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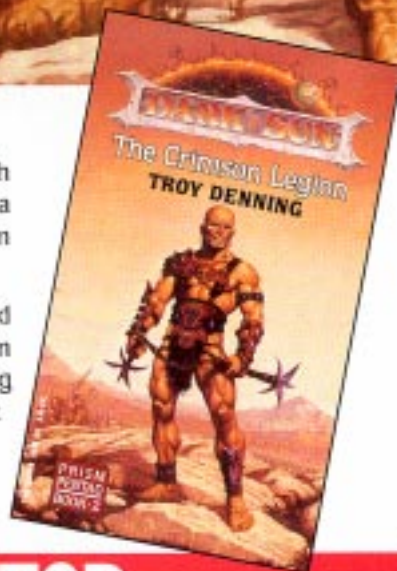
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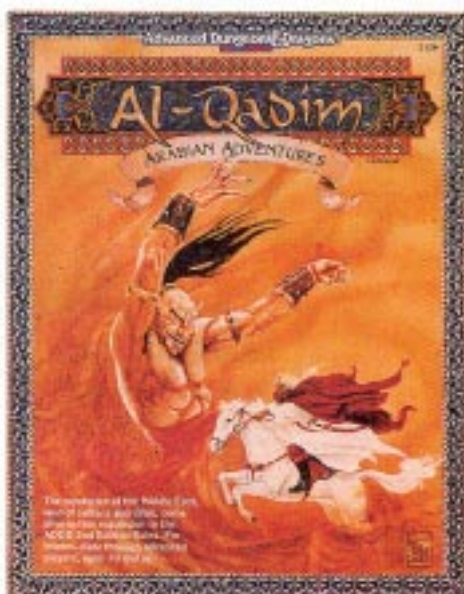


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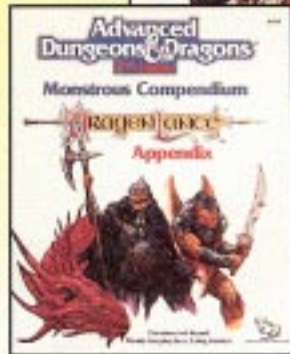
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MAGAZINE

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COVER

In the nick of time, Larry Elmore's painting arrived at our offices, and it was a magical treasure worth waiting for. Three adventurers cautiously eye a very unusual sword, one that they are obviously not eager to snatch up. We wish them the best with their prize.

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 3LB, United Kingdom,

A DM's test?

Dear Dragon,

I want to know when and where I can take a test to make me a certified Dungeon Master. One of my friends is already certified. If you can send me a test, please do.

Name and address
withheld by the editor

One of the common urban legends about the AD&D® and D&D® games is that there is some kind of official certification test for Dungeon Masters, given either publicly or secretly by TSR, and that "real" DMs must take the test before they can ever run a good (or "official") role-playing game. This is a bunch of ottyugh offal. Anyone can run an AD&D or D&D game, and no certification of any sort is required.

It is possible that some gamers believe that the tournament rating system used by the RPGA™ Network is actually a certification system (it isn't—it is simply a system for rating the effectiveness and experience of players and game masters within the Network). It is also possible that there are groups that each have a "certification" test that must be passed by those who wish to run role-playing games within those groups, as a sort of minimum-competency exam to weed out people who aren't familiar with the games involved or would commit DMing errors in play.

We do not encourage the awarding of "DM certificates" because our games simply do not require it. Role-playing games are so open-ended that playing in a truly "official" game is perhaps meaningless, as DMs are also given encouragement to personalize their campaign worlds. In short, if you want to be a DM, just read the rules, find some players, and do it!

Cryptic cover

Dear Dragon,

I read DRAGON issue #174 from cover to cover. The only thing I can say is that it was terrific, but there is one part I really enjoyed: the cover painting. It was great. Did you know that you can decipher the tombstone? I won't give it away so you can do it yourself, but I will leave you a clue: Use the FORGOTTEN

REALMS® boxed set's Cyclopedia of the Realms.

Jeff Bourdon
Freeland MI

A number of readers, including Yves Nida of Talant, France, wrote in with correct translations of the tombstone. Readers who lack the FORGOTTEN REALMS boxed set might also use the article "Runestones," from DRAGON issue #69 (reprinted in the Best of DRAGON Magazine Anthology, volume IV), or FR11 Dwarves Deep. All three sources are by our foremost Realms scholar, Ed Greenwood. Of course, the translation begs one question, asked by John Sheerin, of Nutley, N.J.: "What self-respecting dwarven smith would carve that into a perfectly good slab of stone?"

The letter in #173

Dear Dragon,

I am writing in response to a letter in issue #173 [the second to the last letter on page 84]. I am a 15-year-old girl, and I have been role-playing for about five months and love it. I have one other female friend who feels as I do. When I talk to guys about playing AD&D games, they all look at me like I am crazy. I am glad to see that some guys don't mind seeing girls play. I am trying to get other girls interested, but it is hard. Most of them don't seem to understand or just think it takes too long to play, but I like to either play or just watch games for a few hours.

Rebecca Whaling
Indianapolis IN

Your editor originally ran the letter in issue #173 because the image of a male gamer wandering the streets in search of female gamers seemed rather humorous (the letter writer, by the way, was from Brazil). However, that letter generated a flurry of letters from female gamers, like Rebecca Whaling, who reported that they enjoyed role-playing but were often aggravated to find that there weren't more female gamers around. Worse yet, women who role-play are often confronted with considerable prejudice or unwanted attention from male gamers. I recall a game session some years ago in which an attractive woman rolled up a rather homely male gnome for her player character; upon encountering her character, the male human character of a male player (who was obviously ogling the female player) whistled and exclaimed, "Wow, what a gnome!"

We encourage everyone who is interested in role-playing for the first time to give it a try, and we encourage everyone who is already involved in role-playing to welcome new gamers to their groups and make them feel at home. We've received letters from all sorts of people who feel the prejudice of other gamers against them, including very young gamers, black gamers, handicapped gamers, older gamers, and gamers who play locally unpopular RPGs. It's bad enough that there are some people around who misunderstand and hate role-playing games for very peculiar reasons. We certainly don't need to pick on each other, too.

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EDITORIAL



Presto: the future in a box!

Artwork by Alan Giana

A science-fiction role-playing game was published in 1986 that detailed a future history in which East and West Germany are reunited, the Soviet Union fragments and becomes extinct, and the Republic of South Africa moves toward establishing a full democracy.

The same future history, however, also includes World War III (starting about now), Texas as an independent nation, mainland China fragmenting into three smaller countries, the French Empire as Earth's foremost superpower, and the confederation of Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Palestinians into one political body. It notes, too, that the first human-vs.-alien interstellar war was (or will be) fought and won by Manchuria and Canada.

As anyone with a television or radio knows, the political situation is changing so fast now that you can literally wake up in an entirely new world almost every week. Will there be an independent Croatia, Slovenia, or Quebec? Is Europe going to unite into a single superpower? Will Russia and Ukraine join NATO? Is Cuba becoming a preindustrial society? What's happening to Hong Kong, the West Bank, and Cape Town? In the last few years, I've awakened to my clock radio reporting the invasion of Panama City and the Soviet Union's last coup. Breakfast brought Tian'anmen Square. Lunch brought the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Over dinner, I watched the start of a major land war in the Middle East involving almost half a dozen nuclear nations and dozens of nonnuclear countries using every weapon system known except for nuclear, chemical, and biological ones (and some people thought about using those).

If any of this stuff had been stuck into a role-playing game's future history before 1989, it would have struck me as pretty amusing. I'm not so prone to laugh now at the tidbits that futuristic role-playing games toss out. You just don't know what will happen.

GDW's *TRAVELLER: 2300** game, later revised and released as the *2300 AD** game, was the one cited at the start of this editorial. Let's take a moment to look at the future through the pages of other SF role-playing games and supplements, and see what might (and might not) be in store.

GURPS AUTODUEL* game (Steve Jackson Games): The near future, up to about A.D. 2035, presents us with auto-dueling (a legalized killing sport using armed motor vehicles), a 30-minute nuclear war that does almost no damage, a worldwide grain blight and food riots, cannibal tribes on Manhattan Island ("no longer a problem" by 2035), violent gang activity throughout North America, and Amy Carter as an ex-president. Published in 1986, the game predicted a major economic recession in America in 1990. Several states have seceded from, have seceded from but rejoined, or are considering secession from the U.S. by 2035, including Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana,

Mormon-controlled Utah, Minnesota, northern California, and the Bourbon Free State (a.k.a. Kentucky).

Interestingly, some future events are paralleled in GDW's 2300 AD game: widespread civil unrest and gang warfare in the U.S. and Mexico, war between Mexico and the U.S. over border territories, the independence of Quebec and Texas, nuclear war between the U.S. and U.S.S.R., and the collapse of the Soviet Union (here following the Grain Blight of 2012 instead of World War III). Also, gasoline and oil are replaced by other substances as fuel sources in both games' future histories.

TOP SECRET/S.I.TM game (TSR, Inc.): The supplements *TSAC4 F.R.E.E.Lancers* and *TSAC7 F.R.E.E.America* outline the world of 1998. A huge wall, built by American state governments to stop the tide of refugees from the 1995 Mexican Civil War, marks the boundary between the U.S. and Mexico. The weakened U.S. government is largely ignored by state governments, and America is splitting up into big multistate alliances (Great Lakes Authority, Middle Atlantic Alliance, Greater Massachusetts, etc.). Texas, California, and Oregon remain in the Union but go their own ways. Gang warfare, drug smuggling, and terrorism are widespread. Fighting may break out between two multistate alliances over the damming of the Mississippi River. The Kentucky National Guard, commanded by a mentally unstable dictator-governor, is "the second most powerful fighting force in North America." Nazis have taken over northern Idaho. Religious warfare wracks Utah, and California and Oregon are reeling in the aftermath of earthquakes, volcanoes, and radiation leaks.

In the rest of the world, a new Iran-Iraq war drags on, fought with chemical weapons; it devastates the Middle East and makes American oil critically important. *Glasnost* and *perestroika* have created a newer, brighter Soviet Union (which still spies on us); Gorbachev is still in power. Soviet cosmonauts are heading for Mars, Japanese robots are mining the Moon, civilian hovercraft are on sale, and powered-armor combat suits are being manufactured. Japan has rearmed itself (as it did in the 2300 AD game). Central America is swept by warfare involving the U.S. and Cuba, and Europe functions as a single supnation.

CYBERPUNK* game (R. Talsorian Games): By the year 2020, the United States of America is in sorry shape. Thanks to rising unemployment, a stock-market crash, government and business corruption, homelessness, gang warfare, nuclear terrorism, a staggering deficit, and two wars in Central America, the U.S. has pretty much collapsed. Wildfires, plague, food riots, the L.A. earthquake, and the Midwest drought haven't helped much. Urban areas are centers of beauty for the upper classes, as are the suburbs, but between these zones lie devastated ghettos and ruins where violence is commonplace.

Neo-Luddite terrorists, first appearing in western Kentucky, bomb transportation and industrial centers. Corporations rule the nation and fight wars through computer networks. The U.S. has fought and lost two space wars with Europe.

Elsewhere, Europe has united to become the world's foremost superpower, the Middle East is mostly destroyed by nuclear warfare, space wars are becoming common between rival nations, Eastern Europe is an embattled land, and the Europeans and Soviets have reached Mars. The Food Crash, possibly brought on by U.S. agribusiness corporations engaging in biological warfare, has ruined the economies of Canada and the reorganized Soviet Union. Black Africans comprise one-third of all space workers, having allied with Europe to exploit extraterrestrial resources. South America is a chaotic war zone; Central America is now peaceful and anti-American. Technological achievements include cloning, artificial intelligence, lunar mining, cyber-mercenaries, and car engines using alcohol or methane.

I won't bother to point out the similarities between all of the above futures. (Being a native Kentuckian, I do wonder why everyone picks on Kentucky as a sort of "bozo state," but lots of other people get picked on, too.) The main point is that game designers are as aware as the rest of us of potential trouble spots and possible outcomes in the world order. It will be interesting to see how many of these "predictions" come true in the real world's future. Granted, these game futures were deliberately designed to be bleak, trouble-filled, and "interesting" in the sense of the Chinese curse, "May you live in interesting times." Interesting times guarantee lots of action and excitement for role-playing campaigns—who would want to go adventuring in a *dull* world, after all?

But we're talking here about adventuring in game worlds, and there are times when I wake up to the clock radio and harbor a secret wish that the real world was just a little more dull. I'm not a cyber-mercenary, after all, and I have better things to do on Saturdays than go to food riots. I'll just flip through the game books, listen to the radio, and hope for the best.

Roger Moore

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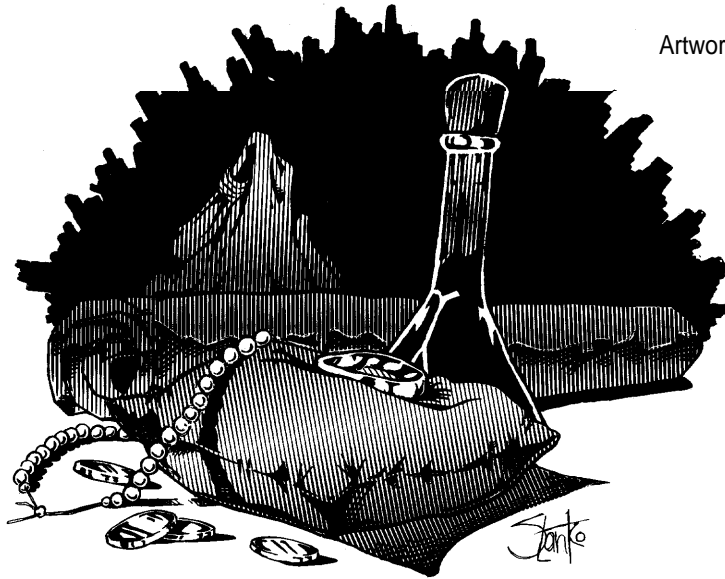
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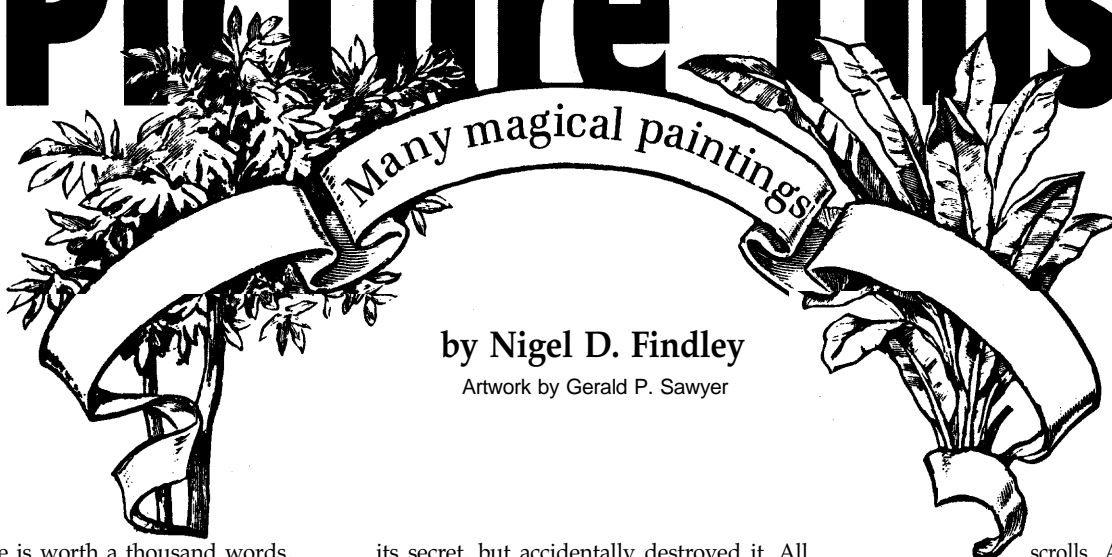
Magic is power.







Picture This!



by Nigel D. Findley

Artwork by Gerald P. Sawyer

A picture is worth a thousand words, they say. Why not in spellcraft as well as in communication?

Many wizards in the AD&D® game can ensorcel a painting with magic mouth, *explosive runes*, or any number of other wardings and spells. Only one mage in a multitude, however, can actually interweave the dweomer with the painting (such an endeavor takes time as well as the Talent, so to speak).

Most fantasy cultures are assumed to have the story of a magical painting in their folk tales; "The Picture of Doria the Gray" is an example that a DM could pass along to his gaming group. The tale involves a Doria of Mel Fira, a mage who transferred her life essence into a painting of herself. As time passed, all expected signs of aging and debauchery manifested themselves on the painting, leaving Doria youthful and untouched even beyond her normal lifespan. However, a rival named Blaise, of the city Sta Fira, acquired the painting through deceit and tried to find

its secret, but accidentally destroyed it. All symptoms of aging and wild living immediately fell upon Doria, and she died swiftly and unpleasantly. If player characters learn of a similar painting of one of their foremost enemies, could they then destroy the work—and thus their foe?

Few inherently magical paintings are assumed to exist in AD&D campaigns, but these would show an amazing diversity in properties. Some can be used by non-mages simply through proper concentration; others can be used to their fullest only by mages. Most would emanate a magical aura; some would show no signs of a dweomer. Many magical pictures are very specific in nature, and their powers relate directly to what they depict. Some can be used for communication or transportation; others can be used to summon whatever is pictured therein (an object, creature, type of weather, etc.). These paintings would be expensive to make; the pigments are assumed to require arcane formulations similar to those used for

scrolls. Also, these paintings tend to be extremely powerful and, in inexperienced hands, dangerous.

The paintings detailed in this article are typical of magical paintings that can be added to any AD&D campaign. Like many other powerful magical items, these paintings are not easy to destroy. While less resilient than artifacts, they usually survive casual attempts at destruction, such as cutting and burning. Unless otherwise specified, the paintings described herein are totally resistant to normal fire and to normal or crushing blows. Other hazards (magical fire, electricity, etc.) are saved against at +4 to reflect the strength of their dweomers.

"The Watchers"

Created over three centuries ago by Tal Alanan, an evil elfen mage, "The Watchers" is a bulky painting, 4' wide by 3' high, on heavy canvas. When last reported, it was framed in dark oak. The work depicts a wooded area with heavy undergrowth.

Barely discernible are the eyes of several creatures watching through the brush (a viewer must consciously examine the picture to notice them). The dark-colored style has an oppressive, almost menacing, feel to it. Just passing the picture or seeing it in peripheral vision gives the viewer an overpowering impression of subtle movement; leaves seem to shift, and the brush seems to stir as creatures move behind cover. Looking directly at the painting removes this discomforting effect.

Concentrated scrutiny for more than one round activates the powers of the painting. The viewer becomes disoriented, then feels himself being drawn into the painting. If a saving throw vs. spells is failed, his mind merges with the consciousness of a small woodland animal, such as a fox or owl, actually existing in the wooded area nearest to the painting (and viewer) at the moment, within a range of 20 miles; if no such woodland exists or the viewer makes his saving throw, no ill effects are suffered. If mental merging with an animal does occur, the viewer's sensory perspective moves as the animal does, and his senses become heightened and attuned to that forest and creature.

Unless the viewer is aware of the problem and concentrates on avoiding it during the moment of disorientation, his mentality becomes one with the small animal as well, and he is unable to withdraw (recognizing this problem requires a wisdom check on 1d20 each time the painting is gazed at until the viewer make his check; he then need not make the check again). Once made, this magical union can be broken only by blocking the victim's view of the painting or an anti-magical field (not by *dispel magic*). During this union, the participant's body becomes rigid and unresponsive, while both his heart and breathing rates rise drastically, posing severe danger. For every 10 rounds the victim remains magically captured by the painting, he must successfully make a system-shock roll or take 3-18 hp damage from physical exhaustion.

When an unwitting mental union is broken, the victim's heart rate and breathing drop back to normal, but the animal mentality stays on. For each round such a union exists, the animal mentality remains for one round after union is broken; the role-playing of this event is left to the DM and player involved. After this period, the victim's mind returns to normal. This does not occur if the viewer has passed his wisdom check.

If the viewer makes his wisdom check and then voids his subsequent saving throw, he will be in control of the animal with which he has merged when the union occurs, able to move where he wills within the nearby woodland with the movement and speed appropriate to that animal (see the *Monstrous Compendium*, under "Mammal, Small" or the appropriate animal type; only normal, nonmagical

animals are contacted). In such a case, the viewer can break the union at will, returning to his own body immediately. However, the stress on his heart, and hence the system-shock rolls, still exist.

In addition to controlling the animal, someone who knows the powers of the painting can even choose where the animal to be controlled will be located. Before viewing the painting, he must concentrate on the region he wishes to deal with. The only restriction is that the area must be wooded and within a range of 50 miles. As with *teleportation*, the chance of successfully "reaching" the desired area depends on familiarity; use the same probabilities for success as for the spell *teleport*, in the *Player's Handbook*, page 172. If the viewer fails this roll (i.e., if he comes in "low" or "high") or if he does not concentrate on a specific locale, the wooded area used will be the one nearest to the painting within a 20-mile radius.

If, during the union, the animal is wounded, the viewer immediately loses a proportion of his hit points equal to the proportion lost by the animal (e.g., if a 4 hp fox takes a wound doing 3 hp damage, the viewer immediately takes damage equal to three-fourths of his hit-point total, not his current hit-point value), with fractions rounded down; save vs. death magic for half of this damage. If the animal is killed, the viewer must save vs. death magic or die instantly (even if he makes the saving throw, his hit points drop to 1 and he falls unconscious for 4-16 rounds).

Any spell-caster who successfully avoids merging with an animal mind, then concentrates on the painting for 10 uninterrupted rounds, gains the power to cast one of the following spells, chosen at will: *entangle*, *call woodland beings*, *speak with animals*, *animal friendship*, *invisibility to animals*, *transport via plants*. This spell is in addition to his own spell allotment for the day. In the case of nondruid spell-casters, the level of casting is 6th level; for druids, the level of casting is the druids own level plus two, or 6th level, whichever is greater. Each spell so gained can be used only once and must be cast within a 24-hour period of viewing the painting, or else the spell so gained fades from the caster's mind.

It is said that Tal Alanan kept close, covert watch over his elven subjects using this painting, and he was greatly feared for his intimate knowledge of the goings-on within his minor kingdom. Until he was overthrown by a neighboring woodland kingdom, he successfully crushed every rebellion against him and controlled all aspects of life within his magical reach. After his death, his possessions (including the painting) were identified but later stolen by rival wizards. The painting's whereabouts are currently unknown.

"Widow's Walk"

This painting shows the crowded dockside of a bustling port. Created by Balfas the Seafarer, famed for his love of ships and things nautical, the painting was reportedly destroyed in the sack of his island manor, but it reappeared in the collection of Ramoth, of Northport. This is often cited as evidence that Ramoth in fact funded the raid on the manor; in any case, there is serious doubt that Ramoth can tap, or is even aware of, the true powers of his prize.

When someone viewing the painting looks closely at the crowd on the dockside, he immediately notices a representation of the person most on the viewer's mind during that day so far. While potentially startling and intriguing, this is just a minor effect of the painting's close attunement to the viewer's mind.

The major power of the painting is to allow the viewer total protection from divination, detection, or scrying spells or powers. If the viewer concentrates while viewing the painting for 10 rounds, he cannot be detected from afar by any means. Psionics, scrying spells, devices such as *crystal balls* and magical mirrors—all are useless. If the viewer is a mage of 6th level or above, this effect protects him from detection by any creature up to the status of a demigod. This isolation effect lasts for up to eight hours or until the invoker consciously dispels it. During this time, he need not concentrate on maintaining the effect; he also need not continue viewing the painting. The effect can be invoked only once per day and can be granted to but one person at a time. This power does not confer on the viewer any form of *invisibility*; the protection is restricted to magical and psionic forms of detection alone. Any creature that can see the viewer of the painting directly can attack him in any manner with no interference from the picture.

In addition to this isolation effect, the viewer of the painting can cast each of the following wizard spells once per day, at the 18th level of ability, by staring at the painting for one uninterrupted hour: *control weather*, *part water*, *water breathing*, *fog cloud*. These spells may be maintained indefinitely in the viewer's mind if they are not cast.

This painting is relatively small, 2' × 2', and is lightly framed. Despite its fragile appearance, it is totally immune to damage from water or lightning. All other damage is saved against at +2.

"The Gladiators"

"The Gladiators" is a large painting, 6' high × 8' long, and is both heavy and cumbersome. As its name implies, this painting depicts four heavily armed and armored gladiators facing each other in a sandy arena. It was painted by Arlena the Fair, to ward her country villa. Arlena herself vanished two decades ago and is believed dead; the painting disappeared around the

same time, but rumors have since reported it in various locales. Because of the size of the painting, transporting and hiding it have undoubtedly proved to be serious problems.

If a human, demihuman or humanoid—except for Arlena herself—walks within 10' of the painting without first saying a special password (this word is thought to be lost with Arlena), he and all his clothing and equipment are immediately transported into the painting. This effect is similar to that of a *mirror of life trapping*, except that it does not require the victim to look at the painting. Once within the painting, the victim is immediately attacked by the four mail-clad gladiators (INT average; AL N; AC 4; MV 12"; F6; hp 48 each; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon type; splint mail, two-handed sword). The gladiators are totally resistant to all enchantment/charm, *fear*, and other mind-affecting spells; to other spells, they have a 60% magic resistance. They are totally single-minded in their intent to kill the victim and cannot be reasoned with in any way. If the victim is slain, the body is immediately transported back outside the painting. If the gladiators are slain, the victim cannot escape from the painting unless someone outside speaks the word of release ("libertas," which may be learned by casting a *legend lore* spell). Any damage received from the gladiators is real and can be cured normally. None of the gladiators' weaponry or armor may be brought out of the painting.

Up to eight creatures may be trapped by the painting at any one time. They are kept totally separate from each other, each with his own four gladiators to fight. When the word of release is spoken, the creature who has been trapped the longest is the first to be released (first in, first out). For each subsequent repetition of the word, another creature is released until all have been freed. If the painting is "full" and a ninth creature passes it, he is trapped and the creature who has been within the painting the longest is freed.

When a creature is trapped by the painting, his image-seemingly part of the painting—appears in the arena, but remains visible for only one round. After that time, the painting returns to normal.

If someone outside the painting speaks the word of summoning ("aggredivi," also lost with Arlena but recoverable with *legend lore*), the four gladiators vanish from the painting and appear standing before it. (Note that this has no effect on anyone within the painting; they still have their own four gladiators to deal with.) The gladiators immediately attack any victims designated by the person who spoke the word, and fight until either they or their opponents are dead. This is all they can do; if there is no one to fight, or if their summoner tries to give them other instructions, they immediately return to the painting. Once the combat is over, one way or the other, the gladiators or their

corpses (plus all their equipment) vanish and the painting returns to normal. The gladiators can be summoned once per day. The word of summoning must be spoken within 50' of the painting.

"Dragonnel"

This painting is unframed and square, 3' on a side, and is painted on tightly stretched dragonnel hide; even if its powers are not known, this fact makes the painting worth 5,000 gp. Unlike the other paintings described here, "Dragonnel" radiates no aura of magic. Only an *identify* spell will show that it is magical. This work was created two centuries ago by the half-drow mage Llemual (now rumored to have become the lich lord of an Underdark kingdom) and is thought to reside in the treasure repository of some drow noble. This painting originated from an undisclosed location in the Pomarj region in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® setting. It depicts a large dragonnel, known from that world, perched on a rocky cliff above a river valley.

By concentrating and speaking the word of summoning ("fuga"), the viewer can call forth the dragonnel, causing it to vanish from the painting and appear before the summoner. The dragonnel (INT semi-; AL NE; AC 3; MV 12"/18" (C, D if mounted); HD 8 +4; hp 68; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 1d6/1d6/4d4; SA tail slap to the rear, with no other attack, for 2d6; ML 13; MC5 GREYHAWK® appendix) is totally obedient to the mental orders of the person who called it forth, willing to act as a mount to the limits of its strength or to fight to the death. Note that this obedience is not transferrable, since the mental rapport necessary for control exists only between the dragonnel and its summoner. If called forth during the day, the dragonnel remains in existence until the sun touches the horizon, disappearing instantly with no warning (potentially embarrassing to its rider if in flight at the time). If called forth during the night, it disappears at the moment the sun first appears above the horizon. The dragonnel can be dispelled by its summoner at any time, returning it to the painting. If the beast is killed, its corpse remains until the sun next touches the horizon, then returns to the painting. The dragonnel can only be called forth once in any 24-hour period; even if the summoned dragonnel is slain, another dragonnel can be called forth after 24 hours.

Alternatively, by concentrating on the painting for one round and speaking the word of changing ("mutare"), the viewer can *shape change* (as per the wizard spell) into a dragonnel. The effect has a duration of 20 turns but can be dispelled by the viewer at any time before it expires. This power can be used three times per day.

Glorindel's gates

During her sojourn across the lands of the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting, before her return to the city of Waterdeep (and

her eventual disappearance), the wizard-bard Glorindel put much effort into creating a number of small, exquisitely crafted paintings depicting places she had visited on her extensive travels. As suited her peaceful outlook at this time, these were typically uninhabited areas of great scenic beauty: sylvan glades, wilderness lakes, and forbidden plateaus. Some paintings, however, depicted less scenic areas that were of importance to her, such as the Market in Waterdeep and the courtyard of her villa. These small paintings, her "gates," were Glorindel's favored means of transport.

Any human, demihuman, or humanoid with intelligence not less than 13 and wisdom not less than 12 may harness the power of one of these paintings. If he stares uninterrupted into the painting for two rounds, the viewer experiences the sensation of the image in the painting enlarging until it fills his entire visual field, seeming ever more real as it does so. After a further round, the viewer is able to "step into" the painting. The effect is identical to the spell *teleport without error*. To someone standing nearby, the viewer seems to simply vanish, along with everything he was carrying. The painting does not *teleport* with him (although if the viewer has another of Glorindel's paintings in his backpack, the second painting will *teleport* with him).

Although Glorindel's home in Waterdeep was destroyed by undead foes, her body was never found. Some believe that, when it became apparent that all was lost, she used one of her "gates" to effect her escape. Whatever the case, Glorindel has not been seen since. No one knows how many of Glorindel's gates were created or still exist. Only three are known for certain to have survived, all owned by the bard Diarmund of Waterdeep.

All of Glorindel's gates are small paintings, usually less than 1' square. Unlike the other paintings described here, these have no innate resistance to harm; they can be damaged and destroyed like any normal painting.

Glorindel's living paintings

Further triumphs of Glorindel's Art were her "living paintings." These are generally square and up to 6' on a side, usually depicting scenic panoramas. The magic involved in these works is more apparent than that of the aforementioned gates as the scenes in these paintings move. In a seascape, the clouds may race, the sea gulls fly, and the waves wash over the rocky shore; in a forest scene, the sun may cast shifting beams of light through the gently moving branches. These paintings are, without exception, strikingly beautiful, and could—if it weren't for their frames—almost be mistaken for windows.

Although their major purpose is to please the eye, each of these paintings has additional powers. When triggered by a command word ("fascinum"), each has the

effect of the spell, hypnotic pattern. This effect lasts until dispelled by another command word ("en"). In addition, the following spells can be cast upon creatures captivated by the painting, each spell triggered by its own word of command: *blindness* ("caecitas"), *suggestion* ("obsequium"), *geas* ("exite"), and *sleep* ("sominus"). These spells have no effect on anyone not previously captivated by the *hypnotic pattern* effect, and these spells do not count as being cast from the viewer's mind. Each is usable once per day.

As with Glorindel's gates, no one is sure precisely how many living paintings Glorindel created or how many have survived. Due to their great value (15,000 gp as a bare minimum), those that still exist probably can be found in the collections of rich merchants, nobles and the like.

Igraine's portraits

In her dual roles as Court Wizard and Court Painter of a minor barony, Freeman's Pass, Igraine created a number of remarkable portraits for her liege, Lord Balto. Although many of these paintings perished, as did Igraine herself, when Freeman's Pass was overrun by an army of were-creatures, some have survived the last century and a half to the present day.

Each of these paintings depicts one person—a close friend, trusted counsellor, close advisor, or family member—with

whom Lord Balto would often have cause to consult. The purpose of these paintings was to make such consultation easy.

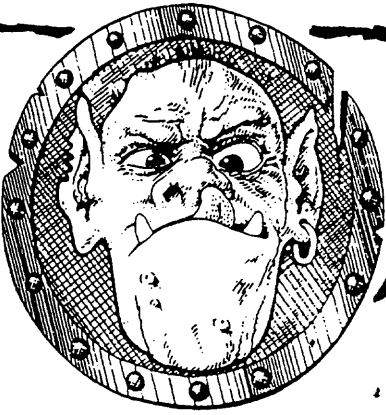
Simply concentrating on the painting sets up a strong mental rapport between the viewer and the person depicted. This rapport takes one complete round to develop; after this time, it allows the two people to communicate fully as though through telepathy. There is no limit to the duration of this rapport or to the number of times it can be established. All that is required is for the viewer to look at the painting and concentrate on establishing the rapport. During rapport, both participants can engage in no other activity.

As the rapport is being established, the person depicted becomes aware of a chilling cold and a sensation of presence. If the person is willing to enter communication, rapport is established after one round; if he is unwilling, he must save vs. spells to terminate contact. A successful save means that contact is broken and cannot be reattempted for a period of one hour. If the save is failed, the person being contacted has one last chance to resist rapport: During the round that it takes to establish rapport, he may resist the contact through the use of mind-shielding spells, devices, or psionics. Once established, the rapport can be broken only by the person viewing the painting or through the death or loss of consciousness

of one of the participants. There is no range limit to this communication.

All of Igraine's portrait paintings still in existence, except only one to be discussed later, depict people who have died since the creation of the paintings. If anyone, through ignorance or design, tries to establish rapport through such a painting, there is a fixed 50% chance of establishing rapport with the soul or spirit of the dead person. Treat this rapport as the spell *contact other plane*. To determine chance of insanity, knowledge, and veracity, assume the soul or spirit is nine planes removed from the viewer of the painting. The viewer can ask one question for each two levels of experience (only mages receive benefit for intelligence scores over 15). Since rapport with a dead person requires much more of the painting's power, this rapport can be attempted only once per day.

Rumors tell of one surviving painting that does not depict a dead confidant of Lord Balto. This is the painting that Igraine was working on at the time of her death. The background is complete, as is the body of the person depicted. Only the face is missing. Perhaps because its dwomeer was not finally bound by the completion of the painting, this famed "unfinished portrait" has an additional power over and above those possessed by Igraine's other works. By concentrating strongly on the painting for a period of two rounds, the viewer can make the likeness of anyone well-known to him appear in the portrait. The painting can then be used to establish rapport with that person as described above (in this case, the saving throw is automatic whether the person being contacted is willing or not). If rapport fails or is broken, the face vanishes from the portrait again. This power can be used only once every two full days. Although no firm information is available, there is a persistent though unsubstantiated rumor that Igraine's unfinished portrait hangs in the halls of a dwarven king. Ω



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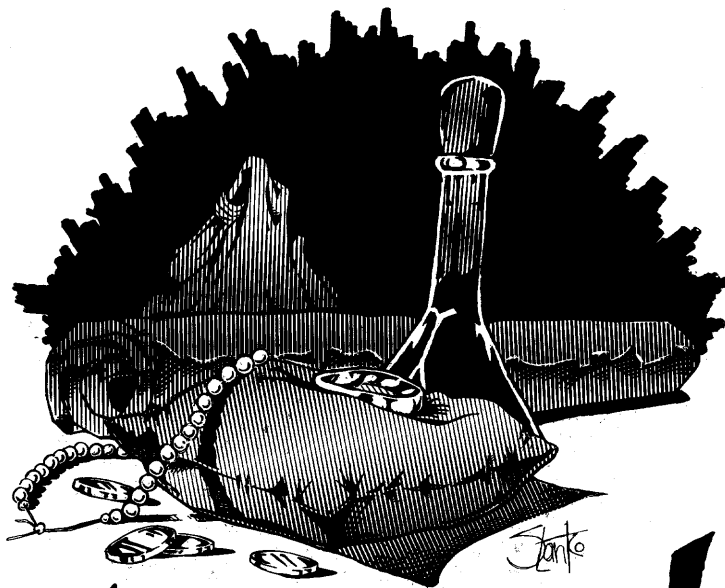
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Magic by Candlelight



Unique magical candles for your AD&D® campaign

by Gregg Chamberlain

Artwork by Thomas Baxa

Once I refereed an AD&D® game during which the player characters found a candle in a treasure cache. They automatically gave it to the cleric character, assuming it was a *candle of invocation*. Later on, the party had a run-in with a pack of trolls, and one of the fighters got badly mauled. The fellow with the cleric character decided to use the candle to temporarily push his cleric up to 9th level so that he could cast a *cure critical wounds* spell.

Imagine his surprise when the candle, instead of increasing his character's powers, suddenly let loose with an aerial fireworks display that didn't cease until someone blew out the candle. Instead of a *candle of invocation*, the party had found one of the special magical candles that I had devised to keep players on their toes when treasure-seeking in my dungeons.

About candles

During preindustrial times, fire was the only source of illumination for people's homes after the sun went down. Torches or oil lamps were commonly used to light large rooms, while candles served as small, portable sources of light for reading or lighting one's way to bed. Candles also figured in many religious services as either part of the altar ornamentation or as an aid to prayer and meditation.

Early candles, also known as rushlights, consisted of animal fats wrapped in rushes, husks, or moss, then set alight. Later candles were made of tallow, obtained from animal fats or, in the Orient, from the seeds of the tallow tree. Wicks for the candle were also introduced and were made of cloth strips or woven cord.

As can be seen by the equipment list in the *Player's Handbook*, tallow candles are very cheap compared to wax candles. Tallow candles burn more quickly and produce a fair bit of smoke, however. Wax candles are used for making magical candles, and there are several sources of wax for making enchanted tapers.

Mages use white candles made from spermaceti, a waxy material obtained from sperm whales and either the small or large bottle-nosed whale. Clerical magical candles are made of beeswax taken from either the regular or giant species of bee. The wax produced is a dark yellow in color. Druids use candles made from the wax obtained from the bayberry, an evergreen shrub whose berries are covered with a waxy coating. A bushel of berries yields about four or five pounds of a pleasant-smelling, green wax.

Only the purest grade of wax is used in making magical candles. That, plus the sources of scent that must be added to the wax in its liquid state to act as a bond between the wax and the special ingredients used to impart to the candle its magical properties, vastly increase the cost of a wax candle specially ordered by a spell-caster from a candlemaker.

Candles may be bought ready-made from the candlemaker who will also, for an additional charge, add whatever incense, perfume, oils, or herbs are required to prepare the candle for enchantment. A mage may hire an alchemist to prepare the candle and add whatever special ingredient is required. Clerics and druids may be able to find a member of their order who is skilled in candlemaking to perform the task. To lessen the chance of spell failure when enchanting the candle or investment when the finished candle is placed upon the altar, the spell-caster should make the candle himself.

There are two methods of candlemaking: molds and dipping. A candle mold is the simplest method of making candles. Molds should be made of either pure silver or the bone of some magic-imbued creature such as a dragon. Wicks of woven silk cord are placed in the molds, and the molten wax, with its scents and magical ingredients already mixed in, is poured into the molds and allowed to cool. During the procedure, the spell-caster chants or prays. After the candles have cooled, the usual process for enchanting an item may begin.

Dipping takes longer but reduces the chance of spell failure during enchantment, as the spell-caster can better prevent cracks or air bubbles from forming in the candle, making it imperfect. While chanting or praying, the spell-caster repeatedly dips the wicks into hot wax heated in a crystal vat, allowing each coating of wax to cool and harden before redipping. Once finished, the candles are ready for enchantment. If the spell-caster uses candles prepared by a candlemaker, the chance of spell failure increases by +20.

Candles as treasure

Magical candles usually come in two sizes: small ones about 3" long and the thickness of a very small twig, and regular tapers 8"-12" long and 1/2"-1" thick. The large taper, as stated in the *Dungeon Master's Guide's* description of the *candle of invocation*, burns for four hours and can be extinguished by normal means for later

reuse. The smaller candle burns for 10 minutes; its spell effects, as with the larger candle, cease once it is extinguished.

Candle powers with areas of effect are effective within a 25' radius of the candle. Unless specifically stated, all beings within the area of effect, except the person who lit the candle and those who enter the area of effect later, are affected by the spell. Normal saving throws apply unless stated otherwise or unless the spell effect is similar to known AD&D game spells. Except where noted, all candles may be snuffed out by normal means. From 1d6 small candles or 1d2 large candles may be found in a treasure cache; they may be all of a kind (50%) or a mixed assortment of whatever types the DM chooses. In a horde, 80% of the candles will be small.

Experience-point (XP) values listed are per candle, for both small and large varieties. No experience is gained from using a *cursed* candle. If a sale value is desired, multiply the XP value by five for the item's value in gold pieces.

The following are some additional magical candles DMs may wish to scatter about the dungeon to liven things up for players. A few candles are restricted to a particular character class.

Candle of blinking

Upon lighting this candle, the individual begins *blinking* as per the spell and will continue to do so until the candle is extinguished or he *blinks* outside of the area of effect. The spell effect is limited to the user only, though in 5% of these candles the *blinking* effect affects all other creatures within the area of effect except the person who lit the candle. (Small: 100 XP; large: 400 XP)

Candle of brilliance

When lit, this candle sheds light equivalent to a *continual light* spell. There is a 5% chance the candle will be of the *cursed* variety so that all within 25' looking at the candle must save vs. spells or be *blinded* (*cure blindness* required). (Small: 50 XP; large: 100 XP)

Candle of charming

Lighting this candle activates a *fire charm* spell, similar to the fourth-level spell regarding area of effect and saving throws. (Small: 100 XP; large: 400 XP)

Candle of darkness

Instead of light, this magical taper creates *darkness* in a 15' radius, effectively

blinding all within the area and those who enter later. (Small: 50 XP; large: 200 XP)

Candle of defense

At least two such candles are needed to activate the *dweomer* for this magical item. Lighting these candles activates a *wall of fire* spell similar to the druid and mage spells. The wall may be in the form of a curtain up to 60' long between the two candles, or in the form of a ring enclosing a space up to 20' in diameter when the candles are set on opposite sides of the individual who lit them. The ring will move with the user provided he carries both candles (the circle then automatically shrinks to enclose only the bearer of the candles). The wall reaches 20' high and causes 4d6 hp damage to any creature passing through it, 2d6 hp damage each round to creatures within 1'-10' of the candles, or 1d6 hp damage each round to creatures within 11'-20'. (Small: 150 XP; large: 600 XP)

Candle of disruption

This magic is the bane of undead when lit. Skeletons, zombies, ghouls, and shadows suffer 3d4 hp damage per round while within the area of effect (no saving throws); wights and ghouls suffer 2d4 hp damage per round; all undead of the higher levels, including the special class, suffer 1d4 hp damage per round. If a cleric or paladin lights the candle, that character's power to turn undead increases by two levels while the candle is lit. (Small: 125 XP; large: 500 XP)

Candle of divination (priest, ranger)

While this candle is alight, the priest (cleric or druid) who lit it will be able to cast a single detection or divination spell of any type permitted at his level without having to pray for it beforehand. Ranger characters with spell-casting abilities may also use this candle. (Small: 200 XP; large: 800 XP)

Candle of exploding

This item may be mistaken for a *candle of fireballs* or *pyrotechnics*. Upon lighting, the candle will burn normally for one round before going out. At the end of the following round, it explodes in a *fireball* for 6d6 hp damage (3d6 hp damage for the small candle). Saving throws are applicable except for anyone actually touching the candle when it goes off. (Small: 50 XP; large: 200 XP)

Candle of fireballs

This candle burns normally for one round before seeming to go out. During the following round and every round thereafter, until the candle is either extinguished or burns itself out, a small *fireball* is emitted that will travel up to 50' before exploding in a 10'-diameter sphere for 1d6 hp damage (if the fireball strikes something before traveling 50', it will explode on impact). The *fireball* will strike any

target that the person who lit the candle directs it to attack; orders must be given at the start of each melee round, or else the *fireballs* fly off in random directions. (Small: 125 XP; large: 500 XP)

Candle of flame

This candle may be mistaken for one of the other varieties. When lit, it burns normally for one round. The following round, a sheet of fire similar to the clerical *flame strike* spell engulfs the candle and a 10'-diameter circle around it, causing 6d8 hp damage (3d8 hp damage for a small candle) to all within the area (save vs. spells for half damage). The candle is destroyed in the fire. (Small: 50 XP; large: 200 XP)

Candle of flame arrows

The bearer of this candle has only to touch its flame to an arrow to turn the weapon into a *flame arrow*, as per the mage spell. Two arrows per round can be transformed in this manner. (Small: 100 XP; large: 400 XP)

Candle of flame blades

This candle burns normally for one round. During the next round, a 3'-long tongue of flame erupts from the wick, similar to the spell *flame blade*. Damage is as per the spell, and the candle may be used as a hand weapon while lit. (Small: 100 XP; large: 400 XP)

Candle of protection

Once lit, this candle surrounds its user with an aura of protection from evil/good (50% chance of either) for a 10' radius, similar to the cleric or mage spell. (Small: 175 XP; large: 700 XP)

Candle of pyrotechnics

This candle burns normally for one round after being lit, then apparently goes out. During the second round, aerial fireworks shoot out of the candle's end like the spell *pyrotechnics*, with the same blinding effect on creatures within a 10' area of effect. The candle does not perform the second function of the *pyrotechnics* spell (i.e., obscuring smoke). (Small: 50 XP; large: 200 XP)

Candle of reflection

Once lit, the smoke from this candle coalesces into an image identical to the individual who lit the taper. The image is capable of independent movement within a 25' radius of the candle, as so ordered by mental command of the candle lighter, but cannot go past these bounds. Weapons, clothing, and other items are copied exactly; the image cannot do damage nor cast spells, though it may appear to do so. Each time a person or creature encounters the image, he must save vs. spells or mistake the image for the actual person. He will quickly realize the error when he attacks it, as any attack on this image destroys it. The person who lit the candle

may step beyond the area of effect without destroying the image, but must be within sight of the image in order to control it and cannot take any action other than movement at half speed; doing otherwise destroys the image. Extinguishing the candle cancels the illusion. (Small: 75 XP; large: 300 XP)

Candle of sanctuary

When lit, this magical taper casts an automatic *sanctuary* spell about the cleric that lasts as long as the candle burns. The candle may be carried. (Small: 175 XP; large: 700 XP)

Candle of shielding

This candle, when lit, surrounds the character with both a shield spell and a *minor globe of invulnerability* spell, as per the mage spells. Note that 5% of these tapers provide the user with a *globe of invulnerability*, as per the mage spell. (Small: 200 XP; small improved: 300 XP; large: 1,000 XP; large improved: 1,500 XP)

Candle of spells (mage)

This taper is similar to the *candle of divination*, in that the spell-caster who lit it can automatically recall any spell permitted at his level that he knows, and can cast said spell the number of times permitted to his level. For example, a 7th-level mage who knows *fireball* will be able to recall and cast the spell twice, as permitted by his level of experience, without having memorized the spell beforehand. An 8th-level mage would be able to cast *fireball* three times, and so on. If the spell-caster doesn't know *fireball*, however, he can't cast it, nor can he cast spells above his level of experience (i.e., a 7th-level mage cannot cast fifth-level spells). (Small: 200 XP; large: 800 XP)

Candle of survival

Also known as the ranger's candle (though any class may use it), this taper provides heat and light equivalent to a normal-size fire when lit. A small candle will burn for 10 hours instead of 10 minutes, while a large candle burns for 240 hours rather than four. Note that 10% of these candles also radiate a 25' diameter aura of *repulsion* against normal animals common to woodlands (bobcats, mice, birds, deer, snakes, etc.). (Small: 50 XP; small improved: 75 XP; large: 200 XP; large improved: 300 XP)

Candle of unfailing light

This taper provides a normal candle flame when lit and will burn steadily until it either burns itself out or is extinguished by the person who lit it. It cannot be extinguished by any other means, even by tossing it, dropping it, submerging it under water, or placing it in a vacuum. (Small: 25 XP; large: 100 XP)

Candle of vapors

This candle burns normally for one

round, then goes out. During the following round, it produces clouds of smoke or vapor that rapidly expand to blanket a 50'-diameter area. Except where stated, all characters and creatures within the area of effect will be affected, including those who enter the cloud later. A successful save vs. poison produces no affect; failure to save causes the noted effect to occur. The cloud dissipates one turn after the candle is extinguished (it must be dowsed with water to cease producing vapors).

There are five types of these candles:

– *Insanity gas*: Victims act as though they were under the permanent effects of *confusion*, as per the priest spell. Either a *heal*, *restoration*, *limited wish*, *alter reality* (from the AD&D 1st Edition game), or *wish* spell is required to cure this.

– *Poison*: This creates a cloud of poison gas against which all characters must save or die (taking 20 hp damage if the save is made).

– *Sleep*: This affects all characters and creatures of all levels within its 25' radius, except the individual who lit the candle. *Sleep* lasts while the victims remain in the vicinity of the fumes, plus 1d10 rounds after their removal.

– *Smoke*: A dense cloud of smoke forms, totally obscuring vision beyond 2'. If the candle is lit within an enclosed space smaller than half the size of the clouds 50'-diameter spherical area of effect, all characters, including the one who lit the candle, must save vs. poison or suffocate in 1d4 + 1 rounds.

– *Sweet smell*: This burns off all evil vapors within its area of effect (including all poisonous, superheated, corrosive, or otherwise harmful gases), leaving the air pure and sweet smelling. (Small: 75 XP; large: 300 XP)

Candle of visibility

Once lit, all creatures or objects within the candle's area of effect that are *invisible* through magical means alone become automatically visible (psionic invisibility is not so revealed). *Invisibility* does not resume if affected creatures step beyond the area of effect of the candle, unless such is normal for the creature. Creatures rendered difficult to see through natural or artificial camouflage are not affected, and objects that are concealed are not revealed. (Small: 100 XP; large: 400 XP)

Making candles

Each entry in the following list of suggested ingredients for making magic candles is given in two parts. The first part gives one or more herbs, spices, or perfume ingredients required for the candle's manufacture, while the second part lists the additional ingredients needed for generating the candle's spell-like powers.

Blinking: Onion juice and crushed chicory root; a few drops of blink dog blood.

Brilliance: Vetiver; phosphorus and ichor of magnesium spirit (FIEND FOLIO® tome).

Charming: Musk from musk deer or

civet; drops of blood from a dryad, lamia, or sirine (*Monster Manual II*).

Darkness: Purple verberna; giant octopus or squid ink, and blood from a dark creeper or dark stalker (FIEND FOLIO tome).

Defense: Patchouli or juniper berry; phosphorus and aqua vitae, plus blood from a red dragon or from the dragon head of a gorgimera or chimera.

Disruption: Myrrh, peach blossoms, and rosewater; holy water, and drops of blood from an especially holy nonhuman creature.

Divination: Three of the following suggested scent sources are required: out-of-season apple blossoms, rosewater, sage, snowdrop, seaweed, tea, ash blossom, hawthorn, mulberry, plum blossom; a few drops of blood from the cleric or druid, plus holy water or a cup of mistletoe juice from berries gathered in winter.

Explosion: May blossom; phosphorus and aqua vitae, plus grains of charcoal, sulphur, and saltpeter.

Fireballs: Fireweed; phosphorus and drops of blood from either a red dragon or from the dragon head of a chimera or gorgimera.

Flame: Fireweed; phosphorus and drops of blood from a salamander or phoenix.

Flame arrow: Oil of citronella; phosphorus and drops of blood from a hell hound, firenewt, fire drake, or fire toad.

Flame blade: Oak moss, rowan, or sumac; phosphorus and blood from either a hell hound or pyrolisk.

Invocation: Frankincense for a cleric's candle, or rosemary and sage for a druidic candle; holy water or a cup of mistletoe juice from berries gathered in winter.

Protection: For *protection from evil*, use three of the following scent sources: garlic, holly sap, peach blossoms, primrose blossoms, rue, juniper; blood from an

especially holy creatures such as couatl, opincuses, paladins, or such. For *protection from good*, use three of each: nightshade, gorse bloom, may blossom, or out-of-season rose petals; blood from an especially evil creature such as a hag, fiend, or the like.

Pyrotechnics: Mimosa; phosphorus and will-o-wisp or boggart ichor.

Reflection: Attar of roses and bay leaf; blood from a giant chameleon and hangman tree sap, plus several drops of quicksilver.

Sanctuary: Peach blossoms, tuberose, and oil of bitter orange; holy water, garlic, and giant skunk musk.

Shielding: Chicory root and rosemary, rue, or sow thistle; fluids from the central eye of a beholder and blood from a bulette.

Spells: Rosemary and sage; blood from a highly intelligent, nonhuman, spell-using creature.

Survival: Patchouli, holly sap, four-leaf clover blossom, and orange blossom; phosphorus and blood from a firesnake.

