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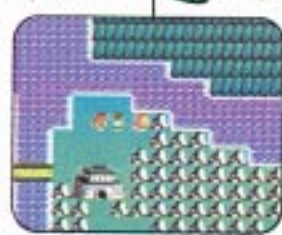
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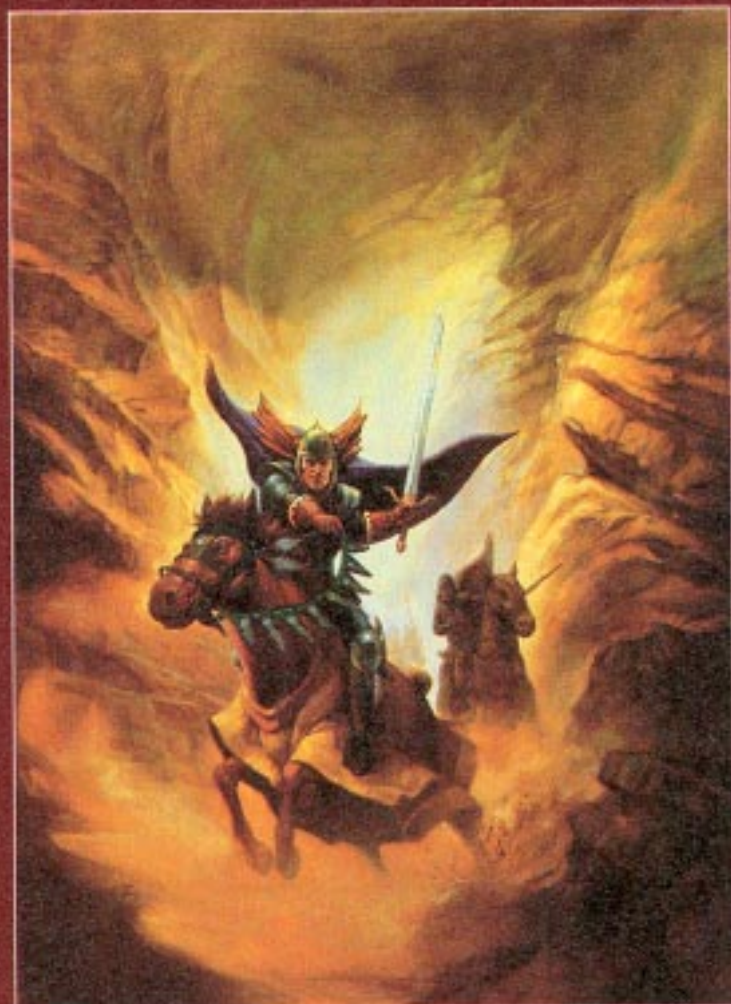
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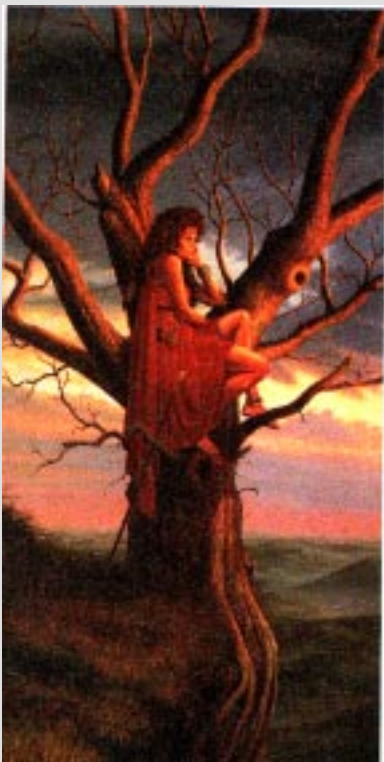
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COVER

At the 1990 GEN CON[®] games fair, Larry Elmore said that he had a painting that we might want to use as a cover for DRAGON[®] Magazine. He led us over to it, we looked at it, and here it is. "Dichara's Tree" is a place of refuge for a tired sorceress, from which she ponders the mysteries of nature and the ways of mankind.

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 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Letters, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LD, United Kingdom.

Short & strange

The following letters were actually received by the editors of DRAGON Magazine and, except for minor editing, appear as they were written.

Dear Dragon:

About what time and age do elves stop making love? What time do they begin?

9:15 P.M., middle age; 9:13 P.M.

Dear Dragon:

What are the effects of a severed limb?

None; it just lies there.

Dear Dragon:

I was wondering, how much damage does a paper cut do?

The actual damage is nil, but the character experiencing it will easily believe that he has been attacked by a sword of sharpness from the pain alone. See the AD&D® 1st Edition Dungeon Masters Guide, page 166, or the AD&D 2nd Edition DMG, page 186.

Dear Dragon:

My brother says elves cannot be muscular. I say they can. What do you think? Do you think elves are powerful?

Elves are anemic and weak. They are powerful only in their imaginations. No offense, of course.

Dear Dragon:

How do you gladiate in AD&D games?

You must have two Romanical fighters for any arenatized combat.

Dear Dragon:

Is there a magical chastity belt that can be controlled only by the wearer?

Having control over your chastity belt rather defeats the purpose of it, doesn't it? We recommend that you instead use the word "No," spoken firmly and with great conviction.

Dear Dragon:

After Ragnarok (the final battle in the Norse mythos), where do all of the gods' souls go if mortals' souls go to the outer planes?

Most will go to Iowa City though some might be found in outlying areas like Des Moines, Nichols, or Davenport. See the Elder Edda for details.

Dear Dragon:

Could you send me a complete set of Dragon Dice? My sister flushed mine down the toilet with two character record sheets.

Your sister shows great promise, and we invite her to work for TSR, Inc., as an editor. As for your dice, a free (and real) catalog showing the most recent dice prices is available from: The Mail Order Hobby Shop, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A.

Dear Dragon:

In one of my dungeons, a player character had an affair with a succubus (much to his surprise!). She has conceived an alu demon. My question is, how long is the gestation period of such a child, and how long will it take to grow up?

Surprise! All the demons have been taken out of the AD&D 2nd Edition rules, so whoever that PC had an affair with was not a succubus. Rerolling the encounter for you, we find that the PC has gotten a neo-otyugh pregnant instead. Good luck!

Dear Dragon:

I have a hard question to ask you. I have all of your books, and I have read them all but can't find the answer. My character was swallowed by a monster, and I was wondering if you could regenerate or resurrect him after [original text deleted by editors in favor of a more delicate phrasing] he passes through the monster.

You could resurrect him, maybe, if someone volunteered to get close enough to the, um, remains.

And now for a serious letter:

A serious letter

Dear Dragon:

I loved your April issue (as I do every year)... On page 12, you mention that the only way to damage a gello monster "is to snarf it—i.e., eat it as quickly as possible." I want to inform Mr. William S. Greenway that he has misdefined "snarf." The actual definition is drinking (or eating liquid substances) quickly and then being made to laugh. Once the person laughs, the liquid comes out his/her nose. That is snarfing, and the classic snarf is with milk, to set the record straight.

Michael Kolodner
Rydal PA

The definition of "snarf" from the text on the gello monster was appended by the editor as a clarification. I thought "snarf" meant "eating quickly," but obviously it means different things to different people. (Did Larry Elmore get the idea for his fantasy hero Snarf in his "Snarf-Quest" comic from this?) After rereading your letter, however, I've decided that this whole topic is silly and gross.

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EDITORIAL

Realistic Fantasy?

I've often wondered how much realism is too much in a game like the AD&D® game. How real should our fantasy worlds be? Do you want reality to intrude in your game? By "reality," I mean the problems that we as a society face today: illiteracy, censorship, homelessness, and so on. I think most gamers (myself included) would react negatively to such a suggestion.

But how then do you explain the incredible popularity of so many "dark future" games that have appeared in the past few years? Off the top of my head, there are (deep breath) at least four "cyberpunk" games, the TWILIGHT: 2000* game by GDW, TSR's XXVc™ game, Steve Jackson's CAR WARS* and GURPS AUTODUEL* games, West End Games' TORG* and PARANOIA* games, the RIFTS* game by Palladium, and almost any post-holocaust game you can think of. All of these games have some hellacious badness, in one form or another, coming down on the heads of the PCs. Whether the menace is from extradimensional invaders or our own morbid fascination with bigger and better weapons, the world and the PCs are in a heap of trouble.

"Dark realism" is the term I'll use throughout this column to refer to certain themes and trends in gaming that have civilization in decline. This dark realism isn't limited to science-fiction games. Two fantasy games with strong dark realism elements leap to mind: the SHADOWRUN* game by FASA, and the WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLEPLAY* game by Games Workshop. Both of these games successfully combine dark elements (cyberpunk and encroaching Chaos, respectively) into a fantasy milieu. Also, DRAGON® Magazine issue #155 ran a questionnaire on the future of the TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game. The results overwhelmingly stated that the players of TOP SECRET/S.I. wanted *realism*. The people who responded favored real-life espionage (e.g., the CIA vs. the KGB, etc.) to the more movie-esque world of huge, international spy organizations (Orion and Web). By the way, TSR has produced TOP SECRET/S.I. adventures and sourcebooks dealing with drug-runners, anti-terrorism, commandos, and covert operations.

Don't get me wrong; I'm not saying any of these are bad games. I've played quite a few of these games, and I absolutely love TSR's old GAMMA WORLD® game. Also,



Artwork by Larry Elmore

many of the "realistic" themes present in these games can make for great role-playing. Political corruption, urban poverty, near-total societal domination by megacorporations, the prospect or actuality of large-scale war, and terrorism are all problems that are worth campaigning against in games (and in reality). The question again is: Do we want to continue the trend of dark realism present in these games into our AD&D and D&D® games?

Well, if you've been playing close attention, you may have already noticed a couple of instances where this has occurred. In DUNGEON® Adventures #13, there's an excellent anti-terrorism adventure, "Of Nests and Nations" by Randy Maxwell. Also, the wonderful D&D adventures DDA1 *Arena of Thyatis* and DDA2 *Legions of Thyatis*, both by John Nephew, deal with political corruption and the detrimental effects of drug abuse.

This discussion can be viewed as a debate about high fantasy versus low fan-

tasy. High fantasy is exemplified by legendary heroes on epic quests. High fantasy is full of wonder, drama, and only passing attention to realism. *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and *The Silmarillion* all by J. R. R. Tolkien are the best examples I can think of. Low fantasy is dirty, grungy, knife-in-the-back fantasy. Low fantasy adventures are full of action, characters with as many faults as you or I, and gritty realism. The *Thieves' World** series and related novels are wonderful low-fantasy stories from a wide variety of authors. (You can also read "The Highs and Lows of Fantasy," by Paul Hancock in DRAGON issue #143 for more information on these sub-genres.)

Both the D&D and AD&D games can be played as either high or low fantasy, depending upon the preferences of the DM and the players. Each game though, has distinctions that make running a particular type of campaign easier. I think the D&D game, with its comparatively loose rules

structure and incredibly rich background material, would be the better choice for a high-fantasy campaign. With PCs capable of evolving into Immortals, how can you help but run a high-fantasy campaign?

The AD&D game, with its more rules-intensive structure and mechanics, is the better choice for running a low-fantasy world. Incorporating some of the AD&D 2nd Edition game's optional rules like critical hits can greatly increase the flavor and realism of a low-fantasy campaign. TSR's LANKHMAR™ campaign setting is a great example of a low-fantasy world.

What I don't want this debate to revolve around is the old "reality vs. playability" dilemma. I'm not concerned with whether or not the D&D and AD&D games are realistic; I'm wondering whether the games should deal with any of the modern issues mentioned earlier. How do you feel about encountering some of the same problems in your D&D and AD&D games that you have to deal with in real life? Do you play any of the "dark realism" games, and if so, which ones? Do you want to see them covered in the pages of DRAGON Magazine? Do you prefer to play in high- or low-fantasy campaigns? Do you want to see more high-fantasy or more low-fantasy material in DRAGON Magazine and other TSR products?

Discuss this topic with other gamers, and find out their views. If everyone is so inclined, try running an epic quest or a gritty survival tale as a change of pace, or try an adventure or two that does deal with some modern issues.

Neutral Forgetful: In my editorial in issue #159, I gave fictional character references for the nine AD&D alignments—well, eight of the nine actually. As it was pointed out to me at this summer's GEN CON® game fair, I neglected to discuss the true neutral alignment. I have since discerned that this oversight was due to a *feeblemind* spell cast on me (and Roger, who didn't catch it either) by an unknown assailant, who was probably true neutral and didn't want me revealing certain secrets. Anyway, with a suitably red face, here goes:

True neutral is perhaps the vaguest of all the alignments. Believing "in the ultimate balance of forces" (2nd Ed. *PHB*, page 47) isn't very specific. I could devote an entire column to this alignment alone, but I have boiled my ideas down into the paragraphs below. I owe inspiration to the 2nd Edition Player's Handbook, for some of the terms used.

The "balance of forces" philosophy for this alignment just never really worked for me. In the game, a neutral character who switches sides more than once (in order to maintain the "balance") is likely to have a very short career. A true neutral person in today's society could easily be regarded as evil. A person, acting for this balance, would likely disregard any laws that might get in his way. After all, too much law is as

bad as too little (to his mind). Being neutral, he would also shy away from too much evil. Many of the "loner" characters in the modern media (especially some "private eye" characters) qualify for this alignment. Also the Waynhim, from the two *Thomas Covenant* trilogies, do qualify for this idea of neutrality. Although quite powerful, they stand back until the forces of chaos and evil present, in the novels have almost achieved final victory. They are not cowards by any means; it is just how they believe they should act. This is the way I would play the "balance of forces" philosophy—stay out of the affairs of others as much as possible. Have your PC lead *his own* life.

To my mind, there is an alternate approach or two to the true neutral alignment. "Ethically neutral" characters are neutral with respect to law and chaos. They will not meddle in the affairs of lawful beings versus chaotic creatures until a situation arises that threatens them. An example of this could be a small village of humans living between a large society of elves and one of dwarves. The humans might lean towards good or evil, but because of their geographic circumstances, would probably remain neutral regarding law and chaos.

Another way to approach neutrality is "morally neutral." The beings or forces using this approach are neutral regarding good and evil, and they will not or cannot judge others as good or evil. This is the alignment of most natural animals and of nature itself. A wolf doesn't kill its prey because the wolf itself is evil: It kills so that it can survive. The wolf's actions are instinctive, not deliberately malign. Likewise, nature isn't malevolent when a tornado or hurricane strikes any more than it is benevolent when the sun shines and makes the crops grow. It is for this reason that druids in the AD&D game are considered to be neutral: They are merely extensions of nature. Play them as nature personified. Thinking of druids in this way might provide some insight on playing them.

Dale A. Donovan

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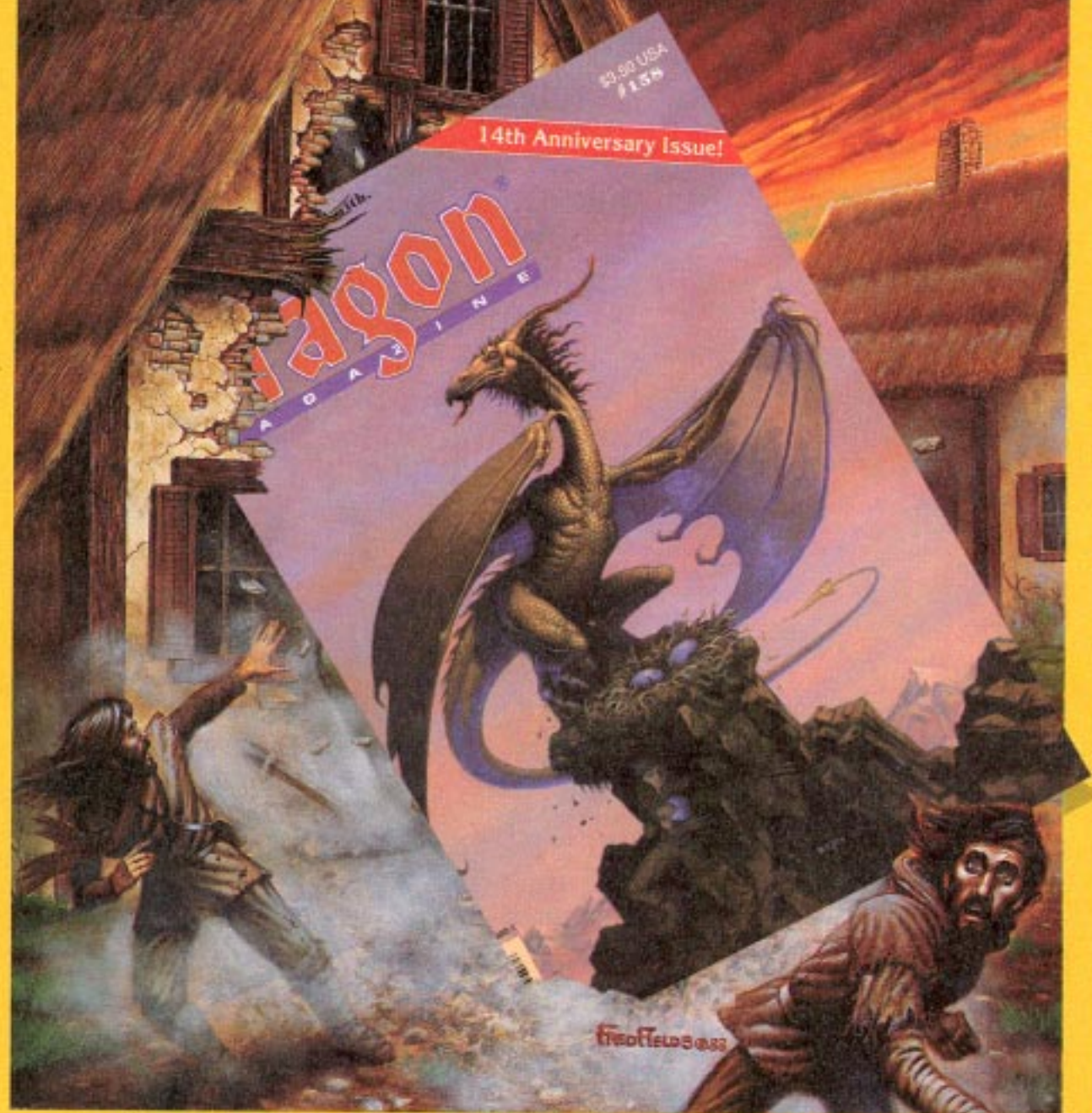


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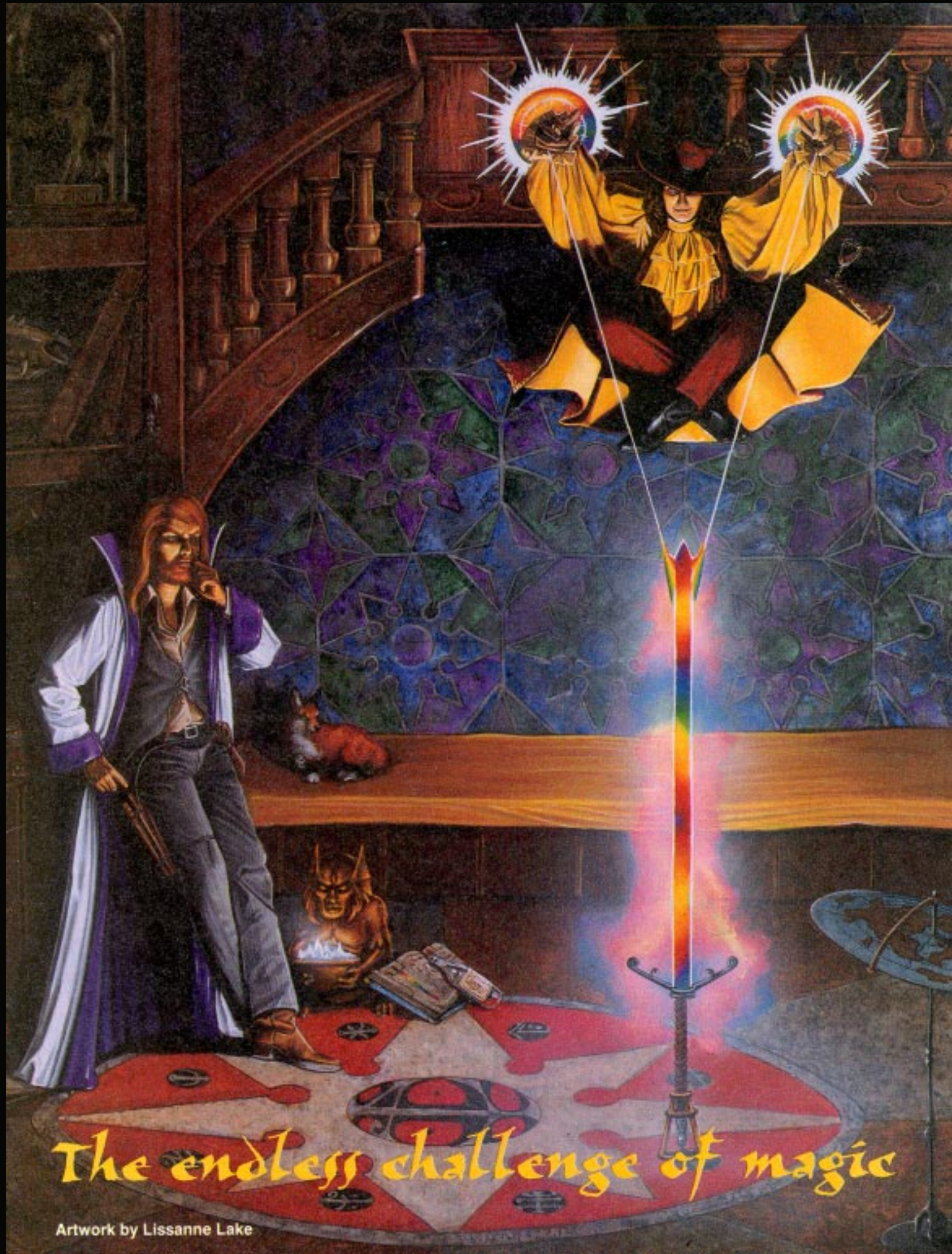
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The endless challenge of magic

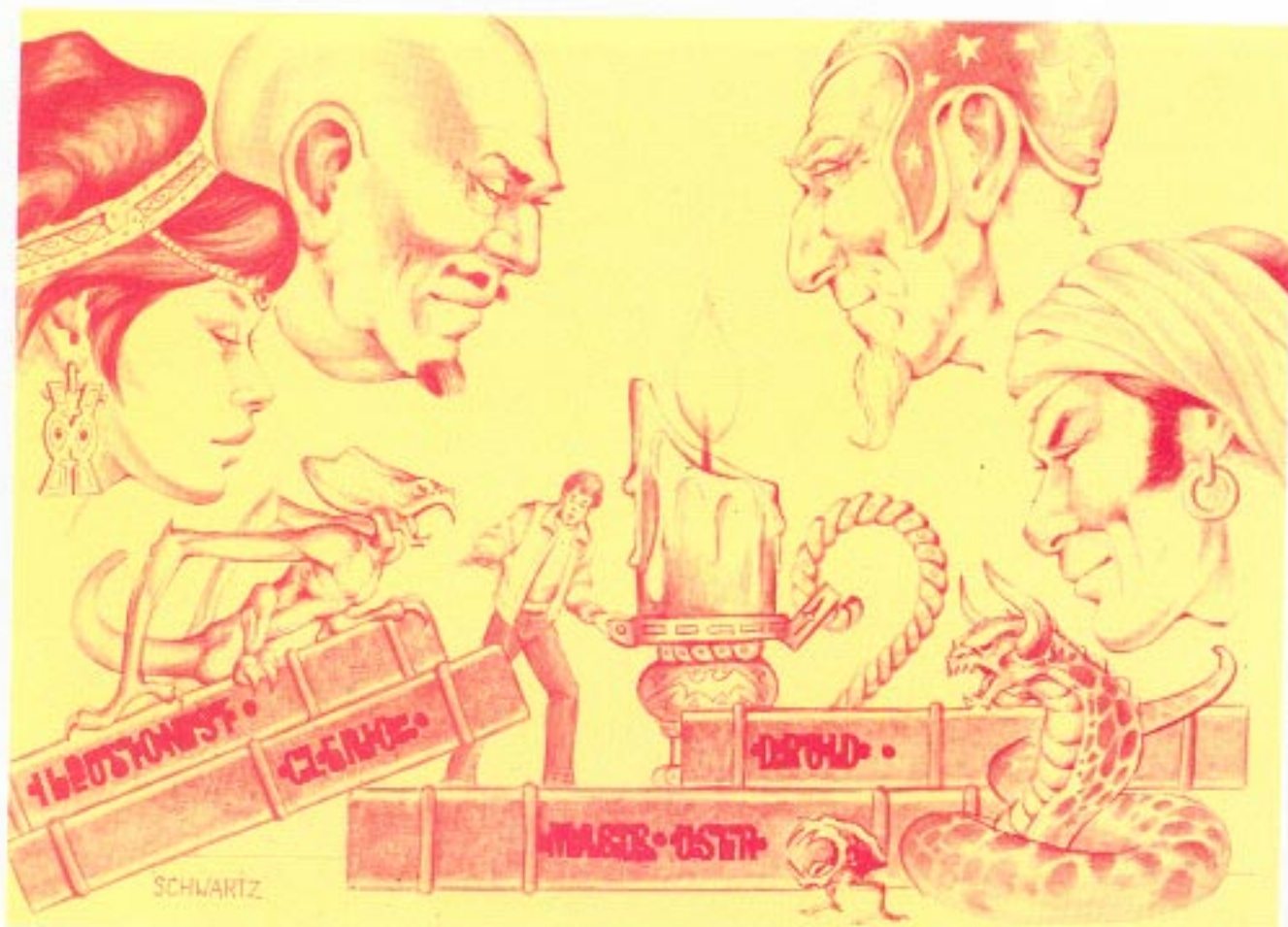
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Back To School— Magic School!

How powerful
are the
AD&D® 2nd Edition
game's schools of
magic?

by Gregory W. Detwiler



artwork by Stephen Schwartz

In the AD&D® 2nd Edition game, players who desire wizard characters have, besides the “generic” mage (the magic-user of the AD&D 1st edition game), eight different classes of wizard to choose from. These eight (abjurer, conjurer, diviner, enchanter, illusionist, invoker, necromancer, and transmuter) have varying powers and numbers of spells at their disposal. No one school can perform every mission that the magic-users of old could; some can do no more than one or two specific tasks. Dealing with the strengths and weaknesses of these schools is crucial when putting together a well-rounded adventuring party.

Things are not quite as clear cut when comparing classes as might be suggested by the above. No practitioner of a specific school of magic is limited to that school alone. However, at least one “opposition” school of magic is denied to each specialist class. By way of compensation, a specialist can cast more spells than a generalized mage, and spells of his school can be more easily resisted by him. Learning spells of his particular school is easier as well. Whenever a specialist gains a new spell level, he may get two spells, provided that at least one belongs to his particular school. This won’t always be the case (an abjurer or necromancer will run out of 1st-level spells of his own school by the time he reaches 4th level), but this does lower the versatility gap between the specialist and a mage of the same level.

This article considers the major functions of spells, and the ability of each school and its practitioners to perform them. The major magical functions are:

1. Personal attack: This is the combat spell that can affect only one target at a time, as exemplified by *magic missile*, *polymorph other*, etc.

2. Personal defense: This category covers defensive spells that work only on the caster or on one person. *Protection from evil*, *invisibility*, and *mirror image* are vital in a fight if one is to survive, but they rarely help the rest of the party.

3. Mass attack: Here we come to the all-time favorite spells of most players; *fireball*, *lightning bolt*, *ice storm*, *cone of cold*, *cloudkill*. They lack subtlety when used against a man-size target, but they can’t be beat for wiping out or softening up entire military units or giant targets.

4. Mass defense: If you want to protect the entire party from some menace, this is the way to go. *Walls of fire*, *ice*, *force*, *iron*, and *stone* are important here.

5. Divination: The information-gathering spells (e.g., *detect magic*, *identify legend lore*, etc.) are often ignored by blast-and-hack players, but are quite useful to those who take the sensible precautions. They may even swing the balance of power between evenly matched groups.

6. Servant gatherers: This category generally consists of summoning spells, such as *gate*, *invisible stalker*, *unseen servant*, and the various *monster summon-*

ing spells. Some personal-attack spells (e.g., *charm person*, *friends*) and mass-attack spells (e.g., *mass suggestion*, *mass charm*) may also fall into this category.

7. Miscellaneous: These spells don’t quite fit in the other categories or have multiple purposes. Most movement spells (e.g., *levitate*, *fly*) can be either defensive (for escape), offensive (if they get you into position for attack), or for peaceful transport. Item-creating spells (e.g., *minor or major creation*, *enchant an item*) fall into this category.

8. Illusions: Illusions are another half-and-half category. They may copy the effects of spells from almost any other category. However, their usefulness against mindless (e.g., golems, most undead) or highly intelligent (e.g., demons, devils) foes is almost nil.

The schools

Abjuration spells fall into two categories: protection (both personal and group) and the repulsion or banishment of enemies, almost always other-worldly enemies. The defensive spells include two of the wizard’s few “curative” spells: *dispel magic* and *remove curse*.

Alteration spells are mostly personal attack, personal defense, and miscellaneous spells. With a handful of exceptions (such as *death fog* and *time stop*), almost no spells are useful against large numbers of foes, at least not directly (a person *polymorphed* or *shape changed* into a dragon, however, might have an effect). Practically all movement-related spells are placed in this category, as changing someone’s ability to move is a standard method of altering him. Because of the great number of (and need for) versatile, general-purpose spells, the school of alteration has the single largest number of spells.

Conjuration/summoning spells specialize in gathering servants, usually monstrous or other-planar ones. There are also a few attack and defense spells (e.g., *prismatic spray*, *wall*, and *sphere*). The main attraction of this school, however, is the fact that one of its 9th-level spells is the highly coveted *wish*.

Enchantment/charm spells concentrate on enslaving or altering the minds and emotions of enemies, as opposed to summoning followers up out of nowhere. There are a few other useful spells, notably those necessary for enchanting magical items (*enchanted weapon*, *enchant an item*); this school may be sought after solely for this one reason, especially as magical-item enchantment can take place at a level lower than the one necessary to learn a *wish* spell.

Greater divination spells consist of all information-gathering spells and nothing else. Actually, the list on page 239 of the AD&D 2nd Edition *Players’ Handbook* is misleading in that it lists *all* information-gathering spells. Technically, greater divination covers only those divination spells of 5th level power or greater; all magic

schools may use the spells of 1st to 4th level. This gives the school of greater divination fewer spells than any other.

The **illusion/phantasm** school consists of all illusion spells, including a few defensive spells like *invisibility*. Like enchantment/charm spells, these spells work on the minds of living beings, though with the purpose of deluding and deceiving them instead of controlling them. For the same reason, they are useless against undead and other mindless opponents.

Invocation/evocation spells are the big-hitting combat spells such as *fireball* and *lightning bolt*, a few personal combat spells such as *magic missile*, some defensive spells including *shield* and almost all *wall* spells, and a few other useful odds and ends such as *dig* and *dream*. With the good selection of attack and defense spells here, I predict that most players who decide to run specialist characters will choose this school over all others.

Necromancy spells are all concerned with dead and undead. Consequently, in an adventuring environment where undead are rare or nonexistent, their utility is sharply reduced. A number of one-target combat spells exist, but most require that the necromancer get close enough to touch his target (who might hit him first and ruin his spell preparations). Only one mass-attack spell is present: *death spell*. This spell is used less frequently than *fireball* and *lightning bolt*, if only because you have to be of a much higher level to use it. There are also two pseudo-healing spells: *reincarnation* and *clone*. *Clone* is less useful than it was in the 1st Edition game because it is now two levels of spell power higher than it was (8th instead of 6th), so fewer spell-casters are able to learn it. Note that *contagion*, *enervation*, and *energy drain*, unlike their identical or similar clerical counterparts, are not reversible. If you insist on lumping all divination spells under greater divination, then the school of necromancy has fewer spells than any other (one less than greater divination).

The specialists

Now we come to the abilities of the character classes, none of whom are restricted solely to their own schools.

The abjurer is severely crippled in his non-combat versatility by the fact that he cannot use alteration spells. All movement and transforming spells, with a few useful extras like *comprehend languages* and *time stop*, are out of reach. He may still use a fair number of combat spells, including virtually all the hard-hitting, high-damage ones. The abjurer also has nearly all the defensive spells, all the servant-gathering and divination spells, and the ability to construct magical items. His inability to cast illusionist spells isn’t serious as long as he doesn’t want to sneak around; why cast illusions when you can cast the real thing?



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The conjuror is the only specialist unable to use greater divination spells. This makes him the one who is most likely to be in the dark about things, unless he sends out a lot of conjured servants to spy for him. He is also cut off from the hard-hitting invocation/evocation spells; apparently the idea is that he should summon others to fight for him, though he does have a few combat spells of his own (e.g., the power word spells). At very high level he has wish. If no monsters are around to be summoned, he must resort to illusory versions of the deadliest spells. He can also use the many defensive spells of the abjuration school.

The diviner can use the spells of any school save for those of conjuration/summoning—no great loss, if he doesn't want to command his own army of living or demonic beings. He'll probably sigh at the point where he can use 9th-level spells, though; no *wish* for him. In terms of versatility, though, this is the next best thing to being a generalized mage.

The enchanter is cut off from mass-combat invocation/evocation spells (probably because he concentrates on persuasion instead of large-scale violence) and necromantic spells (no doubt because his magic focuses on living beings). He can summon masses of creatures with conjuration spells, of course, and has all the protective abjuration spells as well as all divination spells. The long list of versatile alteration spells is also usable by him, and like the conjurer, he can fake mass-destruction spells with illusions. He'd better learn *protection from evil* and *protection from evil 10' radius* at the first opportunity, though; almost none of the combat spells he can use could harm the undead.

The illusionist has the largest number of schools closed to him: abjuration, invocation/evocation, and necromancy. Thus he has almost nothing in the way of mass-attack spells that do real damage or reliable defensive spells. "Faking it" with illusions is his best bet, of course, and the versatile movement spells of the alteration school will be used more often by him than by any other spell-caster. Like the enchanter, his spells won't work on the undead, that makes the exclusion from the necromantic school more painful than it is for most other specialists. With the abjuration spells cut off from him, he can't even use the protection-type spells. In short, the 2nd Edition illusionist must be far sneakier than his 1st Edition predecessor. The fact that he can use alteration spells makes the transition between editions somewhat easier, as many of his old non-illusory spells (*color spray*, *gaze reflection*, *fog cloud*, *rope trick*, *wraithform*, etc.) wound up in that category. Since he can use conjuration spells, he even gets *prismatic spray* and *prismatic wall* back.

The invoker cannot use either conjuring or enchantment/charm spells, but with his powerful combat abilities he is not likely to either need them. He has almost all

offensive and defensive spells available to him, with all divination, illusion/phantasm, and necromancy spells, and even the vast array of alteration spells. With all the magic at his command at high levels, he might not even miss the wish spell — well not too much!

The necromancer is unable to use enchantment/charm spells because his speciality is in controlling the dead, not the living. He is also forbidden to use illusion spells, but the ability to use "the real thing" makes this loss almost irrelevant, as long as he doesn't have to sneak around. With his school's few spells, he'll have to borrow early from the other schools; a kobold archer could easily kill a first-level necromancer and never get within range of a *chill touch* attack.

The transmuter is cut off from the useful defensive spells of the abjuration school (*dispel magic* will no doubt be sorely missed most of all), but he still has those of the invocation/evocation school and can sneak around using *invisibility* instead of *non-detection*. The necromancy spells are also out of his reach, but with the vast variety of combat spells at his disposal (including the invocation/evocation "biggies"), he can fight any undead being to a standstill. Not having some of the specialized defensive abjuration spells can hurt, but having all illusion, combat, divination, servant-gathering, and general-purpose spells definitely makes up for it.

Players interested in having well-balanced parties capable of facing any challenge should study these classes and their schools of magic carefully before creating their characters. Even more so than in the AD&D 1st Edition game, not having a proper balance of character abilities may now lead to disaster.

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Fiction

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See Winninger, pg. 8

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Spell interruptions can spell disaster

by Donald Hoverson



“Oops!
Sorry!”

As the rules currently stand, if a spell-caster is interrupted during the casting of a spell, his spell is merely lost. However, a wealth of possibilities exist in magic gone awry beyond mere dissipation. The casting of spells requires the focusing of powerful magical forces. Just because the caster has lost control of these forces does not mean that they are going to go away, although he might wish that they had.

The fantasy literature that deals with this sort of thing often hints at the awful and strange things that can happen if a spell goes bad. Schmendrick, the young wizard from Peter S. Beagle's *The Last Unicorn*, and Fizban, the senile mage from TSR's *DRAGONLANCE®* saga, come readily to mind as examples of wizards whose spells do not always perform as expected.

The problem with any attempt to systematize this sort of thing is that the uses of magic encompass virtually limitless possibilities. It is somewhere between nothing and infinity that I have erected this framework, with tables showing some of the aftereffects of a ruined spell.



In order to determine if a spell is interrupted, the normal initiative system given in the AD&D 2nd edition rules is used. As per pages 93-96 of the Player's Handbook the casting time of a spell is added to the initiative roll for the caster; if anyone strikes the caster before the spell is completed, the spell is interrupted. A 20-sided die is then rolled on the following table:

1d20	Effect
1-2	Malign effect
3-18	Dissipation/Spell lost
19	Neutral effect
20	Benign effect

In order to determine the severity of the error, roll 1d100 on the following table:

1d100	Effect
01-75	Minor effect
76-95	Medium effect
96-00	Major effect

Minor effects are either convenient for or annoying to the characters but do not involve much damage or healing.

Median effects are not always life threatening but might be bad in certain situations (paralysis in combat, for example). Anything that heals or harms for less than three-quarters of its victim's current hit-point total is considered medium (this would include most spells that backfire on their spell-caster for normal effect).

Major effects kill or resurrect instantly. The creation of powerful magical items or beings is a major effect, as is the making permanent of powerful spells that are not normally permanent in duration or effect.

As a rough guideline, effects that mirror spells of 1st or 2nd level are minor. Effects that mirror spells of 3rd to 6th level are median, and spells that mirror spells of 7th to 9th level are major.

Malign and benign effects either harm or help the caster, respectively. Neutral effects neither help nor hinder the caster or else help both the caster and his opponents equally. If the color of a fireball were changed, it would not effect its operation. A *faerie fire* that works for both attackers and victims is equally neutral.

In order to determine the specific effect of the miscast spell, a 20-sided die is rolled on the following table. Because of the variability between situations and the variability of spell effects even within the same spell school, it is impossible to classify all of the effects given in this table as either malign, benign, or neutral. If a listed effect is inappropriate, then either roll again or choose one. Following the table, spells are further broken down by school for more specific suggestions.

1d20 Specific effect

- 1 Spell affects caster.
- 2 Spell affects 1-4 members of caster's party, if any.
- 3 Spell affects caster and caster's party.
- 4 Spell affects caster's possessions

(clothes, weapons, money, food, magical items — one or all).

- 5 Spell affects caster's and party's possessions.
- 6 Spell affect is limited: i.e., it will affect only a certain substance or being.
- 7 Spell's area of affect takes on a different shape.
- 8 Spell affects target's possessions.
- 9 Spell affects nearby object/area/being, as determined randomly.
- 10 Spell increases or decreases in power by 1-4 levels, for purposes of duration, damage done, etc. (maximum 9th level, minimum 1st level).
- 11 Area of effect of spell is doubled/halved.
- 12 Spell effect is reversed (e.g., *ESP* becomes *transmit thoughts*).
- 13 Spell changes to another spell of same school, either higher or lower in level.
- 14 Spell changes to another spell of a different school, either higher or lower in level.
- 15 Spell effect becomes long-term or permanent (assuming transitory duration), or else transitory (if of permanent duration).
- 16 Spell effect oscillates in duration or effect (over a period of 1-100 rounds for one day).
- 17 Spell effect is delayed (maximum delay of one day).
- 18 Spell dissipates but does damage to caster equal to caster's level in hit points.
- 19 Spell effect occurs at long distance (100-1,000').
- 20 Spell effect is in same school but does not resemble any "known" spell.

Many of these effects are not mutually exclusive, and the DM can choose as many effects as desired. Also, because some spells can change into others in the same school, it is necessary to be familiar with the types of spells covered by each. Some examples of such spell changes follow:

A mage miscasting an Invocation/Evocation spell could find that his *fireball* had become a ball of *darkness*, while an interrupted stream of *magic missiles* could turn and strike the caster.

The miscasting of a Conjunction/Summoning spell could be used by the DM to introduce new technological or magical items into the campaign. Any item thus conjured and later found to be too powerful could simply disappear because the duration of the spell ran out. The only way to discern the properties of conjured materials is to test them; the wizard would not automatically know what he has brought forth. Messing up this type of spell could easily fill a dungeon corridor with stuffed toys or tin cans, to no doubt be puzzled over by future explorers.

If a Summoning spell goes wrong, the creatures that appear are not necessarily under the control of the spell-caster (this does not preclude the possibility that they might be friendly anyway). The DM might

wish to use this avenue to introduce unique monsters or beings (even new player characters) into the campaign. As with conjurations, the summoner will not necessarily know the properties, abilities, or dispositions of summoned beings. This is especially true of any vegetables that might be summoned: An oak tree might have exploding acorns, the pollen of flowers might heal damage if inhaled, etc.

The miscasting of an Enchantment/Charm spell like *charm person* could turn every creature within a 10-yard radius against the caster. A major error in such spell-casting could result in insanity or amnesia. Putting someone to *sleep* permanently would also be quite possible.

If a Abjuration spell is miscast, it could bring about whatever condition the spell-caster was trying to get rid of: e.g., an error in *dispel magic* could bring on a random magical effect or else drain charges from charged magical items. It could also temporarily or permanently drain minor magical items that don't have charges (e.g., potions and scrolls).

Miscast Necromantic spells are extremely dangerous (which is as it should be). While a small slip in an *animate dead* spell might make the spell simply fail to function, it has the potential to harm the caster or else summon up a skeleton, zombie, or other undead. Trapping the soul of the caster in a nearby object could easily result from a bad necromantic spell.

One potential result from a miscast Illusion/Phantasm spell would be that the illusion that was created became real (5% chance). Of course, the caster would attempt to disbelieve his creation (to no avail) if it turned on him.

Miscast Alteration spells could affect material objects creatively. What would you do if your *wand of magic missiles* suddenly became 10' long? The fighter's *long sword* +2 could become a *sphere* +2, which would limit its usefulness somewhat. The potential to *polymorph* things also has great potential; you could change your companion's shield into a roller skate or your enemy's wagon into a feather bed. The *teleport* spell and its kin could have (ahem) far-reaching consequences if miscast.

Divination spells that are miscast would reveal false or undesired information: e.g., a *detect magic* might function as *detect evil*. Conversely, the opponents of the spell-caster (or perhaps someone else entirely) might receive the spell's information—but about the spell-caster!

The purpose of this article is to provide variety and surprises to magic. Lethal effects should be avoided if possible. It should be noted that these rules apply to all if this system is adopted. If used for the players, it should be used for the NPCs as well.

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The low-level mages who make things work

by Gregg Sharp

Hedge Wizards



"Hedge wizard" is a term that's come up in my campaign to describe the proprietors of small "magic shops" in villages and cities in AD&D® campaigns. Hedge wizards specialize in minor but useful magicks, using spells like mending and *knock* rather than *magic missile* and *irritation*. Hedge wizards are usually low-level mages with sage and herbalist abilities.

Hedge wizards are commonly between 3rd level and 5th level, sufficient to cast *knock* on a locked chest or *mending* on a broken axe handle. Hedge wizards can be up to 11th level, however, since magical potions cannot be brewed by a mage of lesser level, as per the 2nd Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide*. A number of items besides potions might be for sale at a hedge wizard's domicile. Prices for these items should be low in keeping with the common customer's finances. A hedge wizard will likely offer reduced prices to local customers, charging more to those from out of town.

Hedge wizards are not generally considered to be powerful spell-casters, and they don't have the massive spell books or sophistication of their more experienced colleagues. Hedge wizards have more of a rustic image, preferring a comfortable and sedentary life. Hedge wizards are rarely good targets for thieves, since these wizards generally have no reputations or vast wealth. Anyone who can best a hedge wizard in a spell duel is unlikely to actually gain much from the accomplishment. Killing a hedge wizard is likewise of little value, though the other merchants and members of the town council may get peeved at people who come in and do such things. Finally, since hedge wizards aren't that powerful, they tend to stick together more than other wizardly professions. If a hedge wizard dies due to other than natural causes, other mages who find out may start proceedings to deal with the problem and make an example, if nothing else.

In game terms, once a decision to become a hedge wizard has been made, level advancement is slowed dramatically. The character does not go on adventures and does not make magical items. Experience is gained only through adventures that come to the hedge wizard, such as meeting a burglar when opening up the shop in the morning.

At least 90% of all hedge wizards operate in urban areas, usually toward the edges of town. Magic use generally has a poor public image, not all of it undeserved. One only has to think of the damage that could be caused by an out-of-control fire elemental in a city built largely of wood to appreciate the problem. Hedge wizards who set up shop outside city limits are either powerful ones (retired adventurers who don't really need the money) or ones who have been chased out of the city.

The specialist schools

Specialist wizards are much like doctors in America. The general practitioner or

family-practice doctor fits the same role as the nonspecialist mage. With hedge wizards, this often means referrals to others within a limited circle of colleagues on a first-name basis. Because hedge wizards don't have the overhead and malpractice lawsuits that American doctors have, the need for wizard insurance to pay for all this has not yet fully materialized.

The specialists among hedge wizards are those who do not see themselves becoming more powerful; either they have become discouraged from the effort of gaining levels, feel that they have reached their ultimate level of competence, or simply don't wish to rise to the level of power where they may become targets. They may also wish to live their own lives in relaxation instead of being dedicated to the pursuit of magic or power.

