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COVER

Our April cover painting has no real title as such. Linda Medley, the California artist who created it, describes it as a "generic bar scene" which she had wanted to try. We looked at the painting when it arrived, and the only trouble we had with it was in deciding how quickly we wanted to use it. There's something for everyone here, it seems — more than first meets the eye. Happy April!

LETTERS

Thieves' guild fixes

We received the following letter from Vince Garcia, the author of "A Den of Thieves" (issue #115, page 14). He had a few corrections and additional information for that article, but we weren't able to print it earlier: The relevant parts of his letter follow. — RM

Dear Dragon:

... As regards to the guild-within-a-guild, the Additional Followers Table should be C rather than D, as in the article. The confrontation factor is F (see below).

Table F: Encounters within parent guild

Dice roll Result

- 01-50 No confrontations this month.
- 51-80 Parent guildmaster suspicious over low guild tithe, forcing PC's group to cut back on activities; quarter indicated take this month.
- 81-85 Randomly selected thief bungles pick-pocketing attempt; 90% chance he is incarcerated and fined 10-40 gp; 10% chance he is killed.
- 86-90 Assassination attempt made on parent guildmaster's assistant: 10% chance death results, 25% chance in that event PC is asked to take his place.
- 91-95 Parent guildmaster suspects presence of *guild-within-a-guild*, spending next 1-3 months exploring the possibility; 15% chance he discovers the PC's guild unless all unauthorized operations stopped during the time period (quarter all indicated receipts if activities continue to be pursued).
- 96-99 Parent guildmaster's assistant suspects same as above; 10% chance he discovers PC's guild and who runs it regardless of whether or not all unauthorized thieving activities are halted. If he discovers the guild's presence, he may become involved in a beneficial way, extort a percentage to keep quiet (DM must arbitrate).
- 00 PC learns his parent guildmaster will be relatively unguarded and open to possible assassination attempt within 1-6 days (30% chance this information is a trap by guildmaster to weed out traitors; DM arbitrates).

The following adjustments are made to the dice

- + 30 if activity factor 1 is pursued; and,
- +50 if activity factor 2 is pursued.

One other error: On page 22, under *Extreme and purposeful measures taken*, the text should read x3 instead of x4.

Vince Garcia
Fresno, Calif.

Lizard bites man

Dear Dragon:

Regarding the article "Adventure Trivia!" (issue #117, pages 26-27): In question 19, it is asked how many successful hits would be necessary for a giant lizard to kill a fighter who has 57 hp. The article states that the answer is four, but this amount would only be sufficient to render the poor fighter unconscious ($57 - 16 \times 4 = -7$). According to the DMG, a character is only killed after his hit-point total falls below -10. Therefore, five hits would be necessary to kill the fighter.

Brian Hindenburg
Sycamore, Ill.

I see your point. This was an editorial mistake (we changed that one particular question slightly) which made the question a tricky one, since any character at -7 hp is probably as good as dead. Five hits it is, then. — RM

Too much coverage

Dear Dragon:

In DRAGON® issue #116, several people made quite a bit of noise about how DRAGON Magazine should expand the number of games that it covers. Perhaps this is so, but by now there must be over 750 role-playing games on the market. If DRAGON Magazine were to report on all of them — well, let's try not to think about it. Mr. Spivey said if you would report on the top 10 or 15 games, you would increase your readership, but to me it would get quite boring.

My solution? Keep the magazine for D&D® and AD&D® games, and the traditional medieval- and ancient-setting games, and have a sister magazine with a science-fiction type name for science-fiction, modern-military, and any other RPG that doesn't fit into the first category.

Just one other thought, although I'm sure Mr. Gravel's intentions must be good: Please do not have articles on MONOPOLY® and RISK® games. Include these in a third periodical, entitled "Boardome."

Bob Hughes
Schenectady, N.Y.

The chances of seeing another magazine from TSR, Inc., covering science-fiction games alone are very poor: We're swamped with work on the magazines we already have. Though I doubt we'll cover the MONOPOLY and RISK games here, we will leave open the possibility of covering certain very popular boardgames with fantasy or science-fiction themes (the OGRE® and CAR WARS® games immediately come to mind). We will continue to cover the most popular science-fiction, espionage, super-powered hero, and other such role-playing games in this magazine. — RM

"Official" business

Roger Moore won't be writing this month's editorial; he wanted me to do it instead — to give a more formal introduction of myself by way of expressing a few of my thoughts. I hope it's only a coincidence that he chose to do this in the April issue.

Many years ago, I learned to play the AD&D® game in the Student Union of the University of La Crosse — only then it wasn't known as the AD&D® or D&D® game: it was simply known as "D and D." The game was fairly crude at that point, coming fresh from its genesis and directly from the spiral notebooks of Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson, among others. The game existed as a set of three, digest-sized, paper-bound rule books, all very drably written, cheaply printed, and sparsely illustrated. These were the "official" rules in 1975. The game itself was simplistic by comparison to today's role-playing games, and its rules were riddled with vagaries, inconsistencies, and numerous flaws. But in that crude and rather basic form, the game had something that a lot of its followers lack; it was the first of its kind, and there was a lot of room left for development.

Now, in 1987, the AD&D game has become the largest and most popular role-playing game on the market. Ten (at present) books and numerous modules make the system complete; they also make it extremely complex. Letters arrive daily asking the designers to resolve the flaws or to make rulings on contradictions in the system. Others write to complain about having to buy ten books to own the AD&D game. Still others write to ask what rules in DRAGON Magazine are "official" and which are not. To these gamers, the AD&D game has become a mass of confusion.

With the second edition of the AD&D game presently in the works, more complaints and letter expressing confusion arrive each day. Some gamers worry that their favorite classes will no longer be part of the "official" rules, hence they will no longer be able to use them in play. Still others complain that they are displeased with having to buy the second edition — a purchase which will outmode their first-edition rules. These same people are further annoyed that the second-edition

(continued on page 69)

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.

Abbreviations in parentheses after a name indicate games in which that person is especially interested: AD = AD&D® game; DD = D&D® game; CC = CALL OF CTHULHU® game; GW = GAMMA WORLD® game;

SF = STAR FRONTIERS® game; ST = STAR TREK®: The Role-Playing Game; MSH = MARVEL SUPER HEROES® game; TS = TOP SECRET® game; T = TRAVELLER® game; RQ = RUNE-QUEST® game; VV = VILLAINS & VIGILANTES™ game.

The World Gamers Guide is intended for the benefit of gamers who live outside the continental United States and Canada, in areas where nearby gamers are small in number or nonexistent, as a way for them to contact

other game-players who would be interested in corresponding about the activities that they enjoy. Unfortunately, we cannot extend this service to persons who live in remote areas of the U.S. or Canada, or to U.S. military personnel with APO or FPO addresses. Each eligible name and address that we receive will be published in three consecutive issues of DRAGON® Magazine; to be listed for more than three issues, you must send in another postcard or letter.

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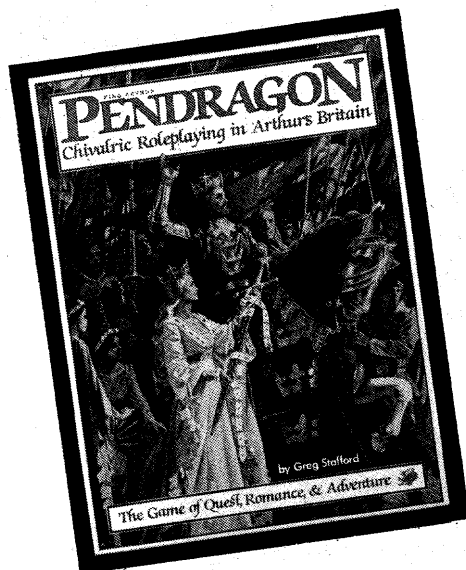
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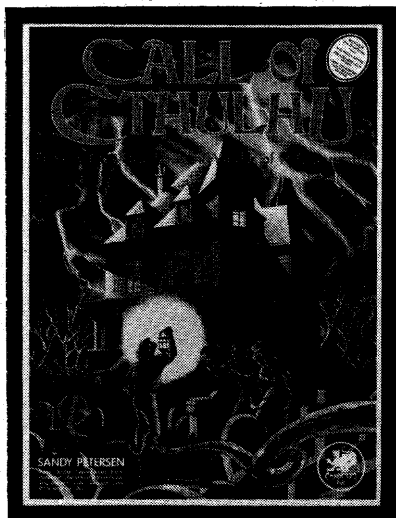
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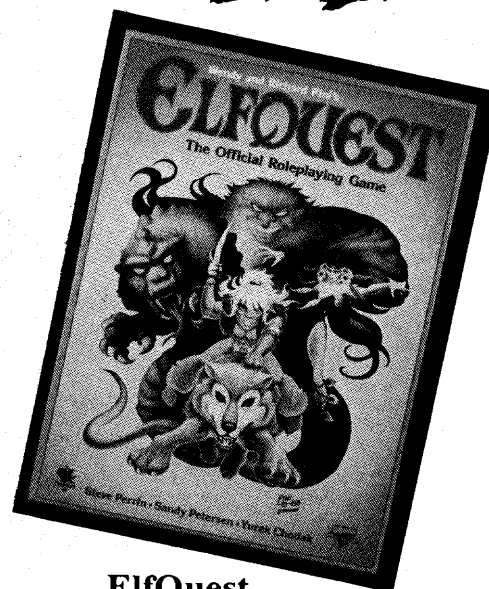
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FORUM

James Yates's article, "Hammer of Thor, Spear of Zeus," (DRAGON® issue #115) is interesting, but it misses the point. "The different combat capabilities of the clerics of the various cults" (page 38) would be a nice thing to illustrate, but more important [than this] is the question of game design.

"Clerics have nearly as good a prospect of success in melee combat as fighters," according to the *Players Handbook* (page 20). This concept is radically changed by weapon specialization. How can a cleric even approach the skill of a dwarven axe-wielder who renders a potential of over 30 hp damage (counting maximum strength and double-specialization bonuses, attacking twice) in one round?

Furthermore, James's justification for the cleric's use of sharp weapons is a bit thin. He uses logic, which is not a necessary foundation for a game.

In the first place, the idea that clerics use weapons that don't shed blood is silly. It is an inaccurate allusion to old Christian priesthood ethics. Secondly, though I have not staved in anyone's head lately, I can imagine what an 80-pound iron mace would do to someone's cranium (needless to say, there would be lots of blood). Also, why should an evil cleric follow such guidelines? Why should he care?

The truth is that Mr. Gyax wanted to flavor the game. By limiting clerics to blunt weapons, or by limiting any class weapon selection, the player is forced to play a character with some character; he is forced to play something that doesn't always swing a long sword.

I propose a simple modifier for clerics (and druids) to return the prowess once shared by clerics and fighters: allow a single-class cleric (or druid) to pick one weapon as the favored weapon when the character is created. When the PC gains a new weapon proficiency, give him +1 to hit and +1 to damage with his favored weapon (as well as the new weapon proficiency.) Since clerics gain a new proficiency every four levels, this would not seriously alter the game balance.

Richard Wiedeman
Claremont CA

I am writing this letter as an ultimate solution to the often contradictory rule of training for levels. The first, most obvious flaw is that one has to find a "name level" character to conduct the training. In most campaigns I have seen, name level personages are usually too busy administering baronies, commanding armies, or doing whatever they do for a living to bother training some lower-level clod. Instead, level training should be as with cavaliers: simply find someone of higher level than the one you are training to reach [with certain modifications to the training costs].

Clerics should have to pay for training only if they train at the temple of another god. The cleric's own temple would have a vested interest in developing a cleric of higher skill; thus, he would only have to pay for his living expenses

during this training period. If the cleric trains at the temple of a god with the same alignment and outlook (or same pantheon and no more than one place removed in alignment), he will be charged only half price, as the other god would have an interest in seeing views similar to his own espoused.

Druids are related to nature and really value gold and such only for what beauty it possesses. No amount of money will help the druid get in better touch with the forces of nature; thus, the cost of training is superfluous. Instead of a flat fee, it would be better to have the druid give any excess funds to the druidic order for the purpose of buying and protecting more woodland areas.

For the fighter, there are two alternatives to paying exorbitant fees for training. The first would only work in a campaign that isn't rushed for time (campaign time, that is). The fighter could enlist in His Majesty's Army for a term of a few months, training with the rest of the dogfaces. At the end of the term, the fighter would be considered trained. Also, where there is no one to train our hero, the character should be allowed to train himself. This self-training costs 100 gp times the level to be attained, per week. At the end of every two-week period, the character saves vs. intelligence on a 1d20. If successful, the character gains his level; if not, he must train another two weeks.

Barbarians are a different case altogether. Their exorbitant experience-point costs would indicate that they train as they go, just as the trainerless rogue ronin must pay extra experience points to advance in *Oriental Adventures*.

The ranger class is by far the most contradictory class with regard to paying for training. Although rangers do not hoard wealth, it is often impossible for them to afford training costs unless they do so. Also, if the ranger trainer remains true to this idea, he would not accept an offered fee. Instead, a ranger trainee's training time should be doubled, to reflect the fact that the trainee is doing the trainer's chores (catching and cooking the meals, etc.). In this case, have the trainer assign the trainee a task to complete once training is over. This could range from taking a letter to someone in a nearby city to going on a major quest. But, whatever it is, let the player know that choosing not to complete the task would have the same effect as knowingly committing an evil act. This is a more reasonable approach to a ranger's training.

Thieves and assassins belonging to a guild should pay a hefty percentage of all that they make in order to be provided with training so they can steal or kill even more for the guild. PCs in most campaigns are not regular members of a guild in any one city, so they should pay the usual price.

If the DM feels a need to milk the players of their money anyway, there are better ways than assessing unreasonable training costs. These methods may come in the form of taxes, rotten exchange rates, or through the thieving of other thieves. You would be surprised what a few

pickpockets (guild-trained, of course) could do to a party that has converted their holdings into gems!

David Van Domelen
Waukesha WI

This letter is not about cover art, although it is in response to Dan Tejes's letter on that subject in DRAGON issue #117. As a long-time woman gamer, I was very surprised to read that "fantasy role-playing games . . . appeal almost exclusively to males." The first time I played an AD&D® game (over ten years ago), the DM and three out of the seven players were women. The balance remained about the same throughout my college years. Interplay between characters was enhanced by the sexual mix, and women brought a great deal of imagination and enthusiasm to the game.

As a thoroughly addicted fantasy reader, I know that such fiction is not written only "by males, for males, and usually about males," as Mr. Tejes says. Even the oldest swords-and-sorcery traditions include women in active roles. Look at the Greek goddesses, the Valkyries, Circe, Calypso, Morgan le Fay, and Nimue. In our own century, examples proliferate. Even that towering patriarch, J.R.R. Tolkien, gave us the shield-maiden Eowyn. At least half of the active fantasy writers whose works I enjoy reading are women. Most of them write about major female characters; often, the male writers do, too.

The fantasy genre, both in fiction and gaming, is not merely a male area of interest. It never was — and while I retain my senses, it never will be.

Kristin Marquardt
Harwood Heights IL

I write this letter due to several comments made by Dan Tejes in DRAGON issue #177. Mr. Tejes lays stereotypes upon three of the most abused subjects of role playing: females, thieves, and wizards.

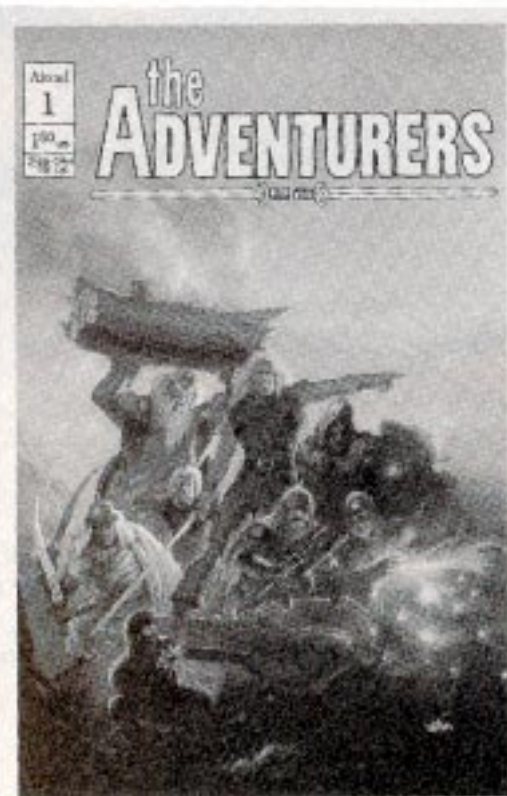
First and foremost, Mr. Tejes attacks the female perspective, "There are almost no traditional female swords and sorcery characters." I would refer Mr. Tejes to Red Sonja, Howard's Belit and Valeria, Offut and Lyon's Tiana of Reme, Jordan's Red Hawk, and Kitiara of DRAGONLANCE® saga fame. These are only a few of the female heroes depicted in swords and sorcery literature. Mr. Tejes goes further, however, to imply that women make neither good thieves nor good wizards, lacking greasy hair and long beards. The female in fact makes a better thief than the opposite sex, possessing higher manual dexterity and also more charm, which appeals to the sometimes blundering male race, giving her a great advantage. Since females are often judged as weak, why would they not wish to indulge in sorcery, a profession which does not require great strength? It would seem, on a proportional bases, more women might be thieves and magic-users than men.

Mr. Tejes also relates, "Thieves are weasel-like, greasy males." My favorite character is a thief, and he is far from this insidious and downgrading depiction. He is a charming, scheming, rogue, well kept and eagerly accepted by his compatriots for, unlike the stereotypical thief, he does not steal from everyone. He is no weasel, and his hair isn't greasy (it doesn't appeal to the ladies or add to one's social grace and acceptability).

"Great wizards have equally great white beards." I have no idea why all great mages are assumed to be bearded, but none of the ones I

(continued on page 44)

THE HOTTEST NEW COMIC!



The first issue of the Adventurers was released in August 1986 and became an instant collectors item. The first printing of issue #1 sells for as high as \$20.

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The first issue of the Adventurers introduces eight new characters ranging from Bladehelm, a greedy and ill-tempered Dwarf from the Iron Reach Mountains, to Nightwind, a female ninja assassin. The characters have supernatural abilities, yet they are humanly vulnerable.

The art is provided by Canadian talents Peter Hsu and Kent Burles. Hsu has studied under the late Wally Wood, and has been favorably compared to Frank Frazetta. His work is incredible!

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Spells for Everyone:

Part II

Incredible nonmagical spells anyone can use!

by Alan Webster

Sooner or later, all gamers are faced with the question: "Well, what the @*%&! do we do now?" For some reason, none of their spells work, their magical items are useless, and their extraordinary abilities aren't all they're cracked up to be. In the past, in situations like this, players were forced to *think*. With the publication of this article, however, this dreadful possibility may be averted.

Why? Because these nonmagical spells are now available for ready reference. Anyone, no matter how bad the situation, may use these spells, and it is doubtful that anyone would want to unless the situation seemed hopeless anyway. So, what have you go to lose? Clasp your hands, fall to your knees, and prepare to cast!

Oh, but first, please note that this article is based upon "Spells for everyone," an article by L. Creede Lambard and Jerry Stoddard, from the April 1983 issue of DRAGON® Magazine (#72), which explains the title. As noted four years ago, anything dumb enough to believe in the effects of these spells deserves what he/she/it gets. Range, area of effect, etc., are all mostly irrelevant, except as noted within the spell descriptions. These spells are called "1/2-level" spells because they are less powerful than first-level spells but better than no spells at all. We now return you to your regularly scheduled spell-casting.

Air-Water-Fire Walk 1/2: These spells have only one purpose, which is to get rid of unwanted associates. Example of use: "Don't worry about that (bottomless pit,

lava flow, flash flood). I'll just cast an (*air, fire, water*) *walk* 1/2 on you. Mumble mumble — there! Off you go!"

Alarm 1/2: When cast, this spell immediately sensitizes all those within the area of effect (hearing distance) to the probability of danger. The material component is a set of vocal chords, and the verbal components are the words "Help! Danger! Aaaaaaaagh!" repeated loudly and often.

Detect Life 1/2: The caster grasps the wrist of the creature in question and holds it for 15 seconds. If the spell-caster is attacked by the creature in question during this time, the thing is alive. If not, the caster should turn to his companions and utter the dreadful words: "He's dead, Jim!"

Detect Poison 1/2: One of the most reliable spells of the lot, this spell is performed by placing a piece of suspect food or material in the mouth of an unwilling hireling. There is seldom any doubt whether the casting was successful or not.

Dream 1/2: Strangely, fighters seem to be the most apt to fall prey to this spell. What usually happens is this: The fighter has just described what he believes is a brilliant plan, in which he and his five companions can fight their way through the City of Brass, slay a death knight riding a huge, ancient, red dragon, and rescue a fair maiden from the clutches of a demi-lich and his younger brother, a vampire archmage. At this point, his friends shake their heads and inform the fighter that he is under the influence of this spell. "In your *dream* 1/2 Bob."

Find Traps 1/2: This spell is almost infallible. Its material components are brave adventurers blundering blindly ahead of the caster, while the verbal components are usually along the line of "I just

know that hoard of gold is ahead! Keep going, you guys, while I watch the rear!" The material components are usually but not always destroyed in the casting.

Fly 1/2: This spell is best held in reserve for a time when the character is in really deep, serious trouble near a cliff or shaft. To cast this spell, take a running start, flap your arms, utter a plea to the ancient god of flight Jurrionimoe (Oriental characters might well call on Bonn-zie), and jump. If you do not begin an immediate plunging descent, it worked.

Haste 1/2: Since haste 1/2 makes waste, a decision was made to exclude the description of this spell, as characters are quite good at wasting things (like time, money, monsters, and each other) without it.

Mind Blank 1/2: This is not so much a spell as the state of mind adopted by most fighters. The verbal component is a simple "Duuuuh."

Move Earth 1/2: The components of this spell are a shovel, a strong back, and a *mind blank* 1/2. This is very useful in trench and tunnel creation.

Neutralize Poison 1/2: After successfully casting *detect poison* 1/2, it's a good idea to follow it with this spell. The somatic component is formed by placing the index finger of one hand as far down the throat as possible — though not someone else's throat. Let them cast their own spells.

Smucker's Transformation 1/2: Upon being faced with the threatening prospect of imminent annihilation, the caster turns into a quivering mass of spineless jelly.

Speak with Animals-Plants-Stone-Monsters-Dead 1/2: The spell-caster may speak to any of the aforementioned creatures or things. However, it is unlikely in the extreme that he or she will receive a reply — or, in the event that an answer is forthcoming, that the caster really wants to hear what the (violently annoyed) object has to say.

Spell Immunity 1/2: This spell is identical to *air-water-fire walk* 1/2 in its uses. For example: "Don't worry about those *fireballs*. I'll cast *fireball immunity* 1/2 on you."

Water Breathing 1/2: This spell is very handy when the caster is suddenly submerged into a large quantity of liquid. The somatic gestures consist of vigorous thrashing motions, performed while voicing the verbal components "Glug! Glug!" The spell duration is something less than one melee round.

Wish 1/2: This is it. The Big One. THE spell. Everyone knows how to cast it, and everyone is familiar with its myriad forms: such castings as "I *wish* 1/2 I'd memorized *feather fall*," or "I *wish* 1/2 I had a weapon that could hit this golem," or even "I *wish* 1/2 I hadn't let you talk me into this." Ω



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The Pun is Mightier Than the Sword

*Verbal repartee for the
jester NPC class*

by **Steven P. King**

The Jester stepped into the street to face his opponent, bells jangling with each step. Women hurried their children inside. The men-folk hid behind the nominal safety of boxes and barrels lining the street. The Jester had an unusually grim look about him as he faced the Merryandrew at the other end of the alley. The air was still. The challenger made the first move. "Draw!" he shouted.

The Jester grinned and pulled out a pad and some charcoal. Quickly, he began to sketch. . . .

In DRAGON® issue #60 (and in the Best of DRAGON Magazine anthology, Volume 4), Roger Moore described the jester NPC class. This class is, shall we say, interesting. However, more than four years have passed since this article was originally printed, and it could use an update and revision.

Spell books

A jester's spell books may not be read by anyone other than another jester, because of the design of the book and the way the spells are inscribed therein. The books are long and narrow (typically 14" x 2"), and firmly bound at the spine. Only a very small number of spells can be kept in each book, due to the rather unique method of writing used. Four spells of first or second level, three spells of third or fourth level, two of fifth or sixth, or just one seventh or eighth level spell can be kept in each book.

To read a spell, the jester holds the book with his thumb on the edge of the pages. He then bends the book, causing the pages to quickly flip by. On the pages are small drawings of a jester in the process of casting a spell. The somatic and material components are pictured very clearly, with the verbal components given in coded "speech balloons" When the pages are flipped properly, a sort of animated cartoon shows how to cast the spell. After a few minutes of flipping, the jester has memorized the spell and can cast it.

Jesters can't read magic works of other classes any more than other classes can read a jester's spell books. The only way they can add to their spell books (without access to another jester's books) is to observe someone actually casting the spell in question. The jester must quickly mark the movements on a scrap of paper, then transfer them in final form to his or her spell book. There is a 3% chance per level of the spell that the jester will "mis-cribe" it, causing it to backfire each time it is used. This chance is reduced by 3% for each additional casting the jester watches. The casting of a first-level spell must be studied only twice to assure an error-free transcription, while an eighth-level spell must be observed nine times to be absolutely sure of it. However, the original article's 1% chance per level of miscasting the spell still applies, no matter how well the jester may have managed to copy it.

Punfighting

Ahh, now we come to the real crux of this article: the jester's ability to sling puns! Phil Foglio touched lightly upon the topic in his "What's New" comic strip in issue #72.

Everybody has the ability to make puns, but the jester class has elevated punning to an art form. Punning is the measure of success for jesters. The jester who can't pun is shunned by his peers, and he soon decides that he doesn't want to be a jester after all. (Maybe he can work and become a lower type of minstrel, like a bard; sure, it's a step down, but at least it's something!)

PLAYERS HANDBOOK II

Rules for punfighting are as follows: Every class has a base 20% chance to pun, plus 1% per level of experience. Bards have a base 40% chance, plus 1% per bard level. Jesters have a base 50% chance, plus 2% per level. Every point of intelligence over 10 gives +1% to punfighting ability.

To resolve a punfight, the attacker must pick a topic. He then has the option of giving either a "straight line" or making a pun. The defender rolls percentile dice. If this roll is equal to or less than his current punfighting ability, he can successfully make a pun on this topic. The attacker must make a returning pun. Each time someone makes a pun (except for the attacker's optional opening pun), his punfighting ability is reduced by 5%. The volley continues until one opponent is "at a loss for words" (fails his ability check). That character then loses the fight.

Instead of merely returning a pun, either opponent can try to change the subject. This opens up a whole new realm of puns and will reset both opponents punfighting abilities to their initial values. This is a difficult maneuver and has cost many a punfighter the battle. To change the subject, the punslinger must declare his intentions *before* rolling to see if he can return the pun. Then he makes an ability roll at one half his current ability score. If he makes the roll, the subject is considered changed. If he fails, he still gets a chance to return the pun, but his ability score (for this volley only) is cut by one half. If this roll is successful, the punfight continues on the same topic. If unsuccessful, it's all over.

At the DM's option, the topic can play a major factor in the fight. If a punslinger is very familiar with a certain topic, the DM may give him or her a bonus (+5% to +15%) to his ability score. Likewise, an unfamiliar topic can cause a penalty to the score. Suddenly, getting on a good topic is of utmost importance!

Another option is the punfighting form of the "critical hit." The "critical hit" is a pun so bad that it stops the opponent dead in his tracks and knocks him speechless. Only true jesters (not any other classes) can achieve a critical hit, and only if one's ability score is currently 35% or higher. In these conditions, rolling an 01 on your ability check means that a jester has come up with the worst pun possible on the subject. The opponent will be unable to respond and the attacking jester will have won the battle. The "pun fallout" from a critical hit can be devastating. Everyone within earshot must save vs. paralyzation or spend the entire next round groaning at the atrocious wordplay. Note that a critical hit in a punfight can turn the tide of a nearby physical battle!

The punfight has one prime significance

for jesters. In order to rise to the 9th (name) level, a Merryandrew must seek out a Jester of greater level and defeat him in a punfight. The Merryandrew initiates the battle and chooses the first topic. If he wins the battle, he can become a full-fledged Jester. If he loses, he must seek a different high-level jester and try yet again. A Merryandrew may not punfight the same Jester more than once in an attempt to gain the level.

I had thought of making the players act out an actual punfight instead of simply rolling dice. This really isn't fair, though. You don't make the players of fighters

actually battle with swords do you? But, if the players want to, go ahead and let them make . . . umm, fools of themselves.

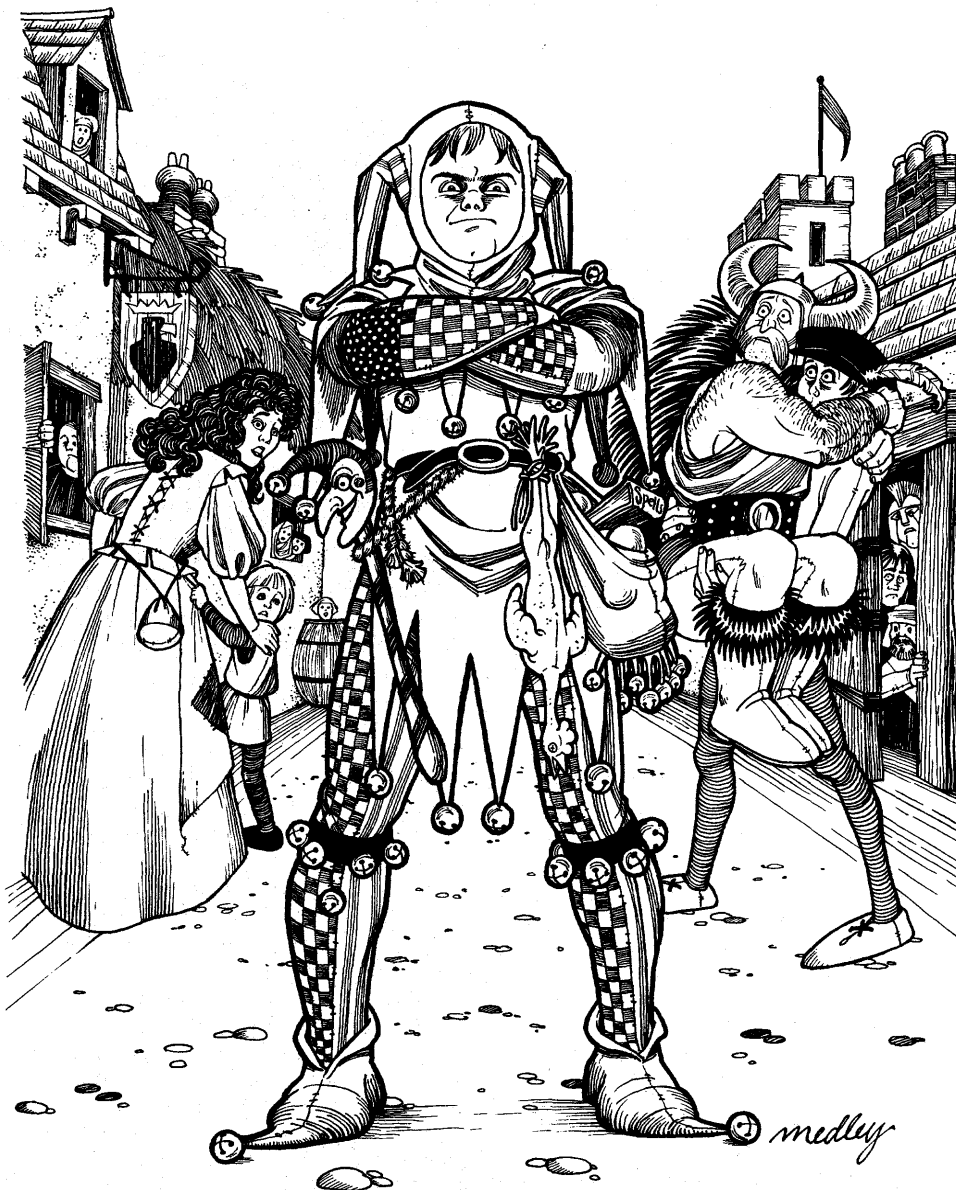
The Merryandrew impatiently waited for the Jester to finish sketching. "Come on! Get the lead out!"

"Just a minute. I'm almost through." He held up the portrait. "There, what do you 'ink'?"

"Looks good. I guess we can chalk one up for you."

The Jester smiled. The young one was good; this could turn out to be a long battle.

Ω





The Ecology of the Picklebug

*Avoiding a "pickle"
with this dangerous cuke-alike*

by Rick Reid

Sominyx sat in his favorite cushioned chair, staring dreamily into the fire. His long, ivory pipe, grown quite cold during his meditations, was still firmly clamped between his yellowed teeth. A long, gnarled finger, ending in a curved nail, lingered on the last passage Sominyx had been reading in the ancient tome resting on his robed lap.

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

"Open up, quick! 'Tis I, Pustule! Hurry! It's trying to kill me!" came a muffled shout from the front door.

Sominyx's eyelids flickered at the interruption. Casting a bemused glance at the thick, wooden door, he shook his wizened head, chuckling softly to himself. "Ah, the impatience of youth," he sighed.

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

"Hey, Sominyx! I'm not kidding! It's right behind me!"

Slowly, the wizard elevated his ancient form from its comfortable resting place and picked at the few specks of lint that had accumulated on his robes. Then, noticing for the first time that his pipe was out, he reached for a thin taper with which to relight it. The pounding continued in the background.

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

"Aaargh! It's killing me! Help! Help! Aaaaarrghhh!"

Taking a deep draw on his newly sparked pipe, Sominyx turned and shuffled toward the door. As his hand reached for the bronze latch, he stopped and caught himself. "It was a rather chilly

night," he mused. Perhaps a shawl would be needed to protect his old bones from the chill that was sure to invade his sanctuary when the portal was opened. "Now where did I put that silly thing?"

Blam . . . blam . . . blam . . .

The knocking and shouting had grown softer now; a few feeble raps were interspersed with muffled cries for help. The wayward shawl recovered, Sominyx bent to the task of opening the door. As usual, the door stuck. "One of these days," he said aloud, "I'll have to oil these hinges." Finally, the stubborn mechanisms broke free, and Sominyx found himself gazing on the sight of young Pustule, lying face down on the front stoop with a hideous creature towering over him.

"Shoo! Shoo!" Sominyx gestured, tossing a **power word**, kill spell at the monster. "Didn't anyone ever teach these creatures any manners?" Then, gazing down at his bloodied visitor, he remarked, "Well, my impetuous friend, are you going to lie there all day or are you going to come in?"

After Pustule had settled into one of the wizards tackier pieces of furniture and was given a lemon to suck for his pain, Sominyx began his dissertation,

"You know, I was just reading about a most remarkable creature, before you so rudely interrupted me — a curious insect called the picklebug."

"Ohhh," Pustule moaned. "Ya got any **potions of healing** laying around?"

"As I was saying, the picklebug begins its life as an egg, laid by the female of the species on the leaves of the dill plant."

"Yeah, yeah, that's great. But what I need to know is, what was that thing that attacked me out there?"

"Oh, that," Sominyx replied, obviously displeased at the interruption. "Just your ordinary garden-variety xaren."

"A xaren!" Pustule gasped, spitting forth a once firmly attached molar. "What in the heck is a xaren?"

"As I was saying," continued Sominyx, pointedly ignoring his battered companion, "the picklebug survives in this egg stage, sometimes for many months, until the dill is picked for the manufacture of pickles. The eggs, being quite small, are not noticed by the picker. When the egg infested dill leaves are introduced into the vinegar-brine pickling solution, the eggs begin to hatch into larvae. The larvae, resembling small green hair, feed on the pickling fluid and begin the first step toward becoming mature picklebugs."

"Picklebug, shmicklebug! Who cares!" cried Pustule angrily. "Listen! This creature ate my magic shield, sneered at my **ring of fire**, and acted like my sword only tickled. What I gotta know is this: How can I kill these things?"

A withering glance from the venerable mage silenced the young fighter. "Once safely secured in a pickle barrel, the larvae continue feeding until, after a span of six months, they become adult picklebugs. In color and appearance, the insects resemble the regular pickles swimming around them, while their size is that of young gherkins."

"That's fascinating," Pustule remarked. "Totally fascinating. Look, I won't take up much of your time. Please, just tell me how I can kill a siren."

"That's *xaren*!" Sominyx spat. "As usual, you weren't paying attention. Now, once the picklebug reaches the adult stage, it begins to feed off the pickles themselves. They say an adult picklebug can consume two quarts of pickles a day. But here comes the good part. What happens when someone reaches into the picklebarrel and accidentally grabs a picklebug instead of the intended pickle? Why, nothing! Picklebugs are actually quite harmless, and are, in fact, rather tasty!"

"Ah, yeah," said Pustule, painfully rising from his seat. "Listen, isn't that my cleric calling me? Well, gotta go."

Sominyx watched with a cocked eye as the black-and-blue warrior slowly opened the door and stepped out into the night. "Hmmmph!" the wizard muttered. "These youngsters; always in a hurry! Couldn't even wait long enough for me to tell him the one thing I do know about xarens — they usually travel in pairs."

The scream lasted only a few moments, until it was borne away on the night wind. Reaching into his vest pocket, Sominyx produced a pouch of tobacco and refilled his pipe. Slowly, the old mage settled back into his chair to continue his reading. Ω

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by Jonathan Edelstein

Dining Out in the Hells

A fast-food guide to the Lower Planes

"I despair, Alryk. We have been wandering the Hells for weeks now and have yet to encounter one of those foul devils. How your black sword must thirst!"

"Aye, Moonbum, they always take to their wings when they hear us screaming like banshees — but we've worse to come, I fear."

"What be this great challenge, Alryk?"

"Ye olde iron rations are running out. We'll have to go back across the Styx for more!"

Alryk's concern is legitimate and widespread. Many an adventurer, in the midst of a successful campaign against the evil devils, has been faced with the problem of a declining food supply. If the character returns to the Prime Material Plane by normal means, the devils will be waiting for him upon his return to the Nine Hells. Interdimensional *teleporting* is dangerous, and *wishes* and such are rare. A cleric can *create food & water* only so many times. Therefore, the best solution seems to be finding food within the Nine Hells themselves.

Recently, a copy of the Hells' gourmet magazine, *For Infernal Consumption*, made its way to the Prime Material Plane. Included in it is a directory of the major eateries of the Nine Hells.

The only reasonably cheap place in the Hells is a chain of restaurants known as Maughdonnell's. Run by a devil known variously as Reynaud or Ronnell, branches of this tavern can be found all over the Infernal Realms. According to the sage Westminster, it lives up to its motto of being "pseudopod-lickin' good!" Finding such an establishment is no great problem — simply look for two sulfur-colored arches linked at the base, like two hills. Indeed, Maughdonnell's is the most commonly patronized restaurant in the Lower Planes.

There is a convenient animal tieup in front of each eatery. However, it is best not leave horses here, since this is where each restaurant gets food for its most finicky eaters. Within the tavern, characters are greeted by a nonservus (see the description at the end of the article). Anyone under 7' tall is seated at a children's table, where he is able to get a small prize such as a costume hellstone with an order of 10 gp or more. Children's dishes are generally accompanied by a side order of khrezdal stalks and a pureed mugzhuc shake — larger beings and adults must order separately.

The staples of this fast-food chain are stench kow burger and filet o' sahuagin. If



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a character does not specify that the burger be from a steak, he may develop violent cramps for two days (save vs. poison for one day, with effects in either case as per the spell *symbol of pain*). Steak burgers cost 5 gp above and beyond the base price of 8 gp for "normal" burgers. Kherezdal stalks, a powerful laxative, are available on the side for 4 gp. As drinks go, cheap beer (2 gp per gallon-sized mug) is the only alternative to the 3-gp, germ-carrying mugzhuc shakes. Items beyond this selection are only available with a bribe of 20 gp, and they necessitate a wait of 1-6 hours.

Diabolic regulars at these places do not take kindly to human intrusion. Since all weapons must be checked on entry, fights are finished using magic and food. Mugzhuc shakes which hit targets in a 30' range will blind them for one round and cause 2 hp damage in the same round from violent retching (save vs. poison to avoid). However, anyone between the attacker and the target is splattered for half effect, whether or not the shake hits. Rock-hard stench kow burgers hit as sling bullets (90' range), and the teeth in a filet o' sahuagin can be thrown as normal darts. If magic is used, restaurant prop-

erty must not be harmed. Otherwise, two nonservi attack each offending character and throw them out into the local garbage pit. The unfortunate adventurers then take 2-8 hp damage from sharp bones before passing out for 3-12 hours from the smell (no save).

Though some knowledgeable sages call Maughdonnell's "Juiblex's home away from home," Westminster insists that it is the Nine Hells' best choice for hungry human adventurers. Indeed, for those without the means to go to fancy places like "13" it is the only choice.

RONNELL MAUGHDONNELL Count of the Hells

FREQUENCY *Unique*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS -4

MOVE: 18"

HIT DICE: 116 *hit points*

% IN LAIR: 10%

TREASURE TYPE: *H*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type or 2-9/2-9*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 80%

INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: *L (13' tall)*

PSIONIC ABILITY: 208

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/All*

Ronnell, or Reynaud, known as the Hells' answer to the Slime Lord, is the owner and director of the Hells' only fast-food service. He desperately wants a higher status as lieutenant to an arch-devil, and he will do almost anything to become one. He customarily fights with a large +2 red sausage which does 7-32 hp damage on a successful hit. He can create a 10'-diameter pool of slime on command that acts as *oil of slipperiness*, and he radiates an aura of *fast-food mania* that causes characters to save vs. spells to become extremely hungry (as per a *chime of hunger*) and extremely silly (as per a *chaos* spell, save that all attacks made are totally ineffective).

Ronnell can apply the following spell-like powers, one at a time and one per round: pyrotechnics, fireball, dispel magic, animate dead, jump, haste (self), blink, hold person or monster, tongues, teleport, and (fulfill another's) limited wish. Once per day, he can use a symbol of discord. Ronnell can summon 1-4 nonservi with a 55% chance of success, and he regenerates 1 hp every two rounds. He is totally immune to poisons and acids.



NONSERVUS (lesser devil)

FREQUENCY: *Uncommon*

NO. APPEARING: 2-8

ARMOR CLASS: 1

MOVE: 3"

HIT DICE: 7+2

% IN LAIR: 65%

TREASURE TYPE: *Nil*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-12

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 25%

INTELLIGENCE: *Low*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: *L (7½' tall)*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

The race of nonservi staffs the great Maughdonnell fast-food chain. They are only found working there or gathering supplies from the lands near each restaurant (such as from hitching posts, sleeping



bags, etc.). In the latter case, 4-16 of these devils will be present. In their lair, treasure is in the form of a cash box containing type B monies. Nonservi can bite, but they also attack by throwing boiling oil, and they are immune to all forms of heat and poison.

Nonservi can use the following spell-like powers, one at a time, once per round: command, produce flame, pyrotechnics, telekinese 3,000-gp weight, and summon another nonservus with a 25% chance of success, twice per day. They regenerate 1 hp per round.

