechange* (into a Pure Strain Human), *speed increase*

**DIET:** Mammalian (especially human and humanoid) flesh

**HABITAT:** Plains, grasslands, and low hill country

**DESCRIPTION:** These bipedal, humanoid wolves are one of the more deadly

species on the Gamma World. Luckily, they aren't encountered often, for these clever and malicious creatures enjoy tricking parties of adventurers. They will meet adventurers in their Pure Strain Human form and try to join the adventurers. If they gain the party's trust, they will carefully work their way into positions in which they can successfully slay as many Pure Strain Humans as possible, as they consider the meat a delicacy.

For some unknown reason, howlers are highly allergic to silver metal. If they are merely touched by silver, it will cause 1 point of damage per action turn to them. A weapon made of silver will do double normal damage if it hits a howler. Any damage caused by silver or silver weapons cannot be regenerated or healed by these creatures. Howlers are actually able to smell silver.

Both howlers and dracs (q.v.) are believed to have been purposefully bred by unknown agencies or beings for unknown reasons. Howlers resemble the Ancients' concept of werewolves in many ways.

Howlers will usually possess several items of Tech Level II. They will only associate with other mutant animals, and are quite rare at present.

### Jestes (Tricksters)

**NUMBER:** 1d12

**MORALE:** 1d4 + 2

**HIT DICE:** 4d6

**ARMOR:** 7

**SIZE:** 50 cm tall

**LAND SPEED:** 2/120/3

**MS:** 1d10 + 8

**IN:** 1d10 + 11

**DX:** 1d10 + 11

**CH:** 1d6 + 2

**CM:** 1d4 + 6

**PS:** 1d4 + 4

**ATTACKS:** No special attacks

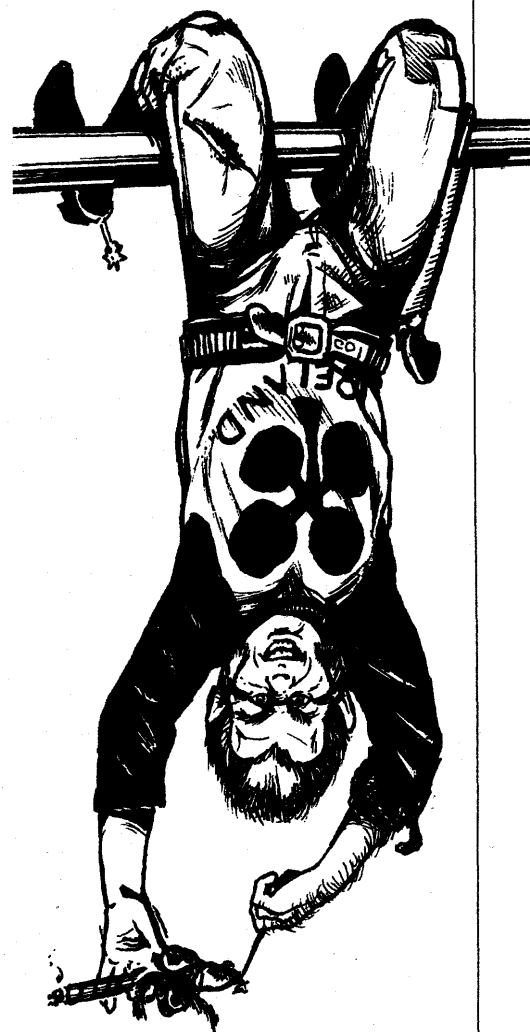
**ORIGINAL STOCK:** Human

**MUTATIONS:** *Chameleon powers*, *confusion*, *density control* (others), *gamma eye*, *heightened sense* (hearing), *illusion generation*, *in tuition*, *shorter*, *speed increase*

**HABITAT:** Dense forests

**DIET:** Vegetarian habits (see below)

**DESCRIPTION:** These short, elfin-looking humans are well known for the





practical jokes they play on unwary travelers. They live in dense forests, making their homes in hollowed-out tree trunks, and feed upon locally gathered fruits, nuts, berries, roots, leaves, and other edible plant matter. Jestes use their *confusion*, *illusion generation*, and *density control* mutations to cause wayfarers trouble. Of course, *speed increase* and *chameleon powers* prove useful when jestes need to hide. If a jeste is hurt by an angry victim of a joke, others will retaliate with their *gamma eyes*.

If characters laugh along with the jestes' practical jokes, they will reveal themselves and help the characters if they can, though they will still play tricks now and then. Jestes are curious by nature, and can often be coaxed into joining a party of adventurers. They will always be loyal companions, though they will still joke around when the party is not in a dangerous situation. Jestes encountered "in the wild" will have 1-4 items of Tech Level II. These will be items that they are able to handle with ease (for example, pistols instead of rifles).

Jestes enjoy the company of friendly mutant animals, grens, and wardents. They dislike androids greatly and hate robots, reserving their more malicious tricks for these two groups of beings.



## Juggernauts (Rampants)

**NUMBER:** 1d4

**MORALE:** 1d4 + 6

**HIT DICE:** 18d8

**ARMOR:** 2

**SIZE:** 3 m long

**LAND SPEED:** 12/1800/30

**MS:** 1d6 + 5

**IN:** 1d4

**DX:** 1d6 + 2

**CH:** 1d4

**CN:** 1d8 + 12

**PS:** 3d20 + 70

**ATTACKS:** 2 gores for 3d6 damage each; or, 1 charge-and-gore for 8d6 damage

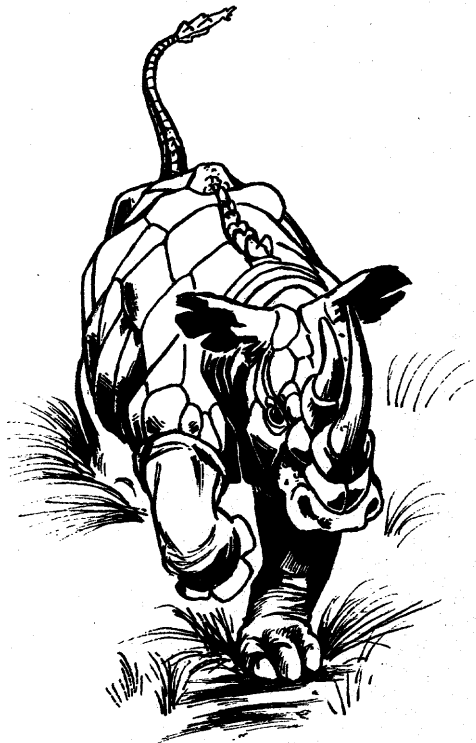
**ORIGINAL STOCK:** Black rhinoceros

**MUTATION:** *Heightened constitution* (special), *increased speed*, *radiation eyes*, *vision defect*

**HABITAT:** Warm-climate scrub, plain, and veldt

**DIET:** Grasses and leaves

**DESCRIPTION:** The juggernaut is a large rhinoceros with bright red eyes and armor-like skin of a metallic, blue-



black color. The juggernaut is not a carnivore, but is still dangerous as it may charge if irritated by some movement within 100 m of its eyes (its effective visual range). A juggernaut will attack first by charging, and then by standing and goring one or two opponents. A charging juggernaut can cover an amazing distance in one action turn (60 m), and a standing juggernaut can gore twice in a round. However, its weak eyesight makes it -4 to hit at all times, although it has good senses of hearing and smell. An attacking juggernaut will use its *radiation eyes* (intensity 3d4) while goring if it is really angry (GM's option, based on the situation). One charge will often satisfy a juggernaut, especially if its target falls down and plays dead. However, a wounded juggernaut will attack anything in range at random (including trees). Juggernauts are totally immune to poison and radiation.

Though juggernauts are found only in North America, they were not originally native to this land. They are descended from zoo specimens that escaped confinement during the Social Wars.

## Marloks (Deep Dwellers)

**NUMBER:** 1d4 + 2

**MORALE:** 1d4 + 6

**HIT DICE:** 5d8

**ARMOR:** 8

**SIZE:** 1.5 m tall

**LAND SPEED:** 12/900/18

**MS:** 1d10 + 11

**IN:** 1d10 + 11

**DX:** 1d8 + 10

**CH:** 1d10 + 8

**CN:** 1d10 + 8

**PS:** 1d10 + 8

**ATTACKS:** No special attacks

**ORIGINAL STOCK:** Human

**MUTATIONS:** *Dark dependency, directional sense, heightened precision, heightened sense (hearing), mass mind, (improved), molecular disruption, telekinesis*

**HABITAT:** Underground, most often beneath hills or ruins

**DIET:** See below

**DESCRIPTION:** Marloks look like Pure Strain Humans, except for their extremely pale skin and their large, light-sensitive eyes, both of which are the result of their subterranean existence. Why those humans who were the marloks' ancestors went underground in the first place is not clear, though it is thought they might have been refugees from the devastation during the Social Wars, or even command personnel controlling the war from deep below the earth. No matter what their origins, marloks are one of the most successful of the various subterranean races and are widespread, often migrating from

one underground complex to another by traveling at night on the surface.

Marloks lead a nomadic life while underground, traveling various tunnels, caverns, and other passageways in small, close-knit groups. Because of the large number of subterranean predators, they seldom stay in any one place for more than a few days. Marloks often use tunnels to the surface to send out nighttime foraging parties to collect whatever edible plants and animals they can get. These are used to supplement the usual marlok diet of roots and fungi. However, since marloks do not recognize the rights of surface people, they often are not above raiding a nearby village for foodstuffs, though some groups have been able to establish mutual trade arrangements in which the marloks receive food for metals and an occasional artifact or two.

Marloks have developed several powers to aid in underground survival. Their *directional sense* helps individuals to find their way back to their "clan" if separated, and this ability also helps in navigating the maze of underground passageways. *Heightened precision* lets them test the stability of tunnels and caves before entering them. Their *heightened hearing*, besides detecting the approach of enemies, can also detect the sounds of settling and potential collapse in tunnel systems. *Telekinesis* is often used to move obstructions from their path; if objects do not prove easily movable, *molecular disruption* can usually reduce them to more manageable size. Should the exercise of the former two abilities be beyond the range of any one individual, then their *mass mind* can increase their power output. The

marlok racial ability of *mass mind* is better than the type usually encountered, in that the base chance of any of the participants dying is only 1% (+ 1% for each minute of contact). All involved in the *mass mind* share a weak telepathic link while in contact, between those in the link who are touching.



## Mountain Men (Squatches)

**NUMBER:** 1d6

**MORALE:** 1d6 + 3

**HIT DICE:** 8d8

**ARMOR:** 6

**SIZE:** 2 m tall

**LAND SPEED:** 15/800/36

**MS:** 1d10 + 2

**IN:** 3d6

**DX:** 3d6

**CH:** 1d6

**CN:** 3d6 + 3

**PS:** 2d8 + 8

**ATTACKS:** 2 fists for 2d4 each; 1 bite for 1d8 (plus poison)

**ORIGINAL STOCK:** Unclassified hominid species

**MUTATIONS:** Heightened strength, intuition

**HABITAT:** Rocky Mountains of North America

**DIET:** Fruits, berries, roots, various mammals

**DESCRIPTION:** Vast tracts of North America's wild forests were destroyed in



the years prior to the Social Wars, and only a few large wildlife preserves were in existence before the start of the Social Wars. Unknown to mankind, these areas also served as the homelands of the mountain men, formerly known as "sas-quatches" (or now "squatches"). Semi-intelligent apelike creatures, the mountain men knew they had to avoid humans or perish. Though they were sometimes spotted by trappers or hunters, little hard evidence of their existence was produced.

Following the Social Wars and the disruption of civilization, the mountain men left their forests and began to spread through the North American west. Bigger and stronger than before, they have also become more aggressive, especially against Pure Strain Humans. Mountain men attack with their fists, refusing to use any technological items or tools. If one hits an opponent with both fists, he can hug the victim for an additional 1d8 points of damage, and he will also attempt to bite the victim and inject intensity 5 poison into the opponent's bloodstream. Only those who are the same size as or smaller than a mountain man may be hugged.

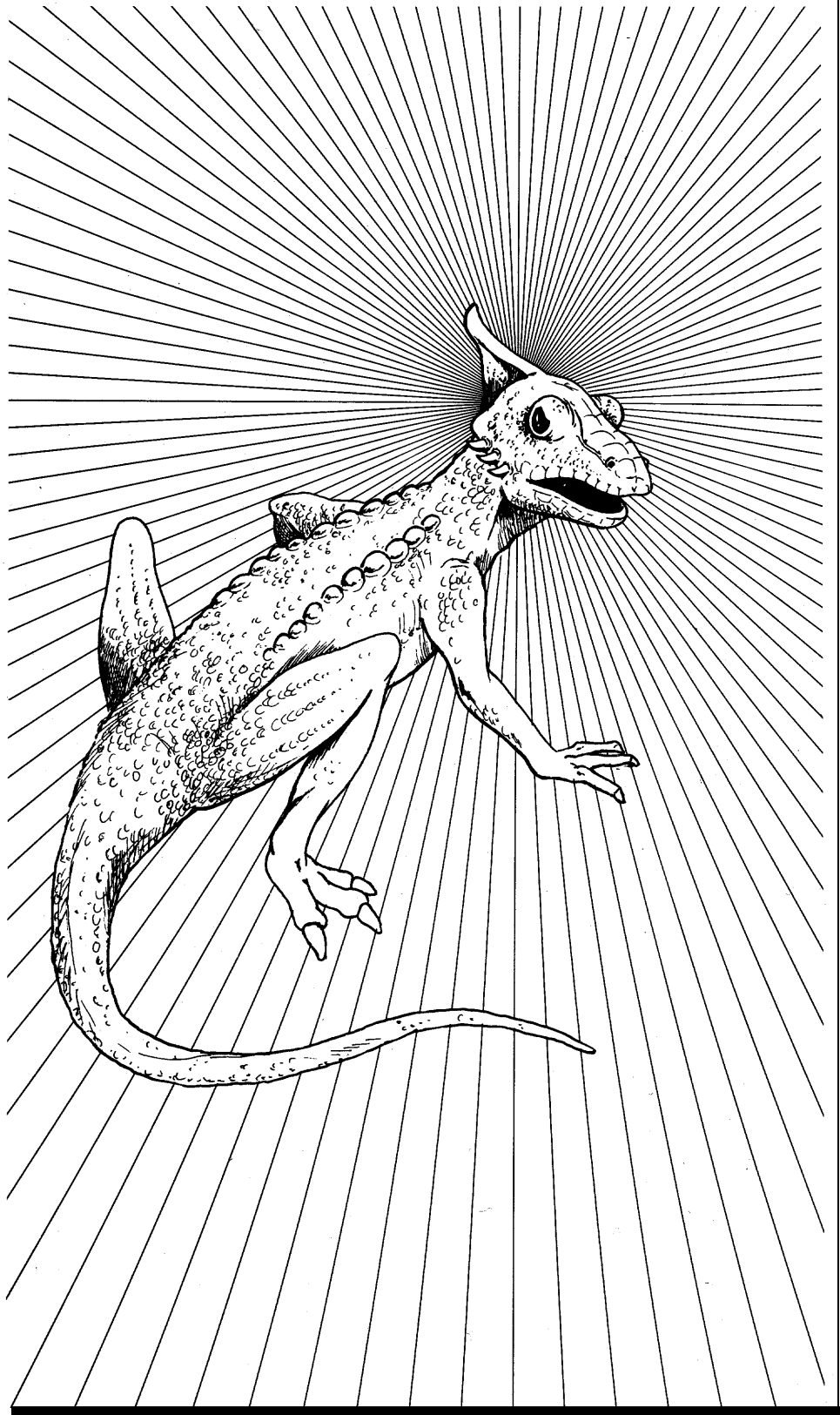
Mountain men are also able to throw stones at opponents, hurling rocks up to .5 m diameter as far as 10 m. The largest rocks cause 3d10 points damage (weapons class 9). Mountain men can catch similar missiles, if they see them coming first.

Mountain men live in caves, forming loose family groups of 2d6 adults with 1d4 children. Females and males appear in equal numbers. Animal skins are used to cover cave entrances and to make beds. A fire is usually kept burning near the cave entrance to ward off animals and to cook food.

Females often pick berries and dig for roots to get food for the family group, while males hunt whatever herbivorous creatures live nearby. If a mountain man tribe feels it necessary, they will raid a humanoid village for food — Pure Strain Human villages are attacked with the intent to destroy them completely.

Mountain men do not like machines, robots, or any mechanical devices. Even before the war, their ancestors were known to have destroyed construction vehicles and automobiles. Wardents and mountain men frequently trade with each other, and a strong friendship exists between the two races.

Mountain men appear to be large, brown, gorilla-like beings who walk erect. Their thick fur keeps out the cold and serves as their only body armor.



#### **Sifoners (Green Stalkers)**

**NUMBER:** 1d4 - 2  
**MORALE:** 1d6 + 3  
**HIT DICE:** 8d4  
**ARMOR:** 3  
**SIZE:** 1 m long

**LAND SPEED:** 6/600/12

**MS:** 1d12 + 7  
**IN:** 1d8 + 2  
**DX:** 3d6  
**CH:** 1d4  
**CN:** 3d6 + 3  
**PS:** 1d12 + 4

**ATTACKS:** 4 claws for 1d8 each  
**ORIGINAL STOCK:** Gecko lizard

**MUTATIONS:** Chameleon powers, duality, symbiotic attachment (improved/ altered), sonic blast

**HABITAT:** Woodlands and ruins

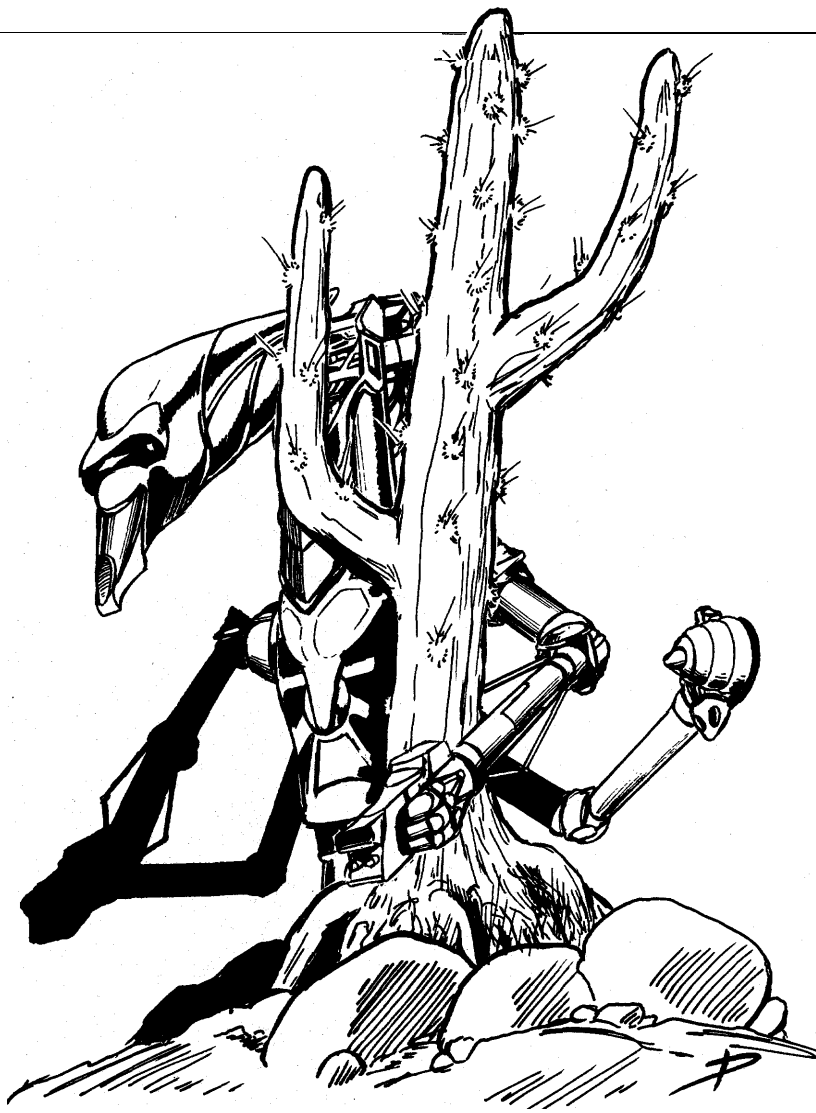
**DIET:** Special (mental energy)

**DESCRIPTION:** Sifoners are a special species of mutant lizard that feed off the mental energy given off by intelligent mammals, including Pure Strain Humans and humanoids. Mutant creatures will be attacked before unmutated ones, as they produce more mental energy from their mutations.

