The Dragon #23

Vol. III No. 9
March, 1979
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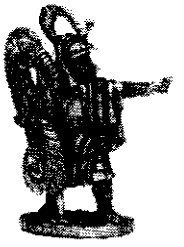

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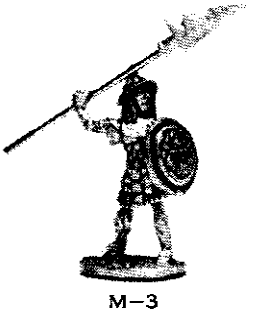

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Convention Season '79 — What Happened To July?

Convention season is fast approaching, and most people are finding themselves requesting vacation periods, making plans, arrangements, etc., about now. A careful scrutiny of this year's offerings produces some disturbing results.

In the past few years, gamers have had their choice of good, reputable cons spread throughout the summer, one in each month actually. *PennCon* and *MichiCon* alternated between themselves as first in June, then came *Origins*, somewhere, in July, followed by *GenCon* in mid- to late August. In effect, something somewhere for everyone, regardless of when your vacation fell, could be worked out.

This year, there are serious problems. *MichiCon* is scheduled to go on the first weekend in June. A scant three weeks later, the combined *PennCon/Origins* takes place. A full eight weeks later, *GenCon* begins again, for the twelfth year. What happened to July, the most favored vacation month? Previously, *Origins* was held in July.

This year, for a variety of reasons, AH and SPI took over administering *Origins.* The group from *PennCon* (who didn't even want to bid for the '79 con, but were there to check procedure to bid on the '80 con) allowed themselves to be persuaded to take *Origins* '79 when no other group showed the slightest interest. This group has a fine reputation earned doing excellent *PennCons* (formerly known as *PhilCon),* and felt that it was in the best interest of the hobby to not let *Origins* die. They should have remained adamant and held out for '80.

Their troubles began when the powers that would like to be decided that the site they wanted was inadequate, and further insisted that *Origins* has to be held on a campus. Previously, *Origins* had been a July con, but this insistence precluded that this year. The only college that would even consider it in their area was Widener, in Chester PA. The only time they could get was in June, as the NFL Eagles train there from July on, and no one else is allowed to use campus facilities. In short, it was the parochialism of AH and SPI that led to this scheduling debacle.

The problems inherent with *Origins* go much deeper, though, and bear examining. The entire concept behind *Origins* is faulty and self-serving. From the onset, AH and SPI have treated *Origins* as theirs, rather than the hobby's. Under its present format, *Origins serves* the manufacturers first, and the gamers second. AH and SPI expect to be able to find a group of volunteer gamers willing to hustle their collective butt off, so that the lustre of the show accrues to them (AH and SPI), while the work, sweat and hassles all fall to the misused volunteers. In this instance, they conned the *PennCon* group into running the show, then refused to let them do it the way they wanted. Further, while they seem to have been long on criticism and demands, they were woefully short of actual assistance or guidance. They caused the scheduling changes that have created problems for the *PennCon* group, and created doubt in the minds of would-be attendees if there was even going to be a show. Unfortunately, the *PennCon* group has received some undue criticism as a result.

Continued on page 21

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En Garde in Solitaire

George Laking

Unique among role-playing games currently marketed is the game, *EN GARDE!*

It's unique flavor stems from the fact that it was designed mainly for solitaire play. The game system is laid out in flow-chart fashion, making it easy for the solitary gamer to guide his character through a month's actions in a "Yes-No" manner:

*Will Armand court Mistress Y, Yes or No?
(If no, go to bawdyhouse this week; if yes, pay courting fee and roll the dice).
*Did Mistress Y accept him, Yes or No?
(If no, go to bawdyhouse or try again next week; if yes, record status points and enjoy Mistress Y's "female companionship!").

The only point where the *EN GARDE!* game system breaks down is in the cumbersome rules for fighting a duel.

Under the present rules, another player is always required for dueling, whether the action takes place against a non-player or player's character. Furthermore, each duelist is required to secretly write one or more sequenced actions for use with a simultaneous movement/combat system! For the solitaire gamer playing *EN GARDE!,* this dueling system is totally unworkable.

To make the game truly solitaire, the members of the Mid-Columbia Wargaming Society (Richland, WA) have substituted the following:

SHORTHAND DUELING METHOD

The rules applying to dueling are modified thusly:

(1) Combat Effectiveness

Before the duel begins, the Combat Effectiveness *(CE)* of each duelist must be computed first. The combat effectiveness of a character is found by adding his STRENGTH, CONSTITUTION and ENDURANCE factors together. This will change during the course of the duel and must be re-computed eveytime a character is wounded.

(2) The Defense Modifier

The Defense Modifier (DM) represents the difference in EXPERTISE between the two duelists. The defense modifier must be found for both duelists and is determined by subtracting the Expertise factors of both duelists from each other.

If both are equally skillful, both will have a defense modifier of "O." Otherwise, it will be a whole number ranging from 1-15. This may change during the duel should a character sustain certain types of wounds which hamper his movement and ability to effectively handle a weapon.

For example, Jaques d'Uberville (with an expertise factor of 18) squares off against Karl von Badenhaus (with an expertise of 15). The defense modifier for both is "3" (18-15=3) but each will apply the modifier differently depending on their status as the superior or inferior duelist.

The defense modifier thus represents how easy (or difficult) it will be to get past your opponent's guard to score a hit.

THE DUEL

(1) Scoring

Once the combat effectiveness and the defense modifier for each duelist has been found, the duel can begin.

Now the underlying assumption of this dueling system is that, between two equal opponents of equal skill and expertise, each stands an equal chance of scoring a hit on their opponent. This equal chance factor is represented by a basic 50% hit probability using percentile dice.

To determine the exact hit probability, subtract the CE factor of each duelist from the other and divide by four. The number thus found is added to the basic hit probability of the stronger duelist, subtracted from the hit probability of the weaker. Let's look at our two duelists — Jacques and Karl — and see how this works.

Although Jacques is the superior duelist from an expertise viewpoint, he is the weaker opponent, having a CE of 100 compared to Karl's 140 CE. The difference between them is 40 points, representing a 10% hit probability modifier (140 - 100 = 40 ÷ 4 = 10). Jacques' hit probability is then 1-40% (50% - 10% = 40%), while Karl has a hit probability of 1-60% (50% + 10% = 60%).

The duelist with the higher Expertise factor always has the initiative. If both are equal, a six-sided die is rolled and high die determines who has the initiative. If tied, both roll again. (Note that, if a player character is dueling a non-player character, the player character *always* has the initiative, no matter what the expertise factor of his non-player opponent).

The superior duelist rolls percentile dice, applies the defense modifier (if any) to the die roll and compares it to his hit probability to see if he scored a hit on his opponent. If both duelists are equal, there will be no die roll modification. However. . . !

If a duelist has the higher expertise factor, he subtracts the defense modifier from his die roll to see if he hits (being more skillful than his opponent, he stands a better chance of slipping past his opponent's guard). If he is the inferior duelist expertise-wise, he adds the defense modifier to his die roll (his more skillful opponent finding it easier to parry his thrusts).

For example, Jacques and Karl (having determined their CE/DM factors and their hit probabilities) now cross swords and have at each other. Jacques rolls "42" on the percentile dice (normally a miss for Jacques) but after subtracting the defense modifier for his superior expertise from his die roll, we see that Jacques has scored (42 - 3 = 39) a light head wound against Karl (refer to Critical Hits Table, below).

Karl now strikes, rolling a "58" (normally a hit) against Jacques. Being the inferior duelist, however, he must add the defense modifier to his die roll for a modified result of "61" (58 + 3 = 61). This is outside his hit probability (1-60%) so his blow misses.

If the number found after rolling the percentile dice and applying the defense modifier indicates that a hit has been scored, refer immediately to the following Critical Hits Table and apply the results shown.

(2) The Critical Hits Table

Using the modified die roll number to score a hit, refer to the column marked "Die Roll" to determine hit results and damage points:

DIE ROLL	RESULT	DAMAGE POINTS
1-10	Light Leg Wound	Base 20 + 16-sided die roll
11-20	Light Left Arm Wound	Base 20 + 16-sided die roll
**21-30	Light Right Arm Wound	Base 20 + 16-sided die roll
*31-40	Light Head Wound	Base 20 + 16-sided die roll
##41-50	Light Body Wound	Base 25 + 16-sided die roll
51-60	Serious Leg Wound	Base 50 + 120-sided die roll
61-70	Serious Left Arm Wound	Base 50 + 120-sided die roll
#71-80	Serious Right Arm Wound	Base 50 + 120-sided die roll
*81-90	Serious Head Wound	Base 50 + 120-sided roll die
!91-99	Serious Body Wound	Base 100 + 120-sided die roll
00	DEAD	

Notes to Critical Hits Table:

** Opponent may defend only in following phase*
*** Opponent's expertise factor halved; recompute defense modifier*
 # Opponent's expertise factor quartered; recompute defense modifier
Opponent's strength halved; recompute combat effectiveness
! Opponent surrenders (non-player character only)

At the end of each phase of dueling, the CE DM factors of both duelists are re-computed (unless noted above) to reflect hit damage taken. If a duelist has sustained no injuries in a phase, his CE factor will not change.

Jacques, for example, dodged Karl's thrust and sustained no hits. His CE remains 100. Karl, however, was wounded lightly in the head, taking (base 20 + 16-sided die roll) damage. The die roll was "6" so his total injuries were 26 (20 + 6 = 26) hit points. His new CE is now 114. Recomputing hit probabilities for the second phase, we find that Jacques now has a hit probability of 1-47% while Karl scores on a 1-53% (figure this one out yourself).

From the example above, it can be seen that the advantage may swing from one opponent to another and back again in the course of a duel — as it happened in reality!

(3) The Grand Melee

A player character may take on more than one opponent at a time (why he would want to do so remains, of course, up to the player!). As with the duel, the character with the highest expertise factor goes first and the rest follow in descending order, equally-ranked characters rolling for high die.

Standard procedure with the Mid-Columbia Wargamers is to give the underdog a number of blows per phase equal to that character's strength factor divided by three. In this way, he stands some kind of chance when faced with two or more opponents —especially if they are *all* superior in skill and expertise!

Two or more player characters may, of course, join forces to even the odds. How they then divide up their opponents is a player function, although each action is handled as a separate melee.

(4) Benefits fo Dueling

Each duel counts as one-half of a (free!) practice session, whether or not the player character wins the duel. The rationale behind this modification is that you learn *something* even if you lose — if only to avoid your opponent's blade more effectively!

***

Using the above modifications completes the conversion of *EN GARDE!* into a solitaire game without Gamesmaster. Of course the game is more fun with two or more other gamers, but with the above dueling method, it is now possible for the solitary gamer to sit down for an evening's pleasure alone with EN GARDE!

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GOOD NEWS FOR GAMING

Gary Gygax

Ten years ago, this writer remembers attending a trade show at which The Avalon Hill Company was the only exhibitor showing games. This year, for the third time running, TSR attended the same show, and at the 42nd Annual Hobby Industry Convention and Trade Show things were a bit different. The convention center in St. Louis housed nearly 500 exhibits, and thousands of buyers crowded the huge facility during the four days of the show. Here's how our own portion of the hobby industry was represented:

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That is a considerable increase from a decade ago, and it is indicative of how the gaming hobby has grown and is growing. This growth will certainly benefit game hobbyists by bringing more and better products in the future. There can be no doubt that gaming is now recognized as a full-fledged member of the hobby industry. More outlets will be carrying games and miniature figures, thus making it easier to obtain gaming needs locally, as well as attracting more hobbyists to gaming.

Exhibiting at the show was certainly exciting and exhilarating, and all of us at TSR are looking forward with enthusiasm to next year's convention. St. Louis proved to be an excellent spot for a show, despite snow and cold, but the California site for 1980 is likely to be better still! For any of you who happen to be in St. Louis we heartily recommend the Shanghai Inn for superb Chinese food at reasonable prices—and if you love elegance and don't mind blowing the family fortune, try Anthony's, it is superb! Next year about this time we trust that we will report still more hobby gaming growth, and a recommendation or two for good restaurants in the Anaheim area . . .

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THE THING FROM THE TOMB

GARDNER F. FOX

Niall of the Far Travels reined in his big grey stallion, lifting his right hand to halt the long column of riders who followed him across this corner of the Baklakanian Desert. In front of him, and far away, he could make out a dark blotch on the golden sands toward which he was moving.

The blotch did not move.

Yet it had moved, for a brief second, just then. Niall, who had been watching it as soon as he had caught sight of it, was certain of that. His hand went to his side, loosed his sword Blood-drinker in its scabbard.

Niall was commander of the armies of King Lurlyr Manakor of Urgrik. His robe was of saffron silk and it blew in the lazy winds that swept across these stretches of bleak and empty sand. His mail was silvered and bore the basilisk insignia of Urgrik. He was riding to make an inspection of the desert forts which served his king, to replace the troops stationed there with the men who rode behind him.

But now —

Caution was alive in him. Again and again he scanned these sands, seeking some explanation for that dark blotch. The hairs on the back of his neck stood up, and he sensed, with an animal awareness, that there was danger here. Or—had been.

To the lieutenant who rode at his right elbow he said, "Keep the men here."

He toed the stallion and rode forward, and as he went, he drew his blade. Niall did not know what that dark blotch might be, but he would be ready for trouble.

He rode slowly, the hooves of his mount kicking up little puffs of sand. As he came closer to the blotch, it resolved itself into the shape of a man, a man who had been cruelly attacked, wrenched about and tom as if by gigantic bands. Sympathy touched Niall, made him snarl under his breath and urge the big grey horse faster.

He swung down from the saddle to kneel above the dying man and turn him over onto his back. The man was a grizzled veteran of Urgrik. His face was scarred with old wounds, and his body was clotted with blood from more recent ones.

The man opened his eyes.

"Death," he whispered. "Death came in the night and —" He choked and his eyes closed. Niall leaned closer, his arm about the man, half lifting him as if to ease him of his pain.

The soldier smiled, nodded. His eyes opened once again. "Beware the fort. They're all dead, inside it. Only I got away. Crawled. Crawled until I—could crawl no more."

His hand closed on Niall's wrist. "Beware the thing in the fort. It cannot — be killed . . ."

The man shuddered and writhed as pain ate inside him. He gasped at the hot desert air and stared upward into the face of the man who bent above him.

"It began when they were di-digging . . . digging to find more water. They — uncovered an old-tomb. And then . . ."

The man shuddered once more, violently, and then his body sagged. Niall looked down at him with pity in his eyes. Pity and — admiration. If this man had not struggled and fought to crawl out this far away from the frontier fort, he and his men would have ridden into untold danger.

He straightened and let the man down gently on the hot sand. He stood up and waved his column forward.

When the lieutenant stood before him, Niall said, "This one came from the fort. Apparently he is the only one left alive. His comrades dug for water and seemingly uncovered a tomb — or so he says. Death

came out of that tomb and killed the entire company, excepting only him."

Niall scowled. His eyes ran along the column, studying the faces of these men he led. He could not take them into the fort, not without discovering what danger lay before them.

"Go back to Urgrik," Niall said slowly. "Tell Lurlyr Manakor that I have gone on alone to discover what this danger is. If I don't return," here he shrugged, "then I would advise that he consult magicians to try and learn what it is that has come up from the ground to slay his warriors."

