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Dragon®
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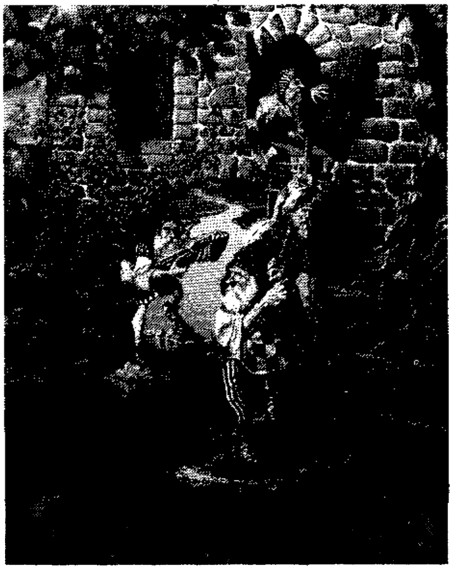

COVER

"The Pillage of Tantlin" is another in a long line of paintings we've published that illustrate the imagination and artistic skill of Dean Morrissey, who's being doing artwork for us since these gnomes were knee-high to a kobold. What will the guy in the foreground do when he runs out of rocks to step on? Well, he'll cross that bridge when he comes to it. . . .

Letters

Training a-gain

Dear Dragon:

There was a sort-of omission in "Only train when you gain" (issue #97). I liked the article; however, there was a question that arose in my mind after reading it: How does a character gain levels between those periodic training sessions?

Kirk Thierbach
Novi, Mich.

If you accept the premise of the article and want to use the system it sets forth, then you have to abandon the concept of "between levels" at the times when training is not mandated. All that's required for a character to gain a level in such a case is to simply amass the requisite number of experience points. However, experience points earned during an adventure are generally not actually awarded by the DM until the adventure is over, when accumulated points are doled out to each member of the party This prevents a character (and properly so) from going up a level in the middle of an adventure, and does build in some sort of "between levels" period — even if it's only to get a good night's sleep and stock up on supplies before heading out again.

Is this fair to a character who starts a long adventure needing only a few points to make the next level? Well, maybe not — but who said the next adventure had to be a long one? It might be possible, and would certainly be in the best interests of the party, to undertake a brief expedition intended to earn enough points to boost the character to the next higher level.

No matter how you handle this, the rule in the DMG *should still apply: Once a character has accumulated enough points to qualify for the next higher level, he is not able to officially record any more XP until that level is actually attained — in other words, until the acquisition of the new level is officially logged between adventures. — KM*

No set plans

Dear Editor,

My friends and I are very interested in DRA*gonchess* (issue #100), and we are wondering if a set will soon be on sale in hobby shops or other stores.

Greg Della Rocca
Castleton, N. Y.

I'm sorry to report that, as of this writing, I know of no plans to produce Dragonchess *for sale as a separate product. We talked about it when the rules were being produced for publication in #100, but decided pretty quickly that we wouldn't be able to have the board and the pieces manufactured for anything less than a small fortune — which means we'd have to charge you a medium-sized fortune to buy it.*

To do it right (which is, I hope, the only way we would consider doing it), we'd have to include 84 specially designed metal miniatures — and you know what it costs to buy one or two figures. (The figures we used to assemble our playtest set would have cost more than $100 if they were purchased individually) We'd have to produce components for a board that would be both big and strong. (The ¼-inch plexiglass we used for each board level seemed like it would be sturdy enough, but it developed a permanent sag in the middle when all the pieces were arrayed on it. And the raw materials we used for our board cost about $25 — not including the cutting that had to be done and the holes that had to be drilled.)

Of course, it would be possible to mass-produce playing pieces and board components for substantially less than what it cost to make our playtest set. But I think we'd still be talking about a product that would carry a pretty hefty price tag. . . too hefty, I fear, for us to consider foisting on you. — KM

The missing number

Dear Editor,

I began reading DRAGON 'way back in issue #64. Recently I was sorting through my stack of issues and discovered something strange. Issue #65 bore the marking "Vol. VII, No. 4" while issue #64 was labeled as "Vol. VII, No. 2."

Whatever became of "Vol. VII, No. 3," and does this revelation go down as the longest undiscovered mistake in the history of the magazine?

Matt Bandy
Cortez, Colo.

By the way you worded your final question, Matt, I think you already know what became of Vol. VII, No. 3. We goofed up the numbering sequence when we made the transition from Vol. VI to Vol. VII, and since we couldn't go back in time and fix the mistake, we did the next best thing and corrected the numbering in #65 by skipping a digit.

No, this isn't the "longest undiscovered mistake," because it's not undiscovered any more. For the record, the oldest mistake we've ever made that hasn't yet been noticed was back in . . . naaah, that would be telling. — KM

London paradox

Dear Dragon,

I really enjoyed "The City Beyond the Gate" (issue #100). I did notice, however, that one minor detail was not included. Since it must be admitted that the AD&D game exists in London on June 1, 1985, and it is readily available, it is not possible for PCs to find and read AD&D products such as the *Players Handbook?* This would definitely result in confusion, fear, or identity crisis. A very touchy situation indeed! Please comment.

Matthew Morse
St. Paul, Minn.

Okay. . . . If the PCs decide to make a side trip to the nearest game store, roll percentile dice and

Is the press doing its best?

You'd think that after all these years, newspaper journalists would have a better grasp of the subject they've been covering — you know, the thing that's loosely referred to as the "D&D phenomenon."

It bothers me more than a little bit to read (as I did a couple of weeks ago) a newspaper account of a GEN CON® convention that was obviously written by someone who didn't really know what he was covering before he went and didn't make a wholehearted effort to understand what was going on once he got there. It troubles me to see photo coverage limited to a group shot of the people who entered the convention's costume contest, which implies that you have to dress up like a druid, a wizard, or a half-orc to get in the door.

Has anyone ever taken pictures of a bunch of normally dressed people sitting around a table having *fun* playing the game? Has anyone with any experience in playing the game and the ability to describe it accurately ever been assigned to cover a convention, or does the duty always go to the guy who loses the coin flip?

Or is it possible that conventions are sometimes covered by knowledgeable reporters who write good stories, only to have them watered down by an editor who assumes people won't understand, or care to know about, the details? (I've been both a reporter and an editor. Believe me, it happens.)

For obvious reasons, those of us who make our livings in the gaming industry want the public to understand and appreciate what we do and the products we make. Sure, I've got a vested interest in wanting news coverage of conventions to be more informative and less superficial. But I also care about the principle involved here. The public does have a right to know, and people are smarter and more inquisitive than the press sometimes thinks they are.

If you have kept a newspaper story about a game convention, or anything else involving role-playing games, that you consider an example of accurate and thorough coverage, please send me a copy of it, I'll give credit where credit is due in a future column, and I'll even eat my words if that seems like an appropriate thing to do. It sure wouldn't be the first time that's happened. . . .

consult the following table:

01 — The AD&D game is so popular that all the rule books are sold out.

02-00 — Either roll again, or forget you ever read this letter. — KM

Dragonchess

To the readers.

We expected that people would have questions about *Dragonchess*, and we were right. Some of the rules weren't expressed as clearly as they could have been, apparently, and a couple of mistakes have come to light that are downright humiliating for this Embarrassed Editor to admit. Here's a rundown of answers that should clear up most people's confusion:

The numerical prefixes in the "Notation and terminology" section should have been given as 3 (upper board), 2 (middle board), and 1 (lower board) to be consistent with the usage throughout the rest of the article. Even though this was the most embarrassing mistake, it was fortunately also easy to figure out . . . wasn't it?

The list of pieces given in the section under "Setting up" does not mention that each side has two Thieves.

The Dragon's "capture from afar" ability left some people up in the air. This capturing ability only applies to the square directly beneath the Dragon, plus the four squares horizontally and vertically adjacent to that square. A capture from afar can only be made as a move unto itself; the Dragon cannot move to a square on the upper board and capture a piece on the middle board in one continuous action, which means that a piece in jeopardy beneath the Dragon has an opportunity to get away. Only one piece can be captured from afar on a single move.

Now, down to the lower board. The Basilisk cannot "freeze" an opposing piece that moves *through* the square above it; the freezing power only applies to a piece that occupies that square or is moved into it. The Elemental's move between boards was described as a two-step process only to emphasize the fact that the intermediate square it moves *through* must be empty in order for the Elemental to be able to move in this fashion; this was not meant to imply that the move between boards is actually two separate moves that must be taken on successive turns.

We're in the process of collecting observations about strategy and tactics and hope to eventually combine them into a followup article, perhaps including scores from exciting or interesting games that you've been involved in. Keep sharing your thoughts with us, and help us make the game as good as it can be. — KM

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 your 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:
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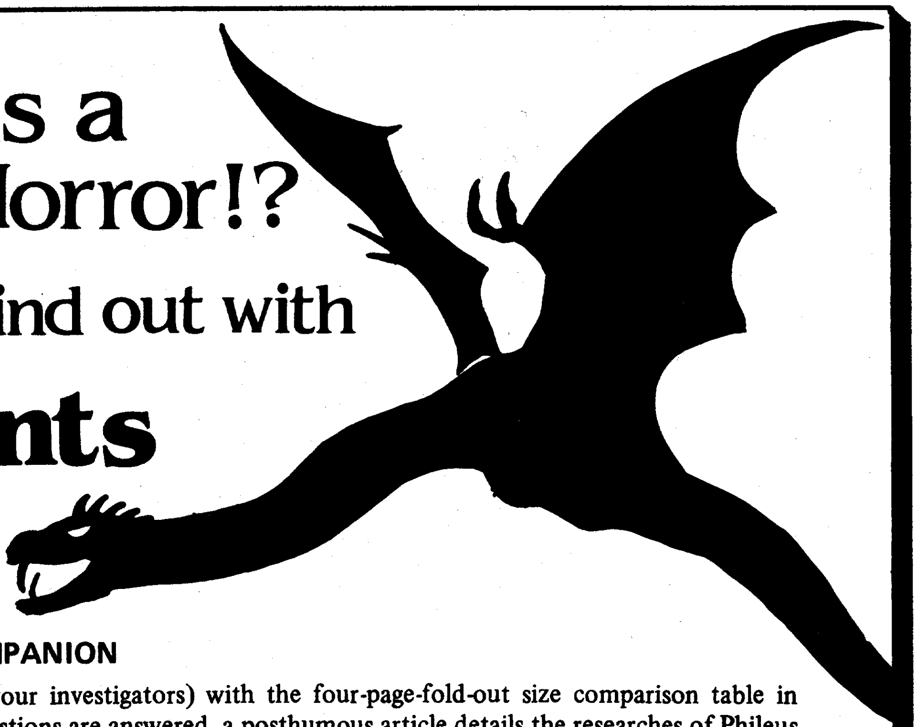

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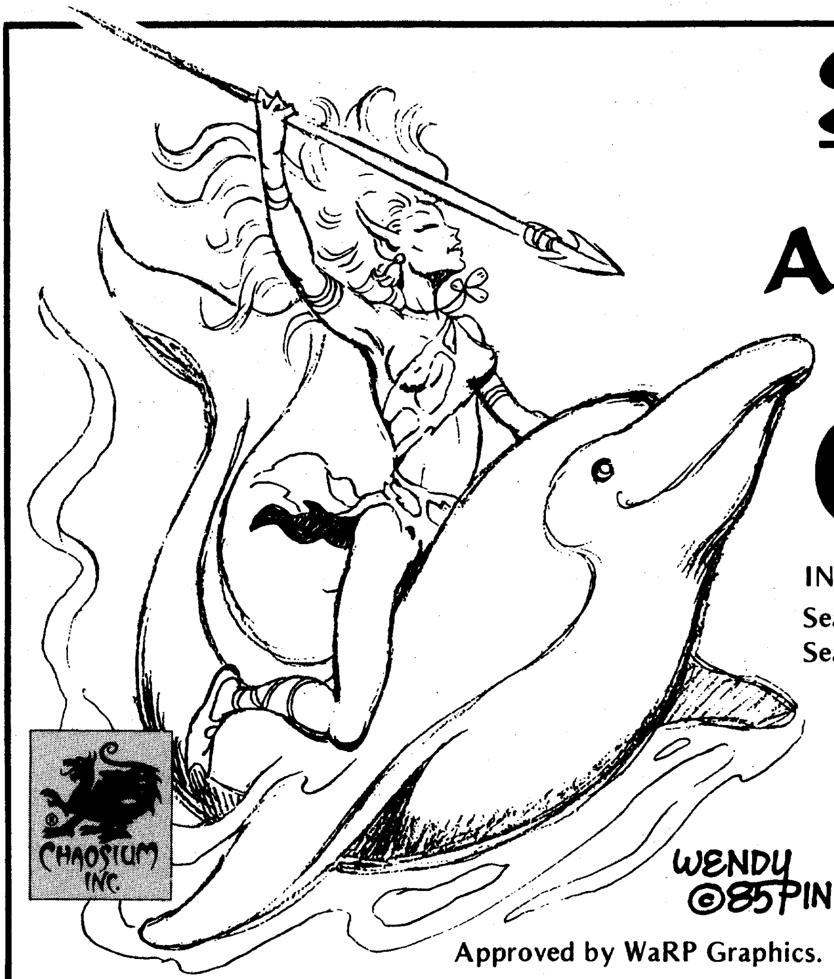

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The forum

In issue #99, Dave Godwin's exceptional article "History of a game that failed" posed a question: "Who let this guy have all that stuff?" It should have read: "Who let the melee be run that incompetently?"

First of all, being blasted by red dragon breath did more than "just" 33 points of damage. All of his items must save vs. fireball (p. 80, DMG) or melt, burn up, etc. Under "Saving Throw Modifiers," Mr. Gygax writes: "You may assign modifiers to saving throws as you see fit, always keeping in mind game balance." So all three of his rings (being soft, magical metal) need a 16 to save. They melt. His girdle, being leather (or so I would rule), needs an 11. It, too, fails. Keeping in mind game balance, his plate mail "just happens" to fail. (Let's just say his god is punishing him.)

Our arrogant friend is now AC 1, wielding a +3 hammer doing at most 17 damage. If he sticks around for another round, his *portable hole*, *helm of teleportation*, hammer, and shield will fail their saves. Next round, it's his life. But remember, magic items are worth more than characters' lives. After all, you can't resurrect that armor, and making foolish characters live without magic is torture. Take out the magic as an alternative to their lives (unless all else fails).

I have found that many DMs don't use all of the powers at the monster's disposal. If they do not do this, characters are getting XP for victory/treasure they don't deserve, and this is where campaign imbalance begins.

Each DM knows which magic items will and will not work in his campaign. Any monster, played correctly with *all* of its powers utilized, poses a threat and will never be an easy kill. Making each encounter unique and distinct is the stuff that good campaigns are made of.

Dan Fejes
Aurora, Ohio

* * * *

I can't agree at all with Frank Mentzer's justifications for a druid/ranger; whatever rationale he may offer, druids are neutral and rangers are good — the two mix like oil and water. I'll grant that a druid/ranger would be a natural combination if rangers were neutral or druids were good. But they aren't, and no amount of rationalization will make them compatible.

Since we're dealing with a fantasy game, there are only a few essential criteria by which we need judge a change or addition to the rules: It must increase the fun of the game, or at least not diminish it; it must be internally consistent and readily comprehensible to those who use it, thus promoting the "willing suspension of disbelief"; and, finally, it must fit smoothly within the milieu of the game as a whole, lest it stand out like a botched chord in a sonata — a real clinker.

I'm sure the druid/ranger would be fun. Any new and highly powerful class would certainly be a blast to play, at least for a while. But I fear that the druid/ranger fails the rest of the test. It is an oddball because of its alignment conflicts. The attempt to explain it is clumsy and does not make the class any more believable. For example, reread the section wherein Frank tries to explain how a ranger can be neutral in regard to Nature (and when is he not in Nature, really?) and good from the point of view of civilization (which is still a part of Nature). No, this won't do. In the end, his exercise in mental gymnastics only succeeds in befuddling the reader.

It is much easier to justify a continuing separation between druids and rangers, while still allowing rangers to use druidic magic. To wit: The gods created the ranger to protect the civilized peoples from the depradations of creatures both monstrous and mundane that reside in the wildlands. His task involves spending much time alone in hostile country, and so they granted the ranger special powers to enhance his ability to survive and carry out his mission. Among these powers was the ability to learn and cast low-level druidic spells, an ability which does fit in logically with the class and its mission.

But why were the druidic spells kept at a low level? I think a simple answer lies in the alignment difference between rangers and druids. The gods who rule Nature recognized that rangers serve their purposes to a degree: by battling the creatures of evil, the rangers help to restore the balance. And so it was natural for them to grant rangers *some* druidic spells.

On the other hand, rangers are committed to good, a commitment which is only a little less strong than a paladin's, if at all. Since rangers are thus dedicated to upsetting the balance of good vs. evil, it is not in the interests of these gods to allow rangers to actually *become* druids; to do so would be to place them into competition with the gods' own servitors, the pure neutral druids.

We may therefore understand why druids and rangers may cooperate, for they often have compatible interests. But we must recognize that their goals may also conflict. In essence, to create a druid/ranger multi-class is to create a class with a massive, inherent internal contradiction. It simply isn't believable.

Anthony Ragan
Los Angeles, Calif.

* * * *

Reading the letter from Brian McCaskill in issue #100 brought back many memories of my own not-so-humble beginning in the world of AD&D gaming. In response to his concluding question: If the letter had been printed a month earlier, I would be able to identify myself as one who had not role-played in almost a year.

Being a fellow "victim" of Monty-Haulism (which I think, unfortunately, is the cause for most role-playing dropouts), Brian's letter prompted me to write this letter to make a point that I think should be made, and made very firmly. I strongly believe, since it has held true for myself and apparently Brian, that it would be in the best interest of the fighter, elf, or whatever in you former Monty Haulers to start playing again.

All of you people who haven't role-played in several months: Go out and find people to play with today!

The most important thing to realize (as Brian, myself, and undoubtedly many others have) is: *There is life after Monty Haul! Play it to the fullest!*

Carl Seglem
El Paso, Tex.

* * * *

The situation described in Brian McCaskill's letter is almost too close to mine to be believed. I started in this game in the 5th grade (I'm in the 10th now) but it didn't catch on as the "cool" thing to do with the people in my school until the 7th grade. My school has electives (as fun classes) and one of the teachers offered the game to students as a choice. I chose another elective because I got my gaming in with a group of friends, and there was another activity I wanted to be involved in. I am glad I didn't take the elective, because the game turned out to be an emporium for +7 swords and more powerful armor (this world would have run out of dragons within the week, honest).

I must admit I was caught up in this somewhat. The thought of being able to smash 30 or 40 orcs gets very appealing when your 1st level fighter keeps getting diced by the local homicidal 47+ level god destroyer. Eventually I tired of this, and so did everyone else. I went back to the way of play defined in the books, but everyone else decided to stop playing altogether. Two or three loyals and myself decided to keep going but, we didn't have the momentum to go for very long.

Finally it was down to me and one other. (In case you haven't tried, it is very hard to role-play with one character and a DM.) I have since then moved to other games, but as Brian mentioned people are too concerned with their reputation to play them or at least to do so in the open. I wish people weren't too concerned to have fun.

Chris Sheldon
Oklahoma City, Okla.

* * * *

"The City Beyond the Gate" (issue #100) is an excellent piece of work. However, the statement in the closing about a paladin attacking his own party for moral reasons has touched upon a conflict in my mind: between the "good" of the AD&D universe and the "good" of our world.

What I say is this: To retrieve the *Mace of Cuthbert*, a lawful good relic, surely must be a good and just quest in the eyes of the PCs. However, stealing the *Mace* from its current owners would not be a good act to us, those on the "other side," or London. Here we have a conflict of "goods," and the worst thing is, there is no way around it. The paladin may suggest to take it by lawful means, but that would mean convincing the owners that the party and their world is the rightful owner of the Mace.

You might say that even that could be accomplished by a little showing off, proving that they were from another world, but could you imagine the extreme consequences of such an action if some otherworldly adventurer were to prove that he came from Neverneverland by showing us a gate to that world? Our whole life would be overturned if such a thing were to happen.

Then I would have to tell the players that, after their characters had completed a quest for a good object, their characters have gone through an alignment change because they have committed the crimes of stealing and destroying a whole world's beliefs and way of life. Which good is right: the good of the adventurers or the good of our own world?

Mark Permann
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Realms of role playing

Let's start pushing the pendulum the other way

by Gary Gygax

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There was a long period of time when action, rather than role playing, was the major focus of gaming, and this was especially true with respect to tournament scenarios at conventions. Thus, an AD&D® game scenario would typically stress combat with monsters to achieve the goal set before the characters. Now, the pendulum has swung the other way — much emphasis is being placed on how well the player takes on the role of his or her character. Personification and acting are replacing action of the more direct and forceful type — be it sword swinging, spell casting, or anything else. Before this trend goes too far, it is time to consider what the typical role-playing game is all about.

First, it is important to remember that ('role-playing" is a modifier of the noun "game." We are dealing with a game which is based on role playing, but it is first and foremost a game. Games are not plays, although role-playing games should have some of the theatre included in their play. To put undue stress upon mere role-playing places the cart before the horse. Role playing is a necessary part of the game, but it is by no means the whole of the matter.

Role playing is similar to, but not the same as, role assumption. The latter term is generally used to identify the individual's acceptance of a part which he or she could actually perform. While a child might *play* the role of a parent, an adult would *assume* that role when dealing with his or her children. This distinction is important in the context of gaming because of the stress now being placed upon role playing. Too much emphasis in this direction tends to make playing out an adventure more of a children's "let's pretend" activity than an action-packed game which involves all sorts of fun, including the playing of a role but other fun aspects as well.

A role-playing game should be such that players begin the personification portion as role *play*, and then as they progress the activity should evolve into something akin to role *assumption*. This does away with stilted attempts to act the part of some character. In place of this, players should try to become that person they are imagining during the course of the game, and conduct the actions of their characters accordingly. A spy, for example, speaks in one way to his superiors, in another way when he converses with his equals, and in yet an entirely different way when he is attempting to penetrate an enemy installation and is impersonating a plumber, perhaps. Implemented in this fashion, the concept becomes one of roles within roles.

This applies to all role-playing games, of course. Straining to play a role is certainly contrary to the purpose of the game. The actual reason for gaming is fun, not instruction in theatrics or training in the thespian art. Role playing is certainly a necessary and desirable part of the whole game, but it is a *part*. Challenge, excitement, suspense, and questing are other portions equally necessary to a game of this nature.

Problem solving is the typical challenge in a role-playing game. Whether it is discovering a murderer, finding a magic sword, or seeking to expose a gang of criminals, this element is an integral part of such interactive gaming. And 'note that problem solving, in this context, has to do with a problem to be solved by the *character*, not a problem (such as "How do I role-play this situation?") to be solved by the *player*.

Combat, survival amidst threatening conditions, or stalking an opponent are typical means of adding excitement and suspense into the whole. These are action-oriented portions of the game activity which call for little role playing but a fair amount of role assumption. The magic-user character (and thus, the player of that character) must know his or her spells and how to utilize them efficiently. The explorer must know outdoor craft. Whatever the situation, setting, or character being played, skill — not theatrics — is what is called for here.

Having a goal, understanding it, and remaining steadfast in its completion are likewise necessary to role-playing games. This questing, if you will, again has little or nothing to do with role playing in the acting sense. It is closer to role assumption and is a measure of gaming ability and skill.

Role-playing games are different from other games in that they allow participants to create a game persona, develop this character, and enhance his or her skills and abilities. While some considerable amount of acting is most beneficial to play, this is by no means the sole objective or purpose. The fun of such gaming includes all the other elements mentioned, plus the interactive relationships which develop between the various characters of the players participating. In the well-balanced game, role playing should quickly become role assumption, which then again leads to character role playing — roles within roles!

Not every game of this sort must be completely balanced with regard to all of these aspects. Such a decision is entirely in the hands of the game master and the players. If a particular group desires to stress acting, or combat, or problem solving, or any other singular feature of the whole, that is strictly up to the individuals concerned. How they enjoy gaming, and what constitutes fun, is theirs alone to decide.

This last point extends not only to players but to products as well. A particular game might be designed to stress one aspect over others. Role playing can be the major thrust, or action and combat, or any of the other elements. Similarly, the underlying game might offer one or another while its accessories and scenarios develop some different aspects. Most games and support material are general and offer a reasonably well-balanced mix.

But is this true for competition situations as well? In contrast to a long period when such tournaments tended to feature hack-and-slash, shoot-'em-up, and blast-'em-out situations, there is now a trend toward downplaying everything except the theatrical side of gaming. This tendency has evidenced itself to a lesser extent in some support materials, it must be noted. The reaction is not altogether unwarranted, for many particpants seem to have been ignoring role playing completely, or nearly so, in their games. Instead, it is usual for such games to stress direct, usually violent, action. This is a true detriment to fully appreciating the scope of role-playing games; as with most things, one extreme is just as undesirable as the other.

The current vogue of placing seemingly undue importance on the role-playing portion of the game is simply meant to inform and educate participants about a very important segment of what differentiates these games from other types of games. It is to be hoped that the needed training thus afforded will enable game participants to go beyond role *playing* of their characters and enter into role *assumption* instead. Once it is understood that role playing is a vital ingredient of the game, and players understand how to actually accomplish it, the undue attention can be discarded.

Balanced games are certainly the most enjoyable sort for the great majority of players. A meal does not consist of but one thing — if it is to be an enjoyable one. By the same token, a role-playing game must have all the ingredients which allow it to be varied and enjoyable. Playing and assumption of roles, interpersonal dealings, action, problem solving, excitement, suspense, and questing are all important to make the

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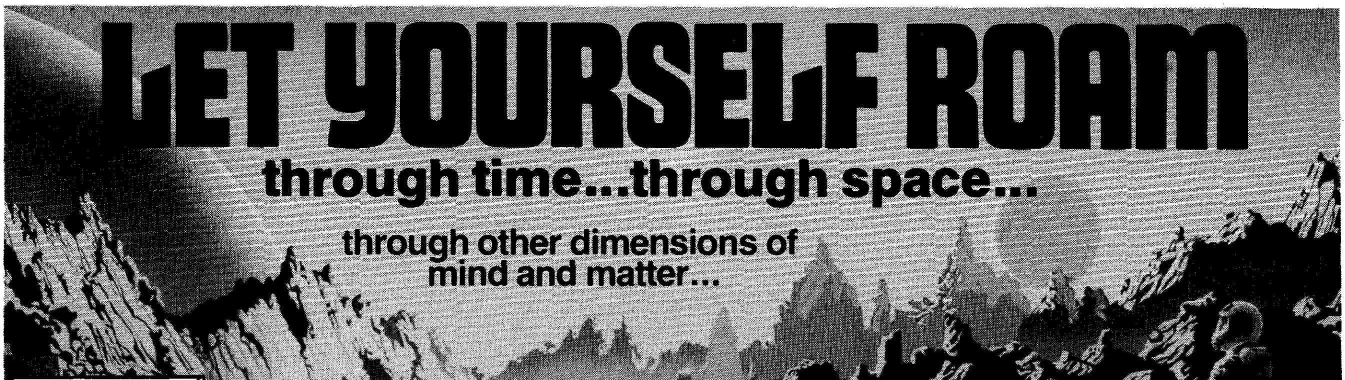

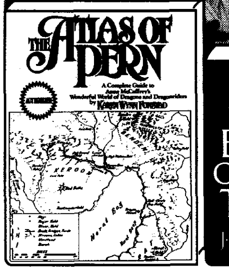
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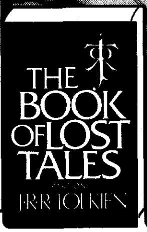
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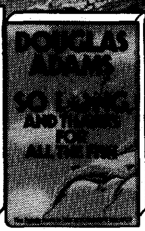
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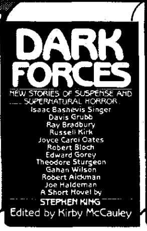
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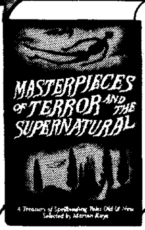
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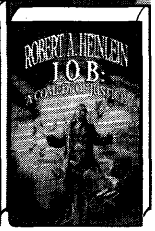
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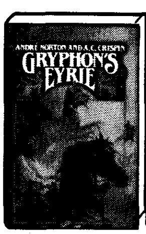
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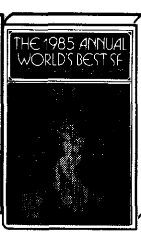
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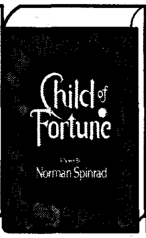
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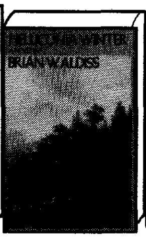
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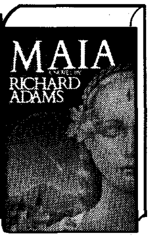
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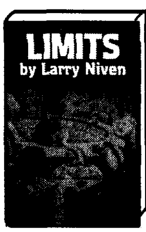
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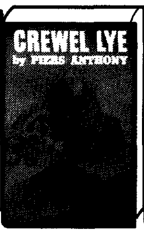
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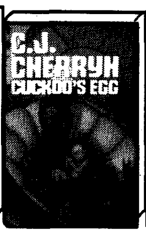
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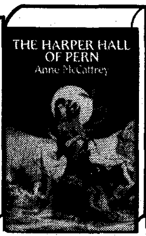
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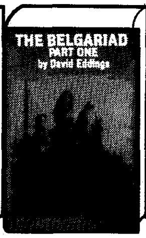
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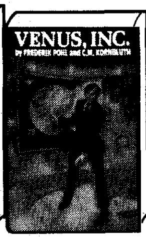
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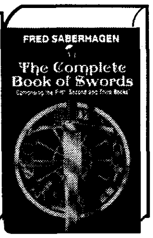
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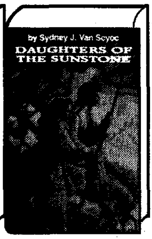
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whole. The portions can be mixed in different amounts, but each should have a degree of existence within the scope of the whole.

It is common for scenarios to identify the level of experience and skill recommended for those utilizing the material they provide. Perhaps it would be worthwhile to also identify any particular stress the scenario places upon a certain aspect of the game activity — role-playing, action, problem solving, or any other.

Tournament scenarios and competitions might also benefit by such identification. Prospective entrants would then be able to determine which aspect they favor, or possibly need to learn more of, before they entered the event. Participants who find their enjoyment lies in one area or another would thus be able to select events optimal for their tastes and avoid those which they might find less fun — making the competition experience more enjoyable for everyone who does take part. Is the player who has difficulty personifying a well-understood character any different from an excellent thespian who misplays the game otherwise? By being able to identify the focus of a scenario, not only would players be informed, but they would also be given the opportunity to round out their abilities in weak areas if they chose to do so.

Play of the game is the thing. Play includes development of the character and personification thereof, role assumption and role playing, and the rest. After all, fantasy in whatever form is integral. Whether fighting a dragon, piloting a starship, or shooting it out with evil enemy agents, the action imagined during the game is what really makes it fun. The pendulum did need to move a bit to balance things, but it must not go too far, or the realms of role playing will become small and constricted instead of being — as they should be — as broad and varied as the imagination.

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Gord of Greyhawk has adventures in other places besides these Splendid Pages. What's this, you ask? I shall explain . . . . As those of you who read "At Moonset Blackcat Comes" in issue #100 are aware, there are books on the way which are all about this young thief. Well, Gentle Readers, in addition to *Saga of Old City* (scheduled for release in November) and its sequel, *Artifact of Evil* (January 1986), there is more! DRAGON® Magazine is, after all, a gaming journal, and this Indefatigable Key-pounder can't take up its space with stories of Gord and Associates as they go about their affairs in that strange city and its environs in probability and time. There are more adventures to be told than those chronicled in the two abovementioned books, and these tales will be appearing in AMAZING® Stories Magazine.

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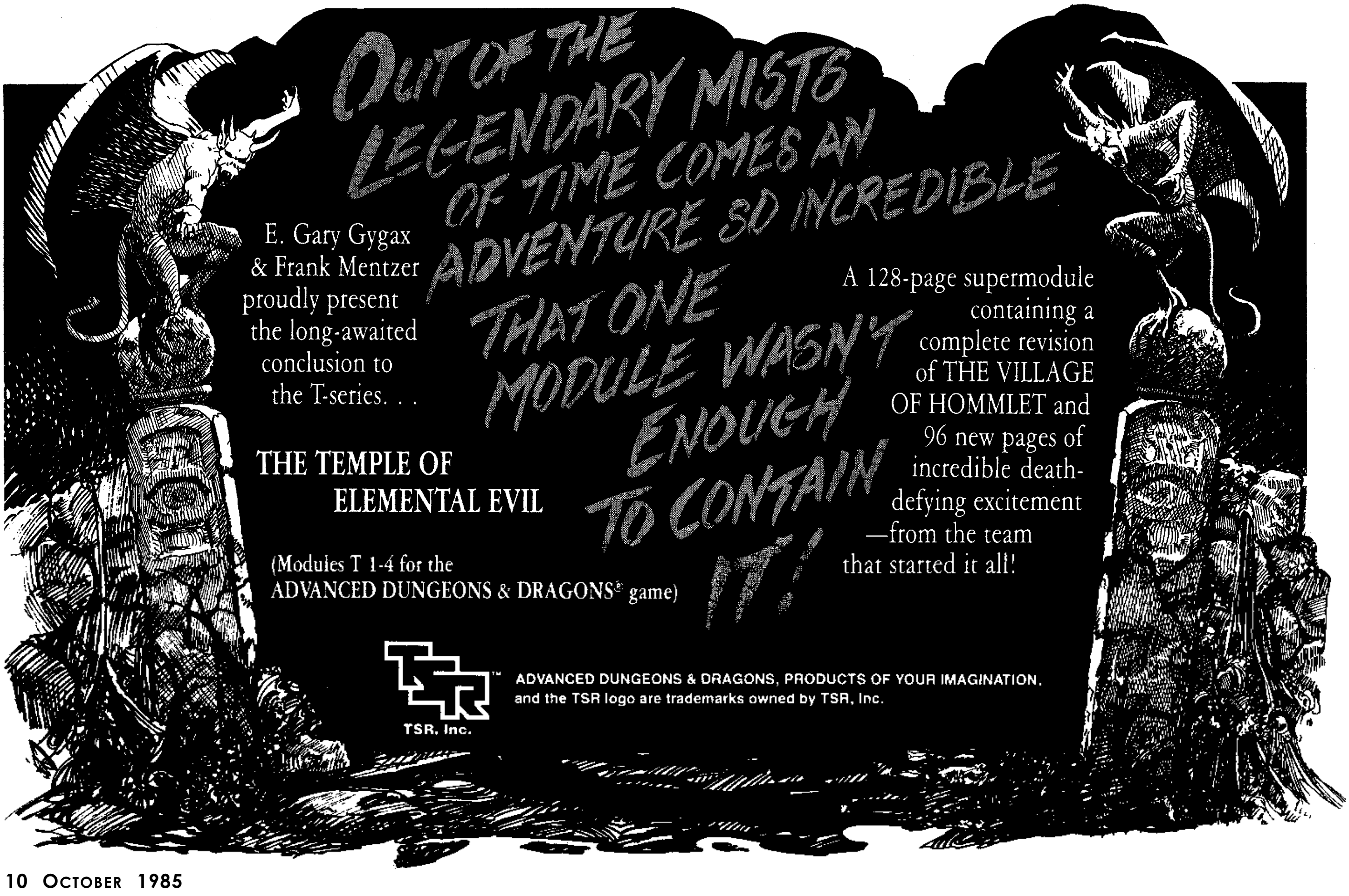
So don't forget to get your copy of the May issue. Subscription orders should be sent to TSR, Inc., P.O. Box 72089, Chicago IL 60690. Be sure to provide us with your complete name and mailing address, tell us what you want, and include a check or money order in the amount of $9.00 (or $11.00 if you are paying in Canadian funds) for a one-year subscription. Be forewarned that the May issue is mailed out well in advance of that particular month, but if you get your money to us by the end of 1985, that issue will certainly be among the six bimonthly magazines you will receive.

Gary Gygax



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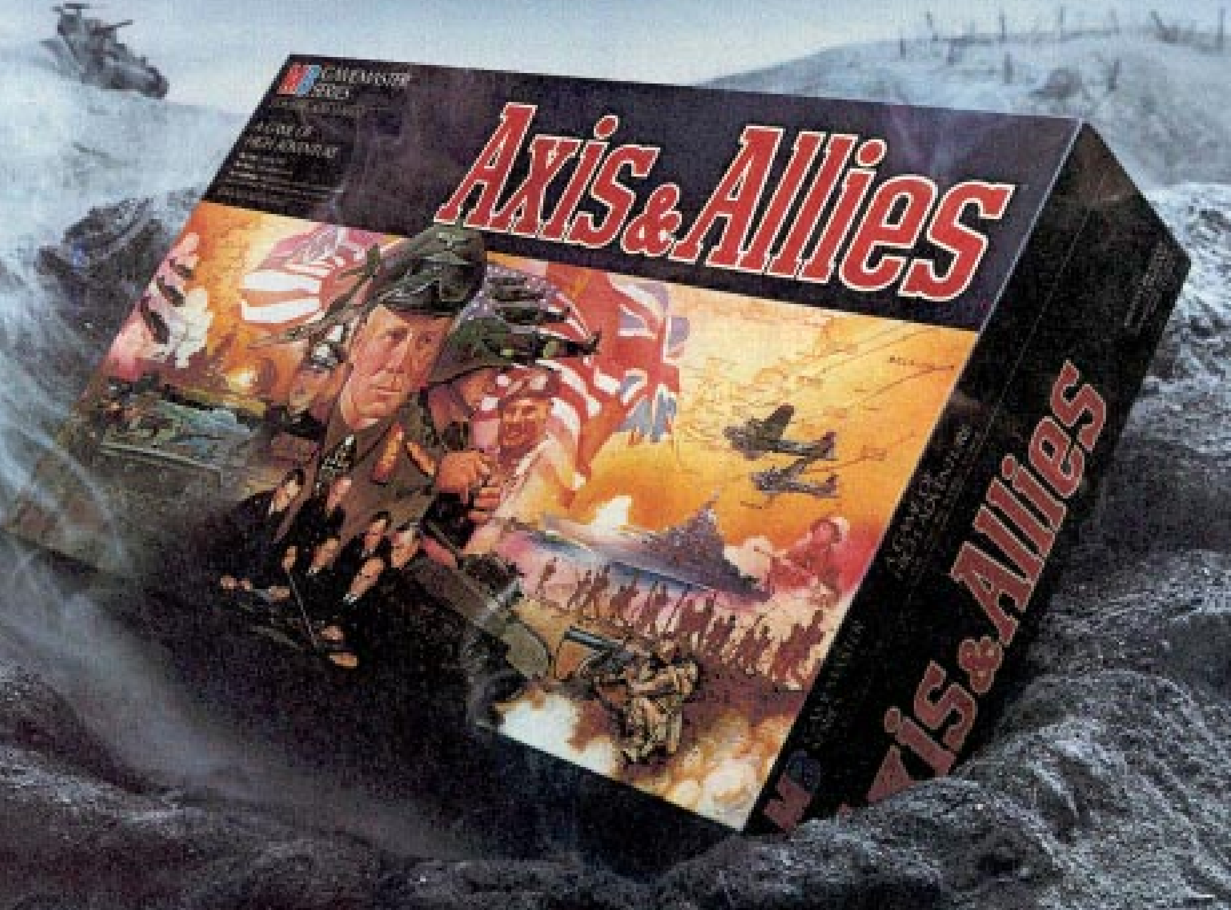

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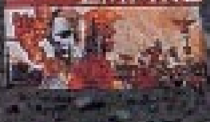

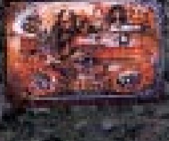

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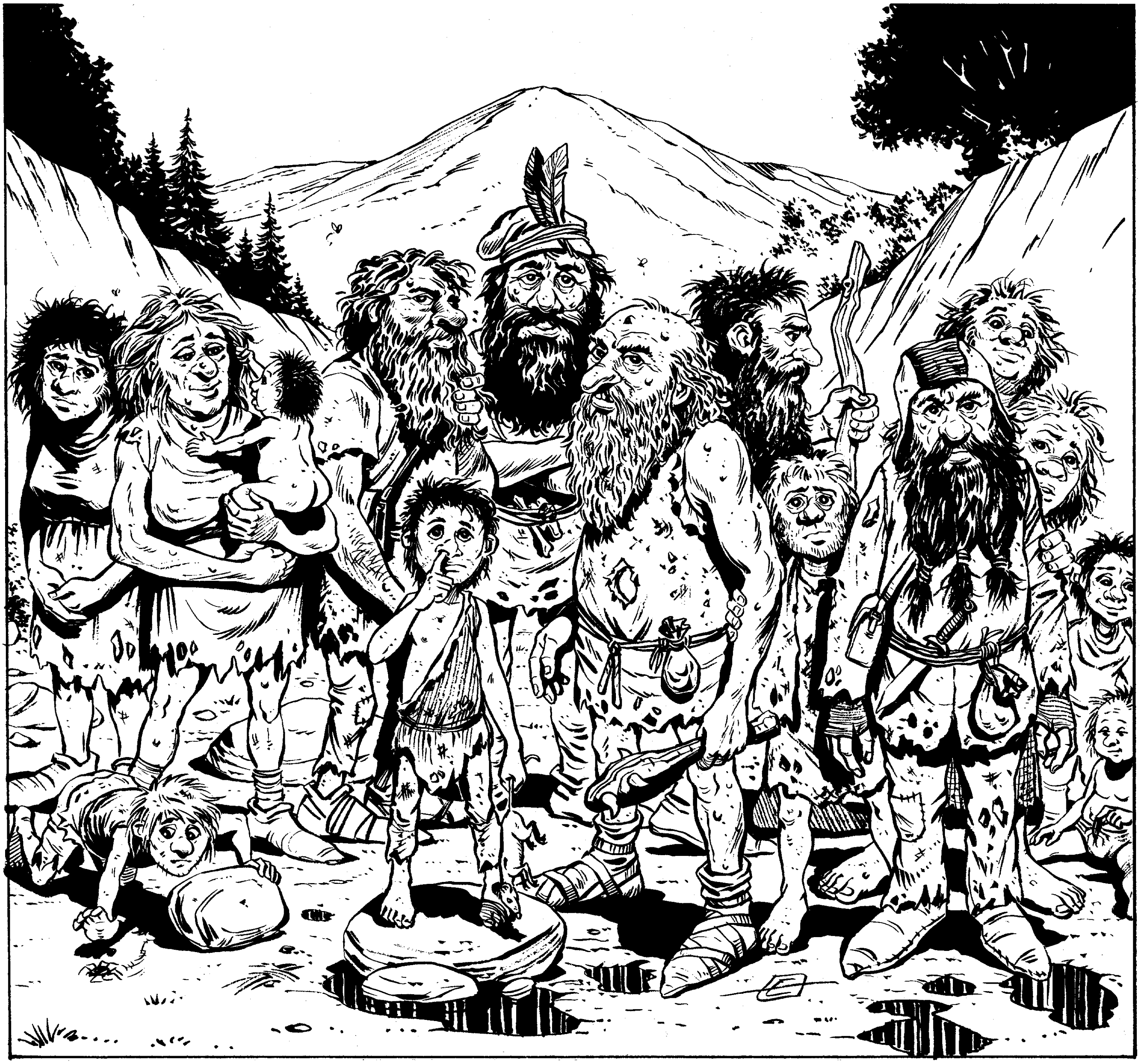
All about gully dwarves

Grubby and goofy, but lovable just the same

by Roger E. Moore



Gully dwarves weren't intended to be a race open to player characters when the DRAGONLANCE™ saga was first assembled. Before long, however, certain gully dwarf characters in the saga developed lives of their own: Bupu, the only being who ever received a blessing from Raistlin; Highbulp Phudge I, the simple but calculating king of Xak Tsaroth; and Sestun, the slave who became the ruler of Pax Tharkas. If *they* could come to life, why couldn't others? Not everyone will want to play a gully dwarf — but those of us who love them wouldn't mind a grubby face or two in the crowd. . . .

History

Gully dwarves have an extensive verbal history of their origins. Unfortunately, no two versions told by different gully dwarf clans agree on any relevant details. The stories are very colorful and entertaining to others, though gully dwarves take them very seriously. For our purposes, other. sources will be considered.

Gully dwarves are a fourth-generation demi-human race. Originally a human people who worshiped the god Reorx, the ancestors of the gully dwarves were magically altered by their deity as punishment for straying from the path of neutrality that Reorx espoused and for selfishly misusing their skills and talents. Reorx reduced his human worshipers in size and filled them with the urge to tinker, invent, and construct — and thus was the race of gnomes created.

As detailed in module DL5, *Dragons of Mystery*, certain gnomes were later profoundly altered by the Greystone of Gargath, turning-them into the two races of dwarves and kender. The dwarves were filled with the lust for wealth and the urge to possess material goods; their curiosity drive was reduced, and they tended to think along static, rigid lines. In later years, intermarriage between dwarves and gnomes occured in isolated communities across Ansalon. Surprisingly, the children of such marriages proved to be of an entirely new race, with their own particular characteristics, but the members of this new race lacked all the better qualities of its parents.

Further intermarriages of this sort were banned by dwarven and gnomish societies, and members of this new race were driven out of their own clans, particularly by the dwarves, who regarded the new race as a blight. This new dwarven race became known as the Aghar, or "anguished." Humans later christened them "gully dwarves," noting the low status and poor living conditions that the race experienced (as well as the general disgust felt toward the Aghar by other intelligent races of Ansalon). Aghar are also called dumpmen, muckers, and dirt-eaters by their dwarven cousins.

Much of the anguish that gully dwarves suffered came from the bad treatment they received at the hands of other races. Dwarves of other thanes (races or major clan houses) even now regard the Aghar as unworthy of respect. Aghar were driven into the wilderness and forced to grub for existence among abandoned ruins, swamplands, and the refuse piles of old cities. They were used as slaves by the darker empires of old Ansalon and even by the crueler dwarven races such as derro.

The Cataclysm was at once the curse of the world and the salvation of the gully dwarves. The destruction of civilization in Ansalon opened up dozens of deserted, ruined cities to habitation by wandering gully dwarf tribes, and soon once-mighty towns like Xak Tsaroth became havens for the Aghar. Undisturbed by the rest of the world, the gully dwarves were free to establish their own cultures — such as they were.

Gully dwarves still congregate in the larger ruined cities of Ansalon. Draconian armies have conquered many of these places and have reduced the Aghar once again to the status of slaves. In places like Pax Tharkas, gully dwarves have been imported as slave labor from surrounding areas. While they obey their new masters, the Aghar wish to return to the days of freedom they once enjoyed, and they will usually seek outside-help in ridding themselves-of their new lords.

Society and government

Non-adventuring adult Aghar have 2 HD; very old or young ones have 1 + 1 HD or less. They typically have a 25% chance of possessing treaure type J on their persons, though this varies widely depending upon circumstances. Gully dwarves inhabiting ruins may carry around considerable wealth that they do not recognize as being valuable.

Gully dwarf communities are usually quite small. Aghar prefer to live in extended family units, called clans, which have 2-20 members. Some very large clans exist which have 6-60 members, and a few tiny families of only 2-8 members may be scattered through wilderness areas. Most gully dwarves live in villages abandoned by previous owners, or in the wilderness in old mines and caves. Small clans may live in the slums and refuse dumps of large cities, and several major cities in Ansalon have gully dwarves living in their sewer systems.

Clans living in or near major cities are often hired to perform (under strict supervision) menial tasks such as garbage collection, street sweeping, tinkering, cooking, and so forth. They face great prejudice when attempting to obtain any other work, and many have adopted a fatalistic and subservient attitude-when working with goblins, humans, or other dwarven thanes.

The leader of a small family group is responsible for keeping the family together, and is the sole voice of authority (though his or her authority may be frequently questioned). No formal education exists, except for the proverbial "school of hard knocks."

On occasion, several clans will be found living together, usually in a ruined or abandoned city. *Dragons of Autumn Twilight*, Book 1 of the *Dragonlance Chronicles*, gives an excellent description of a typical (albeit captive) gully dwarf community at Xak Tsaroth which was partially destroyed by flooding. Major Aghar communities hold between 40-400 adult dwarves and 40-400 children. At least two clans will be present, and possibly as many as five. Each clan will have a chieftain, with one chieftain (the strongest, cleverest, and most charismatic) becoming the local king. Kings are served by their bodyguards and by a completely chaotic hierarchy of lesser functionaries with no clearly defined roles or duties. This haphazard monarchy is invariably repeated throughout all Aghar colonies.

Other large Aghar colonies exist at the Steam City outpost of Thorbardin (see DL3, *Dragons of* Hope) and at the dwarven metropolis of Thorbardin itself. A small colony of Aghar at the ruined town of Pax Tharkas was supplemented by slaves from surrounding lands; following the events in *Dragons of Autumn Twilight*, the gully dwarves successfully defended the ruins from attacking draconians and have shut themselves away from the world for the duration of the Third Dragonlance War. The Pax Tharkas group is-now under the able leadership of Highklahd Sestun I, the former slave of Fewmaster Toede.

A king's title is produced by adding the prefix "High" to the clan that the king represents, with his personal name following it. It is not unusual to note a succession of kings with the same name, each calling himself "the First" because of their inability to count well and their innate egotism.

It is worth noting that a gully dwarf king can be greatly underestimated, as was done with Highbulp Phudge I of Xak Tsaroth (in *Dragons of Autumn Twilight)*. They can become quite crafty and calculating, playing the fool long enough to lead troublesome opponents into unintentionally fulfilling the king's plans (often at grave risk of the opponents' lives).

Aghar support the policies of the Hylar (mountain) dwarves at Thorbardin, though the Hylar do not return the good will. Aghar and derro do not get along because of the latter's enslavement of the former in past days.

Religion

Aghar acknowledge Reorx as the patron deity of all dwarves, but they do not believe that Reorx has any influence over their lives — in fact, they believe Reorx has abandoned them. Instead, gully dwarves believe that the spirits of their departed ancestors protect them from harm and ensure their survival.

Gully dwarves cannot cast any form of magic, though they are fascinated by lesser sorts of "magic show" legerdemain cast by non-Aghar mages and illusionists. Powerful spells frighten them. They hold magical items in disdain, but they universally believe that inanimate objects hold great power in themselves. Possession of such. objects gives the wearer the benefits of this power, which comes from the spirits of ancestral gully dwarves. This cross between animism and ancestor worship appears to be natural dwarven materialism raised to a new plane of meaning.

Aghar believe that magical items are no good because their magic was put into them by other races. The most powerful items, say the wisest gully dwarves, are those that *seem* to do nothing at all. Such items are regarded as holy and are given to shamans (see below) for safekeeping. The origin of this belief is lost, but Astinus of Palanthus says that it is a way of rejecting the races that scorned them. Things that other races value must be bad, since the other races are mean to gully dwarves; thus, gully dwarves do not need magic because it is important to other races. This attitude also appeals to the simple view of the world that gully dwarves have. Magic is complex and difficult to understand; if gully dwarves can't understand it, it must not be any good for gully dwarves.

Objects such as old bones, rotten fruit, furballs, dead animals, mud, and bent sticks are venerated and treasured, though not just *any* old bone, dead animal, or stick will-do. An item is judged holy or not after a long period of deliberation among the gully dwarves who found it. The item is examined in detail and its relative merits as a holy item are widely discussed. After a community vote, an item is either kept or it is thrown away. Shamans keep these "holy relics" and administer their use.

Curiously, human clerics before the Cataclysm sometimes pointed out gully dwarves in their sermons as models to emulate, not as objects of ridicule. "No other beings have the strength of faith that gully dwarves have in their relics," one cleric noted. "We would do well to consider their example."

Personality

The most important facets of a gully dwarfs personality are generally agreed to be survival instinct, stupidity, pride, and endurance. Though derided by other intelligent races of Ansalon, gully dwarves continue to thrive under conditions that would have broken many others, and they have much to recommend them.

Gully dwarves are born to survive. They avoid exposing themselves to harm, and they regard cowardice as a virtue; groveling has been raised to the level of an art in their society. If confronted by an extremely dangerous opponent but not immediately attacked, Aghar will faint, stand paralyzed and shake, cry, beg for mercy, divulge rivers of information, run away, or hide their eyes. If attacked, most will fight normally, but a few will also have both eyes tightly closed. Aghar adventurers are made of slightly stouter stuff, but cannot be relied upon all the time. They are easily intimidated, but, if given a chance to break free of their oppressors, will fight bravely until they win or are overwhelmed.

Though the phrase "brave as a gully dwarf" is considered a base insult in non-Aghar towns, this innate cowardice has saved gully dwarves many times. Draconians have frequently spared them and used them as slaves, and other enemies have bypassed Aghar communities as not being worth the trouble to eliminate.

Gully dwarves are not above stealing, cheating, lying, informing, and bullying in order to survive, though they don't often do these things to other gully dwarves. They can fight well without weapons, biting for 1-4 hp damage and punching for 1-4 hp damage per round. Strength bonuses are added to the punching attacks. Dirty tricks, such as kicking dust in the eyes, jumping on fallen opponents, throwing food, etc., are often used. Food-fighting is also one of their favorite sports.