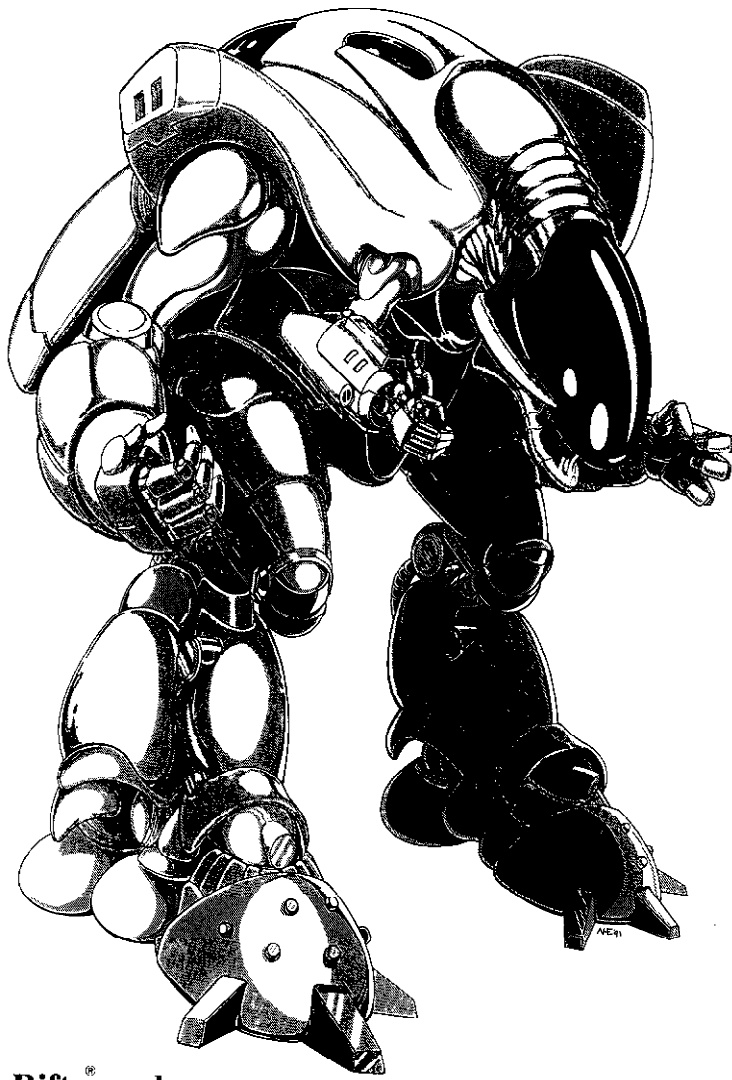
Unfailing light: Primrose; phosphorus and either blood from a blindheim (FIEND FOLIO tome) or abdominal fluids from a firefriend.

Vapors: Sandalwood and either jimson weed (*insanity*), poppy (*sleep*), puffball spores (*smoke*), belladonna (*poison*); ichor from a gibbering moulder (*insanity*), sprite sleep ointment or oil of black willow bark (*sleep*), pure charcoal powder (*smoke*), giant serpent poison (*poison*). The beneficial *sweet smell* candle requires a mixture of mistletoe, rosemary, sow thistle, and white heather.

Visibility: Orrisroot and either chicory root or brakenseed (fern spores); blood from a nonhuman creature with divination powers.

Ω





Rifts® and After the Bomb®/TMNT Sourcebook

Mutants in Orbit™

Mutants in Orbit™ is an adventure and sourcebook for **Rifts®** and **After the Bomb®** (TMNT/Heroes Unlimited™).

The **After the Bomb®** portion of this supplement takes a look at the intelligent mutant animals (and other life forms) that have survived the nuclear holocaust that nearly obliterated life on mother Earth. Life continues in the shelter of orbital space stations, and moon bases, around the Earth. Conflicts involve mutants of all kinds, space pirates, giant insects and aliens.

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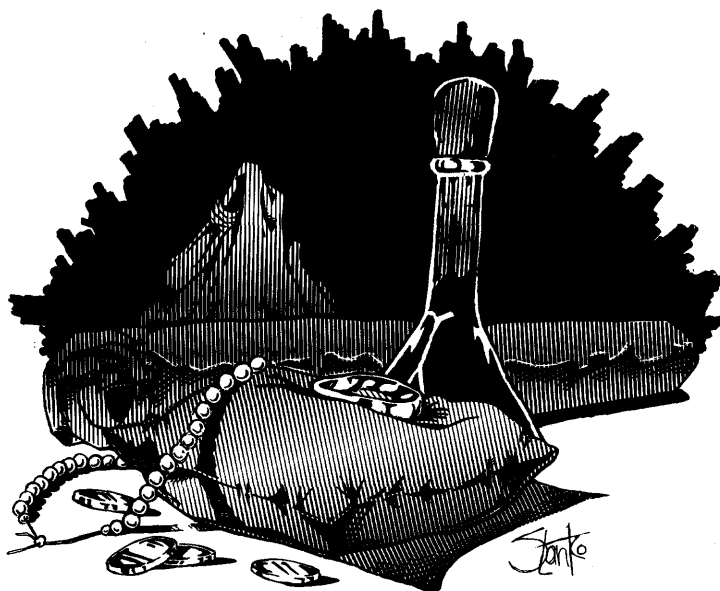
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Something Completely Different

Variety should be a treasure hoard's spice

by Bruce Humphrey

Artwork by Steven Schwartz

Challenging combat encounters are the centerpieces of any AD&D® adventure. With foes and traps defeated, the party then loads up piles of coins and distributes magical items as though the only things of value in the world were made of gold, silver, gems, and enchantments. However, the challenge should not end with the last sword thrust or spell cast. The treasures that a party wins can prove to be as thought-provoking and troublesome as any clever opponent. The effort to recover the monetary fruits of victory should be commensurate with the victory itself.

The realistic route

Not all treasure in AD&D game lands is measured in coins or can be scooped into *bags of holding*. There are works of art, functional items, spell ingredients, and clues to more adventure. In fact, most treasures should be items that are not obviously valuable but may be of greater worth than their weight in gold or dia-

monds. Some items could have little intrinsic value but be beyond price to a collector or as heirlooms.

Challenging your players with unusual treasures adds a new dimension to game play. Mind-boggling logistics are tied to dragging around a priceless carpet that, when rolled up, is a cylinder 15' long and 1' in diameter, and weighs 500 lbs. Put this little gem deep inside a deep dungeon and watch the fun. If the heroes get the rug into town, see how they manage to get its value from know-nothing merchants and con men, even if the party knows the carpet's actual value. This approach opens a world of opportunities for merchant characters and those whose particular histories may have exposed them to exotic valuables. Not only do characters become well-rounded by the introduction of personal experience outside of magic and combat, but the players gain a new appreciation of such mundane matters as trade and travel.

With the introduction of such valuable commodities as artwork, supplies, and collectables, the Dungeon Master can encourage and reward the development of fleshed-out characters. Players seldom fully realize their characters' personalities unless there is some game justification (read "reward") for it. By rewarding the creation of a character's life experience, the DM encourages the players to better visualize their characters and improve their role-playing. To do so, players may select or randomly generate professional training or hobbies for their heroes, using the nonweapon proficiencies section of the *Player's Handbook*, pages 52-65, during character generation. The history and travels of each character can also be imagined, not only to describe him but to justify providing him with clues about exotic items that might come into the party's hands. For example, a fighter might know the value of the carpet mentioned earlier, having served as a mercenary in a southern city-state where such carpets are commonly made.

Players are usually creative in their approach to encounters and traps. Now they are faced with a new threat—one to their pocketbooks. If they do not deal with the variety of treasure they will confront, they get only that fraction of the spoils that remains in coin form. Imagine the look on their faces when they have defeated the Ancient Worm of Khelkotha, only to find it spent those cold winter nights through the centuries smelting its hoard into a 10'-diameter sphere of gold, platinum, and gems—or, better yet, was a connoisseur of sculpture and traded its

hoard for dozens of valuable but bulky and heavy statues.

Many creatures raid merchant trains; very few carry away any money. Their lairs become cluttered with food, creature comforts, and pretty baubles. Even those who do steal treasure will use currency to buy items they desire. Orcs may buy kobold slaves. Gnolls might acquire luxurious furs and interesting jewelry. A mage will probably be an art collector or dabble in rare and expensive spices to accommodate his cooking hobby. The party might even defeat an evil priest whose menagerie of bizarre and dangerous animals is more deadly than its owner, once his *animal friendship* spells dissolve after his death. Lairs are homes, not bank vaults, and tend to reflect the tastes and lifestyle of their owners.

A range of treasures

Bulky valuables: One common form of treasure would be valuable but bulky items. These include carpets, tapestries, artwork, furniture, paintings, and raw materials. These do not have to be large to be valuable, nor heavy to be a challenge. Some such items may be fragile or take up a lot of space. Examples of the latter include a 3' x 3' painting that cannot be unframed without destroying it; a dozen ebony planks measuring 1" x 6" x 10'; or bales of ostrich feathers, each bale worth 350 gp, measuring 3' x 3' x 2', and weighing 10 lbs. Bulky valuables may be rendered down into their component parts (taking the gems out of a statue, for example), but the components' value should not total more than one-tenth the value of the undamaged whole.

Table 1 describes bulky valuables that adventurers might drag out of dungeons, caves, castles, and other habitations of their enemies, with additional notes as follows. Carpets and furniture may be valued for their materials, craftsmanship, or utility. Tapestries can be made from silk, cotton, or heavier materials, and should be treated as artwork. The subject matter, quality, and materials used for statues and paintings should establish their base values (note that the latter might be framed or rolled up). Heirlooms include legendary items esteemed by a particular race, clan, or family. Raw materials can be anything from planks of rare wood to uncut diamonds, and could include seeds, glass, feathers, cloth, and dyes; most will be valuable only to skilled craftsmen or intelligent creatures who collect or sell things.

Fragile treasures: Another type of treasure is the fragile valuable, a thing that may not have much weight or take up much space, but virtually any mistreatment will render it worthless. Mistreatment can be anything from a physical blow to getting it wet, dry, hot, cold, or magicked. The value of these items is in their completeness and condition. They can range from a 4'-tall glass figure that

can take only 1 hp damage before shattering to a piece of parchment whose writing (in gold ink) will fall off if it is rolled, folded, wetted, or heated. Some of these will lose value with each chip or scratch, even if they can withstand numerous hit points of damage.

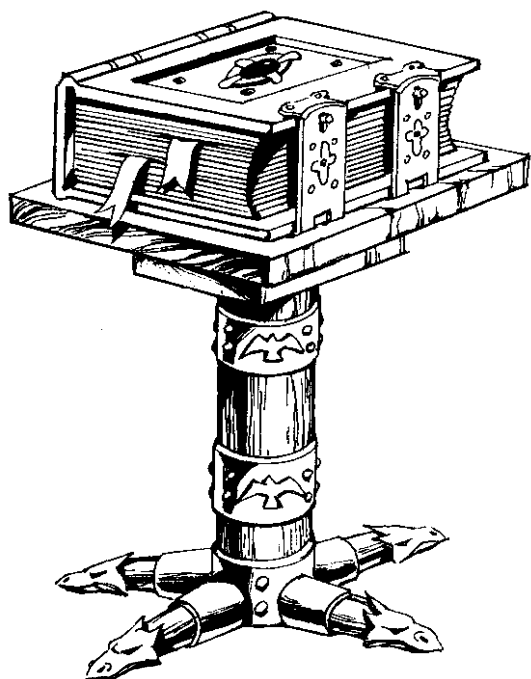
Table 2 describes a variety of fragile valuables for fantasy hoards. Figurines are valued for their subject matter and material, such as glass, ivory, paper, wood, or ceramics. Paintings can flake, and canvas can rip; simply displaying them can be a problem. Books could include histories, biographies, alchemical guides, or financial records. Technological items, such as they are in magical universes, could include clocks, mills, stills, motors, generators, guns, sextants, gear-driven calculators, complex toys, and tools.

False magic: An unusual type of treasure is that which appears to be magical, but is not. This would include ornate and expensive swords, jewelry, rings, cloaks, staves, and similar items. Some of these items may even radiate magic, having *continual light* or *Nystul's magical aura* cast on them, or being unfinished devices awaiting a final step to become true magical items. The value of such items may be up to one-tenth that of their finished form, not necessarily worth the trouble the party may go through to recover them.

Hidden valuables: The hidden valuable is anything that the party might not immediately recognize as treasure. The most obvious examples are maps and heirlooms, which are valuable only if the party follows up on their leads or stores them away to let them gain value over time. Some treasures go unrecovered because the party does not realize the potential for profit in collecting and selling them, as in the case of monsters' teeth, scales, or glands. Other items found in hoards are cast aside as trash, in particular spell components and mundane items like spices, clothing, and tools. Scattering such treasures around can make a lair very valuable, but their use requires creativity on the part of the players to take full advantage of the opportunities they provide. Examples include:

Biological items: Some of the attributes, values, and uses for items given here are corroborated in the AD&D rules, while those for others are left up to the individual DM. None of these items will give any permanent advantage to their owners, and most have a very short shelf life or are of use only to the character who actually killed the creature in question or to non-player characters such as alchemists.

The time taken to collect these items (skinning a dragon, for example) varies, depending on the tools at hand, the size of the creature, and the difficulty of the operation. In general, removing a specific organ from a slain monster would take 1-2 turns, while skinning takes 2-4 turns per 6' of length or height, dependent on the toughness of the hide.



—Glands: Creatures with magical attacks that involve emitting gases or poisons may have glands related to these capabilities that are of value. For example, a gorgon's breath may be the result of the combination of two glandular secretions; the gorgon's glands may be of value to learned mages but will be of no effective use in combat or may be actively dangerous when misused or brought into contact with one another.

—Eyes: The eyes of many powerful creatures, such as beholders, dragons, fiends, and creatures with a death gaze, will be prized as symbols of power and as components for the creation of magical items. They seldom retain any useful function after death without extensive mystical preparation.

—Teeth: In Greek mythology, dragons' teeth grew into loyal fighters when sown like wheat. The teeth of dragons and other large creatures might also be prized as magical and jewelry components.

—Hides: Dragon scales can be used in armor, both magical and mundane. Other creatures have hides that merchants, mages, alchemists, and craftsmen find valuable; these creatures would include displacer beasts, fiends, gorgons, basilisks, bulettes, and lycanthropes. Creatures with beautiful scales or fur, or hides that can be enchanted, will be especially sought after.

—Essence: This nebulous quality, sometimes associated with the blood or brain of the creature in question, can be magically captured under conditions best determined by the DM. The best candidates for this treatment are creatures with a presence on multiple planes, including fiends, psionic monsters, and creatures able to transfer their minds to other bodies.

—Blood: The actual physical or chemical properties of a creature's blood may be valuable, either in what it can do or how it may function as a spell component. In German mythology, drinking dragon blood gives a hero the power of speech with animals. In Greek mythology, a centaur's blood could become a powerful acid or poison (such a substance led to the death of Hercules). Blood is often a potion component.

—Other body parts: Ingestion or use of various parts of some creatures could act

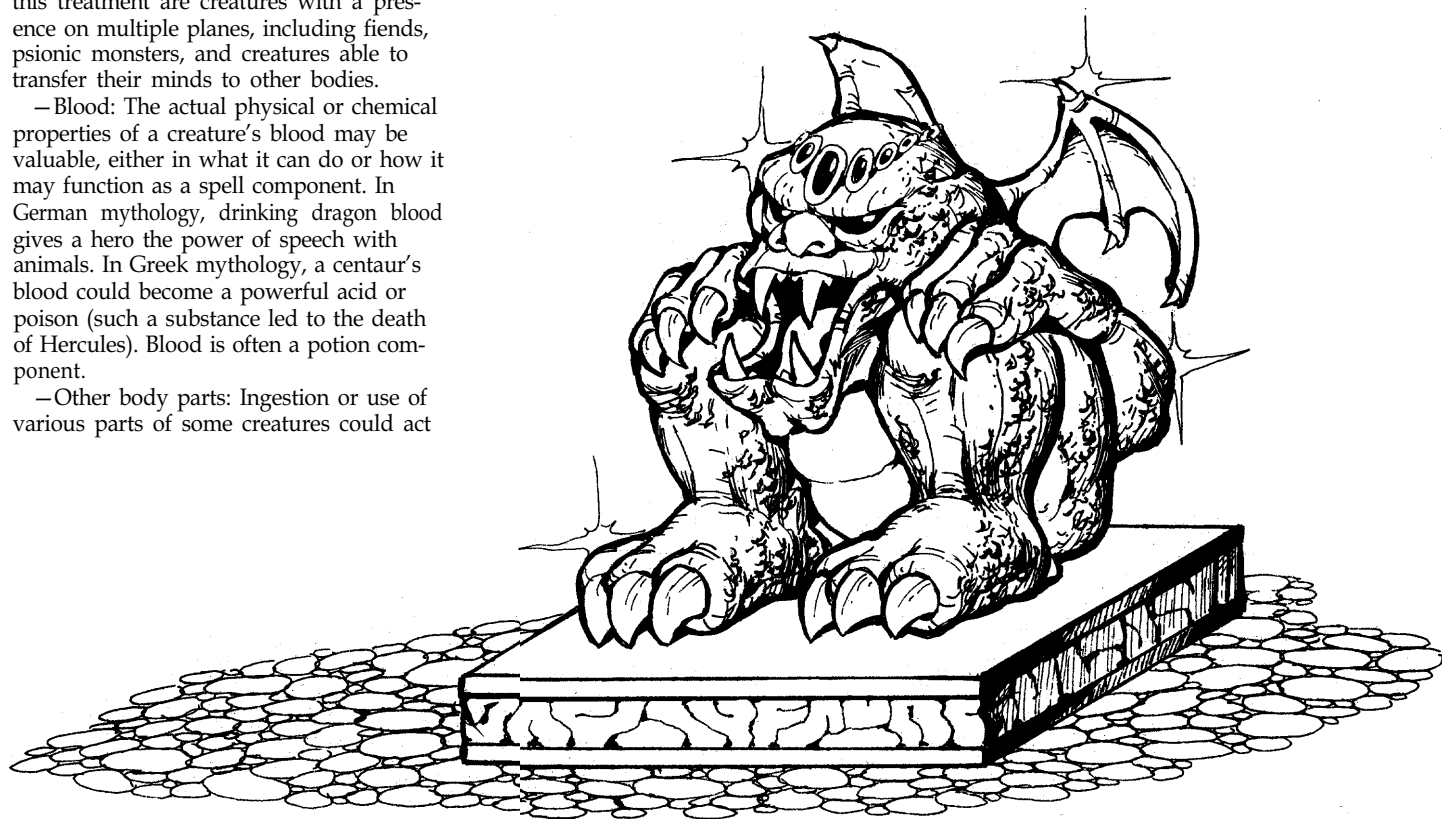
as an antidote for poisons, a cure for disease, or temporary resistance to some magical or physical attack. For example, body oil from a salamander, when spread on a character, might provide fire resistance at -2 for a turn or two. Drinking a potion made from the saliva of a lycanthrope might, if properly done, counteract or delay the effects of that creature's bite on a victim (the hair of the dog that bit him, as it were). Some body parts may be valuable for their artistic or collectible value, rather than their magic. Rewarding creativity this way will make the campaign more interesting and take some emphasis off combat and magic.

Information: Information can be invaluable, but most players ignore it. A pile of papers might be a personal journal of the owner's adventures in a nearby dungeon or cave, complete with encounter descriptions and the names of helpful creatures. The remains of an adventurer might indicate what killed him and where the killer went afterward—very useful in the case of cockatrices, medusae, and dragons. Accurate maps are useful even if they are not directions to treasure; a merchant would pay well for details on foreign seacoasts. A hoard could contain an extortion list of nearby creatures who paid the deceased inhabitant in order to be left alone, or it could include a map that points out ambush points along a well-traveled trading

route, or it could have a message about an attack planned by a group of evil creatures. Another possibility in a hoard is a book that lists the value of certain trading items, such as those listed in the previous sections.

Functional valuables: Spell components and other common items, such as rope and food, can be extremely valuable even if they are mundane, particularly if there is a great public demand for them or if their use is necessary for victory in the future. For example, the party could find wooden stakes and mallets on the bodies of an unlucky group of orcs, not far from the lair of the vampire the orcs were preparing to attack. See the equipment list in the *PHB* (pages 66-68) for inspiration.

Other items: Many items are nearly worthless except to those with specialized knowledge and needs. The most obvious examples here are spell components, which may be junk to anyone but spellcasters. Collectibles, too (plates, stamps, books, old coins, glass figures, dinnerware, etc.), often have little appeal to the noncollector. The same is true of heirlooms, although their use and likely buyers are even more limited, but the perceived value of such items can be nothing less than spectacular. (After all, what were Tolkien's *Silmarils* but extremely valuable elven heirlooms?) People also value pets and personal items well beyond



any obvious intrinsic worth.

Remember that the value of all items depends on the buyer. A family heirloom in the possession of a hated enemy is worth much more to that family than one in the hands of a friend. A mage's ransomed familiar is worth more when the mage's enemy is bidding for it than when the wizard alone is paying.

Magical items: No discussion of valuables would be complete without including magical items. The important point about using magic as treasure is to keep it limited and unusual. Players cannot come to expect magical items as part of every hoard, even a dragon's, without the campaign losing credibility. Magical items should "say" something, providing a hint of the local conditions, the owning creature's prey, or clues to other adventures in the area. The heroes may find an ordinary sword in a dungeon, then learn that its owner was a renowned warrior and his family is interested in finding him. Avoid using the random magic-item tables except as an absolute last resort.

By including only items that have reasons for being there, the campaign can be tightly knit, providing clues and direction to the players at every turn. It may not be possible to note the source for every magical item, so the entire history of how it reached the party's hands is known, but this is the ideal. By doing so, the DM retains control of the campaign and can tie distant events together, leading the players on or justifying campaign situations.

New magical items are interesting to long-time adventurers who are bored with the "normal" range of rings, wands, and swords. New items also have a puzzle value, since the owners may think they have a well-known item but are actually missing many of the powers of the new version. Magical items need not be obviously powerful to be useful, and subtle magic can be more effective than obvious ones. Some possible new items are briefly outlined here; DMs will have to flesh these items out where necessary and assign XP values to them.

Shield of blow turning: This device makes attacks on the user less likely by compelling opponents to select another target, when possible. When a die is rolled to randomly determine which character is being attacked by an oncoming foe, it must be rerolled if the first roll indicates the bearer of the *shield of blow turning*. Optionally, the shield could cast a form of the priest spell sanctuary.

Shield of magical defense: This offers its user a +4 bonus to save vs. breath weapons and ranged spells that can be dodged (e.g., *lightning bolt*), but offers no saving-throw bonus vs. weapon blows or area-effect attacks (e.g., *flaming oil*, *fireball* not targeted on user).

Ring of warding: This ring prevents any one physical attack each round from reaching its wearer, but costs one charge (two charges if attacker was using a magi-

cal weapon). The ring has a maximum of 20 charges; when an attack takes the final charge, the ring's stone shatters. The ring may simply deflect the attack toward another character, in the case of very powerful opposing magic. Optionally, the ring might function as per the wizards *stoneskin* spell.

Gloves of interception: The wearer can catch any hurled or fired missile aimed at his front, provided that he is not surprised and that the missile is not from a siege engine or firearm. Any missile targeted or passing within the wearer's reach (3') may be intercepted, whether the attack is aimed at himself or another character. The wearer must make a dexterity check on 1d20 to succeed and cannot have anything in either hand while performing this function. Magical arrows, bolts, stones, and sling bullets have their bonus to hit applied as a negative modifier to the dexterity check.

Sling stone of pulverizing: This +1 weapon acts as a normal sling stone until it hits its target, then does 4d4 hp or three structural points of damage. The stone has one use, then its magic is dissipated.

Sword of chopping: This +2 weapon does one point of structural damage if used on an inanimate object, cutting through wood and stone equally well. It destroys an opponent's shield, if so commanded before the attack is rolled, if the sword hits the target's armor class; no damage is done to the victim, but the shield must save vs. crushing blow. Otherwise, it is merely a +2 sword.

Sword of retaliator: Normally a +1 weapon, the *retaliator sword* is +5 vs. any creature that has hit the wielder in physical combat within the last hour.

Helm of sensory protection: This full helmet protects the wearer with a +4 saving-throw bonus vs. light, gaze, and sound attacks, and gas attacks that require inhalation. It is of no help against poisons

other than gaseous ones.

Torc of stability: The wearer cannot be moved, except under his own power. This includes falling, dragging, pushing, carrying, or impact from a weapon. The wearer can walk, run, jump, and climb normally, but any outside force cannot move him. Any attack that would throw or push the wearer does 1d3 hp damage to him, instead. The wearer cannot walk on walls, upside-down, or the like.

Ring of harmlessness: This ring makes the wearer appear by illusion to be a small, thin, ragged peasant, very non-threatening in appearance. He is unlikely to be attacked until all others in his group have been.

Silver chalice: Three times a day, this item can create a cup full of any non-magical liquid, poison, or antidote. The liquid can be liquor or any other fluid substance such as soup, water, wine, animal blood, mercury, or maple syrup. The substance must be liquid at room temperature (the fluid will be warm when it appears). The user cannot ask for something as specific as an antidote to cyanide poisoning unless he knows what that substance actually is.

Girdle of back defense: This belt causes the wearer to become aware of attacks from behind him, negating any attack bonus an enemy might gain otherwise. It spoils surprise attacks if the attacker can be seen.

Staff of battle: This +1 staff allows its user double the normal number of attacks allowed him per round. Once per day, it can also be thrown while spinning and will do double normal damage to the first being it strikes.

In short, use treasures not as the end of your adventure, but as adventures in themselves, leading to future quests and glory. Ω

Table 1
Bulky Treasures

Treasure	Weight (lbs.)	Dimensions (feet)	Value (gp)
Carpets	20-1,000	2×2 to 20×40	100-10,000
Tapestries	10-300	1×4 to 10×30	100-25,000
Statues	5-10,000	½ to 10 tall	50-350,000
Furniture	50-5,000	Any	50-50,000
Paintings	5-500	1×1 to 5×10	75-100,000
Heirlooms	5-1,000	1×1 to 3×10	300-10,000 +
Raw material	Any	Any	100-200,000

Table 2
Fragile Treasures

Treasure	Damaged by:	Dimensions (inches)	Value (gp)
Figurines	blows	1-12 tall	50-10,000
Paintings	water, heat, cutting	12 x 12 to 72 x 72	100-50,000
Books	water, heat, cutting	3×5 to 24×36	50-20,000
Technology	water, heat, blows	1-36 long/tall	100-35,000

TARG

Tharkold

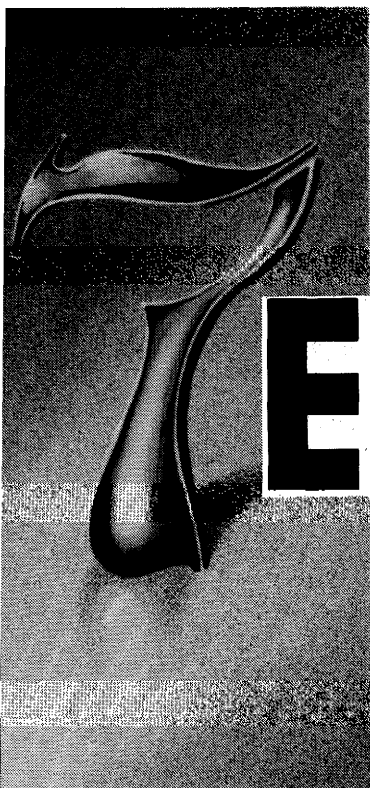


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THE SOURCEBOOK OF TECHNO-HORROR REALITY





Enlightening Lanterns

by Stephen Giles

Artwork by Robert Klasnich

Light your way
through the Forgotten
Realms with these
magical lamps

A reliable light source is invaluable to any adventurer in the AD&D® game, and lanterns are especially reliable. It follows that ingenious wizards in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting would add some magical effects or powers to such a practical item. The following are seven unique examples of magical lanterns from the Realms.

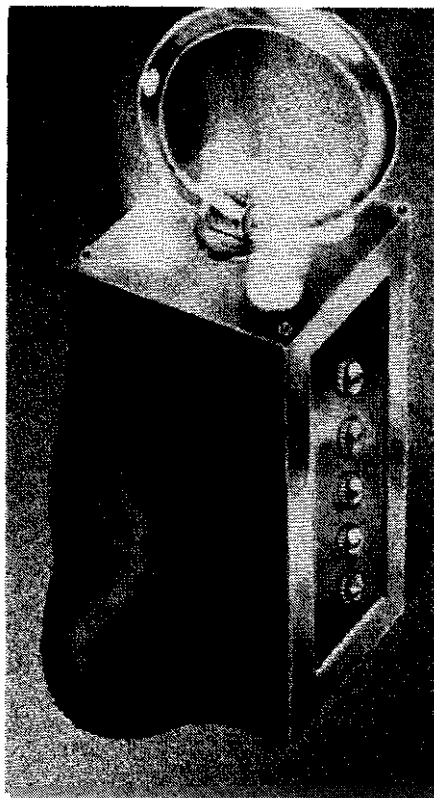
Bashal's Tendrilight

Description: The Tendrilight is a rectangular lantern with a 6" x 6" base. Two shutters rest on opposite sides of the lantern, with a vertical column of five adjustable knobs along one non-shuttered side. When one of the shutters is opened, a quivering black membrane is revealed. The membrane is warm to the touch and has a very rubbery texture. If looked at

from behind (through the other open shutter), the membrane cannot be seen; instead, there appears a metal plate with a row of five horizontal vents corresponding to the five knobs on the side.

When each of the knobs is turned clockwise, it opens a corresponding vent. When light from the lantern strikes the membrane, it causes the membrane to animate and stretch forth from the open shutter like a long black tendril. With each additional vent opened, the tendril becomes longer.

Tendril: AC 1; HD 2-6 (as per number of vents opened); THAC0 13 (see text); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 +1; SA *stunning*, constriction; MR 5%; SZ 10'-30' (5' per HD). The tendril attacks as an 8-HD monster, lashing out like a whip. Those struck by the tendril



must save vs. paralyzation or fall *stunned* for two rounds, unable to move, attack, defend, or use spells or psionics. If the attack roll is two over the score needed to hit, the tendril encircles its victim and squeezes. This constriction does 1d10 hp damage per round to any small- or man-sized creature until the tendril is destroyed or commanded to release. A captured victim need not make further saving throws vs. paralysis after the first one. The tendril functions for 2d6 rounds if not dispelled or destroyed.

The tendril is very rubbery. Subsequently, nonmagical blunt weapons have no effect on it. Nonmagical edged or pointed weapons do 1 hp damage per strike, and magical weapons of any sort do normal damage. The tendril gains 1 HD for every shutter open (from 2 HD for one shutter to 6 HD for all five). The membrane is destroyed if it is reduced to zero hit points; the Tendrilight then becomes a normal lantern. The process required to create new membranes is contained within Bashal's spell book (see "History"), but this text has been missing for many years.

History: The Tendrilight was the last creation of the wizard Rashal of Amn. Bashal was a member of the Cowled Mages, and it was with their resources that he was able to create his masterwork. Unfortunately, he fell quite ill after its creation and died soon afterward. The lantern went into the hands of the order, which sold it to the head of a large merchant family in return for certain services rendered. From the merchant house, the lantern changed hands a number of times before it came into the possession of a

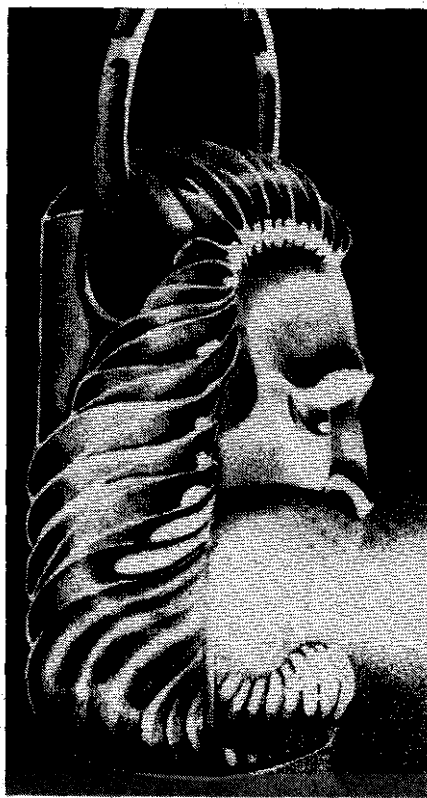
warrior of the Order of the Blue Boar, named Croseess Whitedove. He carried the lantern with him until his death nearly 50 years ago. After his demise, it fell into the hands of one of Croseess' young students, Helrik Redsash. Helrik, at last report, had joined a group of adventurers and journeyed with them into the Snowflake Mountains. They have not been heard from since. Many treasure-seekers have gone into the mountains to look for them, but none have been successful to date.

Bashal's spell book, which might still reside with the Cowled Mages, is bound in black leather with brass bindings. Within, besides the formula for recreating the membrane, are these spells (in order): *armor, friends, find familiar, continual light, deppockets, levitate, knock, rope trick, web, wizard lock, knock, fly, invisibility, lightning bolt, phantasmal force, slow, sepia snake sigil, dimension door, ice storm, massmorph, polymorph self, cloudkill, and wall of force.*

XP value: 8,000

Goldmane's Dazzler

Description: The Dazzler is one of the most beautifully crafted items ever built. It appears as an intricately carved lion's head with large green gemstone eyes, set on a gold cylinder. The materials themselves cost thousands of gold pieces. Coming out of the lion's ears is a handle of gold with an ivory grip. The jaws of the lion open, and it is through here that the light is able to escape. One odd quality of the lantern is that it does not seem to burn any fuel to produce its light. Whenever the jaws are opened, there is light, and it cannot be extinguished. Carved on the back of the



cylinder are two words, written in common: "Dazzle" and "Roar."

When the jaws are open and the command "Dazzle" is spoken, a beam of dazzling light issues forth from the lion's mouth. This beam has the same effects as the mage's spell *confusion*, lasting for 1d4 rounds. If the creature struck makes a saving throw vs. spells, the duration of the *confusion* is cut to one round. This power is ineffective against creatures that cannot see; it can be used once every 24 hours.

When the command "Roar" is spoken and the jaws are opened, a number of things occur. First, the light dims and the eyes glow brightly. Second, there is a great inrush of air. This air movement extinguishes all torches within a 20' radius. Immediately thereafter (but still during the same round in which the command word was spoken), the lion's head releases a mighty roar that deafens all creatures in a 20' radius and creates a *cone of force* 120' long and 30' wide at the end. Any creature within the cone receives 2d10 hp damage and is knocked off its feet if it fails a save vs. wands. The cone of force destroys doors and light wooden structures less than 1' thick, and also does 1d4 structural points of damage to any stone or earth structure. If the lantern is used underground, it may very well bring the roof down. This power of the lantern can only be used once per week.

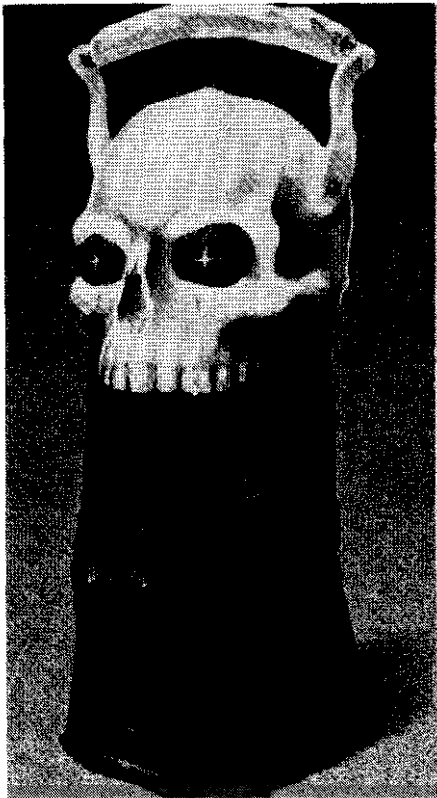
History: This item was made in the city of Myth Drannor at its cultural height. It was crafted by a fine dwarven goldsmith and enchanted by the wizard Goldmane, made to be a thing of beauty as well as a potent item of magic. When Myth Drannor fell, it was taken by the elves toward Evermeet by an elf mage named Silverhair. His party was attacked by a band of orcs who, using surprise and greater numbers, managed to overtake the elves and force them into slavery. The lantern remained in the hall of the orc chieftain until 20 years ago when a band of halfling thieves known as Swifthand, Inc., infiltrated the lair and made off with a large amount of treasure, including the lantern.

The band sold it to a trader on the Wyvernwater, who in turn sold it to a rich merchant from Arabel. He held it for a few years until he died. In his will, he left the lantern to a favorite nephew in Scornubel. Unfortunately, the caravan that was carrying the lantern to the nephew was set upon by a group of bandits just west of High Horn. This occurred last year, and the merchant's nephew has offered a very substantial reward for its return.

XP value: 5,000

Illag's Abominable Beacon

Description: This magical light source is a creation of evil. It is a 2'-tall, 1'-wide cylinder, with one set of shutters, and is made of the blackest iron. It appears to be partially melted but this is a deliberate decoration. On top of the cylinder is a



large skull with two black onyx gems in the eye sockets. The handle, which projects through the skull top, is made of human bone. It weighs about 20 lbs.

If any character of good alignment touches this evil item, he takes 1d10 hp damage; neutral characters who touch it take 1d6 hp. If grasped by an evil character, it forces the being to save vs. spells (wisdom bonuses applicable) or be possessed in such a way that the character is unable to let go of the Beacon and will fight to keep it, even at the risk of his life. This effect is permanent, removable only with a *limited wish* or *wish* spell.

The Beacon's enchantments are twofold. The first is the ability to create a cone of *darkness*, 20' long and 20' wide at its widest, that lasts as long as the bearer continues to concentrate. This *darkness* is the same as the 2nd-level mage spell *darkness* 15' radius in other respects.

The second function of the item gives the lantern its name. When mentally commanded, it acts as a beacon to any undead in the area. When this power is activated, the stones in the eye sockets of the skull pulse with a black light. One to four rounds later, all undead within 100 yards of the lantern are *summoned* by the pulses. These undead are controlled by the lantern-holder as if he were an evil cleric of the same level as his true class; undead that are not controlled will attack the lantern-holder. If the character is dual- or multi-classed, use the character's lowest level. The *summons* will not work if the lantern-holder is in an area the undead are unable to reach. For example, a group of skeletons would be unable to reach the

party through a locked door. *Summoned* undead move at their normal rate.

History: This abomination is the creation of the Void Mage, Illag, with the help of the priests of Bane. In fact, he sold it to the temple in Thay in exchange for divine assistance. The lantern remained in the temple until approximately 50 years ago, when it was stolen by a young Zhentarim priest, Zanepar, and taken to Zhentil Keep. He used this evil item many times in his brotherhoods battles for control of the Moonsea area. However, when Zanepar was told to give up control of the lantern to his superiors, he fled with it into the Thunder Peaks. It was not seen again until three years ago, when it was used by an orc shaman on a raid. Many agents from Zhentil Keep have gone into the mountains in hope of finding the artifact and getting it back. None so far have been successful. The lair of the orcs is rumored to lie somewhere northeast of the Spiderhaunt Woods, but no one has been able to locate it entrance.

XP value: 4,000 (evil characters only)

Krillus's Blazer

Description: Blazer is a very plain brass lantern, square in shape with shutters on one side. The brass fixtures of the lantern always look newly polished. Suspended by magical means above the oil receptacle is a brass ball, unattached in any way to the lantern. If anyone touches the ball, he receives an electric shock for 1d10 hp damage. The person must also make a saving throw vs. paralyzation or be knocked unconscious for 1d4 rounds. The oil receptacle holds enough oil to last two hours. The lantern need not be lit for the

magic to function.

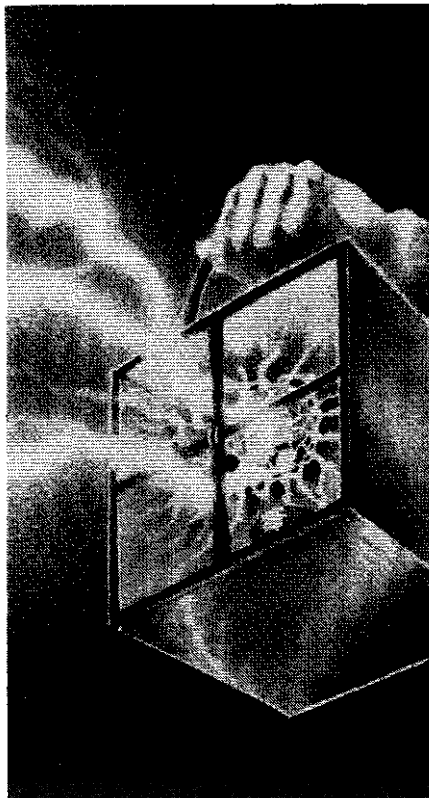
When the lantern is grasped by any character, it communicates its powers to him telepathically but is unable to pass on any other information. The lantern has two functions, both having to do with electricity.

The first function of the lantern is to release a stunning wave of electricity. This wave has a 180° arc of effect, affecting every creature within 20' of the lantern with powers like that of a limited *power word stun*. This stun power follows the description of the spell exactly except that it lasts for only half the normal duration (round up fractions). This power of the lantern can be used once per day.

The second function of the lantern is its ability to create up to 10 *lightning bolts*, as per the wizard spell, with a combined power of 10 HD. The power of each bolt is decided by the user. For example, if the bearer faced a powerful creature, he could fire one bolt delivering 10 HD of damage; if the user met a party of orcs, he could fire up to 10 1-HD bolts, one per round. A bolt can strike only one creature or object. If all the charges are not used within one hour of casting the first bolt, the remaining charges are lost. This power can be used once per day.

History: The mage, Krillus of Westgate, lived almost 100 years ago. During his lifetime, he was particularly fascinated by the wonders of electricity and performed many experiments involving lightning and magnetism (he is responsible for the creation of more than one *wand of lightning* and *ring of shocking grasp*). This lantern, however, was his greatest creation. When he retired to his tower, he gave Blazer to a favorite apprentice named Jelline Lighttouch, who took the lantern when she left to seek her fortune. Blazer saved her life and the lives of her companions more than once. After a time, she grew in power and settled down, establishing a tower and training aspiring young mages in the Art. One of her students, while Jelline was away, took some items (including the lantern) and fled. It was not long before he was caught, but he had time enough to sell the lantern to a rival of Jelline who spotted him leaving the tower. The person lucky enough to get the lantern was a mage named Krosset Blackhand. Blackhand promptly disappeared, and the fate of the lantern was unknown for a time.

Blazer reappeared 30 years after its disappearance, in the hands of a man found floating on a ruined ship just west of Waterdeep. The man could remember nothing of what happened to him or how he came into the possession of the lantern. Soon after his discovery, both he and the lantern vanished without a trace. Many methods, including some magical, were used to try to locate him, but all have failed. Many believe that powerful magic was used to take him, although none have made any claims to the action. There is



still a substantial reward offered by the Lords of Waterdeep for any information regarding this mystery.

XP value: 6,000

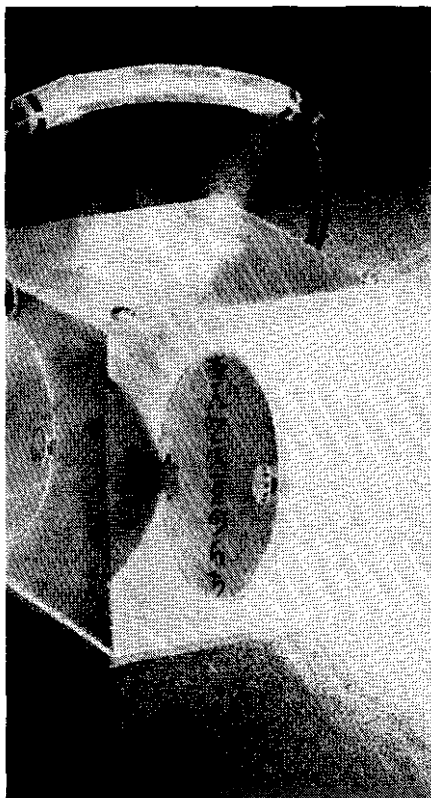
Malthrox's Shadowcaster

Description: The Shadowcaster appears to be a normal oil lantern made of bluish metal, with shutters on all four sides. The lantern has a wooden handle with a bone grip. Upon two of the shutters are carved single words in a script legible only with a read *magic* spell. In the hands of anyone other than a mage, the Shadowcaster acts as a normal lantern. However, in the hands of a mage, its powers are communicated telepathically.

The runes carved on the outside of the shutters read "Bizzait" and "Missathac." When only the shutter marked "Bizzait" is opened and that word is spoken, the narrow beam of light produced has the power to *dispel magic* as per the wizard spell, cast at eighth level. This power can be used three times per day. The area of effect is whatever 30'-square area the lantern light first falls upon (creatures included), with a range of 10-120 yards. Oddly, the light beam is the same diameter beyond the 10-yard range, though it is roughly conical before then.

When "Missathac" is uttered and that shutter is opened, a 1'-wide bright beam of light will flash forward and strike the closest object before it, out to a range of 60'. If the beam hits a living creature, a *shadowclone* is produced.

Shadowclone: INT non-; AL N; AC as original; MV as original; HD special; hp 30; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 or by weapon



type; SD see following; MR 10%; SZ as original, ML special; XP variable. The *shadowclone* is a shadow copy of the creature caught in the lantern's beam. The "clone" in most ways acts like its original, having the same size, speed, and weapons held. However, there are differences.

First, a *shadowclone* cannot cast spells or use psionics, and clones of magical items have no magical properties of their own. Second, the clone can be struck only by +1 weapons or better, but can be affected by spells if they are not negated by the clone's magic resistance. Third, no matter what sort of creature is cloned, it always attacks as a 6th-level fighter.

The clone created is under the complete control of the lantern bearer, being immobile without his direction. To maintain control, the bearer must concentrate on the clone. If his concentration is broken by a successful attack on him or by other means, the clone is dispelled. The *shadowclone* exists for 3d8 + 2 rounds otherwise. This power is usable only once per week. If other shutters are open when the command is spoken, nothing will happen.

History: The original creator of the Shadowcaster and the date of its creation are lost to history. The lantern derives its name from the illusionist who discovered it at the bottom of an ancient dwarven mine. Most sages who have studied this artifact over the years generally agree that it is of gnomish origin, though a human wizard is thought to have enchanted it.

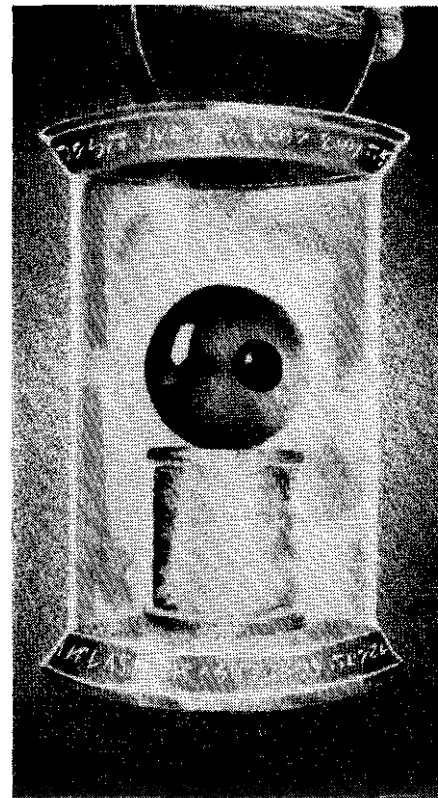
Malthrox carried this lantern with him throughout his career and eventually passed it on to a favorite apprentice named Fronthal. Fronthal took his master's gift and used it extensively on various quests in the west with a group of adventuring friends. He and his band were last seen 10 winters past as they were preparing for an extensive campaign into the High Moors. None returned from this excursion, and the fate of the party and the lantern are unknown. It has been rumored that the lantern has fallen into the hands of a bugbear chieftain.

XP value: 6,500

Messakk's Eye

Description: The Eye appears to be a large red ruby (worth about 5,000 gp) with a black pearl set into its side, giving it the appearance of a large red eye. It sits upon an unadorned column of gold. The gem and the pillar are encased in a glass cylinder that has had a *glassteel* spell cast upon it. The cylinder is capped at both ends, with the caps covered with runes of inlaid ivory. On the top is a simple iron handle with a wooden grip. Although the lantern is made up of a number of heavy materials, this item weighs only 1 lb.

The writing around the brass sections is in a strange alphabet created by the mage, and therefore requires magical means to be understood. If a *comprehend languages* spell is cast, the runes across the top are seen to read, "To have the eye brighten



thy way, speak the word Alight, and it shall obey." The runes along the bottom read, "To halt thine enemy in his path, point the eye and call out Krisak."

When the command "Alight" is spoken aloud by the bearer of the lantern, the eye will glow as if a *continual light* spell was cast upon it. The light has a reddish tint to it and shines in a 360° arc. The *continual light* spell is identical to the third-level priest spell except that it cannot be used to blind a creature. When the lantern's bearer no longer wants the light, he needs only to speak aloud the command "Extinguish." Unfortunately, Messakk forgot to include this bit of information in his instructions.

When the command "Krisak" is voiced, 1d4 creatures in front of the lantern are affected by a *hold person* spell (saving throws allowed). This power only affects those within 15' of the lantern and lasts for 3-6 rounds. This power of the item can be used only twice per day, requiring six hours to recharge after each use. Use of the *hold person* power cancels the *continual light* power, and when the *hold person* spell runs out, the lantern will be dark.

History: The Eye was created by the wizard Messakk of Amn well over 100 years ago. The lantern was his greatest creation, and he devoted his life (and some even claim his own eye) to its making. He carried it with him until his death. The lantern was rediscovered by the Band in Red, an adventuring company operating out of Baldur's Gate, when they located and successfully raided his tower. The Eye was then carried by a warrior of the band named Florn Scarhand, who used it on many of his quests until he finally retired

and passed it on to his son. With his father's gift, Dinlas Scarhand soon joined a group bound for Shadowdale, where the lantern was used on expeditions into the Underdark. It was on one of these expeditions that the party encountered a beholder. The creature accepted the lantern as a ransom from the party, and allowed them to escape. This occurred in the Year of the Spear, and none have ventured back.

XP value: 5,500

Thessall's Wayguider

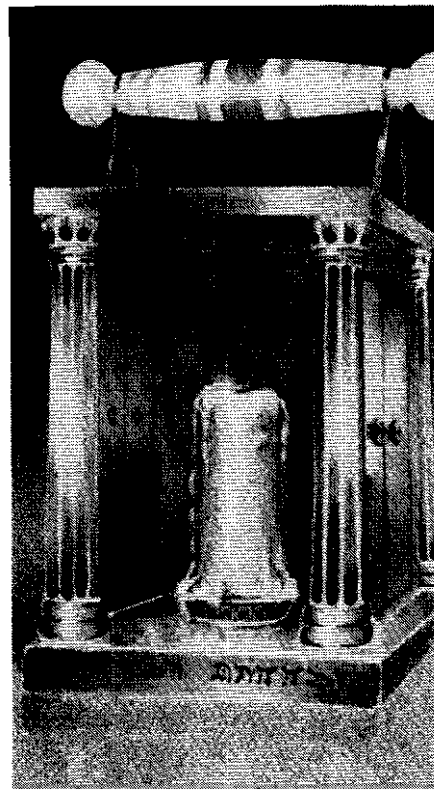
Description: The Wayguider is a square lantern 1' high with a 6" x 6" base. It is styled with four brass pillars, one at each corner. Two opposite sides of the lantern have bronze shutters. The handle on top is made of ivory inlaid with gold bands. In the center of the lantern is room for one large candle. The Wayguider has two words inscribed in the base in an alien script. If examined with a *read magic* spell, the words read "Bezzam" and "Tekkar." This device will function as a normal lantern unless one of the command words is spoken.

When the command "Bezzam" is spoken aloud, the light from the lantern takes on a blue tint and the range of the light is reduced to 40'. This light has the power to reveal secret and magically hidden doors and disguised trap doors. When the light shines upon any such portal, its outline

will glow bright blue. The opening mechanism of any door will *not* be revealed, however. This power of the lantern can be used only four times a day, needing six hours after each use to recharge. The magic lasts for only one turn before the light returns to normal.

When the second command, "Tekkar," is uttered, the lantern casts a reddish light. The glow of the lantern is reduced to a range of 20'. This beam has the ability of *true seeing* as per the fifth-level priest spell of the same name. This power affects all creatures in the light's 180° area of effect even if the bearer doesn't intend it. For example, a party of adventurers comes across a group of robed goblins claiming to be monks on a pilgrimage. When the party first spots the robed figures, the thief uses a ring to become *invisible* and get behind the newcomers. If the beam is used to reveal the true nature of the mysterious robed figures, it will also reveal the thief to the goblins, and he can be attacked. This light burns the candle at four times the normal rate (equal to two turns in the time of five rounds). This power can only be used once per day.

The final power of the lantern is that it can communicate with the holder telepathically and can give directions to find the path from which it came. This power also negates the effects of the 8th-level mage spell, *maze*. It can be used once per day.



In order for the magical properties of the Wayguider to function, a special candle must be used. The candle must be made from the wax produced by the giant honey bee and must have an *enchant an item* spell cast upon it.

History: The Wayguider was created by a mage, Thessall of Port Llast, over 200 winters past. It was made for his lover, the ranger Andreana Longstep, to bring her safely back to him after her long journeys into the High Forest. Sadly, it seems that the enchantment was not enough, for on one trip Andreana did not return. Thessall went into the forest to look for her, and neither of them has been seen since. It is rumored that rival mages kidnapped her to lure Thessall into the forest and into a trap, but these rumors have never been verified.

The lantern was last seen in the possession of a merchant named Druekin Dustycoat, who was trying to sell the lantern quickly in Waterdeep. He fled mysteriously one night with the lantern, leaving all of his goods behind. The present fate of the lantern and its owner are not known. Druekin was said to have been seen traveling east.