A sifoner possesses hundreds of tiny suction cups on its feet which enable it to climb across walls, ceilings, and so forth without fear of falling. It has learned to position itself over well-traveled areas, blending in with the surrounding scenery to await a chance to jump on a passing victim. It will make four immediate attacks against a victim when it leaps (one for each clawed foot); if at least one of the attacks hits, the sifoner may activate its *symbiotic attachment* power. Any claw that hits need not roll to strike again, as it will be securely fastened to the victim and can continue to do damage every action turn thereafter. Any claw that missed may attempt to strike again each action turn until it grabs the victim and remains attached.

A sifoner's *symbiotic attachment* power will only work against one person at a time, but if the victim dies, the sifoner is unaffected. Once the *attachment* is made successfully, the victim is drained of one intelligence point per turn afterwards, until an intelligence of 1 is reached and the victim becomes animal-like in behavior. At this point, the sifoner will leave the victim. Once drained, a victim will slowly begin to recover lost intelligence points at a rate of 1 point per day. No conscious or mental mutations of any sort may be used while the victim is recovering, until full intelligence is again restored. A sifoner can command its victim to take simple actions necessary to help the sifoner escape from those trying to slay it.

Sifoners are usually encountered singly, though pairs may be seen during mating season (which comes in the spring, once every decade). Sifoners lair in ground burrows or under rocky overhangs, and they have learned to use branches, leaves, and stones to hide their lairs from view. Eggs will be present in a lair in late spring 50% of the time. Young sifoners grow to adulthood in 4-5 months. Sifoners do not breed or live long in captivity, and are thus useless as guardians.



### Spitters (Bot Bashers)

**NUMBER:** 1d4

**MORALE:** 1d4

**HIT DICE:** 2d8

**ARMOR:** 4

**SIZE:** 3 m tall

**LAND SPEED:** Does not move

**MS:** 1d4

**IN:** 1

**DX:** 3d4

**CH:** 1

**CN:** 3d6

**PS:** 3d4

**ATTACKS:** See below

**ORIGINAL STOCK:** Cactus

**MUTATIONS:** *New sense* (metal detection), *new body parts* (advanced root system, altered digestive system, thorn-pods), *throwing thorns* (improved)

**HABITAT:** Known only at Tycho Center, the Moon

**DIET:** Metallic material of any sort, particularly iron and duralloy

**DESCRIPTION:** The spitter is another lunar mutant known only from Tycho Center. It descended from a species of large, double-branched cactus that scientists were attempting to genetically engineer to survive on unprocessed lunar soil. It now has hundreds of thorn-pods, each .5 m across, growing all over its surface. Its root system has adapted to feed off metal of all types, and it is able to absorb any moisture in the air as nourishment.

The spitter evolved so that it reacts to moving metal of any type within a 20-m radius. Whenever the spitter detects a metallic object coming into range, it will shoot 1d6 of its pods at the object. The pods release a special corrosive acid upon striking the target that does 3d6 of damage normally, adding an extra 3d6 damage to force fields and metal of any type. Each of these pods has an acid-proof seed that will grow if left undisturbed in the acidic residue of a destroyed robot or vehicle. If less than one kilogram of metal is detected, the spitter will only shoot one pod.



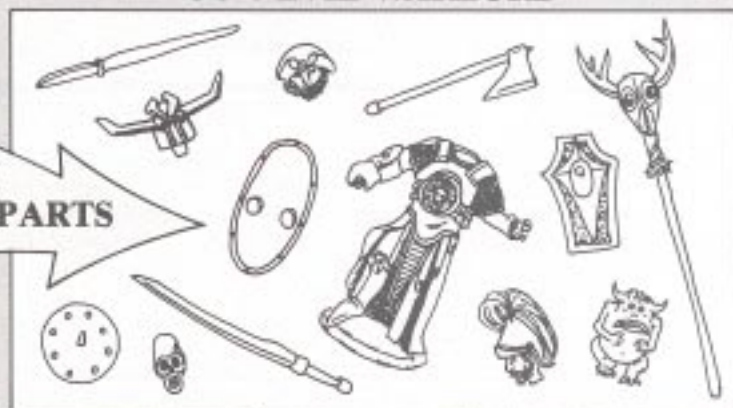
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# Authentic agencies, part II

## More real-world outfits for TOP SECRET<sup>®</sup> play

by Merle and Jackie Rasmussen

This is the second in a series of articles presenting the TOP SECRET<sup>®</sup> game world's intelligence community. Last month, the American spy agencies were detailed. This month's edition includes data on allied foreign intelligence-gathering agencies and important international organizations. Note that, though these agencies exist in the real world, they are given here only as constructs for the TOP SECRET game world. Some of the statistics given for these agencies are reasonably accurate and are taken from publicly available information, but some of the statistics were invented for the sake of completeness or were altered to conform to the specific background and nature of the TOP SECRET game world.

Information about these agencies, as with the previous articles in DRAGON<sup>®</sup> issues #93 and #97, is presented in several categories defined below. It is assumed that this information is commonly available to player character agents and to the general public. Agents might be given additional information that isn't public knowledge during the course of a game campaign.

*Nature of agency:* The basic nature of the organization.

*Governing body:* The governing body of most intelligence organizations are national governments. The control for government agencies belongs to the government official to whom the chief of the agency reports. Non-government organizations may have a short description of their group listed here.

*Personnel:* The estimated size of agency staffs based on public sources. Comparisons show the relative size and activity of various agencies.

*Annual budget:* The U.S. dollar figures shown are estimates based on public sources. Comparisons show the relative size and activity of various agencies.

*HQ:* The main headquarters for agency operations.

*Established:* The date the agency was founded.

*Activities:* Domestic counterintelligence means that the agency is responsible for counterespionage inside the borders of its own country. Foreign counterintelligence means that the agency has responsibility for counterespionage outside the borders of its own country.

*Policies:* Several of the major laws and philosophies of the organization.

*Objectives:* The major goals of the organization.

*Areas of involvement:* The places in

which the agency is known to operate or exercise jurisdiction.

*Allies:* Agencies often share intelligence data formally and informally with one another, when it suits them to do so. Associated agencies do not necessarily share intelligence because of publicly recognized treaties.

*Additional data:* More information on agency structure, operations, covers, and past history is given here.

*Bureaus:* If the word "All" is present, the following TOP SECRET game bureaus may be active within a particular agency: Administration, Investigation, Confiscation, Technical, Operations, and Assassination. (See DRAGON issue #82, "New avenues for agents," for an explanation of the newest bureaus.)

*Alignment profile:* An agent trained by a particular-intelligence agency will very often develop political opinions that are shared by a majority of fellow agents in the organization. The range of personal opinions an agent has relating to political systems, political change, and economic systems are called his alignment profile. The TOP SECRET alignment system was detailed in DRAGON issue #93, in "Agencies and Alignments" (p. 34).

### Security Service (MI5)

*Nature of agency:* Security service of the United Kingdom

*Governing body:* Home Minister, United Kingdom

*Personnel:* 2,800

*Annual budget:* \$21 million

*HQ:* 21 Queen Anne's Gate, London, England

*Established:* 1909

*Activities:* Domestic counterintelligence, including internal security and counter-espionage

*Policies:* Publication of staff size is not permitted. Britain controls wiretapping by requiring warrants from the Home Secretary or Foreign Secretary, depending upon whether British citizens or foreign diplomats are involved.

*Objectives:* To identify spies, keep records of their activities, and decide when such spies should be exposed or arrested

*Areas of involvement:* Inside the U.K.

*Allies:* MI6 and FBI

*Additional data:* An organization analogous to the FBI, MI5 has no power to make arrests. Arrests are made by the Special Branch, a department of Scotland Yard. Special Branch also presents evidence in

security cases, allowing MI5 agents to remain anonymous. MI5 conducts thorough background investigations of its prospective agents.

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 01-19/07-94/20-94

### Secret (Intelligence) Service (MI6, SIS)

*Nature of agency:* "Grandfather" of most of the principal intelligence services outside of the Communist world

*Governing body:* Foreign Minister, United Kingdom

*Personnel:* 2,500

*Annual budget:* \$29.6 million

*HQ:* Leconfield House, Curzon St., Mayfair, London W., England

*Established:* 1911

*Activities:* Military intelligence, strategic intelligence, foreign counterintelligence

*Policies:* Publication of staff size is not permitted

*Objectives:* To spy on enemies and potential enemies of the nation

*Areas of involvement:* Worldwide

*Allies:* MI5 and CIA

*Additional data:* This agency is known to foreigners as the British Secret Service.

Captain Mansfield Cumming set up MI6 prior to World War I, and he used his initial "C" to identify himself to his subordinates. The heads of MI6 have called themselves "C" (not "M") ever since,

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 01-19/07-94/20-94

### Defense Intelligence Service

*Nature of agency:* Military intelligence staff of the three armed services

*Governing body:* Minister of Defense, United Kingdom

*Personnel:* 3,000

*Annual budget:* \$190 million

*HQ:* Bolton, U.K.

*Established:* 1965

*Activities:* Military intelligence. The Defense Intelligence Service consolidates armed service units.

*Policies:* To combine intelligence at the ministerial level under a Director of Military Intelligence, whose staff also produce economic, scientific, and technical intelligence

*Objectives:* To collect and disseminate operational (tactical) intelligence

*Areas of involvement:* Worldwide, especially in Commonwealth member nations and previous colonies

*Allies:* NATO

*Additional data:* The Defense Intelligence

Staff replaced the Joint Intelligence Bureau under the permanent undersecretary of the Foreign Office, which is under the Prime Minister.

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 01-19/20-94/20-94

**Government Communications Center  
(GCHQ, after an old military title:  
Government Communications  
Headquarters)**

*Nature of agency:* Britain's primary source of raw information for intelligence analysis

*Governing body:* Foreign Minister, United Kingdom

*Personnel:* 6,000 to 10,000

*Annual budget:* \$500 million

*HQ:* Cheltenham, U.K.

*Established:* 1954

*Activities:* Electronic intercept

*Policies:* To exchange information with allied nations

*Objectives:* To make and break all codes

*Areas of involvement:* Analysis of signals intercepted in Eastern Europe, the European part of the Soviet Union, the Middle East, Hong Kong, and Africa

*Allies:* NSA, Australia's Defense Signals Division, Canada's Communication Branch of the National Research Council

*Additional data:* The GCHQ has liaison officers stationed at NSA's headquarters in Fort Meade, Md., and in Ottawa and Melbourne. The computers at GCHQ are tied to computers at NSA by a secret cable system. There are four divisions within the Directorate of Sigint Operations and Requirements. Division "J" is classified as "Special Sigint" and deals exclusively with the Soviet bloc. Division "K" handles all other geographical areas with considerable specialization. Division "H" deciphers codes. Division "Z" obtains orders for intelligence from NATO members and assigns monitoring stations and translators to listening tasks.

*Bureaus:* Administration, Technical, and Operations

*Alignment profile:* 01-19/07-94/20-94

**Direction Générale de la Sécurité  
Extérieure (DGSE)**

*Nature of agency:* Principal intelligence agency of France

*Governing body:* Prime Minister, France

*Personnel:* 2,650

*Annual budget:* \$111 million

*HQ:* Paris, France

*Established:* 1981 (The SDECE was established in 1958.)

*Activities:* Military intelligence, strategic intelligence, electronic intercept, foreign counterintelligence

*Policies:* The DGSE is divided into three parts: espionage, counterespionage, and covert operations

*Objectives:* To understand Soviet military strength, and to cope with the problems of terrorism, drug trafficking, world energy, and world grain production

*Areas of involvement:* Former French

colonies and worldwide

*Allies:* DST

*Additional data:* Nicknamed "The Pool," this agency was formerly the Service de Documentation Extérieure et de Contre-espionage (SDECE) — the Department of Foreign Information and Counterespionage. The action directorate of DGSE has paratroopers of the 11th Airborne Division assigned to it. The DGSE is one of the most successful agencies in fending off attempts to infiltrate its ranks. The French people do not discuss the DGSE publicly in the same manner that Americans discuss the activities of the CIA.

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 01-19/07-94/07-94

**Deuxième Bureau  
(Second Bureau, 2nd Bureau)**

*Nature of agency:* French military intelligence agency

*Governing body:* Minister of Defense, France

*Personnel:* 5,000

*Annual budget:* \$200 million

*HQ:* Nice, France

*Established:* 1872

*Activities:* Interpreting military intelligence reports

*Policies:* The 2nd Bureau is responsible for interpreting intelligence reports; it then delivers the interpretations to the French general staff for use in making strategic and tactical decisions.

*Objectives:* The same as the DGSE's objectives

*Areas of involvement:* Worldwide, especially former French colonies

*Allies:* The espionage and counterintelligence services of the Special Services (called the Fifth Bureau in wartime)

*Additional data:* The Second Bureau is currently quite involved in monitoring "minor wars" and terrorist activities in Africa.

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 01-19/20-94/07-81

**Direction de la Sécurité du Territoire  
(DST, Directorate for Surveillance  
of the Territory)**

*Nature of agency:* Controlling service of French national surveillance

*Governing body:* Minister of the Interior, France

*Personnel:* 3,000

*Annual budget:* \$22 million

*HQ:* Lyon, France

*Established:* 1958

*Activities:* Domestic counterintelligence  
*Policies:* To expel foreign officials caught spying in France

*Objectives:* To maintain and preserve internal security

*Areas of involvement:* Inside France

*Allies:* The DGSE and the Surete (the French police system)

*Additional data:* Equivalent to MI5 or the FBI in nature

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 01-19/07-94/01-19

**Bundesnachrichtendienst**

**(BND, Federal Intelligence Service)**

*Nature of agency:* Most truly centralized intelligence service of any NATO nation

*Governing body:* Chancellor, West Germany

*Personnel:* 6,000

*Annual budget:* \$90 million

*HQ:* Pullach (near Munich), West Germany

*Established:* 1956

*Activities:* Military intelligence, strategic intelligence, electronic intercept, foreign counterintelligence, economic intelligence, political intelligence

*Policies:* The assessment of intelligence gathered is left entirely to political leadership.

*Objectives:* To gather order-of-battle information, using members of the military detailed to the BND for that purpose; to gather strategic electronic intelligence; and to interrogate prisoners in time of war

*Areas of involvement:* Worldwide, especially East Germany

*Allies:* MAD and Bfv (see below)

*Additional data:* BND has three divisions: subversion, counterintelligence, and foreign intelligence

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 01-19/07-94/07-81

**Militärischer Abschirmdienst  
(MAD, Military Intelligence Service)**

*Nature of agency:* Military counterintelligence for West Germany

*Governing body:* Minister of Defense, West Germany

*Personnel:* 4,000

*Annual budget:* \$100 million

*HQ:* Bonn, West Germany

*Established:* 1956

*Activities:* Military intelligence, electronic intercept

*Policies:* Prisoner interrogation in wartime is turned over to the BND; otherwise, interrogation is performed by MAD.

*Objectives:* To gain tactical intelligence from direct contact with the enemy

*Areas of involvement:* East and West Germany

*Allies:* BND and NATO

*Additional data:* Attempts are being made to avoid the World War II mistakes caused by rivalry between competing government bureaucracies.

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 01-19/20-94/07-81

**Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz  
(BfV, Federal Office for the  
Protection of the Constitution)**

*Nature of agency:* West German counterintelligence agency

*Governing body:* Minister of the Interior, West Germany

*Personnel:* HQ has over 2,000

*Annual budget:* \$87.5 million

*HQ:* Cologne, West Germany

*Established:* 1958

*Activities:* Domestic counterintelligence

*Policies:* To function as a decentralized



system in which the German states retain significant responsibility for internal security. (This is done to avoid the hard-learned lessons of the 1930s and 1940s under the highly centralized Gestapo.)

*Objectives:* To maintain internal security

*Areas of involvement:* West Germany

*Allies:* BND

*Additional data:* BfV has five divisions, dealing with administrative and legal matters, right-wing extremism, communist political activities, counterespionage, and security matters.

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 01-19/07-81/07-81

## Office of Intelligence and Special

### Missions (Mossad)

*Nature of agency:* Main department of Israeli intelligence

*Governing body:* Prime Minister, Israel

*Personnel:* 1,500 to 2,000

*Annual budget:* \$85 million

*HQ:* Jerusalem, Israel

*Established:* 1951 (In 1937, a secret army was started which was later expanded to include espionage and procurement of arms.)

*Activities:* Strategic intelligence, foreign counterintelligence

*Policies:* Israeli intelligence gathering and counterintelligence operations are sometimes quite forceful.

*Objectives:* To collect foreign political, economic, scientific, and technological information. Secret agents of the Special Operations department have also conducted a fierce undercover campaign against enemies of Israel and fugitives who have committed crimes against the Jewish people, particularly war criminals from Nazi Germany who may be at large.

*Areas of involvement:* Worldwide

*Allies:* The intelligence services of the U.S.A., France, Turkey, Ghana, Japan, Iran, Spain, Portugal, Austria, South Africa, Singapore, Indonesia, Taiwan, Thailand, South Korea, Kenya, Zaire, Liberia, and Christians in Lebanon.

*Additional data:* This agency is also known as the Central Institution for Intelligence and Special Services (*mossad* means "institution" in Hebrew). The Mossad often deals directly with other nations, especially those with which Israel has no diplomatic relations. The Mossad is ranked by espionage experts as being among the six best intelligence organizations in the world.

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 20-81/07-81/20-81

## Israeli Military Intelligence (Aman)

*Nature of agency:* A branch of the Israeli Defense Forces

*Governing body:* Chief of Staff, Defense Forces, Israel

*Personnel:* 7,000

*Annual budget:* \$375 million

*HQ:* Tel Aviv, Israel

*Established:* 1952-53 (reorganized)

*Activities:* Military intelligence, strategic intelligence, electronic intercept

*Policies:* To break all Arab spy rings encircling Israel

*Objectives:* To collect and analyze material dealing with Arab military and political developments

*Areas of involvement:* The Middle East

*Allies:* Aman shares, the same allies as the Mossad.

*Additional data:* Aman is a subdivision of the Mossad.

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 20-81/20-94/20-81

## Sherut Bitachon Kali

### (Shin Beth, SHABAK)

*Nature of agency:* Israeli internal security service

*Governing body:* Prime Minister, Israel

*Personnel:* 1,000

*Annual budget:* \$75 million

*HQ:* Jaffa, Israel

*Established:* 1951 (with roots back to 1948)

*Activities:* Domestic counterintelligence and some military intelligence

*Policies:* Immigrants coming to Israel are monitored by the anti-terrorist section of Shin Beth.

*Objectives:* To maintain the internal security of Israel

*Areas of involvement:* Within Israel

*Allies:* The intelligence services of the U.S.A., France, Turkey, Ghana, Japan, Iran, Spain, Portugal, Austria, South Africa, Singapore, Indonesia, Taiwan, Thailand, South Korea, Kenya, Zaire, Liberia, and the Christians in Lebanon.

*Additional data:* All telephone communication in Israel can be monitored from a switchboard in Shin Beth headquarters. Shin Beth is analogous to the FBI and MI5. It has three sections: Arab, Eastern European, and Anti-Terrorist.

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 20-81/20-81/20-81

## Koan Choa Cho (Public Security

### Investigation Agency, PSIA)

*Nature of agency:* Japanese secret service

*Governing body:* Prime Minister of

Japan

*Personnel:* 2,600

*Annual budget:* \$76.4 million

*HQ:* Tokyo, Honshu, Japan

*Established:* 1952

*Activities:* To collect political and economic intelligence.

*Policies:* To work closely with the Keisatsu Cho (Police Guard Division), which was established to monitor left- and right-wing subversive groups

*Objectives:* To work with the Police Guard Division in investigating subversive movements wherever and whenever they should appear. Both of these agencies possess the powers of arrest and raiding.

*Areas of involvement:* Within Japan, although much information is collected from outside the country

*Allies:* Intelligence services of South Korea, Taiwan, and the U.S.A.

