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DECEMBER 1987, #128

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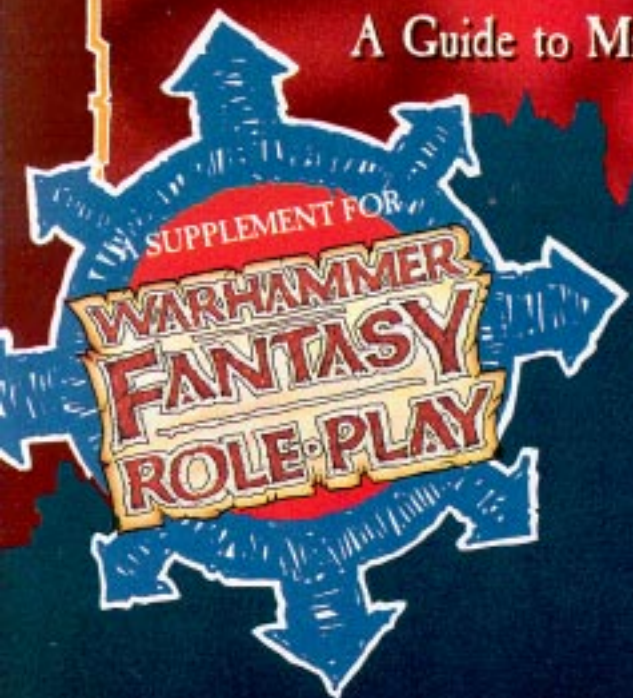


# Warhammer City

A Guide to Middenheim - the City of the White Wolf

Hearken to the words of the Seer:-

*"I see darkness gathering around a walled town - Shadows Over Bögenhafen! I see the Lord of Death astride a mighty river - Death, on the Reik! I see a hooded evil behind the seat of a once mighty Lord - a Power Behind the Throne!"*



The latest release from the bowels of Games Workshop's Design Studio represents the combined efforts of no less than five mind-boggling talents: Phil Gallagher, Carl Sargent, Graeme Davis, Jim Bambra, and Sean Masterson. Backdrop to the next instalment of *The Enemy Within* Campaign, it is an invaluable supplement for all WFRP GMs who've ever wished for a detailed city guide. This 96-page hardback book comes complete with a large, full colour City Map, and is packed with information, History, campaign ideas, 'cameo' adventures, NPCs, dozens of superbly detailed locations - there's enough here to keep the most active of adventurers busy for months.

Ancient and imposing, the walled city of Middenheim perches atop a sheer-sided pinnacle of rock rising five hundred feet above the twisted trees of the Drak Wald Forest. Middenheim has stood over two thousand years. Though it is but a short distance (as the Skaven burrows) to the Chaos Wastes of the north, and the surrounding forest harbours bands of Beastmen and Mutants, the solidity and majesty of the City seem to hold out the hope that it will endure for centuries to come.

That Middenheim exists at all is due in no small part to the labours of the Dwarfs. Over a thousand Dwarfs spent the better part of a century working their way

to the plateau by cutting through the very core of the pinnacle known as the Fauschlag, mining it for useful minerals (and not a little gold) as they went. Fortifying the plateau was the first priority; the City followed after. During the ensuing process of expansion, the defences were modified and protected, and perhaps the greatest fortress outside the Dwarven realms of the Worlds Edge Mountains came into being.

But the beauty of Middenheim is only skin deep. The Dwarven excavations under the City were supposedly sealed over eight hundred years ago, leaving the spectacular viaducts and vertiginous chair lifts as the City's only entrances. Or so most people think. But the Dwarfs have secretly kept some of the old tunnels open, and from the surrounding wilderness other, darker creatures have found ways into the network. Like a cancer, the servants of Chaos have worked their way up towards the City, riddling the rock with their perverted kind. For years they have bided their time while their evil plots slowly ripened. Now there is something in the air - a wind of change carries the smell of rotting flesh through the rock's tunnel network. While above ground, in the heart of the City's society, the followers of the Chaos Gods have also made their plans. The Time of Changes is coming, and They are waiting...



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## COVER

You can almost imagine the conversation taking place as the two would-be adventurers in Daniel Horne's cover painting come upon a particularly huge, ugly, vicious, and highly annoyed monster in their local forest. "How many pluses did you say this sword has? Is that *all*?"



# LETTERS

## D-Chess I

Dear Dragon:

I just received [DRAGON®] issue #122 and read the letter from Emil Leong about the DRAGONCHESS™ game — and your comment about a computerized DRAGONCHESS game being a horror to develop. You were only partially correct. Ever since issue #100, when you introduced that game, I have tried to develop a computerized version of it on my Apple IIc computer because I liked the idea of the game but didn't like the work involved in setting it up.

So far, I have a semi-finished version that is playable only by two people who know how to play the game. The basic design of the game was easy to create because it was given in the article, but putting the mechanics in the computer was hard.

You are correct about it being a horror to develop; it has taken me almost two years to get this far, but things are going along nicely. If anyone who knows about Apple computer programming and how to play DRAGONCHESS games has any advice, it would be greatly appreciated.

Paul Van Horn  
Rochester NY

*We can pass on comments and questions on the DRAGONCHESS game through this column or through the "Forum," or if writers enclose postage and a letter, we can send them on to other writers. Interest in Gary Gygax's imaginative game continues to be shown, as witness the following letter:*

## D-Chess II

Dear Dragon:

I've just read DRAGON issue #122 and Emil Leong's letter concerning the assembly of his own DRAGONCHESS set. Since my letter in the Forum section in issue #119 (page 6) concerning some of the pieces used to assemble my own set, I have completed constructing my own set of figures. I carefully selected each piece and think they represent the best miniatures available. Some (such as the king, basilisks, sylphs, and griffons) were the only examples of these figures I was able to find.

For Emil Leong and anyone else who wants to put together his own DRAGONCHESS game, here are the figures that I used, showing the game piece name, number of figures needed, the figure pack providing the figure, and the number of packs you'll need to purchase:

Dragons (2): Grenadier Models #2505: "Green Dragon" (2 packs)  
Oliphants (4): Ral Partha Personality Miniatures, #01-099: "Armored Giant on War Elephant" (4 packs)  
Thieves (4): Grenadier Models #193: "Thieves" (2 packs)

Clerics (2): Grenadier Models #142: "Clerics" (2 packs)  
Basilisks (4): Grenadier Models #1501: "Monster Manuscripts, Vol. 1" Figure MM4 (4 packs)  
Elementals (2): Grenadier Models #1503: "Monster Manuscripts, Vol. 3" (2 packs)  
Dwarves (12): Grenadier Models #1603: "Dwarves, Army of the Gold Mountain" (1 pack), and Grenadier Models #189: "Dwarf Champions" (1 pack)  
Unicorns (4): Grenadier Models #160: "Unicorn and Maid" (4 packs)  
Paladins (2): RAFM Miniatures #3804: "Odo, Warrior Cleric" (2 packs)  
Heroes (4): RAFM Miniatures #3810: "Charles the Great, Paladin" (4 packs)  
Warriors (24): Grenadier Models #1601: "Foot Knights, Army of the Dragon Lords" (3 packs)  
Mages (3): RAFM Miniatures #3801: "Nimrod, The Bold Wizard" (2 packs)  
Sylphs (12): Grenadier Models #120: "Winged Folk" (4 packs)  
Kings (2): Grenadier Models "Wizards and Warriors" Double Blister Dioramic Sets #WS4: "The Royal Court" (2 packs)  
Griffons (4): Grenadier Models #6004: "Monsters of Mythology" Figure M9 (4 packs)

The basilisk, elemental, and griffon figures each come with nine other figures not needed for the DRAGONCHESS game. You can write to Grenadier Models and ask to buy just the one figure that you need from each set. I bought my griffons this way for only \$1.50.

I hope that this helps anyone putting together a DRAGONCHESS game set of their own. Maybe it will save them the three months it took me to put together my own set.

Boyce Kline  
Ledyard CT

*Readers who wish to order these figures directly from the companies making them may use the following addresses:*

**Grenadier Models, Inc.**  
P.O. Box 305  
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*The Grenadier figure pack WS4: "The Royal Court," has been reissued as #2021: "The Throne Room." All other figures and figure packs are available as of this date (November 1987). Call the companies involved for their prices, or check for them at your nearest hobby and games shops.*

(continued on page 56)

## Fun, fun, fun

Working at a game company is a peculiar sort of job. You become so immersed in the world of games, gaming, gamers, game theory, game design, game editing, game news, and so on that you can develop a reaction to it. When I came to Lake Geneva four years ago, someone took me aside and said, "After you've worked at TSR a while, you'll get a real taste for golf."

Though I never sank to those depths, I did find that I had a new and rather ambivalent attitude about the word "fun." In order for games to sell, they must be fun. People who work at game companies must have a very intense appreciation for the value of fun, or else they might as well take jobs as accountants or lawyers.\*

Anyway, since joining TSR, Inc., I've also developed an intense appreciation for people who know how to have fun. Game companies have no monopoly on fun-loving people, but keeping your sense of fun alive is sometimes difficult when it is your *job* to have fun. This is a unique pressure that has interesting side effects ("Do we *have* to play today?").

But it's worth it. The closeness of the working relationships and the nature of the business at TSR, Inc., have given it the atmosphere of a large extended family composed of adult children.\*\* Co-workers and ex-co-workers are often close friends who show up at your house during holidays to trade stories about work over turkey dinner. And even the worst workday has at least one bizarre or amusing event to tempt you into coming back again for a little more abuse — most of the time. I have heard that other game companies have much in common here with TSR, Inc., and I can believe it. We're all family, in a bizarre way.

From all of us here at DRAGON® Magazine, a special wish is offered to our readers and to everyone in the gaming business — past, present, and future — for the best of holidays.

And have fun. You deserve it.



\* TSR note: Ha, ha, just kidding, folks. A little editorial humor there, really. I love ya.

\*\* I owe this observation to Margaret Weis, who made it at a party at her house just before we played one of her cats like a bagpipe.



# 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 (carefully printed or typed, please), plus your gaming preferences, to: World Gamers Guide, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147, United States of America.

The World Gamers Guide is intended for the benefit of gamers who would like to contact other game-players around the world, to share their interests in gaming through correspondence. Each eligible name and address that we receive is published in three consecutive issues of DRAGON Magazine. To be listed for more

than three issues, you must send us another postcard or letter. Overseas American military personnel may also be listed herein.

When listing gaming preferences, write out the complete title of the games you most enjoy. For the purposes of this column, the abbreviations listed below are used.

AD: AD&D® game  
BS: BATTLESYSTEM™ supplement  
BT: BATTLETECH® game  
CH: CHAMPIONS™ game  
CW: CAR WARS® game  
DC: DC™ HEROES game

DD: D&D® game  
GW: GAMMA WORLD® game  
MSH: MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game  
OA: AD&D *Oriental Adventures* system  
RQ: RUNEQUEST® game  
RT: ROBOTECH® game  
SF: STAR FRONTIERS® game  
T: TRAVELLER® game  
TMNT: TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES® game  
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T2000: TWILIGHT: 2000™ game  
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# FORUM

I really enjoyed the article on "The Mystic College" by J.A. Yates in issue #123, and plan to use his framework if my DM allows my character to begin such an enterprise. After reading the article, however, several questions arose in my mind.

First, what is the relationship between a mystic college and character advancement for magic-users (going from, say, 2nd to 3rd level)? The mystic college seems an obvious place for such advanced training to take place, yet in this admittedly short article only a passing reference is made.

Second, what specific sorts of potions and scroll inks are the subject of a zero-level initiate's training? The article suggests that there are several standard potions and scroll inks for which the formulae are commonly known. This comes as somewhat of a surprise for my 12th-level character, who after a long career had only been able to determine the recipes for three scroll inks and one potion - all at considerable time and expense. What happens to these potions and inks once they have been created?

Third, I'm curious as to why the article didn't exploit more clearly the notion of such schools as research facilities. On p. 20, the article states that "most [of the faculty] must spend eight months out of every year doing nothing except instructing students." This seems unduly restrictive to me. True, the article does go on to state that faculty members of 7th level and higher are only required to teach four months a year, but by Mr. Yates own admission, such faculty members will normally be but a small part of the faculty. In any event, their roles as mentors would presumably tie them down to the school for a considerable portion of the eight months they are free of formal teaching demands.

As I was reading the article, I kept seeing parallels between the informal yet rigorous programs Yates describes for the mystic college, and the type of research I am involved in as a graduate student at the University of Pittsburgh. Now, as anyone connected with a graduate school knows, a faculty member must either publish or perish; the teaching aspect is not the main focus of a faculty member's time. If the faculty members of the mystic college are really teaching beginning students "the fundamentals" with which they presumably have a great deal of familiarity, it seems to me a bit excessive to require faculty members to spend all their waking hours in lecture, in preparation for lecture, or in individual consultation with particular students. Surely one of the most obvious reasons why a lesser magic-user would give up a career as an adventurer would be the lure of the extensive research materials, libraries, and other facilities of the school. And, on the other side of the coin, I think the students would profit from aiding such an individual in his research (a point Mr. Yates explicitly points out on p. 20), as well as attempting some independent research on their own in the course of their studies. (This point is also suggested in *Unearthed Arcana* p. 79, which states that a

magic-user may have developed up to three cantrips of his own while an apprentice.)

Allowing the faculty members to engage in some research while employed as instructors would also make the whole idea of establishing a mystic college more attractive. The chancellor would presumably have a role in directing what kinds of research go on in his institution, and might well insist on not only a copy of the finished product, but also part of the profits (if any) that the faculty member receives upon selling a spell or formula he has created within the walls of the school! The school might also use the fact that it is engaged in research activities to solicit donations from individuals or groups which are interested in the development of a particular type of spell.

Again, guidelines are necessary to make sure this doesn't get out of hand. Faculty members engaged in both teaching and research might take twice or three times the amount of time suggested for the unhindered researcher (remembering that he has both the facilities of the school and students to aid him). Monetary constraints are one obvious restriction to the amount of research which can be done. Likewise, the size of the school's library would probably permit advanced research in only a few areas. One likely consequence of these considerations would be that most of the members of the faculty would be engaged in the same type of research, be it alterations or fire magic, a common theme in fantasy literature about such schools. Research projects involving more than one member of the faculty might drastically reduce the amount of time required.

Students engaged in independent research, either on their own or helping faculty members, might have less time to learn new cantrips, but they should certainly receive some sort of experience-point bonus for an activity which would most certainly teach them a great deal about their craft. In any event, it would probably be best to restrict such research to students at the apprentice level, as those at lower levels are probably not well enough acquainted with the basics to really be on top of what the research is all about.

Dave Rudge  
Pittsburgh PA

"The Mystic College" by James A. Yates is a tremendous amount of work in a needed area. Yet no PC will ever want to found a mystic college under these rules.

For a cost of 30,000 gp a year minimum, our 9th-level mage gets a variety of associates who will be too busy to help him raise that sum. On a given adventure, he will be able to add one low-level mage to his party, who, if he doesn't die quickly, will be more burden than help.

Our small college costs about 20,000 gp to build and has a faculty of 15 total levels, plus the 6th-level alchemist for 2,100 gp per month = 25,200 gp a year for starters. A two-thirds minimum of these must be teaching at all times, and the chancellor and the next highest magic-

user can hardly be both absent at the same time. Income is barely mentioned: a lifetime 5,000 gp from the faculty and perhaps 1,000 a year from the students. So we have here a massive drain on the magic-user's wallet with no clear way to recover the loss.

What we need is a mystic college where the PC can, with luck and skill, make money or gain other advantages his adventuring peer might not. That we can do by first demanding tuition on an annual basis, not merely when the student enters. Second, graduating magic-users should be expected to return to their college for level training (with about half the cost of training being net income to the college). For simplicity, we can assume each graduate gains one level or dies, 50% chance of either every year.

However, the major income/advantage should be related to the purposes of a college - study and learning. The PC associated with such should be able to learn spells or research them with major advantages over the non-college-going magic-user. Magic-users seeking to study should be paying the college money. Creation of magical items should also be cheaper and easier.

A possible list of other advantages:

For every graduate, there is a 50% chance a magic-user of 7-10th level appears and offers 2,000 gp a year to be an associate of the college, able to use the school library and alchemist for cost. (The maximum number of associates is one-third the maximum number of students, and there is a 10% chance each year that an associate leaves.) The associate will not adventure with the PC unless well paid or benefited, but is likely to defend the college if necessary.

There is also a 50% chance per graduate that a magic-user wants to use the college's facilities to research a spell (first to third levels at a small college, first to fourth at medium, first to fifth at large). Income to the college is one-half the cost of researching without a library (*Dungeon Masters Guide*, p. 115).

Potions may be created at 50% cost because of available assistants, with a 10% chance they ruin the potion for the PC in addition to the normal chances of failure. Scrolls, ink, and paper are routinely available, with preparation time cut in half. Again, a 10% chance of complete failure is added.

If a created magical item fails its save vs. spells on *enchant an item*, a magic-user associated with the caster may make his save vs. spells. If successful, he spotted an error in time, and the item gains a new save vs. spells.

Now we have a college the PC might want to run, and we can start to give him problems about getting or keeping it, such as hostile tax collectors, rival colleges, etc.

David Carl Argall  
La Puente CA

Although this is my first letter to "Forum," I have chosen a topic that seems to be written about quite a lot. The addition of rules by well-meaning player's, through articles in *DRAGON* Magazine, and TSR's new [AD&D game] books, has only led to the confusion of everybody. I tell you from experience as both DM and player that nothing is more boring than having to look up the rules on swimming to see if a character makes it to the far shore, or look up the (three?) different rules for breaking a weapon. How simple can it be? You either hit or miss; you sink or swim.

I have always enjoyed reading the letters in "Forum." It's fun to read the arguments about this, that, and the other. I guess it's my turn to  
(continued on page 32)





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# Welcome to Waterdeep

## *The environs of the Realms' City of Splendors*

---

by Ed Greenwood

---

*The following is an introduction to the city of Waterdeep, often mentioned in many of Ed Greenwood's tales from the Forgotten Realms published in DRAGON® Magazine. Though this was originally written for FR1 Waterdeep and the North, the first of the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ sourcebooks, there was no room for it – so we were able to steal this piece away for publication here. It will not be seen in the final version of Waterdeep and the North, but it is compatible with the material in that work. With that, we welcome you to Waterdeep.*

Waterdeep is the gateway to the North. It dominates the lesser cities of Silvery moon, Mirabar, Luskan, Neverwinter, and Sundabar (listed here in order of relative size and influence). The North is a frontier land of rugged mountains, seemingly endless forests, many ruins and dungeons (subterranean cities left behind by the dwarves), and mineral wealth now being taken by humans as the dwarves retreat, as detailed in the first chapter of *Waterdeep and the North*. This article deals with the immediate vicinity of Waterdeep, as shown on the Environs of Waterdeep map. Numbered map features are detailed below. The area to the immediate east and south of the City of Splendors is mostly open, rolling grassland, long since logged bare. This land is currently used by many herdsman for grazing camps near their markets in Waterdeep.

### **1. Ardeep Forest**

Until recently, this ancient forest, a remnant of the woods that once covered the North from the river Delimbiyr to the mountains of the Utter North, was the home of the Moon Elves. This ancient race of elvenkind once lived in harmony with men and dwarves in a kingdom that

stretched to the east of the forest, in what is now rolling moorlands known as "the Fallen Kingdom." The forest is now forlorn and largely empty. The elves have all gone overseas to Evermeet via many covert voyages aboard *The Morning Bird*, a ship owned by Mirt the Moneylender, a local merchant of Waterdeep.

The elves have left the forest of tall blueleaf, duskwood, and weirwood trees unattended (see DRAGON issue #125, "Woodlands of the Realms"). This region was known as "Faraway Forest" to the elves because, although it was near the western coast of Faerun, it was still "far away" from what the elves considered home: the island realm of Evermeet. It is here that exploring PCs may encounter the NPCs Quth and Vedellen Hawkhand (detailed in chapter 7 of *Waterdeep and the North*), as well as some fearsome forest creatures that the elves once lived in harmony with.

After deleting encounters with evil creatures, lycanthropes, and bandits, the "cold, civilized forest" encounter table on page 141 in *Monster Manual II* may be used. Most evil elves have left the area entirely or have gone into the City (see Elaith Craulnobur and Zabbas Thuul in chapter 7 of *Waterdeep and the North*). Few were welcomed onto the ship to Evermeet. DMs should check for encounters only once every two turns.

Somewhere deep in this forest is the overgrown tomb of Reluraun, a warrior-hero of the elves, who is said to lie in his vault clad in magical elfin chain mail, with a sword +2, *dragon slayer* upon his breast. According to legend, the tomb is not unattended; magical creatures guard Reluraun's remains. "Ardeep" was the name of the western region of the ancient Fallen Kingdom, and now gives this forest its name.

### **2. Goldenfields**

Begun only a handful of years ago by the cleric Tolgar Anuvien of Waterdeep, the fortified abbey of Chauntea has grown

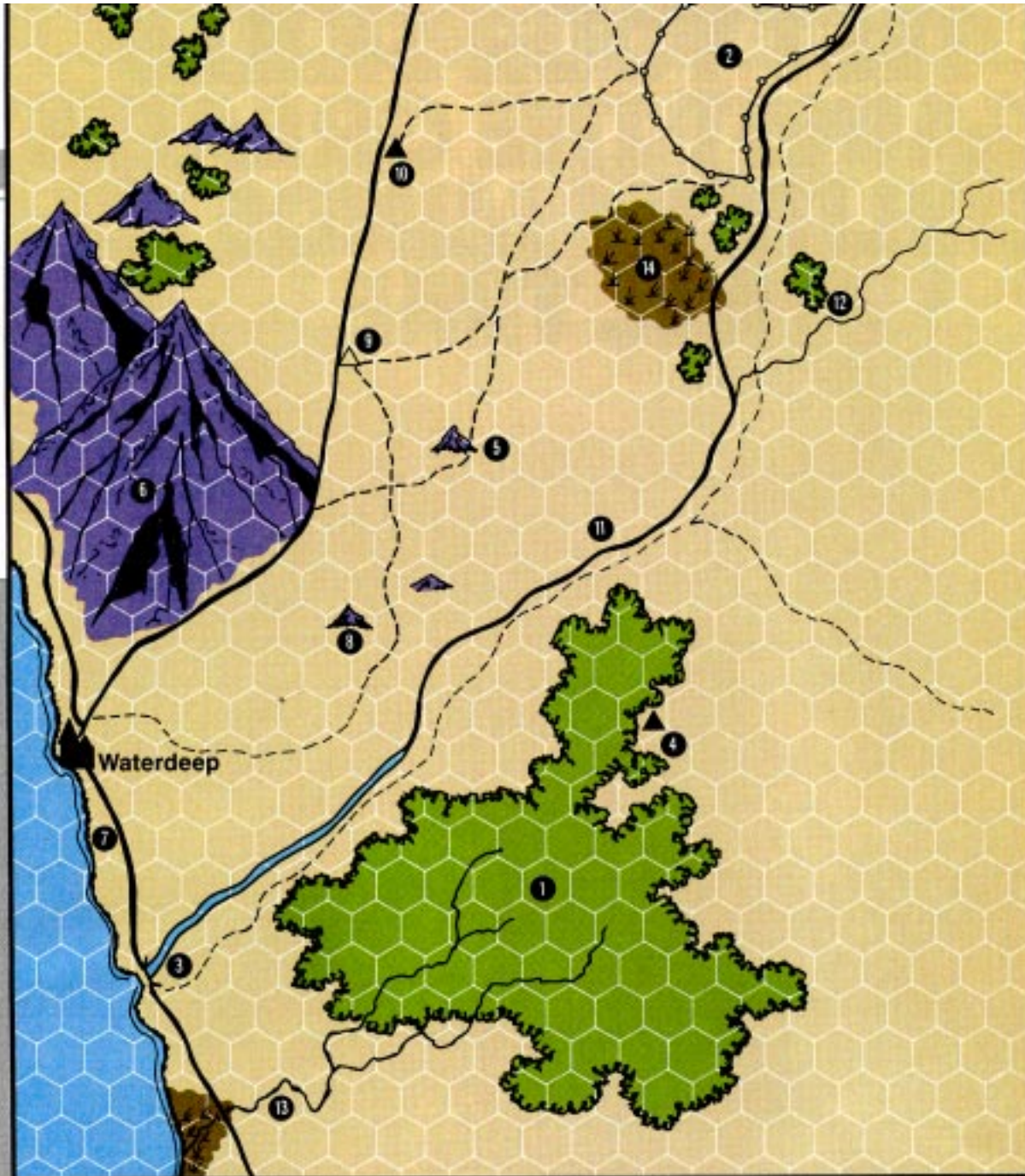
from a small keep with a farm to a walled farm complex 20 miles on a side. Over 5,000 inhabitants, all of whom are devout worshipers of Chauntea, tend crops of edible vegetables. Patrols of adventurer-priests scour the lands around Goldenfields as far north as the Stone Bridge and as far east as the High Forest. Traveling in mounted groups of 20 or more, these patrols seek trolls, goblinkind, and other evil to fight; they also track game for capture and domestication.

To protect their environs, these patrols challenge all whom they meet, but will not fight unless they meet evil creatures or are themselves attacked. These groups usually include four or five clerics of 3rd-5th levels, five or six men-at-arms (accoutred with chain mail and lances), and a remaining force of zero-level devotees (accoutred with leather armor and a variety of weapons). There is a 20% chance for each patrol to include a magic-user of 2nd to 5th level who is of neutral-good or lawful-neutral alignment.

Goldenfields is rapidly becoming the granary of the North, supplying food to Waterdeep and the other inland cities. With the increased importance of Goldenfields, the influence and stature of Tolgar Anuvien have also increased. He is quickly becoming equal in power to the rulers of Silverymoon and Neverwinter. Tolgar plans to expand Goldenfields north to control the strategic Ironford river crossing, then to use that control to safely expand to the east bank of the Dessarin. To do this, Tolgar needs adventurers who are willing to defend Goldenfields and push back the evil creatures that roam the area. These adventurers must be completely loyal to Chauntea (or Lathander) and Goldenfields. They will most likely have boring careers in the constant patrolling of the region, so PCs may not be interested in such service.

Goldenfields enjoys good relations with Waterdeep and all the cities of the North (except Hellgate Keep), and happily takes in adventurers weary of danger or on the





## THE ENVIRONS OF WATERDEEP

Scale: 1 hex = 6 miles

⑮ Feature detailed in text

△ Village or hamlet

▲ Fortress or ruin

■ Wooded area

~ Creek

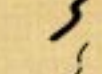
— River



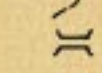
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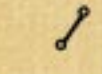
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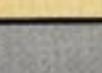
Road



Track



Bridge



Fortified wall

## FEATURES

1. Ardeep Forest
2. Goldenfields
3. Zundbridge
4. The House of Stone
5. Sarcrag
6. Mount Sar and Mount Helimbrar
7. Rat Hills
8. Maiden's Tomb Tor
9. Rassalantar
10. Amphall
11. River Dessarin
12. Gaustar's Creek
13. The Selpir (creek)
14. The Stump Bog



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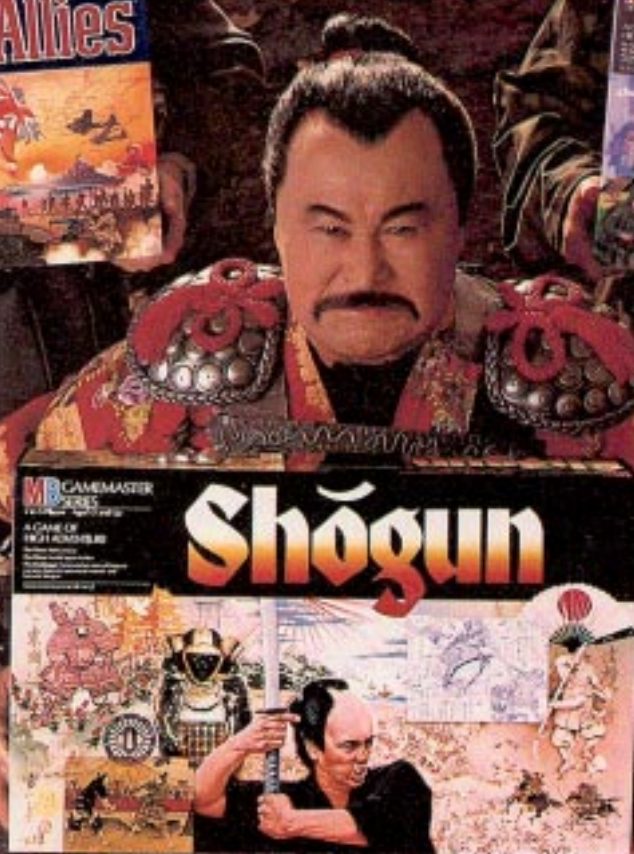
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run from justice elsewhere, as long as they are willing to work in the fields.

### 3. Zundbridge

Named for its creator, the wizard Zund, this squat, massive stone bridge spans the River Dessarin, carrying the main caravan road south from Waterdeep to the lands of the Inner Sea far to the east, and to Baldur's Gate and the kingdoms of the South. Zundbridge has held firmly for over 80 winters, even in the roaring spring floods of the Dessarin, and has not been in need of repairs. Waterdeep patrols the road as far as Zundbridge and maintains a guard post there to stop adventurers who come in search of a stone golem said to have been used by Zund in the construction of the bridge. According to legend, the golem was left at the bridge upon Zund's death, and may be taken by any who can divine or stumble upon the secrets of commanding it.

Over the years, many such seekers have dug around the bridge on both banks, swum beneath it, and even tried to pry stones out of the bridge arches. Waterdeep's Guard fears that if the bridge was left unguarded, it would soon be demolished by these zealous, would-be golem owners. The post is equipped with a flight of three griffon steeds to give Waterdeep advance warning of the approach of any important visiting delegation or an attacking force.

### 4. The House of Stone

To the east of Ardeep Forest is a huge, square tower built a thousand years ago by dwarves under the charge of Turgo Ironfist. The citadel was built to help defend the shared kingdom of the elves, dwarves, and humans against attacking tribes of orcs, hobgoblins, bugbears, and trolls. The dwarves excavated huge, many-levelled storage granaries out of the rock, and built above them a fortress cunningly crafted of fitted stones. The fortress came to be known as "The House of Stone" after the old children's rhyme of the same title:

An elf calls the deepest wood his own,  
A human everywhere may roam,  
But a dwarf just wants a house of stone.

For many years, the Moon Elves guarded the tower, letting no one near it. Since their departure, however, several groups of adventurers have set out to explore the structure. As far as Waterdhavians know, none of these groups have returned. In old tales, The House of Stone is said to have many hidden doors, sliding rooms, and chambers that rise or fall in shafts like buckets in a well. The House of Stone is also believed to have dangerous traps, designed to capture intruders, and numerous caches of treasures (rooms of gold coins and of gems mined by the dwarves from everywhere in the North). Most importantly, an armory of, weapons for the defense of the kingdom is said to have

been collected here, including weapons of powerful magic crafted by the elves and by dwarven smiths of long ago.

The famous bard Mintiper Moonsilver was allowed to see The House of Stone some years ago at the permission of Eroan, Arch-Mage of the Moon Elves. He reported that its gates were open. "A hill giant had forced them apart some months before my visit," Eroan told the Lords of Waterdeep, "for its huge corpse hung just beyond, impaled on a massive stone claw that had sprung out into the space beyond the doors. The elves just smiled when I asked if the place was full of such traps, and said it was best to assume so from safely outside its walls." It seems unlikely that later visitors will bear Mintiper's report in mind. Even now, such Waterdhavian adventurers as Elaith Craulnobur (see chapter 7 of Waterdeep and the North) are said to be forming adventuring companies to explore this fabled fortress.

### 5. Sarcrag

This small, jutting crag of bare rock provides a perfect natural lookout. On a clear day, some 60 miles of territory can be viewed; on a clear night, campfires can be seen 90 miles off to the north or east. Sarcrag also serves Waterdeep as a warning beacon. From its heights, northern patrols can signal the approach of attackers (as happened some 22 winters ago during the "Bleak Winter" of the Year of the Shaking Serpent). Sarcrag is said to be haunted by the "Howler" a bansheelike creature who is never around when adventuring bands come seeking it, but always seems to attack the weak or unwary. Leucrotta are also a persistent problem in this area, and are the main reason Waterdeep and Goldenfields patrol the road north as far as the trail that heads east to Ironford.

According to popular legend, bandits are said to have buried a fabulous treasure here at the foot of Sarcrag. Long ago, an armed force escorting the person and regalia of King Jaszur of Tethyr was ambushed north of Waterdeep and destroyed by bandits. These bandits were surrounded by Waterdeep's armies and slaughtered the next morning. Jaszur's body was found stripped of its golden and jewelled crown, orb, scepter, and sword of state (a flame tongue blade). The soldiers of the Guard swear that no man could have escaped through their lines, for mages cast *detect magics* all night to prevent magical escapes or attacks, and found nothing. Likewise, warriors of Waterdeep searched from the air on the backs of griffons. Many hopefuls have continued the search for King Jaszur's treasure over the 80 intervening years, but none have found the lost riches.

### 6. Mount Sar and Mount Helimbrar

These mighty peaks rise north of Waterdeep, guarding it from the worst winds of the North. To the east runs the road to

Triboar and the northern interior. To the west runs the coastal road which, after passing the two great peaks, enters the vast and treacherous swamp known as the Mere of Dead Men. The road then passes near the ruins of Iniav's Tower. Iniav was a mighty Arch-Mage of the ancient North who became a demilich later in his life. Some say Iniav still guards the ruins of his spell library, though others claim that the famed "Company of the Howling Wolf" destroyed him 42 winters ago. None who may have investigated have made public any report on the truth of this academic dispute, however.

Mount Sar and Mount Helimbrar are named for two great fomorian giants who lived in the mountains until they were slain by early Warlords of Waterdeep. These mountains are still said to harbor stone giants and more fearsome menaces, although travelers also report seeing sylphs on the high ledges and side peaks. Gulyaikin Dzurund, "The Mad Dwarf," also lived in a warren of caves somewhere high up in Mount Sar some 70 winters ago (and may yet live there, if travelers' tales are to be believed). Gulyaikin was said to possess rich treasures and was noted for his occasional fits of berserk glee. During these fits, Gulyaikin delighted in killing all sorts of passersby by rolling large rocks onto the roads below and by catapulting large boulders at fishing boats offshore.

The evil mage Marune, once the chief agent of the outlawed Shadow Thieves in Waterdeep (prior to his exile from the City), is believed to have inhabited a subterranean stronghold at the base of Mount Helimbrar. This fortress was (and still may be) safe from Waterdhavian patrols, local monsters, and curious travelers alike because of the six will-o'-the-wisps that guarded the cavern and climbing shaft that was its only entry. Marune has not been heard from in 15 years, although he may yet be scheming and developing fell magic for revenge upon the Lords of Waterdeep. Marune is a chaotic-evil, 17th-level magic-user (maybe higher) with both an intelligence and a dexterity of 18.

### 7. Rat Hills

This area was once a barren, windswept pebble beach. Waves crashed and rolled incessantly across the shoal, for the water was and still is very shallow at this point. For almost a mile out, the seabed is a mere 5' from the surface of the water. In days of old, large ships beached here for repairs, and lumber barges pulled up for loading. As Waterdeep became rich enough to suffer human raiding, its people began to see this easy landing place as a danger to their safety – and as a free alternative to Waterdeep's harbor. A rough shantytown came into being, and the Shadow Thieves moved quickly to control it. Waterdhavians saw the danger immediately and acted swiftly.

The men of the Guard were called out in force. They drove out the inhabitants of



"The Beach," slaughtering those who resisted and setting fire to everything that would burn. The Guard camped on the spot for two days, waiting for the fires to die down and keeping the area clear with strong patrols. The burnt debris was then tossed into the water, and the City began to bring its garbage to The Beach in wagonloads (now done by the Dungsweepers' Guild) rather than burning it outside the City walls.

Today, the Rat Hills are almost four miles in length and up to a mile in width. These hills of piled, rotting garbage poison the water in the shallows and extend along the entire beach area, effectively barring any hostile landings. The Guard patrols the caravan road and oversees the daily garbage convoy of Dungsweepers' wagons, but otherwise leaves the Rat Hills alone.

As the name suggests, these tangled hills are infested with rats. Scrub trees and gnarled creepers are everywhere. The reek is indescribable and foils all attempts to track by scent. Fresh garbage is brought daily, causing the Rat Hills to grow by almost half an acre per year. The inhabitants of the Rat Hills have made it too dangerous for the Dungsweepers to carry garbage into the interior, so fresh garbage is now piled at the outer edge of the Hills. Several attacks have made the City strengthen the Guards presence whenever garbage is brought or whenever parties pass the Rat Hills by night.

If the PCs elect to explore the area, DMs may use Table 1 to determine possible encounters. To render these encounters, roll 1d8 and 1d12, adding the result. Monsters listed in Table 1 are from the *Monster Manual* and may have treasure as indicated therein.

The Rat Hills are frequented by lizard men from the coast farther south, who are considering establishing a fortified lair in concealment here, and by kobolds from Maiden's Tomb Tor. At the DM's option, strong patrols of these creatures may be encountered. The Rat Hills are also home to Hlaavin, a giant doppelganger (HD 9, 67 hp, with otherwise normal attacks and abilities of doppelgangers) who occasionally hunts with leucrotta who also dwell in the area.

Hlaavin is particularly dangerous to visitors because of the *wand of illusion* it gained from an unwary sorcerer. The doppelganger uses the *wand* to lure parties of victims into pit traps and snares it has set in the area. After scattering a group, Hlaavin slays adventurers singly and feeds on the victims. Hlaavin creates tantalizing glimpses of treasure when small groups venture near in daylight. By using the *wand*, Hlaavin may cause a rusty sword hilt to appear to be of gold set with gems, glowing as if magical; a skeleton may appear to be wearing a gold ring; half-buried chests or partially corroded trade bars are other favorite *illusions*. Most of these images are made to appear atop a thin mat of garbage that Hlaavin

has laid over a pit it has dug, placing rocks and spears nearby for throwing down at trapped creatures.

In twilight or dawn, when the light is poor, Hlaavin attempts more difficult *illusions*, and uses its vocal mimicry. A favorite *illusion* is the image of a running girl clutching a clinking sack, followed shortly by a lumbering warrior. The warrior snarls "Come back, you little swindler! Half that gold is mine!" The *illusion* then disappears deeper into the Hills.

DMs should bear in mind that Hlaavin uses its *ESP* to create an image of precisely what a particular PC finds most attractive. This *ESP* allows Hlaavin to provide second, third, and additional *illusions*, if necessary, to make a PC believe the lure to be real. Hlaavin's *wand* has 67 charges left. Hlaavin does have a very real chest of treasure in its possession, containing 166 gp, 36 sp, 6 cp, and a diamond necklace worth 6,000 gp. The chest is buried somewhere in the heart of the Hills.

Many plant monsters may be added to the list of encounters, if a DM desires; shambling mounds and all manner of marine horrors may lurk in the shallows. There are said to be deep pools and flooded beast-tunnels in the tainted waters. Lizard men have also been seen in the area, and giant gar sometimes drift into the shallows to await the unwary.

Even simple contact with the water has its perils. Immersion or excessive skin contact with the tainted water of the Rat Hills shallows and the pools within the garbage (where rainwater collects) offers a 20% chance of contracting disease and a 14% chance of contracting a parasitic infestation (refer to the *Dungeon Masters Guide* for details on both). Characters must make an exposure-check roll on percentile dice once for each such contact; for prolonged contact, characters must check once per turn for each turn of continuous contact. Ingesting any of the water carries a 32% chance of contracting disease and a 30% chance of contracting a parasitic infestation. Characters should make an exposure check per ingestion. Note that dilution with water or wine cuts the chances of these contractions in half and may lessen them further due to further dilution. Boiling tainted water reduces disease chances to 2% per contact, and parasitic infestation chances to 0%.

Contact with the garbage of the Rat Hills (and the many insects that swarm in the noisome air above it) carries its own peril: a 5% chance of contracting disease and a 9% chance of contracting a parasitic infestation. An exposure check should be made once for each day in which a being is in or enters the garbage of the Rat Hills. (Thus, a character could enter and leave the Hills a dozen times in a day, and still suffer only a single check). If the garbage is excessively disturbed, however, whether by digging, an extensive physical fight, or spell-casting involving an explosion, all creatures in the vicinity must make an

additional exposure check (one per disturbance). Chances are not cumulative. Eating the meat of any inhabitant creature of the Rat Hills carries a 60% chance of contracting disease and a 100% chance of contracting a parasitic infestation (reduce chances by half if the meat is cooked).

If PCs adventure in the Rat Hills repeatedly, DMs may wish to expand adventures to include creatures such as boggles or a gathering of Shadow Thieves who are planning to jump a convoy of Dungsweepers' garbage wagons. Great treasure could well be located in the Rat Hills, perhaps left deliberately for the use of slavers in the City. A beholder or powerful evil creature could well lair in the heart of the Hills to provide a challenge if PCs are of formidable strength.

## 8. Maiden's Tomb Tor

This bare, high-peaked landmark is so titled for an unknown barbarian princess who was buried at the foot of the peak some 400 winters ago by warriors of Waterdeep. This honor occurred after the princess's people had attacked the City of Splendors in the harshest time of winter and had been repelled. The princess and her bodyguard fought with such ferocity that they slew thrice their number of fully armored fighting-men of the City in their day-long, bloody retreat. The barbarians died fighting to the very last warrior, ending their valiant campaign at the foot of the Tor. In memory of their heroism, the princess and the last of her bodyguards were laid to rest in a cairn under the summit of the Tor.

Recently, more than 450 kobolds have taken up residence beneath the Tor (see the Rat Hills), under a chief by the name of Kuthil. DMs should determine the precise dispositions of the kobolds and any treasure they may possess as desired. Kobold patrols have not yet menaced the Lords to any extent; Waterdeep and Goldenfields are not aware of the precise location of the little monsters. The kobolds could well have their attention directed mainly beneath the earth, in hitherto unknown subterranean realms of which their caverns are part. There are several surface connections to their lair on the sides of the Tor itself.

## 9. Rassalantar

Rassalantar is the first settlement of any size on the Long Road north of the City of Splendors. This hamlet is named after its founder, the ancient fighter Rassalantar. He built a keep (which is now in ruins) just west of the present buildings. (DMs may well locate a simple starter adventure for low-level PCs in the keep, which is not detailed in the sourcebook.)

Today, Rassalantar is little more than half a dozen walled farms adjoined in this spot, with a horse-watering pond on the west side of the road and a good inn, *The Sleeping Dragon*, on the east. Beyond the pond and to the west rises the Keep

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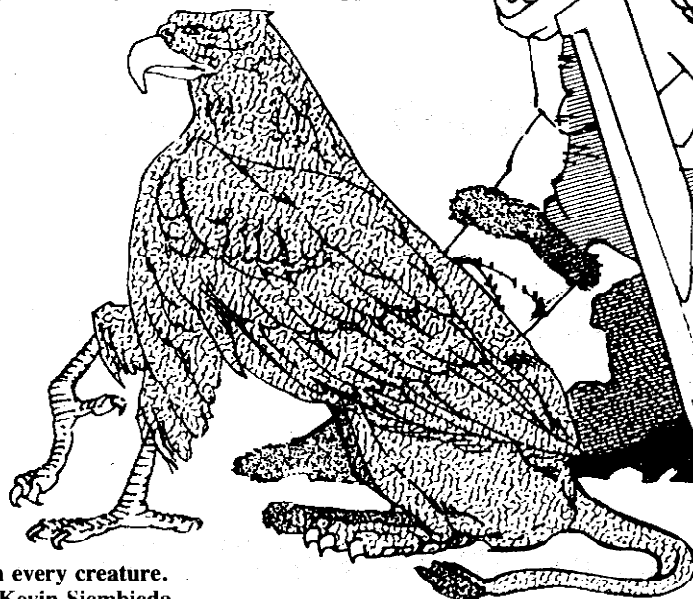
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Woods, a narrow but dense strip of thickly grown, gnarled woodlands in which the ruined Keep stands between two of the farms. The innkeeper, "Spider" Samallah, is a close friend of Durnan (a lord of Waterdeep), and the village is under Waterdeep's protection. The Guard maintains a 60-man outpost here, patrolling the road as far as a cairn five miles north of Amphail (listed later) and as far south as the gates of the City.

These men-at-arms are all zero-level and are accoutred with chain mail and shields, lances, long swords, hammers, and daggers. They are commanded by two 3rd-level fighter *armars* (sergeants) and a 5th-level fighter *civilar* (captain). The personnel rotate each week. The three commanders are named Blaskos Uldraven, Timmer Longschal, and Gheldarm Tassor, respectively.

### 10. Amphail

This village boasts the following establishments: *The Laughing Bandit Inn*; a forge of excellent reputation, which is run by the tall, bearded human Akrosz Ulvinhand; a horse-breeding ranch belonging to the retired adventuress Elraghona Sember; and, a small temple to Waukeen. Perhaps the most successful business in Amphail is the horse-breeding ranch, which supplies remounts to travelers all along the Long Road through inns such as *The Sleeping Dragon* in Rassalantar (which buys dozens of horses each year from the ranch).