The lieutenant would have protested, he would have urged that the entire column go on with their commander, but Niall would have none of it.

"I am one man. I may discover what the thing is that has killed. One man may hide where many cannot. Besides, now that I command the armies of the king, mine is the duty to protect them."

He would hear no argument. He waited until the dead man was wrapped in a blanket and slung across one of the pack mules. He stood and watched the column as it swung about and headed back toward Urgrik.

Only then did he mount up and urge the grey stallion onward. As he rode, his eyes were forever busy, staring out across the sands toward the low line of mountains in the distance, toward which he went.

What was this danger that could wipe out an entire detachment of hard-bitten soldiers? Each man of them was used to weapons, used to fighting the hill tribes, accustomed to swift forays or long battles. Yet something had destroyed them.

Unease lay along his muscles. Niall had met many foes, he had always defeated them, whether they were of the robber kingdoms that lay along the shores of the Aztllic Sea or the trained legions that swore allegiance to the Great Kham. He knew of nothing that could destroy an entire garrison and leave wounds on its victims such as those he had seen on the man who had crawled across the desert.

"By Emalkartha's pretty toes," he muttered. "I may be riding to my death."

Well, he had known that when he had sent back his troops. There was no need for more than one man to die, if die he must. No sense in condemning an entire troop to that method of dying.

He growled low in his throat and rode on.

In time he came to where he could sit his saddle and stare at the high walls of the frontier fort. Nothing stirred there except for the flags that bore the basilisk standards of Urgrik, limp in the still air. No man walked the walls. The big wooden gates were wide open, affording him a partial view of the parade grounds, but these were empty.

Sighing, Niall rode on.

He came up to those open gates and moved between them. In utter silence, he swung down from the saddle and moved here and there, studying the ground. Then he walked into the barracks.

There were bodies here, torn and mutilated as the dead man on the sands had been. Niall let his eyes run over them, trying to imagine what demonaic power could have done this to living men, to men accustomed to fighting. A cold chill ran down his spine.

He heard a whisper in the air and his head snapped up even as he drew his blade. Something was here in the fort. Something deadly, something hateful.

Niall was about to take a step forward, to go in search of whatever it was that quested through the halls and barracks of this frontier fort. Something touched his wrist and held it.

Do not go, Niall: It waits for you!

Ah! That was Emalkartha the Evil, goddess of the eleven hells. Niall grinned and felt himself relax. It has been some time since he had faced death on the high altar in the temple to Korvassor, with pretty Amyrilla beside him.*

Now Amyrilla was queen in Urgrik, being wedded to Lurlyr Manakor. And he himself was commander of the king's armies.

"Well? What am I to do?" he asked softly. "Wait here for that thing to come and kill me?"

Anger was in the voice that whispered in his mind.

*see THE DRAGON Vol. II No. 7: The Stolen Sacrifice

Do you think I would let you be killed? I felt your trouble and I came as swiftly as I could, to help you. I do not know what it is you are to face and so I must be — careful.

"I'd like it better if you became Lylthia, if I could see you," he growled.

You would only want to kiss me.

"What's wrong with that? I love you."

The anger was gone from that inner voice, it held only tenderness now. *Perhaps. In a little while. After I learn what it is that quests for you.*

The whispering in the barracks grew louder. Niall swung about, almost forgetting Lylthia. The danger that had killed an entire garrison was after him, now. Would he be wrenched about and twisted, cut up as those others had been? Would even Emalkartha herself be able to save him?

It came slowly, whispering more loudly. Through the passages of the barracks and the fort it made its way, hunting him. Niall's band was fastened tightly to his swordblade, but of what use was a sword against something like this? Those dead soldiers had had swords and had undoubtedly used them.

Niall gasped.

A ball of blue fire hung above the floor, motionless. It had moved out of the hallway and into this larger room, and now that it sighted its prey, it paused, seemingly to gloat over him.

Even Emalkartha was silent, as though stunned by what she was seeing through his eyes. Then he heard her whisper very faint.

It cannot be! I dream! This thing was destroyed five thousand centuries ago!

The bluish ball moved forward, whispering more shrilly, as though already it were tasting the blood of this man who stood before it.

Niall! Let me!

He felt something run along his veins, felt it slip out of his hand. Instantly the steel blade of Blood-drinker blazed with crimson light. It was as though a million tiny fires blazed within its hardness.

Fight now, Niall! Fight and — destroy this thing!

He hurled himself forward, and harsh laughter-eager laughter — rose up from the blue ball to gloat at him. The blueness rushed, even as Niall swung his sword.

Into that blue ball he drove his crimson steel, felt it bite. He wrenched it out and drove in forward again, barely aware that the blueness was screaming as though in mortal anguish.

Into the ball he stabbed his blade and heard again that keening cry of wild despair. Before his eyes it seemed to shrink, sought to turn and flee.

Do not let it go, Niall! After it!

He ran as swiftly as any Thort deer and as he ran he swung Blood-drinker again. Through the blue ball he drove his crimson steel, again and yet again.

The blue ball wailed. No longer did it whisper so hungrily, for now it was shrinking, as though it were losing shape. Its roundness disappeared, jagged edges came into view. Niall stabbed again.

Suddenly the blue ball was gone.

From somewhere far away, something screamed.

2.

The crimson faded from his blade as Niall lowered his sword and stared around him dazedly. Where was the thing? Had he really destroyed it? He grew aware that sweat ran down his back.

He heard a patter of feet and swung about.

Emalkartha ran toward him, wearing those same ragged garments she had worn in Angalore. * Into his arms she threw herself, to be clasped and kissed more hungrily than Niall had ever before kissed a woman.

For a long time he held her, caressing her, whispering words of love into her ears, half hidden by her long black hair, as dark as Corassian ebony. Then her bands were on his muscular shoulders, pushing him back and away.

*please see: THE DRAGON #2, vol. 1: The Shadow of a Demon

Cont. on pg. 22

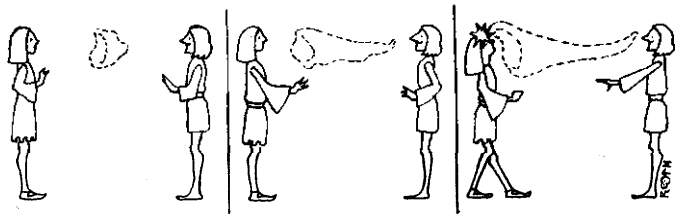
D&D Variant

MIND WRESTLING

A variation of Psionic Combat
by Jeff P. Swycaffer

While Psionic Combat in D&D is well handled in *Eldritch Wizardy,* (D&D® supplement III). I feel that a graphic representation of the ebb and flow of the struggle can be more satisfying than a merely numerical battle.

In this system I visualize the two combatants attempting to push, by willpower alone, a tentacle or cloud of their power into the opponent's mind. To them, and to anyone with psionic power watching, it appears as if a glowing sheet of stretchable fog is being pushed back and forth between the two combatants.



The only equipment needed is a double track (pictured below) seventeen spaces long, and two markers (pennies are fine).

The top track represents the center of the mental field of combat; the bottom track represents the outside or flank.

The two markers are placed in the spaces numbered O. To win, a player must force one of the markers into the oponent's space number 8. If the center marker is pushed into a player's last space the result is either an instant death, or, if a saving throw succeeds, unconsciousness for 1-12 hours. If the outside marker is pushed into a player's last space the victim is controlled by the victor as if charmed (no saving throw).

The method of pushing the markers is as follows. The player with the higher Psionic Strength attacks first, then the weaker, in strict alternation thereafter.

Each attack follows these 6 steps:

1) The attacker secretly specifies either an outside or center attack.

2) The defender secretly divides his total Psionic Strength between center defense and outside defense, in any proportion he wishes.

3) Both decisions are revealed.

4) The attacker's total Psionic Strength is increased by 40 points, or doubled, whichever is less. (This increase is temporary; the attacker's Psionic Strength is decreased back to normal in step 5). This increased strength is compared to the portion of the defender's Psionic Strength in the indicated area. A ratio of 2: 1 means that the proper marker is moved one space toward the defender, the other marker remaining fixed. A ration of 3: 1 moves the proper marker two spaces.

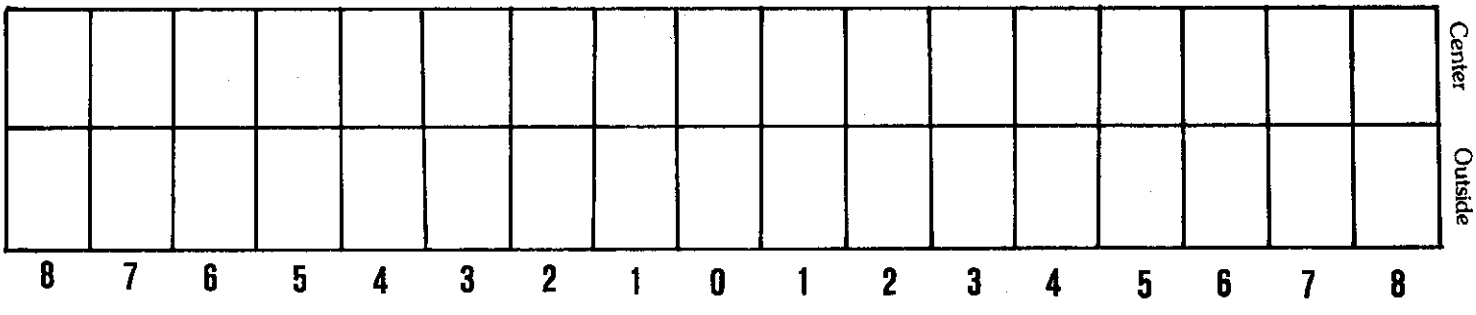
Higher ratios do not have higher effects, and two spaces is the maximum possible retreat.

5) The attacker's Psionic Strength is reduced from its enhanced state to its normal value, and then the attacker and defender both have their Psionic Strength decreased further. The attacker loses 3 points; the defender loses two times the number of spaces fallen back. (If he suffered a 3: 1 retreat of two spaces he would lose 4 points). This decrease lasts until the points are regained as are normally expended psionic points.

6) The attacker and defender switch roles and begin again at step 1.

If one player's Psionic Strength falls to less than 15 during this procedure but has not been pushed into his space number 8, he loses the battle and rolls on the table in *Eldritch Wizardry* as a normal Psionic battle-loser.

I hope that the D&D players who use this method find it useful and enjoyable. *Salvete Psionike!* And good luck.



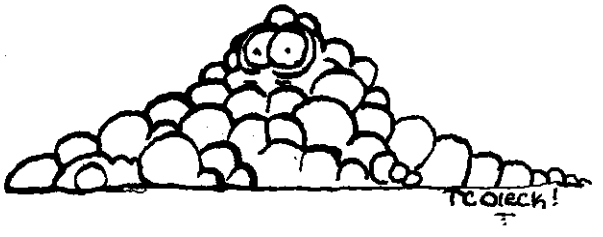
MA Variant

WATER ADVENTURES ON THE STARSHIP WARDEN

Carl Hursh

In my experiences as a *Metamorphisis Alpha* referee I have always run into the same problems when trying to get some wandering monsters when characters are out on their raft or trying out their new gills, and so after much frustration I have come up with these monsters. I would also like to point out the possibilities of flooding an entire level. When this happens the door to the elevator will be under water, so that characters may drown or get wet when they try to step into the elevator when it has been to that level. I would also like to say that these creatures may be used in salt or fresh water because when the Ship went through the radiation the water could have turned from salt to fresh or from fresh to salt causing the fish to adapt. Or the creature could have mutated once, gotten lungs and then moved to a different type of water and then lost it's lungs and been forced to adapt. In any case remember the effects water may have on the characters items.

Creature	# of Attacks	Description and Damage
Sea Griffon	3	2 Claws (1-4) Bite (1-6)
Orcas	2	Tail (12-24) Bite (2-12)
Sea Centipede	1	Bite (1-6)
Sea dragon	3	Radiated eyes (3-18*) Gas Generation (DEATH) Bite (2-12)
Bed of Spikes	1	Tentacles (1-10)
Green Death	1	Dissolves Flesh in 3 Melee Turns
Mine	1	Explodes When hit (10-60)
Water Dagger	–	Sharp Edges do 1-4 When Touched
Water Grabber	1	Dissolves Flesh in 3 Melee Turns
Craboid	2	2 Claws (1-4)
Kraken	9	8 Tentacles (1-6) Beak (4-40)
Oysteroid	1	Throws Explosive Projectiles (1-12)
Peeper	1	Radiated Eyes (4-24*)
Brain Fish	2	Mental Blast Strength 13 (3-18) Molecular Disruption
Gupoids	1	En Masse Attacking (1-6)
Siren	1	Bite (1-8)
Sea Flyer	1	Sybiotic Attachment
Sharkoid	2	Mental Blast Strength 15 (3-18) Bite (1-12**)
Troutoid	1	Electricity Generation (3-18)
Merman	1	By Weapon Type



Description	Armor Class	# Appearing	Hit Dice	Movement (YPM)
Sea Griffon	6	1-2	5	23
Orcas	6	1	18	20
Sea Centipede	3	1-4	2	20
Sea Dragon	2	1	15	20
Bed of Spikes	4	1-4	2	20
Green Death	–	1 Cluster	–	–
Mine	7	1 Patch	–	–
Water Dagger	1	1 Patch	5	–
Water Grabber	6	1-6 Fronds	3	–
Craboid	2	2-20	1	Fly-36 Walk-3 Swim-10
Kraken	3	1	10	20
Oysteroid	1	1-10	1	18
Pepper	1	1-5	2	18
Brain Fish	4	3-30	3	20
Gupoid	–	300-1000	–	15
Siren	6	1-2	3	20
Sea Flyer	3	2-20	1	20
Sharkoid	5	1	12	17
Troutoid	4	4-24	3	23
Merman	5	1-100	5	25-mounted 5-swimming

Sea Griffon — This former lion has traded his lungs for gills, and is now limited to water in much the same manner that his cousin is limited to land. He also has wings, from which he gets his speed in water. His wings are leathery and similar to a bats'. He cannot use most technological materials because he does not have manipulative claws.

Orcas —This former blue whale is very rare; it was very impractical to put many on the ship in the beginning and many died from radiation. In addition to having teeth and being carnivorous, it also has a directional spout which can stun for 1-6 turns.

Sea Centipede —This former eel now sports ten new legs, and can lift 1000 pounds with its telekinesis. It also can make sorties onto land because it also has lungs.

Sea Dragon —This one time sea turtle now is quite formidable. It is about 40 feet long, has an additional 20 feet of neck, and radiated eyes. It breathes poison gas, but has no resistance to poison (other than its own).

Bed of Spikes — Formerly an anemone mushroom coral, this mutation is now mobile (jet propulsion much like a squid's) and has spikes on the tips of its "tentacles." It has approximately 50 tentacles.

Green Death — This mutation still grows in large patches like its nonmutated cousin, algae. It has a sort of empathy with it's fellows which enables them to attack. When attacking they first go for the feet, then legs, then body and finally arms and head. They dissolve and eat flesh in 4 melee turns. They can only be killed by a protein disrupter or by exposing them to oxygen.

Mine — Formerly leather coral, it is now free floating coral that explodes when touched causing 10 dice damage.