Nonservi appear to be lizard-headed humanoids wearing bright-colored uniforms. These uniforms have tags on them stating each devil's name (which are always wrong). Nonservi have the equivalent of 18/00 strength and are able to fight unarmed with great facility. It is rumored that nonservi are either the reincarnated spirits of evil cooks or are abishai who offended Tiamat.

Ω



Not Found In Any Stores!

Nonstandard magical items to keep the DM happy

by James MacDougall

Today, most AD&D® game players have their own copies of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and they have the "Explanations and Descriptions of Magic Items" section (known affectionately as "the shopping list") all but memorized. Given a smart DM, however, players may find that not every magical item performs the way it's "supposed to." Some nonstandard items might find their ways into the campaign; as a result, the characters must discover the items' functions through traditional experimentation (such as handing the things to an NPC and standing *way* back). Other items may appear to be standard treasures, leading the players to become overconfident (the poor dears). What follows is by no means comprehensive, but it is a suggested list of items that player characters may find in their dungeons. The experience-point values for these items (as well as gold-piece sale values) depend entirely upon the whims of the DM.

The Rod of Lordly Might-or-Might-Not

This item looks exactly like the *rod of lordly might* from the *DMG* and will, in fact, function the same as the standard item, but only 50% of the time. Otherwise, the *rod of lordly might-or-might-not* performs in the following manner:

1. Should the rods wielder desire the

mace +2 function, the rod grows a stylized hand with fingers bent, suitable for scratching itches in hard-to-reach spots.

2. If the *battle axe* +4 function is called upon, the rod grows a flat, flexible end, which is +4 versus small, flying insects (doing 1 hp damage at most).

3. If the *spear* +3 is activated, the rod shrinks to a length of 3" — the perfect size for removing things lodged between the character's teeth.

4. An attempt to use the rod for a climbing pole causes it to bury itself 3' in the ground, requiring some digging to extricate it.

5. Trying to force open a door with the rod results in the rod dancing noisily on end for a melee round.

6. If the rod is used to find magnetic north, it points southwest or east (50% chance of either).

7. The *flaming sword* + 1 option, if called upon, results in a flower sprouting from the handle instead.

8. If a charge is used to paralyze an opponent, the rods wielder suffers a fit of sneezing for 1d6 rounds.

9. The rod will not cause *fear* in an opponent; rather, a small cloud appears over the wielder's head and rains on him for a round.

10. Finally, instead of draining 2d4 hp from an opponent, the rod bestows 2d4 gp upon the opponent. Naturally, the gold comes from the wielder's purse (other coins or valuables may be substituted).

Note that these last three undesirable effects drain a charge from the rod just as the desired effects would. Any attempt to

sell a *rod of lordly might-or-might-not* as if it were a *rod of lordly might* will be viewed as a breach of alignment for good characters.

Pipes of the Brewers

Each round that this wooden pipe is played, a character may turn a gallon of water or any other liquid into ale. The quality of the ale depends on the tune played (these tunes are jingles used by the particular breweries to sell their products). While this would seem indispensable to a post-dungeon (or more appropriately, an after-bar) party, there is an unpleasant side effect to possession of the *pipes of the brewers*: The pipe's owner suffers increasing dipsomania. Upon finding the pipe, a character has a 10% chance of succumbing to a terrible urge to drink himself into a stupor. This increases by 10% each day the pipe is kept. Thereafter, the character begins putting on a lot of weight, and the character's nose turns a bright shade of red. The dipsomania can only be cured by a *remove curse*, *heal*, or *wish*.

The Manual of Trendy and Commercially Lucrative Exercise

This magical tome is of particular use to any former owner of the *pipes of the brewers*. The manual details an exercise program created by the sage Fondah. Any out-of-shape character (i.e., one with strength and constitution scores less than 10) who follows the manual's instructions for just three months gains one point to his strength and constitution scores. Not only that, but the character looks good and feels great. However, failure to exercise at least two hours per day causes the immediate loss of all benefits, which cannot then be regained.

Onyx Ball

This 1'-diameter, black sphere acts just like a *crystal ball*, but is only capable of *clairaudience* since the ball is nearly impossible to see through. Ten percent of all *onyx balls* are actually inert, but have *Nystul's magic aura* cast upon them anyway for effect. A closer examination of such balls reveals three finger-sized holes in close proximity to each other.

Toothpicks of Lightning

These toothpicks are usually found in the possession of a seemingly unarmed opponent. The dungeon party may encounter a lone, big, and ugly fighter leaning against a door, with no weapons in sight. As the party approaches, the fighter arrogantly ignores them, slowly cleaning his teeth with a wooden pick. Suddenly, the fighter flips his toothpick at the PCs. In

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flight, just before it strikes, the toothpick is transformed into a 30'-long bolt of lightning, as per a *javelin of lightning*. *Toothpicks of lightning* appear otherwise to be 3"-long slivers of wood. There are up to five such slivers in a pack, and each comes individually wrapped for safety and comfort. Please remember that there is a 1% chance per round that the toothpick "goes off" if used as a tooth-cleaning implement — an interesting variation on Russian roulette. In this event, the user gains no saving throw against its effects, taking double damage from the bolt.

Staff on Strike-ing

These staves are very emotionally sensitive. They act as standard staff of *strike-ings*, but only as long as they feel they are being treated fairly. If a character wields a *staff on strike-ing* in three consecutive melee rounds without using another weapon (to give the staff a break), the staff protests. Leaping from the character's hands, the staff drops to the floor (only a *bend bars* roll will keep it in the character's hands). A placard then materializes on the staff, reading "[User's name here] unfairly degrades and exploits the stave

proletariat!" (or something similar). The staff cannot be used until the character allows the staff to rest for 2-16 melee rounds, after which the entire process may be repeated, *ad infinitum*. A second character may be needed to arbitrate the dispute between the staff's user and the staff, if the DM makes the staff intelligent and verbal in the manner of intelligent swords.

Gem of Not-Too-Brightness

As far as anyone can tell, this gem is just like the *gem of brightness* we've all read about, except for one small detail. Every time the gem is used, the user loses one point of intelligence. The loss of points is, of course, quite painless, and the character will not be aware that anything is wrong. The rest of the party, however, begins to notice things. Spells are forgotten, items are misplaced, boots are put on the wrong feet, and, ultimately, affected characters are unable to recall their names.

All intelligence points return 2-8 days after the gem is discarded. A *remove curse* is necessary to get rid of the gem. A character's intelligence can be lowered to an absolute minimum score of 1 at

worst, but can go no lower than that. However, if a character is lowered to one point of intelligence before discarding the gem, the gem discards the character. In other words, it teleports to another location where a smarter character is sure to find it. When this happens, a *wish*, *limited wish*, or a *restoration* spell is needed to return the PC's lost intelligence points.

Manual of Plush Golems

This magical tome permits a magic-user to create the smallest of the five varieties of golem, the cute and cuddly plush golem. A plush golem is an overstuffed facsimile of a furry animal (usually a bear) animated by special enchantments. Each plush golem has 5 hp, attacks as a 1-HD monster, and has an AC of 8. Plush golems attack with a claw-claw-bite routine, but because of their size, they only do 1-2/1-2/1-3 hp damage. Plush golems take damage from normal weapons, but since they have no bones to break, they suffer no damage from blunt weapons. It costs 5,000 gp to construct a plush golem, and the manual lasts until 2-5 of them are made. After this point, the manual then turns yellow and the writing fades to illegibility. Some wags call plush golems "attack teddies." Ω

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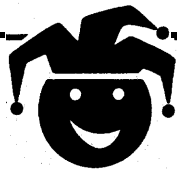
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Urban Blight Made Easy

*Help stamp out predictable
town encounters!*

by Rick Reid

"Okay, DM, we're in town. What do we see?"

"Well, let's see —there's an inn . . . and a tavern, and a stable, and a trader's shop, and a . . . a . . . uh, what else do you need?"

"Zzzzz."

Has this ever happened to you? Sure it has! Well, next time your players enter a new town, throw one of these establishments at them as a change of pace to the "same-old-shop blues."

Shippy's Bait and Tackle

Who would guess that the decrepit lean-to squatting like a bloated toad at the edge of the rotting wharf was in fact the residence of the infamous Cap'n Shippy? Everyone, that's who, which is why most decent people give the place and Cap'n Shippy (AC 10; MV 12"; F1/TI; hp 6; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 with lead-weighted club; S 8, I 14, W 15, D 9, C 8, Ch 4, Co 5; SA caustic comments about characters and their mothers; AL N) a wide berth.

Perhaps it's the four leaky rowboats tied to the dock, their bottoms rotted from disuse, advertised for rent at 2 gp per day. Possibly it's the charming, hand-lettered signs covering missing windowpanes, proclaiming "No Wimmen Allowed," "No Gold, No Bait," and "Closed." Or maybe it's

the human skeleton tied upside-down by its feet and labeled "The One that Got Away" that gives Shippy's its quaint atmosphere. But don't be fooled by outward appearances, for inside, Shippy's is a veritable cornucopia of fishing paraphernalia. Witness the shelves stacked high with jars and bottles of exotic bait (some of its origins best left unknown) and a multitude of hooks (ranging from the microscopic feather hook to the half-ton "Thunderbarb," whose purpose can only be guessed).

And talk about worms! Shippy's has every variety known to Mother Nature. Among the listed varieties are dew worms, shrew worms, dead worms, red worms, head worms, green worms, bean worms, in-between worms, sand worms, land worms, hand worms, purple worms (just kidding), wigglers, squiggles, squirmers, crawlers, and, of course, the rare and special speckled spackle worm.

For those characters not been lucky enough to have already visited this establishment, their first meeting with the proprietor is sure to be a moment to remember. Shippy appears to be in his sixties, although his actual age is unknown. He has one good eye, which he fixes steadily on his customers until they either buy something or leave. (The other is a glass eye, which Shippy rolls on the countertop when he wishes to annoy a slow shopper.) His thin mouth is fixed in a perpetual frown, and long strands of white hair protrude from his ears and nostrils, perhaps compensation for the lack of same upon his head. His posture resembles a

question mark, and he walks with a pronounced limp, leaning heavily on a cane constructed from a stuffed swordfish.

Shippy is always cursing something or someone, usually in a very loud voice. He pretends to be quite deaf, berating everyone to "Speak up!" even if they haven't spoken. In truth, his hearing is quite sharp, and he is able to overhear quite a few conversations that would not take place otherwise. This makes Shippy an excellent source of information, if one is prepared to pay his outrageous prices for bait and sit through several hours of ridiculously exaggerated sea yarns. Rumor has it that Shippy's place is host to illegal worm fights on Friday nights, but this allegation has never been proven.

Madame Zuzu's Bread and Fortunes

The sign in the dusty window of this little shop proclaims "Madame Zuzu — Fortune Teller — Sees All — Knows All — Fresh Bread Baked Daily." Inside is a small, round table surrounded by four chairs. On the table are a crystal ball and a large incense burner which gives off an odor of burning leaves. Madame Zuzu (AC 10; MV 6"; T2; hp 7; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 with thrown object, 1-2 with bread loaf; S 9, I 12, W 14, D 7, C 14, Ch 4, Co 4; AL CN) is a skinny, hook-nosed old crone with protruding chin hairs and a rather prominent wart in the middle of her forehead. She wears a multicolored turban and a long black robe decorated with silver stars. Madame Zuzu can usually be found seated at the table. A curtain at the back of the room leads to a small kitchen and fireplace where bread is baked.

Speaking in a thick accent, Madame Zuzu tells the fortune of anyone who pays her a 1 gp consultation fee. This reading is accompanied by a great deal of mumbo-jumbo and hand waving over the phony crystal ball (actually an inverted mixing bowl). Roll 1d12 for one of the following (faked) fortunes:

1. You will embark upon a long journey. When you arrive, you will have reached your destination.

2. You are about to misplace something very precious to you. When you find it, it will be in the last place you look.

3. I see a young man/woman in your future. He/she will be wearing matching stockings. Celebrate with some baked goods.

4. New enterprises may bring misfortune. Remember: Initiative comes to those who wait. Buy some bread soon.

5. You will succeed where others have failed, if you learn the meaning of success and failure.

6. All is not as it seems. Trust no one but yourself . . . and Madame Zuzu's hot muffins.

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7. An old friend will be the bearer of glad tidings. Invite him in and give him biscuits.

8. You will reap what you sow and sew what you rip.

9. You will live to a ripe old age, unless you are killed.

10. You will receive your greatest wish, then not want it.

11. A fool and his money are soon parted. One gold piece, please.

12. Beware the green monkey. He barks at midnight.

After the reading, Madame Zuzu declares that "the ball has gone cloudy," and tries to sell the patron a loaf of her stale bread (5 cp). If she is asked a direct question about present or future events, she replies with either "Your question has much merit. The spirits smile on your inquisitive nature," or "The path you travel may well lead to that which you seek," whichever is more appropriate. If the group questions her authenticity as a medium, she orders them out of her shop, threatening them with the dreaded curse of the *slobbering* camels and a large loaf of French bread.

Realm of Junk

An 8'-high wooden fence encloses this half-acre junkyard. The sign on the front gate proclaims "Realm of Junk — His Royal Highness King Woofer, Ruler of the World — No Peasants Allowed." The gate is not locked, but a wooden board nailed across the opening at chest level forces anyone attempting to enter to bow. Inside are piles of trash and junk of every description filling the entire half acre. There is a gold-painted, one-room shack to the left of the entrance. A line of old shields embedded in the ground forms a path from the entrance to the house.

An examination of the shack reveals the paint to be cracked and peeling. There are two suits of dented battle armor stationed on either side of the front door. The front window is draped in tattered velvet. Above the door is a wood-burned sign bearing a crown and six X marks.

Inside the shack, seated on a throne made of old armor, barrels, pipes, horse shoes, and other odds and ends, sits King Woofer himself (AC 9; MV 12"; F3; hp 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 with pipe; S 8, I 14, W 3, D 9, C 11, Ch 11, Co 12; AL CN). Woofer is quite mad. He actually believes that his junkyard is the entire sum of the civilized world and that he is its ruler. He wears a thick, patchwork robe and a crown composed of 41 gold coins welded together. His scepter is a piece of lead pipe mounted with a stuffed piglet head. His coat-of-arms, painted on a shield hung behind the throne, shows a mangy rat emerging from a battered chamber pot with two

crossed chicken bones above and beneath the legend "Dis Gust, Dis Grace, Dis Place." Lining the walls of the shack are suits of armor in various positions and states of disrepair. These are Woofer's "subjects," and he treats them as if they were alive. He considers anyone who enters his domain as a barbarian and treats him accordingly. King Woofer expects everyone to bestow upon him all the respect and subservience his position demands.

The coin of his realm is junk, and he expects all visitors to bestow a small gratitude to approach his presence. All the locals know of his condition and transact all their junk business without visiting the throne. If they have something to unload, they merely bring it in and dump it; if they wish to purchase something, they search for what they need and leave food or clothing in exchange.

If the group does not go along with the king's eccentric behavior or makes him mad in any way, he screams for the prince. A low growl from behind the party follows. Standing in the doorway, wearing a spiked collar and a tin crown, is the biggest, meanest junkyard dog the party has ever seen. Prince (AC 6; MV 15"; HD 3; hp 15; #AT 3; Dmg 2-8/1-4; AL NE) springs to the attack, attempting to claw away and lock his slaving jaws around a character's neck. He is not rabid, but his nails are filthy; any scratches have a 60% chance of becoming infected (as per a giant rat's bite) if not properly treated.

Searching the house reveals nothing of value except the crown, which is made of actual gold. Any weapons or armor found are in no condition to be used. If the PCs choose to search the junkyard first, they are able to find almost any item they desire after careful searching, though none of these items are usable. There is also a 60% chance per round that the party encounters Prince, who presents himself in the characters' path. If he smells fear, or if the party moves to attack, he springs. If the characters avoid him or try to be friendly, he backs off but follows them until they leave, growling all the while.

Gristle's Butcher Shop

This small, stone building with a stuffed pig in the front window is the domain of Gristle the butcher (AC 10; MV 12"; F4; hp 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 with bloody meat cleaver; S 15, I 10, W 7, D 12, C 15, Ch 6, Co 6; AL N). Links of greasy sausage are draped freely about the store, and several unmarked barrels of disgusting animal parts are stationed throughout. A grimy glass display case half blocks the curtained back wall. The back of the store consists of a combination cutting room, storage room, and living quarters. The entire place reeks of blood and entrails.

When anyone enters the shop (signaled by a tinkling bell), Gristle emerges from the back room and stands behind the case, cleaver in hand, glaring at the customer. The meat displayed in the case is very old and not very appetizing. Gristle is not really a good butcher; he just likes to cut up animals. He calls everything "meat" and charges the same price for all his cuts (1 sp per pound). Gristle has a tendency to drool a lot and punctuates his speech by waving his cleaver.

The butcher offers to buy any extra horses or pack animals the party may have. If they refuse, he, tries to sell them a hog's head he has in one of the barrels, claiming it would make good soup. If the group spurns all his generous offers, he reaches behind the counter and retrieves a dented, white metal mask, which he places over his face. He then dances around, waving his cleaver and shouting unintelligible curses until the party flees.

Bobo Watson's Chicken Emporium

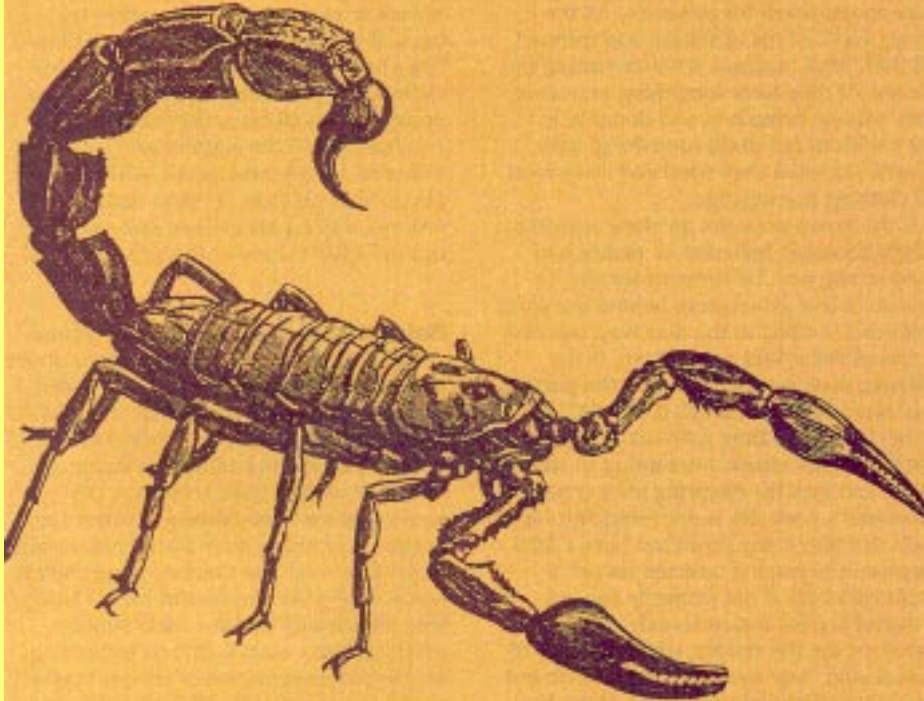
The first thing most visitors notice about this establishment is the 12'-tall wooden chicken welcoming them from the roof with open wings. This giant clucker announces to one and all (with a magic mouth) that they have arrived at the world-famous Bobo Watson Chicken Emporium. Sprawling over a hundred acres of prime gravel, the Chicken Emporium is home to over 33 varieties of fowl. Visitors may choose any bird for their Sunday meal, and may even watch its beheading on the premises by one of several professional axemen. Local children, employed as chicken chasers to catch the chosen chick, have to be fast and must possess a keen eye, for over 5,000 chickens call this ranch their home.

The gift shop boasts such delightful surprises as down pillows and comforters, hand-painted eggs, egg candles, books of delicious egg recipes, feathers for hats and headbands, and, for the kiddies, Junior Chicken Rancher badges and the amazing ship-in-an-egg.

Every day at noon, there is a demonstration of raw egg juggling. Kids love to watch the chick feedings at 10:00 A.M., 2:00 P.M., and 5:00 P.M. The admission price is only 6 cp. Chicken dinner prices vary.

No one has ever seen Bobo Watson. Some say he was a poor chicken farmer who struck it rich and now lives the life of a recluse. Others attest that he fell into a vat of mash and was pecked to death several years ago. Still others claim that there is no Bobo Watson — that it is a fictitious name dreamed up by a group of merchants to help sell chickens. Who knows? To this day, the mystery of Bobo Watson remains just that: a mystery. Ω

Scorpion Tales



*Realistic encounters
with a deadly desert dweller*

by Arlen P. Walker

"As you crest the hill, you see a giant scorpion ahead of you. It is facing away from you, seeming to gaze off into the distance."

"I'll put on my *ring of invisibility* and sneak past it."

Is this possible? I thought so, until I came across the December 1984 issue of *Scientific American*. In that issue, Philip Brownell writes about the way sand scorpions detect their prey. Mr. Brownell's article was not aimed at fantasy gamers, so he didn't mention giant scorpions nor any of the other concepts which interest referees. Still, we can glean from his article some new ideas which make giant scorpions more interesting.

Scorpions use neither their visual or aural senses to detect their prey. Instead, they use the vibrations of the sand underneath them. Small sensors on their legs pick up and measure the strength of vibrations; a scorpion uses the minute differences in these vibrations picked up by each leg to locate its prey. When the scorpion has determined the distance and direction of its prey, it charges toward it with pincers extended.

Mr. Brownell gives about 30 centimeters as the maximum distance a scorpion can sense vibrations — a normal-sized scorpion, of course. A North American scorpion averages about 5 centimeters in length, which means the maximum detection distance is about six times the scorpion's length. At a distance of about twice its length, the scorpion is almost perfect in

determining both direction and distance to a victim.

Mr. Brownell's experimental data points to a method for running encounters with giant scorpions. Up to a distance of about three times its length, the scorpion will always move to within a few feet of its target before attacking. If it makes a detection roll (1-90 on percentile dice), and if it rolls a hit against an unarmored foe (AC 10) at the end of its charge, its pincers have bumped against (but not grasped) its foe, and it may attack normally.

If its prey is farther than three times its length, the scorpion will move in the general direction of its prey up to that distance. (Generally speaking, the farther away the prey is, the more tentative the scorpion's movement toward it will be.) In any case, if the scorpion cannot strike at its prey after it has moved, it pauses for a segment, waiting for another vibration, and reacts to it using the above guidelines.

Since the scorpion uses vibrations, rather than sight or sound, to track its prey, it is immune to most camouflaging devices. Invisibility will not even confuse a scorpion, as it attacks only if its pincers have touched its prey by the end of the charge toward the prey's expected location.

Likewise, tunneling underneath the scorpion gives no protection. The scorpion still realizes a character's presence and can dig the character out with its large pincers. It seems obvious that a scorpion is almost impossible to surprise by any attacker who travels upon or under the ground.

The scorpion's detection ability should be immune to any attacks which directly affect any of the senses except touch, as that is the sense a scorpion's vibration sensors use. The scorpion's attack may be slightly affected by blinding attacks (-1 or -2 to hit, depending on the success or failure, respectively, of the initial detection roll), but sonic attacks should not affect it at all.

If a scorpion is immune to all these things, then what will affect it? It should be penalized **10%** on its detection roll for each leg which is missing or crippled, as the loss of sensory data from that leg impairs its ability to locate by vibration. Also, if several adjacent legs are incapacitated, the scorpion will not be able to accurately detect the direction of prey which is at a 90° angle to its missing legs.

These ideas about scorpions should make for much more interesting and creative play. A scorpion is the ideal creature for demonstrating to a pesky thief or magic-user that invisibility is a vastly overrated ability.

So, the proper response to the opening situation is:

"The scorpion turns and runs directly toward you, pincers extended and stinger in the air, preparing to strike."

And the player's response is . . .

"RUNAWWWAAAYYYY!!!"

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SAGE ADVICE

by Skip Williams

If you have any questions on the games produced by TSR, Inc., write to:

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Please do not expect a personal reply, as we no longer have the time to make them. However, we will do our best to answer as many questions in this column as possible.

D&D® Companion Set

There are no costs given for the new armors introduced in the Companion rules.

Scale mail armor costs 30 gp, and banded mail costs 50 gp.

Can player characters create holy water? How is it done?

This is up to the DM. Generally, this requires a large, specially blessed receptacle and blessed containers. The actual creation requires casting several spells, including *purify food and water*, *bless*, and create water. The exact cost of the implements and the capacity of the receptacle is up to the DM, but keep in mind holy water's standard cost of 25 gp per vial.

Could a group of characters share rulership of a dominion?

A group of characters could jointly rule a dominion, but if the characters are not all of the same alignment, the dominion's confidence level will suffer. The confidence level will also decrease each time the characters argue, as the subjects will not be confident when they see their rulers bickering. The confidence level will really take a plunge if the joint rulers contradict each other on dominion matters.

Since paladins and avengers can cast spells, can they also use wands and staves?

Magical items do not require spellcasters; they require certain character classes. A paladin or avenger is still a fighter and cannot use an item usable only by a cleric, druid, or magic-user.

What is an umber hulk? It's mentioned as a monster with a gargantuan form.

The umber hulk is a monster from the AD&D® game. The hulker, from AC9, Creature Catalogue, page 70 (under the heading "Hook Beast") is similar to the umber hulk.

What happened to the will o' wisp?

The will o' wisp was dropped from the Companion rules due to lack of space; an oversight caused it to be retained in the monster heading on page 28 of the *Dungeon Masters Companion*. See the *Creature Catalogue*, pages 80-81, "Wychglow," for the will o' wisp's statistics.

The War Machine gives a combat result modifier for a force that is immune to enemy attacks. Wouldn't such a force simply win?

The modifier is +150, enough to win in many (if not most) cases. You still have to go through the computation, however, in order to determine casualties and fatigue. Also, there is usually some way for the opponents to harm the force. Lycanthropes, for example, are not immune to fire. It is also possible to defeat a force purely through positioning or maneuvering. A horde of lycanthropes might not be able to take a castle, for example.

How do you create a gargantuan manticore?

Just apply the standard rules from page 32 of the *DMC*. Each of the gargantuan manticore's spikes inflict four times the normal damage and have double range.

What does a potion of super healing do?

A *potion of super healing* cures 6-21 (3d6 +3) hp damage.

If druids don't like metal, what do they do with all the coins they find while adventuring?

Druids are not restricted as to the types of treasure that they can keep. A druid will, however, convert metal treasure to "natural" forms of wealth — gems, ivory, etc. — as soon as possible. This makes sense in terms of the druids' inclination toward nature and is also logical, since this type of wealth is more portable and easier to conceal in the druid's woodland home.

Drolems are immune to first through fourth level spells, so pro-

tection from evil cannot affect any of them, right?

A *protection from evil* spell will work against a drolom, its immunity to first through fourth level spells notwithstanding. See the *Master Players' Book*, page 8.

I'm having difficulty reading table 10c on page 46 of the DMC.

Read the chart as follows: leather, first column; scale or chain mail, second column; banded or plate mail, third column; shield, fourth column. The fifth and sixth columns give the magical plus of the item and the percentage chance of a special ability. Table 10a provides the size, 10b provides the type of armor, and 10d determines special abilities, if any, of the armor or shield found.

How about some more information on interplanar travel? For instance, can characters breathe on the Ethereal Plane? What is found there?

Also, how about some information on wormholes? How do wormholes affect movement and combat? Can they be spotted from the Ethereal Plane? If so, how do you break into the wormhole from that plane?

The whole area of interplanar travel was left deliberately vague so that individual DMs could custom-create their own multiverses. The Ethereal Plane, for example, could be a shadow of the Prime Material Plane, complete with ethereal buildings and whatnot, or it could be something else. Characters can breathe on the Ethereal Plane; and usually do not get hungry.

Movement along a wormhole depends on what is in it. It's difficult to go any direction but "with the flow" in an earth wormhole. Otherwise, one can fly, or walk (or climb) along the sides. How easy this is depends on the material in the hole, the speed it is flowing, and the direction you wish to go. Combat in a wormhole poses similar problems. Missile fire is usually difficult, if not impossible, since the missiles get caught in the 'hole's flow and are carried away. Spell-casting and melee might be possible if the characters have some way to keep from being carried away with the flow of matter in the wormhole. There is no up or down in a wormhole. Exact combat penalties are up to the DM. Wormholes themselves are detectable only from the Ethereal Plane (the outside of the hole is seen) or from the planes with which they connect (the vortexes, or the inside of the hole, is seen). There is a vortex at each connection point which either sucks in or spews out matter. The strength and volume of the flow varies from wormhole to wormhole. A wormhole can only be entered at the "ends" on the Prime Material or Elemental Planes, through the vortexes; one cannot break into a wormhole from the Ethereal Plane.

In general, each plane has its own universe. How these universes interact with each other is up to the DM. Ω

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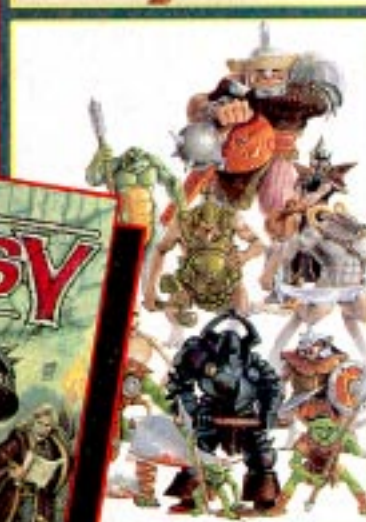
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First Impressions are Deceiving

Beware of this magical thief – the charlatan!

by David A. Bellis

Since the dawn of history, there has existed a class of people who try to cheat others by selling worthless products. These people are known as charlatans, and they exist even today. In an AD&D® game setting, charlatans sell fake medicines and potions, and cheat gullible people out of their hard-earned gold. The charlatan as an NPC character class is an interesting being who could wreak havoc on naive PCs.

Minimum ability scores

In order to qualify for the charlatan subclass of thief, a character must have the minimum ability scores listed in Table 1. If the combination of intelligence and dexterity is 32 or above, 10% is added to the character's earned experience points.

Racial limitations

Charlatans are able to cast magical spells of a limited sort. Since only humans, elves, half-elves, and gnomes have the ability to cast magical spells of any kind, only these races can qualify for the charlatan subclass. To find the maximum level attainable by race, add intelligence and dexterity scores, and consult the Table 2.

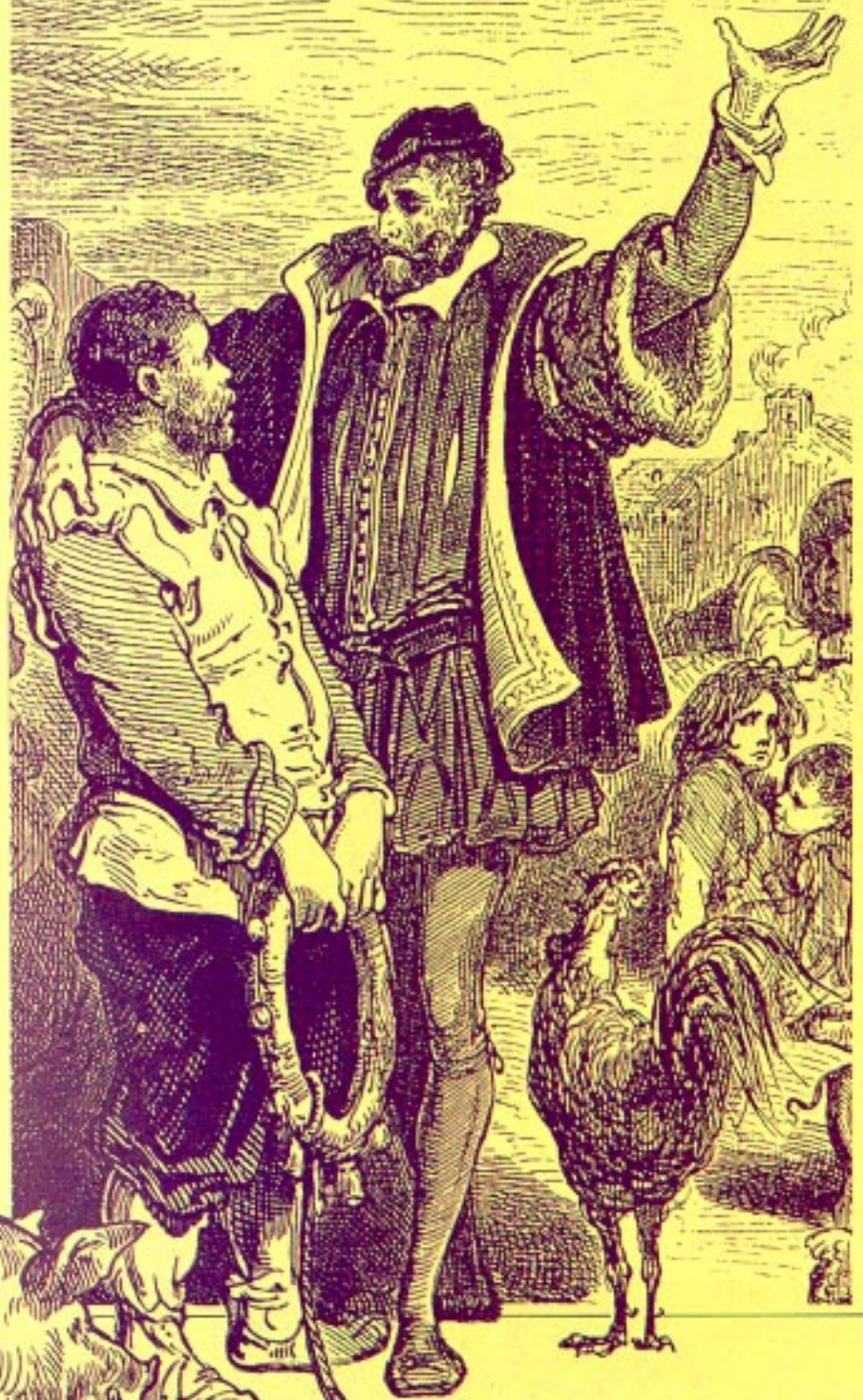
Combat

Charlatans are weak in physical combat potential, having 1d4 + 1 HD per level. At 11th level and above, the charlatan gains one hp per level. Level advancement for charlatans is shown on Table 3.

Charlatans can only wear armor which can be concealed beneath their clothing (thus giving the charlatan the appearance of an unarmored magic-user). Acceptable armor types for this class are listed in Table 7. Weapons which a charlatan is allowed to use are also listed in Table 7. It should be noted that a charlatan will never openly carry a short sword or sap; such weapons are typically concealed in a wagon or cart.

Spell-casting

Charlatans have limited magical power, being able to cast only certain cantrips. Although they eventually gain a great number of these cantrips, they never have offensive or defensive spell capability of any real power. Charlatans employ their cantrips craftily, in a manner that makes the spells appear to be mighty works of spell-casting. Remember that, to most uneducated NPCs (and many PCs), *any* magic will appear to be great magic.



Charlatans are able to cast the following cantrips:

Useful: *dampen*, *exterminate*, and *sprout*.

Reversed: *hairy* and *wilt*.

Legerdmain: *change*, *distract*, *hide*, *mute*, *palm*, and *present*.

Person-affecting: *belch*, *blink*, *cough*, *nod*, *scratch*, *sneeze*, *twitch*, and *wink*.

Personal: *bluelight*, *firefinger*, *smokepuff*, and *tweak*.

Haunting-sound: *groan*, *moan*, *rattle*, *tap*, and *whistle*.

Illusion: *colored lights*, *haze*, *rainbow*, and *two-d'lusion*

Charlatans memorize their spells quickly, having merely to glance at their spell books for one round to memorize a single cantrip. Low-level spells can be added to the list of usable spells at the DM's discretion keeping in mind that charlatans are not powerful spell-casters.

Charlatans often use their cantrips to create an undesirable effect in a possible customer. Such spell usage would include belch, cough, sneeze, hairy and so forth. After afflicting a person with a cantrip, the charlatan gives him a sample of one of his potions, which "cures" the affliction. Since the cantrips' effects are short-lived, it will appear as if the potion has cured the affliction. Few would then doubt the charlatan's claims as a master potion-maker and magician.

Another favorite trick employed by (charlatans involves the use of haunting-sound cantrips to temporarily haunt a house. The charlatan then enters the house, mumbles some vague words while swinging his hands around, and removes the "spirits" from the premises. In general, charlatans are very creative in using their cantrips and often employ them to attract attention to their "great powers." After such a performance as this, how could anyone resist buying the magical items the charlatan is selling?

Charlatans have four standard thief abilities: picking pockets, moving silently, hiding in shadows, and reading languages (which eventually allows the charlatan to read magic). See the *Players Handbook*, p. 27, for descriptions of these abilities.

Charlatans also can mix "potions." Most of the time, these potions (or oils, salves, rubs, etc.) delude the imbiber into believing that the potion has created the effect promised. This minor delusion lasts for 1-4 turns per level of the charlatan. The charlatan can, however, attempt to create potions that actually do have the desired effect. These potions can actually be magical potions or merely a mixture of non-magical ingredients which create the desired effect. The chance for success in creating real potions is one-fifth the base chance for mixing potions (rounding down). In one day, a charlatan can create

three trick potions. Real potions can be mixed in one day, but can only be mixed once a week, due to the amount of research necessary.

A charlatan can also mix poisons at half the base chance for mixing potions (again, rounding down). Charlatan poisons are never directly fatal — they merely cause sickness, sleep, pain, etc. These poisons have durations lasting from 1-2 hours per level of the charlatan. One or two doses of each can be made in a day. Each dose is capable of affecting 1-6 people. A charlatan will often poison a whole town, then rush in selling the cure. The cure may be a real one or merely a minor delusion.

The ability to create pyrotechnics is available to all charlatans. This ability is not magical; rather, the effects are caused by throwing powders or liquids onto a fire source. The effects are similar to those associated with the spells *affect normal fires* and *pyrotechnics*. The effects of these powders or liquids occur instantaneously. Duration, range, and so forth should be determined by the DM, based on the fire source and amount of substance used to create the effect.

Since charlatans often sell magical or alchemical substances, they can approximate the values of these substances accurately. Given 1-4 rounds for examination, a charlatan can guess the price within a 10% deviation above or below the actual price a mage or alchemist would pay for such items.

Convincing disguises can be created by a charlatan of 5th level or higher. This ability is necessary to the class, as a charlatan often visits towns where his face may be recognized by angry citizens. This ability is similar to the assassin's ability of disguise mentioned on page 29 of the *Players Handbook*.

At 10th level, charlatans may gain followers. These followers number 4-16, and include fighters, thieves, charlatans, and apprentice magic-users.

Also at 10th level, charlatans gain their greatest ability — that of beguilement. With this ability, the charlatan emanates a minor form of empathy as he speaks. Any intelligent creature within hearing distance regards the charlatan as a trusted friend and a respected mage. People thus beguiled will buy as much as they can afford from the charlatan. This ability is usable once a day and lasts for one round per level of the charlatan minus 1d4 rounds. After this amount of time, people apathetically drift away from the charlatan. Characters are allowed to make a 1d20 roll against their wisdom as a saving throw against beguilement, with a +2 modifier added to the die roll. If the modified number is equal to or less than the character's wisdom, the effects of beguilement are avoided.

Explanations of special abilities

A. The charlatan has the non-magical ability to create pyrotechnics with effects

similar to the magic-user spells *affect normal fires* and *pyrotechnics*.

B. The charlatan can approximate the values of magical and alchemical substances.

C. Disguises can be donned by a charlatan of 5th level or higher. Disguises can lower height by 1-2" or raise it by 3-4". Disguises can also make the charlatan appear to be almost any race, any class, or as either sex. Chance of discovering the charlatan's disguise is the same as for the assassin's disguise ability.

D. The charlatan can decipher magical writings as a thief of 10th level. Scrolls with magic-user or illusionist spells of third level or less can be read, although a 25% chance of miscasting the spell exists if the charlatan attempts to cast them.

E. At this level, the charlatan gains the power of beguilement.

Followers

Charlatans gain 4-16 followers at 10th level. These followers come in four groups of 1d4 members each. Roll percentile dice on Table 5 to determine the class and level of each group. In determining the race of these followers, roll 1d8 and add the following modifiers: if the charlatan is a gnome, -2; elf, -1; human +1. Cross-reference the modified number on Table 6 to determine the race of these groups.

Status

All charlatans are cheats and tricksters. They are never of a lawful alignment, are rarely good, and are usually highly chaotic. Charlatans are always from a lower social class, though they are hardly ever from one of the lowest classes.

Charlatans vary in personality and mannerisms, except for one common aspect: They are all great cowards. Charlatans intimidate weaker characters and talk tough, but if forced to back up their claims, they try to stall, run away, or talk their way out of trouble.

Disadvantages

Charlatans constantly have to deal with constables and dissatisfied customers. They are always in danger of getting the stuffings beat out of them by angry citizens. Whenever a charlatan fails to succeed in making a potion (note that the charlatan always believes he has succeeded in creating the desired potion), the user immediately becomes aware of the charlatan's true profession, becoming enraged 85% of the time.

Additionally, any magic-user has a chance to identify charlatans for what they truly are. This ability (which requires one turn of observation) is equal to the intelligence score of the magic-user plus the magic-user's level, times two (i.e., 2 x (intelligence + level)).

Miscellaneous

In all aspects not mentioned above, charlatans behave as thieves. This in-

cludes, but is not limited to, saving throws, combat tables, and magical items usable. Miscellaneous information showing various charlatan characteristics is listed on Table 7.

Table 1
Minimum Ability Scores

| Ability | Min. score |
|--------------|------------|
| Strength | — |
| Intelligence | 12 |
| Wisdom | 9 |
| Dexterity | 13 |
| Constitution | — |
| Charisma | 14 |

Table 2
Level Limitations by Race

| Combined int. & dex. | Racial type | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------|-----|----------|-------|
| | Gnome | Elf | Half-elf | Human |
| 25-28 | 5 | 5 | 7 | U |
| 29-30 | 5 | 7 | 10 | U |
| 31-34 | 7 | 10 | U | U |
| 35-36 | 10 | 13 | U | U |
| 37 and up | U | U | U | U |

U indicates level advancement is unlimited up to the class level limit of 15th level.

Table 3
Experience Levels and Hit Dice

| Experience points | Level | Hit dice (1d4) | Level title * |
|-------------------|-------|----------------|------------------------|
| 0-1,700 | 1 | 1+1 | Apprentice |
| 1,701-3,400 | 2 | 2+2 | Hoaxer |
| 3,4001-6,800 | 3 | 3+3 | Cheat |
| 6,801-13,500 | 4 | 4+4 | Con man |
| 13,501-28,000 | 5 | 5+5 | Defrauder |
| 28,001-58,000 | 6 | 6+6 | Deluder |
| 58,001-95,500 | 7 | 7+7 | Deceiver |
| 95,501-150,000 | 8 | 8+8 | Sharper |
| 150,001-205,500 | 9 | 9+9 | Grifter |
| 205,501-300,000 | 10 | 10+10 | Swindler |
| 300,001-525,000 | 11 | 10+11 | Quack |
| 525,001-750,000 | 12 | 10+12 | Charlatan |
| 750,001-975,000 | 13 | 10+13 | Master Charlatan |
| 975,001-1,200,000 | 14 | 10+14 | Grand Charlatan |
| 1,200,001 and up | 15 | 10+15 | Grand Master Charlatan |

* Charlatans often use the level title appropriate to the level title of a magic-user one: to two levels higher than the charlatan. They only reveal their true title to those who know they are charlatans.