Abjurers are specialists corresponding to surgeons or pathologists. To be effective in their specialty, they must be of higher than 5th level. As such, their prices and chances of success are greater when dealing with abjuration spells. Any decent abjurer can cast *dispel magic* at need, and quite a few have *remove curse*. Abjurers are likely to have a number of permanently inscribed protective circles set about their homes. Sagecraft will be also quite likely, with specialization in one of the following: curses, folklore, outer planes (at least one and possibly more), lower planes (same as with outer planes), and religion.

Conjurer hedge wizards are 70% likely to have a familiar. The more powerful conjurers are on retainer to kings and powerful warlords, ready to conjure elementals on a few hours' notice. Because of their practices, large protective circles and the like will be permanently inscribed on their floors, and they are likely to be located a bit off the beaten path, away from other businesses. A remote location makes good sense, since no one wants the conjurer to be distracted while summoning up some extradimensional beast. Some very high-level conjurers go so far as to become "dimensional fishers," reeling in all manner of wealth from other planes. Sagelike knowledge that conjurers possess is likely to be of other planes, as well as about creatures that might be summoned. Conjurers who can deal with elementals are likely to further specialize in a particular elemental plane.

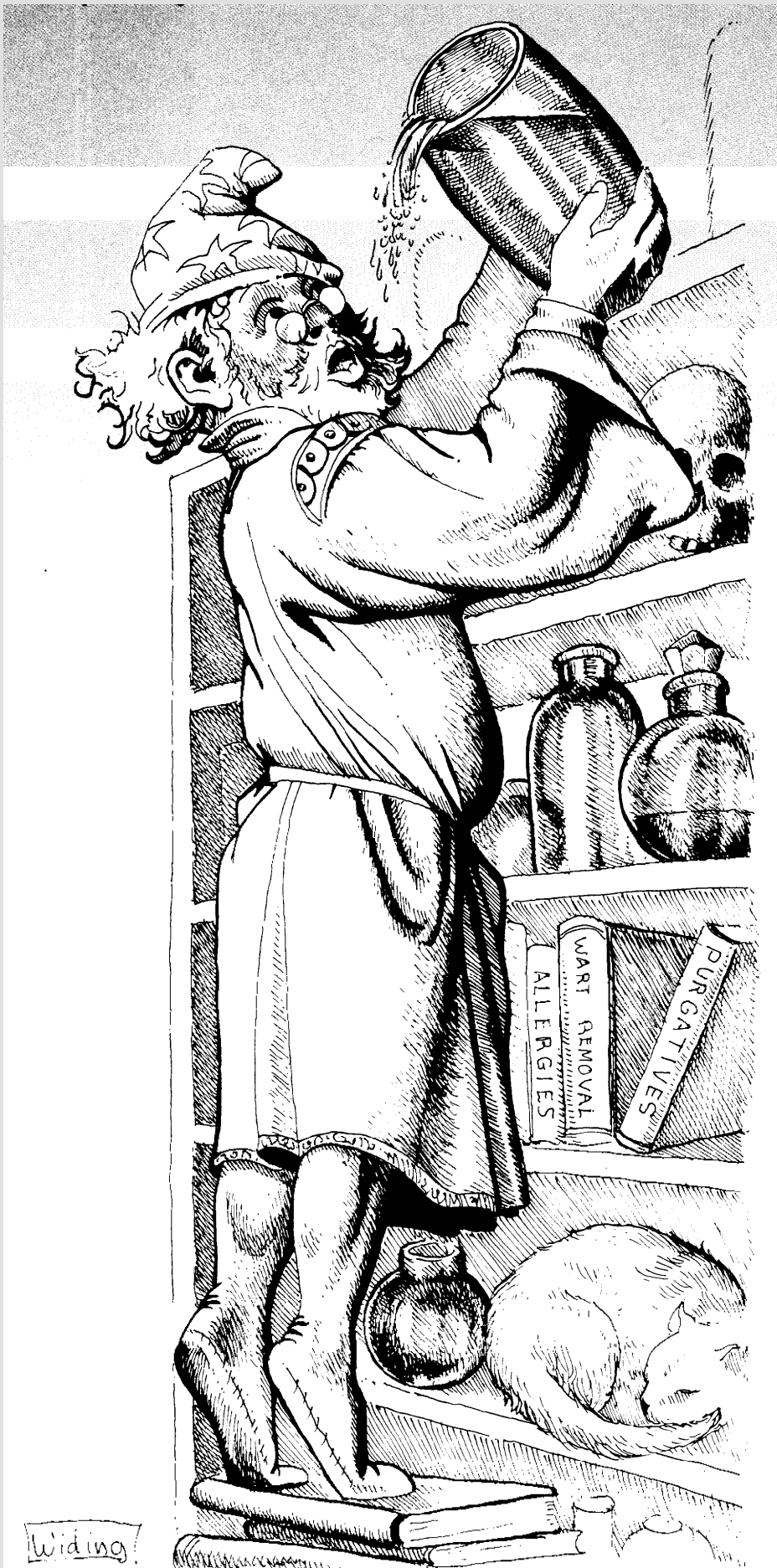
Diviners are the ones the adventurers seek out when the latter come home laden with plunder. An honest diviner is not difficult to find, though a few cause bad reputations for the remainder. Any diviner in business has the basic detection spells, and the majority have identify and *detect curse*. If hired to cast *identify*, the diviner automatically charges for the *detect curse* and casts it first. Because diviners have so few spells dealing with their specialty, they perform as sages with at least two major fields. Commonly a diviner has proficiencies in astrology and weather sense.

Enchanters are the second most common of all specialists, transmuters being the first. The high-level ones work on magical items and potions, and most of those specializing in enchantment dream of reaching this stage. Those restricted to lower levels, by talent or otherwise, are hedge wizards who specialize in dealing with troublemakers by using spells like charm person. They typically become members of or are on retainer to the city guard. Because of the time this takes and the additional money that this generates, their magical shops are smaller than others. Sage areas are likely to deal with items of great power and legends, especially those of wizards and their creations.

Illusionists deal with deception and distraction; it is as hard to find an honest illusionist as it is to find an honest used-car dealer or mechanic. Because they specialize in mind-affecting spells, they are the psychologists of the magic worlds, having to understand the mind's workings in order to get the most out of their specialty. Gnomes often go into this line of work, which allows them to work spells and keep close to the earth with their herbcraft. The use of illusion to enhance or entertain is simply the most obvious use of an illusionist's talents. Typical sagecraft deals with the mind, though history is a very popular topic.

Invokers deal with bringing something into being through their spellcraft. Since many combat spells are in this category, hedge wizards specializing in invocation/evocation spells are often put on retainer by the local constabulary. One never knows when a barroom brawl will escalate, so having a web spell handy becomes a good reason to keep an invoker about. Invokers are also known to run flaming spheres out over fields to clear them before planting. The typical invoker has knowledge about a few special fields of interest, these being more individual hobbies than something suggested by their particular mind sets.

Necromancers deal with dark magic and the raising of the dead. One would therefore expect them to be a particularly nasty lot, but they are often worse than imagined. Necromancers tend to go into taxidermy and have skeletal servitors do their fetching and carrying. (Necromancers who expect to get along with their neighbors should not consider using zombies, the odor being sure to lower all property values.) Little dead things are usually scattered around the shop, some stuffed and mounted, and visitors often get the feeling that those glass eyes are still scrutinizing them. The odors, even if no zombies are present, are sufficient to cause faint-hearted customers to flee outside in a matter of moments. Nonetheless, some necromancers are thoroughly pleasant fellows with good, if grim, senses of humor. They are often undertakers, and they can cause interesting problems for customers who don't pay their bills.



Transmuters are the most common specialists, making alterations in existence itself. Low-level hedge wizards are likely to be around trade areas, casting *comprehend languages* in order to act as translators, or mending to fix pots and pans. Medium-level transmuter hedge wizards sell lamps with continual light on them, with shades that can be lowered to seal off the light. Finding a higher-level transmuter may be difficult, since they have so many usefull spells that they may quickly run into the problem of "spellgunning wizards"—wizards who kill other wizards in order to increase their spellbook contents.

Finally, don't discount the possibility of dual-class hedge wizards, or even "hedge wizards" who can't cast a single spell. Fighters who have gotten tired of killing, thieves trying for a degree of respectability, priests who have left the bureaucracy that is found in some temples—any may have learned enough woodcraft to open up a functional herbalist shop, with a few magical items and the like thrown in. Given the chance to learn something about magecraft, and the requisite ability scores, the possibilities for dual-class characters are quite diverse. Since nonhumans are almost always dual-class, a nonhuman hedge wizard is also likely to have a number of other services or surprises ready.

There may also be utter charlatans pretending to be hedge wizards, but keep in mind that word of mouth is the most acceptable form of advertising in the semi-medieval society of the typical campaign. This cuts down on the utter charlatans, at least if one bothers to ask around.

Priests may well go in for small temples that serve the same purposes as a hedge wizard, lacking only spells such as identify. The best Forgotten Realms deities for this purpose are: Azuth, Chauntea, Deneir, Mielikki, Mystra/Midnight, Oghma, and Selune. Some of these are more likely to be city-based (Azuth, Denier, Mystra and Oghma) and any "hedge wizards" who follow these faiths will be either outcasts from a larger temple, those who tired of internal politics, and those who have left for personal reasons.

Small chapels out in the wilderness or near towns are best for this purpose. Typical cleric levels will be: 2nd to 4th if they left due to internal politics; 5th to 8th if they're an outcast or have personal reasons; or 9th to 14th if they fled due to failure at internal politics, advice from above, or personal reasons. If the cleric is above 14th level, the time just recovering spells makes having lesser priests and laymen about more attractive, hence the presence of the bigger temple complex with lower-level priests attending the needs of such a high priest.

Fighters, paladins, rangers, and the like are not likely to have gone into such a line of business. Paladins will either consider such a job below their station or simply too rustic. Fighters have to rely on magical items to cast spells and rarely have the

learning in sagescraft or herbal lore needed to work the other ends of the business. Rangers often have herbalist knowledge and may have reached the point where spell-casting is a possibility. But, because a ranger is often dedicated to protecting an area and fighting a particular species of monster, it is unlikely that a ranger will work as a hedge wizard.

Rogues may operate a hedge wizard's shop as a front for more profitable enterprise. Thieves lack spell ability but may be able to fake it using various magical items such as wand of magic detection Bards have spell ability but are not likely to ignore the possibility of selling their musical abilities along with every other service they can offer. Since bards can usually rely on their musical abilities more than their magical ones, it would be a rare bard who would go into something as "dull" as hedge wizardry.

Hedge wizards are often in the "message board" business, since they often deal with adventurers of varying types. These keep track of jobs, referrals, out-of-work specialists, adventurers between quests, rumors, and local proclamations. They may even act as a placement service for would-be members of an adventuring group. Any fee for such things is paid up front.

The magic shop generally does not have much in the way of magical items for sale. The reasons for this are given in the *DMG*, page 83, and there is no reason to go into them here. Some items are "common" enough, though, and may be of great use in increasing an adventuring group's chances for survival; these may therefore be included in just such a shop. There is a fair chance that any of the items on Table 1 can be found, priced around 2 gp per XP as shown in the *DMG* tables.

As Table 1 shows, a potion of healing is in stock most of the time and will usually run about 400 gp—steep but well worth it, considering that the poor hedge wizard has to buy it from a temple. A scroll of *protection from poison* costs about 2,000 gp. There may be other items available, especially if another adventuring group just came through, but this is uncommon. If the DM wants to equip the group with something or to introduce a new magical item (say, a potion of *dispel magic* that must be thrown at the area of the magic to be dispelled) and relieve the group of some cash, then the last adventuring group may have sold it to the hedge wizard.

The hedge wizard shop is likely to have a few knickknacks, curios, old tomes, and other oddities for sale or rent. Knickknacks in this case are small magical items, useful but without combat uses. Some examples: a mug that keeps any liquid within at a constant cool temperature, a stone that absorbs heat for later release at a slow gradient, a bedpan that magically empties itself and remains odor-free, a stone that finds lost people or items to which it has been attuned, a *broom of animated sweeping*, a *collar of protection*

from fleas, a chair of comfort, a sleeping bag of warmth, etc. Magical knickknacks either have no combat use, are too bulky to be carried about, or both. These could be found in any hedge wizard shop, though the hedge wizard must be of sufficient level to enchant such things.

Hedge wizards are generally held by their communities to be craftsmen, something like potters or carpenters with the addition of some minor spell-casting abilities (Table 2 and 3 show costs for purchasing spells from these wizards). The statistically average hedge wizard is 5th level, human, male, in his mid-forties, and is not a specialist mage. He has few or no magical items. Various drying herbs and some alchemical devices are in the lab room, and a separate room houses a protective circle of some sort.

The goods listed in Table 4 may be available at any hedge wizard's shop. Those in "Difficulty #1" are the most common, requiring a herbalism skill roll of 14 or better; the availability of ingredients may vary from area to area. Those in "Difficulty #2" require herbalism of 17 or better and may require alchemy of 14 or better. Those potions and other items under "Difficulty #3" are the most difficult of all to prepare, requiring very high skill rolls in both herbalism and alchemy to prepare. The situation is like that of a chef who is preparing blowfish, where with one slip, poison results.

Most of the potions in Table 4 last for 1-4 hours after drinking (some last for a day), and their uses are usually self explanatory. Few, if any, are effective against magical effects. DM discretion is advised in deciding the uses for each item. The more unusual goods are described hereafter:

Babblejuice: The imbiber must save vs. poison, or he will start speaking of anything that comes to mind. Questions may be answered truthfully, but the answers may be difficult to understand. This potion should be very rare.

Brainflight: Wherever people are jaded, tense, dissatisfied with their lives, or ready to make a buck and hang the morality, there will be drugs like this one. Brainflight is a generic fantasy hallucinogen. It works directly on the nervous system, is highly addictive, and causes wildly erratic behavior in frequent users. The exact effects of brainflight should be determined by the DM beforehand, though they should be thoroughly nasty and cause a breakdown in behavior of its users that increases over time towards an alignment of chaotic evil. Because availability of this is so limited by demand and probable legal action against those using and selling it, the price is extremely high. As with babblejuice, brainflight should include ingredients that are very rare or hard to get, but it is not all that difficult to make.

Burnsalve: Type I is simply an ointment that can be applied to burned skin or tissue. It keeps air off the burn, decreasing

the "to hit" penalty applied if the burn is on a limb. Type II also promotes healing, at the rate of 2 hp healed of burn damage per day of rest. Type III is more effective, healing burn damage at twice the rate of Type II. Type III is at least four times as expensive as Type II.

Firegel: This thick grainy ointment is highly fire resistant. Items treated with firegel receive a +6 to saving throws vs. normal fire. It is far too thick and expensive to be used on creatures, so it is typically used to treat pouches and packets containing valuable papers.

Hair restorer: This restores hair to areas where it used to be and no longer is. If imbibed, all the skin that can produce hair will do so (sort of a "potion of hairiness"). It is normally applied as a salve to the area afflicted by hair loss. Repeated treatments are needed at least once a month for a year. There is a version that acts as the reverse—a "salve of electrolysis," if you will.

Healing poultice: On normal wounds, Type I doubles the normal healing rate, Type II triples the normal healing rate, and Type III quadruples the normal rate. Note that some wounds, such as those made by a *sword of wounding*, are resistant to magical healing. Since poultices are nonmagical in nature, they can help overcome this difficulty.

Love potion: This is not the same as a *philter of love*. The reaction is diluted, causing an individual drinking it to become more favorably inclined towards the next member seen of the opposite sex and a similar species. There is no *charm* effect, nor does the potion cause any behavior out of the norm for the affected person. The imbiber of the love potion will instead view the aforementioned member of the opposite sex as being highly charismatic (charisma 19) and of having some undefinable attractive quality.

Maidenweed: This potion prevents pregnancy in females who drink it. The potion's duration is one month.

Mermaid's breath: This one is always in stock if the hedge wizard is near a body of water. Application in two to four rounds to someone who has drowned will allow the victim a save vs. death to cough up all water and start breathing again.

Nullscent: All this does is negate the scent on a creature or the scent that would normally be left behind on objects handled. It requires liberal application, covering the entire body surface of the creature to be affected. This one is popular with thieves.

Plant grower: This nonmagical potion that is poured into the root network of a plant. This must be repeated weekly through the growing cycle. Plant grower increases the size of the plant by an additional 10-100%. This can be made in multiple gallon quantities.

Scented soaps: The typical medieval soap was not anything like the "pure" soaps on the market now. The soaps sold as scented

soaps by a hedge wizard should cost at least three times that of normal soap, but they also won't burn skin or cause more sensitive difficulties the way old fashioned lye soap can.

XYZ balm: This is a general purpose ointment or salve that helps to cure burns, scrapes, and such difficulties as are caused by poison ivy. XYZ balm is semi-magical (see "New Proficiencies: Alchemy") as it requires water that has run along the spiral of a living unicorn's horn. The price should be accordingly high. Being only semi-magical, it does not cure any poison or burn outright, but only speeds the body's own recovery.

New proficiencies

Alchemy (2): Skill roll = Intelligence - 2. The wizard is familiar with the use of various chemicals and equipment required for the making of magical or semi-magical potions, ointments, infusions, and salves. (Semi-magical indicates that the item approximates a magical effect or requires magic in its making, but is not itself magical for purposes of a *detect magic* spell.) Alchemy requires the use of an alchemist's lab: alembics, retorts, distilling apparatus, pitch pots, and condensers. Other equipment may be needed for more complex operations.

Chemistry (2): Skill roll = Intelligence - 2. Chemists can attempt to brew poisons and acids from natural ingredients. Acids are usually weak, causing 1-4 hp damage but not dissolving materials rapidly. Some acids (aqua regia, hydrochloric acid, etc.) are possible but at a -4 modifier to the chemist's skill roll. If gunpowder is used in the campaign, then it requires this proficiency to manufacture it. Use of this proficiency requires the use of a chemist's lab, equal in price to an alchemical lab, and a certain degree of privacy. Any number of works dealing with the history of technology or science can help pinpoint exactly what is possible in a campaign.

Field of study (1): Skill roll = Intelligence -2. This covers everything else in a sage's field of expertise not already covered under existing proficiencies. The more detailed a category, the more information the sage has and can turn up in research (and the more expensive the research should be!). A hedge wizard with a proficiency in "elven art" who looks at a pair of old vases can tell one is an elven vase made about 1,500 years ago in Myth Drannor, and the other was probably made about 500 years ago in Everska. A hedge wizard with the field of study of "elven art during the rule of King Alfroi" can tell that the first vase was made by the master craftsman Iriam Talltree during his revisionist period, but he can't tell anything about the second vase at all other than it appears of elven make. Typical major fields of study are: art, folklore, cryptography, languages (doubles the number of languages spoken by the hedge wizard—not all that important with *tongues* spells

available), folklore, genealogy, geography, geology, mathematics, magics, philosophy, and sociology. A failed skill roll means either no knowledge (just missed the number needed) or misinformation (if roll was off by more than four).

New spells

The following spells have been devised by hedge wizards, and fewer than one in 30 spell-casters who are not hedge wizards will have any spell below.

Alahandra's questing call

(Divination)

Level: 3 Components: V,S,M
Range: 0 CT: 3 turns
Duration: 3 rds./lvl. Save: Neg.
AE: 10-mile radius around caster

Created by Alahandra of Waterdeep, this spell calls forth the image of adventurers who are "between quests" at the moment. The spell-caster is not in control of what sort of adventurers are indicated by the spell, and the adventurers must be within range of the spell. The spell often misfires (30%), showing either nothing or scenes from another plane of existence entirely. Only the vague shadowy image of one or two of the adventurers and their approximate location is indicated by the spell. The material component is a silver mirror, a small bell, and a candle made from beeswax. Only the mirror remains after the spell's completion.

Alvira's stasis shell

(Alteration)

Level: 6 Components: V,S,M
Range: Touch CT: 2
Duration: 1 day/lvl. Save: None
AE: One small nonliving object

Alvira of the Living City created this spell to use in conjunction with *extension*. She then cast it upon a copy of her spellbook and hid it where it would remain for years, just in case something happened to her original spellbook. The largest object that can be affected by this spell is a large standard spellbook, and the smallest object is the size of a vial of potion. An object protected by this spell cannot be affected by any force less powerful than a *disintegrate* spell or a successful *dispel magic*. Water, fire, acid, lightning, and even dragon breath merely move along the outer shell of the stasis. The spell cannot affect living tissue directly, though there are reports that living tissue within a container is affected. For all intents and purposes, time has stopped for the object held within the field.

Bugman's mug

(Alteration)

Level: 1 Components: V,S,M
Range: Touch CT: 4
Duration: 1 turn/lvl. Save: None
AE: 1 mug of water

Bugman, a thoroughly loathsome-looking individual with a heart of gold, created this spell for a dwarven friend who often

visited. The spell alters normal water into a magical potion that must be imbibed in the duration mentioned above. The potion removes hangovers and other ill effects of inebriation and will negate any current state of drunkenness. It is effective against only alcohol-based changes in the target's physiology, thus being ineffective against drugged stupors and poisons. No other way to use this spell has yet been found. The material component is a pewter mug full of water.

Heartcall

(Divination)

Level: 3 Components: V,S,M
Range: Special CT: 3 turns
Duration: 1 turn Save: None
AE: Special

While adventuring in far-off Kozakura, the hedge wizardess Majinhime discovered the belief that an invisible thread of fate connected those destined to marry. Later research bore out this belief, and this spell was created. This spell indicates approximate direction and distance of the target's true love, if such exists. Sometimes the spell garners no results, indicating that either the target being has no true love or that the time is not right for them to meet. If this true love is on a different dimensional plane, some indication of what dimensional plane (alternate Prime Material plane, outer plane, Astral plane, etc.) is all the information that can be garnered by this method. The material components are a spool of red thread and a glass disk.

Hedge enchantment

(Enchantment, Invocation)

Level: 5 Components: V,S,M
Range: Special CT: 1 + days
Duration: Special Save: Neg.
AE: Special

Similar in many respects to the sixth-level spell *enchant an item*, this spell is much less useful and restricted to hedge wizards. It can typically be used to make a spell such as *cantrip* a part of an object. Such enchantments have little or no combat use and are usually restricted to comfort or everyday use items such as skillets and blankets. The more pronounced the effect, the more days the hedge wizard must spend working over the item, to a maximum of one week (at the DM's discretion).

Another version of this spell enhances plants that it is cast upon. Any natural plant (i.e., no molds, shambling mounds, or hangman's trees) can be enhanced in one respect. Kudzu could be made to grow faster, have broader leaves, or form part of a natural water filtration system. It is believed that some druids have this version of the spell, though it is rare that even a hedge wizard should have it. This version only enhances a single quality, and the plant must be a normal non-motile plant (also no venus flytraps, sundews, or snappersaws). Only qualities that the plant normally possesses can be enhanced.

Isolde's answer

(Divination)

Level: 3

Range: Touch

Duration: 2 rds./lvl.

AE: 1 mile/level

Components: V,S,M

CT: 2 rounds

Save: None

This spell temporarily enhances a magical mirror, crystal ball, or other scrying device. The spell-caster then asks the scrying device a question, and the scrying device answers that question by showing an appropriate scene if it is within the area of effect. Typical questions include: "Where did I put that book on magical apparatus?" "Who is the most beautiful in the land?" and "Where are the fish biting today?" Note that a scrying device must be in operation at the time the spell is cast. The material component is the scrying device, which is not consumed by the spell-casting.

Mental block

(Enchantment/Charm)

Level: 1

Range: Touch

Duration: Special

AE: Creature touched

Components: V,S,M

CT: 3 turns

Save: Neg.

This spell can only be cast on a willing and living target. The mental *block* affects a particular message, causing it to be blocked from recall or mental examination until such time as a predetermined trigger is met. The trigger can be as simple as "when you are in the presence of King Azoun of Cormyr" to "three days hence, when the cock crows" or any reasonable similar condition. Torture, spells that probe the mind, *dispel magic*, or any number of other attempts to learn the message will cause the permanent loss of the message instead. This spell is commonly used by kings wishing to send secret information by courier; the information is stored in the courier's mind until the preset conditions are met. The material component is a chip of granite.

Nimodes' major delousing

(Necromancy)

Level: 2

Range: 0

Duration: 2 hrs./lvl.

AE: 60' radius

Components: V,S

CT: 1 turn

Save: None

All normal insects within the area of effect are slain instantly, and no such creature may enter the area until after the spell's duration has ended. Note that the spell area cannot be moved, and only normal insects are affected by the spell. Summoned creatures, even if normal insects, can penetrate the barrier due to the magical nature of the summons. Creatures bedding down for a night in the swamps have been known to pay good money for multiple castings of this spell.

Nimodes' unseen butler

(Conjuration/Summoning)

Level: 2

Components: V,S,M

Range: 20 yards

CT: 2

Duration: Special

Save: None

AE: 60 square feet/level

Nimodes has sold this spell to several enterprising hedge wizards, so it can be found from Kara-Tor to Cormyr. This spell creates something akin to a supercharged unseen servant who races along like a whirlwind along the area of effect. The servitor buffs and polishes, cleans and waxes, straightens and sweeps. The spell lasts until the area of effect is clean, usually three to four rounds. The material component is a piece of string and drop of oil. This spell is used to clean the wizard's own area as well as inns and taverns after a busy night. All trash and broken items are collected in a single heap at the far edge of the area of effect.

Rebinding

(Enchantment, Alteration, Invocation/Evocation)

Level: 7

Range: Touch

Duration: Special

AE: One item

Components: V,S,M

CT: 2 turns

Save: Neg.

Rebinding is possibly the most powerful spell known to hedge wizards, and it is certainly the most rare. Out of a thousand hedge wizards, one might know this spell. Rebinding is cast upon a broken magical item such as a *long sword* + 1 in order to bind the magicks into the materials of the

repaired by an expert (a master swordsmith for the long sword), then rebinding must be cast again on the item. The item gets a saving throw on both occasions and must fail both saving throws for the item to be remade. This has no effect on an item that has run out of charges, is disintegrated, or which is missing some pieces. (If, in the example, the long sword was hit by a *crystalbrittle* or *Mordenkainen's disjunction* spell, it cannot be remade by a *rebinding* spell.) This is typically used for the repair of family heirlooms, items made in accordance with a prophesy, or similarly irreplaceable items. The material component is two pieces of lodestone and a skein of silver wire costing 50 gp, both vanishing during the casting of the spell.

Sharpen

(Alteration)

Level: 1

Range: Touch

Duration: Instant.

AE: 10' square

Components: V,S

CT: 3

Save: None

An enterprising mage who lived near a castle gate came up with this spell. It sharpens and straightens edges in weapons, clearing the normal dents and nicks out. The edges will have a normal sharpness, not conferring any bonus to damage or to-hit rolls. Blunt weapons are not

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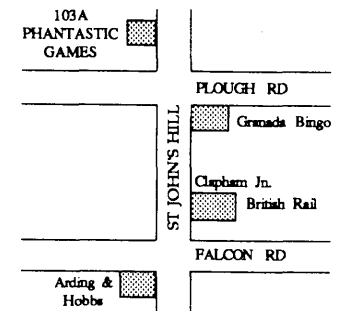
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affected by this spell, though piercing weapons are. Hedge wizards have been known to cast this spell for city guardsmen at a discount especially before inspection, just in case the mage needs a hand later on.

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Table 1

Items and Services Found In a Hedge Wizard's Shop

Item	Number in stock	Chance in stock
Potion of <i>healing</i>	1-8	80%
Potion of <i>extra-healing</i>	1-2	35%
Potion of <i>sweet water</i>	1-2	40%
Potion of <i>speed</i>	1	10%
<i>Philter of love</i>	1	5%
Potion of <i>rainbow hues</i>	1	5%
Potion of <i>polymorph self</i>	1	1%
Potion of <i>ventriloquism</i>	1	3%
Scroll of <i>protection</i>	1	1%
<i>Arrow + 1</i>	1-6	5%
<i>Sling bullet + 1</i>	1-4	5%
Common material components	1-20	80%
Sage categories	1-2	75%
Common poultices & herbs	90%	
Maps, books, & curios	2-20	90%
Referrals	-	99%
Odd minor magical items	1-4	10%

Table 2

Prices of Spells Cast by Hedge Wizards from Scrolls

Spell	Price	Chance in stock
<i>Clairvoyance</i>	300 gp +	40%
<i>Continual light</i>	1,100 gp	80%
<i>Dispel magic</i>	900 gp +	60%
<i>In visibility</i>	250 gp	20%
<i>Legend lore</i>	1,200 gp	5%
<i>True seeing</i>	5,500 gp	5%

Table 3

Scroll Spells Sold By Hedge Wizards

Spell	Price	Chance in stock
<i>Detect magic</i>	500 gp	95%
<i>Feather fall</i>	500 gp	5%
<i>Light</i>	500 gp	35%
<i>Magic missile</i>	1000 gp	55%

Table 4

Minor Potions and Remedies

Difficulty # 1

Allergy suppressant	Breath cleanser
Burnsalve I	Delousing powder
Hangover remedy	Healing poultice I
Ivy ointment	Maidenweed
Purgative	Nerve tonic
Scented soap	Smelling salts

Difficulty #2

Babblejuice	Brainflight
Bloodstop (clotter)	Burnsalve II
Nullscent	Numbing salve
Sleeping draught	Stamina draught
XYZ balm	Whiskerbane
Healing poultice II	Common poison antidotes

Difficulty #3

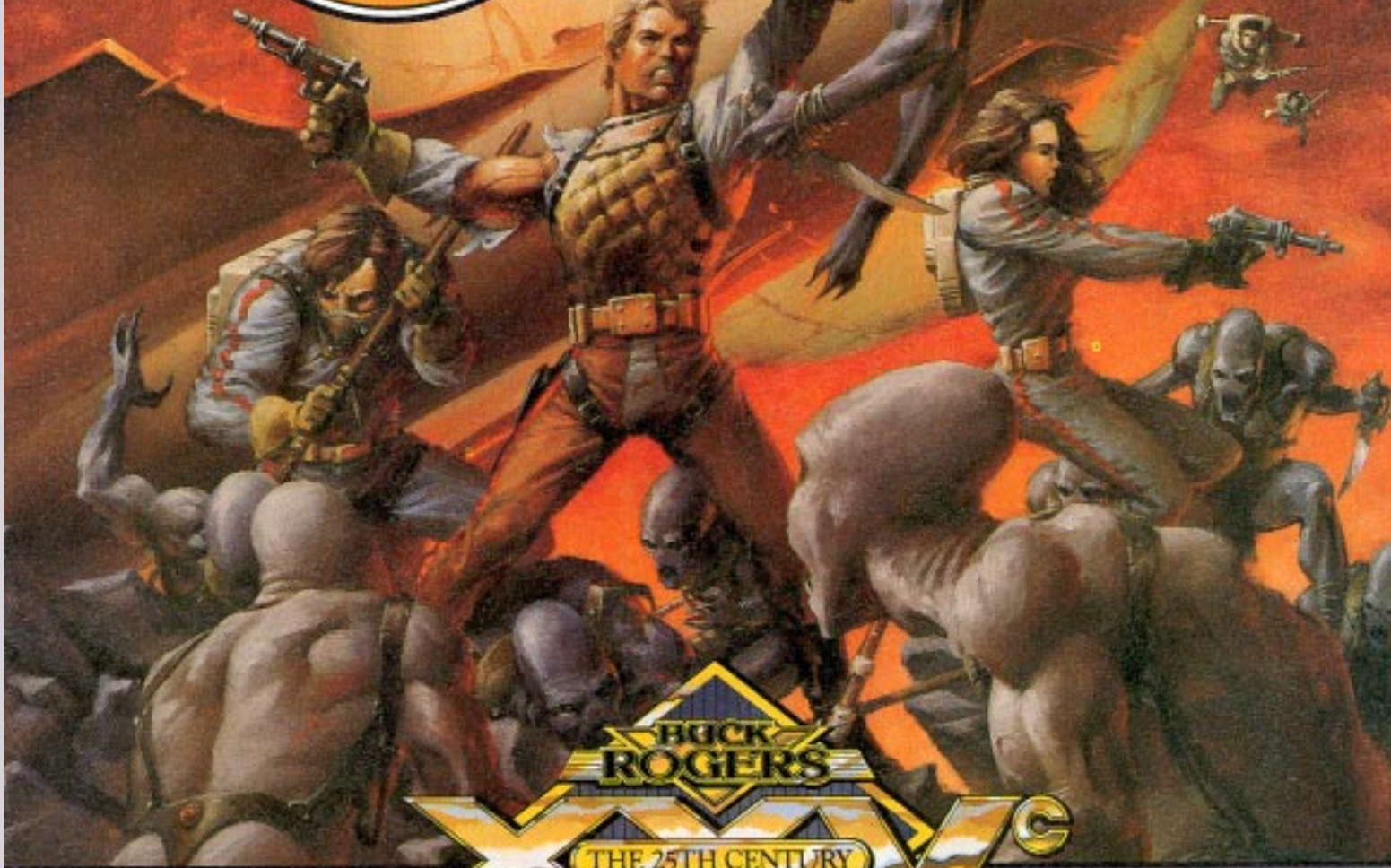
Fish summoner	Firegel (fireproofing)
Flameoil (Greek fire)	Glow water
Hair restorer	Love potion
Mermaid's breath	Plant grower
Whiskerbane	Healing poultice III

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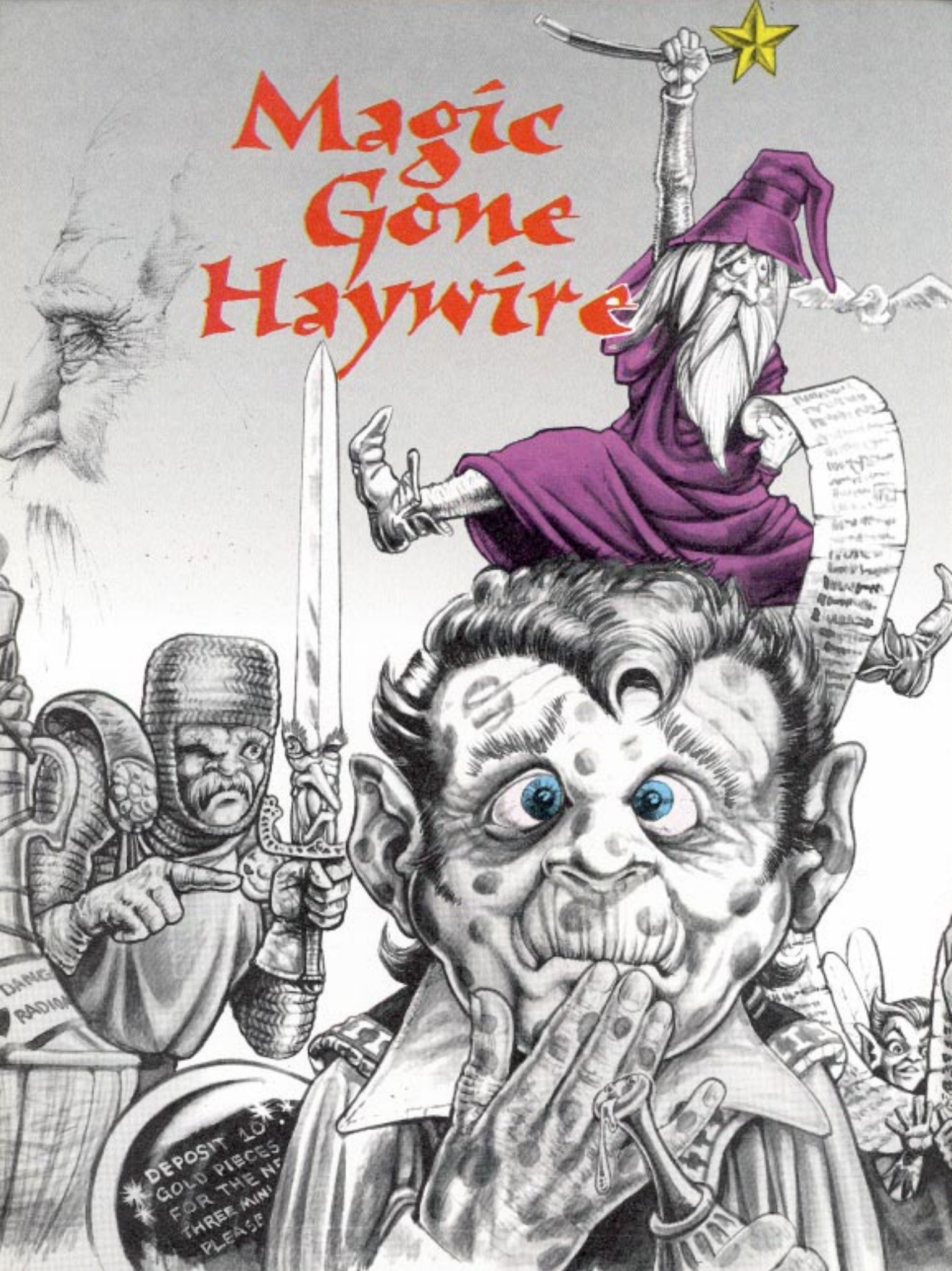
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Magic Gone Haywire



Magical-item misfirings in the AD&D® game

by Rich Stump

The AD&D® game has one of the largest compilations of magical items in the fantasy gaming industry. Unfortunately, this does not prevent many of the players from buying, borrowing, or stealing copies of the *Dungeon & Master's Guide* for the sole purpose of memorizing the magical-item treasure tables. Once one of these people has implanted the entire collection of magical devices into his brain, it becomes very hard for the DM to keep that player on his toes.

Players act in this bizarre but very common manner seem to know what every single magical item does once it has been identified (if not, they look the item up once they are out of the DM's sight). This can be very distressing for the DM, as one player acting in this manner can turn a gaming session into a shopping trip.

The following tables have been created to alleviate this problem and to add some spice and variety to existing magical items in the AD&D game world. The tables are easily adjusted to any other fantasy role-playing game, and a creative Dungeon Master could alter these tables for espionage and science-fiction role-playing games. A table of nonstandard magical-item abilities is offered for each major type of magical items in the AD&D game.

The rationale for such quirks is simple. Most items are created normally, and they function exactly as a standard item of the same type in the *DMG*. However, sometimes there is a slight mishap in the creation of the device: the steps are not followed in the proper order, the astrological signs do not bode well, the item's creator is disturbed to begin with, the instructions are incomplete, or something just plain goes wrong. Any of these results can cause a magical item to behave differently from others just like it.

Not all quirks are bad, however. Some are detrimental to the item or its user, some are neutral, and some are even beneficial. The possibility of quirks existing (and the actual number of quirks) is determined by using Table 1; a specific table is thereafter used to determine the exact quirks that the magical item possesses. By using these tables, even a player with an eidetic memory may be thrown for a loss when his magical sword doesn't function correctly—unless he's also memorized the tables in this article.

Table 1: Quirks Present

Roll	Result
01-90	No quirks
91-96	One quirk
97-99	Two quirks
00	Three quirks

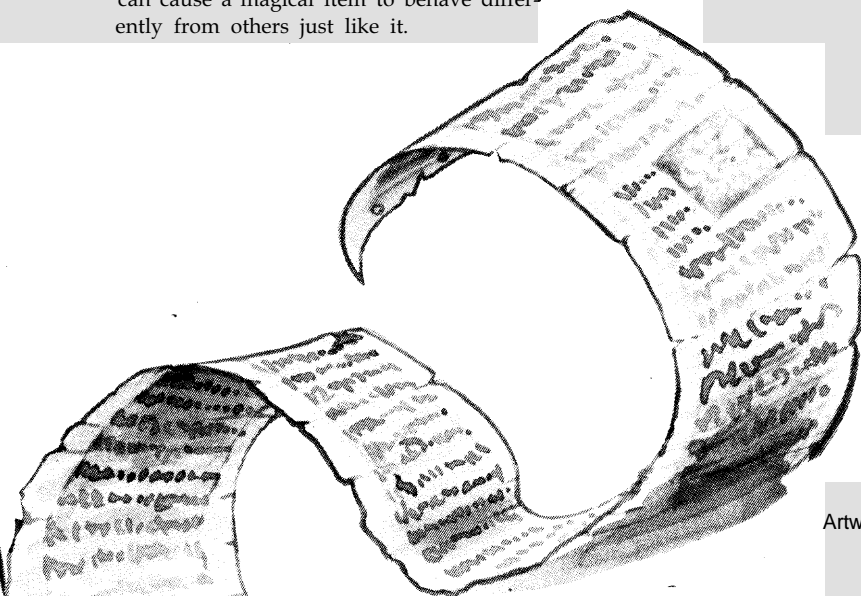


Table 2: Magical Potion Quirks

Roll	Result
01-05	Drinker glows (as per a <i>light</i> spell) a random color for as long as the potion is in effect.
06-10	Drinker's skin turns a random color for 1d10 turns.
11-15	Drinker is unable to speak or cast spells with verbal components for 1d4 hours after drinking the elixir.
16-21	Imbiber gets extremely hungry immediately after the potion is consumed (as per a <i>chime of hunger</i>).
22-25	Drinker's senses sharpen while the potion is in effect, or for a maximum of three turns (whichever is longer). The individual so affected gains a + 2 bonus against being surprised (unless he possesses the alertness nonweapon proficiency or is a ranger, in which case he gains a +3 bonus).
26-30	Drinker cannot hear anything due to ringing or buzzing in ears for as long as the potion is in effect, or for three turns if no duration is given.
31-34	Potion is diluted and works 50% as well as a normal potion of the same type. Both duration and effects are diminished in power.
35-40	Potion becomes inert and useless if left unstoppered for longer than five rounds.
41-44	Potion's duration doubles if it is mixed with wine prior to consumption.
45-50	Drinker becomes greatly intoxicated for 1d10 hours after the potion is consumed. Only a <i>dispel magic</i> can prematurely remove the effects of the drunkenness (effects determined by the DM).
51-53	Drinker gains 60' infravision for as long as the potion is in effect, or for three turns if no duration is given. If the drinker normally has infravision, it is lost for the same amount of time.
54-57	Potion has no effect upon demihumans.
58-62	Drinker experiences slight disorientation for 1d6 rounds after drinking the potion (-2 penalty on any to-hit roll and +2 penalty on armor class during this time).
63-66	Drinker becomes drowsy; a constitution check on 1d20 must be made every round for four rounds after the potion is consumed. If the roll on any check is higher than the drinker's constitution, he falls asleep for 3d6 minutes. The sleeping individual can be awakened only by taking at least 1 hp damage from a physical or magical attack.
67-71	Potion is phosphorescent and glows (equal to <i>faerie fire</i> spell) in the dark.
72-76	Potion is found in powdered form; water has to be added to the powder for the potion to be effective.
77-78	Potion is stronger than normal; its duration is 150% of a normal potion of the same type.
79-83	Potion is nauseating to drink; a constitution check on 1d20 must be made in order to gulp the contents of the potion. If a saving throw vs. poison at + 2 is not made thereafter, the drinker feels sick to his stomach for 2d10 turns (- 1 to hit during that time).
84-87	Drinker loses one point of dexterity for 2d10 turns.
88-89	Potion evaporates (50%) or coagulates (50%) and becomes useless if left open to air for longer than five rounds.
90-91	Potion is unpredictable: It works normally 50% of the time, does nothing 30% of the time, and sickens the drinker for 1d4 + 1 days without any beneficial effect 20% of the time. A <i>cure disease</i> will remove this illness.
92-95	Potion is unstable; if severely jostled or shaken, it will burst its container (75% chance) and become useless.
96-97	Drinker suddenly becomes extremely verbose and talks incessantly for the duration of the potion, or one turn if no duration is given. During this time, the drinker and his associates cannot gain surprise on any encountered monsters.
98-99	If the potion is mixed with <i>anything</i> else, it forms a lethal compound (if swallowed, save vs. poison at - 4 on the roll, or die in 1d4 rounds).
00	Potion is addictive; a draft of it must be taken at least once every week after such an addictive liquid is imbibed. If the addict does not drink another such potion every week, he suffers a -2 penalty on all ability scores until the potion is taken or the affliction is removed. Only <i>alter reality</i> , <i>limited wish</i> , <i>wish</i> , or going "cold turkey" without the potion for 1d3 months will cure such an addiction.

Table 3: Magical Scroll Quirks

Roll	Result
01-06	Scroll is old and brittle; any mishandling causes it to disintegrate. A scroll of this type has a - 2 on all saving throws against fire.
07-10	Scroll glows (equal to <i>faerie fire</i>) when used, opened, or read.
11-15	Scroll is written in scrawled script and is barely legible; a 5% chance exists of blowing the spell in addition to any other such chance.
16-18	Scroll is waterproof and can be read underwater.
19-22	Scroll is exceedingly long and takes 1-3 rounds to unroll and prepare for spell-casting.
23-27	Scroll is specially treated and cannot be burned by normal fire. It has +2 on any saving throws against magical fire.
28-31	Scroll can only be torn by someone making his bend bars/lift gates strength roll.
32-34	Scroll is written in magical hieroglyphics; 5-10 days must be spent translating the characters before the scroll is usable, or a <i>comprehend languages</i> must be cast upon it.
35-40	Scroll is more powerful than normal; any saving throws against a spell from the scroll are at - 1, and the duration of any spell is 125% normal.
41-44	Scroll's print disorients reader for 1d4 rounds after a spell from it is cast. During this time, the reader is at -2 to hit and loses his dexterity bonuses to armor class.
45-49	Scroll is written improperly; any spell on it will fail 50% of the time (but the spell is not erased from the scroll until a second reading).
50-52	Scroll is specially magicked; the spells on it can be used twice each before they vanish.
53-57	Scroll is permanently stuck in a magically strong rolled-up form; in order to cast a spell from it, the reader must make a strength check with a - 2 bonus to the roll on 1d20. If the die roll is above the reader's strength, he is unable to keep the scroll held open for that round. Another try may be made the next round. The scroll cannot be ripped or torn.