Water Dagger — This was originally staghorn coral but now is covered with aluminum which causes it to do damage like a dagger when it is touched. There is also a chance (20%) that it will be poisonous.

Water Grabber — Originally seaweed, this is now a dangerous plant; its fronds act independently so as to capture more food. Its fronds can eat flesh in 3 melee turns.

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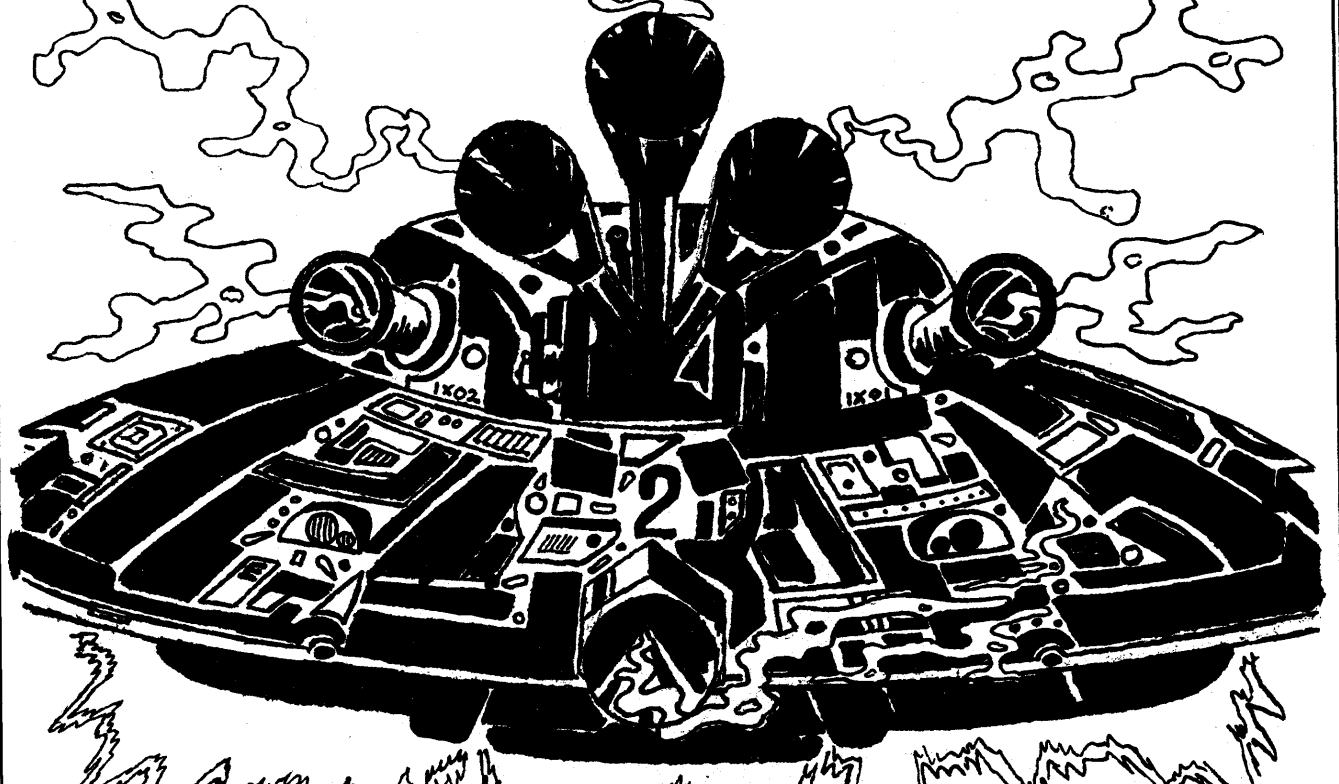

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Craboid — This tiny relation to the crab is now incredibly intelligent. With illusion generation and telepathy they can form enough illusions to scare off most other creatures. They also have lungs and wings and will, occasionally, be found away from water.

Kraken — Like its namesake this octopus is very large (up to 100 feet). In addition to it's size it also has a total carapace which enables it to better withstand attacks,

Oysteroid —These mutants differ very little from their nonmutated cousins, the oyster. The only difference is that these are able to throw explosive projectiles.

Peeper—These mutated clams are not only intelligent but also are highly mobile. They also have radiated eyes which deliver 3 dice worth of damage.

Brain Fish —This former parrot fish now has a mental attack worth noticing. First, it has a mental attack stre of 13; it has a repulsion field and a mental defense shield; it has a mental disruption which kills but it reduces the mutant to 1 pip so it is only used when the mutant is reduced to 5 or less pips. It also has teeth suitable for biting, but rarely does.

Gupoids — These fish are, like their non-mutated cousins, fast breeders so they usually travel in large packs. When they attack they all batter their victim simultaneously doing 1-6 points damage and staying for 1-6 turns. Because they are so small and there are so many of them they are impossible to hit except with a protein disrupter.

Siren — This mutant has very little in common with it's namesake except it does have the ability to put creatures into a sort of trance, even though it does use more of a charismatic effect than a sonic power (gills negate sonics). This hypnotic effect causes creatures not making their saving throw (treat as a poison) to be unable to do anything for 1-12 melee rounds, and being very open to attacks during that time.

Sea Flyer — These mutated manta rays are much smaller than their nonmutated cousins (usually averaging around 2 inches in wingspan) but in spite of their size they are still formidable fighters because they are able to control other creatures for short periods of time so as to make them fight their battles. There is a 20% chance that they be in control of a creature when they are encountered.

Sharkoid — This mutated shark is much larger than it was originally; it also is stronger in its mental state. It has a mental repulsion field and a mental blast. It also has poison teeth, but in spite of all this it is epileptic and can be rendered fairly harmless by showing it a flashing light.

Troutoid — These mutated trout are now a lot harder to catch for food and always on the look out for predators. In addition to having electricity generation they also have a sort of wings to enable them to move even faster through the water. Another thing that makes it harder to catch is that they have density control and can, therefore, make themselves drop like a rock or float on the surface to avoid creatures which cannot leave the bottom.

Merman — Hardly resembling a human anymore these creatures have only a head for a body and for legs and hands they have 6 crab-like limbs; 2 are manipulative claws enabling it to use technological items. They also have a greater mind than normal humans and are more advanced than normal humans. Their main travel mode is a little stick with two propellers and two gyroscopes that are mentally controlled by the merman riding it. when they capture player characters they usually (50%) take their lungs and replace them with gills. They also have a partial carapace and gills but no lungs.

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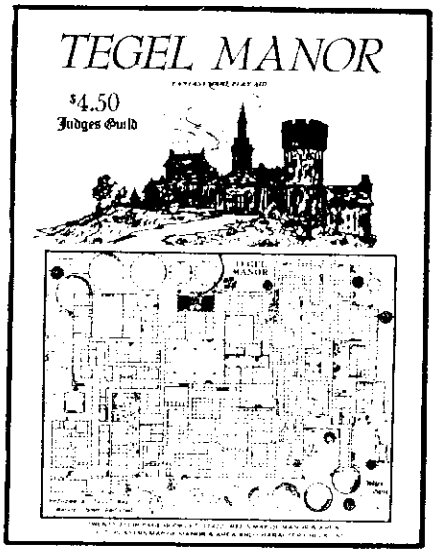

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It Weighs WHAT?!!!

Some Notes on Armor for Fantasy Gamers

Michael Mornard

There exists in fantasy gaming today a great deal of misunderstanding about the weight of armor. In *Dungeons & Dragons*, approximately 15 to 20 extra pounds are added to plate armor. FGU's *Chivalry and Sorcery* is even worse; the statement that full plate armor weighs 2/3 of the wearer's body weight is blatant nonsense.

To quote Helmut Nickel, Curator of Arms and Armor for the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York

"It has been said over and over that a knight's armor was so heavy he could not get up without help when thrown to the ground and he had to be hoisted into the saddle by a derrick. This is nonsense, of course, because it would have been simply suicidal to load oneself with hardware until movement was impossible. On the contrary, a full suit of armor weighed only about fifty to sixty pounds, no more than the battle pack of a modem soldier; with all parts carefully fitted on and distributed over the entire body, it could be worn with great ease. It was expected of the perfect knight that he be able to vault into the saddle of his horse in full armor without using the stirrups — ability that must have come in handy when he had to mount his horse in the press of battle, after his first steed went down."

— Helmut Nickel, *Warriors and Worthies*, p. 57 Hartford, Connecticut: Connecticut Printers, Inc., 1969.

Besides weight, the encumberance of armor is usually greatly exaggerated. I was once told in a D&D game that my plate-armored character was unable to step over or even leap across a three-foot chasm! I would like at this time to Quote Claude Blair, Deputy Keeper in the Department of Metalwork at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and Honorary Editor of *The Journal of the Arms &Armor Society:*

"Modem experiments made with genuine 15th and 16th century armours have shown also that even an untrained man wearing a properly-fitted harness can get on and off a horse, lie on the ground and rise again, bend, stoop, and move his arms and legs quite freely."

— Claude Blair, *European Armor*, p. 191 London, England: William Clowes & Sons, Ltd., 1958.

Or, more to the point; actual weights of surviving armors:

Cuirassier armor of 1620-1630, Augsberg (Castle Churburg, #130) 69 lb. 5 oz.

Plate field (battle) armor, c. 1525 (Wallace Collection, London, #763) 41 lb. 13½ oz.

Plate field armor, Milanese, c. 1450 (Churburg #20) 60.4 lbs.

Mail Shirt, German, mid-thigh, elbow-length (Churburg #2) 20 lb. 11 oz.

Italian helmet, Barbut style, c. 1440 (W.C.L. #39) 5 lb. 14 oz.

Aother frequently maligned piece of knightly equipment is the sword. An excellent analysis may be found in the following book:

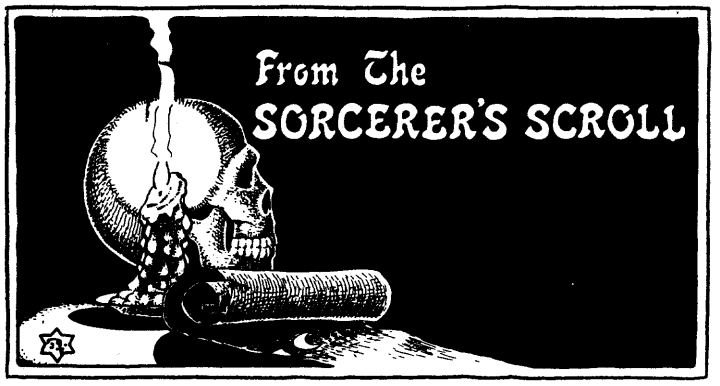
R. Ewart Oakeshott, *The Sword in the Age of Chivalry* New York, N.Y.: Fredrick A. Praeger, Inc., 1964.

On page 12 of that book, he makes a rather delightful statement:

"Of course, there are always those to whom simple austerity of form is indistinguishable from crudity; and an iron object a yard long may well appear to be very heavy. In fact the average weight of these swords is between 2 lbs and 3 lbs, and they were balanced (according to their purpose) with the same care and skill in the making as a tennis racket or fishing-rod. The old belief that they are unwieldable is an absurd and out-dated, and dies as hard, as the myth that armoured knights had to be hoisted into their saddles with a crane."

In writing this book, Mr. Oakeshott had access to many of the finest sword collections in England, where many of the swords are still in pristine condition — even down to the velvet wrapping on the grips. Those weights were taken from real swords. That 2 to 3 pounds, however; is for a one-handed sword. Later on in the book, he gives the weight of a standard 'hand-and-a-half' or bastard sword as 3½ lbs to 5½ lbs. This is a far cry from *Chivalry and Sorcery's* 7-pound sword, and also from SPI's statement that these weapons " . . . are between five and ten pounds. . ." (S&T #68, p. 32) Statements like that could damage a company's reputation for authenticity in design . . .

Hopefully, this article will be of some use to fantasy players and referees. If just one fighter finds that his sword has suddenly become manageable, or that he can climb a ladder in armor, or even that he can simply walk down a corridor without waddling like a rhinoceros with a hernia, it will have served its purpose.



RANDOM GENERATION OF CREATURES FROM THE LOWER PLANES

by Gary Gygax

When I read Gregory Rihn's "Demonology Made Easy" in TD 20 it got me to thinking, and I immediately re-read Jon Pickens' article on random demons (TD 13). Population of the many planes of AD&D will be a problem in the future; most of the monsters now available are designed for the Prime Material world, and when play moves to the various planes, DMs are going to be very busy trying to come up with the creatures who inhabit these strange places. As some start has been made on the lower planes, I thought it would be most helpful to offer a system to aid in the development of more such monsters, for that would help round out those areas rather than sketch in small parts of others. What follows is the current "official" approach, and what you read here will be included in the forth coming DUNGEON MASTERS GUIDE. My thanks to both Greg and Jon!

At times it might be useful to have an unrecognizable creature of evil from the planes of the Abyss, Tarterus, Hades, Gehenna, or Hell. It is no great matter to sit down and design a fairly interesting one given an hour or so, but time or desire lacking, the following will enable you to create one or several such monsters in but a few minutes. The format is straight from the AD&D MONSTER MANUAL for ease of recording and handling the creature(s) developed.

FREQUENCY: Common, uncommon, or rare **(d6= 1,2-3, 4-6)**
NO. APPEARING: 1 to 2-8 **(circumstances must dictate)**
ARMOR CLASS: 0 to -3 **(d4)**
MOVE: 6", 9", 12", 15", or 18" (d8,6-8 = roll d4 for move and creature also has swimming or flying ability; roll d6, 1-2 = swimming, 3-6 = flying, and as a rule these speeds will be greater than land move speed — add 1-4 3" increments as you see fit or by random determination using d4)
HIT DICE: 7 to 10 (d4 + 6, roll a second d4, and on a 4 the creature has 1-4 additional hit points per hit die, as determined by another roll of the d4)
% IN LAIR: (circumstances must dictate)
TREASURE TYPE: low value if any (circumstances must dictate)
NO. OF ATTACKS See ***APPEARANCE TABLE*** below
DAMAGE/ATTACK: See ***ATTACK TABLE*** below
SPECIAL ATTACKS: See ***SPECIAL ATTACKS TABLE*** below
SPECIAL DEFENSES: See ***SPECIAL DEFENSES TABLE*** below
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 5% per hit die (to vary use d6,1= -5%, 2 = -10%, 3 = +5%, 4 = +10%, 5 = +15%, and 6 = STANDARD magic resistance)
INTELLIGENCE: Low, average, very, or high (d4)
ALIGNMENT: According to plane of origin
SIZE: S, M, or L (d8, 1 = S, 2-4 = M, 5-8 = L)
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil (90%) or 96 - 115 (d20 + 95)
Attack/Defense Modes: A-D (d4)/F-H (d6,1-2 = F, 3-4 = F and G, etc.)

