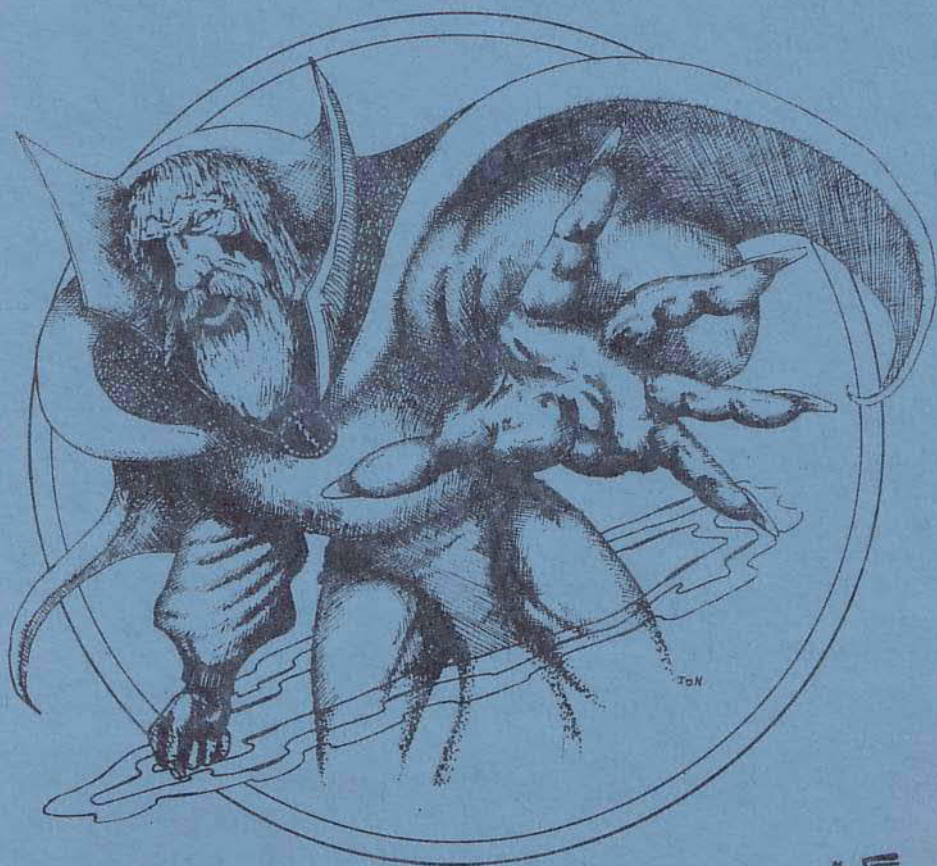


# THE BEHOLDER

ISSUE  
no 19



45p

# EDITORIAL

Hello everyone at Games Day! Some of you may never have seen TBH before, so it gives us an excuse to say that:- "The Beholder" is an amateur British D&D fanzine. D&D (Dungeons & Dragons) is produced by T.S.R. Hobbies Inc, P.O.Box 756, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin 53147, AMERICA. Their British subsidiary is T.S.R.(UK) at The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD. TBH is the creation of:-

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This issue most of our interior artwork was supplied by Jonathan White (Jon). Fali-Ur comes from Alexander Self and uncredited articles are either by one of us or a contributor who wants to remain anonymous.

As we expected our last issue was (gasps!) late by a couple of weeks! However as you can see we've got back on schedule and (unless inbetween the time we write this and the time you read it something goes terribly wrong) we should be okay from now on.

The back issues situation is now progressing with the speed of a grey ooze (i.e. not very fast!). The main problem is cashflow (or, put simply, we have to find some money to pay for them). However issues 8 to 11 will be done..... eventually.

We recently received a letter which asked why BH was used at the top of our contents list when our "standard" abbreviation is TBH. Good question. Let's see if we can get it right this month....

Guy and Mike



## TBH19: C O N T E N T S (Okay now?)

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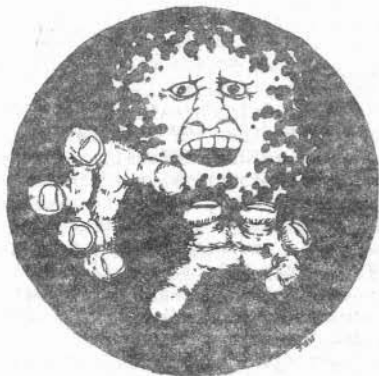
Okay, so they've fought their way through to the treasure, which is held in a nice big chest. Now their problems really start!

## CHESTS

- 1) The chest is actually the lair of some small (but nasty) monster.
- 2) Inside the chest is a slightly smaller one, which contains an even smaller one, which.... Finally a matchbox-sized chest is reached which holds one copper piece. Needless to say it will take a long time to get to it and noise will inevitably be made (DM reaches for his W.M. die).
- 3) The apparent chest is actually a vampire's coffin.
- 4) The chest is actually a monster (AC4, 4d8 hits) and once opened a tongues attacks. If it hits it will drag in the victim and dissolve them for 1d6 damage per melee round. The only way to stop this is to kill the monster.
- 5) A chest which once opened releases an explosive gas. Did the opener have a torch? Yes...BANG (treat as weak fireball).
- 6) The chest contains an endless supply of monsters, e.g. all the time it is open skeletons pour out at the rate of 3 per melee round.
- 7) The chest is actually a solid block of wood! (Watch them try and get into this one!)
- 8) When this chest is opened it acts as a giant-sized Decanter of Endless Water. It sends forth a 50' stream of water at 150 gallons per round, enough to sweep away creatures of under 3 hit dice.
- 9) Not being excessive or anything but this chest is a Well of Many Worlds!
- 10) The treasure in the chest is cursed (see various stuff on "Tutankhamun" for ideas on this).

### MINI-INFO

Graham Staplehurst, the winner of our GCC last issue, tells us that he has recently completed a dungeon module, in the same vein as those from TSR. His is entitled "Fortress of the Ogre-Mage Lord" and is very powerful. If you are one of an experienced group of D&Ders who would be prepared to playtest and comment on it, then write to Graham at 99 Hillbrow, Letchworth, Herts for a copy. He is also looking for good artists to illustrate it. More details on request, from Graham not TBH.





# MONSTERS

## GELESCODA

Frequency: Rare  
No. appearing: 1-8  
Armour class: 4 (body) 7 (tendrils)  
Movement: 15"  
Hit dice: 5 plus 3  
% in lair: 15%  
Treasure type: Q, X  
No. of attacks: See below  
Damage per attack: See below  
Special attacks: See below  
Special defences: Nil  
Magic resistance: Standard  
Intelligence: Very  
Alignment: Neutral (Evil)  
Size: L (9' long).  
Psionic ability: See below  
Attack/defence modes: B/F, G

the Gelescodas will fire 1-6 of its tail spikes at the intended target; these have a range of 20', firing as a light crossbow for 1-3 points of damage. They also contain a powerful charm drug (save vs. poison at -2) which can make the victim believe that the Gelescodas are his friend, and go up to greet him. Then the Gelescodas will advance and grab the victim with its claws, these have the effect of paralysing the victim unless he makes his saving roll. Then the helpless individual is pulled to its jaws to be eaten alive.

The tendrils are AC7, and can be cut off; they each have two hit points. This does not, however, effect the Gelescodas as a whole in any way.

Gelescodas sometimes hunt in packs of up to eight of these creatures, but fight at -2 to hit in the daylight. Some Gelescodas (15%) may even possess psionic abilities.

## GARGENT

Frequency: Very rare  
No. appearing: 1  
Armour class: 5  
Movement: 9"/18" (flying)  
Hit dice: 7 plus 5  
% in lair: 75%  
Treasure type: P, X, Y.  
No. of attacks: 3  
Damage per attack: 1-6/1-6/1-8  
Special attacks: None  
Special defences: See below  
Magic resistance: See below  
Intelligence: Average  
Alignment: Neutral  
Size: L (12-15' tall)  
Psionic ability: Nil  
Attack/defence modes: none.

As the name implies, Gargents are mixture between gargoyles and ents, being 12-15' high humanoids, with wings and a tail that tapers to hard bony point. Their skin is grey-green in colour, and they have long grey beards falling below their waists.

They are nature-loving creatures who protect woods and forests from the inevitable advance of man. They therefore obviously get on well with ents, and similarly have a particular dislike of people carrying battle-axes and mistrust anyone with a cutting weapon unless accompanied by a druid, whom they have great respect for. They tolerate clerics, for they carry blunt weapons, and will not attack parties accompanied by druids unless they are causing harm to the woodland.

Gargents fight with their claws and their tail,

the latter of which strikes as a footman's pick for purposes of hitting. All weapons with a wooden shaft that hit a gargent have a 50% chance of warping as per the druid spell 'warp wood'. Magic weapons are allowed a saving roll, and the effect is



permanent. This means that opponents will probably have to resort to shorter weapons, allowing the gargent to press home his attack. Gargents speak their own language and druids may persuade them (if their language is known to the druid) to go away for a while (perhaps they could roll as if attempting to turn a wraith as if they were a cleric of the same level.) Gargents possess 50% magic resistance to druidic spells.