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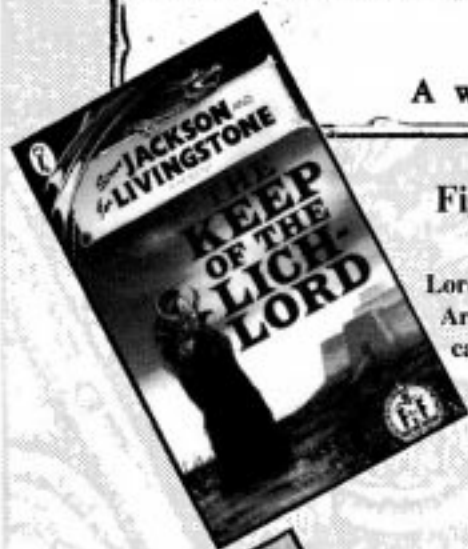
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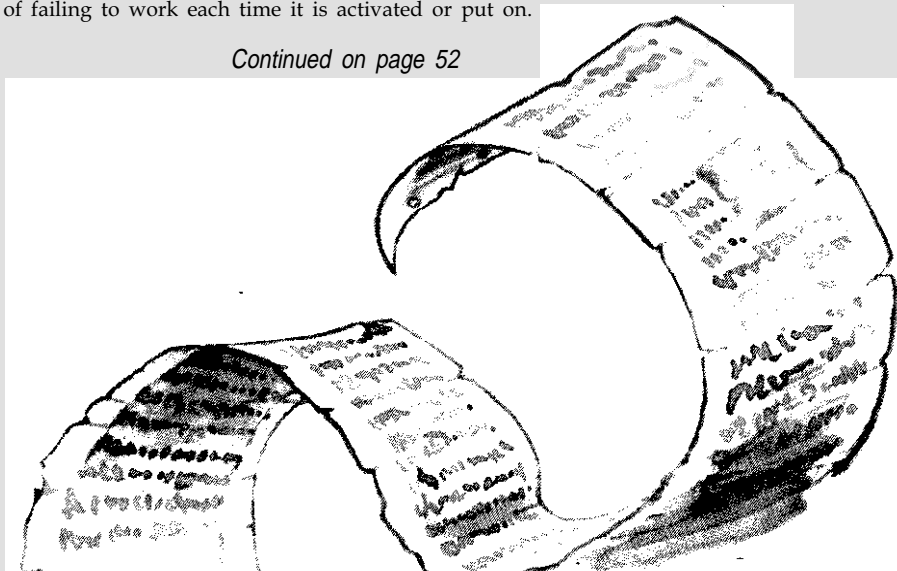
Table 3: Magical Scroll Quirks (Continued)

58-63	Scroll is written on a sheet of thin metal instead of on paper; it makes all saving throws as soft metal does.
64-70	Scroll's writing is hidden by an illusory script or secret page spell.
71-74	Scroll is protected by a spell, such as sepia snake sigil or magic mouth. The protective spell is activated any time the scroll is opened, unless a special bypass word is spoken.
75-78	Scroll is specially treated and is immune to acid and slimes of any type.
79-84	Scroll is dust covered when found; when opened, the opener must save vs. petrification or sneeze and choke on the dust for 1d4 rounds (no attacks or defense possible).
85-89	Scroll's spells are written in complicated terms; the casting times of all spells upon the scrolls are doubled.
90-94	Scroll is substandard in power; all saving throws against spells from the scroll are at +1, and the duration of any spell is 75% of normal.
95-98	Scroll is slow to take effect the round after the casting is finished. Once the casting time is complete, hitting the reader will not disrupt the spell.
99-00	Scroll is very powerful; all spells have an inherent -2 on any saving throw against them, and the duration of a spell on this scroll is 150% normal.

Table 4: Magical Ring Quirks

Roll	Result
01-04	Ring is powerless during the night.
05-08	Ring is powerless during the day.
09-12	Ring will not function underground at depths greater than 100' below the surface.
13-17	Ring will not function if a second magical ring is worn.
18-24	Ring will not function for 1d4 days if it is taken off the wearer's finger and later placed on a new wearer or on the previous wearer.
25-28	Ring cannot use its offensive power against any creature of 1 HD or less.
29-30	Ring is easily damaged; it makes any saving throw at a -2 penalty on the roll.
31-33	Ring works erratically; there is a 5% chance when its powers are utilized that the ring shorts itself out and is unusable for 24 hours.
34-37	Ring magically grafts itself to the wearer's finger and cannot be removed by any means other than employing a wish or physically removing the finger from the wearer's body.
38-44	Ring glows a random color (equal to <i>faerie fire</i>) whenever its powers are in effect.
45-48	Ring is unable to function when within 30' of any other magical ring.
49-53	Wearer of the ring is colorblind and can see only in black and white for as long as the ring is worn. If the wearer is naturally colorblind, he can see normal colors in the visible spectrum for as long as the ring is worn. If the ring is taken off, sight returns to its natural state.
54-59	Ring is specially enchanted and cannot be destroyed by fire, magical or otherwise.
60-61	Ring causes its wearer to experience terrible nightmares if it is worn while sleeping, preventing any rest at all. If it is taken off prior to falling asleep, no ill effects occur.
62-65	Ring is specially enchanted and is immune to the effects of acid of any type.
66-69	Ring emits a hum audible to those within a 10' radius whenever its powers are used.
70-72	Wearer's metabolism is slowed by wearing the ring; consequently, only half the daily amount of food needs to be eaten.
73-76	Wearer's metabolism is sped up by wearing the ring; twice the daily amount of food needs to be eaten by the wearer.
77-81	Ring functions as normal but has no effect on one specific creature type.
82-83	Ring cannot be crushed by anything short of an irresistible force (such as a deity or several tons of rock).
84-88	Ring will not work if its wearer is clad in metal armor.
89-92	Ring has a command word that must be spoken in order for it to operate. If the ring has a power that operates continuously, speaking the command word operates the ring for three turns.
93-94	Ring drains 1 hp for every two days that it is worn, or 1 hp every time it is put on. Normal healing applies.
95-98	Ring is inhabited by a vain minor spirit who wills its wearer to polish the ring daily. If this is not done, the spirit withholds the ring's powers for one day for each time it is not polished.
99-00	Ring has a 20% chance of failing to work each time it is activated or put on.

Continued on page 52



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It's been said that mysteries with fantasy or SF settings are difficult to write, but that hasn't stopped a mini-boom in the category of late. Two cases involving murder by sorcery and a high-tech police procedural mystery are among the most prominent examples, but, for the most part, all three books do more to prove the complexity of the task than to rise above it.

The first challenge in crafting a mixed-genre mystery is establishing a well-identified atmosphere. On that score, *Nightwatch* scores a qualified success, while the other two novels are marginal at best. Robin Bailey's advantage is that much of his audience is already familiar with the City of Greyhawk through the wealth of existing AD&D® game lore available from TSR, Inc. While his prose style is noticeably sparer than that of most other Greyhawk chroniclers, he retains an accurate sense of the city's personality.

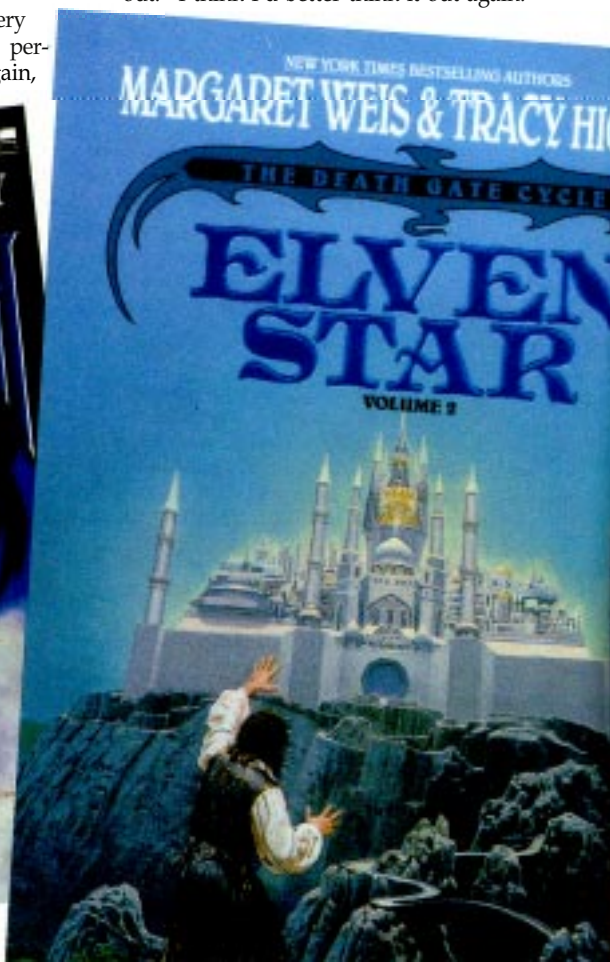
Hawk & Fisher (identified as the first in a series) is also an urban fantasy in a medieval setting, but suffers from a severe case of dual identity. It's packaged as slash-and-skewer street adventure, and it holds that tone through a 23-page vampire hunt—then abruptly turns into a classic house-party whodunit. Only the fantasy elements distinguish the ensuing tale from an army of Agatha Christie novels and Charlie Chan films, and city guard captains Hawk and Fisher feel justifiably misplaced in Simon Green's neatly plotted murder yarn.

Twenty-first-century police detectives Janna Brill and "Mama" Maxwell don't have that problem; they fit seamlessly into Lee Killough's detailed image of a largely automated and computerized America. The difficulty with *Dragon's Teeth* is a different kind of split personality: Author Killough tries to give equal focus to the futuristic SF setting and to a tricky pair of apparently impossible robberies, one of which leaves a corpse behind. But there isn't enough space in the story to do justice to both, and neither element gets enough attention to be satisfying.

All three books weave their mystery plots credibly, though *Nightwatch* is perhaps weakest on this score. Then again,

Bailey's novel is only partly a whodunit, and his strong characterizations are well beyond anything found in the other two volumes. Both *Hawk & Fisher* and *Dragon's Teeth* plant their clues subtly and fairly, though Green lets readers get a step ahead of his detectives partway through the former.

Is there a lesson amidst all this skulduggery? If so, it's Fagin's musical signature line from *Oliver!*, addressed to all those who think they have their mixed-genre mysteries planned properly the first time out: "I think I'd better think it out again!"



THE INTERIOR LIFE

Katherine Blake

Baen 0-671-72010-4 \$3.95

The Interior Life is nothing if not intriguing. Poul Anderson's flyleaf testimonial seems to promise a brilliant high fantasy. The back cover advertises what sounds like a variation on Peter Beagle's *The Folk of the Air*. The copyright page offers trademark disclaimers for a batch of computer terms and a caveat about a made-up SCA barony. And the novel is set in no less than four different typefaces, two plain and two italic.

Not only is it Katherine Blake's first novel, it's both an effortlessly pleasant and satisfying read and a stunningly intricate feat of craftsmanship. In a word: Wow!

As it turns out, both the high fantasy and Peter Beagle comparisons are borne out. The book puts down firm roots in modern suburbia, where Sue is trying to balance housework, motherhood, civic involvement, and her husband's business politics. But it gives equal time to Sue's growing perception of the realm of Demoura, where the mystically gifted Lady Amalia and the pragmatic Marianella are keystones in a battle to drive dark influences from the land. The exchange works both ways; Sue provides moral support to Amalia and Marianella, and the two Demouran women offer Sue subconscious advice on achieving her 20th-century goals.

The twin plots are both parallel and divergent. The Demouran tale has a strong romantic element, while the suburban thread emphasizes Sue's growing people-managing skills. But Blake keeps the strands intricately intertwined, sometimes leaping back and forth between worlds in the space of a single sentence. (That's where the multiple typefaces come in; one pair identifies Demoura, one marks suburbia. Blake deserves full credit for the ingenious device, but the novels real wonder is that most of the time, the device is scarcely necessary. The words themselves convey enough sense of identity to distinguish one milieu from the other.)

The Interior Life is a quiet novel; those looking for bloody sword-and-sorcery won't find it. But Katherine Blake elegantly refutes the mindset that fantasy role-playing, in whatever form, is worth only scorn, and her rich affirmation of the power of imagination comes in a uniquely accessible package.

ELVEN STAR

Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman
Bantam Spectra 0-553-07039-8 \$19.95

I wondered, halfway through this book, how Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman can possibly write their way out of the corner into which they seem to be painting themselves. To date they've always succeeded, but this time there are two noteworthy differences: *Elven Star* has five sequels forthcoming rather than one, and part of the problem seems to originate outside the Death Gate Cycle of which this latest novel is a part.

First, the paradox: One of *Elven Star's* major secondary characters is a peculiar old wizard who keeps trying to remember a particular spell, constantly misplaces his hat, and travels with an enormous dragon. Readers of the original DRAGONLANCE® Chronicles will have no trouble catching the right throwaway lines and rearranging the letters of "Zifnab" into a different but very familiar name. The parallel, of course, is immensely amusing for those who've read the earlier books. If anything, Zifnab is more peculiar than his predecessor, as he tosses off casual digs at archetypical wizards Merlin and Gandalf while his dragon complains about not being assigned to Pern. And like Fizban, Zifnab turns out to be considerably more competent than he initially appears.

But his presence seems to paint Weis and Hickman into two (or possibly three) inescapable corners at once. First: Are the two wizards in fact the same character? Presumably not, if only for legal reasons; as Zifnab points out, "Fiz—No, I can't use that."

Second: How are readers expected to view Zifnab? No clear answer seems possible. DRAGONLANCE saga followers will inevitably make guesses based on the Fizban parallels, even though they're almost certain to be proven wrong. Those who haven't read the earlier trilogy, mean-

while, may be unnecessarily bewildered by the carried-over running gags. Also, among his "ravings," Zifnab tosses in references to our own world (Cary Grant, writers' strikes, and the like). In what kind of a reality can Zifnab coexist with the Death Gate realms, Earth, and the various SF and fantasy worlds to which he refers?

Third: You'd think that having five books to resolve the aforementioned paradoxes and puzzles would be far simpler than trying to accomplish the task in a single volume. Just the opposite is more likely; with all that space, Weis and Hickman may well need to hold back definitive answers in order to maintain suspense, and readers could easily be left hanging for two or three books before explanations start to come together.

Weis and Hickman have built a reputation for impeccable intricacy in their previous work, and the rest of the Death Gate cosmology has held to that standard. So while I'm still troubled by some of the questions *Elven Star* raises (e.g., can the Death Gate Cycle books be fairly evaluated independent of the DRAGONLANCE Chronicles?), I'm inclined to reserve judgment until more of the evidence is in. Fair warning, though: This is no series for readers with low cliffhanger tolerance.

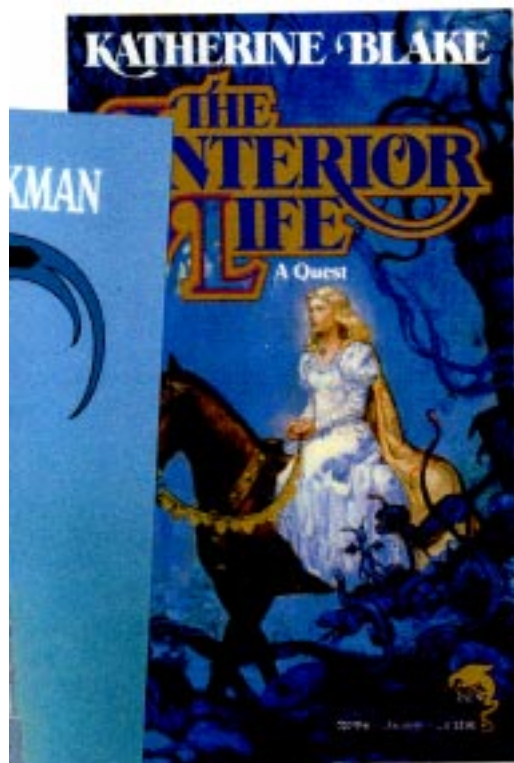
GOSSAMER AXE

Gael Baudino
Roc 0-451-45025-6 \$4.50

This was a book I didn't expect to like, though for reasons not strictly connected to the story. For one thing, there are already several excellent novels juxtaposing present-day musicians with the realms of faerie. For another, the author's description reads entirely too much like her protagonist's: Both are Denver-based harpers who follow pagan theologies and share other "progressive" attitudes. But *Gossamer Axe* is neither a polemic nor a retreat. It's an intimate yet powerful saga that puts its own spin on the concept of mixing elvenkind with music-craft.

Properly, Baudino's novel features an ensemble cast. While sixth-century refugee Christa Cruitaire is its keystone, her friends and fellow performers quickly become just as real and sympathetic, and their problems are integral elements of the story rather than subplots. Most of the players are women, but the tone isn't militantly feminist and Baudino's male characters don't lapse into stereotype (that isn't to say they're all likeable). There's also an unusual magical harp that's more character than prop, and it gets a couple of the books very best scenes.

The book's other distinction is its choice of music: heavy metal. Baudino not only displays a solid knowledge of the major and minor leagues in the 'category, but concocts a thoroughly plausible theory of magic to explain why loud electric rock will allow Christa to reach across worlds and time to rescue her trapped lover from imprisonment at faerie hands.



Gossamer Axe is several sorts of novel at once: traditionally mythic, drawing on familiar old Celtic lore; pragmatically modern, with sharp jibes at persistent personal and interpersonal biases; and unabashedly romantic, not so much in the sexual sense (though that's there) as in the determined optimism of its central characters. All three are compellingly told and memorable; Baudino may not be the first to add today's music to a fantasy quest yarn, but she ably proves that some things can be done right more than once.

GALEN SWORD # 1: SHIFTER

Judith & Garfield Reeves-Stevens
 Roc 0-451-45018-3 \$3.95

I'm not sure whether *Shifter* is a pulp adventure with delusions of grandeur or a fantasy thriller with an identity crisis. Either way, though, this first entry in the Galen Sword series gets more points for its premise than it does for execution.

If we define pulp adventure to describe the exploits of a larger-than-life hero and his colorful sidekicks as they confront a variety of dangerous evildoers (e.g., Doc Savage, Flash Gordon, the Shadow), *Shifter* certainly qualifies. Galen Sword uses his vast wealth in pursuit of paranormal research, aided by a pre-teenage telekinetic, a brilliant but paralyzed physicist, and a Japanese strategist. Opposing him are the paranormals, in the form of a vast and shadowy organization called the First World, that considers its members superior to humanity and is plotting an eventual takeover. Sword himself has connections to a powerful First World clan, but is considered human and outcast by most First Worlders.

But the books writing and structure don't fit the formula of the old pulp adventures. Every major good-aligned character gets a share of the viewpoint, Swords inner motives get far too much examination, and one seemingly regular character is brutally and definitively written out by the books end. There's also a decided lack of atmosphere; no one mood dominates the tale sufficiently to establish an overall tone. The outline may be straight from the pulps, but the style is that of a contemporary thriller.

The combination is unsettling at best. It's hard to tell what readers should expect from this and future entries in the series, especially in terms of cliffhangers and long-term plot resolution. The authors once stated that they have 27 books worth of Swords adventures plotted, which only adds to the confusion, supporting the pulp-adventure classification despite the more complex storytelling style.

The prose itself is solid enough, and the pacing is reasonably brisk. But the structure on which the writing hangs lacks a well-established design, so *Shifter* counts only as an intriguing but seriously flawed experiment.

SERVANT OF THE EMPIRE

Raymond E. Feist and Janny Wurts
 Foundation 0-385-24718-4 \$19.95

Near the end of the first long-term AD&D® game campaign I ran, I tried to maneuver my uncomfortably high-level PCs into the political arena by giving them important lands and titles. They turned me down flat, doubtless with visions of boredom dancing in their heads. DMs facing similar resistance nowadays should show their players a copy of *Servant of the Empire* and wait for the PCs to beg for elevation to the nobility.

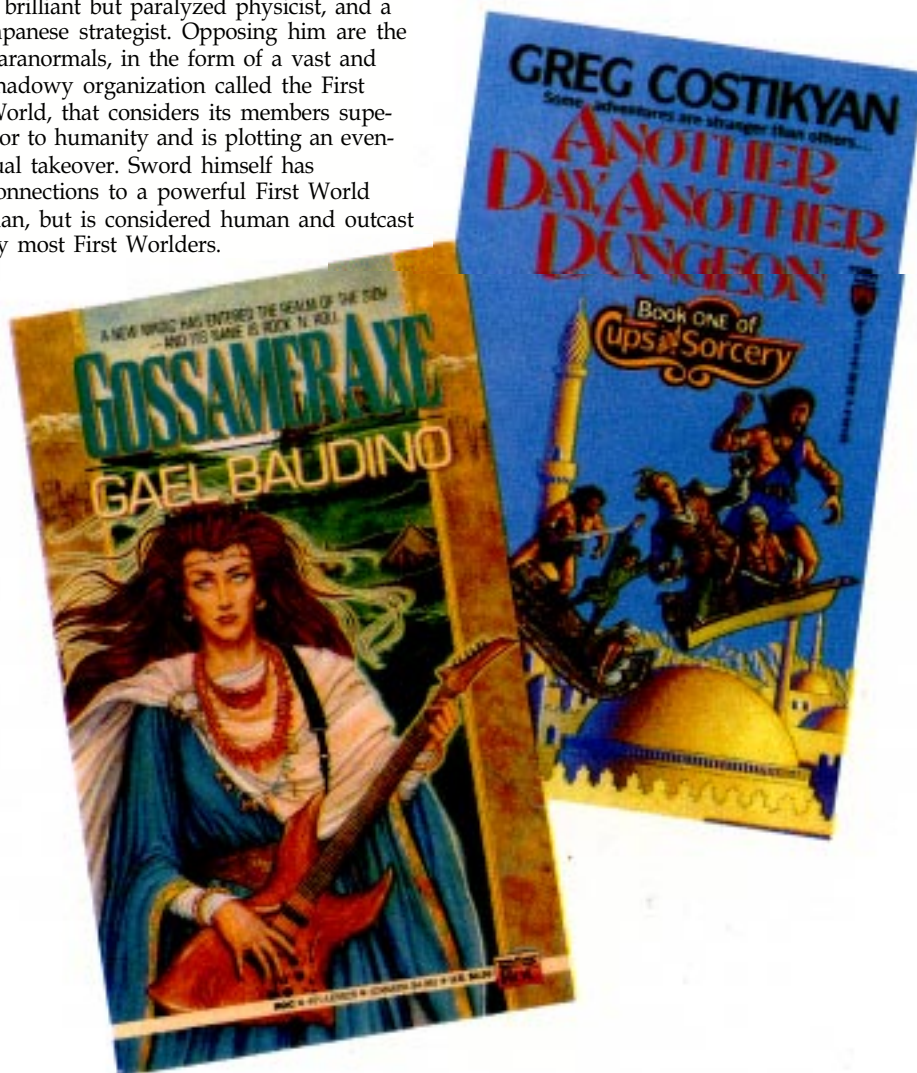
In the realms of Kelewan, political security comes only to those who master the intricate and dangerous Game of the Council. Playing the Game inattentively can find a careless practitioner dead at an assassin's hand, far from home on a hopeless military mission, facing economic ruin as a competitor monopolizes a crucial market niche, or forced to honor an innocuous promise to devastating effect.

All these situations arise in Feist and Wurts' second tale of Mara, a young woman thrust by circumstances into the Game as mistress of a minor noble house. Though already familiar with the Game's broad strokes, Mara now finds its stakes growing higher as her machinations lead her into the topmost circles of the Empire's hierarchy. Her own life is among the least of her worries as she makes a daring bid to snatch the Empire itself back from a potentially disastrous course.

Feist and Wurts give the tale a uniformly attentive eye for detail, amply defining characters and culture as well as battles and bargaining sessions. Connections to Feist's Riftwar novels crop up, as a new Midkemian character takes a major role and old ones make brief appearances. But there's little time to relax in this book; the overall pace and tone might reasonably be compared to running a live chess game on a partially charted minefield.

Servant of the Empire avoids most of the usual problems associated with middle volumes of trilogies, as it's a generally self-contained novel with a decisive climax. But the authors don't stop to explain some previously-covered aspects of Tsurani culture, so newcomers may feel underinformed about the insectoid cho-ja or the backgrounds of certain secondary characters. The series also has a strong Eastern flavor (part Arabian and part Oriental) that should especially interest gamers playing in such settings.

If I'd just had this book seven or eight years ago. . .



ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER DUNGEON

Greg Costikyan

Tor 0-812-50140-3 \$3.95

There are plenty of novels officially adapted from fantasy game settings, and many more inspired by an author's individual game adventures or campaigns. But I can't recall a book that plays more effectively with the conventions of game worlds than Greg Costikyan's *Another Day, Another Dungeon*.

We get answers to all those nagging questions about the mechanics of dungeon-crawling: Where do you find adventuring companions? Why do you carry an 11' pole? How do you get that enormous but valuable statue out of the dungeon? How far do you trust a lizard-man guide at three silver pieces a day?

We get a city full of delights and dangers: a flying-carpet taxi service, layers of political bureaucracy, secret societies, elegant mansions, and a college where wargaming is a favorite faculty pastime.

We get a host of quirky heroes, villains, and supporting players, among them being: Father Thwaite, who's a talented healer when he can remember where he is; Jasper, a dealer in magic who usually appears as a flying point of green light; Sidney, an attractive cat burglar for whom the term has a literal application; and an unappreciated lich doing courier duty for an evil sorceress.

Costikyan puts all this together in a wide-ranging but neatly constructed plot in which the aforementioned statue (that is both hugely valuable and magical) is the target of several competing interests who are chasing each other and the statue around the city. His smooth execution should be no surprise, since he's an award-winning game designer whose credits include work on West End Games' PARANOIA* game and Steve Jackson Games' TOON* game. While the heritage of this tale is eminently clear, Costikyan uses RPG conventions as vehicles for his story rather than crutches, and the results are lively and entertaining. *Another Day, Another Dungeon* is another winner for Costikyan, and gamers should have particular fun with this first book in his "Cups and Sorcery" sequence.

Recurring roles

With the arrival of *Stone of Farewell* (DAW, \$21.95), there's enough evidence to give a preliminary thumbs up to Tad Williams' Memory, Sorrow, and Thorn cycle. Williams is much too involved with his characters—lots of them—to even come close to becoming pretentious, and his treatment of the semi-immortal Sithi has the vast wisdom and distant weariness that is missing from most peoples' attempts at writing Tolkienian elves. It's a bit disjointed and ends just before a climax rather than just after one, but that may be mostly middle-volume syndrome.

The rest of the "middle books" in the current lineup are all solidly self-

contained. Of the three, *The Mutant Prime* (Foundation, \$19.95/\$8.95) is the strongest; Karen Haber's follow-up to *The Mutant Season* is not quite a half-generation ahead of its predecessor, and finds the mutants perhaps even more worried (and in more danger) than the normals when a seeming super-mutant embarks on an ambitious campaign of self-advancement. Familiar characters have matured in the years between the stories—if anything, perhaps a bit too much so to be convincing to real-world readers.

Lifeblood (Ace, \$3.50) is a substantial step forward in P. N. Elrod's series about vampire Jack Fleming. Elrod pulls a clever reverse on the usual vampire-hunter plot, and the substitution of a radio-drama subplot for the previous books gangster doings goes a long way to resolve the formerly fuzzy tone.

As for *Dragonwall* (TSR, \$4.95), Troy Denning's contribution to the Empires trilogy isn't exactly undistinguished, but it spreads itself rather thin. This time, the nominal starring role goes to Batu Min Ho, the maverick Shou Lung general who is that realm's only hope for defeating the invading Horde. But the execution of Batu's strategies is frequently interrupted by a court-intrigue plot in which his wife must act a spy's role to uncover a traitor, only to suffer unduly for her success. Denning gives Wu's adventures too much attention for their resolution to be satisfying, then has too little space left to do more than rush through Batu's reaction to the court events and the setup for the final volume. Ultimately, the novel is two good stories squashed uncomfortably into one book.

There's only space for short takes on a large batch of other new titles. The list of don't-bothers is shorter. Lionel Fenn's *Kent Montana and the Really Ugly Thing From Mars* (Ace, \$3.95) is wildly overrated.

Songs of the Dancing Gods (Del Rey, \$4.95) is doubly depressing, tacking a frustratingly downbeat codicil onto one of the few Jack Chalker series I've actually liked. And *The Young Astronauts* (Zebra, \$2.95) looks more interesting than it really is. This last begins a young-adult series sponsored by Jack Anderson (yes, apparently that Jack Anderson) intended to spark youth interest in the U.S. space program, but is more likely to bore than to attract. He should have commissioned another half-dozen "Planet Builders" novels from the Robyn Tallis group.

Better news comes from a variety of quarters: *The Warlock Rock* (Ace, \$3.95) is the best Gramarye novel in some time from Christopher Stasheff, with an involved and involving musical plot line and a whole slew of obvious and not-so-obvious puns. Ace has also caught up with British author Tom Holt, whose *Expecting Someone Taller* (Ace, \$3.95) is a mild-mannered and unexpectedly intricate present-day extrapolation of the Ring of the Nibelung myth. Few comic fantasists

can get one to laugh thoughtfully; Holt is one of them.

Norse mythologist Thorarinn Gunnarsson heads in a totally different direction with *Make Way for Dragons!* (Ace, \$3.95), a lively yet detailed yarn that finds a mother-daughter dragon family temporarily stranded in California and forced to seek help from the natives. Gunnarsson's wyrms are varied and unusual by draconian standards, and his characters are all too plausible.

Surrender None (Baen, \$4.50) finds Elizabeth Moon taking a giant step backward in the world of her Paksenarrion trilogy, but it's in a good cause; the novel relates the story of Gird, who's a deity in Paks' time but a reluctant farmer-turned-revolutionary in his own. This one is interesting both as a prequel and as a wholly invented cousin to the historical Robin Hood cycle, which Girds tale resembles in some ways.

Despite the TV series' demotion to cable-channel reruns, Avon has kept its *Beauty and the Beast* novelization program alive, at least for the moment. Ru Emerson's *Masques* (Avon, \$3.95) follows ably in the first books footsteps and should satisfy most fans, but it may not be where you'd expect to find it in the bookstore.

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I made two mistakes.

I have been playing West End Games' STAR WARS: The RPG* for over a year, and my mistakes have totally destroyed game balance. One of my players has a character named Red-eyes, a bounty hunter. His scores aren't that high (6d + 2 Blaster, 6d Dodge, most everything else is in the 4d + range). However, I allowed him to amass a large deal of wealth. That was my first mistake.

I made my second mistake when I used the rules for equipment modification in the *Rules Companion*. Instead of making him pay for equipment modification in skill points, I let him buy new equipment. This resulted in a 5d piece of armor with no dexterity penalty.

For all of you who don't play STAR WARS: The RPG, let me explain something: With this armor, Red-eyes walked into an Imperial Base, blew up the base, shot 50 Stormtroopers, and wasn't stunned once.

In every game system, something can happen to make supercharacters. I have read all about "Monty Haul" campaigns, and I have tried to avoid running one, but this bounty-hunter problem snuck up on me. I would like to ask the advice of all game masters out there: How can I restore balance to my carefully thought-out galaxy without aggravating my player? He thinks it's wonderful to be able to destroy 20 stormtroopers in four rounds. I, however, can't come up with missions that seem fun to me; what's the point of thinking if you can just toast everything and not get hurt?

I tried several plans to destroy the armor, but he made incredible rolls and still won. The last thing I want to do is say, "Your armor suddenly fails." The GM's privilege would only upset him and make him leave the game, which of course is the last thing I want to happen.

Robert Rodger
Clifton Park NY

Well, it's nice that your magazine is always chock full of advice for Dungeon Masters and obsessive hyper-experienced players who have been playing since the game was invented (who may begin reading the next letter now). I hope you let me give a few hints to new, inexperienced, or younger players.

The dictionary gives many definitions of what gaming is all about. One definition is "a contest or competition," but that applies to sports more than role-playing. The definition that better applies to role-playing is "a form of play, amusement, or recreation."

To enjoy role-playing, you must always remember that it's only a game and that it won't affect the real world or anything in it, so don't become too wrapped up in it. Anyone (and I do mean anyone) can play. All that is needed is a good DM and fellow players (nice people, not just experienced players).

Here are some basic guidelines that should help anyone become a good player:

1. Don't play if you are not in the mood for involving yourself fully (you'll lessen the enjoyment of people who want to play).

2. Don't plot against your fellow players. A good DM should provide you with plenty of NPCs to plot against, although being a minor irritant is reasonable.

3. Develop a character trait, quote, or action that represents your character. This gives the character continuity from one game session to the next, and it helps the other players recognize your character.

4. Always include other players' characters in your actions or discussions. After all, two heads are better than one, and you'll only get half the blame if something goes wrong.

5. Be reasonable with your expectations and play. No 1st-level thief is a dragon slayer, and nobody is strong enough to wear a full suit of armor with a shield, carry a large sack of treasure and a wounded companion, check for traps with a wooden staff, and still draw a sword.

6. Don't argue with your DM unless you are sure there has been a serious misunderstanding. He is much too busy to nitpick rules with you.

7. Be creative. Nothing makes the game more exciting than something new.

8. Remember that your character is like someone on a soap opera or a TV series; he moves from one situation to the next, solving each as he goes. A good DM ends a character's life with some heroic action, sacrifice, or quest, or perhaps allows him to go off into the sunset to live happily ever after. Your character should not end his existence arguing with the town guard or trapped in some jail cell (unless the character was a real slimeball).

9. Remember what your adventure objective is. Don't fight goblin armies if you're only after the orcs that kidnapped the princess.

10. Watch experienced (entertaining and nice) players play; you may learn more from watching once than playing a few times.

Thank you for reading.

B. Night
Toronto, Ontario

In my years of playing the AD&D® game, I have played with many different DMs. In my area, there weren't many people who played RPGs at all, so I and the two other people in my group were forced to be both players and DMs. Through the years, I managed to get pretty good, and now I have come up with a set of guidelines that makes DMing fun for players and DM alike.

1. A good DM is descriptive. Description is important in many ways: If a DM isn't very descriptive, the player is not only going to be vague in describing his actions, he is likely to skip over something crucial to an adventure (though the truly kind-hearted DM wouldn't allow this).

Vividly describing a scene can also set certain moods for the players. Which of the following sounds better to you? "You continue north down the 20' corridor to a door. You open the door and inside there is a 15' x 15' room with a large bed and chest. There is another door on the east wall." or "You cautiously walk down the dank and musty stone corridor. The flagstone is slippery under your feet. You peer into the

darkness, straining to see what lies beyond the light of your torch. You catch a glimpse of a large wooden door just 20' away. You walk up to it and find it is nearly twice your height. You pull on the large iron ring, and the door slowly opens with a loud creak. Beyond lies a room, you estimate it to be about 15' square. The smell of old rancid meat overwhelms you. There is a constant buzzing of flies. There is an unmade, filthy bed in the corner. It seems quite large in comparison to you. Beside the bed is a large chest, where the stench seems to be the strongest. On your right is another, smaller doorway." Although the latter takes longer and requires more imagination to describe, it is more appealing to the players. Description can cause tension by slowing the scene down.

2. It is useful to have a good vocabulary. I don't mean using words like "borborygmus" (a medical term for stomach rumbles), but using words like "rancid" or "overwhelming."

3. Accuracy is mandatory in describing things. If the DM is not accurate in his descriptions, the players will be confused and complain to the DM, leading to disastrous results.

4. A bit of realism is necessary. When I use the word realism, it does not apply to the world we live in today; after all, who's really seen a ferocious red dragon? The realism I'm talking about applies to the alternate reality of your campaign. If a 1st-level fighter meets up with a huge green dragon, will that dragon use his breath weapon? Probably not, since a 1st-level fighter doesn't pose much of a threat. However, if that 1st-level fighter were part of an army of 10,000 men, the dragon would most certainly use his breath weapon (or give himself up).

5. Variety is a must. There is nothing more annoying than a predictable DM, one whose next scenario the players can dictate to him before he runs it. Use variety and surprise your players. If they think they will meet up with a band of gnolls, use something else, perhaps a band of *polporphed* dragons that look like gnolls. When the PCs expect danger, give them a kind old hermit, etc.

If you follow these five easy steps, you can be a master DM in no time.

Matt Bogosian
Seattle WA

In response to Ahmed G. Amin's letter in issue #155: I agree that there should be risk to the lives of the PCs, but an adventure can be made challenging without killing off the characters too quickly. The results of an adventure can fall between absolute success and the death of the PCs. Characters could fail a quest but still live, or they could be only partly successful. For example:

—They killed the dragon, but only after it had burned down half of the village.

—They completed their mission, but lost all the treasure.

In such adventures, the PCs might not die, but the players are still challenged to be completely successful.

In regard to *resurrection* spells: Using the *resurrection* survival table, the maximum number of times an average PC is likely to be *resurrected* will be four or five.

Allan Roberts
Kingston, Ontario

I'd like to comment on Ahmed Amin's letter in issue #155. I have to disagree with his comments about resurrection. While the constitution limit [on the number of times a PC can be brought to life] is too high and should be reduced (to perhaps one-half or one-third the constitution), to deprive players of these spells makes the DM's job harder, not easier. Players all grow attached to their characters and hate having them die temporarily, much less permanently. This leaves the DM with two options: Make the adventures less lethal (and thus less exciting) or face an angry bunch of players. Also, it takes away some great role-playing fun. The effort to find a high-level priest able to *raise* a PC (and any quests that may follow to pay for the *raising*) is a DM's dream. Only in campaigns where magic is a rarity should these spells be disallowed.

Jeff Barnes
Cedar Grove TN

I am writing in response to Ahmed G. Amin's letter in issue #155. I have been a DM for over three years and a player for over six years, and I have never encountered players who lose interest in the game because of characters' *resurrection*.

I play AD&D games with three parties, and in those parties players do not regularly *resurrect* themselves. Most of the time this is because:

1. They don't have the money with which to *resurrect* PCs.

2. The other party members aren't interested in taking the dead characters to a cleric who can return them to life.

3. They start as low-level characters, "so who cares if I start a new character?"

4. I intervene in the course of play. Even if the character has died, I disregard the dice and tell the player that his character has fallen unconscious. The character will need a couple of days' rest, but he will still be alive and that will prevent him from seeking *resurrection*.

I believe in *resurrection*, not only because it gives inexperienced players another chance with their characters, and not only because players who have played for a long time would be very frustrated to have their characters die permanently, but also because it adds depth to the AD&D campaign world and because it makes the adventure much more interesting.

In conclusion, most of the low-level PCs die permanently in my campaign, but the veterans (the characters who have achieved high levels by hard work) have either the money, the magical means, the friends, or the gods (i.e., the DM) to save them.

No matter what, the players want to be *resurrected*, and they surely don't stop enjoying the game as a result of a *resurrection*.

Oded Ofek
Herzliya, Israel

I am writing in regard to Ahmed G. Amin's letter in issue #155 concerning *resurrection*. On more than one occasion in my 14 years as a DM, I have seen grown men and women cry when their characters died, even though the rite of *resurrection* was available. These players were professional people between the ages of 30 and 50, some of whom had played the same character for five years or more. They had nurtured and identified with their alter egos from the time that he or she was a 1st-level rookie. To them, losing a character would be like losing a son or daughter. *Resurrection* assuages that loss and sustains interest in the game by providing continuity of character. It gives a player the chance to continue on with the persona that he

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Time and place:
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Your identity:
Ninja warrior: Samurai Toda Clan

Your quest:
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ADVENTURE IN THE
LONE WOLF SAGA



Time and place:
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Your identity:
Lone Wolf: the last Kai Master of Sommerlund

Your quest:
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TOMB OF THE SPHINX



Time and place:
1934 AD - Cairo

Your identity:
Sir Edward Mainwaring: archaeologist

Your quest:
To find the legendary 'Eye of Set'

VAMPIRE HUNTER



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Your identity:
Dr Marc Steiner: paranormal investigator

Your quest:
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has created and molded to fit his own needs.

Nothing in the AD&D game should be easy. Gold, jewels, and magical items should be scarce and require a lot of effort to obtain. Experience points should not be given away lavishly; it should take a lot of hard work to gain a level. The same is true of resurrection. High-level clerics who can perform this ritual are not easy to come by. You don't normally find them in the wilderness or deep underground (at least you won't find the type of cleric who would help you), nor do you find them in just any surface city. The work involved in trying to locate a suitable cleric can be an adventure by itself, and once you have found such a person and have persuaded him to perform the rite, there is still no guarantee that it will be effective. The small chance that something may go wrong makes *resurrection* a risky business, and the DM can always increase that risk by changing the *resurrection* survival percentages. Since it may be some time before *resurrection* can be performed, the player might have to sit out a game or two, or run one of the NPCs until his compatriots find a suitable cleric to perform the rite (and they might not even want to do that!). All of the above is generally enough to make a player act with a certain amount of caution, so that while the threat of death is always present, death itself is not a frequent occurrence.

I find that players who lose their characters too easily or too often tend to become discouraged and quit. This can happen if the DM runs "killer dungeons" instead of tailoring the adventure to the player characters' levels. Sometimes the DM can help characters stay alive by making some traps a little less dangerous, or fudging on a monster's hit points, to-hit rolls, etc. If done

carefully, the players won't get the idea that the DM is helping them, but they will get all the thrill and enjoyment of a risky situation. Of course, if a player is acting recklessly and dangerously, don't hesitate to give him everything that he has coming.

Willis M. Burge
Salt Lake City UT

I would like to respond to Mr. Laing's letter in "Letters," where he asks for more information on how to role-play paladins. It is my belief that there are many role models available if one expands the reading list beyond the realms of fantasy and science fiction, or if one resorts to watching television reruns.

My first example of a paladin is from television, and from the genre of the western. Although westerns are filled with examples of almost unkillable straight-as-an-arrow heroes, the best "paladin prototype" I can think of is the character of James West in *The Wild, Wild West*.

Now, mind you, he does not work for a religious group; he works for the U.S. government. But he has many qualities of the paladin: He lives to a rigid code of ethics and laws, he serves one master, and he is expected to perform heroic deeds as part of his job. . . . When James West refused to kill, it was because he was living up to his code of ethics: He was to capture criminals and bring them to justice. He was not judge, jury, and executioner all in one. He knew his place and rarely violated his rule system.

Also, do you have any guess as to how many hit points he had? It seems to have been in the hundreds. Or his armor class? I'd guess down around four, and all he wore was a vest.

One last note: Why didn't James West kill all

those low-level henchmen? It was not his job. His station was to concern himself with the really nasty bad guys. For those low-level fighters, he contented himself with beating the tar out of them. His job was to fight the epic battles.

Another example of a paladin is found in the mystery or spy genre, and he is James Bond. According to the stories, he has a "license to kill." His job to kill bad guys, and not just the street riff-raff, either. What better role model for a paladin, whose duty is to kill (or sometimes convert) creatures of evil?

At least once in each movie, the bad guy tries to bribe James Bond. Does anyone in the movie theater really believe Bond can be bribed? Of course not. Bond also holds to his own unbreakable code of ethics, just as a paladin should.

One last example I can think of is found in DC Comics. He is Batman: The Dark Knight. Okay, I hear you; he's certainly not lawful good. He was lawful good once, so what happened? Off hand, I'd say he would now be considered an insane paladin. He still holds to a code of ethics (though now somewhat twisted), has incredible hit points and armor class, and is involved in a quest to destroy evil.

I feel that if Batman showed up in an AD&D world, he would still have all his paladin attributes because he has not lost or veered from his quest; he is simply insane.

As you can see, there are a number of interesting, varied, non-stupid paladins available that can be used as role models for AD&D game paladins. They are out there, waiting to be found in books from different genres.

Jay Toser
Stevens Point WI

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I am writing in response to Brian Smarker's "Forum" letter in issue #158. I see nothing wrong with a good cleric animating a corpse to teach paladins, as it may very well save their lives in the future. The cleric would not "be looked upon with disfavor from his deity for not letting those who have passed away rest in peace," because the cleric would get permission from the deity and the spirit of the corpse.

Also, since the school is in a safe territory, any regions containing undead would have been cleared out long ago, not to mention there being a lack of any evil priests in the area to animate any undead. Even if you could find an area with undead, it [the teaching situation] would be beyond the teacher's control. He would be too busy fighting for his life to give lectures to his students, who would probably be attacked at this point, anyway. I'm sure a deity would rather have a few corpses animated than have a high-level cleric and a promising group of future paladins killed!

Robert Vaughn
Carlisle PA

It's been about 18 months since I sent in the letter that caused quite a stir in "Forum" [in issue #143], and many things have happened. Right after I mailed the letter, I attempted to join the army, only to have the #10 vaccine K.O. me. Shortly after returning home, I ran into a group of players who held their games in the back of the local public library on Saturdays, alternating between evil, neutral, and good-aligned campaigns. I've been playing with them ever since.

As I look back at the reasons I wrote my first letter, I see now that the real problem isn't evil characters as much as it is evil players. The first

campaign I participated in at the library had mostly evil characters, but there was a strong sense of party unity. I still play only non-evil characters myself, but the way most of the regular members play their characters make an evil campaign work. There's the occasional intraparty petty (and grand) larceny, but rarely will one character fight another without good reason. All of us, from the half-dozen survivors of The Hobby Center in the group to the players we've met (and sometimes created), realize that it's hard to fight battles when you can't turn your back on the rest of the party. That trust between characters is what usually keeps a party together and alive. There may be no honor among thieves, but there can be no survival without trust and cooperation.

Although that evil campaign has long since been abandoned, it taught me something. David, our current DM, is running a campaign that seems to counter the example on pages 47-49 of the AD&D 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook*. The party co-leaders are a lawful-good cleric of Heimdall and a lawful-evil gnome illusionist. The rest of the characters cover at least five of the seven remaining alignments and include a paladin and at least two other clerics. Yet we've had only two major clashes inside the party: one concerning a character's liability for actions resulting from a *cursed berserking sword*, and the other from one cleric's beliefs about assisting the unconscious along to the afterlife.

As I quoted from the DRAGONLANCE® books in my previous letter, "Evil turns in upon itself." Campaigns in which the characters and players cannot put aside their differences due to differing alignment or differences of opinion cannot last. If any of you reading are ever in the Corbin

area on a Saturday night, come on down to the library and join us. Roll up a character or just sit back, watch, and ask about "The Tale of the Vorpall Kitty." Life's too short to waste time arguing or backstabbing (at least when it comes to fellow party members).

