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"Frog Prince" is the first DRAGON® Magazine cover painting by Carol Heyer, a writer/illustrator from Thousand Oaks, Calif. "The Magician's wand is still smoking after turning his opponent into a giant frog," Carol noted in her letter. "Magics are like that, yeah they are. . . ."

# LETTERS

What did you think of this issue? Do you have a question about an article or have an idea for a new feature you'd like to see? In the United States and Canada, write to: Letters, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Letters, DRAGON Magazine, TSR UK Limited, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD, United Kingdom.

## Missing map

Dear Dragon:

Can you tell me where I can get the map that will take me to the lair of the legendary undead dragon, Dragotha?

Casey Beard  
Natchitoches LA

*As noted in the description of Dragotha (in "Lords & Legends," DRAGON issue #134), mention of Dragotha's lair was made only in passing on a map of another dungeon complex, White Plume Mountain (in the AD&D® module of the same name). However, no other map or reference to Dragotha appears anywhere in that or other AD&D game materials. The location of the monster's lair is in hex K4-58 on the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® setting maps from the boxed set. That hex is north of the Howling Hills, on the edge of the Cold Marshes. A DM interested in having PCs meet this undead dragon should design detailed maps as necessary*

## Ancient issues

Dear Dragon:

What happened to the ads for back issues of DRAGON Magazine? The last one printed was in issue #129, when you were offering a last chance for lower prices on back issues.

Keith Martens  
Charlotte MI

*The Mail Order Hobby Shop's catalog contains all the latest information (including updated prices) for ordering back issues of DRAGON Magazine — and back issues of DUNGEON® Adventures, IMAGINE™ Magazine, AMAZING® Stories, and the Best of DRAGON Magazine anthologies as well. In North America, write to: TSR Mail Order Hobby Shop, c/o TSR, Inc., P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: TSR Mail Order Catalogue, TSR UK Limited, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD, United Kingdom. In addition, ask for DRACOL, the special collector's list of DRAGON issues not shown in the catalog.*

## Psionics blasted

Dear Dragon:

I have three related questions concerning the future of psionics and the second-edition AD&D game system:

1. Will the entire system be dropped? If so, what will replace it?

2. If it is dropped, what will happen to those monsters that have certain innate psionic powers (e.g., mind flayers, intellect devourers, brain moles, demons, duergar, etc.)?

3. Wouldn't it be better to simply overhaul or streamline the present system in the way the bard was done?

I'm sure that there are others like myself who would like to get some answers to these questions. The psionics system is one of the parts of the AD&D game that I enjoy using. It is unique to the system and shouldn't simply be discarded. Any help you could give on this matter would be greatly appreciated.

P.S. How about an anthology of articles that deals with dragons only?

Thomas R. Phillips  
Aberdeen ME

*Jon Pickens, who is working with the AD&D game revision, was consulted on your psionics questions. He replies:*

1. Yes, although "withdrawn for reworking" is a more accurate description of the system's fate.

2. The monsters are being held for reissue at a later date.

3. Yes, but revising other parts of the AD&D game rules has priority

*We usually schedule the June issue of DRAGON Magazine for articles on dragons. We are not publishing any further article anthologies in book form — though we might do it again someday.*

## Merchant-dicing

Dear Dragon:

I have two questions regarding the merchant character class in "Taking Care of Business" (DRAGON issue #136). First, does a merchant gain experience from treasure acquired in dungeons or adventures? Second, when a PC changes character classes to a merchant, does he retain all hit points?

Chad Schafer  
Charmichael CA

*Yes, a merchant gains experience points from treasure acquired while adventuring. Also, if the merchant is being used as a PC class, all former hit points of the character are retained when the change to the merchant class is made. New hit points are gained only when the PC's level as a merchant exceeds his level in his former class; thus, a 5th-level magic-user who becomes a merchant gains new hit points (1-6 of them) only when he becomes a 6th-level merchant. Note that as the merchant class is structured, multiclassed nonhuman characters may switch to this class in the same manner that humans may use it as a dual class; this was one of the reasons that the merchant class was recommended as an NPC class. If used as a PC class, it would be best if only human merchants were used as PCs.*

## The real world, part II

IN DRAGON® issue #130, I made some editorial comments about the real world and how it was a lot stranger than the worlds of science-fiction RPGs. A similar point might be made that the real world is a lot stranger than the worlds of fantasy RPGs, too, though hard-core gamers may cheerfully argue the point. What about magic? What about dragons? What about daring deeds of heroism against all odds?

Well, you could make an analogy between magic in fantasy worlds and the power of technology in today's world. Both accomplish a lot, even if most of us are fuzzy about the details of how either of them work. Technology has also created some interesting modern-day opponents. Would your cavalier charge a main battle tank or an armed combat helicopter? Yet unarmored soldiers face both daily in our world; just check the evening news. (This latter point also takes care of the "daring deeds" comparison as well.)

We can continue the comparison by looking at a few other themes commonly found in fantasy game campaigns. As you read the following, think of similar events from fantasy games in which you participated—and compare them for a moment.

*Man vs. beast:* With modern weaponry, the slaying of virtually any animal is absurdly (and perhaps obscenely) easy. Still, some people have used relatively primitive weapons and have come out on top. A few years ago, a bowhunter was surprised and mauled by an adult bear in the wilderness. The bowhunter repeatedly stabbed and eventually killed the bear with a single arrow; being a butcher by trade, the bowhunter knew exactly where to strike to do the most damage—the bear's neck. Elephants themselves are often slain if shot once in the ear.

*"Falling damage":* A Soviet pilot jumped from his damaged aircraft in January 1942 at 21,980' (a little over four miles) and survived after hitting the edge of a snow-covered ravine and sliding to the bottom. A Yugoslavian airline stewardess survived when her DC-9 blew up at 33,330'; she fell to the ground in the

*Continued on page 49*





# FAR FROM TRIVIAL...



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MAGAZINE

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# FORUM

"Forum" welcomes your comments and opinions on role-playing games. In the United States and Canada, write to: Forum, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Forum, DRAGON Magazine, TSR UK Limited, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD, United Kingdom. We ask that material submitted to "Forum" be either neatly written by hand or typed with a fresh ribbon and clean keys so we can read and understand your comments.

For years, I have read varying viewpoints on how to improve the low-level magic-user to help him survive and make him more fun to play. As both a player and a DM, I find the worst part of playing a low-level magic-user is the frustration. He can't fight to save his life, the number of spells he has is pitifully few, and other PCs are as smart as he is. So, what does that leave us with? A frustrated player.

When a player decides he wants to run a magic-user in my games, one of the first things he has to do is inform me of his magic-user's area of magical specialization. This information is kept strictly between the two of us, and it becomes his option whether to tell any other party members. The area of specialization can be as simple as fire-based magic or as broad as conjuration magic. I leave it up to the player to decide, and I have yet had to deny an area to maintain game balance.

Once his specialty is established, the magic-user is allowed to choose his initial spells with no random dice rolls at all. I believe if the apprentice magic-user was specializing in an area during training, he would have learned specific spells in that area, not just any old spells that came along. Likewise his teacher, who is

also a specialist, would tend to teach him spells that fall within his area of specialization. The number of spells the magic-user is initially allowed to have does not change.

The number of spells a character can cast, however, does change. A 1st-level magic-user who has specialized can cast two spells; at 2nd level, three, etc.; overall, the magic-user gains the ability to cast one additional spell. This allows the character to participate more fully should the party have to fight more than once, but it does not give him an inordinate amount of spells at any time in his career.

What does specialization give a character besides one extra [first-level] spell? All spells that are within the character's area of specialization are cast as if the magic-user were one level higher; likewise, he can cast specialization spells from the next higher level at the rate of one per day. This gives the magic-user slightly more power, but not an extraordinary amount, especially when we look at the negative side.

Spells cast which are not within the character's areas of specialization always have only 50% of normal effectiveness, rounded down where appropriate. For example, a 10th-level magic-user with specialization that included *fireball* would be able to cast a *fireball* that did 11d6 hp damage and had a range of 21". If that same magic-user's specialization did not cover *fireball*, he would only be able to cast a 5d6-hp *fireball* with a range of 10". In addition, it takes twice as long to learn and memorize a spell that is not within one's area of specialization.

Finally, magic-users are allowed to memorize or cast only a certain number of spells that fall outside their areas of specialization without receiving added penalties. The number of spells and severity of the penalties vary and are basically subjective. The penalties exist because these magic-users have specialized in a specific area of magic, and working outside that area is

simply dangerous. They are dealing with forces with which they are not entirely familiar, and this could have an effect not only on the spell but on the caster as well. Penalties I have used range from having the spell fail or backlash on its caster to complete loss of specialization and all benefits. In the case of lost specialization, the ability to cast other spells does not revert to normal. Instead, it stays at the level it was when specialization was lost. When the character attains his next level, his abilities in these other areas increases along normal lines but does not automatically catch up.

Let's look again at the 10th-level magic-user who did not have *fireball* in his area of specialization. At 10th level, he could cast a 5d6-hp *fireball* for 10". If he lost his specialization powers, he would only be able to cast a 6d6-hp *fireball* for 11" at 11th level.

As a DM, I have found this method works very well, allowing the low-level magic-user to participate more and keeping him from becoming frustrated. It also forces the players to seriously consider their areas of specialization from the start. What may benefit them at lower levels may be a serious handicap at higher levels if they're not careful. They have to do some research into what they really want to accomplish. The end result is a much more knowledgeable magic-user who is solidly aware of his strengths and weaknesses right from the start.

Jeffrey C. Weber  
Oak Harbor WA

Amid all the (exciting) chaos and radically opposing views concerning the shortcomings and supposed disabilities of low-level magic-users, clerics have been lost in the shuffle (with the wonderful exception of "Arcane Lore" in issue #134). In our FORGOTTEN REALMS™ setting campaign, we felt that it would be more realistic to have the average, everyday cleric be endowed with unique and special abilities as per the pantheon or deity to which the cleric is loyal. We have found these additions to be helpful, and they don't backfire at higher levels. A few examples follow:

Clerics of Lathander (god of healing and regrowth) automatically receive *cure light wounds* and are +2 to hit when opposing clerics, worshipers, or followers of Myrkul (god of death and decay).

Clerics of Bhaal (god of murder) can pray for *raise dead* one level early. When attempting to kill, murder, or assassinate anyone of any race

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or class, Bhaal clerics receive a maximum of +4 to hit depending on the vulnerability of the victim (e.g., a sleeping target denotes a +4 to hit, and an attack from behind generates a +1).

Worshippers and clerics of Chauntea (goddess of agriculture) receive *speak with plants* one level early, and both clerics of Chauntea and Lathander can expect full hospitality and aid from each other.

Lastly, clerics of Tempus (god of battle) can use edged weapons with the exception of spears, javelins, arrows, and similar weapons. When using permitted edged weapons, Tempus's clerics have a +1 bonus to hit.

Hopefully, these suggestions will add some color into the cleric class, no matter what setting, and help rejuvenate the real purpose of that class.

Michael Drake  
Pleasant Grove UT

I found Kenneth Arromdee's input into the ongoing discussion of the abilities and shortcomings of the low-level magic-user (issue #135) to be curious. He noted that the suggestions of Larry Madden (issue #129) were "not really practical," then went on to put forth a "simple solution." His solution was to allow the magic-user the ability to wear armor when he had exhausted his spell-casting capability.

This approach, too, seems to be "not really practical." The prospect of a magic-user (who is most likely deficient in strength to begin with) lugging around a suit of armor for occasional use is at best unlikely. The thought of our magic-user taking his turn in any particular martial encounter to stop and don his armor is truly absurd.

It seems to me that the spell-casters are well-rounded characters as they now stand. In the early levels, when the magic-user's party is tackling relatively low-level problems, the mage will do his bit against the enemy (be it a *sleep* spell or whatever), then slip back to a defended point and lay low while the brawny-armed musclemen hack up the orcs. Then, when experience points are handed out, the magic-user gains for the total attack. This is repaid at higher levels when the strong-shoulders gain experience points after the mage casts a spell that acts as an extraordinary killing machine.

In my opinion, there are only two times when a magic-user should be given any extra abilities. The first is when the party is dealing with a world in which a magic-user is as rare as a *staff of the magi*. In this case, the magic-user would have greater fighting abilities at all levels, but his magical ability must suffer proportionally — both because some of his time that would otherwise be spent enhancing magical technique must be given for the conditioning of those fighting abilities, and because other mages from whom the up-and-coming magic-user could learn are so few and far between. This decrease would be noted by a lessening of effectiveness of spells *across* the board (i.e., the hit-point damage ability of the mage's spells would drop proportionally to that mage's increased amount of hit-point damage that he can inflict in normal combat). The second situation would occur when the party is dealing with a world in which magic-users are a dime a dozen. In this case, the magic-user's spells would be of increased effectiveness — but remember, what is given to the PC must also be given to all NPCs.

Moving on, I find that I must reply to the belief of Steve Allen (same issue) that the prime use of RPGs is to be challenged, and that fun is secondary. I agree with Mr. Allen that a good challenge stimulates play and makes it more fun

— to a point. However, after having spent seven hours in school trying to understand the imbalances of trisomy inheritance and puzzling through General Howe's motives in making a frontal attack against Breeds Hill, my primary aim in sitting down to a game is to enjoy myself, not to be bogged down with endless and agonizing puzzles, the answers to which are buried deeper than the riddles of the ancient pyramids. Also, an occasional adventure which is purely "for the fun of it" is often just the thing to rejuvenate a party — enabling it to attack those earth-shaking quests for which gamers pine with all the more vigor.

Finally, I contend that at the other end of the scale of poor role-players is the player who is so wrapped up in the seriousness of the game that he forces it to be oppressive. Therefore, I submit that the primary aim of RPGs is to have fun — if it's not fun, why bother?

Scott A. Shepard  
Castanea PA

I am writing to contest the assertions made by Steve Allen in issue #135. In his letter, he states that the primary objectives in RPGs should be to think and solve problems, and that the pleasure and fun will generate itself. Perhaps his players enjoy that, but mine feel that fun is more important. As far as I recall, fun has been the prime objective in playing any game. If Mr. Allen can assert that solving problems will generate fun in an RPG, perhaps he also feels that winning is the most important thing in board games. When I lose in games like that, I don't feel bad because I'm still having fun.

I feel slightly insulted by Mr. Allen's statement that players who play just to have fun cannot determine standards of quality. There are good players and bad players, yes, but my objection lies in his definition of "good players." In my mind, a player who has fun and makes things more fun for other players (using humor, crazy actions, or whatever) is a far superior player to one who thinks over every move carefully, solves puzzles, and achieves the adventure's goal. The latter approach is as hollow as playing a board game strictly to win and accepting no other goals in the process.

My gaming group's all-time favorites are West End Games' PARANOIA® and Steve Jackson Games' TOON® games, and we're just starting to play TSR's BULLWINKLE & ROCKY™ game. These were certainly designed to be fun over everything else, with freewheeling, fast-moving mechanics. Granted, as Mr. Allen put it, they have "silly dungeons — adventures with no worthwhile goal," but they are much more enjoyable for us than so-called "serious" games. Fun is, after all, the ultimate point of RPGs.

Amod Lele  
Kingston, Ontario

In response to Steve Allen's letter in issue #135: However you go about it, RPGs will always be nothing more than a source of fun. Without getting too philosophical, it seems to me that the overall goal in life is nothing more than to maintain a level of happiness and satisfaction and to have as much fun as possible. People can pretend that their reasons for living are to strive for world peace, obtain religious enlightenment, or whatever, but such lofty, well-meaning aspirations are really just subdivisions within the everyday quest for personal satisfaction. For instance, in seeking to help others, we are really just helping ourselves. I think that if everyone in the world would seek a fun and happy life according to his own beliefs, the world would be an honest, open-minded, ambi-

tious place, even if it would be somewhat wild, I play RPGs for fun, and I, like Mr. Allen, prefer a somewhat more serious level of play, but I like to mix it in with humor and stupid stuff because I think that funny, knock-around gaming makes the darker material that much more scary and surprising when it finally rears its blackened head. I like to watch the gamers go from hysterics to serious action, then to sad regret and back to laughter again. I do what makes me the most happy; so does Mr. Allen, and so does everyone else. That is the way it should be in gaming, because 500 years from now, who'll know the difference?

David Moyle  
North Olmsted OH

A good DM attracts many "drop-ins" who want to join in the action immediately. When I was a new DM, I expected far too much knowledge from everybody. My players were (and are) mostly busy students and physicians who wanted fun without having to study rule books or fill out long forms. Now, I've learned to provide a good selection of pregenerated, pre-equipped 1st-level characters with a emphasis on fighters, clerics, and thieves. (One fighter is a good-aligned, nearly indestructible troll whose claw/claw/bite damage starts at 1/1/1-4 and increases with level.) These characters quickly learn to swing their weapons, cast *cure light wounds*, and check for traps without much coaching. Other players are always protective and helpful.

My job is harder when a newcomer wants to be a magic-user, especially when everyone else is shy about making suggestions. The familiars of folklore — including Tennessee witch tales — serve as advisors. Even a toad knows that *sleep* is a great choice against goblins, whether or not the new magic-user learned that during training. Once the player has gone on a few adventures, a toad queried about professional matters will simply say, "Ribbit!" Of course, as David Godwin ("Forum," issue #133) points out, such levity is not acceptable in a rigorous campaign. (Neither is the troll fighter.)

How else can we help the casual player who wants to be a spell-caster? Anyone with a sense of humor can devise a weak *wand of wonder* variant. Ours has 100 effects, including a 2-hp *fireball*, an attack mouse, a sheriff with a mock subpoena, and a ranting cleric of the opponent's alignment. This hardly affects game balance, but it keeps the welder involved. Players can also have the newcomer keep watch in the rear or operate a magical item (the *wand of magic detection* is a good choice).

After a few sessions, everyone wants to roll up his own character. In the meantime, how do other DMs make newcomers welcome? More generally, what are the ways that DMs make sure everybody has a good time?

Ed Friedlander  
Johnson City TN

"Laydeeezz and genntellmenn . . . In this corner, wearing a gossamer bikini, *bracers of defense* AC 2, *gauntlets of ogre power* and *ring of protection* +3, weighing 104 lbs., dodging with a 17 dex and an armor class of -4, at 8th level with 75 hp, and armed with a *horseman's flail* + 3: Eriana of Belargn!

"And in this corner, 40 in number, wearing chain mail with an effective armor class of 5, collectively weighing over four tons, each 5th level with 32 hp, and each armed with scimitars: the Faceless NPCs!

"For this bout, two NPCs will face Eriana at any time. As soon as one NPC dies, another



steps in to take his place. No critical hits or fumbles are allowed, no weapon specialization or even multiple attacks for high level will be permitted. Anyone brought to zero hit points is dead!"

Well, Eriana is not *that* well equipped, nor is she all that superior to her foes on paper. But I'd bet a bag of adamantium pieces that she will win easily. (Play it out yourself, and see what happens.) If the Faceless NPCs even come close to winning, the dice really favored them.

Consider: At her level, using the variant "to hit" system on page 74 of the *DMG*, Eriana needs an 8 or better to hit an NPC's armor class. With bonuses for the gauntlets and her weapon, she hits on anything except a 1. The Faceless NPCs need a 20 to hit her. Eriana does 2-5 (+ 9) hp damage per hit (11-14 hp, the average being 12.5). We assume it will take three hits by her to take down an NPC. The NPCs have no damage bonuses and do 1-8 hp per hit, averaging 4.5 hp damage. It would take a minimum of 10 hits and a maximum of 75 to take Eriana down. If we assume average damage, she can withstand 17 hits before dropping.

Eriana has to kill 40 NPCs, needing 120 hits before they can get in 17 hits. With a 95% chance of hitting, Eriana should swing 127 times to finish the lot of them. Since her 3/2 attack rate has been disallowed, she will need 127 rounds to do this. With a 5% chance of hitting, a Faceless NPC needs 340 swings to get those 17 hits. With two Faceless NPCs going at once, it will take 170 rounds for them to finish her off, which is nearly an hour too late. Let her have 3/2 attacks per round or specialization, and it ends a lot sooner.

And again, none of her items are particularly game-disruptive. No + 6 holy vorpal sunblades here; she has a magical horseman's flail. The bracers are the only items that were the best of their type, and simply substituting them with *chain mail* + 3 puts everything in the medium range without changing anything.

In short, it's gotten to the point where guards and troops are only there as window dressing. I worked out an adventure that gave "normal" fighters a chance against the typical party, but the key element of that adventure can't be copied over and over again. The only way to give the Faceless NPCs a chance of being challenging to players is to boost their level to about five over the party's, which is unfair and a bit ridiculous. Fighters of 9th level can get their own castles and troops; why would 14th-level fighters be doing menial guard work without magical weapons or armor? The treasure they guard couldn't pay their fees! It's worse to give them magical items which end up in the hands of the PCs.

Poison? It unbalances the game. I do 1 hp damage to you, you blow your save, you die. Perhaps insinuating poison should be rewritten: Given no save, these poisons could do bonus damage only and add to an assassin's chance of killing his victim. The assumption here is that a fatal dose can be administered by ingestion or contact, but game balance decrees that a fatal dosage can never be left by a blade that rips through flesh. What *does* get through merely causes damage. Faceless NPCs could then do enough damage to make them a threat.

Another possibility, one that should not be used in conjunction with the first, is to give NPCs (and only NPCs) a morale bonus of +4 to hit when they outnumber PCs. If used in the example above, Eriana would be dead meat against her 40 opponents unless she had specialization and fought them two at a time. Even then, she'd be hurting pretty badly, which is a

lot more realistic. This would not work too well against low-level parties and might not go into effect unless the NPCs were at least 3rd level.

I'm not just bouncing around solutions to these problems as they cross my mind. I would like to see what kind of ideas others might have or have implemented already.

S. D. Anderson  
Whittier CA

I think Mr. Friedlander (issue #134) missed a few exciting possibilities while he was revising the spell capabilities of dragons. Please allow me to rectify some of the omissions:

*Dancing lights*: If this spell is cast by an electricity-breathing dragon, the spheres of light will be electrically charged and function as *ball lightning* from a *ring of shooting stars*.

*Fire charm*: A fire-breathing dragon is a sufficient fire source for this spell without actually using its breath weapon, and all saving throws are at an additional -4 as the sight is so impressive.

*Fire shield*: If cast by a fire-breathing dragon (hot version) or frost-breathing dragon (cold version), attackers striking the dragon in melee take triple damage instead of double.

*Fly*: This doubles a dragon's flight speed.

*Jump*: A dragon using this spell is entitled to an extra attack in addition to its claw/claw/bite routine, in which it leaps bodily upon as many opponents as are in a 20' square area, attacking at +4 to hit and doing damage up to one-half its full hit points (thus, in the example, Razisiz II might jump on the two fighters for an extra 5-40 hp damage).

*Melf's acid arrow*: This spell continues to produce acid for one round per hit die of the dragon, if the dragon is acid-breathing.

*Melf's minute meteors*: If the caster is a fire-breathing dragon, this spell creates *meteors* each of which inflicts damage equal to the sum of the dragon's hit dice and age level. Dragons never lose count of the number of missiles remaining.

*Monster summoning I/II*: As dragons are naturally authoritative and masterful, this spell always summons the maximum number of monsters in the shortest possible time. All monsters will be unusually large and strong, having twice-normal hit points and at least +1 on damage.

*Push*: This spell functions as if it were *repulsion* with a one-round duration.

*Scare*: This spell has no saving throw when it is cast by a dragon.

*Stinking cloud*: A gas-breathing dragon can make this spell the equivalent of a *cloudkill*.

*Unseen servant*: This spell, when cast by a dragon, actually summons an *invisible stalker*.

Seriously, though, I agree that dragons tend to be woefully underpowered. I've seen an ancient spell-using red dragon (Brazzamal, from the Hall of the Fire Giant King [in *GDQ* 1-7 Queen of the Spiders]) go under in a couple of rounds against a party in which no one was over 10th level. But it offends my sensibilities, and I suspect those of a number of players, to revise the power of individual spells wholesale for no reason other than they are cast by dragons. Some of [Friedlander's] suggested at-will powers are frightening; had Razisiz II had a little more warning and the use of the spell *invisibility*, uprated to be equivalent with *improved invisibility* as Mr. Friedlander suggests, then the thought of this dragon flapping quietly along while silently and invisibly *dispelling* every spell the party casts from his unlimited supply of *vocalize* and *dispel magic* terrifies me. Without doubt, the fight would have gone rather less well for the party

than even its woeful actual effort.

Several of the spell-effect changes are ridiculously powerful. *Shield* is horrendous; rather than giving a modest AC 2 to AC 4 according to the attack mode used against it, it improves whatever armor class the dragon has by up to 12! Bear in mind a normal *shield* is frontal only (exception: a *staff of power* can produce a circular one). Has Mr. Friedlander considered that all the magic-users in this campaign are going to be queuing up to learn this one, even if they have to take it as a higher-level spell? What if liches get it, too — AC -18 or better for the use of one first-level spell! Giving a dragon the equivalent of *shape change* means it can now use whatever breath weapon it likes over a dozen shots a day; if a magic-user, ordinarily lacking any sort of breath weapon at all, can *shape change* to become a dragon with a breath weapon, I am sure a dragon can! *Polymorph any object* is a great "mayhem" spell, too — the creative dragon could, for example, turn a lump of stone into a short-lived but very peeved umber hulk and absent itself from the chaos that ensued (while hanging around to pick off anyone who wandered away *confused* from the scene). *Haste* improving armor class by yet another four places is hard to justify; a dragon's size of a bus in the first place, and its armor class is largely due to its tough hide. I'd be tempted to argue that neither *haste* nor *slow* is likely to alter the situation appreciably. And allowing *strength* to give double damage! To a human it can't possibly give more than +3 damage (15 to 18/50, 18/20 to 18/00), so why it should give Razisiz II an average bonus of +22 hp on its bite attack escapes me. *Animal growth* does give double damage — but it is a higher-level spell, the duration is much shorter, and it works only on natural animals.

I don't see any reason why a dragon shouldn't be made a good deal tougher. Its claw damage tends to be pathetic — the equivalent of a wimp with a long sword at best — and this should be attended to. Uprating the bite damage for the bigger dragons seems reasonable, too. Magic resistance is a great idea, and giving a dragon magic resistance equal to its hit points would make it really tough. There's no reason in all creation, though, why the dragon alone (with the exception of certain deities) should have magic resistance which not even a 25th-level magic-user can blow down. Its spell ability could improve — but by giving it more and better spells, not by warping the ones it normally gets. Changing the breath weapon so it's always a 30' cone whatever it's composed of also makes things a little too homogeneous for my tastes.

Incidentally, I hope a dragon of Mr. Friedlander's is not going to be sitting on a hoard of worthwhile size. If a party of five 13th-level types can't deal with a dragon, the party that can — presumably three or four levels higher — is going to want reimbursing! And a final comment: Since when has a magic-user under the influence of *Tenser's transformation* had the option of running away?

Douglas Porter  
Norwich, Norfolk, U.K.



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Since the publication of the DC™ HEROES game in April 1985, Mayfair Games has produced game statistics for an amazing number of the heroes, villains, and supporting characters who inhabit the vast DC Universe. This index lists all of those individuals who have had their statistics printed. The index is divided into three sections: heroes, villains, and their supporting casts. Some characters have appeared several times, and all such

occurrences are listed here. Some of the modules and sourcebooks mentioned herein have not yet been published, but all should be out by the end of 1988. Be warned, however — some changes may be made in upcoming books between now and publication. A product list and the abbreviation for each product follow.

*A Titan Nevermore!* (Master Set) . . . . .ATN  
*All That Glitters* . . . . .ATG  
*Batman Sourcebook* . . . . .BMS  
*Belle Reve Sourcebook* . . . . .BRS  
*Blitzkrieg* . . . . .BZG  
*Blood Feud!* . . . . .BF  
*Character cards* (Master Set) . . . . .CC  
*City of Fear* . . . . .CF  
*Countdown to Armageddon* . . . . .CA  
*Don't Ask!* . . . . .DA  
*Doomsday Program, The* . . . . .DP



*Dream Machine, The* .....DM  
*Element of Danger, An* .....ED  
*Escort to Hell* .....EH  
*Eternity, Inc* .....EI  
*Fire and Ice* .....FI  
*Four Horsemen of Apokolips* .....FHA  
*Gamemasters Manual (Master Set)* .....GM  
*Green Lantern Corps Sourcebook* .....GLC  
*Hardware Handbook* .....HH  
*H.I.V.E.* .....HIVE  
*King of Crime* .....KC  
*King For All Time* .....KAT  
*Knight to Planet 3* .....KP3

*Legion of Super-Heroes Sourcebook, Volume One* .....LSH1  
*Legion of Super-Heroes Sourcebook, Volume Two* .....LSH2  
*Lights, Camera, Kobra!* .....LCK  
*Lines of Death* .....LD  
*Mad Rook's Gambit* .....MRG  
*Moonshot* .....MS  
*Night in Gotham* .....NG  
*Pawns of Time* .....PT  
*Project Prometheus* .....PP  
*Rigged Results* .....RR  
*Siege* .....SG

*Strangers in Paradise* .....SIP  
*Superman Sourcebook* .....SS  
*Watchmen: Who Watches the Watchmen?* .....W1  
*Watchmen: Taking Out the Trash* .....W2  
*Wheel of Destruction* .....WD  
*When a Stranger Calls* .....WSC

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## Heroes

Air Wave .....GLC  
 Ambush Bug .....DA, SS  
 Aquaiad .....GM  
 Aquaman .....CC, GM  
 Arion, Lord of Atlantis .....MRG  
 Atom .....GM  
 Batgirl .....BMS  
 Batman .....BMS, CC, GM, WD, WSC  
 Beast Boy .....LSH1  
 Black Canary .....GLC, GM, LD, WSC  
 Black Lightning .....BMS, LCK  
 Blackhawk .....BZG  
 Black Orchid .....BRS  
 Blaze .....MS  
 Blok .....KAT, LSH1, LSH2  
 Blue Beetle .....WSC  
 Booster Gold .....ATG, WSC  
 Bouncing Boy .....LSH1, LSH2  
 Brainiac 5 .....KAT, LSH1, LSH2, MRG, PT  
 Brainwave .....EI  
 Bronze Tiger .....BRS  
 Broot .....GLC  
 Captain Atom .....WSC  
 Captain Metropolis .....W1, W2  
 Celebrand .....LSH1  
 Celsius .....MS  
 Chameleon Boy .....KP3, LSH1, LSH2  
 Changeling .....CC, GM, MS  
 Chemical King .....LSH1, LSH2, PT  
 Chief .....MS  
 Chlorophyll Kid .....LSH1  
 Color Kid .....LSH1  
 Colossal Boy .....LSH1, LSH2, MRG  
 Comedian .....W1, W2  
 Comet Queen .....LSH1  
 Controllers .....GLC, LSH1  
 Cosmic Boy .....KAT, LSH1, LSH2  
 Crystal Kid .....LSH1  
 Cyborg .....CC, GM  
 Dartalg .....LSH1  
 Dawnstar .....KP3, LSH1, LSH2  
 Demonica .....GLC  
 Doctor Fate .....WSC  
 Doctor Manhattan .....W1, W2  
 Dollar Bill .....W2  
 Dream Girl .....KAT, LSH1, LSH2  
 Duo Damsel .....LSH1, LSH2  
 Duplicate Boy .....LSH1, PT  
 Element Lad .....LSH1, LSH2, PT  
 Elongated Man .....CC, GM  
 Elasti-Girl .....MS  
 Elu .....GLC  
 Elvo .....LSH1  
 Evolver Lad .....LSH1  
 Felicity .....GLC  
 Ferro Lad .....LSH1, LSH2, PT  
 Fire Lad .....LSH1  
 Firehawk .....ED  
 Firestorm the Nuclear Man .....CC, ED, GM  
 Flag, Colonel Rick .....BRS  
 Flamebird .....SS  
 Flash II (Barry Allen) .....CC, GLC, GM  
 Flash III (Wally West) .....CF, GM, RR  
 Fury .....EI  
 Gas Girl .....LSH1, PT  
 Geo-Force .....BMS, LCK  
 Goldstar .....ATG  
 Green Arrow .....CC, GLC, GM, LD  
 Green Lantern (Arisia) .....GLC

Green Lantern (Ch'p) .....GLC  
 Green Lantern (Arkkis Chummuck) .....GLC  
 Green Lantern (Driq) .....GLC  
 Green Lantern (Eddore) .....GLC  
 Green Lantern (Guy Gardner) .....WSC, GLC  
 Green Lantern (Hal Jordan) .....CC, GLC, GM  
 Green Lantern (K'ryssma) .....GLC  
 Green Lantern (Kilowog) .....GLC  
 Green Lantern (Medphyl) .....GLC  
 Green Lantern (Mogo) .....GLC  
 Green Lantern (Olapet) .....GLC  
 Green Lantern (Salaak) .....GLC  
 Green Lantern (Flodo Span) .....GLC  
 Green Lantern (Stel) .....GLC  
 Green Lantern (John Stewart) .....CC, GLC, GM  
 Green Lantern (Abin Sur) .....GLC  
 Green Lantern (Tomar-Re) .....GLC  
 Green Lantern (Katma Tui) .....GLC  
 Green Lantern (Charlie Vickers) .....GLC  
 Green Lantern (Xax) .....GLC  
 Green Man .....GLC  
 Guardians of the Universe .....GLC  
 Halo .....BMS, LCK  
 Harpis .....GLC  
 Hawk .....RR  
 Hawkman .....CC, ED, GM, WD  
 Hawkwoman .....ED  
 Hex, Jonah .....EH  
 Hooded Justice .....W2  
 Immorto .....LSH1  
 Infectious Lass .....LSH1  
 Invisible Kid I (Lyle Norg) .....LSH1, LSH2, PT  
 Invisible Kid II (Jacques Foccart) .....LSH1, LSH2, PT  
 Jade .....EI  
 Jericho .....CC, GM  
 Jonni DC the Continuity Cop .....DA  
 Kalista .....GLC  
 Karate Kid .....LSH1, LSH2, PT  
 Karma .....MS  
 Katana .....BMS, LCK  
 Kid Psycho .....LSH1  
 Kole .....BF  
 Krypto the Superdog .....SS  
 Lamprey .....LSH1  
 Life Lass .....LSH1, PT  
 Lightning Lad .....LSH1, LSH2  
 Lightning Lass .....LSH1, LSH2, PT  
 Lodestone .....MS  
 Looker .....LCK  
 Magnetic Kid (Pol Krinn) .....LSH1, LSH2, MRG  
 Man-Bat .....BMS  
 Martian Manhunter .....CC, GM, WSC  
 Matter-Eater Lad .....KP3, LSH1, LSH2  
 Mento .....MS  
 Metamorpho .....BMS, LCK  
 Mister Miracle .....WSC  
 Mon-El .....KAT, LSH1, LSH2  
 Mothman .....W2  
 Myg .....LSH1  
 Negative Man .....MS  
 Negative Woman .....MS  
 Nemesis .....BRS  
 Night Girl .....LSH1  
 Nighthound .....SS  
 Nightshade .....BRS  
 Nightwind .....LSH1  
 Nightwing (Grayson) .....ATN, BMS, CC, GM, WD  
 Nightwing (Van-Zee) .....SS  
 Nimbus .....GLC

Nite Owl (Dan Dreiberg) .....W1, W2  
 Nite Owl (Hollis Mason) .....W2  
 Northwind .....EI  
 Nuklon .....EI  
 Obsidian .....EI  
 Ornitho .....LSH1  
 Ozymandias .....W1, W2  
 People's Heroes .....BRS  
 Phantom Gil .....KP3, LSH1, LSH2  
 Phantom Stranger .....DA, WSC  
 Polar Boy .....LSH1, LSH2, PT  
 Porcupine Pete .....LSH1  
 Power Boy .....LSH1  
 Power Girl .....SS  
 Primus .....GLC  
 Privateer .....BRS  
 Psyche .....LSH1  
 Quantum Queen .....LSH1  
 Quislet .....KP3, LSH1, LSH2  
 Raven .....CC, GM  
 Red Tornado .....SG  
 Robin .....BMS, CC, GM, WD  
 Robotman .....MS  
 Rocket Red #13 .....WSC  
 Rorschach .....W1, W2  
 Ryandr .....GLC  
 Saturn Girl .....LSH1, LSH2  
 Sergeant Rock .....BZG  
 Sensor Girl .....KAT, LSH1, LSH2  
 Shadow Lad .....LSH1  
 Shadow Lass .....KAT, LSH1, LSH2  
 Silhouette .....W2  
 Silk Spectre (Sally Jupiter) .....W2  
 Silk Spectre (Laurel Jane Juspezyk) .....W1, W2  
 Silver Scarab .....EI  
 Speedy .....BRS, GLC, RR  
 Star Boy .....KAT, LSH1, LSH2  
 Star-Spangled Kid .....EI  
 Starfire .....ATN, CC, GM  
 Stone Boy .....LSH1  
 Sun Boy .....KP3, LSH1, LSH2, MRG  
 Superbaby .....SS  
 Superboy .....LSH1, LSH2, SS  
 Supergirl .....LSH1, LSH2, PT, SS  
 Superman (Earth-2) .....SS  
 Superman .....CC, GM, SS  
 Superwoman .....SS  
 Tellus .....LSH1, LSH2, MRG, PT  
 Tempest .....MS  
 Tigorr .....GLC  
 Timber Wolf .....LSH1, LSH2, PT  
 Tornado Twins .....LSH1  
 Tyroc .....LSH1, LSH2  
 Ultra Boy .....KP3, LSH1, LSH2  
 Vartox .....SS  
 Vixen .....BRS  
 White Witch .....LSH1, LSH2, MRG  
 Wildfire .....LSH1, LSH2  
 Windfall .....LCK  
 Wonder Girl .....ATN, CC, GM  
 Wonder Woman (pie-crisis) .....CC, GM  
 Wonder Woman (post-Crisis) .....SIP  
 Zatanna .....CC, GM



Charma	LSH1
Cheetah (pre-Crisis)	GM, KC
Cheetah (post-Crisis)	SIP
Cheshire	ATN, GM
Chief Zoltaurus	LSH1
Chill, Joe	WSC
Chronos	BRS, KC
Clayface	BMS
Coldsnap	RR
Colonel Future	SS
Command Kid	LSH1
Computo	KP3, LSH1, LSH2
Copperhead	KC
Cosmic King	LSH1
Crazy Quilt	BMS
Dagon the Avenger	LSH1
Dark Man	LSH1
Darkseid (20th Century)	CC, FHA, GM
Darkseid (30th Century)	KAT, LSH1
Deadshot	BMS, BRS
Decay	SIP
Deimos	SIP
Deregon	LSH1
DeSaad	DM, FHA
Doctor Alchemy	ED
Doctor Light	GLC
Doctor Phosphorus	NG
Doctor Polaris	GLC
Doctor Psycho	GM
Doctor Regulus	LSH1
Doctor Tzin-tzin	NG
Doctor U'bx	GLC
Dynamo Boy	LSH1
Eclipso	GLC
Emerald Empress	LSH1
Enemy Ace	MRG, PT
Enchantress	BRS
Eris, goddess of Discord	SIP
Esper Lass	LSH1
Evil Star	GLC
Evillo	LSH1
Faora Hu-Ul	SS
Female Furies	BRS
Femme Fatale	WSC
Galactic Golem	SS
Galtry, Nicholas	MS
Garguax	MS
General Immortus	MS
General Zuhl	MS
General Dru-Zod	SS
Ghast	WSC
Gizmo	FI
Glorious Godfrey	BRS
Golden Glider	KC
Goldface	GLC, KC
Golgoth	LSH1
Goodman, Dr. Sebastian	MS
Gorilla Grodd	EI, GM
Grimbor	LSH1
Hardhat	GLC
Heatstroke	RR
Hector Hammond	GLC
Hell, William	BRS
H.I.V.E.	HIVE
Holdur	LSH1, MRG
Houngan	BF
Hunter	LSH1
Immune	LSH1
Infinite Man	LSH1, PT
Jackhammer	GLC
Javelin	BRS, GLC
Jax-Ur	SS
Jer-Em	SS
Jihad	BRS
Jinx	FI
Joker	BMS, CC, DM, GM
Jungle King	LSH1
Kalki	MS
Karb-brak	SS
Khunds	LSH1, KP3
Killer Croc	BMS
Killer Frost	BRS, GM
Killer Moth	KC
Kobra	LCK
Krona	GLC
Kru-El	SS
Lazon	LSH1
Lightning Lord	LSH1
Lord Satanis	SS
Luther, Alexei (Earth-2)	SS

## Villains

Absorbancy Boy	LSH1
Amalgamax	LSH1
Amazo	SS
Animal-Vegetable-Mineral Man	MS
Apollo (30th Century)	LSH1
Arsenal	MS
Atomic Skull	SS
Az-Rel	SS
Baron Tyrano	GLC
Bizarro	SS
Black Bison	GM
Black Hand	GLC
Black Mace	LSH1, MRG
Black Manta	GM
Black Mask	NG
Blackbriar Thorn	SS
Blackout	PT
Blackout Boy	LSH1
Blackrock	SS
Blockbuster	BRS, NG
Bounty	LSH1
Brain	BF, MS
Brainiac	CC, DP, GM, KAT, SS
Brimstone	BRS
Brother Blood	CC, GM
Bug-Eyed Bandit	DP
Calendar Man	NG
Calorie Queen	LSH1
Captain Boomerang	BRS
Captain Cold	BRS, KC
Cat-Man	BMS
Catwoman	BMS, GM
Chameleon Chief	LSH1
Chameleon Kid	LSH1



Luther, Lex	.CC, DA, GM, SS	Persuader	.LSH1, PT	Size Kid	.LSH1
Mad Hatter	.BMS	Phantom Lad	.LSH1	Slipknot	.BRS, ED
Madame Rouge	.MS	Pharox	.LSH1	Sonar	.GLC
Magnetic Kid	.LSH1	Phobia	.BF	Spider-Girl	.LSH1
Magno Lad	.LSH1	Pied Piper	.KC	Spook	.NG
Magpie	.LSH1	Pike, Fenton	.LSH1	Star Sapphire	.GLC
Major Disaster	.GLC, WSC	Plasmus	.BF	Starburst Bandits	.LSH1
Mammoth	.FI	Plastique	.BRS	Starfinger	.LSH1
Manhunters	.BRS, GLC	Poison Ivy	.BMS	Steamroller	.GLC
Mano	.LSH1	Prankster	.SS	Strange, Professor Hugo	.BMS
Mantis	.GM	Predator	.GLC	Stratos	.ED
Mantis Morlo	.LSH1, PT	Prophet	.LSH1	Sugyn	.LSH1, MRG
Master Jailer	.SS	Psi	.BRS	Sun Emperor	.LSH1
Matter Master	.ED, KC	Psions	.ATN	Sun-Eater	.LSH1
Metallo	.SS	Psycho Pirate	.WSC	Syrene	.SS
Micro Lad	.LSH1	Pulsar Stargrave	.LSH1, MRG	Tarik the Mute	.LSH1
Mindboggler	.BRS	Puzzler	.SS	Tattooed Man	.GLC
Mind Dancer	.ATG	Quanto	.LSH1	Terminator	.ATN, CC, GM
Mirror Master	.KC	Quicksand	.LSH1, MRG	Terra	.GM, PT
Mist Master	.LSH1	Ras Al Ghul	.BMS	Terra-Man	.SS
Mister 104	.BRS, MS	Radiation Roy	.LSH1	Tharok	.LSH1
Mister Element	.ED	Rath	.WSC	Thespis	.NG
Mister Freeze	.BMS	Reactron	.MS	Thinker	.BRS
Mister Morden	.MS	Reaper	.WSC	Thunderers	.GLC
Mister Mxyzptlk	.GM, SS	Resource Raiders	.LSH1, MRG	Time Trapper	.LSH1, KAT
Mole	.NG	Riddler	.BMS, GM	Titania	.LSH1
Molecule Master	.LSH1	Rogarth	.LSH1	Titano	.SS
Moloch	W1, W2	Ron-Karr	.LSH1	Toyman	.SS
Mongul	.SS	Rosie	.GLC	Trigon	.CC, GM
Monsieur Mallah	.BF, MS	Sadahuru	.LSH1	Tupeng	.NG
Mordru	.LSH1	Saturn Queen	.LSH1	Two-Face	.BMS
Multiplex	.BRS	Savage, Vandal	.SS	Tyr	.LSH1, KP3
Mystelot	.LSH1	Scarecrow	.BMS	Ultra-Humanite	.SS
Nadira	.SS	Scoopshovel	.GLC	Universo	.LSH1, KAT
Nam-Ek	.SS	Sden	.LSH1, MRG	Va-Kox	.SS
Nemesis Kid	.LSH1, PT	Shadow Demons	.GLC	Validus	.LSH1
Neutrax	.LSH1	Shadow Thief	.KC	Vibrex	.LSH1
New Wave	.RR	Shagrek	.LSH1	Von Tepp, Colonel	.BZG
Night-Slayer	.BMS	Shakedown	.RR	Warp	.BF
Ol-Vir	.LSH1	Shark	.GLC, GM, KC	Weaponers of Qward	.GLC
Omega	.LSH1	Shimmer	.FI	Weasel	.BRS
Omen	.LSH1	Shockwave	.ATG	Wild Huntsman	.LSH1, MRG
Ontiir	.LSH1	Shrapnel	.MS	Wizard	.SS
Organus	.LSH1	Silver Deer	.ED	Wolfigham, J. Wilbur	.SS
Parasite	.BRS, SG, SS	Silver Slasher	.LSH1	Wotan	.WSC
Pares, Benn	.LSH1	Sinestro	.CC, GLC, GM	Zamarons	.GLC
Penguin	.BMS, BRS, CC, GM	Sister Dread	.BF	Zymyr	.LSH1

## Supporting Cast

Amazons	.SIP	Kent, Martha	.SS
Appa Ali Apsa	.GLC	Klybern, Dr. Jenet	.BF
Blanc-Dumont, Capt. Andre	.BZG	Lane, Lois	.GM, SS
Brande, R.J.	.LSH1	Lang, Lana	.GM, SS
Bullock, Harvey	.BMS, GM, NG	Lemaris, Lori	.SS
Candy, Etta	.SIP	Limbo, Kari	.GLC
Chan, Lt. Weng ("Chop-Chop")	.BZG	Lombard, Steve	.SS
Cheeks the Toy Wonder	.DA	Long, Terry	.GM
Clay, Dorine	.GLC	Nocturna	.BMS
Cusimano, Gigi	.LSH1, LSH2	Olsen, James (Earth-2)	.SS
Dasor, Chairman	.GLC	Olsen, Jimmy	.GM, LSH1, SS
Davis, Dirk	.ATG	Pennyworth, Alfred	.BMS, GM
Davis, Capt. Richard	.GLC	Potter, Prof. Phineus	.SS
Doremus, Eve	.GLC	Protty II	.LSH1
Drozdowski, Capt. Stanislaus	.BZG	Relnic, Ambassador	.LSH1
Dvrom, Lt.	.LSH1, LSH2	Remarque, Julia	.BMS, GM
Easy Company	.BZG	Ross, Jon	.SS
Edge, Morgan	.SS, CA	Ross, Pete	.SS
Erin, Shvaugn	.LSH1, LSH2	Senius, Circadia	.LSH1
Ferris, Carol	.GLC	Sensei	.LSH1
Fox, Lucius	.BMS	Sirianni, Capt. Carlos "Chuck"	.BZG
Friedriksen, Capt. Olaf	.BZG	Skeets	.ATG
Gordon, Commissioner James	.BMS, GM, NG	Solar Council	.GLC
Greek Gods	.SIP	Soo, Jack	.ATG
Gym'll, Dr.	.LSH1	Stefancci, Antonio	.LSH1
Hagga	.LSH1	Talia	.BMS
Hendricksen, Capt. Ritter	.BZG	Trevor, Steve	.SIP
Hippolyte	.SIP	Vail, Vicki	.BMS, GM
Itty	.GLC	Vane, Iona	.GLC
Jace, Dr. Helga	.LCK	Vidar, Rond	.LSH1
Jordan, Jack	.GLC	White, Perry	.GM, SS
Jordan, Jim	.GLC	Williams, Sue	.GLC
Jordan, Titus Thomas	.GLC	Yera	.LSH1
Kalmaku, Thomas ("Pieface")	.GLC	Young, Tawny	.GLC
Kane, Francis (Magenta)	.ATN	Zendak, Chief	.LSH1, LSH2
Kaoatelis, Prof. Julia	.SIP		
Kent, Lois Lane (Earth-2)	.SS		
Kent, Jonathan	.SS		

## LOOKING FOR A GAME CONVENTION?

If your gaming group is too small or if you've just moved into the neighborhood, finding friends who are also gamers can be a problem. However, your local hobbies and games shop may have a bulletin board where gamers can advertise their groups and meeting times. The hobby store may also know of local game conventions where you can meet dozens of other gamers with the same interests. The Convention Calendar in this issue may also be of help. Don't sit at home and wish you knew more gamers. Go out and find them today.