APPEARANCE TABLE:

Head

1. bat-like
2. bird-like*
3. crocodilian
4. horse-like
5. human-like
6. monkey-like
7. snake-like
8. weasel-like

Head Adornment

1. antlers
2. crest or peak
3. horns (1-4)
4. knobs
5. ridge(s)
6. ruff
7. spines
8. none

Overall Visage

1. gibbering-drooling
2. glaring-menacing
3. rotting
4. skeletal
5. twitching-moving
6. wrinkled-seamed

Ears

1. dog-like
2. elephant-like
3. human, tiny
4. human, huge
5. trumpet-like
6. none

Eyes

(d6, 1 + 1, 2-4 = 2, 5-6 = 3-4)

	Eye Color
1. small, multi-faceted	1. amber
2. small, slitted	2. black
3. swivel-socketed	3. blue
4. stalked	4. green
5. huge, flat	5. metallic
6. huge, protruding	6. orange-red

Nose

(if necessary)

1. flat, misshapen
2. huge, bulbous
3. slits only
4. snouted
5. tiny
6. trunk-like

Mouth

(d6,1 = tiny, 2-3 = average, 5-6 = huge)

1. fanged
2. mandibled**
3. sucker-like**
4. toothed, small or ridged
5. toothed, large
6. tusked

BODY ATTRIBUTES

(d6, 1-4 = bipedal, 5-6 = quadrapedal etal)

Bipedal Torso

1. ape-like
2. bear-like
3. bird-like
4. human-like
5. pig-like
6. rat-like

Quadrapedal or Other Torso

1. amoeba-like
2. bison-like
3. crab-like
4. horse-like
5. insect-like
7. serpent-like or reptilian
8. spider-like

General characteristics

1. fat
2. long
3. short
4. thin
5. broad
6. muscled
7. narrow
8. rubbery

Back

1. humped-hunched
2. maned
3. normal
4. spiked-spined-ridged

Wings, (if Any)

1. bat-like
2. bird-like
3. insect-like
4. membranous or fan-like

Skin

1. bald-smooth
2. furred
3. hairy-bristled
4. leathery-leprous
5. scaled
6. slimed
7. warted-bumpy
8. wrinkled-folded
9. feathered
10. transluscent

Predominate Color

1. blackish
2. bluish
3. brownish
4. grayish-whitish
5. greenish
6. orangy
7. pinkish
8. purplish
9. reddish
10. yellowish-tannish

Tail (d6, 1-4 = tail)

1. barbed**
2. dog-like
3. goat-like
4. horse-like
5. lion-like
6. pig-like
7. prehensile
8. stingered**

Body Odor

1. bloody
2. fishy
3. fecal
4. gangrenous
5. moldy
6. sweaty
7. urine
8. vomit

Arms

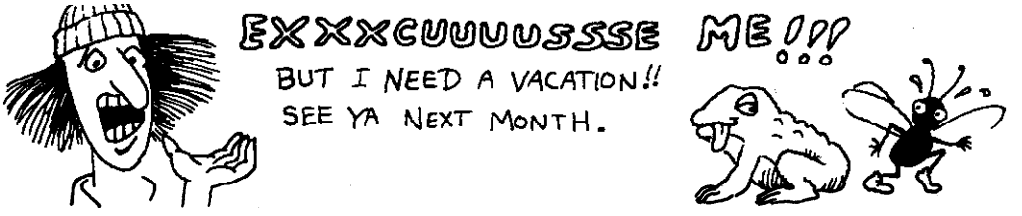
(2 or 4 if bipedal; 2,4, or 6 if otherwise)

1. animal-like
2. human-like
3. insect-like
4. tentacles

Hands

(d6, 1-3 = all alike, 4-6 = different)

1. clawed
2. human nailed
3. pincered
4. taloned
5. tentacle fingered
6. withered and boney



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Legs and Feet

(as applicable)

1. clawed
2. hooved
3. human-like
4. insect-like
5. snake-like
6. suctioned
7. taloned
8. webbed (all swimmers)

**1. duck-like*
2. hawk-like
3. owl-like
4. pelican-like
5. stork-like
6. turkey-like
***Optionally poisoned (or 4 in 6)*

1. +1 on save
2. normal
3. -1 on save
4. -2 on save
5. insanity for 1-4 rounds
6. weakness, 1 point per hit permanently lost

A bit of imaginative creation is helpful in using the tables above. For example, if the creature's body is amoeba-like, you might well decide to give it scores of tiny, bubbling sucker mouths over its entire body, and omit any mouth on the head; of course, body covering would have to be adjusted accordingly, and appendages selected to suit the monster. Likewise, you should feel at ease adding to or amending the tables as you desire in order to arrive at still more diverse and unexpected lower planes' creatures. *(Df. THE DRAGON.* Vol. III, No. 6, whole number *20: "Demonology Made Easy."* Gregory Rihn. This excellent article gives some interesting thoughts on variant creatures of the lawful evil planes!) When you have the form and appearance of the creature, determine strength, if necessary, and then attack capabilities.

Strength	"To Hit"	Damage
01-25 = 17	+1	+1
26-45 = 18	+1	+2
45 - 60 = 18 (01-50)	+1	+3
61-70 = 18 (51-75)	+2	+3
71- 80 = 18 (76-90)	+2	+4
81- 90 = 18 (91-99)	+2	+5
91- 95 = 18 (00)	+3	+6
96-98 = 19	+3	+7
99-00 = 20	+3	+8

ATTACK TABLE

antlers or horns = 1 attack each, damage 1-2 to 2-8
mouth = 1 attack each, damage from 1 to 3-12
tail = special attacks only, damage from 1 to 1-6
hands = 1 attack each possible if no weapon use, strength bonus applicable if used as clubbing weapon, damage from base 1-2 to 2-12
feet = 1 attack each if applicable (flyer, leaper, etc.), damage from 1-2 to 3-12

Damage amount is determined by overall size of creature, with strength bonuses where applicable, and the size and type of body weaponry, *i.e.*, a huge creature with clawed hands would get damage ratings of at least 2-8 per hit. Constriction or hugging damage would be commensurate with a kept creature of the same approximate size. Incidental spine-type damage is best kept relatively low — 1-3, 1-4, or 1-6 range.

Special effects from these attack forms — poison, energy drain, heat, cold, electrical discharge, paralysis, or whatever—should be kept to a minimum.

Special attacks and *special defenses* can't be dealt with in as much detail as would be desirable in a work of unlimited length. The tables below will suggest various magical attack/defense forms, and the DM is urged to add others of his own creation as appropriate to the plane and the creature.

SPECIAL ATTACKS (1-3)

1. ability drain
2. energy drain (cold)
3. gaseous discharge or missile discharge
4. heat generation
5. life level drain
6. spell-like abilities
7. spell use
8. summon/gate

Spell-like and *spell use abilities* should be based upon intelligence level and relative strength in hit dice. Compare daemons, demons, devils, and night hags, From 1-2 spells and a like number of spell-like abilities is sufficient for lesser creatures, while the more powerful and intelligent will get a total of 2-5 of each, some being of higher level (telekinesis, teleportation, etc.).

SPECIAL DEFENSES (1-4)

1. acid immunity
2. cold immunity
3. electrical immunity
4. fire immunity
5. gas immunity
6. metal immunity
7. poison immunity
8. regeneration
9. spell immunity
10. weapon immunity

Immunities above four are possible only if the general class (demons, devils, etc.) has more. Metal immunity can pertain to iron, silver, steel, or any other, including combinations, but excluding magical weaponry. Regeneration base is 1 hit point per turn, with exceptional creatures having a maximum of 1 per round. *Spell* immunity must be limited to 1-4 pre-determined spells. Weapon immunity refers to creatures hit only by magical weapons of a certain value, i.e. + 1, +2, etc.

OTHER ABILITIES (Optional)

1. audial superiority
2. surprise capability
3. visual superiority

Audial or visual superiority will tend to negate surprise and enable detection of creatures through sound or vision. Surprise capability relates to special movement ability and possibly other factors. Visual superiority refers to infravisual and ultravisual capabilities.

To avoid having nothing more than different mixtures of the same old ingredients, be certain that you put a bit of personal creativity into each monster. A list of new and different factors should be started, perhaps in the margin, and then fresh ideas added as they come. When a monster is devised, cross off the unique features from the marginal list.

Convention Schedule 1979

Mon Con III (March 30 - April 1) at Morgantown WV. Science Fiction. Fantasy. Comix. Movies. Games. Star Trek. Contact: Mon Con III, Conference Center, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV 26506.

Spring Revel (March 31- April 1) at American Legion Hall, 735 Henry Street, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. Dungeons and Dragons. Miniatures. Boardgames. FITS. Rail Baron. The whole TSR crowd will be there. Registration Fee $2.00. No game fees. Contact Joe Orlowski, Spring Revel, P.O.B. 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

Tri-State Con (April 20-22) Cincinnati OH, Contact the Queen City Gamers for further information. Eric Franz, Secretary.

Tippacanoe (and Fantasy Too) Game Convention. (May 4-6) Guest Speakers include Gene McCoy (Wargamers Digest), Duke Siegfried (Heritage), Tom Shaw & Don Greenwood (Avalon Hill), Bob Blake (Winner of the 1st D&D Masters Tournament), Lou. Zocchi (Designer of Luftwaffe, and Battle of Britain). Contact: John Hill, P.O.B. 2071, W. Layfayette, IN 47906.

The Great Canadian Games Adventure (May 18-21) at Ottawa University, King Edward Street, Ottawa Ontario, CANADA. Tournaments. Seminars. Games from Europe, England, and Canada (as well as the U.S.). Dealers. Films. Auctions. 100 rooms on campus, costing from $6.00 to $12.00 a night. Room reservations must be made before May 1. Registration fees are $8.00 before April 1 and $10.00 thereafter. Phone (613) 745-2073 for details or write: CANGAMES 79,201-360 Dundas St., Vanier Ontario, CANADA, K1L 7W7.

MichiCon VIII (June 1-3) sponsored by the Metro Detroit Gamers at Oakland University, Rochester, MI (Just North of Detroit). Over 25 board game tournaments, 10 role-playing game tournaments, over 60 miniatures tournaments and demonstrations, seminars/panels/workshops, auctions, flea markets and over 50 exhibit booths. For more information and pre-registration flier send a SASE to Metro Detroit Gamers, MichiCon VIII, P.O.B. 787, Troy, MI 48099. Pre-registration deadline is May 10, 1979.

GLASCON IV (June 15-17) sponsored by CSUN Simulation Gamers' Association. $3.00 Pre-registration Fee. $5.00 at the door. For more information write CSUN-S A, 7133 Reseda Blvd., Reseda, CA 91335.

Origins '79 (June 22-24) at Widener College, Chester, PA. For more information write: Origins '79, P.O.B. 282, Radnor, PA 19087.

GENCON XII (August 16-19) at University of Wisconsin-Parkside, Wood Rd., Kenosha, WI 53140. This could be THE convention of 1979. Over 20 dealers. Over a hundred tournaments. Not to mention seminars, open gaming, and workshops. Pre-registration before July 25 — $10.00. At door — $15.00. Special GENCON XII Information Packet available in April. Contact Joe Orlowski, GENCON XII Coordinator, POB 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

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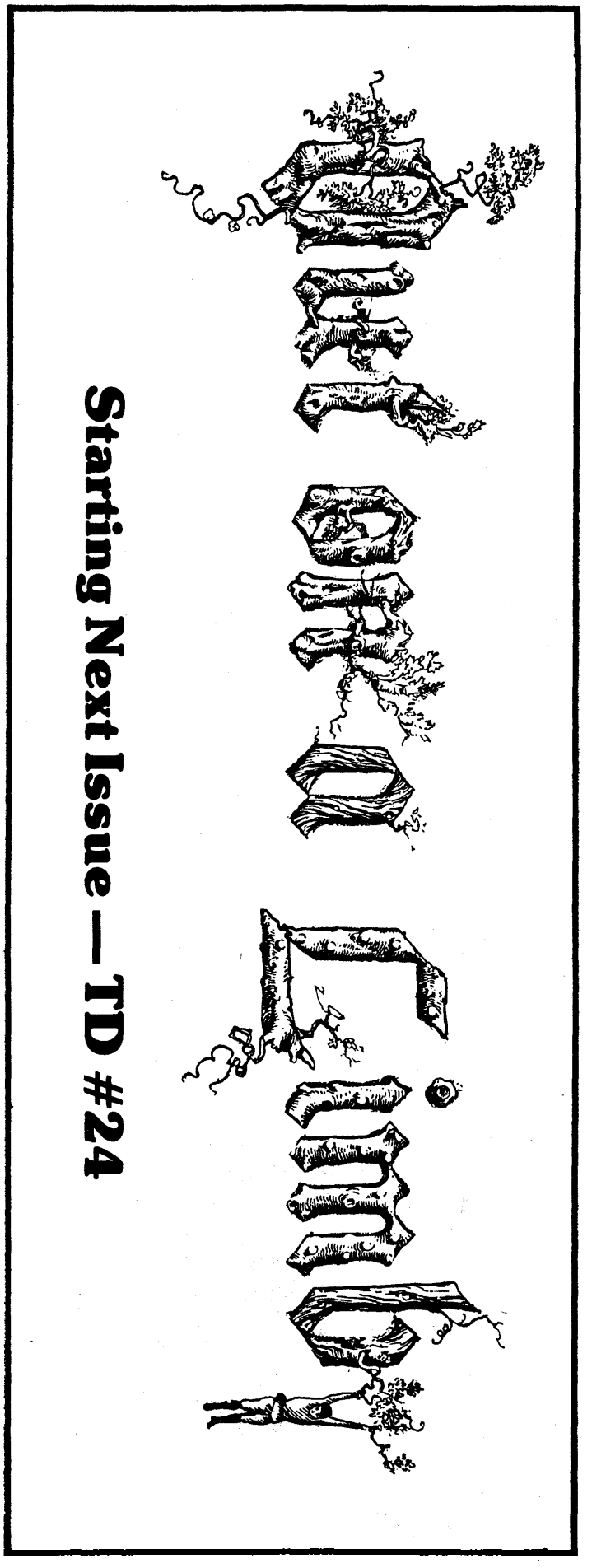
become rich & famous



Damage Permanency

or

How Hrothgar One-Ear Got His Name.

James M. Ward

The concept of "hit points" is almost universal in all types of role playing games. They are often used as a measure of how much damage any given being can take in any given situation. In the case of a sword duel with two high level (and thus, high hit point) players, it is easily possible to see that thirty hits at 1-8 hit points per strike could happen on each side. Logically, thirty such actual cuts would easily kill any real life being in the same situation. It must therefore be assumed that many of these lost hit points represent fatigue, damaged armor, the battle situation itself, or the weapons used. With this being the case there should be some method of determining the physical damage that finally occurs in any given battle.*

When a person takes a great deal of physical damage in whatever manner, it is highly possible that the effects will become permanent. It is conceivable that a sword could sever a toe or finger causing a drop in dexterity or a ray gun could puncture a lung, causing a drop in constitution. The following charts will help judges curb the more active tendencies of their players. They are used when any given player is reduced to one or two hit points.

PERCENTILE

1-50 no permanent damage after healing

51-70 being requires magical aid in healing correctly

71-100% being is maimed unless wish or 5th level or better clerical healing spell is used or device is employed.