#### MOLG

Frequency: Rare  
No. appearing: 20-200  
Armour class: 8  
Movement: 9"  
Hit dice:  $\frac{1}{2}$  or 1-4 hit points  
% in lair: 60%  
Treasure type: Individuals J, otherwise I, W, C.  
No. of attacks: 1  
Damage per attack: 1-6  
Special attacks: See below  
Special defences: None  
Magic resistance: 30%  
Intelligence: Average-vary  
Alignment: Lawful evil  
Size: S(3' tall)  
Psionic ability: Nil  
Attack/defence modes: Nil

Molgs are small purple humanoids with pointed ears, large round pupilless eyes, and short stubby tails. They live in large tribal groups inhabiting dark forests or caves. Their language is a kind of high-pitched hooting and they have a very effective method of attack. All Molgs have the ability to mentally search his opponent's brain and assess his bodily strengths to see what advantages or disadvantages their opponents possess. This scanning can pick up the knowledge of adversaries and so find out about any plan of attack, or whether the party has a powerful magical item or not, and any personal weaknesses the enemy may possess. Anything important discerned in this manner is reported to the leader, who may then plan accordingly. They also possess a mental attacking ability, which will pick upon the highest requisites of adventurers (i.e. strength for a fighter) and will attempt to lower it by force of will. This attack is carried out by

rolling a D20 and requiring a roll of the victims requisite score or higher in order to lower it by one point. The duration of points so drained is one day. For every other molg above one attempting to lower the score of the same person and the same requisite, 1 point is added to the attacking dice roll. The range of this attack is 15", but the disadvantage is that the molgs partaking in this mental process cannot do anything else but concentrate. Therefore, when facing the enemy the molgs usually take up a defensive position with half the force forming a line in front of the thinkers to protect them. Then the "mind attack" weakens their enemy, destroying their strongest attributes until they come into contact for melee. Then all the molgs stop concentrating and go into combat with javalins and short swords. Note that no requisite can be brought under 8 points. The molgs effect upon monsters is to drain 1 hit point per molg concentrating upon the creature, and a maximum of half it's hit points can be drained in this manner for one day. One mind attack is allowed per molg per melee turn.

To clarify the usage of this special ability, here are some examples of it at work:

Example 1 A fighter with 16 strength and 18 dexterity is "mind-attacked" by ten molgs. Four choose to lower his strength and six choose to lower his dexterity by force of will. The four will require a 16 or more to lower his strength, but there are four of them, which gives plus three to the dice roll, so effectively they require a 13 or more upon D20 to lower the fighter's strength to 15. The other six gain plus 5; and so effectively require a 13 also upon D20 to lower the fighter's dexterity to 17.

Example 2 A party attack a large force of molgs, knowing that a second group of adventurers is sneaking round their backs to surprise them and hack them to pieces. The molgs, using their "mind-scanning" ability pick this knowledge up and so lay out nets and set a trap for the second group, planning to ambush them. (Note that the molgs can pick up all the precise details of the plan, and know the exact route that the second group will take if a member of the first group knows it also and is "scanned"). So in fact, it's the party who get the shock, not the molgs!

JEFF  
CRANE  
presents:-

# THE ULTIMATE MONSTER (gulp!)

"O.K." I hear you say, "let's have it, what is this so terrible bogey-man?" Ten will get you five, my 23rd level fighting man/wizard/cleric will send it packing in 1-6 melee rounds! But it is unbeatable. "Magic proof?" No. "Damage proof?" In no way. "Then it can be killed?" Yes, up to a point. "Ah, regeneration". Only sometimes, with help. "You have me confused, what's its HPs, A.C. move, intelligence, size, Psi ability?" It has none, but it does attack in many open and covert ways, it has defenses and it has many treasures. It is the most common monster in D&D and you have met it many times. "But you said it was unbeatable and if I met it, I beat it!" No my friend, those times it merely let you live, but one of these days it will kill you. "O.K., O.K., chum, what's this so wonderful beast called?"

## IT'S:- THE LAND

When I started playing D&D 3 years ago I had only the three basic books. So I drew up a dungeon, put it in a small wilderness with a village near at hand for a base camp and we played it like that for a while. But what is that Wilderness? I believe that to most players, even these days, it is a piece of paper, colour-coded for different terrain, that enables you to go from Point A (the Base Camp) to Point B (the Dungeon) and then back to Base Camp. This is, of course, a simplification, but this I feel is how most of us see it. I have yet to play in a game where the day is not a perfect one for riding or walking (try walking 5 miles through the countryside in a torrential downpour, after it's been raining for 3 days). The only people who take any notice of the weather are Druids and they are usually players rather than GMs. Although the subject of this article is not the weather, I shall be putting together my own tables for this element as soon as possible, as up to now all my days have been perfect too. Also I have a 4th Lv. player Druid, hiding in gorse bushes on top of a hill in a forest, at dusk, with 164 Orcs about to use the same hill for a Bar-b-que party. As I ushered him out he was still plaintively asking what the weather was like. But I digress. If the Hon. Ed. likes this article enough to use it, perhaps I can put my other tables on paper, but until then I'll start with the one I have play-tested (fiendish chuckling).

### THE MOUNTAIN BARRIER

I personally have not read the new DMG, but in the 3 basic books it is -3 movement points to cross mountain hexes. This has never seemed correct but when I started D&Ding we were more interested in dungeoning than in wildernessing and so did not labour the point. However, now that I have a full-blown campaign, involving a much wider world, I have begun to think. To use an example, which I believe many readers of LoTRs as GMs, may have been thinking of when their players gaily sailed across huge mountain ranges as though they were not there (at -3/hex), why then, when Gandalf and party couldn't get across the pass, why didn't they try the next hex South, instead of going all that dangerous way through Moria? There's nothing more infuriating than setting up heavy scenario in a pass and having players cross the mountains miles to the East or West as though they were flat desert (at -3/hex of course). In my campaign now, however, players rarely cross mountains, except through established passes. It is much too risky!

When attempting to cross a mountain range, the first thing to do is select, buy or make some suitable clothes. Being 5,000' up a mountain pass in a roaring blizzard, wearing little but a light tunic and chainmail is a good way to lose your legs, arms, nose, etc. Assuming the party is now packing the correct clothes, bundles of dry firewood, spirits (for emergencies) and other useful items, they may now enter the first mountain hex. Provided that is, they can find a path through the hex.

#### FOOT AND/OR LED HORSE PASS

Basic chance 10%

Per Guide +5%

Per Ranger +5% -1% per Wisdom point 16-18.

+1% per Dexterity point 16-18 accumulative for the whole party.

-1% per Dexterity point 5-3, horses assumed average dexterity.

+or-Mountainwise (Accumulative).

Each throw of the dice (or search) takes 7 day.

#### WEATHER

SPRING

SUMMER

AUTUMN WINTER

			LASTS	REMARKS
01-05		Drought/great heat (only in hot desert mountain)	1-6 wks	Double water
06-55	01-50	Normal	1 day	
56-65	51-60	Showers/rain/sleet	1 day	-10% next thro
66-85	61-70	Storms	1 day	-10% next thro
86-95	71-80	Snow storms	1-3 days	-15% next thro
96-00	81-00	Blizzards. Sit it out and hope it goes away	1-6 days.	

The weather is of great importance when crossing mountains and should be checked at the beginning of each day. The weather may only change by one value, i.e. from normal to showers or drought.

Example: Day 1 winter, (33)normal; day 2, (84)showers; day 3, (67)storms etc.

(Whew). Well that isn't bad if your players aren't in any hurry, have plenty of food and water and don't have to fight off too many wandering monsters. However, I have in my own campaign one or two high level characters who want to set up their own kingdoms away from the established realms. This often means going through extensive mountain ranges. Also as they have to take along gangs of labourers and wagons of materials and equipment, etc. a simple foot path will not do. A possible wagon route must first be scouted and then a trail must be laid. One player so far, a high level tumbler/thief with delusions of grandeur, called Solan Nors, has laid 200 miles of well kept wagon trail to his home from home and even found an emerald mine or two along the way, which keeps him in the style to which he has become accustomed. (Anguished mutterings from the DM).

AND SO:-

#### WAGON AND RIDGE HORSE PASS

Basic chance 10% plus or minus Mountainwise.

+5% per Guide

+5% per Ranger +1% per Wisdom point 16-18

+5% per Engineer +1% per Intelligence point 16-18

However, each throw of the dice takes one day and if after 3 days no way is found that hex is impassable for wagons, unless a ravine blocks the way, 25% chance, thrown after 3 failures (See RAVINE BRIDGE). If a river is in the nex it may be necessary to cross it (See RIVER BRIDGE).

#### ROAD MAKING

Once a possible wagon route has been found, your basic requirement is labourers, so you are going to have to start near a large town or city.



100 labourers take 4 days to lay road through a 5 mile mountain hex, with the assistance of one engineer and one wagon of road building tools and one chuck wagon. You require one 1st level guard/5 labourers. 4 2nd level guards per engineer and 4 1st level guards/wagon.

150 labourers	1 engineer	2 wagons of tools	2 chuck wagons	3 days/hex.
200 labourers	2 engineers	2 wagons of tools	2 chuck wagons	2 days/hex.
250 labourers	3 engineers	3 wagons of tools	3 chuck wagons	1 day/hex
300 labourers	3 engineers	3 wagons of tools	3 chuck wagons	$\frac{1}{2}$ day/hex

#### REST DAY

1 day/week is a Rest Day with no work (except overtime). This is included in everyones contract (on full pay), however, 20% of the labourers may work, plus a percentage of the remaining work force and are paid twice the monthly wage each for the day. An engineer is required to work with them, 25% chance +5% per 50gp bonus. Rest Day work is contracted 3 days before the Rest Day, but should there be a blizzard on that day, the player must still pay the agreed wage, therefore they get paid for doing nothing, (Bloody Guilds), or not working the full day (see Weather Effects).