XP value: 5,600

Ω

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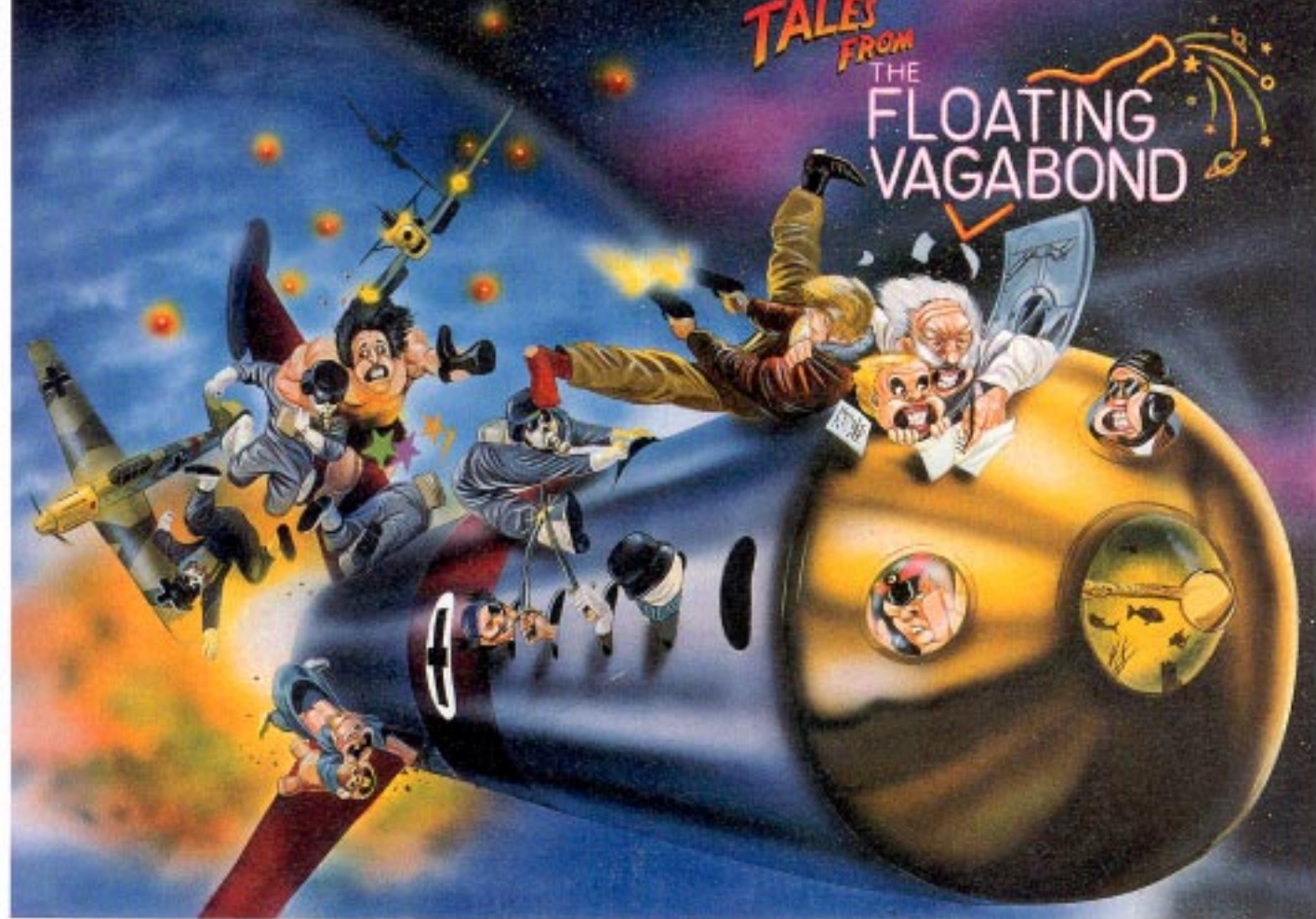
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TALES FROM THE FLOATING VAGABOND



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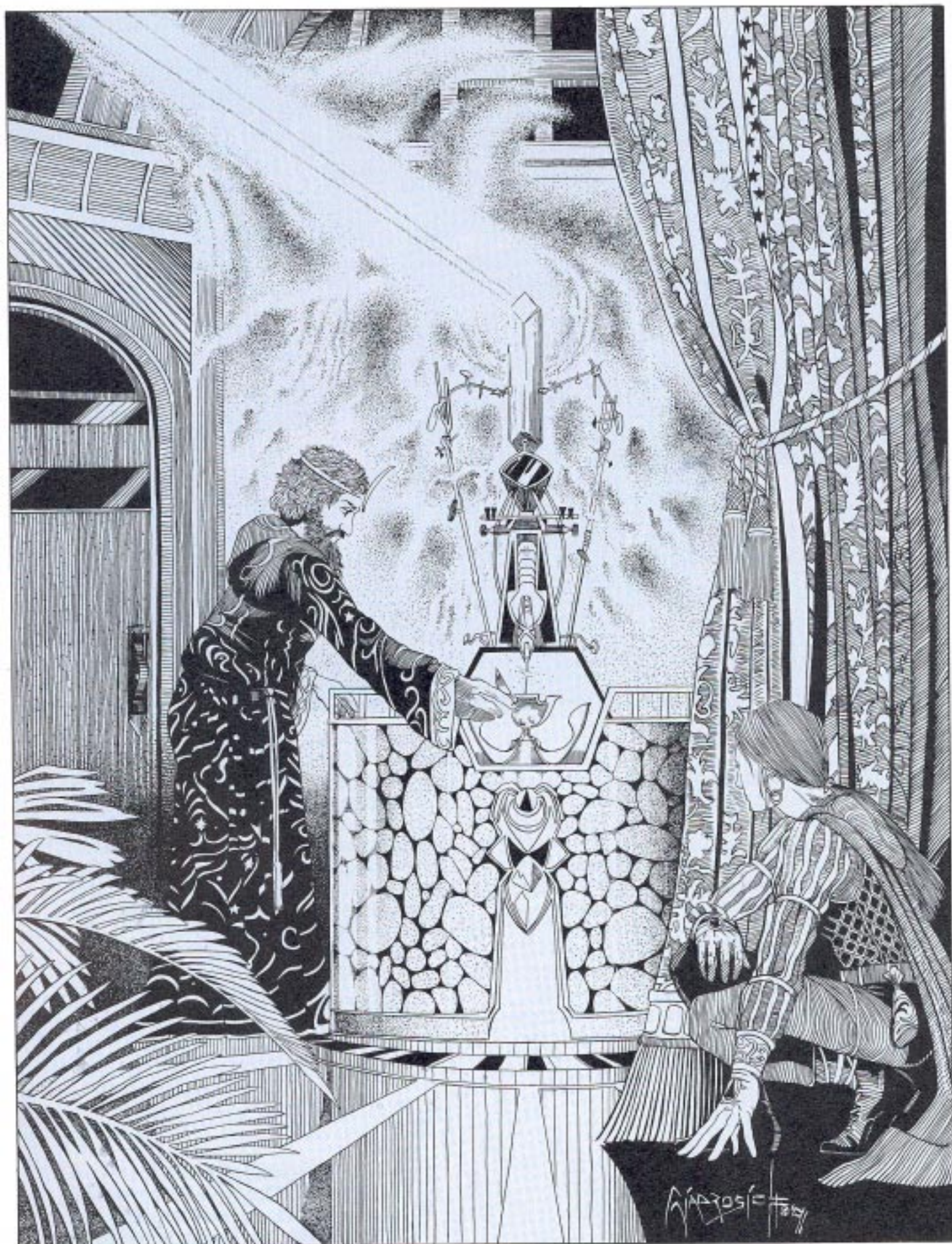
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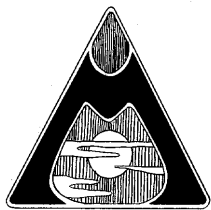
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moonlight spilled through the aperture in the marble roof of the lunarium in a steady, surging stream. Reaching the cylindrical glass prism that glittered from carefully calibrated silver clamps, it dimmed, squeezed into a narrow channel the size of a child's smallest linger. From this conduit it dribbled in quick-silver flashes into the half-filled crystalline bowl positioned beneath.

Lien watched the trickle of distilled moonlight and tried to hold her anxious breathing to slow, labored gasps. From her vantage point behind a thick shroud of black velvet curtains, she could see the bowed form of the Sky-Watcher, his eyes locked on the glimmering liquid, his hands occasionally reaching out to pat at its ornate quartz receptacle. Silver threads glittered in his black robes as he breathed; upon his tufted white hair sat a wholly ridiculous circlet bearing a stylized crescent moon as big as Lien's palm.

There was a quiet and respectful knocking at the door of the lunarium; Lien held her breath as the Sky-Watcher scowled, turning toward the sound.

"Who is it?"

"It is your humble servant, Gilad, who brings you his unworthy obeisance and an assortment of refreshments."

Lien stuffed a fist into her mouth at the sound of Gil's voice, imbued with an outrageously stilted Western accent. The Sky-Watcher frowned and walked toward the door; she stepped quietly out from the stuffy darkness of the draperies, managing somehow to control her laughter.

"Good evening, Reverend Brother," Gil said pompously as the black-robed man opened the door; he wore the plain brown tunic of an acolyte and carried a cloth-covered tray. "I have brought you mead and cheese and fresh nut bread, the humble fruits of the kitchen."

"Put it on the table," the Sky-Watcher said uncertainly. He turned to watch Gil's progress, his back to Lien. His knees buckled and he slumped forward without outcry as she clapped a foul-smelling cloth over his nose and mouth. She broke the priest's fall with an effort, barely able to keep his head from cracking against the stone floor. His limbs sagged into an arrangement suggestive of a fainting spell, and she left them as they were.

"I see you got here safe and sound," Gil said in his normal voice, quickly uncovering the tray. "I wasn't sure you'd made it until you actually jumped out of the curtains."

"And what was I supposed to do, tack up signs on the walls?" She accepted the ornate silver flask he handed her; turning it over to make sure it was empty. "I almost gave myself away when I heard that absurd accent of yours."

"You haven't been stuck in this place for two weeks, carrying fifty-pound platters of roast beef and fowl to gluttonous old men. I had to do something to keep myself amused."

Lien snorted; Gil raised his flask in mute challenge, and she realized they'd been babbling.

"Let's have at the Mead of the Gods, shall we?"

"I've heard it called Unicorn's Piss more often," she muttered as she joined him at the apparatus.

They stood watching the bright silver drip-drop of the

Moonlight

by Heather Lynn Sarik

Illustrations by Bob Giadrosich

moonlight for some moments, unsure of how to proceed. Gil gingerly held out his flask directly beneath the prism, letting the droplets fall into the vessel with tinny, hollow clangs. Lien grinned and plunged her own flask directly into the transparent bowl.

"Gods, Lien," Gil hissed, his eyes widening. She waited for the last bubbling clug of air to leave the flask before raising it, dripping, to the surface.

"It's cold," she gasped, transferring the slopping vessel of distillate to her other hand. Liquid moonlight slid from her fingers and splattered on the floor in a delicate, starburst spray. The spent fragments powdered like ash, disappearing against the flagstones.

Gil had already followed her example by the time the knock came on the door. Capping the flasks with their hands, they hastened toward the window at which Lien had entered.

"Brother Vardon?"

Gil found the two silver flask stoppers after a frenzied groping in his pouch, and bits of moonlight skimmed along the floor as the companions shook the liquid from their liners. Lien thrust her flask into Gil's hands and frantically unlatched the blue-tinted window, letting in a gust of chill air.

"Brother? Are you awake?"

Lien snatched her flask back and drew Gil after her through the window. The marble ledge was dusted with grainy snow and Gil cursed at the wet, fluttering coldness that began to brush his cheeks, loosed by the wind from the roof above.

"Of course it'd be cold as a rock's teats on a night when we're carrying bottles of liquid ice in our pants!"

Lien silenced him with a fierce glance and shut the window as well as she could from the outside. The lunarium door was still closed as she followed a swearing, violently shivering Gil down the rope ladder she'd anchored earlier around one of the building's crude gargoyles.

At the base of the squat tower, it was Gil who led them across the slick-cobbled yard and into the converted dormitory that housed the stables. The building's interior was completely black but for the slice of moonlight through the half-open doorway, and Gil stumbled into something big and warm that smelled of hay after half a minute's floundering search. Lien choked back an angry exclamation after seeing the mounts he'd arranged to steal for them: a swaybacked gelding and a preternaturally huge mule, already outfitted with tack and saddlebags.

"You get the mule," she hissed.

"The gelding has fleas."

Lien made a frustrated noise and swung up onto the horse, waving a hand at imagined insects. "This is the last time you do the infiltrating," she grated.

"I only did it this time because a woman can't play accuracy games with the chamber pots like a male monk. The next time we rob a convent, you're welcome to it."

They fell resentfully silent as their mounts clip-clopped from the echoing stone-walled building and out into the yard. Gil had said he would slip something into the pots of food intended for the bellies of the lay servants; accordingly, there was not a soul in sight as they reached the gates.

"Did you remember to drug the gatekeeper?" she whis-

pered flippantly, hoping to needle him further.

"Oh, gods."

The admission implicit in his words was still jangling a coldness along her spine when they came abreast of the gatehouse. Gil dismounted and walked around the perimeter of the building, listening intently. To Lien's horror, he tugged the unlocked door open and bellowed a cheery greeting inside.

"Ha, one of the stablemen decided to bring him some of my special mulled cider," he chortled, his voice eerily clear and faint across the moonlit snow. "They're sprawled over the pallet in the most interesting—"

"Get over here!"

Gil remounted the enormous mule, grinning and completely unabashed. "By the time they realize their favorite new acolyte has made off with half their Divine Mead and the dregs of their stables, we'll be wallowing in gold coins. I believe we can call our performance a success."

"Nothing's a success until the last coin's shared out," Lien said sourly. "And don't forget it, Brother Gilad."

"Your claim is ridiculous."

Lien stood staring as the merchant languidly tilted the glass saucer on which a steaming cup of spiced wine had recently rested, watching the droplets of moonlight chase themselves along the perimeter.

"What I mean to say," the man went on, setting the saucer down in a flurry of embroidered sleeves, "is that I've had a half-dozen young entrepreneurs visit me in just the past month, bearing bottles and jars of what they claimed was genuine distilled moonlight. It seems invariably to be quicksilver, or some clever concoction of an alchemist's devising."

"But this is genuine," Gil interrupted. "Look at the frost on Lien's flask; surely quicksilver or some counterfeit compound could not stay cold for so long a time."

"I could send a servant to the Witches' Faire and for a handful of copper pieces have him purchase a charm which would accomplish that very task."

Lien dipped her finger into the vessel of icy liquid and splattered a quantity of it along the merchant's desk. He did not raise an eyebrow at the twinkling bursts that skipped along the polished wood; he flicked away a cinder that had found its way onto a stack of papers on one corner.

"Take your street-conjurer's tricks to a more appreciative audience," he said blandly, waving one beringed hand in dismissal. "You will waste no more of my time."

Gil sputtered angrily as Lien took up her flask and shoved the stopper into its mouth. She steered her companion from the merchant's office, hearing a sharp, wet smack as they passed beneath the elaborately carved lintel. The glimmering eruption of light, brilliant even though her back was turned, told her the man had tossed the entire saucerful onto the uncarpeted tile floor.

Lien wisely refrained from comment until they had been escorted from the shop by a disdainful attendant. Gil jerked from her restraining grasp, cursing. In the bright sunlight, his eyes were darkly hollow from lack of rest. Looking at him, Lien suddenly was aware of the effects of their late-night escapade and the sleepless trek to town which had ended at dawn, a scant two hours before.

"It's only the first place we've been," she said in a determinedly reasonable voice. Gil turned away and sullenly refused to reply.

"Oh, please, Gil," she snapped, annoyed at his childish silence. "He was right. How can we expect anyone to believe us?"

Lien's pessimism was proved misplaced at the second shop they visited, a tiny room crammed with antique armor and jars of dragons' teeth, bat skeletons, musty books, and the obligatory powdered unicorn's horn. After minutely examining a bit of the distillate in a bowl and running trembling fingers through the liquid, the establishment's owner pronounced it authentic in a high, quavering voice.

"It's genuine, all right," he said, nodding a sparsely fleshed, balding head. "It's in the texture and the temperature, and, if you will, the tingle it causes in the fingertips."

Gil leaned forward eagerly. "At the going rate of liquid moonlight, we feel that two hundred gold pieces per ounce would be more than fair."

The old merchant fixed him with a quizzical, near-sighted glance before lapsing into wheezing, undignified laughter.

" 'Going rate of moonlight.' Oh, that's amusing," he gasped.

"What's the going rate, then?" Lien asked, hoping Gil's guess hadn't been too inflated.

"There is no going rate for distilled moonlight, my dear." He blotted at his eyes with a crumpled silken handkerchief. "We can't sell it."

"Why?" Gil demanded after a moment's silence.

"Because nobody'll buy it. And nobody'll buy it," he sighed, holding up one swollen linger for silence, "because no one has the slightest idea of what it does."

"But surely, after all these years, someone has . . ." Lien's voice trailed off at the merchant's wry head-shaking.

"The only ones who know its uses are the religious organizations who distill it, and they, of course, are rather tight lipped about the subject. Especially that bunch at the monastery only a few leagues away." His sly glance set Gil's cheek to burning. "What good is it to have the Mead of the Gods when you don't know if it's lit for mere mortals to drink, eh?"

"But wouldn't you like to keep a bit around the shop, in case the secret leaks out?"

"My boy, does it look as though my shelves need yet another useless article weighing them down? Powdered alicorn and dragons' teeth, at least, have been proven edible by hundreds of years of use. I might be long dead by the time anyone finds of how to use this stuff." He pushed the bowl away from him with annoyance.

Lien and Gil exchanged worried glances.

"You young fools just march right in and steal things without even knowing what they do, or if they do anything at all," the merchant said crossly. "Why d'you think the monasteries are so lax in their security? They don't care if you take every last drop of their cursed moonlight; they can always get more, and they know you don't know what to do with it!"

Lien rose to her feet and executed a graceless bow,

muttering unappreciative thanks. The old man's voice, strident with irritation, followed them out into the street: "The next time you rob someone, make sure you get something remotely useful!"

"Cranky old clod," Gil muttered, averting a flushed face.

"You don't know what it does, either, do you?"

"No, but—"

"So what are we going to do with it?" Lien's throat tightened. "You were supposed to find out everything you could while—"

"I was posing as an acolyte, not the abbot himself!" Gil cleared his throat nervously. "Nobody ever talked about the stuff, at least not the servants or the other acolytes. And nobody but the Sky-Watchers were allowed to handle it directly."

"So now what?" Lien asked bleakly, rubbing a finger along the ornate engravings of her flask.

"Follow me," Gil responded with a sudden cheery brightness she'd begun to associate, in the half-dozen months of their acquaintance, with some bungling and shortsighted plan. "I've an idea that'll take care of everything. You just wait . . ."

Letizia the Splendid was a small woman garbed from head to foot in robes of an unpleasant, dusty-looking brown. She resembled nothing so much as an overstuffed sack of potatoes, and Lien found herself closely scrutinizing the seated figure for a suggestion of limbs that might dispel the illusion.

"My consultation fee is two gold coins per question," a nasal voice informed them from the murky depths of the sage's cowl. "The fee is not negotiable. You may pay my secretary as you leave."

Lien slanted a shocked glance at Gil, who gave a sickly smile and agreed, wincing, to the excessive price.

"Very well." Letizia coughed delicately within the gloom of her hood. "Ask."

Gil, after glancing uncertainly at Lien, related a rough description of the problems he and his companion had encountered in attempting to sell the flasks of liquid moonlight they'd found buried in their vegetable garden. Lien could only shake her head at his clumsy subterfuge.

The sage was silent for a long moment, during which Lien was struck by an urge to shake her and see if anything would roll out of the gaps in her garment. "The sages with the knowledge you seek live among the monks of the Brotherhood of the Skywatchers. To bring them the produce of their own distillery might cause them to suspect, however mistakenly, that you had stolen it."

"We wouldn't want that," Gil said in a scandalized tone. Lien ground her teeth.

"The Skywatchers cannot be induced to tell the secrets of the Mead of the Gods, no matter how much money they are offered. I can, however, suggest a solution to this dilemma," Letizia went on. "For a nominal fee, my secretary can sell you a kit which will, with careful study, allow you to become a certified alchemist in less than a fortnight. It has been prepared under the guidance of the renowned Eustonius and utilizes the same techniques he uses to train his own carefully selected apprentices. In just

the first lesson, you will learn how to turn common milk into a delicious, solid substance that can be spread on bread and —

"Is there anything in this kit which pertains specifically to liquid moonlight?" Lien interrupted.

"Of course not," Letizia snapped, her cloth-swathed body swaying with agitation. "If any of us knew what that stuff does, do you think we'd be selling advice and useless alchemy lessons to the dolts who steal it?"

The secretary, more tastefully dressed than anyone whose sleeves were habitually dragged through ink ought to be, accepted their payment with a knowing smile.

"I know of another sage," Gil mumbled as they left the building. "He's cheaper."

"Is he recognizably human, or does he hide inside a sackcloth tent, too?" Lien shook her head. "We're wasting our time. No one knows anything, at least not here."

"But I've heard that this man used to be an acolyte at the monastery of the Skywatchers," Gil protested.

"So did you, and you see what good that did us. Let's get something to eat instead."

Gil was silent for several minutes as they plodded through the snow-drifted street. "I don't know why we don't just take a swig," he said casually.

"Are you volunteering your gullet? What if you have to do something to it first to make it edible?"

"Like cook it?" Gil seemed to find the idea ludicrous.

"I'm perfectly willing to watch you die a screaming, frothing death. Want some of mine?"

The idea silenced him, and neither spoke until within the tepid confines of the nearest tavern. After securing a promise for mutton stew and some decent wine from one of the serving women, Gil began to scan the faces of the patrons with a suspicious intensity. Lien followed his narrow-eyed gaze, watching as it fixed upon a skinny, grimy man crouched before the fireplace. Discovering himself observed, Gil managed a sheepish grin and refused to reveal the bent of his thoughts.

Their meal was brought, and Gil carefully set his cup in his lap as the serving woman hastened away to another table. Looking round, he drew out his flask of moonlight and poured a liberal dollop into the steaming wine.

"Surely you're not going to drink that," Lien said, seized by an unwilling dismay.

"No, I'm not." He nodded to the disheveled wretch at the hearth.

Lien stared at him, shocked, as he rose from the bench. She followed at a breathless trot as he weaved nonchalantly between tables, hissing her objections to his inhumane plan. He waved her away impatiently, squatting down beside his intended victim.

"My good sir," Gil said grandly, "I could not help but notice your pitiable state of deprivation. Being a man who hates to see the suffering of his fellows, I thought you might appreciate a hot cup of mulled wine."

The other man's eyes widened with surprise and longing. "I oughtn't," he muttered, looking down into the filth-strewn rushes.

"Certainly you ought," Gil insisted, pressing the battered cup into the indigent's dirty hands.

"No, you don't understand." The man looked down

into the fragrant wine; sweat broke out on his upper lip.

"Drink up." Gil smiled and patted him encouragingly on the shoulder.

The man hesitated, then reluctantly raised the vessel to his cracked lips. Lien watched in silent indignation, her arms folded across her chest.

"What're you doing?"

The cup, wine, and several clots of peculiarly darkened moonlight were flung across the hearth as a hand reached out to knock Gil's offering from the man's grasp.

"He's performing the sacred fast, you heathens," the tavernkeeper shouted, her face flushed a bright, ugly red. "Haven't you ever heard of the Winter Starving? Why would you go and tempt the poor man so? He hasn't eaten or drunk anything but cold water for three days!"

Gil began to stammer apologies.

"Just get out. You foreigners have no respect for the gods at all."

Lien's foot nudged at a lump of the distilled moonlight, a mass the approximate color and consistency of a blob of blueberry preserves. While Gil settled with the irate tavernkeeper, she scooped up the lukewarm globule and slid it into her pouch.

"So it changes color in wine," Gil said, dismissing the little ovoid lump with a shake of his head. "So what?"

Lien sighed. "So at least we know something about the stuff we didn't know before."

"Sure, let's hawk it on the streetcorner. 'Buy our distilled moonlight. When you put it in wine, it looks like a dead purple slug.' "

"I'll admit it's not much," Lien said through clenched teeth, flinging the blob away into the snow, "but at least I haven't tried something as stupid as experimenting on the local holy man."

"I had to do something. We spent our last gold pieces paying Letizia, and that's almost the last of what we got for the mule and the gelding. If we don't find a buyer soon, we'll starve. Besides," he added, "you could've stopped me if you'd wanted to."

"Oh, shut up," Lien muttered, knowing it was the truth. "Where are we headed?"

"I thought you knew."

Lien stopped walking, puffing out a sigh. A few small shops presented faded signs at either side of the street, snow heaped along their walls and clinging to the cracks between wooden boards and crumbling-mortared stones. Huddled against the nearest building was an old woman, her patched cloak half-concealing a wooden cage.

"Look, there's a conjurer's shop," Gil announced, tugging at her wrist, dragging her attention from the seller of unknown animals.

Lien turned to him, scowling. "I suppose you want him to magick you to the moon so you can ask the little blue men if the light from their silver lamps is safe to drink."

"The moon's surface is comprised of mirrors and fog," Gil corrected, drawing her with him across the street. "Besides, a charm of recognition would be much less expensive than an astral transference spell."

"We can't afford that, either. You'd think their stupid charms were scribed in the blood of their firstborn chil-

dren, for what they charge."

Gil shrugged. "Maybe they'll take some of the moonlight in trade."

"Maybe they'll take you in trade."

The proprietor of the shop was a thin, ethereal-looking man who smiled beatifically at Gil's clumsy inquiries into his wares.

"I keep several charms of recognition in stock," he said serenely. "What manner of substance are you interested in identifying?"

"A liquid," Lien replied promptly, stepping on the toe of Gil's boot.

"Is it a potion, a philter, a broth, an oil, a sap, a liquor, an infusion, or a tincture?"

"A-er, a rather thick liquid," Gil stammered as Lien stood gape mouthed and silent. "A thick, shiny liquid."

"Does it contain herbs? Powdered gemstones or blood? Is it intended to be applied to the skin, poured into wounds, ingested, or spilled over the ground in a mystical pattern?"

"That's what your charm is supposed to tell us, isn't it?" Lien demanded, finding her voice.

"A scroll charm is, unfortunately, quite limited in its applications. I'll need more a more precise description of what you're looking to identify."

"Thick, cold, silver liquids. You got any charms for those?"

The shopkeeper discreetly lowered his eyes. "I'm afraid that the scroll has not yet been scribed which is able to indicate the uses of liquid moonlight."

"So what do you suggest we do?" Gil asked angrily, flushing.

"Slay a sea dragon and bring me the underbelly scales. I understand they polish up nicely."

"I told you," Lien snapped as she pushed Gil out into the street and toward the ragged old woman. "Nobody knows what it does, or they'd be throwing coins at us for just a sniff of the flask. All we have to do now is find out for ourselves."

"And how ought we to do that?" Gil all but screamed. "Pray tell, O woman of no suggestions until now!"

Lien pointed smugly at the cage. "We'll feed it to whatever creatures she's selling."

Gil squinted suspiciously at the pair of dark, furry shapes that squirmed behind the weathered wooden slats, but said nothing as Lien haggled the price of the beasts—the tastiest flesh this side of the White Waste, according to their seller—down to four silvers and a copper. The old woman giggled and wished them happy eating before tottering away, her shabby cloak dragging in the snowdrifts.

"What are they?"

"I don't know," Lien shrugged. "Let's move this cage somewhere private, shall we?"

Grunting, the two of them picked up the crate and began to carry it behind one of the shop buildings. After they were safely hidden from the infrequent, straggling traffic of the street, Lien knelt down and eased the cage's leather-hinged top open.

The animals inside were sleek and ferretlike, with glossy black fur and eyes the soft golden-yellow of honey. They chased each other round the bottom of the crate in a per-

petual, nonproductive circle, their claws sticking in the soft wood.

"I guess we should just grab one and force some moonlight down its throat," Lien sighed. "Try and catch the bigger one, won't you?"

"You bought it, you catch it."

"Oh, I don't know why you insist on making things so difficult," Lien wrapped her cloak around her hand and wrist and reached in to grasp the animal in question.

The cloud of thick, choking smoke that billowed into the cage and obscured the vision of the two companions made it impossible for Lien to accomplish her task. Coughing and waving, she sat back into the snow and waited for the haze to dissipate.

"Mist rats," Gil wheezed. "I should've known. It's the oldest trick in the Northlands."

"Where are they?" Lien asked weakly, looking at the wisp-filled but otherwise empty cage.

"Following the old woman in nonmaterial form, and she's probably already somewhere along the next street," Gil staggered to his feet and kicked viciously at the slats. "She'll come back, put her little darlings in the crate, and sell 'em again. I've never seen black ones before."

"By all the gods," Lien snarled, shaking her flask, "I'm about ready to start drinking this stuff myself."

Gil did not challenge her statement. He brushed the snow from his backside and suggested they seek out a late-afternoon meal. Lien agreed to his proposal with a sullen grunt.

The tavern Gil chose was nearly empty, patronized by a few off-duty guardsmen and a group of six foreigners surrounded by overstuffed bags and packs of gear. Lien selected a secluded table in the drafty back of the room, squeezing herself onto a bench between the wall and the edge of the long table. Gil wandered off to see about their meal himself, for the serving girl was engaged in coy verbal fencing with one of the more attractive guardsmen.

He returned in a few minutes with two bowls of rich-looking stew and a half loaf of bread. The serving girl was soundly berated for her inattentiveness by a thundering, disembodied voice arising from the kitchen, and Gil grinned as she scurried away to see to other customers.

Lien curled her hands around the warm wooden bowl and shivered, watching as Gil cautiously poked through his stew before hungrily spooning it into his mouth.

"Any foreign objects in the food that I should be aware of?" she asked, mocking his careful examination.

Gil flushed, shrugging. "It tastes fine to me," he mumbled through a bite of potato. "Good. Very good, in fact."

Lien swirled her spoon through the broth, then lifted the laden utensil to her lips. With an sickening lurch of her stomach she spotted a silvery, barely visible coagulation next to a chunk of onion. Gil wore an expression of mixed impatience and apprehension, and his eyes shifted guiltily away as she met his glance.

Lien tossed the stew at him, bowl, spoon, and all. She was disappointed, as he leaped to his feet, that the hot liquid had splattered his stomach and not his groin.

"This is it, Gil," she said through clenched teeth, rising from the bench with table-rocking force. "You've done some incredibly stupid things in the past few weeks, but

you've really outdone yourself now."

"You said you were almost ready to start drinking it," he protested weakly, peeling his sopping tunic from his scalded belly

"I was being facetious, you weasel-headed dolt! What gives you the right to gamble with my life?"

"Not just yours!" Gil swallowed, looking away. "I mean—"

"You fouled the entire stewpot?" Lien clenched her hands tightly to keep from striking him, unable to believe the extent of his offense. "And ladled out your own bowlful beforehand, I'll wager, you disgusting little—"

"Don't eat the stew!"

Lien whirled at the sound, her face crimson with fury. A stocky, slovenly little man waved a spoon at the patrons, scratching nervously at his food-stained tunic.

"I-er, found something funny in the stew," he said in a lower voice, obviously unnerved by the pressure of twenty-odd eyes. "A big, silvery lump. We think maybe one of the apprentices tossed it into the pot as a joke. We don't know whether it's poisonous."

The guardsmen shrugged; none of them had ordered anything more substantial than a tankard of ale. One of the other patrons shoved her near-empty bowl away and staggered out the door, retching.

"There'll be no charge, for them that ate it," the cook muttered.

Lien grabbed Gil's steaming bowl, but he was already sprinting across the room, trailing pieces of carrot and gobs of cooked meat. Her ill-aimed toss barely splashed his fleeing ankles.

"No, we have no idea what it does," Gil proffered the clay mug, smiling engagingly. "We'll give you ten silvers if you drink it, though."

"No. . . I have a family to take care of." The man laughed nervously, blinking in the harsh morning sunlight. "Why don't you try feeding it to a dog or something?"

"He's already tried poisoning an entire tavern with it," Lien said with a tranquil smile. The farmer opened his mouth to speak, frowned, and walked away.

"Why'd you tell him that?" Gil demanded. "We're reasonably sure that no one took any stew from the pot after we did; you agreed to that last night!"

"This idea is stupid," she told him, her lips thinned with unabated anger. "No sane person would drink a mouthful of what strongly resembles quicksilver and risk life and health for ten stinking silvers. We'll be lucky if the town guard don't arrest us."

Gil adjusted the wooden plank he'd pried from the floor of the cheap inn at which they'd passed the night, making sure not to touch the still-wet paint. At his midriff, a large wet spot revealed that he'd slapped a handful of snow on his burn.

"Especially with a sign reading, 'We'll pay you to drink our unidentified substance,'" Lien went on in an irritated tone. "Call it the Mead of the Gods and maybe we'll get some volunteers. For all they know, we could be offering them rat poison or something we scraped off the bottom of a witch's kettle."

"Call it the Mead of the Gods and some fool'll rob us,"

Gil responded sourly. "Just wait. It's midwinter; someone's bound to need ten silvers for food or fuel."

Two hours of fruitlessly cajoling passersby found even Gil on the urge of giving up. His tunic and hose were soaking wet from his snowy ablutions, but Lien couldn't bring herself to feel sorry for him.

"Maybe we should just leave town," she sighed, watching him digging in a nearby drift.

"And go where?" He turned, his arms crossed over his belly, shivering. "This is the biggest town for leagues and leagues. You think some little farming village would be able to afford our price?"

"At the rate we're going, we'll be fortunate if we can give the stuff away."

"If you'd let me dose that old woman at the inn last night like I'd wanted to, we'd know what it does and we wouldn't be here now!"

Lien scowled, her eyes caught by a group of well-dressed young men who were making their way toward them. The group's most prominent member was clothed from head to foot in red velvet, and he greeted them both with a grin and a jocular wave.

"Just the sort of diversion I was looking for," he exclaimed after perusing the sloppily lettered sign. "Is your substance unidentified or unidentifiable?"

"Take a taste and tell us," Gil offered, stumbling forward in a miniature squall of falling snow. "Ten silvers'll buy a red velvet ribbon for your lady's hair."

"Keep your money. Here's something I'll wager I've never drunk before, and I've never yet turned down a challenge."

"But you don't know what it is," Lien protested.

"No matter. I've drunk some cursed strange brews in my time, eh?" His companions assented merrily to this. "Hand it over, and I'll give it a wash over my discerning palate."

Gil passed over the clay mug with a wicked grin. The young man glanced inside, sloshing the meager sample about before drinking the stuff down in one gulp.

Lien watched, amazed, as the young man smacked his lips and returned the mug to Gil with a satisfied nod.

"Good stuff. Sweet but not cloying; tastes a bit like apples. Smooth going down, too, though you've chilled it a bit too much. How much d'you want for it?"

Gil began to stammer that he wasn't sure.

One of the young man's friends spoke up, grinning. "Don't mind him. He swallowed one of those magic stones that neutralize poisons, and now he's got to take a swig of every noxious thing he can find."

"I've eaten about ten pounds of arsenic in the past two weeks," the young man laughed, looking fondly at his companions. "They keep trying to kill me, but they simply can't. I've developed a taste for the stuff, actually."

Gil's expression shifted abruptly from one of wild hope to a trembling, bloodless despair.

"You can have my flask for ten gold," Lien announced, holding the silver vessel out as if it contained something pestilent. "It's three-quarters full."

"Fifteen gold for both," Gil added in a defeated tone.

"Might as well go to someone who enjoys it."

The transaction was completed in half a minute, and

the scarlet-clad young man and his comrades wandered away toward a tailor's shop. One of the silver flasks flashed in the sunlight as the invincible youth took a long swallow of liquid moonlight.

"It just wasn't meant to be," Lien said in a low, tight voice. "Maybe we overreached ourselves on this."

She fell silent at Gil's sickly pallor and the warning glint in his eyes.

"There is that matter of the famous Talking Statue of Ileana," he said in a forcedly cheerful tone, picking up his pack. "You always wanted to see if it could be induced to use obscenities, didn't you? I hear it's not too far . . ."

"Brother Vardon is recovering nicely and should be ready to resume watch duty tomorrow."

"Good, good," the abbot murmured. "Anything else?"

"Brother Felan reports that the Great Fountain is nearly filled with moonlight. If we don't find a new storage place, he'll have to resort to putting it in the dye vats or filling up the old well."

"What about the baths?"

"They were declared full three months ago, your reverence, along with the upper root cellar."

"Yes, I remember now. Tell him to fill the well, then. Once the wool is sold, we'll be able to afford that artificial pond he wants so badly."

"He'll be very glad to hear that, your reverence." The clerk bowed to the abbot and his reticent secretary and left the room.

"Glad to hear Brother Vardon's doing well," the secretary spoke into the stillness. "At least this group didn't try to stab him or run him through."

"We've been robbed of moonlight seven times in just this past year. Seven times, and still we've heard nothing." The abbot rose from his chair, his hands clenched. "We leave doors open, windows unlocked, our new acolytes unquestioned, the lunarium unguarded—yet still we hear nothing!"

"Two thousand, four hundred and eighty-six gallons," the secretary mused, glancing at the ledger before him. "We have an inestimable fortune in our vaults."

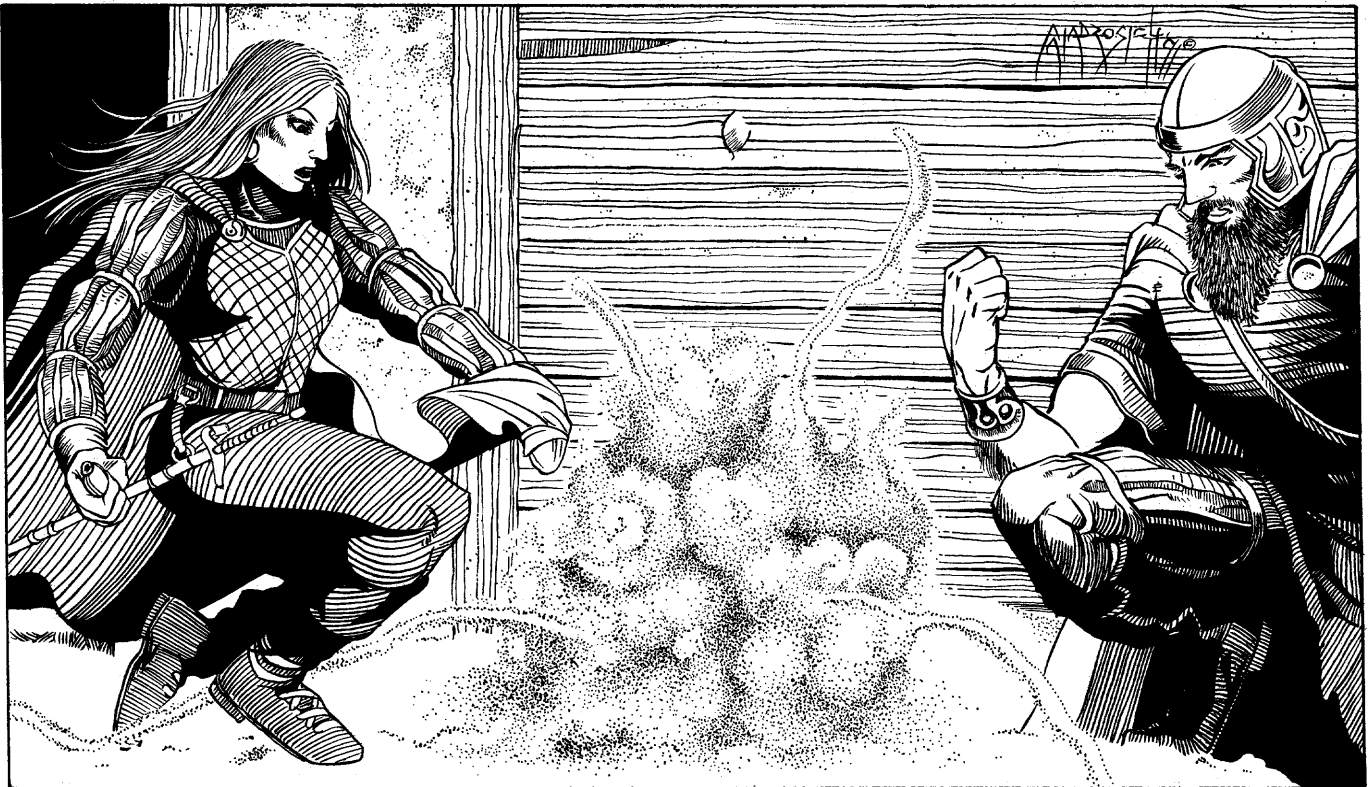
"In our vaults, in our reliquary chests, in the hollow belly of a statue of Saint Giani. I cannot walk across my sitting room without dodging barrels of the stuff! Would that I could turn time back upon itself and strangle the monk who invented that hellish machine, or at least learn how to stop its flow!"

"For now, we must wait," the secretary said wearily.

"Yes, wait for thieves and heathen alchemists to discover the use of our distilled moonlight and hope their revelations somehow trickle back to us." The abbot picked up a little glass jar from his desk, filled to the brim with a silvery, shimmering liquid. "I think we'll drown in this stuff one day, or find that its only use is in the lubrication of wagon wheels."

"Brother Vardon said the last two thieves seemed moderately clever, what with their drugging him," the other man said encouragingly. "Surely they'll be the ones to uncover the answer."

Ω



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The VOYAGE of the PRINCESS ARK

Part 26: A glass of wine and a shaggy dog story

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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.

Burymir 28, AY 2000: After our misadventure in Eusdria, I almost forgot about the arrival of the end of this year. The crew was a bit gloomy, being so far from home. I suggested to Talasar and Lady Abovombe that they organize a night of revelry. Everyone then got very busy, hanging garlands and paper lanterns and setting up tables. A marvelous smell soon rose from the galleys, and smiles began to show on some somber faces.

The celebration of the new year's eve was indeed memorable. The ship's band played marvelously well, adding a touch of magic to their own talent. Lady Abovombe

and I opened the ball, quickly followed by officers and their partners and finally by the crew. By midnight, several barrels of punch accomplished what several days of furlough couldn't. The polite festivities of the evening turned into a cheerful carnival, especially after Leo unveiled a chest full of confetti bags, rolls of streamers, toy flutes, and ridiculous gnomish hats with feathers, pom poms, and other garish things.

They were an instant hit, but they left a horrendous mess on the deck. I myself concentrated on more upscale pleasures, enjoying some wonderful sparkling beverage from Glantri. I discovered that I knew the steps of a square dance I had seen in Cimarron County. Things got a bit fuzzy after that. It was Myojo who kindly helped me back to my quarters, I think.

Nyxmir 1, AY 2001: The sound of gigantic waves crashing on the deck, as if from a storm, woke me up that day. The roar was unbearable. At the thought of water on the decks of the *Princess Ark*, I jumped up, bumping my head on a joist. It felt like Talasar's mighty hammer falling upon an eggshell.

Forever cursed be thou, Immortal patron of hangovers! I should have never looked at anything Glantrian. That was no storm outside—only the ship's boy sweeping heaps of confetti off the deck, as I discovered with a few shouts from my room.

A thunderous knock at the door then rippled through the cabin, shaking the windows and echoing forever in my head. I staggered over to see who dared disturb my agony. "Haaken-san, the city of Louvines is in sight," Myojo said briskly, neatly attired and brushed. After a moment, he added, "You look pale, Haaken-san. Glantrian sparkling wine is no good? Please try ancient Myoshiman hangover medicine." My good friend left, then re-



Artwork by Terry Dykstra



Dykstra©92

turned to hand me a tiny glass of his native medicine: saké. Soon, nausea was added to my throbbing migraine.

Slightly green-faced, I went topside to observe the city Myojo had named. Perhaps fresh air would do me good. I saw two crewmen still snoring away, one perched on a mast and the other's lower half hanging out of an empty barrel. I also found Talasar, who looked rather shabby as he rubbed the back of his neck. I couldn't tell anything about Xerdon's condition, as he was bending too far over the railing.

Raman returned from a quick visit to the capital of royal Renardy. "Your Highness," he said, sweating heavily, "King Louis IV is expecting you to visit today at the palace. He was very excited by our arrival." He looked very queasy and added hurriedly, "May I return to my quarters now? I feel a bit fatigued." Without waiting for my answer, he ran toward the head, holding his belly.

No one volunteered for this diplomatic visit, of course, so it had to be Talasar, Myojo, and myself. I heard several sighs of relief behind my back as we boarded the lifeboat.

A crowd of Renardois—why is there always a crowd?—awaited our arrival. They cheered. They applauded. We cringed. Some of the Renardois even howled, as hound-men apparently made up the majority of this crowd. I feared for a moment we had run into a werewolf lair, but these dog-people looked friendly. Ah, yes, lupins they were. Good fellows, if only they could yowl more quietly.

Myojo hissed when he saw and smelled the lupins. "Shut up, you!" muttered Talasar under his breath.

At last, we arrived at the palace. Great brass horns announced our arrival, the horrendous sound echoing interminably through the courtyard and the hallways. We reached the throne room and the king, feeling barely alive.

"Ah, *cher Prince!*" cried the monarch, arms wide and a broad smile on his lupin muzzle. "*Bienvenue!*" to Louvines! *Sacre-bleu*, you look so tired! Ah, but of course, eet must be zee navy food. Please honor my table. Our chef, he has prepared zee best banquet for you. *C'est magnifique!*"²

There was food. There was wine. Then there was more food and more wine. A bottle of Glantrian sparkling stuff came around again. Much to my surprise, even the king sounded Glantrian—how could that be? The *pièce-de-résistance* finally showed up: a glazed boar with an apple in its mouth, stuffed with marinated pheasant *du chef* and potato-soufflé *à la Barbas-sone*. We gorged ourselves as best we could.

The king then stood and proudly announced this year's Boisjolis-Nouveau vintage would be offered to all, an amazing first that overjoyed everyone but myself and Talasar. Queen Fifrelyne whispered to me this great vintage was normal-

ly served only after the Brotherhood of Vintages had determined which wine was the best of Renardy. This Boisjolis-Nouveau was the king's family pride, his true *joie de vivre* (and, no doubt, soon to be my *coup de grâce*). The king was breaking with tradition to honor our visit. I knew I should be grateful, but . . .

The king clapped his hands and called out, "Bring le Boisjolis-Nouveau at once!"

There was a crashing silence.

The king's steward bent down and muttered at the king's ear, too loudly to keep his secret a secret. "*Votre Majesté*, le Boisjolis-Nouveau—eet is gone!"

Flabbergasted, the king replied, "*Comment? Plus de Boisjolis-Nouveau! Vite, vite! Retournez à Clairvault!*"⁴

With astonishment, the other nobles added, "*Morbleu! Quelle horreur! Trahison! Aux armes! A la guillotine!*" "The royal lupin guards trotted off in all directions. Gongs rang. Horns bellowed. In dismay, the chef threw his cap on the floor. The king walked away, furious, loudly voicing an endless stream of colorful imprecations. The banquet ended in total chaos. We promptly retired to our chambers so that Talasar and myself could hide our tortured heads under the pillows.

Nyxmir 2: A soft knock at the door woke me, early in the morning while it was still dark out. Queen Fifrelyne entered quietly. "Please forgive this intrusion, monsieur," she said. "I had to speak to you about what happened yesterday. You see, this wine is much more than it may seem. It is a symbol of prestige and power in Renardy. My husband is too proud to see you again after yesterday's humiliation. Worse yet, he fears that he'd become the kingdom's laughing stock if he sent his knights to seek the wine. I can hear the words of the town criers now: 'Royal knights on a quest for the holy vintage!' Only you could find the wine without compromising my husbands honor. Please, I implore you, find what happened to this wine and who was behind this treachery. I fear this might lead to a dark conspiracy."

How could I refuse? This lupin lady had a way of batting her eyes that went straight to my heart. I agreed to look into the theft, and she left quickly. She didn't want to be seen alone with me.

Later that morning, I took a stroll by the king's cellar. There, Mordicus, the royal steward, explained that he had left the cellar locked. The lock had been forced open during the banquet and the barrels stolen. Someone had them loaded on a wagon under cover of darkness, after a load of 13 barrels of Château Médor had just been delivered next door.

Mordicus knocked at a large barrel that sounded hollow. "*Parbleu!*"⁶ There eet is! They took all twelve barrels of the king's precious wine instead of zee empty barrels. Eet's terrible! In a few days, the Brotherhood of the Vintages, they will meet again and the king, he will not have his wine. The king, he made a bet with

Monsieur le Duc d'Ysembagne that his Boisjolis-Nouveau was better than Monsieur le Duc's Château LaFifi-Trotteschild! If he loses the wager, oh la la . . . Madame Fifrelyne, she will be very, very angry with him."

Looking around, I found footprints in the cellar's soft ground. They looked like goblin-style hobnailed boots. In shock, Mordicus gasped, "*Mais Monsieur, comment. . . Des gobelins, ici? Saperlipopette!*"⁷

Indeed, this was very fishy business. So far, I had three suspects: the Duke of Ysembagne, who had something to gain from all this; goblins; and the owner of the Château Médor vineyard, who delivered the wine and stole the barrels. Mordicus identified this wine as coming from a vineyard in Ysembagne, past the village of St. Vézy. We had at least one link!

I needed Mordicus' help as a guide to reach St. Vézy. Mordicus suggested that his younger nephew, Croche-Patte, come with us, as the latter knew many people in the shadier circles of Louvines. For my own safety, I brought Myojo as well. Myojo hissed upon meeting Mordicus and Croche-Patte, and Croche-Patte growled, but politely so, and he apologized immediately after Mordicus jabbed his nephew in the ribs. Myojo then sniffed, and Croche-Patte snorted. As for Talasar, he had gone off with a group of nobles for a visit to the Great Wall of Louvines. I envied him for a moment. He was getting off easy this time.

Nyxmir 3: We quietly went through St. Vézy and found the path to Château Médor. The lord of the mansion, Monsieur Ducroc, received us. He explained his two retainers came back from their trip to Louvines, having been beaten up by dwarves a few miles before the bridge there. The dwarves then stole their wagon, horse, and wine barrels. Monsieur Ducroc was very surprised when he received payment from the royal reeve for receiving the wine shipment.

We questioned the two other fellows about the dwarves who attacked them. "Well, *M'sieur le Prince*," said the first, "the dwarves, they were ragged, a bit skinny with a sickly green skin." The second added, "*Oui, oui, M'sieur le Prince*, their beards, too, they looked full of moths!"

We saw none of the king's barrels in the cellar. Without any other evidence to the theft, we had to follow the goblin lead. We reached the site of the fight before evening, near the bridge of Louvines.

There, Croche-Patte recognized the odor of the two beaten retainers from Château Médor. He also identified the odor of goblins—not dwarves. The goblins had obviously been wearing shabby disguises. But there was not one set of wagon tracks—there were two, both coming from the general direction of St. Vézy. The first set went no further than the bridge and then doubled back, while the other went on, presumably to Louvines and back, then headed north. There was no way to

tell if the tracks had been created at the same time. On the other hand, the tracks were the same depth, which lead me to believe both wagons had been loaded at all times. Also annoying was the stench of wine spilled on the river bank, near the spot where the second set of tracks doubled back.

What had happened? The extra set of wagon tracks was very suspicious. Presumably, the tracks that went to Louvines would have been the goblins'. But whose was the second set, and why did it come as far as the bridge and then double back? It had to be our two fellows from Château Médor. So they lied, since they obviously returned with their horse *and* a loaded wagon to St. Vézy. I was beginning to think the goblins and the two fellows were in cahoots from the beginning. But what did goblins have to do with this? In any case, we still had to recover the wine, which I assumed was in the goblins' hands. And I had a hunch it was not the Boisjolis-Nouveau that had been spilled on the bank.

Nyxmir 6: Mordicus returned to the palace to help prepare for the gathering of the Brotherhood of Vintages. Croche-Patte, Myojo, and I went on. Croche-Patte had no difficulty dogging those tracks, which were as clear as if the goblins did not care if they were followed. The wagon tracks crossed the army trail north of Château-Roan and went east to the River of Dreams. Fortunately Croche-Patte had brought a set of herbal masks to protect us from the effects of the Plain of Dreams' amber lotuses. We reached a small camp of goblins just as evening fell.

The few goblins there hadn't a dog's chance of defeating us. They gave only token resistance and surrendered rather quickly, except a couple who managed to escape on their dire wolves. We had to move on, fast, for these two would be back with reinforcements. Those goblins we interrogated knew nothing.

We discovered 13 barrels nearby. Twelve bore the mark of the King's Boisjolis-Nouveau, which brought a sigh of relief from Croche-Patte, and one had the mark of Château Médor. The latter was empty, however. It had contained wine several days ago, since the barrel wood was still wet with the beverage. Instead, this barrel now held four shabby dwarven disguises, goblins' weapons, and a large sack of Renardois silver coins. The king's wine was untouched.

Perhaps the thirteenth barrels contents had hidden the goblin's silver. I did not recall of any silver being stolen from the palace. So, whose silver was that? Someone must have paid the goblins; was it to steal the king's wine and let them keep it?

"*Scrongneugneu!*" said Croche-Patte, lost in his thoughts. "*Comme c'est bizarre.*"⁸ We had to leave at once. The 12 barrels were hastily loaded on a nearby oxcart, and off we went.