Stanley Bundy
Corbin KY

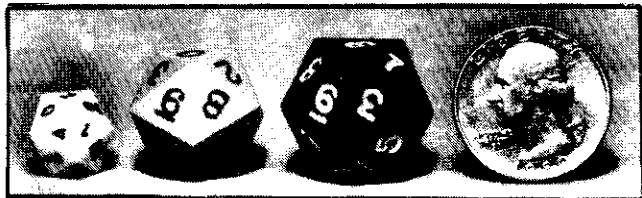
When considering technology in an AD&D campaign world, remember the old proverb that necessity is the mother of invention. In a fantasy setting, there would be no need for many modern inventions. Gas, electric, and even oil lamps would be unused as a cheaper alternative is available: stones with *continual light* spells on them that sell for 1 sp each. Such stones would be cheaper than buying new torches or oil after every adventure, and safer too, although dealing with green slime becomes more problematic. This is not to say that technology would not produce any new inventions. Laziness (the father of invention!) would bring about labor-saving devices without magic, due to the costs of hiring a magician for some jobs. Also, a fantasy world would provide new problems for inventors to overcome and would speed up development of such things as newspapers. Imagine the ease of foreign correspondents using magical items with powers such as *teleport* or *clairaudience* to get stories back to the printers, or even better, using observation-type spells like *wizard eye* to view foreign events without leaving home.

Michael Pitt
Chiddingfold, Surrey, England

Ω

Ya don't wanna roll turkeys, Pilgrim!

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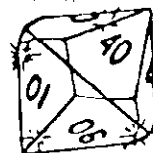
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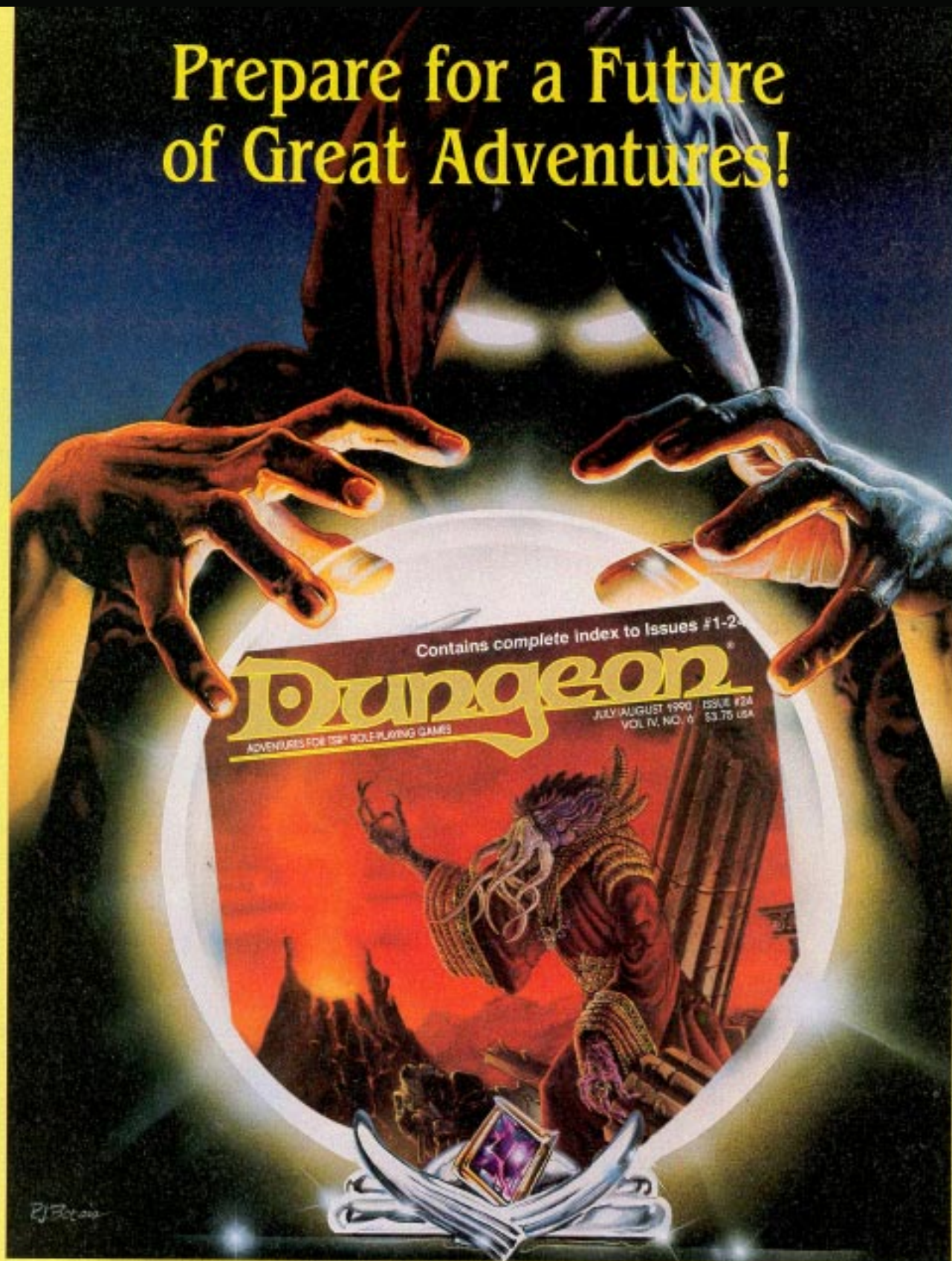
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The VOYAGE of the PRINCESS ARK

Part 10: The Return of Darkness

by Bruce A. Heard

This series chronicles the adventures of an Alphantian explorer and his crew as they journey across the D&D® Known World in their skyship. The information herein may be used to expand the D&D campaigns using the Gazetteer series.

from the Journals of
prince haldemar of haaken
Lord Admiral of the Mightiest Empire
Captain of the Ever-Victorious
PRINCESS ARK
Imperial Explorer, etc., etc.

Amphimir 23, 1965: I woke up at the sound of my bat screeching under the veil of its cage. It must have been late, and the poor thing was getting hungry. Ever since the wild Schaerbeek Regatta, the bat had shown signs of agitation.

A soft knock at the door came next. It was Khufiri and her retinue; she had come to talk business. It was her opinion that the *Princess* had been so badly damaged that no magic remained in her hull. The ship's magic was not salvageable, certainly not within a reasonable period of time. She offered in the name of the king of Nithia a great amount of gold if the remains of the vessels could be left to her

temple. As for the crew, the temple knew of underground passages linking the Surface and Hollow Worlds. She was certain the king would provide a suitable escort.

I found that offer outrageous. I would rather entrust the *Princess* to the care of the gnomes rather than abandon her for a mere pecuniary reward. Khufiri acted as if she was offended.

I also noticed that my bat was staring at Khufiri. She noticed, too, and gazed back at the animal. The poor thing seemed to be paralyzed by terror. Khufiri then turned to me and added "You really should listen to me. This ship will do you no good—and neither will these demented gnomes."

She left, and I pondered on what she was up to. Who was she truly? Blasted be this Hollow World, for I could not use many of my magical talents to pry the truth from Khufiri's mind. I requested Myojo to come to my quarters. The Myoshiman warrior did not notice anything worth of suspicion so far, but he would keep a closer look. He seemed annoyed by the affair, but carried on.

Amphimir 24, 1965: After the gates of Le Nerviens' fortress swung closed behind the *Princess*, the gnomes led the ship down a series of colossal galleries. Two pilots *levitated* on metal disks ahead of the bow, leading the airship that carried the wounded *Princess*.

At first the stone galleries were tastefully carved into the rock, with bas-reliefs decorating much of their surfaces. Many openings could be seen among the sculptures, either windows or doors to gnomish dwellings. Exquisite stairways had been hewn in the walls, crisscrossing from bas-relief to door in an unending and mazelike pattern.

The galleries progressively turned to natural stone. Soon their surfaces became even smoother, totally unlike rugged caverns. After hours of meandering through





the dark galleries, our two gnomish pilots finally reached a giant cavern.

Le Gros Belouga, their first airship, was already there, tethered to a stone post at the far end of the cavern. *L'Epaulard* slowly descended and positioned the *Princess* softly on a large wooden scaffold. The rickety structure creaked, gave a bit, and settled. I heard a sigh of relief from the crew when the *Princess* finally stabilized. *L'Epaulard* then severed the cables and cast three anchors nearby.

Amphimir 25, 1965: The gnomes of Le Nerviens have so far acted professionally, as befitting their prestigious Trade House. Leopold—Leo, as his friends call him—led us to his Conceptual Leader, who in turn introduced us to the Theoretician Supervisor, who took us to the Hypothesician Comptroller, who escorted us over to the Principar Master, and so on. I stopped counting after 23 levels of hierarchy.

Eventually we reached the Canonic Convictor, apparently one of the highest ranking gnomes in Le Nerviens' trade counsel. The lady was quite charming and much was said about each other's cultures. Of course, the issue of the Heldannic occupation was covered in great length, and it was agreed that if our Glorious Empire of Alpathia could cause grief to the Heldannic Temple, then Le Nerviens would be honored and delighted to participate in our flight back to the Surface World. Several divisions of the most talented and skillful Le Nerviens engineers would be dispatched to the *Princess Ark* to begin complete repairs. The lady then took off to handle other immediate business as a tremendous explosion rocked the chamber (apparently a common occurrence here).

Amphimir 26, 1965: Hundreds of gnomes boarded the *Princess* with their tools and their plans. Trouble started at once. From that instant on, gnomes popped up just about everywhere on the ship, including the most unexpected places. Some of the crew resorted to fisticuffs when the gnomes invaded their privacy.

There was nothing one could have done to stop the horde. Hoping the *Princess* would not suffer at the gnomes' hands, I ordered the crew to disembark.

Amphimir 28, 1965: The crew and the officers celebrated the last day of the Alpathian year. I chose that time to climb the ledges of the cavern and meditate. From there I could observe the gnomes' work below and ponder their activities.

Alphamir 15, 1966: Myojo showed up later on with alarming news about Khufiri. He saw her discreetly speaking to one of the gnomes working on the *Princess*. She had often made a point before to show her distrust of the gnomes, and yet she did seem to maintain a connection with one of them. It also appeared like she did not want to be seen. That gnome hasn't showed up since his conversation with her, either. Worse, Myojo did not find a single worker on the *Princess* to be famil-

iar with that gnome's description. This report is not a good omen. I've ordered Myojo to keep a close watch on her.

Alphamir 19, 1966: It has now been over a year since we left Sundsvall. Some of the crew are homesick. Others show signs of despair when dealing with the gnomes. Soon it will be time to cast off, when the gnomes are done.

A late note: I've received a message from the Canonic Convictor mentioning some activity outside the fortress. A Heldannic brigade has arrived at the gate and has demanded to enter. Parley is in process. I've ordered the crew to gather its belongings and be ready to board.

Alphamir 20, 1966: Leo returned today from the *Princess*, happy and proud. The Canonic Convictor joined the engineers in a blessing ceremony. Although I could not see anything different about the *Princess*, the gnomes showed great pride and excitement.

It was not to last. As the beer flowed and the gnomes celebrated their accomplishment, a horn echoed in the far galleries. The knights had broken in. A message arrived that a traitor had alerted the knights to the *Princess's* presence, and later had allowed the knights to enter. Khufiri must have had something to do with this treachery.

The crew immediately began boarding and preparing the riggings. Meanwhile, the gnomes carefully began dismantling the huge scaffolding. The preparations took hours. I suspected that Le Nerviens would not risk a battle against the tyrants. Heldannic troops were probably marching down the cavernous hallways, straight for the *Princess*. There was no time to waste; we had to leave unseen. Rolf had probably revealed to his minions our ability to bend light with the Myoshiman artifact. I suspected his officers would use clerical magic to see the *Princess Ark* in any guise.

The Heldannic Knights came almost in sight of the cavern, but the gnomes cleverly filled the cavern with smoke as two *levitating* pilots beckoned the *Princess* to another exit. The flight was frightening. Steering a large vessel like the *Princess* down narrow and poorly lit galleries was a strenuous task. The ship responded well to my commands, however.

Suddenly, the two gnome pilots ducked to the sides while the *Princess* screamed down a gallery, shooting out from the side of Oostdok. At last, the sky was ours again!

I have commanded the *Princess* to gain altitude and leave at once. Returning to the empire is now vital.

Alphamir 21, 1966: It took little time to reach the skyshield and gain enough speed to breach into the void. The stern watch has spotted five smaller vessels pursuing us. They seem to be quicker than the *Princess* and are slowly gaining on us. Our only hope is to fly out the arctic gate to the Surface World. The flight path has to be calculated with great accuracy; if we

err so much as a few degrees off course, the *Princess* will crash just as it did on its way in.

Alphamir 22, 1966: Our deciphering of the celestial forces is now complete. Talasar cast a *find the path* spell that greatly increased our chance of escape. We had to fly through a field of floating rocks that delayed our pursuers. By chance, none of the rocks hit the *Princess*. As before, she seemed to be able to avoid the threatening boulders on her own. Soon thereafter, we reached the anti-magic region that blocked the polar gate. All magic progressively died out aboard, and the *Princess* followed her course based on a purely ballistic trajectory. Our pursuers halted near the anti-magic area.

Alphamir 23, 1966: Fate was on our side, for we have crossed back out into open space. The *Princess* came terribly close to falling back through the skyshield, as the attraction of the planet below was frighteningly strong near the gate. But as the *Princess's* bow pointed dangerously low, large panels opened from the sides of the hull and revealed two large oblong tubes. Without warning, flames shot out to the rear of each tube. The tubes exerted a force that kept the *Princess* level just long enough to exit the anti-magic area. Sufficient magic was restored just in time to resume normal flight.

There is no doubt that the gnomes installed this device. What else have they done to this ship? After examination, I conclude that the contraption was devised by an amazingly skillful alchemist, for no magic was used here. A very clever system of pendulums caused the panels to open and the tubes to be aimed and fired at the proper angle. Unfortunately, the tubes are now empty. Thank Razud nothing was in the *Princess's* path. A collision in the airless void would have been disastrous.

I hope to recover samples of the substance remaining in the tubes. Perhaps my skills in alchemy will allow me to identify it. The tubes have meanwhile pulled back into their recesses, and the panels have snapped shut.

Our new course is set to Sundsvall.

Alphamir 24, 1966: "Ahoy, the *princess*!" The guttural shout came loud and clear "In the name of the Heldannic Temple, heave to and surrender your weapons!"

The warning came soon after we exited the gate. The voice seemed to come from every point of the *Princess*. A large war galley was then sighted, coming straight at us from the dark. We were too low above the skyshield, and there was no time to maneuver. It was an ambush. The knights knew their business.

The shouted voice seemed familiar. Yes, it was him again! Herr Rolf could soon be seen standing near the helm with a grin on his face. The boltmen prepared for a last stand; they knew I would not surrender to these fiends. The crew braced for a boarding.

Suddenly, a trapdoor popped open near

the bow of the *Princess*. At first nothing came out except a faint squeaky noise. The sound of a ratchet followed, and a small platform appeared. It was surmounted by a fat, black tube with cranks and levers. And behind it sat Leo!

"Oh, greetings!" he said. "You wouldn't have a spare mallet, would you? I still have a problem with—" Noticing the crew, he turned around and gawked at the approaching warship. Scrambling with the cranks and levers, he pointed the tube at the galley and yanked a handle. A pulsating hum grew from the quivering contraption, with ominous hisses. Everyone ducked for cover.

A deafening explosion rocked the *Princess* as a black, billowing cloud obscured the deck. The smoke cleared slowly, revealing a scene of horror and confusion. Leo, now all sooty and smoking, still sat on his platform, holding the handle (which had broken free) and scratching his head. The tube was gone.

Ahead of the *Princess*, the Heldannic galley was reduced to little more than a wreck. Its crew stunned, it drifted on its course and merely bumped into the *Princess*. Xerdon seized the initiative and boarded the galley.

A raging battle took place between the heavily armored knights and the swift boltmen. I, for my part, had a personal account to settle. It took little magic to enter the galley and locate Herr Rolf in a small chapel at the galley's stern. Part of the altar had been ripped off its base. I felt a waning power fizzle from the unholy debris.

"You!" he said. "You shall pay for this!" In a fit of blind rage, Rolf seized a two-handed sword and took a wild swing. His blade crushed through a heavy chest, barely missing me. He lifted his weapon, preparing for another mighty blow—but I was ready for him. My word would be far quicker. How great the anticipation of arcane strands of webbing shooting forth from my fingers! Oh, what rapture! Revenge at last!

But alas! Fate again decided otherwise. Khufiri unexpectedly appeared at the door and struck a wicked blow at Rolf's back. The knight stared blankly, opened his mouth, and fell forward. The back of his armor was lacerated as if giant claws had struck him.

Khufiri displayed an evil grin, and she had death in her eyes as she laughed. "You are so easily fooled, wizard!" she hissed. "One does not rid himself so easily of my kind. I searched a long time for you. Neither the barriers of the stars nor those of the Hollow World can stop me. Now, gaze upon me, and see who I truly am!"

Khufiri's body began to warp and shake. Slowly it grew and expanded to the ceiling. The planks burst outward as the creature developed fully. In horror I realized what had happened. Khufiri was none other than the Oceanian dragon of darkness that had tormented us so long ago.

"You shall not be granted revenge, Halde-mar." The dragon now towered above the war galley. All combat ceased immediately on the deck. "Synn is my name. You will learn to hate it for the rest of your miserable life." She picked up Rolf's unconscious body and added "You will never have this. His soul is now mine." Synn gazed a moment at the princess and snarled, "You can keep your abomination, wizard. It will not help for what is yet to happen!"

The night dragon breathed a cloud of utter darkness and disappeared. There was no sign of Myojo. Where was he?

Alphamir 25, 1966: I write this down from a hazy memory of the day's events. Moments after Synn's strange departure, the sun rose from the east of our world, illuminating the battle scene in a grand display of celestial majesty. At the sight of Rolf's kidnapping, the few remaining knights had yielded. It took hours to transfer all worthy spoils of war off the Heldannic galley. These knights must have been plundering some hapless civilization somewhere in the void. We seized strange coins and items I've never seen before.

Supplies and captives were brought aboard the *Princess*. The Heldannic wreck was then set ablaze and left behind. The flames were rapidly consuming the ship's remaining envelope of air. As the *Princess* resumed her course toward Sundsvall, we watched the fiery hulk plummet toward the skyshield and disappear into the clouds below.

Within hours of our departure, however, chaos seemed to have overtaken the starry vault. Whirling clouds of luminous gases surrounded the *Princess*. Flashes and bolts of magical energy raged everywhere. Somewhere in the distance I heard the voice of Khufiri—Synn. At first it was a mere giggle, but soon it turned into a nagging laughter. The storm built up to a demented maelstrom of energy. In the back of my mind, I could hear Synn's mocking voice: "For you, death is too sweet. So then, wizard, learn to deal with my reality!" There was a roar, and then oblivion.

It was hard to tell how long our unconsciousness lasted. The entire crew and myself had passed out. We apparently did not move from our previous position, which at first led me to believe that little time had gone by.

Then the frightening truth came forth. There, standing at the bow of the *Princess*, was an old lady. Her face was familiar. She rose upon my awakening and said, "Halde-mar, why did you abandon me? Why didn't you return? I trusted you. I gazed at the red skies of Myoshima, praying for your return. Day after day, I hoped and cried. But never did the *Princess* reappear to take me back. I endured thirty-four years of misery in Myoshiman dungeons. And it is only now that I am old and tired that a creature of darkness finally returns me to you. Why, Haldemar?"

To be continued...

If you have any comments regarding this column or the D&D game's Known World as designed in the Gazetteers, please send your inquiries to: Bruce A. Heard, D&D Column, TSR, Inc. P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. We cannot guarantee that all letters will get answers, but they always get our attention,

The Night Dragon

Night Dragons are particularly chaotic dragons that have become the undead servants of Immortals in the Sphere of Entropy. Night Dragons are sometimes sent to the prime material plane to accomplish a mission for their masters. For example, after the destruction of Oceania, Synn (a greater dragon) was allowed to remain and guard an ancient secret in her lair. She looks like the shadow of a dragon, totally black, except for her eyes that glow slightly. Very faint shimmering of dark blue or purple reveal some of Synn's physical features, such as scales and muscles. Night dragons are solid on the prime material plane.

Night dragons are masters of guile and treachery. They feed off the sorrow they inflict upon their victims. They torment and curse a foe rather than destroy it. Physical combat is not viewed as a means of achieving their goals; lies are far more acceptable.

The breath of a night dragon causes a billowing cloud of absolute darkness. Any living being in the area of effect must Save vs. Breath Weapon or fall unconscious. The darkness dissipates in 1d6 turns. The breath cannot be used in windy areas.

Night dragons have the ability to enter the plane of entropy through any area of absolute darkness. In most cases, the dragon uses its breath to cause *darkness*, then disappear into the other plane. Likewise, it may reappear only from a dark spot.

A greater dragon may wrap its wings around an unconscious foe, which causes the victim's soul to be trapped in the plane of entropy. The body is either destroyed or, more likely, possessed by the dragon. It retains its intellect and memories, and becomes a fanatic follower of the dragon. Minor foes often are transformed into bats, which are then used as spies. A night dragon maintains a telepathic link with its followers that allows it to see and hear through them (except in the Hollow World).

Greater dragons like Synn are granted one *wish* per century they spend on the prime material plane, in addition to their spells. Night dragons use wizard spells.

Lesser dragon spells: four 1st level, four 2nd level,

Greater dragon spells: five 1st level, five 2nd level, four 3rd level, three 4th level, two 5th level.

Synn, as an example of this species, often has the following spells: *charm per-*

son (× 2), read languages, shield, ventriloquism, continual darkness, detect invisible, ESP, invisibility, phantasmal force, clairvoyance, dispel magic, haste, protection from good 10' radius, curse, polymorph self wizard eye, magic jar, teleport.

A lesser dragon inflicts 3d10 hp damage with a bite, and 1d6 + 1 hp damage with its claws. A greater dragon inflicts 4d8 +8 hp damage with its bite, and 1d12 +2 hp with its claws. A successful blow from any night dragon is similar to the touch of a ghoul, producing a Save vs. Paralysis.

Night dragons are particularly vulnerable to light and spells affecting undead. A light spell causes 1d10 hp damage to the monster. A *raise dead* will destroy a lesser dragon, or inflict 3d10 hp damage on a greater dragon. Direct sunlight from the Outer World sun will destroy any of these dragons. Both dragons require at least + 1 magical weapons to be hit.

A cleric can turn a lesser dragon as a vampire, and a greater dragon as a nightshade (see the D&D Companion Set, *Player's Companion*, page 11). These dragons cannot be turned within 10 miles of their lairs or on the plane of entropy.

Letters

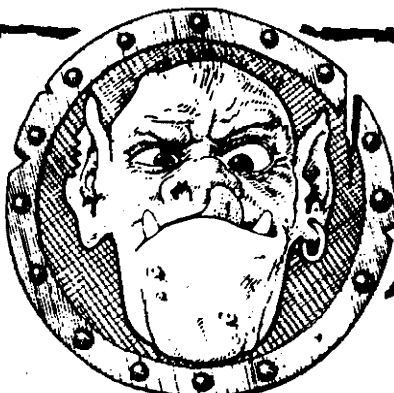
I think your magazine is fantastic! I would be delighted if you included an article in your magazine about the kingdoms of Ostland and Vestland.

Have you had a look at GAZ7 The Northern Reaches? That gazetteer does include a great deal of information on these two regions and Soderfjord.

DRAGON® Magazine should have more information regarding the D&D game. There seems to be more about the AD&D game than the D&D game.

Also, in the D&D Known World, there are several countries with no information about them. Will there ever be in-depth descriptions in Gazetteer-style books about these places?

One last thing, Thyatis is for fighters, Glantri for magic-users, etc. What about a place for thieves or clerics?



ORCS NEST

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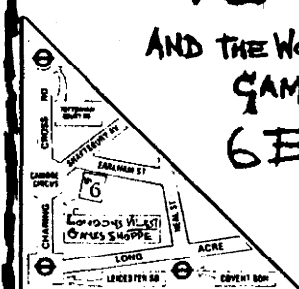
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I agree wholeheartedly with your first suggestion! The D&D line has been doing quite well these past years and is regaining its popularity among gamers. Now it is up to you to get the magazine's writer's guidelines; send an SASE to: Writer's Guidelines, DRAGON Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. Then you can submit more articles on the D&D game and the Known World.

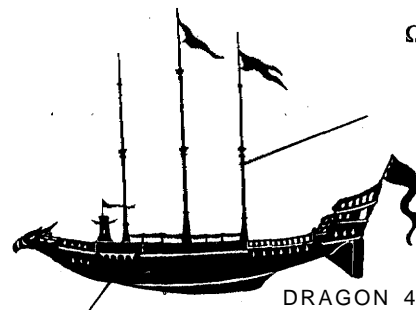
GAZ13 The Shadow Elves was published recently GAZ14 The Atruaghin Clans will be out in 1991.

There are no nations in the Known World devoted in particular to thieves or

clerics—so far. Thieves would do quite well in the Emirates of Ylaruam. Unfortunately for clerics, there are just too many different philosophies to realistically round them up within one single nation.

In one of the latest voyages of the *Princess Ark*, the ship flew into space and traveled to the second moon. Will this moon ever be mapped? I would also like to have the abilities of the rakasta.

Thanks. There are no plans at the moment to map out Myoshima (any volunteers out there?). You will find the complete description of the rakasta in the D&D Creature Catalog, page 44. I am repeating their game statistics here in short format for your convenience: AC 6; HD 2 + 1; MV 90' (30'); #AT 2 claws, 1 bite; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d4; #APP 0 (3d10 + 1d8 sabre-tooth tigers); Save F2; ML 9; TT M; AL N; XP 25 (Intelligence 12).

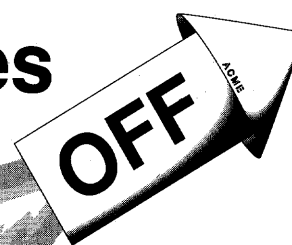


Night Dragon

	Lesser *	Greater *
Armor Class	0	- 5
Hit Dice	9****	20 *****
Move	90' (30')	150' (50')
Flying	240' (80')	360' (120')
Attacks	Up to 7	Up to 7
Breath Cloud	50' x 40' x 30'	50' x 50' x 30'
Breath Effect	Darkness	Darkness
# Appearing	1-4 (1-4)	1 (1)
Save As	Fighter 9	Fighter 36
Morale	9	11
Treasure Type	H	H x 2, I
Alignment	Chaotic	Chaotic
XP Value	4,400	18,500

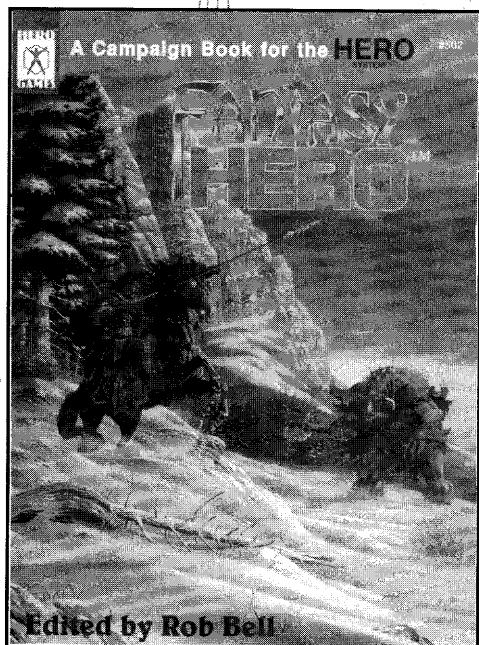
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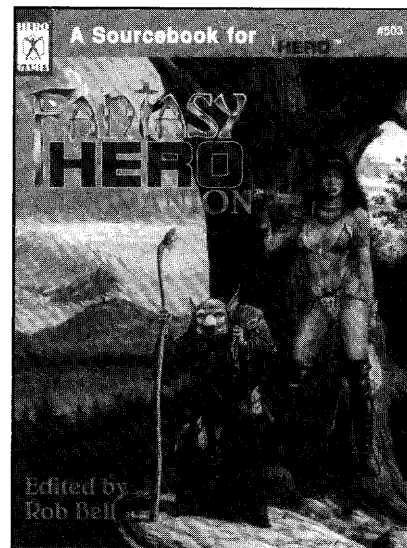
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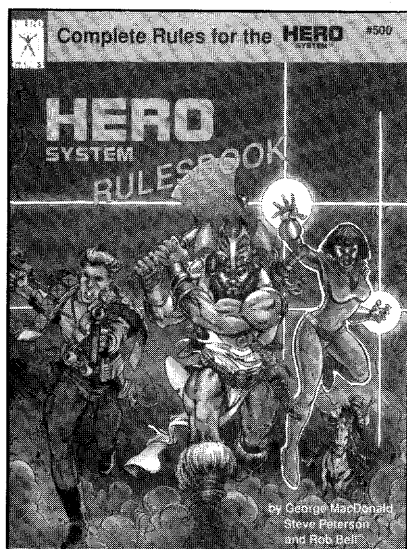
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Secret of the
Silver Blades (SSI)

Silver blades and Roman swords

Before we delve into this issue's column, we wish to answer a polite letter received from a gamer in Concord, Mass., who takes exception to the manner in which we present our reviews. The basic misconception within the letter is that we do not have a right to present our opinions within this column. Unfortunately, the letter writer does not seem to comprehend the fact that everyone has opinions. We are luckier than most in that we are able to offer our opinions to thousands of readers through the print media. Our game opinions are based on careers that span more than a decade of successful computer software reviewing and writing.

Columnists are not reporters. The latter prepare facts for dissemination. Columnists, likewise, prepare facts, but season their work with opinion. They are paid to present work that offers additional insights into a topic, rather than simply report what has been told to them. Columnists write because

their opinions are considered to hold merit, based on expertise.

We report on software and video games from the aspect of the consumer. We do not expound on code, the technical aspects of disk duplication, or on the mechanics of packaging. We look at games from the viewpoints of gamers. If it's fun for us, we figure it'll be fun for others.

Therefore, we do find games like *Ultima*, *Mines of Titan*, *Wizardry V* and SSI's AD&D® offerings are fully worth their five-star ratings. They are enjoyable, in our *opinion*. Other entertainment magazine columnists may differ with our findings. Gamers may disagree with our findings. That's life!

Yes, we have taken up the banner of rewarding intelligent copy protection and castigating unfair copy protection in our reviews. We strongly feel that copy protection is a critically important element of a game, one that should not interfere with its enjoyment.

If we find *Keef the Thief* entertaining but believe its copy-protection method dumps it into the trash bin, at least we have stated our opinion up front. A consumer who purchases the game and understands our reticence in giving it a good rating knows beforehand that he will have to put up with a copy protection method we consider poor in its application.

Reviews

Computer games' ratings

X	Not recommended
*	Poor
**	Fair
***	Good
****	Excellent
*****	Superb

Strategic Simulations, Inc.

675 Almanor Avenue, Suite 201
Sunnyvale CA 94086
(408) 737-6800

Secret of the Silver Blades

PC/MS-DOS version (EGA) \$49.95

Secret of the Silver Blades is a perfect adventure for those who enjoy cartography; this adventure offers ruins, dungeons, crevasses, castles, and mines that all require astute mapping skills.

The basic premise is that, as successful adventurers who have completed *Curse of the Azure Bonds*, you have grown tired of peace and yearn for a new adventure. Having completed *Curse*, we doubt anyone could really be tired of peace. Then, too, yearning for new adventure in the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ setting seems to be a needless concern. By simply stepping outside your tavern or galloping for a league or two, adventure will find you. We don't feel SSI gave enough thought as to *how* the adventurers should enter this new quest and left far too much to luck in, introducing you to *Secret*. The preamble is somewhat contrived and forced, but the game's designers had to get you into the scenario and believed this opening was suitable.

You find yourself whisked away, without warning, to a walled town in a valley surrounded by the DragonSpine Mountains and a glacier. At the top of the glacier rests a castle, and the entire chill of the area leaves you disquieted. It should, as this castle belongs to the Dreadlord and his armies. If you don't halt the Dreadlord's nasties from spilling out of the mines near the town of New Verdigris, the entire Forgotten Realms will be under siege by these horrid creatures and the Dreadlord's power.

More background is in order. The original mining town of Verdigris was founded by two brothers, Oswulf and Eldamar. The latter became the Dreadlord during his experimentation with immortality, during which he turned himself into a lich. Afraid that Oswulf would try to kill him, Eldamar called upon dark creatures to aid him, and they overran Verdigris.

Oswulf knew he had to overcome his lich brother, but he was unable to do so. He formed a group known as the Silver Blades, whose mages and clerics cast a spell that formed the glacier. The glacier encased the entire valley, trapping the lich and his beasts. Oswulf became a guard spirit at the gates of the castle, to prevent his brother from escaping.

Unfortunately, not all of the evil ones were caught in the glacier. Those who did not succumb formed the Black Circle and, a decade and a half ago, researched a spell that began to melt the glacier. The old Verdigris mines became visible as the ice shrank. Miners reworked the shafts for valuable gems. New Verdigris was built and became a boom town—until miners broke into the lower levels of the

Dreadlord's castle. The influx of fresh air awoke the beasts that had been at rest, and the mines are again infested with evil.

You're going up against some high-level folk in *Secret* (many 8th level and above), so you might want to create new characters rather than use ones from previous SSI AD&D adventures. Your foes, mainly from a crowd known as the Black Circle, possess magical weapons, armor, and other items. Thankfully, SSI has incorporated a character-creation process that produces some pretty potent folk. If you choose this route for character creation, the mayor of New Verdigris and the miners will chip in to provide you with some decent armor and weaponry at the start of the game. We strongly advise that you read the tips on page 8 of the *Adventurers' Journal* that comes with the game. The suggested sample party #2 works well.

The interface remains consistent with previous SSI AD&D offerings. The 3-D main screen shows your surroundings. An area view, when requested, offers an overhead view of your location and replaces the 3-D view. In the upper right window are the names of your characters and their order. Messages appear at the bottom of the screen above the command line.

Within the town of New Verdigris is a great pub for rumors, an armory that buys and sells weaponry, a Hall of Training for character advancement, a vault for storing your goodies while you're away on adventure, and a temple for healing and restoring life. You'll also find the shop of Marcus, who sells some magical items. Marcus is someone you'll not want to forget! He certainly doesn't forget you.

Remember the Fire Knives from *Curse*? Well, they're back, and they'll hound you even in the town. That is, until you cut off the source of their information.

The process of obtaining additional information throughout the quest uses specific journal entries found in the *Adventurers' Journal*. This information not only includes tips about the opposition, but also extremely helpful maps.

Before too long, you'll find yourself in the mines, the dungeons, the crevasses, and the castle itself. Lots of adventuring can be undertaken in *Secrets*, which offers an enormously high play value for your dollars. This game seems to move faster than previous AD&D releases, probably the result of newly optimized code. The colors are brilliant in EGA mode, and the AdLib sound enhances play.

In spite of a weak opening premise, *Secret* offers gamers lots of action as you seek to destroy the Dreadlord. This is yet another SSI AD&D adventure that should become part of your software library. This game requires a minimum of 512K RAM with CGA or EGA graphics capabilities. Tandy 16-color mode requires 640K of RAM. Both the C/MS and AdLib sound boards are supported.

Electronic Arts

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

Centurion: Defender of Rome

PC/MS-DOS (EGA) version \$49.95

Centurion is a lively and interesting conqueror game that finds you in the position of building Rome into an empire. Success is not guaranteed, as you confront everything from barbaric hordes, enemy galleons, rebellious citizenry, and losses at the Colosseum.

The game is menu driven. Your start with one legion of 4,200 infantrymen; your rank is that of Officer. Success in the game is achieved by gaining provinces through negotiation or war. Whenever you strengthen a treaty, your reputation improves. Winning chariot races and holding gladiatorial events increases your popularity. However, in order to accomplish the latter, you've got to build an amphitheater—a tough edifice to obtain as you are low on money (measured in talents). You must offset the demand of Roman citizens for gladiator games with the need for another legion.

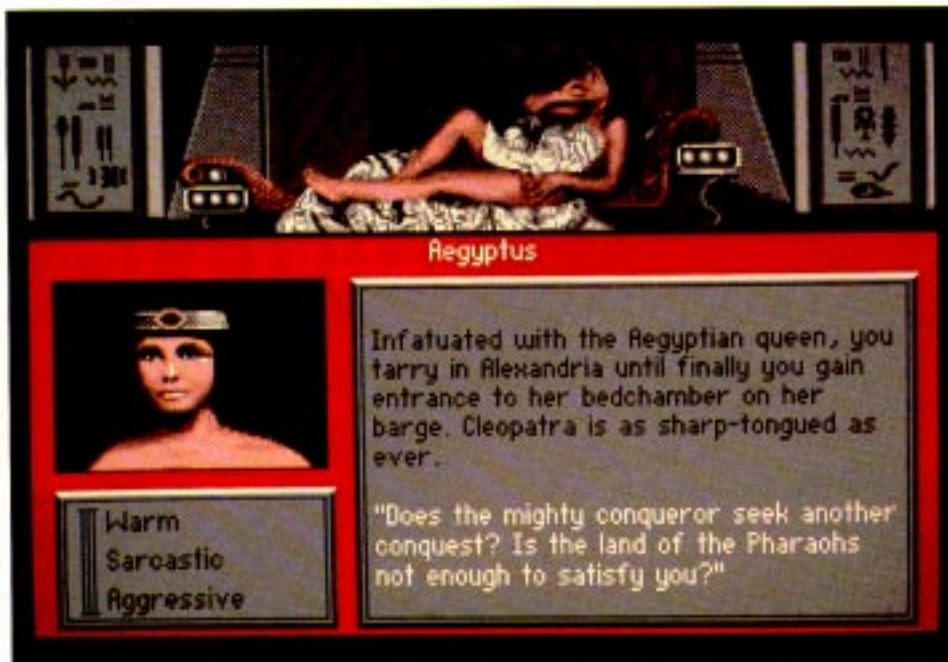
Should enemy confrontation be required, you select the type of offense you wish your legion to present. Battle tactics are detailed in the user's manual. Once you've decided on the offense, a fully animated battle sequence is shown on-screen, with your Roman legion squaring off against the enemy troops. You can change a unit's orders during battle, and can order your unit to melee whenever you wish.

The drawback to this part of the game is that you can't tell what sort of units you are going to face until you've selected your offense. In most battle games, you usually have a good idea as to what sort of forces and numbers the enemy has. Not here; you'll adjust your orders a number of times during battle as the enemy assault plan unfolds before you.

The animated battle sequences are presented quite well. If an enemy cavalry unit goes down before your troops, you'll watch horse and rider fall and a white flag issue forth. Panicked units retreat from the battlefield, chased by the winning side. A message arrives on-screen at the battle's end, informing you of the winner and each side's casualties.

Chariot racing is a howl. Whip your own horses too quickly, especially when in a turn, and you'll be dumped unceremoniously on the track. Litter bearers then sprint onto the track to get your remains—or your money.

The gladiator portion of the game was a disappointment. Although every screen of *Centurion* is alive with color, the animation in this section is burdensome and extremely slow. When you consider there are only two elements on the screen simultaneously (your champion and your opponent), you'd expect near-instantaneous



Centurion: Defender of Rome (Electronic Arts)

action in conjunction with your keyboard command. After you enter your command key, three or four seconds pass before the action is carried out on-screen. Impatience leads to multiple key presses that, in turn, result in multiple unwanted actions. We wondered how the gladiator show could have been left in a game whose other parts are so well programmed.

Centurion is a lot of fun to play. If Electronic Arts could drastically improve the speed of the gladiator section and improve the prebattle planning option, it would have a five-star offering on their hands. As it currently stands, the game is certainly worth your time to demo at your favorite software retailer. This game requires 640K of RAM for EGA, mouse, and support for AdLib and Roland sound boards.

Mindcraft Software, Inc.

2341 205th Street, Suite 102
Torrance CA 90501
(213) 320-5215

The Keys to Maramon

PC/MS-DOS (EGA) version *** \$34.95

Mindcraft is the company that created *The Magic Candle*. *The Keys to Maramon*, however, is a disappointingly far cry from that original and exciting adventure game. Not only does the story behind the game stretch a gamer's credulity, but the adventures within are nothing more than glorified arcade action. After reading the 11-page setup story, our response was: Why would anyone bother to rescue Maramon?

As an arcade game, *Keys* holds up well. The copywriters describe this as a full role-playing game on the game's box. We feel that quite a bit of literary license is taken with that statement.

The *Keys to Maramon* is fun to play for a while, but the game does not present an

original adventure and becomes an exercise in how quickly you can coordinate your character on-screen so you can use the space bar to slay a nasty. In our opinion, *Keys* doesn't hold a candle to Mindcraft's original adventure and should not be considered as a sequel to it. This game requires a PC/MS-DOS computer with 384K of memory, with support for CGA, EGA, and Tandy 16 color boards. A joy stick is optional; a mouse is not supported. The package includes both 5.25" and 3.5" disks. The game is not copy protected.

NEC Technologies Inc.

1255 Michael Drive
Wood Dale IL 60191-1094
(708) 860-9500

Dungeon Explorer

NEC TurboGraphx-16 version ***** \$61.99

NEC has combined the action of an arcade game with an action-packed role-playing game. *Dungeon Explorer* allows as many as five gamers to become different characters, all in search of the Ora stone, hidden by an evil king.

You can be a fighter, thief, warlock, witch, bard, bishop, elf, or knome. Each character has strength, intelligence, attack, and agility statistics. In addition, each character also has two different forms of magic, white and black.

During the adventure, characters may find potions that offer white or black magic skills. Each character has a different white or black magic level that ranges from shielding and healing to increasing damage with attacks and the ability to vaporize enemies. The type and power of magic your character possesses depends on what character has been selected. The game is nicely balanced so that a fighter can kill things quickly with his axe but is rather weak in the magic skills area. A

bishop, however, is a powerhouse in magic but rather inept as a fighter.

Along the way, you'll encounter non-player characters (NPCs) from whom you can learn important information, such as the dungeons that must be conquered to succeed. Should you successfully traverse these dungeons, evil bosses will eventually try to destroy your characters. If these nasties are defeated, you can retrieve tokens that advance you in levels, increasing your character's hit points and abilities.

This game offers players several lives to complete the adventure. If a character runs out of lives, a password is shown at the bottom of the screen to allow players to continue with their levels and abilities intact.

Dungeon Explorer is a great expanded version of the game *Gauntlet*. It amplifies character abilities and magic while still allowing players the freedom to search regions without requiring previous dungeon victories. If you're a *Gauntlet* or role-playing fanatic, *Dungeon Explorer* is for you.

Sega of America

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The Revenge of Shinobi

Sega Genesis version ***** \$49.95

The Revenge of Shinobi is a masterpiece of smooth animation, colorful back-grounds, and what certainly sounds like digitized music. This offering comes extremely close in presentation to an actual coin-op arcade game.

The player becomes Musashi, a master ninja. His sensei has been killed, and the lovely Naoko was kidnapped—all by an evil enemy, the Neo Zeed. Musashi has sworn not to rest until he defeats the Neo Zeed. This quest takes the player from Japan to New York.

You select the number of shurikens your character will use in the game. The control settings can also be altered to determine what actions three buttons manage for the on-screen character: jump, attack, or perform ninjitsu magic.

Once options are selected, the game begins. The game is divided into eight districts, each of which has three stages. At the close of every third stage, you must conquer an enemy boss in order to continue play. Between the start of the game and the downfall of the Neo Zeed are many enemies and obstacles to be overcome. The player has a supply of shurikens that can be thrown in order to destroy the enemy. If the enemy comes in close, you can attempt to kick, or attack with your daggers.

Musashi can also jump over an enemy, sometimes accomplishing a double somersault if you hit the jump button a second time while Mushashi is at the apex of his

first leap. If the player accomplishes this second difficult jump in air, you can press the attack button. This releases eight shurikens that spread out and nearly always injure anything in their paths. Musashi can also use ninja magic once per life.

During the battle, Musashi can be injured from sword fights, shurikens, bombs, cannon, machine-gun fire and attacking dogs. There are several ways to both regain energy and extra lives. When your score reaches 100,000, Musashi's life bar regains some lost strength. Two extra lives are rewarded on completion of a scene. When 50,000 points are reached, an extra life is also awarded. An extra life is given to Musashi every 100,000 points after that.

Another way to regain strength or life is to break open crates to gain access to their contents. Some crates have hearts that give you a potion of full strength, which will return your character's life meter to full. Picking up ninjitsu from a crate allows the player to use ninja magic in the same life, even if it was already used once. But not all crates are helpful to Musashi. Some contain bombs that will either detonate when he touches them or when their time runs out.

Revenge of Shinobi is an impressive video game. The graphics and music are outstanding. When enemies die, a fireball rises from that spot; the animation for this effect is very realistic. And the music is terrific. A single drum beat can be heard upon your character's death, and the soundtrack for each scene is awesome. Video gamers won't be disappointed with the money spent for this game. The game is a great way to show off your Genesis video game system and to show how it holds its own against computer games running on the Atari ST or Amiga. A great deal of development and testing time must have been spent on this game to offer such high play value. Sega deserves a round of applause.

News and new products—computer games

Accolade (408-985-1700) has set up a telephone hot line for its customers: (900) 990-HINT. This number initially provides customers with hints for Accolade's two new animated graphic adventures, *Les Manley In: Search for the King* and *Altered Destiny*. Using the buttons on a touch telephone, you can respond to an operator's recorded inquiries. Within a few seconds, you'll hear hints and tips specifically related to the area of the game you have questions about. Callers are charged 85 cents for the first minute on the line and 60 cents for each additional minute. Be certain you obtain permission from your parents first before making your call! If you have a modem, you can access Accolade's bulletin board at: (408) 296-8800.



