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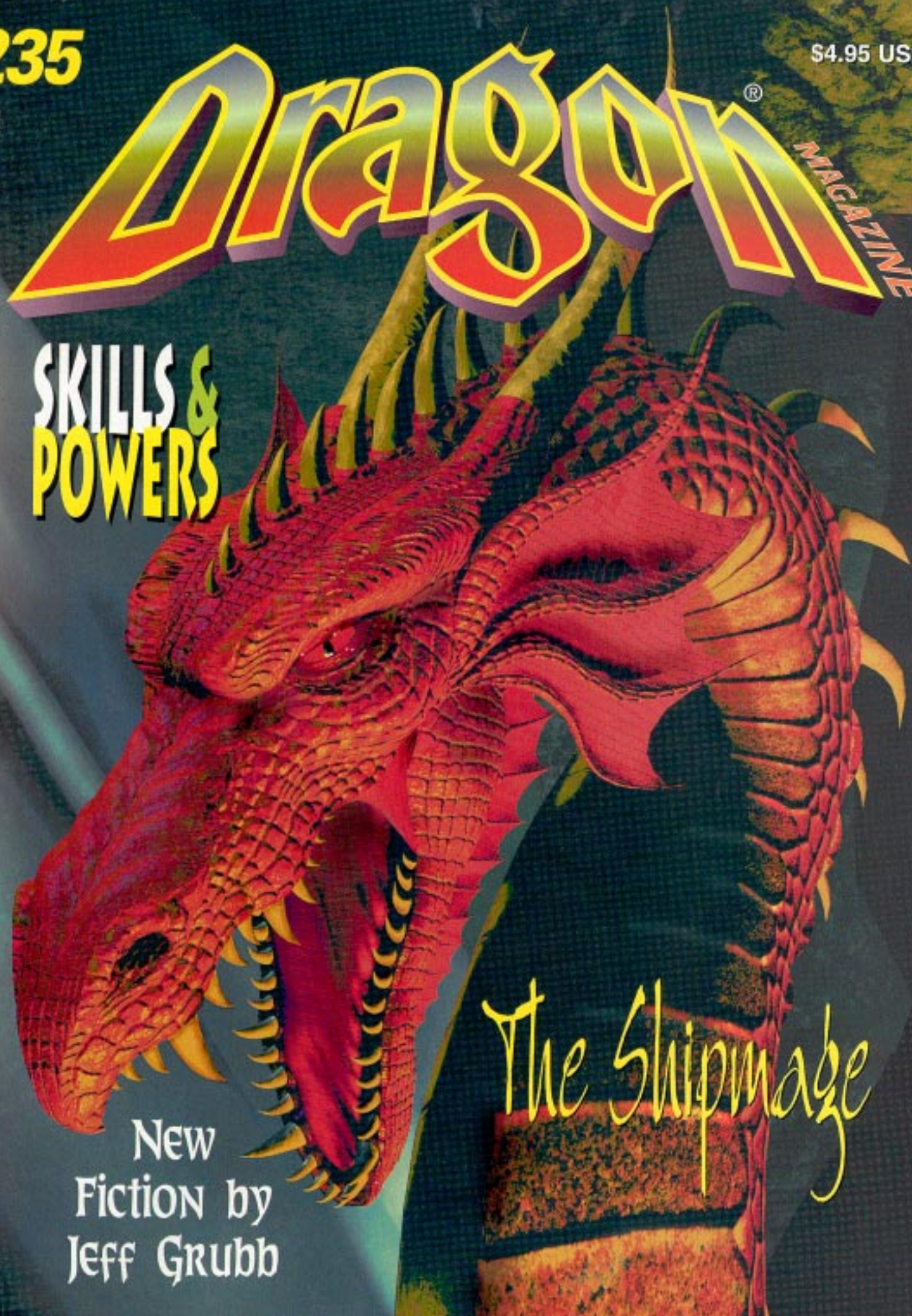
The Lure of the Sea

Dragon[®] MAGAZINE

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POWERS

The Shipmage

New
Fiction by
Jeff Grubb



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The Wyrms' Turn™

What you can't see

Last night I played a game of cards with a friend. It was a slow and often difficult game, since she was new to the rather complex rules and the game really works best with five or more players. To make matters worse, we couldn't see each other's cards. We were playing online.

About six years ago I bought my first modem. At first I went a little nuts, checking out all of the big services as well as the local BBS lines. I gradually lost interest in the smaller outfits, and the first horrifying credit card bill made it clear that I could afford only one of the big services, so I stayed on Genie. The attraction was the TSR RoundTable, and what hooked me was the online role-playing.

At first it was merely novel to see that people hundreds or thousands of miles apart could gather weekly and forge a gaming friendship as strong and satisfying as any in "real life." It was better in many ways, too. The ability to send private messages made passing notes to the DM that much more subtle for the players of thieves and other sneaky characters. Being able to prepare text descriptions of characters, spell effects, NPC dialogue, area descriptions, or practically anything — well, that was amazing to someone who's a better writer than actor.

The magic of online role-playing is in what's not there. When you can't see that Bob's a sturdy balding man over six feet tall, it's much easier to visualize him as a lithe elven ranger. When you can't hear Mary's stammer, you can well imagine her high priest's commanding voice resounding through marble halls. Online gaming focuses much more on what you can imagine, without the distractions of what you see and hear at the gaming table. If seeing is believing, then not seeing is imagining.

When you read a book, don't you imagine the characters much more vividly than when you see a movie? Aren't the "images" of the old radio plays far more amazing than those created by even the most talented SFX crews? In a

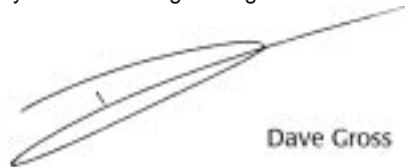
regular, face-to-face game, not only must you imagine the appearance of the setting and characters but also you must ignore the real environment of the gaming table and the actual faces and voices of your fellow players. It takes two leaps of imagination to visualize the fantasy world in a face-to-face game. Online gaming takes away one and makes the second much shorter.

Online gaming does have its drawbacks, of course. Good typists have a distinct advantage over those who hunt and peck. While you can roll virtual dice online, you lose that satisfying heft when rolling for a 6d6 *fireball*. The closest thing you have to miniatures are the stick-figures some DMs use to represent PCs on a text-based map. Worst of all, you can't share your pizza and drinks, hear the laughter of your friends, or see their grins or grimaces as they react to the shared, imagined adventure.

I played and DMed AD&D® game sessions for three or four years before my free time diminished too much to play regularly. You can often find me haunting the TSR Online area of Genie (as TSR.MAGS) or AOL (as TSR Dragon), though it's to trade gaming war stories and chat more often than it is for a game.

If you're interested in online gaming and have access to AOL or Genie, try keyword TSR and have a look around. The software libraries and message boards are good, but it's the gaming you should try. Tell 'em Dave sent you. (Don't believe a word they say about my DMing. There were several nights when not a single character died.)

When I do find the time these days, I play face-to-face sessions at the local game store or at conventions. Since gaming online, though, "real" games seem to be missing something — or maybe they're not missing enough.



Dave Gross

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November 1996



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DRAGON #235

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November 1996
Volume XXI, No. 6
Issue #235



Planar Heroes

Ed Bonny

Skills & Powers give you the edge you need to survive the multiverse — or any Prime Plane, for that matter. This huge special feature provides

PLAYER'S OPTION™ rules especially for the PLANESCAPE® setting, but adaptable to any fantasy role-playing world.

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Mage on Deck!

Ted Zuvich

*The Shipmage:
Don't leave port without one.*

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Gregory W. Detwiler

*Venture too deep into the ocean's depths,
and these are the fishes you'll end up feeding.*

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Arcane Lore I: Sea Spells

Brian Dunnell

*A full complement of spells
to save you from a watery grave.*

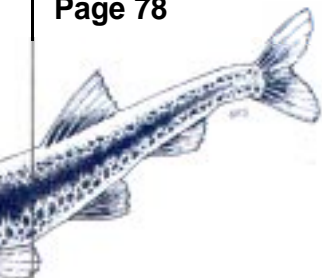
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Ecology of the Troglodyte

Spike Y. Jones

*OK, so they stink. But they're
very sensitive about it.*

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Arcane Lore II: Spells of the Scaled

Steve Berman

*A few nasty surprises
from some cold-blooded spellcasters.*

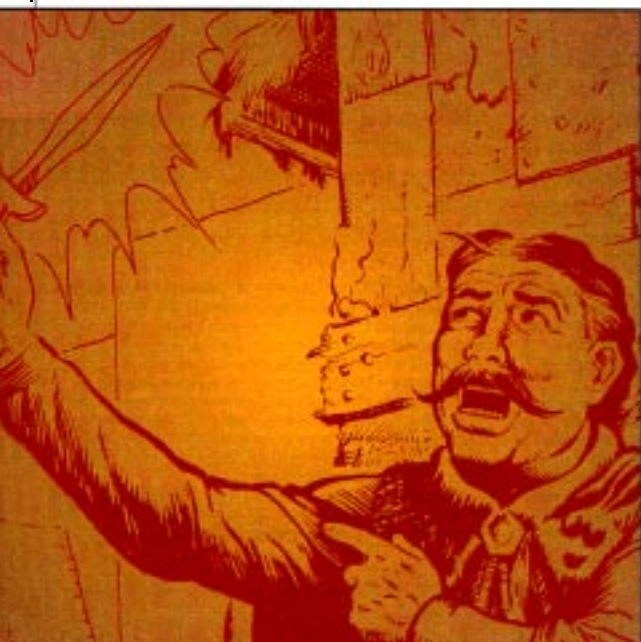
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Dungeon Mastery: Let's Get Physical

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The basics of physical DMing.

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(DRAGONLANCE®:

Tales of the Fifth Age)

Jeff Grubb

*What is left when the legends
pass into history?*





If you have a comment, opinion, or question for the editors of DRAGON® Magazine, write us a letter. We'd love to hear from you.

In the United States and Canada, send letters to "D-Mail," DRAGON Magazine, 201 Sheridan Springs Road, Lake Geneva, WI 53147 USA. In Europe, send letters to "D-Mail," DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, United Kingdom.

You can also send e-mail to us at tsrdragon@aol.com. Don't expect a personal response; we'd love to answer everyone, but the volume has become immense.

Dear DRAGON Magazine,

I'll start with the bad news first.

I received my renewal notice and discovered that a year's subscription now costs \$42. I then thought to myself "That \$42 could buy two hardbound TSR rule or source books." My question to you: Is a year of DRAGON Magazine worth the information found in two hardbound rulebooks? An even better question, will DRAGON Magazine contain the material of at least one hardbound sourcebook that a GREYHAWK® setting DM can use? You need to find a way to control costs, or go bi-monthly. Consider that DUNGEON® Adventures is a bi-monthly publication, and quality adventures abound. DRAGON Magazine could learn much from its baby brother.

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Another topic that troubles me is card games and dice games in general. I am glad that articles on role-playing video games are gone from DRAGON Magazine's pages, but I am alarmed to see that card games and dice games are starting to squeeze their way in. One quick way to get me *not* to renew my DRAGON Magazine subscription is to increase the number of pages on which card and dice games appear. I suspect my words are falling on deaf ears with the latest arrival of the new DRAGONLANCE®: FIFTH AGENT™ product, the marriage of the SPELLFIRE® and AD&D® games. The AD&D game is a role playing game. It has survived since the early seventies. These card and dice games are a fad played by the young. The AD&D game is played by adults; we have the real money to invest in gaming, and we are here for the long haul (or Monty Haul, in some cases).

OK, enough of the doom and gloom, and now for the good things. DRAGON Magazine issue #233 is looking good. Let's see why.

"Going to Court." I got a lot of nasty political ideas from this one. Good work. GREYHAWK campaigns are often quite cerebral, and articles that develop the non-combative aspects of the game are an asset.

"On Wings of Eagles", this looks a lot like the article you guys did on the "Winged Folk" over 12 years ago, right down to those ability scores. I'm old enough to remember. Please, no rewarmed leftovers. Even if you added a bunch of new stuff on their culture and revised it to second edition attributes. I thought the elf's handbook did a fine job.

"Fiendish Fortresses." I don't use the PLANESCAPE® setting, but I like these forts, they seem the perfect vacation spot for high-level adventurers who need to be humbled. Good work!

"Wyrms of the North." I don't use the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign, but my Toril DMs liked the article. If they liked it, you did a service to FR fans, so I like it. (I got a few good ideas and spells secretly).

"Scions of the Desert," good work, support the worlds specifically. My

AL-QADIM® setting DM thanks you.

"Dragon Dice," page 53. No comment for the betterment of our relationship. (smile)

"Bazaar of the Bizarre", More toys for the pile, I guess the *ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA™* tome is in need of revising again. Maybe I'll find some use for them, or they will be used in a module in DUNGEON® Adventures. Not bad.

"Rod of Seven Parts, World by World", Best article in the issue for two reasons. First, the GREYHAWK setting is mentioned. It is mentioned first, and not in passing. Second, Skip Williams wrote it, and Skip printed one of my mind flayer questions in "Sage Advice." Skip Williams rules!

Well done to all!

"Knights of the Dinner Table," I roared laughing. To think I didn't like this comic at first. Well done.

I think you guys are on the right track. Just for the record, you know I will be renewing my subscription. Who else will I be able to complain to or praise?

Frank V. Bonura
147 East Maple Street
Valley Stream, NY 11580

Can we rule with Skip now that we've printed your letter in "D-Mail?" How about if we print more GREYHAWK articles for you? (More are on the way.)

We appreciate your criticism as much as your praise, though we must correct one misconception in your letter. Except that it includes some rather nice cards, the FIFTH AGE role-playing game isn't at all like SPELLFIRE or any collectible card game. (It isn't collectible at all; you never need to buy extra cards.) The use of the cards is more akin to the Tarokka deck from the RAVENLOFT® campaign setting, and even that's not a fair comparison, since they're used very differently. Take a peek at the boxed set sometime, and you'll see what we mean.

As for the notion of going bi-monthly, we're afraid a mob of angry readers would show up at our offices if we even joked about it in reply to your... wait. What's that noise outside? What's with the torches and pitchforks? Hey! Somebody call 911!

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Dear *DRAGON Magazine*,

As often as I disagreed with John C. Bunnell's often nitpicky critiques, I always enjoyed reading his column. I hope he appears in future issues, because in comparison "Bookwyrms" seems really watered down. I like to hear what people think about books, and I like to debate about them. "Bookwyrms" offers nothing to push against. At least tell us who's writing about each book.

Also, did Kiaransalee kill Orcus? Does asking that out of the blue decrease the chances of this seeing print?

Rip Van Wormer
Midland, MI

Check out the initials at the end of each recommendation in "Bookwyrms" and compare it to the masthead; these are staff recommendations. You're right that they aren't reviews. So much cool fiction is released each month that our purpose is to point out the ones we think readers will like best, so there'll never be a pan in the column, only positive recommendations.

John does an excellent job of reviewing books (we think so even when we don't agree with him, too!), and his column will continue to appear every other month. On those months that we offer "Bookwyrms," please don't hesitate to write in if you disagree with a recommendation or want to make one of your own.

As for your question, we can only hint that you may find your answer in 1997.

Dear *DRAGON Magazine*,

I have been playing the AD&D game for a number of years now, and I am very satisfied with everything I have bought from TSR.

Recently I purchased a number of PLANESCAPE boxed sets and books, and I

found that they are well worth the high price. However, within the pages of your magazine, it is a rare occurrence at best to find an article expanding my favorite setting.

I understand that you prefer to publish articles that appear to the greatest majority of your readers. While it is unlikely that a great majority of your readers own a lot of PLANESCAPE products, I think that anything from a PLANESCAPE campaign can fit into any prime-material campaign very easily. All the DM needs to do is open a convenient portal, and any number of things can be imported to his campaign world.

I appreciate that you took the time to read my suggestion, and I would like to thank you in advance for answering with a serious reply. (Please don't just say, "We appreciate your input, and we will consider it when we choose articles.")

Mark Berner
Moorestown, NJ

We appreciate your input, and we will consider ... Oh, what the heck. Here's a huge PLANESCAPE article in this issue. In fact, we've put one in the DRAGON Magazine Annual for you, too.

You're right about why we're planning to continue supporting the AD&D gamer first and foremost, but that doesn't mean we'll forget about the many fans of the various TSR worlds. Whenever possible (as with this issue's "Planar Heroes" article), we'll do our best to present campaign-specific articles that are also very useful to those who don't use that setting. (We agree with you about the ease of conversions.) Let us know when you think we succeed or fail at that goal.

Give 'em a hand, because they gave us one

The staff of *Dragon Magazine* would like to extend a special thanks to Dave Conant and Terry Craig (of the TSR Service Bureau), as well as Sean Reynolds (the TSR Online coordinator on AOL) and Chris Perkins (freelancer at large) for their invaluable help in this and other issues of *Dragon Magazine*, especially the Annual. We couldn't have done it without them. Send your thank-you notes to our address!



On the Cover

This month is another first for *Dragon Magazine*. Over the last two decades we've earned a reputation for the quality of our illustrated covers. A quick scan over our back issues shows a virtual who's who of the genre, as many of the finest illustrators working in SF and fantasy have been showcased there.

We're equally proud of the many up and comers who gained their first major audience on our cover and proceeded to carve out successful art careers.

While the computer is no stranger to this magazine (no stranger than, say the staff anyway), our November issue boasts the first 100% digital cover image we've ever used. We owe it all to Eddie over at Interplay who built the model and created this digital wyrm for the new *Descent to Undermountain* computer game.

ability for such submissions can be assumed by the publisher in any event. Any submission accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope of sufficient size will be returned if it cannot be published. We strongly recommend that prospective authors write for our writers' guidelines before sending an article to us. In the United States and Canada, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope (9 1/2" long preferred) to Writers' Guidelines, c/o *DRAGON Magazine*, at the above address, include sufficient American postage or International Reply Coupons (IRC) with the return envelope. In Europe, write to: Writers' Guidelines, c/o *DRAGON Magazine*, TSR Ltd., include sufficient International Reply Coupons with your SASE.

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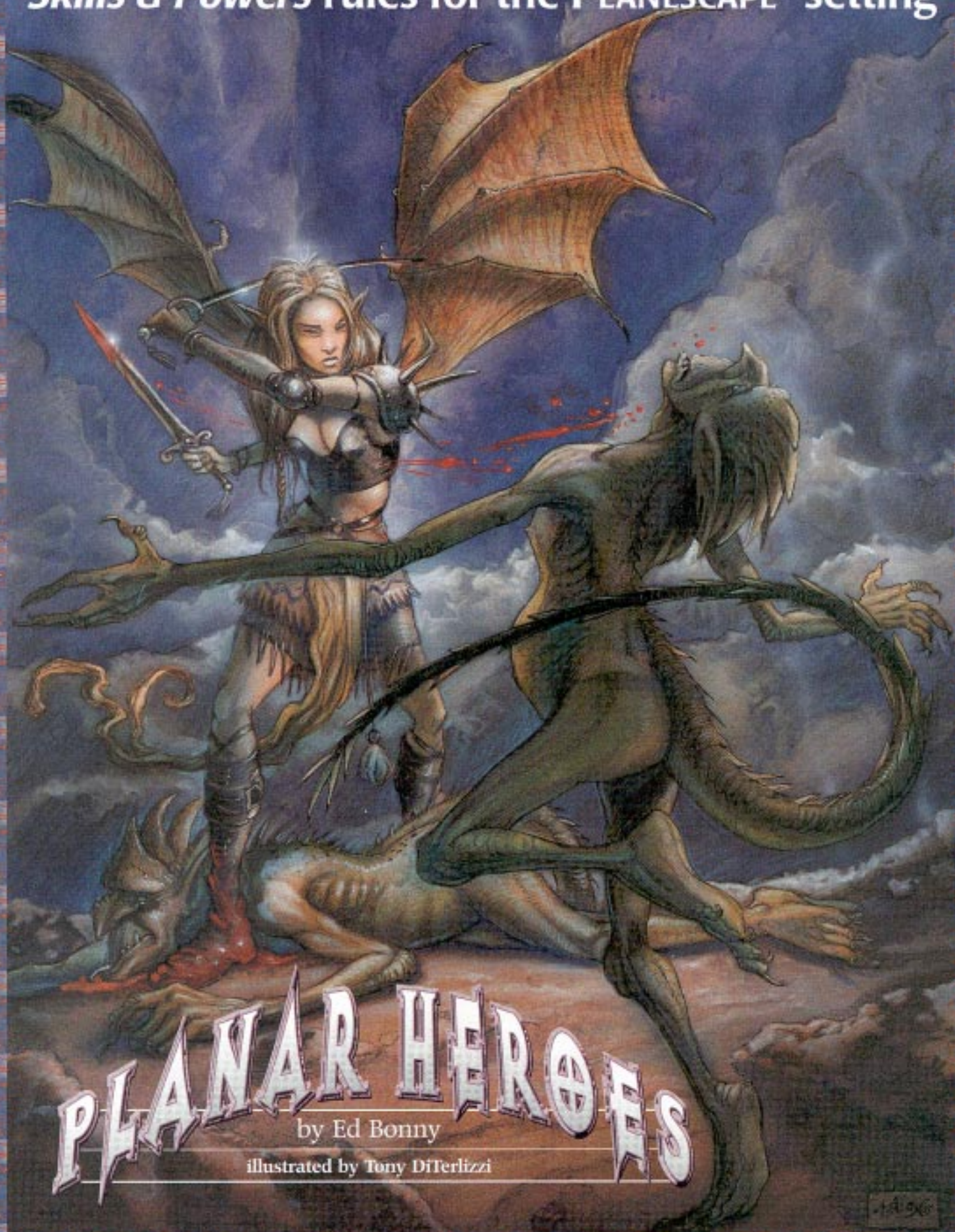
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Skills & Powers rules for the PLANESCAPE® setting



PLANAR HEROES

by Ed Bonny

illustrated by Tony DiTerlizzi

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T

This article provides *Skills & Powers* options to create planar PCs for the PLANESCAPE setting. In order to make cross-referencing easier, this article follows the organizational structure of *PLAYER'S OPTION™: Skills & Powers*. The article incorporates various material presented in many *Planescape* products, so players creating characters using this article should have access to the *Player's Handbook (PHB)*, *Tome of Magic (TOM)*, *PLANESCAPE Campaign Setting (CS)*, *Planewalker's Handbook (PWH)*, *Factol's Manifesto*, *PLAYER'S OPTION: Skills & Powers (S&P)*, and the *PLANESCAPE MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM®* tomes volumes I & II (*PMC1 & PMC2*).

The ongoing revolution in PC customization for the AD&D® game has been a major force in reshaping the way gamers create and play characters. As seen in the three *PLAYER'S OPTION* handbooks (*Skills & Powers*, *Combat & Tactics*, and *Spells & Magic*), players can choose from a variety of options, creating a unique PC. The options from these books work fine in standard campaigns like the *FORGOTTEN REALMS®* setting, but this is not the case when creating unusual PCs from specialized campaign settings like the *PLANESCAPE* setting, where bizarre races are the norm.

It is well-known that folks living on the planes are subjected to the ever-present planar energies surrounding them. The folks out here are sometimes called “planetouched,” because exposure to these planar energies grants them abilities above and beyond their prime counterparts. It would be a rare blood who could live out here and not be influenced in some way.

1. Character points

The *S&P* rules introduced character points (CPs) as the means to acquire abilities and proficiencies for a PC. Rather than play a rigidly defined standard character as provided in the *PHB*, each player has a number of points with which to customize a PC. The CPs allotted depends on the race and class chosen. Points are expended for race and class options and for proficiencies but may also be spent in other ways, such as to acquire a new spell, re-roll a missed attack, or grant a second save. For a complete list of ways to spend CPs, see chapter 1 of *S&P*.

PLANESCAPE PCs are generated by using one of the six methods listed in the *PHB*. After a PC has been rolled, the player creates a background for the PC. Players may select one of the choices in *S&P* or devise a history uniquely tailored to planar life using the character archetypes found in the *PWH*.

Abilities cost 5, 10, 15, or 20 CPs. Some options allow a player to impose limitations on their characters for bonus CPs that can then be spent to obtain other abilities. At any stage of PC creation, only 5 points may be retained for later use.

2. Ability scores

After rolling ability scores, the player selects the PC's race. Ability scores are modified according to the race chosen. Racial ability modifiers for the standard AD&D races such as elves, dwarves, and gnomes may be found in the *PHB* or *S&P* and remain unchanged in the planes. Racial ability score modifications for all *PLANESCAPE* PC races (aasimar, bariaurs, genasi, githzerai, rogue modrons, and tieflings) are listed in the *PWH*.

As detailed in *S&P*, a PC's ability scores may be split into sub-abilities. Players exercising this option for *PLANESCAPE* characters may increase one sub-ability at the expense of diminishing the other. For each ability score, there may be no more than 4 points difference between the sub-abilities.

Note: Some options offer a bonus point to one sub-ability. Characters taking these options are allowed a 5-6 point difference in sub-ability scores.

3. Racial requirements

Each PC starts with a number of character points dependent on race. Points can be spent to customize a character from the skill list provided for each race, or they can be used to purchase the race's standard skill package. Planar dwarves, elves, gnomes, halflings, half-elves, half-orcs, half-ogres, and humans receive the same number of CPs as their Prime counterparts in *S&P*. Players creating a PC from one of these standard races can mix options found in *S&P* with the new planar racial options. Races unique to the planes, such as tieflings and githzerai, are completely customizable with the options presented here.

Notes on magic resistance: Most races living on the planes have developed some magic resistance. This resistance can be either specific, like the elven ability to resist charms, or broad, like the powerful magic resistance of githzerai and aasimar. PCs who opt for broad magic resistance fall under the same restrictions as those listed for githzerai in the *CS*. (In addition to protecting a PC from magic, MR can affect what magical items a character can use and prevent beneficial magic from aiding him.) As some magic-resistant PCs rise in level, they experience greater difficulty using newly acquired magical items or when receiving benevolent magic. The magic resistance rules in the *CS* should be used in all cases except those of single class wizards, who must no longer forego magic resistance to be wizards.

All Races

The unique nature of the planes can affect its inhabitants. Sometimes different populations exhibit the same planetouched abilities. The following options are available to all PCs in addition to those listed for each race. Regardless of whether a player selects any of the options below, all planar PCs have the common, innate ability to perceive planar portals at will. This ability costs no CPs.

Alignment Affinity (5): The PC is instantly aware of any beings within 20' who possess the same alignment as himself. For example, a paladin knows when a lawful good aasimar has just stepped behind him but does not learn the alignment of the lawful neutral good deva crossing in front of him unless he employs some other means of divination.

Magical Perception (10): Regardless of whether the PC is a spellcaster, he understands how the unique nature of his home plane affects magic. This includes which schools of magic are affected, how it is affected, and why (“You’re on Mechanus berk — wild magic is useless here and against the law.”). This ability does not provide other magical insight, such as spell keys.

Planar Recognition (5): Upon sight, the PC instantly recognizes any beings who originate from his home plane as a fellow native. Only true natives of the PC's plane can be discerned. This ability does not grant the ability to recognize those who migrated to the PC's home plane from another plane. The PC does not gain any other information about the beings he encounters.

Planar Resistance (5): The PC receives a +3 bonus to all saves vs. any naturally occurring phenomena on his home plane (plane of birth).

Race	CP Allotment
Aasimar	40
Bariaur (male & female)	30
Dwarf	45
Elf	45
Genasi, all	25
Githzerai	30
Gnome	45
Halfling	35
Half-Elf	25
Half-Orc	15
Half-Ogre	15
Human	10
Rogue Modron	40
Tiefling	40

Aasimar

Standard abilities: Cold resistance, fire resistance, infravision, magic resistance, mental fortitude, surprise bonus.

Aasimon bloodline - major I (10): The PC is immune to all forms of gas attacks.

Aasimon bloodline - major II (15): The PC is immune to poison.

Aasimon powers - minor (10): Once a day, the PC can cast *cure light wounds*, *dispel magic*, or *protection from normal missiles*. At 7th level, the PC can cast all these abilities once a day.

Aasimon powers - major (15): Once a week, the PC can cast *heal*, *holy word*, or *spell turning*. At 9th level, the PC can cast all these abilities once a week.

Armor bonus (5): The PC gains an additional +1 AC bonus when wearing any metal armor.

Celestial skin (15): The PC can be hit only by magical weapons.

Cold resistance (5/15): The PC suffers half damage from all cold attacks for 5 CPs. For 15 points, the PC suffers half damage from cold until 9th level, when the PC becomes completely immune to the cold.

Confer (10): With this option, an aasimar may temporarily confer one of his racial abilities on a worthy being of good for the next 24 hours. The act takes one round and requires the aasimar to touch the recipient. The PC loses that ability until 24 hours have elapsed, at which time he regains the ability. The PC cannot cancel this conferral once it has taken place. This sacrifice is not taken lightly.

Detect lie (5): The PC may cast *detect lie* once a day.

Eladrin bloodline - major (10): PC is immune to *magic missiles*.

Eladrin powers - minor (10): Once a day, the PC may cast *alter self comprehend languages*, or *slow poison*. At 7th level, the PC can cast all of these abilities once a day.

Eladrin powers - major (15): Once a week, the aasimar may cast *minor globe of invulnerability*, *polymorph self* or *wall of force*. At 9th level, the PC can cast all these spells once a week.

Fire resistance (5): PC suffers half damage from all fire attacks.

Guardinal bloodline - major (15): PC is immune to all electrical attacks.

Guardinal powers - minor (10): Once a day, the PC can cast *light*, *magic missile*, or *protection from evil 15' radius*. At 7th level, the PC can cast all these abilities once a day.

Guardinal powers - major (15): Once a week, the PC can cast *hold monster*, *lightning bolt*, or *wall of ice*. At 9th level, the PC can cast all of these abilities once a week.

Holy regeneration (10): While on any of the Upper Planes of Good, the PC regenerates hit points at the rate of 1 hp/round.

Infravision (5): PC possesses infravision to 60'.

Intuition bonus (10): PC raises Wisdom/Intuition sub-ability by +1.

Know alignment (5): The PC may cast *know alignment* once a day.

Lightform (10): Once a day, the PC may assume a lightform similar in function to the wizard spell *wraithform* (except this ability accesses an extra-dimensional space, not the ethereal plane). Once activated, the PC is identical in appearance to a light aasimon (*PMC1*). At 5th level, the PC can assume a lightform twice a day.

Magic resistance (10): PC has 10% magic resistance.

Mental fortitude (5): +2 to saving throws against *charm*, *fear*, *emotion*, and *domination* type spells.

Muscle bonus (10): PC raises Strength/Muscle sub-ability by +1.

Power of life (20): As a direct descendent of the forces of life and goodness, the aasimar is immune to death magic and level draining spells and attacks such as those from undead. The PC is not immune, however, to aging effects such as an attack from a ghost or a *haste spell*.

Rilmani bloodline - minor (10): PC suffers half damage from acid attacks.

Rilmani powers - minor (10): Once a day, the PC can cast *blur*, *fly* or *mirror image*. At 7th level, the PC can cast all these spells once a day.

Rilmani powers - major (15): Once a week, the PC can cast *advanced illusion*, *improved invisibility* or *solid fog*. At 9th level, the PC can cast all of these abilities once a week.

Surprise bonus (5): The PC's unnatural hearing and other-planar alertness grant a +1 to all surprise checks.

Stamina bonus (10): The PC raises Strength/Stamina sub-ability by +1.

Sword bonus (5): The PC gains +1 to hit with any sword.

Telepathy (5): At will, the PC can communicate telepathically with any aasimon, eladrin, guardinal, rilmani, or other intelligent being of the same alignment within a 20' radius.

Willpower bonus (10): PC raises Wisdom/Willpower sub-ability by +1.

Racial weakness options

Some aasimar may inherit weaknesses from their Upper Planar parents. Aasimar PCs may select any or all of the following racial weaknesses to receive bonus CPs to purchase additional racial traits.

Iron weakness (5): PC suffers double damage from any iron weapons.

Lower planar disorientation (5): The good nature of PC comes into severe conflict with the overwhelming evil of the lower planes. On any lower plane, the aasimar becomes extremely uncomfortable and nauseous suffering a -4 to THAC0 and AC as well as a -4 to all surprise checks.

Susceptibility to fiendish magic (5): The PC is more susceptible to the foul, unwholesome magics cast by fiends. PC receives a -1 to all saves vs. magic used by fiends and also suffers an extra point of damage per die rolled from offensive spells employed by fiends.

Unholy water vulnerability (5): The PC suffers 2d4 hp damage from a direct hit of unholy water. A splash of unholy water inflicts 1d4 hp damage.

Bariaur

Standard male abilities: Charge, head butt, infravision.

Standard female abilities: Infravision, spell resistance, surprise bonus.

Back kick (5): The PC can kick an opponent to his rear with his hind legs for 3d6 damage and no penalty to THAC0.

Charge (10): Male PCs may cause triple damage with a head butt by charging an opponent. The PC needs at least 30' running distance to perform this attack successfully.

Club bonus (5): Any club the PC wields in both hands has the speed factor and damage of a 2-handed sword.

Fitness bonus (10): Male PC gains a +1 to the Constitution/Fitness sub-ability.

Head butt (5): Male PC may attack with his horns for 1d8 hp damage plus Strength bonus. Should the PC also select Hoof Attack, then he receives 3 attacks per round.

Health bonus (10): Male PC raises Constitution/Health sub-ability by +1.

Hoof attack (10): PC can attack with both hooves in one combat round causing 1d6 points of damage per hoof.

Improved movement rate (5): This PC is one of the fastest of the race possessing a movement rate of 21.

Infravision (10): PC possesses infravision to 60'.

Intuition bonus (10): Female PC gains a +1 to the Wisdom/Intuition sub-ability.

Knowledge bonus (10): The female PC gains +1 to the Intelligence/Knowledge sub-ability.

Lawbreaker (5): The wildly chaotic nature of bariaurs makes them naturally resistant to the influences of law. The PC receives a +1 bonus to all save vs. spells against magic from the priestly sphere of law or magic cast by lawful creatures.

Magic resistance (10): The PC possesses 10% magic resistance.

Muscle bonus (10): The male PC gains +1 to the Strength/Muscle sub-ability.

Poison save bonus (5): Because of his hearty constitution, the male PC receives a +2 to all poison saves.

Reason bonus (10): The female PC gains +1 to the Intelligence/Reason sub-ability.

Spell resistance (10): The female PC gains +3 to all saving throws vs. spells.

Spear bonus (5): The PC gains +1 to attacks with any spear.

Stamina bonus (10): The male PC gains +1 to the Strength/Stamina sub-ability.

Surprise bonus (5): The female PC gains +2 on all surprise checks.

Tough hide (10): The PC's thick skin and fur give him a tough hide granting a natural AC of 8.

Trample (10): On a successful attack with both hooves, the bariaur has knocked down his opponent and automatically tramples him also. A trampled victim suffers an additional 2d6 hp damage, has a -2 penalty to his AC, and must spend the remainder of the round getting back up on his feet. This attack affects only humanoids of M size or smaller. The PC must first select Hoof Attack to choose this option.

Willpower bonus (10): The female PC gains a +1 to the Wisdom/Willpower sub-ability.

Genasi

All genasi may select from this list of shared half-elemental traits in addition to traits peculiar to their specific element.

Ignore element (5): Genasi can ignore his element (magical and non-magical) for a number of rounds equal to his experience level once a day.

Elemental empowerment (5): Elemental spells or abilities employed by the PC are treated as if he were one experience level higher. Option may be taken multiple times for increased effect.

Elemental form (10): Once a day, the PC can polymorph into an elemental of the PCs element.

Elemental regeneration (10): When the PC rests immersed in his element as

it occurs naturally, he regenerates at a rate of 1 hp/turn.

Elemental resistance (5/15): The PC gains a 30% resistance vs. all attacks against his element. For 15 points, the PC is completely immune to his element. This option cannot be taken with magic resistance option.

Etherealness (10): Once a day, the PC can enter the ethereal plane from any of the inner planes or prime material plane or if already within the Border Ethereal, the PC can enter an inner plane or prime material plane world.

Infravision (5): The PC possesses 60' infravision.

Magic resistance (10): The PC possesses a 10% resistance to all magic.

Para-elemental resistance (5): The PC receives a +2 to all saving throws from any para-elemental attacks associated with the PC's element (e.g., fire genasi receive this bonus against ash and magma attacks).

Quasi-elemental resistance (5): The PC receives a +2 to all saving throws from any quasi-elemental attacks associated with the PC's element (e.g., water genasi receive this bonus against steam and salt attacks).

Saving throw bonus (5): The PC receives a +1 bonus to all saving throws vs. spells and magic of his own element for every five experience levels.

Genasi, air

Standard abilities: Non-respiration, levitate, saving throw bonus.

Aim bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Dexterity/Aim sub-ability.

Air boat (10): At 9th level, the PC can call down an *air boat* once a week.

Balance bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Dexterity/ Balance sub-ability.

Elemental powers, minor (10): Once a day, the PC can cast *fly*, *stinking cloud*, or *wind wall*. At 7th level, the PC can use all of these abilities once a day.

Elemental powers, major (15): Once a week, the PC can cast *air walk*, *solid fog*, or *suffocate*. At 9th level, the PC can use all of these abilities once a week.

Feather fall (5): The PC can cast *feather fall* once a day for every three experience levels possessed.

Non-respiration (10): The PC need no longer breathe.

Knowledge bonus (10): PC gains +1 to the Intelligence/Knowledge sub-ability.

Levitate (5): Genasi can *levitate* once a day as a 5th level wizard.

Reason bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Intelligence/Reason sub-ability.

Genasi, earth

Standard abilities: Stony skin, saving throw bonus.

Elemental powers, minor (10): Once a day, the PC can cast *fist of stone*, *maximilian's stony grasp*, or *meld into stone*. At 7th level, the PC can use all of these abilities once a day.

Elemental powers, major (15): Once a week, the genasi can cast *move earth*, *stone shape*, or *wall of stone*. At 9th level, the PC can use all of these abilities once a week.

Fitness bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Constitution/ Fitness sub-ability.

Health bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Constitution/Health sub-ability.

Muscle bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Strength/Muscle sub-ability.

Pass without trace (5): The PC can *pass without trace* once per day as a 5th level priest.

Passwall (10): Once a day at 5th level, the PC can cast a *passwall* except that this ability affects only stone or earth.

Reverse gravity (10): At 9th level, the PC can *reverse gravity* once a week.

Stamina bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Strength/ Stamina sub-ability.

Stony skin (10): The PC has a naturally rock hard AC of 8.

Genasi, fire

Standard abilities: Affect fire, fire immunity, infravision, saving throw bonus.

Affect fire (5): The PC can *affect normal fires* once per day as a 5th level wizard.

Elemental powers, minor (10): Once a day, the PC can cast *flame arrow*, *flame walk*, or *heat metal*. At 7th level, the PC can use all of these abilities once a day.

Elemental powers, major (15): Once a week, the PC can cast *fire shield*, *maleketh's flame fist*, or *wall of fire*. At 9th level, the PC can use all of these abilities once a week.

Fire immunity (5): The PC is immune to normal, non-magical fire.

Knowledge bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Intelligence/Knowledge sub-ability.

Produce flame (5): The PC can *produce flame* once a day for every three experience levels.

Reason bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Intelligence/ Reason sub-ability.

Surprise fireball (10): At 7th level, the PC can cast a *delayed blast fireball* once a week.

Genasi, water

Standard abilities: Create water, saving throw bonus, water breathing.

Acid storm (10): At 7th level, the PC can create an *acid storm* once a week.

Bestow water breathing (10): Once a day for every three experience levels, the PC can bestow *water breathing* (or its reverse) on any creature other than himself.

Create water (5/10): Genasi can *create water* once a day as a 5th-level priest. For 10 points, the PC can cast *improved create water* (reverse of transmute water to dust) as a 5th-level priest.

Elemental powers, minor (10): The PC possesses the innate ability to cast *lower/raise water*, *insatiable thirst*, or *watery double* once a day. At 7th level, the PC can use all of these abilities once a day.

Elemental powers, major (15): Once a week, the PC can cast *abi-dalzim's horrid wilting*, *part water*, or *wall of ice*. At 9th level, the PC can use all of these abilities once a week.

Fitness bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Constitution/ Fitness sub-ability.

Health bonus (10): PC gains +1 to the Constitution/ Health sub-ability.

Water breathing (10): The PC breathes water.

Genasi vulnerabilities

All genasi may inherit certain weaknesses from their elemental parentage. Genasi PCs may select any or all of the following racial weaknesses for bonus CPs to purchase additional racial traits:

Elemental damage (+5/+10): The PC suffers additional damage from elemental attacks not of his own element. For 5 points, the PC suffers +1 to damage per die rolled. For 10 points, the PC suffers +2 damage per die.

Elemental hatred (+5): The PC despises his opposition element and always seeks to destroy without question or hesitation anyone strongly associated with the opposition element (such as natives of that elemental plane, specialist wizards and specialty priests of the opposing element, etc.).

Elemental vulnerability (+5): The PC suffers a -1 penalty to all saves from elemental attacks not of his own element.

Githzerai

Standard abilities: Infravision, magic resistance.

Aim bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Dexterity/Aim sub-ability.

Balance bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Dexterity/Balance sub-ability.

ESP (10): The PC can cast *ESP* once a day. At 9th level, the PC can cast *ESP* twice a day.

Infravision (10): The PC possesses infravision to 60'.

Knowledge bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Intelligence/Knowledge sub-ability.

Lesser magic resistance (10): The PC possesses magic resistance equal to 2%/level. This option cannot be taken with the magic resistance option.

Lower resistance (10): Once a day, the PC can attempt to lower his magic resistance by effecting *lower resistance* on himself only.

Limbo powers (5): As a native of Limbo, the PC gains a movement rate of 96 while in Limbo and also suffers no ill effects from the roiling, primal matter of that chaotic plane.

Magic resistance (15): PC receives magic resistance equal to 5%/level.

Mental assault (10): The PC can cast *feeblemind* once a week for every five experience levels.

Mental shielding (10): Once a week, the githzerai PC can cast *mind blank*.

Mind guard (5): The PC gains +1 to all saves vs. mind affecting spells and psionics.

Plane shift (10): Once a day, the PC can *plane shift* (himself alone) to any other plane he has previously visited. This ability takes one full round to activate. If the PC is interrupted during activation of this power, the power fails.

Racial enmity (5): The PC's extreme hatred of githyanki grants him a +2 to hit on all attacks against githyanki.

Rakkma hunter (5): The PC gains +2 to hit against the despised gith slave masters of ages past — the mind flayers.

Reason bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Intelligence/Reason sub-ability.

Renegade (5): The PC has secretly decided to advance in level beyond the artificial limits set by the githzerai wizard-king (i.e., the PC has no level limits in any chosen classes). Once a renegade githzerai's decision becomes known, he rarely survives for long, as any such blasphemous githzerai are quickly hunted down by the wizard-king's forces.

Silver sword (5): At 5th level, the PC, if in good standing with his people, is rewarded with a special two-handed *silver sword* +3. If used on the Astral Plane, the silver sword has a 5% chance of cutting an opponent's silver cord upon scoring a hit. These weapons have a significant religious value to the githzerai, who would never willingly let them fall into the hands of outsiders.

Sword bonus (5): The PC gains +1 to hit with any sword of githzerai make.

Xenophobe (5): Fearful and hateful of

nearly all sentient creatures not of his own race, the PC is always on the alert for outside treachery and attack. The PC receives a +3 to all surprise checks. Note that while a xenophobic githzerai may be able to suppress displays of his xenophobic nature most of the time, such strong emotions are ever-present under the surface, just waiting for a chance to be expressed.

Zerth bonus (5): The PC is a zerth, part of a religious sect who worship the memory of the legendary githzerai hero, Zerthimon. PC gains a 5% bonus to all XP when actively worshipping as a zerth and also receives a +4 reaction modifier when dealing with any githzerai (all githzerai value such worship in other githzerai). DMs may decide on the form such hero worship takes such as joining rakkma bands, spreading the word of Zerthimon or hunting githyanki on a regular basis.

Rogue modron

Standard abilities: Armor, detect doors, resist unlawful influences, saving throw bonus, superior sight.

Armor (10/15): The PC possesses a tough, semi-metallic skin allowing a natural AC of 8. For 15 points, the rogue modron has enhanced armor granting an AC of 6.

Detect doors (5): The PC has a 2-in-6 chance of discovering secret doors and a 3 in 6 chance of detecting concealed doors.

Detect lie (5): The PC can detect lie once a day.

Fitness bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Constitution/Fitness sub-ability.

Four arms (10): The PC possesses an extra pair of mechanical arms which can be used to wield another weapon and carry a shield (much like a thri-kreen PC).

Health bonus (10): Constitution/Health sub-ability raised by +1.

Infravision (5): The PC possesses 120' infravision.

Knowledge bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Intelligence/Knowledge sub-ability.

Magic resistance (10): The PC receives magic resistance equal to 2% per experience level.

Modron powers, minor (10): Once a day, the PC can cast *clairaudience*, *clairvoyance*, or *command*. At 7th level, PC can use all of these abilities once a day.

Modron powers, major (15): Once a week, the PC can use its innate ability to cast *dimension door*, *teleport without error*,

Continued on page 17

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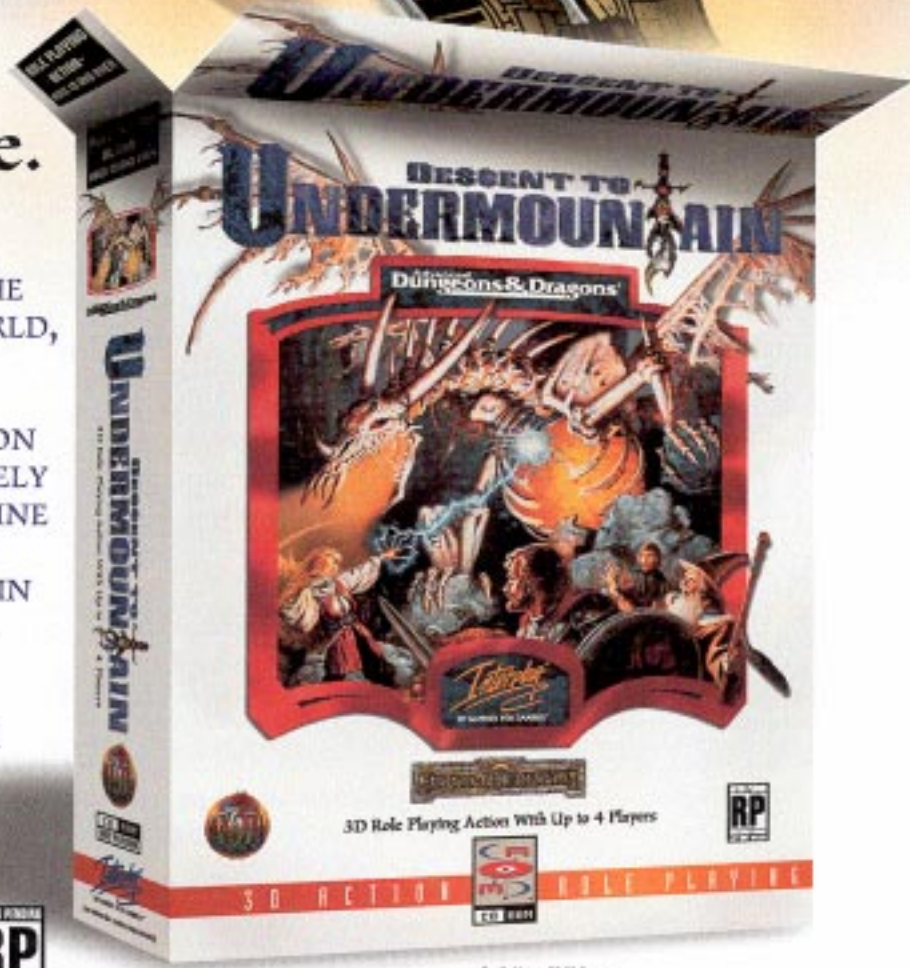
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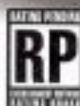
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or *wall of force*. At 9th level, PC can use all of these abilities once a week.

Reason bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Intelligence/Reason sub-ability.

Resist chaos (5): The PC receives a +1 to all saves vs. wild magic, spells cast by chaotic individuals, and spells from the priest sphere of chaos.

Resist unlawful influences (10): The PC has a 30% resistance to illusions, energy drains, *charm*, *sleep*, *fear*, *domination*, and other mind-affecting spells.

Saving throw bonus (5): The PC possesses the modronic resistance to fire, cold, and acid gaining a +1 to all saving throws vs. any such attacks.

Sense modrons (5): Ever alert to the fact that it may be captured by a modron patrol and returned for judgment on Mechanus, the PC can detect at will all modrons within 60 yards. Detection requires the modron's full concentration for each round to be maintained.

Superior sight (5): The PC's vision is double the normal range of sight.

Telepathy (5): At will, the PC can converse telepathically with any creature of lawful alignment.

Winged modron (10): The PC possesses a pair of wings allowing flight (MV 15, MC D).



Tiefling

Standard abilities: Cold resistance, darkness, electricity save bonus, fire save bonus, infravision, poison save bonus.