*Additional data:* The Japanese desire

knowledge for its own sake, whether for peaceful or wartime purposes,

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 01-19/07-94/01-81

## Japanese Military Intelligence

*Nature of agency:* Offices for specific geographic areas in the civilian bureau of the Defense Agency, in the J-2 (Intelligence) section of the Joint Staff, and in the intelligence sections of the Ground, Air, and Maritime Self-Defense Forces

*Governing body:* Prime Minister of Japan

*Personnel:* 100

*Annual budget:* \$10 million

*HQ:* Yokohama, Honshu, Japan

*Established:* 1954

*Activities:* Military intelligence, electronic intercept

*Policies:* The Japanese have no laws for securing classified documents, limiting U.S.-Japanese intelligence exchanges.

*Objectives:* To accurately keep track of Soviet air and naval operations in the vicinity of Japan, and of Soviet and Chinese ground forces on the Sino-Soviet border

*Areas of involvement:* Japanese territory, airspace, and surrounding waters

*Allies:* The CIA assists with mutual security in Japan only.

*Additional data:* The Japanese military intelligence system consists of a small group of highly trained and multilingual intelligence officers within several military and civilian organizations. The Japanese are experts at electronic intercept.

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 01-19/20-94/07-81

## Australian Security Intelligence

### Organization (ASIO)

*Nature of agency:* Australian internal security system

*Governing body:* Prime Minister of Australia

*Personnel:* 2,200

*Annual budget:* \$51.5 million

*HQ:* City of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

*Established:* 1957

*Activities:* Domestic counterintelligence

*Policies:* To monitor the activities of civilians or domestic organizations that seek to prejudice internal security

*Objectives:* To keep subversive elements from undermining the government

*Areas of involvement:* Within Australia

*Allies:* Intelligence services of the British Commonwealth and the U.S.A.

*Additional data:* Australia, at present, is not particularly threatened by any major internal problems.

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 01-19/07-94/07-81

## Office of National Assessments (ONA)

*Nature of agency:* Principal Australian intelligence service

*Governing body:* Cabinet and Prime Minister of Australia

*Personnel:* 2,850

*Annual budget:* \$76.5 million

*HQ:* Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

*Established:* 1977

*Activities:* Foreign counterintelligence

*Policies:* To avoid comment or advice regarding government policy, not to use clandestine means to gather information, to avoid duplicating activities of other departments, and to accept control and overseeing by a committee of ministers on intelligence and security

*Objectives:* ONA is responsible for national intelligence assessments and current intelligence reporting.

*Areas of involvement:* Worldwide, but especially in the South Pacific and Southeast Asia

*Allies:* Intelligence services of the British Commonwealth and the U.S.A.

*Additional data:* Responsibility for national intelligence assessment was shifted from the military to the separate civilian agency after World War II.

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 01-19/20-94/07-81

### **Royal Canadian Mounted Police — Security Systems (RCMP-SS)**

*Nature of agency:* Administrative department

*Governing body:* Prime Minister of Canada

*Personnel:* 1,600

*Annual budget:* \$50 million

*HQ:* Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

*Established:* 1873 (present title adopted in 1920)

*Activities:* Internal security and counter-espionage duties were transferred to SIS in 1981.

*Policies:* To use any technical equipment handy, from dog sleds to computers

*Objectives:* To enforce provincial laws and the criminal code. The mounties “always get their man.”

*Areas of involvement:* Within Canada

*Allies:* Intelligence services of the British Commonwealth and the U.S.A.

*Additional data:* The RCMP is one of the world's most notable crime-fighting organizations. It has laboratories for scientific analysis of evidence, large fingerprinting and identification files, and an academy for training police officers. A commissioner runs the organization from Ottawa and has liaison officers in London and Washington, D.C. The RCMP is the only police force operating in the Yukon Territory and Northwest Territories.

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 01-19/20-94/07-81

### **Security Intelligence Service (SIS)**

*Nature of agency:* Canadian internal security service

*Governing body:* Prime Minister of Canada

*Personnel:* 1,000

*Annual budget:* \$21 million

*HQ:* Montreal, Quebec, Canada

*Established:* 1981

*Activities:* Domestic counterintelligence

*Policies:* The SIS works within the law in order not to violate any civil liberties. If necessary, laws are changed so that the agency can work effectively within the law.

*Objectives:* To maintain the internal security of Canada

*Areas of involvement:* Within Canada

*Allies:* Intelligence services of the British Commonwealth and the U.S.A.

*Additional data:* This new civilian agency was formed with staff from the RCMP-SS, but it works independently from the RCMP and other police agencies.

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 01-19/07-94/07-81

### **Department of National Security (DONS)**

*Nature of agency:* Semi-secret government agency

*Governing body:* Prime Minister of Republic of South Africa

*Personnel:* 1,700

*Annual budget:* \$56 million

*HQ:* Capetown, South Africa

*Established:* 1978

*Activities:* Responsible for enforcing rules and laws. Anyone doing anything that could endanger society can be investigated.

*Policies:* DONS has the power to arrest and detain without warrants of any kind. Members of DONS do not plan murders; they seek to intimidate potential trouble-makers, hence the organization's reputation for violence in the extreme.

*Objectives:* To maintain the government's apartheid (racial separation) policies

*Areas of involvement:* Within the Republic, the Homelands, the Independent Homeland States, and outside the country.

*Allies:* CID and the intelligence services of Israel and Taiwan.

*Additional data:* DONS maintains a strongly guarded prison for political dissidents on Robbin Island, in Table Bay near Capetown. DONS was created from an older service, BOSS (Bureau of State Security), which was established in 1969, but is not appreciably different from BOSS.

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 07-94/07-00/20-81

### **Civil Intelligence Department (CID)**

*Nature of agency:* Secret investigative department

*Governing body:* Prime Minister of Republic of South Africa

*Personnel:* 1,600

*Annual budget:* \$54.5 million

*HQ:* Pretoria, Transvaal, South Africa

*Established:* 1974

*Activities:* Foreign counterintelligence

*Policies:* To investigate plots to overthrow or control the government of South Africa

*Objectives:* To prevent sabotage and the loss of national secrets

*Areas of involvement:* Outside the Republic of South Africa

*Allies:* DONS

*Additional data:* The CID is analogous to a secret FBI.

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 07-94/07-94/20-81

### **International Reporting and Information Service (IRIS)**

*Nature of agency:* Privately owned international business

*Governing body:* Large European financial institutions, organized by a U.S. publisher and a former British Prime Minister

*Personnel:* 96 correspondents, 33 analysts, plus a varying number of others

*Annual budget:* \$15 million

*HQ:* New York City, New York, U.S.A.

*Established:* 1982

*Activities:* IRIS stores business data which can be retrieved by analysts studying specific trends in the international business community. Meaningful data for a client is sifted from the mass of information that becomes available daily.

*Policies:* To make all information obtained by this worldwide computerized organization available to the public for a price

*Objectives:* To serve as an intermediary organization between busy executives in the commercial world and the flood of information around them

*Areas of involvement:* Worldwide

*Allies:* None

*Additional data:* IRIS is comparable to, but excels, the CIA in computer capacity.

*Bureaus:* Administration, Investigation, Technical, Operations

*Alignment profile:* 01-19/07-94/01-81

### **International organizations**

#### **United Nations Security Council**

*Nature of agency:* Primary instrument for establishing and maintaining international peace

*Governing body:* Five permanent member nations (U.S.A., U.S.S.R., United Kingdom, France, and the People's Republic of China) and 10 temporary member nations.

*Personnel:* Varies

*Annual budget:* Varies

*HQ:* United Nations Building, New York City, New York, U.S.A.

*Established:* 1945

*Activities:* The Security Council may dispatch an armed U.N. force to stop aggression.

*Policies:* To prevent war by settling disputes between nations

*Objectives:* To establish and maintain international peace

*Areas of involvement:* The planet Earth, the Moon, and the space between them.

*Allies:* U.N. member nations

*Additional data:* Dispatched forces may be from any member nation. All member nations undertake to make available armed forces, assistance, and facilities to maintain international peace and security.

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 20-81/20-81/20-81

#### **Australia, New Zealand, and United States Alliance (ANZUS)**

*Nature of agency:* Regional defensive alliance

*Governing body:* Member nations

*Personnel:* Varies

*Annual budget:* Varies

*HQ:* None

*Established:* 1952

*Activities:* Military alliance

*Policies:* Each member nation may choose not to share documents with its allies.

*Objectives:* To take any necessary joint counteraction under U.N. charter, including the use of armed force

*Areas of involvement:* Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea, and Persian Gulf

*Allies:* Australia, New Zealand, and U.S.A.

*Additional data:* New Zealand recently forbade U.S. ships which were probably carrying nuclear weapons from docking at New Zealand's ports, an action which has called the existence of ANZUS into question.

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 01-19/20-94/07-81

#### Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

*Nature of agency:* Non-military economic alliance

*Governing body:* Member nations

*Personnel:* Varies

*Annual budget:* Varies

*HQ:* Bangkok, Thailand

*Established:* 1967

*Activities:* ASEAN members regularly exchange political, economic, and military intelligence with each other.

*Policies:* To cooperate on international, political, and economic issues

*Objectives:* To promote regional economic integration, like the European Economic Community

*Areas of involvement:* Southeast Asia

*Allies:* Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore are members, with Papua New Guinea having observer status

*Additional data:* ASEAN was organized at first as an economic grouping.

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 01-19/07-94/01-81

#### Kilowatt

*Nature of agency:* Anti-terrorist organization

*Governing body:* Member nations

*Personnel:* None of its own

*Annual budget:* None of its own

*HQ:* None

*Established:* 1978

*Activities:* Organization concerned with Arab terrorism

*Policies:* National units are trained in the commando techniques of West Germany's Leatherheads (GSG9), Britain's legendary SAS, and the French Gendarmerie's Intervention Group (GIGN).

*Objectives:* To communicate with mem-

ber nations in an effort to reduce and control terrorist activities

*Areas of involvement:* Within member nations

*Allies:* West Germany, Belgium, Italy, the United Kingdom, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Denmark, France, Canada, Ireland, Sweden, Norway, and Israel

*Additional data:* This counterterrorist organization was established to trade information and to act as a center for information on terrorist organizations, operatives, methods, and links.

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 07-19/07-94/07-81

#### North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

*Nature of agency:* Regional defensive alliance

*Governing body:* NATO council of top foreign, economic, defense, and financial ministers

*Personnel:* Varies

*Annual budget:* Varies

*HQ:* Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers, Europe (SHAPE) is located at "Camp Casteau" near the Mons area in Belgium, about 30 miles southwest of Brussels.

*Established:* 1949

*Activities:* Military and naval defensive alliance

*Policies:* Each member nation may choose not to share information produced by its own intelligence services.

*Objectives:* To take necessary joint counteraction under the U.N. charter, including the use of armed force

*Areas of involvement:* Member countries on or near the North Atlantic Ocean.

*Allies:* Belgium, United Kingdom, Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Greece, Turkey, West Germany, and the U.S.A. are members.

*Additional data:* NATO protects an area of 8 million square miles, containing 500 million people.

*Bureaus:* All

*Alignment profile:* 01-19/07-94/07-81

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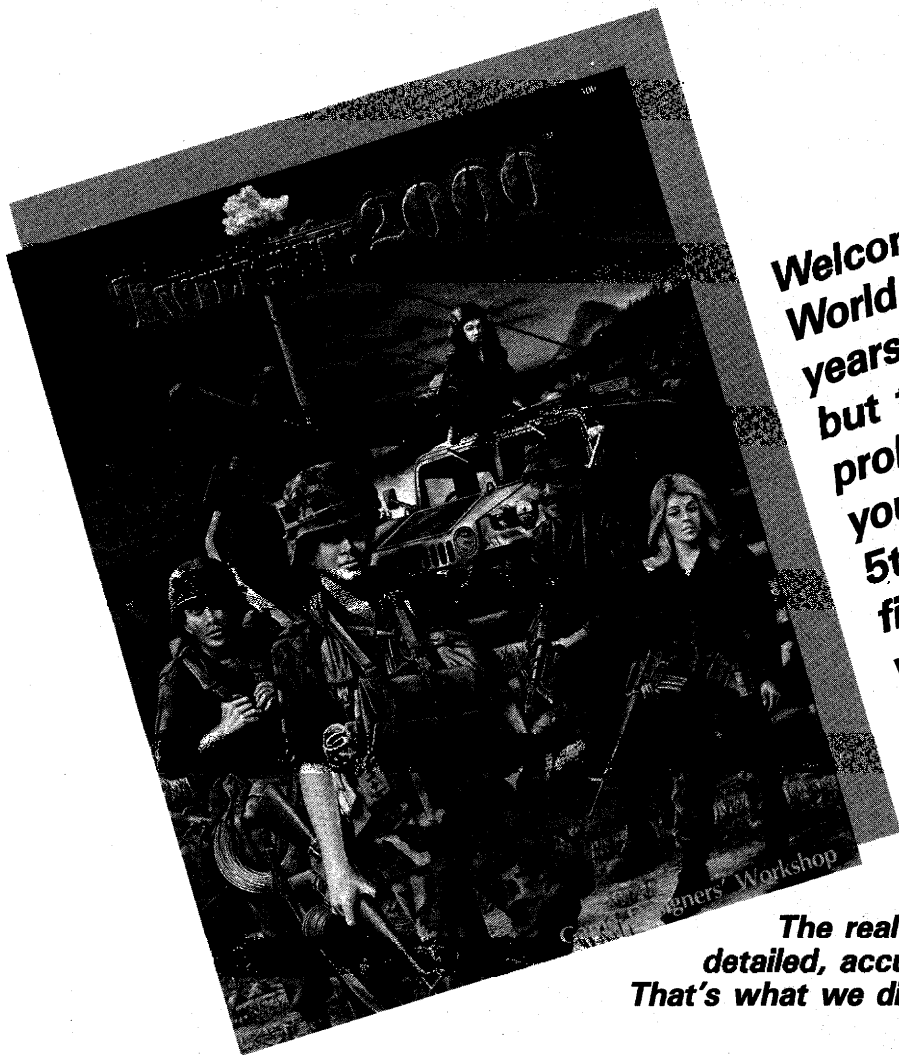
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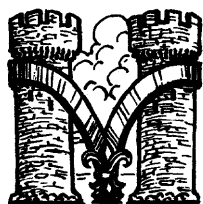
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MY FATHER SOLD ME TO GILLAM FOR two pennies and a good plow. It was a far better price than he had had for Arn, my older brother, and, as well, I could be in the same village and see my parents at times. Arn had gone to the collieries in Wales, and we knew

we'd never see him again.

I was happy in my new life. Gillam was the gentlest of men, for all his size and strength. And he was rich, compared to those who lived on the scrap of ground allotted by Lord Roderick to his commons. A smith's skills are so rare and valuable that even nobles give him some leeway in his life and work. And not only for his skills . . . there is an edge of fear clinging always about his almost magical craft.

This being a new fiefdom, recently granted by King Ethelred to Roderick's family, there was much work to be done. Though Gillam was no armorer, he shod the steeds of the nobles, and he forged the tools used in breaking and clearing the land. So strong was his art that he was chosen to forge the iron bands that bound together the oaken door-leaves of the Lord's new keep. I arrived in time to help with that.

I was not allowed to touch one scrap of the Lord's metal. I only cleaned and put away the hammers and tongs and punches and rasps used in the work. But I pumped mightily on the bellows, forcing the charcoal to white-heat at the center of the forge. I watched closely, even while pumping, as the straps took shape. They were formed into graceful curves, with the heavy lily-crest of Roderick centered upon each. I was fascinated by the boring of the bolt-holes, the shaping of the hinges, the finishing of the edges. Though it was obvious how each matter was done, still I felt the magic of the smith's skill.

And I vowed to become a smith, too — a frivolous dream for one born to my circumstances, but it kept me pumping enthusiastically.

Even better than the work was my treatment by Gillam's family. He and his wife had no child of their own, to their sorrow, and his wife seemed to extend toward me some of the affection that she would otherwise have given to her children. Gillam's niece also lived with them, having been orphaned very young, and the two of us, both in our early teens, settled amicably together almost as if children of the family.

There was altogether enough to eat! That always astonished me — my father would never have sold his children if he could have fed them by his efforts in the Lord's fields. But those efforts always fell far short, once the grain was divided, and starvation stood beside his door every day of his life. He knew that we could only be better elsewhere. I cannot know of Arn, but for myself I was more than happy with the life he contrived for me. Instead of toiling in the fields from dawn to dusk, ill-fed and more inadequately clothed and housed, I was full and warm, and could watch the miracles that took place at forge and anvil.

Gillam never struck me — few lads might say so much, I know. Yet even when my master was angered (and he had cause to be more than once), he withheld the sweep of

# The Forging of Fear

by Ardath Mayhar

*Illustrations by Valerie A. Valusek*

his huge hand that might well have taken me out of this world entirely. It was not only his need for my services. He also had affection for me. When I was burned by flying sparks or fiery bits of metal, his broad face would furrow as if my pain were his own.

But the thing that convinced me of his regard most firmly was the fact that he talked with me as if I were a man, a man with the education and wit to understand his words. This was the bond that kept me by him more solidly than my servitude.

He was no peasant, was Gillam. He had been trained by the clergy — at Avebury, no less — his father having been bailiff for a powerful Lord. Gillam could read, either in Latin or in our pithy Saxon. He could set quill to parchment with a hand finer than our Lord's own priest could manage. He understood many things of which others in our village never dreamed.

He talked of the past to me as we worked together filing punches or adjusting the jaws of tongs. "It was in many was a good life," he said, his big hands moving lovingly over the shape of a maul. "And there were writings in the abbey — I would dearly have loved to have had the time to read through the entire lot of those. But it was not to be. I could not accept many matters that were articles of faith . . . and there was one at which I laughed. When added to the list of my sins of omission and my interest in the Old Religion, that was the last matter needed to expel me. So I became a smith."

I was no fool, young as I was. I knew that a good story must lurk behind that statement. I asked, "What was that? The last thing you could not accept?"

He laughed, pitching a bolt into a bucket and taking up another to check the fit of it into the Lord's chariot-tongue. "Now that was humorous! Sheer folly, you understand, on all parts, from the abbot down to the lay brothers. You have heard the name Donnestoun?"

I gaped. "Him that was abbot of Glastonbury and adviser to kings? Indeed, even here we know his name. They speak of him now as a holy one —"

"That great ninny! And now they do, indeed, call him Holy One, when he was and remained a self-seeker . . . or a deluded fool, which is worse. He was a smith when the need arouse, the brothers told me. And one day, at his forge, he looked up to see the face of the Dark One in the window at his side. Filled with holy wrath that the demon might try tempting him, he heated his pincers to red-heat and caught the fiend by his long nose, pinching and burning him until he shrieked for mercy and swore never to trouble the pious fraud again."

Despite myself, I laughed.

Gillam laughed with me, though a hint of anger curved his grizzled brows down over his eyes. "Laughable enough. Even a child can see that. Either the holy Doonestoun was a liar or a fool, as I said before, but the brothers swallowed that great tale as if it were a custard. Never a one seemed to contract a bellyache trying to digest it. I was not of such tough stuff. I threw it up into the face of the master of novices, and he, in turn, cast me away from my intended goal."

I thought long about that conversation. It seemed to me that a man who was less honest than Gillam might have

aped his fellows and pretended to believe, in order to save his place. But I learned, as I lived with the smith, that his honesty went, like the roots of an oak, right down to the streams that fed his being. Every soul in our village knew that, as did even the Lord and his sons and those lesser nobles who served the Lord and lived in the keep that was rising, every day, to loftier heights above the village.

A day came when the Lord's youngest son, Ranald, brought his favorite mare to be shod. As the red metal clanged beneath the hammer which curved it to fit the anvil, the young man looked about him, his nose in the air. There being none of his own kind with whom to talk, he deigned to speak to me as I rested from my bellows work.

"A low place!" he sniffed, drawing away from the pile of fresh dung that his own steed had dropped near his boot. "A veritable Hell, in fact. Stenches and sweating serfs! Not suitable for me to wait in, I swear! Call me when all is done, boy!" And he strolled into the yard separating the shop from Gillam's house.

Something made me follow him to peer through the doorway. Lilibet, unfortunately, was just hanging the newly washed underclothes upon the barberry bushes to dry in the sun. Gillam's niece had grown, along with me, so gradually that I had not realized how much a woman she could appear. But when she stretched up to spread a length of stuff across the stone wall that faced the road, the sight was not lost upon Ranald, I could see. Something cold thumped, just once, in my chest.

I returned to Gillam's side, trying to hurry the task along in any way I could. I mistrusted the arrogant young man as much as I hated his sneering face, and I feared for Lilibet. There had been that in his look . . .

I spat into the dust and crossed myself.