Named for one of Waterdeep's early War Lords, Amphail the Just (who is said to still ride the area in spirit form, frightening away trolls and hostile barbarian tribes), this village, like Rassalantar to the south, is patrolled by Waterdeep's Guard in all seasons but winter. Amphail is ruled by a Lord Warder, presently the 3rd-level fighter Briathor Alougarr. The Lord Warder swears fealty to Piergeiron, one of the Lords of Waterdeep. In return, the City of Splendors provides military strength, a Warder's purse of 600 gp quarterly, and many orders for fresh mounts from Elraghona's ranch.

### 11. River Dessarin

The fast-moving, cold, and deep Dessarin flows down to the sea from this point. The river is navigable and is home to many shalass (silver, troutlike fish that grow to 2' length), which make a highly prized meal throughout the North. The river can be crossed "dry" in this vicinity only at Zundbridge, at Ironford, and at the Stone Bridge, far to the northeast. The River Dessarin can otherwise only be crossed by swimming; it cannot be forded.

### 12. Gaustar's Creek

This small, fast-flowing stream has cut a narrow but deep gorge along its route. Many tiny caves and tunnels have been scratched out of the soft rock of the gorge walls by various creatures. A "thirst" of

stirges have laired in one of these caves for many years. Attempts to find their home and to thus corner and destroy them have been unsuccessful. Other creatures may well make one of the many caves their home. This small creek is named for the dwarf Gaustar, who is said to have buried a large chest of precious gems somewhere along the banks of the creek. Gaustar perished at the hands of pursuing orcs shortly thereafter. His people had been forced from their dwellings in the depths of winter some 60 years ago and, being harried by orcs all the way south, were slaughtered one by one. Gaustar's treasure has never been found, or at least none have admitted gaining it.

### 13. The Selpir (creek)

This slow, quiet creek drains Ardeep Forest. Lizard men sometimes lurk in the mouth of this marshy source, but mermen also like to congregate in the area. Recent history is marked by several vicious battles between the two races, many taking place in the shallows.

In elder days, the Fallen Kingdom was a proud realm. Many grand heroes of both elven and dwarven descent were laid to rest in the heart of the woods (the now much-smaller woods are known as Ardeep Forest). Over the centuries, the waters of this tiny creek have run endlessly to the sea, breaching many such tombs. Overgrown and forgotten even by the demi-humans, these tombs have yielded their riches to the relentless water. A patient searcher has a 22% chance (check once every 20 continuous turns) of finding some treasure in the streambed, such as an electrum piece, perhaps, or a gold key. A *dagger* + 1 may well turn up; rarely are larger objects found. The DM should select items to be found here rather than rolling

at random, and should decide if any monsters make the vicinity their home.

### 14. The Stump Bog

The vast, sprawling Bog is named for numerous rotting stumps which rise from the still, green waters like blackened teeth (the dead trees were cut by an enterprising woodcutter long ago). Frog-fishermen are the only humans who have entered the marsh since. The Bog's algae-covered, muddy waters are home to many unpleasant creatures.

The Bog's waters may well hide many small treasures. Countless corpses have been dumped in the Bog over the years of fighting in the North. Many victims have drowned in the Bog after dark following nearby battles, getting lost and collapsing as a result of their wounds. Today, the Bog remains a favorite corpse disposal site for brigands, thieves, and City folk who find it more convenient for someone to disappear than to be found dead.

If the PCs enter the Bog, DMs should use Table 2 to determine encounters. As with Table 1 before, roll 1d8 and 1d12, and add the results together to render encounters on Table 2.

### Until swords part

Beyond these environs of Waterdeep lie the greater glories of the North. In the hands of a DM, more of their mysteries may well be revealed, and many of the secrets of the City of Splendors, too! Adventures galore await PCs in these lands of savage beauty - adventure enough to fill many lifetimes. Come: Bring a friend, and bring a sword - and that's two friends to keep close, for in the North a good sword is the best friend you can have. And what's an adventure without good friends to share it with?

**Table 1**  
**Rat Hills Random**  
**Encounter Table**

Roll	Encounter
2	1 mimic
3	1-6 skeletons
4	5-20 rot grubs in carrion
5	1 otyugh
6	1-4 jackalweres
7	4-16 wild dogs
8	4-24 wererats
9	5-50 giant rats
10	2-24 giant centipedes
11	5-50 giant rats
12	1-12 huge spiders
13	5-50 giant rats
14	1-3 leucrotta
15	1-4 ear seekers
16	2-12 poisonous frogs
17	1-12 zombies
18	1 neo-otyugh
19	1-4 catoblepas
20	Special encounter (Table 2) or DM's choice

**Table 2**  
**Stump Bog Random**  
**Encounter Table**

Roll	Encounter
2	1-3 catoblepas
3	1-3 gas spores
4	2-12 giant crabs
5	4-16 giant leeches
6	1-20 giant wasps
7	1-4 giant crayfish
8	4-16 giant leeches
9	5-40 giant frogs
10	1-2 lampreys
11	3-12 giant frogs
12	1-4 giant crayfish
13	3-12 giant frogs
14	1-2 lampreys
15	1-3 shambling mounds
16	4-16 giant leeches
17	1-4 giant eels
18	2-12 giant lizards
19	1-3 will-o-(the)-wisps
20	Roll twice again on this table, or DM's choice of any monster.

Ω

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Three, four, better lock your door.  
Five, six, grab your crucifix.  
Seven, eight, gonna stay up late.  
Nine, ten, never sleep again!*

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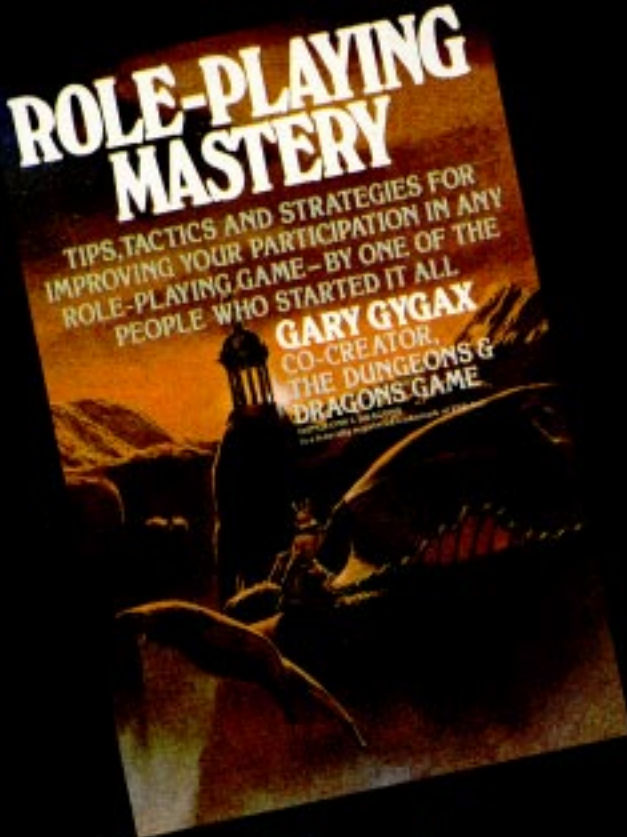
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# Matters of Mastery



*A special review  
on an unusual book*

©1987 by John C. Bunnell

## **ROLE-PLAYING MASTERY**

Gary Gygax

Perigee Books O-399-51923-4 \$7.95

Role-playing Mastery is a difficult book to describe. It doesn't easily yield to the sort of clever one-sentence appraisal that might begin the review of a typical fantasy novel. The problem is partly that Gary Gygax's book seems to have set several different agendas for itself: textbook, field guide, and how-to manual are all accurate yet subtly varying descriptions. These structural inconsistencies, though, are less of a concern than the assumptions Gygax makes about the nature of gamers and gaming - and the degree to which he

takes those assumptions for granted.

"It is hoped," says Gygax in his preface, "(and I go so far as to assume) that interested but inexperienced individuals will read this work prior to beginning activity in role-playing games." That suggests that the book's audience need not have much knowledge of RPGs and argues for the inclusion of lots of easily applied (i.e., specific) advice. Ideally, such an introductory text should also be fairly informal and relaxed in tone, to minimize the potentially intimidating complexity of RPG rules and systems to the uninitiated.

Two pages later, however, the book changes its mind. Now its purpose is "to inform role-game enthusiasts of the history and scope of the role-playing hobby pursuit; to assist all participants in under-

standing the games, campaigns, and dynamics involved; and to inform participants of the methods of bringing play to a high level in order to enhance their enjoyment." The key words are "enthusiasts" and "a high level," implying a chosen audience with enough RPG experience to appreciate a more formal presentation with more emphasis on technical and theoretical matters.

As a whole, unfortunately, the book is exactly as schizophrenic as these two passages suggest. The writing and pacing are likely to hold a more experienced reader's attention while drawing impatient yawns from a newcomer, whereas the content (with some exceptions) is probably of more value to beginning gamers than to those well-settled into role-playing. It's entirely realistic, if distinctly unsettling, to feel as if there are two or three separate books at once unfolding in Gygax's tome.

One of those books is a full-fledged academic textbook that will have readers scanning community college and university catalogs for Role-Playing 101. While the volume includes neither practice exercises nor test questions, several chapters end with neatly summarized lists of principles begging to be memorized for recitation in class. Gygax adds to the effect with a writing style that loudly echoes the voice of an eminent professor addressing rows of students with proverbial impressionable young minds. Moreover, in treating RPG concepts generally while offering very little system-specific (or even genre-specific) advice and virtually no rules analysis, the book takes on the role of a basic introductory text rather than a supplemental resource.

Yet, although *Role-Playing Mastery* is hardly a field guide to available RPGs (most of the product-related material is consolidated into appendices full of lists), it does qualify as something of a field guide to the personalities who populate the hobby. The second through fourth chapters describe a variety of players, referees, and gaming groups, with thorough if largely common-sensical commentary on effective ways of dealing with interpersonal conflicts and less-than-ideal campaigns. The descriptions of these people and groups are detailed and helpful, but the advice for coping with them sometimes seems a bit naive. It's all very well to suggest private conversations or advocate booting a misfit out the door, but readers will remain understandably wary of starting those dialogues without at least some guidance.

The remaining material, comprising chapters five through seven, attempts to codify the elements of quality gaming techniques in a practical how-to format. Gygax essentially argues that if one consciously focuses on what his or her PC is supposed to be doing, rather than more passively "going with the flow," a higher level of play results. The specific tips are again clear, valuable, and sufficiently logi-



cal that experienced gamers will often mutter, "But I knew that!" as they read. Beginning players aren't likely to get this far - Gygax strongly implies in the section on player groups that they'll be woefully lost in a cadre of veterans, and by this time it's clear that the "mastery" referred to throughout the book is a product of long experience that newcomers don't yet have.

It's there that the dangerous flaw in *Role-Playing Mastery* begins to assert itself. Though Gygax makes occasional statements in the book about the need to broaden the RPG audience and increase the appeal of gaming to newcomers, his real thrust is almost precisely in the opposite direction. The program of "study" outlined for achieving mastery (which is full of words like "must" and "requires") is given with the implication that mastery is a necessary goal of all gaming. This plan calls, among other things, for playing in numerous campaigns, competing in RPG tournaments, and (at least by implication) submitting articles to gaming magazines. Essentially, Gygax is making the assumption that gaming can only be appreciated by an elite group of "masters" akin to the Fischers and Karpovs who dominate the international chess world. "You cannot hope to achieve mastery unless the prohibitive factor(s) can be removed," he claims in the book. "You can, of course, still enjoy playing? The unspoken implication, though, is that nonmasters are second-class citizens of the gaming community who need not be taken seriously.

That attitude is one the gaming community should not be promoting under any circumstance. From a purely technical standpoint, it might be true that long-time conventioners and regular contributors to DRAGON® Magazine are more effective gamers than a squadron of high-school students who have just acquired copies of the TOON® game. But it is an enormous mistake to assume that the high-school gamers aren't having as much fun as everyone else, or that gamers who regularly play in tournaments have more fun than those who don't. *Role-Playing Mastery* utterly fails to acknowledge the fact that every RPG hobbyist has a different level of commitment to gaming, and that failure makes this book extremely difficult to recommend.

Which is a real shame - because there is still a good deal of valuable insight to be had within the pages of Gary Gyax's book. Gamers who read it carefully will be able to appreciate some of that wisdom, and novices may be able to glean some as well, if provided with sufficient cautions against treating the tome as gospel. Without those warnings, though, *Role-Playing Mastery* seems likely to drive away more prospective gamers than it manages to recruit. Its introductory paragraphs to the contrary, a solid, easily assimilated handbook for aspiring RPG players is still waiting to be written. □

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# To Believe or Not to Believe



*That is the  
question on illusions and wisdom*

by W. Todo Todorsky

One of the most interesting and effective spell-casting tactics in the AD&D® game system is the use of illusions. It is also one of the most difficult to understand and control. Guidelines in the game texts offer only sketchy advice to aid the DM and players in the casting and administration of illusions.

How one goes about disbelieving an illusion is an open question. There are also other matters which arise to confuse the issue. Does the victim believe a phantasm it sees? Is the illusion good enough to fool an exceptionally smart creature? Is the illusion appropriate for the situation? These questions and many others make the judgment and play of illusions an arbitrary case at best.

Any magical illusion is essentially a spell. Saving against an illusion is then a simple saving throw vs. spells or casting device (wands, staves, etc.). The level of the victim is accounted for in the saving throw, but that is all. This system works well in low-level campaigns; it is simple to use and fast in its execution. It has, however, some serious shortcomings – particularly when it is used against high-level or highly intelligent beings. The level or experience of the caster is not taken into account, nor is the experience difference between caster and victim. It is just as likely for a 5-HD monster to be fooled by an illusion cast by a 5th-level magic-user as by an illusion cast by a 12th-level magic-user. This flies in the face of the idea that magic-users cast more powerful spells as they gain levels.

Questions also arise concerning the victim of the illusion. Does an illusion work just as well against an animal-intelligence creature as it does on a genius? Do dragons and dogs see illusions in the same way? Some insight to these matters can be gained by examining illusions themselves.

An illusion is a mental attack. It works on the victim's perceptions of his environment. Why is a large woody plant with spreading branches and leaves seen as a tree? We recognize it as a tree because our minds equate the sight with a previously learned shape known as a tree. If the victim's mind has been altered by an illusion spell, then the response to the sight picture is what the magic-user's spell has programmed.

One defense against mental attacks, the magical attack adjustment from the *Players Handbook* Wisdom Table 1 on page 11, falls into the province of wisdom. It follows that the tendency to believe or disbelieve illusions should also be in the province of wisdom. The higher one's wisdom, the less likely one would be fooled by an illusion. It is assumed that the illusion does not totally control the victim's mind; therefore, he is still able to use his unaffected mental powers to evaluate his surroundings. The more wisdom he has,

Illustration by Joseph Pillsbury

the more unaffected mental powers he can muster.

A couatl and a 9-HD shambling mound have the same relative level. The couatl has a wisdom of 8-18 (as per the *DMG*, page 79), whereas the shambling mound has a wisdom of 2-8. it would seem that the couatl is more likely than a shambling mound to know an illusion when it sees one. Also, the couatl has spell-casting ability; some of these spells could be illusion-based.

This brings us to another part of the illusion puzzle. Magicians and slight-of-hand artists amaze us by performing feats which seem impossible. To another experienced prestidigitator, though, these feats are old hat — stock-in-trade items. He would have little trouble recognizing another magician at work while the rest of us were easily fooled. It would follow that if one knew how illusions were cast, he would be less likely to fall victim to the illusion-based magic of another.

Even a victim without superior wisdom is not totally at the mercy of an illusion-caster. Someone near his home or lair would be so familiar with the area that almost any new or unnatural sight would be brought immediately under suspicion.

As we can see, the question of what will be believed or disbelieved is very complex. Essentially, however, it is a question of wisdom vs. illusion. Is the victim wise enough to see through the illusion, or is the illusion good enough to fool the viewer? Perhaps a closer look at wisdom and illusion would aid the debate.

**What is wisdom?**

As with other subjects which reflect the depths of human kind such as beauty,

love, and charm, wisdom eludes stereotypical definition. It is not a simple concept. Most of us can observe the behavior of another and decide if his actions are wise or not. As with beauty, wisdom is as wisdom does.

Do not mistake wisdom for intelligence. Intelligence refers primarily to the academic abilities needed in acquiring and processing information. It is helpful for the wise to be intelligent, but it is not necessary that a wise man be more intelligent than an average man. When one has intelligence but not wisdom, the information he gathers is difficult to evaluate and use in the best possible manner.

Although wisdom is reasonably difficult to define, we can look at some of its constituent parts. The *DMG* lists willpower, judgment, wile, enlightenment, and intuitiveness as some of the components which go into wisdom. We could add common sense, patience, and experience to that list. Wisdom, then, is the effect of all these factors working together in one person.

*[The official system for handling spell bonuses for high wisdom scores is given on page 7 of Legends & Lore. There, intelligence has an influence over the detection of illusions; wisdom, by the reasoning in this article, could also play a part.]*

**What is an illusion?**

Strictly speaking, an illusion is a false perception or image, something been which is mistakenly perceived. In AD&D game terms, “illusion” is generalized to mean many things. Spells or spell-like effects which are *illusions* are sometimes more accurately described as delusions, hallucinations, mirages, misconceptions, or disguises. For the purposes of this article, the game’s inaccurate but all-encom-

passing definition of an illusion (a magical effect that produces an illusion, delusion, hallucination, etc.) will be used.

Cast illusions are spells in AD&D games which serve as external forces which act on the minds of the victims. Victims with lower wisdom are more susceptible to this form of attack as they tend to take everything they see as real. Those with greater wisdom tend to be more skeptical of their surroundings and may take a second look. Although not a hard and fast rule, creatures with great wisdom tend to have great intelligence.

Illusions also affect a victim’s emotions, playing on fear, greed, want, and hopelessness. Each emotion has the ability to cloud one’s judgment. Wisdom acts against these wild emotions and against the illusions which feed upon them. The power of wisdom over illusion lies in the unemotional way a wise one views a situation.

Wisdom’s unemotional nature does not imply that its view is heartless or not compassionate. A wise being uses a disciplined mind. This allows him to put emotion aside for periods of time while the situation at hand is evaluated.

How do the components of wisdom work against illusions? First of all, no matter how cleverly they are devised, illusions are false images. Materially, they do not exist, and they tend to disappear when touched. Being false, they are also imperfect. These imperfections serve to bring about their demise.

A character who is confronted with an illusion first believes it to be real. Disbelieving everything one sees is not normal for any creature. As time passes, the character has a chance to evaluate what he sees more closely. Here is the time when

Illusion Saving-Throw Table																					
Victim's wisdom	Victim's level greater by:											Caster's level greater by:									
	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
4	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
5	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
6	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
7	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	00	00	00	00	00	00
8	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	00	00	00	00	00
9	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	00	00	00	00
10	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	00	00	00
11	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	00	00
12	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	00
13	0	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95
14	0	0	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90
15	0	0	0	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85
16	0	0	0	0	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80
17	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75
18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70
19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65
20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60
21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55
22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50



he uses his wisdom, asking himself mental questions about what he sees. He knows that he is likely to see a white dragon in a frozen wasteland, but a red dragon would be out of place. Knowledge of particular aspects of the item in question could be compared with what has been seen before. Does this look, sound, move, and behave as he expects? The sound of a lamia noble moving across the floor is similar to that of a large snake, but a lamia noble that makes no sound when it moves could be grounds for disbelief.

There is no guarantee that the final evaluation the victim makes will be correct. He may miss simple illusions while looking for complex ones. The situation may be bizarre and unfamiliar, yet quite real. In this case, the illusion may have been so well cast that the victim sees no reason to disbelieve it.

Clerics have not been mentioned as yet, even though wisdom is their prime requisite. Wisdom is important to the cleric because he deals with people in his work on a day-to-day basis. In an outlying village, he may be the only person with any education at all; this alone would cause people to seek him out for advice. Wise men tend to be clerics by tradition. Even so, in no way should one assume that wisdom is the exclusive province of clerics. Wisdom is not determined by class, race, sex, or alignment.

### A new saving-throw table

Under the present system, class and level are the deciding factors in calculating what number a player needs to roll to have his PC save against an illusion. If wisdom and level of the caster are included in the calculation, the importance of the victim's class is reduced. The only exception to this would be if the victim of the illusion was an illusion-caster in his own right.

Having covered what wisdom and illusion are and how one affects the other, we come to the Illusion Saving-Throw Table, developed to improve the handling of illusions during a game. The present system of saving vs. spells takes into account the class and level of the victim, but does not reflect his wisdom or the relative level differences between the caster and the viewer. The game grants that spells cast by high-level magic-users carry more power, duration, and damage than the same spell cast by a low-level mage. This increased ability should also be extended to illusions. The illusions of a high-level spell-caster should thus be more believable than those of a low-level caster. Conversely, a character of low level and less experience should have a more difficult time figuring out an illusion than a character of higher level.

The Illusion Saving-Throw Table reconciles the level of the caster, the level of the victim, and the wisdom of the victim. To use it, follow these steps:

1. First, determine the wisdom of the victim. (This is easy for PCs and NPCs. To determine a monster's wisdom, refer to the DMG, page 79.)

2. Find the victim's wisdom on the left side of the table. (This aligns with a horizontal row.)

3. Calculate the difference between the victim's level and the illusion-caster's level (or hit dice, if the caster is a monster).

4. Locate this number on the top row of the table. If the difference is in favor of the victim, the number will be on the left; if the caster has more levels than the victim, the number will be on the right. Magical attack adjustment scores shift the column being read one place to the left per +1, or one place to the right per -1. Thus, a +2 bonus to the saving throw produces a two-column shift to the left [much as is done in the MARVEL SUPER HEROES® Advanced Set game].

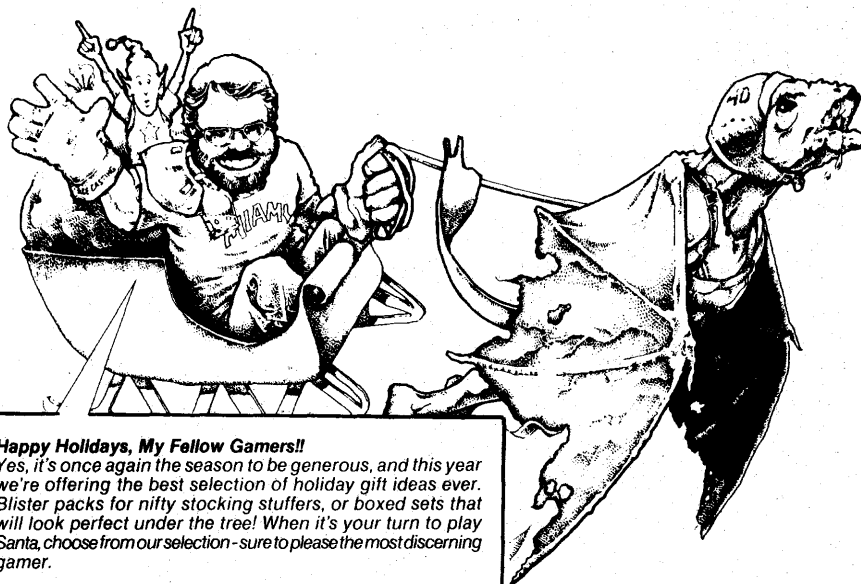
5. The number at the point where the horizontal and vertical lines cross is then read and expressed as a percentage. If the victim rolls over that number, his character disbelieves the illusion. If the roll is equal to or less than the number, the illusion is believed.

A character gains a +4 to his saving throw if another member of the party has already made a successful save and sees through the illusion. This assumes that the disbeliever warns or demonstrates that the illusion is an illusion. On the table, this constitutes a shift of four columns to the left for all subsequent saving throws against that illusion.

If the victim is an illusion-caster, he is granted one additional column shift to the left for every three experience levels (or hit dice) he has attained. This applies to all illusionists and to magic-users who can cast illusion/phantasm spells, as well as to all creatures who can naturally cast spells. The DM should decide whether beings who cannot naturally cast illusions but who possess and frequently use magical devices which do cast illusions should be granted the save bonus.

A victim who is in close proximity to his lair could be allowed one, two, or three shifts to the left due to familiarity to the terrain, at the DM's option. Dragons, being naturally perceptive, might gain an automatic three-column shift. Those creatures listed as "non-intelligent" gain no save against illusions at all, unless the DM feels their sensory abilities would decide otherwise. Creatures with "animal" to "semi-intelligent" ratings are wary of illusions, whether they believe the illusions or not, and have a 75% chance to believe the illusion, regardless of the caster's level.

If a character's percentage figure is in the upper-right triangle (100%), then the illusion is believed regardless of any proof given to the contrary. No saving throw of any kind is allowed. If a character's percentage figure is in the lower-left triangle (0%), then the illusion is automatically disbelieved if the PC decides to do so.



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# Role-playing Reviews



*Fantasy on alien worlds*

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Want to role-play in a *really* alien setting? Think carefully. Do you know what you're getting into? Everybody knows what orcs and dragons and mutants and battledroids are all about, but what do you know about the ahoggyá or the ngóro? Can you distinguish between the larval, second sperric, and third sperric stages in the life cycle of the giggit? If you want to referee really weird alien settings, you have to know this stuff.

Most role-playing games depend on established literary and film genres for their settings, such as the fantasy, post-holocaust, and science-fiction genres. Everybody knows what to expect from these groups. That's why we gravitate

toward the science-fiction section in the paperback stores, or rent any video with spaceships and laser-toting he-men.

The "90% rule" is a pretty good rule of thumb for success in selling genre products. That is, 90% of what the customer gets should be the same old, familiar genre elements he's seen in all the other genre products he's bought. Sure, he wants a few twists – the 10% worth of novelty – just so he gets something really new. But if he's bought a Western novel, he wants it to *be* a Western novel, with all the old familiar trappings: six-guns, saloons, and tough hombres. Wandering too far from the established formula is pretty risky.

The majority of role-playing settings are patterned on three very successful types of genre settings: the fantasy world of

Tolkien's Middle-earth®, the apocalyptic world of post-holocaust Earth, and the high-tech worlds of militaristic space opera. The D&D®, AD&D®, MERP™, GURPS® Fantasy, WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLEPLAY, PALLADIUM® Role-Playing, and other FRP games share conventional setting elements like orcs, dragons, elves, dwarves, quasi-medieval cultures, and epic conflicts with the Forces of Evil. The GURPS AUTODUEL®, TWILIGHT 2000™, and GAMMA WORLD® games portray a recognizably modern Earth degenerating into an ultraviolent, barbaric New Wilderness where only the strong and well-armed may prosper. The STAR TREK®, SPACEMASTER™, TRAVELLER 2300™, TRAVELLER®, BATTLETECH®, and STAR FRONTIERS® games are generally set against the backdrop of galactic armed conflicts with futuristic technology in the service of the star warrior.

I don't mean to suggest that there is no room for originality in genre-based games; that's obviously not the case. But here's the irony: We admire truly original role-playing settings, but the more original and unconventional the setting, the harder it is to create and sustain a role-playing campaign in that setting.

The games reviewed this month – the EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE and SKYREALMS OF JORUNE games – feature alien role-playing settings that are distinctive, original, and brilliant – which is kind of a shame, since they require distinctive, original, and brilliant players and game masters to make them work. Fortunately, we don't even have to play these games to treasure and admire them, to recognize them as superior models of role-playing, and to steal ideas from them for our more mundane campaigns.

## EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE

Science-fantasy role-playing game

**Tékumel Source Book: Swords and Glory, Volume 1, Book 1**

An EPT game supplement

Different Worlds Publications \$12.00 each

Author: Professor M.A.R. Barker

The world of Tékumel evolved in the imagination of M.A.R. Barker many years before the first role-playing game was published. Barker conceived of it as a setting for science-fiction adventures, but the appearance of the D&D game in 1975 inspired him to develop Tékumel as a setting for fantasy role-playing. As an exercise in imaginary universes, it has more in common with Tolkien's Middle-earth than with the campaign worlds of most role-playing games. Tékumel is a setting rich in language, culture, and history. Barker, like Tolkien, is a college professor with a professional interest in language and culture, providing an excellent background for his more stimulating avocation of fantasy world creation.

However, Tolkien's Middle-earth has its

roots in Western European myth and culture. Tékumel's inspirations come from two other sources: historical non-Western myth and culture, and the various synthetic myths and cultures of 20th-century science-fiction and fantasy literature. The result is a distinctive and alien fantasy setting.

Professor Barker's *EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE* game (henceforth, EPT) was first published in 1975 by TSR, Inc. The original boxed edition had a single spiral-bound booklet and three gorgeous, full-color maps. One of these full-color maps was of a city – the first fantasy city most of us had ever seen. However, the \$30.00 price tag made EPT a luxury beyond the means of most gamers; in 1975, the *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®* game cost only \$10.00. The 1987 *Different Worlds EPT* edition is a 112-page booklet with only one map – a reduced, two-color version of the Jakallá city map. Excluding the two campaign maps and box, this \$12.00 booklet is essentially identical to the original edition and is certainly more affordable.

The 1987 edition of the *Tékumel Source Book, Book 1* (henceforth, Book 1) contains roughly one-third of the material originally published in 1983 by Gamescience, Inc., as *Swords and Glory, Volume 1*. The 1987 Book 1 contains extensive essays on the history, politics, legends, locales, creatures, and peoples of Tékumel. *Different Worlds* plans future publication of the rest of the original 1983 *Swords and Glory, Volume 1* material as the *Tékumel Source Books, Books 2 and 3*.

**Mechanics:** Regarding mechanics, EPT offers a variation of the D&D game system, using many familiar concepts such as armor class, hit dice, experience points, movement in inches, spell lists, etc. Character creation is a little more colorful and involved, character advancement is more gradual, increase in combat and spell abilities is only partially determined by increase in character level, and high-level characters do more damage when they hit – but all these variants are fairly simple modifications of basic D&D game concepts. If you know the D&D game, you can zoom right through the mechanics sections – and ignore them, if you want. This is good news if you're contemplating using EPT as a supplement for your D&D game campaign.

**Magic and technology:** Looking for some nifty new magical devices for your campaign? How about some ancient technological artifacts? EPT features a group of devices called "Eyes" – each a small, dull gem with an eyelike aperture and an activating stud. The titles of these little jobbers are their most appealing features: "The Eye of Being an Unimpeachable Shield Against Foes," "The Eye of Calling Forth an Unconquerable Army," "The Eye of Exquisite Power over Maidens," and so on. It's great to have a couple of these hanging at your belt in a tight spot.

Actually, these and other EPT magical/technological devices are fairly standard magical stuff. The priest and magic-user spell lists are useful for player characters doing their usual thing (like looting, pillaging, and scorching the local flora and fauna), but there is little attention given to a rationale for their existence in the Tékumel culture. Some of these are pretty odd in terms of any alien culture. How about "The Amulet of Finding Treasure in the Underworld" – a little obsidian beetle that guides the user to the nearest treasure hoard. How does it detect the treasure? What definition of "treasure" does it use in deciding where to crawl? Its game purpose is embarrassingly obvious, but it's not clear how it fits into the Tékumel culture.

The nature, practice, and significance of magic in the Tékumel culture is poorly developed in the basic game, but that's typical for this sort of FRPG. (As long as PCs get to blow up stuff, who cares where the spells come from?) Explanations for magic are a bit disappointing in this otherwise well-developed alien culture, and EPT is less impressive here than is *Jorune*, which more successfully integrates magic into its alien culture. EPT Book 2 is said to provide more detailed and Tékumel-ish magic; we'll see when the book is available.

**The campaign:** Monsters and alien races galore are given in Book 1. When human space explorers discovered Tékumel, it was covered with nasty native flora, fauna, and intelligent races. The spacefaring humans and their assorted alien pals conquered the nasty natives and terraformed the planet. Then, several skillion years ago, some mysterious extra-dimensional accident popped Tékumel's solar system right out of Known Space into a Lonely Void. The technological civilization devolved to barbarism. Now there are native and imported life forms all over the place.

The names and conceptions of Tékumel's unique bestiary are satisfactorily unique and bizarre. For instance, we have the dreaded *Ssu*, the "Enemies of Man," aboriginal inhabitants of Tékumel – "tall, slender, six-limbed beings wrapped in what looks like greyish shrouds (actually a loose integument which keeps shedding and pulling off). They smell like musty cinnamon and make a high, sweet chiming sound." The text descriptions and illustrative anecdotes suggest queer and plausible alien races with distinctive cultures. The biology, ecology, and illustrations in EPT are less persuasive, though somewhat improved in Book 1. To be fair, most FRPG beasts and races are no more persuasive, but by comparison with the more plausible physiology and ecology of *Jorune's* aliens, EPT aliens rate only a "good" rather than an "excellent."

Then there's alien culture. Think about it: You never really doubt the existence of the Mayans. You never met a Mayan, but you look at photographs of their temples, architectural decorations, and artists'

conceptions of their garments, and you say, "Sure; I'll never see one of those guys, but they sure enough existed." It's the same with Tékumel. There is such a wealth of coherent historical, ethnographic, and linguistic detail that Tékumel simply *has* to exist. Nobody could make all that up.

Barker cheerfully acknowledges his sources – the ancient Egyptian, Aztec, Mayan, Hellenic, Mughal Indian, and medieval European cultures, and science-fiction and fantasy literature – but only a rare soul like Barker would be so knowledgeable about all these historical and fictional cultures – *and* professionally trained to appreciate what makes those disparate cultures distinct and fascinating. The peculiar decorative styles and exotic costumes of the illustrations, the beautiful, ornate, flowing script and the literal, awkward translation of the illuminated Certificate of Imperial Citizenship, the annotated roster of the names and deeds of the 61 Emperors of the Second Imperium, the casual references to contrasting notions of marriage, and the status of women in various human and nonhuman cultures – it's all so rich and plausible that it has to be real, yet still odd and unfamiliar enough to be truly alien.

It's impossible to suggest the texture and detail of a tapestry by displaying a few of its threads, but I'll share a few of my favorite features of Tékumel.

*The Sákbe Roads:* Take the Great Wall of China and spread it over an empire like an interstate highway system. To suit the Tékumelani taste for elaborate visual display of social status, divide the road into three tiers – the lowest tier for common travelers, caravans, and carts; the second tier for nobles, priests, officials, and senior clansmen; the third for exalted dignitaries, the highest aristocrats, and the Emperor's messengers. In peacetime, this network of monumental roads carries commerce, communications, and travelers among the Imperium's centers of civilization. In wartime, the Sákbe Roads present their imposing fortifications to potential invaders, and even if one section is captured, swift movements of troops along the roads threaten to outflank the intruder.

*The Underworlds:* What charming and elaborate rationales for dungeon-crawling the Underworlds are. Take, for example, the custom of *Ditlána* (translated as "renewing"): every 500 years or so, every city must undergo a ritual purification and renewal, knocking everything down and starting over again. Sounds expensive and wasteful, doesn't it? "Ditlána must be done," the people of the Tsolyáni Empire say, "or else we are no more noble than beasts." Of course, the temples are reluctant to abandon ancient, sacred shrines buried by this process, and various human, nonhuman, and monstrous denizens persist in tunneling the razed rubble into labyrinthine networks. These Underworlds may connect by sewers and drain-





Longtime gamers may remember the first edition of the EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE game, produced by TSR, Inc., in 1975. The original cover is shown here.

age tunnels with the Cities of the Dead (vast necropolises outside town walls) providing a dangerous but lucrative cottage industry for intrepid grave robbers. No one knows where all these underground passages lead; sometimes they connect with abandoned temple compounds, the cramped access mazes of the Ssu, or the incredibly ancient Tubeways: an automatic and fitfully operational subterranean transit system tunneled through the planet's crust.

My favorite feature is the use of grand and dignified diction in the titles, pronouncements, and institutions of the Tsolyáni, suggesting great age and tradition, relating remarkable events and traditions, and citing epigrams of noted historical figures. Consider the euphonious elegance

of the following: the Hirilákte Arenas, the Omnipotent Azure Legion, the Seclusion of the Emperors in the great fortress of Avanthár, the reign of Emperor Gyemu Dalisan, "the Magnificent and EverLiving." And how about this typical bibliographical reference cited for those interested in Nayári of the Silken Thighs, founder of the Bednállja dynasty of the First Imperium:


[Bibliography: "Gupaggáli nga Shshi" (the Might of Our Ancestors), by Daggála Mukkrotórr, in Salarvyáni, ms. preserved in Tsatsáyagga; "Nganjá pa Ssú!" (Flee, Ye Ssú!), by Dráka Grillpa, in Pecháni, ms. preserved in the House of Skulls in Mechanéno; "Kolumélan Ssána hiPathái" (Royal Whore of Love), by Pagártra Nemádu, in Tsolyáni, ms. preserved in the Imperial Archives, Béy Sý; and "Bednáll-

ja lél Béy Sý" (Bednállja and Béy Sý), by the same author, ms. in Tsolyáni, preserved in a private collection in Béy Sý.]

**Evaluation:** EPT and Book 1 are living classics of fantasy role-playing – a must for all gamers who appreciate elegant and alien FRPG settings. EPT should be forgiven for antique faults common to its contemporaries, and admired for its singular virtues – brilliant conception, lavish history and language, sheer volume of material, good writing, and vast potential for alien role-playing. Very few gamers are likely to establish orthodox Tékelmel campaigns, but as a source and model for fantasy adventure settings, Barker's universe should be a rich treasure trove of inspiration.

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## SKYREALMS OF JORUNE

Science-fantasy role-playing game  
SkyRealms Publishing, Inc. \$25.00  
Design, art, production: Andrew Leker, Miles  
Teves, Amy Leker, Mark Wallace

Boy, is this good, and it's different from most other FRPG campaigns. For instance, let's start with the box cover – the polished color, lighting, and composition of a classically rendered painting, depicting three beings attending the death of a fourth being. Two of the beings are clearly human; two are clearly nonhuman. All four are equally plausible in appearance. A dimly shimmering globe of light is suspended between the outstretched palms of two of the beings.

This is a painting with mystery, reverence, affection, and dignity. But where are the weapons, slaving monsters, armored knights, or iron-muscled barbarians? Where are the pageantry of war and the splatterings of gore? Don't these people know anything about fantasy role-playing?

Jorune often seems like the sophisticated role-player's ideal game. At the same time, it is also intimidating enough to discourage the casual gamer. Ironically, part of the intimidation comes from the sheer elegance and style of the setting; it also comes from weaknesses in rules and adventure presentation.

Here's one way to put it: Jorune is the best role-playing game I've never played. To better understand this statement, let's look at some of the things that make it so good, and the other things that discourage me from playing it.

**Mechanics:** The first of the four enclosed booklets, the Player Manual, contains the basic mechanics, character design procedure, and an overview of the campaign. SkyRealms Publishing has provided at least two rules revision packages, free of charge: the 1986 edition (a 16-page rules supplement with revised character sheets) and the 1987 version (a 20-page rules supplement with revised character sheets). These revision packages contain substantial changes to the original Player Manual. All citations in this review

are from the first edition of the game or the August 1987 rules supplement and character sheet (available on request directly from SkyRealms Publishing).

I tried to create the Jorune equivalent of a player character specializing in "magical" skills. It was quite a chore puzzling through the rules in the Player Manual and trying to cross-reference them with the rules supplement and updates. Here are a few typical problems I encountered:

1. Imprecise usage of game terminology appears in the text. For example, here's a sentence from one of the updates: "You may only choose dyshas from the lowest rank of each group." Later in the paragraph, it says, "The steps are separated by a thin line." Nowhere is the concept of dysha (spell) "rank" or "step" defined. The example does not clarify the concept, and the only place where the steps are separated is on the revised characters sheet, where in fact the steps are indicated by arrows, not by thin lines.

The example above is exceptional in that I never did figure out what was really intended. In a number of other places, the language is imprecise, but could be puzzled out with patience and common sense.

2. No clear statement exists in either rules supplement about which passages in the original edition were to be deleted or ignored. You must read everything in both the original rules and the supplement, then figure out whether a specific passage in the updated text is an alteration, replacement, or new addition to the original rules. Since the rules supplement does not follow the presentation structure of the Player Manual, this is not straightforward and is sometimes confusing.

3. The Jorune rules include misleading advice. Innocent enthusiasm leads the designers to claim that everything is simple and easy, when it is in fact anything but that. For instance, in the introduction to character creation (Player Manual, page 1), you are repeatedly exhorted to not "tarry too long on any single item or rule" and to "make your choices with some speed. The Sholari [game master] is proba-

bly trying to get all of the player's [sic] character sheets finished so that gaming can begin." These are laudable sentiments, but struggling with the rules writing and revision presentation does little to speed and simplify the task of designing a character. On the same page, consider the place where the reader is told: "After a Sholari is chosen, it's time to get underway. The Sholari needs to have time to be familiar with all the books; a light reading should suffice." I'm sorry; I can accept a light reading of the Tauther and Sholari Guides with considerable skepticism, but a light reading of the Player Manual is impossible, and a light reading of the sample adventure would not prepare a game master for running the adventure.

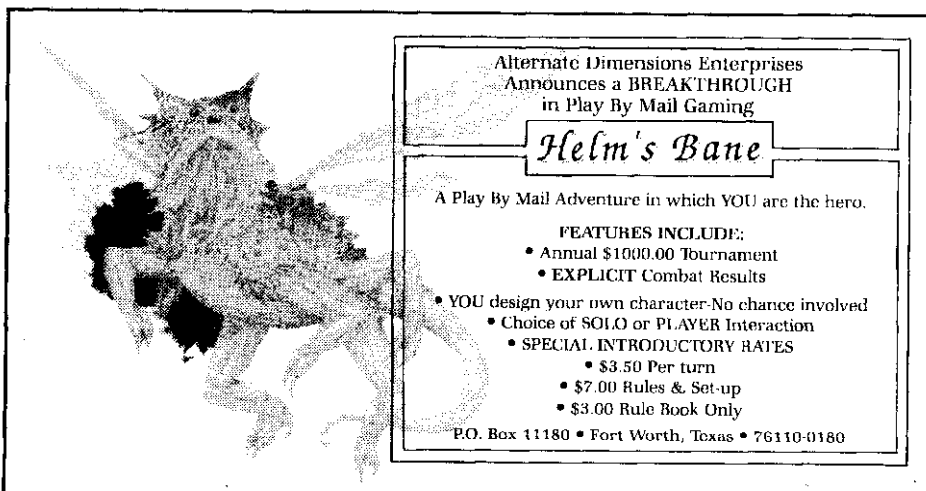
I like the skills lists and descriptions; they're useful, well-written hooks for characterization, and they effectively suggest the alien culture of Jorune. But each skill rating (from 1 to 10) may translate to a different percentile chance of success, according to the specific skill (as per the updates, Skill Level 2 for flora recognition is 50%; for seamanship, 40%; for geology, 20%; for Shantha etiquette, 10%). This system may simulate the designer's vision of these skills, but it's a mess for quick session improvisation with player and nonplayer characters.

Jorune's combat mechanics are more suitable for fantasy role-playing than for heroic-fantasy wargaming. In the narrative examples, Jorune characters fight reluctantly and are grimly practical. The rules concerning initiative, striking, weapon differentiation, and wound effects are relatively involved and clunky (comparable to the RUNEQUEST® game's third edition rules in complexity and pacing), but the initiative and wounds phases introduce dramatic elements missing in many other RPGs. Role-players with wargaming backgrounds may be puzzled by the light gloss on tactical maneuvering and pursuit, but players more interested in character development than combat resolution won't be disappointed by the narrative examples and informal guidelines.

I respect SkyRealm's integrity in making extensive rules updates available free of charge (certainly an exception in this industry). However, the problems with the presentation of the rules are deterrents to beginners and annoyances for experienced players. Further, the relative complexity of the game's systems greatly limits Jorune's appeal to the mass market (by which I mean us folks who enjoy D&D and bare-bones AD&D games).

Despite my complaints, my reservations about the rules have not dimmed my enthusiasm for the game. Now we come to Jorune's strengths – the magic system and the campaign background.