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Michael H. Cook, Publisher



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ANALOG Magazine, Sept. 1986

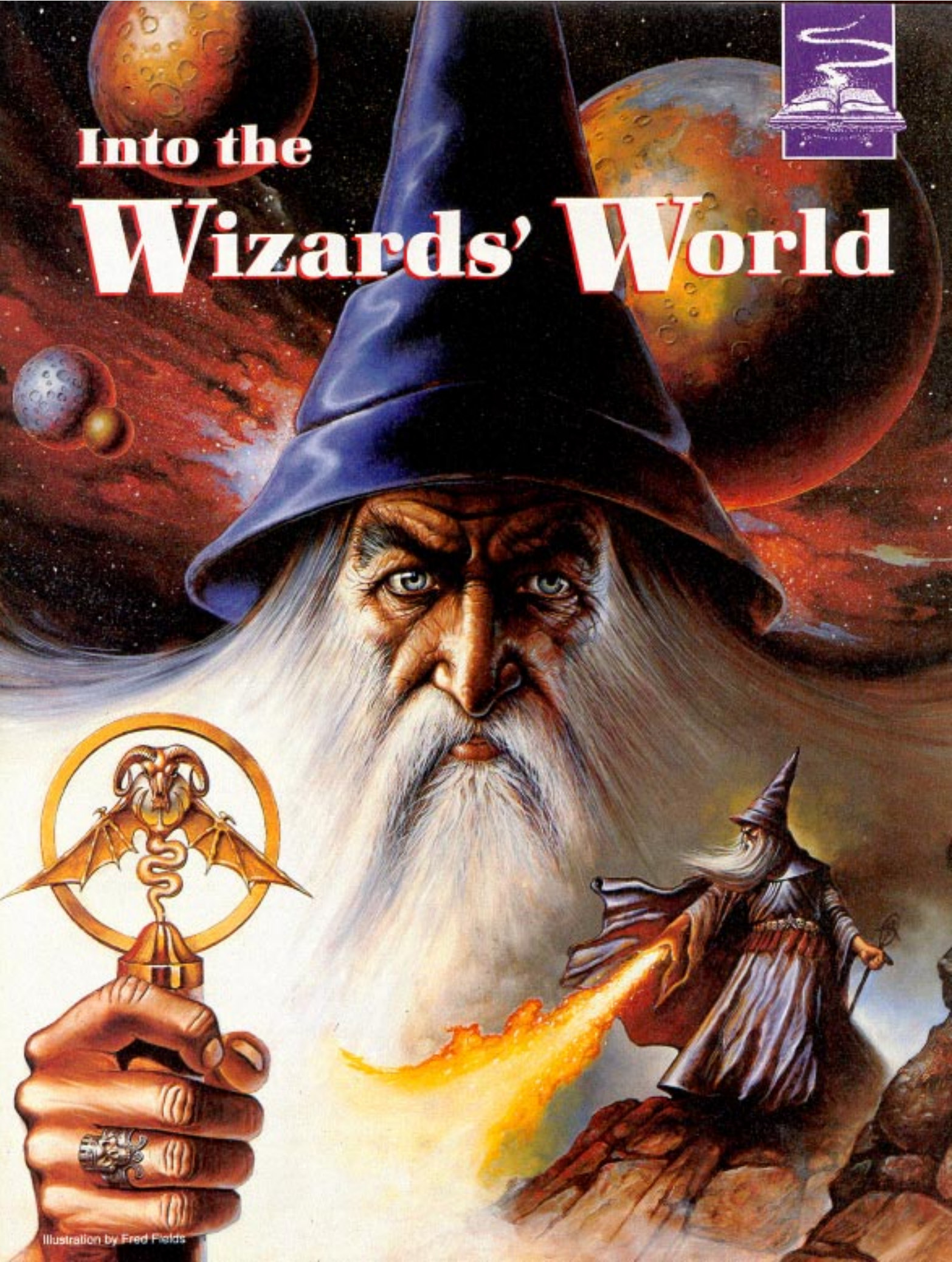
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# Into the Wizards' World







# Lords & Legends

## A miscellany of magic-users

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*This month's "Lords & Legends" brings together a group of wilderness explorers with more in common than their thirst for adventure — they are all powerful magic-users as well.*

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### Aylegard, Queen of the Unicorns

Female high elf  
10th-level magic-user/5th-level fighter  
Created by: Dan Kretzer



ARMOR CLASS: 3 (elfin chain mail + 2)  
MOVE: 12" (24" on unicorn steed)  
HIT POINTS: 40  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 with bow; 1 in melee  
ATTACK BONUSES: + 1 to hit with bow (long or short) and sword (long or short) from elven skills; + 3 with magical bow  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: By weapon type (+ 1 for strength; + 3 for magical bow) or nil (special effects with magical bow)  
SPECIAL ABILITIES: Can communicate with any unicorn, which will obey her (unless her requests are absurd) and will defend her to the death; uses spells and magical weapons and devices; standard elven abilities of infravision, deflection of secret/hidden doors, and silent movement  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard (but 90% resistant to sleep and charm)  
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic good  
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil  
SPELLS: May use any first- to fourth-level magic-user spell while she possesses the Book of the Unicorns (see text); however, she has been unable to locate higher-level spells

S: 16      I: 19      W: 14  
D: 12      C: 12      CH: 13      CO: 24

AGE: 311      SIZE: M  
HT: 5'5"      WT: 120 lbs.  
HAIR: Pale blonde      EYES: Green

POSSESSIONS: Crown, Book, and Bow of the Unicorns  
TREASURE: 5-50 sp, 10-100 gp, and five gems (50, 100 (x2), 500, and 1,000 gp values)

As a young child, Aylegard traveled with her father, a high-elven merchant, from city to city. When her father took her on a trek to the city of Oceanmourn, they passed through the Chettish highlands, a

hilly region dotted with woods. There, Aylegard caught a glimpse of a unicorn and ran after it to try to pet the animal. The unicorn ran off — and Aylegard pursued it, overcome by its beauty.

Aylegard followed the unicorn across the hills and into a small grove of trees. Forgetting completely about her father, who was searching frantically for her, the young elf quietly passed through the trees to the center of the grove, where she found the unicorn standing beside an ancient stone altar on which was the carved image of a unicorn. Beneath the altar in the tall grass, Aylegard saw what appeared to be a glint of metal. She cleared away the grass and found a golden crown with a unicorn-shaped sapphire embedded in it, a spell book, and a long bow covered with magic runes.

Suddenly, there appeared an apparition of an old man standing on the other side of the altar. The spirit greeted Aylegard and introduced himself as Malecint, once the King of the Unicorns. Malecint explained that it had been his job to protect and lead the unicorns of the highlands. The apparition told Aylegard that Malecint had died long ago, leaving the unicorns untended. Soon they began to decline in number, being hunted and slain for their horns. As the apparition began to fade, the former King of the Unicorns told Aylegard that she had now inherited the position he had left; she was the Queen of the Unicorns. Before it disappeared completely, the apparition explained that the Crown, Book, and Bow of the Unicorns were the only tools Aylegard would need to rule her new charges.

Since that day, Aylegard has not reappeared in civilized lands. Her father was finally able to locate her, but she refused to leave the forest and he was forced to go on without her. Other elves from her family have visited her from time to time over the years. She has become a living



legend to inhabitants of the highlands

The *Crown of the Unicorns* gives Ayelgard her power to communicate with all unicorns; it is the reason they obey her. The *Crown* cannot be taken from Ayelgard's head unless she removes it herself or is killed. The *Bow of the Unicorns* performs normally as a *long bow* + 3 unless the archer (who must be of chaotic-good alignment) commands otherwise. If Ayelgard chooses, an arrow shot from the *Bow* becomes an *arrow of slaying* that affects anyone who has harmed or slain a unicorn. She can also command the arrows fired from the *Bow* to cause a living target to fall asleep when hit (as per the magic-user spell *sleep*, doing no damage) or to stop the target (as per the magic-user spell *hold person*, again doing no damage) for 20 rounds. The *Bow* itself causes these effects to occur, and any arrows fired from it are briefly enchanted so that they possess the above powers.

The *Book of the Unicorns* explains the powers of the items to the one chosen as the ruler of the unicorns. It also serves as a magic-user's spell book with all known spells up to the fourth level of power. The DM may add spells to this book or rule that certain spells might not be known to it, however.

Ayelgard herself is stunningly beautiful, being rather tall and well muscled for an elven female. Whenever PCs encounter Ayelgard, she will probably be on a unicorn mount unless she has been watching them and wishes to approach the party on foot. Ayelgard never leaves the highlands unless she is on a desperate mission or is leading the unicorns elsewhere for some purpose. Only when characters stray too far from the roads will they arouse Ayelgard's attention. As a result, she will probably stalk them in an attempt to learn their purpose.

As Queen of the Unicorns, Ayelgard leads her vassals as she sees fit. Her first and foremost duty is to protect them. In so doing, hunters are sometimes attacked with her sleep arrows and her spells. Ayelgard hopes that most hunters won't come back, but if they do or if they kill a unicorn, she attacks with intent to kill.

There are almost 50 unicorns now living in the vast highlands. As a military force, they can be very powerful. Ayelgard decides if any plea for military help is worthy of the unicorns' attention and consults the unicorns themselves. When the unicorns do gather for a certain purpose, it is always important and Ayelgard is always there.

The *Crown*, *Book*, and *Bow of the Unicorns* are all unique items, but they work just as effectively in lands other than the highlands. Whenever there is not a King or Queen of the Unicorns, or whenever one of the items is lost by the ruler, all the items teleport back to the hidden altar. Only a unicorn or a ruler of unicorns can find this place. If there is no King or Queen of the Unicorns, the unicorns look

for one who is pure of heart and has a love of freedom. The unicorns then try to lead that person to the altar.

## Eelix

Male gray elf  
18th-level magic-user  
Created by: Gene Bauer

ARMOR CLASS: 0 (*dexterity bonus and bracers of defense*, AC 3)

MOVE: 12"

HIT POINTS: 50

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 in *melee*

ATTACK BONUSES: Nil, *unless using magical weapons*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type*

SPECIAL ABILITIES: *Uses spells and magical weapons and devices; has gained enhanced personal characteristics and special powers from magical experimentation (see text); standard elven abilities of infravision, detection of secret/hidden doors, and silent movement*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 25% (*check 90% resistance to sleep and charm after the 25% general magic resistance is checked*)

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

SPELLS: *May use any first- to sixth-level magic-user spell; thought to have only a limited number of higher-level spells, including all power word spells, phase door, mind blank, symbol, and wish*

S: 14	I: 22	W: 16	
D: 17	C: 15	CH: 17	CO: 17

AGE: 259	SIZE: M
HT: 5'	WT: 110 lbs.
HAIR: Silver	EYES: Amber

POSSESSIONS: *Mystic wand, ring of Eelix, and armor of Eelix*

TREASURE: *100-1,000 gp and 2-40 pp*

Eelix the Wizard was born Felix Furley of Vendale Forest. He led a very idle existence for the first part of his life. In his early teenage years, he began to study arcane books and tomes, but he wasn't smart enough to learn to cast spells. Eelix tried experiments and spells that always failed. It was during this period that Eelix's life changed for the better.

While experimenting with some potions a friend of his recovered from a nearby cavern system, Eelix's innate clumsiness and absent-mindedness finally paid off. Purely by accident, Eelix mixed three of the potions together; this action dispersed a cloud of gas throughout his laboratory and rendered him unconscious. When he awoke, Eelix was suddenly able to understand the subject of his studies. Thereafter, he went on to become one of the greatest spell-casters in his world. In spite of this sudden acquisition of knowledge, Eelix cannot seem to remember which

three potions he mixed to give him his incredible intelligence.

Eelix delights in learning new things and gladly repays anyone who teaches him something he doesn't already know. Eelix has used his tremendous mental talents to bestow upon himself a 25% magic resistance, the ability to *detect magic* at will, and the ability to *shape change* once per day. Eelix spends most of his time creating new magical items. Some of the items Eelix has created include the following:

*Mystic wand* — This 6" glass wand becomes the hilt of a *sword of light* when a command word is spoken. The weapon may be wielded by anyone and causes 1d10 hp damage. Another command word shuts off the weapon.

*Ring of Eelix* — This magical ring bestows a gain of two levels for spell-casting when worn by a magic-user; this power lasts one hour and can be used once per day.

*Armor of Eelix* — This magical ring produces a suit of armor made of blue light around its wearer upon command. The armor is equivalent to chain mail but is weightless. This item is usable by any class for an unlimited duration (Eelix rarely uses it himself).



Note that there is only one of each of these items presently in existence. Eelix will gladly create a magical item for a PC, but he requests a great duty to be performed in return.

## Elayne Mystica

Female human  
19th-level magic-user  
Created by: Niel Brandt

ARMOR CLASS: -2 (*dexterity bonus and bracers of defense, AC 2*)

MOVE: 12"

HIT POINTS: 53

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 in *melee*

ATTACK BONUS: Nil, *unless using magical weapons*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type (common knife)*

SPECIAL ABILITIES: *Uses spells, psionics, and magical weapons and devices*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral good*

PSIONIC ABILITY: 252

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/FGIJ*

Disciplines: *Detection of magic, ESP, object reading, mind bar, and probability travel*

SPELLS: *May use any first- to seventh-level spell; is thought to know all spells peculiar to the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® setting and possibly spells from other worlds and planes; is fond of using maze, power word blind, symbol, and time stop against opponents*

S: 12 I: 18 W: 16  
D: 18 C: 13 CH: 14 CO: 14

AGE: 243 SIZE: M  
HT: 5'3" WT: 110 lbs.  
HAIR: White EYES: Pink

POSSESSIONS: *Known to own a ring of spell turning; likely owns numerous other devices (the DM should use his own judgment here)*

TREASURE: 3-30 sp, 6-60 ep, 10-100 gp, 4-40 pp, and four gems (100 (x 3) and 1,000 gp values)

Elayne was born in the night-black tunnels below the Crystallist Mountains in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting, a member of a subterranean, albino human culture. Born the first child to a noble family of this race, she was sent to a convent soon after birth so that a son would inherit the family estate. After 16 cruel years, she fled to the surface world to search for a better life.

One week after wandering through the wilderness, Elayne was near death. Fortunately, she was befriended by elves in the Oytwood Forest; thereafter, she gravitated naturally to their mystical ways. After seven years with the elves, her psionic powers manifested themselves, and she was cast out of elven society. Elayne adventured alone for several years under the name Celene and eventually found herself in the service of Cobb Darg, the lord mayor of the Free City of Irongate.

While Elayne serves Cobb Darg faithfully, she now spends much of her time with others. She still retains membership in a formal group of adventurers known as the Company of the Iron Fist, but she is now too powerful to work well with them. Her main acquaintances these days are the entities she meets in her transplanar travels. Tsolorandril, a hero-deity whose sphere of power centers on wave motions, is one of her major allies.

Elayne now resides in a quasi-dimensional "pocket plane" constantly bathed in twilight. No normal weapons may be drawn in this plane without first making their save vs. disintegration as a result of a powerful dweomer placed on the plane by the djinn-mage Tol-Kan-Zeeb. However, this dweomer has the side effect of increasing entropy within the realm; as a result, magical effects often occur at random. For example, portals leading to other quasi-dimensional planes often open, occasionally *gating* some of the pocket plane's inhabitants elsewhere against their will. Elayne's workshop in this plane has a permanent escape portal to the Astral

plane in case this entropy should ever cause planar collapse. Time flows very slowly in this plane, resulting in a longer lifespan for its inhabitants (thus accounting for Elayne's extreme age).

Elayne's hair is white as snow and her eyes are deep pink; she avoids direct sunlight as she sunburns rapidly and painfully. She often has magical symbols drawn on her face and is always cloaked in a flowing robe of deep color.

## Shugar

Male human  
14th-level magic-user  
Created by: Richard Lipman

ARMOR CLASS: 0 (*dexterity bonus and bracers of defense, AC 3*)

MOVE: 12"

HIT POINTS: 55

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 in *melee*

ATTACK BONUS: +2 *with magical staff (+ 8 if using 24 strength)*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type (staff does 1d10 +2 hp damage; + 12 if using 24 strength)*

SPECIAL ABILITIES: *Uses spells and magical weapons and devices*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral good*

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

SPELLS: *May use any first- to third-level spell; knows most commonly known fourth- and fifth-level spells; knows disintegrate and possibly three other sixth-level spells; rumored to know teleport without error*

S: 9 I: 19 W: 15  
D: 17 C: 15 CH: 15 CO: 16

AGE: 60 SIZE: M  
HT: 5'9" WT: 160 lbs.  
HAIR: Gray-black EYES: Black

POSSESSIONS: *Staff of might (acts as a staff +2 hut does 1d10 +2 hp damage; it can also raise someone's strength to 24 for one turn twice per day); bracers of defense, AC 3; ring of free action; and the wand of Alakazam (67 charges), which raises all spell effects cast while holding the wand by four levels and adds a -4 to all saving throws. The wand can be recharged, but the method for doing this is not known.*  
TREASURE: 1-10 cp, 10-100 sp, 5-20 ep, 100-1,000 gp, 1-20 pp, and three gems (100, 500, and 1,000 gp values)

Shugar is one of the mightiest wizards of his homeland of Sard. There are those who chose the paths of evil and its lure of quicker and easier power, but Shugar took the harder road of white magic. At a late age, he became a master magic-user.

Shugar's adventuring career has spanned 45 years. He was on band to banish an evil demon lord, Gorion, whose evil had spread over southern Sard, and







he helped recover the *Crown of Good* from the peril-filled crypt where it lay for an eon. (He did not, however, slay the evil demigod Zeton; that was just a rumor.)

In his adventuring life, there is much that Shugar has experienced. Shugar's most dangerous adventure was made with a band of companions who were able to penetrate the castle of a lich lord, Venessar. Shugar's mission was to rescue Venessar's captive, an elven princess named Ariella. The lich wanted to force the elven king, Exeter, to turn over a potent evil sword to him. If the king did not do so, Ariella would be sacrificed.

The party entered the corridors beneath Venessar's castle, but all it took was one conveniently placed trap to kill the entire party — all except Shugar, that is. A blind *teleport* saved the mage from similar destruction. Alone in the twisting corridors of Venessar's castle, Shugar eventually found the lich and the lich's captive. In the heated battle that ensued, Shugar triumphed over the lich by employing a disintegrate spell. The elven princess was then returned to King Exeter, and normalcy was restored to the elven kingdom.

In honor of Shugar's brave exploits, the elven king decided to have a banquet at the next full moon. While preparations for the feast were being made, Shugar and Ariella spent a lot of time together. Ariella was interested in Shugar's magical skills as

well as in his adventuring life. Shugar was similarly fascinated by Ariella's experiences in politics. On the night of the banquet, King Exeter stated that he would grant Shugar anything within his power as a reward for saving the life of his beloved daughter. Shugar asked for Ariella's hand; when Ariella quickly consented to be Shugar's bride, the King smiled and agreed. One year later, Shugar and Ariella were wed.

At present, Shugar has two healthy children (both boys) who, although young, show a strong aptitude in the mystic arts. Shugar's problem now, however, is one of time. At 60 years of age, Shugar has begun to show his years; his wife, however, appears as young as she did when Shugar took her from Venessar's lair. Shugar has lately gone on increasingly dangerous adventures in a desperate attempt to find a way to make himself younger. By some sad quirk of fate, potions of longevity have never worked on Shugar. He loves his wife deeply and doesn't wish to leave her a widow after such a short time (short as elves measure it, anyway). Ω

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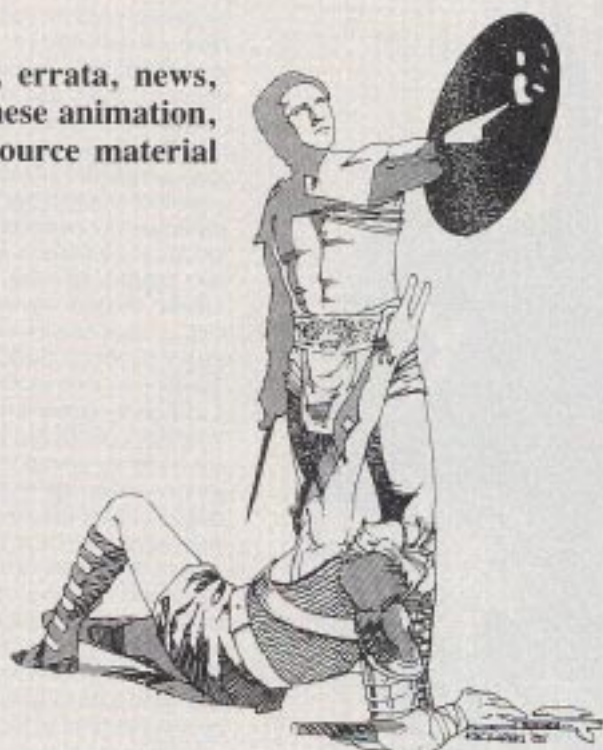
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by John C. Bunnell

# Where Wizards Meet

*One sorcerer is strong –  
but a guild of them is mighty; indeed*

*From the Mageholm Catalogue, 36th edition (Amanda Riddleweaver editor):*

One wizard's life is filled with labor and loneliness, yet many wizard's lives may be blessed with comfort and companionship. So thought the founders of our Mages' Guild long centuries past, and so think we who gather at Mageholm today. But this Guild has grown since its origins in Glen Morris, and this guide is one of the results – a brief summary of our governance and history, that the Mages' Guild members and friends may better appreciate the benefits the Guild brings to our lives.

Let it first be said that this Guild is not a political body – at least, no more than it must be. True, our delegate sits on the Masterguild which shares the rule of Menwyn with the Lord Margrave. True, too, that the standards by which our Circle of Examiners measures magical skill are now recognized, if not always honored, across the Five Kingdoms. Our founders foresaw none of this, wishing only a quiet gathering place for study, conversation, and good ale. In this area we differ from many guilds. Grimclave's Free Arcanium has had much to say about the governing of Genwold since the overthrow of Genwold's ruling house and the establishment of the Enclave; two of the Free Arcanium's senior members now sit on that council. And the Countess Barbara-ap-Rowland, Trenwych's delegate to the Council of the Five Kingdoms, attained her seat after rising to leadership of the Mages of Barglass, her home guild.

Yet from purely social beginnings, this Guild has blossomed into a many-faceted institution. More than 600 annual volumes of *The Quill Arcane* have been published to date, adding immeasurably to our understanding of magic. Novices and veteran mages alike learn specific spellcraft techniques in Guild seminars. City-bound members now have access to spell materials found only in remote and dangerous parts of the Five Kingdoms. Our bastion of Mageholm itself, built when the Guild moved from Glen Morris to

Menwyn, offers study and research facilities made less costly through Guild sponsorship. And on the rare occasions when the membership has combined its powers against a common danger, the power of that joining has answered the need.

These activities, however, are neither carried on nor organized by chance. It has required careful organization and leadership to reach the eminent position we hold, which is how the five Circles now active within the Mages' Guild came to exist. Though we do not require all Guild members to become part of a Circle – nor prevent them from joining more than one – the majority of our members do choose to take on the responsibilities of Circle affiliation. As a result, rarely has the Guild needed a formal selection process to fill the five general Circles, though each Circle does elect an administrative council from within its ranks. A sixth Circle, that of the Circle of Seven (named for the number of its members), governs the affairs of the Guild as a whole. A brief description of each of these Circles, with further information on our Guild, follows.

## The Five Circles

### *The Circle of Examiners*

Mages applying for Guild membership and unaffiliated spell-casters seeking professional credentials are the province of the Circle of Examiners. On the request of the applicant, a board of three Examiners convenes to review his or her training, knowledge, and experience in order to determine the level of mastery at which the mage is professionally competent to practice. The examination normally takes three to four hours and involves both oral questioning and actual demonstration, though written tests are sometimes used as well. Prospective members pay for the testing only if they are eventually rejected; outside subjects are charged 500 gp for the service. Exceptions to this policy are made for tests requested by city officials

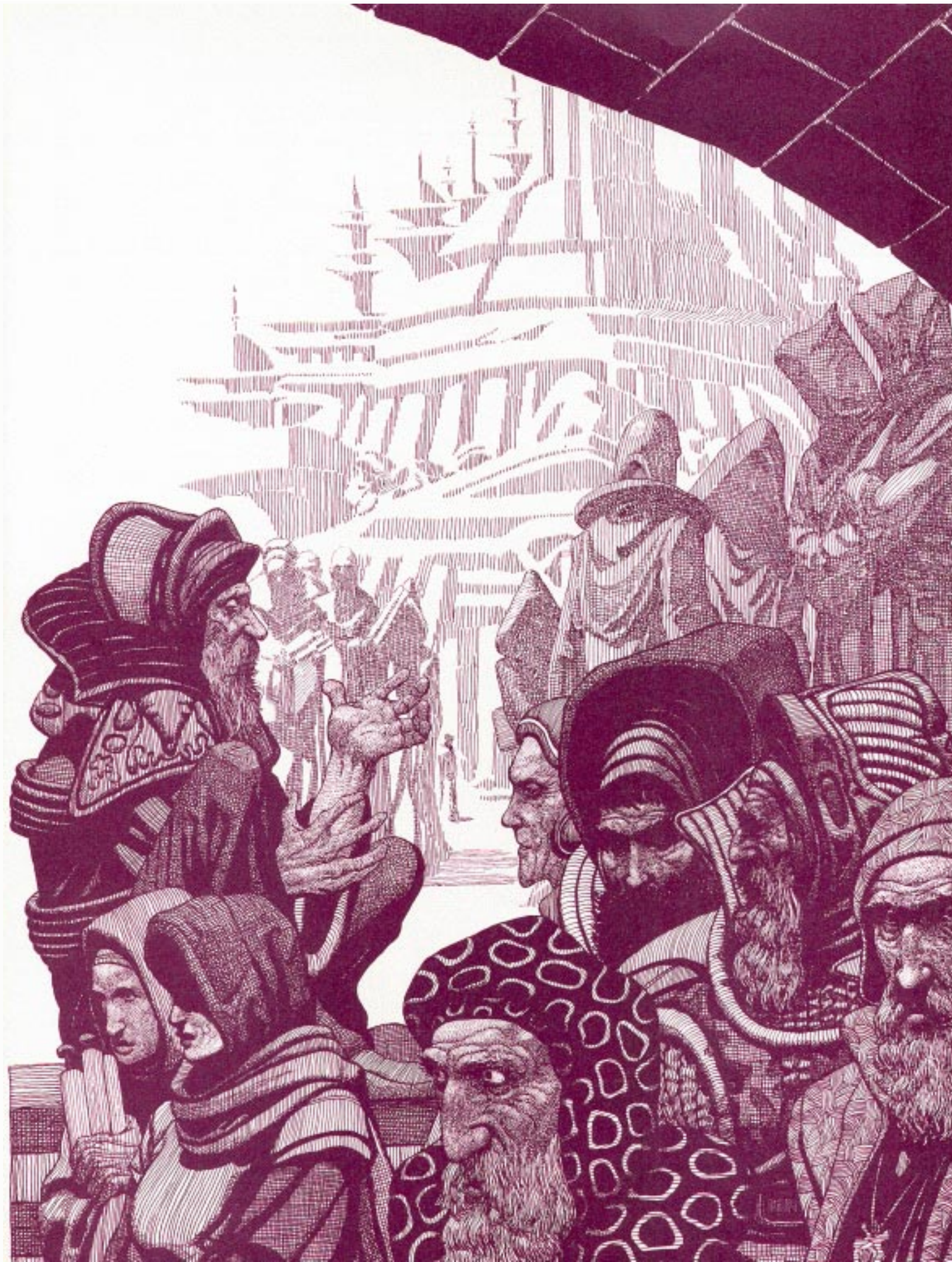
as part of a legal inquiry or dispute; these are charged to the government at a 20% discount – but the authorities frequently turn around and collect the full 500 gp from the party that loses the case.

Following the examination, the Examiners review the subject's performance and issue a certificate of proficiency. City law considers these "licenses" valid for two years from the date of issue, though mages are not required to possess them in order to practice their arts. For its part, the Guild regards the results as permanent until updated, and once tested, mages may request reexaminations as often as every six months at a reduced fee. Members pay 200 gp for retesting; nonmembers are assessed 300 gp. It should be noted that Examiners receive 150 gp for administering initial reviews and 50 gp each for subsequent tests. Surplus revenues go to the Guild treasury.

Certification offers a practicing mage three principle advantages. Under Menwyn's law (and that of many other jurisdictions), certification protects the mage from legal reprisals involving services within his documented ability to perform. While he is not immune to legal action, certification places additional burdens of proof on the complaining party and limits the mage's liability should he lose the case. At the same time, a certified mage can quite legitimately ask a higher price for his services than one who lacks Guild documentation, and many who deal with spell-casters routinely ask to see their Examiners' scrolls before entering into business arrangements. Finally, the certificate is often of value as a means of professional introduction for a traveling mage, particularly one seeking access to research materials – though mere certification does not carry the same weight as full membership, in this regard.

Besides conducting boards of review, the Circle of Examiners also has charge of membership screening and of assessing the relative power and difficulty of newly researched spells. The former area, while







## MAGEHOLM: Map Key

Basement level: storage, wine cellar, Mageholm archives, meeting room.

Ground level: pub, reading room, Circle of Examiners

Level 2: Circle officers, Archmage, Legate, Magehall (council chamber, spell room), guest rooms

Level 3: library, Archivists' offices, scriptorium, *The Quill Arcane*

Level 4: classrooms, faculty offices

Level 5: Circle of Scholars research laboratories

Level 6: private and rental research laboratories

Level 7: member services (component supply; magical-item testing and identification; magical-item sales, service, and manufacture; professional referrals)

Level 8: apartments for Archimage, Legate, Chief and Assistant Archivists; guest suite

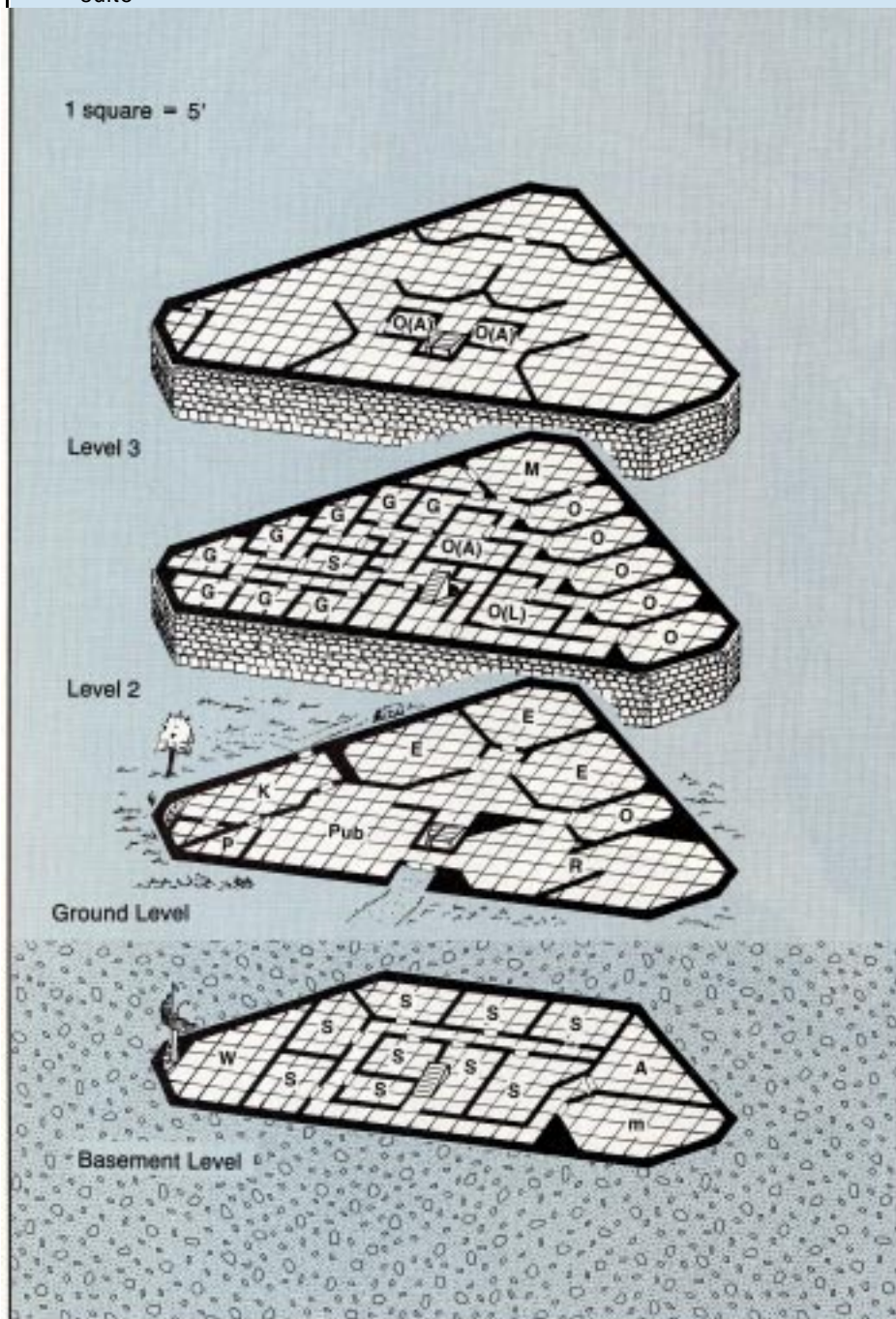
not insignificant, is not especially demanding; only about one in eight applicants for membership is rejected, and in most cases the decision is quite clearly based on bad character. The latter duty is far less frequently invoked but of great importance, as care must be taken to accurately measure the potency of what is often highly unfamiliar magic.

The nature of its responsibilities makes the Circle of Examiners the most time-consuming of the five where its members are concerned. Most Examiners are full-time residents of Menwyn, and the majority are of at least 9th-level proficiency, though mages of as little as 4th-level proficiency are often accredited to perform low-level and apprentice examinations. A Guild member must have been affiliated with the Guild for at least a year before joining the Circle and must pass a special examination before being authorized to participate on boards of review. Examiner status, however, carries sufficient prestige that there is no shortage of candidates — which is fortunate, as the demand for the Circle's services is high.

### The Circle of Scholars

The Circle of Scholars is the educational arm of the Guild, functioning in many ways like a small college of magic — which in fact it closely resembles. The Scholars' purview includes teaching and tutoring (sometimes on an individual level, but frequently in group seminars as well), advanced magical research, and publication of *The Quill Arcane*, the Guild's academic journal. Two full levels of Mageholm itself are assigned to the Circle's use, one consisting of classrooms and office space, and one containing the Guild's group-directed research facilities. Both areas receive almost constant use, as young mages learn basic repertoires and more skilled spell-casters begin to select and train in specialized fields of magic. Too, it is rare for the Circle of Scholars not to have some unusual artifact or branch of dweomercraft under study. Currently, their investigations of the theories which govern magical scrying promises breakthroughs in the fashioning of crystal balls and in the development of new scrying tools. A past study of monsters with vision-related attack capabilities enabled the creation of devices to thwart such gaze weapons. And the Circle now eagerly awaits the return of an expedition which may have found a highly unusual rod from the trove of the eccentric mage, Quardian. Some of its members hope that study of the rod will confirm obscure tales of Quardian's discoveries in the field of antimagical manipulation.

Admission to Guild-sponsored classes is a privilege of membership, but many of the teaching mages also admit tuition-paying outsiders and most also assess fees to cover materials. Private lessons held in Mageholm between individual Guild members are another matter, with all monetary





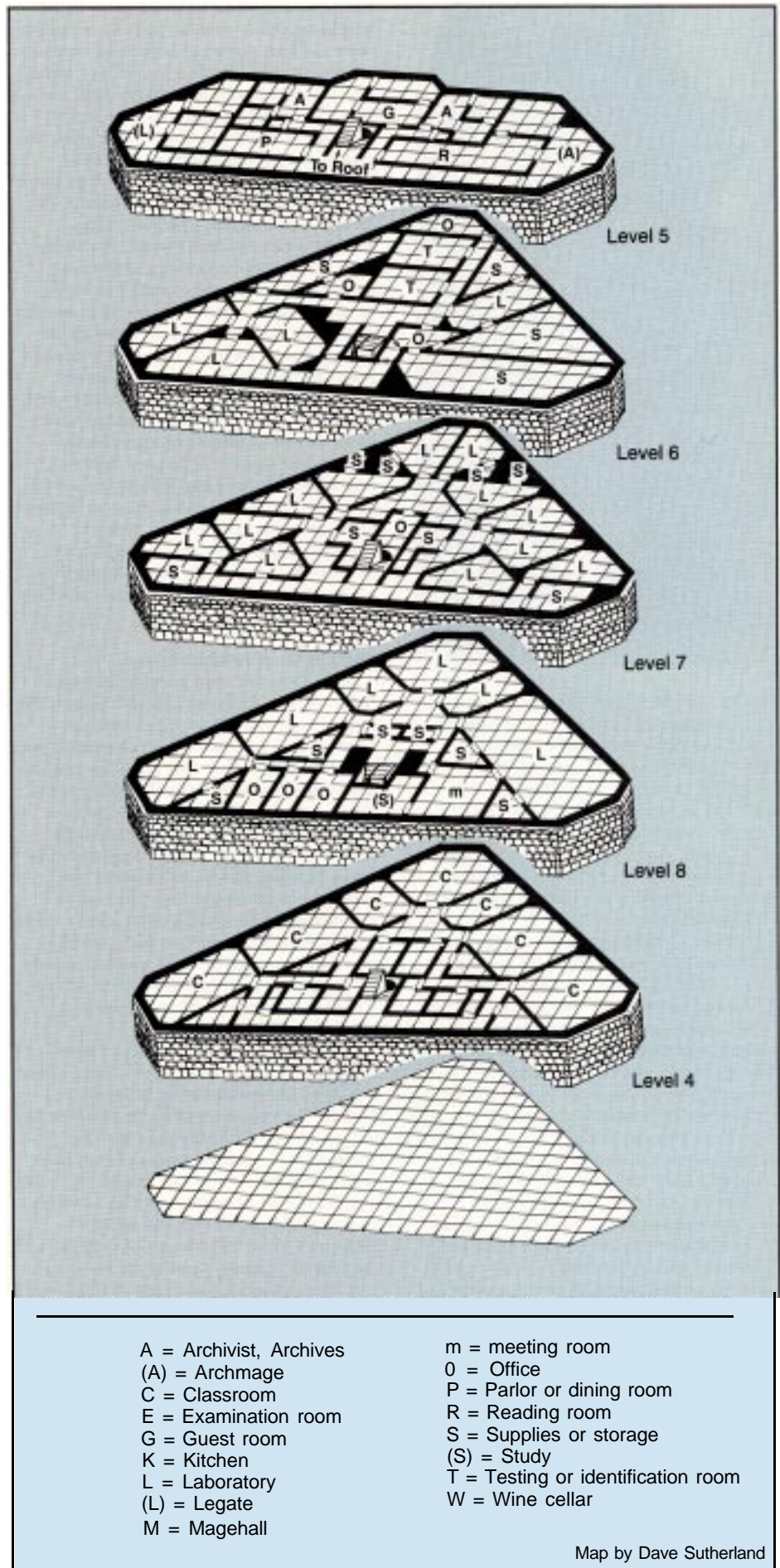
arrangements handled between teacher and student. The Guild does charge a fee in these cases for use of its classrooms — typically 40 gp per hour for a private chamber, though larger rooms may be had by advance reservation for as much as 150 gp per hour. The student almost always pays this fee; students in a group may divide the cost among themselves.

A semidemocratic process usually determines the direction of the Scholars' group research, with Circle members submitting proposed projects to a panel of reviewers which offers the most promising to a vote of the full Circle. Not all studies are so well anticipated, though. Circumstances sometimes divert the interest of special "task forces" into unexpected areas, the case of Guardian's rod being an example. The Circle has also occasionally accepted commissions from outside clients to undertake large-scale research or unravel complex magical puzzles. Chief of these clients is Menwyn's Lord Margrave, though no less than three of the Five Kingdoms have asked for the Guild's aid over the centuries. (Reports of a powerful "ripple" in the fabric of magic have recently arrived from widely separated areas of the Five Kingdoms, and it is yet unclear whether the Circle of Scholars will investigate the matter on its own behalf or accept an offer from Osdain's royal house to underwrite the study.)

Like Examiners, most Scholars are veteran mages residing here in the city, and many of them derive considerable wealth from private and Guild-sponsored teaching. But money is hardly their only motivation, as proven by the expense poured into the annual publication of *The Quill Arcane*. The Guild's journal of magical scholarship draws manuscripts and monographs from across the colonized lands, brought by private couriers, merchant caravans, message birds, and even teleportation. Perhaps strangest of all was the arrival some years past of an article carried by a stone golem sent all the way from eastern Trenwyth. (The golem remained in Mageholm's library until an acceptance letter was placed in its hands.) All submissions are reviewed by a board of readers, which selects those to be published and sometimes corresponds with authors in order to authenticate technical points. Each annual issue must then be hand-copied for distribution to over a thousand subscribers throughout the Five Kingdoms, not to mention local Guild membership. The quantity of material submitted often startles lay readers, who expect mages to guard their secrets jealously, but the prestige associated with publication has overcome many scruples. It is true, though, that as many wizards decline to contribute as those who elect to share their wisdom.

#### *The Circle of Archivists*

Once *The Quill Arcane* has been published, it and all other books and scrolls







coming into the Guild's possession pass into the hands of the Circle of Archivists, which maintains the Guild's extensive library of both magical and mundane literature. In truth, the Archivists also assist the Scholars in the production of their journal once its contents have been determined, since it is they who train and supervise the small army of scribes and copyists comprising the bulk of the Guild's permanent staff.

Though the Archivists are in large part librarians, they must be somewhat more in order to fully-serve the Guild. Since enchanted tomes form a large part of the Guild's collection, the Archivists must be intimately familiar with the many forms of mystic runes and symbols — and the means of preventing them from exploding in a researcher's face. They must know all manner of peculiar and ancient alphabets, and the various languages of magic both living and dead (including the script of illusionists, who operate a rival guild across the square from Mageholm). And they must know not only the contents of the Guild's library, but those of Menwyn's other major archives and of collections spanning the Five Kingdoms, in order to direct students to what may often be the single source of some especially obscure document or bit of knowledge.

The demands of knowledge placed on members of the Circle of Archivists may explain why it is the smallest of the five within the Guild, and these demands are precisely the reasons why its leaders, alone of all the Circles, draw full salaries. While this might seem to give the Chief Archivists certain undue advantages or

conflicts of interest in Guild governance, in practice their time is too fully occupied with archival matters for political complications to arise. (Only once, in fact, has a Chief Archivist simultaneously held the title of Archmage, and that was during the transfer of the Guild library following the completion of Mageholm in C.Y. 169.)

This does not mean, however, that there is no need for the junior members of the Circle — far from it. The staff of lay scribes is talented but cannot, of course, copy magical documents, and the two senior archivists cannot staff the library by themselves. Indeed, mages who join the Archivists' Circle often learn enough in their periodic terms as cataloging aides to upgrade their proficiency certificates before the Circle of Examiners afterward. There have also been cases where junior archivists have discovered previously overlooked clues in little-used volumes, and followed them into dangerous adventures to recover powerful magical items or important scholarly books. And it is scarcely coincidence that, though they may be less frequently used, the spell books of Archivists are the most complete of any in the Guild.

### *The Circle of Enchantment*

Of all the work that goes on in Mageholm, none is more central to a mage's life than that of the Circle of Enchantment. Members of this Circle are responsible for a variety of services, including the acquisition and stockpiling of spell components, maintenance of a basic stock of potions and other practical magical equipment, and preparation of needed magical items and other supplies to the order of the Guild or its members. They also act as custodians of the Guild's open laboratories, where any Guild member may conduct personal research or craft magical objects on payment of lab fees (presently 200 gp/week, excluding special materials and expert hirelings).

The majority of Enchantment's members, unlike affiliates of other Circles, tend not to reside permanently in Menwyn. Rather, they are travelers and adventuring mages who periodically pass through Menwyn to turn over stocks of unusual spell components and raw materials to the Guild. Specific arrangements occasionally differ, but in most cases the affiliate receives 15% of the component's value and may retain a small quantity for personal use. The remainder is placed in the Circle's stocks for sale to other mages (usually at 80% to 90% of retail), a system that provides much of the capital needed to operate other Guild activities. Where more generous terms are offered, it is typically because the affiliate has been sent to collect a particular substance at the request of a Circle or senior Guildmember.

The making of potions, dweomered scrolls, and the simpler sorts of wands and rings serves a slightly different but related purpose, being as much a training exercise

as a profit-making endeavor. Two other factors also figure into the equation. Those who manufacture such items for Guild stocks are often given time and materials to pursue their own projects, and they have — particularly in the case of more complex and powerful objects — kept the knowledge of the techniques of their crafting from deteriorating into obscurity. Although Enchantment members are not above refining and improving these principles, their approach to their work differs greatly from that of the Scholars and reflects a different set of priorities.