Gillam shod the horse in jig time and let the beast out into the yard and assisted the youth to mount. Not even a small coin was forthcoming as he wheeled the mount and sped away.

My master looked about the yard, but Lilibet had gone into the house again, and I hesitated to tell him the thing that I had feared. Yet he knew that something was troubling me, so he led me back into the shop and sat upon a billet of wood.

"It is hard, young Pell," he said, "when you are young to swallow the like of that young sprout. Yet he is not what he thinks himself to be, as his father is not the great and earthshaking Lord he pretends that he is."

I looked up at him from my seat on a sack of charcoal. My eyes widened. "How not?" I asked. "Both have the power of life and death over such as us."

"As does a greater Lord, back to the east, over our Lord upon the hill. And above that Lord, the King, far away on the coast. And over the King . . . why the Deity Himself. Not one is without one greater than himself. And not one of those fine men, puffed up with self-esteem as they are, can do this —"

He reached down and lifted a bar of metal that waited to be turned into shoes or shafts or bolts. With his two hands, he curved it into a bow. His face was a bit red, though the remainder of the glow from the charcoal in the forge might have been to thank for that.



Before I could think what to say, he frowned, his brows meeting above his deep gray-green eyes. "There are many kinds of power, Pell. The power in my hands is one kind. The power upon yonder hill is another. That of the Abbey is still a third. And there is a fourth."

My heart thumped in my side. I knew what he meant, though we had never spoken of it. We both knew that there were those who disappeared from their hearths around the time of All-Hallows and Midsummer Eve. We had both heard tales of dark doings that stank of brimstone.

"But you have never. . .," I began.

He raised his hand. "That is a child's power, out there among the standing stones. Capering in the night is for those without the wit to seek for true strength of will and of thought. When they sent me from the Abbey, I did not turn from the Light . . . but I did not turn away from other matters, either. There are other magics than those of the Dark, never doubt it. Those I have looked into . . . a bit."

We went home to our supper in silence. The Dame and Lilibet looked questioningly at us both, but what might we have said? Nothing that they would have understood, it was certain. Yet each time my eyes met Lilibet's, a shiver went down me. She was so fair, so sweet in her young innocence. In time, Gillam would petition the Lord to wed her to the miller's son, and it would be a match that was good for her and for him. Stan, the miller, was in full agreement.

Yet there in the rushlight, before a board laid with food in plenty and in the company of those I loved and served, I felt a chill of foreboding come over me.

Would any warning of mine have averted the thing to come? I doubt it. Ranald lost no time. Less than a se'nnight later, he abducted Lilibet while Gillam was away dealing with the charcoal-burners. Two of his brother came with the young noble, along with several of the young spurs who tenanted the keep. They struck down the Dame, and they laid me low with the flat of a blade.

When my wits came to me again, I was lying with my head in Dame Marga's lap, and she was sponging the blood from my face. Tears were tracking her pale face. When I struggled to sit, she pushed me back with a firm hand.

"Nay, Pell. Lie still until your head is quiet. A clap to the skull such as that can be dangerous if you do not care for it." Her tone was matter-of-fact, belying the tears that still streamed.

"Lilibet?" I whispered, dreading her answer.

She bent her head. A tear dropped onto my face from her cheeks.

Then I sat up. "I shall take Gillam's staff and go after them!" I cried.

"They have gone into the keep. You cannot follow there, Pell. Gillam will be here soon — the sun is almost down. Then he will know what is best to do. The Lord has ever dealt justly with us . . . but . . . Ranald is his son. . . ."

I could see that she had scant hope of justice, this time. No more than had I.

Gillam returned before nightfall. When the news was told, he turned terribly pale, even through the ruddy flush



set upon his skin by the heat of the forge.

"I shall go at once to my Lord," he said. Without another word he did just that. It was midnight when he returned. His thump upon the door brought both of us running to open the latch and slip away the bar.

He had brought Lilibet. Her slight shape barely weighted his arms at all, and her fair hair trailed in a tousle from the crook of his elbow. For a moment I thought that he had succeeded, that the Lord had granted her return. Then I saw the blood upon her sleeve, the limp way her wrist swung, her lax hand.

The Dame gave a little moan. "Dead?"

He nodded, entered, and laid my foster sister upon her narrow couch. Weeping, I barred the door again and turned to face my master.

"What happened . . . to her?" I choked, though I greatly feared his answer.

"They had no time to ravish her, Pell," he said, and there were tears in his own eyes. "She found a knife in a fruit bowl and used it well." He sobbed one great, strangling sob, then was silent.

"I'll kill them!" I shouted, turning blindly toward the door. His great hand caught me.

"No. We will do . . . something else. We will imprison them in fear. We will drown them in their own panic. They will know more than the things they made our little one feel, before they are done. Come with me, Pell. There is much to do before midnight."

We set pitch torches about the shop until it blazed with light. While I set the charcoal into the forge and began bringing the heat up, Gillam made a pile of stones that looked something like the new keep that was the Lord's pride and home. By the time the forge was glowing, he had the model of the great house completed.

We knew the approach of midnight, as did the animals, by the feel of lateness in the night air, the set of the stars. As iron heated, we felt the time draw near. Gillam drew a long breath. Then he took a lengthy strap of red-hot metal from its fiery bed and laid it upon the anvil.

"Doom! Doom! Doom!" said the hammer, ringing against the anvil.

He forged the straps together, setting the lily-crest at the join. He did not make them beautiful, as he had done those others. He made them terribly strong. I could see his lips working as he hammered and shaped the metal, but what words came from him I could not hear above the clangor of his labor. He seemed bigger than before — taller, more threatening than I had ever dreamed that he could be. A strange tingle filled the workshop as he tempered the straps in cool water and drew them, still glowing dully, forth again.

We slipped them, with the aid of tongs, over the modeled keep that filled the space braced by the oaken beams from which we suspended heavy work. As the straps cooled, they tightened until not even a blade could fit between metal and stone.

I stared, awed. "What magic is this?" I whispered, and Gillam heard.

He bent upon me a gaze so withdrawn and terrible that I cringed. "Those who practice the Old Religion call it sympathetic magic," he said. "As fares this small keep, so

will the great one. The strength of the very soil and stone will hold it captive!" New words came from his lips as his eyes turned from me, but I stopped my ears and would not listen. By the time the second band was cramped about the keep, I was filled with terror.

Yet anger kept me going. Whatever Gillam was doing, whatever force, Dark or Light, that he called upon, this was justified. Lilibet had been all that was good and pure. Men who could cause her death in such fashion had no right to be called men, far less virtuous ones. If the Dark One had appeared at that instant and warned that my continued work at the bellows would mean instant translation into Hades, I would have pumped on. But the work was done, at last. The darkness faded from Gillam's face.

The old kindly smile shaped his lips. "We have done well, Pell. Dawn is upon us. Come into the yard and look up."

The breeze was freshening when we stepped into the open. A hint of dawn glowed in the sky behind the black bulk of the keep. It seemed as usual. The cry of the sentry on the tower came to our ears, dimmed with distance.

"I can see nothing amiss," I said, disappointed.

"We will rest awhile. You will see the result of our labors when the tenants of yonder house begin to stir." He turned to the house, and when inside, he fell into his bed beside the quietly weeping Dame.

We woke to screams and curses. I sat, and Gillam sprang to his feet.

"Pack up the things we must have, Marga," he said to the wondering Dame. "We will leave this place almost immediately, and there will be none to question our going. Pell and I must tend the forge before we go."

She asked no question but began bustling about at once. I could see that she had no objection to leaving this spot behind her forever.

We entered the smithy with the first rays of the sun. Someone hammered upon our door a moment afterward, crying, "Gillam! There is need at the keep! All are trapped there, inside the walls, and none can even so much as leap down from the parapet!"

Gillam grinned, his face ghastly. "Tell Lord Roderick that I will not come!" he shouted. "And be damned to him!"

We emptied out the bits of charcoal and packed the forge-bowl into the cart. The anvil strained us both, but it went in, too. All the tools, those precious things, were wrapped in leather and placed neatly in a big chest. When we had that in place, and the shop was stripped of everything useful, Gillam backed the old horse that had hauled so many loads of charcoal and metal for us between the cart-shafts. We hitched him, and he drew the cart out into the new sunlight.

I waited in the now-familiar smithy. In a bit Gillam returned with Lilibet in his arms. Where the anvil had stood, he laid her tenderly upon a sheepskin from her bed. At her head was the banded keep. At her feet he set into the dirt floor an iron cross that he had forged for the gate of the Lord's chapel.

Then he showed me where to dig, where to pry. We worked in a frenzy, loosing stones at key points in the



structure. The stones began creaking about us.

He bent and kissed his niece on the forehead. I touched her hand. Then we left her there, went outside, and brought the entire building down over her. No noble Lady ever had a finer tomb. None would ever dig through that rubble to find her — or that ensorcelled model of the

castle above the village. It would remain there, secure and undisturbed, while serfs and freemen struggled to free their Lord from his own house.

The last of the dust had not settled when we pulled away from our own home, out of the low gateway, into the dusty road. The cries and pleas of those trapped in the keep filled all the air. The Dame looked quizzically at her husband.

"Will they ever escape?" she asked. Her eyes told me that she had a notion of the thing that we had done that night.

Gillam's face was as grim as the stone of the crag as he whipped up the horse. "Not until they go forth as ghosts," he said.

The Dame reached behind and patted my arm. "Good. Let them rot!" she murmured.

The road wound ahead, exciting to me who had never traveled past the fields. There was always work for a smith . . . and his helper. Wherever we might go, we would prosper, I felt certain. It would have been better if Lilibet had gone, too, bubbling with laughter at everything new, but she was, at least, safe from harm, now.

I looked up at the crag, the castle shining in the morning brightness. No eye could see the spell that bound it round, yet my knowing seemed to visualize the bands of metal centered with lily-crests that imprisoned those within.

I crossed myself. They were in Fate's hands, now. The Dark One had nothing to do with it.

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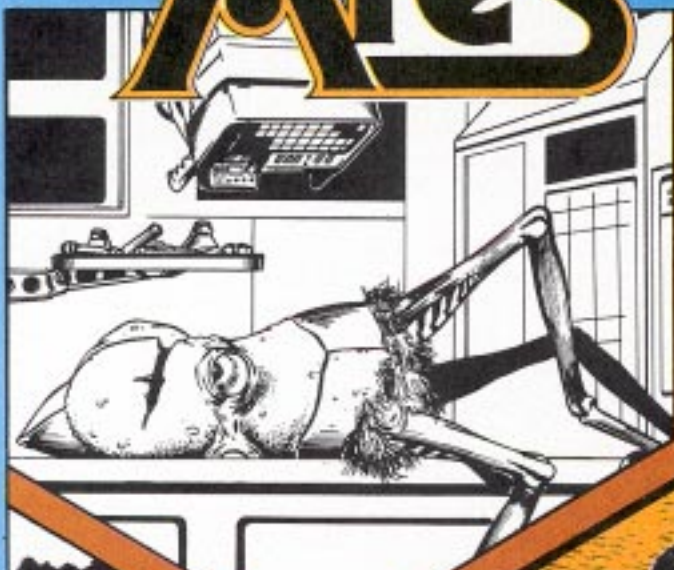
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# Ares™

## SCIENCE-FICTION GAMING SECTION





## CONTENTS

**ARES Log** ..... 70

### THE VOLTURNUS CONNECTION

**Stephen Bonario** ..... 71  
Background to a Voltumnus campaign

### WHEN HISTORY GOES AWRY

**Mark Acres** ..... 74  
Alternate Parallels in TIMEMASTER™ gaming

### ALONE AGAINST THE ASTEROID

**Stephen James** ..... 78  
The *Asteroid* game, solitaire

### RETURN TO THE VIPER'S™ PIT

**Kim Eastland** ..... 80  
Adding more to your MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game

### STARQUESTIONS

**Penny Petticord** ..... 81  
Answers for the STAR FRONTIERS® game

### THE MARVEL®-PHILE

**Jeff Grubb** ..... 82  
The First Index of Heroes!

### ON THE COVER

The many faces of adventure on Voltumnus have a common origin. But who is the Star Devil? Why is there so much interest in Voltumnus? See the article by Stephen Bonario. Collage by Roger Raupp and Patrick Price; art by Jim Holloway, Jeff Easley, and Tim Truman.

This issue contains our second ARES™ Section Special. For all hard-core GAMMA WORLD® gamers who've asked for more variety in their daily mutational diet, we present the **Mutant Manual**, right in the middle of the magazine, which can be pulled out and dropped into any Game Master's notebook.

In the ARES Section itself are the first Index of Marvel Super Heroes™, a detailed background for use with the Voltumnus campaign modules, and some other amusing articles on things like Hydra's™ return, mad computers, and how Napoleon conquered the world. (What?)

The response to last month's "Not Quite the MARVEL®-Phile" was very gratifying. We are now taking requests for next year's April Fool's column on the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game. You may send in your requests anytime you like until next February.

The Fabulous Frog-Man™, by the way, should have had a Health of 32 and a Karma of 16. Also, William Tracy noted two corrections to his article on S.H.I.E.L.D.™ (DRAGON® issue #94). First, Hawkeye aircraft have no armament. Second, the F/A-18 aircraft have the following armament: 2 radar-guided missiles (as per guided missiles, p. 17 of the Campaign Book), 2 heat-seeking missiles (as above, except that they head for the nearest and hottest heat source), and 2 30-mm electric cannon (Range: Good, Damage: Incredible). Thanks to Paul Stevens for his help here. Finally, Jeff Butler did the artwork for Box™ in issue #97. Thanks, Jeff.

DRAGON issue #100 approaches, and we've discussed a number of possible specials for the ARES Section. An all-superhero issue? A GAMMA WORLD diet-and-exercise plan? A centerfold of She-Hulk™ sunbathing atop the Baxter Building? Decisions, decisions. Check with us later for more.

*Roger E. Moore*

ARES™ Section 98  
THE SCIENCE-FICTION GAMING SECTION

Editor: Roger E. Moore

Editorial assistance: Eileen Lucas, Debbie Poutsch, Patrick Lucien Price, Charles Ramsay

Design: Roger Raupp

Graphics and production: Kim Lindau, Patrick Lucien Price, Roger Raupp

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# The Volturnus Connection

## *Building background for the Volturnus campaign*

by **Stephen Bonario**

A referee starting a new STAR FRONTIERS® campaign with the Volturnus module series has many questions about the historical background of the Volturnus adventures which need to be answered. The answers provided in this article are unofficial, but are given to help the beginning referee tie up the loose ends and to help the campaign

grow beyond the initial series of adventures.

This article attempts to deal only with those questions that relate to motivations or rationales important to the series. The motives of the Eorna and the Sathar are well defined in the Volturnus modules. But why are the pirates on Volturnus? What real interests does the Truane's Star government have in the planet? What follows is a possible account of what happened to cause the

circumstances present when players begin SF-0, *Crash on volturnus*.

In Frontier Year 44 (for more information on the Frontier time system, see the Expanded Game Rules, p. 52, and SFKH-1, *Dramune Run*), there was a human merchant named Seccitte Zebulon, who regularly made shipments to the Truane's Star system. His ship accidentally misjumped when leaving that system, and Zebulon found himself in an uncharted and mysterious new star system.

Upon return to Pale, Seccitte decided to sell the astrogational information he and his crew acquired while charting their way back. He sold the location of the system to the government of Pale, which promptly paid Zebulon by giving him a private luxury island (where he lived very comfortably — under the government's watchful eye, so he could not resell the information elsewhere).

The Truane's Star system was divided at the time. Pale was the first local planet colonized because of its great mineral wealth. Pale is a cold planet with seasons defined only by the movement of polar ice over its equatorial oceans. New Pale is an Earth-like planet rich in vegetation and animal life. However, this planet is *far* more dangerous than Pale; huge, vicious dinosaurs roam its plains, jungles, and skies, very much like prehistoric Earth. New Pale was settled by humans to supply food to Pale.

The governments of these two neighboring worlds were independent of each other, yet cooperated well. Pale knew its existence depended on the continuation of food supply shipments from New Pale, the cheapest available external food source. New Pale relied on this demand for its food as its main source of income.

In F.Y. 45, Pale's government created a Planetary Research and Development division to open up the "Zebulon Star Route." Pale launched a deep-space probe to explore the system, now named Zebulon after its discoverer. The probe reported astrophysical data on the system and its only habitable planet (now called Volturnus). When it was discovered that great mineral wealth existed on Volturnus, Pale became eager to colonize the planet. Because Pale itself was an ore-rich world, it already had many mining companies in operation on it. The Research division began taking development bids, and the resulting competition was fierce.

The contract to develop Volturnus was



awarded to a healthy company called MINER (Mining for Industrial use of Natural Earth Resources). Plans and negotiations went on for a year, and MINER planned to begin settlement of Volturnus in early F.Y. 47.

Two calamities struck the project at this time, causing the whole thing to fall through. First, New Pale began to receive non-human colonists from Pale. A majority of humans on New Pale were HUSPs (a slang term for persons believing in a racist political philosophy called Human Superiority). The HUSPs preferred this racially isolated planet and didn't want it "contaminated." But Pale used military force to bully the weaker government into allowing other races to settle there. Pale saw this as a way to increase food production on New Pale and perhaps drive food costs down. Several months later, the HUSPs banded together and began terrorizing the new colonists, also attacking Pale's "colonial protection" forces. New Pale thus declared itself to be in a state of war with Pale.

The result of this was Pale's transference of money from "unnecessary" projects to the direct defense of its critical food supply source. Money from the Planetary Research division was diverted to this cause because it was felt profits from Volturnus operations would not be realized fast enough to help the war effort. Pale also believed that, if it could gain full control of New Pale, it could become a much more powerful stellar government.

The other calamity that struck was the kidnapping of the head of MINER, a Vrusk, who was later reported killed when the demanded ransom was not paid. His body was never recovered, and his will called for the liquidation of MINER, with all monies then deposited into a private bank account. It was widely believed that a rival company was responsible for his death.

This was a turning point for Volturnus. It gave the Eorna another twenty years to fulfill their Great Mission, but it also brought the Star Devil to

Volturnus. The former head of MINER secretly retained all the classified information on Volturnus and the Zebulon star system. He had rigged his kidnapping and death, then assumed a new identity as the Star Devil. His initial intent was to set up an illegal mining operation on Volturnus before the government of Pale could do so. To help realize his plans, he drew on the private bank account his will had set up. But as time went on, he instead became involved in pirating operations. He didn't know then how much his "business" would affect Volturnus's future.

The war on New Pale consisted of a series of HUSP-led terrorist attacks on food service shipments to Pale. Pale was forced to continue to spend money on ensuring its food supply remained secure. This became difficult in the early 50s because Pale had an overabundance of resources that were also low in demand. It suffered an economic depression, and many Pale-based mining companies went out of business. One mid-sized corporation, based in Point True, Pale's capitol, began to acquire these small companies hoping to gain a planet-wide monopoly. The corporation was Streele; by F.Y. 53, Streele completely controlled all mining operations on Pale.

Aware of this, the Star Devil approached the Pan-Galactic Corporation and worked out an agreement with it. The Star Devil, using bases in the Gruna Goru, Prenglar, and Dixon's Star systems, ran weapons shipments from Wartech Corporation to the HUSPs on





New Pale. Pan-Galactic financed the cost of the weapons, while the Star Devil furnished the ships. Gun-running proved profitable for both PGC and the Star Devil, allowing the latter to become a potent force. The Star Devil was able to develop Voltturnus before Trauna's Star could do it, while keeping Streeel busy investing money in the war effort instead of in business projects like PGC did. This activity went on from F.Y. 54 to F.Y. 63. The Star Devil expanded his pirate bases to the Araks, Athor, and Scree Fron star systems. In F.Y. 63, he began putting his Voltturnus mining plans into operation. This particular year also saw the end of the Pale-New Pale war.

Streeel struggled through those nine years of war, yet continued to grow into a larger corporation despite it. In F.Y. 63, in cooperation with the Pale Militia, Streeel made an effort to end the war by pouring millions into the militia's coffers. Confronted by an army of far superior quantity and quality, the HUSPs were soon crushed out of existence, despite the best efforts of PGC and the Star Devil to save them. New Pale became a stabilized planet. Its new gov-

ernment then joined Pale's, and the two began united rulership of the Truane's Star system.

By F.Y. 64, Streeel became aware of the long-deserted Zebulon colonization attempt. It urged the new government to develop the system claimed twenty years ago. Streeel even helped finance a new Planetary Research division. The division sent an exploratory team three and a half months (140 days) into F.Y. 64. Nine months (360 days) later, a second team was assembled — the player characters.

