

THE ROLE-PLAYING GAMES MONTHLY

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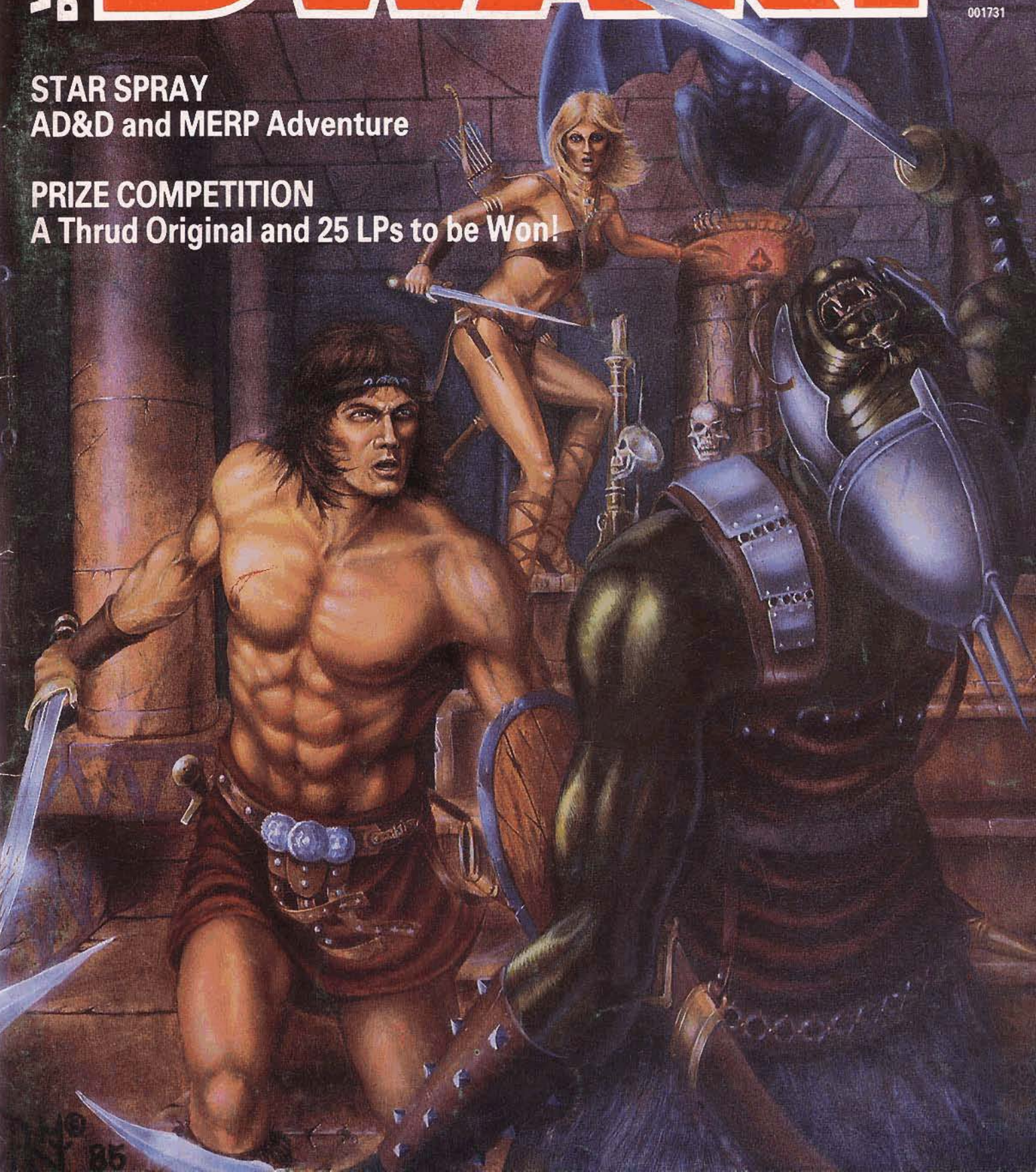
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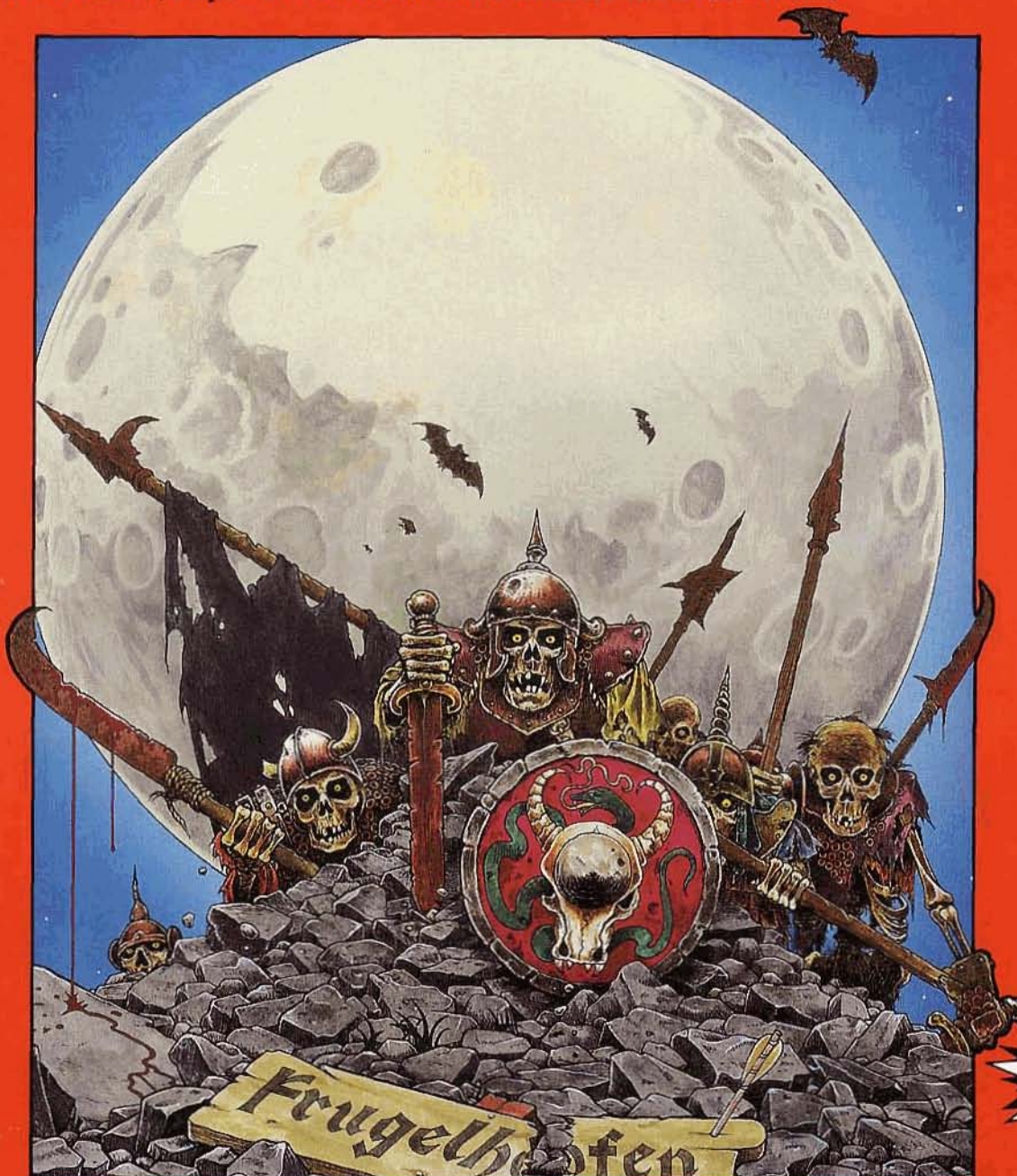


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ISSUE 73 JANUARY 1986

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With the news that *Boots* have decided to stock role-playing games, *Citadel* miniatures and *Fighting Fantasy* books, our hobby seems set to dispel the illusion of being a weirdos' cult. *Boots* are the first major chain to stock a large range of rolegames in the country, and I for one hope that others will follow their example. Manchester, Maidstone, Nottingham and Portsmouth are the first stores to take games. All this does, however, make me wonder about the future of convenience shopping. Now, not only will we be able to buy the latest game releases, but essentials like soap, hair-rollers and Talking Heads lps at the same time!

Ian Livingstone

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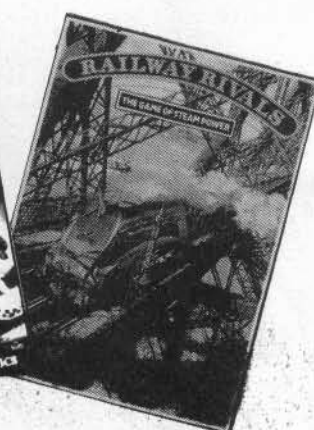
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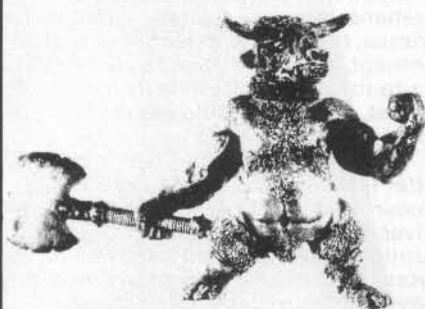
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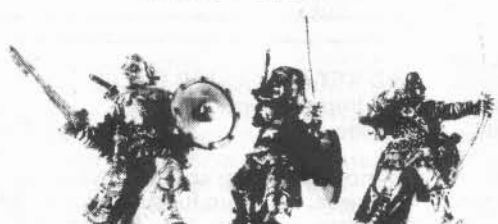
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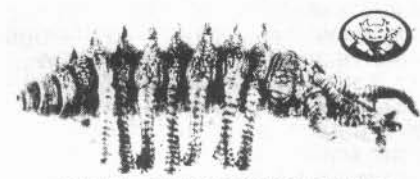
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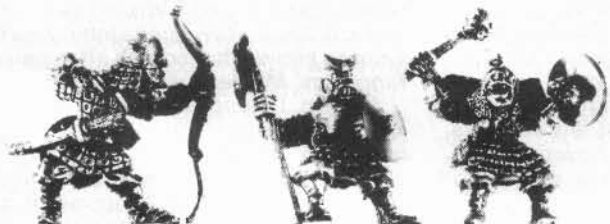
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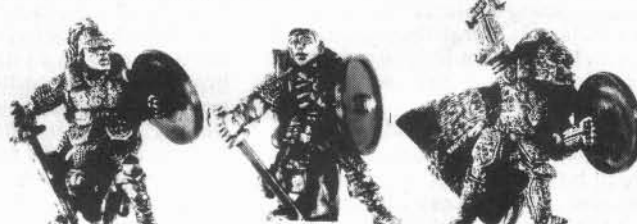
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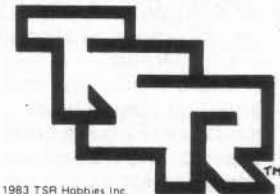
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In Open Box, fantasy and science fiction games and supplements currently in the shops are reviewed by independent authorities.

OPEN BOX

QUEEN VICTORIA & THE HOLY GRAIL Role-Playing Scenario Games Workshop

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Listen, I don't mind telling you that this *Golden Heroes* scenario caused a lot of controversy during development. Marcus Rowland has an unusual, somewhat irreverent and definitely bloodthirsty attitude towards Superhero games. This scenario is Tough, this scenario is Weird, but it is such a marvellous idea that it is well and truly worth all of the trouble.

Obviously I don't want to give any of the plot away, but it does concern Queen Victoria, it does concern the Holy Grail, it doesn't concern time travel and it features one of those charming Megavillain types (see *WD64*) that fight whole teams of heroes to a standstill and then disappear off into the sunset vowing to return to conquer the world another time.

Presentation? Well, being one of *Games Workshop's Monthly Modules*, it doesn't contain quite the same quantity and quality of play aids. Also *Workshop* has lost the services of the excellent Kev Hopgood who is now too busy drawing for *Marvel* to illustrate *GH* stuff. However, it still keeps the excellent format pioneered on *Legacy* and it compares well to the similarly priced *Marvel Super Heroes* scenarios.

I have got a few gripes. I still think the ending is a bit too vicious. Also I feel that one of the four maps is unnecessary. There are other locations in the scenario that need a map more than this one: what idiot is going to start a fight in Buckingham Palace? Overall though, love it, love it, and I can't wait for the players in my campaign to get tough enough to handle it.

By the way, I'm told that *Monthly Modules* have a limited print run and are unlikely to be available for very long.

Complexity:	6	Ease of Use:	8
Production:	8	Value:	8
Skill:	8	Overall:	8

Pete Tamlyn

JUDGE DREDD – THE ROLE-PLAYING GAME

Role-Playing Game
Games Workshop

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Designing a role-playing game is a difficult task to accomplish in its own right, without having to base it on the exploits of a single character – in this case, that most famous of Mega-City 1 lawmen, Judge Dredd.

Marc Gascoigne and Rick Priestley must be congratulated for making what could easily have been a disaster into a classic. The box art, by Terry Oakes, is stunning for a start! Inside the box there are two books; the Judge's Manual (72 pages) and the Games Master's Book

(128 pages), dice, a double-sided sheet of floor plans (for the two scenarios included), and a sheet of cut-out cardboard characters. The latter depicts Judges, citizens, monsters and the like, but unfortunately the characters are a little amateurish in comparison with the rest of the game.

Emblazoned under the Judge's shield on the cover of the Judge's Manual is the legend 'Read This First'. Not wishing to spend the next six months in an Iso-Cube for disobeying a Judge's instructions, I suppose I'd better cover it first.

The book kicks off with an introduction to role-playing games in general, which should prove to be very useful for any novice player. Experienced players can give it a miss. Player character generation is covered next (in 'The Making of a Judge') and it is interesting to see that the game has dispensed with traditional characteristics such as charisma, wisdom, intelligence, etc. Instead, a Judge's attributes include Strength (strangely rated from 1-3), Initiative, Combat, Drive, Technical, Street, Medic and Psi skills. These are generated on a percentage basis. After character generation comes a section detailing standard issue equipment, and, most dear to a Judge's heart, notes on how to make an arrest.

Although Judges only start off with limited special skills, as they gain knowledge and experience, they can learn specialities such as Crackshot, Lawmaster Leap and Aura of Cool. A general overview of Mega-City 1 life, together with a very comprehensive guide to slang rounds off the players' guide.

A large number of role-playing games fail to deal with a vital topic – namely, how to play the game. *Judge Dredd* is not one of these. The weighty Game Master's Book has its first few sections devoted to exactly this – how to be a game master and how to run a game and cope with your players.

The GM's Book contains many elaborations, usually rules orientated, of subjects covered in the Judge's Manual. This draws the distinction very nicely between what the players do and do not need to know.

The section on non-player characters is quite extensive, and GMs are encouraged to give NPCs as much life as their comic counterparts. Most of the *2000AD* villains are included in a useful rogues' gallery, and I can't think of any major perp that isn't present. Many of them, of course, have already been judged by Dredd, but there's no real reason why they couldn't be resurrected to fight against the players. Mind you, you'd better leave Judge Death out of it until your players have a little bit of experience! NPC heroes are also detailed, although Dredd has a surprisingly low Psi rating of 30 – I thought he was 'double zero' rated?

One important section that might use-

fully have been expanded in the Judge's Manual, that of sentencing, is comprehensively covered here. Examples of crimes, together with length of imprisonment, are given. Novice players will undoubtedly require help from their GM at first, but they should get the hang of things quite quickly.

Trying to map Mega-City 1 would be utter folly, and the *Judge Dredd* RPG doesn't even try! Far more sensibly, it gives details about city block design and furnishings for the dedicated (and some would say insane) person who wants to have a go. A general 'bits and pieces' section finishes off this book, leaving only the two scenarios for me to comment on.

The first of these is designed to get you into the swing of the combat system. Dealing with a simple case of wrecking, an idea taken almost directly from a story in *2000AD*, it makes an ideal introduction, being carefully balanced and atmospheric.

The second scenario, 'The Ultimate Crime of Tony Thermo' is... well, it'd spoil it if I told you. Suffice it to say, it's a race against time and particularly well-written.

All in all, *Judge Dredd – The Role-Playing Game* is an excellent product, for detail, value and content. Dredd fans will be pleased with it.

Complexity:	7	Ease of Use:	8
Production:	9	Value:	10
Overall:	10	Jason Kingsley	

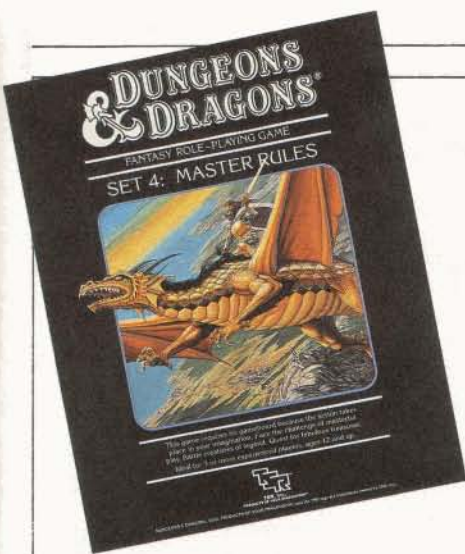
D&D SET 4: MASTER RULES RPG Supplement TSR Inc

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No more mucking about with wimpy vampires; no more fussing about with third-rate shadows. You're 36th level now. From *Basic*, through *Expert*, past *Companion*, you have reached the stage where you can cast 9 wishes before tea, and still have a few spells left over. You want to know what comes after ruling a Kingdom; *Masters* will show you.

At least, I thought it would. For those with characters of 4th-8th level maximum, the idea that there can be 36th level demi-gods must seem like a totally different game. I suppose it is, in a way, but the *Masters Set* doesn't leave you gasping for something simple. Throughout the ascent, the *D&D* game has never run out of air. This is an intelligent, subtle and interesting extension to the game, only to be purchased if you've a need to know about such rarified heights. And there are plenty of people who do need this set, ask the *TSR* switchboard...

There are two books in the set, as one might expect. The *Players' Book* expands the spell lists for clerics, magic-users and druids, while adding to the range of attack ranks for the demi-humans. Then there are rules for Weapons Mastery, a more subtle form of weapon specialization and proficiency. You start as a Novice, and rise to Grand Master, doing more damage as you grow more skilled. It's simple, but it's enough. It's made all the more usable by a table that lists all the weapons from the *D&D* universe, and then shows



OPEN BOX

inal designers might be able to offer something you can't manage yourself, I've got to say that this is a very useful set. I can't honestly see *D&D* at Immortals level in my mind's eye yet, but it's so far, so good.

Complexity:	5	Usefulness:	6
Production:	7	Value:	8
Ease of Use:	8	Overall:	8

Paul Cockburn

UNEARTHED ARCANA RPG Supplement TSR Inc

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With the arrival of *Unearthed Arcana*, the *AD&D* game has become the *Advanced* *Advanced* game, almost as different from the game that was founded on the *Players Handbook* and the *DMG* as that game was from *Basic*. I have no doubt that *Unearthed Arcana* will be a huge commercial success. I also have no doubt that it will cause many problems for gamers, already confused by the existing variations of the game.

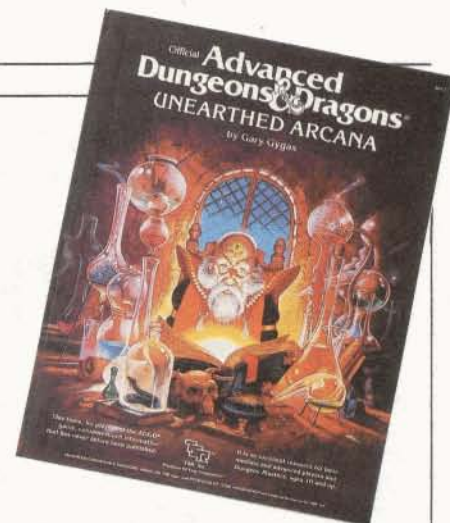
What we have here is a collection of most of the Official material published in the *Dragon* and *Imagine* over the last few years. This material has been the subject of a lot of criticism, and much of it has been re-written for *UA*. So, we now have the barbarian, cavalier and acrobat classes; weapon specialization; comeliness; a large addition to the range of character races, including drow and svirfneblin; new spells; and one or two interesting new ideas. It is very unlikely that these ideas will not pass into current currency – it seems that the appetite for new material that some people have will never be filled – just as it is unlikely that *TSR* themselves will ignore this new volume when they produce modules or other play-aids. So, the question will be asked, do you play *UA*, or not?

For a lot of people, this will be a one-off decision. Someone in the group will buy the volume, and will announce that he/she is going to play as a cavalier. There will be a discussion, the DM(s) will decide, and that will be that. Maybe, by the end of this review, you will have decided already.

But there are going to be times when the decision is more complicated than that. Take game conventions like *Games Day* or *Games Fair*; do they accept *UA* or not? Take modules produced in places outside *TSR* control – like this magazine – do they accept the conventions of *UA*? And what about all the people who move from one group to another?

So, ignoring the contents entirely, the chief problem with *UA* is the fact that it is a companion book. Don't feel that you have to have a copy. It is about as important to the running of a good game as Official character sheets or figures.

Enough generalizations. Let's assume you are interested in an expansion to your *AD&D* game. Well, frankly, I think you'll be disappointed with this volume. Outside of the material that you may already have bought in magazine form, there is very little here. And even if you don't already know all about the drow or the barbarian, you aren't going to be very excited by what you get here. The extension to the number of character



classes is virtually ridiculous, adding several over-powerful races to the list and including some – like the drow – who can't get on with anybody else. Frustrated elf MUs or dwarven fighters might be pleased to see that some thought has been given to upper class level limits for the demi-humans, but it is still just as arbitrary as before. The new character classes are dire. The barbarian... well, it's a farce. When first presented, the balance that made this super-tough fighter a less attractive proposition was the fact that barbarians would have no truck with magic. In *UA*, that balance is gone. Throw away all those measly fighters, folks, and pull on the loin-cloths. The cavalier is OK, everything the paladin should have been in the first place (and the paladin is duly relegated to being a sub-class of this sub-class). The acrobat, again, offers possibilities that should have been attached to the thief from the beginning.

Then there is weapon specialization. Your fighter or ranger can adopt a weapon as a special arm, and receive bonuses in its use. It's a wonderful system for adding plusses to die rolls.

Comeliness and social status I shall ignore so that this review isn't all negative. The new spells – the bulk of the book – are OK, but add nothing very scintillating to the game.

And that (plus the *Everyman's Guide to Polearms*) just about wraps it up. A rules extension package of reprints, most of which add very little of interest or value to anybody's game. What they do add is a significant list of 'extras', to improve player characters and to bring a little variety into wilting games. Add all the extras together, and you have a book that will turn your player characters into spearmen, and which means that all the modules you own or have written yourself need alteration. In a world of barbarians, weapon specialization, and Method 5, four orcs in a room are no threat to anybody.

Method 5? Didn't I mention that? Ah, well in Method 5 for generating characters, you choose the class you want to be and then you roll dice. Lots of dice. Fighters roll STR on 9d6, CON on 8d6, DEX on 7d6 (taking the best three, of course), and so on. Clumsy fighters? Never heard of them mate. Must be some other game...

Complexity:	7	Ease of Use:	4
Production:	5	Value:	6
Ease of Use:	3	Overall:	4

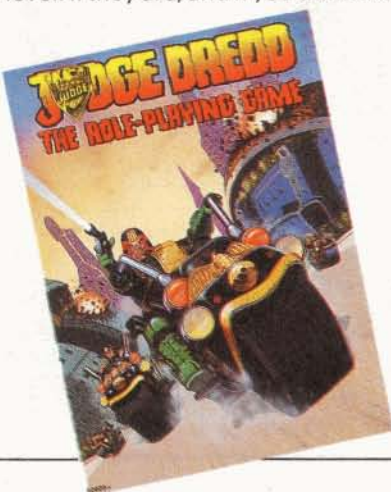
Paul Cockburn

all the restrictions (two-handed, use only in melee, etc), costs, weights, damage at different levels of Mastery, defence uses and special effects. A nice touch. You could end up using it a lot.

In the Master DM's book, we find that the bulk is taken up with the usual expansion to the lists of magical items and monsters. These are all OK. Much more useful are some important paragraphs that give the DM firm guidelines on coping with such a high-magic, super-powerful campaign. Think of a simple spell like *dispel magic* at 36th level, and you'll see why this help is needed. The material on how to cope with the paperwork of having players run small empires is going to help a lot of DMs, and so will the section on balancing encounters. You could be picky and say that all this information should be around in earlier sets, but *Masters* is where most people would start running into serious problems. It is very sound advice in this context.

One section, however, shows the other method of keeping control of high-level play. *Masters* invents something called Anti-Magic; a property possessed by the Immortals, and certain monsters like beholders. Essentially this reduces or nullifies the effects of magic within its sphere of influence. It's a terrific idea. I can think of nothing more ironic than having the party magic-user reduced to the same effectiveness he had when he fired off one *sleep* every twenty-four hours. Actually, as a means of halting the escalation of magic use, it's quite good.

Do you need *Masters*? Well, only you can decide if your campaign is going to have characters straying beyond 36th level. If they are, and if you think the orig-



2020 Vision is White Dwarf's new column covering fantasy and science fiction movies, written by Colin Greenland.

FOLLOW THAT OCTOPUS

Out goes 1985 with a double-barrelled blast from Hollywood. So much for British Film Year. Even as I write, *Legend*, in which British director Ridley Scott turns from horror and science fiction (*Alien*, *Blade Runner*) to elves, pixies and unicorns, is back with its editors for a third time, while two all-American movies jostle for your holiday halfpence: one by Steven Spielberg, and the other by somebody called Steven Spielberg. The Boy Wonder is credited as Executive Co-Producer of both *Back to the Future* [Universal, PG] and *The Goonies* [Warner, PG]. He didn't direct either of them himself: *The Goonies* he wrote (on a beermat, seemingly), while lending his name and his money to ensure the success of *Back to the Future*, apparently without interfering with the actual filming. Even so, both pictures carry the authentic Spielberg message: the kids are all right. Teenage dreams and youthful high spirits are what will keep the heart of America beating.

Marty McFly (Michael J Fox) is a wide-eyed, clean-cut boy whose main problem is his family: alcoholic Mom Lorraine, spineless Dad George, and unprepossessing siblings. No wonder he'd rather be playing loud rock guitar at the home of his mad inventor pal Dr Brown (Christopher Lloyd, *Taxi's* Reverend Jim). Despite travelling everywhere by

skateboard, Marty's always late for school – until the day he takes a ride in Dr Brown's souped-up sportscar, and arrives thirty years early. At Hill Valley High he meets two charming youngsters, Lorraine and George, who don't even know each other yet. Marty has to introduce them, and make sure they stay introduced, if he's ever to get *Back to the Future*. The trouble is, George is such a wimp Lorraine isn't interested in him – but she does fancy Marty.

Robert Zemeckis writes and directs this affectionate treatment of the familiar time-travel paradox, with plenty of comical misunderstandings and some truly frantic suspense. There's enough sly period detail to coax you into a second viewing: the set designers must have had fun building their chirpy little Northern Californian town of 1955 on the Universal backlot before running it down to its degenerate present-day condition, replacing the milk-bar and the Studebaker dealer with Burger King, Toyotas and pawnshops (and pornshops). Historical confusions abound. In desperation Marty tracks down Dr Brown's younger self, who has great difficulty believing the boy is a visitor from thirty years hence. 'Okay, tell me,' he demands finally. 'Who's President of the United States in 1985?' Marty's answer does little for his credibility. An obvious joke,

but perfectly timed. That goes for the movie as a whole.

The Goonies I was unable to enjoy because of a bunch of kids yelling and screaming all the way through. Not the audience, the actors. The Goonies are a sort of hyperactive Secret Seven, called Mikey and Mouth and Chunk and so forth, searching for pirate treasure to buy off the evil property developers currently clawing at their sleepy seaside town (in Northern California). They are pursued through the bowels of the earth by an Italian gangster family. I was cheering the gangsters. Spielberg is fond of these murky caverns, strewn with skeletons and pitted with monstrous traps, as seen in both Indiana Jones movies. They may be a clumsy attempt to put the classic dungeon imagery of *Dungeons & Dragons* onto a cinema screen; but in fact, as other critics have said, the film resembles more some gigantic, relentless theme-park ride. In the mawkishly sentimental reunion scene, Chunk (or Berk, or Sneezzy, or somebody) tells his Mom and Dad about the terrible giant octopus. Several dozen numb film reviewers think to themselves: Octopus? I don't remember an octopus. Minutes later, there's the credit: 'OCTOPUS Designed and Created by THE BURMAN STUDIOS INC.' Unfortunately for the Burmans, the beast itself slithered to the cutting room floor and got clean away. Several dozen numb film reviewers concur: lucky octopus.

Another film that may still be around for you to catch (as in 'measles') is *The Bride* [Columbia, 15], a hokey new variation on *The Bride of Frankenstein*. After his dumb and lumpy male prototype, Baron F manages to create a flawless female Mark II, a free spirit who can only expose his own hypocritical and possessive nature. Confused, the maltreated original (6' 4" Clancy Brown) smashes up the lab and runs away. He meets Rinaldo, a sprightly dwarf played by David Rapaport, who teaches him about Life, Ambition and Beer, and takes him to Budapest, where they join a circus run by Alexei Sayle and Phil Daniels (from *Quadrophenia*). All this bit is as wonderful as you'd expect. It's incredibly annoying to have to return to the main plot, where Sting and Jennifer Beals are acting out their ponderous parable of Knowledge and Freedom. Then Rinaldo is treacherously killed. To enjoy the best of *The Bride*, leave the cinema here. Go instead in search of *The Victor*, a stunning and stylish cartoon made with money from Channel 4. An animation competition in LA threw it out for being 'too pessimistic', but it re-emerged at both the Cambridge Animation and the London Film Festivals. A young soldier struggles through a series of mysterious locations – a bar, a seafront, a dodgem rink, a haunted house – where everyone and everything rises up and tries to kill him. It seems like a vicious nightmare – but who are the two shadowy men looking down on him through plate glass? Derek Hayes and Phil Austin animate a powerful story with close affinities to the best strips in magazines like *Warrior* or *Escape*. Go and see it. See it even if it's on with *The Goonies*. □



Now, if I just reverse the polarity of the neutron flow...