Even the locally based members of the Circle of Enchantment do not confine their work to Mageholm exclusively. They must often venture into the city beyond its walls to meet with and commission alchemists, potters, and other artisans to carry on the more mundane aspects of maintaining the Guild's laboratories, and they are often called to advise the Guild on financial matters due to their familiarity with Menwyn's marketplaces and economy. Despite the often mundane nature of its work, the Circle of Enchantment rarely lacks for members and is the largest of the five most of the time. The mobility of its membership, however, compensates for its numbers, and it wields no more influence than any other Circle in Guild affairs.

### *The Circle of Mageholm*

Last of the five Circles, but certainly not least important to many members, is the Circle of Mageholm, whose chief function is the operation of the Guild's club facilities — bluntly, to act as innkeepers and taverners. In fact, a small permanent staff actually operates the bar and kitchen areas on Mageholm's ground floor, but management and provisioning of the Guild's private club are entrusted to the care of a full Circle. Other duties of the Circle of Mageholm include formal management of the Guild's finances, maintaining its membership rolls, and serving as its public liaison for most general purposes.

It might be thought that this Circle, being so completely a bureaucratic body, would find it difficult to attract members sufficient to carry on its business. Such has not generally been the case. The quiet





routine of Mageholm's offices has proven attractive to a former adventurer-wizards now retired from that life. Younger mages have found themselves drawn to the leadership opportunities created by our members' demands for the finest foods and beverages. Several times each year, buyers must be sent on extensive trips to acquire new stocks of ale, wine and the like, which must be brought back to Menwyn via caravan. Still others have taken on diplomatic posts of a sort, acting as Guild spokesmen and negotiators in dealings with other Guilds and governments across the continent. In all these matters, a member's purely magical ability is less important than other skills, while many assignments provide opportunities for education and advancement.

### The Circle of Seven

While the five general Circles conduct the day-to-day affairs of the Guild, they are much too preoccupied with their own affairs to see to the governance of the Guild as a whole. Such overall leadership is the responsibility of the Circle of Seven, which sets Guild policies, coordinates the operations of the individual Circles, and is the final arbiter of any disagreements or disputes that arise within Mageholm.

The Circle of Seven is composed of one delegate from the administrative council of each Circle, plus two delegates elected at large by the general membership (or as much of it as can be polled within the two-week period allotted for such a balloting). Circle delegates typically serve for two-year terms, while the at-large delegates are elected to four-year terms staggered so that one such delegate is up for election every two years. There is no limit to the number of terms an individual may hold on the Circle of Seven, but few delegates in Guild history have served for more than eight years without interruption.

From within its ranks, the Circle of Seven chooses one of its members to serve as Archmage — a term separate from that of the common name for a wizard who has reached the 18th level (Arch-Mage). The Archmage is the chief officer of the Circle of Seven and master of the Guild. A second member is chosen to be the Legate, who represents the Guild on Menwyn's Masterguild and thus plays a major role in the city's governance. Historically, Archmages have tended to come from individual Circle leadership, while Legates have more often been elected at large. The pattern doubtless stems in parts from the Legate's need to spend much time on non-Guild business, while an Archmage can more easily balance commitments to a specific Circle with his duties as guildmaster. (It should be noted in discussing the Circle of Seven that all of its members are required to be of at least the 9th level of mastery, and that the average level of mastery is usually closer to eleventh.)

The work of the Circle of Seven is far from dramatic, being almost exclusively

administrative in character, and requires its members to remain in Menwyn almost constantly during their tenures. Indeed, apartments in Mageholm are provided to the Archmage and the Legate as much out of necessity as out of respect for the offices. Yet with the exception of the Legate, members of the Circle rarely exercise great political power. Rather, Archmages guide the Guild in the directions of their special magical interests, then only with the agreement of the Circle of Seven. In this respect, the Guild has remained committed to the spirit of its founding, valuing its comforts rather than serving as a means to power.

### Guild membership

Mages desiring to become members of the Guild have several options before them. Individuals merely visiting Menwyn may, with proof of membership in a Mages' Guild elsewhere, pay a fee of 250 gp for a one-year visiting membership which carries the privileges of admittance to Mageholm and the use of Guild facilities at member's rates. This fee can be prorated to apply to a shorter period of time, but is not normally extended for less than a three-month period. It is also not renewable for more than three years in any five-year period and does not confer the right to hold office in the Guild. Visiting members rarely affiliate with a Circle. If they do, they may join only the Circles of Scholars or Archivists. Identified by a silver badge, these members are usually interested chiefly in the Guilds research facilities and library, or in establishing a "base of operations" while they are in Menwyn.

Associate membership is available to mages whose visits to Menwyn are more regular or of longer duration — and, again, who are members of other guilds. The fee for associate membership is 500 gp per year (prorated in a few cases for six-month periods) and confers all the privileges of visiting membership plus full rights to Circle affiliation and subscription to *The Quill Arcane*. Associate members, however, still may not hold Guild office, and their status is subject to review at three-year intervals. At such time, they may either be readmitted with associate standings or be asked to become full members (which may or may not affect their status with their home guilds). Associates wear electrum badges and are divided among scholars who spend part of each year in the city, political officials whose business finds them frequently in Menwyn, and adventuring mages who find it necessary to retain Guild status in multiple locations. (On rare occasions, associate membership has been extended to such adventurers without requiring guild status elsewhere, but this is quite unusual and requires the approval of both the Circle of Mageholm and the Circle of Seven.) Unlike visiting members, associate member candidates much be tested by the Circle of



Examiners before being admitted.

Full membership in the Guild, which carries all the privileges described in this publication, carries a one-time initiation fee of 1,000 gp and annual dues of 1,000 gp thereafter. Magical items or other valuables may be accepted in lieu of the initiation fee. The fee is sometimes waived in return for service to the Guild; dues are also waived for the Archmage while that officer serves, and those of the Legate are paid by the city government. Testing by the Examiners is, of course, required, and younger applicants often present letters of recommendation from Guild members or other respected mages. These letters, though not required, are often most helpful to prospective members and can be of assistance to the Circle of Mageholm, which is responsible for final decisions on acceptance for all members. The badges of full members are gold and are often marked to show Circle affiliation and rank. The sole exceptions are the members of the Circle of Seven, who wear platinum badges; the Legate's and Archmage's badges are also set with gems.

It should be noted that the Guilds badges are more than simple symbols of membership. Members are expected to wear badges at all times when they are within Mageholm's walls and must present them on request elsewhere, as being without the badge may be grounds for denial of membership privileges. All membership badges have been dweomered as a safeguard against forgery and thus possess a distinctive aura which can be read by certain Guild devices and by mages with Guild training in magic detection. In addition, it is possible for the Guild to use the badges as focus points for certain forms of magical scrying and location, though this is done only in dire circumstances since it involves invasion of members' privacy.

### The Guild combined

The Guilds membership badges are also the key to its rarely-used power to intervene in crisis situations beyond the ability of any single mage to control. In this, the Guild is indebted to the research of Gareth Miran, one of our founders, and to the

mysterious seer known only as the Visioner. Their joint efforts, shortly after the Guild's formation, led to the channeling spell, also applied to each membership badge. Though similar in some ways to the known clerical spell combine, channeling is both far greater and somewhat more versatile in scope. The spell's specific formula has been kept highly secret since its creation and is only accessible to an Archmage with the unanimous concurrence of the Circle of Seven. Its last use is now over 400 years past, when Guild intervention prevented the conquest of the halfling-held Freehold of Rivermarch. At least fifteen-score member mages are known to have lent their strength to the wall of wind which drove the invaders' army back into the deserts east of the Rivermarch region.

It should be emphasized that such demands on Guild members are extremely rare, and that for the most part members are free to enjoy the facilities and privileges made available by their participation in the Guild. Nowhere else in the Five Kingdoms is the ale darker, the company more hospitable, or the library better organized than in our tower of Mageholm, and little of magical importance occurs anywhere on the continent that is not eventually brought to our attention. More than anything else, Mageholm is a place where wizards meet, for purposes ranging from social to scholarly, in a Guild designed first and foremost with their comfort in mind.

### Gaming notes

The *Mageholm Catalogue* manuscript provides one model for Dungeon Masters wishing to create a guild of magic-users for the benefit of player characters. Most details needed to set up and operate a similar guild are provided; some, notably regarding the guild's fee schedule, have been translated into statistics compatible with AD&D® games. Additional points are discussed in the notes which follow.

The cataloger writes of other possible guild models, specifically noting guilds with significant political interests. Another potential guild type is that devoted chiefly to supplying members with spell components and materials.

Political guilds will differ from the guild described in this article in three principal ways. Membership requirements will be more stringent, and candidates could be asked to obtain formal sponsorship from active guild members. Their academic facilities will usually be smaller (evidence suggests this may not be true of the Free Arcanium described by the cataloger), and fees for research will normally be higher. Finally, they will have a well-defined relationship with the local or national government, but this relationship can vary widely. Some, like the Free Arcanium, will be closely connected with those in power, while others may be actively opposed to current political leaders, either openly or

in secret.

Clearinghouse guilds will be far less formally organized and will offer few if any other services to members, who will be minimally screened at best and who will pay perhaps 500 gp annually for active status. Beyond this, the guild will be organized much as the cataloger's Circle of Enchantment, being less a guild than a restricted-access supply shop. Leaders of these guilds will be very rich and could be affiliated with a thieves' guild as well, using the latter to obtain items not easily duplicated.

Most guilds (except the clearinghouse variety) would offer training and examination for mages seeking to attain higher levels, with fees varying according to the size and location of the guild. The cataloger's Mages' Guild is housed in Menwyn, a large free city which hosts a standing international council of delegates from several nearby kingdoms. Guilds located in smaller cities might not have the benefit of a bustling trade economy and would charge higher service fees to offset the handicap. Some education may also be available to tuition-paying outsiders as noted by the cataloger; an average charge would be 50 gp per hour of group instruction, plus 100 gp per spell level for spells copied into a student's books. This does not count materials fees, which both members and non-members must pay, and it assumes that a normal intelligence check (*Players Handbook*, page 10) permits the character to learn the spells being taught. (In most cases, a student must pay tuition before learning that a spell is beyond his ability to learn due to the intelligence factor.)

When a scholarly journal such as *The Quill Arcane* is available, research on questions within the journal's field may be conducted much as if one was consulting a sage. For every 50 volumes of the journal available, there is a 10% chance of finding useful information if one hour is spent perusing each volume. (No guild can produce more than one volume of such a journal per year.) If an index exists or an archivist offers aid, only half the time is required — but an archivist must usually be paid for his services.

The cataloger notes that mages and illusionists maintain separate guilds, yet implies Guild knowledge of the script used by illusionists. Without more detailed records, only a human dual-classed illusionist/magic-user can explain access to both sorts of spells. Such characters are likely to be rare in the extreme and are certainly one cause of the strong rivalry implied between the two guilds.

With regard to the availability and cost of purchasing spell components from the guild, reference can be made to Michael Dobson's "Living in a material world," published in DRAGON® issue #81 and reprinted in the Best of DRAGON Magazine Anthology, volume IV DMs may elect to use Dobson's tables for determining the

availability of specific items; it is advised, however, that there be no better than an 80% chance of any rare or very rare component being in stock. (Applying the table to the Guild as described gives better than 100% chances for the rarest ninth-level spell components to be in stock.) Prices for potions and other basic magical items sold will also be 80% to 90% of actual gold-piece value, but those crafted to order will cost the full value quoted in the *DMG* or *Unearthed Arcana*. The cost of spell research and expert hirelings conforms to *DMG* rates, with lab fees applied against the total.

Guilds with different primary aims may have fewer (or more) classes of membership than those described, with fee scales to match. Annual dues, however, will rarely be lower than those quoted by the cataloger and could be much higher in areas where magical supplies and knowledge are relatively rare.

No details of the *channeling* spell are given in the catalog and none are provided here, in order to dissuade PCs from making use of this effect. The catalog does state that invoking the (ninth-level) spell is the exclusive right of the Archmage but can only occur with full cooperation from the entire Circle of Seven. Mages tied into the effect through their badges must consciously focus their wills in order to augment the casting's power but have no control over the type of effect produced.

The scrying potential mentioned by the cataloger is described in greater detail and may be invoked by any member of the Circle of Seven. The link formed by the badge is similar to that of the component of a succor spell or of a "base ball" (see *AC4 The Book of Marvelous Magic*), but does not confer teleporting ability. By use of an enchanted mirror or specially dweomered map in the Circle's spell room, the location of a subject badge may be plotted. The catalog, however, does not indicate the effect's range and is vague as to whether specific badges or merely classes of badges can be identified. Clearly, though, the technique is *not* used to bail mages out of all dangerous situations. Ω

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by Scott Waterhouse

# Bazaar of the Bizarre

*Pages from the Arch-Mages*

The following two magical works were created by powerful magic-users for the use of the same. As a result, there are several points which the Dungeon Master should consider before these spell books are placed as treasure in a campaign.

The value of these books is, perhaps, only exceeded by the potential power they will give to PCs. Many of the spells in these books are of high level, and the DM should carefully consider the effect of allowing the players to get their hands on these spells before they obtain the books. It is perfectly acceptable to omit one or more of the spells that are supposed to be in a book if deemed best for the campaign.

It should be obvious that many characters will want to get their hands on these books, as demonstrated by the history of these tomes. But it is quite possible that a PC's problems will only begin when he acquires one of these books, for any use of a unique spell will attract attention—perhaps much more than the spell-caster bargained for. Thus, the use of these volumes is not a free lunch.

As the spells detailed herein are unique, not all details on their effects may be available to the characters, even within the books in which such spells are found. There is no need for the DM to reveal everything about a spell to the players—let them find out themselves—the hard way, if necessary. That is where the fun is.

Finally, the history of each volume may be adjusted to fit the nations, personalities, and circumstances of a DM's particular campaign world with little difficulty. Otherwise, the lands and personages referred to may be assumed to lie outside the usual campaign area.





## The Book of Black Circles

*Appearance:* The *Book of Black Circles* is a finely crafted book 2' high, 1' wide, and 4" thick. The cover is made of soft black leather taken from the throat of a black dragon and wrapped around a wooden frame. The interior pages are fashioned from the finest vellum and are bound to the spine of the book with threads of black silk. The cover of the book is blank except for the inscription of five silver circles in the upper half of the cover; four are arranged in a square, with the fifth in the center of the square thus formed. The book's name is thought to refer to its creators or its innate powers rather than to its cover design.

*History and description:* Whether *The Book of Black Circles* was designed as a single work, of which copies have appeared repeatedly over the history of Tikkun Shalom in widely disparate locations, or was designed as several works, each with roughly the same power (which seems more likely), is currently a matter of some contention among the sages of Shalom. Whatever the case, it is indisputable that this tome and copies of it have been found in the strongholds of many of the organizations of evil magi found in Shalom. This was particularly true of the Black Circle (which is thought to have created the work) after the Circle was brought low following its attempted takeover of Shalom hundreds of years ago. Copies have also been discovered in the redoubts of the Hand of Destiny and the Htiat. As these groups still wield considerable power in Shalom, however, it is uncertain where such information could be accurately obtained, and it must therefore be treated with some skepticism.

No copies of this book exist in any of the various libraries of Shalom at present, nor do any mages who do not belong to the organizations mentioned above claim to have access to such copies, with the sole exception of the dark elf Arch-Mage, Rathe. Information can be gleaned from various sources, though Rathe is unwilling to reveal any details concerning *The Book of Black Circles*. What little is known follows.

It is generally recognized that *The Book of Black Circles* is used to train young magic-users in the dark arts, especially those who wish to join a cult or organization with evil intentions. It is apparent that the book contains a few powerful and unique spells used to test young mages and to determine their worthiness to advance through the ranks. It also contains a few less-powerful common spells used to train young mages. (It should be noted that the use of these spells, while not intrinsically evil, is largely limited to the holders of these books; however, there are persistent if unfounded rumors that several groups of good mages have used similar spells to both locate and train their

adepts.) In addition to the spells it contains, *The Book of Black Circles* details the process of the advancement of mages and the methods of their instruction in the dark arts, as well as showing the proper construction of magic circles.

The only other information available on *The Book of Black Circles* comes from a page of parchment that the renowned thief Vadour stole from the Arch-Mage Rathe several decades ago, when the mage was of considerably less power. The parchment is now kept in the Library of the Imperial University in Sestar. If this manuscript is to be believed, then other powers may also be attributed to Rathe's book and perhaps others like it.

*Game information:* Each of the silver circles inscribed on the cover of the book triggers a *continual darkness* spell (at a maximum of once per week per circle, performed at the 18th level of spell use) if touched by any being who is not lawful evil. This spell is centered on the toucher, who may escape the effects with a saving throw vs. spells (in which case the spell centers on the book). Any lawful-evil being may see through this *darkness* with ease.

Several magical protections are also attributed to the copy of the book in Rathe's possession, which may be either standard to such a book or unique to Rathe's copy as the DM chooses. The protections on the book may be designed by the DM and should probably take the form of at least one symbol — possibly several. The specific types of *symbols* employed are not revealed in the parchment stolen from Rathe. Few if any copies of these books have mundane protections such as locks, traps, or the like.

The spells set down in *The Book of Black Circles* are written in standard form and may be found in an appendix at the end of the book. They include *block advancement* (unique spell), *charm person*, *conquer self* (unique spell), *discern* (unique spell), *feeblemind*, *geas*, and *hold person*. The *Book of Black Circles* contains all the information on magical circles found in the *Dungeon Masters Guide* and *Unearthed Arcana*.

The three unique spells found in the book are as follows:

### **Discern** (Divination)

Level: 7	Components: V,S,M
Range: Touch	CT: 1 turn
Duration: Perm.	ST: None
AE: 1"	

**Explanation/Description:** A magic-user who casts a *discern* spell is provided (or provides another) with the ability to determine if a person has the potential to become a powerful magic-user. Once cast, the *discern* spell is permanent (though subject to a *dispel magic* spell) and functions continuously, without concentration by the recipient of the spell. The spell may be cast by any magic-user of the necessary level, though the recipient of the spell



must be a magic-user of at least 5th level; the spell may also be applied to the spell-caster. *Discern* is used primarily as a recruiting device for various magical orders and schools of every sort of alignment and ethic.

Once cast, *discern* confers upon the recipient the ability to magically determine if a person has the potential to become a powerful mage simply by being within 10' of that person and interacting in a normal fashion with the candidate for two rounds. The recipient of the spell perceives the potential for magic-use in a candidate as a dim aura surrounding the subject. The aura is invisible by any other means, including *true sight*, *true seeing*, *infravision*, or other types of magical or normal vision, and is so dim that it cannot be perceived in bright light (such as direct sunlight). The aura is of constant strength, regardless of the potential of the candidate. For game purposes, a human, elf, or half-elf scanned by this spell registers favorably if he has an intelligence of 14 or greater and scores of 6 or better in all other characteristics. A variation of this spell may exist that is more selective and detects only those who have the potential to become great illusionists as well (thus including gnomes among the races affected, but detecting only those persons with intelligence scores of 15 or better and dexterity scores of 16 or better).

Even if a positive result is obtained, the spell in no way guarantees that the person will become a great mage (or even a mage at all); it simply indicates ability based on intelligence, aptitude, and the will to achieve. *The Book of Black Circles* stresses the fact that the spell is no more than a prediction; even if a person has the ability, he may opt not to become a mage, quit before he reaches a high level, or die before achieving greatness. The DM should use his judgment regarding who is highlighted by this spell's use.

The material component of the spell is a *gem of seeing* or a similar magical device

(such as *eyes of minute seeing*) which allows for a special type of vision. The material component is consumed when the spell is cast.

**Block Advancement** (Abjuration/Charm)  
Level: 8 Components: V,S,M  
Range: Touch CT: 1 turn  
Duration: Perm. ST: Neg.  
AE: 1 person

**Explanation/Description:** When a block advancement spell is successfully cast upon an individual, it instantly strips him of the ability to advance in levels of spell-casting ability until the recipient successfully survives the ordeal induced by a conquer self spell (q.v., as follows). The spell affects only a single magic-user of no less than 5th level, no greater than 15th level, and of an alignment identical to the caster. *Block advancement* cannot be removed otherwise except by the use of a wish spell.

The recipient of the spell is allowed a saving throw vs. spells (which is forfeited by a willing subject), and the spell does not come into effect if the saving throw is successful. Because the spell was designed to stop the advancement of any magic-user deemed not worthy of power until such time as he proved himself worthy, the original researcher of the spell (most likely a member of the Black Circle) assumed that the recipient would be willing to receive the spell (the alternative was death). However, if the spell is applied to an unwilling subject and he makes a successful saving throw, he suffers damage in hit points equal to twice the number of levels possessed by the caster but is otherwise unaffected.

Once *block advancement* comes into effect, the recipient cannot learn any new spells (though he may record new spells in his spell books) nor may he cast any spells of a level above the highest level that he was able to use before being *blocked*. He may, however, gain more spells of the levels he currently possesses. Thus, if cast upon a 5th-level mage, *block advancement* would prohibit the mage from casting fourth-level spells until the spell was removed (but would not stop him from gaining additional third-level spells). A *block advancement* spell does not prevent a mage from gaining experience points while it remains in effect, nor does it prohibit the mage from gaining new weapon and nonweapon proficiencies and additional hit points when enough experience is gained to advance in level. Advancement in levels occurs as it normally would. Thus, the net effect of the spell is only to limit a mage to his current level of spell-casting ability. Once the spell is removed, the recipient immediately gains all of the normal spell-casting abilities appropriate to his level.

The material component of the spell is a small jade statue of the recipient of the spell, upon which a *feeblemind* spell has

been cast prior to the casting of the *block advancement* spell. The statue is not consumed by the spell, but may only be used for one person. Once the *block advancement* spell has been removed from the recipient, the statue shatters.

**Conquer Self** (Abjuration/Alteration)  
Level: 9 Components: V,S,M  
Range: Touch CT: 1 round  
Duration: 6 hours ST: See below  
AE: 1 person

**Explanation/Description:** Upon the completion of this spell, the recipient of a *block advancement* spell begins a great personal ordeal which either results in his death or in the removal of the *block advancement* spell and the gaining of an experience-point bonus, if the mage is deemed worthy by the power of the *conquer self* spell. The spell is useless for any other purpose. If cast upon an individual not under the effects of a *block advancement* spell, *conquer self* vanishes from the spell-caster's memory with no effect. *Conquer self* must be cast by a mage of the same alignment as the recipient.

Once cast, the recipient undergoes a six-hour ordeal during which he is rendered helpless by wrenching pains and powerful hallucinatory visions — hence the recipient is usually placed in a special area where he is relatively safe from attack. (Interestingly, *The Book of Black Circles* reports that the visions experienced during the ordeal are occasionally prophetic or based on actual events or areas that the recipient may not have witnessed.) The outcome of the ordeal is dependent upon the actions of the recipient since he received the *block advancement* spell. Although the recipient is automatically affected by this spell if he meets the previous requirements, the final outcome of the spell is dependent upon a successful saving throw of 20. This saving throw roll is modified by several conditions, most of which are dependent on the actions and performance of the recipient. No form of magic affects this saving throw (including items such as a *luckstone*), and all other saving-throw modifiers from which the mage would normally benefit are similarly ineffective. The modifiers apply only from the time of the application of the *block advancement* spell. They are as follows:

Per 100,000 xp gained: +1  
Perfect alignment performance: +3  
Average alignment performance: +1  
Poor alignment performance: -1  
Every successful (major) quest performed for organization: +4  
Each point of intelligence above 12: +1  
Average of scores obtained during level advancements used for determining training costs between levels (see DMG, page 86): 1 = +2; 2 = +1; 3 = -1; 4 = -2  
Evaluation of recipient by caster of *conquer self* spell (mediated by DM), based

on recipient's ability, ambition, heroic actions, etc.: -3 to +3

If the recipient successfully makes his saving throw, he comes out of his trance after six hours. At this time, he regains the spell-casting ability appropriate to his present level and gains a 10% experience-point bonus for all experience earned since *block advancement* was cast upon him. If the recipient fails the saving throw, he dies at the end of the six hours; he may be *raised* or *resurrected* in the usual manner, though he will still suffer from the effects of the *block advancement* spell. The saving-throw roll is always failed if the result of the roll is a 1, regardless of modifiers to the roll. The material component of the spell is the jade statue which was used when the *block advancement* spell was originally applied to the recipient; at the conclusion of the *conquer self* spell, the statue shatters.

## Laeyndar's Book of Metamorphoses

**Appearance:** The value of this enormous compendium of lore is only enhanced by the valuable materials from which it is fashioned — and the monetary value of the spells found within it is certainly huge. The work is contained between two thin slabs of deep-blue lapis lazuli (each 1/8" thick) that are 2' tall and 1½' wide. The spine is also formed from lapis lazuli and is bound to the covers by platinum hinges. Ten sheets of thin mithral rest between the covers but are not bound to the spine. The lapis lazuli thus forms more of a folder for the mithral pages than actual book covers. On the front cover is Laeyndar's symbol, also the symbol of water in many areas, engraved with a *wizard mark*.

**History & description:** That this book originally belonged to the mage Laeyndar, titled "The Lame," is obvious, for its cover bears a golden *wizard mark* in the form which Laeyndar chose as his sign — that of a wave, symbolizing the fluidity of water and mutability of form. Laeyndar, the lame mage from the famed waterfall city of Escatlar, lived over 700 years ago. Although born with a club foot and hunchback, he did not let this deter him from the life of magic-use. Laeyndar rose to extreme power but was turned away from the White Circle because of his deformities. Thereafter, he became obsessed with the study of transformations of form. *The Book of Metamorphoses* was evidently created many years later, for it contains numerous spells of high level which appear to be the result of his researches into the subject of alterations of form, including some spells even enabling mental transformation. Unfortunately, Laeyndar's obsession evidently twisted his mind as well as his body, and he apparently never utilized the marvelous results of his research to better his



own appearance, as he originally intended. After he was denied entry into the White Circle, he vanished from sight. His sole apprentice, Moytaire, recorded in his diary that he always knew his master as deformed.

Upon his death, Laeyndar passed the book on to Moytaire, who learned of the book's powerful curse shortly thereafter but was tragically unable to avoid it. The one time he appeared in public in later years, Moytaire had already begun his transformation into a crippled kuo-toa. Moytaire was grief-stricken at his change, and shortly before it was complete he went into absolute isolation. At an unknown later time, Moytaire died, and the book remained in his lonely tomb for many years as tomb robbers were apparently reluctant to chance entry into his demesne on the off chance that the wizard had become a lich (despite his neutral stance) or had secretly warded his tomb.

That the tomb was eventually plundered is evident, for some 330 years after the beginning of Moytaire's isolation the book was examined by the master of the mages' college in Sestar, Illkeda, who also fell under its curse but hid the book so that it could not exercise its fell powers again. The book's location once again remained unknown for another 200 years until it was uncovered and again worked its twisted magic, this time upon the mage-king of the Kingdom of the Coral Throne. The fall of the so-called Aqua Kingdom was the result, as the mage-king, Plautes, betrayed his subjects to their enemies, the kuo-toa. The Book of Metamorphoses has not been seen since, and certainly there is no record of it transforming any other in the interim. Thus, although its whereabouts remain uncertain, the sage Needram asserts that it remains in the ruined palace of Plautes, untouched even after the resumption of the Kingdom of the Coral Throne from its present-day capitol.

**Game information:** The writings of Illkeda provide the only clues as to the contents of the book. Illkeda claims that the book contains the following spells, one per page, in standard form: *change form* (unique spell), *clone*, *enlarge*, *graft* (unique spell), *massmorph*, *polymorph any object*, *polymorph other*, *polymorph self*, *shape change*, and *statue*. The book's curse affects any creature the first time it opens the tome, causing the being to *change form* into a kuo-toa with a club foot and a hunched back, as per the *change form* spell herein. A saving throw vs. *polymorph* is allowed, however.

The two unique spells found in the book are as follows:

#### **Graft** (Alteration)

Level: 6  
Range: *Touch*  
Duration: *Perm.*  
AE: *Recipient*

Components: *V,S,M*  
CT: *1 turn*  
ST: *See below*

**Explanation/Description:** When a spell-

caster invokes a graft spell, he may attach an appendage of another creature in place of a missing limb on the recipient's body, who may be either the caster or another being. The appendage must take place of a lost limb—e.g., the caster cannot place the arm of another creature onto a body which had no such limb before, nor add an extra arm in the middle of his chest. Additionally, the limb to be grafted must also perform roughly the same function as the old one; consequently, a mage may not attach a foot to an arm stump. The appendage may be of any size, but the recipient of the limb must be able to manipulate it with his current strength. If the limb is overly cumbersome or exceptionally different from the original, the limb may inhibit movement or limit spell-casting ability. The appendage to be replaced may be anywhere on the body, i.e., arms, legs, feet, hands, or parts thereof, but it cannot be the head. The replacement may also be of any form, thus a demon's claws, a bear's forepaw, or another human hand could take the place of a lost hand, claw, or paw.

The appendage to be *grafted* must have been alive within the hour before the spell is cast, or the graft will not take. The member to be *grafted* may be successfully joined provided that the recipient of the limb makes a successful system-shock roll upon completion of the casting. A failed roll indicates that the graft does not take, and the limb withers and dies in one day.

If the graft does take, then the new member will remain in place and function normally. Furthermore, the recipient even receives all the strength and dexterity bonuses or penalties the limb had previously. The *grafted* appendage also has all the immunities and weaknesses, including armor class and damage ability, that the appendage had previously, so long as such bonuses and penalties did not result from special characteristics of the limb's original body (thus, innate spell-casting abilities, psionic ability, magic resistance, and strength bonuses do not apply). For example, if a magic-user were to *graft* on the hand of an arcanadaemon, his new hand would be AC -2, would take only half damage from cold, and would cause 1-4 hp clawing damage. The hand would, however, no longer be magic resistant (as is an arcanadaemon's hand). If a magic-user were to *graft* on the forefoot of a lizard, though the mage may gain an improved armor class for that hand, he would probably not be able to cast spells due to the low potential dexterity of a lizard's claw. The hand of an ogre (the largest-size humanlike being whose limbs may be so used) would allow for a grasping strength equal to an 18 (nonpercentile) strength; however, the magic-user could not lift weights at the same strength level as only his hand has this ability, unless the magic-user previously had an 18 strength.

The material components of the spell are the appendage to be *grafted* and a mixture



made up of the blood of the being to which the member originally belonged, the blood of the caster, a potion of *polymorphing*, a potion of *extra-healing*, and at least 10,000 gp worth of powdered moonstone. The components are consumed (except for the appendage, of course) when the spell is cast.

#### **Change Form** (Alteration)

Level: 8  
Range: *Touch*  
Duration: *Perm.*  
AE: *Recipient*

Components: *V,S,M*  
CT: *8 segments*  
ST: *Neg.*

**Explanation/Description:** When the *change form* spell is evoked, the caster begins a process which will eventually end with the complete metamorphosis of the recipient into an entirely new creature. The change induced by the spell is total in every respect and occurs regardless of the size of the recipient and the size of the creature chosen by the caster.

An initial saving throw vs. *polymorph* is allowed to negate the effects of *change form*, but if this is failed, only a *wish* can stop the transformation. Furthermore, a *wish* can only *stop* the process, not reverse it, once the physical phase of the transformation is complete. A second *wish* can be used to reverse the process so that the victim will return to normal at the same rate as the initial change occurs. A third *wish* speeds up the rate of "backward change" so that it takes but one day. The ultimate form of the recipient is chosen by the caster but cannot have more hit dice than the recipient presently possesses and must be a native of the Prime Material plane (thus demons, undead, devils, elemental creatures, and other unique entities are not possible choices).


Immediately after the spell is completed,

all characteristics of the target, including ability scores, alignment, form, armor class, hit dice, etc., move one place toward those of the end creature; for every 10 days following the spell's casting, they change one further position. Size is altered at the rate of 1" and 10 lbs. of gain or loss per day. For example, an 8th-level fighter who began to *change form* into a pech would immediately gain a natural armor class of nine; 10 days later he gains AC 8; 20 days later he gains AC 7; and 40 days after that, AC 3. During this time, the fighter would have lost four of his hit dice, become neutral good, and otherwise assumed the appearance, size, form, and general characteristics of an average pech. The DM must arbitrate these changes as he sees fit.

When all mundane statistics have conformed to those of the new form, the recipient loses all class abilities he possessed previously. Thus, if we assume that our fighter's change is complete on the 70th day, he then loses his fighting ability and now attacks as a 4-HD monster. One week after this phase of the transformation is complete, the subject loses all previous memories (except for rudimentary facts about himself, such as his name, place of birth, and so forth) and other functions associated with his previous form such as racial abilities. Instead, he gains all the special abilities (such as magic

resistance, special attacks, special defenses, etc.) of his new form, becoming in every respect a member of his new race. However, in some cases, even the *change form* spell is not totally efficacious in this respect, as memories and other mental functions, such as intelligence and psionics, may be retained in the being's new form if the new form is basically the same as the old form (e.g., humanoid to humanoid, avian to avian, etc.).

Once the metamorphosis is complete, the recipient grows and ages normally, as would any other member of his new race. He is able to use all natural abilities of his new form, such as flight and other special movements, as if he were born to them, though he may not be able to speak the language of his new form.

The material component of the spell is a vial of acid, in which at least 5,000 gp worth of powdered moonstone has been dissolved during a full moon. The vial must be broken upon the recipient within one round of the completion of the spell. The acid will cause no damage to the recipient of the spell, unless he successfully makes his saving throw, in which case he takes 2-8 hp damage. 

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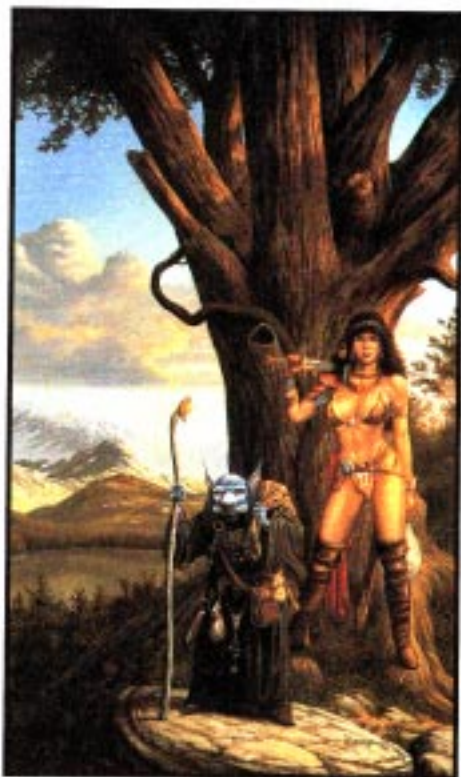
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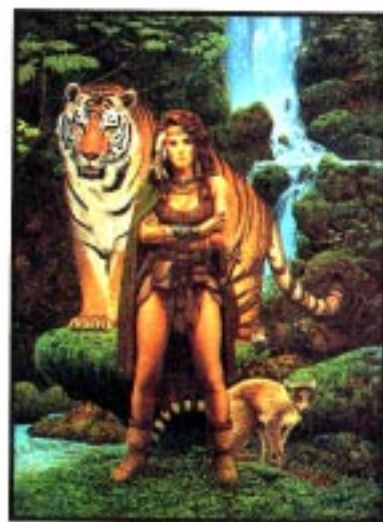
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# Speaking With the Spirits

The following article allows Investigators in Chaosium's CALL OF CTHULHU® role-playing game to engage in the more "mundane" occult practices allowing exploration of the unknown (and permitting the Investigators to share in its dangers as well). This article was originally a part of the Spiritualist section of the *Cthulhu by Gaslight* boxed supplement; unfortunately, it had to be cut because of space limitations. Although Keepers running 1890s campaigns will find these guidelines of the most use in their games, primarily because of the growth of spiritualistic and mediumistic practices during that time period, those running CALL OF CTHULHU game campaigns set in the 1920s or later should have few problems incorporating these rules into their own games.

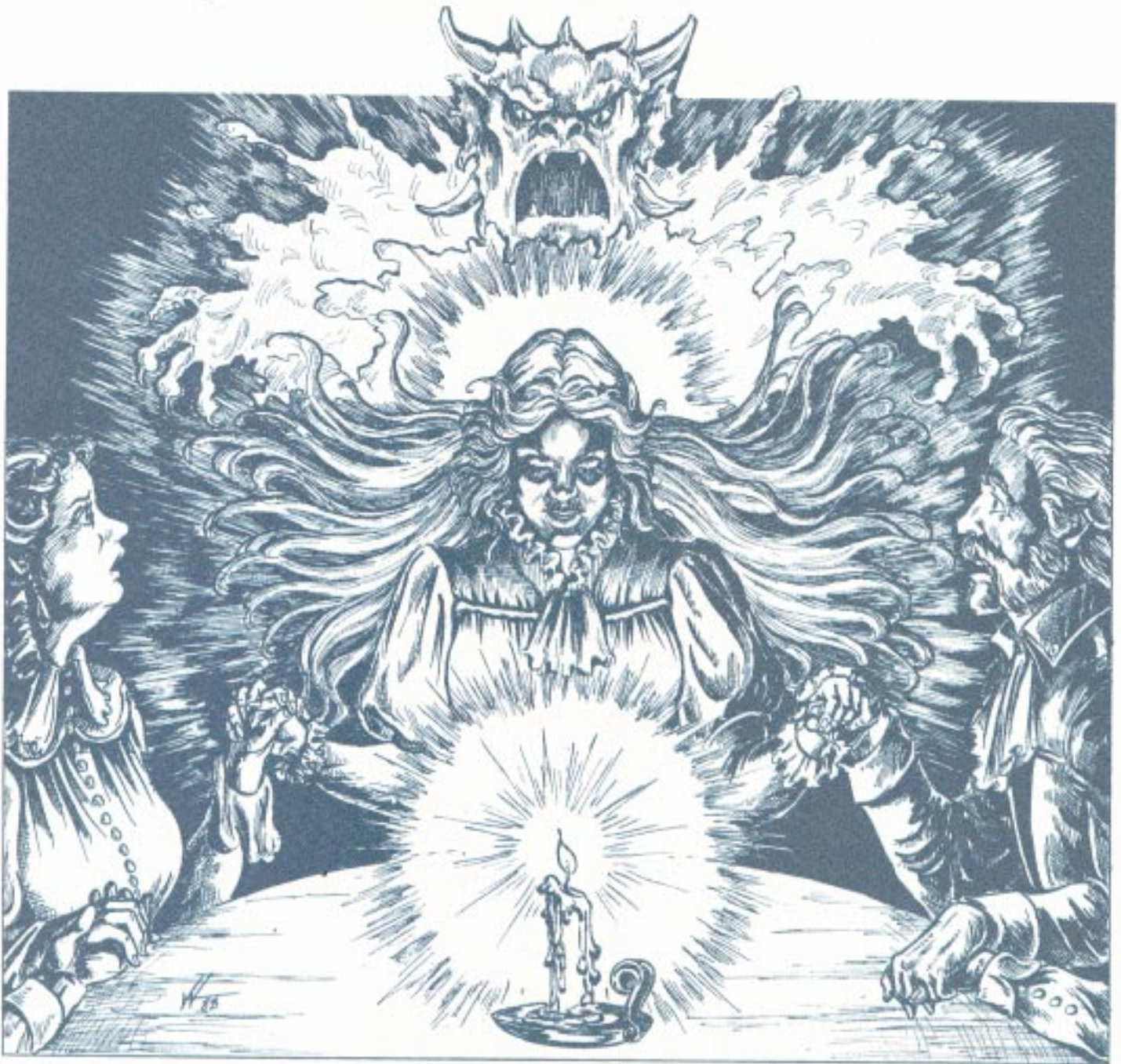


Illustration by Valerie Valussek

*Seances, possessions, and exorcisms in CALL OF CTHULHU® games*



## Seances

For reasons of their own during the course of an occult investigation, Investigators might think it desirable to attempt a seance, either by themselves or using the services of a spirit medium. A successful Occult or Knowledge roll indicates that an Investigator at least knows of such a medium. Whether the medium in question is a clever fraud or an actual medium with true psychic powers is up to the Keeper, who also determines an actual medium's chance of success in summoning spirits for the Investigators' purposes.

Should the Investigators themselves attempt a seance without an NPC medium, their chance of a successful summoning is a percentage equal to the POW of the character leading the seance and acting as medium, or the average POW of all the characters together (whichever is greater). Participants, including the impromptu medium, may increase their chance of success in the seance by contributing temporary Magic Points. Award a 1% increase to their chance of success for each Magic Point expended. However, such a contribution of Magic Points leaves characters more vulnerable to one of the dangers of a seance — possession by a malevolent spirit entity, should they actually manage to contact one. (A successful Occult roll by any Investigator reveals to him the effects of Magic-Point expenditure in a seance — both positive and negative.)

The chance for success in a seance is reduced by half (after Magic-Point addition) if the Investigators fail to set up the seance with the proper trappings — a dimly lit room, participants sitting around a table in a circle holding hands, a minimum of conversation, etc. After all these factors are taken into consideration, the 1d100 roll must be made in secret by the Keeper. If the roll is successful, the Investigators manage to contact a disembodied spirit. To determine the exact nature of the spirit contacted, the Keeper must make a second secret roll, based on the Luck score of the Investigator acting as medium or leading the seance.

If this second roll is one-fifth or less of the Investigator-medium's Luck, the Investigators have contacted either the specific spirit they were seeking or a benevolent "spirit guide" who can direct them to whom they desire, if no particular spirit was specified at the beginning. A "regular" success, between one-fifth and the Investigator's full Luck score, calls up a neutral spirit guide, who acts as the Investigator wishes if he succeeds in a POW vs. POW roll against the spirit to bind and control it. Failure in the POW struggle indicates that the spirit does not act as a guide for the Investigators and either leaves or pulls tricks on them — animating tables, knocking things off the wall, dematerializing small objects — depending on how badly this roll was missed.

If the Keeper's roll against the Investiga-

tor's Luck fails, the characters have contacted a malevolent spirit (a daimon) who attempts to possess the Investigator acting as the medium (or the Investigator with the lowest POW, if none of them were actually leading the seance). The daimon does this by matching its Magic Points vs. those of the Investigator it attempts to possess. If it fails in its possession attempt, the evil spirit may simply try to deceive the Investigators, leading them astray with misinformation while pretending to be the entity they seek. Alternately, the daimon may play tricks on them. These tricks will be similar to those of the neutral spirit — though of a nastier, more harmful nature. Before it leaves, the malevolent spirit makes a final attempt to possess the Investigator with the lowest Magic Points. If it fails in this, the spirit leaves, its passing marked by a blast of wind and an eerie howling.

If the Luck roll in summoning a spirit is a roll of 96-00, the Investigator/medium either finds himself placed in telepathic contact with a Cthulhoid entity — perhaps even Great Cthulhu himself — or inadvertently summons a Cthulhoid monster. Either of these eventualities has dire results. (The choice of deity contacted or monster summoned is up to the Keeper; the deity should, however, be appropriate to the situation or setting of the adventure in which the seance is attempted.)

## Possession

If an Investigator becomes possessed by a malevolent spirit, he remains so until the spirit decides to leave on its own or is exorcised. A neutral or benevolent spirit may possess a character in order to give information by speaking to or through the character, but does so only if invited to do so. The benevolent spirit leaves as soon as its task is finished or the Investigator asks it to leave. The neutral spirit acts in like manner unless the Investigator fails a POW x 5 roll. If this happens, the Investigator must drive it out with a POW vs. POW roll. Failing this, the spirit will have to be exorcised; the Investigator then has only one chance to drive it out himself.

A malevolent spirit, once in possession of an Investigator, attempts to conceal its presence as long as possible, making its host's companions believe the Investigator is quite normal. Even in cases when the spirit allows the Investigator some freedom, however, it is totally in control of him. The Investigator may not even realize it, but he soon finds himself compelled to say and do things he doesn't wish to do. He may attribute this to some other supernatural agency — a curse or mind-control spell of some sort — or may actually realize that he is possessed (either if the player figures it out or the Investigator succeeds in an Occult roll). Once the Investigator determines he is actually possessed, the spirit within him either takes total control of him immediately — effectively making the Investigator a Keeper

character until the spirit leaves — or it toys with him, taking total control only when the Investigator tries to seek help or tell someone of his plight. Of course, once the spirit within him starts to manifest itself, the Investigator's companions may quickly figure out that he's possessed, especially if the spirit is malevolent or strikingly different in personality from the Investigator.

Being possessed by a malevolent spirit requires a SAN roll to avoid the loss of 1d8 points of SAN; nonetheless, 1 point of SAN is lost even if the roll is successful. An Investigator need not roll until either he realizes he is possessed or until the spirit finally releases him if he has been under its total control all along.

When a spirit of any persuasion is in possession of a character (invited or otherwise), it can cause physical manifestations through the character's body. It can change the sound of his voice (so that a female Investigator speaks with a male voice, or vice versa); temporarily change his facial features or body shape within certain limits (a character cannot become so distorted that he no longer resembles a generally human shape); and cause ectoplasm to exude from his body to form ghostly shapes or images. Ectoplasm appears as a white, milky substance that glows in the dark. If touched, it feels cold, perhaps even slimy, then suddenly snaps back into the character's body, causing him 1d6 points of damage.

The evil spirit within can also cause a possessed character to float in the air, spin around, perform physically impossible contortions of his body, and resist sleep, hunger, pain, or injury without ill effect as long as it is within him. It can also cause wounds to open on his body and bleed, then make them heal over as it wills. Normally, only a malevolent spirit performs acts harmful to the body it possesses or to anyone else. Sometimes, however, a neutral spirit possessing a person indulges in the less-harmful acrobatics described above.

It is possible for more than one spirit to possess a single individual, though additional spirits must either be invited in by the spirit already inhabiting the body (or the dominant one, if more than one are already there), or win a POW vs. POW attack against the current possessor of the person. Multiple spirits cause the Investigator so possessed to appear to have multiple personalities, though only the most powerful spirit is in actual control (except when it allows the others to exert theirs, from time to time).

## Exorcism

Exorcising a spirit from a possessed individual can be considered a spell, and the ritual may be learned from any of a number of Cthulhu Mythos and ordinary occult books. It can also be performed by any clergyman with a Theology/Philosophy skill of at least 60%; others





must have a Theology skill of at least 80% to be able to attempt an exorcism, unless they've learned the ritual as a spell. A qualified clergyman can also teach exorcism to a layman, but the layman must spend a total of 20 hours over a period of no more than a week learning this ritual from the clergyman. If fewer than 20 hours are spent within a week, the learning period must start again. At the end of the period, the clergyman must make a successful roll on his Theology/Philosophy skill, and the layman must make a successful Idea roll. If both succeed, the layman knows enough to perform a single exorcism, and gains a +15% bonus to his Theology/Philosophy skill.

To perform an exorcism requires at least an hour's preparation on the part of the exorcist—lighting candles, meditating, praying, sprinkling holy water, or performing some similar ritual. The exact procedure depends on the exorcist's particular religion, as the ritual primarily serves to build his own belief to the point where he has full confidence in his ability to cast out the evil spirit. A clergyman or a character taught by one *must* indulge in these theological trappings in order to carry out his exorcism. A character who has learned the process as a spell from a book has more freedom (depending on the text), but he still must spend an hour preparing ("psyching himself up").