Ambidextrous (5): The PC is ambidextrous and can fight equally well with two weapons with no attack penalty as rangers. Tiefling must use weapons he is proficient in.

Appearance bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Appearance/Charisma sub-ability.

Baatorian bloodline (15): Somewhere in the past, one of the PC's human ancestors became romantically involved with a resident of Baator — most likely an erinyes. This diabolical blood tie has given the tiefling a complete immunity to fire.

Baatorian powers — minor (10): Once a day, the PC can cast *command*, *fireball*, or *know alignment*. At 7th level, tiefling can enact all these abilities once a day.

Baatorian powers — major (15): Once a week, the PC can cast *fear*, *improved invisibility*, or *wall of fire*. At 9th level, tiefling can enact all these abilities once a week.

Bladeling flesh (10): The PC is granted a metallic natural AC 5 inherited from

his bladeling ancestry. An unfortunate side-effect from this option is that the tiefling suffers double damage from any heat metal spells and rust dragon breath attacks.

Choice weapon (5): The PC gains +1 to hit when using any one of the following weapons: long sword, stiletto, throwing dagger, long spear, ranseur, hand crossbow, scimitar, or punch dagger.

Cold resistance (10): The PC suffers half damage from cold attacks.

Darkform (10): Once a day, the tiefling may assume a darkform similar in function to the wizard spell *wraithform*. Once activated, the tiefling appears as a shadowy humanoid shape filled with dark, roiling clouds. At 5th level, the PC can activate this power twice a day.

Darkness (5): Once a day, the PC can cast *darkness* 15' radius.

Electricity save bonus (5): The PC gains +2 bonus to all saves vs. electrical attacks.

Fiendish hide (15): The PC can be hit only by weapons enchanted to +1 or better.

Fiendish wings (10): The PC sports a large pair of leathery, fiendish-looking wings from his back that allows flight (MV 15, MC C).

Fire save bonus (5): +2 bonus to all saves vs. fire.

Gas resistance (10): The PC suffers half damage from gas attacks.

Hellraiser (10): The PC is invigorated when on any of the lower planes, providing a temporary boost to his prime attribute (1d4 points added to prime attribute ability score). A PC with more than one prime attribute, such as a multi-classed PC, has only one attribute determined randomly raised in this way. This boost cannot be made permanent and ends once the PC leaves the lower planes.

Hordling bloodline (10): The PC's hordling ancestry has granted the PC an unpredictable magic resistance. Every 24 hours, the PC rolls a 1d6 to determine his magic resistance for the day (1=1%; 2=50%; 3=10%; 4=15%; 5=30%; 6=60%).

Howl from pandemonium (10): Once a day at 5th level, tiefling can emit a mind-jarring howl that affects all beings within 30' of the PC as if targeted by a *chaos* spell.

Infravision (5): The PC possesses infravision to 60'.

Knowledge bonus (10): The PC gains +1 to the Intelligence/Knowledge sub-ability.

Lower planar regeneration (10): While on any of the lower planes, the PC regenerates 1 hp/round.

Poison save bonus (5): The PC gains +2 to all saves vs. poison.

Reason bonus (10): The PC raises Intelligence/Reason sub-ability by +1.

Styx resistance (10): The PC, like many denizens of the lower planes, is immune to the memory-sapping waters of the River Styx.

Tanar'ric bloodline (15): The PC is immune to all forms of electricity.

Tanar'ric powers - minor (10): Once a day, the tiefling can employ *heat metal*, *scare*, or *suggestion*. At 7th level, tiefling can enact all these abilities once a day.

Tanar'ric powers - major (15): Once a week, the tiefling can employ *telekinesis*, *true seeing*, or *vampiric touch*. At 9th level, the tiefling can enact all these abilities once a week.

Telepathy (5): At will within a 20' radius, the PC can communicate telepathically with any fiend or being possessing the tiefling's alignment.

Teleport without error (15): At 7th level, the PC can *teleport without error* once a day. This ability take one full turn to activate and is ruined for that day if the tiefling is disrupted in any way.

Undetectable lie (5): Once a day, the PC can speak an *undetectable lie* (reverse of *detect lie*).

Yugoloth bloodline (15): A bizarre cross breeding between one of the tiefling's human progenitors and a yugoloth resulted in the PC being immune to acid.

Yugoloth powers - minor (10): Once a day, the tiefling can employ *alter self*, *charm person*, or *spectral force*. At 7th level, the PC can enact all these abilities once a day.

Yugoloth powers - major (15): Once a week, the PC can *polymorph self*, *warp wood*, or *wind walk*. At 9th level, the PC can enact all these abilities once a week.

Racial weakness options: Some tieflings inherit weaknesses from their Lower Planar ancestors. Tiefling PCs may select from the following racial weaknesses to earn bonus points.

Fiendish weakness (5): The PC suffers double damage from cold attacks.

Holy water vulnerability (5): Tiefling's fiendish ancestry makes him especially vulnerable to holy water. A direct hit causes 2d4 hp damage, while a splash does 1d4.

Silver vulnerability (5): The PC suffers double damage from all silver weapons.

Upper planar disorientation (5): The tieflings fiendish nature is at odds with the pure goodness found in the Upper Planes. On the Upper Planes of Good, tiefling is sickened and weakened suffering a -4 to THACO and AC as well as a -4 to all surprise checks.

Standard PC races

Players creating planar PCs with one of the standard character races can select any option for their particular race from both the S&P handbook and from the list of planar options below. The number of CPs for each race remains unchanged from S&P.

Additional dwarven abilities

Enlarge/reduce (5): The PC can *enlarge* or *reduce* himself as the wizard spell once a day.

Lower resistance (10): The non-magical nature of planar dwarves can be harnessed to adversely affect other beings. At 5th level, the PC can cause one being to be affected by lower resistance once a day.

Magic resistance (10): PC has 10% magic resistance.

Pebble to boulder (5): At 5th level, the dwarf may cast *pebble to boulder* once a day.

Planar sense (5): Being creatures of the earth, dwarves are naturally attuned to the lands they travel upon. At will, the PC can determine which outer plane he is on as well as how many layers beneath the first layer of the plane he is. The PC does not gain any other knowledge of the plane (i.e. planar ruler, local inhabitants, etc.).

Rockform (10): Once a day, the PC can assume the form of a large rock or small boulder the same size as the dwarf. The dwarf may remain in rock form for 1 hour per level of the PC. When the PC reverts back to his normal dwarf form, he is healed of 2d8+6 hp damage. While in rock form, the dwarf is virtually immune to standard weapon attacks but may be harmed by other means such as mining equipment, being thrown by a giant. Stone-affecting spells cast on a dwarf in rockform affect the dwarf in the same manner such spells affect a being under the effects of a *meld into stone* spell.

Additional elven racial abilities

Animal/plant form (10): Closer to nature than perhaps any other PC race, the elf has developed the ability to cast *polymorph self* (natural animals only) or *tree* once a day.

Detect undead (5): As champions of life, most elves despise undead as an unnatural abomination and seek to destroy them where possible. The PC can *detect undead* as per the spell once a day for every three levels possessed.

Invoke wild surge (5): Elves, being a magical and mostly chaotic race, can combine these two traits to cause spectacular results. Once a day for every five levels, the PC can cause a wild surge to happen to a spellcaster in the process of casting a spell within 20'. This power cannot affect innate abilities.

Magic resistance (10): The PC possesses 10% magic resistance. This option may not be taken with the elven resistance to *charm* spells option.

Power of life (20): The PC is immune to death magic and level draining spells and attacks such as those from undead. The PC is not immune, however, to aging effects such as an attack from a ghost or a *haste* spell.

Withdraw (5): The long-lived elf approaches each situation with tact and caution making the best possible use of time. Once a day, the PC can cast *withdraw*.

Additional gnomish abilities

Etherealness (10): From any prime material world, inner plane, or demiplane, the PC may enter the Border Ethereal of the Ethereal Plane at will twice a day. Likewise, a gnome in the Border Ethereal can enter any bordering plane twice a day.

Dreamweaver (10): Once a day, the PC can cast *phantasmal force*. At 3rd level, this power improves as the gnome's understanding of illusions becomes greater allowing the PC to now cast *spectral force* once a day. At 9th level, this ability becomes even more enhanced allowing the gnome to cast *advanced illusion*, *programmed illusion*, or *mirage arcane* once a day.

Illusion resistance (5/20): The PC receives 30% resistance to illusion/phantasm magic for 5 points. For 20 points, the gnome is immune to all illusion/phantasm magic.

Magic resistance (20): Gnome starts off with 20% magic resistance that improves by 5% for every level after 3rd. This cannot be combined with Illusion Resistance.

Non-detection (15): The PC is permanently protected by *non-detection*.

Shadow wielder (15): At 5th level, the gnome can cast *shadow magic* or *shadow monsters* once a day. At 9th level, this

ability is enhanced via the gnome's greater understanding of illusory magics and the PC can cast either *semi-shadow* magic or *semi-shadow monsters* once a day.

Summon earth elemental (15): At 6th level, once a day, the PC can summon an earth elemental as the *conjure earth elemental* priest spell with no chance of the gnome losing control of the elemental.

Additional halfling abilities

Alter self (5/10): Once a day, the PC can *alter self*. For 10 points, the PC can *polymorph self* once a day.

Alternate reality (15): The PC can cast the wild magic spell, *alternate reality*, once a day.

Chaos shaper (5): The PC receives the chaos shaping proficiency. All attempts to shape land in Limbo automatically succeed, and the halfling can shape double the amount of land normally allowed.

Chaos shield (5): Some halflings have developed an innate (some say vital) resistance to wild magic. Once a day for every five levels, the PC can cast *chaos shield* to protect himself from all wild surges regardless of where they originate.

Limbo friend (5): The PC is recognized as a native of Limbo and looked upon as a fellow chaos supporter by other natives (i.e., slaadi, githzerai, etc.) receiving a +4 to all reaction modifiers should those natives care at all to parley with the halfling.

Magic resistance (10): The PC has 10% magic resistance (option cannot be combined with wild resistance option).

Wall of fog (5/10): Once a day, the PC can use his smoking pipe to create a *wall of fog*. For 10 points, halfling still uses his pipe to produce a *wall of fog* but upon reaching 8th level can produce *solid fog* once a day.

Wild resistance (5): The PC possesses 30% magic resistance to wild magic spells, the effects of wild surges, and priest spells from the sphere of chaos.

Additional half-elf abilities

Ancestor ability (5+): The PC can select any one ability from either the elf or human list of options but must pay an additional 5 points over the original cost of the option. This option may be taken only once.

Appeasement (5): The PC deeply respects and defers to both human and elven society, gaining a +4 modifier to all reactions with these two races.

Life protection bonus (5): The PC gains +1 to all saves vs. death magic and life-draining attacks.

Racial appearance (5): The PC appears for all-intents and purposes as a member of one of his parents race (either human or elf). The PC will never be mistaken for a half-elf or as a member of the other parents race.

Survivor (10): Not fully accepted by either human or elven society, the solitary PC learned to rely mainly on himself and has thus developed unusual survival abilities. Once a day, the PC can cast *know alignment*, *invisibility*, or *silence 15' radius*. At 9th level, the half-elf can cast all these abilities once a day.

Urban sense (5): The PC is a tough urban survivor having had to hone his skills to find out pertinent information fast. The PC has a base 40% + 5% chance per level of knowing the answer to any general question concerning Sigil or any of the gate-towns (portals, local law, ruler, etc.). Of course, many burghs have secrets that no berk will ever get the dark on.

Additional half-ogre abilities

Alteration resistance (5): The PC is 30% resistant to magic from the school of alteration.

Club bonus (5): A half-ogre who is proficient with a club inflicts double damage on a successful attack that exceed the to hit roll by more than 4.

Humans not so bad (5): The PC has learned enough of his human parents customs to gain a general acceptance with humans. PC gains a +4 reaction modifier when dealing with humans.

Necromantic resistance (5): The PC receives 30% resistance to necromantic magic.

Ogres good, humans bad (10): The PC has honed his fighting skills against those particularly troublesome humans, elves, half-elves, aasimar, and tieflings. PC gains a +2 to hit and damage when fighting any of these "annoying" races.

Super hit points (15): The robust PC receives a bonus 2 hit points at every level advance.

Additional half-orc abilities

Battle Rager of Acheron (10): Once a week, the PC may choose to enter a battle-rage whereby during a battle, PC fights to -15 hps or until all foes in sight are slain. After either condition is met, the half-orc is rendered unconscious but is also instantly healed to 1 hp if 0 hp or less. Once unconscious, the PC cannot be revived by any means but eventually will awaken in 1d4 turns. Some sages attribute this ability to a bizarre influ-

ence emanating from Acheron targeting those of orcish descent.

Chaos foe (5): The PC gains +1 to all saves from spells cast by chaotic beings, spells having chaos as an end result such as confusion and chaos, or priest spells from the law sphere.

Eye of Groomsh (10): At 2nd level, once a day, the PC can *know alignment*, *detect lie*, or *detect magic*. At 8th level, the PC can enact each ability once a day.

Groomsh's speedy blessing (10): Once a day in battle only, the PC can move as if *hasted* for as many rounds as levels possessed. The half-orc does not suffer any aging from this power.

Law warrior (10): Once a day, the half-orc can cast one priest spell from the combat, war, or law spheres. The PC can only cast a spell that is normally available to a priest of the same level. For example, a 5th level half-orc fighter could cast one priest spell up to 3rd level but no higher. When he reached 7th level, the half-orc could then cast one spell up to 4th level.

Magic resistance (10): The PC receives 10% magic resistance.

Revitalized slayer (5): The PC is invigorated with every kill in battle. For every being slain by the half-orc, the PC is healed of 2 hp of damage (but cannot exceed PC's maximum total). This is a reward from Acheron for the half-orc's proven battle prowess.

Additional human abilities

Astral walker (10): Once a day, the PC and up to 1 companion per level can enter the astral plane from the first layer of any outer plane (excluding Sigil). This ability takes one round to enact but works only on the outer planes.

Detect fiend (5): Some stalwart humans are always on guard against the seemingly ever-present fiends. At will, the PC can detect all fiends within 30' x 10' path in front of him even if the fiend has assumed a different form. This power takes one round to scan a direction and the PC cannot engage in any other behavior.

Detect scrying (5): Some humans are very sensitive to divination magics directed at them. Once a day, the PC can detect scrying.

Evocation resistance (5): The PC has 30% resistance to invocation/evocation magic.

Free actor (10): Once a day, the human can cast *free action* on himself.

Magic resistance (5/10): Human receives 2% magic resistance for every

level possessed. For 10 points, the PC receives a 3% magic resistance per level. This ability cannot be combined with evocation resistance.

Plane lover (5): The PC is enamored of a handful of native races living on the outer planes. The PC gains a +4 modifier to all reactions when dealing with good celestials, evil fiends, or the neutral beings (modrons, slaadi and rilmani). The player chooses one group only. Such infatuations sometimes lead to the births of aasimar, alu-fiends, cambions, and tieflings.

True seer (10): The human has been gifted with a precious enhanced vision. PC can cast *true seeing* (priest version) once a day.

4. Character classes

Each class has a standardized package of abilities found in the *PHB* which is also duplicated here for easy reference. Players may opt to take the standard list of skills or customize their PCs using the abilities listed here. More information concerning each class (such as allowable weapons and armor, level limits, and minimum requirements) may be found in *PHB* or *S&P*.

Class	Points Allotted
Warrior	
Fighter	15
Paladin	60
Ranger	60
Rogue	
Bard	80
Thief	80
Priest	
Cleric	125
Druid	100
Wizard	
Mage	40
Specialist	30

All classes

All classes can select the following ability:

Weapon specialization: PC has the ability to specialize in a single weapon but the CP cost for acquiring the specialization must be met in addition to paying for this option. This cost varies depending on the class chosen: Fighter 5 CPs; Paladin, Ranger, or Bard 10 CPs; Thief, Cleric, Druid, or Mage 15 CPs; Specialist Wizard 20 CPs.

Warrior class

Optional restrictions

All sub-classes of warrior can gain bonus points by accepting voluntary restrictions on normal warrior abilities.

Limited armor (5/10/15): The PC with this restriction is limited in his selection of armor. If the PC is restricted to chainmail or lighter armor, this restriction gives 5 CPs; if limited to studded leather or lighter armor, PC gains 10 CPs; and if the PC refuses to wear any armor at all, he gains 15 CPs. All warriors may still use a shield.

Limited weapon selection (5): The PC is limited in his choice of weapons. He can gain proficiency with weapons in only one of the following groups: melee weapons (no missile weapons allowed); priest weapons; rogue weapons.

Limited magical item use (5+): The PC refuses to use certain categories of magical items. For each category that is barred to him, he gains 5 CPs. The categories are: potions, oils, and scrolls; rods, staves, wands, and miscellaneous magical items; weapons; and armor.

Fighter

Standard abilities: Attract followers, weapon specialization.

1d12 for hit points (10): The PC rolls d12 for hit points.

Attract followers (5/10): The PC at 9th level gains followers as described in the *PHB* if he establishes a stronghold. The 10-point option allows him to attract followers whenever he establishes a stronghold, regardless of level. DMs should adjust the racial make-up of followers to adequately reflect the Planescape setting.

Blood warrior (10): The PC believes that the true path to becoming the finest warrior lies in pitting his skills against the eternally warring fiends especially fighting them where they war the most — in the Blood War. When fighting fiends anywhere, the PC becomes an awesome fighting machine as he revels in his true element. Fighter gains a +2 to hit and damage against all fiends, and receives a +2 bonus to AC.

Building (5): The PC knows how to construct heavy war machines, siege engines, and siege towers.

Defense bonus (10/15): The PC gains a +2 bonus to AC if unencumbered and unarmored: For 15 points, AC bonus is +3.

Improved THAC0 (10): The PC begins life better suited to fight than most by having an improved THAC0. The PC starts with a THAC0 of 18 at 1st level that improves by 1 for every level advance.

Increased movement (5): The PC is quicker than most and adds a +3 to movement rate.

Leadership (5): The PC is able to lead large number of troops in battle (up to

100 soldiers per level). The PC knows how to use messengers and signals, is familiar with military terminology, and understands the mechanics of moving large numbers of troops.

Move silently (10): A PC with this ability can move silently like thieves. The chance of success is equal to PC's Dexterity score added to the PC's level. In order to move silently, the PC cannot wear any armor greater than studded leather. All other thief penalties also apply.

Multiple specialization (10): The PC with this ability can specialize in as many weapons as desired provided that the CP cost is met for each individual specialization.

Planetouched (10): The PC's body is charged with a curious planar energy that temporarily renders non-magical weapons the fighter wields into a magical weapon (so long as the fighter maintains physical contact with the weapon). For every 4 levels of the fighter, the non-magical weapon gains a magical +1 bonus to hit and damage (i.e., +1 at 1st level, +2 at 5th, etc., to a maximum of +5).

Poison resistance (5): The PC gains +1 to all saves vs. poison.

Proficiency ease (5): By spending 5 CPs now, the fighter can cut the cost of all weapon proficiency costs in the future (including all forms of mastery) by 50%.

Spell resistance (5): The PC gains +1 to all saves vs. spells.

Supervisor (5): The PC has the authority to supervise the construction of defensive works such as ditches, pits, fields of stakes, and hastily built wooden and stone barricades. Semi-permanent buildings may also be constructed if time permits.

War machines (5): The PC knows how to operate heavy war machines and siege engines such as ballistae, catapults, rams, bores, and siege towers.

Paladin

Standard abilities: Circle of power, curative, detect evil, faithful mount, healing, health, priest spells, protection from evil, saving throw bonus.

All paladins have built-in restrictions to the class, which cannot be changed, as listed in the *PHB* and *S&P*. If the DM allows, paladin spell restrictions listed in *PLAYER'S OPTION: Spells & Magic* rules may be taken for extra CPs.

1d12 for hit points (10): The PC rolls d12 for hit points.

Circle of power (5): If the PC owns a holy sword, he can project a circle of

power 10' in diameter. This circle dispels hostile magic at a level equal to the paladin's experience.

Curative (10): Once a week for every three experience levels, the PC can cure diseases of all types.

Detect evil (5): The PC can detect evil monsters and beings up to 60' away simply by concentrating for one round. The PC can perform this ability an unlimited number of times.

Dispel evil (10): At 7th level, the PC can cast *dispel evil* once per day.

Faithful mount (5): The PC can summon a steed at 4th level as per the *PHB*.

Fiend slayer (10): The PC is the sworn enemy of all vile fiends and gains a +3 to hit and +3 to damage against fiends.

Gift of the Archons (15): The PC has been honored by the archons and rewarded with a wondrous gift. The PC grows a large pair of feathered wings from his back that allows flight (MV 18, MC B). Note that any armor the PC owns must be altered to accommodate these celestial wings.

Healing (5/10): Once a day, the PC can heal him or another by laying on of hands restoring 2 hit points per level. For 10 points, the paladin can heal 4 hit points per level once a day.

Health (5): The PC is immune to all forms of disease.

High wisdom bonus (5): If the PC has the Priest Spells option, he receives bonus spells based on his high wisdom identical to the way clerics do.

Holy assistance (10): Once a week, the PC can gate in 1 lantern archon per experience level as long as the archons are employed solely in the fight against evil. The gated lanterns remain for 1 turn plus 1 round per paladin's level. This ability does not work in Sigil.

Holy defender (10): When on the plane of his power (usually Mt. Celestia but not always), the PC becomes a near invincible defender. All magic resistance and saving throw bonuses are doubled and the paladin's AC is improved by 4.

Lawful order (5): The PC can dictate (as the 3rd-level priest spell in *S&M*) once a day for every four levels.

Lower planar vanquisher (10): The PC has steeled himself for taking the good fight where fiends live and breed. The paladin receives a +4 to all saves vs. any naturally occurring phenomena on any of the lower planes.

Poison resistance (10): The PC gains +2 to all saves vs. poison.

Priest spells (10): At 9th level, the PC can cast priest spells as per the *PHB*.



Protection from evil (5): The PC is protected from evil by a natural aura 10' in diameter which affects all evil creatures in the aura (-1 penalty to THAC0).

Resist fiendish magics (10): Paladin gains a 2%/level magic resistance against any spells employed by fiends. This resistance can be added to any other magic resistance the paladin possesses.

Resist charm (10/15): +2 bonus to saves vs. charm-like spells and effects. For 15 points, the paladin's saving throw bonus vs. charm magic is +4 if the charm is cast by any evil being from the lower planes.

Saving throw bonus (10): +2 bonus to all saving throws.

Turn undead (10): At 3rd level, the paladin can turn undead as a cleric two levels below his own level.

Ranger

Standard ranger abilities: Attract followers, empathy with animals, hide in shadow, move silently, priest spells, special enemy, tracking, two-weapon style.

If the DM allows, ranger spell restrictions listed in the *PLAYER'S OPTION: Spells & Magic* rules may be taken for extra CPs.

1d12 for hit points (10): PC rolls d12 for hit points.

Animal master (15): At 5th level, the PC has learned how to control the natural fauna around him. Once a week, the ranger may cast *animal growth*, *anti-animal shell*, *conjure animals*, or *hold animal*. At 9th level, the ranger can enact each of these abilities once a week.

Attract followers (10): At 10th level, the PC attracts followers as per *PHB* or *S&P* (the list of followers should be modified to include planar beings).

Bow bonus (5): +1 attack bonus with any bow.

Climbing (10): Ranger can climb trees, cliffs, and other natural formations (except the Spire). Climbing score is equal to ranger's Dexterity/Balance score plus the hide in shadows percentage for a ranger of his level (see table in *PHB* or *S&P*).

Detect noise (10): Similar to the thief ability but the ranger uses his Wisdom/Intuition score plus the hide in shadows percentage to determine his chance of success.

Empathy with animals (10): Ranger can approach and befriend an animal as described in the *PHB* or *S&P*.

Find and remove wilderness traps (10): Ability functions similar to the thief ability but ranger's chance of success is equal to move silently percentage.

High wisdom bonus (5): If the ranger has the Priest Spells option, the ranger receives bonus spells based on his high wisdom identical to the way clerics do.

Hide in shadows (5): Wearing studded leather or lighter armor, ranger can hide in shadows as per *PHB* or *S&P*.

Move silently (5): Wearing studded leather or lighter armor, ranger can move silently as per *PHB* or *S&P*.

Pass without trace (10): Ranger can pass without trace as the druid ability.

Planar defender (10): Ranger gains a +2 bonus to hit, to damage, and initiative as well as a +1 bonus to AC when fighting on his home plane against non-natives of the plane.

Planar attunement (5): Ranger can attune herself to the plane he is on and become vividly aware of naturally occurring phenomena of the plane such as the will-sapping entropy of the Gray Waste. This ability takes one complete turn of uninterrupted concentration per phenomena to be discerned.

Plant master (15): At 3rd level, the ranger has learned how to effectively manipulate surrounding flora and may, once a week, cast anti-plant shell, hold plant, plant growth, or wall of thorns. At 8th level, the ranger can enact each ability once a week.

Polymorph self (5/10): At 5th level, ranger can polymorph self once a day into any natural animal native to his plane of origin. For 10 points, ranger can polymorph into any creature he desires within the spell's limitations.

Priest spells (10): At 8th level, ranger can cast priest spells precisely as described in the *PHB* or *S&P*.

Savage ranger (10): The union of planar energies and the ranger's relationship with nature have combined to make him a savage fighter. Once a day, the ranger can cast *Tenser's transformation* on himself with the following differences: ranger uses his own THAC0 and may fight with any weapon which he chooses (proficiency rules still apply).

Sneak attack (10): A ranger who successfully, hides in shadows and moves silently can backstab an opponent as the thief ability. A backstab is +4 to hit and causes damage as per a thief of the same level.

Speak with animals (5/10): Once a day, the PC can speak with animals as the spell. For 10-points, the ranger can

employ this ability once a day for every three experience levels possessed.

Special enemy (10): The PC gains a +4 to THAC0 and -4 to reaction modifiers when dealing with his special enemy. This ability is fully described in the *PHB* and *S&P*, but the ranger may now select planar beings as enemies including fiends.

Tracking ability (5): The PC receives tracking proficiency which automatically improves by +1 for every three levels.

Two-weapon style (5): The PC can fight with two weapons and suffer no penalties as per the *PHB* or *S&P*.

Rogue class

Standard rogue thieving skills

Both types of rogue have access to any standard rogue thieving skill listed below provided that each skill is paid for with CPs. The base values of each rogue skill are detailed in *S&P*. Racial modifiers for the standard races are also detailed in *S&P*. Racial modifiers for the uniquely planar races are found under their specific entry in the appropriate *PLANESCAPE* source. Modifiers based on Dexterity and the specific type of armor worn are found in *S&P*. These skills can be improved upon as a rogue advances in level but these improvements vary according to the type of rogue. Bards begin with 20 discretionary points to distribute among their base thieving skill values at 1st level. At every level thereafter, the bard receives 15 points to distribute among these skills. At 1st level, thieves begin with 60 discretionary points that can be spent on these skills. At every level thereafter, the thief gains 30 more points to spend on thieving skills. Complete descriptions of these skills are found in *S&P*: Bribe (5), climb walls (5), detect illusion (10), detect magic (10), detect noise (5), escape bonds (10), find/remove traps (10), hide in shadows (5), move silently (5), open locks (10), pick pockets (10), read languages (5), tunneling (10).

Thief

Standard abilities: Attract followers, backstab, climb walls, detect noise, find/remove traps, hide in shadows, move silently, open locks, pick pockets, read language, scroll use, thieves cant.

Attract followers (5/10): The 5-point option allows the PC to attract followers at 9th level as per the *PHB*. For 10 points, thief can attract followers whenever he establishes a stronghold, regardless of level.

Audible glamer (5): A thief often needs to cause a diversion when he has to slip past some annoying hardheads or other law-enforcing berks. The PC can cast an *audible glamer* once a day.

Backstab (10): The PC can attack an opponent with a vicious backstab as detailed in the *S&P*.

Backstab bonus (5): A thief who has chosen backstab now attacks with a +6 to all backstab attacks.

Comprehend languages (5): The planes house a tremendous number of races and a knight of the cross-trade has to be able to speak their languages to get what he wants from them (usually a profitable peel). Once a day, the PC can cast *tongues*.

Dimension door (10): Berks about to get nabbed by the law usually wish they'd have planned some form of escape. Some planar thieves, usually Sigilian, have learned a sure-fire way to escape. Once a week, the PC can employ a *dimension door*. At 9th level, the PC can enact this ability once a day.

Defensive bonus (10/15): An unarmed and unencumbered thief gains a +2 to his armor class. For 15 points, the thief receives a +3 bonus to AC.

Know faction (5): In Sigil and elsewhere, lots of cutters try to hide who they are and who they serve. This thief has made it his business to know who he is dealing with before he deals with them. The thief can *know faction* once a day as the *Indep* spell in the *Factol's Manifesto*.

Magic thief (10): At 7th level, the thief can steal enchantment once a day.

Portal lock (5): If on the run, some thieves need to keep annoying berks like Harmonium from following them through portals. Once a day, the thief can attempt temporarily to shut down a portal by casting *surelock* (*PLANESCAPE* campaign setting).

Sense portal (10): Always looking for a possible means to escape should the need arise, the thief can cast *warp sense* (*PLANESCAPE* campaign setting) once a day.

Shadow thief (10): At 7th level, thief can cast *Lorloveim's shadow transformation* on himself twice a day.

Silence (5): Once a day, the thief can render himself silent as the 2nd-level priest spell *silence 15' radius*, except only the thief is affected.

Scroll use (5/10): At 10th level, the thief can use magical spell scrolls as per *S&P*. For 10-points, the thief can read scrolls at any level.

Thieves' cant (5): Thief uses slang terms when referring to illegal activities thus letting them converse about such dealings in the open without others knowing what is being talked about.

Bard

Standard bard abilities: Alter moods, attract followers, climb walls, counter effects, detect noise, history, magical item use, pick pockets, rally friends, read languages, wizard spells.

If the DM allows, bard spell restrictions and options listed in *PLAYER'S OPTION: Spells & Magic* may be selected.

Attract followers (5/10): The 5-point option allows the PC to attract followers at 9th level as per the *PHB*. For 10 points, PC can attract followers whenever the PC establishes a stronghold, regardless of the PC's level.

Alter moods (5): The PC can influence reactions as described in the *PHB*.

Animal friendship (10): Once a day, the bard can cast the equivalent of an *animal friendship* spell by singing a song.

Charm person (10): Once a day, the PC can cast a *charm person* by singing the spell. At 9th level, the PC can cast *charm monster* instead of *charm person* once a day.

Charm resistance (10): The PC gains +2 to all saves vs. charm/enchantment spells and effects.

Counter effects (10): The PC can counter the effects of songs and magic used as magical attacks (including spells cast by song mages) by performing a counter song as described in *S&P*.

History (10): Bard knows a "little bit of everything as found in the *PHB*.

Instrumental spell casting (10): The PC has learned how to enhance his spells by casting them through a musical instrument with which he is proficient. (CPs must be spent for this proficiency also). All spells cast through the instrument are treated as if two levels higher with regard to effect, range, etc., and need no material components. Casting spells in this manner increases casting time by 1 per level of the spell.

Magical item use (10): Bard can use magic items usable only by wizards but with a chance of failure as per the *PHB*.

Priestly magic (5): The bard gains minor access to one sphere of priestly magic. The wizard spells option must also be taken. Additional spheres may be purchased as many times as desired.

Rally friends (5): Music, stories and poetry performed by the bard can be inspirational as in the *PHB*.

Song of combat (10): Once a day, the bard can play a song of combat which has the same effect as unearthly choir as if he were a trio of priests. At 6th level, the bard can sing as per the quartet; at 9th level, the bard functions as if a quintet; at 12th level, the bard sings as an ensemble of six priests; and at 16th level, the bard sings as if he were an entire choir of eleven priests.

Song of discordance (10): Once a day, a non-lawful bard can play a song of discordance on his instrument which has the same effect as chaotic combat except that all warriors within 10' of the bard are affected.

Song of harmony (10): Once a day, a non-chaotic bard can play a song of harmony on his instrument which has the same effect as defensive harmony.

Sound resistance (5): +2 bonus to saves vs. sound-based magical assaults.

Spell bonus (10): Bard gains an extra spell per spell level if the wizard spells option is taken.

Wizard spells (10): The bard can cast spells at 2nd level as per the *PHB* and *S&P*.

Priest class

All priest spheres and their costs are detailed in *S&P*. If the DM allows, priest restrictions and options listed in *S&P* may be also selected to further customize priest PCs.

Optional restrictions

Both clerics and druids can gain bonus points to spend on abilities appropriate to their sub-class by accepting the following voluntary restrictions on normal priest abilities.

Armor restriction (5+): The PC is limited in choice of armor. For 5 CPs, the priest is restricted to chain mail or lighter armor; for 10 points, the priest is limited to studded leather or lighter armor; and for 15 points, the priest may not wear armor at all.

Limited magical item Use (5+): Any priest with this penalty refuses to use certain categories of magical items. The priest gains 5 CPs for every category selected: potions, oils, and scrolls; rings, rods, staves, wands, and miscellaneous items; weapons and armor.

Reduced hit points (10/20): The PC with the 10-point limitation uses d6 for hit points. For 20 points, the PC uses d4 for hit points.

Cleric

Standard abilities: Sphere access (Major - All, Astral, Charm, Combat,

Creation, Divination, Elemental, Guardian, Healing, Necromantic, Protection, Summoning, Sun, Weather), turn undead.

Access to spheres: Clerics can purchase major or minor access to the priest spheres of magic. All clerics are generally limited to only those spheres of their powers portfolio.

Anchor of stability (5): The very land of the planes, being mutable, can slide into another plane when dominated by the overwhelming influence of the alignment of those present. The PC's strong devotion to his power acts as an anchor for that ground and thus prevents its movement. No planar land slips within 10' of the cleric unless that land is shifting to the plane of the cleric's power. (In this case, the land slips normally).

Casting reduction (5): Clerics casting time is reduced by 1 (to a minimum of 1)

Detect good/evil (10): Non-evil clerics with this ability can see emanations of evil (non-good clerics detect good) from creatures and objects within a path 10' wide by 60' long. This power takes one round to scan a direction and the cleric cannot engage in any other behavior.

Detect undead (10): Clerics with this ability can detect undead within a path 10' wide by 60' long as long as the undead are not hidden behind stone or other dense material. This power takes one round to scan a direction and the cleric cannot engage in any other behavior.

Expert healer (5/10): The PC can cast a bonus *cure light wounds* spell once per day. With the 10-point option, the cleric can cast a bonus *cure light wounds* once a day for every three levels of experience.

Faithful fanatic (10): All spells cast by cleric function as if the PC were one level higher as a reward of his devotion to his power.

Followers (5/10): The 5-point option allows the cleric to attract followers at 9th level as per the *PHB*. For 10 points, he can attract followers whenever the cleric establishes a stronghold, regardless of the his level.

Hit point bonus (10/15): The PC rolls d10 for hit points. For 15 points, the PC rolls d12.

Know alignment (10): Once a day, the cleric can cast *know alignment*.

Nearer my power to thee (10): An extremely strong link between the cleric and his power exists lessening by one the levels a cleric will drop when not on the plane of his power.

Path of the proxy (5): Once a day, the cleric can call upon faith or draw upon holy might.

Plane truth (15): The cleric is granted the purest vision from his deity. Priest can cast *true seeing* (priest version) once a week. At 7th level, the priest can use this ability once per day.

Resist energy drain (5): The PC gains +1 to all saves vs. the energy drain spell and level-draining attacks of undead. This ability has no effect where no save is allowed or when used in conjunction with the negative energy protection spell.

Resist temptation (10): The cleric's zeal and devotion to his power lessens the chance that others can sway or influence the PC. PC gains a +2 to all saves which might influence the PC's mind such as charm/enchantment spells and psionics.

Spell duration increase (10): The duration of all non-instantaneous spells cast by the PC increases by 1 round for every 2 of the cleric's experience levels.

Sphere bonus (6+): The cleric can purchase either major or minor access to one sphere of priest spells that normally lies outside his powers portfolio. The cost is twice the standard cost listed.

Sphere focus (10): Any spells in one sphere of the cleric's choice are cast as if the PC were two levels higher. This may be combined with the Faithful Fanatic option.

Turn undead (10): Cleric is granted powers over undead as per PHB or S&P.

Warrior-priests (10): Clerics with this option use the warrior Strength and Constitution bonuses for exceptional scores.

Weapon allowance (5): A cleric with this option can use a favored, edged weapon of his deity. PC must also pay for proficiency for the weapon.

Wizardly priests (15): Cleric gains access to one school of wizard spells and can cast them as if they were clerical spells. This includes the more stylized wizard schools such as elemental magic or even wild magic.

Wondrous healer (15): All *cure wounds* cast by the cleric heal to their maximum potential.

Druid

Standard abilities: Communicate, fire/electrical resistance, identify, immunity to charm, pass without trace, shapechange, sphere access (Major - All, Animal, Elemental, Healing, Plant, Weather; Minor - Divination)

Access to spheres: The standard druid selection of spells costs 60 CPs or the druid can purchase access to the spheres just like clerics do.

Alignment change (10): Once a day, the druid can temporarily neutralize one being by changing its alignment to the least extreme alignment - true neutral. On a failed save vs. spells, the being so affected has its alignment changed to true neutral for the next 2d6 hours and acts accordingly. This change can severely complicate the lives of 'extremists' such as paladins and fiends, which is precisely what the druid wishes to accomplish.

Alter beasts (10): Once a day at 7th level, the druid can *polymorph other* another being into a woodland creature.

Analyze balance (5): The druid can analyze balance at will.

Animal friendship (5): Once a day, the druid can cast *animal friendship*.

Cold resistance (5): +2 to all saves vs. cold or ice-based attacks.

Communicate (10): The druid can learn one language per level of one group of creatures from a related group of racial tongues. A druid could learn the languages of woodland and sylvan races or the languages of the neutral planar beings such as rilmani, modrons, eladrin, slaadi and yugoloth.

Elemental sphere bonus (5/20): Elemental spells cast by the druid are treated as if the PC were one level higher. For 20 points, the druid's own body also serves as an all-purpose elemental power key enabling all elemental spells cast by the druid to reach their fullest potential anywhere in the planes.

Fire/electrical resistance (5): The PC gains +2 to all saves vs. fire and electrical attacks.

Hide in shadows (5): Druid can hide in shadows as per the ranger ability with the same chance of success as a ranger (see ranger).

Hit point bonus (10/15): Druid rolls d10 for hit points. For 15 points, the druid rolls d12 for hit points.

Identify (5/10): At 3rd level, the druid can accurately identify plants, animals, and clean water from his native plane. The 10-point option allows the druid to accurately identify plants, animals and clean water from other planes but because of the druid's unfamiliarity with flora and fauna from other planes, he may fail at an identification attempt. Chance of success equals 40% + 5%/level.

Immunity to charm (5/10): At 7th level, druid is immune to *charm* spells

cast by woodland creatures from his own plane and the plane of his deity as per the PHB. The 10-point option gives a druid this immunity at 1st level.

Immunity to disease (10): With this option, the druid is immune to all natural diseases.

Keeper of the balance (10): When fighting against creatures of extreme alignments (LG, CG, LE, & CE), the druid gains a +2 bonus to hit, damage, and initiative as well as receiving a +2 to all saves from spell attacks by those beings.

Move silently (5): Druid can move silently as per the ranger ability with the same chance of success as a ranger (see ranger).

Outlandish defender (10): On the Outlands, the druid becomes an awesome defender receiving a +4 bonus to armor class and doubling all magic resistance and saving throw bonuses.

Pass without trace (5): At 3rd level, a druid moving at his normal movement rate can *pass without trace* at will as per the spell.

Planar native (10): This powerful option allows a PC to attune his body to any outer plane he is on, providing him with special benefits. The PC's neutral alignment is masked and for purposes of divination appears to be the alignment of the plane he is on. The PC also does not drop in level if his power is on another plane. The PC gains a +1 to all saves vs. natural phenomena of the plane he is on.

Portal affinity (5): Druid can cast *warp sense* (campaign setting boxed set) once a day.

Purify water (5): Druid can cast *purify food and drink* once a day.

Secret language (5): Druid knows a secret language that only druids and rilmani know.

Sense plane slippage (5): While on any of the Outer Planes, the druid becomes instantly aware of any large-scale plane slippage from one plane to another as it occurs (large-scale being about the size of a gate-town). The druid learns where the slipping begins and where the land is headed. Additionally, the druid instantly becomes aware of when he steps on any land that has slipped if the slippage occurred within the past 100 years (druid also learns where the slipped land originated).

Shapechange (10/15): At 7th level, druid can *shapechange* into a natural animal as described in PHB or S&P. For 15 points, the druid can shapechange starting at 5th level.

Spire sense (5): On the Outlands, the druid is instantly aware of when he crosses any of the nine rings surrounding the spire that restrict magic use.

Wizard class

Both mages and specialist wizards have similar characteristics attributable to both sub-classes. The below listed options are available to all wizards in addition to other options particular to each sub-class. If your DM approves, additional options for wizards found in S&M may also be purchased.

Wizard options

Armored wizard (5/10/15): As a 5-point ability, the wizard may wear padded armor. For 10 points, the wizard may wear leather, studded leather, hide, or brigantine armor. For 15 points, the wizard may wear any armor desired. Wizards are not allowed to use shields.

Automatic spells (5): When a wizard with this option gains access to a new level of spells, the wizard automatically acquires a spell for that level. Specialist wizards may only select spells belonging to their chosen school.

Bonus spells (10): Wizard may memorize 1 additional spell per spell level. Bonus spells memorized by specialists must belong to the wizard's specialty school.

Casting reduction (5): Wizard's casting times are reduced by 1 (to a minimum of 1).

Combat bonus (10): Wizard fights with a priests THAC0.

Detect magic (10): This ability allows the wizard to detect magic once a day for every two levels of the wizard.

Dispel magic (10): Wizard can cast *dispel magic* once a day for every five levels possessed.

Extend duration (10): The duration of all non-instantaneous spells increases by 1 round for every 2 experience levels of the generalist mage. If taken by a specialist, this option extends a non-instantaneous spell's duration by 1 round/level but the spell must belong to the wizard's specialty school.

Greater hit die (10/15/20): For 10 points, the wizard rolls d6 for hit points. For 15 points, the wizard rolls d8 for hit points. With the 20-point option, the wizard rolls d10 for hit points.

Immunity (10+): A wizard with this power gains complete immunity to one particular spell, at a cost of 10 CPs plus 1 CP per spell level. The wizard ignores the effects of the spell and cannot be directly



damaged or harmed by the spell. The wizard may gain immunity to a group of related spells by spending CPs to become immune to the highest level spell in that group, so a wizard who wanted to become immune to all charms (*charm person*, *charm monster* etc.) would spend 18 CPs for immunity to *mass charm*.

Range boost (5): The reach of all ranged spells (other than 0, self, or touch) from one school selected by the wizard is increased by 25%. Specialty wizards must apply this option to their chosen school.

Read magic (5): Wizard can *read magic* once a day for every two levels possessed.

Optional restrictions

Both mages and specialists may select from the following limitations to gain CPs to spend on other abilities. With their DMs approval, players may opt to select other wizard limitations in S&P.

Learning penalty (5+): Wizard suffers a -15% penalty when trying to learn spells in all schools of magic except one school which the wizard exempts from this penalty. Specialists must exempt their chosen school.

Limited magical item use (5+): The PC with this penalty refuses to use certain categories of magical items. The wizard gains 5 CPs for every category selected: potions, oils, and scrolls; rings, rods, staves, wands, and miscellaneous items; all weapons and armor.

More opposition schools (5+): The PC with this restriction may choose to take additional opposing schools, gaining 5 points for each school in opposition to his specialty. Only standard specialty schools as described in the *PHB* can be selected as additional oppositional schools. (This option is not available to mages).

Reduced hit points (10): Wizard uses d3 for hit points rather than d4.

Weapon restriction (3/5): For 3 points, the wizard may never have a weapon proficiency. For 5 points, the wizard can never wield a weapon even to save his life. This last restriction is not limited to weapons wholly created by the wizard's spells such as *ice knife*.

Mage

Standard abilities: Access to all schools.

Access to all schools: It costs 40 points for a mage to have access to all eight standard schools of magic.

Planar proficiency summary

Proficiency	cost	Initial Rating	Ability	Reference
General				
Chaos Shaping	4	8	Wisdom/Intuition	PWH
Planar Direction Sense	3	7	Wisdom/Intuition	PWH
Planar Sense	3	6	Wisdom/Intuition	PWH
Planar Survival	4	5	Intelligence/Knowledge	PWH
Plane Knowledge	4	5	Intelligence/Knowledge	FM
Portal Feel	5	3/1	Intelligence/Reason	PWH
Wizard/Priest				
Planology	4	7	Intelligence/Reason	PWH
Spell Recovery	5	3	Intelligence/Knowledge	PWH

Ethos focus (10): The mage's spells are more effective against creatures of a specific ethos, who suffer a -2 to saving throws vs. the mage's spells. Only creatures whose alignment falls into one of the following groups are affected: lawful, chaotic, or neutral good/evil.

Planar safeguard (10): The mage has developed a magical resistance (2%/level) against spells cast by all beings originating from one plane of existence as chosen by the player. This resistance can be added to any magic resistance the PC already possesses.

Planar sympathy (10): The wizard is attuned to those outer planes with the same ethos as his own (either law, chaos, or non-lawful/non-chaotic neutrality). All spells cast by the wizard are treated as if two levels higher when cast on an outer plane of the same ethos.

Priestly wizard (10/15): For 10 points, mage gains minor access to one sphere of priest spells and can cast them as if they were wizard spells. For 15 points, the mage gains major access to that sphere.

Resistance to sleep and charm (5): +1 bonus to all saving throws vs. *sleep* and *charm*.

Stay enchantment (5): Weapons used by the mage do not suffer a magical plus loss when brought to other planes as the wizard is able to sustain the weapon's magical enchantment. A weapon not in the wizard's grasp is unaffected.

Warrior wizard (10): The mage enjoys the benefits of a high constitution score the same as warriors.

Specialist wizard

Standard abilities: Specialty school and accompanying schools (no point cost), automatic spells, bonus spells, intense magic, learning bonus, research bonus, saving throw bonus.

Specialized wizards as listed in the *PHB* have the following penalty (which is not mandatory) when selecting options and limitations: learning penalty.

Extra bonus spell (10): If the Bonus Spell option was taken, the specialist now receives a second bonus spell per spell level provided that the spell belongs to his chosen school.

Focused magic (10): Most beings in the planes have some form of magic resistance which makes it difficult for wizards to use offensive spells. The wizard has enhanced his spellcasting to attempt to overcome that magic resistance. Once a day, any being targeted by a spell cast from the specialist's chosen school is first treated as if affected by lower resistance for that spell only.

Intense magic (5): If a specialist wizard casts a spell from his chosen school, the targets of that spell suffer a -1 saving throw penalty. This option may be purchased several times with a cumulative effect.

Learning bonus (5): +15% bonus when attempting to learn new spells belonging to the wizard's specialty school.

Magic resistance (10): Specialist gains 10% magic resistance against magic from his specialty school which may be added to any other magic resistance.

No components (10): The ability to designate one specialty-school spell per character level as a spell that does not require material components.

Planar strength (10): On his home-plane, spells of his chosen school cast by the specialist have their effects doubled.

Research bonus (5): When attempting to research and create a new spell belonging to his specialized school, the spell is treated as one level lower than its actual level.

Saving throw bonus (5): +1 bonus on saving throws vs. spells cast at wizard from school of specialization. This option may be purchased several times with a cumulative effect.

Specialty bonus (10): All spells in the wizard's chosen school cast by the specialist are treated as if the wizard were two levels higher for purposes of damage, duration, etc.

Specialty sense (5): The specialist is very much in tune with his specialty school and instinctively knows how the physical conditions on any plane will affect spells from his chosen school. This knowledge comes to a wizard within 1d3 turns upon arrival on a plane.

5. Character kits

Theoretically, any kit currently existing in any campaign setting may be taken by a PLANESCAPE PC. Players should keep in mind that some PC kits have been specifically designed for play solely on a specific campaign world (such as the Athasian advanced being or the Mystaran inheritor). It is understandable therefore that their presence on the planes might be difficult to justify. Players should seek their DMs approval before using any kits. The *PWH* lists seven new kits exclusively designed for the Planescape campaign: Planewalker Warrior, Planewalker Wizard, Planewalker Priest, Planewalker Rogue, Abyssal Warrior, Floating Sorcerer, and Hinterland Bandit.

6. Nonweapon proficiencies

At this stage of PC development, players spend points on nonweapon proficiencies and traits. Standard non-weapon proficiencies by point cost are listed in *S&P* and *S&M*. PLANESCAPE warriors, rogues, priests and wizards receive the same number of CPs as the standard AD&D classes given in *S&P*.

Eight uniquely PLANESCAPE non-weapon proficiencies have been published to date. Their CP cost, initial rating, and reference source appear in the table above.

