The Dragon

#36
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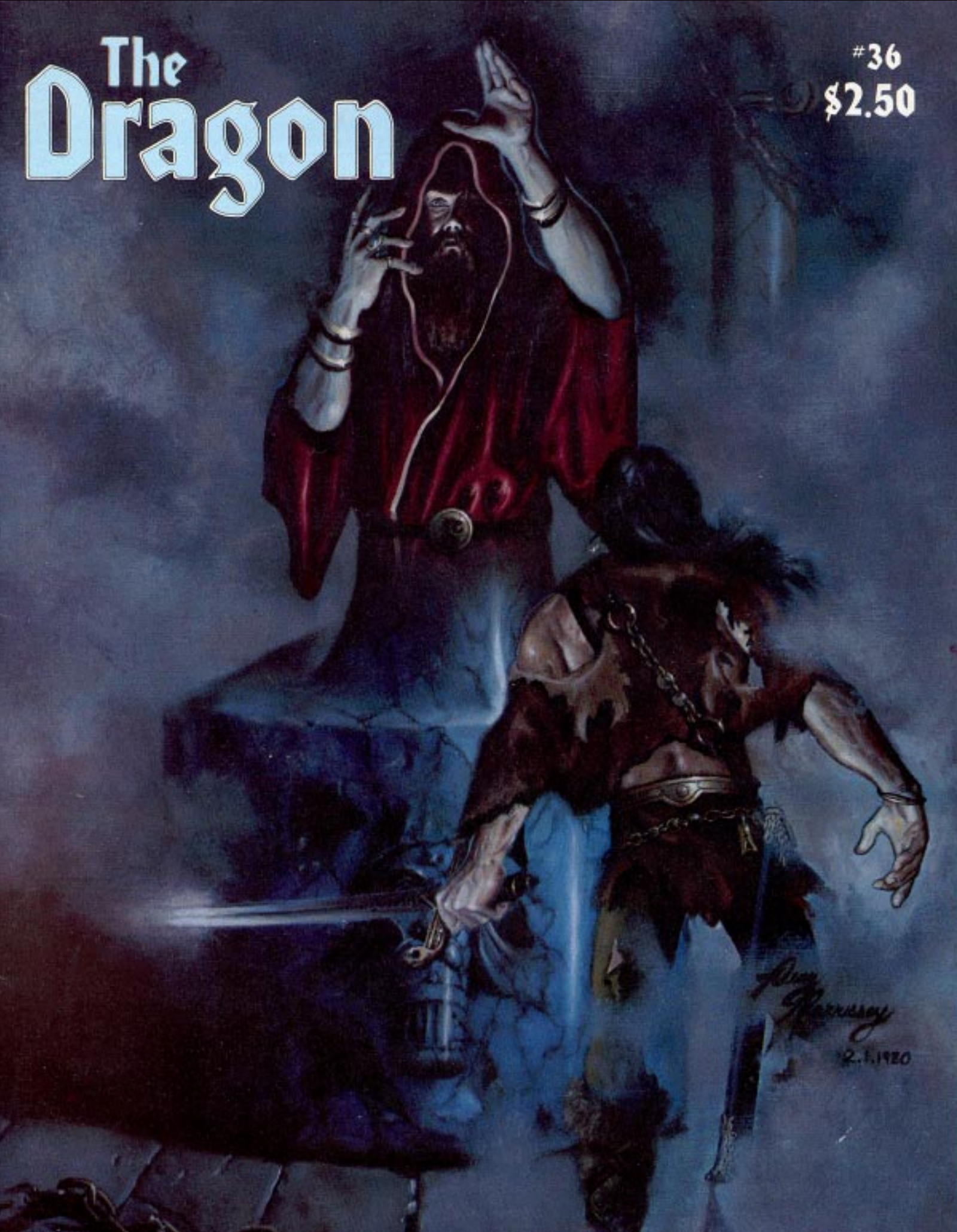