The Lord of the Rings (Interplay)

Interplay Productions (714-545-9001) has released *The Lord of the Rings, Volume I*, for PC/MS-DOS computers. Based on the classic Tolkien Middle-earth saga, this game combines the best elements of graphic adventures and role-playing. It uses full-screen, top-down, VGA graphics, digitized sound, a point-and-click icon interface, an offline paragraph system, and four-directional scrolling to maneuver players through the huge, seven-map world of Middle-earth. Within each map area, players will be able to go on a series of mini-quests and adventures in which they can fully explore Middle-earth. Progression from one map area to the next is based on completion of tasks that will roughly parallel the main story line as established by Tolkien. Combat with orcs, wargs, Dark Riders, and other Tolkien monsters is always an option. Problem solving is handled by a skill-based system that compares skill levels to the complexity of the task at hand. For example, Lockpick will be necessary to open locked chests. The price of this fantasy role-playing adventure is \$54.95. An Amiga version should be available in December.

Strategic Simulations, Inc. (408-737-6800) has published *The Secret of the Silver Blades Cluebook*. Selling for \$12.95, this is a complete guide with highly detailed maps for the entire game. There are exact maps of every major location in the game, with all major encounters located and described. All major magical treasures are located and described, and SSI has included a checklist so you won't miss anything. Included are specific tactics on how



Search For the King (Accolade)

to defeat even the most challenging foes. On a personal note, we feel the price is too high for the clue book; it should have been cut in half!

Clue corner

Champions of Krynn (SSI)

1. Try not to create an elf character if at all possible. It's not worth it if your 8th-level elfen Cleric/Mage dies and, since you can't resurrect him, you have to make another character.

2. To gain experience, you can fight the minotaurs and red dragons that you meet in random encounters southeast of Kern. Simply enter the water over and over again. You will discover various hostile creatures and, with a bit of luck, the aforementioned red dragons and minotaurs.

3. If you have a ranger, and he attains the maximum level before anyone else in your party, and you are fighting random encounters for their experience, don't use the ranger until you are doing something the commandant ordered you to do.

Darin Woolpert
Walnut Creek CA

1. Don't waste time on attempts to clone the + 5 long sword found in the tomb of Sir Dargaard; it's a fake and doesn't even register as magical when a Detect Magic spell is cast.

2. The guide presented at Gargath can be trusted; the one in Jekek definitely can't.

3. There is a secret door at the northeast corner of the first level of the keep at Gargath. This permits the party to leave Gargath in order to train or resupply at the outpost and then return to the keep without having to go through Gargath City again.

James Gilly
U.S.S. Simon Lake (AS-33)

DragonStrike (SSI)

1. You'll note that some dragons are immune to different breath weapons. Here's one to keep track of: The white dragon scoffs at silver dragons who attempt a cone of frost breath weapon against it.

2. Never give up the Arrow of Enemy Detection when advancing to higher orders. Surrender healing ointments instead, unless you enjoy playing impossible-to-win games.

3. If you are attacking an enemy near the ground, try a paralyzation breath weapon for best effect.

The Lessers

Thanks for joining us this issue. Don't forget two important tasks: vote for your favorite game of the year for The Beastie Award, and mail in your game hints to rescue others from adventuring quagmires. Send both to: The Lessers, 179 Pebble Place, San Ramon CA 94583, U.S.A. Until next issue, game on!

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Magic Gone Haywire

Continued from page 30

Table 5: Magical Rod, Wand, and Staff Quirks

Roll	Result
01-04	Wand is inefficient; double the number of charges expended for each use.
05-07	Wand has an extra command word that allows it to shrink to half its normal size or return to its normal size.
08-13	Wand is made of metal and is magnetic; consequently, the wand is attracted to any large concentration of metal of at least 300-gp weight.
14-18	Wand glows a random color (as per faerie fire) whenever its powers are utilized.
19-22	Wand radiates nondetection and registers negatively to any attempt to detect magic.
23-25	Wand does 1 hp damage to its wielder each time that the wand's powers are used.
26-30	Wand is easily broken; the wand must make ail saving throws at -2 to the roll.
31-34	Somatic gestures, as well as a command word, are necessary for activating the wand's powers. The gestures take 1d4 +4 segments. If the gestures cannot be performed (i.e., the wielder's arms are tied), the wand will not work.
35-39	Wand will not work if the wielder's hand is covered, gloved, or gauntleted.
40-44	Wand is unstable; it fizzles out and does nothing 10% of the time that is activated.
45-50	Wand is unaffected by fire, magical or normal.
51-52	Wand is invisible to everyone except its user.
53-55	Wand's wielder must concentrate for one round when speaking the command word in order to activate the wand's powers.
56-60	Wand is unaffected by acid.
61-63	Wand cannot be snapped or broken by any creature of less than 18/50 strength. This also applies to any retributive strike made by another wand, staff, or rod
64-68	Wand will not work if the wielder is wearing metal armor of any kind (including elven chain mail).
69-71	Wand has a tendency to overload. It can be used up to three times in a 24-hour period. Any uses beyond that limit cause the wand to short itself out for 24 hours, and the charges activated are lost.
72-74	Wand is extremely powerful; any saves against its effects are at -2 to the die roll.
75-79	Wand is unable to function in environments colder than freezing.
80-83	Wand is unable to function in environments warmer than normal human body temperature.
84-86	Wand will not function underwater.
87-89	Wand will activate whenever the command word is spoken by anyone within 30', whether it is being held or not
90-93	Wand can be used as a weapon (if it is not already one). It has a +1 bonus with respect to hitting creatures unharmed by normal weapons, but has no actual bonus to hit or on damage. A wand does damage as a jo stick; a rod does damage as a club; and a staff does damage as a quarterstaff.
94-96	If all of the wand's charges are used, the wand explodes in a fiery blast. The blast has a radius of 15' and does 5d4 hp damage to anyone therein. Those within 5' of the wand receive no saving throw; others may save vs. breath weapons for half damage
97-99	Wand is capable of being placed on automatic mode; every round, it will perform one function as designated by the wielder, using the normal amount of charges, until it is taken off automatic mode. During this time, the wielder is able to cast short (1-3 segment) spells, or melee with a -1 penalty to hit.
00	Wand is intelligent; roll on the sword intelligence table and disregard any result of no intelligence. The wand also has an ego; its personality can be determined using pages 114-115 of the AD&D 2nd Edition DMG. Though the wand will tell its owner of the powers it offers, it will never disclose the number of charges it possesses. Note that an intelligent wand will <i>never</i> willingly use its last few charges!

Table 6: Miscellaneous Magical Item Quirks

Roll	Result
01-03	Item has a habit of burying itself in any sack, backpack, or container in which it is carried. If other items are in the container, 1d3 rounds are necessary for someone to find and retrieve the item.
04-07	Item works normally, but it appears dirty and ready to fall apart. For example, a <i>cloak of protection</i> +1 might be moth-eaten and stained, but still functional.
08-11	Item attunes itself to one owner at a time; if it is removed from its owner, or if another person tries to use the device, it goes dormant for 1d4 days as it grows accustomed to its new owner.
12-16	Item has the annoying habit of buzzing when it is used. The buzzing is audible to anyone within 60', and it is impossible to surprise anyone while the device is buzzing.
17-20	Item glows with a soft light (as per <i>faerie fire</i>) when it is used.
21-24	Item is durable and makes any necessary saving throws at +2 to the die roll.
25-29	Item will not function if user wears any kind of head adornment (including a hood).
30-33	Item will not function underground.
34-36	Item will not function at night.
37-38	Item will not function during the day.
39-43	Item is unaffected by blows of any kind, unless the forces are of giant strength (19) or greater.
44-48	Item has a finite number of uses; it will be found with 2d20 charges remaining. Whether or not the item can be recharged is up to the DM.
49-51	Item works erratically; it functions normally 70% of the time, fails 20% of the time, and acts as a <i>wand of wonder</i> 10% of the time.
52-55	Item is magically buoyant and tends to <i>levitate</i> upward at the rate of 5' per minute unless held or tied down

Table 6: Miscellaneous Magical Item Quirks (Continued)

56-60	Item is immune to electricity or magical lightning. If the item is metal, it is also nonconductive.
61-64	Item can only be used twice per day; if used more often, it will short itself out and be unusable for 48 hours.
65-69	Item causes its owner to become extremely possessive of it. If the item is kept for more than 14 days, a mild form of paranoia sets in. The owner will assume that anyone mentioning the item wants it. The owner will never relinquish the item to anyone as a result. A <i>remove curse</i> by a 9th-level cleric, or getting rid of the item before 14 days pass, are the only ways to negate the paranoia effect.
70-72	Item is powerful; it works 125% more effectively than a standard item of the same type, and any saving throw against its effects is at -1.
73-78	Item is substandard and only works half as well as a standard item of the same type.
79-83	Item has a curse upon it. All saving throws attempted by its owner are made at -1 until the item has a <i>remove curse</i> cast upon it.
84-86	Item will not function underwater.
87-90	Item belongs to an extraplanar creature or other powerful being (this is shown on the item by the creature's personal sign). After 1d4 weeks, the item will be located by the being, and it will show up to claim "its" property.
91-95	Item must rest for six turns minimum between uses.
96-98	Item cannot be destroyed by any means short of an incredible excess of force (such as a deity), by dropping it into a lava pit, or the like.
99-00	Item is intelligent; roll upon the sword intelligence table, disregarding any result of "no intelligence." The item will have an ego, and its known languages (if any) are determined as for a sword. The item's personality can be determined on pages 114-115 of the AD&D 2nd Edition DMG.

Table 7: Magical Armor and Shield Quirks

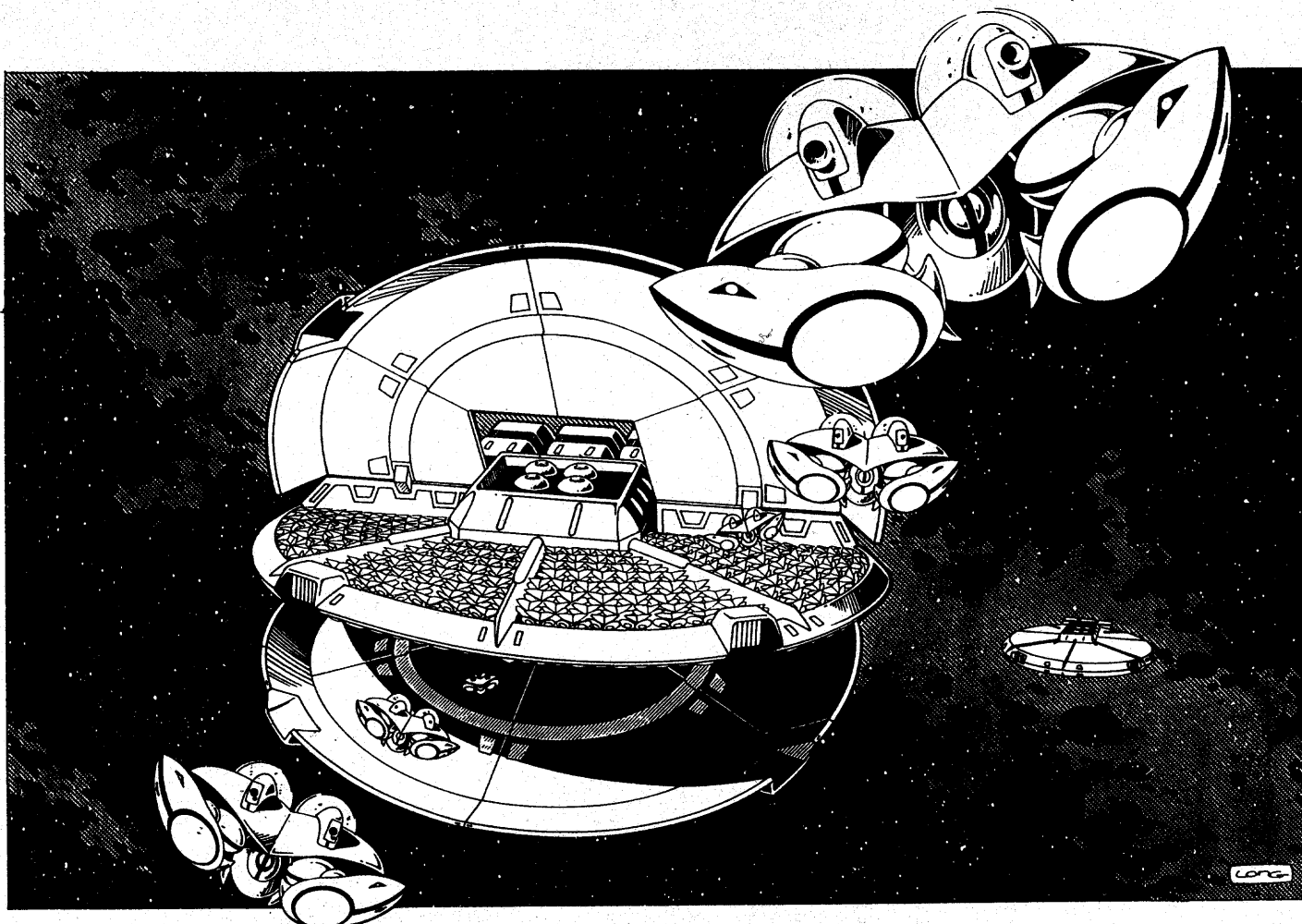
Roll	Result
01-06	Armor is incredibly shiny and reflects light of any kind; furthermore, any creature using a gaze attack within 10' of the armor has a 75% chance of seeing its own reflection.
07-11	Armor is heavy; add 25% to its total weight and encumbrance.
12-16	Armor is tight-fitting; if not oiled at least once every three days, the suit will cramp the wearer's fighting skills. As a result, the wearer will suffer a -1 penalty on all reaction, to hit, and damage rolls until the armor is oiled.
17-21	Armor works normally but appears incredibly beaten up and battered. No amount of repair can change its appearance. (Status-conscious cavaliers and paladins will have reservations about wearing any armor that does not look good.)
22-26	Armor is silent; the wearer does not clank loudly if the armor is metal. Note that this does not mean that the wearer can move silently; the armor simply makes no more noise than would a suit of clothes.
27-32	Armor glows with the light of a <i>faerie fire</i> spell. Only a <i>continual darkness</i> can negate this radiation (and then for six turns plus one turn per level of the caster). If the armor is covered by clothing, the glow will still shine through.
33-37	Armor weighs one quarter as much as normal armor of the same type.
38-43	Armor lacks magical protective ability against 1d4 specific types of creatures.
44-48	Armor is resistant to fire; it can never be burned or melted by normal or magical fire.
49-53	Armor has an "Achilles' heel"; every time the wearer is hit, there is a 5% chance that this "heel" is hit and double damage is done to the wearer.
54-59	Armor magically expands or contracts to fit any size wearer from ogre to halfling.
60-64	Armor is attuned to a place of special magical radiance, in much the same manner as is drow armor. If the armor is not exposed to this place once every 30 days, its magic will be lost.
65-70	Armor has complicated straps and is hard to put on and remove. Consequently, the time required to put on and take off the armor is increased by 10 rounds.
71-74	Armor can never be scratched, stained, or dented.
75-78	Armor has an inherent disruption of magic. While its wearer enjoys a +1 bonus on saving throws vs. spells, he cannot cast spells if he is a multiclassed mage or a spell-using ranger or paladin.
79-84	Armor attracts monsters; any random encounter checks are at double normal chance for anyone wearing this armor.
85-89	Armor is a heat and electricity superconductor; add +1 hp per die to all damage from fire or electricity.
90-94	Armor does not provide magical protection if a clothing or covering is worn over it.
95-98	Armor is an exquisite piece of workmanship and commands a price of 150% of its normal value due to its quality.
99-00	Armor is possessed by a spirit of random alignment; if the wearer's alignment differs from the spirit's, the armor periodically attempts to possess the wearer. Determine the chance of success as noted under the 5th-level wizard spell, <i>magic jar</i> . The spirit's intelligence can be determined by rolling 3d6. The chance of a possession attempt occurring is 15% per week, cumulative.



Table 8: Magical Sword and Miscellaneous Weapon Quirks

Roll	Result
01-05	Weapon glows (as per <i>faerie fire</i>) in normal darkness.
06-09	Weapon is lighter than normal. The wielder has a -1 bonus on any reaction or initiative rolls when the weapon is used.
10-14	Weapon is unable to harm 1d4 types of creatures.
15-18	Weapon must be used two-handed in order to gain its magical bonus. If the weapon is very short (e.g., a dagger or knife), is already a two-handed weapon, or this result does not otherwise apply, disregard this result and roll again on this table.
19-23	Weapon's finish cannot be marred, stained, or scratched in any way.
24-28	Weapon hums whenever enemies come within 30' (and the sound negates any chance of surprise).
29-32	Weapon must be baptized in flame after combat, or it loses its magical bonus until it is placed within a fire for at least one hour (weapon is immune to the effects of normal fire).
33-37	Weapon is twice as heavy as normal. The wielder suffers a +1 penalty to all reaction and initiative rolls.
38-43	Weapon appears beat up, notched, scratched, stained, and dented. No amount of polishing can alter its appearance.
44-46	Weapon's magic functions only at night. Also, the weapon is evilly aligned and radiates this alignment.
47-49	Weapon's magic functions only during the day. The weapon is good aligned and radiates this alignment.
50-54	Weapon has a command word upon it that shrinks it as would an item spell. To return the weapon to normal size, the command word must be spoken backwards.
55-59	Weapon exhibits no magical properties until a certain condition is met (i.e., a bless spell is cast upon it, a certain type of creature is killed with it, etc.).
60-63	Weapon conducts electricity. As a result, the wielder suffers a -1 penalty on all saves vs. electricity or lightning and takes +1 point per die of damage.
64-68	Weapon radiates nondetection; thus a <i>detect magic</i> spell will not register it.
69-72	Weapon is silent; it makes no noise when dropped or struck against armor or another weapon.
73-75	Weapon's magic makes it dangerous to wield in combat. If the wielder misses an attack against his intended opponent, he must roll under his dexterity score on 1d20 or the weapon slips. A to-hit roll must be made against any ally in a 5' radius (or against the wielder, if no allies are near). A successful hit on oneself or a friend does half damage.
76-79	Weapon is not affected by acid.
80-85	Weapon cannot be broken by any means short of divine power or an irresistible force (such as having 10 tons of rock dropped on it).
86-89	Weapon is immune to the effects of rust (including the attack of a rust monster).
90-94	Weapon is invisible whenever drawn or wielded in combat.
95-97	Weapon's blade or head exists in the Ethereal or Astral plane (50% chance of either), and is able to hit creatures that can "phase out," become ethereal, and so forth when they are in an alternate plane.
98-00	Weapon is intelligent (if it isn't already). The bad side of this is that the weapon has an awful personality and specific goals. Determine the extra magical abilities of the weapon as per the sword intelligence table in the DMG, and the weapon's personality on pages 114-115 of the DMG. If the weapon's goals (determined by the DM) are ignored by the weapon's owner, the weapon may refuse to fight or use its powers.





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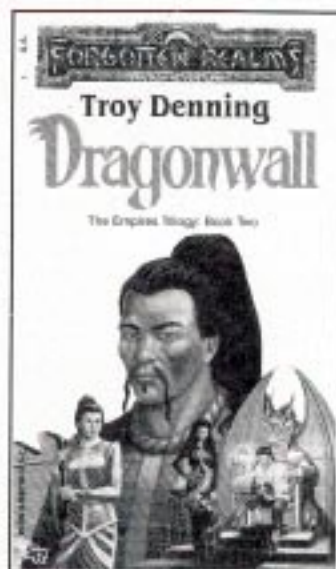
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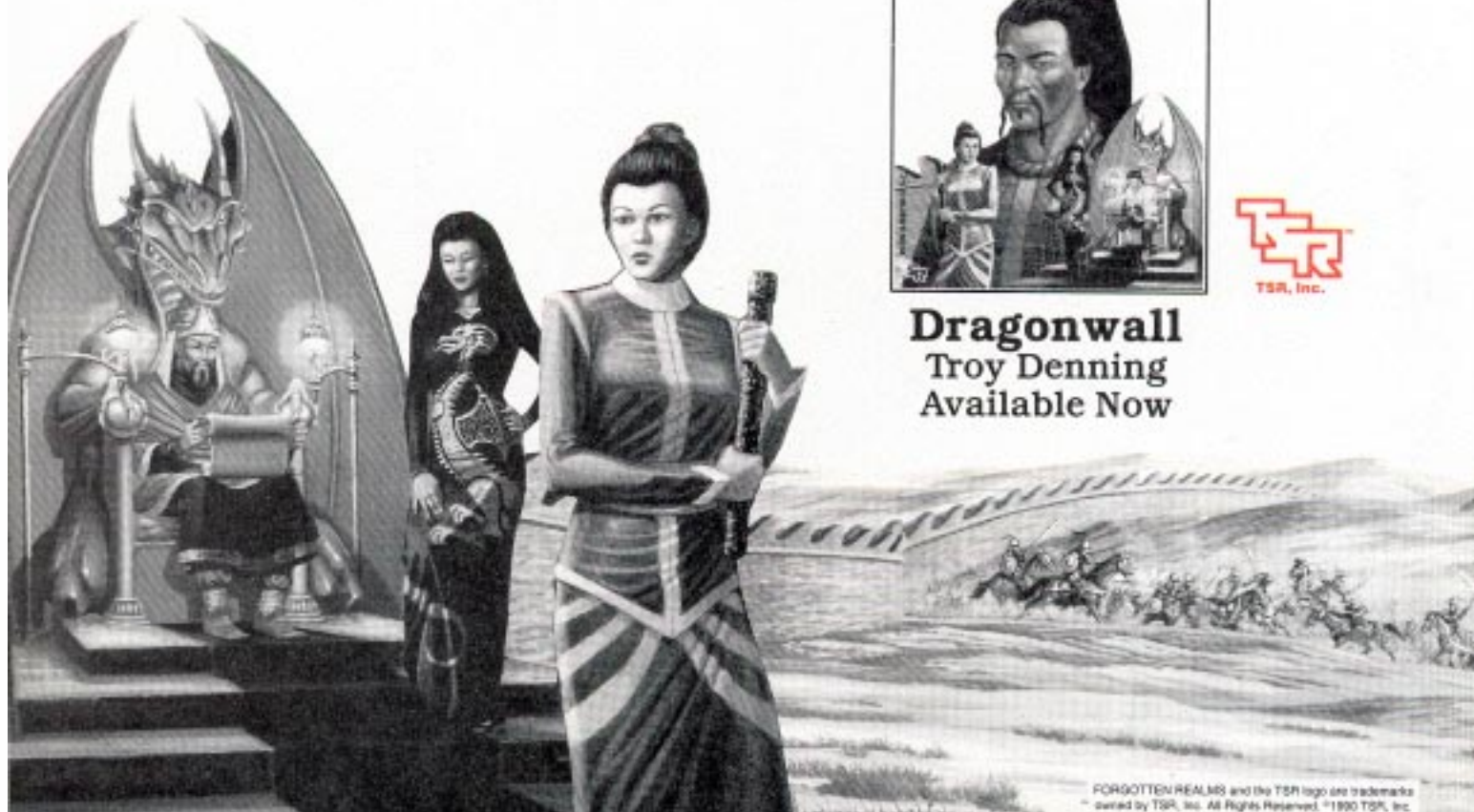
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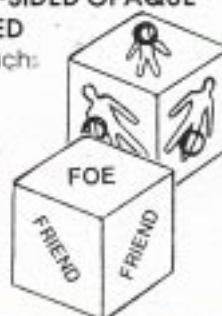


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he first snow of the season fell during the long hours of night. Light but persistent, it covered the dirt streets of the village and formed low drifts against the stone walls of the tight clutch of houses and stores. A north wind carried the snow to the docks,

where it slipped across the ice-crusted boards and gathered against the supporting posts of the almost deserted pier.

The big square-rigged packet that came up every year from Skollten had left more than a week before, taking the fishing families to their winter homes on the mainland. There they'd ride out the bitter months, mending nets and sharpening harpoons, preparing for another season fishing at the edge of the pack ice.

Only one ship remained at the winter dock: an aging brigantine loaded with dried fish for trade in the south. Even as the brief day began, the crew of the ship labored at the cargo and rigging, anxious to follow their families south. Farther down the shore, the village fishing smacks were neatly lined up on the coarse sand of the little cove. All but one of the little boats were securely lashed to the gnarled trunks of pines that had ridden out a thousand winters. All but one were stripped to the boards. That one boat still held a furled sail, its hull still rode in the slushy sea, and in its cabin the charts and supplies were waiting to challenge the winter sea.

Kitrin opened the window and scooped a bucket of snow from the drift by the house. She hung it above the fire to melt, then went to the backroom for some dried deepfish and roots. Ever hopeful, she had made enough broth for two every day of the past week, and every day she had seen most of it go to waste. When the soup was well stirred, she sat on the workbench where she could see through the wavy glass of the side window to the docks.

A surprise knock on the door drove her hopes up for a moment. She moved to answer, but before she could reach the door, it swung open and Sedark strode in.

Frost rimed the gray beard around the mouth of the old seaman. He looked down at Kitrin with eyes eternally frozen into a horizon-searching squint. "It's in my mind that I should make you come with us," he said.

"Please, Clan-Captain, you know I have to wait." They'd had this discussion several times over the days since the black ship had sailed, and Kitrin was growing suspicious that much of the delay in Sedark's departure was manufactured in the hopes that she might relent and go south with him.

The old captain closed the door and moved to the fire.

"The *Gray North* will sail before the sunset," he said.

"Then there'll be not a soul on the island save yourself." He paused and turned toward her. "It's not in my nature to leave a child alone to face the storms."

"I am not a child. Besides, my father will return soon."

Sedark opened his mouth, then closed it again. He turned his eyes back to the fire.

"No one can sail the pack ice like Father," continued Kitrin. "You've said as much yourself. He'll be here soon, and we'll join you all at the summer home."

"Girl, there is no doubt that Weiden is as canny a navigator as I've ever seen, and I'll miss him at the helm of

Storm Winter

by M. C. Sumner

Illustrations by Charles G. Hiscock

the *North*. But we're on the edge of storm winter, and there's ice floes big as all of Umber just outside the cove. It will be all we can do to make it safe home ourselves." He moved closer to her and spoke more softly than he had done at any time before. "Sail with us. Let Faren and Lere beach your father's fisher before its hull is crushed by the ice."

Kitrin turned away.

"Ah," sighed Sedark, "if only my crew had been here when those creatures came and stole away with Weiden."

"Who knows how many Viashin were on that evil ship? You couldn't have stopped them."

Sedark scowled, unwilling to admit that anything was too much for his crew. "I can't fathom it. The Viashin have their own ways, but they're not daft. Why take your father away? Why sail a ship north into the teeth of storm winter?"

Kitrin did not answer immediately, but moved to the fire and stirred her broth. In her mind she could still see the high sides of the black ship as it stood in their small cove. Still see the long necks, protruding snouts, and hunched backs of the Viashin who peered over the rails. See her father struggling as the creatures led him toward the beach. Could still hear him calling to her as they rowed toward the ship.

"He said he would come for me," said Kitrin, "and he will."

The Captain rubbed at his beard. As much as he barked about leaving her alone, Kitrin knew that the idea of leaving a seaman to return from a voyage and find his family gone bothered the old sailor even more.

"We've stacked thirty arms of wood against the back wall," said Sedark, "and good Norumber pine it is. Still, you use it too fast and you'll be ice before the sun rises in the spring. Understand?"

"Yes."

"I've seen your stores, so I know you've got enough food, though you'll probably grow tired of roots and fish. Be sure to eat enough to keep up your heat, and never go out when you don't have to. A night in storm winter will freeze the breath right in your chest. Do you hear?"

"Yes."

Sedark grabbed her in a rough hug. "We'll sail back early, child. I'll have that ship here the moment there's a crack in the ice." The seaman's eyes were red. "Please tell me you'll be here when we get back, child."

"My father will return soon. We'll be mending nets with you down in Skollten before the week is out."

The Clan-Captain turned abruptly and went out into the cold.

Kitrin moved restlessly around the house, cleaning what was already clean and stirring her thin broth. By the time she felt enough hunger to sit down and eat, the sun was already setting on the abbreviated day, and Sedark's ship was gone.

She was alone.

For three days the weather was unusually gentle. Kitrin used the time to wander the deserted town. It was odd to see all the houses and shops, so full of activity in summer, sitting empty and boarded against winter's wrath. Few of

the doors were locked—there being no one to lock them against—so she had her chance to lay hands on those things that were forbidden her in the summer months. She fingered the carefully stored tools of the keelmaker and smelled their oily coating, examined the racks of harpoons at the house of the northwhale hunters, and felt the cold furnaces of the iron master.

At the end of each day, as the sun dipped quickly toward the horizon, she found herself pulled toward the docks. There she saw nothing but the still, gray sea and the slowly drifting ice. And each day was noticeably shorter than the one before, as the darkness of storm winter came on.

On the fourth day, Kitrin awoke to dead silence. Not a breath of wind stirred in the narrow streets of the summer town. Even the lap of waves on the beach had stopped.

When she went out to fetch snow, she saw the storm. A wall of impenetrable blackness was draped across the northwest. For a moment, she was gripped by panic. Then she dashed about the town, gathering as much snow as she could and seeing that the stone shutters were mounted over the precious glass of the windows. Then she waited.

Within an hour the storm began. The thick stone walls of her house seemed to sway before the force of the wind, and icy currents slipped through invisible cracks to steal all the warmth from her dwelling. The sound inside was so great that she clapped her hands to her ears. Over the general roar, she seemed to hear screams. Twice she almost went to the door, but she persuaded herself that no one was there. Piling every rug, quilt, and scrap of clothing into a heap in front of the fire, Kitrin wrapped herself in what little warmth she could and tried to sleep. For five days the storm raged about her.

When she at last awoke again to stillness, she thought she had gone deaf. After she convinced herself that her ears were still working, she went to the door.

She was surprised to see that little snow had fallen. Instead, the wind had swept the village almost clean. It was night, and the moon was but a sliver in the south. The air was so cold that one step from the door Kitrin's eyes began to freeze. But she had no more water in the house. She wrapped her head in scarfs until only a slot remained, then went in search of snow.

What snow there still was in the village was so thoroughly mixed with the dust of the streets that it melted to a murky, undrinkable sludge. Adding another blanket to her burden of clothing, Kitrin walked clumsily west until she came to a field rippling with clean white dunes.

As she knelt to pack the snow into her bucket, she heard a coughing sound. There were few large animals on the island during the summer, but who knew what might move in with the ice? Kitrin rose slowly, ready to swing the bucket in her defense.

A figure stumbled into view across the dunes and collapsed. She dropped her bucket and ran toward it. Before she reached it, Kitrin could tell it was one of the Viashin. Even in the thin light, she could see the odd cant of its back, and as she drew nearer she saw the swan-curve of its long neck and the exposed rows of needle-thin teeth in its gaping mouth. She forced herself closer.

"Where . . . where is my father?"

The creature raised its muzzle from the snow and opened one large eye. "Help me," it said. Its voice was deep, quite clear, and surprisingly gentle.

"Where is my father?"

"Father?"

"My father. The fisherman you took from our village,"

"The navigator," said the Viashin. Its eye closed. "Your father is dead," it said, and its head dropped back to the snow.

It was almost a day before the Viashin spoke again.

It had been as much as Kitrin could stand to touch the crooked form, and the limit of her strength to load the creature onto a sledge, but finally she had him at her house and swathed in cloth. She fought her revulsion of the leathery brute as she unwound its tattered clothing down to its innermost cloak. When fully revealed, the Viashin looked much like the result of a mating between some man-sized lizard and an equally gigantic bird.

Trembling, she kneeled over the alien form and ladled warm broth into its open mouth. She had to revive the beast. She had to know what had happened to her father.

When the Viashin did not revive after the first hour, Kitrin left it by the fire and went to find a knife. If the creature ever did awaken long enough to tell her of her father, she would listen carefully to its tale. And when its tale was done, she would kill it.

When the Viashin did not awaken by the end of the brief day, Kitrin decided that the knife would not be needed and despaired that she would never learn what had become of her father. She gave into the sorrow that had been hanging over her ever since the departure of the Viashin's black ship and sobbed throughout the night.

"Where am I?" asked the Viashin. It was just after sunrise of the next day.

Kitrin, who had been crying quietly by the window, started at the sound of its voice and had to swallow several times before answering. She still had the knife hidden in the voluminous sleeve of her coat as she walked back toward the fire. "Norumberbod Island. Fisher's Port. Who are you?"

The blue eyes blinked slowly and the Viashin raised itself on its thin arms. "I am Agustlas Finur, lately Master of the ship *Tarchen*. How long have I lain here?"

"Through a night and a day," said Kitrin. "I brought you here from the snow outside. Do you remember?"

"I remember. You asked about your father."

"Yes," she said, and tightened her grip on the secreted knife. "My father. What happened to my father?"

Finur crawled closer to the fire on his short arms and pulled the rugs tightly around himself. "Your father . . . was a good navigator. So good that it cost him his life." One of his eyes rotated and fixed on Kitrin. Like his voice, the eye itself, though large and mounted in a ring of scaly flesh, was uncomfortably human. "Do you have anything to eat?"

"Just some broth and some dried fish."

"Either will do."

Kitrin went to the backroom and brought out a bundle of deepfish. She was surprised to find herself looking for

something to feed the ugly brute. A night of tears seemed to have taken the edge from the hatred she had felt while dragging the creature in from the ice. Still, as soon as he had finished answering her questions, she would kill him.

"My thanks to you," said Finur when she handed him the fish. His long, claw-tipped fingers pulled the tough fish into halves.

"My father . . ." began Kitrin.

"A good navigator, as I said. He led us to the Point, the mountain at the edge of the ice." He fixed Kitrin with his overwhelming gaze. "Do you know this place?"

Though she had never been there, the mountain at the world's top was well known to her people. Kitrin nodded.

"Yes, well that is where my passengers wanted to go. And when he had brought us safely to its jagged shore, they killed him."

She had thought that her pain had departed with her anger, but it had not. It came back to her now in a razor-sharp torrent. "Who killed him? Why?"

"My passengers were priests of Maleat, one of the ancient gods of the Viashin. They believe that the mountain in the ice is a place sacred to Maleat and would not permit any human to walk there. Besides, they did not want anyone to know what they sought in that desolate place."

"What did they want?"

"This," said the Viashin. He reached into the folds of his cloak and withdrew a lump of dark-green stone shot through with streaks of deepest red. "I took it from them."

"You sailed to the edge of the ice, in winter, kidnapped and killed my father, all for a piece of rock?" Kitrin felt the tears welling again in her eyes.

"This is not what I wanted; it was the priests."

He held the stone out to the fire and immediately it burst into verdant flame that filled the cabin with uncomfortable warmth. A scent of damp places and mold assailed Kitrin, and she seemed to hear irregular chants rumbling from the earth.

"For this stone," said Finur, "they have killed many times. And they will be willing to do so many times more. They stole not only your father but my ship as well."

He leaned toward Kitrin, and in the light of the stone, the Viashin's huge eyes were as black and empty as the sea at midnight. "I took the stone from them in the night and ran my own ship aground to prevent their plans. This stone is a piece of the First World, Maleat's world, and all before it are mist before the sun. With it, they would so bolster their power that neither other Viashin nor the kingdoms of men could stand against them."

Finur placed his other hand over the stone, and its light was abruptly extinguished. "Have you a ship?" he asked.

"You're sure they will come?" said Kitrin as she freed the sails.

The Viashin was on shore, working clumsily at the lines with his long fingers wrapped in cloth. He snorted a cloud of frozen breath into the air. "I did what I could. The priests knew my heart, and they would not allow me enough freedom to destroy the ship, but I did manage to lead them into the shallows and escape with the stone. Still, I grounded the *Tarchen* only a day north of this cove.

Even were the priests to kill every one of my crew, which they may well do, they will probably get under sail at the next tide."

"Perhaps they think you're dead."

"Perhaps, but the priests detected the presence of this fragment from half a world away. I'd not bet against them finding it now." The Viashin captain loosed the ropes holding the smack to the shore and, despite the weight of his makeshift clothing, jumped nimbly onto the deck of the small fishing vessel. Standing, the Viashin's head on his long neck was slightly higher than Kitrin's, his back held almost level with the ground. The effect reminded her of the running birds of the Skollten plains.

From the mouth of the cove came the sound of ice grinding against ice as the floes drifted inexorably southward. Finur's head swiveled sharply back and forth between the sea and the sail.

"We'll never make it through the ice," said Kitrin.

"I think we might."

"My father was the best seaman in the clan, but even he would be sorely pressed to ride a fishing boat before the rage of storm winter!"

"Human child," said Finur, "I don't know how much you know of the Viashin, but know this: we can sail." Bumping against barrel-sized chunks of ice, the boat moved into the Umber Sea.

By the time the day had ended, Norumberbod Island had vanished to the north. During the long hours of darkness, Kitrin huddled near the metal firepot while Finur stood on the bow, pushing the boat from the larger rafts of drifting ice with a stout pole. Kitrin watched him work, his oddly hinged arms thin but powerful. The large eyes were always moving. His splayed feet sat far apart and rode the swells with ease. Despite his earlier ordeal in escaping from the priests, he now seemed tireless.

"How is it that you speak Tamini so well?" asked Kitrin.

"I've 'been a trader for twenty years. You have to speak Tamini if you want to deal with humans."

"Do you deal with humans often?"

"Sometimes."

"Do we look as . . . I mean, how do humans look to you?"

He turned to her and cocked his long head to one side. "You mean 'Do I look as strange to you as you do to me?' Correct?"

Kitrin thought she heard amusement in his voice. "No, not that." But Finur only continued to look, and after a moment she said. "Yes, I guess I do mean that."

"Don't worry about offending me. Even we Viashin don't think all other Viashin are especially handsome."

"And humans? Do you find us ugly?"

"No. Not at all. Do you not have animals that you find attractive? The powerful riding beasts, the sleek hunting cats; I know humans celebrate such creatures, in their own art. Come to a Viashin home and you'll find humans in the artwork, humans in the trim of the wood. You are like beautiful animals to us. So fluid, so right." He gave her a fine-toothed grin. "Particularly the females, like yourself."

Kitrin blushed. "Then why do you hate humans so much?"

Finur clicked his hard lips together and made a quick gesture with his arms. "Why do humans hate us?"

"You made war on us. You took Tamini Island and sank the human fleet."

"We made war with you. We took the island back."

For a moment they stared at each other. Kitrin was full of indecision and suddenly comforted by the weight of the knife that was now hidden at her belt. If there was any indecision in the Viashin's eyes, she could not recognize it.

There was a thump as a chunk of dull ice bounced away from the hull. The Viashin hissed. "Now you have distracted me from my work," he said, and he gave the ice a jab with his pole. "Come, it is your turn to push away the ice." He handed her the long pole, and they slid past each other carefully.

Finur settled by the firepot and made a soft groaning noise. "You do not appreciate how painful this cold is to a Viashin," he said. "Viashin skin is not meant for snow and wind. Viashin feet can get no grip on ice."

"Why not wear shoes?"

"Viashin feet cannot stand shoes," he said and flexed the three long toes of one foot.

"Then why not just stay in the south?" said Kitrin.

Finur did not reply.

A sound woke Kitrin some time later, and she realized she had fallen into a doze with the ice pole still in her hands. She opened her eyes and jumped to her feet when she found herself facing an iceberg big as the summer village.

The wind was dead calm, and the sails hung limp. Whether the boat was moving toward or away from the large berg, she could not say, but it was doing neither at any great speed.

There was another sound. Kitrin leaned her head to the side to try and hear better. A drumming sound from somewhere out across the darkened sea. And . . . voices? Could they have come far enough to meet ships from the kingdoms of men? The sounds grew louder.

Dum-dum-dum-DUM, went the sound. Dum-DUM-dum-dum.

"Malalmalalmalalmal . . ." ululated the voices.

Suddenly, Finur surged to his feet in a flurry of agitation. "The *Tarchen*," he hissed, his voice sibilant and suddenly inhuman.

"How did they catch us?" said Kitrin as she strained to see into the blackness.

"Magic," said the Viashin. "Necromancy."

The word was more chilling to Kitrin than the winter air. "Necromancy?"

"All the priest's magics require the death of someone. They'll be sacrificing my crew to get a wind." He reached into the tiny cabin and extracted two short paddles. "We must move so that the iceberg is between us and the priests. Perhaps they'll pass us by in their haste."

Kitrin took the wooden blade from his hands and leaned over the side of the boat. Finur lowered the sail, then took his place on the other side. Together they began the laborious job of moving the craft through the still water. The fisher was small to be sailing in storm winter, but it was quite large to be paddled and their progress was slow.



All the while, the sound of the approaching Viashin ship grew louder. The pounding noise was soon joined by a low thrumming that made Kitrin's teeth ache.

By the time they had managed to draw near to the berg and place some of its comforting bulk between themselves and the approaching ship, false dawn was on them and the *Tarchen* was visible as a darker shape against the graying sea. Close behind the ship rose a wall of boiling clouds that was lit from within by continuous bursts of lightning. Occasionally, green-tinted arms of vapor would lash upward from the storm and crash down like breaking waves. Kitrin knew that, compared to this storm, the gale that had locked her into her house for live days was little more than a summer squall.

Finur appeared at Kitrin's side, startling her. "Stop paddling," he shouted into her ear. "Get down and stay quiet."

The noise from the approaching ship and its attendant storm was so loud, Kitrin could not see how anything she could do would be heard above the clamor. She dropped her paddle to the deck and crouched behind the gunwale.

The sound grew until it seemed to come from the sea as well as the air, and the timbers of the boat vibrated in sympathy. An oddly warm wind accompanied the approach of the ship, bringing with it a painful bombardment of hail and hard-driven rain. The gelid sea was churned, and the small fishing boat rocked violently.

As the black ship slid past the shoulder of the iceberg, Kitrin could see that it was connected to the storm by a writhing tentacle of lightning that pulsed and spit droplets

of liquid fire into the sea. Suddenly, the fiery umbilicus dimmed, and the ship surged to a stop just past the berg. The storm halted as if it had hit a wall of glass. In a moment, the cacophony of sound diminished to the noise of waves lapping against the iceberg.

Kitrin crawled across the wet deck of the boat to where Finur crouched near the bow. "Do they know we are here?" she whispered.

"I do not think so," he said carefully, "but they may know we are near."

Kitrin peered over the low gunwale of the fisher at the sharp prow of the Black Ship. Some figurehead was affixed to the dark wood below the bowsprit of the ship. A vague shape of lighter gray sheathed in a rind of sea ice with its feet just above the waterline. Something about the figure made Kitrin's soul shrink. "What is that on the bow of the ship?"

"Get down. Do not look at it."

"What is it?"

Finur let out a long hiss. "It is your father."

She tried to scramble to her feet, but the Viashin's strong arm held her down.

"He feels no pain. He is dead. Do not bring his fate on yourself."

As the black ship angled toward them for a moment, Kitrin could see clearly the tortured form of her father bound to the wood, his skin bleached as gray as the winter sky.

"But why?" she sobbed.

"Necromancy. I told you that they killed your father

when they reached the mountain, but they could not escape without a skilled navigator. So the Maleat priests are using necromancy to pull the skills of your father from his body and pilot the *Tarchen* through the ice. Believe me when I say he feels no—”

He was cut off by a terrible scream from the black ship. Instinctively, Kitrin looked toward her father, but the ice-shrouded body had not changed.

A moment later, a Viashin appeared at the bow of the ship. He wore an elaborately ornamented cloak whose silver chasing caught the green light of the storm. In his hand was an indistinct bundle that he stretched out over the sea.

“Malea ild ol sulva!” cried the Viashin priest.

The storm at his back answered with a series of blinding verdant flashes. In the sporadic illumination, Kitrin could see that the object the priest carried was a severed Viashin arm. She could see drops of dark blood apparently frozen in their fall by the irregular pulses of light.

Before the flashes had ended, the priest had turned their way. With a groaning of timbers, the black ship rotated in place, and the bow with its gruesome figurehead was directed at the tiny fishing boat. Whatever restraints the priests had laid on the storm were released, and it surged forward in a roiling mass.

Finur scrambled to his feet and ran to raise the sails. “Get the pole!” he yelled. “They’ve seen us!”

Kitrin lifted the pole and pushed the boat away from the big berg. The sails filled with a snap, and she nearly toppled into the sea as the boat lunged forward. The black ship was almost on them, but the fishing smack accelerated faster than the larger craft, and for a moment the distance between the two vessels grew. The Viashin priest leaned over the high sides of the ship and screamed down at them, “Amal! Amal! Amal!”

“What is he saying?” Kitrin shouted over the wind as she dropped the pole and moved to help Finur with the rigging.

“Die. Die. Die. It is a very popular theme with Maleat priests.”

Finur tacked the boat toward a cluster of ship-sized bergs, deftly navigating the gaps between them in the growing gale, while Kitrin retrieved the ice pole and stood by nervously. The return of the fearful drumming noise signaled the resurrection of the black ship’s lightning propeller, and the dark craft closed on them rapidly.

Kitrin looked back as the *Tarchen* entered the ice field, wincing as the harrowed figure of her dead father seemed about to be smashed against a craggy wall of ice. But at the last moment, a blast of light originated from the encrusted body and the massive iceberg was hurled from the path of the black ship. Another berg stood in the way of the onrushing ship, and again the ice was flung aside by a bolt of hideous energy that came from her father’s tortured frame. The gap between the two crafts continued to shrink.

“They are going to catch us!” she shouted into the recessed ear of Finur. “Can you not do something with the stone?”

“Not without the risk of my soul.”

Kitrin turned her head to see that the sharply pointed

bow of the black ship was almost touching the stern of the fisher. “What will happen to your soul if they catch us?” she asked.

Finur hesitated for a moment, but as the boat shook at its first contact with the *Tarchen*, he reached into a pouch and took out the stone. He hissed and dropped it to the deck when he saw that it was already alight, glowing with a green brilliance that was painful to see. “They are drawing from it even now!” he cried.

The boat shook again as the prow of the black ship slid along one side. Then they were riding the bow wave of the ship, carried along by its headlong rush toward another flock of massive icebergs. Kitrin looked up and saw the shape of her father no more than an arm’s reach away.