**Magic and technology:** The plentiful presence of isho (magical energy) and isho-shapers (magic-users) on Jorune crucially influences the cultures and history of



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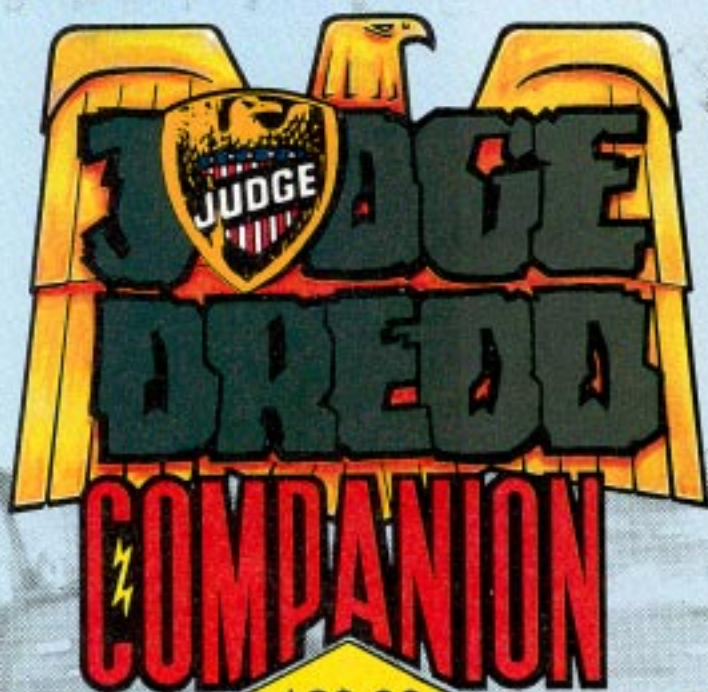
# DO YOU FEEL LUCKY, PUNK?

Well, do you? You ought to, because Games Workshop are releasing the first major rules supplement for Judge Dredd - the roleplaying game. Called *The Judge Dredd Roleplaying Companion*, it's a hefty hardback collection of all manner of great things to help you enjoy yet more roleplaying adventures in that most dangerous futuristic setting, Mega-City One, as featured each week in *2000AD*.

What's it got in it? New rules, additional special abilities and the introduction of Judge Exorcists!! Articles on super-powered vigilantes, the rules for shuggy, a guide to BritLit One and a fully-detailed sector of the city! There's even a pull-out-and-play Block Out boardgame! And the adventures: *On The Beat*, *Channel 9 Crime Time Special*, and *Fear & Loathing in Mega-City One*.

Assembled by the co-author of the original Judge Dredd game, Marc Gascoigne, the *Companion* is stuffed with contributions from top JDGP authors, including Hugh Tynan, Richard Halliwell and Pete Tamlyn. As some creep said, it's the most essential complement to Judge Dredd since the lawgiver.

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Jorune. Anyone discouraged by typical FRPG medieval settings hardly disturbed by cheap and plentiful magic is sure to appreciate such a virtue.

Jorune generously details the rationale and pseudophysics of magic, and the process by which certain beings learn to exploit magical energy. The muadra, a human race that naturally pulls in isho energy, learn as youngsters to "kern," or discharge the energy. Young muadra must regularly visit "kerning bays" to blow off energy. Later, as they learn to control and shape the energy into "naulls" (coherent energy orbs that form from the muadra's palms), they are taught various discharge skills called "Dyshas." Dysha effects are very similar to typical FRPG spell effects; dyshas can bake targets, levitate objects, heal, and defend against other dyshas.

The special jargon, technology, and cultural institutions centered around isho are derived from the true natives of Jorune, the shanthas. Shanthic culture, now in decline after a disastrous conflict with the early human settlers of the planet, has an entire technology based on isho-sculpting. With the cle-eshta (stone pillars that amplify isho senses), skilled shanthas can pick up information about isho weather all over the planet. (Magical weather? What a delightful concept!) Shanthas can travel instantaneously all over the planet

through a network of warp doors. The shanthas, peaceful and contemplative by nature, are bewildered by the humans' intense interest in mastering dyshas and isho technology; the humans are awed and intimidated by the magical powers of the shantha.

**The campaign:** Humans came to the planet Jorune in A.D. 2123. There, they found a number of startling enigmas. A variety of intelligent races were living in relative harmony. The humans discovered no technologically advanced race, yet the thriddle (one intelligent race) maintained a primitive agricultural society amidst the monumental ruins of some vanished civilization. Bizarre geological formations were the apparent source of a hitherto-unknown form of energy. However, when survey reports could produced no evidence of potential threats to a human colony, human settlements were established. Later, war on Earth cut the colonies off from communication and supply.

Desperate colonists inadvertently goaded the shantha into revealing their long dormant destructive abilities. All the human colonies were attacked. In retaliation, the humans struck back with biological weapons, decimating the shanthas. Human and shanthic civilization collapsed. Now, 3,500 years afterward, humans, shanthas, and the other races of Jorune have created their own unique, melting-pot culture. This period is the setting of the Jorune role-playing campaign.

In most fantasy and science-fiction role-playing campaigns, the player character generally expects to get ahead in the world by knocking the stuffings out of someone or by grabbing a lot of loot. Some games put more or less noble constructions on these activities, but these often boil down to a dedication to accumulating power.

In Jorune, the primary motivation of beginning characters is to become full citizens of Burdeth, the country where the campaign is set. Those seeking citizenship are called "tauther." The status they seek is called "Drenn" - full citizenship. Upon initiation of the "tauther" process, each candidate is given a metal challisk. Upon this challisk, the tauther is expected to accumulate marks of approval from the Drenn they meet in their travels, signifying the tauther's suitability to advance to Drenn status. A citizen particularly impressed with the character and achievements of a tauther may appear in person at the Hall of Drenn and personally attest to the tauther's sterling qualities. Marks on the challisk or personal testimonials earn the player character Social Points. When a certain number of Social Points are accumulated, the character may formally apply for citizenship.

Thus, each encounter a PC has must be viewed, not in terms of how his actions might make him more deadly or powerful, but in terms of what actions might recommend him as a good citizen. Maybe rescu-

ing kittens from trees or helping old ladies pay their mortgages isn't standard role-playing game fare, but in Jorune, these activities are as meaningful as bashing goblins or robbing graves. Making such encounters into dramatic role-playing sessions might be difficult, but it is just the sort of challenge good GMs and players cherish.

The second book, the Tauther Guide, is a player's guide to the campaign, presented as a primer for Drenn candidates to prepare them for what they are likely to encounter as they travel through the lands of Burdeth in search of marks of approval on their challisks. This is a masterpiece. Read this first - before the Player Manual - and you can easily forgive any faults in game mechanics.

Concise, deliberately incomplete information is given on the major races, history, geography, and cultural practices of Jorune. Superb illustrations - accompanied by wry, enigmatic captions - perfectly communicate the peculiar tone and spirit of the Jorune campaign. Much of the vocabulary and concepts are bewilderingly alien; just enough can be guessed from context to make some sense of what is read. These tantalizing, half-comprehended hints adroitly support Jorune's air of wonder and mystery.

Most of the third book, the Sholari Guide, is devoted to details on the intelligent races, creatures, history, and places of Jorune that the GM needs to know, and that the player has to find out by hard experience. The separation of player and GM campaign knowledge into two books is exceptionally well-conceived; this principle is so obvious, yet so rarely served by most other RPG or supplement designs.

The alien races and creatures provided in this guide are the finest in the field, both in concept and execution. I'm dazzled by the illustrations; these pictures are worth more than a thousand words. The settings, postures, and dramatic stagings of the illustrations are startlingly eloquent, especially in an industry where illustration is often of dubious quality or only marginally supportive of the specific text it accompanies. The verbal descriptions are also excellent, offering vivid details of distinctive verbal mannerisms, personality traits, alien biology, and peculiar social customs. The only thing I can think of that compares with Jorune in its treatment of alien races is the brilliant and lamentably out-of-print Trollpack for the RUNEQUEST game - one of the finest FRP supplements of all time.

Also in the Sholari Guide are the best hints on how to create proper Jorune role-playing adventures. These hints are presented as a chapter on encounters, consisting primarily of numerous tables suggesting various events, personalities, and circumstances that might be combined to make up an encounter. The philosophy suggested by the contents of the tables is perfect for Jorune, but by current



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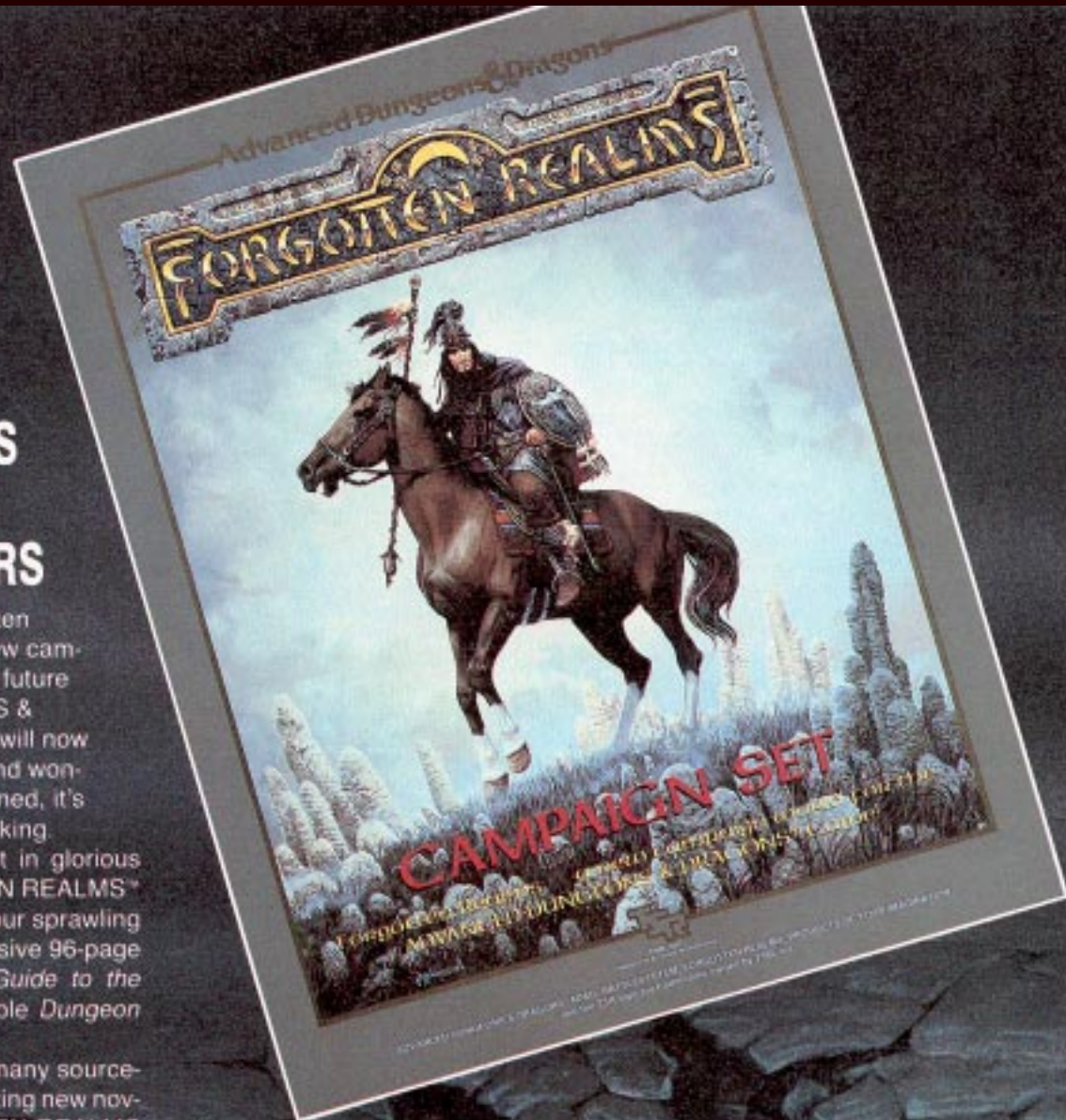
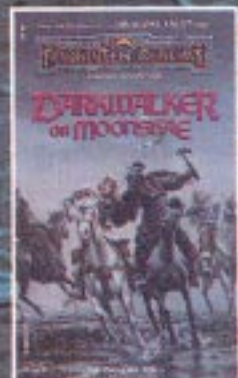
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# ONE GIANT STEP FOR DRAGONKIND



standards of game master support for preparing adventures and campaigns, this material is inadequate. Jorune is a unique and sophisticated sort of role-playing experience; even experienced and gifted GMs need more help in visualizing the kinds of encounters and adventures appropriate to this unfamiliar setting. Considering the uneven presentation of the adventure that accompanies the game, this is another major weakness in Jorune - it provides the GM with inadequate guidance and models for the types of adventures that can effectively exploit Jorune's preeminent virtues as a role-playing setting.

The fourth book, "The SkyRealm Kolovisondra," is the introductory adventure. It is based on a wonderfully imaginative scenario idea but is incompletely developed by current adventure design standards.

On Jorune, certain geologic formations can accumulate vast quantities of isho, causing large sections of crust to break free of the planet's surface and float about in the air like clouds. Such islands in the sky are often sites of ancient shanthic ruins, isho-rich crystals, and other valuables. The characters are employed by two men planning an expedition to explore a SkyRealm which has recently broken loose from its moorings and which is now drifting out over the ocean.

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The setting, challenges, and encounters of the scenario are excellent, but the organization and presentation of the material is less developed and professional than one would expect from a major FRP game company. This is actually not much of an inconvenience, since any FRP GM experienced and sophisticated enough to understand and appreciate Jorune can probably develop the outlined events and encounters into a solid adventure. On the other hand, it's a comparatively difficult scenario for a less-seasoned GM to run, and it lacks the GM tips and anecdotes that help even an experienced GM present the adventure more effectively.

In terms of presentation, the game's narrative and descriptive text is generally well-written. Often presented through the peculiar language and perspective of a Jorune native, the presentation style avoids clumsy exposition, relying rather on atmosphere and context clues for understanding. Jorune's convincing and flavorful use of language - especially the special terms for magical practices and alien cultural institutions - is a strong feature. However, the writing style of the rules, while colorful and right-minded, is amateurish and unclear. But the illustrations are simply spectacular.

#### Short and sweet

*The AADA Road Atlas and Survival Guide, Volume One: The East Coast*, by John Nowak. Steve Jackson Games, \$6.95. This item is another surprisingly plausible (well, plausible enough) campaign supplement for the GURPS AUTODUEL and CAR WARS® game universe. The annotated road atlas of the East Coast makes good reading, with useful game information and adventure hooks. Rules for GURPS helicopters are given, and the campaign support, staging, and scenario ideas sections are first-class. The adventure, "Escape from Poughkeepsie," is pretty convincing. *Road Warrior* and post-holocaust fans should be well-satisfied.

*Teenagers from Outer Space*, by Mike Pondsmith. R. Talsorian Games, \$10.00. Yo, dude. Check it out. A humorous role-playing game about teens from the Cosmos. Here's the game itself, telling you how it is:

"The plot of *Teenagers from Outer Space* is pretty simple. Aliens from Out There invade our planet. They enroll their kids in our schools; shop in our shopping malls; hang out in our fast food joints. It's sort of like 'Leave It To Beaver' crossed with the 'Twilight Zone,' 'The Outer Limits: and 'Alien.'"

"We said this was simple. We didn't say it made sense."

Hey, it's like totally well-written and presented, man. I can't tell who'll dig it more: old folks, who think teen culture is like totally weird, or veritable teens who get a kick out of parodying their own

Still, there are a number of features commonly found in better game designs that are absent here. There are no prepared characters or NPCs; detail, staging, and GM tips for the adventure are inadequate; and, directions for designing and developing adventures with the peculiar flavor of Jorune are sparse. Attention to these and other faults - in particular, to the cumbersome rules presentation - in a revised edition would make Jorune less frustrating and intimidating for a prospective sholari.

**Evaluation:** SKYREALMS OF JORUNE is a wonderfully original and inspiring FRPG campaign setting. On that basis alone, it is certainly a worthwhile purchase. Jorune's subtle and unconventional role-playing style may not appeal to power gamers or axe-swinging heroic-fantasy fans, but those who admire an atmospheric, consistently developed campaign setting will find much to appreciate. Its less-than-effective presentation of the introductory adventure and of GM adventure and campaign tips are of little concern for experienced GMs, but the confusing rules presentation may deter those eager to start their own Jorune campaigns.

cultural stereotypes. Simple rules, fast pacing, and numerous hints on how to make comedy role-playing work make this game unique.

B1-9, *In Search of Adventure*, by TSR staff. TSR, Inc. \$15.00. This is a collection of the choice bits from the first nine B-series D&D Basic Set modules. A frame is provided to fit the adventures into the Grand Duchy of Karameikos, the first country treated in TSR's D&D Gazetteer game supplement series. In addition to some good, old-fashioned dungeons by world-class designers like Gary Gygax, Doug Niles, and Tom Moldvay, there are two exceptionally fine adventures here. One, "Rahasia," is a classic low-level FRPG scenario by Tracy Hickman of DRAGONLANCE® saga and *Ravenloft* fame. The other is David "Zeb" Cook's "The Veiled Society," a rare example of a political and diplomatic adventure in an urban setting for low-level D&D game characters.

Aside from the intrinsic value of these adventures, they are perfect for introducing new players to FRPGs through the simple, well-presented D&D Basic game system.

In the "Role-playing Reviews" column in DRAGON® issue #126, Undead (from Mayfair Games, Inc.) was identified as a Role Aids™ AD&D game campaign supplement. It is not an AD&D game product, which could only be published by TSR, Inc. - Editor



# MEGATRAVELLER

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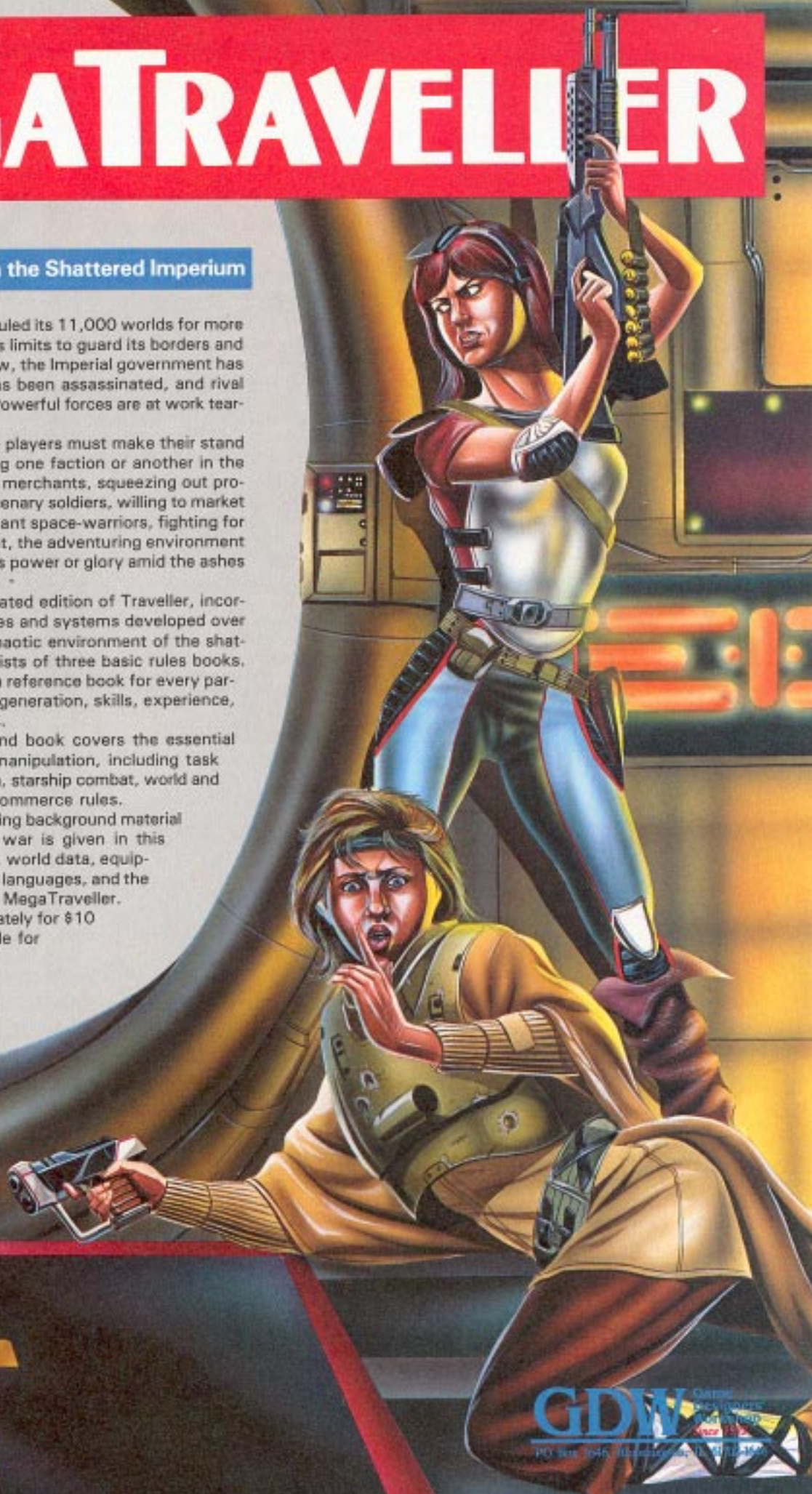
**The Players' Manual:** Intended as a reference book for every participant, it includes tasks, character generation, skills, experience, personal combat, and psionics rules.

**The Referee's Manual:** This second book covers the essential elements of universe creation and manipulation, including task resolution, starship and vehicle design, starship combat, world and system generation, and trade and commerce rules.

**The Imperial Encyclopedia:** Supporting background material for the Imperium and the ongoing war is given in this volume, including library data, maps, world data, equipment lists, word generation for major languages, and the forms and charts necessary to play MegaTraveller.

These books will be available separately for \$10 each. The boxed set will be available for Christmas and will cost \$30.

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(continued from page 6)  
step into the ring. I want more ideas instead of rules! I was thrilled to read James A. Yates's article on "The Mystic College" (issue 123): It was new, it was exciting, and best of all, it wasn't a set of rules. It fit perfectly into a spot in my campaign that I just couldn't fill. That is the kind of thing that I buy DRAGON Magazine for.

Don't get me wrong. As a DM, I have been known to throw in some little piece of magic or a new monster to give my players a break from: "A ring? Well, can I control people, control animals, regenerate; do I feel warm, weak; can I jump, walk on water, etc.?" It is almost a chant when my players find a new item. This is not what I am writing about. I am trying to get the point across that the revisions of the ranger, the thief, the druid, the monk, barehanded combat, and dragons, just to name a few, are only making a muddled mess out of the game.

Timothy J. Cunningham  
Wichita KS

I am writing in regard to W. Brian Barnes's [second] letter in issue #122 of DRAGON Magazine. In this letter, he states that "a 1st-level magic-user, played by the books, is hopelessly deficient in survival skills." I must disagree with this notion.

I have been playing AD&D games for over five years, and I have found that my favorite characters are thieves and (you guessed it) magic-users. These character classes seem to have more options open to them and are, in my mind, more fun to play than any other.

Mr. Barnes states that magic-users are much

like a one-charge magical item since all the "defenseless" spell-caster can do is shoot off his one spell and pray that he survives afterward. I must say (meaning no offense to those who agree with this view) that such a view shows very little imagination. There is surprisingly large room within the actual rules for the improvement of the "cast and run" magic-user. For example:

1. A magic-user proficient in the use of the dart as a weapon can effectively back up the party by throwing these weapons (at a rate of three per round) over the heads of those shorter than the mage or through gaps in the front row (and let's face it, there's plenty of room left between two fighters when they're busy hacking at foes in front of them).

2. The cantrips presented in *Unearthed Arcana* can be used to create some extremely useful (and interesting) effects. A *smokepuff* cast in the face of an opponent is an effective way to blind someone for a round. The cantrips *footfall*, *thump*, *rattle*, *groan*, and *creak* can be used to draw the attention of the enemy to their backs and perhaps break their morale in the process. These "small magics" can be used to effect many useful (and hilarious) results.

3. Use the race of the magic-user to the fullest advantage. A dwarf can effectively double his rate of fire with darts and knives due to his ambidexterity. Other types of elves can be useful woodland guides, even though their chosen profession would seem to preclude such abilities.

4. Double-classed magic-users can wreak havoc upon friend and foe both. Imagine a thief

(continued on page 92)

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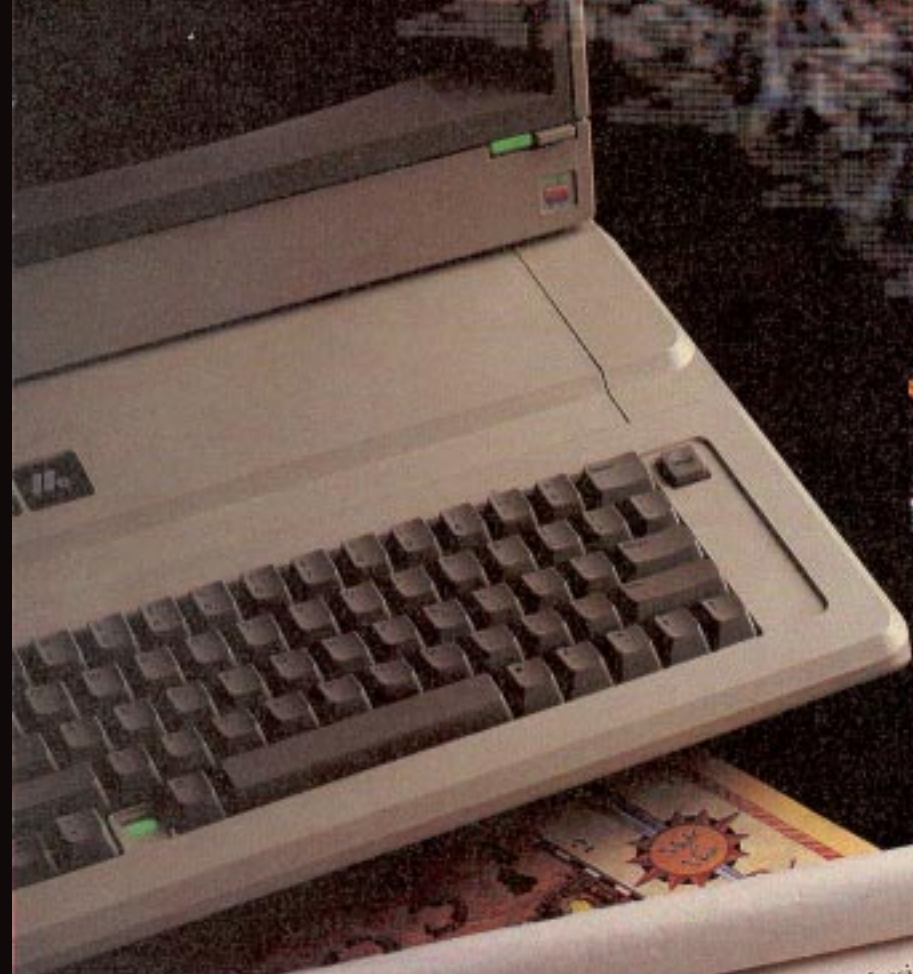
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# The Game Wizards

*The latest from Lake Geneva*

by James M. Ward

Recently, I was made the manager of the Creative Services department at TSR, Inc. Creative Services generates games and books for the marketplace, and as manager I am responsible for maintaining the high standards that you DRAGON® Magazine readers are used to seeing in TSR® game products. In this column, I would like to answer a question that we commonly see in our mail, and talk a little about TSR products for 1988.

## How do I get published by TSR?

That is the single most-asked question in our mail, and the answer is simple. You must be a published author of gaming material before TSR's Creative Services department will consider you for free-lance work. This rule was created because there are thousands of people who want to submit material to TSR every year, and it's impossible to review that material with the staff the company has on hand.

There are several ways to be published. If you have already been published by another game company or have written articles for DRAGON Magazine, modules either for DUNGEON™ Adventures, or POLYHEDRON™ Newszine, this sets you up to deal with TSR's free-lance design coordinator, Bruce Heard. Write a brief note telling him you are available and what your gaming interests are. If you have editing skills and are interested in editing work, you may contact Karen Martin, who coordinates that area of free-lance work. Both Bruce and Karen may be reached by writing to:

Bruce Heard/Karen Martin  
TSR, Inc.  
PO. Box 756  
Lake Geneva WI 53147

Once you have been published, don't start sending in your wonderful manuscripts. The company has contracted the entire 1988 schedule; we are currently working on ideas for 1989. If you don't

presently deal with TSR but you meet the above qualifications, contact us to say you are interested in working on products, and tell us which areas interest you most.

**Making deadlines** is one of the most important factors in dealing with TSR, Inc. The company presents every free-lance designer and editor with strict deadlines, and expects the free-lancer to meet or beat them.

It is also important for the designer to provide good, clean, entertaining concepts that haven't been presented several times before in products from TSR, Inc., or other companies. In the newspaper business, it's not big news if a dog bites a man, but if a man bites a dog, that's news. In the gaming business, it's not interesting if the player characters must save a princess, but if that princess saves the player characters, that's interesting.

## The 1988 product schedule

TSR, Inc., is going to have a 1988 lineup that's sure to appeal to the widest possible range of gamers. The following is a brief look at some of the highlights for next year, to give you a taste of what's coming. Future DRAGON Magazine pages will have many more details on the products I am going to hit, and there are many products I am not mentioning (we have to keep some surprises).

**January:** *Castle Greyhawk* is sure to be a hit with all AD&D® game players. Imagine a castle filled with dungeons of every level and with every type of monster, trick, and trap. Throw in lots of humor, and you have one of the most entertaining 128-page supermodules ever created.

**February:** The first of four, 256-page, full-color volumes of the *Gamer's Handbook of the Marvel Universe®* (for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES® game) appears this month, complete with sheets on many of the characters from Marvel Comics. The character sheets will be punched for three-ring binders for easy use and replacement. Players will get not only statistics but the biographical information that will help them properly role-play their favorite heroes.

March: The TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game boxed set *High Stakes Gamble* is a companion work for the TOP SECRET/S.I. game that creates a complete European campaign setting, incorporating the WEB and ORION organizations. Also appearing in March are *The Legend of Huma* (a DRAGONLANCE® Heroes book) and two DOUBLE AGENT novels, each including an AGENT 13™ novel and a TOP SECRET/S.I.™ novel.

**April:** The big story in this month is the HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER™ board game. TSR is creating a new line of fast-playing games, complete with special counters and a new look. This game, based on the best-selling novel by Tom Clancy, starts off the line. It will be a hit with the wargaming crowd and perfect for introducing friends to board games. Doug Niles, designer of the WORLD WAR II™ and ONSLAUGHT™ games, is even now hard at work on a project that will keep TSR the leader in state-of-the-art game systems.

**May:** The BULLWINKLE AND ROCKY role-playing game hits the stores in May! It's sure to be the cartoon gaming hit of the year. You can be right there when Bullwinkle tries to pull that rabbit out of his hat. "Presto!"

**June:** The FORGOTTEN REALMS™ 1989 calendar, AGENT 13™ graphic novel, and GREYHAWK™ Adventures #6 are all big items this month.

July: This month, TSR will produce the BUCK ROGERS™ board game and the DRAGONLANCE® board game, each with game boards that are works of art.

**August:** The AD&D GREYHAWK hard-back book will probably be one of the biggest hits of 1988. Filled with useful data for DMs and players alike, this volume will completely round out the WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ fantasy setting.

**September:** The second DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® art book will appear this month, providing fans with the best in fantasy art.

**October:** The Kara-Tur boxed set for the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ setting should satisfy all the demands that have been made by those game players who want more *Oriental Adventures* information. The set will contain two 96-page manuals and large maps of the Oriental lands of the Realms.

**November:** DOUBLE AGENT books, a BUCK ROGERS™ novel, and a BUCK ROGERS graphic novel appear this month.

**December:** *Lords of Darkness*, a 96-page book about the undead, the tenth D&D® game Gazetteer (all about those loveable orcs), and a Kara-Tur module should please role-playing fans. This month reveals another DRAGONLANCE novel as well (the third this year).

That's just a sample of the coming year's product - and there are lots of other exciting things coming that I know you are going to like. Stay tuned for more!



\$20.00

# Gob-Lobber

DWARF ONAGER

A horde of howling, ripping, green-skinned fiends was bearing down upon the beleaguered Dwarfhold. The catapult crew worked their machine frantically, raining rocks down on the advancing hordes, but the advance seemed irresistible. Then true disaster struck. For a hundred yards around the catapult, there was not a rock to be seen - all had been prised out of the ground and fired at the approaching Goblins. Despite the enthusiastic offers of young Gorm Foambeard to be fired instead of a rock, the situation looked hopeless. Then Gottri Flatnose had an idea.

Before anyone could stop him, Gottri had picked up one of the large mallets used to fire the catapult, and was running towards the advancing Goblins. A group of three or four Goblins had left their fellows behind, and Gottri felled two in as many blows of the mallet. By the time the others caught up, only one Goblin remained to be quelled with a swift kick to the lower body.

"Quick!" roared Gottri, "Truss 'em up before they come round! Here's our ammunition!" The insensible Goblins were soon securely tied and carried back to the machine.

"Don't look so upset, greeny," chuckled Gottri as the first Goblin was loaded. "You're going back to your mates." The arm snapped upright, and the netted Goblin hurtled through the air.

"AZZAAAAAADZ...." howled as it flew. The Dwarfs looked at each other with an air of injured innocence, then loaded the second.

The effect of these missiles was remarkable. The Goblin front rank faltered. Gottri, emboldened by his first success, stood some way in front of the machine with his mallet in one hand, grinning and beckoning.

The Goblin charge broke - clearly no-one wanted to be next in the catapult - and despite the curses and shouting of their officers, they stopped dead.

The next shot flew with unerring accuracy into the middle of the Goblin command group, scattering the assembled chieftains and turning the whole army to flight. Cheering Dwarfs crowded round the catapult crew as the last of the Goblins dwindled on the horizon. A great feast was held to celebrate the invention of the Gob-Lobber, as it came to be known, and had the Goblin hordes returned during the next few days, they would have had difficulty finding a single Dwarf capable of fighting.

## GOB-LOBBER

Gob-Lobber is a stone thrower, and follows the normal rules for machines of this type (Warhammer Book 1, pp. 50-1). When Goblins are used as ammunition, each creature hit (including the netted Goblin) takes one S 6 hit rather than D3. Any Goblinoid unit struck by a Goblin from the catapult must make an immediate rout test.

Designed by Michael and Alan Perry, the Gob-Lobber is a multi-part kit which requires some assembly. It is not recommended for young or inexperienced modellers. The boxed set contains all the models illustrated plus special bonus vignette of Dwarf cook with a pig on a spit! This engine of war can, of course, be used as a conventional stone thrower. Full rules and profiles are supplied for Warhammer Fantasy Battle.

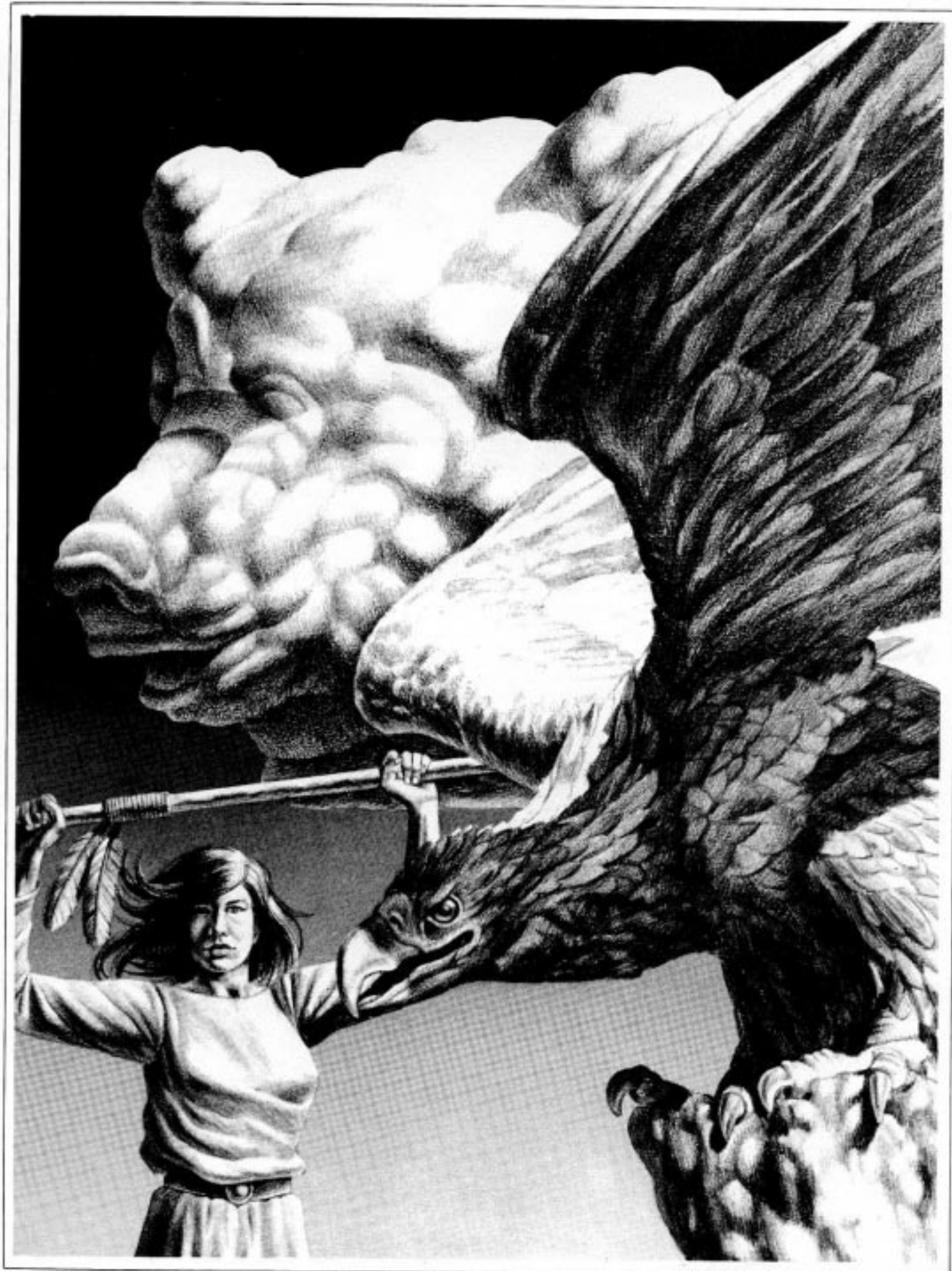


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small palm of herb, you see, enough to fit in the hollow of your hand."

Ranvaik watched her great-uncle rub the dried, crumbled herb between his large brown hands, releasing the oils hiding within. "Be always careful

here: do not lick your fingers or rub

your eyes; rinse your hands afterward." Ranvaik knew the herb was strong, but she had not known how strong until now. Even the smell of the crushed leaves was tempting her into a trance, luring her on a spirit-journey.

"Pay attention," her uncle said firmly, but not harshly – he knew the nature of the shaman-herb. "Now, in the hollow of this stone, with this other stone, you powder the pearly green rock, to give color – are you watching, girl? – and then stir the two together, herb and earth, kin to each other and to you. They will hold your body to the earth, even as they send your spirit to the otherworlds. That is a mystery of my work. One part herb, one part earth. And five parts bear fat, to bind it all together and hold it on your skin. So. Out into the sun with it!"

They climbed together up the short ladder of the Clan House and out into the bright day. A breeze from the sea was just coming up, carrying salt and the smell of fish.

Ranvaik's uncle put the stone mortar down carefully in the sunlight and covered it with a thin piece of the sacred red cedar bark. Then he sat and looked up at his niece.

"Sit," he said, "and let us speak together."

Ranvaik sat, folding her long legs under her, looking with her hazel eyes into her uncle's black ones. "You are coming of age under this moon," said he, "and you must choose now whether you will live as a woman or as a master of spirits.

"Wait. Before you speak, listen. The spirit-quest is the same for both, mostly. You go into the wilderness, into the taiga, to fend for yourself. You must take nothing with you but the clothes on your body, for you must get your needs from the taiga's gifts. Somewhere there you will find a spirit who will be your guardian throughout your adult life. And then you will come back to the village. All this is the same.

"But if you are to master the spirits, you must find powerful guardians and helpers, you must have visions, you must be accepted by the spirits. I cannot tell you who you will see, or what. I can tell you that fasting, purifying your body, singing, all these will help you." He looked gravely at her for a long time, then his eyes became distant and Ranvaik thought he was daydreaming as she had been. He was old, after all, her mother's mother's brother, and full of wisdom and visions.

She waited some while longer, and was about to rise quietly and respectfully to leave him, when he spoke again in a deep voice. "Walk on the Spirit Way, daughter of the Whale House; I am waiting for you." He looked at her with eyes black and deep as unknown caves, and he seemed to grow large and terrible, his grizzly-bearded face changing as though, like one of the First People, he were going to become a beast. Power flowed out of those eyes, drawing her, seeking her, calling her.

Then her uncle blinked, and he was just a man again, an old man with a tired face. "I think it is time for you to

# The Spirit Way

by Leigh Anne Hussey

*Illustrations by Terry Lee*



go," he said. "I wish there was some gift I could give you, but you must take nothing. Go put on some moccasins, though." He did not look like he was 'going to get up or even embrace her in parting. Ranvaik could not tell what was wrong with him, but she did bend down and squeeze his hand in hers before she went back to her Clan House.

As she climbed the rise behind the village, she looked out over the five Clan Houses and the great Dance House, painted with the Clan beasts – Wolf, Raven, Whale, Bear, Eagle – beyond them to the sea that was the life of her people. "I will be a spirit-master," she swore to the houses and to the sea. "I will climb the World Tree, I will fly to the ends of the earths, I will row to the bottom of the sea to find the Mother of Sea-Beasts, I will heal the people. All this I will do. Av-pa, Uncle, I will be a shaman." Then she turned away from the village and did not look back.

Ranvaik sat under a cedar tree, breathing its subtle perfume, and meditated on the nature of the taiga. It was the last thing she could think of to do. She had bathed in the icy river, drunk its water, sung the purifying songs. There, in the middle of the river, with the water curdling around her, she declared herself open, ready for whatever might come. She had waited expectantly; after all, she was the sister-child of a great spirit-master, and surely the spirits would be clamoring for her.

But nothing had come. So, clean of body, she had found a seat and proceeded to empty her mind as av-pa had taught her, the better to hear the spirit-voices. But nothing spoke to her.

Having sent everything out of her mind, she decided to let the taiga back in first, as it was home to more than plants and beasts. Every stone, every leaf, every being in the taiga housed a spirit, she had learned, and so she considered the taiga, in case a stone's slow thought was speaking to her and she was not hearing it.

She filled her senses with the breathing of trees, the colors of mosses; she considered the world of small things that lay under the pelt of dead leaves and compost that clothed the taiga. She considered the qualities of animals, but never a one came near her. She had never seen the taiga so empty of beasts. And the idea of none of them appealed to her especially. Away with them, then! She needed no animal for her helping spirit. She would think about trees, and failing that, about herbs, and if that availed nothing, about rocks!

But even as her thoughts chased themselves in fury, under the tumult was a bleak despair. After all, the spirits had not made themselves obvious by making her ill – av-pa had started her training before that could happen, perhaps seeing the possibility of mastery in her. But supposing he had deceived himself in his desire for a student of his own kin? That meant that she was nothing but an ordinary woman. She would never see the otherworlds, never fly.

This was foolish! Even if something were speaking to her, she would never hear it through this storm of emotions. Well, she would listen, all right! She would fast until she starved if need be. She would rather die than come home not a shaman.

She clamped down on her thoughts to silence them. Into that silence one voice came, a niggling voice which she could not suppress: *You are a failure.*

Ranvaik had spent more than four days now in the taiga, alone. She'd lost count of the days. She had stopped feeling hungry a while ago, and now she felt light, as though a weight were gone from her. It was the weight of mortality, she knew, because she had ceased to worry about dying. She wandered aimlessly, falling and getting up again, singing all the while with words she could not remember. She stopped at night only when it became too dark to go on without falling over something.

She was lost, she knew, but didn't care about that either. She felt light, elated, as though she were flying. Every step seemed to take her high into the air and deep into the earth. Above her, suddenly, she heard an eagle's whistle. Looking up sharply, she saw the white belly and brown wings of the sea eagle. It wheeled over her, then winged away.

Headless of paths or obstacles, she ran, keeping it in sight through the budding trees. It was a sign, she knew it! She didn't have to worry about falling now, she was flying with the eagle, and it was leading her to her transformation.

The sun was bright; the taiga was a riot of color flashing past. She rose higher and higher, into the sun. She looked down and saw with new sight her body fallen and lying still, and the taiga spread out beneath her like a painted mask. In the distance she could see in one direction the ocean and in the other the mountains that discouraged travel farther inland. She looked around for the sea eagle, but couldn't find it.

She suddenly realized she was the eagle.

She screeched with joy, and she banked and swooped, feeling feathers turn on her pinions as she turned. Her first spirit-animal! And a powerful one at that! And what was this if not a vision? Wouldn't av-pa be pleased!

She was suddenly concerned for her body: perhaps it was dead, and her spirit had lodged in the body of the eagle. That would make her uncle unhappy. Well, she must see it if were true.

With sharp eyes she spotted her body, and pulling her wings close to her sides, she stooped as if to strike it. She came shooting down through the trees like an arrow aimed at her body's heart, everything blurred around her but that small space of flesh.

With a shock, she struck, and jumped up as though struck, blinking and looking around. Her eyes were seeing normally again; she looked at her hands – they were hands, not wings.