Nyxmir 6—Talaras, from a later

account: The admiral had been gone for three days with no news from him. Later this day, I met the duke of Ysembragne, who was visiting the king. He inquired about the admiral and was surprised of my lack of information. He said his troops had reported seeing the admiral cross the border into goblin land. The duke thought the admiral had gone on a private goblin hunt, which was not an uncommon thing among nobility. Seeing this was not the case, he said he would arrange for reliable warriors to help me determine the admiral's whereabouts.

Indeed, by evening, a group of the duke's knights offered me a horse. We rode north toward the spot the admiral was last seen. The knights seemed confident that the admiral and his companions would be found.

Nyxmir 7—Haldemar: What I had feared the most was beginning to happen: Croche-Patte's herbal masks were drying up. The substance in the herbs protected us less and less from the *sleeping* effects of the amber lotuses, and Château-Roan was still some distance away. The heavy wagon was slowing us down. Without warning, my horse collapsed, as its mask no longer protected it. Our plan was going to the dogs.

As we debated what to do next, a howl rose in the distance. The goblins were following the wagon's tracks. It wouldn't be long before they would catch up with us, awake or asleep.

Radical problems demanded radical solutions. We tied the barrels together and threw them into the river. The barrels had only slightly more buoyancy than rocks. We whipped the ox and horses away, hoping to mislead the goblins, and grabbed the barrels. Slowly, we floated downstream. At least the goblins would have a tougher time getting to us.

The plan worked for a few hours. Alas, the masks were truly failing us. Myojo was already deep asleep; Croche-Patte and I were having a tough time keeping awake and holding on to him. Then a large raft came into view downstream. Unfortunately, it looked like some goblin-fortified river barge. We tried to maneuver around it, but I fell asleep just as our barrels bumped into the raft. I felt dog-tired.

Nyxmir 8—Haldemar: No goblins here! I woke up this morning among a group of large turtles. One of them bowed slightly, holding his wrist up to his forehead much in the fashion of mystics. These were missionaries sent by the grand abbot of Dunwick on a quest to convert the impious goblins. They belonged to a lawful order of turtle mystics. The raft was theirs. By chance, they had recovered all three of us and the precious barrels. They expected an attack from the goblins, however, as goblin scouts had seen the turtles retrieve us from the water.

The raft was an interesting device. Within the fortified part of the raft were four oxen. Two were harnessed to a horizontal

wheel that drove a paddle-wheel through a series of pinions and shafts, while the two other oxen rested and fed. The bunker protected the oxen from projectiles and the cursed river's plants. Clever, as long as the paddle-wheel worked.

That point made, a burning projectile suddenly hit the back of the raft, setting the straw on fire. Two turtles ran out of the raft's wooden bunker to put out the fire, and several more arrows came down. Amazingly, one turtle demonstrated an incredible ability to deflect arrows with a stick. The rest bounced off the shell on the other turtle's back. As if the goblins were angered with the turtles' performance, a furious shower of flaming arrows followed. Both turtles then retreated into their shells, and the arrows bounced off them harmlessly.

The fire was getting worse, though. Soon we lost our steering and ran aground. A pack of goblins mounted on dire wolves quickly charged onto the boat. The turtles fought like none I'd seen before. They didn't run very fast, but they didn't need to: Anything within reach of their legs, arms, or sticks was destined to be bashed, chopped, or thrown into the air. One of the turtles hid within its shell, and each time a goblin or a wolf peered at an opening, a deadly blow would shoot out, followed with a heart-felt scream of "Hay-yah!" "Copycat!" murmured Myojo when he saw this.

A heated battle was on. More goblins rode onto our stranded raft. Suddenly, cheers rose from behind the goblins. There, Talaras and a company of heavily armored lupin knights charged into the goblins' rear, brandishing the banner of Ysembragne high above their crested helms. Losing heart, the goblins retreated.

The paddle-wheel and steering devices were hastily fixed, and off we went, slowly sailing down the River of Dreams alongside "*les chevaliers du duc*"⁹ and my loyal friend, Talaras. We reached the walls of Louvines in the night. Mordicus greeted us at the dock, overjoyed by the recovery of the royal vintage. "*C'est formidable, non?*"¹⁰ he cheered, "We'll make a wine-stomper of you yet!" One of the turtle mystics asked if we would make a donation to the order, obviously eyeballing one of the barrels. Mordicus sighed, "*Oh et puis zut!*"¹¹ Just don't tell anyone." Thus we parted with our turtle saviors.

Nyxmir 9: The precious barrels had been returned to the king's cellar just in time, for the Brotherhood of the Vintages was meeting this morning. I, however, still hadn't gotten a clue as to what exactly had happened.

Someone knocked at my door. It was one of the turtle mystics. "Your Highness," he said, "I believe you have been fooled. Why, no later than this morning, we stopped at a tavern in Louvines and sampled its wine before returning to Dunwick. Lo and behold, its wine was no better than the Boisjolis-Nouveau we had yesterday. Come

to think of it, it tasted very much like it. With all due respect to King Louis, this Boisjolis-Nouveau you gave us was not what it used to be. And how could a tavern already have some anyway?"

Mordicus and I rushed back to that very tavern, where we discovered the owners were selling Château Médor wine that they had legally acquired "weeks ago." That's it! It was the missing clue. This Château Médor was the same wine that now filled the king's barrels. Of course, the two "roughed-up" retainers were in cahoots with the goblins, to whom they must have paid that silver. Both parties came together, each with a load of thirteen barrels of Château Médor. The goblins indeed stole the 12 barrels of the king's vintage, then switched barrels. They poured the king's vintage into Château Médor barrels, and vice versa. For this they needed an empty barrel—thus some wine poured into the river. The goblins then went north with their payment and their *phony* barrels of Boisjolis-Nouveau, while our two fine fellows returned home with the king's wine, marked as Château Médor.

Why? Mordicus knew. Monsieur le Duc d'Ysembagne had probably engineered all of this to win his bet. The trail to the goblins was after all not all that difficult to follow—a bit risky, yes, but not impossible, as we had demonstrated. Monsieur le Duc *wanted* us to find the phony wine and bring it back to Louvines. Château Médor had never won an award from the Brotherhood of Vintages, and it seemed clear it wasn't going to win one anytime soon, as it was rather average. If the jury of the Brotherhood sampled that wine instead of the true Boisjolis-Nouveau, they would surely not give it any award, thus allowing Monsieur le Duc to win his bet with his comparatively excellent Château LaFifi-Trotteschild. In addition to this, the sample marked as Château Médor, which belonged to the Duke of Ysembagne, might even win the award this year, adding insult to injury. *Voilà!*

Of course, it would be best not to involve Monsieur le Duc, since nothing could be proven. We had to rush back to the palace. The Brotherhood of Vintages was in the process of sampling all those wines—including the ones with the wrong labels! We had to act at once!

With horror, I discovered how the competition was set up. Hundreds of anonymously numbered samples sat on a huge table in the throne room. There was no way to tell which sample was whose. More samples came into the room, on trays carried by the king's servants. I had an idea.

I had Croche-Patte don servant's garb and carry a tray to the table. There, he would sneeze violently, at which point he would tuck a corner of the table cloth into his belt and walk away. Those samples would be ruined, and the competition would have to start over.

While Croche-Patte went to do his worst, Mordicus and I went to the cellar where samples were secretly numbered by the Brotherhood. We had to get the wines switched back to their rightful barrels—a tough task, since no one but the Brotherhood could now enter the cellar.

Invisibility helped us both. Once inside the rather dark cellar, we rolled two of the mislabeled barrels around the cellar, playing hide and seek with the members of the Brotherhood working there. One confused brother saw my barrel at several different spots in the cellar. He looked at that barrel every now and then, walking away muttering and scratching his head. Eventually, we found a quiet spot with an extra empty barrel where we could switch wines. For the moment, one single barrel of each vintage would do. Soon after we returned the barrels to their proper spots in the cellar, word came that all the samples had to be redone and renumbered, as some fool upstairs had utterly ruined the current session. Grumbling and growling, the members of the Brotherhood went back to work.

Nyxmir 10: "And zee winner is . . . an exquisite although discreet, delicate yet rustic, flowery if mellow, fruity albeit dry, light but not too much so, historical vintage that we unanimously enjoyed and which therefore earned our unequivocal preference without zee shadow of a doubt. And so, eet is our honor, and doggedly so, to award in zis Year of AC 1001, by zee grace of St. Mâtin and Malinois, zee Golden Leaf Award to . . . Madame la Comtesse de Marmandie's excellent Côtes du Grognes! Other nominees for the Golden Leaf Award will be posted at once."

Monsieur le Duc and King Louis stared at each other in total amazement, then both stood up at once and marched over to the list. Both the Boisjolis-Nouveau and the Château LaFifi-Trotteschild were listed among the other nominees. The king called the archbishop of the Brotherhood of Vintages and demanded to know which of the two wines was best.

"*Votre Majesté*, eet is not customary to rank nominees, as eet is honor enough for a vintage to be listed. In our eyes, we feel all nominees to be of equal quality and enjoyment. You should be pleased to know that your entry, this *je-ne-sais-quoi* of amber lotus and ever-so-slight aftertaste of St. Vézy vine stock, was absolutely, hmmm, *délicieux!* This unique and original blend might win you another golden leaf, *Votre Majesté!*"

So ended this day in Louvines. King Louis was satisfied that no bet was lost and that his vintage had come so close to winning. The bet with Monsieur le Duc had not been revealed, and no harm to either party had come from it. Queen Fifrelyne was greatly relieved that the honor of her royal husband was safe, and she quietly rewarded my help by permitting unlimited furlough for the crew and a free load of that excellent vintage, Le

Boisjolis-Nouveau. At last, all was quiet in the Kingdom of Renardy—at least until next year.

To be continued . . .

Footnoted translations

1. Welcome
 2. It's wonderful!
 3. Your Majesty
 4. What? No more Boisjolis-Nouveau? Quick, quick, return to Clairvault!
 5. *Sacrebleu!* Shocking! To arms! To the guillotine!
 6. *Sacrebleu!*
 7. But sire, how . . . Goblins, here?
- Sacrebleu!*
8. *Sacrebleu!* How bizarre!
 9. The duke's knights
 10. Isn't it wonderful?
 11. Oh, blast it!

The "Royaume de Renardie"

Kingdom of Renardy— Coat of arms: golden fox rampant (1st and 4th quarters) and fleurs-de-lis (2nd and 3rd quarters) in azure field, with royal crown and golden crest overhead; capital: Louvines (pop.: 65,700—mostly lupins, humans, some demihumans and turtles); ruler: King Louis IV "Le Cabotin," son of Gaston de Clairvault (royal domain includes the communities of St. Vézy and Daens); patron: Saint Renard.

The Renardois belong to an uncommon race of humanoids, the lupins. No one knows exactly how they came to Mystara, but it is largely believed among sages that lupins descend from a cross between humans and gnolls. Fortunately, humane attitudes prevailed in the offspring, and an ancestral hate of gnolls and other evil canine manifestations is part of the lupin character.

Early lupins were nomads, tribes of hunters and adventurers who roamed the plains west of the Guardianio lands. They observed the way the Guardianos grew in power, and the lupins began to imitate them, mimicking their arts, nobility, hereditary laws, and philosophies.

The goblins of the Yazak Steppes captured a large portion of the lupins' hunting grounds, scattering many of the tribes. Five tribes, however, regrouped to the south and formed an alliance to defend their lands against the goblins. They were the founding fathers of Renardy, the present lupin kingdom, west of Eusdria. With time, they became typical medieval dominions under the authority of a sole king, now King Louis IV "The Theatrical." Louis set his capital in the City of Louvines, on the River of Dreams. It was the site of an old lupin camp (see D&D module X9 *The Savage Coast*, page 8, Lawful Alliance Camp).

To prevent the sleep-producing amber lotuses from the Plain of Dreams from plaguing their lands, lupins installed a water lock whose sole function was to strip out all debris that floated on the river

Continued on page 98

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by Dale A. Donovan and Steven E. Schend

THE MARVEL[®]-PHILE

Building better mousetraps—or better villains

Yes, it's time now for those dastardly denizens of the MARVEL UNIVERSE™ to step forward and be counted! Time for the downtrodden and somewhat dated villains to take a stand in the light! That's what we're here to discuss: Hack villains and what you can do with them, today in "The MARVEL-Phile"!

For years, Marvel Comics has been creating super villains to pit against their heroes, and many of those villains are nasty or tragic or downright disgusting. Some of them, however, verge on being laughable in the light of the modern day. Today, the Fantastic Four battles against Terrax and the Super Skrull, both of whom are great villains. In the early days, the Wizard and Paste Pot Pete (a.k.a. the Trapster) were almost as formidable a pair

for the four heroes. What makes the newer villains—or heroes, for that matter—better than those who have come and gone before them? It's simply all a matter of perception.

P.R. for villains

No matter how powerful a villain is, if people aren't afraid of him, he's doing something wrong. Many powerful Marvel villains have more than enough power to face the Avengers and escape without needing major dental work, but few have the public perception that they could fight the Avengers and hope for a measure of success. These villains need some help if you, as a Judge, intend to use them in the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game and not

get snickers from your players the first time they encounter these ultra-criminals.

Aside from suggesting the simplest idea in the world for increasing power (namely, team up with others!), we can put forward some basic principles in creating villains that gain the respect of their superhuman peers.

- Find a gimmick that's quick, effective, and memorable. People remember Mr. Fear's fear gas. Giving a villain powers united by a strong theme helps him stick in your players' minds.

- Have the villain keep in good physical shape and learn some basic fighting techniques if he's out tussling with the heroes.

- Find a distinctive name and look for the crook that people will remember and respect. Doctor Doom's armor demands attention from its sinister simplicity.

Keeping all this in mind, we'd like to



discuss a few villains and what you can do in your campaigns to make them more formidable against your campaign's heroes.

Invincible Man: This villain has nothing more than a battlesuit of olive green with yellow boots, gloves, and belt, and a pink hood with goggles. Appearing only three times (Fantastic Four #32, #196, and #287), this suit of microcircuitry and metal can project Incredible (40) Force bolts from its goggles and gloves, fly at Good (10) speed, and levitate objects of Remarkable (30) weight. The only existing costume is in the Latverian Embassy in New York City; given some slight alterations to its looks, Doctor Doom could have an excellent supplementary suit of armor worthy of any villain. The name's also a little dated, but changing the look can allow any name change desired as well. Also, remember that New York has its share of criminals and super villains, so the armor could be stolen (which would probably irritate a certain Latverian monarch as well as your heroes).

Porcupine: One of Dr. Henry Pym's oldest foes from his days as Giant-Man, the Porcupine struck bottom a few years back after he attempted to sell his quill-shooting armor to other villains and found no buyers. All told, the Porcupine armor was very powerful indeed (see MU3, *Gamer's Handbook of the MARVEL UNIVERSE*), but Alexander Gentry wasn't a very good villain. In your own game, someone much more ruthless may have adopted the Porcupine's armor and can try to use it for his own ends. Now, if the villain takes a slightly better name (such as Spike or even Quill) that fits the suit's powers, he has a better chance of becoming a feared name among the super hero community. The armor is currently interred within Avengers Mansion in New York City to honor their dead foe. What if a duo of aspiring New York villains managed to steal the Porcupine armor and the Invincible Man battlesuit? Sounds like instant trouble for your heroes!

Trapster: He learned the power of a name change early on; he used to call himself Paste Pot Pete. With all his gimmicks and expertise with locks, traps, and technology, the Trapster could be one of the greatest thieves ever. By reworking his paste-shooters to add a wider variety of materials, Pete could improve his high-velocity arsenal with acids, mists or gases, and other materials (like Mr. Fear's fear gas, or something simpler-like napalm). The material's all there to make Trapster a major villain; you just have to work it into your games.

Wizard: Like his erstwhile partner above, the Wizard has some heavy-duty technology at his disposal and can certainly invent more. If this villain's so smart, why hasn't he improved his armor over

the years? The Wizard's antigravity discs and power gloves are great, but the helmet could be miniaturized into something a little more dignified. Give this man a tougher suit of armor for the '90s a few more offensive and defensive devices for that armor, and the Wizard steps back into the light as a major villain. How about a spray of miniaturized antigrav discs that can't be removed easily, or some shock field generated by the power gloves in addition to the armor's force field?

Rocket Racer and the Leapfrog: Okay, some villains are so strange that there's no hope of them ever making it big in the bad-guy business. These two took the best route left to them: They became heroes! Yes, this is the last refuge of villainous incompetents, but they don't get arrested nearly as much.

Villains from surplus

Now that we've worked on improving existing villains, we'd like to show you that a "garage sale" of lost or forgotten technology in the MARVEL UNIVERSE might be the best thing ever to happen to any up-and-coming villain. There is so much powerful technology within reach that nearly any person could become the terror of his hometown. Your authors decided to test this by scrounging up available technologies that aren't getting much use in the MARVEL UNIVERSE these days, and we each created a new villain from those technologies. Thanks to Mark Gruenwald and his Scourge killings in the *Captain America* comic a few years back, there's lots of technology just lying around and waiting for us to use. We must also acknowledge all the other characters who were left out to dry by Marvel writers and editors over the years.

Keep in mind that the characters we've created are only examples of what you and your players could create in your own MARVEL SUPER HEROES game campaigns. Give it a try! Also remember that these two characters are not part of the MARVEL UNIVERSE and have no place in official Marvel Comics' continuity.

SENTINEL, ORION CLASS™

	Covert mode	Battle mode
F	EX(20)	RM(30)
A	EX(20)	RM(30)
S	EX(20)	IN(40)
E	IN(40)	MN(75)
R	EX(20)	EX(20)
I	RM(30)	RM(30)
P	TY(6)	TY(6)
Health	100	175
Karma	56	56
Resources	n/a	n/a
Popularity	n/a	n/a

POWERS: *Alter Ego:* An Orion Sentinel is capable of changing between two basic modes, Covert and Battle. The Covert mode appears as a normal human of either sex, while the Battle mode exhibits gender-neutral armored plates and various visible weaponry. An Orion can change modes with Excellent ability, accomplishing a switch in one full round (no other actions are allowed).

An Orion unit can be detected easily if it is damaged. Damage of more than 20% of its total Health in either mode disables its voice modulator and makes its voice sound hollow and mechanical. Damage of more than 60% to its Battle mode disrupts its shape-shifting ability so that its armor cannot later be folded into Covert mode without repairs.

Learning Program: This programming allows an Orion Sentinel to gain a +2CS against an opponent in all combat FEAT rolls after fighting that opponent for at least two rounds. This adaptability program stores a mutant's fighting style and power uses, and this information can be transferred into a database to be shared by all Sentinels when the Orion returns to base; this transfer must occur at central computers at Project: Wideawake and cannot be relayed through any other means. This information allows for modification and upgrading of all Sentinels to counteract the powers of a target mutant.

Robotic Construction: An Orion Sentinel is a sophisticated artificial life form, subject to powers that affect or control machinery. Use the Orion's Endurance of its current mode to resist attempts to control it. It is immune to disease, poisons, gas, or powers that affect the human mind or emotions.

Self-Repair Systems: Self-repair systems restore an Orion's lost Health with Poor (4) ability. This system only works if at least 25% of the Orion Sentinel (one-quarter normal Health points for the Orion's current mode) is still intact.

Note that the following abilities given for each mode are specific to those modes, so that a Covert-mode power cannot be used when an Orion is in Battle mode, though an Orion in either mode can use those powers given previously.

Covert mode

Gamma Energy Detection: An Orion can detect, identify, and trace all forms of gamma radiation at Monstrous ability and range. This is included as a subordinate system to track the Hulk and other gamma-irradiated beings.

Infravision: An Orion Sentinel can see in total darkness up to a distance of five areas using infrared-imaging techniques.

Leaping: An Orion can leap with Remarkable ability, clearing 30'.

Mutant Detection and Tracking: An

Orion can detect, identify, and track any mutants within a two-mile range with Unearthly ability. The tracking systems are triggered by the use of mutant powers, and use of any power for more than three rounds allows an Orion to lock onto that mutant and track its movements whether its powers are subsequently used or not.

Resistance to Energy: An Orion Sentinel has Excellent resistance to all forms of nonmystical energy (heat, cold, electricity, etc.), reducing all nonmystical Energy damage by 20 points.

Scanning Shields: Remarkable-level shielding allows an Orion to masquerade as a human and avoid detection by any scanners (X-rays, metal detectors, etc.) of less than Remarkable rank.

Battle mode

Body Armor: A Battle-mode Orion has metallic blue plate armor that provides Incredible protection from Energy attacks and Remarkable protection from physical and Force attacks.

Flight: An Orion Sentinel flies using boot jets at Excellent speed (10 areas per round).

Weapons Systems: An Orion Sentinel's arsenal of weaponry is hidden within its azure armor, the most common ports for weapons coming from the forearms, hands, and eyes. These weapons include all of the following weapons:

– **Gas Jets:** Remarkable-intensity knock-out gas can be emitted from the palms of an Orion Sentinel to cover an area up to two areas away.

– **Grapple Rings:** These large rings are fired from an Orion's left forearm, and each Orion has 10 such constricting rings. The rings can be fired one per round up to three areas away and tightly wrap around any target (of up to 12' in diameter) upon contact, constricting with up to Incredible (40) strength, depending on the strength of resistance. The rings are of Incredible material-strength metals. These rings are not lethal weapons, being restraint devices instead.

– **Inhibitor Rings:** These large rings are fired from an Orion unit's right forearm and are capable of wrapping around targets of up to 10' in diameter. Armed with five rings, an Orion can fire one a round up to three areas away and entrap single targets with Excellent strength. Once in contact with a mutant (or within 2" of a mutant's skin), the Amazing-rank inhibitor negates any mental or psionic powers as well as enhanced physical powers like Colossus's strength and armor. It does not affect or negate blatant physical mutations such as Nightcrawler's tail and fur, or Angel's original wings; it simply blocks the neurological signals that allow their effective use.

Any targets with powers stronger than Amazing rank are reduced by 50 points

and need a successful Psyche FEAT roll to use their powers at the reduced rank. Note that cumulative inhibitor rings have a cumulative inhibiting effect on mutant powers, so two inhibitor rings project an Unearthly inhibitor field. The rings are made of Incredible-strength material.

– **Shock Blasts:** An Orion Sentinel can emit vibration-shock Force blasts of Remarkable (30) rank from its hands. The blasts have a range of two areas.

– **Shock Touch:** The gloves of an Orion Sentinel can maintain a high-intensity vibration pulse that is released on contact with a target (Fighting FEAT roll needed). The shock touch releases Amazing (50) Force damage and can destroy inanimate material of up to Incredible strength material. This shock touch can be used once every other round, needing the interim to build up the vibrations.

– **Heat Beams:** These heat beams issue from an Orion Sentinel's eyes, dealing Remarkable rank Energy (heat) damage to its target. The beams have a range of eight areas.

TALENTS: An Orion Sentinel can be programmed with any noncombat-oriented skills to aid it in masquerading as a normal human.

HISTORY: With the repeal of the Mutant Registration Act by the U.S. Supreme Court, elements of the United States government still wanted a check in the system against the often-uncontrolled mutant populace and the danger that mutants might present to people in general. Recently, the covert and highly classified mutant surveillance and detainment branch of the National Security Council, known as Project: Wideawake, was brought back into full operational status. With Henry Peter Gyrich as its acting head, this technically illegal government agency answers only to the President.

With the new Project: Wideawake appropriating large amounts of funds for its comeback, its first act was to rethink its strategy in producing Sentinels. The Mark V series had not performed up to expectations, and the Project needed more reliable agents to detain the growing number of dangerous mutant groups. Not willing to risk human agents, armored suits like the Guardsmen and the Mandroids were dropped from consideration. Then a Dr. Isaac Rheros came up with a plan to amalgamate numerous cybernetic and electronic systems into artificially created androids or robots.

Following that line of thinking, Dr. Rheros was placed in charge of developing the Orion-class Sentinel, named after the mythical hunter. Using information gathered from Ryker's Island, the Vault, and old Avengers' case files and security scans, Rheros gathered potential technologies for

assimilation into the new Orion Sentinels. Through various go-betweens, the Project gave Herman Schultz, the Shocker, a commuted sentence for his existing vibro-shock gauntlets and plans. From government warehouses and stockpiles came a number of old SHIELD Life Model Decoys (LMDs), various Sentinel systems for mutant detection, and the impounded equipment of the recently slain villain Ringer.

Dr. Rheros adapted the LMD technology to accept a wide number of mechanical upgrades and adaptations while still allowing it to maintain its human appearance. Hoping to avoid the amount of attention that Sentinels usually drew, Orion units are designed to function as unobtrusive covert agents that easily mix into a crowd under normal circumstances. If forced into battle, Orion Sentinels can comport themselves as well as, if not better than, their gargantuan predecessors. Mutants: Be alert, for a hunter may now be anywhere, keeping its eyes on you.

ROLE-PLAYING NOTES: Orion Sentinels are generally programmed to act like normal humans. Their actual behavior depends on who they are disguised as in Covert mode. The first three Orions are designed to look like an African-American male, an Asian male, and a Caucasian female in Covert modes. They dress and act as very strict, prim-and-proper government agents (dark suits and glasses), but their individual personality programs should allow for some differences after their installation. Their voice modulators allow them human-sounding voices, but their actual voices are hollow and mechanical. Their primary programming, as with all Sentinels, is to track down and capture mutants.

HURRICANE™

Roger Philip Banks
Criminal mercenary

	Normal	Armor-enhanced
F	GD(10)	EX(20)
A	GD(10)	EX(20)
S	GD(10)	RM(30)
E	EX(20)	IN(40)
R	EX(20)	EX(20)
I	GD(10)	GD(10)
P	GD(10)	GD(10)
Health	50	110
Karma	40	40
Resources	GD(10)	GD(10)
Popularity	0	- 2

POWERS: All of Hurricane's powers originate from his battlesuit. These abilities include:

Body Armor: His reinforced battlesuit provides Hurricane with Excellent (20)

protection from physical and Force attacks and Good (10) protection from Energy attacks. The suit also enhances Banks' physical abilities (FASE) as noted.

Wind control: Hurricane's suit gives him the power to control wind and air patterns with Amazing (50) ability within his own area and up to one area away in every direction. Hurricane is immune to the effects of his own winds. This power grants him the following Power Stunts:

- **Air Shield:** Hurricane can swirl his winds closely about him, which creates an Amazing-rank shield vs. physical attacks.

- **Flight:** Hurricane can fly at Good (10) air speed, eight areas per round.

- **Flight disruption:** Using his wind-control power, Hurricane can disrupt other flying or gliding characters. Flying characters must make an Agility FEAT roll vs. Amazing intensity to avoid being buffeted by winds (see next Power Stunt) and moved about through the air at Hurricane's bidding. Gliding characters must always get a red FEAT result to avoid falling under Hurricane's control.

- **Buffeting:** Airborne characters who fall under Hurricane's control suffer an Amazing-rank attack due to wind buffeting. This buffeting attack can inflict up to Remarkable (30) Blunt Attacks damage, and victims can be Slammed or Stunned.

- **Lifting:** Hurricane can use his winds to lift unanchored people or objects off the ground. Hurricane's winds lift objects with Amazing (50) strength. Characters must make a successful Strength or Agility FEAT roll (whichever is better) vs. Amazing intensity to avoid leaving the ground. Hurricane can control the movements through the air of those who fail the roll, and he can inflict buffeting damage, as noted earlier. Characters who make the FEAT roll and remain grounded can still take up to Excellent (20) buffeting damage, but cannot be Slammed or Stunned (they are assumed to be avoiding the worst effects of the winds by getting under cover, holding onto anchored objects, etc.). Hurricane is also fond of lifting powerful, nonflying opponents high off the ground, buffeting them, then dropping them to cause even more damage to the hapless victim (see "Downward Movement: Advanced Set, Players' Book, page 21).

- **Vacuum:** Hurricane can create a small, partial vacuum around a single target. Victims of this attack must make an Endurance FEAT roll vs. Amazing intensity or be forced to roll on the Stun table.

- **Limitation:** Hurricane's powers affect everyone in an area, with Hurricane himself being the only exception. Hurricane can control the amount of buffeting damage taken by victims, but all victims in an area take the same amount of damage.

- **Energy Beam:** Hurricane can fire this

variable-setting energy projector from his suit's helmet. This beam can inflict up to Incredible (40) Energy damage at Remarkable range. He calls this weapon the "Eye of the Hurricane."

TALENTS: Banks has the Engineering, Computers, Electronics, and Repair/Tinkering skills.

CONTACTS: Hurricane has no current contacts, though he is seeking some in organized-crime and super-villain mercenary circles. Banks knows a few people employed by Stark International, but they are not considered to be contacts as they are disinclined to be on friendly terms with Banks (see "History" below).

HISTORY: Roger P. Banks was an electrical engineer by trade and a computer hacker by hobby. He filled his free time by doing his best to break into computers illegally. Until recently, Banks was a mid-level engineer for Stark International. He stayed late after work one evening to test a new hacking program he had been developing. Curiosity and greed drove him to try breaking into some of Stark International's restricted files, something he had been unable to do before. He hoped this new program would crack the security of restricted areas of the main-frame computer. Banks had some success, managing to access and download low-clearance files on one of Stark's inventions, the Guardsman armor. He also broke into some mid-level security-clearance Research & Development files concerning two technology-based villains.

Banks found some files concerning the power horn of one of Iron Man's old foes, the Unicorn. Iron Man had once captured Unicorn, only to find the man inside the Unicorn suit was seriously ill. Tony Stark (Iron Man) devised a special bath treatment in which Unicorn's suit and helmet were removed and the villain was placed in the treatment bath. Some of Stark's technicians analyzed the power horn, though little was done with the information gained. Stark International kept this information after Unicorn left and subsequently disappeared. It was these files and partial plans that Banks discovered.

Banks also came across some files concerning the battlesuit of a deceased villain, Cyclone. (After Cyclone and so many others were killed in "The Bar with No Name" by Scourge a few years back, some of the technology that Scourge did not completely destroy was sent by the authorities to Stark International for testing.) Banks found virtually complete plans for the wind-controlling suit, and he decided to make that suit the basis of his new identity: Hurricane!

Once he had this information, Banks did his best to electronically cover his tracks. In this, he was less successful. Computer Security personnel discovered the data break-in but could not determine the identity of the thief. Banks soon quit Stark International and moved away with his illicit information, assembling his suit from components stolen from Stark International. The company later discovered the missing equipment and discerned that Banks was the thief; it reported the theft to the authorities and left it at that. The company was unaware that Banks planned to turn the stolen components into a functioning battlesuit.

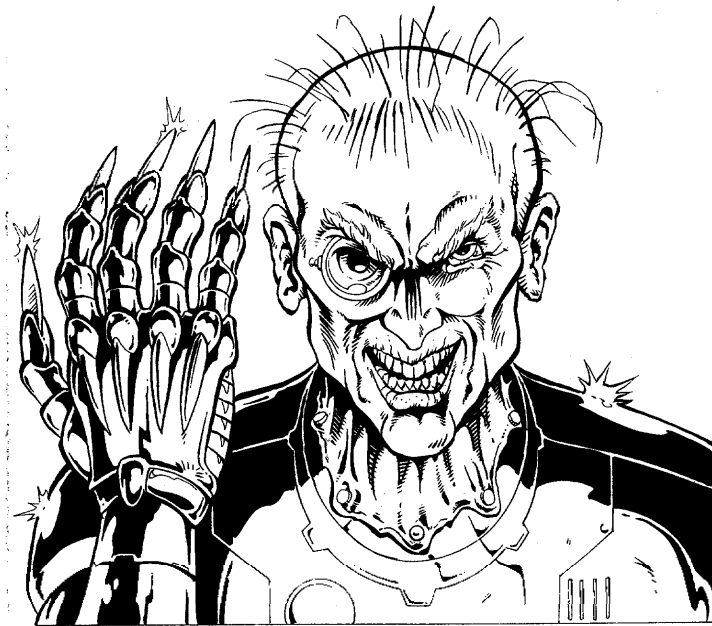
Recently, Hurricane completed his suit and has been committing crimes (bank and armored-car robberies, wanton public displays of his wind-controlling powers, destruction of property, etc.) in an effort to attract the attention of those who might be interested in hiring superpowered muscle or an assassin. He has had little success so far. He has neither encountered any super-heroic resistance nor received any offers of employment from normal criminals or super villains. Whether this changes in the future is up to you.

ROLE-PLAYING NOTES: Roger P. Banks is a greedy man. Born and raised in lower-middle-class family, he grew to resent those who possessed more than he. As a teenager, his family noticed his talent for electronics and his fascination with computers. Banks' parents encouraged him to turn these abilities into his career, and they put him through college. Banks did well and got an entry-level job at Stark International after graduation. Over the next few years, he did good work and was promoted twice. This, however, was not enough for Banks; although he enjoyed his work, he came to resent Tony Stark, the wealthy owner of Stark International, for the latter's material wealth. This resentment grew over time until Banks became bitter. The bitterness (and his hobby of hacking) was what led to him breaking into Stark's files.

In your campaign, Hurricane can appear as a thug for a criminal mastermind or as a super villain. Due to the nature of his powers, Hurricane will work most effectively when he works alone. Hurricane would also gladly work as an assassin, as long as he was very well paid for the act. He does have a penchant for destroying property, seeing this as another way of harming those who have more than he by destroying what he feels "they" possess.

The main thing to remember about Hurricane is his greed, his prime motivation. For example, Hurricane would not be above stealing from the home of someone who he was contracted to assassinate. Q

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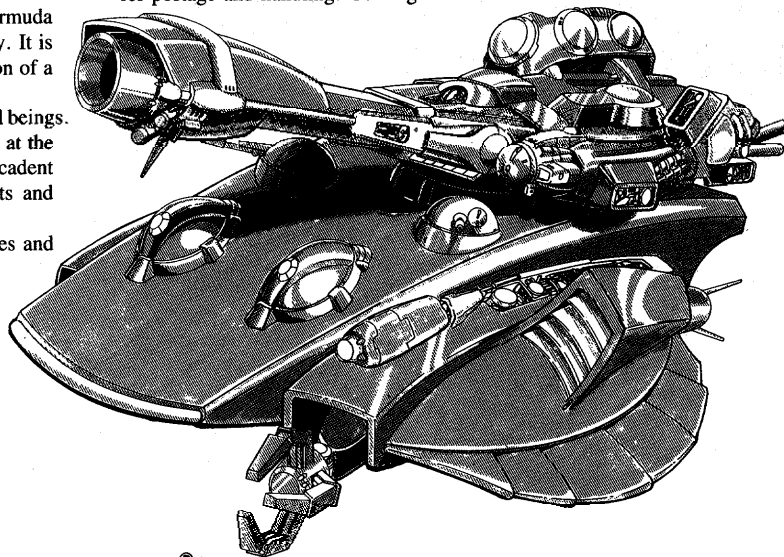
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FORUM

"Forum" welcomes your comments and opinions on role-playing games. In the United States and Canada, write to: Forum, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Forum, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, United Kingdom. We ask that material submitted to "Forum" be either neatly written by hand or typed with a fresh ribbon and clean keys so we can read and understand your comments.

I enjoyed "The Nature of the Beast," by Zoe Bell Hurst, in DRAGON issue #171. I have several of the figures shown in the photographs, and I use some of the techniques given in the article. I've always found that miniatures of real animals are harder to paint than those of monsters. Everyone knows what real animals look like, so if you make a mistake, people notice. There is some leeway with imaginary creatures since there is no reality to check against. The ultimate painting challenge has to be a leopard or jaguar, with all those spots and circles.

I also use photographs as a painting guide. There is one tip I'd like to pass along: Do *not* use pictures of animals in winter fur. These animals have a two-tone fur color that is impossible to duplicate on a miniature. I found this out the hard-way while painting the bobcat from the Ral Partha Lesser Animals set (photo B in the original article). Oddly enough, my painted badger looks almost exactly like the one in the article; apparently, not much variation can be done on such a tiny figure.

It is unfortunate that there are so few miniatures of mundane animals available. Miniatures of common AD&D® game creatures such as tigers, crocodiles, and apes are not to be found. Wolves and bears are easy to find, but there are only so many variations that can be done with them. I'd like to see the big miniatures companies make a greater effort in this direction.

I've always liked photos of painted miniatures, and this article had some very well done ones. I've thought about taking some photos of my own figures, both with blank backgrounds and in dioramas. However, I know almost nothing about this type of photography. I would like to see an article about this, with emphasis on things like lenses, lighting, film speed, etc.

David Howerly
Idaho Falls ID

I have been playing the AD&D game for about six years now, the past two with the AD&D 2nd Edition rules. I feel that the AD&D 2nd Edition game is killing off the mage class. Creatures

with magic resistance are a dime a dozen now, and the fact that magic resistance no longer goes down in percentage due to higher levels only adds to the problem.

Our group consists of a fighter, a paladin, a fighter-cleric, a ranger, and a mage. Our group has been very successful (an average of 25th-level), and our DM is fairly generous with magic items. In our long adventuring career, our party has systematically hacked creatures, argued with NPCs (and the DM), collected loot, and gobbled experience; through it all (and through no fault of the player), the mage has been—for lack of a better term—extra baggage. Oh, sure, sometimes those *magic missiles* and *cones of cold* come in handy, but either the monster makes his magic-resistance check or, if not, his save. This is unfair to the player, who gets all the rude comments on how wimpy his mage is, even at high levels.

Our DM has tried to find ways around this, but unfortunately even the *one ring of elemental power* doesn't cut it. The most spectacular feat of magic our mage has produced so far is a *lightning bolt* spell misfire that fried the paladin's holy sword and half the other characters' items. Needless to say, the mage was not very popular afterward and received even more rude comments thrown in her general direction (Miss Fire, Miss Use, Miss Cast—you get the idea).

It's possible that my DM pits us against too many supernatural beings, but I've paged through the *Monstrous Compendium* (for research, of course) and the number of monsters with magic resistance is terrible.

No, these are not the insane ravings of a spoiled player (by the way, I'm the fighter-cleric, not the mage, but I still feel sorry for her), but it makes you wonder why mages even try. Therefore, I have an idea for all of you out there with similar complaints. Use the magic resistance rules from the AD&D 1st Edition game, or use a modified form that agrees with you and (if you're nice) your players. Thank you for listening to my comments, and I would like to hear yours on the subject.

Justin Kelley
Superior WI

I am writing in response to Joseph Dineen's comment in the April 1991 issue (#168) about the use of Vauban-style walls for cities defending against magical attacks. His letter was prompted by an article in DRAGON issue #160 by James Collier, who argued that cities in the AD&D fantasy world could not rely on the castles and walls used by our ancestors to defend against attacks from magic and mon-

sters. Before I get to my own comments, let me briefly summarize both Mr. Collier's article and Mr. Dineen's letter.

This is James Collier's main point: "... few of the cities in present FRPG campaigns would reasonably survive 10 days in their worlds, much less 10 centuries. A tower-studded wall keeps out humans but would not stop a derro raid from below or a dragon swooping down from above. The AD&D game world is not the world of medieval Europe; Constantinople was never menaced by foes that *flew*, *teleported*, *burrowed*, or turned *invisible*. A city in a campaign world must have defenses that are complete and overwhelming in order for the metropolis to survive for centuries." The article then goes on to illustrate how a city in a magic-rich environment could be attacked and defended, and shows that medieval-style walls and castles would not stand up against a magic-enhanced siege unless the defenders made use of magic themselves.

Mr. Dineen offers an enhancement to the cities illustrated in Mr. Collier's article: Vauban walls. Marquis de Vauban was a 17th-century French military engineer whose fortress designs had a tremendous impact on the ways fortresses were built from his day forward. Without going into too much detail, the fortress was laid out in a star-shaped configuration—much, much different than the castles of prior periods. Their design was shaped primarily by the capabilities of cannon and musketry, which could easily overcome conventional castles (proved quite well by Oliver Cromwell, who demolished English castles while Vauban was still in his early twenties). Mr. Dineen suggests that since the "damage inflicted by magic is at least comparable to and usually exceeds that caused by gunpowder artillery," Vauban defenses would be ideal for a fantasy city.

My own thoughts on this situation are mixed. I wholeheartedly agree that Vauban walls would be useful against ground-level magical attacks, but I don't know if they would be the best all-around defense. For example, Vauban walls are pretty spread out in area, which would facilitate aerial and underground attacks against them. Thieves would probably not be more hindered by this style of defense. Also, there are a wide number of spells that would be just as effective against Vauban walls as against conventional walls, such as *transmute rock to mud*, *ice storm*, or *dig*. Finally, one need only look to our own military history to see how "successful" Vauban walls were. With a series of trenches running parallel and criss-crossed to the fortress walls, an elaborate and expensive Vauban fortress could be breached within a short time. These fortresses were basically obsolete by the American Civil War, well before airplanes and tanks entered the battlefield. If this kind of fortress is ineffective against mid-1800s ground troops and useless against biplanes, the fortress is nothing more than a bull's-eye target to a flying red dragon. So, while the Vauban walls are an improvement over conventional walls, their weaknesses against common threats in a magic- and monster-rich AD&D setting mean that no military engineer worth his *compass* +3 would give them much thought.

This leaves the question of how to defend a fantasy city. I see three solutions. The first runs along the lines of Mr. Collier's article: Beef up the magical defenses. This can get pretty wild if you let your imagination run. Hundreds of wizards prepared to unleash a fury of *fireballs* at a moments' notice? City walls coursing with enchantments? Paladin griffon-riders? Dragons defending humans? These are all suggestions

given by Mr. Collins. What kind of economic and political structure would be needed to support all of these magical defenses? If these things were put into play, they would ruin the medieval flavor that has been present in the game. The affluence and structure needed to support all of these things would require an advanced civilization like the Roman Empire or Renaissance Europe. I suppose this is okay or even desired by some, but to those of us who prefer the knights, castles, and wildness of the Middle Ages, something else is needed.

The second solution is really a cop out, but it is the easiest way to solve the problem. Instead of reasoning everything through, just ignore it. Just say paladins stick to horses, wizards aren't interested in manning the city walls, and dragons just aren't seen much around human civilization. Just assume everything works and don't question the physics. As has been said before, the AD&D game is a fantasy game; if you assume magic is real in that world, then *anything* is possible, medieval-style castle and city walls are common, and everything seems to work out just fine.

Of course, some people (me, for instance) like to have their campaign worlds realistic and reasoned out, in spite of the fantasy nature of the game. I have taken a third approach to solve the castle-defense problem: Make magic and monsters so rare that castles and cities need not worry about being attacked by them. In this way, the castles and walls (and political and economic structures) are similar to their medieval equivalents. Any of a number of reasons could be used to justify the limited amount of monsters and magic. I personally like the idea of persecution of wizards ("After all, everyone

knows they can just cast an enchantment and then you're enslaved to them forever!"). One could also argue that only certain people have the mental stamina or sheer intelligence or some inborn "magical power" (you pick one) needed to cast spells.

While magic can be fixed easily, monsters pose a slightly different problem. The powerful ones, like dragons and liches, would have to be quite rare, or else human civilization would find survival to be very difficult. Humanoids, on the other hand, fit in just fine with only minor adjustments ("You live in the goblin quarter of town? Boy, that must be smelly!"). Orcs, goblins, halflings, and so forth could be dealt with by human civilization much as some real-world human ethnic groups were treated. Instead of fighting Saracens, a crusading paladin could take on hobgoblins or gnolls. Perhaps orcish culture could be based on American Indian culture, with a splash of Viking society and beliefs. The point is that humanoids can be less inhuman and more three dimensional.

The "weaker" nonhumanoid monsters such as basilisks, griffons, and trolls would need to be strictly limited and placed well away from civilized regions. If large numbers of these creatures lived near human or demihuman settlements, the settlements would require elaborate and possibly extraordinary defenses, and that is what we are trying to avoid. With limited contact (say one "strange" creature like a troll every five years per town or village), the civilizations would find that medieval-style castles and walls sufficient to counter any threat, most of which would be from the very humans (or humanoids) for which medieval castles were designed.

Simply put limits on the number, kind, and frequency of monsters seen, and limit the amount of magic in the world. In this way, DMs can base their campaigns on medieval Europe and not have to worry about the influence of magic and monsters. This doesn't go against the grain of the game, in spite of what one may think; the rule books warn against letting magic get too out of hand. The *Monstrous Compendium* has a "frequency" rating for every creature—and it's there for a reason.

Bryce Harrington
Lake Oswego OR

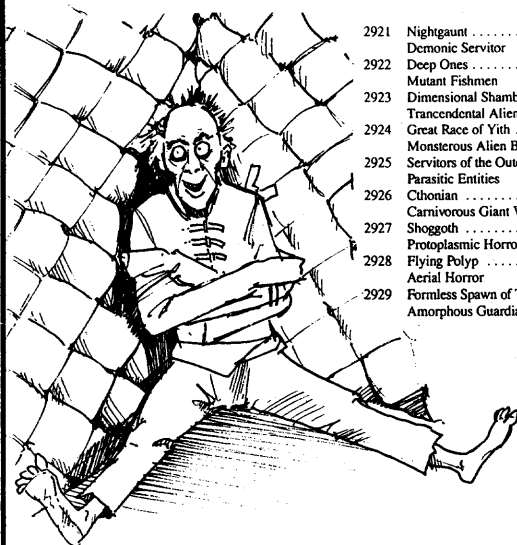
I am writing in response to the two letters published in issue #167, that of Russell Speir concerning crossbow damage, and Bradley Wadle's regarding the energy-draining ability of undead creatures.

First, for an example of an innovative and elegant undead energy-draining methodology (that should have been picked up by the AD&D 2nd Edition rules), I urge Bradley Wadle to beg, buy, or borrow a copy of issue #126 and check out Vince Garcia's article, "A Touch of Evil."

Second, I would welcome an upgrading of the damage ratings for heavy and light quarrels, but not quite to the extent suggested by Russell Speir. If one accepts the game validity of a 1d8 hp damage rating for a sheaf arrow, and that this is related to the arrow's kinetic energy, then it should be possible to obtain some idea of the damage rating of a heavy quarrel by comparing its kinetic energy with that of the sheaf arrow's.

For a sheaf arrow, I'll assume a kinetic energy (K) of 70 joules (J). I've drawn this figure from the technical appendices in Robert Hardy's book, *Longbow*. Corresponding data on cross-

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bow quarrels seems to be very sparse; the only data I could find was for a reproduction of a 15th-century crossbow using a 113 g (4 oz) quarrel, measured at 84 m/s (275.604 fps), from the *Guinness Book of Speed Facts & Feats*. The formula $K = \frac{1}{2}mv^2$, where m = mass and v = velocity, gives a figure of 398.664 J, which is near enough to 400. Comparing the two figures (sheaf arrow 70 J, heavy quarrel 400 J) suggests that the latter has about 5.7 times as much kinetic energy as the former.

The next step is to estimate what effect an increase in kinetic energy has on damage ratings. I think that a linear-cube relationship would be reasonable. That is, in order to double the damage rating, you have to impart eight times as much energy. I can't offer any firm justification for this relationship, except that it "feels" right and has worked reasonably well when I applied it to some other calculations concerning the damage ratings of modern firearms.

Returning to the heavy quarrel/sheaf arrow quotient of 5.7 and taking its cube root, this gives a damage-rating multiplier of about 1.8. Applying this figure to a sheaf arrow's average damage of 4.5 hp (1d8) suggests an average damage figure of around 8.1 hp for a heavy quarrel.

At this point, I need to explain my preference for the simulation of the actual rate of fire (ROF) of the heavy crossbow. I think that in the time it takes to fire one aimed shot with a cranequin-wound heavy crossbow, it should be possible to fire at least six aimed shots with a longbow (see Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey's book, *The Crossbow*, for an empirical confirmation of these rates of fire). The AD&D 2nd Edition ROF rules allow

you to fire only four times with a longbow in the time that it takes to fire once with a heavy crossbow. To better simulate the historical ROF relationship, you could increase the longbow ROF by 50% to 3/1 or reduce the heavy crossbow ROF to 1/3. I don't particularly like either of these alternatives, because I think that from a playability point of view the current ROF rules work well. Instead, I'll reduce the heavy quarrel's average damage by one-third, from 8.1 to 5.4 hp. An average damage of this order can be achieved by using 1d10 (average 5.5 hp). For large-creature damage, I would move up to 1d12 (average 6.5 hp).

Applying the same process to a military light crossbow (spanned by a brace-augmented goat's foot lever, and assuming half the K of a heavy crossbow quarrel but twice the modified rate of fire) gives an average damage rating of 4.3 hp, which could be simulated using 1d8 (average 4.5 hp). Damage to large creatures would also be 1d8. Bringing all of the foregoing together produces the Revised Missile Table.

It's then tempting to complete the streamlining of damage ratings by increasing the hand quarrel from 1d3/1d2 to 1d4/1d4 -1.

As far as realism is relevant to a fantasy role-playing game, I think that these ratings bring out

the difference between the longbow and the crossbow better than do the current rules. As to the actual numbers themselves, these tend to be intuitively obvious. With regard to the heavy crossbow, 1d10 is a lot easier to roll than the multiple 1d4s advocated by Mr. Speir (I hate rolling multiple 1d4s).

Finally, Mr. Speir states at one point that "... the short bow (using sheaf arrows) does more damage than the heavy crossbow." Not so. According to "Sage Advice" in issue #149, no matter what sort of arrow is fired from a short bow, it does damage as a flight arrow (1d6/1d6).

If anybody can tell me what happened to the apocryphal medium crossbow (mentioned in the 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook* on page 143, second paragraph of the *levitate* spell description; and in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 78, column 1, paragraph 9, last sentence), that should just about be enough from me on Advanced Missiles & Mayhem. [Delete the references to medium crossbows in both sections; they are in error and should have applied to heavy crossbows only. There are no medium crossbows in the AD&D game. —The Editors]

Rene Vernon
Hazelwood Park, S.A., Australia

Revised Missile Table

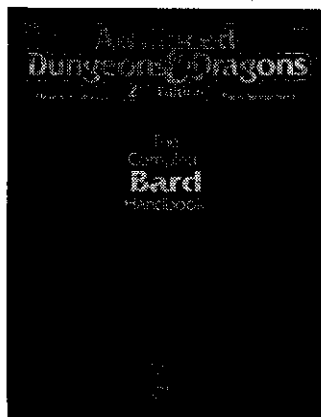
Item	S-M damage	L damage	ROF	
Heavy quarrel	1d10	1d12	1/2	
Light quarrel	1d8	1d8	1/1	
Sheaf arrow	1d8	1d8	2/1	
Flight arrow	1d6	1d6	2/1	Ω

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Conquests of the Longbow
(Renovation)

Robin Hood meets the second eye of the beholder

KnightLine

We'd like to discuss a letter we received from David Kurtz of La Verne, Calif. David writes that we seem to focus too much on PC/MS-DOS games (he wants more information on Macintosh games). He's right. The reason for this focus is that today more games are released for PC/MS-DOS systems than any other computer system. Most of these game releases are initially for a single format. Few companies release games for the PC/MS-DOS, Macintosh, or Amiga at the same time. A company wants to see how well its game sells on the most popular entertainment computer system before investing time and money to converting that game to another computer system.

While noting fewer Amiga releases, we

are seeing new titles released for the Macintosh, all supporting either monochrome or 256-color mode. A few are even moving up to 32-bit color! Some companies to watch for Macintosh releases include Interplay, Strategic Simulations, Sir-Tech, Sierra, Dynamix, Inline Designs, and Max-is. The latter two have been in the Macintosh game business for many years. So,

Computer games' ratings

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

hang on while your Macintosh computers continue to make headway with increasing sales. The number of installed systems is what publishers look to before deciding which system gets the game-and you can bet that both PC/MS-DOS and Macintosh gamers will have a great deal to look forward to over the coming months!

For Macintosh gamers, you have two, cool new releases for your machines. These offerings, from Sound Source, feature the sounds from the original *Star Trek* television series! The sounds include music cues and sound bytes from those famous characters and their equally famous lines. Thrill to the theme music when you start your Macintosh, hear a bulkhead door opening when you open a file, or chuckle to McCoy's "There goes

paradise" when you shut down your computer. There are two volumes, *The Logical Collection* and *The Final Frontier*, in the *Star Trek Soundware* library. Each is fully compatible under System 7 or earlier versions of System 6.x. Because Sound Source has included the SoundMaster program, you can edit the sounds for any Macintosh activity. You'll never be bored with system silence again. These are a must addition to your Macintosh system's sound resource file if you are a Trek fanatic "Live long and prosper!"

By the way, Broderbund Software has moved to 500 Redwood Boulevard, P.O. Box 6121, Novato CA 94948-6121. Its main telephone number is (415) 382-4400.

H.E.L.P.

Brian Roberson of Fremont, Calif., has come to the aid of Doug Parsons (issue #175), who had a question regarding *Might and Magic II*. "To decode the last part in *Might and Magic II*, you need to put the words into the preamble from the Constitution."

In DRAGON® issue #175, a cry for H.E.L.P. was issued regarding *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. H.E.L.P. has arrived, thanks to Reese Jones of Brigham City, Utah, and John Finley of Asheville, N.C. Reese notes, "There are a few items the reader missed. The chest in Henry's house contains a mock version of the Grail diary that is very helpful when the Nazis ask for the diary. To open the chest, first pull the bookshelf off the wall in Henry's house. Close inspection of the back of the bookshelf reveals a sticky wad of tape. Take the wad of tape to Indy's lab in the university, where you will find a bottle of solvent. Use the solvent on the wad of tape to find the key to the chest in Henry's house."