Gully dwarves are master scavengers. Much of their clothing, armor, weapons, and other possessions were recovered from garbage dumps or hammered together from scrap. They have a remarkable talent for putting apparently useless items to good use again — like converting a battered pot into a helmet, or a twisted board and nails into a rat-catching trap.

The stupidity of gully dwarves is legendary. They can grasp the concept of a single item and of a group of items, but they cannot distinguish between large groups and small groups, regardless of their intelligence. Most Aghar don't recognize numbers greater than one, which may derive from the fact that most gully dwarves do not recognize the needs of anyone other than their individual selves. Any number greater than one is called "two," which simply means "more than one."

This leads to ludicrous situations in which gully dwarves are asked, "How many stars are in the sky?" or "How many bandits are riding this way?" Gully dwarves, of course, always hold up any number of fingers and solemnly (and *truthfully)* say, "two." A few gully dwarves seem to understand that "two" can mean two separate items or beings as well as "more than one." These few gully dwarves are also able to understand the needs of those other than themselves, and are often found in positions of responsibility and power within Aghar communities. Humans refer to such dwarves as "those who can almost count to three." Aghar adventurers are usually of this type.

Though regarded as foolish by others, gully dwarves are a proud folk and act with great seriousness, which only heightens their comic appearance. They tend to have inflated ideas of their own greatness, and puncturing their egos is difficult to do. They don't like to be made to appear silly, though they seem to be unaware of how hilarious or revolting their behaviors are to others.

Finally, gully dwarves are used to adversity and can withstand great punishment as individuals and as a race. They plod through the bad times with determined, defiant spirits, often with a surprising cheerfulness. They've outlived so many other previous troubles that one more isn't seen as very important.

Gully dwarves as PCs

Like kender (see DRAGON® issue #101), gully dwarves will generally appear only in DRAGONLANCE-based AD&D® game campaigns. Aghar are not known from any world other than Krynn, their home world. It's possible that a few individuals have found their way into other planes and lands by accident, though they would likely try to find a way back to their own lands and people again.

Aghar are less outgoing than other races and will rarely wander far from their homes without a good reason (such as being captured). Some gully dwarves might be encountered while on special missions for themselves or for their people, and a few might decide to go adventuring for a short time (with periodic visits back home).

Gully dwarf PCs may be of any alignment. The ancestry and nature of the Aghar grants them an intense individuality, though they do not tend toward evil or good. Nearly all Aghar are chaotic neutral, with most of the rest being chaotic evil, chaotic good, or truly neutral in alignment.

The initial characteristics for a gully

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dwarf PC are generated using special dice rolls, to reflect their unique nature. The following table shows maximum and minimum values for their six basic characteristics, as well as appropriate dice rolls.

Ability	**Range**	**Dice roll**
Strength	6 - 18/50[1]	4d4+2
Intelligence	3 - 9[2]	2d4 + 1
Wisdom	3 - 9[2]	2d4 + 1
Dexterity	6 - 18	4d4+2
Constitution	3 - 12	3d4
Charisma	3 - 9[3]	2d4 + 1

1 — Female gully dwarves may reach a maximum strength of 17.

2 — Or higher; see below.

3 — This effect applies only to non-Aghar races. Double the charisma to determine its effect against other gully dwarves. See also below.

Gully dwarves have a comeliness modifier of -3. However, their charisma is doubled (and the effects of charisma on comeliness increased accordingly) when applied with regard to other gully dwarves.

Aghar have poor resistance to will-force spells and powers, and are relatively easy to enthrall. Illusions work well against them, and even if they disbelieve an illusion, they will tend to admire it or step around it.

Gully dwarves who are "almost able to count to three" (as explained above) may add a + 2 bonus to their intelligence, wisdom, and charisma base scores. The maximum base scores for these characteristics then becomes 11 for these individuals. Any gully dwarf with a base charisma of 10 or 11 will be regarded as a champion of his or her people, and will almost certainly hold a major public office such as general, shaman, or king. Those with intelligence scores of 10 or 11 are regarded as geniuses.

Gully dwarf characters may be fighters, thieves; thief-acrobats, or shamans (a special class detailed below). The only multi-class options open to them are fighter/thief and fighter/thief-acrobat.

Gully dwarf fighters are treated the same as those of any other race. A gully dwarf with strength of 18 or higher may progress to the 7th level of experience as a fighter; otherwise, 6th level is the maximum attainable. The king of a gully dwarf community is not necessarily its most powerful fighter, since charisma is a major factor in determining political status.

Thieves and thief-acrobats are common in gully dwarf communities, though such characters rarely belong to organized thieves' guilds and are only capable of learning thieves' cant if they have intelligence of 8 or better. Dexterity modifiers for thieving skills are the same as for any other race. Racial modifiers for gully dwarf thieves follow; those for thief-acrobats are the same as for other dwarves.

Pick pockets	-5%
Open locks	-10%
Find/remove traps	-10%
Move silently	0%
Hide in shadows	+5%
Hear noise	+ 10%
Climb walls[1]	+ 10%
Read languages[2]	0%

1 — Though all gully dwarves can climb well, thieves are even better at it (see below).

2 — Gully dwarves usually cannot read (or speak) any language other than crude forms of the dwarven tongue and Common. Those with intelligence of 8 or higher may add one more language to their initial list, usually that of a neighboring race (like draconians).

Gully dwarves may reach the 8th level of skill as thieves or thief-acrobats, but can progress no higher because of their limited learning capacities.

Gully dwarf thieves may be hired out as assassins and spies. (No assassin class exists among gully dwarves.) Neutral thieves will only attempt to assassinate beings who are harming or enslaving other gully dwarves, while evil ones are not so choosy. However, gully dwarves are not very effective in these capacities. Thieves take a -40% penalty on the Assassin Spying Table (*DMG,* page 18), and a -40% penalty on the Assassins' Table for Assassinations (*DMG,* page 75). Gully dwarves are afraid to handle poison, and will never use it. If caught while on a mission, or even if stopped and asked a completely unrelated question, gully dwarf thieves who were hired for some task are 50% likely to blurt out the name and address of the person who hired them in order to save themselves. ("Nope, nope, nope, me not know nothin' 'bout no Geoff Ghrubb what gave me two coins to bump off no Zheb Kooke, nope, nope, nope.")

In their favor, gully dwarf thieves may be hired for a fee amounting to only one percent of the going rate for any mission, including assassinations. Only Krynn gnomes will ever hire them, since the gnomes understand that no one can ever be completely perfect.

Gully dwarf shamans are treated as fighters in every respect, except that they have 8-sided hit dice. Shamans gain several special abilities, however, and are the keepers of any relics that a gully dwarf clan possesses. Shamans have great pull in their home communities, and are regarded as healers, wise men, and saviors. A shaman must have a minimum charisma of 7 (14 to other gully dwarves). Such characters usually travel with a wide assortment of holy items on their person, which they will haul out and use at every opportunity to benefit their friends and allies — as Bupu tried to do for Raistlin with her dead lizard (see *Dragons of Autumn Twilight).* A shaman leading his people into battle (a rare event) will prominently display every holy relic the clan owns, including a few new holy items

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drafted into emergency service as protective devices in case the old holy items have lost their power. ("Better safe than sorry.")

If forced into actual combat, a shaman will go berserk with fear and desperation, fighting recklessly until he is slain or the enemy is vanquished. Aghar shamans are noted for their ferocity when placed in seemingly hopeless straits from which they cannot escape. At such time, shamans gain a + 2 bonus to hit and damage on all physical attacks, though they lose all armor class bonuses for their dexterity. The berserker bonuses end when the visible threat has vanished. All NPC gully dwarves, whether in combat or just putting up a bluff, gain + 20% to their morale when within 60′ of a shaman of their own clan.

Finally, shamans are the lorekeepers of their people, handing down the oral history of the Aghar as they see it. They also listen to the various tales told by other gully dwarves, and are sometimes consulted by non-Aghar adventurers who hope to learn some important bit of information.

Though gully dwarves are unable to process information to any depth, they have exceptional memories for all that they see and hear. This leads to situations in which a gully dwarf might know the answer to a problem, but will be totally unable to recognize the information as the solution. Gully dwarf PCs have a percentage chance equal to their intelligence of knowing the answer to any particular problem or mystery that the DM feels is within their realm to know. For instance, no gully dwarf would know Fizban's true identity or the distance of Krynn from its sun, but one might have heard of a secret treasure hoard in the mountains somewhere. The problem, of course, lies in getting at this information. A non-Aghar character must question a gully dwarf for 20 minutes, less the gully dwarfs intelligence, in order to determine if the dwarf knows the answer to the problem. Thus, it would take 12 rounds to question a dwarf with an intelligence of 8, and there is an 8% chance that the dwarf knows the right answer. Shamans have double the chance for knowing the answer to a problem, but it takes twice as long to get the information from them. Threats of physical harm will double the length of time needed to get the information.

Like other dwarves, gully dwarves have infravision to 60′. They have no bonuses to attacks made against goblins, hobgoblins, or the like (orcs are unknown in Ansalon), since they are not racial enemies of these folk. Likewise, gully dwarves have had little experience in fighting larger beings like giants and ogres, and so receive no bonuses to their armor class against these monsters. They move at 12″ due to their agility. No gully dwarves are psionic, but they gain a + 6 to their saving throw vs. *psionic blasts.* Gully dwarves are not able to detect traps, new stonework, or other underground phenomena as can normal dwarves, but they still have a constitution-based bonus to their saving throws against poison, spells, rods, staves, and wands (+ 1 on saves per 3½ points of constitution).

Because they have been exposed to noxious substances for so long, gully dwarves have poorly discriminative senses of smell and taste. Spells or powers that rely upon a victim's olfactory sense to work (e.g., skunk, witherstench, or wolverine musk, or *stinking* cloud) will fail when used against Aghar.

Oddly enough, gully dwarves rarely die from diseases, though they often suffer from them. When rolling for severity (page 22, *DMG)*, apply a - 1 modifier to the d8 roll. Gully dwarves may possess multiple diseases and are often feared because they serve so well as carriers (the "Typhoid Marys" of Krynn, as it were). Magical diseases affect them normally.

All gully dwarves can climb well, scaling any surfaces from cliffs to trees to city walls — a hard-learned survival talent. Any gully dwarf wearing padded, leather, studded leather, or no armor has a base chance of success at climbing equal to that of a thief of equal level *(see* page 22, *Unearthed Arcana).* Both hands must be free to climb; heavier armor of any sort negates this ability. Gully dwarves without levels climb as well as a 1st-level thief. Gully dwarves climb well, as their short height is balanced out by their dexterity and past experience; thieves receive a bonus to their climbing ability, as noted above.

Gully dwarves are surprisingly short-lived, compared to their brethren. The half-orc aging table (page 13, *DMG)* should be used for aging such characters, and starting ages for half-orc characters (page 21) should be used for gully dwarf PCs, with shamans starting at the "cleric" age. Aghar give birth much more often than other dwarves do, which helps keep their numbers up.

Appearance

Gully dwarves are short, squat demihumans, averaging 4′ in height; they have an average weight of 100 lbs., give or take about 10 lbs. Females tend to be slightly smaller than males. Aghar are physically much like any other dwarves, though they are often covered with scars, boils, sores, and filth, due to their living conditions and the effects of disease.

Gully dwarves have skin tones ranging from olive brown to a light parchment color. Mottled and splotched skin is not uncommon, and a few have a dirty gray-brown skin tone. Male gully dwarves wear long, scruffy beards; females have cheek hair but no beards. Hair color ranges from dark, dirty blond to brown, rust, gray, and dull black. Eye color can be watery blue, dull green, brown, or hazel.

Gully dwarves don't appear to be as heavy and stocky as other sorts of dwarves, and have narrower fingers and limbs. Pot bellies are very common among both sexes, and gully dwarves develop wrinkles quickly after age 25.

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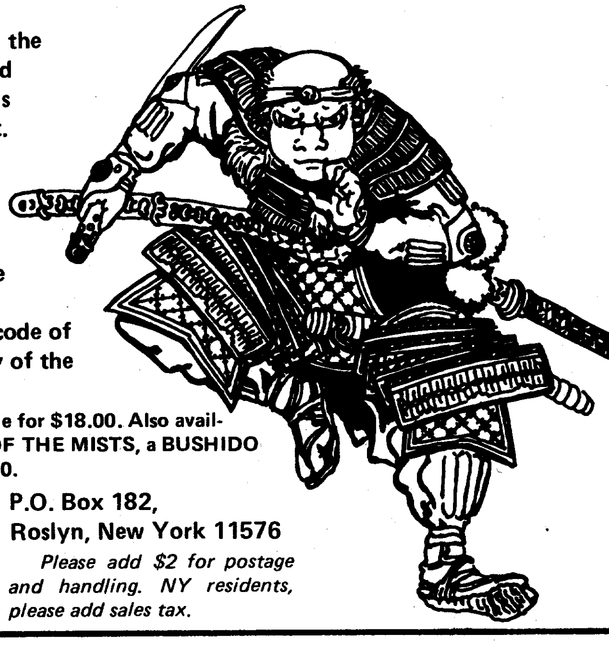

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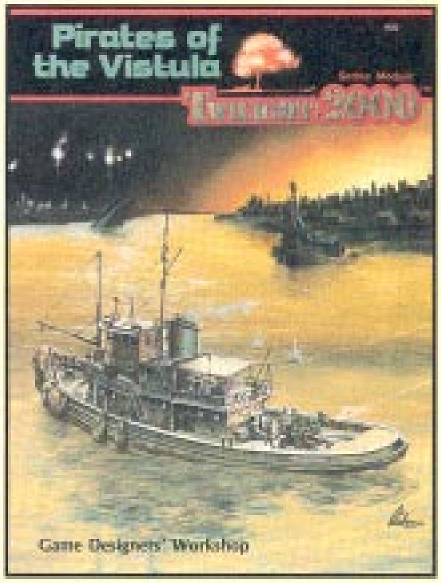

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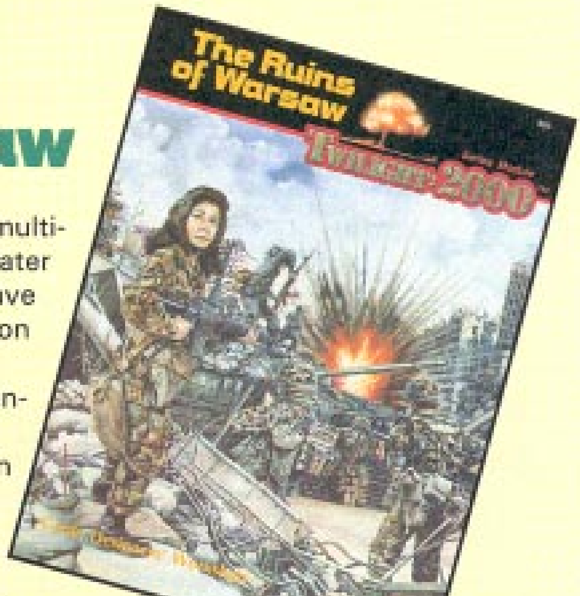

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Gully dwarves are hard to understand, since they have no concept of grammar, syntax, and so forth. They speak in one- or two-syllable words, ramble constantly, lose the thread of what they are saying, and — in short — make themselves as obtuse as possible.

Possessions

Gully dwarf characters start with only one weapon and 2-20 copper pieces (and no armor). Anything else they find must be scavenged, stolen, or taken as charity. They have nowhere to go but up!

If given the chance, gully dwarves will wear any armor that they come across. Those living near old battlefields or in ruined fortresses often wear battered bits of old armor suits, some of which fit them poorly at best. Armor which requires a lot of complicated work to assemble and wear will be beyond their ability to use. Because most gully dwarves have little concept of what good armor is all about, they tend to wear mismatched pieces of it if they wear it at all. Armor classes for these patchwork armor suits range from 3 (equal to plate mail) to 6 (equal to scale mail), determined at random when the suit is created. Such suits will only be worn in battle.

Padded, leather, and studded leather armors are most often seen, since gully dwarves like to travel light unless preparing for battle.

Gully dwarves may use any weapon one-handed which is 3½′ or less in length and weighs less than 80 gp. They almost never use missile weapons, though they can throw weapons such as hand axes and daggers. Weapons weighing 150 gp or less and 8′ or less in length may be used two-handed. Longer and heavier weapons are too clumsy for gully dwarves to use effectively. Small shields may be used with one-handed weapons. Traditionally, gully dwarves rarely use weapons other than clubs, daggers, knives, hand axes, and saps. A few gully dwarves have learned to use slings.

As would be expected, gully dwarves usually wear ragged clothing. Children in many communities run around without any clothing at all. When they can get them, they prefer clothes with bright, flashy colors — the more garish, the better.

Famous gully dwarves

Because the statistics for the more important gully dwarves mentioned in the DRAGONLANCE saga were not included with the module series, they are presented below, with appropriate notes on role-playing these characters as NPCs or as PCs.

Bupu
2nd-level Aghar shaman (fighter)
HP 12 AC 10 CG
STR 11 INT 10 WIS 10
DEX 14 CON 9 CHR 8/16

Following the events in Book 1, *Dragons of Autumn Twilight,* Bupu returned to Xak Tsaroth and helped reorganize the Aghar colony there after the city was partially destroyed by flooding. She still remains there with her people, though she pines for her one true love: Raistlin. Bupu carries a pouch on a strap that holds numerous odds and ends (like dead lizards) which she uses in her daily rituals.

Phudge I
O-level Aghar (2 HD adult)
HP 16 AC8 CN
STR 15 INT 8 WIS 11
DEX 13 CON 10 CHR 9/18

Like Bupu, Phudge I may be found among the ruins of Xak Tsaroth. Phudge doesn't trust any outsiders, and will do all he can to get rid of them, using trickery and deceit. He blames all of his problems on magic-users, heroes, and draconians. He wears heavy robes and usually carries no weapons except for a dagger.

Sestun
3rd-level Aghar fighter
HP 15 AC6 CG
STR 14 INT 8 WIS 9
DEX 15 CON 9 CHR 8/16

Sestun, as noted above, is currently the ruler of the gully dwarves at Pax Tharkas. He wears some bits of armor and uses a double-edged hand axe. He is regarded as a hero and is quite popular among his people. PCs fighting the draconians will find him a willing — if not always helpful — friend.

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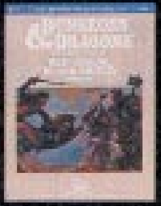

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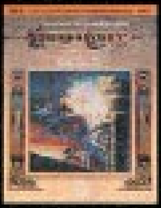

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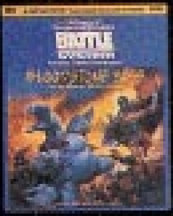

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A collection of canines

More dogs than you can throw a stick at

by Stephen Inniss

Although some of the wild canids (wolves, foxes, and their kin) have been described briefly in the *Monster Manual*, others which might be of interest to AD&D® game adventurers are not mentioned. As for the three that have already been covered, the entries on them might be fleshed out to the benefit of a campaign. The same might be said of canid-like carnivores such as hyenas, which are covered in the latter portion of this text. Player characters will frequently encounter these animals, if only through the agency of conjuring and summoning spells, and some characters (particularly druids and magic-users) will take the forms of these animals.

Described below are several canids and canid-like carnivores, including those already detailed in the *Monster Manual*. In the latter cases, new material has been added, and a few changes are suggested. These changes are based on available information about these animals, with the assumption that those found in the AD&D game world are much like their equivalents in the real world. Reasons for some specific alterations are given at the end of the descriptions.

Canids, wild

Canids are very successful predators and are common in their native haunts. The number encountered can be highly variable, except in the case of solitary species such as the fox. In some cases two ranges are shown for number appearing, one for times and places in which prey is small or scarce (the lower number) and one for those in which prey is large and abundant (the larger number). Wolves, for instance, are found in greater numbers during the winter, when they hunt deer and moose, than in the summer, when they hunt mice and rabbits. As indicated in the *Monster Manual*, these ranges are to be used as guidelines, not rules. For instance, several otherwise separate groups of canids might gather and mingle where food is superabundant: wolves scavenging at the site of a battle, hunting dogs where large herds of animals are on the move, or foxes in a mouse-rich meadow. It is suggested that 5% of encounters with canids should be in the vicinity of a large carcass. In such a case, there is a 25% chance that 1-2 other groups of canids (chosen at random from the appropriate types) will also be present, and a 25% chance (checked separately) that another carnivore or group of carnivores is in attendance. The largest, most numerous, and hungriest animals will have taken possession of the kill, and the others will dispute this or wait for an opportunity to steal or scavenge.

Canids are all at least as speedy as humans, though none of them are quite so fast as a horse or deer. It is noteworthy that canids are not slowed as much by undergrowth or rough ground as humans are, so that even the stubby-legged bushdog can be a good deal faster than a man under certain conditions. The smaller canids (those weighing less than 40 pounds) swim at 6″, while the larger ones swim at 9″. Most are handicapped by the fact that they must keep their heads above water, since unlike humans they cannot submerge themselves without getting water in their nostrils. An exception to this is the bushdog, which can immerse itself without difficulty and can swim at 9″) despite its small size. Only dholes and bushdogs will willingly enter the water. With the exception of foxes, no canids can climb.

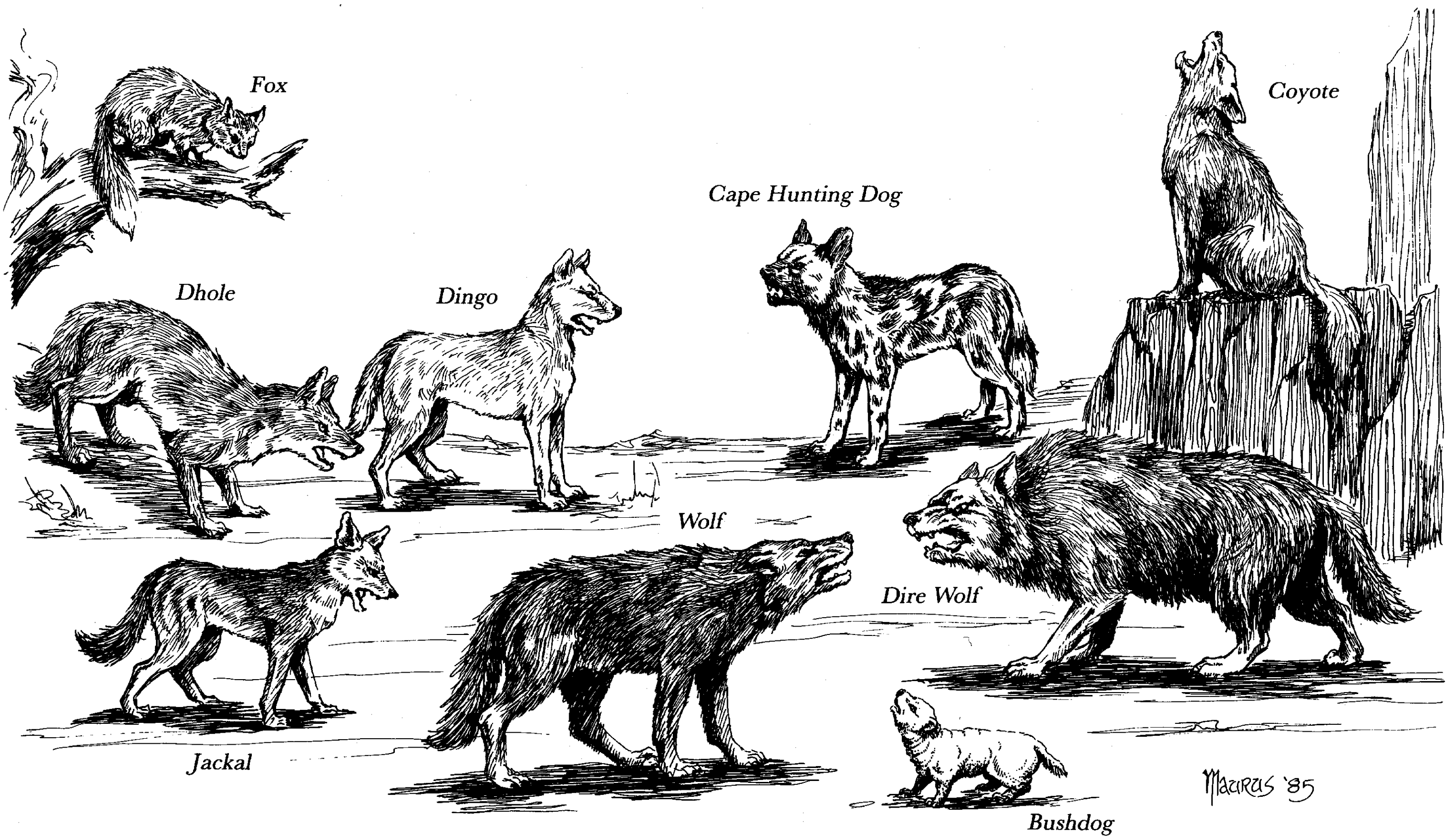
The smallest canids are given two damage ranges for the bite, the larger amount being applicable to creatures less than three times their weight and the larger amount being applicable to creatures of more than three times their weight. This reflects the fact that these animals are deadly to their usual prey, but less so when larger animals are concerned. Note that some canids of approximately the same size are given different amounts of bite damage. This is a reflection of differences in anatomy and behavior.

The sizes given for the various canids are approximate averages to the nearest 5 pounds. Exceptional individuals may weigh as little as half or as much as twice the amount given. Males are typically larger than females.

Canids encountered in the lair during the season of greatest abundance (spring, or the beginning of the rains) will always include one male and one female, even in solitary species, and 2-8 pups. All of the adults help care for and guard these pups, which are usually kept in a cave or burrow. Among social canids, the pups will typically be the offspring of the dominant female (the one with the largest hit-point total) and her chosen mate (usually the dominant male). Pups have no effective attack. There is a 30% chance that they will be young enough to be tameable.

Though canids of a suitable age can be

	BUSHDOG	COYOTE	DHOLE	DINGO	DOG, FERAL
FREQUENCY:	*Common*	*Common*	*Common*	*Common*	*Common*
NO. APPEARING:	*2-12*	*1-2/2-8*	*4-16*	*1-2/2-8*	*1*
ARMOR CLASS:	*7*	*7*	*7*	*7*	*7*
MOVE:	*12″*	*18″*	*15″*	*15″*	*18″*
HIT DICE:	*1/4*	*1-1*	*1+1*	*1-1*	*1*
% IN LAIR:	*5%*	*5%*	*5%*	*5%*	*5%*
TREASURE TYPE:	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*
NO. OF ATTACKS:	*1*	*1*	*1*	*1*	*1*
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	*1/1-2*	*1-3*	*1-4*	*1-3*	*1-4*
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	*Standard*	*Standard*	*Standard*	*Standard*	*Standard*
INTELLIGENCE:	*Semi-*	*Semi-*	*Semi-*	*Semi-*	*Semi-*
ALIGNMENT:	*Neutral*	*Neutral*	*Neutral*	*Neutral*	*Neutral*
SIZE:	*S (15 lbs.)*	*S (30 lbs.)*	*S (40 lbs.)*	*S (35 lbs.)*	*S (45 lbs.)*
PSIONIC ABILITY:	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*
LEVEL/X.P. VALUE:	*I/5 + 1/hp*	*I/10 + 1/hp*	*I/20+2/hp*	*I/10+1/hp*	*I/10+1/hp*



tamed, they cannot be made over into domestic dogs. They will certainly be affectionate if they are well treated, but taming and training are two very different things. Solitary canids are effectively untrainable; a fox will never be more than a companion. Semi-social canids (coyotes, dingoes, and jackals) are only a little easier to handle. Like solitary canids, semi-social ones do not understand dominance and submission, and may retaliate if they are disciplined. As adults they may wander away from their handlers, just as in the wild they eventually leave their parents. The social canids (bushdogs, dholes, feral dogs, hunting dogs, wolves, and dire wolves) can be trained as well as tamed. With the exception of feral dogs, though, they will seem aloof and indifferent by comparison with domestic dogs, and since they are less dependent on approval they are more difficult to teach. At least, though, they can be persuaded to accept their handlers and perhaps a few others as pack members, preferably senior pack members. In any case, a tamed canid will always be suspicious of new people and new things, and will not adapt well to civilized life. It may seem unpredictable because it does not always understand human signals and because wild canids are often difficult to "read." These misunderstandings may have tragic results.

Some of the abovementioned difficulties can be mitigated if a spell such as animal *friendship* is used, or if the handler makes frequent use of *speak with animals*, but *charm* spells will be ineffective since the problem lies not with how well the animal loves its handler but how well it expresses that emotion. Feral dogs do not present the above problems, since they retain something of their domestic ancestors' instincts, although they too may seem unruly by comparison with true domestic dogs.

Coyotes, dingoes, wolves, and jackals are all fertile with domestic or feral dogs and with each other, though they do not normally interbreed. The offspring, themselves fertile, are intermediate in most characteristics, though from a human point of view crosses of domestic with wild canids look and act "wild" and present the training problems described above, being difficult to train and seemingly unpredictable. A dog-wolf cross, for instance, inherits the wolfs aloofness and hostility toward strangers, and this, along with its large size and powerful jaws, might suggest that it would be a good guard dog. However, it shows a wolfs reluctance to bark, and it may show wolflike

---

	FOX	HUNTING DOG	JACKAL	WOLF	WOLF, DIRE
FREQUENCY:	*Common*	*Common*	*Common*	*Common*	*Common*
NO. APPEARING:		*4-24*	*1-2/2-8*	*1-2/2-20*	*3-12*
ARMOR CLASS:	*7*	*7*	*7*	*7*	*7*
MOVE:	*18"*	*21"*	*18"*	*18"*	*15"*
HIT DICE:	*1/4*	*2*	*1/2*	*2 + 2*	*3 + 3*
% IN LAIR:	*5%*	*5%*	*5%*	*5%*	*5%*
TREASURE TYPE:	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*
NO. OF ATTACKS:		*1*	*1*	*1*	*1*
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	*1-2/1*	*2-5*	*1-2*	*2-5*	*2-8*
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	*Standard*	*Standard*	*Standard*	*Standard*	*Standard*
INTELLIGENCE:	*Semi-*	*Semi-*	*Semi-*	*Semi-*	*Semi-*
ALIGNMENT:	*Neutral*	*Neutral*	*Neutral*	*Neutral*	*Neutral*
SIZE:	*S (10 lbs.)*	*S (60 lbs.)*	*S (20 lbs.)*	*M (90 lbs.)*	*M (150 lbs.)*
PSIONIC ABILITY:	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*
LEVEL/X.P. VALUE:	*I/5+1/hp*	*I/20+2/hp*	*I/5 + 1/hp*	*II / 35 + 3/hp*	*III / 60 + 4/hp*

caution and simply avoid an intruder rather than risk an attack.

Canids of all sorts have keen senses of smell and hearing. In good light, a canid's sense of sight is less exceptional, since canids do not perceive colors and haven't the sharpness of vision that humans have. However, a canid can see about as well by moonlight as by daylight, and can see as well on a moonless night as a human would under a full bright moon. A canid's hearing allows it a 20% bonus to its chances of detecting hidden or invisible creatures, where applicable. This bonus may be halved or doubled according to circumstances. A similar 20% bonus is granted because of the canid's keen sense of smell, as appropriate. This bonus too may be halved or doubled as circumstances warrant. An alert wolf, for instance, can detect a human for quite some distance downwind, and canids can even distinguish different individuals of the same species. A canid's nose also allows it to track as an *onyx dog (DMG,* page 144).

Canids are opportunists, and will eat practically anything: fresh meat, carrion, fruit, insects, and even some roots and grasses, including what humans would regard as garbage. Dholes, hunting dogs, and bushdogs are more exclusively predacious than the others, while foxes are best described as omnivores with a preference for meat. The others fall somewhere in between, with the larger and more social sorts showing a greater preference for hunting. Even the largest canid is cautious, and will seldom attack an animal of its own size or larger that fights back. A wound can be fatal, even for an individual that is supported by the rest of the pack; the animal may well starve before it recovers, even living on "charity." This doesn't mean that hunting canids will leave humans and their domestic animals in peace, however. They may test them to see if they are able to run away or defend themselves, and if they uncover weakness they will exploit it. However, humans (and, in an AD&D game world, human-like creatures) are not on any canid's "preferred" list. They are too likely to have nasty surprises on hand, such as swords and spears, and after centuries of association canids know this instinctively. Unless they are starving and desperate, they will avoid humans entirely.

Each canid has a distinct odor, which may be detectable to the human nose (foxes can be quite rank). Whether or not humans detect and approve of these odors, other canids can detect them, and they almost universally disapprove. Treat this as "hate" on any interspecies reaction roll. Domestic and feral dogs and dingoes are mutally acceptable, however, as any canid which has been raised with the smell in question won't be bothered by it.

The characteristics of the different kinds of canids are as follows:

Bushdog: A bushdog is a small brownish canid of robust build, covered with coarse, sparse hair. It has a short, broad skull, powerful jaws, short legs, small ears, and a short tail, and looks somewhat like a heavily built dachshund, or a cross between an otter and a small dog. With their low-slung bodies and webbed feet, bushdogs are well suited to the heavy undergrowth and abundant water of their native haunts. They live in small packs and communicate using various whistles, clicks, chirps, and squeals. When excited, they give voice to high-pitched, metallic barks. Bushdogs regard nearly anything of suitable size as prey, and will pursue large water rodents, small deer, and birds up to the size of a rhea as well as lesser game. Young bushdogs are not difficult to tame and train. Their expressive faces make their moods as easy to read as those of dogs and wolves, making the task an easy one. Tame bushdogs are affectionate and gentle as they are homely. Bushdogs are tropical, living in the forest or near water and away from settled areas.

Coyote: This is a versatile, mid-sized predator, able to take prey as large as sheep or goats, although coyotes generally restrict themselves to less difficult foods, such as mice and berries. The typical coyote is greyish, with long fur and long legs. Coyotes are wary and difficult to catch; they are less odorous than foxes and therefore more difficult to track, and over long distances they can outpace the fastest coursing hounds. Semi-social, coyotes can be tamed but not trained. They may be found in any climate from subarctic to subtropical and in any sort of terrain, even invading the mountainous parts of the tropics. They thrive in both settled and domestic areas.

Dhole: The dhole, or red dog, resembles a domestic mongrel at first glance, but it carries its bushy tail low and has reddish fur, short legs, and a short muzzle that has a unique profile: the line from skulltop to nosetip is convex rather than concave. Dholes hunt in large, highly cooperative packs, and they chatter when they are excited (they seldom bark). Aggressive and bold, they will attack even the largest herbivores, though they prefer deer-sized game. They have been known to drive away or kill competing predators, including tigers. Dholes trot tirelessly after their chosen prey, following it until it weakens and is suddenly vulnerable to a sudden coordinated rush. What they lack in sprinting speed, dholes make up for in endurance. Unlike other canids they are fond of water; it is difficult to escape them. Dholes hunt by day, or on moonlit nights. Dholes show little fear of humans, but are not known to attack them either. They can be tamed if captured when young, but are perhaps more difficult to handle than some other social canids might be because of their relatively inexpressive faces. Dholes live in both the forest and the steppe in temperate to subarctic climes. They survive in both settled and wilderness areas.

Dingo: Though they are like coyotes in

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size, build, and habits, dingoes are descended from or closely related to domestic dogs. Evidence of domestic ancestry is to be found in dingo coat colors and patterns, which (in addition to the nondescript tawny color typical of wild dogs) range through black, red, white, yellow, brown, and piebald, though none of these is as common as the "wild" type. Like coyotes, dingoes may be found in any sort of terrain, but they range from tropical to temperate climes rather than from subtropical to subarctic. They will not occur together with coyotes. Dingoes are semi-social. They can be tamed but not trained.

Feral Dog: This type is not truly a wild canid. Feral dogs are domestic dogs that have spent a generation or more away from human interference. Natural selection tends to produce an animal midway in size between coyote and wolf, and features such as droopy ears, odd coloration, gigantism, dwarfism, and so on become less common with each generation. Feral dogs do not occur together with truly wild canids of the same size, since they can't compete, especially where seasons are marked. Like domestic dogs, feral dogs may bear young at any time of the year, including such inappropriate times as the middle of the winter or the height of the flood season. Feral dogs will be found in most climes and sorts of terrain, but only within 50 miles of human settlements. They can be tamed if captured young, and are in effect domestic dogs.

Fox: Foxes and foxlike canids of various sorts are found everywhere, from the high arctic, to the deep tropical rain forest. Except when rearing their pups, they are solitary, and they are generally nocturnal. They catch game of pheasant size or less, and feed on whatever else is available. Most kinds are unobtrusive and wily enough to survive in settled areas despite organized persecution. Being asocial creatures, foxes can be tamed but not trained.

Hunting Dog: Also called the African hunting dog or Cape hunting dog, this canid is not closely related to the others. It resembles a big domestic dog with long legs, an outsize head, powerful jaws, and large, rounded ears. The short fur is sparse, and the black skin beneath it can be seen in places. Hunting dogs sport a peculiar harlequin pattern: asymmetrical white blotches, rimmed with black, on a yellowish background. The tip of the tail is always white, and the face and muzzle black. Hunting dogs have a strong, musky odor. They are efficient hunters, and can bring down anything smaller than an elephant or a hippopotamus, hunting in coordinated groups near sunrise or sunset. They chatter when excited, and make a strange, bell-like sound in the chase. Members of the pack are very close, and it is surprising that these canids are not more often tamed. Their inexpressive faces and strong odor may have something to do with this. They can be tamed and trained for use as coursing hounds, though. Hunting dogs seldom attack humans, but will take domestic animals. They are native to open tropical country.

Jackal: Jackals (there are several species) are like coyotes in appearance and behavior, though they are smaller. They catch game up to the size of a gazelle or lamb but generally eat smaller animals or scavenge, hunting cooperatively only on occasion. They are semi-social, like coyotes. Jackals are found in warm temperate or tropical climates in any sort of terrain except heavy forest.

Wolf: Wolves are the largest modern canids. They vary in appearance from place to place, both in size and in color. Wolves vary from white through greys, browns, and red-browns to black. The larger races tend to specialize in larger prey, but any sort will take prey of mouse-size to moose-size. As with other canids, wolves (with the exception of rabid individuals) usually leave humans alone, though they are less circumspect when it comes to domestic animals. They may pick up scraps or stray animals. During time of war, wolf populations tend to grow, for wolves will not pass up carrion. Since they are closely akin to domestic dogs and they are social carnivores, wolves are perhaps the easiest to tame and train of the wild canids. However, they need to be kept under strict supervision, especially when they reach maturity at two years of age. At that time they may try to take over leadership in their adoptive "pack." Wolves are

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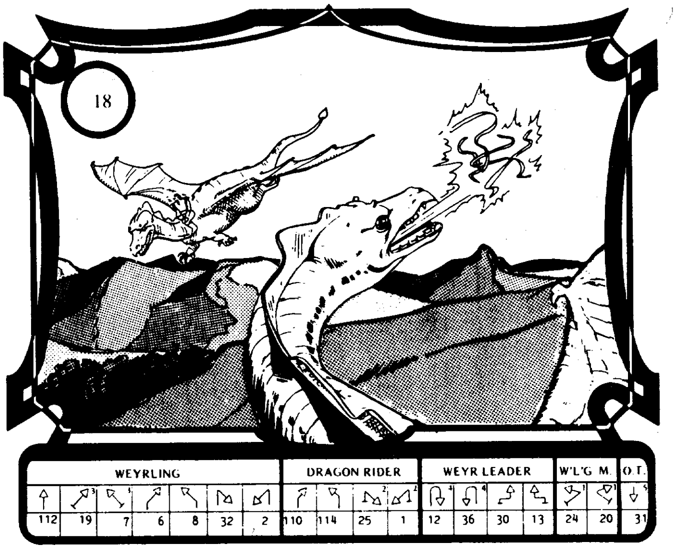

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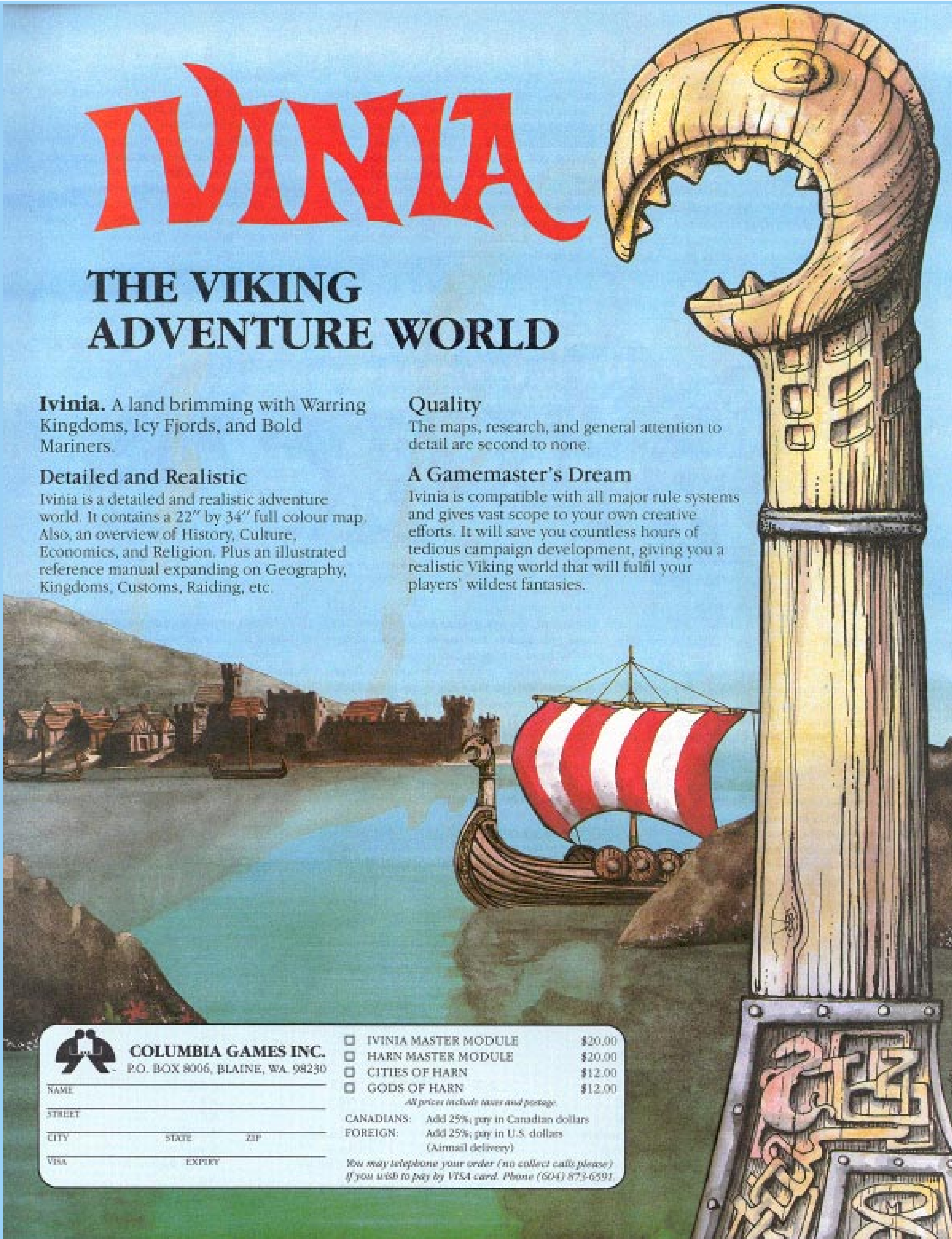

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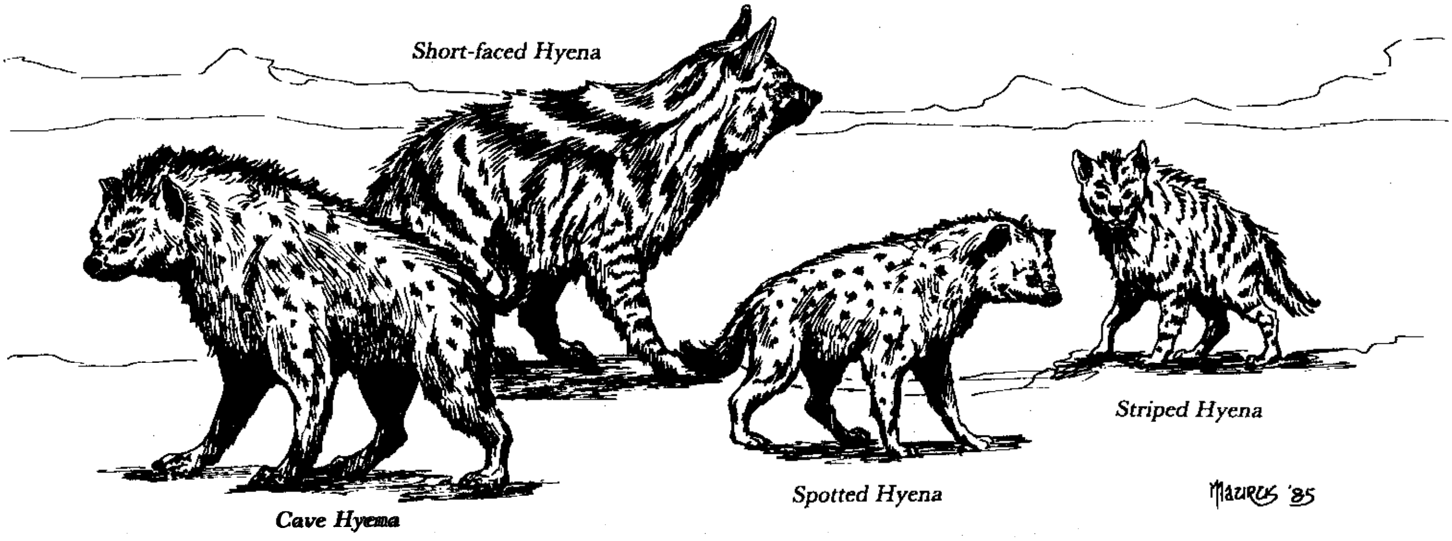
Wolf, dire: Dire wolves are wolflike canids from the Pleistocene epoch, and in such settings they are quite common. They resemble wolves in most aspects, but prey on larger animals and are more partial to carrion. The dire wolf looks much like an ordinary wolf, but is more heavily built, has proportionately shorter legs, and has larger teeth and more powerful jaws. A dire wolf is less intelligent than an ordinary wolf, though still within the semi-intelligent range. Dire wolves can be tamed and trained, but the handler is in grave danger should he make a miscalculation. Dire wolves are found in the same sorts of environments that wolves are, wherever large prey species are available.

Prehistoric canids

Canids of the Pleistocene epoch will be of modern type, even to the particular species, with the addition of the dire wolf. Similar types will be present in Pliocene and Miocene settings, but they will include hyena-like forms (use the figures for hyenas given below). Canids and canidlike predators from earlier in the Age of Mammals will be 3″ slower, and of *animal* intelligence rather than semi-intelligent. The canids have no close analogues from earlier eras.



Hyenas

Although hyenas are more closely related to cats than they are to canids, they parallel the canids in a number of ways. With the few exceptions mentioned here, the earlier general remarks concerning canids apply to hyenas as well.

Like canids, hyenas are runners and attack their prey by biting; this is related to their somewhat similar appearance. However, hyenas have relatively large forequarters and small hindquarters, so that the back slopes downward from shoulders to hips. Hyenas typically have less elegant pelts than canids do; their fur is coarse and unkempt, though hyenas keep themselves as well groomed as any canids. Hyenas also differ from canids in that they are better adapted to scavenging the remains of large animals, though they are by no means poor hunters. Hyenas have powerful jaws, and teeth specially adapted to crushing bones, not to mention a robust digestive system. They can finish off not just the meat and internal organs of a kill, but the hide and bones as well. Even the most predatory hyenas seldom pass up a free (effortless) meal, and some villages depend on hyenas to clean up refuse. Male hyenas are no larger than females, contrary to the situation among canids. In fact, female spotted or cave hyenas are larger than the males.

Unlike canids, hyenas do not cooperate in caring for their young. Raising the pups is the sole responsibility of the female that gave birth to them, and other hyenas may eat these pups if they are undefended. As with canids, the lair is typically a cave or burrow, but the further reaches of the lair are extended by the pups themselves among the hyenas, and adult hyenas cannot reach them. Among social hyenas, several females may keep their pups in the same den. Each female typically has 1-2 pups, and as with canids there is a 30% chance that the pups in any single litter encountered will be young enough to be tameable.

Cave Hyena: The cave hyena is a large variety of spotted hyena from the temperate

	CAVE HYENA	**SPOTTED HYENA**	**SHORT-FACED HYENA**	**STRIPED HYENA**
FREQUENCY:	*Common*	*Common*	*Common*	*Common*
NO. APPEARING:	*2-12*	*2-12*	*1*	*1*
ARMOR CLASS:	*7*	*7*	*7*	*7*
MOVE:	*15″*	*15″*	*15″*	*15″*
HIT DICE:	*4*	*3*	*5*	*2*
% IN LAIR:	*5%*	*5%*	*5%*	*5%*
TREASURE TYPE:	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*
NO. OF ATTACKS:	*1*	*1*	*1*	*1*
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	*2-8*	*2-7*	*2-12*	*2-5*
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	*Standard*	*Standard*	*Standard*	*Standard*
INTELLIGENCE:	*Semi-*	*Semi-*	*Semi-*	*Semi-*
SIZE:	*M (200 lbs.)*	*M (140 lbs.)*	*L (300 lbs.)*	*M (90 lbs.)*
PSIONIC ABILITY	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*
LEVEL/XP. VALUE:	*III / 60 + 4/hp*	*II / 35 + 3/hp*	*III / 90 + 5/hp*	*I/20+2/hp*

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plains and the steppes of the Pleistocene. It is of the same species as the spotted hyena, and is like it in all but size.

Short-faced Hyena: The short-faced hyena is a lion-sized relative of the striped hyena from the Pleistocene. Its habits are those of its smaller cousin, though it can tackle larger game. It lives in temperate climates.

Spotted Hyena: Spotted hyenas are dirty orange in color, with small black spots. The spotted hyena has a large repertoire of calls, including the famous "laugh," which really does sound like it ought to be coming out of a lunatic asylum in a third-rate movie. This laugh brings other scavengers and predators on the run, for it means the hyenas have made a kill. Swift runners, spotted hyenas hunt cooperatively, and will attack anything that doesn't put up too much of a light. Where they depend on refuse, spotted hyenas may start in on the human population if the supply of garbage falls off. These hyenas can be tamed and used as hunting beasts if they are caught when young. They inhabit open country in tropical climates, in settled and wilderness areas.

Striped Hyena: This hyena (and its relative the brown hyena, which is essentially the same in size and habits) conforms best to the hyena stereotype. It seldom attacks something larger than itself (goats and small humanoids are near the upper limit), and shows little or no social behavior. Striped hyenas eat human refuse, and will also raid crops of melons, dates, grapes, or other sweet fruits. A striped hyena is greyish, with vertical stripes on its sides and a crest of longer hair running down the back. Its ears are larger and more pointed than those of the spotted hyena. Brown hyenas are essentially the same, except that they are (as the name bears out) brown. Striped hyenas can be tamed if they are captured as juveniles, though they may be rather shy. Striped hyenas live in open country in tropical and subtropical regions.

Prehistoric hyenas

In Pleistocene settings the modern varieties of hyenas will be present, along with the larger sorts mentioned above. Also present will be slender hyenas of cheetahlike build and habits (as the cheetah, but 3" slower). Hyenas date back to the Miocene epoch. Similar creatures of earlier times will be 3" slower and of *animal* intelligence rather than semi-intelligent.

Hyaenodons are prehistoric carnivorous animals that were common predators during the Oligocene, before the rise of dogs, cats, hyenas, weasels, and their relatives. They had relatively short legs, long jaws full of large teeth, and small brains. They resembled hyenas, if at all, in the shapes of some of their teeth (*Hyaenodon* = "hyena tooth"). These animals ranged from kitten-sized to lion-sized, and the figures given under "Hyaenodon" in the *Monster Manual* describe one of the larger varieties quite well, even to the relatively slow movement rate and low intelligence, though there is some tenuous evidence that these animals were solitary.

Summary of changes

Jackals are given a figure for number appearing that reflects the typical jackal group size. They are also made a good deal faster, since no jackal is as slow as a human unless it is missing a leg. Jackals are speedy enough to steal meat from hyenas and hunting dogs or from lions, and to catch gazelles. Since jackals have no lairs, a chance is given that they will be encountered in or near them; a small chance, since the lair is often concealed and the animals are often out hunting. This reasoning applies to all the canids and canidlike animals, and indeed to all of the carnivores.

Wolves sometimes occur singly or in pairs according to local conditons, thus the addition to the figure for number appearing. They are seldom encountered in the lair, for the reasons discussed above, and so the chance has been reduced from 1 in 10 to 1 in 20. Since most wolves are the size of a small person, the size rating has been increased to M. To reflect the great variation in size between wolves of the south and northern wolves, the northern wolves are given more hit dice and a greater bite damage, as noted.

Indications are that dire wolves were rather common in their chosen habitats, and the frequency classification has been changed accordingly. The armor class has been changed to 7 to bring it in line with the other canine armor class ratings. If the change to armor class 7 needs justification, it might be pointed out that while large animals are more robust, smaller ones are more maneuverable, and the two factors might cancel out. The dire wolfs movement rate has been reduced because of the length and proportions of its legs: evidence indicates that it was almost certainly slower than the ordinary wolf.