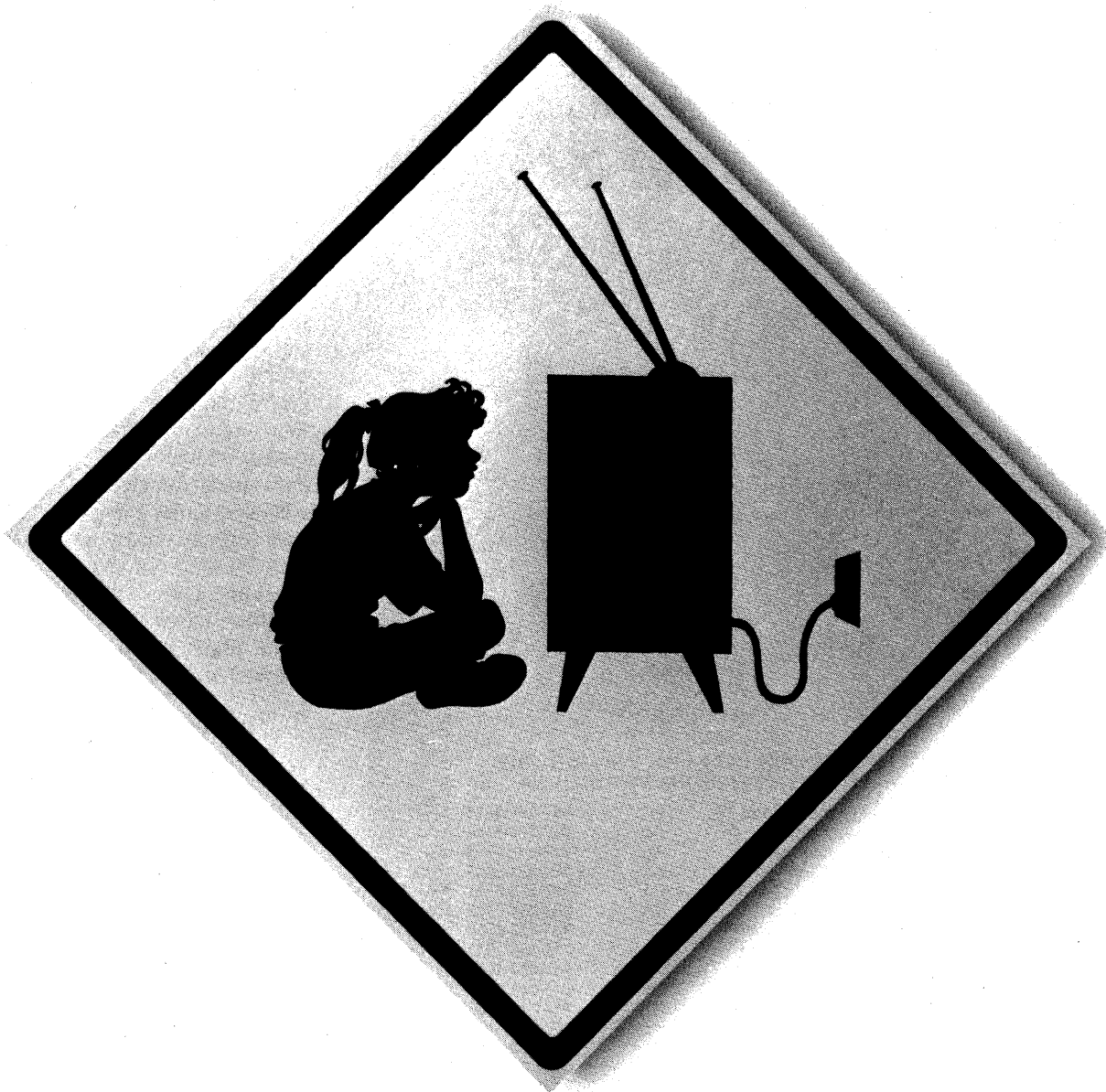
7. Weapon proficiency and mastery

All classes must consult chapter 7 of *S&P* for more information on acquiring weapon proficiencies and other weapon skills. Planar warriors, rogues, priests, and wizards follow the same weapons rules as their Prime world counterparts.

8. Magic and new schools of magic

Wizards spending a significant amount of time in the planes soon discover that nearly every spell and school of magic in existence can be found in the planes. New spells for wizards and priests can be found in nearly every PLANESCAPE reference released so far.

Some forms of magic found on specific prime worlds simply do not or can-



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not exist in the planes. Spellcasting PCs from the BIRTHRIGHT® campaign will not be able to cast any realm spells on the planes (or on any other prime material world for that matter) as they are effectively cut off from their domains and ley lines. There is no magic in existence that will connect a PC with his ley lines once they are separated by the planes. There is also no way to create ley lines in the planes. Blooded PCs, however, may enact any of their innate abilities without difficulty wherever they are (unless prohibited by the plane's magical properties). Similarly, afflicted PCs from the RED STEEL® campaign can use their cursed abilities as they wish, however, individuals affected by the Red Curse will soon suffer the excruciating loss of their legacies if they stay away from the crimson lands of the Savage Coast for too long. DMs have the final say on whether magic and spells unique to some prime campaign settings will be allowed in their Planescape campaign.

9. Psionics

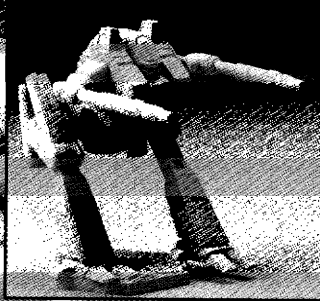
Two sets of optional rules exist that cover the creation of psionics using the SW method. One is found in the "Sage Advice" column in DRAGON Magazine #231 while the second is in the DARK SUN Player's Option article in the DRAGON Magazine Annual #1. The options from these two articles are not compatible and thus cannot be "mixed and matched." Psionist proficiencies described in S&P have been assigned CP values in the DARK SUN Player's Option article.

For specifics on importing spells and magic to PLANESCAPE that are unique to a particular prime world (such as a BIRTHRIGHT PC's blooded abilities), consult the guidelines provided in the PWH. DMs have the final say on whether such magic will be allowed in their PLANESCAPE campaign.

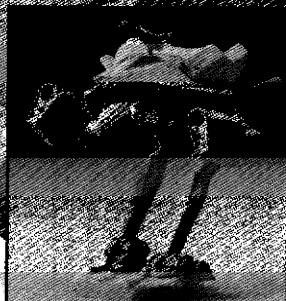
Ed Bonny reports that game dungeons took on a whole new meaning when he began to patrol the subterranean maze of stations and dark tunnels called the NYC subway system. He writes, "I was very much attracted to the PLANESCAPE setting, not only for letting players adventure on the planes but also for the cosmopolitan attitude and poseur scene that so mirrors the NYC nightlife."

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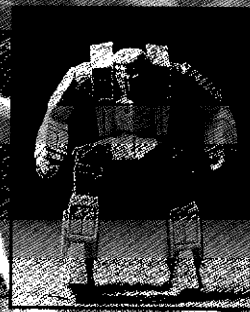
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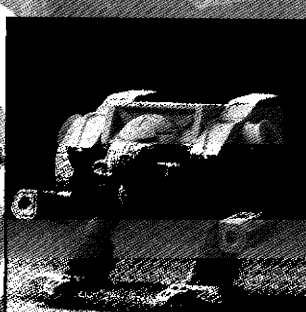
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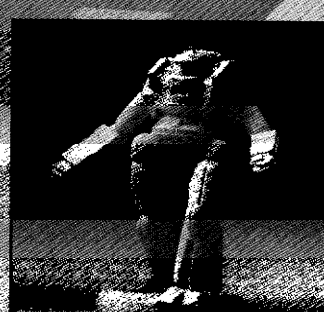
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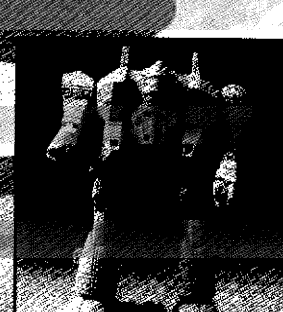
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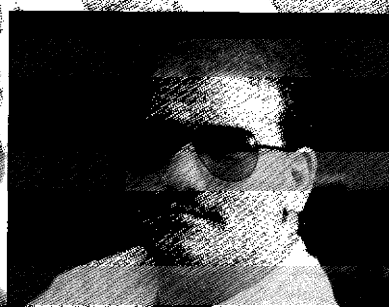
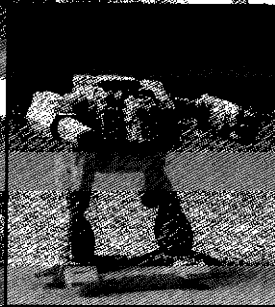
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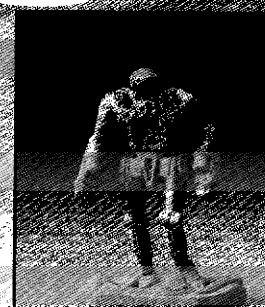
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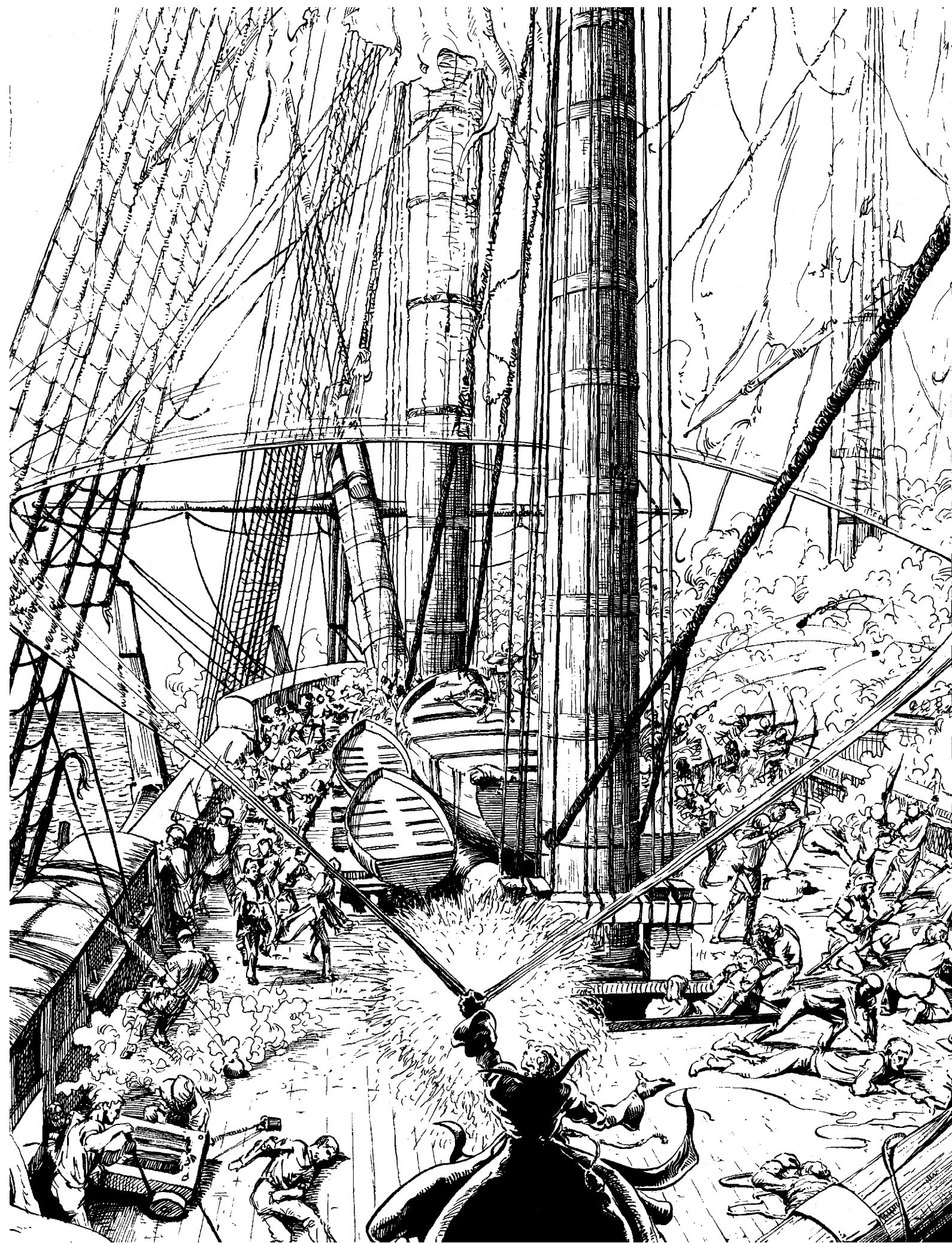
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Mage on Deck!

The shipmage kit for AD&D® campaigns

by Ted Zuvich

by David Kooharian

On the third day, the storm broke, its rage spent. The sun peeked out from behind dark clouds, and Captain T'Do of the Alca Torda pried his numb fingers from the helm. He swayed on his feet as he surveyed the wreckage of his ship. The top of the foremast drooped at a drunken angle, and the sails hung in tatters. Broken spars snarled what was left of the rigging. Something was wrong with the rudder, too, and the ship rode far too low in the water for his liking. Less than he'd expected though. The Alca Torda was lucky to be afloat.

The crew began coming out, untying the safety lines and creeping slowly from whatever safe hideaways they'd found for themselves, moving carefully and talking in whispers. One fellow got down on his belly and hugged the deck and sobbed. It only took a few moments for Captain T'Do to account for the crew. Most were present. But not all.

"Shipmage Dorothea," he croaked. "Report!"

From the corner of his eye, he saw the misty outline of the phantom sail wink out of existence. Minutes later, Dorothea staggered on deck and stood blinking in the bright sunshine. Great dark circles surrounded her sea-blue eyes, circles put there by the strain of maintaining the phantom sail for the past two days, ever since they'd lost the real one. One of her apprentices held her by the arm, offering support, although he wasn't much steadier himself.

"One last thing, shipmage," said T'Do, "then sleep for you. We're missing a few of the crew. Can you locate them?"

Dorothea simply looked at him and nodded her head, too weary to speak unless it was necessary. She dug a silvered mirror out of a deep pocket, and croaked soft words over it. She began counting slowly. After a few moments she spoke, her voice broken and dry.

The shipmage is a new Wizard kit for the AD&D® game. Examples of shipmages in popular fiction include the mages in Ursula K. LeGuin's *A Wizard of Earthsea* and the Seafolk Windfinders in Robert Jordan's *Wheel of Time* series. The shipmage is a valuable component of a ship's crew, and those ships that have one count themselves fortunate.

The idea for the shipmage kit was conceived and developed during a long-running seagoing campaign. While seagoing campaigns are not as common as land-based campaigns, they occur fairly often. TSR publishes several products useful in a seagoing campaign, such as *Pirates of the Fallen Stars*, the **RED STEEL**® setting, and the "Volkrad" adventures published in *DUNGEON*® Adventures.

Description and background

In a seagoing campaign, the PCs usually own (or operate) either a merchant vessel or a military ship. A seagoing campaign will probably start with the PCs as members of the ship's complement, under the nominal command of an NPC captain. The PCs could be marines on board a military ship, or members of a merchant ship's crew. At this point, the Captain of the ship can send the PCs off willy-nilly on dangerous, hair-raising special missions. As the PCs go up in levels, they may earn officer's rank and move up in the ship hierarchy.

Somewhere around 3rd to 5th level, the PCs should have the resources to purchase or otherwise acquire their own ship. Perhaps they could capture a pirate vessel during a wild sea-battle, and be given ownership as a reward. When the PCs acquire their own ship, the fun really starts - as do the headaches for the DM. Imagine a group of adventurers with a ship, not bound to any one specific location, able to come and go as they please. Luckily, the DM can usually distract most players with an interesting mission. The PCs will probably split up the duties on board the new ship, taking officer positions such as captain, commander of the marines, quartermaster, etc. Shipmages are officers in the ship's chain of command, usually staffing the "special weapons and defense" position.

Shipmages have abilities that allow them to thrive in a seagoing scenario. The shipmage is at home on the sea, and very powerful there, with abilities that enhance the ship's operational capability. A shipmage has great powers over air and water, and some influence over fire. Seafarers must control fire at all costs.

Requirements

A ship mage must meet the minimum ability requirements for a mage, and have a Dexterity of 14 or better. A shipmage with an Intelligence and Dexterity of 16 or better gains a 10% bonus to earned XP. There are no racial restrictions on becoming a shipmage, other than the normal restrictions on mage eligibility. While most shipmages are single-class humans, there are a few elven and half-elven fighter-shipmages.

Role of the Shipmage

Circumstances force shipmages to be largely self-sufficient, independent-minded people. A ship usually only has one shipmage, possibly with one or two apprentices. Sailing vessels are at sea for



long periods of time, so shipmages rarely meet and converse with their own kind. They take every opportunity to do so, however, when the chance arises. When two or more ships carrying shipmages meet, the sea-mages go to great lengths to visit and compare notes, spells, and stories. If the ships meet while in harbor, the mages shuttle back and forth between each other's ships constantly.

If five or more shipmages meet and at least one of them is a master shipmage, they may declare a *shipmeet* by unanimous consent. Shipmages declare truce during a shipmeet, and none of them raise a hand against any of the others. They also do everything they can to prevent their ships from coming into conflict. The seamages use the shipmeet to discuss spells, swap stories, and make decisions about apprentices and shipmage candidates.

New apprentices are sometimes literally bullied into the job. A shipmage in need of an apprentice often grabs a promising member of the crew and makes him an offer he cannot refuse. Shipmages typically serve as apprentices under the tutelage of an older and more experienced shipmage until 3rd level. It is here that the shipmage learns the duties and responsibilities of a proper shipmage. Shipmages usually find their own ships when they reach 4th level. At this point, they are known as journeymen. Shipmages of 9th level or higher are known as master shipmages.

Shipmages are busy and detail-oriented. No shipmage can afford the luxury of being distracted or absent-minded. Consequently, the shipmage is an ideal role for a conscientious player who likes to keep track of numerous details. The shipmage needs to know exactly what is aboard the ship at any time, from lanterns to navigation tools to the nature of the cargo the ship is currently carrying.

The player of a shipmage should be prepared to make lists of crew-member information (level, skills, rank, etc.), food-stuffs, supplies, equipment, weapons, and anything else onboard the ship. That way, if the DM says you need a shovel, you have probably got one, and you have the list to prove it. "Polka-dot paint? Sure. Third sea-chest on the left hand side of the secondary hold, underneath the flea-infested camel-hair rugs." Although the player will probably have to make lists, it is entirely possible that the shipmage would carry all of this

detailed information in memory, without need to commit it to paper.

One of the shipmage's prime responsibilities is to keep the ship in good working order. The shipmage uses a combination of spells and NWP's such as engineering, seamanship, navigation, and ship repair (new NWP) to help maintain the ship. Practically the first spells an apprentice seamage learns is mending. And the apprentice uses it every day, without fail. Similar spells include *defect structural flaw* (see below), *renewal* (*DUNGEON Adventures* #58, "Caveat Emptor"), *robust construction* (see below), *minor creation*, and *major creation*.

A journeyman or better shipmage is expected to be able to navigate competently. The shipmage also has several spells that help with navigation and piloting, including *absolute location* (see below), *depthsounder* (see below) and *fish-eye* (see below). Other spells of this type include: *locate object*, *clairvoyance*, and *infravision*.

A sailing ship suitable for a seagoing campaign can have a crew of anywhere from five to fifty sailors. Members of the crew are usually 0-level or 1st-level fighters. Some of these may be henchmen or followers, in which case they might be slightly higher level. The members of the crew do the tedious but necessary grunt work required to operate the ship: swabbing decks, hauling sails, making sail repairs, handling cargo, etc. They also usually perform such duties as standing watch, carrying the heavy stuff, digging holes, chopping trees, etc. When a sea-serpent attacks, or a fierce storm hits, or the sahuagin stage a raid, or any of the other numerous things that can go wrong on an adventuring ship, the members of the crew are usually the most vulnerable and must be protected.

The shipmage should have a different philosophy about spellcasting than the normal mage. Instead of using spells that affect only a few people, the shipmage should concentrate on spells that improve the survivability of the ship and its crew. A shipmage rarely casts a combat-oriented, single-target spell such as *magic missile*. Instead, the shipmage uses spells such as *affect normal fires*, *wail of fog*, *fog cloud*, *levitate*, *rope trick*, *shield vessel* (see below), and *wind wail*. Shipmages also make an effort to select long-duration spells with wide areas of effect. In addition, please refer to the excellent discussion in "Arcane Lore: Sea Magic" in *DRAGON Magazine* #220 regarding standard spells usable at sea.

DMs have used the "damaged ship" plot device to introduce new adventures so often that it has become a cliché. The wily player will work out many different ways to circumvent or minimize the effects of this plot device. Typical sources of ship damage in a fantasy campaign include monster attacks (sea dragons, sea serpents, sahuagin), storms (hurricanes, gales), pirates, and reefs. What good does a *hurricane anchor* (see below) do in a normal campaign situation? Very little. But at sea during a hurricane with the reefs looming ever closer and a sea-serpent growling at you from the deep water, a spell like this could save the ship. Look for mundane ways to improve the ship's odds as well. Imagine everything that could go wrong, and make a plan for it. Develop a "broken mast" contingency plan before the ship breaks a mast.

A shipmage also provides the means to enhance temporarily the ship's speed and maneuverability. Players should imagine everything that they would like the ship to be able to do, then design spells that make it so the ship can do it. More speed, tighter turns, and the ability to withstand more damage: these are all things that can make the difference between life and death on the high sea.

Experience for spellcasting

Played properly, the shipmage casts many spells practically every day, and not necessarily during encounters. The DM should award XP only when those spells make a difference. If the shipmage casts *shield vessel* (see below) when the crew's nest spots an approaching ship, and the ship turns out to be friendly, the PC should receive no XP. On the other hand, if the precautionary *shield vessel* keeps the PCs' ship from being captured by pirates, the shipmage should receive full XP.

Shipmage familiars

All seamage familiars must either live on the ship or be able to keep up with the ship. Typical familiars include: rat (night vision), cat (excellent night vision and superior hearing), parrot (superior sense of taste), ship-snake (extremely sensitive sense of smell), and seabirds such as seagulls, albatrosses, and terns (usually offer superior sight).

Weapon proficiencies

The shipmage uses the normal mage proficiencies, with the exception that the shipmage can become proficient with the net.



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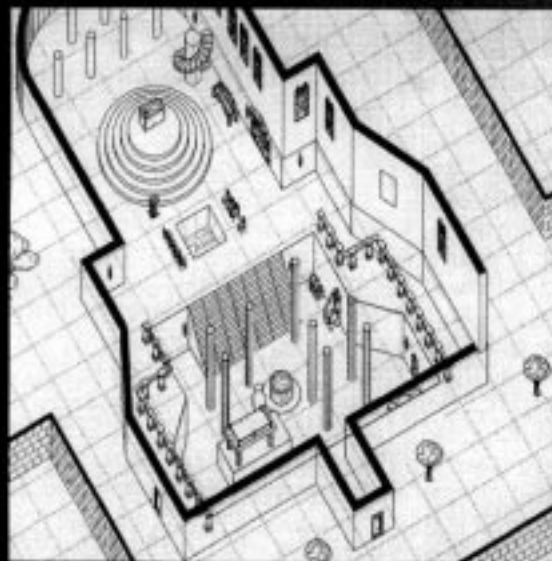
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Nonweapon proficiencies

Shipmages receive seamanship as a bonus NWP. Shipmages must obtain Navigation by 4th level, but they must spend proficiency slots to do so.

Recommended NWPs include: carpentry, direction sense, fishing, languages, rope-use, seamstress/tailor, ship repair (see sidebar) swimming, weather sense, engineering, and navigation.

In general, most strictly land-based NWPs are forbidden or modified to reflect the seagoing setting. A shipmage would not learn how to ride a horse, for example, but might learn how to ride a dolphin or whale. Likewise, a shipmage would not learn mining, but might learn about pearl-farming.

New nonweapon proficiency: ship repair (1 slot, Int +1)

This NWP allows the mage to assess the state of the ship and direct the crew to make any necessary repairs. Because of the higher level of maintenance, a ship under the constant care of a mage with this proficiency gains a +1 bonus vs. any damaging attacks. The bonus is +1 for every three levels of the mage. A 1st level mage provides a +1 bonus, a 4th-level mage provides a +2 bonus, etc. The bonus increases by a further +1 if the mage also has the engineering NWP. The proficiency assumes that the mage uses magic such as *mending*, *unseen servant*, *levitate*, and similar spells to help make necessary repairs.

The shipmage receives the normal mage starting allowance for money and equipment.

Shipmages have the option of using their ship as their spellbook. Such "spellships" are covered with intricate carvings, lacquers, paintings, murals, strange arrangements of ropes, etc. The carvings and decorations make up the spell information that a mage would normally record in a spellbook. A normal mage cannot read spells recorded in this manner, nor can a shipmage who uses a spellship read spells recorded in spellbooks. The cost of recording the spell is the same as if the shipmage had recorded it in a spellbook. The spellship is a very visible sign of shipmage's presence and provides the shipmage with extreme motivation to protect the ship.

The advantage of this form of spell recording is that the spellship is more robust than a normal spellbook. The spells are damaged only if the ship is, and they can be "repaired" just as the ship can. The disadvantage is that it is difficult (but not impossible) for the shipmage to transfer to a new ship. Shipmages who do so lose 5-25% of their spells in the process. In addition, the transfer takes one week per level of the shipmage.

Table 1: Chance of spell failure with substitute components

How close is the substituted component to the original?	Spell failure modifier	Example
Very Close	0%	<i>Sleep</i> : sawdust for sand
Similar	-10%	<i>Rope trick</i> : long hair for string
Barely related	-25%	<i>Water breathing</i> : a bottle instead of a reed or straw
Unrelated	Automatic failure	NA

Special benefits

Because of his close ties to the sea, the shipmage has a +1 bonus to all saving throws while at sea or aboard ship (even when docked). Conversely, the shipmage has a -1 penalty applied to all saving throws while on land. A shipmage who never sets foot on land (after becoming a shipmage) receives a +2 bonus to all saving throws while at sea. This bonus goes away once the shipmage touches land, reverting to the normal +1/-1 forever after. The DM should strictly enforce the restriction on the +2 bonus.

A shipmage counts as one level higher for purposes of determining range, area of effect, and other level-dependent parameters when casting an air or water-based spell such as *wall of fog*, *stinking cloud*, or *whispering wind*. The shipmage receives a +15% bonus to learn such spells. A shipmage counts as one level lower when casting fire-based spells and receives a -15% penalty to learn such spells. A shipmage can never cast earth-based spells (such as *stoneskin*, *stoneshape*, and *transmute rock to mud*). For example, a 5th-level shipmage casting a *gust of wind* counts as a 6th-level caster. The same shipmage attempting to cast a *fireball* counts as a 4th-level caster for purposes of determining damage dice, range, etc.

The shipmage also has the ability to conduct spell research aboard ship, which would normally be nearly impossible. The shipmage's lab is not the traditional stark and isolated wizard's tower. It is apt to be a corner of the cargo hold, a cabin, or perhaps even the deck of the ship. In a sense, the entire ship is part of the mage's lab. To reflect this, 10% of the value of the ship counts toward the value of the shipmage's lab. The shipmage should also be something of a scavenger. A shipmage should attempt to find at least half a dozen strange items at every new port. The DM should assign a monetary value to these items. The shipmage counts 30% of the value of the items toward the value of his lab. Typical examples of strange items include: a spear from a cannibal tribe, white sand from a virgin beach, black sand taken from the slopes of an erupting volcano, and the vinegar-preserved hand of a sahuagin raider.

Shipmages are prone to conduct spell research to come up with specialty spells. The AD&D spell system is tremendously flexible, if the players take advantage of it by having their PCs conduct spell research.

Sailors have a long tradition of making do in a pinch. To reflect this, the shipmage can substitute material components when casting spells. In order to use a non-standard component, the player must first propose a reasonable substitute, along with the rationale for why the substitution should work. The substituted component must be at least somewhat related; attempting to use totally incompatible items causes spell failure. When a seamage uses a non-standard material component to cast a spell, there is a minimum 10% chance of spell failure. The DM then modifies the base chance of spell failure according to Table 1. For example, a shipmage who attempts to cast a *water breathing* spell using a bottle has a 35% chance of spell failure.

Special hindrances

The shipmage must be a "seafarer" at all times. To meet this criteria, he must either be an active member of a ship's crew or be shipwrecked and actively seeking to return to the sea. Those who do not meet these criteria are allowed a one-month grace period to find a new ship. If this time expires, the shipmage permanently loses all special abilities connected with the kit. A former shipmage is referred to as "beached," and he is looked upon with pity and derision by active shipmages.

Wealth options

The starting resources for the shipmage are the same as for a normal mage. However, no other type of mage can bring along what is essentially a mobile laboratory. This can quickly become a significant advantage for the PC.

In a seagoing campaign, the resources available to the PCs are usually greater than those in a normal campaign. The PCs have a ship to carry their equipment, even if actual paying cargo takes up part of the ship's space. At the same time, it's easy to hare off to exotic locales. The PCs are free to "run away" from problems or

seek out their own adventures. The DM should go with this. If the PCs want to sail through remote archipelagos in search of lost tribes, let them. You can bring them back around sooner or later.

First-level spells

Absolute Location

(Divination)

Range: 0

Duration: Instant

Area of Effect: Caster

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 1

Save: None

Tired of being blown off-course and having no idea where you are? This spell provides the mage with a navigational fix (the distance and direction) to a known landmark. The mage must be very familiar with the site. Suitable landmarks include the home port, an often-visited island, or a distinctive mountain. The navigational fix is accurate to within 200 yards. This is not accurate enough to navigate through shoals or reefs, but it is good enough to determine which way is "home." The spell works over world-wide distances but only on the "home planet" of the mage casting the spell.

The material component of the spell (not consumed) is a map of the world worth at least 50 gp. The map does not have to be accurate.

Cast-Iron Stomach

(Evocation/Invocation)

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 hour/level

Area of Effect: one target creature/level

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 1

Save: None

This spell allows the recipient to eat basically any food without fear of upset stomach or other violent gastric protest. This spell was developed by mages who were attempting to establish trade contacts among the many small islands of the Archipelagos. The spell provides no protection against the effects of alcohol or toxins. It simply prevents unfortunate involuntary reactions to unusual or spicy food.

Cure Lumber

(Alteration)

Range: Touch

Duration: Permanent

Area of Effect: 8 cubic feet/level

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 1 turn

Save: None

This spell takes 8 cubic feet of green lumber per caster level and cures it, rendering the green lumber ready for use. Sea-mages rarely use this spell, although it is in their repertoire. There is nothing better for quick repairs when a damaged ship barely manages to limp into some remote deserted tropical island harbor or bay.

The material components are a small clay model of a lumber-drying kiln (not consumed), a sliver of cured wood (consumed).

Depthsounder

(Divination)

Range: 60'/level

Duration: 5 rounds/level

Area of Effect: 10' radius cylinder, 60' long per level

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 1

Save: None

This spell provides the caster with an estimate of the water depth below the caster and within the range of the spell. The estimate is accurate to within 10% of the real value. It is important to note that the spell reports the average local water depth within the area of effect.

This means that if the water depth varied from 30' to 60' within a very small distance, the spell would report an average depth of 45'.

This spell is most commonly used to navigate through shallow water. The caster takes a position in the prow of the ship, casts the spell, and then gives steering directions.

The material component is a small black stone, which the mage tosses into the water while casting the spell.

Detect Structural Flaw

(Divination)

Range: 10' per level

Duration: 1 turn per level

Area of Effect: 10' x 10' area per level

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 1 turn

Save: None

This spell allows the caster to detect hidden structural flaws in items such as ceilings, floors, armor, weapons, ships, piers, buildings, etc. The spell is used primarily to assess the structural soundness of seagoing vessels. A shipmage who regularly uses this spell (and acts upon the information gathered) grants a +1 bonus to the ship's saving throws vs. any

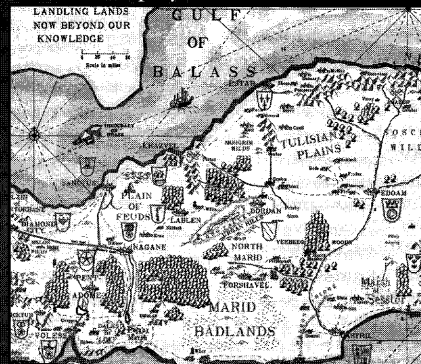
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kind of damage. Storms, weapons, impact, swamping, etc.

The caster may move slowly (one-quarter normal speed) while maintaining the spell, but may not cast other spells. The caster may detect flaws up to 1' deep in wood and stone, and up to 1" deep in metal. Scanning an "item" such as a shield, helmet, sword, or specific support beam, etc., requires 1 round. Scanning an "area" such as a deck or ceiling requires 1 turn per 10' x 10' area inspected.

The material component (consumed) is a 1" diameter unflawed steel disk with ridges (easily made with a file) on the outer rim, worth 1 sp.

Desalinate

(Alteration)

Range: Touch

Duration: Permanent

Area of Effect: 8 gallons/level

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 1 round

Save: None

Desalinate removes dissolved salts and other contaminants from seawater. The filtered water is potable. This spell is not like *create water*, which creates something from nothing, and *desalinate* is much less effective than the priest spell *purify food and drink*. However, it will work, in a pinch. *Desalinate* simply separates the desirable portion of the seawater (water) from the undesirable materials (dissolved salts and minerals). *Desalinate* has no effect on living creatures.

The material component (consumed) is a small piece of fine paper or cloth (worth 1 gp) which is used as a filter.

Predict Tide

(Divination)

Range: 0

Duration: Instant

Area of Effect: Caster

Components: S,M

Casting Time: 1 turn

Save: None

Predict tide provides the caster with a general indication of the tides (time, water level at high and low tides) in the local area for the next 24 hours. The base accuracy is 75%, plus 2% per level of the caster. Even if the accuracy roll fails, the most that will happen is that there will be a slight error in the estimated time or water level.

The material component (not consumed) is a silver disk engraved with an image of the moon. The disk must be

worth not less than 10 gp. On a world with more than one moon, the spell requires one silver disk for each moon.

Being able to magically predict the tide is not terribly important in an area where the tides follow regular patterns. However, on a world with two or more moons, this spell can be very handy indeed.

Preserve

(Alteration)

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 year

Area of Effect: 1 cubic foot/level

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 1 turn

Save: None

This spell preserves food (or other organic material, such as ropes, leather, fat) for a period of one year. The spell protects against normal rot or decay, insect infestations, damp rot, etc. It provides no protection against extraordinary environmental stress (magic, fire, item left out in the sun, dumped directly in anthill, etc.)

The material component (consumed) is a small amount of fine beeswax.

Protection from Rust

(Abjuration)

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 year per caster level

Area of Effect: Target object,

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 1 round

Save: None

Using this spell, the mage can protect an item from mundane rust (oxidation) for one year per caster level. The spell also provides a one-time bonus of +1 per three caster levels on saving throws versus rust monster effects. The spell is intended for use on small to medium metal items (daggers, swords, pieces of armor), not large metal structures.

The material component (consumed) is a specially formulated lacquer, which the mage applies to the item to be protected. This lacquer costs not less than 5 gp per application.

A shipmage who regularly uses this spell on the ship's equipment reduces the yearly maintenance cost of the ship by 10%.

Strip

(Alteration)

Reversible

Level: 1

Range: 10' + 10'/level

Duration: Instant

Area of Effect: 100 square feet/level

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 1 turn

Save: None

Mages use this spell to strip paint, barnacles, ice, etc., off surfaces. The spell can strip 100 square feet of surface of rough work, or 10 square feet per level of fine work such as a piece of delicate furniture.

A cog with a deck length of 85', modeled as a half-cylinder with radius 10' has approximately 2,700 square feet of hull exposed to barnacles. Assume that the exposed area is 80% covered, 2150 square feet. A 3rd-level mage could strip 300 square feet, or about one-seventh of the total surface area per application.

It is difficult to see how this spell could be turned to offensive or defensive use. It might (with the appropriate tool) be able to de-scale a large fish such as a pike.

The material component (consumed) is a scraping tool appropriate to the substance being scraped, i.e., a barnacle scraper to strip barnacles off a ship's hull, or an ice scraper for scraping ice off a sidewalk.

The reverse form of the spell, *apply*, applies a layer of liquid such as paint, pitch, caulk, etc. to a surface such as a ship's hull or deck. The *apply* spell cannot be used to coat mobile creatures.

Verm-in-ward

(Abjuration)

Range: 0

Duration: 1 week/level

Area of Effect: 100 square feet/level,

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 1 turn

Save: None

The vermin-ward prevents vermin such as spiders, wasps, mosquitoes, flies, mice, rats, small snakes, and other small pests from entering the warded area. Mages often use this spell to protect grain silos and cargo holds. The mage must trace the perimeter of the warded area with a slurry of noxious chemicals that costs 1 gp per 10 linear feet. The spell consumes the material component.

Second-level spells

Anchor

(Alteration)

Reversible

Range: Touch

Duration: Instant

Area of Effect: Target

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 1 round

Save: Negates

The *anchor* spell causes a ship's anchor to fully deploy in one round, regardless of water depth. The anchor sets well and holds the ship firmly in place. The deployment is much faster than a manual deployment. The ship must be at or near a stop in order to use this spell. The anchor spell gives ships a +1 on saves vs. storm damage.

If used offensively (to drop the anchor of a pursuing ship, for example), the target ship uses the saving throw of its captain.

The reverse of the spell, *weigh anchor*, pulls up a physical anchor in a single round. This is much faster than manually retracting the anchor. If used offensively, the target ship uses the saving throw of its captain.

The material component of the spell (not consumed) is the ship's anchor.

Collision Alarm

(Abjuration, Evocation)

Range: 50 yards

Duration: 8 hours +1 hour/level

Area of Effect: Target vessel

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 2 rounds

Save: None

This spell sounds an audible alarm if any object larger than a small rowboat (i.e., a reef, dock, or another ship) comes within 50 yards of the target vessel. When triggered, the collision alarm lets out a piercing whistle that is clearly audible throughout the ship, and for a half-mile radius around the ship. Otherwise, this spell is just like the 1st-level *alarm* spell.

Diskboat

(Evocation/Invocation)

Range: 0

Duration: 1 turn/level

Area of Effect: 10' long, 5' wide oval

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 2 rounds

Save: None

This spell is an adapted form of *Tensor's floating disk*. The spell forms a boat-like oval disk (with edges) that can move out over water. The mage (and other passengers) can ride in the diskboat. The diskboat can vary in altitude from 1' to 10' above sea level and can carry 200 lbs. per level of the caster. The *diskboat* is at the mercy of wind and current, although it can be rowed, sailed, or towed, if appropriate equipment is available. The spell essentially forms a small rowboat, so it does not handle stormy weather well. The *diskboat* provides no special stability, and can tip

over just as a normal boat can. The diskboat can also move over land, if required.

The material components (consumed) are a small clear disk worth not less than 2 gp and a drop of mercury.

Fog Light

(Evocation)

Range: 60 yards

Duration: 1 turn/level

Area of Effect: 20' radius globe

Components: V,M

Casting Time: 2

Save: Special

This spell creates a light of a particular golden-yellow hue that penetrates fog. In even the thickest, most noxious mundane fog, the softly glowing fog light provides a 60' radius of illumination. In a wall of fog, the radius of illumination is 40'. In a *fog cloud*, the radius of illumination drops to 20'. The *fog light* illuminates as a torch in non-foggy conditions, since the color of light is very strange. A permanent version of *fog light* exists.

This spell may be cast upon a creature's visual organs, with the same restrictions and effects as the *light* spell.

The material components (consumed) are as a *light* spell (firefly or a piece of phosphorescent moss) plus a small (1" x 1") piece of glass stained a deep, translucent yellow. The stained glass costs at least 1 gp.

Eagle-vision

(Invocation)

Range: 0

Duration: 5 rounds +1 round/level

Area of Effect: Caster

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 2

Save: None

The *eagle-vision* spell has two possible manifestations, either of which the caster can use. The caster must specify which version will be used when memorizing the spell. The first version temporarily duplicates the effect of a 20:1 telescope, under the caster's mental control. The spell manifests itself as a slightly warped-looking piece of air in front of the caster's dominant eye. The second version reverses the magioptic field to produce a microscope with 20:1 magnification.

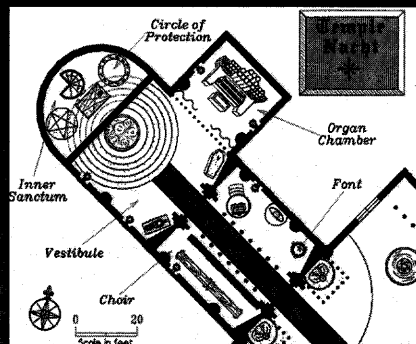
The material component (consumed) is a piece of optical glass worth at least 1 gp.

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Fisheye

(Alteration)

Range: Touch

Duration: 2 hours +1 hour/level

Area of Effect: Creature touched

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 1 round

Save: None

The recipient of *fisheye* spell can see up to 60' through water as if it were clear air. *Fisheye* is extremely useful for spotting underwater hazards such as submerged reefs, logs, sandbars, and argumentative sahuagin with crossbows. Mages also sometimes use it for spotting other items underwater, such as shipwrecks and schools of fish.

Note that the spell functions properly only if there is sufficient light by which to see. The *fisheye* is useless at night, nor is it effective if the water is deep enough to block out surface light. A shipmage could, of course, provide a magical light source with which to augment the use of the *fisheye* spell.

The material component (consumed) is the eye of a fish, which the caster must swallow whole.

Flamedouse

(Alteration)

Range: 5 yards/level

Duration: Instant

Area of Effect: 100 square feet per level

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 2

Save: Special

This spell is specifically designed to put out nonmagical fires. The spell instantly squelches all flames within the area of effect. The *flamedouse* extinguishes torches, small campfires, a puddle of flaming oil, or the secondary fires caused by a *fireball* detonation. It would not have any effect on the *fireball* itself. An extremely large, hot, well-established fire (such as a shipboard fire that has been burning for a turn or more) might (50%) only be reduced to half effectiveness, but the spell instantly extinguishes most (95%) nonmagical fires.

The material components (consumed) are a pinch of sand and a foamy concoction worth 1 gp per application. The material components must be thrown at the base of the fire.

Gripdeck

(Alteration)

Range: 0

Duration: 1 hour/level

Area of Effect: Target vessel

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 2

Save: None

A *gripdeck* spell improves the traction of the deck and actually makes it "grip" a sailor's feet, thus reducing the chance of being swept overboard in high winds, storms, rough seas, extreme maneuvers, or combat. Anyone who might be swept overboard gains a +3 saving throw bonus. If the event does not allow a saving throw, all personnel now receive an unadjusted saving throw vs. paralysis to avoid being swept or knocked overboard. Anyone who does somehow fall overboard falls no more than 10' from the ship.

Helmsman

(Evocation/Invocation)

Range: 0

Duration: 1 hour +1 turn/level

Area of Effect: Helm

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 3

Save: None

The material component (consumed) is a small doll of a helmsman worth no less than 1 gp.

The material components are the same as those required for the *alarm* spell.

The material component (not consumed) is a chest worth at least 25 gp.

Save: None

The material component (consumed) is a small square of starched sailcloth.

This spell allows the target creature to *swim* (as the NWP) at MV 12, with normal

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Third-level spells

Crew of Phantoms

(Illusion/Phantasm)

Range: 0

Duration: 3 rounds/level

Area of Effect: 6' radius around targets

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 3

Save: None

Related to *mirror image*, this spell provides 2d4 exact duplicates of every member of the crew of a vessel (up to a maximum of 30 people). Each real member of the crew must carry a small "badge" worth 10 gp, identifying them as members of the crew. The badges are not consumed by the spell. Otherwise, the spell acts as if every member of the crew had a *mirror image* spell placed upon them.

Doublespace

(Alteration)

Range: 0

Duration: 24 hours +1 hour/level

Area of Effect: Cube 5' on a side/level

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 1 turn

Save: None

The *doublespace* spell allows a volume of space to "be" two times larger than it actually "is." In addition, objects in the doubled space have an effective weight of half their "real" weight. For example, if a 7th-level mage casts *doublespace* on a cargo hold with a volume of 875 cubic feet, the cargo hold would then have an effective volume of 1,750 cubic feet. The spell is great for packing extra cargo onto a ship and can vastly increase the profit margins of merchant vessels. The spell can only be used on inanimate objects.

If the spell expires while material remains within the folded space, or if a successful *dispel magic* is cast upon the area, disaster can occur as the material suddenly occupies its original volume. The doublespace immediately ceases to function if any dimension-altering spells or magical items (such as *rope-trick*, *dimension-door*, *teleport*, *portable hole*, or a *bug of holding*) are used within the area of effect.

The material component (consumed) is a 1" wide strip of paper (worth not less than 1 gp) twisted and joined so as to only have one side.

Fast Travel

(Alteration)

Reversible

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 hour +1 hour/level

Area of Effect: 1 vessel

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 3

Save: None

This spell is usually used on seagoing vessels, although it would work on a riverboat or skyship as well. The spell works by magically reducing hull friction and augmenting sail efficiency. Typical uses of the spell include: fleeing combat, chasing a faster ship, running before a storm, and making a quick passage.

The first form of the spell *fast travel* causes the vessel to proceed at a speed 5% greater than its normal maximum speed, per level of the caster. There is a maximum speed increase of 50%. The vessel must save vs. crushing blow once per hour. If the save fails, the vessel immediately drops to its maximum rated speed and must receive major repairs at the earliest opportunity. The repairs cost not less than 10% of the original cost of the vessel. The caster can cancel the spell at any time. The caster does not need to concentrate on this spell once it is cast.

The second form of the spell allows a ship to proceed at 100% of its base movement speed for the duration of the spell, even if there is no wind.

The material component of the spell (not consumed) is an elaborately decorated hand-fan, which must be waved for the duration of the spell (although not necessarily by the caster). The fan must be worth at least 30 gp.

The shipmage may reverse the first form of this spell and use it against an enemy ship. The reverse of the first form, *slow travel*, reduces speed by 5% per level of the caster. In this case, the enemy ship gains a saving throw (as the captain of the vessel) to avoid the effect of the spell.

Locate Person

(Divination)

Range: 1 mile/level

Duration: 1 round/level

Area of Effect: Caster

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 3

Save: None

This spell provides the caster with a target person's current range and direction, relative to the caster. The caster must have an accurate description of the target to use this spell. The base chance of success is 5% per level of the caster. If the caster is familiar with the target, apply a +10% bonus to the base chance. If the caster has a piece of clothing or other personal item belonging to the target, add a +20% bonus. These

modifiers are cumulative.

The caster can automatically locate anyone who is wearing any item wizard marked with the caster's personal rune. In addition, the range of the spell doubles. All wizard-marked items within range show as small red lights in the mirror used for the spell.

Locate person can be blocked by 10' of earth, 2' of stone, or 1" of lead. A number of spells (such as non-detection, *aura alteration*, *sunctuary* the interior of a *rope-trick* spell effect, etc.) also block the *locate person*.

The material component of the spell (not consumed) is a fine silver mirror worth at least 100 gp.

Phantom Sail

(Evocation/Invocation)

Range: 60'

Duration: Special

Area of Effect: 1 vessel

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 3

Save: None

This spell summons up a ghostly sail that attaches itself to the ship (no mast is required). The phantom sail acts just as a normal sail, and is great for those times when a ship loses a sail or a mast. The spell is adaptable to form a phantom rudder, phantom keel, phantom steering wheel, etc. It cannot form a phantom hull, however. The *phantom sail* lasts for as long as the caster can maintain concentration.

The material component (consumed) is a small model of the equipment to be replaced.

Robust Construction

(Alteration)

Reversible

Range: Touch

Duration: Special

Area of Effect: one target up to 1,000 cubic feet/level

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 1 turn

Save: None

This spell makes a construction tougher and more robust for one encounter with a damaging event such as a storm, collision with a ship or reef, damaging spell such as a *fireball*, ramming, etc. The spell lasts for one encounter, but lasts for the duration of that encounter. While the encounter lasts, the construction gains a +1 bonus on saves vs. any type of damage per two levels of the caster. A ship with robust construction placed on it receives

a saving throw (as the captain of the vessel) to resist *warp wood*.

As an example, Doroth (M5) the shipmage sees a storm on the horizon. She immediately casts a *robust construction* on the ship. Several hours later, the storm hits. The DM rules that the storm is equivalent to a large catapult hitting a thick wood wall, and the ship must make a saving throw once per hour until the storm has passed. See the *DMG* Table 52: Structural Saving Throws. The ship has a +3 bonus on all of its saving throws because of Doroth's spell.

The caster must provide a few chips of material of the same type as the construction to be reinforced, (i.e., wood chips for a ship, stone chips for a stone wall).

The reverse of the spell, *weaken construction*, applies a -1 penalty to a structure's saving throws per two levels of the caster. In this case, the structure receives a saving throw vs. the spell as the commander or captain of the structure.