Critical Mass is a regular fantasy and science fiction book review column, written by starving author Dave Langford.

The Great Hardback Famine

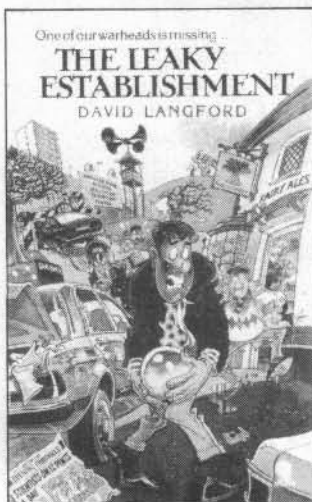
I'm recovering from being a guest of honour at Britain's autumn SF convention, where serious science-fictional things occurred: a speech during which I remember proposing three new Laws of Robotics; a death threat from kindly co-guest James White because I'd done a parody of his Sector General stories which Ian Marsh will soon have an opportunity to reject; and several parties, one of which led to everyone hiding in a toilet to escape the attentions of the most appallingly boring person in the universe, whom I am not afraid to name: (Cut – Ed).

Back in hungover Reading, I found the first review stack in aeons to include no hardbacks at all. Mind you, some of the paperbacks are Big – like *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy: The Original Radio Scripts* [Pan 249pp £4.99]. This is the perfect cure for fans worried by the differences between radio, radio repeat, record, book, and TV versions. Massive Arcturan Megafootnotes explain more, including reasons for changes, Arthur Dent's Origin Story, which TV programmes inspired the senseless violence satires, Adams' shoeshop phobia, and the ultimate significance of towels. 'Bits which were cut' appear, most of them familiar since used in books; other, weaker bits here were dropped; and Adams, then if not now a fanatical polisher didn't add several famous lines until the records and books. (Cf the hilarious Book 1, now in its 32nd impression, same old shoddy typography: Pan 159pp £1.95.) *Scripts* is worth it for the FX directions: THICK SWIRLING SMOKE. A FEW LIGHTS VISIBLE AND SOME MENACING BUT ILL DEFINED SHAPES. THIS IS SIGNALLED BY A FEW COUGHS FROM ARTHUR, WHO IS PLAYED BY A REMARKABLY TALENTED AND ABLE ACTOR. . . .

Harry Harrison, a talented and able writer, shows his versatility by effortlessly turning off these qualities for *You Can Be The Stainless Steel Rat* [Grafton £1.95. Grafton used to be Granada; there are no page numbers but 339 paragraphs.] Perhaps that's unfair: he cracks some good jokes, but literary ability seems irrelevant to these game books (look at the people who usually write them). Playability? Unless you get bored and go to sleep there's no way to lose, or to escape the linear 'plot' to which Harrison has merely added decorative, swiftly returning loops. Occasionally you toss a coin to find whether life or death awaits you: heads or tails lead to the same paragraph (guess what it says), inserted twice by the magic of the word processor. My all-purpose review for such efforts is designed to appease the publishers: 'This one is a real page-turner!'

So is James P Hogan's *Code of the Lifemaker* [Penguin 405pp £2.95], another step in this determined author's

progress from being merely worthy and dull. The scenario: a million years back, a damaged alien von Neumann machine lands on Titan. Its programs being as corrupt as South American politics, the robot workforce goes awry and starts



evolving – they even develop sexual reproduction. Blimey. (A first in science fiction: robot sexism! Not only do all female humans occupy subordinate roles – no female robot seems even to get a speaking part.) Cut to 21st-century investigative probe from Earth, carrying troops, exploiters and the lunatic fringe: a Gelleresque psychic (much sound scepticism here) and a fanatic debunker. Meanwhile, the robots are debating the shape of their world, a dangerous subject since they've also evolved the Spanish Inquisition. . . .

This farrago improves as alignments shift among the Earth team, with expected and unexpected reversals, and oddities are justified by the deeply nasty political sub-plot. Hogan grapples with robot environmentalism: will Earth strip-mine the metallic biosphere for spare parts? *Lifemaker* never comes to terms with its own absurdity, but if you survive the stodgy opening it has its charms.

As does Barrington Bayley, an even more rough-hewn writer than Hogan, and SF's premier pulp philosopher. *The Rod of Light* [Methuen 193pp £2.50] follows his *Soul of the Robot*, and with tongue partly in cheek examines the Nature of Consciousness in terms of B-movie villainy. Thus: Jasperodus, continuing robot hero, is unique in being conscious (thanks to soul-donating human 'parents'). Far more intelligent is Gargan (sic), a robot genius who though not conscious is bright enough to deduce that he isn't. A sympathetic and even tragic villain, he duly starts draining human souls out of the very best motives (also, of course, out of humans). Jasperodus opposes this on robotitarian grounds – but Gargan's team has the

last word: 'Consciousness needs matter through which to act. . . . But does matter need consciousness? No. . . . We robots are proof of that. Which, then, is more fundamental to the world?' Concepts by Jorge Luis Borges, action by Doc Smith, sense of humour Bayley's own.

The humour of Peter Beere's 'Trauma 2020' series escapes many readers: it's in the style and dialogue with which appalling events flow down big-city gutters a few years hence. Raymond Chandler on speed. 'As great love affairs go, ours was something of a wipe-out. Which is a surfing term meaning you scrape your balls off on the edge of the board.' The wisecracking idiom suits the non-hero Beekay, a crook, coward and (just barely) survivor whose paranoia is utterly justified. He even manages to poke shards of wit through the squalor of the sequence where he's forcibly addicted to heroin by an insane female cripple. This is volume 3, *Silent Slaughter* [Arrow 202pp £1.95]. 'The book doesn't stink,' says Beere. 'But it tries to.' It succeeds – conjuring up a smell that's a powerful antidote to books and TV series where violence is sanitized and good guys never get hurt, much.

For the reference shelf: David Pringle's *Science Fiction: the 100 Best Novels* [Xanadu 224pp £3.95]. When Anthony Burgess published a book listing 99 best novels, Pringle was inspired. His selections, covering 36 years from 1984 to *Neuromancer*, are less quirky than Burgess' and, short stories excepted, would be the basis of an excellent home SF library. Most of my favourites are there, and only a scattering of dodgy selections – like Mack Reynolds, an 'ideas and concepts' man whose writing makes my teeth hurt. Most surprising omission (with an evasive apology in the introduction): Jack Vance.

The Science Fiction Film Source Book [Longman 312pp £7.95 – yes, it is a paperback] is David Wingrove's follow-up to the offbeat *SF Source Book*. Despite the spate of SF movie books, it's a handy list of plot summaries, with added information about producers, directors, etc. Minor glitches: the dreaded 'star ratings' (for Plot, Technical skill, Entertainment and Artistic Merit) appear again, and coverage can be superficial (eg nothing on Hugo and suchlike SF film awards). To pick a random example, the entry on *Wizards* dismisses it as 'comic-orientated' without even mentioning the influence of Vaughn Bode, or Ian Miller's powerfully effective backgrounds. Nitpicking, though, is a game with no ending.

Down to the reissues. *Castles* by Alan Lee, David Day and David Larkin [Unicorn 192pp £7.95] is a gift book crammed with attractive pictures of. . . well, with that title, it's not bungalows. *Lies, Inc* [Granada 224pp £1.95] is the weird, mind-boggling expansion of Philip Dick's *The Unteleported Man*. E E Smith has long been held not responsible for the dismal 'Family d'Alembert' books, number 10 – *Revolt of the Galaxy* [Grafton 186pp £1.95] – being churned out as usual by Stephen Goldin. Rick Raphael's 1966 *Code Three*, exciting but dated SF about 800-mph cars, is improbably released as a tie-in with *Mad Max*. . . .

But where are my nice hardbacks? □

POWER & POLITICS

Derek Carver talks to White Dwarf about the Warrior Knights game



WD: For the benefit of readers who have not yet played *Warrior Knights* perhaps you would give a brief description of the game.

DC: It is set in an imaginary European country around 1400. The throne is vacant and the stage is set for a power struggle among the great Barons (the players) and their faction of Knights. The object of the game is to control over half of the country's un-raised cities. The moment this is achieved the game is over. [I stress 'un-raised' because a lack of money will often force an impoverished player to raze a city after capturing it. This brings him an immediate financial gain, but as opposed to putting him nearer to meeting the winning conditions it assists his opponents by making the conditions easier.]

Although the game is won as a result of military action the financial and political aspects have equal importance. It is essential that each player establishes a sound financial base before he attempts to do much else and it is only when he feels himself financially secure that he can confidently throw his military weight around.

The political aspect is one of the particularly unique features of *Warrior Knights*; this is represented by 'The Assembly'. The Assembly is at the heart of the game and on average it can be expected to meet around ten times, debating and voting on four motions every time it meets. All Barons 'in the country' are entitled to attend (and I say 'entitled' because one of the features of the game is attempting to prevent powerful Barons from attending) and a player's voting strength is dependent upon his status – represented by his wealth and the number of cities he controls. One Baron also has the power of Veto over one of the four motions.

There are a number of other aspects that feature in the game – such as investing in trading fleets and the appearance of a Royal Pretender – all of which are intended to keep the action lively.

WD: The usual question – where did the inspiration for *Warrior Knights* come from?

DC: There are two ways I go about inventing a game. The usual one is I decide that a certain situation would

provide material for a good game – the 'theme', if you like – and it is then a question of translating that situation into game terms. The other is when I feel that certain ideas would make the elements of a good game and I then try to find a scenario into which they will fit. This is what happened with *Warrior Knights*. In this instance I wanted to make a game that was played on three equal (and I stress the 'equal') levels – Military, Political and Financial. I also wanted to make a game that was controlled by votes of the players, which in its turn involved those players having to make a conscious decision as to where they wanted their power to lie.

At the time I was working on the game I was a 'fringe' wargamer but I greatly disliked the small pieces and the inevitable stacking. Andrew McNeil with *Kingmaker* let a breath of fresh air into that particular door by representing each army by a single piece with the make up of the army represented by cards off the board, and the influence of *Kingmaker* in this respect can be seen in *Warrior Knights*. So in this particular instance there was no single flash of inspiration as such. Instead, the game was gradually built up round a core of ideas that I felt would make for exciting play.

WD: In the introduction you described the game as being set in an 'imaginary' country. Had you anywhere particular in mind?

DC: Well, I suppose I was thinking of a region somewhere near present-day Poland but I purposely avoided anywhere that was in any way recognisable even though I wanted to preserve the feeling of period. This 'Polish' feeling has largely disappeared now that the Knights have been given somewhat international names – each name being linked to the colour of the player's faction. I fully acknowledge the attraction some people find in correct historical simulations but because I am at heart a games player rather than a history buff I find attempts to recreate a precise historical location and/or situation restrictive in the gaming sense.

WD: Would you call it a wargame?

DC: No, not really. Combat is only one element in the game, even though it is an important one. But wargaming is a very serious business and frankly, I feel there are too many fun elements in *Warrior Knights* for it to be considered a true wargame.

WD: You use the word 'fun' in relation to *Warrior Knights*, implying that you consider it an important component of the game. Is this so?

DC: Most definitely. I like a game to generate a lot of noise (of the friendly type!). In fact, in the games I play and in the games I invent there are certain features that I like to be present if possible. Firstly I like a lot of simultaneous action with the waiting for other players to make their moves kept to a minimum. I also dislike very long games – or, rather, games that are longer than they need to

be. By this I mean that every game, just like a book or a piece of music, has a length which is ideal for that particular collection of ideas. If it exceeds this it becomes drawn-out or laboured. When I first invent a game it starts off too long and I have to start cutting it down to what I feel is its correct length. I have allowed *Warrior Knights* to be longer than many of my other games simply because the game changes its character halfway through. Players become more powerful and the game enters the phase of Stronghold attacks (or the threat of them) with the weaker players often being left in control of the Assembly.

WD: *Would you call it a complicated game?*

DC: Certainly not. I can say that with confidence because I do not like complicated games. But I suppose one should qualify that. My mother, who is 89 and a very keen games player, would most certainly regard it as complicated but to the type of games player that is likely to be attracted to it, it is by no means complicated. I always make a distinction between complicated and complex. I like a game to offer the opportunity for a variety of approaches and levels of play without being encumbered with a vast number of rules in order to do so. Sometimes game rulebooks appear daunting because they have to be written in such a way that they clearly explain all aspects to a possible purchaser who is not familiar with the type of game they represent. For example, whilst it is sufficient in most instances to say 'The highest card takes the trick' one always has to allow for the reader who doesn't know what you mean by 'trick'. The basic rules of *Warrior Knights* are easily learned. Because one has to try to cover every possible situation – and even then in free-wheeling games, situations can arise that one has never dreamed of! – it is necessary to include a number of supportive rules, but these can be referred to as and when needed. If a newcomer is given some guidance as to the procedure he should follow at the beginning of the game (and this is included in the game box) he should have no problem in getting going, but because *Warrior Knights* is the game that it is, he probably stands a slender chance of winning if in the company of experienced players. But this can be said of many games not dominated by luck.

WD: *It is always of interest to know how much a game has changed during its development, especially with regard to possible 'streamlining' for the purposes of commercial production. Has Warrior Knights changed much between being first invented and finally put into production?*

DC: Hardly at all. Making a prototype is a long and tedious business if it is to be one that other people will enjoy playing in order to test out the game. Being a very regular player of a large variety of games I am able to assess whether there is a worthwhile game there before I embark on the prototype. If I don't think there is then the prototype doesn't get made. So by the time *Warrior Knights*

was put onto the table in front of my friends it was pretty much as it is today. There have been changes of detail of course, but in essence it is still the original game. What I should stress is that *Warrior Knights* was not invented with an eye to commercial production, which is why it has so many components. It was originally made purely for our own pleasure. *Games Workshop* have wanted to produce it for quite some time but there was no way in which I was prepared to reduce the scale of the game in order to get it published and *Games Workshop* would not have wanted me to. They eventually made the decision that the time was right to go ahead and the only thing that had to be changed was the title. Locally it has always been known as *The Warlords*, but as two other games have now appeared with that same title we could hardly add a third one to the list!

WD: *As the inventor, what tactical tips can you pass on to players of Warrior Knights?*

DC: I was afraid you'd ask me that. Among the people who know me I have a reputation of never winning the games I invent so I am hardly the person to pass on advice! But what I will do is give a few pointers that may help the newcomer to the game, but which, I am sure, will already have been discovered by the experienced player.

The first concerns money. As in life, money in *Warrior Knights* seems to be an ever-present problem but it is at its most acute in the game's early stages when you have no source of regular income. First of all look at the motions coming up for debate at the first Assembly. Counting your wealth you start the game with four Assembly votes. If you spend nothing at the first Mercenary Auction you might be able to make a deal with another player that will give you voting control – assuming that other players do spend some money and reduce their voting strength. Should you decide to bid for Mercenaries you could try putting in an outrageously high bid for the very first lot to come up for auction. Not only will you get what you bid for (unless somebody else is doing the same thing, of course) but you will have established a high level of bidding for that and for subsequent auctions. Meanwhile you stay out of the bidding hoping to see your opponents impoverish themselves by the second or third round by which time you come back into the auction because it is then that the cash shortage begins to bite. But whilst all this is sound theory it falls down if other players realise what you are doing and refuse to dance to your tune.

Because the capture of cities brings income and votes it is tempting to start going for these right away but it is worth considering deferring this and going for an overseas city instead. If you are successful these provide a reliable source of income for the rest of the game – especially if you leave a garrison there, which reduces their attraction to other players who may consider similar ventures. But there is a risk involved and you should not commit all your troops to an overseas campaign even if so doing would

reduce the time it takes to capture the city.

Should Mercenary troops get too expensive at the auctions you could concentrate your efforts on attacking other armies as opposed to towns or cities. If you win you can get hold of some cheap Mercenaries.

Being sent away on a Governorship early in the game is no bad thing. You are not greatly inhibited and you return pretty wealthy, probably at a time when your opponents are feeling the pinch. But if you are sent away later in the game this is a totally different matter. If there is a chance that your Stronghold will be attacked in your absence you must either bring troops in to defend it or you must defy the Assembly and refuse to go. You are probably only being sent because you pose a powerful threat. Defying the Assembly will mean you are barred from attending future meetings so you will have to use some of your power to persuade one of the other players to get you pardoned under a Private Motion.

Remember that the Veto passes clockwise so when you are choosing your 'friends'; it is best to choose them from among those that the Veto has not yet reached and who will soon possess it. Similarly when you are in line for the Veto it is best to remind other players of this fact.

You will soon realise that a lot of skill is required in order to manipulate the Assembly and to vote in such a way that you don't create enemies unnecessarily. Some players are adept at preserving the reputation of always keeping their word yet turning events to their advantage at the expense of an ally. For example, a plum office might be up for debate as, say, item 3 or 4 on the Agenda. You are committed to vote in favour of another powerful player. But there is the rule which states that no single faction can be granted more than one Office at each Assembly, so if you can organise things so that the player in question is granted some insignificant Office that may be up for grabs as item 1 or 2 on the Agenda, he automatically is barred from the later Office and your honour is saved. Procedural rules are there to be manipulated.

Finally, remember that you have an advantage in launching a Stronghold Attack against a player who comes after you in the movement round. You will have your first attack during the Stronghold Attack phase and then another attack during your movement turn (or, as is normal, two turns of Siege). It is only then that the defending player can take action. Also, because of this advantage you can more easily give the impression that you intend a Stronghold Attack when you have no intention of doing so but merely wish to keep a powerful opponent away from the Assembly. By the same token, of course, your most dangerous enemies are players who move before you at this stage in the game.

WD: *Is there anything you would like to add for the benefit of players of the game?*

DC: Merely 'Have Fun'. □

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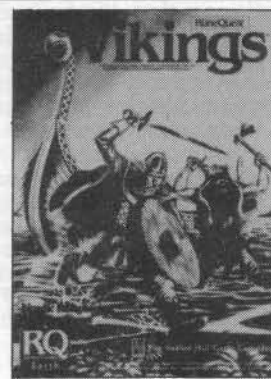
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Terence O'Brien, Buckley: No matter how truthful Marcus' remarks were in his review of *Twilight 2000* they should never have been printed. If I wanted a review of NATO's tactical alignments, proposed battle areas and weaponry, I would have bought a book on the subject. All I wanted was a review of a new role-playing game – that simple!

Peter Vials, Guildford: Gamers get a bad enough press from the Moral Majority (though that particular group probably wouldn't object to the stance of *Twilight 2000*) and other extremists, and the Rambo-esque tactics of a game like this will only worsen public opinion. A game must be reviewed as a whole, not merely on the grounds of its mechanics which are, after all, of little importance: the name of the hobby is role-playing.

Andrew Young, West Bretton: Mr Rowland should confine his opinions on nuclear war and its social after-effects to his local CND group.

I for one don't want to know about his trendy 'I'm an intellectual, caring person' moral standards which all games manufacturers should adhere to. I would like to be able to read reviews about games that have been released, not some pseudo-socialist airing his views on the 'moral stance and attitudes' they present.

Marcus Rowland, London: Anyone who believes in a 'limited nuclear exchange' probably believes in the tooth-fairy too. *Twilight 2000* is supposed to be a serious simulation of post-atomic Europe; I cannot see how the sort of Kelly's Heroes plots that have been published so far can be considered anything other than a particularly sick fantasy.

Terence O'Brien: It is obvious that because of Marcus' open hostility to the idea of the game that the game should be fairly re-reviewed, and the previous review declared void. Surely if a reviewer feels so emotive over a game he should return it to *White Dwarf*, so that they can get it reviewed by an impartial reviewer?

An impartial reviewer who likes the game, you mean?

Andrew Young: I like to know something of a game's system after reading a review, something that can hardly be claimed after digesting Mr Rowland's pathetic attempt.

I myself have been involved in a *Twilight* scenario and campaign more or less since it was released, and can fairly say that Mr Rowland's review was biased against the game to an extraordinary degree, because, I feel, he finds it distasteful because of his social outlook. A reviewer should try to prevent his personal feelings interfering with a review he submits.

Terence O'Brien: *White Dwarf* is not the place for religious, political or military discussions – it only causes arguments, breaks friendships and brings trouble.

The Letters Page would be a little dreary without them, though.

GIVE SOMEONE YOU
LOVE A RING



*White Dwarf,
2729 Sunbeam Road,
London NW10 6JP*

Terence: And what about the *White Dwarf* proof-readers? Those offending lines stuck out like a sore thumb – are your proof-readers blind or plain ignorant?

No, we're just caring pseudo-intellectuals...

Mohan Holkar, Southampton: Faced by the concerted attack on George Stepanek's views in *WD71*, I felt compelled to add at least one small voice of support.

I hate to say 'When I were a lad...', but the fact is that when I started playing, a few years ago now, there was no *Fighting Fantasy* and there were no bendy figures. So, in passing, I fail to see how Jez Keen can claim that the hobby would collapse without them. But anyway, in those far-off days, younger gamers were very much thrown in at the deep end. And what fun it was! I honestly think that children who start off on the plastic and flavourless fare served up in the *Fighting Fantasy* gamebooks are missing out on a lot.

My main point is, if people want to play *Fighting Fantasy*, good for them! But let them read *Warlock*, and keep the hallowed pages of *White Dwarf* for 'serious' games.

Phil Masters, Stevenage: Poor George Stepanek! The poor chap actually has the courage to complain about the biggest problem in role-playing games today, and the *WD Letters Page* is inundated with hate-mail. The worst was from Jez Keen, who, between the cheap jibes, tried to say that children are necessary to the game companies.

Richard Eyre, Barton Stacey: To one Mr Blunt's comment on the suitability of *Fighting Fantasy* books as an insight to role-playing, there is none at all. If *Warlock*, *Forest of Doom* et al are to be realistic entrances to *AD&D*, etc, then I've missed out somewhere. *FF* books are closer to the computer software side of Space Invaders, Missile Command, etc. The point of role-playing is not to get three goes to kill the alien, commie scum – if an orc approaches your first level cleric, you can normally kiss your cleric goodbye!

Phil Masters: The great objection to infant gamers is not their age as such;

it's their influence on the market. So long as companies can survive by churning out solo adventures and talking down to their customers, there will be no incentive for them to produce material that really emphasises skilled role-playing, and the hobby's image will remain ludicrous. Even *White Dwarf* is not immune to the plague of juvenilia. If the twelve-year olds can't play properly, why should we encourage them to play at all? Leave them until they are 16 (at least).

Terence O'Brien: It is not the novices who are to blame for the 'decline' of our hobby, but the manufacturers who prey on them. Novices introduced to our fantastic hobby are immediately set upon by hungry, opportunist firms. For £20, all they end up with is a small book and a few dice. Surely, like Jez Keen pointed out, if we welcomed the newcomers and pointed out which systems to buy, etc, the standard of our hobby would rise?

Phil Masters: Stuff the kiddies.

Probably not the most helpful contribution to the debate.

Geoff Bush, Wantage: Minority games are not 'insignificantly obscure', nor are the players of them 'selfishly deranged' as Toby Borgeest stated. The minority in this case have made the best decision, ie to play the best games. *AD&D* is definitely not the best thing that ever happened to the fantasy role-playing scene, and I think Toby was having a fantasy when he wrote this. *AD&D* and *D&D* are not the biggest because they're the best, but because they're older.

Too much space is devoted to big games, and not enough to smaller, but far superior games. A reasonable amount of *D&D* material in *WD* would be one sentence per issue – just to humour the freaks.

Claus Weisenberger, West Germany: I'm very worried to see that gaming gets more and more commercialised. Not only are the prices increasing every few months so that many interesting games get unaffordable, but the standard and value for money are decreasing at the same rate. Not many years ago, I had to pay £5.45 for the first edition of the *C&S* rules, but what can you get for that sum

of money nowadays?

Production standards in general are lowering. The old rules, like the first editions of *D&D* (the blue one), *C&S* and *RQ* seemed to be works of love to the hobby and were greatly inventive. Perhaps they had some flaws, but they challenged your imagination and forced you to improvise, thus creating a good gaming spirit. The ideal with which a rules set is compared to now is perfection. The games are ready to use and leave you nothing to do; everything is supplied by the publisher – adventures, screens, monster books and the like. In my eyes, a good part of the fun of gaming comes from my own creativity, which is lost more and more with 'perfect' games.

Robert Troth, Gosport: You never have any articles for role-playing games that haven't become so well established as *AD&D* and *Call of Cthulhu*. Games such as *Lords of Creation* and *James Bond* should have a few useful items and scenarios for them maybe once or twice per year.

Since we get enough whingeing when we print something about *Call of Cthulhu* or *Golden Heroes*, both of which are popular systems, imagine the cacophonous ululation that would result if an article on *LOC* crept into the magazine! Although future coverage of the *James Bond* role-playing game in *White Dwarf* isn't beyond the realms of possibility, to keep the majority of our readers happy, we have to cater for more mainstream games.

Simon Evans, Clevedon: Miss Carbery's righteous indignation seems sadly misplaced (*Letters*, *WD70*). She complains that pseudo-medieval games appear male-orientated; well perhaps that is because pseudo-medieval society was male-orientated. She should be grateful that these games cater for women at all, because in reality that form of society relegated women to a very subservient role. From an historical and sociological point of view (and I speak as a history student) the 'poor deal' women have is entirely justified. I am also at a loss to understand why she feels that the rule barring females from attaining maximum 18 strength is unfair: simple biological fact dictates (whatever one's views on a women's lib) that the female is physically incapable of attaining strength equal to the potential strength of the male, in terms of sheer brute power. Can you imagine a female Conan?

S MacPherson, Blatchington: I must agree with S A Carbery's letter; it has often struck me that, being nearly all based on the well-worn clichés of pulp fiction, 'pulp drawing, and 'pulp cinema', role-playing games tend to reflect a great number of backward and outmoded ideas. Not only is the role of women reduced to that of a deceitful whore or helpless innocent, but there is also an obsession with the idea of supermen, the idea of uncontrolled but legitimate violence, with the idea of defenceless and inferior people or races, and with the idea of an evil, all-pervading

external threat to (Western) civilisation.

The cover of your last issue (*WD70*) illustrates several of these points very nicely: there is the blond, masculine hero; there is the passive, but deceitful, temptress; and there is the evil, enemy 'green' race against whom our white, blond hero is fighting. Over the page is *Judge Dredd* dealing with urban crime.

Sometimes I wonder if the magazine we put together is the same one that eventually gets out to our readers!



Simon Evans: If illustrations in *WD* of 'over the top females verge on soft porn', and are offensive to Miss Carbery, why does she persist in buying the magazine? I make no apologies here – females in fantasy are always portrayed this way – that's fantasy. Yes it's sexist, but taking that line, fantasy and other role-playing games are also racist, militaristic, or just about anything else, depending on one's viewpoint. Stereotypical subservient females are as much a part of fantasy as magic and hobbit-bashing.

Robert Marion, Guildford: In this more enlightened age, it is about time that attitudes towards fantasy and sf artwork changed. Certainly if we are to make the role-playing hobby more attractive to female players, then the bigoted attitudes inherited from the 'Golden Age' of pulp novels must be quickly excised from rulebooks and magazines. *White Dwarf* (and its old rival, *Imagine*) have hardly helped the hobby in this way, and perhaps it is time for the editorial staff to change their ways.

S MacPherson: Why are so many role-playing games set in Imperial or (pseudo-) medieval settings with a strict, fixed social hierarchy and where

nothing ever changes? There is no such thing as 'pure' fantasy; it always has its roots somewhere.

P Abraham, Bradford: *Tabletop Heroes* is an excellent regular feature in *White Dwarf*, but why not take it a stage further by holding an annual *White Dwarf* open painting competition? Photographs and descriptions of the winners could appear in *Tabletop Heroes* for the various categories such as Best Single Figure, Best Regiment or Best Diorama, and several age groups.

Such a competition, whilst requiring some organisation and effort, would be good for figure painters everywhere, encouraging new names to appear in the hobby headlines, and new ideas and styles to circulate.

Although painting competitions are already taking place at venues such as *Citadel's* Open Day, what could be more accessible than *WD*; after all, not everyone can get to such venues.

An interesting idea, but the organisation required would be quite mind-boggling! The nearest we could ever hope to come to achieving this would be through a photographic competition of some description, thus limiting entry to figure painters with access to the required camera equipment. Although this can be relatively cheap, as demonstrated by Joe in TTH, it is probably far more economical on the modeller's part to trek to one of the games conventions in London. However, we would be pleased to hear other opinions on the subject.

Dave Morris, Woking: I'm really fed up with reading about alignment. If the only way to encourage role-playing is to enforce some daft alignment principle that bears no relation to human psychology, there's not very much hope for role-playing.

Luckily, of course, all this is so much tosh. I (and several other gamemasters I know of) have not used alignment in my games for years, and role-playing has only benefited from the omission. The only games I have seen that rigidly and pedantically insisted on the alignment thing were the sessions at the Oxford University *D&D* group, and they were almost without exception the daftest and least worthwhile examples of fantasy role-playing that could be imagined. I suggest that people switch to something like Pete Tamlyn's 'Campaign Ratings' (*WD69*) in order to wean their players onto true role-playing. Although not perfect, it is at least a step in the right direction.

Terence O'Brien: How about a few decent scenarios? Your last good one way back in *White Dwarf 56* (*The Last Log*). Scenarios such as *The Bleeding Stone of Iphtah*, *Beyond the Shadow of a Dream*, *Smile Please* and *Plague from the Past* are pathetic. They're boring, dull, and I wouldn't use them (though I'm not saying I could do better, before 6000 readers request I do so).

Having just named four of our most well-received scenarios, there wouldn't seem to be much we can do for you. Perhaps you should try Imagine instead. . .

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THE AMERICAN DREAM

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REFEREE'S BACKGROUND

'Well, girl? Do you know the meaning of power yet?' The voice of a distant madman boomed from a speaker set in the giant synthzoid's chest. The limp, blonde-haired, rag-doll of a figure it grasped moaned in pain, twisted and launched a kick at its midriff. She was weak and battered, yet it staggered back. Then it smashed her against the omnium-steel walls of the laboratory once, twice and three times. Barely holding her grasp on consciousness, all she could do was listen.