The hyena is given a movement rate of 15" because it is certainly faster than a human. An argument might in fact be made for 18", except that wolves already occupy that slot and are probably faster than hyenas. Hyenas are given a chance to be encountered in the lair because they have lairs, just as canids do. The amount of damage from a hyena's bite is reduced because while hyenas do have great crushing power they are accustomed to bringing it to bear against immobile things such as bones from a carcass. Hyenas are therefore judged to do no more damage per bite than do large wolves. Hyenas are given an intelligence rating of *semi-* to bring them into line with the other carnivores; there is no evidence that they are more stupid.

The hyaenodon has been released from the hyena group, since it is not a relation and doesn't look particularly hyenalike. It is recommended that gnoll tribes should have short-faced hyenas in place of hyaenodons, since the latter are more gnoll-like.

Many of the descriptions of natural animals in the *Monster Manual* make them more likely to attack people than animals in the real world are. This is probably not a lapse in accuracy, or "realism"; it is more interesting from a story-telling point of view if adventurers come into direct conflict with these beasties, and the entries in the *Monster Manual* may well have been composed with this in mind. A different tack is taken in the preceding descriptions, however. The animals are described in naturalistic terms, and it is up to the DM to devise situations in which the animals might come into conflict with adventurers.

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Nine wands of wonder

Wherein Elminster reveals more of the Realms

by Ed Greenwood

It was cold that night; a wind cruel and cutting as a sword rustled leaves in the darkness, and brought the smell of woodsmoke from afar. Overhead, the stars scudded through tattered fingers of ghost-white cloud, and only owls hooted. Elminster came up the path, a grey spectre in his cowled cloak, looked around the garden, pipe in hand, nodded thoughtfully, and said, "Let's go in."

The cozy corner where he is wont to sit was much warmer; Elminster sank down with a sigh of contentment and accepted a mug of cocoa. "Thank'ee," he said, and swung his feet up onto the clawed footstool — and the footstool clawed him back!

It was Stardust — the one of our cats black as night save for the four white hairs that gave her her name. She erupted from beneath his startled feet with outrage, picked up a stick she'd been playing with, turned her back upon him, and stalked away. Elminster spoke a Word as she went; she froze for an instant, all her hair stood straight on end, and then she was gone, running hard. Elminster looked thoughtfully at the stick she had dropped and said, "I'm sorry. . . . I've not told ye of wands yet, have I?"

I assured him that he had not, and he nodded. " 'Tis a funny night, and fitting, for they're funny things, even to mages. And when lesser things" — he nodded in the direction of Stardust's disappearance — "get ahold of them, such creatures fair think themselves possessed of the power of gods, and a fast doom they earn. Usually." He picked up Stardust's stick, spoke another word, and it vanished from his fingers. "That one belonged in the Realms, not here. I'll spin ye the tales ye want, but mind ye remind those that read ye that the danger is usually worse than the-gain."

I promised to do so; and, by this recounting of his words, I have. Elminster told me of nine types of wands known in the Realms, and I pass them on to you without comment. (No, he didn't tell me what type of wand Stardust's stick was, and I don't think I really want to know.)

Wand of Magical Mirrors

These wands were made by the archmage Glendar, who, though good and noble in life, became a lich, and was later destroyed. The knowledge of their making is now lost. Perhaps twenty were made, and most survive about the Realms in the possession of powerful mages, or in treasure, caches. Elminster has found four known command words in his researches: "Phasral"; "Talusta"; "Ormduth"; and "Resshemma." To which wands these apply — and indeed, where specifically any of these wands are — is not known.

Function

Activation of this wand creates an opaque, silvery, and reflective circular shield of force. This shield appears wherever the wand is pointing, 1" distant from the wielder of the wand, facing outward. Its surface will reflect images (including the gaze of the catoblepas and basilisk) like a mirror; the wand wielder can look "through" the mirror as though it was a window without suffering any harm from such attacks — and when viewed through the shield, things appear as they truly are: illusions are invisible; creatures or items disguised by magic, mutable form, or invisibility (e.g., dopplegangers, *shapechanged* individuals, leprechauns, demodands, and devils) are revealed in true aspect; and so forth.

The mirror-shield lasts for 3-8 rounds (at random, not at the wielder's command) and moves as the wielder moves the point of the wand. Each wand can only have one shield created from it in existence at a time (the first shield will instantly vanish if a second is created). The caster need not concentrate on the shield to maintain its existence, and can even put the wand down or pass the wand to another (who thereby assumes control of the shield's location) to engage in spell casting or other activities.

The shield has no tangible physical existence; it can neither ward off attacks nor be used as a weapon. Creatures pass through it as though it does not exist. It will, however, reflect color spray spells striking it from any direction directly back at the caster, and harmlessly dispel darkness and prismatic *spheres*, *sprays*, or walls upon contact. A *dispel magic*, *limited wish*, *wish*, or *alter reality* will destroy such a shield; it cannot otherwise be affected. Each creation of such a shield drains one charge from the wand, and such wands are not rechargable. Magic-users, illusionists, clerics, and druids may use this wand.

Wand of Hammerblows

The mage Phultan recently developed this device, and has used it to shatter potion vials, delicate jewelry, brittle parchment maps and scrolls, lanterns, mirrors, ladder rungs, and even the material components of rival spellcasters. It can't directly affect living creatures, and is thus little sought after by rival mages, but Phultan has sold several to thieves and assassins in Westgate, Amn, the Vilhon Reach, and the kingdoms of the South, who have seen its potential. Elminster has examined one that was found on a thief slain in Waterdeep, and sets down its powers below. Its command word, he reports, is: "Dessout."

Function

This wand, when activated by a whispered command, causes objects to be affected as if by a "crushing blow" (forcing a saving throw to be made at par on the Saving Throw Matrix For Magical And Non-Magical Items, *DMG* p. 80). Targets must be non-living items, of any size, but at least some portion of them must be within 6" of the tip of the wand — and they must be visible to the wand-wielder when the wand is activated.

No known physical or magical barriers can stop the wand's effect, which is silent and does not affect or alert surroundings — such as a creature holding the object — at all. No actual physical blow is dealt, but rather, there is a magical assault on the internal structure of the item.

The wand can be used by any class, and is rechargable. One charge is expended per "hammerblow," regardless of the blow's effectiveness. It is not possible to hit an alternate item by accident — the intended target is chosen mentally by the wand-wielder, and if it is missed, nothing at all occurs.

Wand of Banishment

Savengriff was a young magic-worker of Waterdeep who fell in with a band of reckless adventurers and was slain in battle with a beholder. His corpse was found by the Archmage Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun, who arranged for his resurrection. Savengriff became a loyal apprentice, but has devoted much of his time since then to devising means of avoiding fearsome beings — and another death like his first.

The *wand of banishment* was one result. Savengriff made over a dozen of these before he vanished into other planes than this; most passed into the hands of good mages across the North, one Savengriff took with him, one he gave to Khelben, and he is thought to have hidden away at least one. Elminster gives the command word of one he examined, but has not revealed in whose possession that wand was (or is now). The word is: "Baerlaguth."

Function

This wand is usable only by magic-users; it cannot be recharged, and each use (effective or not) drains 1 charge. Upon command, a needle-thin ray of flickering green light shoots from the wand's tip up to 4" distant, striking a single target creature (the target is allowed a save vs. spell at -1; a successful save means the ray missed). Creatures struck by the ray are affected as follows:

— A *summoned* creature (from another plane) is instantly *banished* back to its own plane; it must save vs. wand at -4 to remain. If it does remain, it is *held* for one round.

— A creature summoned from elsewhere on the Prime Material Plane (i.e., by *monster summoning, call woodland beings*, or the like) is driven away; it will leave instantly at a normal movement rate, stopping only to defend itself if attacked, and not return.

— A hostile creature of 2 + 2 hit dice or less (including enemy familiars and homonculi) is affected as if by a *repulsion* spell, for 4 rounds. The target is allowed a save vs. wand; if successful, the repulsion lasts for only 2 rounds.

— A hostile creature of more than 2 + 2 hit dice must save vs. wand at -4; if successful, it is *slowed* for 2-5 (at random) rounds (if save is successfully made, target creature is unaffected).

— By draining 6 charges at once (the power will not work if less than 6 are left, but any attempt will exhaust the wand anyway), the wielder of the wand may attempt to *repel* any other wands within 4". Any affected wands (all wands are allowed a save vs. "Lightning" on the Saving Throw Matrix For Magical And Non-Magical Items at -3; if successful, they are unaffected) will be instantly, and violently, *telekinesed* away from the *wand of banishment* for 10"-60" distance, and held that distant for 1-4 rounds. Wands carried in the hand or belt will tear free; wands in backpacks and chests will drag the owner or item with them — unless very heavy or bulky, in which case the wand will smash about within the item, perhaps being destroyed. Note that wands in extra-dimensional spaces (such as a *bag of holding* or that produced by a *rope trick)* are immune from this effect.

Only one creature can be attacked with a *wand of banishment* per round; the ray will only affect one creature at a time, although it may affect any number of wands. Any given creature can be affected by any particular *wand of banishment* only once every 12 hours; a creature cannot be repeatedly attacked, or attacked a second time or with a different function of the wand, if an initial

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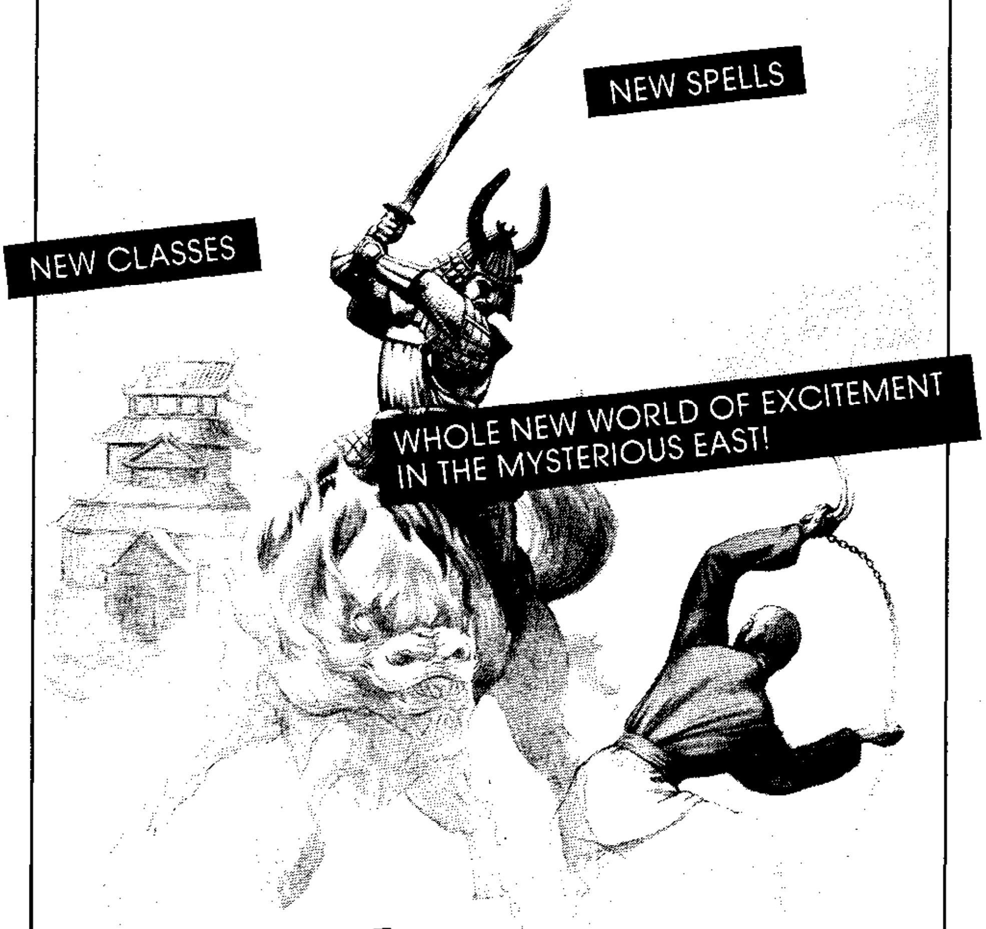
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attack fails. Subsequent attempts will merely waste charges; a creature that has saved once against the wand (or endured one successful attack) cannot be affected by the wand again until the dweomer built up around the creature by the wand dissipates (which takes 12 hours).

Wand of Armory

The long-ago wizard Hosta worked on this device for many years, and he had many apprentices; not a few of them carried knowledge of the making of the complete and final item away at his death. The sorceress Myschanta of Arabel is known to possess one; others are in the royal treasuries of Cormyr and Aglarond. Many other specimens of this wand are believed to survive — most (since Hosta lived in the North) probably now lie in tombs or dragon-hoards. One used in a tavern brawl in Waterdeep many years ago had the command word “Plessendar”; the tome *High Magic of Mirabar* lists among the treasures of that city a wand *of armory* (since gone missing) with the command word “Skulpin.” Elminster suspects that the parchment found behind paneling in the throne room at Suzail, which bears only the word or name “Ailun,” preserved the command word of Azoun II’s vanished *wand of armory*, too.

Function

When touched to a target creature (or activated upon the wielder’s person), this wand causes the recipient to be enveloped from head to foot, and on all sides, by an invisible, magical field of force which slows and deflects physical attacks so as to afford the equivalent of armor class 0 protection.

This field of force can be destroyed by *dispel magic*, *limited wish*, *disintegrate* (which will not affect the protected person, however) or similar, stronger spells; but otherwise lasts for 6 rounds. During this time it absorbs *magic missiles* and all electrical attacks (including magical ones) so that they do no harm to the—wearer — or to anything else coming into contact with the field — but otherwise do not affect spells cast into, or out of, its confines. The “force armor” may be cast over and in addition to real, physical armor worn. by a target, and will completely cover any size M or S creature (who need not be conscious, alive, or even willing to be so protected.; no saving throw allowed). Size L creatures will have only their heads and torsos protected by the fields of force. All classes may use this wand, which may not be recharged. Each use of the wand (only one use per round is possible) drains 1 charge.

Wand of Darkness

Human and drow mages, acting at the behest of the powerful forces of evil that inhabit the Lower Planes, are believed to have made these fell magical devices. They enable the weakest servants of evil to hold their own, and can be found throughout the Realms. They are made of black ebonywood or carved and polished bone, and a few have small, ornamental claws at one or both ends. Elminster warns that they are dangerous to those of good alignment; readers, beware! Demons, devils, illithids, and other creatures of evil seem attracted by the use of such wands. From sources he does not disclose, Elminster reports six known command words for such wands: “Orgul”; “Meth”; “Kulmur”; “Druu”; “Ulgukh”; and “Ssleeer.” (After the command word is spoken, choice of the wand function is by mental concentration of the bearer.)

Function

A *wand of darkness* has four separate functions. It can be wielded by any intelligent, speaking creature of neutral or evil alignment. Creatures of good alignment cannot make the wand function, and will suffer 1-2 points of damage per contact with the wand — or if they grasp it continuously, 1-2 points of damage per round. It can be recharged.

The powers of the wand are these:

— It can cause *darkness 15’ radius*, lasting 4 rounds, and centered upon the tip of the wand, at a cost of 1 charge. The bearer of the wand (and anyone else, while touching the wand) can see perfectly in any *darkness* produced by the wand.

— The wand can be commanded to *summon* a nightmare *(see Monster Manual)* at a cost of 3 charges. This summoning has a 4 in 6 chance of success; the charges are lost even if it fails. The nightmare will be brought from an evil Outer Plane, and will appear in an explosion of black smoke and a brimstone stench within 3 rounds, whereupon it will immediately know and serve its summoner. It can be commanded to fight on the summoner’s behalf, or take the summoner into the Astral or Ethereal Plane. It will so serve for 9 turns at a time, and then vanish. If the summoner is then astride it, he or she will be taken along for the ride, or flung off, usually to be hurt when landing.

— By touch, and at a cost of 2 charges, a *wand of darkness* will break a *protection from evil* circle, or deal any creatures of good alignment 2-5 points of fiery damage. Creatures immune to fire, or creatures of neutral or evil alignments, are unharmed, but the charges are lost.

— By touch, and at a cost of 4 charges, a *wand of darkness* can animate a single corpse of a size S or M creature. A zombie, skeleton, or animal zombie will be thus produced, and can be commanded by the wand-wielder as though an *animate dead* spell had been cast. The undead creature will serve until destroyed or until 6 turns have elapsed, and then collapse. If it is still intact, a corpse or skeleton could then be animated anew by the expenditure of 4 additional charges. Attempts to animate incomplete skeletons will fail, but will still drain 4 charges. The wand cannot be used to control existing undead, but only undead creatures created by the wand.

In addition, 10% of these wands can *summon* a shadow when so ordered, this function having a 1 in 3 chance of success (twice that if in deep caverns or ancient ruins) and expending 4 charges if successful or not. The shadow will arrive in 3 rounds, and will not attack any creature holding the wand.

Wand of Displacement

This wand is exceedingly rare; probably only a dozen or so exist, and most are in the possession of thieves’ guilds in large cities. Thought to have been invented by the long-ago mage Schollus, who made a few (which he sold for vast sums of money) before disappearing forever into other planes, who alone knew the secrets of their making, these wands are among the most closely guarded (and eagerly sought) treasures of dweomercraeft. The Guild in Baldur’s Gate is known to hold one, and it is thought that another lies in the hands of thieves in Hillsfar. Several are rumored to be in the rich cities of the South (due to the number of inexplicable thefts there), but the precise whereabouts of none can be heard or read. Elminster can give only a partial set of command words for but a single wand (which one is not known), from all his books of lore; three of its six words are or were: “Tamyr”; “Urembom”; and “Lairu.”

Function

A *wand of displacement* can *teleport without error* single pieces (or several pieces fastened together in some way) of non-living material (which may be organic or formerly alive) up to 16” away from their initial position. The wielder must touch the material to be *teleported* with the wand while speaking a command word, and later touch the intended new location of the material while speaking the same command word. The material will then be *teleported* from one location to the other within 1 segment.

Magical items (or any items bearing a dweomer) may be transported without affecting their magic in any way, but the following limitations apply; if the material is of over 30 cubic feet in volume (weight does not matter), or is contained within a magical prison (such as a protective circle, *protection from evil*, a *forcecage*, *imprisonment*, etc.), or the intended new location is over 16” distant from its location at the time the wand wielder speaks the command word a second time, the *teleport* will not work — and the magic is lost. (The item must be touched again if it is to be teleported with the wand.) Material that is destroyed, consumed, or made living (e.g., a corpse resurrected) also cannot *teleport*.

The wand may touch the intended location(s) any number of times without activating if the command word is not spoken.

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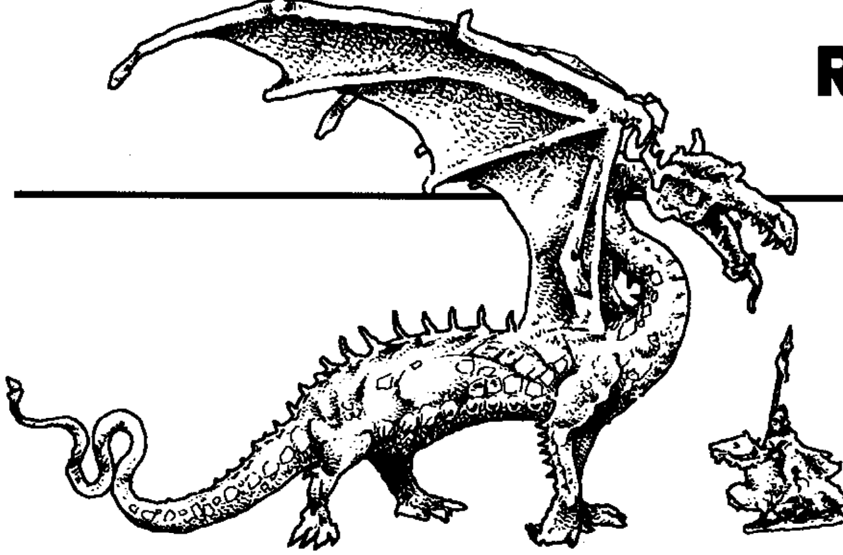

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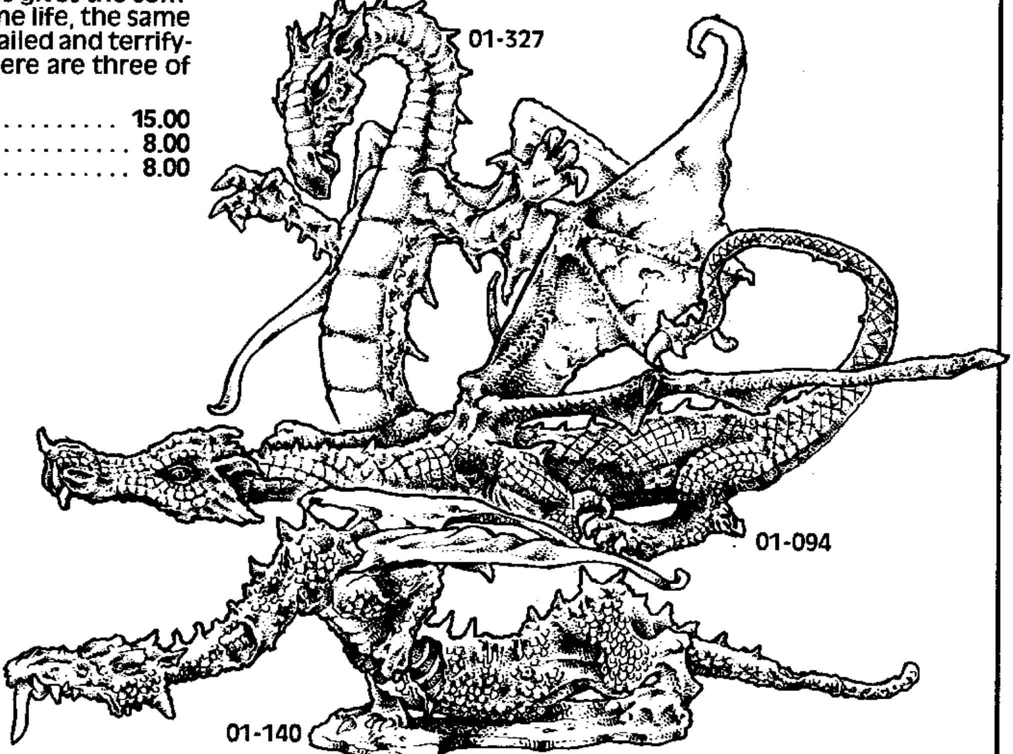

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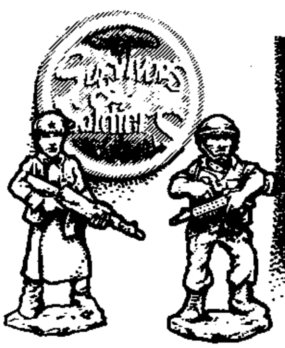

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Note that a magical prison (such as a petrified creature, *magic* jar or the like) could itself be *teleported*, and that the teleportation circumvents any physical or magical barriers around its new location — or between the two locations. The wand will not move objects from plane to plane.

Each wand has six (set and unchangeable) command words; up to six items can be simultaneously carried, or "held ready" to teleport; i.e., a wand could be immersed in a *potion of healing*, and the first word spoken, and then touched to a gem and the second word spoken, and then to a sword, and the third word spoken, and then touched to an empty vial and the first word spoken again (causing the *potion* — unaffected in its magical powers — to instantly "jump" from its initial container to the empty vial). Another item could be touched with the speaking of the fourth command word, the second word then spoken again to snatch the gem from the purse of someone the wand wielder has paid or given it to (or had it stolen by), and so on.

Teleports can be made in any order; the first word need not be spoken for a second time before the second, third, or fourth is so spoken. The *teleport* will not work, however, if a location is touched before the item. A *dispel magic* cast upon the item will not negate or foil a not-yet-completed *teleportation;* only magical imprisonment (see above) of the item will prevent its *teleportation.* If *teleports* are wasted (by failing to work) or used successfully, the command words corresponding to them are freed again for re-use. Knowledge of only one or two command words will permit simultaneous carrying of only one or two items. This wand may not be recharged, and each *teleport* (successful or not) drains one charge. This wand may be used by all classes.

Wand of Obliteration

The origin, and means of making, these rare and powerful wands is now lost. Six were discovered in a chest on the island-realm of Ruathym over a hundred years ago, but if any others have been found since then, no one has revealed it. The whereabouts of all are unknown; Elminster believes that only perhaps ten or so have ever existed in the Realms; he can find no hint of even a single command word for any of them. The wands are said to be dangerous; sometimes they turn back upon the user.

Function

This wand can harmlessly erase and dispel *symbols, glyphs of warding,* and other written messages and runes (such as *wizard mark).* It will obliterate scrolls, and even pages from spell books, but all such items (regardless of how written, and on what) gain a saving throw vs. "magical fire" on the Saving Throw Matrix For Magical And Non-Magical Items, as if they were "Parchment or Paper," with bonuses and penalties as follows:

– Normal, non-magical writing: -3

— *Wizard mark*, identifying rune or sigil for magical person or thing, command word, message concealed by *unreadable magic:* + 1

— *Symbol, glyph of warding*, protective circle or other magical rune: + 2

– Single written spell (e.g. scroll), *secret page* magic: + 3

– Spell book page (or scroll if in close proximity to other scrolls or spell books); includes all multi-spell scrolls, but not *secret page* spell book pages: + 4

Note that messages or marks deeply cut into stone cannot be destroyed by use of this wand. Only one message (regardless of extent), spell, or magical rune can be affected with the wand per round, and the fading (if successful) takes a full round. If an erasing attempt is unsuccessful, there is a 5% chance the wand will explode, doing 10-54 (4d12 + 6) points of damage to all within 1". The wand cannot be recharged, and each use, successful or not, drains a charge. Only magic-users, illusionists, and incantatrixes (see DRAGON® issue #90) can use this wand.

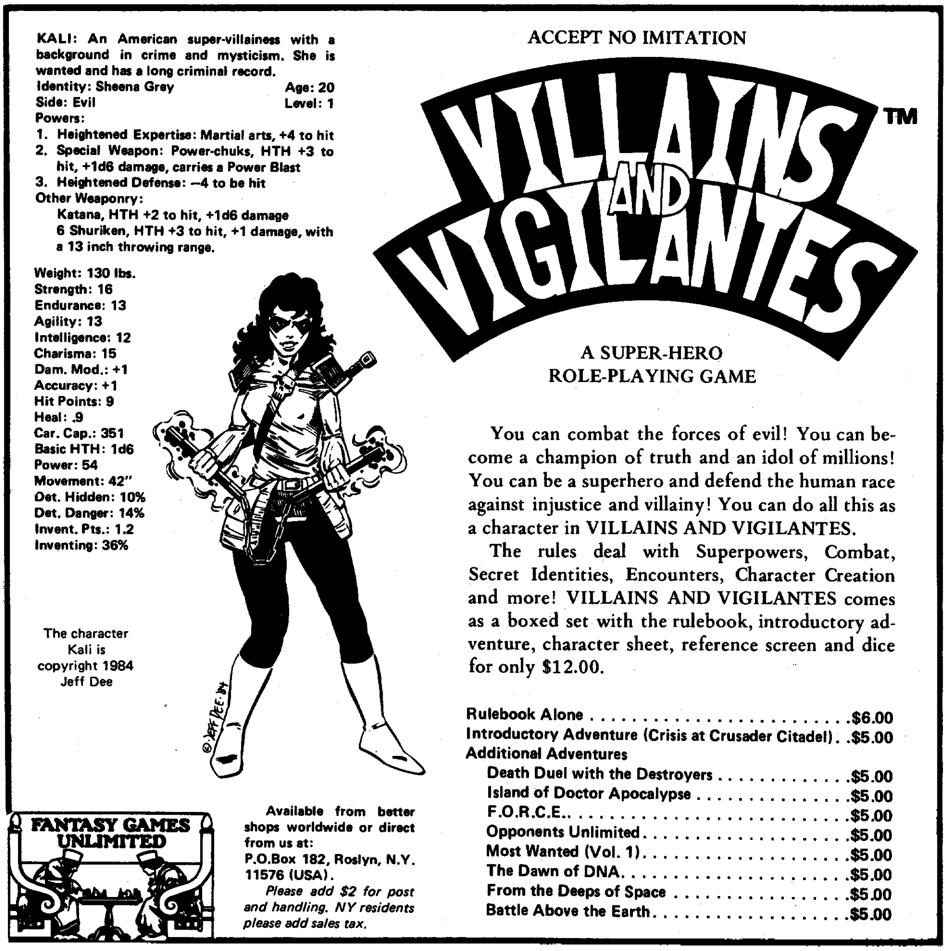
Wand of Teeth

Lantan of Pelmarin, that sinister and rotund mage notorious for his ruthless domination of the mages of the South through poison, subterfuge, and awesome magics, is said to have looked like a pomegranate in death. "Full of holes," said the merchant Zustel of Amn, who viewed the body, "holes right through!" Lantan came out the loser in a battle with the bard Tamshan, a grim but gentle man who possessed a spell Lantan wanted. Tamshan still holds the cause of Lantan's demise — a *wand of teeth,* one of only seven known to exist. The origin and method of manufacturing these deadly devices is lost in antiquity, and the few remaining wands are all thought to still possess only a few charges each. Anczibul of Neverwinter spent much of his apprenticeship to the Archmage Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun studying Khelben's specimen of the wand, and from his diaries Elminster has decoded the hidden command word of Khelben's wand: "Neverretha." The "Book of Bulgoz," written by the Southern merchant of that name, attests that Elzir of Calimshan possessed a *wand of teeth,* and that its word of command was "Orlethar."

Function

This wand is not rechargable; it calls forth a certain number of "teeth," one per charge), firing not more than one tooth per round, at targets up to 7" distant. The missiles it fires are daggerlike wedges or blades of force that coalesce out of nothingness (actually from material and kinetic energy drawn from the Positive Material Plane, Elminster believes) within 1 segment

(Turn to page 89)



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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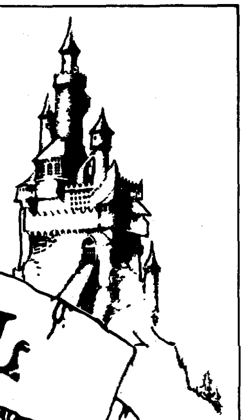

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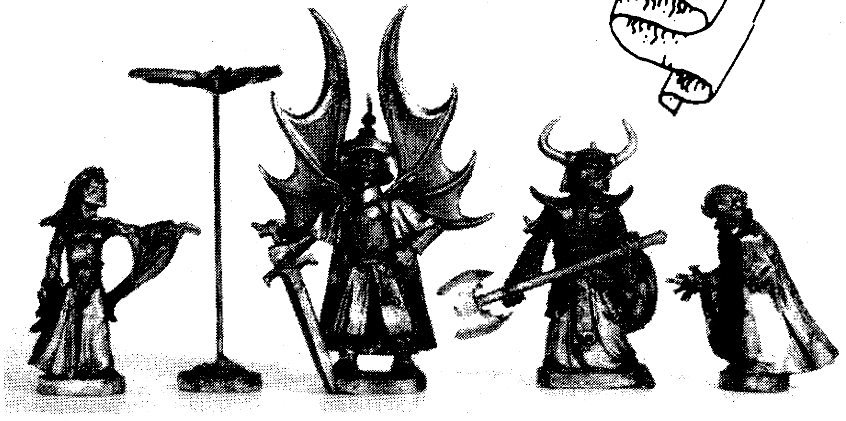

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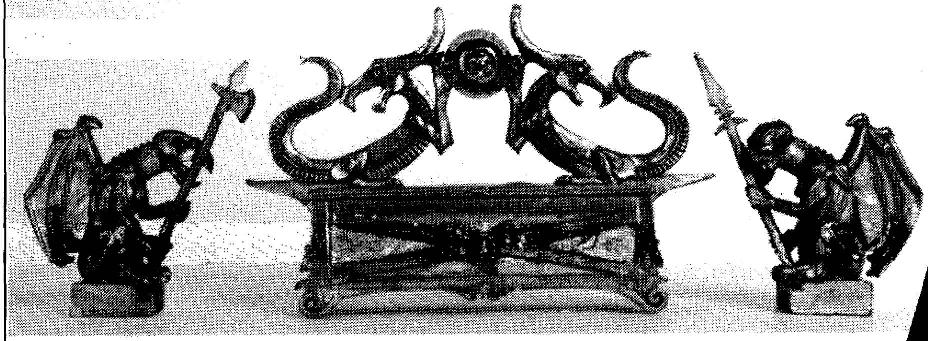

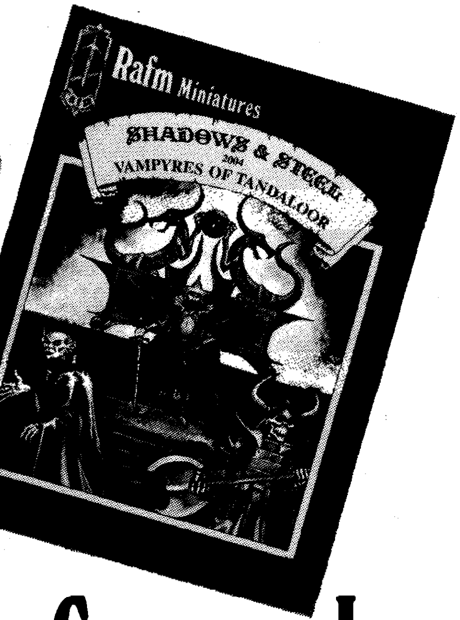

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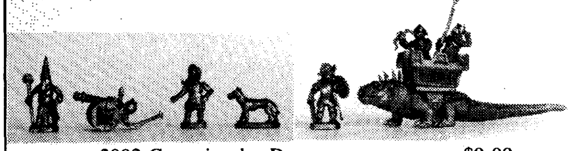

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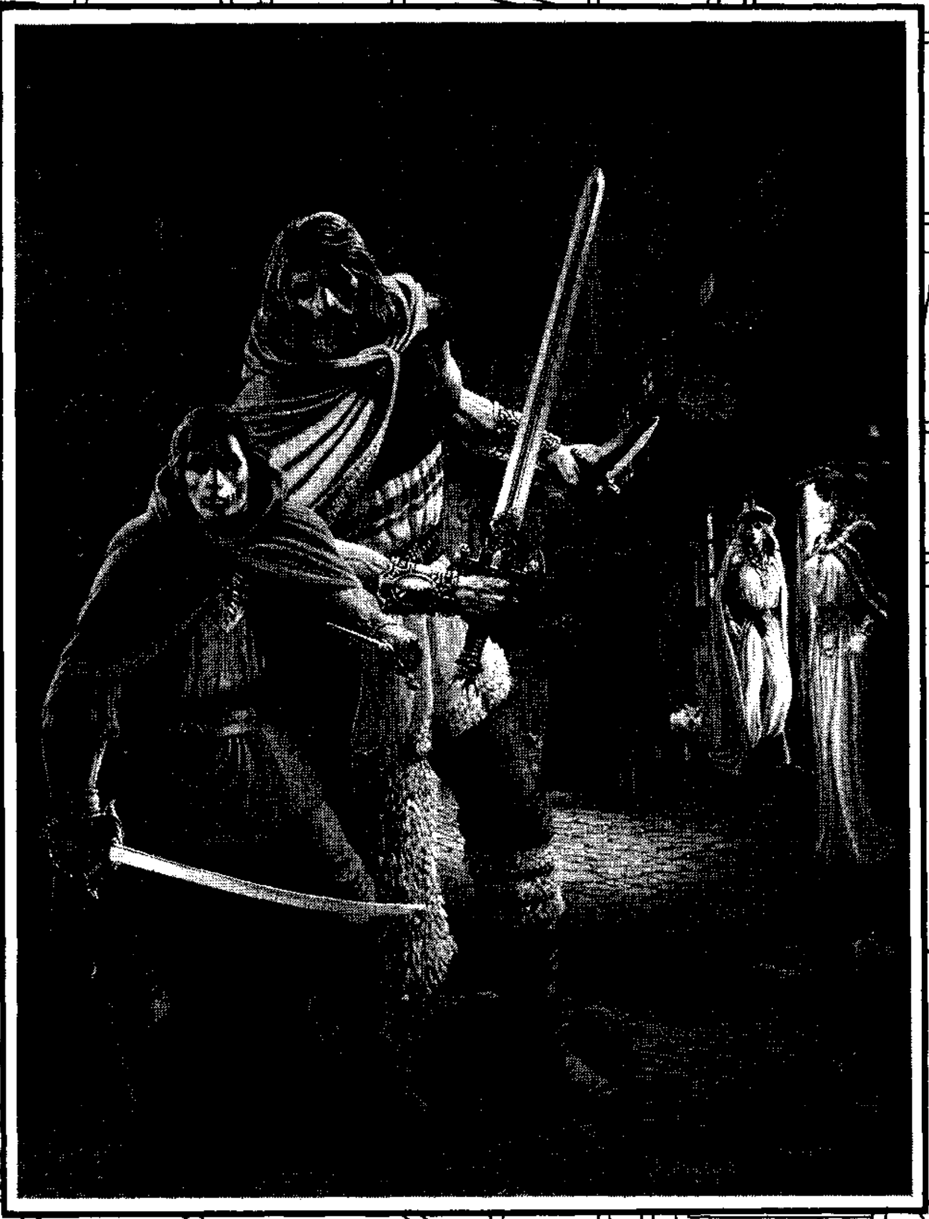

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Now that's firepower!

Machine guns & missiles in TOP SECRET® gaming

by Desmond P. Varady

The mission had gone off without a hitch. Agent Dan Carlyle and his partner Gadgets were running through a forest now, but a boat waited for them just a hundred yards away, and the pursuing guards were far behind. Dropping his backpack and rifle to lighten his load, Dan kept his holstered 9mm Browning. They quickly broke into the clearing around the beach. Just a few more seconds and —

Suddenly, the thumping of a helicopter echoed out of the dawn sky. Dan heard the rattle of an M-60 machine gun and saw sand fly up in a line straight across the beach in front of him. The boat was only moments away, but its crew had no kind of anti-aircraft gun. Dan and Gadgets turned and ran back toward the woods, knowing that their only chance to survive lay in reaching ground cover.

The helicopter was hovering low over the treetops before them. Dan heard the chattering of the machine gun and the crack of bullets flying past him, and he jumped across a dune, rolling on the ground. Gadgets screamed in agony, collapsing in the sand with blood spattered across his clothing. Dan unholstered his Browning, knowing it would have little effect against the chopper. He jumped up and took three quick shots while the gunship was turning to adjust to the strong ocean breeze. He quickly dropped behind the dune just as another line of shots kicked sand across the top of the dune and into his face.

Believing he'd had it, Dan flashed a quick look back at the boat — and saw his operator Florence raising an M-72 light anti-tank weapon across her shoulder. She pulled the trigger with a grim smile. In a split second, the helicopter exploded in an enormous fiery ball and fell into the trees below. . . .

Although the TOP SECRET® rule system provides an array of personal arms for agents' use in the field, some situations arise when heavier weaponry would be used by agents or their adversaries. There are many styles of TOP SECRET play, and commando-type missions might utilize machine guns and personal missile launchers, as described in the situation above. This article discusses the use of these weapons in TOP. SECRET play.

Machine guns

Standard use of a machine gun requires a crew of two — an aimer/shooter and an ammunition feeder. Up to four people can assist in the firing of a machine gun; all individuals involved are known collectively as a *fire team.*

Machine guns do not use magazines to feed ammunition. Instead, they use long belts of individual bullets which can be fed through the gun at an incredible rate. Belts come in varying lengths according to the type of gun being used (see the Weapons Table). Ammunition belts can be linked together for a continuous feed; this is usually done by the ammunition feeder in the machine gun crew. If only one man is firing the machine gun, it takes two phases to link belts together. Rechambering a new round in the machine gun after discontinuing fire takes one phase. Lone shooters cannot link belts while firing.

Bracing for a machine gun is standard equipment and consists of a bipod or tripod used to support the weapon while firing it. With its standard bracing equipment, a machine gun can be used on any horizontal surface and suffers no firing penalty. Other possible areas for bracing a machine gun and costs for necessary accessories are listed below.

window, doorway, pillbox window, roof	$10
ground vehicle (e.g., jeep)	$50
helicopter doorway	$100

Adapting machine guns for use in a vehicle as a standard part of its equipment (e.g., behind rotating headlights) costs 120% of the machine-gun cost, plus 5% of the vehicle cost.

Because machine guns have great range and power, they can be used to penetrate the outer defense material of buildings or vehicles so that the bullets have full effect on the occupants. This aspect of use is covered under the Penetration Factor section below. Finally, machine guns always use the Multiple Targets optional rule (p. 44, TOP SECRET rule book).

In order to determine the success of a fire team or an individual using a machine gun, a Base Accuracy must be calculated, Take one-half of the Offense of the individual or of the averaged Offense value of the fire team (half of the Offense is used because most of the effectiveness of a machine gun comes from the gun, not the shooter); to this, add the Projectile Weapon Value of the machine gun. The result is the percentage chance of hitting the target(s). Adjustments to this value are as follows:

1. Movement adjustments for both shooter and target, as per the Hit Determination chart (p. 24, rule book).
2. The amount of area cover in the machine gun's field of fire:

none	0
light brush, few trees	-10
heavy brush, small trees of hills	-15
heavy trees, rocks	-30

3. Special adjustments:

hand-held use	-20
lack of bracing	-10
emplacement use	+15
penetration use	-30
extra crew	+ 5 each for 3rd and 4th persons
untrained shooters	-15

One person can use a machine gun hand-held ("Rambo-style") as a small-arms weapon. All of the above restrictions apply, plus the following.

1. The user must weigh at least 175 lbs., and have a Physical Strength of 85 or greater; otherwise, the user is knocked down and hits nothing.
2. Normal penalties apply for automatic fire, as per the Hit Determination chart for "the Automatic; Submachine Gun" class (p. 24, TOP SECRET rule book).
3. Long ammunition belts are too unwieldy for individual use. Belt lengths of greater than 50 bullets cannot be used by any agent.
4. Lone shooters cannot use the machine gun in an emplacement.

Machine guns can be used to great advantage when an emplacement is established. This involves a number of aspects described below.

1. The machine gun must be braced in some permanent position, like a rooftop, bunker, etc.
2. The crew must have at least 50% cover while firing the gun; sandbags, buildings, or vehicles can provide this cover, as can other objects at the discretion of the Administrator.
3. Finally, the machine gun must have an *established* field of fire — that is, the machine gun must have been fired at least once in this position and the field of fire been marked and tested by the crew that is using the weapon.

All 7.62mm NATO-round belts use a disintegrating belt material which, as the bullets are fed through the gun, breaks up and falls away. NATO machine-gun ammo belts come in lengths of 50, 100, 200, and 300 bullets, and cost $4 and weigh 2 lbs., for each 50 bullet increment.

Soviet 7.62mm rounds come in boxes of 50, which are then fitted into either ammo boxes similar to magazines or into metal-link belts. Boxes come in 50- and 100-round sizes, link belts in 50-, 200-, and 250-round sizes. Either system can be used in the PK-GPMG or the Goryonov SG43. The cost is $5 and weight is 2.5 lbs., for each 50-round increment prepared; stats include box or belt weight-and cost. Soviet 7.62mm rounds must be prepared before combat. Soviet and NATO 7.62mm rounds are not interchangeable.

Vickers and Browning ammo comes in belts of 100 and 250. Costs and weights are the same as 7.62mm NATO rounds. Browning belts are disintegrating; Vickers belts are made of cloth and can be cut with a sharp knife.

Disintegrating link belts can easily be broken to any size. Machine gun rounds are not interchangeable with small arms rounds of the same caliber.

Personal missile launchers

The advance of modern technology has created many new personal weapons, among these the personal missile launchers (also known as PMLs, LAWs, or light anti-tank weapons). These weapons are tubes 3″-5″ in diameter and 22″-36″ long (sometimes available in a collapsed form 6″- 16″ smaller for easy transportation). The tube contains one missile, launch devices, and sighting apparatus. This self-contained system is not reuseable, and the tube is discarded after it is fired.

The missile systems outlined in this artitle use a crew of one. Operation usually consists of preparing the tube (expanding a collapsed tube, attaching sighting apparatus, etc.), sighting, and firing, all of which can be done in five seconds. The Weapons Chart shows relevant statistics for live missile launchers; effective range is the maximum distance at which the missile would have full penetrative and explosive capabilities. Hit determination and missile effects are outlined under the following explanation of Penetration Factor.

Penetration Factor

Both missile launchers and machine guns have a new statistic called the Penetration Factor. This number is the percentage chance of a projectile (either missile or machine gun bullet) penetrating the outer defensive material of a structure or vehicle. This statistic is treated somewhat differently for each weapon.

Machine guns: In order to use the penetrative abilities of a machine gun, a normal check of hit determination must be made. The machine gun must be on the same horizontal plane as the target. A declaration of the attempt to penetrate must be made by the machine gun crew or shooter, because the use of a machine gun for penetration results in a -30 modifier to hit. Penetration checks proceed after a successful Hit Determination check. Take the base Penetration Factor of the machine gun and add the appropriate adjustments from the Penetration Factor Adjustments table.

If penetration succeeds, half of the bullets fired will affect the occupants of the building or vehicle. Randomly choose targets within the structure or vehicle and apply the appropriate damage from the General Injury Determination tables (p. 25, TOP SECRET rule book). No body part is effectively shielded from penetrating bullets by the vehicle or building protection.

Whether penetration succeeds or not, any attempt to use penetrative fire against a vehicle should result in a normal roll on the Bullet Use Against Vehicle table (p. 38, TOP SECRET rule book), since any attempt to use penetrative fire has to follow a successful hit on the vehicle.

Machine gun fire can only penetrate one barrier. After that, the bullets will lose their penetrating effectiveness.

For example, an agent using an M-60 GPMG hand-held decides to use penetration against a group of thugs pulling away in their getaway car. Adjustments to hit are using machine gun for penetration (-30), car moving 5 mph (-15), agent is stationary (+0), no area cover (+0), using machine gun hand-held (-20), lack of bracing (-10), short range for M-60 (+0), and the PWV for the weapon is 93, for a total of 18. Adding in the successive shot adjustments for an automatic weapon, the totals are 18%, 7%, and then 5% for each of the remaining six shots. The agent gets two hits, both of which roll on the Bullet Use Against Vehicles table and one of which has a chance of penetrating the car. For the former, rolls of 23 and 75 indicate that the car's speed is reduced by 50%. For the penetrating bullet, determination is as follows: M-60 Penetration Factor (+20), normal vehicle protection on the car (+0), car moving at 15 mph (-5), short range (+10), size of target (+0), for a total of 25%. The agent's player rolls a 23, then consults the General Injury Determination table for a random target (chosen in this case by the Administrator to be the driver of the car). The die rolls indicate a serious fracture in the head for 10 points of damage. The driver had a Life Level of 8, so he slumps at the wheel and the car crashes into a lamp post.

Personal missile launchers: A missile does not have to make an initial "to hit" roll in order to be effective. A missile launcher's effectiveness is determined through the process of checking the success of penetration. This is done much as for the machine gun; the base Penetration Factor is adjusted by appropriate modifiers on the Penetration Factor Adjustments table. The resulting number is the missile launcher's combined percentage of hit determination and successful penetration.

All missiles affect the 10′-radius area just beyond the first penetrated protective barrier (usually a door, wall, or window). All

Weapons chart 1: Machine guns

Name	PWV	PB	S	M	L	WS	Rate	Ammo	HWV	Weight	Cost	PF
.303 Vickers MK1* MMG (England)	82	+10	0	-20	-65	VS	6	250 rnd belt	16	33/15	$700	14
.30 Browning MMG (USA)	94	+1	-10	-35	-110	BA	4	100/250 rnd belt	18	30.8/14	$800	20
7.62mm M-60 GPMG (USA)	93	+10	0	-35	-85	VS	8	50/100/ 200/300 rnd belt	22	22.75/10.4	$950	20
7.62mm Goryonov SG43 MMG (USSR)	94	+8	-5	-30	-82	VS	7	50/200/250 rnd **	22	30/13.5	$850	20
7.62mm PK-GPMG (USSR)	95	+ 10	-3	-30	-90	VS	8	50/200/250 rnd **	24	19.5/8.9	$925	20
7.62mm MAG GPMP (Belgium)	101	+10	0	-37	-100	S	8	50/100/ 200/300 rnd belt	20	23.75/10.8	$950	18
7.62mm NATO MG-42	101	+10	-2	-35	-85	VS	10	50/100/ 200/300 rnd belt	20	25.5/11.6	$950	20

PF — penetration factor
Ammunition sizes given in number of rounds per belt.
Weights given in kilograms/pounds.
All other statistics are as per p. 21, TOP SECRET rule book.

* — The Vickers machine gun requires a 2-lb. pack of water in order to fire it; the water is used as a barrel coolant. The pack cost is included above, but the pack must be refilled for every 200 rounds fired.

** — Rounds per belt or box (see text on Soviet 7.62mm ammo).

persons in that area are immediately killed. Other effects as follows:

1. Surrounding wood and plaster structures will catch fire 60% of the time.

2. Surrounding brick and concrete structures will crack and collapse 15% of the time.

3. Persons in surrounding areas will take damage as follows:

Unprotected by hard cover (walls, rocks) within a 30′-radius area surrounding the blast area — 2-20 points damage.

Falling or burning debris (if applicable) within a 30′ -radius area as above — 1 - 10 points damage.

On side of barrier from which missile came, within a 10′-radius area — 1-10 points damage.

If a missile successfully penetrates a vehicle, the vehicle is totally destroyed and all of its occupants killed. Obviously, the effects of missiles used against player characters are devastating. Using the Fame and Fortune point option (p. 41, TOP SECRET rule book), Administrators can allow the player agents to escape unharmed or with minor damage. This, of course, includes the offering of some suitable alibi for survival by the player agent(s).

If, because of high armor protection or quirk of fate, a missile does not penetrate its target's armor, roll on the Non-Penetrating Missile Effects chart to find the result of this occurrence.

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Weapons chart 2: Personal missile launchers

Name	Nation	Effective range	PF	Weight	Cost
Arpac Freeflight ATM	France	150′	68	2.75/1.3	$150
Miniman	Sweden	600′	77	6.25/2.84	$200
Armburst 300	Germany	750′	62	9.5/4.3	$300
M-72A LAW	USA	450′	85	4.5/1.92	$225
Sarpac AT	France	450′	75	5/2.2	$185

PF — penetration factor
Weights are given in kilograms/pounds.

Training

Agents are assumed to go through basic espionage training, during which familarization with all of the basic TOP SECRET weapons is achieved. This is not the case with the weapon systems outlined in this article. Agents planning to use these weapons in the field must receive an extra amount of training and indoctrination on the use of these weapons, as outlined below.

Machine guns: A one-week course teaches agents the mechanics of operating a machine gun — set up of the weapon, establishing fields of fire, familiarization with the positions of aimer/shooter and ammunition feeder, the use of various bracings available, and how to operate a machine gun from all of these positions with highest effectiveness. Course cost — $750.

Personal missile launchers: A one-week course introduces agents to the major types of personal missile launchers available and their operation. Topics include missile ballistics, range orientation, and effective use against vehicles. Field operatives attending this course shoot dummy and actual missiles in practice. Course cost — $2,000.

The costs of these courses include the

Penetration factor adjustment table

Target protection	
plaster/wood, 1″-2″	+ 40
plaster/wood, 3″+; aluminum, 1″	+ 20
brick, 6″; normal vehicle protection	+ 0
brick/concrete, 12″	-5
steel reinforced concrete, 6″; armor plating, 1″	-10
steel reinforced concrete, 12″; armor plating, 2″	-20
per 1″ of armor plating over 2″	-10
Range *	
point blank (machine guns only)	+20
short	+10
medium (up to effective range for missiles)	0
long (machine guns only)	-40
per 50′ beyond effective range for missiles	-10
Offense of firer(s) **	
40 or less	-10
90 or greater	+ 10
Size of target	
tiny (doorway, telephone booth)	-10
small (car, helicopter)	+ 0
medium (tractor-trailer, small house)	+ 10
large (warehouse, mansion)	+25
Movement of target (vehicle)	
under 10 mph	0
per mph over 10 mph	-1

* — Ranges are as per p. 21, TOP SECRET rule book.

** — The Offense of a single firer or the averaged Offense of a fire team is modified by the Hit Determination Wounds Modifiers, p. 20, TOP SECRET rule book.

Non-penetrating missile effect table

d100	Effects
01-05	Missile is a dud; it will hit and fall in front of the first barrier it strikes, without exploding.*
06-20	Non-penetrating explosion; missile does 2-20 points damage to all within a 20′ radius on the side of the target where the missile strikes; vehicle occupants take no damage.
21-45	Non-penetrating explosion; 1 - 10 points damage done to all within 20′ radius on the side of the target where the missile strikes, and protection of targeted area is reduced by one class. * *
46-70	Penetrating explosion; 1 - 10 points damage done to occupants of vehicle and to those within 10′ radius beyond the first barrier penetrated, and protection of targeted area reduced by two classes.
71-00	Penetrating explosion; 2-20 points damage done to occupants of vehicle and to those within 10′ radius beyond the first barrier penetrated, and protection of targeted area reduced by three classes.

* — Unexploded missiles can still be used for their explosive capabilities. A demolitions expert (designated by Administrator's discretion) can hook up detonators to explode the missile manually, with the same effects as described in the text describing building damage.