Table 5
Class and Level of Followers

| Die roll | Level and class * |
|----------|--|
| 01-10 | 1st-level fighters (1d4) |
| 11-20 | 1st-level thieves (1d4) |
| 21-30 | 1st-level assassins (1d4) |
| 31-40 | 1st-level charlatans (1d4) |
| 41-45 | 1st-level magic-users (1d4) |
| 46-50 | 1st-level illusionists (1d4) |
| 51-60 | 2nd-level fighters (1d4) |
| 61-70 | 2nd-level thieves (1d4) |
| 71-80 | 2nd-level charlatans (1d4) |
| 81-90 | 3rd-level charlatans (1d4) |
| 91-95 | 4th-level charlatans (1d4) |
| 96-00 | Extra 1-2 followers, plus two more rolls |

* For each group of four fighter followers, a leader of 4th-level fighting ability is also gained as a follower.

| Level | Cantrips usable | Pick pockets | Move silently | Hide in shadows | Read languages | Potion mixing* | Special abilities |
|-------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 3 | 40% | 10% | 10% | — | 46% | A,B |
| 2 | 4 | 45% | 15% | 15% | — | 50% | — |
| 3 | 5 | 50% | 21% | 20% | — | 53% | — |
| 4 | 7 | 55% | 27% | 25% | 20% | 56% | — |
| 5 | 8 | 60% | 33% | 31% | 25% | 59% | C |
| 6 | 9 | 65% | 40% | 37% | 30% | 62% | — |
| 7 | 11 | 70% | 47% | 43% | 35% | 65% | — |
| 8 | 12 | 80% | 55% | 49% | 40% | 69% | D |
| 9 | 13 | 90% | 62% | 56% | 45% | 73% | — |
| 10 | 15 | 100% | 70% | 63% | 50% | 77% | E |
| 11 | 17 | 105% | 78% | 70% | 55% | 81% | — |
| 12 | 19 | 110% | 86% | 77% | 60% | 85% | — |
| 13 | 21 | 115% | 94% | 85% | 65% | 90% | — |
| 14 | 23 | 120% | 97% | 93% | 70% | 95% | — |
| 15 | 25 | 125% | 99% | 99% | 75% | 99% | — |

* Base chance for trick potions. The chance to create real potions is one-fifth of the base; the percentage chance to create non-lethal poisons is one-half the base chance (round down in both cases).

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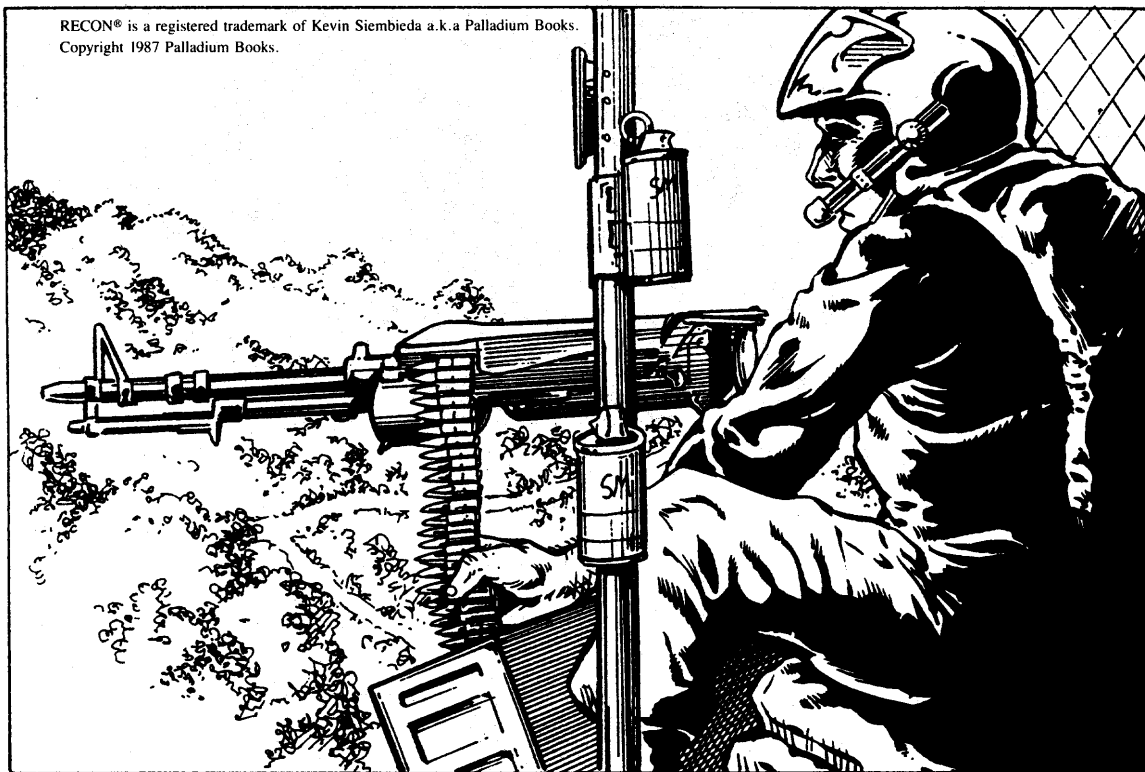
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Table 6
Race of Followers

| Die roll | Race |
|----------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Gnome |
| 2-3 | Elf |
| 4-5 | Half-elf |
| 6-7 | Human |
| 8 | Other (DM's discretion) |

Table 7
Combined Information

Racial stock: gnome, elf, half-elf, and human.
 Hit dice: 4 + 1.
 Spell capability: limited to cantrips.
 Class level limit: 15th (Grand Master Charlatan).
 Armor permissible: leather and elfin chainmail.
 Shield: none.

Weapons allowable: dagger, knife, dart, sap, sling, staff, short sword, and garrote.
 Flaming oil allowable: yes.
 Poison allowable: only self-manufactured poisons (used by neutral or evil NPCs).
 Weapon proficiency:
 Initial number of weapons: 2.
 Non-proficiency penalty: - 3.
 Added proficiencies/level: 1/4.
 Alignment: any nonlawful.

Bazaar of the Bizarre

Three that ring true

by Bill Birdsall

Bill Birdsall is an occasional contributor to our magical-item files, and we ran two of his magical rings in DRAGON® issue #117, in the "Bazaar of the Bizarre" column. Three of his rings for the AD&D® game were withheld due to space limitations, and we present them now. — RM

Ring of Rapid Regeneration

This ring acts as a normal *ring of regeneration* with one major difference — it regenerates 1 hp per round rather than one per turn. This ring is created by combining a *ring of regeneration* with a rare distillation of troll's blood and *potions of speed* during the enchantment process. One percent of the *rings of regeneration* found will be *rings of rapid regeneration*.
XP Value: 5,000
GP Value: 50,000

Ring of Para-Elemental Command

The four types of *rings of para-elemental command* are lesser versions of the *rings of elemental command*. Each appears to be nothing more than a normal ring, but each has certain other powers as well as the following common properties:

1. Para-elementals of the plane to which the ring is attuned cannot approach within 5' of the wearer or attack the wearer. If the wearer desires, he may forgo this protection and instead attempt to *charm* the para-elemental (saving throw applicable at -2 on the die). If the latter fails, however, total protection is lost, and no further attempt at *charming* can be made. The properties below still function with respect to the para-elemental.

2. Creatures, other than normal para-elementals, from the plane to which the ring is attuned attack at -1 on their "to

hit" dice. The ring wearer takes damage at -1 on each hit die and makes applicable saving throws from the creatures' attacks at +2. In addition, all attacks are made by the wearer of the ring at +4 "to hit" (or -4 to the para-elemental creature's saving throw), and the wearer does +6 damage (total, not per die) adjusted by any other applicable bonuses and/or penalties. Any weapon used by the ring wearer can hit para-elementals or quasi-elementals, even if the weapon is not magical.

3. The wearer of the ring is able to converse with the para-elemental creatures of the plane to which the ring is attuned. Recognizing that the character wears the ring, the creatures show a healthy respect

to the wearer.

Note that the Dungeon Master is free to create any new para-elementals for the relevant planes as desired.

4. In addition, the possessor of a *ring of para-elemental command* suffers a saving throw penalty as shown in Table 1.

5. Only one power (whether major or minor) of a *ring of para-elemental command* can be used at one time.

Smoke: At will, the wearer produces the following magical effects: *wall of fog* (once per hour), *fog cloud* (twice per day), *solid fog* (once per week), or *free action*. The ring appears to be nothing more than a *ring of free action* until a certain condition is met (such as having the ring *blessed*, slaying a smoke para-elemental, or whatever is determined necessary to activate its full potential).

Ice: At will, the wearer produces the following magical effects: *ice storm* (twice per day), *wall of ice* (twice per day), *Otiluke's freezing sphere* (once per week), or *warmth*. The ring appears to be nothing more than a *ring of warmth* until the condition established is met.

Ooze: At will, the wearer produces the following magical effects: *grease* (once per turn), *melt* (once per hour), *rock to mud* (twice per day), or *water walking*. The ring appears to be nothing more than a *ring of water walking* until the condition established is met.

Magma: At will, the wearer produces the following magical effects: *burning hands* (once per turn), *affect normal fires* (once per turn), *flaming sphere* (twice per day), or *fire resistance*. The ring appears to be nothing more than a *ring of fire resistance* until the condition established is met.

Rings operate at the 12th-level of experience or the minimum level needed to perform the equivalent magic spell (if greater), with respect to range, duration,

Table 1
Ring of Para-Elemental Command

| Ring type | Penalty |
|-----------|--|
| Smoke | -2 vs. breath weapons or wind-based attacks. |
| Ice | -2 vs. fire or steam. |
| Ooze | -2 vs. petrification or polymorph. |
| Magma | -2 vs. cold or water. |

Table 2
Ring of Quasi-Elemental Command

| Ring type | Penalty |
|-----------|----------------------------------|
| Lightning | -2 vs. water, steam, or cold. |
| Steam | -2 vs. lightning or electricity. |
| Radiance | -2 vs. paralyzation or darkness. |
| Mineral | -2 vs. petrification. |
| Vacuum | -2 vs. death magic. |
| Salts | -2 vs. poison. |
| Ash | -2 vs. water or cold. |
| Dust | -2 vs. disintegration. |

or area of effect determinations which might apply. The additional powers each take only five segments to bring forth.

XP Value: 4,000

GP Value: 20,000

Ring of Quasi-Elemental Command

The eight types of quasi-elemental command rings are lesser versions of the para-elemental command rings. Each has certain powers (detailed below), as well as the following common properties:

1. Quasi-elementals of the plane to which the ring is attuned cannot approach within 5' of the wearer or attack the wearer. If the wearer desires, he or she may forgo this protection and instead attempt to charm the quasi-elemental (saving throw applicable at -2 on the die). If the latter fails, however, total protection is lost, and no further attempt at *charming* can be made. The secondary properties given below then function with respect to the quasi-elemental.

2. Creatures, other than normal quasi-elementals, from the plane to which the ring is attuned attack at -1 on their "to hit" dice. Also, the ring wearer takes damage at -1 on each hit die and makes applicable saving throws from the creatures attacks at +2. All attacks are made by the wearer of the ring at +4 "to hit" (or -4 to the quasi-elemental creature's saving throw) and the wearer does +6 damage

(total, not per die) adjusted by any other applicable bonuses and/or penalties. Any weapon used by the ring wearer can hit quasi-elementals, even if the weapon is not magical.

3. The wearer of the ring is able to converse with the quasi-elemental creatures of the plane to which the ring is attuned. Recognizing that the character wears the ring, the creatures show a healthy respect to the ring wearer.

Note that the Dungeon Master is free to create any new quasi-elementals for the relevant planes as desired.

4. In addition, the possessor of a *ring of quasi-elemental command* suffers a saving throw penalty as shown on Table 2.

5. Only one power of a *ring of quasi-elemental command* can be used at one time.

6. All rings of quasi-elemental command detect as magic, but do not identify precisely until a certain condition is met (such as having the ring *blessed*, slaying a quasi-elemental of the type to which the ring is attuned, or whatever is determined necessary to activate its full potential).

Lightning: At will, the wearer produces the following magical effects: *shocking grasp* (once per turn) or *lightning bolt* (four times per week).

Steam: At will, the wearer produces the following magical effects: *melt* (once per turn) or *fog cloud* (twice per day).

Radiance: At will, the wearer produces the following magical effects: *rainbow pattern* (once per hour) or *sunray* (twice per week).

Mineral: At will, the wearer produces the following magical effects: *transmute metal to wood* (once per day) or *wall of stone* (once per day).

Vacuum: At will, the wearer produces the following magical effects: *unseen servant* (once per day) or *negative plane protection* (four times per week).

Salts: At will, the wearer produces the following magical effects: *irritation* (twice per day) or *preserve* (twice per day).

Ash: At will, the wearer produces the following magical effects: *pass without trace* (once per hour) or *detect invisibility* (once per hour). The ring appears to be nothing more than a magic ring until the condition established is met.

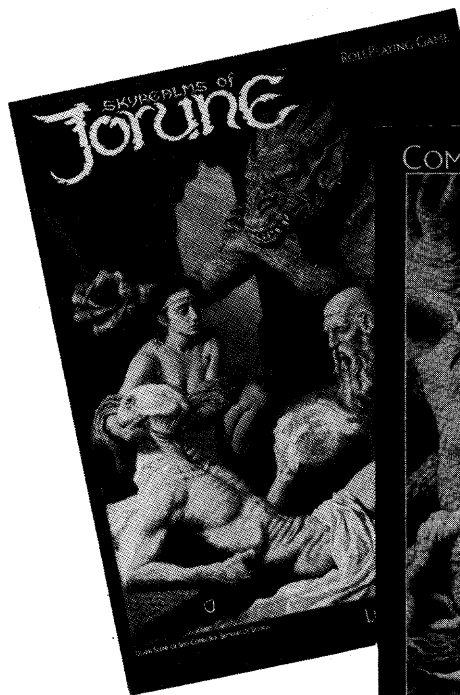
Dust: At will, the wearer produces the following magical effects: *dust devil* (once per day) or *transmute water to dust* (once per day).

Rings operate at the 12th-level of experience or the minimum level needed to perform the equivalent magic spell or wand effect (if greater), with respect to range, duration, or area of effect determinations which might apply. The powers take only five segments to bring forth.

XP Value: 2,000

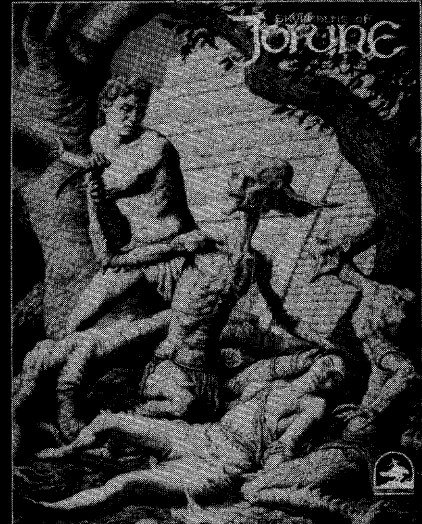
GP Value: 10,000

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The Ecology of the Gas Spore

Not a beholder, but bad nonetheless

by Ed Greenwood

From the journals of Shulheddin, Master Thief, founder of the "Soft Hands" Brotherhood:

"... Kedulkin, who was always the eager one, claimed the right to descend first, since it was he who had discovered the shaft. If it was indeed a way into the Lost City, there would soon be treasure enough for us all, and so we agreed. Taking a deep breath of fresh air, Kedulkin drew one of his throwing blades and a dropline, and vanished through the opening without fanfare. The fighting-men crowded close around, trying to peer down into the gloom, but Mairclyn and I were too cynical to stay that close, and too old to be taken by surprise from behind in such lawless country. We were eyeing the tumbled rocks all about with ready weapons when there came the muffled thud of an explosion beneath our feet, followed by startled cries from the warriors. Kedulkin made no sound as his body, tangled with the rope, was flung high into the air like a child's doll, coming down to sprawl torn and lifeless on a high rock. Mairclyn and I were well away on the next rise when the fighters began stumbling about in a spreading yellow cloud of spores, coughing and crying out. Some were blinded, some shivered uncontrollably, and all seemed dazed and witless. We decided to leave that place ere a breeze came up to carry the spores our way..."

From the *Bestiary of Creatures Strange and Wonderful*, a tome of unknown authorship presently in the library of Piergeiron's Palace, Waterdeep:

"One of the deadliest deceivers in nature is the *aniatha*, or gas spore, a creature which precisely resembles the dreaded beholder. If an *aniatha* is struck and pierced, it explodes violently, injuring all within seven paces or so. Here follows all that is presently known of the true nature of this odd and hazardous creature.

"An *aniatha* is a large, mobile, fungoid plant of unusual sophistication. It derives energy from visible light, particularly sunlight, and feeds on other plants to gain chlorophyll (necessary for this process) and cellulose (which it uses for structural growth and repair). In this, it is no different from the luminescent "crawling night-moss" and other ambulatory fungus growths found in the forests and thickets, and it is just as unintelligent. But an *aniatha* has the unusual natural ability of *levitation* and floats slowly about, turning so as to absorb the maximum amount of light in the vicinity — sunlight, if above ground, or torchlight or phosphorescence if in subterranean regions. Areas of *continual light* radiance often serve as underground lairs for gas spores. The false eye

of an aniatha (so-called because of its external resemblance to the central visual organ of a beholder, whose magical powers the aniatha does not share) is indeed an eye, which is sensitive to all light and enables the creature to orient itself so as to gain the maximum possible available light, identify food, and navigate through its surroundings.

"The gas spore also has 10 tentacle-like arms which resemble a beholder's eye-stalks. These arms, sometimes called rhizome growths, are actually the feeding organs of the gas spore. With them, an aniatha sucks molds and lichens from rock walls, leaves from treetops and aerial plants, and duckweed or pond scum from the surface of pools of standing water. The arms also help the aniatha "walk" delicately along rock walls, tree trunks, and the like, keeping the central body of the gas spore from injury against such obstructions. Under certain conditions, the arms also discharge rhizomes. Gas spores often group together where food and light are plentiful, but they have no apparent intercommunication, and never attack or feed on each other.

"The danger to adventurers lies in the aniatha's asexual means of reproduction. The interior of a gas spore is a hollow cavity filled with gas, in which a cloud of rhizomes is suspended (in whirling motion), nourished, and protected. These reproductive spores are produced on the interior surface of the gas spore and released into the gas storage bladder when fully developed. Here, they whirl at a constant temperature and pressure, until a tentacle of the gas spore touches the flesh of a warm-blooded mammal of gnomish or greater size (for such are the aniatha's minimum needs for a reproductive host creature). Upon such contact, the flexible tentacle exudes moisture to create a temporary airtight suction-seal with the flesh of the mammal, and a jet of rhizomes is expelled through the hollow tentacle, where they stick to the hapless victim's skin, thus infesting the mammal. The tentacle constricts to pinch itself shut at its base (within the spherical body). The creature then withdraws from the mammal. Adventurers report that severing tentacles does not cause the central body to leak or explode.

"Warm-blooded creatures of sufficient size are located by a gas spore's infravision. The aniatha will pursue such a prospective host until the creature is contacted or until pursuit is ended by the disappearance of the creature, by a barrier, or by the availability of other food. (Being unintelligent, an aniatha will break off pursuit immediately to ingest plant material.)

"Unless the rhizomes are destroyed by magical means, an infested host creature dies, sprouting 2-8 gas spores from its body. In the last few hours before their emergence, the growing spores eat away and absorb surrounding bodily fluids and

tissue material, leaving only the empty husk of the host.

"If the tough, fibrous epidermis of a gas spore is ruptured and its gaseous interior contents are mixed with air, it will explode, as mentioned earlier. Accidental contact with branches, rock, flesh, and other obstructions rarely splits an aniatha's skin — it must be pierced by a thorn, spike of rock, or the cutting edge of a weapon or similar object in order to rupture. It is the violent reaction of the gas spore's internal gas with air — "a mere accident of nature," as the eminent naturalist, Gessage of Neverwinter, puts it — that makes the gas spore infamous and dangerous. It is thought that the tiny jet of gas exposed to the air when rhizomes are ejected at an intended host does not explode because it is chemically altered by cells within the tentacle, so as not to react with air. There is certainly no truth to the belief that a gas spore must die (that is, explode) to reproduce.

"Any aniatha that lacks sufficient food and energy to remain fully active will hibernate, floating motionless or drifting aimlessly in air currents with its bodily processes halted, eye closed, and tentacles curled in upon itself. Such suspended hibernation can last for centuries, until nearby light, heat, noise, or movement revives the gas spore. Truly, it is a curiosity of our world, if not a sentient creature proper in the sense that others in this bestiary are."

Notes

1. The explosion of a gas spore does 6-36 hp damage to all beings within a 20' radius (half damage if a saving throw vs. wands is made). Warm-blooded mammals within this range must also save vs. poison at +3 to avoid being infested with rhizomes (see note 5 for effects). Any creature in direct contact with an exploding aniatha (i.e., touching the aniatha physically or with a held weapon) takes full blast damage with no saving throw, but saves normally versus rhizome infestation due to the force of the blast, which tends to drive most rhizomes past the victim. This saving throw versus rhizomes represents the possibility of being infested at any time while a character is within the spreading, dissipating spore cloud — creatures remaining in the vicinity need not roll for a saving throw each round.

2. A gas spore's levitation is a natural, spell-like ability, and is *not*, as is popularly believed, linked to buoyant internal gases. Instead, this ability is the result of an independent power which is not fully understood at present. In this way, the gas spore's *levitation* is akin to that of the beholder, and it is perhaps magical in nature. Such *levitation* is an ability held only by the living plant and not by dead or severed portions thereof. It enables the aniatha to move 3" per round in any direction (horizontal, vertical, lateral, and at

any vector or angle), and is a strong force, capable of resisting normal breezes (although a *gust of wind* can often hold one at bay), and is thus unaffected by *dispel magic* or *reverse gravity*. A *push* or *repulsion* spell is effective in fending off a spore in most situations.

3. A gas spore's eye has 12" infravision and is sensitive to all forms of light and heat energy. Presumably, it can also detect vibratory and pressure-fluctuation disturbances, for a gas spore can detect noise and movement within 6" (although how it does this is unknown). It should be noted that a gas spore's eye cannot be blinded or dazzled by sudden or intense bursts of light, such as those produced by explosions and some creature and spell effects; these are merely absorbed by the gas spore.

4. A *cure disease* spell cast upon any rhizome-infested creature within 24 hours automatically destroys all the rhizomes. Note that from 20 hours of infestation until death (when the rhizomes hatch), a host body is being eaten away from within (see below).

5. Rhizome-infested creatures are *feeble-minded* within two rounds of initial infestation and cannot grasp objects, perform tasks, or even move without aid. This can only be cured by the application of *cure disease* as noted above. An affected person could stand, for example, but could not fight, defend himself, climb stairs, walk, or even push open a door unaided. If the character fell, he would lie unmoving until helped up. After 4-7 turns (3 + 1d4), the victim slips into a coma and remains therein until cured or killed by the hatching spores, regardless of external stimuli. (Application of a *temporal stasis* spell affects both victim and rhizomes normally, effectively freezing their activity.) After 18 hours of infestation, a victim ravaged by the spreading rhizomes must make a successful system-shock survival roll to avoid death. At 20 hours of infestation (and every hour thereafter), a host victim loses 1-4 hp. These losses accumulate until death occurs, whereupon 2-8 spores erupt from the corpse. These effects occur unless curative spells are used to halt the growth of the proto-aniathas. A *cure disease* will destroy the rhizomes at this point, but will not cure any internal damage. By attaching themselves to such hosts, the proto-aniathas provide themselves with protein substances not found in plant life — substances which are essential to their growth and survival.

Expelled, fledgling spores hatched from a host are of small size (4' diameter), do only 2-16 hp damage if ruptured, and are otherwise identical to a mature spore. They grow to full size at whatever rate available food and light energy permit (usually within the first one to five years of life).

Higher Aspirations

How druids get their start in life

by Mark L. Palmer

Zero-level characters who desire to enter the druidic priesthood in the AD&D® game go through two preparatory levels: the inquirer and the petitioner. An inquirer is simply one who is interested in entry to the druidic priesthood. The inquirer attends various ceremonies and lectures held by a 3rd-level or higher druid. The inquirer gains no special powers or abilities, has no responsibilities, and usually brings an offering to the meetings even though no donations are required. The lectures are given in the form of parables or stories with hidden meanings and symbols; this keeps the sacred knowledge safe from the unworthy and the uninitiated.

Inquirers may be of any alignment. An inquirer must make a saving throw vs. death magic after attending a lecture or be

convinced to move one step closer to neutral with respect to Law and Chaos. Thus, an inquirer becomes either neutral good, neutral, or neutral evil. If an inquirer makes his saving throw, he finds the teachings confusing and eventually leaves the lectures. He may return at a later date if he so desires and repeat the lectures. This saving throw is not required by PCs who desire to become druids, though it is useful for NPCs.

Once this change takes place, the inquirer may ask to be granted petitioner status. The druid in charge performs an interview which includes the casting of a detect balance, detect magic, and know alignment spell, to insure that the candidate is worthy. A simple ordination ceremony is then conducted, and the candidate becomes a petitioner.

During the course of his training, a petitioner becomes true neutral in alignment. He also gains the following powers:

1. The ability to cast one zero-level spell, or orison (as per DRAGON® issue #108 "Cantrips for Clerics").

2. Save vs. fire-based attacks at +1.

3. Use any druidic magic items (except for scrolls) at half power.

A petitioner is responsible for the cleanliness of the grove and is expected to help keep order at all meetings. When the petitioner is ready to advance to the aspirant level, he is given another interview as described earlier. If found worthy, the petitioner is advanced through a special ceremony to the 1st or aspirant level. The druid is now able to receive two first-level spells, or more, depending on his wisdom. Table 1 shows the progression we have just discussed.

The following is a list of orisons that a druid may acquire through prayer. As with most druid spells, the material component is the druids mistletoe (unless otherwise stated).

Table 1
Experience Levels for Aspirants

| Experience points | Experience level | Accumulated hit points | Level title | Orisons |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------------|-------------|---------|
| -1,500 to -501 | 0 | 2* | Inquirer | none |
| -500 to -1 | 0 | 4 | Petitioner | 1 |
| 0 to 2,000 | 1 | 1d4+4 | Aspirant | 2** |

* At this time, the druid gains his constitution bonus if he is zero level. If the inquirer is seeking to leave a previous class for this one, he receives the constitution bonus at 1st-level aspirant.

** At 1st level, a druid gains two first-level spells. He may choose to take two orisons in place of one first-level spell.

Table 2
Druidic Orisons

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Animal | 11. Judgment |
| 2. Animal command | 12. Liven |
| 3. Bless meal | 13. Pet |
| 4. Consecrate | 14. Preserve |
| 5. Elemental shield | 15. Prod |
| 6. Find water | 16. Remove pain |
| 7. Flame finger | 17. Restful sleep |
| 8. Haze | 18. Smokeball |
| 9. Holly dart | 19. Temperature |
| 10. Humidity | 20. Watch |

The following abbreviations are used: AE is Area of Effect, CT is Casting Time, and Perm. is Permanent.

Animal (Conjuration/Summoning)

Range: ½ mile Components: V,S,M
 Duration: 2 turns CT: 1 round
 AE: Special Saving Throw: Neg.

This orison allows the druid to summon up to 2 HD of mammals, birds, or reptiles to his area. The animals are not under the druid's control. They may, however, be subjected to further spells cast by the druid after they arrive. The components of this spell are an oak leaf and a small bit of food.

Animal command (Enchantment/Charm)

Range: 1" Components: V
 Duration: 1 round CT: 1/3 segment
 AE: 1 Animal Saving Throw: None

This orison (except as noted) is the same as the clerical spell command. It effects only animals of low intelligence or less.

Bless meal (Alteration)

Range: 1" Components: V,S,M
 Duration: Perm. CT: 1 round
 AE: 1" sq. area Saving Throw: None

This allows the caster to bless a meal, including drink, so as to give those that eat it a +1 saving throw vs. any poison or diseases it may contain, even if one is not normally allowed.

Consecrate (Invocation)

Range: 1" Components: V,S
 Duration: Perm. CT: 1 round
 AE: 1" sq. area Saving Throw: None

This orison is used to consecrate any material component that may be needed for use in spell-casting (such as mistletoe, holly, and oak leaves). It is also cast before offering any special sacrifices or before beginning any special quests. It offers no benefits per se, but all affected items radiate a faint dweomer, as will any who have embarked on a special mission. Druids will recognize the dweomer if a *detect balance* spell is cast, and will offer any aid to those so marked.

Elemental shield (Abjuration)

Range: 0 Components: V,S,M
 Duration: 1 round CT: 1 segment
 AE: The caster Saving Throw: None

This orison gives the caster 8 hp of protection from all types of attacks based upon any of the elements (air, earth, fire, and water). The attack may be from a magical or nonmagical source.

Find water (Divination)

Range: 100 yards Components: V,S,M
 Duration: 1 turn CT: 4 segments
 AE: 100 sq. yards Saving Throw: None

By means of this orison, the druid can locate large amounts of water, fresh or

otherwise, within 100 yards. The druid requires a consecrated branch of wood cut in the form of a "Y". The water must be of at least 10 gallons in volume and is not guaranteed to be fresh or drinkable.

Flame finger (Alteration)

Range: 0 Components: S
 Duration: 1 round CT: 1/3 segment
 AE: The caster Saving Throw: ½

This orison has two applications. The first creates a small flame on the end of the caster's forefinger. This flame cannot be extinguished while the druid holds it. The druid has one round to transfer the flame to any combustible material or the flame dies. Once transferred, the flame becomes nonmagical and is subject to wind, water, and other means of being extinguished. The second application is very rarely used because of the great danger involved. The druid may imbue the flame with some of his own lifeforce. This causes the flame to become magical, making it capable of striking any creature as though the target was AC 10. The druid can then hurl the flame up to 3', and must successfully hit the creature. Magic resistance applies, and a successful saving throw vs. magic negates half the damage. The amount of damage done varies with the amount of lifeforce transferred. The druid takes 1 hp of damage for every hp of effect he wishes the flame to have. Furthermore, the druid must make an unmodified saving throw vs. death or permanently lose ¼ of all hit points given to the flame. These lost hit points can only be regained by level advancement; no magic of any type will restore the lost hit points. This application of the orison may only be cast once per day. Both applications of this orison require only somatic components, as the flame is drawn from the lifeforce of the caster.

Haze (Alteration)

Range: 0 Components: V,S
 AE: 3" radius Saving Throw: None

A druid may cause a haze to envelop his person for two rounds by means of this orison. This haze gives the druid the benefit of +1 to AC and +1 to saving throws.

Holy dart (Alteration)

Range: Touch Components: V,S,M
 Duration: 1 round CT: ½ segment
 AE: One dart Saving Throw: None

By means of this orison, the druid may enchant a special consecrated holy dart to become a magical **dart** +1 for one round. If not used before the expiration of the orison, the dart reverts to its normal state.

Humidity (Alteration)

Range: 1" Components: V,S
 Duration: Perm. CT: 1 segment
 AE: 1" rad. sphere Saving Throw: None

The druid may cause all objects in the area of effect to become damp and slippery. This remains in effect until the area naturally dries out. The reverse is also possible, with the druid drying an area that remains dry until naturally becoming wet.

Judgment (Divination)

Range: Touch Component: V,S,M
 Duration: 1 turn CT: 1 segment
 AE: 10' radius Saving Throw: Neg.

This orison allows the druid to hear a dispute and render what he would consider a fair judgment. The disputers are allowed a saving throw vs. magic; otherwise, they agree to the druids settlement. If the disputers make their saving throws, they may ask for another judgment or may seek another judge. Both participants must willingly submit themselves to the judgment, or the orison has no effect.

Liven (Alteration)

Range: Touch Component: V,S,M
 Duration: 1 turn CT: 1 round
 AE: 1 plant Saving Throw: None

By means of this orison, the druid may restore life to any one plant; if applicable, he may also cause that plant to bring forth fruit. After one turn, the plant returns to its original state, and any fruit not consumed turns to dust.

Pet (Enchantment/Charm)

Range: 1' Component: V
 Duration: 1 turn CT: 1 segment
 AE: Special Saving Throw: Neg.

This orison allows the druid to calm one animal of up to 2 HD, domesticating the animal for one turn. The animal must have a low intelligence or less. Any attacks on the animal break the orison.

Preserve (Alteration)

Range: Touch Components: V,S
 Duration: Perm. CT: 1 round
 AE: 1' square Saving Throw: None

This orison is used to preserve those material components of an animal or vegetable nature for future use. Under this orison, these items are not subject to decay. Other forces, such as elemental attacks, may destroy the item, however.

Prod (Evocation)

Range: 1' Components: V,S,M
 Duration: Instant CT: 1 segment
 AE: 1 creature Saving Throw: Neg.

This orison produces an electrical spark springing forth from the caster's hand to strike any one creature. This spark does 4 hp of subdual damage and 1 hp of actual damage. (For information on subdual damage, refer to p. 109 of *Unearthed Arcana*.)

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Remove pain (Necromantic)

Range: Touch Components: V,S,M
Duration: 1 hour CT. 2 segments
AE: 1 creature Saving Throw: None

This orison negates the effects of pain, allowing the recipient to gain 1 hp, but only for the duration of the spell (if the one who receives the orison is currently wounded). This orison cannot help a healthy character.

Restful sleep (Necromantic)

Range: Touch Components: V,S
Duration: 4 hours CT. 3 segments
AE: 1 creature Saving Throw: None

This orison allows the willing recipient to gain twice the benefits from half the rest; thus, the creature touched gains the benefits of eight hours of rest from only four hours of actual sleep. The individual may be awakened at any time, and may wake-up of his own volition in an emergency. Upon the recipient's awakening, the orison terminates.

Smokeball (Alteration)

Range: 2' Components: V,S
Duration: 1 round CT. 3 segments
AE: 1' radius sphere Saving Throw: None

This orison brings into being a sphere of dense smoke anywhere within the range

that the caster desires. Those within the smoke cannot see or breathe, and must leave the smoke immediately.

Temperature (Alteration)

Range: 0 Components: V,S,M
Duration: 1 turn CT. 3 segments
AE: 1 person Saving Throw: None

An individual protected by a temperature orison is protected from adverse temperature as though he was wearing a *ring of warmth*.

Watch (Conjuration/Summoning)

Range: 0 Components: V,S,M
Duration: 4 hours CT! 2 segments
AE: 1 animal Saving Throw: Neg.

The druid is able, by means of this orison, to charge an animal to watch over him while he sleeps (the animal may, however, make its saving throw and ignore the spell). If the animal accepts the charge, it remains alert and awake to the best of its ability. If anyone approaches within 20' of the caster, the creature will attempt to awaken the druid. The animal will not fight for the druid unless it is also attacked. The material component is a small amount of animal food. Ω

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Plane Speaking

Tuning in to the Outer Planes

by Jeff Grubb

Hello, and welcome to the first of a series of articles on bits and pieces and other neat things involving the care and feeding of the known planes of existence. The purpose of this series is to supplement the material that will be presented in the upcoming *Manual of the Planes*, the newest hardback for the AD&D® game system.

Note what I said — the material here is a supplement to the hardback. It's not rough information in summarized form, a preview, nor any of that. This is news you can use.

The reason is simple. In *Manual of the Planes*, we (editor Mike Breault and myself, aided and abetted by a number of friends and fellow gamers) are faced with about 40 infinite planes of existence, many with their own multiple layers or demi-planes. Certain things are not fully explained, being left for another forum to cover in detail.

This series hopes to be that forum. We'll talk about some the nicer details and tricks of adventuring in the various planes where the physical laws do not conform to the standard campaign. Monsters, such as the astral dreadnaught, the archons, and the quasi-elementals, more magic items that are usable in the planes, and the very business of being a world-shattering power like Odin or Zeus.

We'll start with something simple and indicative of the problems faced when dealing with the planes in general: *Players Handbook*, page 50, the fifth-level clerical

spell *plane shift*. "The material component of this spell is a small, forked metal rod — the exact size and metal type dictating to which plane of existence the spell will send the affected creature(s) to. (*Your referee will determine specifics regarding bow and what planes are reached.*)" (The italics are mine.) OK, how many of you DMs have determined such a thing? Let's see some hands. Uh-huh. Right. A couple of devoted folk, but the majority have let it go by the wayside, either ignoring the material components or just hoping that the PCs don't head out for the planes.

Let's take care of that right now. Using the proper fork is preferred at formal dinner parties, but it is an absolute requirement when traveling between the planes.

Planar forks

Planar forks are devices used in plane-spanning spells to determine the final destination of people using those spells. Two factors determine the final destination using one of these forks: material and pitch. Material is the substance of which the fork is made — usually, but not always, metal. Pitch is the note struck that guides the spell to a particular plane.

The Ethereal Plane may be reached by a *plane shift* using a B-fork made of glass. The body is transformed into the ethereal state in making the transfer into the plane. The glass fork is broken in the use of the spell. Those cast into the Ethereal Plane are placed deep into that plane, away from any *curtains* that lead to other planes.

The Inner Planes may be reached by

forks of different materials, all set to the Pitch A and the notes adjacent to it. The pitches and materials required are shown in Tables 1-4.

A tuning fork set to the note B and made of quartz crystal is used to reach the Astral Plane. There is a 50% chance per use that the quartz will crack and be unusable. Planar travelers entering the Astral Plane in this fashion are physically moved deep into the plane, far from any *color pools*.

A single fork of the correct material and pitch will take the caster of the *plane shift* (and other items) to the top-most layer of any Outer Plane. The major chord will take the traveler to the second layer (if any). the minor chord of that note will take the traveler to the third layer (if any). Other chords may take the traveler to deeper layers, fail entirely, or take the traveler to another area (see Experimenting, below).

Reaching the Prime Material Plane requires a steel C-fork. The spell will take the travelers to the Prime Material Plane to which the metal is native. If the metal came from an alternative Prime Material Plane, then the fork will take the traveler to that plane. Such forks are normally used by those interplanar travelers who wish to return to their native plane.

The *plane shift* spell also notes that travelers using these forks may be returned to their starting plane. They may only be so returned under the following circumstances:

1. The individuals are still alive on the other plane.
2. The individuals are still on that plane or planar layer (if they travel to another plane or planar layer they may not be returned); and,
3. The same fork is used to return them. This means in all cases of the glass fork for the ethereal and 50% of the time with the crystal fork for the astral, the trip to the other plane is one-way.

Experimenting with forks

Many of the forks required to reach other planar layers are listed as "unknown." Chords do exist for these layers, but they differ from Prime Material Plane to Prime Material Plane (that is, from game campaign to game campaign). Further, they do not follow the standard rules for reaching the other layers. Just because the first three Hells use F-sharp and its major and minor chords in iron doesn't mean that the fourth layer of the Hells will need an iron *fork* or that it will be related to F-sharp in the least. In part, this is because the natives of these lower layers take a dim view of interplanar trespassers, and they deliberately alter the required chords.

If the travelers uses the *plane shift* spell with different *forks* or other types of chords, the DM may either choose a result or may roll on Table 6 to send them

whither he will.

The DM is not committed to these combinations and is free to modify them to fit his own campaign. For example, a DM not wanting easy access to the Inner Planes may change the notes to combinations of a G as opposed to combinations of an A, and not tell the players (until a few of them have stumbled into Lolth's lair by mistake). These rules are the general heading for helping the DM get players into the planes, and into further adventures — and that's a plane fact.

Table 1
Major Inner Planes

| | |
|-------|----------|
| Fire | Copper A |
| Earth | Zinc A |
| Water | Lead A |
| Air | TinA |

Table 2
Para-Elemental Planes

| | |
|-------|-----------------|
| Smoke | Bronze A |
| Magma | Brass A |
| Ooze | Zinc/lead mix A |
| Ice | Pewter A |

Table 3
Quasi-Elemental Planes

| | |
|-----------|----------------|
| Lightning | Tin A-sharp |
| Radiance | Copper A-sharp |
| Minerals | Zinc A-sharp |
| Steam | Lead A-sharp |
| Dust | Zinc A-flat |
| Vacuum | Tin A-flat |
| Ash | Copper A-flat |
| Salt | Lead A-flat |

Table 4
Energy Planes

| | |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Positive Material Plane | None known |
| Negative Material Plane | None known |

Table 6
The Outer Planes

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Nirvana | Silver C |
| Arcadia | Gold C-sharp |
| Layer 2 | Gold C-sharp major |
| Layer 3 | Gold C-sharp minor |
| Seven Heavens | Gold D |
| Layer 2 | Gold D major |
| Layer 3 | Gold D minor |
| Other layers | Unknown |
| Twin Paradises | Gold E-flat |
| Layer 2 | Gold E-flat major |
| Elysium | Gold E |
| Layer 2 | Gold E major |

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Layer 3 | Gold E minor |
| Layer 4 | Unknown |
| Happy Hunting Ground (also known as the Beastlands) | Gold F |
| Layer 2 | Gold F major |
| Layer 3 | Gold F minor |
| Olympus/Arvandor | Gold F-sharp |
| Layer 2 | Gold F-sharp major |
| Layer 3 | Gold F-sharp minor |
| Gladstheim | Gold G |
| Layer 2 | Gold G major |
| Layer 3 | Gold G minor |
| Limbo ¹ | |
| Layers 1-5 | Nickel C |
| Pandemonium | Iron C-sharp |
| Layer 2 | Iron C-sharp major |
| Layer 3 | Iron C-sharp minor |
| Layer 4 | Unknown |
| Abyss ² | |
| Layer 1 | Iron D |
| Other layers | Unknown |
| Tarterus | Iron E-flat |
| Layer 2 | Iron E-flat major |
| Layer 3 | Iron E-flat minor |
| Other layers | Unknown |
| Hades | Iron E |
| Layer 2 | Iron E major |
| Layer 3 | Iron E minor |
| Gehenna | Iron F |
| Layer 2 | Iron F major |
| Layer 3 | Iron F minor |
| Layer 4 | Unknown |

| | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| Nine Hells | Iron F-sharp |
| Layer 2 | Iron F-sharp major |
| Layer 3 | Iron F-sharp minor |
| Other layers | Unknown |
| Acheron | Iron G |
| Layer 2 | Iron G major |
| Layer 3 | Iron G minor |
| Layer 4 | Unknown |
| Concordant | |
| Opposition | Platinum C |

¹ Limbo's layers tend to overlap and ooze between each other, so that precise determination of the destination layer is random.

² The lower layers of the Abyss may be reached by random chords (see Experimenting, below).

Table 6
Random Planar Destinations

1d100 Destination

- 01 Transported to intended destination.
- 02-50 Nothing happens.
- 51-80 Transported to random layer of the Abyss.
- 81-90 Transported to demi-plane of DM's choice.
- 91-00 Transported to Alternate Material Plane.