"In the sewers, when you find the gate with the casket behind it, you have found the room with the Crusader's shield, but you cannot get through the gate. There is a back entrance to this room that you must find. You are less than halfway to this back entrance, which is too complex to describe in detail. The following hints allow access to more of the sewers that lead to the back entrance:

"From the gate, you must go up through the manhole to the restaurant. There, you will find a couple sharing a bottle of wine. If you convince them that the wine is bad, they will let you take the bottle. Enter the sewers through the manhole again. Take the bottle and fill it with water. You also must find the cavern with the skeletons, one of which has a hook for an arm. Take that hook. Now, use the water to loosen the mud on the torch. Moving the torch opens a trap door to the second level of the sewers. Find the room directly under the plug. Use the hook with the plug and then the whip with the hook to remove the plug."

Kyle Erickson of Cavalier, N.D., Andrew Mussell of Brandon, Wis., and Ed Larson



Conquests of the Longbow: The Legend of Robin Hood (Renovation)

of Artesian, S.D., all answered Jonathan Corathers' *The Bard's Tale* problem published in issue #176. Andrew writes, "After reading Jonathan Corathers' plea, my heart went out to him. I was in a situation quite like his, stuck in the middle of *The Bard's Tale* and confronted by this horrible riddle. The two clues found in the same area as this riddle do little to help. The best clue is found on the second level of the sewers. This clue is "Golems are made of stone." The answer, therefore, is "stone golem." A warning before moving on: Make certain you have the Crystal Sword (found south of the jabberwock) before continuing, as you need it to continue the game."

Glenn Sutton of Ohio Northern University in Ada, Ohio, requests assistance in his adventure with *BattleTech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception*. "Where is the map that is referred to in the cache on the planet of Pacifica? This map is also the one that Jeremiah Youngblood is supposed to have given to Jason Youngblood."

Kyle Erickson (one of the respondents to a H.E.L.P. plea above) also requests assistance. He writes, "I recently purchased *Beyond Zork* in a software clearance and am now stuck. The Invisiclues hint books are no longer available. I do not know what to do with the bubble-mirrors. I have no idea how to use the Fountain of Youth on the butterfly. I would also like to know if there is any way to retrieve the jewel from the idols maw. Any help would be greatly appreciated."

Reviews

Conquests of the Longbow: The Legend of Robin Hood *****

Sierra

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Graphic adventure games really do *not* get much better than the offerings currently released by Sierra and Dynamix.

The Legend of Robin Hood (LORH) is extremely well crafted, visually and auditorily. The animation is smooth as silk, and the player interface is the simplest yet conceived. By simply clicking on the right mouse button, the on-screen cursor changes icons to represent a new command. All it takes to move is to click to the walking-figure icon, then click on the area of the screen you wish your character to walk toward. That's all there is to it!

Not only is the graphic adventure well written, interesting, and challenging, but the arcade sections are also a great deal of fun. Fret not, for those who haven't yet experienced a Sierra graphic adventure; with practice, all of the arcade sections and puzzles within LORH can be mastered. As the game allows you to save it whenever you wish, you can always recall the last saved position should you fail in some endeavor, then try again.

LORH is suitable for both novice- and intermediate-level adventurers. Those who have played some really tough adventure games might find some of the challenges in LORH less difficult than they would like. However, the overall treatment of the adventure will leave you amazed at the programmers' accomplishments.

Not that this adventure follows any legend of Robin Hood that you might have read. The path to Robin's success is quite varied, and he must accomplish a number of feats in order for you to "win" the



Conquests of the Longbow (Renovation)

game. Points are garnered for successful completion of specific scenarios. At one point in the adventure, it's up to Robin to rescue King Richards court jester from the monastery in the Fens. (The monastery is a front for Prince John's soldiers.) As Robin is attired in the habit of the monks of this monastery, he must win the confidence of the court jester. This is only possible by obtaining his scroll of verses directly from the prior. Perhaps an accident will assist in that regard.

The court jester knows a secret way out of the monastery, but another scroll you should have read while in the prior's office contains the information necessary to raise a gate that allows you, the jester, and your boat into the lake to escape.

Each scenario requires the completion of some earlier action in order to advance your quest. You must keep good notes and be prepared to map a hedge maze behind an abbey later on if you are going to rescue three good friends from the hangman.

You can practice your archery skills at three sets of distant targets in camp. You will also find that the outlook is a great place to station yourself if you are unsure of what your next step should be; surprisingly enough, someone usually happens along who can expedite your thoughts. You may have to kill a couple of these folk or threaten them with your physical presence, but you'll learn enough to help you.

LORH is a fine example of superb programming skills, graphic design, and game ingenuity. We highly recommend that this graphic adventure be added to every gamer's software library. The graphics are VGA (EGA/Tandy graphics are sold separately); Roland, AdLib, Thunderboard, Pro Audio Spectrum, and SoundBlaster sound systems are supported. The only problem we encountered was that the game would not access our Walt Disney Sound Source for the audio portions of the game. Our Roland board operated superbly with the musical delights found in *Conquests of the Longbow: The Legend of Robin Hood*.

Eye of the Beholder II: The Legend of Darkmoon *****

SSI

PC/MS-DOS

\$59.95

You are thrust once more into the fray, in this sequel to SSI's hit fantasy role-playing game (FRPG), *Eye of the Beholder*



The Eye of the Beholder (SSI)

In *Eye of the Beholder II*, you enjoy the same rich graphic interface that debuted with the original offering in the Legend Series. However, the graphics have been much improved, the animation is extremely well done, and the AdLib/SoundBlaster sound support is adequate. VGA/MCGA and EGA graphics are supported.

You have a first-person perspective, and since you manipulate four characters in real time, there is little opportunity to consider your decisions. When four or five undead approach your group and they are suddenly joined by a mage, you learn to swiftly react to this threat with your mouse or keyboard—or your group dies. It's no simple matter to order your lead adventurers to swing their weapons and then have your mage and cleric each cast a spell. This is what combat requires, using the mouse as your I/O device:

Move the mouse cursor up to the lead character's display window and right-click on his weapon; that causes the character to swing the weapon. Now move your cursor to the second lead character and do likewise, right-clicking on the weapon being carried. Don't forget that while you're accomplishing this, those who would defeat you are carrying out their attacks. While you're clicking, they're hitting. Splotches of blood appear in your character windows when one of your adventurers has been hit.

Now, move your cursor to your wizard or cleric character in the rear-rank windows. Right-click on the magic devices they carry (the spell book or magic icon), and a window appears within which you can select an appropriate spell (you could

find yourself scanning through four or five levels of spells to find just the right one for casting). All this time, you're under attack. Even after the spell is cast (graphically, it's great to see a Magic Missile or Ice Storm spell hit), you still have to access the magic device carried by your fourth character and cause him to cast his spell.

This is not an adventure for those who have been able to take their time and ponder their decisions. You've got to think before battle, prepare your spell-casters for any eventuality, and remember to "duck and cover" when necessary.

Believe us, it's awfully hard to map when you're engaged in combat or are running down a hallway to escape destruction. That's an area where we would like to see an improvement in the Legend Series, Automapping, as demonstrated in *Might and Magic III*, should become a standard feature in FRPGs.

We would also like to see additional sound support for the Roland sound board. The AdLib sound effects were quite good, especially the sound of footsteps when you're deep in the dungeons of Darkmoon.

You find yourself at the start of this adventure having received letters from both Khelben Blackstaff and Oltec, captain of the city guard, both of Waterdeep. Evil is afoot north and west of the city. Shallow human graves have been found; could they be the remains of unexplained disappearances? As the investigation of these occurrences is beyond the jurisdiction of Waterdeep's city guard, you've been asked to eradicate the threat. To further assist you, there is the journal of one Wently

Kelso, a scholar and self-proclaimed chaeologist, who recorded his partial investigations.

You may create your four characters from scratch, or you may import them from the first *Eye of the Beholder*: Those you create seem to be less powerful than those who experienced success in the original adventure. If you do wish to create characters, we believe single-class characters do best.

Temple Darkmoon is a heaven for undead of all varieties. There are keys to find, nonplayer characters to befriend, and assaults to repulse, as well as traps, teleporters, messages on walls (some can be read only by characters of a particular race), and dismal passageways. Our single hint revolves around what to do when you encounter overwhelming odds: Find an area where you can rest and recover health, and *always* know how to run to that location. Even when confronting enormous odds, lessened forces will you if you run away and wait, whittling away at the enemy a few at a time. You will gain your rewards, but only if you are patient.

The graphic interface is extremely well designed. Everything you need for exciting adventuring is present on your computer monitor. Additional windows can be accessed that enable you to remove or use equipment, eat (gaining a cleric who can cast the *create food* spell is highly advisable), check out a character's statistics, and cast spells. With game time being real time, you'd best be on your toes at all times.

For AD&D® 2nd Edition game aficionados, other FRPG gamers, and those who want to feel as though they are truly experiencing a quest first-hand, *Eye of the Beholder II* is a great purchase. If SSI adds in automapping and additional sound support, it would probably be one of the best dungeon adventures released.

Neverwinter Nights

SSI and America Online
PC/MS-DOS version

Price n/a

A few months ago, we received word about a role-playing game called *Neverwinter Nights*, available on America Online, a telecommunications service. We were able to track down a copy of the game and a subscription to this service to see what all the hype was about. We weren't disappointed. *Neverwinter Nights* contains all the elements of SSI's popular gold-boxed AD&D game series: first-person views, overhead combat, EGA graphics, and treasures. Now there are traveling companions as well.

After creating your online character, you are given a quick tour of Neverwinter. You can freely visit many shops, including Lord Nasher's castle, where you learn of available quests that earn rewards on their completion. However, other gamers are playing the game online as well. If you



Neverwinter Nights (SSI & America Online)

move in the direction that another character is located (or if another character moves into your space), that character's name appears beneath your name on the screen. The character's armor class and hit-point total are also revealed. You talk to the character by typing in your words through the keyboard. The conversation is two-way, and you'll be able to read the character's response to you.

You can also use the commands Follow and Unfollow, a feature that is especially kind to newcomers as it allows your character to move in the same direction as a character you have chosen to follow, thus saving you messy mapmaking. Items can also be traded between characters, and we noted that helping out lower-level characters is commonplace. The "citizens" of Neverwinter seem obsessed with helping "freshmen." On his first visit, our character was given *plate mail* +1 and a *two-handed sword* +2 simply because we asked a group of characters if they could assist in arming our character.

Combat is really well done. You can enter combat if monsters pounce on your party or if your hero walks into an ongoing fight. He may be ambling along when suddenly the message "Combat to the north" is displayed on-screen. By walking north, he can enter and assist other player characters in their brawl.

When you enter a battle, you receive an overhead view of the fight that shows your character icon and those of other players also involved in the fight. You can observe other players' moves as they attack the monsters. When it is your turn, you can have your hero move around, cast a spell, fire a missile, or attack a nearby creature.

You have about 20 seconds to make your move; otherwise, the action moves to the

next player or monster. If your hero is killed, fear not—he is moved to the entrance of his current area, minus a few hit points. The only problem with this is that sometimes clerics and healers are a long way from his location, and he can get "killed" numerous times.

Once combat is finished, the computer automatically divides up the treasure among the party, and shows you only the money and items you might want to carry with you. Experience points are also divided equally. When you have the necessary points to move up a level, the training hall aids you in your move upward.

Neverwinter Nights can accommodate characters up to the 12th level, but this limit will probably increase in the future as more and more adventurers gain levels on the system. This is a definite buy for any AD&D game aficionado who possesses a modem and can access America Online. Not only do you experience the combats, puzzles, and rules of AD&D computer games, you are also able to talk to other gamers. You *create* your personalities.

One warning: America On-Line charges an hourly fee, and the phone company bills you for calls you make to a local telecommunication node. We spent \$15 on phone calls playing *Neverwinter Nights* for a few hours in the evening. If there were a way to bring the access costs down, *Neverwinter Nights* would really take off and be a smash hit. As it stands now, this adventure is still a definite leap forward for AD&D computer gaming.

Space Quest IV: Roger Wilco and the Time Rippers

Sierra

Macintosh version

\$69.95

We reviewed the PC/MS-DOS version in



The Simpsons: Bart's House of Weirdness (Konami)

an earlier column. We wanted to let Macintosh gamers know that Sierra's 256-color Macintosh version is really good. You can request a large or small game screen view; on a large screen, the smaller size really compacts those pixels and the game looks even better. We wish Sierra could somehow program in a key press and mouse click to change the user interface icons the way that is managed with its PC/MS-DOS games. You currently have to move your mouse cursor above the game window and access your commands from a displayed horizontal menu of icons.

The color is great, the sound exemplary, and the humor and action are as much fun as in the original PC/MS-DOS version. Mac gamers, don't complain about a lack of games. Support developers who bring top-notch entertainment to your system. *Space Quest IV* is a guaranteed great purchase for your Mac.

The Simpsons: Bart's House of Weirdness *****

Konami

PC/MS-DOS version \$49.95

Without a doubt, *Bart's House of Weirdness* is one of the best arcade games we've played. It also happens to be one Konami's best products!

As Bart Simpson, you have six adventures to complete. Each time you encounter an alien or a bug and it bumps into your character, the Cool-O-Meter reveals a loss of coolness. Find a cool item, and you increase your coolness. With such weapons as a Burp Gun, Water Balloons, or Spray Gun, you can (using your joy stick

or keyboard) keep the bugs away from you for a time.

Hey, don't have a cow—this is really a fun arcade game. You not only get to participate in Bart's favorite TV show, but you also help Maggie find her ball as well as find Krusty in Krustylund. There are two modes for your joy stick. The first mode is best applied to adventures where shooting skill is required, and the second is for adventures where jumping is necessary.

This game is available for EGA and MCGA/CGA, and can use either AdLib, Roland, or SoundBlaster sound. With superb Roland sound (the TV show theme and opening animations are quite good) and smooth animation, our only wish is that Konami would consider releasing this fine arcade delight with full VGA support sometime in the future. If you like Bart and really enjoy arcade games, you have to get this one.

Clue corner

Don't forget: Back up your software before trying *any* of the following hints!

Bane of the Cosmic Forge (Sir-Tech Software)

1. Do not resurrect any PCs. Instead, restore a saved game every time a character dies. If you do this, you can sell the Amulet of Life for loads of money to buy decent armor, etc.

2. Whenever your PCs blow a trap or do something else not to your satisfaction, restore the saved game and try the task again and again and again and again, until

you are satisfied.

3. After your PCs have received all of the items you feel they need from the queen of the Amazulu, fight her. After you have slain the queen and her flunkies, you will receive the usual stuff, as well as a Spear of Death that poisons all it hits.

Yuuta Sasaki
Toronto, Ontario

BUCK ROGERS®: Countdown to Doomsday (SSI)

1. Talon can be beaten. I lowered my game level to the novice play level. Then I ordered my 4th-level Desert Runner Warrior to challenge him. The trick is to move behind him, then attack. At novice level, he has only 45 hp.

2. An easy way to defeat enemy ships is to destroy the bridge. Board and defeat the first forces, then flee to your ship. The enemy follows you and attacks. If you win the following battles, you have conquered the enemy ship. This is particularly useful against RAM heavy cruisers.

3. Battle armor, Martian heavy battle armor, and a plasma thrower can be found by boarding Mercurian cruisers.

4. On Venus, make certain you befriend the acid frogs in Acid Lake. They are a great help in battles.

5. A Mercurian microwave gun, a Venusian pole arm, a Venusian bolt gun, and a set of Venusian heavy battle armor can be found in the Venus Lowlander village.

6. A Lunarian smartsuit and battle armor with fields can be found on the Psyche mining asteroid.

7. To see the Sun King at the Mariposa, you must give him three gifts. These are found on levels one, two, and three. The copper coin from level one is found at 7,12; the silver coin from level two is found at 12, 13; and the gold coin on level three is at 11,12.

Christian Marzari
No address given

Pools of Darkness (SSI)

If you have a character from *Secret of the Silver Blades* that you have transferred to *Pools of Darkness*, but you no longer want him, give all of his equipment to a new character. This new character will not only have the old character's equipment but may have some superhuman abilities as well. I created a human cleric and got a 13/184/11-level multiclassed human cleric/thief/ranger. This character can use all weapons, attack three times every two rounds, backstab, cast ranger and cleric spells, and can also pick locks!

Brian Frank
Tallahassee FL

1. After leaving Phlan at the beginning of the game, you should immediately try to find a training hall and an equipment shop. My characters obtained several experience levels before they found a training hall, losing some experience in doing so. If you have plenty of platinum

and gems, you can find both of these locales in Zhentil Keep, although any encounters there may be tough on beginning characters.

2. The first pool of darkness can be found by working your way through Dragon's Horn Gap and north to the Dragon's Cave. The pool of darkness will return you to Elminster, who also provides training.

3. When using the pools of darkness to travel to an outer plane, most magical items will be destroyed or left behind. It is possible to keep your magical items with the following technique: Before leaving, enter the training menu and create a temporary character for each of your characters. By removing and adding characters, transfer all of your magical items to the temporary characters. Now that all of the party's magical items are stored on the disk with the temporary characters, travel to the outer plane. After arriving, immediately enter the pool again. This allows you to enter the training menu and retrieve your magical items from the temporary characters. It is a good idea to have some nonmagical weapons and armor, as you sometimes must fight to enter the pool from the outer plane. Note that this also must be done when returning to

the Realms from the Outer Planes.

Resse B. Jones
Brigham City UT

Quest for Glory II (Sierra)

1. In the Wizards Institute, use Fetch and Levitate for the first challenge; then Trigger and Calm; next Flame Dart, Force Bolt, and Open; and lastly Open, Calm, Fetch, and Force Bolt.

2. Talk to Aziza to find out how to defeat the elementals, and also how to help the plant woman.

3. Ask the alchemist about the dispel potion and use this on the creature in the desert.

4. Be sure to do everything in Shapeir by day 17, because on that day you get a one-way trip to Rasier.

Ronald Wisniewski
Dearborn Heights MI

Wasteland (New World Computing)

To find the Blackstar key, you must enter the Guardian's Citadel and fight your way into the second area. In the second area is a chapel filled with warrior women. Defeat them, approach the altar, and use perception on the middle area that you cannot enter in order to find the key.

Peter Bogdasarian
Binghamton NY

Another month comes to a close. Your tips save hundreds of adventurers each day. Send your game insights to: The Lessers, 521 Czerny Street, Tracy CA 95376. Until next issue, game on!

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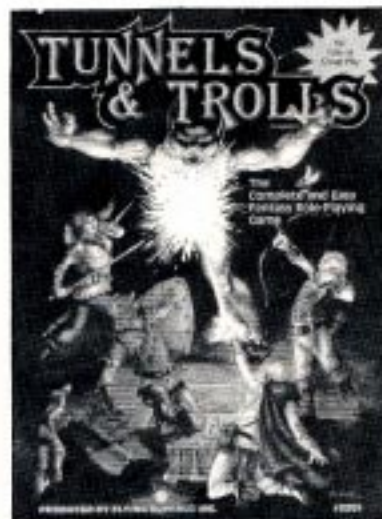
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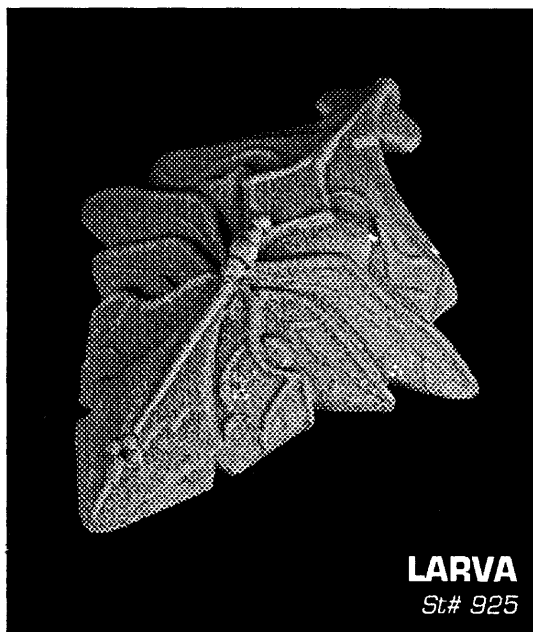
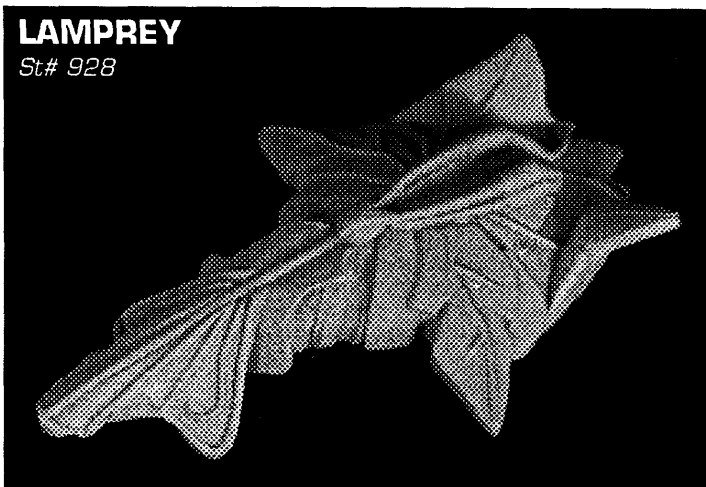
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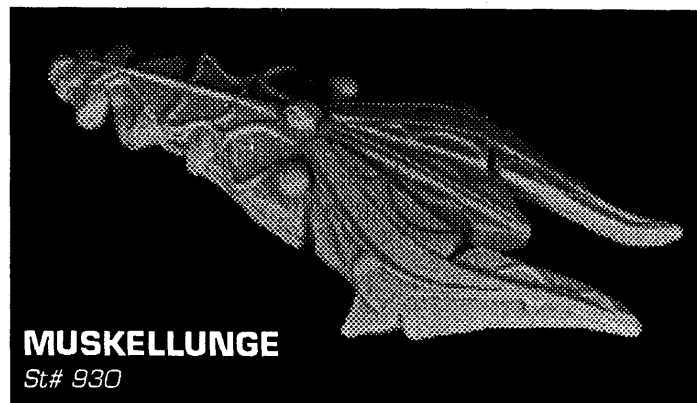


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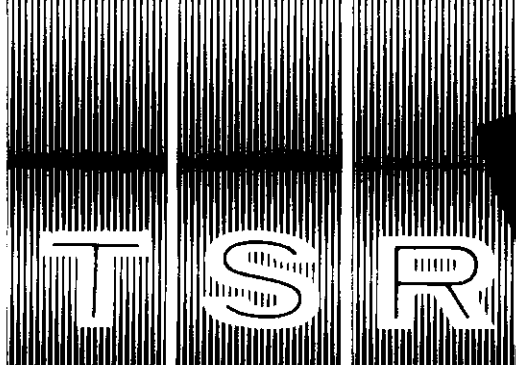


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Previews...

NEW PRODUCTS FOR MARCH

MC12 *Monstrous Compendium*, DARK SUN™ Appendix

AD&D® game DARK SUN™ accessory
by TSR Staff

The DARK SUN™ world contains monsters unlike any ever seen before and this, the *Terrors of the Desert Appendix*, delivers 96 pages of beasts and horrors native to the desert sands. Many of these creatures also wield the psionic powers that makes the DARK SUN™ world so unique and deadly. No DARK SUN™ campaign will be complete without this accessory!

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FOR3 *Pirates of the Fallen Stars*

AD&D® game FORGOTTEN REALMS® accessory
by Curtis Scott

Sail the high seas with rogues, buccaneers, and pirates in this new sourcebook for the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting. Everything you need to know about sailing, shipping, and their dangers fills this 128-page book. This is the first-ever pirate sourcebook for the AD&D® game, and it's the definitive way to add this popular adventure genre to your game.

Suggested Retail Price: \$15.00/£8.99

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SJQ1 *Heart of the Enemy*

AD&D® game SPELLJAMMER™ accessory
by Rick Swan

The second Unhuman War continues! With the elven fleet largely ruined, the player characters must follow the Scro race alone through this 96-page sequel to *SJS1 Goblin's Return*. *Goblin's Return* is not necessary to play this galaxy-spanning adventure, however.

Suggested Retail Price: \$10.95/£6.99

Product No.: 9347

RQ1 *Night of the Walking Dead*

AD&D® game RAVENLOFT™ accessory
by Bill Slavicek

In the swamps of Souragne, the dead climb from their watery graves. An unearthly army of zombies assaults the town of Marais d'Tarascon by the light of the full moon. Can your player characters save the town, stop the undead horde, and survive? Find out in this adventure especially designed for newcomers to the RAVENLOFT™ campaign setting.

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WGQ1 *Patriots of Ulek*

AD&D® game WORLD OF GREYHAWK® accessory
by TSR Staff

Stop the orcish invasion! Beginning adventurers forge their plowshares into swords to battle the invading orc army of Turrosh Mak. This 32-page adventure allows players to play against the epic backdrop that's described in the *GREYHAWK® Wars* game, released in 1991.

Suggested Retail Price: \$6.95/£4.50

Product No.: 9385

NEW PRODUCTS FOR APRIL

Arabian Adventures

AD&D® game ALQADIM™ rules set
by Jeff Grubb with Andrea Hayday

The mysteries of fabled Arabia, the lands of sultans and djinn, come alive in this expansion to the AD&D® 2nd Edition rules. This 160-page softcover book describes the an exotic world inspired by tales of Sinbad, Ali Baba, and other classics from The Arabian Nights. The first in a new product line, it also gives all the special rules unique to this wondrous new setting: new character classes like desert raiders and swash-buckling corsairs, new proficiencies like camel-riding, and a unique realm of magic. Get in on the ground floor of the latest AD&D® campaign, the AL-QADIM™ setting, and adventure with genies, ride flying carpets, and trek across the sands in search of the next oasis.

Suggested Retail Price: \$18.00/£11.99

Product No.: 2126

PHBR7 *The Complete Bard's Handbook*

AD&D® 2nd Edition game accessory
by Blake Mobley

The bard is part wandering minstrel and part rogue; part performer and part con man. He is unlike any other character class; he's the jack-of-all-trades of the AD&D® game. This 128-page book explains the bard's tricks, talents, and secrets: it expands his magical ability and adds tremendous depth to one of the game's most intriguing classes.

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AD&D® game SPELLJAMMER™ boxed set
by Dale "Slade" Henson

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prepare to board an enemy ship!

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Product No.: 1072

DSQ1 *Road to Urik*

AD&D® game DARK SUN™ module
by David "Zeb" Cook

In this adventure, your PCs are members of a great army amassed to defend Tyr from the nearby city-state of Urik—setting or perhaps changing the course of history on the world of Athas. This adventure is the perfect companion to *DS1 Freedom*, but works just as well without it. Again, this module uses the innovative and popular two 48-page spiral-bound flip-books—one for the players and one for the DM. Make your mark on the history of Athas now.

Suggested Retail Price: \$12.95/£7.99

Product No.: 2406

Dragon's Den Adventure Pack

D&D® game boxed set
by Ken Rolston

This boxed set contains three entry-level adventures—all built around the theme of dragons and their lairs—and a complete stand-alone minigame. All three modules are role-playing adventures using the basic D&D® game rules. The box includes three poster maps, six dozen stand-ups, and cardboard tiles for detailing your dungeon. The minigame comes complete with rules, counters, and playing surface.

Suggested Retail Price: \$16.95/£11.99 inc. VAT

Product No.: 1073

FMQ1 *City of Gold*

AD&D® game Maztica accessory
by John Nephew

This 96-page book is part adventure and part source book. The adventure concerns the PCs seeking a lost city of cliff-dwellers who are rumored to have great stores of gold—though the PCs may learn the meaning behind the phrase, "All that glitters . . ." The source information describes new PC races and classes, and it uses the magic system unique to the Maztica campaign setting.

Suggested Retail Price: \$10.95/£6.99

Product No.: 9349

The Reign of Istar

DRAGONLANCE® Tales II Trilogy, Volume One

The best-selling DRAGONLANCE® Tales books are reborn in this, the first volume of a new trilogy. Within, you'll find tales by many past DRAGONLANCE® authors. This series is packed with stark drama, key battles, love stories, and light-hearted comedy.

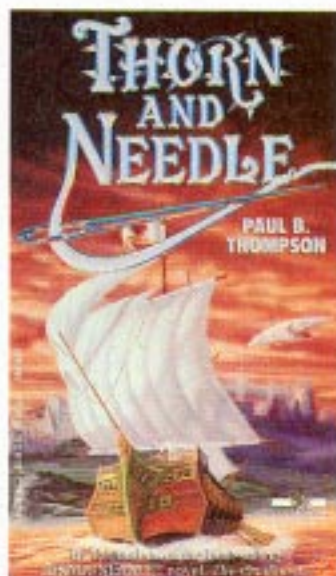
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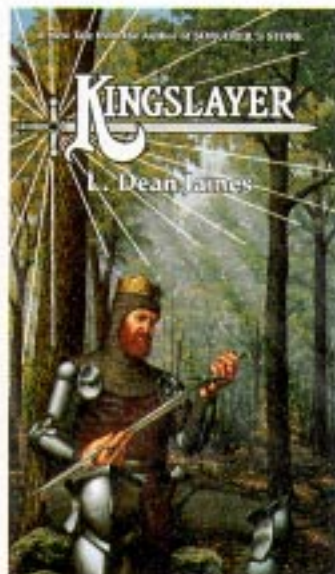
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Everyone said Miyesti was a perfect place . . . however disaster boils beneath the surface of this seemingly peaceful land. Written by best-selling author Paul B. Thompson, *Thorn and Needle* is an imaginative science-fantasy tale describing two mysterious travelers and their impact on a majestic, flawless city. *Now available.*

A sequel to the very successful novel *Sorcerer's Stone*, L. Dean James' newest title, *Kingslayer*, continues the gripping story of Gaylon Reysson's endless quest. Now king of Wynnmyr, he must take up the magical sword that has twice killed its royal wielder. With it great victories or tragedy will follow. *Available in June.*



The Nine Gates is a captivating tale of monsters and magic in the outer cosmos. Written by Phillip Brugalette, the story begins when Gopal, the prince of Goloka, watches his teacher suddenly burst into flames and disappear! To survive the ensuing chaos, he must secure help from a centuries-old mystic and face tests beyond imagination. *Available in August.*

Denise Vitola delivers *Half-Light*, a mind-bending adventure in space that features a bold female heroine, Commander Ariann Centuri. After her lover is killed in battle, she weds the Viceroy of the Consortium of Planets . . . only to discover disaster. Amidst their stormy union, she must save his life — and the fate of the consortium. *Available in December.*



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WONDERS OF the LAND OF Fate

Magical items of the AL-QADIM™ AD&D® campaign setting

by Jeff Grubb

Artwork by Robin Raab and Karl Waller

The Land of Fate, the setting for AL-QADIM™ AD&D® Arabian adventures, is a unique land with its own history and magical nature. Its hot climate makes heavy armor unsuitable, and the land is dominated by great, open wastes. Civilization is confined to dense urban centers linked by caravan trails and sea routes. These cities, deserts, and seas are the prime territories of the heroic adventurers of the Land of Fate.

The standard AD&D magical-items tables are not appropriate for the Land of Fate. A suit of *plate mail* +3 would be out of place anywhere but a curio shop or a wizards laboratory, and anyone wearing such armor would be at a serious disadvantage in the heat. Similarly, many of the specialty items that fit with the western European approach to history, myth, and faith do not fit the heritage of the Middle East; for example, a *saw of mighty cutting* is not very useful in a land where trees are rare and wood is mostly imported.

Presented here are tables for generating random magical items for the Land of Fate. New magical items are described in each section, but items similar to or duplicated in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* are referenced in that book. New spells can be found in the upcoming *Arabian Adventures* tome.

Designer's notes: This article is the result of difficulties with space and time. While writing the rules for the AL-QADIM *Arabian Adventures* book (on sale in April), we discovered we had no space for magical-item tables after putting in over 20 new character kits, rules for genie summoning, new items, and a host of new

spells. Then, too, there was four months of time between the release of *Arabian Adventures* and the *Land of Fate* boxed set. Roger Moore had room in DRAGON® Magazine for an AL-QADIM article in his "treasures" issue, and he was more than happy when I offered this material for publication.

The tables presented here are a truncated version of the final tables that will appear in the *Land of Fate* boxed set (due out in August), particularly in the wands and miscellaneous magical-item areas. It is sufficient to get your players up and running in adventures in your own Arabian campaigns. Such items as the *banner of renown*, the *rod of the monolith*, and the *razor of truth* will have to wait for the final version, as will details on artifacts and nonmagical objects of art. The new magical items found here may be imported into other, non-Arabian campaigns at the option of the DM.

When a magical item is called for, roll first on Table 1. This selects the general type of magical item that was found, then directs you on to Tables 2-8 to determine the specific item. Unless a special weapon is noted on Table 2 (a roll of 98-00 on 1d100, directing you to Table 2B), roll on Table 2A for the attack bonuses of a weapon. Roll on Table 3A for the defensive bonuses of armor and shields, unless directed to Table 3B by a roll of 99-00 for special items; roll on Table 3C for the size of any armor generated. Similarly, Table 5 (scrolls) sends you to one of three subtables. All other tables are self-explanatory.

Have fun, and look for more in the *Land of Fate* setting. We have no Fate but the Fate which we are given!

Magical weapons

Special weapons from Table 2B are detailed here.

Cutlass of the Golden Gulf: This magical cutlass is a favored weapon for corsairs and other sea travelers. In addition to its combat bonus, the sword allows the wielder to survive underwater as if under the effects of a *water breathing* spell for as long as the cutlass is in his hand.

Dagger of quickness: This weapon may be any of the daggerlike weapons noted in Table 2: dirk, dagger, jambiya, knife, razor, or punch dagger. In addition to providing a +2 bonus to hit and damage, the dagger may strike first that round, even if thrown. If used in situations with other weapons that allow a "first strike" (such as a *scimitar of speed* or *short sword of quickness*), such attacks are simultaneous. The *dagger of quickness* does not allow any increase in the number of attacks allowed to the user.

Dagger of the evil eye: This weapon appears as a simple magical dagger (roll on Table 2A for its attack bonus). However, an individual who uses this weapon in combat immediately receives the effects of the evil eye (detailed in *Arabian Adventures*). The *evil eye* may be removed by using the *avert evil eye* spell (again, detailed in *Arabian Adventures*), but the spell effects will be reinstated as soon as the weapon is used again in combat. Other weapons may be affected by this form of the evil eye, but daggers are the most common ones. Such weapons usually have a history and once belonged to some hero or other legendary figure.

Dagger of venom: This weapon is as per the dagger described in the DMG but may be any of the daggerlike weapons noted in Table 2.

Mace +1, +2 vs undead, and mace +2, +4 vs undead: These weapons may be used against all forms of undead, whether conjured or occurring naturally, including creatures such as the great ghuls.

Mamluk swords of obedience +1 and +2: In addition to their magical bonuses, these weapons also have additional powers over humanoid creatures (including men, elves, dwarves, gnomes, goblinoid creatures, lycanthropes in human form, and giants, but not creatures who are obviously nonhuman, such as lizard men, who have tails). An individual struck by these magical *mamluk swords* must make a saving throw vs. spells or be *charmed*, immediately surrendering to his opponent in combat providing that the individual wielding the sword is of higher level or has more hit dice than the one struck. The effects of the spell are as for the *charm person* or *charm monster* spell. The magical *mamluk sword* may be any of the sword types.

Scimitar of speed: See the weapon of the same name in the DMG.

Sword +1, +2 vs. genies: These swords (which may of any type) each grant a +1 combat bonus to hit and damage, and in addition grant a +2 against any genielike creatures, including gen, common genies, tasked genies, noble genies, and jann.

Sword +2, +3 vs. specific genie type: These weapons grant a +2 bonus in combat, but provide a +3 to hit and damage only against one specific genie type (dao, marids, efreet, or djinn). They may affect both common and noble versions of these types, but they affect all other genies, even other genies of the same elemental type, as simply +2.

Sword +2, genie slayer: This +2 weapon acts as a +4 weapon when used against any genie. Further, it inflicts double damage (doubling any damage bonus as well) when used against one of the following genie types (roll 1d4): 1, djinni; 2, dao; 3, efreeti; 4, marid. The sword inflicts double damage against the common and noble versions of the particular genies. Other types of genies (including jann, gen, and tasked genies) will only be attacked with a +4 bonus to hit and damage.

Weapon of concealed wizardry: Roll again on Table 2 for a new weapon. This weapon holds enchantments designed to cloak its true nature, so it will not respond to *detect magic* or similar spells. *Legend lore* or *identify* spells, or the *legend lore* ability of the rawun or barber (detailed in *Arabian Adventures*), will reveal some of its magical nature. Any type of weapon may be a *weapon of concealed wizardry*, including special weapons. If a DM rolls a second time but gets the *weapon of concealed wizardry* result again, he may choose any special weapon.

Magical armors

The following are special armors and shields from Table 3B.

Armor of the desert evening: This lamellar armor has no magical bonus to armor class, but it may be worn in the desert heat without ill effect to the wearer or his abilities.

Armor of swimming: This lamellar armor allows its user to move through water as if unencumbered. It does not convey *water-breathing* abilities nor the swimming proficiency, but it will allow the individual to float and swim if he is otherwise capable.

Shield of the holy: This medium shield is inscribed with a symbol of one of the enlightened deities. In the hands of an ordinary individual, the shield functions as a *shield +1*. However, if used by a priest of the same religion as the deity to which the shield is dedicated, the shield gains a +2 bonus and allows its user to affect undead as if he were four levels higher. This ability to affect undead applies only if the priest is otherwise capable of turning or commanding the undead in question.

Shields of proof against fire, cold, or electricity: These medium shields provide the wielder with additional protection against the type of attack listed. Saving throws against that particular type of damage are at +4, provided that the wielder can put the shield between himself and the attack form. Damage is as normal for the attack form.

Tortoise shield: This small daraq-style buckler emits a magical field that provides protection equal to a body shield, but it is only the physical size of a buckler. This enchanted daraq provides +1 protection against normal attacks and +2 protection against missile attacks.

Armor of concealed wizardry: This type of armor has its magical nature concealed by powerful spells, such that it does not respond to *detect magic* or similar spells (see "*weapon of concealed wizardry*"). Roll again for a new armor or shield type. If *armor of concealed wizardry* is rolled again, the DM may choose the type of armor from Table 3B.

Potions, philters, and oils

Potions in the Land of Fate are usually found in small crystal bottles, slightly pyramid-shaped in that the base is wider than the mouth. The mouth is stoppered shut with crystal and sealed with wax. The bottles are heavy and quite resilient, such that each gains a +2 on saving throws against crushing blows.

In addition, these bottles are often labeled to indicate their contents. As an option, the DM may roll 1d6 to determine if the bottle is labeled (and labeled *correctly*): 1-2, bottle is labeled correctly; 3-5, bottle is unlabeled; 6, bottle is labeled incorrectly.

For incorrectly labeled bottles, the DM rolls again on the chart to determine the incorrect label, then marks it accordingly

in his own notes for when the players use it. An intelligence check on 1d20 indicates to a player character that a bottle might be mislabeled, but only if the character has encountered that form of potion before ("It looks cloudier than any potion of *extra-healing* you've ever seen.")

Dreaming: This potion grants the imbiber a vision of that which he desires. The imbiber drinks the potion before retiring, then names the person, object, or setting for which he searches. That evening, a dream will tell him something of that which he seeks: a location, a magical guardian, other individuals nearby, potential dangers, etc. Only one thing will be revealed about a person, object, or setting per dream. Upon awakening, the dream will remain in the imbiber's mind so that he may use the clues provided there to guide his path. A dreamer seeking water may have a marid appear to him, pointing to the east, where water lies within easy walking distance in the "real" world. A dreamer seeking a lost gem may find himself deep in a cavern, where a great ghul hunkers over the gem, indicating the creature that guards the desired item.

The DM may determine the nature of the clue—a direction, a location, or an individual involved in the search in the dream. If no clues are available (by DM decision) or the item searched for is magically protected or not in existence, the individual will instead have a vivid nightmare. The DM may feel free to pepper the dream with horrific images, forebodings of doom, and dangers to the dreamer and the dreamer's party.

Oil of attractiveness: By means of this slick unguent, the user may coat his face and gain one point of charisma, to a maximum of 19. This effect lasts for 24 hours *minus* the original charisma of the user (e.g., an 18-charisma individual would have it last for but six hours). If the oil is not removed by then, it acts as *oil of horridness* (see later) for the next 24 hours.

Oil of cloaking: This oil may be smeared over an item to hide its magical nature for up to 24 hours. The item must be no larger than the size of a man and cannot be alive. Applying the oil to one item uses the entire contents of the bottle, regardless of size. Divination spells such as *detect magic* will not work on an item cloaked in this fashion, though spells that do not reveal magical nature (such as *legend lore* or *detect evil*) will function normally. At the end of the 24 hours, the oil wears off without ill effect.

Oil of great devotion: This holy unguent is only usable by a priest, though of any kit or alignment. The priest's level increases by three levels if he is of 5th level or lower, and by two levels if of 6th to 10th level. It has no effect on priests of 11th level or higher. The priest receiving this boon fights, casts spells, turns undead, and otherwise performs as if that number of levels higher for the next 12 hours. This oil does not allow additional spells to be

gained, nor does it allow for the priest to learn spells that he would otherwise be unable to learn at his earlier level. Special priestly abilities that are tied to level (such as kahin or hakima abilities, explained in *Arabian Adventures*) may be temporarily added in this fashion.

Oil of horridness: By smearing this oil on the face, one's charisma is immediately reduced to 3 for the next 24 hours, as it temporarily renders the user's visage so horrid that only ghuls and night hags would be comfortable around him. This oil is never labeled correctly, as it is often the result of oil of attractiveness that has spoiled.

Oil of invisibility: This is similar to the potion of the same name in effect (see the DMG), though it lasts for 1d6 + 6 turns or until dispelled. The oil does have a distinctive scent that dogs or other creatures may track.

Oil of invulnerability: This is similar to the potion of the same name in effect (see the DMG), though it lasts for 1d6 + 6 turns unless dispelled. This oil has the aroma of burnt almonds when used.

Oil of obedience: This pasty unguent is smeared on the forehead of a sleeping or unconscious creature; upon awaking, the being comes under the control of the individual who placed the oil there. This control is complete, and the obedient one does not think for himself except in the most basic fashion (breathing, not walking into walls) and cannot use spells (though he could use spell-like abilities or otherwise communicate). The one who placed the oil must give orders for the affected individual to move; inability to follow the orders will cause the individual to not act at all. This oil's effects last for 24 - 1d6 hours. Self-destructive acts may be ordered, but the affected individual gains a saving throw vs. spells to resist. This oil has no effect on someone who is already awake.

Oil of romance: This oil smells of rancid fish, yet has a powerful effect when poured on the ground, usually across a doorway or other window. At that time, the name of the desired victim is spoken aloud. If the individual called upon crosses the threshold or patch of oil, he suffers the effects of a *charm person* spell at -4 to his saving throws. Failing the saving throw results in the victim becoming devoted to the oil-user, seeking to protect and follow the other's orders (excluding outright self-destructive acts). The enchantment worked by this magic does not wear off over time (unlike the *charm person* spell) and can only be removed by a *dispel magic* or a *limited wish*.

Oil of the pickpocket: This oil, rubbed over the hands, allows a character without pick-pocketing ability to pick pockets as if a 1st-level thief. If used by a thief, it raises his percentage chance of picking pockets by +10. The oil lasts for six hours before evaporating.

Philter of drunkenness: Upon imbibing this potion, the individual immediately becomes horribly, totally inebriated. Role-playing aspects of this situation are left to the player and the DM, but in game terms the individual is -4 for all to-hit rolls as well as all proficiency checks. An intelligence check is required each time an affected spell-caster attempts to cast a spell to see if it is cast correctly (failure means merely that the spell is lost), and all spells cast have a +2 bonus on saves. The effects last six hours, followed by three hours of splitting headaches (no spell-casting allowed, -1 on attack rolls).

Scrolls

Sorcerer's scrolls: Spells for these scrolls are taken from the "general" category of spells in *Arabian Adventures*.

Sand, sea, wind, and flame magic: Spells for these scrolls are taken from the "Elemental" listings for each level. If no suitable spell exists at the rolled level, then the DM rolls or chooses from the "General" category.

Priest spells: These are separated by sphere as opposed to level. Check the appropriate sphere in the *Player's Handbook* and roll randomly or choose an applicable spell.

Mixed spheres: Some priest spells contain mixed spheres. For each spell, roll on the following table for sphere:

1d100	Sphere
01-10	All (general)
11-16	Animal
17-18	Astral
19-25	Charm
26-35	Combat
36-40	Creation
41-50	Divination
51-55	Elemental
56-60	Guardian
61-73	Healing
74-76	Necromantic
77-78	Plant
79-85	Protection
86-90	Summoning
91-95	Sun
96-00	Weather

Cursed scrolls: The DMG (page 146) provides an excellent list of potential curses upon the players. Here are few more:

- The individual is cursed with the evil eye.
- The individual is cursed with lycanthropy (DM's choice of creature).
- The individual is *polymorphed* into a donkey, goat, or camel. A hakima (see *Arabian Adventures*) will be able to see the individual in his true form.
- The individual has his station reduced to 1. He is reviled wherever he goes.
- The individual is smitten with the first individual of the same or related species of the opposite sex that he or she sees.
- The individual has earned the enmity of a powerful ruler of some town or city of the DM's choice. There is no need to tell

the player immediately that his character has earned this enmity; let him find this out on his own.

—The individual has caught the attention of a mischievous djinni who will follow the individual invisibly, playing nonlethal practical jokes (the djinni will not aid the character if he is in danger, either). If detected, the djinni may leave if properly approached or bribed.

—The scroll is blank, save for glittering dust that falls from the scroll when opened. This does nothing, but it can make a player very paranoid. The DM may call for additional (unused) saving throws from that individual at random moments to convince the player that something is afoot.

Grant: Like a map, a grant is nonmagical in nature but opens the door to new adventures and ideas. A grant is an award of land, title, or moneys to an individual named in the document (optionally, the document's recipient may be left blank). A grant can be a springboard to further adventures, both in the wilderness and the city. The DM may supply the details in keeping with his own campaign, or can use the following suggestions:

- The grant is for 1d6 × 1,000 gp, to be awarded to the (unnamed) bearer in the court of a local ruler.
- The grant is for 2d6 × 1,000 gp, to be awarded to a named individual upon presentation of that document to a local ruler.
- The grant is for the position of *qadi* (judge) to a village on the desert's edge.
- The grant allows the bearer to audit the tax records of a local ruler in the name of the Grand Caliph, and the ruler must offer whatever the bearer needs to complete that audit.
- The grant is to allow the bearer to enter the local ruler's court as an ambassador of the Grand Caliph. Optionally, a named individual can be mentioned, and the grant might name an individual who is to be replaced by the grant-holder's arrival (and who will likely be unhappy with the situation).

—A grant for a wilderness area in which to establish a town and mosque.

—A grant for rulership of a small village, in which the individual agrees to provide protection in exchange for taxes. The populations of these villages always expect mighty and high-level heroes as their protectors.

—A grant for a ship.

—A grant for a particular business within a particular town. Optionally, this also allows a monopoly of a business.

—As any of the above, but the document is a forgery and may be revealed as such under close inspection by those who know the true documents.

Protection from air: (reading time—6) This scroll issues a 10'-diameter zone of protection centered on the reader. All types of air-based attacks, including strong winds of a magical or natural nature and poisons carried on breezes, are unable to

cross into this area, leaving the reader and those close to him untouched. The scroll does not protect against poisons that are not blown into the area of the protection; e.g., reading the scroll and jumping into a *cloudkill* spell will not offer any protection, but if that *cloudkill* is carried by the wind toward the individual, the individual will be protected. The protection lasts 1d4 +4 turns. It has no effect on creatures of elemental air but can protect against their air-based attack forms.

Protection from divination: (reading time—8) This scroll cloaks the reader and all other things within 10' from being affected by any spells of the divination school. These spells fail when cast within this area, or when attempting to affect beings or items within this area. Spells and abilities that reveal magical properties without the use of divination spells (such as the hakima ability of seeing truth) are unaffected by this spell.

Protection from earth: (reading time—6) This scroll protects the reader and those within 10' from all forms of earth-based attacks, including avalanches, sand slides, quicksand, and earthquakes, whether magical or natural in origin. The reader and those who remain within 10' merely float to the surface in such cases and may walk across unstable ground without ill effect. This scroll does not provide protection against the physical attacks of earth elementals or dao, though it will protect for 1d4 +4 turns against magical earth-based effects such as beings create.

Protection against genies: This scroll will offer protection against one or more of the genie peoples, including protection from both physical and magical attack forms. The protection extends only to the reader and those items he carries. A genie cannot touch the individual nor directly attack him. Area-effect attack forms launched by a genie affect all others in the area, but do not harm the individual so protected. The scroll affects genie types as follows:

1d6	Type
1	Dao
2	Djinni
3	Efreeti
4	Marid
5	Any tasked genie
6	All of the above genies

Noble genies are not affected by this protection, nor are gen, jann, or other elemental creatures. This protection lasts 5d8 rounds.

Protection from heat: This spell creates a 10-yard-diameter stationary zone of protection that acts as a *cool strength* spell for three days. During this time, all within this area are protected from the detrimental effects of the sun; they may wear heavy armor without ill effect and suffer normal requirements for water.

Protection from lycanthropes: In the Land of Fate, this scroll is effective against

all forms of lycanthropes, not just those listed in the DMG.

Rings

Magical rings not previously described are detailed here.

Ring of cloaked wizardry: Roll again on Table 6. The ring generated in this fashion is undetectable by normal means, such as *detect magic*, though an *identify* or *legend lore* spell or ability will reveal its true nature.

Ring of folly: When donned, this cursed ring causes the wearer to lose one point of wisdom and intelligence per turn until the individual reaches 3 in each ability. This loss is not noticeable until the individual is called upon to perform some action that requires one of these abilities (such as gaining spells or proficiency checks). Once the abilities reach 3, the individual is under the effects of a *feblemind* spell and may not use the abilities of his character class nor gain further experience. The *ring of folly* may be removed only by a *remove curse*, followed by a *dispel magic*. Intelligence and wisdom are then returned at the rate of one point per day of rest. The *ring of folly* may have a secondary function, such as *feather falling* or *invisibility* at the option of the DM.

Ring of genie summoning: An expanded form of the *ring of djinni summoning*, this ring may summon a particular genie from its elemental plane; the genie will appear on the round after the ring is rubbed. The genie so summoned will serve the master of the ring faithfully until slain, at which point the ring becomes nonmagical. The type of genie summoned is determined from the following table:

1d100 Genie

01-24	Djinni
25-48	Dao
49-73	Efreeti
74-96	Marid
97	Noble djinni
98	Noble dao
99	Noble efreeti
00	Noble marid

Noble genies serve to perform only three tasks. They use their *wish-granting* abilities to complete these, at which point they are freed.

A sha'ir of 10th level or higher (see *Arabian Adventures*) may free a common genie from its binding to the ring. The sha'ir gains experience points equal to that of the genie he freed. In addition, the genie will consult with its elders to grant the sha'ir a *wish*, free and clear of all entanglements. The ring becomes nonmagical in these circumstances.

Message ring: The *message ring* is used to record and convey messages, and it is often used to transmit "direct orders" from a superior to an underling. Such rings are used in businesses, bureaucracies, religions, and military units. The user of the ring looks into its inset gem, speaks

a command word, then speaks his message, of a minute's maximum length. When the command word is spoken again, the speaker's face appears on the gem and the message is repeated. The gem will speak three times in this fashion and then be emptied, at which point a new message may be emplaced. The command word is chosen by the holder of the ring, and a new wearer may choose a new command word-and, therefore, a new message. The command word is usually known by the two correspondents but not by the bearer, so a message may be lost but rarely intercepted. Spells such as *contact other plane* reveal the nature of the command word. The DM may use an intercepted message ring to send the heroes off on new adventures, as the message is usually of some import and secrecy (otherwise a common scroll would do the task). Alternately, the message ring could be found empty, and the heroes could utilize it themselves.

Ring of sustenance: Also called the *ring of the camel*, it functions as noted in the DMG with the added note that the individual still suffers the detrimental effect of wearing armor in the heat, as far as taking negative modifiers to combat and proficiency checks, but otherwise does not need water or food for a number of days equal to his constitution. At the end of that time, the individual suffers all normal effects.

Ring of the vizier: This ring is similar to the *message ring* in that when the command word is spoken, the face of the wizard who created the ring appears in gem, and speaks a message up to one minute long. Only the wizards face and message may appear, and the message may not be changed. A normal message may be "The bearer of this ring is my servant, and you should follow his instructions in the matter we discussed," but could be a direct order, a plea for rescue, or instructions to find a buried tomb. Note that the individual passing oneself off as the vizier's servant may do so until it is revealed otherwise (such as the discovery that the wizard being quoted has been dead for a decade, or shows up wondering who has been acting in his name). More importantly, the wizard who created this ring may imbed in it a single spell of fifth level or lower. The spell may be used up to 10 times before it is exhausted, and it is cast at the wizards level (usually of level 1d6 + 14). The message may reveal the nature of the spell, possibly in code or riddle.

Rods, staves, & wands

Rod of leadership: This powerful rod may be wielded by either a fighter or a priest, and it is prized by military units. All friendly individuals and creatures within 120 yards of the wielder have their morale increased to fanatic (17) status. In addition, those friendly and allied beings within 30 yards are immune to *fear* and gain a +4 on saving throws that otherwise affect the



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emotions. In addition, the rod may be used as a mace that inflicts 1d10 + 6 hp damage and *paralyzes* an opponent on touch (saving throw vs. wands allowed), at the user's whim. This last effect will drain the rod. Once the *rod of leadership* has been drained, it loses all other functions and becomes nonmagical.