From above, the Maleat priest cried in triumph. More Viashin gathered at the rail, ready to board the fishing boat. Tendrils of green flame began to dance from the stone lying on the fisher’s deck to her father’s body.

Grabbing Finur by his narrow shoulder, Kitrin screamed to be heard. “Steer for the ice!”

“You saw what they can do! It’s no use; they have us!” “Steer for the ice!”

Releasing the Viashin, Kitrin drew the knife from her robe and scrambled onto the gunwale of the boat. With one hand holding firm to a line, she leaned out across the surging sea and faced her dead father.

His frozen eyes were a centerless, cloudy gray. His mouth hung open in an endless scream. Stout lines bound his arms back and held him fast to the ship, and the wrinkles of his clothing were frozen in place. The streamers of light that left the stone danced over his teeth and darted down his throat to emerge again tinged by blood. Glints of their awful energy glinted from the depths of his lifeless eyes.

There was a shout from above. The Maleat priest reached down to snatch Kitrin’s wind-blown hair. She struck at the corded wrist with the edge of her knife, then winced as hot blood sprayed against her face. But the priest did not relinquish his grip, and she found herself being pulled from her feet. She slashed at own hair and fell from the priest’s grasp.

The two vessels ground together, and Kitrin found her cheek against the cold face of her father. She did not flinch away.

“Good-bye, Father,” she said softly, and she hacked at the ice-crusted ropes that bound him to the Viashin ship. The line parted quickly, and the body tumbled away from the black ship. As it fell, sparks and bolts flew between it and the dark wood of the vessel. Kitrin reached out her arms to catch her father, but the stiffened form slipped through her grasp and splashed into the boiling sea.

At once, the noise of the preternatural drive was cut off. The ice pole swung past Kitrin’s head in a whistling arc, and she turned to see Finur shoving them away from the side of the ship. She had a single, tear-blurred glimpse of hunched figures running on the deck above, and then the *Tarchen* smashed full bore into an iceberg.

The masts of the ship snapped with a sound like cannon-shots and fell to the deck with a tremendous crash. The sides of the ship split open along their length. A dozen of the Viashin were thrown from the ship and bro-

ken against the hard ice.

The fishing boat sheered across the sunken flank of the berg with force enough to almost shatter the wooden hull. Narrow jets of water shot upward from holes gouged by the ice. The fisher shook and moaned as it ground its way over the berg, and then they were past, and the black ship was left crumpled behind them.

The storm vanished in a moment. In the sudden silence, the voice of the priest could be heard. "Amal! Amal! Amal!" he screamed.

"I told you it was a favorite," said Finur.

There was a grinding, sucking noise, and the black ship slipped from the berg and slid quickly beneath the waves. The light from the stone lying on the fisher's deck flickered and died.

It took three days of difficult sailing through bitter winter winds to reach the coast of Skollten. Kitrin spent much of that time below decks, bailing the frigid water that leaked in around their makeshift patches.

It was snowing when Finur brought the fisher into the broad bay of the winter village. He did not try to make it to the village docks. Instead, he beached the boat gently on the sands at the bay's mouth.

Kitrin stepped onto the beach with more appreciation for solid ground than she had ever felt in her life. Soft flakes of snow settled in her hair and melted against her

face. She turned and, with only a moment's hesitation, took the hand of her companion. "Come with me," she said.

The Viashin shook his long head. "I have to find somewhere to hide the stone."

"Throw it in the sea."

"The priests were willing to sail to the top of the world to get it. I do not think a little water will stop them." He pulled his hand from hers and scratched at his cheek with a clawed finger. "I must find somewhere more clever."

"Stay here until you think of it."

Again he shook his head. "I might endanger you. Besides, some of your relatives may not like me." He gestured down the beach, and Kitrin turned to see the snow-softened forms of men spilling out of the village. Even at this distance, she could make out the waving gray beard of Sedark.

"They won't hurt . . ." she began, but when she turned back, she found that Finur was pushing the boat into the gentle surf.

"Good- bye, human child," he said as he jumped to the deck. "Warn your people."

"Warn them of what?"

"If I am not clever enough, if those of Maleat find the stone, it will be the death of peace." He raised the sail before the quickening breeze, and the small boat moved toward the warm south.



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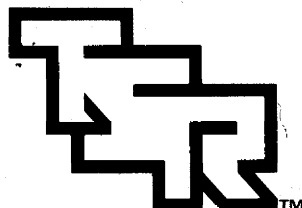
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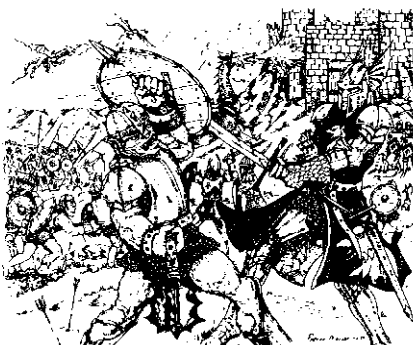
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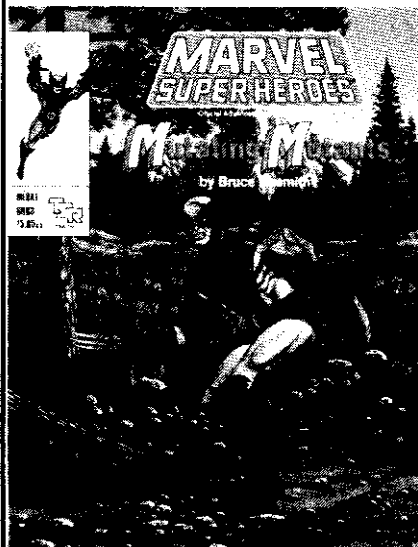
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THE MARVEL-PHILE

by David E. Martin, Chris Mortika, Scott Davis, and William Tracy

Leftovers II: The Villains

This month we'll take a look at two MARVEL UNIVERSE™ villains who didn't make the final cut to appear in MU6, *Gamer's Handbook of the MARVEL UNIVERSE 1990 Character Updates* book: Nebulon and Solarr. Enjoy!

Special thanks to Barb Nish, Peggy Cooper, Judy Gifford, and Steven Schend for their assistance in compiling this column.

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R IN(40)
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P MN(75)

Health: 195

Karma: 121

Resources: EX(20)

Popularity: - 10*

* Nebulon had Monstrous worldwide popularity while head of the Celestial Mind Control Movement.

BACKGROUND

Real Name: Unknown

Occupation: Prospector, guru, would-be conqueror

Legal Status: Citizen of Ul'lula

Place of Birth: Planet Ul'lula, Ul system, Milky Way galaxy

Marital Status: Married

Known Relatives: Supernalia (wife, deceased)

Base of Operations: Ul'lula, later Earth

Past Group Affiliations: Leader of the Celestial Mind Control movement

Present Group Affiliation: None



TM

KNOWN POWERS

Biospheric Energy Manipulation. Nebulon could manipulate the biospheric energy of planets at Unearthly rank. His power stunts included:

—**Energy Bolts:** Nebulon could project energy blasts of Amazing intensity with a range of five areas.

—**Defensive Shield:** Nebulon could create a protective energy shield at Incredible rank against all attacks.

—**Force Bolts:** Nebulon could project concussive force bolts at Shift X rank. Nebulon's force bolts had a range of 10 areas, **Shape-Shifting.** Nebulon had the ability to shape-change at Monstrous Rank into any form. The transformation process was very strenuous, though, requiring an Endurance FEAT roll to remain conscious, so Nebulon did not undertake it often. Any time Nebulon's Health dropped by more than 50 points in a single combat round, he had to make an Endurance FEAT roll or revert to his natural form.

Teleportation. Nebulon could teleport with Monstrous rank ability for a variety of effects. His power stunts included:

—**Teleport Self:** Nebulon could teleport anywhere on the surface of a planet,

—**Dimensional Travel:** Nebulon could travel to alternate worlds in parallel dimensions

—**Teleport Others:** Nebulon could transport others either across the planet or across the dimensions with a Psyche FEAT roll.

Weakness. If Nebulon were to go without contact with a biosphere long enough, his power level would be no more than that of a normal human being

ROLE-PLAYING NOTES

Nebulon was a powerful, shape-changing alien initially intent on finding a mineral-rich world for his starving people to exploit. The very survival of his race depended on his success and that of others like him. However, Nebulon fell in with a lot of super criminals and soon forgot the dire straits of his homeworld in pursuit of personal gain,

If you want to use Nebulon in your campaign, you will need to come up with an explanation of his “exaggerated death”—but in comics that’s not a big problem. A resurrected Nebulon is powerful enough to seriously threaten your heroes and their world. Perhaps he has returned to complete his original mission of trying to make Earth suitable for his race to colonize (see “History”), or maybe he just wants Earth for himself. He could organize a team of lesser villains to support him (this is great for bringing back old, hated enemies of the heroes). His teleportation ability is a built-in escape route. Your heroes finally manage to get Nebulon just where they want him and—BING! He’s gone!

HISTORY

Nebulon was a member of the alien Ul’lula’ns, a race of six-tentacled, finned, water-breathing non-humanoids, who had begun to deplete the mineral resources of their homeworld. To remedy the situation, the Ul’lula’n High Tribunal dispatched an undisclosed number of prospectors to locate and secure worlds with the appropriate mineral resources for the race’s survival.

Possessing vast biosphere-tapping power and the ability to assume other forms, Nebulon took a glistening golden humanoid form when he neared star systems with humanoid populations. He was not, however, particularly successful at prospecting. Unexpectedly, Nebulon came in contact with the misanthropic Hyperion of the Squadron Sinister, who had been imprisoned by the thunder god Thor in a glass sphere floating in space. Upon rescuing him, Nebulon told Hyperion of his mission.

Hyperion was seeking vengeance against the people of Earth for the imagined destruction of his world, and he offered to let Nebulon have Earth. Unaware of the alien’s true form, Hyperion directed the Ul’lula’n to Earth to reorganize Hyperion’s one-time comrades, the Squadron Sinister. Nebulon wished to take custody of the world with all of its land masses completely submerged under water. To effect this, the Squadron members pooled their resources to create a powerful laser cannon capable of melting Earth’s icecaps. The Squadron member Nighthawk was an unwilling accomplice to the proceedings, however, and took the first opportunity to summon help.

Contacting the Defenders, Nighthawk outlined the nature of the crisis and they swiftly traveled to the North Pole to en-

gage the Squadron in battle. In the course of events, Nebulon expended so much energy that he lost control of his humanoid form and allowed his allies and enemies to see his true self—a sight that dismayed even his allies. Nighthawk seized this moment of confusion to train the laser cannon on Nebulon, who seemingly imploded, taking along his three Squadron accomplices.

In actuality, Nebulon dispatched himself to the aquatic extradimensional world of Zaar, inhabited by a race of philosophers called the Ludberites. The Ludberites explained to Nebulon the essence of their philosophy—that it is the obligation of higher beings to improve the lot of their inferiors. For unknown reasons, Nebulon took this philosophy to heart, severed his loyalties to his people, and abandoned his original mission to instead save the beings of Earth from their own innate foibles. Returning to Earth, Nebulon assumed a less-imposing human guise than before and started a movement called Celestial Mind Control that promised to liberate the powers of the human mind but that actually robbed its participants of free will.

As Nebulon spread his movement across the world, the Defenders eventually tried to thwart him. In defense, Nebulon dispatched some of the Defenders to another dimension to prevent their interference. At the same time, the Headmen, a group of renegade scientists, undertook their own scheme to gain worldwide political power. Soon Nebulon and the Headmen found themselves working at cross purposes. After months of effort, the Defenders managed to expose the Headmen’s political machinations and to convince Nebulon it was a hopeless task to force humanity to better itself. Nebulon abandoned his mass movement and disappeared.

When the Tribunal of Ul’lula learned of Nebulon’s interference in Earth culture and abandonment of his mission, it tried and convicted Nebulon for treason against his race. But before he could be taken captive, Nebulon fled into Earth’s ocean where he used his shape-changing abilities to assume the form of Lady Dorma, the deceased bride of the Sub-Mariner. Convincing the Atlanteans that Dorma had survived, Nebulon used her popularity as well as his own powers to convince the Atlanteans to attack London. The Defenders then got involved since the Sub-Mariner was one of their original members and uncovered Nebulon’s deception. Soon afterward, an Ul’lula’n starcraft appeared and took custody of Nebulon, who was sentenced to be stripped of half

his biospheric power, entrapped within his humanoid form, and exiled on Earth. The Tribunal suggested to Nebulon that he commit suicide, the honorable alternative to disgrace according to his culture, but Nebulon flatly refused. Learning of Nebulon’s dishonor, Nebulon’s wife Supernalia traveled to Earth to force him to take the honorable action.

Nebulon had, in the meantime, made his way into the ranks of the Avengers with the hidden goal of using his technology to siphon power from them to replace that which he had lost. Supernalia enlisted the aid of the Defenders, and soon the two teams of champions were manipulated into battle. By the time Nebulon’s motives were revealed, the Earth heroes were already being drained of their energies. Supernalia was made to realize that her actions on Earth also constituted a violation of her people’s ethics, so she chose to commit suicide. In trying to stop her, Nebulon fell victim to the same energy-draining ray that was killing his wife. As Nebulon died, he admitted that at last he was acting honorably. The Avengers and Defenders buried the aliens where they died, in the snowy Himalayan mountains.

SOLARR™

F TY(6)
A GD(10)
S TY(6)
E GD(10)
R TY(6)
I TY(6)
P TY(6)

Health: 32

Karma: 18

Resources: TY(6)

Popularity: - 10

BACKGROUND

Real Name: Silas King

Occupation: Professional criminal

Legal Status: U.S. citizen with a criminal record

Identity: Publicly known

Place of Birth: Carson City, Nevada

Marital Status: Single

Known Relatives: None

Base of Operations: Mobile; later Project: Pegasus complex

Past Group Affiliations: Former member of Egghead’s Emissaries of Evil, former ally of Klaw

Present Group Affiliation: None

KNOWN POWERS

Manipulate Light Energy. Solarr was a mutant with the Unearthly ability to absorb, store, and manipulate large amounts of energy from light, especially direct sunlight. This energy he then used for the following power stunt:

—**Heat Blast:** Solarr could project a blast of heat energy that would do Incredible damage and had a range of three areas. After 10 turns of continuous blasting, Solarr had to recharge for 45 minutes.

Heat Resistance. Solarr's mutation made him highly resistant to heat attacks. Heat attacks are reduced - 3CS versus Solarr, and then a Red FEAT roll was required to actually injure him.

Supplemental Power Source. Egghead once designed for Solarr an auxiliary power supply that allowed him to operate at full power at night.

ROLE-PLAYING NOTES

Silas King was a no-good drug-smuggling lowlife who unfortunately developed a mutant power and turned to crime.

Solarr, if alive in your campaign, is a simple, straightforward villain. He could be a wonderful nemesis for a lone hero or a small number of low-powered good guys. Since he is so simple, he also makes a wonderful "soldier" for a major villain (maybe even Nebulon). His heat-generating abilities could be in high demand among criminal masterminds; just think of all the safes, vaults, armored cars, etc., that he could melt. If Solarr develops a few more power stunts (light or heat-related; look to the Human Torch for ideas) and gets his hands on another supplemental power source, he could be quite nasty.

HISTORY

Silas King was born with latent mutant powers that might have remained dormant if he had not been exposed to prolonged solar radiation. A former smuggler of illicit narcotics, King was making one of his frequent runs from Los Angeles to New York City when his van broke down in the Mojave Desert. King spent several days in the desert trying to make his way back to civilization, marginally surviving on cactus pulp. The several days' exposure to the desert sun catalyzed the latent mutation within his body that enabled certain of his cells to store solar energy. When King eventually reached civilization he was immediately hospitalized for sunstroke and dehydration. While recovering, he accidentally discovered he could discharge the solar energy he had stored as heat blasts.

After recuperating, King made his way to New York City to take up a criminal career. He named himself "Solarr" and initially used his superhuman powers to rob banks. His criminal career brought him into partnership with Klaw and membership in the Emissaries of Evil, led by the criminal mastermind Egghead. However, Solarr repeatedly met defeat at the hands of such crimefighters as the Avengers, Captain America, Spider-Man, and the Thing. Eventually, the captured Solarr was imprisoned at the Project: Pegasus complex, a federal energy research center, in New York State. There his ability to store and discharge solar energy was studied by Project scientists.

Another captive and subject for study at the Project was Bres, a member of the superhuman other dimensional race known as the Fomor. Bres was held powerless by electromagnetic shackles that were fed a continual stream of charged particles that somehow neutralized his ability to employ his magical powers. As a result of a series of power failures at the complex, the flow of particles was interrupted long enough for Bres to stop it altogether without any Project personnel becoming aware that he had done so. Bres then secretly used his powers to try and take control of the minds of various persons at the complex by giving them mental visions in which each was forced to confront the evil side of his personality. One of Bres' victims, a guard named Harry Winslow, suffered heart failure as a result of his vision. Bres animated Winslow's corpse from afar to use it to commit murders at the complex.

To add to the confusion at the Project, Bres used his magical powers to free Solarr from his cell. Solarr hated Winslow, and upon finding his unmoving corpse, incinerated it using his powers. But then the charred corpse rose, animated by Bres' magic. Solarr fled in panic but could not escape the walking corpse that caught up with him and killed him. The costumed crimefighter Iron Fist soon defeated Bres, who was once again rendered powerless by the electromagnetic shackles. Winslow's corpse was safely buried.

Those of you who have purchased *MU6* have noticed by now that Moon Knight's updated statistics are not included, as the back covers claims. Marc Spector was bumped from *MU6* at the last minute, too late to change the back cover. You can find statistics on Moon Knight in *MU3*. All you need to note is that he no longer possesses the Power Boost ability, and he no longer

has anything to do with Khonshu or his paraphernalia, but his Health is the same as listed and his current primary weapon is nunchakus. Current statistics for Moon Knight do appear in *MLA2 Night Moves*, by Anthony Herring.

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MAKING LAW OUT OF CHAOS

Since the AD&D® game was introduced, there has been no end to the controversy over alignment. It seems that many players and DMs don't know how the alignment classifications in the various AD&D 1st Edition volumes should affect a character's style of play. Granted, the rulebooks' descriptions are somewhat vague and lack detail, but numerous articles, editorials, and letters in DRAGON® Magazine have addressed the problem.

The result of this confusion is that many players ignore this aspect of the game because they aren't sure what constitutes proper behavior regarding their characters' alignments. But a good role-player should make the alignment system an indispensable (not to mention that dreaded word "official") part of the AD&D game. This article can help make the alignment system more understandable and playable.

In order to introduce the material of this article, let's see what the *Dungeon Masters Guide* (page 23) has to say on the matter of alignment:

"Note that alignment does not necessarily dictate religious persuasion . . . The overall behavior of the character (or creature) is delineated by alignment, or, in the case of player characters, behavior determines actual alignment. . . . alignment describes the world view of creatures and helps to define what their actions, reactions, and purposes will be. . . . and alignment also aids players in the definition and role approach of their respective game 'personae.'"

Up to now, what has been written before on the subject seems to indicate that most players and DMs suppose the alignment system to be a set of moral or ethical codes to which a PC or NPC should strive to adhere. The inherent flaw in this kind of assumption is that "morality" and "ethics" are completely subjective matters. For every person who considers himself moral and ethical, there is someone who thinks that same person is a scandalous brute.

Admittedly this is a generalization, but the point is that each player or DM will view law, good, evil, and chaos differently. Conflicts are inevitable if a player feels he is being true to his character's alignment when others don't see it that way.

So what is good or evil? What constitutes chaotic or lawful behavior in a player character?

Redefining the AD&D® 1st Edition game's alignment system

by J.R. Renaud



Why have alignments?

Perhaps the best place to begin this topic is in a rather touchy area. Here we will define the age-old differences between good and evil, law and chaos—the forces of light and darkness, order and disorder—and the reasons for the existence of these forces (and that of neutrality) in the AD&D game.

Good, evil, law, and chaos exist as universal balancing forces. Without all four, neutrality would not exist, humans and demihumans could not make moral and ethical choices. Without opposing forces, there would be no measure by which virtue and sin could be rewarded or atoned for in the afterlife.

But the multiverse is neither good nor evil, ordered nor chaotic. The choices of its intelligent creatures, both mortal and immortal, create the circumstances of life on any given plane, world, or specific society. And, since the majority of AD&D game societies have already manifested a world view of good, PCs and NPCs will be under severe constraints and biases when they attempt to define their own good. Nonetheless, many will choose to scorn good or at least think of it as irrelevant when they seek places in the social order.

But such conflict is, after all, what makes the AD&D game interesting and viable. Without conflict between good and evil, or law and chaos, what would be the point of adventuring?

So what is good in terms of characters' (and orcs') behavior? In our world, a definition of the word "good" may be found in any dictionary. If a player applies the synonyms, he can't go too far wrong. A "good" act may be said to be any of these: virtuous, honest, decent, kind, caring, forgiving, benevolent, generous, sympathetic, considerate. On page 23 of the *DMG*, it says that "the tenets of good are... creature rights. Each creature is entitled to life, relative freedom, and the prospect of happiness."

An evil act, on the other hand, might be defined as the absence of good, or an act described by antonyms of any of the above adjectives (e.g., wicked, dishonest, indecent, unkind, uncaring, unforgiving, harmful, injurious, unsympathetic, inconsiderate). The *DMG* goes on to say that evil "does not concern itself with rights or happiness; purpose is the determinant."

In a lawful society, the ideals will likely be order, harmony, structure, regulation, conformity, justice, sociability, reliability, loyalty (to the group over the individual), and trustworthiness. Again, the *DMG* (page 23) makes it clear that law "dictates that order and organization is [sic] necessary and desirable," and "generally supports the group as more important than the individual."

A chaotic character, on the other hand, would likely prefer to be disordered, inharmonious, unstructured, unregulated, nonconforming, unjust, unsociable, unreliable, loyal to none but himself, and un-

trustworthy. It might be guessed that as chaos is the opposite of law, the *DMG* implies that chaotic characters promote disorder and individuality above all else.

But now we come to a more difficult area: What is "neutrality"? Generally, a neutrally-aligned character is the proverbial fence-sitter in some regard, walking the fine line between at least two of the four other alignments. It might perhaps be of greatest benefit to take the definition of a neutral character straight from Webster's *New World Dictionary of the American Language*, Second College Edition, as "belonging to [no] extreme... without strongly marked characteristics; indefinite, indifferent, middling, etc." In addition, in the *DMG* (page 23), the following may be found: "[Other creatures] may be more or less important, but the neutral does not concern himself or herself with these considerations except where it is positively determined that the balance is threatened."

The neutral character, when faced with a choice between acting in one of several different ways, should choose the path closest to the center of neutrality. A lawful-neutral PC, for example, might face a choice between being either forgiving (good) or unforgiving (evil) in a given situation; he'll rarely be concerned about whether or not to be sociable (lawful) since he already does that. When forced into an "extreme" action or reaction, the neutral character's ultimate decision must be consistent with any non-neutral part of his alignment and with the perceived circumstances. He must seek (first, last, and always) to promote his alignment's ideals, then to "preserve the balance."

Readers may have noted that several adjectives that could have been included above were not, such as ethical/unethical, worthy/unworthy, exemplary/unexemplary, etc. These terms could apply to any alignment; both good and evil PCs may, for instance, be "exemplary" in their behaviors and attitudes. Of course, DMs and players still have leeway in adding their own ideas to the descriptive lists herein.

Alignments as traits

Using the preceding definitions as a place to start, the cure for most of the apparent confusion is to view the alignment headings as subjective, moral labels standing for a combination of characteristic traits. Naturally, not all characters will display the exact same traits to a like degree as do others of their alignment, and this (along with the fact that each PC will have many different habits, characteristics, idiosyncrasies, etc.) ensures that no character will ever be forced to act in the same manner as another of his alignment.

With this in mind, below are listed a series of personality traits that I feel are common and indigenous to each particular alignment. An attempt has also been made to relate this material to the passages under each of the alignment headings as found in the AD&D 1st Edition *DMG*

(pages 23-24) and the AD&D 1st Edition *Players Handbook* (pages 33-34) in regards to the personality traits assigned them. Lastly, the value that should be put on life is suggested for each adherent.

Lawful good: Friendly, courteous, sensitive to the feelings of others, scrupulous, honorable, trustworthy, reliable, helpful, loyal, respectful of "life, love, and the pursuit of happiness."

As it states in the *Players Handbook*, lawful-good characters are group and order oriented, and will cooperate with authority in all cases to promote "the common weal." Yet the *DMG* implies that not all lawful-good beings view the cosmos with an equal desire for lawfulness and goodness, so there is no such thing as a perfectly balanced "lawful-good" attitude (nor a perfectly balanced attitude for any other alignment, for that matter).

In general, however, a lawful-good character promotes the ideals and rights of the majority over those of the individual (and this includes himself as well as others) and upholds the rights of the weak and oppressed members of society, who should be allowed to reap society's benefits with equanimity. The lawful-good being feels this is the best way that all members of society can enjoy the rights of existence together. Life is important to the lawful-good being, but life is not exclusive of order, and vice versa.

Lawful neutral: Reliable, responsible, truthful, orderly, loyal, respectful of authority, regular, structured, rigid, neat, methodical, precise.

The lawful-neutral being normally sees law and order as of prime importance, with the well-being of the group put ahead of the individual on almost every occasion. The *Players Handbook* description shows that such persons see good and evil as immaterial and unimportant in the structuring of the universe into perfect order and harmony, in which lies society's only hope for survival. The *DMG* (page 23) goes further to say that "whether a law is good or evil is of no import as long as it brings order and meaning."

Thus personal gratification of needs and desires is well and fine, as long as this doesn't interfere with the ultimate ordering of the cosmos; all other considerations are secondary. Life, to the lawful-neutral being, has no meaning without order, and thus it's expendable when faced with the choice between it and harmony.

Lawful evil: Cruel, vengeful, proud, callous, hostile, taciturn, malevolent, calculating, plotting, merciless, domineering, severe, tyrannical, commanding, organized, respectful of authority and power.

To paraphrase both the *Players Handbook* and the *DMG* in regards to the lawful-evil being, this character seeks to increase his power over others within the hierarchy of the universe, the "strongest first and the weakest last." Naturally, most adherents of this alignment wish to be first.

Like the other two lawful alignments,

the lawful-evil being normally holds that strict order is of utmost importance, but he sees it as necessary to further the ends of the deserving strong over the undeserving weak and worthless. Usually it is that being's own ends that are to be promoted above all others, but he respects the will of the group and the power and authority of those above him—unless he believes the latter are not deserving of that position.

A lawful-evil being is seldom subject to the secular laws of good society in general, as he sees those laws as restrictive and unfair because they deny the worthy their proper place. So-called "good" is seen as a means by which the undeserving are given or kept in positions of power, whereas each person should be allotted his place by his leaders according to personal merit. Life is valueless to the lawful-evil character; those too weak to defend their possessions and positions don't deserve to have them in the first place.

Chaotic good: Unpredictable, independent, free spirited, cheerful, optimistic, easy going, carefree, helpful, kind, merciful, respectful of personal liberties, anarchic.

As indicated in the Character Alignment Graph on page 119 of the *Players Handbook*, the chaotic-good character has a "beatific" attitude toward existence. In this character's opinion, any laws, social structures, or other such hierarchies that restrict his freedom are abhorrent and to be done away with. The inviolable right of the individual to seek his own pleasures is one of the cornerstones of society; but, being good, the chaotic-good being will not tread on others to get his own way, for he feels that every other creature has the right to the pursuit of pleasure as well.

Friends of a chaotic-good character will find him unreliable in the clutch only if he puts his own well-being ahead of that of his companions. Obviously, almost everyone has this tendency, but it is left up to this individual whether or not he values a friendship enough to risk self sacrifice. (DMs should see if such a being's actions jeopardize the lives of other persons or creatures unnecessarily.) Life is valuable, but without sufficient personal freedom it is demeaned. Life and freedom are the foundation of the universe.

Chaotic neutral: Unreliable, independent, greedy, inconsistent, unpredictable, selfish, disorderly, anarchic, self centered, confusing, unfettered, free, egotistic.

In direct opposition to the lawful-neutral being, this character views ultimate freedom and disorder as most desirable. The *Players Handbook* states that he sees good and evil in a secondary role, and neither should be allowed to interfere with pure chaos. The *DMG* (page 24) says: "Whether the individual . . . chooses to do good or evil is of no concern."

Violence is not a chaotic-neutral trait, but adherents will often not hesitate to use intimidation and nonlethal violence to achieve their goals. These characters will

almost always seek some selfish goal (such as acquiring wealth) in addition to the promotion of universal disorder, and are thus seen as "greedy" by others. Naturally, the chaotic-neutral being won't see this as greed, but rather as "self-fulfillment."

Thus, respect for others does not stand in the way of the pursuit of individuality. Since death is inevitable anyway, the chaotic-neutral being isn't averse to speeding certain creatures on their ways if it's deemed necessary, although he won't go out of his way to inflict pain and suffering like an evil being would (" . . . life can only be justified as a tool by which order is combatted. . . .": *DMG*, page 24).

Chaotic evil: Violent, cruel, capricious, malicious, untrustworthy, unreliable, heartless, volatile, inconsistent, uncaring, unfeeling, deceitful, discourteous, selfish.

The paragraph allotted to this alignment in the *Players Handbook* might be condensed to read, "The chaotic-evil being seeks personal freedom at the expense of those who aren't smart, capable, or ruthless enough to get what they want." Taking it a step further with the *DMG*, if what this being wants will come only at the price of the freedom and happiness (not to mention the lives) of others, so be it (" . . . other individuals and their freedoms are unimportant if they [freedoms] cannot be held . . . through their [the individuals'] own strength and merit. ").

All else being equal, the chaotic-evil being is perhaps the most dangerous character of all, because one rarely knows how he might react to a given encounter. For reasons often known only to himself, he could ignore some situations, then suddenly explode in apparently identical ones. His behavior patterns are almost impossible to predict, for he has probably learned to curb and control his penchant for "evil" due to the constraints of civilization. A chaotic-evil being is *not* expected to go about insanely slaughtering and torturing everyone he meets, for he isn't usually stupid. He will realize the consequences of such activities and will participate in such pleasurable distractions only when safe from discovery. To a chaotic-evil being, the lives of others have no value and are incidental in the pursuit of ultimate freedom and personal power.

Neutral good: Self reliant, helpful, courteous, kind, respectful, sensitive, friendly, loving, merciful, gracious, humane, altruistic, giving, respectful and protective of life.

We can begin with a neutral-good being's views on life, for the *Players Handbook* implies this character will most likely hold life as the most important factor. To a neutral-good being, life and the assurance of other creatures' rights take precedence over all else. (This is not to say that this character will have an aversion to taking another's life when faced with a choice between an attacker's and his own.) Also, "law and chaos are merely tools to use in bringing life, prosperity, and happiness to

all deserving creatures" (*DMG*, page 23). Neither numbers nor individual concerns have any bearing on decisions regarding the needs and rights of any given creature. In other words, in the view of a neutral-good being, rarely will either the needs of the many or the personal desires of an individual outweigh the needs of any other creature. All life is given even-handed treatment.

As with all nonchaotic or nonlawful alignments, the key to these adherents' personalities is "self-reliant." In the crunch, neutral-good characters trust in themselves and in no other individual or group. This doesn't mean they can't make friends and develop trusting relationships with others, however. Neutral-good beings aren't normally as independent as chaotic-good beings, and they can cooperate in groups. But they won't always trust a group to be more effective than they could be themselves.

Neutral: Diplomatic, judgmental, enigmatic, aloof, distant, self-reliant, mediatory, even handed, fair, indifferent, impartial.

A true neutrals outlook, according to the *Players Handbook* and *DMG*, is that law, chaos, good, and evil are all necessary forces in the universe. But all are of equal import, and none should be allowed to take precedence over another, unless and imbalance should be perceived—in which case corrective steps must be taken until the balance is righted once again.

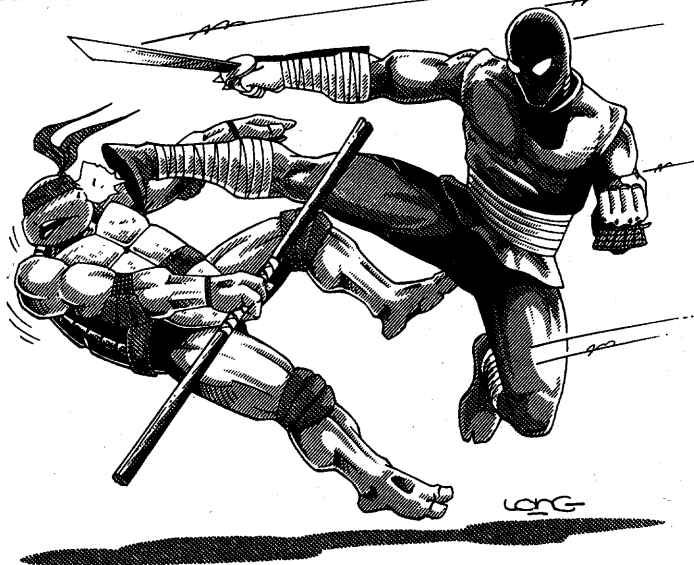
Hence, the motives of the neutral PC are perhaps the most difficult for any other alignment to fathom, for a neutral will usually act first to preserve the balance, second if he deems it his business, and third if it is in his own best interests.

For these reasons, being nature's mediators, true-neutral characters should be diplomatic and tactful, but they may also come across as being strange and enigmatic until one gets to know them and their "world view" better. This is because true neutrals look far beyond the immediate situation to the overall balance of the cosmos.

Most true-neutral characters will, throughout their lives, tend more or less toward one of the other alignments, dependent upon their perception of the state of the world and what force should be balanced (see the *Legends & Lore* tome for examples of this behavior in deities). Such a "deviation" should be excused by the DM until there exists a situation in which a neutral character refuses to recognize and modify his actions in accordance with the new balance. For example, once the strong evil forces in an area have been conquered, the neutral character should stop acting "good." In addition, this attitude of balance will ordinarily be reflected in a true neutral's choice of adventuring companions and should thus be demonstrated with reasonable consistency.

As all things in the cosmos are equally important and necessary, life is as valuable

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as death to the true neutral being, because life is inevitably followed by death. In this character's view, one's time will come when it is supposed to come, and no sooner or later.

Neutral evil: Unfeeling, uncaring, insensitive, unkind, uncooperative (unless it suits him), self reliant, wicked, cruel, depraved, corrupt, immoral, hateful, vicious, destructive.

In the case of the neutral-evil being, the *Players Handbook* and *DMG* both state that law and chaos are beneath consideration in this character's quest for pure evil in the universe. At the root of this character's personality is the word "wicked." Evil is his goal; natural and man-made forces, if allowed to take their course, weed out the weak and useless in society. The deserving should take advantage of this condition to further their own goals by any means possible, especially to destroy weaklings who put forward "good" actions to promote the well being of all, which is just an excuse used to deny the deserving their due. To the neutral-evil being, life is of no value, for those who cannot take advantage of their superiority don't deserve it, and they'll only interfere with the rightful pursuits of those who do.

The (first) last word

As usual, the DM must be the final arbiter in regards to what constitutes proper alignment behavior, but two cautions should be mentioned. The first is simple: Be consistent. Nothing frustrates players more than to act in one fashion one or more times with no repercussions at all, then suddenly have the DM give an alignment warning or, worse, abruptly change a character's alignment in a similar situation. The second caution is that forcing characters into involuntary actions treads on a player's sacred ground, and DMs should proceed lightly to avoid outraging their players due to perceived vindictiveness or desire to control the proceedings. No character should be obliged, merely because of alignment, to act in a rash manner that would endanger himself, his

friends, or other innocents, except in rare cases as adjudicated by the DM.

One of the very few instances in which a DM might condone interference in a PC's life might be in a critical situation that could possibly upset game or campaign balance. The DM could say "That would be contrary to your alignment," or, "To do otherwise would be wrong." Normally, however, he should allow the PC to do whatever he wishes, then rule on the consequences of the PC's actions.

Religious beliefs and constraints also take precedence over all other behavior. In any encounter involving a particularly dangerous person or group, a character's sacrifice of himself may be expected (perhaps by his peers, but most especially by his deity) and hence would be seen as "the ultimate sacrifice" (i.e., martyrdom) for the religious cause. It might be a good idea for the DM to give such characters a break by having their gods raise them or make any other equitable recompense for such a gesture. Take care not to allow PCs to act rashly in the belief that their patrons will rescue them for being so "exemplary." A god shouldn't save everyone, but a god may feel it's in his own interests to put such a faithful adherent back to work among mortals as an example to others. Such rewards depend on the faithfulness of a character to his alignment; if an evil creature was to sacrifice himself for another's well being, his evil deity might simply write him off as a particularly bad example of evil. In all such cases, the description of the particular religion or god should spell out any such behavior expected by a patron deity.

Additionally, specific actions may be required of a good-aligned character that in any other context could be seen as evil acts. Take, for instance, the common practice of putting down suffering animals; death, to many (even "good" people), is usually preferable to allowing a beast to suffer. But how far is this to be taken? Would the mercy killing of a human, demihuman, or humanoid be seen as an act of decency and "goodness"? Maybe, but not very often.

Consider the ethical problems with euthanasia in today's world, for example.

Because the circumstances of such a situation will vary a great deal, no hard-and-fast ruling can be given on this matter, especially not within the scope of this article. Such decisions must be left entirely to the DM's own consideration of the variables and extenuating factors.

The only other instance in which a DM might interfere with the role-playing of a character's alignment would be to make a ruling that a given character doesn't have the necessary wisdom to foresee the consequences of his actions if they happen to be consistent with his alignment but contrary to better judgment. Thus a character may perform seeming foolish or reckless acts that agree with his alignment but might cause trouble later, such as having a lawful-good being question and arrest everyone who registers as "evil" with a *detect alignment* spell, or having a chaotic-evil being kill everyone he meets.

The (final) last words

Not all traits listed under a particular heading or ethos are equally applicable to every character of that alignment. As one example, the degree of generosity in a lawful-good character can vary greatly, depending upon certain factors such as the character's own means. But out-and-out stinginess shouldn't be a lawful-good trait by anyone's reckoning. As another example, a chaotic-neutral character might care not a whit for monetary gain (surely some kind of deviant recidivist), but he must be motivated by something, be it only the simple pleasures of dungeon-trashing and monster-bashing (watching the evil element, of course). As a final example, a neutral-evil being may find pointless torture and suffering distasteful, or at best be indifferent toward it (another hopeless aberration, to be sure).

Lastly, it must always be kept in mind that, when dealing with human or demihuman foibles and imperfections, there is no such thing as pure "goodness" or "badness." A reasonable DM should see nothing wrong with, say, a paladin having a bad day wherein he snaps at everybody, kicks his dog for soiling his favorite suit of armor, or even loses his temper and yells at a persistent beggar. And the world isn't likely to end if a chaotic-evil thief helps an old lady across the street without thereafter mugging her, or gives a copper to a blind man.

After all, nobody's perfect. Ω



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Professional Monsters

Give semihumans and humanoids some class in your AD&D® 1st Edition game

by Matthew Schutt

Because of the presence of humanoid and giant shamans and witch doctors in the AD&D® game, it seems feasible to allow humanoids and semihumans the ability to study and train in other professions. This provides the DM an opportunity to add surprising elements to all-too-familiar creature encounters. Such characters should be used only as NPCs; this article does not allow players a greater range from which to pick their races (see "Hey, Wanna Be a Kobold?" in DRAGON® issue #141 for humanoid PC races and classes). The following examples are the centaur cavalier, the orc barbarian, and the lizard-man druid. Similar classes may be designed for goblins, ogres, satyrs, and related races, as appropriate to your campaign.

Centaur cavalier

The fealty of a centaur cavalier is given to his herd, specifically to the ruler of his herd. Like a human cavalier, the centaur cavalier (also called a peer) must keep honor, bravery, and a chivalric code as his most important guides. A peer must protect his herd from outside dangers and keep harmony within the herd itself. Peers are the centaurs' law enforcers and make up the officers and the elite corps of the militia. Note that only the more advanced and intelligent centaur populations are able to support peers.

Centaur cavaliers come from prestigious bloodlines and hold very high social status in centaur societies. With this prestige comes responsibility. Peers must show extreme expertise in the arts of warfare and must display style and grace.

Peers are always lawful good. They use the attack and saving-throw tables appropriate to their hit dice (not levels), and the experience-point tables (with modifications) of cavaliers. A peer starts with 4 HD at 1st level; for every odd-numbered level gained above the 1st, up to his maximum level of 7th, the centaur cavalier adds 1 HD (reaching 7 HD at 7th level).



Peers may use any weapon found in centaur culture, but they prefer proficiency in the following weapons: footman's mace or footman's flail, dagger, club or hammer, short composite bow, and medium lance. These cavaliers also gain to-hit bonuses with these weapons of choice as levels are advanced:

- At 1st level, the peer is +1 to hit with the medium lance.

- At 2nd level, the peer is +1 to hit with either the club or hammer.

- At 3rd level, the peer is +1 to hit with either the mace or flail.

- At 4th level, the peer is +2 to hit with the medium lance.

- At 5th level, the peer is +2 to hit with either the club or hammer (the same as was chosen at 2nd level).

- At 6th level, the peer is +2 to hit with either the footman's mace or footman's flail (the same as was chosen at 3rd level).

- At 7th level, the peer is +3 to hit with the medium lance.

This to-hit bonus does not apply to damage, and it does not allow the peer to strike monsters hit only by magical weapons. Weapons proficiencies are gained as per normal cavaliers. Peers have as many attacks per round as normal centaurs. A damage bonus of +1 hp per level is gained when the centaur peer uses a medium lance in a charge. They never use oil or poison, but magical devices will be used if appropriate.

The peer shares other abilities common to normal cavaliers described in *Unearthed Arcana*, pages 14-16: the ability to parry, an immunity to fear, a *protection from fear* aura of 10' radius (that affects only allied centaurs), a 90% immunity to all magical or magiclike powers that affect the mind, saving throws at +2 versus illusions, and the ability to function at negative hit points. Of course, peers have nothing to do with armor or mounts, though they will use shields of all sizes.

The centaur cavalier shows rank with feathers and trinkets fixed in his tail,

which is groomed continually to appear regal and commanding. This cavalier follows a code of conduct and ethics, but it is much narrower compared to the other chivalric versions. The peer's life is also full of glory, honor, bravery, pride, and unbridled courtesy, but only within centaur society. The peer gives no service nor offers any respect to noncentaurs, be they more powerful or not. The peer considers any such individuals to be possible dangers or, at best, facts of nature and circumstance to be studied and possibly dealt with (e.g., orcs or the weather).

[Articles on centaurs as PCs include: "The Centaur Papers," in issue #103, and "The Rest of the Papers," in issue #105.]

Orc barbarian

Just as the cavalier is the most elite of the centaurs, the barbarian (or vandal) is the most honored among orcs. Vandals do not, however, hold any protective responsibility toward the rest of the orcish community; these creatures are the ruling class. Orc barbarians train themselves, which ensures that only the strongest attain this "prestigious" profession.

Vandals are always neutral evil or chaotic evil. They use the attack and saving-throw tables of fighters, and the experience-point table (with modifications) of barbarians (see *Unearthed Arcana*, pages 18-21). A vandal's maximum level is 8th. Being the toughest of all in an orc clan, a vandal gains bonuses to hit and damage based on his strength, which is always 18 (roll 1d100 for percentile value, from 18/01 to 18/00). He also gains an additional +1 to hit and damage for every other level of experience gained (i.e., +1 at 3rd level, +2 at 5th level, and +3 at 7th level). Vandals do not gain bonuses to their armor classes based on dexterity, as human barbarians do. Orc barbarians start with 1 HD at 1st level, and gain an additional hit die (1d8) for every level above the first.

The weapon proficiency list of a vandal depends upon what is available to orcs of his tribe, though any sort of weapon is possible. He may use any armor or shield, and he may freely use oil or poison in combat. A vandal may make one hand-to-hand attack per round.

Orc barbarians also hate magic and will destroy magical items and spell-casters if such are recognized. Vandals never associate with mages or clerics, no matter the barbarian's level. Shamans and witch doctors are not allowed in a tribe ruled by a vandal, which makes the irreligious and vulgar vandals very unpopular with orcish gods. Of course, it is possible for an orc barbarian to use a magical weapon unwittingly, if he finds that it works well in combat and is not obviously magical (like a *flame tongue* or a *speaking sword*).

Of the other barbarian powers, the vandal does not have the natural ability to strike creatures normally requiring a magical weapon to strike, but he does




have all the saving-throw bonuses unique to barbarians. Orc members of this class also have all other primary and secondary abilities common to barbarians. Note that the primary ability of leadership works on all orcs, not just other barbarians. The locale of the tribe dictates the use of the barbarian's secondary skills and determines the number and type of tertiary abilities the vandal has. A vandal can also assemble a barbarian horde of orcs just as can the barbarian upon reaching the 8th level.

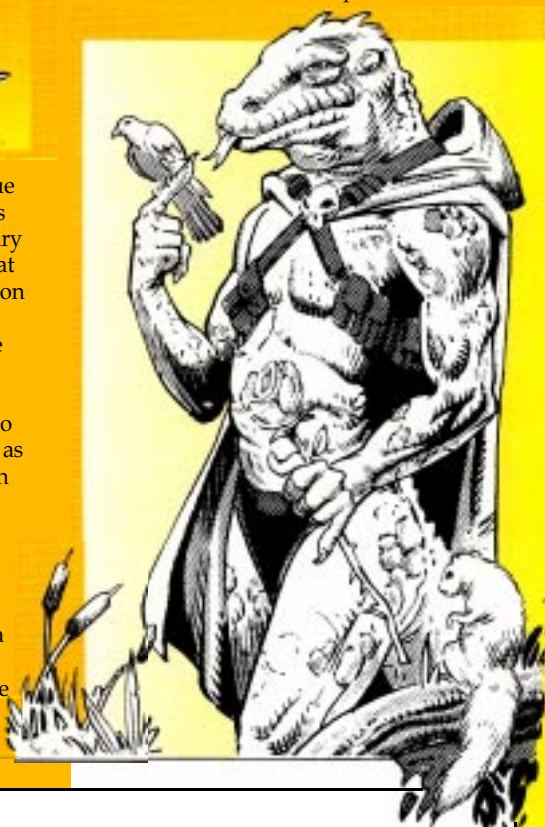
Vandals are usually found only among orcs living in especially harsh environments. Their tribes are primitive and brutal in the extreme, even for orcs. A meeting between an orc tribe ruled by a vandal and one ruled by a normal chief always leads to an immediate fight to the death between both sides.