#### WEATHER EFFECTS

Drought or great heat	$\frac{1}{4}$ day working
Normal	Full day working
Showers rain/sleet	$\frac{1}{2}$ day working
Storms	$\frac{1}{2}$ day working
Snow storms	$\frac{1}{4}$ day working
Blizzard	No work possible.

I found it necessary in my own campaign to have a formal Contract drawn up (much to the annoyance of Solan Mors) and below is a copy of Contract. It helps to make road building an expensive hobby. (Damn those Emerald Mines).

#### - WORK CONTRACT -

##### Camelot Labourers Guild

I, Jeran Zerok Head Brother of the Labourers Guild of Camelot, do witness, that on this day, one Solan Mors has engaged 160 labourers for the sum of 480 GP payable monthly.

This Contract ensures the following:-

1. 1 day of rest in 7.
2. Payment as stated in the Workers Manual regarding Rest Day working.
3. Observance, (with full pay) of any and all Religious Festivals.
4. Restitution of full pay, plus 1 years Injury Pay to any worker injured whilst in his employ.
5. Restitution of full pay, plus 2 years pay to the family of any worker killed or permanently maimed whilst in his employ.

Signed and witnessed this 25 day of Owl month

SOLAN MORS .....

JERAN ZEROK .....

---

#### RAVINE BRIDGE OR RIVER BRIDGE

If it is found, that after 3 attempts to find a suitable route through a mountain hex, the way is blocked by a ravine or gorge, then the player may bridge it or go some other way. Wooden bridges will remain 100% safe for 1-5 years, then begin to decay at a rate of 5% per year. Stone and wood bridges will remain safe 100% for 3-10 years, then begin to decay at a rate of 5% per year. Stone bridges will remain safe 100% for 20-50 years, then decay at 5% per year. (The decay rate is for unmaintained bridges).

### WOODEN RAVINE/RIVER BRIDGE

100 lab'rs, 1 engin'r, 1 wagon of tools, 1 wagon timber/20' width takes 2 days  
150 lab'rs, 2 engin'rs, 2 wagons tools, 1 wagon timber/20' width takes 1½ days  
200 lab'rs, 2 engin'rs, 2 wagons tools, 1 wagon timber/20' width takes 1 day  
250 lab'rs, 3 engin'rs, 3 wagons tools, 1 wagon timber 20' width takes ½ day.

### WOOD AND STONE BRIDGE

Requires 1 stone mason/engineer and 1 wagon of stone/wagon of timber.  
Time to erect doubled.

### STONE BRIDGE

Requires 2 stone masons/1 engineer and 3 wagons of stone per 20 feet width,  
time to erect tripled.

### RAVINES OR RIVERS (10% chance width and/or depth x 5)

	<u>Width</u>	<u>Depth</u>
01-10	20ft	20ft
11-20	40ft	30ft
21-30	60ft	40ft
31-40	80ft	50ft
41-50	100ft	60ft
51-60	120ft	70ft
61-70	140ft	80ft
71-80	160ft	90ft
81-90	180ft	100ft
91-00	200ft	200ft

### RIVERS

3 hexs inclusive from source no Bridge is needed (natural fords) assuming a route has been found through the hex. If a ravine blocks the way, the river runs through it and must be bridged. No river in mountains will be wider than 60 feet. Now we arrive at the part I enjoyed most (being a Chaotic Evil DM at times) when young Mors went Road Building.

### Natural Hazards

After each days work there is a 10% chance of something having happened during the day, something happening at the present moment or something happening the following day. (Double chance if working in rain, triple if working in snow.)

- 01-20 Axle breaks, ½ day to repair if spare carried.
- 21-40 Axle breaks, 1 day to repair if no spares
- 41-50 Labourer injured working wood. (Must be sent home to recover).
- 51-60 5 labourers injured working stone. (Must be sent home to recover.)
- 61-70 Landslide blocks road. Takes 100 labourers ½ day to clear.
- 71-76 Religious Festival, 1-6 days. No work. (See Contract)
- 77-80 Draught horse breaks leg.
- 81 Rock fall kills 1-10 labourers, or 10% 1 engineer and his guards.
- 82 Flash flood brings confusion. No work for 2 days. 10% of work force killed.
- 83 Wagon and team fall over precipice in landslide.
- 84-87 Find natural road through hex.
- 88 Volcanic activity, find different hex. work wasted.
- 89 ½ food stores contaminated.
- 90 Anthrax breaks out, %age of stock must be killed.
- 91 20 labourers killed in accident
- 92-96 Earthquake destroys 1 hex of road (check route as may be ravines.)
- 97 ½ water contaminated
- 98 All food contaminated.
- 99 Epidemic breaks out
- 00 All water contaminated.

If after 7 days there have been no accidents, on the 8th day 2 days work will be carried out.

So, if you are the kind of DM (like me) who thinks things should not be made too easy for your players, then use these tables. It is very satisfying watching players veering around mountains, looking for natural passes. In my campaign The Mountain Barrier has become the obstacle it should be. If you don't like the tables just go on using the -3/mountain hex rule and your players will go on crossing mountains as though they were flat deserts! Deserts? Hmm. Now there's a thought...

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# Out Now! :- BEHOLDER SUPPLEMENT 1 "GLOSSARY OF MAGIC"

As a supplement to "The Beholder" this 32page booklet includes all of the magical items from issues 1 to 10 of "The Beholder", plus over 60 completely new ones. All are sorted alphabetically into sections, with random rolling tables given. Printing quality is extremely high and this is definitely something worth getting your hands on. If you would like a copy send a cheque/P.O. for 50p (that includes P&P) to J.P.Stoner at 29 Parkway, Dorking, Surrey RH4 1EX. Do NOT make them payable to M.G.Stoner please.





# Swashbuckler

Well me 'earties, we was just havin' a flagon o' mead in the ole "Beholder's Arms" when who should walk in but me old enemy Pierre, and his mates. I thought I'd catch his attention by throwin' me flagon at 'im, but I made sure to finish the mead first. It was a bad shot, but was enough to get 'im annoyed, and, as usual with these musketeer types, he went for his rapier straight off, so did his mates. I'd got me cutlass on hand and started toward 'em, and Kidd, Blackbeard and Long John joined me. It promised to be quite a fight! Pierre, ever a show-off, leapt onto a table and reached for the chandelier, but before he could swing at us Blackbeard threw his dagger, and knocked him flat! I was the nearest to the table and managed to grab one end and flip it over, with Pierre on it! That put him out of action for a while I can tell you! By the time he was coming round his mates had fled, but we could hear the pounding footsteps of the Cardinal's Guards fast approaching and, though we didn't have enough time to kill him a chair over the head was a pretty satisfying substitute. Then we were out the window and running back to our ship.....

The above is only a sample of what you can do with Yaquinto's new game "Swashbuckler". It is one of several "album games", which basically means rather than getting a box full of game components you get something which looks like a double album. When opened out the centre is the map board, and where you would expect to find the record itself there are rules books, charts and playing pieces. In Swashbuckler there are two sections to the board, each one used in a different variant of the game. You can either have a pub brawl (similar to a "Bar-room Brawl") or ship-to-ship combat, with two small vessels close together and treasure chests in the holds to be fought for.

The most interesting thing about this game is the combat systems, and the multitude of methods you can use to injure your opponents. Rules even differentiate between the effects of being hit by a full or empty mug of mead! Tables and chairs can be pushed over, shoved at people or climbed onto. Carpets can be pulled out from under feet, shelves can be toppled and hats can be waved about as a distraction to your attackers. And this is all, there are still more ways of attacking all with rules covering their use and effects.

At the start of each turn actions must be plotted, which can result in some silly situations, e.g. Henri steps forward and lunges with his rapier, even though there is no-one there. This means that anticipation of other players' actions is essential. As you may have guessed plotting means you must photocopy an "orders sheet", once for each player in the game.

Optional rules cover such things as endurance, weapon proficiency and variable characteristics (in the basic game everyone has "average" strength, dexterity, etc). Endurance isn't a very good rule, because if someone has a low score in that area they are doomed to spend most of the game resting, to avoid dying of exhaustion! Seems a bit harsh to me.

I'm not sure how much this game costs (between £4 and £5 probably) but it is definitely worth getting. It is one of those games that is best played with a group of mates, can of lager and loosened-up sense of humour. Buy it and enjoy it!

# WOT

I have always thought that character generation in D&D is too boring, and that there are not enough variables brought into it. Therefore I propose the following:-

Characters are rolled on 3d6 and values can never go lower than 3 or higher than 18 (unless racial bonuses allow a score of 19). However every time a roll for a characteristic is made the number given is changed by the following variables:-

Regular readers of TBH gain +1

Subscribers to TBH gain +2

Subscribers who have been such for over a year gain +3

Subscribers who have let their sub run out without renewing it suffer -1

For each other D&D fansine read -1 (cumulative)

For each other D&D fansine subscribed to -3 (cumulative)

Editors of other fanzines suffer -17

For each copy of "Beholder Supplement 1" bought +1 (cumulative)

Regular contributors to TBH gain +4

Writers of stupid articles about character generation +17

(Copyright by "Toungue in Cheek Enterprises Inc.")