Sail in Irons

(Enchantment, Alteration)
Range: 50 yards + 10 yards/level
Duration: 1 round/level
Area of Effect: Target vessel
Components: V,S,M
Casting Time: 3
Save: ½

This spell can only be used when an enemy ship attempts a turn. The spell causes the target vessel to lose inertia when coming about so that it stops with its bow pointing into the wind, which renders its sails useless. The ship remains in irons for a minimum of one round per caster level. The captain of the target vessel receives a saving throw vs. spells for one-half effect. In addition, the captain of the enemy vessel must make a navigation or seamanship proficiency check to get the ship moving again, once the spell expires. Putting an enemy ship's *sail in irons* is something of a coup and will cause the enemy sailors to curse and swear heavily.

The material component (consumed) is a link of heavy iron chain worth not less than 1 gp.

Shield Vessel

(Evocation)
Range: Touch
Area of Effect: one vessel
Components: V,S,M
Casting Time: 3
Save: None

The *shield vessel* spell allows the mage to place a shield spell around a struc-

ture, protecting everyone within the area of effect. The target is usually a ship, but a mage could conceivably adapt the spell to protect a small keep or tower. The *shield vessel* protects the crew of the vessel just as the *shield* spell protects its caster. Since the shield effect totally surrounds the vessel, anyone onboard receives a +1 bonus to saving throws against attacks that originate from off the ship.

A series of finely wrought pieces of silver jewelry made to resemble small shields make up the material component of the spell. The silver shields must be placed around the perimeter of the vessel to be protected. The total value of the shields must be at least 500 gp. The silver shields are not consumed by the spell, allowing the spell to be used again and again. However, if the total value of the shields falls below 500 gp (through wear, battle-damage, vandalism, theft, etc.), the *shield vessel* spell does not work.

Fourth-level spells

Hurricane Anchor

(Alteration)
Range: 0
Duration: Instant

Area of Effect: Target vessel, 20' long + 10'/caster level
Components: V,S,M
Casting Time: 4
Save: None

The *hurricane anchor* holds a ship firmly in place in winds up to 150 miles per hour. The spell prevents damage from the wind and from the tossing sea, but does not provide any protection from flying debris. A ship with a *hurricane anchor* spell placed upon it can safely weather a hurricane.

The material components are the ship's anchor (not consumed) and a strong piece of steel wire worth at least 5 gp (consumed).

Smooth Sailing

(Alteration)
Range: Touch
Duration: 10 hours
Area of Effect: Target vessel
Components: V,S,M
Casting Time: 4
Save: None

Smooth sailing provides the target vessel with a calm passage and a normal movement rate through severe storms, without possibility of damage to

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the ship. It will not work entirely against storms of gale strength or higher. Within the area of effect, gales become severe storms, hurricanes become gales, etc. The ship may still be damaged by such storms, but at least they will be greatly reduced in effect. Note that smooth sailing does nothing to affect the actual weather, it simply provides a smooth path for the ship and for the ship only.

The material component (not consumed) of the spell is a small model of the ship mounted in the middle of a gyroscope. The total assembly must have a value of at least 400 gp. In campaigns where a gyroscope would be an anachronism, the material component (consumed) is a small keg of fine oil worth a minimum of 25 gp. The caster pours the oil into the sea to complete the spell.

Wind of the Zephyrs

(Evocation/Invocation)

Reversible

Range: Special

Duration: 4 hours +1 hour/level

Area of Effect: Target vessel

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 2 turns

Save: None

This spell summons a strong, constant wind which propels the ship at 150% of its base movement speed. The spell also supplies magical structural reinforcement so that the ship can handle the extra speed without damage to the sails, masts, or superstructure.

The reverse of the spell, *unfriendly zephyr*, summons a strong, chaotic wind which reduces the target vessel's speed by 50%. The targeted vessel must save vs. crushing blow each hour or suffer major damage to the ship, such as a torn sail, cracked mast, broken spar, or shattered boom. If the result of saving throw is a "1," the vessel capsizes. The targeted vessel is allowed a saving throw (as the captain of the vessel) to resist the *unfriendly zephyr*.

Fifth-level spells

Blinkship

(Alteration)

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 round/level

Area of Effect: one vessel

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 3

Save: None

Blinkship is much like *blink*, except that the whole ship blinks, not just the caster. Use the rules given under the *blink* spell

description to determine when the blink occurs, which direction, and to determine the success of enemy attacks. When the ship blinks, it reappears 50' from its previous position. The ship cannot blink onto land or into a solid object. If the ship blinks into another ship that is smaller than itself, the smaller ship displaces. If the ship blinks into a ship that is the same size or larger, re-roll the direction.

The mage must make special preparations to use this spell. The mage must distribute a number of small jeweled tokens throughout the ship. Each token must be wizard marked by the caster. The total value of the tokens must be at least 1,000 gp. The tokens are not consumed by the blinkship spell. If the value of the tokens falls below 1,000 gp, through theft, deterioration, or battle-damage, the *blinkship* spell will not work.

Wild Jibe

(Alteration, Evocation)

Range: 100 yards +20 yards/level

Duration: 1 round

Area of Effect: Target vessel

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 5

Save: Special

The *wild jibe* spell sends a dangerous, highly focused burst of wind at an enemy vessel. The wind has several detrimental effects. The primary effect of the spell is to cause the heavy booms at the foot of the sails to sweep across the decks of the vessel from one side to the other. Any personnel on deck must save vs. paralyzation or be hit by the boom as it crosses the deck. Anyone who fails the saving throw takes 2d6 hp damage and is swept overboard. On vessels that do not have masts, all personnel receive a +3 bonus to the saving throw vs. paralysis.

The secondary effects are all aimed at the vessel itself. The captain of the ship must make a saving throw vs. paralysis. If the saving throw fails, all the spars break. If the saving throw fails by 3 or more, the masts also break. If the saving throw fails by 6 or more, the targeted ship capsizes. Even if the captain's saving throw vs. paralysis succeeds, the target vessel is still delayed for 2d4+1 rounds while the crew re-establishes control of the ship.

Seventh-level spell

Dimensional Fog

(Conjuration/Summoning)

Range: Sight distance

Duration: Instant

Area of Effect: one vessel or group

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 1 round

Save: None

This spell is used to send its targets to alternate realities (or alternate crystal spheres). The mage casting the spell usually does not have the targets best interests in mind, although the spell could theoretically be used for limited inter-planar transport. *Dimensional fog* can only be used when a dense fog descends upon the area of effect, typically a seagoing vessel or tight grouping of folk. Weather magic can be used to provide the fog, but spells such as wall of fog are insufficient. There are several other restrictions. First, the caster must be within sight distance of the area of effect. Second, the caster may not go along with the target vessel.

When the spell is cast, the fog becomes thick, misty, silvery, and sound-deadening. When the fog disperses (usually several hours later), the vessel is on an alternate prime-material plane (or in a different crystal sphere). The caster can either specify a destination or let the destination be random. The alternate plane must meet several requirements. First, it must be a viable alternate world, not a plane. The victims may not be sent to places like outer Gehenna or the Elemental Plane of Fire. Second, the alternate world must be at least marginally habitable. Sending the victims to a planet with no air is not allowed; sending them to a plane where the atmosphere is so thin that it is barely breathable is allowed. Third, the alternate prime material plane must have a navigable sea for the ship to sail upon. Fourth, while this spell could be used to send its victims to Ravenloft, it cannot be used to *escape* Ravenloft.

The spell does not provide any automatic way home. There must be a way home, although the victims might have to be quite clever and industrious in order to find it.

The material component (consumed) is a small sphere of finest crystal (worth not less than 500 gp) filled with cloudy water, which must be swirled while the spell is cast.

Ted Zuvich tells us that his son Alex typed his first lines while Ted wrote this article. "I'm not sure what they meant, but I'm sure he was trying to tell me something. Being a father is definitely a stormy sea, but when that wee boy smiles, it's all worth it."



The Dragon's Bestiary

Monsters of the Lower Deep

by Gregory D. Detwiler

illustrated by Stephen Schwartz

Sea monsters are a staple of fantasy, both in gaming and in fiction. Most are denizens of the upper levels of the ocean, if not inhabitants of the shallower reaches. In the ultimate depths of the real-world oceans, however, dwell monsters more terrible than anything a legend-maker can create. With only slight modifications, mainly in size, these creatures are perfect for the AD&D® game.

Conditions in the depths

Water has weight, just like anything else. Thus, the more of the stuff that is over someone, the greater the weight he must bear. Oddly enough, animals that live in the depths of the sea are not massively powerful, well-armored brutes such as anyone might reasonably expect. (Jules Verne's scientist character in *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, it may be recalled, assumed that the "sea unicorn" they were chasing - i.e., the submarine *Nautilus* - answered the description of an animal that dwelled in the ocean depths.) In fact, the flesh of deep-sea fish is not only extraordinarily tough but it is also so soft as to be little more than jelly. The bones of fishes living at this depth are also weak. Poor Armor Class is the first AD&D translation of this, with only the exceptional deep-sea animal having an Armor Class of even 7 or better.¹

Note that PCs and NPCs alike are subject to the same pressure at these depths, a pressure that a simple *potion of water breathing* cannot neutralize. Specialized magical items, such as a *cloak of the manta ray* might be able to neutralize the pressure, and a *ring of free action* would by definition do so. Re-read the descriptions of aquatic magical items carefully, then decide what each can and cannot do in the depths.

Creatures deal with the nearly complete lack of sunlight at these depths in a number of ways. Either they have extremely large eyes, to catch what little light there is, or they are blind. Even fish that can see, however, rely largely on the senses of hearing, smell, and touch. Fish can sense even subtle changes in water pressure by means of the lateral

1. Size is another factor. Most animals living at these depths are only a few inches long, with a six-footer (described above) being a true titan among them. These creatures must reduce surface area so as to keep the water pressure - 7 or 8 tons per square inch - to the absolute minimum. Deep-sea fishes brought up from the depths are relieved of this pressure so abruptly that their air bladders may be forced out of their mouths. (This is all that comes out; contrary to popular myth, the entire fish will not be turned inside-out.)

line that runs along each side of their bodies. Even near the surface, sharks use this means of picking up vibrations in the water set up by injured and struggling fish; when vision is chancy at best, this ability to sense vibrations becomes much more important.

When creating animals in the ocean depths, here are some realistic color schemes: From 500-1,600' down, the fishes are generally gray, silvery, or pale brown. In lower depths than that, the fish tend to be dark brown, pure black, black with a violet or coppery cast, or, oddly enough, bright red or orange. The reason for this is that the long waves of light at the red and orange end of the spectrum are the first to be absorbed by water, so that fish of those colors appear to be black when encountered in the depths of the sea. If an NPC orders the party to find a brightly-colored fish of a particular type in the depths, this can cause endless (and amusing) confusion. Crustaceans such as shrimp are brighter in hue, generally being red, violet, or brown, while the squids and their relatives can be of a fantastic variety of ever-changing colors.

The most famous deep-sea residents, such as the angler fish, are known primarily for carrying their own lights along. This living light, or bioluminescence, is generally created by either colonies of luminescent bacteria or by specialized light organs. Light can be used both as a lure for prey, and as a dazzling defense mechanism. Squids and octopi are famous for blinding adversaries with clouds of ink; those that live in the ocean depths produce instead a cloud of luminous particles, generally either bright blue or blue-green in color. The more potent light defenses can have an effect like the *sunburst* power of a *wand of illumination*.

Light sources will definitely be necessary for PCs, even though they will bring every predator for miles around on top of them. Visibility without them will be as per the "Fog, dense or blizzard" part of the visibility table in the rules, with this difference: the numbers are in *feet*, not yards. Save for the occasional squid-hunting sperm whale, there are no warm-blooded animals in the ocean depths, so infravision powers based on picking up body heat are of little or no value, which is tough on elves. Under these conditions, a *wand of illumination* may be the most prized magical possession of all on a deep-sea adventure, at least after whatever magical device

allows the PCs to survive underwater in the first place.

Now for the single factor of deep-sea life that an adventuring party will be most interested in. Because there is no sunlight, there is no vegetable matter such as seaweed present, so all the food available — such as it is — is animal in nature. Animal food for creatures in this environment consists either of each other or dead creatures from above that sink into the depths. Of course, all the fish and other creatures in the upper levels get first crack at the second course, so very little remains for those on the bottom rung. Consequently, the denizens of the deep have to be able to eat anything and make the most of every opportunity. In practical terms, this often means the ability to swallow prey as large as or larger than oneself in a single gulp. The soft flesh of deep-sea fishes helps here, as it is easier to stretch. Of course, it also makes it easier to cut open a fish to rescue a swallowed comrade, but since the flesh is so soft, one would definitely do the same amount of damage to the trapped PC that he would cause to the fish when he starts slicing

Anyone trying to rescue a swallowed companion by cutting open the offending fish must roll as though he were actively attacking said companion whenever he damages the fish. Note that the resulting blood in the water is certain to draw more predators with its scent.

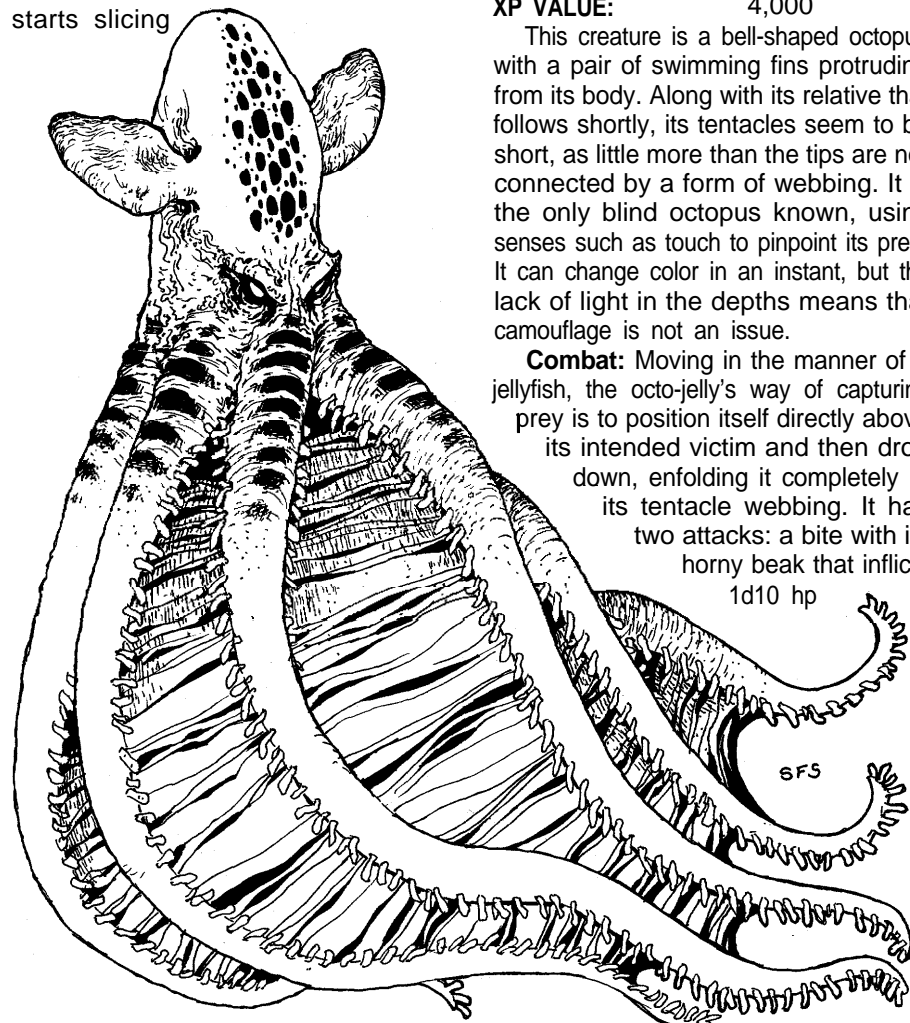
Octo-jelly

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Ocean depths
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral

NO. APPEARING:	1-2
ARMOR CLASS:	10
MOVEMENT:	3, Swim 9
HIT DICE:	3, Swim 9
THACO:	11
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-10
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Smothering
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Luminous cloud,
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Standard
SIZE:	Large (9' long, 5' across)
MORALE:	Fearless (19)
XP VALUE:	4,000

This creature is a bell-shaped octopus with a pair of swimming fins protruding from its body. Along with its relative that follows shortly, its tentacles seem to be short, as little more than the tips are not connected by a form of webbing. It is the only blind octopus known, using senses such as touch to pinpoint its prey. It can change color in an instant, but the lack of light in the depths means that camouflage is not an issue.

Combat: Moving in the manner of a jellyfish, the octo-jelly's way of capturing prey is to position itself directly above its intended victim and then drop down, enfolding it completely in its tentacle webbing. It has two attacks: a bite with its horny beak that inflicts 1d10 hp



damage and smothering in its clammy mass, which causes another 1d6 hp damage. A trapped victim can free himself with a Bending Bars roll (at -1). Because it is so soft (hence the name), all attacks directed at it cause full damage to anyone trapped inside its mass. Although fragile, it has virtually unshakeable morale, like all deep-sea creatures, for the starkly simple reason that it cannot afford cowardice; it must attack and devour whatever it comes across, as food is hard to find.

When attacked by a stronger foe, the octo-jelly can release a luminous cloud of glowing blue-green particles. Anyone caught in this cloud (20' high by 30' wide by 30' long) is blinded for one full turn, losing all initiative and defending against any attacks at a -2 penalty. An octo-jelly does not consider retreat until it has lost 75% of its hit points; under absolutely no other circumstances will it even consider retreat.

Habitat/Society: These creatures are solitary, due largely to the virtual impossibility of finding food for even a small gathering in the ocean depths. No more than two (a male and a female) will ever be found together, and then only during the mating season. When the creature's eggs hatch, the young live for a short time within the mother's protective tentacle bell, but they soon disperse in search of food.

Ecology: The octo-jelly eats any animal it has a chance of killing, just like all other forms of deep-sea life. In return, it is eaten by anything that can catch and kill it, meaning virtually all of its neighbors; there are few clear-cut distinctions between predator and prey in the ocean depths. Because it is softer than octopi that live near the surface, its

hide is useless for commercial poses. It is edible, however, and if its "screen" particles can be collected,

they can be used as an ingredient in spell ink when penning scrolls with spells such as *light*, *continual light* and the various *prismatic* spells. An octo-jelly carries enough particles to provide sufficient ink for one written spell.

Hide

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Ocean depths
FREQUENCY: Very rare
ORGANIZATION: Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE: Any
DIET: Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE: Animal (1)
TREASURE: Nil
ALIGNMENT: Neutral

NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: 3, Swim 12
MOVEMENT: 8
HIT DICE: 13
THACO: 1
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2-12
DAMAGE/ATTACK: Cold generation
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Luminous cloud,
SPECIAL DEFENSES: immunity to cold

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard
SIZE: Huge (20' across)
MORALE: Elite (20)
XP VALUE: 3,000

The hide is a bottom-dwelling octopus of enormous size, with comparatively short tentacles. In basic appearance, it resembles a dirty floor mop or an opened umbrella, and in general is quite a disgusting sight. It can be of any color, changing hues frequently.

Combat: The hide will try to get close enough to a victim to bite it, its beak inflicting 2-12 hp damage. In order to disable a target so it can close in for the kill, it generates a *cone of cold* 10' wide and 30' long, which causes 3d6 hp damage.² As a side effect, it is immune to all cold-based attacks, but if the battle goes against it anyway, and it loses three-quarters of its hit points, it can cover its retreat with

the same sort of blinding cloud the octo-jelly produces.

The dimensions of this creature cloud, though, are 40'

high by 60' wide by 60' long.

Habitat/Society: These creatures are solitary, due to the virtual impossibility of the deep sea providing enough food for more than one in a small area. The mating season is brief, and the eggs are

abandoned as soon as they are laid.

Ecology: The hide has the same uses to both Man and Nature as the octo-jelly. In the natural world, it preys on both swimmers and bottom-crawlers, while its ink has the same value as a scroll-ink ingredient.

Gulper

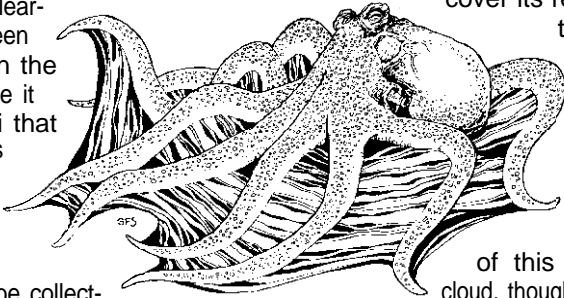
CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Ocean depths
FREQUENCY: Uncommon
ORGANIZATION: Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE: Any
DIET: Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE: Animal (1)
TREASURE: Nil
ALIGNMENT: Neutral

NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: Swim 15
MOVEMENT: 9
HIT DICE: 11
THACO: 1
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2d8
DAMAGE/ATTACK: Constriction,
SPECIAL ATTACKS: swallow whole

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard
MORALE: L (12' long)
MORALE: Elite (20)
XP VALUE: 3,000

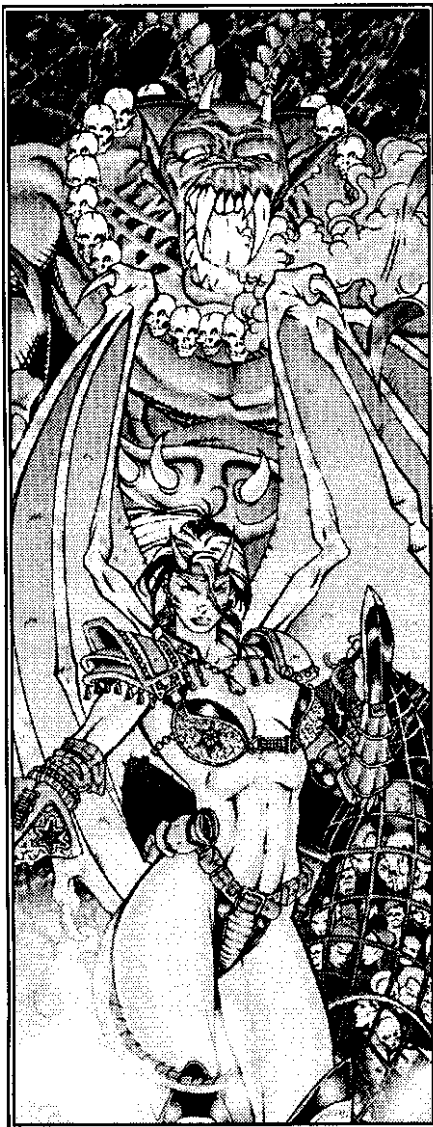
The gulper variety of fish consists of little more than a huge mouth, following by a trailing tail that seems to stretch on forever. This mouth is so huge that it enables the fish to swallow prey several times larger than itself; one species of gulper on Earth is known as the "pelican eel". Gulpers on Earth range in size from 6" (not counting the tail) to 6', but fantasy-world denizens can get up to 12' in length. These creatures have small eyes, set on top of their heads to catch the least little bit of sunlight that filters down from the surface, but they rely almost solely on their lateral lines to feel the approach of prey. Some species even have an electric light at the tip of the tail, apparently to attract potential victims.

Combat: The gulper's biting attack, which causes 2d8 hp damage, is inflicted only once on any prey it catches. After that, the victim has been swallowed whole, and the creature's teeth are now reduced to a supportive role³, holding the prey in place so it can't get away. Now the damage is caused by the gulper's digestive juices, which inflict 1d8 hp damage per turn until the prey is



2. It's time for the big surprise of this listing. "Hide" is the name of a sea monster mentioned in the maritime folklore of the nation of Chile here on Earth, and a creature answering its description has been mentioned by a diver in the modern era. The witness was quite deep, observing a shark, when he noticed that the water was becoming icy cold. Even as he watched, a great shapeless mass came up out of the depths and wrapped itself around the shark, which seemed unable to move. It was not until after the thing sank back down with its prey that the diver dared to move. Yes, this is a real report on a real animal, and I'm not even making up the fantasy-sounding attack form of a cold "breath weapon." Deep-sea diving, anyone?

3. Oh, yes, one more little thing about gulpers and the other fish discussed in this article. Their teeth are slanted for holding prey in place. They do this so well that they literally cannot let go! Once a victim has been swallowed whole, it is literally a case of "digest or die". If the gulper chokes on its prey, it chokes, but it cannot let go. On Earth, a fair number of deep-sea fish were discovered when they floated belly-up to the surface after choking on an intended meal.



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either digested or released. Release can be tricky, though, as cutting through the gulpers soft flesh means inflicting an equal amount of damage of the cutter's trapped comrade. Both fantasy and real-world gulpers may use their tails for purposes of constriction, inflicting 1d6 hp damage per round to the hapless victim. In general, any creature smaller than size G may strangled by a 12' gulper, the whiplike tail takes up so its length.

Habitat/Society: These creatures are solitary, and don't have brains for a rich social life any way. A 10" "pelican eel" from Earth has a brain case only a quarter-inch in length. Their reproductive cycle is unknown, but it is possible that as is the case with other fish, one of the parents may shelter the newborn young in its mouth for a time. In this case, "survival of the fittest" means knowing enough to leave home hunger overrides parental urges.

Ecology: Gulpers will eat anything. In return, they are edible, with literally delicate flesh. In addition, some enterprising magical artificers have used their skin in the construction of — what else? — a bag of holding.

Angler Fish

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Ocean depths
FREQUENCY: Uncommon
ORGANIZATION: Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE: Any
DIET: Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE: Animal (1)
TREASURE:
ALIGNMENT: Neutral

NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: 8
MOVEMENT: Swim 12
HIT DICE: 8
THAC0: 13
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2d8 or (some species only) 1d4

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Swallow whole
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard
SIZE: L (8' long)
MORALE: Elite (19)
XP VALUE: 1,400

The angler fish is, as its name implies, a fish that hunts by means of a natural "fishing line," sometimes even with a

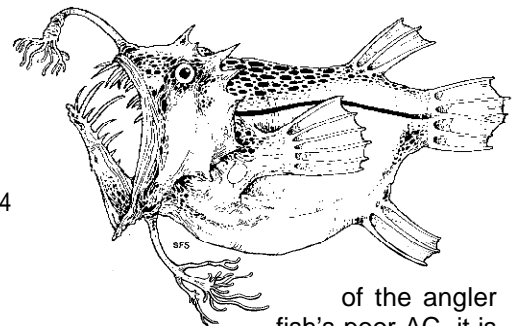
hook (not in the real-world creatures). These bloated-looking things are clumsy swimmers, relying on their lures to cause prey to come to them.

Surface-dwellers have an illicium (the "fishing line," actually the modified first ray of the dorsal fin) that looks like a worm or similar creature; with deep-sea anglers, the illicium is luminous. Some anglers don't have an illicium, relying instead on a luminous growth protruding from the roof or palate of the mouth. Imaginative DMs in a fantasy world full of human and demihuman adventurers can modify these growths to

resemble an from mounds of sunken treasure to a beautiful mermaid, both lying in a "cavern" chock full of "stalactites" and "stalag-

ses." Most anglers are no bigger than a man's fist, though one surface-dwelling type is large enough to swallow ducks and geese and does so.

Combat: Combat for the angler fish generally consists of decoying the victim close enough to be attacked, with the teeth getting in one good bite (2d8 hp damage) and then simply holding the victim in place to be digested (1 d8 hp damage per round). Some anglers actually have one or more hooks at the end of the illicium. In real life, they just *look* like hooks, without doing anything useful, but in a fantasy ocean, they can be used to grapple a victim (1d4 hp damage) and draw him down to the mouth. Because



of the angler fish's poor AC, it is relatively easy for stabbing weapons to penetrate it (and do as much damage to the victim as to his attacker). The fish's teeth curve inward, so it can't

inward, so it can't even *think* about letting go, no matter how much those guys with tridents and daggers may make it wish it could. Swallowing prey is the ultimate act of commitment.

Habitat/Society: Oddly enough, in most species of angler fish, only the females do the hunting. The male, who is only a fraction of the female's size, clings lampreylike to her body, living off her as a parasite. Actually, this is a rather logical thing to do; because of the darkness of the ocean depths and the fact that angler fish are few and far between, this system ensures that every fish will always have a mate on hand when breeding season comes around. What happens to the young is not known.

Ecology: The angler fish is the same generic type of predator that all hunters of the deep are. Its flesh is edible, though not a gourmet's delight by human standards.

Viperfish

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:

Ocean depths

FREQUENCY:

Uncommon

ORGANIZATION:

Solitary

ACTIVITY CYCLE:

Any

DIET:

Carnivore

INTELLIGENCE:

Animal (1)

TREASURE:

Nil

ALIGNMENT:

Neutral

NO. APPEARING: 1-2

ARMOR CLASS: 7

MOVEMENT:

Swim 18

HIT DICE:

10

THACO:

11

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK:

1 d20 or (some species only)
1d8

SPECIAL ATTACKS:

Swallow whole

SPECIAL DEFENSES:

Nil

MAGIC RESISTANCE:

Standard

SIZE:

Huge (20' long)

MORALE:

Elite (20)

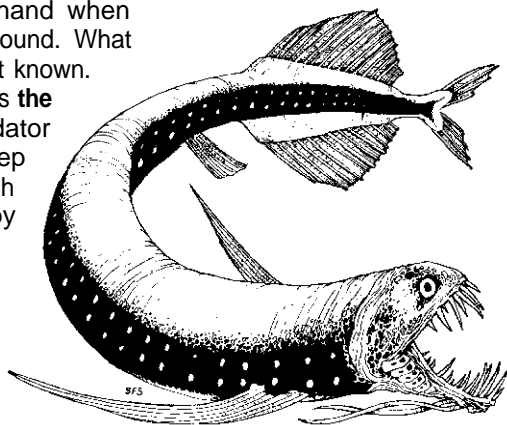
XP VALUE:

5,000

The viperfish are among the most vicious inhabitants of the ocean depths, being more active cruisers after prey than mere passive toothed traps waiting for something to come within reach. They have lights for vision as well as attracting prey, often having double rows of lights on their torsos like portholes on an ocean liner. Prey lures include luminous patches directly inside the creature's mouth. From a viperfish's chin protrudes one or more branch- or whiplike growths. In all species, this is an extension of the lateral line senses,

with the growth serving as a sort of antenna to detect movement in the water. Some fantasy fish, however, may also use it as a weapon (see below). The smallest viperfish, also known as stomiatoids, are about an inch and a half in length, while the largest can get up to 6', making them true giants of the ocean depths. In a fantasy sea, stomiatoids grow up to 20' in length.

Combat: Like all other fish of the depths, stomiatoids get in one good bite at the start of the attack (1d20 hp damage) and then swallow their prey whole,



with
the
teeth
now

serving as no more than bars in a cage to keep the victim from escaping. They also keep the viperfish from letting its prey go if it realizes it is too much for it, as they slant backwards. If the viperfish takes too big a mouthful, then that's just too bad for it, as well as for its prey. Some fantasy specimens use their whiplike chin growths as a sort of tentacle, causing 1d8 hp strangling damage. Swallowed victims take 1d8 hp damage from the viperfish's stomach acids until they are gone, one way or another. Would-be rescuers of swallowed prey may also do damage when they try to cut their friend out, their weapons doing full damage to the victim after cutting through his captor's soft skin.

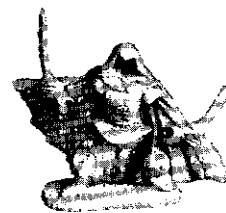
Habitat/Society: The stomiatoids as a group are solitary creatures, only coming together briefly for the mating season, and abandoning their young as soon as the eggs are laid.

Ecology: As active hunters, viperfish have more of an impact on the deep-sea ecology than those predators who simply sit around waiting for prey to come to them. They also have edible, if non-tasty, flesh.

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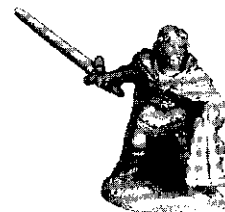
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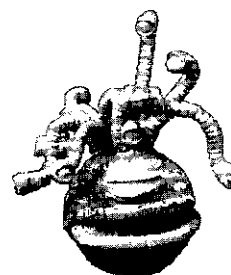
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Death Minnow

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Ocean depths
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral

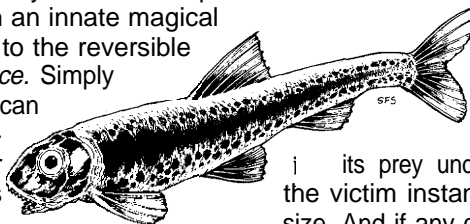
NO. APPEARING:	1-2
ARMOR CLASS:	10
MOVEMENT:	Swim 22
HIT DICE:	6
THACO:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	0
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Swallow whole, magic
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	High agility
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Standard
SIZE:	T to L (2" to 8')
MORALE:	Elite (20)
XP VALUE:	2,000

The death minnow is a bright orange fish only 2" in length (and the only completely magical invention in this article). It is a magical extrapolation of the normal fishes of the ocean depths, created by some powerful, but unknown under-sea sorcerers. (Aboleth? Sahuagin? The aquatic elf version of the drow? Who

knows?) A potent guardian of undersea lairs and treasure troves, this critter is guaranteed to drive your players crazy. It relies on lateral lines to detect its prey.

Combat: The death minnow's creators — whoever they were — incorporated into the fish an innate magical ability equivalent to the reversible spell *enlarge/reduce*. Simply put, this little fish can swim up to a creature of Size M or smaller, looking as innocuous as can be, then suddenly *enlarge* itself to the size of a giant angler fish, swallow the surprised victim with a single gulp, and then *reduce* both itself and the victim to minute size again. If no one else in the party is looking in the victim's direction at the time (remember, there is apparently nothing large enough to be a threat in the vicinity), then the target will seem to have simply disappeared without a trace.

The act of swallowing itself causes no damage, as the victim is drawn into the fish's mouth by suction. Once inside, however, he suffers 1d6 hp damage



from his captor's digestive juices until he either dies or is rescued. As always, striking weapons do full damage to the victim as well as their intended target. However, even bloated with prey, the

death minnow can easily dodge most blows. Once the fish is slain (an ingrained magical instinct prevents it from releasing its prey under any circumstances), the victim instantly returns to normal size. And if any quick-witted mages are present in the party, casting *dispel magic* on the death minnow will cause it to grow back to its "monster size" of 8', making it a far easier target.

Habitat/Society: There are no "wild" populations of death minnows. These are magical guard beasts, nothing more, and as they are created magically, they do not need to breed. In fact, it is uncertain if they even have male and female sexes.

Ecology: The death minnow serves no role in a natural ecology, except to ensure that the immediate vicinity around the spot it is set to guard doesn't have any. If the party can kill one, its blood may be used as an ingredient in the ink used for penning *enlarge* or *reduce* spells on scrolls. If, instead, someone wants to return the swallowing favor by eating it, it tastes remarkably like kippered herring.

I hope you enjoy the above sea monsters. When encountered in their natural habitat, they can make any underwater quest an adventure to remember.

Bibliography

Abyss; C.P. Idyll; Thomas Y. Crowell Company; 201 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10003; 1964, 1971 (revised edition).

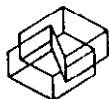
I gained virtually all my factual information from this book, which is a treasure house of facts about the ocean depths. Read it if you can, especially if you're a DM; there are enough weird creatures in this book for several articles the size of this one.



There was something fishy about the biographical sketch Gregory W. Detwiler sent us (especially the part about the voyage on the Calypso), so we've decided to say only that we consider this article quite a catch.

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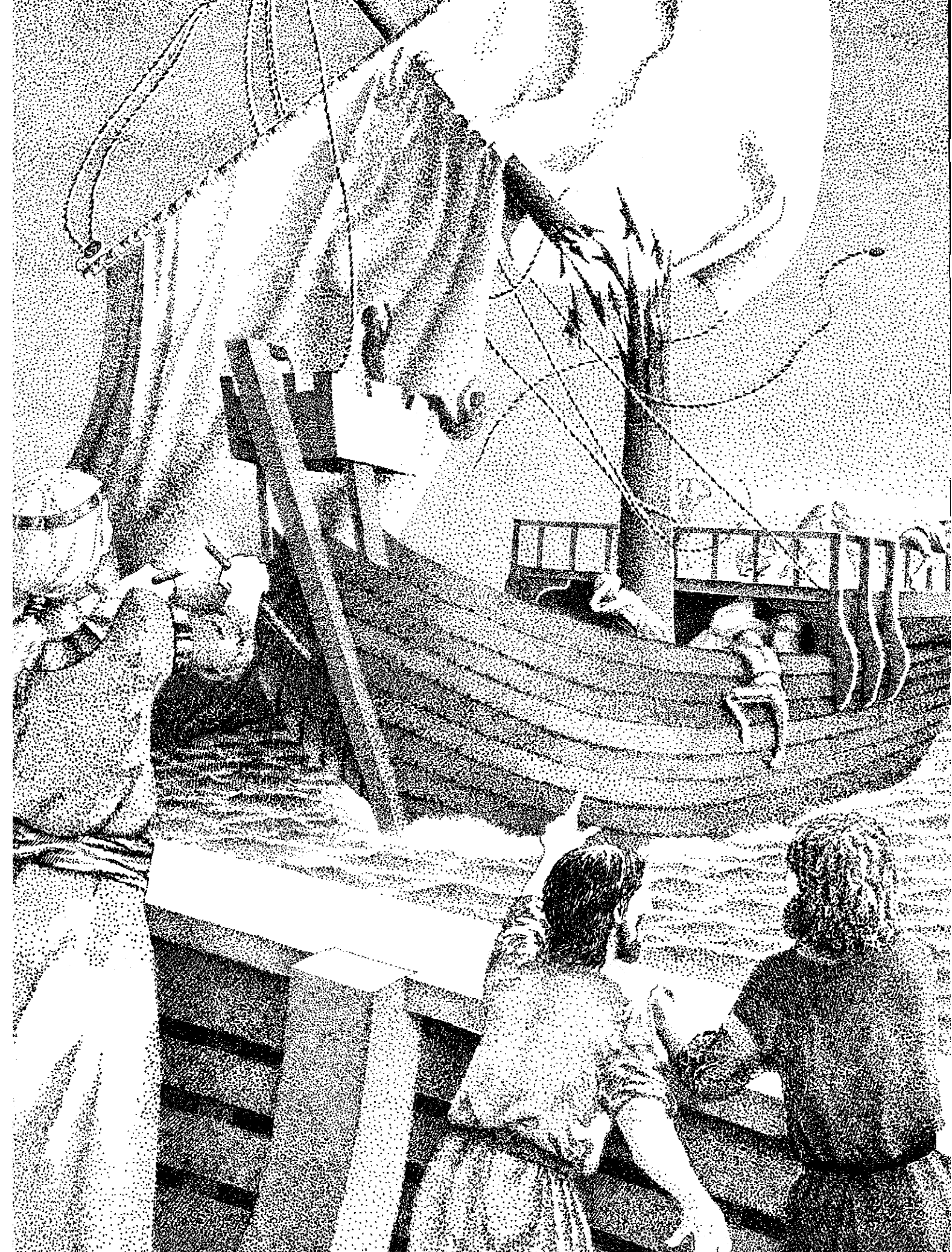
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ARCAINE



Sea Spells

by Brian Dunnell

illustrated by Amy Lusebrink

Seagoing sorcery for nautical adventures

Iron-Leg Bruce was a corsair, one of the best to prowl the seas. He was a member of a loose confederation of pirates, privateers, corsairs, and brigands held together by the will and prowess of the Pirate Queen Lorelee.

Iron-leg was pleased. His ship, the Black Dragon, had stumbled upon the Golden Lion, a great elven galleon. Masked by a powerful illusion, his ship followed close behind the Lion.

"Helm," Iron-leg said. "Bring us alongside!"

His crew scurried up the rigging to let out more sail. They made no noise. They were professionals.

Iron-leg whispered to his first mate. "Have the spellslingers get to their posts. We'll drop the illusion as we pull alongside."

In a moment, Iron-leg could see the faces of the elves on the deck of the galleon. He raised his hand in a signal.

His gigantic black galleon, with gray sails and a flag as black as the Underdark, shimmered into existence beside the elven ship.

Even as the elven faces registered shock, Iron-leg's wizards began to chant.

The battle was on.

Whether pirates, merchants, or explorers, those riding the high seas are in no less need of magical spells than those traveling the mountains or plains. Here, then, is a collection of spells especially suited for those at home on the sea — no matter what their calling may be.

First-level spells

Foul Rigging

Alteration

Reversible

Range: 100 yds. + 10 yds. per level

Components: V,S,M

Duration: Instantaneous

Casting time: 3

Area of effect: Special

Save: Negates

When this spell is cast, the rigging of the affected ship becomes tangled, jumbled, and otherwise unmanageable. In game terms, the ship is slowed by one mile per hour per level of the caster, to a maximum penalty of one-half its movement. The rigging takes two hours per level of the caster to unfoul. The reversal of this spell, *unfoul rigging*, has no save and counters this effect.

The material components are a bit of canvas and twine wrapped in a tightly knotted ball.

Land call

Divination

Range: Special

Components: V,S,M

Duration: Instantaneous

Casting Time: 10

Area of effect: Caster's ship

Save: None

By means of this spell, the caster knows the location of the vessel's port of call (or any other port from which he has earth), no matter where the ship is or what the weather and light conditions are. This spell is especially useful in foul weather or when sailing with no instruments. The material component for the spell is a pinch of earth from the chosen port.

Map

Alteration

Range: 1'

Components: V,S,M

Duration: 1 day per level

Casting time: 15

Area of effect: Special

Save: None

This spell animates mapping tools so that they map any area within sight of the caster. Islands, reefs, shoals, and coastline are all



diligently recorded by these animated instruments. In open ocean, the tools chart a ship's route. This spell is extremely useful on voyages of exploration.

The material components are a set of inks, charts, blank paper, pens, compasses, rulers, and other mapping instruments of at least 750 gp total value. These may be re-used.

True Compass

Divination

Range: 0

Components: V,S,M

Duration: 1 round

Casting time: 10

Area of effect: One ship or the caster

Save: None

With this spell, the caster gains an instant and exact knowledge of his heading (e.g., north, south, south by southwest, etc.). The spell gives no other information. It may also be used on land.

The material component of this spell is a small piece of lodestone and a needle.

Second-level spells

Eagle Eyes

Alteration

Range: Touch

Components: V,S,M

Duration: 1 hour per level

Casting Time: 4

Area of effect: One creature

Save: None

This spell gives the recipient an especially keen distance vision, effectively doubling the range at which he can see things, as well as enhancing the details that he can make out. The effect can be disorienting at first, and the recipient must make an Intelligence check or become dizzy and confused for 1d10 minutes.

The material components are the eyes of a keen-sighted animal.

Fantar's shoal

Alteration, Evocation

Range: 100 yds.

Components: V,S,M

Duration: 1 hour + 10 minutes per level

Casting Time: 5

Area of effect: One ship

Save: Negates

This spell creates a magical barrier just under the ocean's surface. Ships striking the barrier become grounded as if on a shoal or shallow. It causes no structural damage but effectively arrests movement for the duration of the spell unless the ship's navigator or captain makes an effective save vs. spell. The

caster's level determines the size of the ship that can be affected:

Level	Ship
1-3	raft, canoe, small row boat
4-6	row boat, outrigger, small long boat
7-9	long boat, small barge
10-12	large barge, fishing vessel
13-15	small ship
16-18	medium-sized ship
19-21	large ship, galleon

The material components are a piece of coral valued at least 100 gp and a bit of sand from a shoal. They are consumed with the casting of this spell.

Flame Resistance

Abjuration

Range: 20 yds.

Components: V,S

Duration: 1 day + 1 hour per level

Casting time: 10

Area of effect: One ship

Save: None

This spell renders one ship resistant to normal and magical flame. Sails, rigging, and wood are essentially immune to normal, non-magical flames and sparks for the duration of the spell. Against especially intense or magical flames, the ship receives a saving throw bonus of +1 for every 3 levels of the caster. Flames cause half the damage as normal and spread half as quickly. (Note that this protection affects only the ship itself and does not extend to the crew or cargo.)

Leomund's Many Life Preservers

Abjuration

Range: 100 yds.

Components: V,S

Duration: 1 day per level

Casting Time: 3

Area of effect: Special

Save: None

This spell creates one circular buoyant ring of force for each level of the caster. Each ring has sufficient buoyancy to keep two unarmored man-sized creatures afloat for the duration of the spell. The rings are virtually indestructible and cannot be harmed in any way short of *dispel magic* or *disintegrate* spells, or similar methods.

Morning Glory

Evocation

Range: 50 yds. + 10 yds. per level

Components: V,S,M

Duration: Instantaneous

Casting Time: 3

Area of effect: Special

Save: Half

This spell creates a cone of flaming sparks that arc outward from the caster's hands starting 10' wide at the base of the arc and ending with a 50'-wide apex. The sparks range in color from red to white. Creatures in the fan receive no direct damage but must save or have any combustible clothing or gear catch fire. Any ship caught within the arc suffers 1 point of structural damage per three levels of the caster, up to a maximum of 5 points of structural damage. Thus, a 9th-level mage would cause 3 points of structural damage. Damage is from drying out the hull or rigging, causing snapping or fraying, or from small fires caused by the sparks. If the ship makes a successful saving throw, it suffers only half damage.

The material component is a handful of iron filings.

Plug Leak

Alteration

Range: 10'

Components: V,S

Duration: 2 hours + 1 turn per level

Casting Time: 2

Area of effect: Special

Save: None

This spell creates invisible walls of force that plug small leaks in a ship's hull, shore up cracks and splits, and otherwise temporarily repair similar structural damage. One point of hull damage for every two levels of the caster can be repaired in this way to a maximum of 10 hull points. These force barriers eventually weaken and break but allow time for proper repairs to be conducted. This spell is most commonly used during battle, when there isn't time to effect proper repairs.

Third-level spells

Buoyancy

Alteration

Range: 150 yds.

Components: V,S

Duration: 1 hour + 1 turn per level

Casting Time: 4

Area of effect: One creature per level

Save: Negates

This spell causes affected creatures to float to the surface of the water as if they were buoyant. Even the most heavily armored knight can thus be suspended on the surface. Similarly, underwater creatures can be forced to surface in this way. The spell does not affect creatures more than twice the size of the average man. It affects only living things. Unwilling creatures can save vs. spell to avoid the effect.

Fantar's Reef

Alteration, Evocation

Range: 200 yds. + 10 yds. per level

Components: V,S,M

Duration: 1 hour + 1 turn per level

Casting Time: 5

Area of effect: One ship

Save: Special

This spell is a more powerful version of *Fantar's shoal*. It creates a reef-like construct of magical force underneath the ocean's surface. Any ship striking this magical barrier sustains 1d4+1 points of hull damage per level of the caster. The ship can save vs. spell for half damage. Unless the ship's navigator makes a successful navigation check, the ship has "run aground" for the duration of the spell. The caster's level determines the size of the ship that can be affected:

Level Ship

1-3 raft, canoe, small row boat

4-6 row boat, outrigger, small long boat

7-9 long boat, small barge

10-12 large barge, fishing vessel

13-15 small ship

16-18 medium-sized ship

19-21 large ship, galleon

The barrier is invisible and indestructible, but a *dispel magic* spell negates it.

The material component for this spell is a piece of coral of at least 500 gp value.

Leomund's Lifeboat

Abjuration

Range: 20 yds.

Components: V,S,M

Duration: 1 day per level

Casting time: 5

Area of effect: Special

Save: None

This spell creates a magically sustained life boat large enough to hold up to 10 humans or human-sized creatures. It has a cover and a sail, and it provides shelter and warmth. It cannot be sunk or capsized through normal means. The boats stores provide food and water sufficient to sustain its passengers for the duration of the spell. The spell may be renewed by further castings before it expires. It moves at a constant rate of 10 miles per hour.

The material component of this spell is a miniature replica of the boat, made from the finest materials of no less than 1,000 gp value.

Mentap's Mine

Evocation

Range: 30 yds. + 10 yds. per level

Components: V,S,M

Duration: Instantaneous

Casting Time: 3

Area of effect: Special

Save: Half

This spell creates a small ovoid sphere to appear on the hull of the vessel in question. The sphere is dark blue and blends in with the water. It is about 6" in diameter. It cannot be removed from the ship's hull by normal means. After a time specified by the caster, the sphere detonates with a large explosive force. Any creature within 30' of the blast suffers 1d6 hp damage per level of the caster; save vs. spell for half. The ship sustains 1 point of structural damage per level of the caster (save vs. spell for half) and may be set on fire. The caster can have the charge detonate up to half an hour plus one minute per level after the charge is placed. A thief who makes a successful Remove Traps check can disarm the sphere.

The material component for this spell is a small wad of sulfur and pitch placed inside a sealed steel tube.

Narcomb's Battened Hatches

Alteration, Abjuration

Range: 10 yds.

Components: V,S

Duration: 1 hour per level

Casting Time: 8

Area of effect: One ship

Save: None

This spell causes all the hatches, doors, and windows on a ship to close tightly. If these have locks or seals, they bolt themselves in place. A magical watertight seal comes into being around all the hatches. No force of wind or wave can burst the hatches; however, they are not *wizard locked*; unless otherwise locked or barred, intelligent creatures can still open and close the doors normally. This does not affect the duration of the spell.