Ω

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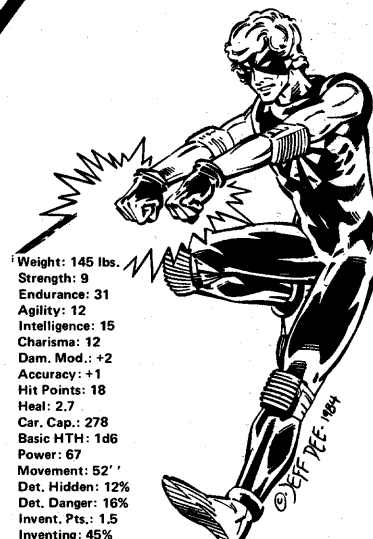
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Side: Good Level: 1

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- Invulnerability/20
- Flight: Max, airspeed = 279 mph, PR = 1/hr.
- Power-Blast: 20 inch range, PR = 1 per shot, does 1d20 damage.


Weight: 145 lbs.
Strength: 9
Endurance: 31
Agility: 12
Intelligence: 15
Charisma: 12
Dam. Mod.: +2
Accuracy: +1
Hit Points: 18
Heal: 2.7
Car. Cap.: 278
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Power: 67
Movement: 52' /
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FORUM

(continued from page 6)

play are. Beards tend to get in one's way when working with chemicals and that sort of thing.

The foremost bearded wizard which comes to my mind is Tolkien's Gandalf. Do all wizards look like him? I think not, but it seems that most players think so.

By laying these accusations on females, thieves, and magic-users, Mr. Tejes is being left out of three of the most stimulating roles to play. I often hear skeptical and lewd remarks when I suggest other males play female characters, but my best fighter and only assassin are females, and they are a force to be reckoned with. Thieves and magic-users require a different mentality to be played. These folk cannot barge into a room in full plate armor, armed with their mighty blades, and hack everything to bits. That is the noble fighter's job; the thief and magic-user must live by stealth, luck, and spell-casting. No sex, race, or class should be slighted, because the best adventuring party has a variety of each.

Randy A. Donahue
Hot Springs AR

I have one quick issue regarding women in D&D® games. It is hard to be a woman DM. I've given up. It's hard enough to find men who don't mind campaigning with a woman (especially when she runs a male character). I've heard every excuse from "Well, then we have to watch our language" to "You might take our 'rape and plunder' campaigns too seriously and be offended." Come on, guys. At 27, with a library of well over 200 science-fiction and fantasy books, don't you think I can handle it? If I couldn't, I'd get out of the group. After all, nobody forces me to play.

Sometimes I feel like I'm beating a dead horse, but there are women who like all the hack and slash as much as you guys out there. I feel that if a letter like this gets printed, maybe it'll start some more guys thinking about including women players in their campaigns.

P.S. Can anyone suggest easy ways to find players? My husband is in the Navy, and we move a lot. It seems to take forever to find other players. I know they are out there; I just don't have a good way to find out who they are in a short amount of time (within a month or two). Any suggestions would be helpful!

Candace Miesen
Millington TN

Every so often, I read a fresh crop of letters or articles on the fundamental topic "we should be nice to the poor girls/women and help them learn to play the D&D game!" While I understand the authors' good intentions, I cannot agree with their premises or suggested courses of action.

As a female player and DM for over nine years, I have seen a number of reasons for the dearth of females in gaming. One, and I suspect this is the primary one, is a combination of lack of interest and peer pressure. The age at which many players begin their interest in FRP games also happens to be a period in a child's life when both boys and girls are under extreme peer influence. In both cases, but particularly for the girls, the urge is to "go with the crowd." This is a repressive cycle; not many girls play in D&D

games because few of their friends do. Worse yet, the girls who are free enough from peer pressure to try out novel ideas are outsiders, seen as "weird," and are the least likely ones to incite a trend; the very fact that these girls engage in an activity, whether chess club or D&D games, can often label the activity as something only for nerds. In addition, most "mundane" girls are simply not interested in gaming and have no desire to change.

A second major reason for the shortage of female players is the attitude of the existing male players and gamemasters. Throughout the years I have been playing FRPGs, without exception, I have been treated as a novice in any game I joined — even by new players entering games in which I was already a participant. As far as I can tell, the prevailing attitude among the less-enlightened male gamers (this includes most of those in the adolescent age range) is that all females are novices at best and incapable of learning. It can get very frustrating at times to be treated as a total and permanent incompetent. If a person is only tentatively interested in gaming in the first place, this kind of subliminal insult will turn them off very quickly.

Isolating a broad group of people as a special case and giving them special consideration in the guise of helping them often harms more than it helps. Such a group will have a difficult time, at best, being accepted by the majority. The unvoiced, often even unrecognized, attitude is "if they were really equal to us, they wouldn't need special privileges." This is the case, whether it is hiring quotas or seminars on "Women in D&D Gaming." I do not want to be treated as a "female gamer;" I am an ordinary, normal gamer whose plumbing just happens to be different from most of my companions.

I am involved in three weekly AD&D games, one of which I DM, all with at least two female participants. My advice on how to obtain and retain female players is fairly simple. First, remember one fundamental thing: Females are individuals, too! We are no more all alike than males are. So, you've seen a few incompetent female players or DMs? If they had been male, would you refuse to play with males after that? We are *people*, same as you. We have good days and bad days: we start as beginners and learn. I have run into many (usually young) males who said "but I wouldn't know what to do with a female player." The answer is simple: deal with the player, ignore gender. I'm not much different from the guys I play with. My characters, of either sex, do not want to be protected. They are quite capable of committing adequate mayhem on their own.

The one change to gaming style that I would suggest is one that will make the game more attractive, not just to female players, but to anyone besides adolescent males. I have seen far too many games run by young, inexperienced males which are endless streams of mayhem, often with crude pornography injected. I have even played in a few of these (with male characters, out of self-preservation). I suppose if you are a 14-year-old boy, this sort of thing is fun, but not many people of other ages or either gender enjoy it. Interestingly enough, I (and all of the female players I know) run characters of either gender; so do the male members of our regular gaming group.

Severe sex discrimination is often institutionalized, as it were, in game rules. In the case of a game mercifully forgotten by history, the following rule was stated: "Players wishing to play a female character must . . . make the following adjustments to die-rolled characteristics: phy-

sique and endurance - 3, charisma - 2, social class - 3, bravery - 2. They will be excluded from combat, from all parts of the Church save the nunnery, and expected in most cases to adopt a domestic position as wife, housekeeper, and servant. These factors are invariable." In a game with magic, miracles, and dragons, was the idea of a female adventurer so unthinkable? Needless to say, I doubt if the game in question attracted many female players, and certainly no female characters. Judging by its brief period of existence, I suspect it attracted very few players at all! I have found that games tend to either ignore all differences between male and female characters, which is dull, or severely restrict the female characters, which is worse. *Vive la difference!* One option is to apply a -1 to the strength of female characters and a +1 to dexterity or constitution, player's choice. In addition, in my campaign, the character class of ranger is restricted to male characters only, as a sort of fraternal society, and witches are exclusively female.

The easiest thing to do is to leave your stereotypes behind when you go to a game and treat female players as just what they are: people.

One final thought. How many girls have never tried role-playing for the simplest reason there is: "Nobody ever asked me?"

Jeanne McGuire
State College PA

I would like to comment on Mr. Dorman's article in issue #117. His ideas on how to use the feudal system for AD&D games were excellent, but some problems may arise.

One problem is chaotic characters. The feudal system relies on strict adherence to law and knightly standards in which one obeys his lord's commands without question. Chaotic characters may rebel against such a system. This could provide for interesting confrontations. A second problem is shifting loyalties. The feudal system depends on knights and serfs giving their loyalty to their feudal lord, and during the fall of this system, many shifted their loyalties to their king and nation. Finally, a third problem is the control the feudal lords have over towns. Many merchants and tradesmen lost the opportunity to make money because they had to obey their lord. Under this system, the commerce of many towns in Europe was weakened.

This does not mean one should discard the system. The system does provide law and order in a local area. You could modify the system so as to encompass the chaotic ideas of individuals. Another modification could be that the king only deals with other nations and keeps an eye on all the feudal lords, thus avoiding the possibility of shifting loyalties. A third possibility is to allow tradesmen or merchants to make money from side endeavors, thus avoiding the problem of a weakened town commerce. There are, of course, other ways to modify the feudal system so that it does not seem as harsh, but then again, you may choose not to, thus giving player characters something to fight against. Who could be a better foe than an evil feudal lord?

Drew Martin
Rockville MD

Ω

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GURPS®



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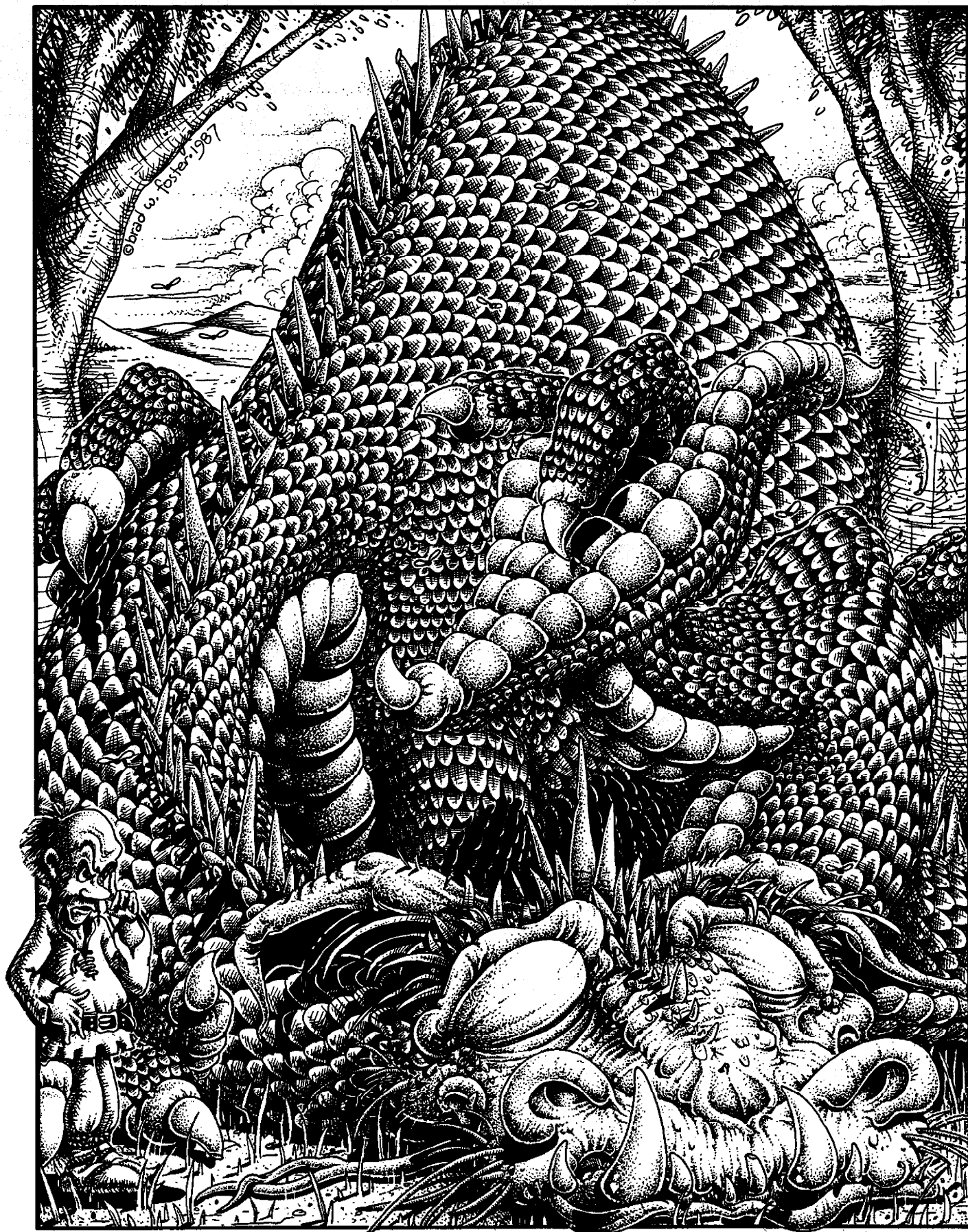
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HIS JERK KILLED A DRAGON AND left it at my doorstep. Sir Percival Flaubert, first son of the local baron — blond, always smiling, arrogant. You know the type. His father bought him the fastest horses, the flashiest armor — like I said, a jerk. And he

had to slay this four-ton monster in front of *my* hovel.

Why didn't I see it coming? My wife had told me the day before that the neighborhood serpent had seized a virgin and carried her off to his mountain lair. I was mildly surprised that there were any virgins left — Sir Percy wasn't particular. In fact, I've always wondered if that girl didn't set the dumb lizard up just to get Percy to notice her.

I didn't take it too seriously. It was late fall, I had a crop to get in, and my cow had died two weeks earlier with the flu. Yes, the flu. But I figured everybody has his problems, right? I would manage.

When Sir Percy got the word about the virgin, he charged up the mountain and offered the beast a challenge. Oh, not to fight him *there*, of course. No, they needed an audience so that young Flaubert could build his knightly reputation. He invited the poor serpent to meet him at the edge of the village. *My* edge. The dragon didn't catch on what the meeting was *for*, and the girl, playing the damsel in distress to the hilt, evidently didn't clarify matters. Dumb lizard never knew what hit him.

I'd strapped myself into my ox harness and was pulling my wagon in from the field when I saw the crowd around my hovel. Rather easy to guess what happened: over here laid a mountain of dead dragon, and over there stood Sir Percy, beaming at the halfhearted cheers of my fellow peasants and ogling the virgin. I went straight to him.

"I say, my lord, you've slain a dragon."

Sir Percy looked my up and down, as if I were what stunk instead of the foul serpent behind me. Then he turned back to the girl. I tried again.

"When do you plan to pick it up?"

His eyes jerked back to mine, his expression of faint disdain blossoming into a proper sneer. "Pick it up?" he demanded, with that irritating drop and rise on the last word of his sentence that blue bloods must start teaching their children prenatally. "That is a dead beast, peasant. I do not *touch* dead beasts."

I've never been a crusader, but the fact that this carcass loomed in front of *my* cottage stimulated within me a sudden zeal for the proper disposal of hazardous wastes.

"Well, somebody's got to get rid of it! It'll stink up the whole region!"

Young Flaubert smiled superciliously. "Of course, someone will. *You* shall."

"Me!"

"I've done you a favor, varlet!" Sir Percy snarled. "Now you must do the rest!"

I hated him calling me a varlet. I wasn't certain what the word itself meant, but I knew exactly what he meant by it. "Now wait —" I began, but the knight had no more time to chat with a common peasant. He tossed the swooning girl onto his charger and mounted up behind her.

Dragon Meat

by Robert Don Hughes

Illustrations by Brad W. Foster

"What have you ever done for me?" I shouted at his back, but the racket of iron-shod hooves drowned out my words. He ignored me.

I looked at my wife. She rolled her eyes. I looked at my neighbors —or tried. They were all scampering back to the village, or else back to the fields, but not one scampered anywhere near me. The task of dragon removal had been placed squarely upon my capable shoulders. They *believed* in me.

How do you move a dead dragon? What do you *do* with it once you get it to wherever you've moved it? I'd never given such questions any thought before. If asked, I might have suggested that a dead dragon would simply disappear, being a magical beast. At the very least I figured that other dragons would come to collect the remains of their own and bear him off to some burial ground in the hills. That prompted my next thought: "I'll wait," I told my wife. She rolled her eyes again, and went into our hovel holding her nose.

Two days later no dragons had come, and the stench was awful. Worse than that, everyone seemed to hold me responsible. Friends of a lifetime cursed me as I walked the mud roads of the village. Some kid threw a dirt clod and knocked off my cap. I stomped into my cottage to recount these injustices to my loyal wife.

"Sluggard!" she railed. "Lazy oaf! It's been three days, and you've not lifted one finger to dispose of that thing!"

"That thing, dear wife, will not be moved by my lifting one finger!" I replied, with all the logic of the truly defensive.

"Well, it certainly won't move itself!" she snarled back.

"I know that!" I barked. "I'm working on it."

"Work! What work? All you've done is sit on the stinking beast's head and bite your lip!"

"I'm thinking!"

"Yes, well, it's *stinking*. Perhaps you haven't noticed?" she added more sweetly.

I indeed I had. I'd even slept in the doorway the night before in hopes that I'd catch a cold. No luck. Why can't you ever catch one when you need it?

"If you don't do something soon, we're going to have to leave this village. No one will talk to us. We're outcasts! We might as well burn this hovel to the ground! And what about our children, how would you like it if —?"

She went on, I think, but I didn't hear the rest. Her words had inspired a splendid plan. I'd burn it! Make an awful stink, of course, but how much worse could it be than what we already smelled? I raced to the fire pit, got a really good flame burning on the end of a stick, and ran out to the side of the dragon. There, I paused triumphantly, then put the thing to the torch.

It didn't burn. My wife strolled out the door with a smirk on her face. "Dragons *breathe* fire," she reminded me. "Think they could do that if their hides could burn?"

I shrugged, then sat down on the dead creature's head and thought some more. That night I didn't even go inside. I slept on the ground, and woke with a wonderful covering of frost on my back. I inhaled with great excitement — but no luck. My sense of smell was marvelously acute.

It was a bad day. First, the baron's steward arrived in

the company of two of the old goat's men-at-arms. He kept his distance as he unrolled a long scroll and read a proclamation. Whereas I had willfully neglected my duty to king, country, and lord of the manor, I was to be fined some exorbitant sum, to be extracted daily until such a time as the fetid hulk should be removed, and so on and so on. All this to a man whose cow was dead. I shrugged, and the steward tamped at his nose with a handkerchief and started to ride off.

That's when this other contingent of riders arrived, dressed in the livery of the king no less. A strange little man whose eyes didn't focus got off his horse and walked over to me. He had an odd smile, as if half-embarrassed at what he was about to do and half-thrilled at being the one permitted to do it. "Is this your dragon?" he asked.

"He is now." The words were out of my mouth and gone before I could stop them, and the little man's eyes glowed wickedly. I'd known it from the moment he'd gotten off his horse, and it was my own fault for not behaving accordingly: this was a tax man. He scribbled something on a scrap of parchment and handed it to me.

"What's this," I asked flatly, but I already knew.

"Property taxes," the little fellow grinned, and he got back *onto* his horse.

"How can this be property when the baron has ruled it a public nuisance!"

"We've had no conversations with your baron on this matter. He can rule it whatever he likes. You ought to be grateful the beast isn't moving."

"Why," I asked, not really caring.

"Transportation tax," the gleeful mouseling cackled, then he and his entourage departed, leaving me and the steward to stare after him.

The steward's last words to me were brief: "Whatever you do," he warned, "pay us first."

Then he, too, was gone, leaving me to pay my dragon's head in shock and murmur, "Fat chance . . ."

You see, few things terrify me so much as taxes. The baron's fines I could ignore. I was already so deeply indebted to Flaubert I'd die before I could even pay off the interest. But tax evasion was another matter. That could get me arrested, hauled off to the king's court, and impaled on a stake! I got a little desperate then; and wild ideas filled my head. My inner turmoil was evidently not particularly noticeable on the outside, however. My wife stalked out of the house, propped her hands on her hips, and stared at me. I struggled to be polite. "Yes?" I inquired.

"Do you realize we don't have a scrap of food in this house? While you perch there like a plump vulture, the rest of your family is starving! Other men in this village would have —"

I'm certain she continued, but I didn't hear. I was off for the cutting board to fetch a cleaver, then back out the door with it clutched in my fist. My wife's eyes suddenly grew very wide and round, and she backed up against our stinking guest and stood there; quivering. "What's the matter with you?" I asked with exaggerated kindness.

"Don't you point that thing at me!" she gasped, gesturing toward the cleaver.

I looked down at it. "It doesn't have a point," I ob-

served snidely. We're very accurate when we quarrel. When I looked back up, she'd disappeared. Odd, I thought, but really preferable. I was about to experiment upon the dragon, and she tended to be squeamish.

Going to the far side of the mound of flesh, I pulled back the cleaver and chopped downward. I nearly cut my hand off. The blade bounced off the scales and landed two feet behind me, while I grabbed my vibrating arm and sought to still its shaking. "Scales," I reminded myself. "Under the scales," I suggested as I picked up the cleaver and tried again. It took a couple of hours, and the wife's cleaver would never be the same, but I did manage at last to pry five of the wicked scales aside and cut myself a slice of dragon. I glanced around guiltily to see if anyone was watching, then tiptoed to the hovel door to see if my mate was back. She wasn't. I danced to the firepit, stirred the coals to action and added a log, then found a flat, black pan and started frying the lavender meat.

I won't describe the smell it made while cooking, except to note that hungry dogs would gag at it. I persevered, nose firmly clasped between thumb and forefinger of my free hand. Obviously, the stuff *did* cook. I had to assume that only the scales were fireproof.

How can you tell when dragon is done? The meat still looked purple when I took it off the fire. I let it cool a minute, then steeled myself and took a bite. All of my worst fears were confirmed. Dragon tasted exactly like liver.

I ate what I could stomach, reminding myself with a desperate optimism that there are many in this life who actually *like* liver. I didn't realize it, but that moment was the turning point in my life. I was no longer a peasant. Henceforth I would be a salesman.

One thing saved me: my wife liked it. Oh, I didn't tell her what she was eating, of course. I only lured her back to the hovel on the promise that I'd go to market in the next village and buy some meat. I kept my promise too — I just bought it from myself. I sold a dozen other chunks as well — none to anybody from our village, of course. In fact, I had to leave rather hurriedly when one of my former friends got wind of a scent that had grown familiar, and started spreading nasty rumors. I beat a hasty path home, enjoying the unusual jingle of coins in my pants. When I got to the hovel, I cut a few more strips off the carcass and told my dear wife that it was parrot. When she told me she liked it, I told her what it *really* was, and spent that night back outside on the ground again.

The next day the steward showed up with a new proclamation. I didn't pay much attention, but my dear lady did. She burst into tears and ran over to grab my arm. "They're going to seize our home!" she wailed. "Non-payment of fines!"

I stood there with a cleaver in my hand, purple blood all the way up to my shoulder, gazing over the head of my wife at our humble hovel. "Let them," I grunted.

"What?" she snapped, all tears vanished.

"What would they do with it?" I asked her.

"Sell it!"

I nodded knowingly, then took a long, meaningful whiff of that pungent aroma we'd grown to know so well.

"Right. Must be hundreds of people who'd love the fresh

air . . . the view. . . ." I patted the dead beast's head. I think I was actually growing fond of it.

My wife stared back toward the cottage, a puzzled frown on her face. "Mmmm." That was all she said. Then she went inside and left me to my butchering.

It was dark work. I'd gotten my fill of hacking on those nasty scales the first day, so I used the area I'd cleaned as an entry point and just cut my way into the dragon. By now there was room to squeeze inside, and I was coming to understand the life of a miner. While I didn't enjoy the work exactly, I didn't mind it much either. As far as I was concerned, I mined a vein of pure gold. It netted me a healthy profit the next day, when the market rotated to another town. And the day after that, you might say my fortune was made. That same pushy neighbor who had spotted me before saw me again and had gone up onto someone's cart to announce that the lavender stuff I was selling was dragon meat. He'd intended to warn people away. As it happened, I learned that day that advertizing — even negative advertizing — sells meat.

Now, I'd never been a merchant, but I'd never been a fool either. The sudden run on my ox cart stimulated my economic imagination. I raised my price. Not without some hesitation, of course: would they laugh in my face?

Not so. They just paid through the nose in coin or barter, then ran off to brag to other peasants about how much they'd had to pay to get *their* chunk of dragon.

When I toted up my takings at the end of the day, two things were evident. First, I wouldn't have to drag my ox cart around by my own strength anymore, for I'd made enough cash to buy a new cow. And second, I needed to hire my neighbor.

Actually, I didn't *hire* him. Instead, I told him I'd *sponsor* him. He could climb into the dragon with me, cut as much meat as he could carry, and sell it for whatever he could get. All he had to give me was half of his daily take. He jumped at the offer. There are lots of idiots in the world, aren't there?

Within three days I no longer visited the market myself. I was sponsoring fourteen distributors, and they were doing all the selling. All the butchering, too. About all I did anymore was to find new peasants I could tell about "the business." Incredible as it seemed, I soon had the gold to pay my taxes, and the baron's fines as well. I *didn't*, of course. I just had the funds *available*. And I sold my new cow to one of my distributors. After all, why did I need it? If I kept it, the baron would just seize it for non-payment of fines. Let him come take my hovel, instead.

I suppose it was inevitable. About the time the dragon's carcass was half-empty and my distributors had started sponsoring distributors of their own, Sir Percy showed up looking grim. "Trouble!" my distributors murmured, and they scuttled away into the twilight. I stepped out to face the man who had ruined me — and thereby made me rich.

He looked at me scornfully for several minutes, as if expecting *me* to talk first. I could wait. Sure enough, the stench at last got to him. "Varlet! I hear you grow wealthy from *my* dragon!"

"With due respect, my lord, it's not your dragon."

"It is mine! I killed it!"

"Now that I'll grant," I responded, "but of course, you declared it a public nuisance and bade me remove it. I'm doing that, my lord."

"It's my property!" Flaubert roared.

I paused thoughtfully, then said, "Actually, it's *not*. You see, the king's tax man has declared it *my* property, and I'm paying taxes on it. Thus legally —"

Flaubert did what any sensible knight would do. He tried to chop my head off.

I did what any sensible peasant would do. I ran and dived into the carcass. Flaubert started in after me, actually getting so far as to push his helmeted head inside. "Ah, my lord?" I said quietly. "I thought you didn't touch dead beasts?" Then I gave a little sniff — just a little one. Enough, however, to remind him of the smell.

Sir Percy threw himself backward with a lordly "Aurgh!" A cry no peasant could even imitate. Then he whined, "How can you *do* that?"

I smiled, but I doubt if he could see it through the gloom. "Somebody's got to," I reminded him.

"I'll get you, peasant! I'll be back in an hour with my guards!"

"Bring them," I yawned.

"We'll seize your possessions!"

"I'll move anything of value inside here."

"I'll imprison your wife!"

"I'll move her in here, too." I hoped he wouldn't ask how I intended to accomplish that. Given her choice, I figured my dear lady would opt for his dungeon instead of my dragon carcass.

Fortunately, he didn't press that point, but went on to other threats: "We'll attack!"

"Go ahead, if you think you can penetrate this old hide!"

"You forget yourself, varlet. I *killed* this beast!"

"A lucky blow. You got him in the eye. And if the lizard had happened to blink at the proper moment, your blow would have bounced off, and he'd have roasted you for supper."

This was true enough, and it made Sir Percival scream with rage. It also gave him a new idea.

"We'll burn you out!"

I had to chuckle. "I tried that. The scales won't burn."

"We'll . . . we'll . . . starve you out!"

I glanced around. "Plenty of food in *here*," I said nonchalantly, not bothering to mention how I loathed the stuff. I figured I could learn to like it.

"I'll . . . I'll —"

It was evident poor Percy's imagination had run dry. Before he pieced together the fact that *I* had, *indeed*, pierced the dragon's hide and that in all probability he could, too, I figured I'd better suggest some ideas of my own.

"Sir Percival, there's *no* reason why we can't all have a slice of this dragon. Now let me just tell you a little about a business that just can't miss. It's all based on the single, inviolable principle that anyone can get rich if he doesn't mind taking advantage of his friends. And Sir Percy, I need a distributor like you. The way I figure it, this skin will be empty within another two weeks. But there are *hosts* of dragons out there just waiting for an ambitious, shrewd knight like yourself to . . ."

And Percival bought it. He now has a hundred and six distributorships in a dozen feudal kingdoms. And I sponsor *him*!

We've diversified. I took the scales and started making flameproof armor and selling it to knights going out after new meat. The wife and I have built a little mansion near the hovel, but we've kept the old place. Sentimental reasons, you understand.

We still have our problems. Some noisy group of picketers keeps campaigning to shut our business down, saying there won't be any dragons left for posterity. As if posterity should need any! But it's all just talk. Why should the king close me down when he's one of my best distributors?

We've done well. I can't complain. And the king and some of the other boys are dropping by this afternoon for a chat. We're talking about going into unicorns. Ω

"Once upon a time . . .

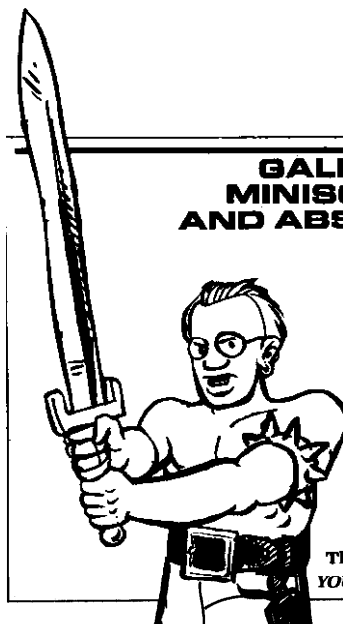
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This month:
YOUR EDITOR

Journey across the light years exploring the uncharted systems of the frontier; watch your two shadows under a double star; war against the unfathomable Kafers amid the exotic environments of alien worlds; ride the beanstalk down to the towering cities of Earth, the economic center of an ever expanding human civilization. Be a part of the New Age in **Traveller: 2300**—the state of the art in science fiction role-playing.

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Spies in space in the TOP SECRET[®] game

by Merle M. Rasmussen

Three years ago, DRAGON[®] Magazine ran a series of articles which depicted the future history of lunar exploration and civilization, according to a number of popular science-fiction role-playing games. At the time, I was making a list of games which might be worth covering in this series when Merle Rasmussen suggested writing up the TOP SECRET[®] game's version of space and lunar adventuring.

Espionage on the High Frontier? Well, after all, there was James Bonds Moonraker movie, and several other novels and films have been made about adventures in space which involved astronaut-spies and cosmonaut-spies. What was there to lose?

Merle went to work. Many months later, he produced a three-part series of articles describing possible near-future adventuring in space with TOP SECRET game agents, which we present now. It ain't Kansas, Toto. — RM

The idea of conducting espionage missions in outer space is not a new one. Spy satellites and space weapons tests have occurred for many years, particularly by the United States and the Soviet Union. Manned espionage and military missions are also not new, as both of the above nations have conducted purely military missions using the Space Shuttle and Salyut space station, respectively. It is not difficult to conceive of manned space missions in which espionage, whether on a very detached or very personal level, could become quite important — important enough to send highly trained agents into space. This article presents the basic rules necessary for TOP SECRET game missions into this last and deadliest frontier of them all.

New personal traits

Two new personal traits important to characters adventuring in space are presented in this article. These traits are additions which are designed for this space article and are not part of the "official" TOP SECRET game system. Administrators may use these new personal traits in Earth-bound situations where they seem appropriate.

Balance: To determine a particular character's Balance Value, add the character's Willpower and Coordination values together and divide the total by two. The

OPERATION: ZENITH

equation for this secondary personal trait is as follows:

$$\text{Balance Value} = \frac{\text{Willpower} + \text{Coordination}}{2}$$

Wellness: The Wellness Value is calculated by adding a character's Physical Strength and Willpower values together and dividing the total by two. The equation for this secondary personal trait is as follows:

$$\text{Wellness Value} = \frac{\text{Physical Strength} + \text{Willpower}}{2}$$

Astronaut requirements

Agents operating as astronauts have to meet both general and specific requirements, none of which are waived on their behalf. The United States space program is too valuable to risk on the weaknesses of an unqualified astronaut. It is assumed that the Soviets (and any future space-faring nations) have equivalent requirements. General astronaut requirements include the following:

Acceptable citizenship. This applies to anyone who takes passage aboard any American spacecraft, whether crewman or payload specialist or visitor. So far, astronauts from West Germany, Saudi Arabia, Canada, France, and Mexico have flown aboard the Space Shuttle, as well as American private citizens and military officers. Numerous cosmonauts from Soviet-bloc nations have traveled into space aboard Soyuz spacecraft. France is the only nation to have sent crewmen on both Soviet and American space flights.

Age. There is no real age limit for becoming an astronaut, though the oldest astronauts are in their mid-50s. Astronaut candidates must be mentally and physically fit. Mentally fit candidates have Charm, Courage, and Knowledge trait values all above 40. Physically fit characters have a Movement Value greater than 120, with vision corrected to 20/20 and normal hearing.

Sex and race. Qualified individuals of either sex are allowed in the program. Shuttle pilots and commanders, who are usually pulled from the military, have invariably been male. Racial barriers have also eased considerably since the early days of the space program.

Height. Acceptable heights for astronauts range from 60-74" (150-185 cm). This is the height of the individual as measured under Earth gravity situations, not under weightless conditions.

Education. A college degree in science or engineering is required. Some flying and skydiving experience is also preferred. To determine an agent's college degree, refer to Education on page 5 of the TOP SECRET Companion. If the Companion is not available, the agent must have a college degree in his Area of Knowledge (AOK) with the highest rating score above 70. If none of the agent's scores are above 70, the agent cannot become an astronaut. Agents com-

pleting the Pilot Training Course of the Espionage College (found on page 70 of the Companion) have flying experience, as do any agents with Transportation and Aeronautical Engineering AOK scores over 75. Table 1 shows the Areas of Knowledge currently required for Space Shuttle pilots, mission specialists, and payload specialists.

Crew positions

Pilots: Pilots spend most of their work time involved in launch, ascent, insertion, orbit, deorbit, re-entry, and landing procedures. Agents wanting to fly a Space Shuttle need a college degree (B.A. minimum) in Engineering, Biology, Physics, or Mathematics. An advanced degree (M.A. or Ph.D.) and working experience in the aeronautical field is also preferred. A pilot must have a college degree in at least one Area of Knowledge listed on Table 1. In addition to the college degree, pilot candidates must have at least 1,000 hours of experience in command of a jet aircraft. Experienced test pilots have an even better chance of becoming an astronaut-pilot, though such would happen only in extraordinary circumstances, as experienced shuttle pilots would be preferred.

Mission specialists: Mission specialists are professional astronauts who spend most of their work time in space or in preparation for spaceflight. Mission specialists operate various systems aboard the shuttle. Agents acting as mission specialists need at least one of the same college degrees as pilots have. In addition, they must have some background in biological science and at least three years working experience within their field of specialization. A mission specialist must have a college degree in at least one of the Areas of Knowledge listed for pilots on Table 1 and a superior Area of Knowledge rating score in a field required for mission specialists.

Payload specialists: Payload specialists are experts in operating the sophisticated equipment carried into space in the shuttle's cargo bay. This has included Spacelab and all its related materials, and has also included both the conducting of experiments to take place inside the shuttle itself or the care of satellites to be placed into orbit. Payload specialists tend to be one-shot passengers, depending on the equipment involved. The training for these part-time, nonprofessional astronauts is brief when compared to the time involved for regular astronauts, but it is quite strenuous and intensive.

Guest astronauts: Several of the astronauts sent into space aboard the shuttle had specialized missions or were simply "guests" placed aboard the ship for political reasons. Two U.S. Congressmen went aloft in the shuttles *Discovery* and *Columbia*; Sharon Christa McAuliffe was scheduled to teach from space. Any agent added to a shuttle roster in an emergency might be placed aboard as a "guest," provided

there was no need (or no time) for a cover to be manufactured. Such a flight would have to be launched in secret, probably from Vandenberg AFB in California. Training for guest astronauts is equivalent to that for payload specialists.

Characters might be qualified in more than one specialty, but are assigned to only one per flight. For example, Guion Bluford, Jr., was equally qualified as pilot and mission specialist, but served as a mission specialist.

All astronaut candidates must pass psychological testing and an interview concerning their education, health, character, performance in front of a group, and interest in the program. Before the final selection, the astronaut-trainees are put through intense physical fitness tests. If selected, it is up to the astronaut-trainee to maintain or improve that level of fitness. Since there is no regular daily exercise routine for astronauts, they must manage to work this routine into their busy schedules. Working out in a gym, jogging, or playing a sport are recommended for staying in shape.

Payload specialist training

Agents posing as technical experts or satellite specialists receive most of their training from the foreign government, private business, private organization, or private citizen supplying the experiment, equipment, or satellite, and paying the necessary fee. Payload specialists receive about 150 hours training at the Johnson Space Center. This training includes learning about the shuttle and the equipment used to support the payload, housekeeping, and various other shuttle duties, as well as learning what to do in case of an emergency. Course time and costs are modified by the amounts listed under the Espionage College Course Handbook on page 67 of the Companion.

Course: Payload Specialist 'Raining

Cost: \$40,000.

Time: 4 weeks.

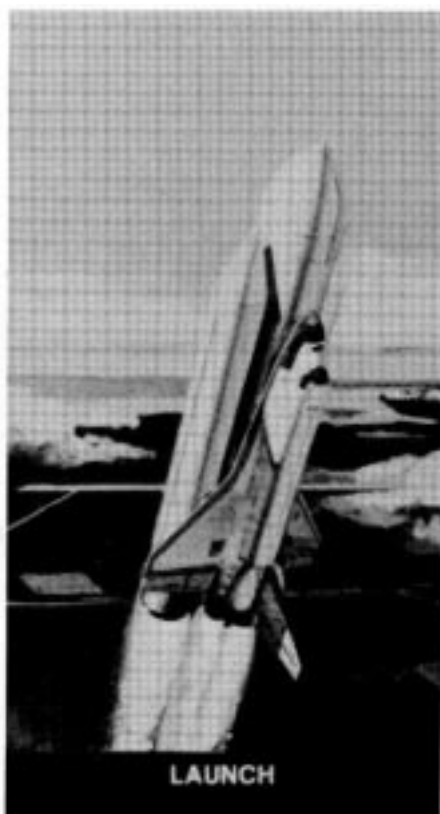
Prerequisite: General astronaut requirements listed above, including Movement Value above 120.

Areas of specialization: None (American Space Shuttle only)*.

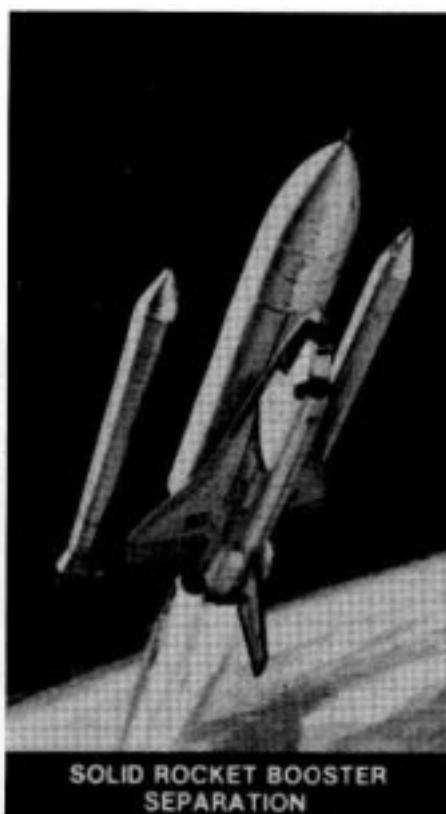
Ability acquired: The agent can perform each duty of a payload specialist with a 90% chance of success. Duties are those learned in training, including payload operation, normal flight procedures, emergency flight procedures, and general housekeeping. Increase Courage +(1-10).

Area of Knowledge increases: Astronomy/Space Science +(1-10) x 2. Computer Science, Aeronautical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Transportation Engineering, Home Economics, Medicine/Physiology, Military Science, Naval Science, and Physical Education — all +(1-10).

Credit: 200 Experience Points.



LAUNCH



SOLID ROCKET BOOSTER
SEPARATION



EXTERNAL TANK
SEPARATION

* The Soviet Space Shuttle program may be operational by 1990. Additionally, the French/ESA Hermes spaceplane and British/ESA HOTOL spaceplane programs may be operational by the year 2000, thus expanding career possibilities here.

Regular astronaut training

Once selected, the regular pilot and mission specialist astronaut-trainees must take two to three years of training. Training includes classes in basic science, basic math, meteorology, guidance, navigation, astronomy, physics, and computers. They study manuals and attend lectures by experienced astronauts. Nearly weightless (or microgravity environment) training takes place in a water immersion facility and aboard aircraft flying parabolic flight paths. Additional mission training takes place inside flight simulators. Course time and costs are modified by the amounts listed under the Espionage College Course Handbook on page 67 of the Companion.

Course: Astronaut/Cosmonaut Training*

Cost: \$1,500,000.

Time: 150 weeks.

Prerequisite: General astronaut requirements listed above including Movement Value above 120.

Areas of specialization: Mercury Pilot**, Vostok Pilot**, Gemini Pilot* *, Voskhod Pilot **, Apollo Command Module Pilot**, Apollo Lunar Module Pilot* *, Soyuz Pilot* *, American Space Shuttle Pilot, Skylab Mission Specialist**, Salyut/Mir Mission Specialist, American Space Shuttle Mission Specialist.

Ability gained: The agent can perform each duty of a pilot or mission specialist with a 95% chance of success. Duties are those learned in mission training, including working in a pressurized space suit, escaping from the spacecraft in case of emergency, surviving on land and water, performing certain types of experiments, and operating the shuttle. Increase Physical Strength, Willpower, and Courage $+(1-10) \times 2$.

Area of Knowledge increases:

Astronomy/Space Science + (1d10) X 3. Computer Science, Ecology/Earth Science, Aeronautical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Hydraulic Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Transportation Engineering, Geography, Home Economics, Mathematics/Accounting, Medicine/Physiology, Military Science/Weaponry, Naval Science, Photography, Physical Education, Physics, Psychology, and Social Science/Sociology — all $+(1-10) \times 2$.

Credit: 7,500 Experience Points.

* French space crewmen have been called *spacionautes*. See also the footnote regarding the Soviet Space Shuttle and the two ESA spaceplane projects in the section on the Payload Specialist training course.

* * Though facilities, equipment, and texts exist for training astronauts and cosmonauts to operate these spacecraft, no operational spacecraft of these obsolete types are known to exist. Note that a Voskhod spacecraft was merely a stripped-down Vostok. It is possible (but not likely) that a museum piece could be made operational or that an unused spare craft exists, but the launch vehicles and launch facilities

themselves may not exist. Only advanced-design Atlas and Titan missiles are currently able to carry American nonshuttle manned spacecraft into orbit.

* * * The Soyuz spacecraft has undergone numerous modifications over the years, and some types are now obsolete. The exterior and interior appearance of the Soyuz craft has been considerably altered, as have various incarnations of the Salyut space station, of which the *Mir* space station appears to be a variant.

Crew complement

Usually seven, but occasionally up to eight, astronauts can be selected for an American Space Shuttle flight. The basic crew consists of the shuttle commander, pilot, and necessary mission specialists. Overall crew safety and flight execution is the commander's responsibility. The commander is qualified as a pilot. The pilot, second in command, assists the commander. Sometimes the commander is called the "pilot" and the pilot, "co-pilot!" The mission specialists coordinate payload operations and carry out mission scientific objectives. One or more payload specialists (scientists, engineers, or physicians) are selected by the organizations that built the payloads to be operated. Payload specialists may be trained to operate other payloads, and are trained in Space Shuttle housekeeping, plus normal and emergency flight procedures. A mission specialist operates the remote manipulator arm when necessary.

Each crewman receives cross-training so at least one person can handle the duties of all the others. All flights have a backup



ORBITAL INSERTION



ORBITAL OPERATIONS



ATMOSPHERIC ENTRY

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

crew, In case of accident or illness, any crew member can easily be replaced by an identically-trained substitute without having to cancel the mission. Each crew takes part in spacecraft reviews and test programs so as to maintain their familiarity with the shuttle and its systems. Crew replacement has been performed on many past space missions, including once when the entire primary crew was killed in a plane crash (Gemini 9, 1966).