The voice adopted a quieter tone. 'You still don't understand, do you, child? You still think you are a Superheroine, plucked from the ranks of America's millions to be their great white hope, saviour of the American Dream. Pah! Do you think any Government, even a so-called democratic one like that in the USA, would be so selfless? You are a fool, girl. Worse, you are a dupe and a pawn. Still, you could be little else. Your psychological profile was perfect for the role. That is why you were chosen for the project. Forget the lies they told you about your brave and noble spirit. You are a puppet, nothing more.'

'In the modern world, there are many things a government is forced to do in the public interest which are not popular. Of late, America has been forced to do things for her own protection which have lost her friends both at home and abroad. In the interests of good public relations, the Senate Covert Operations

and Planning Executive decided to create a figurehead, someone who had total public trust, to sugar the pill and make the government's more unsavoury escapades more palatable to the people. Taking advantage of America's fixation on Superheroes, they decided to create their own, a figure who was exactly the type of person the public would trust and rely on yet who was under complete federal control. Research was conducted into the mood of the populace and the results were moderated by the country's most advanced computers. The hero should be a woman in her early twenties, blonde-haired, blue-eyed with a trace of an unidentifiable southern American accent. Her optimum personality, appearance and attitude were all charted.

'This research facility was set up, containing all known information about Superheroes and supervillains. The files of all the federal agencies were merged into a massive database within these four walls. All known artefacts currently in the possession of the government or any of its agencies, which have ever been used by a superpowered individual were brought here for study. Psychological studies were held to find a woman of the correct age and appearance whose personality would be independent enough to fulfil her role but tractable enough to manipulate. They found you, girl.

'You were trained, improved, brain-washed and manipulated until they had their heroine. Tomorrow, they would have revealed you to the world. Miss America, Saviour of the USA.

'The fools. I offered them my services. I, Jackson Stone, world-renowned expert on supernormal abilities and powers. I could have built them a real Superhero, one with the power to level mountains and smash entire armies but they called me a madman and threw me out. I showed them. With one small robot I've smashed their most secret installation and slain the so-called scientists they employed to replace me. Their 'Miss America', you girl, was as nothing to this one tiny creation of my genius. You tried, I'll give you that, but you hadn't a prayer.

'Now, with the artefacts assembled here, with the information stored in these computers, I will build an army of supervillains capable of conquering this entire country. *Now do you understand?*

The robot shook the limp and broken girl in its hands before throwing her to one side. She should have died then. She probably would have, but she hit one of the many display cases in the room, smashing it. Her body landed on its contents, a strange sceptre adorned with the American Eagle. It began to glow. Somehow, she was able to fight off the pain and force herself to her feet. She had time to glimpse a fraction of the sign above the case ('... belonged to the WWII hero American Eagle. Since his death in Korea, no one has been able to make the sceptre manifest its power. One theory ...') before turning.

The room was littered with broken bodies of people who, minutes before, had been the closest thing she had to a family. The giant synthzoid was bent

over the computer banks. Letting the rage her training had tried to deny build up in her, she screamed at it to turn and face her. When it did, the sceptre turned her burning hate into a beam of pure energy. The robot, built from the strongest materials known to man, melted like butter.

She cried then, long and hard, for the friends she had lost. She called the authorities, but as she waited in the burnt-out room for the mop-up crews to arrive, she wondered about the madman's lies. She reached for the computer keyboard...

When the Army taskforce arrived they found a ruined building, several corpses, a heap of molten slag and the tattered remains of a star-spangled costume. Of 'Miss America', there was no sign.

RUNAWAY

Susan Martin, the would-be Miss America, has discovered that she was not created to be anything more than a figurehead. This hurts. She has decided not to allow herself to be used and has fled from the destiny mapped out for her by the agents of her Government. Adopting the name Renegade, to reflect the role she has cast herself in, she operates outside the law. Gone is the Stars and Stripes costume, her long blonde hair, and youthful charm. The bright, cheerful heroine who was to bring America new glory has been replaced by a dark, dour and cynical vigilante.

As Renegade, she uses a number of items stolen from the research station. These have all been used, at one item or another, by famous Superheroes of American history. She has learnt to use some of these items but others are a mystery to her.

Renegade is currently involved in a desperate vendetta against Jackson Stone, a power-mad ex-NASA scientist who was responsible for the death of the men and women who trained her. She has convinced herself that this is simply a matter of revenge but, having discovered the truth about herself, she feels deep down in her heart that they deserved their fate. The vendetta is merely a way of occupying time so that she does not have to think about the future.

Each time that Renegade encounters one of Stone's minions or creations, she uses her sceptre to get a bearing on his line of communication. Since Stone has a number of operational headquarters and moves between them, it will be a long time before she can locate even one of his lairs by this method. It is all she has to work on, however, and to be honest, she doesn't really care how long it takes.

PLOTLINE

One of Jackson Stone's current projects is the creation of a Super-army to spearhead his assault on the USA. He has convinced the world famous StarTech Corporation to support his research and is currently using one of their English research facilities. StarTech are aware of Stone's reputation and the nature of his research. They do not, however, know how far he has progressed or his plans for his creations. Stone has found,

trained or created a force of twenty superpowered operatives using the StarTech organisation. He now plans to remove all evidence of his work by destroying the plant and shifting his Super-army to another location.

Renegade is aware that Stone is somewhere in England and has gone there to search for him. She does not know that he has detected her presence and plans to frame her for the destruction of the StarTech base, giving his new creations a field trial in the process.

He has set up a fencing operation for rare electronic goods in a small corner junk-shop in the heroes' home town, and ensured that Renegade knows of its existence by communicating with its proprietor, Henry Sharp, by the high-frequency radio he knows Renegade can detect. Having drawn her, he has sent a message to the American Embassy warning them that Renegade is in town. They in turn have contacted all official agencies and, hence, the heroes, asking for her to be detained for extradition. A few words to the more talkative elements of the underworld should ensure the heroes' presence along with that of Renegade.

P1: SOUTHERN DISCOMFORT (MAP 1)

This issue opens with a figure in a long black leather coat watching shady figures going to and from a small junk shop. Seeing one she recognises enter and, a few minutes afterwards, leave with a satisfied smile on his face, she goes into the shop.

The supervisor should arrange matters so that, when the heroes arrive, they find a tall woman lifting the shop's owner from the floor by his lapels. The counter and floor are covered with electronic components which look out of place amongst the rest of the shop's goods. As she lifts him, she questions him in a Southern American accent.

'Mr Sharp, don't, ah say *don't* play games with me. Ah don't play games anymore. We both know what your job is and who these electronic gee-gaws ah for. Now, either you tell me weah he is or ah do declare ah'm going to pull this shop down around your eahs.'

The heroes should now initiate combat. They have been warned that Renegade is extremely dangerous and wanted for questioning by the American government. If they try to talk, Renegade will merely say that her business is none of theirs and attempt to leave. Should they prevent this or intimate that they are working with any official backing it is she who will initiate combat. She will ditch her coat, draw her sceptre, materialise her shield and attack. Her tactics will be to render as many heroes as possible hors de combat; by making them use up actions, knocking them down or out of the way, bringing down the roof on them or blasting the floor from under them. She does not wish to harm them, but she is determined to get away and will not let them stop her.

If possible, the supervisor should manoeuvre the battle into the street within the first couple of rounds of combat.

KEY (Map 1)

1. Nondescript shops.
2. Alleyway used by Renegade to observe shop.

3. Front of shop, containing various items of junk, the counter and the till. 'X' indicates the position of Renegade and Henry Sharp.
4. Shop storeroom, stairs up to living area and hall to side entrance.

P2: SHOT BY BOTH SIDES

During the first 3 rounds of the fight, a number of vehicles will pull up in the vicinity of the shop. At the start of Round 4, the Super-army will disembark from these and move to capture Renegade and the heroes as soon as possible. During Round 4, Renegade will be convinced that it is a trap organised by the heroes and attacks them with renewed vigour, actually doing them damage if necessary. She will act on the villains' initiative roll. However, by Round 5 (if she is still standing), she will have realised her mistake and will side with the heroes, acting on their initiative.

The supervisor should use all of the Super-army to ensure that the heroes are captured quickly and easily. They should be made to feel that they are fighting against impossible odds. Consequently, the supervisor should take care to keep the relative weakness of many of the Super-army's members secret by merely moving them and making their attacks but *not* counting out their actions Frame by Frame. Every costume should be described and every name should be given. They are powerful and should throw *Energy Attacks* and *Sunday Punches* at their opponents (though the supervisor should take care that no one is actually killed). There should be plenty of opportunity for the heroes to gain Heroism points, and some of them may actually manage to defeat several of the Super-army's members, but all in all their defeat should seem pre-ordained.

By the beginning of their sixth round, all the *Energy Attackers* in the heroes' team should either be unconscious or engaged in hand-to-hand combat by one or more of the Super-army's brawlers. They should not be allowed to recover their energy and use it.

Should the supervisor be blessed with heroes powerful enough to defeat the entire Super-army, then the battle can be further weighted against them by having Overseer activate a *Sonic Screamer*. This device will knock 2d6 off Renegade's and the other heroes' HTC scores each action (it is effectively a cybernetic simulator of a *Field Manipulation*). The Super-army all wear filters, but, even if the heroes are able to remove them, they do not have the time to fit them properly.

P3: THE PARTY'S OVER

Before the coup de grâce is administered to the last hero, the Observer will laugh with Jackson Stone's voice.

'Well, well. So the highway's littered with broken heroes and a runaway American Dream. Well done, my Super-army. You have passed your first test with flying colours. Overseer, bring them to me.'

The heroes will be loaded into the trucks and carted off to Stone's StarTech installation. Anyone who is playing possum will receive the coup de grâce on the way. If any heroes managed to escape

from the massacre in P2, then any sensible attempt to follow the convoy will succeed. Note that Stone's hirelings have the knowledge and equipment to keep anyone unconscious for the duration of the journey regardless of their superpowers or recovery rate.

When they reach the installation, they will be restrained in the interrogation room marked on Map 2. Supervisors should use their knowledge of the heroes' powers to restrain them as they see fit. Remember that Stone has made a study of superpowers and their abilities and can counter just about anything they can do (if he is aware of it).

KEY (Map 2)

1. Gate, usually manned by watchman.
2. Car park.
3. Admin building.
4. Social amenities, cafe.
5. Research blocks.
6. Detention block.
7. Interview room.
8. Guard's quarters, monitor room.
9. Cells.
10. Main detention room, occupied by heroes.
11. Equipment storage.

When the heroes come around, they and Renegade will be chained up and guarded by whichever members of the Super-army the supervisor deems suitable. It is at this point that Renegade will tell them her origin and explain her objectives.

When she is finished, Jackson Stone will come in and gloat. He is holding Renegade's sceptre and will play idly with it as he explains how StarTech, Renegade and the heroes are all pawns in his game. When he has covered the plot so far, his speech will finish:

'... So you see, 'Miss America' – I'm sorry, you like to be called Renegade now, do you not? – this plant will be destroyed at your hands. A few minor superheroes – the best that this pitiful little island can muster – bravely try to stop you but fail. I, and all my work, will be destroyed in the explosion. Yes, and you will die a Renegade, despised by your country.

'My brave band and I, meanwhile will be hard at work. I believe one of the USA's warships, an aircraft carrier called Liberty, or some such stupid name, is visiting the Naval dockyard in Portsmouth. Once she is ours, we can launch a small but effective nuclear strike at Washington. I'm sure we'll find something useful to do in the chaos that follows.

'Doubtless your sceptre would be useful to you now. Perhaps you want it back? Here, take it...' (He holds it out to Renegade and then snatches it away) '... *Vagabond*.'

As the lumbering mutant advances to take his prize, Renegade frowns and the sceptre glows, momentarily, white-hot. Stone howls in pain and hurls it away from him. He clutches his smoking hand until the pain subsides and then slaps Renegade viciously across the face, before regaining control of himself.

'Impressive. You seem to have rather more control than I'd expected. I'm sorry, Vagabond, we can't risk giving you such a dangerous toy. We'll have to leave it here with the rest of the rubbish.'

So saying, Jackson Stone and the Super-army leave. The heroes struggle in their bonds. The scene cuts to an exterior shot of Jackson Stone holding a detonator. 'Life just won't be the same without her', he muses. Then he destroys the plant and drives off, laughing.

Note: It is possible that a hero who has escaped from **P2** may attempt a rescue during this element. If he or she leaves it until after the Super-army have left, then they can be introduced in **P4**. The details on *Map 2* are given in case they choose to make the attempt any earlier.

The authorities, if alerted to the heroes' whereabouts, will not arrive until *after* the plant has gone up.

P4: AFTER THE FALL

The issue opens with a graphic account of the Super-army's assault upon the USS Liberty. As he takes his place on the bridge, Jackson Stone is seen musing about his victory. However, as he thinks about the destruction of the StarTech installation, the scene cuts back to the heroes' last minutes inside the doomed building.

If they are to escape their fate, the heroes have to get out quickly. If any heroes escaped in **P2** and arrive to rescue their friends now, then this is relatively straightforward. Alternatively, if any of the heroes have any powers which have not been neutralised by Jackson Stone (because he is not aware of them due to them being new refinements or unpublicised) they can use these to get free. If they are desperate,

heroes can try to develop new uses of powers on the spot (Supervisor's Book, p57, Special Cases). Finally, if there does not seem to be any other way out, the supervisor may opt to have Renegade save the day. She can telepathically call the sceptre to her hand and use it to cut the chains binding one of the heroes. This is a new power, however, and the strain it entails will cause her to pass out.

Regardless of the way in which they escape, the heroes will still have insufficient time to get out of the building before it explodes. Once free, therefore, they will have to use their powers in some way to avoid the damage the explosion causes. A *Force Field* is the classic method of getting out of such traps, but a tunnel cut into the floor with *Energy Blasts* is equally good. Characters who fly with *Energy Blasts* might be able to make it out through the ceiling. Alternatively, the heroes may be caught in the explosion but seek to negate the effects of the rubble falling all around them.

The explosion itself will do 4d6 HTK and HTC (divided as *Energy*) to everyone inside the building. This damage may be halved if the characters have thrown themselves flat. The collapsing building will do 30 HTK and HTC (fully divided) to anyone trapped. The collapsing masonry may be parried as a *Weapon Class 0* attack. Any HTK damage getting through should also be considered as hypothetical binding damage as the rubble pins the heroes to the ground. For each round that they are buried in the rubble, each hero takes 2d6 HTC (or 2d6 HTK if they have a negative HTC score greater than

their vigour), as they slowly suffocate.

If there is a hero who, through no fault of their own, is unlikely to survive the explosion, the supervisor may elect to have Renegade blast a hole into the ground beneath their feet. They will take 2d6 HTC from the fall but will take no damage from the explosion or the collapsing building and will be able to breathe for 5 rounds before taking suffocation damage (as noted above).

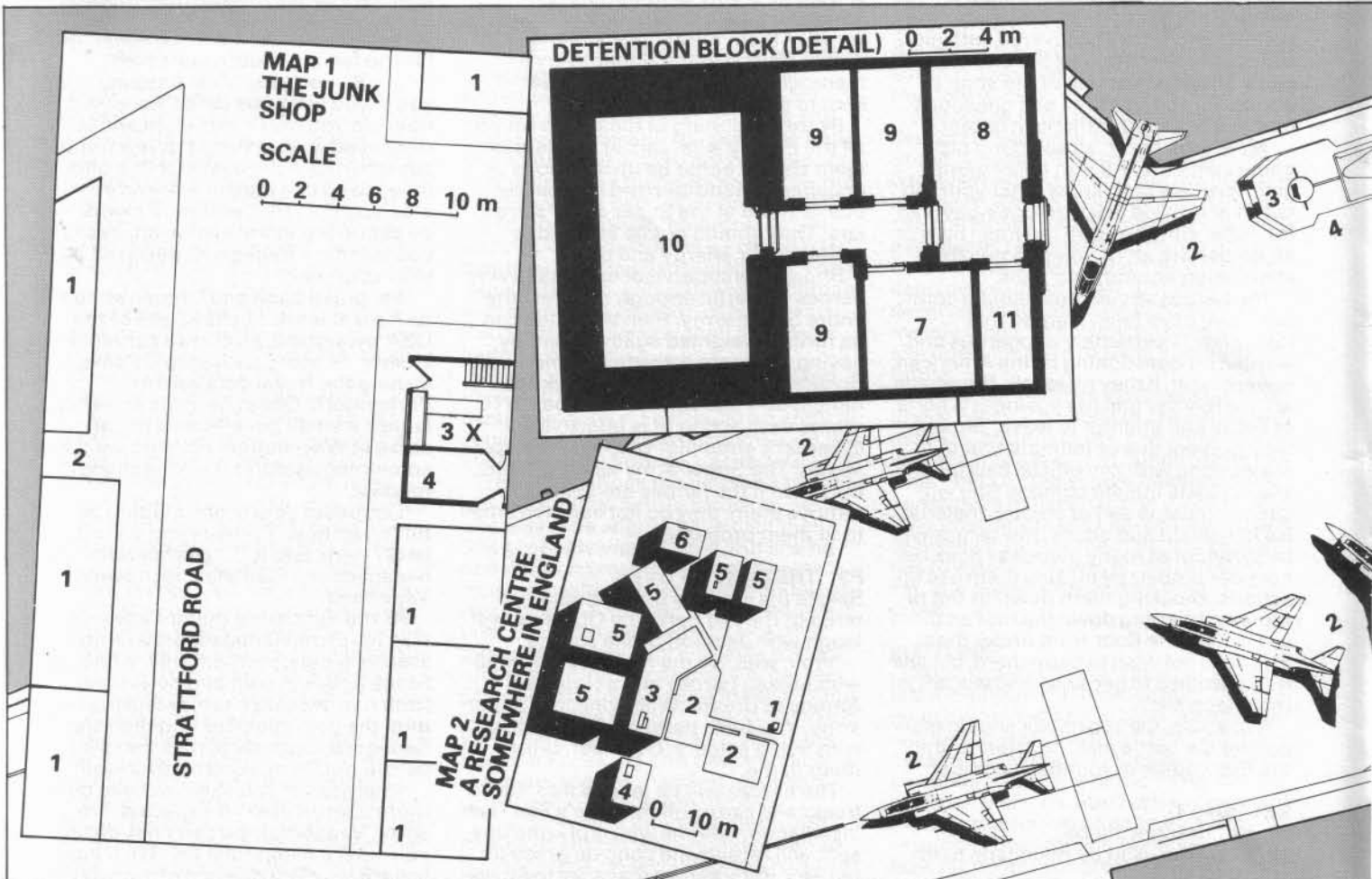
The supervisor should review all survival attempts on their merits, remembering that any reasonable plan should work. Also, this is a good time to take note of players' actions with regard to their Conscience and Heroism scores.

It is hardly surprising that Jackson Stone considers the heroes to be finished.

P5: SHIP TO SHORE

If the heroes escape the destruction of the base with any degree of alacrity, then it may be that they will be able to ambush the Super-army on its way to Portsmouth. In this case, the supervisor should handle the encounter as he or she sees fit. The ambush will have to be a very good one if the heroes are to defeat the Super-army in open conflict. If they win, the scenario is over. If they lose, they will be brought aboard the USS Liberty and tied to the nuclear missiles aimed at Washington.

If, as is more likely, the heroes take a while to dig themselves out from the ruins of the StarTech establishment, they will have to find some way to get aboard the USS Liberty and stop Jackson Stone before he can launch the missiles.



Renegade will use her sceptre to find out the frequency which Stone used to jam the Liberty's radar systems. He had been idly playing with her sceptre whilst he was explaining his plans to his underlings and it has remembered his words. She can send out a signal on this frequency, to prevent their approach being noticed. However, the heroes will have to supply some kind of air or sea transport, whether through superpowers, possession, connections or theft. Renegade will explain that the heroes will have to stay together since she can only keep one thing 'radar blind' at a time. This should save the supervisor the trouble of handling four or five different groups' attacks at once!

Allow the heroes a chance to plan on their way to the Liberty and actively encourage them to work out specific tactics to use against the various members of the Super-army, pick opponents, and prepare themselves for the fight of their lives. They are going up against impossible odds, after all. Renegade will take a full part in any discussion, though she will not initiate any team-tactic suggestions. She will make it clear that she will understand if anyone wants to drop out. It isn't their country they're saving. She doesn't have any choice in the matter, her 'programming' sees to that. The only thing she will ask is that the heroes leave Jackson Stone to her. (The set of her jaw might lead to one or two heroes checking that she merely wishes to see him put in prison. She will avoid replying to such questions.)

Unless anyone is needlessly fool-

hardy or careless, the heroes should be able to catch up with the Liberty somewhere in the Atlantic and land on her flight deck almost before the Super-army realise that they are there.

P6: THEY DON'T MAKE VILLAINS LIKE THEY USED TO . . .

A pitched battle will now ensue on the flight deck of the USS Liberty (Map 3). Although the Super-army are all present, the heroes stand a far better chance of victory this time around. The supervisor should run this battle in the way most suited to a close victory for their player-characters, bearing the following factors in mind:

- The heroes are not surprised or low on Energy or HTC.
- The Super-army are surprised.
- The heroes should have worked out specific tactics versus some members of the Super-army. If they have come up with any really clever 'take-outs' then they should be allowed to try them out.
- Only a few members of the Super-army will be on the flight deck when the heroes land. The rest are busy elsewhere and will arrive in waves, giving the heroes a chance to defeat some of them before the others arrive.
- Some of the Super-army have specific tasks which cannot be abandoned (keeping an eye on the engineers in the engine-room, guarding Jackson Stone on the bridge, etc).
- The battle should be a long one, giving heroes ample opportunity to recover Energy, Magic Points, etc.
- When the bulk of the Super-army is defeated and Jackson Stone is captured or has fled, the rest will surrender.

The supervisor should determine exactly which members of the Super-army are on the flight-deck and in what order and over what time period the other members arrive. The battle should still be a tough one for the heroes, but they should have a chance of winning.

KEY (Map 3)

- Heroes' vehicle (plane, helicopter or whatever).
- Strike-fighters, 'L' indicates lift to lower decks.
- Control tower; access to bridge and lower decks.
- Stairs to bridge.

As soon as the battle starts and regardless of any previously discussed battle-plan, Renegade will cut her way through the first wave of opponents towards the bridge. She will pause to engage Vagabond (who must be in the first wave) and retrieve her shield (which he has been given in place of the sceptre). Heroes worried for her safety or for that of Jackson Stone, may try to follow her. The supervisor should try to impede their progress, but if they don't stop, the supervisor should run a battle using Renegade and any accompanying heroes versus Jackson Stone's bodyguard on the bridge.

Toward the end of the battle, when most of the villains are defeated and Renegade (and any assisting hero) have overcome the resistance on the bridge, she will advance on Jackson Stone. He will 'accidentally' switch on the public address system. The entire ship will hear

her explain her need for revenge and how much she hates Stone. He will taunt her, call her gutless and invite her to 'finish the job properly'. After a deathly pause (that could bring many heroes rushing to the bridge), she refuses and reaches to grab him, promising that he will spend a long time in jail.

'Jackson Stone' laughs, says 'They programmed you well, didn't they, Miss America?' and explodes. Anyone on the bridge will take 3d6 HTK and HTC (fully divided). Renegade will bear the brunt of the explosion on her shield.

P7: KEEP ON RUNNING

Once the Super-army are defeated, have fled or have surrendered and the crew of the USS Liberty have been released, Renegade will ask the heroes to drop her off on their way back to base. If they still want to take her back for extradition, she will resist. If they ask her to join them or suggest that she return to America to be the heroine her country needs, she will demur. Jackson Stone is still around somewhere, and one day she will get her hands on the real one and not a booby-trapped android. Until, that day, she will keep on running.

RATINGS

The scenario has an overall practice rating of 7 with regard to Britain but 8 with regard to the USA. It should be treated as one scenario for the purposes of Success Rate due to the built-in loss situation in P2.

CHARACTER NOTES

The more significant members of the Super-army are fully detailed and are expected to play a major part in most battles. The other characters are tabulated, but sufficient information is given for the supervisor to build on if they want to increase their part in the plot. Costumes, etc should be chosen to suit available figures. Try to give the impression that all of the villains are full-powered, fully-detailed opponents to heighten the 'against impossible odds' atmosphere of the piece.

Care must be taken, in playing Renegade, that she does not overly dominate the piece. The scenario is constructed as a story in which the players are permitted to participate. It is essential that this is offset by permitting them to take an active part in events, upstaging Renegade whenever possible. She is a newcomer to the hero game, after all.

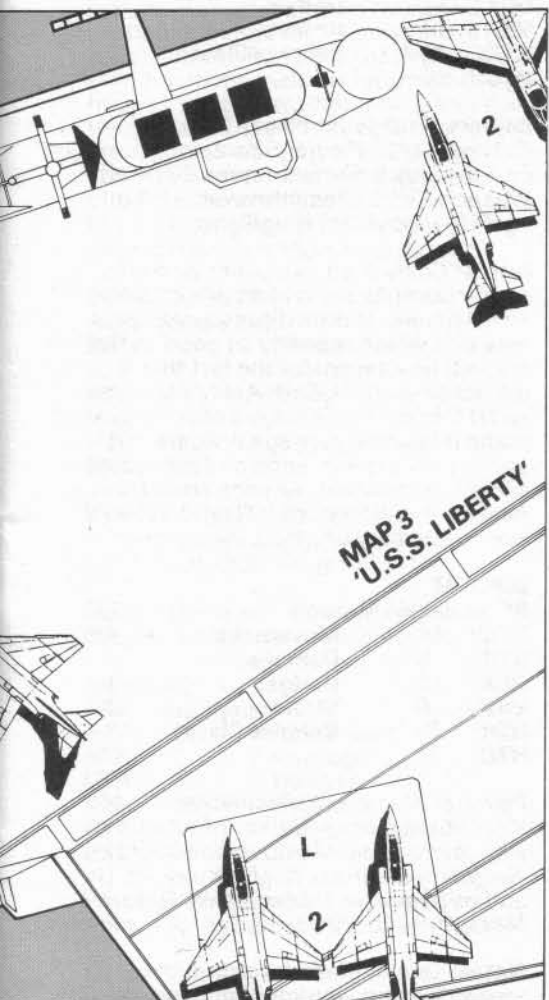
STATISTICS

RENEGADE

Alias: Susan Martin/Miss America

EGO:	8	Movement:	7m
STR:	11	Damage:	-
DEX:	17	Dodge:	+3
VIG:	13	Strike:	+2
HTK:	47	Defence Class:	6
HTC:	45		

Powers: Advantageous Background 3 (Previous Training, already figured in STR, DEX, VIG); Martial Arts (Oriental) 2; Agility; Weapon Skill 2 (Shield, Defence and Missile); Cybernetics 4 (Power Simulator, sceptre, Energy Attack 2*; Field Manipulation*; Sense Field Manipulation*; Computer Brain).



THE AMERICAN DREAM

Notes: Renegade's *Martial Arts* and *Agility* are the result of her extensive training. Her *Weapon Skill* is the application of this training to the use of a new weapon – specifically, her strange, indestructible shield of an unknown alloy. The rest of her powers come from the eagle-topped sceptre she uses. This allows her to manipulate and detect the manipulation of any form of energy. Though she cannot use more than 20 dice in five rounds, they can be used in any energy form (as can all her powers indicated by an asterisk). Similarly she can manipulate energy fields which allow her to do up to 2d6 damage in minor ways – by adjusting temperature or electrical flow – or perform minor effects – detecting and tracking radio waves, bending the light around her shield to render it invisible and the like. She has, as a result, a number of unique options which the supervisor should use with imagination. In addition to these powers, the sceptre 'records' the words spoken by its possessor in some strange way; these may be recalled at a later date by its master.

The sceptre may only have one master at a time, and the link must be formed and broken as a result of some traumatic experience.

Renegade does not have complete control over her items. With training, she could well acquire long-range control over the sceptre and develop its energy powers, gaining *Energy Reflection* and more dice on the *Energy Attack*. She also possesses, but is unable to use, the boots and gloves of a cowboy hero of the old west: Renegade needs the companion items of spurs and six-gun to gain the *Speed* and *Weapon Skill* (hand-guns) that they confer.

JACKSON STONE

Defence Class: 12 **Frames/Round:** 2 or 4

Powers: *Advantageous Background* 4 (Brilliant Chemical and Mechanical Scientist; Wealthy – Loot; Position of Power – world-famous and respected scientist).

Notes: Physically, Jackson Stone is a normal human. He should be considered to have HTK/HTC scores of 15 for the purposes of determining damage. Consequently, an attack doing 35 or more HTK will kill him outright. His physical attributes should be assumed to be 5, his EGO to be 15.

For movement and combat, etc, he has two Frames. In situations when he uses his brain more than his body (eg under Mental Attack or operating a computer console) he has 4 Frames.

Any hit by an attack of WC3 or higher or with a damage bonus will KO Stone. Any other two attacks will also KO him.

JACKSON STONE (ANDROID)

Defence Class: 2 **Frames/Round:** 2

Notes: This is a real life simulacrum (RLS) designed to stand in for Stone. If it takes more than 10 HTK or HTC in any one blow, it will explode doing 3d6 HTK and HTC damage to everyone within 4m. Needless to say, it can also be detonated by remote control.

During the scenario it is possible to

identify the RLS. Stone's hand is injured in P3 and he is forced to bandage it: the RLS shows no sign of such an injury.

OVERSEER

Alias: Jonathan Carlsen

EGO: 12	Movement: 4/25m
STR: 8/22	Damage: +7
DEX: 8	Dodge: –
VIG: 8	Strike: –
HTK: 28/5	Defence Class: 3
HTC: 30/4	

Powers: *Advantageous Background* (Brilliant Mechanical Scientist); *Skill* 2 (Computer Programming, Psychology); *Armour* 2; *Strength* 1; *Energy Attack* 1 (Electrical); *Flight* 3; *Cybernetics* 1 (Defence Computer).

Notes: Overseer is one of Stone's assistants. Specialising in artificial intelligence, Carlsen is also an expert in the psychology of the supernormal. This makes him an ideal choice as field leader for the operation. Unfortunately, he lacks combat experience, so he has built the armour to compensate for his lack of skill. In the armour he has 4 Frames per round; out of it, only 2 Frames. Also, should a target which the Defence Computer deems to be hostile come within 10m, the electrical *Energy Attack* will automatically discharge in Carlsen's next two Frames, doing 2 dice damage for every 20kg mass of the target. The burst will be predominantly HTC for living targets, HTK for non-living.