AREA OF THE BODY DAMAGED PERMANENTLY

1-14	Head
15-49	Trunk
50-74	Arms
75-79	Legs
80-94	Hands
95-100	Feet

HEAD DAMAGE

1-12	Hearing Loss
13-24	Sight Loss
25-36	Speech Impaired
37-48	Charisma Impaired
49-60	Intelligence Impaired
61-72	Wisdom Impaired
73-88	Fighting Ability Impaired
89-100	Spell Ability Impaired

LEG DAMAGE

1-25	Speed Decreased
26-50	Strength Impaired
51-75	Dexterity Impaired
76-100	Fighting Ability Impaired

HAND DAMAGE

1-20	Dexterity Impaired
21-40	Fighting Ability Impaired
41-60	Magical Ability Impaired
61-80	Strength Impaired
81-100	Weapons Ability Impaired

TRUNK DAMAGE

1-25	Constitution Impaired
26-50	Fighting Ability Impaired
51-75	Resistance to Poison Changed
76-100	Speed Decreased

ARM DAMAGE

1-25	Fighting Ability Impaired
26-50	Magical Ability Impaired
51-75	Dexterity Impaired
76-100	Strength Impaired

FEET DAMAGE

1-33	Speed Impaired
34-66	Fighting Ability Impaired
67-100	Dexterity Impaired

**ED. Note:* While this statement is true for the majority of role-playing games, it is not true for *D&D*® and *AD&D*® and poses some contradictions.

The system holds true for games such as *MA*® and *GW*®, because their systems use a set nuimber of hit points which are determined by the number of *hit dice* the character is endowed with at his (the character's) paper birth. Normally, this maximum potential is seldom reached.

Game systems that set no upper limit on the number of hit dice cannot accept this rationale. It is patently absurd to think that a fighter, when advancing a level, is somehow enhanced: more muscles, more mass, more blood. Were that rationale used, we must assume that first level types all look like Herve Villechaize (Tattoo on *Fantasy Island),* gradually acquiring the stature — assuming survival and advancement, of course! — of Arnold Schwarzenegger (former Mr. Universe purported to be playing Conan in the proposed movie).

In *AD&D,* the rationale behind the concept of hit points is decidely different. Basically, hit points represent the ability/facility to evade a fatal blow/injury. It is an abstraction that includes such considerations as fatigue, armor durability, fighting technique, fighting "tricks" learned, and so forth.

When the head area is affected, a roll of percentile dice will tell the judge what has happened to the being.

1-12* Hearing Loss; indicates that the being will now be surprised on a roll of 1-3, with a point being added on the surprise die for every new occasion. Thieves will lose their ability to hear behind doors.

13-24% Sight Loss; indicates the level of combat efficiency drops by one with every occurrence and bright light, in the form of spells of full daylight, blinds this being for 1-4 melee turns.

25-36% Speech Impaired; indicates that a drop in charisma of one point occurs at every occurrence.

37-48% Charisma Impaired; indicates a drop in charisma of one point at every occurrence.

49-60% Intelligence Impaired; indicates a drop in general intelligence at every occurrence and a -1 on the Saving Throw on all spells involving control and illusion used on that being that is also increased by -1 at every occurrence.

61-72% Wisdom Impaired; indicates a drop of one at every occurrence.

73-88% Fighting Ability Impaired; indicates that the being loses one level of fighting experience at every occurrence.

89-100% Spell Ability Impaired; indicates that if the being used spells, that being loses one level of spell usage per occurrence. Not the spells of a level, but the additional spells given the being at their level of experience. Hence a 3rd level Magic User would have the spells of only a 2nd Level Magic User.

Trunk

When the trunk area is indicated, a percentile roll will tell the judge what happens to the player.

1-25% Constitution Impaired; indicates that one point is lost with any possible hit point loss included per occasion.

26-50% Fighting Ability Impaired; indicates that the being loses one level of fighting experience at every occurrence.

51-75% Resistance to Poison Changed; indicates that all saves are made at a -2 (to the detriment of the being); this situation multiplies itself at every occurrence.

76-100% Speed Decreased; indicates that the being is slowed down by 10 yards per melee turn, per occasion.

Arms

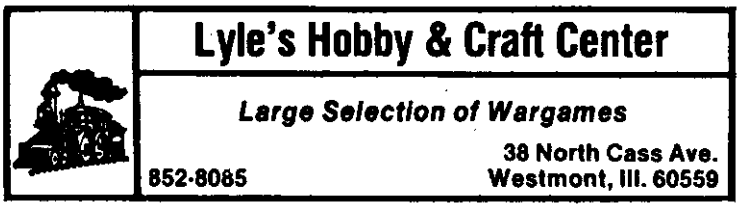
When the arm area is indicated, a percentile roll will tell the judge what happens to the player.

1-25% Fighting Ability Impaired; indicates that the being loses one level of fighting experience at every occurrence.

25-50% Magical Ability Impaired; indicates a loss of one level of experience per occasion if that being has or attains any magical ability.

51-75% Dexterity Impaired; indicates a loss of one dexterity point per occurrence and thieves lose the ability to climb walls.

76-100% Strength Impaired; indicates that one point of strength is lost per occasion.



Legs

When legs are indicated a percentile roll shows the judge what happens to the player.

1-25%* Speed Decreased; indicates a loss of 10 yards per melee turn, per occasion and a 10% reduction in thief hiding abilities per occasion.

26-50%. Strength Impaired; indicates the being loses the ability to carry weight by a factor of 300 gold pieces per occasion.

51-75% Dexterity Impaired; indicates a loss of one dexterity point per occurrence and thieves lose the ability to climb walls.

76-100% Fighting Ability Impaired; indicates a -2 chance to hit per occasion, that accumulates, with each occurrence.

Hands

When hands are indicated, a percentile roll shows the judge what happens to the player.

1-20% Dexterity Impaired; indicates a loss of one dexterity point per occurrence and thieves lose their extra abilities by 10% wherever their hands are needed.

21-40% Fighting Ability Impaired; indicates a loss of one level of fighting ability per occurrence.

41-60% Magical Ability Impaired; indicates a loss of one level of magical ability if the being has or attains a magical ability, per occurrence.

61-80% Strength Impaired indicates a loss of one strength point per occurrence.

81-100% Weapons Ability Impaired; indicates the decreased use of certain types of weapons (-1 in hitting per occasion) The areas are as follows.

1-10%	All Bows
11-20%	All Crossbows
21-40%	Lances/Spears/Pole Arms
41-60%	Bludgeon Type Weapons
61-95%	Sword Type Weapons
96-100%	Fist Action

When reduced to from ten to two hit points left, depending on how many they started with, a person is suffering greatly from fatigue and pain and is also reduced in abilities according to the area. This is changed by clerical healing spell, magical devices, etc. for an instant cure.

1-14% Head, indicates a drop of one spell per level if the being is a magic user or priest, a drop of one level of fighting ability if the being is only a fighter, and a drop of 10% in all abilities in any of the other character classes.

15-49% Trunk, indicates a drop in speed by 20 yards a melee turn and a drop of strength by ,a point.

50-74% Arms, indicates a drop of 2 strength points, a drop by a weight of 300 g.p. the carrying ability of a player, and a drop by 20% in all thieving abilities.

75-79% Legs, indicates a drop of speed by 20 yards per melee turn, a drop of carrying ability by 600 gold pieces, and extra ability characters lose by a factor of 20% in all abilities, using legs.

80-94% Hands, indicates the inability to fight if a roll of 1-2-3 is rolled with a 6 sided die (with the normal weapon hand). I will leave it to the referee to figure out what drops in fighting power as a result of using the wrong hand in battle.

95-100% Feet, indicates a 50% drop in the ability to move and carry things.

In using this material, a little good sense should prevail. It is in the realm of possibility that a tenth fighter could have 10 hit points so I wouldn't want the pain loss to apply after only one hit. I do think it is logical to use this with beings over 20 hit points to start with.

In making up this material, I have tried to throw in several different concepts so that readers would realize that it fits in many different types of role playing games. I want you to throw in a lot of other things in the charts so that your players are kept guessing. You could make your Bards lose the ability to sing on a head shot. You could make your robots function illogically or lose lifting capacity.

Design Forum

DUNGEONS AND PRISONS

or
A 'No-tears' formula for getting rid of high-level characters.

Mark S. Day

Now why would anyone in his/her right mind dig a dungeon in the first place? The answer is that they probably wouldn't, but this is a game, so we'll ignore that. They would use it mostly as a secure prison for political enemies and other flotsam and jetsam of the criminal world. While the dungeon and its castle may have decayed somewhat over years of disuse, there are often places even under castles in the 20th century where someone could be sealed and forgotten.

Bearing this in mind, dungeons in D&D should have at least a few areas that resemble cells, both to catch unwary adventurers (steel doors that latch solidly when they close, and the key is that pile of rust on the table 20' away) and to hold high-level characters, removing them from the campaign at least for a reasonably long time. This system has two advantages: First, you don't have the sort of emotional trauma that occurs when a high-level character bites the dust for the last time, since it is always possible for some intrepid band to go and attempt to free the now-helpless superman; and second, the cries of "Unfair" do not ring so often as when you attempt to polish off adventurers with Acts of Gods, exploding dungeons, and a couple of other things I have seen frantic DMs use. Of course, it's best if you simply don't let characters become super-characters in the first place, but it seems that every campaign, no matter how tough, winds up with at least one of these "Dungeon-busters." Play then tends to become a rather boring cycle of bigger, nastier monsters, which are killed off by the character and his party, gaining him more experience, making him more powerful, which necessitates even bigger and nastier monsters, and on and on. So, to get rid of these thugs with a minimum of violence, arrange for the character to somehow meet up with a very powerful person on your lower levels (it helps here if your dungeon has an active caretaker.) In some manner, the super-character has offended this person and is put in a permanent holding cell. Often, just to be chivalrous, the ruler of my dungeon offers the character a chance to escape by defeating his champion in single combat —though of course there's no guarantee that he will honor his end of the deal if the super-character does win —*evil snicker*.

Do make certain that the cell is escape-proof for the character concerned. Don't overlook such escape possibilities as teleportation, ethereal movement, astral projection, etc. For example, my brother's wizard Elrohir required a cubical 200 feet below the lowest dungeon level, sealed with five layers of true lead to prevent teleportation and mental communication, and reachable only by a shaft two inches wide and with liberal quantities of true lead around and above, through which canisters of food drop and air is blown. The shaft through which he was brought into the cell has since been blocked with around twenty tons of granite interspersed with thick sheets of lead. Such a prison is a far better way of imprisoning a character than even killing him, since such a character typically surrounds himself with patriarchs to bring him back to life.

Good luck to all the fiendish DMs out there — may the masonry in your dungeon never crumble.

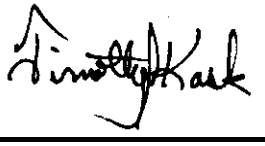
Continued from pg. 4

If AH and SPI are going to pick the group, they should then follow up with constructive advice, assistance and expertise; they should not become "nay-sayers" only, and then swoop in for the benefits of exposure, acclaim, etc. They clearly have not earned it.

The serious scheduling gap in activities for the hobby this summer is a disservice to the entire hobby, and to all gamers. Any damage to the formerly excellent reputation of the *PennCon* group should be assessed to AH and SPI instead.

The supposed rewards to a group sponsoring an *Origins* are nebulous and inadequate. Supposedly, the group is in line for a share of the profits. On the surface, this sounds rather nice. If there are no profits, however, they go empty-handed. Even if they should make what sounds to be a princely sum of two or three thousand dollars, it is woefully inadequate. A convention the size of *Origins* requires at least three or four thousand man-hours to pull it off. One dollar per hour is ridiculously low return. Supposedly, the group stands to gain recognition and stature from a well-run show. What did it ever do for *Interest Group Baltimore*, the group that put on the first two shows? Has anything been heard of them since? (I mean no slur on IGB, but use them as an example to ridicule the contention.) In the event of a good con, with it all going well and smoothly, it may be that any other events that the group sponsors will serve to benefit. That seems to have been the case with the Metro Detroit Gamers: they ran an excellent *Origins*, and attendance at their subsequent *WinterCon* was up, and expected attendance at this year's *MichiCon* is up. But what happens to the hapless group if for reasons beyond their control the show is less than a smash? In that event, any thing they do from then on is likely to be tainted. If that happens this year, the taint should not be indiscriminately applied to the *PennCon* people, but rather, where it belongs: with AH and SPI for inadequate assistance and excessive interference.

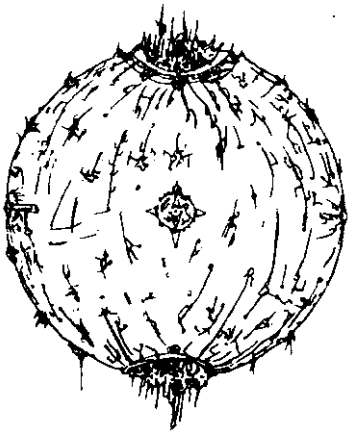
Major conventions should be run and sponsored by the industry.



A Note of Thanks . . .

. . . to all of you that sent cards or inquired as to my health, and sent kind wishes. It was a very pleasant treat to be the object of such concern. I am unable to thank each of you personally, but you now who you are. Thanks again for your concern. That is all past, and I know find myself in good health and much better spirits, in no small part due to your good wishes. Every editor should have readers as kind . . .

Empyrean Challenge



EMPYREAN . . . is defined as "the highest heavens". Control of a star cluster comprising 100 solar systems and 500 planets is the goal of this 250 player hidden movement strategic science fiction game. Players are faced with over population and dwindling resources on their home planets. Each player negotiates with the other rulers of the planet in order to cope with tricky economic situations, rebellion, exploration problems, war, and new technology, and finally, to establish interstellar travel. The player finds new **worlds,** sets up orbiting factories, protects his colonies, and can discover whole new systems where other "races" can be encountered. EMPYREAN CHALLENGE is the most comprehensive computer-moderated futuristic play-by-mail game in existence.

There are two turns per month - they are processed every 2 to 3 weeks and print-outs with the results are mailed back to you. The cost of entering a game is $11.50 ($5.50 is for the set-up fee and rules - the balance is for the next three turns.) Game Fee is $2.00 per turn. Rules only $2.50.

Order from: Superior Simulations, 524 Franklin Park Circle, Boise, Idaho 83705

Green eyes gazed up at him fondly.

"So. You have not forgotten Lylthia?"

"How could I forget you? Don't you know I dream of you, night after night?'

"You are a very foolish man, you know," she chided him. "You rush into dangers the way a bull rushes at a red flag."

He grinned down at her. "I always have you to protect me."

"That is only because I like you very much. But you must not expect me to be around you all the time."

"Only when there is nobody to see you. Like now."

"And because you are in trouble." She pouted. "Much trouble, if I am not mistaken." Her eyes went up to stare into his. "Do you know where you are, right now?'

"Of course. In a frontier fort that belongs to the kingdom of Urgrik."

She nodded. "Yes, of course. But it is something more. I did not realize it myself until just a little while ago. You are standing where once bloomed the ancient land of Pthest."

Niall turned the word over in his mind. "Never heard of it."

"You would not. It has long since been forgotten by mankind. But five thousand centuries ago, it was famous all across the world. Sosaria Thota lived here, where it was a garden world."

"Oh? And who was Sosaria Thota?"

"A most famous witch. Some said she was the daughter of a demon, She ruled this part of the world with cruel fingers. Kings and emperors paid her fortunes to have her cast spells for them."

"Well, she's dead now."

"Is she, Niall? I begin to think she still lives — or hopes to."

He stared down at her. It was on the tip of his tongue to tell her that this was nonsense, but he was remembering other times when he had encountered magic and the effects of magic. But why would this Sosaria Thota come alive again? How could she?