This is where your campaign is set to begin. Using the previous information, you can provide information about the past to characters who manage to gain access to the pirates' computers. You can now use the Star Devil's many bases as expansion for further adventures. It is almost inevitable that a party will want to get even with the pirates, who may have been responsible for the deaths of party members or who may have escaped Voltturnus with prisoners who are player characters. What happens next will be up to the referee and players. Using the rationale provided here

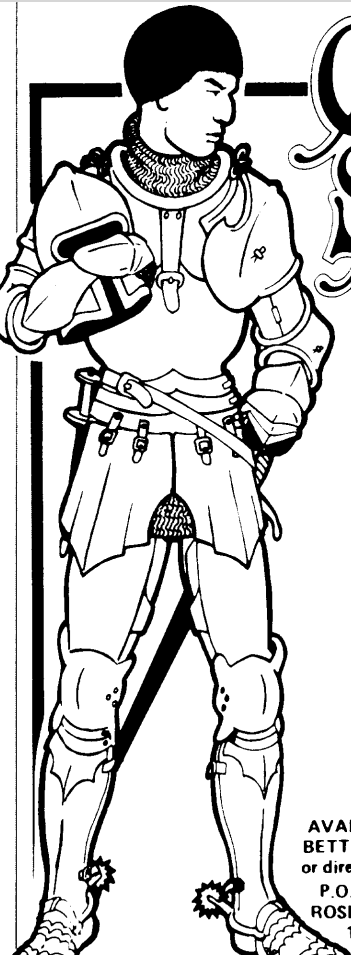
will flesh out the campaign and make it more logical and consistent.

It is also suggested that gamers use the following additional information:

1. The captain of the *Serena Dawn* was working with the pirates, but his reward for delivering the second team to them was his death and the destruction of his ship and crew. The player characters, of course, escaped.

2. PGC has been buying the Star Devil's ore mined on Voltturnus. PGC knows of this operation and deals with it despite its illegality. Should characters discover this information, they could sell it to Streeel for a handsome price. However, it is quite likely PGC will learn of the sale and send out a few agents to deal with the characters. . . .

I hope this article has demonstrated the need for rationale in any kind of campaign to new and old referees alike. By having a consistent set of motives for the major influences in a scenario, the referee can draw on them and "wing it" with ease when necessary, yet remain true to the pre-planned course of events. Players are an unpredictable lot, and answering their questions becomes easier when you know the answers.



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# When History Goes Awry

## *Alternate Parallels in the TIMEMASTER™ game*

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by Mark Acres

*It was close, very close. The Demoreans had suckered us, and we didn't realize it until we were at sea with the French fleet. No chance to recall our chronoscooters; no chance to time hop back and fix the problem the easy way. We had to survive the upcoming battle of Trafalgar, so we figured we might as well fix the Parallel while we were there.*

*Fortunately, we succeeded. The Demoreans had been smart enough to have the English fleet act just as Nelson's had on T-0. That would have guaranteed an English victory, had we not been there. We had one advantage: being from T-0, we knew already what the English would do if they followed Nelson's plan. By feeding suggestions to Villeneuve at the right times, we were able to see that the French won, right on schedule. Mission accomplished.*

*History on M-221 is now restored to normal. Napoleon reigns over his continental empire from Paris until his untimely death in 1839. England becomes a French client state in 1807 under King Joachim Murat, hero of the Battle of Salsbury. Russia joins the Empire without war in 1810. The socialist and nationalist revolutions of 1848 are required to restore the familiar national boundaries of Europe as they are known on T-0.*

*Mission Report  
Submitted Oct. 12, 7192  
to Time Corps HQ*

Adventures on alternate Parallels, especially those in which history is moderately different from history as we know it, quickly become a favorite staple in most TIMEMASTER™ campaigns. Players relish the flavor of these different — yet familiar — worlds, in which Napoleon's Empire once spanned the globe, the Confederacy won its independence, and the adventures of legendary heroes like Robin Hood or the Three Musketeers are reality.

Two things can make adventuring in these alternate Parallels as much fun in actual play as it sounds. A good Continuum Master should develop these alternate Parallels as logical, self-consistent adventure settings, with attention to those details which will be enjoyable and relevant during play. Then, he or she should make adventures in these Parallels just as dramatically important (i.e., dangerous to the agents' own futures) as adventures in T-0, the home Parallel of the Time Corps.

Different groups of TIMEMASTER players have different tastes. Some groups are fanatical about historical detail and accuracy; others see the game more as science fantasy and want emphasis on the unusual or the bizarre. Adventures in the "M" category of Parallels, those with a history moderately different from our own, are most likely to please both extremes of style, without causing the CM undue work or headaches. There are two types of "M" paral-

lels: those with unusual deviations from history as we know it, and those which are directly related to T-0 because they are the homes of important characters of historical fiction or legend. Whichever type is chosen, the "M" Parallels are an ideal setting for the CM whose time is limited. Adventures in the "R" and "A" Parallels are also possible, but these require substantially more work for the CM to prepare.

### **Legendary Parallels**

Developing the "M" Parallels which are the homes of legendary or fictional characters requires only that the CM be familiar with the novel or legend which is the basis for the characters and the setting. The actual developmental work has already been done, either by various fiction authors or by the generations of storytellers who have embellished the legend.

For example, Pacesetter's published adventure scenario *Crossed Swords* takes place on an "M" Parallel in which Dumas's novel, *The Three Musketeers*, is real history. While developing this scenario, we were able to concentrate on the plot and game elements of the adventure, rather than worry about building a world to serve as setting for the adventure, since Dumas had already built the world for us.

When selecting a legendary or historical fictional setting, it is important to choose one with which most of your players are already familiar. A lot of the fun in adventuring in such a setting comes from the setting's flavor, the intangible elements of mood and style which those familiar with the story or legend take for granted in that particular setting.

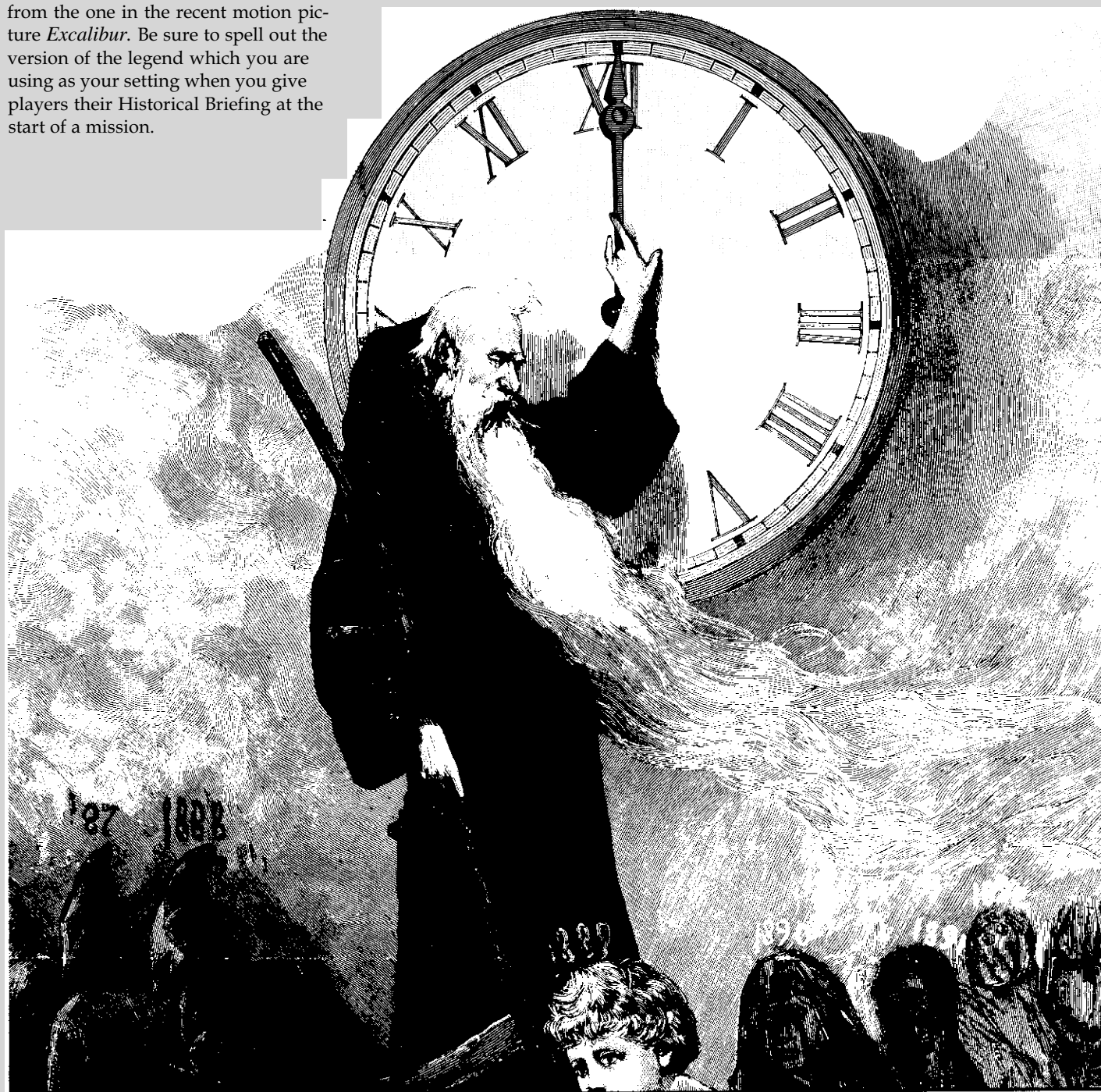
When dealing with a legendary figure such as King Arthur or Robin Hood, it is important to know with which version of the legend your players are most familiar. The King Arthur of the Broadway musical *Camelot* is very different from the one in the recent motion picture *Excalibur*. Be sure to spell out the version of the legend which you are using as your setting when you give players their Historical Briefing at the start of a mission.

sive points require more work to develop than the historical or legendary Parallels. Fortunately, such work is largely speculative and quite entertaining. In fact, once your imagination goes to work, the hardest part is keeping speculation within some sort of reasonable bounds. (Speculative histories and societies which go beyond all reasonable bounds belong on the "R" and "A" Parallels.) The sort of imaginative thinking required to develop an "M" Parallel is actually the sort we use to come up with the historical changes shown on the

Historical Changes Chart at the end of every TIMEMASTER scenario.

The first step is to decide the event with which history on the "M" Parallel deviates from history as we know it. The event picked as this deviation point can be as famous or obscure as desired. However, most groups of players will understand the setting better if the deviation stems from an event which was famous and decisive, and which can easily be visualized.

Decisive battles or the outcomes of famous wars fall into this category. If you say, "This is a Parallel where the



South won the Civil War,” or, “This is a Parallel where Napoleon won at Waterloo and went on to conquer all of Europe,” most people will immediately have some idea what you are talking about. They will begin to have a feel for the world you are building, and their imaginations will be fired with the possibilities of what might have been.

Social, cultural, or intellectual events are much more difficult to deal with. If you say, “This is a Parallel in which Plato never wrote *The Republic*,” you probably haven’t fired the imagination of many players, even though a Parallel built on that premise could be quite interesting.

A well-chosen deviation point could be the setting for an interesting adventure in its own right. For example, the battle of Gettysburg could be the setting for an adventure in a Parallel where the South won that battle, but Demoreans or time renegades are out to change the result so that the North wins, just as on T-0. Adventures of this sort can be fun for both the CM and the players, especially because the players’ knowledge of real history can be used against them by a creative CM.

CMs who are willing to invest more time in the creation of their “M” Parallel can set adventures taking place long after the deviation-point event has occurred. In these adventures, the PCs would enter a world in which the consequences of the historical deviation are being lived out.

For example, imagine a world where the South *did* win the Civil War, and further imagine that it’s now 1985 in that world. What’s the world like? Clearly, there can be as many answers to that question as there are people who can answer it — and any number of those answers could be equally correct. We are dealing with pure speculation, and any description of this world would involve a large number of arbitrary decisions.

This doesn’t mean, however, that all speculative decisions are created equal. They aren’t. Some descriptions are much better than others because they are logically self-consistent. Developing and maintaining self-consistency in a Parallel is just like developing and maintaining self-consistency in any other game setting. This issue has been addressed in dozens of articles on dozens of different games, and there is no need to belabor the point here.

It is important to remember that the differences you want to highlight will

show up better against a background which is familiar. In other words, don’t make *everything* in this altered world different from the historical norm. Players need something familiar for them to hang onto during an adventure. Having this familiarity will make the differences you create stand out more sharply and clearly.

However the speculative description of this altered world develops, be sure to provide some detailed examples of major differences from our own history, the results of which can be turned into minor encounters for the PCs. These small encounters should give the flavor of the world you’ve created, and they are very important to enjoyable play. No matter how well you describe the setting you’ve created in a briefing, there is no substitute for the direct experience of that setting through play.

For example, let’s say that in an alternate Parallel the South gained its independence in the Civil War and the North continued on as the United States. Suppose that by the early 1900s, a combination of political and economic pressures made it imperative that the two nations reunite for their own mutual advantage. In this newly reconstituted United States, however, the South received a much more generous allowance of political power in the federal government than is the case in T-0. Your PCs, adventuring in this society, might find a newspaper article which shows this power being put to use in a current political issue. The characters may even be drawn into a barroom discussion (or brawl) in Boston over the power of the “southern bloc.”

### A few new ripples

CMs seldom have a problem keeping a TIMEMASTER game tense when the adventure is taking place on T-0. The PCs know that if they fail their mission, they may time travel home to Time Corps HQ only to discover that both it, and they, no longer exist! Most PCs take this into careful consideration when on their missions; they do not, for example, go around indiscriminately killing NPCs.

But, aside from the Corps regulations, what is to constrain the wilder type of player when his character goes adventuring on, let’s say, Parallel M-17? After all, it isn’t *his* history he’s going to change, is it?

Well, maybe it is, and maybe it isn’t.

The TIMEMASTER rules specifically state that PCs are members of the Earth

Speciality Division and were recruited from Earth’s past. Nowhere do the rules mention *which* Earth; they could be from Earth in T-0, Earth in T-121, or Earth in M-17, for that matter. All that is strictly implied is that the historical experience of the PCs was the same *up to the time of the PC’S recruitment*. It could very well be the case, for example, that a PC was recruited from M-17 at a point on M-17’s timeline *before* that Parallel’s history deviated from history on T-0. Thus, that PC, on a mission to M-17 sometime before his own birth, could very well change his own history — he could even prevent his recruitment by the Corps and thus effectively kill himself as a game character.

The exact Parallel of origin for each PC can be determined by the CM at the time the character is created. The CM may share this information with the PC at his or her discretion. CMs should also feel free to incorporate appropriate changes in a PC’s own history as part of the Historical Changes Chart for scenarios of their own design.

Furthermore, the Time Corps has recently made a startling discovery which is just now being communicated to its agents. Changes in alternate Parallels can have ripple effects through the Continuum, *causing changes in T-0 itself*.

The nature of these changes to T-0 should be decided by the CM as part of the scenario design and incorporated as additions to the Historical Changes Chart, using the following guidelines.

1. Of course, successful missions with no inadvertent changes to the Parallel have no ripple effects.

2. Mission failure on an alternate Parallel can, at the CM’s discretion, have *automatic* ripple effects onto T-0. Correcting these effects can, of course, be the PC’s next mission, unless the ripple effect was strong enough to wipe out the existence of the Time Corps.

3. When PCs successfully complete a mission but cause inadvertent changes to the Parallel despite their mission success, the chance for a ripple effect is equal to the total Significance Points the PCs were penalized divided by 60, or 5%, whichever is greater.

Ripple effects from fictional or legendary Parallels should flow naturally in some way from the changes caused in the legend or work of fiction (see the module *Clash of Kings!*, for example). Ripple effects from other “M” class Parallels should affect T-0 at the same dates that the “M” Parallel was affected, and in some similar, analogous ways.



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# Alone against the Asteroid



## *The Asteroid game, solitaire*

by Stephan James

A hastily assembled team of adventurers attempts to board an asteroid piloted by a mad computer, to prevent it from striking the Earth and destroying mankind. Among the heroes are a news reporter, a demolitions expert, an old professor and his daughter, a muscleman, a mine dog, an assortment of robots and space soldiers, and a parapsychologist.

Obviously, this isn't your typical group of world savers. The space-opera plot and the strange characters make the *Asteroid* game a memorable one. But what if you can't find a second player? The rules don't cover solitaire play. The following scenario and material attempt to rectify that situation.

**Setup:** Take the eight game maps and place them on the playing surface in pairs of two, dividing the asteroid complex into four distinct floor levels. Place the following counters face down on the corresponding floors, on the red circles:

- 1st floor* — 6 utility bots, 1 stairs-up.
- 2nd floor* — 4 utility bots, 1 mining bot, 2 stairs-up, 1 computer terminal.
- 3rd floor* — 4 utility bots, 2 mining bots, 1 stairs-up, 2 terminals, 1 roamer.
- 4th floor* — 2 utility bots, 1 mining bot, 4 roamers.

Place the following counters in a separate face-up pile: 4 stairs-down, 3 collapsed vents, 3 collapsed corridors, keys invisibility belt, disintegrator, and computer brain.

**Boarding:** The expedition team enters through an airlock into the lowest left corridor on the first floor. The whereabouts of stairways, hostile bots, etc., are completely unknown.

**Discovery:** After each movement phase, a discovery phase is added. A die is rolled once for each floor that contains an expedition character and a turned-down counter. On a roll of 1 or 2, take a turned-down counter and place it in any square adjacent to a random expedition character on the same floor. Melee with hostile forces so discovered will occur during the melee phase, as described in the existing rules.

Dr. T.A. Johansen, Project Director  
Project Skyline  
1219 Senyuta Place  
Monkasa Space Center

Dear Dr. Johansen:

Enclosed please find the diagnostic printouts I have been able to obtain so far on the control brain for mining station Nine Seven Bravo (Nenote). Due to frequent and erratic interruptions in communications with the center, the printouts are fragmentary, but the picture that emerges is frightening. It is my belief that for reasons we shall never completely understand Dr. MacDonald, prior to his suicide, programmed the station to conduct a maneuver using its thermonuclear mining charges which will place it on a converging orbit with the Earth. Minor course corrections can be conducted using the station's large ram drivers (see enclosure 2 for mathematical proof of course change feasibility). I believe such action by the station to be imminent.

In the event of a ground strike, my available information indicates in excess of a 70% chance of crust penetration which would effectively destroy the earth. Failing a penetration to the magma, the strike impact and subsequent cause extensive subsidence. Secondary earthquakes of massive proportions will continue for an indeterminate period of time.

In the far more likely event of a water strike, the chances of a crust penetration are somewhat lower, but the tidal waves and earthquake destruction will be the same and the millions of tons of water precipitated onto the earth's surface will cause the same damage on the land.

Before the station's computer brain is destroyed, once the course of the mining station and the damage on the earth is determined, the damage on the earth will be determined.



If a stairs-up counter is discovered, get a stairs-down counter from the separate face-up counter pile and place it on the next higher floor of the asteroid complex. The grid square position of the up/down stairway counters should correspond to each other. An up staircase at 1M4 means that a down staircase exists at 3M4 (if sheet 3 is assumed to be directly above sheet 1).

If an expedition character moves on the same floor from one map to another (each floor being made up of two maps), then roll a die. On a roll of 1 or 2, place a "collapsed" counter on the corresponding vent or corridor. Roll again, and on a roll of 1 or 2, place the collapsed counter behind the expedition character, blocking his way back through the corridor. Otherwise, place the counter so that it blocks the character's forward movement into the next map.

This method will unexpectedly trap some characters in an inhospitable sector of the mining complex. Demo charges will then have to be used to clear the way, or Muscle McGee's breach traits might be needed — the existing rules explain these methods.

**Bots:** All hostile robots move towards Nicholle if she is within a bot's line of sight. Otherwise, the bots move to attack the closest expedition character. When a hostile bot moves adjacent to Nicholle, she is automatically abducted. The bot and Nicholle are then placed in the face-up pile for later discovery (see below).

**Computer terminals:** Disregard the rules concerning computer terminal info on map and terminal locations. If terminal access gives info on the keys, belt, gun, or computer brain, take the corresponding counter from the face-up counter pile and place it anywhere on the next higher floor. Note that the locations of these items can only be found by using the terminals.