Staff of devotion: This magical staff may only be used by priests of any kit. Hierarchy priests (pragmatists, ethoists, and moralists) gain additional advantages. Any priest may use the following powers without draining any charges, three times per day, one per round: *atonement, bless, create food & water, cure light wounds, avert evil eye, purify food & drink*. The following powers use one charge each but may be used multiple times in one day, once per round, by any type of priest: *cure serious wounds, dispel magic, enthrall, neutralize poison, remove curse*. The following powers use three charges each and may only be used by hierarchy priests (the pragmatist, ethoist, and moralist kits): *flame strike, holy word, legend lore, raise dead, restoration*. In addition, the staff provides a +2 bonus to all saving throws of the individual who holds it.

Staff of flames: This staff allows any wizard to use the following powers, at the cost of one charge per use: *affect normal fires, flaming sphere, pyrotechnics, sundazzle, sunfire*. The following powers use two charges, except in the case of flame mages, who expend only one charge from the staff: *conjure fire elemental, sun stones, enhance fire creatures*. Only a flame mage may use the following power, which consumes *four* charges of the staff: *conflagration* (the staff wielder's level is used to determine the duration of this spell). The wielder is also considered to be under the effects of a *flameproof* spell as long as he holds the staff. The *flameproof* effect disappears when all charges of the staff are expended.

Staff of the sands: This staff allows any wizard to use the following powers, at the cost of one charge per use: *move sand, sand slumber, sand sword, stoneskin, traceless travel*. The following powers use two charges, except in the case of sand mages, who may expend only one charge from the staff: *conjure earth elemental, desert first, create shade*. Only a sand mage may use the following power, which consumes *four* charges of the staff: *sink*. The individual holding the staff is in addition considered to be under the effects of a *cool strength* spell while holding the staff. The *cool strength* effects disappear when the last charge of the staff has been expended.

Staff of the sea: This staff allows any wizard to use the following powers, at the cost of one charge per use: *cool strength, depth warning, converse with sea creatures, water blast, waterbane*. The following powers use two charges, except in the case of sea mages, who expend only one charge from the staff: *conjure water ele-*

mental, ice storm, command water spirits. Only a sea mage may use the following power, which consumes four charges of the staff: *maelstrom*. The individual holding the staff is in addition considered to be under the effects of a *water breathing* spell as long as he holds the staff. The *water breathing* effect disappears when all charges of the staff are expended.

Staff of the winds: This staff allows any wizard to use the following powers, at the cost of one charge per use: *alter normal winds, flying jambiya, solid fog, wind blade, wind wall*. The following powers use two charges, except in the case of flame mages, who expend only one charge from the staff for the following effects: *conjure air elemental, cloudkill, wind carpet, summon wind dragons*. Only a wind mage may use the following power, which consumes *four* charges of the staff: *windtomb*. The individual holding the staff is in addition considered to be under the effects of a *feather fall* spell as long as he holds the staff. This *feather fall* effect disappears when all charges of the staff are expended.

Note: Staves, wands, and rods do not have "cloaked wizardry" versions, as it is very difficult to pass these items off as something they are not. All are made with fine materials, carved with incantations, and gilded with precious metals. These items send a direct message to all viewers: "Hey, I'm a magical item!"

Miscellaneous magical items

Aba of the desert: This magical garment of the desert tribes provides the wearer with the effects of the *cool strength* spell, allowing him to move comfortably in the desert. However, no armor other than leather may be worn with this aba. Among the desert peoples, if a tribe possesses one of these items, it is used with the aged or infirm, expecting to ease their discomfort in the desert heat.

Aba of displacement, aba of protection, and caftan of protection: These items are much the same as the magical cloaks of the same name, from the DMG. As with the *aba of the desert*, they cannot be worn with armor heavier than leather.

Carpet of fighting: This magical rug is similar to a *rug of smothering* but functions upon the command word of the owner. At that point, it will wrap up any who stand upon it (other than the owner) and smother them, rendering them unconscious-but not dead—in 1d4 +2 rounds. Creatures that do not need to breathe will be unharmed but unable to move. It requires an *animate object, hold plant*, or *wish* to escape the carpet, or strength of 19 + to unwrap it (it unwraps at the command of the owner as well). The carpet may be destroyed by inflicting 25 hp to it (AC 10), but such damage is inflicted to those within the carpet as well.

Genie prisons: These magical devices come in a variety of forms in the Land of Fate: bottles for djinn and efreet, stop-

Table 1
Magical Items

1d100 Category

01-25	Weapons (Table 2)
26-40	Armor & shields (Table 3)
41-60	Potions, philters, & oils (Table 4)
61-75	Scrolls (Table 5)
76-80	Rings (Table 6)
81-85	Rods, staves, & wands (Table 7)
86-00	Miscellaneous magic (Table 8)

pered ewers for marids, and geodes or crystal decanters for dao. They are used by sha'ir to capture and discipline genies. Some genies so captured deserve their fate for being mischievous, dangerous, or hateful. Some are innocent of any crimes, but were imprisoned by evil or misguided sha'ir. All will claim innocence in such matters. The following types of genies may be found within any bottle:

1d100 Genie type

01-24	Djinni
25-48	Dao
49-73	Efreeti
74-96	Marid
97	Noble djinni
98	Noble dao
99	Noble efreeti
00	Noble marid

A genie so imprisoned may be charges, upon release, to perform certain actions. The DM may choose or roll randomly from the following table:

- 01-20:** The genie must perform three tasks for the opener of the bottle. If the genie has wish-granting powers, the creature may use those to perform the task.
- 21-70:** The genie must serve the opener of the bottle for 1,001 days.
- 71-80:** The genie must attack the opener of the bottle. Good-aligned genies leave their opponents unconscious but alive; otherwise, they fight to the death.
- 81-85:** The genie must bring the opener of the bottle to a particular location, which may be a treasure vault, wizard tower, or city bazaar, at the decision of the DM.
- 86-90:** The genie must locate a particular item and may not leave the opener of the bottle until that item is found. The genie is under no obligation to serve the opener of the bottle.
- 91-00:** The genie has gone insane and will attack all within reach upon release. Any item or spell that cures insanity will bring the genie back to his senses. The genie will then perform three tasks for the individual.

Table 2
Weapon Type

1d100	Type
01	Ankus
02-12	Arrows
01-60	Flight arrows (2d6)
61-85	Flight arrows (3d6)
86-00	Flight arrows (4d6)
13-16	Axe, hand
17-18	Axe, battle
19	Bullets, sling (3d4)
20	Club
21-28	Dagger or related weapon
01-20	Dagger
21-30	Dirk
31-70	Jambiya
71-85	Katar (punch dagger)
86-95	Knife
96-00	Razor
29-30	Dart (3d4)
31-34	Flail
01-40	Horseman's
41-00	Footman's
35-36	Javelin (1d3)
37-40	Lance
01-70	Light horse
71-00	Medium horse
41-46	Mace
01-60	Horseman's
61-00	Footman's
47	Military pick
48-49	Morning star
50-53	Pole arm
01-20	Awl pike
21-60	Glaive
61-00	Halberd
54-55	Quarterstaff
56-57	Quarrel, crossbow
01-40	Light quarrels (2d6)
41-60	Light quarrels (3d6)
61-90	Heavy quarrels (1d6)
91-00	Heavy quarrels (2d6)
58	Scythe
59-61	Sickle
62-70	Spear
71-95	Swords
01-05	Bastard
06-10	Broad
11-35	Cutlass
36-40	Great scimitar
41-45	Khopesh
46-50	Long
51-70	Scimitar
71-95	Short
96-00	Two-handed
96	Trident
97	Warhammer
98-00	Special weapon (Table 2B)

Item of cloaked wizardry: Roll again on Table 8 for an item. The item will be magical but will not radiate a dwomer upon the casting of a *detect magic* spell (though other divination spells will reveal its true nature). Some items, such as *wings of flying* or a flask ringed with magical writings, will be obviously magical despite their "cloaks."

Table 2A
Attack Roll Adjustment

1d20	Sword bonus	XP value	Other weapon bonuses	XP value
1-2	-1	—		—
3-4	Q(Hit)	—	Q(Hit)	—
5-6	Q(Dam)	—	Q(Dam)	—
7-13	+1	400	+1	500
14-16	+2	800	+1	500
17-18	+3	1,400	+2	1,000
19	+4	2,000	+2	1,000
20	+5	3,000	+3	2,000

Q(Hit): This is a weapon of quality and fine craftsmanship. It provides a +1 to hit. It is otherwise a nonmagical weapon.

Q(Dam): This is a weapon of quality and fine craftsmanship. It provides a +1 to damage. It is otherwise a nonmagical weapon.

Table 2B
Special Weapons

1d100	Weapon	XP value
01-10	<i>Cutlass of the Golden Gulf</i> + 1	800
11-15	<i>Dagger of quickness</i> +2	500
16-20	<i>Dagger of the evil eye</i>	—
21-25	<i>Dagger of venom</i>	350
26-30	<i>Mace</i> +1, +2 vs. undead	400
31-35	<i>Mace</i> +2, +4 vs. undead	600
36-40	<i>Mamluk sword of obedience</i> +1	700
41-42	<i>Mamluk sword of obedience</i> +2	800
43-50	<i>Scimitar of speed</i>	500
51-65	<i>Sword</i> +1, +2 vs. all genies	600
66-70	<i>Sword</i> +2, +3 vs. efreet	700
71-75	<i>Sword</i> +2, +3 vs. djinn	700
76-80	<i>Sword</i> +2, +3 vs. dao	700
81-85	<i>Sword</i> +2, +3 vs. marids	700
86-90	<i>Sword</i> +2, genie slayer	900
91-00	<i>Weapon of concealed wizardry</i>	+300

Jellaba of concealment: This overgarment is similar in function to the *cloak of elvenkind* in the DMG. It may be worn over any armor type. Of the cloaks, 80% are from human-, elf-, or half-elf-sized individuals; 15% are for smaller (dwarf, gnome, halfling, goblin, or kobold) individuals; and 5% for larger (ogre, gnoll, or hill giant) individuals.

Jellaba of eyes: This is just like the *robe of eyes* in the DMG.

Phylactery of bravery: This device is an armband made of parchment, inscribed with metallic inks and trimmed with gold, invoking the name of Najm the Brave, an enlightened god of courage. The wearer of this armband gains a +1 to hit in combat and makes saving throws against *fear* and other emotion-affecting spells at +2.

Slippers of dancing: These function like *boots of dancing* in the DMG.

Slippers of soft movement: These are like *boots of elvenkind* in the DMG. These slippers, like all magical slippers, conform to the size of the feet of the wearer, stretching or shrinking as need be.

Telescope of fantastic vision: This appears to be the other magical spyglass given herein and functions as such for the first 1d4 times. After this, the telescope reveals fantastic and lurid scenes, often the opposite of what it truly there (e.g., a merchant fleet appears as a pirates' in the spyglass, a safe harbor as a monster-ridden mirage, an upcoming city as a dark domain of evil).

Telescope of true vision: This device appears as a normal spyglass bound in gold, and functions as such with a magnifying power of 50 (e.g., a character may see something at 5,000' as if he could see it at 100') at distances of 50' or more. Upon speaking a word, the spyglass functions as a *gem of seeing* for one round, revealing the true nature of what is viewed in the glass. The telescope has 20 charges before it is depleted, and its lens will fracture and break when the last charge is used.

Buying magical items

The Land of Fate thrives on trade, and magical items, like all other objects, are

subject to purchase. Such items are relatively rare (excluding weapons and armor of quality) and unusual, so no set price exists for them. For those who wish to unload magical items or seek out those who have them, the following guides are recommended:

The NPC owner of a magical item will want to sell an item for no less than 10 times its XP value in gold pieces. If the item is of use to the NPC (e.g., a wizard selling a *jellaba of eyes*), this may be raised to 20 times its XP value, even if the NPC wishes to part with it. This is a general asking price and may be reduced during bargaining. Favors, quests, and other nonmonetary items may be traded as well.

The NPC who wishes to buy a magical item will generally wish to pay no more than three times its XP value in gold pieces, five times if he can use it or knows someone who can. Again, this is a starting price and may go upward. Unless the NPC is in need of the item, he will pass on excessive purchases.

There are no "magic shops" in the Land of Fate, but every suq and bazaar has a few stalls that specialize in curios and other odd items, and a few gold could purchase the name of wizards or other collectors who might have a specific item the player characters are searching for (in hunting for magic, there is no possibility of "just browsing"). Most "magical" materi-

al for sale may be junk or frauds passed off as truly magical items, but there is the rare occasion of an *item of cloaked wizardry* picked up for a few shekels by an individual whom Fate smiles upon.

Recharging magical items

Wands, staffs, and some rings and miscellaneous magical items have charges and may be exhausted. One method of recharging these items is as per the standard AD&D rules. Another method is to work with the genies, the cosmic middle-men of the Land of Fate. Here's how:

1. Find a genie. This may be a genie working for a sha'ir, under the control of a ring, or existing as a free individual. If the genie is under the control of another individual, that individual must be contacted and dealt with as well. The genie must be one of the "true genie" types (marid, dao, djinni, or efreeti) but may be a commoner or nobility.
2. Give the genie the item.
3. Give the genie a sum of gold pieces equal to three times the XP value of the item. You may pay more, but to pay less would be an insult and result in the genie "losing" the item. Cursed items and items that have no XP value are merely taken away and not returned (there are legends of a huge mountain of cursed items somewhere in the elemental planes, a toxic dump of foul magic).
4. Wait. The genie will take the item to an elemental plane and contact those individuals (e.g., gods, extraplanar beings, other genies, space aliens, game designers) who can recharge the item. This takes a

day of the genie's time, but otherwise the genie is able to return to his normal duties or life. The number of days it takes to recharge an item equals the total number of charges in the item times two. The individual owning the item may continue with his daily life, but it is his responsibility to contact the genie at the end of the time to claim the item. If the individual runs off or perishes, the genie will hold onto the item for a short time (a year at most), then pass it on to someone else, either in trade or as a gift.

5. Thank the genie upon return of the item. Courtesy counts, and attacking the genie you are dealing with establishes a reputation as a dangerous human. Remember, genies are incurable gossips, and word of such actions spreads quickly.



Table 3
Armor & Shields

1d100	Armor type
01-03	Banded
04-06	Brigandine
07-10	Chain mail
11-20	Hide
21-40	Lamellar
41-60	Leather
61-70	Padded
71-73	Ring
74-75	Scale
76-94	Shield
01-10	Body
11-60	Daraq
61-00	Medium
95-96	Splint
97-98	Studded leather
99-00	Special (Table 3B)

Table 3A
Armor Class Adjustment

1d100	AC adj.	XP value
01-10	- 1	—
11-30	Q(+1)	—
31-50	+1	500
51-70	+2	1,000
71-85	+3	1,500
86-95	+4	2,000
96-00	+5	3,000

Q(+1): The armor or shield is a weapon of quality. While nonmagical, its fine craftsmanship grants it a +1 on armor class.

Table 3B
Special Armors and Shields

1d100	Item	XP value
01-25	Armor of the desert evening	500
26-35	Armor of swimming	700
36-40	Shield of the holy	400
41-50	Shield proof against fire	500
51-55	Shield proof against cold	500
56-65	Shield proof against electricity	500
66-75	Tortoise shield (daraq)	300
76-00	Armor of concealed wizardry	+300

Table 3C
Armor Size

1d100	Sized for:
01-60	Human (includes lizard man, orc, and hobgoblin)
61-70	Dwarf (includes goblin)
71-75	Elf
76-85	Halfling (includes kobold and gnome)
86-95	Ogre (includes gnom)
96-00	Hill giant



**Table 5
Scrolls**

1d100 Scroll type (Table)

01-60 Wizard's (5A)
61-80 Priest's (5B)
81-00 Protection (5C)

**Table 4
Potions, Philters, & Oils**

1d100	Item	XP value
01-05	<i>Climbing*</i>	300
06-10	<i>Diminution*</i>	300
11-15	<i>Dreaming</i>	600
16-20	<i>Extra-healing*</i>	400
21-25	<i>Growth*</i>	250
26-35	<i>Healing*</i>	200
36-40	<i>Oil of attractiveness</i>	500
41-45	<i>Oil of cloaking</i>	750
46-50	<i>Oil of great faith (priest)</i>	750
51-55	<i>Oil of horridness</i>	200
56-60	<i>Oil of invisibility</i>	400
61-65	<i>Oil of invulnerability</i>	400
66-68	<i>Oil of obedience</i>	750
69-70	<i>Oil of romance</i>	750
71-75	<i>Oil of the pickpocket</i>	500
76-77	<i>Philter of glibness*</i>	500
78-79	<i>Philter of love*</i>	200
80-81	<i>Philter of persuasiveness*</i>	400
82-83	<i>Philter of stammering & stuttering*</i>	—
84-85	<i>Philter of drunkenness</i>	—
86-90	<i>Poison*</i>	—
91-94	<i>Speed*</i>	200
95-98	<i>Sweet water*</i>	200
99-00	<i>Water-breathing*</i>	400

* This item is described in the DMG.

**Table 5A
Wizard Scrolls**

1d100	Spell, number & type	Levels
01-06	1 sorcerer's spell	1d4
07-09	1 sorcerer's spell	1d6
10-11	1 sorcerer's spell	1d8+1
12-17	2 sorcerer's spells	1d4
18-19	2 sorcerer's spells	1d8+1
20-25	3 sorcerer's spells	1d4
26-27	3 sorcerer's spells	1d8+1
28-33	4 sorcerer's spells	1d6
34-35	4 sorcerer's spells	1d8
36-40	5 sorcerer's spells	1d6
41-42	5 sorcerer's spells	1d8
43-47	6 sorcerer's spells	1d6
48-49	6 sorcerer's spells	1d6+2
50-52	7 sorcerer's spells	1d8
53-54	7 sorcerer's spells	1d8+1
55	7 sorcerer's spells	1d6+3
56-60	1-4 flame magic spells	1d8
61-65	1-3 flame magic spells	1d8+1
66-70	1-4 sand magic spells	1d8
71-75	1-3 sand magic spells	1ds+1
76-80	1-4 sea magic spells	1d8
81-85	1-3 sea magic spells	1d8+1
86-90	1-4 wind magic spells	1d8
91-95	1-3 wind magic spells	1d8+1
96-00	Cursed scroll	—

A scroll's XP value, unless otherwise noted, is equal to the total spell levels on the scrolls X 100.

**Table 5B
Priest Scrolls**

1d100 Spells, number & sphere

01-05	1-4 spells, All (General)
06-09	1-4 spells, Animal
10-11	1-6 spells, Animal
12	1-2 spells, Astral
13-16	1-4 spells, Charm
17-18	1-6 spells, Charm
19-21	1-4 spells, Combat
22-25	1-4 spells, Creation
26-30	1-4 spells, Divination
31-34	1-6 spells, Divination
35-38	1-4 spells, Elemental
39-40	1-6 spells, Elemental
41	1-8 spells, Elemental
42-44	1-4 spells, Guardian
45-55	1-4 spells, Healing
56-58	2-8 spells, Healing
59-60	1-4 spells, Necromantic
61-62	1-4 spells, Plant
63	2-8 spells, Plant
64-67	1-4 spells, Protection
68-69	1-6 spells, Protection
70-72	1-4 spells, Summoning
73-74	1-6 spells, Summoning
75-77	1-4 spells, Sun
78-80	1-4 spells, Weather
81-95	1-8 mixed priest spells
96-00	Cursed scroll

A scroll's XP value, unless otherwise noted, is equal to the total spell levels on the scrolls X 100.

Table 5C
Protection and Other Scrolls

1d100	Scroll	XP value
01-05	Map*	—
06-10	Grant	—
11-14	Protection from acid*	2,500
15-20	Protection from air	1,500
21-22	Protection from cold*	2,000
23-30	Protection from divination	2,500
31-34	Protection from electricity*	1,500
35-38	Protection from earth	1,500
39-42	Protection from elementals*	1,500
43-50	Protection from fire*	2,000
51-52	Protection from gas*	2,000
53-58	Protection from genies	2,000
59-65	Protection from heat	1,000
66-68	Protection from lycanthropes	1,000
69-73	Protection from magic*	1,500
74-75	Protection from petrification*	2,000
76-77	Protection from plants*	1,000
78-85	Protection from poison*	1,000
86-89	Protection from possession*	2,000
90-93	Protection from undead*	1,500
94-95	Protection from water*	1,500
96-00	Cursed scroll	—

* This item is described in the DMG.

A scroll's XP value, unless otherwise noted, is equal to the total spell levels on the scrolls × 100.

Table 6
Rings

1d100	Ring	XP value
01-06	Animal friendship*	1,000
07-12	Cloaked wizardry	**
13-15	Clumsiness*	—
16-19	Delusion*	—
20-27	Feather falling*	1,000
28-30	Folly	—
31-35	Free action*	1,000
36-40	Genie summoning	3,000
41-43	Human influence*	2,000
44-48	In visibility*	1,500
49-53	Jumping*	1,000
54-60	Message	500
61-63	Mind shielding	500
64-70	Protection*	***
71	Regeneration*	5,000
72	Spell storing*	2,500
73	Spell turning*	2,000
74-80	Sustenance	500
81-85	Swimming*	1,000
86-90	Truth*	1,000
91	Vizier, ring of the	1,000
92-95	Water walking*	1,000
96-99	Weakness*	—
00	Wishes, three*	3,000

* This item is described in the DMG.

** Roll again on this table (ignoring this result) and add + 500 XP to the item's XP value.

*** 1,000 XP per magical "plus."



Table 7
Rods, Staves, and Wands

1d100	Item	XP value
01	Rod of beguiling* (priest, wizard, rogue)	5,000
02	Rod of cancellation*	10,000
03-04	Rod of leadership (warrior, priest)	5,000
05-06	Rod of smiting* (priest, wizard)	4,000
07	Rod of splendor*	2,500
08	Rod of terror*	3,000
09-14	Staff of curing* (priest)	6,000
15-18	Staff of devotion (priest)	8,000
19-20	Staff of flames (wizard)	10,000
21-25	Staff of striking* (priest, wizard)	6,000
26-27	Staff of the sands (wizard)	10,000
28-29	Staff of the sea (wizard)	10,000
30-31	Staff of the winds (wizard)	10,000
32-35	Staff of withering*	8,000
36-40	Wand of earth & stone*	1,000
41-50	Wand of enemy detection*	2,000
51-55	Wand of fire* (wizard)	4,500
56-60	Wand of frost* (wizard)	6,000
61-70	Wand of illumination* (wizard)	2,000
71-75	Wand of lightning* (wizard)	4,000
76-85	Wand of magic detection*	2,500
86-95	Wand of magic missiles*	4,000
96-00	Wand of paralyzation* (wizard)	3,500

* This item is described in the DMG.

Table 8
Miscellaneous Magical Items

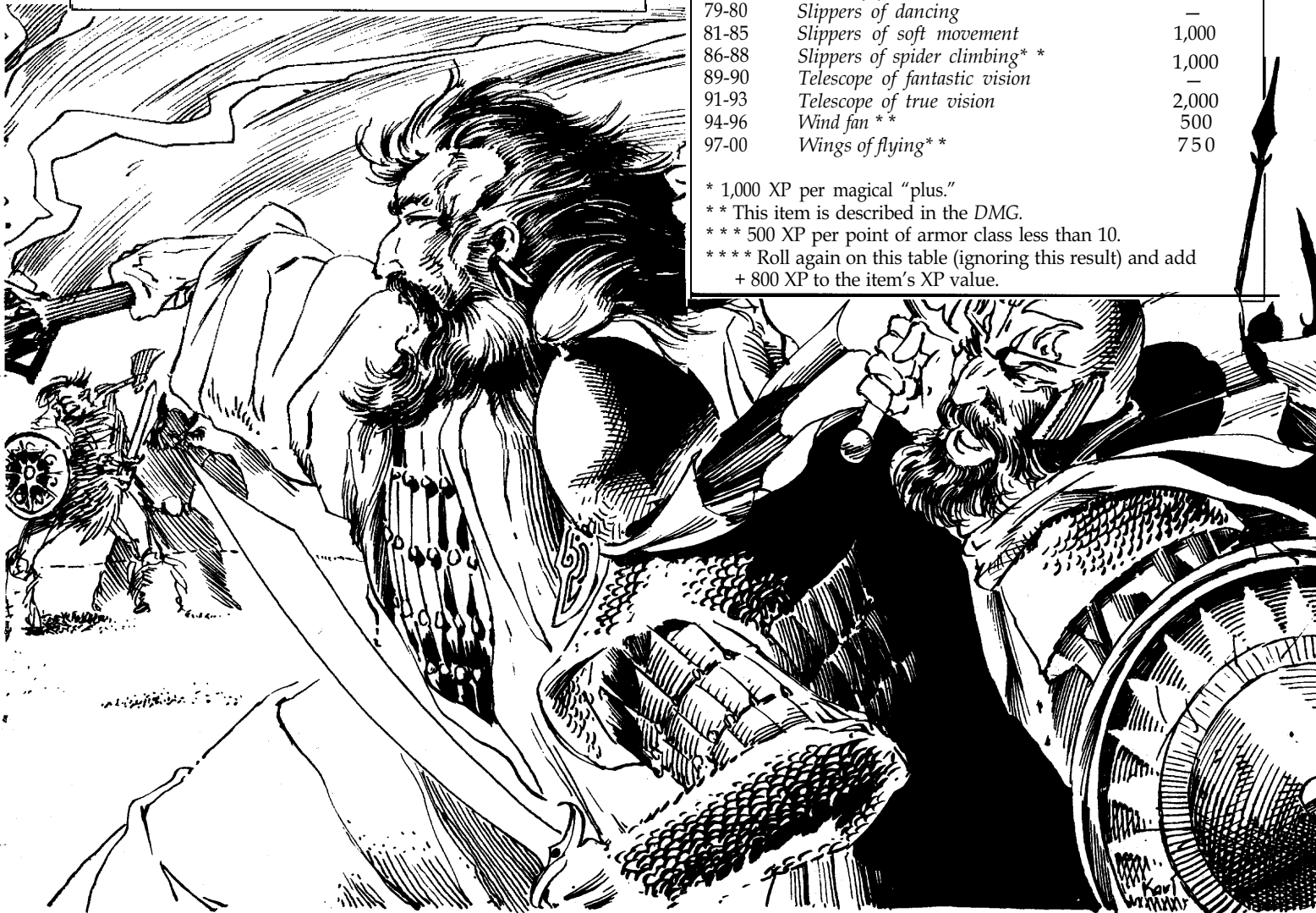
1d100	Item	XP value
01-05	Aba of the desert	1,000
06-07	Aba of displacement	3,000
08-10	Aba of protection	—
11-12	Bag of holding* *	5,000
13	Boots of dancing* *	—
14-15	Boots of speed* *	2,500
16-18	Bracers of defense* *	—
19-20	Bracers of defenselessness* *	—
21	Brooch of shielding* *	1,000
22-23	Caftan of protection	—
24-25	Carpet of fighting	4,000
26-30	Carpet of flying* *	7,500
31-34	Crystal ball* *	1,000
35	Crystal hypnosis ball* *	—
36-37	Flask of curses* *	—
38-45	Genie prison	—
46-48	Iron flask* *	—
49-52	Item of cloaked wizardry	****
53-58	Jellaba of concealment	1,000
59	Jellaba of eyes (wizard)	4,500
60	Pearl of wisdom (priest)* *	500
61-65	Phylactery of bra very	1,000
66-70	Phylactery of faithfulness (priest)* *	1,000
71-73	Phylactery of long years (priest)* *	1,000
74-75	Phylactery of monstrous attention* *	3,000
76-78	Scarab of protection* *	2,500
79-80	Slippers of dancing	—
81-85	Slippers of soft movement	1,000
86-88	Slippers of spider climbing* *	1,000
89-90	Telescope of fantastic vision	—
91-93	Telescope of true vision	2,000
94-96	Wind fan* *	500
97-00	Wings of flying* *	750

* 1,000 XP per magical "plus."

** This item is described in the DMG.

*** 500 XP per point of armor class less than 10.

**** Roll again on this table (ignoring this result) and add + 800 XP to the item's XP value.



*Where shall we meet again
In thunder, lightning or rain?*

— Shakespeare, *Macbeth*



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ARS MAGICA™

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.

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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) 248-3625 (U.S.A.). Questions or changes concerning European conventions should be directed to TSR Limited, (0223) 212517 (U.K.).

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BASHCON '92, March 13-15

OH

This convention will be held in the University of Toledo's Student Union Auditorium in Toledo, Ohio. Special guest is Michael Dorn. Events include RPGA™ tournaments, with AD&D®, PARANOIA*, and other games. Other activities include panels, anime and SF films, a dealers' room, and miniatures and board games. Registration: \$3/weekend, or \$1-2/day. Games are \$.50 each. Send an SASE to: Student Activities Office, UT-BASH, 2801 W. Bancroft St., Toledo OH 43606.

CALCON 7, March 13-15

✧

This convention will be held in the Sandman Inn in Calgary, Alberta. Events include tournaments in role-playing, board, war, and miniatures gaming. Other activities include a dealers' room, computer gaming, a games auction, and a miniatures-painting contest. Write to: CALCON 7, Gulf Canada Sq., RPO 401, 9 Ave. SW, Box 22206, Calgary, Alberta, CANADA T2P 456; or call Brian at: (403) 282-0945, or Paul at: (403) 275-0761.

CAPE CON '92, March 13-15

MA

This convention will be held at the Cape Cod Plaza Hotel in Hyannis, Mass. Registration: \$16 preregistered, \$20 at the door (includes two free games). Call: (508) 477-2291 or (508) 775-2357, leave your name and address, and we'll mail out a booklet; call Jonet at (508) 775-2357 to confirm.

DEMICON III, March 13-15

MD

This gaming convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Chesapeake House in Aberdeen, Md. Events include AD&D®, WARHAMMER*, SHADOWRUN*, CALL OF CTHULHU*, PARANOIA*, BATTLESYSTEM™, BATTLETECH*, CAR WARS*, and TALISMAN* games. Other activities include a dealers' room, a miniatures contest, and seminars. Registration: \$20. Write to: DEMICON III, Hartford Adventure Soc., c/o Strategic Castle, 114 N. Toll Gate Rd., Bel Air MD 21014; or call: (301) 569-4025.

HEXAGON 2, March 13-16

AZ

This gaming convention will be held at the Celebrity Hotel, 3333 East Van Burne, Phoenix AZ (call: 602-244-8244). Events include 24-hour gaming, a dealers' room, a used-game auction, a miniatures-painting contest, seminars, panels, and food, with role-playing, board, computer, and miniatures games. RPGA™ Network and other events will offer prizes. Special guests include DRAGONLANCE® saga author Tracy Hickman, SHADOWRUN* game creator Tom Dowd, and author/game expert Michael Stackpole. Registration: \$10 in advance, or \$15 at the door. Write to: HEXACON 2, P.O. Box 11743, Phoenix AZ 85061; or call: (602) 220-9785.

SIMCON XIV, March 19-22

NY

This convention, sponsored by URSGA, will be held at the University of Rochester's River campus in Rochester, N.Y. Events include CYBERPUNK*, STAR FLEET BATTLES*, CHAMPIONS*, STAR TREK*, TRAVELLER*, and fantasy role-playing games. Other activities include board, tactical, and 15-mm and 25-mm historical miniatures games. Registration: \$10. Write to: SIMCON XIV, c/o URSGA, CPU Box 227146, River Station, Rochester NY 14627-7146.

LUNACON '92, March 20-22

NY

This convention will be held at the Rye Town Hilton in Rye Brook, N.Y. Events include 24-hour-a-day open gaming, RPGA™ tournaments, and the state's premier SF convention. Registration: \$35 at the door gains admission to all convention events. Write to: LUNACON '92, P.O. Box 338, New York NY 10150-0338; or call: (908) 721-1537. No collect calls, please.

SPRING OFFENSIVE III, March 20-22

IL

This convention will be held at Illinois Central College in East Peoria, Ill. Events include Napoleons, ADEPTUS TITANICUS*, CHILL*, ASL*, and other role-playing, board, and miniatures games. Registration: \$3/day or \$5/weekend, and \$1 per game. Write to: Tri-County Gaming Assoc., 116 Walnut St., Washington IL; or call: (309) 444-4640.

AGGIECON XXIII, March 26-29

TX

This convention will be held on the campus of Texas A&M University in College Station, Tex. Guests include Barbara Hambly and David Drake. Activities include a dealers' room, game shows, a costume contest and ball, an art show, children's programming, SCA demos, Japanimation, SF films, a party room, RPGA™ tournaments, and 24-hour open gaming. Registration: \$16. Write to: AGGIECON XXIII, MSC Cepheid Variable, Box J-1, College Station TX 77884; or call: (409) 845-1515.

MAGNUM OPUS CON VII, March 26-29

SC

This convention will be held at the Greenville Hyatt and the Greenville Holiday Inn in Greenville, S.C. Guests include Marion Zimmer Bradley, Lois McMaster Bujold, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, Roger Zelazny, Robert Asprin, and Sergio Aragones. Activities include panels, a costume contest, a dealers' room, a fashion show, fencing, gaming, and a talent show. Registration: TBA. Send an SASE to: MAGNUM OPUS CON VII, P.O. Box 6585, Athens GA 30604.

IANUA FANTASY III, March 27-29

✧

This convention will be held at the "Istituto Brignolo" in Genoa, Italy. Events include AD&D®, D&D®, CALL OF CTHULHU*, STAR WARS*, 2300 AD*, CYBERPUNK 2020*, RUNEQUEST*, SPACE: 1889*, and MERP* tournaments, in Italian and English. Other activities include a costume show and a miniatures-painting contest. Prizes will be awarded for all tournaments. Registration: \$6/day at the door. Lodging is available. Write to: LABYRINTH, Vico S. Antonio 5/3A, 16126, Genoa, ITALY; or call: (10) 291788 at GMT +1.

MIDSOUTHCON XI, March 27-29

TN

This SF&F convention will be held at the Airport Hilton in Memphis, Tenn. Guests include Margaret Weis, Beth Willinger, Nancy Springer, and Belinda Anderson. Activities include AD&D®, CHAMPIONS*, CALL OF CTHULHU*, CYBERPUNK*, ROBOTECH*, BATTLETECH*,

RIFTS*, SHADOWRUN*, and board games, plus panels, a dealers' room, an art show, an auction, filking, a con suite, and open gaming. Registration: \$25. Write to: MIDSOUTHCON XI, P.O. Box 2279, Memphis TN 38122; or call: (901) 353-9439, or (901) 274-7355.

MSU IN CONTROL 6, March 27-29 KY

This convention will be held at the Student Center Grand Ballroom on the campus of the University of Kentucky at Lexington. Events include AD&D®, BATTLETECH*, WARHAMMER 40,000*, CALL OF CTHULHU*, SPACE MARINE*, and CHAMPIONS* game. Other activities include a miniatures contest and movies. Registration: \$5. Send an SASE to: Miskatonic Student Union, 106 Student Center, University of Kentucky, Lexington KY 40506-0030; or call Michael at: (606) 255-8966.

ABBYTHON 10, March 28-29 KS

This convention will be held at the Community Center in Abbyville, Kan. Registration: \$10 preregistered only. Players will receive materials to create their own ABBYTHON characters. Prizes will be awarded to top ten players. Write to: ABBYTHON Adventure Guild, P.O. Box 96, Abbyville KS 67510; or call: (316) 286-5303.

DREAMCON '92, March 28-29 MO

Sponsored by the NMSU Fantasy Club, this convention will be held at Ophelia Parrish Hall on the campus of Northeast Missouri State University in Kirksville, Mo. Events include AD&D®, CHAMPIONS*, and PARANOIA* games, with a movie room, a costume contest, merchants, and more games. Proceeds will benefit the Dream Factory of St. Louis. Write to: NMSU Fantasy Club, SUB-NMSU, Kirksville MO 63501-4988; or call: (816) 785-5152.

MIRACLECON '92, March 28 OH

This convention will be held at the Liedertafel Club in Springfield, Ohio. Events include gaming, a dealers' area, a miniatures-painting contest, and an auction. Registration: \$6. Write to: Wolf's Lair Games, 601 W. Leffels Lane, Springfield OH 45506; or call Tim at: (513) 325-0059, Thursday through Sunday.

DEUXIEME FESTIVAL DU JEU DE LONGUEUIL

April 3-5 *

This convention will be held at the MEA in Longueuil, Quebec. Guests include Ed Greenwood and Bruce Nesmith. Activities include dozens of events, such as a sanctioned STAR FLEET BATTLES* tournament and an Ed Greenwood adventure, plus panels, videos, an art show, and an auction. Registration: \$5 (Canadian)/day, or \$8/weekend; tournaments cost extra. Write to: SNF, P.O. Box 247, Station A, Longueuil, Quebec, CANADA J4H 3X6; or call: (514)677-2740.

POCON, April 3-5 PA

This convention will be held at the Holiday Inn in Bartonsville, Pa. Events include role-playing, board, miniatures, and war gaming, with a painting contest. Registration: \$6/day or \$10/weekend, no game fees. Write to: Ed Dowgaillo, P.O. Box 390, Effort PA 18330; or call: (717) 629-7218.

ROUND CON '92, April 3-5 SC

Sponsored by the Round Table Gaming Society, this convention will be held at the Russell House on the campus of the Univ. of South Carolina, in Columbia, S.C. Events include AD&D®, CHAMPIONS*, VAMPIRE*, CALL OF

CTHULHU*, SHADOWRUN*, JAMES BOND*, RIFTS*, STAR WARS*, BATTLETECH*, and PARANOIA* games, as well as an AD&D® game benefit for the Richland County Children's Hospital. Other activities include many board games, a competitive miniatures session, a fiction-writing contest, movies, and a dealers' area. GMs and dealers are welcome. Registration: \$10. Game fees are \$1/event and \$5 for the benefit tournament. Send an SASE to: ROUND CON '92, USC, P.O. Box 80018, Columbia SC 29225; or call Trella at: (803) 779-1924.

U.B. CON '92, April 3-5 NY

This convention, sponsored by SARPA, will be held at the State University of New York at Buffalo, Amherst campus. Events include AD&D®, SHADOWRUN*, BATTLETECH*, WARHAMMER*, BATTLELORDS*, and AXIS & ALIENS* tournaments. Other activities include combat demos and a dealers' area. Registration: \$6/weekend preregistered; \$9/weekend on-site. All students will receive discounts. Write to: SARPA, 111 Talbert Hall, SUNY-AB Amherst campus, Buffalo NY 14260; or call Dave at: (716) 831-0640.

UMF-CON 10, April 3-5 ME

This convention will be held at the University of Maine Student Center in Farmington, Maine. Events include AD&D®, SHADOWRUN*, BATTLETECH*, and MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ games. Other activities include a Chinese auction, an art contest, and a game store on site. Registration: \$7/weekend preregistered; \$10/weekend at the door. Single-day prices are also available. Write to: Table Gaming Group, 5 South St., UMF, Farmington ME 04938; or call Susan at: (207) 778-7998.

FANTASY FEST SPRING '92, April 4-5 PA

This gaming convention will be held at the Days Inn in Shamokin Dam, Pa. Events include AD&D®, BATTLETECH*, WARHAMMER 40,000*, and SHADOWRUN* games, with RPGA™ Network events, board games, a miniatures-painting contest, a dealers' area, and open gaming. Registration: \$15/day or \$20/weekend preregistered; \$20/day or \$25/weekend at the door. Make checks payable to A&B Entertainment. Write to: A&B Entertainment, P.O. Box 645, Shamokin Dam PA 17876; or call: (717) 743-4146.

IMPACT 1.6, April 4 NE

This gaming convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Central in Omaha, Nebr. Guests include Stan West of Hero Games. Registration: \$5. Write to: IMPACT, P.O. Box 4486, Omaha NE 68104.

POINTCON XV, April 10-12 NY

This convention will be held at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y. Events include AD&D®, BATTLETECH*, WARHAMMER FANTASY* and 40,000*, JOHNNY REB*, and micro-armor games, with RPGA™ Network events, a miniatures-painting contest, an auction, computer games, and open gaming. Registration: \$8 preregistered, or \$10 at the door; no event fees. Write to: Cadet Robert Williams, P.O. Box 3643, West Point NY 10997.

TECHNICON 9, April 10-12 VA

This convention will be held at the Donald Brown Center for Continuing Education in Blacksburg, Va. Guests include Tom Deitz, Mark Rogers, and Colby Perkins. Activities include a dance, an art show and auction, panels, gaming, SF and anime videos, computer games, and a dealers' area. Registration: \$21 before April 1;

\$23 at the door. Students receive \$3 discount. Write to: TECHNICON, c/o VTSFFC, P.O. Box 256, Blacksburg VA 24063-0256; or call: (703) 953-1214.

BATTLECON '92, April 11-12 NE

This BATTLETECH* game-only convention will be held at the Reunion Hall on the University of Nebraska campus. Events include tournaments and other games daily, plus a miniatures-painting contest. Registration: \$2/day preregistered; \$3/day or \$5/weekend at the door. Send an SASE to: 48th Ronin, P.O. Box 21956, Lincoln NE 68542-1956.

CONVENT, April 11-13 WV

This convention will be held on the campus of Marshall University in Huntington, W. Va. Events include an RPGA™ Network D&D® tournament and scads of other games. Guest of honor is Richard Tucholka. Registration: \$5/tournament or \$3/nontournament for the weekend. Write to: Chuck Puckett, 821 Holderby Hall, Marshall Univ., Huntington WV 25955; or to: Steven Saws, 558 Aspen St., Morgantown WV 26505.

HYPOTHETICON, April 11 CT

This convention, hosted by the Univ. of Connecticut SF Society, will be held at the Univ. of Connecticut, Storrs branch Student Union. Events include CALL OF CTHULHU*, TOON*, and AD&D® games, with panels, Japanimation, movies, and dealers. Registration: \$7. Write to: HYPOTHETICON, c/o Anne MacFadyen, Rm. 128B Shippee Hall, Univ. of Conn., Storrs CT 06269; or call: (203) 427-4985.

RU-CON '92, April 11-12 PA

Note: This convention was previously announced as taking place in the Holiday Inn in Williamsport, Pa. This was an error. The convention will be held at the Days Inn in Williamsport, Pa. Events include many gaming events (some RPGA™ Network-sanctioned), tournaments, and dealers. Registration: \$15/weekend before April 1; \$12/day or \$20/weekend at the door. Send a business-sized SASE to: The Role-Playing Underground, Woolridge Hall, Box 39, Lock Haven Univ., Lock Haven PA 17745-2396; or call: (717) 893-3237.

AMIGOCON 7, April 24-26 TX

This convention will be held at the Sunland Park Holiday Inn in El Paso, Tex. Guests include Jennifer Roberson, Patricia Davis, and Mel White. Registration: \$15/weekend before April 1; \$18/weekend or \$6-\$9/day at the door. Write to: AMIGOCON 7, P.O. Box 3177, El Paso TX 79923.

DEFCON III, April 24-26 NJ

This gaming convention will be held at the Sheraton Inn in East Brunswick, N.J. Events include AD&D®, CHAMPIONS*, WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLEPLAY*, RUNEQUEST*, SPACE: 1889*, CAR WARS*, CYBERPUNK*, MARVEL SUPER HEROES™, CALL OF CTHULHU*, BLOOD BOWL*, and ROLEMASTER* games, plus a FASA-sanctioned BATTLETECH* tournament. Other activities include a miniatures-painting workshop, a chess exhibition, a costume contest, and a variety of board games. Registration: \$15/weekend preregistered; \$20/weekend at the door. Single-day rates are available. Write to: DEFCON, 16 Grove St., Somerset NJ 08873; or call Pete at: (908) 249-0570 evenings and weekends.

GAME FAIRE '92, April 24-26 WA

This will be held at the Student Union

Building, #17, on the campus of Spokane Falls Community College in Spokane, Wash. Events include AD&D®, BATTLETECH®, CALL OF CTHULHU®, SHADOWRUN®, CYBERPUNK®, STAR WARS®, and WARHAMMER® games. Other activities include SCA demos, a miniatures-painting contest, historical and microarmor gaming. Registration: \$12/weekend preregistered; \$16/weekend at the door. Single-day passes are available. Write to: Game Faire, c/o Merlyn's, N. 1 Browne, Spokane WA 99201; or call: (509) 624-0957.

CHAOTICON I, April 25-26 WI

This SF&F convention will be held in the Student Union of the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. Events include AD&D®, SPACE MARINE®, CLAY-O-RAMA, TALISMAN®, CAR WARS®, TALISMAN®, and BATTLETECH® games. Other activities include seminars and movies. Registration: \$5/day or \$7/weekend; all games are free, subject to space. Send an SASE to: CHAOTICON I, 2469 Walter Way, Green Bay WI 54311-7070; or call Adam at: (414) 465-5318.

CONCENTRICS '92, May 2-3 NH

This convention will be held in the Love Gym of Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, N.H. Events include AD&D®, CALL OF CTHULHU®, SHADOWRUN®, PARANOIA®, and DIPLOMACY® games. Preregistration is required for some events as space is limited. Registration: \$6 before April 1; \$10 thereafter. Write to: CONCENTRICS, 27 Court St., Exeter NH 03833.

CONDUIT 2, May 15-17 UT

This SF&F/gaming convention will be held at the Quality Inn in Salt Lake City, Utah. Guests include Roger Zelazny, Mike Stackpole, and Liz Danforth. Activities include a masquerade, art and short-story contests, films, seminars, and open gaming. Registration: TBA. Write to: CONDUIT 2, c/o Dave Powell, 2566 Blaine Ave., Salt Lake City UT 84108-3359.

BLOODSUCKING CONTRAPTION '92 May 15-17 MI

This SF convention will be held at the Airport Radisson hotel in Detroit, Mich. Guests include Nick Pollota and Bob & Ann Passovoy. Registration: \$15 until March 15; \$20 thereafter. Write to: CONTRAPTION, P.O. Box 2285, Ann Arbor MI 48106; or call: (313) 334-4191.

OASIS V, May 15-17 FL

This convention will be held at the Ramada Inn, Altamonte Springs, in Altamonte, Fla. Guests include Michael Bishop, Holly Bird, Ann & Kendall Morris, and Andre Norton. Activities include a costume contest, a dealers' room, an art show and auction, a con suite, open and tournament gaming, videos, and panels. Registration: \$17 before April 15; \$20 thereafter. Dealers are welcome. Make checks payable to OASFIS. Write to: OASFIS, P.O. Box 616469, Orlando FL 32861-6469.

DIXIE TREK '92, May 17-19 GA

This convention will be held at the Sheraton Century Center hotel in Atlanta, Ga. Guests include actors Denise Crosby and Jonathan Harris, and musician John Serrie. Activities include an exhibit concourse and dealers' room, model and model design workshops, an art show and print shop, a con suite, a video room, and gaming. Registration: \$25 before March 13; \$27 before May 7; or \$30 at the door. RPGA™ Network and club discounts are available. Write to: DIXIE TREK, Box 464351, Lawrenceville GA 30244; or call: (404) 925-2813.

GAMESCAUCUS II, May 22-25 CA

Presented by Trigramming Associates, this convention will be held at the Oakland Airport Hilton in Oakland, Calif. Events include an RPGA™ AD&D® tournament, plus AD&D®, CALL OF CTHULHU®, CHAMPIONS®, GURPS®, DIPLOMACY®, AXIS & ALLIES®, WARHAMMER®, ROLEMASTER®, STAR WARS®, CIVILIZATION®, and TALISMAN® games. Other activities include dealers' room, a painting contest, a PBM room, a flea market, and 24-hour movies. Registration: \$25/weekend preregistered, \$30/weekend at the door; GMs pay \$10/weekend. Make checks payable to Trigramming Associates. Write to: Trigramming Assoc., P.O. Box 4867, Walnut Creek CA 94596-0867; or call Larry or Mike at: (510) 798-7152 on Saturday afternoons.

GAMEX '92, May 22-25 CA

This convention will be held at the Airport Hyatt hotel in Los Angeles, Calif. Events include all types of family, board, strategy, and adventure gaming. Other activities include a flea market, an auction, seminars, demonstrations, and a dealers' area. Write to: STRATEGICON, P.O. Box 3849, Torrance CA 90510-3849; or call: (310) 326-9440.

ONCE UPON A CON, May 22-24 CO

This convention, presented by the IFGS, will be held at the Holiday Inn in Northglenn, Colo. Activities include a video room, a trivia contest, a costume ball and contest, a dealers' room, an art room and auction, and a con suite. Registration: \$18. Write to: IFGS CON '92, P.O. Box 100840, Denver CO 80250; or call Collin at: (303) 665-4082.

DER SÜDWEST-CON, May 28-31 *

This convention will be held in Karlsruhe, Germany. Events include board, role-playing, PBM, and tabletop games, with exhibitions and championship tournaments. Write to: Winni Dörge-Heller, Goldlackweg 6, D-7500 Karlsruhe 51, GERMANY 0721/888978; or to: Reinhard Müller, Willi-Andreas-Allee 3, D-7500 Karlsruhe 1, GERMANY

NASHCON '92, May 29-31 TN

This convention, hosted by the HMGS-Midsouth and Games Extraordinaire, will be held at the Music City Rodeway Inn in Nashville, Tenn. Events include miniatures tournaments, plus role-playing and board games. Other activities include a dealers' room, a game auction, FigFair, and Waterpistol Waterloo. Registration: \$15. Write to: NASHCON '92, c/o 2713 Lebanon Pike, Nashville TN 37214; or call: (615) 883-4800.

BEER AND PRETZELS III, May 30-31 *

This convention will be held at the Town Hall in Burton on Trent, Staffs, England. Events include board, role-playing, and tabletop gaming. Other activities include a dealers' area. Dealers are welcome. Registration: £3/day or £5/weekend at the door. Write to: Spirit Games, 98 Station St., Burton on Trent, Staffs, UNITED KINGDOM DE14 1BT.

MIGSCON XIII, May 30-31 *

This historical-gaming convention will be held at the Holiday Inn in Hamilton, Ontario. Events include WRC®, DBA®, ASL®, and BATTLETECH® games. Other activities include Napoleonic, Ancients, and American Civil War games. Write to: MIGSCON, c/o Apt. #8, 142 Caroline St. S., Hamilton, Ontario, CANADA L8P 3K9; or call Brian at: (416) 525-7730.

TSR Previews

Continued from page 64

The Crimson Legion

DARK SUN™ Prism Pentad, Book Two

by Troy Denning

Rikus, the gladiator-hero, is spurred on by the success of the revolt depicted in *The Verdant Passage*. Setting off with a ragtag army, he uses his brawn and his skill as a warrior to gain the legion some success, yet his inconsistent leadership could bring disaster.

Suggested Retail Price: \$4.95/£3.99

Product No.: 2403

In Sylvan Shadows

FORGOTTEN REALMS® Cleric Quintet, Book Two

by R. A. Salvatore

In this second installment of the five-part series, Cadderly must save the inhabitants of the beautiful elven forest, Shilmista. But not even Cadderly's powerful companions can insulate him from the trials of courage and character that he must face.

Suggested Retail Price: \$4.95/£3.99

Product No.: 8489

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Role-playing reviews

One thousand and one faces of fantasy

©1992 by Lester W. Smith

In the role-playing hobby, there is a natural tendency for some experienced players to become game masters, and for some experienced game masters to become writers and game designers. Frequently, players become game masters because they decide that they can do as well as or better than their current referee; at other times, it's because they feel a driving urge to create a game world of their own. As some of these new game masters acquire experience, this urge to create a campaign of their own grows into a drive to create their own role-playing rules and to publish their world as a game in its own right. Of course, some simply feel that they can do as well as or better than previous game designers.

This phenomenon occurs often enough that every year there is a new crop of role-playing games from companies hitherto unheard of. Small-press fantasy RPGs, in particular, show up regularly. Some of these games are little more than a rehash of previous systems, with the numbers shuffled, the character types and spell lists renamed, or a new sociopolitical background created to suit the designer's own particular tastes. Others, however, are truly inventive in at least one aspect and are worthy of examination, if for no other reason than to refresh our sense of possibility and to foster creativity in our own campaigns.

In this and subsequent reviews, I would like to introduce you to a number of fantasy role-playing games from small companies. Occasionally, I may cover related products, such as particularly interesting adventures and source books, or products from larger companies that seem to me to have received little attention. Without further ado, let's turn to the first item on the list.

FIFTH CYCLE* game

200-page softcover rule book
Shield Games

\$20

Design: Robert Bartels

Cover: Michael Newbanks

Illustrations: Michael Newbanks

The world: Central to the FIFTH CYCLE game's purpose is its history. A synopsis of that history follows:

First Cycle: Humans lived in caves and dressed in skins.

Second Cycle: Humans began to study magic, and its power raised great civilizations. Magic made mages separate from the rank and file of humanity, and eventually the mages seized control of the world.

Third Cycle: The Tyrant Mages ruled with an iron hand. During this period, the demihuman races were created as warrior servants for the mages. This cycle ended when the Tyrant Mages toyed with powers that destroyed them.

Fourth Cycle: Magic became anathema. Anyone found practicing it was put to the sword. A dark age of ignorance settled over the world.