It was as if Lylthia read his mind when she murmured, "Because she has made a bargain with the wicked ones who dwell in megaspace, who wait outside the world you know, seeking a way to enter it."

Niall shrugged his brawney shoulders. He did not care overmuch for demons, he had a wholesome regard for them and their powers and if it were up to him alone, he would avoid them. As commander of the armies of Lurlyr Manakor, it was his duty to put this frontier fort into operation, however. He could not do that if this demonaic witch were to send her powers outward to destroy the men who inhabited it.

His eyes touched Lylthia. She was staring at the door through which the glowing blue ball had come. Was she expecting another manifestation of the powers of this Sosaria Thota?

"Well?' he asked softly. "What now?'

She turned her head and smiled at him, yet deep within her green eyes there was worry. "By rights, I ought to go back to my eleven hells. But I dare not leave you unguarded." She sighed, "You are a worry to me sometimes, Niall."

He gave a bull bellow of laughter and dragged her in against him, almost smothering her in his embrace. Lylthia tinkled laughter, but there was an undertone of concern in her throat

"You must not take things so lightly, Niall," she scolded. "No matter if I am here to guard you. There are those in the megaworlds with powers as great — if not greater — than my own."

"The thing to do then is find out how strong this witchwoman is. We'll go exploring."

His hand caught hers and like that, with Lylthia tripping lightly along beside him, he moved from the big barracks room out into the corridor and walked past the doors of other rooms, rooms in which weapons and other gear were stored.

Silence lay like a pall on this fort which usually resounded to the curses or laughter of the men who were stationed here. It seemed to lap about them, surrounding them with menace. Niall grumbled and shifted his shoulders restlessly, and his hand was never far from his swordhilt.

They came out upon a wallwalk and stood with the hot wind off the desert brushing them. To the south lay the vast expanse of the Baklakanian Desert, and beyond that the cultivated lands of Urgrik. Westward were the vast steppes between Urgrik and the lands of Noradden. Niall had never been to Noradden, but he had heard tales of its bazaars and the ships that fled across the waters of the Pulthanian Sea. He turned and stared eastward, and could make out, dimly enough, the Mountains of the Sun, that marked the boundary of Urgrik.

Lylthia touched him with a shoulder, and he put an arm about her. The winds were cool up here, and he felt her shiver.

He swung about and looked northward toward the high hills. Whatever evil had come upon this fortress had come from those hills, where the men of this fort had been digging for water.

"I have to go there," he muttered.

Lylthia stirred. "No. It is certain death. I know that much, Niall."

"It is my duty."

She drew back and stared up at him. "You men, with your ideals of duty and what you must do!" She sighed and laughed. "Perhaps that is why I like you so much, though. But you shall not go alone, my love. I will walk with you."

"First we will eat and sleep."

They turned — and suddenly froze.

In the long shadows of this late afternoon, they heard a strange and eerie keening. It was like the wail of a lost soul, rising and falling. The sound came from the north, in among those hills.

Niall swore and half drew Blood-drinker. Lylthia listened, eyes wide and head up, as though something in that sound touched a chord of memory deep inside her. After a moment, she shuddered.

"She has strange powers, that one," she whispered. "Ancient powers, long forgotten by this world." Her lovely face twisted in a grimace. "Indeed, I myself had forgotten all about them — until now."

Niall glanced down into her face. "Are you telling me that you're afraid?"

Her green eyes glowed. "You would be well advised to know fear. Such a woman as Sosaria Thota has never been known since she died."

With a hand at his fingers, she drew him down off the wallwalk. They found a commissary room equipped with freezer units and with stoves. In moments, Niall had two big steaks roasting over the flames while he poured red Kallarian wine into two big goblets.

They ate without a thought for anything but the food. When they were done and sipping at the wine, Niall grinned. Lylthia eyed him suspiciously.

"Last time I took you to bed with me —in Angalore, you'll recall — you mesmerized me."

Laughter twinkled in Lylthia's eyes. "I did not know you so well, back in those days. To me, you were only someone who was interfering with my vengeance on Maylok the magician."

"And now?'

The girl shrugged. "We'll see," she muttered, and laughed. "I have a fancy to know something of this emotion you humans call love. It might not be amiss . . . "

Nial lifted to his feet, reached for his winecup and drained it. Then he reached out for Lylthia. He put an arm about her slender waist and hugged her to him. Like that, they walked out of the commissary room and up a short flight of stairs to the bedrooms of the post officers.

The room was dark, but Niall found tapers of yellow wax and lighted them. In their light, he saw a big, wide bed, together with a bureau and a desk and chair Lylthia was staring around her with wide eyes, almost as though she had never before seen a bedroom.

"Now you shall dance for me, as once you danced in a dream," he said softly.

She shook her head. "I do not feel like dancing, Niall. There is danger here — great danger. I can feel it, inside me."

"What sort of danger?'

"I know not. But it is here. Somewhere. Just —waiting."

She turned and walked toward an open window, without glass, with only a leather curtain on a rod drawn back, freeing that opening to the winds. It was a still night, no breeze stirred, and there was a heaviness in the air.

Niall stared at this woman he loved. It was not like Lylthia to be given to worry. If she were concerned, there was reason for him to be, too.

He moved toward her, stood beside her looking out into the night. High above, the ring of shattered matter that encircled their world reflected back the brilliance of the sunlight that touched its edges.

It was a beautiful sight, and on more than one occasion Niall had looked up at it, wondering what it was, where it had come from.

"If you—"

"Wait!"

There was urgency in her, and he could feel the tenseness of her body where he touched it. Her eyes were wide, her arms were by her side, yet rigid. It was as if she searched with senses unknown to him somewhere out there in the night.

And then —

A beam of light shot skyward. It was pure white, almost blinding in its brilliance. For a moment it paused, as though seeking, and then it flashed downward, straight at them.

Lylthia gave a little cry.

She whirled and thrust at him with both arms, driving him backward and into the darkest shadows. Then the pale light was all about her, enveloping her.

Niall shouted, with agony in his soul.

The blazing whiteness was all around Lylthia, eating at her, dissolving her. From where he stood as though paralysed, Niall could see her shimmer, glow with unearthly brilliance, then fade out.

Only the whiteness was left.

That whiteness sang joyously. It whispered and laughed, or so it seemed to Niall, and then —slowly, slowly — it withdrew, back into the night from which it had come.

Lylthia was gone.

Eaten.

Niall lifted his head and bellowed out his grief, his rage.

3.

Dawn found the Far-traveler moving upward along the slopes of the hills that lay north of the fort. He felt frozen inside him, dead. Lylthia was gone. So too, was her other self, Emalkartha of the Eleven Hells.

He would never see her again, never know her laughter nor the touch of her body. A rage burned inside him, cold and deadly. As he walked, his big hand fondled the hilt of his sword.

He would find this witch-woman, this Sosaria Thota, and he would run cold steel into her flesh. Lylthia would be avenged! He cared nothing for what might happen to him, nor did he pause to reckon at any odds.

He was a barbarian sellsword. All his life had been given to using a sword in battle. He was walking toward his last battle, now. If he could avenge Lylthia, if he could kill this witchwoman, he would be satisfied. Even if he himself found death.

Life meant nothing to him any longer. Not without Lylthia. Or Emalkartha. He loved that woman who was also a goddess in her demonaic worlds. He would revenge her death. Then he would die, himself.

He plodded on and upward, his great muscles rolling under his sunbronzed hide. He felt no tiredness, no weariness, though he had been walking since early dawn. Up there in the hills, the men of the frontier fort had been digging for water, to make a stone pipe which would bring water into the fort.

And they had unearthed — Sosaria Thota.

He would search and find that tomb where she had been buried. He would run his steel into her body and destroy her. Nothing else mattered.

Sometime after high noon, he rested on a flat rock and ate the food and drank the wine he had brought with him. His eyes searched the tree-covered heights toward which he climbed as he ate, striving to discover where it was the men had been digging.

He sighed and rose and began walking again.

Toward evening, he sighted an open gap in the ground where it had been dug up, and several tools lying there, neglected. Niall moved forward.

He came to the opening, and stared down into it.

He saw rockwork and bricks, part of a subterranean chamber. Yet much dirt and rocks lay there, hiding any way in or out of it. The first thing he must do was to dig out that rubble, find a way into that structure.

But not now, not tonight. Tonight he must eat and sleep, to be ready for the morrow.

He stood before that opening, grieving. Never to see Lylthia again! Never to hear her soft laughter or be aware of the brightness of her green eyes, staring up into his with so much love! It was not a burden he could carry for the rest of his life.

No! As soon as he had killed the witchwoman he would leave this place and walk westward. He would walk until he dropped of exhaustion, and there he would die. Niall of the Far Travels no longer wanted to live.

He sat down and ate the remainder of the food he had carried with him, and finished the wine in the skin. He lay down and drew his cloak more tightly about him. In a moment, he was asleep.

When he woke in the early morning, it was to a brilliant sun that covered him with warmth. Niall lifted off his mail shirt, his other garments, until he stood almost naked, with just a bit of cloth about his loins. Then he reached for a shovel.

He began to dig.

Apparently there had been a landslide here, for the dirt was loose. Shovelful1 after shovelful1 rose upward, and as he worked, Niall saw that he was uncovering the door of the tomb.

It was a bronze door, covered over with strange signs and sigils. Niall stared at it a moment, scowling. There was an aura of evil about that door that was almost tangible. He scowled blackly, shrugged and put out a hand to it.

The door opened slowly, its hinges creaking. He had to apply all his strength to opening that door, for it had been closed for uncounted centuries.

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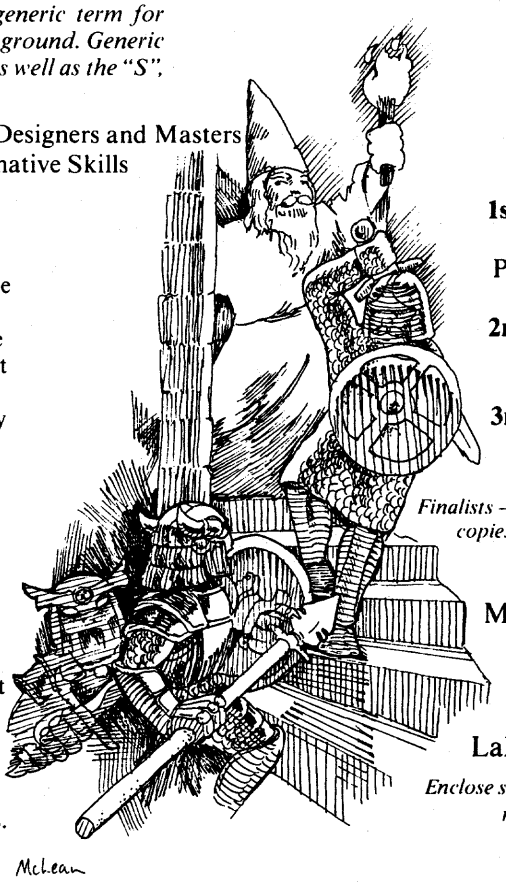

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When it was open, he waited for air to go into that dark chamber which lay beyond it. As he stood there, he bent to lift up his sword and draw it from the scabbard.

Then Niall stepped into the tomb.

His attention was caught by what seemed to be a glass case. under which lay a body. The case was on a table of ebony with carven legs. about which were entwined the bodies of demons. Niall stared at it a moment, before turning to look around him.

His eyes wandered here and there, seeing strange and unusual objects of metal, objects the purpose of which he could not understand. There was something that resembled a great glass globe mounted on golden balls, and to one side of it there was another object which consisted of slender rods and golden stars. Not far away was a great metal square with antennae rising upward from its top.

Niall turned back to the glass case.

He moved forward and caught his breath. He stared downward at the body of a woman with long golden hair. a women so beautiful that something inside him choked up at the sight of her. Her eyelids were blued, yet were closed, and her golden lashes lay like tiny fans against her cheek.

She wore a single garment, something of diaphanous silk through which he could see the gleam of pale flesh. Her breasts pushed upward into this cloth, and for a moment, Niall thought to see those breasts move.

But no, that was merely an illusion.

This girl — or woman — was dead. There was no doubt of that. But — could this be the Sosaria Thota whom Lylthia had mentioned? How long ago was it she said the witchwoman had lived? Five thousand centuries?

Ha! If that were so, then this could not be she. This woman looked as though she had just fallen asleep.

He put a hand on the case. It felt warm. and seemed almost to quiver under his touch. Niall drew back, scowling.

There was wizardry here. He could almost smell it.

Niall waited. He could not believe that a woman as lovely as this could be as dangerous as Lylthia had suggested. Yet if she were Sosaria Thota, she had killed the woman he loved. With some sort of magic in this tomb.

He eyed those strange objects warily.

Maybe he ought to lift out Blood-drinker and use the flat of his blade to smash those queerly glittering things. There was evil in them, and a strange power which he could sense.

His hand lifted out the blade and he took a step forward.

"No!"

The word exploded inside him. There was strength in that word, spoken by a tremendously powerful will,

Niall whirled around.

The woman lay as she always had, motionless. The chamber was quiet, with his breathing making the only sound. The hair rose up on the nape of his neck. More sorcery!

Niall growled low in his throat, swung back toward the strange objects. His huge hand tightened on his sword. By Emalkartha of the Eleven Hells! He was going to smash those things, destroy them forever.

He took another step, and froze.

Behind him he heard a whisper of sound. He did not know what that sound might be. he had never heard it before. With it came a sharp scent to his nostrils.

Niall wanted to swing around, to look behind him at that ancient catafalque, but he could not move a muscle. Yet his every sense strained to hear, to listen to those sounds which were like nothing else he had ever heard. And with the sounds, came that sharp acrid smell.

"You fool!"

The words were sharp, bitter. They had been spoken by a woman. Niall gave a rumbling growl. Was that corpse behind him — alive? Was that woman he had seen breathing? Could she have spoken to him?

Slowly, slowly, the rigidity went out of his muscles. Now he could move, and he swung about, staring.

The transparent covering was gone. Melted away? Evaporated into nothingness? The woman was sitting up and looking at him with calm grey eyes, very wise eyes and very old, or so he thought. She was

Over $500 To Be Awarded At GenCon Wargame Figure Painting Competition

A new competition will be inaugurated at this year's GenCon, scheduled for Aug. 16-19. Sponsored by TSR Periodicals and The Dungeon Hobby Shop, the competition is for painted wargame figures.

Over $500 in prizes will be awarded in a total of seven categories The competition will be divided into two size classifications, with each of these further divided by period. The two size classes are *Micro Scale* and *Regular*. Micro Scale is to consist of all micro-sized armor and other types, such as spaceships (Grenadier and Valiant, for example), naval vessels (CinC l/2400, GHQ Micronauts, Valiant *Fighting Sail, Superior*, Waterline, etc. *i.e.*, any scale smaller than 1/200, inclusive) and airplanes. The Micro Scale class is further divided into two categories: *Unit* and diorama. Unit is defined as a militarily definable and recognizable organization. (This definition applies only to this class; unit is defined differently in other categories.) The minimum number of figures in this class is five, and the maximum is forty.

Dioramas are limited only in base size- 15" X 15".