Once the time of preparation is over, the exorcist must then pit his POW against that of the spirit or spirits; if there are more than one, he must cast each out individually. If he is successful, the spirit must leave as he commands. If not, the spirit remains and probably manifests itself in some manner to mock or harm the exorcist. If the first attempt at exorcism is a failure, the exorcist may try again; he must then spend an additional hour in preparation above the first for each extra attempt at exorcising the same spirit (e.g., the third attempt requires three hours preparation).

There are various methods of increasing the chance of casting out possessing spirits

that are available both to clergymen and laymen. A character who is an actual clergyman may add one-fifth of his Theology/Philosophy to the percentage chance on the Resistance Table (as determined by matching his POW against that of the possessing spirit) before rolling his final chance for success. Thus, if the normal chance for success is only 30%, but the clergyman has a Theology/Philosophy skill of 80%, the chance is increased by 16% to 46%.

Additionally, any exorcist, clergyman or layman, can increase his chance of casting out a spirit by invoking the name of the deity he worships—even if it is a Cthulhoid deity such as Azathoth, Cthulhu, Nyarlathotep, Hastur, or Nodens (though the great danger of this would be in the possibility of actually *summoning* one of these beings or its minions, which would be worse than the spirit itself). This invocation adds 1-20 additional percentage points to the roll for success, depending on the strength of the invoker's own belief in that deity and (in the Cthulhu Mythos only) on the relative strength of the deity called. Thus, a clergyman who invokes the name of his god in casting out a spirit (and *fully* believes in the power of his deity) could get up to an additional 20% added to his chance of casting out the spirit.

Using the same example cited heretofore, the chance of success in the exorcism is then raised to 66%. It is up to the Keeper to determine the exact number of extra points toward success that the invocation of a deity adds. He should make his decision based on the Investigator's past actions and statements about his religious beliefs, and thus determine the exorcist's conviction in the power of the deity whose name he has invoked. If there is any serious question as to the Investigator's sincerity in invoking the name of a deity, the Keeper may simply determine the additional chance of success randomly by rolling 1d20.

In the case of extremely powerful deities, the mere invocations of their names and the command to leave the possessed body may alone be enough to force the possessing spirit to do so, even if the exorcist is ignorant of the exorcism spell or ritual. In such cases, no POW vs. POW roll is necessary, but the chance of exorcising the spirit is equal to only half the normal percentage points that the deity's name usually adds to the chance of success. Thus, if the Keeper determines that invoking the name of Nodens normally adds 18% to the exorcist's chance of casting out a possessing spirit, the total chance of a character ignorant of the exorcism ritual is only 9% with the invocation of the name alone. Whether the exorcism succeeds or not, there is the same chance on a second roll that Nodens himself shows up (or sends several nightgaunts) to show his displeasure at the unauthorized use of his name.

It might also be possible to cast out a

possessing spirit by convincing a more powerful spirit to dislodge it in the same manner as that of multiple spirits attempting to possess a character. The danger in this is that the new, stronger spirit, once it has dislodged the other by defeating it in a POW vs. POW roll, might decide to stay and possess the individual itself. Because of this, Investigators attempting such feats should be as certain as possible that the spirit they've called up to help them is a benevolent (or, at worst, a neutral) spirit and not a deceiving evil one.

### Daimon and daimonion

In the CALL OF CTHULHU game, malevolent spirits—as well as most neutral and some seemingly benevolent ones—are actually members of an extradimensional race of beings, vaguely similar in nature to the lloigor (see the CALL OF CTHULHU game rule book). These entities are far more ubiquitous, in fact, because they are not tied to certain areas as are the lloigor. They do tend to congregate by their own choice in certain locations—old houses, swamps, graveyards, etc.

These spirits are normally intangible and invisible but are capable of manifesting themselves on occasion as ugly, demonlike beings. They are, in fact, more properly known as *daimon* (pronounced DIE-moan) or *daimonion* (die-MOAN-ee-on)—Greek for devils or devil spirits. These are the same words that were transliterated into Latin as "daemon" and into English as "demon!" In Hebrew, they are called *dybbuka*—disembodied spirits. They are the possessing devils and demons of theology and mythology. They have been known throughout history, but they have been too quickly explained away by modern, "rational" science. Like the denizens of the Cthulhu Mythos, the daimon exist just beyond the human plane of reality. On the other hand, unlike many Cthulhoid beings, they are able to enter this dimension at will, making them in some ways even more dangerous than Cthulhu's cohorts.

Because they are invisible and intangible in our world (and because no mortal has ever visited their world and returned to tell of it), daimon have no physical characteristics, per se, except DEX. They have varying amounts of INT and POW, depending on their nature. The smaller daimonion are rather stupid, easily outsmarted, and of limited POW (human average). The larger daimon, on the other hand, can be wickedly intelligent, possessing great amounts of POW—as much or more than lloigor, though they are unable to drain Magic Points from surrounding humans as the lloigor can. When daimon or daimonion are in possession of a human (or an animal, which is also possible), they may add that individual's Magic-Point total to their own to use as they wish, as long as they continue to possess him.

Daimon and daimonion can cause telekinetic effects similar to those of lloigor, as explained in *The Cthulhu Companion*.

There is, however, no variation in the amount of Magic Points required to create a point of telekinetic STR, based on location, as is true with the Ilogor. Daimon and daimonion always create one telekinetic STR point for every Magic Point put into the effect. They can also cause physical damage to a character by "biting" him psychically. They do this by first overcoming an Investigator in a Magic Point duel (the points devoted to the duel are temporarily expended). Then every additional Magic Point put into an attack does 1d6 physical bite damage to the target on a hit. The chance of a successful hit equals the daimon's DEX x 3.

Once a daimon or daimonion is in possession of an individual, it can change the character's SIZ, APP or voice by expending Magic Points (its own or the possessed individual's) on a ratio of 1 Magic Point to 1 point of SIZ or APP changed. One Magic Point is all that's necessary to change the character's voice. The initial change of features or voice lasts for one hour unless the daimon allows them to return to normal sooner. Thereafter, it costs only a single Magic Point per hour to retain the entire change. If the daimon decides to change the character's features again without allowing them first to revert to their original appearance, it costs only half the normal Magic Points to effect another such change.

Daimon can also create ectoplasm from a possessed character's body (one Magic Point expended creating one SIZ point of ectoplasm). To do this, the possessing spirit must use the host's Magic Points rather than its own. When ectoplasm has been formed, the daimon may shape it at will. Ectoplasm lasts for 10 minutes unless renewed with more Magic Points — this time either the host's or the daimon's own. Once within a character's body, the daimon can cause it to levitate or move around in any way it pleases; it only costs 1 Magic Point per 5 SIZ points of possessed character for the daimon to do so.

When a daimon or daimonion has possessed a character, it can take total control of that character's thoughts, mind, actions, and feelings at will. Once the initial possession has occurred (described in the section above), nothing else is required to hold and control the person, either intermittently or full-time. The invading spirit has full access to that individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities, and it can cast any spell that that person knows, whether the daimon knew it prior to possessing him or not. If more than one daimonion is in possession of an individual, the one with the greatest POW is the dominant one, and the others are able to manifest themselves only when it so allows them. Usually no more than one daimon will be in possession of a single person, but it may share the individual with any number of daimonion over which it has command.

In spite of their seemingly immense power, daimon and daimonion are limited

in their abilities to affect humans. Except in cases of possession, daimon and daimonion cannot overtly affect mortals unless one of the following conditions is met:

1. The spirits have been called up in a seance.
2. The areas in which the spirits congregate are invaded or disturbed.
3. A person has invited the spirits into his life. This invitation can be made, consciously or not, by engaging in moral depravity, overindulging in drink or drugs, living a cruel and evil life, or even by delving too deeply into occult matters — e.g., studying old grimoires or magical texts, playing with ouija boards or similar divining aids such as tarot cards, or allowing oneself to be hypnotized or mesmerized repeatedly (especially for such purposes as discerning past lives, communing with higher powers, and so on).

On the surface, it appears that most CALL OF CTHULHU game Investigators fall into the category of having studied magical texts (if they've read or seriously examined any book of the Mythos). Oddly enough, that is not the case. The exact reason for this is not known; perhaps it is because the more powerful beings of the Mythos keep the daimon away from Investigators pursuing such studies by the beings' own insidious influence. Whatever the reason, the mere reading of Mythos books rarely opens one up for daimon infestation or possession unless other factors are involved.

Certain things that affect a person physically also affect a spirit possessing that person. For example, if a possessed individual is knocked unconscious, the daimon is also unconscious and unable to act unless it leaves the host's body. If it does leave, it can repossess the body at will until the character awakens. If it has failed to repossess the individual before he has awakened, the spirit must make another Magic-Point struggle to regain possession. Additionally, certain drugs that deaden parts of the possessed character's brain (where the spirit normally resides) incapacitate the spirit as well. In such a state, the spirit may defend itself against being exorcised but do nothing else. Naturally, killing the individual hosting a daimon or daimonion gets rid of the spirit once and for all — but the deceased will hardly be able to appreciate it.

Some daimon and daimonion also seem to have aversions to certain holy items. Holy water, crucifixes, and other religious symbols occasionally seem to be proof against possession by a daimon and may even drive one away. Unfortunately, just as many of these spirits seem to be immune to such protections. It is up to the Keeper whether or not such measures are effective against any particular daimon. Note that certain protections, such as Elder Signs or Starstones of Mnar, that are wards against Cthulhoid entities are just as effective against daimon. As a result, their employment is total proof

against possession by daimon or daimonion. Certain magical spells with nonphysical effects prove effective against these spiritual entities as well, though physical attacks affect only the hosts they possess.

In the characteristics for daimon and daimonion that follow, no scores have been given for STR, CON, or SIZ because of the nonmaterial nature of daimon and daimonion. Should these characteristics become necessary, as may occur in the case of a physical manifestation of a "devil spirit," the Keeper is advised to use the same value as listed for POW or handle the spirits as described below.

Daimon (Greater Independent Race)		
Characteristics	Average	
INT	4d6+6	20
POW	5d6+6	23-24
DEX	3d6	10-11
Hit points		Special
Move		Special
Weapon	Attk%	Damage
Telekinetic throw	DEX x 3	Variable*
Psychic bite	DEX x 3	1d6/MP**
Possession	MP vs. MP	Possession
Dematerialize	Special	Special

\* Depends on SIZ of object used.  
\* \* Also MP vs. MP damage.

Daimonion (Lesser Independent Race)		
Characteristics	Average	
INT	1 - 3d6	3-11
POW	2d6 + 6	13
DEX	3d6	10-11

Hit points, Move, Weapon, Attk%, and Damage are all as per the daimon.

**Armor:** In their natural, nonmaterial states, daimon and daimonion cannot be affected by any physical weapon. When one or more inhabit a host body, the host can be affected normally, but only the death of the host affects the spirit and then only to drive it away. Enchanted weapons damage these spirits normally but also damage their hosts.

**Spells:** A daimon or daimonion may know a number of spells equal to its INT.

**SAN:** In their normal states, daimon and daimonion are invisible; thus, no SAN loss for Investigators is possible. Seeing the various physical manifestations of one (similar to those of a poltergeist) costs 1d4 SAN points if a SAN roll is missed, or none if the roll is successful. Being possessed by one of these spirits costs 1d8 SAN points upon this realization if a SAN roll is missed, or 1 point even if the roll is made. A daimon or daimonion can temporarily



take on a physical form if it desires (such an appearance is normally that of an extremely hideous, demonic being, occasionally wreathed in fire and brimstone) if it expends eight Magic Points, plus two more for sounds and one for odor. Seeing a daimon's physical manifestation costs up to 1d20 SAN points if a SAN roll is missed, or 1d6 points even if it is made, as the forms these spirits take are usually extremely frightening (though the Keeper may decide the entity takes on a less SAN-blasting appearance for reasons of its own). Should an Investigator manage to see a daimon in its own, original dimension, the maximum SAN loss should be applied regardless of the SAN roll.

**Hit points:** If any magical spells that cause hit-point loss are used against one of these spirits, or if any attacks are made against it with enchanted weapons, use the daimon's or daimonion's POW for its hit points. If the spirit loses all its POW to damage, it has been destroyed. If a spirit's Magic-Point total falls to zero, it also disperses (at least temporarily), losing its possession of a host. If the host's Magic Point or POW totals fall to zero, the host dies, and the spirit is immediately cast loose. There is a 50% chance that *any* such magical anti-POW attacks against a possessing daimon affects the possessed host instead of the spirit. Enchanted weapons

harm both possessors and hosts.

**Move:** Daimon and daimonion are not bound by our laws of physics; therefore, they can teleport anywhere they wish around our planet (but *not* beyond the Earth, for reasons that are not totally clear, unless they are in possession of a character who himself leaves Earth). They can also move through physical barriers as though the barriers were not there. Strong magnetic fields or force fields seem to slow them down, perhaps due to the nature of the dimension from which they originate (which may in fact be why they cannot leave this planet, with its strong magnetic fields). Effectively, however, these spirits are as swift as thoughts and are nearly impossible to contain.

**Dematerialize:** Daimon and daimonion appear to have the ability to dematerialize objects of various sizes. In actuality, these spirits do this by telekinetically seizing the objects they wish to dematerialize, then teleporting themselves and the objects to other locations, where they can leave the objects and return instantly. Several of the entities can work together to teleport any object too big for only one of them. To thus "dematerialize" a living being in this manner, a daimon must win a Magic-Point struggle with its victim (unless the victim is an individual the spirit possesses, in

which case no such struggle is required).

**Detection:** Unless a character possesses psychic powers himself, the only way to detect the presence of a daimon or daimonion, either within an area or while possessing another character, is to succeed in a roll of POW x 1% upon first entering the area or encountering the possessed individual. If the roll is successful, the Investigator detects the presence of the spirit as a foul odor (it "stinks" spiritually). Unless the Investigator has detected such spirits before and knows what the odor indicates, he may then have to make an Occult roll to realize what it is he's actually detecting.

#### Conclusion

It should be kept in mind that, in the course of a CALL OF CTHULHU game campaign, it is quite possible that many of the so-called higher spiritual powers worshipped by various occult and spiritualist societies are actually very ancient, extremely wise, and cruelly cunning daimon, deceiving their followers for their own malevolent purposes. What purposes lie behind such deceptions, if they come up in play, are left to the Keeper's discretion and for the Investigators ability of discovery as they navigate the dark waters of the occult. Ω

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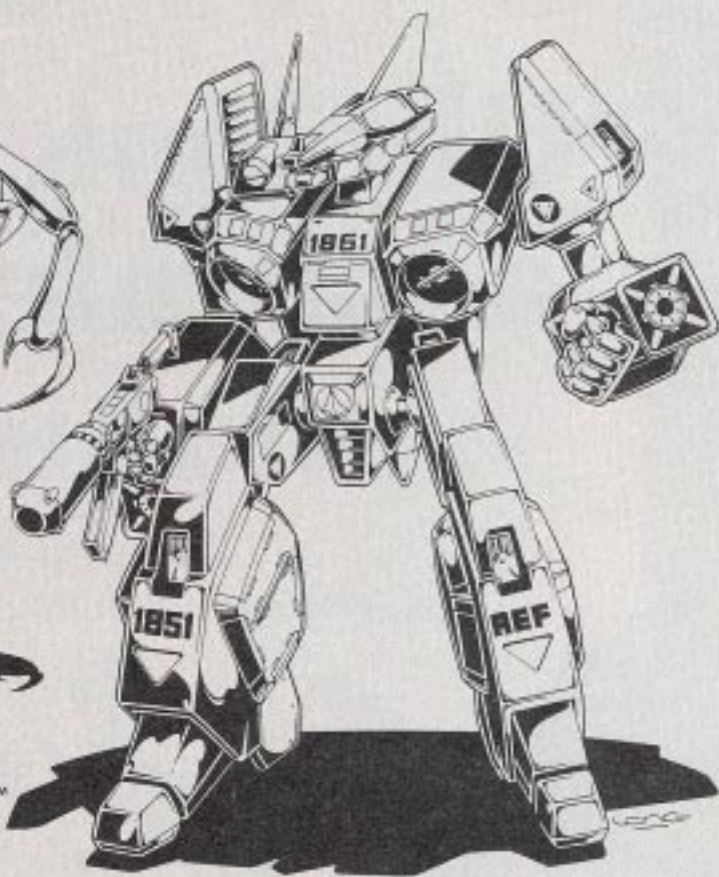
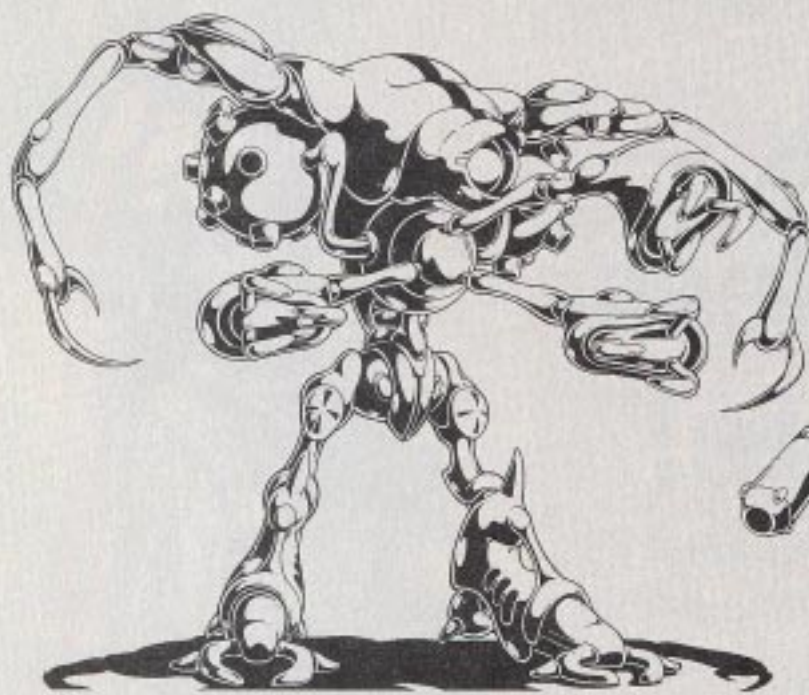
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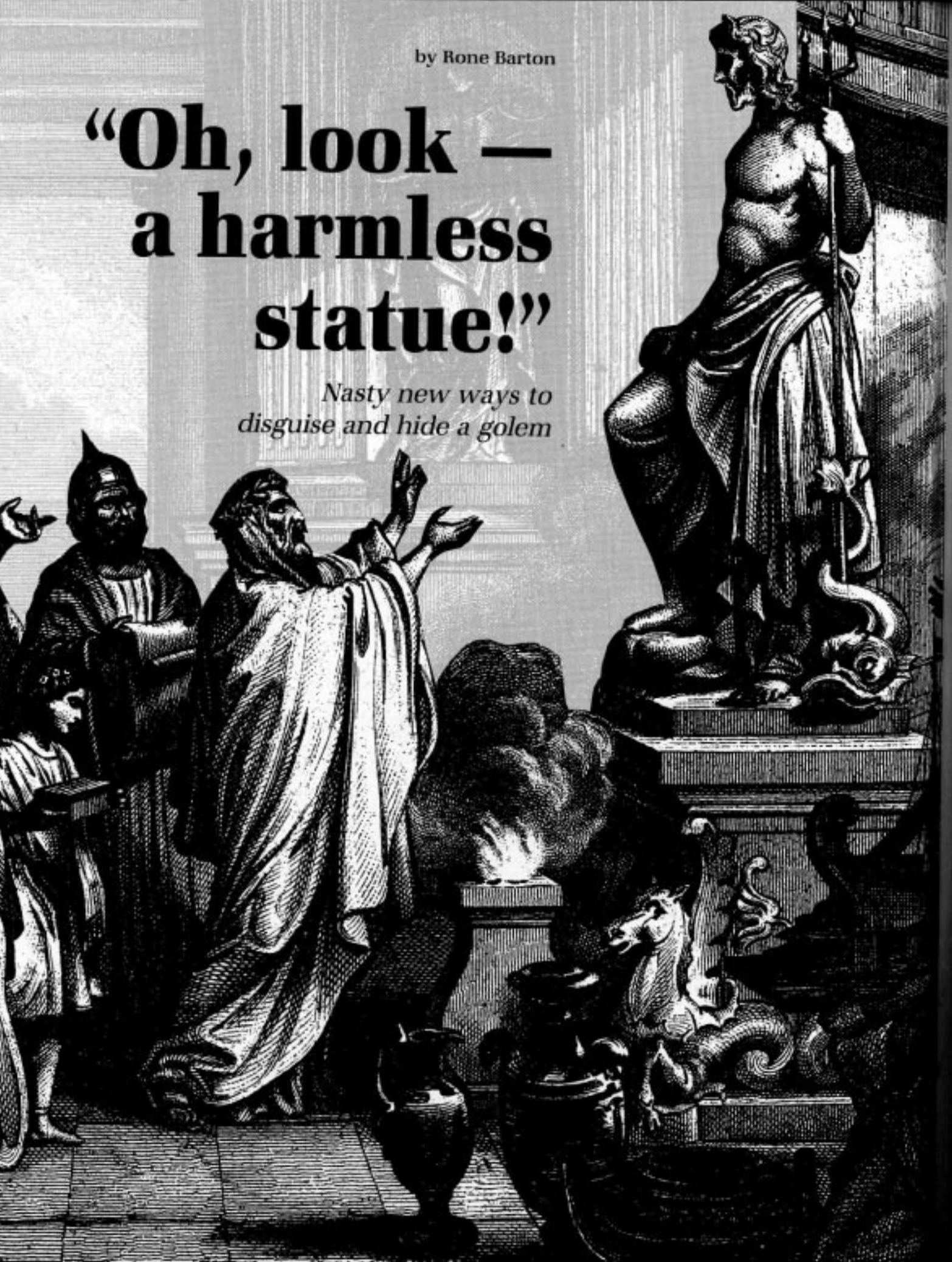
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by Rone Barton

# "Oh, look — a harmless statue!"

*Nasty new ways to  
disguise and hide a golem*



---

**I**t's an old pastime by now. The player characters enter a dungeon room, see something that is obviously a golem, and pull out their swords. Gamers who have been playing for 10 years know the rules; they know where most of the traps are and they've probably killed most of the monsters in the *Monster Manual II* index. Well, with a little cleverness, the DM can still outsmart them. Adventures would take on a fascinating twist if many golems were disguised or camouflaged. I've listed some possible suggestions to use for keeping golems from looking like golems. Most of these refer only to stone golems, but some may be used for other types. Note that if the golem is supposed to be mistaken for something else, it must have a way of cleaning up old victims. Victims are surprised by disguised golems on a 1-4 on a 1d6 roll. More than one golem may be used in each case, if the DM is especially nasty.

---

1. The golem is completely recessed into the wall, completely unnoticeable because the golem's flat front matches the texture of the wall.

2. The golem is recessed into the wall as part of a bas-relief. It may complete a scene (e.g., "You see a wall which depicts a battle scene among men and devils. One particularly large man killing devils seems to dominate the picture").

3. The golem is seated in a large stone chair (like a statue) and wears a valuable amulet, holds a staff, etc. If anyone touches the golem's possession, the golem is activated. The held item may also work to the golem's advantage in some way.

4. The golem is kneeling down with its hands placed in such a way that one could climb its hands like stairs. The golem's eyes are gems. Activation of the golem occurs when the gems are touched — or else when some other set of circumstances occurs that the PCs do not expect.

5. The golem is recessed in the floor and activates when someone steps on it. The entire front portion of the golem's body is flat and smooth like the floor.

6. The golem is concealed under thousands of loose coins. Its activation occurs when the coins are disturbed. After slaying the intruders, the golem covers itself back up.

7. The golem is created without a head and is laid on the ground. A phony golem head lies beside it. Adventurers who are

not aware that decapitation cannot slay a golem (*DMG*, page 166) may think that the golem has been destroyed. Of course, a real decapitated iron golem whose head still breathes poison gas is an interesting idea; the body and head could work together to destroy intruders from two directions.

8. The golem is placed lying down, recessed in a cave floor with its frontal body covered with stalagmite- or rock-shaped formations.

9. The golem is covered with a thin sheet of gold or silver to give it the appearance of a valuable statue.

10. A golem resembling a large cherub stands in a dancing pose in the center of a fountain.

11. Two golems stand on either side of a doorway, resembling huge caryatid columns (but much more dangerous).

12. The golem is placed among many normal statues, all of which have *Nystul's magic aura* cast upon them.

13. The golem resembles a wise old sage studying a book (but the book might be an integral part of the golem's arm). Dressing up flesh golems can be amusing.

14. A flesh golem could be made to resemble a humanoid being of a similar size, such as a powerful gnom, bugbear, small ogre, and so forth. Aside from using its fists (perhaps a large ogrillon is a good disguise), the golem could also wear armor and use simple protective devices.

15. A golem could have a special perch over a room's entrance, from which it jumps onto any characters passing underneath. Damage varies but would be extreme (10-60 hp for a stone golem, or 10-100 hp for an iron golem). The distance fallen should not be too great to avoid smashing the golem or having it bury its feet in the ground.

16. The golem is hidden behind a secret door. When characters pass through the door, they step on a pressure plate; one round later, the golem pursues them from behind. This golem could have its feet wrapped in a soft material that would absorb the sound of its footsteps, or else be enchanted to move silently.

17. The golem resembles an embarrassed naked giant trying to cover itself with its hands. If encountered in a silly dungeon, this disguise might prove very effective. Other silly but deadly appearances could include huge pink apes, clowns, etc.

18. Imagine a huge room full of golems, or else just one golem and a bunch of statues, shaped as chess pieces. They would attack when the adventurers moved onto a certain position.

19. The golem is hidden underwater in a river channel or a deep pool which fills up the entire room. When a character passes over it, the golem pulls him underwater with one arm (only a roll to hit being required) and attack with the other arm. After that character is dead, the golem

moves on to another, not attacking anyone but a character it grabs. Drowning rules would apply. The water might also be poisoned or contaminated in some manner. Flesh golems would decay and iron golems would rust, so clay and stone golems would work best.

20. Given the golem-in-the-pool described above, the golem's head might appear to be a flat stone pedestal which characters could use as a stepping stone, perhaps in the middle of the body of water.

21. The golem's back is rectangular, flat, and smooth. When the golem sits with its back facing an oncoming party, it looks like a large stone block — perhaps a door.

22. The golem waits underneath a secret trapdoor in the floor. If the trapdoor opens, the victim drops in with the golem. Combined with one of these other ideas, this could be a deadly combination attack.

23. The golem has permanent *darkness 15' radius* spell cast around it. The golem might not suffer penalties to hit victims if enchanted to detect prey in some manner other than by sight.

24. The golem's body is pockmarked with holes which contain soil in which seeds were planted. The golem should appear to be one large decorative plant holder, green from head to toe with vines. If carnivorous plants are used, watch out!

25. The golem might hold two huge torches as if he were an elaborate sconce. The torches might themselves be useable as weapons.

26. The golem's midsection is hollow, with many pockets and perches for birds to roost. The golem should resemble something cute, like a demented mage's idea of a birdhouse.

27. The golem has a permanent *invisibility* spell cast on it, so that it can attack without being seen.

28. The golem has an animal-shaped head and corresponding animal-like hands. Clawed hands could do extra or unusual sorts of damage, and an advanced golem design might even bite.

29. Consider variations on the given types of golems, like a stone golem that can throw *flesh to stone* spells, or a dehydrated flesh golem, such as the one in area 17 of "The Ruins of Andril," from *DRAGON®* issue #81. What about a halfling-size flesh golem with reduced powers?

30. Cover the golem with an illusion that makes it seem to be something else.

These examples should work well on most everyone. If you're playing with people who have read this article or who were not tricked by these disguises, try to think up new ways to fool them. No one can be so careful as to check every square foot of ground in front of him. If you know anyone who is, put the golem on the ceiling!

Ω





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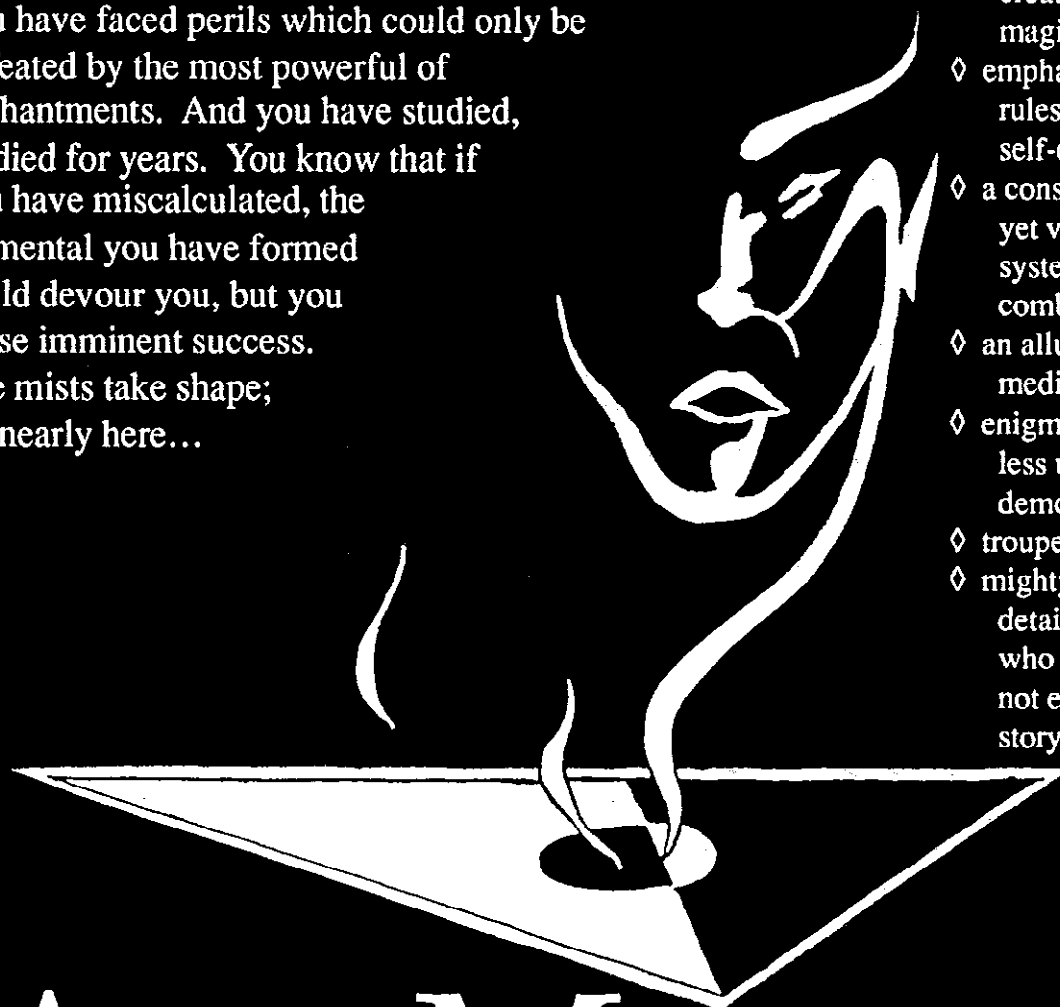
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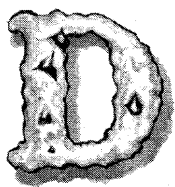
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Davaris lifted his aching body from the depths of an enormous chair, unwrapping himself from blankets of dark fur. His bony fingers wound around the cane of oaken wood at his side. Leaning on the cane heavily, he felt the stiffness in his limbs that no cleric

could cure and no magic could hide from him. Even the spells of some younger magician wouldn't help, had there been any young magicians left to remember words he'd long ago forgotten. The silver droplets of the moon's light sparkled through the only open window in the room. Spilling across the black stone floor, they gave Davaris the impression of a dagger piercing through the heart of the tower.

Running a hand over sparse, white hair, he looked out into the night sky over York Village. At least it had been York Village at one time. In the passing centuries its name had changed. Now, New Something-or-other lay outside the castle. Again he looked at the outline of moonlight. "And so the gods remind me of my impending death." He croaked out the words, an elvish lisp in his decaying voice.

Turning with a rustle of black robes, his stooped form eclipsed the window briefly and stopped before an oaken door. Short breaths rattled in his lungs and his every muscle ached. He sensed the spirits in the darkness, the undead guardians of the keep. Many were gathered about him: some perhaps craving his flesh and waiting for him to surrender to death, and some perhaps looking at him with pity, as they had once watched Nicairius with pity. Nicairius, his teacher, the late revered master of the blacker arts. Davaris was the only Black Robe left alive, therefore, the Castle of Bloodstone was rightfully his. But in truth, the castle always had and always would belong to the master, Nicairius. His soul was in every stone, his blood in every fire that burned within the castle's walls. His very life had been captured by this tower, where a thousand years ago he was consumed into the chaos of a most powerful magic spell. Of course, he had never since returned or been found.

Davaris shook his head clear of the memories and images still giving him nightmares today. Instead, he tried to bring to mind a spell. It would carry him on the wings of magic to any place he chose; he wanted merely to go upstairs. In the last fifty years, the study around him had become his whole world. To leave it he had to cast a spell or walk, and he could no more walk a hundred stairs than he could go ten paces in a straight line without difficulty. As he huffed out a string of dry coughs, Davaris remembered the spell words and whisked himself away.

Before him was a door, not at all unlike the one leading out of his study. This door was on an enchanted landing, however, and the landing extended over darkness. There were many such landings, constructed to guard the chambers and their valuables beyond. The blackness below had no end, none that he knew. If the fear of falling overtook the mind, as it often did those who were unprepared, one would stumble, and — Davaris opened the door, making the hinges scream and stirring up a cloud of dust. He coughed, then glided into the long-forgotten room.

# The Visitor

by Llynne Moore



Shelves nestled in the shadows, filled with objects as many as the twinkling stars outside, a coat of dust their testament to existence. The wailing hinges had sent a ripple of life through the air, and in the instant he entered, the room burst with a display of magic. Each bottle, each pendant, each nondescript piece was glowing with its own light, longing to be touched. But Davaris, their user, their creator, was intent on one object only.

Resting on a delicate silver stand, an orb of crystal held his attention. It was an object he rarely dared to touch, one that hungered for his soul. The rainbow lights shrank back as he hobbled to the end of the room with an outstretched, gnarled hand.

Even in the dim torchlight filtering from the doorway, he could see the hairline cracks on the orb's surface, its shattered center. Davaris had created the orb long ago, and in its making the magic had gone awry, shattering its heart, altering its originally simple purpose. Its use would now drive a lesser mage insane . . . or an old, senile one, but Davaris chose to overlook that. Cradled in purple satin and silver fingers, it was now an object that revealed to his eyes, occasionally, the deepest enchantments. Reaching his hand out farther, trying to still the minute quivers of age and excitement, he felt the cool surface beneath his fingertips.

There won't be much to see, Davaris reasoned, though he could not explain the feeling in his bones that had pulled him there. He thought to himself, deep magic nowadays meant an ogre swallowing a lucky penny.

Without uttering a sound, he concentrated and waited in a long silence. Soon, an image began to form in the orb as he felt the forces pulling at him. Another eye would have been captured in confusion and driven mad; Davaris was able this time to see and understand. His lips began to tremble as he watched. He slowly shook his head from side to side. However, his features sagged in acceptance of an unavoidable truth. Uttering strange words that only his heart might recognize, he turned away and left the crystal ball as cold and lifeless as he had found it.

The magical forces inhabiting the room eagerly questioned dark-robed Davaris. The things — the inanimate things of the shelves — did not actually move or speak; he felt their questions in his being. Then he heard the whispers of the spirit-guardians lick his pointed ears. In a strained voice he spoke the answer given to him by the spirits.

"A visitor comes."

He left the room, dust clinging to his robes as they brushed the floor. With all his strength, he pulled the door shut and disappeared.

Davaris, the apprentice of Nicairius; Davaris, head of the order of the dark arts; Davaris, master of the Castle of Bloodstone in New Something-or-other, the last of the ancient users of true magic — Davaris sat quietly and alone in a huge, black throne. The high ceiling of the great room stretched out before him, supported by black pillars. Each pillar guarded an alcove, sentinels of the many staircases spiraling away. A glow filled the room, lighting from some unseen source.

The high-backed chair was cold and hard, stinging his

old bones. There were tiny lines of white running through its black marble, and he began tracing over these with his fingers. First following one path, then another, a different finger on yet another. Many decades had passed since he'd last sat there. Even in the days when hundreds flocked to the castle, this entry hall was rarely used. And there was one reason why.

The huge, magically sealed door opposite Davaris led out into a deadly garden. Foliage and creatures of all types — alive, dead, and undead — surrounded the castle, had guarded its existence through every war, against every intruder. Nothing living or dead passed the bewitched grounds without a powerful charm, an even more powerful will, and perhaps a god or two for luck. Yet, the crystal had shown a visitor passing, a hideous monster that would survive to face Davaris at the door.

He did not sigh, though the air seemed to project with all its substance that he would. He did not, leaving the air to wait expectantly. Tension almost burst stones from their mortars as Davaris sat deciding his strategy. What would he say? What spells could he remember? What magic should he work?

Magic. Davaris rolled the word around in his mind. How people had grown to detest the word he worshiped. With piercing suddenness he recalled the last time he'd walked the city streets. He was laughed at, asked to do some card tricks. "Pull a silver piece out of my ear!" Streetside performers did "magic" with scarves and half-naked females. Whispering voices did not even murmur with reverence, in the darkest dark of the latest late, when magic was mentioned. Well, what did people know? Humans, elves, dwarves, halflings . . . it was the interbreeding, Davaris decided. An elf wasn't an elf anymore, nor an ogre an ogre. No wonder the world was a mess.

Davaris had more important things to think about. He would protect the honor of the castle, its towers, even if it meant his death. And his death would have been easier to face, walking up the unwalked steps, ignoring around it the most fearsome place on the face of any world. His death could pound at the door, and he would gladly answer it before he would face the creature. The monster wouldn't let him die; it would inflict its horrible tortures. Davaris knew well. It had come once before, a mere three years ago. He stared intensely at the rune-etched door.

*This time.* . . . This time, he vowed, he'd turn it away. He ceased tracing the white lines and sat. He just sat, arms extended over the armrests, body slouched against the midnight black of velvet cushions. Unmoving, he stared continually at the sturdy door. The one and only heartbeat in the halls — his own — stilled and almost forgotten. The walls let go of him, and his mind went deep within himself. Still, he was acutely aware of every nerve in his body, every rune and glyph on the door.

Suddenly, though there was no sound to stir him so, every thin muscle went rigid, every aching tendon went tight, and he straightened. The pillars, the alcoves, the ceiling — all seemed to sway, startled by his movement. Then the room seemed to lean, as Davaris leaned, expectantly. He became aware of his heartbeat again. Reminders of just how weakly it beat ran crazily in his head; he tried to push them aside and ran a hand over his

balding scalp. The other hand, thick, purplish veins almost bursting from the skin, held the oak cane tightly.

Within a few long seconds, heavy knocking echoed through the chamber. Davaris had expected this, but he started as if in pain when the loud sound broke the silence. The light in the room continued to glow.

Open the door from here with magic, giving myself time, giving myself room? he wondered. Leave the throne and meet it standing? Open the door myself and surprise it? He arose from his seat and went forward, leaning on his cane.

He stopped halfway, as much from pain as from strategic consideration. No, he reasoned, I'll meet it at the door. It may be harder to drive out once inside the doorway. The mage went on, seeming calm though his stom-

ach quivered. He stopped and placed a hand on the knob.

The knocking came again. This time he did not flinch but released the wards placed on the door and clenched the doorknob tighter. Sweat trickled down from his pate, dripped from his brow.

In one swift motion, he threw the door wide, ignoring the throb and pain of the tissues in his body. Agony and aversion washed over him all at once as a squat, green hobgoblin leered up at him. No, not again! He felt his will crumble, exhaustion creeping over him. The loathsome creature waved a box-shaped talisman in his face.

"Buy some cookies, mister?" the young girl asked.

Davaris cringed. Voice shaking, he submitted to her vivid temptations. "Ten boxes of vanilla," he moaned and shelled out the gold pieces.

Ω

(Continued from page 3)

plane's tail section. Both of these people suffered severe injuries, but a crewman who jumped from a burning RAF Lancaster bomber over Germany in 1944 survived a fall of 18,000' — and walked away without a single broken bone. His fall was cushioned by a fir tree and snowy ground.

*Remarkable thieves:* Fantasy footpads must compete with the man who, in 1966, used an axe to cut the mooring lines on a 10,638-ton ship that was banned from leaving the harbor at Wolfe's Cove, Quebec, due to a wildcat strike on the waterfront. The ship drifted until it met a blacked-out tugboat that completed its escape. Then, too, no dragon's hoard ever matched the riches gained from the robbery of the Reichsbank by American and German personnel after the fall of the Nazi government in 1945. According to one source, the enterprising thieves made off with the equivalent of about \$3,000,000,000.

*Incredible combat odds:* During the American Civil war, a 19-year-old Confederate captain and 43 men, armed only with rifles and six small cannon, drove off an entire Union fleet that attempted to land an invasion force of 15,000 men. Richard W. Dowling and his men sank one gunboat, captured two others after putting them out of action, and took 400 prisoners as well — without losing a single man from their own outfit.

*Great physical strength:* Even a casual thumbing through a list of world weight-lifting records is interesting in comparison with Conan-like fantasy barbarians. For example, Paul Anderson (the 1956

Olympic heavyweight champion) was able to lift 6,270 lbs in a back lift in 1957. He was also able to bench press 627 lbs., squat lift 1,200 lbs., and dead lift 820 lbs. It is worth noting that a 100-lb. chimpanzee once made a two-handed dead lift of 600 lbs.

*Heroism:* While there are innumerable instances of heroism in the world today, the case of Raoul Wallenberg is worthy of mention. A Swedish diplomat assigned to Budapest during World War II, Raoul Wallenberg managed to save about 90,000 Hungarian Jews from deportation to concentration camps. He escaped assassination by the Nazis but was imprisoned by the Soviets after the war; he apparently died in a Moscow prison in 1947. (Virtue must indeed be its own reward.)

*Courage:* Though it would be difficult at best to put any sort of a measurement on the limits of bravery, one possible nominee in this category concerns the Yugoslavian

airline stewardess, Vesna Vulovic, who was mentioned previously. Surviving a six-mile fall after your plane blows up is not in itself courageous, nor is spending over a year in the hospital after having broken almost every bone you have. Ms. Vulovic simply went back to work for her airline after her recovery — and, though she was no longer allowed to be a stewardess, she continued to fly.

Which is stranger: reality or fantasy? I know which one I'd choose.

(Thanks to Sheila Goldsmith of the editorial offices of the *Guinness Book of World Records* for her assistance in obtaining information on some of the entries herein.)

*Raymond E. Moore*

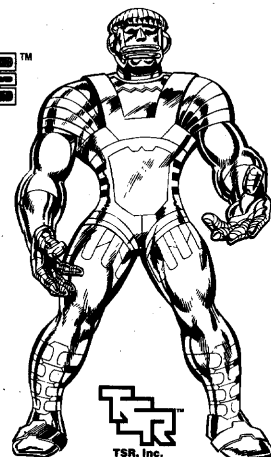
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# The New, Improved Druid

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## *Additional abilities for the sylvan sect*

In the AD&D® game, the druid PC class has not always been taken seriously. The advent of the expanded druidic experience table and improved powers in *Unearthed Arcana* has helped dispel this attitude among players. It is hoped that this article will improve the class's standing still further, as this material expands the abilities and skills of this class.

It is known that the druid may not use metallic armor or shields; the only exception to this rule is elven chain mail, as elves have lived in peace and harmony with nature for thousands of years — long enough to be able to craft metal in such a way as not to spoil the druid's special magic. All other crafted metals for armor negate the druid's innate and spell-using abilities.

Only a limited number of high-level druids live in every druidic region. In each woodland keep dwell no more than nine 12th-level druids, each of which is the leader of a body of 3-30 druids of 3rd to 8th level, and an entourage of underlings of 1st and 2nd level. No more than three 13th-level Archdruids are found at each druid keep. At 13th level, the druid gains 1-8 10th-level druids. Only one 14th-level Great Druid stays in any given druid keep, and he attracts an additional 10-200 hit dice of animals to do his bidding. These animals can be replaced by others if slain.

Each druid keep is visited by an emissary of the 15th-level Grand Druid once each year. This emissary is usually an Archdruid who serves directly under the Grand Druid. In this position, the emissary examines the lands under the keep's protection and receives a detailed annual report from the keep's Great Druid. The Archdruid emissary may also take action against woodland offenders, wielding the will of the Grand Druid.

### **Druidic abilities**

In connection with the druid's worship of nature, innate powers are gained at higher levels. At 3rd level, a druid gains the following abilities:

1. Ability to converse in the common tongue of all neutrally aligned woodland creatures.
2. Ability to identify plant types.
3. Ability to identify animal types.
4. Ability to identify pure water and to locate pure water within 1 mile + 1 mile/level of the druid above 3rd level.
5. Power to pass through overgrown areas without loss of movement and without trace of passage.
6. Ability to brew poisons from natural woodland materials. The druid also gains the knowledge to create antidotes for his poisons and gains an immunity to each level of poison that he may brew, given a familiar use of herbs and other components of the poisons.

At 5th level, the following powers are gained:

1. Immunity to charm and sleep spells, and similar magical effects from woodland creatures.
2. Ability to *shape change* at will into one chosen form of woodland creature. At 5th level, the druid may *shape change* into one type of bird, reptile, or mammal associated with the wilderness; this creature must be of the druids weight or less. The druid hereafter gains the ability to choose one new form every two levels, with the ability to add 500 lbs. of mass to each new form. For example, at 7th level, a druid may have two shapes — one his weight or less, the other up to approximately 700 lbs. Archdruids may use each form two times a day instead of just once. At 14th level, the Great Druid may assume an additional (third) form of any woodland

creature once per day.

3. Ability to regain from 10-60% of all hit points in damage sustained upon resumption of each animal form.

4. Empathy with plants.

### **Poisons**

Druids have a special link with nature, enabling them to identify plants by their mystical and chemical properties. This allows druids to brew natural poisons (see Table 1). This art is well-guarded, and little of it is known to nondruids. Druid poisons and antidotes are made by using the herbs and plants in common woodland surroundings. The formula for the time it takes to brew the poisons is as follows:  $24 - (\text{druid's level}) + [(\text{poison level})/2] = \text{Number of hours required to brew one vial of poison.}$

The druid may choose to make the poison fast-acting (immediate) or slow-acting (up to six hours delay). The druid's player must state this to his DM before brewing begins. The brewing doesn't have to be continuous work; it need only be equal to the number of hours calculated by the formula. For the sake of reference, one vial of poison is enough to coat six arrowheads, four shuriken, eight darts, twelve needles, or one dagger or spear point. Two vials will coat twice as many small weapons or one short-sword blade. Three vials will coat a long-sword, scimitar, or broadsword blade. Four will coat a bastard-sword blade, and five will coat a two-handed-sword blade. Each coating of poison on a blade or weapon lasts for two successful hits on a target. The maximum coats allowable is five. When swallowed, one vial equals one dose.