Fourth-level spells

Amgig's Rowers

Alteration, Conjunction

Range: 20'

Components: V,S

Duration: 1 hour per level

Casting time: 6

Area of effect: One ship

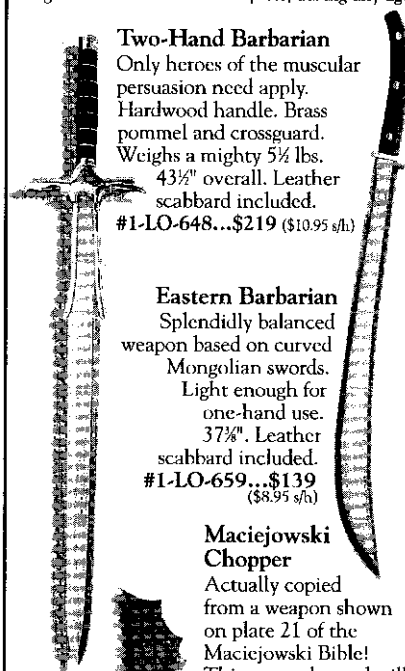
Save: None

This spell creates banks of magical glowing oars on the sides of a vessel that

Continued on page 56

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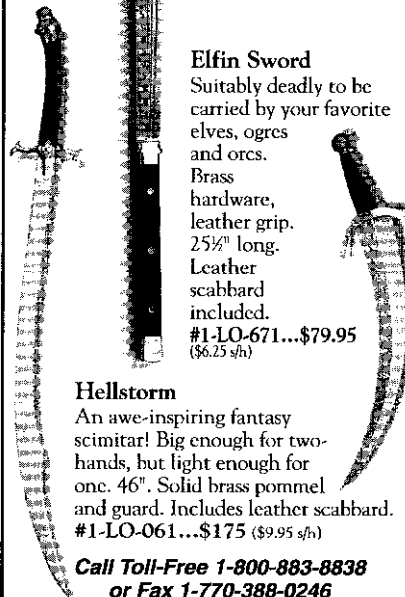
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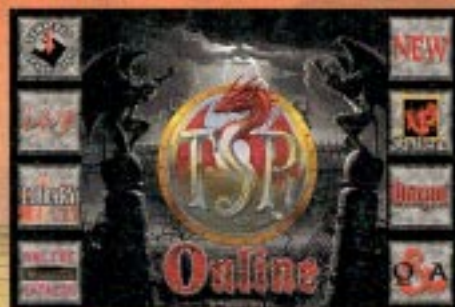
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row with their own power. For each level of the mage, the oars increase the vessel's movement by one mile per hour, up to double the normal movement rate. If the mage maintains concentration on this spell, he can direct the speed and direction of the vessel with the oars; otherwise the ship goes straight forward at its maximum movement rate.

The oars are magical constructs. Although they can be dispelled, they are not harmed by normal means.

Fifth-level spells

Call Wind

Alteration, Conjunction

Reversible

Range: 0

Components: V,S

Duration: 1 day + one hour per level

Casting Time: 10

Area of effect: Special

Save: Negates

This spell has two effects. The first increases the force of the prevailing wind by one factor for every 4 levels of the caster. Thus, a calm can become a light breeze or a brisk wind. The caster can choose how much of an increase he desires. It is important to note that this affects only the vessel in question; other ships in the area are not affected.

Alternatively, the caster can change the direction of the wind for one vessel. He can affect the wind's vector by 5° per level. The navigator of a ship who would not desire to be affected by this wind must save vs. spell to avoid the effect.

The reverse of this spell, *calm wind*, reduces the ferocity of the wind in respect to a vessel.

Ironside

Alteration

Range: Touch

Components: V,S,M

Duration: 1 turn +1 round per level

Casting Time: 6

Area of effect: One vessel

Saving throw: None

This spell increases the strength of the recipient vessel's hull. Saving throws vs. crushing blow are made against iron. Attacks against the ship are made against AC 0. Note that this spell in no way affects the flammability of the vessel, it only operates in terms of durability. In all other respects, it still has the same properties of its constituent material.

The material component for this spell is a bit of ironwood.

Otiluke's Screen

Abjuration

Range: 10 yds.

Components: V,S

Duration: 1 turn + 1 round per level

Casting Time: 6

Area of effect: One vessel (or a sphere of 10 yds., + 1 yd. per level radius)

Save: None

This spell creates an invisible screen of energy that surrounds the ship, even below the waterline. Solid objects - water, projectiles, fish, etc. - can pass freely through the screen, while any magical energy that strikes the screen (*fireball*, *lightning bolt*, etc.) is absorbed and dissipated. The screen is able to absorb 1d8 hp damage per level of the caster before being disrupted. (Divide this number by 10 and round up to determine the number of hull points the screen can absorb.) If cast somewhere other than on a ship, e.g., on land, the screen is immobile but has virtually the same affects.

Repair Breech

Alteration, Conjunction

Range: 20'

Components: V,S,M

Duration: instantaneous

Casting Time: 6

Area of effect: One vessel

Save: None

This spell causes hull and other damage to regenerate. The caster can repair 1d6+1 point of hull damage per level. The effect is nearly instantaneous and is permanent; it cannot be dispelled.

The material components for this spell are a tiny set of shipwright's tools worth at least 500 gp.

Seventh-level spell

Spectral Navigator

Conjunction, Summoning

Range: 10'

Components: V,S,M

Duration: 1 hour per level

Casting time: 10

Area of effect: Special

Save: None

This spell creates a ghostly, quasi-tangible navigator who will, for the duration of the spell, steer the ship. The navigator unerringly avoids all natural obstacles, if possible, and always takes the course most likely to allow a vessel to reach port safely.

The material components of this spell are a tiny golden ship's wheel and a chart with the ship's position at the time of casting and the desired destination plotted.

Eighth-level spell

Raise Vessel

Alteration

Reversible

Range: 20'

Components: V,S

Duration: 1 hour per level

Casting Time: 9

Area of effect: One vessel

Save: Negates

This spell causes one sunken vessel to be raised intact to the surface of the sea. If a vessel is sinking or only partially submerged it is raised and held afloat by the power of this spell as well. The reversal of this spell, *sink vessel* (the effect of which is permanent), causes the recipient vessel to sink below the waves in 2d4 rounds. The ship's captain is allowed a save vs. spell to avoid this effect.

Brian Dunnell lives in Maine, somewhere near a lighthouse, we like to think.

By Rex F. May



It looks good to me, but we'd better run it through the spellchecker first."



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Rescheduled for Spring 1997

In order to keep the rest of Palladium's 1996 titles on schedule (including Rifts® Lone Star, Rifts® New West, Rifts® Spirit West, as well as Nightlands and Dragons & Gods), Palladium has rescheduled Psyscape™ for a Spring, 1997 release. Since the book has been advertised as Rifts® World Book 12, it will retain that numerical distinction but will actually follow the release of World Book 15: Rifts® Spirit West (scheduled for a March 1997 release). We hope our fans understand. Thanks.

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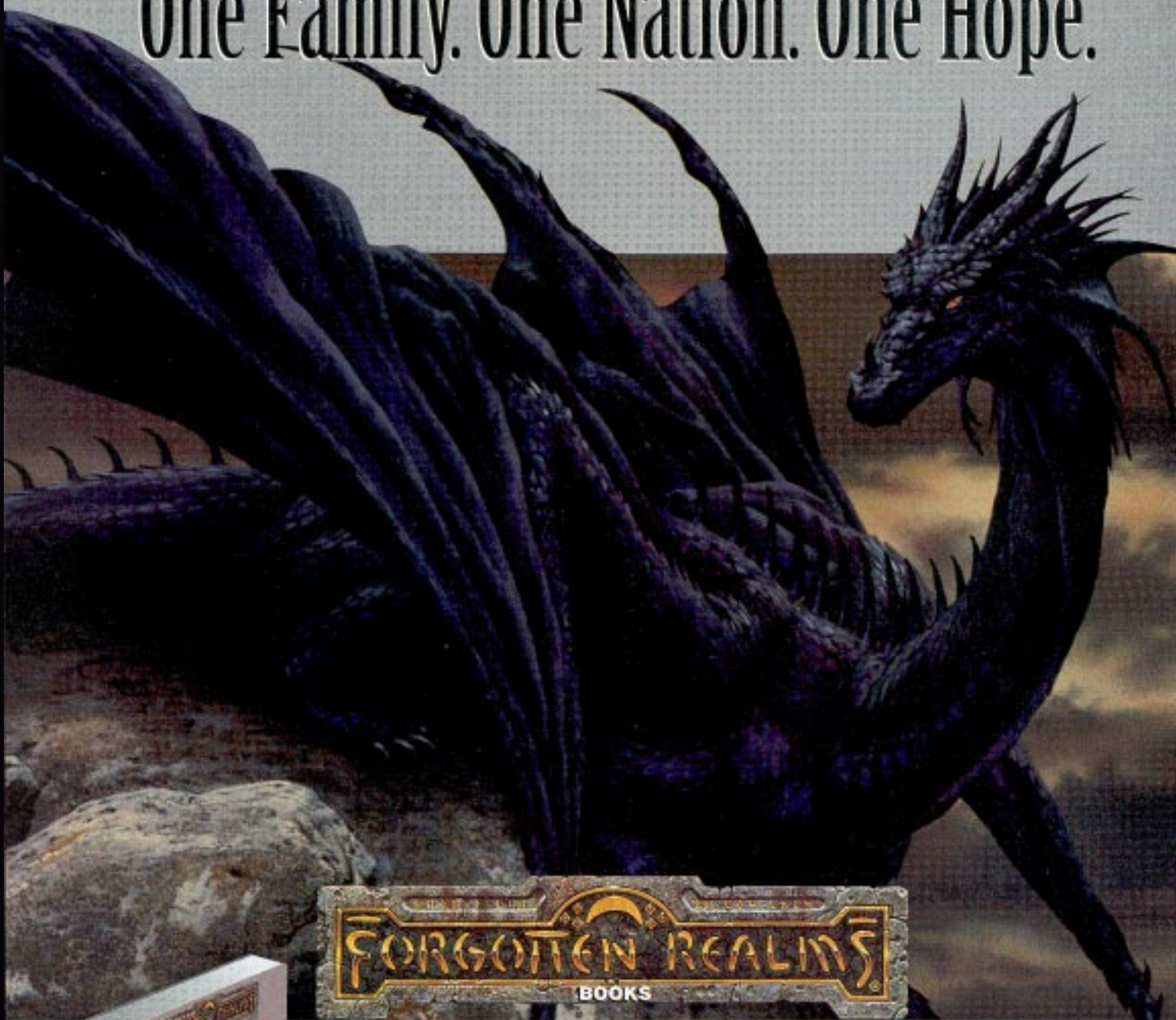
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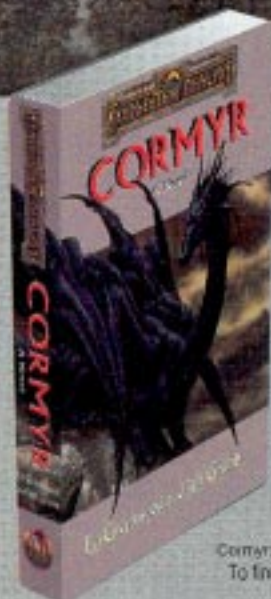
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Bookwyrms™

Once again, we bibliophiles of the **DRAGON** Magazine staff share our recommendations of the best books we've read (or re-read) recently. Would you like to recommend one to us? Write to "Bookwyrms," **DRAGON** Magazine, 201 Sheridan Springs Road, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

Alvin Journeyman

by Orson Scott Card

\$6.99

I have been a fan of *The Tales of Alvin Maker* since its debut volume, *Seventh Son*, was published back in the late eighties.

Card's alternate vision of a frontier America where hexes, knacks, and folklore are

as real as science, industrialization, and democracy never ceases to entertain me with its quaint backwoods wisdom and parallel versions of figures from history like William Henry Harrison and Tecumseh.

The fourth and latest volume in the series (following *Prentice Alvin*) continues the tale of Alvin as he enters the journeyman stage of his career as a smith and shaman of sorts. His long-term goal of building a Crystal City and saving America from the clutches of the dreaded Unmaker faces another obstacle in the form of allegations that threaten both his good name and his freedom.

Card fuses the best of Mark Twain with Peter Beagle to tell his tale in the proper voice. The only fault is this otherwise enchanting tour-de-force of magical Americana is the long wait between volumes in the series. I hope the next one arrives soon.

B.T.

The Demolished Man

Alfred Bester

Vintage

\$11.00

When we heard that Alfred Bester's two most famous novels were to be re-released this year, Pierce and I quarreled over who would recommend them. We came to a compromise, but immediately after, the quarrel resumed, this time over which book is the better. I pick *The Demolished Man*.

Ben Reich is one of the world's most powerful and wealthy men, even though he is not one of the gifted few who have developed telepathy. Reich is also a ruthless man, willing to kill a rival, knowing that the Espers of the police force can detect murderous intent even before a crime occurs. Nothing deters Reich, however, and soon he's locked in a deadly struggle with Lincoln Powell, Police Prefect and 1st-Class Esper.

The Demolished Man excels as science fiction because it takes a single SF premise and explores its effects on the setting and characters of an intense drama. Sure, you have your rocket ships and zapguns in the background, but the important thing is always the way that telepathy affects the conflict between two extraordinary men.

Also notable is Alfred Bester's inventive use of language. It is never so obtrusive as to detract from the story. It's smart, clever, and integral to the narrative. Maybe he shows off sometimes, but he never just shows off. *The Demolished Man* is superlative writing and great science fiction.

A Game of Thrones

by George R.R. Martin

Bantam Spectra **\$21.95**

I figure life is too short to drink bad beer or read poor fantasy novels.

You can understand why I'm always reluctant to try the "next big fantasy trilogy."

George R.R. Martin's name on

the cover of *A Game of Thrones* gave me hope. (Even he jokes that he has the right middle initials to succeed Tolkien.) Frankly, the first fifty pages worried me. I can't stand seeing common words like "Sir" or "master" transformed into "Ser" or "maester" simply to make them seem otherworldly — especially in a story with many obvious real-world analogs. Early coincidence and cliché, and characters who seemed too obviously good or evil nearly made me set the book aside.

Fortunately, *A Game of Thrones* soon employs the clichés of fantasy fiction to fresh effect rather than relying, upon them as a crutch. Martin makes vital figures of what seem at first to be stock characters, and even those who fall neatly into categories are genuinely beautiful heroes or truly despicable villains. His writing is good, but his storytelling is a killer. Martin can make you mourn, love, wonder, and hate.

This is the one for fantasy novel snobs who wanted to enjoy the big trilogies but were spoiled on better writers. *A Game of Thrones* is only the first book of *A Song of Ice and Fire*, yet already it promises to exceed all of the epic fantasy series since . . . You're not going to make me say it, are you? D.G.

The Grid

by Philip Kerr

Warner Books **\$21.95**

When we think of dangerous places, we used to conjure images of haunted castles and trap-infested dungeons. Then

along comes

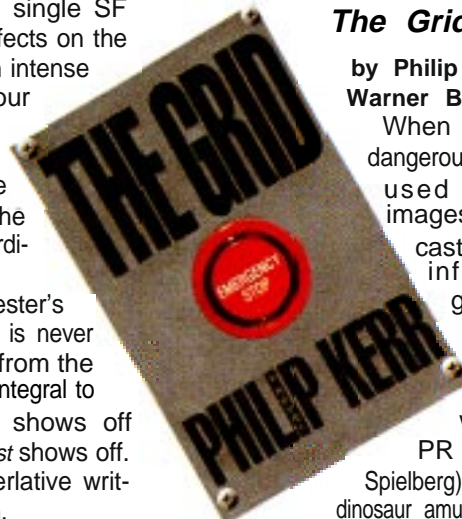
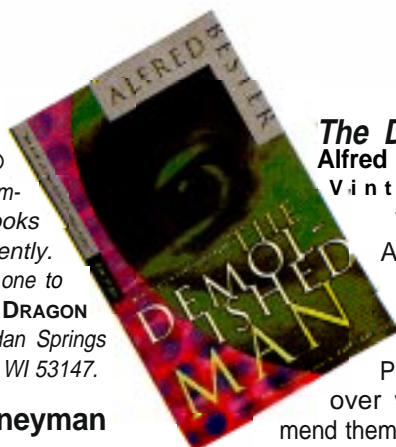
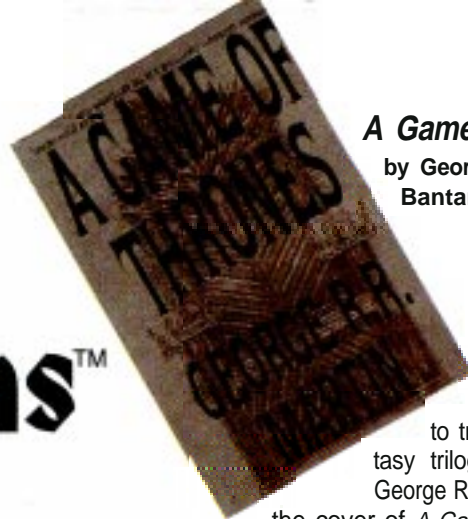
Michael

Crichton

with a little

PR from Steven

Spielberg), and voilà, the dinosaur amusement park of



tomorrow takes the forefront. Well, Philip Kerr does him one better in his latest novel, *The Grid*. Unlike *Jurassic Park*, where you had to travel many miles to get there, this new dangerous place can exist right next door in major city in the U.S.

The Grid's antagonist is "smart building," that is, one that is fully automated and monitored by an ultra-sophisticated computer who manifests malevolent toward a group of trapped executives during its early days on line. What Kerr has so successfully wrought is a new riff on the bad computer monster theme that caters to all of our worst fears of technology, while also entertaining us with great new traps and perils that can lurk right down the hall in the nearest elevator, lavatory, or swimming pool.

The Grid is a modern dungeon crawl of great suspense that will both amuse you and thrill you. It is probably the best thriller of its kind since, well, *Jurassic Park*, and that is high praise indeed. B.T.

Now You See It . . .

by Richard Matheson
Tor

\$5.99

Richard Matheson has always been one of my favorite authors. *I Am Legend* is a classic vampire novel, *Hell House* is a classic haunted house novel, and many of his short stories were made into classic

Twilight Zone episodes. His new novel, *Now You See It*

. . . has all the makings of becoming a classic magic novel.

The magic that Matheson uses, however, is not of the wizardly sort but rather more closely that of legerdemain. His main character is not in the Merlin tradition but rather more akin to David Copperfield or Doug Henning, for he is indeed a mortal performer of illusionary tricks and slight of hand, and possibly a murderer. What follows is not so much a whodunit but a whodunit-or-did-he mystery of deadly illusions and retribution games that rivals *Sleuth* and *And Then There Were None* in its inventiveness. B.T.

So You Want to Be a Wizard

Diane Duane

\$6.00

So You Want to Be a Wizard, first published in 1983, is an exciting adventure that's also a lot of fun.

The background is so rich and hints at so many things not explained that it begs for a sequel.

So You Want to Be a Wizard begins with a girl, Nita, running from bullies. She hides in the public library and finds a special book behind some others. This is a step-by-step, how-to manual on becoming a wizard. Nita takes the book home and begins to study. Soon she encounters Kit, another budding young wizard, and together conjure up a white hole named Fred by accident. Or was it an accident?

Fred is the bearer of a grave message. *The Book of Night with Moon*, the most important book in all of the universes, is missing. Through several misadventures, the threesome learn the whereabouts of the book, and together they seek to rescue it. They travel to an alternate Manhattan inhabited almost entirely by malevolent machines. Beset by perytons, evil taxi cabs and a forgetful dragon, Nita, Kit, and Fred are forced to improve their magic skills in order to survive.

So You Want to Be a Wizard leaves the reader satisfied with the adventure's conclusion but wanting to know more about the system of magic, the other wizards, and the alternate universes. This is a book to be enjoyed by readers of any age. P.W.

The Stars My Destination

\$11.00

The Stars My Destination grabbed me by the scruff of my neck and shook me like a terrier shakes a rat. I couldn't get loose, and I didn't want to.

When I first read this novel 25 years ago, I didn't completely understand it, but I knew it was good. Now, rereading it, I am in awe. Well-written and fast paced, *The Stars My Destination* is a splendid book.

A war has erupted between the inner colonies and the outer colonies. An Earth ship, the *Nomad* is destroyed. A lone survivor, Culley Foyle, lives in a ship's locker, venturing out when he

must to scavenge oxygen and food from the wreckage. He hopes for rescue. Finally, another ship arrives. Culley signals them. This other ship, the *Vorga*, ignores the signals and leaves. Now only the hope for vengeance keeps Gulley alive.

In a world where visualizing a place transports you there by jaunting (distances of 1,000 miles or less), Gulley Foyle, the focus, is a tiger-faced demon. He seeks revenge and savages anyone who stands in his way. Like a rogue tiger, sometimes he destroys people who are merely in the wrong place at the wrong time.

This novel grows in intensity like a tornado, whirling and twisting, relentless. You hate Gulley, but you can't stop reading. You need to know what will happen next. Eventually, Gulley begins to learn what it is to be human. Kicking and screaming, he learns. He's still the tiger, but what a tiger! Even those who hate him are held in his thrall.

Transformation, transmogrification, perhaps, that's part of what this is all about. Here is a novel of sin and redemption, but redemption on Gulley's terms. Finally, and most importantly, this is a book about faith.

Considered by some the greatest science fiction novel of all time, *The Stars My Destination* is wonderful, as in "full of wonder." Every reader has certain books that change their lives or change their perception of life. Two that come to mind, immediately, for me, are Roger Zelazny's *Lord of Light* and Cordwainer Smith's *Norstrilia*. Add this one to the list.

Sure, this 40-year-old book is a little dated, but to paraphrase Bum Phillips — If *The Stars My Destination* is not in a class of its own, whatever class it's in it doesn't take long to call roll. P.W.

War of the Worlds: Global Dispatches

edited by Kevin J. Anderson
Bantam

\$22.95

H.G. Wells's *War of the Worlds* has provided fertile inspiration for any number of other invasion earth scenarios (including most recently *Independence Day*) that have involved other planets, places, and times. Orson Welles's infamous Halloween radio broadcast further fueled the fame of this seminal work of science fiction by validating its verisimilitude in the eyes of the public. *The War of the Worlds* works because it's believable.

The thrust of this new anthology hinges on this conceit and asks the question: If this really happened, what did others have to say about it? The results are truly entertaining as Mike Resnick tells it from Teddy Roosevelt's point of view, George Alec Effinger from Edgar Rice Burroughs' via John Carter, Robert Silverberg from Henry James', etc. This is an anthology of wonderful riffs on Well's Martian War, and even if some of the stories fall short in terms of plot or originality, all of them are as vastly entertaining and innovative as listening to a collective of jazz musicians, each performing his own version of some classic tune.

Whether it's Mark Twain observing the war while at sea or Albert Einstein realizing that some things are relative, this is an anthology that entertains. B.T.

The Winter King

by **Bernard Cornwell**
St.Martin's Press

\$24.95

Bernard Cornwell, the author of the Sharpe series (dealing with the Napoleonic wars) and the Starbuck Chronicles (dealing with the Civil War), has this time turned his story telling skills to Britain in the fifth century for a naturalistic look at the reign of a warlord known to history as King Arthur.

Rich in historic detail and sociological research and interpolation, Cornwell focuses on the multitude of clashes that were coming to a head during the so-called Dark Ages (e.g., warlord vs. warlord, Roman vs. British, Christian vs. Druid, old vs. new, etc.) telling the tale from the retrospective point of view of an aging witness Derfel Cadarn, a recently converted Christian monk who had been a Saxon ward of Merlin and one of Arthur's warriors.

There is a sense of weariness of the present in relation to the excitement and passion of the past in the narrator's voice as he tells the story of Arthur as a warrior king and unrecognized bastard son of the former High King Uther Pendragon. Arthur's goal is to unite the disgruntled factions of his dead father's crumbling empire against the ravages of foreign powers. Cornwell purposely downplays magic in favor of religious mysticism and myth, with Derfel giving frequent asides to the reader in an attempt to put things in perspective (eg. the truth about Excalibur, Merlin, etc.).

The Winter King is perfect for fans of Arthurian lore, particularly those who are acquainted with the original source material by Geoffrey of Monmouth. Cornwell's latest is historic storytelling at its best.

B.T.



New York Times PIERS

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Tales of the Fifth Age



Relics

by
Jeff Grubb

Artwork by Terry Dykstra

27 SE

With the passing of the heroes, the incursion of Chaos, and the coming of the Great Dragons, Ansalon changed irrevocably. With time, however, people forget the past or reshape it into more pleasing shapes....

—from the Chronicles of Nathal, compiled in 31 SE.

The tolling of the bell reached the village long before the wagon did. The sound was a jangling, ear-bursting peal that could not be ignored, which swelled in intensity as the wagon neared the stockade gates. Jamie heard it over the rhythmic pumping of the bellows in his father's smithy. As the other youngsters streamed toward the town's protective wall, Jamie looked to his father. The older smith scowled for a moment, then nodded at the boy, and the youth was gone, bellows in mid-pump, to join the others at the stockade wall.

The bell was mounted atop a curious cart, slung low in front, with huge, oversized wheels in the rear, large metal monstrosities that seemed to come from another wagon entirely. Indeed, the entire carriage seemed a hybrid of several vehicles merged together, the sole survivor of some sorcerous collision. The forward half looked like a salvaged boat, the riding board mounted at the dragon-headed prow. The back half, raised above the huge wheels, resembled a small cottage of wood and plaster which had suddenly decided to take up the traveling life. A narrow balcony ran along the left-hand side of the cottage at about shoulder height. Small poles jutted from every prominence and corner, from which were hung pennants, tattered but brightly colored. The wagon was pulled by a pair of oxen, huge, lumbering, slow beasts, their harnesses draped with similar tattered pennants.

The bell was mounted atop that back cottage, a high-point of cobbled stone that apparently doubled for a chimney. The bell was connected to the running board with a thin line, broken and reknotted several times. The wagon's driver yanked on the rope again and again, continuing the clatter until he was right up on the gates itself. Jamie noticed that most of the rest of the town, including all the young people, were clustered along the stockade wall, peering over at the newcomer.

The cart's driver looked as if he was dressed in spare pennants from his cart. His voluminous cloak was a tatterdemalion of different fabrics, fur stitched into satin, red silk overlapping a blue cotton. The shirt beneath was a solid white linen, and the pants a dependable black leather, stuffed into boots, but they were overwhelmed by the swirling brilliance of the cloak.

He bore no obvious weapons, and Jamie wondered if this was one of those mythical wizards, which haunted the tales his late mother told before bedtime. He decided against it. The old wizards were powerful and deadly, he had heard, and probably would ride on clouds or scaled monsters as opposed to this travesty of a cart.

The town guard, Roger's father, held up a hand, and the wagon's driver ceased his ringing, but not before forcing one last, ringing peal that spun the bell over its bracket.

"Who are you," said Roger's father, his voice in that deep tone he always used when trying to command respect. "And why do you call all evil down upon us with your incessant clamoring."

The rag-tattered rainbow of a man, his face weathered and creased, smiled at the guard. "I am a simple peddler, working my stock in trade. I seek to sell my wares throughout your village, or failing that, allowing you to let your citizens to come out to visit my wagon."

Roger's father was unmoved by the options presented. "What do you sell, peddler?"

"A variety of items, both wondrous and sweet," responded the merchant, "I have nostrums and novelties from far lands. I carry medicines and salves. I fear no evil, for I bear magical wards and protective amulets. I have candies and sweetmeats for the children," and with this he nodded at the small heads poked over the wall, "And I carry powerful relics for sale, and the tales of the great past."

"The past has brought nothing but pain," grumbled Roger's father, "And magic is dead. But you are welcome within our village, and may seek to sell your wares." With that he waved at the gate-guards, who swung the stockade doors open.

The wagon lurched forward. As the peddler cleared the gate, he poked his hand into a satchel at his side. He came up with a handful of candy, individually wrapped in brightly-colored paper. He scattered the candy in a bright arch to his right, and then another handful to his left. The younger children squealed and dived for the sweets. Jamie himself snagged a piece in the air, and quickly unwrapped it. It was a sweet caramel, which dissolved on his tongue.

Having purchased the loyalty of the youngest members of the crowd, the peddler guided his wagon through the dirt streets of the town. Rogers father led the way, to the open commons at the center. A few of the town's sheep barked in protest at the presence of the lumbering oxen, but made sufficient room for the wizened old man and his wagon.

The merchant gave his bell rope a sharp tug, setting off one last jangling peal. Then he rose from his perch and walked around to the left side of the carriage, along the balcony. Those children who had gathered on the right side quickly shifted position, on the off-chance that old peddler wanted to pass out more candy.

The balcony was the peddler's stage, keeping him above the gathered crowd. By now many of the townswomen, and those of the townsmen with little else to do, had joined the crowd. The old man smiled at the assemblage, cleared his throat with a theatrical grabbing of his larynx, and began his patter.

"Greetings, good townsfolk," he began, his voice rolling and melodious, "I thank you for taking in this humble traveler, the well-meaning peddler of the past. I am Habakor, the last of Fizban's pupils before the War of the Lance, in these late days reduced to selling balms and sundries, telling tales of history and offering a glimpse of legend. Gather round and let me tell you of all manner of marvels."

The peddler reached into a fold of his cloak and pulled out what looked like a lump of blackened wood set with a translucent, yellowing gem, cracked and fire-scarred.

"This is a fragment of my mentor's own staff," said Habakor, "Smashed in his final battle with Chaos, all those years ago. Would you like to hear the tale?"

The younger children gave a hasty assent, and before waiting for the adults to wade in, the peddler began to recount the tale. His master, Fizban, was a mighty mage, and was sought out to battle the the great smokey beast of Chaos. As his apprentice, and a mere boy, Habakor accompanied him on the quest, so the audience should realize that what he said was true.

As Habakor spoke, he paced the length of his small stage, and all eyes followed him as he recounted the tale of his own passage into the Lands of Chaos with his master. His voice was smooth and relentless, speaking as if he had no need to take a breath, each sentence spilling into the next without pause. He told of entering the twisted lands with his master, and of the dangers they faced together, until at last they confronted the chaos-beast.

"Dark as the thickest smoke, it was, towered above my master and I," said Habakor, "It blocked out the stars, and the moons themselves changed their course to avoid striking it. Fizban turned to me and bade me flee back to the land of the living. I did as he asked, but looked back only once, to see Fizban wielding his staff, glowing like the sun itself, battling the blackness of Chaos. There was a blinding flash, then both were gone, and I found the wreckage of his staff where they both once stood. This staff," the peddler waved the gem-set fragment of wood. "That was the last I saw of the mightiest mage of Ansalon. It is said that magic itself died with his passing."

Jamie inhaled sharply, realizing that he had been holding his breath through the last of the tale. He could imagine the smokey embers of Chaos' domain, the power of the great beast, and the valiant sacrifice of this Fizban, tall and quick-witted, who battled the darkness.

Jamie's reverie was shattered by a shout from the rear of the crowd. Shel's father, who spent most of his afternoons drinking, laughed loudly and bellowed, "And how much are you selling that trinket for, peddler?"

Habakor's face creased in a deep frown, and he seemed genuinely hurt by the words. "This is my only memento of Fizban's legacy," he said sharply, "I would never part with it, regardless of the price, and I am insulted that anyone would think I would." He paused here, and scanned the crowd, as if daring anyone else to challenge his honor. No one responded, and the peddler permitted a smile, "Now if you are intent on purchasing artifacts, I have something that might interest you."

The peddler ignored Shel's father's deep chuckle as he produced a thin blade from beneath his cloak. It was made of fine steel, and had a stylized symbol carved into the hilt. "This is the dagger of Sturm, with which he defeated the woman-dragon Kitiara in single combat, though at the cost of his own life. Would you like to hear this story?"

A shout of agreement brought another tale, this one climaxing in the great warrior spilling off the wall of his white citadel, locked in a deathgrip with a great shape-shifting dragon who was once his lover. At its conclusion, Old Ben the Innkeep shouted an offer for the knife. Habakor said that was an insult, and Old Ben raised his price by half. Habakor demurred again, but finally settled when Old Ben threw in lodging for the night. The sale was consummated, and Habakor tossed another handful of candy to the children clustered aside the cart.

So the afternoon went. Habakor lectured on a series of herbal balms, used by Goldmoon herself to bring her husband Riverwind back from the dead. From within the depths of his cart, he presented a great glass sphere, with which, in the days of magic, Raistlin battled with the arch-lich Fistandantilus. That one received no offers, but he was

more successful with several bottles of a sanguine liquid called Toedesblood, a cure-all supposedly leached from the living flesh of a great emperor of Flotsam.

There were protective amulets made of dragon scales, charms cut from the tusks of the demonic Thanoi. A frying pan once owned by Tika Majere. Small wooden toys, supposed first designed by Fizban himself to entertain Raistlin as a child, and all manner of rings, claimed to be once magical, but now in these later days little more than good luck charms and keepsakes.

With each new item there was a story, and with each story there was a sale, perhaps two. Jamie, Roger, Shel, and the rest of the young people hung on every word, and some parted with their own coins for a ring or a bracelet.

Finally, as the sun was kissing the horizon behind him, the peddler called a halt to his sales. He claimed his throat was raw from talk, though he seemed to be just as smooth and melodious as he had been at the start. One last scattering of sweets, and the crowd dispersed, most of the young people excited by the tales, and a few worried about ignoring their chores for a full afternoon.

Jamie returned to find his father at the forge, as he had left him. The older man grunted at the boy and pointed at the bellows. Jamie resumed his position at the forge, working the thick, wooden pump-handle to keep the coals hot. "Did you have a chance to hear the peddler?" the youth asked at last.

His father shook his head, "There's work to be done," he said gruffly, "No time for foolishness."

"He had all these amazing things," continued Jamie.

His father looked at him, "You didn't buy anything from him, did you?"

Jamie shook his head, but flushed. He had thought about it, but didn't feel he could afford any of the more amazing items. Still, the accusation that he might even think about wasting money embarrassed him. His father worked hard, and was a prudent man with his money.

Jamie tried another approach, "But he told all these wonderful tales."

"Lies, you mean," said his father with a deep sigh, shaking his head. "Peddler lies. A sweet tale to sell some gimcrack or whatsit to a foolish crowd. If there is any truth in them, it is buried so deep that it would take ten men with shovels a week to dig it out."

The father looked at the boy's expression as he spoke, and Jamie's face revealed his disappointment. His father's voice softened just a touch. "When I was your age, son, I met a merchant like that. He had a pair of skulls mounted on his wagon, a large one and a small one. He said the large one was the skull of Fistandantilus the Arch-lich, and the smaller one . . ."

"Was the skull of Fistandantilus as a boy," came a low, laughing voice from the door. Habakor the peddler stood in the doorway, shorn of his tatterdemalion robe, a simple sack over his back. "I've met peddlers like that myself. And there are enough pieces of Fizban's staff to build a tower taller than Mt. Nevermind. There are too many rogues and incompetent con men in this business."

"So you say, peddler," said Jamie's father. "How may we help you this evening?"

"I have business with you, smith," said Habakor, looking at Jamie with one eyebrow raised. "Private business. Profitable business."

Jamie's father gave a small chuckle and waved the boy out the door. Jamie wanted to remain, but would not disobey his father. Of course, the youth circled around to the back of the shop and re-entered the forge area from the rear door. Jamie chose a hiding place among a collection of fireplace tongs, pokers, shovels, and other instruments. He wanted to hear what the peddler wanted with his father.

The two were in deep, quiet conversation by the time he returned, seated at the workbench. Neither noticed him. The peddler laughed and smiled, and his father returned the smile with a deep chuckle of his own. Jamie recognized his father's chuckle — it was a business chuckle, one used in dealing with warriors and guards. A calculated, brief laugh. Jamie could see his father's eyes, and they were as hard as when he dealt with the long-standing debtor.

Habakor the peddler was talking, "As a reasonable man, Smith, I think you understand the need for silence on the matter."

"Silence comes at a premium," said Jamie's father, "You've filled my son's head with all manner of wild tales."

"Tales you heard as a youth, as well," said the peddler, "Or versions of them. And they seem to have not harmed you in the least. Young people need such wondrous tales. It gives them hope."

"It gives them ideas," said Jamie's father, "Dangerous ideas in a world much more deadly than it was when I was a lad. Now how can I help you?"

The peddler reached into his satchel, "I need," said, pulling a blade from his satchel, "To restock my supplies."

Jamie almost gasped. The blade Habakor now wielded was twin to the one he had sold to Old Ben that afternoon, a blade the peddler had sworn was unique. In the light of the hearth, Jamie could see Sturm's symbol carved into the hilt. The Peddler handed it hilt-first to the Smith.

Jamie's father took the dagger, turning it over in his hands, "Solid workmanship. Simple enough design. I suppose its better that way, eh?"

The peddler gave a mild laugh, "Easier to resupply, yes. And I can do the engraving myself, so you don't have to do it here."

"How many?" said his father, "And when?"

"Your town has been most beneficent," said the Peddler, "I will be here for two days. Past that I find that some customers have doubts about my balms and potions, and my tales grow old to the ears. I will need a half-dozen, at least, a full dozen if you can make them."

Jamie's father grunted, the kind of grunt he used when sizing up a grade of ore or a rival smith's work. "Have to have the boy help me."

The peddler shook his head, "Leave the boy his dreams. Mine were shattered early, and you see where it left me."

"Can get you a half-dozen by tomorrow night, then," said the Smith, "And will you pay for my services, and my silence?"

The peddler leaned back on his seat, "I could pay you in mere steel, petty coins from lost empires and dead kings," he said, pulling another item out of the satchel, "Or I could offer you something of real value."

The peddler opened his hand to reveal a stoppered vial made of carved crystal, which caught the reddish light of the forge and scattered it to the far corners of the shop. At the heart of the crystal was a mote of darkness.

"I got this from one of my brother travelers," Habakor said, "who got it from a warrior in the south, who claims to have found it among the wreckage near Tarsis. Within this sealed bottle is the spirit of darkness itself, a piece of the great Chaos. Quite the conversation piece."

Jamie's father frowned deeply, setting the false Sturm-blade down firmly on the table. Jamie knew that the peddler had stepped over a line. It was one thing for the merchant to casually admit he was defrauding the others in town. It was another for him to try it with his father. Jamie's father was slow to anger, but once angry was capable of rash, sudden actions.

"I don't need your rose-water medicines," snarled the smith, "And I don't like the assumption that I am as gullible as Old Ben and the rest."

"I would not insult you like that," said the peddler, "For this it truly what I have been told it is. Think, you could charge admission, or trade it to some passing warrior or aspiring necromancer. See, the wax seal is set with the golden sigil of the rulers of Tarsis."

"I would rather have hard currency," said Jamie's father abruptly.

"But this is worth twice, three times what I would otherwise pay," said the merchant, and Jamie realized, the peddler was trying to avoid paying in hard coin. His father had already surmised that, and was getting angry.

"If you don't have the money, peddler," said Jamie's father, "Then I expect you to leave. Now."

"Please, examine it," The peddler shoved the vial forward, into the smith's face. "I have been assured by one of the last priests of Mishakal, with her dying breath she told me . . ."

"Enough!" said Jamie's father sharply, raising his hand to bat away the proffered vial.

The peddler was too close, and the smith's blow was too solid. The vial tumbled from Habakor's hand in a low arch. It smashed against the side of the firepit, chipping a white scar into the stone. The force of the impact cracked the wax seal around its stopper.

There was silence in the forge between the two men, the only sound the soft popping of the forge. Then there was another sound, a high-pitched ringing, like the noise made from running a wet finger over the rim of a glass. Jamie raised his hands to his ears, but the sound seemed to bore into his brain.

Both men, and Jamie from his hiding place, looked at the crystal, which now seemed to vibrate and glow of its own accord. Jamie's father stepped forward, curious, but the peddler stepped back, his face suddenly contorted in fear.

The stopper of the vial shot from the throat of the bottle like a dragon from its den, smashing in a thousand miniscule shards against the firepit stone. Then out of the bottle oozed a thick, oily blackness.

It was the shade of a starless night, without definition, having only a silhouette, a border within which lurked utter darkness. As it spilled out of the bottle it swelled, until at last it had the size and rough form of a human being. Its head

was too large for any human, though, and when it hissed at the men, Jamie could see row upon row of razor-sharp fangs, the only white against the surrounding oblivion.

The peddler let out a strangled cry as Jamie's father cursed, reaching for the false Sturm-knife on the table. The shadow creature was faster, however, and lashed out with one arm. Its blow caught Jamie's father at the side of the head and the Smith was knocked back across the room.

Jamie let out a shout, and both the peddler and the shadow creature swiveled their heads at him. The shadow creature was only visible by its ivory teeth, which flashed in a twisted, ragged grin at the boy. Then the beast turned back towards Habakor the peddler. The merchant's face was white as ash, and he stumbled backwards over a low bench, sprawling on the floor.

Jamie was on his feet in an instant, grabbing one of the cold iron pokers, the closest weapon at hand. Jamie hurried the workbench and brought the poker in a low, level stroke, hoping to catch the creature in the side of belly.

The poker passed through the being as if the creature were made of smoke, ripping out patches of darkness as it passed through the beast. The attack seemed to have some effect, in that the creature let loose a low, guttural howl.

The beast turned and lashed out at Jamie, a hard, back-handed blow of the type that had struck his father. Jamie was prepared for the attack, and dodged backward. The rows of sharp-fanged teeth turned to him and gnashed once, then twice. Jamie backed up now, keeping the poker in front of him, until he felt the back of his thighs touch the stones of the firepit. The heat of the forge rippled through the back of his shirt.

The darkness beast crouched low, then leaped at the lad. Jamie twisted at the last moment out of the way, and raised his hand to protect his face as the beast leapt into the hot coals of the forge itself.

The beast yelped at the heat, and began to burn, the edges of its silhouette-form crackling and burning with a purplish heat. Jamie shouted and drove the poker through the creature's midsection, pinning it to the hearth itself. The poker sank through the beast's back with a satisfying thunk, driving face-down into the coals. The beast thrashed, but its limbs were already in flames and it moves slowly.

The coals began to glow more hotly, and Jamie looked up to see the peddler was at the bellows, pulling the wooden pump-handle down with both hands, heating the coals to a white radiance. The beast squirmed and howled, lashing backward at the boy. Jamie held tightly onto the poker.

The creature's head then started slowly, painfully to pivot around its neck, the purple flames dancing on all sides of it. The rows of ivory fangs came into view as the beast slowly snaked its head forward to bite at Jamie's hands. The youth could not close his eyes as the jaws edged closer.

Then the ivory-filled maw was knocked aside by another slab of cold iron, the business end of a fireplace shovel. The creature hissed, squirmed and lashed at this new attack, but Jamie's father held firm, swatting the creature's head aside each time it lunged at the boy. Jamie tightened his grip and bore down harder through the darkness, pinioning the shadow beast in place. The entire smithy was lit with the purple light of the burning shadow.

The entire creature was on fire now, its impenetrable flesh turning to greyish ash, incandescing violet against the coals. The creature's snarls became choked rasps, and finally weak, choppy breaths. At last it moved no longer, but the peddler kept pumping the bellows and his father kept piling the white-hot coals on the beast. After a long time, Jamie finally relaxed his grip and withdrew the poker. Nothing stirred in the coals of the forge.

Jamie gasped both from the heat and the danger, and rubbed an arm over his sweaty brow. "What was that?" he quietly asked the two older men.

"Chaos Minion," said Habakor the peddler, then gulped, "Blackflame. Maybe an efreeti." He looked at Jamie and his father, then added, "I really don't know. I really don't."

"You'll think of something," muttered the father, righting the toppled benches and table, as if nothing had happened. "You still want the blades?"

The peddler opened his mouth, then shut it again. It was a few moments until he spoke. "If it were just the same, I'd like to buy out the rest of your fireplace instruments. And I'll paid hard coin for them. No barter or trade."

The Smith looked at Jamie, then back at the Peddler, hefting the small shovel. Including these?" he asked. Jamie gripped the poker tightly, as if it were still his weapon.

"No," said the peddler, slumping onto a bench. "But I'd appreciate it if you hung those over your forge. I'll sell the other tools, but I'll tell the tale of what happened here. People will want to come see the tools that killed the darkness. Not weapons, not spells, not enchantments, but simple tools, wielded by skilled hands." He reached out a hand, resting it on Jamie's shoulder. "Promise me you'll do this."

Jamie looked at his father. The older man gave the lad a small smile, a nod, and a grunted assent. Jamie nodded too.

The old peddler rose, brushing the last bit of dirt from his shirt and pants. After a few last pleasantries, Habakor disappeared into the night, leaving Jamie and his father to clean up the rest of the damage.

Jamie asked, "Are you really going to hang up the tools, like you said?"

"We promised," said his father with a small smile, "And besides, given that herbal salesman's patter, he'll have you turned into Sturm's grandson before he's hit three more towns. When people come by to find out, we can tell them the truth on the matter."

Jamie thought for a moment, "I thought you said they were peddler lies."


His father looked at the shovel, then hung it above the forge, "I guess that's when they happen to other people. When they happen to you, they become tales worth telling."

Jamie handed his father the poker, and the older man hung the second tool across the first. Pleased with his handiwork, Jamie's father looked at the boy and smiled.

"And people always need these wonderful tales," he said softly, "It gives them hope."



While Jeff Grub's Krynnish fans know him for Lord Toede, his most recent novel is Cormyr, written with Ed Greenwood.



Network NEWS

by Jeff Quick

I've been the POLYHEDRON® *Newszine* editor in the RPGA® Network for six months now, yet whenever we're all sitting around the office talking about Network services, I think to myself, "This would make absolutely no sense to an outsider."

If you're a Network outsider, chances are you've read all the pages with color on them by now. You've read the articles with application to your game. You read the comics. You may even have read Larry's commentary on the cover artist by now. Now you're just wandering around the rest of the magazine, seeing what's left.

If this is you, pay attention. You're the one I want. The rest of you keep reading, but feel free to stretch your legs or get something to eat. Skimming this column is acceptable for you. Don't go far though, because I get back to you toward the end.

As for you outsiders, you and I are not so dissimilar. Until recently, I too was Joe Gamer, with above average verbal skills perusing *DRAGON® Magazine* every month. I played with friends weekly, maybe less around holidays. I frequented comics and games stores. And I was entirely in the dark about the RPGA Network. I was a Network member in high school about 10 years ago, but I dropped out when it didn't seem to have any useful application (the Network, not high school). As I got older, Network benefits still seemed a bit thin. Twenty bucks got me a magazine, a patch, and a plastic card I'd wind up losing. Whoopy.

Things are a bit different now, and I don't say that just because I bought into the establishment. I say that because somebody finally figured out that the Network has scads of potential. A world-

wide organization of gamers, dedicated to furthering role-playing games as vehicles of entertainment and enlightenment, might have something to offer for members and non-members. What does that mean for you, the non-member?

On a personal, immediate level, the Network can do more for you now than ever before, especially if you attend role-playing game conventions. If you attend even one convention during the year, you can't afford not to be a Network member. The RPGA mark on a game at a convention means it was edited (and sometimes playtested) to ensure quality and fun. In addition to the quality of modules, Network players and judges are typically of a higher quality. A Network member is usually someone who cares enough about role-playing to strive for more than monster-bashing. Not that monster-bashing is all bad, but we're the RPGA, not the MBGA.

We also publish a monthly *Newszine* filled with player and DM tips, adventures, additions for your campaign, and inside industry info. We call it *POLYHEDRON Newszine* for a reason: It's a multi-faceted publication. Running the gamut of the role-playing community, we serve the young, the old, the hardened con-goers, the new players, American gamers, members in more than a dozen foreign countries, RPGA Network campaigns, entrenched home games, and everyone who cares about role-playing games. Many people find that the *Newszine* alone is reason enough to be a member of the Network, aside from any other benefits they may receive.

On another level, we offer several ways for you to heighten your gaming enjoyment through the Network. The following initiatives are on the way;

some will even be in place by the time you read this:

- ❖ "DM school" for prospective game masters. We plan to create a "textbook" and a "class" for Network game masters to increase their skill in this all-important role-playing ability;

- ❖ A retailer program to give members a 10% discount at participating stores. This entire concept is so win-win that your retailer would have to have concrete for brains not to participate;

- ❖ Demo teams for Network-sponsored games. Take the game to the players. Schools and libraries are full of people who would love to learn more about gaming if someone would tell them. A demo game or mini-con is easy to run, and members who do it get to keep the stuff they used to demo.

There's even more stuff in the works that's so new and different to the Network that we can't talk about it yet. Suffice it to say, now's a primo time to jump on this bandwagon.

Now, you insiders, start reading again. The fact that you're on the inside means that you're a vital organ in the RPGA body. Look back at all that fantastic stuff I just listed that we're going to do. As a "brain cell" for the Network body, I can think up promising plans all day. Without you to implement them, the gray matter doesn't matter.