# VIEWPOINT

By DON  
TURNBULL

Mike's article in TBH17 is a very fair summary of the delights (and difficulties) we find in role-playing games. But a comment, if I may, which I hope may clarify some of the original thinking behind the melee rules in D&D/AD&D - an aspect which I found very difficult to grasp at first and was, before I gave it proper thought, inclined to criticise.

This is the 'one minute melee round'. I think it was at Dragonmeet 1979 when I watched (with some incredulity, I must admit) members of the Society of Medieval Anachronisms (I trust I have the name right) dressing up in cushions and cardboard armour then clouting each other ferociously with what looked like swords made from plastic hosepipes. As they rained blows on each other at an incredible rate, a friend nudged me - "What's all this rubbish about only being able to land one blow in a minute, then?"

Well of course he (and those who prefer the melee rules in, say Runequest) is absolutely right. The melee system in D&D/AD&D is neither realistic nor intended to be so. For - and frankly this is the main single reason why I get a great deal of enjoyment from D&D/AD&D - melee is not the central aspect of the game which some might wish it to be, it is but one aspect of the adventure, and not a particularly important one at that.

Without any doubt, D&D/AD&D melee is an approximation, and some would say quite a wild approximation at that. For my money, it is glorious approximation - one which prevents the game from bogging down into a role-playing melee game, rather than a role-playing fantasy adventure game.

The way I see it is this. If players want to play a game which represents melee in detail, D&D/AD&D was not intended for them - they should look to the more complex, and no doubt more realistic, systems embedded in other games (systems which, in my opinion, dominate those games). But if they want to play an adventure game - as Gary says 'the stuff of heroic fantasy' - then detailed concentration on melee will preoccupy them to the point when the adventure recedes into the background. This is not to imply criticism of anyone's personal game preferences - this is quite simply the product of the structures of the various games.

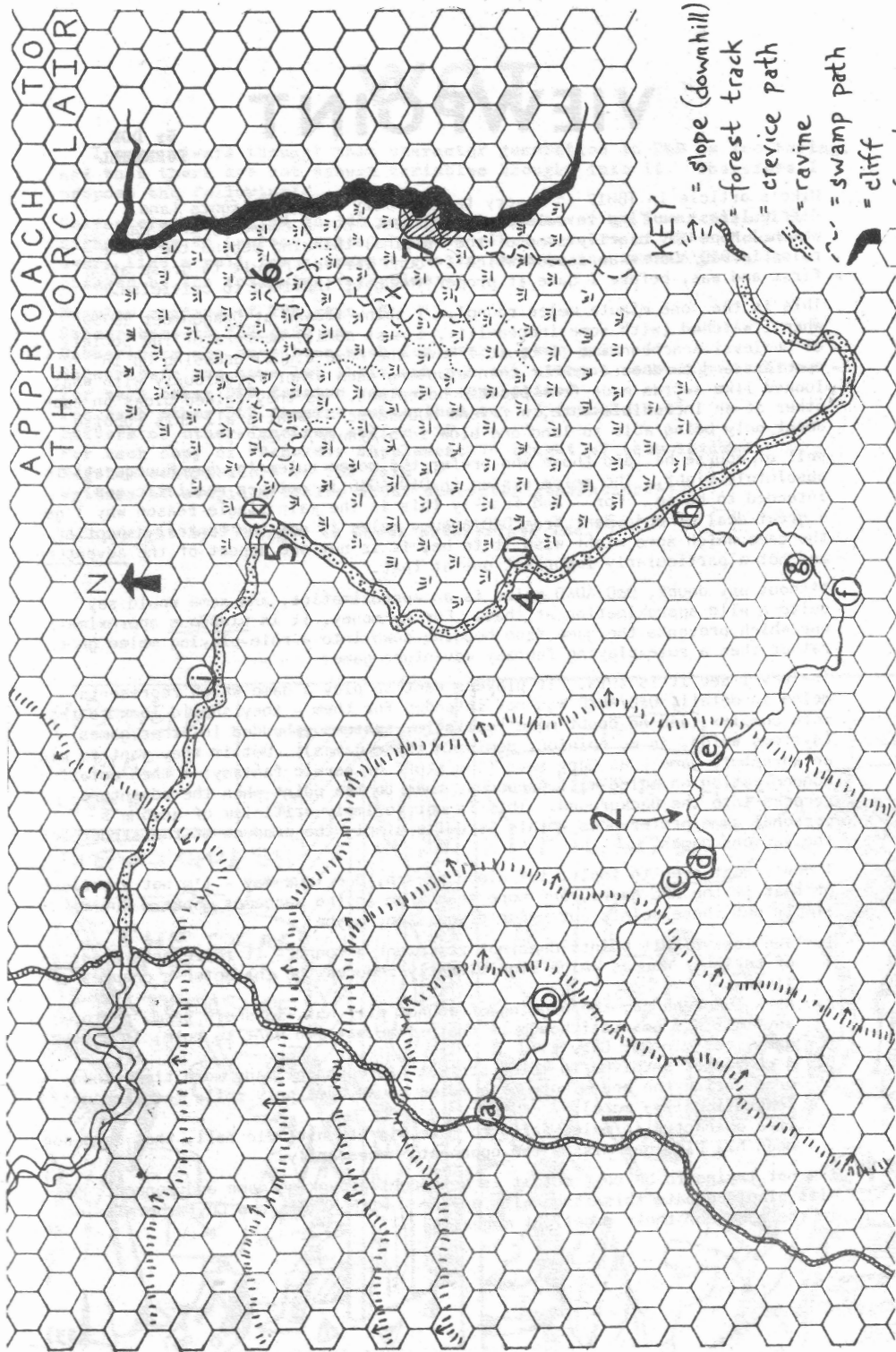
I don't want even to imply, let alone preach, One True Way - I'm not a believer of that in the RPG genre, any more than I am in the wargames genre. But may I simply put these points out - for discussion, maybe:

1. The loss of hit points does not represent a wound - it represents a series of serious wounds which significantly reduces the character's chances of living;
2. As a consequence, the binding of wounds will not, in short term, restore any lost hit points (though if that's the way you want to rule, it's your game, not mine or Gary's);
3. A character involved in melee strikes his opponent many more times than once during the one minute of a melee round, yet only rolls the die once (exceptionally, more);
4. If a character in melee fails to make his 'to hit' die roll, that does not mean his blow has missed the opponent, necessarily.

I'm not trying to be coy, but it is a thought-provoking game and concept. I will gladly debate this issue with anyone - with Mike's and Guy's permission, in the pages of their excellent magazine.



# APPROACH TO THE ORC LAIR



KEY

= slope (downhill)

= forest track

= crevice path

= ravine

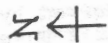
= swamp path

= cliff

= forest

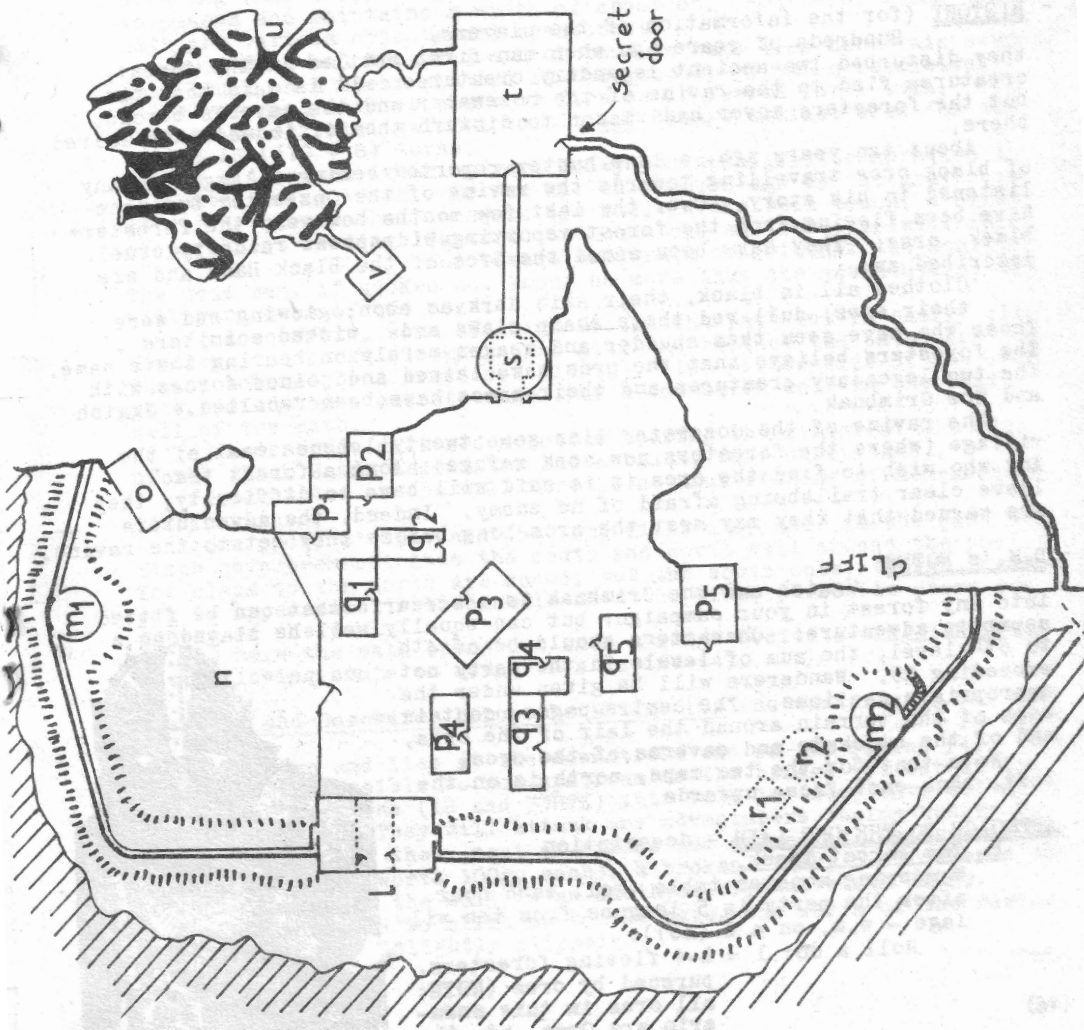
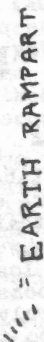
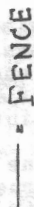
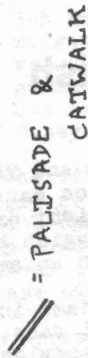
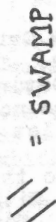
= swamp