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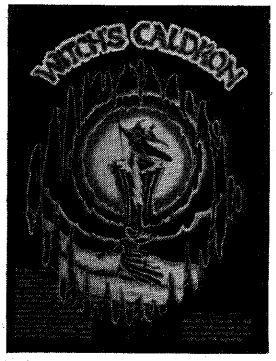

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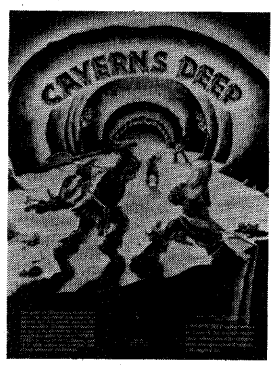

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Cover art this month has been rendered for us by long-time contributor **Dean Morrissey.** Inspiration for Dean's painting came from this month's adventure of Niall of the Far Travels, **"The Cube from Beyond"** by **Gardner Fox.** Title page and interior art are also courtesy of Dean's talented hand. Gar will have further accounts of Niall in upcoming issues of *The Dragon,* so don't go 'way.

This month *The Dragon* welcomes game designer, advertising agency executive, and new publisher/editor of *The Space Gamer,* **Steve Jackson.** Steve (in my opinion) makes the game he designed even greater with his variant **"Stellar Conquest for Two."** It is our hope that Steve will find time in his busy schedule to contribute to *The Dragon* again in the future.

Up on a Soapbox this month is **Larry DiTillio.** Larry examines an aspect of D&D not integral to the game, but important nonetheless, as his article "Painted Ladies and Potted Monks" relates to the older player/younger player relationship that has been discussed under "Out on a Limb" over the past few months. Readers should also examine **Dragon Rumbles** as an introduction to Larry's piece.

There's a little something for everyone in this month's issue. **Samurai** fans can get the lowdown on the game from the designer, **Dan Campagna. Divine Right** players can check out this month's installment of **Glenn Rahman's Minarian Legends,** where we get the history of Immer. Historical researcher extraordinaire **Michael Kluever** gives us some background on the Mongols of the 13th century.

DM's will want to read **From the Sorcerer's Scroll,** where **Gary Gygax** details **Conan** a la our **Giants in the Earth** series. Speaking of GITE, the dynamic duo of **Schick** and **Moldvay** this month give us Rafael Sabatini's **Captain Blood,** H.P. Lovecraft's **Richard Upton Pickman,** and Thomas Burnett Swann's **Silver Bells.**

Also of interest to D&D players will be **Bill Fawcett's** article on experience points. Those of you with a taste for the Old West will enjoy **The Fastest Guns that Never Lived—** *Boot Hill* characters from the Lone Ranger to Clint Eastwood.

A new column debuts this month with the first of **Bryan Bullinger's *Squad Leader*** scenarios. Go to most any convention, and you're likely to find Bryan there playing or running a *Squad Leader* tournament. I've lost count of all the titles he's won.

And, continuing our regular features, we have **Sage Advice** from **Jean Wells: Len Lakofka** discusses high-level AD&D pantheons in **Leomund's Tiny Hut; The Fantasysmith** has a "skull session" in his Notebook; **John Prados** examines game complexity in the **Simulation Corner;** and **Mark Herro** gives us another lesson in computers in **The Electric Eye.**

Next month, it's module time! We'll be presenting the 2nd place IDDC entry (and detailing the rules for the 2nd **International Dungeon Design Contest,** as well—those of you who missed the first contest, or have new dungeons to submit, here's your chance). Also on tap for next month is the **Mapping the Dungeons** DM listing update, and the debut of a new illustrated fantasy adventure strip, **"Jasmine,"** by Darlene Jean Pekul, better known as **Darlene.**

And (for the record), for those of you who are reading *The Dragon* for the first time this month, and might be wondering about pages 23-30, Happy April 1!—Jake

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If your mailing label says TD 36 this if your last issue . . . resubscribe

game . . . 3c: a situation that involves contest, rivalry, or struggle; *esp:* one in which opposing interests given specific information are allowed a choice of moves with the object of maximizing their wins and minimizing their losses. . . .
Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary

The foregoing definition says many other things as well, but that portion is most germane to our style of gaming

Nowhere in any of the definitions of "game" is there any age specification. Therefore, there is no inherent connotation that games are for juveniles, any more than games are for adults.