Fifth Cycle: "Two hundred years ago," says the rule book, "King Ildebrand the Great of Jenmaryn, realizing that magic could not be destroyed, decided to bring it under his power." Ildebrand established the first school of magic in over three millennia. When the rest of the world marched against him and his school, he fought back and defeated them, building a great empire in the process. Among his acquisitions was the land of Dolphinia, a realm filled with myriad ancient ruins holding untold wealth and magic. Now, 200 years later, the archaeological exploration of Dolphinia remains one of the great-



est sources of the empire's continued progress.

That is the essence of the background for the fantasy world presented in the FIFTH CYCLE game, and it reveals the game's most valuable asset: a solid, plausible approach to fantasy. The history explains the existence of fantasy races, the reasons for conflict among those races, the existence of dungeons to explore, and the presence of magic and treasure lying in those dungeons.

In the FIFTH CYCLE game, the nonhuman races are being pushed steadily back into the less-desirable portions of the globe, and they're understandably peeved about it, so they raid and pillage the human lands. This makes things dangerous for archaeological expeditions (typically player-character groups), which must travel through unsettled regions to reach the sites of ancient temples and tombs. Of course, the temples and tombs are dangerous in their own right, holding items of wild and unpredictable magic from ages past. Adventuring groups that have not purchased a charter from the emperor have imperial patrols and agents to dodge as well.

An aside: In the arena of RPGs, "dungeon crawling" and "true" role-playing are often viewed as mutually exclusive. One of the best explanations I have seen of the situation was made over a decade ago by Glen Blacow, in an article published in *Different Worlds* magazine, issue #10. Blacow divided role-playing into four different aspects: power gaming, role-playing, war gaming, and story telling. Power gaming, he explained, primarily involves collecting loot and experience points. Role-playing focuses on acting out the personality of a particular character. War gaming concentrates on using the game rules to the best advantage, learning to accomplish the most effect with the minimal expenditure of resources. Story-telling focuses on the unfolding of a plot, with role-playing as the creation of a piece of fiction involving more than just the player characters.

Under Blacow's system, dungeon crawling and power gaming are synonymous, and what I above called "true" role-playing would involve primarily Blacow's second and fourth categories: role-playing and story-telling. The problem, according to Blacow, is that people who emphasize a particular aspect tend to look down their noses at those who emphasize each of the other three. Certainly, few people would disagree that "true" role-players often think of "dungeon crawling" as immature.

Without a doubt, "true" role-playing is fun—but regardless of any protestations to the contrary, "dungeon crawling" is fun as well (one reason for the popularity of computer role-playing games, I'd argue). That's why the FIFTH CYCLE game's background is so impressive: "Dungeon crawling" and "true" role-playing are brought firmly together and merged. Fun plus fun,

in this case, certainly equals fun.

The look: Physically, the game looks good. It is a perfect-bound book with a glossy cover, the back of which has a full-color map of Dolphinia. The front cover is primarily black, with a border composed of various pieces of line art on a rainbow-colored background. In places, this background color is too dark for the line art to be seen clearly, but the overall effect certainly conveys a sense of high fantasy. Inside, the book contains very legible text, clearly organized and easy to access, with simple charts and tables and numerous examples where necessary. The whole is broken up nicely with more line art, all black and white but adding to the feel of heroic fantasy.

Character creation: The FIFTH CYCLE game's mechanics are fairly straightforward. Character generation is a mixture of random rolls and player-directed design, with random rolls determining what the player has to work with; the player then decides exactly how to use those rolls. Attributes usually range from six to 20 points apiece, with an occasional number slightly higher or lower due to such things as racial modifiers. (A player character can be a human, elf, dwarf, wynoc—similar to a halfling—or glynna, a winged humanoid). The game uses a percentile, skill-based system, with skills collected into occupational packages. Skills outside your character's chosen occupation and family occupation can be purchased, but they cost more than those within. A character's actual chance of succeeding at a skill is a percentile number: Most skill use has a base chance of 50%, +5 per rank (skill level) of the user; skills used in adversarial situations (combat, for instance) have a -10 penalty to the base chance. On occasion, a player might be asked to make a percentile roll versus some multiple of a particular attribute. Both skills and attributes can be increased by the expenditure of experience points. When purchasing skills, a high related attribute reduces the cost per rank, while a low one increases the cost.

Combat: The combat rules are simple in concept but allow for fairly complex battle resolution. The turn sequence follows six distinct phases: initiative, glynna swooping attack, magic, missile, melee, and movement. During the first turn only, there is a possibility for one side or the other to gain surprise and receive a free turn of actions.

During the initiative phase, each side rolls (modified by the leader's Strategy skill) to determine which will have the advantage that turn. Next, any glynna in the air may make a swooping attack. During the magic phase, spells are prepared and cast (the caster's rank with a particular spell determines exactly how many turns it requires for preparation). In the missile phase, ranged weapons are fired, with both chance of hitting and damage done modified by range.

During the melee phase, attacks are made in a sequence determined by the attackers' Combat Tactics skill rank. The actual weapon skill modifier can be divided between offensive and defensive bonuses, as the user sees fit. Damage is applied to specific hit locations, with a chance of a special hit (extra damage points), critical hit (special results), or optional fumble. Armor and shields can reduce damage suffered, but they are heavy, and characters who try to carry too much weight find their effective Agility and Movement Rate values declining.

During the movement phase, figures spend their movement allowances (ranging from 1 to 6 for humanoids) one point at a time to jockey for position. The game assumes a hex grid is used, with each figure having three front and three rear hex sides.

There are special but easy rules for readying weapons, fighting with the non-dominant hand, making aimed attacks, charging, using two-handed weapons, handling NPC morale, determining falling and suffocation damage, damaging armor and shields, and recovering from wounds. An optional fatigue rule is also included.

Magic: To my mind, the magic system of a fantasy RPG is its most important part. A great magic system ought to be flexible enough to allow players to create characters similar to those from disparate works of fiction, but well-enough defined that referees find it easy to quickly build magic-using NPCs and to create items of wondrous, exceptional magic. If a magic system is overly rigid, it becomes, with repeated play, predictable and mundane—and a mundane magic system is a contradiction of terms. If, on the other hand, a magic system is too loose, its effects are left so entirely up to the referee that it can be exhausting to play.

The game's magic system walks the line between those two extremes well. Any character can learn Magic Training, Magic Resistance, and individual spells (allowing for Grey Mouser-type characters), but nonmages purchase them at an increased cost. The 16 magical colleges in the game are divided into two major realms—Physical Magic (that of the earth and elements) and Scholarly Magic (research of the Third Cycle)—and arranged into two concentric wheels. The game includes a total of 170 individual spells divided among these colleges, with adjacent colleges sharing certain common spells and colleges opposite one another on the wheel having opposing spells. Characters devote themselves to a particular college to begin the game, and as they grow can branch out ever further into adjacent colleges. The skill rank a character holds with a particular spell determines his basic chance of success (modified by the target's magic resistance). As spells are cast, they use up spell points, which are regenerated during rest. As a character gains ranks of experience with a particular spell, it be-

comes both easier and faster to cast. Rules are given for the creation of magical items, as well. Overall, the FIFTH CYCLE game's magic system has a pleasing internal logic that allows for widely differing mage characters while providing a consistent framework for referees to use.

Campaign material: The game's campaign material is short but to the point. Statistics are included for creatures both natural and fantastic, intelligent and animal, adequately answering a referee's needs for a beginning campaign. Guidelines are given for introducing players to the world, together with a number of suggestions for beginning adventures. The only thing significantly missing is a sample dungeon to explore. (For referees with any experience, this won't be a problem, but it is likely to leave a brand-new referee at a loss.) On the other hand, the economics section is one of the better ones I've encountered in a fantasy game, giving not only costs for equipment likely to be used during an adventure, but also for food, drink, and lodging, as well as typical wages for various occupations, all without growing too long or overly involved.

Evaluation: In my opinion, the FIFTH CYCLE game is a very satisfying product. From start to finish, it projects an aura of a well-thought-out, sensible fantasy system. By sensible, however, I do not mean mundane. With its magic-laden dungeons, multiple subhuman races, and winged humanoids, the FIFTH CYCLE game is definitely high fantasy, but it is fantasy with control and balance. Beginning characters are novices but they are nowhere near helpless, and the directions in which they can grow are multifold, lending a truly heroic sense to the game. Similarly, combat is very tactical, rather than abstract, but it is larger than life rather than mundanely realistic. In all, this is a system that I could be happy with for a long time to come.

Product line: As I write this, there are four supplemental products for the FIFTH CYCLE game (with more on the way):

Out of the Dark: Available only as part of a package with the basic game (together costing \$21.95), *Out of the Dark* is advertised as being adult in theme and possibly inappropriate for young children. It is, as the title page explains, a "clinical study of the intimate relationships of the various races." While not graphically sexual, the book is highly suggestive in places. It is also extremely silly, not at all in keeping with the FIFTH CYCLE game's well-thought rationale for the existence and behavior of the intelligent races. Considering the flak that role-playing sometimes draws, teen-aged gamers should be advised that parents may find *Out of the Dark* worrisome or offensive.

FIFTH CYCLE Game Screen: \$9. This is a trifold screen containing the most important tables from the basic game, packaged with a 24-page booklet that includes a nicely defined, nine-page, beginning ad-

venture and a collection of photocopyable character sheets, NPC sheets, archaeological charter, etc.

Dark Riders: \$9.95. This 64-page supplement describes the county of Markstrand and its capital city, detailing the area's principal locations and personalities, together with a 14-page adventure located in the area, seven pages of related adventure "seeds" (i.e. basic plots, without encounter statistics), and additional skill material for the basic game. It also introduces a contest to discover the location of the Crown of Wisdom, based upon clues in this and subsequent books, with a cash reward (ranging from \$100-\$500, depending upon how long it takes) to go to the winner.

Military Races: \$12. Another 64-page supplement, *Military Races* gives more details for the military races listed in the basic game and adds three new races as well. It also contains rules for creating player characters from all military races. Each race is accompanied by an adventure seed (i.e., a basic plot), and the book adds a new skill, wrestling, to the basic game's collection, while also adding detail to the originals artillery skill. Also included are errata and clarifications for some areas of the basic game rules (with further clues to the location of the Crown of Wisdom).

If you cannot find FIFTH CYCLE game products in your store, write to:

Shield Games
P.O. Box 211053
Columbus OH 43321

BARONY* game

42-page rule book, 39-page scenario design book, 52-page encounters book, cut-apart tarot deck, shrink-wrapped in a paper referee's screen.

Better Games \$11.99
Design: George Rahm and Joseph Hillmer
Cover: Todd Pickens
Illustrations: Todd Pickens

As fantasy role-playing games go, the BARONY game is quite unusual—so much so, in fact, that it may be best if I review it in an unusual manner. For that reason, let me describe the game in an order something like that in which a new buyer would experience it:

First impressions: Twelve dollars (minus a penny) is a fairly tempting price for a three-book, fantasy role-playing game, and as a shrink-wrapped package, the BARONY game is eye-appealing as well. The protective sleeve is a colorful piece of artwork. One face depicts the right side of a large, red dragon clutching an armored warrior in one taloned fist while being threatened by another warrior toting a spear. The other face of the sleeve depicts the dragon's left side, eye shut against a bolt of energy lancing from the hand of a cloaked magician. The colors are rich, and the execution—while not as slick as a Larry Elmore piece, for instance—is quite good, much better than one might expect

from small-press publications.

Upon breaking the shrink wrap, the buyer discovers that this sleeve, while it purports on the outside that it "Doubles as a Referee's Screen," is too thin to stand up like most referee's screens. However, it does have printed on the inside a collection of tables, charts, lists, and boxed sets of notes that seem intriguing and look like they will be helpful during play.

Contained within the package are three cardstock-covered books, a black-and-white flyer/catalog, and three cardstock sheets marked off into roughly 1 5/8" x 1 1/4" rectangles and printed with the names of the cards from a tarot deck. Each of the books has a black-and-white illustration on its front cover and a worksheet or character sheet on its back. The art on these covers is somewhat less adept than that on the referee screen, but still better than usual for small-press publications. The three books are titled *Conrad's Fantasy*, *Designing Fantasy Scenarios*, and *Encounters: Fantasy Scenarios*. A quick page-flip through them reveals double columns of small, dense type broken by occasional headings with no immediately apparent hierarchy. A slightly closer look reveals scattered lines of bold type, but these are almost lost against the normal type face. The *Conrad's Fantasy* book also has eight small interior illustrations. There are no chapter divisions indicated in any of the books.

Digging in: With nothing to indicate where to begin, the *Conrad's Fantasy* book seems the most logical place to start, mainly because of the "Free-Style Role-play by Better Games" line running down the left side of its cover illustration. Opening the book, the reader finds on the inside cover a basic table of contents, followed by a section titled "Philosophy of Free-Style Play," which says that the game is "designed for players who are experienced role-play gamers," and that it uses a "Quick and Dirty system, hence no effort has been made to explain the basic mechanics of dice rolling or player interaction."

Proceeding into the second paragraph, the reader discovers a strange item of English usage: The word "referee" is always capitalized, and it is never preceded by an article (e.g.: "... though Referee has a great deal of influence") except when used as a possessive adjective (e.g. "the Referee's delusion"). I'll reserve more comments about the game's usage of English until later, in the "Evaluation" section.

The mechanics: On the next page (page two), after a description of what players do and what "Referee" does (despite the introduction's note that the game assumes experienced players), we learn that characters begin the game as one of four occupations, "Footmen, Bumpkins, Street Urchins or Students." We also learn that there are six traits for characters: "Bold, Cleverness, Energetic, Magical, Methodical, and Ruggedness," but that there is no measure of these traits—you

either have them or you do not. A description of each trait comes next, followed (on page three) by a set of tables from which you choose one trait for your character and roll 1d8 (though the game does not specifically say so, the only dice it uses are eight-sided) to learn what other traits your character possesses, if any.

Page four is devoted to a chart with hand-drawn arrows detailing the possible paths of character advancement from the initial four occupations all the way to the two ultimate occupations: "Dark Lord . . . Supreme principle of Evil" or "Delta Zaire . . . Most powerful wizard of the Twenty Zaires." It's an interesting and unusual advancement system. Each stage has its own title and a parenthetical list of number and type of skills learned upon attaining it. Each time the characters complete a mission (adventure), they advance one stage. An optional advancement system requires that characters achieve a collection of "ignobles" —each ignoble being basically a minor goal such as performing a heroic act or doing something exceptionally clever in a mission—before advancing a stage. The progression arrows allow a character to go from beginning stage to final stage in as little as eight jumps, or to wander back and forth across the four primary paths (basically soldier, duelist, thief, and mage), taking as many as 20 or so steps, picking up lots of skills along the way but not quickly attaining any great rank in society. I've never seen its like in any other game, and I find it completely intriguing.

After a short description of each occupation, we come (on page six) to the "Equipment and Weapons" section, where we learn that there is no equipment list: characters just carry whatever seems appropriate on their missions, with a skill roll chance of forgetting to pack something important. Nor are there any weapons: Characters do damage based upon the combat skills they choose ("Hero's Great Weapon," "Ranged Power Blow," "Foul Blow," etc.), and players can envision their characters carrying whatever weapon they like best. Again, I'm intrigued. I've never seen anyone approach role-playing in this way, but I like it, as it shows a definite emphasis on story-telling.

Skills in this game fall into four general categories: Gifted (the character has a "gift" for the skill), Learned (someone taught the character), Practiced and Patient (the skill takes lots of practice), and Physical and Combat (related to physical abilities). If the distinctions seem somewhat unclear, that's because they are, and the distinctions among skills often seem even more ambiguous and arbitrary. Still, the system fits the concept that this game is a set of guidelines for role-playing rather than hard-and-fast rules. Skill tests are rated among three main degrees of difficulty; Simple, Difficult, and Tasking, with a special fourth degree, Limit, reserved for times when the seemingly impossible is

being attempted. Task resolution is resolved with a 2d8 roll, and a simple chart translates the exact roll into a degree of success, again enhancing story-telling. Characters can gain bonuses to the dice rolls by buying the same skill more than once.

Combat follows a three-phase sequence, with player characters deciding to act either in the first or last phase, and their enemies acting in the middle phase. Acting first is aggressive and does more damage, but it prevents the characters from blocking or dodging their opponents' attacks. Acting in the third phase, on the other hand, allows characters to respond to their opponents' actions before launching their own.

Neither characters nor monsters have hit points. Rather, they have a list of adjectives, ranked from least to most impressive, then arranged into four columns that correspond to the severity of wounds that can be delivered: Bruise/Cut, Bleeder, Vicious, and Spirit. The tougher a creature, the more adjectives it has. When damage is done, it begins marking off the lowest-ranked adjectives in the appropriate column. Once a column is marked completely off, further hits of that type are applied to the next column up, and when a creature's most impressive adjective has been marked off, the creature is dead. Again, the emphasis on story-telling is obvious. With just a little bit of practice, referees can create monsters on the spot by simply describing them in terms of the listed adjectives. The game includes a full page-and-a-half of combat examples to make the use of these rules clear.

Magic: It is only to be expected that a game that deviates as far from the norm as this one does would have an unusual magic system. Magic in *Conrad's Fantasy* is as simple as wishing that something would happen. Most characters avoid doing so, however, because magical effects warp the natural laws of the universe, and those laws tend to snap back at the magic-maker. Those who are powerful with magic are characters who can control this magical backlash, and doing so requires the expenditure of magic points. To cast spells, a player tells the referee what effect is desired, and what laws the character intends to violate to achieve that effect (six laws are defined in the game). The referee judges whether or not the plan seems reasonable, perhaps adding a violation or two to the list, then decides to what degree the laws are being violated. The player then makes a skill roll for each of those laws, with the difficulty level being set by the degree of violation. Depending upon the degree of success, the character may have to pay magic points after one or more of the rolls, or a roll may have to be made on the major mishap tables.

The major mishap tables are one of the most entertaining things in the game. Mages who roll a major mishap when violating the Force Law, for instance, can

experience results ranging from being picked up and tossed around the room, to being permanently removed from the world by one of the Twenty Zaires, who spend their lives trying to keep magical bollixes from destroying all natural order and ushering in complete chaos.

To get the new referee started, the game includes multiple examples of spell effects, the laws they violate, and the degree to which they violate them. Rules are also included for mind-to-mind duels between mages.

Dragon battles: Another unusual facet of this game is its treatment of battles with dragons. A full 10 pages of the 40-page rule book are devoted to tables of dragon battle results, as generated by tarot cards. When characters first encounter a dragon, they begin the battle in its "Zone of Terror," where they are subject to its breath. Players draw cards to generate what happens to them there and what skill rolls may be used to avoid death or to attack the dragon. From the "Zone of Terror," each surviving character will move to different locations on the dragon, based upon card draws, where they again attempt to survive while attacking the dragon. Even when the dragon dies, the players must draw cards to see what happens to their characters during its "Dance of Death." The result is a very rich story-telling battle, with characters leaping aside from the jaws of the dragon, clutching its chin hairs while swinging swords at its throat, clambering about on its back looking for a weak place in the armor in which to thrust a weapon, then leaping aside to avoid its violent death throes.

Missions and encounters: So far, I've concentrated pretty exclusively on discussing the *Conrad's Fantasy* book. *Designing Fantasy Scenarios* is filled with tables for generating details of missions by drawing tarot cards. *Encounters: Fantasy Scenarios* is similarly filled with tables for use with tarot cards, but in this case devotes itself to generating encounters the characters can have along the way—some relating specifically to their present mission, others relating to individuals in the party, and still others having significance largely in terms of an overall campaign. The listings in these two books are very inventive, and they could easily be used with almost any other fantasy RPG.

Evaluation: Considering how many new fantasy role-playing games simply follow in the footsteps of those that have gone before them, the BARONY game is amazing in its inventiveness. Unfortunately, that inventiveness suffers somewhat from the game's lack of polish. In places, the product shows a decided lack of a developer's hand (most particularly in the arbitrariness and lack of clarity of its skill list), and it reveals a pervasive lack of an editor. I hate to sound like a language snob, but the text ranges from mildly difficult to nigh impossible to read in places, and it evinces a near complete lack

of awareness of the simplest technical writing tricks to make text easy to comprehend. The thing that bothers me most about this is that the creative ideas included in the game *deserve* better presentation. Sadly, it wouldn't have taken that much effort to give them one.

Don't let this language commentary put you off. The BARONY game should be part of every serious role-player's library. The magic system, dragon battle system, mission generator, and encounter generator can be adapted very easily to any other fantasy role-playing game, and that FRPG will be the richer for it. Even the character and combat systems from the *Conrad's Fantasy* book are worth playing as a diversion from the norm now and again. Despite my complaints about the game's presentation, I highly recommend the BARONY game.

STUFF O' LEGENDS* game

32-page rule book

Better Games

\$5.95

Design: George Rahm and Joseph Hillmer

Cover: Todd Pickens

Illustrations: Todd Pickens

The STUFF O' LEGENDS game isn't really a fantasy role-playing game, at least not in the sense that the other games mentioned here are, but it's not quite a board game, either. It's something between the two, a "Duo-Play* Action & Adventure" game, and it's fun.

In STUFF O' LEGENDS game, players take the parts of ancient heroes preparing for the Trojan War. "Duo-Play" means that players take opposing sides, some playing Trojan heroes and others playing Achaeans. In each yearly turn, each character performs one of several actions: 1) train NPC heroes; 2) perform diplomacy at a polis (city-state); 3) travel to an island of adventure; or 4) other (which will be made clear in a moment). The ostensible purpose of all of these actions is to either boost one side's hero count for the time when the war finally commences, or to decrease the enemy's hero count. For example, successfully training NPCs boosts the number of NPC heroes a polis is worth when it shows up at the war. Diplomacy allows an opportunity to talk an enemy polis into neutrality (lowering the enemy NPC hero count) or a neutral polis into aligning with you (boosting your own NPC hero count). Travel to the islands provides a chance to wrest wondrous, gifts from mythical monsters or gain boons from the gods, each of which enhances a side's value at the war. It is also quite possible (even common) for heroes to be cursed or die on these islands, which is one of the reasons for the "other" category of action. For instance, characters might discover the isle of Hypnos, the god of sleep, and have to plot "sleep" every turn until the sound of the final battle at Troy wakens them.

There are four different types of heroes, each of which has a particular strength: Arms is best at training and fighting; Personality is best at diplomacy; Agility and Brawn are roughly equal at fighting but have advantages in island encounters.

Travel from location to location doesn't take any actual time (remember, the game turns are one year long), so players merely plot where they want their characters to be and the characters show up there. If enemy characters show up at the same location, those that don't hide (thereby giving up their turn) duel to the death before completing their plotted action. The chances for successfully training NPCs or conducting diplomacy are easier with smaller poleis and more difficult with larger ones, but diplomacy can be conducted for up to three consecutive turns, with a bonus accruing each turn. (A character who is unsuccessful for three consecutive turns is cast out of the city, as the citizens have grown weary of the same old speech.) Of course, hanging around one location for several consecutive turns is a good way to attract enemy characters to come and kill you.

While diplomacy and training are arguably the best ways to increase your side's NPC hero count, the real excitement is in having island adventures. The game book comes with a map of the region, with every island named, so that players can plot where their characters are going. The contents of each island change from game to game, however: They are randomly drawn from a standard deck of playing cards, with each card representing a different encounter on a table included in the book. Here it is possible to fight a hydra and steal its loot, find the entrance to Hades and rescue dead heroes, or be killed and eaten by the Sphinx.

Because it is relatively easy for characters to die in the game, each player typically runs a stable of three of them. When a character dies, a roll is made on a table to determine what effect the story of the hero's death has on other people. Such fear might be caused to the hero's side that some poleis abandon the alliance; at the other extreme, the gods might raise the character from the dead, and his tale of glory might inspire independent poleis to join the hero's side.

While all of this is great fun, eventually the Trojan War itself will break out. (Heroes can hasten its beginning by spending their turns just outside Troy, agitating for battle, another "other" action.) During the war, each side rolls 1d8 × 1d8, hoping for a result that remains under its NPC hero count. As turns go by, the hero counts deteriorate steadily (representing the attrition of battle), and the dice roll becomes more and more difficult to achieve, until one side fails while the other succeeds and thereby wins the war, ending the game. (It is also possible for the Achaeans to attempt the old Trojan Horse ploy.)

Players on the losing side then roll for

the final outcome of each of their heroes at the battle, with possible results including such things as fleeing and being noted as a coward (true or not) in the poems, dying but being noted as honorable in the poems, surviving as a slave of the victors, or surviving to start a new kingdom. Heroes of either side who were absent when the battle ended (possibly still out adventuring on the isles, for instance) must be rolled for on another table to determine whether they commit suicide in shame, become bandit raiders, or other such things.

The game is full of optional rules for enhanced play. Heroes can, for instance, be accompanied by a scholar (a sage or healer) to aid them in their adventures. It is also possible for a player to designate a home polis for his character, giving his hero die-roll bonuses in that polis, but reducing his level of victory if the home polis ends the game neutral or aligned with the enemy. It is even possible for players to take the part of Persian heroes to add another twist to diplomacy.

Physically, the game consists of a single book with a heavy paper cover. Players will need a deck of cards, one or more eight-sided dice, pencils, and scratch paper (or access to a photocopier) in order to play. The rules are well organized for easy access during play, with the primary tables reproduced on the back cover and player and island sheets on the insides of the cover. The island map itself is very easy to find in the center of the book, and the table by which the cards are translated is only a couple of pages away. The smaller, less frequently used tables are each with their appropriate rules section and can be a bit tough to find until players become familiar with their locations, but this is a minor inconvenience.

Evaluation: The STUFF O' LEGENDS game is a heck of a lot of fun to play. It makes a great beer-and-pretzels or convention game and requires almost no effort at all to teach people the basics. Hard-core war gamers should be warned that a character can win or lose on a single bad die roll or card draw, and even the best strategist can lose the final war on a single die roll. On the other hand: 1) A good strategy does tend to pan out; 2) Even if your side loses the war, one or more of your characters can still end the game as winners in the legends; and 3) Even if you lose, you'll have fun.

Buy it—it's a party. If your local retailer doesn't have copies of the BARONY or STUFF O' LEGENDS games, you can write for a catalog from:

Better Games

P.O. Box 11424

Burbank CA 91510-1424

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Ladders to the Sky

Lift your AD&D® game characters into a SPELLJAMMER™ campaign!

by Allen Varney

You're walking through the marketplace one afternoon when something hurtles down from the sky and strikes the ground before you. As the dust clears, you see it's a huge ship's anchor with a rope stretching straight up into a clear sky. What do you do?

In my AD&D® SPELLJAMMER™ adventure, *SJA1 Wildspace*, that anchor rope pulls the player characters directly into fantasy space, and fast. The rope works like a ladder that the player characters

climb to get into the sky—and into the adventure. The SPELLJAMMER boxed set's Lorebook of the Void lists almost a dozen more such ladders—or adventure hooks—to spelljamming space.

There are as many ways to launch heroes into the void as there are stars on a crystal sphere. Choose a ladder according to the way the heroes will climb it. Should they reach wildspace after diligent search or by accident? Voluntarily or unwillingly? The answers influence the adventure that follows.

Accidental ladders

"What happened? Weren't we just on the ground a moment ago?" Sure, but the heroes read the wrong scroll, they stepped through that hidden gate, or something large swooped down on them from the sky.

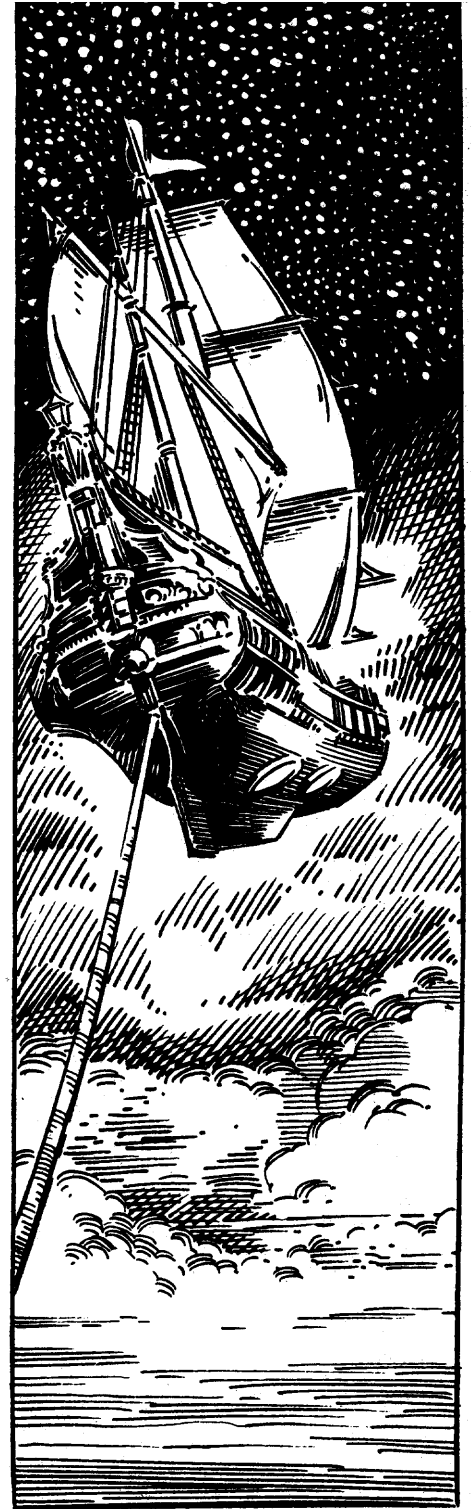
Sudden entry into space gives the DM absolute control over the heroes' circumstances and options. This implies a linear scenario, at least at first, and probably minimal resources available to the characters—i.e., whatever they were carrying when their world dropped away. The characters should be low-level, so they can't just pop back home at will.

Accidental ladders offer major surprise value, so they work best on players unfamiliar with fantasy space. The adventure should stress the sense of wonder, the opening of new horizons, and lots of graceful exposition. It should also probably be rather brief and seldom venture beyond local wildspace. The goal should involve a return home, since the PCs will worry about it. A couple of sample accidents follow.

Mountain seed

The PCs return from an expedition to a deep dungeon under a mountain. They carry a peculiar magical rock that changes color with the geology of the terrain they cross. Analysis says it is a *mountain seed*, an essential nub that can grow an entire peak under certain circumstances.

Try to stage this revelation in the wilderness, away from important landmarks.



Whether by the analysis itself or by accident, something (a spell? a drop of water? moonlight? evil thoughts?) activates the seed. The ground erupts beneath the characters' feet, and suddenly they're standing on the flat top of a mesa a quarter-mile high and growing!

Assuming the campaign includes a really powerful wizard or interfering deity, surviving citizens at ground level entreat this great power to get rid of the new stone pillar. The entity responds by raising the pillar into space, carrying the PCs with it. While the heroes debate ways to get back down, the long stone column radiates such magic that it attracts a passing spelljammer.



Either the ship's owner promises to take the PCs down (but kidnaps them instead), or he offers the heroes escape from all the angry folks below. Either way, the characters are off into wildspace. Who knows? Perhaps some subterranean monster was engulfed in the *mountain seed's* growth, and it crept aboard the spelljammer. It may even carry a mountain seed!

Mountain seed: 4,500 XP value. The seeds are extremely rare, but because of their obscurity they are not especially prized. They are always found singly; their origin is unknown, though they are ancient. Some sages might pay huge sums of money for a seed, and military commanders with a penchant for clever tactics may perceive a seed's potential surprise value when activated in an enemy fortress. Naturally, such a commander may require its owner to take the seed into the fortress.

Teleportation chamber

The *Tome of Magic* supplement offers DMs a ready-made ladder in the form of the *teleportation chamber* (page 145). Characters walk into this mirror-tiled room, touch a small green sphere on the wall, picture a destination, and suddenly are there—except, in this case, they didn't want to go.

The heroes were visiting a minor noble, Count Cyrus Ravian, who promised them work. Ravian lured them into this room with an illusion or other bait while hiding, invisible, outside. When he touched a concealed sphere in the doorway, he *teleported* the heroes far across their crystal sphere to the brig of a spelljamming slave galley, a deathspider of the evil neogi.

The slavers have bought the traitorous Count Ravian's loyalty. They left the *teleportation chamber* to assure a steady stream of new fuel for their lifejammer helm (detailed in the SPELLJAMMER boxed set's *Concordance of Arcane Space*, pages 38-39). The PCs endure captivity long enough to learn about fantasy space, perhaps from a human guard who cooperates with the slavers to save his own skin. Once they know the situation, let the heroes escape when the neogi ship runs into a battle with an elven man-o-war.

If the escaping heroes do their part to defeat the neogi, the man-o-war captain is willing to drop them off at their homeworld—with many adventures along the way, no doubt. (Does the guard escape to cause the heroes further trouble, or does he become their *de facto* guide through arcane space?) When the PCs return home, they can settle their grudge against Count Ravian before departing once more for space.

Teleportation chamber: 10,000 XP value.

Ladders of opportunity

"Free passage into space, just for cleaning the ether vermin out of the galley? Where do I sign?"

If the heroes are impulsive adventurers who have seen so much of their homeworld that they yawn at standard perils, and especially if they're flat broke and ready for the first offer that flies along, let them choose space.

When they fall into space by accident, characters mainly want to get home. However, given time to prepare before they launch (pick up a lucky trolls foot, arrange to have the plants watered, and write a will), heroes display real commitment to the adventure. Even if they have to choose on the spur of the moment, the very act of choosing makes players feel more comfortable.

Like accidental ladders, opportunity ladders probably imply a prearranged story line. But now, when they carry more than the armor on their backs, the PCs feel (pardon the expression) room to breathe. Without the persistent desire to get home, they can afford to range farther and visit other worlds or the phlogiston. This kind of ladder works best for an experienced, capable party that has little fear of the unknown. A few ways opportunity can knock are given here.

Gadabout field

The second SPELLJAMMER *Monstrous Compendium*, MC9, includes a spacegoing plant called the "gadabout." Elves breed this handy winged plant for personal transport through wildspace. As written, these scarce and highly prized plants do not grow on planets, but this adventure changes that.

While traveling in the wilderness, the PCs happen upon a field of plants they've never seen before—gadabouts. These have prehensile branches and butterfly-like wings; one or two float into the sky as the PCs watch. Highly adventurous heroes may jump aboard the next few plants on the spot. If so, they're on their way to a SPELLJAMMER campaign, but most characters show less courage or more prudence. This simple adventure hook should persuade the PCs to jump aboard:

Near the gadabout field, a pack of low-level bandits preys on travelers, using the plants to fly away. The thugs know nothing of the gadabout's history or function, nor of wildspace; they simply jump from forest to forest. Using various one-shot magical illusions (scrolls of *audible glamor* and *phantasmal force*, for example), the bandits create a "ghost" in the gadabout field. The false spirit begs the PCs to lay it to rest by piling treasure among the plants' leaves.

Concoct appropriate details that convince the PCs to comply. Once they do, the bandits lift into the air with the treasures, laughing and throwing leaves or garbage down on the heroes. If the PCs don't have the means to fly, they can jump onto other gadabouts and follow.

Assume that a PC's attack damages a bandit's gadabout (or vice versa), or the bandits use a last-ditch magical item; either way, one or more gadabouts fly out of

control straight into space. In rescuing the runaway, the PCs learn a little about gravity planes and air envelopes, and they may even run into an outpost like the Rock of Bral (from the SPELLJAMMER boxed set). If they return home, they may attract an elven spelljammer whose crew wants to know where they got those valuable gadabouts! In any case, the PCs are on their way to a wildspace adventure.

Gadabout: Int non; AL N; AC 7; MV 36; HD 2; THAC0 n/a; #AT n/a; Dmg nil; SZ M (4'-6' wide); ML n/a; XP nil; MC9. Sale value: 2500 gp.

Vermin busters

They look like little multicolored, semi-transparent jellyfish, but they float down from the sky and drift through town like dandelion seeds. Borne not by the wind but by some impalpable current, their ghostly bodies pass easily through walls and ceilings (and people!), but they congregate by dozens around any magical item, leeching away its magical energy within minutes. What are they? Ether vermin!

A vermin-infested spelljammer has docked a mile or so above the campaign city to refresh its air and clean out the infestation. The ether vermin drift down to the city and cause general panic by draining magic (see later). The call goes out for heroes to determine where these things came from.

By *fly* spells, a *carpet of flying*, a hot-air balloon, or what have you, the heroes ascend and meet the spelljammer responsible for this, a small tradesman run by the magic-locating firm of Gaspar Reclamations (the SPELLJAMMER boxed set's *Lorebook of the Void*, page 53). The captain, a young, ladylike mage named Kiria Bator, apologizes for the vermin and soon sets matters right. She then makes an offer: This ship was crewed partly by golems, and the ether vermin have rendered these useless (along with most of the cargo). Would the PCs be interested in signing on to keep the vermin population down?

Ether vermin: Int non-; AL N; AC 7; MV 3; HD 3; hp 12; THAC0 n/a; #AT n/a; Dmg nil; SA magic draining; SZ T (1" long); ML n/a; XP nil.

Whether in wildspace or an atmosphere, these unintelligent parasites drift silently in swarms of 1d100 members, as if on some imperceptible "ether" distinct from ordinary wind. Usually dormant and pale white, they revive and flicker through many colors in the presence of magic or spell-casters. When vermin contact a magical item, the swarm feeds on the item's energy at the rate of one charge, spell level, "plus to hit," or other component per round (one minute). Permanent magical items are drained after one hour. Minor spelljamming helms are drained in a week, major helms in a month. Artifacts and relics are unaffected. (Alternately, the vermin can consume magic in the same way as does the symbiont, from MC7, the first SPELLJAMMER *Monstrous Compendium*.)

Once the vermin have drained at least 10 charges or spell levels, they spawn 1d4 new swarms, then perish. The new swarms float dormant for one day before they can feed.

Ether vermin swarms are immune to all but area-effect attacks. Fire, cold, electricity, and poison kill them normally. *Remove curse* is useless, but *dispel magic*, a *wand of negation*, and similar anti-magical effects destroy one entire vermin swarm. Many wildspace creatures feed on the vermin, such as flow barnacles (from SJR1 *Lost Ships*); focoids, plasmoids, and slinkers (from MC7); and feesu, firebirds, gossamers, greatswans, gullions, space owls, and skullbirds (from MC9).

Friar Erasmus beckons

A PC cleric pays a courtesy visit to the local priests of the Sphere of Travelers. At their shrine, the ranking priest mentions that this is the first anniversary of the disappearance of good Friar Erasmus the Explorer. Erasmus vanished a year ago, leaving a short note: "Do not worry. I start on a pilgrimage far beyond the paths we have yet traveled."

A glowing portal opens suddenly before the shrine. Through it the PCs see an elderly priest trapped in the wreckage of a ship deck. The local priests identify him: It's Friar Erasmus! "Friends, help me!" he cries, then falls back weakly. The portal begins to waver and will soon vanish.

A year ago, Friar Erasmus hitched a ride on a passing spelljammer that stopped for supplies. He has traveled wildspace, but now he's run afoul of pirates—the evil mind flayers. Before one of the illithids' umber hulk servants carries him away, Erasmus has had just enough time to cast this *dimensional folding* spell (P4; *Tome of Magic*, page 77).

The heroes have only one round to pass through the gate and pursue the kindly Erasmus. (Don't inflict aging effects for, passing through the portal, because Erasmus knows this destination well.) If they fail to follow, Erasmus can cast the same spell again a day later, this time from the brig of the mind flayers' nautiloid ship.

Heroes who pass through the gate might quickly fend off the mind flayer assault and rescue Friar Erasmus. Then they can wander freely through wildspace and learn about spelljamming before Friar Erasmus sends them home. If you want this ladder to be more than a straightforward story hook, here is another approach:

Priests among the mind flayers have set a trap for Friar Erasmus. They have used divination spells to determine the destination of the unwitting friar's *dimensional folding*. Now the mind flayers, using spelljammers or perhaps a *dimensional folding* spell of their own, can travel to the heroes' homeworld and plunder it!

The heroes can learn about this plot by defeating and interrogating the captors of Friar Erasmus. While they do so, other

illithids are escaping to their asteroid lair, where the crossover to the PCs' homeworld is to take place. The PCs must track the illithids to their asteroid, bypass its defenses, then defeat the powerful monsters who were to pass through the gate or launch the spelljamming ship. Victorious heroes can use the illithids' transport device to return home.

Ladders of intent

High-level heroes can pull themselves into space by their own bootstraps. Here are some appropriate bootstraps—er, ladders for characters who are really committed to reaching space.

One approach lets the heroes locate a lost spelljamming ship, perhaps stranded in the wilderness or even stored deep in a dungeon. (Good luck getting it out!) When the PCs gain the ship through their own efforts, they naturally want to take it out for a spin. For adventures of this kind, see James Wards "Jammin'" in DUNGEON® issue #21 and Shonn Everett's "Visitors From Above" in DUNGEON issue #28.

Climbing the ladder of intent, unlike those ladders outlined before, is a challenge to the characters. Characters who want to get to wildspace are obviously ready to face obstacles and are probably stubborn in the face of a challenge. These characters have very good to excellent resources.

Given all this, the ladder of intent implies a vivid, highly desirable goal that the PCs can pursue in any number of ways because they have any number of devices that offer a path to success. The difficulty of the goal implies a wide-ranging adventure that covers a lot of wildspace, and likely the phlogiston or other crystal spheres as well. The rewards suit the effort involved.

Here are two ways the heroes can build their own ladders to the sky:

Putting out a thumb

In arcane space, merchant trading companies sometimes engage in fierce competition. One such feud involves an unscrupulous merchant prince named Bardon Benz (F5, NE, 24 hp) and a small-time rival contractor called Noriole.

Noriole, a female half-elf (W4, LN, 10 hp), works mainly for the organization called Clevar's Gimcracks & Sundries (Lorebook of the Void, page 53). She is Clevar's sole supplier of beautiful and valuable trinkets called "Nori crystals," which change color magically according to the holder's mood and desires. Noriole has made great profits as exclusive purveyor of Nori crystals, and many rivals would pay dearly to know her source of supply. Bardon Benz has concocted a scheme to learn her secret.

Benz arranged for Noriole to discover a magical silver headband that works like a *robe of eyes* (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 178). She has taken the headband for

her own and wears it constantly. Unknown to her, the headband is psychically linked to a second band, such that the second bands wearer sees everything the first's wearer sees. Benz planned to spy on Noriole by wearing the second band himself, thereby finding her supplier of Nori crystals.

Unfortunately, a daring thief plundered Benz's spelljammer before Noriole's secret was discovered. By the hidden twisting route of fences and thieves' guilds, Benz's headband has found its way to the PCs' homeworld—with Benz and a hired crew of slavers in close pursuit.

The heroes, having defeated an otherwise routine band of thieves, find the headband. It gives them mysterious glimpses of a mosquito ship (Lorebook of the Void, pages 16-17) in space, as seen from Noriole's point of view. Noriole occasionally removes the headband, breaking the connection—but not before the PCs glimpse the mosquito's cargo of Nori crystals and other wondrous treasures of space. Whet the players' appetites. Make them want to get to whatever place they're seeing!

A learned sage or friendly lunatic offers the heroes their first information about fantasy space. Extended analysis of the headband reveals a way to signal and communicate with the other bands wearer. When the heroes learn how to do this, they can talk to Noriole across the vast distances of this crystal sphere. Presumably the heroes want to learn about space and the treasures waiting there.

Communication is difficult, however. No more than a few static-filled exchanges go through before the headbands grow so hot that the wearers must remove them. The main result is that Noriole, curious about the other headband, decides to set course for the PCs' homeworld and meet them. Shortly after they make arrangements to rendezvous, both headbands burn out from the stress and become useless.

Unfortunately, the two-way communication has also alerted Bardon Benz, who procured a special magical item for this purpose. (If you wish, this could be a third headband, undetectably linked to the other two in a "daisy chain.") Shortly after the heroes rendezvous with Noriole, Benz attacks. Aiding him is a large party of slavers from the evil organization called the Chainmen (Lorebook of the Void, pages 53-54). There is one Chainman per PC, and all are fighters of sufficient strength to give the heroes a tough battle.

Bardon has arranged for the Chainmen to take Noriole and whoever is with her, after he learns Noriole's secret; he has given up on the stealthy approach. The Chainmen, for their part, intend to turn on Bardon after the battle and take him as one more slave!

Assuming the PCs win the struggle, the grateful Noriole can carry the PCs in her mosquito ship to some convenient way

Wizard SPELL CARDS

Errata

When it comes to time- and labor-saving devices, the new AD&D® *Wizard Spell Cards* are the best invention since the 10-hit-die *fireball*. In fact, we were so thrilled with the self-evident convenience of these cards that we sent them out the door without any explanation of a few minor details that you're probably interested in—namely, the key to the icons that appear on the front of each card. While it's pretty simple to figure out what the icons represent (the corresponding wizard school is printed right there on the same side of the card as the icon, and the elemental icons speak for themselves), we thought we'd better cut you an official key.

When the AD&D *Priest Spell Cards* hit the store shelves this June, we'll be sure to include an extra card with the key to the priestly sphere icons, but in that box we'll also include a card for the wizard spells. Until then, here's a temporary

key for you:



= **Abjuration**



= **Alteration**



= **Conjunction/Summoning**



= **Enchantment/Charm**



= **Illusion/Phantasm**



= **Invocation/Evocation**



= **Lesser/Greater Divination**



= **Necromancy**



= **Wild Magic**



= **Air**



= **Earth**



= **Fire**



= **Water**

station in space, such as the Rock of Bral. There she sells her current cargo of Nori crystals for a price high enough to buy a larger ship. She is willing to join with the PCs in a consortium to transport greater quantities of Nori crystals.

Why join with them? Because her supply of the crystals, hidden in a distant asteroid belt, is now being menaced by spacegoing monsters. The PCs have many fights ahead of them before they find the crystals and protect their supply. By then, they will be well launched on their spelljamming campaign.

Dream haunting

This ladder works best for characters with great resources. On their homeworld, the heroes encounter some benign, amusing, spacegoing animal, such as the monkeylike chattur (from MC7). The heroes adopt the creature, or vice versa. It gravitates toward a PC with shipbuilding experience, if possible; otherwise, the creature chooses the PC whom you judge to be most adventurous and curious.

In the night, the creature curls up with its chosen PC. The PC experiences a vivid dream of building a ship, one unlike any seen on this world. (Use a spelljammer design of your choice.) The powerful dream gives the hero detailed, explicit procedures for constructing the ship. Then the dream shifts to beautiful, slightly surreal visions of spelljamming. Describe these in attractive terms, as with the previous ladder. Upon awakening, the PC has exact knowledge of how to build the spelljammer.

This vision was caused by an improvement of the *dream* spell (W5; *Player's Handbook*, page 168). The modified spell (W6) differs in duration of effect: Every night thereafter, the sleeping hero receives the same dream again, each time getting a bit more information about spelljamming and arcane space. This continues whether or not the creature is present. The dream series should inspire the hero with intense longing, if not an actual obsession, to build and pilot the ship seen in his dreams.

Once the PCs build the ship, they must find a helm. This might require an elaborate search leading to some inaccessible stronghold; or, upon the ship's completion, the PCs may receive a mysterious visitor—an arcane, one of the inscrutable retailers of space. In the most mysterious way, the arcane can negotiate a price and provide a helm. Perhaps the heroes find the helm, inexplicably, in a PCs' own stronghold!

After installing the helm and riding into space, the dreaming PC receives new sleep-visions. These guide the party through various space encounters and obstacles to the dreams' sender—the owner of the animal.

The creature is a well-trained pet belonging to a wizard named Thorophilus Introvias. Thorophilus (W12, LG, 38 hp) lived on the PCs' homeworld until recently, when he stumbled upon a crashed

spelljammer, repaired it, and rode it into space. (For Thorophilus, you can substitute any powerful NPC wizard with a strong code of honor in your campaign.)

In his travels, the wizard discovered a giant unfinished structure hidden in a comet. Investigating, Thorophilus encountered a lawful-neutral lich. The lich overwhelmed the visitor's defenses and *geased* Thorophilus to assist it in finishing the structure—the work of generations!

The structure, resembling a giant shallow dish in the comet's surface, is the lich's attempt to attain demigodhood. When completed, the dish will concentrate the sun's energy at a focal point; the lich, hovering at that point, will supposedly gain the energy to reach the next stage of existence.

The *geas* prevents Thorophilus from actively seeking rescue, but he could plant his *improved dream* spell in a willing carrier, his pet, and send it forth. By this circuitous method, Thorophilus lures the PCs into space. If they can remove the *geas*, he can aid them in overcoming the lich. First, of course, they must avoid the lich's *geas* themselves.

Improved dream: This is a 6th-level wizard spell, as per the 5th-level *dream* spell but with two differences: First, the caster need not describe a specific recipient. Second, the caster may divide one dream into several overlapping episodes (up to one episode per level of the caster). Each episode repeats in the victim's dreams, once per night, until a defined circumstance invokes the dream's next episode. If the circumstance does not occur, the current episode expires after the caster's level in days.

As with the *dream* spell, the caster may send the dream by a willing messenger. The messenger may choose the recipient if the caster specifies none. There is no limit on how long the dream may be carried before it reaches a recipient.

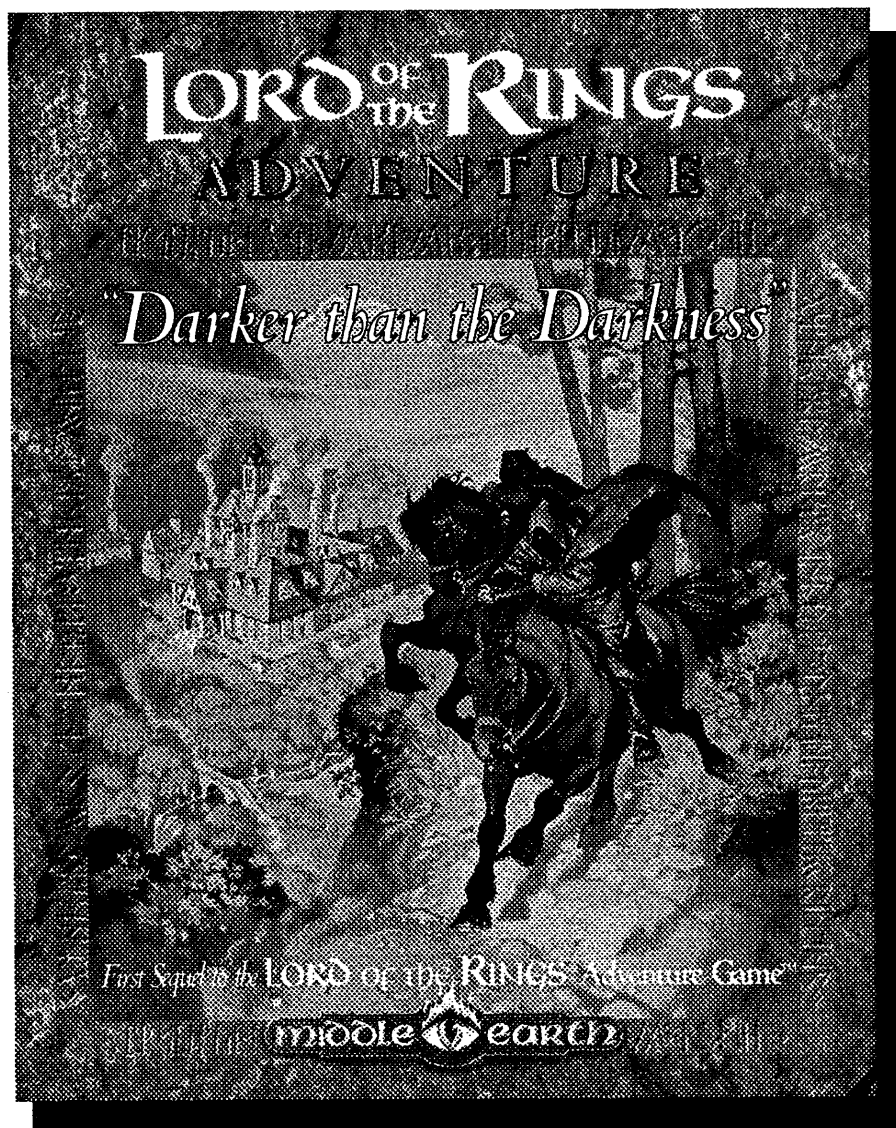
The reverse of this spell, *improved nightmare*, works as per the 5th-level *nightmare* spell. Each episode occurs only once. The victim is allowed a save vs. spells for each episode to negate all ill effects of that episode.

These few ladders to the sky indicate a fundamental feature of good SPELLJAMMER adventures and adventure hooks: They take specific advantage of the space environment. Fantasy space is not just a device for getting from one ground-bound adventure to another. Space is a place with new allies and villains, strange ways of living, and, above all, a very large scale of adventure. The SPELLJAMMER campaign's asteroid dungeons are immense, its villains' evil schemes mind-wrenching, its rewards lavish and the ladders to its skies go on and on, straight up. Start your characters climbing the ladders today.

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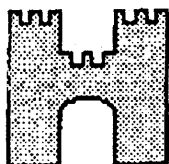
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SAGE advice

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The sage joins our exploration of magical treasures this month with a look at some magical spells and items from the AD&D® game. Page references refer to the AD&D 2nd Edition game's volumes.

Why can't druids in the AD&D 2nd Edition game cast the fourth-level spell *call woodland beings* and the fifth-level spell *commune with nature* as they could in the AD&D 1st Edition game?

They can't because these spells accidentally were assigned to only one sphere each. At least as far as druids are concerned, call woodland beings should be included in the Animal sphere and *commune with nature* should be included in the Elemental sphere. TSR's Steve Winter pointed out this bit of official errata way back in POLYHEDRON™ Newszine #49 (September 1989), but various mishaps and oversights have kept it from appearing elsewhere until now.