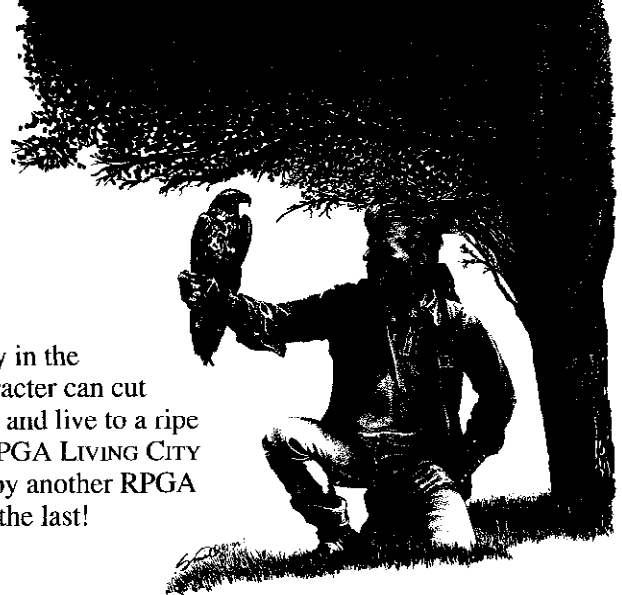
You are *the* liaison between the outsider and the Network. Tell them what you like about the Network. Arrange to demo games at your local store, library, or school to pull in non-members and even non-gamers. You already know the cathartic, endorphin-laced joy role-playing brings; just introduce others to it. Then, together, you can pool efforts to increase everyone's enjoyment. After all, both insiders and outsiders understand the concept of fun. Why else do we play games?



Jeff Quick is a certified wunderkind, completing his first degree in astrophysics at age 15. He has gone on to win three Nobel prizes in the sciences and humanities, as well as engendering an experimental commune in France based on searching for natural virtue in humankind. No wait — that's somebody else.

For more information about the Network's programs, write to: RPGA Network, 201 Sheridan Springs Rd., Lake Geneva, WI 53147, or send e-mail to: rpgahq@aol.com.

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Sage Advice

by Skip Williams

If you have any questions on the games produced by TSR, Inc., "Sage Advice" will answer them. In the United States and Canada, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON® Magazine, 201 Sheridan Springs Road, Lake Geneva, WI 51347, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: "Sage Advice," DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge, CB1 3LB, U.K. You can also e-mail questions to tsrsage@aol.com.

We are no longer able to make personal replies. Please send no SASEs with your question. SASEs are being returned with copies of the writer's guidelines.

This month, "Sage Advice" considers the physical demands of long bows, puts some mental energy into questions of psionics, and peers into a few magical mysteries.

How tall does someone have to be to wield a longbow? In the original *Players Handbook* on page 19 (Character Classes table II) it reads: "Characters under 5' height cannot employ the longbow" In the old second edition *Players Handbook* on page 73 (weapon size) it talks about weapon size but is vague on the use of longbows. The reason I ask is because my dwarf PC, who is 4' 9" tall wants to use one, and my elf PC who is 4' 8" tall was using one before I took notice of the note in the original *Players Handbook*.

According to the current rules (see the Weapons section in Chapter 6 of the PHB) a character can wield any weapon of his size or smaller in one hand. Using two hands, a character can wield a weapon one size larger than himself. No character can use a weapon two or more sizes larger than himself. Since both characters in your example are members of man-sized races, they both can employ long bows using two hands; in this case, one hand on the bow's shaft and one hand on the string (that hand also holds the arrow) counts as two-handed use. Small and tiny creatures, such as gnomes and pixies, cannot use long bows.

What happens when a psionist attacks a non-psionist with psionic blast, id insinuation, or other psionic attack mode from the *Complete Psionics Handbook* without using the contact devotion first? Can the psionist gain tangents on an opponent by using multiple psionic attacks to establish contact? Or would he have to use contact first and then use his attacks on the non-psionist?

Attack modes used against a closed mind can establish contact, but only if the target has some psychic ability. See page 25 in the *Complete Psionics Handbook* and the description of each attack mode for details. Attack modes have no effect on a non-psionist's mind, which must be opened though a successful use of the contact devotion first. If two psionists want to exchange telepathic messages, they, too, can use contact to establish a mental link with psychic combat. Note that in the new psionics system (presented in the revised DARK SUN® setting and again in the *PLAYER'S OPTION™ Skills & Powers* book) contact is not a psychic power, but a proficiency that allows the user to learn attack modes.

If a character wanted to make a telepathic powers effects permanent via psychic surgery from the *PLAYER'S OPTION: Skills & Powers* book would the psionist have to pay the cost for the surgery and the power to be made permanent every round the surgery lasts? Or is the cost paid only once even though the procedure takes ten rounds? Also, if the subject of the surgery is a willing one, does the psionist still have to pay the higher PSP cost due to the subjects level? I would think that it would be easier to perform on a willing subject rather than against someone's will.

The PSP cost for the power to be made permanent need be paid only once, at the end of the surgery. The PSP

cost for the surgery itself must be paid each round the surgery lasts. The cost per round remains the same no matter how the recipient feels about it; the increased PSP cost for recipient with more than 6 levels or hit dice replaces the base cost for the surgery. If the recipient is unwilling, the surgeon must first open the recipients mind through psychic combat. Note also that the surgeon must touch the recipient throughout the surgery. Unwilling recipients usually must be restrained in some fashion; the surgeon must begin the process all over again if the recipient breaks free before the surgery is complete.

How does the signature spell concept from the *PLAYER'S OPTION: Spells & Magic* book work for sha'irs from the AL-QUADIM® setting? Can they even use it at all? Are they treated as specialists or mages for the purposes of cost in slots or spell points? Normal wizards gain the benefit of one memorization of the signature spell at no cost in spell slots, but that benefit is useless to sha'irs. Would it be reasonable to allow sha'irs the benefit of speeding up their gens' search for the signature spell, say down to the minimum for that spell?

A sha'ir can designate a signature spell. The sha'ir follows the procedure described on page 57 of *Spells & Magic* and must fulfill all the requirements in time, money, and proficiency slots (or character points). The cost is the same as for a mage, and the sha'ir's gen must participate in the process. The signature spell must be one that a native Zakhari wizard of the sha'ir's level can cast. A sha'ir cannot choose a priest spell as a signature spell nor can he choose any spell unknown in the Land of Fate or whose level would be beyond his ability to cast if he were a normal wizard.

Once the sha'ir and his gen learn the signature spell, the gen can automatically find the spell for the sha'ir once a day without any dice rolls. This once-a-day search always takes the minimum time and always succeeds, no matter what the gen's chance to locate the spell normally would be. The sha'ir can request that the gen make a regular search for the signature spell anytime, but all the rules on page 98 of the *Arabian Adventures* book apply to such searches. Whenever the sha'ir receives the signature spell (even if the gen locates the spell through normal means) the sha'ir enjoys all the benefits of a signature spell (a two-level bonus to effective casting level or a -2 penalty to

the target's saving throw). If the sha'ir ever loses his gen, he retains the casting benefits but his new gen has no special ability to find the signature spell, though it can be trained to do so at the same cost as establishing a new signature spell.

Can a song mage make use of a *vocalize* spell to cast spells from the school of song without any material or somatic components (just sheer mental effort)? Recall that song mages normally require only verbal components when casting spells from the school of song. The reason I ask is because I have nightmares about song mages with a persistent spell effect ability (*vocalize*) running around rampantly casting spells without ever uttering a single song.

Rest easy. A song mage must always sing to cast spells. A *vocalize* spell can allow other wizards to cast spells in silence, but a song mage's singing is the sole medium for his magic — no singing, no spell casting.

In the *Player's Handbook*, under 1st-level wizard spells, it says that *cantrip* is a part of all schools of magic. It also says illusionists and other specialist wizards can memorize an extra spell per level, provided that extra spell is from the specialist's school of specialization. Does *cantrip* count as one of the extra spells an illusionist or other specialist can memorize? Also, I always thought that the *cantrip* spell worked as described in the *Player's Handbook*. The new CD-ROM suggests that one would have to learn it for each school of magic. Is that the case?

Any specialist can choose *cantrip* as his bonus 1st-level spell. A wizard need learn *cantrip* only once.

The article "A Flurry of Swords" in Issue #232 gave descriptions of many new weapons. Each description had a category for proficient use and specialized use, where extra damage or bonuses to speed factors were listed. Do these rules also apply to the established weapons from sources such as the *Player's Handbook*? While we're on the subject of new weapons, how does one decide which die to use as a weapon's knockdown die (from the *Combat & Tactics* book)? Is it related to weapon size or speed?

The bonuses the article gives for proficient and specialized use apply only to the weapons listed in the article. If you decide to use these weapons with the

standard rules for weapon specialization or any of the optional rules for weapon of choice, weapon expertise, or weapon mastery, the wielder gains all the benefits of the weapon and his level of skill. For example a 7th-level fighter specialized in kyber knife would gain a speed factor of 2, an attack bonus of +1, a damage bonus of +2 (which rises to +4 against armored humanoids), and two attacks per round.

I recommend that you allow the benefits for proficient use only to wielders who actually spend a weapon proficiency slot or character points to learn its use; characters who have familiarity with the weapon or who use it as part of a weapon group shouldn't get the bonus. Likewise, a wielder should get the bonuses for specialized use only if the wielder actually specializes or achieves mastery with the weapon. Designating one of these weapons as a weapon of choice or gaining expertise with one of these weapons should not grant any bonuses for specialized use.

When assigning a knockdown die to a new weapon, look on the Master Weapon list in Chapter 7 of the *Combat & Tactics* book and find a similar weapon; use that weapon's knockdown die for the new weapon. Most of the weapons from "A Flurry of Swords" should get a d8 for a knockdown die (though the kyber knife would have a d6 for a knockdown die because it's similar to a short sword). If you can't find a similar weapon, assign a knockdown die roughly the same size as the damage die the wielder rolls against man-sized opponents.

In the *Spells & Magic* book (and other places), it says only wild mages can use wild magic spells. This makes sense; after all, only chronomancers can use chronomancy spells. But, if this is true, why do wild magic spells end up on the spell lists of other wizard schools? Chronomancers have access to *alter-*

nate reality, alchemists can use *pattern-weave*, song mages get *fireflow* and *spellshape*, geometers get *Hornung's baneful deflector* and *there/not there*. This seems to weaken the wild mage specialty by allowing so many other casters free access to spells which, by definition, are difficult to control. Why is this so?

Anyway, when a non-wild mage casts a wild magic spell, do they get level variations during the casting as wild mages do? Or do they control the wild magic spell as easily as any other in their repertoire?

The official word from TSR, Inc. is that *alternate reality* is a chronomancy spell as well as a wild magic spell. With that sole exception, wild magic spells are not available to other spell casters and should be struck from any non-wild mage spell list where they appear.

When a chronomancer casts *alternate reality*, no wild surge occurs, because the caster isn't using wild magic.

Thank you for the column (issue #231) about giving character points to psionicist PCs. A printing blooper seems to have left the PSP bonus ability with no character point cost. Oh, well, life without bloopers would be just a bit boring. While you're fixing that, tell us how many character points psionicists receive for weapon and non weapon proficiencies.

Actually, there were two bloopers, both mine, not the printer's. The PSP bonus costs 10 character points. Also drop the MAC bonus ability. Instead, the psionicist gains the mental armor proficiency for free with the purchase of the mental defense ability. Here's the scoop on psionicist proficiencies:

Weapon Proficiencies: Once the psionicist has purchased class abilities he receives 6 character points for weapon proficiencies. The psionicist can spend these points as designated in Table 1.

Table 1: Psionicist weapon proficiencies	
Ability	CP cost
Proficiency in a single weapon from the psionicist list	3
Proficiency in a single weapon from the warrior list	4
Designating a weapon of choice	3*
Weapon Expertise (one weapon)	4*
Weapon Specialization (one weapon)	8**
Learning a fighting style	1†
* in addition to the cost for proficiency in the weapon.	
** in addition to the costs of proficiency in the weapon and the ability to specialize	
† Psionicists can learn these fighting styles: one-handed weapon, weapon and shield, missile, horse archer, thrown weapon/sling, and special.	

Table 2: Additional psionicist nonweapon proficiencies

Proficiency	cost*	Initial Rating	Relevant Ability
Contact**	5	N/A	Wisdom/Intuition
Mental Armor**	3	N/A	Wisdom/Willpower
Psionicist Group			
Gem Cutting	3	6	Dexterity/Aim
Harness Subconscious**	6	7	Wisdom/Willpower
Meditative Focus**	5	8	Wisdom/Intuition
Musical Instrument	2	7	Charisma Leadership
Reading/Writing	2	8	
Intelligence/Knowledge			
Rejuvenation**	3	6	Wisdom/Willpower

* Cost in character points

** Proficiency described in Chapter 9 of the *Skills & Powers* book.

Nonweapon proficiencies: Once the psionicist has purchased class abilities and weapon proficiencies he receives 6 character points for nonweapon proficiencies. The psionicist can choose proficiencies from the general and psionicist groups. Refer to the *Skills & Powers* book, Chapter 6, and to Table 2 above.

I'd like to try out the *Rod of Seven Parts* adventure, but I've already read the book; is there any point in playing the adventure now?

There sure is. The adventure in the *Rod of Seven Parts* boxed set is not the adventure Kip Kayle (the book's halfling hero) had.

I am about to start running a pixie thief (cutpurse kit) and I wanted to know what bonus being invisible would

give my character. For instance, if I fail to pick someone's pocket, can they see me? If I stab someone, do I become visible? Or do I become visible for a second and then invisible again? And, since I am invisible, do I have a +4 on my armor class due to being invisible? Why is it that pixies, as monsters, have a 25% magic resistance, but, as a humanoid race, you do not have the magic resistance?

Pixies have natural invisibility and don't become visible unless they will it or unless forced into visibility in some fashion (a successful *dispel magic* against an 8th-level effect can do so, as can mundane actions such as coating the pixie with paint or flour). A failed pick-pocket attempt would give the victim a chance to notice the invisible pixie (see the description of the 2nd-level wizard

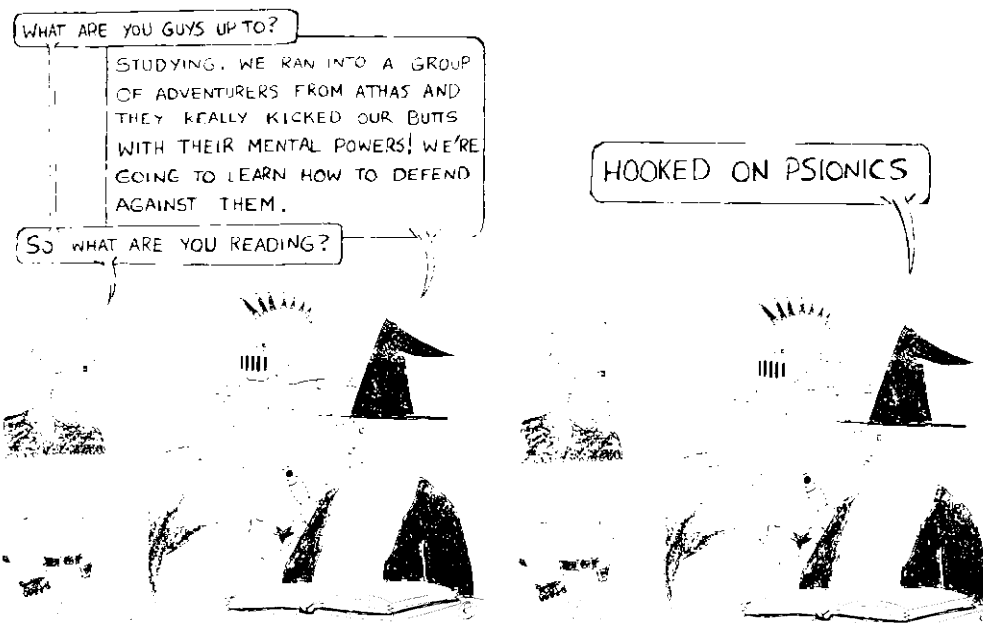
spell *invisibility* for details). A melee attack certainly would get an opponent's attention and alert him to the pixie's presence. Neither act makes the pixie visible, however, and any opponents unable to see the pixie suffer the standard -4 attack penalty.

Noticing an invisible creature and actually seeing it are two different things. If a creature merely notices an invisible creature, it knows approximately where the creature and can attack it but still suffers the attack penalty. Actually seeing an invisible creature requires a *detect invisibility* or *true seeing* spell, a natural ability to detect invisible creatures, or some way to negate the invisibility.

Obviously, pixies who haven't adopted a character class must do something or know something adventuring pixies don't. That's why "monster" pixies have magic resistance and pixie adventurers don't. The pixies aren't saying what it is, and I'm not either.



Skip Williams, who tends to furrow his brows and stare intently into space fairly often, speculates that pixies could rule the world if they could just keep their minds on the task.



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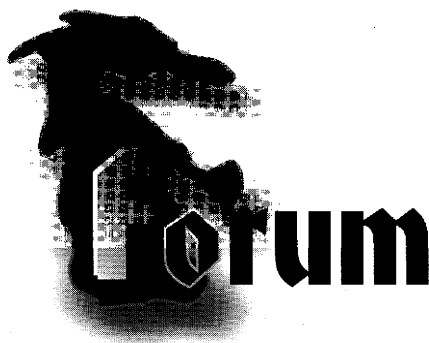
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In 33 years of enjoying role-playing games, this is the first time I have written to any gaming magazine. I mention my years of playing only as a way of introducing myself to Rick Maffei, who seems to place emphasis on experience, although denying it in the next sentence. I have read with some amusement the recent wrangling amongst Rick, Tim Nutting, et al., concerning AD&D® game rules. And I must support Rick in that *all* of the rules are optional!

TSR has performed a great service to all gamers, most of whom can't remember what it was like to try to develop a campaign system based on Tolkien's, Leiber's, or Norton's fantasy worlds without any guidelines whatsoever. Indeed, most would have difficulty conceiving a world were there only six-sided dice.

TSR and others who have developed and published game systems have established bases for expanding gaming possibilities. These systems in essence allowed us to expand outward from the small groups who had each developed their own personal game systems to a world

of players who now have some common reference point. But my point remains: *all* of the rules are optional! Perhaps the most optional rules of all deal with the generation of character attributes.

There has been a disturbing trend toward an over-reliance on character attribute scores. I have seen DMs adhere to the limits set forth in AD&D rules, then provide so many attribute-enhancing ioun stones that their PCs resemble uranium atoms with legs. I have seen players sulk and declare a character unplayable because they had to deal with an attribute score lower than 10 (in something other than Charisma, of course). It seems that everyone wants to start with invincible characters and improve from there!

Maybe it would be more fun to start all of your PCs with attributes of 8 (with racial modifiers added or subtracted) and allow them to elevate those attributes during the course of a campaign, as they age, train, or study. Perhaps, in such a scenario, Charisma would be the one attribute a player rolls! Maybe racial

eventually lead to new ideas and new ways to explore the rich texture of gaming.

I, for one, would also like to say that I welcome any TSR "thugs" who might show up at my door. We play every Sunday afternoon.

**Rick Bruner
Attica, IN**

There seems to be a lot of trouble with exceptional Strength. I really must recommend doing what I did a few years ago (on recommendation from another "Forum" letter): *get rid of it!* Yes, don't use exceptional Strength. Either keep the strength tables the way they are (the warriors will not be pleased), or make a new Strength/Muscle table the way you want it. For example, I want characters to have advantages already at 13 Muscle, so the table I made gives a bonus at 13.

Consider the benefits: Warriors who gain or lose Strength will be much easier to handle. As the rules are now, Strength reduction or increase either

"I welcome any TSR 'thugs' who might show up at my door."

level limitations should be ignored, and your demi-humans could advance by doubling or tripling XP requirements. Why would any prudent DM using 3d6 six times to generate scores then penalize the person who rolls an 18 by telling him that he cannot elevate a sub-ability score above another PC who has rolled only a 16? Should a priest who can memorize three 1st-, two 2nd-, and one 3rd-level spells be restricted to just these? Or should he be able to memorize six 1st-level spells? Or perhaps ten 1st-level spells (based on spell levels)?

My point is that arguing about specific rules is pointless. A good DM will set forth the ground rules at the beginning of a campaign, and these rules may agree in total with "established" AD&D rules or vary because of a DM or group's preference, interest, or skill level. Attempts to crystallize role-playing games under a set of iron-clad rules would destroy the tradition of imagination that has always been its most basic appeal. I think it's apparent that TSR recognizes this. *Skills and Powers* is the reward for every DM who has tried to develop a separate perception or intuition roll or who labored to balance the scales between the Wizard and Warrior classes. The "new" rules expand the base and fuel the imagination, and they will

ignore percentiles, reduces the percentile amount by half (as by aging), uses 10%-increments (*strength* spell), or uses the different %-brackets as single points of Strength. Quick, when a roper reduces a character's Strength, which system do you use? Getting rid of exceptional Strength eliminates a lot of inconsistencies.

Also, with this system, there is no longer such a huge gap between 17 and 18 Strength. With the exceptional Strength rules, a warrior really needs an 18 to amount to something.

I guess there are benefits to the exceptional Strength system, but I don't see them.

On another note, GMs out there seem to have problems with Muscle 20 characters. The solution here is simple as well. Make a rule that goes like this: "No man-sized or smaller creature can have a Strength or Muscle score of more than 18 by natural means". Simple, isn't it?

Now for the problem of elves with a Reason score of 20 (at 20 Reason, you ignore 2nd-level illusions, namely *invisibility* and *mirror image*) . . .

**Rasmus Juul Wagner
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2600 Glostrup
Denmark**

Many letters in recent issues of *DRAGON Magazine* have dealt with introducing new PCs and transferring PCs from other campaigns into the current game. Addressing this issue is always up to the particular DM, but it seems almost all of the solutions seen to date hinder the new PC in some way.

The trend to new PCs always seems to be to start them off at the level of the lowest-level PC already in the group. Though this may seem fair to all the other players, it is often unfair to the new ones. By following this trend, we should also restrict ability scores to all of the lowest in the campaign, as well as starting money, equipment, and so on. What chance are we really giving the new character?

Adding a new PC to an existing campaign is more than figuring stats and equipment. Somehow, the DM must give the PC a reason for being. A background must be developed, and the player needs the opportunity to learn about the world. All too often the DM just expects the character to jump in and play but then can't understand why the new character isn't fitting in to his group's way of playing. Even experienced players have trouble adjusting when they have no stake in the final results of the campaign.

If a DM has the time, individual sessions can make the difference. If the DM can't, perhaps another player can run the newcomer through some small adventures to get him up to speed on the campaign and the game world. Let the newcomer role-play his PC through key events in his life that brought him to the level he will be playing in the campaign. Let the PC find spells or magical items, and let him earn at least a fifth of the experience points necessary for his starting level. By doing this, the DM gives himself an opportunity to make the new PC immediately useful to the party, thus pulling him into play as an integral part of the game instead of being the sidelinier who rolls dice and slays gnolls.

The DM can give the new PC contacts throughout a region, which may be useful later, and possibly let him find some item of significance to the rest of the party. Maps, books, scrolls, and even some magical devices could be used.

How the new PC meets the party is equally important. All too often the party is told, "You meet a wandering fighter on the road who asks if he can travel with you." This automatically gives the feeling

of being a fifth wheel to many players. Instantly, the new PC becomes an extra sword, not a member of the party. Instead, make the meeting memorable, give it some meaning. It could be the party who frees the character from a terrible fate, which just happens to have been caused by their adversary. If the new character is wealthy, he could be the one who lends a helping hand in a city market. Whatever you decide, make it an opportunity for role-playing. Add it to the campaign, and make it a useful part of the story.

As for PCs from other campaigns, it seems we must always strip abilities or equipment or something else the player has grown used to having. Why hit them all at once? A good DM should be able to find ways to balance the game and PC. This doesn't necessarily mean the new PC will always remain so powerful, just that the loss of abilities, equipment or other factors should be incorporated into play. Just don't forget to explain to the new player that his luck may be just a little worse off for a time.

High stats are the hardest to deal with, but they can be handled through game play and need not be axed immediately. The gravity on your world may be different and have a definite affect on a PC's Strength. Where he may have a 20 Strength from some super campaign he was in, in this world the gravity difference causes him some penalty to that Strength. It could take him some time to adjust, and it still leaves the DM the possibility to lift the burden as other characters progress in other areas, without having to pull out a few *wish* spells.

Intelligence and Wisdom can be affected by the new world as well. These are generally a person's ability to reason and learn. Suddenly appearing in a new world is little different from getting off an airplane in a city you have never visited. It takes time to learn the layout of the area, the best places to shop, and the disposition of the local people. Use this to your advantage, and impose the appropriate penalties. Regardless of the Intelligence score, enforce the fact that this character couldn't possibly know some things, simply because he has never been able to learn them.

Spell abilities are no different. Magic may work differently here, and the gods may not be as helpful in this world. The new character could have lower chance of spell success for a period of time, or he may just find it extremely difficult to learn new spells for the first couple of

adventures.

Proficiencies a lesser impact, but they should not be neglected. For the hunter, different animals have different habits. Has the PC ever hunted the deer of your world? If not, his chances of a successful hunt will be lower.

Weapons, equipment, and magical items take a bit more care, as they are not explained by natural phenomenon. But this is a fantasy world. Perhaps the trip through the plains has caused some imbalance in the magical property of magical items or caused some change to the molecular structure of non-magical items. Perhaps the items are not as strong as they once were. Lower saving throws for these items will gradually eliminate them and give the player time to adjust to not having all of his favorite gear.

And don't forget the wonderful thieves of your world. They live by knowing where the best targets are, not by just waiting for something good to come their way. A group of adventurers, finding treasure and powerful items, would be a perfect target for a thief. Whatever you do, don't penalize only the new PC. Give him a reason to stay.

One solution, though it can't be used for every character, is to take a look at Michael Moorcock's books of the eternal champion. This was a hero who existed in a thousand world's and times but was at the core the same person. By treating a PC as an eternal champion, you can lower the power of items but still keep them basically the same. You change certain aspects of his life but don't destroy the core feeling of the character. For the right player, this could be the best role-playing chance he has ever had. Role-playing the adjustment will add an enjoyable element to the campaign for everyone. The eternal champion PC must figure out just why he is in the world, how he fits into the grand scheme of things.

Other writers give us other possibilities to help the DM explain why things happen to a new PC. DMs can gradually adjust a PC to a new world without stripping him of everything that makes him who he is. If the adjustments are good enough, they will add to the character and the campaign through the process, thus gaining a happy new player without upsetting those who have been with the DM for a long time.

Keith Houin
Address withheld





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Sensitive subjects

"I thank you, gentlemen and ladies, fellow members of the Korbelian Order of Magecrafters, for allowing me time for this presentation, and for your attendance," he said, peeking out at his audience from behind the pillars at the edge of the darkened theater's stage, "I must further inconvenience you by asking that you refrain from the casting of any light-producing spells for the duration of the seminar. They would . . . detract from the display.

"As I am not often found here in Khanahr, permit me to introduce myself," he said, his barely visible outline stepping from the wings to stand in the darkness at center-stage, "I am Farrand Two-Spell, a wizard of good standing in this Hall."

"A technicality," remarked one audience member, sotto voce.

"Some few of you," Farrand continued, "may be familiar with my name by way of the spell I designed years ago, jokingly referred to by some as *Farrand's freeloader*, but more properly named *Farrand's cognitive conveyance*, and that dweomer has a role in the story I am about to tell you. Until recently, I had amused myself by seeking the answers to problems unsolved by my predecessors, including even the archmage Korb himself, but now I have come across a problem of my own which I ask your help in dealing with.

"Some centuries ago, a sage by the name of Arneerus, compiled a lexicon of the troglodyte language." At this moment, a troglodyte appeared to the left of Farrand's position, apparently from nowhere, advancing menacingly towards the audience and then blinking out of existence, only to reappear in its original position.

"A beginner's illusion", heckled the same voice in the audience, "there's no sound, and the animation is hardly life-like. It couldn't convince an ankle-deep farmer, let alone a trained wizard."

"And," continued Farrand without pause, almost as if he hadn't heard the remark, "he was surprised to find that troglodyte speech apparently traces itself back to a highly degraded form of a prim-

THE ECOLOGY

THE TROGLODYTE

by Spike Y. Jones

illustrated by James Holloway

itive lizard man tongue."¹ A second creature then appeared, a lizard man poised on Farrand's other side, going through the same short rush at the audience before instantly returning to its place.

"Arneerus was surprised, because all of the anatomical sciences seemed to show that the two reptilians were no more closely related than humans and gnolls." As he spoke from his shadowy position, the reptilians on either side began to strike poses that mimicked each other and displayed the differences between their body structures.

"A second peculiarity that the sage pointed out was that troglodyte speak their own, lizard-man-derived language and absolutely no other. The language of the lizard man has evolved somewhat since it was learned by the trogs, changing in some aspects. At that point, the two beasts proceeded to intone pairs of words in their languages to show both the similarities and the differences.

"Sound. Nothing spectacular about that," sneered the heckler.

"There's nothing spectacular about a cantrip," commented a mage near the man, sparks dancing on his fingertips, "until I employ it on you."

"On no occasion has it been recorded that a troglodyte learned even a single word in a foreign tongue. Even when lizard men adopted from humans the common word 'halfling' to describe that race," (the lizard man made a smooth but

recognizable reptilian parody of the word, after which the illusory figure dissolved into the surrounding darkness), "the trogs coined a phrase to cover the new species from other lizard man words: 'bad smelling little humans'," (a phrase which was followed by the troglodyte figure making a similarly long speech).

"In addition, there were numerous troglodyte words, apparently of trog, not lizard, origin, that simply baffled Arneerus. This, combined with the mysterious lack of many basic lizard man adjectives and adverbs, made his *Beginner's Troglodyte* a primer for a pidgin-troglodyte at best. No one has yet managed to decipher even a single of these extra terms, and woefully few new words have been discovered to fill these gaps. But flawed though it is, it has remained the essential tract used by those desiring to communicate with those creatures even to this day, centuries later.²

"Seeing the gains to be made by the man completing the translation of Troglodytian, I set myself diligently to the task.

"At first, I explored a number of blind passages that I should have had the sense to avoid entirely. After all, if the accomplished lexicologist Arneerus had forgotten to try a *comprehend languages* or *tongues spell* on a captured specimen, then I might as well try speaking the common tongue to them and hope he'd

Continued on page 82

1. The relationship between the troglodyte and lizardman languages is only a slight one, more easily detectable by linguists than by adventurers. If a character speaks either of these languages, he will be able to understand 10% or less of the other.

While the troglodyte language can be transcribed by others, troglodyte themselves have no concept of written records.

2. That version of the troglodyte language which can be taught to humans and the like

expresses less than 50% of the total content of troglodyte speech. Exceedingly simple statements, such as 'I surrender', 'you surrender', or 'I kill you', can be translated, but complex, intricate discussions are impossible.

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overlooked that obvious avenue as well. And my results duplicated those of Arneerus; even the more powerful of the two spells left inexplicable gaps in its translations, gaps that corresponded to the gaps in Arneerus' lexicon.

"Taking my studies to the field, I went to a wild area a day's travel from my home, the place from whence my captured subject had originally been taken. After preparing a secure hiding place for my body, I cast my *cognitive conveyance* on the troglodyte and then released him, so that I could, from within his mind, follow him to his home and experience his interaction with others of his kind in a natural setting, hoping thus to learn the intricacies of his language. Although I counted Troglodyte among the languages with which I was as fluent as any other human, I supplemented my fluency with a *comprehend languages* and the most powerful *extension* spell of which I was capable, the better to interpret the missing nuances of the language I was sure I would soon hear.

"After only a few minutes of travel on the part of my host, we crossed a field of wildly growing roses to enter a honeycomb of tunnels inhabited by a community of almost three score of these creatures."

Slowly, a dim image of a branching tunnel made itself visible to the right of Farrand's still-shadowed and stiffly-motionless form, moving and changing to match the description his monologue made. And the whole while, the slightly more animated image of the troglodyte stood to his left; a constant reminder of what the audience was watching for.

"The first thing that I noticed as we entered the caverns was darkness," Farrand said as the illusion of the craggy lair disappeared from his right. "Although I would have panicked on my own, my host's mind was entirely at ease, and it was not long before I realized that the darkness wasn't as unrelieved as it had first appeared. Various patches of the

darkness slowly grew into wispy, red clouds and other shapes, and I realized what the misty redness was. Under more pleasant circumstances, I had used the *cognitive conveyance* to experience a number of things through the eyes of a young, elvish woman of my acquaintance, and this recalled one of those experiences; infravision."

"Something smells off in here," commented the heckler quietly enough not to raise the ire of his neighbors.

"For those of you who have infravision, what you enjoy is but a pale reflection of the infravision of a troglodyte," Farrand said, as a series of shifting pictures in numerous subtle shades of red, orange and yellow filled the space to his right, "I estimated that troglodyte could differentiate temperatures as little as a tenth of a degree apart, so that surfaces that would appear uniformly cold to even an elf's eye, such as the ceiling, walls, and floor or a rock tunnel, would reveal enough thermal variation to allow a troglodyte to navigate as well as a human on a moon-lit night.

"Of course, such navigation took some getting used to, as infravision is not a fast-acting sense like our normal vision is, but this didn't seem to bother the troglodyte at all because, much as we use hearing as an adjunct to our sense of sight, his infravision was secondary to his sense of smell.

"Corners in the tunnels were marked off by scent-markers and we could even smell around corners if we were downwind of them, more than once detecting approaching trogs long before we could see or hear them. Conversely, my host tended to be more cautious approaching corners we were upwind of, as neither his infravision nor his keen sense of smell afforded him any advantage in such a situation.³

"I stayed with my host for a considerable time experiencing many little details of his normal life. I ate a meal of raw meat with him, raw because

troglodyte shun cooking fires or other sources of heat sufficient to blind their infravision.⁴ I relaxed with him by smelling samples from a collection of flowers, rocks and furs, each scented subtly different in ways our language hasn't the vocabulary to describe.⁵ And we talked with other troglodyte.

"At first, the conversations were just as confusing from the inside as they had been in all my previous attempts; I again heard nearly incoherent conversations in which key words, descriptives, and even whole sentences seemed to be missing. The troglodyte talked about things common to all species: their previous meals, their . . . uh . . . mating successes, their possessions, etcetera, but they left out important details like whether they liked the taste of the meal, what their mate looked like, or even exactly what possessions each one had.

"But the key to the missing words came when I realized the name of the individual I was being conveyed by. I never heard his name spoken, but more than once, at a point in the conversation when a name would have been expected, I smelled a curious blend of fragrances. It took a number of repetitions before I had both separated the different scents, and realized that these scents were the name of my host in the real language of the troglodyte. His name was Rose-Boiled Cabbage-Mild Skunk, and this was all accomplished by the troglodyte's bodies manufacturing these scents and releasing them into the air as if they were words!

"For a time I was stunned by this, but afterwards, I was able to decipher a large number of other words. For every word that is missing in their spoken vocabulary, there is a corresponding smell to take its place. There are smells for objects, places, persons, animals, and even emotions. Apparently, the original language of the troglodyte was entirely olfactory, and the verbal component was only borrowed from the

3. Because smell is such an important part of troglodyte sensory input, they arrange their lairs to facilitate the distribution of important scents. Caves are selected or modified so that the primary direction of air circulation is from the main entrance towards other, smaller exits and air vents, so that the foreign scents of intruders will be wafted to the defenders almost immediately. The savagery that troglodyte display when attacking humans has lead some to assert that they hate humanity, but the situation is actually the opposite. Humans smell and taste especially savory to troglodyte (human scents being used as superlatives when discussing other meats in the troglodyte scent-language), causing them to react with particular vigour and violence when those scents are sensed.

4. It is because of this avoidance of fire that

troglodyte are generally armed with stone weapons, and that they raid the communities of other races in order to get worked metals for themselves. They are incapable of forging their own metal weapons, as their infravision is blinded by the searing heat of a forge.

Instead, they make most of their weapons by stone-chipping, an activity they can accomplish with minimal light and a keen sense of touch. Their javelins are all wood except for the head which they make from sources as diverse as well-crafted human spears and points broken off of daggers. The javelins are not spectacular of themselves (in fact, they look somewhat crude in many cases), but troglodyte are so skilled with this weapon that trogs have bonuses both to hit and in damage with them.

It is also because they cannot process their own

steel that its possession is considered a sign of status and power within their communities; as the only way they can get metal is through combat (what would they offer in trade?), its possession is a sign of a warrior's prowess.

5. While magical translation aids, such as *Comprehend Languages* or *Tongues* spells, can make the spoken words of intelligent creatures understandable to the caster, they do not give him any new communicative abilities he did not previously possess. In the case of communicating with troglodyte, a human spell-caster doesn't gain an improved sense of smell from casting a *Comprehend Languages* spell, nor can the spell's magic invent new words to cover concepts unfamiliar to the caster, such as the thousands of variations of scent that only a troglodyte can differentiate.

lizard man in order to give them some form of ability to communicate with those outside of their own race.⁶

"Once I had firmly grasped this concept, and had learned enough of it to form a base for a new treatise on troglodytian conversation, I made ready to abandon my host's body and return to my own, safe in the woods outside. Even more stunning than the discovery of the secret of the troglodyte language was the realization that I couldn't extricate myself from my host! There is a time-limit involved in the use of the *cognitive conveyance* such that it becomes progressively more difficult to end the spell as time goes on. And I had apparently been so engrossed in the wonders of troglodyte sensibilities and society, that I had failed to keep track of the passing hours; I was trapped."⁷

"Hey, the smell's getting worse," exclaimed the heckler, "I think he's brought the worst part of the troglodyte cave back with him to prove his silly story."

"If you think that this speech is merely an attempt to authenticate some claimed discovery," responded another of his fellows, "then you're a greater fool than Farrand is about to reveal himself to be."

"At first, I didn't panic. I merely paused for a few moments to renew my mental energies, and then tried again to escape my prison, but to no avail. As my repeated efforts proved fruitless, I changed the direction of the task I set myself. Instead of trying to escape my host, I tried to invade him entirely, hoping to take over the mind and body I had passively shared up until that moment. I spent more than a few frus-

trating days trapped voiceless and bodiless within the beasts mind and at times it felt like he would eject me from his mind to go none-know-where, but I finally succeeded; I became the mind of Farrand Two-Spell, saddled with the body of a troglodyte named Rose-Boiled Cabbage-Mild Skunk.

"This accomplished, I exited the complex (incidentally called Roses In Profusion by the troglodyte, from which all of the tribe members drew part of their name; the field of roses cultivated outside the cavern being a signpost and beacon for the benefit of travelling troglodyte), to retrieve my body, return home, and solve this new predicament.

"The journey was more difficult than one would readily imagine. While my troglodytian body could see well

Continued on page 86

6. This scent language is central to the troglodyte, and apparently evolved from such basics as the similarity of scents within a clan or family, the easily identifiable scents of fear and passion, and the common animal ability of tracking other animals by the foreignness of the other's smell.

Among troglodyte, the scent-language is so versatile that it takes precedence over all other forms of communication. Guards cry out alarms in a shrill olfactory "voice" without making a sound, thereby alerting other troglodyte within smell range (about 20' away per round as the smell drifts, to a maximum of 80', after which it blends in too well with the background scents to be identifiable) without alarming relatively smell-blind humans. In fact, the overpowering stench that can reduce a human opponent to weak-kneed vomiting during combat with troglodyte, is merely the build up of olfactory battle-cries, combat orders, screams of rage, pain, and hunger, and other smell/phrases which are spoken/emitted in such profusion that the combined smell overpowers non-troglodyte.

In fact, a similar effect would occur at any time troglodyte "speak" too fast for the ventilation in their lairs to accommodate, the equivalent of the noise level in a crowded room full of humans, something which can cause headaches even to the participants. Even a single troglodyte can cause such a build-up of smells, if he is kept in a poorly ventilated area for extended periods of time.

When fighting troglodyte place increasingly more stock in this form of information gathering rarely making any noise, in order to concentrate on the immediacy of scent; they pay as much attention to what they see during combat as humans do to what they hear. Thus, light would have to be particularly bright (eg: a Light spell cast directly on their eyes) to cause them significant discomfort, and this discomfort is only half what other subterranean beings suffer from in similar circumstances (-1 to their "to hit" rolls and armor class, or no effect if a saving throw vs. spells is successful), causing effects more akin to deafness than blindness for a human.

If fighting under conditions in which their sense of smell is overwhelmed (eg: if their opponents have spread skunk oil in the vicinity, or if they've set a number of different things aflame, releasing thick clouds of multi-scented smoke), they will put more stock in their infravision or their weak normal vision, but if anything threatens these senses as well (such as Light or Wall Of Fire spells), they will immediately retreat.

As they can easily tell which of their opponents are the most afraid of them by the fear scents all release, they will usually concentrate their attacks on the most fearful, which usually proves to be a good tactic as these are also the weakest of their enemies. (In game terms, the DM should require

Morale rolls when NPCs face troglodyte, not to have them run away, but merely to determine which is the most fearful. In the case of player characters, the DM should judge on the basis of known PC abilities, and on the reactions of the players.)

Illusions without scent components have no effect on them in combat and not much in other conditions. They have +8 on their saving throws vs. illusions without olfactory components under normal circumstances, and +2 on saves vs. those with scent components unless the caster is sufficiently familiar with the scent to duplicate it exactly. An illusion of another troglodyte will not be believed under any circumstances if it is not accompanied by scents proper to the occasion (ie: even a perfectly duplicated battle-scent won't fool a troglodyte during a non-battle oriented encounter). And even the best illusion of a troglodyte is unlikely to be believed for more than a few rounds, as the real troglodyte might eventually begin to wonder why his 'friend' is constantly repeating the same scent phrases over and over again.

7. For those daring enough to use it, here is the spell that Farrand used to trap himself with:

Farrand's Cognitive Conveyance (Necromantic)

Level: 4

Range: 5 feet/level

Components: V,S

Duration: Special

Casting Time: 1 round

Area of Effect: 1 Creature

Saving Throw: Special

Similar to a *magic jar* spell, the cognitive conveyance allows one's mind to enter the body of another creature, but unlike that other spell, it does not remove the original "occupant" from his position. Instead, the caster "shares" the victim's body, seeing through its eyes, hearing through its ears and even thinking with its brain to a certain extent. This effect is put to a number of uses by spies, scouts, and even the simply curious.

The victim of the spell must be within the listed range at the time of casting, and as long as the two bodies are both within the casting range, the caster will be able to see through both sets of eyes at one time, and can control his own body with some minor difficulty. The caster and his host can move any distance away from the caster's body without negative effect, but if separated by more than the spell's range, he loses all sensory or control contact with his own body (which goes into a deep coma but is otherwise unharmed) until such time as the bodies re-enter the spell's range.

The duration of the spell is unlimited, but this is not an unmix blessing. As time goes on, the caster slowly loses touch with his own body and becomes more attuned to the body he "rides in".

Every hour spent sharing another's mind and body removes the caster 5% from his own body, so that he will have lost 25% control of his body's actions after 5 hours, and after 20 hours, he will not have any contact at all with his original body, being fully integrated within his hosts consciousness.

The subject/victim of the spell gets no saving throw to resist it, but in order for the caster to sever the spell and return to his own mind and body, the caster must make a saving throw, rolling the percentage of control he retains of his own body or less to return to normal. Thus, after 5 hours in the hosts mind, the caster must roll 75% or less to return to his own body; after 20 hours he will find himself irrevocably trapped.

If this should happen, the caster will find that he slowly (at a rate of about 1% per hour) gains control of his hosts mind and body. The host will likely have been unaware of the casters intrusion until this point, but if the trapped caster attempts to flex his mental muscle, forcing the shared body into actions the host hadn't intended, there may be a struggle for control, with the caster having to roll the amount of control he has or less to take over the body entirely. If he fails, he loses all control and must begin working at control from 0% again. A patient prisoner will wait over four days (i.e. 100 hours) without attempting a takeover, thus virtually assuring himself victory with a 99% chance of taking over (as a roll of 00 always results in a failure).

If control is established, the hosts mind is not eliminated, it is merely locked securely within the mind of the new controller, and the host-turned-prisoner can begin his own attempts to overthrow the Freeloader, starting at 0% chance, and working his way up 1% an hour until he makes his own attempt at control. The flip-flop cycle of owners can continue until either one gives up, or the caster is finally returned to his own body.

To lose control of your body to an invading mind is a traumatic occurrence. Thus, any time complete control is wrested by one of the two minds, the loser must roll his Wisdom or less on 1d20, or else be driven insane by the shock. If one of the two combatants goes insane, the other gains uncontested control of the body, until such time as the insane mind is restored to sanity.

Once a caster has become trapped in the subject's body, the spell cannot be cancelled by any simple means such as a *dispel magic* spell, and the subjects lifeforce becomes so attached to the host body that it is curiously resistant to even a Magic Jar spell. Those concerned speculate that it would take at least a *limited wish* to free the conjoined minds.

If the caster manages to gain complete control of the body, he can treat the body as his own in all ways; he will be able to cast spells as per normal, and will possess all his own mental facilities, along with the physical capabilities of the body.

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 where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. No call-in listings are accepted. Unless stated otherwise, all dollar values given for U.S. and Canadian conventions are in U.S. currency.

WARNING: We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Our wide circulation ensures that over a quarter of a million readers worldwide see each issue. Accurate information is your responsibility.

Copy deadlines are the first Monday of each month, four months prior to the on sale date of an issue. Thus, the copy deadline for the December issue is the first Monday of September. Announcements for North American and Pacific conventions must be mailed to: Convention Calendar, *DRAGON® Magazine*, 201 Sheridan Springs Rd., Lake Geneva, WI 53147, U.S.A. Announcements for Europe must be posted an additional month before the deadline to: Convention Calendar, *DRAGON Magazine*, TSR Limited, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, United Kingdom.

If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been cancelled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, please contact us immediately. Most questions or changes should be directed to the magazine editors at TSR, Inc., (414) 248-3625 (U.S.A.). Questions or changes concerning European conventions should be directed to TSR Limited, (0223) 212517 (U.K.).



November Conventions

Ork Con '96

November 1-3

Panorama Hotel, Am oberen Marienbach 1. Schweinfurt. Special guests: Larry Elmore, Lester Smith, Mike Tinney, Ash Arnett, Brom, Jeff Grubb, Ken Whitman, Oliver Hoffman. Events: AD&D® Championship, *DRAGON DICE™*, *Rage** and *M:tG** tournaments. Registration: \$7/day \$18/weekend. Robert Moore, Ruckertstr. 15, D-97421 Schweinfurt, Germany.

Corpse Con III

November 1-3 TX

Howard Johnson Airport Hotel and Convention Center, Corpus Christie. Events: role-playing, card, board, and miniatures games. Other activities: Masquerade ball, *M:tG* tournament, Japanimation room, and dealers area. Registration: \$10/weekend, \$5/day, plus 50¢/game. Game Lords of Corpus Christie, P.O. Drawer 987, Odem, TX 78370.

Novagcon '96

November 2-3 VA

Kena Temple Hall, Fairfax. Events: role-playing, painting contest, historical and SF miniature wargaming and card games. Registration: \$8 NOVAG members, \$10 general admission. Send SASE to: NOVAG, P.O. Box 7158, Reston, VA 22091.

- ❖ Australian convention
- ❖ Canadian convention
- ❖ European convention

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Sci-Con 18

November 8-10 VA

Holiday Inn Executive Center, Virginia Beach. Special guests: Larry Elmore and Melissa Benson, SF author Charles Sheffield, and others. Events: *Starfleet Battles**, *M:tG* and live-action games. Other activities: charity auction and workshops. Registration: \$30 on site. Hampton Roads Science Fiction Association, Inc., c/o Mark Shaffer, P.O. Box 9434, Hampton, Virginia 23670, or e-mail: scicon@earthlink.net or <http://www.earthlink.net/~scicon>.

Configuration 7

November 8-10 OK

University of Oklahoma campus, Norman. Events: AD&D, role-playing, *Vampire** Interactive Theater, Convention Suite, and art show. Registration: \$9/weekend pass, \$9/Vampire pass, \$15/for both. War and Role Playing, 215-A OMU, Box 304, 900 Asp Avenue, Norman, OK 73019.

Fields of Honor

November 8-10 IA

Adventure Lane Inn, Altoona. Contact Scott Friedmeyer, Comics Plus, 6501 Douglas Ave., Urbandale, IA 50322.

Chimaeracon '96

November 15-16 IN

French Lick Springs Resort,

French Lick. Events: role-playing, card, board, and miniature games. Other activities: *Star Trek* Con, dealers, home film contest, costume contest and ball. Tentative guests: Grace Lee Whitney, Bjo Trimble, and NASA. Registration: varies. Send SASE to: Chimaera, P.O. Box 42, West Baden Springs, IN 47469.

Pentacon XII

November 15-17 IN

Grand Wayne Center, Downtown Fort Wayne. Events: role-playing, RPGA® Network tournaments, collectible card games, board games, auction, miniatures painting contest, charity raffle, and art show. Other activities: seminars and computer games. Northeastern Indiana Gaming Association, P.O. Box 11174, Fort Wayne, IN 46856, or e-mail: 102654.230@compuserve.com.

Garden State Games Faire

November 21-24 NJ

Ramada Inn, East Windsor. Contact Andrew Dawson, 470 Ironstone Dr., Boyertown, PA 19512.