Psychology is the ability to understand, interpret and, to a limited extent, influence the attitudes and emotions of others through observation or verbal interaction.

THE OBSERVER

EGO: N/A	Movement: 10m
STR: 50	Damage: +35
DEX: 10	Dodge: –
VIG: N/A	Strike: –
HTK: 50/3	Defence Class: 5

Powers: *Advantageous Background* (Robot); *Strength* 2; *Taller* 1; *Cybernetics* (Radio Transmitter/Receiver and Public Address system).

Notes: The Observer is the same model of robot as the one which destroyed the project that gave birth to Renegade. It is essentially a remote-controlled humanoid bulldozer which also allows Stone to observe the fruition of his plans from the safety of his base, and to gloat when the heroes are defeated.

LOLITA

Alias: Jennifer Berrie

EGO: 8	Movement: 5m
STR: 6/30	Dodge: +1
DEX: 6	Strike: –
VIG: 6/25	Damage: +15
HTK: 88	Defence Class: 6
HTC: 90	

Powers: *Larger* 1; *Strength* 1; *Vigour* 1; *Cybernetics* 1 (Holographic belt).

Notes: Lolita is the result of one of Stone's super-soldier serums. She is a huge, bloated, misshapen figure. Naturally, she was not particularly pleased with her new appearance, so Stone

made her a belt which displays a hologram of her original form, thus disguising her true form. In combat, Lolita appears as a beautiful young woman who uses a Force Field to attack people. The illusion will be dispelled when HTK damage on the field causes her to bleed.

VIRUS

Alias: Mark Hardcastle

EGO: 10	Movement: 6m
STR: 9	Damage: –
DEX: 12	Dodge: +1
VIG: 16	Strike: –
HTK: 56	Defence Class: 6
HTC: 56	

Powers: *Replication* (special); *Stunner* (special).

Notes: Jackson Stone has given Hardcastle the ability to reproduce like a virus. He can split into two separate beings, each with Virus' attributes and abilities but with half his HTK/HTC scores. Each replica can then subdivide further, halving the totals again, and so on. The levels at which replicas are hospitalised or stunned, etc, are standard, regardless of the number of HTK/HTC they start off with. Each time that a Virus grabs someone, it does damage as a stunner. These points are then added to its HTK/HTC scores, divided equally between the two.

ACETYLENE

Alias: Adam Colby

EGO: 11	Movement: 7m
STR: 14	Damage: –
DEX: 12	Dodge: –
VIG: 14	Strike: –
HTK: 48/2	Defence Class: 5
HTC: 50	

Powers: *Energy Immunity* (Heat); *Cybernetics* 2; (Power Simulator – *Energy Attack*, Flamethrower, 20 dice); *Weapon Skill* 2 (Flamethrower, +5 damage); *Martial Arts* 1 (Pugilism).

Notes: Colby is an ex-soldier who was nearly burnt to death in an arson attack on his house. Jackson Stone gave him a new skin which is nearly as good as the original one except for the fact that it cannot sense heat. Thus Acetylene takes no HTC from fire damage and only 50% of the HTK, after damage dividers. His gun is only experimental and generates a lot of excess heat. Anyone apart from Acetylene will take 3d6 HTC and 1d6 HTK every time they use it.

DIADEM

Alias: Jackie Monroe

EGO: 11	Movement: 4m
STR: 5	Damage: –
DEX: 12	Dodge: +1
VIG: 6	Strike: –
HTK: 20	Defence Class: 6
HTC: 20	

Powers: *Magic* 2 (Hallucinations (spec), Hypnotism, Energy Strike, Information); *Invisibility*; *Field Manipulation* (Light); *Heightened Senses* (Sight, X-ray, IR, UV and microscopic vision; Sense Field Manipulation; Light).

Notes: One of the few items at the research establishment that Renegade

did not take was a coronet taken from an alien invader. Being unsuited to sit on a human head, Stone has surgically implanted it in Diadem's forehead. The alien jewel in the coronet gives her power over light. She cannot use her offensive abilities whilst invisible. The information spell only gives visual information, whilst energy strike is a rapidly changing pattern of colours which overloads the target's vision centres. It can only do HTC damage and can be foiled by visual defences. When using her powers, Diadem croons to herself in a strange alien tongue which even she cannot understand.

Field Manipulation (Light) is the ability to increase/decrease the illumination in an area for 2-12 rounds. A flash can be produced which will blind the target for 2d6 Frames, but this takes an action to use and will be foiled if they close their eyes in time (d20 under DEX).

HAZARD

Alias: Michael Williams

EGO: 15	Movement:	4m
STR: 7	Damage:	-
DEX: 8	Dodge:	+2
VIG: 8	Strike:	-
HTK: 28	Defence Class:	6
HTC: 30		

Powers: *Probability Manipulation* (Conscious, Unconscious 30%); *Intuition, Reactions*.

Notes: Hazard was an unlucky person until Stone helped him to harness his ill-fortune, master it and turn it against people. Hazard is a focus for negative probabilities and all his powers are based around bad luck. His probability manipulations make unfortunate things happen to others rather than beneficial things happen to himself. Similarly, his *Intuition* is a warning of bad things about to happen and his *Reactions* power reflects the bad luck his attackers have in hitting him and the poor luck his targets have in dodging his attacks.

STREETFIGHTER

Alias: Marco Kane

EGO: 9	Movement:	5m
STR: 10	Damage:	-
DEX: 9	Dodge:	-
VIG: 9	Strike:	-
HTK: 33/3	Defence Class:	4
HTC: 32/2		

Powers: *Martial Arts 2* (Pugilism); *Advantageous Background* (Underworld contacts); *Tough Skin 1*.

Notes: Underworld heavy with skin toughened by chemical injection.

BRIGAND

Alias: Jed Hanson

EGO: 13	Movement:	6m
STR: 11	Damage:	-
DEX: 11	Dodge:	+1
VIG: 12	Strike:	-
HTK: 42	Defence Class:	6
HTC: 40		

Powers: *Weapon Skill 2* (Quarterstaff, Held, +5); *Cybernetic Weapon* (Staff).

Notes: Worldly-wise adventurer searching for excitement. Uses a line-slinger.

SNAKEFIST

Alias: James Hoy

EGO: 11	Movement:	6m
STR: 16	Damage:	+1
DEX: 11	Dodge:	+3
VIG: 10	Strike:	-
HTK: 35	Defence Class:	6
HTC: 35		

Powers: *Martial Arts 2* (Oriental); *Judo Throw; Leaping 1; Skill* (Gymnast).

Notes: Chinese Kung Fu expert. No regard for western fighters.

VAGABOND

Alias: Nick Curtis

EGO: 15	Movement:	5m
STR: 12/19	Damage:	+4
DEX: 14	Dodge:	+1
VIG: 6/18	Strike:	-
HTK: 65	Defence Class:	6
HTC: 63		

Powers: *Larger 1; Health* (Immune to disease, radiation, toxins; regeneration).

Notes: Huge, lumbering mutant outcast. DC6 is natural. Wears tattered rags.

NIGHTFIRE

Alias: Logan Tamlyn

EGO: 7	Movement:	4m
STR: 8	Damage:	-
DEX: 7	Dodge:	+1
VIG: 10	Strike:	-
HTK: 35	Defence Class:	6
HTC: 37	Frames:	3

Powers: *Skill* (Hide in Shadows); *Energy Attack 1* (Heat).

Notes: Descendant of a demon. Barely looks human.

FIRELIGHT

Alias: Joan Makian

EGO: 11	Movement:	5m
STR: 11	Damage:	-
DEX: 8	Dodge:	+1
VIG: 8	Strike:	-
HTK: 30	Defence Class:	6
HTC: 28	Frames:	3

Powers: *Energy Attack 3* (Heat, 16 Dice, Manifestation, Light).

Notes: Light blinds for 1d6 Frames unless eyes closed (under DEX on d20).

LARIAT

Alias: Del Stevens

EGO: 10	Movement:	5m
STR: 11	Damage:	-
DEX: 11	Dodge:	+1
VIG: 9	Strike:	-
HTK: 32	Defence Class:	6
HTC: 32	Frames:	3

Powers: *Energy Attack 1* (Special: energy lasso inflicts hypothetical damage).

Notes: Uses lariat to bind victims and shoots them with a 6-shooter (WC2).

SNOWSTORM

Alias: Kelly Morgan

EGO: 11	Movement:	5m
STR: 11	Damage:	-
DEX: 8	Dodge:	+1
VIG: 9	Strike:	-
HTK: 32	Defence Class:	6

HTC: 33 Frames: 3

Powers: *Energy Attack 1* (Cold).

Notes: Rather nervy, mid-20s, ex-skier injured in accident.

DISCHARGE

Alias: Jeneve Scott

EGO: 12	Movement:	5m
STR: 8	Damage:	-
DEX: 9	Dodge:	+1
VIG: 10	Strike:	-
HTK: 35	Defence Class:	6
HTC: 35	Frames:	3

Powers: *Energy Attack 1* (Lightning).

Notes: Loud, noisy, tends to give orders but 'folds' early on in a fight.

SQUALL

Alias: Molly West

EGO: 8	Movement:	4m
STR: 8	Damage:	-
DEX: 6	Dodge:	+1
VIG: 9	Strike:	-
HTK: 33	Defence Class:	6
HTC: 32	Frames:	3

Powers: *Weather Control 1*.

Notes: Quiet and thoughtful.

BREEZE

Alias: Candice Wells

EGO: 9	Movement:	3/15m
STR: 4	Damage:	-2
DEX: 10	Dodge:	+1
VIG: 5	Strike:	-
HTK: 18	Defence Class:	6
HTC: 17	Frames:	3

Powers: *Flight 1* (windrider).

Notes: In early teens; reckless.

GARGANTUS

Alias: F'Kriss D'Reyn

EGO: 10	Movement:	8m
STR: 8/20	Damage:	+5
DEX: 12	Dodge:	+1
VIG: 11/18	Strike:	-
HTK: 62	Defence Class:	6
HTC: 64		

Powers: *Taller 1; Leaping 1; Skill* (Vocal Skills).

Notes: Captured alien whom Stone has promised a spaceship. Carnivorous.

GNAT

Alias: Karen Silk

EGO: 8	Movement:	1/15m
STR: 9	Damage:	-
DEX: 12	Dodge:	+1
VIG: 7	Strike:	-
HTK: 25	Defence Class:	6
HTC: 24		

Powers: *Shrink* (always shrunk); *Flight 1*.

Notes: Product of human DNA being added to insect clone. Dimwitted but sly.

Acknowledgements

This adventure was inspired by American comics of the Golden and Silver Ages, a touch of Bruce Springsteen, and the artwork of Chris Achilleos. My thanks to Pete Tamlyn for StarTech. □

Have yourself.
Cthuloid little.
Dyest mas.

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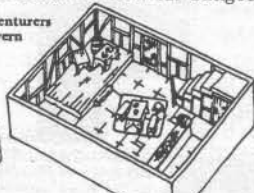
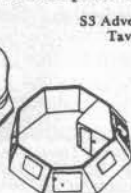
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TRAVELLERS

TIME: 05.59

Last episode the Osprey was blasted into a million billion itsy bitsy pieces. Well in the true tradition of 'cliffhangers', it will come as no surprise to find the Osprey completely intact. The wits of the crew, however, are less so.

The situation was clear. Compu predicted an 80% chance of being shot down on take-off. It also predicted a 90% chance the adventurers would investigate the artifact, a 60% chance of reader boredom if they don't and a 10% chance that Hayes is an android answering only to the COCA-COLA corporation.

SHIPS COMPUTER HERE: DAMAGE REPORT: Minor abrasions... second degree burns and we lost some more of those heat tiles. REPAIR TIME: 2000 years.

TIME: 06.30
8 hrs begin.

IT SINGS IN THE ACID RAIN, JUST SINGS IN THE ACID RAIN, WHAT A WONDERFUL FEELIN' IM MELTIN' AGAIN!

IT LOOKS SO PEACEFUL... LIKE NO. 1...

NOW LISTEN! WE GOIN-FIND THE POWER SOURCE NEUTRALISE IT- LEAVE. OKAY? NO SIGHTSEEING! NO ROCK COLLECTING, NO PEEPING INTO EGG-LIKE LEATHERY OBJECTS, NO "I WONDER WHAT'S DOWN HERE" JUST DO THE JOB AND GET OUT!

Donning protective ponchos to delay the corrosive atmosphere and sheathing weapons, they set out towards the Pyramids of Doom...

They had 8 hours before the acid ate through their suits... 8 short, hours...

At the top...

IT'S GOING...

IT'S GOING...

IT'S GOING...

Syrena and Flinn decide to check out the other flat-topped pyramid, from which Flinn directs the ship to blast the other's stairway, where he believes an entrance to be concealed...

COMPUTER!

I'm sorry Dave I can't do that. Why don't you sit down Dave and take a stress pill. "Daisy"

ARG! He got me boss... I'm going... Say goodbye to all the pocket micros for me...

SO THE PYRAMID WILL RETURN FIRE... STILL, WE'VE FOUND ANOTHER ENTRANCE... POKCHO'S ALMOST GONE... HAYES! DINALT! GAVIN! GO THRU THE SHAFT! SYRENA AND I WILL TRY THE STAIRWAY.

"Daisy, Daisy, give me your..."

COMPUTER... MONITOR US OKAY? COMPUTER?

"... answer do -" Oh sure thing Cap'n! "Baa Baa black sheep..."

DON'T WORRY - EVERYTHING WILL BE OKAY! LIKE NO. 2

FLINN-IM SCARED! WHAT'S THAT SOUND? IT'S JUST THE WIND HONEY. LIKE NO. 3

HAYES HERE. WE DREW STRAWS TO SEE WHO WENT DOWN FIRST. GAVIN LOST... SO I'M GOING DOWN FIRST.

TIME: 08.20

...to be continued...

Starbase is a bimonthly column for players of the Traveller game, edited by Bob McWilliams.

3-D SPACE

by Bob McWilliams

The *Traveller* rules and official campaign background make use of a two-dimensional subsector map system; the Imperium and its surrounding regions are in effect a 2-D 'slice' of our galactic locality. There are good reasons for adopting this approach – it makes mapping simple to carry out, and astrological relationships, travel distances and so on are easy to understand. Of course space is not two-dimensional, but this is science fiction and designers of RPGs can take liberties with the real universe.

Nonetheless, the third dimension can be added fairly painlessly to produce a reasonable limitation of volume as well as distance. For those of you not committed to the official campaign I offer the following ideas based on my own *Traveller* campaign setting. As with any type of rules additions, you will have to decide whether the benefits outweigh the burden of additional work. I'm in no doubt myself!

The system I have adopted keeps the one parsec wide hex. 3-D is achieved by 'stacking' a column of hexes on top of one another, the hex becoming one cubic parsec in volume compared to the standard 2-D hex of one square parsec in area (*Diagram 1*). In order to continue using the standard *Traveller* subsector map (TAS Form 1), the subsector remains 8 parsecs 'wide' by 10 parsecs 'long', but becomes 10 parsecs 'deep' as well. Rather than consisting of 80 square parsecs, it now consists of 800 cubic parsecs.

In my case a sector now becomes 8 subsectors, arranged two wide by two long, by two deep (*Diagram 2*). The reason for reducing the number of subsectors per sector (from 16 to 8) becomes clear when you consider the number of potential sites for star systems.

In the 2-D sector there are: 16 subsectors each of 8×10 parsecs = $16 \times 80 = 1280\text{PC}^2$.

In the 3-D sector there are: 8 subsectors each of $8 \times 10 \times 10$ parsecs = $8 \times 800 = 6400\text{PC}^3$.

STELLAR DENSITY

The average density of a 2-D subsector

is going to be one system per two hexes, since the rules suggest a system is present on a 1d6 roll of 4, 5 or 6. In practice, the overall density may be less due to the presence of rifts, etc – perhaps as low as one system per three or four hexes. The main reason for deciding on a given density in *game terms* is the need to make most systems accessible to starships with Jump-1 or Jump-2 drives – not that all systems need to be accessible in all directions, just as long as most systems can be reached by at least one route. Apart from the fact that Jump-1 and 2 ships are the most likely types to be available to players, jump fuel takes up so much of the ship's volume at the larger jump numbers, the sector economy would suffer considerably if most connexions were Jump-3 or 4.

A 2-D hex is adjacent to six other hexes, but a 3-D hex is adjacent to no less than twenty other hexes if we count diagonal movement as adjacent. I count Jump-1 movement as being anything from a fraction of a parsec up to 1.5 parsecs, Jump-2 as being 1.5 to 2.5 parsecs and so on. From this we can easily make up a 3-D jump chart that caters for combinations of horizontal and vertical vectors by using good old Pythagoras' Theorem (*Table 3*). Just for comparison, *Table 4* shows the much more restricted travel possibilities if Jump-1 is limited to one parsec, Jump-2 to anything between one and two parsecs, and so on. I don't use this version because it negates much of the reason for using 3-D space. Jump distances are arbitrary values for a fictional drive system, so I don't feel I am mutilating the basic concepts of *Traveller* too much.

Back then to stellar density. In our (real) stellar neighbourhood, the stellar density is about one star per ten cubic parsecs. Of course, many systems are binary or larger multiples. Working from the *Traveller Book 6* System Features Table, the average number of stars per system works out as 1.444. Thus to get the average of one star per ten cubic parsecs, you need an average of one system per 14.44 cubic parsecs. A roll of 11 or 12 on 2d6 would give a one in thirteen chance – near enough for game purposes.

However, I use a basic chance of one in six (ie one system per six cubic parsecs), assuming my area is denser than normal. This provides more than adequate Jump-1 connexions and it is in fact quite rare to find any system that is more than Jump-2 from at least one other system. *Diagram 5* shows a small but typical part of one subsector in this campaign area by way of illustration. Remember that each hex is ten layers deep, so there could well be more than

one system in the column. Theoretically there could be ten, but five is the most I have encountered so far, and of course, at a base chance of one in six per cubic parsec, the average number of systems per column ought to be 1.66.

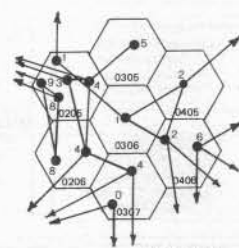
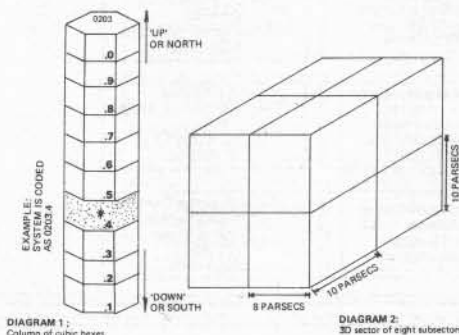
All that is needed to denote 'depth' is the addition of a decimal place and relevant number to the hex reference. Thus 0.305.5 indicates, in my case, the system is the fifth level up, since the bottom level is '1' and the top is '0' (*Diagram 1*). I have drawn in (*Diagram 5*) all the Jump-1 connexions – you can work out Jump-2 connexions yourself using *Table 3*! One disadvantage is that unless the hexes are pretty big, the standard *Traveller* mapping symbols are out – but I can live with this since it is all in the system catalogue anyway.

THE PURPOSE OF 3-D

What, then, are the advantages of 3-D space? Most obvious is the fact that it is a more 'realistic' representation of the universe. Despite the lower stellar density, everything is more compact – there are many more worlds (and hence more opportunities for adventure) within a given distance of a central point. Players will also find that they don't have to keep back-tracking through the same few 'bottle-necks', since there is a larger choice of directions to take. Of course, even in 3-D, certain key 'crossroads' systems will develop, but I have found this to be a bonus. In 3-D these systems become logical subsector capitals, naval bases, X-boat depots, etc.

In the larger fields of politics and strategy, more bonuses accrue. In terms of political groupings, rational development is easy and makes constructing the sector map a pleasure. Different forms of grouping – compact clusters, drawn out 'strings of beads', interwoven structures – can all be catered for. Navy and defence strategy has to cope with threats from all directions. Such a sector would be ideal for a *High Guard* campaign, or one using the rules and counters from *Fifth Frontier War*. The image of the player-admiral in his command centre overlooking a 3-D situation display comes nearer to the truth.

If 6400 potential system sites, or about 1650 systems, seems too much to produce, there is no need to tackle it all at once. I only have two subsectors (271 systems) drawn up completely, plus small areas of adjacent subsectors, where important routes loop out and back. Within this region there is more than enough to keep the players busy for years, whether they are criminals on the run, trading magnates or even admirals or subsector governor! □



		HORIZONTAL VECTOR (no. of hexes)					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
VERTICAL VECTOR (no. of hexes)	1	1	2	3	4	5	6
	2	2	3	4	4	5	6
	3	3	4	4	5	6	-
	4	4	4	5	6	6	-
	5	5	5	6	6	-	-
	6	6	6	-	-	-	-

TABLE 3: JUMP DISTANCES
(Jump-1=1-5pc, jump-2=1.5 to 2.5pc etc).

		HORIZONTAL VECTOR (no. of hexes)					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
VERTICAL VECTOR (no. of hexes)	1	1	2	3	4	5	6
	2	2	3	3	4	5	6
	3	3	4	4	5	5	6
	4	4	5	5	5	6	-
	5	5	6	6	6	-	-
	6	6	-	-	-	-	-

TABLE 4: JUMP DISTANCES.
(Jump-1=up to 1pc, jump-2=1 to 2pc etc).

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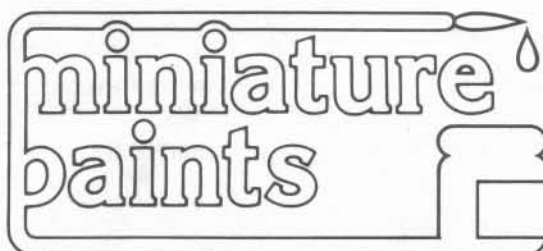
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STAR SPRAY

An epic adventure for MERP and AD&D, by Graham Staplehurst

GAME MASTER'S INTRODUCTION

This adventure draws on the works of J.R.R. Tolkien. However, you do not need to have read his books in order to play this scenario—just read through it carefully, paying particular attention to the NPC Capsules which detail some of the major characters involved in the scenario. The adventure has full notes for the *Middle-earth Role Playing* and *AD&D* systems, and is suited to medium level characters (4th to 9th level).

To almost everyone, the history of the Silmarils ends with the fate of Maglor. For players in this adventure, however, the Silmarillion continues and will encompass their feats. The principal characters of the scenario are Maglor and Elwing. It is essential that you as GM fully understand these two characters and their motivations. Elwing has great magical powers over sea, birds and dreams, all these things being linked in the tales of Middle-earth. She is also very lonely and wishes to join her husband. To this end, she has searched long and far for a Silmaril—the one thing which might enable her to join Eärendil—and now she has found one. Lately, she has used her knowledge of Maglor's fate to manipulate him into attempting to find the jewel she desires, as he is one of the few inhabitants of Middle-earth capable of seeking it out, and yet cannot ultimately keep it. Elwing dwells on the shores of the Uttermost

West, where '... there was built for her a white tower northward upon the borders of the Sundering Seas'. There she talks to all the sea-birds '... and it is said that Elwing learned the tongues of the birds: and they taught her the craft of flight, and her wings were of white and silver-grey'.

Maglor is a great tragic character, who recently has had many strange dreams which he intently believes will lead him to the Silmaril and his redemption. He will be the main mover of the adventure as far as the characters are concerned. He is completely selfish and disdainful of the characters, and will try to get them into a position where they need him to survive the long sea crossing, so that they are almost completely under his thumb. He can be magisterial or awe-inspiring at times and has a nature very alien to that of the party.

The adventure does not have a set ending. You should choose the one which you think best fits the adventure as it happens to your players. There is the possibility of a tragic ending or a more hopeful one; there can be intervention by Eärendil or even Ulmo, the Vala of the Sea, if necessary. Much of the enjoyment of this adventure depends on careful handling of the NPCs, so there are extra details on these, which you may want to enlarge upon. You may also want to add further precursors to the main adventure

whilst the characters are still in Ethrond. Have fun!

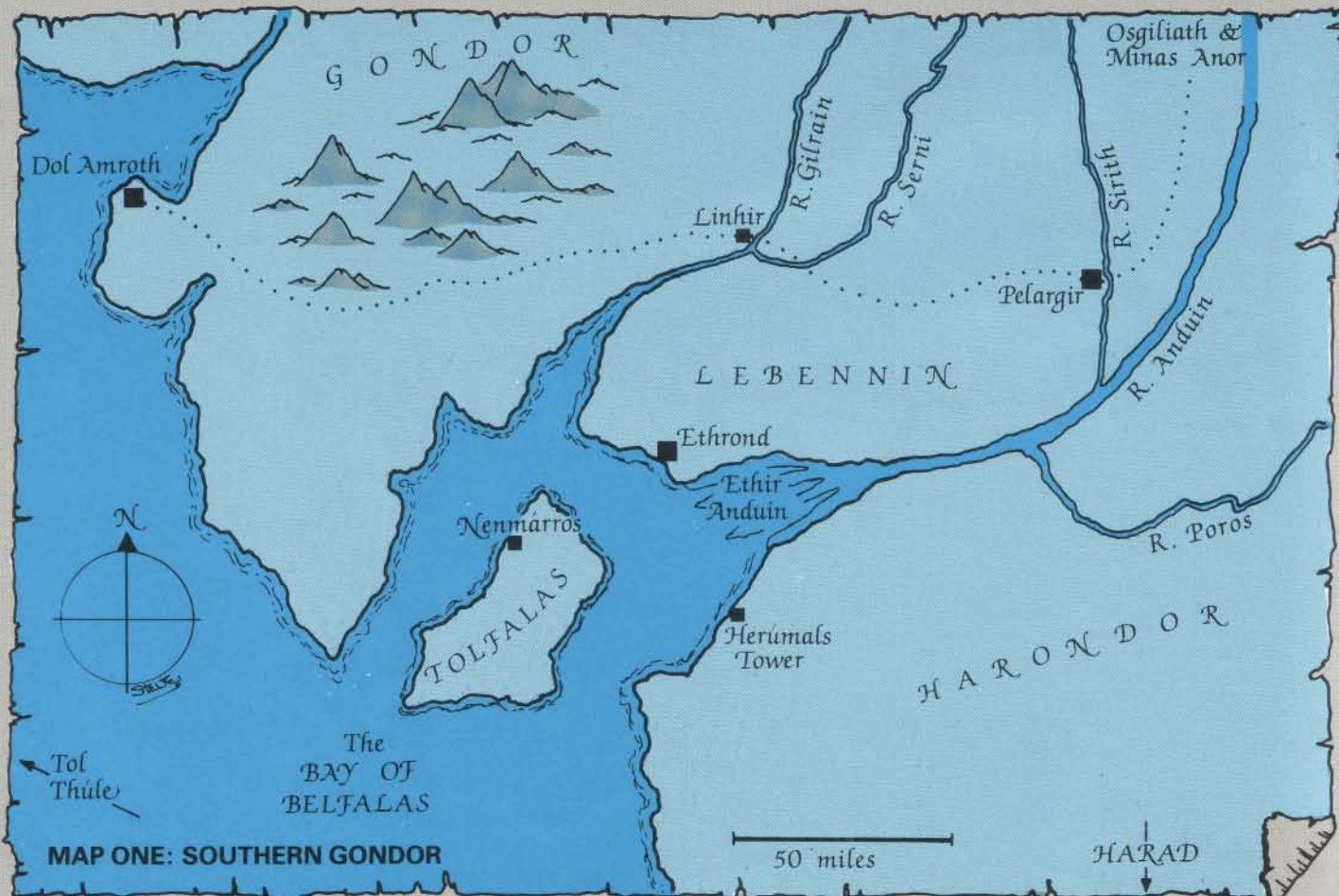
A: A MEETING IN ETHROND

GM's Notes

The party should start the adventure in Ethrond. It will be up to you how they arrive there, but Ethrond is a typical haven for adventurers, wastrels, mercenaries, buccaneers and fugitives from justice. Many find it an excellent base for illicit activities, and it is also a trading centre for many exotic goods. After the brief description of the port are a couple of encounters which you should use on the party before they meet Ywalmolin and start the main adventure. In this way it is hoped that they will not at first suspect this as anything more than a minor encounter. Only later, when it is too late, will this happen!

Players' Information

Ethrond is a port in Southern Gondor, about 40 leagues downstream from bustling Pelargir and right amongst the Mouths of the Anduin. It is a well-known stop for ships passing along the coast to Belfalas, Dol Amroth and Anfalas, being more accessible than Linhir. Ships also stop here going up the river to the capital, often to pick up pilots, since the delta can be treacherous with its shifting sandbanks. As a quiet town in the rural province of Lebennin, it attracts little notice from Gondor's busy rul-



ers. It is not very large, lacking any major trade routes inland, and most traders are just passing through. However, it has several springs of sweet water, a safe harbour and plenty of welcoming taverns.

1. Captain Arahim Players' Information

In a tavern conversation, you meet Captain Arahim, who is looking for some special 'help'. The Captain explains that he is planning a raid against the tower of a wicked man exiled from Gondor who just happened to have taken a large amount of valuables with him, which the good Captain thinks should be returned to Gondor. The Captain has a boat and a complement of sturdy men to help him, but knows that the tower has some magical protection which he may not be able to overcome, and hence is willing to pay the characters half of any treasure recovered for their assistance.

GM's Notes

Arahim owns a privateer with a crew of 16. He is arranging a sortie against a stronghold on the south bank of the Anduin estuary, on the shores of Harondor, occupied by Herúmal, an exiled nobleman of Gondor.

The attack will be planned for night, and the Captain will set sail on the previous night: he is a very experienced sailor and will be able to navigate the delta safely. It would be useful if the characters lend a hand with some of the shipboard operations so that later on they will be familiar with them. The boat carries two rowing-boats which will ferry the crew and party to shore when they reach their destination. The tower is situated on a cliff-top and from the small beach there is a quarter-mile

long winding cliff path. Herúmal has 10 guards: 4 of his old men-at-arms and 6 mercenaries from Near Harad he has recruited since his exile. There will be one man watching at the top of the cliff path and two inside the tower on the ground floor.