She felt suddenly drained and weak. She had succeeded in the first part of trial. She was more than an ordinary adult, whose animal was a mere guardian; she had flown in an eagle's body, seen with more than human eyes. Now she had to find food and her way home in order to complete her initiation as a shaman. To be the priestess of hunters, to be the provider of game to be hunted, she had to prove herself a hunter. She had to survive and get home.

This was a different training, one that everyone learned

to a degree. She looked around her, still almost seeing with keen hawk's eyes, searching for the paths which would show the habitual routes of small animals. There! The growth near the ground stopped, grew around and above a small space. There she stooped and found old tracks, though she could not tell how old. There she would set a snare. And now she had to find cedar trees and braid strips of their bark into a cord to make the snare.

It was getting late by the time she had set the snare, and she was exhausted. And she was worried now, too: such a small effort should not have tired her so. She knew she had tried too hard again and made things worse for herself. She'd overdone the fasting – she didn't know how long she'd gone without food, but now she might have made herself too weak to get food. She would look for nuts in the morning, she promised herself – those, at least, would tide her over until she could trap some meat, and she wouldn't have to run after them.

She slept well into the day, however, until hunger awakened her. She wondered why she was only just now noticing hunger. But that whole morning had brought no game to her snare.

This was foolish,, she chided herself. She was using only her mediocre woodcraft. Now that she had a shaman's gift of distant sight, she should be using it! She must stop thinking like an ordinary person, starting now. And with that, she let her soul fly in eagle form, looking for a stream that would lead her down to the sea, and then home. All the while, she moved slowly, eyes closed, at once seeing overhead and sensing all around her. The life of the taiga spoke to her in myriad voices, and as her eagle eyes caught a silver flash of reflected sunlight, her ears picked out the voice of water from among the others.

She snapped back into herself and went back to unset the snare, as she wouldn't be returning to it. Then she walked in the direction of the water. She toyed with the cedar bark cord, finally wrapping it around her wrist like an ornament from the winter dances. The bark was sacred and would be fortunate to wear, and it would provide her with a usable snare should she want it.

After a while the voice of the river became clearer, but there was another voice with it, and this one did not sing. It howled. Before she knew what was happening, she had come out of the trees a small distance from the pebbly bank of the river.

There was a crashing on the other side, and a white bear, huge and angry, came charging down toward her. She froze. She couldn't keep up a decent pace in her weakened state, so there was no point in running. There were no likely trees to climb near her either. She was resigning herself when she saw that the bear had stopped at the side of the river across from her. The bear stood up, roaring and reaching with long claws, but came no nearer. She retreated slowly into the trees.

To her amazement, the bear dropped down to all fours, turned, and went back up the bank. Ranvaik followed with her eyes. Could the bear have meant merely to frighten her off? But the white bear was second in fury only to the brown bear of the islands; she had never heard of one turning away from an enemy.

The bear had stopped now and was sitting at the foot of

a tree. Did it have some quarry trapped up there, then, that it did not want to abandon? That seemed likely. Curiosity overcoming her good sense, Ranvaik moved silently to where she might have a better view, and looked up into the tree.

There was something there indeed, high up, something small and white. It thrashed about a little, and was still again. She heard a bawling to which the bear responded. Ranvaik's scalp prickled; it was a bear cub, and its mother was at the foot of the tree. She looked harder, trying to see how it was caught, peering at the branches above it as well.

It seemed to have gone too high to support its weight; branches had broken and it had plunged down – she could trace its fall in the stripped branches. But one branch had caught the cub and not broken. One of the cub's paws was wedged up there somehow, and it was dangling, confused and probably hurt. Judging from the tree's torn bark and bent lower branches, Ranvaik guessed that the mother had tried to climb up and save her cub, but had not been able to get high enough.

Ranvaik was torn by the cub's pitiful wailing. And this was a sign also, for these bears were a long way from home. It would be greatly fortunate to save this cub – not only would it require good fortune, but if she succeeded, it would surely bring her good fortune: the white bear is a powerful spirit. She fingered her cedar bark cord and got an idea.

She felt suddenly giddy; she charged down into the water, waving her arms and shouting. "Wa! Everyone is afraid of Man-eating Man! Eat! Eat! His face makes the heart flutter!" She waded into the middle of the cold water and started swimming. The bear thundered across the river after her.

This was the dangerous part, for the white bear is also a powerful swimmer. Ranvaik let the current help carry her farther downstream, and she scrambled out on the other side as fast as she could. She looked back only a moment; the bear had stopped in the middle of the river and turned back to chase her. She ran through the trees, dropping her few clothes as she went in the hopes that they would distract the bear. The air chilled her wet skin. A crashing behind her told her the bear followed.

Fear sped her feet; the mother realized where Ranvaik was running and came on even faster. The cub's crying led Ranvaik. The torn tree was before her. She sprang to it and swarmed up the battered trunk with the mother close behind.

But again the white bear was thwarted by her great weight, even though she came as high as she dared. The tree swayed; the cub howled with pain. Still roaring, the mother backed down. Ranvaik began to make her way up to the cub. She could see now that it was a tangle of branches, some fallen with the cub, which trapped one of its hind feet. The cub's leg was twisted – broken, or wrenched joint from joint. The cub, hanging upside down, saw her coming and renewed its struggles, but pain overcame fear and it stilled, trembling. The mother was in a frenzy below.

Ranvaik eased herself out along the limb, the branches scratching her bare skin. The branch swayed dangerously,



and only then did it occur to her that the branch might not hold them both. Resolutely, however, she went on.

She spoke to the cub in soft tones, scolding gently, while she unwrapped the cedar-bark cord from her forearm. "Now what did you think you were going to find way up there, eh?" She tied the ends together, making a loop. "I suppose you were showing off for mama. Or was it a squirrel?" Ranvaik flicked the loop down, trying to get it over the cub's head; it kept batting the rope away. "Silly baby, didn't you know a squirrel is faster and lighter than you?" Ranvaik tried to keep the edge of anxiety out of her voice as the branch creaked. "Now hold still for me, baby; hold still so I can get hold of you."

The cub stopped pawing at the rope to take a swing at her arm. Ranvaik didn't cry out as the small claws raked her, but she clenched her teeth and managed to get the loop over the cub's head. She pulled and drew the cub up by its shoulders. She hoped the cedar-bark rope would hold. It could haul in a fifty-pound halibut, but she didn't know what the cub weighed. For that matter, she did not know if she could hold it. Up it came, with the branch quivering horribly.

Before the loop could slip off, she had grabbed one of the cub's forepaws. Now she quickly pulled the snarl of branches apart before the cub could wriggle free of her grasp. She moved in toward the trunk, to the base of the branch, the cub under one arm scratching and biting, a couple of broken branches in her other hand.

"Fine gratitude you show, small one," Ranvaik said through gritted teeth, "but I don't suppose your mother will be any more gracious."



She reached the trunk, and where two branches forked out from it she sat, put the branches in her lap, took both the cub's arms in her hands, and held it tightly. "Now look at me!" she ordered, glaring implacably into the brown eyes. "Right now I am your mother and you will do as I say!" She frowned at it, curled her lip, bared her teeth, and growled as convincingly as she could. The cub's eyes fell from hers, and its struggles subsided. It looked so much like a small child in its first Winter Bear Dance, with the red-cedar rope draped around its neck, that she almost laughed. But she kept her face and voice stern.

"Now keep still!" She thought about hitching the rope under the cub's arms and carrying it down on her back like a baby. But she wasn't sure the cub would keep still and not fall. No, it would be better to use the cord for something more practical; the mother bear might appreciate it if Ranvaik tried to fix her cub's leg. She took the rope off the cub and untied the knot with one hand and her teeth while holding onto the cub with the other arm.

She gently felt the cub's leg as she tried to remember how her mother treated such things. She couldn't feel any bone ends moving under the skin. The cub whimpered, but held still. The mother below had quieted also. Ranvaik put the cub's back to her chest and wrapped one arm around it, pinning its paws to its sides. Then she took the dislocated leg in the other hand and gave it a firm but not jerky pull.

The cub tried to bite her, but it wasn't limber enough and couldn't reach her. She gave it a cuff on the nose with her free hand. "Settle down! Your leg is back in joint, so be still unless you want us both maimed or killed!" She had no idea if the bear understood – stranger things had happened after all – but again it settled down and sat meekly while she tied the branches to its leg with the cedar-bark cord, as a splint.

Now, slowly and gingerly, holding the cub – which was becoming heavier by the minute – under one arm, she climbed down the tree. The mother called anxiously; the cub answered. Ranvaik knew a moment of terror as she felt the tree sway and knew the mother bear was coming up. She steadied herself where she was and looked down; the great bear was just below her, growling ominously. Ranvaik held the cub between herself and the mother like a shield; as she climbed down, the bear gave way before her.

She was on the ground! With her back to the tree, Ranvaik slowly set the cub down safe before its mother. Then suddenly the energy drained out of her like blood from a wound, and she fainted.

*I am the Master Bear. I am the teacher. I am the initiator. Why come you to me, mortal?*

*"Because I wish to see. Because I wish to heal."*

*You have seen. You have healed. You have healed a child of mine. What more do you wish, that you are here?*

*"I wish to heal my own people. I wish to command the spirits."*

*No one commands but I! The great mouth opens. To live, you must die! I am the devourer! I am the engenderer!*

In an instant of light, Ranvaik sees her flesh torn from her bones; her sight flies on eagle's wings as before. The

great bear nuzzles the bare bones, then opens its mouth in a roar: fire issues forth, and flesh. The bear re-covers the bones with flesh of molten earth, skin of light – just before the bones are covered, she sees them change under the bear's breath, glowing, stony. The bear looks up to where her sight flies with her soul; with a snarl, it lashes out with a great paw and smacks her into that fiery body. Now we must do it once more! Again the red mouth opens to engulf her.

Ranvaik jumped awake with a shout, seeing still a red mouth over her. There was a scrambling, and she looked to see the bear cub backing away from her in such haste that it tripped over its paws. Then it gave a small cry and jumped to its feet, leaning away from the injured leg. It looked at her with awe in its brown eyes. She looked down at herself; her body ached and her skin was torn, but the cub had licked her wounds clean. And she was alive! The mother bear was nearby and came quickly, hearing her cub's voice.

She loomed over Ranvaik, snuffing at her. Ranvaik was stiff with fear. What if the mother had been waiting for her to waken before she killed her? She did not want to die now! The bear eased herself to the ground and rolled onto her side. With a happy grunt, the cub bounded up to nuzzle her mother's belly for a nipple.

The mother was still looking expectantly at Ranvaik. Ranvaik hesitated, then moved slowly, afraid of misunderstanding the mother's intentions. But the great bear made no complaint as Ranvaik's hands probed gently to find a teat, and when she found one and with some embarrassment, she began to suck – after all, here she was, newly come to adulthood, being treated like an infant again. Ranvaik forgot all else in the delightful wash of warm, rich milk, sweet and strong. Food at last! And what food!

It took her longer than she had expected to get home; once she had partaken of the bear's milk, the bear took her as another cub, albeit one incapable of her kind of speech. And the mother was very firm about Ranvaik's not wandering off until she had learned everything the bear could teach.

Ranvaik tussled with her bear-sister, grew fat on bear-milk and then lean on hunting. The fishing was not so good, for the salmon would not come until another two moons had waned and waxed. But there were berries to be had, roots to dig for, and finally, a young deer, a buck who had won no territory this year. He was wary, beautiful.

Ranvaik, close by her bear mother, heard a low rumbling in the bear's throat, unlike any sound she had heard her make. Ranvaik could feel the mother's intensity as the deer made his way cautiously to the river to drink. The bear mother hummed, and the deer came nearer! Ranvaik fairly shook with excitement; her bear mother sang hunting magic just as her people did!

Then suddenly the bear charged out. The deer, seemingly confused at the sight of an unfamiliar animal, hesitated a second, and in that second the bear had pulled him down and dispatched him with one blow of her huge paw.

The meat was raw, but so what? Still, she was careful to find some pithy tubers to eat afterward to steady her digestion. As she ate, she considered: she would not be

able to kill a deer that way. She could not run as fast as her bear mother, either. For one thing, she had not the weight to push her way through the taiga. She would have to get stronger, and keep watching.

She and her bear-sister cornered a wild boar, once, while they were out on their own. Her bear-sister had grown so quickly she was now too big for Ranvaik to carry, and together they were strong, but the boar fought single-mindedly, with slashing tusks. Both she and her bear-sister were covered with blood when the boar charged and sliced open the bear's leg. In a fit of passionate strength, Ranvaik tackled the boar and crushed its skull with a rock.

Then she was at the side of her bear-sister, gently unmatting her fur to look at the leg wound. It was not too bad; Ranvaik licked it to encourage the flow of cleansing blood. When she had packed the wound with herbs she knew her mother used to prevent festering, they returned to the place by the river where they had first met, where they spent nights now, dragging their hard-won prize behind them. With the metallic taste of the bear's blood lingering in her mouth, Ranvaik knew that she and the bear were true kin now. They had shared blood, Ranvaik at the beginning, her bear-sister now. She would always have an ally in the otherworld.

But she had used a tool to kill, and she had killed in anger. She still had not learned all there was to learn. She did not eat that kill, but left her share for her bear-sister, to help her heal faster.

She spent nights curled up with the two bears; their fur was bristly, but they kept her furless body warm in the chilly nights that would come down on the balmy days like the lid on a box. It was a box of dreams, carved and inlaid with a mother-of-pearl moon. She would wake in the mornings with scant memories of forests of ice, wind-battered mountains, ever-frozen seas. Maybe it was because she was cold in the night, but she saw eyes in her dreams also, ancient and amused. The spirits were trying to reach her, she knew it.

So at last she took herself a fair distance upstream, to find silence and solitude. Again the taiga filled her senses, its scents and sounds and colors. But now she felt a part of it, not a separate vessel. She had lived in the taiga and from its gifts. The life of the taiga was in her, and hers in it. She was so full of excitement and joy she thought she would break open and scatter her singing soul all over the taiga.

She didn't realize until that moment that she was, indeed, singing. And something was responding. Something inside her, something in the taiga, she couldn't tell the difference until she saw the deer nearing her and felt a bearlike spirit rise in her.

This was the test. Almost in a dream, she rose and moved forward; the deer came to her as if entranced. She took its head in her hands, and they stood a moment so. "It is not I who have strength to kill you," she whispered, realizing only now the truth of the ritual words. "It is you who fall for me, for my needs. Carry my thanks with you. . . ." The deer bowed its head, then, and in that moment she loved it and knew that only with respect could she kill and not die inside.



With a sharp wrench, it was done; the deer crumpled to the taiga floor, and Ranvaik knew that it was not her physical strength that had killed. It was soul-strength, the spirit of the bear. She felt that wild power surge in her, ancient, terrible, implacable, and revelled in it.

Then, is a flash, she saw her uncle's face, changing as she had watched. She was changing! She would not be able to change back! She could not control the rising tide like the liquid stone that is the Mother Earth's blood. The bear-shape was too strong for her! Terror drove all strength from her, and she found herself shaking uncontrollably as she looked down at the deer, seeing the trickle of blood from its nose and mouth.

And as quickly as it had come, the bear-spirit left her trembling in the clearing. The Master Bear had come to consume her again and had left her weak as a baby. She was still young, and the Master Bear saw fit to remind her of it.

Humbly, gratefully, she picked up the carcass and carried it back to the tree by the river.

They ate their last meal there, she and the bears, then turned for their homes; soon it would be too warm for the bears to be comfortable. But Ranvaik vowed silently to her bear-sister that she would seek her out again, in the spirit-worlds.

She came up to her village from the seashore, which she

had reached at the mouth of a river, and walked along toward a familiar promontory. People stared at her as she passed, as if she were a spirit. Indeed, she felt like one returned from the dead. She supposed she looked it as well, with her body scarred and muscled – she had forgotten about clothes! No wonder they stared at her.

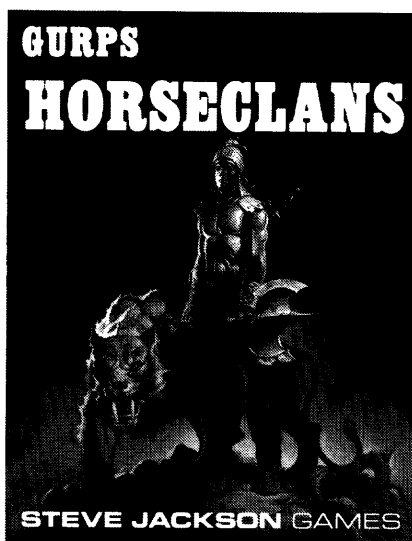
She approached the door of her great-uncle's house, but he was already coming out to meet her, with something rolled up in his hands. A smile was hiding in his beard, but his eyes shone with pride. "So," he said, "you come naked from the womb of your rebirth. A naked new babe should be clothed against the cold – here is your swaddling cloth." He shook the bundle out, and it clattered.

It was a dancing apron, a real shaman's dancing apron, of fine pale deerskin hung with deer toes and cones of copper to sound in dancing. And in the center was painted a bear, the white bear, and flanking it a sea eagle on each side. She recognized her uncle's painting style. He had been watching! He knew!

"The spirits have made you theirs, and it is good," he continued. "But that does not mean you now know all. First, I will teach you dancing. You say you know already how to dance? But I will teach you trance-dancing, the shaman's dance."

And together, each in their own aprons, dancing and drumming in the big, empty Dance House, they danced the Spirit Way.

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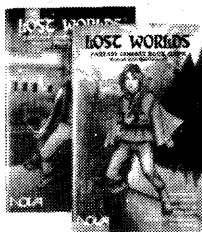
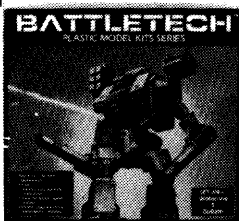
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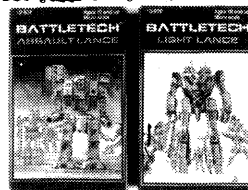
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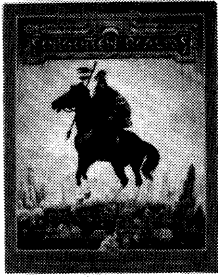
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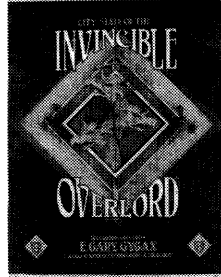
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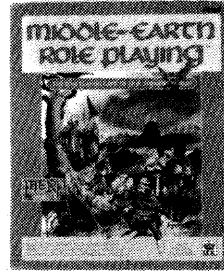
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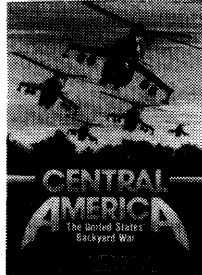
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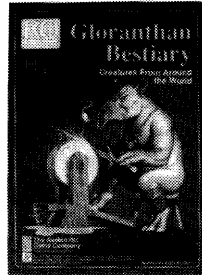
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# King's Table

A real-life Viking favorite for over 1,000

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Designed by Dale Oldfield and Mark Foster

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*King's Table* is an exciting and challenging board game dating back to at least the 4th century A.D. Called *Hnefatafl* (pronounced: neh' fuh tah' ful) by the Vikings, this game was played for over 1,300 years by the Germanic peoples of Scandinavia. It is most commonly associated with the Vikings, who pillaged and conquered large areas of Northern Europe, including Iceland, England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, the Baltic Sea region, and the northern coast of France (Normandy). Fragments of *Hnefatafl* boards and their game pieces have been found in most modern archaeological excavations of Viking settlements.

The fragments would have been all that remained of *Hnefatafl* were it not for the Swedish botanist Linnaeus, who first observed and described its play while touring Lapland in 1732. We are indebted to his careful records of his journey for our ability to reconstruct the probable methods of play for *Hnefatafl*, and thus *King's Table*. As the Vikings were gradually introduced to Christianity by missionaries, *Hnefatafl* was superseded by board games such as chess. Except for isolated regions like Lapland, *Hnefatafl* fell into disuse and, finally, into obscurity.

Now, however, Ancient Games, Inc., has collated the findings of modern scholarly research with Linnaeus's journal entries to produce the most accurate and definitive modern version of *Hnefatafl* available: *King's Table*. Rules for historical variants and options are also given here.

## The Basic Rules

In each version of this game, four groups of attacking pieces are placed along the edge of the board. The attackers seek to capture the King, who occupies the central square (the King's Throne) and is surrounded by his bodyguard pieces. The

King, in turn, seeks to reach either a corner or an edge of the board to escape his attackers. All game pieces move exactly like the rook in chess: They may move along any horizontal or vertical rows over any number of squares (provided that those squares are not blocked by playing pieces), but no piece may move diagonally across the board. Only one piece may be moved at a time, by players taking alternating turns. The King alone is distinctive in shape among the playing pieces, though the two sides are given different colors (in the diagrams here, black for attackers and white for defenders).

Playing pieces for this game may be easily had for less than \$2.00 in most cases – just use pennies for the attacking (black) pieces, and dimes for the defending (white) pieces. More elaborate counters may be made, of course (see "Author's Notes"). If coins are used, the King should still be distinctive; a nickel will do well, dividing the teams into "silver" (defender) and "copper" (attacker) colors.

Figure A shows the basic 13 × 13 square board, with the initial starting position for the game pieces. Play this board first to master the basic rules. The 13 × 13 square board is one of four games using the board placed in the center of this magazine. The colored lines separate the 13-square playing field from the 11-, 9-, and 7-square versions on the same board. The line of attacking pieces marks the outermost edge for each specific game board. After the players decide which game board to play, none of the pieces may be moved beyond that given boards designated outer edge (e.g., on the 7 × 7 square board, no piece may move beyond the perimeter outlined by the attacking pieces at the beginning of the game).

In the basic game, the King's opponents move first. A game piece belonging to



years

either player is captured when it is caught between two opposing pieces. Figure B shows five possible captures. Moving clockwise from the upper left: a white piece takes a black piece; a black takes a white; white takes black; black takes white; and, in the boards center, a black piece takes two white pieces in one move. Pieces cannot be captured diagonally, nor can two pieces in a single line be captured (Figure C). The capture of pieces must be done in an aggressive move by the attacker. A piece may move between two opposing pieces without being captured (Figure D); this is known as “resting.” If a piece on one side of a resting piece moves away on one turn, then moves back on another turn while the other two pieces have not moved, the opposing piece in the center is captured. The King can help capture pieces like any of his bodyguards, even though he himself cannot be captured in the usual manner.

The central square, or King’s Throne, may be crossed over by other playing pieces if the King is not present, but only the King may occupy it. Unlike the capturing process of all other pieces, the King himself can only be captured when he is surrounded by four opponents (Figure E), or when he is trapped against his Throne square and surrounded on three sides (Figure F). Here, the Throne acts as an opponent; the King cannot escape when caught in this position. If the King were on the edge of the board and surrounded by three opponents (Figure G), he could not be captured. If the King were the only piece left of his original force and if he were thus surrounded, it would be a stalemate, because the King could not move nor be surrounded on four sides.

In the basic game, the players must decide whether the King’s goal is to reach an outer edge of the board or an outer corner of the specific board being played. If it is the latter, then the corners act like the Throne square, and only the King may enter them, at which point he has escaped.

Graphics by Diesel

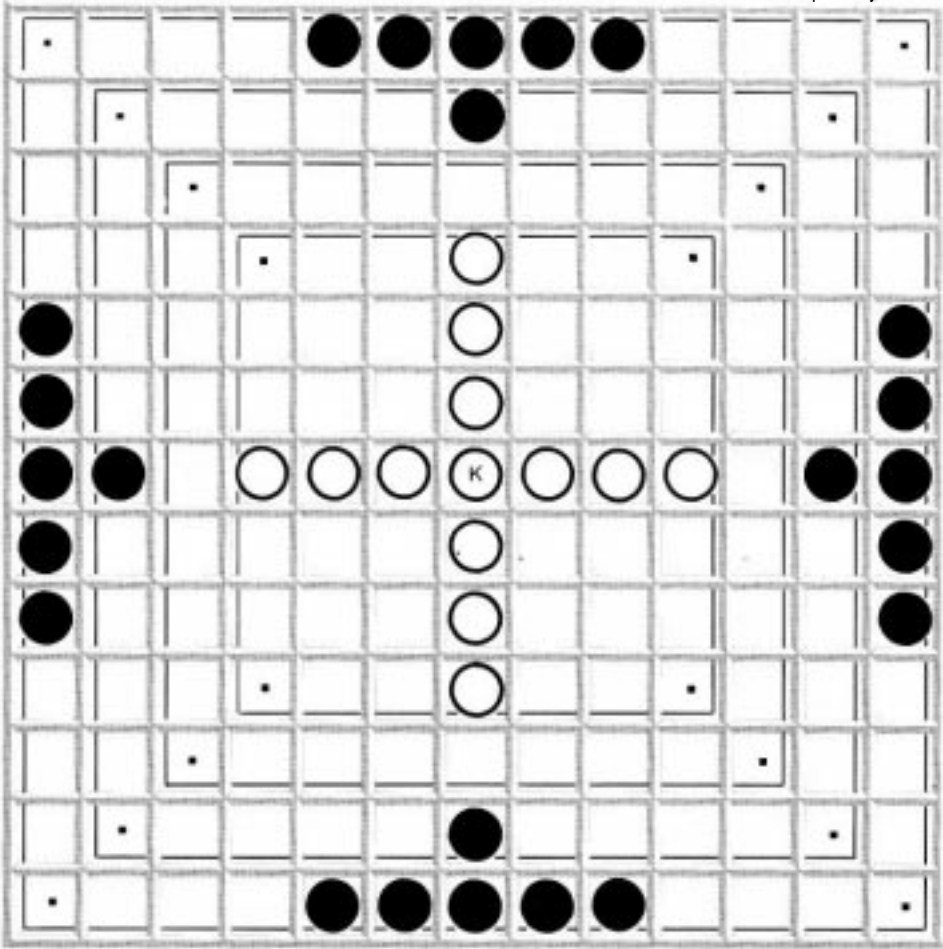


Figure A: The 13 × 13 *Hnefatafl* board, with starting positions.

The game ends when either the King escapes or is captured, or when a stalemate is evident.

**The Game Boards**

The *King’s Table* board is designed so that the players can select among four different boards, each being separated by colored lines. Each version of this game has a real historical basis and varying numbers of playing pieces.

The outermost, 13 × 13 square *Hnefatafl* game board (Figure A) was discovered in fragmentary condition on the *Gokstad*, a Viking-age chieftain’s ship found in a burial mound. To play this board, you need 24 attackers against the King and his 12 bodyguards.

The next, 11 × 11 square game board

(Figure H) is known to us from a Welsh board described in 1587; the game was then known as *Tawlbwrdd*. Here, you need 20 attackers against the King and his 10 bodyguards.

The third, 9 × 9 square board (Figure I) is the Lapp board described by Linnaeus. For this version, there are 16 attackers against the King and his eight bodyguards. This board is of some historical interest because it was described elsewhere in literature as representing the King of Sweden under siege by the Russians. In the original version, known as *Tablut*, the King needed only to reach the edge of the playing board – a possible variation for this modern version – but the King’s player was required to announce to his opponent when he had a clear route to an edge, thus giving the opponent an opportunity to block his escape. If the King had





a route to two edges simultaneously, the player would announce the equivalent of "checkmate," because the King's escape was inevitable.

The innermost  $7 \times 7$  square board (Figure J) represents an original Viking board found in a lake dwelling excavation at Ballinderry, Ireland, in 1932. This wooden board has a central square with the four corners clearly marked for the King's escape – typical features of *Hnefatafl*

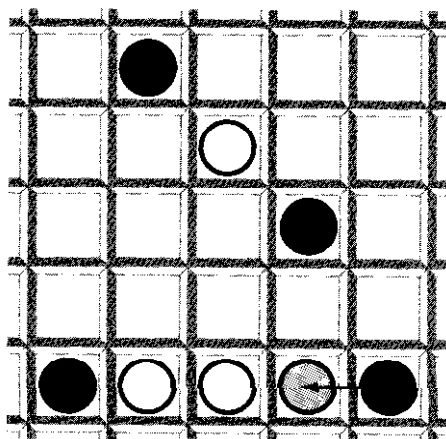


Figure C: Two illegal captures.

Figure B: Five possible capturing moves in King's Table.

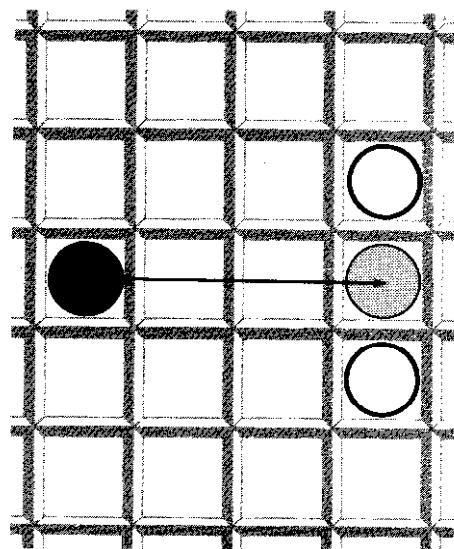
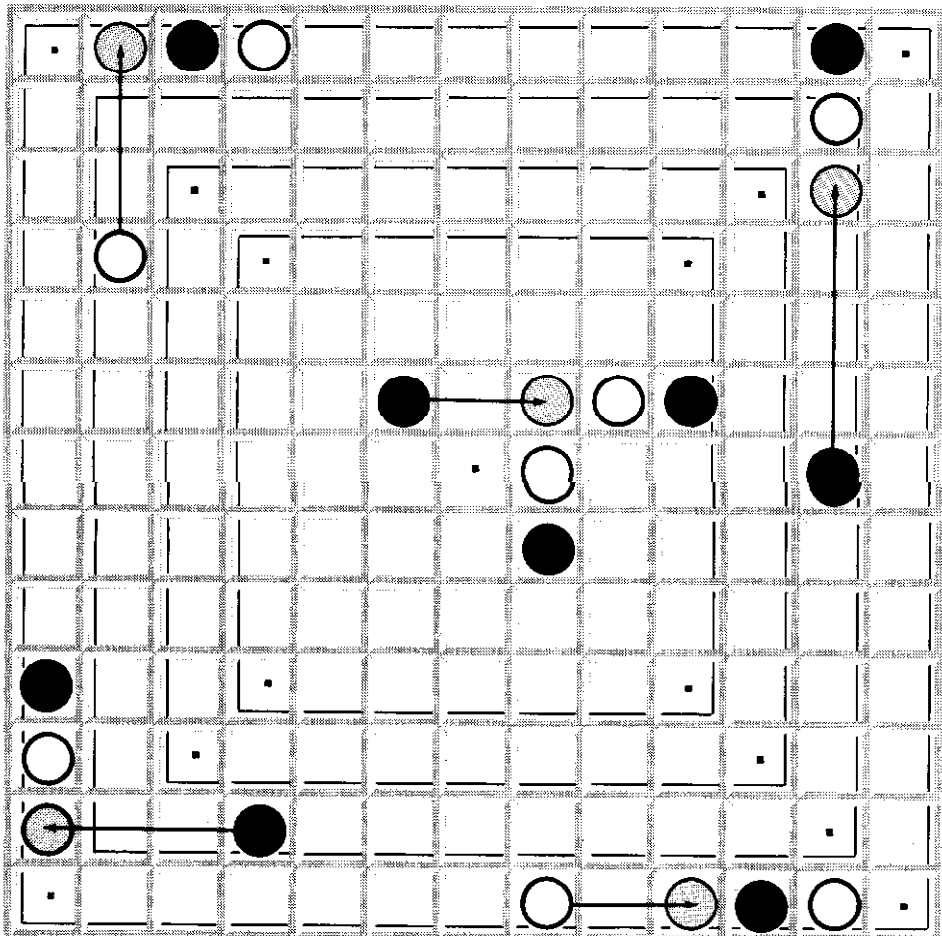


Figure D: Resting move.

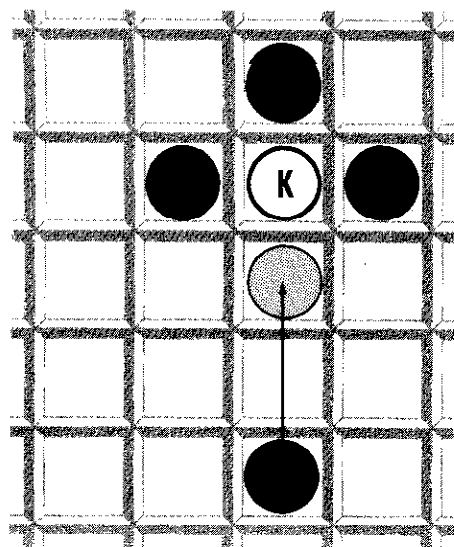


Figure E: Normal capture of King.

game boards. To play using this board, you need 12 attackers, the King, and his six bodyguards.

Figure K represents a  $19 \times 19$  square board that was played by the Saxons in England during the 10th century. It is the only known Saxon board game. Originally, this board represented a sea battle in which the King's flagship sought to escape by reaching either an edge or a corner of the game board. Here, the King and his 24 bodyguards face 48 attackers. The rules for this version are identical to the four other boards. The starting positions for all players are clearly marked on the board.

## Variations and Options

1. The players decide whether the King must reach a corner or an edge to escape, as has been described above. If the latter, it is wise to require the King's player to announce his position if he has a clear column or file to an edge – but this is not mandatory. Obviously, it takes more time to play a game in which the King must escape through a corner square, but this is more demanding and, hence, more rewarding.

2. The first side to move has traditionally been the attackers, but initial movement can be decided by any reasonable device (e.g., rolling dice, coin toss, etc.). Once the starting player has been established, however, play always proceeds in alternating turns between the two players – unless the next variant is used!

3. Using a six-sided die, each player rolls to see if he can move for each turn; an odd number would allow movement, and an even roll would prevent movement for that turn. In the basic game, this variation

should not be used; however, it would be useful in breaking a stalemate that two experienced players may reach when the attackers can successfully block all four corners and effectively prevent any significant chance of the King's escape. In this situation, the King's player may request the use of dice described above so that either player could have two consecutive turns to break the stalemate.

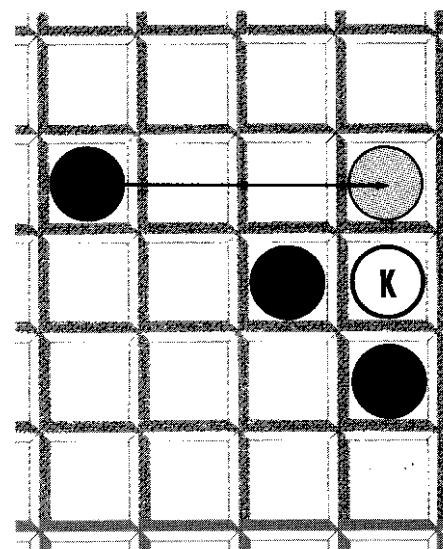


Figure G: King surrounded (but not captured).

Figure F: King captured against Throne.

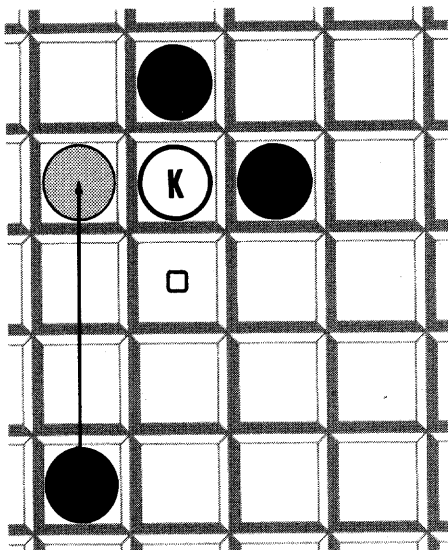
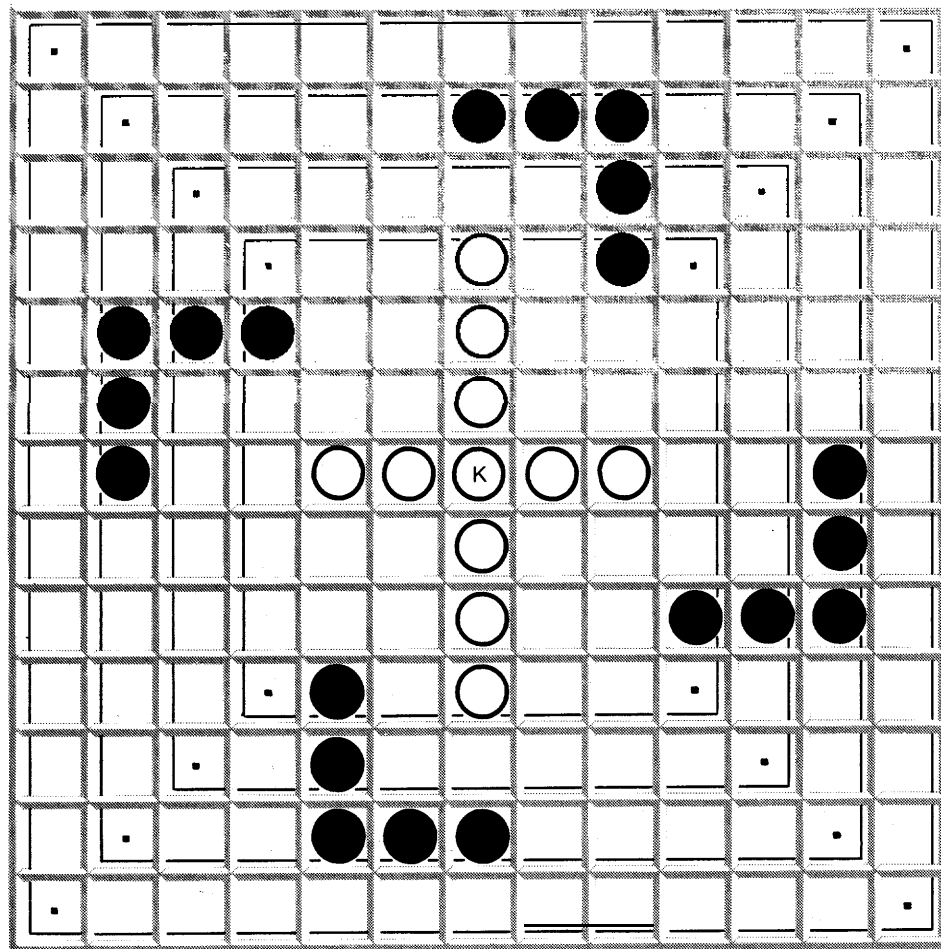


Figure H: The 11 x 11 Welsh board, with starting positions.





## Strategies

While King's Table might seem easy to play at first glance, it is truly a rigorous test of each player's concentration. Most often (approximately 60% of the games), the King escapes. If you are the type who can't stand losing, play the King's side. If you like a challenge, play the opponents of the King. It is difficult to surround the King because this requires eliminating virtually all of the King's bodyguard before the King can be captured.

Perhaps another name for King's Table might be "I Didn't See That!" This game is often won by waiting for the other player to miss something or otherwise make an error. Like the Vikings themselves, King's Table is bold and direct; while strategy is important, the game is swift enough to usually undo elaborate plans and schemes.

The playing time for each of the five versions of King's Table is linked to the size of the board being played; the larger the board, the longer the game will usually last. Another factor, as mentioned above, is whether the players require the King to reach a corner or an edge to escape. Reaching a corner requires more skill and time to accomplish. To get the best results and appreciation of King's Table, play both sides to understand the game's logic and subtlety.

## Author's Notes

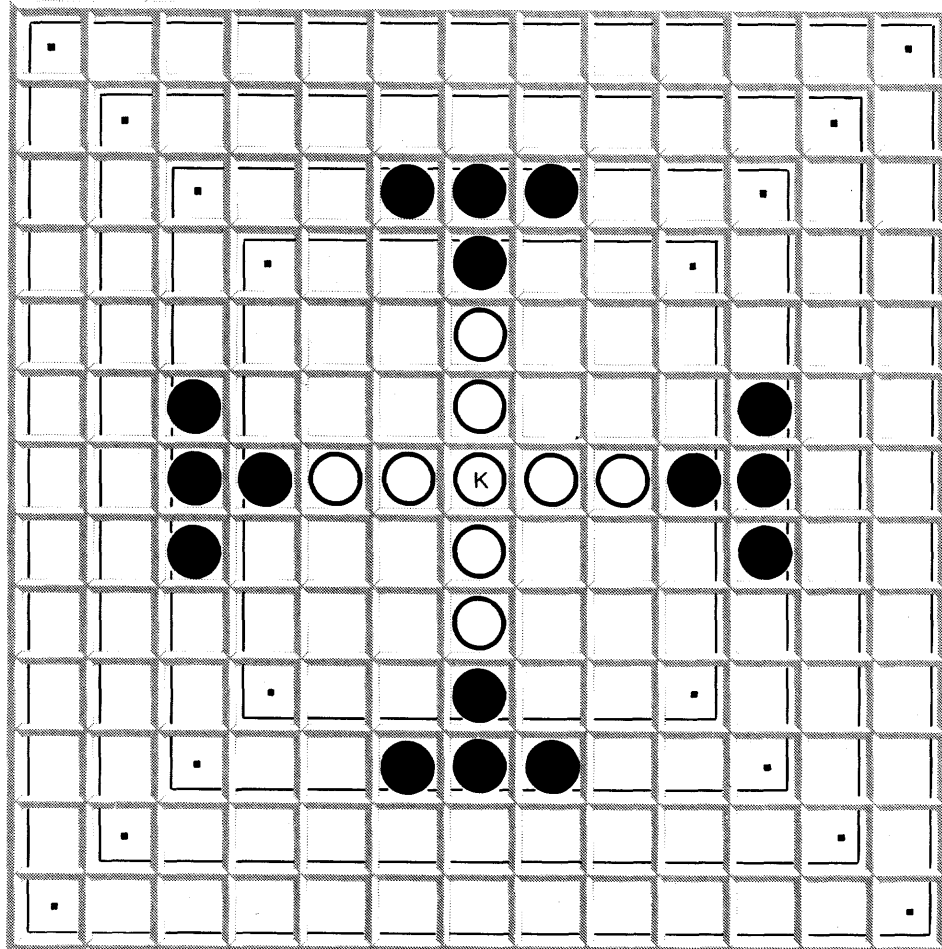
I discovered *Hnefatafl* while in England in 1984. There are published versions of *Hnefatafl* there, and I kept this in mind as I researched the game, so as not to infringe on their copyrights. The major source used to reproduce *King's Table* was Linnaeus's *Flora Lapponica*, translated into English by Sir J.E. Smith as *Lachesis Lapponica*. This record contains the detailed rules for play that Linnaeus observed in 1732. The English versions of *Hnefatafl* are true to these rules.

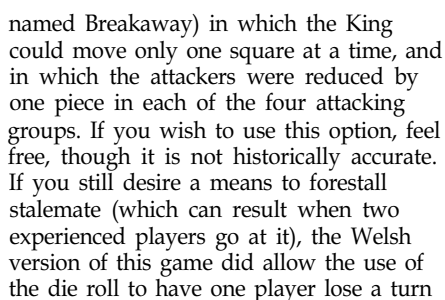
Players who wish to replay game problems, as is done with chess, or preparing to run play-by-mail games of King's Table may devise notations for each playing piece. The attacking side can be divided into the four starting groups and labeled as such (A, B, C, and D, or using symbols like a star, triangle, etc.). The individual attacking pieces can then be identified by number (I, II, III, IV, etc.). The King's bodyguard pieces can each be numbered and

given a prefix of a symbol (crown) or the letter K. The King, of course, is just the "King." The game board (as with chess) can be labeled alphabetically for file and numerically for rank.

One possible - though radical - variant of the game would involve handicapping the King, slowing his movement to increase the risk of capture. Ideal Toys produced a highly variant version of *Hnefatafl* for their "Hi-Q" game series (this one

Figure 1: The 9 x 9 Lapp board, with starting positions.