** — The reduction of protection by classes refers to the variable protection adjustment which the target receives on the Penetration Factor Adjustment Table. For example, a two-class reduction for 1″ armor would give the target an effective protection of normal vehicle protection, or of 6″-thick brick.

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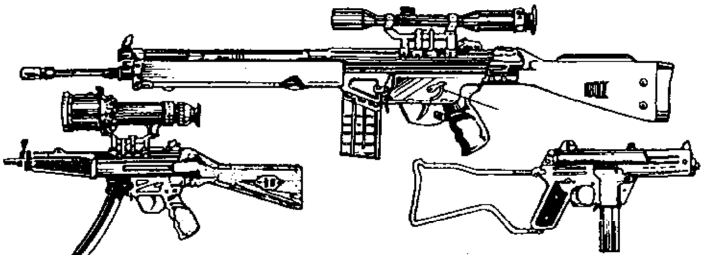

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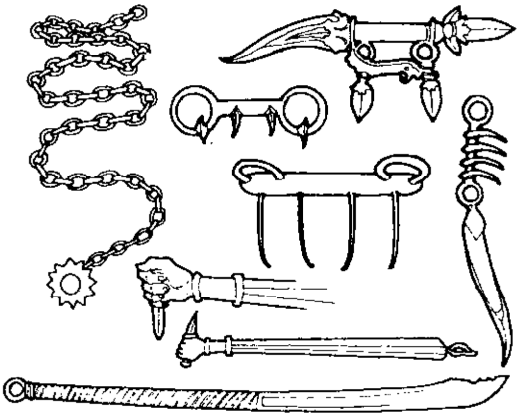

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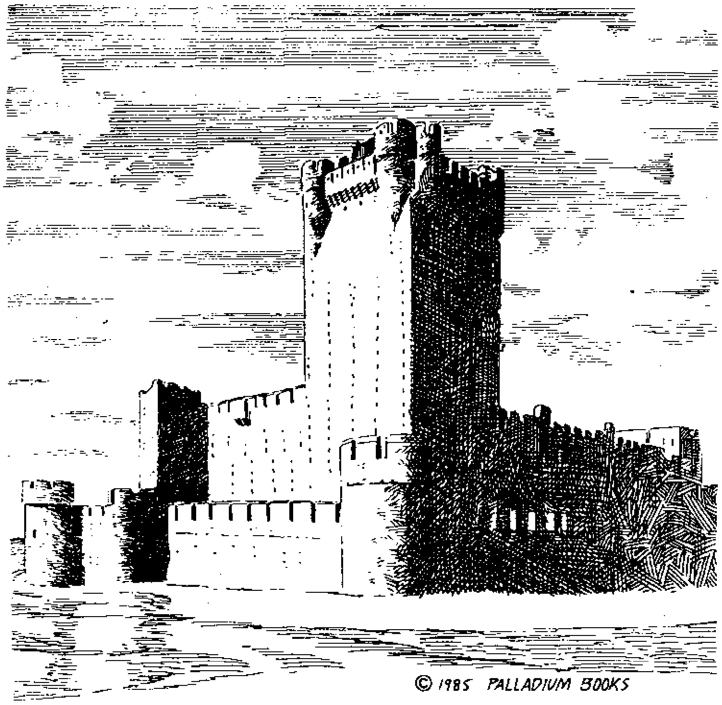

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salaries of training personnel and the cost of the ammunition or missile systems expended.

If one person in a machine-gun crew has training, all crewmen benefit from this situation and no penalty is taken by the fire team. Novice shooters take a -15% "to hit" penalty and cannot use the machine gun for penetration. An untrained missile-launcher user takes three times as long in setting up the missile launcher for use (15 seconds), and the shooter's Offense is halved for purposes of determining penetration.

Campaign notes

Both of these weapon systems have proven to be very lethal in all playtesting situations — as they would be in real life. Some guidelines and warnings are offered for agents' information and Administrative caution.

1. Machine guns have a very high degree of accuracy in short- and medium-range situations. Agents are warned not be foolhardy; without proper cover, crossing an established field of fire is like writing a ticket to your own funeral.

2. Both missiles and machine guns cause great destruction to personnel. Administrators should consider use of these weapons carefully in all scenarios. Properly used, they can provide excitement that your TOP SECRET game has never seen before, but improper use can lead to the destruction of a campaign.

3. The use of these weapons should be supplemented by the use of the Fame and Fortune point option (p. 41, TOP SECRET rule book).

4. This writer has found that the most effective use of these weapons has been in three scenario situations: first, a situation in which both the team of agents and their adversaries have one or the other system, thus balancing each other; second, a situation where the agents have access to one of the weapon systems in the face of an otherwise overpowering foe; finally, a situation where the systems are used in a deterrent role, such as the machine guns used in the scenario *Whiteout (see* issue #87 of DRAGON® Magazine).

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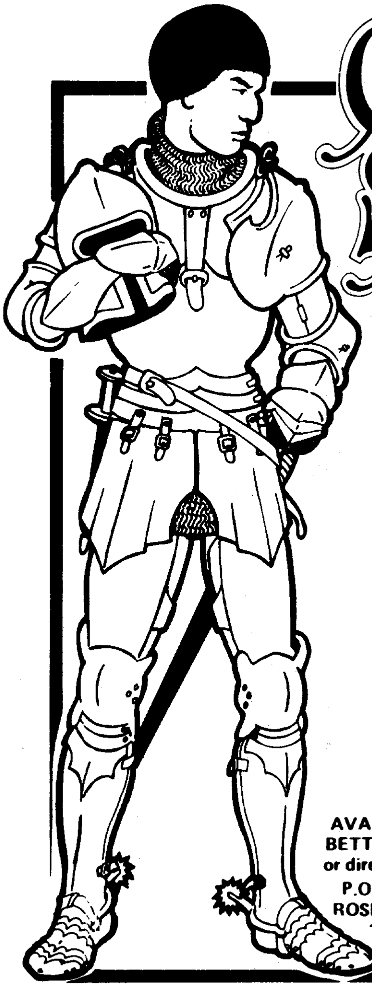

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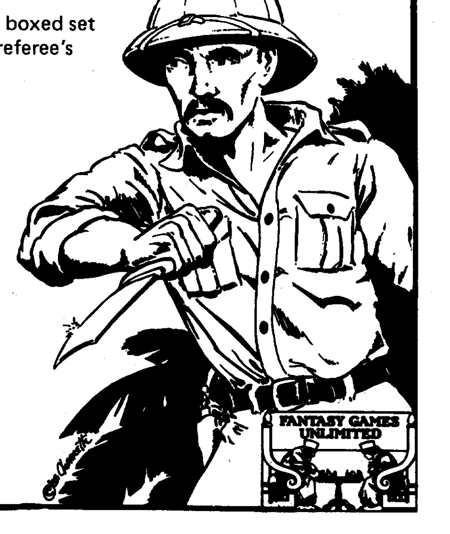

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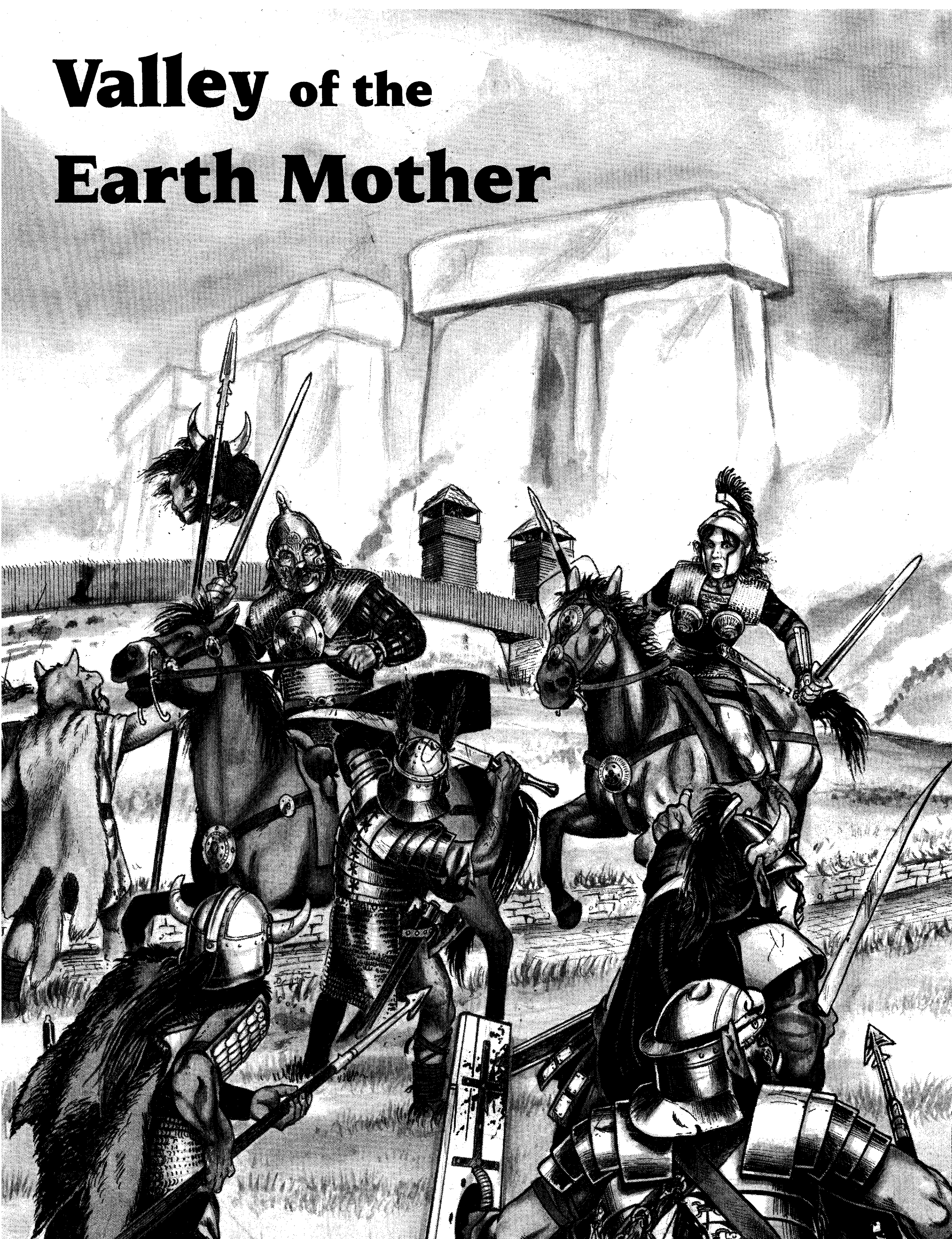
Valley of the Earth Mother



Valley of the Earth Mother

An AD&D® game adventure for PCs of 4th-6th level

Designed by Lise Breakey

Valley of the Earth Mother is an AD&D® game adventure for good or neutral-aligned characters of 4th to 6th level. The party should include a magic-user, cleric, and druid for optimum success. In many ways, this module is ideal for parties with strong Celtic ties, particularly druids and rangers, though such are not required for play. Use is made of an article from DRAGON® issue #65, "Tuatha De Danaan," which described a revised Celtic pantheon. The Earth Mother in this module is the goddess Danaan, whose statistics are given at the end of the module. Any worshiper of a neutral Celtic deity will certainly pay homage to Danaan as well.

DM's overview

The player characters are asked to help a village that will shortly be attacked by a major orc tribe. To insure victory in the coming battle, the PCs must go to a former stronghold of the local druids, the Valley of the Earth Mother, and recover a minor relic which will hopefully drive away the orcs. The Valley, now called the Tor, has been taken over by a rival cult, supporting the death god Arawn.

A new, evil NPC class, the huntsman, appears in this module. It is described in detail at the end of the text. The Torc of the Gods that the characters are seeking is also detailed at the module's end.

This area is ideal for developing as part of a druid-oriented campaign. The referee will need to create the village of Dungaelen and the surrounding territory, but it should be relatively easy to fit it into any campaign setting. If used as part of an ongoing campaign, the introductory section may be modified as desired to fit the campaign circumstances.

Players' introduction

The wanderings of your party in search of adventure have brought you to the small fortified village of Dungaelen, a town very much in need of heroes. Dungaelen is south of a large mountain range on the Daan River, on the outskirts of human habitation. Lately, it has been unceasingly raided and harassed by hordes of orcs from the mountains, At first the raids were infrequent and the raiders few in number, but the orcs are beginning to realize how much they outnumber the fighting population of Dungaelen. Soon the fort will be under an all-out attack. Brave though their warriors are, the people of Dungaelen do not believe they can long defend their log ramparts against the enemy.

Now the war leader of the village, Lord Vortimax, has asked your party to come to his home and confer with him about the situation. Over horns of strong mead, he tersely explains the problem and suggests a solution. At his side is Avanthus, the aged leader of the much-reduced druidic community in the region. Lord Vortimax is a 9th-level fighter (hp 44); Avanthus is an 8th-level druid (hp 28).

"To the north, two days' travel up the Daan River," says the warrior, "is a religious stronghold which once was called the Valley of the Earth Mother. It was built under a hill, out of which flowed a sacred spring possessing great powers of healing. The spring was blessed by the goddess of life herself. The druids of the valley followed the old ways of the Earth Mother, holding all life sacred and striving to preserve it.

"That was many years ago. The stronghold was taken by force a decade ago by priests of the lord of death, whose name I shall not utter. The druids were slaughtered, and evil rules there now. The stronghold is now called the Tor.

"You may wonder what all this has to do with us. The druids of the Valley possessed a magical relic of great power: a *Torc of the Gods*. It is said that in addition to the usual powers of such a sacred object, this torc also possesses magical powers which could be of great assistance in driving off the orcish hordes."

"It is as m'lord says!" whispers the aged druid by Vortimax's side. "Were I to wear the torc, no foul thing that harms the forest could stand against me — including the orcs!"

"The problem is," continues Lord Vortimax, "the evil priests now have the torc. Though they cannot use it, I am sure they have not thrown it away. Perhaps they have even made an alliance with the orcs.

"We must ask you to help us by retrieving the torc. We can send none of our own men; few of them are seasoned, and even now we can barely hold our own against the orcs. We need every warrior. Will you aid us?"

You look at each other, quickly reaching a consensus. The people of Dungaelen have been very hospitable to you, and you feel you cannot desert them in their hour of need. Besides, evil religious strongholds usually have plenty of treasure. . . .

The approach

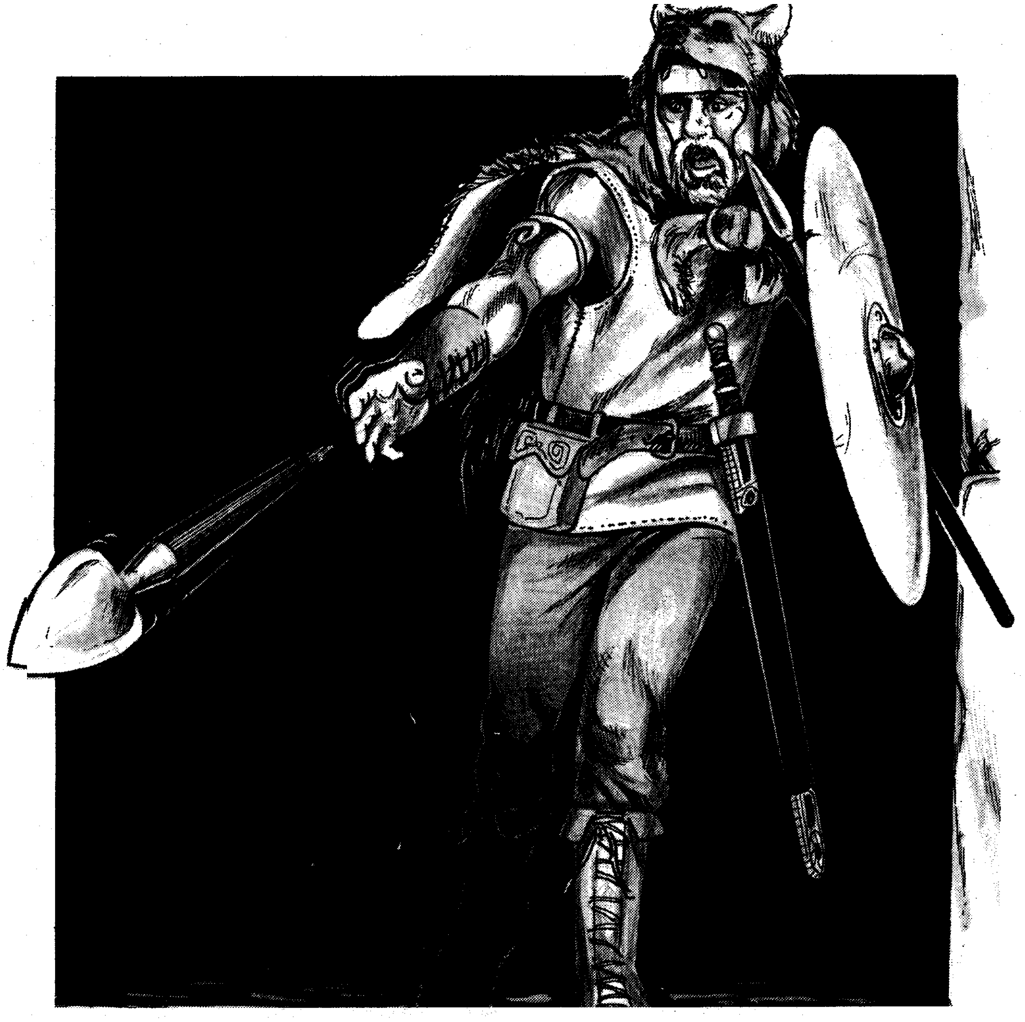
As directed by Lord Vortimax, the party must travel north up the river for two days. The terrain consists of forested rolling hills which gradually become mountains. The river winds its snaky way through the terrain. There is no road, and the river is much too strong and fast to take boats upstream, so the party must either walk or purchase horses at Dungaelen. The foliage is too thick to allow horses to move at better than a 12" movement rate. The villagers will supply the party with as much food as they ask for, within reason. They have little to offer, because the orcs have razed their crops. Except for two predestined encounters, the trip will be uneventful.

1. Sirine

At some point on the first day, the party will encounter a sirine if they are traveling by the river. (Sirine: HD 7, hp 40, AC 3, MV 12"//24", #AT 1, DAM short sword, NG, other information may be found in *Monster Manual II)*. The sirine will smile at the party and approach as close as she can without leaving the water. If convinced that the party intends to drive out the evil priests at the Tor, the sirine will give them the information that "blood runs where water ran," and that dead men are said to wander about the Tor. If the party attacks or threatens the sirine, she will scream in mock alarm and dive for the deepest part of the river. The party will suddenly find itself surrounded by thick greenish fog, resembling that created by a *cloudkill* spell. All the fog does is obscure vision for 11 rounds, as per *fog* cloud. The sirine has no lair or treasure.

2. Orc scouts

As the player characters come within a five-mile radius of the Tor, they will see that the trees in this area have been systematically cut down, trampled, burned, and left to rot. If the party is on horseback, mounted movement returns to normal. The river banks quickly enlarge into a canyon. At the canyon's entrance, the party will encounter a group of eight orcs (each HD 1, hp 5-8, AC 6, MV 9", #AT 1, DAM scimitars, LE) who are on a scouting mission to Dungaelen. If the orcs find it at all possible to avoid a fight, they will, but they will not surrender. If any are captured and questioned, they must make a morale check or tell everything they know to avoid execution. Their tribe is preparing the attack on Dungaelen, and their forces consist of over 300 orcs. An alliance between the orcs and the Tor is being considered, but nothing more is certain. The orcs know nothing about the inside of the Tor, although they know where it is. They have 2-12 sp each. If freed, the orcs will immediately split up and try to warn their tribe and the Tor of the PCs′ coming.



3. The valley

The party will soon arrive at the point where the canyon widens into a valley raze of all large animal and plant life by men and orcs. In its center is a broad, foreboding hill of stark stone, obviously the Tor, crowned with a circle of huge stone monoliths. A dark opening lies 60′ up the southern slope of the hill with steps leading up to it. A stream of thick, red liquid flows out the opening through a special channel cut down the middle of the steps, through the valley, and eventually into the river. No further details can be made out from this point.

4. Monoliths

If the party wishes to investigate the monoliths, they will find the going a steep climb. At the top of the hill is an 80′ circle of stones, which was used by the druids to predict eclipses and maintain their seasonal calendar. (The monolith arrangement strongly resembles that at Stonehenge.) The monoliths are 6′ x 8′ at the base and rise 18′. Some of them have smaller horizontal monoliths on top of them. The entire structure is obviously very old. In the center of the circle is a 10′ x 10′ pit lined with stone which drops 150′ into room 25. Before the pit stands a bloodstained slab of stone 4′ x 4′ x 8′. Four 2nd-level huntsmen are on guard here (hp 12-18, AC 7, MV 12″, #AT 1, DAM by weapon type, LE, surprise as rangers). They are armed with swords and spears, and have 4-16 gp each.

5. Entrance

Sixty steps lead up to a platform and the entrance. A stream of blood flows out the center of three openings and down the steps in a channel cut in the rock. It is 10′ wide and 5′ deep, and enchanted so that it will not coagulate quickly. The Blood River was created by the evil priests to replace the pure spring water that used to flow here. Four 2nd-level huntsmen in wolf-head hoods, each armed with a sword and two javelins, are on guard at the top of the steps (hp 12-18, AC 7, MV 12″, #AT 1, DAM by weapon type, LE, surprise as rangers). Unless attacked at long range from the bottom of the steps, they cannot be surprised where they are. If they are attacked, they will throw javelins and retreat to area 6 to make a stand. They dare not interrupt the ceremony going on in room 7. They have 4-16 gp each. The entrance itself is a post-and-lintel structure ornamented with human skulls set into niches about it.

The Tor

All floors, walls and ceilings, unless stated otherwise, are made of stone. Doors are of wood and usually open easily. Ceiling height (CH) and illumination (IL) are given for each area described below.

The DM should be aware that the evil high priest of the Tor, Gershus Koch, has disappeared within the last three days (see areas 16 and 45). Most of the activities of the priesthood are centered around locating him. Most priests will immediately believe that the party had something to do with his disappearance, and they will do all in their power to capture the party and force the characters to reveal the high priest's location. Random encounters take place on a roll of a 1 on a d6, rolled every 2 turns.

Random encounters:

1 — Three orcs (HD 1, AC 6, MV 9″, #AT 1, DAM 1-8, LE) looking for their fellows in room 11.

2 — Two 3rd-level huntsmen (hp 18 and 16, AC 5, MV 12″, #AT 1, DAM 1-8, LE, surprise rangers) returning from a patrol.

3 — One scarecrow (HD 5, AC 6, MV 6″, #AT 1, DAM 1-6, LE, touch and glance cause *charm)*, a guardian of the Tor which will attack all intruders. It is only encountered once unless destroyed.

4 — Five 4th-level clerics (AC 10, MV 12″, #AT 1, DAM clubs, LE, use spells) on their way to room 7.

5 — One kobold (HD ½, hp 3, AC 7, MV 6″, unarmed, LE), who will instantly flee and raise an alarm upon seeing the party.

6 — Two skeletons (HD 1, AC 7, MV 12″, #AT 1, DAM 1-6, N), that wandered away from the barrows (see "The Barrows" below).

6. Entrance hall

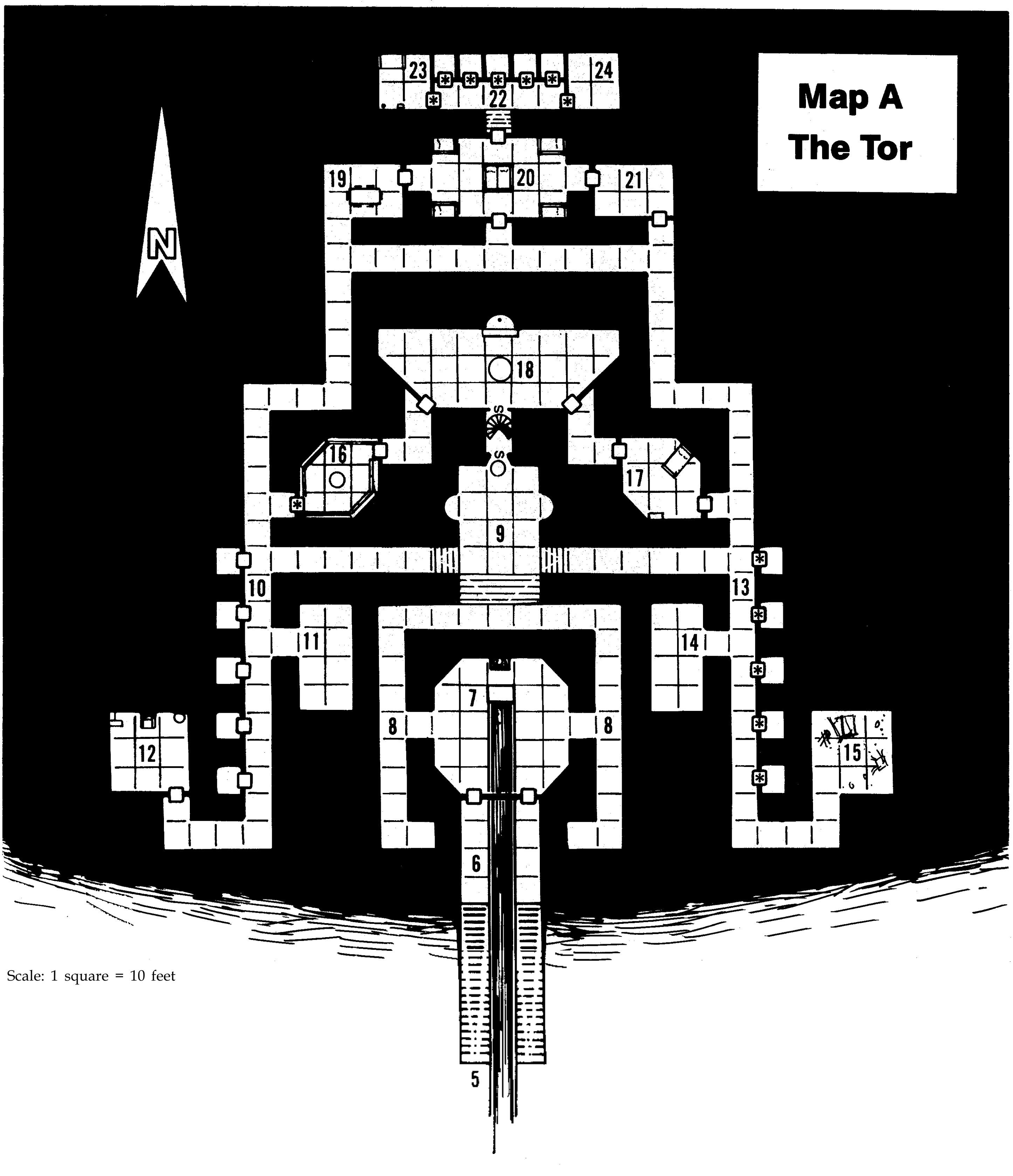
(CH: 10′, IL: daylight, if any)

The Blood River flows through the center of this room from under the north wall. Directly above it, between the two doors, is a recently made bronze plaque, which reads in Common: "Ye who come to reverence the Deathlord may speak and enter." The two doors each have a *glyph of warding* on them. The first person to touch either door without first saying the name of the *glyph* ("peh") must save vs. spell or be *paralyzed.* It is possible to swim upstream under the wall into room 7. However, good characters would consider this distasteful at best, and the party would attract attention afterward because of their bloody footprints and foul smell. Characters listening at either door will hear a low, guttural chanting.

7. Main shrine

(CH: 20′) IL: four braziers)

This room is occupied by live 4th-level clerics in black robes who are chanting in a


Map A
The Tor

Scale: 1 square = 10 feet

strange tongue, in front of a bronze statue of a tall, grim-faced man in an iron crown. This is the god Arawn. The Blood River flows through this room from under a large altar before the statue. The Blood River appears to originate here, but actually it is being teleported to a cistern under the altar from room 43. (Priests: hp 12-20, AC 10, MV 12″, #AT 1, DAM clubs, LE, use spells.) Today, their spells are *command, cause light wounds, sanctuary, augury,* and *spiritual hammer.*

On seeing the party, two of the priests will attack with clubs, and two will cast offensive spells such as *command* ("sleep!") or *spiritual hammer.* The last one will cast *sanctuary* on himself and attempt to retreat to room 9 and warn the huntsmen there.

The priests have been attempting by prayer to find out what happened to their high priest. This vigil is maintained around the clock. If the PCs re-enter this room after an hour, there is a 30% chance it will be again occupied by five more priests. The priests have no treasure, but there is a set of 13 gem-inlaid sticks worth 50 gp each lying in a strange pattern on the altar.

8. Vestry

(CH: 10′, IL: none)

Hanging on pegs along this corridor are ten black robes on each side. There is nothing unusual about them.

9. Commemoration hall

(CH: 10′, IL: two braziers)

At the top of the steps are four 2nd-level huntsmen in bear hoods on guard duty (each hp 12-18, AC 7, MV 12″, #AT 1, DAM long sword, LE, surprise as rangers). They will attack the party on sight. They have 4-16 gp each.

The room contains four tapestries. Two of them depict a grey star on a black background. The other two show scenes of black-robed priests plunging corpses into a huge undead cauldron, after which the corpses walk away. In the center alcove is a bronze statue of Arawn in an iron crown. Player characters inspecting the statue will notice that the crown is removable. The secret door behind the statue opens onto a stairway which leads down to room 34. The door can be opened by twisting the crown. On a spike driven into the east wall next to the arched exit, an intricately worked horn of silver inlaid with jet dangles from a leather thong. This horn is the alarm system for the Tor. Blowing it will alert the whole level and bring the huntsmen in room 19 and 20 running. It has had a *Nystul's magic aura* placed on it and is worth 200 gp.

10. Priest chambers

(CH: 10′, IL: none)

Each of these rooms contains two reed mat beds, two chests and two 4th-level clerics (each hp 12-20, AC 10, MV 12″, #AT 1, DAM clubs, LE). They are either sleeping (50%) or meditating (50%). In either case, surprise is automatic. The priests have only bless and *chant* spells. The chests contain personal items of no interest. From the hallway, loud noises-can be heard from room 11. It sounds like an argument in an extremely guttural language.

11. Converted storeroom

(CH: 10′, IL: one torch)

This room is a storeroom, but it is being used to house nine large orcs in black chain mail and rounded black helmets. They are with Strengul in area 12. As is typical of orcs with nothing to do while in a strange place, two of them have started a fight. The PCs will hear one call the other a "brown-nosed kobold punk." They have drawn swords, and, with the other seven orcs looking on and yelling encouragement, are about to have at it. On seeing the party, all the orcs will forget about the fight and attack the party instead. (Orcs: each HD 1, hp 5-8, AC 5, MV 9″, #AT 1, DAM long swords, LE.) The room contains several crates full of torches and braziers, an empty cabinet, and two large cagelike wicker baskets, used for holding sacrificial victims for burning. The orcs have 2-12 sp each, as well as backpacks full of jerky and uncured wolfskin bedrolls.

12. Meeting hall

(CH: 10′, IL: two braziers)

A large, impressive-looking stone chair against the north wall is occupied by a figure shadowed in a dark cloak. Before him, seated on a fur-padded stool, is an extremely ugly half-orc in black leather armor and spiked *bracers of AC 4*. The shadowed figure is Cathbad, a 6th-level illusionist and the current leader of the Tor (hp 24, AC 7, MV 12″, #AT 1, DAM dagger, LE). His spells are *color spray, darkness*, *detect invisibility light*, *blur*, *mirror image*, and *suggestion*. Cathbad possesses a *ring of human influence* with 3 charges left. The half-orc is Strengul, a 5th-level fighter/5th-level assassin, leader of the orcs in room 11 and of the tribe preparing to attack Dungaelen. He is here to discuss the possibility of an alliance between his tribe and the Tor. (Strengul: hp 32, AC 4, MV 12″, #AT 1, DAM long sword, NE, sword poisoned.)

Cathbad's first reaction after seeing the party will be to restrain Strengul from attacking while he uses his *ring of human influence* to *charm* the party. He will attempt to keep the party enthralled while Strengul tries to assassinate the most powerful-looking member; if this attempt takes place, allow another saving throw-for the *charmed* characters. Strengul's sword is poisoned, causing the first victim struck with it to save vs. poison or take 5-20 hp damage more.

The room contains two chests full of clothing, four pieces of jewelry worth 50 gp each, and four stoneware urns (with *permanent illusions* cast on them to make them appear empty) that each contain 150 gp. Cathbad purchased the urns in a nearby city. Strengul has 20 gp and a 100 gp gem on his person.

13. Priests' chambers

(CH: 10′, IL: none)

These rooms are identical to the ones in area 10, except the doors are locked and the rooms are unoccupied.

14. Storeroom

(CH: 10′, IL: none)

This room contains a stack of crates holding torches and braziers. It also has a cabinet which contains ten gold-plated scythe-like daggers worth 15 gp each, and ten amber bowls worth 25 gp each. There are also two large cagelike wicker baskets. They are used for holding and sometimes torturing man-sized prisoners.

15. Boggle's room

(CH: 10′, IL: none)

This room bears all the telltale signs of having once been a bedroom, but its furnishings have been smashed and burned into uselessness. A boggle (HD 4 + 3, hp 28, AC 5, MV 9″, #AT 3, DAM 1-4/1-4/1-4, CN, naturally resists fire, *spider climb* and *dimension door* through any complete frame at will) lurks in this room. If surprised, it will be kicking back on the remains of a bed, cleaning its toenails. If not surprised, it is on the ceiling just above the archway, waiting to drop on the first character who enters. In either case, it will to to steal some small, valuable item from a PC. After attempting the theft, it will *dimension door* beyond the party down the hall and run for the exit. It crept into the Tor looking for treasure. It will fight only if cornered. It has no treasure yet.

16. Library

(CH: 10′, IL: none)

Shelves line the walls, books stacked neatly on them. Charts of various astrological configurations are tacked to the fine oak-paneled walls. Luxurious black furs cover the floor, and two unlit braziers hang from the ceiling. In the center of the room stands a small round table with a clean, burnished human skull resting on it. A large raven, actually a *polymorphed* imp, perches on the skull. (Imp: HD 2 + 2, hp 14, AC 2, MV 6″/18″, #AT 1, DAM 1-4, LE; 25% magic resistance; poisoned tail; can *detect good*, *detect magic*, *polymorph self* into raven or giant spider, and become *invisible* at will; can use *suggestion* once per day.)

A former familiar, this imp was driven permanently insane when its master (the high priest Gershus Koch) attempted to turn himself into a lich and failed (see area 45). It now thinks it is a talking raven and will not attempt to leave the room. It will not attack unless attacked first. If left alone, it will use *detect good* on the PCs and verbally abuse those that it detects as good. It will respond to all questions with absurd phrases such as "Nevermore!" or "Won't you come home, Bill Bailey?"

Most of the books here are local histories, religious treatises, and philosophical novels on subjects that would interest any evil high priest. However, there are two books that the party might find fascinating. One, entitled "Politics of the Eighth Hell," has a scroll with a *wizard eye* spell tucked within it. The other is an unnamed volume bound in black leather that details the process of achieving lichdom in exacting detail. Player characters reading it will notice that certain key paragraphs have been underlined, and the name Gershus Koch is written in the front of the book. The book is *almost* completely accurate and usable; a magic-user with intelligence of 17 or better will note that the work fails to tell the reader that any magic-user wishing to become a lich must be at least 18th level. The work implies that a magic-user of *any* level may become a lich, which is not true. The results of attempting to achieve lichdom without being of sufficient level vary widely, but they are invariably bad (see area 45). The party has a 10% cumulative chance per turn of searching to find either book.

17. High priest's chamber

(CH: 10′, IL: none)

This was the high priest's bedroom before he disappeared. The name Gershus Koch is painted on the door in gold leaf. Furs cover the floor and two unlit braziers hang from the ceiling. The large fur-filled bedstead has a screaming devilkin (HD 3, hp 12, AC 2, MV 12", #AT 1, DAM 1-6, LE, screams) hiding under it, acting as guard. It will attack the party when encountered, and its screams will automatically attract a wandering encounter in 1-4 rounds. The room also has a chest containing black robes, a gold torc worth 50 gp, and a leather pouch with 6 pp. Two tapestries of a gray star on a black background cover the walls; each is worth 75 gp.

18. Wizard's lab

(CH: 10', IL: none)

The first thing the party notices about this room is the knotted, writhing pile of nine, sickly yellow larvae (each HD 1, hp 5-8, AC 7, MV 6", #AT 1, DAM 2-5, NE) which disentangle themselves and move to attack in a mindless frenzy. This room contains a clutter of things typical of a sorcerer's laboratory.

A cauldron set in the burned-out fireplace is steaming slightly, and contains the fermenting ingredients for a *sleep* potion. After the PCs have been here one turn with the doors closed, they must save vs. poison or suffer extreme grogginess from the fumes. They will receive a -3 on "to hit" and armor class. Magic-users and illusionists will find it very difficult to concentrate, and each spell they cast will have a 50% chance of failure. Magical counters such as *neutralize poison* will work. The effect lasts 2-8 turns.

A work bench sits against the north wall with several vials and a small locked box. The vials are clearly labeled with what they contain: "Arsenic," "Belladonna," "Phase Spider Venom," "Wyvern Venom," "Vampire Blood," and "Giant Moth Glands." The box contains a large, luminous gem that will drain the soul of the first person who touches it into itself, unless he or she saves vs. spell at -3. The body of the person will fall to the floor, apparently lifeless. The gem's effect is similar to a *magic jar* spell, except that the character cannot possess anyone or return to his own body. *Dispel magic*, successfully cast vs. 10th-level magic, will restore the soul to its body; so will bathing either the body or the gem in the Waters of Life in room 43. The gem only works once. It is worth 1,200 gp. In the center of the room is a stone platform, 10' in diameter and 2' high. This is one end of a two-way teleport once connected to room 43; it has been deactivated.

On a stand against the south wall is the high priest's magic-user spellbook, marked with his name and chained to its stand. A *glyph of warding* has been placed on the cover which will *blind* the first person touching it, unless he saves vs. spell. The book contains the spells *find familiar, Nystul's magic aura, read magic, write, darkness, ESP ray of enfeeblement, shatter, fireball, monster summoning I, slow, polymorph other, polymorph self, cloudkill*, and *magic jar*. The page with the *cloudkill* spell on it also has notes in the margin regarding the process of becoming a lich (duplicating some of the material from the black book in area 16).

In one corner of the room is a large wicker cage with several holes chewed in it. This is where the larvae were confined before they escaped. Shelves and cabinets against the north wall hold an uninteresting clutter of vials, tripods, bowls, rods, tongs, and other equipment. The secret door opens easily onto a staircase which leads down to room 34.

19. Guardroom

(CH: 10', IL: two torches)

Five huntsmen in cougar hoods are seated around a table. If surprised, two of them are occupied playing chess while the others look on. They are drinking mead, occasionally calling for refills from the kobold sulking in the corner. They are not yet intoxicated and will attack the party on sight. Two huntsmen are 4th level (hp 22 and 27), two are 3rd level (hp 16 and 17), and one is a 7th-level warrior (hp 49). (Huntsmen: AC 8, MV 12", #AT 1, DAM long swords, LE, surprise as rangers). The huntsmen in room 20 will come in at once if they hear the sounds of combat in this room (and vice versa; see area 20).

The kobold (HD ½, hp 2, AC 7, MV 6", unarmed, LE) will not attack the party. It will just sit on top of its cask of mead muttering angrily about how it has been mistreated and what it would do if it was bigger. In any case, it knows nothing of interest. The huntsmen have 4-16 gp each. The chessmen are made of bronze and are worth only 1 sp each.

20. Barracks

(CH: 10', IL: six torches)

Nine huntsmen in boar hoods are lounging around on their bunks, telling stories of past battles. They will attack the party at once, astonished that intruders have gotten this far into the Tor. One huntsman is 8th level (hp 50) and wears *bracers of AC 2;* he carries a *battleaxe* + 2. Another is 6th level, wears *leather armor* + 2, carries a shield, and uses a *longsword* + 1. The other men are 2nd level, and wear leather armor and use long swords. (Huntsmen: AC 8, MV 12", #AT 1, DAM long swords, LE, surprise as rangers.) The room contains 16 bunk beds and 32 chests. All the chests contain extra animal-head hoods, grooming brushes, and personal items. The locked door to area 22 has a small barred window in it, through which the loud complaints of the prisoner in room 24 can be heard.

Note that any sounds of battle here will attract attention from those huntsmen in room 19.

21. Warlord's chamber

(CH: 10', IL: none)

The first thing the DM needs to know about this room is that there is a night hag in it (HD 8, hp 46, AC 9, MV 9", #AT 1, DAM 2-12, NE, see *Monster Manual* for powers). She recently arrived from the Ethereal Plane to look for the huntsman warlord, in order to strangle him and take his soul back to Hades. This is the third time she's missed him, and she is in a foul mood. If the PCs don't attack her within two rounds of seeing her, she will leave for home, planning to try again a few days later. If threatened, she will attack, but if reduced to less than a quarter of her hit points, it will occur to her that she is wasting her time and she will leave through the Ethereal Plane.

The room contains a bed, a chest, and a desk and chair. Two non-magical swords and a shield are hanging on the wall. The chest contains animal-head hoods and a pair of *boots of striding and springing.* On the desk is a wire cage that holds a live stirge, furiously rattling its proboscis against the bars (HD 1 + 1, hp 7, AC 8, MV 3"/18", #AT 1, DAM 1-3, N, drains blood). It is voraciously hungry.

There is nothing to indicate where the warlord went beyond a few scribbled pages in Common on the desk, speculating on where the high priest might have gone. The warlord was obviously trying to locate him.

22. Cell block

(CH: 10' IL: none)

All the doors to this area are locked. The small rooms are unoccupied cells used for holding sacrificial victims until the time for their sacrifices. They are small, dirty, full of wet straw and infested with vermin. Characters searching through the straw have a 30% chance of contracting a mild parasitic infestation of the skin (no saving throw). Characters captured in the Tor will be confined here for 1-4 days, then taken to room 27 and dropped into the barrows without weapons, armor, or equipment. Loud complaints from the prisoner in room 24 can be heard through the tiny barred window.

23. Special cell

(CH: 10', IL: none)

Although the door to this room looks exactly like the others in room 22, the room itself is spacious and clean. It is furnished with a bed, a chair and a washbasin. It is used for special sacrificial victims, such as a paladin or druid. Grafitti has been scrawled all over the walls by previous captives, The DM should invent a number of suitable scrawlings, none of which are helpful to the party, in case someone wants to read them.

24. Ogre's cell

(CH: 10', IL: none)

A ranting and raving ogre is locked up in this room. He is swearing in a mixture of common and ogrish. This burly creature is destined to be the next sacrifice. On seeing the party through the tiny barred window; he will demand his freedom, using the logic that if the party does not let him out, he will smash them. The door's lock must be picked and the bar across it removed to open it; otherwise, the "bend bars" roll must be used (one chance only). If the ogre is released, he will immediately look for huntsmen to kill. He will not attack the party unless they either attack him, enter his cell without releasing him, or encounter him again in the complex. (Ogre: HD 4 + 1, hp 24, AC 7, MV 9″, #AT 1, DAM 1-10, CE.)

Chambers of Preparation

The floors, walls and ceilings are of stone, just as in the previous section. Also, doors are wooden and open easily unless locked or otherwise impeded.

The activity of the priesthood on this level is involved in the creation of an undead army under the priests' control, for the purpose of conquering unbelievers, expanding the priests' sphere of influence, and all other goals typical of evil priesthoods. Normally, undead are created by the priests by putting the corpse of a sacrificial victim into the undead cauldron in area 44. The undead cauldron is a magic item that turns ordinary bodies into undead corpses; it was enchanted to be easily portable as well. However, the cauldron disappeared at the same time as the high priest. The priests are now simply dropping live victims into room 37 from room 27, in the hope that they will be slain by the undead and thus become undead themselves.

Random encouters take place here on a roll of 1 on a d6, checked for every two turns.

Random encounters:

1 — Two 2nd-level huntsmen (AC 7, MV 12″, #AT 1, DAM long swords, LE, surprise as rangers) dragging a male human peasant (0 level, AC 10, MV 12″, unarmed, LN) to room 27.

2 — One scarecrow (HD 5, AC 6, MV 6″, #AT 1, DAM 1-6, LE, touch and glance causes charm). If the party has already destroyed the scarecrow, disregard this roll.

3 — Five 4th-level clerics (AC 10, MV 12″, #AT 1, DAM clubs, LE, use spells) on their way from room 27 to area 13.

4 — One kobold (HD 1/2, hp 4, AC 7, MV 6″, unarmed, LE) who will instantly flee and raise an alarm upon seeing the party.

5 — Four zombies (HD 2, AC 8, MV 6″, #AT 1, DAM 1-8, N) that wandered away from the barrows (see below).

6 — Two ghouls (HD 2, AC 6, MV 9″, #AT 3, DAM 1-3/1-3/1-6, CE, cause *paralysis)* that escaped from the barrows (see below).

25. Pit

(CH: 20′) IL: daylight, if any)

The light in here is very dim, as it is coming from 150′ up through a 20′ x 10′ shaft in the center of the ceiling (leading up to area 4). The floor is coated with dried blood. In the center of each wall, 10′ up from the floor, is an alcove. Each alcove has a bronze statue of Arawn in it, with a club and an iron crown. The southern statue's crown may be twisted to open the secret door behind the statue.

26. Morgue

(CH: 10′, IL: none)

This room is filled with crude wooden coffins. Most of them are unoccupied, although five have ordinary human corpses in them (victims of a recent rockslide that killed several huntsmen). The entire room reeks of carrion. In the northwest corner, four ghasts are leaning over a coffin, ripping the occupant into bite-sized chunks. They will attack the party with deranged enthusiasm (HD 4, hp 19, AC 4, MV 15″, #AT 3, DAM 1-4/1-4/1-8, CE, stench, cause *paralysis).*

27. Shrine

(CH: 10′, IL: four braziers)

Five black-robed priests are conducting a ceremony in this room. An unconscious figure is stretched out prone on a stone altar with two priests holding his wrists and ankles. The other three priests stand before the altar, holding gold-plated, curved daggers and chanting in a strange language. Behind the altar is a small, bronze statue of Arawn. In the center of the room gapes a dark 10′ x 10′ pit. It drops 40′ into room 37. If left uninterrupted, the priests will finish the ceremony by dropping the figure into the pit. The (4th-level) priests will defend themselves with spells and clubs if attacked. (Priests: hp 12-20, AC 10, MV 12″, #AT 1, DAM clubs, LE.) Their spells are *curse*, *detect good*, *protection from good*, *augury*, and *hold person*.

If given the chance, the priests will retreat to room 34 and up the steps to warn the Tor's inhabitants of intruders, killing the victim with their daggers before they leave. (Note: Arawn is assumed to approve of the use of sharp-edged weapons for sacrificing victims or slaying captives in this manner, though he would not approve of the regular use of daggers or the like by his priests.) The party will have to act quickly in order to rescue the victim. If the PCs succeed, they will learn that he is Ferdian, a 4th-level half-elven thief who was caught sneaking around looking for treasure. (Ferdian: hp 20 (now 4), AC 10, MV 12″, unarmed, N, 17 dexterity.) Having been severely beaten in the process of being captured, his only goal is to escape the Tor alive. Toward this end, he will offer the party some information he overheard in exchange for a weapon he can use. He heard that a large treasure is hidden at the southern end of this level. He can draw a crude map of how to get to room 34, but that is the extent of his knowledge. If he acquires a weapon, he will thank the party and head for the nearest exit.

28. The forgotten room

(CH: 10′, IL: none)

Both doors to this room are locked, and the room's contents are covered with dust. There are two fireplaces in the east wall, filled with ash and soot. Two bronze cauldrons, once used for heating water, lie on the earthen floor. Cloth and clothing are scattered all over the floor. Against the western wall, between the two dark openings of the staircases, is a patch of disturbed earth marking a shallow grave. Beside it kneels the shadowy figure of a woman with elfin features, dressed in a pale robe. The woman seems to be digging at the dirt with her hands, but is unable to affect the earth. The faint sounds of weeping may be heard.

When the party enters, the woman will look up at them with a pleading gaze. It will become immediately apparent that she is undead, and is 90% likely to be mistaken for a groaning spirit. In truth, she is the haunt (see *Monster Manual II)* of a half-elven druid who was slain when the forces of Arawn took over the temple. She was trying to hide the magical torc when she was caught and killed by a huntsman. Now, she continually digs at the earth where her body is buried. She will arise and attempt to possess the body of a player character, preferably a female, in order to find the stolen torc and give it to a druid. If this act has already been accomplished, the haunt will need to see proof of this before "giving up the ghost."

29. Room of healing

(CH: 10', IL: none)

Dust covers the room. A table stands in the center of it. Shelves line the walls, filled with boxes and jars containing first-aid equipment, torn-up bandage strips, and most of the herbs listed in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, Appendix J (75% chance that any particular one is present). If the party searches the room for one turn, a jar with six applications of *Keoghtom's ointment* will be found.

30. Linens

(CH: 10′, IL: none)

Although dusty, this room is reasonably neat. White and blue robes hang from pegs on the walls. Linens of various sorts are folded and stacked on the floor. There is nothing of value here, and the room hasn't been entered since the druids were present.

31. Kitchen

(CH: 10′, IL: five torches)

This is obviously a kitchen. The contents of two cauldrons bubble and steam over their fires. Cabinets and shelves of utensils stand against the walls. A kobold is standing in front of a low counter slicing up meat. A second kobold scampers hither and yon, fetching various items to pop in the soup. Both are frantically hurrying through their tasks at the direction of a large, bulbous female bugbear (HD 3 + 1, hp 22, AC 5, MV 9″, #AT 1, DAM 2-8, CE), who is sitting comfortably beside a table between the two dark openings in the floor. Between bouts of shouting at the hapless kobolds, she is sharpening her claws with a file. Upon seeing the party, she will seize a huge meat cleaver from the table and charge.

The first kobold will attack with his knife (HD 1/2, hp 4, AC 7, MV 6″, #AT 1, DAM dagger, LE). The other kobold will stand back and throw pots and pans at the party. These cause no damage, but a character struck by one will suffer a -2 on all "to hit" rolls made in the same round because of the distraction. (Second kobold: HD 1/2, hp 3, AC 7, MV 6", #AT 1, DAM special.) There is no treasure here.

32. Wine cellar

(CH: 10', IL: none)

Wine bottles and mead barrels line the walls. Wine bottles also line the floor, mostly empty. An unmade bed stands in one corner; it reeks of drunken bugbear. Next to the bed is a locked chest containing 60 sp, 15 gp, and two pieces of jewelry worth 10 gp each.

33. Pantry

(CH: 10', IL: none)

This room is filled with boxes and crates stacked from floor to ceiling. Hidden up among the crates lurks an executioner's hood, a large one (HD 4 + 4, hp 36, AC 6, MV 6", #AT 1, DAM 1-4, N) that has been well fed on a steady diet of kobold. It will drop on some unlucky party member when he investigates the crates. The crates contain dried and fresh food, most of which is lit for human consumption. The hood will not attack its master, the bugbear.

34. Nexus point

(CH: 10', IL: none)

This room is empty except for the steps leading up to room 9 (or room 18) and for the unusually ornate door in the south wall. It is completely carved with strange runes. It radiates both magic and evil. Human and demi-human skulls are set into the thirty-four niches in the stone wall about it.

The door to the south has a *glyph of warding* cast upon it, such that anyone who does not pronounce the *glyph* ("coo") will be struck with *confusion* for 3-12 rounds.

35. Guardian shrine

(CH: 20') IL: four torches)

The floor, walls and ceiling of this room are faced with black marble. There are three alcoves in the south wall. The center one has a bronze statue of Arawn wearing a gold torc that is actually a *polymorphed* poisonous snake, created by a special ceremony once performed by the high priest (snake: HD 2 + 1, hp 12, AC 6, MV 15", #AT 1, DAM 1, N, creature bitten must save vs. poison or take 3-12 points of damage). A touch will dispel the *polymorph.* The alcove has a semi-circle of niches over it, each one containing a skull. An altar rests before the alcove with two handles sticking out of the top. Anyone except a halfling, gnome, or dwarf must kneel to grasp them comfortably. The four torches on the walls cannot be put out or removed from their sockets by ordinary means. They radiate magic.