1 hex = 50 yds. across 0 yds. 200



STOCKADE AND  
CAVERNS of the  
ORCS

KEY:





# Uggish and the Grimbnak



g. duke

## BACKGROUND

Uggish and The Grimbnak are two of the oldest and most malevolent beings on earth. The latter, a lesser devil, is served by the former, an ancient creature known as a mireslug. Grimbnak's power and also that of Uggish has now waned; for he put forth the greater part of their power into an amulet called the Doomstone and somehow this stone was lost.

The Doomstone came into the possession of the Orcs of the Black Hand, a truly cruel race. With it, they have forced The Grimbnak and Uggish into their service. This now infamous tribe, featured in Chronicle, inhabit a stockaded cliff-side settlement deep in untamed forest (at least four days journey from the nearest habitation) from which they issue in hoards to hunt and destroy.

## HISTORY (for the information of the players)

Hundreds of years ago when man first settled in the forest, they disturbed two ancient legendary creatures. It is said that the creatures fled to the ravine of the Oozewater and the caverns beyond, but the foresters never had reason to disturb them if indeed they laired there.

About ten years ago, a lone hunter reported seeing a large company of black orcs travelling towards the ravine of the Oozewater but none listened to his story. Over the last few months however, the foresters have been fleeing from the forest reporting widespread raids by cruel, black orcs. They have been named the Orcs of the Black Hand and are described as;

'Clothed all in black, their skin dark as ebony; glowing red were their eyes, dull red their sharp claws and wicked scimitars.' Those who have seen them shudder and weaken merely on hearing their name. The foresters believe that the orcs have laired and joined forces with the two legendary creatures and their names have been recalled - Uggish and The Grimbnak.

The ravine of the Oozewater lies some twenty leagues east of the village (where the foresters now seek refuge) along a forest track. Any who wish to find the orcs it is said will have no difficulty; they leave clear trails being afraid of no enemy. Indeed, the adventurers are warned that they may meet the orcs long before they get to the ravine.

## D.M.'s NOTES

Uggish and The Grimbnak is a scenario that can be fitted into any forest in your campaign, but can equally well be played as a separate adventure. Characters should be of 4th to 6th level, the sum of levels in the party not exceeding 25. Wanderers will be given under the appropriate sections. The centre-pages contain maps of the terrain around the lair of the orcs, and of the stockade and caverns of the orcs.

Note that for the two maps, north is on the left, thus east faces upwards.

## APPROACH TO THE ORC LAIR - description

### 1. The Forest Track.

Wandering monster table (roll each hour after the party is 5 leagues from the village - w.m. on a 6 (d6)):

Roll a d8; 1 = 1-4 fleeing foresters, pursued by orcs (NOTE; all orcs in this scenario are Orcs of the Black Hand).







- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 2 = 1-6 deer                                   | 6 = 3-6 bandits (AC6, swords) |
| 3 = badger                                     | mugging a forester            |
| 4 = 1-4 wild boar                              | 7 = webs across path, 1-3     |
| 5 = giant owl 75% flying                       | giant spiders                 |
| (encounters 1, 6, 7 and 8 may only occur once) | 8 = 2-4 orcs with stolen pony |

This 10' wide track runs unbranching from the village 20 leagues eastwards, passing burned and ruined woodland settlements, to the crevice path (2). As it nears this path it becomes well trampled by orc feet. Large dog-like footprints can also be made out. Beyond the crevice path, the track fords a river (3) and carries on to the woodland settlements beyond (which are also ruined).

## 2. The Crevice Path (no wanderers). This is a narrow path running east off the forest track from point (a).

It slopes downhill, sheer, damp walls covered in slimy moss rising up on either side as it winds along (wall counts as 'slippery' for climbing (DMG p19), height is given on the map). It is roughly cut in places and maintains a width of about 6'. Scattered along the path are various objects and creatures:

(b) a dead and decaying elf clothed in rags lies here, his severed head stuck on a spear planted in the ground, grinning repulsively. All elves must save vs magic or flee as if feared for 1 turn. If saving, an elf will gain +1 to hit and damage against orcs for the next 9-18 (d10 + 8) turns.

(c) a dead man, wearing very holey chain mail, lies sprawled in the path facing south. He was killed 3 hours ago by the gray ooze at d. He carries half a sword (!) and, in his belt pouch, a scrap of parchment reading 'Capture the Doomstone and the orcs will fall, But beware the wrath of Grimbnaak the Small.'

The dead man, if spoken to, knows no more than the adventurers, but will warn them of the ooze.

(d) a rockpile, some 15' high blocks the path but is easily climbed. However, the rocks (looking damp like the rest of the path) are actually covered by a gray ooze (13HTK). 10' either side of the rock pile, joined by a secret tunnel, is a concealed door in the south wall of the path.

(e) a dropped, dull red scimitar bearing the symbol of the Orcs of the Black Hand (a scimitar and a black, four-digit hand).

(f) scratched on the wall here is a vague etching of a dragon-like creature.

(g) a pool, 6' wide and 15' long fills a 5' hole in the path here. Steps have been cut into the south and north wall around the pool. The steps to the north are sound, but the south ones, though identical in appearance, will crumble when the first person is above the centre of the pool.

(h) here the path opens out into a ledge beside a sluggish green river flowing south to north in a ravine (4).

## 3. The Ford and Oozewater below the Bridge (5) (no wanderers). The ford

is over two feet deep and lies at the downstream end of the ravine (4). With a boat it is possible to row upstream to the bridge (5) but at the point (i) 2 perytons (18 and 23HTK) lair in a 10' deep cave 40' up the cliff-face. They will attack any adventurers, being hungry for human hearts. In their nest of sticks and stones at the rear of the cave are 2 eggs (worth 100gp each), a broken flask, 5 arrowheads and 47cp. Growing in the wall is an amethyst crystal worth 110gp.

It is possible to climb up to the cave, the walls of the ravine here counting as 'slightly slippery'.

#### 4. The Ravine of the Oozewater.

Wandering monster table (roll each turn - w.m. on a 6 (d6)):

Roll a d8; 1 or 2 = 1-4 giant leeches. 6, 7 or 8 = orc patrol;  
 3 = giant lizard. 4 orcs, one with light  
 4 = giant owl 100% flying. crossbow, another with  
 5 = 1-3 giant frogs (2HD). horn ( $\frac{1}{2}$  mile range).

The ravine starts about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile upstream of the point h on the map. By this point, it is 70' deep and 50' wide with sheer walls. The west wall is 'slightly slippery', the east wall 'slippery'. A 5' wide ledge runs, 2' above the sluggish green river that fills the ravine, from the crevice path at point h to the bridge (5). When the adventurers turn the corner at the point marked j on the map, a beast will rise out of the water. This is Uggish the mireslug who has been set by the orcs to guard their 'front door'.

Armour Class: 5 (3)	Special Defense: silver (magic)
Movement: 12"/3"	weapons to hit
Hit Dice: 33 (66) hit points	Magic Resistance: 5% (25%)
No of Attacks: 3	Intelligence: Low (Very)
Damage/Attack: 1-4/1-4/2-8	Alignment: Lawful Evil
(1-6/1-6/2-16)	Size: 25' long
Special Attacks: Breath, Fear	

Uggish (picture TBH17) feeds on sentient life and can sense it within 12". As he cannot attack orcs, he is very hungry! The sight of the mireslug is enough to cause all of 5 (8) hit dice or less to save vs. magic or cower in submission. Uggish drowns his victims. He cannot himself be killed save by the wielder of the Doomstone; when reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, he will slip back into the water and regenerate 3 hit points per turn. However, before retreating he will use his breath. This is a black cloud 3" long, 3" wide and 2" deep; its effect (known only to its victims) is to curse its victims to return in self-sacrifice to the mireslug within 3 days. If the victim saves vs. dragon breath, at +2, there is no effect. A Remove Curse will also remove the effect. (The figures bracketed () are those that apply should Uggish or the Grimbak retrieve the Doomstone).