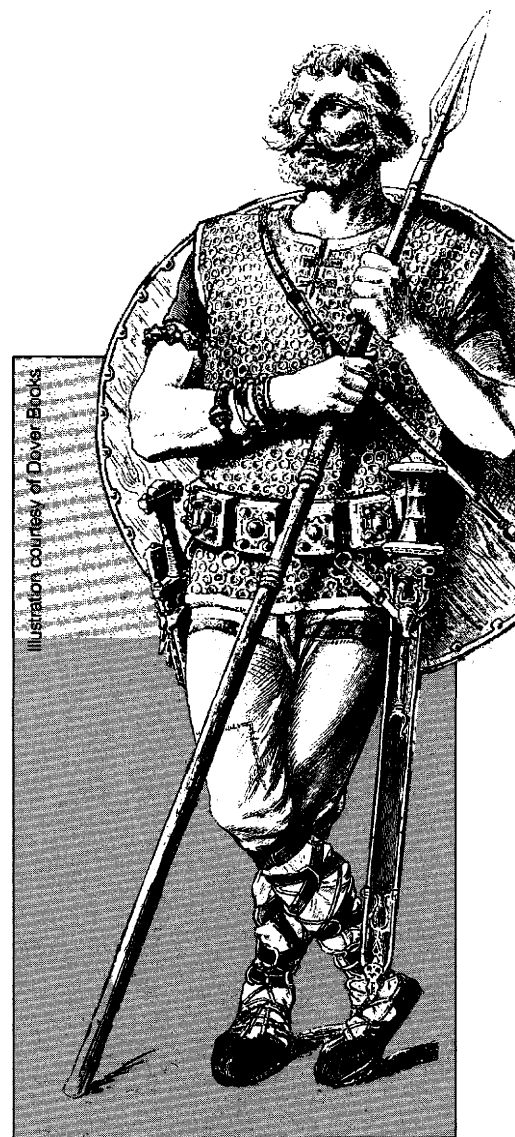
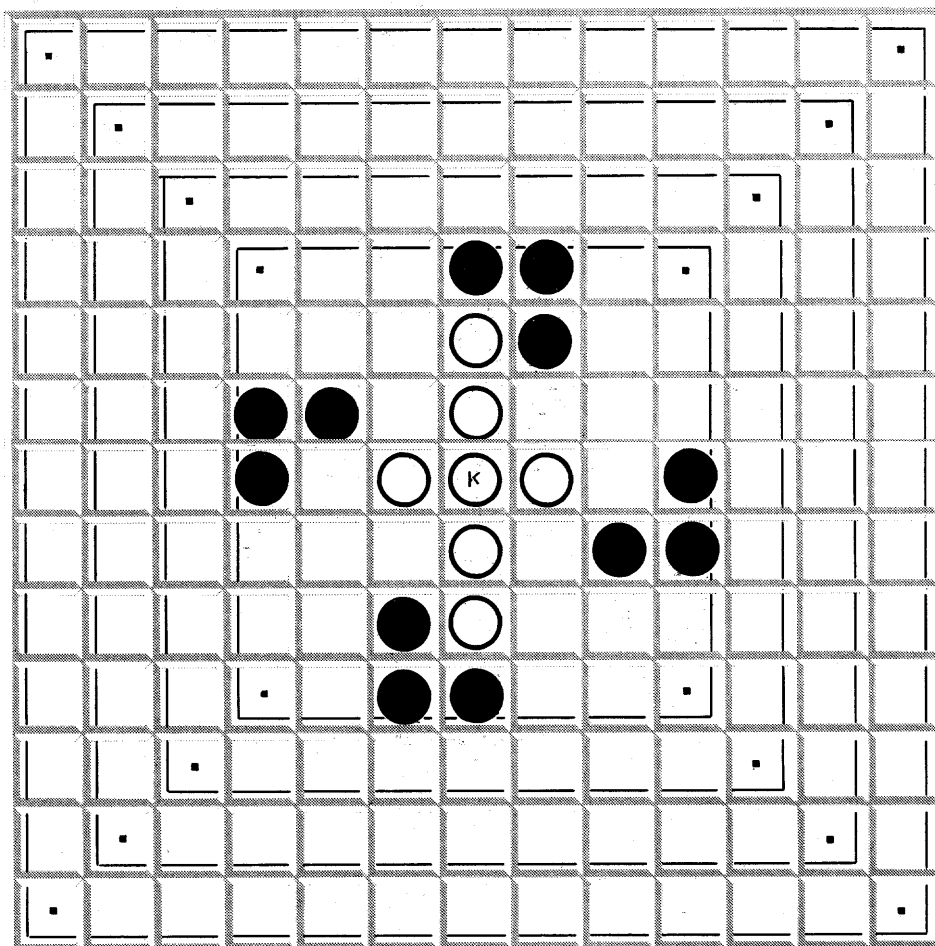




Another possible means of forestalling stalemate, as suggested by a playtester, may be used when the King's goal is to reach a corner of the game board. In this variant, the King's bodyguards are allowed to move first. If the King need only reach the side of the board, the attackers should move first.

The question arose that if the King can reenter the central square (the Throne),

Figure J: The 7 x 7 Irish board, with starting positions.



how could he be captured by three opposing pieces when backed against it. This is a historically correct capture, observed by Linnaeus, and must be considered valid.

The reasoning behind this move has been lost, but I suspect it represents a significant insight into the Viking's thoughts about a King: He shouldn't get caught in or near his throne room by attackers (where would the attackers be most likely to look for a king, anyway?). Thus, the King must be aware of his position when near the Throne.

Players can create their own King's Table playing pieces from miniature figures available from most game and hobby stores. If you design a board with  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " squares and mount your figures on 1"





# King's Table

bases (round or square), you could produce a wide variety of Viking warriors and Kings for use with your game. Additionally, you could even design fantasy figures using barbarian, knight, goblin, dwarven, or elven pieces. The individual figures should have a paint scheme to differentiate between the two sides (perhaps based upon shield designs). The individual warriors may sport any sort of weapon, since

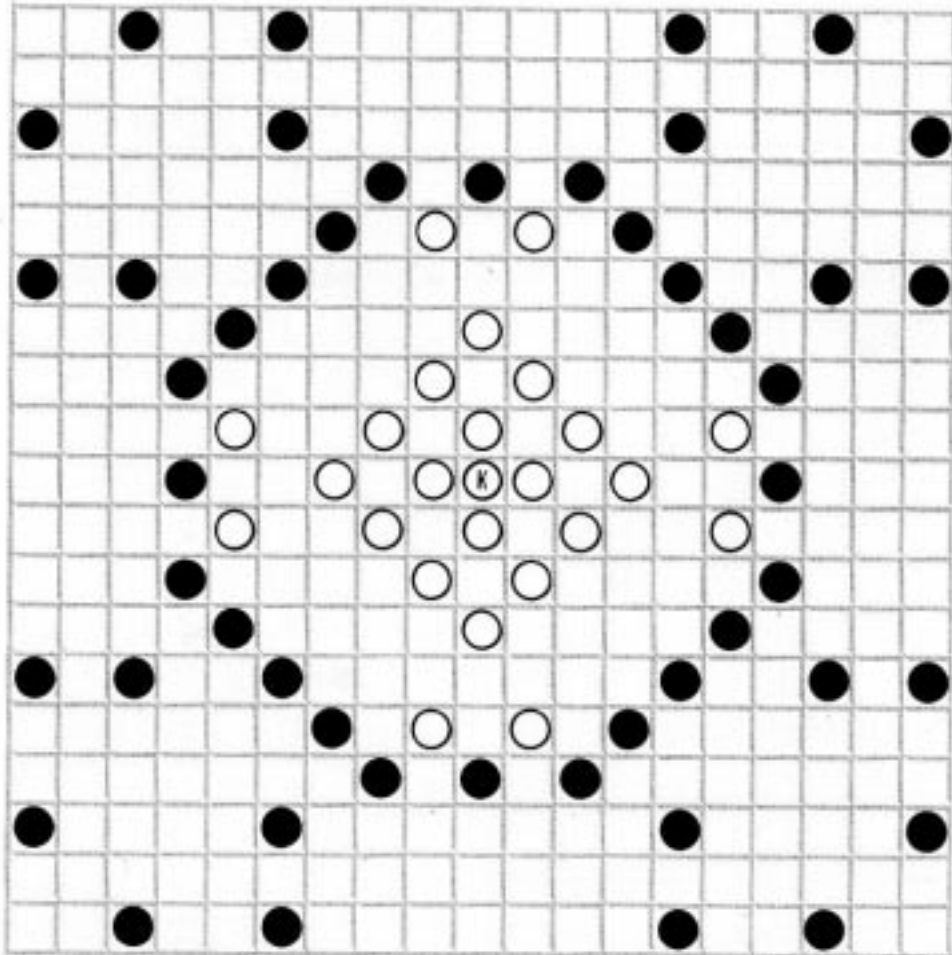
they all have the same game value. It is recommended that the King be mounted on an especially tall base, about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " higher than the others.

*Dale Oldfield*

For further information concerning this game, write to: Ancient Games, Inc., P.O. Box 572, Akron, Colorado 80720, United States of America.



Figure K: The 19 X 19 Saxon board, with starting positions.



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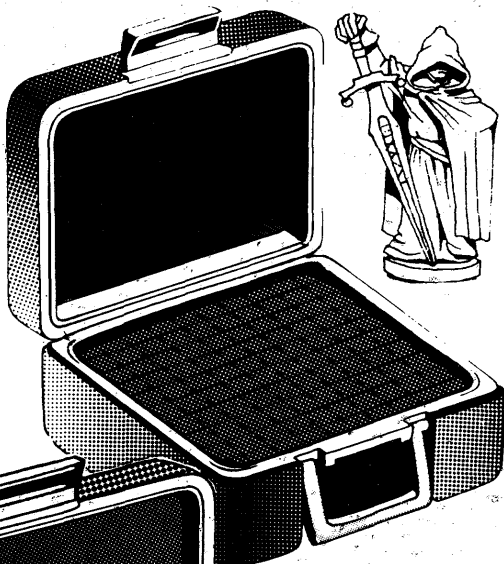
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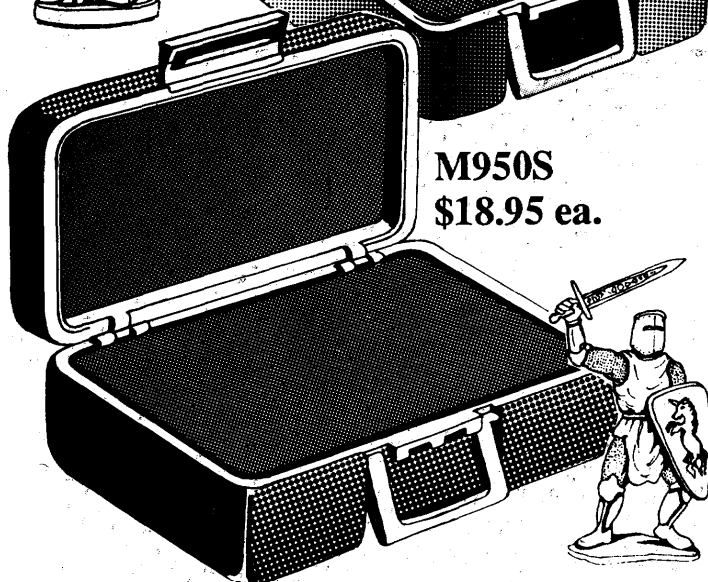
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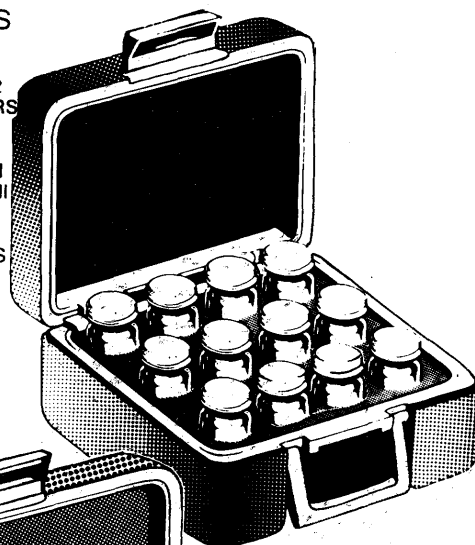


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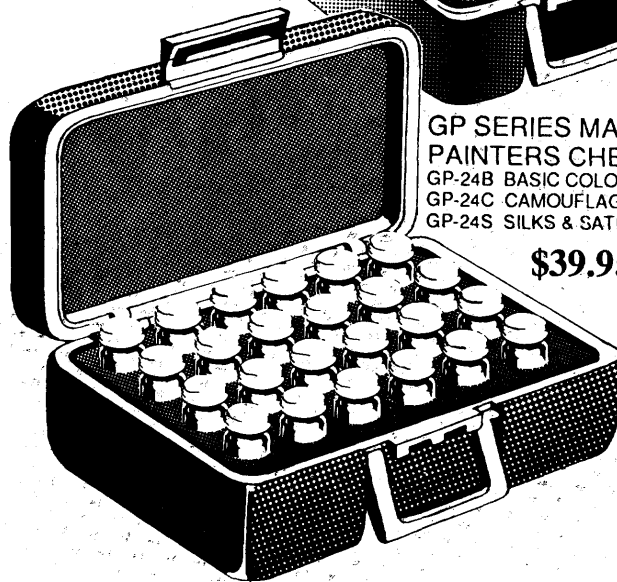
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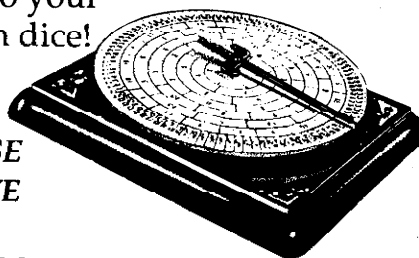
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(continued from page 3)

The TSR Mail Order Hobby Shop has the figure packs named above for the dragons, oliphants, basilisks, elementals, sylphs, and griffons (The Mail Order Hobby Shop, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147). Good luck!

## Clay-O-Mania I

Dear Dragon:

I have just finished reading the rules to Clay-O-Rama, and I think that it is one of the best features ever published in the hallowed pages of DRAGON Magazine. My main question is: Why is a creature with large limbs *less* likely to hit successfully than a creature with small limbs? It seems to me that large, long clay arms, with large clay muscles, are better equipped for attacking than short, thin clay appendages.

Also, are there any plans for Clay-O-Rama modules? It would be a very lucrative idea to publish small booklets that contain scenarios about different clay creatures for a party of PC Claydonians to encounter! It could include instructions for the GM on how to set up pitfalls, such as mousetraps or garlic presses, in the appropriate locations on the landscape.

Todd J.A. Shafritz,  
Wexford PA

David Cook was consulted on the above questions, and he said that game balance was the reason that large limbs (which do lots of damage) have worse chances to hit than small limbs (which don't do lots of damage). "You have to

know something about the physiology of clay," he said.

We have no immediate plans for Clay-O-Rama modules, though it isn't beyond the realm of possibility. We were astounded at the role-playing concept – adventuring Claydonians! – but we also rather liked it. More on this later

## Clay-O-Mania II

Dear Dragon:

Issue #125 was clearly your best issue in the fourteen I've read – and all because of one thing. Yes, that's right: Clay-O-Rama, a great idea by Mr. Cook. It was funny; this is what DRAGON Magazine needs, more of this kind of thing.

Looking the game over, I find one power missing: The Ultimate Missile. Ultimate Missile has the same effect as a regular missile attack, except you throw your Claydonian at the opponent's Claydonian. The damage caused equals the largest missile possible (five dice). Another power that could be added would be Steal Opponent's Limb. You rip off a limb of a Claydonian and stick it to your own Claydonian. Of course, both of these powers could only be used once per game.

I have one question, though. What happens if you have the Rip Limbs Off power, but your fellow Claydonian has no limbs? One example would be the Blue Bowling Ball in the game's introduction.

Long live Clay-O-Rama!

Tom Sawyer  
Bolingbrook IL

Dave Cook was asked what would happen if you attacked a limbless Claydonian with a Rip Limbs Off power, and he said, "You're out of luck. You weren't very bright to have attacked him, were you?" Guess that settles that.

It was also pointed out that throwing your Claydonian at another Claydonian will hurt both of them – but if you want to do it, have fun.

## Games & copies

Dear Dragon:

Since I've subscribed to DRAGON Magazine, I have seen two games in the pages of the magazine. Both Clay-O-Rama and Nibar's Keep were (and still are) great games! I would really like to see games like these more often. I'm not asking for one every issue, but maybe every three or four issues.

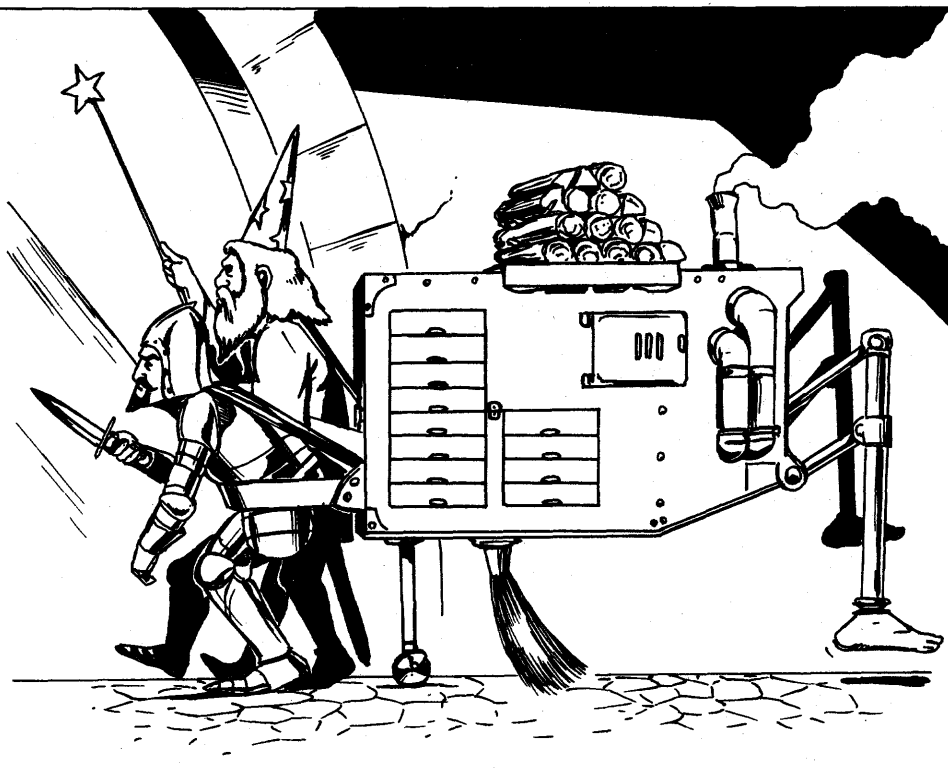
Also, I would like to order some back issues of DRAGON Magazine and DUNGEON™ Adventures, but I don't want to hack up my magazines. Can I photocopy the order forms or could I just put what I want on a piece of paper?

Mark Anticole  
Dayton OH

We have no problem with photocopying order forms from the magazines at all – but be sure to use the most recent issue you can find. Also, be warned that prices on back issues of DRAGON Magazine are about to rise. See the back-issue advertisement in this issue for more information.

Ω

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# Plane Speaking

## The (Negative) Quasi Elementals!

by Jeff Grubb

In a previous article (DRAGON® issue #125), this column covered the creatures native to the positive quasi-elemental planes. Let's turn our attention to the other side of the coin: the negative quasi elementals.

The negative quasi-elemental planes are those which lie along the borders of the major elemental planes and the Negative Material plane. These regions are distinguished by the *reduction* and eventual absence of a particular elemental type. The plane of Ash is the reduction and elimination of Fire; the plane of Salt the removal of Water; the plane of Vacuum the eradication of Air; and the plane of Dust the destruction of solid Earth. The quasi elementals of these planes reflect the nature of these planes. As is so for "true" elementals, quasi-elemental life is a sentient animation of the plane itself, as differentiated from creatures which are at

home in these alien environments.

Even more so than positive quasi elementals, negative quasi elementals are rarely found in the Prime Material plane, but appear with common frequency in their native quasi-elemental planes and are uncommon in other Inner planes. They may be able to survive the rigors of the nearby Negative Material plane, but this is as yet unproven. Each quasi elemental may be of small, medium, or large size, depending on where it is found:

	Prime Material plane	Inner plane
1d100		
01-60	Small	Large
61-90	Medium	Medium
91-00	Large	Small

Statistics given in parentheses for the following creatures apply to conditions on their home planes. Otherwise, statistics apply to both Prime Material and quasi-elemental planes.

### ASH QUASI ELEMENTAL

FREQUENCY: *Very rare (Common)*  
NO. APPEARING: 1 (1-6)  
ARMOR CLASS: 3  
MOVE: 12"  
HIT DICE: 6, 9, or 12  
% IN LAIR: Nil  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6 + 1 hp/HD  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See below*  
INTELLIGENCE: *Low*  
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral (chaotic)*  
SIZE: *M*  
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*  
LEVEL/X.P. VALUE: *VII/ 1,000 + 15 per hp*

Ash quasi elementals look like animated piles of burnt ash and charred cinders. They are malleable and capable of forming themselves into slate-gray replicas of men,

centaurs, and other creatures. Ash quasi elementals are found in the Prime Material plane only in regions where intense flame has passed and cooled, as in the lava flows of extinct volcanoes and in the debris left from large forest fires.

While not cold in themselves, Ash quasi elementals suck up the heat from their surroundings, so that all within 30' suffer 1-6 hp damage from heat loss for each round. Creatures which are cold-based (though not those which are cold-blooded) are immune to this effect. In addition, the Ash quasi elemental can narrow the focus of this draining effect to a cone 60' long and 30' across at the base. Those within this area take 2-12 hp damage. In addition, the force of this inward blast can snuff out torches and small campfires.

Ash quasi elementals are immune to cold-based magic, but heat in any form is dangerous to them. All fire-based spells inflict twice the normal damage, and if the

temperature is raised above freezing, the Ash quasi elemental must save vs. poison or explode, inflicting 1-4 hp/HD damage to all within 20'. In combat, Ash quasi elementals can only be struck by +1 or better weapons.

Ash quasi elementals are very rare in the Prime Material plane, though they are reported to have been used by smiths forging magical weapons in order to cool the hot metal.

### VACUUM QUASI ELEMENTAL

FREQUENCY: *Very rare (Common)*  
NO. APPEARING: 1 (1-6)  
ARMOR CLASS: -1  
MOVE: 36"  
HIT DICE: 6, 9, or 12  
% IN LAIR: *Nil*  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-4 + 1 hp/HD  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See below*  
INTELLIGENCE: *Low*  
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral (chaotic)*  
SIZE: *S*  
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*  
LEVEL/X.P. VALUE: *VII/ 1,000 + 15 per hp*

Vacuum quasi elementals are the living embodiment of a nullity – the absence of elemental Air. They are invisible by nature, though if their presence is detected (by *detect invisible*, *true sight*, etc.), they appear as amorphous, three-dimensional "skins" of force (similar to an ochre jelly in zero-g).

Vacuum quasi elementals suck in any and all surrounding air, seeking to reduce any area of confinement to the same level of airlessness as their native plane. In the Prime Material plane, the region within 60' of a Vacuum quasi elemental has the effects of a *gust of wind* spell blowing toward the quasi elemental. A Vacuum quasi elemental can reduce a 60' × 60' area to vacuum in a single round. Those within an area so vacated of air suffer the



effects of being in the plane of Vacuum (no loss of pressure or temperature, only the absence of air itself). In addition, those caught within this range who require air for survival suffer 1-4 hp damage per round in addition to any attacks made by the creature.

In regions of abundant air (such as the Prime Material plane), Vacuum quasi elementals can cause their air-removal effects for 10 rounds at most, after which they cannot do so again for one hour. When overwhelmed by air, these quasi elementals become spherical in shape, and their armor class increases to AC -4. They may still attack normally (ramming a target with their forcelike bodies), but cannot use their special attack.

Air-using spells can destroy a Vacuum quasi elemental only if the level of the caster (or hit dice of the monster) is greater than that of the Vacuum quasi elemental. If attacked in such a fashion,

the Vacuum quasi elemental is allowed a saving throw vs. death magic; if this succeeds, it is unharmed by the attack. If the saving throw fails, the Vacuum quasi elemental is destroyed. A *gust of wind* cast by a 1st-level magic-user has no effect on a 6-HD Vacuum quasi elemental, but a 7-HD djinn could destroy it. Vacuum quasi elementals are subject to magical attacks, but require +1 or better magical weapons to be damaged.

Nature may abhor a vacuum, but magic-users find these airless creatures useful as both protectors and laboratory aides (they may provide an environment without dust by removing the air that keeps the dust suspended). As such, they are valued when encountered on the Prime Material planes. This rarely occurs, as most which survive are those locked in some airtight compartment which they have drained of air, or (it is rumored) in the spaces between the planets and stars.

## DUST QUASI ELEMENTAL

FREQUENCY: *Very rare (Common)*

NO. APPEARING: 1-3 (1-8)

ARMOR CLASS: -1

MOVE: 12"

HIT DICE: 6, 9, or 12

% IN LAIR: Nil

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6 + 1 hp/HD

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See below*

INTELLIGENCE: *Low*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral (chaotic)*

SIZE: *M*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

LEVEL/X.P. VALUE: VII/ 1,000 + 15 per hp

Dust quasi elementals are the living embodiment of disintegration, the breaking down of all solid matter. They are rarely found in the Prime Material plane, and then only in desertlike regions where the winds have pulverized most of the earth to sand.

Dust quasi elementals appear as billow-

ing clouds of dust, dominated by brighter motes which are collected into the "eyes" of the creature. The quasi elemental can inflict damage in normal combat, but also can engulf an opponent on a roll of 19 or better on 1d20 (regardless of magical protections of the target). An engulfed creature suffers the effects of the plane of Dust: the loss of 2-12 hp per round from the atomic bonding of the body being broken down and driven apart. If the attack takes place on the plane of Dust, the effects are doubled. The engulfed creature can only escape by killing the Dust quasi elemental, though the quasi elemental takes the brunt of all outside attacks, like living armor which kills its wearer.

In addition, a Dust quasi elemental can blow parts of its body up to 40' away, creating a blinding sandstorm. Those which may be affected by the storm must save vs. wands or be blinded for 1-10 rounds, and take 1-2 hp damage per hit die of the creature.

One of the most dangerous of the negative quasi elementals, the Dust quasi ele-

mental may be affected by normal weapons and magic. An individual engulfed by an elemental may inflict 2-12 hp damage merely by his struggles each round.

Dust quasi elementals are considered quite dangerous, and, unlike the other quasi elementals, tend to be avoided and not captured or magically enslaved. One reason for this is that, unlike other quasi elementals and elementals, these creatures attempt to seek out the ones who have enslaved them and slay them.

## SALT QUASI ELEMENTAL

FREQUENCY: *Very rare (Common)*

NO. APPEARING: 1-2 (1-6)

ARMOR CLASS: 1

MOVE: 3"

HIT DICE: 6, 9, or 12

% IN LAIR: *Nil*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8 + 1 hp/HD

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See below*

INTELLIGENCE: *Low*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral (chaotic)*

SIZE: *L*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

LEVEL/X.P. VALUE: VII/ 1,000 + 15 per hp

Salt quasi elementals appear in a variety of forms, but their most common form is that of a long, huge, white lizard, like a wingless, rime-encrusted white dragon. They are found only rarely on the Prime Material plane, and then only in places of extreme dryness, like the floor of an evaporated lake or the salt flats bordering a dead sea.

Salt quasi elementals absorb all available moisture in an area 80' in radius around the creature. This inflicts 2-12 hp damage per round to all creatures which are made primarily of water (including most creatures of the elemental plane of Water, as well as humans and similar animal life).

It is possible to overload the amount of water a Salt quasi elemental can take in. Full immersion in water (dumping it into a large lake) causes the creature to save vs. death magic or explode. Such an explosion causes all within 30' to suffer an attack equal to the level of the monster's hit dice. Those struck in this attack take 1-8 hp damage from shards of salt. Water-based magics have a similar effect only if the magic-user or cleric casting the spell is of higher level than the total hit dice of the quasi elemental. When this is not the case, or when small amounts of water (such as natural rain or fog) are present, the effects are merely absorbed by the creature.

Salt quasi elementals are unaffected by fire spells and weapons of less than +1 magical enchantment. These creatures are often prized by researchers, who use them to reduce the effects of water damage in underground libraries.

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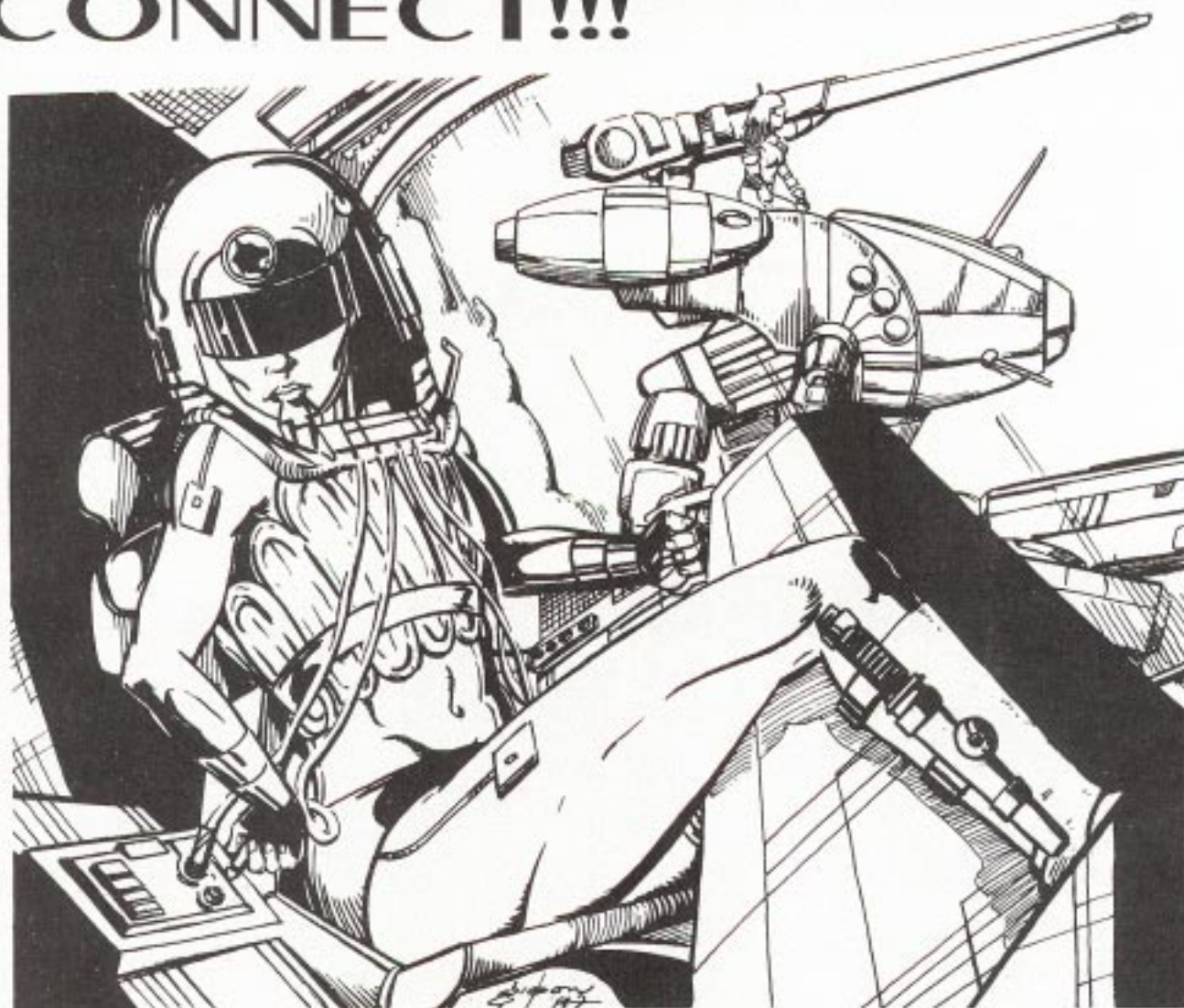
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Hughes 500



Bell 222B

# Chopper Power!

*The air cavalry arrives in the TOP SECRET® game*

by **Dennis McLaughlin**

Remember the introductory scene from "Now that's firepower!" in DRAGON® issue #102? What do you suppose happened next? Well . . .

. . . As the enemy helicopter fell in flames from the sky, agent Dan Carlyle ran across the beach to the waiting boat. His partner was dead, the mission was over, and it was time to go home. Florence waved him on from the boat, clutching the wheel with her free hand. "Let's go!" she screamed. "Haul it!"

Dan started to shout a smart reply as he ran — but heard the thumping sound that gave warning of a second helicopters approach. Dan risked a quick look back and saw the chopper rise over the tree-tops. Its shape was familiar from aircraft identification sessions: a Hughes 500.

*"Dan!" Florence shouted. She reached down to grab a weapon on the floor by her feet. Dan stopped and raised his gun to fire at the 'copter. He got off two shots — with no visible effect whatsoever.*

*Flashes of light and smoke burst from the helicopters main guns. Howling machine-gun bullets tore through the air over Dan's head. Dan heard a blood-chilling shriek of agony from Florence — then nothing at all. He looked back in time to see the shattered boat list, roll over, and slip beneath the shallow waves.*

*The thundering of the helicopter now filled his ears. It was lowering and turning toward him.*

*Not my day, Dan thought, as the machine guns leveled at him. . . .*

The use of helicopters in the TOP SECRET® game has not been overly publicized, because a helicopter gunship is a devastating weapon which shouldn't be used often against secret agents. While

this argument is true and the TOP SECRET game isn't a military game, the helicopter can be effectively used for transportation and surveillance, as well as air support.

Helicopters can be outfitted with a variety of useful devices to help or harm agents. Such devices include searchlights, cameras, and .50-caliber machine guns. Particularly nasty Administrators and agents may use them to eliminate pesky agents; a Hughes 500 with machine guns can be quite effective in keeping the KGB away from a defector being smuggled to Switzerland — and just as effective in stopping that defector.

## Common helicopters

Helicopters are very expensive, difficult to obtain, and often dangerous. No agent should be allowed to simply go out and buy one. The helicopters mentioned below are some of the most common and easily obtainable. Table 1 has more information.

**Hughes 500:** A small, maneuverable chopper with chin and skid gun mounts, the Hughes 500 is often seen on TV ("Magnum P.I." and "Airwolf"). This helicopter is excellent for gunship duty.

**UH-1:** A common military helicopter with several variations, the UH-1E and UH-1N (Bell 212) are the most common versions of this helicopter in use. It carries door, skid, and nose gun mounts. (Do not use the movie *Rambo* as a deciding factor in determining the amount of armaments a "Huey" can carry!)

**Bell 222B:** A large, expensive helicopter, the Bell 222B is good for surveillance and was formerly seen on "Airwolf." It has only a door gun mount.

**Agusta 109:** Another large, expensive helicopter with a door mount, the Agusta 109 is quite useful and common.

**Sikorsky S-76:** Similar to the Agusta but easier to obtain, this helicopter is also



Illustrations by Dennis Kauth

**Table 1**  
**Helicopter Statistics**

Helicopter	Overall length	Hover ceiling	Service ceiling	Max. speed	Range	Capacity	Average cost
Hughes 500	30'4"	8,200'	14,400'	152 MPH	373 miles	1 pilot +4	\$185,000
Bell 222B	47'11"	10,600'	16,000'	165 MPH	450 miles	2 pilots +6	\$950,000
UH-1N (Bell 212)	57'3"	12,900'	17,400'	126 MPH	273 miles	2 pilots +13	\$700,000
Agusta 109	42'11"	10,000'	15,000'	193 MPH	354 miles	2 pilots +6	\$1,000,000
Sikorsky S-76	44'	10,600'	16,300'	167 MPH	465 miles	2 pilots +12	\$1,250,000
Bell 206 Jetranger	41'	13,500'	18,900'	137 MPH	298 miles	2 pilots +3	\$250,000

**Table 2**  
**Helicopter-Mounted Weapons**

Weapon	PF	PWV	PB	S	M	L	WS	Rate	Ammo	HWV	Weight	Average cost
M-60 GPMG	20	93	+10	0	-3.5	-8.5	VS	8	belt	22	10.4 lbs.	\$ 950
M-2 .50 HMG	22	94	+10	0	-3.5	-6.5	S	5	belt	20	n/a	\$1,200
20mm HMG	30	101	+12	0	-3.5	-8.5	BA	10	belt	14	24lbs.	\$1,500
2.75" rocket	40	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	single	-	2 lbs.	\$10 each

excellent for surveillance.

*Bell 206 Jetranger:* One of the most common helicopters around, the Jetranger uses chin and skid mounts. It has excellent maneuverability for its size and cost.

#### Helicopter weapons

The weapons available for the helicopters are both expensive and dangerous. For more information on heavy weapons and their effects, consult "Now that's firepower!" by Desmond P. Varady, in issue #102. See Table 2 in this article.

*.50 MG:* A belt-fed weapon mounted

either on a pod or a door mount, this machine gun is quite effective.

*.20mm MG:* Basically like the .50 MG, this weapon has a larger caliber. It comes only in a pod mount.

*2.75" rockets:* These have no guidance systems; they go where you point them. Use the combat system given in issue #102 for these weapons. They come in pods of 19 rockets which can be fired singly or in groups. These rockets have an effective range of 150'.

*M-60 GPMG:* This weapon is for door mounts only. A 7.62 mm weapon, the M-60

is belt-fed and can be removed for hand-held use. See issue #102 for details.

#### Surveillance devices

These devices can be used for spying on people, making them especially helpful to Investigators. See Table 3.

*Searchlight:* This allows the helicopter to see a ground target in the dark. It projects a halogen beam which can blind someone temporarily if stared at directly. A searchlight is mounted on a helicopter's nose.

*Infrared/night vision:* This device is a thermal sensor on the nose of the helicop-





Sikorsky S-76



Bell 206 Jetranger

**Table 3**  
**Helicopter-Mounted Surveillance Devices**

Device	Mount*	Range	Weight	Cost
Searchlight	A	1,500'	80 lbs.	\$1,250
Night vision	A,B	1,200'	30 lbs.	\$1,500
Sound system	A	800'	50 lbs.	\$ 650
Video camera	A,B	1,200'	30 lbs.	\$ 950

\* A = chin/nose, B = door.

ter which runs an electric image to the gunner's helmet. It is more effective than a searchlight, since the target cannot see it being used, but it is also more expensive.

**Mike/sound system:** This device screens out the noise of the helicopter and background while amplifying the sounds of conversation and movement below. The copilot/gunner must have an AOK of at least 45 in Electrical engineering or a similar area to be able to screen out the right sounds. This makes an excellent combination with a night-vision device.

**Video:** Simply a video camera used to film anything desired, this device can be fitted with a night-vision lens.

### Systems mounts

These are the points on the helicopters where equipment of any sort is mounted.

**Nose:** This mount, under the cockpit, is an ideal place for a searchlight or machine-gun pod. It is controlled by a gunner (often the copilot) who is seated in the cockpit.

**Skids:** Weapons such as rocket pods and machine guns can be mounted on the skids. These can be controlled by a gunner or by the pilot. Note that helicopters with

retractable landing gear cannot have skid mounts.

**Door:** A common mount, this is simply a machine gun mounted on a holder and fired through an open door. This method was used in Vietnam in UH-1 helicopters and is still used in the military. An M-60 GPMG is one of the best guns for the job. Video cameras can also be used on a door mount. Door mounts require a gunner/operator at all times. Weapons and surveillance equipment can be removed from a door mount if desired.

### Acquisition

Most of these helicopters cannot be bought at just any airport. If a character wishes to buy one (assuming the Administrator will let him), he should roll d100 on the table below to find his chances of getting the particular type of helicopter he wants. The percentage chance of finding a certain helicopter depends on the size of nearby airports and the type of helicopter wanted. The base percentages given here are for finding a used helicopter in good condition at an international airport.

Administrators should lower the percentages for smaller airports. Buying a used (and thus tested) helicopter is more expen-

sive than buying a new one; add 5-20% to the average cost given in Table 1 for a used helicopter in excellent condition, modifying the score downward for helicopters in worse shape.

Helicopter	Chance to locate
Hughes 500	65%
UH-1N	20%
Bell 222B	25%
A-109	30%
S-76	35%
Bell 206	55%

A new helicopter can always be purchased from the factory or a dealer (except for the UH-1; being a military transport, it can only be purchased from the military or from someone who has purchased one from the military). All weapons must be purchased separately, usually on the black market. They may also be obtained by robbing government armories or by requisitioning them from a liberal agency. Video and surveillance equipment can be legally purchased at most large electronics stores.

### Final notes

The helicopters listed above are dangerous and expensive, and the Administrator still has the right to keep agents from using helicopters. These things can greatly upset the game balance. Gunships like the AH-64 Apache, AH-1 Cobra, Soviet MI-24 Hind, Mi-28 Havoc, or any other solely military helicopter should not be used by any agents. Of course, using them *against* the agents is another story entirely!

For more information on helicopters, consult Giorgio Apostolo's *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Helicopters* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1984).



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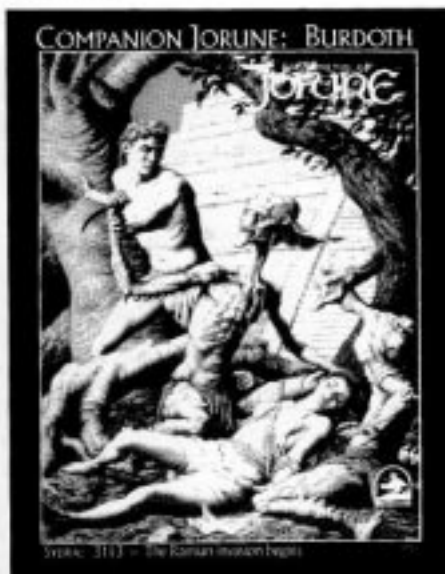
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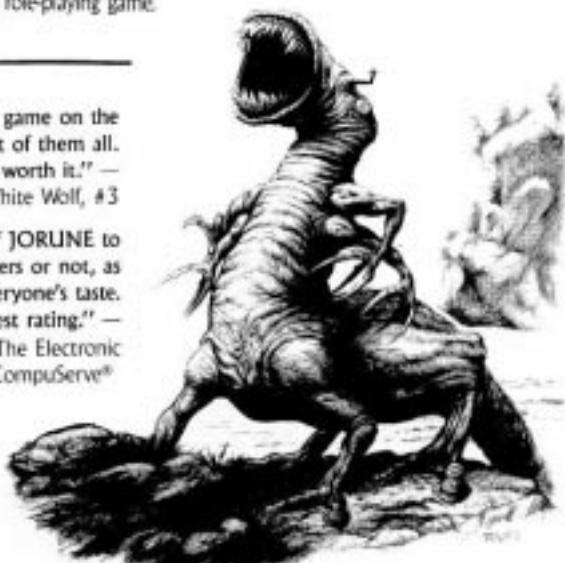
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# A Mutant by Any Other Name

## A GAMMA WORLD® game lexicon for mutant adventurers

by Kim Eastland

"If a creature is known throughout the lands by the same name, there is a reason: It can either save your life or end it."  
— Estelroth Twilyght

The Gamman language, as presented in the GAMMA WORLD® game, is a strange patchwork of nicknames, translations, and scientific names, all taken from civilizations long past. Before writing some of the new modules for the GAMMA WORLD game, I decided to make some sense out of the existing mutant-monster names so future ones could have a rhyme and reason to them. Where possible, I translated names of mutant beasts literally into the alternate names given in the rulebooks.

Eventually, some of the players in my campaign learned this new vocabulary. Srea, for instance, means invisible. If an NPC mentioned that a srea-something-or-other lived in the hills into which the PCs were venturing, the PCs knew that there were creatures living there who were either excellent at camouflage or could bend light around themselves and be invisible. This type of word association is important in creating atmosphere in a

role-playing game; consider, for example, the effects produced when fantasy-world PCs overhear someone mumble about a dragon. The very word *dragon* triggers the imagination. It is also fun to create new monsters in the GAMMA WORLD game, and properly naming them can lead an attentive party member to anticipate what some of their attacks or defenses might be.

Most of the Gamman names are simple constructs of individual syllables, each of which has its own meaning. This is very much like German word construction in which, instead of creating a new word for the animal *bat*, a couple of other words are combined to create a name that literally means "the mouse that flies." In the Gamman tongue, *seroon* lous means "aquatic trees that are masters of their areas." Sometimes a letter used in the middle of a word grouping, or used as a suffix or prefix, is actually a substitute for a word (such as *i*, meaning "living") or a concept (such as *n* followed by an accent mark, meaning "beings who are"). Most of these syllables can be used as prefixes, suffixes, or as root words. There are no rules governing how the syllables should be combined. As a general rule, if a combination of syllables forms a word but is repetitive (such as *par* ("sword") + *arn*

("beetle") = *param*, "sword beetle"), the repetition is usually dropped (*thus*, *parn*), though this is certainly not always the case. This abbreviating of words is a result of handing a name down over generations, with the repetitive sounds being dropped for convenience.

The following is a simple lexicon of Gamman terms translated to English. There are actually so few Gamman words compared to the bounty of the English vocabulary that a reverse translation would be highly repetitive. Some GAMMA WORLD game names are ignored completely because they don't fit this system; these names were probably affixed to creatures at the beginning of the Shadow Years and have undergone hundreds of pronunciation changes. Other names, like *blood birds*, are borrowed directly from English. These names do not fit in with the overall nomenclature of Gamman creatures and were dropped.