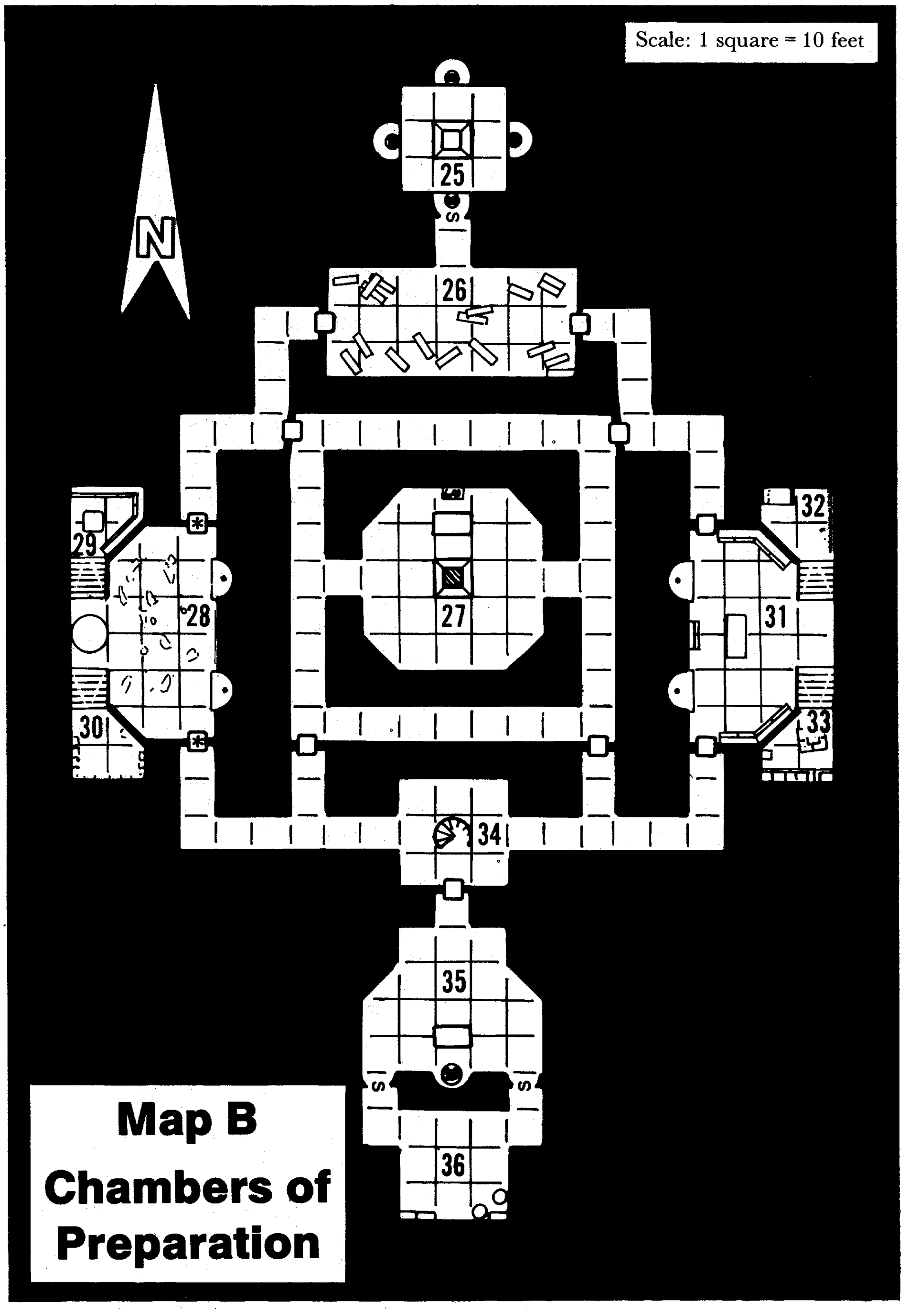
If a character grasps the handles of the altar, a *magic mouth* spell on the topmost skull will activate and say "If ye come to reverence our god, then speak his name." The DM should then glance discreetly at his watch. If the character does not say "Arawn" within 15 seconds, the four torches will shoot out flames which will combine in a single *flame strike* on that spot. Unless the PC has stated, within the 15-second delay, that he is moving away, he must save vs. spell or take 6-48 hp damage. Remember, the party may not have heard of Arawn; try not to give the name away unless they have been in a situation in which they might have heard it.

If the character does say "Arawn" in the time given, he will notice that the handles will now move. Each one controls the opening and closing of the secret door adjacent to it. The handles will now work for anyone, but after one turn the doors will automatically close and the trap will reset itself. Operating the handles is the only way to open the doors.

36. Treasure room

(CH: 10', IL: none)

This room is where all the treasure taken from sacrificial victims is kept. Neatly stacked in locked chests and sealed pottery jars are 2,000 cp, 1,200 sp, 800 gp, and 100 pp. A box contains 20 gems worth 50 gp each. Other boxes contain eight pieces of jewelry worth a total of 400 gp. Hanging on the walls are four swords, a morning star, six daggers, ten javelins, eight shields, and a silvered mace. There are also three sets of scale mail, two sets of chain mail, a suit of *studded leather + 2* (to be given to the huntsman who kills the old druid in Dungaelen), and a rack containing seven vials of colored water and one *potion of frost giant*



Map B Chambers of Preparation

strength for use in emergencies. Lying in a corner is a small ivory box containing a cursed *ring of weakness.* This will cause its wearer to slowly lose strength at a rate of 1 strength point per day, a rate not immediately noticeable. The ring also grants *protection* + 3. If the ring is not removed before the wearer's strength reaches zero, the wearer will die. The ring cannot be removed except by casting both a *remove curse* and a *dispel magic* upon it, after which the ring may be removed and the character will regain his strength at the same rate. It will take the party at least two turns to search through all this stuff. Note that the doors will close in one turn.

The Barrows

Much of this level is inhabited by undead. These vile creatures were created by the priests using the undead cauldron (see room 44) and dropped into room 37 until they are needed. They wander about the barrows preying on hapless living creatures that fall into their clutches. Clerics will suffer a -3 on attempts to turn them until the Water of Life is restored (see room 43).

Only doors with magical protections on them still exist on this level. The undead have torn the rest into splinters. Random encounters take place on a roll of a 1 on a d6, rolled every turn.

Random encounters:

1 — Four skeletons (HD 1, AC 7, MV 12", #AT 1, DAM 1-6, N).

2 — Three zombies (HD 2, AC 8, MV 6", #AT 1, DAM 1-8, N).

3 — Two ghouls (HD 2, AC 6, MV 9", #AT 3, DAM 1-3/1-3/1-6, CE, cause *paralysis).*

4 — Ten giant rats (HD 1-4 hp, AC 7, MV 12", #AT 1, DAM 1-3, N).

5 — One coffer corpse (HD 2, AC 8, MV 6", #AT 1, DAM 1-6, CE, causes ***fear).***

6 — Two ghasts (HD 4, AC 4, MV 15", #AT 3, DAM 1-4/1-4/1-8, CE, cause *paralysis*, stench).

37. Landing

(CH: 10', IL: none)

This room is 3' deep in wet straw. Those falling into it from room 27, 40' above, will only take 1-6 hp damage instead of the normal 4-24 hp damage. If Ferdian was dropped here from room 27, he will be found crumpled in the straw; the fall killed him. A scrawled charcoal message is on the wall next to the archway, saying "point of no return" in Common. The room is otherwise empty.

38. Preparation chamber

(CH: 10', IL: none)

A 3' x 3' x 8' slab of stone lies in the center of this room. An empty fireplace is in the north wall. Broken glass, pieces of rotten wood, ash, and straw litter the floor. The walls and ceiling are blackened with soot. The door to room 40 is *wizard locked* (11th level) and covered with claw marks. Light can be seen shining around the edges of it.

39. Alchemist's bedroom

(CH: 10', IL: none)

Six ravenous ghouls (HD 2, hp 9, AC 6, MV 9", #AT 3, DAM 1-3/1-3/1-6, CE, cause paralysis) are in this room searching the trash on the floor (for the umpteenth time) for something edible. The room contains more pieces of wood, straw, cloth, and feathers. There are also several highly polished human bones, all that's left of the alchemist who was killed when the temple fell. Under all this trash is a gem worth 100 gp.

40. Alchemist's lab

(CH: 10', IL: *continual light* in ceiling)

This room looks like a small laboratory. It smells of formaldehyde. The room is dusty, but neat and orderly. There is a chest in the room with a small black cat lounging on top of it; it is a guardian familiar (HD 1 (9), AC 8, MV 12", #AT 3, DAM 1-6/1-4/1-4, NG, 40% magic resistance). It is guarding the treasure of its master, who was an alchemist as well as an 8th-level magic-user. It will talk to those characters able to *speak with animals*, but it will not believe its master is dead, nor will it allow the characters to touch the chest. If the chest is left alone, the familiar will be fairly friendly. The chest contains a book of alchemy worth 2,000 gp to any alchemist or magic-user of 11th level or higher. The room also contains a rack of bowls, tripods, rods, tongs, and other equipment. A locked cabinet stands against the east wall; it contains racks of vials, all empty except for three. One contains a liquid that smells strongly of formaldehyde and is poisonous (save vs. poison or take 4 - 16 hp damage). The other two are *potions of undead control*, one for ghasts and one for zombies. The guardian familiar will not object if the party takes these.

41. Barrows

(CH: 10', IL: none)

All these rooms are round and have round stone slabs 10' in diameter and 2' thick in the center of them. These stones are seals for pit graves; only the top 6 inches of each stone can be seen. Each was emplaced by magic *(wall of stone, stone* shape), and they are not movable by normal (nonmagical) means, due to their weight and the fact that they are partially merged with the surrounding stone. The stones are marred with claw marks — obviously the undead have tried to pry them up. Under each one is a shaft 10'-20' deep, divided into 2' sections by tough wicker partitions. Each section contains the remains of either a warrior or a druid. They have been buried with their weapons, armor, and holy symbols. None of these are magical, and they have been buried too long to be of any use.

41a. A coffer corpse lies flat on its back in this room (HD 2, hp 13, AC 8, MV 6", #AT 1, DAM 1-6, CE, cause *fear).* It will attack.

41b. This room has a group of four ghouls (HD 2, hp 8-11, AC 6, MV 9", #AT 3, DAM 1-3/1-3/1-6, CE, cause *paralysis)* and three ghasts (HD 4, hp 15-20, AC 4, MV 15", #AT 3, DAM 1-4/1-4/1-8, CE, cause *paralysis*, stench) who are trying to pry up the sealing stone in this room. They will attack.

41c. This room is empty.

41d. Five zombies stand around in this room (HD 2, hp 6-13, AC 8, MV 6", #AT 1, DAM 1-8, N). They will attack any intruders.

41e. One monster zombie (an ogre) lurks in here (HD 6, hp 30, AC 6, MV 9", #AT 1, DAM 4-16, N). It will attack intruders.

41f. An unusually powerful wight (HD 6, hp 40, AC 3, MV 12", #AT 1, DAM 4-1 1 or 1-4 plus life drain, LE) staggers around the room here. It was once the huntsman warlord, who entered the barrows looking for the missing high priest and wound up as an undead; the wight that killed him was slain in the fight, so the warlord is now free-willed. The warlord is still wearing his *chain mail* + *2* and is armed with a *sword* + *3.* He will attack anyone he sees, maddened at his condition. He is crying the name of the high priest (Gershus Koch) in hopes that the priest will help him.

41g. This room is empty.

41h. Four wights lurk here (HD 4, hp 15-20, AC 5, MV 12", #AT 1, DAM 1-4, LE, life drain). They will attack,

41i. This room has two wights in it (HD 4, hp 19 and 22, AC 5, MV 12", #AT 1, DAM 1-4, LE, life drain). They will attack.

42. Entrance shrine

(CH: 20') IL: *continual light* in ceiling)

The light keeps the undead away from this room. It appears to be a ruined shrine. In the center of the room is an altar marred with claw marks. Seated comfortably on top of it is what appears to be a small, immature kobold. It is actually a boggart (HD 6, hp 32, AC -6, MV 18", #AT 1, DAM 2-12, CE, causes *confusion).* If it is surprised, it will attack with its electrical charges. If not, it will turn, grin at the party, and begin its *confusion* attack. The three alcoves in this room each have a toppled, broken-up statue in them. Characters inspecting the rubble notice that the statues were of beautiful, robed women carved in white stone. The double doors behind the altar are *wizard locked* at the 11th level.

43. Hall of Life

(CH: 20') IL: 38 braziers)

This room is menacingly evil in appearance. The white marble walls were recently painted black, as were the two double rows of columns. The columns now resemble twisted, withered, and blackened trees.

Each one has a brazier hanging from it that burns with blood-red flame. At the southern end of the room is a 10′ -diameter black marble platform, 1′ high. This was the other end of the two-way teleporter that once connected with room 18. At the northern end of the vast hall is a semicircular pool filled with blood; it is 30′ in diameter and 3′ deep. Four more treelike columns line it, equipped with flaming braziers.

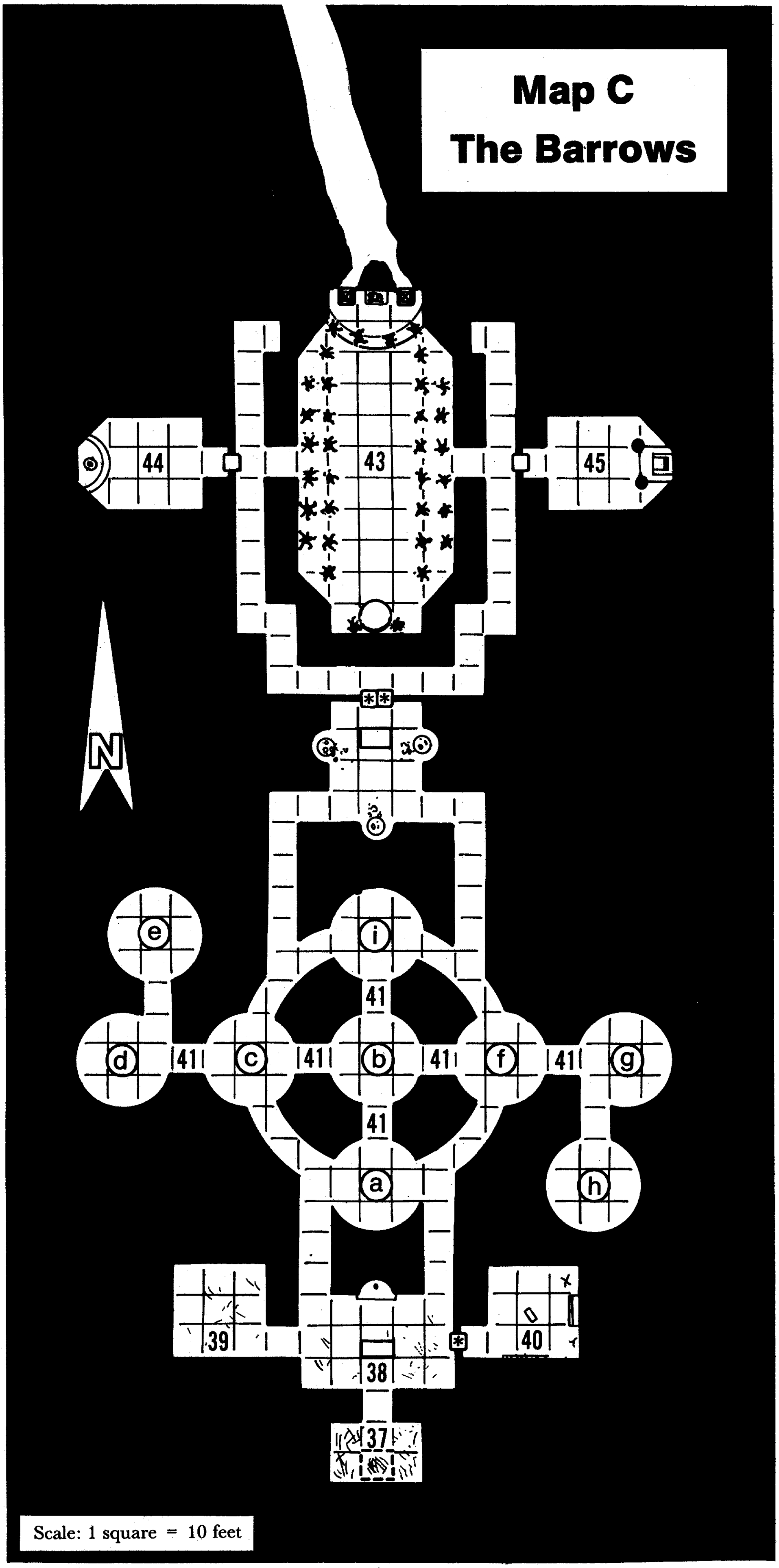
In the center of the blood pool, against the wall and up on a pedestal out of the pool, is a black stone statue of Arawn, grim-faced, wearing an iron crown and holding a club. The statue radiates magic and is fixed in place. Two stone obelisks, one on each side of the statue, stand against the wall; each one is 1′ x 3′ x 6′ in size. They are blocking the flow of the Water of Life, the sacred spring water that used to flow in place of the Blood River. This pool is the source of the Blood River. Volumes of liquid are constantly being teleported from this pool to room 7, using a special spell devised by the druids who once lived here. Any large volume of liquid spilled into the pool will be *teleported* to the area by the altar in room 7, where it will then flow out of the temple.

A slight leakage of water may be detected around both obelisks. If they are removed (requiring a "bend bars" roll for each, one attempt per hour per person), the spring water will gush forth, washing away sufficient blood for the PCs to see a small decanter lying at the bottom of the pool. Fresh blood is pouring out of the decanter at a rate of five gallons per round.

This item has the basic characteristics of a *decanter of endless* water, with the obvious difference described above. The decanter can be stoppered; fortunately, it has its stopper lying next to it.

Once the *decanter of blood* has been stoppered and the blood has been washed away (taking 6 turns), the Water of Life will act as a *restoration* spell and heal 2-20 points of damage for anyone who drinks it or bathes in it. This will work one time per character only. The *Torc of the Gods* is hidden on the statue of Arawn. If the characters pour the Water on the statue, an amazing transformation takes place. The black stone first becomes gray and then white. Its form writhes and warps. It becomes softer, slender, curved and graceful — the form of a beautiful woman carved in white stone. Ringed around her neck is the *Torc of the Gods,* which can easily and safely be removed by a neutral character. It will not budge for an evil or good one.

As the statue changes form, the appearance of the rest of the room changes as well. The black walls become white, and the columns become real wood and put out leaves — they are actual living trees. The flames go out and soft pearly light in the room radiates from the statue itself. In addition, the *teleport* platform is now returned to its original purpose. Anyone stepping on it will be teleported to room 18, and vice versa.


Map C
The Barrows

Scale: 1 square = 10 feet

44. The undead cauldron

(CH: 10′, IL: none)

The door to this room is unlocked and there are no traps (except for the cauldron). The north and south walls are draped with two large tapestries of a grey star on a black background. On a platform at the western end of the room is the undead cauldron. It is an ordinary-looking iron cauldron, 3′ in diameter and rather battered and stained with blood. It strongly radiates both magic and evil. All living creatures who go within 5′ of it feel an icy chill go through them. Good beings who touch it take 2-8 points of damage, no save, from frostbite. Special enchantments have reduced the cauldron's weight to only 50 gp, though it is bulky to carry.

The corpse of a mortal creature placed in the cauldron will emerge as a random undead monster, under the control of the cauldron's current owner. The undead type will be one with a corporeal, physical form, and less than 7 HD. A living creature who enters the cauldron must save vs. death magic at -4, or its soul or life force will be devoured and forever gone. Those who make the save will take 2-8 points of damage and lose two life levels. The cauldron has a magical link with the Negative Material Plane. Those who try to possess it will quickly turn evil, if they were not already. Eventually, the possessor of it will, by a DM-arranged "accident" or his own cauldron-influenced desire, become undead himself. The cauldron can only be destroyed by washing it in the Waters of Life.

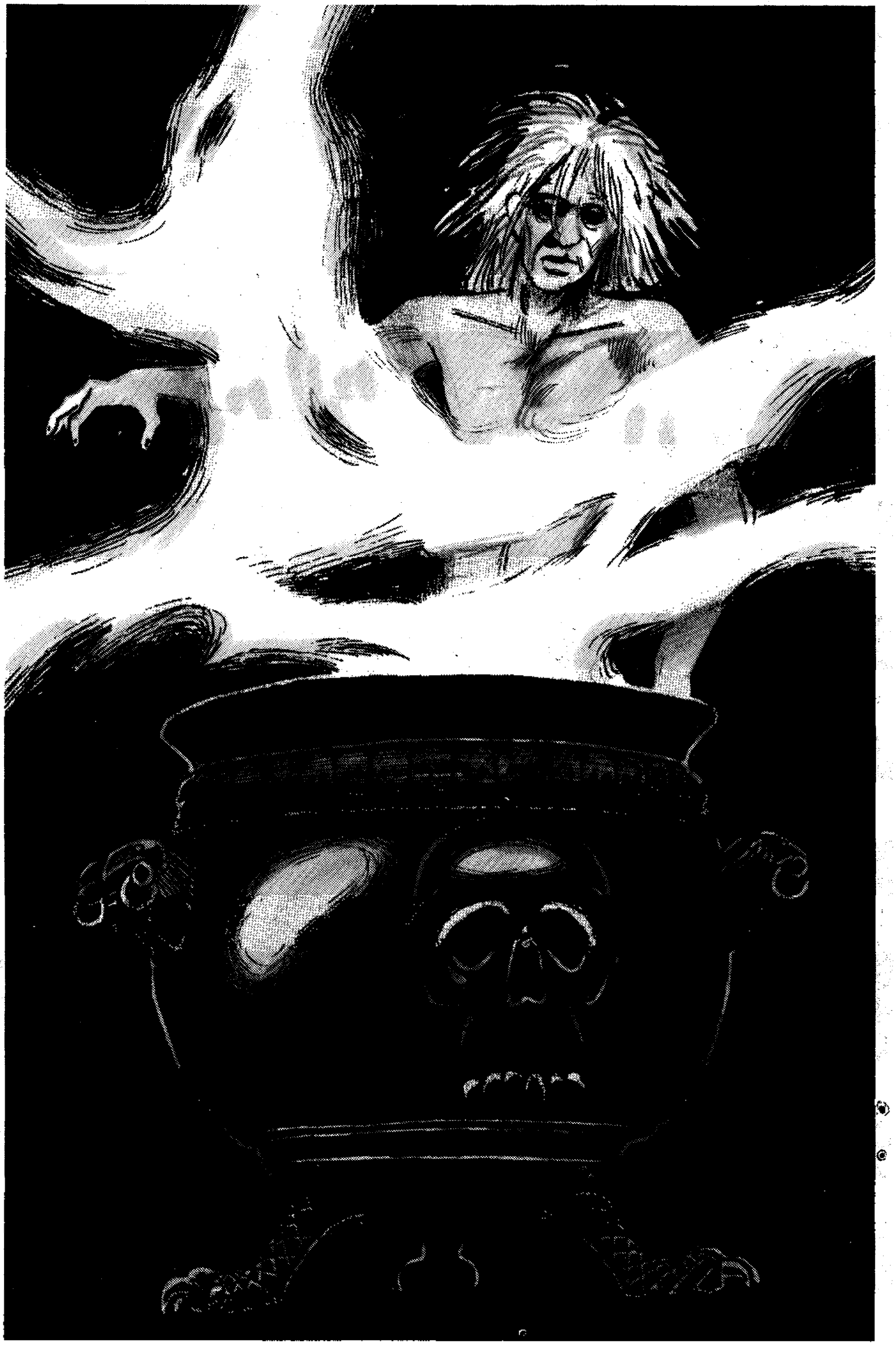
The cauldron was brought here by the high priest, who planned to use it to create his personal undead army. When his plans to turn into a lich failed, the cauldron simply remained here and collected dust.

This room was once a place of worship for the druids.

45. Barrow of the high priest

(CH: 10′, IL: none)

On a platform against the east wall is a large, thronelike stone chair. Seated in it is a rotted, robed skeleton, slumped as if in death. Its jaws gape open in a hideous grin, and its eye sockets are pits of blackness. One taloned bone hand weakly clutches the handle of a large mace. This is all that remains of the high priest, who tried and failed to turn himself into a lich. He was an 12th-level cleric/11th-level magic-user. His soul has gone on to its punishment, but his undead body remains, possessing all the physical characteristics of a lich, but none of the mental ones. Scattered about the room is the high priest's treasure, consisting of 7,600 cp, 5,000 sp, 2,200 gp, 345 pp, 10 gems worth 100 gp each, a *potion of animal control*, a *wand of polymorphing* with 6 charges left, a *staff of striking* with 8 charges left, and a *sword + 2*. If the corpse or its treasure is disturbed, the corpse will animate and attack. (Semi-lich: HD 10, hp 60, AC 0, MV 6″, #AT 1, DAM 1-10, + 1 or better weapon to hit, immune to *charm*, *sleep*, *enfeeblement*, cold, insanity, and death magic, turned by clerics as a ghost.) Being mindless, the corpse is immune to all illusion/phantasm and enchantment/charm spells. Once animated, the corpse will fight until destroyed.



Scattered papers on the floor, written by the high priest before he died, describe his plans to become a lich and rule an army and nation of undead. The high priest was not insane; he was a very calculating, determined man who made only one mistake.

Conclusion

With the release of the Water of Life, the power of the Tor is broken. Most of the priesthood and all the huntsmen will panic and flee upon beholding the returning water. The priests who are caught will be imprisoned and sacrificed by NPC druids in a major cleansing ceremony designed to restore the Tor to its old state. Any huntsmen and orcs captured will also be executed; the NPC druids will point out religious justification for such actions. The Water of Life, flowing in its original channel, will soon make the land green again. The surviving druids from Dungaelen will return to the Valley of the Earth Mother.

The power of the torc will liberate Dungaelen. The old druid there is of sufficient power to wield it, and he will cause the assault to fail miserably by using his *entangling* powers and other spells. If the PCs assist him, the whole battle may be played out by the DM and players using the BATTLESYSTEM™ Supplement rules. About 470 orcs will be involved in the assault on the town, which is defended by 260 humans with only moderate arms and armor. The DM should detail the rest of the orcish and Dungaelen forces as desired.

Huntsman

The huntsman NPC class may be used for devising opponents for the player characters involved in a long-term campaign in this area. Because the class is evil-aligned and offers little variation from the standard ranger class, it is not recommended for use as a PC class.

FREQUENCY: *Rare*
NO. APPEARING: *2-12*
ARMOR CLASS: *By armor type*
MOVE: *12"*
HIT DICE: *2 and up*
% IN LAIR: *Variable*
TREASURE TYPE: *M, Q*
NO. OF ATTACKS: *1, 3/2, or 2 (as per weapon and level)*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Surprises on 1-3*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Surprised on 1*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
INTELLIGENCE: *Average to genius*
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*
SIZE: *M*
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Possible in special individuals*
Attack/Defense Modes: *Possible in special individuals*

Huntsmen are humans of an anti-ranger class. They have the tracking skills of a ranger of equivalent level, and the surprise and magic-user spell-casting abilities of one as well. No druidic spells may be cast, and no special followers of any sort are gained. Huntsmen may employ scrying devices at 10th level as rangers do. Their attacks per round, experience-point and hit-dice tables, saving throws, and so forth are otherwise the same as rangers, though they have no level titles. A huntsman gains a + 1 bonus "to hit" against all human, demi-human, and humanoid opponents for every three levels of ability the huntsman possesses.

Hunstmen oppose all that rangers stand for: they hunt for sport, destroy things of nature, lay waste to good communities, and support evil humanoids. They especially hate rangers, druids, elves, and elf-like beings, and will attack them in preference over other opponents.

Huntsmen are often found in the service of evil clerics, particularly those who worship death gods. They act as guards and as hunters for the stronghold's food supply. They enjoy fighting as much as hunting and seldom need check morale.

The huntsmen in the Tor are dark-haired human males, clad in brown or black leather armor. All of them worship Arawn. They frequently wear hoods made of the heads of predatory animals, wolves and wildcats being favorites. No limit exists on the number of huntsmen who may gather in any one spot, though their rarity ensures that such gatherings are few.

Danaan, the Earth Mother

The following information on the Earth Mother has been slightly modified from the original article in which it appeared ("Tuatha De Danaan," DRAGON issue #65). Under no circumstances will this deity (or any other) appear in this adventure. The statistics may be useful for campaign play, however.

ARMOR CLASS: *-4*
MOVE: *12"*
HIT POINTS: *400*
NO. OF ATTACKS: *Nil*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *Nil*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Spells and devices*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Spells and devices*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *80%*
SIZE: *M (6' tall)*
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*
WORSHIPER'S ALIGN: *Neutral*
SYMBOL: *Wreath of mistletoe*
PLANE: *Concordant Opposition*
CLASS ABILITIES: *23rd-level druid, 30th-level magic-user, 15th-level bard*
PSIONIC ABILITY II
S: 19 I: 25 *W:* 25
D: 20 *C: 25* CH: 24 CO: 26

Danaan is the queen and ruler of all the Celtic deities, though her worship is not widely practiced. She appears as a mature, beautiful woman with auburn hair and leaf-green eyes, cloaked in white robes and garlanded with mistletoe and oak leaves.

Danaan's motherly aspect makes her sympathetic to all living things, especially young beings like saplings, baby animals, and children. In her dual role as the Goddess of Magic, she can animate trees, stones, and sods of earth to fight for her by turning them into armed soldiers. From 10-100 such soldiers will be created each round within a 10" radius around her, each man wearing leather armor, using a shield (AC 7), and being 6th level. These men are variously armed with spears, short swords, and hand axes, and will fight until Danaan says otherwise.

Danaan can summon the Wild Hunt once per day, which will appear in the evening of that particular day. She often carries a magical staff that has the spell-casting powers of a 12th-level druid and 12th-level magic-user. Around her neck, she wears a *Torc of the Gods (see* the *Legends & Lore* book, page 30).

Both men and women may become priests of Danaan, but only women may achieve 12th level or higher in her cult. Priests wear white robes and leave their heads uncovered; leather armor may be worn in battle, but it should be dyed white. The day of the new moon is Danaan's monthly holy day, and sacrifices of animals are made to her in a grove consecrated to her.

The *Torc of the Gods*

The *Legends & Lore* volume describes a typical torc as a ornamental neck ring. Certain torcs are given magical protective powers, such *protection* + 1, and are often encrusted with jewels and made from precious metals. A *Torc of the Gods* is a special torc imparted with the power to allow its wearer to *shapechange* without limit and to cast a *polymorph others* spell once per round when the wearer chooses, except when in *shapechanged* form. This kind of torc is always made of precious, rare metals and has a large gem of any type mounted on the front. The gem must be worth at least 5,000 gp.

The *Torc of the Gods* at the Tor has several additional powers. It allows the wearer to function as a 10th-level druid if he is below that level, adding the capability to cast the extra spells after the torc is worn for a full month. In addition, the torc will cause all vegetation within a 240-yard radius of the wearer to attack any targets the wearer designates as per the *entangle* spell. This power may be used once per day.

However, the torc's spell-increasing and *entangling* powers will only function if the wearer dedicates himself to the restoration and preservation of the druid's temple at the Tor. The wearer must give up all adventuring so long as he possesses the torc, or else he must give the torc to another druid who will carry on the task. Taking the torc with the intent to use it on adventuring, or hiding the torc without giving it to another druid, is cause for divine punishment; the DM may cause the offending druid to lose all spell-casting powers until such time as he makes amends. Note that a PC druid who keeps the torc may do so with the willing permission of the NPC druids in the area, regardless of the level of the possessor — so long as he agrees to stay and protect the druid's temple.

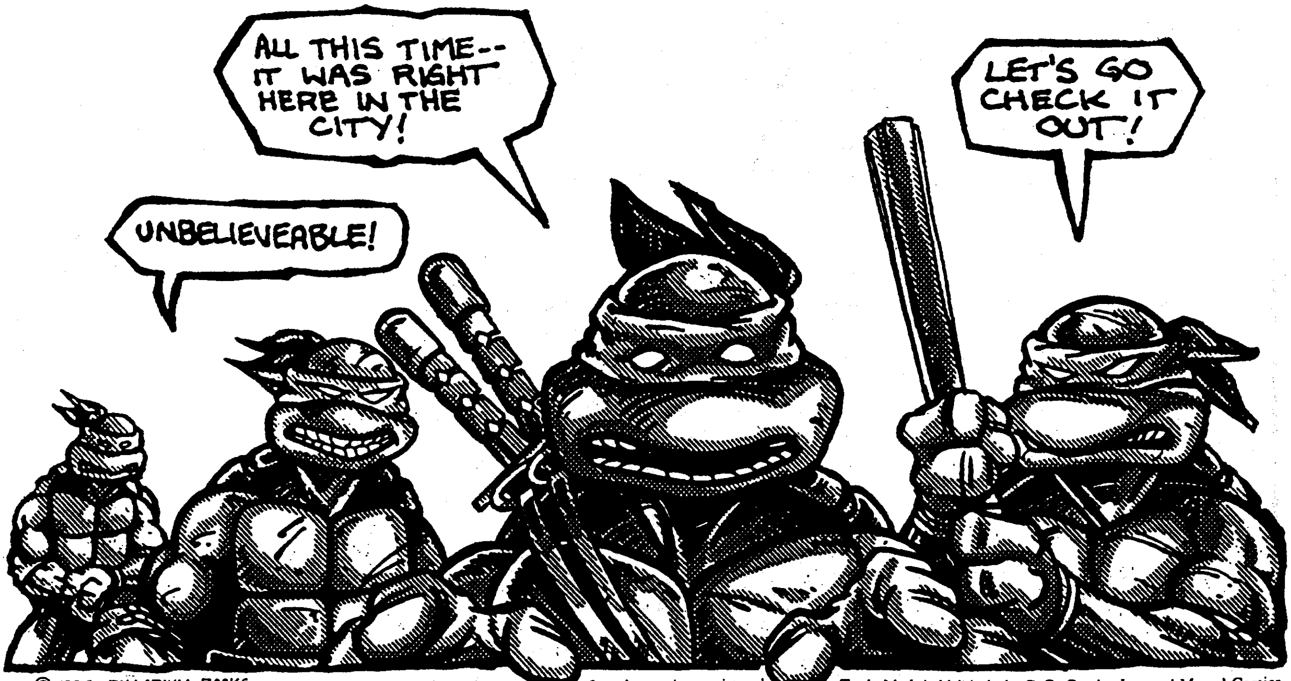
The torc at the Tor grants its wearer *protection + 2.* It has a gold piece value of 50,000 gp, but confers no experience point value since it is considered to be a relic.

Further reading

The editors recommend the following books for those who are interested in developing a Celtic campaign derived from this adventure.

Stonehenge Decoded, Gerald S. Hawkins, Dell Publishing Co., New York, 1968. If you've wondered how a bunch of stone blocks could serve as an advanced astronomical observatory, read this.

The Druids, Stuart Piggot, Penguin Books, London, 1968. An excellent resource text for those wondering what druids really did.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Creating a cast of NPCs

To do it nice, do more than roll the dice

by Jim Dutton

(Editor's note: Two previous articles by Jim Dutton have appeared in this magazine; see "Blueprint for a big game," in DRAGON® issue #97, and "Detailing a fantasy world," in issue #98. Jim Dutton is the president of Entertainment Concepts, Inc., which is producing the AD&D™ Play by Mail Game.)

This article discusses a part of the creative process that is one of the most entertaining for the gamemaster building his own campaign. Most AD&D® game players enjoy rolling up characters, and if you're planning on developing a complete cast of NPCs for your players' characters to encounter, then you'll wind up doing quite a bit of dice rolling.

If you have a supply of NPCs already rolled up when your campaign starts, it makes running the campaign much easier. When players want their characters to hire a certain type and level of NPC, when you need some quick information on a possible villain NPC, when you roll a random encounter with another party of adventurers, or in any of several other circumstances, you won't have to rush to roll up an NPC or "fake it." All you'll have to do is open your file of NPCs and pick out pregenerated characters that fit the situation at hand — no muss, no fuss.

When I build a campaign, I like to have several characters of each PC class and special NPC class worked up on 3" x 5" index cards. I keep these NPC cards in a plastic card file and use the lettered dividers that come with the file to separate the various classes.

Once I have the cards and file, I get out my *Players Handbook*, plus issues of DRAGON Magazine that have information about various NPC classes. Armed with these, a few sharp pencils, and a table full of dice, I'm in business. Starting with the player classes, I create as many as ten to fifteen NPCs for each character class by rolling four six-sided dice six times (using the best three dice for each group), recording the rolls, and then placing them next to the six abilities, usually in the most advantageous order for that character class. For classes like rangers, in which there are minimum ability scores to be met, I may roll five or six dice (taking the best three) to help insure rolling the minimum score for those abilities. I don't always use the six scores in the most advantageous manner for the NPC, which gives each NPC a more individual flavor.

Of course, whenever you want to create a special NPC that you want to be a part of your campaign, you don't have to roll the dice. Just decide what you want his abilities to be. For example, if you want to insure that there is a Conan-type barbarian in your campaign, there is no need to roll dice; just write down 18/00 strength on his 3" x 5" card. However, I don't recommend creating these types of special NPCs at this point. There is a later step in the campaign design process where it fits in better.

Once you have the abilities of an individual NPC generated, there are a few other things that need to be determined for that NPC. First is level. You can assign a level, making sure as you create all the NPCs for one class that you have included a broad range of levels, or you can use a statistical dice rolling system to help you make up your mind. (That's what I normally do.) One of the easiest methods for rolling levels is to roll a ten-sided die and a six-sided die. The level of the NPC is read off the ten-sider, but if you roll a 6 on the six-sider, then add ten to the level. If you rolled an 8 on the ten-sider and a 6 on the six-sider, the NPC's level would be 18. This method gives you a good mix of characters from levels 1 - 10, and an occasional very powerful NPC.

When the level is rolled, you can then determine the NPC's hit points using the AD&D rules. The back of the *Dungeon Masters Guide* has tables for generating magic items for player classes by class and level, and money and treasure owned by the NPC can be generated using a likely row on the treasure table for monsters in the back of the *Monster Manual.*

At this time, you may also choose to select some personality traits for the NPC. Again, there are tables in the *Dungeon Masters Guide* for doing this. However, don't try to roll up one selection from each of the tables in this personality section to assign to a single NPC. You'll be likely to wind up with a clutter of descriptions that will be confusing and useless when it comes time to try to use that NPC in role-playing situations. Just pick out two or three of the categories to roll for. Jot down those personality descriptions on the NPC card, and it will be a lot easier to decide how he might react when he comes in contact with the players' characters.

Generally, I will not follow all the steps above for every NPC generated. First, I generate all the ability scores and levels for one class of character. Then I go back to roll and calculate hit points for each of the characters. Next I roll for magic items and treasures, select additional equipment, then roll the personality traits for each NPC. The advantage to this method is that you only have to turn to the proper pages in the correct book once for each character class, rather than once for each character.

Now you have a card box full of rangers, paladins, magic-users, witches, barbarians, and whatever. This is an important step toward an organized and smoothly flowing campaign. One last thing to remember as you generate these NPCs is to create a supply that is tailored to the scale of your campaign. If you have a small campaign world set up to accommodate only a few players, then you will not have to generate nearly as many NPCs as if you have a large campaign that will include a large number of players. One nice aspect to creating this part of your campaign is that it is not as exacting as some of the other parts. If, in administering your campaign, you start to run low on a few types of NPCs, it is easy enough to roll up a few more before the next session.

The next step is to place some special NPCs and groups of NPCs in various locations about the campaign map. What this entails is deciding on what mountain top will the fortress of a reclusive magic-user be placed, in what dense forest or dismal swamp will a coven of witches be located, and so forth. You can place as many of these special NPCs of any and every class as you desire; the key is what flavor you want your campaign to have.

Again, we go back to a sheet of paper for each special NPC area, just as was done for each nation (see DRAGON issue #98). There are really two topics to consider: special individual NPCs and special groups of NPCs. Individual NPCs of this type will generally be very powerful characters. You can also have certain individuals found only in their home area, while others roam the world and could be encountered by the players' characters anywhere. It's a good idea to have about one-third of these characters be good guys and the rest be possible trouble for the players' characters. For the most part, when generating these NPCs, you should make your own decisions regarding an NPC's abilities, possessions, and personality. Remember the discussion from issue #98 on creating interesting NPCs, avoiding stereotypes whenever possible.

There are many examples of interesting "loner" NPCs. I mentioned the reclusive magic-user above; one of these can be working on dangerous magical research or enjoying the solitude of the wilderness, away from prying eyes. Powerful fighters or rangers who make careers as bounty hunters are interesting, as are skilled thieves who trail parties on quests, intending to steal their treasure. You can create solitary druids and monks who roam the wilds reflecting on their philosophies, and dangerous, crafty illusionists who have been cast out from society.

The subject of special NPC groups is just as fascinating. When you create these groups, you may want to generate two or three special NPCs as the leader and main lieutenants of the group; the rest of the group can be generated in the manner we described for generating NPCs above. These groups can become the targets of quests, factions causing trouble for established political orders, or mercenaries whose services are for hire to the highest bidder. One coven of witches in one of our recent campaigns created quests and wars that lasted for months and inspired numerous deeds of valor on the parts of the PCs. The real fun of special NPC groups often lies in the interaction of these groups with the political framework you created earlier in the campaign design process. Other examples of NPC groups are select orders of monks, fraternities of rangers, brotherhoods of magic-users, thieves' guilds in certain cities, small mercenary units and barbarian tribes, orders of knights, and secret societies of assassins. The possibilities are as varied as your imagination.

Crucial to your formation of the special NPC groups is a firm idea of what role that group will play in your campaign. You can approach the problem by either thinking of an interesting group of characters that you want to have in your campaign and creating a role in the campaign for them to play, or knowing a function in your campaign that must be filled and then creating an NPC group to fill it. Jot down some of your ideas about the group on the sheet of notes you're keeping for them. If the group will play a part in the international politics of your campaign, you do not have to limit player character contacts with those NPCs just to the area of the map where you have placed the headquarters of the group.

In preparing the AD&D™ Play by Mail Game, we used a slightly more sophisticated method of producing a variety of NPCs for use in our vast campaign. Knowing that hundreds of players would be involved in each version of our campaign that we started, it was obvious that it would require literally thousands of NPCs to provide enough variety for the gamemasters to select sidekicks, rivals, and villains from them. In fact, we decided that it would take at least 5,000 NPCs to make sure each campaign was adequately supplied!

A sophisticated method of generating NPCs of various classes, levels, alignments, personalities, and possessions was embodied in a computer program that turned out these NPCs in a remarkably short period of time. Not only did this provide us with an adequate supply and variety of NPCs for the players to meet throughout our campaign world, but if the NPCs start to run short, the same program is ready and waiting to restock the supply.

Creating the NPC groups was not quite so easy. We had to design these in the same manner as would have to be done for any campaign. However, with several designers working, we came up with a large number and wide variety of NPC groups placed throughout the campaign. As described above, some of them are unique to one location, and some are societies that make their influence felt throughout many areas of the campaign. Specific information on all these groups is stored on a large computerized "Description File," which the gamemaster can refer to for his own use, and to print selected information on players' move sheets. Information on the specific statistics of the NPCs in these groups are stored on the NPC file mentioned above. We will be using these NPC groups extensively in the adventures we create for the many players in our campaign, and expect this to be a richly entertaining element of the game we are providing.

Just as important as the NPCs are the monsters with which you populate the campaign. One important area to consider here is the availability of interesting types of monsters. You should plan in advance for places where players can expect to find such creatures as unicorns, pegasi, dragons, griffins, giants, and so on. Of course, most monsters do not have to have special work done for them to establish their place in the campaign; their presence is accounted for in the random encounter tables used when adventurers are traveling from one place to another. The monsters you will want to do special preparation for are the ones that characters are likely to seek out for a special purpose.

For example, one player might decide that his character wants to capture a pegasus to train as a steed. You can decide at the time he declares his intention where pegasi can be found, but preparation at that point can delay your AD&D sessions and leave your players twiddling their thumbs for a few minutes while you decide on all the relevant details.

This is where preparation plays a big role in establishing you as an organized and entertaining Dungeon Master. If you have previously made notes about pegasi, then you will be able to look in your notebook and see in what areas of your world pegasi reside, what factor makes their location so remote that they are rare in the world of men, what dangers are to be found on the approach to pegasi grazing lands, and any other information that during your preparation period you decided would be relevant and useful in your campaign. Not only will this speed up your playing sessions, but your players will be impressed by the forethought you used.

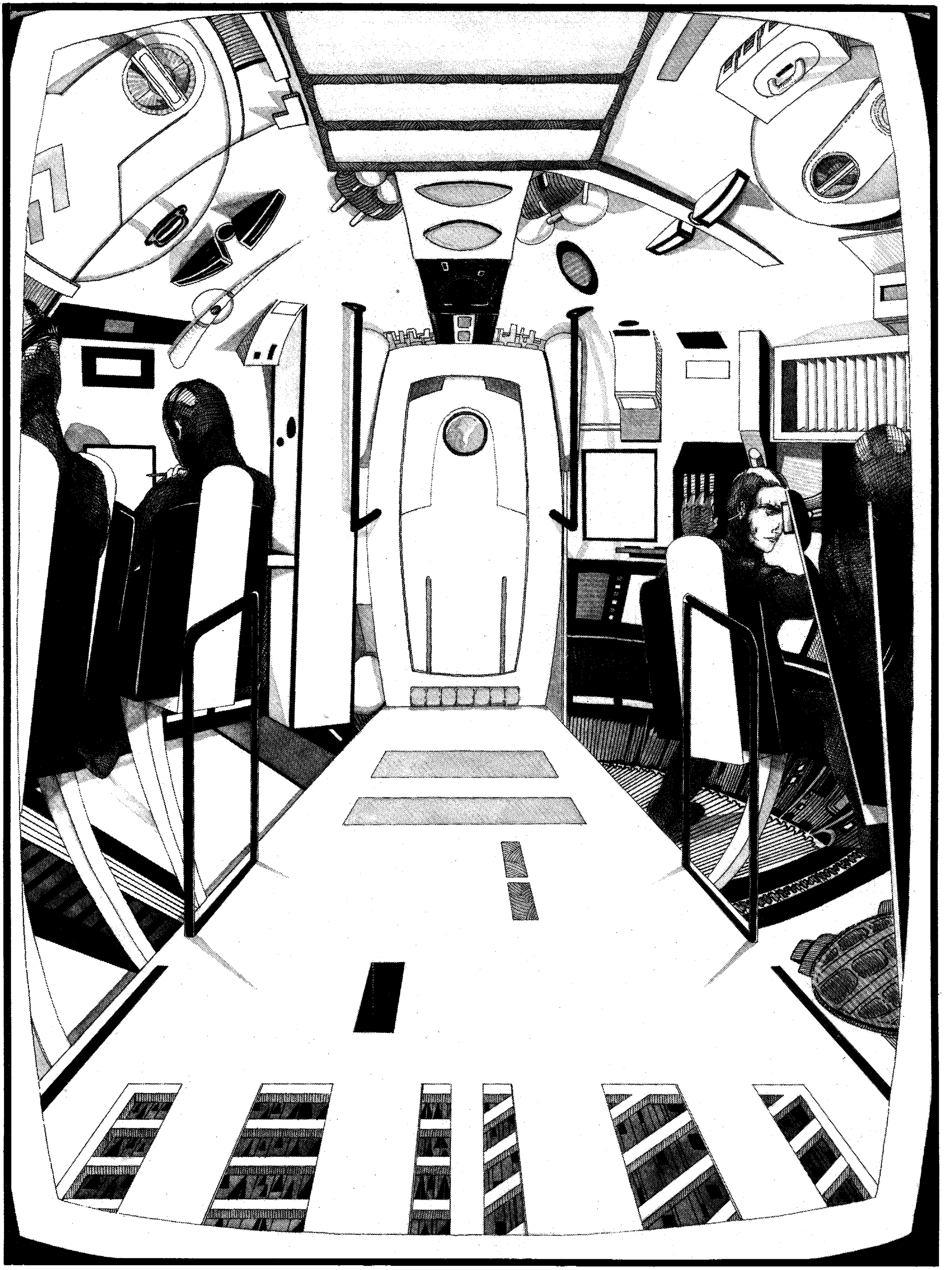
There are several other topics to consider concerning monsters. One involves deciding on details for special-purpose monsters. Another is a subject discussed in issue #98, that of creating political areas that are monster-ruled. A third area, which doesn't need much discussion, is deciding on an individual basis whether you want to include a certain monster type in your campaign. These are all needed to design a completely organized campaign, but the one topic I find to be the most interesting and fun involves individualized monsters.

Individualized monsters have a great deal in common with individualized NPCs, as discussed earlier in this article. Basically, you create some of the most important encounters that players will have in your campaign. For example, somewhere on your map you may want to place the very oldest, largest, meanest red dragon alive. You may want to know where the leader of the lammasu lives; and on which mountain top the castle of the most powerful storm giant stands.

Some individual monsters should be good instead of evil, so that they aid the players instead of creating problems for them. They should also be powerful enough to survive and escape an adverse encounter with the players' characters. The reason for this is that these monsters are not the average dungeon fodder, and they're not the stuff of random encounters, to be fought and forgotten. Instead, they are relatively permanent features of the campaign. Adversary monsters of this type can be long-time rivals and enemies of players, and friendly monsters in this category can provide pleasant surprises and occasional unexpected help. Creatures with illusionary magical powers are especially fun to work with, for they can appear in different forms at different times, thereby confusing players and making sure they stay on their toes.

In organizing these monsters, I suggest making notes about each of them on 3" x 5" cards, just as was done for the NPCs. Groups of these individual monsters can be formulated just as was done for NPC groups. A powerful magic-user might have a team of intelligent dragons that work for him, just as a monarch might have a fellowship of knights in his employ.

As you create the nations, monarchs, NPCs, and individual monsters in your game, and make notes on each so that they are a permanent and consistent fixture of the campaign, you are creating a more stable environment for the player characters to operate in. By using these notes as you work, you allow characters to accumulate their own stock of dependable knowledge about the campaign. This will make the players of those characters feel like a part of a whole, rather seeing their personas as an isolated group in the midst of chaos. Though you may want the environment to *seem* chaotic at times, over the long run, the players (and you) will enjoy the game much more if there are established facts that can be learned and acted upon.



Passing In the Night

by Rob Chilson

THE ALL-SHIP ALERT AWAKENED THE commander not long after he had sunk into exhausted sleep: "Invader battleship vectoring onto us from forty degrees forward. Contact in four and a half hours."

Cursing, Kliment Mikhailovich Bazulin dragged himself out of bed. *Right out of the frying pan,* he thought.

Space warship *Stepan Bandera,* a light cruiser, was under one gravity of acceleration toward Mars, a week away. Behind it was the Invaders' Near Base in the asteroids — Far Base was in the Saturn system. *Stepan Bandera* had just spent five months pretending to be an minor asteroid, drifting into the Base area, while the crew nearly went mad from tension and boredom. It had all ended with explosive suddenness an hour and a half ago, when the unsuspecting Invaders had sent a small ship to check on this errant rock.

That unfortunate ship had been caught by surprise when Kliment blew the camouflaging shell. *Stepan Bandera* scrambled out of the tumbling pieces and disabled the Invader ship with a missile while scorching it with the cruiser's fusion rocket exhaust. The ships were *that* close — within ten thousand kilometers of each other. And so they had made, they thought — till now — their escape.

Afterward, Kliment had stumbled off to bed, his perpetual headache for once stilled. Now he felt a dull pain in his head as he began the descent from the tiny cubbyhole his rating permitted him; yes, it was starting again.

After five months of free fall, the commander was clumsy under acceleration, and despite the long regimen of exercises, he felt weak. He took the ladder carefully — it really was a ladder in this small ship. *No hurry,* he told himself; *four and a half hours to contact.*

The longest section of the ladder was that in the shaft that ran through the missile bay. The missiles themselves were ten meters long, powered by a smaller version of the mighty fusion rockets that drove the *Stepan Bandera.* He could not see them, of course; the tube walls were opaque. The three missile bays themselves were separate and unpressurized. Kliment felt his usual twinge of anxiety at the thought that the bays — one for each turret — had no mechanism for moving missiles from one to the other. Disablement of a given turret meant the loss of the use of the unspent missiles in its bay. *Stepan Bandera* was a converted transport.

He put the perennial worry out his mind as he arrived, breathing heavily, at the Command Center.

It was a spherical room near the middle of the ship, a gleaming armored ball. The command and fire control sections centered here; there was a twin to it farther aft for the power control area, where Wojalek, the Polish chief engineer, held sway. The mirror-plated, laminated armor of these centers was as thick as that on the hull — 300 centimeters.

The curving hatch was open, and leaning against it was Frank Voorhies, their number-one-turret chief gunner. Standing in the hatch was Dr. Gonsalez, a Spaniard — a large motherly woman who gave a false impression of age.

"I guess they figure they've nothing to lose, and at least

Illustrations by John Weinberg

a little to gain," Frank was saying bleakly. Kliment had rarely heard him so pessimistic.

"Maybe they want to teach us not to send spies in among them," she said.

"Could be — hello, Skipper — give him room, Frieda — could be, or maybe they're human enough to want revenge."

Bazulin glared at him. "Regs do not forbid gunners to be in or near the command and power centers off-watch in non-battle conditions," he said. "However, there are rules forbidding 'Cluttering of the Armored Centers.' Section 405, paragraph M(3) on 'Waste, trash, junk'—"

"Sir, are you insinuating —" Frank began with outrage in his voice.

"— and Americans —"

"Britons! Britons! Britons!"

"— to be disposed of properly, in the containers provided —"

"Very well! I'm off to my turret in a huff! But if you expect me to shoot to save *your* hide, you'll have to beg my pardon first. American, indeed!" But he didn't move.

Voorhies was British — mostly Irish — but to the Russians, all native English-speakers were "Americans." Bazulin grinned as he ducked through the hatch.

The command center was shaped like a thick coin. Behind the flat ceiling and floor was the life-support system. Around the circular wall were the control boards and displays so that the operators sat in a circle, back to back. There was an emergency escape hatch, half the size of this one, opposite it, and behind one of the visiplate displays was a cramped and uncomfortable toilet. In battle, everyone wore space suits.