#### 5. The Bridge (no wanderers). Here the ledge ends where the ravine turns west towards the ford (3). A

flight of stone, carved steps lead 70' up to a narrow arched bridge. The bridge passes over to the east side, between two standing stones k to the winding path (6) beyond.



#### 6. The Winding Path (wanderers as for the ravine (4) but on a 7-8 (d8)).

The standing stones at (k) emit an aura of evil but are the only way onto the path from the east. There is an inscription on each stone;  
 north stone, west facing south stone, east facing  
 'All things pass in peril, 'Those who pass seek death,  
 Of old Grimbak the devil.' Or the mireslug's black breath.'

thus warning adventurers of what lies in each direction.  
 East of these stones lies a peat bog which drains into the ravine (hence the 'slippery' east wall) through which a path winds, and over which there is a permanent fog (10' visibility). If straying from the path, adventurers will become lost (lodestones malfunction) and will sink in mires after 1-10 rounds (DM determines effects). The paths marked by dotted lines on the map are dead ends, but look identical to the true passage which winds in long zig-zags till it reaches raised ground on which is built the stockade (7) of the orcs. At the points marked x on the map is the lair of a trapdoor spider (as huge spider, see NM).

## LAIR OF THE ORCS OF THE BLACK HAND - description

These orcs have been well described elsewhere and there is a picture on pl6. Their statistics are as follows:

→ Armour Class: 6 (10)  
 Movement: 12"  
 Hit Dice: 1+2 (1d6)  
 No of Attacks: 1 (2)  
 Damage/Attack: by weapon  
 Special Attack: Fear  
 The Orcs of the Black Hand are a half-orc, half-negroid race. Though tall they appear smaller due to their habit of stooping. Some ride trained wolves. If outnumbering their opponents in hit dice (include wolves), they can generate Fear (as if cast by a 7th lvl M/U). Their weaponry is: scimitar 70%; scimitar & 1t crossbow 20%; scimitar & spear 10%. 'Guard' types are AC5, 2HD, 16 strength and armed with scimitar and whip (d6 damage) being able to wield both at the same time. All can fight equally well in light or dark. Each orc carries d20sp (other treasure is noted). Other than the above, they conform with normal orcs.

### 7. The Stockade (see occurrence table for wanderers). Built on a bare rock platform 6'

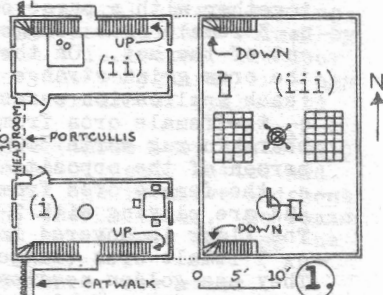
above the peat bog, this enclosure is defended by a palisade of 6" stakes each imbedded into a 12' rampart and projecting to a height of 12'. Inside this runs a 3' catwalk, 8' above the level of the rampart (20' above ground level). Within the stockade are several wooden huts.

(i) a stone-built gatehouse. (i) is occupied by 3 orcs drinking out of pewter mugs (13gp each) at a table against the east wall. A cauldron of oil boils over the central brazier, attached to a chain that passes up through the ceiling. There are 3 barrels of oil beside the staircase. (ii) On the table beside the staircase are 2 kegs of wine, 3 pewter mugs and 3 scimitars. A wolf (11HTK) sleeps under the table. Against the east wall stand 9 spears and the standard of the Orcs of the Black Hand (see MM). (iii) is the roof 30' above ground level. There is a 7' battlement around it. There is a winch to draw the cauldron up from (i) and another to raise/lower the portcullis. There are murder holes above the entranceway. 3 guards (armed only with 1t crossbows) and 4 other orcs (scimitars) stand watch here though the fog limits visibility to 10' towards the bog. One guard has a wolf (13HTK) on a lead. In the centre is rigged a copper bell (35gp) that can be heard in a 60" radius.

(m) towers of guard. These two stone towers are built on the palisade. In each are 3 guards, 2 normal orcs and a wolf. In m<sub>1</sub> one of the guards has a potion of invisibility (1/2 left). They are poking at a bound human child and intoxicating it with foul liquor, of which they have a keg. In m<sub>2</sub> one of the guards wears an amulet that gives Protection vs good (as 1st lvl cleric spell). On the wall is a picture of a huge orc with a fiery glow on its chest.

(n) a livestock enclosure containing goats and bullocks. It smells strongly. There is a bull (20HTK) in the cave in the cliff face which will charge out at any entering the enclosure.

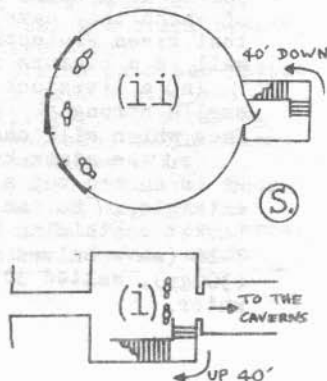
(o) the stock-keeper's shack, built of wood against the cliff. He is an orc but also a 1st lvl druid (spells; speak w animals, entangle). He can control the bull. In the shack is a bed, a basket containing his pet cobra (AC7, 3HTK, 1 @ 1-3 + poison for 3-18 (save halves effect)) sitting on 360sp and a ruby brooch (300gp), salted joints hanging from the ceiling and a barrel of water. (19)



(p) & (q) these are wooden orc-huts, each having a door but no windows. They are built on the rock platform within the palisade. The rock is covered with foul mud and waste (in which orcs delight). In each hut are wooden sleeping pallets (1 per orc), a rough wooden table and a layer of muck and rubbish on the floor. Additional items are listed below:

- p<sub>1</sub> 8 orcs (6 x scimitar, 2 x scimitar & 1t crossbow), 4 sleeping, 4 talking. Lantern on ceiling. Candles, silver mirror, silver pipe (smoking, 420sp) and a bowl of raw human flesh on the table.
- p<sub>2</sub> 6 orcs (scimitar&spear), one being tortured by the others for fun. He wears a Ring of Weakness. A wolf sleeps in one corner on a mattress stuffed with 75gp and 880sp hidden among the padding.
- p<sub>3</sub> 5 normal orcs (scimitar) and 2 guards (scimitar & spear) are quarrelling; one of the normal orcs has just been beheaded by a guard who uses a +1 scimitar. On the table is a lantern and a map of the Caverns of the Orcs with room v blotted out by spilt wine.
- p<sub>4</sub> 6 orcs (scimitar) sleeping. In the doorway is a hidden trapdoor (springs on a 1-4 (d6)) over a 20' pit. Scattered around the floor of the hut are an ornate silver helmet (1800sp), a black sack and a silver dagger (110sp). One orc wears a shoddy ring (1sp).
- p<sub>5</sub> 3 normal orcs (scimitars) and 2 guards (scimitar & spear) are entertaining 10 female orcs (daggers) and certainly won't be ready for a fight! There is no light. All their weapons are laid on the table together with a purse of 33gp and a silver horn (560sp).
- q<sub>1</sub> 3 female orcs (daggers) and 8 children. The latter wander in and out of the hut. On the table are cheeses and large pestles in which the orcs grind strange herbs; the 'flour' is used as a healing paste (each application cures 1-4 hit points; there are 6 applications).
- q<sub>2</sub> the female orcs from here are in p<sub>5</sub>. Laid on one pallet is a bearskin rug worth 300gp and a dram of perfume of lust (causes first person of the opposite sex to lust for the wearer - worth 35gp).
- q<sub>3</sub> the female orcs from here are in p<sub>5</sub>. 10 children are left alone and are playing with 2 cats - they've tied their tails together. The floor is covered in dry straw and there is a lantern on the table...
- q<sub>4</sub> 5 female orcs (daggers) are making cloaks from stolen silk (130gp). They use golden needles (5gp each). One of them is a 1st lvl MU (4HTK, spells; Hold Portal, Reduce). Her imp familiar sits invisible on the table but may appear in the form of a large spider (15 HTK). The MU carries a scroll of Detect Magic and Strength.
- q<sub>5</sub> 8 female orcs (daggers) labour in here over a new standard. 12 mischievous children are wrapping 360' of rope around the room. 2 of the females wear silver brooches inset with tiny rubies (100 & 130gp). Scattered on the floor are 3 flasks (of water), 4 empty belt pouches and a spear head (+2 if attached to a shaft).
- (r) pens of iron bars 30' high containing fierce hunting wolves. r<sub>1</sub> contains 4 wolves, r<sub>2</sub> contains 5 and the remains of a forester. The wolves can smell intruders within 8" and will start howling.
- (s) the tower of the eye, standing above the entrance to the caverns. There is a narrow passage (single file) leading to (i).

A bodyguard (2+2HD, AC4, scimitar & halberd, 17 strength) stands either side of the east exit. A spiral staircase leads up to (ii). (ii) is the chamber of the eye; it is bare save for 3 windows. At each stands a guard with 120' infravision and armed with a +1 Lawful Evil aligned scimitar. One is a 2nd lvl FM/MU (14HTK, spells; Message & Magic Missile), another a 2nd lvl FM/Gleric (13HTK, spells; Command, Detect Good), the 3rd is a 2nd lvl FM/ill. (10HTK, spells; Audible Glamour, Phantasmal Force). These spells can be used to good effect in frightening off enemies.





# CAVERNS OF THE GRIMBNAK - description

These caverns were originally inhabited by The Grimbnak but are now ruled by the Orcs of the Black Hand.