**New traits:** The modified character traits given below add even more complications to the mission, and may even be used for a multiplayer game.

*Lucky's* luck may run out when he expends over 18 luck points. On a die roll of 1 or 2, rolled for each point that his used luck exceeds this limit, his luck runs out.

*Muscles* has befriended the dog *Sasha*, and he also knows that *Carter* hates the dog. If *Sasha* is killed by any means, *Muscles* avenges her death by fighting *Carter* to the finish.

*Nicholle* is the most vulnerable member of the expedition, and hostile bots

will always try to abduct her. If they are successful, then *Nicholle* is immediately taken to the deepest part of the asteroid complex and her counter is placed in the turned-up counter pile. It is returned, along with the abducting bot, to the fourth floor only when all other fourth-floor counters have been discovered.

*Sasha* is very protective of *Nicholle*. If *Nicholle* is abducted, *Sasha* will always try to attack hostile bots. The dog won't even tag along with *Muscles* until every bot is killed.

*Demon* loves to demolish things. As soon as he finds the computer, he will do anything to destroy it. Anybody who tries to stop him will have to melee with him to the death. If *Demon* discovers the computer brain before *Nicholle* is rescued, look out victory points!

Either *Sarge*, *Gunner*, *Hanson*, or *Alex* is an android. Unknown to the expedition, the computer communicates with the android using high frequency waves (unheard by human ears). During every game "crisis," a die is rolled for each of these characters. The first character that rolls a 1 is the android. This android then joins forces with the computer and tries to abduct *Nicholle*.

*Mrs. Jones'* regular characteristics should be disregarded for solitaire play. Instead, she has special psionic powers useful on mechanized machinery, but it takes lots of energy for her to use this power. Only once can she turn a hostile bot which occupies the same room as she does into a friendly bot. Saving her powers until someone discovers a Roamer may save the expedition.

*George* might be a top pilot, but lately he has been drinking heavily. His mental stability is on shaky ground. During each game "crisis," the die is rolled. On a 1 or 2, *George* cracks and makes a mad dash to escape the asteroid, leaving everyone else behind. Fortunately, as he makes his mad dash he becomes disoriented, and his movement allowance is reduced to 3. If he gets to the first-floor airlock by himself, you lose the game.

*Scoop's* reporting methods have made enemies. An assassin is among the expedition members. Before each movement phase, roll a die for each character who is on the same floor with *Scoop*. The first character to roll a 1 attacks *Scoop*. If the assassin ends *Scoop's* news career, then the assassin once again joins the expedition party to shut down the berserk computer.

*Kirby*, too, will try to destroy the computer as soon as it is found.

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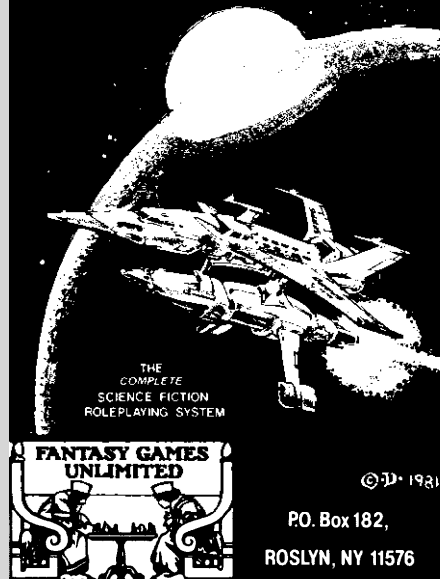
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# Return to the Viper's™ Pit

## *Expanding your MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ campaign*

by Kim Eastland

Creating a module, like many other things in this world, is a group effort. When the writer/designer has finished his manuscript, it still goes through many hands, including those of editors, artists, layout persons, and so on. This is a great system because additional creative input sharpens the product. Sometimes, of course, things get left out or aren't completely explained. This article wraps up a glitch or two in my MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Module, *Pit of the Viper™*, and adds new material to the module as well.

A few of the creative people who helped put this module together deserve credit for their work. Dennis Kauth took my rough concepts for the fold-ups and turned them into beautiful pieces of three-dimensional machine art. Jeff Butler did the great artwork on the 3-D characters (as usual), and John Meyers put together the finished product. All three of these artists did a splendid job, and I thank them.

### **A few corrections**

The top of the Nihilist™ Complex Map page is north. This will help the Judge tie it into the larger city map from the boxed set. The smaller Warehouse Map on the same page should have a line of crates running along its west wall. Behind these crates is the pneu-tube entrance to the complex. The doorway on the south wall of the warehouse leads to the retail outlet in the front. Also, add a monitor in the southeast corner of the Flight Deck, area II.

Note that the recharging stations in the complex are used for cyborgs, electric carts, and laser weapons.

The "tentied" picture of Captain America™ is actually a dartboard. Just prick it with a pin a few times so that

the characters will notice it when they enter Viper's room.

### **Additional material**

During the laying out of the cut-outs, extra room was created due to Dennis's superior organizational ability, and last-minute additions were implemented to give the most cut-outs for the money. Everyone involved felt it would be fun for us to give the creative Judges out there something to play with. Here are some suggested statistics for the new "toys" we added.

*Missiles and rockets* — Range: 20 areas; Damage: 50 (one use); Body: Excellent; Speed: Excellent. The only difference between the two is that a rocket is fired in a specific direction and will continue in a straight line until it strikes something or reaches the end of its range.

A missile is guided (Control: Remarkable) and can home in on one target. It will follow the target and explode either upon impact with it, upon impact with an obstacle that suddenly appears between it and the target, or upon reaching the end of its flight range. The addition of rockets or missiles to an Attack Sled reclassifies it as an N-3 Attack Sled. Rockets and missiles can also be used in a Danger Room, but their damage is reduced to 2.

*Laser cannon* — Range: 12; Damage: 75; 5 shots before it has to be recharged, but it can only fire every other turn because it superheats. This cannon may be used in a Danger Room, where it only does 2 points of damage and has Incredible Control, or it can be mounted on an Attack Sled. When the cannon is added to an N-3 Attack Sled, the sled is reclassified as an N-4 Attack Sled.

*Flying rings* — Range: variable (1d10 areas); Damage: 2; Speed: Remarkable;

Control: Amazing. Flying Rings are only used in Danger Rooms for training purposes. Some will expand and entrap the characters inside them if they strike. Others will lay out a smoke screen as they whiz along. The Judge can have a great time throwing these things at unsuspecting heroes who come in for a workout (just like Professor X™ does to the X-Men™).

*Tentacle pillar* — This is a nasty little trap that can be incorporated into any scenario if the party starts to take things for granted. It's a wonderful defense mechanism designed to look just like a steel girder, stone pillar, etc. In truth, it's a steel trap (Remarkable material) set to unleash its tentacles and ensnare anyone who passes within a few feet of it. It grapples with Remarkable Strength and can attack any one character with up to 4 tentacles.

*Gauthits* — A "gauthit" is any one of the numerous little jig-a-ma-whats that Dennis tossed into the cut-out sections. Some are simply gas tanks for use in the module; others are obstacles to trip over or toss into melee. Others may be potentially devastating weapons. It is completely up to you and your imagination what can be done with them.

If a Judge is looking for a theme on which to base a MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ campaign, the *Pit of the Viper* module is strongly recommended. It could be the first step in a potential resurrection of Hydra™, that most feared of Marvel's secret, evil organizations. The chilling cry of "Hail, Hydra!" might be just what you need to keep your heroes looking over their shoulders.

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# StarQuestions

## *Answers and advice on the STAR FRONTIERS<sup>®</sup> game*

by Penny Petticord

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: Can supernatural things happen on STAR FRONTIERS<sup>®</sup> game worlds?

A: Only if you (as referee) are willing to make up rules to cover it. The STAR FRONTIERS game universe is based on technology and science rather than on superstition and magic. That is not to say that such cannot exist, but it is most often encountered on backward planets without access to "civilized" ways. Referees wishing to use so-called supernatural effects in their campaigns should first establish a logical basis which does not contradict the game system. (For example, a referee might choose to introduce effects which appear to be magical, but which can be done by technological means.) Once your means of dealing with the subject is set, you're pretty well stuck with it, so try to foresee any major balance problems the new addition to your system will generate.

Q: What do you do after gaining six levels of experience in a skill?

A: Consider adding additional skills to your repertoire, or spend your experience points to improve ability scores. Never let experience points go to waste; there are always plenty of good ways to use them.

Q: On p. 8 of the Knight Hawks Campaign Book, it states that the damage control rating is equal to three multiplied by the hull size plus twenty, but in the second column at the top it gives an example which is obviously in error:  $(3 \times 8) + 20 = 32 + 20 = 52$ . Should I multiply the hull size by four or change the example?

A: The sample calculation is incorrect. It should read:

$(3 \times 8) + 20 = 24 + 20 = 44$

Q: In the basic rules, it says that characters start with 10 credits and a standard equipment pack. But in the expanded rules, it says to roll 1d10 and add 50 credits for starting capital. Which is correct?

A: The former is correct for the basic game, and the latter is correct for the expanded game.

Q: Can you choose two starting skills from a character's main PSA, or does one have to be from a different PSA?

A: As long as at least one of the skills chosen is from the main PSA, the other may be chosen from the same one or a different one, at the player's preference.

Q: I found "whip" on the equipment list (p. 40 of the Expanded Game Rules at the very bottom), but I could not find it on the Melee Weapons Chart, Weapons Table, or in the Weapon Descriptions (p. 42). Could you give some information about it?

A: The whip is described on the Weapons Table and p. 43 under the heading "Chain/Whip". It does 1d10 points damage and has a modifier of -5. Inertia screens and skeinsuits absorb half the damage.

Q: Could heavy lasers be mounted on a fighter? What damage and range would such a weapon have?

A: Heavy lasers cannot be mounted on fighters. See the Tactical Operations Manual for sample ships and the weapons that can be carried by each.

Q: Please comment on the possibility of trading a ship design for a commission.

A: Commissions may be granted as rewards for a variety of things, at the referee's discretion. Conspicuous valor, efficient handling of a sticky situation, and a new weapon or ship design are all good ways to gain a promotion. The referee should evaluate the individual's performance in the way that a superior would before recommending such an

action, though. For example, a new ship design must be practical and not too expensive to build and maintain, or it would not be profitable to use it. A prototype must be built and tested (test flights, crash tests, and battle simulations) before it is approved for use. (The referee can and should require the player to redesign portions of the ship that do not meet the specifications of the "customer" before granting a commission.) Once it passes all the requirements, the character who designed it would be eligible for a reward of some type, but it might take considerable time, since the the wheels of bureaucracy *do* turn slowly.

Q: The front cover art on *Sundown on Starmist* and that on p. 4 show a double moon system, when p. 3 and p. 24 (System Brief) clearly state the Starmist has no moons! Various other parts of the text imply poor lighting at night. Was the planet supposed to have moons?

A: No, the illos are incorrect. Starmist has no moons.

Q: In module SF3, if the fans of the war tank hit water, do repairs take 2 days (as on p. 25) or 1 day (as on p. 13)?

A: Repairs take one day.

Q: The rules say a ship can be controlled by a pilot, an astrogator, and an engineer. Yet on p. 6, it says that a freighter's crew numbers about the hull size of the ship. What are the extra crew members used for? And what are the skills needed by those extra crew members?

A: It's usually convenient on long space flights to have cooks, technicians, weapon specialists, and medical personnel, even though such individuals are not necessary to operate the ship itself. Security personnel are needed for transport of passengers or valuable cargo. (See POLYHEDRON<sup>™</sup> Newszine #22 for Roger Moore's article on shipboard personnel, for more information.)

# The MARVEL<sup>®</sup>-Phile

*Where the heroes are!*

by Jeff Grubb

It's been a year now since the release of the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game. How time flies when you're having fun!

In the past year, we've published a great number of Marvel Super Heroes™ and Marvel Super Villains™ in our products. Therefore, we now present the first-ever Index of Heroes! Yes, gathered in one place, an index of all the mighty and not-so-mighty members of the Marvel Universe™ we've described so far (including characters from a couple of products that just escaped — er, were released — from the design department, which should appear early this summer).

This index includes all TSR publications in which Marvel characters have

appeared. In general, more recent appearances will be more up-to-date and complete than earlier ones. Articles in DRAGON® Magazine tend to be more complete because of the space available for expanded descriptions.

A summary of the product abbreviations used in the index appears below:

MSH . . . . . MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ boxed set  
BB . . . . . MH-1, *The Breeder Bombs*  
TT . . . . . MH-2, *Time Trap*  
MW . . . . . MH-3, *Murderworld!*  
LW . . . . . MH-4, *Lone Wolves*  
CP . . . . . MH-5, *Cat's-Paw*  
TJ . . . . . MH-6, *Thunder over Jotunheim*  
SW . . . . . MHSP-1, *Secret Wars*™  
AA . . . . . MHAC-2, *Avengers*™ *Assembled!*  
PV . . . . . MHAC-4, *Pit of the Viper*™  
PW . . . . . MHAC-5, *Project Wideawake*  
NY . . . . . MHAC-6, *New York, New York*

Note that several other Marvel products have been released, including MHAC-1, *Judge's Screen* (including "A Hero's Guide to New York"), and MHAC-3, *Adventure Fold-Up*™ figures (which has dozens and dozens of your favorite Marvel characters in 3-D form).

A final note about the mail. I really enjoy the letters, and your ideas and suggestions for the 'Phile and any future games are being taken seriously. We're getting lots of support for an expanded version of the game; it's currently under discussion, and the volume of mail is extremely welcome and helpful.

However, if you have questions about the game, PLEASE send them to Uatu™ [c/o MARVEL SUPER HEROES Questions, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147] as noted in the boxed set. I'm not Uatu (though we often have lunch together), and if I answered all the mail, I'd never write anything else again (including this column). If you've sent personal mail to me, I'll get to it, but it will take a lot longer for me to reply. Oh, yeah, if you want a response, remember the stamped, self-addressed envelope. Otherwise, Uatu feeds the mail to Lockjaw™ of the Inhumans™.

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Absorbing Man . . . . . AA,SW  
Alicia Masters . . . . . MW  
Alpha Flight . . . . . CP,97  
Amanda Sefton . . . . . PW  
Angel . . . . . PW  
Ant-Man . . . . . AA  
Arcade . . . . . MW  
Ariel . . . . . BB  
Arsenal . . . . . AA  
Attuma . . . . . AA  
Aurora . . . . . CP  
Avalanche . . . . . PW  
Avengers . . . . . AA,TT,SW  
  
Banshee . . . . . PW

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Batroc the Leaper	NY	Gary Cody	CP	Mandroid Armor	AA
Beast	AA,PW	Geirrodur	TJ	Mantis	AA
Beetle	MS H	Giant-Man I	AA	Mariko Yashida	PW
Black Knight	AA	Goliath I	AA	Marrina	CP
Black Panther	AA	Goliath II	AA	Marvel Girl	PW
Black Tom Cassidy	PW	Graviton	AA	Masque	PW
Black Widow	AA,LW	Grey Gargoyle	AA,TT	Mastermind	PW
Blacklash	NY	Grim Reaper	AA	Mauler	CP
Blastaar	MW	Guardian	.97	Melter	CP
Blizzard	CP	Gypsy Moth	NY	Mentallo	BB
Blob	P W			Mimic	TT
Boomerang	NY	Hammer Harrison	NY	Mirage	PW
Box	97	Hand	NY	MissLocke..	MW
Brood	PW	Harry Leland	PW	Mockingbird	93
Brotherhood of Evil Mutants	PW	Havok	PW	Modok	LW
Bulldozer	SW	Hawkeye	AA,SW	Moirra MacTaggart	PW
		Healer	PW	Molecule Man	SW
Caliban	PW	Heather MacNeil Hudson	CP	Montana	NY
Callisto	PW	Hellfire Club	PW	Moondragon	AA
Candy Southern	PW	Hellions	PW	Morlocks	PW
Cannonball	PW	Heralds of Galactus	.92	Mr. Chambers	MW
Captain America	AA,MSH,TT	Hercules	AA	Mr. Fantastic	MSH,MW
Captain Mar-Vell	AA	Hobgoblin	.94	Ms. Marvel	AA
Captain Marvel	AA,MSH,TT	Howard the Duck	96	Mystique	PW
Cascade	CP	Hulk	AA,SW		
Catseye	PW	Human Torch	MSH,MW	New Mutants	PW
Cl o a k	91	Hydra	NY,94	Nick Fury	AA,94
Collector	AA			Nightcrawler	BB,PW,SW
Colossus	BB,PW,SW	Iceman	PW	Nihilist agents	PV,98
Constrictor	CP	Invisible Girl	MSH,MW	Northstar	CP
Crimson Dynamo	BB	Iron Fist	LW	Nova	92
Cyclone	NY	Iron Man	AA,SW,95,96		
Cyclops	PW,SW			Octodroid robot	MSH
		Jack O'Lantern	NY	O w l	NY
Dagger	.91	Jarvis	AA	O x	NY
Daredevil	LW	Jetstream	PW		
Dazzler	PW	Jocasta	AA	Peter Henry Gyrich	PW
Destiny	PW	Juggernaut	PW	Phoenix	PW
Doctor Doom	MW,SW	Justin Hammer	CP	Piledriver	SW
Doctor Octopus	MSH,SW			Plague	PW
Donald Pierce	PW	Kang the Conqueror	AA,SW,TT	Polaris	PW
Doug Ramsey	PW	Karma	PW	Power Man	LW
Dragon Man	TT	Killer Shrike	NY	Power Pack	NY
Drax the Destroyer	TT	Kimara the Cloudstalker	CP	Professor X	BB,PW,SW
		Kingpin	LW,NY,94	Prowler	NY
Electra	NY	Klaw	AA,SW	Puck	CP
Emma Frost	PW	Kraven the Hunter	LW	Punisher	LW
Emmanuel Da Costa	PW	Kree	AA	Pyro	PW
Empath	PW				
Enchantress	SW	Leader	CP	Quicksilver	AA
Enforcers	NY	Leech	PW		
Executioner	TJ	Lilandra Neramani	PW	Rachel Summers	PW
		Living Laser	AA	Radioactive Man	MSH
Falcon	AA	Lizard	SW	Raider armor	CP
Fancy Dan	NY	Lockheed the Dragon	BB,PW,SW	Rhino	NY
Fantastic Four	MSH,MW,SW	Loki	AA,88	Rick Jones	AA
Fixer	MSH			Ringmaster	AA
Flying Tiger	NY	Machete	NY	Rogue	BB,PW,SW
Forge	PW	Mad Thinker	AA	Ronan the Accuser	AA
Franklin Richards	MW	Maggia	NY	Rose	NY
Frog-Man	96	Magik	PW	Roulette	PW
		Magma	PW		
Galactus	SW	Magneto	BB,PW,SW	Sabertooth	CP,LW
Galactus's "Cat"	SW	Mandarin	AA	Sasquatch	CP

Scarlet Witch ..... AA,TT  
 Scorpion ..... MSH  
 Sebastian Shaw ..... PW  
 Selene ..... P W  
 Sentinels ..... BB,PW  
 Shadowcat ..... PW  
 Shaman ..... CP  
 She-Hulk ..... AA,MW,SW  
 S.H.I.E.L.D. .... AA,94  
 S.H.I.E.L.D. agents ..... AA  
 Shroud ..... 9 3  
 Silver Samurai ..... PW  
 Silver Surfer ..... 92  
 Silvermane ..... NY  
 Skrulls ..... MW  
 Snake Marston ..... NY  
 Snowbird ..... CP  
 Soviet Super-Troopers \* ..... BB  
 Speed Demon ..... NY  
 Spider-Man ..... MSH,NY  
 Spider-Man's Alien Suit ..... 94  
 Spider-Woman ..... SW  
 Starfox ..... AA,TT  
 Stevie Hunter ..... PW  
 Stilt Man ..... NY  
 Storm ..... BB,PW,SW  
 Sub-Mariner ..... 89  
 Sunder ..... P W  
 Sunfire ..... PW  
 Sunspot ..... PW