Before and after flights

Twenty-four hours prior to a flight, the crew members are given a physical checkup. The chance of passing the pre-flight physical is equal to the character's Wellness Value. A character with a Wellness Value of 100 or greater has no chance of failing the preflight physical. Roll percentile dice to determine this; if the value rolled is less than or equal to the character's Wellness Value, the character is allowed on the flight. If the value rolled is greater than the character's Wellness Value, the character may not go on the flight, and his alternate goes instead.

Following a flight, crew members are given a physical and spend several days debriefing. These post-flight reports inform future crews of what worked and what didn't. They also help flight planners determine whether spacecraft systems, payload handling, or training procedures need to be improved. The press is always anxious to talk to astronauts after the completion of a flight. The press crunch can be avoided if a news blackout is announced at the start of a mission on the grounds of national security. Soviet

spaceflights are always performed in secrecy. After the debriefings and press conferences are completed, the astronauts go on a short vacation before returning to their jobs, when studies and training begin again for the next flight.

It is suggested that agents assigned to espionage missions in space be placed on board the shuttle during secret military-sponsored flights. The press can be kept at a distance during the entire mission due to a mandatory news blackout in the name of national security. If a military-sponsored secret flight is not available, the mission/payload specialist cover allows the greatest possible access to space with the least amount of training. Non-agency crew members could be sworn to secrecy about secret payload testing operated by agents on board. Rarely would an entire shuttle crew be made up of agents, and only then in the gravest and most unusual circumstances.

Space sickness

Weightlessness disturbs the vestibular system, causing vertigo, nausea, and vomiting when the subject moves around. This discomfort, affecting many subjects on their first day of weightlessness, is dubbed "space sickness." The resultant nausea reduces the subjects appetite for several days. Time-release motion-sickness medication absorbed through the skin is applied by placing an adhesive strip behind one's right ear. Motion sickness medication is only effective if administered before space sickness occurs. There is no guarantee that this medication will combat all space sickness effects.

The chance a character does not experience space sickness is equal to the character's Balance Value. If the character's Balance Value is 100 or greater, there is no chance the character suffers space sickness. Roll percentile dice; if the value rolled is less than or equal to the character's Balance Value, no space sickness occurs. If the value rolled is greater than the character's Balance Value, the character becomes space sick for a number of hours equal to 100 less the character's Balance Value. Characters suffering from space sickness have a temporary loss of Coordination of 1-100% for the sickness's duration, whether medicated or not. When the duration of the sickness is over, the affected character recovers all lowered characteristics.

For example, Yuri has a Coordination Value of 53 and a Willpower Value of 69. His Balance Value is 61 ($53 + 69 = 122$; $122/2 = 61$). Yuri's chance of not becoming space sick is 61%. Percentile dice are rolled, getting a score of 74. Since 74 is greater than 61, Yuri becomes space sick for 39 hours ($100 - 61 = 39$). Percentile dice are rolled again. An 85 is rolled. Yuri's Coordination Value is temporarily reduced to 8 ($53 \times .85 = 45$; $53 - 45 = 8$).

When a character moves from a weightless to an environment with gravity, whether by landing on the Earth or Moon, or experiencing acceleration aboard a spacecraft, the chance for space sickness should be rolled again. If the character is space sick when the change in gravity occurs, use the character's temporarily reduced Coordination Value in the calculation of Balance Value to determine if the

sickness continues and, if so, for how much longer.

Physiological effects

After 7-10 days in a weightless environment, the following effects reach their peak. Body fluids become more evenly distributed throughout the body. Legs become 5% thinner in circumference. The feet and waist appear thinner. Upper body blood pressure rises and may cause blood-shot eyes, a red and puffy face, nose-bleeds, nasal congestion, and headaches. The senses of smell and taste are depressed. Lung capacity decreases as more blood circulates in the chest. Chests and shoulders become slightly larger. Bodies change in size as well as in shape. Spongy discs between the vertebrae absorb more fluid from the surrounding tissues, causing an increase in height of 2%. Returning to a gravity situation causes these effects to be reversed in 2-20 hours. Deceleration during re-entry causes blood to pool in the body away from the brain and may lead to grayout (a "graying" of vision) or blackout. Inflatable bladders inside antigravity-suit trousers place pressure on the lower body, literally squeezing blood into the upper body and preventing pooling.

Additionally, a character's thirst is depressed, loss of body fluids is increased, potassium and calcium salts are lost, blood plasma falls, red-blood cell (RBC) production ceases, and T-lymphocytes (which fight against infection) are lost. Add the effect of a closed environment where bacteria can remain suspended indefinitely in weightless water drops, and you have a breeding ground for disease. The chance of not contracting a head cold under these conditions is equal to the character's Wellness Value. A character with a Wellness Value of 100 or greater has no chance of contracting a head cold. Roll percentile dice; if the value rolled is less than or equal to the character's Wellness Value, the character is healthy. If the value rolled is greater than the character's Wellness Value, the character contracts a cold. A character contracting a head cold temporarily loses a Life Level point for a period of time in hours equal to the character's Wellness Value subtracted from 100. It has happened at least once that an entire spacecraft crew has fallen ill with head colds (Apollo 7, 1968).

The need for RBCs is also reduced by the reduction in muscular usage and by the higher oxygen content of spacecraft atmosphere. Characters are at their lowest level of physical well-being just before bone-marrow production of RBCs recurs. For game purposes, this weakness is considered damage. The production of RBCs recurs after a period of 30 to 60 days. The number of Life Levels lost after a specific number of days without gravity and exercise are given on Table 2. Refer to this table when a character is subjected to gravity after a period of weightlessness. Note that no character can be killed by the

loss of Life Level points in this manner; a minimum Life Level score of 1 is always left to the character.

For flights lasting less than seven days, 15 minutes of strenuous exercise per day reduces the number of Life Level points lost for that mission by ½ point per day. On longer missions, increase the exercise period to 30 minutes. Daily exercise can include running on a treadmill, riding a bicycle (ergometer), wearing an elastic "penguin suit," or performing heavy calisthenics. Soviet cosmonauts, long accustomed to prolonged spaceflight, have worked out careful routines of exercise to help in such circumstances.

For example, George is on a seven-day Space Shuttle flight. Without any exercise, he loses 4 Life Level points when he returns to Earth. If George exercises strenuously on three days of the flight, he loses only 2 Life Level points (1½, rounded up) when he returns to Earth.

Zero-gee movement

A character moves inside a spacecraft by using handholds or by connecting and disconnecting footholds (such as suction cups or locking mechanisms on footwear). The most popular form of locomotion is pushing oneself away from a solid object and floating toward one's destination. This form of motion, similar to swimming and popularized by the Skylab astronauts, is dubbed *soaring*. The trickiest parts of soaring are takeoff, which determines the direction and speed the astronaut is traveling, and landing. If ill-timed or neglected, these actions could result in painful collisions with solid surfaces or other astronauts. To conform these actions to game functions such as movement speed and combat, treat soaring as wading.

A character may choose to *dart* (push off quickly) inside a spacecraft, but there is a 5% chance per landing of suffering W-type damage from the HTH Combat Results Table (rule book, page 28). A character injured from such a collision is stunned and unable to perform any action for a number of phases equal to the number of injury points received. Luckily, important onboard equipment switches are usually, protected by safety covers in spacecraft, to prevent accidental triggering. For game purposes, treat darting as running.

Self-styled acrobats may wish to perform daring athletic feats which cause them to tumble, spin, and pivot. Accidentally, after an unintentional collision or when attempting to avoid damage in combat, a character might tumble uncontrollably against his will. For game purposes, treat such motion as running and dodging, whether the tumbling is voluntarily performed or not.

Most of these same forms of locomotion —hand-over-hand, soaring, darting, and tumbling —can also be performed in a spacesuit, both inside and outside a spacecraft. The difference is that outside the spacecraft, astronauts are usually tethered

or have their feet in restraints. At other times, astronauts are also hoisted and moved around by the shuttle's remote manipulator arm. Last, but not least, an astronaut may don a Manned Maneuvering Unit (MMU) and jet around with enough propellant for a total velocity change of 66' per second. Thus, an astronaut could use a MMU to gain a 6'/second, with enough propellant left to come to a dead stop and repeat the process four more times, leaving enough left for one last 6'/second spurt (hopefully, the astronaut will aim at a solid object that he can grasp, stopping his forward motion at that time).

Extravehicular activity (EVA)

There are three modes of EVA or "space-walking": surface, tethered, and untethered. During a surface EVA, the astronaut remains on the surface of the spacecraft. Hand-held electro-adhesive pads, handholds, and Dutch-shoe foot restraints are designed for surface work.

During a tethered EVA, the astronaut maneuvers in space, but remains attached to the spacecraft and its life-support system. A variable flexibility tether consisting of a 3-meter-long series of ball-and-socket links encased in an outer soft covering is used for tethered work. A ratchet on the astronaut's belt enables the astronaut to apply tension to the links and lock them in any position. This type of tether is more difficult to cut than the wire, hose, and cable combination tether or various belt and tether waist restraints.

During an untethered EVA, the astronaut must use an independent propulsion system and a portable life-support system. The MMU and the Portable Life-Support System (PLSS) were designed for untethered EVAs. Hand-held, high-pressure, cold-gas propulsion units are also used. A common error in using these devices involves the overcorrection of a tumble that increases the problem. Riding the shuttle's remote manipulator arm with one's feet secured has become a new mode of untethered EVA, but the rider must rely on the abilities of the arm's operator. Pay load and mission specialists are usually trained in the arm's operation. Satellite recovery has been performed using an astronaut set on the arm.

EVA is very exhausting due to the bulkiness of the spacesuit and is especially pronounced without zero-reaction tools. This fatigue is simulated for game purposes by subtracting 1 point from the astronaut's Willpower rating for every 10 minutes of EVA. When the character's Willpower score reaches 10 or less, the astronaut becomes drowsy and has difficulty working; he will likely be sweating profusely, and his helmet visor may be fogged over. If the character's Willpower score reaches zero, he falls asleep or simply drifts, exhausted. This is not a permanent Willpower loss — it is merely an accounting method. The affected charac-

ter's Willpower is not affected for any other purpose.

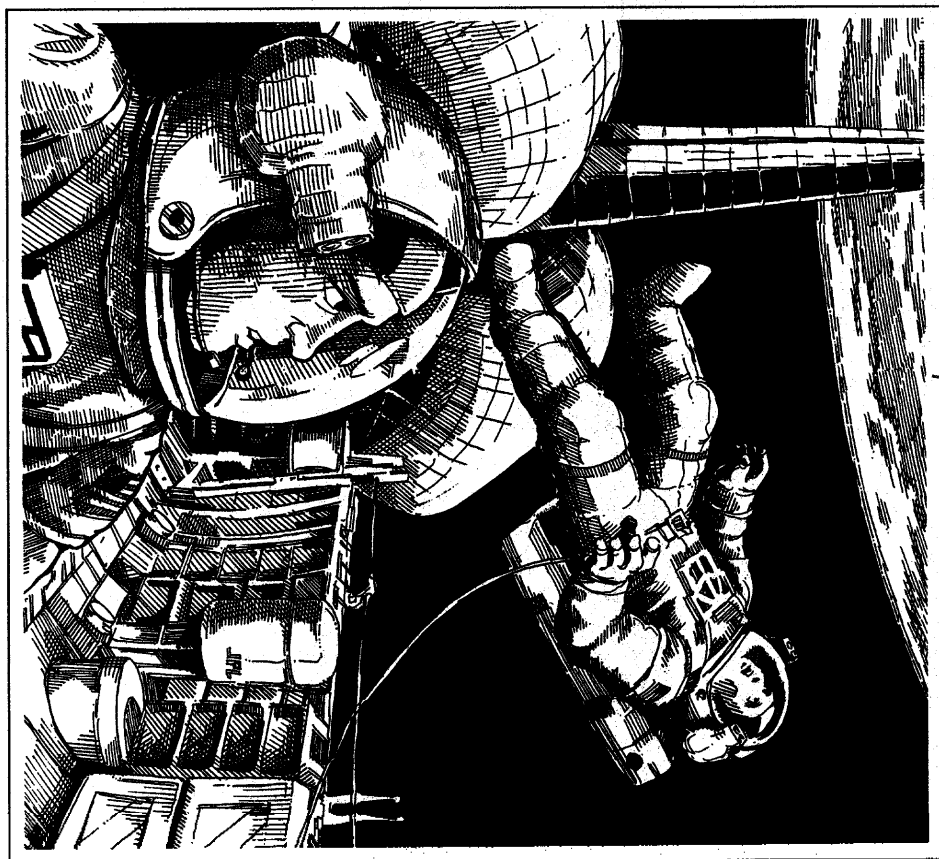
Bending at the waist, whether crawling through a narrow, bent tunnel or working outside the spacecraft, is very difficult in space, as gravity cannot pull the upper torso over. A spacewalking cosmonaut (Voskhod 2, 1965) once had grave difficulty re-entering his spacecraft after his walk, as the airlock tunnel required him to bend at the waist. Only by letting air out of his suit (enough to let him and his suit become more flexible) was he able to enter again. To further emphasize the extreme dangers involved in spacewalking (which are much overlooked by naive observers), a Soviet cosmonaut on the Soyuz 26 mission (1977-78) accidentally drifted free from his spacecraft without a tether. Were it not for the quick actions of his fellow cosmonaut, who was spacewalking at the time and caught the other cosmonaut by the foot, the cosmonaut would have been lost in orbit.

Combat in zero-gee

A character performing the action of firing a projectile weapon, swinging a hand-held mass, or throwing a hand-to-hand (HTH) weapon experiences an equal and opposite reaction. Performing any of these actions in a weightless or microgravity environment causes part of a character's body to spin, lean, or twist; naturally, the rest of the character's body follows. These motions are divided into three sorts: roll, pitch, and yaw.

One phase (1 second) of projectile weapon firing, no matter how many bullets are fired, causes a character to change facing by 90°. One action in Untrained Fighting, Knife Fighting, Boxing, Swordplay, Judo, or Martial Arts HTH Combat causes a character to change facing by 90°. The character continues to pivot (roll, pitch, or yaw) at a rate of 90° per phase until another force stops the spinning. Usually, this means the character strikes a more massive object, such as a spacecraft wall, and bounces off in a different direction.

The chance for a character to stop the tumbling is equal to the character's Balance Value. Characters with a Balance Value of 100 or greater stop the tumbling motion the following phase. Roll percentile dice; if the value rolled is less than or equal to the character's Balance Value, the character stops the tumbling in the following phase by acrobatically counteracting the motion or by catching hold of any solid object in reach. The character cannot perform any activity other than attempting to stop the tumbling. If the value rolled is greater than the character's Balance Value, the character continues to spin, bouncing off solid objects or drifting off into the vastness of space. An additional attempt to stop the tumbling may be made each phase until the tumbling is stopped. See the combat example below for more information.



Tumbling is prevented in several different ways. The most common method involves mounting a weapon to a solid object before it is fired. This action does not include monopods, bipods, or tripods unless they are bolted in place. Simply bracing a weapon against a solid object won't prevent tumbling. The Weapon at Rest on Solid Object Hit Determination Modifier (rule book, page 24) does not apply to projectile combat in space. Once mounted, it is often too difficult or too time consuming to move the weapon to a new location.

A second method of preventing tumbling involves securing the character's body before combat begins. This includes using handholds, foot restraints, securing straps, suction cups, and other characters to hold the combatant in place. A character can also position himself against a solid object, such as a wall, so that the reaction presses his body against the obstruction, but does not cause him to tumble.

The third method for preventing tumbling involves the use of weapons with no recoil. These recoilless weapons include the 13mm Gyrojet/Microjet Launcher, 80mm Missile Launcher, High-Intensity Light Device, High-Intensity Sound Device, and the Electrical Shock Device (Companion, page 62).

Space and weapons

Standard weapons used aboard spacecraft (which incidentally violate Article IV of the Outer Space Treaty) should have

their trigger guards enlarged or removed so they can be used with gloved hands. Because of extreme temperature variations, most guns used outside of spacecraft misfire during a Hit Determination roll of 92-93 and jam on a roll of 94-00. Revolvers misfire on a roll of 97-00, but won't jam. Ammunition is combustible; the oxygen within the shell reacts with the powder, allowing the gun to fire. Blowguns and flamethrowers can only be used in an atmosphere, and so are useless except within a spacecraft (but the use of open flame on spacecraft is extremely dangerous, due to the high oxygen content of the air and possible presence of free-floating flammable material). Aerosol Spray Devices may explode in vacuum conditions. The spray from an Aerosol Spray Device or the liquid inside a dart may freeze or vaporize in space. Contained breathing apparatuses on spacesuits prevent gases and sprays from being effective weapons except within shirtsleeve environments aboard ships. Sprays are useful for obscuring vision. Air (pellet) guns may be fired once in a vacuum, but can only be filled with compressed air in the presence of air.

In a weightless environment, nearly all projectile weapons have no range modifiers beyond point blank range and have no maximum range. In space, a bullet or thrown weapon continues in a straight line at the velocity it left the gun or thrower's hand until another force acts upon it. This means all targets are treated as if they had an unlimited upper limit for short ranges (i.e., no medium- or long-

range modifiers apply). Note that, without training, a gunner is likely to aim in such a way as to account for gravity's effect on the bullet — meaning that until the gunner learns to aim *directly* at the target, he will always miss what he aims at beyond short range. Very small targets at extreme ranges may cause the application of other to-hit penalties, since normal hand and body movements and the difficulty in aiming at very small targets may cause the gunner to miss.

Projectile weapons which disperse particles or fire recoilless ammunition have medium- and long-range modifiers in weightless (microgravity) environments as shown on Table 3.

Whether slug, buckshot, or birdshot is loaded in a shotgun, only one projectile can hit a target beyond 300' when fired from a shotgun with full choke, modified choke, or improved cylinder. Only one projectile can hit a target beyond 50' when fired from a sawed-off shotgun.

Conventional telescopic sights are worthless to helmeted astronauts since they cannot get their eye near the eyepiece. Silencers are unnecessary in space since there is no atmosphere to conduct sound. Monopods, bipods, and tripods are worthless unless bolted to a solid surface. Heavy artillery is not necessary to incapacitate someone in space. A simple sharp object which punctures a suit is enough to keep an astronaut busy trying to save himself from the effects of space. Obscuring an astronaut's faceplate (such as with paint or dust) also reduces his possible actions.

Characters have one less action available to them while fighting in a weightless environment. Inside a spacecraft, this lack of action is due to slippage and the opponents drifting apart because of swinging, striking, and being struck. Outside a spacecraft, this lack of action is due to slippage, driftage, and spacesuit bulkiness. If opponents are in a confined space, tied in place, or tied together, they cannot drift apart but retreat is more difficult. Swinging at or striking an opponent causes a character to tumble, as described in the sections on "Zero-gee movement" and "Combat in zero-gee!"

When a character is hit by a projectile or struck by a solidly-landed hand or foot, the victim also tumbles (roll, pitch, or yaw) at a rate of 90° per phase. The chance for a victim to stop the tumbling action is equal to the victim's Balance Value, as noted in the section "Combat in zero-gee." If the attack is a successful hold or a projectile such as a lasso which ties the victim to the attacker, both individuals begin to tumble. A victim tied in place or forced against a solid object will not tumble. Light, hurled objects (such as knives) may not cause a target to tumble, depending upon the force of impact and the mass of the victim and striking weapon.

If a tumbling character strikes a solid object, there is a 5% chance of receiving damage from the impact. The amount of

damage is calculated on result W (rule book, page 28). There is also a 5% chance per point of damage done by striking a sharp or pointed surface of tearing open a spacesuit; this includes being struck with HTH weapons such as knives, swords, foils, and spears. Whenever a character is injured in a tumble and is not wearing a helmet, the character is stunned. A stunned character is unable to perform any function for a number of phases equal to the number of injury points he received. If an attacker and a victim are tumbling together, each of them suffers result W damage.

Example of space combat

While on a double spacewalk outside a military-mission Space Shuttle, an enemy agent posing as a mission specialist is caught trying to cut the tether of a payload specialist, Daniel Walker — who is himself a special agent assigned to locate a suspected saboteur among the shuttle's crew (mission now accomplished). The two agents are 25' apart. Suspecting trouble, Daniel thought to bring **along an illegal** (but helpful) .45 U.S. Government-issue revolver. The enemy agent cuts the tether and throws an Air Force survival knife at Daniel; treat the weapon as a thrown hunting knife. The enemy's Offense Value

is 75 and the knife's PWV is -10; the enemy's base accuracy is 65. The only range modifier which applies is the -42 for the short-range distance. After throwing the knife, the enemy agent tumbles backward in a pitching motion (a 33% chance was given for him to either roll, pitch, or yaw, with a 1% chance that he did none of them).

As Daniel aims the .45 revolver at his opponent, the knife strikes him. Roll percentile dice and refer to the General Injury Determination Table in the rule book (page 25) or the Accelerated Specific Injury Determination Table in the Companion (page 50). We'll assume the blade harmlessly glances off Daniel's visor, startling him but not knocking him backward. If it had struck anywhere else, there would have been a 5% chance per point of damage done of a suit tear. The first combat phase ends.

Taking careful aim at the tumbling enemy agent, Daniel fires. Subtract 20 from the from Daniel's base accuracy for a tumbling (running and dodging) target. The short-range modifier for the .45 handgun is -45. Its PWV of 45 and Daniel's Offense Value of 60 gives a Base Accuracy of 105. Daniel's chance to hit is 89 ($105 - 45 = 60; 60 - 20 = 40$). A 38 is rolled on percentile dice, indicating a hit. Daniel

Table 1
Required of Knowledge

| Area of Knowledge | Required for |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Agriculture | MS, PS |
| Animal Science | MS, PS |
| Architecture | PS |
| Astronomy/Space Science | MS, PS |
| Biology/Biochemistry | P, MS, PS |
| Botany | MS, PS |
| Business/Industry | PS |
| Chemistry | PS |
| Computer Science | P, MS, PS |
| Ecology/Earth Sciences | MS, PS |
| Engineering, Aeronautical | P, MS, PS |
| Engineering, Construction/Civil | P, MS, PS |
| Engineering, Electrical | P, MS, PS |
| Engineering, Hydraulic | P, MS, PS |
| Engineering, Industrial | P, MS, PS |
| Engineering, Mechanical | P, MS, PS |
| Engineering, Transportation | P, MS, PS |
| Geography | PS |
| Geology | PS |
| Mathematics/Accounting | P, MS |
| Medicine/Physiology | MS, PS |
| Metallurgy | PS |
| Military Science/Weaponry | PS |
| Naval Science | PS |
| Photography | PS |
| Physical Education | MS |
| Physics | P, MS, PS |
| Psychology | MS |
| Social Sciences/Sociology | MS |

P = Pilot; MS = Mission Specialist; PS = Payload Specialist

yaws wildly to the right from the .45's recoil. The enemy agent tries to regain his balance this phase and rolls a 17 — success! —just as the .45 standard ammunition slug slams into his chest-mounted Display and Control Module (DCM), which was positioned where the slug would have hit him otherwise. Making an incredible roll of 00, he remains stable and quickly attempts to flee toward the airlock before his system fails. (Roll percentile dice and refer to the section on the DCM to determine the exact malfunction.) The second combat phase ends.

Rolling a 99, Daniel fails to regain his balance, smashing into the remote manipulator arm and causing 4 points of damage. The bulky spacesuit reduces the damage by half to 2 points of damage; since Daniel is wearing a helmet, he is not stunned by the impact for two phases. The remote manipulator arm has no sharp surfaces, sparing Daniel the horrors of a suit rip and exposure to vacuum. Grabbing the arm, Daniel stabilizes himself, filled with terror at his loss of control — and with thoughts of vengeance against the saboteur. . . .

Typical hardware

Below are samples hardware typical of that flown on many shuttle missions. Extra

equipment may be added for special missions, as the Administrator desires.

Tools

Ratchet/torque wrench with sockets
Crescent wrench combination
Screwdriver
Hammer
Vise grip and other pliers
Swiss Army knife
Scissors

Equipment

Exercisor
Food Warmer
Water dispenser
Vacuum cleaner
Mirrors
Flashlight
Stereo tape recorder with cassettes
Head sets
Binoculars
Window filters
Trash containers
Lines, straps, and cables

Environment/medical instrumentation

Sound-level meter with octave analyzer
High-rate, low-rate, and passive-radiation dosimeters
Blood pressure cuff
Stethoscope
Thermometers
Otoscope
Ophthalmoscope
Bioinstrumentation system (EKG device)

Supplies

Tape
Dry wipes
Packing material

Television system

Two portable TV cameras with monitor-viewfinders
One color lens
One wide-angle lens
Cassette recorder and cassettes

Photography gear

16mm Data Acquisition Camera
Time-coded, slow, fast, and normal speed film
5mm, 10mm, 18mm, and zoom lens with film magazines
Hasselblad 70mm reflex camera
Standard and 250mm lens with film magazines
Nikon 35mm single-lens reflex, f/1.4 lens, and 35mm film cassettes
35mm self-developing CRT camera (photographs orbiter operational data on CRT screen) with film cassettes
Portable light
Flash gun
Filters
Mounting brackets

Special hardware

Extravehicular Mobility Unit (EMU): The EMU, or spacesuit, consists of seven parts

which allow an astronaut to put it on and take it off unassisted. Donning the suit takes five minutes. Removing it takes one minute.

Because of the EMU's increased padding and the underlying cooling and ventilation garment, all projectile and HTH combat damage is reduced by half. Any attack with a sharp object or projectile which causes one or more points of damage to the suit's wearer has a 5% chance per point of damage done of tearing the suit. Any attack which causes damage toward the death (not unconsciousness) of the wearer also damages the suit first. The helmet is considered proof against all attacks save against projectile (bullet) attacks which hit the faceplate; these have a 10% chance per point of damage done of cracking the plate — leading to certain death in a vacuum situation. One disadvantage of using the EMU is that astronauts cannot raise their arms above their shoulders.

Portable Life-Support System (PLSS): The PLSS is contained in a backpack permanently attached to the EMU's upper torso. All connections between the life-support unit and the EMU are inside the suit, eliminating the hoses and connections seen on past spacesuits. The unit contains enough oxygen and electric power for seven hours. This allows 15 minutes to check the EMU after donning it, six hours of EVA, 15 minutes to take off the EMU, and 30 minutes for reserve. In addition, an emergency 30-minute oxygen supply is contained in the secondary oxygen pack. The PLSS is recharged between spacewalks using the shuttle's onboard systems.

A chest-mounted Display and Control Module (DCM) contains the electrical and mechanical controls required to operate the EMU as well as a microcomputer. The microcomputer's LED display provides constant status checks of oxygen and battery power. Additionally, if there is an EMU malfunction, the microcomputer provides a warning and specifies the appropriate corrective action.

Each time a PLSS is struck by a shot, blow, or collision, roll percentile dice and refer to Table 4. Note that if the radio is damaged, person-to-person communication can still occur by conduction if two helmets are pressed together.

Manned Maneuvering Unit (MMU): The MMU is essentially a miniature spacecraft. The unit is flown very much like a spacecraft, and pilots and mission specialists need no additional training. This personalized propulsion system can be used inside and outside a spacecraft because nitrogen gas is used as the propellant. The MMU operates up to six hours with normal use and has enough propellant for a total velocity change of 66' per second. Twenty four nozzles arranged around its exterior allow fine-control maneuvering and allow an astronaut to hover in one spot. The right hand control governs orientation — pitch, roll, and yaw. The left hand control

Table 2
Damage Due to Weightlessness

| Number of weightless days | Life level points lost |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1-2 | 1 |
| 3-4 | 2 |
| 5-6 | 3 |
| 7-8 | 4 |
| 9-10 | 5 |
| 11-12 | 6 |
| 13-14 | 7 |
| 15-16 | 8 |
| 17-18 | 9 |
| 19-20 | 10 |
| 21-22 | 11 |
| 23-24 | 12 |
| 25-26 | 13 |
| 27-28 | 14 |
| 29-30 | 15 |
| 31-33 | 14 |
| 34-36 | 13 |
| 37-39 | 12 |
| 40-42 | 11 |
| 43-45 | 10 |
| 46-48 | 9 |
| 49-51 | 8 |
| 52-54 | 7 |
| 55-57 | 6 |
| 58-60 | 5 |
| 61-90 | 4 |
| 91-120 | 3 |
| 121-150 | 2 |
| 151+ | 1 |

governs straight line motion along the X, Y, and Z axes.

The MMU is a self-contained backpack that latches onto the EMU. To use the MMU, first unfold the control arms. Next, back into the MMU while wearing the EMU. Two latches connect the MMU to the EMU's PLSS backpack. The latches allow an astronaut to put the MMU on and take it off without assistance. Fifteen seconds are required to put the MMU on, and five seconds are needed to take it off. A fiber-optics cable links the MMU to the EMU's Display and Control Module (DCM). This allows the astronaut to monitor the MMU's operation the same way the EMU is monitored. Readouts show propellant quantity, battery power level, and malfunctions, along with the necessary corrective action.

One MMU is carried per shuttle flight, but another can be carried for rescue missions or when flight plans require two. When not in use, the MMU is stored in the front of the cargo bay.

Each time a MMU is struck by a single shot, blow, or collision, roll percentile dice and refer to Table 5. Each time both the PLSS and MMU are being worn and the chest-mounted DCM is struck by a single shot, blow, or collision, roll percentile dice and refer to Table 6.

Survival limits

Survival limits depend on a character's Willpower value. If a character exceeds any environmental survival limit, the character suffers unconsciousness. If a character exceeds his survival limit on any entry, he loses 1 Life Level per minute he remains in that environment. See Table 7.

Damage from exposure to space due to a puncture in an EMU is cumulative. An average character survives a *slow* exposure to vacuum a bit longer by holding his breath, but sudden decompression literally blasts the wind from one's lungs, regardless of attempts to hold it in. Any character passes out after only a few seconds of complete exposure to vacuum, and brain death from oxygen starvation begins moments later. (People do not explode within seconds from blood boiling in the veins. Skin exerts an elastic counterpressure to prevent swelling and distortion caused by gas bubbles forming in the tissues. The human body can be exposed to vacuum for around three minutes without suffering irreparable harm.) In sunlight, an exposed agent with oxygen can stand about 213° Fahrenheit before passing out. In darkness, he can stand about 11° Fahrenheit.

Atomic radiation and light have little immediate effect on the character. Radiation doses are measured in rems, the amount of ionizing radiation required to produce the same biological effect as one roentgen of high-penetration X-rays. Most places on Earth have a background of 0.1 rem per year, and U.S. standards for the general population are 0.5 rem per year. The annual dose of cosmic rays on an

unshielded astronaut is 10 rems. Radiation shielding is necessary all the time an astronaut is in space, and temporary shields must be available for solar flares. Solar flares are violent solar disturbances which blast high-energy protons into space without warning. The dangerous rain of particles can last for days after a solar flare. Manned telescopes and scientific instru-

ments give astronauts a few minutes warning to find cover before the dangerous proton flux strikes. See DRAGON issue #108 for the effects of atomic radiation on agents.

For game purposes, the timing of solar flares and the length of the disturbance are random. Roll percentile dice once each day. On a roll of 00, a solar flare occurs.

Table 3
Projectile Weapons with Range Modifiers in Space

| QRC | Weapon | Range Modifier | |
|-----|--------------------------------------|----------------|------|
| | | Medium | Long |
| z | 10-gauge variable-choke pump: | | |
| | full choke | -67* | -201 |
| | modified choke | -50* | -150 |
| aa | 12-gauge variable-choke pump: | | |
| | full choke | -80* | -240 |
| | modified choke | -72* | -216 |
| bb | 16-gauge variable-choke pump: | | |
| | full choke | -107* | -321 |
| | modified choke | -96* | -288 |
| cc | 20-gauge variable-choke pump: | | |
| | full choke | -133* | -399 |
| | modified choke | -120* | -360 |
| dd | 28-gauge variable-choke pump: | | |
| | full choke | -187* | -561 |
| | modified choke | -168* | -504 |
| ee | 410 caliber variable-choke pump: | | |
| | full choke | -450 | -900 |
| | modified choke | -405 | -810 |
| ai | 12-gauge Winchester pump-action | | |
| | M1200 (U.S.A.) | -120* | -360 |
| | 12-gauge High Standard M10A (U.S.A.) | -120* | -216 |
| aj | 13mm Gyrojet/Microjet Launcher | 0 | 0 |
| ap | 80mm Missile Launcher | -10 | -55 |
| aw | Aerosol Spray Device | -260 | -520 |

* The range modifier for all indicated shotguns at medium range is as follows: at 51-300', the listed subtraction is halved; at 301-600' the subtraction is as shown. Double-barreled shotguns have an ammunition capacity of 2 and each barrel may have a separate choke setting. The second consecutive shot from a side-by-side (not over-and-under) shotgun has a -5 Hit Determination modifier. Sawed-off-shotguns are usable at all ranges. Add +10 to the RM at point-blank range. Add -5 to the RM at short range. Add -100 to the RM at medium range. Add -300 to the RM at long range.

Table 4
PLSS Damage Table

| Percentile dice roll | System damaged | Effect |
|----------------------|------------------------|---|
| 01-25 | None | None |
| 26-50 | Oxygen Purge | Wearer has nothing to breathe in 1-10 minutes |
| 51-63 | Radio Transmission | Wearer can receive, but not send. |
| 64-75 | Radio Reception | Wearer can send, but not receive. |
| 76-00 | Temperature Regulation | Suit becomes outside environmental temperature in 1-10 minutes. |



By Stephen
Michael Rechi

Illustrated by
P.D. [unclear]

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Roll percentile dice to find how many hours the storm lasts. The risk of meteoroid collision is negligible, though the increasing amounts of space debris (flocks of paint, bits of metal from booster explosions, etc.) may make large space stations prone to be damaged on a regular basis.

Characters can hold their breath voluntarily for a number of seconds equal to their Willpower value, no matter what they are doing. If the character cannot take a full breath after the last breath runs out, the character becomes unconscious. One full breath of air (with oxygen) revives the character with no damage within a few minutes. Once the character passes out, no appreciable brain damage occurs for (Willpower x 5) seconds. After that, the character loses 1 Life Level and 10% Knowledge immediately, and every (Willpower x 1) seconds afterward. This situation applies only to exposure to air which has no oxygen whatsoever in it, not to vacuum exposure. A slow exposure to vacuum extends the agent's life for only 1-10 seconds beyond the limits of Table 7, after which the agent goes unconscious, as noted above, and brain death begins.

Further reading

An Administrator willing to do some research before starting a space-based adventure for his agents would do well to read through the following books as background.

Benford, Timothy B., and Brian Wilkes. *The Space Program Quiz & Fact Book*. New York: Harper & Row, 1985. This book has a great amount of information on specific space launches, including a complete table of space shots through mid-1984. Lots of useful space trivia.

Canan, James. *War in Space*. New York: Berkley Books, 1982. Covers the history and future of the military uses of the space program; excellent source for scenario ideas.

Cooper, Henry SF., Jr. *A House in Space*. New York: Bantam Books, 1978. Describes the Skylab missions in a readable style, giving an excellent idea of what it's like to live in space for long periods of time. Good source of "mood" information to make game missions seem real.

Gatland, Kenneth. *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Space Technology*. London: Salamander Books Ltd., 1981. Beautiful full-color illustrations of all major spacecraft up to the publication date. Especially useful for figuring scale sizes, showing the players "what, things look like," and so forth.

Joels, Kerry, and Gregory Kennedy. *The Space Shuttle Operator's Manual*. New York, Ballantine Books, 1982. Though the other books listed here are especially useful for creating background material for space missions, this book is **required reading**, as it describes in great detail how Space Shuttle missions are performed. Any Administrator running scenarios in space will find this reference

book invaluable, as nothing else imparts the true feel of taking part in a shuttle mission the way this book does. Lots of clear illustrations and diagrams.

McConnell, Malcolm. *Challenger: A Major Malfunction*. New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1987. Though written specifically about *the Challenger* disaster, this book describes in detail the inner workings of NASA and the Space Shuttle program prior to *Challenger's* loss. Another good reference book for setting mood in an adventure.

Oberg, James. *Bed Star in Orbit*. New York: Random House, 1981. The most informative and readable study of the Soviet space program and its future in print.

Oberg, James and Alcestis. "Last Flights." *Omni*, vol. 8, no. 4 (January 1986): 22. This brief article, written prior to the *Chal-*

lenger disaster, describes death in space; the information is quite valuable, though it is ironic that a notice of the *Challenger* launch appears on the same page.

Ritchie, David. *Space War*. New York: New American Library, 1982. Another excellent source for military/espionage mission ideas; useful background material as well, when taken with the book by Canan.

Sheffield, Charles, and Carol Rosin. *Space Careers*. New York: Quill Books, 1984. Superb text covering the overall set-up of worldwide space programs, particularly those of the West. The section on the development of the Air Force's Space Command division are especially interesting to Administrators.

Next month: Operation Zodiac — 12 scenario ideas for shuttle-board agents.

Table 5
MMU Damage Table

| Percentile dice roll | System damaged | Effect |
|----------------------|-------------------------|--|
| 01-25 | None | None |
| 26-38 | Propulsion | MMU leaks all propellant in 1-10 minutes. |
| 39-50 | Propulsion | MMU leaks all propellant in 1-10 seconds, causing random tumbling. |
| 51-57 | Orientation Control | MMU loses all ability to control pitch, roll, and yaw. |
| 58-63 | Pitch Control | MMU loses ability to pitch. |
| 64-69 | Roll Control | MMU loses ability to roll. |
| 70-75 | Yaw Control | MMU loses ability to yaw. |
| 76-82 | Straight Motion Control | MMU loses all ability to move along X, Y, or Z axes. |
| 83-88 | X-axis Control | MMU loses ability to move along X axis. |
| 89-94 | Y-axis Control | MMU loses ability to move along Y axis. |
| 95-00 | Z-axis Control | MMU loses ability to move along Z axis. |

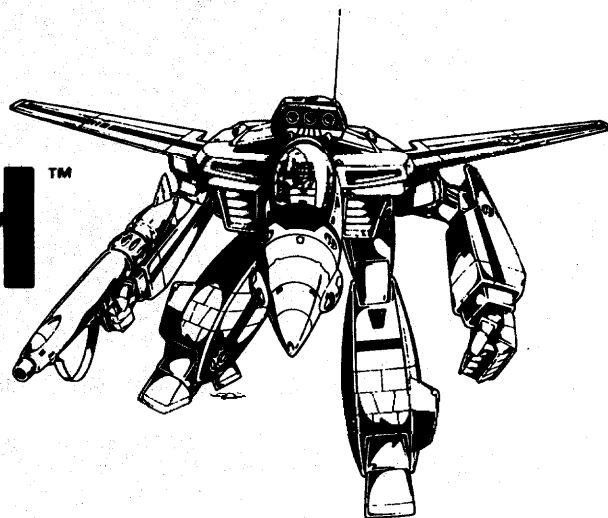
Table 6
DCM Damage Table

| Percentile dice roll | System damaged | Effect |
|----------------------|----------------|--|
| 01-13 | None | None |
| 14-38 | PLSS | Refer to PLSS Damage Table |
| 39-63 | MMU | Refer to MMU Damage Table |
| 64-00 | PLSS and MMU | Refer to both PLSS and MMU Damage Tables |

Table 7
Environmental Limits Table

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------|----------|----------|----------|
| Willpower Value: | 0-40 | 41-73 | 74-100 | 100+ |
| Perseverance Rating: | Weak | Average | Strong | Super |
| Temperature, dry | 75 F. | 213 F. | 325 F. | 438 F. |
| Freezing, unprotected | 32 F. | 11 F. | 7 F. | 5F. |
| Acceleration | 1 g | 4 g | 7 g | 10 g |
| Atomic radiation, annual | 15 rem | 27 rem | 38 rem | 46 rem |
| Light, foot-candles | 10,000 | 18,250 | 25,000 | 30,500 |
| Vacuum, exposure to | 3 sec. | 5.5 sec. | 7.5 sec. | 9.2 sec. |

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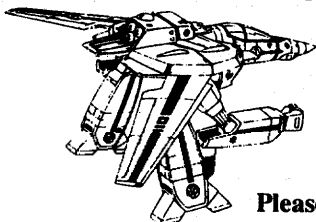
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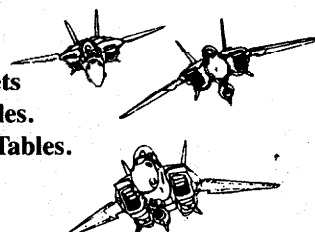
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A person looking for a job as an interstellar espionage agent has a choice of three types of organizations:

Government. Both "good" and "bad" governments usually have a secret service, and unpopular governments will always have one to combat resistance movements.

Underground. Where an unpopular government has come into power, espionage/terrorist organizations are likely to combat that government.

Commercial. The rare commercial espionage agency uses its agents to do "jobs" for groups or individuals. This may range from keeping an eye on a dishonest husband to performing corporate espionage to carrying out assassinations.

Once the character has decided which type of agency he wants to join, he must decide what kind of work he is going to do. In so doing, he must decide whether he will work for the Control Department (which is involved in "direct action" jobs such as bombings, muggings, and assassinations) or the Intelligence Department (which is involved in the "softer" fields of spying, surveillance, and courier duty).

Using normal TRAVELLER game dice rolls (involving 2d6), the player resolves enlistment into either of these fields using Tables 1 or 2. Re-enlistment is handled with these tables in the usual manner as well. Die rolls must be equalled or exceeded with the 2d6 roll, with applicable die modifiers (DMs) added to the roll. A character always enlists at age 18.

Espionage agencies place a lot of trust in their agents and in their agents' abilities. Consequently, agents are trained for four years before being assigned to actual missions. Control agents must roll 3+ per skill (using 1d6) to gain each of the following skills at level one: Stealth, Brawling, Gun Combat (as per Book 1), and Poison. Intelligence Department agents learn one level of skill on a roll of 3+ on 1d6 for each of the following skills: Disguise, Stealth, Surveillance, and Gun Combat.

After the four-year training period, all terms of service in the espionage corps are two years long. The second term (i.e., first



active term) requires no re-enlistment roll. During a term, the character takes one assignment. Thus, when an individual signs up for an agency, he is dedicating six years to the service: four years in training plus two years on active duty. The assignment is rolled on 2d6 in the appropriate column on Table 3. The character must then roll to see if he survives the assignment, using Table 4. Take note of the DMs for survival; if the character survives, roll 7+ on 2d6 to gain a skill while the assignment is prepared for and completed (see "Training and skills" below). Note that skills gained on an assignment do not affect survival DMs for the assignment on which the skill was gained.

The assignments an agent undertakes should be recorded for later use in establishing the character's personal background. Cross-training means the agent takes a temporary assignment from the other department on a special mission.

If an agent fails a survival roll, he must then roll on Table 5. No skills are gained from failed missions. Note that capture may affect re-enlistment for a new term of service, as noted on the table.

Training and skills

Each assignment allows for the chance of acquiring skills. If a 2d6 roll of 7+ is made on an assignment from Table 3, then a skill has been earned for that assignment. The player then refers to the appropriate assignment skills table — Tables 6 through 18 — which deal with the various types of training and skills available to a TRAVELLER game agent. New skills are described below.