First Officer Rodion Nikolayevich Kostenko was in the "hot seat," and the commander waved him down when he started to get up. Olga Bonfiglio, his chief fire control officer, a dumpy, dark-eyed Frenchwoman in the Earth-brown European uniform, was looking over the shoulder of her cadet, Alexei Treivas. There wasn't as much room now as in free fall when they could simply float in the center of the space.

SWS *Stepan Bandera* was one of the first ships the Soviets turned over to United Fleet Command. Though it was his first command, Kliment Bazulin had accepted it dubiously; he had had doubts about discipline in a crew pooled from half the nations of Earth. He had been right about that, but was surprised to discover the efficiency of the mutual-respect relationship they had worked out — one well familiar to the Europeans.

"Nothing to lose..." Frank's phrase recurred to him as he peered over Rodion's shoulder. The enemy was not just a little cruiser like *Stepan Bandera* but a first-line battleship two hundred meters long by half that thick. His own ship was but sixty meters long by thirty in diameter — a mere two hundred feet and eight thousand metric tons against six hundred sixty feet and a twenty-five-thousand-ton mass.

"We're outmassed by three to one, outgunned by more like four to one," said Kostenko somberly.

Bazulin agreed. *Stepan Bandera's* complement was 24 attack missiles, of which they had spent three (counting the two spy probes), and 48 antimissiles. That ship had at least a hundred attack missiles, unless it had spent some on the mission from which it was now returning. There was absolutely no possibility of flashing it; victory would be merely to survive.

Had it been like human battleships, the Invader would have at least a meter of armor and six separate armored centers inside. Even shot up, 'the individual turrets could fight on, though less effectively without central fire control. Of course, no armor could ward off an *impacting* nuke, but in all the history of space warfare, no missile was known to impact on an active ship.

"Four hours to wait," Bazulin said. Hell must be a ship perpetually waiting for battle to join.

The true hell was he could think of nothing to do.

"Oh my poor children! Which is the best way to run?"

Rodion twisted around to look at him. "Sir, I don't know. Toward the Sun? He's coming at a good angle. . . . How about upping acceleration? Once we're past him, we're reasonably safe. Our combined speeds will be very high."

"Well, let's see. He's aiming to cross our path in four hours. To do that he'll cut all deceleration toward Near Base" (the Invader was homeward bound, and had probably been diverted by messages from Base) "and turn half around to drive straight toward the Sun. He's making half a gee sunward. In order to outrun him, we'd only have to boost sunward as fast as he does. But no; our combined drifts would still throw us together."

An hour and a half ago *Stepan Bandera* had begun to accelerate away from the Invaders' Near Base in the Asteroid Belt, toward Mars. In that hour and a half, the cruiser had acquired a velocity of 54 kilometers per second. Meanwhile, the Invader battleship, six hours away from its base and braking down, had 220 "klicks," as they said, toward them. It had ceased to brake down along that line and had put on half a gravity of acceleration straight toward the Sun. It would cross their path in four and a half hours unless they maneuvered.

No matter how hard they drove sunward, the two ships would retain these motions toward each other and come together.

Roll ship and blast back toward Near Base? No good. The Invader already had the advantage of their combined velocity, 274 klicks, and would only have to match their acceleration to come within range, sooner or later. It would take 27,400 seconds at one gee to bring them to a stop relative to the Invader, assuming it didn't drive toward them — over seven and a half hours.

Another possible solution was to blast at an angle to slow their drift towards Mars while driving away from the Sun. And this, too, the Invader could counter easily; he still had the advantage of their combined velocities.

No help for it; this battle couldn't be avoided. Their combined velocity doomed them. Racing spaceships don't dodge.

"Run straight at them?" Rodion asked again.

Bazulin frowned. The Invader was slotting to cross their path in four and a half hours, assuming they did one gee the whole time. Cutting acceleration wouldn't help. Upping it? They were well over two million kilometers from the point of crossing now. Going to two gees would cut the time to little over three hours. Not much help, though. The Invader could easily match that. And three gravities made it a little less than three hours, according to the astrogation computer.

"No point in exhausting ourselves," he said.

"So. Four and a half hours to wait," said Rodion, accustoming himself to the idea. His mouth worked.

"A short-range battle," said Olga Bonfiglio. "Better chance of getting hit, but not so hard on the nerves."

Bazulin was in a battle once that opened at *this* range — nearly a million and a half miles, almost eight light seconds. This was going to be a low-velocity, close-in battle.

"Though nothing like that little skirmish back at Near Base. That must have set some kind of record," she said.

Her commander grunted, not liking to be reminded that he had spent a missile. Two of their too-few missiles had been outfitted as spy probes — warheads replaced with batteries of lasers and detectors and sensors. Using them was what they'd come there for. But now they had only 21 missiles left.

That nondescript dot of light in the visiplate represented the enemy. It seemed quite innocuous in its unimaginable distance. Kliment felt cut off, unreal. Impossible to believe that he was real, that *Stepan Bandera* was real, that death was real. Kliment Mikhailovich Bazulin — who was he? Surely he'd soon awaken. . . . He shook his head, conscious of his condition; the strain of the last five months was telling on him.

For that dot represented a ship, and the ship was full of real, if unknown, enemies. Less than three years ago, the huge mother ships of the Invaders were detected by an astrographic survey of cometary asteroids, far out from the Sun. An envoy ship had gone out to speak to them; it had been swallowed by one of the mile-long ships and never heard of again.

The various governments of the solar system had had time to pull themselves together in the face of this common enemy. Fortunately (formerly, it had seemed unfortunate), the human race had had battleships and even limited practice in their use; ancient rivalries had been exported from Earth. But now, oddly, Europeans and Americans were shoulder to shoulder with him, and it was confidently expected that the Chinese would join United Fleet Command within the year.

That to Bazulin was as incomprehensible as the Invaders, who answered no signals and whose objectives were still unknown. Though he was only thirty-eight and his hair only beginning to thin in front, Kliment felt old. There had been so many changes, so fast. Just three years ago —

"Wish we could've gotten a look at a 'Vader," Frieda murmured.

The Invaders had a tidy habit of blowing themselves up when they lost a battle; humanity still didn't know what they looked like. It was conjectured that they were a hive species, the individuals of which had low self-consciousness. They might even have no use for planets. So far they'd moved no farther into the solar system than the asteroids. After all, they were heavily outnumbered.

Fortunately, Invader technology was not too advanced from that of humans. They had a reactionless drive in their ships, presumably based on gravity. But their other weapons were about at human level. Definitely, they had no faster-than-light drive. Their two spy probes had been burned out by the base-mounted superlaser, more powerful than anything humanity had, but of no great value in a space battle.

"I've always preferred to be a bad winner instead of a good loser," muttered Frank, staring mesmerised at the symbol of their enemy.

The wait was getting him down — and 'not he alone.

With an effort Kliment forced himself to seem natural. Had the others been in any better condition they'd instantly have seen through his pose, but they were as bad off as he was. They stood up, sat down, milled restlessly about, spoke jerkily and to no consequence. Acceleration dragged at them with its unaccustomed gravity, but still they could not sit. Kliment found himself looking at the chronometer every few moments; time had obviously frozen.

Talk of recorders brought to mind a belated duty: a letter home. Kliment had not written to Galina in five months. Of course, she knew he was under communications silence, but not why; it was not difficult to explain to her why he had not written. But, Nikolai at twelve and Nina at ten might found it harder to understand. And, as for why he couldn't tell them, even now, where he was and what he was doing — even Bazulin didn't understand that. Surely, the High Command didn't think the Invaders had spies on Earth?

When he looked up from the effort at writing an at least moderately gay letter, he was amazed at how much time had passed — he'd written so little. Hard to choose words even for grave, sober Nikolai (blond hair shining like flax, blue-gray eyes clouded, looking at him with puzzlement) — but Nina? He didn't know her, didn't really know Nikolai. Kliment brooded; did he really know Galina? Officers, even junior officers, of the Soviet Fleet were rarely home.

Previously, he had always consoled himself with the thought that retirement itself wasn't so terribly far away (he was pushing forty! incredible thought) — and failing that, he could apply for a dirtside job behind some desk. But, that meant a practical end to further promotion, and the family needed the money. Now with this war, there might be neither retirement nor dirtside jobs for a combat officer. Galina seemed to have adjusted to his absence; he was careful not to inquire how.

And now, all those options might well have run out. That ship, now only a featureless point of light in the visiplate, might well be the emblem of his death, coming down on him at a steadily increasing velocity starting at 274 kps.

No difficulty in keeping this stark fact out of his letters; it had scarcely yet penetrated his own consciousness.

There was a further ordeal. He borrowed the wardroom's recorder in his turn and recorded a final message home. It was a good recorder, giving excellent sight and sound, and he hoped his fragile jauntiness didn't seem to obviously false. A couple of wipes with sandpaper over the lens might improve his image, he thought morbidly. What do you say when you're under the shadow of death and you don't want to frighten the children? Or even Galina? Yet, how much would she miss him if he never came back? His soul cried out to reach across the distance between them, but it was too great; he didn't know how. He pleaded that others needed the recorder and cut it short.

The messages and good will of the crew were beamed by laser to Phobos, where they would be scanned by computers which would draw the censors' eyes to anything objectionable — parts might be rewritten — then they'd be beamed onward to Earth or elsewhere. Galina and the kids might well be reading and hearing his last words to them an hour before the battle started.

Back in the command center, the tension seemed to have eased a little, as each person came more or less to grips with it; others had also had trouble writing and recording. Bazulin also looked into the power control center, where the "black gang," as the Americans called it, were nervously running calibrations on the rockets and the auxiliary circuits. Wojalek seemed calm in the center of it, and the commander saw that the chief engineer had chosen this way to occupy his technicians' minds.

Bazulin glanced at him sharply out of habit, but saw nothing he wouldn't have expected to. *Idiotic;* he shrugged in silent grimace at himself as he backed out. But, a certain captain with an elaborate uniform and an air of arrogant authority — obviously of the Cheka — had suggested he keep an eye on the Pole. *Foolishness;* Gorbatov had been dead for forty years, and the bad old days were over. But not for the Cheka, he thought. Never for the Cheka.

Of course, they had an eye on him, too. Probably Kostenko. But Rodion 'wasn't one of *them;* he could tell them by the smell. There wasn't a regular Chekist aboard. It was a totally unexpected fringe benefit of this United Fleet ship.

Can't last long, he thought, opening the command center hatch and peering in. They'll be plotting the takeover next —

"Why's the hatch shut?"

"We're getting close, Commander. Better suit up, don't you think?" Kostenko indicated the visiplate.

"True. It's true. I'll make that official." Stepping carefully in, Bazulin spoke over the all-ship circuit, then made the weary climb back to his cubbyhole.

His tailored skintight pressure suit was stored here. Kliment had been careful to keep his weight constant and his physical profile the same; it still fit. Pulling it on was a sweaty business. Basically it was a heavy fabric like knit wool, chrome plated, but the individual fibers had the property of contracting greatly in vacuum. Should he go outside, the suit would shrink on him, squeezing him with five or six pounds of pressure per square inch. Balloons in strategic places — under the armpits, even in the palm of the hand — had a couple of pounds of pressure in them and were consequently flat now, but during pressure drop, they'd expand and transmit pressure to the inward-curving places the heavy fabric could not.

Skinsuits had certain advantages. One could work in them, yet be protected from explosive decompression. The human skin is airtight and has excellent cooling apparatus built-in, one that doesn't break down due to failure of a small part. Furthermore, they were donned like pajama bottoms and tops, the fabric overlapping, with sockboots pulled up over the legs and gloves over the sleeves. No elaborate seals were needed except around the neck where the helmet joined.

But pulling them on was a sweaty awkward business that took the commander's mind off his problems for five minutes. Kliment clipped the gloves to his forearms and took the helmet under his arm, putting one hand to his head, panting. It throbbed with a measured beat, gradually slowing. Kliment heaved a sigh and started down again, an improbable gleaming figure.

The dot of light indicating the Invader was the same, but the figures were ominous. Time, that had seemed frozen, was beginning to speed up, bearing toward them their precalculated fate. They could see it move.

SWS *Stepan Bandera* was a gleaming mirror-shape in endless night, a great fan of day sprouting from its stern, the murmuring fusion rockets lifting it endlessly. It was shaped like a fat milk can with a domed lid and a domed bottom pierced for the nine rockets. Around its bulging midsection were three turrets, each projecting enough to have a full hemisphere of vision. Through holes in the bottoms of them, the missiles were dropped; guns and lasers were mounted outboard on them and on the ship's dome.

The Invader was of much the same shape, minus the rocket flares, and set its turrets lower, in groups of four. They were staggered, two groups of four, so that the lower turrets didn't foul the launching from the upper ones. At this distance, though, these details were unseen; the Invader was just a dot of light in the visiplates.

The Invader ship ceased to accelerate toward the Sun, and time speeded up jerkily.

"Enemy launching!" someone shouted. And, true to Invader doctrine, it shut down acceleration just before launching. It had held its fire till very late.

"Twelve, eighteen, twenty-six, thirty missiles," said Olga. "Permission to counter?"

"Da." Commander Bazulin gulped at the figures. The Invader had been in touch with its base and knew how many missiles they had expended, and it knew how many a human cruiser carried.

"Hoping to swamp us," muttered Frank in turret one, and Kliment mentally noted the unfamiliar English term. His mind toyed with it as events speeded up. He had the terrible feeling that something deathly important had been whipped by him while he was looking at something else.

Off over there, a tiny bright symbol indicated the Invader; it was otherwise invisible at its 300,000-kilometer distance. Beside the symbol, however, tiny diamond-hard points of light had come into being, a fuzzy little lattice the human eye couldn't quite resolve — missiles. The enemy used fusion rockets not unlike the human ones; either they couldn't compress their reactionless drive into so small a unit or they feared to have one captured. Like human missiles, their tubes could sustain their approximate hundred gravities for a mere ten minutes or so, and so were fueled for no longer than that.

In a little over nine minutes, they'd be exploding around *Stepan Bandera.*

In the auxiliary visiplate, the Invader ships appeared magnified, thirty pale fans of light seen sidewise. They were driving straight toward the Sun, the ships' combined velocities alone bringing them down toward *Stepan Bandera.*

Olga ordered out all twenty-one remaining missiles, bunching them in an umbrella to the right and ahead of the ship. Then, the rumble and bump of launching were over, the static haze from the fusion exhausts was gone, and two clusters of missiles sped toward each other across illimitable distance.

Again time stretched. Seconds passed like beads on a string, three hundred and thirty-six of them. The Invader counted their missiles and looked over Olga's dispositions. Now, it belatedly decided to hedge its bets: it launched a second wave of ten missiles pointed straight back along *Stepan Bandera's* course — toward Mars.

Olga swore in French, which Kliment always supposed to be Italian because of her name, interrupting the flow of curses to order five antimissiles launched from each turret. Kliment was surprised to find that he was not at all troubled about the second wave. Apparently, the first wave absorbed all his concern.

Fifteen antimissiles! *Will we need so many?*

They carried forty-eight of these small but potent weapons. They were nuclear powered but not nuclear-driven, having instead a plasma or electric rocket that blew vaporized, incandescent lead aft to generate thrust. They could drive at ten gravities for five minutes, more than usually needed. Each attack missile carried four of them, and each anti had a warhead as powerful as an attack missile's.

Commander Bazulin's gaze came back to the first wave of the enemy. Almost a minute passed, and the flights of missiles were coming together; both flare lattices paled as they shut down acceleration to one gravity. Olga had targeted all their missiles as countermissiles on the oncoming enemy attack missiles.

The symbol for lead vapor flashed in both formations as both launched roughly comparable antimissiles. The Invader, still patterning its weaponry on the human, also put four antis on each attack missile. In all, two hundred four antimissiles and fifty-one attack missiles coming together, hardly seen from here.

The X-shaped Greek symbol *chi* for chemistry indicated the vapor of monopropellant, as antis and attack missiles launched small rockets of low final velocity at each other. Here, there, and everywhere flashed the symbol of gunpowder as these "minehead" rockets detonated. Each carried a claymore mine that sprayed the space ahead of it with iron shot.

Pellets and missiles were coming together with a combined velocity of well over 1100 kilometers per second, fifty-five times the speed of a meteorite.

Finally, after minutes of awful tension, the missiles came together, eighty thousand kilometers away. Deep within the visiplate before Kliment, the faint flares of their own, the fainter flares of the enemy, merged into one tiny hazy blob.

A hard, sharp flash, visibly expanding; a sudden explosive twinkle of a star previously unseen but surely there. Another, and another — the first was a faint point of dull light — two more at once, another. Fireflies sparked and died, all in a space the size of a coin — eighty thousand kilometers away. Second after second, that soundless firefly battle raged far off across the hard dark emptiness, a miniature galaxy, man-made, man-destroying.

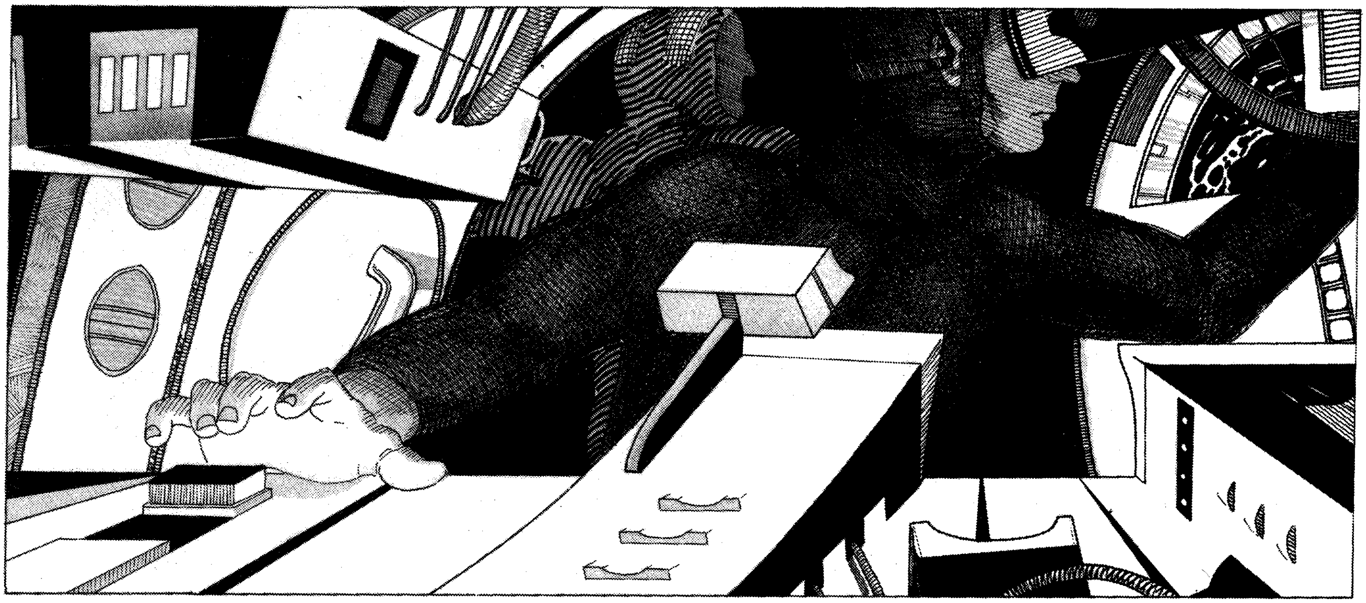
An auxilary visiplate gave them a close-up. A pulsing globe, flash after flash faster than they could count a couple of seconds after it began, the fireballs visibly moving toward each other in the moments before they faded. Two hundred ten (or fifteen) of them — Then, in a mere few seconds it was all over.

Radar, probing, found a thin, thin atmosphere there in a planet-sized volume of space — a star-hot, radar-opaque atmosphere.

Six missiles bloomed from in it, sidewise on to them.

"So many!" said Olga.

Five. One veered upward, blinded by something, a fireball, a pellet. Minutes later and far away from them, it



self-destructed.

"One of our countermissiles is still active, sir:," said Kostenko from his post behind Bazulin. "I am targeting it on the enemy second wave."

He couldn't bring it back, for it had used more than half its service life to get up the 353 kilometers per second it now had. It would approach the second wave from ahead. But, since it must have expended all its antimissiles and probably mineheads too, Kliment gave it no further thought.

Olga's computers had counted the fireballs that had burst, sorted out the human from the enemy by spectroanalysis, and made an inhumanly fast appraisal of the Invader's battle tactics. They concluded that the Invader had targeted half its missiles as attack (holding themselves back to hit the *Stepan Bandera)* and half as countermissiles, to clear the way for the attackers. The attack missiles had only expended two each of the four antimissiles each carried, so there were fifteen, not five, warheads in the diminished flight boring sunward to cross their path.

Olga made her plans accordingly, while Kostenko filled space with noise modeled on the command signals the Invaders sent to their missiles, hoping to confuse them. But the codes were too good; this never helped much. He was also beaming a running record of the battle home. Bazulin looked over everybody's shoulders, tried to think of something else to do, but couldn't. But, he did it all merely by giving them the feeling that he was there, the all-seeing, all-knowing mind controlling the battle.

— Who could control this roaring torrent?

They had two minutes after the missile battle ended before the remnant first wave would break over the ship. It wasn't a second too many for Olga, busiest person in the ship. She jolted Kliment from his fascinated gaze into the visiplate: "Cut acceleration, Commander, for the guns."

He cut sharply, surged up into his straps, and rolled the ship. Rapidfire guns in each of the turrets were pointed in the direction Olga indicated, almost straight away from the Sun, and the ship rippled to chain-thunder. Minehead rockets were thrown out at low velocity, a mere kilometer per second. They now made a slowly widening umbrella beside them, just behind the umbrella of the fifteen antimissiles, waiting for the signal to burn toward an enemy: the last line of defense.

Everybody jerked when the green symbol of lead vapor flashed in the visiplate (the enemy missile flares were huge, huge): the attack missiles launching antimissiles, their own prelaunched antis leaping toward them. The red of monopropellant followed, then the red of gunpowder: steel pellets fanned out. A flash as an antimissile detonated, much brighter than the first battle (Kliment's heart shook him but he was unconscious of it, staring mesmerised into the visiplate). Another, another. Kliment was in agony. They were using too many!

Then, he gulped as an attack missile almost got through, flashing and glancing like ice in the sunlight as their lasers bore on it. Its mirrors shrugged that off, it bored grimly in. An antimissile leaped toward it, fired mineheads that sprayed its path with pellets, then detonated. When the blaze died away, the missile's mirror-surface was dulled and dark and its temperature rising as their lasers found it again. Its flare, too, had altered; it veered away from them, blind. The anti's fireball had brushed it.

It self-destructed, safely far away from them. It was the last one.

"Acceleration?"

"Not yet," said Olga tightly. "We still have —"

Monopropellant flamed, gunsmoke puffed into nothingness as Commander Bazulin's gaze leaped back to the visiplates. An enemy antimissile he'd overlooked was still boring in toward the ship at all its ten gravities. The pre-sown minehead rockets were burning toward it. Most were too far away but detonated anyway in the faint hope that one of their pellets would be thrown into its path.

The guns were hammering again, the lasers silently glaring, while the deceptive dark dot with its faint halo of near-invisible plasma flare grew. Seconds were eternities.

Then, the visiplates went white as the filter circuits cut in against the awesome flare of the detonation. Overhead came a muffled thud as the edge of the wispy fireball stiff-armed the ship, still streaking toward them at hundreds of kps, though it was now a fireball rather than a bomb. The ship vibrated but did not jolt.

Kliment relaxed after a held-breath moment. *A tap. We got worse than that in the old* Lenin II *three times in as many seconds.*

The visiplates cut back again, and for a moment nobody spoke or moved. They had survived the first wave.

Commander Bazulin cleared his throat. "We made it — past the first hurdle," he said into the all-ship mike. "Olga, how long till the second wave catches up with us?"

The chunky little woman gave herself a shake and took a long breath, as if under a cold shower, but immediately began to play tunes on the computer's board. "I make it about thirteen minutes. It depends on just what flight path they follow."

Bazulin considered going to, say, eight gravities. It was not impossible that they could outrun the missiles. Their tubes were only good for ten minutes or so. But no. They were programmed to shut down acceleration on long drives to save them. Their velocity was so high they'd still overtake the *Stepan Bandera*, saving enough fuel for the final approach.

All they could do was delay the inevitable.

Rodion took charge of a party going out to replace damaged sensors on the dome forward; unnecessary, damage had been so slight, but something to do.

They had passed the Invader at the time the first wave was breaking over them, each snootily silent. Their distance then had been about a hundred thousand kilometers — 62,000 miles — quite close. Shooting at that distance was possible, but their combined velocity was too great for any missile to cross the slight gap (a 7½-minute missile flight) before they had whipped by. The Invader was now far astern, finished, done, shaping course back toward Near Base, It was out of the fight.

It had left them a momento, however: the ten missiles of the second wave, accelerating toward Mars as they were doing, over there a hundred and twenty thousand kilometers to their right. Coming as late as it did, it had to overcome the ships' combined velocities. It had braked to a stop about the time the ships passed each other, and now it was building up speed again in the direction they were going.

Stepan Bandera was even with the second wave now, pulling past it. It was a lonely little star barely visible to the naked eye, a pale shy glow. In the telescopic visiplates, responding to higher-frequency wavelengths, the superheated plasma was a supernal flame carrying tarnation. Ten diamond-hard dots of light with a hint of something icy at the apex.

They walked past at 226 kilometers per second, but the pale star faded slowly. It faded more slowly each second for three minutes and a half. Then, it stopped fading.

Olga and Alex Treivas tried to sic the lone countermissile that had survived the missile battle onto it. Trouble was, it was already making 560 klicks towards Mars and had long since swept past it. They discussed a maneuver to cut its acceleration and swing it in behind *Stepan Bandera*, but when they had cut a program, they found that the missile no longer responded.

"Malfunction, or more likely it ran into something."

A grain of sand, a pellet, anything. At those velocities, missile armor was not thick enough.

Feeling oppressed, Kliment left the command center, careful to close the hatch. There was a toilet within it, but little privacy. The gunners, too, were prowling the ship, gleaming chromium mer-people in their skinsuits. Down in the "black gang," his jetmen and engineers were cheerful. Even Wojalek, who'd been in combat and should have known better, said, "What's ten missiles when we just radicalized thirty?"

They were eating ice cream and offered him some, but, though Kliment's stomach felt hollow, empty, he couldn't. Frank Voorhies found him there, clapped him on the back, breathed tobacco fumes into his face — in the Soviet Fleet you could be broken a whole grade for smoking in ship even in peace.

"That's what you get for being a Russian, Skipper. You brood too much. Now, a simple-minded Britsky like me bounces back like a cat. Bet you a hundred we make it; give you three to two."

In his raddled state, Kliment couldn't figure how much he'd win if he put up a hundred. He punched the gunner in the short ribs. "Try flying your own ship, sailor, and see how soon you take to brooding."

"Not me; and that ship wouldn't last long. My God, is that Frieda?" She was death on smoking.

"Don't worry, you've been a good boy for five months. Besides, the condemned should have a last smoke."

"Who me? Good? That's slander! I can provide character witnesses —"

An eerie interlude of laughter in the midst of battle.

The thought that this ingenious and intricately made, little ship might soon be flashed into intangible vapor gave Kliment an odd pang. He had never cared much for the ugly little ship; it was just a ship, but now he began to appreciate it.

It was actually a converted transport, though its thick waist and squatty build gave it a military appearance — the look of speed. A compact shape has a lower moment of inertia than a long one. It could turn faster than a more slender ship of the same mass.

But soon all this would be behind him: his first command. If he lost, of course (and the odds were against them), *Stepan Bandera* would be put out of action or actually flashed. If he survived, assuming he wasn't crippled, he could surely expect promotion. In any case, it would be *Stepan Bandera* no more for him.

What then? Back to the Soviet Fleet, I suppose. It wasn't a real promotion if it wasn't a Fleet promotion. That meant it wasn't only his ship he'd be saying farewell to, but to his crew. That brought a real pang. Floating near a chess game in which the participants had time to make one move each between missile waves, Kliment was shaken by a sudden gust of love for all his ill-assorted crewmen.

God, I hope I make it. Then: *That was a sucker bet!* He'd have had to die to win. Kliment had to choke down helpless laughter before entering the command center.

The commander was a little late getting back; even the gunners had gotten nervous and gone home. When he had seated himself and looked in the visiplates, he gave a little jump. The missiles looked awfully close and awfully big. "Three minutes from impact, plus battle time." The missiles would shut down acceleration so they could launch their antimissiles; that would increase the time before the second wave impacted. "Olga, time to launch antimissiles."

She looked into the visiplates, having just returned herself, and frowned. The second wave was over 4,500 kilometers behind them. In 180 seconds, the missiles would travel 46,500 kilometers, but *Stepan Bandera* would cover 42,000. "What happened to the other one?"

Only nine were left. The other must have run into something. That was the chance one took in a long-range launch.

There came a triple bump as the first antimissiles were dropped, and another, and another. It took nine seconds to drop eleven antimissiles from each turret. Each, as it was launched, rolled over and fired its chemical rocket aside, to avoid the concentrated hell of *Stepan Bandera's* exhaust.

That fury was turned on the oncoming missiles. To accelerate its eight thousand metric tons at one standard gravity, *Stepan Bandera's* nine fusion rockets must generate, in thrust, at least the equivalent of 95 million calories per second — four hundred thousand kilowatts. Rockets not being 100% efficient, it actually took five times as much. Had all that energy been focused on one missile, it would have been vaporized. But even when Wojalek had. laid his tubes parallel and focused them with the anodes, the flares fanned out till only a fraction struck a given missile. Even so, the intensity per square centimeter was dozens of times that at the *surface* of the Sun a thousand miles from the rocket throats.

But, the missiles knew their business. They were well spread so that he could only focus on one at a time, climbing from below in a circle around them. The second wave had the most favorable line of approach: straight up their tubes.

Their own antimissiles kicked on acceleration to get distance "downward" before the battle. For less than three minutes, they maneuvered toward each other, avoiding the ship's flare. The second wave dimmed as the enemy missiles launched their antimissiles: four each, thirty-six altogether, and the nine attack missiles. Kliment groaned internally; they had only thirty-three antimissiles. And his scourging hadn't stopped the one attack missile from launching its antis.

Olga was cool, tense, and precise as she calculated lines of approach. (She had to think seconds or minutes ahead and had no time to watch what was happening now; now is history, ancient history, in a space battle.) The gunners laid their rapidfirers along the lines she gave them and fired, fired, fired, laying down a barrier of steel aft. Lasers swung and focused.

Chemical fuel and gunpowder far aft — the missiles and antis laid their own mineheads; steel stitched space. The ship's flare gobbled some of those mineheads. Bazulin snarled suddenly when the missile he was attacking wandered away from its course. He followed it as far as he could — not far — and came back on course.

Then it began again, the blooming of death in darkness. Space pulsed firefly-like with sixty-three explosions, but in some ten seconds, it was over. Even in these moments of tension, Kliment could appreciate the stark beauty of the bombs bursting in emptiness.

(Blurred thought: the battle was only 800 miles away.)

The flaring bombs subsided, space was dark again. Two attack missiles and three antimissiles had gotten through. Commander Bazulin gulped inaudibly, but there was nothing he could do. They were too close for him to attack; he'd have to roll ship too far, to do so would burn his own minehead rockets, and the fusion tubes were safest pointing due aft as the missiles streaked up "beside" them from "below." He bit a knuckle and breathed heavily.

Time was rushing, roaring, foaming past in the familiar battle manner. Their motions, their thoughts, were jerky, speeded-up, words short and tense.

Monopropellant — the gunners' minehead rockets were streaking toward their targets. Chemical explosions — no human eye could have seen them at that distance. Pellets sprayed from them. (The guns were firing again.) One thing gave them a chance: the oncoming missiles could. hold nothing back; each was defenseless now, all targeted as attack missiles, even the antis.

Explosion! Everybody jerked. Then another. Range shortened as they watched, watched, hoping for another — six hundred kilometers now, and the second wave of mineheads Olga had ordered was burning powder to get in front of the remaining attackers (20 seconds to juncture).

Gunpowder, gunpowder again, gunpowder, fireball! One of the antimissiles had detonated, seeing steel ahead, in a forlorn hope; too far away — three hundred kilometers or about 190 miles.

Ten seconds to juncture, and the gunners were firing hopelessly, the lasers doing apparently nothing as the missiles grew and grew, one drifting, one driving. Kliment stopped breathing, even his heart stopped —

Fireball! Half the universe was blotted out, the visiplates going milky white as the filters cut in. Jolt transmitted through the frame as the on-coming wispy edge of the fireball rammed them on the aft quarter like a thing of steel. Hit, he thought —

Again the visiplates went white, when they had just cleared from the attack missile's burst. The ship rang like a bell, rocked under them. Kliment surged up against his straps, his heart in his throat, as acceleration ceased. Alarms shrilled, and cool recorded feminine voices from far away spoke in his ear: "Rockets overheat —" "Hull broach —" "Pressure drop in engineering compartments —"

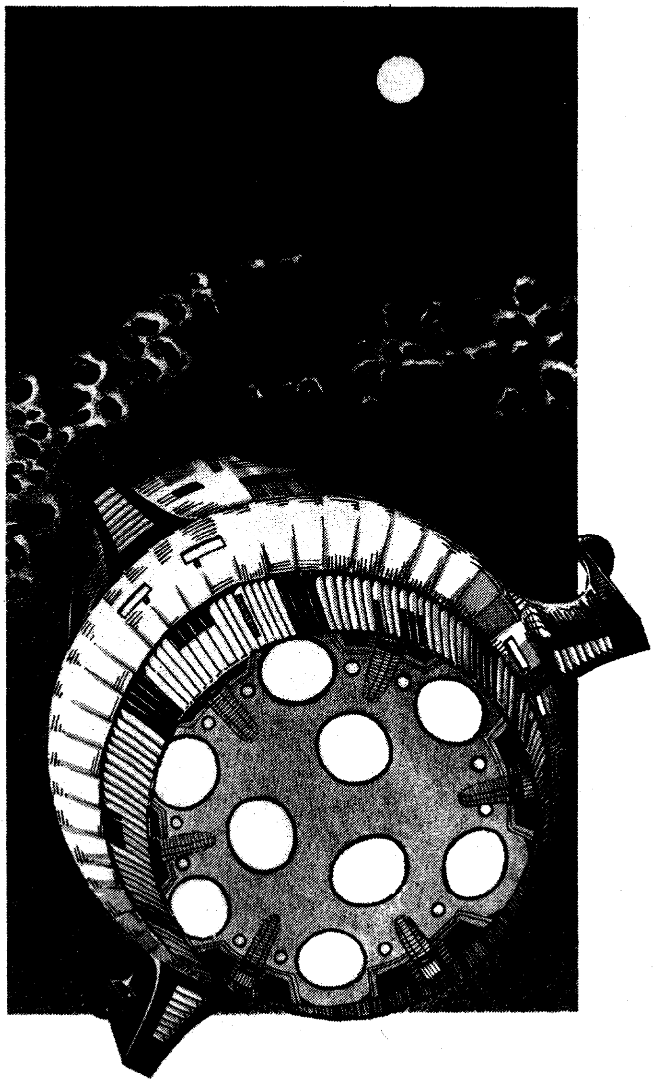
A crippled and helpless ship drifting toward Mars.

Kliment opened his eyes after a couple of seconds. He was surprised to find the visiplates working — most of them; they'd lost some aft. After a long time, he realized there were no more missiles coming. It seemed an age since there hadn't been missiles incoming.

They had survived the second wave.

His hands were shaking, but his voice was still under control. Everyone else in the Command Center seemed dazed. "Lieutenant Wojalek, can you give us a quick check on damage?"

"Early readouts aren't too discouraging, Commander;



we're not losing air too fast, though we may have to depressurize. Stressed along the seams, maybe. No communications with number one turret; it must have taken the brunt. Frank and Ernst are probably dead."

"We're no deader than a jetman is from the neck down! Damn fireball ripped out our controls." Frank's voice, from the command center hatch continued to mumble profanities.

The fireball had blown in the missile hatch in the bottom of the turret and had been channeled back into the missile bay, doing unaccounted damage as well as ripping out their communications. But, the turret control centers were separate from the missile tracks, and they hadn't been hurt. The blast had merely sprung the turret and let out their air. Freida immediately demanded their dosimeters, and Rodion unstrapped to help them swim in.

"I'm going out to check up, then, Commander," said Wojalek. "The last burst overheated the rockets, and the safeties shut down to keep from burning them out. We'll try to restart when I get back. We'll make it to Mars on schedule, I'd say."

The Invader ship was no farther from them than Earth is from the Moon, 380,000 kilometers, and could launch again — if it had any missiles left. But, it would take any missile six hours to reach them in a long-stern chase, and it would have to cross more than five million kilometers of space, with all the risks that meant. It went away silently.

"Okay. We have won. We'll live. Good work, men and women —" Kliment's voice broke, overcome by his affection for these men and women. It seemed impossible to believe humanity wouldn't ultimately triumph. He'd have to explain that to Nikolai and Nina.

"I don't see anything good about it," said Olga, slamming down the cover over her computer board. "We have less than a hundred minehead rockets left — and no other weapons!"

"If another ship jumps us we're dead," said Commander Bazulin gently, already slumping into relief. "Is that likely?"

Not a fair question — they were still a week from Mars, only hours from the Invader Base.

It hit her all at once. Olga's piquant face crumbled as if in tears. Then, she screamed in triumph and relief, and the tears did come. Rodion ducked to keep from being kicked as she floated into the air, but he yelled too and pounded Kliment on the back. Al Treivas, the shy cadet, reached out to pull Olga back to earth but was yanked up into a kicking, laughing pinwheel with her instead. Frank was kissing Frieda, and Ernst was helpless with laughter. Other whoops came over the com from the turrets and aft; for ten minutes there was no discipline at all in SWS *Stepan Bandera.*

Everybody but the commander joined. Kliment felt burned out, and his head felt stuffed with cotton. He could only repeat the phrase: "We did it. We did it. We did it."

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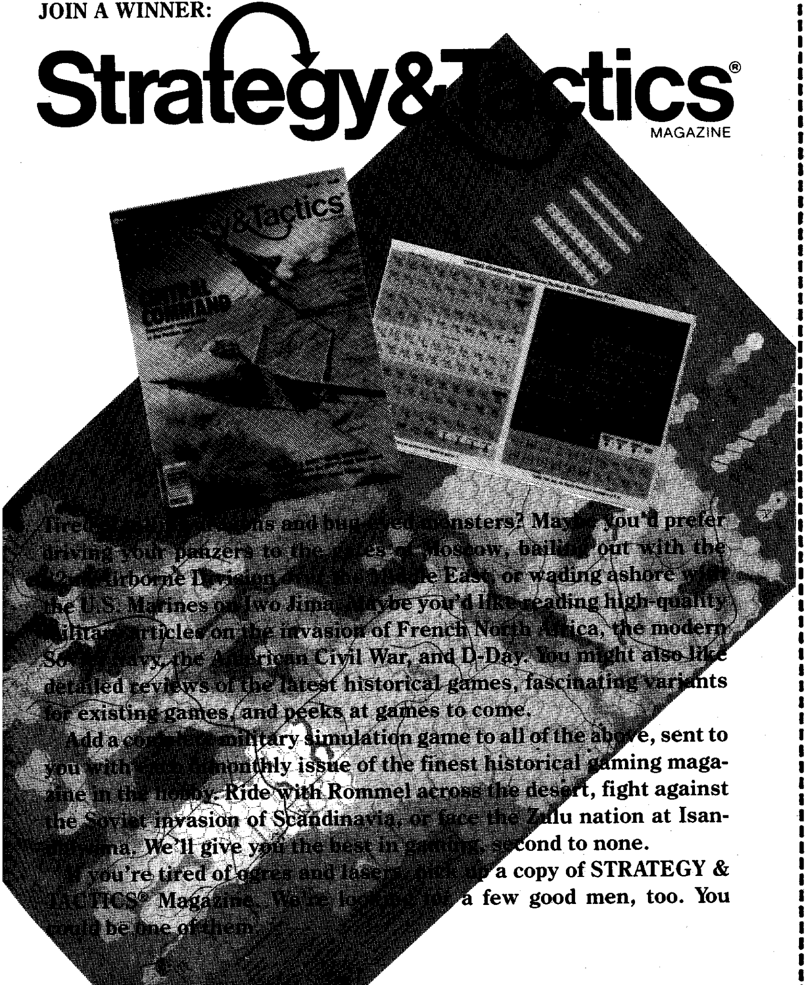

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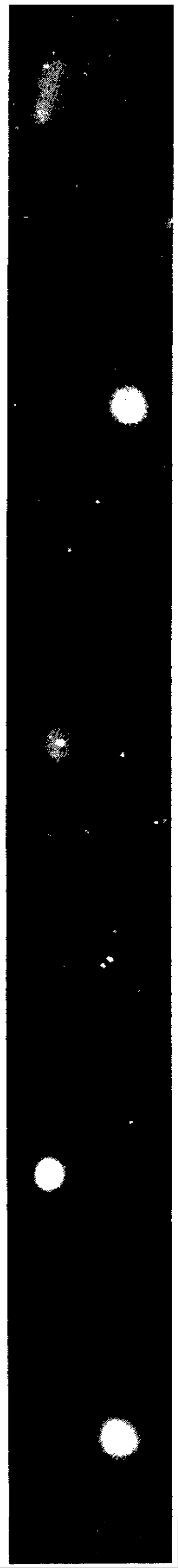


The GEN CON® 18 convention is over with – FINALLY! A report on the science-fiction side of things (particularly the seminar on super-powered hero games) will be coming soon.

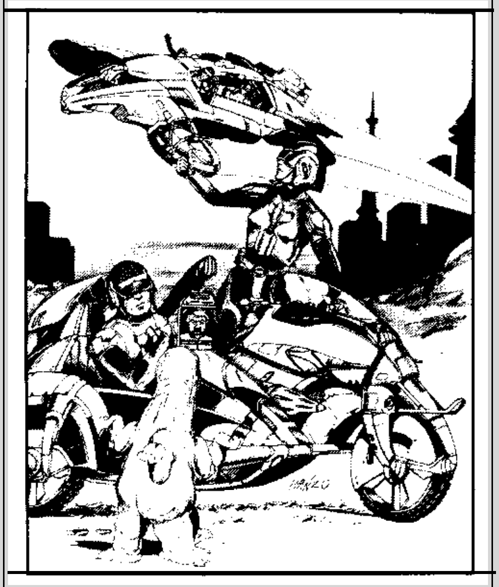
What do Isaac Asimov and TSR, Inc., have in common? Drop by your local bookstore and pick up a copy of the new AMAZING® Stories anthology that Dr. Asimov and Martin H. Greenberg have assembled, and find out. ***60 Years of the Best Science Fiction*** presents 19 of the finest tales to ever grace the pages of AMAZING Stories, with a full-color section of past magazine covers and a special tribute by Dr. Asimov. After all, his first story sale appeared in AMAZING Stories in 1939.

The all-heroes ARES" Section of #100 went over very well. Though we got a lot of positive mail on it, a few readers wanted to know if we'd forgotten about STAR FRONTIERS®, GAMMA WORLD®, and TRAVELLER® games. No; the mail for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES" game has been running very high lately, however, and we wanted to give the readers something special. Hard-core science-fiction gamers will still find lots to keep them occupied here, particularly in this issue.

Patrick Goodman (Webster, Texas) asked an interesting question. He wanted to know how other super-powered hero campaigns were developing, particularly for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game. Would any referees for heroic campaigns care to write in and tell how their campaigns are developing? Do your MARVEL SUPER HEROES games tend to follow the comics, or has your universe developed separately from the Marvel Universe™?

We'll consider publishing a summary of some of these responses in a future section if we get some good ones. Describe your campaign in a page or two, and send it to the ARES Section, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

Cheers! Roger E Moore



ON THE COVER
When powerful criminal forces threaten the security of the Frontier, Star Law brings in its best – the SilverTwin Project For details, see p. **82**. Art by Jim Holloway

ARES™ Section 102
THE SCIENCE-FICTION GAMING SECTION

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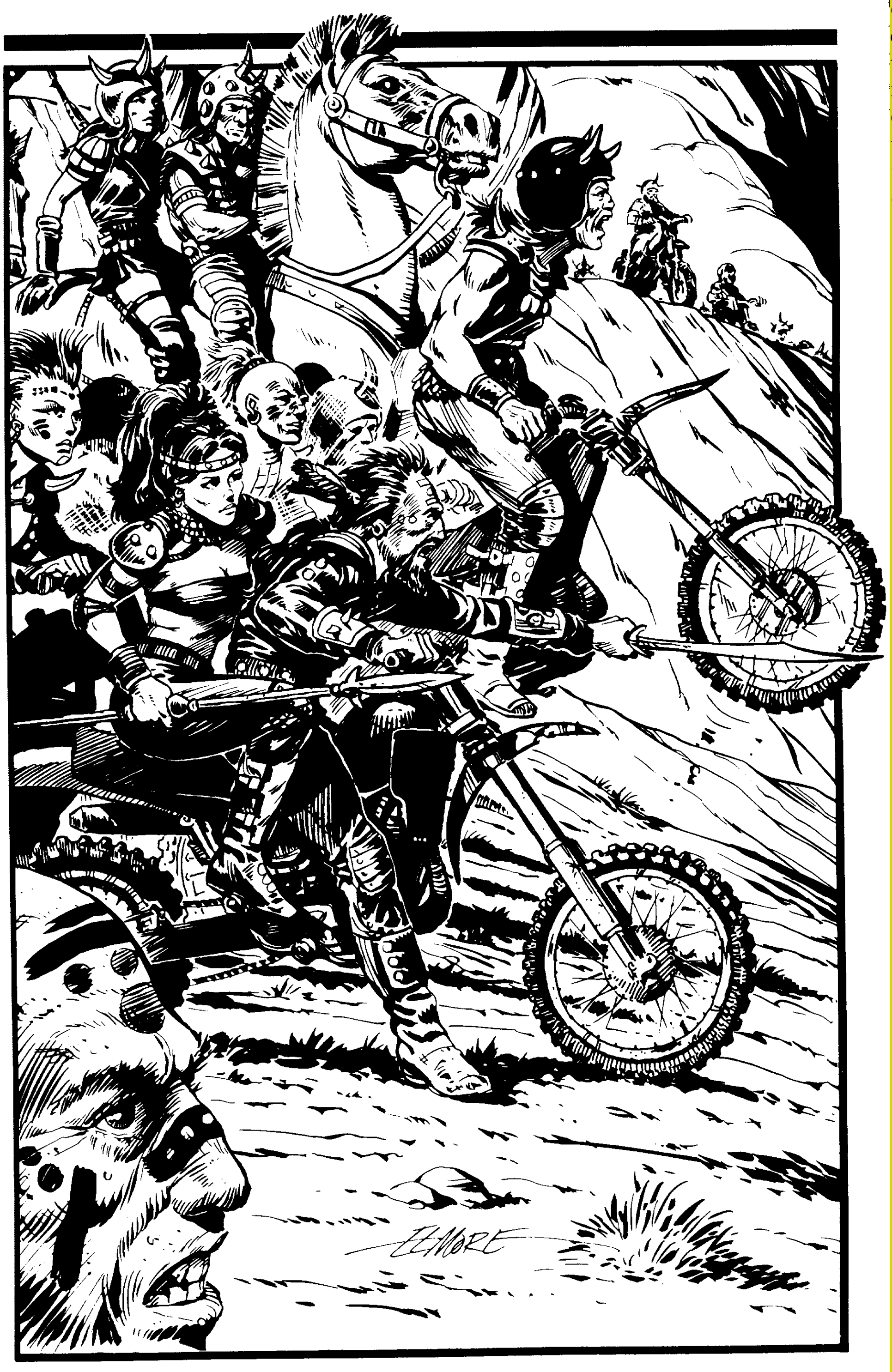
STICKS & STONES & DEATH MACHINES

Balancing the GAMMA WORLD® encounter tables



by John M. Maxstadt

Most fantasy role-playing games are structured around encounters with monsters. I use the term "monster" here as the AD&D® game does, referring to potentially dangerous persons or creatures that a player character party encounters more or less unexpectedly. The new GAMMA WORLD® game rules may call them non-player characters, but players usually insist upon calling them monsters, anyway.

There are two types of monster encounters: set and random. Set encounters are planned into the adventure; random encounters are generally rolled up from a table. Of the two, set encounters are by far the more important. Random encounters serve many useful purposes: keeping the player characters on their toes, livening up dull stretches of adventuring, providing a touch of realism, and motivating the party members to get on with whatever they are doing. Still, they are peripheral to the main action. When they hamper or detract from the set encounters to any serious extent, they spoil the adventure.

Dangerous random encounters are particularly prone to detract from the set encounters in any given adventure. In general, random encounters should be less challenging than set ones; the PCs will want to save their big guns for the set encounters, because they will have more of a chance to use strategy encounters, and because the hairiest encounters will naturally impress players as the most important. The goblin king's mansion pales into insignificance beside the fight with the wandering red dragon, however little the latter had to do with the main adventure. Certainly, it is not desirable for the PCs to be killed off by random encounters before they even get to the first set encounter.

For these reasons, it is particularly important that random encounter tables be balanced to the PC party's level in any role-playing game. Ideally, most random encounters should be dispatched with some effort by an intelligent party, with a minimum of casualties and expenditure of resources.

However, the GAMMA WORLD random encounter tables are divided only according to type of terrain, with no attention to game balance at all. The most dangerous and deadly creatures are jumbled together indiscriminately with the most harmless. If the Game Master uses the tables without making some game-balance adjustments, he can wreck a campaign with a single roll of the dice. If a brand-new party's first random encounter is with a kamodo, a few keeshins, or a patch of crep plants, the adventure will be over in a hurry.

Some may object that the AD&D® wilderness encounter tables are not balanced either, and that doesn't seem to hurt the game. This is true, but most AD&D adventures take place indoors or underground, where the carefully balanced dungeon-level tables apply. The "Gamma World" is mostly wilderness, and what few buildings exist (installations, automated factories, etc.) usually house the toughest encounters. A 1st-level AD&D character who wanders off into the wilderness is a suicidal fool; a comparable GAMMA WORLD character who does the same thing is simply getting on with the game.

It may also be objected that the balanced encounters are more necessary in the AD&D game because the characters begin weak and become powerful later, while GAMMA WORLD characters don't use levels and personally remain much the same. However, the accumulation of high-technology artifacts makes a dramatic difference in the combat effectiveness of a party, particularly in the case of Pure Strain Humans. A party equipped with lasers, black ray guns, and powered assault armor can cope with encounters that would decimate the same characters equipped with clubs, spears, and bearskins.

The third objection to imposing game balance on the encounter tables is that it isn't logical to have the local animal populations change and become nastier as the party becomes more powerful. The same sorts of creatures that were out there when the party first started should still be out there twenty adventures later, and vice versa. This is not entirely true, since animal populations do change, and parties may move into new ecosystems as they move from adventure to adventure. Also, game balance is far more important than logic in a role-playing game; the important thing is that the game be playable and enjoyable. The GAMMA WORLD game is not a perfectly logical ecological simulation. Few players will complain about the lack of logic in a system designed to keep their characters alive.

The main objections have been dealt with in brief. More could have been said, but I still believe that some system is needed to bring game balance to the GAMMA WORLD random encounter tables. I could record my own system in detail here; but, as each GM has his own tastes, playing style, and playing situation, my system would not suit everyone.

The considerations and options involved in balancing the tables are not too complex. There are two main steps: first, the GM must decide which monsters are weak enough for beginning encounters and which should be reserved for later adventures when the party is stronger; second, he must choose and implement a mechanism to separate these different "levels" of monster encounters.

The GM may want to rank all monsters on a continuum from the most innocuous to the nastiest, give each one a numerical "nastiness" rating, or divide them into groups as per the AD&D dungeon level encounter tables. Whatever the system, the distinctions should be made on the criteria of monster disposition, combat effectiveness, and armament.

The dispositions of GAMMA WORLD monsters vary. Some, like herkels, kep plants, parms, and squeekers, are fearless and near-mindless predators that will attack anything that moves. Greedy types, such as hoops, bloodbirds, carrins, and serfs, will attack PC parties in hope of finding valuables to steal. Some monsters will attack out of insane hatred or sheer evilness; these include badders, keeshins, "mad" robots, and certain Cryptic Alliances such as the Purists, the Mutationists, and the Red Death. These monsters will nearly always attack a PC party, so they should be rated solely on how dangerous they are when they do attack.

However, some monsters will not attack a PC party unless the party does something stupid or vicious first. Berleps, erts, ert teldens, perths, and rakoxen, for example, attack only if provoked or disturbed, and are harmless if left alone. Other creatures, including brutorz, menarls, sleeths, and yexils, are friendly toward character races and will generally try to help, trade with, or join PC parties. Certain other intelligent (and generally humanlike) creatures have their own plans which may or may not involve PC parties. Androids, fens, grens, and lils might be appropriate for beginning encounters even if armed to the teeth, if the GM assumes that they have other fish to fry and are unwilling to risk their necks or waste their time and ammunition on a PC party which is just passing through.

If these three types are to be assumed harmless, the GM is responsible for seeing that they really are harmless, at least in low-level encounters. If a yexil will attack on a reaction roll of 1-3 ("Extremely Hostile: Immediately Attacks") no matter what the party does, or if a passing troop of androids may turn out to be the hit squad for the local branch of The Created, then these creatures are not necessarily harmless, and the party cannot be expected to do anything but shoot first and ask questions later. On the other hand, if the GM always allows the party to avoid fights with these three types by "speaking them fair," pulling a bluff, or simply making a wide circle around them (surprise notwithstanding), then they can be considered non-dangerous encounters, no matter how powerful the monsters actually are.