Damage from slow-acting druid poison is taken as follows. Half the total poison damage is initial (shock); the character poisoned takes damage immediately. Remaining damage occurs gradually, doing the poison's minimum damage amount per round. This damage is taken until the accumulated damage equals the number originally rolled on the damage dice. For example, strength E poison that does 6d6 hp damage is used on an arrow. The user rolls 26 hp damage. The victim takes arrow damage plus 13 hp poison damage the initial round. Unless the poison is cured or slowed, the victim takes 6 hp damage per round until death or until the total damage rolled is reached.

If a saving throw is made against poison of strength AA through J, the victim takes half the rolled damage, accumulating further damage at the normal rate. A successful save vs. X or XX poison causes the victim to take damage equal to half of his original (fully healed and rested) hit points. A save vs. sleep poison acts as a slow spell for three rounds, but creatures immune to sleep (such as undead) are not affected.

Poison may be applied only to nonmagical iron or steel weapons, including nonmagical alloys of metal that are iron-based, well made, and have an advantage

not associates with magic (i.e., weapons of quality.) Silver will not hold poison beyond a single use. The process for treating metal with poison gives a dark discoloration to the blade; any character seeing and recognizing this discoloration reacts vehemently to the use of poison. Poison is outlawed in most areas, and only thieves and assassins use it regularly. Lawful-good characters act with rage and may attack the user or turn him in to authorities; chaotic-evil characters may threaten the PC if he doesn't share the poison.

**Table 1**  
**Druid Poison Chart**

Level of druid	Poison level	Poison type	Poison strengths (maximum possible damage)
3rd	0	AA	6 hp (1d4, 1d6, etc.)
4th	1	A	12 hp (2d6, 1d12, etc.)
5th	2	B	18 hp (2d8, 3d6, etc.)
6th	3	C	24 hp (2d10, 2d12, etc.)
7th	4	D	30 hp (3d10, etc.)
8th	5	E	36 hp (9d4, etc.)
9th	6	F	42 hp (4d10, etc.)
10th	7	G <sup>1</sup>	48 hp (4d12, etc.)
11th	8	H	54 hp (5d10, etc.)
12th	9	I	60 hp (10d6, etc.)
13th	10	J	66 hp (3d20, etc.)
14th	11	X	1d6 hp/round until dead
15th-16th <sup>2</sup>	11a	Xa	Same as X + 1 hp/die
17th-18th <sup>3</sup>	11b	Xb	Same as X + 2 hp/die
19th-22nd <sup>4</sup>	12	x x	Instant death <sup>5</sup>
23rd <sup>6</sup>	13	Z	Catatonic poison <sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sleep poison is also made at this level. A successful saving throw results in being *slowed* for 3 rounds; failure results in sleeping for 1d10 rounds.

<sup>2</sup> Brewing time is halved; 1s rolled on damage dice are rerolled.

<sup>3</sup> Any 1s or 2s rolled on damage dice are rerolled.

<sup>4</sup> Any 1s, 2s, or 3s rolled on damage dice are rerolled.

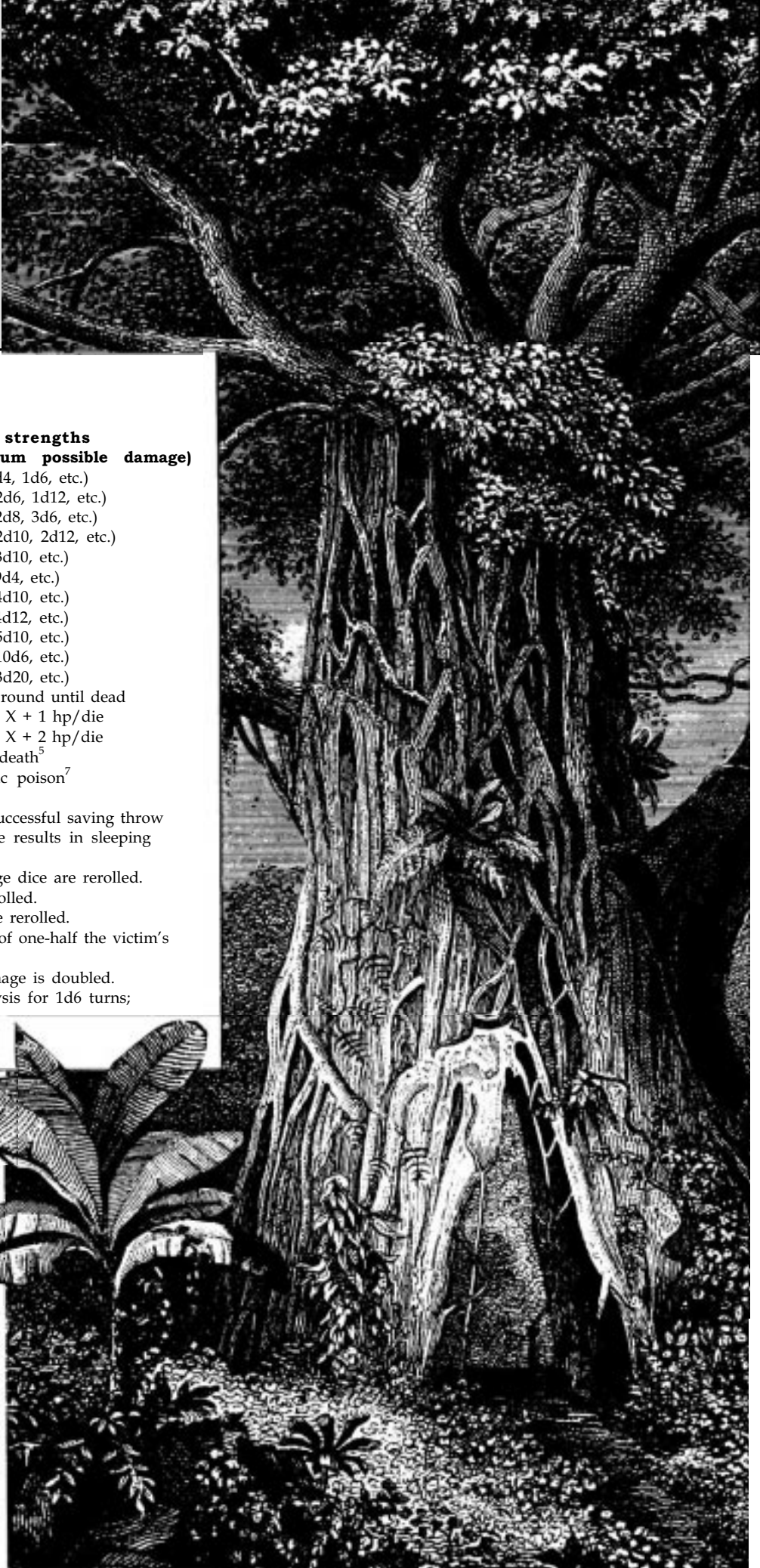
<sup>5</sup> A successful saving throw results in a loss of one-half the victim's full hit points.

<sup>6</sup> Brewing time is quartered, and poison damage is doubled.

<sup>7</sup> A successful saving throw results in paralysis for 1d6 turns; a failed saving throw results in a catatonic state for 1d6 days.

**Antidotes**

Antidotes are always ingested and come in strengths AA through X. These antidotes deliver a set number of hit points of poison protection per dose. Strength AA antidote neutralizes 3 hp poison damage, strength A neutralizes 6 hp, strength B neutralizes 9 hp, strength C neutralizes 12 hp, and so forth, up to 33 hp for strength J antidote. Strength G antidote not only neutralizes sleep poison but gives a +3 or saving throws vs. sleep-based attacks for the next four turns. The effects of sleep poison can also be negated by drinking a type C or greater antidote. Type X antidote acts as a *neutralize poison* spell. Antidotes may act before or after poisoning occurs.





The strength of the antidote taken is subtracted from the number rolled for poison damage. If the resulting number is zero or less, the victim suffers no ill effects. The effects of an antidote last for four rounds after consumption. For example, a victim is struck by a sword coated with strength C poison, which does 5-30 hp damage; 15 hp damage is the result. The victim is given a Type A antidote the next round and ends up taking 5 hp actual poison damage (10 hp were neutralized). Two rounds later, the same victim is struck again for 25 hp damage but ends up taking only 15 hp as the antidote is still active. This protection lasts for four rounds; any damage taken before or after this period is sustained in full.

Druids seldom use poisons outside their forests (they could wind up in trouble with any number of law agencies, assassins' or thieves' guilds, or even a high-level alchemist or paladin). Druids never sell these poisons to anyone other than other druids. In dire need, a druid may find it necessary to coat a blade with such a substance in order to guarantee the survival of the party, but he will be wary of his use of this material.

**New druidic spells**

Table 2 shows some new spells that may be added to the druid's repertoire at the DM's discretion. Many of these spells are variations of magic-user or clerical spells, although a few of them are strictly for use by druids and are given here.

**Find Woodland Familiar** (Conjuration/Summoning)  
Level: 1                      Components: V,S,M  
AE: As per range            CT: 1-20 hrs.  
Duration: Special          ST: Negative  
Range: 1-mile radius/level

**Explanation/Description:** This spell is the same as the first-level magic-user spell, *find familiar*, except with respect to spell components. In the brazier, the druid must add three leaves of mistletoe. Tables 3 and 4 should be used in determining the result of the druid's summoning.

**Animate Dead Animals** (Necromantic)  
Level: 3                      Components: V,S,M  
Range: ½"                    CT: 1 round  
Duration: Perm.            ST: None  
AE: Special

**Explanation/Description:** This spell creates skeletons and zombies from the bones or remains of dead animals. The effect causes the remains to become animated and to obey the commands of the caster. Animated creatures of more than 1 HD lose 1 HD due to deterioration. Animals of 1 HD or less merely lose half their normal hit-point totals, with 1 hp as a lower limit. This spell animates the creatures until they are destroyed or dispelled. The druid is able to animate 2 HD of crea-

**Table 2**  
**Druid Spell Levels**

<b>1st level</b> Endure heat/cold <sup>1</sup> Magic stone <sup>1</sup> Resist cold <sup>1</sup> Affect normal fires <sup>2</sup> Mount <sup>2</sup> Find woodland familiar <sup>3</sup>	<b>2nd level</b> Dust devil <sup>1</sup> Detect life <sup>1</sup> Messenger <sup>1</sup> Resist fire <sup>1</sup> Snake charm <sup>1</sup> Preserve <sup>2</sup>	<b>3rd level</b> Continual light <sup>1</sup> Create food & water <sup>1</sup> Flame walk <sup>1</sup> Meld into stone <sup>1</sup> Water walk <sup>1</sup> Wind wall <sup>2</sup> Cloudburst <sup>2</sup> Animate dead animals <sup>3</sup>
<b>4th level</b> Giant insect <sup>1</sup> Lower water <sup>1</sup> Spike stones <sup>1</sup>	<b>5th level</b> Air walk <sup>1</sup> Rainbow <sup>1</sup> Lightning strike <sup>3</sup> Raise dead animal <sup>3</sup>	<b>6th level</b> Conjure animals <sup>1</sup> Find the path <sup>1</sup> Part water <sup>1</sup> Stone tell <sup>1</sup> Word of recall <sup>1</sup> Transmute water to dust <sup>2</sup>
<b>7th Level</b> Wind walk <sup>1</sup> Heal <sup>1</sup> Aerial servant <sup>2</sup> Calm earth <sup>3</sup>		

<sup>1</sup> Clerical spell                      <sup>2</sup> Magic-user spell                      <sup>3</sup> New spell

tures per level obtained, cumulative. The material component for this spell is a fine powder made of earth from a forest floor, mistletoe, and powdered bone sprinkled into the air.

**Lightning Strike** (Evocation)  
Level: 5                      Components: V,S,M  
Range: 4" + 1"/lvl.            CT: 3 segments  
Duration: Instant.            ST: ½  
AE: Special

**Explanation/Description:** This spell is the same as the third-level magic-user spell, *lightning bolt*, except for the material components: a piece of tree bark recently struck by lightning, a handful of sand, and three leaves of mistletoe.

**Raise Dead Animals** (Necromantic)  
Reversible  
Level: 5                      Components: V,S,M  
Range: Touch                    CT: 1 round  
Duration: Perm.            ST: None  
AE: 1 animal

**Explanation/Description:** When a druid casts a *raise dead animal* spell, he may restore life to mammals without souls (meaning all mammals except those that assumed their mammal form by being *reincarnated*). The druid may restore life to mammals not more than one day dead per level of the druid casting the spell (e.g., a 9th-level druid could raise an animal that had been dead for up to nine

days). The raised creature will have its full hit points returned, has no need for rest, and is not required to make a saving throw. The reverse of this spell, *slay living animals*, allows the victim a saving throw; if successful, damage sustained by the victim is 3-17 hp. Druids never use this spell to slay neutral animals and usually do not use this spell's reverse except in life-threatening circumstances. The material component of this spell is an herbal paste made of mistletoe, holly, tree sap, and a drop of the druid's blood, which is rubbed on the body of the spell's recipient. In the case of the reversed spell, the druid rubs the paste on his own hands.

**Calm Earth** (Alteration)  
Level: 7                      Components: V,S,M  
Range: 12" + 1"/lvl.            CT: 3 segments  
Duration: Perm.            ST: None  
AE: Sphere of radius = 12" + 1"/level

**Explanation/Description:** This spell negates the seventh-level clerical spell *earthquake* and instantaneously stops all natural earthquakes, tremors, vulcanism, and such within the area of effect. The material component for this spell is a piece of mistletoe within a lump of clay.

**Table 3**  
**Druidic Familiars**

Roll on 1d20	Familiar	Sensory powers
1-4	Fox	60' night vision and superior hearing
5-6	Hawk	Highly superior distance vision
7-8	Raven	Excellent vision
9-10	Rabbit	40' night vision and superior sense of smell
11-12	Weasel	Superior hearing and sense of smell
13-14	Toad	Wide-angle vision
15-16	Wild cat	40' night vision and excellent hearing
17-18	Special (see Table 4)	
19-20	No familiar in woodland area	

**Table 4**  
**Special Druidic Familiars**

Roll on 1d4	Familiar	Powers gained
1	Elven cat	Druid may move silently (50% chance); surprised only on a roll of 1 (on 1d12)
2	Pseudo-dragon	Night vision (60%) and infravision; + 10% to hide in natural terrain
3	Pixie	<i>Invisibility</i> once per day as spell; 25% magic resistance
4	Leprechaun	<i>Invisibility</i> once per day as spell; 30% magic resistance

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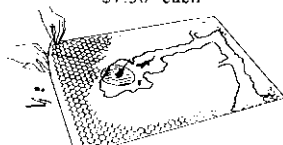
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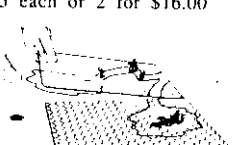
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## *The ORIGINS™ Awards and the Gamers' Choice Awards*

Two sets of gaming-achievement awards were given out at the 1988 GEN CON®/ORIGINS™ Game Fair. One set, the ORIGINS Awards, was given by the Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts and Design. These awards are presented annually at the ORIGINS game convention for outstanding achievement in many gaming areas. The other set, the Gamers' Choice Awards, was announced by the RPGA™ Network, which had polled gamers for their favorites in a number of gaming categories. This year's winners are listed herein. Our thanks to Anne Jaffe and Jean Rabe for this information.

### ORIGINS™ Awards

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**Best Historical Figure Series, 1987:**

*Shogun Hard Guys: The New Samurai\** (Ral Partha Enterprises), sculpted by Dennis Mize and Bob Charrette

**Best Fantasy or Science Fiction Figure Series, 1987:**

*Julie Guthrie's Fantasy Line\** (Grenadier Models, Inc.), sculpted by Julie Guthrie

**Best Vehicular or Accessory Series, 1987:**

STAR TREK\* Miniatures (FASA Corporation), sculpted by Randy Hoffa and Steve Apolloni

**Best Miniatures Rules, 1987:**

HARPOON\* game (Game Designer's Workshop), designed by Larry Bond

**Best Role-Playing Rules, 1987:**

STAR WARS\*: The Roleplaying Game (West End Games, Inc.), designed by Greg Costikyan

**Best Role-Playing Adventure, 1987:**

*Tournament of Dreams\**, for the PEN-DRAGON\* game (Chaosium, Inc.), designed by Sam Shirley, Les Brooks, and Greg Stafford

**Best Role-Playing Supplement, 1987:**

STAR WARS Sourcebook\*, for STAR WARS\*: The Roleplaying Game (West End Games, Inc.), designed by Curtis Smith and Bill Slavicsek

**Best Graphic Presentation of a Role-Playing Game, Adventure or Supplement, 1987:**

*Miskatonic University Kit\**, for the CALL OF CTHULHU\* game (Chaosium, Inc.), graphic design by Lynn Willis

**Best Pre-20th Century Boardgame, 1987:** SHOGUN\* game (Milton Bradley Company), designed by Mike Gray

**Best Boardgame Covering the Period 1900-1946 for 1987:** SCORCHED EARTH\* game (Game Designer's Workshop), designed by John Astell

**Best Boardgame Covering the Period 1947 to modern day for 1987:** TEAM YANKEE\* game (Game Designer's Workshop), designed by Marc Miller and Frank Chadwick

**Best Fantasy or Science-Fiction Boardgame, 1987:** ARKHAM HORROR\* game (Chaosium, Inc.), designed by Richard Launius, Lynn Willis, and Charlie Krank

**Best Graphic Presentation of a Boardgame, 1987:** SHOGUN\* game (Milton Bradley Company), graphic design by Alec Jutsum and James Bremer

**Best Play-By-Mail Game, 1987:**

ALAMAZE\*, Pegasus Productions

**Best Fantasy or Science Fiction Computer Game, 1987:** PIRATES!\* (MicroProse Simulation Software), designed by Sid Meier

**Best Military of Strategy Computer Game, 1987:** PROJECT. STEALTH FIGHTER\* (MicroProse Simulation Software), designed by Jim Synoski and Arnold Hendrick

**Best Screen Graphics in a Home Computer Game, 1987:** PIRATES!\* (MicroProse Simulation Software), graphic art by Michael Hair

**Best Professional Adventure Gaming Magazine, 1987:** *Computer Gaming World\** (Golden Empire), edited by Russell Sipe

**Best Amateur Adventure Gaming Magazine, 1987:** POLYHEDRON™ Newszine (TSR, Inc.), edited by Jean Rabe

**Hall of Fame:** Greg Stafford

**Special Award for Outstanding Achievement, Awarded 1987:** DRAGON® Magazine (TSR, Inc.)

**Special Award for Outstanding Achievement, Awarded 1987:** *The Courier\** (The Courier Publishing Company), edited by Richard L. Bryant

### Gamers' Choice Awards

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**Best Family Game:** SHOGUN\* game (Milton Bradley Company), designed by Mike Gray

**Best Fantasy Role-Playing Game:** ARS MAGICA\* game (Lion Rampant), designed by Jonathan Tweet and Mark Rein • Hagen

**Best Science-Fiction Role-Playing Game (tie):** MEGATRAVELLER\* game (Game Designers' Workshop), designed by Marc Miller; and STAR WARS\*: The Roleplaying Game (West End Games), designed by Greg Costikyan

**Best "Other Category" Role-Playing Game:** TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game (TSR, Inc.) designed by Douglas Niles

**Best Role-Playing Adventure:** *Who Watches the Watchmen?* for the DC\* HEROES game (Mayfair Games, Inc.), designed by Dan Greenberg

**Best Role-Playing Accessory:** FORGOTTEN REALMS™ setting boxed set, for the AD&D® game (TSR, Inc.), designed by Ed Greenwood and Jeff Grubb

**Best Historical Strategy Game:** SCORCHED EARTH\* game (Game Designers' Workshop), designed by John Astell

**Best Science-Fiction Strategy Game:** STAR CRUISER\* game (Game Designers' Workshop), designed by Frank Chadwick

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by Vince Garcia

# Hand-to-Hand Against the Rules



## *Modifying the martial arts of Oriental Adventures*

The unarmed fighting guidelines in AD&D® *Oriental Adventures*, while martial-arts styles, leave a few gray areas open to subjective interpretation. For example, the kensai has the option of specializing in an unarmed fighting style, yet the table provided with the class description is based entirely on the premise that the character decides on perfecting the use of a melee weapon. It isn't clear if it is possible for a bushi to choose an unarmed fighting style as a form of weapon specialization, nor is it clear if a

character wanting to learn martial arts shouldn't have to meet one or more ability score minimums (one has a difficult time imagining a martial artist with a dexterity of 3 gracefully executing a *circle kick* maneuver!).

Unfortunately, the lack of integration in the martial-arts rules causes problems if an attempt is made to clarify and elaborate on some of these gray areas. Suggesting, for instance, that a prospective martial artist possess at least a 10 or 12 dexterity,

while appearing to be a reasonable idea, conflicts with the structure of at least one class with a right to martial-arts abilities — the shukenja, which may be played with a 3 dexterity. The following article offers a few guidelines and observations to clarify the subject of martial arts in an Oriental AD&D game campaign.

### **Who may learn martial arts?**

The section in *Oriental Adventures* entitled "Learning Martial Arts" (page 105) appears to suggest that any character with an open proficiency slot may acquire martial-arts ability if he can find a master to study under. Of all character classes, only two have an inalienable right to martial arts — the monk and shukenja, both of whom begin at 1st level with martial-arts abilities. The DM retains the final ruling on whether game balance is best maintained by allowing other classes to use these skills, and one of the factors he should consider when making this determination is how well martial-arts skills fit the character class in question.

**Barbarians:** Oriental barbarians are granted a large selection of skills and allowable proficiency slots to cover their many useful abilities acquired while growing up in a harsh and demanding environment. Nowhere are martial arts mentioned in the description of the class, and it is reasonable to assume that the barbarian's exposure to the subject during childhood was minimal at best. Because of this, it is likely the barbarian would have little motivation to invest time in such a demanding regimen of training in a field so foreign to his background. Certainly nothing exists to prevent him from making the attempt, but the DM must decide whether commitment to learning and practicing martial arts is done to the detriment of the barbarian's other talents.

**Bushi:** The rules for weapon specialization do not specifically leave the bushi with the option of choosing an unarmed fighting style as a specialty. But since unarmed fighting styles are listed as weapon proficiencies, it is possible to allow the bushi to specialize in one instead of in a melee or missile weapon. To do this, however, requires some rule modifications, for the listed benefits of weapon specialization function adequately when applied to missile or melee weapons but bear no practical tie to unarmed fighting styles.

In developing guidelines to cover the bushi, two facts listed in *Oriental Adventures* must be considered. First, the bushi must study under a master in order to learn martial arts. Second, the character's specialty must be declared upon his initial creation.

At the DM's discretion, the bushi may have the privilege of entering the game with an already chosen master, foregoing the cumbersome process normally entailed in finding such a tutor. To balance this, the character should undergo a process of training prior to embarking upon

the road of adventure, which would reflect a childhood or adolescence during which the bushi acquired the basics of his chosen style from a relative or acquaintance functioning as the character's master. In game terms, this could be done by allowing a period of zero-level adventuring not unlike that of the *Unearthed Arcana's* cavalier. During this time, the bushi earns his "free" master by working through experience- and hit-point penalties as shown in Table 1. At the beginning of this period of zero-level adventuring, the bushi receives three proficiency slots, two of which must be expended to acquire the basics of his style. Upon attaining 1st level, the bushi receives his fourth proficiency slot which can be used for the acquisition of a special maneuver or martial-arts weapon taught under the style. In addition, if the bushi either then or at a later time gains proficiency with a martial-arts weapon, he will be entitled to a bonus of +1 to hit and damage when employing it. (This bonus does not apply to any additional weapons in which the bushi later gains proficiency, nor to weapons not used in martial arts.)

Table 2 outlines other bonuses that could be granted to the bushi. They include the automatic acquisition of a special maneuver every six levels (which doesn't affect his option of obtaining more through expending proficiency slots) and a mental and physical training maneuver of the DM's choice every seven levels.

As a final note, the DM must consider carefully whether to allow a bushi specialized with a weapon to gain martial-arts abilities at some later point. Weapon specialization entails far more than merely expending extra proficiency slots to gain a bonus; the character is presumed to spend quite a bit of time practicing with his chosen weapon, sparring and developing a confidence with it as he learns its various nuances and the most effective means of employing it. No less a dedication is required to perfect any of the martial arts, and it is reasonable to consider whether the character may have the time to pursue both weapon *and* martial-arts practice — especially in the case of a bushi who spends much of his time adventuring.

**Kensai:** The kensai who chooses an unarmed fighting style as his forte brings up the same question as the bushi regarding whether he should enter the game with a previously chosen master. Unlike the bushi, however, the kensai's character description does not require him to be, under the tutelage of an instructor to begin play with martial-arts proficiency. Thus, the kensai character need not undergo a period of zero-level adventuring for a bonus that isn't necessary. However, the player and DM may favor zero-level adventuring anyway, for certainly the kensai requires supervised training to gain any special maneuvers taught within his particular style. Table 3 outlines an experience-level modifier similar to the

**Table 1**  
**Alternate Bushi Experience and Hit Dice**

Experience points	Experience level	10-sided dice for accumulated hit points
- 750-0	0	1d6*
1-1,500	1	1d4
1,501-3,000	2	1
3,001-6,000	3	2
6,001-14,000	4	3
14,001-30,000	5	4
30,001-60,000	6	5
60,001-120,000	7	6
120,001-240,000	8	7
240,001-480,000	9	8
480,001-710,000	10	8 + 2
710,001-1,000,000	11	8 + 4
1,000,001-1,250,000	12	8 + 6

250,000 points per level beyond 12.

\* Constitution adjustments are made at zero level. None are made at 1st level.

**Table 2**  
**Martial-Arts Specialist Bonuses for Bushi**

Experience level	Additional martial attacks	Additional martial damage	Special bonus
1	0	0	A
2	1/3	0	—
3	1/3	0	—
4	1/3	+1	—
5	1/3	+1	—
6	1/2	+1	B
7	1/2	+1	C
8	1/2	+2	—
9	1/2	+2	—
10	1/1	+2	—
11	1/1	+2	—
12	1/1	+3	B
13	1/1	+3	—
14	2/1	+3	C

**Special bonus key**

A. +1 to hit and damage with a single martial-arts weapon.

B. Gain special maneuver within style.

C. Gain mental and physical training maneuver of DM's choice.

**Table 3**  
**Alternate Kensai Experience and Hit Dice**

Experience points	Experience level	10-sided dice for accumulated hit points
- 1,500-0	0	1d6*
1-3,000	1	1d4
3,001-5,500	2	1
5,501-10,000	3	2
10,001-22,000	4	3
22,001-44,000	5	4
44,001-88,000	6	5
88,001-150,000	7	6
150,001-250,000	8	7
250,000-500,000	9	8
500,001-750,000	10	8 + 2
750,001-1,000,000	11	8 + 4
1,000,001-1,250,000	12	8 + 6

250,000 points per level beyond 12.

\* Constitution adjustments are made at zero level. None are made at 1st level.



bushi's in the event this method of acquiring a master is used.

Whether or not the kensai begins play at zero or 1st level, he receives the basics of his style without cost along with three proficiency slots, one of which may be expended for martial-arts purposes if the kensai is determined to have a master. (This does not include martial-arts weapons taught within the style, for the kensai should realistically be able to self-train in these weapons if he desires. Further, from 2nd level on, the kensai may expend up to two slots per level in martial arts.) Other slots may be expended for peaceful proficiencies, but it is suggested that until the kensai has mastered all special maneuvers and martial-arts weapons taught within the style, he may not gain proficiency in other weapons or martial-arts styles.

Table 4 outlines martial-arts bonuses for a kensai perfecting an unarmed fighting style. Some modifications have been made between this table and the character description as written, particularly regarding the levels at which certain kensai abilities are normally gained. Other bonuses granted the kensai include a periodic bonus of +1 to hit and damage with a martial-arts weapon of his choice taught within his style; at the option of the kensai, this bonus is cumulative and may be taken more than once with a single weapon. Further, the kensai periodically gains special maneuvers, mental and physical maneuvers, and a free weapon proficiency. (If the kensai has already gained proficiency in all martial-arts weapons

taught within the style, this bonus is lost.) When the character at last gains the ability of *whirlwind attack*, he may make either a hand-to-hand or melee weapon attack on each enemy within 10' of him. This does *not* mean a full hand-to-hand attack sequence, but only a single hand-to-hand attack per foe. In addition, should the kensai use his ki power to cause maximum damage during an attack, the bonus will apply only to one attack, not to an attack sequence — although the character may expend multiple ki uses to cover his full allotment of attacks during the round.

The kensai's armor class is equal to the base of his style plus the indicated bonus from the table. The formula offered for other kensai does not apply.

Kensai not dedicated to perfecting a martial-arts style may also, at the discretion of the DM, be prohibited from learning martial arts as a bushi weapon specialist. The kensai has even less time to spend on other pursuits than a bushi; and thus may not have time to learn an unarmed fighting style.

*Monk:* Fortunately, the monk is adequately dealt with in the *Oriental Adventures* rules. No major problems exist within the class regarding martial arts.

*Ninja:* Unfortunately, the ninja is not as well defined in the area of martial arts as the monk. The first problem presented by the class is that two passages in *Oriental Adventures* contradict each other: "Ninja with a dexterity score of 16 or higher gain a bonus of 10% on earned experience" (page 8), and "The ninja has no prime

requisite and so never gains the 10 percent bonus to earned experience" (page 19). This writer has the impression the ninja is *not* entitled to the experience bonus, although the class requires so much experience to advance in level that I allow ninja characters in my own game the bonus. [The passage from page 8 is incorrect, according to David "Zeb" Cook.]

Putting aside other arguments with the class, such as whether it was a good idea to make it a split-class rather than its own separate class, one might wonder whether the ninja should be able to use his ninja proficiency slots on martial arts rather than relying on the other half of his class for this. The martial art of ninjutsu in our own world certainly embodies various unarmed fighting movements; while this fact does not require translation to a ninja character class placed in a particular DM's fantasy world, the potential probably should at least exist. Thus, the DM can create a martial-arts style particular to the ninja, such as the following (as per *Oriental Adventures*, page 101, Table 68):

Name: *Ninjutsu*  
# of At.: 2/1  
Damage: 1-6  
AC: 8  
Principal Attack: *Hand*  
Special Maneuvers:  
    *Lock 1, 3*  
    *Movement 1, 5*  
    *Throw 2*  
    *Vital area 3*  
Weapons: *Nunchaku, Kusari-gama (the*

**Table 4**  
**Alternate Bonuses for Kensai**

Experience level	Initiative bonus	Armor class bonus	Additional martial-arts attacks	Additional martial-arts damage <sup>1</sup>	Special bonus
0-1	0	1	0	0	A
2	0	1	1/3	0	—
3 <sup>2</sup>	1	1	1/3	½ die	—
4	1	2	1/3	½ die	B
5 <sup>3</sup>	1	2	1/3	½ die	C
6	1	2	1/2	½ die	A,D,E
7	1	3	1/2	½ die	F
8 <sup>4</sup>	2	3	1/2	1 die	G
9	2	3	1/2	1 die	D
10 <sup>5</sup>	2	4	1/1	1 die	C,H
11	2	4	1/1	1 die	A,D
12 <sup>6</sup>	2	4	1/1	1 die	I

**Special bonus key**

- A. +1 to hit and damage with a single martial-arts weapon.
- B. May meditate like a shukenja.
- C. Gain special maneuver within style.
- D. Gain mental and physical maneuver of DM's choice.
- E. Only surprised on a 1.
- F. Cause fear; use two weapons.
- G. Gain proficiency in martial-arts weapon.
- H. Attract 1-6 pupils.
- I. Whirlwind attack.

<sup>1</sup> Using the type of damage die appropriate to the martial-arts style.  
<sup>2</sup> May strike creatures requiring +1 weapon to hit.  
<sup>3</sup> May strike creatures requiring +2 weapon to hit.  
<sup>4</sup> May strike creatures requiring +3 weapon to hit.  
<sup>5</sup> May strike creatures requiring +4 weapon to hit.  
<sup>6</sup> May strike creatures requiring +5 weapon to hit.

*DM might allow ninja weapons to be taught within the style for ninja)*

Once the DM has created a style of ninjutsu for a given clan (as different clans would likely make use of different special maneuvers), the character must locate a ninja master to study under, receiving the basics of the style after expending a proficiency slot. From that point, he advances like anyone learning martial arts, but may only allot proficiency slots from the ninja class to improve his skill at ninjutsu.

*Samurai:* It seems odd that the samurai class may be played with as little as a 3 dexterity. Other fighter classes like the barbarian, bushi, and kensai must each meet a minimum dexterity requirement, but the samurai does not have this restriction. This brings up an earlier question as to whether a prospective martial artist should meet a dexterity minimum. I personally feel that he should, and so would not allow a samurai with less than a 12 dexterity to learn martial arts. But it is for each individual DM to determine his own guidelines in the matter. An argument — albeit not a strong one — could be made that the martial artist may actually rely less on his dexterity and more on his ki for fluid performance of movement, and in this case could be the basis for allowing a 3 dexterity samurai to perform tae kwon do, as his dexterity plays little part in the scheme of things.

However the DM chooses to handle the matter, the samurai — because of his weapon-specialization requirements — should not be allowed the option of beginning play with a martial-arts proficiency. Instead, he should at some point after entering the campaign search out and locate a master to study under.

In contrast to the bushi weapon specialist and the kensai, the samurai has an intense training in his weapons from his youth, and so he requires a less-constant regimen of practice to maintain his bonuses. Certainly, the samurai will spend a significant portion of his time in practice with katana and daikyu, but probably not to the extent that training in the martial arts is automatically prohibited. Of course, the properly played samurai should be more interested in improving his calligraphy skill than his karate skill, but that is the character's choice.

Finally, the samurai's damage bonus should *not* apply to martial-arts attacks, except at the DM's discretion.

*Shukenja:* Like the monk, the shukenja is adequately handled. Given the shukenja's monastic ties, it is reasonable to presume the character has access to martial-arts training at all times without the need to actively hunt out a tutor. This should also hold true for the monk and the sohei.

*Sohei:* Unlike the shukenja, the sohei does not automatically begin play with martial-arts abilities. Yet because he is similarly tied to a monastery, it is not gratuitous for a DM to allow him to expend a proficiency slot upon creation to

gain the basics of a style taught by his superiors.

*Wu jen:* Each class in the AD&D game is given various strengths and weaknesses to keep it in balance with other classes. Magic-users in particular have traditionally been singled out as having to rely upon their arsenals of spells to survive — which is one of the reasons they may not use swords or wear armor. In the case of the wu jen, though, not only is he granted a potent and respectable selection of spells, but he is given a hit-point bonus as well as allowed the use of certain weapons (such as a short sword and bow) which his Western counterpart has always been denied in the name of "game balance." Further allowing the wu jen to acquire the art of karate, for instance, essentially grants a magic-user a three-attack round at 1-6 hp damage per hit! If one adds the special abilities of those nonhuman races allowed to become wu jen, all these talents in concert with one another may result in a character so versatile that game balance starts to suffer.

Almost certainly, any wu jen character will, if possible, learn martial arts for a back-up in the event he is forced into melee. The wu jen begins at 1st level with six proficiency slots, which is more than most classes receive. He gains another every other round. Why so many? The answer is found on page 55: "[The calligraphy proficiency] is needed to inscribe magical scrolls. . . ." As the wu jen has no *write* spell, he relies on his calligraphy skill to perform essentially the same function, as well as assisting in the creation of magical scrolls. Clearly, a wu jen *must* expend two of his six proficiency slots to acquire calligraphy. If one wishes to give the wu jen the benefit of assuming calligraphy is automatically known, the character must still make a proficiency check (at base 18 or higher) to inscribe a scroll — and probably to transfer a spell from a scroll to his equivalent of a spell book. Thus, the wu jen has a good use for all his proficiency slots apart from learning martial arts or the use of extra weapons. Given this, the wu jen character may not be quite so anxious to put proficiency slots into martial arts.

Lastly, the overall power of the adventuring group's typical opponents can provide an indicator of whether the wu jen should be allowed to learn martial arts. Some of the Oriental monsters are so powerful that it behooves the wu jen to take advantage of every possible benefit; if these monsters regularly appear in the campaign, game balance isn't necessarily compromised by permitting the wu jen the option of unarmed fighting. In the same way, if every group of bandits the party encounters are evil monks or masters of kung fu, then the wu jen may as well be allowed to pick up karate if he wants.

*Yakuza:* Nothing in the yakuza's character description reveals martial arts to be natural to the class. Thus, he should not

be allowed to begin play with an already chosen master or with martial-arts abilities, but may acquire them through the normal process.

### Learning martial arts

"Master is an honorary title, not a character class. Students refer to their teacher as master. Unarmed fighters who have gained a reputation are respectfully called master. A wanderer may enter a town, proclaiming himself to be a master. The title is not a measure of skill or level!"

No statement in *Oriental Adventures* opens the door to more potential abuse than that just quoted, from page 105. If a master may theoretically know and impart nothing more than the basic movements of a style, what is the difference between studying under an NPC master of little ability and a kensai PC who volunteers to instruct a wu jen PC in the art of jujutsu? Immediately, this important aspect of the game is removed from the control of the DM and handed over to the players. The long, involved process for the PC to locate a master to study under is not only unnecessary but ludicrous.

To retain control over the issue, the DM must insist that a PC may receive instruction in martial arts only from an NPC — *never* from another PC. Some rationalization exists for this statement. The monastic classes of monk, shukenja, and sohei would jealously guard the secrets of their unarmed fighting styles from outsiders. A bushi PC approaching a shukenja PC with a request to learn tae kwon do should receive a polite but firm refusal. Even in the case of two adventurers from the same monastery, the ultimate determination of a student's right to learn a martial-arts style or special maneuver should come from a temple superior with authority over both characters; the choice would not be the PCs' to make.

In the same way, a ninja would never instruct an outsider in the art of ninjutsu, nor would a yakuza reveal clan fighting techniques to those not under the authority of his *oyabun*. The fanatical training regimen of the kensai would be more than a nonkensai could endure, and a samurai might think it beneath his dignity to be instructed by a PC who is a mere bushi.

All these justifications cannot cover every circumstance, but they do offer grounds for ruling martial arts can only be learned from NPCs. In addition, they bring up a point that the DM should consider: In many cases, the greatest likelihood is that the PC's tutor in the martial arts will come from his governing superiors. Those classes in which this is a virtual certainty are the monk, ninja, samurai, shukenja, sohei, and yakuza.

While the above suggestion is not engraved in stone, in game terms it may be the most practical way of handling the matter. Other classes might well resort to

*Continued on page 64*



by Charles A. Vanelli

*An uprated  
movement  
system for the  
STAR FRONTIERS®  
game*

# "Jetboots, don't fail me now!"

---

*Player (whose character, a space-station security guard, has unexpectedly discovered an intruder in a storage area): "I back away, drawing my nightstick."*

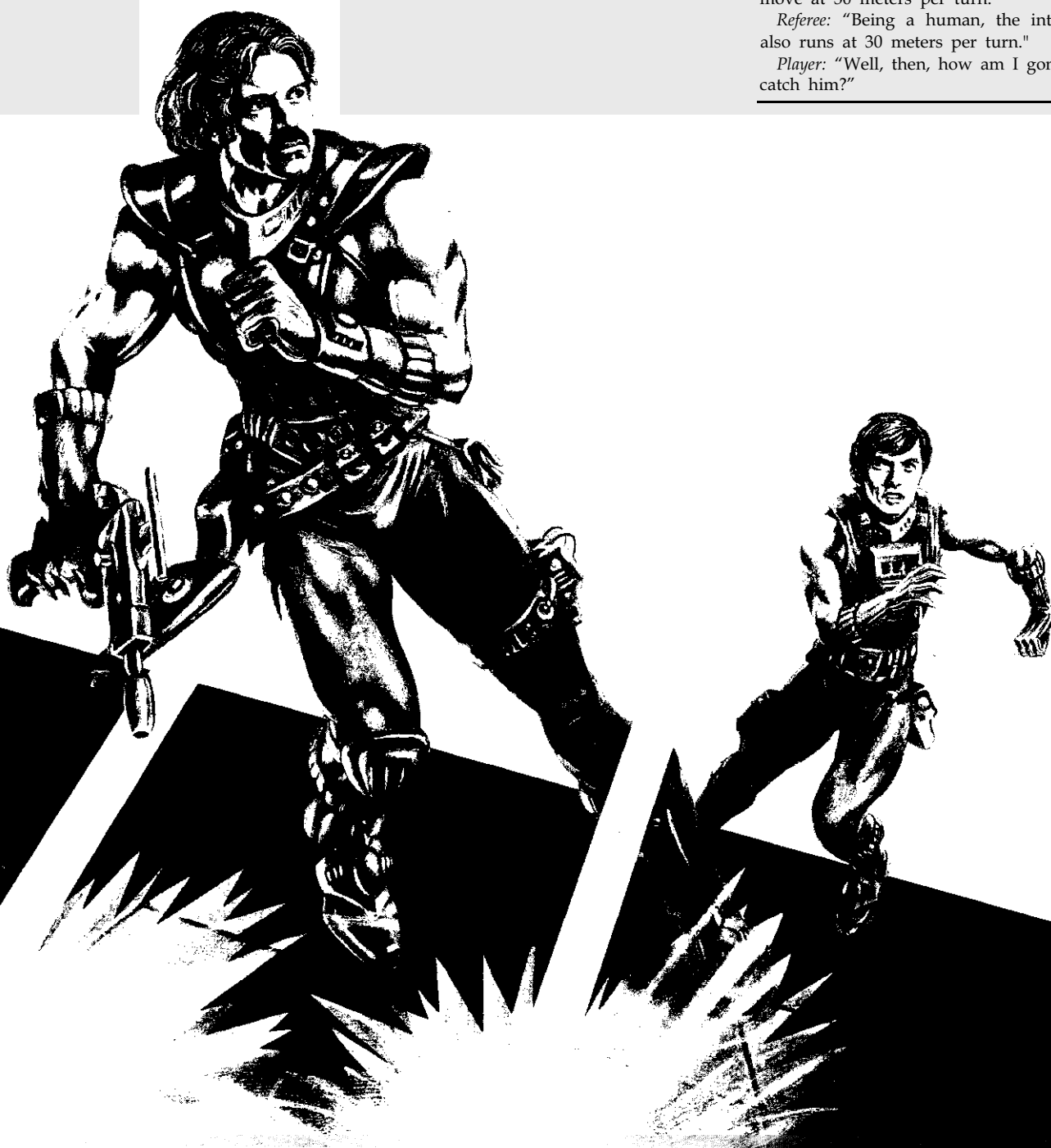
*Referee: "Great, because the guy takes off the moment he sees you. He's carrying a box from the storeroom."*

*Player: "I chase after him! When I catch up, I'll smack him with my nightstick! I move at 30 meters per turn."*

*Referee: "Being a human, the intruder also runs at 30 meters per turn."*

*Player: "Well, then, how am I gonna catch him?"*

---



Good question. Unless the intruder happens to slip on a convenient banana peel or other unforeseen obstacle, the poor security guard may never get his man. Here we see evidence of a flaw in the STAR FRONTIERS® game, in that all beings of the same race run at the same rate of speed. The problem, however, is not just limited to running or walking; it also applies to swimming, climbing, and just about every other movement task that a character might attempt.

In the STAR FRONTIERS game, all creatures are given a set of movement rates which are dependent only upon the races of the creatures involved. Thus, every Human in the Frontier runs just as fast as every other Human. The same can be said for Yazirians, Dralasites, and every other known race. Obviously, this just isn't the case. Any decent member of an Olympic track team could beat the socks off the average person on Earth in a foot race, yet the current movement system would not allow this.

Since all characters are *not* created equal in the STAR FRONTIERS game system, all speeds should not be equal. Speed should be based upon the basic attribute scores of a character and the character's race. (Obviously, a Dralasite cannot run as fast as a Vrusk.) This article describes a diversified movement rate system in which only the characters who are physically alike have the same movement rates. In addition, the "standardized" movement rates, such as climbing, jumping, and the rest, are also covered. The main advantage of this system is that it allows each character to be different from his peers. As an added bonus, the system is flexible, permitting a character to improve his speed as he improves his physical fitness.

#### Movement Rate Multiplier (MRM)

This system requires that each character have a new statistic defined: the Movement Rate Multiplier (MRM). The MRM is simply a number from 1 to 10, indicating how fast a character is — but only as compared to other members of the same race. High MRMs represent fast characters, while low scores represent slow characters. This score is used extensively in generating the movement rates, so it is recommended that this score be recorded on each character sheet near the Initiative Modifier score or the movement rates. To create the MRM, simply take the average of the character's Strength and Reaction Speed scores, then divide by 10, rounding all fractions down. This value is the MRM.

The Strength score is used in the MRM because a character's speed and quickness are based upon the strength of the muscles within that character's limbs. The Reaction Speed score is used because, by definition, it is a measure of a person's quickness. Excessive body weight and equipment encumbrance do not play a part in the creation of the MRM because of their difficulty to implement; game

masters wishing to use these attributes must create their own modifiers for them.

To use the MRM, the player must find his character's Base Movement Value for the type of movement desired. The Base Movement Values are listed in Table 1 herein and are found by cross indexing the character's race with the type of movement needed, such as running or walking. The player then multiplies the number found by his character's MRM to find his character's movement rate using that particular type of movement. Even though encumbrance has no effect on the MRM, it still plays a role in reducing the movement rates of an encumbered character by half

if the character is carrying over half his Strength score in kilograms.

For example: Rufinkel, a Yazirian, has a Strength score of 55 and a Reaction Speed score of 60. His MRM would then be 5 (the average of 55 and 60 is 57.5; dividing by 10 gives 5.75, rounded down to 5). Consulting Table 1, Rufinkel walks at the rate of 12.5 meters per turn, runs at 37.5 meters per turn, and hikes at the rate of 5 kilometers per hour. In addition, the table also gives Rufinkel's "standardized" movement rates. Rufi now climbs at the rate of 2 meters per turn, and he makes running jumps up to 6 meters long and standing jumps up to 3 meters.