(t). The courtroom of Yrchold, Chief of the Orcs. It is a well hewn chamber, 30' high with pillars running down each side. Yrchold sits on a marble throne at the east end laughing at his obscene jester (unarmed, 3HTK). Yrchold is AC3, 30HTK (6HD +3), 18 strength and armed with a scimitar of wounding and a spear. He wears a ring of amplification (see TBH9); it has one empty clasp and one holding a moonstone (this has caused him to become a werewolf). Yrchold also wears the Doomstone. The amulet radiates a fiery glow from his chest where it hangs. It bestows to its wearer the following abilities (so long as he has the required hit dice):

Infravision.....1HD	Illusion (use Phan-
Know Alignment...2HD	tasmal Force)...10HD
Charm Person....4HD	Teleport (no error)...12HD
Suggestion.....6HD	Animate Dead.....14HD
Cause Fear.....8HD	

(where applicable, spell effects are as if cast by a 10th level M/U). Thus Yrchold can use the first four abilities. However, both Uggish and The Grimbnak can use all its abilities regardless of hit dice.

Curled at the feet of the chief is a worg (19HTK) wearing a wrought silver collar (7000sp). On either side of the throne stands a bodyguard (as in s (i) but armed with 2 javelins of piercing each instead of a halberd) with a wolf (both 11HTK) on a lead

(u). The Cavern of Death, this is a purely natural cavern varying in height from 4' to 10' with innumerable arches and pillars formed by stalactites and stalagmites. The entrance from t is locked, the door being made of a 1' thick slab of stone (one of the bodyguards in t has the key). The entrance to v is concealed by a curtain of stalactite formations.

The orcs bring their unwanted captives here (those they don't eat) and chain them to the pillars. There are scores of dead, rotted and skeletal bodies littered around the cavern. Not one is alive and most have been eaten by the resident of the cavern, The Grimbnak. He roams this area in captivity subservient to the orcs but always keeping the hope of retrieving the Doomstone.

THE GRIMBNAK  
 → Armour Class: 3 (1)  
 Movement: 12"  
 Hit Dice: 44 (88) hit points  
 No of Attacks: 1  
 Damage/Attack: 1-3 (1-6)  
 Special Attacks: see below

Special Defense: see below  
 Magic Resistance: 10% (30%)  
 Intelligence: Average (Highly)  
 Alignment: Lawful Evil  
 Size: S (4' tall but obese)

The Grimbnak is horrific to look at having the lower torso of a lion and the upper torso of a human. His head bears large horns with which he butts opponents. He is a lesser devil but he has lost the general characteristics of such creatures having put them into the Doomstone. He retains however the following powers:

at will, one at a time, once per turn or melee round as applicable  
 Heat Metal, Magic Missile, Stinking Cloud, Hold Person, Feign Death  
 The Grimbnak cannot be killed save by the wielder of the Doomstone; if reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, he will turn gaseous, flee and regenerate at 3 hit points per turn. He can identify the wielder of the Doomstone within 3" and will do all in his power to wrest it from him - even by resorting to pleading. (The figures bracketed ( ) are those that apply should Uggish or the Grimbnak retrieve the Doomstone).

(v). Piled on the floor of this excavated chamber is the treasure of the orcs. Grimbnak is too obese to squeeze through the narrow entrance. The treasure consists of 7035gp, 31050sp, a gold bracelet set with 3 diamonds (1050gp), 10 multicoloured glass bottles of vintage wine (30gp each), 3 silver scroll tubes (1500sp each) one containing a clerical scroll (spells: Detect Evil, Protection From Evil), a peridot stone (fits into the ring of amplification in t), a +3 Chaotic Good short sword,

v cont. a leather tube containing another clerical scroll (spells: Remove Curse x 2, Dispel Evil), a cheap looking necklace (actually a necklace of Missiles 'type' 13-16 (see DMG pl50)), an Amulet of Proof against Detection and Location, Bracers of Defenselessness and 3 potion flasks (Sweet Water, Extra Healing, empty)

#### - Table of Occurrences

Remember that the orcs are lawful; defense will be well organised, reactions logical. But they are also insubordinate - if one of strength is not present they may act carelessly or rebelliously. The following table suggests occurrences within the stockade whilst the adventurers are there. Roll a d20 or select an occurrence every turn (you can make up additional ones. It is essential to play this scenario as a living dungeon):

- 1 = 3 orcs in 1 (i) start a brawl; oil barrel smashes into brazier...
- 2 = wolf in 1 (ii) has contracted rabies and roams the stockade
- 3 = 3 large spiders climb into the stockade
- 4-6 = 2 guards from m<sub>1</sub> make a check on the catwalk
- 7-9 = 2 orcs and wolf from m<sub>2</sub> make a check on the catwalk
- 10 = the bull breaks out among the huts
- 11 = 4 orcs from p<sub>1</sub> report to s
- 12 = a messenger from l (iii) discovers the brawl in p<sub>3</sub> and reports it to s
- 13 = an orc has emptied the perfume of lust over herself and is creating a stir outside p<sub>2</sub>
- 14 = pen r<sub>1</sub> is broken down by the wolves who make for n...
- 15 = 6 orcs from p<sub>4</sub> leave on a hunting trip with 2 wolves from r<sub>2</sub>
- 16 = gatehouse attacked by giant owl
- 17 = Yrchold goes on a check around the stockade on his worg
- 18 = 3 orcs return with captive forestess and take her to Yrchold
- 19 = fog descends over the stockade for d20 turns
- 20 = 3 ogres arrive offering aid to the orcs and are taken to t

## CHRONICLE: THROUGH THE STANDING STONES

by G.Duke

being the fifth part of the chronicle  
featuring: Aresthusa (alias Willy Wilma) elven thief  
Tuffnik human fighter  
Peebinga human M/U  
Stroller human ranger  
Malmo human cleric

**F**rom the sluggish waters the beast drew itself up and oily mud dripped from the rotting weeds that adorned its slimy, scaled hide. Dragon-like it was, yet it possessed no such majesty and was merely a mockery; a creature foul and perverted. Vile sounds it emitted as it arose, but if they were words they were malicious, full of hate and scorn.

Stroller cowered, hiding his eyes in fear but Aresthusa stood her ground muttering fair elven words. Peebinga before her grimly smiled; he waved his long hands in the air, his voice rising and falling with magic words, his robe flowing about his raised arms, and suddenly a bolt of lightning sprang from his fingers and smote the beast full in the eyes. But even before it wailed and slipped gurgling down into the soup, it sent forth from its nostrils a cloud of accursed fumes that smote the magician and for a moment hid him from sight.

+ + +

When the fumes cleared, Peebinga lay crumpled on the ledge and all that remained of the beast were a few bubbles rising to the surface. Stroller, released from his fear, sprang up and leapt to the body of the stricken magician.

"Tis a sore loss to us," spoke Aresthusa as she stepped up. "How can we hope to save our friends now?" and her words kindled a faint hope in her that Stroller might now be persuaded to turn back.

"Hold your tongue elf-maiden, I'm not dead yet," came the voice of Peebinga from beneath his hood. "Help me to my feet!"

Aresthusa jumped back in surprise, her hope dashed, but Stroller leant rejoicing over the now stirring body of the magician. "How many lives have you?" he cried as he pulled him to his feet.

"Nine perhaps, but not many left now," said the magician.

"Truly your life seems charmed," said the wily thief, not without misgivings. "But now let us get away from this dreary place while we can. I dislike the silence here."

"And I feel greatly chilled," said Peebinga. "These waters fill me with loathing, for ere three moons am I now doomed to return here; the black breath has been laid on me and I am cursed!"

"This is evil tidings," cried Stroller, "but there may be means to lift such a curse." With that he led the party along the ledge once more. They hadn't travelled far when the gorge turned to the west and here a bridge spanned it to the east side. Narrow steps led up to the slender span and with care the three crossed over and thus came, at midday, out of the dreaded gorge.

+ + +

Before them lay two standing stones, and the path passed between them. The three companions felt apprehensive.

"Look!" said Stroller, "There is an inscription here." He pointed to the stone on the left of the path. It read:

*"All things pass in peril  
Of old Grimbnak the devil"*

"Should we pass?" asked Stroller.

"We will follow where you lead," replied Peebinga. Stroller showed no hesitation. The company passed through and immediately they found themselves in a thick, clammy fog. They could see barely ten feet. On either side the path fell away into pools and mires. Stroller led the way, winding through the bog, often stooping. Paths went off to left and right, all well trodden, and the two followers wondered at the skill of the ranger.

"We are making good progress," said Stroller, "The way is clear to me and there is no sign of anything living other than the foul footmarks of the orcs."

But as he said that, an extraordinary thing happened. A hole suddenly opened up beside the path and from it sprang an obese creature. It struck at Stroller's back as he spoke and clung there with long, clawed legs, biting at the ranger. Stroller let out a cry and flung himself onto his back hoping to squash his assailant. Peebinga stared in horror as Aresthusa leapt forward brandishing her sword.

The creature, a huge spider, scuttled away and Stroller rose to his feet blood running from his back. Aresthusa jumped and her blow came down heavily on the spider. Its eyes glowed with menace but they could not match the fury in those of the elf. The hellish lights were extinguished and the spider sank into the bog.

"I'm only scratched," said Stroller as Peebinga looked at him with concern. "The beast had no time to inject its poison."

Aresthusa looked at pit from which it had jumped; the 'trapdoor' was flung to one side. "A good place to hide," she thought.