If a monster will usually attack a PC party, then its combat effectiveness becomes an important consideration. Many statistics have a bearing on combat effectiveness, but the first to consider is potential attack damage. Total potential damage for all attacks that a monster can make in a round should be added together, including physical (tooth-and-claw) attacks, weapon attacks, and mental attacks. Two 5d6 attacks do the same damage as one 10d6 attack in an average round. Some attacks do not necessarily involve damage dice, but may kill or incapacitate one or more characters instantly. These include high-intensity poison and radiation, *stunning force, the gamma eye, molecular disruption, mental paralysis, mental control, symbiotic attachment, telekinesis,* and the ultimate party-killing combination of *death field generation* and *life leech* (which both serfs and crep plants have).

A variety of potent attacks, even if they cannot all be used in a single round, increases a monster's effectiveness against a party that has a variety of defenses. Of course, attacks used only once per day are less dangerous than those which can be used at will.

The likelihood of an attack hitting its target is also an important factor. Weapon attacks are more or less likely to hit depending on weapon type; physical attacks depend on hit dice, and mental attacks depend on mental strength, so these three statistics are pertinent to combat effectiveness. In general, attacks with Tech Level 1 weapons (swords, bows and arrows, etc.) are the least likely to hit. Some attacks, such as *sonic blast, radiation eyes, hands of power, gas generation, light generation, pyro-cryokinesis,* and the herp's acid jet, always hit anything within range. Most of these (the exception being *pyro-cryokinesis)* have the added advantage of damaging several opponents at once.

A monster's defenses are also important. Low armor class and a generous supply of hit points will allow a monster to live longer in combat, effectively giving it more attacks. Special defenses, such as the hawkoid's *repulsion field* and the blight's invisibility and special immunities, are also significant.

A few examples may serve to demonstrate how combat effectiveness can be added up. Arns have one attack per round for 2d6, a very poor armor class (9), and no special attacks, making them very weak and definitely appropriate for beginning encounters. Cal thens do terrific damage per attack (10d6), but they have only one attack per round, and, at 6 hit dice, are not much likelier to hit than a sword or club. Their high armor class (9) and low hit-point average assure that they will not live long in combat; so, while they are more dangerous than arns, they might be appropriate to beginning encounters if they were surprised or greatly outnumbered. A sep does slightly less damage per attack than a cal then (9d6), but, at 17 hit dice, is far more likely to hit. Seps have armor class 5, an average of 60 hit points, and generally attack by surprise, so they are much more dangerous than cal thens and definitely not appropriate for beginning encounters.

Once a monster's combat effectiveness has been determined, the question of armament remains. Many monsters have both the intelligence and manipulative members necessary to use high-technology weaponry, and its presence or absence makes a big difference. An encounter with hissers armed with pipe wrenches and an encounter with hissers armed with blasters are two entirely different things. As a wise man once said, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but a laser beam is something else altogether."

Monsters that habitually use Tech Level 3 weapons should be reserved for high-level encounters. There may be some disagreement about which monsters are involved here. The monster descriptions clarify this matter in some cases, but some GMs may have their own ideas, and, at any rate, several cases are left entirely up to the GM's discretion. In my campaign, hoops nearly always have Tech Level 3 equipment, but badders mostly use axes, morning stars, and crossbows, perhaps with a grenade or slug pistol for the leader. Consequently, hoops are a much higher-level encounter than badders in this campaign. If a monster's weaponry may vary widely, the GM may want to place that monster on more than one level, giving different ratings to "androids, poorly armed," "androids, moderately well armed," and "androids, heavily armed."

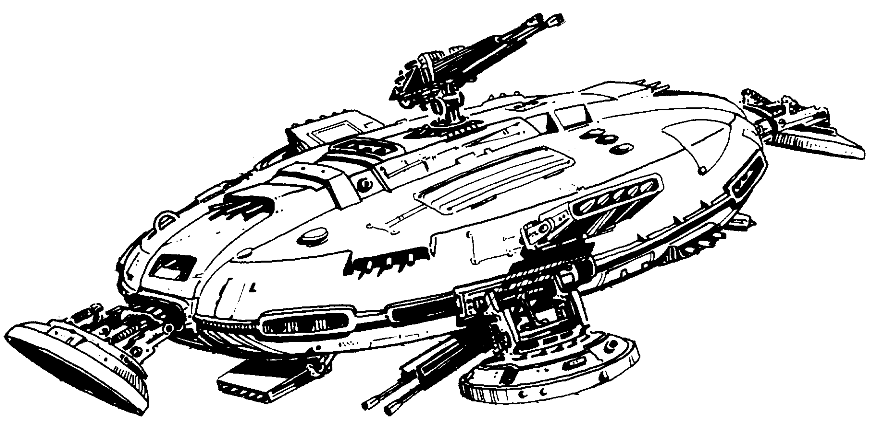
When the GM has considered disposition, combat effectiveness, and probable armament, and decided which monsters are more and less dangerous, he should remember that these decisions are not carved in stone. Experience may reveal that an apparently weak monster is tougher than it seems, or that experienced parties always manage to kill a supposedly dangerous monster before it can get off an attack. A highly experienced GM may want to base the distinctions entirely on his past observations, but the trial-and-error method is not recommended for beginning GMs, as they will kill a lot of parties before they get the tables adjusted properly.

Once the distinctions between higher- and lower-level random encounters are made, the GM should work up a system for seeing that beginning PC parties have only lower-level random encounters and that powerful parties generally tend to have higher-level ones. One way is to draw up homemade encounter tables and ignore the ones in the book. If this way is tried, the GM will want to have a good variety of monsters available on each table for each terrain, and at the same time have enough tables to make the increase in encounter level reasonably gradual. Some monsters might be put in several different types of terrain, and some borderline cases might even be put in more than one level, with some adjustment in the number encountered or their weaponry. The GM might also make only two or three tables and gradually increase the average difficulty of encounters by rolling a second die to see which table an encounter is to be rolled on, allowing a greater chance of the higher-level tables being rolled as the party becomes stronger. The homemade-table system-also allows the GM to include his own monsters and ones that appear in modules or in DRAGON® Magazine.

If this seems like too much work, the GM can simply use the tables as they are and fudge the die rolls. When the encounter die indicates a high-level encounter for a low-level party, the GM can keep rolling until something comes up that the party can handle. The trouble with this system is that it greatly narrows the variety of random encounters. As the tables now read, there are only one or two low-level monsters possible in some types of terrain.

A third option is to use the tables as they are and take the die rolls as they fall, but to arrange high-level encounters so that low-level parties don't get killed. A herp encounter, for example, could be a glimpse of a herp's back from several hundred yards away. An obb encounter might just be the passing shadow of an obb that is flying high overhead, completely oblivious to the party. A kamodo that the party encounters might already be dead or completely disabled. The band of serfs they encounter might simply demand a nominal fee for safe passage. At best, such nonviolent encounters add a touch of realism and are a refreshing break from hack-and-slash gaming. At worst, they make the GM's hand too apparent in the adventure and make the players feel manipulated. In any case, this system makes heavy demands on the GM's extemporaneous creativity.

Creative GMs will, no doubt, see ways of combining, varying, or expanding any or all of these systems. Some will probably think of even better systems that have not occurred to me. The important thing is that the random encounter tables in GAMMA WORLD gaming be balanced in a dependable, workable, and reasonably consistent system.



A Thousand in One

Tips for expanding your interstellar campaign

1985 by Mark Graham Jones

Every role-playing game campaign, regardless of genre, requires a variety of exotic physical and cultural environments for the player characters to explore and operate within. When the referee finds his imagination flagging, or when the players begin to show signs of boredom with the campaign's present locale, these new environments can provide just the right new- challenges to revitalize everyone's enthusiasm. Science-fiction campaigns are particularly well-suited to fulfilling this requirement. With an entire universe to draw from and a virtually infinite variety of environments available to him, the referee can create as large and varied a campaign area as he wishes.

Unfortunately, too many referees fall into the one-world, one-environment trap. Laboring under the belief that advanced cultures will inevitably develop into unified world cultures, or that societies living in and adapted to harsh or dangerous physical environments must be placed in total isolation on a separate world, referees create campaigns in which every world hosts a single, uniform, physical and cultural environment. Monolithic world-states dominate the campaign.

These planetary cultures, easily identified by the presence of a single governmental entity, a common set of values and beliefs, and common styles of speech, dress, art and architecture, typically coexist in some larger, galactic civilization. They are almost invariably the basic social and political unit of organization in a campaign. Economic or political activity on anything less than a planetary scale is ignored, and multi-government or *balkanized* worlds (as the TRAVELLER® game calls them) are seldom given serious attention.

This state of affairs is the result of a deliberate effort on the part of the game designers. From the earliest serials and pulp adventures, science fiction has featured star-spanning civilizations and planet-hopping adventurers. When role-playing games expanded into the genre, the designers naturally wanted to recreate those elements. A look at the world generation tables from the TRAVELLER, SPACE OPERA™, and other science-fiction role-playing games will show that those systems are designed to foster the creation of monolithic world-states.

In each case, monolithic world-states are the given norm, along with some larger galactic civilization in the background (the TRAVELLER Imperium, the SPACE OPERA Terran United Federation of Planets, and so forth). Balkanized worlds are always mentioned, but only as a single possibility among a dozen or more variations on the basic theme of the world-state. Thus, the games encourage the player characters to rapidly planet-hop from world to world in search of adventure, wealth, safety, or escape from their enemies. Interstellar travel is relatively inexpensive, fast, and simple — and every world possesses a single, easily assimilated culture for the player characters to discover, explore, and exploit before moving on to the next.

This concentration on recreating the trappings of sci-fi serials and epics is understandable, but it ignores the gaming potential of balkanized worlds. These worlds have a great deal to add to any campaign. They permit the referee to more efficiently utilize his time and effort, and provide an opportunity to exploit a higher density of cultures than he could ever hope to achieve among societies separated by interstellar distances.

Efficiency

Anyone contemplating the creation of a campaign world should keep two facts firmly in mind: the size of a planet, and the variety of environments which it can support.

A planet is a very large object, with a surface area of millions of square miles. Very few cultures in a campaign are likely to require so much territory. A world could therefore host a large number of cultures without crowding.

By concentrating on a relative handful of worlds, the referee can avoid having to generate large numbers of merely statistical planets. He can instead begin the more difficult, more exacting — and more interesting — process of creating exciting physical and cultural environments for the characters. He can exercise his imagination, not just his writing and die-rolling arm.

Next to size, a planet's most obvious feature is the variety of environments to be found there. Each planet's age (and that of its primary), its orbital period, distance and eccentricity, its rotational period, axial tilt, atmospheric and hydrospheric composition, internal heat and vulcanism, and other factors will combine to create a unique set of basic conditions. Within the limits established by these conditions, however, the world will exhibit a wide variety of terrain types, climatic conditions, and forms of plant and animal life.

Our Earth itself displays an enormous range of surface conditions and forms of life, which should need no description here. (There are libraries full of information on the subject for those who really want it.) Presumably, worlds sufficiently Earthlike to be habitable by humanity will be equally diverse. These worlds may be warmer, cooler, wetter, or otherwise different from Earth, but this simply means that the range of conditions to be found there is shifted farther to one extreme or another than those of our Earth.

Thus, a referee who wishes to tailor certain cultures to particular environments need not feel pressured to place them on individual worlds. If one wishes to create a desert-dwelling nomadic culture, a tropical tribal society, and a culture adapted to arctic conditions, all three can be placed upon a single world. Vast stretches of rolling dunes, lush tropical continents, and barren glacial tundras can all coexist on other worlds just as they do here on Earth.

None of these environments dominates the Earth, yet, to a party of adventurers lost or stranded within any of them, they might just as well. Only intelligent and timely action will see the characters through the crisis safely. And, if the characters survive their trials, don't they deserve to find something more awaiting them than a tiny starport town in the midst of nothing more than endless ice, sand, or jungle?

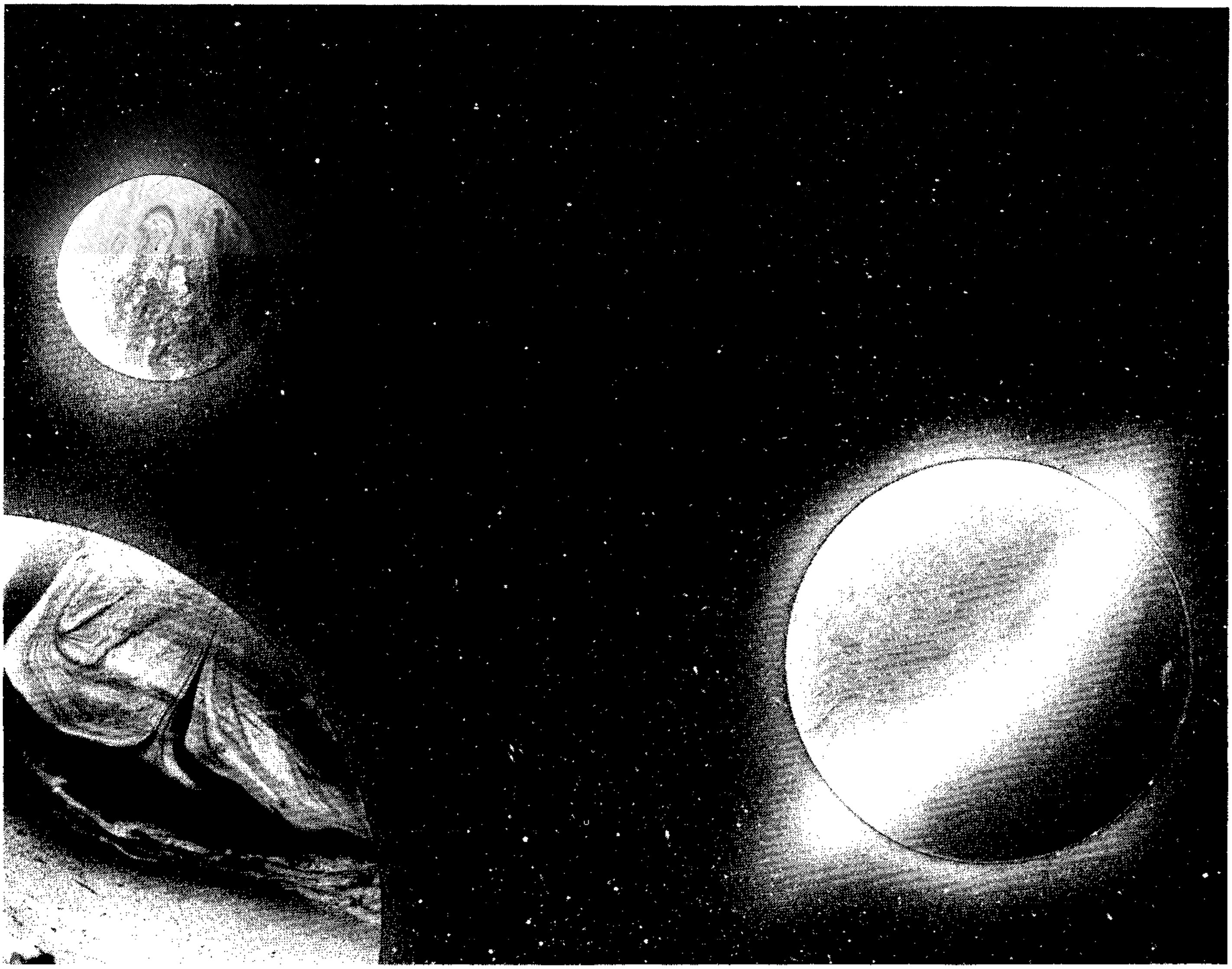
But, suppose the referee wants to create a culture specifically adapted to some harsh or unusual environment. Why would such a culture evolve or remain in such an environment if some more pleasant or temperate environment were available? Wouldn't the natives choose instead to migrate to a more hospitable area of the world? And wouldn't this ruin the referee's plans to introduce such a culture into his campaign?

Certainly, the natives would move, and indeed this would ruin the referee's plans — *if* the natives had such a hospitable environment available to them, and *if* they knew of its existence, and *if* it were sufficiently attractive to them, and *if* they could get there. But what if the natives do not consider their environment particularly harsh or unusual? Indeed, they might consider it rather pleasant, or even normal.

The referee must remember that most cultures, and particularly primitive ones, will not have the same high standards of comfort and convenience which we take for granted. Daily, repetitive, exhausting labor is required for survival in a primitive society. The amount of work necessary to carve out a niche in the environment might not seem that much worse than would be necessary in a less hostile environment elsewhere.

Even if the natives find their lot in life lacking in appeal, this is no guarantee that they will consider some other environment sufficiently attractive to be worth the effort of moving into the area After all, a great deal of extra work and extra risk would be required to transplant one's people into a new habitat. The natives might well find some distant land a pleasant enough place to dream about, but too difficult and risky to reach to make the effort worthwhile. Individual explorers, adventurers, or family/clan groups might make the effort, but the majority of the tribe will remain at home.

Furthermore, the simple fact that a more hospitable environment exists doesn't mean that it is available to the natives. Access to this new environment might be limited or blocked by any number of obstacles. Mountain ranges, rivers, seas and oceans, desert wastes, or trackless jungle all could prove nearly impossible to overcome. Make these obstacles just a little tougher to conquer, and the natives might easily remain ignorant of the very existence of other environments — or even the existence of any other world at all (leading to the



possibility of "lost world" adventures).

The final and most important obstacle to such large scale migrations, though, has been and will always be other men. Natural obstacles are passive in nature. They exist, and their existence makes the discovery and exploitation of new environments difficult or impossible, but they do not actively seek to oppose the colonization of new lands by our natives. Other men might.

In fact, it is quite possible that our hypothetical natives settled in their uninviting territory after being driven there by population pressures or conflicts with other peoples. In either case, the natives of the more pleasant regions will have every reason to keep the area for themselves and none whatsoever for sharing or surrendering it. Under these circumstances, the referee can easily justify the existence of a culture which is adapted to a harsh environment, or one which has evolved in relative or total isolation, even when surrounded by other environments and peoples.

Density of cultures

A second major advantage of using balkanized worlds in a science-fiction campaign is the far greater density of cultures which they make possible. Interplanetary and interstellar travel, no matter how inexpensive, rapid, and reliable, can never match the volume of trade and travel and the level of contact possible where two or more cultures are physically present on a single world. This proximity makes it possible for individuals from the various cultures to visit others with a far smaller investment of time, money, and energy than would be possible among the same cultures when separated by interstellar distances. The level of contact — and the possibility of conflict — between cultures is greatly increased.

With so many cultures present on a single world, there is also the potential for a major exchange of goods, services, and ideas. Styles of dress, speech (including slang and idioms), art and architecture, fads, and new ideas concerning ethics, philosophy, religion, economics, politics, science, and technology can pass rapidly from one culture to others. These innovations may be embraced enthusiastically, given a lukewarm reception, ignored, or received with suspicion or hostility. If there happens to be a major rift between the people and their government, or between segments of the population, a culture may exhibit a variety of reactions to new ideas. There is the possibility of confusion, debate, and even violence on the part of one or more factions within the culture.

The referee may also determine that certain cultures have external conflicts as well. Diplomatic relations between states may be non-existent, strained, or recently broken off. Embassies, as well as private property (including the persons of the staff, or citizens of the "offending" state), might become the targets or the instigators of negotiation, propaganda, demonstrations, espionage, terrorism, or police actions. Player characters could be introduced into the situation as diplomats or couriers, security personnel, private, corporate or governmental detectives, spies, saboteurs, terrorists, assassins, or soldiers.

If the hostilities become still more intense, they may spill over into other areas of intercultural exchange. Trade, travel, and communication between hostile states could be threatened or interrupted. Trade embargoes could be instituted, with the player characters stopping smugglers or engaging in black market activity, depending upon their loyalties and daring. There are fortunes to be made in acquiring, transporting, and disposing of goods or services desperately needed in one state, but unavailable for domestic or foreign reasons — and there is danger as well.

Should problems within or between cultures become still more serious, armed conflict may occur. Within a culture, revolutions (and perhaps counter- and counter-counter-revolutions as well) are possible. Between cultures, raids, border skirmishes, invasions, occupations, and wars of annihilation may take place. Mercenaries and amateurs with a taste for almost any brand of combat or espionage work can find it somewhere, yet, with the exception of holocaust scenarios, these military actions can occur almost continuously in various parts of the world without necessarily affecting the characters, unless they or the referee so desire it.

In addition to cultural or military conflicts, balkanized worlds are perfectly suited to any of the more general sorts of adventure. Hunting, exploratory, survival, detective, mystery, romance, suspense, or horror plots are all quite possible within any of the several balkanized states. Entire campaigns can be run on a balkanized world without ever rising above the atmosphere.

For proof of this, just look at any modern or fantasy role-playing game on the shelves of your local hobby shop. These games and all of the supplements for them are designed to take place within the confines of a single world, yet the variety of scenarios and adventures available is quite extensive. In addition, most of the adventures and scenarios published for use in science-fiction campaigns based upon monolithic world-states and galactic civilizations can be easily modified by substituting various balkan states for the planetary governments suggested.

Balkanizing your campaign

If you're too fond of your present campaign worlds to simply abandon them, try condensing your campaign territory. Place several existing world cultures on each planet, carefully selecting them as necessary to create interesting combinations. You may find that many of your world-states are essentially alike; combine them into a single culture and work it out in detail. By eliminating redundancies and concentrating on the cultures which are most unique and exciting, you can make the remaining worlds far more vivid and enjoyable.

This was done in a campaign that I play in. Over a hundred worlds were reduced to less than two dozen, with dramatic and lasting success. The result was easier access to previously isolated cultures, though travel into and within such cultures was still difficult, slow, and often dangerous. By concentrating previously widespread cultures into far smaller territories, the referee was able to give each culture far more attention — including detailed maps of the terrain and population centers, encounter tables, and notes on all of the most important or interesting features.

The players in the campaign now have a number of well-defined cultures to choose from when creating player characters. They can play out their roles better, and can get more involved in the political and cultural conflicts since they have a real grasp of the issues and events in question.

Just because a science-fiction game permits space travel doesn't mean it must dominate the game. Experiment a little. Create some balkanized worlds, and detail the environments and cultures to be found there. Then, rough out a few potential adventures from the conflicts you've established. It isn't difficult, and the results should be well worth the effort.

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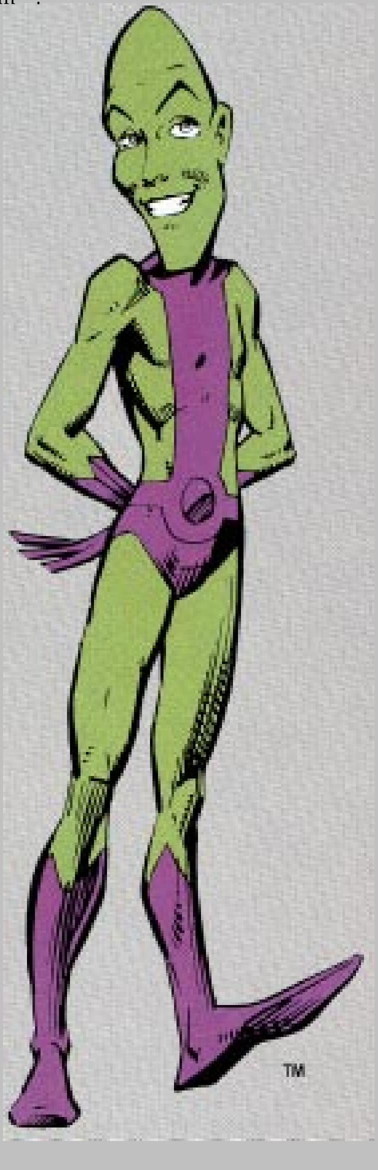
The MARVEL®-Phile

Marvelous Impossibilities

by Jeff Grubb

It's convention time as I write this entry of the Marvel®-Phile, which means I'm even more pressed for time than usual, what with the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ tournament and other duties. Since I'm faced with an impossible task and an impossible schedule, I thought I'd make things easy and do the Impossible Man™.



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IMPOSSIBLE MAN™

Name? Poppupians need no names. They know who they are.
Native of Poppup

Fighting: GOOD (10)
Agility: REMARKABLE (30)
Strength: GOOD (10)
Endurance: UNEARTHLY (100)
Reason: TYPICAL (6)
Intuition: TYPICAL (6)
Psyche: REMARKABLE (30)

Health: 150
Karma: 42
Resources: Not applicable
Popularity: 3

Known powers:

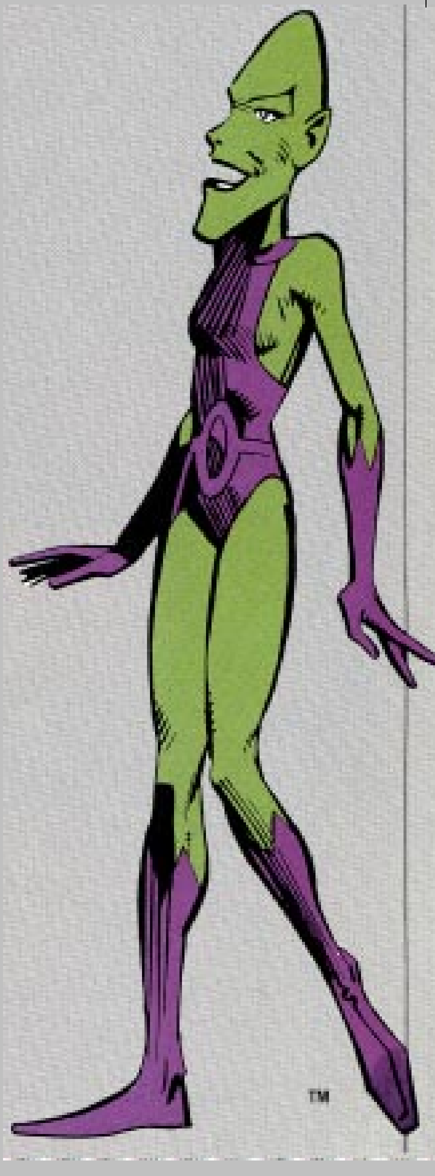
SHAPECHANGE: The Impossible Man can shapechange with Unearthly ability, shifting from one form to another with an audible "pop." He can turn himself into a working model of any object, duplicating all of its abilities up to the Amazing rank. His only limits seem to be his imagination the once turned himself into a clone of Galactus™), and the fact that whatever he becomes will be green and purple (so it was a green-and-purple Galactus). He may duplicate living and non-living objects equally well; his Health does not change in either case.

BODY ARMOR: Due to Impossible Man's plastic physical nature, the small alien has Unearthly Body Armor. He is still subject to all Slam results (with spectacular effects, caroming off two or three walls before coming to rest), but he cannot be Stunned.

ALIEN MIND: The Impossible Man was and is a member of a group consciousness of his race, giving him an Unearthly Psyche against mind control, thought reading, and other mind-affecting powers. Those attempting to mentally contact the Poppupian must make a Red Psyche FEAT or be knocked unconscious for 1-10 rounds. (Those that make the FEAT will recognize that it is very, very *weird* inside Impy's mind).

Impossible Man's story: The Impossible Man (also known as "Impy") was a native of the planet Poppup, and a member of a race with totally malleable bodies and a group consciousness. Granted free will and independent decision-making through a minor genetic defect, the Impossible Man left his planet in boredom and explored outer space.

The Poppupian's travels eventually led to Earth, a planet that amazed him with



its entertainment value. He was dubbed the Impossible Man and quickly became a major nuisance with his continual interference in day-to-day life. The Fantastic Four™ got the alien to leave by having everyone ignore the little pest. The Impossible Man became bored again and left Earth.

The Impossible Man returned months later to lead the world-eater Galactus to his own planet of Poppup. Impy's people had become so bored that they chose oblivion over continued existence, and they hoped to do some good in their passing by feeding the ravenous Galactus, thus sparing another planet. The result was a case of cosmic indigestion, and the Impossible Man became the soul survivor of his race.

Having nowhere else to go, Impy settled down on Earth, absorbing the bulk of the high-art forms of this planet (meaning TV and movies — BAD TV and movies) and bothering his good friend, the Thing™. Eventually, he realized he was lonely and needed others of his race. The Impossible Man managed to divide his cells and create an Impossible Woman as his mate, and a bunch of Impossible Kids. As clones of the original Impossible Man, his wife and kids have identical statistics and abilities.

The collected Impossibles set out from Earth to settle their own planet. When a question of leadership arose, the Impossible Man staged a scavenger hunt that resulted in the theft of the mansion of the X-Men™ and all of Janet (Wasp™) Van Dyne's costumes, and a close brush with an interstellar war. Despite this, Impy lost the contest and is now in self-imposed exile. He was last seen imitating Magnum P.I., to get ice cream from little girls.

Running the Impossible Man: Imagine a happy, well-adjusted five-year-old with the above powers. Impy hasn't yet worked out the nature of cause and effect — e.g., that stealing a spaceship may anger someone very powerful. He is good natured, likes adventure, and can easily become a pain-in-the-neck to anyone around him. The important thing in running Impy is to have fun; the Impossible Man is rarely serious. If someone yells at him, he will mope and get all dewy-eyed until the yelling party apologizes. Heroes lose 10 Karma points for yelling at the Impossible Man.

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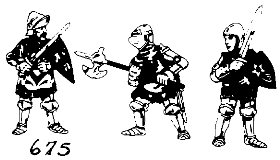

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ACTIVE DUTY

Continuing careers in TRAVELLER® gaming

1985 by Jefferson P. Swycaffer

When the TRAVELLER® game was first published, virtually the only career options a character had were military ones. With Supplement 4, *Citizens of the Imperium*, non-military occupations became widely available. Some of the military occupations were expanded in great detail in later books and supplements such as Book 5, *Mercenary.* Yet each of the occupations available to a TRAVELLER character requires the character to retire or muster out of the occupation before adventuring begins. Nearly every published TRAVELLER adventure lists a suggested group of such retired characters, such as "Ex-Navy Captain," "Ex-Merchant First Officer," or "Ex-Marine Force Commander."

Why retire? Why shouldn't adventures be undertaken by characters still in their military or non-military occupations? Very little recent science fiction deals with characters who have retired from active duty. The tension of working within orders from above while adapting to the situation below can be the stuff of some wildly successful adventures.

Producing an active-duty character is simple. A failed reenlistment roll is translated to mean that the character must start play at this point in his or her career. Pregenerated characters devised by the referee or taken from the many supplements and adventures for the game may also be declared on active duty and used in a campaign.

Given the interstellar nature of most adventures and the sheer size of the TRAVELLER Imperium, the orders that a character's superiors give him must be loose enough to allow for considerable independent action. In addition, the option should be present on field assignments to disobey the orders altogether and get away with it, given the success of the character's initiative. The Imperium is pragmatic enough to reward original thought and quick action. Should the character fail a mission while disobeying orders — well, courts martial are dreary, and getting shot isn't exactly the road to fame and glory that the character had in mind when he acted on his own.

What play modifications need to be considered in order to run adventures for characters currently in the military? The most important consideration is freedom of action. Retired characters can go where they want and do what they want; military characters cannot. However, this objection is often of little importance when the characters are running through a "normal" adventure moderated by a referee. The usual methods of trapping the characters in an adventure are many and well-understood. A referee can use the "pull," amounting to the promise of rewards for undertaking the risk of the adventure, or the "push," which is the threat of punishment if the adventure is ignored. These carrot-and-stick methods are often interspersed with traps — i.e., the characters' spaceship is disabled by an earthquake or solar flare, or the characters awake in captivity, having partaken of drugged food.

Military characters present the referee with considerable freedom to plan adventures by simply having the characters assigned to a mission by a superior officer or their headquarters. For example, in *Horde* (part of *Double Adventure* 5), the characters' ship is surrounded by planetary militia troops to prevent its escape, so that the characters' help will be assured in fighting the horrid alien threat. After the threat is dealt with, rewards are distributed. How much more simple and direct to send the characters in as trained officers of an Imperial military branch, to deal with the alien threat from a position of authority!

Since the player characters must make the decisions in this adventure (as in any others), trapping them into facing the threat makes the adventure almost unavoidable — *almost*, because many players have the knack of getting their characters out of such traps, and referee deviousness cannot always compensate for it. If I tried to trap my regular players into an adventure, I could be sure they would spend most of their imagination and energy in trying to bypass the trap from the start.

Freedom of action is also limited for military characters in terms of how they may deal with threats, but this can prove to be a beneficial change. Too many TRAVELLER players use a shoot-first-and-ask-questions-later philosophy; military officers, as part of a structured hierarchy, are bound by a more ethical code. When a hasty shot might trigger an interstellar war, no officer is anxious to be the one who fires first. Thoughtful solutions to problems tend to outweigh firepower solutions, even in cases where greater firepower is available to the characters.

Leadership levels and chain-of-command are a problem if characters are in the military. It sometimes makes sense to grant the highest rank to the character belonging to the player who is the best leader, selection being by consensus of the other players. Character ranks should be clustered together, more than would occur naturally in the TRAVELLER character-generation sequences. If five of the six characters are captains or rear admirals and the sixth is a chief petty officer, then the balance of player-power is skewed, and only certain contrived scenarios will accomodate it. All six characters could be stranded on a desert world, for example, and only the CPO has a survival skill, but that's an idea for a single adventure, not for a viable campaign. A group of captains and admirals would make for a good decision-making nucleus in a *High Guard* battle campaign, whereas a group of lieutenants and lieutenant commanders would make an ideal investigating team looking into corruption at a starport. For ground combat, a colonel and his subordinates can handily divide up a regiment to face an enemy. The level of coordination will depend on player skill more than character skill.

Rebellious or mutinous behavior is one of the true joys of role-playing, but it is one of the greatest taboos of the military. To reconcile this dilemma, I recommend a bit of lenience in interpreting the military codes. Just as Captain Kirk was willing to overlook times when his subordinates questioned his orders, so too can the leader of the group of characters allow more latitude in the behavior of his own subordinates. *Star Trek* worked to dramatic necessity, not to military necessity, and role-playing games must do the same. If, on the other hand, a court-martial becomes necessary, the resulting courtroom drama, with skulking about for evidence, devious legal maneuvers, and perhaps a desperate break for freedom, would make the trial an intriguing adventure.

Then, too, military officers have access to the vast resources of their branch in case of emergencies. Calling in the Marines is an available option, but is one that must be justified. When characters are isolated and acting only on their own resources, they must learn to think and plan ahead. In such circumstances, they also have the advantage of being out of contact with their superiors, so that their decisions will be their own. Either way, the chances for a successful adventure are increased.

Of course, non-military career options can lead to adventures of their own. A diplomat could be sent in to normalize relations with a newly discovered alien species, accompanied by an entire cadre of advisors. What hidden motivations might the aliens (or humans) harbor — xenophobia? Isolationism? A bureaucrat would be dispatched to investigate discrepancies in a payroll account, thereby discovering corruption at a high level. (And with no more back-up than a team of accountants, how can he deal with what he finds?) Even a barbarian can enter the action, when members of some long-lost, human-settled world find themselves dragged into the fifty-seventh century.

So, why retire? Stay active!

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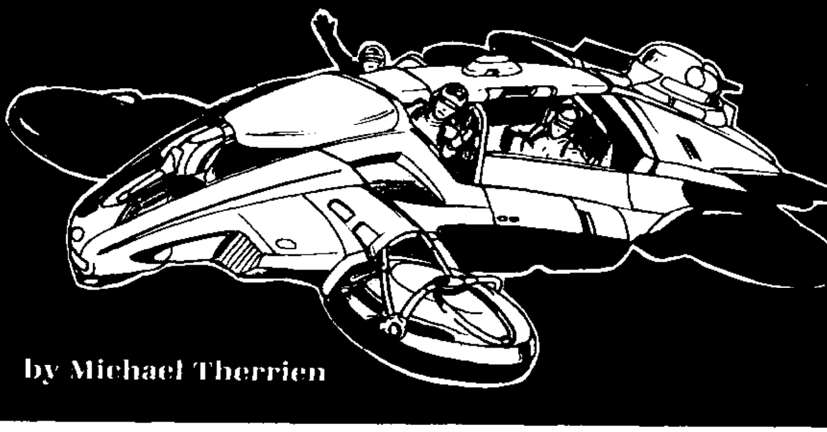
SilverTwin!

High-tech crimefighters of the Frontier



by Michael Therrien

TO: *All concerned planetary officials*
FROM: *Security Council*
Star Law Laboratories
Port Loren, Morgaine's World
Prenglar

Honored sirs:

It has come to the Council's attention that the phenomenal success of the SilverTwin project (entire background included) has led to a flood of requests for such services. It must be understood by all that such projects are extremely expensive. Most local police agencies hardly have the funds to keep themselves in uniform, let alone to pay out 2,000,000 Cr for a pair of vehicles and six more personnel, regardless of how well skilled they are!

Captain-General Dwarg Uol has asked all planetary heads to reconsider their many requests. . . .

History

After the Second Sathar War, white-collar criminals from several outlaw organizations began to stir things up in the Frontier, using gangs of moderately armed thugs. Hundreds of serious crimes were committed by these gangs each week. The crime lords behind these groups of thugs hoped to occupy Star Law's forces on an increasingly planetary level, thus reducing the organization's strength in open space and permitting the growth of piracy. Their ploy failed miserably, for their actions led to the development of the SilverTwin project.

Star Law Laboratory (Morgaine's World) reacted to the demand by officers throughout the Frontier for heavily armed combat vehicles. The SilverTwin project was revealed nearly a year ago; since then, it has been installed and activated in three Star Law planetary branches. With the widespread fame of this highly effective arm of law, the requests for many more SilverTwin units have reached the attention of the Security Council. The cities that so far have had a SilverTwin module included in their arsenal are Port Loren (Morgaine's World, Prenglar), Jancaith (Triad, Cassidine) and Tarnath's Realm (Truane's Star).

SilverTwin is the code name for a pair of all-terrain vehicles, both well armed and screened, which have been created for special missions of law enforcement. They are experimental in design and would only be used in conjunction with the law agencies of major cities, acting on orders from a Star Law Planetary Council, Planetary Officer, or higher authority.

A SilverTwin unit itself is composed of two vehicles: one car and one cycle. Both have the capability of being able to change from hover movement to ground movement. The speed limitations (see p. 30, Expanded Rules) are better than most racing vehicles. A look at the basic statistics below will reveal a greater turning speed, better acceleration, and a faster deceleration. Also noted under each vehicle description is a Vehicle Damage Modifier (VDM). When a SilverTwin vehicle has been fired upon, subtract the VDM from the dice roll before consulting the vehicle damage table on p. 32, Expanded Rules. This represents the armor quality and high-stress engineering which were incorporated into the SilverTwin project.

Talon (ground/hover car)

Speed:
Accel.: 90 m/turn Decel.: 45 m/turn
Top: 260 m/turn Turn: 85 m/turn

Cargo: 100 kg, 1 cubic meter
VDM: -5

Onboard systems:

* Two turreted laser-rifle cannons: setting of 1-20 SEU/shot, 1d10 damage per SEU, range of a laser rifle
* Grenade launch tube: 6-grenade magazine (usually 3 doze and 3 smoke), ranges of 0/30/55/120/235
* Standard radiophone: compatible with Gemini helmet chronocom and most local radio channels
* Albedo defensive screen: 3 SEU/minute, plus normal drain on hits
* Inertia defensive screen: 3 SEU/hit, half damage done to Talon
* Holo camouflage screen with feedback loop: 2 SEU/minute, normal (20% chance) of detection
* Hostile environment seals: protective against water (no depth over 2 meters), poison gas, and all grenade smokes. It will also function as an oxygen tent, sustaining four persons for ten hours.
* RENDER: computer system access and analysis panel
* Public address system

Details:

A Talon, as mentioned above, can use either hover or ground movement, depending on the situation. The change from one mode to another takes two turns (twelve seconds) of complete motionlessness.

Four crewmen ride inside a Talon under normal circumstances: a pilot (driver), copilot (weapons operator), coordinator (uses radiophone to coordinate actions between SilverTwin and other agencies or allies), and defender (uses RENDER to operate screens, monitor levels of ammunition, and perform damage control). The positions are listed according to where each person sits in the vehicle, moving clockwise from a left-handed driving seat. A Talon can carry two extra passengers (none of them Vrusks), though only with cramming.

The cargo storage space has a false bottom, beneath which is a hidden weapons cache containing 10 power beltpacks, 3 laser pistols, 2 spare grenade magazines, a disguise kit (for four people, two different identities each), survival rations for 6 (lasting one week), 10 sticks of tornadium D-19 with variable timers, a freeze field, and a waterpack. This is the normal equipment carried on a Talon, though additions or changes may be made in special circumstances.

Talon will, while on a stakeout or similar operation, usually have the holo screen either offer camouflage or the image of a normal car, depending upon the situation.

Claw (ground/hover cycle)

Speed:

Accel.: 110 m/turn	Decel.: 45m/turn
Top: 270 m/turn	Turn: 100 m/turn

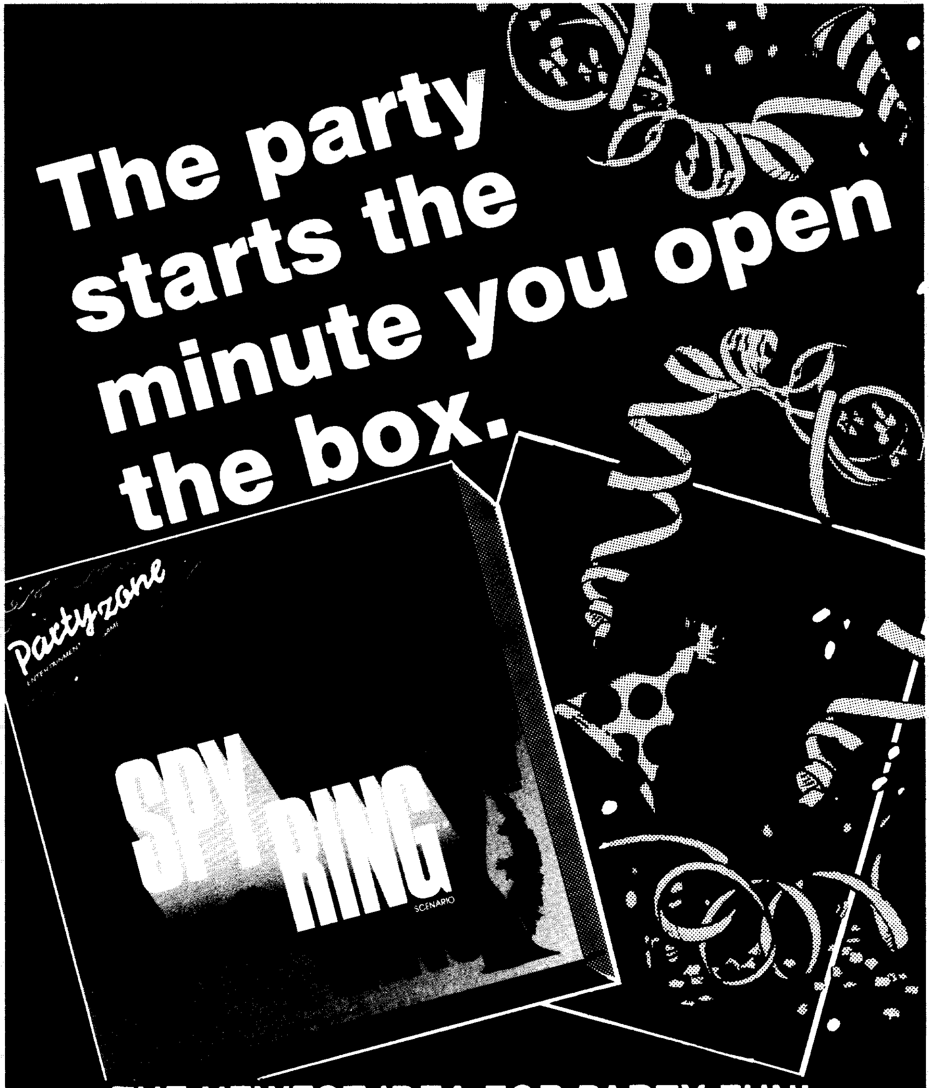
Cargo: 20 kg, .5 cubic meters
VDM: -3

Onboard systems:

* 2 laser barrels: 1-10 SEU discharge, range of a laser pistol
* 4 heavy projectiles: do 5d10 structure points, range of an automatic pistol
* Albedo defensive screen: 2 SEU/minute, plus normal drain on hits
* Inertia defensive screen: 2 SEU/hit, half damage done to Claw personnel
* Spur (coordination computer between Claw and Talon)

Details:

A Claw is a cross between a ground cycle and a hover cycle. The switch between modes can be made if the Claw is traveling over 60 m/turn or is at a standstill. It takes one turn of the pilot's actions to activate the change, during



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which time the Claw cannot fire (since the driver/pilot operates the sighting controls of the weapon systems) or turn more than 30 degrees in any direction. A Claw has a parabattery type 2.

A small weapons cache is included, in which are 4 power beltpacks, 2 normal laser pistols, a disguise kit (for two people, for four different disguises each), a survival kit (rations for 20 people for one day, plus 1 liter of water, toxy-rad gauge, 2 all-weather blankets, compass, everflame, flashlight, and three holoflares), and 4 sticks of tornadium D-19 and a like amount of variable timers.

The survival kit is a standard model and can be purchased for 50 Cr. However, different companies have different ideas as to what a person needs to survive, and the price will vary according to the contents.

Twinsuit

A Twinsuit is a special combat uniform, made exclusively for the crew of the SilverTwin modules. They are fitted to the team members, with no chance of them being usable any other being. The methods of creating Twinsuits are kept completely secret. Each has a lock keyed to the brainwave patterns of its host, which cannot be duplicated, permitting only the person for which the suit was fitted to use it.

Twinsuit equipment:

* Exoskeleton frame: normal operation (p. 48, Expanded Rules)
* Anti-shock implant: on the team member, not a part of the suit
* Built-in albedo and inertia armor: This very special armor is a unique weave of albedo and inertia fibers into a tight mesh suit. The specifications of this weave are kept highly secret.
* Built-in holo screen: standard model
* Gemini helmet: A specially designed helmet, with the following additions: chronocom, magnigoggles, a small infrared jammer, and a vocal print distorter (VPD). The VPD will alter the wearer's voice beyond all possible chances for identification by voice print.
* Laser/stunner: This pistol is a normal laser pistol with a sonic stunner attached. It takes one combat round to change the setting from laser to stunner or back. The stun setting will drain 2 SEU per shot.
* Sonic sword: normal in all respects.
* Four power beltpacks: normal in all respects.
* Gas mask: normal in all respects, and fastened to the front of the Twinsuit.

Twinteams

Because of the limited space for seating on the Talon and Claw vehicles, Vrusks could not be considered for membership on a Twinteam. However, Vrusks do make sizable contributions to the SilverTwin project, particularly in the area of design. Vrusks now make up nearly 45% of all SilverTwin technical crews. The Twinteams identities are known only to the Star Law Security Council, the Planetary Council (if there is one), and the Planetary Officer.

A tight team feeling is highly stressed when developing a Twinteam. The chosen few will live together for more than two years after attaining Star Law Ranger rank, becoming accustomed to their partners. They live and train inside a special set of huge domes on Morgaine's World.

Players who wish to join a SilverTwin project must be Star Law Rangers (see DRAGON® issues #87 and 91). They then have the option of either joining a Twinteam missing a member or two, or beginning their own team (six people only). Those needing details on the Star Law ranking system should refer to Alex Curylo's article, 'Careers in Star Law," in issue #91.

The following are the names, races, abilities, and skills of the first and foremost Twinteam, which operates inside Port Loren, Morgaine's World, Prenglar. These people made the SilverTwin project a success for Star Law. The referee will note that this Twinteam is very powerful; it has trained extensively for the benefits SilverTwin has to offer.

Blarg Dramiloud: Dralasite (STR/STA 61/85, DEX/RS 56/55, INT/LOG 69/83, PER/LDR 86/86, PS 4, IM 6). PSA: Technological. Technician 6, Computer 5, Robotics 5, Beam weapons 5, Melee 6. Talon pilot.

Yalik Califor: Female Yazirian (STR/STA 56/76, DEX/RS 65/60, INT/LOG 65/77, PER/LDR 81/81, PS 3, IM 6). PSA: Technological. Technician 5, Computer 5, Robotics 6, Beam weapons 5, Melee 6. Claw pilot.

Lucretia Xerxes: Female Human (STR/STA 57/71, DEX/RS 76/85, INT/LOG 63/71, PER/LDR 77/77, PS 3, IM 9). PSA: Military. Beam weapons 6, Projectile weapons 6, Computer 5, Melee 5, Martial arts 5, Demolitions 4. Talon copilot.

Garlib Rampous: Dralasite (STR/STA 60/84, DEX/RS 60/55, INT/LOG 64/74, PER/LDR 74/74, PS 3, IM 6). PSA: Biosocial. Beam weapons 5, Medic 6, Environmental 4, Melee 6, Psycho-social 4, Computer 2. Garlib works Spur, riding on the back of Claw.

Fraw Talm: Male Yazirian (STR/STA 65/70, DEX/RS 66/65, INT/LOG 71/69, PER/LDR 72/72, PS 4, IM 7). PSA: Military. Beam weapons 5, Melee 6, Computer 6, Technician 6, Martial Arts 4, Demolitions 4. Fraw operates RENDER from inside Talon.

Johnathon Killbear, Male Human (STR/STA 85/94, DEX/RS 69/63, INT/LOG 60/65, PER/LDR 71/71, PS 5, IM 7). PSA: Military. Beam weapons 5, Thrown weapons 5, Martial arts 5, Demolitions 5, Medic 6, Environmental 4. John coordinates Talon, Claw, and the local law force with a radiophone in the back of Talon.

A Twinteam member has all the legal power of a Star Law Ranger. All legal powers and restrictions are listed in DRAGON issue #91. Twinteam members will not, under any circumstances other than to save a life, break the law.

SilverTwin scenarios

It is readily apparent that SilverTwin is a powerful tool for the forces of planetary good. Numerous scenarios may be built around it, with the player characters either supporting, fighting against, or being a part of a Twinteam. The first encounter with a SilverTwin force should be in a large city, with the PCs watching from the sidelines as a SilverTwin force stops a major robbery or hijacking. PCs may help, though the Twinteam will prefer not to have civilians involved in their operations unless the situation is dire. The Twinteam will use all resources available (within legal limits), including calling in the local law enforcement agency and military forces if necessary.

SilverTwin is meant for adding more excitement to your STAR FRONTIERS® gaming. It represents the best that Star Law has to offer, and as such it requires special handling in adventure creation. The referee should carefully work out scenarios that will challenge Twinteam PCs, without making things entirely too easy for the team. After all, SilverTwin was created to fight a menace — and the more menacing, the better!

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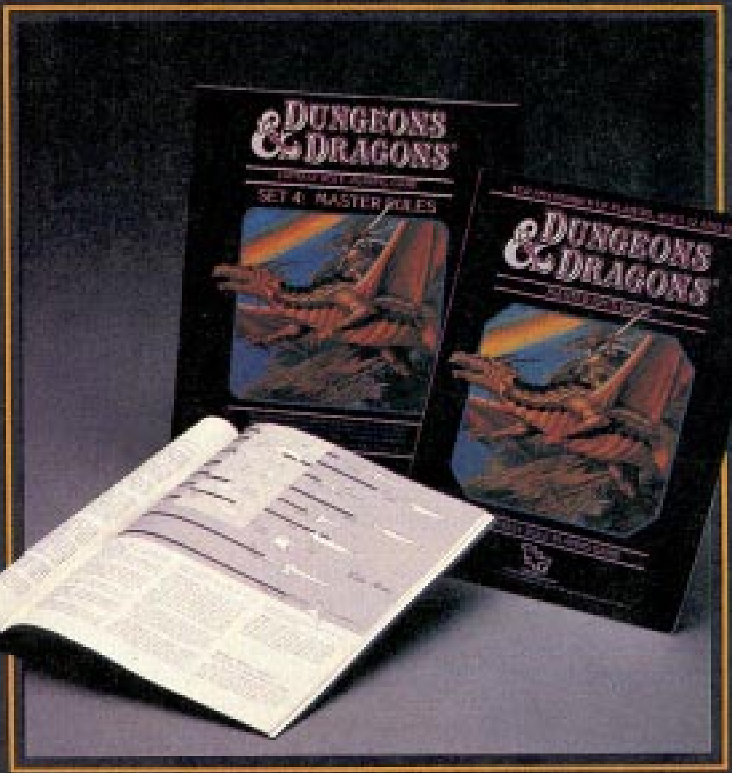
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Convention Calendar

KING CON 1, Oct. 5

Sponsored by the Knights of the Griffon, this convention will be held in the community building at the Mt. Vernon city park. Featured events will include role-playing game tournaments, seminars, a painting competition, a fantasy and science-fiction art show, and much more. Registration fees are $5 in advance, or $1 entrance fee for each scheduled gaming event. For more details, contact: King Con 1, c/o The Dragon's

MILWAUKEE'S 7th HISTORICAL WARGAME WEEKEND, Oct. 5-6

To be staged at the Milwaukee War Memorial Art Museum, this two-day event features military miniatures war games. Over thirty features have been scheduled. A formally judged painting competition will be held on Saturday. Registration fees are $3 per day or $4 for both days. Additional costs include an event fee of $1 to play each scheduled game, and there's an entry fee for the painting competition. For further details, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Joe Gepfert, 3440 S. Monterey Dr., New Berlin WI 53151, or Bill Protz, Jr., 5690 W. Glenbrook Rd., Brown Deer WI 53223.