Lock-Picking: The ability to spring locks with simple tools. With a lock-pick set, an individual with this skill can open simple locks on a 2d6 roll of 5+, with a DM +1 for a Dexterity of 9+. More complex locks should be shown as negative DMs.

Stealth: The ability to move quietly without attracting attention. It also allows an individual to perform acts requiring high Dexterity. For more information, see Igor Greenwald's article, "Rogues of the Galaxy," in DRAGON® issue #97.

Concealment: The ability to conceal objects from a search. For more information, see DRAGON issue #97, as noted above.

Disguise: The ability to alter one's appearance with the help of a disguise kit. See DRAGON issue #97.

Demolitions: The ability to place and set off demolitions, or to defuse them. For more information, see TRAVELLER game Book 4, *Mercenary*.

Pyrotechnics: The ability to use flame-throwers, chemically ignited rockets, and flammable fuels. See DRAGON issue #97.

Surveillance: The ability to observe someone's actions in detail without being noticed and to detect observation. See DRAGON issue #97.

Interrogation: The individual can query a person and thereby coerce that person

into revealing information, sometimes without realizing the information was given away. A roll vs. the person's Intelligence (using 2d6 to equal or exceed the score, indicating success) is suggested. See TRAVELLER game Book 4, *Mercenary*.

Double-Talk: The individual can twist his words so as to confuse those with whom he deals. The use of this skill is handy to the agency; one could use it, for example, to convince guards that he really is allowed into a restricted area. A roll of 2d6 against the Intelligence of the person to be confused is recommended. Certain extremely secure outposts may place negative DMs on this roll.

As an example, Harji Krone, an agent for a foreign government with Double-Talk-2, needs access to a governmental building to procure some secret documents. A guard is posted outside. Harji hails the guard and proceeds in. The guard stops him and tells him only security personnel are allowed inside. Harji flips a piece of paper in front of the guards face, bombarding him with basically meaningless talk about security clearances. The guards Intelligence is 8. Harji rolls a 7, +2 for skill, for a total of 9.

Table 1
Control Department Enlistment/Re-enlistment

| | Government | Underground | Commercial |
|-----------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Enlist | 10+ | 11+ | 9+ |
| DM +1 if | | Dexterity 9+ | |
| DM +2 if | | Strength 9+ | |
| Re-enlist | 7+ | 7+ | 6+ |

Table 2
Intelligence Department Enlistment/Re-enlistment

| | Government | Underground | Commercial |
|-----------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Enlist | 9+ | 10+ | 8+ |
| DM +1 if | | Dexterity 9+ | |
| DM +2 if | | Intelligence 9+ | |
| Re-enlist | 7+ | 7+ | 6+ |

Table 3
Espionage Assignments

| 2d6 | Control Department | Intelligence Department |
|------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2 | Assassination | Local Undercover |
| 3 | Bombing | Confiscation |
| 4 | Arson | Misinformation |
| 5 | Raid | Surveillance |
| 6 | Mugging | Courier |
| 7 | Training | Training |
| 8 | Mugging | Courier |
| 9 | Raid | Surveillance |
| 10 | Advanced Training | Advanced Training |
| 11 | Kidnapping | Deep Undercover |
| 12 | Cross-training | Cross-training |

Table 4
Survival and Promotion

| Mission | Survival | Promotion |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Assassination/Deep Undercover | 7+ | 6+ |
| Bombing/Arson/Confiscation | 5+ | 8+ |
| Raid/Local Undercover/Kidnapping | 6+ | 7+ |
| Surveillance/Mugging | 5+ | 8+ |
| Misinformation/Courier | 4+ | 10+ |

DMs on survival:

+ 1 per level of Stealth (max. DM +2)

Control — +1 if Dexterity 9+; +1 if Strength 9+

Intelligence — +1 if Intelligence 9+; +1 if Dexterity 9+

The guard is convinced this person has clearance and that bothering the person further could produce a demotion.

Poison: The individual knows of the different poisons and nonlethal drugs available on the open and black markets. Poison skill enables an individual to identify poisons, apply poisons and antidotes, and make poisons and antidotes. An individual with a skill level of 1 can apply and identify poisons and illegal drugs. An example of a nonlethal poison is used in blackout grenades (250 grams; Cr 900; TL 9). These grenades cause all beings within 10 meters to go blind for 20 minutes. The gas itself is invisible.

Espionage officers

The agency's officers are commissioned upon reaching age 50 (the 14th active term). Upon finishing the 14th term, an agency serviceman must roll to be commissioned. If the roll is a 9+, the serviceman can become an officer. If the roll is a 12, the serviceman *must* become an officer. If not commissioned, the serviceman receives his mustering-out benefits at that time and summarily leaves the service.

The duties of an officer (1st-5th) involve coordinating missions of small groups and handling logistics for them. The rank of Chief involves overseeing the officers and planning the larger missions, especially assassinations and deep-undercover missions. The Controllers handle the service's major policies and oversee any missions which deal with high-risk threats to the agency or which are carried out against very skilled enemy agencies. An agency officer takes on one mission to administer every term. Upon completion of a successful mission, an officer rolls 9+ to gain his skills on Table 19.

Officers can be promoted upon the success of missions they have adminis-

Table 6
Advanced Training Skills

| 1d6 | Skill |
|-----|---------------|
| 1 | Jack-o-Trades |
| 2 | Vacc Suit |
| 3 | Double-Talk |
| 4 | Pilot |
| 5 | Electronics |
| 6 | Medical |

Table 7
Training Skills

| 1d6 | Skill |
|-----|--------------|
| 1 | Vehicle |
| 2 | Concealment |
| 3 | Stealth |
| 4 | Disguise |
| 5 | Gun Combat |
| 6 | Blade Combat |

Table 8
Assassin Skills

| 1d6 | Skill |
|-----|--------------|
| 1 | +1 Strength |
| 2 | +1 Dexterity |
| 3 | Stealth |
| 4 | Gun Combat |
| 5 | Gun Combat |
| 6 | Poison |

Table 9
Bombing Skills

| 1d6 | Skill |
|-----|--------------|
| 1 | + 1 Strength |
| 2 | Demolitions |
| 3 | Concealment |
| 4 | Stealth |
| 5 | Demolitions |
| 6 | Pyrotechnics |

Table 10
Arson Skills

| 1d6 | Skill |
|-----|--------------|
| 1 | +1 Strength |
| 2 | Pyrotechnics |
| 3 | Concealment |
| 4 | Stealth |
| 5 | Pyrotechnics |
| 6 | Demolitions |

Table 11
Raid Skills

| 1d6 | Skill |
|-----|---------------|
| 1 | +1 Dexterity |
| 2 | +1 Strength |
| 3 | + 1 Endurance |
| 4 | Gun Combat |
| 5 | Demolitions |
| 6 | Lock-Picking |

Table 12
Mugging Skills

| 1d6 | Skill |
|-----|--------------|
| 1 | +1 Strength |
| 2 | +1 Endurance |
| 3 | Brawling |
| 4 | Brawling |
| 5 | Blade Combat |
| 6 | Stealth |

Table 13
Kidnapping Skills

| 1d6 | Skill |
|-----|-----------------|
| 1 | +1 Intelligence |
| 2 | + 1 Dexterity |
| 3 | Gun Combat |
| 4 | Lock-Picking |
| 5 | Demolitions |
| 6 | Stealth |

Table 5
Mission Failure

1d6 Failure result

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Killed in attempt |
| 2 | Captured and imprisoned for (10 x law level) years |
| 3 | Captured and imprisoned for (8 x law level) years |
| 4 | Captured and imprisoned for (5 x law level) years |
| 5 | Captured and imprisoned for (2 x law level) years |
| 6 | Captured but not enough evidence to convict. |

Effects of, imprisonment on re-enlistment:

All prison years are cumulative for the effects of imprisonment on re-enlistment. If an agent is imprisoned for more than 20 years, he cannot re-enlist afterwards.

If an agent is imprisoned for 10-20 years, he can re-enlist if he rolls double the normal re-enlistment score needed to re-enlist. If successful, he will be at half his former rank.

If an agent is imprisoned for 0-9 years, he can re-enlist if he rolls half the normal re-enlistment score needed to re-enlist. If successful, he will be at his former rank.

trated. An officer must roll the number listed on Table 20 or higher to be promoted. An officer can only be promoted once per term. A Chief can be promoted to Controller only if the promotion roll is made with a DM of -2, as a Controller position is a major step into another level of the agency's hierarchy. Junior Controllers similarly roll with a DM of -3. Most upper-level officers are assumed to be NPCs using anagathics.

Espionage officers must roll 10+ every two-year term or be relieved of duty. Each successful mission completed during that term acts as a DM of +1. Roll to choose an assignment just as you would for a non-com. An officer may refuse one mission assigned to him a year, thus receiving (rolling for) one of a different nature.

Upon retirement, an officer's security clearance rating goes down two levels. For example, a Section Chief's security clearance rating will be six upon retirement.

When mustering out of the spy service, espionage servicemen roll twice for every

Table 14
Undercover (any) Skills

| 1d6 | Skill |
|-----|-----------------|
| 1 | +1 Intelligence |
| 2 | +1 Dexterity |
| 3 | Stealth |
| 4 | Disguise |
| 5 | Double-Talk |
| 6 | Concealment |

Table 15
Confiscation Skills

| 1d6 | Skill |
|-----|-----------------|
| 1 | +1 Dexterity |
| 2 | +1 Intelligence |
| 3 | Lock-Picking |
| 4 | Concealment |
| 5 | Stealth |
| 6 | Double-Talk |

Table 16
Misinformation Skills

| 1d6 | Skill |
|-----|-----------------|
| 1 | +1 Intelligence |
| 2 | Double-Talk |
| 3 | Double-Talk |
| 4 | Stealth |
| 5 | Disguise |
| 6 | Disguise |

Table 17
Surveillance Skills

| 1d6 | Skill |
|-----|-----------------|
| 1 | +1 Intelligence |
| 2 | +1 Dexterity |
| 3 | Stealth |
| 4 | Interrogation |
| 5 | Disguise |
| 6 | Surveillance |

rank level on Table 22. Officers roll seven times on Table 22 and once for every officer's rank level on Table 23.

Table 18
Courier Skills

| 1d6 | Skill |
|-----|-----------------|
| 1 | +1 Dexterity |
| 2 | +1 Strength |
| 3 | +1 Intelligence |
| 4 | Stealth |
| 5 | Gun Combat |
| 6 | Brawling |

Table 19
Officer Skills

| 1d6 | Skill |
|-----|------------|
| 1 | Carousing |
| 2 | Recruiting |
| 3 | Leadership |
| 4 | Computer |
| 5 | Tactics |
| 6 | Admin |

Table 20
Success and Promotion

| Mission | Success | Promotion |
|----------------------------------|---------|-----------|
| Assassination/Deep Undercover | 7+ | 6+ |
| Bombing/Arson/Confiscation | 5+ | 8+ |
| Raid/Local Undercover/Kidnapping | 6+ | 7+ |
| Surveillance/Mugging | 5+ | 8+ |
| Misinformation/Courier | 4+ | 10+ |
| Training/Advanced Training | 4+ | 12+ |

DMs to mission success:
+1 each time officer undertook such a mission while a noncommissioned officer (noncom) or administered as an officer, up to +2.
+1 per level of Tactics, up to +2.

Table 21
Espionage Officers' Ranks and Security Clearance

| Title | Security clearance | Rank |
|---------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Noncom | SC-10 (extremely limited) | — |
| Rank 1 | SC-7 | 5th Officer |
| Rank 2 | SC-6 (top secret) | 4th Officer |
| Rank 3 | SC-6 | 3rd Officer |
| Rank 4 | SC-5 | 2nd Officer |
| Rank 5 | SC-5 | 1st Officer |
| Rank 6 | SC-4 (ultra secret) | Station Chief |
| Rank 7 | SC-4 | Section Chief |
| Rank 8 | SC-3 | Division Chief |
| Rank 9 | SC-2 | Junior Controller |
| Rank 10 | SC-1 (unlimited) | Senior Controller |

Table 22
Mustering-Out Benefits for Noncoms

| 1d6* | Benefits |
|------|-----------------|
| 1 | Low Passage |
| 2 | Blade |
| 3 | Gun |
| 4 | +1 Intelligence |
| 5 | Travellers |
| 6 | High Passage |
| 7 | +1 Social |

* DM +1 for over 10 terms service in the agency.

Table 23
Mustering-Out Benefits for Officers

| 1d6* | Benefits |
|------|----------------|
| 1 | Medium Passage |
| 2 | Blade |
| 3 | Gun |
| 5 | Travellers |
| 6 | High Passage |
| 7 | Free Trader |

* DM +1 for Chiefs and Controllers.

Benefits for retired noncoms and officers

SC-A (Agent) – 2,000 cr pension.
SC-9 to SC-7 (Officer) – 5,000 cr pension.
SC-6 to SC-5 (Chief) – 9,000 cr pension.
SC-4 (Junior Controller) – 12,000 pension + two-man personal bodyguard until 15 years after retirement.
SC-3 (Senior Controller) – 15,000 cr pension + four-man personal bodyguard until 25 years after retirement.

The Game Wizards

The New TOP SECRET® game

by Douglas Niles

The new TOP SECRET® game has some major factors in common with the original version. It is a game about spies and espionage, with all the special equipment, weapons, and gimmicks that make the secret agent such a popular hero of fiction, film, and television.

However, those of you expecting modifications and streamlining of the original rules will be in for a surprise. From the ground up, the new TOP SECRET game is an original role-playing game system. Systems for character generation, combat, skills, and everything else have been freshly created. A conversion for original TOP SECRET game characters will probably be incorporated as a feature of the game, allowing you to convert your old characters to the new system.

The game is currently between the design and development portions of the process, but a number of sections have emerged as clearly different from the original. Other sections are still up in the air, as playtesters are consulted and various of the designer's cherished ideas are mercilessly trashed.

Speaking of merciless trashing, I'd like to welcome Warren Spector to TSR, Inc. His first project was the editing of TOP SECRET game material, and he wasted no time in firing up his chain saw and getting to work. Between us, we will give you a product that offers all of the flavor of the original system, with game mechanics that are much smoother and faster in play.

The new TOP SECRET game begins with a slightly different approach to its theme. While the detail needed for a realistic espionage game is included, the game's emphasis is much more focused on the secret agent of movies and TV. Action and adventure are primary features of the game.

In line with this, the PCs and major villains have enhanced abilities, as well as the opportunity to spend Luck Points to avoid campaign-ending disasters. The minor NPCs have to suffer through the rolls of the dice.

On to the game systems themselves:

The game is built around a single game mechanic — the Attribute Check. Each character has five attributes, each generated by a "d60" roll, giving a range of 20-79 for PCs and 10-69 for most NPCs.

Players determine the outcome of acts by rolling 1d100, trying for a result lower than their relevant Attribute scores. Modifiers can shift Attribute scores up or down in specific situations.

The bulk of the rules for player characters relate to creating the characters themselves. Rules for the game are grouped into two categories: Standard Rules (governing the play of the game) and Reality Rules. The reality rules are placed throughout the book, separated by distinctive graphic elements. These are optional and advanced rules that offer a greater level of detail ("reality") to the game mechanics. Players may start a campaign with the standard rules, and add the reality rules as the game progresses and they become more involved.

One of the major points of debate in the game design is the role of player choice in the character generation process. Warren and I agree that skills, backgrounds, and general characteristics of specific agents should be decided by the players. However, I feel that Basic Attributes are best generated through dice-rolling, with a balancing system to protect PCs against particularly bad rolls. Warren maintains that players should be allowed to spend a pool of points upon attributes, selecting strengths in those areas that the players desire. This one is still up in the air; we might present you with a couple of options, and let each Admin choose the procedure he likes for his campaign.

A major feature of character creation and the use of characters during play is the area of skills. The game includes extensive skill lists and descriptions, and a character is often defined by the types of skills he has. Skills are handled in levels; most characters have a level 1 skill at driving automobiles, while only the pros might take such a skill to 4th or 5th level. Additional levels of skill provide modifiers to Attribute checks.

However, your character is much more than the sum of what he or she can do. A number of game features are designed to encourage role-playing and to help players visualize and play their characters. Your character can be as well rounded and broad based — or as narrow — as you want.

The action scenes in the game occur in two-second turns, with most PCs able to take one careful shot or two quick shots in a turn. Vehicles are given acceleration

ratings to match this scale, so incorporating vehicle and pedestrian activity into the same encounter is no problem.

The combat system is fully designed and undergoing playtesting. It incorporates a single 1d100 roll to determine whether or not you hit a target and where the wound is located. The *same* roll, in hand-to-hand combat, also tells how much damage the attack has inflicted! In ranged combat, a second roll determines damage.

The combat system is very lethal, although the Luck Points enhance PC survival. Thus, it is not impossible for a PC to dash through a mob of enemy agents, dropping them right and left with the deadly use of his Browning Hi-power, while evading some of the bursts of automatic weapon fire that are directed at him. Bursts, by the way, are handled as a single attack instead of as a series of individual bullets. This has provided a major increase in the speed of play.

Loving care and attention have gone into the development of vehicle rules. These are considerably more extensive than in the original system, and include protection and handling factors as well as acceleration. Skilled drivers will be tempted to try special maneuvers, such as ramming, power turns, braking skids, and bootleg turns.

Other significant differences between the two versions of the game concern the amount and nature of campaign background. I can't go into a lot of detail, because much of this will be subject to the desires of the individual Admin, but we are taking a different tack from the original game system.

The new game presents a campaign environment with a "good guy" and a "bad guy" spy agency. Obviously, these two agencies are arch-rivals. In many campaigns, the PCs will be able to find ready employment with the good guys. However, this "official" campaign is presented only in a portion of the Admin book, so it is in no way required for use. Several other campaign genres, such as private eye, law-enforcement, mercenary, and counter-terrorist settings, lend themselves easily to the game.

The game includes a 2-4 page rules summary for experienced role-players that should get you up and playing with little preparation time. It will also include a player's book, Admin's book, Admin's screen, and several other little accessories

that speed play and enhance enjoyment.

The comments and feedback from the TOP SECRET game players we met at the GEN CON® Games Fair last summer, and from those of you who have taken the time to write, have been greatly appreci-

ated. There is still time to hear from you if you have points that you think need to be addressed — but hurry! The game will be out late this summer. I'm afraid we don't have time to answer each letter personally, but we read them and take your ideas into

consideration. (In fact, one of my simple pleasures of the last few weeks, occupying an office next to Zeb Cook as I do, has been listening to him discuss all those ideas sent to him concerning the AD&D® game Second Edition. Keep it up!) Ω

"Official" business

(continued from page 3)

rules won't mesh with the first edition, thereby "forcing" them to purchase the second edition. In the end, it all leads up to one thing: a lot of needless worry and unnecessary complaints.

When the second edition arrives, it will replace the first-edition rules, which essentially replaced the original D&D game I spoke of earlier. This does not mean it will make the first edition obsolete. In the case of the original paperbound rules, the hardbounds cleared up a lot of the inconsistencies in the earlier rules. By this time, a lot of gamers had invested their money in the paperbacks. They had also taken it upon themselves to fill in most of the gaps in the rules. In 1975, there weren't many role-playing games available to choose from. As a result, filling the gaps and providing alternatives to the present system was up to the individual. Many of these rules were never published; they weren't developed with that goal in mind. Rather, they were created to help personalize a game system whose very beauty lay in its open-endedness.

There were never any arguments about "official" rules then; each DM had his own guidelines which he followed, the majority of which existed beyond the sight and inquiry of the players. The beauty of the game was that it differed from campaign to campaign — that DMs weren't afraid to fudge the rules, to make decisions themselves, or to alter rules they disagreed with or which did not fit the milieu of their campaign. It didn't matter that the rules varied from world to world; this was simply an aspect of personalization that went along with the game. It was this aspect that made the game unique.

There never were "official" rules in the earliest edition of the game; there were only "guidelines to follow in designing your own fantastic-medieval campaign" (*Men and Magic*, p. 4). These rules were meant to "provide the framework around which you will build a game of simplicity or tremendous complexity." Rule changes were acknowledged as a part of the system in this early edition: "If your referee has made changes in the rules and/or

tables, simply note them in *pencil*." This note was carried through in the *Players Handbook* (p. 6): "the most important material herein can be altered and bent to suit the needs of individual campaigns. Where possible, true *guidelines* have been laid down to provide the barest frameworks for those areas of the campaign which should be the most unusual and unique." I have no doubt that this attitude will be carried through the second edition AD&D game rules as well.

What it all comes down to is that the ultimate choice of what is important and essential to each campaign is up to the individual. If the DM likes assassins, but they are no longer part of the "official" rules in the second edition, what's stopping the first-edition rules from being used? If a DM has grown accustomed to using the first-edition rules, finding only a few items from the second edition useful, what's to stop him from using the second edition as an accessory to the first edition? The choice of what is and isn't necessary to a campaign is, as it has always been, up to the individual DM. No matter how

many revisions the rules themselves go through, the game itself remains, in spite of all its varying, personalized forms. No matter how complex or revised the "official" AD&D game becomes, the game itself is only as good as the players who play it.

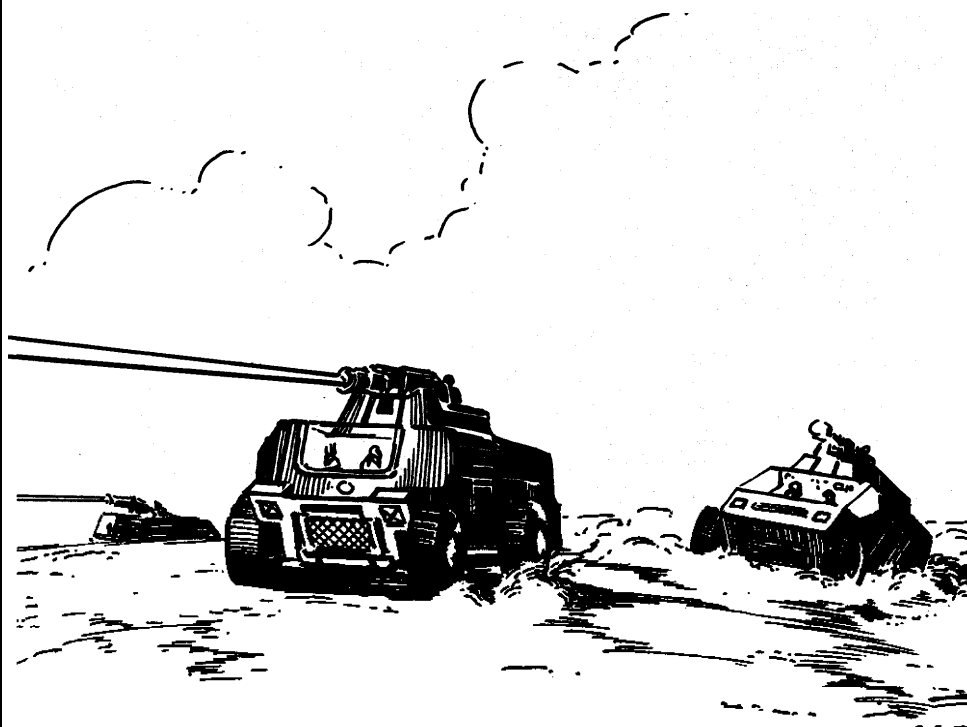
And although the original game and its first edition were flawed and sometimes vague, it seems like much more fun in retrospect — at least to a bunch of guys who once sat around a table in the La Crosse Student union playing with a handful of dice, a set of tattered note-riddled digests, and a ream of maps and plot outlines.

Robi Denb.

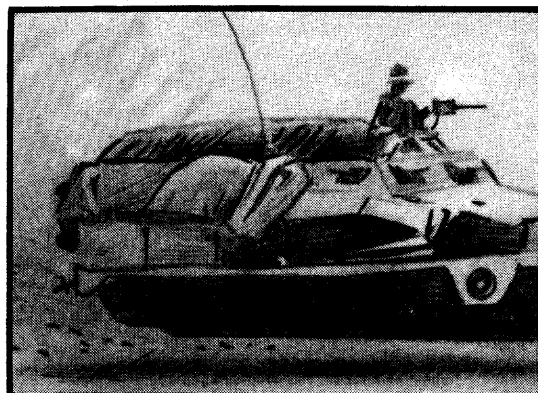
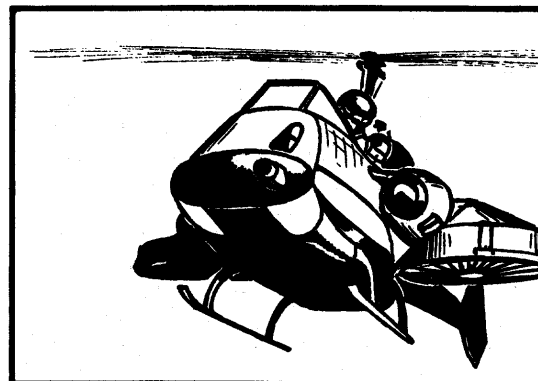
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Here Comes the Cavalry!



*Conventional warfare in the
STAR FRONTIERS® game*



by Matt Bandy

Some gamers (myself included) are attracted to the idea of combining role-playing with wargaming. For the most part, however, we are given only tantalizing bits of such a combination that leave us hungry for more. "The Battle of Voltarnus" in STAR FRONTIERS® module SF2 is a good example. The module is great fun, but it ends too quickly. There's Alex Curylo's article, "Tanks a lot!" which appeared in DRAGON® issue #199 which deals with modifying civilian vehicles for combat. But would there not exist vehicles designed solely for combat purposes? This article presents just such vehicles, based on Alex's article noted above.

Cavalry

Four basic divisions exist in any well-balanced military organization: infantry,

cavalry, artillery, and command. This article deals with cavalry — that branch of an army organized and equipped for missions requiring great mobility. Statistics for particularly important cavalry vehicles are listed in Table 1. Airborne vehicles are also considered cavalry. Particularly important airborne vehicles are shown on Table 2.

The effects that different types of terrain have on cavalry vehicles is important in the calculation of realistic rates of movement. These effects are shown in Table 3. Detailed explanations of terrain types are given in the Alpha Dawn expanded game rules.

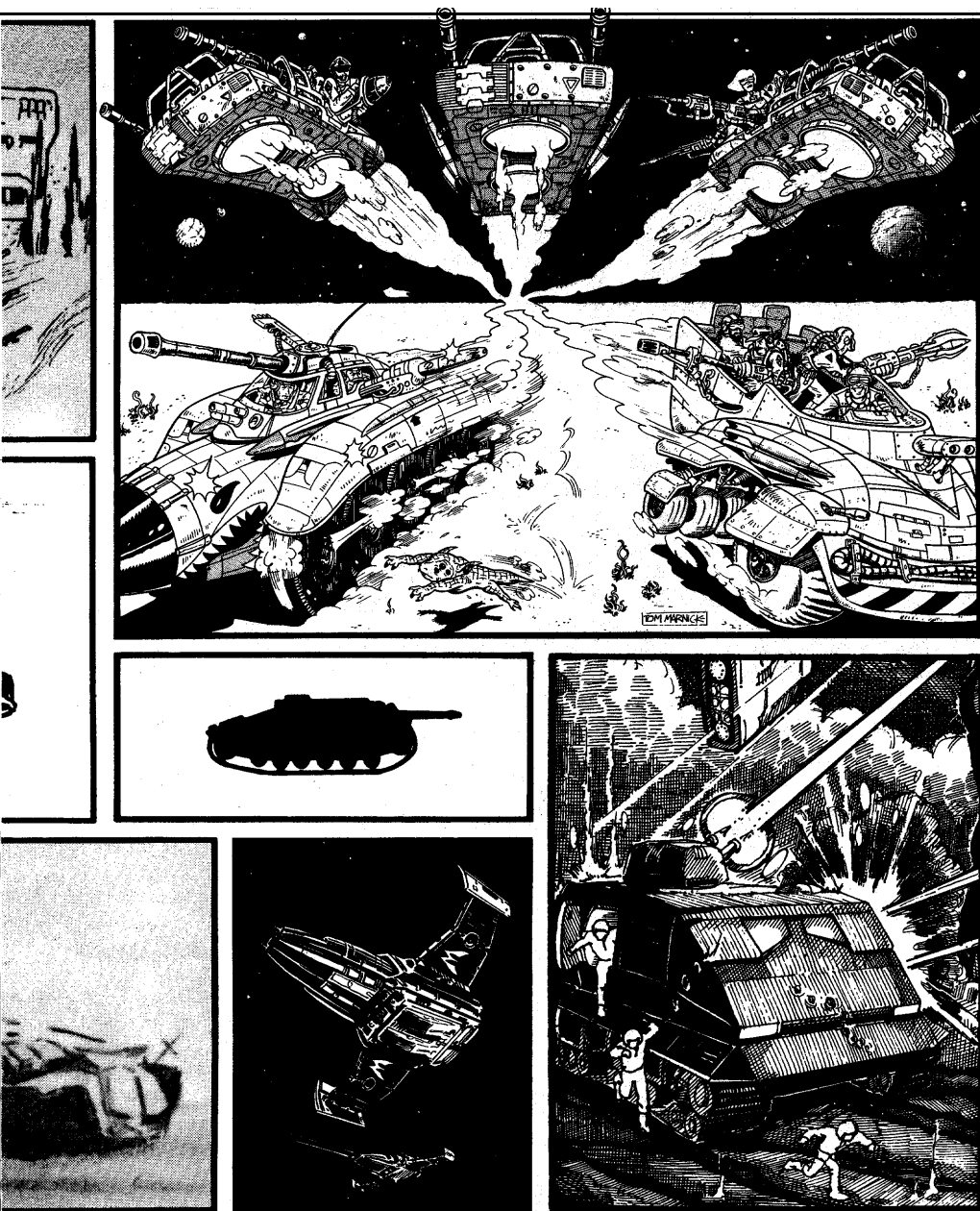
Bumping maneuvers

The vehicles dealt with in this article may take any action, such as bumping and slipping, that normal vehicles can. The battlegroup is an exception to this rule, as its actions may be limited by its size. Some

examples of bumping seem pretty unlikely, such as a hovercycle running an explorer off the road. To correct this situation and to integrate cavalry vehicles into the game, each vehicle has been assigned a "bump number." These numbers are listed in Table 4.

When a bumping situation occurs, the referee finds the difference between the two vehicles' Bump Numbers and multiplies that number by five. The result is added to the modified reaction speed score of the driver of the higher-valued vehicle, then subtracted from that of the driver of the lower-valued vehicle. A percentile-die roll is made for each driver to resolve the success or failure of the bump. Rolls of 01-05 always indicate success, just as rolls of 96-00 always indicate failure.

For example, a hovercycle is trying to run a ground car off the road. A quick look at Table 4 shows the difference be-



tween the two vehicles' Bump Numbers to be four. The hovercycle driver's score of 63 minus 20 ($4 \times 5 = 20$) is 43, and the ground car driver's score of 81 plus 20 (for being the driver of the higher-valued vehicle) and minus 30 (for being the vehicle bumped) is 71. The hovercycle driver makes a 1d100 roll of 26, meaning he maintained control of his vehicle. The ground car driver, however, is not so fortunate: a roll of 95 indicates loss of control. The referee now consults the Control Table in the Alpha Dawn expanded rules (page 31) and continues play.

When a driver loses control of his vehicle, standard procedures governing this situation apply. The exceptions to this rule are the tank (ground) and the battlegon. Due to their low centers of gravity and width, these two vehicles do not roll over. Treat a result of either "roll" or "roll and burn" as a spin.

Armaments, defenses, and sensors

Defenses and sensors, instrumental in locating and dealing with the enemy, are shown according to vehicular type on Table 5. Power screens may be of any type covered in the Alpha Dawn rules, the most common being albedo, inertia, and holographic screens. Albedo and inertia screens are detailed in "Tanks a lot!" Holographic screens are described in the following paragraph.

For use in sneak attacks, vehicles are commonly fitted with holo screens equipped with camouflage feedback loops. In certain terrains, however, this tactic is not effective. In passage over sand dunes, vehicles tend to raise a cloud of dust that the holo screen cannot hide, creating suspicion among observers. In these instances, it is best to disguise the vehicle as something more regionally appropriate, such as a thundering herd of camels. Holo screens cannot disguise or hide a vehicle

from radar or infrared sensors. Holo screens use three SEU per. Minute.

Armaments are shown according to which turret they occupy in each type of ground vehicle on Table 6. The same is done for airborne vehicles on Table 7.

The following section regarding bombs is the only part of this article that deviates from the rules set forth in "Tanks a lot!" That section of Mr. Curylo's article oversimplified the topic.

Bombs do damage of varying severity according to the distance an object is from them when they explode. This is illustrated on Table 8. The chance of a bomb hitting its target is equal to one-half of the bomber's dexterity score, modified. In the event of a miss, use the Grenade Bounce Diagrams on page 24 of the Alpha Dawn expanded rules book. The asterisk represents the target and the arrow represents the direction the bomber is travelling. The distance by which the bomb misses its target is dependent upon the altitude of the bomber, as shown on Table 9.

The bomb explodes one turn after being dropped, giving the bomber that amount of time to vacate the blast radius. Failure to vacate the blast area results in damage to the bomber.

Due to the increased sophistication involved in the engineering, Manufacture, and application of futuristic vehicles, a great degree of skill will be required to operate these machines. Skill requirements for operating the vehicles dealt with in this article are shown on Table 10.

Targeting systems

Numerous targeting systems are in use throughout the Frontier Sector. The most common are the eye-weapon coordination (EWC), manual, and cyberlink systems. The cyberlink system is explained in "Yanks a lot!" The remaining two are described in the paragraphs that follow.

"Eye-weapon coordination" means that the gunner's eyes and weapons are linked in such a way that they move in tandem. This is accomplished through the use of a special helmet fitted with a low-power laser. The laser follows the movements of the wearer's eyes and, through a complex circuitry link, brings the weapons to bear along the wearer's line of sight. When the weapons are aimed at the target, the gunner has only to push a button, flip a switch, or pull a trigger to fire any combination of weapons. The helmet can be switched from infrared to normal vision and can be turned on or off. The gunner need not expose himself to enemy fire, for each helmet is also linked to a set of infrared and video cameras. The images these cameras receive are projected onto the inside of the helmet visor.

On all the vehicles detailed in this article, the weapons are controlled by EWC. The vehicles have one gunner operating each turret who may fire any combination of the weapons mounted on the turret in any one direction on a given turn. Of course,

Table 1
Land Vehicles

| Vehicle | Top speed | Turn speed | AC/DC | Crew | Parabattery | Mileage |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|-------|--------|-------------|----------|
| Hover vehicles | | | | | | |
| Hovertank | 200 | 70 | 60/40 | 3 | 4 | 4 SEU/km |
| APC | 230 | 80 | 70/60 | 2 (20) | 3 | 2 SEU/km |
| Battlewagon | 150 | 50 | 40/30 | 5 | 5* | 8 SEU/km |
| Ground vehicles | | | | | | |
| Tank | 130 | 100 | 70/60 | 3 | 4 | 4 SEU/km |
| APC | 130 | 100 | 60/50 | 2 (20) | 3 | 2 SEU/km |

* A parabattery type 5 costs 8,700 credits, weighs 400 kg, and produces 8,000 SEU.

Key to Table 1

AC/DC: Acceleration/Deceleration

Crew: Minimum number of crew members required for the vehicle to operate at maximum efficiency. Value in parentheses shows passenger capacity.

Speeds: Given in meters per turn.

Turn speeds: Because of their low centers of gravity, most vehicles shown here have high turn speeds.

Mileage: The mileage properties of the vehicles are given because all the systems of said vehicles (i.e. weapons, defenses, sensors, and targeting systems) as well as the engine draw power from the vehicle's parabattery. A tally of SEU used should be kept by the players or referee.

Hovertank: A large, armored vehicle that floats 50 cm above the ground on a cushion of air. It resembles the tanks of today *sans* treads.

APC: Armored Personnel Carrier. Both ground and hover APCs look like large, armored transports and can carry 18 passengers. These passengers can all vacate the APC in two turns via the 10 hatches in the ceiling of the passenger compartment. These hatches may be opened to serve as firing ports.

Battlewagon: A huge, armored vehicle wide enough to take up two lanes of a highway, and designed to carry out extremely hazardous missions individually.

Tank: A large, armored vehicle much like modern-day tanks in appearance and locomotion.

Table 2
Airborne Vehicles

| Vehicle | Top speed | Cruise speed | AC/DC | Turns | Crew | Parabattery | Mileage |
|---------------------|-----------|--------------|---------|-------|------|-------------|----------|
| Attack helicopter | 600 | 100 | 120/120 | 8 | 2 | 5 | 8 SEU/km |
| VTOL fighter-bomber | 1500 | 650 | 120/120 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 8 SEU/km |

Key to Table 2

Turns: The number of 45° turns the vehicle can make in one game turn.

Attack helicopter: An armed and armored jetcopter designed to combat enemy ground forces.

VTOL fighter-bomber: An armored aircar with exterior weapon mounts that is designed for high-speed bombing runs. However, it is versatile enough to hold its own in a dogfight.

Table 3
Effects of Terrain

| Vehicle | Clear | Broken | Rugged | Bog | Water | Highway | Hazard |
|----------------------|-------|--------|--------|-----|-------|---------|--------|
| Hover vehicles | | | | | | | |
| Hovertank | 1.0 | 0.8 | — | 1.0 | 0.9 | 1.2 | 0.8 |
| APC | 1.0 | 0.7 | — | 0.9 | 0.9 | 1.3 | 0.8 |
| Battlewagon | 1.0 | 0.8 | — | 1.0 | 0.9 | 1.2 | 0.8 |
| Ground vehicles | | | | | | | |
| Tank | 1.0 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 0.7 | — | 1.1 | — |
| APC | 0.9 | 0.7 | 0.3 | 0.6 | — | 1.2 | — |
| Airborne | | | | | | | |
| Attack helicopter* | 1.0 | 0.9 | 0.6 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 0.6 |
| VTOL fighter-bomber* | 1.0 | 0.9 | 0.5 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 0.4 |

* Modifiers apply only if the vehicle is within 100 meters of the surface. Above that altitude, movement is at 1.0.

Table 4
Vehicle Bump Numbers

| Vehicle | Bump number |
|------------------|-------------|
| Hovercycle | 1 |
| Ground cycle | 2 |
| Hovercar | 4 |
| Ground car | 5 |
| Hover transport | 6 |
| Ground transport | 7 |
| APC (hover) | 9 |
| APC (ground) | 10 |
| Hovertank | 12 |
| Explorer | 13 |
| Tank | 14 |
| Battlewagon | 16 |

weapons firing once every two or four turns must respect their limitations. EWC gives the user a +30 modifier to hit. The gunner receives no additional bonuses due to weapons skills.

“Manual” operation means the gunner operates the weapon by hand. This is by far the most common targeting system in civilian use. The gunner using this system must expose himself to enemy fire but will have hard cover if the weapon is mounted on a vehicle. Skill bonuses apply when using this system.

UPF and Sathar use

The UPF and Sathar war machines have little use for cavalry vehicles, as they are expensive and easily destroyed by planetary defenses in any attempted landing. Nevertheless, each faction does maintain a small complement of cavalry vehicles aboard assault transports, in case the attackers happen to cripple the enemy’s planetary defenses.

Planetary governments, however, are a different matter entirely. Being fast and durable, cavalry is an important factor in any planetary engagement and constitutes a large part of all planetary governmental armies in the Frontier. For what it’s worth, large Sathar biogenetic constructs are also considered cavalry.

On a final note, EWC systems, all weapons, and all defenses presented in this article are banned from civilian use (except by UPF Grant #739) by the Arms Proliferation Act.

Table 8
Bombs

| Distance from bomb | Damage | |
|--------------------|--------|-------|
| | Light | Heavy |
| 0-20 m | 25d10 | 50d10 |
| 21-50 m | 20d10 | 40d10 |
| 51-100 m | 15d10 | 30d10 |
| 101-200 m | 10d10 | 20d10 |
| 201-300 m | 5d10 | 10d10 |
| 301-400 m | — | 5d10 |
| 401+ m | — | — |

Table 6
Defenses, Sensors, and Turrets

| Vehicle | Sensors | Defenses | Turrets |
|---------------------|-----------|--------------|----------------|
| Hover | | | |
| Hovertank | IR,V,SL | IRJ,S,A20 | 2 (L) |
| APC | IR,V,SL | IRJ,S,A15 | 1(M) |
| Battlewagon | IR,V,SL | IRJ,S,A25 | 3(L) |
| Ground | | | |
| APC | IR,V,SL | IRJ,S,A20 | 1(M) |
| Tank | IR,V,SL | IRJ,S,A25 | 2(L) |
| Airborne | | | |
| Attack helicopter | IR,V,SL,R | IRJ,S,ES,A20 | 1(M), 4 (Pods) |
| VTOL fighter-bomber | IR,V,SL,R | IRJ,S,ES,A20 | 1(M), 4 (Pods) |

Key to Table 5

| | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| IR: Infrared cameras | V: Video cameras | SL: Searchlight |
| R: Radar | IRJ: Infrared jammer | A: Armor (# of coats) |
| S: Power screen(s) | ES: Ejection seat | |

Table 6
Armaments for Ground Vehicles

| Vehicle | Turret | | |
|-------------|------------|------|-------|
| | One | Two | Three |
| Hover | | | |
| Hovertank | VMG,VHL | GMx6 | - |
| APC | VMG | - | - |
| Battlewagon | VMG,VHL | C,FT | GMx6 |
| Ground | | | |
| Tank | VMG,VHL,FT | GMx8 | - |
| APC | VMG,FT | - | - |

Key to Table 6

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| VMG: Vehicle machine gun | VHL: Vehicle heavy laser | GM: Guided missile (Type 2) |
| C: Cannon | FT: Flamethrower | B: Bomb (Heavy) |

Table 7
Armaments for Airborne Vehicles

| Vehicle | Turret | Pod number | | | | Pylons |
|---------------------|--------|------------|-----|-------|------|--------|
| | | One | Two | Three | Four | |
| Attack helicopter | VHL | GMx4 | VMG | GMx4 | VMG | Bx2 |
| VTOL fighter-bomber | VHL | GMx2 | VMG | GMx2 | VMG | Bx6 |

Key to Table 7

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| VMG: Vehicle machine gun | VHL: Vehicle heavy laser | GM: Guided missile (Type 2) |
| C: Cannon | FT: Flamethrower | B: Bomb (Heavy) |

Table 9
Distance of Miss

| Altitude of bomber | Miss distance |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Point blank | 20m |
| Short | 50m |
| Medium | 150m |
| Long | 250m |
| Extreme | 350m |

Table 10
Skill Requirements

| Vehicle | Driver skill requirement |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| APC | Technician 1 |
| Hovertank | Technician 2 |
| Tank | Technician 2 |
| Battlewagon | Technician 4 |
| Attack helicopter | Technician 4 |
| VTOL ftr./bmbr. | Technician 5 |

Ω

Born in the Ruins

Social class and GAMMA WORLD® game characters

by Dan Salas

The social systems of the second-edition GAMMA WORLD® game are briefly described in the Basic Rules Booklet and Adventure Book, giving a rough idea of the world in which the player characters live. Yet how do the PCs and NPCs fit into these cultures? Loners and wandering adventurers seem to be the most common types of PCs, but many characters may not have begun their careers in this way. For this reason, a PC's Base is much more than a place to buy starting equipment. It is the character's home of origin — and in this home, social classes can be an important aspect of every person's life.