When considering mainstream games, the parlor type beastie, if you will, there have been few games, other than those utilizing cards, that were specifically aimed at adults. There have been hundreds of games aimed directly at juveniles over the years the balance has long been in their favor.

There has been, either by design or appeal, any number of games that have had appeal to both juveniles and adults over the years—MONOPOLY being perhaps the prime example. Other games. such as chess. require either an adult mind or a rather precocious juvenile mind.

Traditionally, wargames have been somewhere in that grey area in between. While designed for more mature thought processes they could be enjoyed by precocious juveniles such as I once was.

Along came D&D® which made the grey area murkier. Originally designed for miniatures buffs, who at that time were mostly adults it became the focus of fascination for all ages.

Some months back, we started a discussion through *OUT ON A LIMB* that addressed the problems encountered with the wide disparity of ages of players in D&D AD&D®. Sadly, it sort of petered out and some of the more Interesting aspects were only skimmed over or neglected entirely.

The camps are sharply divided, with a form of "age-chauvinism" drawing the boldest lines.

One side, older players, wants nothing to do with "kids" whatsoever The other side, younger players, wants to know why they are being discriminated against and looked down upon. Without going into specifics. both sides have their points, both pro and con. There is a large middle-ground group that manages to mix.

I have always felt that age preference depended upon the individual involved, on a case-by-case basis. The exuberance of youth and the stodginess of maturity have never been good bedfellows. It has always been necessary to seek some acceptable middle ground. The game club that I was involved with at the University was not immune to the problems under discussion. There were perhaps half a dozen younger members who were made welcome; their peers were not. We made our decision on the basis of the individual's maturity and behavior. If he was continually loud and disruptive, he wasn't welcome. By the same token, when an older player showed the same traits, he was given the same choice as the younger: Clean up his act or leave. A couple of the youngsters became known as "characters" in the behavorial sense, along with a couple of their older counterparts. To this day, whenever any of the "old gang" get together at GenCon or some other con, and we get to swapping rememberances of adventures past, those same youngsters are in the thick of the conversation, having been an integral part of our group. I'm delighted we had them, as they often brought in fresh insights and ideas from young minds unsullied by convention and "the real world."

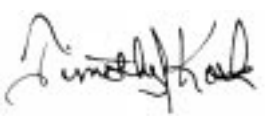
Unquestionably, some younger players do not fit into the scheme of things in some older groups. That same enthusiasm mentioned earlier can sometimes damn them.

Beyond the concerns of group compatibility, there exist other considerations to this apparent problem. For one thing, young minds are more impressionable than older minds, both consciously and subconsciously.

This month, we are printing an article on one of these more inconspicuous considerations on page 8, under the *Up On A Soapbox* head. I hope that everybody sees and reads it, as the author has treated a very provocative topic quite interestingly.

Every one of us who does or has run a campaign should consider the author's points.

We are hoping that article will revive some discussion on this problem that has no easy answers. If you form an opinion on the topic, please share it with us, so that we may share some of them with all the readers.



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Out on a Limb

They don't exist?

To The Editor:

After reading Bert Calfee's letter in TD #32, I decided to throw in my two cents' worth concerning Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser in your "Giants in the Earth" column (TD #27). You report Graywand as a +2 sword, and Scalpel and Cat's Claw as +1 weapons. Actually, there is no Graywand, Scalpel, or Cat's Claw. I refer to the quote in "The Prince of Pain-Ease" *(Swords Against Death):* ". . . they habitually stole their possessions, even their swords and daggers, which they always named Graywand and Heartseeker and Scalpel and Cat's Claw, no matter how often they lost them and pilfered replacements. . ."