The tower is 80' high and has four storeys. In the topmost sleeps Herúmal with his mistress Belandien. She has her own room on this floor. On the next floor are the couple's living quarters, and also the room of Garith, Herúmal's faithful old retainer, now over 100 years old. Below that floor are the quarters of the men-at-arms and the kitchen. On the ground floor is the entrance hall-cum-guardroom and two spare chambers. At the entrance to the tower, a black stone sits atop the door's arch, graven with strange signs. The stone contains a spirit bound by the Ringwraith who led Herúmal into treachery. Whenever anyone unknown to Herúmal crosses the threshold, it lets out a keening wail, and if the guards are attacked, it will emerge from the stone and attack the intruders itself. It appears as a shadowy black form with violet fiery eyes and claws. It gives off ultra-violet light which will make anything white or pale blue glow unnaturally and will scare all the pirates.

The tower has many objects of beauty and value in the top two floors: a small amount of treasure in coins, but more in candlesticks, tapestries, salvers and cutlery, paintings, sculpture and robes of fur and rich embroidery. Belandien has a small store of dried and preserved herbs in her room including some Gariig, some Harfy and some Juth poison. [AD&D: Gariig acts as a *cure serious wounds*, Harfy stops all bleeding and Juth poison comes from scorpions and causes gradual insanity.]

She also has a fair selection of jewellery.

Close to the tower are three outbuildings used to stable four horses, as rooms for the Harad mercenaries and as a store for food, supplies, firewood etc. Some way down the coast is a secret cave in which Herúmal has a small sailing boat. He will make for it if the tower's guards are overcome, but will normally help attack any intruders. Belandien will only fight to defend herself and Garith cannot fight.

2. The Great Pallandi Players' Information

You have been sought out by a huge man wearing brightly coloured and outlandish garb one evening, who immediately introduces himself as the Great Pallandi, a strongman and owner of a travelling circus. The fair has lost a couple of star acts recently and he wants to find something spectacular to bring the crowds back and the money rolling in again. He has managed to persuade a captain to take him to the southern coasts and simply needs a little assistance in capturing a baby mûmak. Pallandi offers to pay quite handsomely for your trouble.

GM's Notes

Pallandi is the owner of a travelling fair and wants to sail down the coast of Harondor and try to find a baby mûmak to capture and show off in the fair.

Pallandi will be accompanied by his wife, a ranger-type who is the fair's animal-handler. The captain of the 'Cheerful Swallow' thinks the couple are quite barmy, but is being paid well, so does not complain. The trip will take 2-7 days sailing (each way) during which time the characters should again be encouraged to take up some sailing tasks. On land, mûmakil will be spotted each day, in groups of 1-10. If there are 5 or more beasts present, one will be a baby suitable for Pallandi's purpose and the party will have to split it away from the rest of the group (or slay them all) and capture it. Adult beasts will be level 5-7, the baby level 1-2, but otherwise use the standard stats in *MERP*. [AD&D: Treat these beasts as mastodons (MM).] Roll for other random encounters as usual both on land and at sea - planning a few of these in advance will greatly enhance the flow of the game. Suggested ideas include dolphins, small bands of Haradhrim hunters, giant snakes, poisonous plants, infected water and large cats (eg lions).

3. Ywalmolin (Maglor) Players' Information

You are approached by an elfin sailor interested in adventure and mutual gain. He explains that he has learnt from an ancient elf of the location of a ruined castle on Tolfalas wherein treasures might be found. The castle was built by the men of Númenor but soon abandoned and has never been used since. Ywalmolin has a suitable ship for the party to get to Nenmárros on Tolfalas but has no crew, so the characters will have to work! Ywalmolin suggests that any treasure you find is split one-third for him and two-thirds for the party.

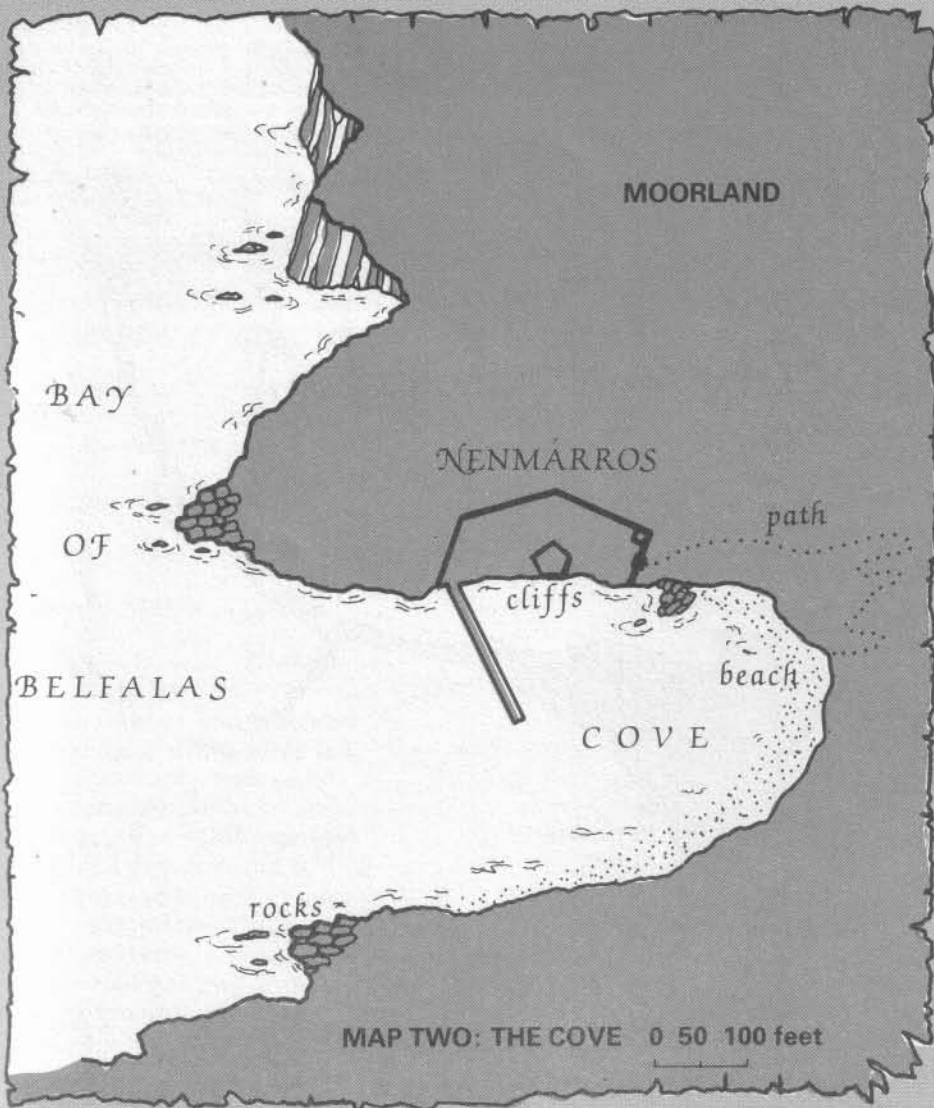
GM's Notes

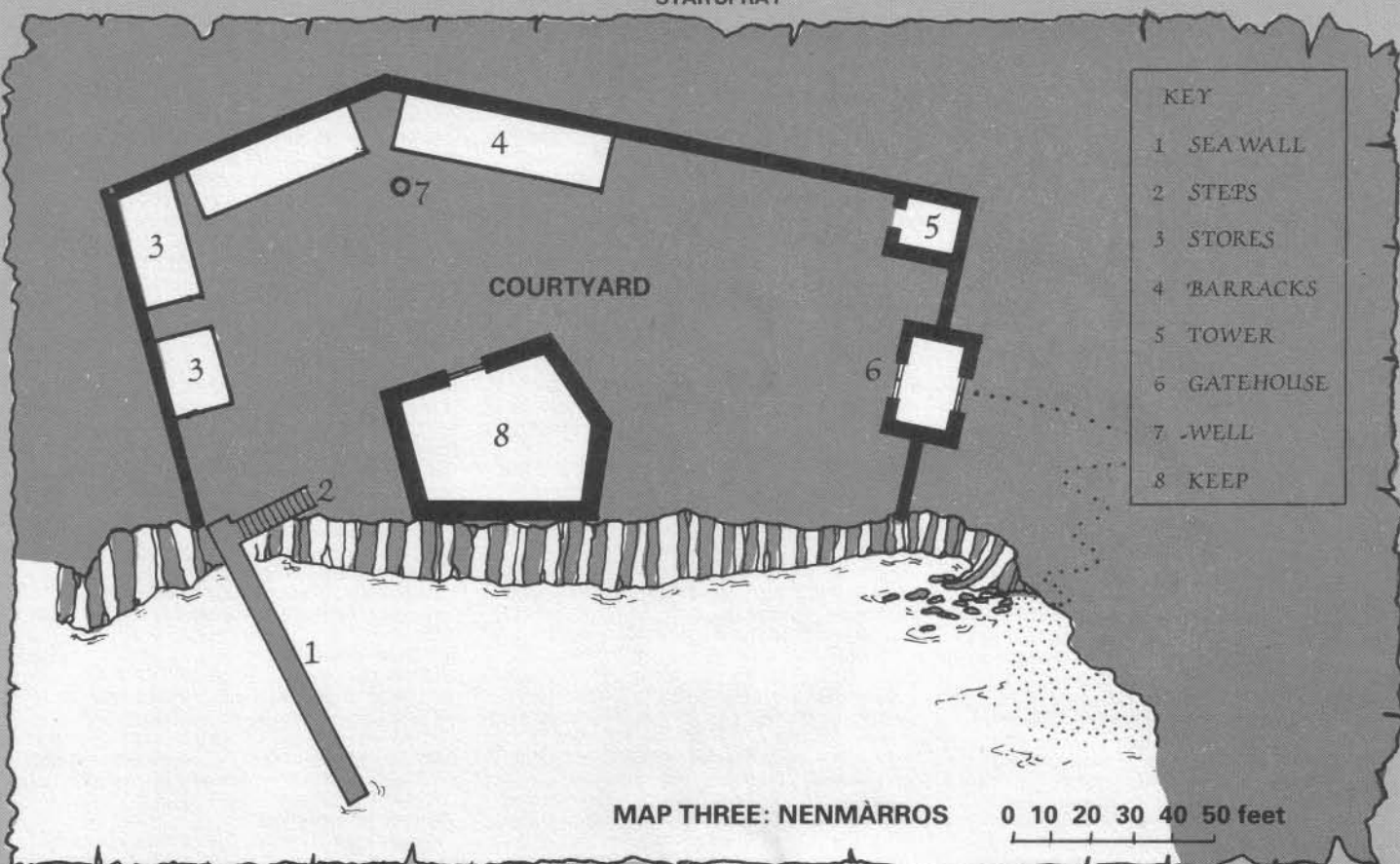
Maglor's background is explained in the introduction and his NPC Capsule. He is very different from almost every other inhabitant of Middle-earth and should be played as such: make him as obscure as possible.

The adventure is detailed in section B. The castle is only about 60 miles away but might take a little while to get there if the characters are very bad at sailing. Maglor will be very helpful, telling everyone what to do if necessary. Don't forget to prepare some random encounters if necessary, and pay particular attention to the weather which could affect the duration of the sea voyage considerably.

B: IN THE RUINS OF NENMÁRROS Players' Information

The fort stands on a cliff above a narrow inlet, with a sea wall projecting out into the inlet to





MAP THREE: NENMÁROS

0 10 20 30 40 50 feet

provide a safe harbour. There is a central keep surrounded by a courtyard and high wall, and opposite the castle is a wide beach. Steps lead up from the sea wall to the courtyard of the fort.

GM's Notes

Nenmáros was built by the Númenoreans in the Second Age as an extra fort to guard the Bay of Belfalas and the entrance to the Anduin, and as a measure to lay claim to Tol-falas. However, no one wanted to settle on Tol-falas and there were great logistical problems in supplying the garrison, so the fort was abandoned in the reign of Tar-Ardamin. Since then, the fort has decayed, although the strength of Númenorean building techniques has helped preserve the major parts of it.

The party must either beach the boat or tie up at the sea wall. The sea wall has withstood storms for thousands of years and will protect any boat on the landside of it; on the beach, however, strong waves could sweep the boat away or swamp it.

1. The Sea Wall. This is built of huge stone blocks and has several steel rings and stone posts to tie up to. The steel rings are corroded and will not hold the boat in a rough sea without breaking.

2. The stairs are cut right into the cliff and are safe unless it is a wet day, when they are slippery and precautions must be taken. The characters may be surprised by a large lizard (see Monster stats) that is waiting to attack them at the top. The lead character should make a hard (-20) Perception roll [AD&D: roll for surprise]. Only the lead character can fight it unless he/she manages to make a Medium Manoeuvre roll to get past the creature [AD&D: roll under DEX on 1d20+2]. The lizard has a poisonous bite, the poison affecting anyone struck with a critical [AD&D: a roll of 18+ 'to hit']. Those failing to save against it suffer dehydration, and must consume a pint of fresh water every half hour or take 2 hits damage cumulative (ie if the water is missed for 1½ hours the character takes 2, then 4, then 6 hits). The effects are first noticed after 1 hour and last for 20+d10 hours. There is a 10% chance of encountering the lizard in the courtyard if the characters entered the fort by the gate.

3. Courtyard. The courtyard is surrounded

by a 10' high wall, solidly built. Against this wall are the remains of some collapsed buildings. The piles of rubble and weathered timber are mostly overgrown with weeds and sea grasses. In the northwest corner is a nest of winged termites. If disturbed, the termites will fly up as a swarm and attack anyone in the immediate area. A swarm consists of 100+d100 termites, each with 1 hit, and attacks without regard for DB or shields – only take armour type into consideration. If anyone takes more than 10 hits from a swarm, they must save against poison or suffer weakness (halve strength and constitution) for d3+6 hours. Fire or thick smoke will drive the termites away.

4. These are ruined barracks, again overgrown with pinks and weeds. There is nothing special to be found in the rubble here.

5. In the northeast corner of the courtyard is a tower built integral with the wall. The roof and all the floors have collapsed, leaving a chimney-like ruin, some 15' wide inside, 30 to 40' tall. The interior walls are unsafe and there is quite a pile of rubble at the bottom. It will require an Extremely Hard Manoeuvre roll to climb the walls inside [AD&D: treat as slippery, DMG p19]. A failure/fall indicates that the climber has dislodged some crumbling masonry and suffers an 'A' crush critical in addition to any falling damage [AD&D: +d10 damage and 20% chance of broken limb per 10' fallen]. Various small birds nest on ledges within the tower, some being very rare with valuable eggs. If any are disturbed, Elwing (section D) will be very displeased.

6. Gateway. The gate is also in poor repair and just as likely to collapse as the tower (see 5) if climbed. The gates are shut. The gatehouse may be approached from the outside if the boat was beached and the winding path taken up the hill from the cove. The gates are wooden, bound with steel, but the wood is completely rotten and will easily crumble from the bindings – but unless this is done carefully, the doors and a portion of the gatehouse will collapse, showering anyone nearby with rotten wood, rusting steel and masonry: make a Medium Manoeuvre roll [AD&D: roll under DEX on 1d20+2] or suffer a 'C' Crush Critical [AD&D: d12+2 hits and save vs dragon breath or break/sprain a limb]. A Perception roll will spot the unsafe nature

of these gates [AD&D: dwarven and gnomish special ability roll].

From the outside a hole can be seen in the wall beneath an arrow slit. This can be easily reached and is large enough for a character to get through. Inside, on the ground floor of the gatehouse, is the lair of a pair of moor cats, who will be disturbed if they are present. Their lair is untidy and full of scattered bones, dung and cat smell. They hunt for a couple of hours at dawn and dusk every day and will attack anyone in the gatehouse. The moor cats are about 7' long, a dull mauve in colour and have fluffy ears and powerful claws. [AD&D: jaguar (MM).]

7. The undergrowth in this area is lush and greener, as this is the old well. However, the well holds a surprise, for lurking in its depths is a small kraken that will be awakened by anyone trying to draw water or climb down the inside. It can attack up to 3 people (see MERP for details of concentrating attacks on fewer than 3 targets) and if it manages to entangle a victim, further attacks will be to Unbalance, aiming to drag victims into the well and drown them. It will not attack after having snatched one character. [AD&D: the kraken is a half-size roper with no 'weakness' poison.]

The well is 240' deep altogether, the water level being 180' below the level of the courtyard. It is just 6' wide.

8. The Keep. The keep is a pentagonal structure about 50' x 50'. The walls are 4-5' thick and so well built that they have survived perfectly, like the main wall surrounding the courtyard. The sea wall has protected the cliffs below the keep from erosion. The keep has 4 floors. The ground, first and second floors all have safe stone floors but the top floor is of old wood which is now completely unsafe and will not bear a person's weight. When it was deserted, most of the furnishings were removed from the keep apart from odd chairs and tables (now ready to disintegrate at a touch). On the ground floor are a few chests containing mouldy old cloth, etc. If these are moved, a well-preserved wooden trapdoor will be found, with an inset bolt on the uppermost side. The bolt can be easily drawn and the door opened (though this will make quite a noise) to reveal stairs going

down to the dungeons.

The stairs go down some 50' then end in a short corridor with three doors. All the doors are locked, and the locks rusted, making them Hard [-20%] to pick. The left-hand room is empty save for a wooden pallet and a dry well. The right-hand room contains the remains of a prisoner left by the departing commander. The skeleton will jump up and attack anyone in the dungeon area 2 rounds after the door is opened; it is a minor wight [AD&D: coffer corpse (FF)]. In the room at the end of the corridor are two securely locked and airtight chests. One contains books and a small jewellery box with an assortment of rings, earrings and brooches, the other a collection of liqueurs which are now wonderfully mature, tasty and incredibly alcoholic. All the books are well-preserved and can be read.

The books are what Ywalmolin desires: a large black-bound one with bronze hasps is the log of a Númenorean ship (the 'Inzil') which voyaged once to Tol Thúle, and from the description of it, he recognises it as the Isle of the Silmaril in his dream. At this, Ywalmolin will get visibly excited and secretive about the book, unlike his normal impassive self. The other books are various texts from the Second Age that were forgotten by the departing Númenoreans: books of poetry and song, treatises on peoples, creatures and plants, manuals of craftsmen, and a history of the Kings of Númenor. None are related to magic. There is little else in the keep and overall there is not very much treasure. Ywalmolin, after reading the log, will apologise to the characters about the unrewarding nature of the trip, and suggest that they seek out a remote island 'Noted in this book as being on ev'ry shore strewn with precious stones'. (If this does not entice the characters, Ywalmolin will resort to magical means later.)

C: JOURNEY ACROSS THE SUNDERING SEAS GM's Notes

The journey to Tol Thúle will take about three weeks. Ywalmolin will make sure that there are insufficient rations to last, so that his magical ability to produce food makes him invaluable to the party – they would not be able to survive back to landfall – and also puts them in his thrall. Roll regularly for random encounters along the way if you want, preparing a few in advance. In these waters all manner of creatures dwell: sharks, dolphins, whales, perhaps even a faistitocalon.

Tol Thúle can only be found by carefully following the route taken by the Inzil and recorded in the Númenorean logbook, also allowing for the changes in star patterns that are only noticeable in the thousands of years that Ywalmolin has lived. When the ship is a day away from it, Tol Thúle will be sighted as a small green hump.

The isle is covered in trees apart from a few beaches around the edges. It was once part of Tol Eressea, the island which became a vast ship for the Calaquendi's migration to Blesed Aman. This 'lump' fell off and remained part of Endor, in the middle of the Sundering Seas. It is about 1 mile across and rises quite steeply to a height of 800' in the centre. The isle was accidentally discovered by Númenoreans but soon forgotten in the conquest of Middle-earth, and when Númenor sank at the end of the Second Age, Tol Thúle returned to complete anonymity.

Currently the isle is relatively uninhabited, though thickly growing with every sort of pleasant plant, bush, tree, herb and grass. There are a few animals, but none of them are at all harmful and all eat only plants: monkeys, boars, small snakes, tree cats, sea birds, etc. The only other three inhabitants of the isle are Ul, Hobnob and Vikiliniñama (see NPC Capsules). At night the streams of the isle, which are fed from a common underground source, glow with light, and this can even be noticed on gloomy days. Tol Thúle is also magical in other ways: storms always abate around its shores and there is never hail, snow or harmful rain nor blistering heat.

Under the isle is a secret cavern, 600' across and up to 150' high in the centre. None of the inhabitants of the isle know about the cavern, save Vikiliniñama who lives in it. All the isle's streams are fed from pools in the cavern, which is connected with the sea through blow-holes. When sea water enters the cavern, the salt is magically deposited to leave clear, fresh water, which flows up from pools to the fissures in the rock through which the springs force their way to the surface. In one of the pools is the Silmaril, and its light is conducted by the water to the streams. Its light also reflects on the salt deposits which glitter gold, violet and green. If anyone enters the cave, Vikiliniñama will spring down in front of them, growling, and, with his scaly crest raised, issue a piercing growl like a *great song* [AD&D: power word *stun*]. It can only use this ability once per day.

When the characters land on the island they will see it as a paradise and indeed there are glittering stones on the beaches (mainly quartz and amethysts) and succulent fruits pending from trees amidst sparkling humming birds and radiant flowers. For Ywalmolin it is something more and he is torn between eagerness and secrecy and a nagging despair that he will somehow be denied the Silmaril once more. By now he will either have the characters under his control or will know their weaknesses and strengths so well that he will be able to anticipate any move they make and counter it beforehand if he so desires. The party will meet either Ul or Hobnob on their first evening; Ywalmolin will attempt to question them about the Silmaril (out of hearing of the party) but neither of them knows anything about it, or even of the cave.

Ywalmolin will eventually manage to persuade either Ul or the party to search the island for the source of the glowing streams. Eventually they will find a spring with a cleft above it, which goes down into the rock of the isle. It is only 2-3' wide and twists and turns often, so that it is impossible to see far ahead. Note that Ul will not accompany any party that harms any creature of the isle or that goes down into the cleft. The cleft leads down for about 80' before opening out into the cavern. Characters may be dazzled by the sudden light which flashes from every pool and facet of salt-covered rock. In several places around the edges of the cavern the salt deposits are quite thick and walking through them can stir up a great cloud of swirling crystals. Anyone entering the cavern will be attacked by Vikiliniñama as described previously. Ywalmolin will let the characters fight the beast and will start to search for the Silmaril. The beast will be very hard to combat as no real idea of its size can be obtained and in the confusing light it appears to shift and scintillate, rearing up suddenly and delivering terrible bites and swipes with its claws (this is reflected in its high DB).

When Ywalmolin has found the Silmaril (which will take d6+3 rounds), he will produce a metal circlet and place the jewel on its clasps which magically fasten the Silmaril in place. As he places the circlet on his head there will be a clap of thunder and a flash of light: if Vikiliniñama is still alive, it will fall to the floor as if stricken unto death. The whole cavern will then shake as Ywalmolin utters these words in Quenya:

I, Maglor, second son of Fëanor, claim the birthright denied to me by Morgoth and Manwë and cursed Ulmo! I claim the Silmaril wrought by my father with the light of Telperion and Laurelin the Golden!

Maglor then stumbles and screams as he is suddenly afflicted with terrible pain from the Silmaril. Aeons ago he tried to seize the Silmaril and failed because of his oath, and all the wanderings in Endor it seems were not enough penance for the mighty treacheries and the genocide committed by Fëanor and his sons, and Mandos has fated them never to regain the jewels. The ancient elf will then

fall into a swoon like death, his visage locked in a tight grimace. If Vikiliniñama is still alive, it will get to its feet and attack the characters once more. However, the surge of magic power through Silmaril has disrupted the cavern and characters will soon notice that the water in the pools is bubbling up and overflowing: the cave is being flooded. If Maglor is to be saved, he must be carried from the cavern.

The characters must leave the cavern or be drowned. If they leave without Maglor, they will need to spend some time gathering food before they leave the isle and in that time, Maglor's body will pass through a blow-hole and be washed up on the beach. If they bring his body out with them, they will find that he is in a near-coma but not dead. It is impossible for the characters to remove the circlet from Maglor's brow, even if they remove his head (a task which any self-respecting character would not even suggest, and which none could actually stomach). The only people capable of removing it are Ul (if the characters think to ask her) and Elwing. Maglor will not drown in his passage from the cave to the beach, he is protected by the Silmaril. Vikiliniñama, however, passes out of this story.

D: 'STAR SPRAY' GM's Notes

This final encounter starts on the first evening after Maglor's finding of the Silmaril. The characters must still be on the isle, and should have found Maglor's body; manipulate events so that both these conditions are satisfied.

Players' Information

There is a great feeling of peace once more on Tol Thúle as the day ends. As you contemplate the magnificent sky, you see the evening star rise and, far out at sea, you see a great wave start to form, the water humping itself up into a rushing dome of marvellous energy, bearing down on the little island. About half a mile away, the wave crests and as plumes of spray are stripped off the top by its own speed, it breaks thunderously and deeply, the sound resonating around the trees and rocks of the island in a myriad of echoes. From the surging white foam arises a huge white sea-bird with beautiful, ethereal wings of gossamer and a shining white body. It glides off the now quiet sea and swoops over the isle, hovering over the party for a few moments before alighting beside you. The bird-spirit shimmers momentarily and suddenly turns into the figure of a beautiful elven woman.

GM's Notes

This is Elwing, wife of Eärendil, also called Bride of the Evening Star. She has come to take the Silmaril from Maglor, for only rightfully may a Silmaril be taken, and thus she has had to manoeuvre Maglor into stealing it so that she might retrieve it with surety. The characters may try to intervene if they wish, but Elwing has waited long for this moment and will not brook any challenge to her taking the Silmaril – she will use all her considerable powers if necessary. When she takes the circlet from Maglor, he will awaken and recover (to half total hits) in 10 turns, or earlier if assisted by the party. Elwing meanwhile will set the Silmaril upon her own brow. At this point the referee should select one of the following ways of continuing the adventure, or invent another:

1. Elwing prepares to resume her bird form and explains her story to the party, who might well be curious. Maglor, however, recovers and attacks her from behind, dealing her a '101' Slash Critical [AD&D: stunned 4 rounds and bleeding 8 hits per round] which will be sufficient to be a mortal wound for Elwing. Consumed with hatred and desire, Maglor snatches the Silmaril and holds it aloft in his bloody hand as it crackles with golden fire. He is absolutely invulnerable to attacks but the Silmaril destroys him with its fire; eventually flame bursts from his eyes, nose and mouth and his burnt-out shell crumples to the floor.

The characters will then realise that Ul is present and before they can act she will have picked up the jewel. The characters may attack for the Silmaril if they want, but Hobnob (if still alive) will protect her, as always, and anyone else touching the jewel will take 1-10 hits every 2 seconds until they drop it, at which point half the hits taken are recovered. Ul will appear delighted with the Silmaril and will say (speaking quite clearly in Quenya):

'My Lord calls me and I must go to him. If you are ever in need, speak my name and I will send aid if possible.'

However, if the players have offended her at all during their visit to Tol Thûle, she will merely bid them farewell and walk away. Ul will depart into the surf and disappear amid the waves: for she has been called by Ulmo.

2. As in 1, Maglor awakens and attacks Elwing, but she detects his attack and counters it with magic, subduing him. She then binds him with magic and hands him over to the players, for she can feel pity for even him. She then finishes preparing herself and as the evening star sets, she flies off, more radiant than ever, to join it. Ul may or may not go home with the party, this depends on their behaviour on the island and whether any of the male characters are attractive. There are many valuable things growing on the island, plus the gems to be found in the streams and on the beaches. Maglor may well commit suicide in the elvish way by going to sleep and not waking up, as all his hopes are gone forever.

3. As before, Maglor awakens and he and Elwing fight. At first, he fights with a sword and she with a wand of light. Then, if the characters try to interfere, she will turn into a dove and he into a hawk and they will fight in air. He will seem to get the upper hand and drives Elwing back to earth, where they fight with magic. Elwing throws a shimmering barrier around them so that the characters cannot interfere, and the fight lasts through the night. As the evening star begins to set, Hobnob leaps out from the trees and brings his club down between the combatants, sending them sprawling. If Hobnob has been killed, they are separated by a bolt of lightning. *'SILENCE!'* roars Hobnob (or a voice from the heavens). Then, like a meteor flashing through the sky, Vingilot descends to the island bearing Eärendil. All the characters will be affected by his aura and the shining of his boat. He will ignore them, merely going up to his wife and Maglor with a stony face. *'Would you defy him that slew Ancalagon the Black?'* he demands of Maglor and then gathers up his wife, who has spent all her energy, and returns with her and her Silmaril to Vingilot, which then flies off. Maglor will probably die of anguish or commit suicide unless Ul or the players stop him. Ul may want to keep Maglor on the island and can feed him potent herbs of forgetfulness until he has regressed to his youth (before the Silmarils were made) and all the torments of his life are banished.

4. As Elwing assumes the form of a bird once more, the Silmaril can be seen burning brightly in its breast. Then the brightness seems too much for her and a mewling wail of despair can be heard. She circles ever higher, trying to escape the pain, but eventually it is too much and she falls to the ground. When the characters find her, they see her shattered elven body, but no sign of the Silmaril. Maglor will not recover, but towards dawn Vingilot will appear with Eärendil, who will alight to mourn all day beside his wife and then take her away in his boat. Ulmo will ensure that the characters have a safe journey home, and Ul may return with them.

NPC CAPSULES Ywalmolin/Maglor

Second son of Fëanor, he is the greatest elvish craftsman ever. Born before the First Age, he

followed his father and brothers to Middle-earth in pursuit of the Silmarils which Morgoth had stolen. With Maedhros he was one of the last two sons of Fëanor to survive the turmoil of the First Age and they eventually stole two Silmarils from the Valar who had taken them from Morgoth's iron crown. However, the Silmarils burned him and his brother; Maedhros cast himself into a fiery chasm and Maglor then threw his into the sea '... and thereafter he wandered ever upon the shores, singing in pain and regret besides the waves. For Maglor was mighty among the singers, of old, named only after Daeron of Doriath; but he never came back among the people of the elves.' (See the Quenta Silmarillion.)