Lizard-man druid

The dire erudite derives much use from the wilderness in aiding its tribe, helping the clan survive efficiently with little adverse effect on local wildlife. The lizard-man druid avoids metallic objects such as armor, weapons, and tools as much as possible, such as the scimitar and the khopesh sword. Armor is not used, though shields may be employed. Oil and poison are not used in combat.

The dire erudite is always neutral in alignment. This class uses the normal combat and saving-throw tables of clerics of equal level, and it uses the experience-point table of the druid (with modifications). A dire erudite starts out with 1 HD, gaining 1-4 hp per level after the first. Like normal druids, this version gains additional powers at the 3rd and 7th level. Note that in using the *shape change* ability gained at 7th level (maximum level), the dire erudite will transform into animals native to its environment, like frogs, snakes, and alligators. These druids, however, do not gain additional languages or receive saving-throw bonuses against fire and lightning.

Spells usable by dire erudites are listed in the Lizard-Man Druid Spell Table. 



Lizard-Man Druid Spell Table			
1st Level	2nd Level	3rd Level	4th Level
<i>Animal friendship</i>	<i>Create water</i>	<i>Cure disease</i>	<i>Animal summoning I</i>
<i>Detect balance</i>	<i>Cure light wounds</i>	<i>Hold animal</i>	<i>Cure serious wounds</i>
<i>Detect magic</i>	<i>Feign death</i>	<i>Know alignment</i>	<i>Dispel magic</i>
<i>Detect poison</i>	<i>Locate plants</i>	<i>Neutralize poison</i>	<i>Hold plant</i>
<i>Detect snares & pits</i>	<i>Obscurement</i>	<i>Plant growth</i>	<i>Repel insects</i>
<i>Entangle</i>	<i>Slow poison</i>	<i>Snare</i>	<i>Speak with plants</i>
<i>Locate animals</i>	<i>Trip</i>	<i>Spike growth</i>	
<i>Speak with animals</i>	<i>Warp wood</i>	<i>Summon insects</i>	

The Dragon's Bestiary

A weaver of spells and disaster

by Ed O'Connell

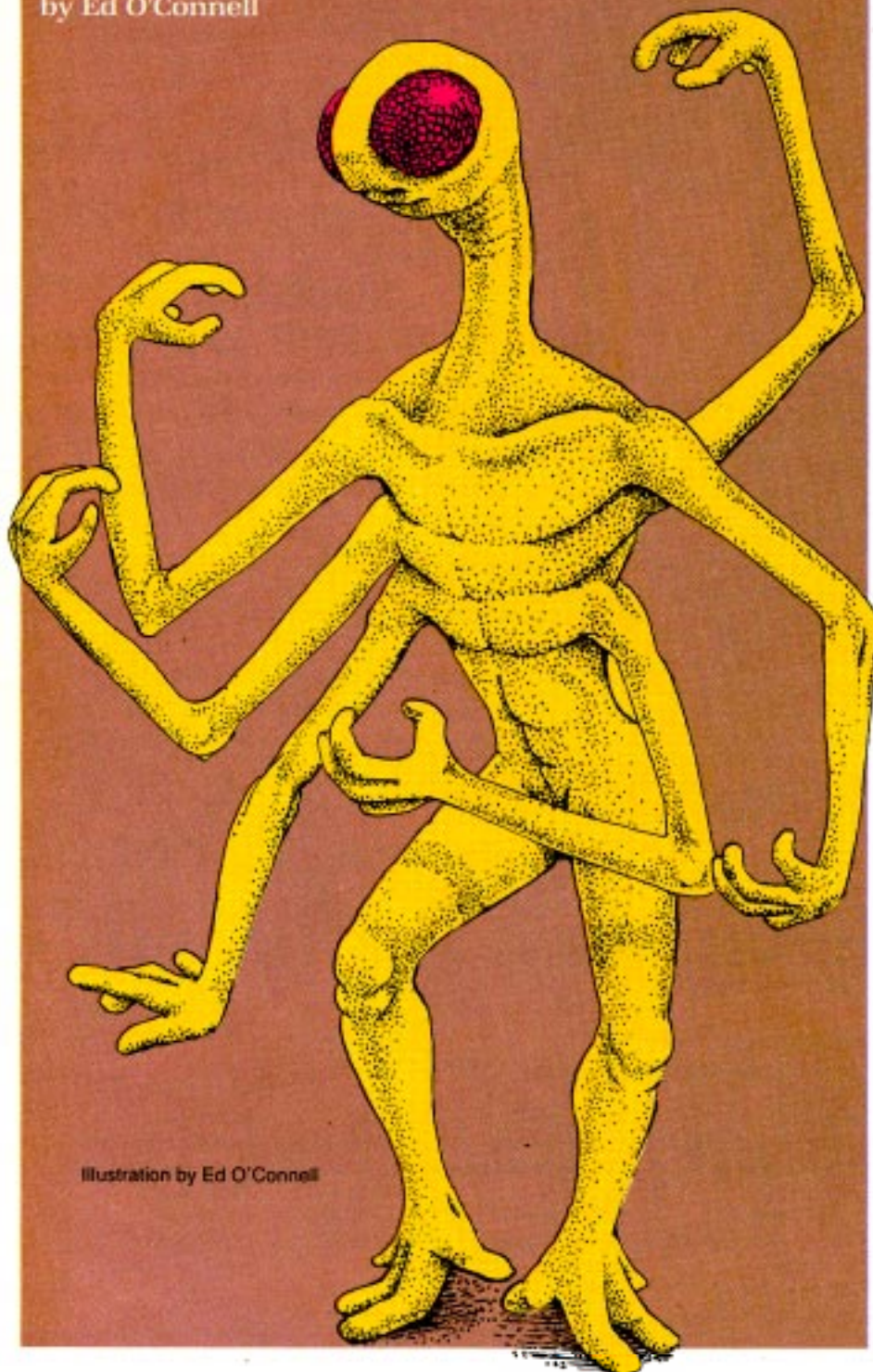


Illustration by Ed O'Connell

Spell Weaver

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: *Any*
FREQUENCY: *Very rare*
ORGANIZATION: *Solitary*
ACTIVITY CYCLE: *Any*
DIET: *Herbivore*
INTELLIGENCE: *Genius (17-18)*
TREASURE TYPE: *Magical items (see text)*
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*
NO. APPEARING: *1 (2-5 if on raid)*
ARMOR CLASS: *2*
MOVEMENT: *12*
HIT DICE: *10*
THACO: *11*
NO. OF ATTACKS: *Variable (spells)*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *As per wizard spells*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Surprise bonus when invisible*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Immune to effects of pain and to psionic and fear-based attacks; planar impenetrability; innate spell powers (detect magic and detect invisibility); invisibility at will*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *50%*
SIZE: *M (5' tall)*
MORALE: *Champion (16)*
XP VALUE: *10,000*

Spell weavers are nonhuman spell-casters of great power, originating from an alternate Prime Material plane. Only vaguely humanoid in appearance, they have a combination of mammalian, reptilian, and insectoid features. Aloof and inscrutable, spell weavers are generally regarded as intelligent, if bizarre. Although the race usually expresses little interest in humanity, a history of destructive encounters has earned them mankind's fearful respect.

Spell weavers are totally silent, using telepathy (10-mile radius) to communicate among themselves. Humans find that telepathic communication with spell weavers is extremely difficult and even dangerous, resulting in temporary insanity for any individual who attempts ESP or telepathic rapport and fails a save vs. spells (wisdom bonuses apply; insanity lasts 1d6 days, with effects as per the mage spell, *confusion*). Spell weavers have left written messages for humans, but such messages are often cryptic and confusing. Infrequent alliances with humans in order to acquire magical devices have been reported, however.

Spell weavers possess a keen interest in magical items and phenomena of all kinds. A group will organize to steal a unique magical device in a commando-like raid of hellish ferocity, invisibly bypassing outer guards to appear near the item itself. The group will destroy or incapacitate the guards, then seize the item and escape. Spell weavers automatically *detect magic* and *detect invisibility* in a 100' radius. Each can *plane shift* once per day, shifting only from its home plane to an alternate one or back again (the latter usually at the end of a raid).

Spell weavers are solitary creatures,

though it is possible to meet more than one if they are on a raid. They reproduce through a magical fissioning process that results in two identical spell weavers of half the size and strength of the original. It would appear they have no control over this process, as they have been known to divide even during crisis situations (1% chance per meeting of this occurring; process takes 5-10 rounds, during which time the individual makes no attacks). A spell weaver is immune to fear, including all magical fear-based attacks, though they will retreat if common sense so dictates. Their peculiar decentralized nervous systems render them resistant to pain and to all psionic attacks.

All spell weaver activities appear to be confined to the Prime Material planes. Each spell weaver can create a region of planar impenetrability around itself (200' radius) once per day for 10 rounds. All scrying attempts and planar travel into, out of, or through this area, whether by spell, artifact, psionics, or intrinsic ability, result in failure. This ability requires no expenditure of energy on the part of the spell weaver, although this effect will not be activated in a round in which the spell weaver has been surprised. The activation of this planar shield takes a full round of concentration during which the spell weaver cannot cast any spells.

Each spell weaver possesses a fixed assortment of spells that it casts solely through the use of complex arm and hand gestures, using no verbal or material components; the casting time for such spells is the same as for humans. Some of these spells are previously unknown to humanity, but usually they are mage spells of up to the 6th level (cast at the 12th level of ability). The segmented brain of a spell weaver supports magical multitasking, allowing it to cast multiple spells simultaneously. To cast a spell, a spell weaver uses as many arms as the spell has levels; thus a single creature could cast a fourth-level spell using four arms, while simultaneously casting a second-level spell with its other two arms. Spell weavers use this ability whenever they face multiple attackers. A spell weaver may cast two or more identical spells simultaneously (two fireballs, for example).

A spell weaver has a number of "spell points" (one point for each spell level, a first-level spell being equal to one, a second-level spell equal to two, etc.) equal to its hit points. It can use each spell in its arsenal any number of times within the limits of its spell-point total. Thus, a spell weaver with 43 hp can cast a number of spells each day adding up to 43 spell points. Spells are selected at the time of casting.

Spell weavers have the unsettling habit of lying dormant and invisible for months in various areas of magical interest (magical temples, castles, portals, dungeons, etc.), becoming active only if detected. When encountered in this fashion, they are generally murderous and implacable.

They always carry magical items (1-2 per creature); one item is always of the conventional sort (random roll for type, none cursed), and the additional item (if any) is a unique device that humans call the *chromatic disk*, described later. Any magical item may be employed at the same time a spell weaver casts any spells, devoting one or two arms (as necessary), to the effort.

A *chromatic disk* is a 6" -diameter disk of an unknown, indestructible substance; it glows with a bright light that slowly shifts through the visible spectrum, becoming red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet in a matter of seconds. The disk is a vessel of magical power that spell weavers can tap, thus increasing their effective spell-point total by a total of 10 points. Each disk releases magical energy as it is used, allowing the spell weaver to cast more of its spells. The disk is consumed in the process, evaporating as its energy is exhausted. A spell weaver may employ a disk in combat, devoting one arm to holding the disk.

All recorded human attempts at employing *chromatic disks* have resulted in explosive disaster (10d4 hp explosion in a 30' radius; material items must save vs. crushing blow). It is rumored that spell weavers use arcane means of their own to create such disks by drawing the magic out of enchanted items (such as swords, wands, or scrolls) that they have captured. This process permanently destroys the magical properties of the objects so used.

Spell weavers make their lairs in a bewildering variety of locations, including underground, outdoors within giant mutated trees, on magical floating platforms disguised as clouds, etc. All spell-weaver lairs contain 1-8 unusual pillars, being 10'-tall stone or wood columns covered with magical runes that are indecipherable to humans. Stolen magical items are sometimes (10%) found atop a pillar. While prolonged study of the runes on a column can be mentally damaging (save vs. petrification once per round or be *confused* for d10 rounds), incidental viewing produces only mild headaches. Touching the runes may have unpredictable magical effects (at the DM's whimsy).

The accompanying tables may be used to generate a spell weaver's bank of usable spells. A 1d4 roll is made on the Spell Weaver's Spells table for each being; then the particular spells each spell weaver has are generated using the Spell Selection Tables. A spell weaver can cast only these spells and no others. Feel free to augment the lists and manipulate the results in order to produce an interesting spell weaver.

Spell Weaver's Spells

1d4 Spells

- 1 2 offensive, 2 defensive, 1 utility (maximum spell level 5)
- 2 3 offensive, 3 defensive, 2 utility (maximum spell level 6)
- 3 4 offensive, 4 defensive, 3 utility (maximum spell level 6)
- 4 4 offensive, 4 defensive, 4 utility (maximum spell level 6)

**Spell Selection Table:
Offensive Spells**

1d20 Spell (level)

- 1-2 *Magic missile* (1)
- 3 *Web* (2)
- 4 *Ray of enfeeblement* (2)
- 5 *Fireball* (3)
- 6 *Hold person* (3)
- 7 *Lightning bolt* (3)
- 8 *Slow* (3)
- 9 *Confusion* (4)
- 10 *Evard's black tentacles* (4)
- 11 *Fear* (4)
- 12 *Ice storm* (4)
- 13 *Cloudkill* (5)
- 14 *Cone of cold* (5)
- 15 *Conjure elemental* (5)
- 16 *Chain lightning* (6)
- 17 *Death spell* (6)
- 18 *Disintegrate* (6)
- 19 *Stone to flesh* (6)
- 20 Unique spell (DM's creation) (1-6)

**Spell Selection Table:
Defensive Spells**

1d20 Spell (level)

- 1 *Armor* (1)
- 2 *Feather fall* (1)
- 3 *Shield* (1)
- 4-6 *Invisibility* (2)
- 7 *Wizard lock* (2)
- 8-12 *Dispel magic* (3)
- 13 *Protection from normal missiles* (3)
- 14 *Fire shield* (4)
- 15 *Polymorph self* (4)
- 16 *Stoneskin* (4)
- 17 *Wall of fire* (4)
- 18 *Anti-magic shell* (6)
- 19 *Globe of invulnerability* (6)
- 20 Unique spell (DM's creation) (1-6)

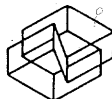
**Spell Selection Table:
Utility Spells**

1d20 Spell (level)

- 1 *Darkness, 15' radius* (2)
- 2-3 *Levitate* (2)
- 4 *Clairvoyance* (3)
- 5 *Fly* (3)
- 6 *Dimension door* (4)
- 7 *Wizard eye* (4)
- 8-10 *Passwall* (5)
- 11-15 *Teleport* (5)
- 16 *Wall of iron* (5)
- 17-18 *Contingency* (6)
- 19 *Invisible stalker* (6)
- 20 Unique spell (DM's creation) (1-6)

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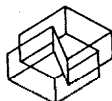
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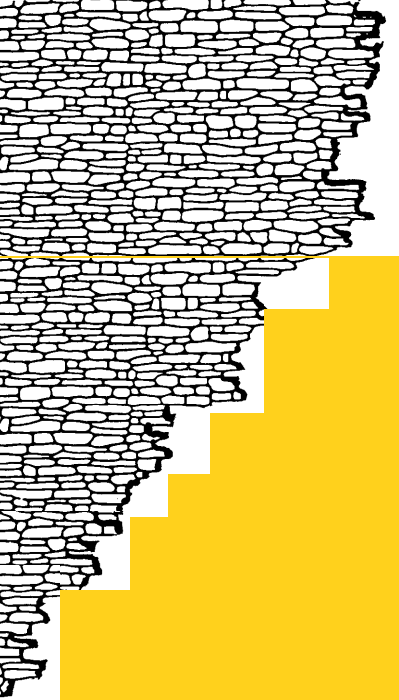
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The Affordable Fort

Build your own castle—from cardboard!

©1990 by Ed Dobrianski

After purchasing DRAGON® issue #86, I was very impressed with the cardboard cut-out castle "Great Stoney" featured in that issue. I became intrigued with the idea of making that castle on a much larger scale. Such a castle, I thought, would be perfect for displaying my miniatures. Although there are already castles, temples, and similar items that can be purchased through most hobby stores, most of these are very expensive. I surmised that I could construct my own castle, principally out of ordinary cardboard boxes, for less than \$40. It could be larger and more detailed than any castle that is currently on the market.

Cardboard is the major building material used in the construction of my castles because it is inexpensive and very easy to work with. Reinforced, it can be extremely strong. It is not brittle and can easily absorb a small impact without major damage. If it is damaged, it can be easily repaired with additional cardboard. Painted, it will become semi-water resistant. Used properly, it is a stronger and more durable material than most people would believe.

I decided to make my model of Great Stoney four times its original size (it was about $1/500$ th scale). An exact reproduction in 25-mm ($1/72$) scale would have been closer to seven times its size, but this would make it too large to easily fit through a standard-size door. Even at four times the size, its plywood base measures $3' \times 3'$, and the height of its main tower is over a foot. (If you intend to make your own castle, be wary of the size. Generally, the larger the castle, the longer it will take to complete. You may later discover that you lack a large enough area to properly display it!)

Getting ready

Designing your castle requires a fair amount of preparation. First draw a rough sketch of the type of castle you wish to build. You can use a picture or map of a real medieval castle as your guide. Avoid anything that is too complex; be realistic. Remember that it will take many hours to see your project to its conclusion, and complexity adds time, money, and effort.

Next, draw your castle in great detail; sketch out front, side and top views on graph paper. Drafting skills will prove to be a definite asset. Next, decide how to break the castle design down into individual fold-up pieces, as was done with Great Stoney, and draw out each piece. To get the proper size of each piece, simply multiply all dimensions on your drawings according to the size you want the constructed castle to be. You may discover that many sections of the castle (e.g., towers and walls) are identical throughout the design; this greatly speeds construction. Once you have drawn out one such section, the others are easily made, using the first as a guide.

You will next need to assemble your building materials: cardboard, bristol board, glue, wall patch material, shelf paper (wood grain finish), cocktail sticks, a plywood base, and grass mat and lichen (for local vegetation). Model railroad scenery may also be used. Other materials may be added as the castle is constructed (e.g., flagpoles, banners, chains for the drawbridge, models of siege weapons, etc.).

The proper tools will also help: a selection of X-acto or utility knives, scissors, a metal ruler or straightedge (to keep cutting lines straight), scrap wood working surface, a small putty knife, a small paint brush, and (if you like) an airbrush.

Doing the work

Transfer the drawings of the cut-out pieces required for assembling your castle to the cardboard in pencil. (In Great Stoney's case, this meant redrawing the heavy-stock pieces from the center of issue #86.) Cut out the cardboard pieces with an X-acto or utility knife; use extreme care, as these knives are very sharp. If a straightedge is used, make sure it is metallic so that the knife does not cut into it. To avoid damage, do all cutting on a protected surface, such as a piece of scrap plywood. Gently score the cardboard with your knife where folds should be. Whenever possible, make all folds on the inside of the piece (it may be easier to fold the cardboard using a metal straightedge). With the piece folded in the desired shape, check it for the proper fit against other pieces. If it proves to be right, make all other pieces that are identical to that one, using the first as a guide.

After the cardboard pieces have been folded and checked for fit, they should be painted. First use a light-colored flat paint; an off-white or light gray color is usually best. Next, dark castle bricks should be painted on. Most bricks appear gray, brown, or reddish-brown in color. Normally, it would take forever to paint so many bricks, but by making a few simple stencils, this task can be accomplished in much less time. Cut a piece of bristol board about the size of a standard piece of paper. Draw your brick pattern on it, leaving a generous gap between the bricks where the mortar would be. Next, cut out all the brick shapes, revealing the finished stencil. The stencil is then placed over the previously painted piece. Using spray paint or an airbrush, spray the paint onto the stencil; after it dries, remove the sten-

cil to reveal the brick pattern. Remember, bricks are not identical; making some darker or lighter than others will add to the realism of the finished castle. For the tops of towers or similar round pieces, use another stencil on which the brick shapes follow a circular pattern. You can paint any bricked areas on the plywood base in the same manner.

Although your castle should not be exposed to water, high humidity may affect the glued surfaces over time. Use a high-quality glue that dries transparent and waterproof. Reinforce all large pieces with additional cardboard braces inside them. While a glued piece is drying, hold it together with heavy twine wrapped many times around it. Later the twine can be easily removed.

Assembly

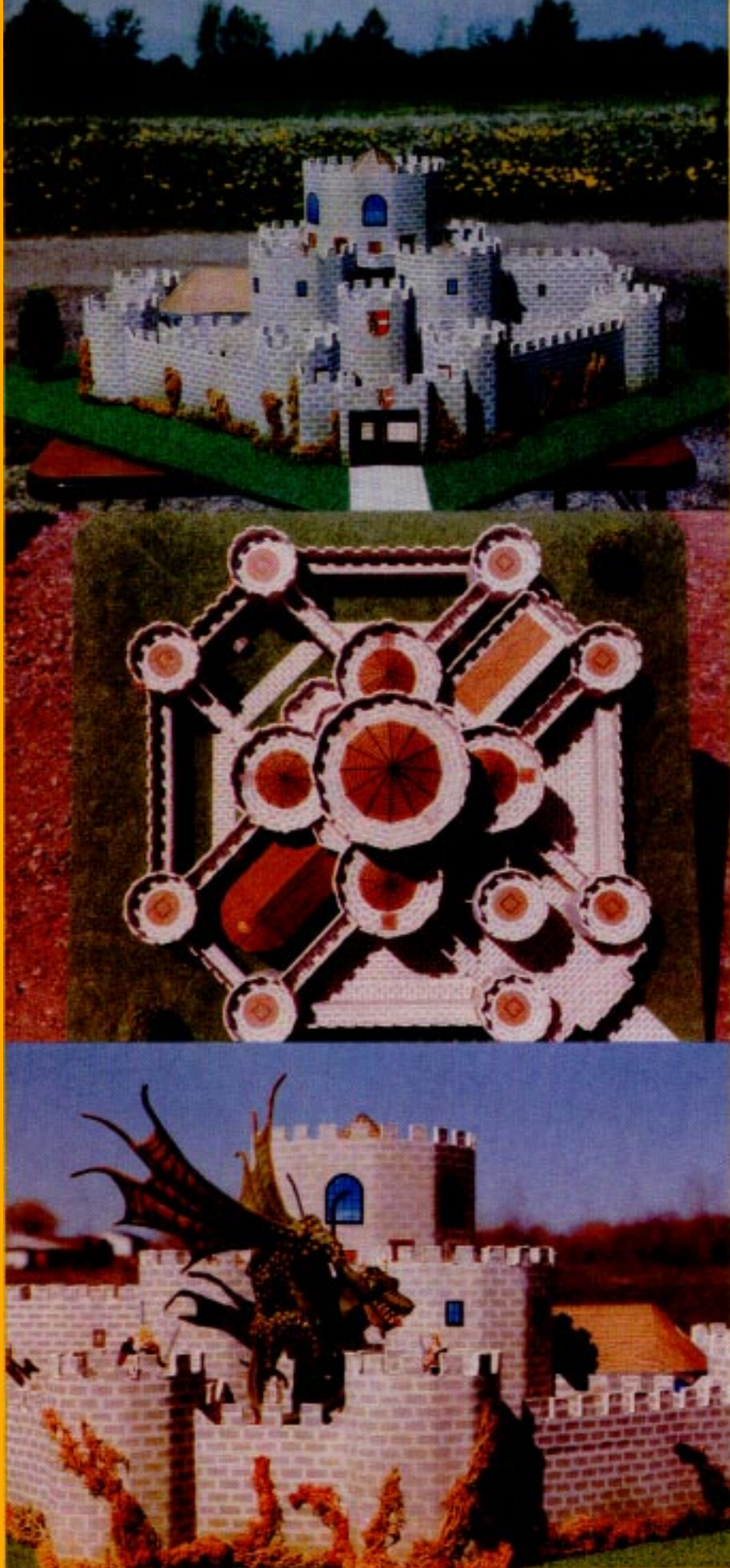
Prepare the plywood base by beveling all four corners. Depending on the size of the base, I find using a bevel depth of 1"-to-1' ratio works best. The beveled corners enhance the overall appearance of the castle. On the base, draw a floor plan of where all the pieces are to fit. Cut and glue the grass mat to all appropriate areas of the base. Also, glue strips of grass mat to the exposed ends of the plywood. Grass mats can be purchased in hobby stores where model-train accessories are sold.

After the base has been prepared, carefully glue the castle pieces together, then glue them to the base. Start from the center and work your way out, checking and measuring the positions of all pieces before you glue them in place. Using wall-patching material and a small putty knife, fill in all exposed ends and crevices in the cardboard structure. Later, when the patching material dries, you may paint over it using a small paint brush.

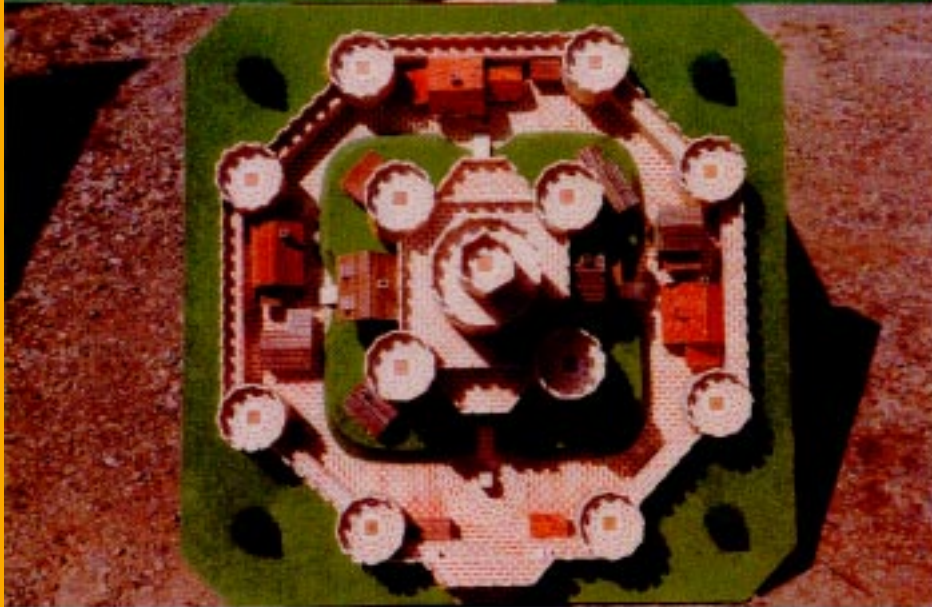
Detail

Very lightly paint or airbrush a moldy green color over areas of the castle that contact the grass mat. In general, you should spray more heavily closer to the base. This will give the castle the realistic appearance of moss growing on the bricks. Later, lichen (a small flowerless plant that is available in many different colors and can be purchased in most hobby stores) can be glued onto various parts of the castle and its grounds. It should be most heavily placed on the outside of the castle walls and towers, closest to the base, to resemble vines and shrubs growing up and along the walls. Another nice touch is to add plastic trees from model railroad scenery around the castle grounds. Don't get carried away; too much can be worse than too little.

Windows can be easily made by airbrushing a glossy light-blue paint on a piece of bristol board. Once it dries, draw in a brown or black window frame using a permanent waterproof marker. Finally, cut out and glue the windows in the desired locations. Many different window sizes



Great Stoney castle



and shapes can be used. An even simpler method to make windows is to find an old model airplane box and cut out window shapes from the sky background on the box. Glossy cardboard works best, as it reflects light and gives the appearance of a real window.

Doors and trapdoors are made in a similar fashion. I recommend that you use shelf paper that has a simulated wood-grain finish. Simply draw in the door frame, cut it out, and glue it on. Most shelf paper already has adhesive on the back.

A gate or portcullis can be made by gluing cocktail sticks together. Lay two or more sticks horizontally. Next, glue more sticks vertically on top of them, leaving about one eighth of an inch spacing in between. Later, glue additional sticks horizontally to the opposite side, matching the position of the other sticks. Allow these to dry, then paint the gate gray, brown, or black. For additional realism, lightly airbrush a moldy green color to the finished gate.

Other structures

With a little perseverance, just about any type of structure can be built. Small bases for 25-mm miniatures are best made out of wood. Finished wooden blocks for flooring are excellent for bases, because they are already cut and easy to work with. Most of these are made of solid oak and can be bought by the bundle in lumber supply stores. Put each piece in a vice, then cut it into the desired shape using a saber saw. (Save all waste material, as you might use it later.) A brick or stone-block pattern can be made by cutting criss-crossed grooves into the wood using the saber saw. Finally, paint and add finely cut lichen to your base to give a touch of realism to the finished work.

Summary

Many different types of structures can be created using simple and inexpensive materials. Look around your home, and you may find just about everything you will need. Building a castle is by far the best way to enhance and display your miniatures. As with anything worthwhile, a great deal of time and patience is required. A castle may take many hours or days to complete. Do a little work each day, and watch it develop into the finished work. Your greatest reward will be in the personal satisfaction of doing it yourself.

[*"Great Stonery"* was reprinted in *The Art of DRAGON Magazine*. Additional 25-mm buildings and structures made of heavy-stock paper may be found in the following TSR products: *FR8 Cities of Mystery*, the *WGA Falcon series of modules*, and the *Castles boxed set*.]

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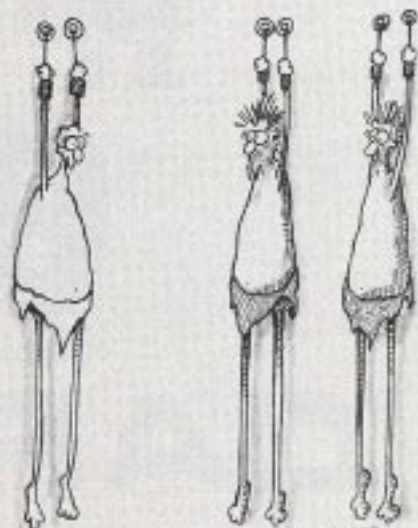
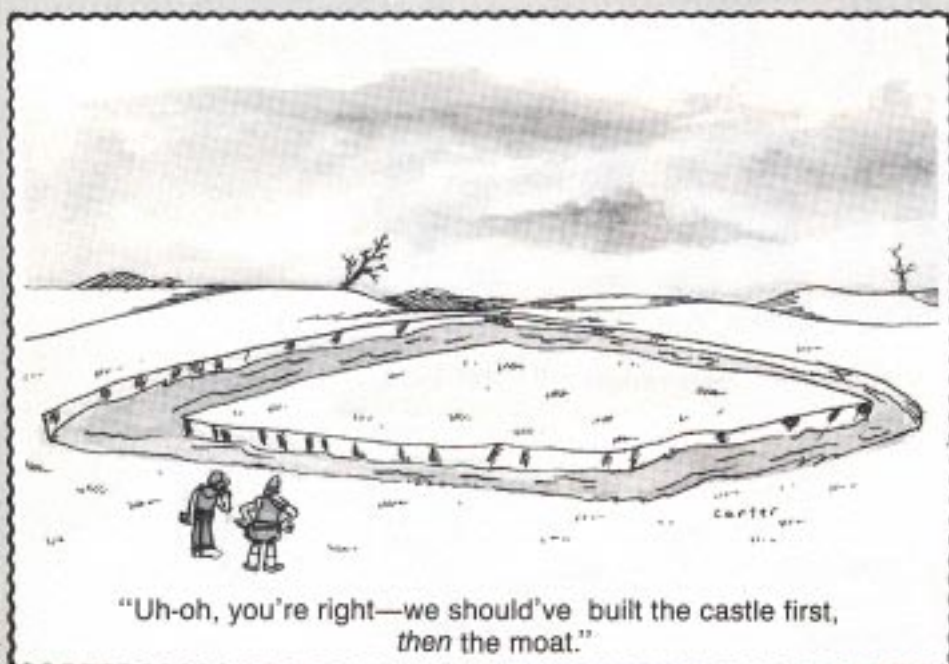


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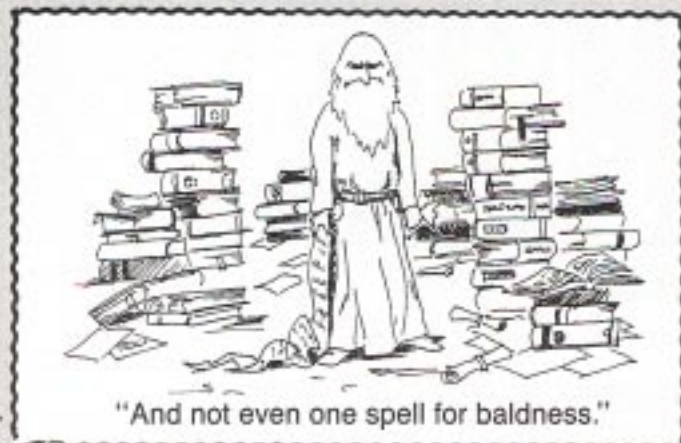
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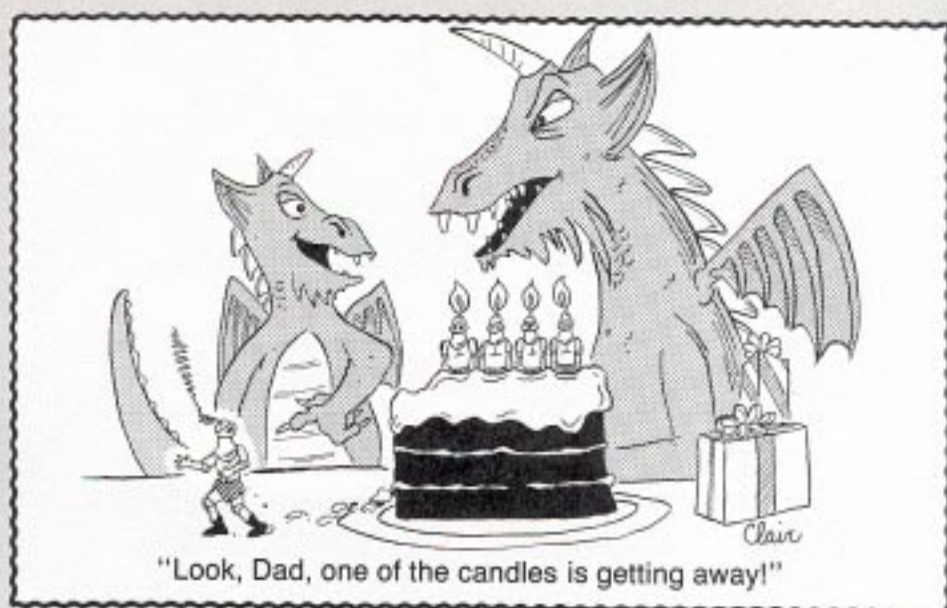


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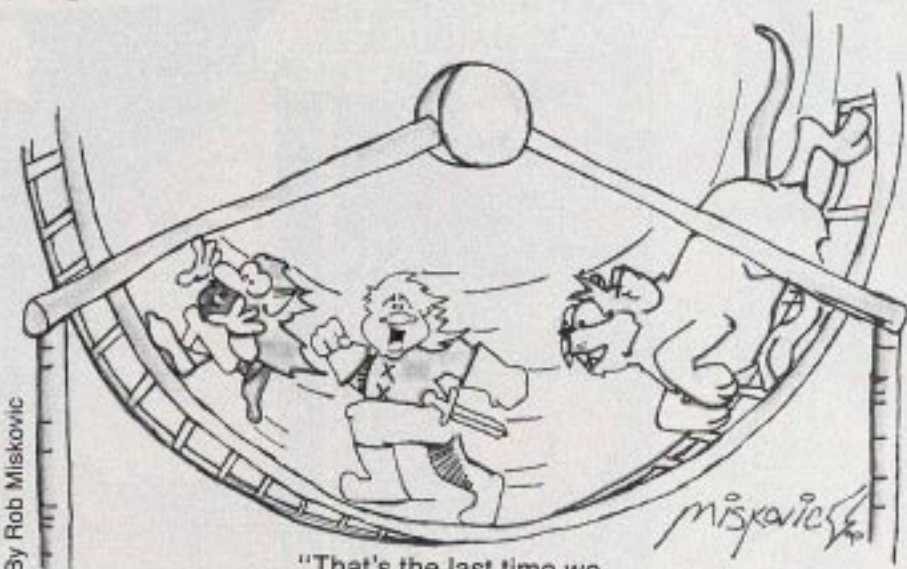
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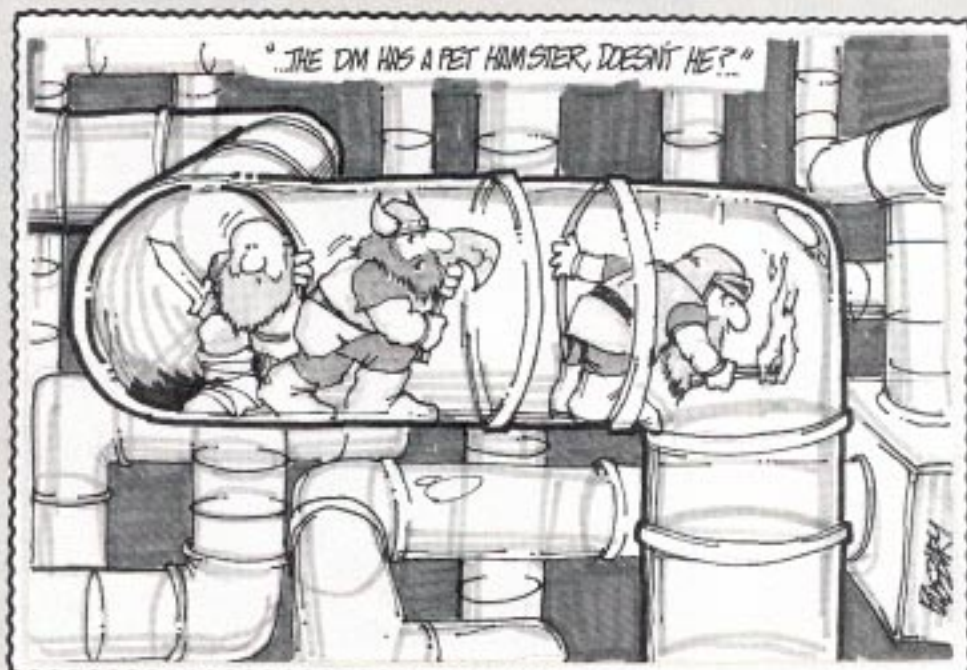




By Doug Clair



By Rob Miskovic



By Joseph Pillsbury

ROB AND FIN ESCAPED FROM JAIL WITH THE HELP OF OSGOOD & BRENNA.

YOU'D BETTER BE RIGHT ABOUT THIS, HORTON.

IF YOU'VE WAKENED ME UNNECESSARILY...

MY MEN WERE QUITE SURE IT'S SHE, LORD RED HAND.

WE DON'T OFTEN GET ELVEN WARRIORS IN OUR JAILS.

WHERE IS SHE?!

I-I DON'T KNOW, MY LORD!

S-SHE MUST HAVE ESCAPED!

BRIBED YOUR SLACKARD GUARDS, MORE LIKELY!

BECKMAN, ROUSE THE GUARD AND SEARCH THE TOWN.

VARGA, TAKE MY FASTEST HORSES, A DOZEN OF MY BEST MEN, AND A TRACKER. MAKE SURE SHE HASN'T FLED BY ROAD.

THAT ELF WITCH CAN'T HAVE MUCH OF A HEAD START.

FIND HER AND BRING HER TO ME. KILL ANY WHO TRY TO STOP YOU.

ELSEWHERE...

WHAT A LOVELY DAY.

WOULD YOU LIKE SOME
FRIED CHICKEN?

YES, ISN'T IT.

ROB?

HUH? - WHAT?

YOU WERE DOZING.

LET'S STOP AWHILE.

WE SHOULD KEEP MOVING.
UGO MAY HAVE SENT
MEN AFTER US.

THE HORSES CAN'T GO
MUCH LONGER WITHOUT
REST.

AND WE ALL NEED
SOMETHING TO EAT.

OKAY. YOU REST, I'LL
KEEP WATCH.

DON'T WORRY.
WE'LL GET YOUR
MEMORY BACK.

Damn.

THE HUT OF THE HAG
ISN'T FAR NOW.

BRENNA... THANKS
FOR ALL YOU'VE DONE.

I CAN'T SEE A
THING THROUGH
THIS RAIN.

THEY COULD BE RIGHT
ON TOP OF US FOR ALL
I KNOW.

WE'D BETTER GET MOVING THEN.

WRITING &
COLORING

Stephen D.
Sullivan

ART

John M. Hebert

LETTERING

Matt Mattick

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ROBINSON'S WAR

PART 8

MEANWHILE, AT
THE CASTLE OF
THE WITCH QUEEN.

WHAT MUST I DO TO
PROVE MY LOVE?

WHEN THE TIME COMES,
YOU WILL KNOW.

NOK
NOK

YES? WHAT IS IT?

LORD KALIL RETURNS FROM
THE FRONT, YOUR MAJESTY.

GO NOW.

MY QUEEN.

ESCORT LORD
KALIL TO MY
CHAMBERS.

I WANT TO KNOW HOW
MY WAR PROGRESSES.

NEXT: **WANTED
DEAD OR ALIVE**



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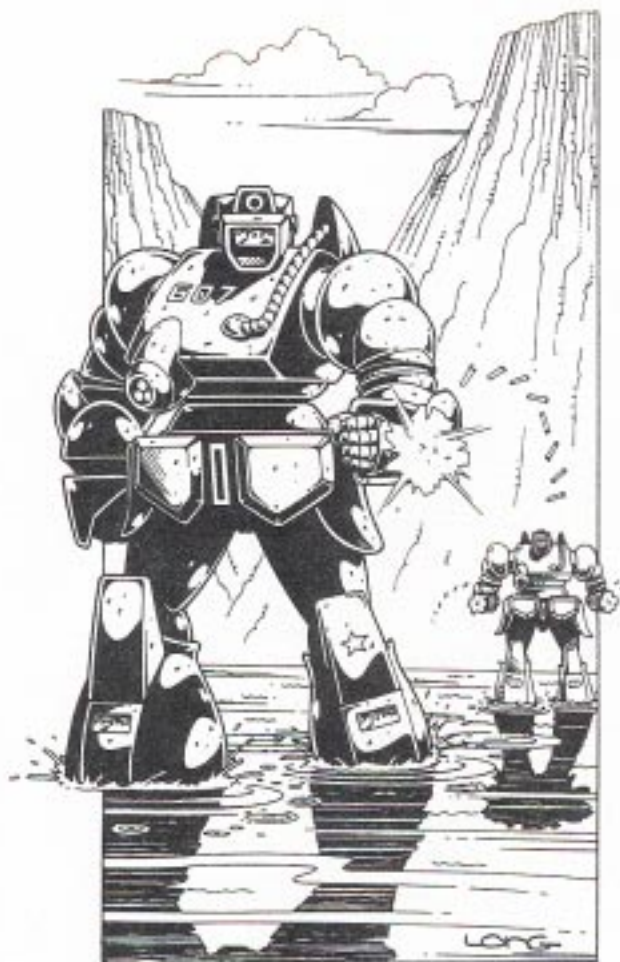
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CONVENTION CALENDAR

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 and succinct.

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 December issue is the last Monday of October. Announcements for North American and Pacific conventions must be mailed to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. Announcements for Europe must be posted an additional month before the deadline to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, TSR Limited, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, 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 the magazine editors at TSR, Inc., (414) 246-3625 (U.S.A.). Questions or changes concerning European conventions should be directed to TSR Limited, (0223) 212517 (U.K.).

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AUG-CON II, November 9-11

AU Gamers are proud to announce that this convention will take place at the Sheraton Tara Hotel in Parsippany, N.J. Featured events include RPGA™ tournaments, a game for charity, costume and miniatures contests, an auction, and a dealers' room. Registration: \$10/day at the door. Call the hotel for special room rates: (201) 515-2000, ext. 5800; be sure to mention the convention. Write to: AU Gamers, c/o Oakwood Village Apts., Bldg. #26, Apt. #9, Flanders NJ 07836; or call: (201) 927-8097.

NEBULOUS CON II, November 9-11

Penn State University—New Kensington campus will be the site of this gaming convention. Various role-playing and strategic games will be featured, along with a video room, and a costume contest. Sleeping space in the gym will be available. Registration: \$13/weekend preregistered and \$4 for Friday, \$7 for Saturday or Sunday, and \$15/weekend at the door. Send an SASE to: NEBULOUS CON II, c/o Penn State New Kensington, 3550 Seventh Street Rd., New Kensington PA 15068.

RECON II, November 9-11

Sponsored by the Colorado Springs Gaming Assoc., with the U.S. Air Force Academy, this convention will be held at the Sheraton Hotel North in Colorado Springs, Colo. Events include all types of historical, SF, and fantasy gaming. Other activities include vendors, displays, videos, an SCA demo, and an auction. Registration: \$10 postmarked before November 1st; \$13 at the door, plus \$1 per game entered. Write to: Dick Fickes, 2045 Chapel Hills Dr., Colorado Springs CO 80920; or call: (719) 599-3688.

KETTERING GAME CONVENTION, November 10-11

This gaming convention will be held in the Charles I. Lathrem Senior Center in Kettering, Ohio. Events include FRPGs, DUNGEON!®, CIVILIZATION*, CIRCUS MAXIMUS*, DIPLOMACY*, ACQUIRE*, RAIL BARON*, STOCKS & BONDS*, RAILWAY RIVALS*, NAVAL WAR*, RISK*, MONOPOLY*, and TALISMAN* games. Dealers will be present, and there will be an auction. Registration: \$2/day or \$3/weekend for those age 13 and over; \$50/day for those 12 and under. Write to: Bob Van Gruenigen, 2013 Gay Dr., Kettering OH 45420.