- A-:** Concealed, hiding (usually used to mean cowardly, as part of an extremely derogatory term).
- Al:** One who climbs extreme heights, like a mountain climber.
- Am:** Shapeless.
- An:** Tail
- Ar, er:** Folks, people.
- Arl:** Slime, slimy.
- Arn:** Of or belonging to the beetle family.
- Ark:** Of or belonging to one of the larger canine families, such as a wolf or coyote.
- Ash, ashe:** Post-Shadow Years, gamma (as in the Gamma World environment).
- At:** Servant, one who obeys.
- Ba, bar:** Endlessly, forever, eternally; frequently used for any material that lasts "forever," such as a rock.
- Bad:** Dig, digger, one who burrows.
- Bai:** Beast.
- Barl:** Large fish.
- Bat:** To spin, spinning.
- Bber:** Beggar, one who is a pest.
- Ber:** Sweet (as in taste or smell).
- Besh:** Any member of any of the large insect families.
- Bil:** Crescent, in a crescent shape.
- Bis:** Of or belong to the swine family; also used as a derogatory term for one who is sloppy.
- Bla, blaa, blas:** Of or belonging to the moth family.
- Bli, blit:** Any creature that is or resembles a worm; also a derogatory term for one who does not stand up for himself.
- Bof:** Powerful; of or belonging to the oxen family.
- Boom, booma:** Explosion, exploding.
- Brath:** To consume with a voracious appetite.
- Bru:** Big.
- Bu, buo:** Moon-flier, any creature that flies at great altitudes.
- Bumb:** Of or belonging to the bee family.
- Cal:** Of or belonging to any family of flying insects.
- Carr:** Emperor, ruler.
- Cee:** Feathers, feathered.

**Centi:** One who is fast.  
**Choo:** Plant, generic term.  
**Chot, chote:** Bristles, short needles, small spines, etc.  
**Con:** Hunger, hungry.  
**Coo:** Any baying animal.  
**Cren:** Any member of any fish family that can alter its appearance.  
**Crep:** Carnivorous.  
**Crisp:** Midwinter.  
**Crol:** One who runs, running.  
**Cut:** Friend, friendly.  
**Cyn:** Yellow.  
**Daan:** An indescribable animal.  
**Dab:** Brown.  
**Day:** Bird.  
**Deb:** Crest, crested.  
**Dek:** Thatched hut.  
**Dent:** Deviate, sick creature; exiled.  
**Die:** Block, cube.  
**Dog:** Any mount not of an equine nature.  
**Dol:** Trade, bargain, barter.  
**Ed:** Paradise.  
**Eeb:** Without structure or form.  
**Ek, eka:** Fur, furry.  
**El:** Sneaky, one who moves by sneaking around.  
**Ep: Tree.**  
**Erd:** Fin, finned.  
**Erf:** Psionics, mental powers, powerful thoughts.  
**Erp:** Beetle.  
**Er, ert (when followed by k, l, m, or n):** Fish. Given the many varieties of fish, the four additional letters designate either the size or variety of the subject, but this distinction is unfathomable.  
**Erth:** Bush.  
**EsK:** Hedge, any bushlike plant that forms a hedge.  
**Et, eta, ethh:** Plains, grasslands, or savannah; usually pertaining to a creature found there or to the grass itself.  
**Eth:** Of or belonging to any family of lizards with near-human intelligence.  
**Eto:** Cactus.  
**F, fal:** Manlike, humanoid.  
**Farb:** Haven, sanctuary.  
**Fel:** Metal stud, studded.  
**Fer:** Overly willing, gutless.  
**Pho, fhot:** Orange.  
**Flin, fl-in:** To fly in a fluttering manner.  
**Flipp:** Of or belonging to the porpoise family.  
**Frid:** A creature that resurrects itself, like a phoenix; one who is believed to be immortal.  
**Froth:** Glider, gliding.  
**Ga, gar, gr:** Various shades of color, from light to medium green.  
**Garr:** Of or belonging to the squirrel family.  
**Gel:** Plate (armor), plated.  
**Ghit, ght:** Cloud, air.  
**Gon, gen (or a prefix of -n):** Dragon, dragonlike.  
**Goth:** Of or belonging to the elephant family.  
**Gre:** Wooded, one who belongs in the woods.  
**Gum:** Flat.  
**Har:** Powdery snow.

**Hel, h-el:** Devil, demon, hellish.  
**Her:** Tiger, tiger-striped.  
**Herk:** Cannibalistic, a cannibal.  
**Hex:** To suspend above the surface by ropes or poles.  
**Hoi:** Ugly.  
**Hoop, hop:** Of or belonging to the rabbit family.  
**Horl:** Of or belonging to the porcupine family, a porcupine-like creature or plant.  
**Hri:** Indestructible creature, one who can withstand a great amount of damage.  
**Hu:** Hungry or omnivorous, a creature that will eat anything.  
**Hur:** Packed snow.  
**Hydr:** Multiheaded (three or more heads).  
**Hyr:** Ice.  
**I:** When used at the beginning of a word and followed by an apostrophe, it means "living."  
**Ik:** Acid, acidic.  
**Il:** Of or belonging to the feline family in general.  
**In:** Black, dark.  
**Irn:** Ribbonlike, flat and twisted, spiraling.  
**Jag, jagg:** Of or belonging to one of the family of felines that inhabit the plains or savannahs.  
**Jema:** Glass.  
**Jin:** Wing, winged, wing-shaped.  
**Ju, jut:** White.  
**Jugg, jugg:** Rampage, a creature that runs rampant.  
**Kak, -k, -ak, -og:** Of or belonging to the canine family.  
**Kai, kam:** Of or belonging to the lizard family.  
**Kath:** Fun, amusement.  
**Kee:** Weird, a highly mysterious creature.  
**Kep:** Sand.  
**Khesh:** Reclusive, a hermit.  
**Kiik:** Love, loved, loving.  
**Kins:** Bramble, thorny bush.  
**Kir:** Endless, seemingly never-ending.  
**Kit:** Mud, clay.  
**Klos:** Dusk.  
**Ko:** Shadowy, shadowlike.  
**Kraw:** Demon.  
**Krea:** A hateful creature, a monster.  
**Kreel:** To leap, leaping.  
**Kus:** Motion, moving.  
**Laj:** Blue.  
**Lar:** Village.  
**Leen:** A cottage, a home surrounded by plants.  
**Len, lens:** One who walks upright, bipedal.  
**Lep:** Of or belonging to any of the families of aquatic plants that float on the water.  
**Li:** Tall, one who is large.  
**Lil:** Small, one who is tiny.  
**Lin:** A mobile plant, a plant that can move by itself.  
**Lop, lope:** Of or belonging to the deer family.  
**Lou:** A large aquatic plant.  
**Ma, maa:** Slasher, one who slashes.  
**Man:** Render, one who renders.  
**Mar:** Warrior, one who fights.  
**Mel:** Ruins.  
**Men:** Troublemaker, one who bedevils others.

**Mish:** Goo, a substance or creature that has a jellylike structure.  
**Mub:** Murder, to kill.  
**Mut, mutan:** Gas, to spray gas.  
**N:** When used at the beginning of a word and followed by an apostrophe, or at the end of a word and preceded by an apostrophe, it means "beings who are."  
**Narl:** Ghost, spirit.  
**Naut:** Blue-black.  
**Neks:** Predator.  
**Nep:** Death.  
**Nog:** Gray.  
**Nos:** Of or belonging to the monkey family.  
**Not:** Place, location.  
**Ny, ni:** Deadly.  
**Oala, ola:** Ball, sphere.  
**Obb:** Of or belonging to any of the Gamman families of mutated, intelligent, airborne fungi.  
**Oda, odo:** Thunder, deafening sound.  
**Og:** Of or belonging to the ape family.  
**Omnit, omnite:** Mirror, mirrored.  
**Oon:** The area or environment around a creature that it prowls or controls.  
**Or:** Double, twin, twice as much.  
**Par:** Sword.  
**Per:** Radiation, irradiated.  
**Phant:** An elephant-like trunk.  
**Pier:** Of or belonging to the bear family.  
**Pin:** Mount, horselike.  
**Pod:** Terrifying.  
**Prot:** Protection, defense.  
**Puf:** Wind.  
**Qas, qash:** Electricity, electrical; also an electrical shock (like a zap).  
**Qith:** Clear, transparent.  
**Quan, quana:** Barricade, barricading.  
**Rak:** Horns, horned.  
**Rakee:** Literally means "one whose horns have grown inside," it is a derogatory term for someone who is not mentally balanced (i.e., crazy).  
**Ram:** Of or belonging to the sheep family.  
**Rark:** Den.  
**Reg:** Of or belonging to the turtle family.  
**Ren:** Pure strain humans.  
**Ris:** Sticky, gooey.  
**Rod:** Rodent (mice, rat, etc.).  
**Rot:** Roost, avian perch.  
**Rrer:** Cold, freezing.  
**Sar:** Dirt, earth.  
**Strep:** Of or belonging to any of the tree-dwelling lizard or reptile families.  
**Seen:** One who tangles, tangling.  
**Sep:** Of or belonging to the shark family.  
**Ser:** Master, one who has mastery.  
**Shee:** Long hair, one who is long-haired.  
**Shez:** Any fast, flying bird.  
**Shil:** Rain.  
**Shin, shiny:** Water (highly reflective and pure).  
**Sho, shoo:** Moonlight.  
**Sith:** Nest.  
**Sky:** Of or belonging to the ant family.  
**Sled, sledd: Tunnel,** tunneling.  
**Slee:** Seers, prophets.  
**Slith, slithe:** Of or belonging to the snake families.  
**Smok:** Flames, flaming.  
**Smov, smove:** Iron.  
**Soul:** Blood-drinker, vampire.



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**Spir:** Tall and thin, spiral-like.  
**Sprot:** Growing, to grow, growth.  
**Squeek:** One who emits sonic attacks.  
**S'Re:** Dependable, reliable.  
**Sre, srea:** Invisibility, invisible.  
**Sree:** Home.  
**Ssi, ssis:** A gathering of snakes.  
**Steed:** An animal that serves as a mount, usually an equine creature.  
**Suc, suck:** Suction cup, covered with suckers.  
**Sut:** Giant.  
**T:** When used at the beginning of a word and followed by an apostrophe, or at the end of a word and preceded by an apostrophe, it means "she who."  
**Ta, tat:** Dark green.  
**Tel, teld:** Fire, fiery.  
**Ter:** Tree-dweller, tree-dwelling.  
**Tes, -ets, -ts:** Stone, stonelike.  
**Then:** Ripper, shredder.  
**Thlai:** Strange, bizarre.  
**Tis:** Emerald green.  
**Tith:** Garden.  
**Tog:** Day, a 24-hour period measured from dawn to dawn.  
**Tor:** Of or belonging to the reptile family in general.  
**Torn:** Of or belonging to the grasshopper family.  
**Tos:** Cactus, cactuslike.  
**Tosh:** Of or belonging to the amphibian family in general.  
**Torz:** Walker, one who walks.  
**Tsor:** Of or belonging to the bat family.  
**Tsurp:** A batlike humanoid.  
**Tyen:** Nameless, unclaimed.  
**Uns, unus:** Of or belonging to the spider family, spiderlike.  
**Ur, urr:** Spike, spiked.  
**Vath:** Hideous.  
**Ven, vene:** Villain, villainous.  
**Ver, verz:** Guardian.  
**Vilch:** Jump, jumping.  
**Ward:** Small beast, usually used to refer to a smaller than man-sized mammal.  
**Wed:** Red.  
**Win:** Vines.  
**Wolk:** Week, seven togs.  
**Xan:** Mildew.  
**Xen:** Mushrooms, toadstools, and other large fungi.  
**Xil:** One who eats with incredible speed; to eat like a beast.  
**Xon:** Mold, moldy.  
**Y:** When used at the beginning of a word and followed by an apostrophe, or at the end of a word and preceded by an apostrophe, means "he who."  
**Yak:** To talk, chatter.  
**Yama:** City.  
**Ye:** Orange-yellow, golden.  
**Yuk:** Spores.  
**Zar:** To drill, bore.  
**Ze, zee:** Purple.  
**Zeta:** Rocky, mountainous.  
**Zorr:** To fight, to combat.  
**Zu:** Scamper, to climb small heights very rapidly.  
**Apostrophe ('):** When placed between two syllables that stand alone, it means "of the," "which has," or "which is."

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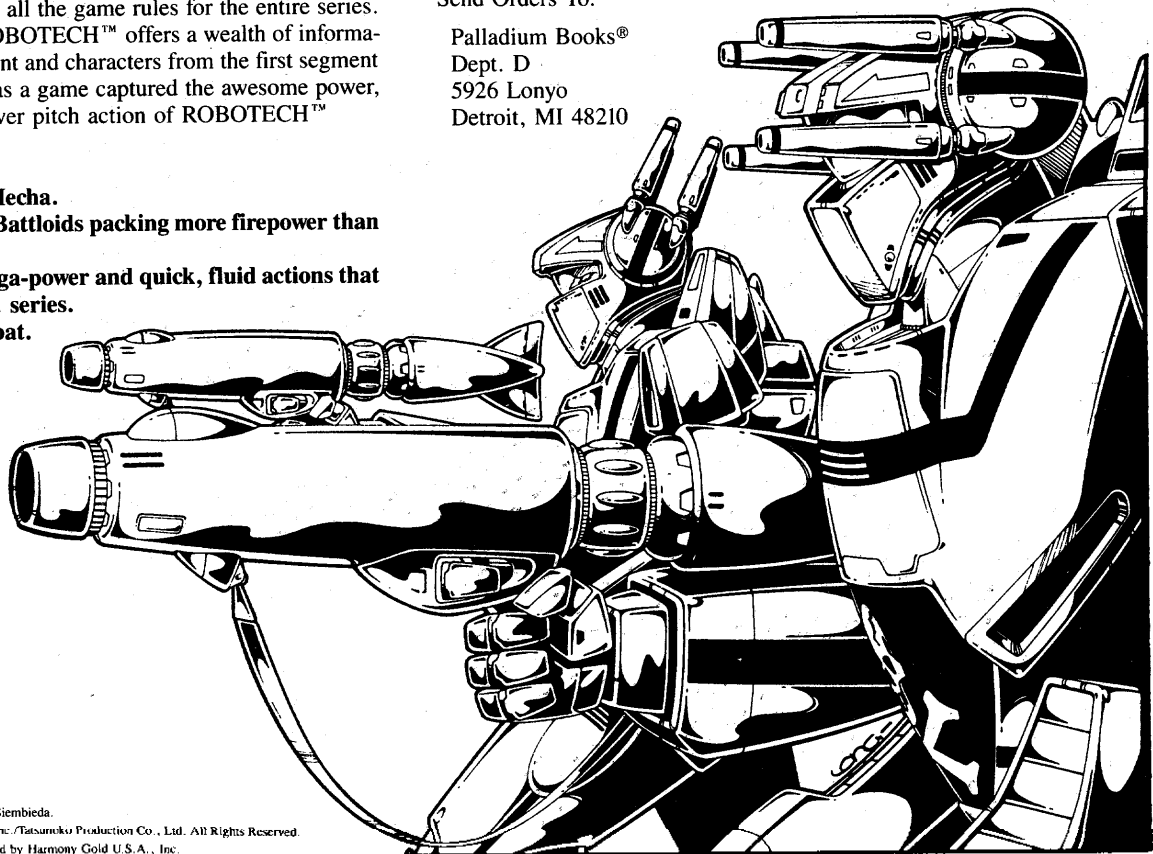
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Grenadier Models™ has released a set of miniatures of the Legion featuring Wildfire™, Blok™, Dawnstar™, Sensor Girl™, Element Lad™, Mordu™, The Persuader™, Tyr™, Lightning Lord™, and the Emerald Empress™.

DC Comics is coming out with a special series on the Legion characters for the thirtieth anniversary. Watch for it at your local shop.

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The current issue of the **DC Heroes RPG Newsletter** contains more ideas for adventures in the 30th Century.

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### LAUREL KENT™

DEX: 10	STRE: 25	BODY: 25
INT: 9	WILL: 9	MIND: 11
INFL: 7	AURA: 7	SPIRIT: 4
INIT: 26 (32) HERO POINTS: 80		

#### POWERS:

Bio-Energy Blast 75/15  
Flight: 15  
Illusion: 12  
Invulnerability: 28

#### SKILLS:

Detective: 9  
Scientist: 15  
Gadgetry: 14  
Martial Artist/Att. Advantage: 6  
Weaponry: 10

#### LIMITATIONS:

Miscellaneous: Illusion only usable to transform appearance.

Miscellaneous: Bio-Energy Blast Power of 75APs is actually a self-destruct system which the android can only use upon itself. The android can use 15APs of Bio-Energy Blast against other targets.

EQUIPMENT: Legion Flight Ring

#### CONNECTIONS:

Legion of Super-Heroes (High-Level)  
Legion Academy™ (High-Level)  
Manhunters™ (High Level)

MOTIVATION: Power Lust

WEALTH: Affluent

OCCUPATION: NA

RACE: Android

#### BACKGROUND:

Laurel Kent was a trusted companion of the Legion, and originally joined the Legion Academy under the guise of being a descendant of Clark Kent™, Superman™. She started quickly gained the confidence of all the Legionnaires.

Recently, she broke her trust and stole information from the Legion's computers in order to find the Chosen™ of the Millennium™. She exposed herself as an android Manhunter™. When she discovered no traces of the Chosen left on Earth, she assumed her mission was a failure and destroyed herself.

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# The Island in Your Computer



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## A Moment in Kesmai

After weeks of preparation, your group of adventurers is ready to launch an assault on the dragon hiding deep within the dungeon maze on the Island of Kesmai. As you wait in the Kesmai conference room, people you know and people you've never met before wander in and out. While you do your share of the talking, your mind is preoccupied with the battle to come.

As one of two thaumaturges in the band, it will be your job to fight when necessary and to reinforce the strength of your comrades. You feel lucky to be part of such a good group. At first they wondered whether a woman of Mu would be any help on their quest. Your strong right arm soon convinced them that women were nothing to scoff at, and your healing powers have come in handy for them more than once.

Then you overhear one of the newcomers — a common thief — bragging. "Yeah, I left old Shelman for dead down in the lower levels. He said something about waiting for companions, but that was probably just a trick. I snuck up on him and got in a few good licks before he could even raise his defenses. When a group of hobgoblins appeared and started in on him, I slipped away."

"Shelman?" you ask suddenly. "Where did you leave him?" Knowing that Shelman was to lead the raid this afternoon, you are seriously worried about his condition.

"I don't know. Somewhere down in the lower levels. He wasn't much of a fighter — hee hee hee!"

You wish you had this clown down in the dungeon instead of in the conference hall, but you realize you must go look for Shelman. "Anyone gonna be around for the next five minutes?" you ask, hoping against hope that someone else is waiting for a friend.

A wizard in the back silently motions for you to approach. As you do, he says, "I came in early to pick up on the gossip. I'll be here a while. What can I do to help?"

Though this man seems familiar, you

can't quite place his name: Kesrom. "I'm meeting my companions - Harold, James, Shanarra, Alfie, and Koor. They were supposed to be here at 10 o'clock, but it looks like they're a bit late. Shelman must have gotten tired of waiting. I have to go after him. Will you tell the others to wait here until we get back?"

Kesrom nods his head and looks about gravely. "Go for your friend. I'll await your return and hold your comrades here. When you return, though, I wish to hear more about your group."

You nod and disappear in a flash, reappearing in the dungeon corridor downwind from and one level above the dragon. Looking around, you see no sign of Shelman - but what you do see doesn't please you at all. A large party of hobgoblins is closing in fast. A fighter named Jason is standing next to you.

Hoping that Jason will take no action against you, you throw your staff at the nearest hobgoblin and warm up a create *fear* spell. Jason, who seems to have decided you are not a threat, knocks an arrow in his bow and fires at the hobgoblins, hitting one in the throat. As they come closer, you cast your spell and most of them flee, leaving only two to deal with. Your combined efforts as two skilled fighters prove too much for the hobgoblins, and they are soon defeated.

Fearing for your friend Shelman, you look around and wonder in what direction he lies. You yell Shelman's name and hear nothing, but Jason says, "Follow me." Not wanting to waste time talking, you follow him several rooms east - where you find the ghost of Shelman, hovering over his body. You hastily decide to save your raise dead spell and try to carry Shelman back to the temple to be revived. Picking up the corpse, you thank Jason and use a *ring of recall* to teleport to the temple. Once Shelman is revived and rested, the two of you return to the conference room to seek your missing companions.

There, you find your friends and the wizard Kesrom. Shelman recounts his harrowing tale of trying to fend off the hobgoblins after being attacked by the thief. Though it was a long battle, he was eventually overcome and had to wait helplessly as a ghost, hoping that someone would come by and move his corpse before decay set in. Luckily, you reached him in time. "You're fortunate that the thief was such a loudmouth and came in here to brag," you remind Shelman. "Otherwise, I wouldn't have known to come after you."

Jason pops in and tells his part in the adventure. He had come upon Shelman too late to help, and was forced to flee before the hobgoblins did him in as well. He then ran into a couple of skeletons, which were quickly dispatched. Then you found him in the room with the hobgoblins, and together you defeated them. "I had hoped to be able to double back down a side corridor and save Shelman. I was

sure glad you came along when you did."

Kesrom quietly absorbs the tales. He asks about your band and your plans. Hesitant at first, you finally give him all the details of your plan and invite him to join you. Though he concedes that it sounds like a good idea that may not have been tried before, he declines the invitation, wishes you luck, and departs.

Jason asks whether you can use another hand; after a short discussion, he joins the group. Figuring that the time has come, your gallant band steps back into the world of Kesmai to pursue the quest for the dragon. . . .

### An island in your computer

Island of Kesmai is an interactive role-playing game on the CompuServe® Information Service. This popular on-line telecommunications network can be used by almost anyone with a personal computer and a modem. With local phone numbers in all major cities (and many smaller ones), CompuServe lets players log on from all over the country. You can play solo anytime, team up with some of those who are already playing, or agree to meet other players at a specific time and place. You can walk randomly about or create a detailed plan of action.

According to Kelton Flinn and John Taylor of the Kesmai Corporation, the developers of the game, *Island of Kesmai* is evolving even now. "We're working on it all the time," says Flinn. "*Island of Kesmai* is not a simple game. It's an environment where the players set the objectives. Many different objectives are possible. Killing the dragon is a goal, but players can create their own goals."

As with other fantasy role-playing games, there is no real winner in any session. The point is for players to enjoy themselves and have fun. "Winning" is subjective - a part of the player's own concept of the game. *Island of Kesmai* keeps track of the strongest characters, but this is no indication of winning.

Part of *Island of Kesmai's* uniqueness is the interaction between players. While nonplayer characters are used to populate the town and countryside, and to create havoc in the dungeon, many characters you meet in the game are players like yourself. When you speak with NPCs, they are dull and have limited speech patterns. Other players, however, speak just as they would in real life. Any movement or activity command can be followed with a message in quotation marks. Anyone nearby will hear this message, which appears on the computer screen. If you need to communicate with someone farther away, you can yell by adding an exclamation point to your message.

While in the game system, your computer screen shows a graphic representation of your character's immediate surroundings. A text section on the screen describes the other characters in your area. If other beings are within striking

distance, the screen shows the names, weaponry, and armor of these characters or monsters. Another section is devoted to the commands you type and any messages that the game must give you. For instance:

NW  
FIGHT ORC  
You hit the orc with great force. The  
orc is dead.  
SEARCH CORPSE  
On the ground, you see a dagger, two  
scrolls, a gold ring, and an oaken  
staff.  
You hear from the SE "I got two  
kobolds. I'll be there in a second.  
Good fighting."

Cooperation between players in Kesmai is very common. After all, the monsters can attack in packs; why shouldn't the players be able to do likewise?

The command structure is easy to learn. In most cases, English language commands are used. These can frequently be abbreviated to just the first two letters of a key word. Up to three commands can be entered at once. First letters are used to indicate direction. For example, typing N N EN would take you north one space, northeast one, then north again. Running into walls is a "stunning" experience and is not recommended, so care should be used when entering moves.

### History of the realm

The world of Kesmai has a definite history. If you buy the manual that CompuServe sells, you'll have all the information on the world at your fingertips. If you can't wait to get started, the information is also available in the on-line instructions that you can read before you start playing.

Briefly, a group of evil sorcerers threatening to take over the world were fought by a group of thaumaturges. The thaumaturges weren't strong enough to prevail, so they used a dragon to help defeat their opponents - but the dragon, finding that he liked the hoard of treasure collected by the sorcerers, set up a permanent home on the island and settled in for a comfortable stay in the dungeon.

This is where you come in. The thaumaturges offer a reward to anyone who can get rid of the dragon. Of course, the dungeon is also filled with gold and treasure to lure those who want a quick profit.

As with most role-playing games, you set up a character for adventuring; unlike other role-playing games, the computer helps you do this. It asks you a few questions, then generates the strength, intelligence, wisdom, dexterity, constitution, and charisma statistics for your character. You then choose one of the six character classes or occupations: fighter, martial artist, thaumaturge (cleric), thief, wizard, or sorcerer.

The Kesmai universe is populated by people from seven different civilizations:



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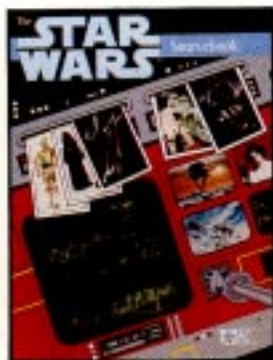
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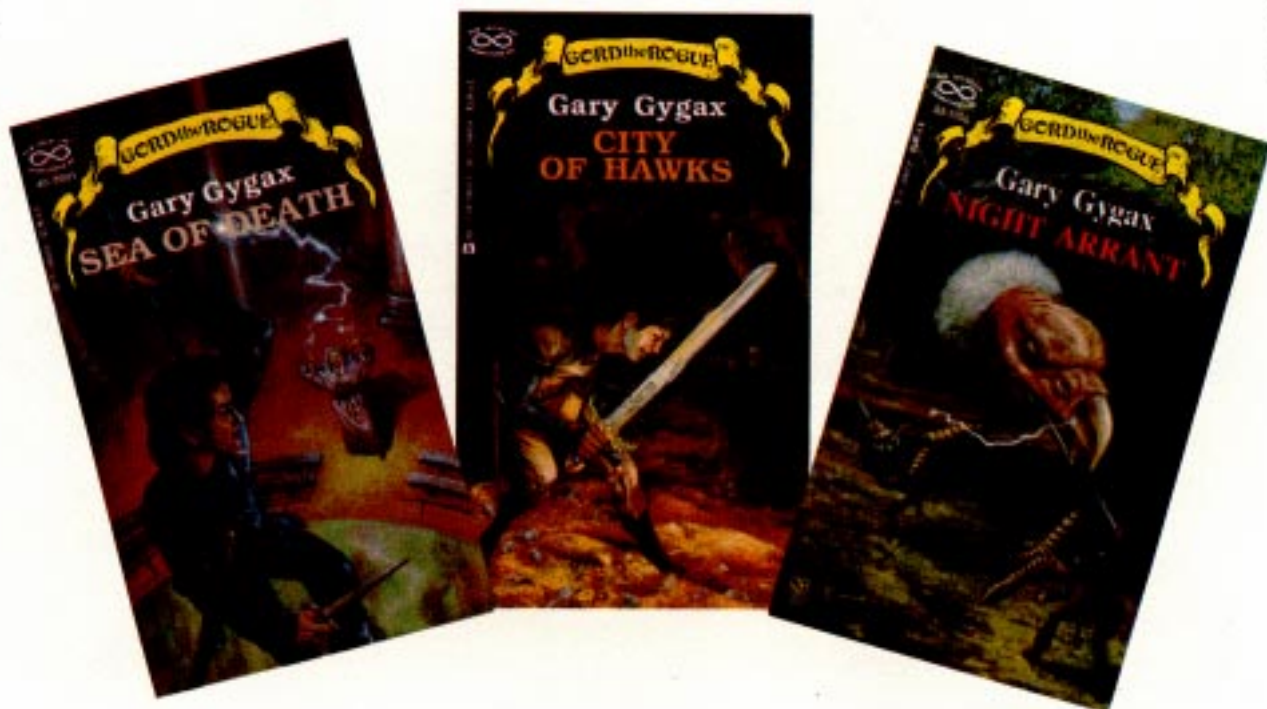
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Illyria, Lemuria, Mu, Leng, Draznia, Hovath, and Mnar. There are also various bands of barbarians. You must choose which of these bands or civilizations your character is from.

All characters in Kesmai have a limited lifetime determined by the Fates. This adds an incentive to accomplishment and helps keep the game balanced. Life is measured in number of turns as opposed to real time. Experience points determine your character's level; everyone starts at level three.

Character abilities are earned in many ways. With proper training, you can increase your skill level in any of 10 available weapon classes. To obtain training, you must pay for it in gold. Magical enhancements are available through special weapons, armor, rings, and other items. Magic wielders can enhance their characteristics by using certain spells, but these have their price. Successful combat in the dungeon also helps improve your character's attributes.

Kesmai has five types of magic wielders: thaumaturges, wizards, sorcerers, thieves, and knights. Each has its own list of spells, with a few overlapping powers. A spell's effectiveness depends on many factors, from the person throwing it to the conditions in the dungeon at the time.

There are two basic character alignments: Lawful and Neutral. Monsters are usually Chaotic. A fourth alignment, Evil, is usually reserved for sorcerers and demons. Alignment is not just a convenient way to identify players on the island. Some abilities and options require that a player use a lawful character who has committed no crime that would change his alignment. Attacking and killing a lawful character who has done you no damage will change your alignment to neutral, forever barring you from becoming a knight. Though forgiveness can be obtained, changing your alignment back to good, you can never be truly good again.

### Finding help

The variations on game play on the island are too numerous to describe here, but there are as many scenario differences as can be found in a noncomputerized role-playing game. Because of this complexity, though, players need all the help they can get. *Island of Kesmai* denizens can be very helpful. In fact, I found most players were both friendly and generous. The on-line help feature is wonderful. If you can't remember how to use a command, you can type `HELP`, and the command name and a message will appear, telling you about that command and its possible uses.

A great place to find help before you even start playing is the Multi-Player Game Forum. Type `GO MPGAMES` from any command prompt on CompuServe; you join the forum by answering a few questions. Once you join, you can read the messages left by other members, leave a message

for other members, go to the real-time conference area and look for someone to talk with; or go to the data library area and read files about the game.

The bulletin-board system is easy to use. The manual that comes with subscriptions to CompuServe explains how to use the forums. Basically, you can leave a message for a specific member if you know his ID number, or you can leave messages that everyone who reads the board can see. To read only the messages related to Kesmai, you use the `SET SECTION` command `ss 6.7`. Reading the board is as easy as typing `RTN` - an abbreviation for "Read Thread New." This will show all the messages that you haven't read. The messages that relate to each other are shown in sequence, so you can see the answers that are left for each message. Again, a help feature can be used to explain how to leave or read messages if you don't have your user manual handy. Help with using the data libraries and conference area is also available.

While the data libraries contain help files submitted by other players, there are also maps of the island and dungeon levels that can be read into your computer and printed out if you have the right equipment. A special on-line newsletter, *The Electronic Gamer™*, is also available by typing `GO TEG`.

For those who want to learn more about the game, the MPGAMES forum sponsors

beginners and intermediate classes in the conference area. Classes can be arranged by appointment or players can just show up for the regularly scheduled classes. These classes usually include a short question-and-answer period, followed by a field trip into the game. According to John Taylor, "It's strange but true that a body count is used to measure success of a field trip. If they only lose a few players, it's considered a good trip."

### Bigger and better

Improvement plans are in the works and will be finished before you read this. The dungeon is growing, and new player areas are being added. The programmers are designing new scenarios to increase the complexity of the game.

To subscribe to CompuServe and to play *Island of Kesmai*, contact CompuServe:

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# The Marvel-Phile



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*American dreams and nightmares*



by Jon D. Martin

*Deadline doom and the need to further research his massive article on the victims of Scourge has led Jeff Grubb to step down for one more month from "The Marvel-Phile" – but he'll be back soon with the largest roster of Marvel Super Villains yet published in these pages. Meanwhile, Jon Martin (who wrote up the original Warlock and friends in DRAGON® issue #118) presents the current players in the life of Captain America, both friends and foes.*

## CAPTAIN AMERICA®

**John Walker, former member of the U.S. Armed Forces, formerly known as the Super-Patriot**

F	IN (40)	Health: 140
A	EX (20)	
S	IN (40)	K a r m a : 2 2 *
E	IN (40)	
R	TY (6)	Resources: EX* *
I	GD (10)	
P	TY (6)	Popularity: 100 * * *

\* Reduced to zero following killing of Anthony Power (see below).

\*\* The new Captain America is supported by the U.S. government.

\*\*\* People still believe him to be the original Captain America, since the fact that he isn't has yet to be disclosed to the public.

### KNOWN POWERS:

**Unique Weapon:** Walker uses the same shield that Rogers used during his career as Captain America, though he is not as proficient in its use as Rogers was. The shield is made of a unique adamantium-vibranium alloy. Its composition renders it immune to harm from all forms of energy save the psionic or magical. The material rank of the shield is Class 1000.

Used defensively, the shield can absorb up to 90 points of damage in one round, but when the wielder employs it in such fashion, no attacks are possible during that round. If charging and attacking, Walker may use his shield to deflect up to Remarkable (30 points) damage. Even when using the shield, Cap is subject to specific battle effects such as Slam or Stun. Used offensively, the shield can be hurled in boomerang fashion to make multiple attacks, to then return to the thrower's hand (an Agility Power Stunt). When using the shield in this manner, Walker has Remarkable Agility, thanks to training which he received from the imprisoned Taskmaster, as part of a sentence-reduction deal made with the government. The shield causes Remark-

able blunt or edged damage, as the user desires.

After years of loyal and heroic duty, the original Captain America, Steve Rogers, had a falling out with the U.S. government. The disagreement stemmed from his refusal to cooperate with the Commission to Coordinate Super-Human Activities and his discovery of U.S. Army involvement with a known criminal named Curtiss Jackson, better known as the Power Broker. Heated words were exchanged between Rogers and members of the Committee. The result of the confrontation was that Rogers left his post as Captain America, leaving the government with a shield and an empty costume.

For decades, Rogers wore his costume in

able blunt or edged damage, as the user desires.

**Body Armor:** Thanks to the augmentation process he underwent prior to becoming Super-Patriot, Walker possesses a dense muscle and bone structure which provides him with Typical protection from physical attacks (bullets, knives, fists, and any parked cars he might be thrown through). His costume, which includes the original Cap's chain-mail shirt, is Excellent Body Armor, also lending Typical protection against heat, cold, and electricity.

**TALENTS:** Walker has Martial Arts A, B, and E, as well as Acrobatics, Sharp Weapons, and Thrown Weapons skills. As Super-Patriot, he used a short torch sword with an energy blade (Remarkable material strength and damage) and five-pointed shuriken (Excellent damage; thrown three at a time). He has a +1 CS (as noted above) with his shield.

**CONTACTS:** As Super-Patriot, John Walker had contacts with the organization called Power Broker, Inc., and (to a lesser extent) the Unlimited Class Wrestling Federation (UCWF). Since becoming Captain America, he has gained contacts with the Commission to Coordinate Super-Human Activities, most notably with its director, Valerie Cooper. The only contacts that he retains from his days as Super-Patriot are with his former manager, Ethan Thurm, and his friend and fellow augment Lemar Hoskins, the new Bucky.

**HISTORY:** John Walker grew up on a farm near the small town of Custer's Grove, Georgia. Little is known of his early life, though it seems likely that he was an accomplished athlete in his high-school years. After his older brother Mike was killed in Vietnam, Walker joined the Armed Forces in his late teens or early twenties, where he met Lemar Hoskins. Walker hoped to make a name for himself

defense of the ideals of freedom, justice, and liberty, becoming a living legend in the process. Having a walking, talking symbol of the ideals upon which the nation was founded had become a public-relations asset that the government found itself unwilling to do without. With Rogers gone, someone had to be found who could put forth the proper image for both the nation and the office of Captain America. Finding a replacement for Rogers was made even more difficult by the fact that any such person would have to be physically able to perform like the original Captain America. Fortunately, such a man was available at the time!

as well as to serve his country as an "all-American hero like my brother."

Following his time in the armed forces, Walker became involved with the California-based criminal organization known as Power Broker, Inc. Through the physiological augmentation process perfected by Dr. Karl Malus (see below) during his work for the Power Broker, John Walker gained his superhuman abilities. Donning a red, white, and blue costume, Walker began traveling the country under the management of Ethan Thurm. John took the name of Super-Patriot, using the name and his abilities to espouse his own radical views of patriotism. Part of his activities as Super-Patriot included backing a gang of augmented thugs called the Bold Urban Commandos – Buckies for short. One of the Buckies was Lemar Hoskins, who would go on to serve as Bucky to John's rendition of Captain America.

John's career as Super-Patriot ironically brought him into conflict with the living symbol of the values he espoused – the original Captain America. The two fought on different occasions, with neither claiming a decisive victory. During this time, Walker's attitude toward the original Cap was one of open contempt, as he believed Cap was out of touch with the times.

When Steve Rogers gave up his career as Captain America, the government went looking for suitable replacements and found Walker to be a made-to-order candidate for the job. He accepted the offer and began a long stretch of intense training designed to match his fighting style with that of Rogers as closely as possible. On his first field mission, Walker was sent to his hometown to infiltrate a radical group of men who called themselves the Watchdogs, who were responsible for various terrorist acts in Georgia. Once Walker and Hoskins (as Bucky) dealt with the Watchdogs, it was revealed that the entire mission had been a test of Walker's fighting prowess and his dedication to duty; fighting the Watchdogs had meant fighting old

friends. The incident set Walker to questioning the ethics of the U.S. government and the ethics of his own past activities.

Though he is somewhat egotistical, John Walker is a man of integrity. He is honest and has made a vow to himself to live up to the highest personal standards of morality and honor in his post as Captain America. His heart is in the right place, but only time will tell if he lives up to those standards. John Walker is patriotic to the point of fanaticism, a factor in his personality which has served as his motivation as both Super-Patriot and Captain America. He also has strong fundamentalist beliefs. His recent killing of the criminal Anthony (Professor) Power greatly strained his sense of morality; he does not wish to be a government executioner, and the strain of his role is telling on him. Still, he is a ferocious and unforgiving fighter.

## BUCKY™

**Lemar Hoskins; former member of the Armed Forces and of the Bold Urban Commandos (Buckies)**

F	RM (30)	Health: 130
A	EX (20)	
S	IN (40)	Karma: 46
E	IN (40)	
R	TY (6)	Resources: EX*
I	EX (20)	
P	EX (20)	Popularity: 50 **

\* The new Bucky is supported by the U.S. government.

\*\* Again, this is largely due to name association, and it will likely change after he receives more public exposure.

### KNOWN POWERS:

*Shield:* The new Bucky was given an Incredible-strength shield by the government. This shield, which resembles the one originally used by Captain America during World War II, cannot be hurled. However, it can be used defensively in the usual manner and also as a smashing weapon (+ 1 CS to Lemar's Fighting ability when using it; Incredible damage). When not in use, the shield may be slung over Bucky's back.

*Body Armor:* Lemar Hoskins underwent the same physiological augmentation process as John Walker, and as a result was granted the same sort of dense bone and muscle structure. He has Typical protection from physical attacks, and his costume extends that protection to apply against heat, cold, and electricity.

**TALENTS:** Lemar has received combat training which grants him Martial Arts A, B, and E, and Acrobatics skill. At present,

he is attending classes to obtain a GED (Graduation Equivalency Diploma), having dropped out of high school.

**CONTACTS:** Not surprisingly, Lemar shares the same contacts as his partner.

**HISTORY:** Little is known of Hoskins's past. It is known that he grew up in an economically disadvantaged area of a large American city, and he is apparently a high-school dropout who served in the Armed Forces, where he met John Walker. Hoskins and Walker have been close friends for quite some time, Lemar having worked with John as one of the Buckies during John's brief career as Super-Patriot. The two men look out for each other and share many of the same attitudes, though Hoskins doesn't seem quite as driven as his partner. He is quick-tempered but possesses enough self-control to keep from getting too far out of line.

Hoskins's major motivation at this time is serving his country, though he doesn't mind the media attention he expects to receive or the steady income he is already receiving. He is somewhat unsure of himself but hopes that he can make good in his new role. Though prone to act impetuously, he is able to deal with any situation that arises from his actions. He has a more casual attitude about the "fair use" of his augmented strength against unpowered opponents than does John Walker.

## DR. KARL MALUS™

**Karl Malus; creator of supervillains**

F	PR (4)	Health: 24
A	GD (10)	
S	TY (6)	Karma: 70
E	PR (4)	
R	RM (30)	Resources: FE/RM*
I	EX (20)	
P	EX (20)	Popularity: - 10

\* Feeble at present; Remarkable when employed by Power Broker, Inc.

**KNOWN POWERS:** None.

**TALENTS:** Dr. Malus has a doctorate-level degree in biology and has Incredible Reason in that field. He has great knowledge in the fields of chemistry and radiology as well, and these talents give him Amazing Reason when applied to the study of superhuman physiology and genetic manipulation techniques, such as those he used to create the augmentation process undergone by Walker, Hoskins, D-Man (see below), and many others [see *DRAGON* issue #121, "The Marvel®-Phile"].

**CONTACTS:** Malus is a well-known figure in the Los Angeles underworld, where his services are much sought after. When Power Broker, Inc., was in operation, Malus had close ties with that group, and any members of the organization are likely to remember Malus as a valuable employee. In particular, Malus is known to Curtiss Jackson, the man behind both



Power Broker, Inc., and the long-defunct Corporation. In addition, Malus apparently knows at least one good lawyer and a bail-bondsman or two.

**HISTORY:** From the time that he first read of the Fantastic Four in the newspaper, Dr. Malus was fascinated by the subject of superhuman powers. Upon his graduation from UCLA, Dr. Malus applied



to several institutions for funds to finance an in-depth study of supernormal capacities. Failing to achieve his goal through legal means, Malus turned to the Los Angeles underworld in search of potential investors. In short order, he was set up with adequate laboratory facilities with the understanding that his "investors" would be allowed to exploit the results of his work. Those same investors provided Malus with human test subjects.

None of Malus's early test subjects survived, though his research did lead him to creating a number of chemical-based weapons which he sold to Los Angeles criminals such as the Enforcer. His first major break came when the criminal called the Fly approached him seeking a way to bolster his waning powers. His encounter with the Fly led him to a run-in with the original Spider-Woman, which in turn led Malus to jail following a brief stay in the hospital.

Following his short stay in prison, Malus worked free-lance for a time, renewing the powers of the original Power Man and giving him a new name (Goliath) and costume. His creation of the Armadillo and

subsequent attempt to use the Armadillo to free Goliath for the purpose of forming a team of superhuman henchmen led to his arrest and his second prison term. While serving time, Malus was contacted by Power Broker, Inc., and he agreed to work for the company in return for his freedom. While employed by Power Broker, Inc., Malus performed the same physiological augmentation process he had used on Goliath, now augmenting many men, most of them members of the UCWF or employees of Power Broker, Inc. It should be noted that Malus still hasn't perfected his augmentation process, and that roughly half of those who undergo the treatment end up brain-damaged or disfigured [as noted in *DRAGON* issue #121).

Malus's current stay in prison resulted from an investigation by Captain America into the source of Super-Patriot's superhuman abilities. With the help of Demolition Man, a UCWF wrestler who had been augmented by Malus, Cap located and exposed Malus's illegal lab. Exactly how long Malus will remain incarcerated is a question for the courts to decide.

investigation of that organization, cannot be said to have friendly contacts within the company's personnel. He is on good terms with several of his former fellow UCWF wrestlers, most notably the Thing. Dennis has become a close friend of Steve Rogers as a result of their brief partnership during his investigation of the Power Broker and, as a result of this association, recently met the Falcon, Nomad, and Nomads female companion, Vagabond.

**LIMITATION:** Dennis Dunphy has had severe heart trouble and may reinjure himself if strained to his limits. Any attempt at a Red Strength or Endurance FEAT causes him to make a second Endurance FEAT immediately afterward. Any result other than a Red or Yellow result allows him to perform normally; a Yellow result causes him to rest for 1-10 rounds, with some chest pain and shortness of breath. A Red result is treated as a Kill result with an edged (sharp) weapon, requiring immediate hospitalization from a major heart attack. See the Advanced Set *Players' Book* for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES® game, page 29.

## DEMOLITION MAN™

**Dennis "Demolition" Dunphy, alias D-Man; former pro wrestler, now crimefighting adventurer**

F	IN (40)	Health: 136
A	TY (6)	
S	IN (40)	Karma: 36
E	AM (50)	
R	GD (10)	Resources: RM
I	EX (20)	
P	TY (6)	Popularity: 20/6 *

\* 20 as Demolition Dunphy, 6 as D-Man (he has yet to make public his identity as an adventurer).

### KNOWN POWERS:

**Body Armor:** Prior to entering the UCWF, Dunphy underwent the physiological augmentation process employed by Dr. Malus under the auspices of Power Broker, Inc. The treatment gave him Excellent protection from physical attacks and Typical resistance to heat and cold.

**TALENTS:** As a member of the UCWF, Dennis trained enough to gain Wrestling talent as well as Martial Arts A and C. He also possesses a fair degree of knowledge in the area of professional wrestling organization and management. Dunphy rides a motorcycle as do Nomad and Steve Rogers.