Maglor has recently been led in dreams (by Elwing, though he knows it not) to see the Isle of the Silmaril, Tol Thûle, and has discovered that its whereabouts may be related by a certain book in an old fort on Tolfalas, and it is with the aim of finding the book that he enlists the help of the party, although he discloses nothing of his real aims. He now calls himself Ywalmolin, meaning 'hidden torment', and appears to be a typical noble elf, ageless except for his eyes, which betray the years of wandering over every coast of Middle-earth. His clothes he fashions himself with an artistry unknown in these later years and into the hems are worked reminders of all the shores he has travelled. He wears armour of fish scales threaded on mithril and a small helm set with polished coral and abalone. His sword was made by Fëanor and hangs ever-sharp in a scabbard decorated with mother-of-pearl. His hair is long and starkly white, bleached by the sea and sun, and is worn tied back with a black ribbon. He is 6'9" tall. He speaks only Quenya and Sindarin - he is not a sociable person and has never learnt the

tongues of man.

Elwing

Elwing, which means 'star-spray' in High Elven was the daughter of Dior and Ninloth, and Dior was the son of Beren and Luthien (the first union of mortal men and elves) from whom she inherited the Silmaril they won from Morgoth. She married Eärendil, also of the race of men, when he fled from the fall of Gondolin and came to be the ruler of her people. Eärendil decided to seek out the Valar for help in the war against Morgoth and so built the ship Vingilot. Whilst he was away seeking Valinor, the sons of Fëanor heard of the Silmaril Elwing kept and attacked her people. Elwing in despair cast herself into the sea bearing the Silmaril and '... Ulmo bore up Elwing out of the waves, and he gave her the likeness of a great white bird, and upon her breast there shone as a star the Silmaril, as she flew over the water to seek Eärendil her beloved.' They were reunited and arrived in Valinor and persuaded the Valar to march against Morgoth, and this was the War of Wrath. Elwing and Eärendil chose to become immortal elves, but after the Great Battle in which he slew the dragon Ancalagon the Black, Eärendil was sent on voyages through the heavens with the power of the Silmaril on his brow and his ship. He became known as the Evening Star as he was visible from Middle-earth, and also Gil-Estel, the Star of High Hope. But Elwing was left behind '... for she might not endure the cold and pathless voids, and she loved rather the earth and sweet winds. Therefore there was built for her a white tower upon the borders of the Seas; and thither at times all the sea-birds of the earth repaired.' Elwing has eventually tired of her lonely existence and desires to join her husband. She has learnt from her sea-birds that a Silmaril lies beneath Tol Thûle, and is now trying to arrange a way for her to rightfully claim it, which she may from Maglor as compensation for the death of her people.

Elwing is exceedingly beautiful and can assume the form of a great, translucent, sea-bird by expending much power. She can also communicate with all sea-birds and can wield a wand of light equivalent to a +20 shortsword [AD&D: +4 Longsword] which also halves the opponent's chance of hitting (reduce OB by half).

Captain Arahim

A Dúnedain fighter turned privateer, he intensely dislikes being called a pirate, although actually he is - preying on merchants' ships of Gondor and ships of its enemies alike. He owns the 'Braldarcia' and has a crew of 16. He has skills in navigation, sailing, rowing, swimming etc, and wields a fine broadsword with a ruby in the pommel. His chainmail is specially non-rusting for use at sea and in all weathers.

Herúmal

Once a rich nobleman of Gondor, from Dor-en-Enril, he was turned to treachery by a Ringwraith and spied on Gondor for it in return for magical favours and powers. He was discovered and exiled, and the Ringwraith directed him to a disused tower on the south shore of the Anduin estuary from where he still spies on naval movements. The Ringwraith has provided an evil spirit to guard the tower and Herúmal also has a +10 longsword of evil manufacture [AD&D: +2 Evil Longsword] and a magic ring which can extend a *water-lungs* spell twice daily (12th level) [AD&D: as 3rd level MU spell, *waterbreathing*]. Herúmal is dedicated to his profession although it is not particularly enjoyable. He is about 55 and devoted to his rather younger mistress.

Belandien

Herúmal bought Belandien as a slave; she is now his mistress. She enjoys the dangers and evil of his work and lives in awe of the Ringwraith, whom she has seen three times. Magical tomes stolen and bought by Herúmal

have taught her some minor mage abilities, and she can use the Spirit Mastery and Spell Ways spell lists. She has a concealed dagger as part of her normally skimpy attire in which she has stored the *sleep V* spell [AD&D: as 1st level MU spell, *sleep*]. Belandien will use her feminine wiles to stay alive if Herúmal is slain, claiming to be a prisoner and the daughter of a Gondorean nobleman.

UI

UI was one of the Calaquendi, inadvertently lost on the isle of Tol Thúle when it broke away from Tol Eressëa in the middle of the Sundering Seas. She has dwelt here on her own from the age of 4 with only the magic of the isle to protect her until a few years ago when Hobnob arrived. She can now speak a few words of giantish, and enjoys learning new words, although Hobnob cannot always help, not being very bright. UI is completely 'uncivilised' – she wears no clothes, eats only fruit and nuts, sings beautiful tunes all day long and does not understand fighting or the concept of conflict. She loves Tol Thúle passionately, but as she has not yet seen a male elf, must love one just as readily! Her special pleasure is to bathe in the warm sea or the sparkling streams.

Hobnob

Hobnob is a large giant who arrived recently (well, several hundred years ago) on Tol Thúle by accident. He feels very protective towards UI (this is partly the effect of the

island on him) and will guard anything on the island and particularly her from any harm. He will only attack characters as a last resort, however. He has typically ugly giant features and stands 11½' tall. [AD&D: Hobnob is a stone giant, or possibly a cloud giant if you want a tougher encounter.] He uses a large club to attack if necessary, and can also throw rocks.

Vikilinināma

This beast was one of Melkor's slave-spirits which fled after the destruction of Utumno in the Battle of the Powers. It is vaguely troll-like, but larger and heavier and it walks on all fours. It is covered in scintillating scales and has vicious teeth and claws. When roused, a scaly crest running from its neck to its tail rises up threateningly. It can emit a growl once per day which acts as a *great song stun*. It can also use spells (at 25th level) from the Light Law and Earth Law lists: typically *shock bolt*, *sudden light*, *lightning bolt*, *stonewall*, *stone/earth* and *earth/mud*. [AD&D: can cast *lightning bolt*, *wall of stone*, *transmute rock to mud* and *continual light* up to 3 times per day, at 12th level.] Vikilinināma has now been converted by the power of the Silmaril to protect it and can no longer be considered a truly evil creature; however, the Silmaril has not abated its fearsomeness one whit!

Pallandi

The Great Pallandi, as he styles himself, is a typically flamboyant fairground character. He

is amiable and quick to make friends – although those who cross him should be warned, for he is as strong as two normal men and can bend a ¾" iron bar with his bare hands. His clothes are orange, red, purple and green with trimmings of white fur, gold lace, yellow ribbons, etc, and he is fond of humorous tales. He owns the Circus Pallandi which tours around the provinces of southern Gondor in the summer and winters in one of the larger cities, such as Osgiliath. □

AD&D STATISTICS

Section A (1)

Captain Arahim: AC2; LVL7; HP54; Fighter; Human; STR:18(19); INT:13; WIS:14; DEX:16; CON:16; CHA:15 Bastard sword; heavy crossbow.
Pirates (×16): AC6; LVL2; HP12; Fighter; Human; STR:17; INT:10; WIS:10; DEX:13; CON:15; CHA:12. Scimitar; light crossbow.
Herúmal: AC9/3; LVL5; HP40; Fighter; Human; STR:17; INT:13; WIS:12; DEX:15; CON:16; CHA:11. +2 Longsword; throwing dagger; *Ring of Waterbreathing*.
Men-at-arms: AC5; LVL2; HP14; Fighter; Human; STR:16; INT:11; WIS:11; DEX:15; CON:16; CHA:10. Halberd; flail; throwing dagger.
Mercenaries (×6): AC6; LVL3; HP22; Fighter; Human; STR:17; INT:9; WIS:9; DEX:13; CON:16; CHA:7. Morning star; shortsword.
Belandien: AC9; LVL1; HP3; Magic-User; Human (female); STR:13; INT:16; WIS:13; DEX:15; CON:8; CHA:14. Dagger. Spells: 1st level – *magic missile*, *sleep* (stored in dagger).
Bound spirit (spectre): AC2; HD7+3; HP39; Att 1-8; level drain, +1 or better weapons to hit, spell use; [MM].

Section A (2)

Pallandi: AC9; LVL4; HP25; Thief; Human; STR:18(00); INT:16; WIS:13; DEX:15; CON:16; CHA:17. Mace; dagger.
Dorya (Pallandi's wife): AC9; LVL1; HP15; Ranger; Human (female); STR:15; INT:13; WIS:14; DEX:15; CON:16; CHA:12. Shortsword; shortbow.

Section A (3)

Ywalmolin/Maglor: AC0; LVL20(7/7); HP119; Bard (Fighter/Thief); Grey Elf; STR:15; INT:17; WIS:17; DEX:16; CON:14; CHA:19. +5 Broadsword; +3 Mithril Chain Mail; *Ring of Transmutation*. Spells: five 1st level, 4 each 2nd-5th level druidic. 80% charm; 85% legend lore/item knowledge.

Section B

Giant lizard: AC5; HD3+1; HP20; Att 1-8; poison; Size: L; [MM]. Termite swarm: as *summon insects* [PH p58].
Moor cats (as jaguar): AC6; HD4+1; HP20, 26; Att 1-8/1-3/1-3/2-5/2-5; Size: L; [MM].
Kraken (as small roper): AC0; HD6; HP41; Att 3 strands; weakness; Size: M; [MM].
Coffer corpse: AC8; HD2; HP12; Att 1-6; strangulation, +1 or better weapons to hit, cause fear; [FF].

Section C

Vikilinināma (powerful type II demon): AC-4; HD9; HP96; Att 1-6/1-6/4-24; darkness 15'r, cause fear, levitate, detect invisible, telekinesis, spell use; [MM].
UI (grey elf): AC9; HD1+1; HP7; STR:10; INT:16; WIS:18; DEX:15; CON:14; CHA:16. No attacks.
Hobnob (stone giant): AC4; HD9+3; HP75; Att 3-18; (club) or 3-30 (rock) catch rocks 90%; Size:L; [MM].

Section D

Elwing: AC4; LVL20; HP74; Cleric; Grey Elf (female); STR:14; INT:17; WIS:17; DEX:17; CON:15; CHA:18. *Belt of Protection* +3 (as Ring); +4 *Wand of Light*. Spells: 9 each 1st-3rd level; 8 of 4th level; 7 of 5th level; 5 of 6th level, 2 of 7th level; *shape change* to any white bird.

MERP STATISTICS

	Level	Hits	Armour Type	DB	Melee OB	Missile OB	Notes
Section A (1)							
Captain Arahim	10	120	CH+S	25+25	120bs	99xb	ST99; AG96; CO82; IG77; IT86; PR74.
Dúnedain, Warrior							
Pirates (×16)	3	60	RL+S	20+20	65sc	35xb	ST95; AG90; CO75; IG50; IT50; PR50.
Urban men, Warriors							
Herúmal	7	102	NO/CH+S	30/20+20	115bs*	56da	ST96; AG91; CO80; IG57; IT61; PR52.
Dúnedain, Warrior							
Men-at-arms (×4)	3	65	CH	15	65hb/35fl	30da	ST90; AG90; CO82; IG55; IT57; PR45.
Dúnedain, Warriors							
Mercenaries (×6)	4	73	RL+S	20+20	82ms/50ss	35da	ST95; AG90; CO82; IG45; IT46; PR35.
Haradhrim, Warriors							
Belandien	1	16	NO	15	10da*	10da	PP4; Spell lists: <i>Spirit Mastery</i> , <i>Spell Ways</i> .
Dúnedain, Mage							
Bound Spirit	10	108	NO	55	85CI*	—	PP10; Spell list – <i>Ice Law</i> ; Crit-L; Size-L.
Treat as vampire when being attacked; see MERP p42.							
Section A (2)							
Pallandi	6	64	NO	10	56CI	46da	ST102; AG81; CO59; IG92; IT76; PR94.
Rural man, Bard							
Dorya	2	40	SL	10	44ss	30sb	ST76; AG58; CO79; IG44; IT61; PR68.
Rural woman, Ranger, (Pallandi's wife).							
Section A (3)							
Ywalmolin/Maglor	32	164	CH*	65	110bs*	—	ST82; AG91; CO76; IG96; IT93; PR101; PP330; Spell lists: all Bard, all <i>Open Essence</i> (1st-5th only), <i>Creations</i> .
Noldorin, Bard							
+25 Broadsword; +15 Mithril Chain; Magic Ring – turn into any normal bird, animal or fish no larger than wearer (only 11 charges remaining.)							
Section B							
Large lizard	4	66	SL	30	55Pi*	—	Size M (*poisonous)
Termite swarm	1	1 each	NO	40	20St*	—	Size T (*poisonous)
Moor cats (×2)	5	89,104	SL	45	80CI	—	Size M; Speed VF
Kraken	15	137	NO	50	75Gr ×3	—	Size M; Crit Lge
Minor wight	11	105	NO	35*	90CI*	—	Size M; Crit Lge
*see MERPp42 for special offensive and defensive abilities.							
Section C							
Vikilinināma	25	185	CH	75	200*	—	Size H; Crit Hge; PP80; Divides 200 OB between 2 claws and bite; Spell lists: <i>Earth Law</i> , <i>Light Law</i> .
Beast of Morgoth							
UI	—	10	NO	—	—	—	ST55; AG79; CO66; IG90; IT100; PR96; PP3.
'Noldor'							
Hobnob	20	348	RL	30	150Ra*	75ro	Size H; Crit Hge; ×4 concussion damage.
Giant							
Section D							
Elwing 'Star-spray'	25	142	NO	40*	special	—	ST70; AG96; CO81; IG93; IT95; PR101; PP200; Spell lists: all <i>Animist</i> and <i>Open Channelling</i> .
Noldorin, Animist							
+20 belt of defence; see NPC Capsule for attack details							

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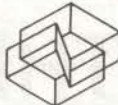
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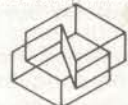
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RuneRites is a bimonthly column for RuneQuest enthusiasts, edited by Dave Morris.

FIRST THIS, THEN THAT

by Oliver Johnson

We get a lot of submissions about RQ combat. Too many. Few people have suggestions for adjusting the non-combat rules, though there is plenty more room for change in that department. The procedure for climbing a cliff-face or hiding from a sentry is so quick and simple (one dice roll!) that a few additional rules can do no harm – and may even correct the continual injustices that I'm sure have irked many a player. Now, if someone would only find a way to stop armour falling off... –DM

NON-COMBAT SKILLS

The percentile skill system is one of the simple rules features for which *RuneQuest* is famous. However, it contains a flaw. This is best illustrated by considering two characters: Fandango (all of whose skills are at 25%) and Silvanus (all of whose skills are at 75%). Taking their shortsword skill, for example, it is clear that Silvanus completely outclasses Fandango. The latter is but a novice, and to reach Silvanus' standard he would have to train continually, at least two hours a day, for over a year – or obtain equivalent experience from real fights. This is reflected by the rules. If the two square off for a duel the betting will not be 3:1 on Silvanus (ie, in direct proportion to their relative skill levels), it will be more like 30:1. Quite reasonable.

Okay, here's the problem. What if these two decide to have, say, a climbing contest? Common sense indicates that Silvanus is an experienced climber who has probably conquered several mountains; Fandango recognizes a ladder when it is pointed out to him. And yet there is a significant chance (1 in 4) that Fandango will be able to scale a wall, cliff or whatever even if Silvanus fails to.

Similar problems occur with other skills. With every skill except combat, in fact. Luckily (since it is probably more important in the game than any other skill) the system works for combat. The results it gives are realistic. Presumably this is because the designers of *RuneQuest* were SCA buffs who knew their swordplay. So why doesn't the same principle handle other skills so well? Because in melee, the character's skill represents his chance of succeeding with each individual blow or parry, *not* his outright chance of winning the fight. Players would not want to win or lose on the result of one dice roll. But the roll made for a climb does not represent each foothold and handhold – this time it just gives overall success or failure.

To deal with 'task' type rolls – Climbing, Lockpicking and so on – I suggest that each task be given a basic 'difficulty rating'. This is a number from –100 (child's play) to +100 (virtually impossible). A character whose skill percentage is below the task's 'difficulty rating' must

subtract the difference from his chance of success. If his skill is higher, he gets to add the difference.



Returning to our two chums, then, we find them approaching a large wrought-iron gate about twenty feet high. The referee assigns a 'difficulty rating' of 0 (average), so Fandango gets over on a roll of 01-50 while Silvanus can only mess things up if he *fumbles*. Incidentally, I think players should always be told the difficulty rating of a climb if they make an INT×5 roll. Honestly speaking, most people in real life have a pretty good idea of the kind of obstacles they can climb, and *nobody* just climbs things until they fall off!

We also have to deal with what I call 'passively competitive' rolls. This comprises things like Hide in Cover and Pick Pockets, where the aim is to stop someone else noticing what you're up to. Again, a straight percentile roll isn't enough. Suppose Silvanus and Fandango both dive for cover and make their rolls. Logically we might expect that the 'old pro' would do a better job of concealing

himself than the 'young greenhorn'... Not so: the trollkin sentry who shortly arrives on the scene is equally likely to spot either of them. To consider another aspect of the problem, imagine a character who has hidden in an alcove off the main underground shrine to Thanatar. Giving the solitary cultist who wanders past a 30% chance of noticing our hero sounds okay – but if a line of cultists were to file past, each with 30% chance of spotting him, the chance of him remaining unseen rapidly diminishes to zilch. This is not the way things work in reality. Either he has concealed himself well enough that none of the cultists should have any chance of spotting him (or only on a 01-05, anyway) – or he should be spotted by the first to look in his direction.

This is handled by applying a 'difficulty rating' to Perception rolls. The difficulty rating is given by adding the hidden character's Hide in Cover ability (or Move Quietly, etc) to the percentage cover available (or background noise, etc) and subtracting 1-100 (to represent miscellaneous random factors), ie:

Difficulty Rating = Stealth + %age cover
– d100

Which, of course, gives a number between –100 and +100, as before. Consequently, in an overgrown garden affording 75% cover, even under the worst possible conditions Silvanus will not be seen by the trollkin with 25% Spot Hidden except on a roll of 01-05. But Fandango, who has left his backside protruding quite conspicuously from a thicket, will be seen on a roll of 01-50.

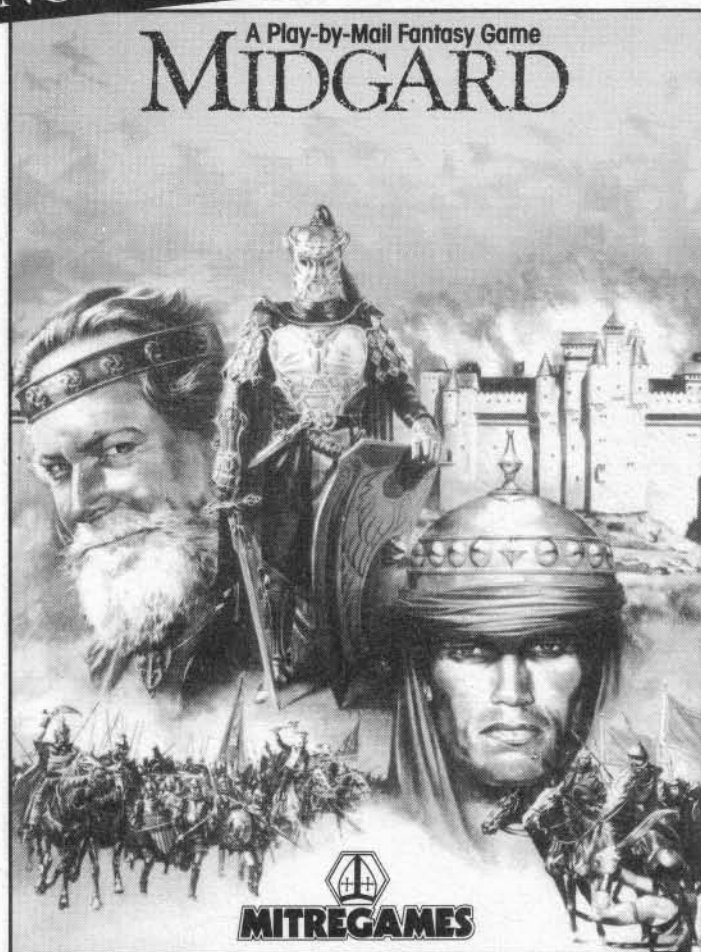
A FEW TIPS

For keeping track of spells: Counting off the Melee Rounds until a temporal spell wears off can be tedious. Use a stack of coloured counters (eg from a *Risk* set) for this. Whenever a temporal spell is cast, the player(s) affected takes ten counters. At the start of each MR he hands one in until none are left, and then the spell wears off. This makes it easy to add new frills to *dispel magic*, *countermagic*, etc. A below-power *dispel magic* might reduce the number of MR a spell still had to run (reduce the MR 'stack' by 1-6 counters) even though not dispelling it altogether; a *countermagic* that didn't stop an incoming *befuddle* could at least reduce its duration by 1-4 MR. (Try to stick to a colour convention for mutually incompatible spells – eg, white counters for *shimmer/countermagic/protection*, red for *bladesharp/fireblade*, etc.)

For keeping track of special items: When the characters find a potion and can't identify it, give it a code name. This way, if they end up with a batch of unknown potions, you will be able to distinguish between them – the players say they're drinking 'Potion Charlie' and you can read off the effects from your notes. Codes can also be used for items with a limited number of uses. You tell the players they have a wand of frost with 'X' charges: they keep track of its current charges as 'X-1', 'X-2', etc, which saves you having to tell them in advance that the thing will work only seven times or whatever. □

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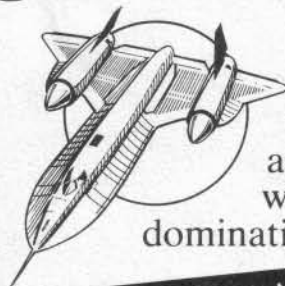


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Cults of the Dark Gods 2

Original Text by Prof Wolf von Archensbak, Translated for Call of Cthulhu by A J Bradbury

Translator's Note

In the first part of these notes (WD71), prepared in the mid-1930s, Professor von Archensbak dealt with two (allegedly) extinct groups: the Assassins and the Knights Templar. He concludes his research with a study of the Freemasons, the Bavarian Illuminati and that most worrying new phenomenon which has appeared in Germany, National Socialism – the Nazi Party.

In the section of his notes on Freemasonry the Professor has done no more than prepare two cross-referenced lists. I have



rewritten them as a brief description of Masonic ritual, appending von Archensbak's references to the Templars where appropriate.

Freemasonry

The first reappearance of the Knights Templar after their persecution in Europe is to be found at the time of the Battle of Bannockburn (1314) when a sizeable body of knights-in-exile fought on the Scottish side. There is then a substantial gap in the historical record until the Battle of Killiecrankie (1689) when one of the Scottish casualties – John Claverhouse, Viscount of Dundee – was found to be wearing the Grand Cross of the Order of the Temple.

So far as the existence of the Templars in Scotland is concerned, then, the evidence may be regarded as limited but significant. Its importance resides in the fact that the earliest known 'speculative' Masonic group was the Mary's Chapel Lodge, founded in Edinburgh sometime 'before 1598' (according to the *Concise Cyclopaedia of Freemasonry*). That is to say, the birth of Freemasonry – as distinct from the original guilds of genuine stone masons – appears to have occurred in a region known to have Templar connections and at a time when the Order must certainly have still been in existence.

But the relationship between the Templars and Freemasonry is not merely speculative, so to speak. On the contrary – Masonry's true parentage can be clearly seen in the

details of its various rituals. In Masonry's initiation ceremony (*Entered Apprentice*), in particular, this dressing of the 'deposed king' in new clothes is evident beyond all reasonable doubt.

Before the initiate is first allowed into the Temple a part of his normal clothing is removed so that he is left only his shirt and trousers, a shoe on his left foot and slipper on the right. His left shirt sleeve and his right trouser leg are rolled up above the joint, and his shirt is pulled back on the left to expose that side of his chest. Finally, the initiate is required to wear a noose about his neck (known as the *cable tow*), and a blindfold.

[The rope is clearly an imitation of the ritual knotted cord worn by all Templars, whilst the baring of the chest on one side is surely a reminder of the time when the Templars were forbidden to wear the red cross on the left side of their surcoats – von A.]

On gaining admission on the Temple, after the Tyler has given the 'first degree knock', the initiate is now halted in his progress by a small sword (a *poniard*) which is held against the bared part of his chest.

[The knock consists of three evenly spaced raps, the same signal as that used by the Templars. The use of the poniard, which would allegedly have been used to run the initiate through had he tried to force an entry, lays emphasis on the importance (and secrecy) of the original ritual – von A.]

To describe the entire ritual which now follows would take more space than we have here. I will deal, then, with only three further points which von Archensbak feels are particularly important.

Firstly there is the movement known as the 'first degree step'. This involves taking one short pace forward on the left foot completed by bringing the right heel into the left instep so as to form a *tau* or Egyptian cross. Freemasonry explains this as a representation of a T-square, but when linked with other evidence it must also recall the accusation made against the Templars that they 'trampled upon a crucifix' during their initiation ceremony.

Secondly, much is made of the *Volume of Sacred Law* in all Masonic rituals. It is said to 'govern our faith', which seems reasonable enough since the VSL is, in Europe and America, a Bible. Yet in an Indian lodge the VSL would be a copy of the Hindu scriptures; and in a Moslem country it would be a copy of the Koran, and so on. Von Archensbak points out that this highly ambiguous attitude towards religion puts one in mind of the Assassins' willingness to adopt any and all religions in order to gain their own ends.

Finally, let us end with an item from the *Royal Arch* ceremony. In English lodges, this ritual is widely held to be the final part or 'completion' of the Master Mason's degree. In this ceremony a Mason is introduced, though often without realising it, to one of the real secrets of Freemasonry: the four 'sacred words', laid out around a triangle within a circle, and the three Hebraic letters used to make up the three descriptions of 'the Lord'.

The first 'word', divided into three parts around the circle, is JE-HO-VAH (a Jewish name for God). The other words, set out on the three sides of the triangle, are JAH, BUL and ON which are described to the candidate as being the Chaldean, Syrian and Egyptian names for God. It would be far more accurate to describe them as being the names of three gods, with a small 'g' – (Jah, Baal and Osiris) – since all three religions worshipped not one but many such 'divine beings'.

The candidate is now told that the three Hebrew letters are *Aleph, Beth and Lamed* – A, B and L in English – and that from

these letters one can make three descriptions of 'the Deity'. These are: AB BAL (Father Lord), AL BAL (Word Lord) and LAB BAL (Spirit Lord). Whether the candidate be Christian or not he will almost certainly *think* that he recognises the Holy Trinity as described in that religion. But this is the crucial point of the ceremony, for BAL, like BUL, is not a name for the Christian God – they are both forms of the name of the Syrian demon-god more commonly known to us as BAAL!

No wonder the candidate is informed this 'proves the Royal Arch to be the climax of Freemasonry'. He has just been shown the direct link from Freemasonry, through the Templars to the Syrian Order of Assassins, yet fewer than one man in a thousand will recognise the real significance of these words! Truly, as the old Arab proverb has it: 'the best place to hide a light is in the sun'.

The Illuminati

What we have seen, time and again, is the way in which these cults derived from the Assassins have adopted whatever guise seemed most likely to enable them to gain their own ends. For the Assassins it was the power which derives from brute force and a reign of terror. For the Templars it was the more subtle power that comes with great wealth with force of arms being reserved for situations where all else had failed. In our third case physical enforcement has given way entirely to what we might call 'political' power, based on the financial and social standing of those who are seduced by the organisation's 'innocent' facade.

But there is yet a fourth group who, whilst seeking the same all-embracing power, have rejected the idea of outright secrecy, choosing instead a modern version of Joseph's 'coat of many colours'. The Illuminati – the Ancient Illuminated Seers of Bavaria – have encouraged so many differing stories concerning their constitution and their purposes that it is quite impossible for the average citizen to know what, if anything, is the truth. Indeed, their programme of misinformation has been so effective that a majority of the population refuse to believe that they exist at all!

How I wish that were true. Unfortunately my own researches over the years have revealed that the AISB is all too real. And if their current plans (as I understand them) should ever prove successful then I have no doubt that the world will come to curse their name.

A Rose ...

As the great English poet, William Shakespeare, once wrote: A rose by any other name would smell as sweet. In the case of the Illuminati we might say: The Assassins by any other name would be as deadly.

What all my fellow researchers seem to have overlooked is the fact that the group which is so often labelled 'The Illuminati' actually does not have a single name. It has, as the need arose, adopted many names – some meaningful, some deliberately misleading – yet through all these changes the group itself has not altered its essential identity for over 2000 years.

The first organisation to use the idea of illumination in its title was, as I have already mentioned, the *Roshinaya* of Afghanistan. The Bavarian Illuminati, officially founded on May 1st, 1776 by Adam Weishaupt in Ingolstadt, Bavaria, was just one more manifestation of the original Assassins which used this name. At other times there have been the *Allumbrados* (the Illuminated Ones) in Spain, supposedly wiped out by order of the Grand Inquisition in the mid-17th century but soon reappearing as the illuminated *Guerinets* of France. The *Guerinets* also disappeared from public view after a while, only to resurface in the late 19th century as the Illuminati of Paris.

At other times, and in other places, the selfsame organisation has appeared as occult societies such as the Rosicrucians, the notorious Hermetic Order of the Silver Twilight and temporarily, the Order of the Templars of the Orient, and as self-styled defenders of the Christian faith like the Holy Vehm.

The Chosen Ones

In speaking of the Holy Vehm I would divert this study for a moment to consider once more the *meanings* of certain titles.

You will remember that I took some pains to unravel the meaning of the word *Baphomet*, the name of the idol supposedly worshipped by the Templar Knights. In the case of the Holy Vehm we find exactly the same confusion over the word 'Vehm'. It has been suggested that this was a corruption of the German word *Fahne* (see below) which means a flag or stan-

dard, so that the organisation would have been, in effect, the 'standard bearers of Christendom'. A more practical translation would be *Fehm*, meaning 'wise' (the actual title adopted by initiates of the Holy Vehm) – yet another link with Syria through a word which is spelt and pronounced almost exactly the same way in German and Arabic!