The Regular class consists of 15mm, 20mm, 25mm, and 30mm figures. This class is further divided into two categories; Historical and Fantasy & Science Fiction. The *Historical* category is further divided into two sub-classes- *Unit* and *Diorama*. The minimum number of figures represented must be a viable unit on the wargame table. Unit size is limited to one battalion of foot or horse, or one battery of cannon or siege equipment. The maximum number of actual figures must be justified by an existing, commercially available set of rules governing the period. Diorama limitations apply as above, 15" X 15", maximum.

The Fantasy & Science Fiction Category is also divided, this time into three sub-classes: *Unit, Diorama* and *Monster*. Unit is defined as at least five, but no more than 40, figures in a plausible organization. The diorama restrictions are the same as previous categories. The monster sub-class is limited to five figures or less. (Some may qualify as both Unit and Monster, but may only be entered in one.)

If you wish to enter, you need only show up at the appointed times. There will be a $1 entry fee per entry. We will provide secure storage prior to the actual judging. You must package your entries for safety from incidental damage — we will provide security and a place to store them in your packing. The actual judging period is the only time that all entries will be on full display, and we will do everything we are capable of doing in an effort to protect your property. The results are scheduled (remember that we are talking about an event some six months away) to be announced shortly after lunch on Sat., the 19th. The actual judging will be occurring during lunch. We would like to place the winners on display for the rest of Saturday.

There are a total of seven classes and sub-classes: Micro-Scale Unit; Micro-Scale Diorama, Historical Unit, Historical Diorama, Fantasy&SF Unit, Fantasy & SF Diorama and Fantasy Monster. Each of the seven class winners will receive an engraved plaque and a year's sub to the TSR Periodical of their choice In addition, there will be two BIG prizes: *Best of Show* and *Sweepstakes Award. Best of Show* will go to the best diorama in the entire competition, the *Sweepstakes Award* will go to the best unit entered in the competition. These two awards also merit plaques, along with $250 in gift certificates. Best of Show will receive a $150 G.C. from the Dungeon Hobby Shop, while the *Sweepstakes Award* merits a $100 G.C. from The Dungeon. The Dungeon is the most complete wargame hobby shop in the midwest, and also carries an extensive line of trains and equipment, and capable of fulfilling any gamers' dreams. Their mailorder service is extensive and efficient.

beautiful. More beautiful than any woman Niall had ever seen.

Those grey eyes went over him from his worn war-boots to his kilt and fur kaunake that covered his mail beneath the saffron silk cloak, upward to his face. The grey eyes widened at sight of his rugged good looks, his mop of thick yellow hair.

"Who are you, who come blundering in to disturb my sleep? From whence do you come?"

"I am the commander of the armies of Lurlyr Manakor, king of Urgrik," he growled. Then he asked, with a snarl in his voice, "Are you the one who killed Lylthia?"

Mocking laughter rose upward into the air as the woman on the spotted furs of the catafalque threw back her head. Amusement was written plainly enough on her face. "And if I were? What is that to you, man? Do you not know who I am?"

She paused and stared at him. In a softer voice she went on, "No, perhaps you don't. Something tells me I have been asleep for a long time. A long, long time. Even your speech is different from the way people talked when I lived before. What is the year?"

"The fifth year of the Bear in the Cycle of the Twelve Sigils."

"All of which means absolutely nothing to me."

Niall remembered what Lylthia had whispered in his mind.

"You have been dead for five thousand centuries. If you're who I think you are."

The woman gasped and sat up straighter. "You lie! So much time could not have elapsed."

"What would I gain by lying?"

She considered him, her head tilted sideways. Those eyes seemed almost to weigh him, to look deep inside him. They made Niall uncomfortable. He still held his sword in his big right hand, and he told himself that if he could get close enough to this woman, he would bury its steel in her throat.

"Do you know who I am?" she asked softly.

"Sosaria Thota."

Alarm and amazement came into her features. She swung her legs forward off the catalfaque and stood upon the stone floor. Her breasts rose and fell as though to deep emotion.

"How could you know my name?" she whispered. "If what you tell me is true — that five hundred thousand years have passed since I was last here — no man could possibly have remembered me."

Niall shrugged. He was not about to admit that it had been Lylthia who had whispered that information into his mind.

She moved forward, as graceful as the hunting leopard, and — or so Niall thought — as deadly. She was beautiful as Lylthia, but there was something about this woman that chilled Niall, deep inside him.

He stood waiting, his hand still holding his sword. As though she sensed his thought, Sosaria Thota laughed softly.

"Would you kill me, man?" she asked.

"Aye. I would."

She laughed gleefully and clapped her pink palms together in an almost childish glee. She was close now, and despite the hate he felt for her, he was aware of her as a desirable woman. The garment she wore was revealing, being woven of some silken strands that seemed almost transparent.

"You are an honest man. Good! I like that. And you are a brave one. I like that, too. It will make your subjection that much sweeter."

She paused, the green eyes laughing up at him.

"Do you think you can buy your sword in my flesh, man? Do you? Try it."

He could not look away from those eyes which seemed to hold him in thrall. His knees grew weak, suddenly, and he groaned, unable to move his swordarm. She was a witchwoman, all right, this Sosaria Thota. In her hands he was like a helpless babe.

"There now," she smiled, speaking in a soft voice. "You appeal to me, whoever you are. I need a companion, a living companion. I have been too long — asleep."

She sighed. "I would look upon the world again, see it as it was, so long ago. Come you with me, man."

Sosaria Thota turned and without looking back at him, made her way out of the tomb, climbing over the loose rubble and the rocks, the wind blowing her drapery about her flesh so that at times it seemed she was almost naked.

Niall went after her, sheathing his sword. No sense in carrying Blood-drinker in his hand, if he could not use it. And he knew he could not, against this woman.

They came out upon the lip of the diggings, and the woman stood as if frozen, staring out across the desert sands. Her eyes went this way and that, as though seeking something that had been here, and was here no more.

Niall stood beside her, so close that her bare arm touched his. From her flesh rose up a sweet, stirring fragrance.

"Gone. All gone," she whispered. "No longer is there a land of Thilmagia. Instead — only dead sand."

She whirled and stared up at him with those disturbing grey eyes. "Is it like this all over the world?"

"Of course not," he growled. "This is the desert. Out yonder," and here he flung up a hand, "are the wild hordes of Pugarsk. To keep them at a distance, Urgrik has built these forts."

He turned and now his arm swept northward, toward Urgrik. "There are cities that way, and to the east and the west. There live men and women. No one but soldiers stay in such places as this."

His mention of soldiers made him think of the men this woman had killed with her devilish lights. She must have caught the anger in his throat, for she smiled faintly and nodded.

"Yes, I slew all life around me, once I was—disturbed. I lay asleep and dreaming for many centuries, it seems. Yet when men came and began to dig, I became aware of it, and sent out my messenger to kill them."

"As your messenger was slain."

Her hand stabbed out and caught his arm, her long red fingernails biting into his flesh. "Aye! Something destroyed Messarib. Was it you? No, no. You have not the power. Then —who was it?'

Niall shrugged. He was not about to tell this woman anything, though it could make little difference, since Lylthia was dead. At that thought, a fierce anger began to burn inside him, until it became a rage that made him tremble.

Her eyes were wise, they saw the fury in him, and she laughed softly. "I sent the vilaspa light to search the barracks when Messarib was destroyed. That light touched a living person — ate him. Who was that person, Niall?"

He shook his head, knowing that those eyes were on him as though they might read his mind. Let her look, let her try to discover what he knew. He would not tell.

Sosaria Thota sighed and turned away, her stare going over the desert lands once again. She stood as though she did not feel the desert winds that touched her lone garment and blew it about her. Niall wondered what she might be thinking.

At last she said, "These lands where men do live in these days — be they far?"

"A few marches away."

"Then lead me there, man."

"Not I, lady."

She turned and looked at him, haughtily. Her lips opened as if she would speak, but then they only curved at their corners into a grim smile.

"Go and fetch horses, then. One for you, one for me, and two more to carry those things I shall need. Go now."

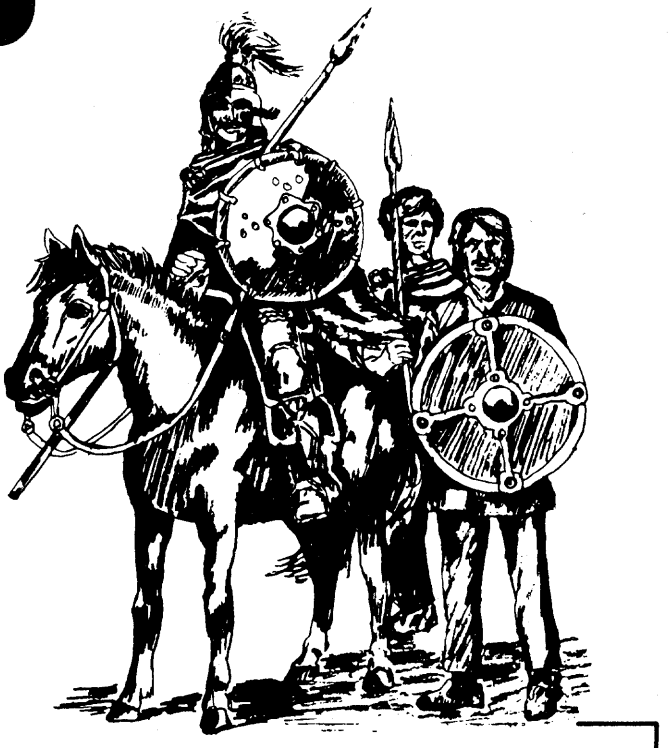
Niall turned and walked toward the fort. In the stables there would be horses. Yet he told himself he would not take the witchwomen into Urgrik City. He would lead her out upon the desert, but in a direction away from the populated places.

There in that desert, without water, she would surely die. Of course, he would die with her, but what was his death compared to the lives of the people he would save? Sosaria Thota would kill and slay all who stood in her way. She would not rest content until it was she and not Lurlyr Manakor who ruled in Urgrik.

Aye, and in other cities as well, until with her wizardous arts she controlled all men and their lives. His big hand clenched into a fist. He would not permit it. In some way, he would find a way to kill her.

He saddled two horses, one of them the hig grey stallion he had ridden here. He also selected two pack animals. He fed them and the other horses which would be left behind, and made certain they had plenty of water.

THE TRIBES OF CRANE



You, task chief of the Leopard people wandering tribe of Crane, sit in your great wagon awaiting news from your swift searching outriders. Suddenly hoof beats approach. The outriders leap from their mounts to your wagon flushed with excitement for they know full well the meaning of their news. But one sector to the North the great merchant caravan of the Impala people has been spotted. The order is given "To arms . . . to arms!" You snap your orders, "Gather my captains of hundreds. Let all know the tactic will be enfilade right. Now my arms, my mount." You heard that Kate, chief of the Impala people, has chosen a stand and defend tactic twice before; will he again? You know also that the Impala people are fine warriors as are all the people of the many tribes. This will be no raid of the strong on the weak, but rather a mighty clash of the ***TRIBES OF CRANE....***

The **Tribes of Crane** is a unique correspondence game, allowing for interaction between players and the fantasy world of Crane and each other through a continuous game that may be entered at any time.

As a new player you will start as the chief of one of the many wandering tribes of Crane. Perhaps your tribe will be of the Sea people or Caravan merchants.

As chief you will know many secrets of your people and their lands, but there will be much you have still to learn of the lost secrets of Crane. It will be you who decide if your people will remain in their familiar homeland or begin a journey to new lands as you strive to increase your herds, train warriors, and learn of the ancient lost secrets that can move your people toward prosperity and dominance.

The land of Crane is a complete fantasy world with a full range of geography from the permanent ice of the polar regions, to the deserts, and tropical forests of the equator.

Cities dot the continents of Crane providing centers of trade and homes for the powerful Shamans and King Lords.

The creatures of Crane are as varied as its geography. Cattle goats and the caribou are the mainstay of the tribes, depending on the geography. But horses and the great mancarrying war hawks are important to the fierce warriors. Many undomesticated creatures also inhabit Crane such as the Euparkeria, a hugh bipedal lizard that feeds on cattle in the grasslands of Crane.

Interaction between players is very common. Alliance, trade, and combat are always possible. Combat is determined in part by a comparison of tactics used by the antagonists, the relative number of warriors, and the geography.

The games objective is to increase the relative strength and prosperity of your tribe which is measured by different criteria, depending upon the type of tribe, and thus obtain points. Players try to obtain high average points per turn thus placing new players on a par with those who have been playing longer.

The **Tribes of Crane** may be entered for $10.00 which includes the first six turns, a rule booklet, and all necessary material (except return postage). Thereafter, turns are $1.50 each. If dissatisfied after the first turn, you may return the materials for a full refund. A rule booklet may be purchased separately for $3.50.

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Then he brought the mounts toward where Sosaria Thota waited. He might not be able to draw and use steel against her, but she would not suspect that the desert sands might kill her.

It was his only chance.

4.

They began their march at a walk, with Niall out in front on his grey horse. He set the pace, it was an easy walk, for he was in no hurry. Apparently Sosaria Thota was content with that, for she made no comment.

All day they moved across the hot sands, until the sun sank in the west and a breeze sprang up. Only then did Niall turn and glance back at the witchwoman who sat her saddle with the ease of olden days.

Her eyes were very bright as they studied him.

"Always you move westward, man," she said softly, and her eyes were narrow and angry. "I ask myself if you are trying to trick me."

Niall shrugged his broad shoulders. "Now why should I do that?"

"Because you are loyal to this king you serve, because you don't want to lead me into this city of Urgrik." Her lips curved into a cruel smile. "I will play your little game with you, for a time."

She leaned forward in the saddle, her hands clutching its pommel, and her eyes blazed at him. "Think not to fool me, man. I am Sosaria Thota!" She moved back then, and let her laughter ripple on the air. "You take me westward, and I want to go north. Am I such a fool that I cannot see the sun?"

Niall swung down from the kak. "We'll make camp here."

The woman stared around her, brows wrinkling. "One spot is as good as another, I suppose. One can eat and sleep here."

She came onto the sands and walked back and forth, kicking little sand-puffs at every stride. From time to time she threw back her head and stared upward at the darkening sky. Then, as though making up her mind about something, she moved toward one of the pack horses and began to fumble with the straps.

Her hands lifted down an apparatus consisting of many slender rods, each of which was surmounted by a golden star. This she set down very carefully on the sand and stood a moment, brooding at it.

She turned and stared at Niall.

"I have had men flayed alive for lying to me, man. Others I have had my torturers spend a week over, making certain that the manner of their dying was extremely slow and painful." She sighed. "I should not care to order you to die in any such manner."

"In those days, you had many serants. Today you have only me."

She laughed at him. "Fool! Do you think I cannot summon up help? I can call on the denizens of the outer darknesses, which are all familiar to me, who obey my slightest whims."

Niall shrugged and turned back to the little fire he had made and over which he was cooking meat he had brought from the fort. Inside him was a coldness that seemed to stretch inward to his very bones. How did a mere man deal with such a witch? From what Lylthia had hinted, this beautiful woman who stared at him so coldly had strange and mighty powers.

Her hands did something to the rods and stars, and instantly Niall saw a dark cloud spring up about them. It was dark at first, as black as the fabled pits of Aberon, yet slowly that ebon tint faded, was streaked with brilliant scarlet—then faded.

Now he stared at a dead world. Dark were the cinders on which he crouched, lifeless and sere, while above him was a sky shot with crimson fires. It seemed that he heard a whisper, very faint, yet one which grew louder she listened.