WARGAMERS' WEEKEND, Oct. 5-6

This wargaming convention will be staged at the Disabled American Veterans' Hall on Route 1, Newburyport, Mass. All events will take place in the main upstairs function room of the DAV Hall. Events will include two tournaments — WRG Ancients and WRG Renaissance — and many other games. Registration fees are $5 for Saturday and $3 for Sunday; most events will have a $2 charge. For more information, contact: Chris Parker, c/o The Toy Soldier, Ltd., P.O. Box 148, Newburyport MA 01950.

MAINECON, Oct. 10-12

This convention will be held at the Waynflete school in Portland, Maine. Eventsinclude fantasy role-playing games, miniatures, board games, and seminars. On-site dormitory space available at reasonable cost; however, bring your own bedding. For more details, contact: The Maine Wargamers Association, 116 Front St. Bath ME 04530.

COUNCIL OF FIVE NATIONS XI, Oct. 11-13

This gaming event will take place at the Union College in Schenectady, New York. Featured activities will include costume and miniatures contests, an auction, and around-the-clock gaming. For more information about this event, contact: Pamela Boynton, Council, P.O. Box 4086, Queensbury NY 12801.

NEBRASKA LIN-CON VII, Oct. 11-13

Guests of honor for this convention will be Duke Seifried, his associate Dale Bruner, Ken Bunger, and John Boehm. Mr. Seifried is the past president of Heritage Game and Figure Manufacturing, and also a past vice president of TSR, Inc. Mr. Bunger is the associate editor of *Courirer Magazine* and a rules designer with 25 years of gaming experience. Mr. Boehm is the Nebraska Assistant Attorney General; he has been active in the gaming field for over 20 years. For more details, contact: Merlin Hayes,. c/o Hobby Town, 130 North 13th St., Lincoln NE 68508, or telephone (402)476-3829.

WINGAMES VI, Oct. 11-13

Held at the University of Manitoba, this event offers one of the largest AD&D® tournaments in Canada. Free admission; an entry fee may be required for some events. Contact: Wingames VI, Box 80 University Center, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3T 2N2.

FALLCON, Oct. 19-20

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the newly built University Centre Hotel in Gainesville, Fla. Guest of honor will be Piers Anthony. Events will include videos, an art show, a cocktail party, and a costume contest. Registration fees are $10. For more information, contact: Bill Hatfield, c/o Novel Ideas, 1122 W. University Ave., Gainesville FL 32601.

ADVACON '85, Oct. 20

This gaming convention will be held at the Polish Falcon Hall in Depew, N.Y. Fantasy and science-fiction role-playing games, board games, and miniatures tournaments will be among the featured events. For details, contact: The Advacon Fellowship, 101 Floss Ave., Buffalo NY 14211.

MILE HI CON 17, Oct. 25-27

Denver's oldest science-fiction convention will be staged at the Sheraton Inn in Lakewood, Colo. Guests of honor include Somtow Sucharitkul and Leslie Fish; Edward Bryant will be toastmaster. Featured events will include a computer game room, a trivia bowl, and a filk concert. For more information, contact: Mile Hi Con, P.O. Box 27074, Denver CO 80227.

NECRONOMICON '85, Oct. 25-27

This convention will be held at the Holiday Inn in Riverview, Fla. Guests of honor will include Andre Norton, Robert Adams, Robert Bloch, and Roger Zelazny. Autograph sessions, a caberet, a costume contest, alien cooking, and a banquet are among the featured activities. Registration fees are $15. For more details, contact: Necronomicon '85, P.O. Box 2076, Riverview FL 33569.

RO VA CON 10, Oct. 25-27

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be staged at the Roanoke Valley Civic Center in Roanoke, Va. Guests of honor include Richard Pini, Hal Clement, and Angelique Pettyjohn. Activities will include filk singing, a variety of gaming tournaments, and a costume contest. Fore more information, contact: Ro Va Con, P.O. Box 117, Salem VA 24153.

THE WORLD MYSTERY CONVENTION, Oct. 25-27

800 readers, book dealers, and professionals will congreagte at this convention to share crime fiction's joys in San Francisco's Sir Francis Drake Hotel. For more details about this convention, contact: Bouchercon XVI, P.O. Box 6202, Hayward CA 94540.

OCTOBER FANTASY REVEL, Oct. 26-27

This convention will be staged at the Stone Ridge Inn in West Bend, Wis. RPGA™ Network, AD&D®, and CHILL™ game tournaments will be featured. Also scheduled are a game auction and three films. Guests of honor include Frank Perry, Mark Acres, and TV personality Tuloose Noneck. For more information, contact: Keith Polster, c/o West Bend Hobbies, 155 N. Main, West Bend WI 53095, or telephone (414)334-0487.

DEF CON '85, Nov. 2-3

This gaming convention will take place in Middleton, New York. Activities will include role-playing tournaments, wargaming events, an RPGA™ Network meeting, auctions, door prizes, and much more. Dealers and game masters should feel free to inquire. For more information, please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Chris Arndt, RD #2 Box 318, Pine Bush NY 12566

DOCTORCON, Nov. 2-3

This mini-convention will be staged at the Ramada Inn (SW Freeway) in Houston, Texas. Activities include tournaments, panels, contests, and costume parties. Registration fees are $6 for a one-day membership and $10 for a two-day membership. For more details, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Doctorcon, P.O. Box 540906, Houston TX 77254-0906.

ROCK CON XII, Nov. 2-3

This convention will take place at the Wagon Wheel Resort on Route 75 in Rockton, Ill. Featured events include a selection of historical miniatures activities, an official RPGA™ AD&D® tournament, board games, an auction, an expanded dealer area, and a flea market. For more information, contact: Cliff Wilson, c/o Black Hawk Hobby Distributors, 14225 Hansberry Road, Rockton IL 61072.

UNICON II, Nov. 8-10
This convention will take place at the L.A. Pittenger Student Center on the Ball State University campus in Muncie, Ind. Guests of honor will be David Gerrold, Nancy Springer, and Buck and Juanita Coulson. Movies, seminars, workshops, and miniatures competitions will be featured. Registration fees are $10 until October 15. Contact: The Quetors' Society, Unicon II Preregistration, L.A. Pittenger Student Center Box 279, Muncie IN 47306.

CONTACT, Nov. 15-17
This convention will be staged at the Airport Sheraton Inn in Evansville, Ind. Guests of honor include author Jack L. Chalker and RPGA™ Network coordinator Penny Petticord. Panels, an art show and auction, and comet gazing will be among the featured events. Registration. fees are $10 until November 1, and $12 thereafter. Contact: RCSFA, P.O. Box 3894, Evansville IN 47737, or telephone (812)858-5419.

TROPICON IV, Dec. 6-8
This science-fiction convention will take place at the Holiday Inn in Ft. Lauderdale West, Fla. Guests of honor include Robert Bloch, Lee Hoffman, and Gary Alan Ruse. Activities will include panels, films, an art show, and a banquet. Registration fees are $10 until November 1, and $15 thereafter. For details, contact, Joe Siclari, c/o South Florida Science Fiction Society, 4599 N. W. 5th Ave., Boca Raton FL 33431.

EVECON 3, Dec. 27-29
This year EveCon will be staged at the Holiday Inn in Gaithersburg, Md. Featured events include science-fiction and fantasy gaming activities, videos, movies, music, singing, dancing, and an art show. Also planned are a Friday Night pool party (with waterfall) and a Saturday masquerade. Registration fees are $10 until December 1, and $15 thereafter. For more details about this event, contact EveCon 3, P.O. Box 128, Aberdeen MD 21001.

RUSTYCON III, Jan. 17-19
To be staged at the Executive Inn in Seattle, Wash., this science-fiction convention will feature a number of activities. Guests of honor include author Vonda N. McIntyre and artist Ilene Meyer. Registration fees are $16 until December 31, and $20 thereafter. For more information, contact: Rustycon III, P.O. Box 47132, Seattle WA 98146.

BRIDE OF PANDEMONIUM, Jan. 18
This event will be staged at the Ryerson Poytechnical Institute in Toronto, Ontario. This third annual convention will include 17 games, a figure and diorama contest, an auction, and open gaming. Gifts certificates will be awarded. For more details, contact: Dungeon Parties, Inc., P.O. Box 67, Stn. F, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4Y 1N1, or telephone (416)924-1989.

CHIMERACON III, Jan. 25-26
This convention will be held at the Carolina Union at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, NC. Guests of honor include Orson Scott Card, Manly Wade Wellman, Allen Wold, M. A. Foster, and C. Bruce Hunter. Special events include an "Outer Limits" cantina, a writing workshop, a trivia bowl, an art show, panels, and readings. Registration fees are $6 until November 15, or $3 per day thereafter. For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: ChimeraCon III, 12-A University Gardens, Chapel Hill NC 27514, or telephone (919)967-5347.

ORCCON, Feb. 15-17
This gaming convention will take place at the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel. Activities will include role-playing tournaments, war games, seminars, and an auction. For more information, contact: Orccon, P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808, or telephone (213)420-3675.

WISCON 10, Feb. 21-23
This science-fiction convention will be staged at the Concourse Hotel in Madison, Wis. Guests of honor include Chelsea Quinn Yarbro amd Suzette Haden Elgin. Activities include films, a masquerade, and an art show and auction. For more details, contact: WisCon 10, P.O. Box 1624, Madison WI 53701, or telephone (608)251-6226 (days) or (608)233-0326 (evenings).

WAMCON '86, Feb 28 - Mar. 2
This event will be held at the Sheraton Inn Coliseum in Hampton, Va. Guests of honor will include Judson Scott, A. C. Crispin, and Tracy Hickman. Two- and three-day registrations are available. Three-day registration fees are $15 until November 31, and $20 thereafter. Two-day registration fees are $15, but they are avialable at the door only. Children between the ages of 6 and 12 can get in for $10. For more details, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: WamCon, P.O. Box 2223, Poquoson VA 23662.

NEOCON V, March 21-23
To be staged at the Gardner Student Center of the University of Akron in Akron, Ohio, this convention will ofer a variety of role-playing, board, and miniatures games. For more information about this gaming event, contact: Neocon V, P.O. Box 7411, Akron OH 44306.

L.A. ORIGINS '86, July 3-6
This convention will be staged at the Airport Hyatt Hotel in Los Angeles, Cal. For more details, contact: L.A. Origins '86, P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808.

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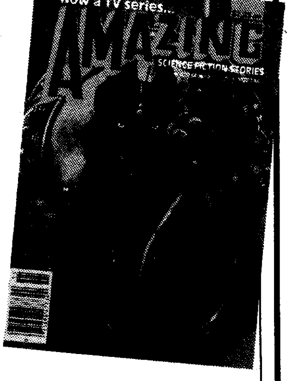

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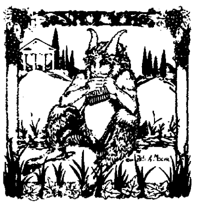

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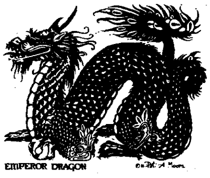

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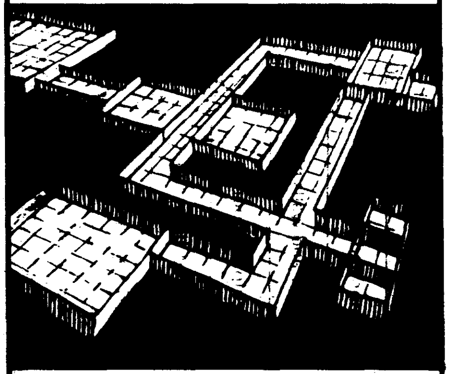

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Wands of wonder

(From page 34)

of activation, and in the next segment flash prow-straight from the tip of the wand to the extent of the wand's range, passing through everything in their paths except *spheres of annihilation, prismatic spheres, shield* spells, and *walls* or cubes *of force,* all of which swallow or absorb them. A *forcecage* spell, or an existing *armor* (as in the 1st-level magic-user spell, or that caused by the use of a *wand of armory;* see above) will deflect a tooth.

A strike by a tooth does 4-14 (2 + 2d6) points of damage (save vs. spell will reduce the damage by half), and strikes (as though a hand weapon directly wielded by the wand-bearer) at + 2 to hit. Solid rock will deflect a tooth; any other material will be struck and damaged by it, although magic items cause any plus they possess to be subtracted from the tooth's "to hit" roll. *Wind wall* and *gust of wind* spells, and similar air disturbances (such as those caused by wind walkers or air elementals) have no effect on the flight of a tooth. All classes can employ this wand.

Wand of Whips

First heard of in use by the fell Wizards of Thay, whose wands create red, barbed whips (and have never been known to pass out of the Wizards' possession), the secrets of making such wands passed west through unknown means (probably a renegade apprentice such as the Adept of Mulmaster or one of the Cowled Wizards of Amn), and mages such as Nelver and Tusprun of the Ten Smokes are known to use such devices. One is thought to have been lost in the Vast Deeps when the sorcerer Alamanth was slain in battle aboard a ship off Port Llast.

Alamanth set down precise details of the powers and means of using his wand — save for the command word, which is thought to have died with him — and it is from his records that Elminster passes on all details of this type of wand.

Function

This wand shoots forth a whip-shaped field of white, shimmering magical force to a maximum (horizontal and vertical) range of 7". The wielder of the wand, as he activates the wand, names, looks at, or concentrates upon a specific target creature or automaton *(i.e.,* golem, undead, homonculous or the like), and the whip attacks this creature and this creature only. The whip remains in existence for 4 rounds; if the target is beyond 7" from the wand when it is cast, the whip will flash instantly (in 1 segment) to the limit of its range, at that point closest to the target, and hang motionless, waiting; it will attack only if the target enters its range. Otherwise, the whip strikes once per round, as a *Quaal's feather token* (see *DMG)* does: at + 1 to hit and on damage, doing 2-7 hit points of damage per strike, and binding fast an opponent for 2-7 rounds if a save vs. spell is not made after each successful strike.

Once a whip has bound an opponent, the wand wielder cannot release it to strike again. The whip cannot change targets. A whip may follow an opponent that it has successfully struck at least once beyond 7", moving with the target, even if the target *teleports, plane shifts, blinks,* enters a rock or plant, etc. The whip can hit invisible and ethereal (but not astral) creatures without penalty. The *wand of whips* may be recharged. Only magic-users, illusionists, and incantatrixes may wield it.

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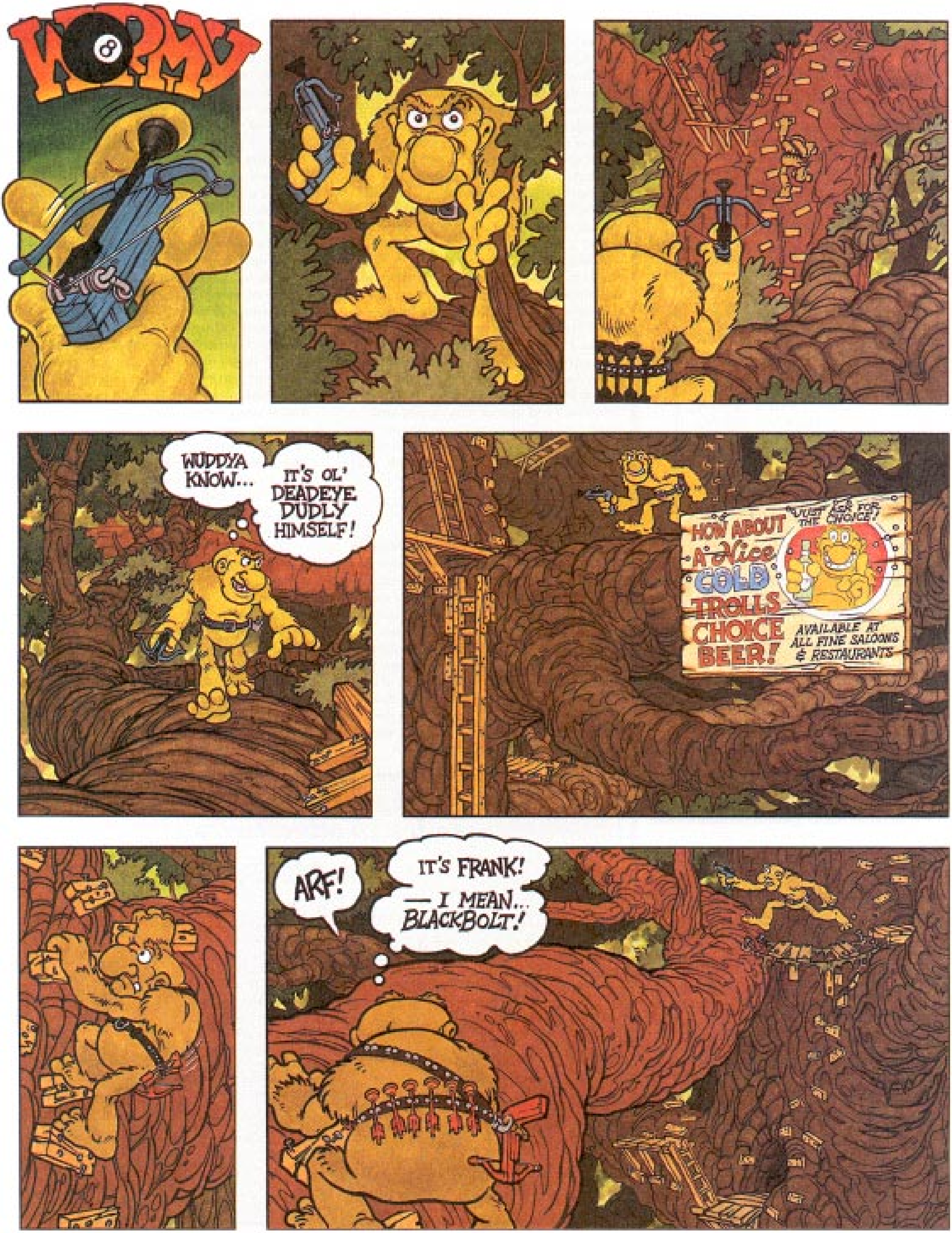
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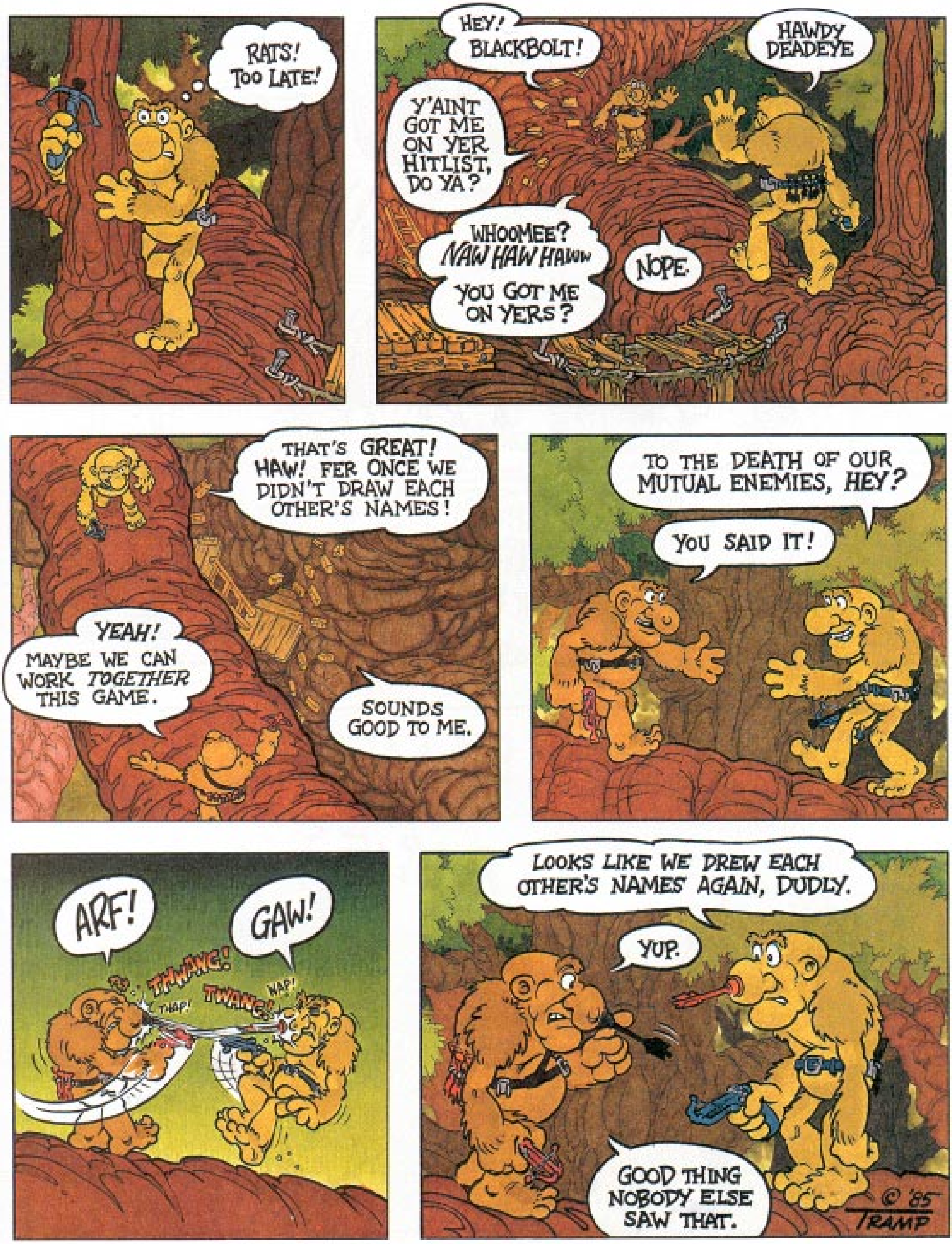
RATS! TOO LATE!
HEY! BLACKBOLT!
HAWDY DEADEYE
Y'AINT GOT ME ON YER HITLIST, DO YA?
WHOOMEE? *NAW HAW HAWW*
YOU GOT ME ON YERS?
NOPE.
THAT'S GREAT! HAW! FER ONCE WE DIDN'T DRAW EACH OTHER'S NAMES!
YEAH! MAYBE WE CAN WORK *TOGETHER* THIS GAME.
SOUNDS GOOD TO ME.
TO THE DEATH OF OUR MUTUAL ENEMIES, HEY?
YOU SAID IT!
ARF!
GAW!
THWANG!
THAP!
TWANG!
WAP!
LOOKS LIKE WE DREW EACH OTHER'S NAMES AGAIN, DUDLY.
YUP.
GOOD THING NOBODY ELSE SAW THAT.
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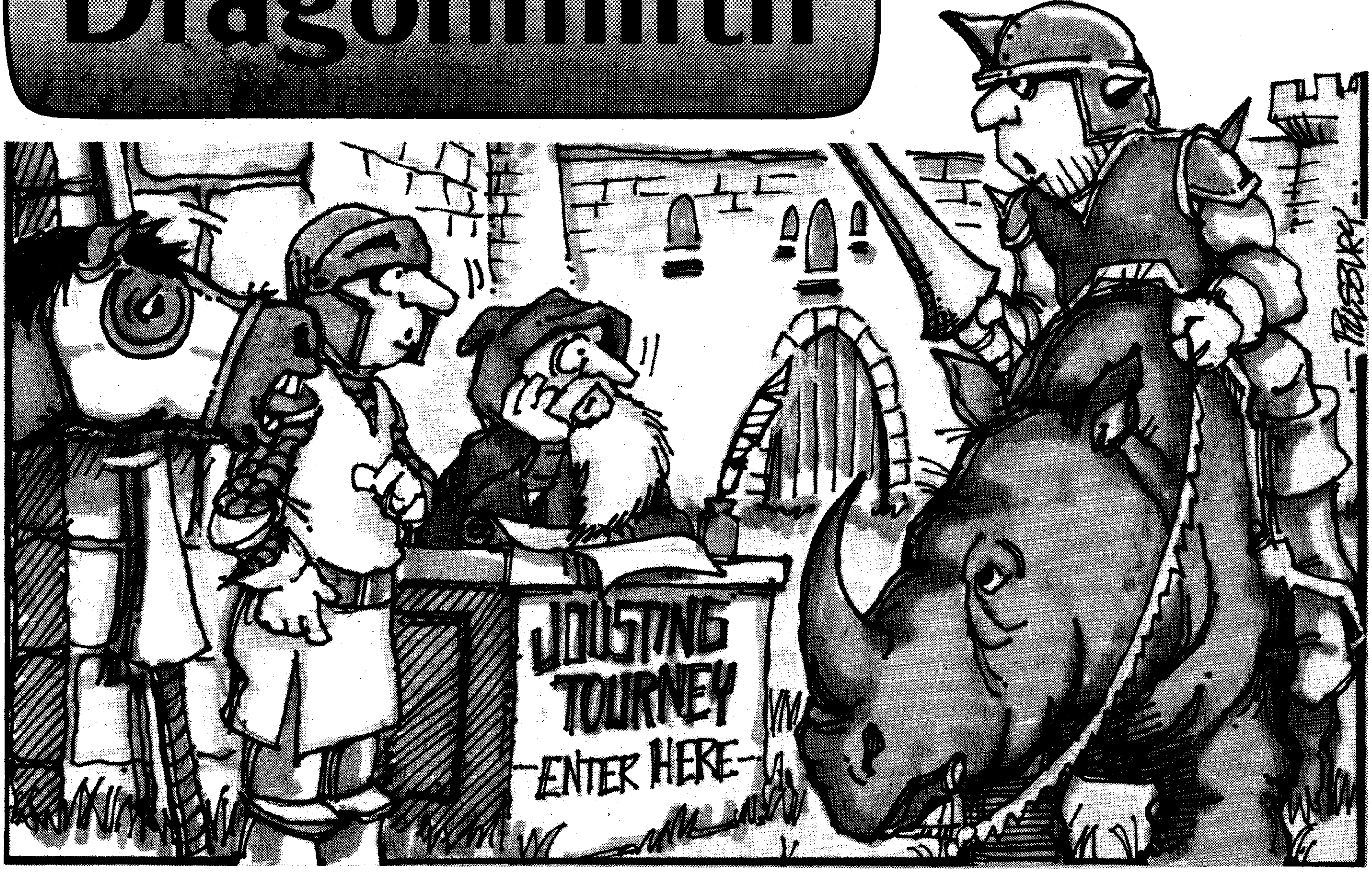
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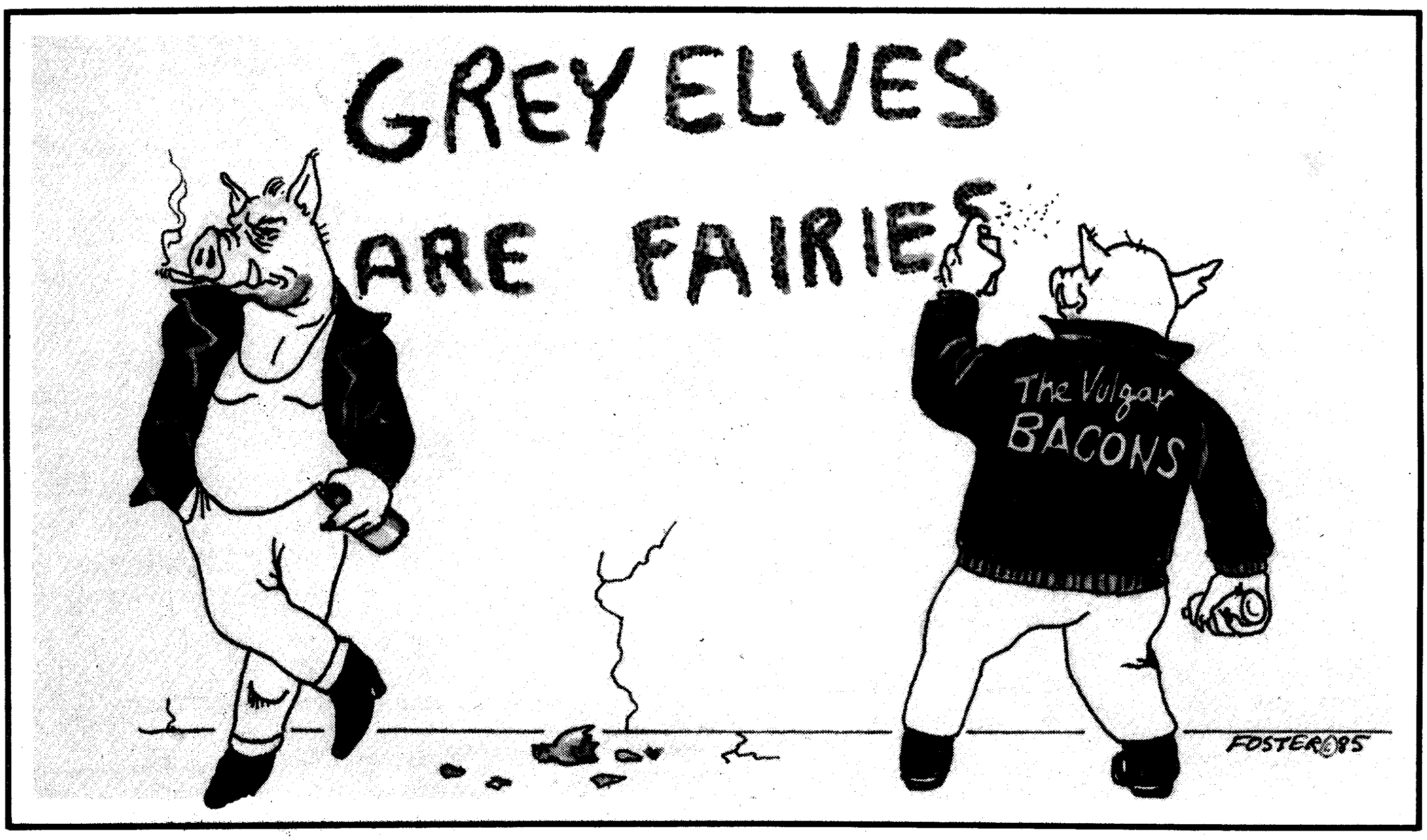
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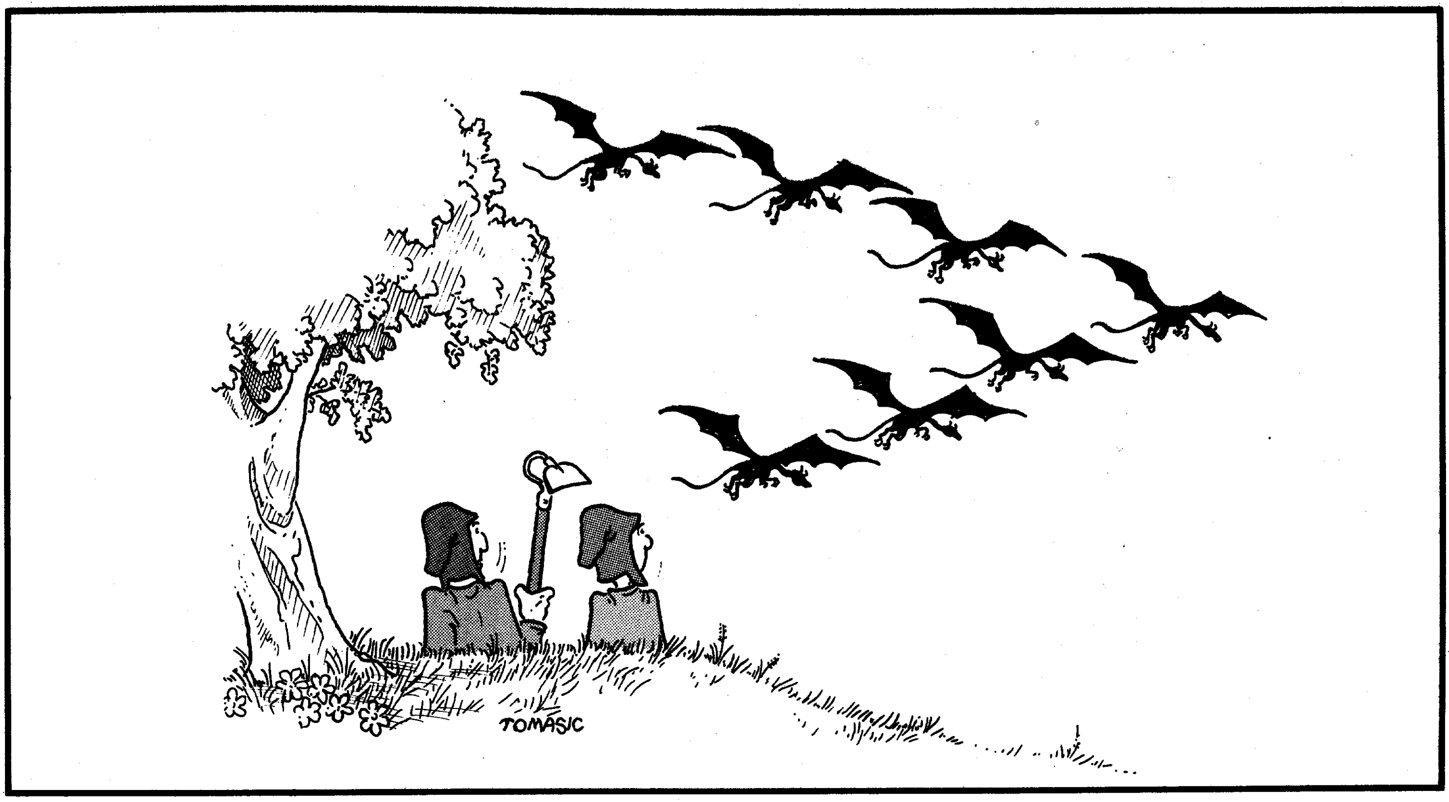
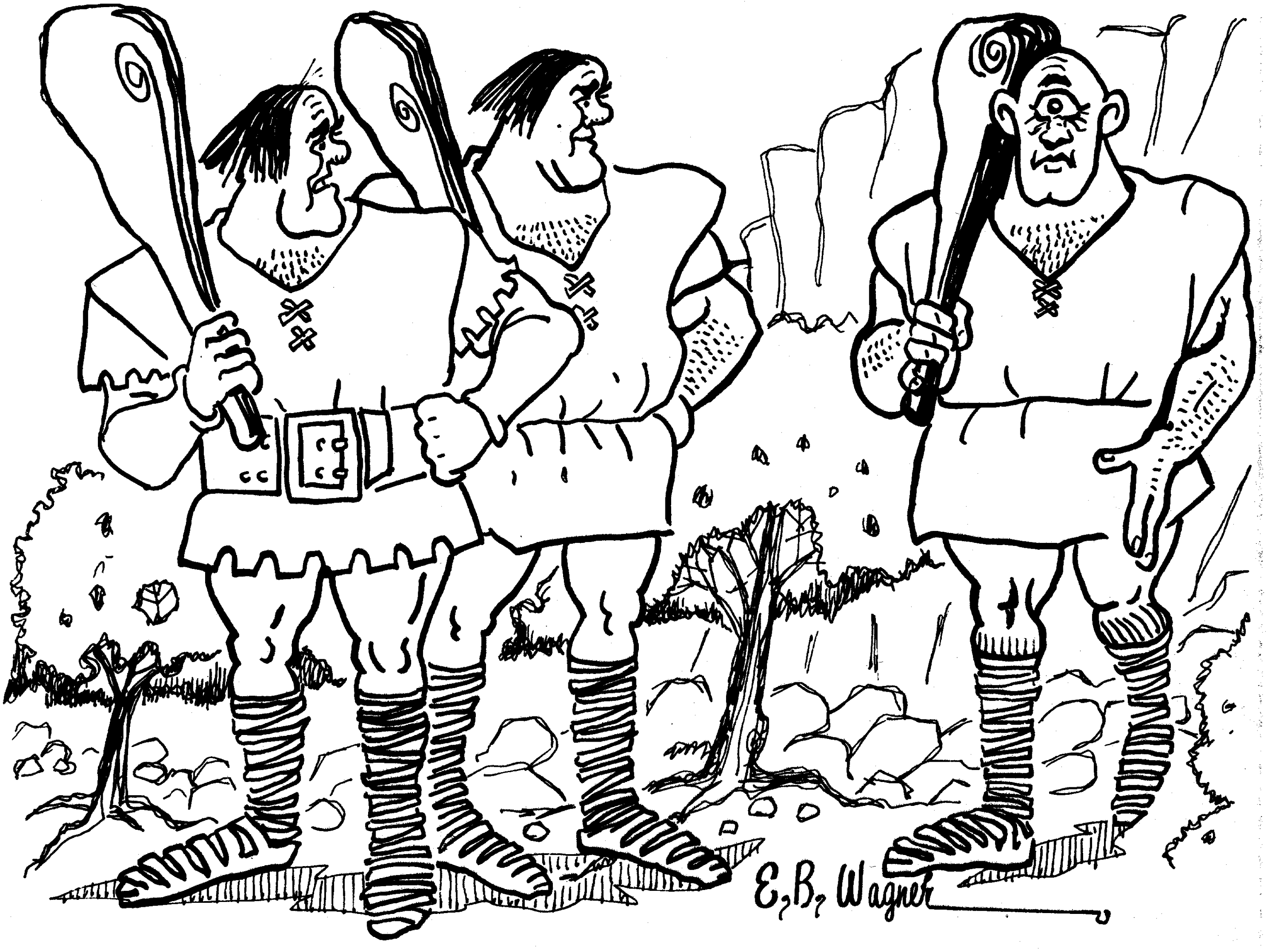
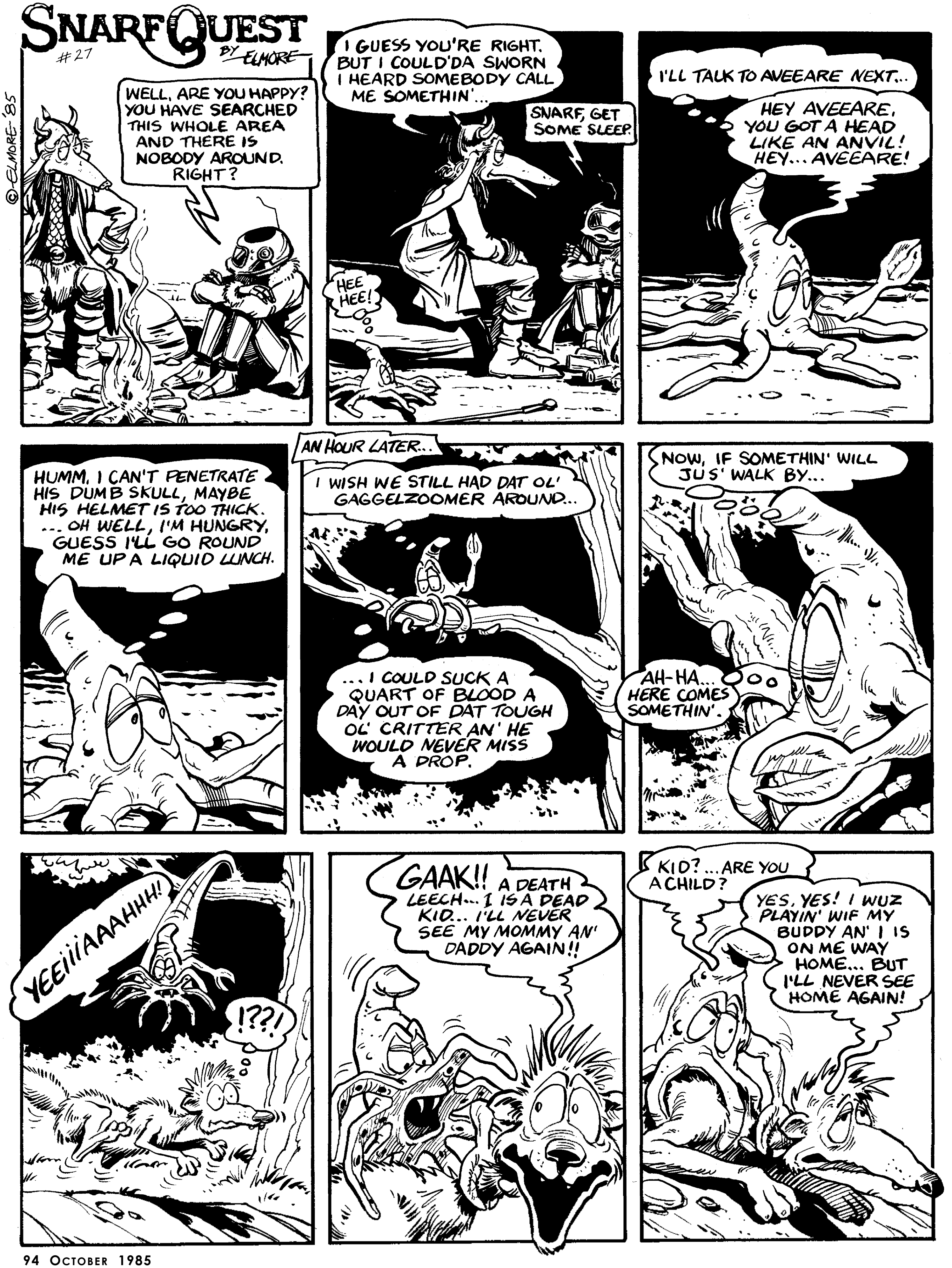
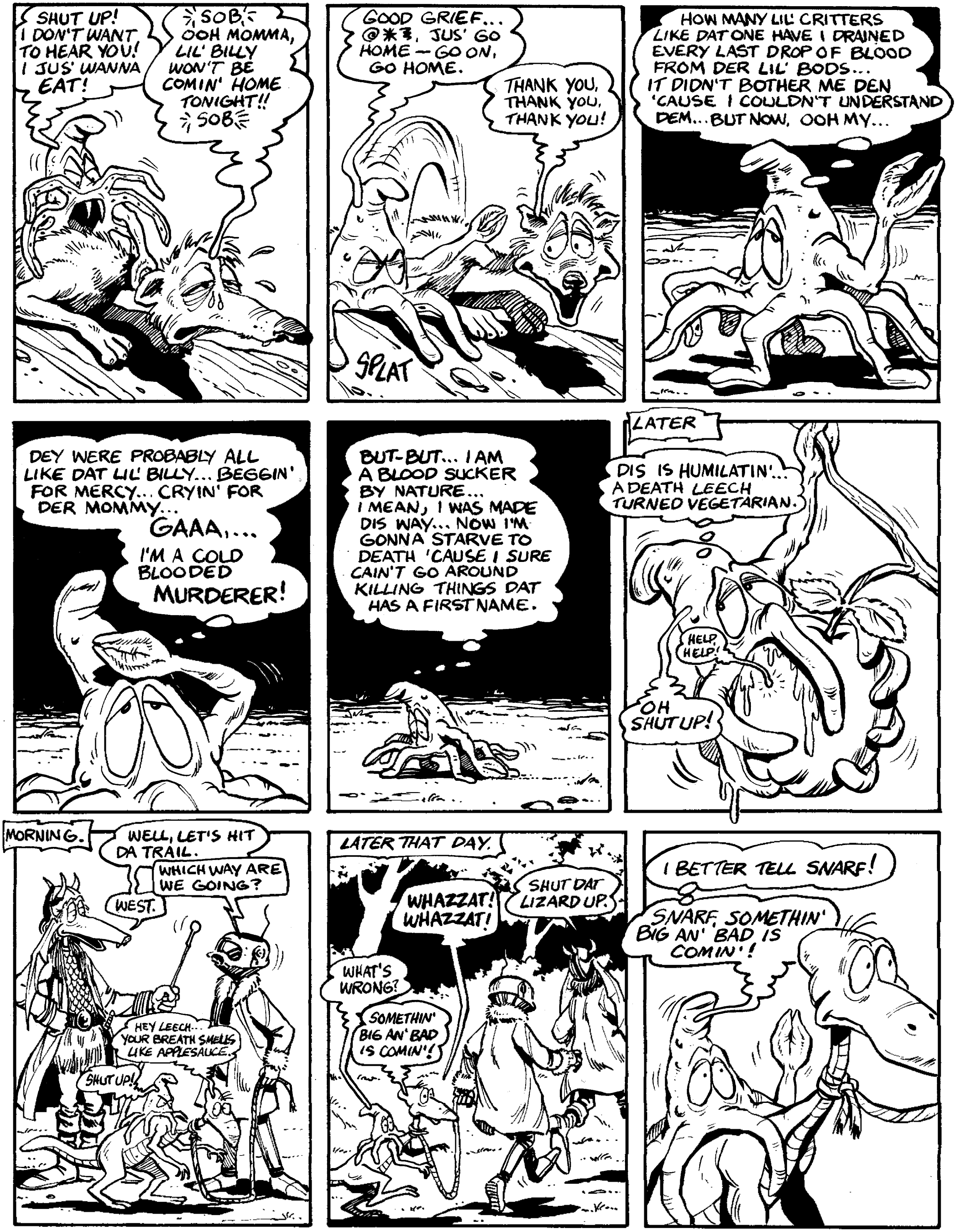
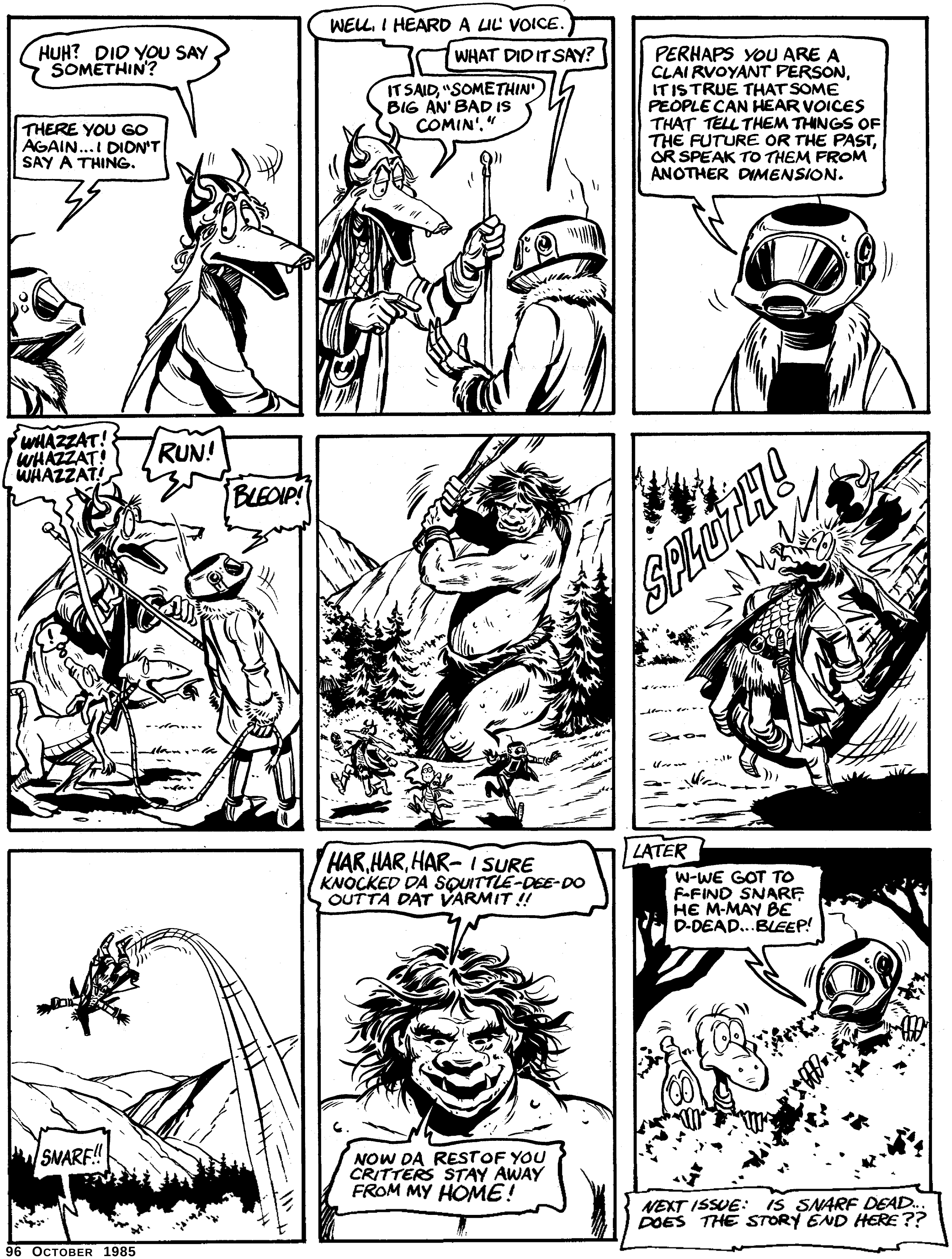




"THERE GOES THE OL' NEIGHBORHOOD."


SNARFQUEST
#27
BY ELMORE
© ELMORE '85
WELL, ARE YOU HAPPY? YOU HAVE SEARCHED THIS WHOLE AREA AND THERE IS NOBODY AROUND. RIGHT?
I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT. BUT I COULD'DA SWORN I HEARD SOMEBODY CALL ME SOMETHIN'...
SNARF, GET SOME SLEEP.
HEE HEE!
I'LL TALK TO AVEEARE NEXT...
HEY AVEEARE, YOU GOT A HEAD LIKE AN ANVIL! HEY... AVEEARE!
HUMM, I CAN'T PENETRATE HIS DUMB SKULL, MAYBE HIS HELMET IS TOO THICK. ...OH WELL, I'M HUNGRY, GUESS I'LL GO ROUND ME UP A LIQUID LUNCH.
AN HOUR LATER...
I WISH WE STILL HAD DAT OL' GAGGELZOOMER AROUND...
...I COULD SUCK A QUART OF BLOOD A DAY OUT OF DAT TOUGH OL' CRITTER AN' HE WOULD NEVER MISS A DROP.
NOW, IF SOMETHIN' WILL JUS' WALK BY...
AH-HA... HERE COMES SOMETHIN'.
YEEIIIAAAHHH!
!??!
GAAK!! A DEATH LEECH... I IS A DEAD KID... I'LL NEVER SEE MY MOMMY AN' DADDY AGAIN!!
KID? ...ARE YOU A CHILD?
YES, YES! I WUZ PLAYIN' WIF MY BUDDY AN' I IS ON ME WAY HOME... BUT I'LL NEVER SEE HOME AGAIN!


SHUT UP! I DON'T WANT TO HEAR YOU! I JUS' WANNA EAT!
SOB OOH MOMMA, LIL' BILLY WON'T BE COMIN' HOME TONIGHT!! SOB
GOOD GRIEF... @✱ʒ, JUS' GO HOME — GO ON, GO HOME.
THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!
SPLAT
HOW MANY LIL' CRITTERS LIKE DAT ONE HAVE I DRAINED EVERY LAST DROP OF BLOOD FROM DER LIL' BODS... IT DIDN'T BOTHER ME DEN 'CAUSE I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND DEM... BUT NOW, OOH MY...
DEY WERE PROBABLY ALL LIKE DAT LIL' BILLY... BEGGIN' FOR MERCY... CRYIN' FOR DER MOMMY... GAAA,... I'M A COLD BLOODED MURDERER!
BUT-BUT... I AM A BLOOD SUCKER BY NATURE... I MEAN, I WAS MADE DIS WAY... NOW I'M GONNA STARVE TO DEATH 'CAUSE I SURE CAIN'T GO AROUND KILLING THINGS DAT HAS A FIRST NAME.
LATER
DIS IS HUMILATIN'... A DEATH LEECH TURNED VEGETARIAN.
HELP, HELP!
OH SHUT UP!
MORNING.
WELL, LET'S HIT DA TRAIL.
WHICH WAY ARE WE GOING?
WEST.
HEY LEECH... YOUR BREATH SMELLS LIKE APPLESAUCE.
SHUT UP!
LATER THAT DAY.
WHAZZAT! WHAZZAT!
SHUT DAT LIZARD UP.
WHAT'S WRONG?
SOMETHIN' BIG AN' BAD IS COMIN'!
I BETTER TELL SNARF!
SNARF, SOMETHIN' BIG AN' BAD IS COMIN'!


HUH? DID YOU SAY SOMETHIN'?
THERE YOU GO AGAIN... I DIDN'T SAY A THING.
WELL, I HEARD A LIL' VOICE.
WHAT DID IT SAY?
IT SAID, "SOMETHIN' BIG AN' BAD IS COMIN'."
PERHAPS YOU ARE A CLAIRVOYANT PERSON, IT IS TRUE THAT SOME PEOPLE CAN HEAR VOICES THAT TELL THEM THINGS OF THE FUTURE OR THE PAST, OR SPEAK TO THEM FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION.
WHAZZAT! WHAZZAT! WHAZZAT!
RUN!
BLEOIP!
SPLUTH!
SNARF!!
HAR, HAR, HAR- I SURE KNOCKED DA SQUITTLE-DEE-DO OUTTA DAT VARMIT!!
NOW DA REST OF YOU CRITTERS STAY AWAY FROM MY HOME!
LATER
W-WE GOT TO F-FIND SNARF. HE M-MAY BE D-DEAD... BLEEP!
NEXT ISSUE: IS SNARF DEAD... DOES THE STORY END HERE??

...STAY ALERT!... TRUST NO ONE!...
...KEEP YOUR LASER HANDY!...

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