A similar link can be found in the name of the alleged founder of the Bavarian Illuminati – Adam Weishaupt. Here we find the name of Adam – the originator of all wisdom, according to the Assassins – coupled with 'Weishaupt' which may be translated as 'high wisdom'. The real question that we need to ask is not: *who* was Adam Weishaupt? but rather: *what* was Adam Weishaupt? In practice, I believe, this name was not a name at all (in the normal sense), but the *title* of someone who at least believed himself to be the current master of all those groups which were descended from the Assassins!

But why does our path so often seem to lead back to Germany? Why have Westphalia and Bavaria become so central in the story of the Illuminati and the Assassins? The answer to these questions is, I fear, about to be made all too plain. It is the reason why I must publish my work in such an unfinished state. The world must be warned before it is too late – or is it already too late to avert the terror that lurks at the very threshold of the Western world?

Kadath Once More!

Those of my readers already familiar with the 'fictional' work of the American H P Lovecraft will know full well the horrors of the icy wastes of 'Unknown Kadath'. Yet there is a group in Germany at this very time who seek to glorify that horrible land of *Ultima Thule*, as it is known in our mythology.

Based in the city of Munich (in Bavaria!), the Thule Gesellschaft has, at the behest of the notorious occultist Dietrich Eckart, placed its power at the disposal of a despicable little Austrian Corporal named Adolf Hitler and his National Socialist Party – the Nazis! According to Eckart's deathbed statement Hitler has been initiated into the 'Secret Doctrine' and is able to communicate with those whom Eckart called 'The Powers'.

But which powers? Certainly not those of our own world. Let me make it plain to my readers that I am not one of those who believes in magical powers in the normal sense of those words. Yet I must hold it to be beyond doubt that there are doors, or *gates* as Lovecraft calls them, between our dimension and some utterly destructive forces that would ravage our world if they could, mentally, spiritually and – ultimately – physically as well. And for those who deal with such forces there are indeed certain evil powers over which they are given mastery for a brief span.

What powers? The power to bring insanity, death and destruction into our world of an unparalleled nature. Already, despite his imprisonment following the fiasco of the Beer Hall Putsch some ten years ago, Hitler has risen to unthinkable power. Now, so I learn, with our beloved President Hindenburg not yet cold in his grave the upstart Corporal has induced the armed forces of Germany – *in their entirety!* – to swear an oath of allegiance to him. Not an oath of loyalty to a rightful King, not even an oath of loyalty to their country, but an oath of loyalty unto death to one man alone. And what is this oath – it is the *Fahneneid*, the blood oath of the Teutonic Knights!

Thus have the Assassins, Templars, 'inner' Masons – call them what you will – resurfaced to terrorise all decent citizens. Just as the Grand Master of the Assassins lived in his castle named the 'Eagle's Nest', so Hitler has named his headquarters near the castle of Zeigenberg the 'Eagle's Eyrie'. Just as the Assassins chose red, white and black as their 'official' colours, so the symbol of Nazism – the reversed or 'dark' swastika – is picked out in black, in a white circle on a red ground. And just as the First Reich – Charlemagne's Western Empire – was centred on Germany (hence the constant linking of our country with the Illuminati), so Hitler seeks to create a 'thousand year empire' of the Third Reich dominated by the German peoples!

If the horror that lies before us is to be averted then it must be by the action of the peoples of Britain and America, for Germany is already lost. The Powers are no longer on the threshold for us, we have closed our eyes and welcomed them into our midst! □

The Heart of the Dark, a scenario based on the findings of Prof Wolf von Archensbak, will be appearing in the March edition of White Dwarf.

Treasure Chest is a regular department for readers' ideas about the AD&D game. This issue . . .

A NEW APPROACH TO MAGIC WEAPONS



by Michael
Williamson

In most fantasy rolegames, there are two sorts of weapon, normal and magical. Cursed weapons are usually just the opposite of beneficial ones, and are used by GMs as traps to keep the party from being too successful. This system has advantages in that it is simple, but it is also predictable and doesn't employ any degree of player skill.

Under this new system, every weapon is potentially magical. The power of, say, a sword, depends upon its history as much as any of the charms laid upon it. When placing a weapon in his campaign, the GM decides upon its age, and on any special features such as charms, or the power of previous owners. From this a number of points are derived which would be available to the player to adjust his combat rolls. For example, a sword may gain one point per twenty years of its age, plus a few for each wielder of particular renown, this latter being linked to the experience level of the wielder. The GM should decide his own method of allocating these points to suit the needs of his campaign, and should further decide during play whether a magical weapon will increase its point allocation from being used by a player character.

To utilise the power of the weapon, the character *must* know the name of the weapon. If a weapon has had more than one name, the points available will depend on the date when the sword was given the name which the character uses. If the player calls on the power of his weapon, he must throw the normal dice to hit and damage. The weapon will then automatically add the necessary plusses to hit, then kill, the monster being attacked. The number of points added, cannot of course, exceed the total available. In addition, the number of points used in any such blow is the percentage chance of the weapon breaking under the strain. To replenish these

points, the weapon must first do as many points of damage in normal combat as there were points expended (several blows may be required to do this). After this points are recovered at a rate of one point for every two points of damage done in later combat.

Clearly, it will add to the tension and mystery of the game if the GM keeps the current point totals of magic weapons from his players. Thus, a player can never be certain that his magic weapon is going to strike the killing blow that he may be depending on. If the totals are kept secret, it also allows GMs to prevent the untimely deaths of NPCs or monsters crucial to the progress of the campaign, should he be prepared to indulge in such 'number-fudging'.

There are many ways to curse a weapon under this system, should such weapons be desired. The chance of breaking can be increased, or it may not be possible to replenish points (in AD&D such cursed weapons would be produced through casting a *bestow curse* on the weapon, at the discretion of the DM). In some chaotic weapons, there might be no effect on some occasions when the power is summoned. However, the best way for any cursed item to work is for it to have a subtle but increasingly strong effect on the wielder's alignment. This phenomenon is exemplified by a well-known ring.

The major difficulty with this system is deciding how powerful a weapon must be to qualify as a 'magic weapon' when used against creatures such as undead etc. Again, this will be a matter for the individual GM, and will enable yet more uncertainty and tension to be introduced into the game. Further, a GM may decide to use this new system in addition to the standard rules for magic items, rather than as a replacement. The important thing is to ensure that the weapons are the right strength to fit into

your campaign without upsetting play balance.

By designing and operating magic weapons along these lines, the GM can ensure that they are powerful enough when desperately needed, but they do not have an unbalancing effect on normal combat against orcs, goblins and similar standard creatures. The player is given a choice, and takes a calculated risk. Both of these should introduce more skill and enjoyment into the game. As each weapon has a name, players will be able to identify with them instead of just thinking 'Gosh! I've got a +4 sword.'

While this system is obviously most applicable to D&D/AD&D, there is no reason why it can't add a lot to MERP, RQ, and most other games.

By way of an example, consider the blade *Rensano*:

The Weaponsmith Arcoros gave his life in the making of the mighty blade *Rensano*. For his liege lord, Duke Nermal, had instructed him to manufacture a sword so potent that none could stand against it, and held his sword to ransom as security. Arcoros worked non-stop for a week on the final stages of the sword's construction, employing materials that had been two years in the making. As the blade was completed, he dedicated it to his son, then collapsed from his exertions. The strength of his love in his dying breath suffused the blade with power, and a measure of his anger also entered the weapon. When Duke Nermal got his hands on the sword, he found it poorly balanced for him, and turned in anger to Arcoros' son. But *Rensano* (the youth) overpowered him, wresting the sword from his grasp.

'You killed my father, and I, *Rensano*, will kill you!' he declared.

As he spoke thus, the sword glowed blood red, and seemed to pulse with a slow heartbeat. Duke Nermal hardly had time to shout at his guards as his life was stolen by the bane sword. Somehow, *Rensano* evaded the Duke's guards and made good his escape from the castle, going on to various heroic exploits wielding the sword which bore his name. The circumstances of his death were shrouded in mystery, and for half a century the whereabouts of the sword were unknown, until it was found by Captain Cifkas, a mercenary of some renown. He carried the sword into a thousand battles — always victorious — until he met his death (gloriously, of course). *Rensano* then passed through a succession of lesser owners, none of whom augmented its reputation or power.

Rensano is a longsword, unremarkable in appearance apart from its hilt, which is longer than is usual. When its name is called on, the blade turns blood red, and the slow beat of a dying heart can faintly be heard . . .

In game terms (for AD&D): Because Arcoros gave his life in its creation, *Rensano* began with quite a large pool of points (10). It is two centuries old (10 points) and has had two famous owners, each of whom has increased the points total by 5. Hence *Rensano* currently has a pool of 30 points available, making it an extremely formidable weapon, suitable only for very high level characters. □





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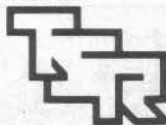
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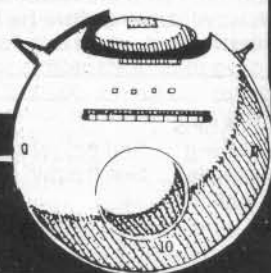
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Fiend Factory is a bimonthly column for readers' new creatures and monsters.

JUNGLE JUMBLE

Rain-forest monsters for AD&D, by Geoffrey Carr

The tropical rain-forest is only rarely used as a setting for adventuring in AD&D. This seems rather surprising since, besides the tales of lost tribes, secret cities and overgrown temples associated with such areas, the diversity of life in the jungle allows the DM's imagination to run riot. Monsters that are not ecologically credible in more temperate climes seem entirely natural in the rain-forest. The uncanny sounds of unknown perils all around should also be enough to scare the wits out of the average adventurer before he has gone two miles!

ARMY WASPS

No Appearing: See below
Armour Class: See below
Movement: 12"
Hit Dice: 1HP
Treasure: Nil
Attack: 1 or 1-3
Intelligence: Animal
Alignment: Neutral

Army wasps are a very dangerous menace indeed. The first sign of their presence is usually the arrival of two or three large and rather persistent wasps. These are colony scouts and will buzz about for a round or two without attacking, and then disappear. The scouts are out looking for prey—typically large animals. The scouts will return to the main colony and perform a dance indicating the distance, direction, size and number of the prey, in the same manner as a honeybee would dance to show the location of a rich flower patch. Within

rate of 1-10 per round against each individual until all the party are dead, or all the wasps have exhausted their poison. Shields and dexterity bonuses do not add to armour class, though magical armour bonuses do apply. Each wasp



attacking is assumed to use up its sting, whether or not it succeeds in beating its opponent's armour class, an unsuccessful attack being absorbed in armour or clothing. Any character stung must save against poison once, to see if the poison is effective against him. If he saves, each wasp successfully attacking will cause 1HP of damage; if he fails, 1-3HP. A wasp may sting only once, although it does not die after doing so.

Fighting the wasps, once the swarm has arrived, is virtually impossible without magical means. However, characters with high dexterity may attempt to swat wasps which land on them. If they win initiative in a round, they may kill one wasp per point of their dexterity above 14 before it stings them.

When a creature has been killed, wasps which have already used their stings will start to dismember it, cutting away small pieces of flesh and carrying them to the colony site where they are fed to the larvae. It will take about 12 daylight hours to strip a human carcass to the bone (the wasps do not fly at night), but it will be beyond the reach of a *raise dead* spell within one hour.

The best defence against army wasps is to kill the scouts (assuming that someone realises what they are). Certain magical attacks will be useful, but striking weapons and missiles are completely useless until the wasps have settled. Characters may try to pluck scouts out of the air (throw DEX or under on a d20 to catch one) allowing the insect a 'free hit' before it is crushed. This does not apply against swarms, when sufficient concentration is impossible.

The next best defence is to be a long way away when the swarm arrives, not as easy as it might seem in dense jungle. If the party are within 200 yards of the point where they were first located when the hunters come for them, they will be found automatically. If within 400 yards the wasps have a 1 in 4 chance and within 800 yards a 1 in 8 chance. Above 800 yards away, the party are safe unless they have been moving towards the nest (ie the direction in which the scouts go off).

An active wasp colony consists of 500-5000 workers, a similar number of larvae and a queen. Their life cycle is 4 weeks, and at the end of this time the whole colony, having exhausted the prey in one area, flies off to another, several miles distant.

Other than the arrival of the scouts, the only warning that a party is likely to receive are the skeletal remains of previous victims; a still visible victim usually indicates that the colony has not yet migrated. If adventurers are active in the area, such past victims might have worthwhile treasure on them, assuming that the party hang around to pick it up.

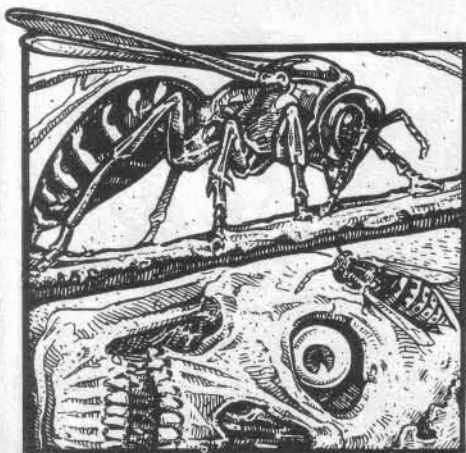
VAMPIRE BATS

No Appearing: 1 (20-50)
Armour Class: 8 (0)
Movement: 3"/24"
Hit Dice: 1
Treasure: Nil
Attack: 1-4 plus special
Intelligence: Animal
Alignment: Neutral

Vampire bats are fairly common in the tropical rain-forest. They do not travel as groups, but where one is found, others will almost certainly appear along later. The bats attack at night, always choosing a sleeping victim. Any large mammal will do; they have no particular preference for humans, so pack animals may suffer their attentions as well.

The bat lands close to its victim and crawls the last few feet up to it. It makes a small bite, usually in a limb, and laps up the blood as it flows out. Since the bat's saliva contains an anaesthetic, a sleeping victim will not wake. The bat will feed for between 1 and 4 rounds, each round draining one hit point, and then fly off. Victims are not normally attacked by more than one bat per night, since they wish to conserve their food supply.

In the morning, the victim will find that he has an itchy cut, but unless he has special knowledge, he will probably not realise from what. He will not notice the missing hit points unless they exceed 25% of his full total. Each time a character is attacked by a bat, he must make a saving throw vs poison to see if there is an allergic reaction to the bat saliva (the DM should do this if the victim is ignorant of the attack). If there is, he loses a constitution point (which he will notice) and makes throws for subsequent nights at -1 (-2 after the second failure and loss of constitution etc). Untreated, constitution points are recovered at the rate of 1 for each complete week that the victim is free from the bats' attentions. If, however, a *neutralise poison* spell is cast over the victim, they will be reco-



5-20 rounds, depending on the distance between the party and the colony, a hunting swarm will arrive. This will consist of d20+40 wasps for each large animal (human, demi-human, pack animal, etc) in the party. Wasps will attack at the

vered at one per day until the bats attack again.

Finally, the bats can act as carriers of lycanthropy if this is endemic in the area. In this case, from 0-5% of the bats will be carriers, and a victim will contract the disease as if bitten by a lycanthrope. If more than one form of lycanthropy is present in an area, and an unlucky victim is infected with two different sorts, he or she will become permanently insane at the next full moon.

Vampire bats are purely nocturnal, and difficult to detect due to their habit of landing away from the victim and creeping up on him. Someone on nocturnal guard duty would have to make a 'secret door' roll in order to notice the arrival of a bat unless all his attention was focused on his sleeping comrades, in which case he might miss the arrival of other threats.

Vampire bats are very difficult to hit in the air (AC0), but make easy targets on the ground (AC8). They will not attempt to defend themselves, but will fly off immediately if detected, leaving their assailants only one round in which to try to kill them. They live in colonies and patrol a radius about 3 miles around a colony, defending it against intruding bats. They will not attempt to follow a party beyond this range.



QUETZL

No Appearing: 1-2
Armour Class: 3
Movement: 3"/12"
Hit Dice: 2+2 (5HD vs magic)
Treasure: Nil
Attack: 1-2 plus special
Intelligence: Semi
Alignment: Neutral

The quetzl is an enchanted bird which lives in the deepest parts of the rain-forest. Rarely seen by men, it is still more rarely captured. A flash of spectacularly beautiful iridescent colour is all that is usually visible as the bird travels through the canopy.

Quetzls are poor fliers, but have certain magical protections which make them difficult to catch. Their plumage acts as the illusionist spell *colour spray* on anyone approaching within 20 feet if the bird chooses to display its feathers to this end, and there is a 10% chance that the effect (unconsciousness, blindness, stunning) will be permanent. They are able to

dimension door once per day, and to become *invisible* likewise; thus it may not be clear whether an empty cage, for example, is really empty. Their beak attack, however, is only for 1-2 points of



damage, and is used as a last resort. They prefer to try to escape.

The reason that anyone persecutes these beautiful creatures, is that they are valuable. Live birds are esteemed as status symbols by wealthy personages, particularly magicians and illusionists. The young, if hand-reared, can become quite tame and will not attempt to escape from an attentive owner, although they have not been known to breed in captivity. Adult birds cannot be tamed, but their plumage is used to make intricate head dresses by rich women, and, in the hands of a skilled magician, can form the basis of a *Robe of Scintillating Colours*, though the feathers of at least 8 adults are required for this.

A quetzl nest, if it can be found, will contain 2-5 eggs (25%), nestlings (50%) or fledglings (25%). Eggs cannot be hatched artificially, though they might have some value as curiosities. Nestlings and fledglings may be hand-reared, their principal food being the large, highly coloured butterflies of the forest canopy. Nestlings require at least 5 of these per day, and fledglings, 10, otherwise they will die. The balance of their diet may be composed of ordinary meat. Young birds acquire their full plumage and magical powers at one year of age.

Nestlings are valued at 500gp, well grown fledglings at 750gp and the intact adult plumage at 1000gp.

APHRODITE'S NEMESIS

No Appearing: 1
Armour Class: 3
Movement: Nil
Hit Dice: 5-10
Treasure: Nil
Attack: Special
Intelligence: Non
Alignment: Neutral

Aphrodite's nemesis is a very attractive tree. It stands some 15 feet high and bears globular silver and blue fruit of exquisite beauty, from 2 to 8 being mature at most times. The fruit secrete substances which mimic human sex pheromones, and adult humans of either sex will be drawn to them almost

irresistibly, although they will not be able to understand quite why. Each character so drawn must then save vs intelligence (d20, throw INT or below to save) or eat one of the fruit. He or she will find it the most delicious food they ever tasted, and will not require anything else (even another fruit) to eat for the rest of the day. No apparent harm will occur at the time, nor, if party members of only one sex have partaken, will further effects be noticed. If characters of both sexes and compatible races have eaten the fruit, however, they will begin to pair off in order of charisma, the most attractive man with the most attractive woman and so on, unless established couples already exist, in which case these will be maintained.

As the party camps down for the night, each affected individual must save against wisdom. Characters saving successfully will realise that they are acting under the influence of the fruit and will be able to restrain and control their passions, having some idea of the consequences if they don't. If only one member of a couple makes the saving throw, the other will grow more and more passionate through the night, regardless of rebuttal or explanation and, before the dawn, must make a final saving throw vs petrification or become insane. On passing this, they will recover their senses and be completely normal.

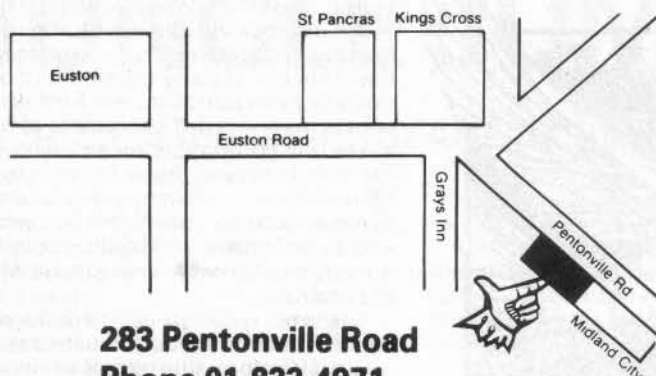
If both members of a pair fail to save against wisdom, nature will take its course. The couple will be locked together in ecstasy as the magic of the fruit takes control of both. Their bodies will begin to merge and lignify, and roots will start to grow. They will never realise their fate, but the green shoots blossoming in the morning will one day form a new tree...



The effects of the fruit can be counteracted as follows: after eating and before transformation, the character can be rescued by *cure disease*, *heal* or *remove curse*. Once metamorphosis has begun, only *heal* or *turn wood* will save the unfortunate victim. Of course, a wish might work even after transmutation was complete.

The fruit of the tree is much sought after as it can be used as the basis of love potions (*Philtre of Love*), one fruit per potion, within 10 days of being picked. Alchemists will pay between 150 and 200gp per ripe fruit, although some of the more unscrupulous have been known to use them to create their own trees. □

RALLY TO

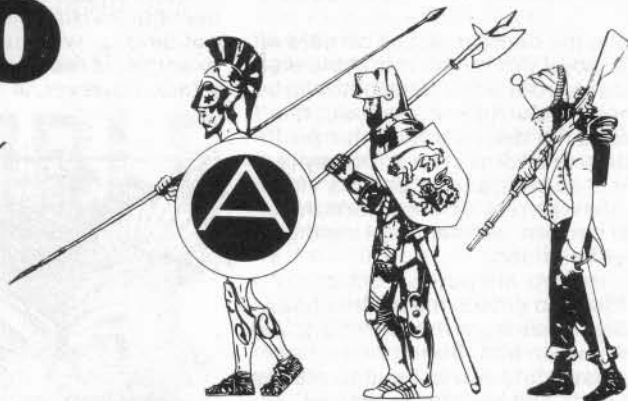


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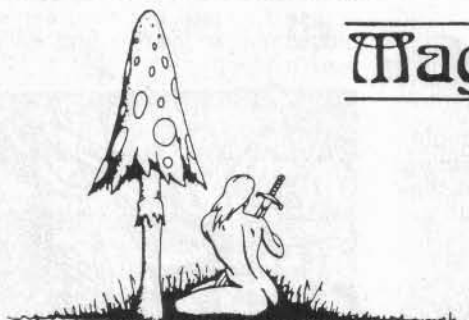
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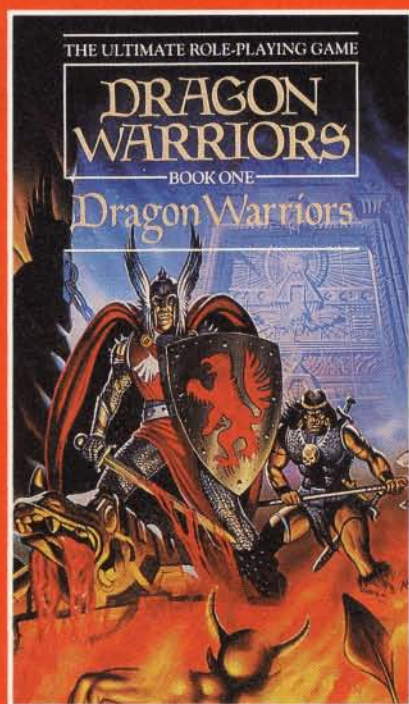
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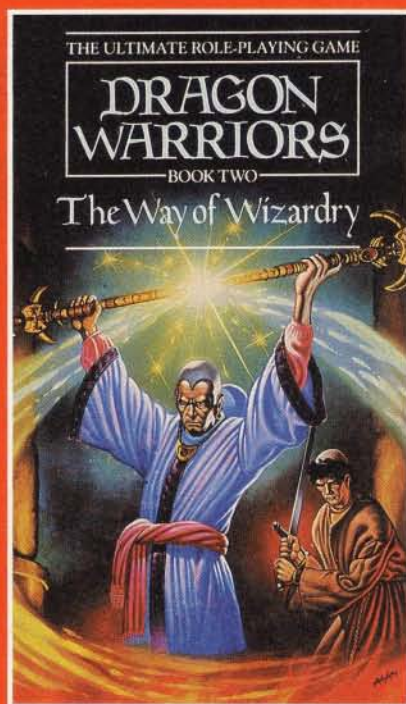
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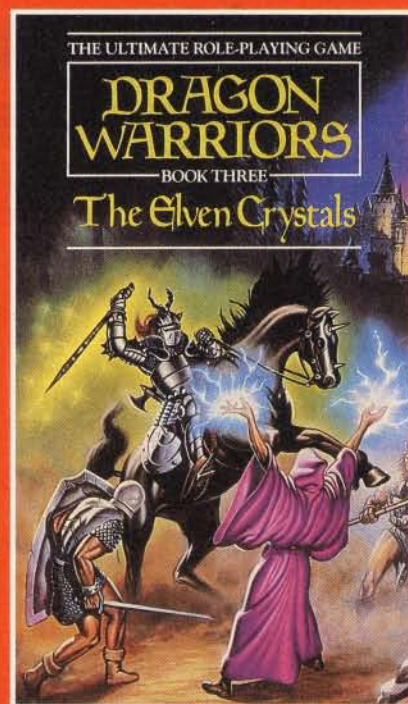
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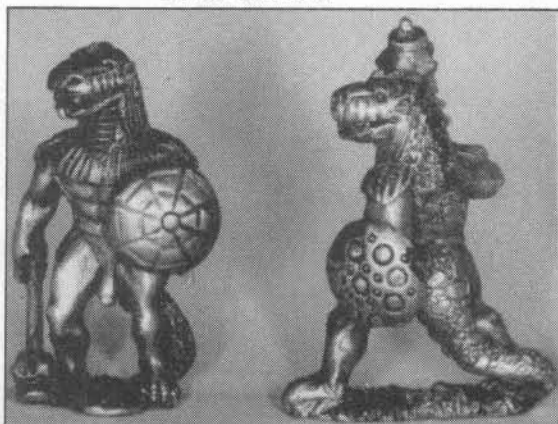
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Fig 1



Fig 2

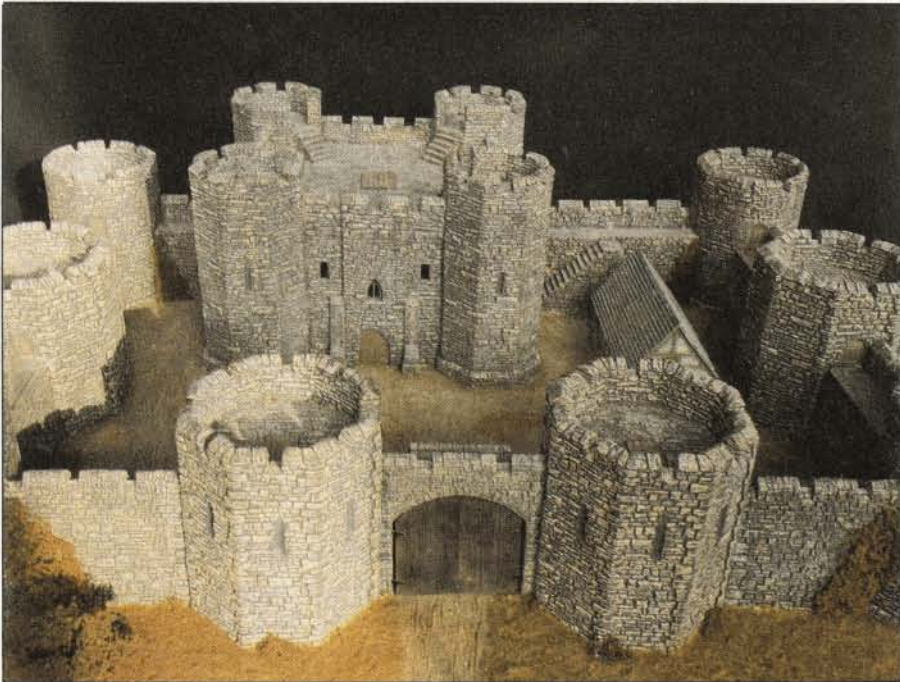


Fig 3



Fig 4

All photographs by Joe Dever



Fig 5



Fig 6

Tabletop Heroes is a regular column covering painting and modelling hints, written by Joe Dever.

DIORAMAS

Part Two: Scenic Effects

The success of any diorama relies heavily on how well you simulate the surrounding landscape. The aim of this article is to provide you with a basic guide to modelling these settings. By experimenting with these basics, and by introducing more exotic forms of scenic dressings and accessories, imagination need be the only limit to what you can achieve.

Earth

To simulate bare earth, sprinkle fine cork chippings, coarse sawdust or even potting compost over a layer of wet *Polyfilla* or white PVA adhesive. When set, paint it dark brown. Allow to dry before applying thin washes of mid-browns to add interest, and then highlight with pale fawn or yellow ochre.

Mud

Apply a creamy mixture of *Polyfilla* to the base using a well-laden brush, and half-bury any accessories such as logs, weapons or tree trunks in the mixture while it is still wet. Footprints and wheel tracks should also be made at this stage. When set, paint with a dark earth colour and add brown washes, using very dark tones to depict the wettest areas.

Sand

Use real sand sprinkled over a thick layer of white glue. As the glue sets, it shrinks and forms ridges and contours. Emphasise these with washes of yellow ochre and rust-red paint. For sand drifts or dunes, cut a polystyrene wedge and fix it to the base. Coat it with *Polyfilla* and, as it sets, smooth the contours into shape with a spatula, covering it once set.

Snow

For thick snow, apply *Polyfilla* to your base using a well-laden brush. When dry, paint matt white. If it dries with a satin sheen, use matt varnish to dull it down. Add pale washes of blue-grey to emphasise contours and shadows. For light snow cover, use spray paint. Spray from one direction and at a distance; it will look as if it has been driven by the wind.

Water

For shallow puddles or wet earth use gloss varnish; satin varnish for dampness. For pools, use clear casting resin mixed with hardener as per the manufacturer's instructions. To create the illusion of depth, build up the resin in layers, each no more than 5mm thick, and allow each layer to harden before

adding the next. For ripples, blow the last layer with a hair-drier until it holds its shape. When using resin, always cover it to prevent dust from settling on top. For deep (blue-green) or muddy (brown) water, apply washes of ink or thinned enamel paint to a dry layer before adding the next resin layer; the wet resin will disperse the colour evenly.

Rivers and Streams

Prepare the 'bed' with glue and sand, painted with appropriate washes of colour. The sand will create a realistic ripple effect beneath a single layer of resin or several coats of varnish. For deeper water, paint the bed with darker tones, using blue-greens in the centre fading to reddish-browns and yellows near the banks or shallows. Remember to build up the resin by layers.