Super-Adaptoid ..... AA,MW  
 Super-Skrull ..... TT  
 Supreme Intelligence of Kree ..... AA  
 Swordsman ..... AA  
 Talisman ..... 97  
 Tarot ..... P W  
 Taskmaster ..... AA,LW  
 Terrax ..... 9 2  
 Tessa ..... PW  
 Thing ..... MSH,MW  
 Thor ..... AA,SW,TJ,BB  
 Thunderball ..... SW  
 Thunderbird ..... PW  
 Tiger Shark ..... 8 9  
 Tigra ..... AA  
 Titania ..... SW  
 Toad ..... P W  
 Trapster ..... MW  
 Ulik ..... TJ,88  
 Ultron ..... AA,SW  
 Unus ..... P W  
 Valerie Cooper ..... PW  
 Vanisher ..... PW  
 Vermin ..... LW  
 Viper ..... PV  
 Vision ..... AA,TT  
 Volcana ..... SW

Vulture ..... NY  
 Vulturions ..... NY  
 Warlock ..... PW  
 Wasp ..... AA,SW,TT  
 Whirlwind ..... AA  
 White Dragon ..... NY  
 White Rabbit ..... NY  
 Willy Lumpkin ..... 96  
 Wizard ..... M W  
 Wolfsbane ..... PW  
 Wolverine ..... MSH,PW  
 Wonder Man ..... AA  
 Wrecker ..... S W  
 Wrecking Crew ..... SW  
 X-Men ..... P W  
 Yellowjacket ..... AA  
 Zaran ..... NY  
 Zsaji ..... SW

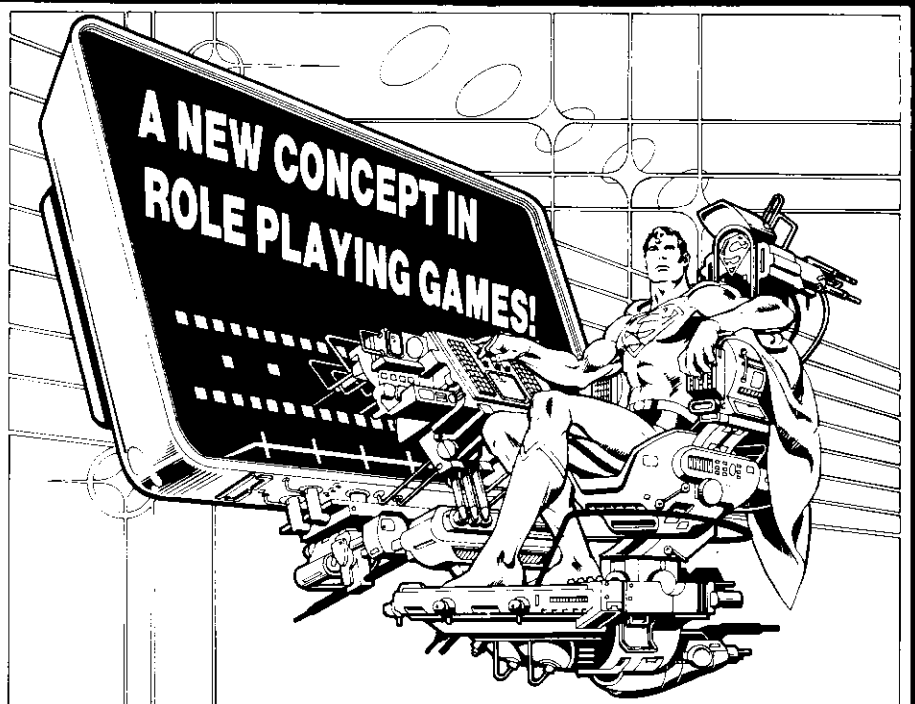
\* — The Soviet Super-Troopers™ are a team of government-sponsored Soviet agents in battle armor. They should not be confused with the Soviet Super-Soldiers™, a super-powered team consisting of Vanguard™, Darkstar™, the Crimson Dynamo™, Ursa Major™, and Gremlin™.



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# Convention Calendar

## HATCON 3, June 6-7

To be held at the Ramada Inn, this convention will include a hat masquerade, a pool party, a champagne Sunday brunch, and various games. Guests of honor will be Ian and Betty Ballantine and Fred Haskell. Registration fees are \$35. For additional information, contact: Kennedy Poyser, CT SF Society, 108 Park Ave., Danbury CT 06810, or telephone (203)743-1872.

## SYCCON I, June 8

To take place at the Peach Tree Mall in Marysville, Cal., this convention will feature a variety of gaming events. Winners will receive \$50 worth of gaming merchandise and comic books. Though admission is free, there will be a \$1 registration fee for each event. Be aware that openings are limited. For more information, contact: Update Productions, c/o The Game Warden, 24 Peach Tree Mall, Marysville CA 95901.

## TEMPLECON '85, June 8-9

To be staged at Ritter Hall at Temple University, this convention will feature a used game auction, a costume contest, video games, and impromptu gaming sessions. Registration fees are \$6 at the door. For more details, contact: Dave Appelbaum, P.O. Box 1062, Havertown PA 19083, or telephone (215)787-7430 or (215)787-7131.

## GLATHRICON, June 14-16

To be held at the Sheraton Inn in Evansville, Ind., this event will feature a masquerade, seminars, tournaments, and an RPGA luncheon. Guest of honor will be Frank Mentzer, game designer and editor for TSR, Inc. Registration fees are \$10. For more information, contact: R.C.S.F.A., P.O. Box 3894, Evansville IN 47737, or telephone (812)858-5419.

## DESOLATION CON II, June 15

To be staged at the Columbia Basin College "Hub," this convention will offer a variety of board and role-playing games. Registration fees are \$4. For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Desolation Con II, P.O. Box 297, Richland WA 99352, or telephone Dale Painter at (509)586-3318.

## MICHICON GAMEFEST '85 June 15-16

This fantasy and science-fiction convention will feature board and role-playing game tournaments, miniatures events, and seminars. For more details about this event, contact: MichiCon Gamefest '85, P.O. Box 656, Wyandotte MI 48192

## 1ST ANNUAL MILWAUKEE TOURNEY, June 21-23

This convention is sponsored by and will be held at the Depot Hooby Shop in Milwaukee, Wis. This event will feature mainly AD&D® game tournaments. Registration fees are \$6. For more information, contact: The Depot Hobby Shop, 6426 N. 76th St., Milwaukee WI 53223, or telephone (414)353-2773.

## POLYCON '85, June 21-23

To be held on the beautiful San Luis Obispo campus of California Polytechnic State University, this convention will feature an assortment of wargames, role-playing tournaments, minatures events, and a costume contest. For more details, contact: Polycon '85, Box 168 Julian A. McPhee University Union, Cal Poly Sate University, San Luis Obispo CA 93407.

## X-CON 9, June 21-23

This science-fiction convention will be staged at the Olympia Resort in Oconomowoc, Wis. Robert Bloch will be the guest of honor at the convention. Registration fees are \$17. For more information, contact: X-Con Ltd., P.O. Box 7, Milwaukee WI 53201-0007.

## GAMEX '95, July 5-7

This convention will take place at Chapman College in Orange, Cal. Contact: GAMEX '85, P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808, or telephone (213)420-3675.

## SEAGA '85, July 5-7

To be held at the Airport Ramada Inn in Atlanta, Ga., this gaming convention will feature computer gaming tournaments, door prizes, and movies. Dealer inquiries are welcomed. Admission fees are \$12 until June 15, and \$15 at the door. For more details, contact: SEAGA, Inc., K. Scott Filipek, P.O. Box 930031, Norcross GA 33093.

## COLONIAL CITY GAMEFEST '85 July 13-14

This convention will be held at the Mt. Vernon High School in Mt. Vernon, Ohio. Activities will include board games, role-playing game tournaments, and a miniatures painting contest. Contact: Colonial City Gamefest, 1003½ East Gambier St., Mount Vernon OH 43050.

## MINDCON II, July 13-14

This gaming convention will be held at the Scottish Rite Temple in San Antonio, Texas. For more details, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Craig

Pierce, 7107 Blanco Road, San Antonio TX 78216, or telephone (512)349-6620.

## WINDSOR GAMEFEST III, July 13-14

This convention will take place at Ambassador Hall at the University of Windsor. Fantasy, science-fiction, and miniatures tournaments will be featured. Preregistration fees are \$10 (in Canadian funds); registration fees are \$12. For details, in Canada, contact: WRPA Head Office, 584 Brighton, Windsor, Ontario, Canada N8N 2L6; or, in the U.S.: U.S. Office, 8675 Sarah Lane, Grosse Isle MI 48138.

## SPACECON 8, July 19-21

To be held at the Stouffer's Concourse Hotel in Arlington, Va., this convention will feature presentations by representatives of NASA and Universal Pictures. Guests of honor include Richard Herd and Frank Ashmore of "V," Robert Colbert of "Time Tunnell," and Angelique Pettyjohn of "Star Trek." Admission fees are \$20. For details, contact: SpaceCon 8, 230 Denfield Drive, Alexandria VA 22309.

## EMPEROR'S BIRTHDAY™ CONVENTION XIV, July 20

To be staged at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Ind., this convention will feature an assortment of historic miniatures events, role-playing game tournaments, a painting contest, and a flea market. Preregistration fees are \$5.75; admission at the door is \$6.25. For more information, contact: R. Hagerty, 905 W. Franklyn Ave., Elkhart IN 46515, or telephone (219)293-4398.

## THUNDERCON I, July 20-21

This gaming convention will be held at Hammarskjold High School in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Featured events include science-fiction and fantasy role-playing games, board and war games, and miniatures events. Dealers' booths, a flea market, movies, and a figure painting contest will also be provided. Registration is \$5 per day, or \$8 for the weekend. For more details, contact: Thundercon, c/o The Gamer's Attic, 777 Red River Road, Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada P7B 1J9, or telephone (807)345-2411.

## ATLANTA FANTASY FAIR II, Aug. 2-4

This gaming convention will be held at the Omni Hotel & Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, Ga. Leading guests will include authors Robert Asprin, Lynn Abbey, and Frederik Pohl, artist Jim Starlin, and special-effects creator Jim Danforth. Featured events include a costume contest, a short story competition, a graphic story contest, an amateur film festival, and an art show. Registration fees are \$21 until June 30 (with club and family discounts available), and \$28 thereafter. For more information, contact: Atlanta Fantasy Fair, P.O. Box 566, Marietta GA 30061, or telephone (404)425-8095.

### CAPITOL-CON, Aug. 3

This convention will be staged at the Public Affairs Center of the Sangamon State University in Springfield, Ill., from 9 A.M. to 9 P.M. Featured activities will include role-playing, historical, science-fiction, and board games. For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Bill Wilson, 2 Candletree, Apt. 6, Springfield IL 62704, or telephone Bill Wilson at (217)787-3386.

### OZARKON I, Aug. 3-4

This gaming convention will be held at the Ramada Inn in Joplin, Mo. Proceeds for this charity event will be donated to the local PBS station. Guests of honor include game publisher Steve Jackson and sculptor John Fischner. Scheduled events include a variety of gaming tournaments, an amateur film contest, computer software demonstrations, and panels on a wide range of topics. Registration fees are \$8 for the entire weekend and \$4 for a single day. For more details, contact: Ozarkon I, P.O. Box 2151, Joplin MO 64803, or telephone (417)781-5326.

### GAME-FEST VI, Aug. 9-18

San Diego's 6th annual game festival will be held in the Old Town district, and it will feature over 60 different gaming events with more than \$1500 in total prizes. This convention will also include special game demonstrations and instruction sessions, figure painting, diorama design, and costume contests. Registration fees, which include a \$20 coupon book for game purchases, for all 10 days are \$15 until August 8, and \$20 at the door. For more details, contact: Game-Fest VI, c/o Game Towne, 3954 Harney St. (Old Town), San Diego CA 92110.

### VALLEYCON '85, Aug. 17

This science-fiction and fantasy gaming convention will be held at the Tulare Community Center in Tulare, Cal. Films, trivia and costume contests, and open gaming are among the scheduled events. Admission to this convention is free. For information, contact: Valleycon, c/o Big Mikes Video, 1766 E. Tulare Ave., Tulare CA 93274.

### GEN CON® 18 GAME CONVENTION, Aug. 22-25

This gaming convention will be staged at the MECCA Convention Hall in Milwaukee, Wis.

### TERRA-CON '85, Aug. 23-25

This convention will be held at the Hilton Inn East in Wichita, Kan. Guests of honor include Poul and Karen Anderson and David Le Anderson. Registration fees are \$8 until August 1, and \$10 thereafter. For more details, contact: Terra-Con '85, P.O. Box 947, Wichita KS 67201.

### GATEWAY '85, Aug. 31 -Sep. 2

This convention will be staged at the Airport Hyatt Hotel in Los Angeles, Cal.

Role-playing games, family games, seminars, and a game auction will be featured. For more information, contact: Gateway '85, P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808, or telephone (213)420-3675.

### FANTASY FAIRE, Aug. 31- Sep. 2

This annual convention will feature films, panels, filksinging, workshops, a costume contest, and a cabaret/talent show. Guests of honor include science-fiction writers Poul Anderson, Fritz Leiber, Evangeline Walton, and Paul Edwin Zimmer. Registration fees are \$15 until June 15, \$20 until August 5, and \$25 thereafter. For more details, contact: Fantasy Publishing Company, 1855 West Main St., Alhambra CA 91801.

### AUTUMN CAMPAIGNS, Sep. 7

This convention will take place at the Holiday Inn North Bluegrass Pavillion in Lexington, Ky. Featured activities will include role-playing and board games, tournaments, and miniatures events. Registration fees are \$5. For more information about this convention, contact: Tim Wisner, c/o The Rusty Scabbard, 513 E. Maxwell St., Lexington KY 40502.

### 1985 COI/COD FALL MANEUVERS, Sep. 21-22

For more details about this wargaming convention, contact: Bill Thomson, 7081 NW 16th St., Apt. 114, Plantation FL 33313, or telephone (305)587-3315.

### VALLEY CON 10, Sep. 21-22

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Holiday Inn in Fargo, N.D. Guest of honor will be fantasy author Patricia Wrede. Featured activities will include videos, an art show and auction, panels, a Tarot reader, and a wide variety of gaming events. Registration fees are \$5 for adults and \$3 for children under the age of 13. For additional information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Valley Con 10, P.O. Box 7202, Fargo ND 58111.

### CRUSADER CON V, Oct. 4-6

This gaming convention will take place at the Metropolitan State College in Denver, Col. Tournament events will include Diplomacy™, Kingmake™, Champions™, Squad Leader™, and AD&D® games, and much, much more. Registration fees are \$8 until September 15, and \$10 thereafter. For more details about this event, contact: The Auraria Gamer's Club, P.O. Box 13395, Denver CO 80201-3395.

### COUNCIL OF FIVE NATIONS XI, Oct. 11-14

This gaming event will take place in Schenectady, New York. Featured activities will include costume and miniatures contests, an auction, and around-the-clock gaming. Though role-playing games are emphasized, all gaming activities are welcome. Contact: Pamela Boynton, Council, P.O. Box 4086, Queensbury NY 12801.

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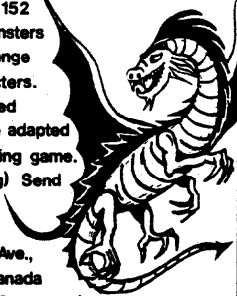


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## Letters

(From page 3)

at the bottom of the first column of the article. If the terrain category that applies is the most favorable one (with the +20% modifier), then going to the next lower category involves adjusting the terrain modifier from 20% to 10%, as the example illustrates. But using the next lower category does not always mean taking a 10% reduction to the chance of success; it could mean a 50% reduction (from 0% to -50%), or a reduction from possible (even at -50% to the chance of

success) to impossible.

Tommy's letter indicates that to arrive at the "next lower category," all he did was subtract 10% from the -50% modifier—but that's not the way the rules work. If the terrain modifier is already -50%, then the next lower category is, in effect, off the table—in the realm of impossibility. By the way, I'm not sure that "-50% for secret door" is the appropriate way to handle tracking under such conditions. There are no provision in the new rules for modifying the chance of tracking one's quarry through a secret door, which could be accomplished at the usual chance for success—providing that the ranger succeeds in detecting the existence of the secret door to begin with. — KM

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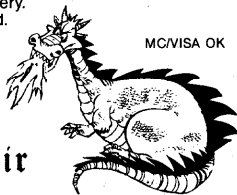
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Chaosium, Inc.	5
Draco Digitalis	19
DRAGON® Magazine	96
Dunken Co., The	16
Entertainment Concepts, Inc.	35
Fantasy Games Unlimited	24, 28, 73, 79
Game Designers' Workshop	39, 61
Game systems Inc.	12
Game Towne	20
Gamers' Guide	88-89
Games Workshop U.S.	Inside fr. cover, 33
Graaf Simulations	12
Iron Crown Enterprises, Inc.	1, back cover
Lotus Records	13
Magicware	9
Mayfair Games Inc.	84
Nichols Services	60
Nova Game Designs, Inc.	23
Pacesetter, Ltd.	25, 41
Palladium Books	85
RAFM Co., Inc.	55
Ral Partha Enterprises, Inc.	21
Reality Simulations, Inc.	60
Sky Realms Publishing, Inc.	37
Steve Jackson Games	10
TSR, Inc.	4, 16, 17, 42, 67, 68, 77, 89
West End Games	Inside back cover
Wormy	90

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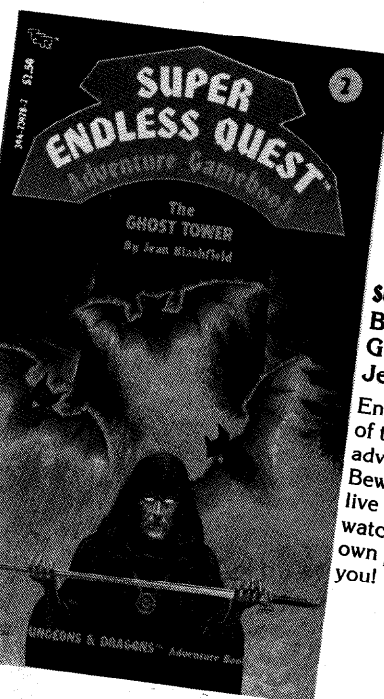
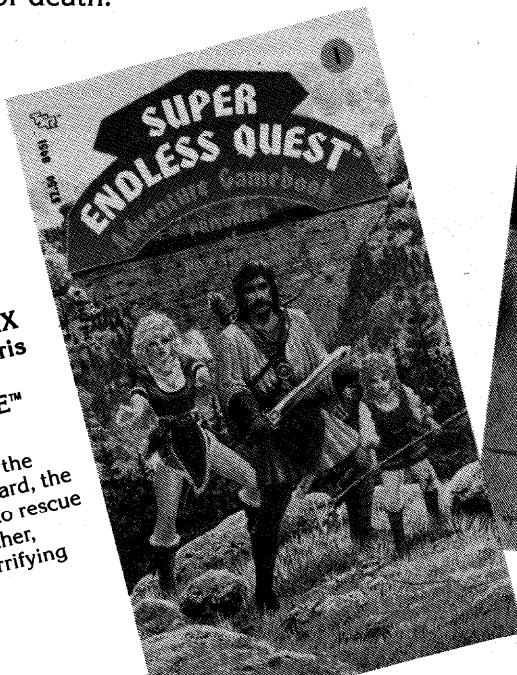
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# The forum

(From page 38)

The various offensive and defensive spells are very likely to contribute to the high mortality among *combatants* as described by Ms. Kerr. However, the various transportation, informative, and curative spells would create a society very unlike the historic medieval model. The historic medieval society was very closed. Travel over great distances was limited. Scholarship was based on a series of arguments starting from a set of often unstated assumptions. Transportation spells such as *plane shift*, *word of recall*, *transport via plants*, and *teleport* would allow one segment of society to move freely and easily over great distances. Informative spells such as *commune* and *contact other plane* would allow the testing of the untested assumptions. Even in our modern world, it would be invaluable to get a yes-or-no answer to such questions as: "Will the physical universe continue to expand indefinitely?"

The greatest contrast between a historic and an AD&D medieval society would be the effect of the various curative spells. Ms. Kerr describes a medieval society as having a high mortality rate, especially among the young and among pregnant women. The existence of such spells, as *cure blindness*, *cure wounds*, *cure disease*, *neutralize poison*, *raise dead*, and *regeneration* would enable clerics and druids to dramatically reduce mortality rates. The DMG does list charges for these spells (pp. 103-104). However, it also states that this is a sliding scale. PCs pay more than peasants. As Ms. Kerr states later in her article, all persons take the gods very seriously. They may not have much money, but they do have faith. Such faith would be rewarded by clerics, who are the shepherds of their flocks. Such care would include the use of spells priced to meet the ability to pay.