**Table 1a**  
**Base Movement Values by Race**

Race	Walking	Running	Hiking	Climbing	Crawling
Dralasite	1.250	5.000	0.750	0.375	0.500
Human	2.500	7.500	1.250	0.500	0.500
Humma*	2.000	7.000	1.200	0.300	0.200
Ifshnit*	1.000	3.750	0.500	0.250	0.250
Osakar*	5.000	12.000	2.000	0.400	0.600
Vrusk	3.750	8.750	1.500	0.375	0.250
Yazirian	2.500	7.500	1.000	0.500	0.500
Sathar **	2.500	5.000	0.750	0.500	0.500

**Table 1b**  
**Base Movement Values by Race**

Race	Running leap	Standing leap	Running vertical leap	Standing vertical leap
Dralasite	1.000	0.375	0.375	0.250
Human	1.250	0.500	0.500	0.375
Humma*	10.000	5.000	1.500	1.000
Ifshnit *	0.750	0.250	0.375	0.250
Osakar *	1.200	0.500	0.400	0.300
Vrusk	1.250	0.625	0.375	0.250
Yazirian	1.250	0.500	0.500	0.375
Sathar **	1.000	0.500	0.375	0.250

**Table 1c**  
**Base Movement Values by Race**

Race	Flying	Swimming per turn	Swimming per hour
Dralasite	—	2.000	0.250
Human	—	2.500	0.250
Humma*	—	1.600	0.200
Osakar *	—	1.000	0.125
Ifshnit *	—	2.400	0.200
Vrusk	—	2.500	0.250
Yazirian	—	2.500	0.250
Sathar **	—	2.500	0.375

\* See SFAC3 Zebulon's Guide to Frontier Space for details on this race.

\*\* Sathar are used as NPCs only. However, this information also applies to the Sathar-related S'sessu race (which may be used as PCs), as described in DRAGON® issue #96.



**Movement types**

Table 1 also gives new movement types that are available to the characters. These are more fully explained below, along with the old movement types from the Alpha Dawn expanded game rules to reduce cross referencing between the book and this article.

*Walking:* This is the rate at which a character can walk, expressed in meters per turn. This is also the rate at which a character can climb a ladder or staircase.

*Running:* This is the rate at which a character can run, expressed in meters per turn.

*Hiking:* This is the rate at which a character can walk (with appropriate rests) over long periods of time, expressed in kilometers per hour. (This is known as "Per Hour" in the Alpha Dawn expanded game rules.)

*Climbing:* This is the rate at which a character can climb a rope, expressed in meters per turn. A character can climb a vertical surface at half this speed, provided there are handholds and footholds.

*Crawling:* This is the rate at which a character can crawl along the floor or ground in a semiprone position, expressed in meters per turn.

*Running Leap:* This is the distance in meters that a character can leap horizontally, allowing a straight-line run for 15 meters before leaping.

*Standing Leap:* This is the distance in meters that a character can leap horizontally from a standing start.

*Running Vertical Leap:* This is the height in meters that a character can leap, allowing a straight-line run of at least 5 meters before leaping. This height is measured from the ground to the lowest point on the character's body at the highest point of the jump. The sum of this distance and the character's height (with arm extended) used when the character is attempting to reach a high object.

*Standing Vertical Leap:* This is the height in meters that a character can leap from a standing start.

*Flying:* This is the rate at which a

**Table 2**  
**Average STR, RS, and MRM Scores**

Race	Average strength	Average reaction speed	Average MRM
Dralasite	50	40	4
Human	45	45	4
Humma*	55	45	5
Ifshnit *	40	45	4
Osakar *	50	50	5
Vrusk	40	50	4
Yazirian	35	50	4
Sathar **	45	40	4

\* See SFAC3 *Zebulon's Guide to Frontier Space* for details on this race.  
\* \* Sathar are used as NPCs only. However, this information also applies to the Sathar-related S'sessu race (which may be used as PCs), as described in DRAGON issue #96.

winged character may fly, expressed in meters per turn. Note the difference between flying and gliding: Gliding is merely coasting through the air on steady wings, but flying is the act of physically propelling oneself through the air by flapping wings.

*Swimming per turn:* This is the rate at which a character may swim, expressed in meters per turn.

*Long-Distance Swimming:* This is the rate at which a character may swim (with brief floating rests) over long periods of time, expressed in kilometers per hour.

**Expanding Table 1**

Expanding the table of Base Movement Values for new races can be accomplished in four easy steps. First, each new race must have a table of average movement rates defined for it; the creation of this table is left to the designer of the race. Second, the new race's average Strength and Reaction Speed scores must be found, using the method in the following section. Third, using the average Strength and Reaction Speed scores, the average MRM is computed, as per the rules in this arti-

cle. Finally, new figures for Table 1 are found simply by dividing the average movement rates for the race by the average MRM, rounding results to the third decimal place. The results should be recorded in the appropriate columns on Table 1.

There may be some confusion as to what a race's average ability scores are. Note that when rolling on the Ability Score Table in the Alpha Dawn expanded game rules (page 4), the most commonly generated base score will be a 45, simply because the table assigns a 20% chance for it to occur. No other base score has as great a chance, though 45 is not the average score. The average score is actually the sum of 45 and the appropriate value from the Ability Modifier Table (Alpha Dawn expanded game rules, page 4). Thus, for a Dralasite, the average Strength score would be 50 (45 and a +5 modifier equals 50), while its average Reaction Speed score would be 40 (45 and a - 5 modifier). This gives Dralasites an average MRM of 4 (the average of 50 and 40, divided by 10 and rounded down). The average MRMs for typical races are given in Table 2.

When the numbers in Table 1 are multiplied by the average MRM score for a race, the results are the regular movement rates for the race in question. This system works on the assumption that the rates given in the Movement Table on page 19 of the Alpha Dawn expanded game rules were created with the average character in mind. The average character's statistics are the same as those of an average NPC, as shown on the table in the Alpha Dawn expanded game rules on page 59.

Ω

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*Continued from page 61*  
finding a master entirely apart from their acquaintances or present superiors.  
Once the master has been established, the DM can then use the formula in *Oriental Adventures* for detailing what martial-arts abilities the particular master is familiar with. In the case of the monastic classes (monks, shukenja, and sohei) and the ninja and yakuza, even if the character's present master is limited in martial-arts ability, it should not be difficult for the character to locate a more experienced master later — through the process listed.

Ω

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# SAGE ADVICE

by Skip Williams

If you have any questions on the games produced by TSR, Inc., "Sage Advice" will answer them. In the United States and Canada, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON Magazine, TSR UK Limited, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD, United Kingdom.

Once again, we enter the realm of player characters in the AD&D® game. These questions are primarily organized according to the classes involved, not races; class combinations are dealt with in their own section. Additional commentary was provided by David "Zeb" Cook and Jon Pickens, who are currently working on the second-edition AD&D game rules, and by Roger E. Moore.

## Magic-users

**Can a magic-user fill a higher-level spell slot with a lower-level spell? For instance, can a magic-user memorize fireball instead of a fourth- or higher-level spell?**

No. Spells can't be switched except under certain special circumstances, such as the use of a *Rary's mnemonic enhancer* or *Mordenkainen's lucubration* spell.

**Would a magic-user take damage from his own fireball if the spell were cast at zero range?**

Absolutely yes! Note that a *fireball* has a cubic volume in excess of 33,000 cubic feet, enough to fill about 335' of 10' x 10' corridor. A mage doesn't have to cast a *fireball* at range zero in order to get caught in the blast.

**Are there any restrictions on magic-users trading spells?**

None except those imposed by the DM. Some campaigns require mages to make scrolls (or have them made) before a spell can be safely transferred. Once the scroll is made, the receiving magic-user rolls his "chance to know," writes the spell into his book, and the spell disappears from the scroll. Any attempt to write the spell into the book uses up the scroll even if the "chance to know" roll fails. Note that a *write* spell is not required as long as the receiving magic-user has a "slot" of the appropriate level available, and he has not previously failed his "chance to know" for the spell in question. Attempts to transfer spells directly from book to book result in

the spells disappearance from the original book.

If a PC has an NPC mentor who supplies higher-level spells as the PC advances in level, the mentor might be upset to find "bootleg" spells appearing in his apprentice's spell book.

## Fighters & rangers

**Can a ranger wear plate mail or plate armor?**

Yes. A ranger may wear any armor.

**How do rangers acquire magic-user spells?**

A ranger learns magic-user spells from a magic-user, just as a 1st-level magic-user does. Start the ranger out with *read magic*, plus three other spells from the table in the DMG, page 39. The cost of the initial spell book is assumed to be part of the training cost for reaching 9th level. The ranger must follow all the normal rules for spell use (e.g., chance to know a spell by intelligence, casting time, material components, armor worn, etc.).

**At what level do rangers cast their spells?**

The character's spell-casting level is based upon the first level at which he can cast spells. An 8th-level ranger, for example, casts his druidic spell at 1st level. A 9th-level ranger casts his magic-user spell at 1st level, but he casts his druid spell at 2nd-level; at 10th level, a ranger casts his druid spells at third level and his magic-user spell at second level, and so on.

**Do rangers receive bonus druidic spells for high wisdom?**

No, only clerics and druids get them.

**Can high-level rangers use wands or other magic-user items?**

The ranger's ability to cast spells does not empower the class with the ability to use magic-user or druidical magic items, unless such may be used by all classes.

**Can a high-level ranger who has all the Bigby's hand/fist spells in his books use all three functions of a wand of force?**

No. Only a member of the magic-user class can use the wands third function (and then only if he has at least one of the *Bigby's hand/fist* spells in his book). Rangers, even though they can cast magic-user spells, are not magic-users per se. Furthermore, a ranger can have 2nd-level magic-user spells at best (see the *Players*

*Handbook*, page 25), and thus cannot have any of the *Bigby's hand* spells.

**If a ranger can only own what he can carry, how can he build a stronghold?**

You might also ask "If a ranger can only own what he can carry, how can he own a mount?" In fact, the restriction applies only to personal items, treasure, weapons, magic items, etc. The property restriction is not intended to turn rangers into medieval bag ladies. It merely reflects the class's nonmaterialistic outlook. A stronghold is not strictly for a character's personal use; it is a home for all the character's hirelings, and also serves to enforce the character's interests and promote the fundamentals of the character's alignment within the area that the stronghold controls. As such, a stronghold is not an item of personal property and falls outside the restriction.

**Are there additional adjustments to surprise for an elven ranger?**

No. However, the character does get the best applicable surprise chance in any given situation.

**The article, "Arcana update, part 1" in DRAGON issue # 103 (page 13) says that only single-classed fighters and rangers can specialize with a weapon. Does this mean that dual-classed fighters and rangers cannot specialize?**

*Unearthed Arcana* did not specifically restrict weapon specialization to single-classed fighters and rangers, though the update article (written by Kim Mohan, with input from Gary Gygax, Frank Mentzer, and Jeff Grubb) did. If *Unearthed Arcana* alone is used, then multiclassed and dual-classed fighters and rangers can indeed specialize with weapons. If the update is followed, the opposite is true. Another option for the DM is to rule that a fighter or ranger who assumes a second class loses the benefits of specialization, but a character of another class can become specialized if he assumes a fighter class. Fighters and rangers get their specialization bonuses from concentrating on one weapon, which requires constant practice. When a character assumes a second class, he ignores his original class completely while learning the new class. A fighter who does this loses the benefits of specialization, as he no longer devotes any effort to the weapon of specialization. If the character started play as any other class, he could specialize in a weapon when he began learning the fighter class, and would not incur any penalty except the possibility of low hit points (see the *Players Handbook*, page 33).

**The rules say that the option to specialize in a weapon must be made at 1st level. What about the NPCs in my campaign that were**

**around before the specialization rules came out? My players aren't taking this sitting down, either.**

A DM may allow already-created characters to start weapon specialization retroactively when he first introduces the specialization rule into his campaign. Thereafter, the decision to specialize must be made when a character begins play.

**Can a weapon proficiency slot be used to enable a fighter or other class to make attacks with two weapons at no penalty? Can a fighter or ranger specialize in two-weapon combat?**

Using a proficiency slot for two-weapon combat is up to the DM, but we do not recommend it. If you decide to allow such a proficiency, require a separate slot for each combination to be used. For example, a character who wishes to use a long sword and dagger combination without penalty would have to have at least three proficiencies: long sword, dagger, and long sword *and* dagger.

Weapon specialization allows a fighter or ranger to excel in the use of one — and only one — weapon. Thus, a character cannot be specialized in two-weapon combat, as this is not a weapon per se. A character may use a second weapon along with his weapon of specialization, but he must follow the rules on page 70 of the *DMG*. Bonuses for specialization apply only to the weapon of specialization, never to the secondary weapon.

**Can a character simply specialize in "sword," and so gain specialization bonuses with all types of swords?**

No. A character specializes with a specific type of weapon, not a general class of weapon.

**Can a fighter or ranger specialize in more than one weapon if the extra slots are available?**

Fighters and rangers can specialize in only one weapon, the number of available proficiency slots notwithstanding.

**Will "to hit" bonuses from strength or weapon specialization allow a character to hit monsters that are hit only by silver, iron, or magical weapons?**

Nonmagical bonuses of any sort *never* allow a character to harm a creature which is harmed only by magical or special weapons.

## Thieves & assassins

**Why did *Unearthed Arcana* take shields away from assassins?**

*Unearthed Arcana* (page 13) is in error. Assassins may use shields but not during a melee round in which the character is engaged in the act of assassination.

**Do assassins have to roll to hit when attempting assassination?**

This question sparked considerable controversy among the sages. Gaming groups should choose whichever of the two following rulings is most appropriate and desirable for the campaign and PCs:

1. Assassination **is not** a melee tactic; it cannot be performed against a surprised PC or NPC during a regular, played-out battle. In order to perform an assassination, an assassin PC must turn over an exacting plan for the act to the DM, who evaluates the plan and rolls the dice on the Assassins' Table For Assassinations on page 75 of the *DMG*. No "to hit" roll is required; the roll on the table merely condenses all of the various die rolls together into one package for fast results.

2. Assassination **is** a melee tactic but can only be used against surprised opponents and cannot be combined with backstabbing; a "to hit" roll is thus required (*Players Handbook*, page 29) unless the victim is helpless (see the *DMG*, page 70). If the attack hits, the DM rolls on the assassination chart to see if the assassin kills the victim outright. If the assassination fails, the victim still suffers normal weapon damage. Poison can be used with an assassination attack.

**Can thieves back-stab or assassins assassinate with missile weapons?**

Thieves cannot use missile weapons for backstabbing attacks, but assassins apparently can do so (going by a strict rules interpretation), though this is not recommended.

**If a thief using two weapons makes a back attack, does he get his "to hit" and damage modifiers for both weapons?**

The +4 "to hit" and the damage multiplier only apply to the first blow; the second weapon gets the +2 "to hit" modifier for a rear attack but no damage modifier. The same holds true if the thief gets multiple attacks due to surprise.

**When a thief makes a back attack, are any damage bonuses for strength or a magical weapon also multiplied?**

No. The multiplier applies only to the weapon's base damage; other damage bonuses are applied after the multiplication is made.

**Can a thief ever get more than quintuple damage for back-stabs?**

No. Quintuple damage is the limit.

**Why are thieves restricted to short bows? Why can't they use long bows?**

There are two reasons for this: game logic and game balance.

From the standpoint of game logic, a long bow is simply too large. A thief carrying such a weapon would have difficulty

hiding or climbing. Therefore, the thief learns to use other, more easily concealed weapons. There are other logical considerations. A long bow requires more strength than the average thief has. Rather than writing a strength requirement for the long bow (and every other weapon on the list), we put a class restriction on it; only fighters who normally have high strength scores can use it.

From the standpoint of game balance, only fighter-types have unlimited choices of weapons. In order to make thieves less effective than fighters in combat, they have fewer weapons to use. Thieves are not supposed to get into long-range fire-fights with opponents; they're supposed to be sneaky. This distinction between classes is very important for several reasons. It prevents a character with extremely good stats from totally dominating the game, since no character can do everything. It also promotes teamwork and gives everyone a chance to have some fun, again because no single character can do it all.

A similar line of logic applies to all the other class distinctions. The AD&D game simply would lose its appeal if clerics could use edged weapons, if mages could wear armor, or if fighters could pick locks.

**The *Players Handbook* says that eleven characters can move so silently that they can surprise opponents 66 2/3% of the time. Do I add this amount to an elfen thief's move silently percentage?**

No; use the racial adjustment from the table on page 28. The 66 2/3% refers only to an increased ability to gain surprise (1-4 instead of 1-2 on 1d6) and is dependent on the prevailing conditions (see the *Players Handbook*, page 16).

**A 9th-level thief-acrobat has a dexterity of 19 and wears no armor. According to the Thief-Acrobat Function Table (*Unearthed Arcana*, page 24), a 9th-level thief-acrobat can fall a distance of 10' and take no damage. The modifications for dexterity and no armor add 15' to the falling distance. Is this 15' also added to the 10' that the thief-acrobat can fall and take no damage?**

The bonus distances from any source are added to the distance indicated on the falling column on the Thief-Acrobat Function Table; since the "automatic safe" falling distance is inferred, not listed, it does not increase with bonuses. The 9th-level thief-acrobat in your example would take no damage from falls up to 10'.

**Which races can become thief-acrobats?**

All races that can become thieves can become thief-acrobats.

**Do thief-acrobats have to pay extra training costs? How much does a thief-acrobat's initial training cost?**



Acrobats pay normal training costs. A starting thief-acrobat pays training costs for gaining the 6th level (see the *DMG*, page 86).

**Will gauntlets of ogre power give a thief-acrobat the bonuses for an 18 strength (as given in the table on page 25 of *Unearthed Arcana*)?**

Gauntlets of ogre power give an 18/00 strength to the chest and arms. Use the 18 strength score only for pole vaulting.

**Can thief-acrobats use their evasion maneuvers against missile attacks?**

Yes, provided they have the initiative and are aware of the attacks.

## Multi- and dual-classed PCs

**What multiclassed options are open to thief-acrobats?**

Thief-acrobats are treated as thieves for determining what multiclass combinations are available.

**Can assassins opt to become thief-acrobats as multi- or dual-classed PCs?**

No, they cannot. A subclass cannot be combined with another subclass.

**Are half-orcs the only race that can become cleric/thieves?**

If you are using just the *Players Handbook*, this is indeed the case. If you are using *Unearthed Arcana*, the following races can become cleric/thieves: gray dwarves; dark, gray, high, valley, and wood elves; deep and surface gnomes; all types of halflings; and half-orcs. Note that an expanded table of allowable multiclassed options was published in issue #103 of *DRAGON Magazine*, on page 49.

**Are druid/illusionists possible in the AD&D game? There are druid/magic-users.**

No. A subclass is not allowed in a multiclassed combination just because the main class is. In the case of the illusionist class, only the gnome races can be multiclassed illusionists of any sort because these races have a predisposition toward the illusionist profession. Elves, who can be druid/magic-users, can't become illusionists at all.

**Which races can become magic-user/assassins?**

Dark, gray, high, valley, and wood elves may become magic-user/assassins.

**I have a human 2nd-level fighter/8th-level cleric (using the dual-classed rules from the *Players Handbook*). Can he use edged weapons? Is there any penalty for their use?**

The answers to these questions depend on which class the character followed

first; it isn't apparent from the order in which you list the levels. We'll guess that the PC was a fighter first and a cleric second. In this case, the character can use edged weapons freely, since he is now a higher level in his second class (see the *Players Handbook*, page 33). There are no penalties whatsoever for using edged weapons. When using such weapons, however, the character attacks as a 2nd-level fighter, not an 8th-level cleric.

**Can a multiclassed fighter/thief use his specialization bonuses in a back-stab attempt?**

No. Only single-classed fighters may specialize (see "Arcana update, part 1" in *DRAGON* issue #103, page 113).

**Can a multiclassed fighter/magic-user wear full plate armor?**

Yes, multiclassed magic-users (not dual-classed) may wear the best armor allowed by their classes. However, only elves may wear armor and cast magic-user spells (see the *Players Handbook*, page 33, top of second column).

**What multiclass options are open to barbarians and cavaliers?**

None. The barbarian subclass is open only to humans, and humans are never multiclassed characters. An elfen or half-elfen cavalier (strictly speaking) cannot be a multiclass character as such a combination is never mentioned in the rules as a possible combination; this also applies to half-elfen paladins. Human cavaliers and paladins cannot be multiclassed, but in theory could be dual-classed. However, a dual-classed cavalier or paladin also seems to run against the single-minded nature of those classes. You might consider a restriction on dual-classed cavalier types that only the cleric class can be adopted as the other class.

**What are the rules for single-classed demi-humans adding a second class, or multiclassed demi-humans adding another class?**

There are none. Multiclassed demi-humans must be multiclassed from the start; they can't add more classes later.

**When can my fighter/illusionist use weapon specialization? Are there any penalties for doing so?**

Your fighter/illusionist might not be able to use weapon specialization at all. If he is a multiclassed fighter/illusionist (and therefore a gnome, the only race in which this combination is allowed) he is not single-classed and cannot specialize.

If he is a dual-classed human he may specialize only if he was an illusionist first. If the character started play as an illusionist, he could specialize in a weapon when he began learning the fighter class, and would not incur any penalty except that he would have an illusionist's hit points (see the *Players Handbook*, page 33).

**At what level do multiclassed spell-casters cast their spells? I assume that the levels are cumulative, so that a 7th-level fighter/7th-level mage would cast his spells at 14th level.**

A multiclassed character's levels are *not* cumulative for any purpose. The fighter/mage in your example casts magic-user spells at 7th level. If the character were a 7th-level cleric/6th-level magic-user, he would cast clerical spells at 7th level and magic-user spells at 6th level.

**Do multiclassed characters get all of the proficiency slots of all of their classes? If so, are they free to use any of their slots for any of their classes?**

Multiclassed characters have proficiency slots for all their classes. All these slots are not lumped together, however; they remain separated by class. A fighter/thief, for example, who chooses to attack as a fighter suffers the fighter nonproficiency penalty if he uses a weapon with which he is proficient only as a thief. Likewise, the fighter/thief may only back-stab with a weapon allowed to the thief class.

**Is it possible for a human to add more than one class using the dual-class rules?**

Adding more than one class is not recommended except for the occasional and extremely rare NPC, but it can be done.

***Oriental Adventures* says that a dual-classed character "always uses the most advantageous combat and saving throw tables of the two classes without penalty" (page 28). Does this mean that a high-level fighter could make multiple attacks while studying a second class?**

Not before he surpasses his fighter level in the second class, unless he forfeits all experience for that adventure. Multiple attacks are a function of the fighter class.

## Miscellaneous

**I think I have found an error in the *Players Handbook*. It lists the maximum dexterity for half-orcs as 14, but the AD&D game errata published in *DRAGON* issue #35 lists the maximum dexterity as 17.**

You have indeed found a mistake in the *Players Handbook*. Half-orcs do have a maximum dexterity of 17.

**Do elves get their 66 2/3% surprise ability when wearing elfin chain mail?**

No; elfin chain mail and all other metallic armors negate the surprise ability. Ω

# DAILY PLANET™ GAMING SUPPLEMENT

Winter Edition

November 4th, 1988

Number 16

## SECRET MISSION FILES OF TASK FORCE X™ REVEALED

Espionage comes to the DC™ HEROES RPG in two releases this winter featuring Task Force X, a.k.a. the Suicide Squad™. The **Belle Reve™ Sourcebook** is a complete reference work on Belle Reve prison, the Squad's secret headquarters and the most sophisticated facility for holding villains ever built. Following the sourcebook is **Operation: Atlantis**, a 32-page adventure featuring the Suicide Squad.

Released this month, **The Belle Reve Sourcebook** is a complete sourcebook on the Squad, containing histories, psychological reports, and statistics for every Squad member, from core agents like Rick Flag, Jr.™, Bronze Tiger™, and Nightshade™, to one-shot specialists like Plastique™, the Privateer™, and Slipknot™, to casualties like Mindboggler™, Multiplex™, and the Thinker™.

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You won't want to miss either of these exciting modules. **The Belle Reve Sourcebook** is on sale now, and **Operation: Atlantis** will be out soon.

### THE JOKER™

**The Joker** *alias Unknown*

DEX: 4	STR: 4	BODY: 3
INT: 9	WILL: 12	MIND: 5
INFL: 10	AURA: 7	SPIRIT: 6
INITIATIVE: 23	HERO POINTS: 120	

#### Skills:

Artist (Actor): 5  
Charisma: 10  
Martial Artist: 8  
Gadgetry: 11  
Vehicles: 4  
Weaponry: 4

#### Advantages:

Connections:  
Arkham Asylum™ (High)  
Underworld (High)  
Batman™ (Low)

#### Drawbacks:

Catastrophic Irrational  
Attraction to practical jokes.  
Miscellaneous: Insanity.

#### Equipment:

Acid Flower  
[Acid: 8, BODY: 2, R#: 2]  
Range is 0 APs.  
Electric Joy Buzzer  
[Lightning: 9, BODY: 4, R#: 2]  
Range is Touch  
Joker Venom™ Ring  
[Poison Touch: 8, BODY: 5, R#: 2]

The Joker can poison his victims by scratching them with this ring. When the Joker Venom kills, it leaves its victim's lips pulled back in a twisted smile.

**Motivation:** Psychopath  
**Wealth:** Varies

#### Job:

Former Comic, now Criminal  
**Race:** Human

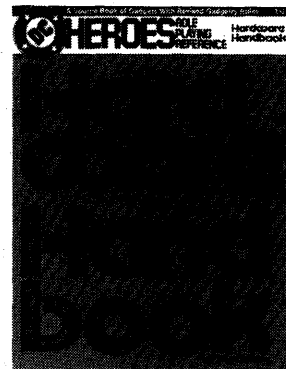
#### Background:

Recent finings about the man now known as the Joker indicate that he originally worked for the Ace Chemical Company™, but quit to become a stand-up comedian. He could not find work as a comic, and became increasingly desperate for money to support his pregnant wife. He somehow came into contact with the Red Hood Gang™ and agreed to help them rob the chemical factory where he had once worked. Before the crime could take place, however, the comedian's wife was electrocuted in a freak domestic accident.

Under duress, he still accompanied the gang on the robbery dressed as the Red Hood™. The break-in was interrupted by police and the Batman. The other two members of the Gang were shot, and the would-be comedian dove into a chemical waste tank in an attempt to escape. He managed to get free, but discovered that the chemicals had turned his skin white, his lips blood red, and his hair green. The combined stress of the day's events finally caused his mind to snap and he went insane, becoming the notorious criminal called the Joker.



### CHECKLIST:



#### □ HARDWARE HANDBOOK

This 96-page sourcebook is entirely devoted to bringing you the high-tech equipment used by heroes in the DC Universe™ to help them in their never-ending battle against crime. Included are a host of Batman's Bat-Gadgets™, Green Arrow™'s amazing arsenal of trick arrows, the Teen Titans™ heavy-duty gear, and the futuristic gizmos of the Legion of Super-Heroes™. It's a must for Gadget fans.

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The following conventions will be attended by members of our DC HEROES staff. Come and visit at:

#### Quad Con '88

November 4-6, 1988  
Rock Island, Illinois

#### Rock Con '88

November 5-6, 1988  
Rockford, Illinois

If your convention will be running a DC Heroes RPG tournament, please contact Mayfair Games for prizes. If we're notified far enough in advance, we will list your convention in the *Daily Planet Gaming Supplement*.

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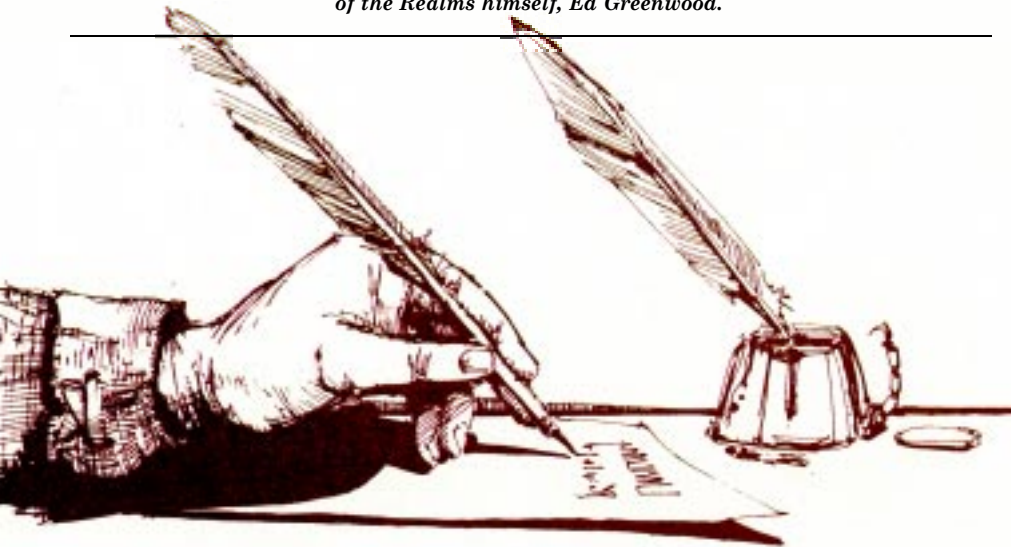
# The Dragon's Bestiary

## Rare beasts of the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ setting

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*A number of creatures found in every fantasy world are unique to that world alone. Our files have revealed a few rare creatures that inhabit the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ setting and no other known world — all described by the creator of the Realms himself, Ed Greenwood.*

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### LOCK LURKER

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FREQUENCY: *Rare*  
NO. APPEARING: 1  
ARMOR CLASS: 3  
MOVE: 8"  
HIT DICE: 1+3  
% IN LAIR: *See below*  
TREASURE TYPE: *Often found with large hoards (e.g., A, H, O, or Z)*  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 bite or 1 sting  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2 or 6-9  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Paralyzing venom in sting*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*  
INTELLIGENCE: *Low*  
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*  
SIZE: *S (1" body, sting up to 12")*  
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

This tiny creature has been the bane of many thieves and tomb-robbers, and it is sometimes deliberately placed as a guardian against such. Appearing normally as an inch-long, coinlike, coppery disc, a lock lurker has two rows of tiny, retractable legs on its underside, each of which ends in a small suction cup. On one edge of the coinlike body is a lightning-fast stinger that sometimes reaches a length of 12".

When the lock lurker is at rest, this stinger is concealed from sight, as it exists on the Ethereal plane (where it can also strike); it is only brought into existence in the Prime Material plane to launch an attack. When so materialized, the sting looks like a scorpion's segmented tail, curving upward from the dislike body of the lurker. When using the stinger, it looks as though the lurker will overbalance and

fall due to the size and length of the sting. This action, however, is counterbalanced by the heavy body of the creature.

The strike of this sting is terrifically powerful, being able to pierce any armor and *stun* opponents smaller than man-size for 1-2 rounds. The stinger does 6-9 hp damage per strike; it also injects a venom that reacts with a victim's blood to *paralyze* it in the round immediately following a sting-strike. At this point, the victim is *slowed* to half-normal movement rates and attacks (as per the third-level magic-user spell). As the victim's body reacts to the venom, a saving throw vs. poison must be made. Success means that the victim is *slowed* for another round, then recovers. Failure means that *paralysis* takes place immediately, lasting 1-6 hours, and is then followed by a round of *slowed* movement prior to recovery. The complex venom of the lurker reacts unpredictably with all victims. Hence, a successful save vs. one strike does not mean immunity to the venom of a subsequent strike, nor does paralysis from one strike mean paralysis from all others.

A lurker eats by means of a tiny mouth on its underside, an iris of razor-sharp teeth that resembles the beak of an octopus. These teeth do 1 hp damage per round to any opponent with which they come in contact. The lurker can bite through hide, hair, skin, or leather armor; it cannot bite through metal, however. The strike and bite of a lurker are utterly silent unless metal is struck.

Lock lurkers are so named because they are often employed as guardians of chests and doors to strike unwary interlopers through large keyholes. Assassins have placed them under inkwells and other items where victims are sure to come within striking distance. Lock-lurker venom is valued by alchemists as an ingredient in the spell ink of the *slow* spell and in certain potions and magical processes. A lock lurker injects only a small part of its venom with each strike, and can so strike 40 or so times in any one-day period without its venom being exhausted. Venom and ingested food are held in expandable body sacks on the Ethereal plane, being transferred by the lock lurker in a method not yet fully understood.

Lock-lurker bodies are an essential ingredient of *oil of etherealness*. As a result, a well-preserved body will garner 2 gp (6 gp if its sting is recovered, too, and not left behind on the Ethereal plane). Lock-lurker venom brings about 10 gp per flask from those few alchemists who know it for what it is: a clear, viscous fluid that has a gummy texture and smells somewhat like fresh crab or seaweed. Lock-lurker egg sacks bring 25 gp or so on the open market.

The stinger of a lock lurker can be attacked on the Prime Material plane only when it materializes there. On the Ethereal plane, all of a lock lurker can be attacked, except when the stinger passes

into the Prime Material plane (which it can always do, once per round, despite any physical or magical restraints placed upon it in either plane). Lock-lurker attacks and venom have identical effects on the Ethereal plane. Lock lurkers can see up to 6" (with infravision) on either plane.

Lock lurkers are solitary creatures. They wander slowly, pausing wherever they find a good feeding location. Lock lurkers can tolerate extremes of heat and cold, including the conditions found in smoke-houses, ovens, and cold-room freezers. Lock lurkers are hermaphroditic; whenever two adult lock lurkers meet, they mate and pass on. One to four months after mating, each lock lurker lays an egg sack of 10-120 tiny eggs, 60% of which are fertile. These are left untended and hatch in 1d6 weeks. Typically, each egg sack produces 6-18 survivors. The surviving lurkers eat each other and unhatched eggs until they are fully mobile, whereupon they wander off in search of food. They never again fight each other and become mature within two years.

Lock lurkers are usually copper or bronze in color but may be of a gold or silver hue 25% of the time. Lock lurkers are able to regenerate a lost or damaged stinger, but this is a slow process.

## LYBBARDE

FREQUENCY: *Rare*

NO. APPEARING: 70% of 1, 20% of 2, 10% of 3-6

ARMOR CLASS: 5

MOVE: 14"

HIT DICE: 5

% IN LAIR: 15%

TREASURE TYPE: *Nil*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 *claws and 1 bite*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-4/1-4/2-8

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Rear claws rake for 2-8/2-8*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Surprised only on a 1; see below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See below*

INTELLIGENCE: *Low to average*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*

SIZE: *L*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

Celebrated by heralds for its courage and fortitude, the lybbarde is one of the most feared predators of the wastelands. These giant cats resemble a cross between a panther and a lioness. In battle, they are utterly fearless and totally silent. Although a lybbarde's intelligence is rarely greater than that of most humans, the lybbarde is always well aware of its own powers and uses them with great cunning. Moreover, its judgment is unaffected by pain — it is never enraged, and never blinded or maddened by pain or circumstance.

Although it possesses standard magic resistance, the lybbarde is immune to any form of mental control or influence, as if it

had a wisdom of 25, as per *Legends & Lore*, page 7. A lybbarde fights to defend itself, its mate and young, or its lair, to gain food. It breaks off or avoids combat when it judges its chances of success to be too slim to be worth the danger.

A lybbarde can spring up to 30' horizontally and 20" vertically, and can fight for hours without tiring. The lybbarde regenerates 2 hp per day regardless of how much rest it receives. Adult lybbardes cannot be tamed, but young lybbardes (if trained from birth) have a 40% chance to be made into obedient, diligent guardians.

A lybbarde has a special and formidable combat ability. Its long, prehensile, whip-like tail ends in a tuft of hair. Its touch (successful "to hit" roll required) slows creature, as per the third-level magic-user spell; a save vs. breath weapon at -2 negates its effects. The effects of this *slow* last for one round, during which the lybbarde can make double the number of normal attacks against that victim alone. Only one creature per round can be *slowed*.

This creature is thought to live up to 60 years. Naturalists report that a lybbarde tail loses its *slow* ability immediately after being severed or after the lybbarde dies, and that a lybbarde that loses its tail regenerates a new one very slowly, regaining its ability to *slow* as much as one year after losing its tail. Magic-users report that lybbardes seem unaffected by *haste* or *slow* spells cast upon them, or by the tails of other lybbardes.

Lybbardes are usually solitary hunters, although mated pairs may be encountered 20% of the time. Lybbardes seek out and live with others of their rare breed, and gather against strong foes in hunting packs of up to half a dozen. If encountered in their lairs, lybbardes have 1-4 young (HD 2, half damage on all attacks, no *slow* power), who are ferociously defended by their parents. Lybbarde lairs never contain treasure because lybbardes always eat outside their lairs (so as not to draw attention to the location of their abodes). Lybbarde young grow to full power within a year, and thereafter may establish a lair near that of their parents.

Lybbardes are huge, sleek cats of up to 7' body length (with tails up to an additional 6' in length). Their coats are black to dark brown on their heads, backs, and flanks, with mottled tan and brown belly and legs. The tail is always dark, and its tuft is light tan in color. Lybbardes have large, glowing green eyes and many teeth. Savage tribes value and wear these teeth in necklaces and bracelets.

## METALMASTER

FREQUENCY: *Rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1 (10% of 2)

ARMOR CLASS: 6

MOVE: 11"

HIT DICE: 4 + 4 to 6 + 6

% IN LAIR: 20%

TREASURE TYPE: *Nil, though often found near metallic treasures such as coins*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-12

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Magnetism*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Magnetism*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

INTELLIGENCE: *Low*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*

SIZE: *L (12-26' long)*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

The metalmaster is a large, sluglike creature that eats only large, red-blooded prey, such as livestock and humans. It gains its name from its strange ability to generate (or manipulate existing) magnetic fields to alternately attract or repel metal. This ability has a 90' effective radius (increased to 150' if a metalmaster affects a magnetic field of natural or magical origin). Incredibly, all metals, even nonferrous ones such as gold, are affected by a metalmaster's magnetic manipulations.

A metalmaster can either attract or repel metal from round to round. Attraction draws unsecured metallic objects toward the metalmaster. Small, secured objects (up to 20 gp weight) are unaffected unless the strap, flap, or other device securing them fails to save vs. normal blow. In such cases, the objects break free







and are pulled toward the metalmaster at a rate of 60' per round. Handheld weapons of this size or less are wielded at -6 to hit if within the metalmaster's "reach."

Large, unsecured metallic objects (up to 200 gp weight) are dragged at 30' per round toward the metalmaster if they are affected at all. Large, secured objects are unaffected. Grasped or held metallic objects (like weapons) are wielded at -4 to hit while being attracted, and characters holding them must roll their strengths or less on 1d20 (consider 18/01-18/00 as 19) or have the object torn free. Magically held or secured objects are never affected by a metalmaster, and a *wall of force* or similar means prevents metal objects from being snatched away. A metalmaster's power cannot be avoided by use of *blink*, *jump*, or similar spells because the power extends into the Ethereal plane. *Teleport*, *dimension door*, and the like, however, work as means of escape.

The repulsion ability deflects metallic missiles (including arrows with metal heads) so that they strike at -8 to hit. Similarly, repulsed metallic weapons are wielded at -4 to hit. Characters armored in any metallic or metal-using armor must make a strength check on 1d20 every round or be forced away 10'; a successful check means the character can advance no more than 10' and attack. Characters wearing leather, cloth, or no armor can be prevented from advancing or forced away if they carry more than 10-gp weight of metallic weapons or accoutrements (coins, belt buckles, bracers and the like). This occurs at the rate of 5' per round, if they fail strength rolls on 1d20 each round.

A metalmaster's power works on metal, whether such metal is magical or not; enchantments do not affect the aforementioned saving throws. This power also extends to affect traces of metal in rock or

unrefined metallic ores. The attraction and repulsion cause no damage to characters themselves. Note, however, that wielded weapons may strike unintended targets; anyone within 5' of a weapon's wielder has a 20% chance of being attacked with normal "to hit" rolls if the metalmaster is missed.

Small, unsecured objects attracted by a metalmaster never strike its body, instead taking up orbits around it. Thus, in the 10' around a metalmaster, there often exists a whirling storm of metal akin to a *blade barrier* (see the sixth-level clerical spell). The cloud deals 4d6 hp damage to all creatures within the area of effect (or 2d6 hp damage if a dexterity check on 1d20 with +4 to the die roll is made) unless such creatures are magically shielded. A metalmaster often lurks near hoards of metallic treasure (particularly coins), which not only attracts prey but also provides ready-made missiles. The metalmaster is able to work its magnetism at will and without rest.

A metalmaster can also mimic speech and similar sounds made previously in its presence (such as cries for help, fragments of verbal spell-casting, shouted warnings, and so forth). Nevertheless, the metalmaster's low intelligence often causes it to use the wrong sound for the situation, which may lure by default by causing great curiosity in intelligent prey.

A metalmaster is large and leather-skinned, of sluglike or wormlike form, and is dull purple to rust-red in hue. Smoky gray or black specimens are sometimes encountered. The metalmaster has a large maw with sawlike teeth that does 3-12 hp damage, and its jaws are strong enough to bite through metal.

A metalmaster does not eat

metal, although small pieces ingested accidentally cannot harm it.

The metalmaster is usually solitary, and no small or young metalmasters have ever been reported. Specimens have been known to live for over a century (several have been captured for use as guardians, but these have not been trained or tamed, and no known method of doing so exists). A metalmaster sees with 90' infravision via two eyes posted atop two eyestalks. Furthermore, it appears able to smell and hear keenly, and it can sense the direction and distance of fist-size or larger pieces of metal within a 120' radius by using a strange magnetic-related sense that does not involve its eyes.

A metalmaster regenerates rapidly given steady food; for instance, an eyestalk might regenerate in a day or two, and lost hit points are regained at a rate of 1 hp per turn. This creature is also called the "sword slug" and is referred to in songs by the bard Mintiper. Metalmasters lair near metal and favor narrow tunnels where opponents cannot easily reach them.

## SERPLAR

*created with Jenny Glicksohn*

FREQUENCY *Rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1-4

ARMOR CLASS: 9

MOVE: 8"/14"

HIT DICE: 2+2 to 8+8

% IN LAIR: 40%

TREASURE TYPE: *Nil*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

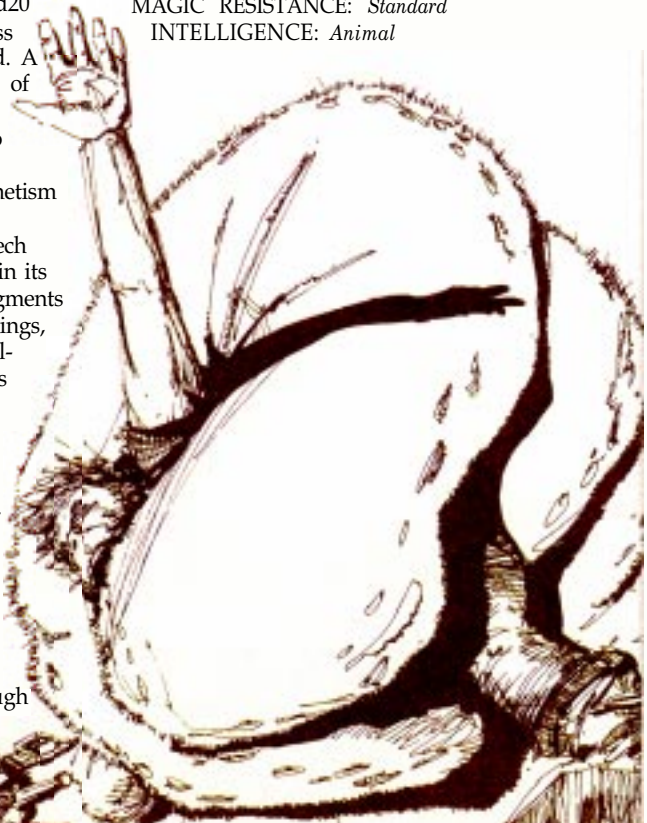
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 4-16

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Envelopment*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

INTELLIGENCE: *Animal*







**SPECIAL ATTACKS:** *Pounce; see below*  
**SPECIAL DEFENSES:** *Surprised only on a 1*  
**MAGIC RESISTANCE:** *Standard (but see below)*  
**INTELLIGENCE:** *Average*  
**ALIGNMENT:** *Neutral*  
**SIZE:** *L*  
**PSIONIC ABILITY:** *Nil*

The thylacine, or jumping tiger, is a fearless predator that inhabits rocky areas and wooded country. Its favorite prey is man. A solitary hunter, the thylacine likes to leap upon opponents to bite and rend, and it is intelligent enough to rend scrolls, smash glass vessels, break wands, and disable spell-casters and other obvious dangers when attacking a group.

The thylacine is immune to *charm*, *fear*, and other mind-controlling or influencing magics, and it cannot be mentally sensed or magically *summoned*. Because of this, its brain and cranial fluids are highly valued for use in the magical ink used in setting down *mind blank* spells. The thylacine is by nature fearless and bold. Otherwise, it is as patient and intelligent as a human, and is thus a hunter of dangerous skill and cunning. It makes full use of natural traps and concealment offered by the land in which it hunts — a circular region roughly 30 miles across.

A thylacine has keen infravision (range of 11"), ultravision (range of 9"), and regular vision in normal light. Its sense of smell is also keen, and its hearing is equivalent to a human's (it can track with 80% efficiency). Its coat is a smudgy, smoky-gray hue, varying slightly in uneven patches, and its eyes are black. If standing motionless in woods or among rocks, it is well camouflaged and 70% likely to be unnoticed to casual scrutiny. A thylacine has no set lair but enjoys a number of favored rest spots. High rock ledges or small, concealed caverns are its first choices; slightly less desirable are tangled thickets around ruins. A thylacine is intelligent enough to conceal the remains of prey and to drop coins or other items of precious metal on trails where they might serve as bait.

A thylacine can leap 20' upward and 50' ahead (6.5' if a running start is possible), attacking prey on a silent pounce. (It takes only 1 hp damage per hit dice of falling damage, no matter how far it falls.) In jumping on its prey, the thylacine has a +2 bonus to hit with its front claws if attacking from surprise and rakes with its rear claws if the front two claws catch hold. Its bite (if the front two claws catch) is at +4 to hit and does maximum damage each round that it hits until the thylacine is dislodged (*bend bars/lift gates* strength roll required). The front claws automatically do the minimum amount of damage each on each round that they simply hold on to its prey. Thylacines avoid attacking large groups of intelligent-looking prey, preferring to pick off solitary beings or

The serplar, also called the sponge worm or "pink ghost," has no eyes or mouth. Food and oxygen are sucked into its body through countless tiny, hairlike tentacles. These tentacles exude a highly corrosive digestive acid which can consume anything short of metal or stone. Serplars are usually found in chimneys, caverns, or abandoned dwellings, where they feed upon soot and charcoal, carrion, mosses and fungi, and slimes (including green slime, which does not harm it). A serplar hunts by smell and by sensing vibrations. It is immune to heat and cold. The serplar's digestive acid is highly flammable, however. As a result, flames do the creature double damage.

A serplar's long, soft pink body can flatten and flow about an obstacle or prey in an amorphous mass. Air-breathing creatures that are completely enveloped suffocate in two rounds (three rounds, if a save vs. poison is made) as the serplar's body cuts off access to air, then sucks oxygen from the creature. An enveloped victim takes 9-16 hp damage from the serplar's oxygen-draining attack each round. Note that a *completely* armored

opponent suffers no damage from oxygen-draining by a serplar, which is still able to smother the victim. A serplar is not able to crush or constrict victims, however.