+ + +

Unknown to the adventurers the sounds of battle had reached the ears of the Orcs of the Black Hand.

"Go and see what it was Agwurz. Take that lazy wolf and two of those drunken scum downstairs with you," said the harsh voice of the dutyguard and he sneered. "Grimbnak can have it for his supper!"

+ + + + +

Low-level characters often have problems staying alive. If you're a more experienced D&Der why not follow Graham Staplehurst's example with:-

## CLERICS

I have always thought that a first-level cleric is one of the most ineffectual characters invented, even with the ability to use half-way decent weapons and plate mail. Those first level spells, though, are apparently the worst things ever invented - create water? detects?? purify food and drink??? But think again on the usefulness of such spells and read on with some of the hints on usage propounded here.

**BLESS:** Two powerful monsters are affected badly by this spell - rakshasa and vampires. The spell also has a decent area of effect and for first level characters to have their hit prob lowered say from 19 to 18 means that they hit  $\frac{1}{2}$  as many times as usual. The same applies in reverse case to using the curse spell against low-level creatures such as kobolds, cutting their hit prob drastically.

**COMMAND:** This was suggested at Games Day 79 as being the best spell to have if you were a 1st level cleric fighting an ogre. Many useful words are listed in the PH, and many will become apparent for specific situations. I have used 'strip' on occasions against humanoids wearing armour. Once I also used 'jump' when the creature was standing next to a pit. This works just as well with other barriers.

**CREATE WATER:** This, surprisingly, is my favourite 1st level clerical spell. If one puts ones mind to it one can come up with some startlingly original ideas for this spell. Water created just in front of a dragons mouth will halve the effect of acid, fire or cold and those of you who have read "Three Hearts and Three Lions" by Poul Anderson will know what throwing water down a red dragon's throat can do to the poor dragon - superheated steam exerts a pressure of 2000 lbs/sq. inch!! If the water is created in little droplets over a large volume, we have a dense mist - 2 pints = 1000 cu. feet. Fire elementals can be held at bay by creating a long puddle of water between the party and it. Water can also be used to dilute and spoil acids and potions. Water thrown at the face will blind for 1-3 mr and also stop the use of gaze weapons during this time. Water can be created in or on weapon handles to make them slippery or backpacks to make them heavy and spoil rations, clothes, chalk etc. Water can also be used to wash off or lay clouds of dust and spores - a soggy yellow mould will be unable to release its spores. It may also wash green slime away. Water created in wood will swell it; jamming doors, preventing it from catching fire etc. Remember that running water can also kill a vampire (although the 1" range limit gets in the way a bit here). But why stop at water? Ice and steam are also forms of water - 1 rule that water when created is at 20°C and can be altered by +6°/level or -3°/level. Scalding water (63°+) does 1-6 damage per gallon and makes hit prob -2 for 1-4 mr. It also cuts through ice walls and will negate 50% of an ice storm if cast in time. It will also cause relatively more damage to cold-using or dwelling creatures. Ice can come in the form of hailstones, 1 per pint, doing 1-6 damage each if they hit (creature must save on most favourable column to avoid each hailstone). Although water cannot be created inside a creature, why not encase its head or hands in ice? Freezing water will also plug a decanter of endless water or similar jug. Ice could be used to form an ice pridge, black ice on a dungeon floor or hard little pellets under an opponent's feet. Enough ice can be made to totally encase some creatures, such as giant centipedes.



Encasing a flying creature's wings in ice could also be disastrous. An added bonus is that there is no save for this spell. Finally we come to the reverse of the spell - destroy water. Many objects depend on residual water for flexibility and usefulness. 5 pints of water within every cu. foot of wood; removing this will cause it to become light, brittle and totally useless for such jobs as weapon handles, shields etc.

CURE LIGHT WOUNDS: This is a fairly normal spell, and is always useful. Evil clerics should never take a cure light wounds unless they know they are going somewhere without weapons. Evil clerics should be allowed to take cure spells, but only for curing themselves. Remember these spells are only useful for those beasts and people who can be hit by normal weapons.

DETECT EVIL/GOOD: Detect spells are always used by the thinking party, this being one of the best to avoid walking into danger. The duration is also longer than many other detect-type spells, and it is not stopped by walls.

DETECT MAGIC: This is only useful for treasure-hunters who cannot carry a whole hoard of treasure and merely wish to find the choice items.

LIGHT: The only offensive use for this spell is blinding creatures, as explained in the PH. Otherwise it is fairly useless - why not use a torch or lanterns? Note that continual light cast on stones etc. and kept in boxes are also better.

PROTECTION FROM EVIL/GOOD: This is very useful for low-level parties who may well accidentally meet a powerful enchanted creature. Note that I rule this hedges out creatures or attacks by creatures that do not derive from the Material Plane, thus a cleric protected by this cannot be drained a level, though all other effects of a wight's attack, for instance would still apply. The -2/+2 bonuses for/against evil creatures is naturally a good side effect, but think of the cumulative effect of 4 or more of these on your butchest fighter inside that orcs den!

PURIFY/POLLUTE FOOD AND DRINK: This is most often used to procure provisions in a hunger situation, such as if it is necessary to eat a poisonous animal or if some suspicious water in the dungeon must be drunk. However, think of its effect on offal-dwelling creatures such as otyughs and rot grubs - this will drive them forth and reveal their presence, confusing them for 2-5 mr. This will also kill water weards, and creatures living in polluted water, such as throat leeches etc. Polluting water will also kill or affect fish or good creatures therein.

REMOVE/CAUSE FEAR: Note that although a hit is needed, there is no saving throw so this is very useful against a powerful beast the party feels unable to fight. This is also useful against creatures which are set to guard something and thus will not attack until attacked themselves.

RESIST COLD: This is about the most useless spell I have ever come across!!

SANCTUARY: This also is a fairly standard spell that does not have any useful side-effects of any sort. It is useful if a cleric gets caught alone by a trap etc. and wishes to get home or flee with a greater measure of security. It functions somewhat like an invisibility spell.

# U.P.

U.P. stands for the Uncertainty Principle, something which should be incorporated into every D&D game. There have been frequent complaints about the game becoming too mathematical, e.g. "well my mace does an average of 4.5 hits damage, and I'll hit AC7 28% of the time so I'll finish them off inside 3 melee rounds". I've also seen DMs allowing players to get away with things like standing a few inches outside a blast radius, and thus suffering no damage, or putting about 10 people in an "invisibility 15'r" and then have them walking around a dungeon, with none of them ever accidentally moving out of the circle and thus becoming visible, etc, etc. Many players have copies of the Monster Manual and seem to have learnt it off by heart, almost totally ruining any chance of suprising them with some special monster's abilities. This is probably the most important reason for D&D 'zines to print new monsters, and quite a lot of them. Coming across something totally new and strange is one way to bring some uncertainty into a game, and this is surely a good thing.

Magic is, by definition, supposed to be mystic and mysterious. How then can anyone justify situations where MUs always know exactly where their fireballs are going to appear and just what their radius will be? Also how often have you seen someone let a player get away with saying "I'll lightning bolt him when he comes within 60 feet"? How on earth can an MU tell that someone is just within range, could you tell to within a few feet how far away something was, even ignoring such things as the poor lighting in dungeons, etc. What is needed is some sort of klutz system, but most of those already published just require a little time for players to learn their results, and your back where you started.

When dungeoneering, players get far too edgy, and it can be interesting to play on this. Imagine what can happen to someone when they're out walking: they might get hungry or thirsty, could twist their ankle or get a stitch. How often does this happen in D&D? A while back, when DMing a game, I suddenly told one player that his character was starting to feel hungry. Did he reach for his rations and eat something? No, he immediately assumed that there must be some mind-controlling monster nearby, which was making him think he was hungry!

So, what is the "Uncertainty Principle" then? Put in general terms it says "Nothing is fixed, nothing should be certain". It requires a DM to fairly and sensibly vary aspects of the game, in such a way as to make the absurd situations mentioned above impossible. The MU slightly miscalculates the placing of his fireball, the ogre seems to last longer than usual, etc, etc. If some form of table is used it must be kept a secret from the players. All-in-all bring some uncertainty back into D&D!



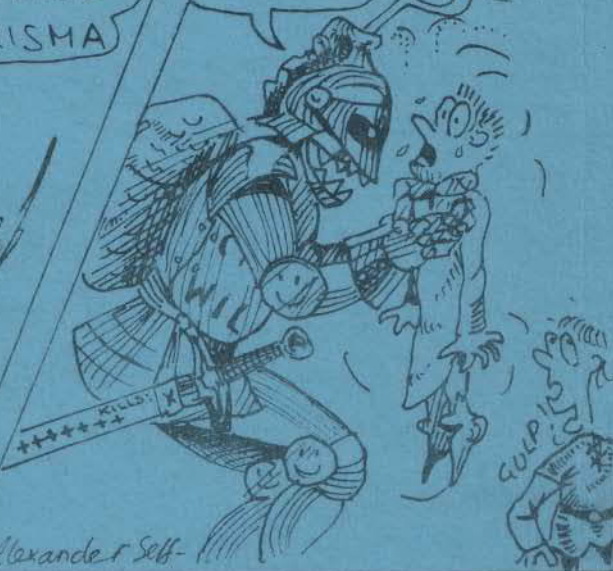
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AND I'VE ALSO  
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