In developing a society for use in the AD&D game, historic models are very useful. However, the historic model must be modified by the existence of magic. Magic makes things different.

Thomas W. Gossard  
Davis, Calif.

\* \* \*

In the Forum of issue #96, Joseph Dornbier wanted to know if the majority of the people who play the AD&D game use the "nitty gritty" rules or if they just "guesstimate." In response to this, I would like to make a few comments.

Through the course of playing AD&D games, I

have lived in three different states and had exposure to many different gamers and styles. A few of them were "nitty gritty" players and some of them were "guesstimators," but the majority of the players were a combination of both. They played by the book but also included things such as Mr. Moore's weaponless combat system (issue #83), which was simple and helped the game move along smoothly.

These DMs were not concerned about following every single rule in the book. They followed the majority of the rules, but they "forgot" about the rules which had a tendency to slow the game down. A game that is played using all the "nitty gritty" rules would be an official game, but by including an extra table or ability of some sort, such as Mr. Routley's "The handy art of forgery," (issue #96), you add more flavor to the game.

You must not forget that Mr. Gyax had the rules published in 1979. Since then, the game has had thousands of hours of more game time, which helps make the game better by discovering which rules detract from the game and finding out what could be added to improve the game. DRAGON Magazine seems to be accomplishing this quite well, by printing things that are meant to add to the game as a whole.

Todd Breneiser  
Rochester Hills, Mich.

I would like to comment on Mr. Dornbier's letter in the Forum of issue #96. He asked if DMs really use the "nitty gritty" rules of AD&D games. Well, speaking from experience, the best answer I can give is "no."

I have never encountered a DM (including myself) who ever used a Weapon Speed Factor table. The first character I ever started out with was an elf well under 5' who carried a 6' two-handed sword! I know of other, greater infractions of the rules as well.

One reason so many DMs allow impossible characters is to get the players interested in gaming. Then, little by little, the DM might apply more rules. I don't think that any DM ever makes good use of *all* of the rules.

There may be DMs who use all or nearly all of the rules, but the AD&D game is so complicated that it would take literally years of practice to master them. I myself have never been to a convention; perhaps they use those rules there. In general, I allow anything that is not obviously wrong, and most of the DMs I have met do the same. You may wish to be more strict, but using all of the rules can take away from the enjoyment of the game by making it lengthy and boring. Each DM must decide for himself.

Chip Myers  
Outlook, Wash.

Often have emerging role-playing games been denounced in comparison to their "superiors" in terms of over-regulation. What their critics have been missing, sadly, is the fact that the widely accepted superior role-playing game, the AD&D game, also follows a policy which tends to dissuade its players from fully role-playing their characters through threats and heroic morality. This limitation has often been discussed in these pages, but few have seen the truth of what their condemnations point to: that the very concept of "alignment" tends to stifle role-playing, and to substitute for it an acceptance of stock characters. Thus is the facade of realism broken.

The AD&D game is an activity wherein players may act out heroic fantasies [through their characters], where they can fight the unbeatable foe with naught but their fantastic strength and unbelievable skills; where they can revel in the unreal. This is not to say, however, that it is not a game of realism as well; the notion of what is real simply changes to fit the standards of this impossible world. The laws of science become the laws of magic, perhaps, but they are still laws, and as such must be tolerated.

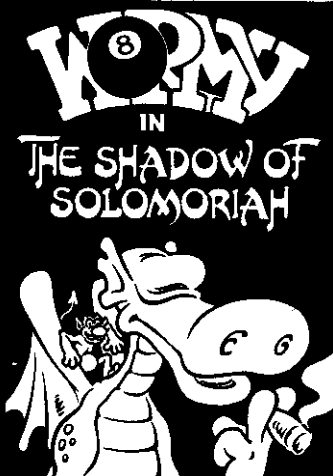
In this impossible world, however, men are still men, and men, by definition, must have thoughts, ideas, hopes, fears, weaknesses, phobias, faults, and perhaps a few annoying tendencies — in short, men must have *personalities*.

Real people are everchanging, always surprising, and anything but absolute. Why, then, must we restrict characters through such an absurd system as alignment? Is Ptolemy the Paladin not allowed to make a mistake now and then, not allowed to lose his temper, or his interest in yet another holy quest — not allowed to be human? On the other hand, should Bazar the Assassin be reprimanded for not killing his mother, for helping a peasant woman across the alley — for not acting as malevolent as a devil?

People just can't be lumped into categories like this. No one does all good or all evil — and who are we to judge what is good or evil anyway? Players, as a rule, do not fully understand the tenets of each alignment; they see only the ideal, cardboard image of that alignment. Thus, their characters actually attempt to reach a level of non-personality, of non-human perfection, and this quest for absolute unity with an alignment must result in a lack of role-playing. When a character is told how to act, and is penalized for not acting as he "should," the purpose of the game is gone. Where is the enjoyment in role-playing when each like-aligned character must be played in the same way? Alignment cannot be applied to individual characters if one seeks true role-playing.

To those who might disagree with these claims, I would offer a test. Try creating a *character*, determining his words and actions not by class or alignment, but instead by his other experiences in life. Just role-play the character for a while, and concentrate on that instead of on the dice. Don't worry whether he *should* do something, just let him do it, and try to discover, from his background that you will create, why he talked and acted in the way he did. In a short time you will know something of your character, if you have remained apart from standards of class and alignment, and once you know your character, you will know that you can pin no alignment on him. If you keep him, he'll grow even more, for like a real person he'll never know everything there is to know about himself. He won't always be sure how to act. Then, he won't be Ptolemy the Lawful Good Paladin; he'll be Ptolemy the Person.

Daniel J. Birkholz  
Crystal, Minn.



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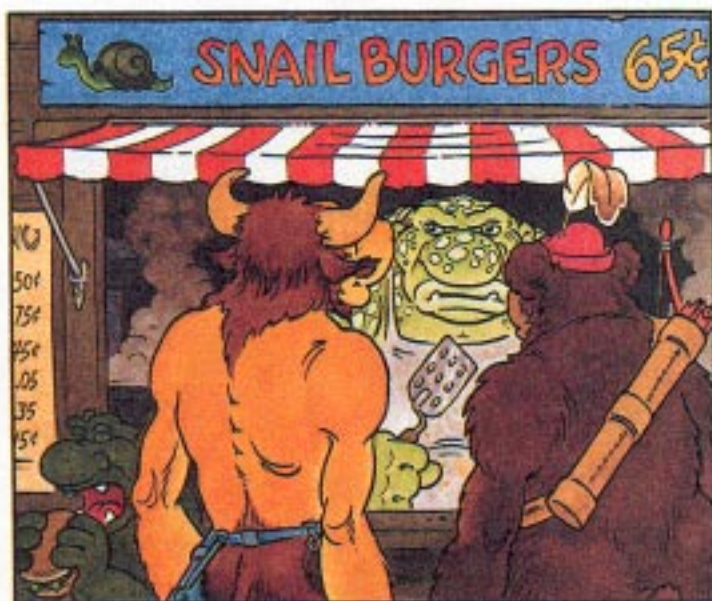
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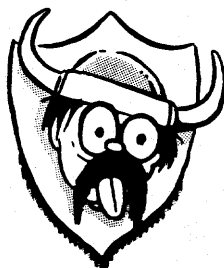




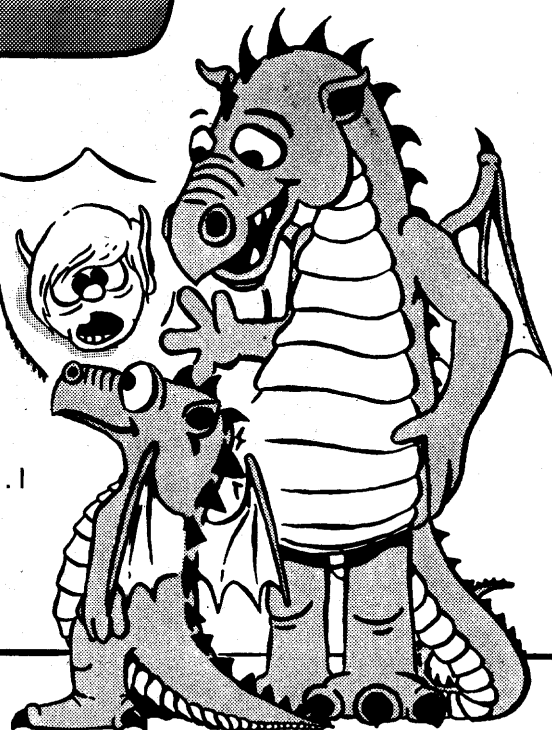




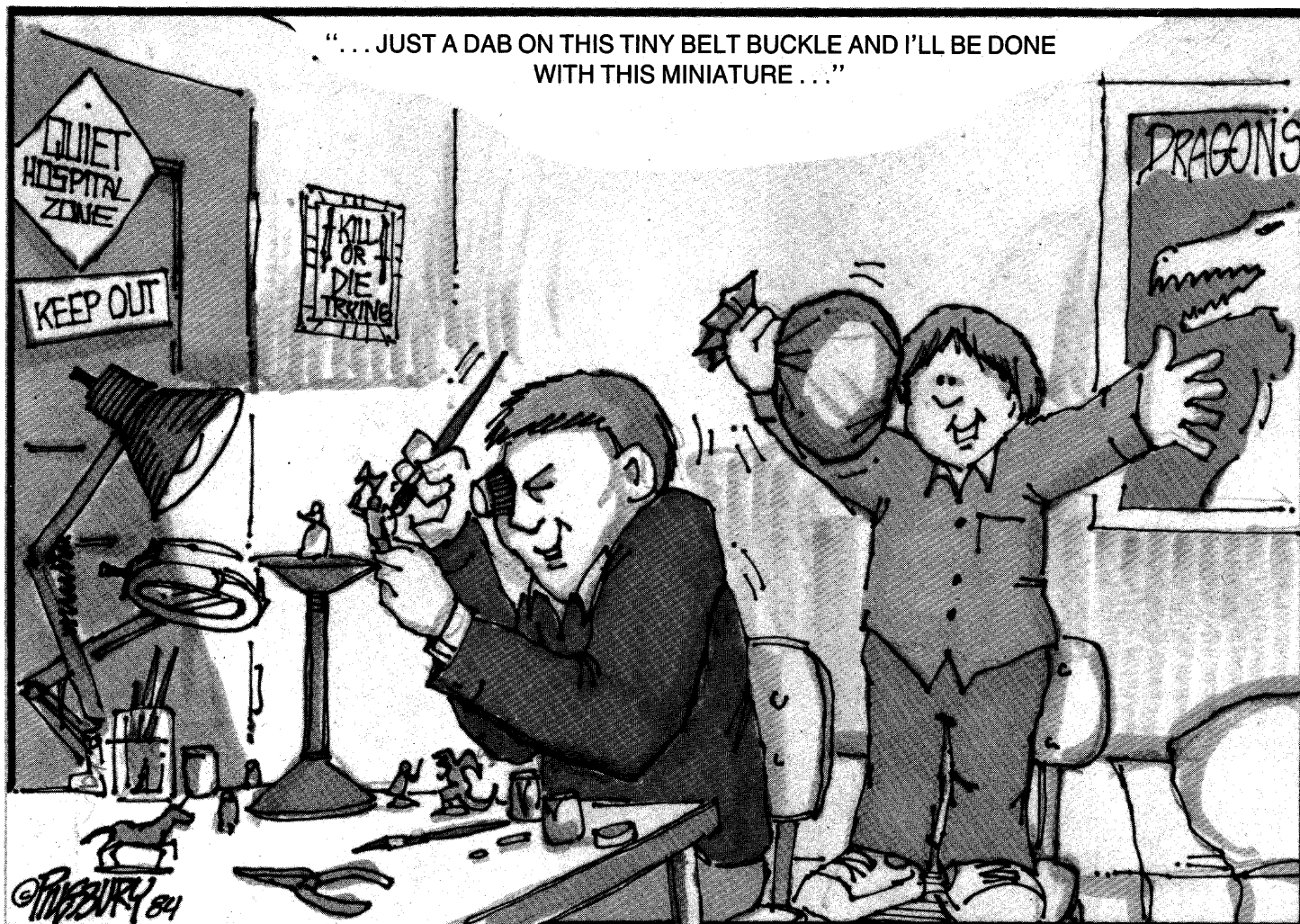
# Dragonmirth



"NO, I DON'T EAT 'EM... I  
JUST KILL 'EM FOR  
SPORT"



"... JUST A DAB ON THIS TINY BELT BUCKLE AND I'LL BE DONE  
WITH THIS MINIATURE ..."



© PIRBURY 84



# SNARFQUEST

# 23

BY ELMORE

SHE CAN'T MARRY AVEEARE...  
SHE'S GOTTA MARRY ME!

NOT SO, SNARF, ACCORDING  
TO OUR CUSTOM, IF  
THERE IS MORE THAN ONE  
HERO, SHE HAS THE  
RIGHT TO CHOOSE.

BLEEP!  
I CAN'T  
MARRY  
ANYONE!

OH, YOU MUST,  
SWEETCAKES...  
LIKE, WE WILL SET  
THE FASHION WORLD  
ON ITS EAR, WE'LL  
BE THE TREND  
SETTERS!

IT IS QUITE  
IMPOSSIBLE  
FOR ME TO  
MARRY!

DON'T PLAY  
HARD TO GET!

DAT'S RIGHT.  
HE CAN'T MARRY!

WHY NOT?

'CAUSE ...EEHH... 'CAUSE HE,  
AHEM, HE ALREADY HAS FOUR  
WIVES AND FIFTY-SEVEN KIDS.

I DO  
NOT!

OH DADDY... THE OL'  
ZEETVAH IS JUST  
JEALOUS, DON'T  
LISTEN TO HIM!

AVEEARE IS REALLY  
A CLERIC OF AN  
ORDER DAT VOWED  
NEVER TO MARRY!  
GOT DAT - NEVER!

I AM  
NOT!

EVERYONE SHUT UP! AVEEARE,  
ARE YOU MARRIED?

NO.

ARE YOU A CLERIC?

NO.

ARE YOU U...?

NO.

THEN WHAT THE  
@\*~\*~\*~\* IS  
YER PROBLEM?

I CANNOT EAT.  
I CANNOT MARRY.  
I CANNOT SLEEP.  
I CANNOT HAVE  
CHILDREN...

I AM A  
ROBOT!

WHAT AN INDIVIDUAL ♡... WHAT  
STYLE ♡... I WILL BE A ROBOT  
ALSO... LIKE WAUOW, WE COULD  
START A CULT, VA KNAUOW?

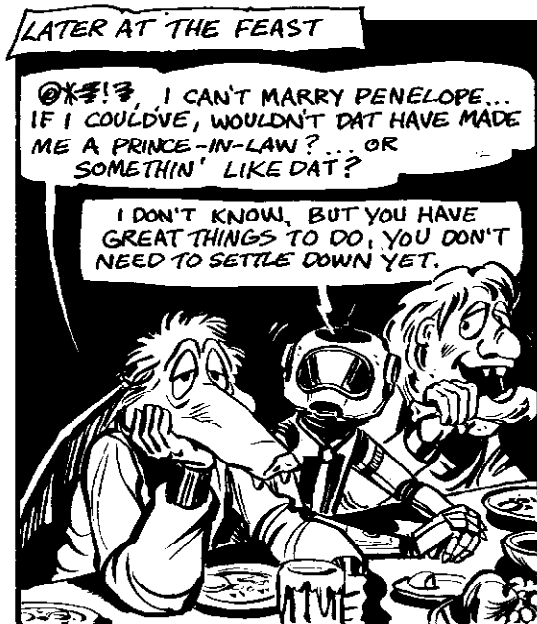
DA GIRL IS NUTS...  
BUT CUTE...

CAN'T HAVE CHILDREN?  
...HHUUM...

I FORBID YOU TO MARRY AVEEARE,  
IF I CAN'T HAVE GRANDCHILDREN -  
MY LINEAGE MAY END... THAT STUPID  
SON OF MINE WILL PROBABLY NEVER  
GET MARRIED ANYWAY.

HUH?

GOOD!  
SHE CAN  
MARRY  
ME!



OVER THE NEXT 3 DAYS, SNARF CASHED IN MOST OF THE BULKY TREASURE FOR SOME PRIZE GEMS. THE REST WAS INVESTED IN SOME PRIME COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE AND. HE STARTED HIS FIRST IRA.



IN THE MEAN TIME, PRINCESS PENELOPE, DEMONSTRATING HER GREAT LOVE FOR AVEEARE, STARTED A ROBOT CULT WHICH INCLUDED MOST OF THE SOCIAL ELITE OF QUESSA.

I AM A ROBOT, I NEVER SLEEP.  
I AM A ROBOT, I NEVER EAT.  
I AM A ROBOT, I GO BLEEP!



AVEEARE SPENT MOST OF HIS TIME EXPLAINING TO HIS FOLLOWERS WHAT A ROBOT IS. THIS, OF COURSE, WENT OVER EVERYONE'S HEAD... WHEN SNARF WASN'T AROUND, SOMETIMES AVEEARE WOULD GIVE HIS FOLLOWERS A LOOK AT HIS "FACE".



SNARF POSED FOR AN OFFICIAL PORTRAIT TO BE HUNG IN THE HALL OF HEROES IN THE CASTLE OF QUESSA.



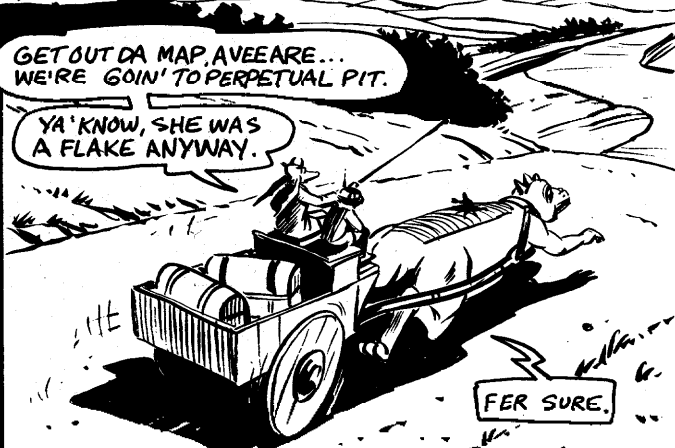
ON THE FOURTH DAY THEY PREPARED TO LEAVE QUESSA.



LATER

GET OUT DA MAP, AVEEARE... WE'RE GOIN' TO PERPETUAL PIT.

YA' KNOW, SHE WAS A FLAKE ANYWAY.



NEXT ISSUE: OUR HEROES FINALLY ARRIVE AT PERPETUAL PIT!!

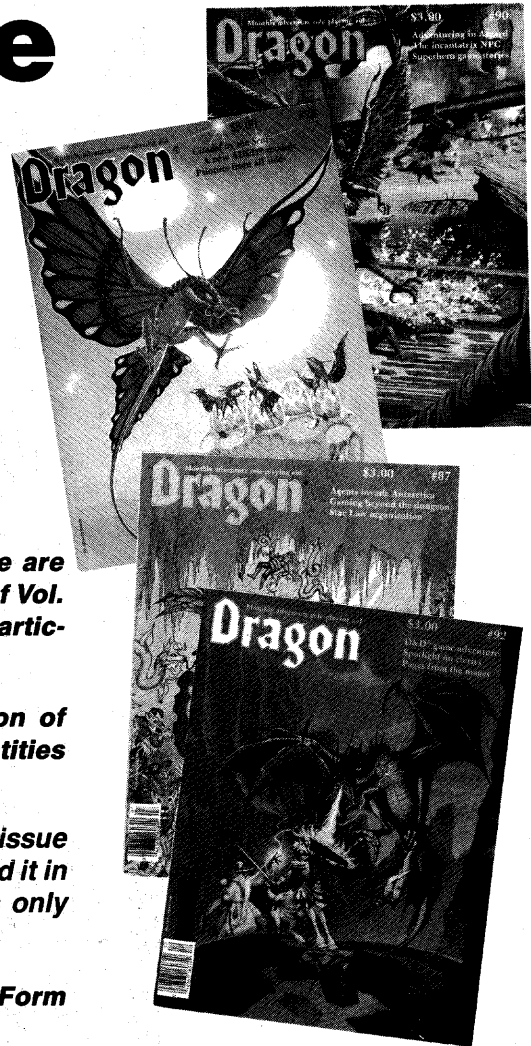
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