Each player must decide if his or her character has been raised in a particular social level. Some communities have no class system. A good example is a small egalitarian tribe in which all people share the same tasks, all contribute to the production and gathering of food, and none have more wealth or possessions than the others. In such a tribe, the leader is the wisest (and sometimes strongest) person, and he or she rules in cooperation with a tribal council. Yet the leader is no wealthier than the other hunter-warriors of the community.

Most larger groups have a class system which develops when there is a division of labor among the people. In simple terms, the food-producers (herdsmen, farmers, etc.) give food and taxes to the non-food producers, in exchange for services such as military support from soldiers, spiritual leadership from priests, medicine and healing from doctors, material goods from craftsmen and merchants, and governmental leadership from officials, judges, and royalty. Social rank becomes the com-

munity's view of a character's wealth, power, authority, and importance.

When families hold tightly to their own class levels, the system closes and becomes unchangeable. Referees would be wise to keep the system open so that PCs can strive to advance in the community.

Social levels are completely different from status-rank levels, though both can complement or contradict each other to provide interesting situations. For instance, a low-ranking king might be distrusted because of his lack of experience (in other words, status points), while a high-ranking farmer is respected for his experience and proven ability. PCs can struggle to increase in both social and rank levels, and referees are free to give awards in both areas to successful characters.

To determine the level of a character, roll 1d100 on the Social Level Table provided with this article. The social system is divided into five levels:

Very low. This level includes ex-slaves, beggars, criminals, and outcasts.

Low. This level includes laborers, farmers, fishermen, herdsmen, peddlers, and craftsmen.

Medium. This level includes technicians, doctors, government officials, merchants,

soldiers, and priests.

High. This level includes rich merchants, important officials, judges, tribal shamans, and knights (high-ranking soldiers and heroes).

Very high. This level includes the community's ruling family, royalty, and nobles from wealthy and powerful families.

These examples are general ones, not reflecting the specifics of any single community. Most tribes have no important officials or royalty, while a city-state might have no shamans. The exact background of a PC must be chosen by the player and given approval by the referee. Since Part VII of the second-edition Adventure Book explains that player characters should begin in Tech Level I Bases in wilderness areas, many of the more civilized backgrounds, such as technician and royalty, are not available to starting PCs.

The following notes apply to the table.

Starting money. Beginning characters use this die roll to determine the number of gold pieces which they can spend to arm and equip themselves. This rule reflects the economic considerations of social rank, where wealth brings respect and positions of power.

Research modifier. This modifier is used when a character does research at a Base

Social Level Table

| | Social level | Starting money | Research | Charisma | NPC reaction |
|-------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1-5 | Very low | 2d4 X 10 | - 0% | - 4 | 0 |
| 6-55 | Low | 3d4 X 10 | - 5% | - 2 | 1 |
| 56-85 | Medium | 4d4 X 10 | - 10% | + 0 | 2 |
| 86-95 | High | 5d4 X 10 | - 15% | + 2 | 3 |
| 96-00 | Very high | 6d4 X 10 | - 20% | + 4 | 4 |

in a community in which the character is a member. The researcher is using authority and contacts to gain access to information.

Charisma modifier. This modifier is added to or subtracted from the character's ability score when determining the maximum followers and Morale adjustment on the Charisma Table, found in the second-edition Adventure Book.

NPC reaction modifier. This modifier is similar to the one used in *Oriental Adventures*. When two characters meet and know each others' levels, subtract the smaller modifier from the larger. The character of lesser social level uses the final number as a penalty when rolling for the other's reaction, and the character of higher level uses the number as a bonus when rolling for the other's reaction. This modifier is also used when a character is attempting to hire or recruit an NPC.

If a group in the community (such as the ruling family or the merchants) is on bad terms with another group (such as the farmers, the soldiers, or the entire low social class), then ignore this NPC reaction modifier. Instead, use -2 if the group is disliked, or -4 if the group is hated. This penalty applies only with reactions between the opposing groups. The penalty is doubled if the reacting NPCs are armed and prone to violence.

All modifiers listed on the table are subject to change when a character publicly changes in social level. To do this, the character must enter the profession of another level, either willingly or not. Thus a farmer can increase in level by becoming a soldier, and a royal prince can decrease in level by becoming an outlaw. If the royal prince's criminal acts are never known to the community, then he remains in the very high social level, even if he is secretly banished by his own family.

When a character holds professions of varying levels, he or she is still considered to be a member of a single level. If all the professions are good, then the person is known by the highest social level of the given professions. Thus, a noble-doctor is of very high level. If one or more professions are "bad," then the character is treated as being in the lowest of the bad-profession social levels. Thus, a noble-doctor-criminal is treated as if he were in the very low social level.

The referee must decide any other considerations of a system of social levels. Will a corrupt politician be executed, pardoned, or demoted to a lower social level? Will an ex-slave be allowed to become a priest? Can a knight freely seize the rulership of his community, or will the community resent his attempts to increase his social level? These questions are left to the judgment of the referee, who knows his campaign world better than a series of reaction charts. But, from the starting point given here, the referee is welcome to expand social levels into a complex and fascinating part of his game world. Ω

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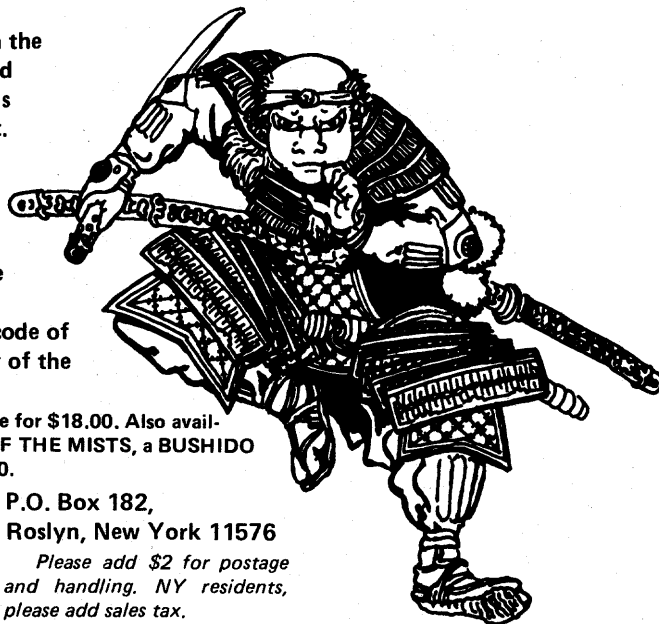
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WELCOME TO THE MACHINE

The Marvelous Machine Man™ and the Midnight Wreckers™

by Douglas A. Lent

Jeff Grubb has been busy with the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ boxed campaign setting lately, but he promises to return with his (one month late) Marvel®-Phile on the Unlimited Class Wrestling Federation™ and all the strange and unusual folks therein. Meanwhile, let's get mechanical with MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Original Set statistics for the Indestructible Machine Man™ — RM

MACHINE MAN™

X-51, alias Aaron Stack™
Fugitive robot

| | |
|-----------|-----------------|
| Fighting | EXCELLENT (20) |
| Agility | EXCELLENT (20) |
| Strength | REMARKABLE (30) |
| Endurance | UNEARTHLY (100) |
| Reason | REMARKABLE (30) |
| Intuition | INCREDIBLE (40) |
| Psyche | REMARKABLE (30) |

| | |
|------------|-------------------|
| Health | 170 |
| Karma | 100 |
| Resources | FEEBLE (TYPICAL)* |
| Popularity | 0 (20)* |

** Parenthetical terms apply to Machine Man in the 1980s; other terms are for his futuristic form.*

Known powers:

ANTIGRAVITY GENERATORS: Machine Man has several built-in antigravity generators, allowing him to render himself weightless and giving him the ability to fly at Feeble speed (two areas/round).

BODY ARMOR: Machine Man's skin is made of a titanium alloy that gives him Amazing protection from cold, heat, and physical damage.

EXTENDABLE LIMBS: Machine Man can extend his arms and legs out to a maximum of three areas away. Within this radius, he can engage in close combat and handle objects without a FEAT roll. He can step over structures up to three stories tall and, by extending both arms and legs, can climb surfaces at a rate of five areas/round. It should be noted that the farther Machine Man extends his limbs,

the less strength he has in them. When his limbs are extended one area, his Strength is normal, two areas away, his Strength becomes Excellent, and at full extension (three areas), it is only Good.

ENVIRONMENTAL INDEPENDENCE:

Machine Man does not need to eat, drink, breathe, or sleep. He could easily survive in outer space or other vacuum environment.

HEATING/COOLING SYSTEMS:

Machine Man is able to use his internal temperature control system to radiate great amounts of heat or cold through his hands. He can do this with Remarkable ability (causing Remarkable damage), and can affect a maximum radius of three areas around his hands.

PISTOL HANDS: Machine Man has a pair of modified .357 Magnums installed in his index fingers. They have a three-area range and do Good damage.

POWER SOURCE: Machine Man is powered by a network of solar receptors positioned at various points on his body. Because of this, if he is kept in total darkness for more than 40 hours, he will lose three Endurance ranks each hour thereafter. If he is not exposed to light before his Endurance drops to Feeble, he will shut down (i.e., go unconscious) from a lack of power. He will remain in this state until he is exposed to light once more, whereupon he regains Endurance ranks at a rate of one rank per round.

Machine Man's story: Machine Man was created by a top-secret U.S. military project, whose goal was to create a robot soldier capable of independent thought. One of 51 original prototypes, he was placed in the custody of Dr. Abel Stack, a brilliant computer specialist who believed that man and robot could co-exist in harmony. Stack taught the robot, whom he named Aaron, as if it were his own son. Under Stack's guidance, Aaron developed his own individual personality.

At this same time, the other 50 robots began to develop serious malfunctions in their programming. An executive decision was made to terminate the project and destroy the robots before they could become dangerous. The destruct order allowed no exceptions, within hours, Aaron would be destroyed by an explosive device built into him when he was assembled.

Fortunately, Stack was able to remove the bomb although he could not deactivate it. Knowing this, Stack said a brief farewell to his "son" and sent Aaron away. Minutes later, the device detonated, killing Stack instantly.

Now on his own, Aaron began a crimefighting career as Machine Man in an attempt to find his place in the world of humanity. During this time, he was



befriended by several humans, most notably psychologist Peter Spaulding and “Gears” Garvin, a mechanic. Machine Man tangled with many foes as well, including the opportunistic Senator Miles Brickman and Madam Menace™ (alias Sunset Bain), an arms merchant who wanted to mass-produce robots copied from Aaron’s circuitry.

Then Machine Man met Jocasta™, a former Avenger™ and fellow robot. During their brief time together, they discovered a mutual attraction that might have led to something much more for them both had she not been destroyed in a battle with her creator, Ultron™.

A few months later, Garvin, Machine Man, and Spaulding were at Garvin’s garage, trying to find a way to revive Jocasta’s robotic brain. While Garvin was away, buying some necessary parts, Bain’s agents attacked the garage. Garvin returned to find Spaulding dead and his garage in ruins. There was no sign of either Machine Man or Jocasta.

A few years later, Bain began selling robots based on designs stolen from Machine Man, eventually gaining a monopoly on the entire robotics industry by the turn of the century. By the year A.D. 2020, Baintronics, Inc. was one of the most

powerful corporations in America.

During this 40-year period, Machine Man’s components remained crated and stored away in the warehouse where Bain’s technicians had left them. Then, a computer error mistakenly identified the parts as obsolete, and the crate was removed to a Baintronics dumping ground just outside New York City.

The crate was found by a pack of Midnight Wreckers™, young people whose livelihood came from selling black-market robots made from castoff Baintronics components. Intrigued by the crate’s contents, they eluded a Baintronics patrol and brought the crate back to their lair, where they succeeded in reassembling Machine Man.

Soon after Machine Man’s reactivation, both he and the Wreckers were forced to flee when Baintronics security forces found the hideout. Following several close calls, they eventually made their way to Sanctuary, a flying city that served as home base for the packs of Wreckers and their leader, the Ancient Wrecker™.

Upon his arrival, Machine Man was surprised to learn that the Ancient Wrecker was none other than Gears Garvin. When Bain first began selling robots on the open market, Garvin

realized what must have happened and tried to stop her, but soon found that he was powerless to do so through legal means. In frustration, he organized the Midnight Wreckers as his way of striking back at Bain.

Meanwhile, Bain had located Sanctuary and organized a strike force under the command of Arno Stark, the Iron Man™ of 2020. Bain’s soldiers struck with surprise, and it was only after a bloody battle that the Wreckers were able to drive them off. Sickened by the needless violence and tired of running, Machine Man decided to confront Bain face to face. After breaking through her defenses and barely surviving a duel with Stark, he at last stood before his persecutor, only to be stopped by a reconstructed Jocasta, who had been acting as Bain’s aide for the last 40 years.

Jocasta persuaded Machine Man to spare Bain, but only after securing her promise to leave him and the Wreckers alone, on the threat of his return to claim his rightful vengeance if she did not. During this exchange, Machine Man realized that his feelings for Jocasta were gone. Thus freed from his past, Machine Man departed with his friends, once again trying to find a life for himself in a strange new world.

MIDNIGHT WRECKERS™

BRAIN™

| | |
|-----------|-----------------|
| Fighting | TYPICAL (6) |
| Agility | GOOD (10) |
| Strength | TYPICAL (6) |
| Endurance | GOOD (10) |
| Reason | REMARKABLE (30) |
| Intuition | EXCELLENT (20) |
| Psyche | GOOD (10) |

| | |
|------------|------|
| Health | 32 |
| Karma | 60 |
| Resources | GOOD |
| Popularity | 7 |

HASSLE™

| | |
|-----------|----------------|
| Fighting | GOOD (10) |
| Agility | EXCELLENT (20) |
| Strength | TYPICAL (6) |
| Endurance | EXCELLENT (20) |
| Reason | TYPICAL (6) |
| Intuition | EXCELLENT (20) |
| Psyche | EXCELLENT (20) |

| | |
|------------|------|
| Health | 56 |
| Karma | 46 |
| Resources | GOOD |
| Popularity | 6 |

SLICK™

| | |
|-----------|-----------------|
| Fighting | EXCELLENT (20) |
| Agility | EXCELLENT (20) |
| Strength | GOOD (10) |
| Endurance | REMARKABLE (30) |
| Reason | GOOD (10) |
| Intuition | GOOD (10) |
| Psyche | TYPICAL (6) |

| | |
|------------|------|
| Health | 80 |
| Karma | 26 |
| Resources | GOOD |
| Popularity | 9 |

SWIFT™

| | |
|-----------|-----------------|
| Fighting | EXCELLENT (20) |
| Agility | REMARKABLE (30) |
| Strength | TYPICAL (6) |
| Endurance | EXCELLENT (20) |
| Reason | TYPICAL (6) |
| Intuition | GOOD (10) |
| Psyche | TYPICAL (6) |

| | |
|------------|------|
| Health | 76 |
| Karma | 22 |
| Resources | GOOD |
| Popularity | 8 |

WEAPONS: All the Wreckers have access to laser pistols, the standard handgun of A.D. 2020, though Slick and Swift prefer to use their close-combat skills instead. Laser

pistols have Excellent range (five areas), do Remarkable damage, and can fire 10 times per charge.

In addition to her laser pistol, Hassle carries a special grenade-launching pistol that fires an explosive projectile that does Amazing damage and has Excellent range. After firing one shot, the user must spend two rounds reloading (four rounds if dodging or attempting to dodge).

Talents: All the Wreckers have piloting skills. In addition Swift is trained in martial arts, and Brain in electronics and robotics. Hassle’s agility is Amazing when firing handguns.

THE ANCIENT WRECKER™

“Gears” Garvin; mechanic

| | |
|-----------|----------------|
| Fighting | GOOD (10) |
| Agility | GOOD (10) |
| Strength | TYPICAL (6) |
| Endurance | GOOD (10) |
| Reason | EXCELLENT (20) |
| Intuition | GOOD (10) |
| Psyche | GOOD (10) |

| | |
|------------|------------|
| Health | 36 |
| Karma | 40 |
| Resources | REMARKABLE |
| Popularity | 10 |

Talents: Gears is skilled in aeronautics.

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The Role of Computers

Of the bard and other tales

by Hartley and
Patricia Lesser

The number of computer-managed adventure and fantasy games entering the marketplace seems to be on the rise once again. For awhile, during the fall of last year, the number of new offerings dropped off. However, with the holiday season of 1986 and the birth of 1987, far more games are being introduced to the consumer.

Though fortunate for the consumer, this is most unfortunate for us. We are finding it difficult to allocate the review time necessary for a thorough examination of each new product, especially when the offerings include the new breed of massively coded adventures. Where before we had weeks to thoroughly investigate a program, now we have a few days to complete our task. Such has also occurred with this column, which must, in this issue, focus more on the new fantasy, adventure, and role-playing games being introduced, rather than the actual review of two or three offerings.

We also mentioned in one of our earlier columns that gaming tips were not something we would afford to cover. Some rules are created simply to make those who instigate such policies appear as total cretins. This may be the case now, for we must violate our own rule!

To be perfectly frank, we overlooked some major points when we reviewed *The Bard's Tale* in our last column (DRAGON® issue #116). And we thank Michael Busta, of Richfield, Ohio, who was kind enough

to write to us regarding some of these oversights. And, as *The Bard's Tale* is such a complex adventure, we felt a few of Mike's hints and tips would be most appropriate to further your play with this fantasy role-playing adventure game. We have used his clues quite effectively to further our play of *The Bard's Tale*.

First of all, Mike indicated that the characters we were using in the game lacked potential. He recommends a group comprised of one hunter or paladin, two monks, one bard, and two spell-casters. Michael prefers the hunter character to other fighter types, as this individual has a number of special weapons available to him that can be found during the game. The paladin is certainly a wise choice; she starts out as an excellent fighter with a lot of hit points. The monks, after they reach the sixth level, become incredibly effective in combat when you *throw away* their weapons and armor. And don't fret if you don't have a rogue. Mike says that the *Trap Zap* spell disarms any odious snares better than the rogue could disarm them in the first place.

Mike also identified two additional dungeons that we missed, due to our haste to complete the game in time for the review deadline. These additional dungeons are The Tower of Kylearan and The lower of Mangar, and are accessed through the Castle itself. In order to enter Kylearan's Tower, Mike says you'll first have to recover the eyeball from King Aildrek, who dwells in the Catacombs (a most unfriendly place to visit). Then, while holding this eyeball, your party must visit the Statue of the Mad God that is located

within the Castle. This places your party behind the once-impassible gates. According to Mike, when the party is ready to take on and (hopefully) defeat Mangar, you must find the stairs hidden deep in the sewers and follow them to the surface. With the aid of Kylearan's present, you'll be able to enter Mangar's Tower for the final confrontation!

Mike has some additional hints that might be of use to *The Bard's Tale* adventurers — hints that we have also tried and found to be most amenable to game success. First, make certain that all of your characters start with a very high constitution score. Constitution is *rarely* given as a bonus when individual characters reach higher levels. Second, launch your party with one magician and one conjurer. After your magic-users have learned all seven of their individual spell levels, immediately change them to the Sorcerer class. When they have become successful Sorcerers, adjust them to the Wizard orientation. Their final conversion should have each becoming a Conjurer or Magician — whichever class they have not previously completed. Third, during your area perusals, look for three silver shapes. Without these shapes, you cannot succeed in your quest. When you manage to enter Kylearan's Tower, make certain that you always carry a Crystal Sword. Remember, the only sure way to win this game is to map every square of the dungeon. As Mike so aptly stated, the real key to winning *The Bard's Tale* is persistence. Thanks, Mike, for your help.

If *The Bard's Tale* on the Apple II and the Commodore 64/128 computer was to your liking, wait until you experience the game on a Commodore Amiga computer. The graphics, the animation, and the sound are absolutely stunning! We had the opportunity to talk with Brian Fargo, the president of Interplay Productions — the folks who produced this series of adventures. We also played both the new Amiga release of the game as well as *The Bard's Tale II: The Destiny Knight* for the Commodore 64/128. Both products are from Electronic Arts, 1820 Gateway Drive, San Mateo CA 94404; (415) 571-7171.

The Amiga version is two disks full of highly compacted code that brings new life to what has been called onscreen animation. The opening scene for *The Bard's Tale II* now shows the inside of the inn where all congregate. The fire roars in the background, casting shadows on the implements on the mantelpiece. All of the encountered creatures are fully animated, and some of the more outstanding images include the magic-users, whose gestures animate flying objects onscreen. There are some hideous monsters that give the game a new threatening feel when combat is announced. Some of the onscreen representations will, indeed, cause one to seriously consider running away from the conflict. The mazes themselves are very well done, with a true three-dimensional



Remember the red dragon from DRAGON® issue #116, page 72? Here it is again, on the Amiga version of *The Bard's Tale*.

effect created using the walls, ceiling, and floor. The town itself, with its streets and buildings, are all effectively drawn in brilliant color.

Additionally, the sound for the Amiga version of *The Bard's Tale* is awesome. For example, when entering a Temple for the all-crucial healing of an injured party member, the monks gather together, and you hear a marvelous Gregorian chant issue from the computer's stereo speakers as the holy brothers work their curative powers. The music played by the bard is now dictated by the kind of instrument he or she selects. If the flute is the instrument of choice, then you hear a flute when the bard's song has been selected, not a computer-generated instrument that *almost* sounds like a flute, but an actual flute! This version has to be seen and played to be believed. We highly recommend this offering to those of you gamers who have access to the Amiga computer. Brian also told us that he will be managing

a conversion of *The Bard's Tale* for Atari ST computers as well.

But that's not all, folks. If *The Bard's Tale* was to your liking, then you're going to absolutely go crazy for *The Bard's Tale II: The Destiny Knight*. Released initially for the Commodore 64/128 computer family, this is an awesome offering from Interplay and Electronic Arts that is 50% larger in code size than *The Bard's Tale I*. The game features an expanded domain for exploration and adventure, and incorporates advanced combat and magic systems. The theme for this exciting quest centers around your party's search for seven separate pieces of The Destiny Wand. This device was forged by the Archmage Turin and had maintained peace and prosperity within the Realm for 700 years. But the Realm was invaded by mercenaries from the neighboring kingdom of Lestradae, and The Destiny Wand was stolen, smashed into seven pieces, and scattered throughout the Realm. This is your quest,

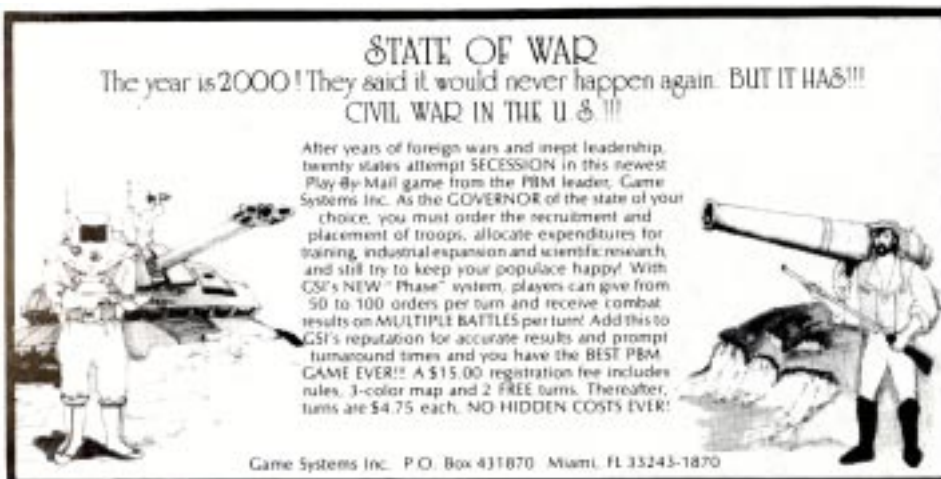
then — to make the wand whole again. Once this is accomplished, great power will be given to the bearer.

There are six cities (Tangramayne, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosee, Corinth, and Thessalonica) and 25 dungeon levels, plus a vast wilderness area that also requires as much of a thorough search as the mazes themselves. There's also a sage out in the wilderness who can be of invaluable assistance to your adventuring party. Plus, the archmage has been introduced, an extremely powerful conjurer class that is attainable by your magic-users once they have learned at least three levels for each of the previous four magic-user classes. Like the bard, the archmage is one of the most important and most powerful characters in *The Bard's Tale II*. There are also 79 different magic spells to aid in your play.

One of the most intriguing new facets of the game is the fact that distance now plays an important role in combat. For example, in *The Bard's Tale I*, all combat occurred within 10' of your character. Now, combat can occur within a range of from 10-90'! This means that in addition to handheld weapon proficiency, you might want some of your characters to become adept with missile weapons, such as spears and arrows, or edged weapons that can be thrown, such as axes and knives. Unfortunately, unless these weapons are of the magical variety, they're not recoverable once thrown. But let's not forget that spells may also be cast over distances. Spells in *The Bard's Tale II* all have an effective range, so if some hostiles suddenly appear 60' in front of the party, and one of your Wizards happens to possess the fifth-level spell *Storal's soul whip*, the enemy would be within the effective range for the psionic attack, taking from 50-200 points of damage. However, most of the spells are effective within the 10-30' range, which means you and your friends had best be on your toes at all times!

Of extreme challenge are the real-time puzzles that confront your band of questors. Called Snares of Death, these locations are the hiding places of pieces of The Destiny Wand. You'll always be alerted when your party has entered this area. Once you're inside, you have a limited amount of time to successfully complete all of the various tasks, puzzles, and riddles within the room in order to retrieve the segment. Sometimes, the order in which the tasks must be completed is very important; in other Snares, the order has no effect on your success. There is only one penalty for failure — instant death for your entire party.

Other game features include a pregenerated team of characters known as the ATEAM, designed to get your feet wet in the game, plus the ability to import characters from *The Bard's Tale I* and *Ultima III* into *The Bard's Tale II* (when the Apple II version debuts, you'll also be able to import *Wizardry* characters). There are several castles that require exploration



(Fanskar's Castle, Dargoth's Tower, and Oscon's Fortress). Within the forests of the Realm, there are some crypts that can prove quite challenging — especially the Grey Crypt dungeon! As was the case with *The Bard's Tale I*, you'll also find temples, taverns, and Roscoe's Energy Emporium, plus two new edifices — for you gamblers, there are casinos for wagering and the Bedder's Bank for depositing or withdrawing your gold. Of course, the Review Board continues to serve as the final authority as to when your individual characters can attain the next level.

The Commodore 64/128 version of *The Bard's Tale II* is exciting, sports extremely well-programmed, three-dimensional graphics, continues to capture the flavor of a true fantasy role-playing game, and has better sound quality than the first offering. The scope is mammoth in nature, and this is another highly recommended offering for all fantasy role-players. Interplay Productions also expects to produce an Apple II version and has hopes of also converting the game to the Atari ST and Commodore Amiga machines. Interplay is to be highly commended for their current product line.

There's good news for Steve Jackson boardgame fans! Released by Electronic Arts are computerized versions of his most popular games: the AUTODUEL® and OGRE® games. The *Autoduel* computer game is set in the year 2030 and combines the feel of the *Road Warrior* movies with the fantasy role-playing action of the *Ultima* adventure games. The computerized version of the classic boardgame still finds the highways controlled by marauding outlaws. Likewise, several locales have their arenas awaiting your participation in motorized combat. A player earns prestige and money i money in those arenas, on the highways, and in the cities. Should you survive, fame and fortune will naturally grow. Players purchase and build customized vehicles, and try to rid the land of road outlaws and cycle gangs. If a character rates a high enough status, the FBI tries to enlist him in order to destroy the ultimate evil force! *Autoduel* can be found in Commodore 64/128 and Apple II formats (\$49.95), and will soon be released in Macintosh, Amiga, Atari ST, and Atari 800 computer formats.

The second computerized Steve Jackson game is one of our favorites: *Ogre*. This is a game for one or two players that pits an incredible, lone cybertank, named the Ogre, against more conventional forces of infantry, armored units, and command posts. In one-player mode, you can wither control the Ogre or manage the forces that oppose the Ogre. In the two-player mode, one participant becomes the Ogre player and the other player manages the conventional forces. It then comes down to a question of who can outblast and outmaneuver the other player. The defenses that the Ogre tries to eliminate contain as many as 20 units of infantry and 12 units



A typical (?) character from *The Bard's Tale II*.

of armor (heavy tanks, howitzers, etc.). But the Ogre has missiles, main and secondary batteries, and antipersonnel guns. All of the battle action takes place in the nuclear wastelands of the future, with the battlefield also player-designable as well. *Ogre* is now available for the Commodore 64/128 and Atari 800 systems for \$39.95, the Atari ST and Commodore Amiga at \$39.95, and will soon be available for IBM micros and their compatibles.

Several years ago, one of the first adventure games we played was called *Zork*. The company who produced this fine fantasy adventure was Infocom, Inc. (125 Cambridge Park Drive, Cambridge MA 02140; (617) 492-6000). Shortly thereafter, the game became a hit. The adventure takes place in a vast, underground labyrinth, among the remnants of a fantastic civilization known as the Great Underground Empire. Within this setting, exotic

creatures, extraordinary sights, and mesmerizing puzzles were diabolically created. *Zork I* was soon followed by *Zork II*, then by *Zork III*, becoming one of the most popular computer game trilogy adventures ever written. Now Infocom has released this trilogy in one package for the Apple II and Apple Macintosh, Atari S-bit systems and the Atari ST, Commodore 64/128 and Commodore Amiga, and IBM micros and compatibles. Included in this package is a specially minted Zorkmid coin, a history of the Great Underground Empire, two semi-luxury resort brochures, a Frobozzco International stock certificate (named after the frivolous Wizard of Frobozz), an official letter, and a rather strange, old map. You can look forward to exciting encounters with the likes of Dimwit Flathead and the Dungeon Master in *Zork III* — if you survive *Zork I* and *Zork II*, that is. This trilogy is highly enjoyable and is certainly

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Garth's Weapons Shop (the armory) appears before you in a setting from *The Bard's Tale*.

one of the first classic computer adventure games ever released. The price for the complete package is \$59.95 for the C64/128 and Atari S-bit systems, and \$69.95 for all other computer systems. That's a \$60 savings over the total price of \$129.85, if you had to buy each *Zork* adventure separately.

A second new text adventure game from Infocom is *Hollywood Hijinx*, wherein the player has inherited the entire estate of his uncle, Hollywood mogul Buddy Burbank. There are 10 treasures hidden throughout his home; in order for you to keep the estate, you've got to find these treasures in but a single night. There's an enormous hedge maze that'll drive you bonkers as you try to navigate through it. You also get to control a special effects creature from one of your uncle's science-fiction film classics. This game is packed with a variety of puzzles, and has been released for the Apple II and Apple Macintosh, Atari S-bit and ST series, Commodore 64/128 and Amiga computers, and IBM micros and compatibles. The price is \$34.95 for the S-bit machines and \$39.95 for all other systems.

Of final note is a brand new (and most impressive), fantasy adventure game entitled *Might and Magic, Book One: Secret of the Inner Sanctum*. Released for Apple II computers, this program is a four disk adventure that is absolutely astounding in its total scope! We hope to have an in-depth review of this offering for you in our next column. Our initial foray into *Might and Magic* leaves us with the impression that the creator has been a fantasy role-player *extraordinaire*.

With *Might and Magic*, you assemble a party of six adventurers to explore a complete world in which your party crosses oceans, climbs mountains, searches

through castles and dungeons — all in three-dimensional perspective. In full color, all graphics are flicker-free, which is quite an accomplishment on an Apple II computer. There is an elaborate combat system and hundreds of special events and encounters. The game has 94 different spells and more than 250 magic items. All are quite necessary, as there are over 200 monsters of various descriptions and abilities.

The game packs 500 K of assembly code on two, double-sided disks. There is a 54-page reference manual, a color fold-out map of the Land of Varn (measuring 18" x 12"), and a very handy, quick-reference spell chart. As fantasy role-players are well aware, mapping skills are most crucial to your campaign success. Subterranean towns that contain all manners of inns and shops and training grounds can all assist in your quest to discover the Secret — but first, you've got to locate the Inner Sanctum itself. Don't think, not for a second, that the Inner Sanctum is revealed on the map. This is one area you're going to really have to search for in order to locate. *Might and Magic* is from New World Computing, Inc., PO. Box 491415, Los Angeles CA 90049; (213) 659-1888. If first experiences are any indication of what is to come, *Might and Magic* is bound to be a real winner!

For *Star Trek* aficionados, Simon and Schuster Software (One Gulf & Western Plaza, New York NY 10023) has released a sequel to their last year's successful *Star Trek* fantasy, *The Kobayashi Alternative*. The second program, which is entitled *The Promethean Prophecy*, challenges you to unravel the mystery of a complex culture and discover an adequate food source before the *Enterprise* crew starves. You become Captain Kirk, and your decisions

in this interactive text adventure decide the fate of your friends and crew. The *Enterprise* comes under sudden attack while exploring an unmapped sector of space near the border of the Great Transstellar Rift. As a result, the ship's entire stock of raw protein substance is contaminated. To replenish the food supply, you must beam down to the surface of Prometheus Four, the only Class M (oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere) planet within range, on an exploratory mission. You'll discover a bizarre and alien planet full of mysteries and puzzles. To win the game, you must solve a series of puzzles — the solutions to which unravel the planet's secret prophecy — and save the *Enterprise* crew from starvation. Simon and Schuster has released the game for IBM micros and compatibles, the Apple II family (\$39.95), and for the Commodore 64/128 computer (\$32.95).

Of final note, we recommend to Atari ST owners that they consider *Phantasie* as a me well-worth their attention. *Phantasie* is a product of Strategic Simulations (1046 North Rengstorff Ave., Mountain View CA 94043; (415) 964-1200). We initially played the Apple II version several months ago and were favorably impressed with its detail and adventure. The Atari ST version incorporates far more sophisticated graphics and sound, and has almost become a new game because of the ST's environment. Windows now accomplish a great many of the keyboard commands, such as combat, spell-casting, and earning levels. For example, in every town there is a Guild. Through the Guild, parties may add new members, purge unwanted adventurers, learn new spells, or obtain additional training for each member of your brave band. In the ST version, you simply click on the Guild's doors with the mouse, and a pull-down menu at the top of the screen displays your choices. You click on one of the choices, and additional dialog boxes are presented onscreen that require you to respond with another mouse click.

This same convenience is found throughout *Phantasie*, no matter where you are adventuring. The dungeons are automatically mapped for you as you explore them, and the map can be saved after you exit the dungeon — something you will be doing often; to complete a dungeon in one foray is rather rare. You can also reset all of the dungeons back to their original levels. This is one of the most enjoyable fantasy adventure games we've been involved in, and the Atari ST version presents us with a far more graphically enjoyable and aurally pleasing format than previous releases of this game.

Please don't forget to write to us with your adventuring tips and other comments regarding computer games that would be of interest to fantasy role-players. Next column, look for our review of *Might and Magic*, and who knows what other surprises! Take care, and game on!

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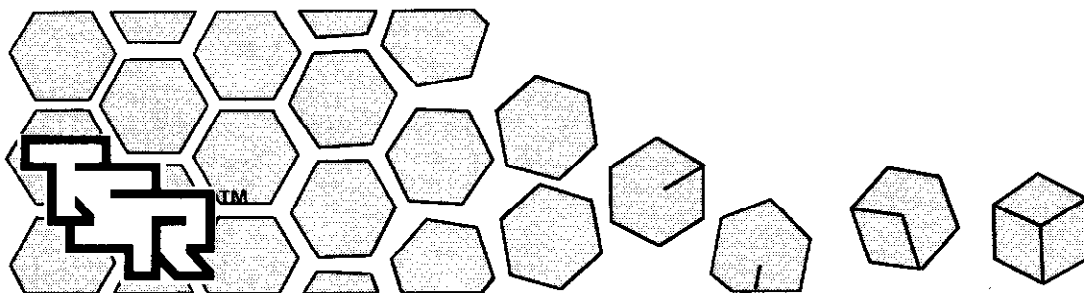
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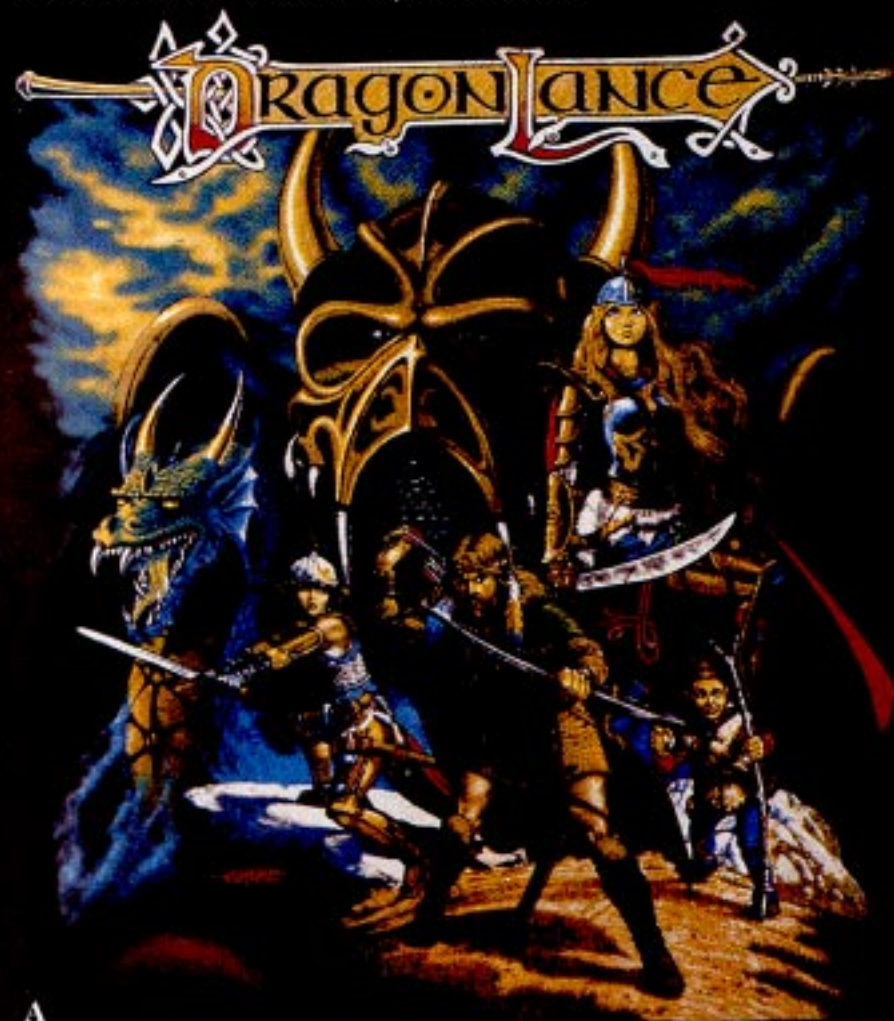
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KAREN MARTIN

Karen Martin made her appearance on January 20, 1958, in the midst of a blizzard in northern Illinois. From the Deaconess Hospital (now a home for mentally disturbed children), she was taken to live in the old family home in German Valley.

Karen had a fairly quiet childhood — “After all,” she says, “how much trouble can you get into, living on farm in the middle of nowhere?” After graduation from Forrestville Valley High School in 1975, Karen decided to attend Rockford College in Illinois, and in 1979 she graduated with a degree in English and a secondary teaching certificate.

Karen Martin

During her freshman year at Rockford, she met David Martin, who would eventually become her husband. They began dating after David saw her in a college production of *Blithe Spirit*. “I played a crazy medium named Madame Arcati,” she explains. “After a tempestuous, on-again-off-again relationship, we finally got married in April 1980. At the time, I was teaching English to seventh and eighth graders at Stillman Valley Junior High — getting married provided a similar challenge!”

The following year, Karen began working for ASI (Advanced Systems Incorporated, where David also worked) as an editor for data-processing manuals, so she and her husband moved to Schaumburg to be closer to their jobs. It was here that Karen had her first taste of adventure gaming. “To relieve occasional boredom we would play games on the computers. I liked one in particular — *Adventure*.” A fellow employee noticed Karen’s interest in the game, and invited her to play in an AD&D® game with his group. “I loved it and played often. Marathon games were not uncommon.”

After about two years at ASI, Karen moved on to Glenview, Illinois, and into a job with Scott, Foresman and Company as an editor in the Electronic Publishing department. “I edited manuals for microcomputer software for schools, but since then, I think the department no longer exists,” she said. “About this time I was offered a job as managing editor for a small publication. The day before I was to start, they called and said the position no longer existed. So, to preserve my existence, I began a job as sales associate for Lee Wards in Schaumburg. From there, I went to Carson, Pirie,

Karen Martin poses with her cat.



and Scott, and sold draperies for a few months.”

Karen and her husband moved to West Bend, Wisconsin in 1984. Until this time, Karen had been a regular player of AD&D games, but this changed when she moved to Wisconsin. “The gaming groups in West Bend were too strange for my tastes. I heard things like, ‘I’m invulnerable to everything, so don’t even bother rolling a saving throw!’” In 1985, Greenfield (a Milwaukee suburb) welcomed the Martins as they moved once again in July. “I started work as an assistant manager at the Lane Bryant store in Brookfield [another Milwaukee suburb].”

In December of that year, Karen finally got a call she had been long awaiting. TSR wanted her to come for an interview. “I had applied back in August of 1984 and came in for a couple of interviews, but that was the last I heard anything until Steve Winter called. I went in for another interview and was hired before the end of the week. What a Yule gift!”

In January 1986, Karen began her new job as game editor. “One of the first things I worked on when I came was the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Advanced Game. What an introduction to the company! No mercy for the new kid!” In July 1986, Karen became the freelance editing coordinator for TSR. “I now work closely with Bruce Heard who handles the acquisitions. I wish I had paid more attention to my college French classes.” Karen’s job is to find people to edit the material that comes from the Acquisi-

tions Department. The job requires that she coordinate many projects at once, in addition to some editing of her own. projects. “It’s tough to juggle 10 things at once, but I really like my job and the people I work with.”

Still footloose, Karen and her husband moved to Williams Bay in October 1986. And yes, they are thinking of moving again. “We’re looking for a more permanent place.” In addition to her hobby of transporting entire households, Karen enjoys reading about ancient religions and culture, especially Celtic and Arthurian legends. She also likes reading fantasy literature.

Any advice for the readers, Karen? “Keep telling yourself, ‘It’s only a game. It’s only a game. It’s only a . . .’”

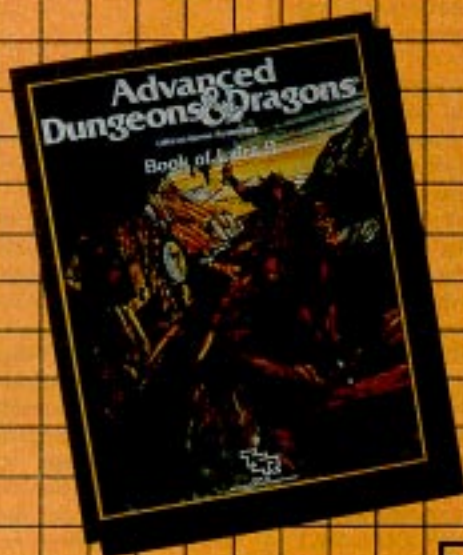
REF4 was one of the projects which Karen helped produce.