It was the beat of wings.

The thing came on widespread wings, fluttering a moment, before it settled down near Sosaria Thota. Its three eyes were brilliant with evil, and Niall shuddered when he saw that this demonaic being eyed him hungrily.

"Can it be Sosdria Thota?" the thing croaked.

"None other, Alphanor. I am awake again, you see. I have slept a long time. Now I appeal to you for help."

"Leave the man-thing for me, and I shall be at your service."

"Na, na, Alphanor. This one I need — for a time, at least. Yet you shall be paid. This I vow."

The bird-being took its beady eyes from Niall to glance at the witchwoman. For a moment it seemed to hesitate, then its armored head nodded.

"What is it you seek?"

"Long ago —in my other lifetime —the gods of the outer darknesses promised me their aid. Yet at that time they were unable to help me — and so I waited. Now my time of waiting is at an end."

She stood proudly before that black bird-beast, her head flung back, and Niall had to admire her at that moment. She was a human being, or had been, and she trafficked with demons in their own lands. Great must be her powers, great her courage.

Alphanor hesitated. "There are other powers," he grumbled. "They too, are powerful, mayhap even more powerful than we dark beings. Over the years when you have been sleeping, those others have extended their abilities."

"Are you saying you cannot help me? Or will not?"

"It is not easy. If those other powers were to guess — "

It seemed to Niall that the bird-thing shivered.

"Enough," Sosaria Thota snapped. "If you fear to aid me, there are others upon whom I can call."

The bird-god shook himself. "Look around you," he croaked. "Once this land was fair, with trees and grass and animals abounding, all over it. That was before you called on me and I — aided you.

"Those others came then and destroyed my world, even as they forced you into an eons-long sleep. Do you care to risk their wrath a second time, Sosaria Thota?"

"I do. I shall"

Her hand touched the rods and stars and instantly the dark, dead world was gone and there was a moment when Niall swayed while all about him madness cracked and thundered. Then the ground under his feet settled, and he saw that he stood in a massive hall, so large it seemed to stretch away almost to infinity.

There were tiles underfoot, and a warmth everywhere. Niall swung about, stared at a great throne upon which — something —stirred and seemed to rise upward from slumber. He could not make out its form, there was something alien and non-human about it.

"Who comes?" a voice whispered. "Who dares disturb the dreams of Xinthius?"

"I dare, great one. Long ages ago, I worshipped thee in the lands I ruled. I am Sosaria Thota!"

There was silence, then something rustled like dry leather. "I remember you. Aye. But that was long, long ago."

"And now? Are your powers so faded you cannot aid me again?'

"What is it you wish of me?"

"Help me attain to my old powers! Help me rule the world of my birth as once I ruled it?"

"Na, now. Things have changed while you slept, girl. We dark worlders are not so powerful as once we were. There are those who would contain us."

Sosaria Thota sneered. "And you fear them?"

"I do, and rightly so. I am content here in my halls, where my word is supreme. Here I sit and dream, and I enjoy my life. If I were to aid you in your plans, all this might be taken from me."

BACK ISSUE AVAILABILITY

Some back issues of TD are still available. Only those listed below are in stock. Back issue price is $2.10, postage and handling are included.

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TD 9	TD 19
TD 11	TD 20
TD 12	TD 21
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"Must I seek out Abaddon himself?"

"Go seek him, woman. I will not help. I am content with my dreamings."

Angrily, Sosaria Thota stabbed out a hand, touched the rods and stars. They glittered and gleamed and gave off a faint music. Niall swayed to the dizziness that touched him, and then he stood on rocky ground riven by great fissures. Upward from those fissures came white steam.

Yet in the near distance, Niall could make out grassy slopes and trees heavy-hung with fruit. His head turned as he stared about him. This land was like a paradise. The air was sweet, it was filled with birdsongs.

"Carry that," snapped Sosaria Thota, gesturing at the rods and stars.

She turned and walked away from the rocky ground, moving steadily toward the nearest grass. Niall bent and lifted the rods and stars and carried it easily in his muscular arms. Only when Sosaira Thota halted did he set it down.

"Who intrudes on Abaddon in his domains?"

It was a whisper from the very air. There was no shape around, nothing which could have spoken. Yet the words rang in his ears, and he knew that the witchwoman heard them too, for she stiffened and glanced around her.

Was it his imagination, or did her beautiful face mirror an inner fear? No matter. She flung back her head and cried, "I come for help, Abaddon. I am Sosaria Thota, who worshipped you long and long ago as the father of all demons!"

"I remember."

"Then aid me now, great one! Restore to me those lands which once I ruled."

There was laughter all about him, Niall realized, as though the very air itself were amused. Slowly that mirth died away and there was a silence.

Then: "If I do this which you ask, what is to be my reward?"

"Anything you ask."

"Then this is my demand: that all men shall adore me, on your world. There is to be no temple to any other god or goddess. I alone — Abaddon! — am to be sole god."

"It shall be done."

Niall stirred restlessly. Was this to be the end of his world as he knew it? He had heard of the powers of Abaddon, they were whispered of by priests and initiates of other gods and goddesses. He was The Black One, the Dark Destroyer. All power was his, he was supreme among the evil ones.

His hand touched the hilt of his Orravian dagger and he half drew it. Yet he knew that he could never use steel against Sosaria Thota. It was an order that was impressed upon his very brain by her wizardous arts.

Around Sosaria Thota the air seemed to glow, to brighten intensely. Swiftly that brightness shrank until it encompassed her body and then seemed to merge with it. She turned her head and stared at him, and now it seemed to Niall that *another* was inside that body, looking out at him.

"Come, man," said the witchwoman, and gestured at the rods and stars.

THE INTERNATIONAL DM SEARCH IS ON! AGAIN!

THE DRAGON is compiling a list of DM's to be published sometime in the late fall.

If you wish our list to include your name, simply send it to us on a postcard or 3X5 note card. If you wish to be listed for a game other than *D&D* please specify. If no game is listed, it will be assumed that it is the one and only — *D&D.*

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Obediently, Niall lifted the contraption. There was an instant of intense cold and darkness, and then they were standing again on the vast stretch of sand that formed the Baklakanian Desert.

Sosaria Thota was looking around her, as though considering. Niall watched her closely, then reached for his dagger. Could he throw it at her? An old warrior with whom he had served in the forces of Sensenall to the south, had taught him the way of it. Still, he was long out of practice.

He hefted the dagger in his big hand. Should he risk it?

Na, na, Niall. That is not the way.

Niall of the Far Travels froze. Nis heart leaped and thudded inside his great chest. Was that Lylthia? Or — to give her her true name — Emalkartha of the Eleven Hells? But — Lylthia was dead!

Sosaria Thota turned and stared at him and at his dagger. Her lips curved into a grim smile. "Are you thinking of using that against me, man? You cannot, remember. I have forbidden it."

Niall said, "Our meal is done. I was about to slice off steaks.

He knelt about the flames and lifted off the piece of meat he had brought from the fort. He sliced off pieces and handed one to the witchwoman. She accepted it, her grey eyes grave on his face, as though she weighed whether or not to let him live.

You shall live, Niall. Neither Sosaria Thota nor Abaddon himself know this world. It has been eons since they were here. You do know it. You are invaluable to them.

Niall hunkered down, chewing his steak. He was at peace, within himself. Now that Emalkartha was back with him, nothing else mattered.

When he was done eating, he wandered away from the little camp to attend to the horses. He fed them, he gave them to drink from the waterskins he had brought from the fort. Then he turned and looked back at his campfire, where the witchwoman sat before it. staring into its flames.

"What shall I do?" he whispered.

Nothing. Only — wait.

Niall came back to the fire, stretched himself out and wrapped his cloak about him. Sosaria Thota glanced at him, but her eyes were lidded so that he could not see their great depths.

Niall slept.

He woke in the early dawn, when the sun was tinting the desert sands a reddish hue. Sosaria Thota was standing beside the dead embers of the fire, her body rigid, arms by her side, her head flung back. Beside her was the machine with the tall, thin rods.

Her hand touched it.

All about them there was a shifting of light, of vision. No longer was there any sand but instead green grass grew, and at some distance, Niall could see a great white wall and behind it the tops of buildings.

Yet this vision lasted only a few moments. It shifted then and faded away, and only the desert remained. Sosaria Thota sobbed.

"What is it? What's wrong?" she wailed.

"I do not understand. Always the amanathor has performed as you requested. It has great powers, has the rod-thing."

That had been the voice of Abaddon.

"I saw my little city, I did. And the lands that were wont to surround it when I lived —before."

"Yet now they will not stay. Some other power is making them disappear, setting at naught the power of the amanathor."

Anger touched the witchwoman, distorted her features. "You are the father of evil, the grandfather of all devils! Help me!"

"I — cannot. There is great power here allied against us. I am seeking for it, but it is hidden."

Soft laughter rippled through Niall's mind.

They search for me, yet they do not suspect you hold me within you, as Sosaria Thota holds Abaddon. Nor shall they.

Sosaria Thota began to pace up and down, kicking sand with her feet at every stride. Confusion and fear touched her face. She halted at last and stared down at Niall where he sat on the sand.

"What power rules this desert, man? Answer me!"

"No power I know of. It is only a desert."

The witchwoman shock her head. "No. There is something here. Some great and tremendous strength, against which I am helpless."

Her hands clenched into fists. Her green eyes blazed. "It shall not

defeat me. Nothing shall do that. I will not permit it."

She turned and walked away, toward the pack horses and their burdens which Niall had put upon the ground last night She walked up to the metallic thing that held the huge glass globe mounted on golden balls. Her hand touched it, set the balls in motion.

Faster those golden balls rotated. Faster, until they seemed almost to disappear. And as they whirled, the interior of the glass globe darkened, then brightened. Tiny lightnings shot outward from it.

Break it, Niall!

Sosaria Thota stood with her back to him. Niall lifted out his Orravian dagger, balanced it a moment, then hurled it with all his strength. Straight for that glass globe hurtled the steel blade.

claaanngg

The sound of breaking glass was loud in the desert stillness. Niall saw pieces of that globe fly to and fro through the air.

Sosaria Thota whirled and screamed.

Raw was her fury, black her rage. Her arm lifted and she leveled her fingers at him. From the tips of those fingers flaring blue light sped at him.

Sped at him and —

Parted as that light was about to touch him! On either side of him it went, and faded out.

The witchwoman stared, mouth open and eyes wide.

"Who are you?" she whispered. "What are you? No human could so turn my power."

Niall found himself saying —knowing that Emalkartha was making his lips and tongue fashion those words, "It is useless, Sosaria Thota. Even your evil gods cannot help you. Can you, Abaddon?"

Her last three words were bugled, ringing clearly and loudly. Sosaria Thota shrank back as if hit, and fear lay written on her beautiful features, distorted now by terror.

"You are a demon, a god," she breathed.

Niall said, this time in his own voice, "I am only what you have named me. A man."

She shook her head so that her long golden hair flew about her head. "No! You are more than that. You have driven Abaddon from me. He has fled away, back into his own lands. He has left me to face you alone."

In a broken voice she asked, "What seek you of me?"

"Your death, Sosaria Thota."

She leaped at him, fingers curled to claw at him. With one sweep of his arm, he hit her, drove her reeling backward until she fell and lay upon the sands.

"You struck me," she breathed. "You lifted your arm and struck me. You could not. I had forbidden it."

Niall lifted out his sword. Her eyes went to it, to his face. There was insane terror in her eyes now.

The witchwoman whimpered, "No. You cannot. Look at me, man!"

Look you, Niall, as she commands.

Those grey eyes fastened on his, as though they would devour him. Had not Emalkartha been inside him, he would have done what those eyes were bidding him to do: lift out his sword, put its point to his chest, and fall on it.

Yet he did nothing more than stand there, staring back at her, his sword in his right hand.

And then Sosaria Thota whimpered. Her eyes grew bigger, as though something within his own eyes were speaking to her. Slowly she rose upward, to stand before him.

As she did, Niall lifted his sword and pointed it at her, as an inner voice commanded. His blade began to glow whitely, so brilliantly that its glare blinded him.

That brightness gathered in the steel, focussed at its point, became a ball if incandescent luminescence. Sosaria Thota shrieked, the agony of death alive in her throat.

From his sword that blazing radiance leaped forward, straight at the witchwoman. It hit her, seemed to burst so that it enveloped Sosaria Thota. For an instant, her body was outlined within that shimmering refulgence.

A voice inside that brightness wailed.

Then the whiteness was gone, and the witchwoman with it.

Niall stood alone upon the sands, with only the horses to keep him company. He lowered the sword, and was aware that there was wetness on his forehead. He shook himself, like a great bear newly wakened from his winter sleep. Then he sheathed Blood-drinker and looked around him.

Emalkartha was gone from inside him —

Yet even as he turned, he saw Lylthia standing a dozen feet away, laughing softly.

"I thought you — dead," he whispered.

"And so did Sosaria Thota. I wanted her to think that, Niall, for she had sent one of her messengers to slay someone whom she suspected of being in the fort."

She strode toward him and he opened his arms and caught her to him, kissing her soft red lips hungrily.

When she could, she said, "We shall spend a few days together in the fort, Niall. Before you return to Lurlyr Manakor and tell him that the danger here is done with. Eh? Would you like that?"

Niall gave a great roar of laughter, lifted her high on his chest and began to kiss her even more hungrily.

GENCON XII Status Report

Yes, there is going to be a GENCON XII, and it's going to be at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside (August 16-19). You remember the place-big, brown buildings on top of a hill, surrounded by an 1800 acre campus, smack dab between Racine and Kenosha, Wisconsin — a great place to hold a game convention: save for the fact that all bridges in the area were under repair and that some malicious wizard had thrown a Permanent Invisability on it. Well the bridges have been repaired, and since we are sending out maps to all the people we know of who might possibly want one, there should be no problem in finding GENCON this year. (I hope!) If by chance you lose your map or never could find "X marks the spot," just remember "Take I-94 to Highway E. Turn east and stay on E until you come to Parkside. Turn back if you come to a BIG lake."

As far as sleeping accomodations are concerned, we sill NOT have any sleeping facilities (Dorm Space or Flop Space). We will be making block registrations with four large motor inns in the area but you will be responsible for making the specific room reservations. In addition we will have a complete listing of all motels within 5 miles of Parkside, including their rates in the Convention Catalog. The Convention Catalog will be massed mailed to everyone we know or have heard about. (Yes all The Dragon subscribers get one). If you want to make sure you are on the mailing list, please drop us a post card, at GENCON XII, attn. Joseph G. Orlowski POB 756 Lake Geneva WI 53147.

Pre-registration fees will be $10.00 for the entire convention. The "at door" price will be $15.00 for the entire convention and $5.00 per day. All pre-registration requests must be postmarked by July 25. This is to allow us to mail ID badges, convention schedules and other material to you before the convention. When you get to the convention all you need do is show your badge to the people at the registration desk, who will note that you made it and make sure you know how to get to the game registration area.

Right now I'm looking at GENCON XI tying to determine problem spots that need to be corrected for this year's GENCON. Problem spots determined so far are Game Registration, Complaint Procedures, and lighting in the Dealer Area. If you have any more problems that you spotted, please drop me a line.

Joseph G. Orlowski
GENCON XII Coordinator

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