ShaunCon XXIII

November 22-24 MO

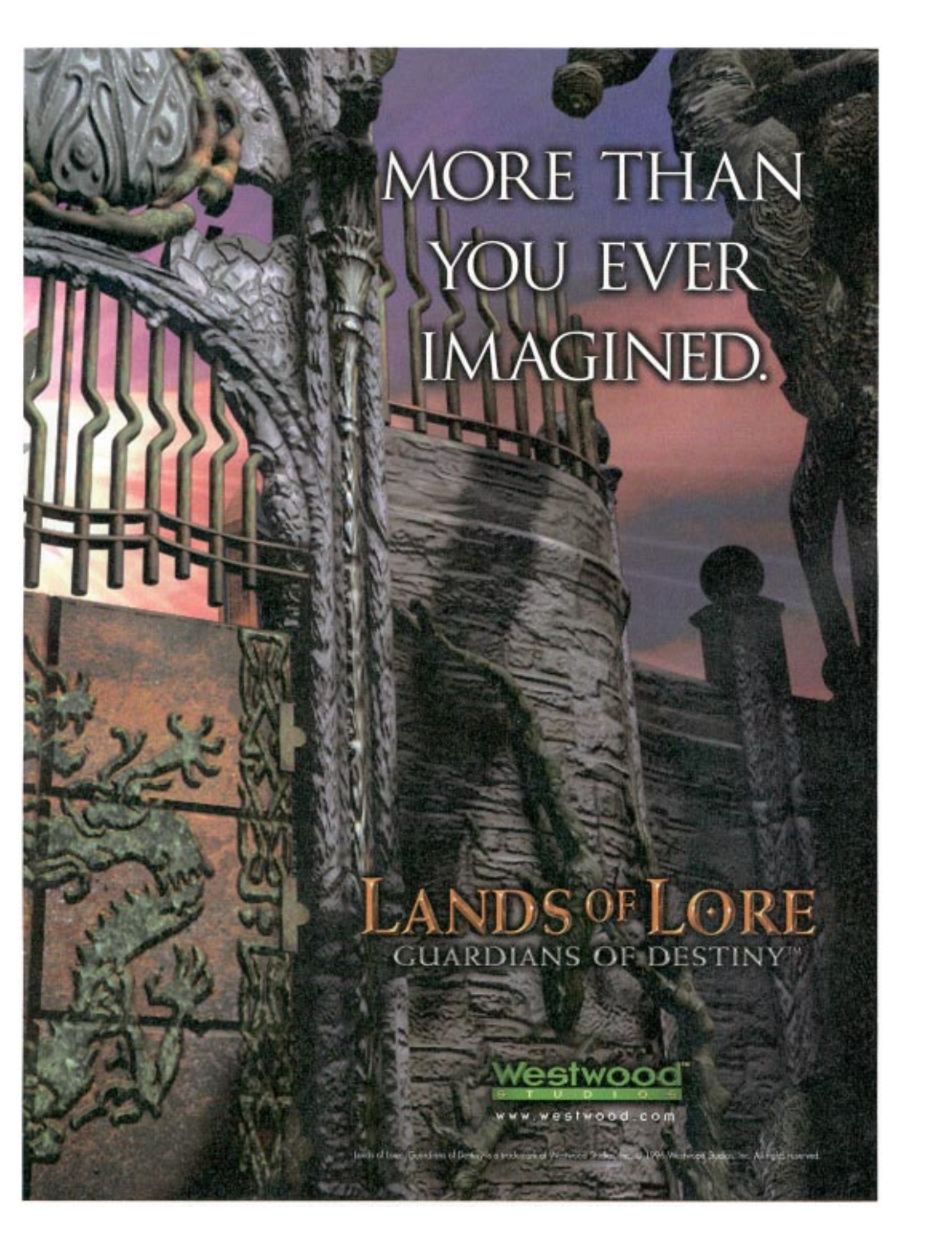
Holiday Inn, Kansas City. Events: *LIVING City™*, *LIVING JUNGLE™*, and *LIVING DEATHS™* tournaments, Masters and Grand Masters events. Other

Continued on page 87

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To ensure that your convention listing makes it into our files, enclose a self-addressed stamped postcard with your first convention notice; we will return the card to show that it was received. You also might send a second notice one week after mailing the first. Mail your listing as early as possible, and always keep us informed of any changes. Please do not send convention notices by fax, as this method has not proven reliable.



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enough in the light of day, it seemed difficult to recognize landmarks I had passed but a few days before. I kept forcing my body to look around for familiar sights, while it kept trying to sniff about for smells which might have been familiar to Rose-Boiled Cabbage-Mild Skunk, but which would have provided me no guidance at all even if I had found any.⁸

"Due to the sensory difficulties of the trip, and the fact that my troglodyte body was forced to carry my still-living but mindless and failing human body, the one-day trip to my home ended up taking almost three.

"In my chambers, I pored over the notes I had made during the creation of my *cognitive conveyance* spell and, unfortunately, assured myself of what I had feared most during my week-long ordeal."

Indeed, the smell in the closed theatre had been getting more and more oppressive as Farrand's story went on, and now even the more forgiving members of his audience were starting to take up the hecklers restless muttering. Of a sudden, the lights in the theater lit up, and the scenic illusions that Farrand had been maintaining to his right to show his route to Khanahr faded and disappeared under the lamp's onslaught. But surprisingly, the illusion of the troglodyte that had been standing to Farrand's left for the whole lecture seemed no less solid now than it had before. And Farrand himself seemed oddly awkward as he stood there, moving only occasionally and jerkily as he spoke.

"Since returning from Roses In Profusion I have tried every spell I thought would help, but none have shown any promise or effect. When I first entered *Farrand's cognitive conveyance* in

the rolls of this Order's additions to magecraft, some of you warned me about the dangers of employing new magics without proper tests and controlled experimentation. I stand before you now, having delivered my *programmed illusion*, moving and speaking through the use of *telekinesis* and *ventriloquism* spells, to offer all of the profits from my upcoming volumes on the language of the troglodyte to the magebrother or sister among you who can free me from this damned, stinking reptile's body and make me again the man I was!"



Spike Y. Jones would like to thank Kimberly F. Marshall, Dale A. Donovan, Roger E. Moore, and Mark Goldberg for their help at various stages in this article's evolution.

8. Just as troglodyte don't recognize any written form of their language, they don't make use of sketched maps. If a troglodyte is to make a trip into a strange region, another, with past experience of the area, will emit an olfactory sketch of the route, describing the succession of scents that the traveller should encounter along the trip; visual landmarks are only used as a supplement to the olfactory, or when they are obvious enough to be used day or night.

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activities: *Amber**, *Call of Cthulhu**, *GURPS**, *Necromunda**, *Shadowrun**, *Star Wars** and many more. Registration: \$23 at door, discounts for preregistration and/or RPGKC members. RPGKC, P.O. Box 7457, Kansas City, MO 64116-0157, or send e-mail: ShaunCon@aol.com or web: <http://users.aol.com/RPGKC/RPGKC.html>.

Pittsburgh Comicon

November 23-24 PA

Pittsburgh Expomart, Monroeville. Special guests: John DeLancie, artist William Stout, and Marvel/DC artist Scott McDaniel. Events: *M:tG*, *Star Wars* CCG, charity auctions and more. Other activities: free autographs, comic and game sales. Registration: \$7 single-day pass. Michael George, 1002 Graham Ave., Windber, PA 15963.

SyndiCon '96

Nov 29-30, Dec 1 IN

Ramada Inn, Portage. Events: role-playing, cards, comics, miniatures, board games, painting contests, and RPGA Network events. Other activities: AD&D Arena Combat event, Friday the 13th, all-weekend Photo Killer game and interactive role-playing. Registration: \$20 on site. SyndiCon '96, P.O. Box 1602, Portage, IN 46368.

December Conventions

Albuquerque Game Fair

December 6-8 NM

Pinnacle Four Seasons Hotel, Albuquerque. Guests: Margaret Weis, Tracy Hickman, and artist Quinton Hoover. Events: role-playing, card, board, and miniatures games. Other activities: RPGA tournament, art show, dealers area, computer room. Registration: varies. AGF '96, 3422 Central Ave SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106 or e-mail WWWOC@USA.NET.

Lagacon 21

December 7 PA

Eagles Hall, Lebanon. Events: role-playing, card, board, and miniatures games. Other activities: AD&D tournaments, dealer area. Registration: varies. LAGA, 1006 Colebrook Rd., Lebanon, PA 17042.

Dominicon

December 13-15 *

St. Patrick's College Maynooth Co., Kildare. Events: role-playing, card, board, and miniatures games. Other activities: CCG tournaments and more. Registration: £3/day, £5/week-end. Karl Monaghan, 27 Great Oaks, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, Rep. of Ireland.

January Conventions

Sunquest '97

January 2-5 FL

Marriot Orlando Resort, Orlando. Guests: Timothy Bradstreet, Michael Stackpole, and Jay Tummelson. Events: role-playing, card, board, and miniatures games. Other activities: Art show, charity auction, *M:tG* tournament and 17 RPGA events. Registration: \$20 before December 1, \$25 on site. Sunquest, P.O. Box 677069, Orlando, FL 32867-7069. e-mail: sunquest@sun-dial.net. Website: <http://www.net/~sunquest>

Crusades '97

January 10-12 CT

Ramada Inn, Norwalk. Events: role-playing, card, board, and miniatures games. Registration: varies. Phillip Spera 2 Sibley Lane, East Haven, CT 06512; e-mail Phillip_Spera@usa.racal.com

Pandemonium XIV

January 18-19 *

Ryerson Polytechnical University, Ryerson Hub Cafeteria Toronto, Ontario. Events: role-playing, card, board, and miniatures games. Registration: \$25.

until Jan 5, \$30 on site. Contact Peter Fund, 118 Roncesvalles Avenue #34 Toronto, Ontario M6R 2K8, Canada.

Glorantha Con IV

January 24-26 IL

Ramada Hotel O'Hare, Rosemont. Events: *Call of Cthulhu**, *Runequest**, *Pendragon**, *Mythos** and other related games. Guests: Greg Stafford, Sandy Peterson, and others. Other activities: auction, art show, troll ball, and LARP. Registration: \$40. Andrew Joelson, 1330-D Gifford Ct., Hanover Park, IL 60103-5227. e-mail joelsona@cpdmfg.cig.mot.com.

The 8th Annual Florida Extravaganza

January 25-26 FL

Orlando Expo Center. Events: role-playing, card, board, miniatures games and collectible memorabilia. Other activities: *M:tG* and *Star Wars* tournaments. Registration: varies. E-mail bza-lkin@aol.com.

February Conventions

Constitution V

February 14-16 VA

Quality Hotel, Arlington. Events: role-playing, card, board, and miniatures games. Other activities: LARP, RPGA, LIVING CITY, *M:tG*, Clay-o-Rama, and an auction. Registration: varies. Constitution V, 2205 Luzerne Ave, Silver Spring, MD. E-mail CONSTI_5@AOL.com.

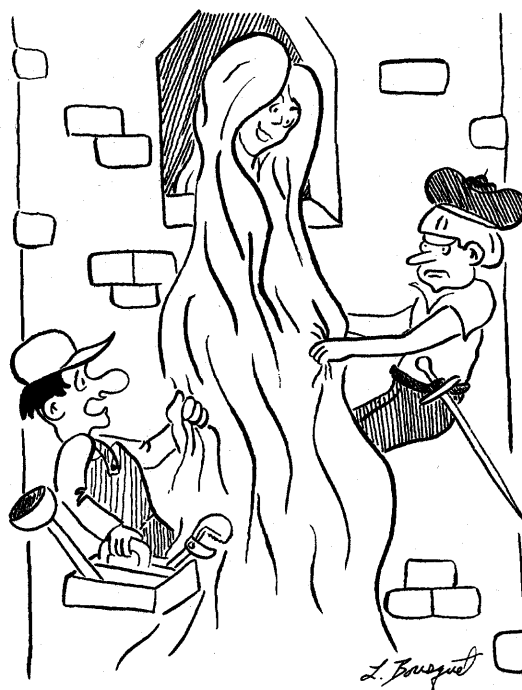
Total Confusion XI

February 20-23 MA

Rolling Green Inn, Andover. Events: role-playing, card, board, and miniatures games. Other activities: RPGA, LARP, and more. Registration: \$30. pre-registered, \$40 on site. Total Confusion, P.O. Box 403 N. Chelmsford, MA 01863-0403.

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By Lee Bousquet



"Someone called about a clogged drain?"

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ARCAINE



Spells of the scaled

by Steve Berman

illustrated by Michael Scott

The ancient amphibious, reptilian, and piscine races and creatures pre-dated mankind by eras. Through countless generations spent in oceans, swamps, and underground, they accumulated much knowledge and power. Although most campaigns are set in a time where such beings are declining, it would be implausible to believe that magic unknown to the "warm bloods" had never been practiced during those centuries so long ago.

And so below are some new spells to be used by the scaled. Though these magics are presented in a format much like wizardly magic, they could be used by nonhuman priests and shamans as they try to reclaim the past glory of their race. Or simply just survive in a changing world.

Nearly all of these spells have a duration that is dependent on the Hit Die of the casting creature. In those instances where a humanoid may have a level (such as in a troglodyte shaman), the DM should use that figure instead.

A DM can easily substitute these spells for the magic or special abilities possessed by a scaled creature, specially the more intelligent races like nagas and yuan-ti. Such substitutions provide a surprise to those adventurers who, through experience or research, think that they such creatures are not a challenge to them anymore. Won't those "warm bloods" be shocked?

Barble^{1,2}

(Alteration)

Level: 1

Range: 0

Components: V

Duration: 1 turn/Hit Die

Casting Time: 1

Area of Effect: 1 creature

Saving Throw: None

This spell causes the recipient's body to grow *barbles*, long, semi-flexible spines extending from the creature's scales. The *barbles* have the effect of improving the creature's Armor Class by 2. In addition, the creature may attack with the *barbles* in lieu of its normal attack mode, causing 1-6 hp damage on a successful hit. Opponents who are foolish enough to grapple with a *barbled* creature suffer that damage automatically each round they are so engaged.

Because of the awkward size of the *barbles* (some of which reach over a foot in length), the spell recipient may be unable to enter some small openings, such as narrow cave mouths. Also, surrounding objects may be accidentally caught on the spines, and the spell recipient is quite limited in his choices of clothing and other equipment worn on the body. For this reason, most of the users of the spell are creatures who wear little clothing and live underwater, where they are less likely to jar the altered scales. Locathah in particular are especially fond of this spell.

Serpent Tail²

(Alteration)

Level: 2

Range: 0

Components: V

Duration: 1 round +1 round/Hit Die

Casting Time: 2

Area of Effect: 1 creature

Saving Throw: ½

This sinister magic is often used by the yuan-ti. It transforms the ordinary tail of any reptilian creature into the form of a snake, complete with fanged head. A *serpent tail* provides an additional attack. Unless the creature already could threaten with its tail, however, it suffers a -2 penalty to its THACO when attacking with the *serpent tail*. The bite of the snake head causes 1-6 hp damage and injects a venom that burns like acid in the victim's veins. On the round after being wounded, the poisoned creature must save vs. poison or suffer 1 hp damage for each Hit Die of the attacking creature. A successful saving throw vs. poison indicates that the victim suffers only half damage.

The snake head can do nothing more than hiss and bite. Magic cast upon it affects the host creature and vice versa. Some adventurers have claimed that they have seen a more fearsome version of this spell, one that allows the serpent tail to detach from its caster and attack independently.

*Camouflage^{1,2,3}

(Alteration, Abjuration)

Level: 3

Range: 10 yards

Components: S

Duration: 1 turn/Hit Die

Casting Time: 5

Area of Effect: 1 creature

Saving Throw: None

Through the use of a camouflage spell, the recipient can alter the coloration of its hide to match whatever background it rests against. But beyond this change in hue, this spell also slightly alters the hide of the recipient to blend in with the surrounding terrain. Thus, in a bed of kelp, the creature develops frond-like extensions over its body. If lying on a cave floor, the scaly hide becomes mottled and bumpy.

All of these physical changes make the creature nearly impossible to notice. It can surprise an opponent on a 5-in-6; even those beings who are extraordinarily perceptive (rangers, elves, and so forth) suffer this disadvantage. In addition, the spell lessens the likelihood that

the concealed creature can be detected by Divination magic (such as *detect invisibility* or *true seeing*) to only a 5% chance per level of the caster.

To gain the benefits of the spell, however the creature must remain quiet and still, moving no faster than MV 1. Otherwise it will be noticed.

Sahuagin and locathah shamans often cast this spell on the tribe's scouts before they embark on a mission.

Scale blade^{1,2}

(Alteration, Enchantment)

Level: 4

Range: Touch

Components: V,M

Duration: 1 hour/Hit Die

Casting Time: 1 round

Area of Effect: See below

Saving Throw: None

Though this spell is often used by the scaly folk, human wizards and draconian worshipers have rumored to practice such magic. The caster must take a scale (the material component) from a suitable creature's skin, and from that he creates a magical weapon that looks like it was forged from that single scale and not metal. The length of a *scaleblade* and the sort of damage it delivers is dependent on the size of the creature it came from: a dagger is created from M-sized creatures, a short sword from L-sized, and a long sword from G-sized beasts; no *scaleblade* can be crafted from a creature less than Medium sized.

The weapon is considered magical for combat purposes, but has no bonuses to hit or on damage. If the *scaleblade* is crafted from a dragon, however, then it does possess a magical ability: an aura that reflects the breath weapon of the drake it came from. Thus, a *scaleblade* from a red dragon would burn with fire, while one from a green dragon would leak fetid fumes. This aura inflicts additional damage equal to the Hit Dice of the dragon from which the *scaleblade* was made. A saving throw is allowed vs. breath weapon, and, dependent on what sort of aura is present (fire, cold, poison), bonuses may apply.

This spell can be used on other scaled creatures that possess magical abilities (nagas, remorhaz, etc. in which case the blade may carry a weaker aura), delivering half the creature's Hit Dice in damage with every blow. Again, the victim is entitled to a saving throw to see whether only half damage from the magical aura is suffered.

At the end of the spell's duration, the *scaleblade* crumbles to dust.

Skin of the Salamander

(Evocation, Alteration)* 2, 3

Level: 4

Range: 0

Components: V, M

Duration: 2 rounds +1 round/Hit Die

Casting Time: 4

Area of Effect: The caster

Saving Throw: None

Salamen are first credited with the creation of this spell as a part of their religious ceremonies. Since then, a number of scaly creatures have either stolen or bartered for such knowledge that evokes some of the power from infamous scaled creatures native to the Elemental Plane of Fire.

The spell causes the caster's body to erupt into pale orange flames. While the duration lasts, the caster and the personal items borne by him are resistant to fire, both magical and mundane, and suffer no damage from any such attack.

Due to this flaming aura, anything the caster touches risks catching fire. Paper, cloth, and volatile liquids are immediately set alight. Wood burns after a full round of exposure (though this time should be adjusted to consider relative thickness). Creatures susceptible to fire suffer 1-10 hp damage from contact with the immolated caster.

An interesting bit of news coming out of the northern reaches of the land hints that some ancient white dragons have learned this magic spell, and their use of it comes as a rude awakening to those adventurers who see fire as the means for such beasts' destruction.

Moltings

(Alteration, Conjunction)* 1

Level: 5

Range: 20 yards

Components: V, M

Duration: See below

Casting Time: 5

Area of Effect: 1 skin

Saving Throw: None

This is perhaps the most potent of spells for any scaled creature. As sages and rural folk know, reptiles must molt their skins in order to grow, and often these sheddings can be found in the territory if not lair of such animals. When this magic is cast on the shed skin of any reptilian creature, intelligent or otherwise, it causes the molting to animate

and come alive under the command of the caster.

A *molting* so created appears as a smaller, lighter version of the creature from which the skin came from. In game terms, the *molting* is one size level down from its parent (i.e., a size G dragon would create a size L *molting*, and a size L rock lizard would yield a size M skin).

To discover the *molting's* statistics, refer to the chart below:

Hit Dice: one-half parent's

Hit Points: one-quarter parent's

Move: twice parent's (such creatures can even fly!)

AC: 7

THAC0: Parent's score -4, minimum of 20

of AT: Same as parent

Damage/Attack: T size 1-2

S size 1-4

M size 2-5

L size 2-8 (Note that a *molting* cannot inflict more damage than its parent creature; in such cases the amount is the same as parent.)

Special Attacks: None

Special Defenses: As parent

Alignment: Neutral

Moltings are affected by magic much in the same way as their parent stock, except they are immune to any attempt to *charm* or *beguile*.

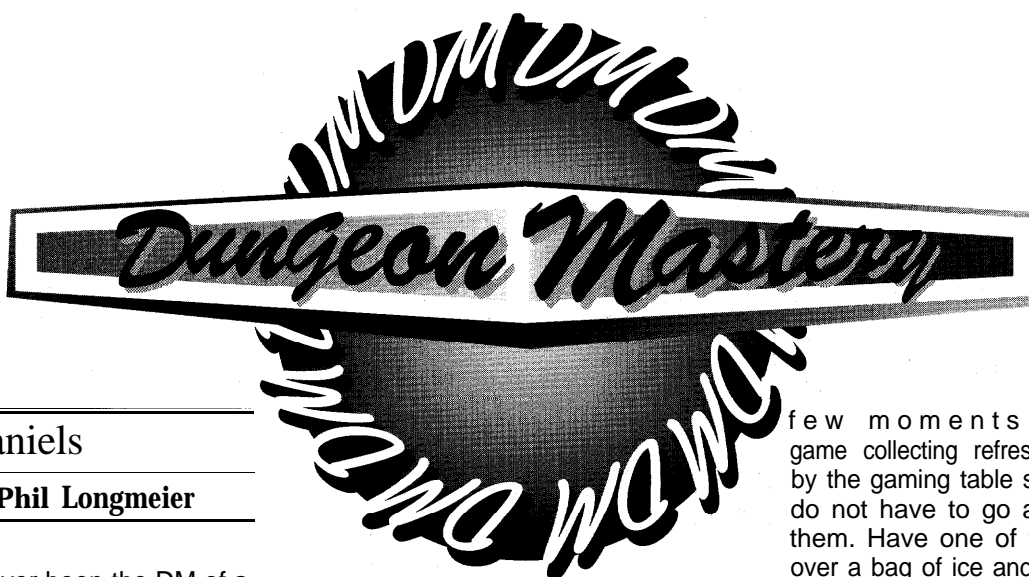
The number of *moltings* at any one time created from a parent's shed skin cannot be more than half the creature's Hit Dice. A *molting* lasts until it is killed or wanders farther than 10 miles from its creator.

Sometimes these creations are purposely devoured by a hungry or ailing reptilian parent, for doing so heals that creature a number of hit points equal to those the molting possessed; in such cases the *molting* passively accepts its fate.



Steve Berman is currently hard at work trying to finish a novel before any of his friends manage to do so. Beyond that immediate goal, there's talk about seizing control of a Balkan country. Dragons may be involved.

1. Usable by piscine creatures
2. Usable by reptilian creatures
3. Usable by amphibian creatures



by Troy Daniels

illustrated by Phil Longmeier

If you have ever been the DM of a long term campaign, I am sure that this—or something very similar — has happened to you:

Game time has rolled around. After several hours of grueling work creating the perfect dungeon encounters for your enthusiastic players, you are ready. Holding the door open for your unsuspecting victims, you watch as they take up their customary places around the room. Seeing that everyone is comfortable, you march to the table, take your treasured notes (and your seat) and begin.

Things are moving rather smoothly until you notice that Robbie has fallen asleep, curled up into a little ball making sounds that could only be made by a person who's face is shoved in a vinyl bean bag chair. Samantha has moved off to the kitchen again and is in search of something to drink (and probably something to eat as well). Jessica and Kevin (the lovebirds of the group) have retired to their own little world, whispering softly to one another. You roll your eyes as Jessica giggles at some witty remark. Poor George, too, has fallen victim to the Sandman, the only difference between him and Robbie is that rather than snore, he is wheezing.

Did you do something wrong? Is this a silent revolt? Have you failed as a Dungeon Master? Is there life after role-playing rejection?

This example is probably a worst-case scenario; however, I am also sure that you can identify with one or more points in the above text. There are ways to avoid this horrible fate. One of them is Physical Dungeon Mastering (PDMing).

There are several key rules to the art of PDMing.

Let's get physical

Focusing

In the above example, there was no focus. Focus in this context is defined as the group as a whole concentrating on one central person, namely you. The easiest way of accomplishing this is to gather everyone up and have them sit at a table. Having an entire adventuring company spread out over your living room is bound to cause trouble, not only for your game, but for your carpet as well (for some reason, gamers spill more liquids than any other group I have ever met). Bringing the group together not only unifies the group, but makes them more accessible to Physical DMing.

Another aspect of Focus that can be fixed is those darn refreshments. I understand that soda and those chips are needed when you are sitting down for a long period of time as most gamers do. But having one of your players away from the table (and the action) breaks up the group focus and can sometimes ruin the setting and atmosphere. For example:

The encounter is going well. The party has just dropped through a pit trap into the evil Lich Nebular's lair. As the lich approaches, he casts a spell, freezing most of the party. Down, injured and in some cases held, things look rather grim for our hearty adventurers. Suddenly a voice cries out from the darkness: "Hey! Who wanted the cola and who wanted the root beer?"

few moments before the game collecting refreshments. Put them by the gaming table so that the players do not have to go anywhere to get them. Have one of the players bring over a bag of ice and fill up the cooler. Putting the drinks out ensures that the PCs will not have to make the trek to the refrigerator for that pause that refreshes. (Now if we could only figure out a way to eliminate bathroom breaks ...)

Something else that can help to maintain focus is preparing the room itself. Lighting in the room itself can be dimmed with the main illumination on the table the gaming will be done on. Another lamp could be sat on a small table beside the main one. This is the table that you, the PDM will be using during the game to keep your clutter off the playing area. By bringing light to the table and dimming the lights elsewhere, you bring the focus of the room inward. This helps to eliminate some of the distractions in the room and bring the group's attention on the game at hand.

Once we have acquired Focus, we can concentrate on keeping it. That finally brings us to Physical DMing and the next key.

Moving

The "track" is the area encircling the table. PDM's hardly ever sit, spending most of their time walking around the table or standing where their chair would normally be. This accomplishes two goals.

♦ Your players have to follow you visually in order to know what is going on. This is important so that you keep the PCs' attention. By standing, you raise their eye level higher than they are used to. The PCs are more likely to track you with their eyes rather than track that last nacho chip in the bowl.

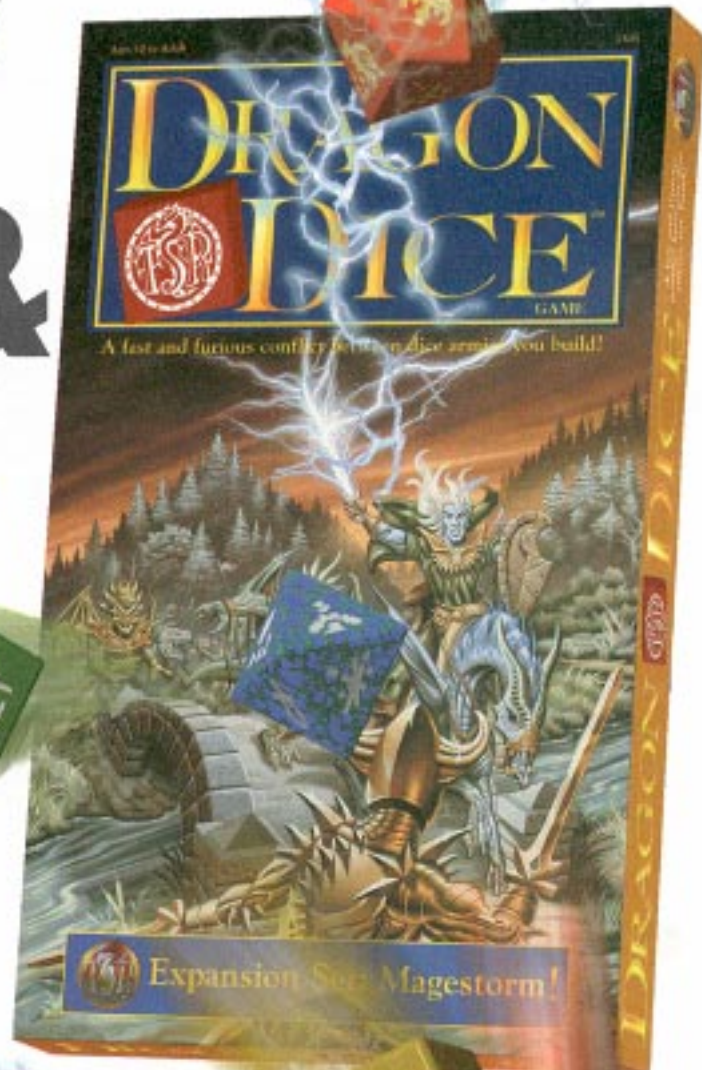
♦ It puts you in the action. You actually get in the action with the character

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because you are right beside them. This also gives you the opportunity to do things like this:

Robbie's character (the thief in the group) has just walked into a room in Nebular's dungeon. A very faint smell is in the air, almost too faint to be noticed. Standing behind Robbie, you look over his shoulder and notice his Observation Proficiency score is a 12. In a quite voice you ask, "Robbie, roll a d20 for me please." Robbie looks at you, wondering what you are up to. "Uhm ... Why? Is there a trap nearby?"

"Just roll the die please." Robbie nervously rolls the die. Nine.

Robbie the Thief notices something strange in the air. Sniffing with caution, the caustic odor of acid burns his nostrils. Looking about, he spies a large pool of a greenish substance he recognizes from past adventures. Being careful to avoid the green slime, he continues.

This is also an excellent tactic for those secret saving throws. Instead of writing down info at the beginning of the game or asking the player to hand you their sheet, you are there and the action is personal, between you and the player. Not only does this give them a sense of being the focus of this segment of the evening, it also gives you, the PDM the chance to act, and react in a more personal and social manner with your players.

The next part might take some getting used by your players. If you have not done Physical DMing before you might want to warn the more skittish players that you are trying something new. This way they are ready (or at least they think that they are) for what is to come.

Getting Physical with your players does not mean that the next time their player characters are attacked by a fearsome fighter, you jump the nearest player and wrestle him to the floor. It does mean that you might want to try the following two sample tactics:

- ❖ When the party hears those sudden "Crashes," have a box of empty cans nearby. Picking it up and dropping it is sure to get the attention of even the most involved lovebird or sleeper.

- ❖ When role playing an NPC who is talking to the party in anger or in an emphatic manner, slam your hand on the table when the NPC is trying to make a point. You are adding emphasis to your statements and bringing the

character to the PC's. By doing this, you bring the character to life and also insure that the players are going to listen to his words.

Emphasis on character is very important and can be used by the PDM to create truly memorable NPC. Those shopkeepers who are constantly moving around the room straightening things up are often annoying. The mayor who paces with his hands behind his back before the party that he is addressing looks quite official. And let's not forget the informant who is always wringing his hands and looking over his shoulder. These are the people that players are going to attach names too. These are the NPCs the players are going to remember. By presenting them in a physical manner, you make sure that the point of the NPC being there is made in a way that will cause the characters to react the next time this particular person shows up.

Acting

Take an afternoon and go downtown or to the mall. Just sit down and watch as people walk. You will begin to notice that just about everyone strolls just a bit differently. You will also see that you can tell a lot about a person just by the way that they walk. Armed with this information, approach your Track and Acting with a new eye toward the NPC. A few notable examples:

- ❖ The PCs are approached by a young fighting bravo, intent on proving his worth to the group. Chest puffed out and arms swinging smartly at his side, he struts toward the party full of hubris and pride.

- ❖ Doddering old wizards do not nimbly hop, skip, and jump over every obstacle that is in their way. Shuffling feet and puttering along are more their style.

The third part of Physical DMing is acting. I don't mean combat. That is dangerous and someone can get hurt. But there are other things that the players can do that will not only keep their interest in the game, but also serves to help them visualize their environment.

Perhaps the best example that I can offer is the trapped (or not trapped) door:

The characters have fought long and hard and now stand before a large, iron bound door. The PDM motions for the players to move to where he is standing, in front of a closed door right there in the living room. Handing the thief of the party a sim-

ple pen, he stares briefly at the space right in front of the door. After a moment, he stops. Turning to Robbie the player, he asks, "Show me what your character is doing to pick the lock."

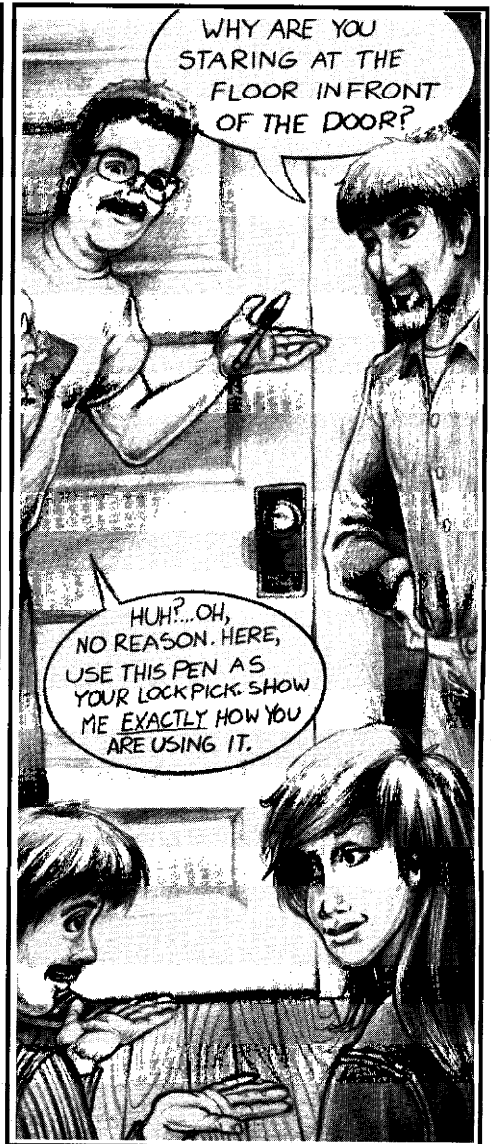
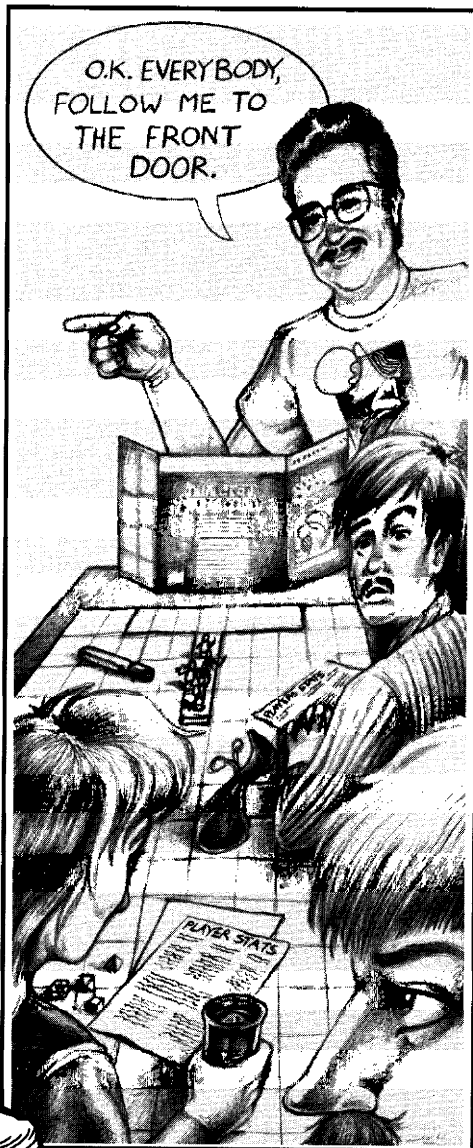
Robbie looks at the door, and then his eyes slowly drift to the area on the floor that the DM had paid so much attention to just a moment ago. Cautiously, he approaches the entrance and stands several feet away. Bending at the waist (and careful not to touch the area in front of the door) he begins to poke at the lock.

Poor Robbie. Once more the center of attention, he is also performing an action that his character would be doing. What this does is bring the group together once more to attempt to solve a perceived problem. It also serves to create what is called "player paranoia" By setting them up with the pretense that there is some sort of trap in front of the door, they will be extra careful with this. This also allows the characters the chance to do things that their PCs would not normally think of doing. For example, this would be a great time to check for secret doors or traps on the other walls.

Remember, you are providing an environment that the players are exploring. If your environment is a monotone reading of boxed text, then your players will be a monotone group of one-dimensional adventurers. By becoming an PDM, you bring alive the characters and the action that make any role playing game something more. You make it entertaining. And when it comes right down to it that is what you are there to do in the first place, right?



Troy Daniel lives in Hilliard, Ohio. He is also known as TSR0 Thar, in which role he plays traffic cop in the TSR area on America Online.





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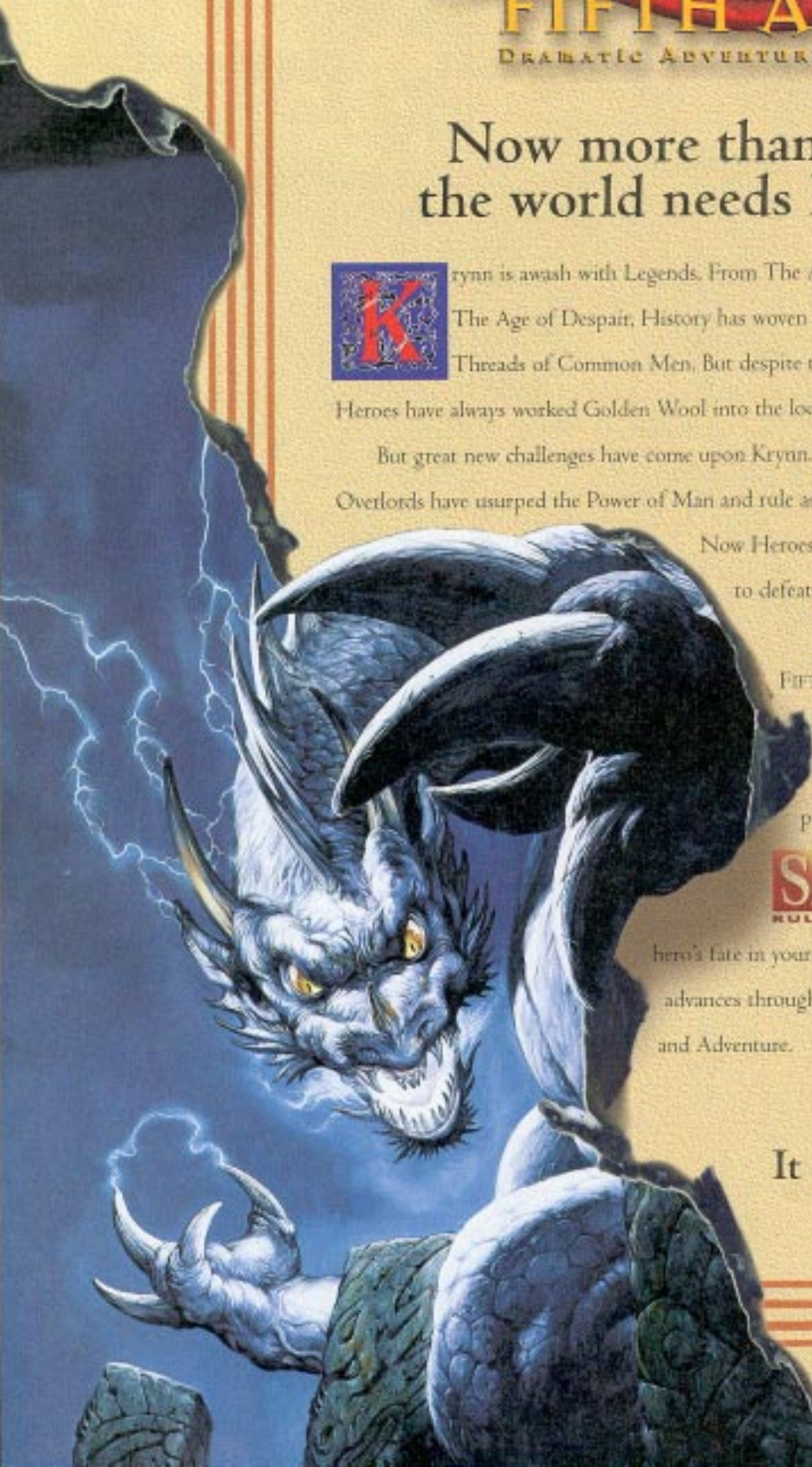
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Knights of the Dinner Table™

By Jolly R. Blackburn
Story suggested by Steve Lampman

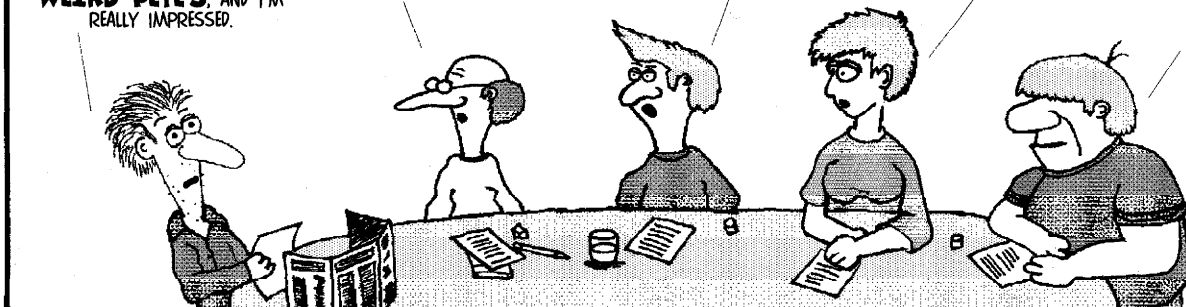
TONIGHT SHOULD BE FUN. I'LL BE USING THE NEW **HACKMASTER MOOD ENHANCER TABLES**. I JUST PICKED THEM UP TODAY AT **WEIRD PETE'S**, AND I'M REALLY IMPRESSED.

I SAW THE AD FOR THAT SUPPLEMENT "**TASTE AND FEEL THE ADVENTURE**" COOL BEANS. LET'S PLAY.

(SNEER) IF I WANTED TO "TASTE AND FEEL" A DUNGEON CRAWL, I'D LICK THE BASEMENT WALL BEHIND MY HOT WATER HEATER. **CHARTS** SLOW DOWN THE GAME. WHO NEEDS THEM?

WELL I DID HEAR IT WAS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED BY THE **GARY JACKSON RPG ACADEMY**.

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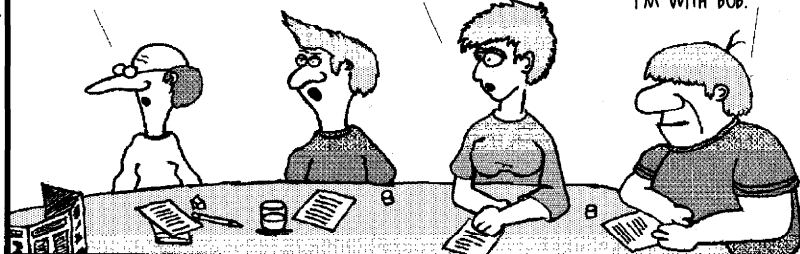
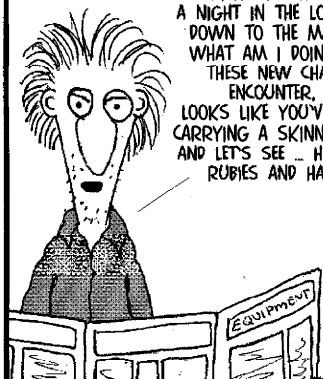
WELL, WHEN WE LAST LEFT OFF, GANG, YOU HAD ENTERED THE SMALL TOWN OF **PAWLID BERG** TO PICK UP SOME SUPPLIES AND PROVISIONS. AFTER A NIGHT IN THE LOCAL INN, YOU AWAKE AND WANDER DOWN TO THE MAIN STREET IN TIME TO SEE ... HA! WHAT AM I DOING? PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO USE THESE NEW CHARTS. LET'S SEE ... RANDOM CITY ENCOUNTER, CHART FIVE, TABLE C. HMMM ... LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE BUMPED INTO A CRIPPLED BEGGAR CARRYING A SKINNED MOOSE CARCASS TO THE BAKERY. AND LET'S SEE ... HE'S WEARING A GOLD CROWN WITH RUBIES AND HAS A PARROT ON HIS SHOULDER.

I STILL DON'T LIKE THIS NEW SUPPLEMENT. I SWEAR — IF I LOSE AN EAR OR GET TURNED TO JELLY, I'M WALKING.

UH ... THAT'S SOME BEGGAR. I'M STALKING HIM IN THE SHADOWS. AS SOON AS HE'S HOBBLED INTO A DARK ALLEY OR SOMETHING I'LL WHACK HIM. THE PARROT TOO.

YOU KNOW, DAVE, MOST RANDOM EVENTS ARE JUST SCENERY, AND DON'T POSE MUCH OF A THREAT.

IT MAY HELP TO REMEMBER THAT STATISTICALLY SPEAKING, RANDOM ENCOUNTER KILLS ARE AN EXCELLENT SOURCE OF UNPROGRAMMED EXPERIENCE POINTS, OFTEN WITH LITTLE OR NO RISK TO YOUR CHARACTER. I'M WITH BOB.

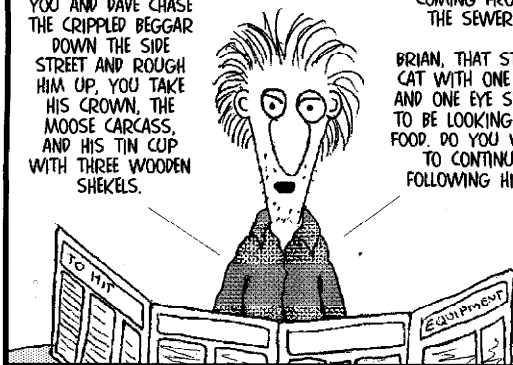


LATER...

OKAY, BRIAN, AFTER YOU AND DAVE CHASE THE CRIPPLED BEGGAR DOWN THE SIDE STREET AND ROUGH HIM UP, YOU TAKE HIS CROWN, THE MOOSE CARCASS, AND HIS TIN CUP WITH THREE WOODEN SHEKELS.

SARA, THE BEAUTIFUL MUSIC YOU'VE BEEN HEARING SEEMS TO BE COMING FROM THE SEWER.

BRIAN, THAT STRAY CAT WITH ONE EAR AND ONE EYE SEEMS TO BE LOOKING FOR FOOD. DO YOU WANT TO CONTINUE FOLLOWING HIM?



MUCH LATER...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN THAT BLACK CAT WAS **JUST** ANOTHER LOCAL STRAY? AFTER THAT SUSPICIOUS STORM SOAKED ME, I'LL BET MY LUCKY PENCIL THAT THE CRIPPLED BEGGAR WAS SOME KIND OF EVIL MAGE. IT'S A CURSE I TELL YOU! WAIT — YOU SAID THERE WAS A STRAY **DOG** AROUND, TOO? HMMM ...

HEY, DID BOB GET ANY POINTS FOR THAT CAT? IF HE DID, I'M GONNA LOOK AROUND FOR SOME MORE CATS AND STUFF ONCE BRIAN AND I FINISH INTERROGATING THAT PARROT. HE **KNOWS** SOMETHING, I'M SURE OF IT.

UM, WEREN'T WE IN TOWN TO GET SOME SUPPLIES, GUYS?

SUPPLIES CAN WAIT, SARA. THIS IS A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO GET SOME QUICK CASH, INFORMATION, AND EXPERIENCE POINTS TO BOOT, ALL WITHOUT LEAVING TOWN! B.A. — WHEN THE PARROT COMES AROUND AGAIN, I'M USING A **WET** TOWEL ...



MUCH, MUCH LATER...

FOR THE LAST TIME, BOB, THERE ARE **NO MORE SMALL ANIMALS** IN TOWN. NO PETS, NO STRAYS, NOTHING!

BRIAN AND DAVE, YOU SLAP THE PARROT AROUND FOR HOURS, BUT THE ONLY THING HE DOES IS CONTINUE TO SQUAWK PATHETICALLY.

SARA, YOU PURCHASED THE SUPPLIES, ATE A HEARTY LUNCH AND ARE WELL ON YOUR WAY TOWARD THE DUNGEON LOCATION. NO SIGN OF YOUR COMRADES.

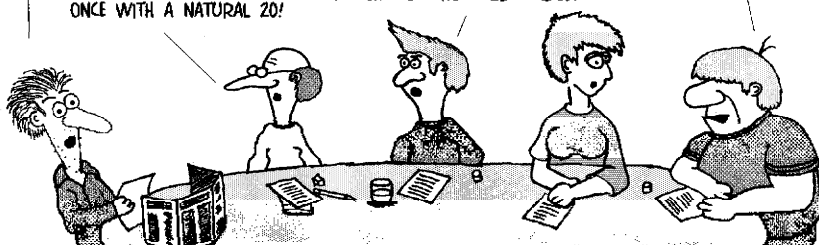


WELL, WELL, 8 HOURS OF GAMING TONIGHT, AND WHAT DID WE ACCOMPLISH? LET'S SEE YOU KILLED 57 CATS, 12 DOGS — IT SEEMS YOU SHIED AWAY FROM STRAY DOGS AFTER DAVE WAS MAULDED BY THE KING'S **ROTWEILER**. YOU KILLED 40 BEGGARS, A SINGING GYPSY, A BAND OF TRAVELING CLERKS ON A PILGRIMAGE, A TOWN CRIER, 3 GEESE WHO WERE NESTING ON THE MOAT'S EDGE, A DISGRUNTLED SHOPKEEPER WHO WAS ANNOYED BY THE SQUAWKING PARROT YOU WERE TORTURING. UH ... DID I MISS ANYTHING?