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MARGARET WEIS

Interviewed by Tracy Hickman.

"We can write this book," Margaret said. "It's our story. Nobody knows it the way we do. Nobody else can tell it right."

It was January 1983. I was sitting in the 10'-wide cubicle that passed then for the office of Margaret Weis. I was the design coordinator for Project Overlord (the cover name for what would later be known as the DRAGONLANCE® saga), and she was the Coordinator for Books Division. We were part of a committee to select who should write the DRAGONLANCE novel which Margaret, Michael Williams, and I had already outlined.

And there she was, on the edge of her chair, her eyes full of determination and energy. "We've got to prove to them that we can do it. We'll submit our own sample chapters and show 'em." Two days later, we were ready with the prologue and first five chapters of the first DRAGONLANCE novel. There was never any question after that as to who would write the series.

Margaret Weis was born in 1948, in Independence, Missouri, and later attended the University of Missouri. It was here that she had her first brush with heroic fantasy. "I read Tolkien when it made its first big sweep in the colleges back in 1966. A girlfriend of mine gave me copy of the books while I was in summer school at MU. I literally couldn't put them down! I never found any other fantasy I liked, and just never read any fantasy after Tolkien." Ultimately, she earned what her mother called "a worthless degree in creating writing." Her mother's dream of a Librarian Daughter was at an end. Margaret went to work for a small publishing company in Independence and became an editor there.

Soon fate seemed to take a rather firm hand in Margaret's life. "I did see the beginnings of the D&D® game — all of the little books — but was pretty much occupied by marriage, kids, and a career, and just didn't pursue it." That changed after a few games with friends, and soon Margaret was following the fortunes of TSR, Inc. When she saw an advertisement for an editorial position in *Publisher's Weekly* she sent in her resume.

"TSR was looking for a games editor at the time. I sent in my application and took their test, but was told that I wasn't quite what they had in mind for that position." Coincidentally, Jean Black, manager of TSR's book division, was looking around for

a book editor at that same time. She happened to be talking to Ray Puechner, Margaret's literary agent, and asked Ray if he knew anyone looking for work.

"Ray told Jean where to find my application. Jean walked over to the games division and picked it up." Margaret was offered the job on the same day as her interview. One of her first assignments was to help coordinate the new DRAGONLANCE project.

There's been no rest since then. Margaret loves to write — lives to write, in fact. What has her interest now?

"We have several new projects based on the DRAGONLANCE saga. One is *Leaves from the Inn of the last Home*, the Complete Krynn Source Book. It has legends, original music, kender and gnome proverbs, recipes, and a lot more. It's just a fun book. We are also working on *The Art of DRAGONLANCE Saga*, which contains the full-color art from the first two DRAGONLANCE calendars, the book covers, and some of the art from the third DRAGONLANCE calendar that the artists are producing now. In addition, it has artwork never before published.

"Finally, in response to the hundreds of letters we received begging for more about Krynn, we are producing three anthologies of short stories called DRAGONLANCE Tales. The first one is the *Magic of Krynn*, the second *Kender Gnomes*, and *Gully Dwarves*, and the third *Love and War*: Tracy and I are doing a novella for each one. The first novella is called 'The Legacy.' It's about Caramon's third son, who is a-magic-user

and must deal with the 'leg acy' of his uncle. It's going to surprise a lot of people! The first anthology also includes the 'Test of the Twins,' the short story I wrote for DRAGON® Magazine [issue #83]. It has the original ending to the story, which I had to rewrite because the editor of DRAGON Magazine wanted something more 'upbeat.' We're also republishing the short story by Roger E. Moore about Tasslehoff and the teleporting ring. And there are several new original stories by some very talented new writers. We've enjoyed working with them, and we've made a lot of new friends — but the new project Tracy and I are working on will hopefully make the DRAGONLANCE saga a fond memory. It's going to be fabulous!"

TSR Profiles

Profiles

of him, and beats his head upon the table. "I **am** Tracy Hickman!" he moans.

Yes, Tracy Raye Hickman is a he. Not only that, but he is married to his childhood sweetheart, Laura (the pretty Hickman sister, who was also the inspiration for Laurana), and he has two children. I can hear hearts breaking all over the world.

Tracy was born on November 26, 1955, in Salt Lake City, Utah. He grew up in Salt Lake and eventually attended Brigham Young University. Did he always want to become a role-playing game designer?

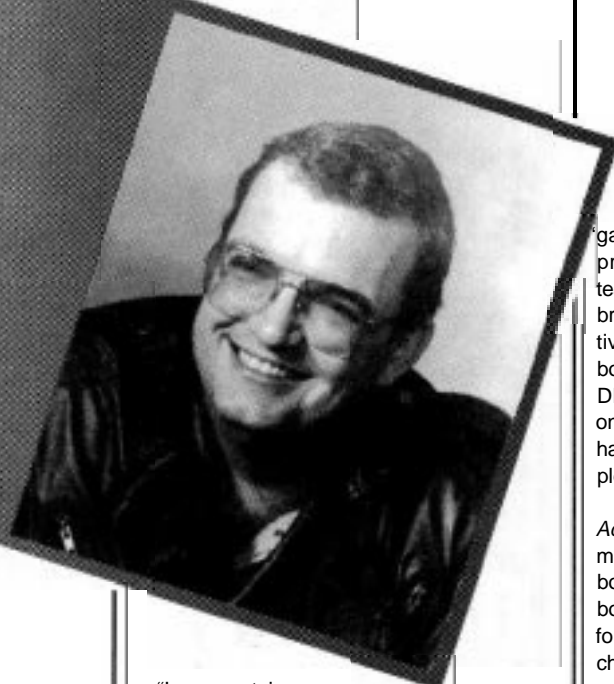
Not exactly. Tracy has held various jobs, sometimes several at one time. His first brush with DUNGEON & DRAGONS® games came when his wife, Laura, failed to pick him up after work one day. Understandably upset, Tracy rode his bike across town, where he found his wife at the house of a friend, so totally engrossed in a game that she had forgotten about him.

Tracy somewhat grumpily asked her what the board looked like.

"It doesn't have a board," Laura told him.

"All right," Tracy said patiently. "Explain the rules."

"They're ... well ... kind of flexible," Laura admitted.



TRACY HICKMAN

Interviewed by Margaret Weis.

The setting is an autograph party at a Waldenbooks in Milwaukee. Tracy and I are sitting at a table, pens in our hands. A young man comes up and asks me to sign his copy of the DRAGONLANCE Chronicles. As I do so, he looks around sadly.

"Where's Miss Hickman?" he asks in wistful tones. "Couldn't she be here today?"

Tracy groans, flings his arms out in front

"I was not impressed," Tracy recalls grimly.

Laura was impressed, however. She bought Tracy the blue Basic Set for his birthday and gave it to him a month early.

"For three weeks after that, I didn't see him," Laura says with a sigh. Completely fascinated, Tracy immersed himself in the rules; within a month, he and Laura wrote and designed their first role-playing adventure — Rahasia.

Eventually, the two decided to privately publish the adventures they had designed — Rahasia and Pharaoh. Tracy and Laura gained a reputation on a local level. Then

disaster struck. Tracy went into business with an associate who went bad, leaving Tracy and Laura with \$30,000 in bad checks to cover. Driven into bankruptcy, Tracy sent their modules to TSR, Inc., "literally so that I could buy shoes for my children," Tracy adds, shaking his head.

But disaster was actually the door opening to Tracy's career. TSR not only wanted the modules but wanted Tracy as well. "They said it would be easier to publish my adventures if I was part of the company. So, we made the move from Utah to Wisconsin. It was a terrifying experience. We had no money. My parents begged us not to venture into such foreign territory to pursue such a bizarre career. My father wrote that there was a secure job as a fry cook in Flag staff (where my parents were living), and he pleaded with me to come take it."

Shortly after Tracy came to TSR, Inc., in 1982, management announced the intention to develop a series of role-playing adventures based on dragons. Tracy just happened to have this proposal. . . .

Code-named Project Overlord, the DRAGONLANCE Chronicles was the first project TSR, Inc., had undertaken that would include adult novels as well as

games, calendars, and other spin-off products. The original DRAGONLANCE team was formed under Tracy's leadership, bringing together some of the most creative minds in the company. Two million books and a half million modules later, the DRAGONLANCE project has proven to be one of the most successful the company has undertaken — a credit to the many people who put so much time and effort into it.

Tracy's current project is *DRAGONLANCE Adventures*, a role-playing game supplement produced as a deluxe hardbound book. Set for release in August, the hardbound will include history and background for both Pre- and Post-Cataclysm Krynn, character class descriptions and statistics, and rules and histories covering the other races, such as elves, dwarves, and kender. The Orders of High Sorcery are detailed, as well as how magic works in Krynn. The Gods of Krynn and rules for clerics are given here. New spells for both clerics and magic-users are included, as well as ancient artifacts and character descriptions of both player and nonplayer characters from both contemporary and historical times.

What else are Tracy and I working on? Well, there's the new, top-secret Project X. "All I can say about that," comments Tracy, "is that we've been earthbound too long. We're setting out for the stars!"

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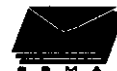
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CONVENTION CALENDAR

Convention Calendar Policies

This column is offered as a service to our readers around the world. Anyone may place a free listing for a game convention here, but the following guidelines **must** be observed.

In order to ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be either typed double-spaced or printed legibly on 8½" X 11" paper. The contents of each listing should be short, succinct, and under 150 words in length.

The information given in the listing **must** include the following information, in the following order:

1. Convention title and dates held;
2. Site and location;
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6. Address(s) and telephone number(s) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, brochures, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements run the risk of not being considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. No call-in listings are accepted. Domestic and foreign conventions are welcome.

WARNING: We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Our wide circulation ensures that up to a quarter of a million readers see each issue. Accurate information is your responsibility!

Convention listings should be mailed by the copy deadline date to Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147. Copy deadline dates are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. For example, the copy deadline for the August 1987 issue is the last Monday of June 1987. Plan ahead; early listings pay off!

If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been cancelled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, **please contact us immediately!** For any questions or changes related to this column, please call either Robin Jenkins or Roger E. Moore at (414) 248-3625.

* indicates a Canadian convention.

MUNCHCON VI, April 10-11

The Marshall University Science Fiction Society is planning its sixth science-fiction convention, MUNCHCON VI, which will be held in Corbly Hall on the Marshall University campus in Huntington, W.Va. This year's events include role-playing and boardgaming, an art show,

movies, seminars, and a hucksters' room. For more information, contact: Mary Sheffer, MUNCHCON VI Public Relations, c/o Marshall University Science Fiction Society, Memorial Student Center, Marshall University, Huntington WV 25701.

GAME FAIRE '87, April 10-12

This gaming convention will be held at the Spokane Falls Community College in Spokane Falls, Wash. Sponsored events include AD&D® game tournaments, chess matches, CAR WARS® games, microarmor, boardgames, and role-playing competitions, as well as miniatures painting, diorama, and costume contests. Other events include live SCA fighting demonstrations, panel discussions, dealers' tables, and a huge game auction. Registration for GAME FAIRE '87 is \$10 for a pre-paid weekend pass, \$12 for a weekend pass at the door, \$5 for Friday or Sunday only, and \$6 for Saturday only. All profits go to the Wishing Star Foundation. For more details, contact: Paul Wilson, Merlyn's, West 621 Mallon, Spokane WA 99201, or call (509) 325-9114.

CAPCON X, April 17-19

The Ohio State University Miniatures and Gaming Association (OSUMGA) is proud to announce the 10th annual CAPCON, which will be held in both ballrooms of the Ohio Union, 1739 N. High Street, Columbus, Ohio. CAPCON X needs referees, game masters, and judges for a number of events; contact us as soon as possible. Admission for CAPCON X is \$3 for each day. The convention is open from 5 P.M. to 11:30 P.M. Friday, from 9 A.M. to 11:30 P.M. Saturday, and from 12:30 A.M. to 10:30 P.M. on Sunday. Events sponsored include a variety of board-, role-playing, and miniatures games, a number of tournament events, and a miniatures-painting contest. For more information, write to: OSUMGA/CAPCON, Box 21, The Ohio Union, 1739 N. High Street, Columbus OH 43210, or call Mark Loughman at (614) 263-9057.

GAME-A-THON 4, April 24-26

This 24-hour gaming event will be held at the Town Center Hall in Santa Fe Springs, Calif. All types of role-playing, board-, computer, and miniatures games are offered, as well as a dealer's area and movie room. Preregistration is \$4 until April 10. For details and dealer's information, contact: GAME-A-THON 4, Santa Fe Springs Gamers' Association, P.O. Box 2434, Santa Fe Springs CA 90670.

LITTLE WARS, April 24-26

This gaming convention will be held at the Triton College Student Building in River Grove, Ill. Focusing on miniatures events only, this gaming convention offers hundreds of historical, fantasy, and science-fiction miniatures competitions. Registration fees are \$6. For more information, send a SASE to: Todd Fisher, 6010 N. Marmora Avenue, Chicago IL 60646.

LAF-CON II, April 25

Sponsored by the Lafayette Area Gamers, this convention will be held at the Family Inn in West Lafayette, Ind. Events include an RPGA™ Network AD&D® game tournament (open to nonmembers as well), a variety of fantasy role-playing games, wargames, miniatures events, and special guest Penny Petticord. For further details, write to: LAF-CON II, c/o L.A.G., Box 51, Lafayette IN 47902, or call Stan Mitchell at (317) 523-2551.

SCRYCON '87, April 25

This is the fifth year able adventurers have sallied forth to find the remaining pieces of the fabled Crystal Monolith in this annual AD&D® game tournament. Presented by the Seekers of the Crystal Monolith Gaming Club, this convention will offer a variety of events ranging from TALISMAN to TOON® games. Also featured will be a miniatures-painting contest, an art show, and the Clubs popular used games sales table. This one-day event will be held in scenic Red Hook, N.Y. (60 miles south of Albany). For more information, send a SASE to: J. Kesselman, SCRYCON '87, 7E Baldwin Lane, Lake Katrine NY 12449.

WERECON IX, April 26-26

This role-playing game convention, sponsored by the Detroit Gaming Center and the City of Detroit Recreation Department, will be held at the Lighthouse Center in Detroit, Mich. Erick Wujcik (TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES® and Revised RECON® games) is the featured game master. A variety of role-playing games, tournaments, and naval miniatures events will be featured. There is no charge for admission to this event (although tournament fees range from \$1 to \$2). For further details, contact: Erick Wujcik, P.O. Box 1623, Detroit MI 48231, or call (313) 833-3016.

AMIGOCON II, May 1-3

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Sunland Park in El Paso, Tex. Stephen R. Donaldson will be the guest of honor, with Real Musgrave as artist guest of honor. Events include all forms of gaming, an art show, a masquerade, and a dealer's room. Registration is \$12 for the weekend if paid prior to April 15, or \$15 thereafter; single-day registration is \$7.50. For more information, contact: AMIGOCON II, c/o EPSFFA, P.O. Box 3177, El Paso TX 79923.

THE WIZARD'S CHALLENGE '87

May 8-10

This fifth annual gaming convention takes place at the Holiday Inn in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Scheduled activities include an AD&D® game tournament, Star Fleet Battles tournament, game demonstrations, and miniatures displays. The registration fee is \$5 for the weekend. For details, contact: The Wizards Corner, 801C Broadway Avenue, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, CANADA, S7N 1B5.

KEYCON '87, May 15-17

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Delta Winnipeg at 288 Portage Avenue in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Guests of honor will be Keith Laumer, Ken Macklin, and Mike Glicksohn. Events include filksinging, videos, an ice-cream social, an art show, an auction, a dealer's room, gaming, parties, and much more. Membership rates are \$18 until April 26 and \$24 at the door. For more information, write to: KEYCON '87, P.O. Box 3178, Winnipeg, Manitoba, CANADA, R3C 4E6.

MISCON II, May 15-17

This science-fiction, fantasy, and gaming convention will be held at the Quality Inn in Missoula, Mont. Guests of honor are Steve Jackson, Bob Eggleton, Mike and Beth Finkbiner, and Marion Zimmer Bradley. Events include an RPGA™ Network tournament, other role-playing games and boardgames, videos, a masquerade, a dance, an art show, panels, and a writers' workshop. Registration is \$15 until April 15 and \$18 thereafter. For further details, contact: MISCON II, c/o WMSFC, PO. Box 9363, Missoula MT 59807.

TECHNICON 4, May 15-17

Sponsored by the Virginia Tech Science Fiction and Fantasy Club, this special gaming convention will be held at the Blacksburg Econo-Travel in Blacksburg, Va. Guests of honor include Margaret Weis, Terry Adams, and Lisa Cantrell. The convention features other guest speakers, an extensive gaming tournament, video rooms, an art show, computer games, a masquerade, and a dealer's room. Membership is \$10 before May 1 (\$6 for students) and \$13 thereafter (\$9 for students). For more information, contact: TECHNICON 4, PO. Box 256, Blacksburg VA 24060.

BAYCON '87, May 22-25

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Red Lion Inn in San Jose, Calif., over Memorial Day weekend. Guests of honor include Barry Longyear, Mike Glyer, Marta Randall, and one to be announced. Advance four-day memberships are \$25 until April 30. Thereafter memberships are \$35 for the weekend. Single-day memberships are available at the door for \$15 per day. For more information, send a SASE to: BAYCON '87, PO. Box 70393, Sunnyvale CA 94086, or call (408) 446-5141.

GAMEX '87, May 22-25

Brought to you by STRATEGICON, the people who also brought you ORIGINS '86, this gaming convention will be held at the Pasadena Hilton Hotel. Role-playing, wargame, computer game, and family boardgame tournaments will be offered, as well as an RPGA™ Network AD&D® tournament and various seminars and demonstrations, a flea market, a game auction, and an exhibitor's area. Pre-registration is \$16 until May 9; thereafter, registration is \$20. For more information, contact: GAMEX '87, c/o DTI, PO. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808, or call (213) 420-3675.

NOT *A* CON, May 22-25

This is the first eat-in, sleep-in, gamers' holiday. Role-playing gaming, miniatures competitions, and a host of other events are scheduled to be run by the best game referees in the Indiana tri-state area. For more details, write to: NOT *A* CON, 3328 Broadway Boulevard, Fort Wayne IN 46807.

RAGGCON, May 24-25

Sponsored by the Rockford Area Gamers' Guild, this gaming convention will be held on the Rockford College campus. Events include a game auction, a Masters and a regular RPGA™ Network AD&D® tournament, and a number of other tournaments. Prizes will be offered in a number of these tournaments. Registration costs are \$5 for the day and \$8 for the entire weekend; a \$35 fee will cover all accommodations, meals, and registration costs. For more information, send a SASE to: RAGG, 2736 City View Court, #301, Rockford IL 61103, or call (815) 282-1278.

DALLAS FANTASY FAIR, June 5-7

Sponsored by Bulldog Productions, this comic-book, science-fiction, and film supershow takes place at the Dallas Hyatt Regency, 300 Reunion at I-35. This event includes appearances by dozens of comic-book artists, writers, editors, and publishers, as well as a number of film personalities. Other features include a huge dealer's room, a professional art show, an art contest, an art auction, video rooms, a masquerade, numerous workshops, previews of upcoming motion pictures, and a variety of gaming events and open gaming competition. Tickets for this three-day event are \$20 through May 15 and \$25 thereafter. For more information, contact: Bulldog Productions, PO. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382, or call (214) 349-3367.

NEO-VENTION VI, June 5-7

This gaming convention will be held at the Student Union of Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. Sponsored events include RPGA™ Network events, miniatures displays and gaming, an art show, and numerous other attractions, including special guests Penny Petticoat and Frank Mentzer. For more information, send a SASE to: NEO-GS, PO. Box 412, Cuyahoga Falls OH 44322-0412, or call (216) 666-1866.

DALLASCON, June 12-14

This gaming convention will be held at the Regent Hotel in Dallas, Texas. Over 100 events are scheduled, including an RPGA™ Network AD&D® tournament, along with a variety of role-playing games, board games, and miniatures games. For more information, including a preregistration form, send a SASE to: DALLASCON, PO. Box 867623, Plano TX 75086.

GLATHRICON '87, June 19-21

This gaming extravaganza will be held at the Executive Inn in Evansville, Ind. Guest of honor is E. Gary Gygas, with Frank Mentzer and Penny Petticoat as additional guests of honor, Ray VanTilburg is the artist guest of honor, and Jay Tummelson is the game master guest of honor. RPGA™ Network tournaments include the AD&D® Grand Masters (a national first), the AD&D® Masters, the Joe Martin AD&D® Tournament to Benefit the American Cancer Society (another national first), a variety of AD&D®, MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Masters and regular, TOP SECRET®, and GAMMA WORLD® game events. Other features will include a miniatures-painting competition, a banquet, and masquerade. Membership is \$12 until April 30 and \$15 thereafter. Memberships may be limited, so early registration is advised. For more information, contact: The Evansville Gaming Guild, PO. Box 15414, Evansville IN 47716, or call (812)474-0461.

HAYSCON III, June 26-27

The Pegasus Extension invites all fantasy and science-fiction gamers to participate in their third annual convention to be held at the Memorial Union of the Fort Hays State University campus in Hays, Kans. Featured activities include all types of role-playing games, a miniatures competition, a game auction, and dealers' booths. Preregistration fees are \$10. For inquiries on registration or on game mastering for HAYSCON III, send a SASE to: HAYSCON III, The Pegasus Extension, 1718 Felten Drive, Hays KS 67601.

BATCON VI, June 26-28

Sponsored by the Southeastern Indiana Gamers' Association and Role-Players' Workshop, this gaming convention will be held at the Sherman House Inn in Batesville, Ind. Events

include an RPGA™ Network AD&D® game tournament, an AD&D® game open tournament, a TOP SECRET® game tournament, and many other gaming contests. Also, there will be a miniatures-painting contest and a schedule of films. Shawn McKee, designer of Hack-n-Slash, will be this year's guest of honor. For more details and registration information, write to: SEIGA, PO. Box 266, Batesville IN 47006-0266; Robert Washburn, 1025 Locust Avenue, Batesville IN 47006; or, call Robert Westerman at (812)852-4542.

ORIGINS '87, July 2-5

This national gaming convention and trade show will be held at the Baltimore Convention Center and Hyatt Regency Inner Harbor in Baltimore, Md. The convention is sponsored by GAMA, the Game Manufacturer's Association. For more information on registration rates and scheduled events, contact: Atlanticon, Dept. C.A., PO. Box 15405, Baltimore MD 21220, or call (301) 298-3135.

AUSTIN FANTASY FAIR, July 3-5

Sponsored by Bulldog Productions, this comic book, science-fiction, and film supershow takes place at the Austin Marriott, 6121 I-35 at U.S. 290. This event includes appearances by dozens of comic-book artists, writers, editors, and publishers, as well as a number of film personalities. Other features include a huge dealer's room, a professional art show, an art contest, an art auction, video rooms, a masquerade, numerous workshops, previews of upcoming motion pictures, and a variety of gaming events and open gaming competition. Tickets for this three-day event are \$20 through June 15 and \$25 thereafter. For more information, contact: Bulldog Productions, PO. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382, or call (214)349-3367.

DOVERCON III, July 18-19

This year, DOVERCON will be staged at the University of New Hampshire's Memorial Union Building (MUB) in Durham, N.H. Featured games will include the AD&D®, CALL OF CTHULHU®, CAR WARS®, DIPLOMACY®, GURPS, D&D®, MERP PARANOIA™, Star Fleet Battles, STAR TREK®, and TOP SECRET® games, and a host of others. Registration for events will be on a first-come basis. A flea market, film festival, miniatures painting competition, art contest, and open-gaming area will also be provided. Preregistration rates (must be received by July 1) are \$7 for both days; at-the-door rates are \$8 for both days and \$5 for one day. There will be a \$1 entry fee for each event. Vendor and game master inquiries are welcome. For further information, write to: Information, DOVERCON III, PO. Box 622, Dover NH 03820.

KINGCON III, July 25

This one-day convention will be held in the Lewis Building at the City Park in Mount Vernon, Ill. This gaming event will run from 8 A.M. to 8 P.M., and features a two-round AD&D® tournament, a miniatures painting contest, continuous movies, a dealer's room, and a variety of role-playing and board games. Preregistration is \$5 until July 1; thereafter, registration is \$6.50 for the day. For more information, send a SASE to: KINGCON III, Rt. 1, Box 202, Kell IL 62853.

WINDSOR GAMEFEST V, July 25-26 *

This gaming convention takes place at the Ambassador Auditorium in the University Centre at the University of Windsor. Featured events include role-playing, miniatures, and

boardgaming, free movies, and a dealer's area. Registration for this event is \$10 for preregistered admission, \$12 for regular registration, and \$7 for a daily pass. For further information, contact: W.R.P.A., PO. Box 2055, Walkerville Station, Windsor, Ontario, CANADA, N8Y 4R5. Telephone inquiries can be made by contacting Kristine Sheffield at (519) 734-1150 or John Schippers, Jr. at (519) 735-5233.

HOUSTON FANTASY FAIR, August 7-9

Sponsored by Bulldog Productions, this comic-book, science-fiction, and film supershow takes place at the Houston Marriott Astrodome. This event includes appearances by dozens of comic-book artists, writers, editors, and publishers, as well as a number of film personalities. Other features include a huge dealer's room, a professional art show, an art contest, an art auction, video rooms, a masquerade, numerous workshops, previews of upcoming motion pictures, and a variety of gaming events and open gaming competition. Tickets for this three-day event are \$20 through July 15 and \$25 thereafter. For more information, contact: Bulldog Productions, PO. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382, or call (214) 349-3367.

GEN CON® 20 GAME FAIR/TRADE SHOW August 20-23

This year's original gaming convention will be held once at the MECCA Arena in Milwaukee, Wis. Additional information will appear in future issues of DRAGON® Magazine. For pre-registration materials or for judging forms, write to: GEN CON® Game Fair, PO. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147. Please indicate on the envelope which information you are requesting (i.e., "Pre-reg info" or "Judging info"). For information on assisting the RPGA™ Network Tournament Headquarters, write: RPGA Network HQ, PO. Box 509, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

GATEWAY 7, September 4-7

The seventh running of this Labor Day convention will be held at the LAX Hyatt Hotel. Featured events include role-playing games, wargames, family games, and computer games tournaments. Other events include seminars, demonstrations, auctions, flea markets, and an exhibitor's area. Preregistration is \$16 until August 21, and \$20 at the door. For more information, contact: GATEWAY '87, c/o DTI, PO. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808, or call (213)420-3675.

NANCON-88 IX, September 4-7

This annual, four-day gaming convention will be held at the Ramada Northwest Crossing in Houston, Texas. Tournament events will include AD&D®, Squad Leader, Star Fleet Battles, PARANOIA™, and Nuclear War games, and a variety of others. A large dealer's room and open-gaming room will also be provided. For more details, send a SASE to: NAN'S GAME HQ, 2011 Southwest Freeway, Houston TX 77098 (Attn: NANCON).

GOLD CON '87, September 5-6

This gaming convention will be held at the OMNI Auditorium in Coconut Creek, Fla. For more details on scheduled events and registration rates, write to: GOLD CON '87, OMNI Auditorium, B.C.C. North, 1000 Coconut Creek Parkway, Coconut Creek FL 33066, or call (305) 973-2249.

MIRACLECON '87, September 12

This one-day gaming convention will be held from 9 A.M. to midnight at the Ramada Inn (I-70 and State Road 72) in Springfield, Ohio. Spon-

sored events will include an AD&D® tournament, a dealer's room, a miniatures painting contest, a game auction, and a variety of other gaming programs. Registration is \$5 for the day, with no additional fees for separate events. For more details, contact: MIRACLECON '87, c/o Timothy A. Riley, 308 West Church Street, Urbana OH 43078, or call (513) 653-7848.

SAN ANTONIO FANTASY FAIR

September 18-20

Sponsored by Bulldog Productions, this comic-book, science-fiction, and film supershow takes place at a location which has yet to be announced. This event includes appearances by dozens of comic-book artists, writers, editors, and publishers, as well as a number of film personalities. Other features include a huge dealer's room, a professional art show, an art contest, an art auction, video rooms, a masquerade, numerous workshops, previews of upcoming motion pictures, and a variety of gaming events and open gaming competition. Tickets for this three-day event are \$15 through September 1 and \$20 thereafter. For more information, contact: Bulldog Productions, PO. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382, or call (214) 349-3367.

CONTRADICTION SEVEN, October 2-4

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Ramada Inn, 401 Buffalo Avenue, Niagara Falls, N.Y. Anne McCaffrey is the pro guest of honor, with Mike Glicksohn as fan guest. Other guests include Joan Vinge, Nancy Kress, Jim Frenkel, and T.S. Huff. Events offered include a costume contest (\$25 for best costume), an art auction, videos, parties, a people and thing auction, panels, wargaming, filksinging, and other fannish activities. Registration is \$13 until July 11, \$16 until Sept. 12, and \$20 thereafter. For more details, contact: CONTRADICTION, PO. Box 2043, Newmarket Station, Niagara Falls NY 14301. Please send a SASE if you require confirmation.

DRAGON CON '87, October 2-4

The Southeast Fantasy and Gaming Convention will be held at the Pierremont Plaza Hotel and Conference Center in Atlanta, Ga. Fantasy role-playing, strategic, and computer gaming will be featured in over 75 tournaments. Panels, video rooms, a dealer's room, a masquerade party, a game auction, and much more will be offered. Featured guests will include E. Gary Gygax, Michael Moorcock, Richard "Lord British" Garriott, Robert Asprin, Lynn Abbey, Brian Herbert, and Steve Jackson. Pre-registration is \$20 for Fans and \$25 for Gamers through April 15, and \$25 for Fans and \$30 for Gamers through August 15. (Gamer registrations include four tournament entries.) For more information, send a SASE to: DRAGON CON '87, Box 148, Clarkston GA 30021. Registrants can use their Visa or Master Card to charge advance memberships by calling (800) 554-1162 (toll-free), or (404) 441-3045 in Georgia.

ICON XII, October 16-18

This science-fiction convention will be held at the Roweday Inn, Hwy 965 and I-80, in Coralville, Iowa (call (1809)228-2900 for reservations). Scheduled events include science-fiction readings and panels, an art show, a large dealer's room, and open gaming. Memberships are \$12 until September 15 and \$17 thereafter; special one-day registration is available at the door for \$10. For further details, contact: ICON XII, Dept. M, PO. Box 525, Iowa City IA 52244-0525.

NECRONOMICON '87, October 16-18

The Stone Hill Science Fiction Association will hold its sixth annual science-fiction convention at the Holiday Inn-Sabal Park in Tampa, Fla. This year's guests of honor are Orson Scott Card, Frederik Pohl, and Elizabeth Anne Hull. In addition to panel discussions with these authors, there will be a vampire pageant, a costume contest, trivia games, a general auction, and a host of other events. Registration rates are \$10 until September 15. For more information, contact: NECRONOMICON, c/o Stone Hill SF Association, PO. Box 2076, Riverview FL 33569, or call (813) 677-6347.

RUDICON 3, October 16-18

This wargaming and role-playing convention takes place at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, N.Y. Events will include tournaments, a dealer's room, movies, and much more. For pre-registration or dealer's information, contact: Steve Ritzau, RUDICON/Rochester Wargamer's Association and Guild (RWAG), c/o Student Directorate, One Lomb Memorial Drive, Rochester NY 14623.

FANFARE '87, October 30-November 1

Brought to you by STRATEGICON, the people who also brought you ORIGINS '86, this science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel. Role-playing, wargame, computer game, and family boardgame tournaments will be offered, as well as various seminars and demonstrations, a flea market, a game auction, and an exhibitors' area. For more information, contact: FANFARE '87, c/o DTI, PO. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808, or call (213)420-3675.


DALLAS FANTASY FAIR, November 13-15

Sponsored by Bulldog Productions, this comic-book, science-fiction, and film supershow takes place at a location which has yet to be announced. This event includes appearances by dozens of comic-book artists, writers, editors, and publishers, as well as a number of film personalities. Other features include a huge dealer's room, a professional art show, an art contest, an art auction, video rooms, a masquerade, numerous workshops, previews of upcoming motion pictures, and a variety of gaming events and open gaming competition. Tickets for this three-day event are \$20 through November 1 and \$25 thereafter. For more information, contact: Bulldog Productions, PO. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382, or call (214) 349-3367.

ORCCON 11, February 12-15, 1988

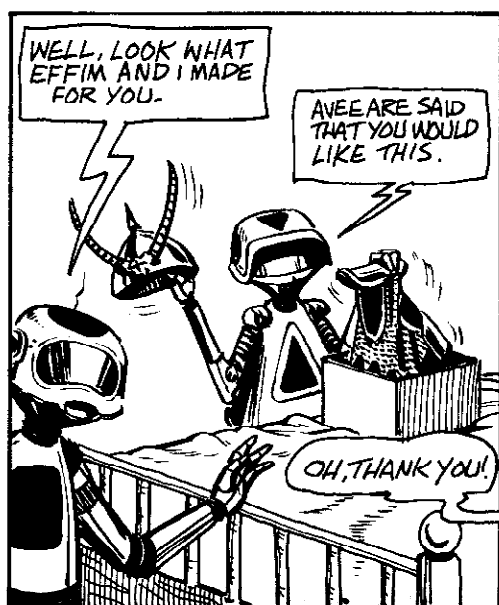
Brought to you by STRATEGICON, the people who brought you ORIGINS '86, this gaming convention will be held at the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel. Role-playing, wargame, computer game, and family boardgame tournaments will be offered, as well as various seminars and demonstrations, a flea market, a game auction, and an exhibitors' area. For more information, contact: ORCCON 11, c/o DTI, PO. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808, or call (213)420-3675.

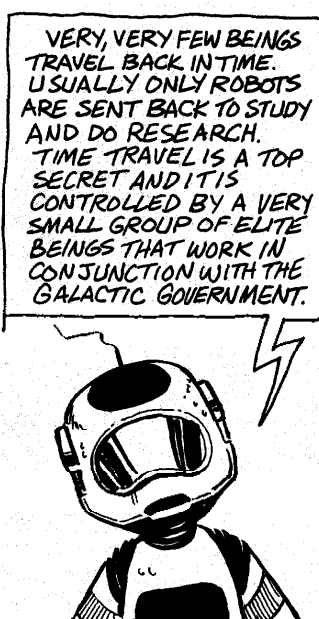
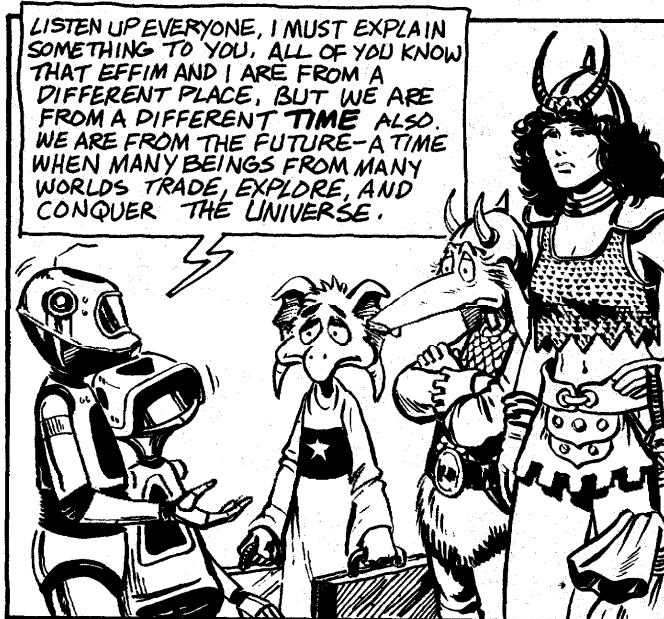
GATEWAY 8, September 2-5, 1988

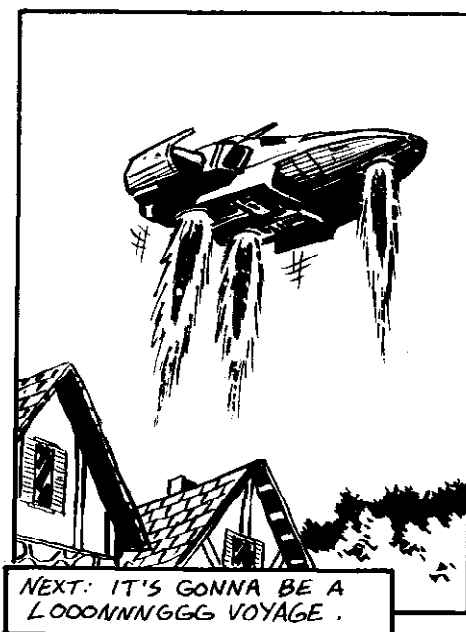
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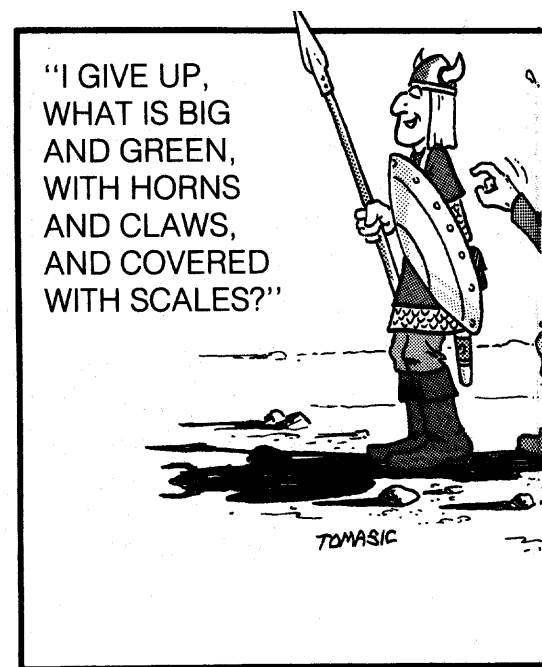
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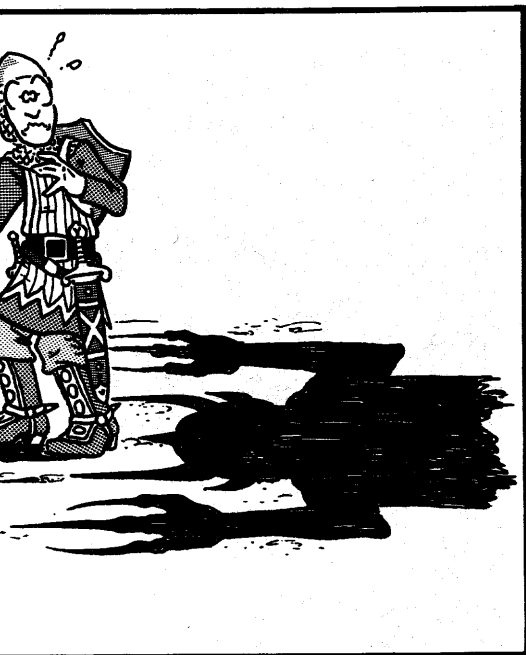






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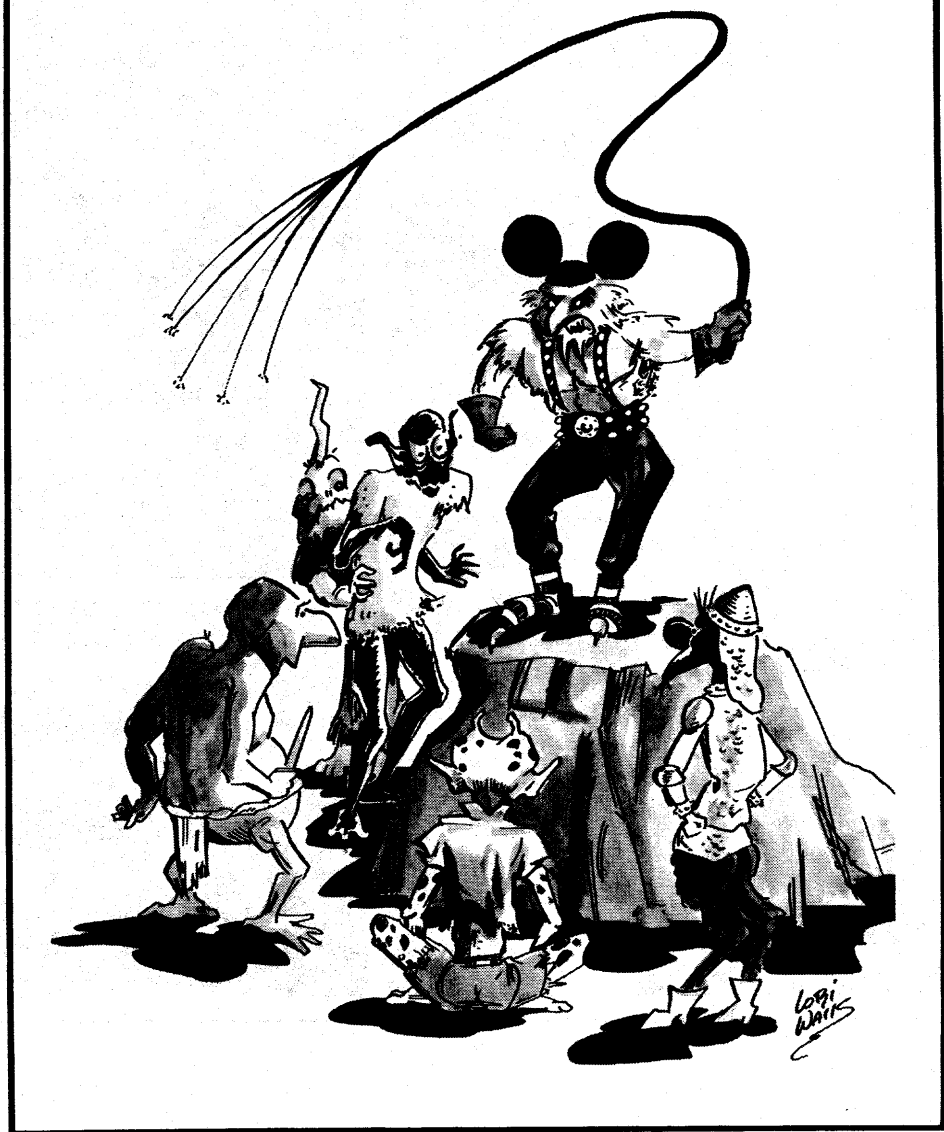




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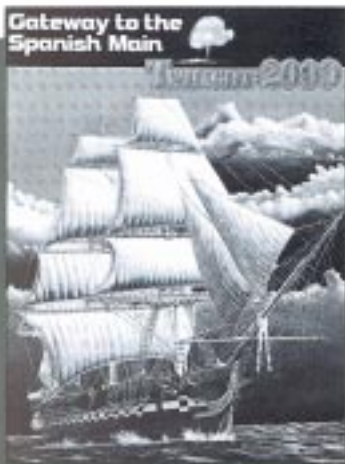
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By Air or By Sea



Airlords of the Ozarks

Ozark Mountains of Arkansas, 2001: On a mission through some of the most rugged terrain in the central states, the player characters must infiltrate and gather information on New America, a bizarre right-wing organization determined to build an empire from the ashes of the United States. As a means toward that end some of their elements have taken to the air in ultralight aircraft and dirigibles they have found or made themselves—the airlords now have control of the skies over the Ozarks from which they enforce their will. The player characters will also discover Operation Eaglestrike, a plot involving salvaged cruise missiles. \$7.00.



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