**CONTACTS:** Dunphy has had dealings with Power Broker, Inc., but because of his role in aiding Captain America in his



**HISTORY:** Dennis Dunphy is a former professional wrestler who took advantage of the strength-enhancing process offered by Power Broker, Inc., to be able to compete in the UCWF. Calling himself Demolition Dunphy, he soon became one of the UCWF's top wrestlers. He enjoyed life as a wrestler and amassed a small fortune in winnings, building an estate in the Santa Monica Mountains near Los Angeles.

The Demolition Man identity was created by Dunphy to provide him with a cover while he aided Captain America in his investigation into the activities of Power Broker, Inc. In the course of their investigation, D-Man was captured by several strength-augmented men who worked for the Power Broker. As a captive of the organization, he was subjected to augmentation to a point that nearly destroyed his muscles; he was then injected with a drug which caused him to go berserk and attack Captain America, who had been locked in an augmentation chamber with him. Eventually, Dunphy collapsed from heart failure but was saved by the quick action of Cap and subsequently returned to a stable physiological condition by Dr. Malus.

Following his recovery and Roger's retirement from his post as Captain America, Dunphy opted to quit the UCWF and become a full-time masked adventurer. He handled the major calls from Cap's hot line service until he, Nomad, Falcon, and Vagabond joined forces with Steve Rogers to fight crime. Steve Rogers uses a black, white, and red uniform designed by Dunphy, and calls himself simply "Cap."

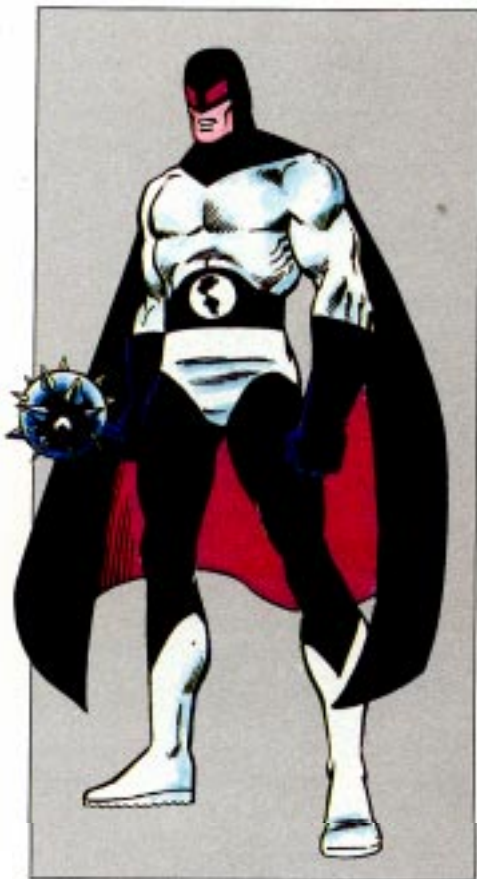
## FLAG-SMASHER™

**Real name known to the authorities hut not publicly revealed; former student, now terrorist**

F	RM (30)	Health: 80
A	GD (10)	
S	EX (20)	Karma: 46
E	EX (20)	
R	GD (10)	Resources: FE/IN*
I	RM (30)	
P	TY (6)	Popularity: - 20

\* Feeble at present; Incredible with backing of ULTIMATUM (see below).

**KNOWN POWERS:** None.



**WEAPONS:** In the past, Flag-Smasher has employed the following weapons and devices:

**Costume:** His costume is made of highly resilient fibrous materials, providing him with Good protection from physical attacks and Typical protection from heat and cold. The lenses in the mask of his costume give him Excellent resistance to light-based blinding attacks.

**Flamethrower pistol:** Flag-Smasher uses a cut-down version of a standard military flamethrower which conforms to the statistics given for such weapons (as per the *Advanced Set Players' Book*, page 43), but with Typical range and Excellent damage on the first round (and Typical

damage for 1-10 rounds afterward unless the flames are extinguished).

**Tear gas gun:** This weapon has the following combat statistics: Good range; one shot per turn; eight-shot magazine; and, fires Remarkable-strength tear gas requiring an Endurance FEAT to resist its effects (which last for 1-10 rounds after victims are removed from exposure to the gas).

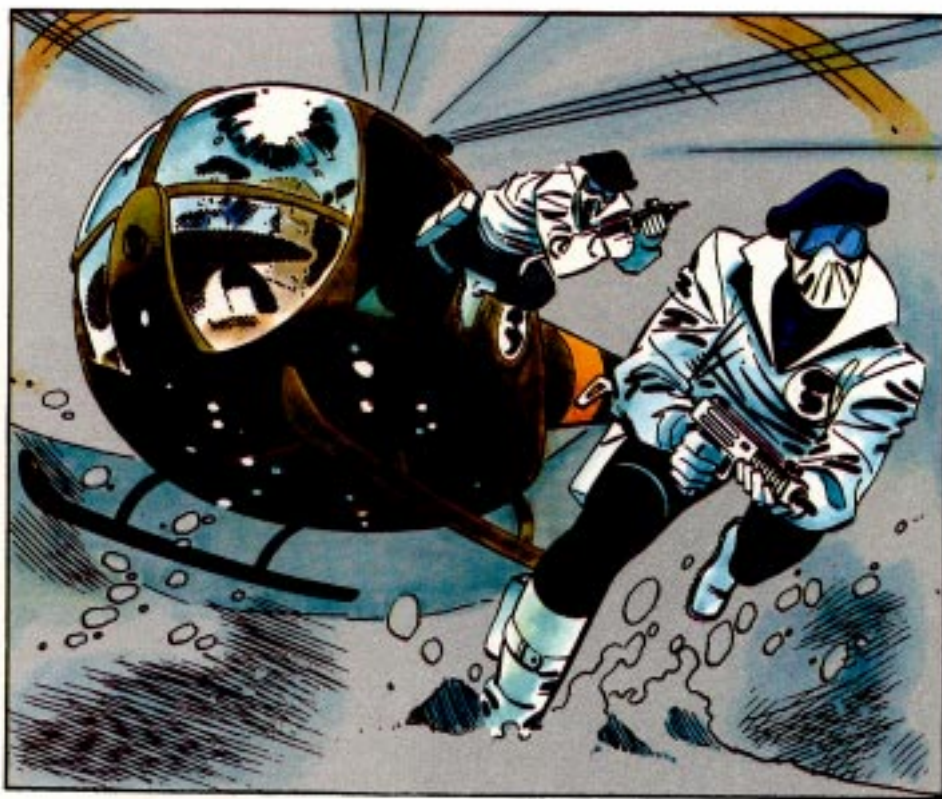
**Mace:** Flag-Smasher's trademark weapon is a spiked mace made of Incredible-strength steel. He may employ it to inflict either blunt or edged damage, but in either case it inflicts Remarkable damage. Flag-Smasher's Fighting is Incredible when using the mace.

**Hovercraft:** When he first appeared,

es: French, German, Italian, Russian, English, Japanese, and Esperanto.

**CONTACTS:** Flag-Smasher is currently affiliated with the terrorist organization called ULTIMATUM and can gain any manpower that he might need through his ties to ULTIMATUM. It is apparent that he has access to at least one black-market weapons dealer, and he may have further ties in the international underworld.

**HISTORY:** The father of the young man who eventually became the Flag-Smasher was a wealthy Swiss banker and diplomat. He allowed his son to accompany him on many of his missions to foreign companies,



Flag-Smasher drove a rocket-propelled, ATV-like hovercraft which was severely damaged during his first battle with Captain America. The vehicle was equipped with a remote control (Excellent range) and, when in working order, had the following statistics: Excellent control; Incredible speed; Incredible body; and, Good armor protection.

**TALENTS:** Flag-Smasher is a gifted hand-to-hand combatant, with Martial Arts A and E tucked firmly under his black belt. As noted above, he is skilled in the use of the mace and has Remarkable Agility when using handguns. Furthermore, he was once a student of international diplomacy and as such learned several languages

which proved to be a sort of mixed blessing in terms of its influence on the boy's social development. While he did learn a lot about foreign cultures and the need to promote international understanding, the boy often encountered prejudice, which made him grow introverted and angry. While living in Tokyo, he learned to channel his anger into the practice of the martial arts - shotokan karate-do in particular. At the age of 15, he achieved a black belt. At the age of 19, his father was trampled to death in a protest outside of the Latvian embassy in New York City.

It was the death of his father which prompted Flag-Smasher to begin his career of terrorism. He felt that his father had pursued the goals of world peace and



unity too passively, so he decided to spread the word using the universal language of violence. He started off by attacking national embassies and symbols of nations, decrying nationalism and patriotism as dangerous concepts which promoted world disorder. His first major press coverage came when he attacked Captain America at a press conference in which Cap was announcing the creation of his nationwide hot line. Flag-Smasher used the opportunity to present his view of world politics to a captive audience, but found his regularly scheduled program interrupted by a police SWAT team. He was subsequently apprehended by Captain America.

In his second attempt to enlighten the world, Flag-Smasher fared no better, in spite of the aid of several dozen operatives of ULTIMATUM. The second attempt began with the skyjacking of an American airliner from London and ended with Cap and the European branch of SHIELD safely freeing the passengers of the airliner, capturing Flag-Smasher and his forces. At present, Flag-Smasher and a sizable portion of the membership of ULTIMATUM are in SHIELD custody. Steve Rogers is especially irritated with Flag-Smasher and company as Rogers was forced to kill an ULTIMATUM operative while rescuing the

airline passengers, thus violating one of Cap's most cherished points of honor - the preservation of human life. Cap has suffered serious repercussions from unfavorable media attention as a result (as would be expected with a complete loss of Karma in game terms); his situation could be compared in some ways with John Walker's following the latter's killing of Professor Power, though in the latter case, Walker lost his temper and could have avoided killing his foe.

## ULTIMATUM™

### Terrorist organization


ULTIMATUM is an acronym which stands for Underground Liberated Totally Integrated Mobile Army To Unite Mankind. The organization is ideologically opposed to the concepts of nationalism and countries, and its activities are designed to subvert the governments and political structures of all nations. The full origins of ULTIMATUM have yet to be disclosed, but it is known that the bulk of its membership is culled from the ranks of experienced agents of HYDRA who suddenly found themselves unemployed in the wake of the demise of that long-extant terrorist group. Agents of ULTIMATUM have the following game statistics:

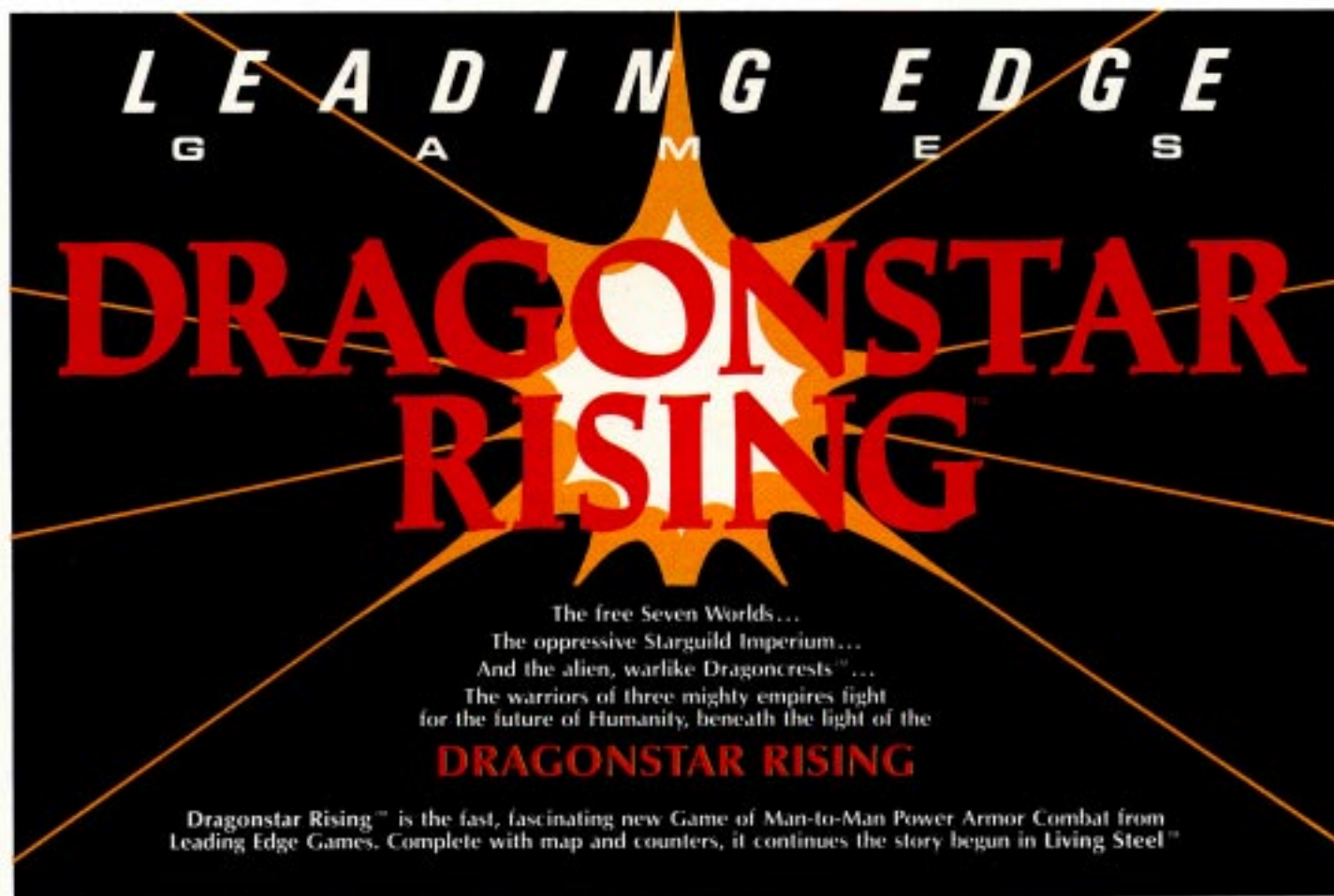
F	EX (20)	Health: 50
A	GD (10)	
S	GD (10)	Karma: 22
E	GD (10)	
R	TY (6)	Resources: TY/IN*
I	GD (10)	
P	TY (6)	Popularity: 0/-10* *

\* Typical Resources as individuals; Incredible Resources if backed by ULTIMATUM.

\*\* The former statistic applies to individuals normally; the latter applies to those acting while wearing ULTIMATUM suits.

**EQUIPMENT:** Members of ULTIMATUM wear black and white uniforms which are made of ballistic cloth and provide Typical protection from physical attacks. The goggles of their uniforms grant them Good protection from light-based blinding attacks. All soldiers of ULTIMATUM are equipped with submachine guns and knives, the statistics for which can be found respectively on pages 43 and 45 of the Advanced Set *Players' Book*. They also carry at least one spare clip of ammo for the submachine guns.

**TALENTS:** Standard-issue ULTIMATUM troops are trained in Guns and Martial Arts B talents. Of course, Judges are free to create nonstandard, agents as well. 



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Night falls on Washington, DC. — perhaps for the very last time. You've got one chance to save it (and the world) in Mindscape's *S.D.I.*

Just admiring the local Mindscape

# The Role of Computers

©1987 by Hartley, Patricia, and Kirk Lesser

Our column this month deals with three games from a company called Mindscape, whose fantasy adventure and strategy/arcade game offerings are certainly worth investigating as additions to your game library.

**Mindscape, Inc.**  
3444 Dundee Road  
Northbrook IL 60062

## Feature review

### *Shadowgate*

Heroism is required to play *Shadowgate*, a fantastic, graphically oriented, heroic-fantasy game from Mindscape. The adven-

ture runs on the Apple Macintosh and offers superb three-dimensional graphics, the ability to pick up and move objects, and some of the finest digitized sound effects ever used in a Macintosh game. There are many opportunities to prove one's mettle, as adversaries are frequently encountered and are more than just cold- or warm-blooded beasts. There are traps and puzzles galore, many of which depend upon your memory of previously explored regions and your retained treasures for their solutions.

*Shadowgate* was developed by ICOM Simulations, the designer of *Uninvited* and *Deja Vu*. *Shadowgate* uses the Macintosh graphic-user interface. Of premium note is the fact that you can save and recall specific game-saves throughout your adventure at any time. This is great, because characters are terminated repeatedly throughout your quest. We highly recom-

mend that game-saves be initiated twice for each room: once when you first enter, then again just before you leave.

Your Macintosh screen contains several windows. The Command Window located at the top center of your screen allows you to control your destiny within the once-magnificent *Shadowgate* castle. To the immediate left is the Inventory Window, within which are graphic representations of those items you are carrying. Center screen is the actual viewing window, revealing all that you can see in your present position. The screen shown here reveals one of the deadliest dangers in the Tomb Room: a rotter of a banshee who exits from the leftmost upright tomb and does you in! The large window at the bottom of the screen is the Message Window, where details regarding your activities and surroundings are revealed to you as the game progresses. On the right side

\*\*\*\*\*



of the screen and above the Message Window is the Exits Window which reveals all known or visible exits from your current location.

The final onscreen window is the Thyself Window, which not only informs you as to your current health, but enables you to initially open the Inventory Window. Thyself is also used when you wish to operate something in a personal manner. For example, there is a torch in one of the early rooms that reveals a secret door if pulled. In order to accomplish this action, you move the mouse cursor to Thyself, click once, then move to the Command Window and click on Operate, and finally move to the object to be moved. In this case, you move the mouse cursor into the actual viewing window and click on the torch, hold down the mouse button, and pull the mouse down. The torch then moves onscreen, and the door is suddenly revealed.

How do you know if an object you see has some bearing on your adventure? Simple: You click on the object in the viewing window. If that object has some game influence, it becomes highlighted. You can then manipulate the object in a manner you feel is appropriate. For example, sooner or later you'll find a sling. The necessary complement to a sling are small rocks or pebbles to be flung at targets. Once the rocks are found, you move the mouse cursor onto them and click once. The rocks are now highlighted. You then drag the rocks to the Inventory Window, and they leave the viewing window. There is a limit as to how much wealth, weaponry, and torches you can carry, so you'll find it necessary throughout the adventure to constantly evaluate what you are carrying as to its specific worth. Most objects you find have some fairly specific value; once that particular use has been completed, the object involved should be discarded.

The castle is very dark, requiring you to carry torches; these are located in sconces throughout the old fortress and should be seized whenever possible. You are warned if your current torch is about to give out; a message indicating that the flame is flickering is received in the Message Window. At this point, you should click on the active torch in your inventory, then click on Operate in the Command Window, and finally click on an unlit torch in your inventory. The new torch bursts into flames, and you can discard the old torch.

We certainly have no desire to give this game away to those who wish to enter the exciting realms of Shadowgate. The real key to the adventure is to click on everything in the viewing window to see what can possibly be of use to you. For example, in the opening view, you're confronted with a front entrance that opens for you when double-clicked upon the door itself. However, once inside, you're confronted with two doors, both of which are locked. There is a key somewhere in the immediate area with which to unlock at least one

of the doors (without that particular key, the adventure would end). We strongly suggest you study the opening scene very carefully and try double-clicking on objects surrounding the door. Early in the game, you will also locate a book that possesses a valuable object for use in your explorations. Here, you must not forget that to examine a book, it isn't necessary to move it. Some items you'll want to find right away are three gems, a shield, and more keys.

If you continually die because of some action, and are bound and determined to figure out a solution to this problem, remember that there are some activities within Shadowgate that were designed simply to cause death. There's no other reason for their existence. The fact that such traps are there doesn't necessarily mean that there's a reward for trying to figure out their meaning. When you locate two bridges, there is a reason why one of the bridges has stanchions mounted with human skulls; don't ignore obvious warnings.

Instead of writing to us for hints, we recommend that you write to Mindscape and order the Shadowgate Hint Book. The company has cleverly designed the Hint Book so that the clues are coded. An "A" code continues to shroud the true answer in mystery, hinting at a possible solution to a specific dilemma. A "B" code offers more of a hint than the "A" code, but won't give you the complete answer. The "C" code is the answer to your problem, and should only be utilized as a last resort to preserve the game's excitement and problem solving environment.

*Shadowgate* is a great adventure game in that you must continually be aware of what's already been accomplished to complete subsequent puzzles. The graphics are truly superb, and the digitized sound—ranging from the squeaking of doors to the laughter of the evil one—heightens the sense of adventure. We highly recommend this offering to anyone with access to a Macintosh. Should you complete your quest, the game will honor you. If you don't complete the quest, the only reason for such failure is that you're simply dead on your feet!

#### Mini-Review S.D.I.

\*\*\*

Also from Mindscape for the Amiga is an arcade game with excellent graphics, called S.D.I., which stands for Strategic Defense Initiative. This game is a member of the company's extraordinary *Cineware* family, in which the offerings tend more toward the feel of an interactive movie rather than static software. Other offerings in the Cineware group include *Defender of the Crown* and *King of Chicago*.

In S.D.I., the Soviets, led by KGB-commanded revolutionaries, have initiated a missile strike against American SDI forces. You have five objectives. First, you must totally negate the threat of the KGB

attack fighters. Second, the United States must be protected from Soviet missiles. Third, the SDI satellites must be repaired when hit; otherwise your defensive posture against the incoming missiles is weakened as each satellite is destroyed. Fourth, you must rescue Natalya Kazarian, the commander of a Soviet space station that hasn't yet fallen to the KGB-led rebels. Fifth, after you successfully rescue Kazarian, you must finish off all remaining enemy fighters.

These are no easy tasks to complete! You must learn how to fly your starfighter, how to dock with either the American or Soviet space station, how to use the orbital scanners in the U.S. space station, and how to command the missile defense system. This latter activity requires that you not only select the primary satellite for sequencing against incoming hostile missiles, but also the secondary satellite, in the event that the primary satellite is damaged. You must determine whether a full beam (full power in a single burst) or pulse mode (multiple shots) is to be utilized by each primary and secondary satellite.

Although the game's feel can become routine after several rounds of play, the Amiga computer's graphics and sound effects continue to add heightened arcade excitement to S.D.I. These do not wear thin, even after several games.

#### Mini-Review *In to The Eagle's Nest*

\*\*\*\*

*Into the Eagle's Nest* concerns three Allied saboteurs who are being held in a top-secret Nazi fortress called the Eagle's Nest. Your orders are to infiltrate the Eagle's Nest, rescue the captives, and destroy the Nest with explosives, while at the same time saving art treasures the Nazis have stolen. Think you're up to the assignment? With help from Mindscape, you'll be in the Nazi nest rescuing Allied comrades and artwork before you can say "Eisenhower."

You play the role of an Allied soldier who has just entered the Eagle's Nest. Your mission involves infiltrating the four castles that comprise the Eagle's Nest complex. Once inside the complex, you must rescue one hostage from each of the first three castles, then destroy the fourth castle with explosives. You carry a machine gun and enough ammunition for 99 shots. The good news is that you're in such good physical shape that you can sustain 50 shots from enemy soldiers yourself.

A joystick is required for control, and the firing button is depressed when you wish to fire your machine gun. Nazis swarm around the castles like bees to honey, and each requires two well-placed shots to eliminate. Nazis who are sitting at a table are far easier to do away with, requiring but one well-placed shot apiece.

While inside the castles, you find crates which are either open or closed. Shooting



A screaming banshee strikes in the underground corridors of Mindscape's *Shadowgate*. The windows are described on pages 80-81.



The war room reveals the collapse toward global disaster in the arcade-game thriller *S.D.I.* See page 81.

at closed crates can be very dangerous, for some of them hold explosives. Also, many art objects are in some of the crates, and you can retrieve these for extra points if they are undamaged.

Ammunition is not unlimited, and if you are not careful, your machine gun can run out of rounds. There are ammunition dumps throughout the castles where you can reload your machine gun. Many closed and locked doors inside the castles can also be opened with a burst or two from your gun, while other doors can only be opened by using keys found in the castles. First-aid kits and food are also essential to the maintenance of life, as they heal lost hit points. A nice feature is that once you

find a prisoner and leave, the program saves the game position so you won't have to start over at that castle ever again.

*Into the Eagle's Nest* is a nicely programmed adventure and strategy game from Mindscape, and is definitely worth the purchase price. The graphics are excellent on the Commodore 64, and even though the sound effects were minimal at best, those that the program does employ sound realistic. We thoroughly enjoyed this game and hope that Mindscape continues to develop games of this caliber.

Also of importance is a new educational software offering from Mindscape called *Drug Alert!*, in which students are asked

to get Pat, a friend who is hooked on drugs, out of a seedy hotel. While wandering through the hotels dank corridors, students come face to face with the realities of drug addiction. They must figure out how to get out of the hotel by answering questions about drugs, by destroying drugs stashed away on each floor, and by finding and identifying the drug on which Pat is hooked. Designed by Methods & Solutions, this program gives elementary and high-school students the basic facts of drug abuse through a responsible and entertaining computer program. During the game, students consult the *Drug Alert!* on-line handbook. *Drug Alert!* is available for the Apple II computer family (\$39.95).

## News and new products

### Accolade, Inc.

20813 Stevens Creek Boulevard  
Cupertino CA 95014  
(408) 446-5757

*Killed Until Dead* is a new murder-mystery game from Accolade for the Apple II family of computers. *Killed Until Dead* is an interactive text-and-graphics murder mystery. It features sophisticated animation with over 20 different plots. The game presents the player with a unique challenge: trying to prevent a murder rather than solving a murder. The player becomes Hercule Holmes, a master sleuth who must solve the mystery before the murder hour at midnight. The game ends at midnight - approximately 24 minutes in actual playing time. *Killed Until Dead* simulates the options a real detective would choose from to collect data and investigate suspects. Operating from his desk, Hercule Holmes can access information from character profiles, a video-telephone, and a surveillance machine. *Killed Until Dead* is available for \$34.95.

Accolade has announced that its baseball

simulation, *Hardball*, is now available in formats for both the Apple IIGS and Commodore Amiga computers. The realistic animation, natural playability, and ultra-large characters featured in the game utilize the enhanced graphics and sound capabilities of both of these computers to their fullest. The game features 3-D field perspectives, and as many as six different pitches may be thrown by either a right- or left-handed pitcher (\$33.95).

### Activision, Inc.

2350 Bayshore Parkway  
Mountain View CA 94043  
(415) 960-0410

Users of the Atari 2600 game machine: Don't give up hope for new game offerings! Activision has signed an agreement with Absolute Entertainment to sell and distribute two new cartridges: *Title Match Pro Wrestling* and *Skateboardin'*. In the first game, players select one of four wrestlers for slammin' at mat-time. The second game finds players challenged with mazes of streets and obstacles for the fastest skateboarding times.

### Electronic Arts

1820 Gateway Drive  
San Mateo CA 94404  
(415) 571-7171

Electronic Arts has added two new additions to its Amazing Software line of action-oriented software programs. The first is *Delta Patrol*, in which you command a battle cruiser in the Delta Sector of space. Described as a junkyard of lost ships, alien bandits, and unknown forces of destruction, the Delta Sector is the toughest neighborhood in space - and, as a member of an elite police squadron called Delta Patrol, Delta Sector is your beat. Your assignment is to penetrate its boundaries and terminate the enemy forces that hide within them. Accompanied by a symphonic sound track, the game action whisks you into battle with more than 200 alien attack waves in over 30 levels of colorfully animated regions of space. As for our official review...

### Mini-Review

#### *Delta Patrol*

\*\*\*\*

*Delta Patrol* is the worst duty anyone could be assigned, but someone has to



# At Either End of the French Arm

## 2300

**2300** plays against a background of Earth 300 years after the cataclysm of the Third World War, set in a world where nations still clash and civilization has crawled back to its prewar levels and then beyond. The world is dominated by the Third French Empire. Earth's hundred nations have colonies among the stars. First contact happened long ago, and commerce with alien intelligences is now commonplace. But exploration still goes on. The conquest of the stars has just begun—be a part of it with **2300**! \$20.00.

## Nyotekundu Sourcebook

The first star out from Sol along the French Arm is a rather ordinary one that otherwise would not attract much attention in humanity's scheme of things. But its central location makes it a rest stop on a very important interstellar highway, and the Nyotekundu system is now home to two outposts and an OMS mining station, the *Andrew Carnegie*. The sourcebook gives diagrams, personalities, and adventuring ideas for the two outposts in the system, including an encounter with a strange artifact bearing the message of a long-dead being.

from an ancient civilization.  
\$10.00

## Mission Arcturus

A German light squadron commander at Eta Bootis is determined to retake and examine the Arcturus Research Station. Since the player characters have experience fighting Kafers, they are quickly recruited to accompany this expedition against the dreaded aliens. \$8.00

TRAVELLER:  
**2300**

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Art by  
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manage this operation. You look rather stupi-er, I mean, brave enough to take on the Delta Sector. But watch out for galactic pirates, alien fighter ships, rampaging creatures, and deadly scenery. Don't just sit there - load that disk and get moving!

This arcade game is another of Electronic Arts' Amazing Software line. In this offering, you must patrol a sector and blow away anything that moves. The one feature that makes this game extremely addictive is that whenever you destroy an entire wave of attacking aliens, you receive credit for your actions. You may use these credits to buy weapons and ship modifications that may make your additional missions somewhat easier. Be forewarned: You'll encounter opposing ships that are *not* supposed to be shot at. If you hit one of these ships, credits are subtracted from your total.

This game brings in a new type of arcade action, in which players can select what they wish to use to help them defeat the evil forces that lurk in space. The weapons you can buy include:

*Extra Speed:* increases the speed of your attack craft;

*Rate of Fire:* provides additional fire power to your ship;

*Multiple Fire:* allows you to fire from the rear, port, or starboard sides;

*Fish Weapon:* allows you to go after the really tough enemies;

*Protector:* repels the enemy ships;

*Warper:* slows enemy vessels down, making them easier targets; and,

*Supa Shield:* provides the ultimate in protection from enemy blasts.

The price for each weapon increases with each modification, ranging from one credit for Extra Speed to a whopping seven credits for the Supa Shield. The modifications are well worth the price, however, for there are many different kinds of aliens that each modification is especially designed to handle. Some of the aliens prefer attacking in a spiral wave, making them very hard to hit. Other aliens resemble "Space Donuts" and have a whip-lash maneuver that tries to smash your ship. Other aliens are immune to a single offensive blast, and can only be destroyed by firing on one region of the ship.

The three-dimensional graphics for the Commodore 64/128 are stunning and alone are worth the price of the software. This is an arcade shoot-'em-up that any C64/128 user will wish to own; the price only makes the game more attractive (\$19.95).

The second offering from Electronic Arts is Sanxion, in which you and your high-speed attack craft are the lone defenders of a world under siege. Alien drones are attacking the cities of your planet, and your ability to align your ship's superior firepower with enemy targets is all that you have to defend yourself. If you can defeat a line of attacks in 10 sectors and complete the training course following

each, you will be promoted to Sanxion Class 1 and be transferred to the Dark Side to challenge a secondary attack force. *Sanxion* is available for the Commodore 64/128 (\$19.95). Watch for a review of Sanxion in our next column.

#### **Firebird Licensees, Inc.**

P.O. Box 49  
Ramsey NY 07446

Firebird Licensees has released *The Guild of Thieves*, the long-awaited sequel to *The Pawn*, in Commodore 64/128 format. This is an engrossing, illustrated adventure that takes place in the mythical kingdom of Kerovnia. Magnetic Scrolls, the company responsible for both of these titles, has added witty dialogue, outstanding graphics, wry humor, and challenging puzzles in perfect measure. Included is a humorous 40-page novella, a Bank of Kerovnia credit card, an Indenture and Contract of Service Certificate, dice, play guide, and other goodies (\$39.95).

#### **Infocom, Inc.**

125 Cambridge Park Drive  
Cambridge MA 02140  
(617) 492-6000

Infocom has introduced *Plundered Hearts*, a software adventure-game specifically aimed at women. Through gripping prose, challenging predicaments, and scenes of derring-do, author Amy Briggs has managed to create a software title that is equally appealing to men. Prerelease testers and reviewers, the majority of whom are male, have had an overwhelmingly favorable response to *Plundered Hearts*. As the heroine of this game, you find adventure at every turn as you sail to the Caribbean to aid your ailing father. This sultry romance is the first Infocom story in which the main character is a woman. Infocom provides the salt air, steamy tropical nights, and treacherous characters essential to heart-pounding adventure on the high seas. Although it's rough sailing, you maintain control of your fate. *Plundered Hearts* is available for IBM micros and compatibles, Apple II series, Macintosh, Atari ST and S-bit systems, and Commodore 64/128 and Amiga (\$34.95 for S-bit systems and \$39.95 for all other computers).

#### **Miles Computing**

7741 Alabama Avenue, Suite 2  
Canoga Park CA 91304  
(818) 341-1411

When the Macintosh computer first made its entry into the world of users, few companies developed games for that machine. One of the first was Miles Computing, which developed and marketed a fine arcade-style space shoot-'em-up entitled *MacWars*. The company has now released a fine version for the Atari ST and has called it Atari *STWars*. There is true 3-D flight through 10 separate

sequences, with Ground, Sky Targets, and Ground Targets. You can use either the joystick/mouse or the keyboard. We found this offering highly appealing; it puts you on the edge of your seat (\$39.95).

#### **New World Computing, Inc.**

14922 Calvert Street  
Van Nuys CA 91411  
(818) 785-0519 (Tech support)

Good news for *Might and Magic* players and would-be players! New World Computing is currently producing a much-needed and highly desired hint book for its mammoth fantasy-adventure role-playing game (distributed by Activision). According to president Jon Van Ganeghem, the hint book should be available by the time this column is published. At the time of this writing, Jon was unsure how the hints would be treated - whether they would be coded (similar to the Mindscape hint books) or directly related to specific puzzles found within the game itself. If you haven't played *Might and Magic* yet, hang on - versions for the most popular computer systems (IBM, Macintosh, and Commodore) are due for release before Christmas!

#### **The Clue Corner**

Our hint this month comes from Douglas Pickell of Medford, Ore. Doug writes that, as an enthusiastic player of *The Bard's Tale II* (Electronic Arts), he finally figured out one particular problem that faces all adventurers, and wanted to share his findings:

"In Colosee, there is a wizard known as the Strange Mage who is located in the center of town. When your party 'bumps' into him, he will ask for an answer to a question. He wants two words that will split the rock which is referred to in the Tombs. Just answer 'Freeze' for the first word and 'Please' for the second word to enter the final dungeon in *The Bard's Tale II*."

Don't forget to mail in your hints and tips for recognition of your hard work and game play!

#### **In conclusion**

Reviews to come: *The Ancient Art of War At Sea* from Broderbund Software (San Rafael, Calif.); *The Tower of Myraglen* from PBI Software (Foster City, Calif.); and *The Eternal Dagger* from Strategic Simulations (Mountain View, Calif.).

Don't forget - we need your vote for the best gaming software you've played in the last year. We'll separate the vote tallies into groups for each computer system, then make the DRAGON® Magazine computer game awards, known as the *The Beasties*, early next year. Please mail your vote to:

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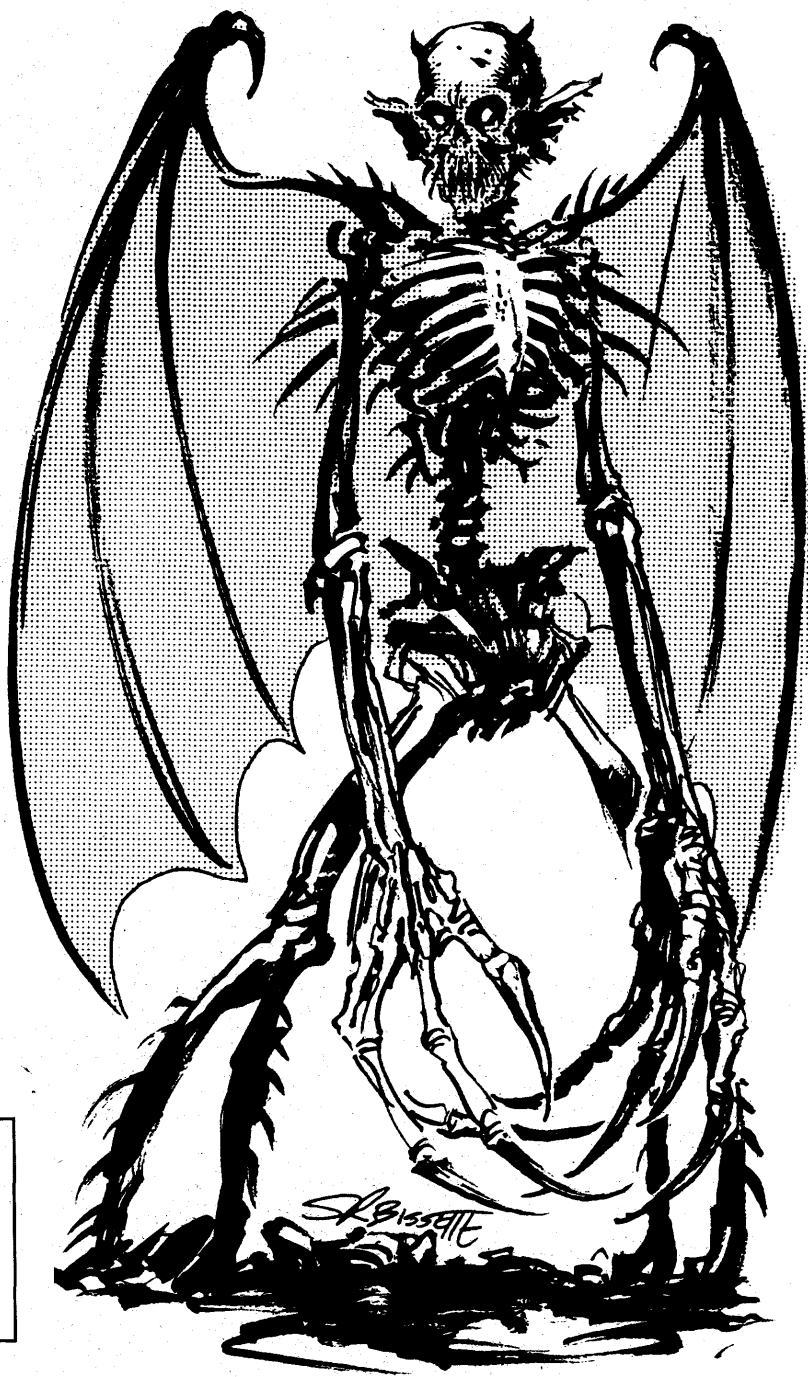
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**1. You've just arrived in a new town. You immediately:**

- a. sigh in relief.
- b. find the nearest tavern.
- c. strip down to your underwear.
- d. do all of the above, to start with.

**2. Wizards are:**

- a. snappy dressers.
- b. valuable allies.
- c. awful darn smart.
- d. cute on the end of a spear.

**3. What's the best way to test for trap-doors?**

- a. With eyes shut.
- b. Make the half-ogre go first.
- c. Jump up and down a lot.
- d. Burn the place to the ground.

**4. It's late at night, the moon is full, and you notice that your partner is turning hairy. What do you do?**

- a. Compliment him on his coiffure.
- b. Whip out the scissors and wolvesbane.
- c. Check your pack for doggie chow.
- d. Join him.

**5. A portable hole:**

- a. a day keeps the ogre away.
- b. comes in handy in the king's treasury.
- c. What?
- d. holds a lot of beer,

**6. Given the choice, you'd rather have:**

- a. lint-free chain mail.
- b. 1,000,000 gold pieces.
- c. a chocolate-chip cookie.
- d. a sword and a major land war.



7. Describe a hill giant.
  - a. A large, smelly Muppet.
  - b. Big, hairy, ugly, and strong.
  - c. Your last blind date.
  - d. All of the above.
8. You are in a cave when your torch goes out. You:
  - a. scream.
  - b. cannot see.
  - c. hit your head.
  - d. throw the torch away and continue on ahead.
9. Your deity tells you to walk on hot coals. You promptly:
  - a. practice shouting "Ouch! Ouch! Ouch!"
  - b. get a new deity.
  - c. invite your friends to a cook-out.
  - d. attack him.
10. You find out that the ship you are on is manned by vicious, savage buccaneers. You:
  - a. double-check the travel brochure.
  - b. swim for shore.
  - c. taunt them.
  - d. join them.
11. What makes your mouth water?
  - a. Vichyssoise.
  - b. A leg of mutton and a jug of mead.
  - c. A burger and fries.
  - d. A dead brontosaurus.
12. What is a bard?
  - a. A sophisticated, wandering musician.
  - b. My DM doesn't allow them.
  - c. A piece of lumber.
  - d. The hair on your face.
13. What scares you the most?
  - a. Gross, icky, crawly things.
  - b. A tribe of bloodthirsty primitives on your doorstep.
  - c. An umber hulk in leotards.
  - d. Mom.
14. Which would you take as your share of the loot?
  - a. Gems and jewelry.
  - b. A treasure map.
  - c. A wooden nickel.
  - d. The loot.
15. Someone in your party is a thief. It's probably:
  - a. that mysterious, cloaked stranger.
  - b. the dwarf with his hand in your pocket.
  - c. your horse.
  - d. all of the above.
16. You are trapped by a cave-in. You immediately:
  - a. scream again.
  - b. try to dig your way out.
  - c. choose the best position to be found in.
  - d. kill the fool who knocked over the support beam.
17. Your favorite choice for a pet would be:
  - a. a gerbil.
  - b. a war dog.
  - c. a dung beetle.
  - d. a mammoth.
18. How can you detect for evil alignment among your henchmen?
  - a. Look for bad penmanship.
  - b. Cast a spell.
  - c. Flip a coin.
  - d. Use torture.
19. What is the first thing you should say when you spot a bugbear?
  - a. "So, how does my leg taste?"
  - b. "Don't come any closer! I've got a sword!"
  - c. "Nice ears."
  - d. "Yo! Ugly! Let's party!"
20. If there's anything you hate, it's:
  - a. mismatched armor.
  - b. being drawn and quartered.
  - c. the letter "c"
  - d. not got long to live.
21. Witches:
  - a. make great gingerbread.
  - b. aren't allowed in my DM's campaign, either.
  - c. Where?
  - d. don't wear underwear.
22. There's nothing more exciting than:
  - a. the full moon at midnight.
  - b. the thrill of victory.
  - c. answering this question.
  - d. hand-to-hand combat with a thousand cannibals.
23. What heals all wounds?
  - a. Thyme.
  - b. Time.
  - c. Tyme.
  - d. A week in a harem.
24. Select a title for yourself.
  - a. Gerard the Thoughtful.
  - b. Lars the Mighty.
  - c. Fred.
  - d. The Terror of Morovia.
25. Keep an eye on your fellow traveler. He might be:
  - a. a barbarian.
  - b. a thief.
  - c. a Democrat.
  - d. Demogorgon.
26. A princess is trapped in a dragon's cave. You should:
  - a. ask someone to help her out.
  - b. rescue the princess.
  - c. rescue the dragon.
  - d. rob them both.
27. What's the most important thing about making camp?
  - a. Keep the marshmallows in a clean, dry place.
  - b. Keep the fire low and post guards.
  - c. Have appropriate party games.
  - d. Have the others do all the work.
28. The best kind of partner is one with:
  - a. a warm personality.
  - b. a good sword-arm.
  - c. a game of checkers.
  - d. a keg of ale.
29. If you had to choose one of four doors before you, which would it be?
  - a. The door out.
  - b. The treasure-room door.
  - c. That one.
  - d. The booby-trapped door.
30. In matters of life and death, you should:
  - a. choose life.
  - b. avoid death.
  - c. dress warmly.
  - d. loot and kill and pillage and burn.
31. You find the thief who stole your horse, money bag, and provisions. You then:
  - a. count from 1 to 10 before speaking.
  - b. demand your belongings back, or else.
  - c. give him the rest of your things.
  - d. turn him into lasagne.
32. Before you'd ever abandon your friends, you'd rather:
  - a. kiss a goat.
  - b. slap a sunburned frost giant on the back.
  - c. get permission first.
  - d. get all of their money first.
33. "Halt!" means:
  - a. "Surrender!"
  - b. "Stop!"
  - c. "Hello!"
  - d. "Attack!"
34. If asked what your price is for a dirty adventuring job, what do you say?
  - a. "Lunch at the Bulette Cafe."
  - b. "The going rate,"
  - c. "I'll pay anything!"
  - d. "How much have you got? Your family, then – how much have they got? Mmm. Got any sisters?"
35. You find yourself alone and unarmed in a cave with 100 hungry carnivorous apes. What is your next move?
  - a. Hide.
  - b. Hide.
  - c. Hide.
  - d. Fight.

**36. You must never forget:**

- a. to clean up afterward.
- b. your spells.
- c. the . . . the, uh . . . uh . . .
- d. to check for treasure.

**37. The best way to handle a poisonous spider is:**

- a. from afar.
- b. with a glove.
- c. by blackmail.
- d. with a *hammer of thunderbolts*.

**38. An ogre invites you to dinner. You should:**

- a. check his references.
- b. decline.
- c. accept.
- d. show up wearing your best ogre-slayer.