A marine variety of the serplar is found on the ocean floor in warm waters, feeding primarily upon polyps, plants, and

carrion. The marine serplar lives in circular, coral-like tubes up to 40' long which it creates with its mineral wastes. These tubes grow up from the bottom like long reeds and sway with water currents. They are easily broken by the impact of rocks and creatures, and they are rich in minerals and ores of valuable metals. The marine serplar is sometimes called the "pink ghost," as one will often leave its tube behind to drift in the currents in search of food. If a current is lacking or too weak, or if the serplar senses nearby prey and wishes to follow, it flits through the water in the manner of a ray, flapping the flattened edges of its body like wings.

A marine serplar cannot survive out of water, but a dry-land specimen suffers no damage if submerged, as long as it can readily obtain oxygen from the water and surrounding objects. Serplars grow larger if food is plentiful and shrink if food is scarce.

## THYLACINE

**FREQUENCY:** *Rare*  
**NO. APPEARING:** *1 (see below)*  
**ARMOR CLASS:** *5*  
**MOVE:** *14"*  
**HIT DICE:** *4 + 4*  
**% IN LAIR:** *Nil*  
**TREASURE TYPE:** *Nil*  
**NO. OF ATTACKS:** *3*  
**DAMAGE/ATTACK:** *2-5/2-5/2-22*



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those in small, weak-looking groups.

One out of five thylacines can cast an illusion (making it appear to be a human or humanoid) upon itself once per day. This simple illusion can be maintained only for 1-3 rounds and is raised to escape pursuit or to approach alert prey. This ability (which gives the thylacine the nickname of "mantiger") is a natural *change self* ability usable by force of will, not as a memorized spell. Because of this crude spell-use, viewers gain a bonus of +2 to saving throws against the illusion.

Thylacines seldom mate, doing so only once every dozen years. At this time, mature thylacine are driven by an instinctive urge to travel and congregate in isolated forests and arctic regions. There, they form huge packs of 10-40 individuals that stay together for months, hunting en masse and howling loudly (thylacine are otherwise silent and stealthy) as they do so. Males then leave and females stay in the pack until the birth of their young, which occurs six months after mating. Young remain with their mothers until full-grown. Then, as the pack breaks up, the young are left to find a hunting range for themselves.

Thylacine have been known to live for 70 years, although most come to their untimely (and often violent) ends long before this. Thylacine fur is highly valued in the making of camouflaged cloaks (1-3 gp per pelt), and a thylacine brain brings 25-50 gp in a large city market. 

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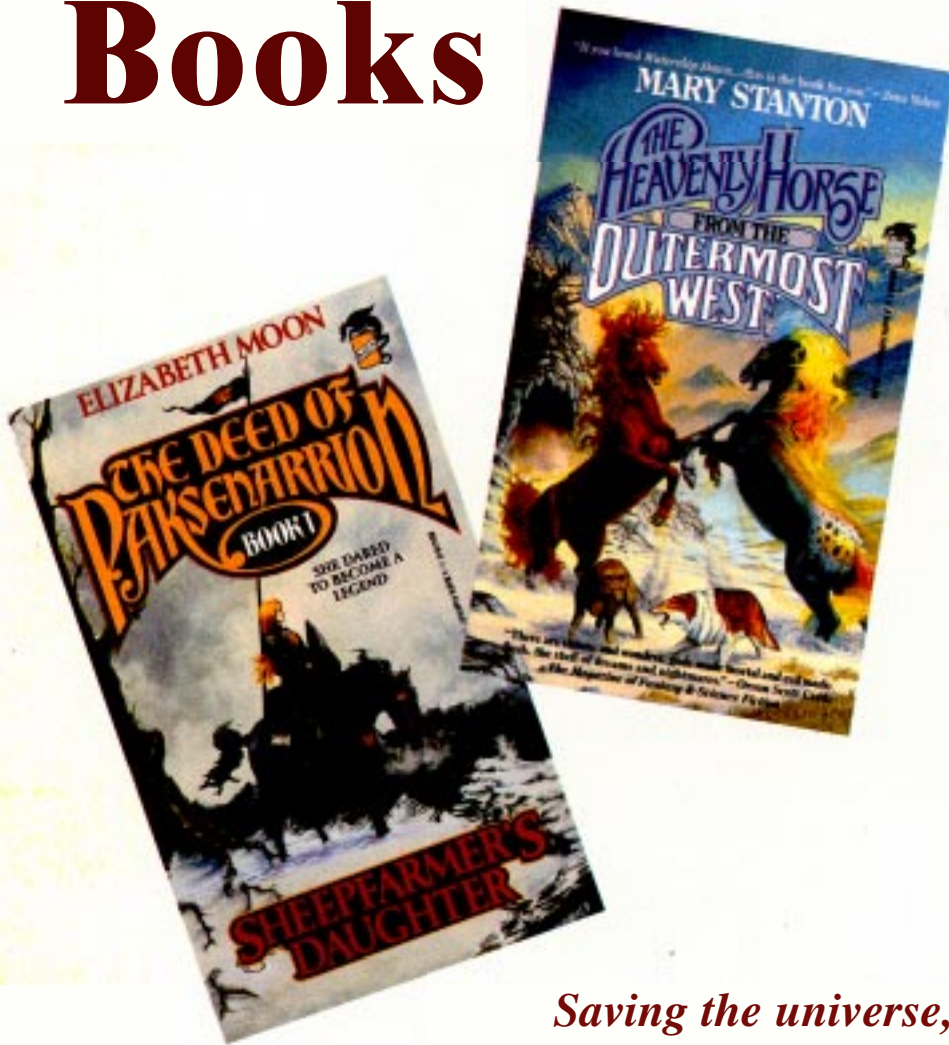
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## SHEEPFARMER'S DAUGHTER

Elizabeth Moon

**Baen** 0-671-65416-0 **\$3.95**

Don't believe Judith Tarr when she says, on the flyleaf of *Sheepfarmer's Daughter*, that Elizabeth Moon's novel is a sort of spiritual sequel to Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. Though well meant, the compliment misses its mark. Do believe her, though, when she praises Moon for crafting a tale of medieval mercenaries with a keenly authentic atmosphere.

Yet while Moon's experiences in the U.S. Marines (noted in a back-cover biography) have clearly benefited her portrayal of

would-be soldier Paksenarrion's experiences, the result isn't quite the "gritty" yarn the blurb writer promises. Instead of painting mercenary life in angry gray green — like so much of today's Vietnam literature and film — Moon adopts a matter-of-fact, easygoing attitude well suited to a world in which war is just another profession. This isn't to say that Moon minimizes the mercenary lifestyle's inherent violence — the novel has plenty of solid action. But she approaches that violence with neither cynicism nor gloom, and that's unusual in military fantasy.

Moon focuses squarely on Paksenarrion

(Paks for short), who flees an unwanted marriage to become a soldier. This isn't difficult in Paks's culture, as companies of contract militia are fairly common; even her sex is no great novelty to the recruiters. A period of adjustment is punctuated by inevitable false charges of misconduct, and mysteries and complications gradually ensue, involving Paks's unusual reactions to magic (a rarity in this time and place) and an elusive renegade mercenary leader known as the Honeycat.

*Sheepfarmer's Daughter* is (of course) the first book in a trilogy, so Moon leaves the usual lingering plot strands at the volume's conclusion. But loose ends and all, the novel is a gold mine of useful and readily adaptable-military lore. The world Moon portrays would make a thoroughly viable if magic-poor campaign setting. On a less ambitious scale, gamers could easily transplant aspects of her mercenary troops into their own worlds.

The problem with most war stories is that they appeal to a fairly limited audience. That audience will appreciate *Sheepfarmer's Daughter* — but those who don't usually enjoy war stories may also find the book appealing. That's a rare phenomenon, and Elizabeth Moon gets high marks for achieving it.

## THE THREE-MINUTE UNIVERSE

Barbara Paul

**Pocket** 0-671-65816-6 **\$3.95**

The problems with *The Three-Minute Universe* have very little to do with the fact that it's a *Star Trek* novel. They'd be problems in any science-fiction adventure, whether book or RPG scenario. Author Barbara Paul, known chiefly for her mysteries, frustrates readers to no end with her scientific lapses in logic.

According to Paul, the U.S.S. *Enterprise* can save the universe from a heat wave that makes a supernova look like a stuttering Bic lighter — by capturing a "baryon reverter," pointing it at the rip in space-time, and spraying on the submolecular equivalent of Krazy Glue. Reasonably, the U.S.S. *Enterprise* can barely get within spray range of the rip in space-time without being fried by the heat. Unreasonably, it isn't worried about the spectacular waves of hard radiation that surely extend well beyond this heat perimeter. In short, Paul's solution couldn't possibly work in the conditions she describes.

That might not be a fatal flaw by itself; *Star Trek* has always tended to skate over technicalities in the interests of exploring challenging themes. Paul's other plotline has such ambitions, but it suffers from a severe case of back-pedaling.

The Sackers, as Paul initially describes them, are amoeboid aliens whose bodies are physically repulsive to most Federation members. It isn't just visual ugliness; a Sacker's touch burns human skin, its voice is painfully shrill, and humans aboard Sacker spacecraft must live in refrigerated quarters.

That's a solid SF premise: How might we deal with a race with which we really can't co-exist? Prejudice isn't the problem because it's an emotional response, not a physical one. But that's how Paul treats the matter, and she must minimize the physical imbalances to make her thematic argument credible. The attempt only highlights the inherent contradictions and fails to address the emotional consequences of the Sackers' solutions.

Paul doesn't do badly at portraying *Star Trek's* familiar characters; her dialogue for Kirk may not ring true, but she knows how he and his crew will act. Unfortunately, beloved characters aren't enough to sustain belief in the dangers of *The Three-Minute Universe*, and readers are better off bypassing this *Star Trek* tale, just as SF gamers are better off bypassing poorly constructed RPG campaigns.

### THE HEAVENLY HORSE FROM THE OUTERMOST WEST

Mary Stanton

**Baen 0-671-65410-1 \$3.95**

The horses I've known were mostly working ranch animals, not the carefully trained and bred equestrian competitors featured in Mary Stanton's novel. I suspect that explains why I disagree with the eight big-name authors who believe (according to the flyleaf) that *The Heavenly Horse from the Outermost West* is the greatest thing to hit fantasy since talking rabbits. *Watership Down* made talking rabbits respectable because author Richard Adams gave rabbits a culture they might have evolved for themselves. By contrast, Mary Stanton's cosmology seems derivative; it portrays horse civilization as humans would create it, not as it might naturally arise. Her horses are extremely breed-conscious, and their supposedly prehuman religion has invented barns to house the evil Dark Horse. (Oddly enough, humanity itself is generally seen as benign.)

The story Stanton tells is good enough on its own terms, as various exceptional horses complicate the routine lives of the Bishop Farm herd. Shows, new foals, and children's riding lessons take a back seat to the mystery surrounding Duchess, the visions of El Arat, and the mission of the Dancer. The author has a good ear for names, effectively matching rhythms of personality to those of description. And the plot flows clearly, if sometimes at uneven speed, toward the requisite confrontation that concludes the tale.

The premise, however, is ultimately one-dimensional. The quest to reestablish the Appaloosa bloodline is an equestrian's invention; cow ponies, draft horses, and wild mavericks have little place in Stanton's narrative, and their omission makes *Heavenly Horse* an incomplete portrait of the equine kingdom.

Veteran gamers may recall FGU's BUNNIES & BURROWS™ game (undoubtedly inspired by *Watership Down*) in which

players took on rabbit identities. I can't prove it, but I suspect that B&B game players soon found that realistic talking rabbits weren't terribly exciting to play, while entertaining talking rabbits weren't that different from elves and halflings. A similar moral may apply to *The Heavenly Horse from the Outermost West*. Structurally, the novel is a sound traditional fantasy, but that reliance on the classic mold severely undercuts its ability to succeed as a distinctively horsey tale.

### WHEN H.A.R.L.I.E. WAS ONE:

#### RELEASE 2.0

David Gerrold

**Bantam Spectra 0-553-26465-6 \$3.95**

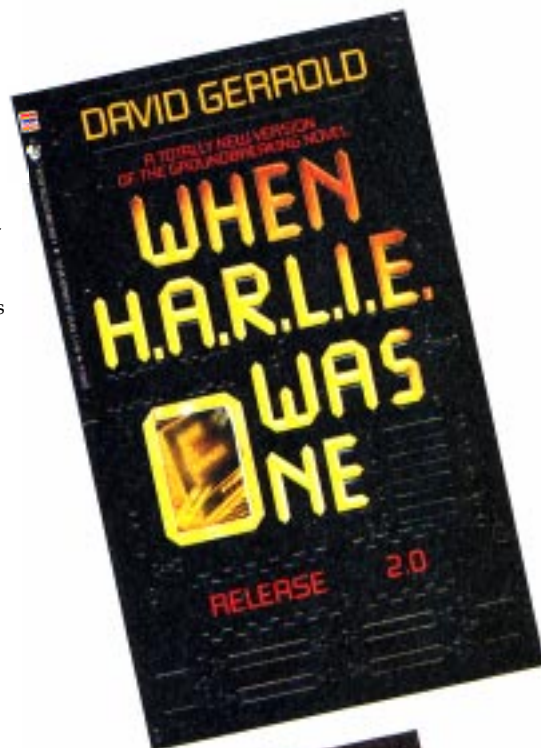
The ground rules for this column say that all of the material discussed here should have some sort of connection to gaming. I sometimes stretch that rule for the sake of an especially good book, and I originally thought I'd have to stretch considerably to justify including this book. Then I reread the last chapter — and realized that while I didn't need to stretch at all, I couldn't possibly explain the connection without ruining the ending.

I could argue that computer gamers should be interested in H.A.R.L.I.E., since his language-handling software is probably descended from the increasingly clever parsers found in today's interactive fiction. I could argue that TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game players should be interested in potential scenarios built around his potentially disastrous abilities as an electronic hacker — abilities that nearly get H.A.R.L.I.E. shut down. Both observations are true, but they barely touch the edges of Gerrold's real story.

The novel is classic science fiction in that it takes its plot from pure scientific extrapolation. There are no three-eyed aliens, no evil dictators (at least not in the usual sense), and no doomsday weapons. Those expecting lots of action and breakneck chase scenes should look elsewhere, but those who equate hard technical SF with "boring" will be surprised. Gerrold can do wonders with dialogue, and the long bouts of snappy repartee carry a surprisingly thought-provoking punch.

*When H.A.R.L.I.E. Was One* was originally published in 1972 to very good reviews (and placed second that year for the prestigious Hugo award). The current edition (dubbed "Release 2.0") thoroughly updates H.A.R.L.I.E.'s outdated hardware while retaining Gerrold's impressive exploration of the nature of electronic intelligence. As computer technology advances, the book could very well become the predictive science fiction that actually comes true.

That's both a frightening and a profoundly hopeful thought, because Gerrold's H.A.R.L.I.E. has software so dangerous we may not want to invent it — and so important that we may have to invent it anyway. Which brings matters back to that ending I can't reveal.



### CHILD OF THE GROVE

Tanya Huff

**DAW 0-88677-272-9 \$3.50**

Any entertainer who leaves her audience wanting more of the same is usually doing a very good job, and Tanya Huff certainly leaves readers wanting to know more about the characters who populate *Child of thy Grove* Huff's case, however, is unusual. One wants to know "What happened in between?" rather than "What happened next?"

The book's structure is very peculiar, resembling nothing so much as a trilogy with large chunks of the middle left out. Five chapters (plus one interlude) focus on



young Prince Rael, heir to a kingdom threatened by a powerful and subtle wizard several countries over. Two chapters take up the story four generations later, as Princess Tayer rediscovers her family's heritage. Only in the second interlude, nearly halfway into the novel, does Tayer's daughter Crystal (the title character) assume center stage.

What Huff accomplishes with her cast in the space she is given is significant. Each of the three would-be lead players could easily sustain a book alone, and each comes from a different mold. Rael is a quiet but driven youth with an intense dislike for violence despite his skills as a warrior. Tayer is capable of great devotion but must discover the best direction to focus her mind and heart. And Crystal, chosen by prophecy as the world's last wizard, must lead a lonely dual life that does not promise a comforting future along either path.

*Child of the Grove* shows a great deal of care in construction for all its missing elements. Some of the touches, such as the outlook of the long-lived dwarf and centaur races, the substantial dryad lore, and the use to which Huff puts dragons, approach standards of development DMs would do well to emulate in campaigns.

All of this is encouraging as far as her future books are concerned, but the virtues of Tanya Huff's first fantasy can't quite compensate for its uneven focus. Buying the book is like buying a savings bond; it may not bring immediate rewards, but the talent it represents may improve substantially as it matures.

## THE NIGHTINGALE

Kara Dalkey

**Ace 0-441-57973-6 \$16.95**

From a message intercepted on its way toward the great city of Minneapolis:

*A thousand thanks, honored storyteller, for the gift of your writings concerning the girl Uguisu, whose music charmed an Emperor. The Nightingale was most pleasing to the eye and melodious to the ear, and I am grateful to you and to your literary patrons for bringing it to my humble attention.*

*Your words transported me, honored storyteller, to that world of elegance and quiet magnificence which existed long before the days of daimyos and samurai, just a few short centuries after the turn of a calendar not yet known to the Empire that was Japan. Music and poetry rustled like breezes through my hair, and my eyes were captured by images of intricately stitched clothing, gardens of impeccable tranquility and wildness, and the misty shades of those who would return to life from the realms beyond.*

*I was lost for a time, honored storyteller, in the sly plots of the powerful Fujiwara clan to ascend the Imperial throne. I strayed headlong into the troubles and happinesses of Katte-san and Kuma, and*

*paused respectfully at the cleverness of the poetess Shonasaki. And I was properly awed by the grandeur and simplicity of the Great Kami, Amaterasu, and her humble avatar.*

*I may say with certainty honored storyteller, that I have been entertained. I quite strongly suspect that, wherever he may be, the Lord Buddha is smiling and shifting the sands of karma in your favor. And as for the matter of Heaven, there is no more to say — for I shall read The Nightingale not merely once more but many times, whenever I wish to visit the utterly entrancing world within its pages. . . .*

Very little explanation need be added to the reader's remarks, clearly made in response to author Kara Dalkey's brief and stylish prologue to her ingenious and meticulously crafted novel. Like its predecessors in the Fairy Tales series (a collaboration between Ace Books and Armadillo Press whose future is mysteriously and regrettably uncertain as I write), *The Nightingale* is a sophisticated new vision of a well-remembered old story. For richness of atmosphere, Orientaly minded gamers won't find any portrayal of early Imperial Japan more satisfying than this one.

## THE BLIND KNIGHT

Gail Van Asten

**Ace 0-441-06727-1 \$3.50**

When is an Arthurian fantasy not an Arthurian fantasy? Just when you'd think all the possible changes had been wrought on the Pendragon legend, Gail Van Asten presents readers with a startling sequel to the traditional tales of Camelot. Technically speaking, Mallory Pendragon is Arthur's brother, but his story takes place during Henry Plantagenet's reign against a background of petty baronial intrigues and fading memories of chivalry's splendor.

In one stroke, that overcomes the greatest limiting factor facing Arthurian storytellers. By springing forward in time to a new generation of characters, Van Asten wins the freedom to develop her own plot and characters rather than devising yet another variation on the familiar romantic rivalry between Arthur and Lancelot. Yet she maintains firm and convincing ties to the Pendragon legend, as sustained through the generations by the obscure Lord Wilfred of Wodensweir (who has at least two other very important identities, neither of which is Merlin).

Wilfred's daughter, Rosamund, provides the romantic interest in the tale. Van Asten treads a tricky line with this character, crossing modern tastes for strong female characters with the need to give her story a more traditional chivalric conclusion. While Rosamund is a fierce and outspoken heroine, she also becomes a loyal wife by tale's end, and the blend is unevenly stirred.

That's a forgivable shortcoming, though, in an adventure which is otherwise a skillful and sensitive recreation of the old

knightly quests for honor and justice. *The Blind Knight* also adds an additional tension to the mixture, as the traditional values of Arthur's day find themselves tested in an England several generations removed from their origins. Van Asten's language manages to reflect both the formality of the Arthurian element and the rougher, more intrigue-laced tones of Angevin nobility.

There is not quite enough vision in the tale to make it more than a satisfying afternoon's excursion into another age. But Van Asten is a wise and observant tourguide, and players of such role-playing games as Chaosium's PENDRAGON game should find the vacation worth taking.

## Recurring roles

The flow of graphic novels is increasing, and so is the variety. *Elfquest: Volume I* (Donning, \$5.95) is a reprint of the series that more or less started the trend, but reduced to a less bulky, less expensive digest size. This one really did start out as a comic book, but the level of detail and color is impressive, and these have become influential elves.

*Gate of Ivrel: Fever Dreams* (Donning, \$7.95) is second in a series of graphic novels adapting a well-known C. J. Cherryh book. Jane Fancher's art for this project is extremely striking — richly detailed, deeply and deftly colored, and reproduced in fine style. A classier, more intense swashbuckler would be difficult to find.

Then again, the *Thorgal* series (Ink Publishing, \$6.95 each) has its own virtues. These hardback volumes (distinctive in a mostly paperbound field), translated from European editions, win points for unusually realistic cover art and straightforward, smoothly paced stories that younger readers will find easier to follow than the convoluted plots of more "adult" graphics. *The Archers* in particular is notable; Thorgal's generally Norse background and his encounters in connection with a dangerous archery contest are definitely adaptable to game situations.

The good news in the Department of Concluding Volumes is that *The Mage-Born Child* (Bantam Spectra, \$3.95) solidly concludes Jonathan Wylie's trilogy concerning the Servants of Ark. This series is not a ground-breaker by any means, but it has lived up to its ambitions as a traditional epic conflict while providing several above-average variations on the theme. The prophecies have been nicely structured throughout, and the final volume ends on an unusual note.

*Perihelion* (Ace, \$3.50) is less successful as the formerly final volume in the "Isaac Asimov's Robot City" series. Far too many questions still remain about these novels — they neither stand firmly on their own nor fit comfortably into Asimov's own robot universe. In particular, *Perihelion* doesn't work well as a concluding volume; author William Wu brings in too many new ele-

ments and leaves too many old threads hanging. (Blaming these problems on Wu may be unfair; given the six extra books recently tacked onto the concept, his editors may have demanded loose ends.) Unless forthcoming volumes improve markedly, this series is no longer worth following.

Meanwhile, much against my principles, I'm finding C. J. Cherryh's *Merovingen Nights* shared-world books more and more enjoyable. The third of these, *Troubled Waters* (DAW, \$3.50), is less a short-story collection than a mosaic novel, with Cherryh's meticulous editing tracing a complicated path through the various plots and counterplots. Roberta Rogow's "Nessus' Shirt" is short but engagingly nasty, and Leslie Fish's tale of minstrel Rif and guardsman Black Cal provides a rousing climax. (I'm still waiting for the novel about Rif.)

Esther Friesner continues to offer unpredictable twists on fantasy conventions in two recent novels. *Here Be Demons* (Ace, \$2.95) cleverly brings the business of collecting souls into the present day, though it isn't always clear just where Friesner wants to go with the idea. It isn't her best work, but it's still an interesting concept. Even stranger and more unusual is *Druid's Blood* (Signet, \$3.50), set in a very weird alternate England where magic works and the local equivalent of Sherlock Holmes is an actor

who assumes the role after reading about the fictional detective's exploits in the *Strand* magazine. For sheer audacity, nobody is likely to top this one for quite awhile.

Charles de Lint's latest offering is relatively light by his usual standard, but *Wolf Moon* (Signet, \$3.50) is still a literate and logical variation on the werewolf legend. While his characterization of werewolf is highly revisionist by AD&D® game standards, there is still much to be learned from Kern's adventures. (Note the unusual part played by the bard in this tale.)

Finally, *The Oathbound* (DAW, \$3.50) gives Mercedes Lackey's readers a whole book of stories featuring warrior Tarma and sorceress Kethry, previously featured in short stories and a taped cassette adventure. Their adventures are both enjoyable and well thought out, but one odd matter requires mention. The novel's copyright page indicates that two chapters have been previously published, a statement which is technically only half correct and potentially confusing. In fact, *The Oathbound* marks the first publication of the story "Keys," so that its appearance in Marion Zimmer Bradley's *Sword and Sorceress V* (DAW, \$3.95) shortly afterward counts as a reprint. Bradley, unfortunately, makes no mention of this situation in her collection. That isn't necessarily surprising, as it's probable that a rearranged publishing schedule is to blame for the

mixup, but readers should be aware of the overlap.

### The role of readers

DRAGON® Magazine's editor frequently tells me that response to this column is highly favorable. This is gratifying (said the columnist, massaging his ego) but not as useful as it might be. Like other reviewers, I value feedback highly, the more honest the better. Are there books out there I've been unjustly ignoring? Have I recommended a novel you absolutely couldn't stand?

The answers to these and other questions may now start piling up in my mailbox. I can't promise to write back, and I can't promise to review everything that's suggested to me, but I will definitely read all the letters mailed to:

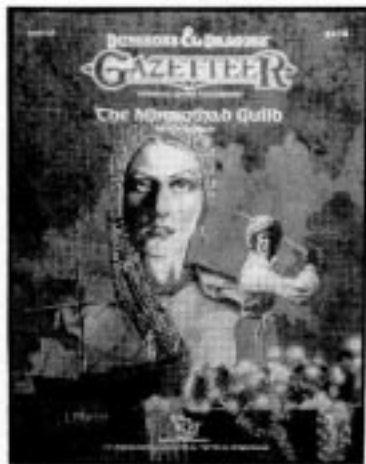
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Books for possible review may also be directed to the above address, saving the Exalted Editor and his minions the chore of boxing them up and sending them to me from Wisconsin. One final note: I work with a three-month lead time (this November column is being finished — late — at the beginning of August), so keep this in mind as you make suggestions. □

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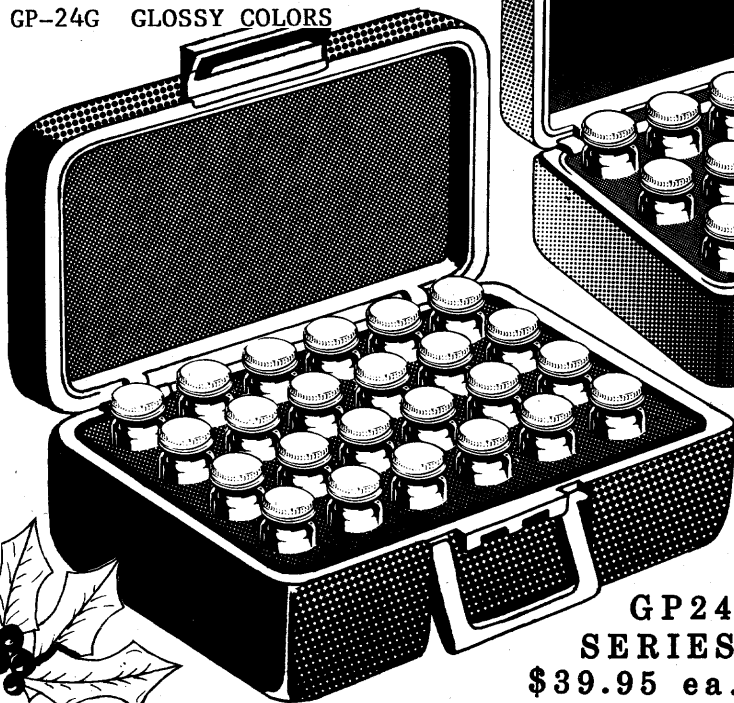


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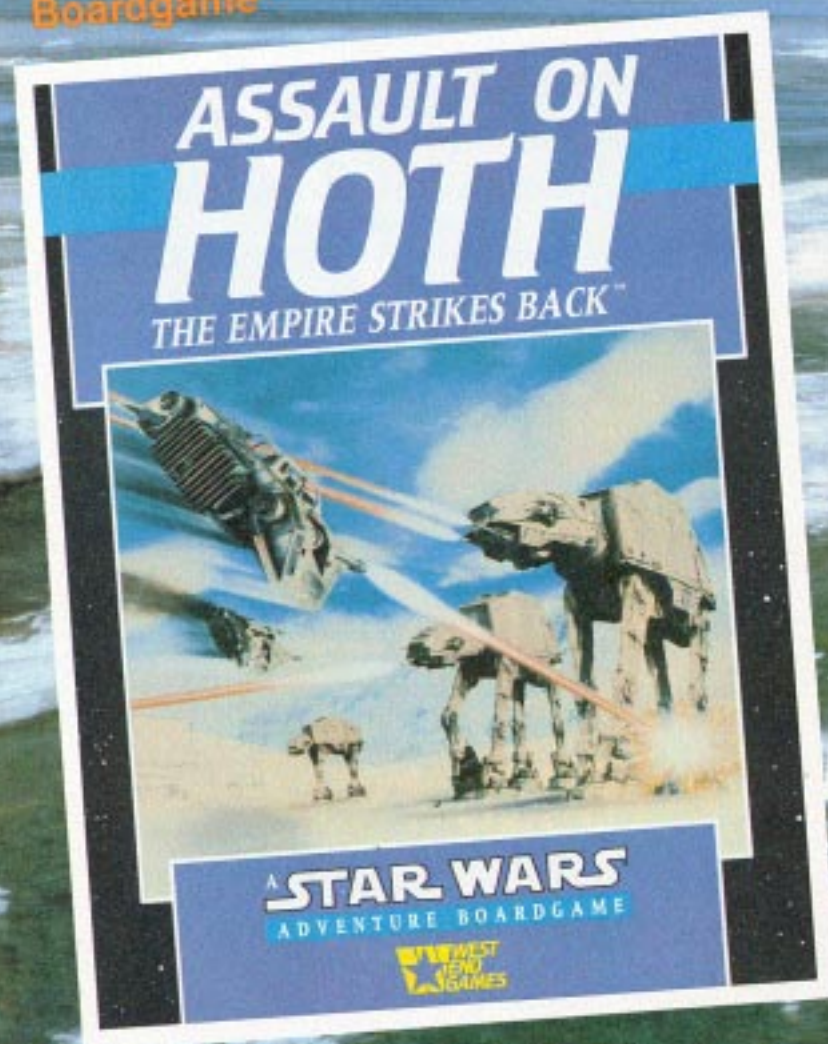


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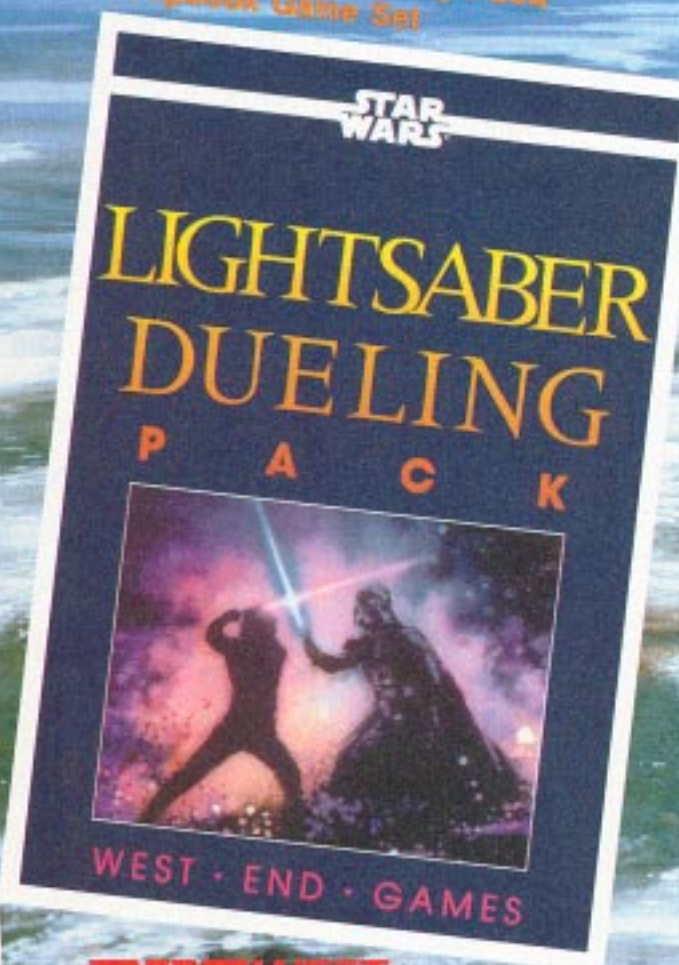
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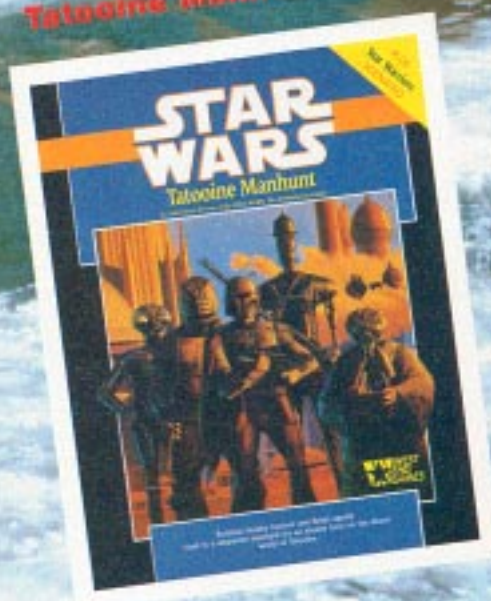
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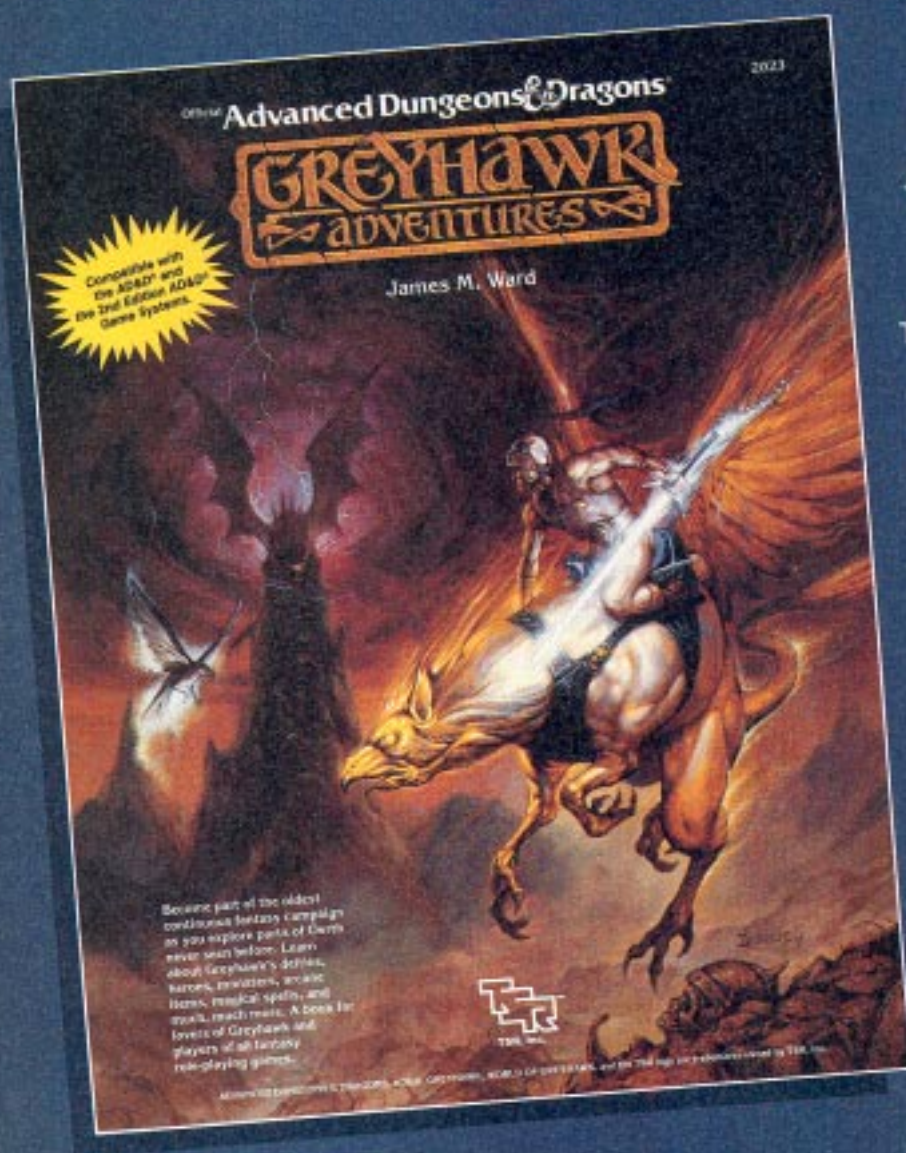


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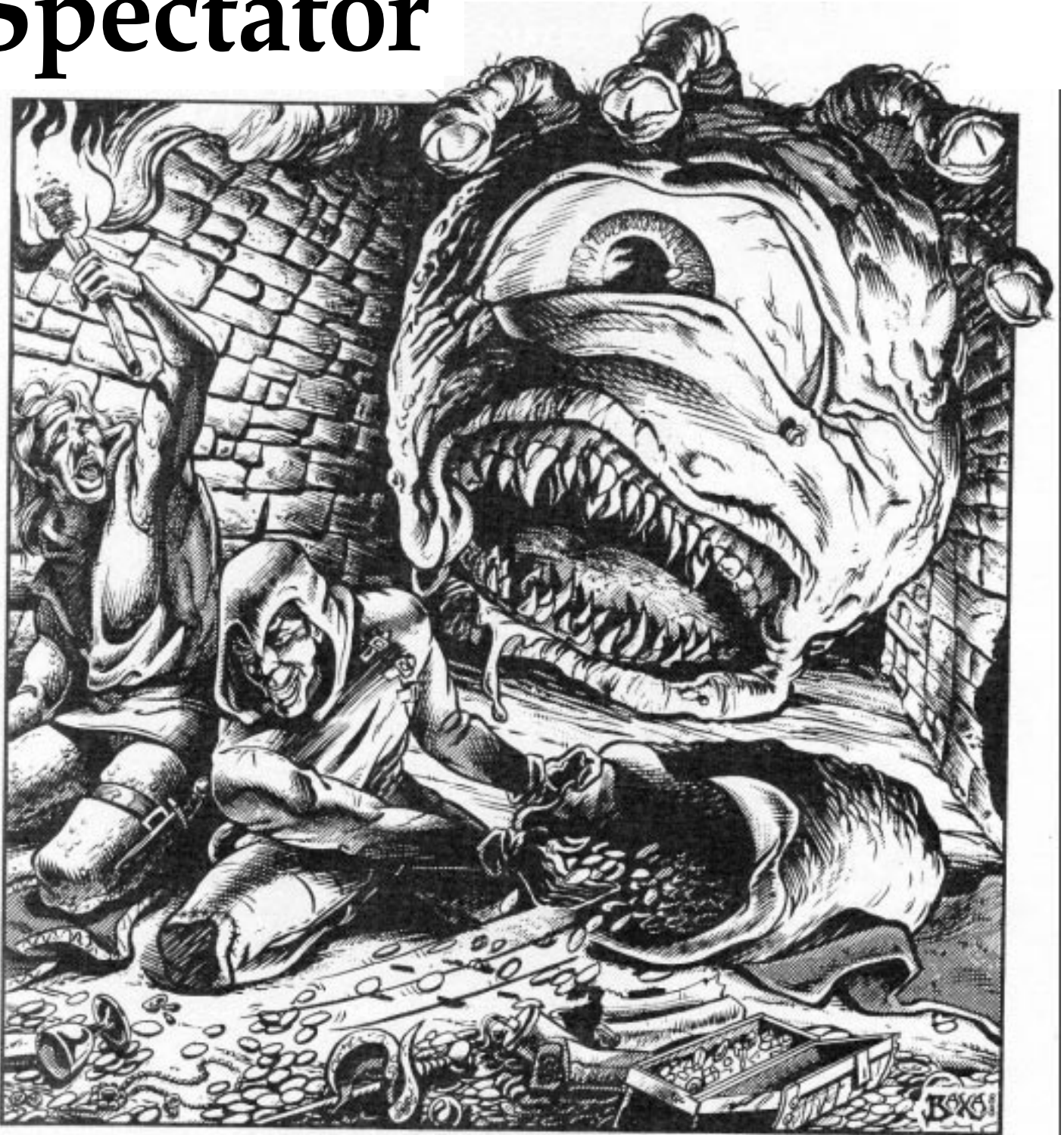
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by Dougal Demokopoliss

# The Ecology of the Spectator



*A promise made is a promise kept — for 101 years*

From *Curiosities of Other Worlds*, volume six, by Mage-Lord I. J. Jijaks of the Free City of Greyhawk:

We now come to spectators, which dwell on the plane of Nirvana in either the Dominion of Lendor<sup>1</sup> or in the land of the modrons. The reader has no doubt read the basic description of these striking creatures in any one of the manuals and tomes that catalog the beasts of this world and others. Having performed the usual research required before summoning and interacting with these beholder-like beings, I am able to share my knowledge in hopes that it will prove to be of use to the reader as well.

Spectators are adapted to equal amounts of light and dark, heat and cold, and liquid and solid terrain. (Nirvana is perfectly balanced in all of these qualities.) Spectators have generous lifespans, and most of these creatures live over 1,000 years. Many of these spectators at any given time are guarding objects throughout the Prime Material plane, as they are often commanded to do so by high-level magic-users.

Spectators are summoned by the casting of a *monster summoning V* spell, accompanied by the sacrifice of at least three beholder's eyes. During the sacrificial rite, the beholder's eyes must first be annihilated — that is, the eyes must be ground into a fine powder, then burned into a black dust. This black dust is then soaked in oil and placed in a special magic circle. Next, the dust is set aflame. Finally, while the eye dust is still burning, a small bag is placed in the center of the magic circle and *monster summoning V* is cast by the magic-user. (The burning eye dust is used as a material component instead of a candle.) The bag opens a small one-way *gate* from Nirvana to the plane on which the spell is cast.

Three segments later, there is a chance that a spectator appears in the center of the magic circle; for each beholder's eye so sacrificed, there is a 10% chance that a spectator is summoned (thus, a base chance of 30% for three eyes). Three segments after the spell has been cast, the *gate* closes again. If summoned into a properly created magic circle, the spectator awaits instructions from its summoner (which invariably entail the guarding of some item or location). Inside this magic circle, the spectator is powerless to *teleport* to Nirvana, leave the circle physically, or use any other powers besides *levitation*. If the circle has not been created properly or if the circle is somehow broken before the spectator promises to complete its job, it *teleports* back to Nirvana. If the summoner gives the spectator a job besides guardianship, the spectator merely states it is unwilling to do so and *teleports* back to Nirvana as soon as the magic circle is broken. Even if the spectator is given a task concerning guardianship, it will instead *teleport* to Nirvana unless it actually promises to fulfill its task.

Spectators dislike guarding for beings of

lesser races (i.e., the races of their human or demi-human summoners), so they always try to avoid such guardianship. However, a spectator will not return to Nirvana after it has made a promise to anyone, because of its lawful-neutral alignment; breaking a promise is considered chaotic behavior. A spectator prides itself on its guardianship and will refuse if a summoner tries to force it to do a job other than guarding. From the spectator's viewpoint, it is not lawful for the summoner to force the spectator to perform a job other than guarding, as spectators should be summoned only to guard.

Once the spectator takes its mission of guardianship, the summoning magic-user deliberately breaks the magic circle and frees the spectator, allowing it to move over to the treasure to be guarded. The creature is free after 101 years to return to Nirvana. A *permanency* spell has no effect on the circle or the duration of the spectator's guardianship.

As a guardian, a spectator's loyalty to its summoner's commands is absolute; it will guard the place or object for *precisely* 101 years. A spectator always knows when the 101 years of service have expired; this is tracked by the spectator's internal clock, actually a lobe on the spectator's brain that perfectly measures time.

When a spectator is guarding the place or objects to which it has been assigned, it will allow *no one* to pass that place or examine any objects it is guarding. At the time the summoner assigns the task, he can make exceptions to these rules, such as allowing certain individuals to circumvent these conditions. This rule applies even to the summoner himself. If the summoner breaks these rules himself, he will be attacked by the spectator.

When a spectator attacks, it launches spells from three of the four small eyes perched on stalks over its globular body. It also tries to keep out of melee range for as long as possible by using its *levitation* powers. A spectator will *teleport* to Nirvana if all of its eyes have been blinded, but if encountered in Nirvana itself and if all of its eyes have been blinded, the spectator attacks with its toothy maw.<sup>2</sup>

To a spectator, killing a creature for reasons other than self-defense or duty is viewed as a chaotic act. Under a spectator's sense of justice and law, all creatures have the right to live, so long as they do not interfere with the spectator's duties. If a spectator accidentally kills a creature for reasons other than self-defense, it usually wills itself to die, directing its brain's powerful energies against itself.

Spectators have two social classes, upper and lower. Lower-class spectators live in otherwise uninhabited sections of Nirvana in the Dominion of Lendor or in the "modron disk," each residing alone in a small, vertical cave which is dug out with the spectator's mouth. Upper-class spectators are those who directly serve Lendor or serve as guards for the modrons. These

spectators are more lawful and philosophical than their lower-class counterparts because they have usually been educated by their masters to uphold their ideals. In order to become a guard for the modrons, a spectator must *paralyze* a modron rogue unit (using one of its attack eyes) and turn it over to the local pentadrome regimental headquarters (the modrons' law enforcers). Lendor chooses only the most powerful and intelligent spectators to serve him.<sup>3</sup>

Unlike modrons, spectators are not completely lawful neutral, although upper-class spectators come very close to this ideal. Lower-class spectators have slightly lawful-good tendencies, while upper-class spectators are more strictly lawful neutral. Because of its personal honor, a spectator will not attack a *paralyzed* or helpless enemy unless the spectator was attacked by trickery or by very cruel means.

Spectators have little personal ambition; perhaps their only true goal in life is to serve the forces of law as well as possible. Since modrons are completely lawful neutral, most spectators want to serve the modrons. The greatest pleasures of a spectator (and perhaps its only pleasures) are to thwart chaos, especially modron rogue units, and to guard and defend.

What little is known of the internal anatomy of the spectator is presented here as well. This information on its most unique body organs was collected from the works of several wizards and priests who voyaged to Nirvana and took part in the dissection (with permission) of a spectator slain by a rogue modron unit.

*Levator magnus*: The levator magnus is a small, highly magical sphere in the center of the spectator's brain (which itself lies at the center of the spectator's round body). This organ gives the spectator its ability to *levitate* in any direction at 100' per minute. No magic negates this effect, although physical forces resulting from magic use (such as those created by a *gust of wind* spell) hamper this activity. The juices drained from this organ are sometimes used as a component in the ink of a scroll of *flying* or *levitation*.

*Brain*: The spectator's brain has the power to generate a magical force using psionic energy, though the spectator has no true psionic powers as such. This magical force is divided into two branches of power: magical and antimagical. The magical power travels through special nerves to the monster's top four eyes, which convert the power into spell-like effects. The antimagical power is carried by nerves directly to the creature's large eye, causing any spell that strikes the eye to reflect back to the caster. The juices drained from the spectator's brain can be used as a component in the ink of an *anti-magic shell* scroll. (It is to my understanding that the higher sorts of modrons will actually sell or barter the bodies of slain spectators to those who would make use of the corpses for their research, and even some spectators will likewise bargain





away the bodies of their kind.)