Does a saving throw or magic resistance apply to a *warp marble's* various effects? Can a creature trapped in the marble be freed by a *dispel magic* spell?

According to the item description (see *Tome of Magic*, page 148) a saving throw applies only when the marble is set as a trap using the third command word and hurled at a creature. If the marble hits, the victim gets a save. If the item is set as a trap with the third command word, any creature touching it is trapped, with no saving throw. Likewise, the creature closest to the marble is automatically trapped when the first command word is spoken. The DM easily can prevent abuse of this ability by making the command word effective only at a very short range (I suggest 10'-20') and by introducing opponents who are inclined to crush unintended

marbles or hurl or kick them toward the owner or his party—in the latter case, the marble might trap the owner or one of his allies if the initiative roll turns out well. Likewise, I suggest that *warp marbles* develop a bad habit of bouncing around unpredictably when thrown, thus encouraging owners to use the third command word when handling them (since a bad bounce might inadvertently trap a character employing the first command word). Note also that *warp marbles* can be safely manipulated with spears, other long implements, *unseen servants*, and *gusts of wind*, and in numerous other ways.

I suggest you treat the effects of a *warp marble* as an individually targeted effect subject to magic resistance (see the *Player's Handbook*, page 102, or the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 67).

Since the extradimensional space created by a *warp marble* is fragile enough to be disturbed by *teleportation* and similar effects, I suggest that *dispel magic* can free a creature trapped inside, or expel a creature trapped voluntarily, if the spell succeeds (see the next question).

How do you decide if a magical item resists a *dispel magic* spell? A *rod of cancellation*? A *Mordenkainen's disjunction* spell? What modifiers apply?

According to the spell description (see the *PHB*, pages 148 and 210), a *dispel magic* spell cast directly against an item automatically causes the item to cease functioning for 1d4 rounds *unless* the item is in a creature's possession; in that case, the creature is allowed a normal saving throw vs. spells to determine if the item ceases to work. I suggest you apply magical and racial bonuses to the save, but not dexterity bonuses. Most DMs define "possession" as holding, carrying, or using the item. For example, a mage riding a *carpet of flying* has possession of the carpet, but the same mage does not have possession if he rolls up the carpet and puts it on a table while studying spells. Note that *dispel magic* has no effect on a permanent magical item at all unless it is actually targeted on the item, and artifacts are always immune; however, spell-like effects produced by any item can be dispelled just as spells can be.

A *rod of cancellation* requires a successful melee to-hit roll before it can drain an item. If the rod's wielder scores a hit, use the table on page 152 of the *DMG* to deter-

mine if the item saves. Generally, no modifiers apply to this save except in extraordinary circumstances that the DM must adjudicate on a case-by-case basis. For example, a *stone of good luck* might affect the save, since losing a magical item is bad luck indeed (or perhaps good luck, if the item is *cursed*). Situational modifiers that affect the attacker, such as bad footing or reduced visibility, reduce the to-hit roll and do not improve the defender's chances. Likewise, circumstances that hinder the defender increase the to-hit roll and do not make the item more vulnerable once a hit is scored.

Mordenkainen's disjunction automatically disenchant all magical items within 30' unless they are in a creature's possession. In that case, the creature makes one save vs. spells; if the save fails, all the creature's magical items are *disjoined*.

What is the effect on a spelljamming ship's ship's rating (SR) if the spelljammer is a wizard wearing a *ring of wizardry*?

Generally, there is no effect at all, as a ship's SR depends on the type of helm it has and the spelljammer's level. A *ring of wizardry* does not actually boost the character's level. However, I don't see anything wrong with assuming that any spells cast prior to spelljamming are taken from the bonus spells provided by the ring first; this might allow the character to remain "fresh" and be entitled to his full SR even after casting some spells. Note that if the character casts a spell of a spell level not enhanced by the ring, he cannot claim this benefit.

The section on bards in the revised *PHB* does not mention any limits on magical items. What kinds of magic can they use?

Bards are rogues, and since their subsection does not specifically mention magical-item restrictions, they use exactly the same types of items other rogues can. Many DMs, however, regard bards as true dilettantes and allow them to use any type of magic. I do not recommend this approach unless your campaign is particularly magic-poor, as a bard who can duplicate too many different class abilities through his magical items can quickly upset the play balance and become tedious to boot.

In a campaign world set in a period resembling the Renaissance, could magical scrolls be produced in a printing press given the proper inks and other materials?

No; at least not unless the printing press is actually a magical artifact (see the *DMG*, pages 89-93). Only fresh writing implements can be used to create scrolls; once a quill or printing plate is used to create a scroll, the residual magical energies remaining on it will spoil all future attempts (see the *DMG*, page 86). Furthermore, inscribing a spell onto a scroll requires the

creator to know the spell (if he's a wizard, that means having it in his spell books) and to expend the appropriate material component and suffer any normal penalties (such as unnatural aging) associated with the spell. While this latter requirement is not mentioned on page 86, it is implied on page 145 (see "Casting Scroll Effects"); it also is necessary for game balance, as PCs otherwise would avoid paying for expensive material components and avoid nasty side effects by writing scrolls instead of casting spells directly.

Is it possible to rescue the victim of a bag of devouring by turning the bag inside out?

No. A *bag of devouring* is an extradimensional monster's "mouth." Turning the bag inside out closes the portal to the mouth but does not make the monster spit out the victim. Generally speaking, characters snagged by a *bag of devouring* are beyond help, short of *wishes* or heroics inspired enough to really impress the DM.

Is it possible to use a wand of conjuration to summon seventh-through ninth-level monsters if the wielder is high-enough level and expends the appropriate number of charges?

A *wand of conjuration* can release only six charges at once, and therefore is limited

to summoning a sixth-level monster or several lesser creatures (see *DMG*, page 156). Of course, the DM can create non-standard *wands of conjuration* that can summon more powerful creatures, but such devices would more properly be classed as staves (for summoning eighth-level monsters), or rods (for ninth-level or more powerful monsters).

When, if ever, do you feel the full weight of the contents of a bag of holding? For example, could you overload a structure or vehicle just by opening a bag if it's fully loaded?

A *bag of holding* is a permanent extradimensional space. Open or closed, items within the bag weigh less than they do outside the bag. An item "regains" its normal weight only when removed from the extradimensional space.

Will a cloak of displacement protect the wearer from a magic missile spell? Would the protection negate an entire volley of magic missiles or just the first such missile?

A *cloak of displacement* causes first-time missile and melee attacks to miss. The only effect a *cloak of displacement* has on spell attacks is a +2 saving throw bonus. *Magic missile*, in spite of its name, is a spell effect with no save at all; consequentially, the cloak has no effect at all on *magic missile*

attacks. I suppose, however, that as a house rule you could allow the cloak's wearer a saving throw of 18 or better to avoid the first *magic missile* in a volley. Whether the first *magic missile* hits, the rest of the volley automatically hits.

Is it possible for a dwarf who suffers a magical-item malfunction to get a partially useful or mildly detrimental effect from the item?

As TSR's Andria Hayday recently pointed out to me during a discussion concerning the *AD&D Trivia Game*, a "malfunction" does not have to be a total failure. Still, I think the spirit of this rule (see the *PHB*, page 21) is to subject dwarves to occasional complete but benign magical-item failures. I suggest that any partial failure still render the item completely ineffective; the *AD&D Trivia Game* uses a *ring of invisibility* that makes a dwarf's legs disappear as an example. Likewise, a dwarf who has a *broom of flying* fail should not be able to limp away a slow flying speed. On the other hand, malfunctions probably should not actually cause harm; a malfunctioning *ring of invisibility* shouldn't partially disintegrate a dwarf, and a *broom of flying* shouldn't eject a dwarf while in the air or beat him the way a *broom of animated attack* does. Note that most magical fighting gear and clerical items are not subject to such malfunctions. Ω

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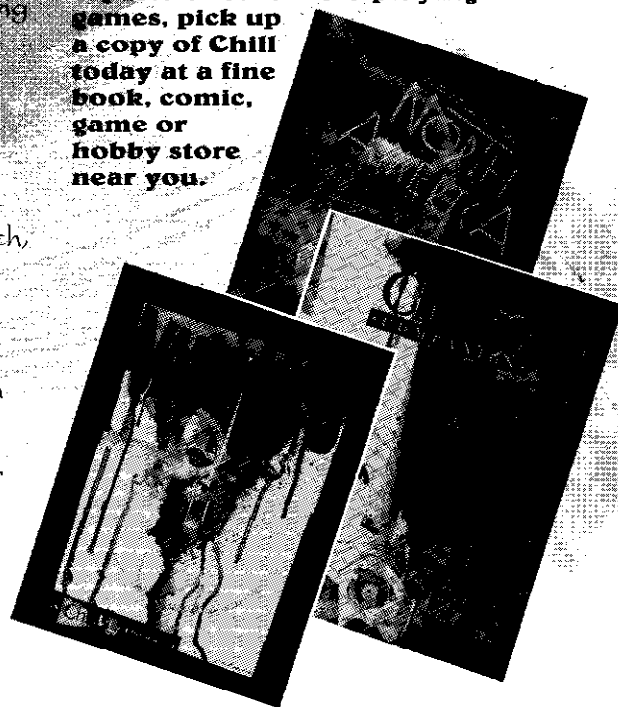
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Princess Ark

Continued from page 45

(particularly plants) before the water flowed further south. Construction was achieved thanks to the help of lupin shamans who protected the workers against the effects of the plants. Later on, the water lock grew into a mighty fortress, Château-Roan.

Other sleep-producing plants infested the land nearby, and soon the shamans directed a general cleanup, slowly gaining territory to the east and north. Patches of noxious plants were systematically destroyed, and the earth beneath them scorched thoroughly. This infuriated the goblins, who saw their conquered territories threatened, and they savagely attacked all lupins in hopes of wiping them out. The war was a brutal one, but the courageous lupins held their ground. It also forced the lupins to build great fortresses on their borders; most towns and villages erected walls. The late King Gaston de Clairvault finally ordered the construction of the Great Wall to protect his subjects from the goblin hordes and halt the spread of the cursed plants. Today, Le Grand Mur is complete, and the Plain of Louvines is a lush, fertile valley dotted with countless hamlets and farms.

Although the Renardois remain at peace with their neighbors, the Eusdrians, the former suspect the latter of harboring aggressive thoughts toward lupinkind. Kings Louis and Sigismund of Eusdria have begun formal talks, however. Sigismund is likely to offer a pact of nonaggression or treaty of mutual support against the goblins. King Sigismund would also be willing to trade an undisclosed amount of red steel for the shamans' secret protection against the cursed plants in the Plain of Dreams. Red steel (see this column, DRAGON® issues #171-172) is currently unknown in Renardy. Both Sigismund and Louis dream of conquering wide swaths of the northern plains—Sigismund in hopes of imperial power, and Louis for the recovery of the ancestral lupin hunting grounds. If the red-steel trade for shamanic secrets takes place, “the Holy Crusade” against the Yazak Goblins may very well succeed.

Lupins are great producers of wine, grain, dairy products, cloth, wool, and works of art, and they also extract amber and sapphires from their mines. A great deal of their exports channel through the Free City of Dunwick, a city of merchants located at the heart of the turtles' sacred lands. The majority of Dunwickers are turtles, but the remainder contains representatives of just about any intelligent race, including goblinoids. Dunwick was built around the site of an old monastery of the Lawful Brotherhood that is now the mayor's residence (see D&D module X9, page 7, Second Chance Outpost). Dunwick later became a trading post owned by the LB Trading Co., based in Cimarron. Today,

many of the businesses in Dunwick are either owned or financed by the LB Trading Co., with the hired protection of the Texeiran Navy and a corps of Torreón swordsmen.

The wine trade is of particular importance to Renardy. Wine affects many things in the Renardois' daily life, from business to political power. The existence of the small *châteaux* (country houses and estates) and vineyards so typical of the Renardy landscape have a greater meaning than most outsiders think. Nobles or bourgeois (members of the self-employed middle class) commonly own the *châteaux*, seeking prestige from the quality and uniqueness of their wines. *Châteaux* range from small fortified manors to well-defended towers strong enough to resist goblin depredations or banditry long enough for help to come. Bourgeois are wealthy enough to arm guards to defend their estates.

Bourgeois commonly settle north or west, outside the limits of the kingdom, on lands that are not part of the established nobility's domains. For a fee, a bourgeois' claims to the land is registered at the Palace of Louvines by the royal bailiff (*Bailli du Roi*). This practice angered the goblins, who have watched the fringes of their immense tribal land being nibbled away. Renardois nobility defends the bourgeois, for the latter are regaining the tribal territories of their ancestors.

A jury of wine-tasters, the Brotherhood of Vintages, determines which wine in Renardy is the best every winter. Bourgeois, nobles, and the king are allowed to present samples from the vineyards they own. Numbered samples are otherwise unmarked to avoid cheating. The winner receives a golden vine leaf from the Brotherhood.

Seven leaves awarded to the same vineyard over time allow a bourgeois to gain nobility. The King of Renardy recognizes a bourgeois as a baron when the latter receives the seventh leaf. In exchange for his title, the baron swears fealty to the king, and his estate becomes a dominion of the kingdom.

Likewise, seven leaves awarded to a vineyard allow the owning noble to gain a rank, such as from baron to count. “Grand duke” is the highest title that can be attained. A rank cannot be lost except by royal decree (a punishment for treachery). If the noble's family is dispossessed or extinct, the king divides the land into *châteaux*. The lords of the manors who administered those vineyards for their noble master get to purchase the land if they meet a price set by the king, therefore becoming bourgeois. Otherwise, the land is auctioned off. Until nobility rises from the *nouvelle bourgeoisie* (new bourgeois), the land remains under the king's law and protection.

Monasteries often own vineyards, too. Should they win seven leaves, their territory would become a royal dominion under

the authority of the Renardois clergy. Depending on the number of awards, the landlord could become an abbot, a bishop, or an archbishop. Although not shown on the map, many such monasteries within larger dominions eventually escape a noble's authority, including taxation rights and other service privileges. Clergymen cannot attain royalty.

The very first king of Renardy was originally put on the throne by the allied lupin tribal chiefs. From then on, the crown remained a hereditary title. Should the royal family become extinct, the noble of the highest rank and with the highest number of leaves becomes the new king.

Besides prestige, wine growing encourages territorial and economic growth for the kingdom. The more “leaves” a wine is awarded, the more popular it is among the connoisseurs and therefore the more expensive. Clues also reveal that some of the best vintages (seven gold leaves or more) have mystical powers, such as the abilities to heal, instill joy or sadness, enhance strength or bravery, or even compel truth (thus the saying *In Vino Veritas* —although simple ineptitude often achieves the same results). Of course, wine-growing and fermentation techniques are utterly secret, invaluable family heirlooms never discussed with outsiders.

Many bourgeois have been bankrupted in Renardois history, either because of a long-lasting lack of awards, vine diseases, bad weather, poor growing technique, or goblin raids. But the worst threat to a bourgeois, or a noble for that matter, still lies in his very neighbor. Competition among them is fierce, if not outright sordid. No guile or villainy is too low for a rival. Although lupins are lawful beings, anything goes when it comes to wine. Local bourgeoisie usually rush to bid for a fallen competitor's land (they may even coerce the latter to sell out) or establish a new claim at the *Bailli du Roi* should all legal owners of the land be gone or deceased. This is often how nobles and bourgeois increase their domains.

Many Texeiran sages still wonder how the lupins developed their present language and culture, which is somewhat different from that of the Guardianos. Many “tribeless” lupins came from the faraway land of Glantri. There, they had lived with the people of New Averoine, from whom they learned the local tongue. Following problems with lycanthropy in that region, the lupins migrated to the lupin nation they had heard rumors about. From the original Renardois, they gained friendship and protection. In return, the Glantrian lupins offered their magic skills and their colorful culture, which has become widely popular there.

Dominions of “Sa Majesté le Roi”

Duchy of Ysembragne— Coat of arms: sable wolf head in crimson field (upper left half) and ermine (lower right

half); capital: Deauvais (pop. 14,300); ruler: Duc Henri "Le Grogard," son of Thibaud de Châtelguyon; typical NPC: lupin knight riding a dire wolf; patron: Saint Loup.

Marquisate of Noijou—Coat of arms: red and argent chequy; capital: Pertignac (pop. 9,800); ruler: Marquis Francois "Le Hautain," son of Fouques de Valefroi; typical NPC: Glantrian lupin wizards, sages, palace or cathedral architects, and wine merchants; patron: Saint Ralston.

Barony of Brégoigne—Coat of arms: flaming hell hound over argent and azure vair; capital: Ytres (pop. 5,600); ruler: Baron Philippe "Le Chevalier Sans Puce et Sans Reproche," son of Grégoire de Rochefort; typical NPC: Old lupin mystic shaman; patron: Sts. Mâtin and Malinois.

County of Marmandy—Coat of arms: three golden mastiffs standing in verdant field; capital: Mons-en-Plécy (pop. 12,300); ruler: Comtesse Marguerite "La Soyeuse," daughter of Gilles de St. Gens-de-Bout; typical NPC: sea wolves, lupin adventurers and explorers; patron: Saint Clébard.

The lupin pantheon

Much like other civilizations, the lupins of Renardy adopted spiritual patrons among the Immortals. The novelty here is that they refer to them as *saints*, holy lupins who achieved ultimate greatness in this universe. Over the centuries, many

saints were authenticated, either genuine Immortals or heroes of the lupins' history now long gone. It would take too long to enumerate all these here, other than some more-common ones:

St. Renard: (alias Korotiku). He represents freedom of thought, wit, wisdom, smell, cunning, but also trickery. He is the chief Immortal of the Renardois pantheon and so far has guided the royal dynasty of the Clairvaults well. Korotiku is the only Immortal of this group who wasn't a lupin (although everyone in Renardy would object to this statement). He sponsored lupins to become Immortals as a prank played on pompous Immortals of human origins.

St. Clébard: This is the patron of loyalty, fidelity, and family. He represents the law and also love among those well-thinking beings of acceptable canine pedigree.

St. Loup: As the patron of mercy but also of hunger, destruction, night, and winter, St. Loup portrays both good and evil among lupins. Originally, St. Loup was the one who kept the tribes strong by weeding out the sick and the weak.

St. Mâtin: He is the Great Watchdog, patron of fortresses, guards, and those who died on the battlefield defending their kin. He is the master of safety and happiness at home.

St. Malinois: Patron of hunters, the Were-Slayer also masters the spheres of revenge, courage, warriors, blacksmiths, and those who go to war. He is the lord of glory and conquests against evil.

St. Ralston: The patron of good food, fun, health, and later the patron of wealth, farmers, merchants, and those who produce goods for all. St. Ralston is the immortal patron of life.

Common lupin: Bipedal, human-sized, doglike creatures with canine heads. AC 9 unarmored, or AC 5 with armor; HD 2; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; D by weapon type; Save F2; ML 8; INT 2d8 + 1; AL L; XP 20. For more information, see D&D modules X2 or X9, or accessory AC9 *Creature Catalogue*, page 39.

Common turtle: Turtlelike, 6'-tall, 500-lb. humanoid land-dwellers. AC 4; HD 4; MV 30' (10'); AT 2 claws/1 beak, or 1 weapon; D 1-4/1-4/1-6 or by weapon type; Save F4; ML 11; INT 4d4; AL L; XP 75. For more information, see D&D module X9 or accessory AC9 *Creature Catalogue*, page 47. Ω

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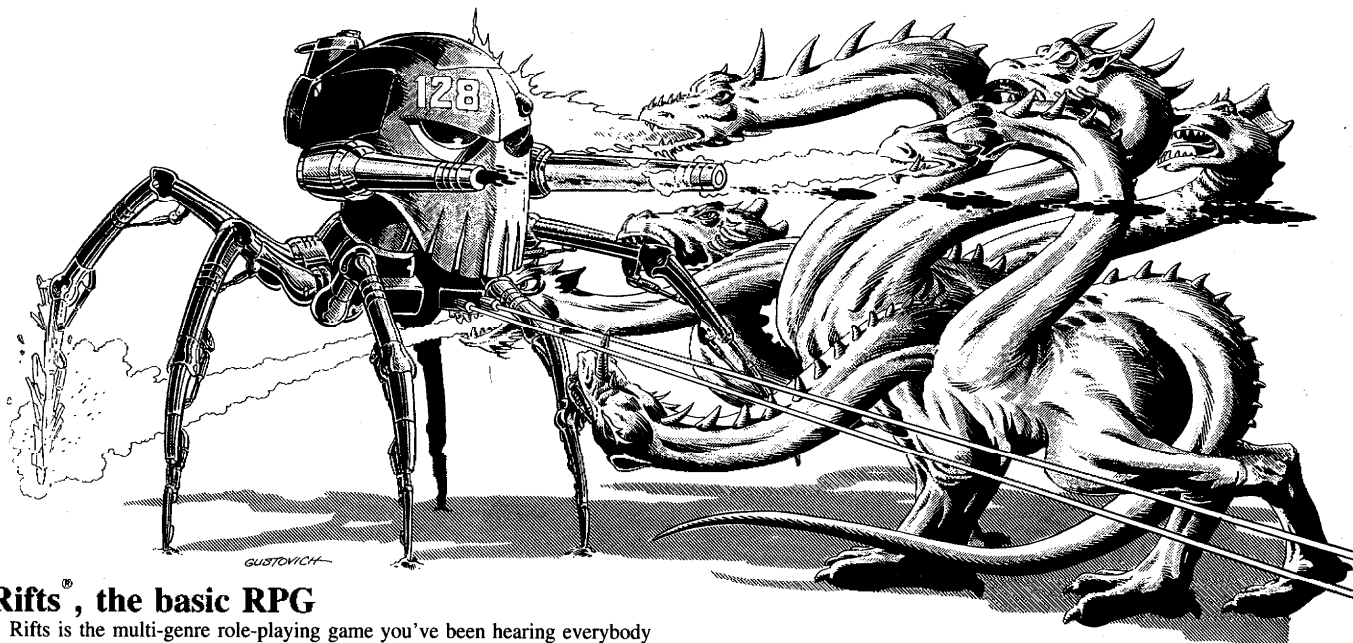
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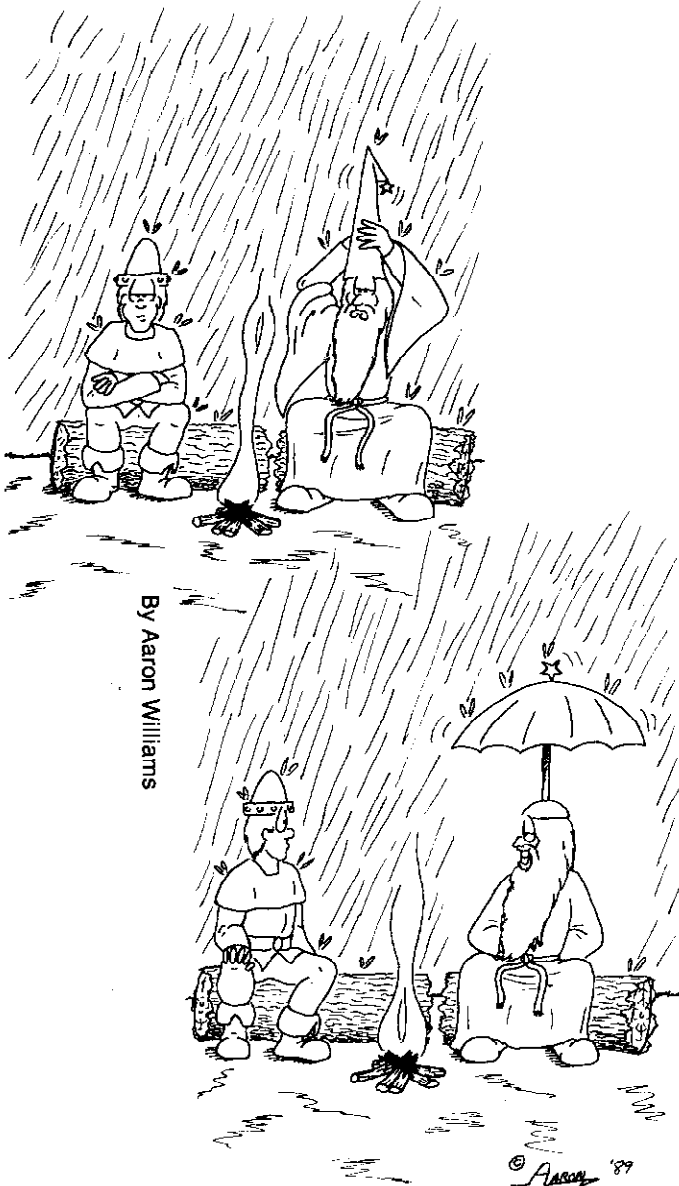
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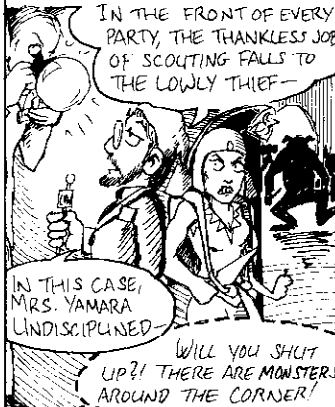
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"Wait a minute—is there a retirement plan?"

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"And that must be the famous 'singing sword' I've heard so much about."





DONE!

WRAWK!
THANKS GUYS!
I'LL GO SEE WHAT
I CAN SEE.

HANG ON...

GALEN'S FOUND
A WATERFALL
TWO CAVERNS OVER.

IF WE GRAB
ONTO BILL AND HE
FLIES AS FAST
AS HE CAN...



WE JUST MIGHT
MAKE IT BEFORE WE
BURN UP.

LET'S GO.
WE'RE LOSING
THE RAIN CLOUDS.

JUST A SEC.
LET ME BUILD UP
SOME FLYING SPEED.



HANG ON
EVERYONE!

BREN, I NEED
DIRECTIONS.

STRAIGHT ON!



NOW THE MIDDLE PASSAGE!



SECOND FROM THE RIGHT!

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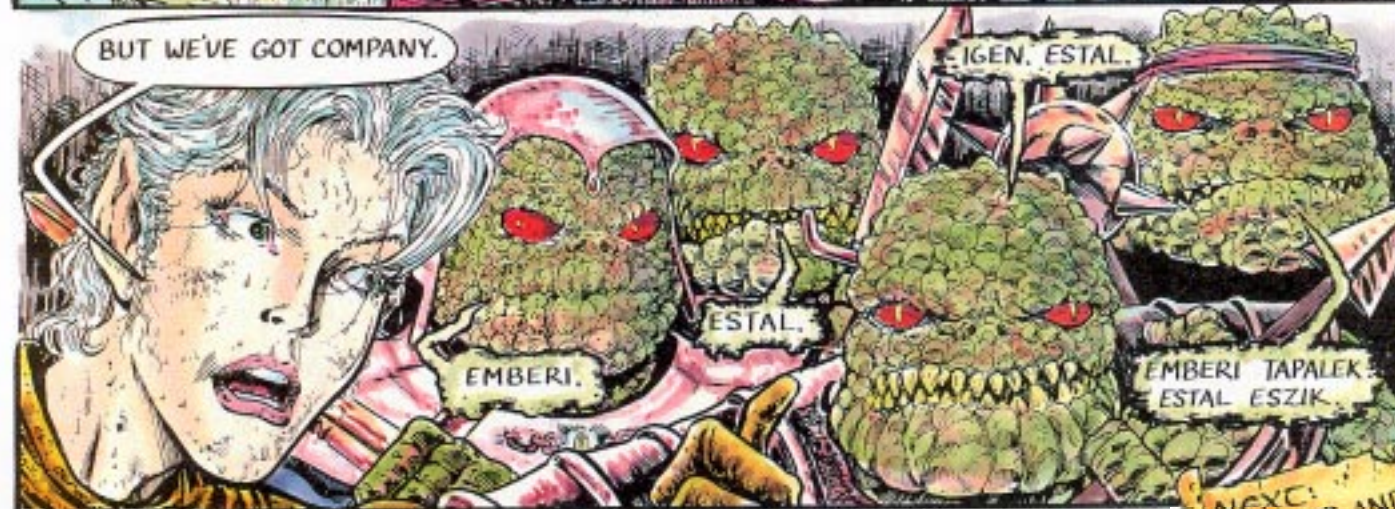
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PART 24



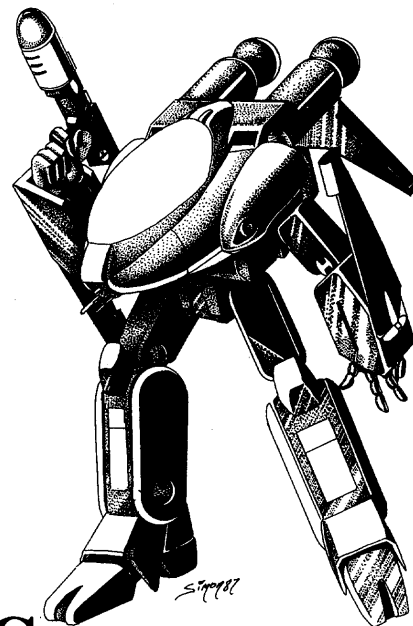
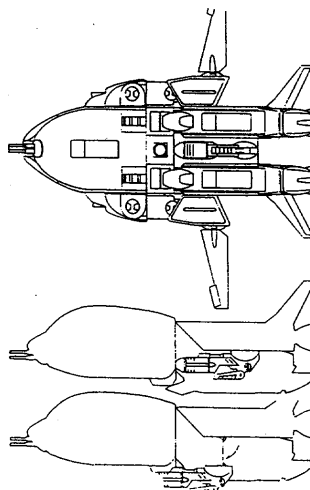
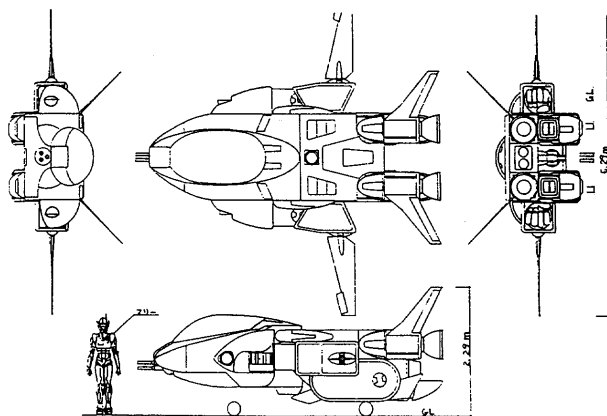
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Volume Five: Presents episodes 49: *A new Recruit*, 50: *Triumvirate*, and 51: *Clone Chamber*. It is decided to induct Zor into the army of the Southern Cross. A full scale assault is launched against the Masters. Zor, Dana and Bowie get closer to the secret of the **Robotech™ Masters** and protoculture. Plus epic space battles! Available late March, 1992.

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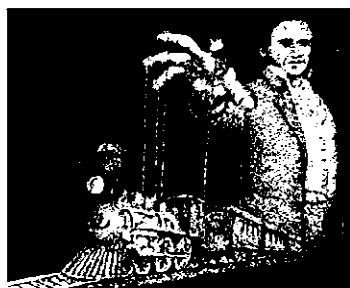
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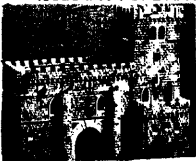
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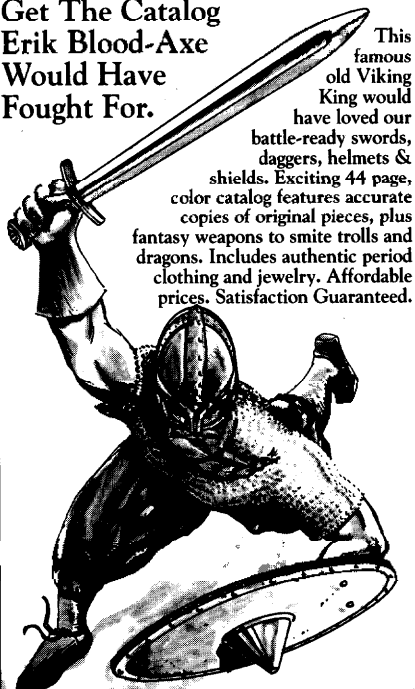
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Do you have to play with *official* miniatures?



Grey Blossom Regiment (Ral Partha)

Something happened recently that has encouraged me to get up on my soapbox and lecture vigorously against what could become a real danger in the miniatures gaming arena. A young man came to my booth at the WINTER FANTASY™ convention in Milwaukee (held the weekend of January 3-5) and looked through my Stan Johansen Space Marine figures. He discovered several weapons platforms that provided good firepower for a minimum of money, and purchased a fusion cannon for use with the WARHAMMER 40,000* game, by Games Workshop. He then went off to use the piece in a game. Two hours later he was back, asking quietly if he could return the gun. When I asked why, he said that the person that ran the WARHAMMER 40,000 league where he played would not let him use the piece unless it was an "official Games Workshop authorized piece," and he had no other game in which he could use the equipment. Though he wanted his money back, he liked the piece. I found out that he would like to buy more equipment for his gaming

but just could not afford the current Games Workshop prices.

I later ran into the person running the game, and he admitted that, for his group, the rule on "official" figures fulfilled two goals: 1) It weeded out anyone who couldn't afford to play "official"; and 2) It put him in special favor with a certain shop that incorporated this type of campaign to build specific customer groups and sales. He explained that it was in his best interest to keep his campaigns going and stop other campaigns that didn't benefit him.

These are dangerous and short-sighted ideas that should disappear and never be

Miniatures' product ratings

*	Poor
**	Below average
***	Average
****	Above average
*****	Excellent

seen again. There should be no rule sets that do not allow the introduction of game equipment that is not made by a specific company. Set-ups like that are no more than snob games. Every person that you discourage because he can't keep up with other gamers' budgets (and, hence, purchases) potential loss to the gaming world. Many of our teenaged players as they get older, inherit responsibilities that may restrict their playing time. This means tapping into a new supply of gamers in order to play, but these new players may not be around due to this type of discouragement. What would happen to people who practice this type of discouragement if no one else in their area could afford to keep up with them? Would their "official" armies be worth anything if they couldn't find anyone to play "official" games?

Economics also enters the picture. There are very few people I know who can afford to buy a miniatures force specifically for one game or one time period except those that deal in historical miniatures, and even some of those people have the SPACE: 1889* game from GDW. Why restrict yourself to using certain miniatures for only one type of game when you can use them for many other games as well? FASA's BATTLETECH* miniatures are produced by Ral Partha, but there are miniature vehicles by Scotia, Stan Johansen, M-3, and others that work very well in representing home-specific defense-weapon systems for planets cut off from the Successor States. The hardest job is determining the gaming statistics for the miniatures, but once that's done, gamers just keep the stat cards on hand. You can do this with MORROW PROJECT* figures, MEGATRAVELLER* miniatures, and figures for many other game systems. Why spend \$5 for a figure for one game when you can get \$5 worth of equipment that will work in five different game systems? Be tolerant and flexible, and everyone will be happier and more gamers can get into miniatures.

Shops need to encourage more open campaigns that allow people to use a more open-minded approach to gaming. The more shop owners encourage people to try other games and game crossovers, the more their sales will grow.

Reviews

Ral Partha Enterprises

5938 Carthage Court
Cincinnati OH 45212

Ral Partha Enterprises

c/o Minifigs
1/5 Graham Road, Southampton
UNITED KINGDOM SO2 0AX

Ral Partha has come up with a number of good ideas over the years and has set several standards for the miniatures indus-

try. One of its most recent good ideas was the release of scenario sets geared toward playing out specific conflicts using TSR's 2nd Edition BATTLESYSTEM™ rules. These "miniatures brigades" each contain all the metal figures needed for a battle, as well as a separate scenario set-up sheet that includes a brief history of the forces before the fight, the statistical data needed to use the rules, and a set-up chart showing the location of terrain that plays a part in the battle. Also included is a painting guide and a back-of-box illustration for use in painting. Another good thing about these packs is that you can get a box of one force and have someone else pick up one of the boxes of opposing forces, and you can enter into the unit-size figure combat arena a little more cheaply.

We're going to review some of the forces involved in the scenario, "The Raid on Pequir." The fight will be between the Oriental forces of the Grey Blossom Regiment and the gnolls, led by Harag Skullsmasher.

RP 10-562 Grey Blossom Regiment

The Grey Blossom Regiment is listed as having 12 armored troops, 12 unarmored militia, and two commanders. When you open the box, you find yourself with four differently dressed and posed groups of six figures each, plus the commanders. A number of sprues hold different weapons, including short swords, long bows, and pole arms. These allow you to vary weapon types from figure to figure so you can have 26 truly different figures.

The figures share several features. All are mounted on circular bases with slight indentations on the bottom so you can mark the figures. These bases have no particular features, so you decide how to decorate them. Where visible, all hair is pulled back into topknots, which are difficult to grab during combat. All figures have angry, Oriental facial features and open hands to receive whatever weapons you wish to arm them with.

Figure #1, an unarmored bushi, wears a short *shitagi* (garment worn beneath armor), *obi* (belt), and high soft boots. The legs, chest, and arms from the elbow down are bare. His face has mutton-type sideburns that join his moustache. The scenario pack advises that this and figure #2 be armed with swords and used as berserkers. (On my next set, I'm going to use the unarmored bushi as bowmen and leave the heavily armored samurai to fight the armored troops.)

Figure #2 wears a cloth suit and hard boots. This gaunt-faced figure has no moustache, and his mouth is open slightly as if speaking.

Figure #3 is dressed in a chain-mail shirt and *kote* (armored sleeves). His shoulders are each protected by a *sode* (armored plate), but his head is bare and his legs have only trousers and plain, high boots. His face wears a grin. The open hands can



Harag Skullsmasher and his gnolls (Ral Partha)

accept either a *katana* (long sword), a halberd, or some other pole arm.

Figure #4 has a complete samurai uniform, including *haideate* (thigh protectors) and a *fukigaeshi* helmet (one with hornlike side guards). This figure, the heavy knight of the Oriental world, has an almost happy expression. He can be equipped with a bow, sword, or pole arm. This is also the last figure in the foot-slogging group; the rest are commanders.

Figure #5 is a fighter-monk *sohei* who commands the bushi. The figure is basically identical to figure #3 except for a cowl over the shoulders and a veiled helmet covering his face. He should be armed with a *katana* to take advantage of his speed.

Last is the multipiece casting of the leader on a horse. For some reason, the horse and the bottom part of a fully clad samurai were cast as one piece, while the samurai from stomach up is another part. The figure is meant to be glued together one way, but painting will be difficult if you are going for detail, so be careful. The horse has barding and tack, and it rears up as it waits to claim a kill. The horse also contained the only real flash I've found on these pieces, and it was negligible. The mane and tail are both well done, and even the base has good grass detail.

Two boxes of these figures allow you to amass four groups of 12 soldiers each, which will give you a fair-sized force for Oriental fighting using almost any miniatures-combat rules. This box is recommended at \$24.95 each. Now, let's meet the competition.

RP 10-563 Harag Skullsmasher and his Gnoll Raiders

Gnolls are loathsome, sadistic beasts that share a genetic past with hyenas or rabid dogs. This gnoll set contains 17 different fighters in five different figure types. Two of these types are leaders and have limited options. The other three groups feature

separate heads and weapons so you can come up with a variety of figures.

Figure #1 is the leader, Harag Skullsmasher, who wears what looks like laminated or banded armor, augmented by splint mail on the legs, light plate on the dagger arm, and splinted mail on the sword arm. His helmet has a crest and ear holes, and he growls with a feral appearance. I'm not sure what kind of sword he has, only that it is metal plating bolted to something. A giant sheath is secured to his back by three buckled straps.

Figure #2 is an evil flind shaman. He is a two-piece casting, with his totem on a sprue with two helmeted heads. The back of his head is covered by a feathered headdress. His clothing is best compared to that of an American Indian medicine man decked out in close-woven reeds. His facial features conform exactly to those described in the *Monstrous Compendium* for flinds, including a rounded head and ears. Anticipating battle, the figure grins with rows of needlelike teeth exposed. In his right hand is a weapon, ready for combat, while his left clutches a skull-topped fur totem.

Figure #3 is from one of the three five-figure groups. This hairy gnoll has splint mail armor with a skull strapped over his groin. Muscle detail is visible. I chose to put an uncovered head on this body and equip the figure with a shield and mace.

Figure #4 wears a metal jazerant shirt over padded cloth. His chest, shoulders, arms, hands, and legs are exposed except where high boots cover his shins. This one received a head with a helmet and neck guard; his canine teeth are exposed by a growl. This gnoll wears a pair of bracelets, and his hand is open for a weapon-in this case, a thrusting spear.

The final gnoll type is barely armored, using several rolls of bones and splints to provide him with protection. Legs, feet, and arms are all bare, but the upper torso is covered with a fur vest and bracers are



Mermaid in a Seashell (Thunderbolt Mountain)

on his wrists. The head I picked was bare. A jagged sword completes the figure.

The gnolls must be supplemented by either packaged troops or another boxed set to come up with units that are armed alike and will fit unit definitions in other miniatures-combat games. There was no flash on the figures from this box, and the extra weapons and heads came in handy. This is well recommended at \$24.95 per box.

Thunderbolt Mountain Miniatures

656 East McMillan
Cincinnati OH 45206-1991

Thunderbolt Mountain Miniatures

70 Harcourt Street
Newark, Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM NG 241 R4

1014 Mermaid in a Seashell ** * 1/2

This lead piece crosses the gaming barrier to serve as a gift or as part of a possible diorama. It is molded in 54-mm scale and consists of two separate pieces, shell and mermaid. The shell is hinged in the back and made in such a way that the hinge blends in well with the rest of the shell. The shape is typically fanlike, with good ridges and overlapping spots as if the shell has grown with time. The bottom of the lower shell sits flat and is oval shaped. Being 45 mm × 20 mm, the shell will sit handily in many spots. The nicest touch is the mother-of-pearl that lines the inside of the shell (I would be careful about scratching this surface). There was almost no flash on this piece except by the front lip, and even that looked more like shell growth.

The mermaid is typical. A long, scaly body twists into a wiry tail with visible veins. Scales and a finlike ridge run along the top. The buttocks are ridged to fit neatly into the front lower ridges of the seashell but are just a bit off. There are also minor imperfections on the tail, and it ends at an area where it is a bit too thick. The upper body is well done, and the face is simple but pretty, surrounded by curly tresses. The mermaid appears to be staring off into space at things we cannot see. A seahorse harp is held in her arms. The seahorse needs its ridges cleaned up slightly, and there is flash between her left arm and the harp. The top of the harp is in an ornate style and joins the seahorse's tail and back of neck. There are no strings in the harp.

The arms are a weak spot on the miniature, being square with sharp ridges rather than the rounded, well-done arms that we normally see in Tom Meiers's sculptures. You can round the arms off with careful work and effort. You can also make the miniature much nicer by stringing the harp with wire or hair so it appears that the mermaid is plucking it.

With a little work, this could be an exceptional gift for a nongamer. It is not as high in quality as many other Thunderbolt Mountain miniatures, but this is a very good buy at \$9.95.

RAFM Company, Inc.

20 Parkhill Road E.
Cambridge, Ontario
CANADA N1R 1P2

4005 Dark Elf Female Warrior *** 1/2

This dark-elf figure is scaled slightly bigger than true 25 mm but slightly less than 28-30 mm, providing a bridge be-



Dark Elf Female Warrior (RAFM Company)

tween the two scales. The figure is made of lead and consists of two parts: the figure and base, and a display base. The display base is 39 mm × 29 mm and molded to represent the floor of a cave, including stalagmites and a clear spot to insert the figure.

The figure has low boots that strap around her ankles and shins, a G-string bikini bottom held together by a simple buckle, and form-fitting plate protecting her shoulders and upper chest, connected to the G-string with a strap. In her bare left hand is a sword (its scabbard is on her back), and her right hand holds a loaded hand crossbow. There are spare crossbow bolts in her quiver.

The face is well done, including a slightly sensual and arrogant look on her face and clearly pointed ears. The cheeks and forehead are covered by a partial helm. Her hair rises to a crest and falls in a Mohawk style to midback. Anatomically, though, this figure has problems. The figure looks good from the front, but from the side its appearance is different. The legs are thick and blocky, almost square. The upper torso has a solid mass protruding from the back by the hair that shows no separation or shaping; it is either a strap for the quiver or a piece of flash that is going to be a pain to remove. This item is useful, but I can't recommend this as a collector's piece. Its price is \$1.75.

2005 Hartha the Death Machine, Orc Triceratops **** 1/2

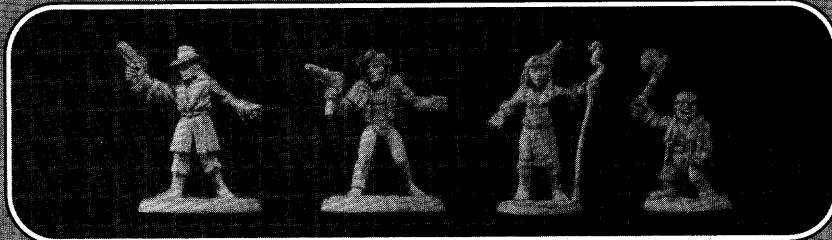
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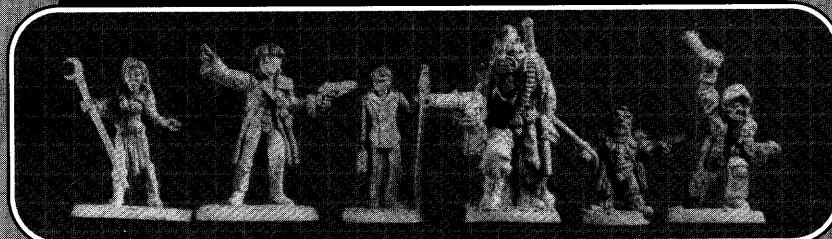


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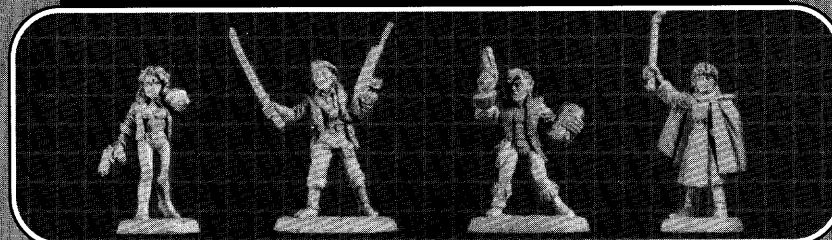
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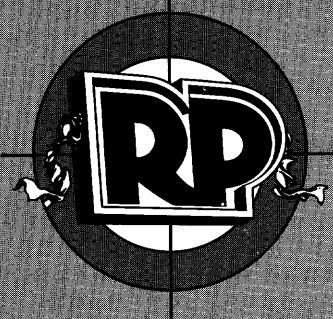
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>>>>[Dull the drek out, hoser! We were
just on our way to the local time-passery to
hang for a while!!]<<<<
- Deckhead <21:48:36/05-22-50>



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WHERE MINIATURES MEET MAN AND MAGIC.



Hartha the Death Machine (Thunderbolt Mountain)



Halfling Adventurer, Dungeon Raider, Ranger Bowman (Grenadier Models)

Hartha is a 25-mm-scale lead kit that contains 16 pieces. The basic-chassis for this attack platform is a *Triceratops* dinosaur. The creature consists of nine pieces: two horns, a head, a body with a large hollow area in the center, four different legs, and a tail with a macelike attachment. The head is good, with prominent fangs and an elongated jaw that seems a little longer than it should be. The bony shield shows spines, and the ridge around the reptilian eyes is also well done. Wrinkled nostrils, ear slits, and mottled skin are all present. The one detraction is a slight mold line behind the nose horn.

The body cavity should be filled carefully with filler, although this is not mentioned in the short instruction sheet. The kit designers planned for the side shield and legs to cover and block this gap, but if not filled the space can be seen upon casual observation from almost any angle.

Use the filler so that its sides line up with the outline of the beast and are flat across the openings so the shields will fit correctly. The legs need filling at the joints, and you must clean a small amount of flash off the toenails. Carefully align the feet so they are all flat on the ground, except possibly the front advancing foot; this way the model will be stable. Add the tail piece after cleaning the joint so that the fit is smooth, and you have your basic dinosaur. RAFM did an excellent job of getting the right feel and appearance for the creature's skin, which almost looks like an elephant's and paints up well. The leg positioning is strange, almost double jointed, but the fit on the legs is good. The model is well within the correct scale, as it is 145 mm stem to stern, which puts it at over 30'.

The weapons platform measures 37 mm X 20 mm and is molded to represent a

wooden platform surrounded by metal-studded planks. The bottom of the platform is well molded and fits well into the dinosaur's back. Some flash on the floor prevented the correct mounting of the spiked gun shield, which needs cleaning. The bombard looks like an early metal casting, covered by boards and held together with iron bands. The gun fits into holes in the gun shield. Overlapping plate barding protect both sides of the dinosaur and is anchored to the sides of the platform. Both sides have large, stylized skulls, and the left side also has a tribal shield. Special effects include a severed head hanging off the rear of the figure and good bolt detail on front and rear of shields and fittings on the guns.

The gun is manned by two orcs. The chief gunner on the platform carries a torch in his left hand. He is dressed in chain mail and hard armor over skins, with thick boots. His only visible hair is a pony tail; the rest is covered by a horned helmet. The most striking thing about this figure is the bestial expression on the orc's face as he screams defiance from an excellently molded mouth.

The loader rides in a saddle behind the dinosaur head shield and looks almost like one of Games Workshop's *BLOOD BOWL** game "orks". He wears the same chain mail as the other orc, and is bent forward and glaring as if daring anyone to get in his way. In his left hand is a well-done barrel of cannonballs, and in his right are water barrels and gunpowder containers, as well as the swab needed to clean the weapon. The swab is molded to a water barrel and must be carefully cut away if you want the extra detail.

We had an additional problem with this kit, as it came missing the gun shield and front legs. I notified RAFM, and the company was very quick with an apology and replacement parts. We were able to assemble the model as we stated above without further problems.

This is not a stand-alone model in tabletop gaming, as it has little self-defense capability. It needs to operate with a unit and could be part of an engineer group or one operating an assault gun. This is a kit with some work involved, but it is well worth the \$20 price. I wish to thank Sam White for the assembly and painting of this miniature.

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turers, with a flat undecorated top and a mold line.

8118 Halfling Adventurer

Halflings are common to any fantasy party in a thief capacity. If you want your figure to be more than a thief, you're usually out of luck. Well, your luck just got better.

This lead casting is 17 mm to the eyes, so it scales out pretty well. This smiling, curly-haired figure includes bare feet with well-molded foot hair. He wears simple trousers and a loose-link chain shirt. A belt supports a canteen and sacks of provisions; a chest strap supports another pouch. The halfling also carries a knapsack with a pipe, and a helmet is tied to one side. A sword is held in his right hand. This figure had no flash on it, and I highly recommend it to anyone, especially at \$1.50 each.

8119 Dungeon Raider

**** 1/2

Every character is a dungeon raider in most fantasy games. This figure is a generic fighter, searching for fame and fortune. His face is solemn and bearded; a helmet covers his head, long gloves cover his arms up to the elbows, and he wears hip boots. Overlapping plate forms his armor. His belt contains a knife and provision bag. On his back are a battle axe, coils of rope, a knapsack, and a cape. He holds a long

sword in his right hand, but the sword has little detail and actually detracts from the figure. The lantern held high in his left hand helps him search for treasure or monsters.

The detail is very good on this figure, but you should be careful when painting it. There was very light flash, but otherwise the figure was good. It is recommended at \$1.50.

8117 Ranger Bowman

*** 1/2

The ranger bowman stands erect but measures only 23 mm to the eyes, which would be slightly small unless it were an elf or short human, although the figure is well proportioned. The figure is dressed in either scale or padded armor from hip to neck. A hooded cloak covers his head and drops behind to just below his knees. High soft boots, a girdle, and a quiver of arrows on his back complete his wardrobe.

The figure is posed with a long bow in his left gauntlet. A sword shows under the left side of his cloak. His right hand is up, having just released an arrow. Careful painting of the face will have it following the arrow's path. You will need a single hair or strand of wire for a bowstring to finish the figure. The figure is good, but looks like it should be in an archer company rather than be a stand-alone figure. It's recommended at \$1.50 each.

I bid you farewell till next month. If you need to get in touch with me, call my store (708-336-0790), and I will do what I can to help you. Do not call for information about conventions; I go to many of them, but the information I have is the same as is in DRAGON Magazine's "Convention Calendar" If you need to see me at a convention in the Midwest, look for either the Friend's Hobby Shop booth or the Inner City Games booth, or follow the flood of Game-master's Guild T-shirts. **Q**

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BT22



Girl Biker & Cross-country bike

BT25



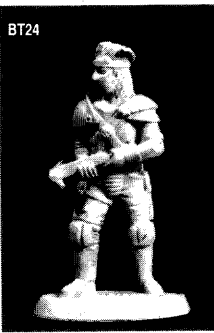
Road Gang rider & sidecar occupant/armoured bike

BT23



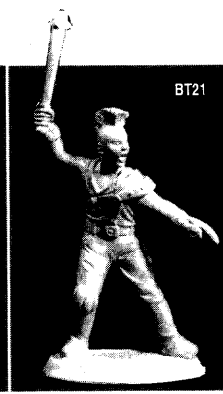
Road Gang Member with Grappling hook

BT24



Road Gang member with crossbow

BT21



Road Gang member with spiked club

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