Rocks

Use real rocks or stones whenever possible, positioned in the groundwork material before it sets. Lightweight alternatives include mortar and cork. Mortar, which has a very fine texture, can be found on any demolition site, and cork can be bought at a florists. Both will require painting to make them look convincing.

Grass

Apply a layer of *Polyfilla* to your base and smooth it flat. While wet, sprinkle fine sawdust or sand evenly across the surface and allow to dry. Paint the surface dark brown and, when dry, give the surface a very light dry-brushing with brown, green and yellow tones to break up the uniformity of colour. Avoid bluish-greens as these look poor under artificial lighting. When dry, brush away any loose particles with a soft brush and apply patches of white PVA glue to selected areas of the base. Sprinkle grass powder (available from hobby shops) into the glue and press it down to ensure that the glue soaks into the foam. Allow it to dry before blowing away any excess. A particularly good grass-like flock is available in a variety of colours from *Games Innovation*, at 60p per pack (inc p&p).

Plants and Foliage

To simulate weeds, sprinkle sawdust onto small patches of matt varnish applied to your grass surface. Build up with drops of varnish and sprinkle with grass powder. When dry, paint the weeds slightly darker than the surrounding grass tone. Reeds and rushes can be made by cutting clumps of bristles from an old paintbrush or shaving brush. Using tweezers, position the clump into your groundwork material (or resin if you're depicting pond rushes) before it sets. Plants can be made by paring slivers of wood from a matchstick to form rows of leaves, then trimming the tip from the centre section of the match and painting it to depict the flowering head. Bushes can be made from steel wool or clumps of lichen. Spray the material black or dark green and sprinkle with grass powder before the paint dries. As with the reeds, fix your bush into the groundwork material before it sets, rather than gluing it to the surface.

All of these techniques can be used to

brighten up the bases of your individual figures. If you have never attempted a diorama, try practising these techniques on the bases of your larger figures or fantasy wargame units.

THIS MONTH'S PHOTOGRAPHS

A surfeit of festive spirit (the liquid variety) inspired Phil Lewis' Santa Claus conversion of a *Citadel* cleric (C03: Nordic Warrior Priest – 60p), seen here in Fig 1. The original figure's shield was removed from the left arm and substituted with a *Milliput* sack; the hand-bell and cuffs are also *Milliput* additions, and its once-pointed hat was filed down to form the hood. The Dalek is one of *Citadel's Dr Who* range of miniatures for the RPG of the same name. Currently, all six Doctors are available, plus Daleks, Cybermen and assistants, with more releases due early this year. The *Judge Dredd* range, for use with *Games Workshop's* RPG, is rapidly expanding. The man himself (seen here) comes in a pack together with a seated version and bike, for £1.95.

In Fig 2, we see an attractive *Citadel* foursome, painted and based by Pete Prow. From left to right they are: a Noldor deep elf from the *LOTR* pack ME52; an unarmoured fighter from the *BDD1 Adventure Starter Set* (£4.95) Brommedir, from the *Bloodbath at Orc's Drift* miniatures range; and a cleric, also from the *BDD1* set.

The magnificent castle seen here in Fig 3, is constructed entirely from individual items in the 25mm buildings and accessories range by *Gallia Reproductions*. Everything from cottages and temples to castles and stockades are available. Prices start at around £1 for barricades and walls etc, rising to £115.00 for the castle. All items are available either painted or unpainted.

In response to John Blanche's award-winning minotaur (featured in last month's *TTH* photopage), his colleague and sparring partner, Chas Elliot, has constructed this tongue-in-cheek parody (Fig 4), using C31: a giant two-headed troll (£3.00) to carry the banner that bears an uncanny likeness to J.B. Chas hopes to continue his satirical modelling, just as soon as he is discharged from the intensive care unit of Nottingham's General Hospital!

Four oldies but goodies are paraded here in Fig 5. Cursed Doomhandle, Thel, Agrad and Doomed Ratchragged were originally part of the *Citadel Knights of Chaos* boxed speciality set, but have since been incorporated into the C35 range of *Chaos Warriors* (all 60p each).

Fig 6 features an attractive, highly stylised diorama by Fraser Gray. The figure, an *Asgard Lord of Chaos* (FM85: 75p) is also available as a mounted version (FM92: £2.50). The pinnacle of rock was constructed from *Milliput* applied directly to a cardboard tube and sculpted into shape with a spatula. The grass effect was achieved by using the techniques outlined this month. □

Useful Addresses

Games Innovation, 23 Sladebrook, Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire BA15 1SH.

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gobbledigook.



BoL

Trevors Tidbits

ANYTHING BUT CONVENTIONAL

Welcome to the first *Trevor's Tidbits*, the new style *White Dwarf News Page*. One of my objectives with *TT* will be to make it rather more friendly and informal than the *News Page* has been in the past, with rather less of the hard sell for new products (although these will, of course, still be mentioned). I also intend to abuse my position of power to as great an extent as the magazine's General Operations Director will let me get away with. (How about introducing yourself, Trev? – GOD.) To this end, I will begin my first column with a plug for an event which I am personally involved in organising. *Koancon* is to be a fan-run fantasy gaming convention which will take place in August at Warwick University. The weekend will see lots of gaming, events, talks, etc, the correct air of solemnity being ensured by an open *Toon* contest! The guests of honour are to be Pete Tamlyn (respected fan and author of much material for *Games Workshop*) and *Dwarf's* own Dave Langford (pardon?). We expect the convention to be heavily over-subscribed, so if you're interested, write immediately to Alex Zbyslaw, Elbereth, 123 Hollis Rd, Stoke, Coventry.

There are two other conventions you may not have heard about. *Stabcon* is traditionally the first convention of the New Year, and in 1986 it takes place over the 10th-12th of January at Woolton Hall, Fallowfield, Manchester. Gaming is the order of the day – and night! For more information and booking (rooms are available at £11.50 a night) contact Dave Waring, 59 St Martin's Green, Trimley St Martin, Felixstowe, Suffolk.

Reveille '86 is organised by Bristol University and Lincombe Bara Wargames Club. It will be held on the 1st and 2nd of March at the Students Union Building, Queens Rd, Bristol and there will be trade stands, participation games, etc – plus, of course, a bar. For further details contact Roger Comber, Marlenwood, 43 Davids Rd, Knowle, Bristol.

Origins '85 took place in Maryland, USA a few months ago and, as usual, the Origins Awards were given out. Those of particular interest to *Dwarf* readers are: Best Role-Playing Rules: *Paranoia* and *Twilight 2000*; Best Role-Playing Adventure: *Live and Let Die*; Best Science Fiction Boardgame: *Web and Starship*; Best Fantasy Boardgame: *The Lonely Mountain*; Adventure Gaming Hall of Fame Winner: Frank Chadwick. (Very interesting, but you still haven't introduced yourself. – GOD.)

RECORD BREAKERS?

By now you'll probably all have heard of *First Quest*, the *AD&D* record. As fantasy gaming expands to take control of all forms of media, there are rumours of a

D&D movie next year. Meanwhile, NBC in the States is currently running the 'D&D TV Quest Game'. Whilst there are rumours of a plan to produce a British version of this, it seems unlikely. Although several people have expressed interest in the idea of *D&D* on the telly, none seem able to do it properly within their budgets. I can't say I'm overly upset.

Various assorted goodies are due for *RuneQuest* fans. A \$15 basic version will no doubt please those who've just bought *RQ3*, whilst negotiations are going on with *Avalon Hill* to produce a line of \$6-\$8 scenarios. There are planned to be four large supplement releases per year: *Gods of Glorantha* will contain short entries on 60 cults, with another book listing 300 gods, plus 15 pages of what the priests themselves say about various cults. *Griffin Island* provides a totally different setting and includes various player handouts, maps, etc. *Glorantha the World* gives a broad view of the entire world and details of specific localities. The next new game is to be *RuneQuest Nippon* – a Japanese version of *RQ* by the author of *Bushido*.

TSR's new hardback *AD&D* supplement *Oriental Adventures* should be out for Yule despite earlier fears that it might not make it. Originally expected to be written by one Francois Marcela-Froideval, it will in fact be entirely the work of Gary Gygax.

HACK AND SLAY

White Dwarf doesn't normally spend a lot of time on computer games, but we've received a couple of press releases of games which are worth a nod. *Soderon's Shadow* (available now for the *Spectrum*, later for the *Amstrad* and *Commodore*) comes from *Beyond* and is designed to 'fill the gap left by the postponement of *Eye of the Moon*, third part of the *Lords of Midnight* series'. The game features landscaping, 6100 locations and a series of nine tasks leading up to slaying 'Soderon the immortal (and evil) wizard who controls the fair land of Elindor'.

Showing rather more imagination in its scenario is *Infocom's* new adventure-style game *A Mind Forever Voyaging*. Written by Steve Meretzky, co-author of *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide To The Galaxy* software, the game begins in the year 2031 with you discovering at the age of 20 that you are in fact a computer who has been brought up as human. In the face of world crisis, you must enter a simulation of the years to come, exploring the huge futuristic city of Rockril in order to study the long-term effects of a plan designed by various world powers. The game is aimed at 128K machines including the *Apple II*, *Atari ST*, *Mac*, etc.

Remember *Ghostbusters*? You know, that film which grossed vast sums of

money some while back? That's right, you remember, *that* one. Well, whilst it's still so high in people's minds *West End Games* are planning to bring out a *Ghostbusters* role-playing game.

Not really role-playing, but in sufficiently bad taste to appeal to me, is *Subway Vigilante* from *Paperback Games* in the USA. Players start in Brooklyn with a gun and six bullets – the first player to get to the Bronx alive wins. Sounds like a perfect relaxing change from *Judge Dredd Role-Playing*.

PRINT AND BE DAMNED!

Hopefully you all know of *Games Master Publications*, the magazine based around a scenario, started by Paul Cockburn and *Beast Entz* when *TSR* in America thumbed their noses at the British gamers by cutting funding for *Imagine*. Well, Paul reports that his new magazine has 'achieved a good deal of welcome reception in retail and a promising early subscriber list'. A little healthy competition is good both for the hobby in general and also for us at *White Dwarf*, so good luck to Paul. (Well that's enough about Paul, how about yourself? – GOD.) By the time you read this, there may actually be another independent professional fantasy games magazine in the UK – I can't say more than that at present, but keep your eyes open.

Musketeers is new from *Task Force Games*. For one to three players, it attempts to recreate the adventures of the Three Musketeers in 17th century France in eight different scenarios.

The second *Marvel Super Heroes* boxed set, containing rules expansions, etc, will be out soon from *TSR*. *Marvel Super Heroes* is apparently selling well, and there is a hard-hitting advertising campaign in the States by *Mayfair Games* comparing *TSR's* product point for point with their own *DC Heroes*. The latest *DC Heroes* scenario is *Blood Feud*, featuring the Teen Titans and the Brotherhood of Evil, with art from *DC* cover artists Ed Hannigan and Jose Delbo. Whilst on the subject of high art, *Mayfair's* new scenario *Ice Elves* has cover art by Boris Vallejo.

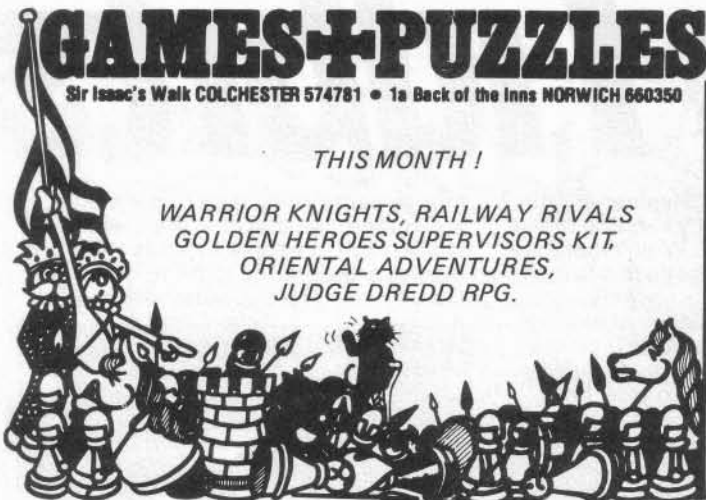
Finally, included in the latest *TSR* catalogue is *Understanding the Dungeons and Dragons Game*. This is a guide for those who don't play the game explaining what it's all about and how useful it can be. Presumably this is to counteract the nonsense put about by groups such as the Moral Minority (sic) and BADD (Bothered About Dungeons and Dragons). Fortunately, such pinnacles of intellectual prowess have little or no influence in the UK. But let's keep on our guard. (Who is this man? How did he get in here? – GOD.) □

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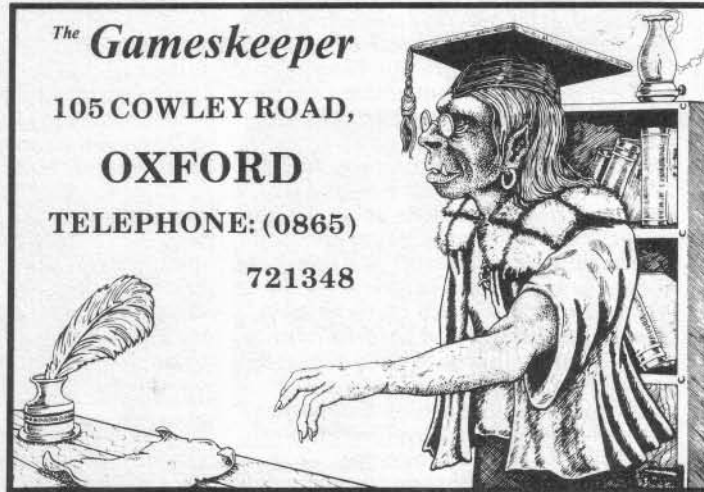
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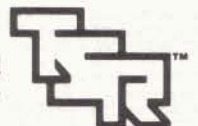
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HELP!

Clubs, contacts and events can be advertised once at no charge up to a maximum of 25 words. Further insertions at the rate of 15p per word (incl VAT).

Watford/NW London. Keen (if inexperienced!) *Middle-earth*, *TSR* and wargame players seeks other players in area (including Hertfordshire). Prefer established players, but other novices seeking to form a group also sought. Dean, ☎ (01) 421 4230 after 7pm weekdays & any time weekends.

Wanted: Merchants & Merchandise, Scouts & Assassins, Sorag. D Gibbons, ☎ Maidstone 676480 (after 6pm).

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Penpal wanted. I'm a young, male D&D player/DM with access to other RPGs. Nicholas Drake, 11 Blackpool Rd, Ansdell, Lytham, St Annes, Lancs FY8 4EH.

Wanted: Bunnies & Burrows, Marvel Super Heroes and supplements, *RQ2* supplements, *Different Worlds* and *Wyrm's Footnotes*. ☎ Farnborough (Kent) 51121.

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Wanted WD 42. Hadyn, ☎ 07918 5223. PS Grendel is still alive and kicking. PPS If Grendel is a Marillion fan please ring.

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Ashmire the Terrible, King of Thieves is slain. The Underworld Guild is finished. Victory to Ronin Stormhammer, Barbarian Lord of Gulgaros. To Dave from DL.

WDs Wanted: 28, 29, 33, 35 in good condition (NO writing, tears, scuffs etc) up to £2 per copy paid. Sarah Clark, ☎ (0703) 826554.

Experienced DM/Player seeks players/group, 18+, in Moseley/Balsall Heath/Edgbaston area for *Bushido*, *CoC*, *Aftermath* etc. Mark, ☎ 440 5670.

Chester. 19 yr old inexperienced RPGer seeks GM/Players for *MERP/Rolemaster* & *Star Trek*. Contact: Iain Archer, 44 Rosslyn Rd, Vicars Cross, Chester CH3 5HP.

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I am collecting new or used American Civil War board wargames. J Gardiner ☎ (0252) 723269.

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Help. AD&D player seeks other players in Leytonstone area. Contact Roy Peters, 312 Hollydown-Way, Leytonstone, London E11 4LG.

Felin Khuzkil can nuzzle the fool elf any day. Omar better watch his back as well.

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Penpal 14 yr old boy interested in D&D, ED&D and AD&D and willing to learn any game, wants female penpal. Contact: SOS, 303 Sutton Park, Sutton, Dublin 13. ☎ 324658.

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Games: All wargames, AD&D etc played. **Time:** As arranged.

Place: Room E, Fort Regent.

Contact: P L Gatehouse, PO Box 518, St Helier.

BELFAST

QUB RPG Club

Games: All played.

Time: Monday 7.30pm.

Place: QUB Students Union.

Comments: All welcome.

Contact: Dragonslayers, QUB Students Union, University Rd, Belfast BT7 1NN.

KILMARNOCK

Kilmarnock Wargames Club

Time: Sunday 12-5pm.

Place: Shortlees Community Centre.

Comments: Starting up. All gamers welcome.

Contact: Colin Mair, ☎ (0563) 28598 after 5pm.

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Contact: SAE to TSWA, Deptsee, 255 Kents Hill Road, Benfleet, Essex.

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Games: AD&D, CoC, RQ, *Battlecrus*, *Killer*.

Time: Monday & Wednesday 8-11pm.

Place: RAFA Club, St Pauls Street, Stamford.

Comments: Over 17 only. Experienced and new RPGs welcome. Female members especially welcome.

Contacts: Graeme, ☎ Stamford 53969 (after 6pm).

ST HELENS

St Helens RPG Club

Games: Any.

Time: Wednesdays 7.30-10.30pm.

Place: Lingholme Hotel, St Helens.

Comments: All welcome.

Contact: Mike Willis, ☎ Up Holland 625574.

COMPETITION PAGE

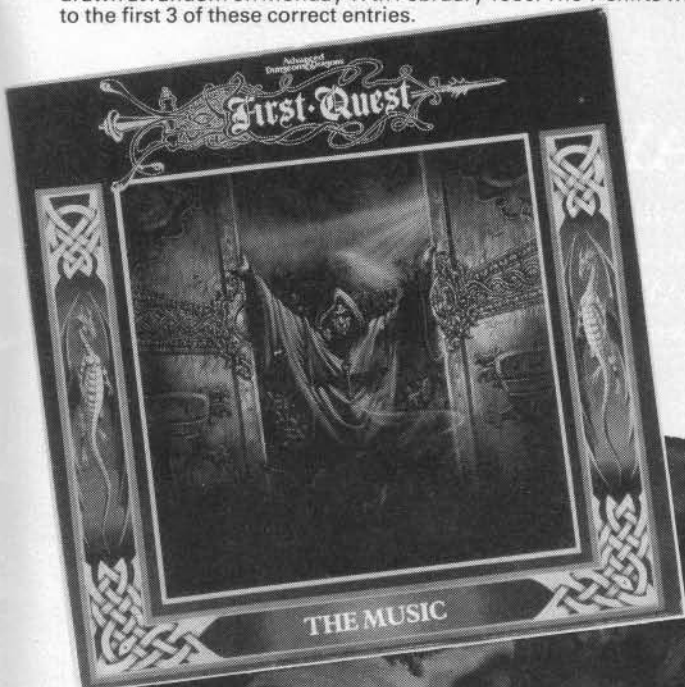
FIRST QUEST

White Dwarf has 25 copies of *First Quest*, the AD&D double LP, to give away, along with 3 *First Quest* T-shirts. *First Quest* is a new venture as far as role-playing goes: it comes complete with outlines for an AD&D adventure on the sleeves of the two records. Designers of the adventure include Tom Kirby, Jim Bambra and Phil Gallagher of TSR (UK), and Paul Cockburn, *Imagine's* ex-megastar.

Filmtrax, the company responsible for bringing *First Quest* into the gaming world, have kindly provided the albums and T-shirts for *White Dwarf* to give away in a competition. Since the album cover features such splendid artwork, we've decided to base the competition on it.

Photographs of the artwork accompany this competition. What we would like to know is where do the two pieces of artwork originally come from? (Clues: Refer to the cover of a handy guide; *DragonLance* is plainly dated). Since we anticipate a large number of correct answers from everyone, as an eliminator, we would like to know who is the artist that painted them? Both illustrations have been used on or in AD&D products from TSR.

All entries should be marked 'First Quest Competition' and sent to: *White Dwarf*, 27/29 Sunbeam Road, London NW10 6JP. Prizes of a *First Quest* album will go to the senders of the first 25 correct entries drawn at random on Monday 17th February 1986. The T-shirts will go to the first 3 of these correct entries.



WIN A THRUD ORIGINAL!

Ever fancied yourself as a scriptwriter for a comic? Well, now's your chance to start in a small way by writing a script for our regular hero *Thrud*. Carl Critchlow, *Thrud's* creator, has kindly agreed to judge the competition and to draw up the winning script for inclusion in *White Dwarf*. The original of this will then be given to its creator, along with a year's free subscription to *White Dwarf*. We will also be giving away three runners-up prizes of *White Dwarf* subscriptions, and who knows, if we get lots of really good entries, these could also see print!

All entries should be typed, double-spaced, on one side of the paper only. Entries should be at least 250 words in length, including dialogue and descriptions. The exact format of the script is up to the entrant, but it should be based around a witty punchline. Each frame should be described concisely and accurately, giving details of the characters involved, of any action going on, and all relevant dialogue. If you are introducing new characters, give a brief description of each one. Details of settings and relevant background are almost as important as the plotline! Remember that Carl has to be able to draw a one-page strip based on the information that you provide, so avoid using too many frames or having too much going on in a small frame.

Mark your envelope 'Thrud Competition' and send your entry to: *White Dwarf*, 27/29 Sunbeam Road, London NW10 6JP before the closing date of Monday March 3rd 1986.

IMPORTANT NOTE

If you intend entering the *First Quest* competition and the *Thrud Script* competition, please send your entries in different envelopes. The staff of *White Dwarf* cannot take any responsibility for mislaying 'doubled-up' entries.

JUDGE DREDD PRIZE-WINNERS

We were quite overwhelmed by the number of entries to the *Judge Dredd* competition announced in *White Dwarf* 70, undoubtedly our most successful competition to date. Picking the winner out of almost 200 entries proved very difficult, but congratulations are in order for Mick McGovern of Blyth, who provided the hippest arrest line and answered all the questions correctly. Mick's arrest line was:

'Don't give me any jive, you're doing five. If you're caught again, you'll be doing ten.'

Well, we'd hate to be in a Mega-City patrolled by Judges of Mick's calibre! He also went on to add 'Sorry, I couldn't get a barf bag into the envelope.' Well, Mick, we're not quite sure what you mean. . .

The answers to the five tricky questions, posed by co-author of the *Judge Dredd* role-playing game, Marc Gascoigne, were as follows:

1. Judge Anderson's first name is Cassandra.
2. The Devil is imprisoned in Iso-Block 666.
3. A 'Zipper' is a hover version of the Lawmaster.
4. Kevin O'Neill made Krong the giant robot gorilla.
5. Yogi Yakamoto won Supersurf 6 (Chopper won Supersurf 7; quite a few of you fell for this one!).

A copy of the *Judge Dredd* role-playing game, the *Judge Dredd* boardgame and 25mm Judge Dredd and Anderson figures are on the way to you Mick. Some of the arrest lines provided by other entrants also deserve a special mention since they amused all of us!

'Don't even think of it Juve, unless you want brain surgery - Lawgiver style!' (Simon Miles.)

'I am the JAW and you'd better believe it!' (Stuart Mee.)

'Burglary, 2 years; Assault, 5 years, wasting Justice Dept bullets, 6 months; making a mess of the pedway, just look at all that blood scum, 12 months. You're going down for quite a while; what's that? O, sorry, I forgot I've got my size 10 on your head, 2 years, damaging a Judge's uniform. . . ' (Peter Lewis.)

Runners-Up

All of the following get a copy of the *Judge Dredd* role-playing game and the 25mm Dredd and Anderson figures:

Iain Dunford, Gidea Park; Richard Evans, Leeds; G Carmichael, London; Jonathan Mortimer, Portsmouth; David Kempster, Nottingham; Mark O'Connor, Thornaby; John Roper, Bishop Auckland; David Dickens, West Byfleet; Jo Minns, London; Andrew Bates, Coalville; J Wignall, Hutton; Simon Anderson, Milton Keynes; Carl Vandal, Troon; Peter Lewis, Cardiff (Peter sent in 16 different arrest lines!); Paul Emsley, Potters Bar; Stuart Mee, London; Thomas Howard, Edinburgh; Simon Miles, Hornsea; David Towers, Birkenhead.

The Judges' decision is final! □

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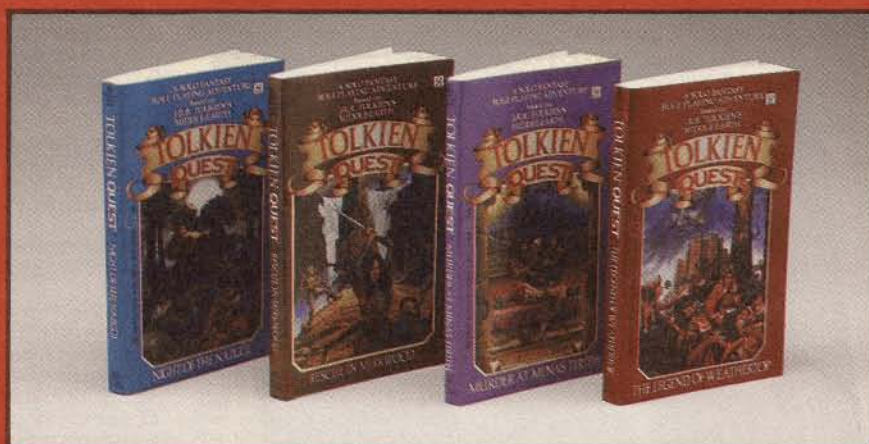
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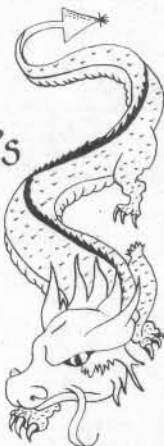
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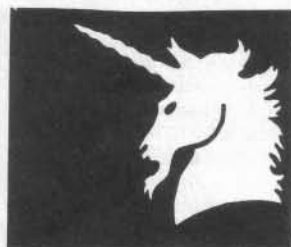
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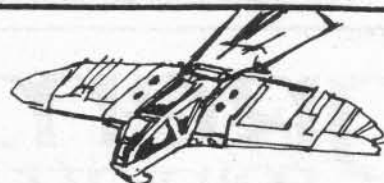
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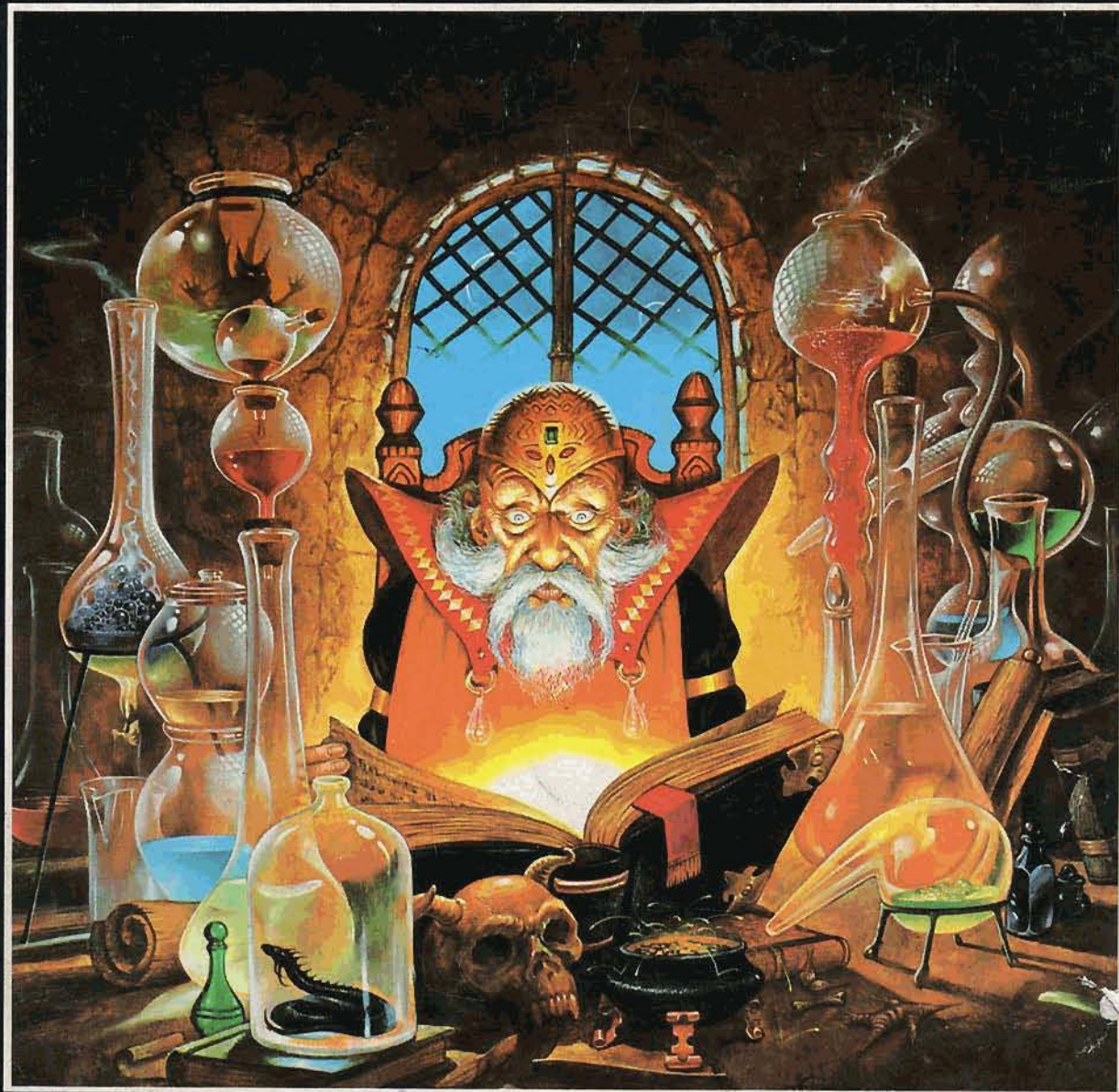
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