**Thought-energy enhancer:** This organ multiplies the psionic force generated in the brain and relays it to the spectator's eyes, providing their powers.

**Stomach:** Food and water created by a spectator's first eye is usually directed inward through a large passage leading directly to the stomach, where it is digested. If the spectator wishes, food can be created by that eye to feed someone else.

**Skin:** The skin of a spectator is thick, lumpy, rubbery, and grayish, with many blood vessels protruding from its surface. If a spectator is killed but not severely damaged, the skin can be removed and fashioned into a suit of armor by an experienced armorer. The resultant suit is in all respects the equal of leather armor and is sufficient in size to be of use to a dwarf, gnome, or the like.

Little else about these beings is known to me. I am at a loss to know how they reproduce, what they have in the way of religion (though I suspect they worship Primus or Lendor in their own fashions), or even if they have a loose culture. I never got around to discussing these matters with the few spectators I had occasion to meet. I have even heard that a breed of spectators lives in the sea, though this report is surely based upon a mistaken identification of an eye of the deep. Per-

haps someone more learned than I can fill in the details another day. . . .

#### Game information

When a spectator reaches 1,000 years of age, its four eyes grow very large, and its body becomes small and shriveled. After three months in this state, the spectator has only 3 + 3 HD; after six months, it has only 2 + 2 HD, and its four eyes are twice as large as they were originally. By this time, the spectator must retire permanently to a cave it has dug, since it can no longer *levitate*. Upper-class spectators serving the modrons are thrown out of the upper class at this age, but Lendor's spectators are allowed to stay in his palace until their deaths. In three more months, the spectator's body is extremely small and shriveled with 1 + 1 HD, and each of its small eyes has developed four tiny eyestalks. Finally, when a spectator reaches 1,001 years of age, nothing is left of its body. At this time, its four eyes fall off their stalks to become 1 + 1 HD spectators.

These "newborn" spectators have the power of the eye from which they came plus *levitation*. They stay in the cave in which they were born for one year, gaining an extra eye power and 1 + 1 HD every three months. The spectator with the *create food and water* ability shares the food it creates with the others. In the last three months of the spectators' stay in the birth cave, each gains the antimagical power of the large eye. When the spectators are fully developed after one year, they leave the cave to build lairs of their own. Spectators under one year of age or over 999 years of age are immune to the *monster summoning V* spell.

### SEARECHTER (Marine spectator)

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: *Body 6, eyes -1, eyestalks 8*

MOVE: *-20"/40"* (B in water, E in air)

HIT DICE: 6 + 6

% IN LAIR: 35%

TREASURE TYPE: *See below*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 *bite*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-2

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 50%

INTELLIGENCE: *High to exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful neutral*

SIZE: L (5½' diameter)

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Special*

Attack/Defense modes: *Nil/nil*

LEVEL/XP VALUE: VII/865 + 9 hp

Among a select few wizards (usually those from coastal cities or who are masters of summoning), there are rumors of a race of marine spectators dedicated to slaying eyes of the deep. In the WORLD

OF GREYHAWK® setting, these are the elven and human wizards living on the Spindrift Isles. The Suel god Lendor, believed to be an Arch-Mage by many, taught the inhabitants of the Spindrifts how to summon spectators. Spectators living in Lendor's stronghold heard these rumors of their marine cousins and passed them on to their summoners.

Although there is such a creature as the marine spectator, it is cautious and actually avoids eyes of the deep. These marine spectators are also called sea spectators, spectators of the sea, or (most commonly) searechters. They dwell in the depths of the ocean and are very rarely encountered, and then are nearly always mistaken for eyes of the deep.

If a wizard researches the means of summoning a searechter, he finds that one can be summoned by the casting of *monster summoning VII* spell, with three small eyes from an eye of the deep employed in place of three beholder's eyes. The wizard must cause the searechter to appear underwater or it will not be brought forth. Few sorcerers has ever tried this summoning because of the difficulties in obtaining the proper material components.

Searechters have six small eyes on the end of six eyestalks and one large central eye which functions as does a spectator's. Each of its small eyes has a spell-like function, explained as follows. Each power is usable three times per day and functions as if cast by an 8th-level spell-caster.

Eye no.	Spell
1	<i>Airy water</i>
2	<i>Airbolt</i> (new spell)
3	<i>Charm monster</i>
4	<i>Fear</i> (as wand)
5	<i>Water breathing</i>
6	<i>Paralyzation</i> (as wand)

In front of each of the searechter's eyes is a thin, clear shell that has a magical equivalence to + 3 metal. If the searechter is killed, this "eye crystal" can be removed and fashioned into small weapons such as dart tips and dagger blades of + 3 value. Likewise, if a strap is somehow attached to the large eye crystal, it can be used as a + 3 (and transparent) small shield. Nonetheless, it is difficult to cut and melt this material in order to fashion it into weapons or defensive items. Finding a way to do so is difficult and should be left to the discretion of the DM.

Any attack made upon a searechter has a 50% chance of hitting its body, a 25% chance of hitting its large eye, and a 25% chance of hitting one of the six small eyes on top (with, in the latter case, an 80% chance that the attack hits an eyestalk and a 20% chance that it hits one of the small eyes directly; which eye is hit is determined at random). A successful hit upon one of the small eyes blinds that eye and

**Airbolt** (Alteration)

Level: 3                      Components: V  
 Range: 1"/level            CT: 3 segments  
 Duration: Instant.        ST: None  
 AE: One target

**Explanation/Description:** By means of this spell, a magic-user is able to create a concentrated blast of air roughly 3" in diameter. Using only verbal components, this spell utilizes the air around it and focuses it into a powerful beam that may then be directed by the spell-caster. Although this spell works underwater (where oxygen exists in a hydrogenated form), it will not work in a vacuum. *Airbolt* may be used as an offensive weapon, a powerful version of *gust of wind*, or a modified *push* spell. Because of the spells concentrated beam, only one creature or item may be targeted per spell. Damage for this spell is 1d6 per level (or 2d6 per level underwater, due to the greater ability to concentrate the spell in this medium). A saving throw vs. spells allows the one attacked to take half damage. The spell-caster blows a puff of air as this spell is cast.

With regard to the searechter, *airbolt* has a range of 6" in water and 2" in air, and it does 6-36 hp damage in water and 3-18 hp damage in air. The *airbolt* is not as potent in the air because it diffuses, whereas the spell is enhanced by the dense medium of water. A saving throw vs. spells allows the target creature to dodge a portion of the spells blast. The bolt is guided by sight, so a blinded searechter cannot cast this spell.

ruins its power until it regenerates. Eye-stalks take 5 hp damage before being severed, but the eyestalk and the eye on the end regrow within one day. The large eye takes 5 hp damage until it is destroyed and takes two days to regenerate.

A searechter never voluntarily goes out of the water and only rarely enters waters less than 15,000' in depth. For every 1,000' closer to the surface than 15,000', the searechter takes 1 hp damage per turn; above the surface of the water, it takes 2 hp damage per round. This is a result of the expansion of the searechter's internal gases. These damage figures are given in case the searechter is somehow brought into shallow waters or to the surface. In the water, searechters are very agile; however, in the air they have less movement control because of the damage they take from being out of water and because of their increased speed.

Searechters usually live in small sea caves, but there is a 25% chance they will live in different lairs. Roll the percentile dice on the following table to determine the lair of each:

Ruins or abandoned lairs could include a ruined storm giant palace, morkoth lair,

**1d100**

	<b>Lair</b>
01-75	Small sea cave
76-85	Sunken ship
86-90	Ruins or abandoned lair
91-96	Extensive cavern
97-99	Labyrinth of vortexes to or from the plane of Elemental Water
00	Vortex leading to the water-filled caverns under Lendor's stronghold on Nirvana

triton stronghold, sea dragon lair, aboleth city, kraken lair, and many others. A vortex is a gateway leading to or from another plane. If the vortex leads to the plane of Elemental Water, there is a 50% chance that water flows into it (creating a whirlpool) and a 50% chance that water rushes out of it, filling the worlds oceans. If the vortex leads to Lendor's stronghold, it will be full of water and without current; this is the gateway by which Lendor brought searechters to this world.

There is a 75% chance that a searechter has some creatures enslaved by its *charm monster* ability. The slaves are usually humanoid in appearance, such as sahuagin. Slaves hunt for and protect the searechter. There are usually 2-12 hit dice of slaves, but usually no one creature with over 4 HD (2 HD is the average slave's level). Searechters do not usually have treasure except that of their slaves or the treasure in the sunken ship or ruins they may inhabit.

The coloration of a searechter is either dark blue or black. Its body is similar in appearance to an eye of the deep's, with three eyestalks on each side of the body and two fins on its back like the wings of a messenger monodrone.

**Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup> See DRAGON® issue #86 for more information on the Suel deity Lendor.

<sup>2</sup> The spectator attacks with only a -2 on its "to hit" rolls because of its ability to psionically sense intelligent opponents, though the spectator does not have any other psionic abilities. In this manner, the spectator gains an accurate idea of where its enemies are located. If the spectator is attacking a creature with no brain, such as a golem or a skeleton, it suffers the usual -4 penalty on "to hit" rolls.

<sup>3</sup> When a magic-user summons a spectator, the DM should roll percentile dice to determine the class of spectator. A roll of 01-75 means a lower-class spectator appears; a roll of 76-99 means an upper-class spectator appears; and a result of 00 means the magic-user has summoned one of Lendor's favorite spectators (which has 36 hp and high intelligence). In this latter case, Lendor will eventually come to the Prime Material plane, release the spectator from its bondage, and return to Nirvana with his elite spectator, without bothering the summoner further. Ω

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# The Game Wizards

## *Back from beyond: progress on the second-edition AD&D® game*

I am not a rules lawyer. I never want to be a rules lawyer. You know the type — the person who insists that every situation that could ever come up in your game be followed exactly by the rules; who won't let your character try something just because it's not in the rules and therefore must not be allowed; who follows every rule literally as it is written (no matter what the result); who argues endlessly about a minor point until fellow players either give in or bop him over the head a few times (I do that every once in a while) — in short, a rules lawyer.

Fortunately, rules lawyers (perhaps we should scientifically name them: *rulius magistarius*) don't simply spring to life, newly endowed with their hairsplitting senses through some arcane genetic code. No, we can safely say they are products of their environment. Perhaps weaned on games by fellow gamers, they develop a desire to play games correctly, never interpreting the rules differently from session to session. This leads them to discover so-called “fatal flaws in design” — gaps, contradictions, and unanswered areas in a game that the designer never thought worth detailing. From there, it's only a small leap to extrapolating from the rules to fill all those gaps, neat and tidy.

So, what's all this ranting got to do with the second-edition AD&D game? In a word — playtesting.

Now, before all the playtesters get me wrong and proceed to line up and kill me (though they still have to wait their turn until the defenders of the cavalier and barbarian classes are done), let me say in great big letters: I LIKE MY PLAYTESTERS! I am very thankful to have them. Without their efforts, more than a few egregious errors and ideas would have slipped through the cracks of the second-edition process. Yet wading through the mountains of 3 x 5 cards showing their comments is like spending the evening with a distant aunt and uncle — the ones who want to like you, but don't really know you and would never let their son dress that way even if they don't want to be

rude and say it (but sometimes do anyway). After several hours, you come out of it feeling like you've strengthened your moral fiber. After several months of playtesting comments, we'll come out with a strengthened second edition — and a small case of insanity.

Do I think the playtesters are rules lawyers? Certainly not. (Well, perhaps some are — but not all.) I am sure that they create and play entertaining, lively, and exciting adventures. But that's not what playtesting is all about.

Playtesting is the gaming equivalent of passing the bar exam. If you make it, you're in; if you fail, it's back to the books. And one of the things taught in law school is that it's the argument that counts, not whether you're right or wrong. The AD&D game's second-edition design draft is, in some ways, my test to pass the gaming bar exam. As you may have guessed, it hasn't been easy.

So, what has been going on to reduce me to a state of raving madness? A massive playtesting campaign, that's what. In the months that have passed since anyone last reported to you on the progress of the second-edition project, quite a bit has happened. I wrapped up most, but not all, of the first design draft in January or February of this year (its been so long that I can't remember). I actually got a break from this work and designed some wildly different things — the BULLWINKLE & ROCKY™ roleplaying party game and Commando, a TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game supplement. But even while I was sleeping, work was being done on the second-edition project.

Most of that work was done by Jon Pickens. Jon's filled several roles on the project. He handles a lot of the research that needs to be done (yes, there is research), coordinated the playtesting groups, and acts as a staunch defender of the conservative view of the AD&D game. Now, as you may guess from previous columns, I have always treated the AD&D game rules as something less than rigid, sacrosanct, and untouchable; it's in my

nature as a designer. Given complete freedom, I would change a lot of things about the second-edition game. Jon, in my opinion, is at the other extreme. He claims to actually play AD&D games using all the rules exactly as they are written. Consequently, he is my perfect foil — or, better yet, my counterbalance. Every time I go too far to the “Let's make this change because it's great (i.e., my idea)” extreme, Jon counters with the “Let's not change it if it isn't broken” creed. He continually brings me back to consider what this game is all about and why people play it. This doesn't mean that he is always right or that I'm always forgetting why people like AD&D games, but he is a useful balance to make sure that all viewpoints in the second-edition project are fairly heard.

As mentioned above, Jon ran the playtesting of the second-edition rules. This doesn't mean he was out there running playtesting games himself (Jon worked hard, but not *that* hard), but he established and monitored our playtesting groups. These groups had players just like you, RPGA™ Network members who volunteered to take part in our work. All told, Jon worked with about 20-30 groups. Now, I don't know exact numbers, but if each group had an average of six players, that means about 100-200 players actually did the playtesting. Furthermore, they did the playtesting for eight months or more. On top of that, we have 10 years of comments, suggestions, criticisms, letters, DRAGON® Magazine articles, and two GEN CON® game fairs (and several regional conventions) that solicited your views. Thus, you have the most thoroughly playtested and developed game done yet by TSR, Inc. (I won't be so rash as to claim that it's the most thoroughly playtested and designed game in the industry, but I think there are few games out there that have received as much attention.)

From all these playtesting groups, Jon has been collecting criticisms, comments, and loopholes. Each one, no matter how trivial or small, is noted on a 3 x 5 card and sorted according to subject. Jon has

collected thousands of these cards. From some of the playtesters, he got longer comments — letters, reports, and even small books. These, too, he boiled down to 3 x 5 cards.

Our playtesting has now reached an end. We are still some months away from releasing the new books, but there are still several stages left to go. That's where the playtesters, Jon's 3 x 5 cards, and my ranting all come together in a big crash. We didn't do this playtesting just to look important, and Jon didn't note each comment on a card just to pass the time. Each card and comment has to be evaluated, considered, and (when necessary) incorporated into the manuscripts to get changes and improvements into the second edition. As the designer and developer, this last part is what I've been doing.

At this year's GEN CON games fair, an unknown playtester complained to my boss that all of the playtesting of the second edition was being ignored. I don't know what this person's reasoning was, because I wasn't there (and I'm glad I wasn't there; if I had been, the convention might have had its first homicide). By that time I had already spent an entire month going through playtesting comments, inputting changes and listening to what our players were saying. Since then, I've spent another two months doing the same thing. Don't let anyone kid you — the playtesters have been heard, and it has made a difference.

Still, three months of going through 3 x 5 cards may not seem like enough to make a person crazy. But remember, as I said earlier, playtesting does something to people. The playtesters are no longer just looking at a game to see if they like it. They have an important responsibility to find all the little things that might be wrong, noting what rules work and what rules don't, and to tell us. If they didn't do these things, they wouldn't be good playtesters. Fortunately, they are good playtesters. They are incredibly critical, picky, and blunt, which is just what they should be — but they are awfully hard on a poor designer's ego.

Just what have our playtesters accomplished? They noted, en masse, the error that caused magic-users who made their saving throws to still blow their spells (with graphic descriptions of what this could do to the game). They pointed out the problems with trying to change the monetary system to a more "medieval" economy. They took apart and reassembled the game systems for running, overland movement, sighting, swimming, and climbing. They told us if I was making things too complex — encumbrance was a particular concern here. They located contradictions in different parts of the text — the height and age of elves, for instance, tended to vary from section to section. They requested more detail about things like spell books, alignment, paladin powers, and thief abilities. They argued

for retaining material we had decided to cut (and some of it is going to come back as a result). They pointed out awkward wordings and repetitions, although fortunately that is the editor's task to fix, not mine.

Am I always wrong? Are the playtesters always right? Not every time. More than once (more than twice, even), the playtesters don't agree. Some like level limits on character races; some don't. Some want the limits higher; some want the limits lower; some don't want them at all. Some groups think encumbrance and casting times should be standard rules; others agree with me and see them as optional. There are those who want more complexity in combat with critical hits, hit locations, and specific damage; others argue that combat is already too complex and should be made simpler. That's why I, the designer, have to go through each comment. Choices still have to be made between doing a certain thing one way and doing it the another. Often the arguments for changing what I have already written are good and strong. Sometimes it's just a matter of personal taste. These are the times when I have to make the final decision.

And, every so often in going through the cards, I find a little moral support and praise — usually when I'm feeling at my lowest ebb. I'll come across a card with "Nice job" or "We like this" — and that helps. It really does.


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# CONVENTION CALENDAR

## Convention Calendar Policies

This column is a service to our readers worldwide. 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 standard manuscript paper. The contents of each listing must be short, succinct, and under 150 words long.

The information given in the listing **must** include the following, in this 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, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. No call-in listings are accepted. Unless stated otherwise, all dollar values given for U.S. and Canadian conventions are in U.S. currency.

**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 worldwide see each issue. Accurate information is your responsibility.

Copy deadlines are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. Thus, the copy deadline for the May 1989 issue is the last Monday of March 1989. Announcements for North American and Pacific conventions must be mailed to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. Announcements for Europe must be posted an additional month before the copy deadline to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, TSR UK Limited, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD, United Kingdom.

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. Most questions or changes should be directed to either Robin Jenkins or Roger E. Moore at TSR, Inc., (414) 248-3625 (U.S.A.). Questions or changes concerning European conventions should be directed to Rik Rose at TSR UK Limited, (0223) 212517 (U.K.).

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## OMNICON 1988, November 4-6

Sponsored by the North Carolina State University Science Fiction Society, this science-fiction, fantasy, and gaming convention will be held on the North Carolina State University campus in Raleigh, N.C. Miniatures, role-playing, and board games are featured, with two RPGA™ Network AD&D® tournaments and a CHILL\* tournament (and possibly others). Science-fiction and fantasy literature will also be featured. A door-prize drawing will be held. Registration is \$2 for one day, or \$5 for the weekend. Registration begins at 5 P.M. Friday, and the con closes at 6 P.M. Sunday. Write to: OMNICON 1988, c/o Andrew Chilton or David Ridout, P.O. Box 98052, Raleigh NC 27624; or call: (919) 847-6758.

## QUAD-CON 88, November 4-6

The RiverBend Gamers Association will hold this convention at the Sheraton Hotel, located at 17th Street and 3rd Avenue in Rock Island, Ill. Room rates are at a special nightly rate of \$44 for a single and \$53 for a double (for reservations, call: (800) 322-9803, or (800) 447-1297 if calling from outside Illinois). There is over 3,300 square feet of space in the two gaming rooms and about 2,080 square feet in the dealers' room. Featured events include AD&D®, D&D®, BATTLETECH\*, CHAMPIONS\*, RECON\*, MARVEL SUPER HEROES®, CALL OF CTHULHU\*, and other games, as well as a miniatures-painting contest, microarmor events, an ancients-to-future combat tournament, and a costume contest and party (no weapons, please). Prices are \$8 for the weekend, if received by October 1. Otherwise, costs are \$10 at the door, or \$5 per day. Write to: RiverBend Gamers Association, P.O. Box 8421, Moline IL 61265.

## METROMEET '88, November 5

The Gamer's Guild is sponsoring an all-day gaming meet at the Fine Arts Building at Montgomery College - Rockville Campus, in Rockville, Md. Events include role-playing, board, and miniatures gaming, which start at 10 A.M. and conclude at midnight. Registration is \$10 at the door. Write to: METROMEET '88, c/o Gamer's Guild, Suite 304, 90 West Montgomery Avenue, Rockville MD 20850; or call: (301) 424-2115.

## ROCK-CON XV GAME FAIR, November 5-6

This gaming convention will be held at the Wagon Wheel Resort in Rockton, Ill.; from 10 A.M. to midnight on Saturday and 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. on Sunday. Guests of honor will include E. Gary Gygax, Jim Ward, Tom Wham, and Lou Zocchi. Events will include an RPGA™ Network multi-round AD&D® game tournament, a large (40 booths) dealers' room, miniatures events and contests, and the Fifth Annual Rock-Con Auction, hosted by Rich Borg. In addition, door

prizes will be given away every hour. Admission is \$5 for one or both days; there are no game fees. Send an SASE to: ROCK-CON XV GAME FAIR, 14225 Hansberry Road, Rockton IL 61072.

## SAN ANTONIO FANFAIR, November 5-6

Bulldog Productions presents this small, fun comic-book, science-fiction, and film convention, to be held at a hotel to be announced. More than 60 dealers' tables, more than a dozen guests of honor, a masquerade, 24-hour gaming sessions, 24-hour video rooms, writers' workshops, an open convention suite, and a huge Saturday night party will be featured events. The anticipated attendance for this convention is 600. Tables are available for \$50-60. Admission fees are \$4 for Saturday, \$3 for Sunday, and \$5 for both days at the door only. Write to: Bulldog Productions, P.O. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382; or call: (214) 349-3367.

## DALLASCON 88 WINTERFEST November 11-13

The largest gaming convention in the Southwest will be held at the Park Inn International Hotel in Irving, Texas. All types of board, miniatures, and role-playing game events will be featured, including a WRG Ancients and AD&D® game tournament. The convention also features a dealers' room, auction, movies, and open gaming. Write to: DALLASCON, P.O. Box 867623, Plano TX 75086.

## SCI CON 10, November 11-13

Sponsored by the Hampton Roads Science Fiction Association, this science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Executive Center in Virginia Beach, Va. David Brin is guest of honor, David Mattingly is artist guest of honor, Bud Webster is fan guest of honor, and David Cherry is toastmaster. Kelly Freas and other guests will be in attendance. Panels, readings, video presentations, a costume contest, gaming, an art show, and more will also be featured. Memberships are \$15 until September 30 and \$20 at the door. Huckster tables (limit of two per customer and including one membership each) are \$60 each until September 30, and \$75 thereafter (if still available). Send an SASE to: SCI CON 10, Dept. FA, P.O. Box 9434, Hampton VA 23670.

## TULARE-CON 10, November 12

This science-fiction, comic-book, and gaming convention will be held at the T.D.E.S. Hall in Tulare, Calif. Guests of honor will include artists Ron Lim, Chuck Austen, and Edward Luena. Other guests of honor will include special-effects designers John Goodwin and Scott Alexander. Activities will include movies, panels, workshops, and costume, art, and gaming contests. Admission is free. Write to: Bob Meyers, c/o Bobs Office Supplies and Stationers (B.O.S.S.), 227 South K Street, Tulare CA 93274; or call: (209) 686-2896.

**CONCON: THE CONSTANT CONVENTION**  
**November 13-14**

This gaming convention is held the second Saturday of each month at The Gamemaster in Arlington, Mass. This November's CONCON will be the first two-day event. Special features will include the Northeast Regional BATTLETECH\* Championship and CONCON Cup, and the BLOODBOWL\* Championship. Other events include WARHAMMER\* Fantasy and 40,000 miniatures battles, historical miniatures events, and role-playing games. Write to: The Gamemaster, 444 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington MA 02174; or call: (617) 641-1580.

**NEBRASKACON, November 18-20**

Nebraska's largest gaming convention will be held at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, at the Student Union Ballroom. Steve Jackson will be the guest. For a free preregistration packet, send an SASE to: HobbyTown, 6021 South 52nd St. Ct., Lincoln NE 68516 (Att: Jim Lafler).

**SILVERCON, November 18-20**

This science-fiction, fantasy, and gaming convention will feature RPGA™ AD&D® and CHAMPIONS\* tournaments (among others), open gaming, panel discussions, art displays, a benefit auction, a dealers' room, and more. Dedicated to the memory of Manley Wade Wellman, SILVERCON will donate its profits to Mr. Wellman's widow to help defray her late husband's medical bills. Various science-fiction and fantasy authors and artists may appear, with a special emphasis on North Carolina and the South, and guests from the gaming and comics industries are expected. This convention will be held at the Great Smokies Hilton, Asheville, N.C. Memberships for all three days are \$20 before November 11, and \$25 at the door. Write to: SILVERCON, P.O. Box 8342, Asheville NC 28814.

**XANADU, November 18-20**

This annual convention will be held at the Nashville Ramada Inn, across from the airport. Jim Baen is guest of honor, and Wilson Tucker is M.C. Programming includes a costume contest, a dance, a 24-hour video room, and many panels. Several RPGA™ Network events are featured; with other game tournaments sponsored by a local games store. Registration for all three days is \$15 until November 1, or \$20 afterward. Write to: XANADU Convention, P.O. Box 23281, Nashville TN 37202; or call: (615) 833-1345.

**CONTEX VI, November 25-27**

This science-fiction and fantasy convention, sponsored by Friends of Fandom, will be held at the Hyatt Regency West, 13210 Katy Freeway (at Eldridge), Houston, Tex. Guest of honor will be Joel Rosenberg, along with Cat Boxe Theatre, Jean Elizabeth Martin, and Randy Farran. Events include panels, merchants, clubs, fanzines, art, workshops, media, filking, costumes, auctions, contests, and open and tournament gaming. Registration is \$15 for three days until September 30. Write to: Friends of Fandom, P.O. Box 266996, Houston TX 77207-6996; or call: (713) 475-8228. For hotel reservations, call the Hyatt at: (713) 558-1234.

**DALLAS FANTASY FAIR, November 25-27**

Bulldog Productions presents this full-scale comic-book, science-fiction, and film convention, which will be held at the Marriott Park Central, 7750 LBJ at Coit, in Dallas, Texas. This event will feature more than 140 dealers' tables, 100 guests of honor, an art show and auction, a masquerade, 24-hour gaming sessions, 24-hour

Japanimation and video rooms, artists' and writers' workshops, readings, a dance, an open convention suite, and much more. The anticipated attendance for this convention is 2,000. Admission fees are \$15 for all three days if paid in advance or \$20 at the door. Write to: Bulldog Productions, P.O. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382; or call: (214) 349-3367.

**MACQUARIECON '88, December 9-11** ♦

One of the largest role-playing conventions in Australia will be held on the campus of Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, with AD&D®, CALL OF CTHULHU\*, PARANOIA\*, WARHAMMER\*, and other games. Prizes will be awarded to winners. Registration is \$12 (Australian), with a \$5 (Australian) discount for entries received before November 1. There is also a \$3 (Australian) fee per game. No entries accepted after December 2. Write to: MACQUARIECON '88, c/o MURPS, Box 83 Student Council, Macquarie University, Sydney, AUSTRALIA 2109.

**EVECON 6, December 30-January 1**

Now one of the largest science-fiction, fantasy, and gaming conventions, EVECON 6 will be held at the National Clarion Hotel in Crystal City, Va. Feature will include our usual assortment of jugglers, clowns, strolling minstrels, and vaudeville acts — not to mention such things as writers' workshops, a computer room, an art show, open gaming, a costume contest, a light show, a New Year's extravaganza, and much more. Membership will be \$15 (if postmarked before December 1) and \$20 at the door. One-day rates for CastleCon will also be available. Write to: FanTek, Box 128, Aberdeen MD 21001.

**ICON XIII, January 20-22, 1989**

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by Ed Sollers

# When the Tanks Roll

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*Coups and revolutions in the TOP  
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Political instability is all too common in today's world, and in many countries the usual means of changing regimes is not by elections but by coups d'état. In the period 1966-1986 alone, more than 50 successful coups occurred, taking place in every region of the globe. Coups thus pose an obvious hazard to Orion Foundation agents in the field. Knowledge of how, when, and where a coup might occur reduces that hazard considerably.

In its war against the Web, Orion sometimes intervenes in an attempted coup if it appears to be Web-controlled. However, it is the policy of the Orion Foundation to respect the sovereignty and independence of all countries; Orion neither initiates coups nor intervenes in coups that are not known to be Web-controlled. When preparing for a nation's overthrow, the Web either infiltrates the government elite (if the Web has a strong business and financial presence) or else disrupts the government (through terrorism, encouragement of insurgency, propaganda, etc.).

A coup d'état is the infiltration and subversion of part of the armed forces or security apparatus of a nation, using that faction to overthrow the government. The purpose of the coup is always political, but its methods are politically neutral; there have been left-wing as well as right-wing coups.



Not every country is vulnerable to a coup. Unless the preconditions for success exist, the plotters could not retain power even if the coup succeeded. There are three fundamental preconditions for a successful coup:

1. The social and economic condition of the country must be such that only a limited number of people — the elite — can participate in politics. Under such conditions, political legitimacy is fragile. The deprived masses will accept any change in government, legal or otherwise, knowing that their own lots will probably not change. Much of the Third World meets this criterion. In countries where the masses can participate effectively in politics, a strong sense of political legitimacy among the masses, leading to widespread resistance, will probably defeat any coup. Additionally, if a country has experienced an economic disruption or military defeat (or both) such that the existing government is totally discredited, a coup is possible.

2. A country must be politically independent. If a stronger power is willing and able to intervene against a coup, the coup will fail (as happened recently in Grenada). To succeed, the coup plotters must first secure the cooperation of any strong outside power that might oppose them. The 1963 coup in South Vietnam that ousted Diem (with tacit U.S. approval) is an example of such a situation.

3. A country must have a center of power that can be seized. In most countries, this will be the capital city.

Coup plotters must neutralize, generally by sabotage or the defensive use of force, all forces and facilities they do not use themselves. To this end, they must do several things:

First, they must identify all forces that could intervene in the capital while the coup is in progress. In addition to military units, such forces could include paramilitary police, civilian militias (belonging to labor unions, students, and political parties), and other armed groups. All such forces must be dealt with, either by incorporating them into the plot or by neutralizing them through the use of infiltration, sabotage, roadblocks, or defensive warfare. In general, the more advanced technology a unit uses (such as electronics or aircraft), the easier it becomes to sabotage the unit — but the deadlier the unit is if it can attack.

Second, they must identify the means of communication that they will use after they have established themselves in power. This should be the means that the public most closely associates with the government. In most Third World countries, this will usually be the government radio station. All other communication facilities (telephone, radio, television, etc.) must be neutralized through sabotage.

Third, they must identify the persons who must be detained or eliminated during the coup. This category includes the

head of the government (usually a president, general, or prime minister), defense minister, armed forces chiefs, police minister, and anyone else who controls an intervention force or could rally opposition to the coup. Ceremonial heads of state need not be arrested unless they can rally opposition; if they can be manipulated, they will be useful to the new regime.

Fourth, they must identify the buildings and other physical facilities to be sabotaged or seized. This includes the royal or presidential palace, the capitol, communication facilities, the homes or offices of the people detained or eliminated, the airports, and any other locations as required. Once they choose their areas of operations, they must plan how to isolate them. These areas should include all the buildings and facilities to be sabotaged or seized. All approaches to each area must be sealed with roadblocks.

Finally, they must recruit the necessary personnel to execute the coup. Two types are needed: strike teams (to seize targets, make arrests, man roadblocks, etc.) and technicians (to conduct sabotage). The initial approach to each recruit should be made by a cut-out — an expendable participant — rather than one of the coup leaders. Typical criteria checked for when approaching a recruit include his political opinions (it helps if they match the coup's), his career pattern (men who have been promoted more slowly than their peers are often ideal), his leadership potential (his unit should follow him into the coup), and other data, including religion, ethnic background, and so forth, if appropriate to the coup's goals.

The potential recruit should be told that his own role will be limited and specific (without going into the actual details of the task), and he should be assured that most of his unit has already joined the plot (regardless of whether or not this is true). All of this will make the recruit feel more secure and lead to his easy acceptance of the idea of a coup.

Coup plotters have two approaches in recruiting units. They can either subvert entire units, such as battalions, or they can recruit fragments, such as platoons and companies, from a number of units. The first method provides greater security prior to the coup, since the men know each other and will be on the watch for informers and infiltrators. The second method minimizes the risk that someone within the coup will usurp control from the leaders, since the troops are unused to working together and the officers are usually of similar rank and are unwilling to defer to one another. The second method also has the advantage that, when the coup is underway, the government cannot be sure which units are still loyal to it.

Recruiting should not be attempted in units organized by the government for political reliability. These ultraloyal units must be dealt with during the coup itself. The Web assists coup plotters with recruit-

ment (using bribery, blackmail, kidnapping, or entrapment to persuade the recruit) and with security, by infiltrating the security apparatus and assassinating potential informers.

The active phase of the coup consists of carrying out the five actions given earlier in this article. In doing so, the following tactics will be useful:

1. The starting time for the coup will be the hour at which the insurgent forces will be detected by loyalists, which is largely a function of how conspicuous the coup's action teams are and the distances they must travel to reach their targets. The first teams to go into action will be the ones sent to arrest people, since only these targets can escape. However, these will be the smallest teams (probably no more than a truckload each). A similar-size team should be sent to each of the facilities the coup will sabotage rather than seize (primarily communication facilities). The largest teams, the ones that will seize buildings and set up roadblocks, will be the last to move. The teams in this last group should receive any available heavy weapons (such as armored vehicles), since their real function is to intimidate the loyalists rather than fight them.

2. If possible, units should move at night to conceal their numbers and increase confusion for loyalist forces.

3. Revolutionary forces should do a minimum of actual fighting, both to reduce the risk of coup forces accidentally fighting each other and to keep the loyalists confused. With the leadership arrested and the communications seized or sabotaged, the orders issued to loyalists would take an irregular form. Revolutionary forces should claim that they, too, are following orders and urge caution to their comrades. Every hour of loyalist delay works for the coup. Once the coup plotters have seized their targets and broadcast their victory, loyalists will probably give up. However, the ultraloyal formations such regimes maintain will have to be dealt with on the barricades, as the likelihood of their surrender is low.

4. Large action teams (the ones that seize buildings) should be broken up as soon as their mission is accomplished; they should then be sent to set up the roadblocks. During a coup, all teams must be kept busy; otherwise, they might overthrow their own leaders.

The Web ensures the success of its coups by using Web assassins to eliminate the human targets of the coup. It also encourages personnel in strike teams to greater effort — at gunpoint. The Web also freely provides hardware and support to technicians, as well as a few heavy weapons, if greater firepower is needed to intimidate loyalist troops. When the Web is behind a coup, it assigns a Web Operations Manager to direct events.

Once the coup has succeeded, it must announce the fact to the nation as quickly as possible. The first communique from



the new regime, in addition to denouncing its predecessor, announces the security restrictions that will be placed in effect. At minimum, these will include a rigorous curfew, a strong military and police presence in the capital, and a ban on air traffic. Banks may be closed. Frequent identity checks may be required, and news will be censored or unavailable. Public gatherings will be prohibited. All this makes life hazardous at best for Orion agents engaged on missions in the area, but if the Web is behind the coup, the situation becomes even more dangerous as the Web and the new regime hunt them down.

Ironically, in countries where Web-controlled businesses have large holdings, the new regime will (insincerely) denounce the corporations, if the coup was dominated by the Web. Harsh criticism of foreign-owned corporations is standard after coups, especially in the Third World.

A coup is a particularly unpleasant surprise. The Orion Foundation tries to avoid such surprises through a combination of surveillance and intelligence-gathering of other types. Direct action, where practical, is also used; Orion fights Web-influenced coups in countries at all levels. Sometimes the Foundation must act indirectly, using the resources of the corporations that contribute to Orion. The following are common Orion strategies:

1. The corporations affiliated with Orion

often make business decisions and investments with the sole purpose of countering Web influence in a country subject to frequent coups.

2. Orion maintains a close watch for the presence of high-level Web agents in countries vulnerable to coups. Sometimes a Web operation of great importance will be handled by a Director or senior Operations Manager in person. If Orion can spot these people, it has an opportunity to terminate or capture them.

3. The Foundation often conducts an analysis of a country's officer corps similar to that done by the Web as noted above. Continuous surveillance is placed on soldiers and officials believed vulnerable to Web influence. If necessary, their homes and offices are bugged so that their dealings with the Web can be recorded. Such men are driven out of the conspiracy by the threat of exposure.

4. Orion monitors military and government signal traffic; a sharp increase in the amount of traffic may be a sign of an impending coup.

5. Orion recruits reliable local citizens to watch suspected coup targets, persons as well as locations; these local agents normally perform no other task. The residences of such persons will be specified by Orion and will be chosen to make their task easier. If an analysis indicates that a coup may be attempted shortly, these

people will be alerted to watch their targets and report any suspicious activity. Their Orion case officer will then broadcast a warning to Orion agents. To maintain security, the case officer will represent himself to the locals as an agent of their government. Instructions and salaries will be passed to these people via dead drops. If practical, they may be given legitimate jobs in a local Orion company. Each local surveillance personnel will be issued a communicator similar to the SW1 that does not operate on the frequencies routinely used by the government, to minimize the risk of detection.

6. If necessary, an Orion agent will be placed inside the security services of the government, effectively becoming a double agent. This agent will then be able to pass on to the local government Orion analyses of the situation and any warnings received. Infiltrating the security services is, of course, a highly risky stratagem.

7. In extreme cases, Orion may send a Titan Team to a country threatened by a coup. The team's job will be to rescue or prevent the capture of persons capable of organizing effective resistance to the coup. Although this is the most dangerous stratagem of all, it has a good chance of success because a Titan Team is far better trained than average soldiers and because the Titan Team may well outnumber the coup action team sent to arrest the target. Other possible missions for a Titan Team include impersonating military or police officers to rally loyalist units and using clandestine communication facilities for the same purpose. A Titan Team is authorized to act as it sees fit in such situations. In general, a Titan Team will avoid any confrontation with a building-seizure or roadblock action team, as the latter will probably have enough firepower to defeat the Titan Team.

8. Finally, in all countries in which it operates, Orion maintains several safe houses. These can, of course, serve as refuges for agents caught off guard by a sudden coup. Ω

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GONE ON WITHOUT 'IM !

WHY DOES HE KEEP  
REPEATING THOSE SAME  
WORDS ? WHAT DO THEY  
MEAN ? IS HE ANGRY  
AND PUTTING A CURSE  
ON SOME WOMAN ?

WOW! HE SHOULD  
BE AT A CONVEN-  
TION IN ATLANTA,  
**TOMORROW!**

SNOW ON THE BEACH,  
SNOW ON THE BEACH,  
SNOW ON THE BEACH,

OH NO, HE WAS GOING TO TAKE  
A FEW DAYS OFF. SO YESTERDAY,  
HE WENT TO THE LAKE, TO GO  
SWIMMING, AND THERE WAS  
SNOW ON THE BEACH. SUMMER  
IS GONE... HE MISSED IT AGAIN.

OKAY, I'M HERE  
AN' I CAN HANDLE  
EVERYTHING...WHO  
IS THAT OL' DUDE?

I THINK HE  
IS DA GUY DAT  
DRAWS US.

ELVIS  
LIVES!  
NO ONE!

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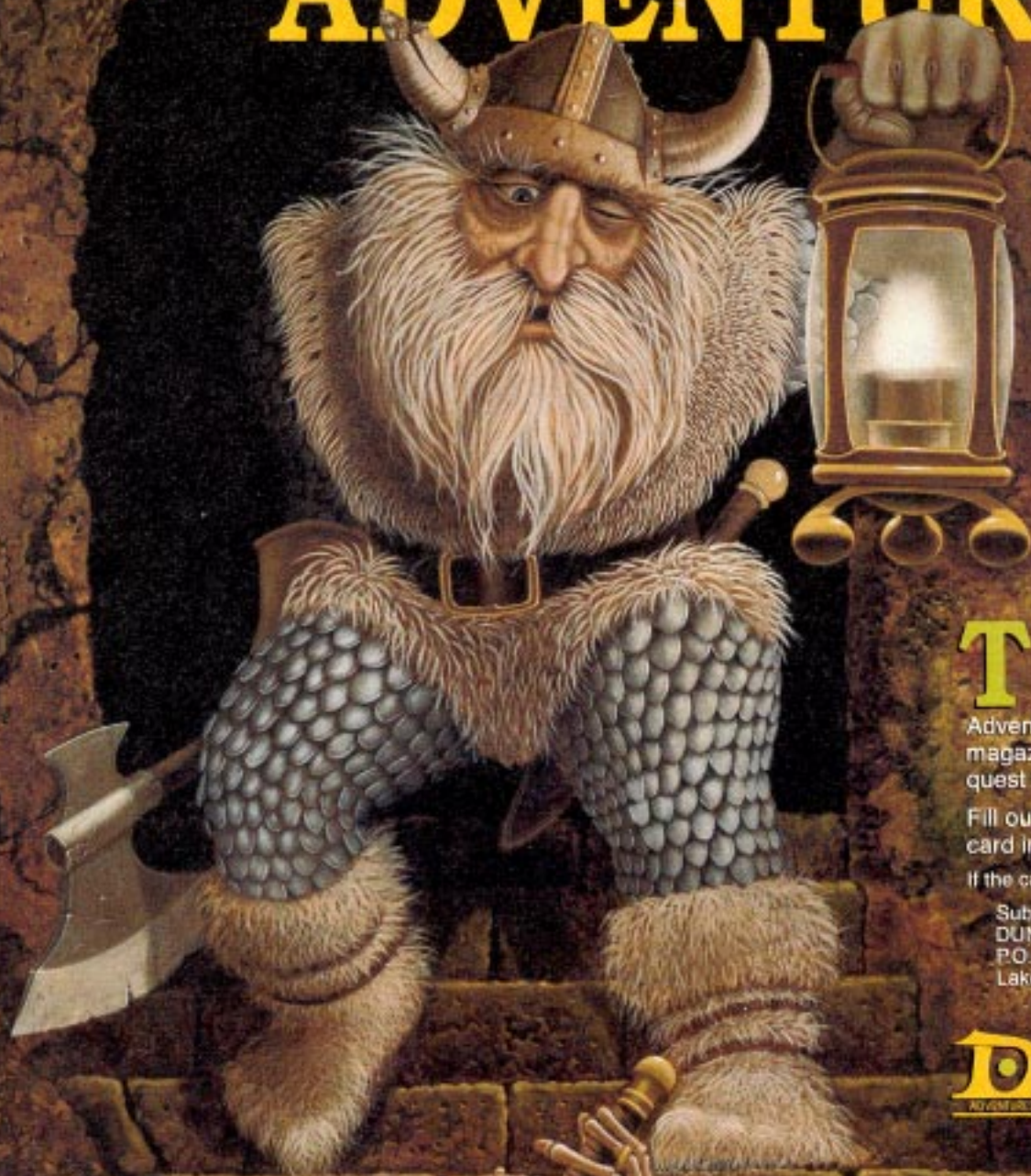
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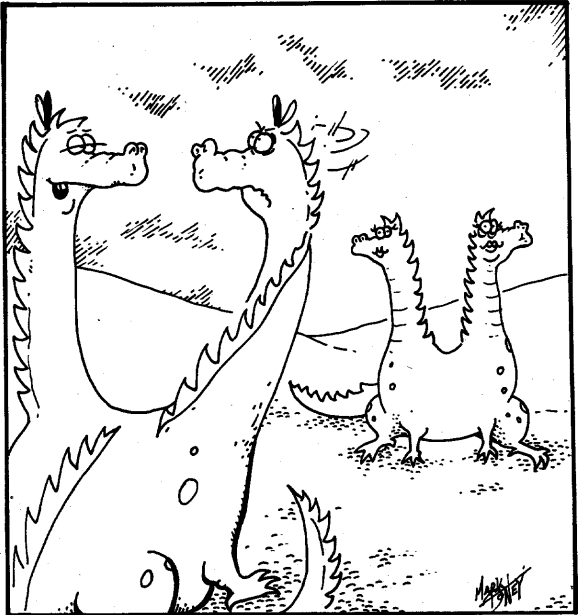
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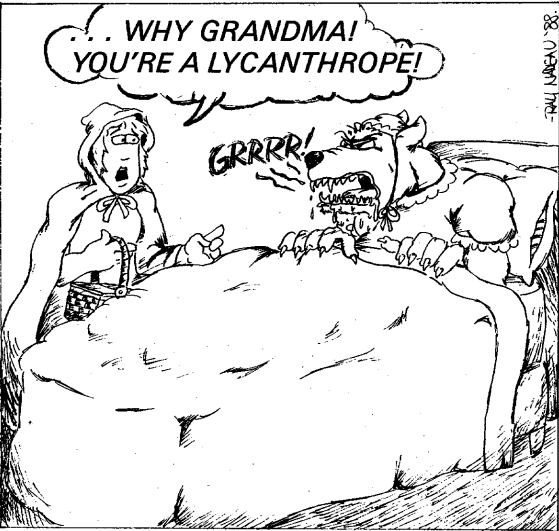


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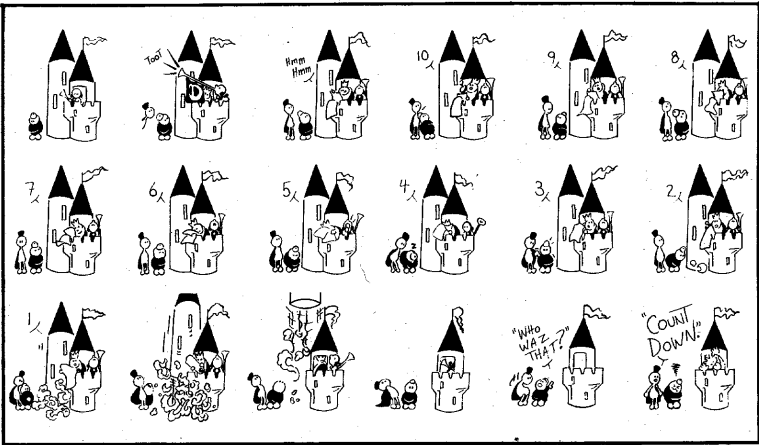
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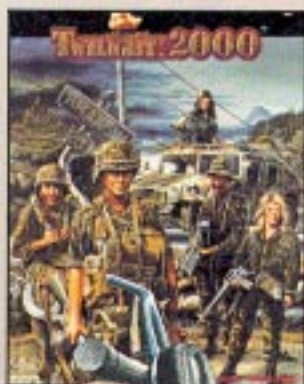


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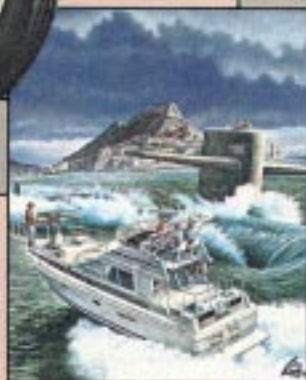
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