PROVOCATION, November 10-11 *

Organized by the Quebec Gamers' Assoc. (AQJS), this convention will be held at Pierre-Dupuy High School in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Activities include 33 hours of nonstop gaming, plus an auction, open gaming, an art show, and a figurine contest. Registration: \$21 U.S./weekend and \$13 U.S./day. Write to: PROVOCATION, Box 63, Station M, Montreal, Quebec,

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CANADA HIV 3L6; or call Christine: (514) 596-0115 or Daniel: (514) 252-3032.

TURP-CON, November 17-19

This gaming convention will be held at the Torquay Boys' Grammar School in Torquay, Devon, England. Events include AD&D®, PARANOIA*, MERP*, ROLEMASTER*, WARHAMMER 40,000*, BLOOD BOWL*, and D&D® games, miniatures demos, painting contests, videos, and gaming tournaments. Registration: £0.50, plus a £1.50 fee to play (all fees are one-half price to students). Send an SASE to: Richard Barrow, 169 Windsor Rd., Ellacombe, Torquay, Devon, GREAT BRITAIN, TQ1 1SR; or call: (0803) 297314 evenings.

CONTEX 8, November 23-25

This convention will be held at the Hilton Southwest in Houston, Tex. Guests include Robert E. Vardeman, Sherlock, and Willie Siros. Activities include gaming, merchants, an art show, costuming, writers' workshops, filking, films and videos, and the Contex Cross-Tavern Cosmic Tour. Dealers are welcome! Write to: FRIENDS OF FANDOM, P.O. Box 266996, Houston TX 77207-6996; or call: (713) 729-6733.

EUROPEAN GEN CON® GAMES FAIR 1990 November 30-December 2

Europe's largest residential gaming convention will be held in Camber Sands, Rye, Sussex. Guests of honor include TSR's Blake Mobley, Jim Ward, Jeff Easley, Harold Johnson, Jean Rabe, and free-lancers Larry Elmore and Tom Wham. Tournaments include AD&D® European Open, BUCK ROGERS™, STAR WARS*, 2300 AD*, SPELLJAMMER™, CALL OF CTHULHU*, BATTLESYSTEM™, and BATTLETECH*, games. Registration: £39.95 including accommodation.

Write to: EUROPEAN GEN CON® Games Fair, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge, CB1 3LB ENGLAND.

TROPICON 9, November 30-December 2

This convention will be held at the Ft. Lauderdale Airport Hilton hotel. Guests include Hal Clement and Bruce Pelz. Events include programming, filking, an art show, a video room, a dealers' room, a banquet, a trivia contest, a masquerade, and gaming. Registration: \$20 until Nov. 1; fees will be higher at the door. Write to: TROPICON 9; c/o South Florida Science Fiction Society, P.O. Box 70143, Ft. Lauderdale FL 33307; or call Tony Parker at: (407) 391-4380.

SYNDICON III, December 8

This convention will be held at the International Inn in Orlando, FL. The guest of honor is Rembert N. Parker, RPGA™ Regional Director. Events include one- and two-round RPGA™ AD&D® tournaments, with BATTLETECH*, ILLUMINATI*, CAR WARS*, CALL OF CTHULHU*, SHADOWRUN*, SPELLJAMMER™, DIPLOMACY*, and DRAGONQUEST™ games. Registration: \$8; \$6 for RPGA™ Network members; \$10 at the door. All fees include four free events. Write to: SYNDICON III, 11324 Porto Court, Orlando FL 32821; or call: (407) 857-1896 or (407) 788-3014.

ROACH-CON '91, January 19, 1991

The first kind-of-annual convention will be held at La Roche College and is sponsored by Project Achievement. Events include AD&D®, TOP SECRET/S.I.™, and BATTLETECH* games. Other activities include movies, vendors, and a

miniatures- painting contest with an entry fee of \$2 per figure. Registration: \$5 preregistered; or \$7.50 at the door. Write to: ROACH-CON '91, La Roche College, Box 22, Allison Park PA 15101; or call Bob at: (412) 793-6028 or (412) 341-6450.

JANCON '91, January 19-20

This two-day gaming convention will be held at the Quality Inn Conference Center in New Haven, Conn. Events include AD&D®, BATTLETECH*, and DIPLOMACY* games, with miniatures painting, movies, and a dealers' room. Other activities include a banquet on the 20th and a benefit game with all proceeds going to Alzheimer's research. Send an SASE to: JANCON '91, P.O. Box 822, Shelton CT 06484.

PANDEMONIUM VIII, January 19-20

This convention will be held at the Ryerson Hub Cafeteria, Jorgenson Hall, Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, in Toronto, Ontario. Highlights include two game auctions, over 50 games, a miniatures contest, and many local dealers. Prizes will be awarded to tournament winners. Registration: \$10 (Canadian)/day. Write to: PANDEMONIUM VIII, c/o 17B Wales Ave., Toronto, Ontario, CANADA M5T 1J2; or call: (416) 597-1934.

ADVENTURERS' INN II, January 26-27

This gaming convention will be held at the Stockton Growers' Hall in Stockton, Calif. A medieval/fantasy atmosphere will highlight this gathering of gamers. Events include official and open gaming, SCA demos, a 36-hour campaign, a costume contest, and a dealers' area. Registration: \$15/weekend until Jan. 1; \$13/day or \$20/weekend at the door. A \$3 discount goes to anyone in medieval/fantasy costume. Write to: ADVENTURERS' INN, P.O. Box 3669, Turlock CA 95381.



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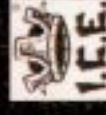
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SAGE ADVICE

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 Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, United Kingdom. We are no longer able to make personal replies; please send no SASEs with your questions (old SASEs are being returned with writers' guidelines for the magazine).

This month, the sage considers a few magical enigmas. Page numbers refer to the AD&D® 2nd Edition game books unless otherwise stated (one question refers to the D&D® Immortals set).

One of my characters was recently tricked into donning a girdle of femininity/masculinity. What options do I have for getting the character back to normal? If the character finds another such girdle and puts it on, will this change him back? My DM says this won't work because the item's description says a wish has only a 50% chance of restoring the character's original sex. Obviously, a polymorph other spell could restore the character, but I'm leery of dispel magic and anti-magic shell spells.

It isn't often that I get a question with so many . . . possibilities.

What a *wish* will do is irrelevant in this case; the *girdle's* absolute power to change the character's gender is stronger than the *wish's* general power to remove misfortune. (Several powerful miscellaneous magical items are more potent within their limited portfolios than *wishes* are.) If the character dons a second girdle, he might have his gender restored, or he might lose all gender—and your DM might rule that this is more likely than the standard 10% chance (DMG, page 170), since the character is fiddling around with things best left alone. But your character's gender *will* be altered if he puts on a second *girdle*, as these items are quite potent.

There is nothing in the *polymorph other* spell listing to suggest that secondary characteristics like age or gender can be

altered by the spell. Individual DMs are free to include the ability to change gender along with form, but players shouldn't count on it without consulting the DM. Furthermore, assuming that your DM does allow *polymorph other* to change gender, there would be *at least* a 50% chance that the attempt would fail. A *wish* certainly is more powerful than the 4th-level *polymorph other*. If the character was *polymorphed* back to his original gender, a system-shock roll would be required. A successful *dispel magic* would change the character back to the "wrong" gender and would require another system-shock roll.

You are quite right to be worried about *anti-magic shells*, but note that an *anti-magic shell* cannot permanently dispel a long-term effect such as *polymorph other*. The effect temporarily dampens magic, it does not dispel it. If the *polymorphed* character entered an *anti-magic shell*, he would be forced back into the "wrong" form, and this would require a system-shock roll. Upon leaving the *anti-magic shell*, the character immediately would resume the "correct" form, and another system-shock roll would be in order.

How is each spell's school chosen? Also please explain how the various pairs of opposing schools of magic were chosen. What is the nature of the opposition? Why do illusionists have to contend with an extra opposition school?

Generally, spells are grouped into schools according to the types of effects they produce and, by extension, the type of power used to produce their effects. Abjuration blocks, dispels, or protects; alteration produces changes in its target; conjuration/summoning brings material from some other place; enchantment/charm grants its users or targets special abilities; greater divination reveals information; illusion/phantasm causes perceived changes that are not real; invocation/evocation creates matter or energy; and necromancy provides or removes the energy of life. See *The Complete Wizard's Handbook* for detailed explanations of each school.

No two schools of magic are mutually hostile due to their natures; opposition arises from how the spells are learned and

used. Specialist wizards employ methods of study and mental discipline that enhance their abilities to use certain types of magic and erode their aptitudes for others. This is why generalists can freely use magic from opposing schools while specialists cannot. Specific pairs of opposed schools were selected according to common sense and game balance. For example, if invokers spend a lot of time learning how to bring things into being from nothing, they probably neglect to learn how to call things from one place to another. Illusionists, who spend their time trying to create believable unrealities, have a hard time casting magic that produces and channels real energies; there are three such schools: invocation/evocation, necromancy, and abjuration.

I've noticed that a few spells are parts of two opposing schools of magic. For example, the limited wish spell is both conjuration/summoning and invocation/evocation. Can specialist wizards from either school use such spells? That is, can conjurers or invokers use limited wish? How is it that a spell can be from two opposing schools anyway?

A specialist wizard can use any spell that falls within the schools allowed to him, even if the spell in question also falls under an opposing school. Certain effects, such as *limited wishes*, can be produced in more than one way; in this case, what is *wished* for can be plucked from some other place and delivered, or it can simply be created to order.

How do you calculate a multi-classed or dual-classed character's personality score or chance to detect scrying?

For a multiclassed character, use either the character's highest level or the level of the pertinent class. For example, a fighter/wizard would use his fighter level when calculating his personality score in a conflict with an egotistical magical weapon, but would use his wizard level to determine his chance to detect scrying. The DM should decide which method to use, then use it consistently. Dual-classed characters use the level of the class in which they are

currently active. If the character has more experience in the previous class, he can use the higher level but must pay the experience penalty for reverting to that class (*PHB*, page 45).

Will a spider climb spell negate the effects of a grease spell?

This is up to the DM, but I suggest not. The coating from the *grease* spell would keep a *spider climbing* creature from adhering to a surface if that creature failed a save vs. spells, as per the *grease* spell description. A *spider climbing* creature (or any other creature normally able to climb sheer surfaces or ceilings) can still traverse *greased* surfaces; however, if they fail their saves, they fall.

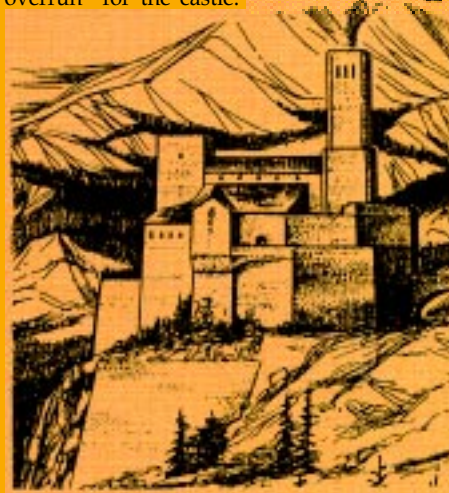
There is a contradiction in the *D&D® Immortals* rules regarding the effects of mortal magic on Immortals. Page 6 of the *Players' Guide to Immortals* says that Immortal minds are immune to mortal magic, but their corporeal forms are not. But page 16 says mortal magic is ineffective against Immortals in any form.

Page 6 is right. The second sentence under the heading "Limits on Use" on page 16 should be deleted.

I'm confused by the castle construction section of *The Castle Guide*. When using smaller work forces (page 60), is the savings calculated once per project, or more often? The "Larger Work Forces" section on the same page suggests that the savings be calculated per week, but if that's the case a character could get a castle for free just by cutting the work force in half and waiting patiently through the increased construction time. Also, if a character is feeling frugal but still is in a hurry, what's to keep him from reducing the work force but keeping it above 75% of normal, thus gaining substantial savings and not extending construction time?

The savings from reduced work forces is calculated per week, so dropping one worker saves 520 gp each year. However, *The Castle Guide* editor Bill Connors says there is some dropped copy in the "Smaller Work Forces" section. The last sentence in the second paragraph should read: "No reduction below 50% in the work force or cost is possible." While a castle builder can reduce labor and administration costs, he can't get them for free and must still pay for materials. Smart castle builders will adjust their work

forces to get some savings, but I can think of two ways to discourage this if the referee thinks the practice is getting out of hand. First, an accident or misfortune (such as a raid or marauding monster) might deplete a reduced work force even further and cause a construction delay. Second, morale in the reduced work force might deteriorate. Workers who believe they are being asked to do the impossible tend to be resentful. This might prompt the referee to recalculate the Production Modifier in mid-project and declare a "cost overrun" for the castle.



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Through the LOOKING Glass

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Some items for your holiday shopping lists

As I write my November column, I find that I have three different subjects to cover. First, events in and around Iraq have unfolded quickly, leaving the U.S. and other countries close to war with that nation. Those gamers who use modern-day settings in their campaigns may wish to use the Iraq situation and other current events in their scenarios. Adventures for Task Force Games' DELTA FORCE* or TSR's TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game can be devised for role-players, and GDW's COMBINED ARMS*, TTG's CHALLENGER II*, or ISM's OVERWATCH* miniatures game can be used to enact military combat in the Middle East.

Second, some alternatives for the campaign rules for FASA's BATTLETECH* game, detailed in issues #161 and #162, are noted below. And third, it's also time for our yearly gift review column, which follows last.

The alternate campaign revisited: Bloodtech

We have made some modifications and additions to the alternate campaign set-up for mercenaries (from issue #162) that might make things a bit more interesting. We've also revised the turn sequence for the set-up.

Mineral or resource planet: Raise the available resource tonnage to 800 tons. Also add one general-purpose 'Mech facility. This factory can handle construction projects or repairs of any 'Mech up to 100 tons. 'Mechs under 50 tons may be built or repaired in multiples of two, with any extra capacity being used for spare-part production for that type of vehicle only. Only one 'Mech of over 50 tons may be built here at a time, with no spare parts being made at the same time. If a 'Mech of up to 100 tons is only being repaired, spare parts for that weight class may be manufactured (e.g., if a 50-ton 'Mech is being repaired, the facility can repair the 'Mech and build 50 tons of armor and parts).

Turn sequence: In order to get the flavor of strategy along with the mayhem, the following turn sequence is used for the mercenary campaign sequence:

1. Move combat-ready forces.
2. Send resources and damaged 'Mechs to homeworld from controlled planet or battle scene (will arrive at stage 7 on the following turn).
3. Fight battles.
4. Retreat (if necessary).
5. Repair units.
6. Build new units and parts.
7. Receive resources or damaged 'Mechs from last turn.

Ranges: The locations of production and resource planets are shown in the Mercenary Campaign Set-Up diagram on page 107 of issue #162. A production planet on the inner ring of worlds may easily attack any other inner-ring planet, as well as the production and resource planets adjacent to it that are in line with the sun; all other planets are a long-range jump away. An outer-ring planet may attack the two production planets to either side of it, the nearest production planet in line with it and the sun, and the three nearest resource planets; all other planets are at long range.

Ships: Dropships may be captured using special infantry or basic sneakiness. Jumpships cannot be damaged except on deep raids.

Repairs: Repair rolls must be witnessed by another player and must be signed into record for campaign purposes.

Duels: Personal duels and challenges for control of certain planets are allowable upon request and acceptance by both parties. Honor is added for both units.

These additions are designed to improve your enjoyment of the game. If you have any other questions or suggestions, please let us know.

Reviews

Miniatures' product ratings

*	Poor
**	Below average
***	Average
****	Above average
*****	Excellent

Geo-Hex

609 N.E. Schuyler St., Unit #1
Portland OR 97212

GSFL—Forest Floor

* * * **

Forests have many military uses. In particular, they provide defensive cover for troops and vehicles, and they obstruct the movement of forces. In gaming, these same forests sometimes also detract from the game. Much time and work can be spent in placing individual trees, and the use of green felt to indicate a forest is fairly crude; the presence of forests can negate all the advantages of using terrain by sapping our fun. Geo-Hex has produced a new product that gives the feel of reality while using a relatively flat surface and regular trees.

Forest Floor is exactly what its name implies. It's a 10¼" X 12" loose-weave mat, marked to represent a forest as seen from above. The markings represent several types of trees, with foliage, bushes, and pathways. The mat also has elevation lines and wavy circles that could easily represent pits or holes. The forest density is easily apparent.

The fabric is a felt weave, with the smooth side painted. The rough side is placed face down and acts like Velcro, attaching itself to anything it lays on so it does not shift. The trees, bushes, and brush are painted on in layers, with a thin flocking attached to the high points of trees and bushes. The product is ex-

tremely durable; we tested it by carrying it for several days in a briefcase, and no fold lines or damage were evident.

One suggested use for this mat is in conjunction with either individual miniature trees or a group of miniature trees, the latter made by supporting Woodland Scenics foliage or lichen on braced match sticks, to form a liftable canopy. By placing some brush on the outside, figures can be hidden on the paths for ambushes. When the battle is to be joined, the screening "trees" are moved to reveal the placed figures, and the fight is conducted on the marked paths. When the battle is over, replace the trees to impede any sighting of the figures.

This product has many uses, as it can be cut into different shapes. It also can be purchased with a hex overlay (GSFL-X). The only real disadvantage is price. At \$5.95 for a regular piece or \$6.95 for one with the hex overlay (*Battlescape Forest Floor*), it can take considerable sums of money to cover large gaming areas.

Black Dragon Pewter

P.O. Box 290
Mass NY 11758
(Attn.: Cindy Sudano)

418-Unicorn Key Chain * * * * *

These two items do not fit into the field of miniatures as we normally present them here. They are pewter castings, one flat and one pseudo-diorama, of fantasy subjects. They are not playing pieces but are nifty show pieces that fit in well with our holiday buying preview.

The unicorn key chain is a flat pewter piece consisting of a unicorn's head and neck, a metal chain, and a key ring. The key chain is very basic, but the head deserves a closer look. The piece measures 1½" X 2 5/8". The bottom of the neck is curved and covered by well-carved, intertwining flowers, vines, and leaves. The base of the neck thins out toward the head, and the jaw, cheeks, and ears jut out in a very life-like manner. The eye is a faceted blue stone that at once draws your attention and blends with the different features. The horn is short for a unicorn, but the whorls can be seen even though they are slightly obscured by the mane. The mane flows from the neck with single-strand highlights. The only detractors were a couple of pin holes, common on many pewter pieces, and the tendency of the joining ring for the key ring to separate.

Though not for someone who carries keys in a pocket (which would damage the pants) or in the open (which would wear down the unicorn's detail), this would be ideal for purse use or for display. The piece is great, and price is only \$15.

The second piece is one that I particularly like. The scene is 2 1/8" high, 1½" long, and ½" wide at the base, and consists of four individual parts that blend



Unicorn Key Chain (Black Dragon Pewter)

well. The base is made of slightly irregular and rounded puffs that appear to be either clouds or small rocks. These puffs have random stars that contain small faceted blue gems.

Rising from this base is a drowsy quarter moon, with a sleepy grin, a beaklike nose, dimples, chubby cheeks, and almost-closed eyes. A tiny, scaled dragon lies sprawled over the upper point of the moon, with its eyes closed and its head resting on a paw. The dragon's other arm reaches down to a ring from which three small glass beads hang. The dragon's tail rolls down the moon.

On the tapered base lies a small wizard, his robes and hat covered with engraved stars and moons. His face is composed in quiet slumber, a small jeweled wand in his hands.

This piece is not "realistic," being like a cartoon sketch transferred to pewter, but the easy flow and blended parts cause it to assume a strange realism of its own. This one is recommended as a gift at only \$21.

West End Games

RD 3, Box 2345
Honesdale PA 18431

40311—Rancor Pit * * ½

West End Games' STAR WARS®: The RPG universe holds many dangerous creatures, not the least of which is the rancor. The rancor figure in this set, manufactured by Grenadier Models but sold by West End Games in the U.S., is 61-mm tall and 110-



Moon Dreams (Black Dragon Dreams)

mm long from tail to nose. The body of the rancor has great folds of leathery skin, especially in the neck and face area. The spine is plated up to the midback, then changes to pointed ridges. Sharp teeth show in its mouth, and the arms end in talons.

The rancor's keeper is a rather rotund humanoid, about 26-mm tall. He wears a hood that spreads to his shoulders; his face is puffy and almost has a smirk, while the eye and nose detail is fair. His upper body and legs are bare except for leather or skin studded armlets on his upper arms, and he has the type of trunks that a sumo wrestler wears.

Unfortunately, the quality of the rancor model is as ugly as the creature itself is supposed to be. Thick lines of mold flash spread across the creature's back, obscuring some details. The arms and legs have some minor flash, but most of this can be cleaned with some work. Unfortunately, some pitting is also present. The arms and legs don't seem to fit correctly to the body, although some of this appears to be excess lead on the ball castings that can be cleaned up with work; many spots can be

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Rancor Pit (West End Games)

fixed with filler. Also, detail on the keeper is not sharp.

This particular casting has severe problems. I personally hope that this was a casting made with cool lead on a slightly separated mold, which then slipped past quality control. If you purchase this miniature, check it out immediately at the store. If your model has these same problems, exchange it.

I must stress that this model is simply not of the quality that West End/Grenadier usually makes, and it may simply be my copy. If you don't mind lots of work, this could be an interesting model, but it would not be worth it to me. Its price is \$12.

Thunderbolt Mountain Miniatures

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1000-Sorcerer

1001-Barbarian and Lady

All too frequently in the hobby business, when you don't hear from a company, that company is no longer in business or is so busy that it simply doesn't have time to respond. Luckily, Thunderbolt Mountain is in the latter category, as I found out at the 1990 GEN CON® games fair.

Thunderbolt Mountain Miniatures produces limited-run, high-quality figures suitable for play, but designed more for collecting or dioramas. We are pleased to present some new figures from this company to be released this November.

The Sorcerer is a 54-mm, two-part figure. The pieces consist of a base and an unattached figure. The base is a 60-mm X 35-mm rectangle sculpted to resemble a stone floor in disrepair. On this floor are many of the objects necessary for spell-casting, such as a bowl containing unknown objects, three wax candles in varying sizes with wax build-ups, and three spell books with inscriptions and clear binding. The open pages of one of the books shows wording that can almost



Sorcerer (Thunderbolt Mountain)

be read with a magnifying glass. Two scrolls and a well-rendered rat are also present on the floor.

This is a highly detailed figure with an eastern European or Persian style of clothing. The conical hat has overlays and an engraved band. Intense concentration shows on his face; his mouth is open as if speaking. His nose is sharp and hooked, his hair is straight, and his beard is cut to a long taper and curled up. The right arm stretches out with fingers extended as if casting a spell. A large cape covers his shoulders and back, with runes along the hem and a tasseled front held by a clasp. The sorcerer wears an ornate breast plate, a stomach protector that (if you look very carefully) contains a face, and an ornate belt with a fancy buckle and a front strap hanging to the floor. Several spell component packages hang from the belt. The figure wears a pleated smock, pantaloons, and ornate leggings with ties. The pointed shoes have curled toes and ornate buckles. This figure is well done and costs a reasonable \$8.

Figure #1001 is entitled *Barbarian and Lady*. This set is also molded to 54-mm scale and consists of three pieces: a base, the barbarian, and the lady. This base is also 60 mm X 35 mm, but it represents a semi-smooth floor such as a passageway or dungeon floor. The floor is covered with a wealth of detail, including a scroll tube, coins, pouches, necklaces, broken and hollow bones, a monkey or kobold skull, a skeletal hand with a manacle and a key close by, rocks, and a snake.

The barbarian and the lady both have the primitive style of dress made famous by Conan. The woman has long hair swirling in disarray as she flees from something. She wears a tiara, a necklace, a shell-type G-string with chain fasteners, wrist bracelets, rope sandals, and nothing

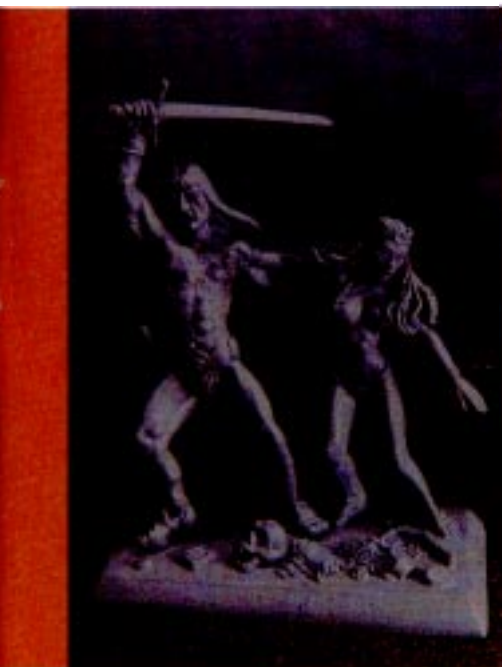
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CHRISTMAS



Barbarian and Lady (Thunderbolt Mountain)

else. All "objectionable" areas are tastefully covered, and the body and face are very good. The main thing that grabs your attention is her look of abject terror.

The barbarian holds a huge sword, poised to cut downward in his right hand; his left hand is empty. He has wrist bands on both wrists and wears only an interlocking disk belt, a loincloth, and rope sandals; a knife hangs from his belt. His hair flows straight down. The physical sculpting is excellent, with good muscle tone and hair. The most striking area on this figure is his face, which reflects a snarling, killing frenzy.

This figure is a good display model and a value at \$16. Both figures are secured to their bases by pegs. All sections are made to be painted first, then attached to their base by adhesive or the very judicious use of a soldering iron to spread the pegs. (If you have never used a soldering iron, have someone else help you.) These are excellent display models and with a little work can make fine collectors' pieces.

Iron Crown Enterprises

P.O. Box 1605
Charlottesville VA 22902

#910-Pharsii II

* * * * *

#907-Teal Hawk

Iron Crown's SILENT DEATH* game is a new space combat system that includes a new line of fighter spaceships, each with individual capabilities and places of origin. This game is compatible with ICE's SPACE MASTER* SF role-playing game.

Item #910 is a Pharsii II fighter. Looking in the SILENT DEATH game's Starship Inventory booklet, we find that the craft, armed with five different weapons, is big by game standards at 900 tons. The miniature is 30-mm long and 25-mm wide from



Space fighters (ICE)

wingtip to wingtip. Stubby and square, the body has leading wings and twin engines. The combat cockpit and weapons blisters are clearly visible. The rear wings are straight and angle under the engines. It's refreshing to see the complete lack of flash and very minute mold lines. The price is \$4 for package of two.

#907 is a Teal Hawk, by definition a small fighter with only three weapons—and, according to the book, not a very good fighter. The miniature has a 33-mm wingspan and is 31-mm long. The body is flat and has a

wedge-type nose and flared engine housings in back. (For World War II gamers, it looks like a Soviet Yak 3 with upturned wingtips and no tail.) Two of the weapons are displayed under the wings. Two of these fighters come in a pack for \$4.

There are very good points to both these products, but a couple of concerns as well. The miniatures are very well made and are simple pieces that don't have the wealth of fine detail that makes you hesitant to use them frequently for fear of wear. They are also relatively inexpensive and can be used with other game systems. The problems are that the ships don't seem to be even close in scale. The Teal Hawk at 300 tons is larger than the Pharsii II at 900 tons. Then, too, the stands seem to be loose enough to need filling. Both are simple problems that will probably be fixed later on.

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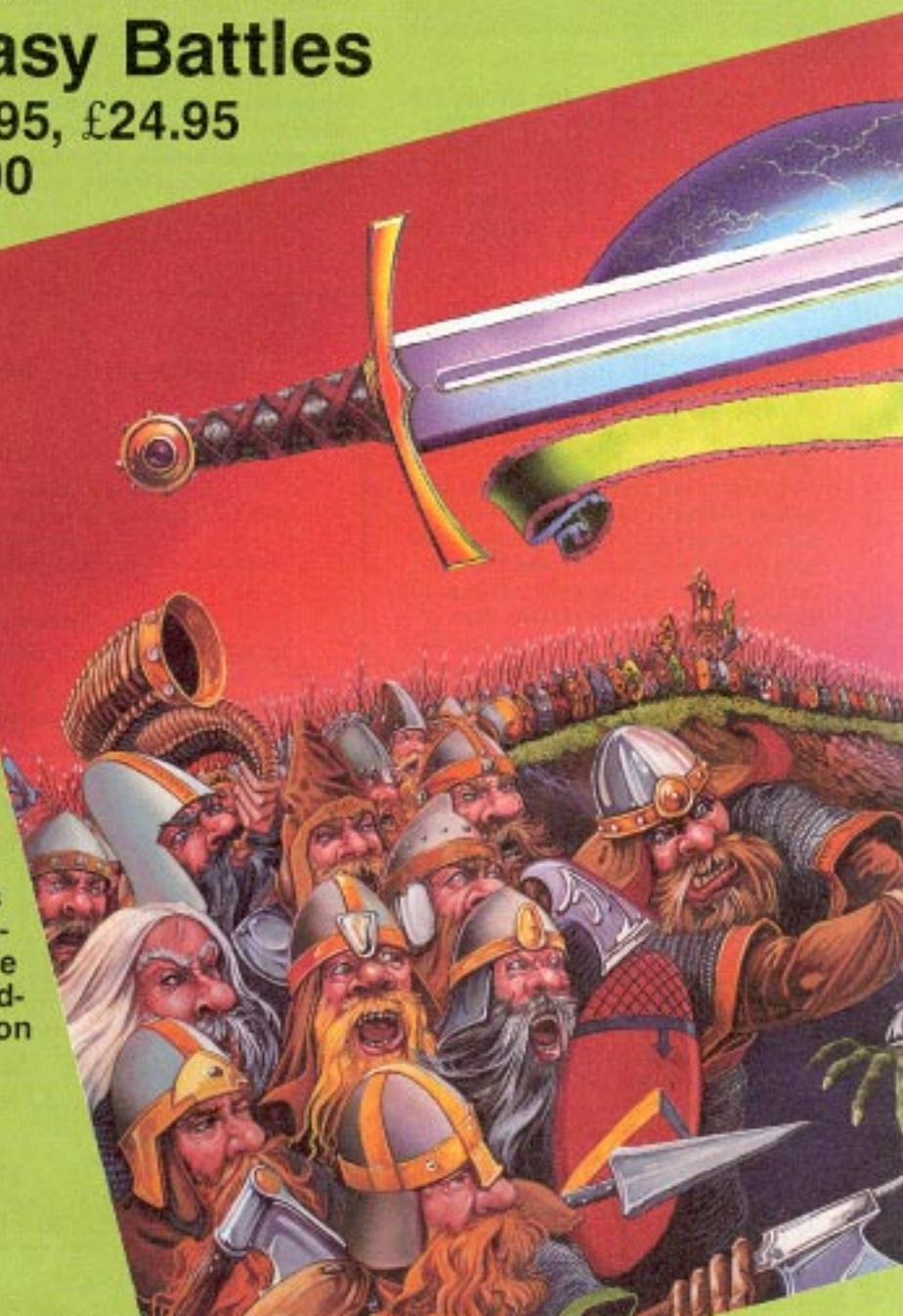
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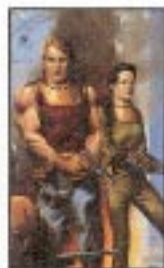
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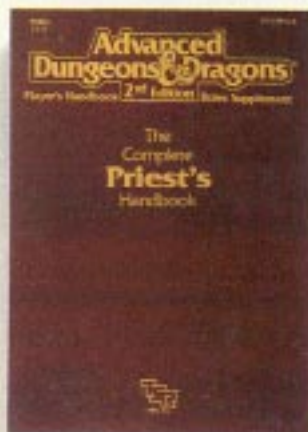


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A Hoard For The Horde

Four creatures from the lands of the barbarians

by David "Zeb" Cook

Editor's note: In this gatefold, you'll find four creatures that were originally slated to appear in *The Horde* boxed set for the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ campaign setting. Fortunately for DRAGON® Magazine, there was no room for them in the boxed set. The boxed set's designer, David ("Yurts don't float!") Cook, wandered into our offices and offered them to us.

We took him up on his kind offer and hereby present four new beasts specifically suited for use with *The Horde* campaign setting. These can, of course, be used in any campaign with a climate and geography similar to the Asian steppes (or anywhere else you please). Feel free to either remove the gatefold itself from the magazine or make photocopies of these sheets for your use. Enjoy!



Dragon, Dzalmaus

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Steppe
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Very (11-12)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	1-2
ARMOR CLASS:	Special
MOVEMENT:	6, FL 30
HIT DICE:	8 (Base)
THACO:	13 (Base)
NO. OF ATTACKS:	5+ special
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-6/ 1-6/3-18 (x3)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Breath weapon
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Variable
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Variable
SIZE:	G (30' base)
MORALE:	Elite (16 base)
XP VALUE:	Special



Age	Body Length	Tail Length	AC	Breath Weapon*	Spells	MR	XP Value
1	3-6	2-5	7	Nil	Nil	Nil	420
2	6-15	4-13	6	Nil	Nil	Nil	975
3	4-23	12-19	5	Nil	Nil	Nil	2,000
4	22-31	18-25	4	Nil	Nil	Nil	3,000
5	31-40	24-33	3	Nil	Nil	5%	6,000
6	41-52	34-43	2	0	Nil	10%	9,000
7	52-63	44-53	1	-1	Nil	15%	10,000
8	64-75	54-63	0	-2	Nil	20%	12,000
9	76-87	64-73	-1	-3	Nil	25%	13,000
10	88-99	74-83	-2	-4	Nil	30%	14,000
11	100-111	84-93	-3	-5	Nil	35%	15,000
12	112-123	94-103	-4	-6	Nil	40%	16,000

* The numbers listed are modifiers to the victim's saving throw.

The dzalmaus is a dreaded species of dragon, feared as much for its appetite as its great size. Unlike other dragons, it is not the least bit sociable, not even to others of its kind. As a consequence, it roams dusty grasslands, following the movements of its prey, humans.

Unlike other dragons, the dzalmaus is not a brightly creature with glistening scales. It is particularly drab in coloration. The dzalmaus is sand-brown colored to light yellow across its back. Its body is flatter and without the back ridges common to many dragons. The neck branches into three heads, each broad, with the eyes high on the skull. For its huge size, the dzalmaus is able to conceal its body in the tall grasses of the steppe amazingly well.

Combat: The dzalmaus is a constant predator, stalking its prey across the grasslands or swooping down from the air. It then strikes with its three heads, quickly rending the victim apart.

Dragon, Dzalmaus

It uses its other attacks (claws, tails, and wings) only for self defense, never for hunting.

The dzalmaus can bite up to three different targets in a single round, provided all are within the front 180 degree arc of the creature. Its necks, while flexible, are not so bendable that it can reach behind itself.

Breath Weapon/Special Abilities: Dzalmauses of adult age or greater possess a fearsome breath weapon. They are able to project a cone of vampiric life-draining 60 feet long, 1 foot wide at the mouth, and 20 feet wide at the base. All creatures within the area of the cone must make a saving throw vs. breath weapon or be drained one energy level. Hit points, spells, and combat ability are lost immediately. The life-draining of older dragons is powerful enough to lower its victim's chance of making a successful saving throw.

Levels drained by the dzalmaus are added to its own in the form of additional hit dice, one die for each level drained. The additional hit dice do not alter the THAC0, damage, age, or size of the creature. Once it has drained levels equal to its hit dice, the creature cannot use its breath weapon until the drained energy dissipates. Damage suffered by the dzalmaus is taken from these hit points first.

Fortunately, the energy drain is not permanent. Those drained regain their levels 1-4 hours after the attack. Hit points, combat ability, and spells known are returned to normal, unless, of course, the character was slain. Memorized spells that were lost are not regained, however. At the same time, the dzalmaus loses the additional hit dice it had gained. It also regains the use of its breath weapon.

The dzalmaus has a strong will. It is immune to all *charm* and mind control spells. In addition, the dzalmaus develops a minor magic resistance as it grows older. It can speak the languages of the steppe people, in addition to the dragon tongue.

Habitat/Society: Although intelligent, the dzalmaus is a solitary and savage creature. It prefers to have little contact with other dragons, especially those not of its own kind. The dzalmaus makes no known lair and does not collect treasure. Instead it roams the steppe, following the movements of the human nomads.

The dzalmaus only mates as is necessary. The female raises the young on her own. At this time, the mother makes a concealed nest, usually in the tall grass or a small stand of trees. Bold hunters will search for these nests, hoping to steal the infants away while the mother is out hunting. Such thefts invariably cause the mother dzalmaus to go on a rampage, at which point the thief had best be far away.

Ecology: The dzalmaus lives on a diet of meat, with horseflesh most common, followed by humans. In times of famine, it will eat whatever is available.

Fortunately for its kind, the dzalmaus does not create any useful by-products. The young can be sold as exotic rarities for 5,000 to 10,000 gp.

Manni

Horde

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate forest and steppe
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Flock
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Dusk
DIET:	Scavenger
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	P (Y x2, W)
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
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NO. APPEARING:	1-6
ARMOR CLASS:	5
MOVEMENT:	9, FL 18
HIT DICE:	3
THACO:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-6 and by weapon
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (4'-5')
MORALE:	Unsteady (5-7)
XP VALUE:	65

The manni, also known as kara or "black ones," are a pestiferous and evil race that haunt the bleak and wasted corners of the steppe. They are fond of decay and death and are often found near grave mounds and in ruins.

The manni looks like a humanoid, long-beaked crow or raven. It stands on two bandy bird legs. The body is completely covered by black feathers, hence its nickname. It has long wings instead of arms. The feathers hide three long fingers that allow the manni to grasp and use items. It does not speak any human tongue, but communicates in a series of clacks and whistles.

Combat: The manni is a furtive and cowardly creature, preferring to avoid combat when possible. However, since it must eat and it cannot always rely on the kills of others, the manni is sometimes forced to fight. When it must make a kill, the manni prefers to attack from ambush at times when it is certain to win uninjured. To this end, it will build snares along game trails, lurk on the edges of encampments, and attack with an entire flock, overwhelming by sheer numbers.

In combat, the manni fights with its sharp beak and a weapon. Most often this is a spear, the easiest item for the manni to use with its awkward wings. In some cases a club is favored. Swords are not used by the bird men, as these are too difficult for the creatures to manage.

In addition to its beak and weapons, the manni can also use its wings to buffet an opponent. Generally, this is a tactic of last resort, since it requires the creature to get very close to the enemy and places it at risk of being grappled. Buffeting causes little damage, only 1-2 points, but can disorient and confuse an opponent long enough for the manni to fly away. Creatures buffeted must make a saving throw vs. spells or be stunned for one round.

Habitat/Society: The manni are a fairly loathsome and disgusting race of creatures. Not noble, brave, or trustworthy, they live as scavengers on the steppe.

The manni form together in flocks of 10-30 individuals. Of these no more than one-fourth are males. The remainder are females and young. In combat there is no differ-



ence between the males and females, and the young are too helpless to fight. Any hatchling old enough to bear weapons is treated as an adult.

The flock lives in a poor imitation of a village. It is usually located in a sheltered stand of woods or hollow. Here the manni make their nests, simple domed huts of woven grass and branches. These are carefully camouflaged with branches, moss, grass, and dead leaves. The huts are not particularly weatherproof, but they do provide some protection from the elements.

As scavengers, manni are far from the cleanest of creatures. Their villages are rank with decay and pollution. In times of famine, the manni dig up burial mounds, tear apart wind burials, and have even been known to eat their own dead.

The manni have no liking for humans. They fear the "wingless ones," and because they fear, they hate the humans. The humans care no more for the manni, either, and nomads usually attempt to kill them on sight.

The manni speak their own tongue and no other. Although they can learn to understand human languages, it is impossible for their beaks to speak human words.

Ecology: As scavengers, the manni fill a clear-cut niche in the ecology of the plains. Their own weaknesses, cruelties, and cowardice keep them from dominant roles in the land and so they have been surpassed by others.

Manni feathers are used for decorations by some of the nomadic tribes. Merchants have also been known to buy the feathers for sale in exotic markets.

Morin

Horde

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Plains or steppe
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Pack
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Dusk
DIET:	Scavenger
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	(Z)
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
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NO. APPEARING:	3-12
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	18
HIT DICE:	2
THACO:	19
NO. OF ATTACKS:	6
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-2 each
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Swarm
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Burrowing
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	S (1'-2')
MORALE:	Special
XP VALUE:	120

The morin is a dangerous, but rarely seen, creature of the steppes. However, when it does appear, its ferocity, speed, and numerous attacks make it dangerous.

The morin is a small creature, oblate in shape. The head and rear are difficult to distinguish, except for the beaklike mouth. The creature's eyes are small and weak. It has six short legs that end in thick claws good for burrowing and slashing. The creature is dirty mauve, pale and sickly in appearance. It is almost hairless.

Combat: The morin is a pack animal and is never encountered singly. Individually, it is not a fearsome creature, although its numerous attacks do pose a threat.

When attacking, the morin springs at its target. The creature can only leap 3 feet, but this is sufficient to take down most of its prey. In the first round of combat, it attacks with all six legs, becoming a miniature whirlwind of claws. If four or more attacks hit, the creature grips its target and thereafter automatically causes 1 point of damage per gripping claw each round. It retains its hold until someone—or the victim—dies. Those encumbered by a gripping morin suffer a -1 on their chance to hit for each creature. Thus, a warrior with three of the beasts clinging to him has a -3 modifier on his rolls to hit.

What makes the morin truly fearsome, however, is the swarm. Whenever eight or more morin are encountered, the creatures are swarming. A swarm will attack any living creature the size of a horse or less. The entire swarm attacks a single target. Instead of calculating each attack individually, a single roll is made for the entire swarm (THACO 17 for their ferocity). The swarm attack causes 2 points of damage for each creature in the swarm. Thus, a swarm of 11 creatures causes 22 points of damage. If the target is not killed in the first attack, 2-12 morin cling to it. These creatures cause an automatic 4 points of damage per creature in subsequent rounds. Once the victim is slain the morin immediately begin burrowing, taking their prey with them.

Perhaps once in a score of years, the morin gather into a great swarm of 100 or more creatures. They are the stuff of terrifying tales when they appear. When this happens, there is little for normal folk to do but leave the



area. Such swarms eventually disintegrate through attrition and natural events.

Morin normally have a morale of 12. However, while swarming they never make morale checks.

Habitat/Society: The morin are burrowing pack creatures, living in colonies known as pods. During most of the day they live in colonies beneath the surface. These are collections of tunnels, dens, bolt holes, and storage chambers. On the surface, a morin colony looks very much like a prairie dog town—mounds built up around holes. One or two morin are always on watch, although they have few predators to fear.

The morin are exceptionally fast diggers, using this ability to hunt, lying in wait just below the surface. More often they rely on their speed to run down their prey.

The morin are adapted to life in the plains in others ways. They breed quickly, producing litters of two to five young every year. They drink little, getting most of their moisture from their kills. During times of drought the morin hibernate in large underground nests, sealed off from the surface. All the members of the pod hibernate in a single chamber. When the rains return, the morin surge forth and immediately swarm in search of food. The chance to encounter morin increases after a thunderstorm, making such times dangerous on the steppe.

Ecology: The morin are predators and scavengers. While they prefer to make their own kills, the pack will also scavenge carrion on the steppe. They normally hunt small mammals and antelope and only attack humans or larger targets when they are swarming. They are a plague on shepherds, since sheep are a favorite prey.

Sand Cat

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Desert or dry steppe
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Den
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1-4
ARMOR CLASS:	8
MOVEMENT:	15
HIT DICE:	1+1
THACO:	19
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3
DAMAGE/ ATTACK:	1-4/1-3/1-3
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Rear claws 1-2, surprise
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Surprise
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	S (2'-3')
MORALE:	Average (8-10)
XP VALUE:	120

The sand cat is a small desert feline that preys on many of the small mammals of the desert and dry steppe regions. Slightly larger than a regular house cat, it is a sandy brown color. The ears are long and pointed, ending in a long, white tuft. The tip of the tail is a darker brown than the rest of the body.

Combat: Although the sand cat is a predator, its prey is not man or other humanoid creatures. It will not attack a person under normal circumstances. However, if forced to fight (cornered, etc.), it attacks savagely. The sand cat is a small and stealthy creature and so applies a -1 to all opponents' surprise rolls. At the same time, its keen senses make it very hard to surprise, giving it a +1 on all surprise rolls.

When the cat attacks, it springs toward its target. The sand cat can leap 5 feet upward and 10 feet forward, with a running start. It strikes with both front claws. If both of these hit, the rear claws automatically rake the victim for 1-2 points damage each. Thereafter it will bat and bite as much as possible.

The sand cat seldom fights to the death, instead trying to escape any opponent stronger than it. However, a mother will not abandon her young unless it is to lure an attacker away. If the sand cat is defending its young, it gains a +1 on its THACO and damage rolls.

Habitat/Society: The sand cat lives in a small family group called a den. Depending on the time of year, the den will have two to seven individuals: two adults and kittens. Sand cats mate for a single season and the male remains with the female until the young are grown, which takes about 10 months to a year.

The sand cat makes its lair in a small cave, sheltered overhang, or abandoned burrow. The latter is preferred if there is one available. The lair is normally occupied only while there are young to be raised. During this time, one adult always remains near the kittens.

Sand cats are very territorial. They hunt over a range of 5 to 10 square miles. They are nighttime predators and mostly bring down small mammals. They are seldom a threat to larger creatures.



Ecology: The sand cat is a natural force in the local ecology, keeping down the numbers of small vermin in a region. Unfortunately, the sand cat is also valued by humans. The kittens, if taken young enough, can be trained. Among the tribes of the desert and steppe, sand cats trained to hunt are the gifts of sheiks and khans. These animals can run down hares and other game for their masters. Others are sold to traders, who in turn sell the little cats in the cities. Here they are raised as pets—dangerous and savage little pets. A sand cat kitten is easily worth 500 to 2,000 gold pieces.