HEY YOU FORGOT THE BARMAID! I SLAPPED HER **TWICE!!** AND ONCE WITH A NATURAL 20!

AND **WHO** HELD THAT BARMAID WHILE YOU SLAPPED HER? GIVE UP SOME OF THOSE **EP'S** BOB.

I STILL THINK THAT PARROT COULD TALK. I WISH YOU'D LET ME CONTINUE MY INTERROGATION SARA.



DragonMirth



By Matthew Guss

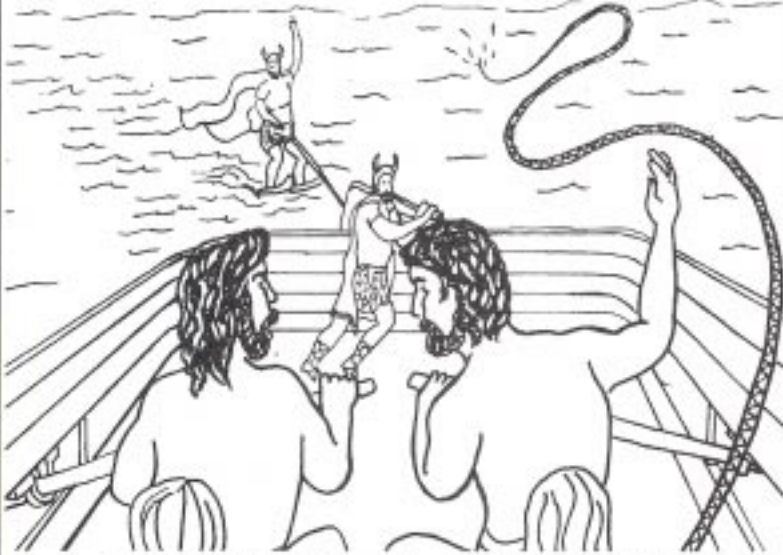


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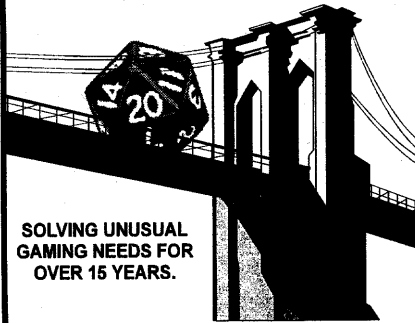


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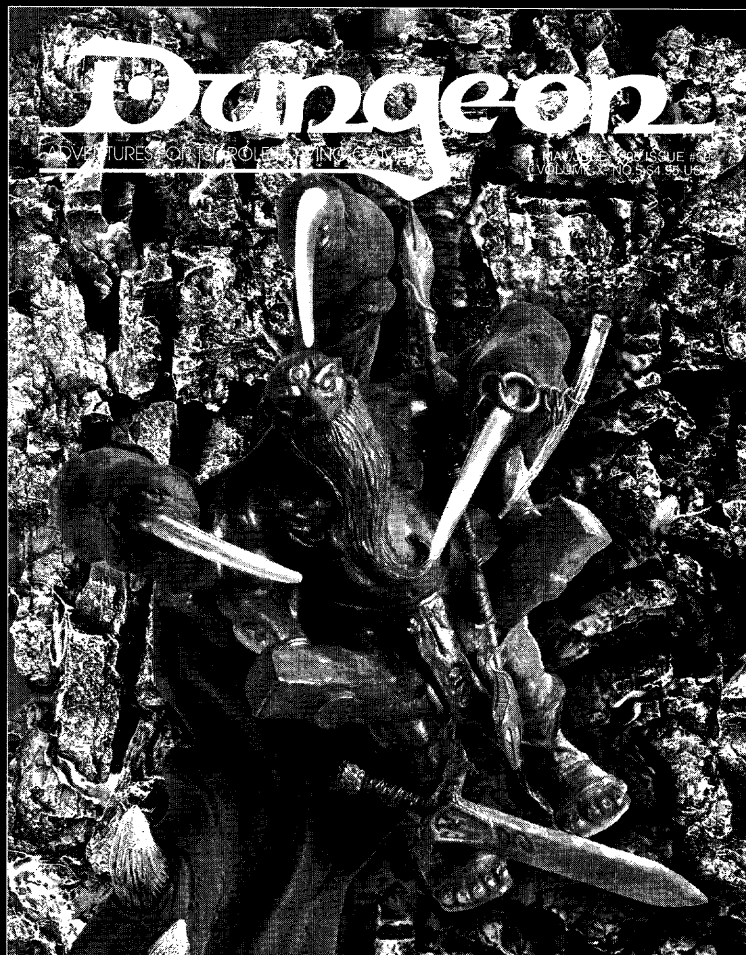
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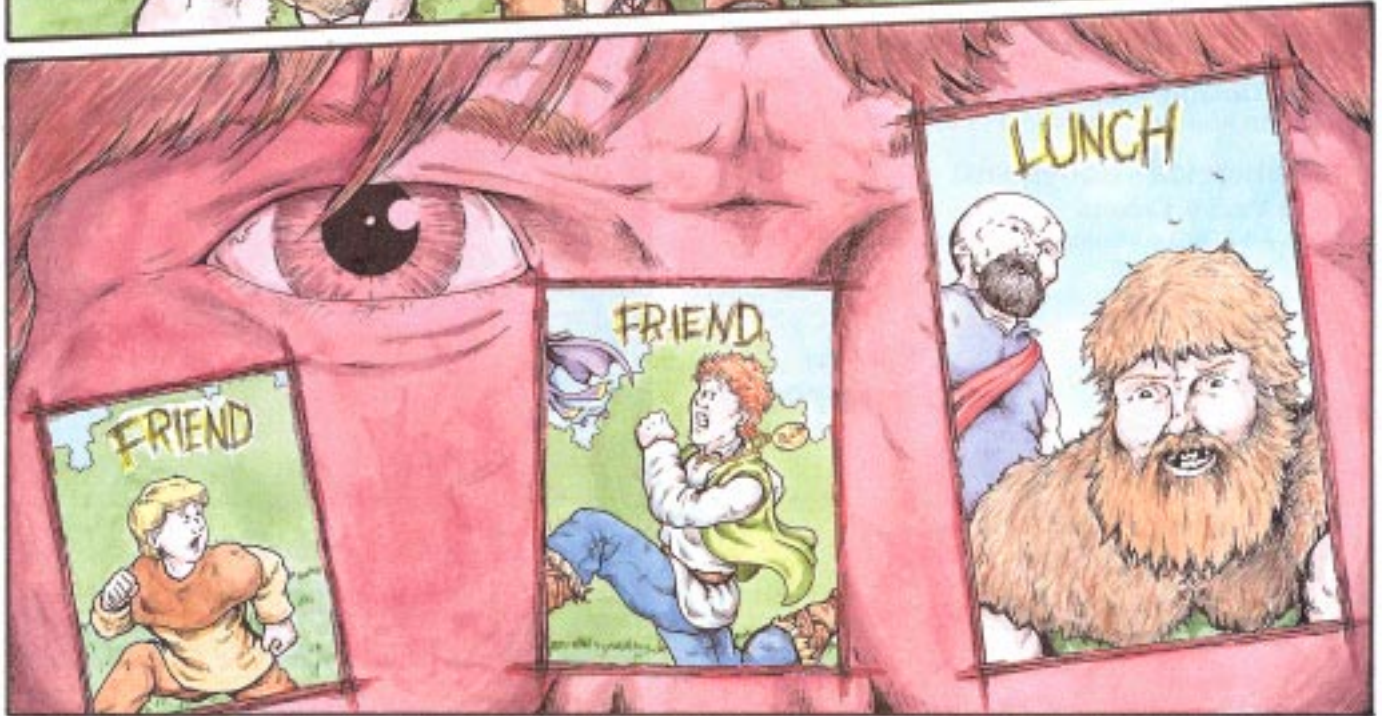
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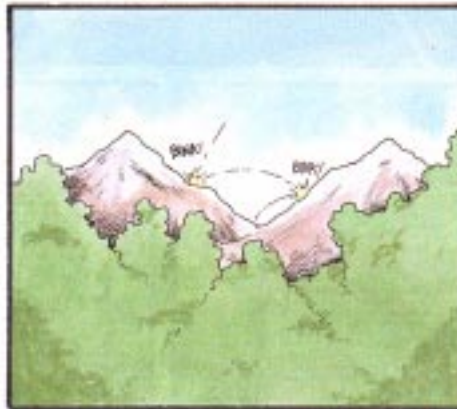
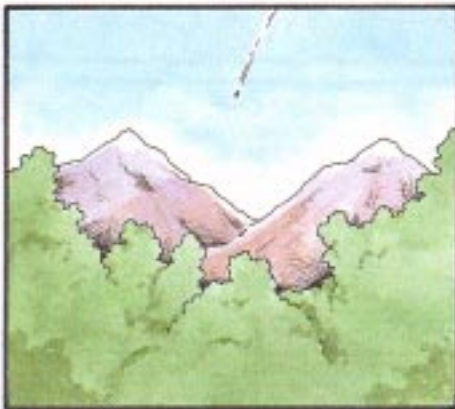
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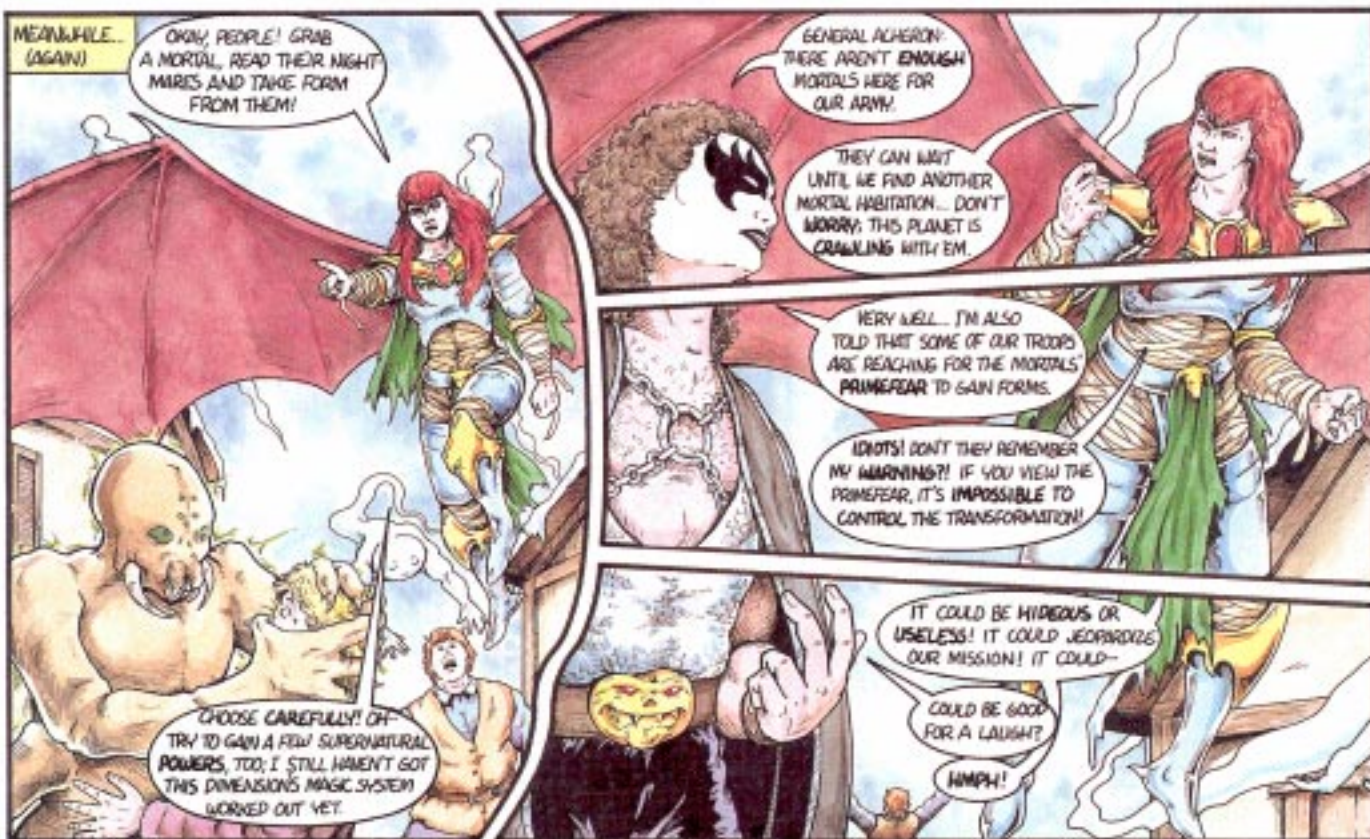


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by
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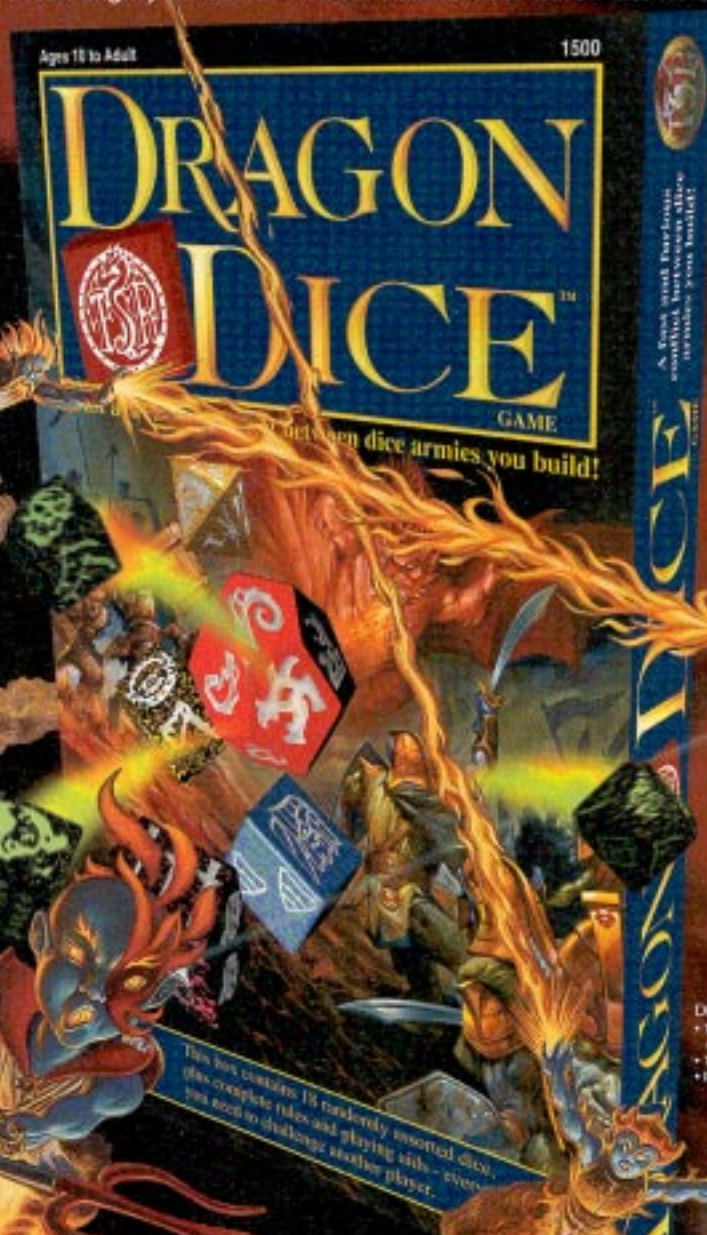






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Role-Playing

Reviews

Gooseflesh, anyone?

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I feel better now.


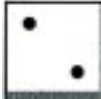




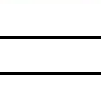
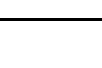

I admit, I was worried. Mightily worried. At last year's GEN CON® Game Fair, I was proclaiming to anyone who'd listen that the rumors of role-playing's imminent death were based on hysteria, an over-reaction to the onslaught of card games that threatened to swallow up every nickel in the gaming community and leave the RPG biz gasping on the shore like a suffocating carp. But inside, I was nervous. There were, after all, only two RPC releases of any consequence last year: the *Everway** game from Wizards of the Coast, and the *BIRTHRIGHT*® setting for the AD&D® game (both of which were covered in *DRAGON*® Magazine issue #224). No amount of spin doctoring could change the fact that this did not bode well for the future of RPGs.

But this year . . . ah, sweet relief. Sure, GEN CON '96 barfed up a bunch of new card games, but a lot of them struck me as redundant, such as Fleer Skybox's *Star Trek: The Card Game** (not to be confused with Decipher's *Star Trek The Next Generation Card Game**). Others, like the *Dragon Storm** game, appeared to be suffering from an identity crisis. (The back

of the *Dragon Storm* box says: "This is a role-playing game." Hmm...)

But as for RPCs — the real ones, not the card game wannabes — they were crawling out of the woodwork, and I staggered out of the convention hall with more than I could carry. Are they any good? Too soon to tell. We'll be sorting through them over the next couple of months and find out. (An early favorite: the *Deadlands** game, an oddity from Pinnacle Entertainment that mixes *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* with *Tales From the Crypt*). But if quantity counts — and it

Role-playing games' ratings

	Not recommended	
	May be useful	
	Fair	
	Good	
	Excellent	
	The BEST!	

does — role-playing is in pretty good shape. It may have taken a hit or two, but it isn't dead yet.

Speaking of dead, while the playtest crew pours over the GEN CON releases, what say we catch up on some horror games? We'll look at some nifty stuff for the *Call of Cthulhu** game, a deranged little number from the folks at White Wolf, and a cool new card game. (Hey, I didn't



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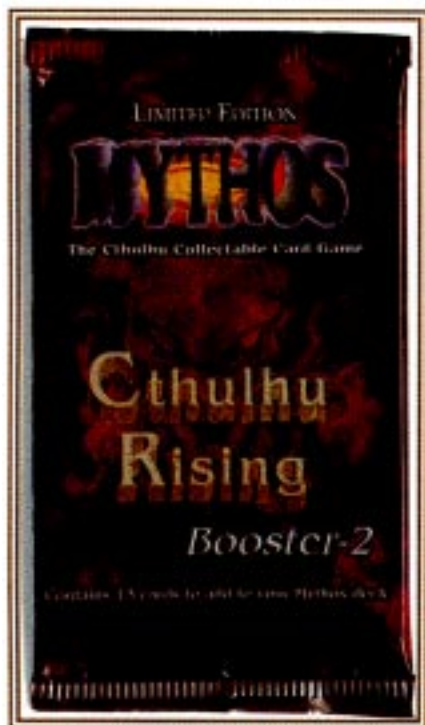
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Chaosium Inc. \$12

Design: Gary Sumpter
 Editing: Lynn Willis and Eric Vogt
 Illustrations: Dave Carson, Earl Geier,
 and Drashi Khendup
 Cover: Eric Vogt



Mythos* game (including the Expeditions of Miskatonic University,

Legends of the Necronomicon,
 and *Cthulhu Rising* booster packs)

Starter deck: 60 cards, 32-page rules
 booklet, one double-sided character
 card; booster pack: 13 cards

Chaosium Inc. Starter deck: \$9;
 booster pack: \$3

Design: Charlie Krank

Development: Sam Shirley, Eric Vogt,
 Eric Rowe

Illustrations: Salvatore Abbinanti, Chris
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 Taylor, Susan Van Camp, and Jason Voss

I know I'm supposed to be unbiased.
 But in the interest of full disclosure, you
 should know that *Call of Cthulhu* is my



all-time favorite game and, in my humble opinion, the best RPG ever invented by man or beast. The reasons are too numerous to go into here. (But here's a couple: 1) *Cthulhu* boasts a near-perfect blend of rules and background, the latter derived from the mind-boggling narratives of horrormeister H.P. Lovecraft. 2) You don't have to waste a lot of energy developing your PC's personality, since it's only a matter of time before one of the *Cthulhu* cosmic creeps turns his brains to mush.)

But the last few years have been rough on us loyalists. True, Chaosium has produced a steady stream of supplements: *Blood Brothers*, *The King of Chicago*, and *Sacraments of Evil*, to name a few. And true, for the most part, they've been pretty good. But pretty good isn't good enough, considering that in the glory days — I'm thinking mid- to-late '80s — virtually every *Cthulhu* release was a major event. Expansions like *Cthulhu by Gaslight* and *Dreamlands* set standards of quality for the entire industry. More than a decade after their release, adventures like *Spawn of Azathoth* and *Musks of Nyarlathotep* still linger in the memory. By comparison, I played *The King of Chicago* only a month ago and can barely remember what killed me.

But despair not, fellow *Cthulhu*-ites: I come bearing good news. If the latest round of supplements is any indication, there may be light at the end of the tunnel — or maybe I should say, from the back of the crypt.

Ironically, the most ambitious supplement in recent memory comes not from Chaosium, but from Pagan Publishing, a feisty small press publisher responsible for the outrageous *Creatures & Cultists** board game. (For more about their product line, write Pagan at 4542 18th Ave. NE #4, Seattle, WA 98105-4232.) In obsessive detail, *Golden Dawn* examines a legendary society of Victorian magicians called — what else? — the Golden Dawn. Along with the expected history, personality profiles, and locale descriptions, the book serves as a springboard for magic-intensive adventures. That's a major departure for *Cthulhu*, which in the past has tended to discourage the indiscriminate use of magic.

The sourcebook material, derived in part from the out-of-print *Cthulhu by Gaslight*, provides a readable account of all things Golden, from the membership's favorite hang-outs (the vaults of London's Thavies Inn make a good place to consecrate talismans) to their

current concerns (investigating rumors of invisible immortals, exploring the astral plane). The personnel roster can be used as a source of allies and adversaries; occult scholar Samuel Liddell Mathers might become a player character's mentor, while misanthropic physician Edward Berridge would make a good serial killer.

Of course, the PCs themselves may opt to join the Golden Dawn. The Outer and Inner Order Curriculum sections tell how players should adjust their point totals to qualify their PCs for membership. Players may also expend points to establish relationships with prominent non-player members, such as Aleister Crowley and the aforementioned Dr. Berridge. But the real benefit of membership comes from learning the Dawn's secret rites, which give access to extraordinary power. The Hexagram Ritual, for example, enhances the caster's ability to summon and bind extraterrestrial entities. Astral Travel enables the user to soar through the astral plane. The rites, however, are not without risk. Travelers in the astral plane may encounter a race of mind munchers called astral parasites. As *Cthulhu* veterans know, summoned entities are not only hard to control, they have a tendency to swallow their summoners.

The book wraps up with four terrific scenarios. They're not particularly easy to run — my notes for "The Room Beyond" ate up almost as many pages as the scenario itself — but they're loaded with memorable scenes. Consider this excerpt from "La Musique de la Nuit": "Dazed and confused, the Yaddithian Ktaubo emerged from its light-wave envelope. The air was still hot with crackling electricity, and brilliant blue-green sparks danced and arched along the twisted and discolored hull of the alien's machine." Though it's aimed at a narrow range of players — experienced, literate, and history-minded — *Golden Dawn* remains an impressive production.

Two of Chaosium's recent releases comprise a score and a snore. First, the snore. Like its predecessor, *Cairo Guidebook* (reviewed in *DRAGON Magazine* issue #227), *London Guidebook* provides a plethora of cultural and historical information intended to help Keepers stage realistic adventures. Westminster, Mayfair, and other London districts are examined in depth, as are the city's clubs, hospitals, and transportation systems. But the useful material — a blue-



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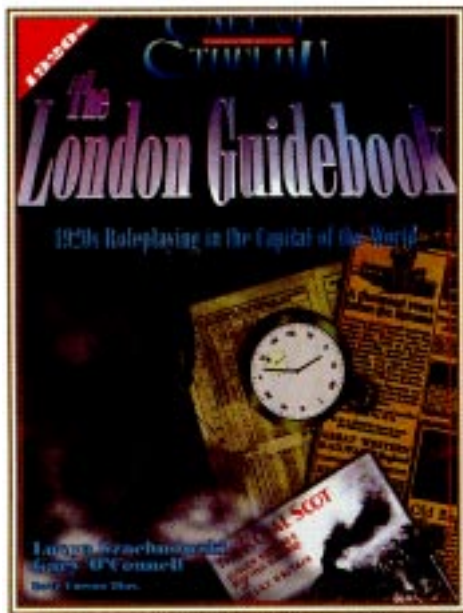
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print of the Houses of Parliament, the history of the British Museum — can be found in any good library. The not-so-useful material — the date of the Chelsea Flower Show, the length of London's hydraulic power pipes — is interesting trivia, but it's trivia nonetheless. Worse, the designers don't do much to tie the material into the Cthulhu Mythos, beyond an occasional suggestion of supernatural activity ("[The Highgate Cemetery] has fallen into disuse, and it is likely that ghouls have taken residence.") *London Guidebook* succeeds on its own terms, but before you invest, make sure you know what you're getting.

Happily, *In the Shadows* fares much better. A collection of three ready-to-run scenarios, it's old-fashioned in the best sense, employing the classic archetypes, adversaries, and plot twists that have made *Cthulhu* so durable. "Devil's Hole" pits the Investigators against a pool of animated slime, a monstrosity from outer space, and a "loathsome blob of ropy, green, pustulant flesh" called the Thing in the Barrel. "In the Shadows of Death" takes place in a corpse-ridden Louisiana plantation. "Song of the Spheres" tells a shuddery tale of madness and murder in New England, with a little Italian opera thrown in for good measure. All three are novice-friendly, making *In the Shadows* a great way to get a new campaign off the ground.

I have only two gripes with *Shadows*. 1) What's with the graphics? Chaosium hasn't done much to change the look of their books in 15 years, and it's time for an upgrade. I suggest that the art department spend an evening or two

with a stack of White Wolf products, particularly material for the *Vampire: The Masquerade* game, and see how it's done. 2) Whose bright idea was it to scatter the player handouts throughout the book instead of collecting them all at the end? Since about 30 pages have handouts on them, that means you've got to photocopy nearly half the text. Does Chaosium own stock in Xerox?

As for *Mythos*, the *Cthulhu* card game, a little birdie told me to reserve judgment until the first batch of boosters hit the stores, and darned if the birdie wasn't right. The basic game, it should be noted, is nothing to sneeze at. Each player assumes the role of an Investigator who undertakes a mission outlined on one of several adventure cards. Investigator One, for instance, might have to translate a mysterious book belonging to his late uncle ("The Curious Parcel"), while Investigator Two might have to explore an abandoned mansion ("The Haunted House"). To complete his adventure — and win the game — the Investigator must put into play a specific set of cards; "Curious Parcel" requires one Tome card, one Spell, one Library, one Cemetery, one Gate, and two Allies.

On his turn, the Investigator plays one of 13 cards in his hand, each of which represents a different element of a developing story; a Location card represents a site he wishes to explore, an Ally represents a potential companion. When both Investigators pass (by declining to deploy new cards), combat ensues. They attack each other with Monster cards: Fire Vampires, Rat Things, Flying Polyyps. Damage is taken as a loss in sanity. If an Investigator's sanity reaches zero, he's out of the game.

It's a snap to learn; one trip through the rulebook — okay, two — and you're on your way. The variety of Adventures ensures a different challenge in every game. Best of all, *Mythos* captures all of the elements that make *Call of Cthulhu* so much fun. It's appealingly low tech; Investigators arm themselves with shotguns and dynamite, and travel from site to site on foot. All of the memorable Lovecraft themes — forbidden tomes, hazardous spells, garish creatures — are firmly in place. And as in the RPG, player characters rarely die; they just go crazy.

The basic game, however, pretty much confines the players to the northeastern United States. And that's why you need the booster packs. By sending the Investigators around the world, the boosters more accurately represent the scope

of the RPG. *Expeditions of Miskatonic University* includes Stonehenge, the British Museum, and the Catacombs of Rome. *Cthulhu Rising* adds Easter Island and the Lost Temple of Atlantis. *Legends of the Necronomicon* incorporates the Mosque of Amr in Cairo and the Sphinx of Giza. The entire collection's first-rate, but if you're on a budget, I recommend a pair of starter decks and a handful of *Risings*. Not only does *Rising* have the best sites, it also features Cthulhu himself — uh, itself.

Evaluation: The success of *Mythos* has enabled Chaosium to finance a line-up of promising new products, including the long-awaited (long-awaited by me, anyway) update of *Masks of Nyarlathotep*. Meanwhile, *Cthulhu*-ites can keep their tentacles a-tinkling with the essential *In the Shadows*. Enterprising players might take a look at *Golden Dawn*. And if you're a completist, go ahead and splurge on *London Guidebook*. *Mythos* is a convincing simulation of a world-class role-playing game. But make no mistake — it's only a simulation. Enjoy the cards, but for heaven's sake, don't neglect the RPG. A gamer who's never played *Call of Cthulhu* is like a rock fan who's never heard the Beatles.

Chronicle of the Black Labyrinth

*Werewolf: The Apocalypse**
game supplement

104-page softcover book

White Wolf Game Studio

Design: Sam Inabinet

Development: Bill Bridges

Editing: Laura Perkinson

Illustrations: Ron Brown, Mike Chaney, Matt Milberger, John Cobb, Andrew Mitchell Kudelka, and Larry MacDougall

Cover: uncredited

Here's an abridged section of "On the Road with Chucko the Monkeyboy," the finale of *Chronicle of the Black Labyrinth*:

chuck: wut the ole man dont no aint gonna hert him nun! Gowan! with our compliments! i got plenny more wair that cum from.

polise ofiser: wel yu fokes be cairful then. i suspek one of the deputeez in this nex town is ordoor of the roze, but i aint pegged with if is yet. giddown!

chuck: thanku much and yu hav a nise day sir!

This, to put it mildly, isn't your typical role-playing supplement.

When it comes to content, White Wolf has about the same batting average as every other publisher. Some of their books are terrific, some are so-so,



\$11

some are what-were-they-thinking. But nobody, I mean *nobody* matches White Wolf in presentation. Their anarchic formats and wild experiments with color, fonts, and even paper texture have redefined the look of role-playing. Consider, for instance, the surreal illustrations gracing the *Mage: The Ascension** game, the rainbow pages of *Immortal Eyes* (a fairy tale from hell for the *Changeling: The Dreaming** game), and the fiction/sourcebook hybrid of the *Book of the Kindred* (a sensual assault for *Vampire: The Masquerade*). The White Wolf-ers aren't just pushing the envelope; they're shoving the envelope off a mountain.

Black Labyrinth is a pinnacle of sorts, an RPG supplement that goes out of its way to flaunt its eccentricity. Ostensibly a collection of works inspired by an occultist named Frater — who's sort of a cross between Indiana Jones and Charles Manson — *Labyrinth* serves up a dizzying mix of journal excerpts, personal memoirs, and psychotic ramblings. It's breathtaking. It's infuriating. And you've never seen anything like it.

The material is tied, albeit loosely, to the Wyrm and other key concepts in *Werewolf The Apocalypse*. Kernels of hard information are hard to come by, but they're in there, and they're fascinating. A centurion's diary reveals the secrets of the serpent folk, an ancient race of fiends with connections to the Picts. The Table of Cardinal Essences lists the totems of the Eater of Souls and the servitors of the Essence of Sludge. The Grades of Initiation section explains how to attain the various ranks within the Black Spiral organization, useful to social-climbing Garou.

Black Labyrinth, however, is mostly about mood, and it evokes an atmosphere that's genuinely disturbing. A reproduction of *Cloven Hoof Magazine* recounts the exploits of Professor Wayland Webley and his descent into insanity. A document from the Harleian Museum recounts the grotesque rituals associated with the Church of Damburrow. As for the Monkeyboy section, I'm not sure what it means, but tell the truth — didn't the chunk quoted above kinda give you the creeps? It's all pretty much like that: vague, eerie, compelling. Reading *Black Labyrinth* made me feel like I'd slipped into another world, a world crunched in death and despair. More importantly, it made me want to haul *Werewolf* out of the closet and give it another try.

Evaluation: For sheer originality, *Black Labyrinth* deserves six pips. But as a role-playing aide, it's no better than a two-pipper, considering that much of it borders on the incomprehensible. On other hand, Werewolf isn't about combat stats and attribute bonuses, its about passion and ambiance; for true believers, incomprehensibility is part of the game's charm. In that sense, *Black Labyrinth* deserves . . . geez, this is driving me nuts. Let's give it four pips and get the heck out of here. If you're a connoisseur of the bizarre, *Black Labyrinth* belongs in your library, even though its likely to make your other books recoil in disgust. But as Chucko the Monkeyboy might say, "It dont no aint gonna hert ya nun.*"

Short and sweet

Pulp Dungeons: The Forsaken Elves, Pulp Dungeons: An Infestation of Kobolds, Pulp Dungeons: Dwarf Hold and Pulp Dungeons: Orc's Lair, all by Timothy Brown. Destination Games, \$4 each.

If you lament the scarcity of low-level, smartly designed RPG adventures, lament no more. The four self-contained fantasy scenarios in the *Pulp Dungeons* series serve up enough tricky encounters, engaging opponents, and convoluted death traps to tickle the fancy of the most demanding dungeon crawler. The best of the bunch, *Dwarf Hold*, sends the party though a secret door in a granite cliff and into a creature-strewn maze. Forget about rich plots and lavish production values; these are strictly no-frills thrillers. And since they're generic in nature, they can be adapted to any RPG system, including those associated with dragons and, er, dungeons. (Information: Destination Games, PO Box 1345, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.)

The North: Guide to the Savage Frontier, by Slade, Ed Greenwood, Jeff Grubb, Julia Martin, Paul Jaquays, Steve Perrin, Jim Butler, and Steven Schend. TSR Inc., \$25.

Here in Iowa, we're gearing up for winter, which tends to arrive with all the subtlety of a sledge hammer. To get in the mood, I've been perusing *The North*, which couldn't have portrayed a sub-zero environment more vividly if it'd been etched in ice cubes. Though it skimps a bit on adventure hooks, this extravagant boxed set describes Frozenfar, the Neverwinter Woods, and a host of other frosty locales in chilling detail. If you're one of those wimps who

sits out the winter in Florida, check out *The North*) and see what us real men are up against.

Ironwood, by David Berkman, Aaron Crosten, Travis Eneix, Andrew Finch, and Anthony Gallela. Backstage Press, \$27.

The *Theatrix** game, a diceless universal RPG system reminiscent of the GURPS* game, didn't impress me much the first time around. Although I liked the goofy tone and the emphasis on storytelling, the improvisational tone of the rules made it tough to run. But if all the supplements prove to be as good as *Ironwood*, I might break down and play it again. Based on the underground comic book by Bill Willingham, *Ironwood* presents a magic-saturated setting called Avalon that's one part monster movie, one part Monty Python. Unicorns and storm giants roam the treacherous terrain, as do bugbears, hell hounds, and dinosaurs — in other words, if you've ever seen it in a fantasy game, you can probably find it here. Player characters can be anything from vampires to elves to weremuskrats and can learn to cast spells like *skeletal servitor* and *wither limb*. The whimsical magical items are especially fun; the Sunbrella projects a field of darkness, and the Friendly Coat Rack not only takes your hat, but hangs it neatly upon itself. Even if I never get around to exploring *Ironwood* (which, incidentally, isn't suitable for children because of some explicit material), I might arrange for the Friendly Coat Rack to show up in an AD&D campaign. (Information: Backstage Press, PO Box 170243, San Francisco, CA 94117.)

The Book of Exploration, by Diane Piron-Gelman, Greg Gordon, David R. Henry, Angel Leigh McCoy, Jim Nelson, Andrew Ragland, and Rich Warren. FASA Corporation, \$10.

The second volume in the *Legends* series presents another set of tales and fables derived from the mythos of the *Earthdawn** game. "Carrul and the Therans" describes the flight of a Barsaive airship. "An Ancient Mystery" tells of a quest for a rare plant in the Mist Swamps. Well-written and tightly edited, they go down as easy as potato chips. Still, despite the section of game material at the end, this is essentially a collection of short stories. So why not publish it as a paperback book and knock the price down few bucks?



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Heroes' Lorebook, by Dale Donovan and Paul Culotta. TSR, Inc., \$20.

A update of 1989's *Hall of Heroes* supplement for the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting, this data-packed encyclopedia profiles 61 of the AD&D game's most eminent characters. Each entry provides complete statistics, background information, and campaign notes, drawn from novels and game products published through the end of 1995. With so much history to digest, casual players may feel overwhelmed. But if you take the Realms seriously, and names like Alias and Drizzt Do'Urden make your pulse quicken, welcome to nirvana.

Eurosource Plus, by Jose Ramos, Florian Merx, and Steve Gill. R. Talsorian Games, \$18.

A good, not great, supplement for the *Cyberpunk** game, *Eurosource Plus* suffers from the same shortcomings as guidebooks like *Pacific Rim*. Namely, it tries to tackle too much of the planet. It's hard to cover the economy, politics, and geography of Italy in less than three pages. Spain and Bulgaria get about two pages each. Portugal gets about one. The concepts are solid; the German sports clubs and the Dreampainters of France are admirable additions to the *Cyberpunk* universe. But a narrower focus would've allowed the designers more room to breathe. Next time, instead of another *Eurosource*, how about something along the lines of *Portugalsource*?

Material World* game, by Kent Mitchell and Alexis Papahadjopoulos. Strange Magic Games, \$30.

A cousin of the *Civilization** and *Diplomacy** board games, this engaging economic simulation casts players as monarchs of England, France, Germany, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire. By expending resources like wheat and timber, the monarchs build caravans, galleons, and trains to establish trade routes around the world. Trade routes bring in coffee, carpets, and other treasures. Whoever accumulates the biggest treasure hoard wins the game. Victory depends on careful resource allocation and chess-like timing, making the game virtually luck-free. *Material World* has nothing to do with role-playing, but since it allows you to conquer the planet by acquiring coffee and carpets, I guess it qualifies as fantasy. (Information: Strange Magic Games, 2529 College Ave., Berkeley, CA 94704.)

Og* game, by Aldo Ghiozzi. Wingnut Games, \$8.

Yes, it's real. *Og* bills itself as a role-playing game of "senseless prehistoric combat," which is close to a perfect description. To build your caveman PC, you roll six-sided dice to determine scores for Strength, Brains, and three other attributes, then pick a few skills like Fire Starting and Picture Writing. Armed with Short Pointy Things and Bent Sticks That Come Back, the PCs venture into the wilderness to do battle with Hairy Cave Things and Hairy Tree Things. Throughout, the players must communicate with each other using only a 17-word vocabulary. Thus, if a PC wants to kill a gorilla, the player tells his comrade, "You, me bang Hairy Tree Thing." Me like play bone head. You like play bone head, too? (Information: Wingnut Games, PO Box 1714, Burlingame, CA 94011.)

Rick Swan has written for Writer's Digest, Wizard, and the Marion County Pork Peddler. You can contact him at 2620 30th Street, Des Moines, IA 50310. Enclose a self-addressed envelope if you'd like a reply.

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Glorantha resurgent

One of the oldest and best roleplaying worlds returns to prominence starting next year, as Chaosium (Albany, CA) and the Italian game publisher Stratelibri begin Gloranthan roleplaying, fiction, and miniatures lines.

Chaosium founder and president Greg Stafford, who developed his fantasy world of Glorantha starting in 6th grade, introduced it to the gaming hobby in his early board games *Dragon Pass** (1976) and *White Bear and Red Moon** (1977). Glorantha reached full flower in Steve Perrin's *RuneQuest** RPG (1977) and ensuing supplements (1978-84) before Chaosium sold *RQ* to The Avalon Hill Game Company (Baltimore) in 1985. Avalon Hill's support for Glorantha has been uneven, but the world's rich mix of history, mythic scope, and shamanic magic has fostered a tight-knit community of fans in America, Europe, and Australia.

David Hall, editor of the excellent British *RQ* fanzine *Tales of the Reaching Moon*, has contracted with Chaosium to develop a new Gloranthan RPG using the mechanics from Stafford's superb *Pendragon** RPG. "It is intended to handle everything from microcampaigning to heroquesting," says a press release. "Simple mechanics and extensive use of runes for the magic system will make the game accessible to all."

Chaosium has licensed Stratelibri to publish Gloranthan games in Europe and will coordinate their American release. Starting next summer, Stratelibri plans two sets of tabletop miniatures rules (25mm skirmish and 15mm mass combat) plus accompanying lines of figures. "The first full year will include six Gloranthan army books, plus introductory materials describing Glorantha. Board games and other related products are also planned."

Australian writers Phil and Marion Anderson, designers of or contributors to several *Call of Cthulhu** game supplements (*Fearful Passages*, *Horror on the Orient Express*, *Cairo Sourcebook*), are editing the Gloranthan fiction line. No release dates for the fiction or roleplaying lines have been set. (Contact: chaosium@aol.com)

Meanwhile, Avalon Hill is readying the *RuneQuest* game's fourth edition (176

pages, \$20), by Oliver Jovanovic, Mike McGloin, and others, for release in spring 1997. A companion *Adventures in Glorantha* worldbook (200+ pages) appears in summer. AH also plans two Gloranthan scenario books by Harald Smith and Martin Crim, *Edge of Empire* and *Winds of Deception*. These are set in Imther, a small provincial kingdom of the Lunar Empire, circa 1620 ST. (Contact: avhill999@aol.com)

Magazine scene

Bootstrap Press (Vancouver) has put its *Adventures Unlimited* magazine on hiatus. The magazine will resurface in the future, possibly by year's end, "probably reformatted and with some differences in the content," says Bootstrap's Nicole Lindroos Frein. "We'll be filling everyone's subscriptions and are still accepting new subscriptions." Meanwhile, Bootstrap is preparing *MARS: Adventures in Miniature*, a science-fiction gaming magazine, for an October debut. *MARS* covers such games as the *Battletech**, *Warhammer 40,000** and *Heavy Gear** systems. (Contact: nikchick@aol.com)

A new company, Raven's Watch (Gibbsboro, NJ), has announced The October Society, a club devoted to horror RPGs both popular and neglected. "There are many horror games out there with little or no press, and we want to fix that," says an Internet press release from "Lord Icarus" (not the most propitious name). In its monthly newsletter, the Society "will constantly seek out new games while still covering in-depth those that have driven a stake into our hearts." Memberships: \$13/six months, \$20/year to Raven's Watch Inc., 71 Lakeview Drive Suite 456, Gibbsboro, NJ 08026. (Contact: lordicarus@aol.com)

Notes from the field

After a year of scheduling problems, FASA Corporation (Chicago) plans strong support in 1997 for its popular *Shadowrun** cyberpunk/magic RPG, including an art book (January), an underworld sourcebook (January) and accompanying adventures (March), scenario books in May and December, a second edition of the *Rigger Black Book* (July), *Cyber-Pirates* (October), at least three novels, and in May — wait for it — a *Shadowrun* trading card game. (Contact: fasainfo@aol.com)

This just in . . .

Games Magazine has announced their choice of the DRAGONLANCE®: FIFTH AGE™ game as their 1996 Adventure Game of the Year. Last year's winner was also a TSR product, the popular Dragon Dice™ expandable dice game.

Likewise, Metropolis Ltd.'s *Kult** RPG of Clive Barker-style horror and Gnostic philosophy has had a bumpy ride. But Metropolis (Folsom, PA, but with staffers based in three states and the District of Columbia) has big plans for late 1996 and 1997, including a revised *Kult* rulebook, a player's companion, two magic sourcebooks, two scenario books, and a cheery supplement called *Purgatory*. (Contact: lictor@aol.com)

Name any three gaming companies. Gold Rush Games (Elk Grove, CA), which has doubled the size of its product line from one *Champions** scenario book to two, produces more press releases than all three companies put together. Gold Rush now carries the Hero Games backstock; Gold Rush is the American distributor for the fine gaming magazine *Australian Realms*; Gold Rush has abandoned plans for a new edition of the venerable *Bushido** RPG after threats of legal action from the previous publisher, Fantasy Games Unlimited, and is now embarking on a new roleplaying game set in feudal Japan, the *Sengoku** game. ("Sengoku" is Japanese for "warring states.") No word on a release date yet; no doubt there will be a press release. (Contact: goldrushg@aol.com)

Pagan Publishing (Seattle), publisher of *The Unspeakable Oath* magazine and licensed *Call of Cthulhu** game supplements, has moved. New address: Pagan Publishing, 5536 25th Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98105. (Contact: paganpub@aol.com)



Freelance game designer Allen Varney says hi to Melbourne's Phil and Marion Anderson, new Gloranthan fiction editors (see story above), who hosted him for several delightful weeks of his seven-month world trip in 1992-93. Send news to APVarney@aol.com.

The Current Clack

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DRAGON® Magazine extends a warm welcome to Todd Lockwood and Randy Post, two of the most talented artists in fantasy illustration. Both have recently joined the TSR staff, and we can't wait to see their work on new games next year.

White Wolf to form Null Foundation

Mark Reine•Hagen, designer of the *Vampire: The Masquerade** game and three other Storyteller RPGs published by White Wolf Game Studio (Atlanta, GA), now plans a subsidiary company, the Null Foundation. Created to support Reine•Hagen's forthcoming *Exile** science-fiction RPG, Null will distribute the game's rules and supplements over the Internet, free of charge. Null will be "connected directly to White Wolf," says Reine•Hagen, comparing the relationship to "a Japanese conglomerate, but not with a bank at the center but an intellectual property" — both the game and spinoff companies that derive from it.

The *Exile* game's draft rules and preliminary background material are available on White Wolf's ornate World Wide Web site (www.white-wolf.com). The game incorporates concepts from a broad range of science fiction stories, such as David Brin's "Uplift" series, Frank Herbert's *Dune*, and works by Orson Scott Card and Gene Wolfe. In a highly stratified galactic society, players play scholars, aristocrats, celebrities, or others on the paradise planet, Diadar. As the game begins, the characters are exiled from Diadar to the Grange, a mysterious region of space beyond the Great Barrier. Each beginning character has affiliations with up to five different "Syndics" (organizations): as champion of one, enemy of another, initiate in a third, spy for a fourth, and contact for a fifth. By fostering "memes" (ideas or beliefs), a character collects Logos, points that serve many

purposes. Syndics and memes determine character goals, which vary widely. Reine•Hagen says the game tries to "get at the core of what classic science fiction is all about, but in a way that's basically mythological."

"A polymedia entity": At press time Null had not yet secured nonprofit status. Pending approval, details of Null's operation remain confidential. But Rein•Hagen, speaking from his home in San Francisco, discussed its goals in general terms. "The idea is to evolve what we call a polymedia entity." Whereas he says "multimedia" generally means "Here's an idea, let's find a bunch of different ways to market it," Rein•Hagen intends his "polymedia" idea to evolve naturally to fit all media.

"I'm very interested in letting the [*Exile*] world evolve with the input of hundreds, if not thousands, of people. Roleplaying is already intrinsically polymedia," Rein•Hagen says, citing the early evolution of the D&D® game as "very powerful. But I don't think any other game after [the D&D game] has evolved. I think that evolution has been lost, because [later RPGs have] been overly designed. We want *Exile* to evolve to fit its ecosystem."

The Web site will include a newsgroup, Rein•Hagen says, where players can discuss the game. Null Foundation designers will read the discussions, and "if someone comes up with a really good idea, we'll approach them and invite them to get involved. Once you contribute on a basic level to the world, there will be opportunities for you to get involved at higher levels. Those involved in the Null Foundation will get first bid on new companies that spin off from the game. "The idea is to help people start their own companies. [In the role-playing field,] there's never been an organized way to help people do that."

As an example, Rein•Hagen cited Noise-to-Signal Consulting, a planned

company that would develop the news-group software. This program would let users vote on other players' posted ideas; posts have ratings customized to each user. For example, say you and I both like the same kinds of posts. If I vote "thumbs-up" for a given post, then when the program shows you a rating for that post, it gives my voter greater weight than a vote from someone who seldom shares your taste.

Long-term goals: Rein•Hagen says the *Exile* game tries to "take what we've learned from [White Wolf's] *World of Darkness* and do some radically different things. I'm convinced they'll work, but nothing's for sure. The whole idea is, we take risks, and we do things differently. Role-playing is not only about worlds but also intrinsically [about] where all our media are going: [toward] interactive storytelling. What we are creating today will become within ten years an important form of storytelling, and within thirty years can become the dominant form of storytelling in the world."

He hopes that the Null Foundation can guard against commercial pressures that, he believes, can corrupt creators' intent. "We, the pioneers, should push in a way that evolves [role-playing] so that people who come later can screw it up. Look at comic books. It's sad that in America comics are seen as childlike, when it's clear they can be incredible works of art. Role-playing deserves something more."

"This is not about one person's vision, it's not about leadership, it's not about 'follow us,' We're trying to give people the tools they need to do what they want, whether they're memes or rules or simply new ideas that can do what art always does: change someone's perspective." (Contact: wwolfmail@white-wolf.com)

Continued on page 119

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