**39. You find a dwarf chained in a cell. He says that he'll lead you to lots of treasure if you release him. You should:**

- a. think about it.
- b. insist that he reveal the whereabouts of the treasure first.
- c. attack.
- d. release him.

**40. There is a disguised dragon in the room. It must be:**

- a. the terrier in love with your leg.
- b. the cow breathing fire.
- c. disguised.
- d. ready to die.

**41. Your castle has been overrun by hobgoblins. You've been fighting and running from them all day, and have finally managed to hide from them. Then, your henchman knocks over a vase. You then:**

- a. soil your pants.
- b. grit your teeth and ready your weapon.
- c. fix the vase.
- d. throw the henchman out into the hall.

**42. You are trapped in a 10' x 10' room, and the walls are closing in. What do you do?**

- a. Yell for help.
- b. Use a dagger to jam a wall.
- c. Leave.
- d. Wait for the hangover to pass.

**43. What's the best way to catch a golem?**

- a. Set out a saucer of milk.
- b. Dig a humongously deep pit.
- c. Is that a disease?
- d. Wrestle him down and hog-tie him.

**44. What's a good sign that you've had too much to drink?**

- a. The room is spinning.
- b. A wench is leaving the room with your money and your clothes, and you are smiling.
- c. You're out of milk.
- d. Your boots are covered with your dinner.

**45. What's a druid good for?**

- a. Flower arrangements.
- b. Nature spells.
- c. Beats me.
- d. Calling forest creatures for target practice.

**46. If you were told that a treasure lay in a hole in the wall, would you stick your hand inside?**

- a. No.
- b. Maybe.
- c. Inside what?
- d. Yes.

**47. How strong are you?**

- a. Not very.
- b. Above average.
- c. Not very; just had a bath.
- d. Damn strong.

**48. Do you think there should be rights for orcs?**

- a. Yes.
- b. No.
- c. Maybe.
- d. Sure: rights, lefts, right crosses, left jabs, right uppercuts, etc.

**49. Describe a daring deed.**

- a. Inviting a goblin to a Tupperware party.
- b. Facing a tribal chieftain in single combat.
- c. Housebreaking a hell hound.
- d. Leaping off a burning battlement into a crocodile-infested moat in front of an army of orcish archers.

**50. What is the best thing you can say about skeletons?**

- a. They make great tap dancers.
- b. They don't have many hit points.
- c. They don't eat much.
- d. Some of my best friends are skeletons - now.

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*Rogar of Moorria*  
**GIANT** faculty member

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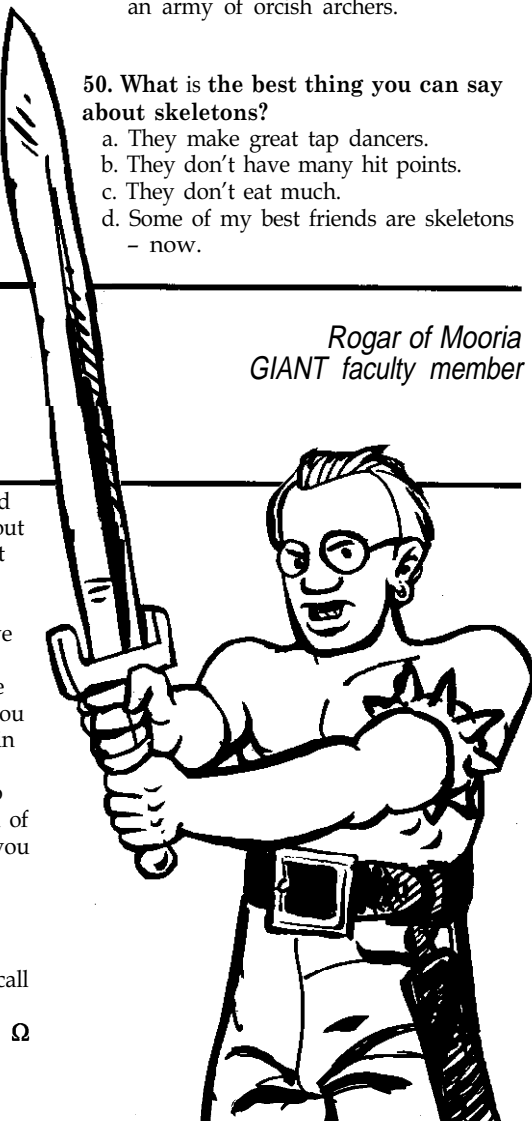
**Type B:** You're probably referred to as "dependable," "practical," "an OK guy," etc. There is not much wrong with you, and you should do well in the adventuring life. We recommend that you take our accelerated S.P.U.D. program.

**Type C:** My, my. We are having a rough day, aren't we? This exam was probably

tiring, but take a few minutes to rest and relax. When you're feeling better, take out all of your money and mail it to us, right away. That's right: every copper piece. Good, good. We're proud of you.

**Type D:** Well, it appears that you have probably done more than your share of adventuring, and there's not much more we can add to your training. In fact, if you have some free time, we'd like you to join our teaching staff. Sure, others may call you a bloodthirsty maniac, but hey, who cares? We'll give you a portable hole full of beer and a major land war. Where can you beat that? You're darn right.

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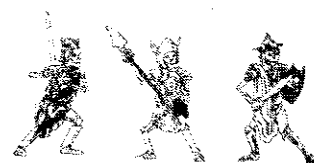
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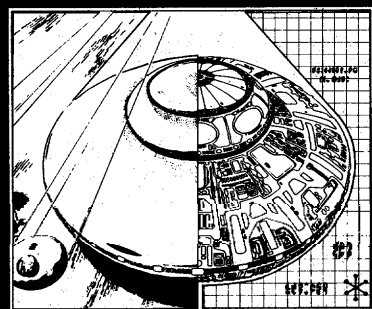
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(continued from page 32)

who, without so much as touching another, can transport valuables to his hand (the present cantrip), then make them *invisible* or change their appearance (the *hide* or *mute* cantrips) while disappearing into the crowd. Likewise, the fighter/magic-user presents a formidable foe with both weapons and wizardry, while the cleric/magic-user is still effective in combat but can now cast the spells of two professions instead of just one. The list goes on, and possibilities would seem endless.

Thus, I must maintain that the magic-user, if played with a little imagination, can hold his own with any party. I must, however, agree that removing the rule of memorization, thereby allowing magic-users to cast spells "on the fly," seems to be more reasonable. Since when has any spell-worker in popular fantasy forgotten a spell just because he put forth the power to cast it? It just doesn't happen! Certainly, they grow tired and can no longer cast a spell, but they don't totally forget spells which they can cast!

Steve Shewchuk  
Cranbrook, B.C.

I would like to respond to the letter in issue #122 concerning magic-users, from W. Brian Barnes. I feel that if a gamer is not able to understand the reason for the rules, he should just make up his own, ignore the ones he can't handle, or not use magic-users. If the game is played with three or more players like the basic

D&D® game box says (which also applies to the AD&D game), the mage will have at least one other character with him. If the DM is not bloodthirsty, they should be able to survive to high level.

Next, I would like to say something about SD. Anderson's letter on experience for finding treasure. The experience is supposed to reflect the fact that the characters *found* the treasure through tough fighting, and should not be awarded otherwise. In my campaign, it also reflects how the characters figure out what magical items do. The experience is a reward for the daring character who picks up the sword suspected of being cursed and ends up with a +2 blade. DMs who just say: "You found a sword +2" are destroying a lot of role-playing possibilities, not to mention some fun for the characters trying to figure out what it is. Also, magic that is purchased should not gain experience for the PC. Money should work the same way. I reward PCs with one experience point for every 5 gp they find. The key word is "find": The [characters] must go through some ordeal to gain the gold. Some of the most powerful monsters only raise higher-level characters about 1% of a level. Treasure experience helps this a little and balances the game. Rules don't have to be followed rigidly, but the creator of the game usually had a reason for creating what he did.

K.B. LaBaw  
Ridgecrest CA

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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 long.

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;
3. Guests of honor (if applicable);
4. Special events offered;
5. Registration fees or attendance requirements; and,
6. Address(es) 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 over 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 July issue is the last Monday of May. 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 TSR, Inc., at (414) 248-3625.

## TROPICON VI, December 4-6

This science-fiction convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Oceanside in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. Guests of honor include George R.R. Martin and Gail Bennett. Panels, movies, trivia, videos, filksinging, and gaming are featured. Registration is \$15 after November 1. Tickets for the banquet are \$19 before November 30. Write to: SFSFS Secretary, P.O. Box 70143, Ft. Lauderdale FL 33307.

## THE LONGVIEW GAMING SHOW December 21

Sponsored by Alan's Comics, Cards, and Games, this one-day gaming show will be held in the Pine Room of the Contessa Inn in Longview, Tex., from noon until 10 P.M. Events include BATTLETECH® and AD&D® game tournaments, and a host of open games. Registration is \$4 in advance, or \$5 at the door. For details, send an SASE to: Alan's Comics, Cards, and Games, P.O. Box 1301, Longview TX 75606; or call: (214) 753-0493 between noon and 6 P.M. CST on any day.

## 1988 Convention Schedule

### EVECON 5, January 1-3

The "first and friendliest convention" of the New Year will be held at the Stoufferts Concourse Hotel on Route One in Crystal City, Va., across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C. Guests include D. Allen Murphy, Nancy Janda, and Hal Clement. EVECON 5 features a solid mix of science-fact, science-fiction, and fantasy events, including a costume party, a computer room, and open gaming. Preregistration is \$15 until Dec. 1; thereafter, registration is \$20. For details, send an SASE to: FANTEK-EVECON, Box 128, Aberdeen MD 21001.

### UNIVERSE 88, January 1-3

This game convention will be held at the Airport Hilton and Towers in Los Angeles, Calif. Featured events include over 150 assorted game tournaments, an exhibition room, films, seminars, and many science-fiction and fantasy events. Admission is \$19.50 until December 5, or \$25 at the door. Write to: UNIVERSE 88, Dept. D, P.O. Box 2577, Anaheim CA 92804; or call: (213) 867-4140.

### CONFUSION, January 15-17

This science-fiction convention will be held at the Southfield Hilton in Southfield, Mich. Room prices are \$55 per night. Guests of honor include Joe Haldeman, Larry Tucker, Marta Randall, and David Cherry. Membership fees are \$15 until November 25, and \$20 at the door. Write to: AASFA/CONFUSION, P.O. Box 8284, Ann Arbor MI 48107.

### PROJECT...GENESIS II, January 17

This PATCO protoriginal convention celebrates its second incarnation at Chiminello's Hall, 2221 N. Weber in Fresno, Calif. Featured tournaments include AD&D®, BATTLETECH®, CALL OF CTHULHU®, CHAMPIONS™, and other

games. Open gaming will be available, along with a Swap Meet for those wishing to buy, sell, or trade old games or gaming material (table space required). Preregistration is \$3 before January 10, or \$5 thereafter. Tables for the Swap Meet are \$10 for an entire table and \$6.50 for half a table. Write to: PATCO, c/o Phil Pittz, 5415 E. Washington, Fresno CA 93727; or call: (209) 255-4682.

## NEW ORLEANS SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY FESTIVAL, January 22-24

This science-fiction and fantasy event will take place at the Pallas Suite Hotel, Canal Boulevard, in New Orleans, La. George R.R. Martin, George Alec Effinger, and others are guests of honor. Registration is \$15 at the door. Write to: NEW ORLEANS SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY FESTIVAL, P.O. Box 791089, New Orleans LA 70179-1089; or call: (504) 482-0908.

## PANDEMONIUM 5, January 23-24 \*

This two-day gaming convention will be held at the Hub Cafeteria of the Ryerson Polytechnical Institute at 350 Victoria Street in Toronto, Ont., Canada. Events include a wide variety of FRPG tournaments, board games, miniatures contests and competitions, auctions, dealers, and more. Preregistration fees are \$10 for Saturday, \$8 for Sunday, or \$15 for both days; fees must be received before January 7. At-the-door fees are \$12 for Saturday, \$10 for Sunday, and \$20 for both days. There are no tournament fees. For details, write to: The General Staff, P.O. Box 425, Station A, Downsview, Ontario, CANADA M3M 3A8; or call: Doug Richards at (416) 598-1693, or Dave Simpson at (416) 597-1934.

## CHIMERACON V, January 29-31

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the University of North Carolina campus in Chapel Hill, N.C. Guests of honor include Nancy Springer, Hugo and Nebula Awards winner Orson Scott Card, Colleen Doran, Allen Wold, Lisa Cantrell, and Mark van Name. Events include a costume workshop and contest (costumed guests receive \$1 off admission for Saturday registration), an Outer Limits Cantina Variety Show, filksinging, gaming, panels, and more. Admission prices are \$6 per day, \$11 for two days, or \$15 for all three days. Preregistration for all three days is \$12.50. Write to: 15-A University Gardens, Chapel Hill NC 27514; or call: (919) 933-3003.

## REDCON 88, February 6-7 \*

The Royal Military College of Canada will hold its second annual Wargames Conference at the Cadet Recreation Centre on the campus grounds in Kingston, Ont., Canada. Scheduled events include SQUAD LEADER®, BATTLETECH®, microarmor, AD&D®, and BATTLESYSTEM™ game tournaments, along with plenty of open gaming. Retail vendors and board-game company representatives will be present to introduce, promote, and sell their products. Registration is only \$5 (Canadian) for the entire conference. For details, send an SASE to: RMC Wargames Club, c/o OCdt. Dray, 1 Sqn., Royal Military College, Kingston, Ontario, CANADA K7K 5L0. Registrations must be filed before January 15.

## WARCON '88, February 5-7

Texas' oldest gaming convention will be held at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. The featured event is an RPGA™ Network AD&D® Open Team Tournament. Other events include board games, miniatures events, and role-playing game tournaments, a dealers' room,

\* indicates a Canadian convention.  
• indicates a European convention.

and 24-hour open gaming. Preregistration is \$8, or \$11 at the door. The guest of honor is Larry Bond (coauthor of the thriller *Red Storm Rising* and designer of GDW's *HARPOON*® naval warfare game). Write to: MSC NOVA, Box J-1, Memorial Student Center, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77840; or call: (409) 845-1515.

#### **THE EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGN, February 6**

Sponsored by the Southern Illinois University Strategic Games Society, the *EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGN* will be held at the Student Center on the Southern Illinois University Campus in Carbondale, Ill. Events run from 9 A.M. to midnight. Scheduled programs include an AD&D® game tournament, a Diplomacy tournament, *MARVEL SUPER HEROES*®, *BATTLETECH*®, *CAR WARS*®, and other game tournaments, open gaming, and a fantasy-miniatures painting contest. Preregistration is \$3 for the day, or \$5 the day of the event. For details, write to: SIU-SGS, Office of Student Development, 3rd Floor, Student Center, Carbondale IL 62901-4425; or call: David T. Blustein at (618) 457-6416.

#### **DUNDRACON XII FANTASY**

##### **ROLE-PLAYING AND PLAY-BY-MAIL GAME CONVENTION, February 12-15**

Held at the Oakland Airport Hilton Hotel in Oakland, Calif., this gaming convention will feature a variety of events including tournament and open gaming, a miniatures-painting contest, SCA demonstrations, a flea market, and a dealers' room. This year's events will also include a play-by-mail Mini-Con featuring a number of guests and live versions of favorite PBM games. Registration fees are \$20 until February 1, and \$25 thereafter (or \$10 per day). For details, write to: DUNDRACON, 386 Alcatraz, Oakland CA 94618.

#### **GENGHIS CON IX, February 12-14**

Join the Horde as *GENGHIS CON IX* moves to winter quarters at the Airport Hilton in Denver, Colo. This convention is sponsored by the Denver Gamers Association and the Colorado Military Historians. Events include all varieties of board, miniatures, computer, and role-playing games. The ever-popular game auction will make another appearance this year. Special gaming events include competitions in *VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC*, *TITAN*, *CIVILIZATION*, *KING-MAKER*, and *ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*. The Colorado Military Historians will also sponsor one of the first qualifying rounds for the WRG Ancients National Championships. Registration is \$12 until January 31, and \$15 thereafter. Write to: Denver Gamers Association, P.O. Box 2945, Littleton CO 80161.

#### **ORCCON 11, February 12-15**

Brought to you by *STRATEGICON*, the people who also brought you *ORIGINS '86*, this gaming convention will be held at the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel. Role-playing, wargame, computer game, and family board game tournaments are offered, as well as various seminars and demonstrations, a flea market, a game auction, and an exhibitors' area. Write to: ORCCON 11, c/o DTI, P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808; or call: (213) 420-3675.

#### **FAL\*CON I, February 19-21**

This gaming convention will be held at the Howard Johnson Convention Center in Meridian, Miss. Guests of honor will include Steve Jackson, Dave Miller, Phil Foglio, and Robert Asprin. Scheduled events will include an RPGA™ Network AD&D® game tournament, open gaming, a video room, blacksmithing, cloth-

weaving, and pottery demonstrations, an art show and auction, a masquerade party, an SCA demonstration, and much more. Membership rates are \$20 for the entire weekend. Interested gamers may send their checks, money orders, or information requests to: FAL\*CON, P.O. Box 4707, Meridian MS 39304.

#### **NOT-A-CON, February 20-21**

This mini-convention will be held at the Palmetto Ball Room on the Clemson University campus in Clemson, S.C. Activities will include an AD&D® game tournament, a *CHAMPIONS*™ game tournament, and a miniatures-painting contest. Registration fees are \$3, with \$2 fees for tournament play. There is a \$1 fee for up to four entries in the miniatures-painting contest, with each additional entry over four costing \$0.50. All preregistration fees must be postmarked no later than January 15. For details, send an SASE to: Clemson University Adventurers' Guild, Box 9962, University Station, Clemson SC 29631; or call: (803) 656-6650.

#### **CONTEMPLATION 88, February 26-28**

This science-fiction, fantasy, and gaming convention will be held at the Ramada Inn in Columbia, Mo. Guests of honor include Jerry and Roberta Pournelle, and Larry Niven. J.R. Daniels is the artist guest of honor, and Keith Berdak is fan guest of honor. Events include an art show and auction, panels, a masquerade, a video room, a hucksters' room, and games. Membership fees are \$10 until December 16, or \$14 thereafter. Write to: CONTEMPLATION, P.O. Box 7242, Columbia MO 65205.

#### **CREATURECON 88, February 26-28**

Sponsored by The Creature Shop, this gaming convention will be held at the Ice House Ball Room at the corner of W. Eldorado and Van Dyke in Decatur, Ill. Featured events include two miniatures-painting contests, RPGA™ Network tournaments (including AD&D®, *MARVEL SUPER HEROES*®, and *TRAVELLER*® games), open gaming, fantasy drawing contests, science-fiction games, a dealers' room, an art show, an auction, lectures on fantasy gaming concepts and on writing fantasy adventures, and a number of guest authors and lecturers. Registration is \$15 through February 20, and \$20 at the door. Preregistration fees must be paid in advance by check or money order, made payable to *CREATURECON 88*. For tickets or details, send an SASE to: *CREATURECON*, P.O. Box 2875, Decatur IL 62526; or call: (217) 875-1316.

#### **BASHCON '88, March 4-6**

Sponsored by the University of Toledo Benevolent Adventurers' Strategic Headquarters, this sixth annual event will be held on the third floor of the University of Toledo Main Campus Student Union in Toledo, Ohio. This convention will feature a host of events, including a games auction, a miniatures-painting contest, a game exhibitors' and dealers' room, an RPGA™ Network AD&D® game tournament, an AADA *CAR WARS*® tournament, a schedule of movies, as well as more than 120 other role-playing, board, and miniatures gaming features. Steve Jackson will be this year's guest of honor. Send an SASE to: Student Activities Office, UT-BASH, BASHCON, 2801 W. Bancroft Street, Toledo OH 43606; or call: (419) 537-4654.

#### **JAXCON SOUTH 12, March 4-6**

This 12th annual gaming convention will be held at the Jacksonville Hotel on the Riverwalk in Jacksonville, Fla. Numerous miniatures, board game, and role-playing game events will be held, as well as a large dealers' room, a flea market,

numerous tournaments, movies, door prizes, and much more. Registration is \$12 before December 15, 1987, and \$18 at the door. Dealers should write to: JAXCON SOUTH 12, Dept. D., P.O. Box 4423, Jacksonville FL 32201. Write to: JAXCON SOUTH, Dept. A., P.O. Box 4423, Jacksonville FL 32201; or call: (904) 772-9040 between 7 and 9 P.M. only.

#### **CALCON III, March 11-13**

This role-playing, board, and miniatures-gaming convention will be held at the Glenmore Inn in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Sponsored events include a major AD&D® tournament (\$250 first-place prize offered), *TUNNELS & TROLLS*™ games, a Monty Hall Bake-off Extravaganza, *CALL OF CTHULHU*® games, and a host of minor tournaments. Other events include an auction, miniatures competitions, a miniatures-painting contest, *LAZER TAG*® games, intros and demos of many RPG systems, and much more. Registration is \$5 until January 1; \$7 until March 1; or \$10 thereafter. For details, write to: CALCON III, P.O. Box 204, Station "M," 2204 Avenue SE, Calgary, Alberta, CANADA, T2P 2H6.

#### **TOTAL CONFUSION 2, March 11-13**

The second-annual *TOTAL CONFUSION* game convention will be held at Clark University in Worcester, Mass. RPGA™ Network events will be held for AD&D® and *CALL OF CTHULHU*® games. Regular events include 10 "unlimited" AD&D game events, and *CHAMPIONS*™, *DC*™ *HEROES*, *CAR WARS*®, and numerous other board and role-playing game features. A miniatures-painting event, a dealers' room, seminars, 24-hour open gaming, and much more are also offered. Preregistration for all three days is \$15, or \$6 for each individual day. Registration after March 1 is \$7 per day. Write to: *TOTAL CONFUSION*, 151 Chandler Street, Worcester MA 01609; or call: (617) 793-0853, (617) 562-2554, or (617) 755-4207.

#### **UMF-CON, March 13**

This science-fiction, fantasy, and gaming convention takes place at the Student Center of the University of Maine in Farmington, Maine. Barry B. Longyear, the nationally known science-fiction writer, will be attending. *UMF-CON* features AD&D®, *TOP SECRET*®, *RISK*®, and *BATTLESYSTEM*™ game events, along with numerous other board and role-playing games. Registration is \$5; each game requires a \$2 entry fee. Write to: Table Gaming Club, c/o Student Life Office, Student Center, South Street, Farmington ME 04938.

#### **DRACONIS, March 18-20**

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Galt House in Louisville, Ky. Anne McCaffrey will be the guest of honor, and Julia Ecklar will be fan guest. Featured events will include the Dragon Bazaar, open gaming, filksinging, a masquerade contest, an art show and auction, panels, workshops, a *LAZER TAG*™ area, and a child-care center. Registration fees are \$17.50 until February 17, and \$20 thereafter. Children ages 6-12 may be registered for half price. For details, write to: *DRACONIS*, P.O. Box 162, Concord MA 01742.

#### **SIMCON X, March 18-20**

This convention will be held in the Wilson Commons on the University of Rochester's River Campus in Rochester, N.Y. Events include role-playing game tournaments, wargames, miniatures competitions, movies, demonstrations, and a dealers' room. Registration is \$5 before March 1, and \$10 thereafter. For details, write to: *SIMCON X*, P.O. Box 29142, River Station, Rochester NY 14627; or by calling: (716) 275-9379. **Q**



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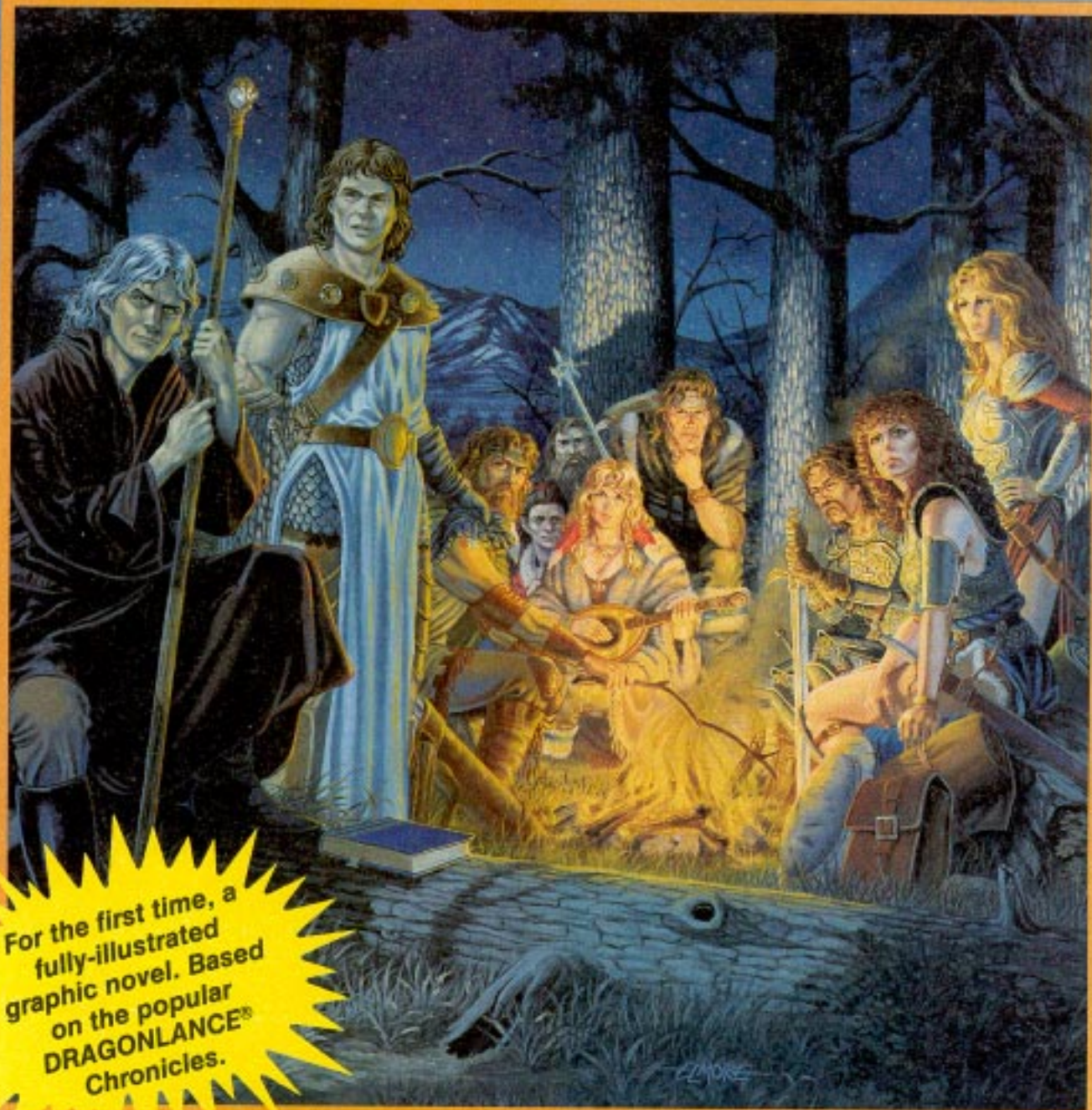
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# SNARFQUEST

#52

BY LARRY EMMORE

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'EY, IT'S NOT LONG 'TIL WE GOTTA PLAY OVER AT DA GEEK-OUT CLUB.

RIGHT, YOU GUYS WILL HAVE TO DO WITHOUT ME TONIGHT, I'M GOING TO TRY AND SALVAGE WHAT'S LEFT OF EFFIM.

LATER THAT NIGHT AT THE GEEK-OUT CLUB.

REMEMBER WHAT AVEEARE TOLD US, WHEN WE HAVE A BREAK, WE MUST GET TO KNOW PEOPLE, SO THAT WHEN WE GO AND LOOK FOR THAT GOLD, EVERYONE WILL THINK THAT WE ARE JUST GREEDY PROSPECTORS LIKE MOST OF THESE PEOPLE.



OKAY.

THEY PLAYED THEIR HEARTS OUT AND THE CROWD LOVED THEM.



TELL YA BROTHER - YA SISTER AN' YA MOMMA TOO -



FINALLY A BREAK AND TIME TO SOCIALIZE.

WELL, WE ALMOST HAD A NUMBER ONE HIT LAST YEAR.

WHY DO YOU RUN AROUND WITH THOSE UGLY LIL' ALIENS? STICK WITH ME BABE, MY GOLD CLAIM JUST PAID OFF - BIG!!

OH REALLY! GOLD, HUH? DO YOU GUYS HUNT FOR GOLD? THAT SOUNDS EXCITING.

...YOU GUYS BEEN HITTING A LOT OF OUT BACK PLANETS?

OOH, WOW! REALLY!

YEAH, WE'RE ON A BIG ROAD TRIP RIGHT NOW.

WOW!

AN' ME CAN PLAY DA GUITAR TOO... AN' DRUMS... AN'... ER, AHEM... I, SUTHAZE, I AM THE GREATEST AND MOST POWERFUL WIZARD IN THE UNIVERSE.

SURE?

HEH HEH



SNARF, WE BETTER KEEP OUR EYES ON GEEZEL, HIS IDENTITY KEEPS SLIDING BACK AND FORTH.

OKAY, SURE.

HEY, ARE YOU SOCIALIZING OR ARE YOU FLIRTING?



ME CAN DO MAGIC... YES ME CAN!!

HA-HA, SHOW US A MAGIC TRICK IF YA KNOW ONE.

YEAH, YA LITTLE DIP. HA!



WAIT, LET ME LIGHT DAT CIGAR WIF MY REAL MAGIC. 15 8 9 2 5

HA

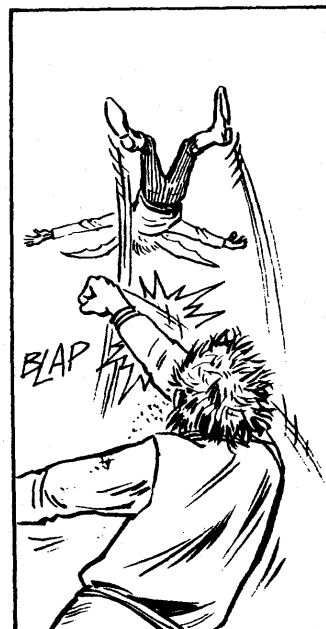
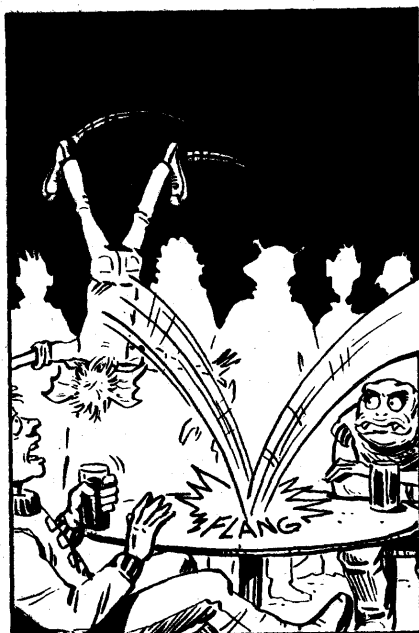
HEH HEH

HUH??



ZZZAAPP  
BLAW









# DRAGONMIRTH



by Bob Muleady



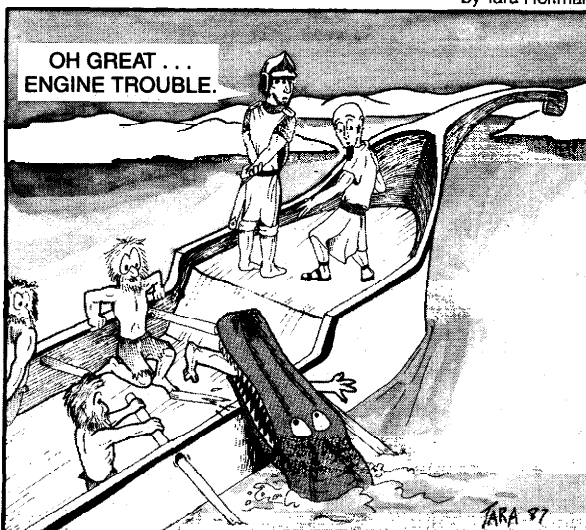
REMEMBER! NO PAIN, NO GAIN.



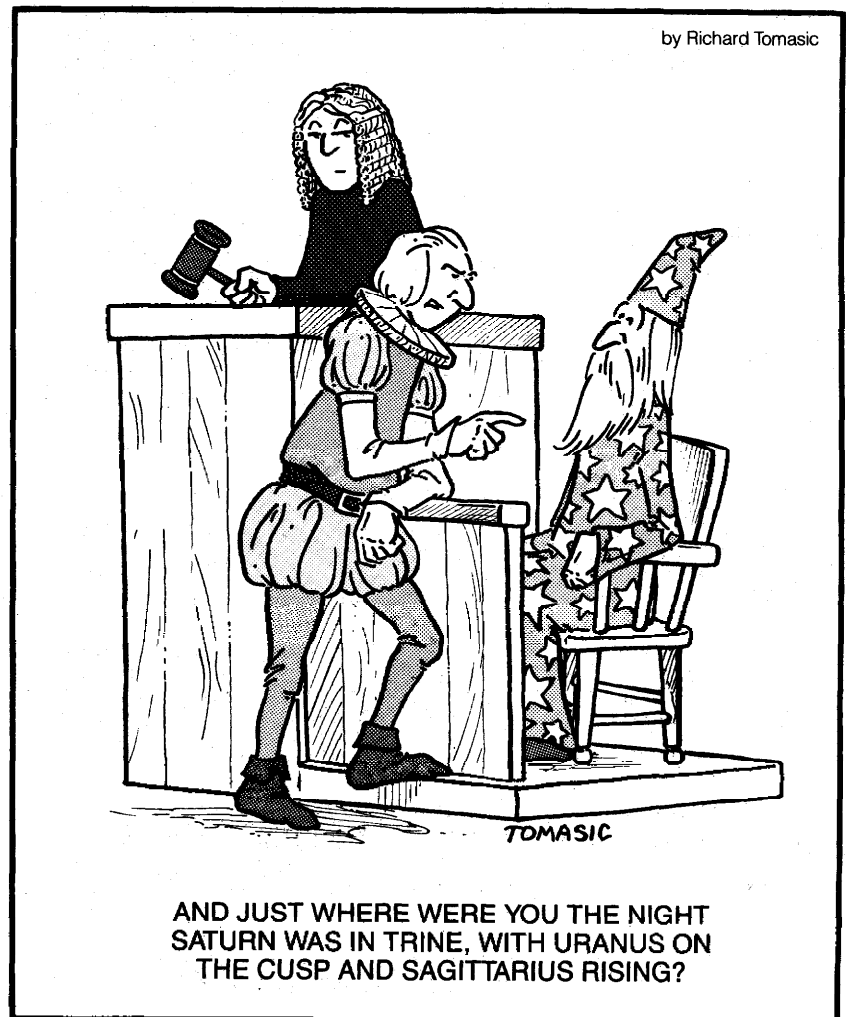
by Lori Walls

WHY ARE YOU COMPLAINING?  
IT'S A VERY GOOD INVISIBILITY SPELL!

by Tara Hoffman



OH GREAT ...  
ENGINE TROUBLE.



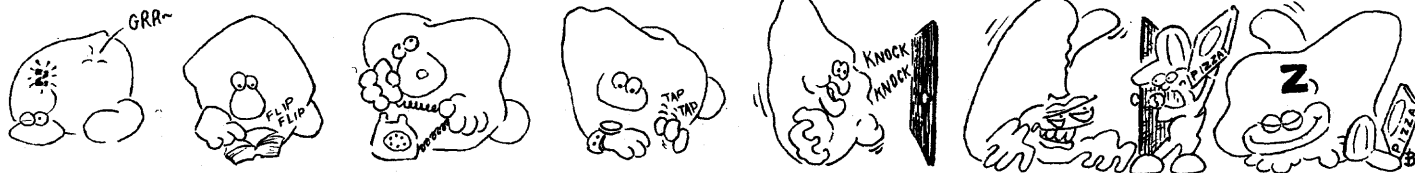
by Richard Tomasic

AND JUST WHERE WERE YOU THE NIGHT  
SATURN WAS IN TRINE, WITH URANUS ON  
THE CUSP AND SAGITTARIUS RISING?



by Joseph Pillsbury

by Bruce Simpson



by Ray Nadeau

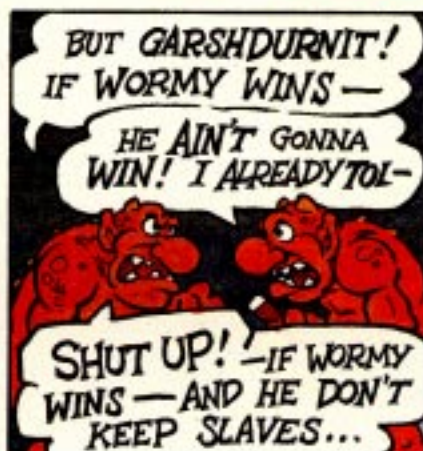




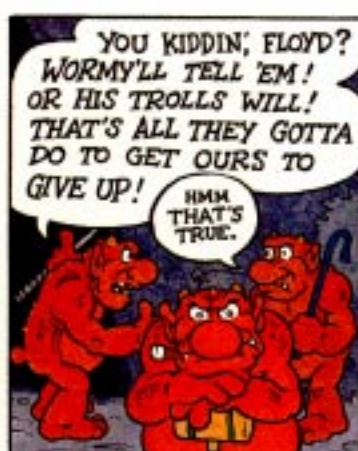
**WORMY**













# BETRAYED!



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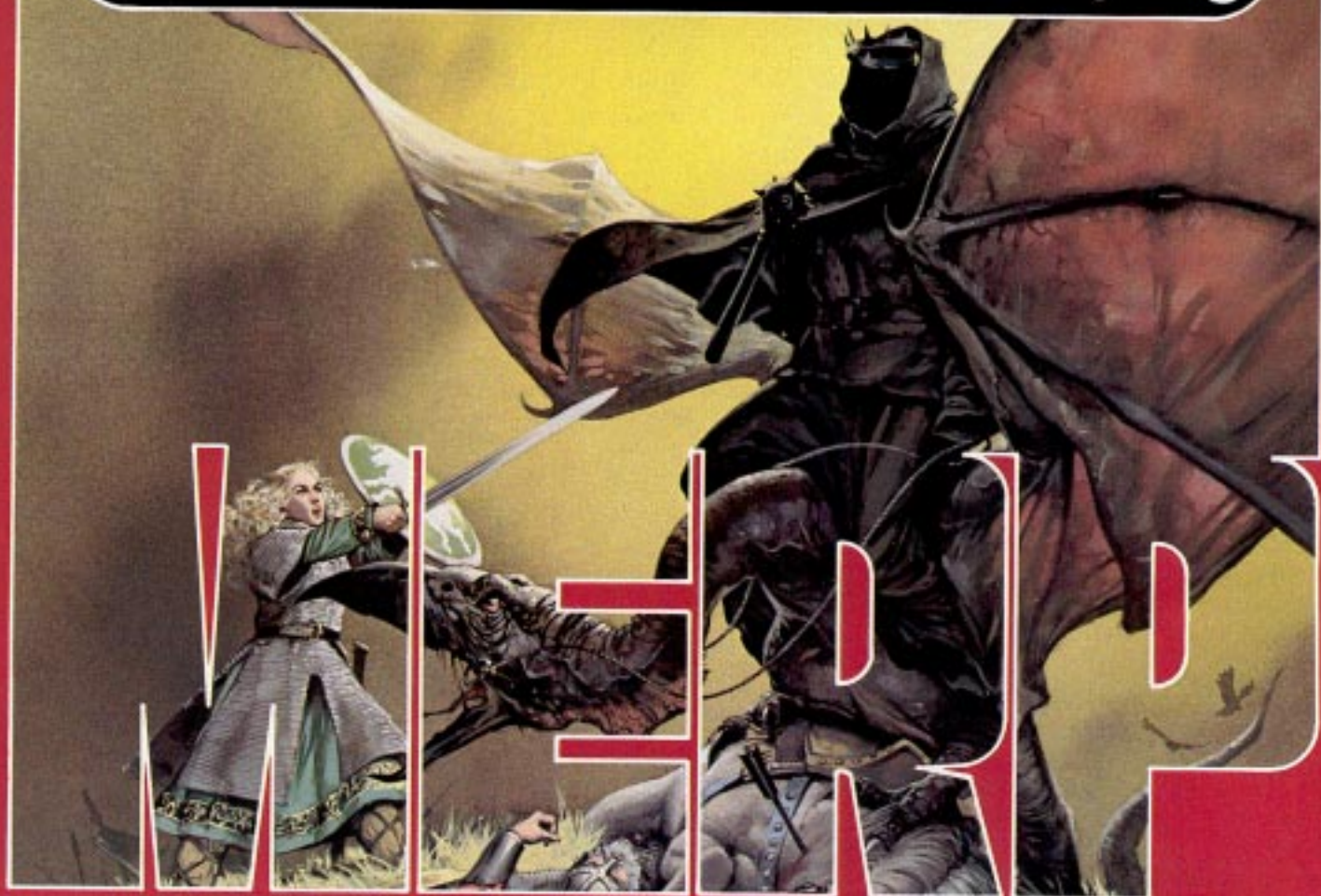
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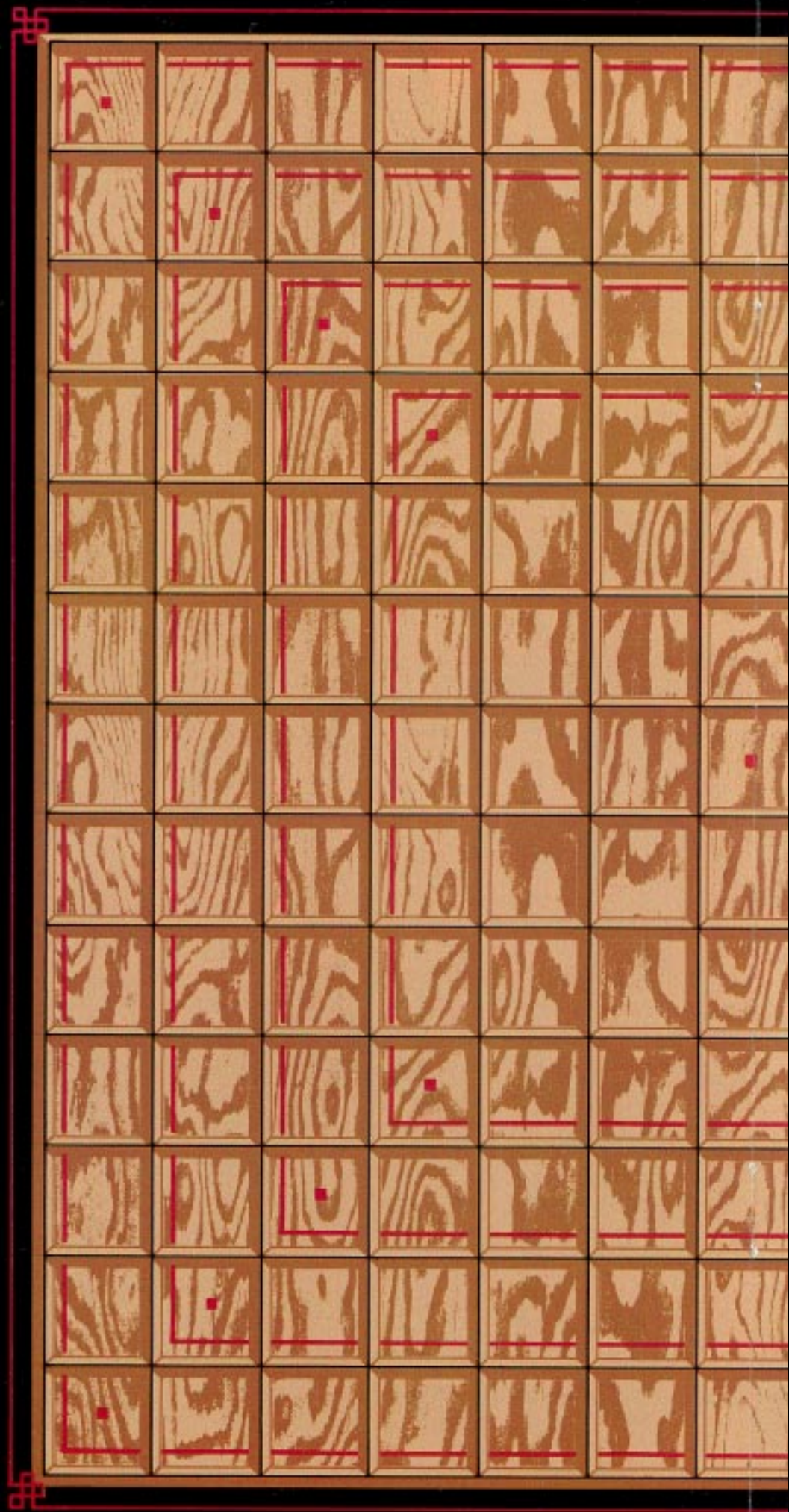
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# King's Table





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