I do not mean to be picky or snobbish, but I am certain that most DM's would like to be accurate if they use these two characters.

By the way, why wasn't "Giants in the Earth" in TD #32? It is my favorite column in your excellent magazine.

Matt Lussenhop—Minneapolis, MN

Mr. Lussenhop has a good point, but receives an answer similar to Mr. Calfee's. I called one of the authors of Giants in the Earth, Lawrence Schick, for an opinion, and he explained that the plusses were given to the weapons to represent their effectiveness as they are used in the world of Nehwon. Rationale? Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser could steal magical weapons, couldn't they? The point is, the plusses were necessary to have Fafhrd and the Mouser exhibit their superiority over "normal" D&D and AD&D characters. The same effect could have been obtained by giving the pair plusses to hit with their normal weapons. But it is easier to rationalize a benefit due to magic than an arbitrary "plus to hit" given to one character and not to another of the same level.

Mr. Schick also reminded me that Giants in the Earth is subject to interpretation, just as are all the variants/NPC's for D&D and AD&D. That doesn't mean characteristics can be changed indiscriminately without affecting play balance, but it does mean if you don't like one rationalization for a given effect, you may interpret things differently, so long as the effect is constant.—Jake

'Congratulations'

Dear Editor:

I have just bought TD33 and have decided to subscribe. My reasons are not primarily those of Mr. Pickett, but rather the *price changes!* But you must admit the flattery (#30) is true.

You have, admittedly, dropped your best article and postponed what would (a touch of Divination there) be equally good until only those fanatics like me would remember it existed. You have also started/returned/continued some articles/tradition that make *The Dragon* stand out as well as its namesake in a 40x40 room. I speak of: Bazaar of the Bizarre, Dragon's Bestiary, Finieous, Wormy, Leomund's Tiny Hut, Sage Advice, and your numerous fictions—not to mention 1,001 one-shot greats like "Where the Orcs Are" in TD30. Congratulations.

But why the #%$&@¢ did you have to drop Giants in the Earth when it was one of the best things to ever happen to player-reader-DMs like me?? You haven't run out of subject matter-or readers—yet. How about something from Gor, *Sword of Shannara,* more Jack Vance, Moorcock, or the ever-popular Tolkien? Your last was the best ever, but also the last. Thought you'd wind it up with a bang, huh? The only bang you'll get is when my friend the wizard drops a Meteor Swarm in through the window! This is not *hate mail* —I hope! I just want to break your necks for—never mind.

As Dastardly Deeds &Devious Devices is coming, and you gave us "ample" warning when you introduced it, I am not mad at you on that. I have sent in three of my best to that and am eager to send more. Do you want them? And my new ones are a lot better balanced.

The Dragon is getting better all the time! At one point I called at my local hobby shop and found that it wasn't in. The next day—10 minutes after it opened—it had arrived and was already sold out!!

Finally, two suggestions: first, the "news from the college" approach in *Clerics take note—no swords means NO swords* was an idea well worth continuing. Would you show me some more such looks into the training of characters?

Secondly, an idea for TSR Hobbies: publish a set of booklets on character classes. These would contain selected information on the class, with clarifications and guides to roleplaying the class. But not spell explanations, please! Keep the price more or less equal.

Ken Hughes—Ann Arbor, MI

Ask and ye shall receive! Actually, it's not quite that simple-in fact, we already had Giants in the Earth scheduled to return to the magazine before we received Reader Hughes' letter There was never any intention to drop Giants in the Earth permanently, it was merely suspended for a while for space considerations. Rest assured, it will be around on an "as-regular-as-possible" basis for some time.

DD&DD premiered in TD #34 (February) and will be continuing as long as interest and submissions continue. And, yes, Ken, we'd be happy to look at any DD&DD material you care to send That goes for the rest of you with devious and dastardly ideas, too.

The "my local hobby shop sells out of magazines too quickly" complaint is, unfortunately, a common one. We've tried to help out by telling the retailers that they can return, for full credit, any unsold copies of The Dragon—we can

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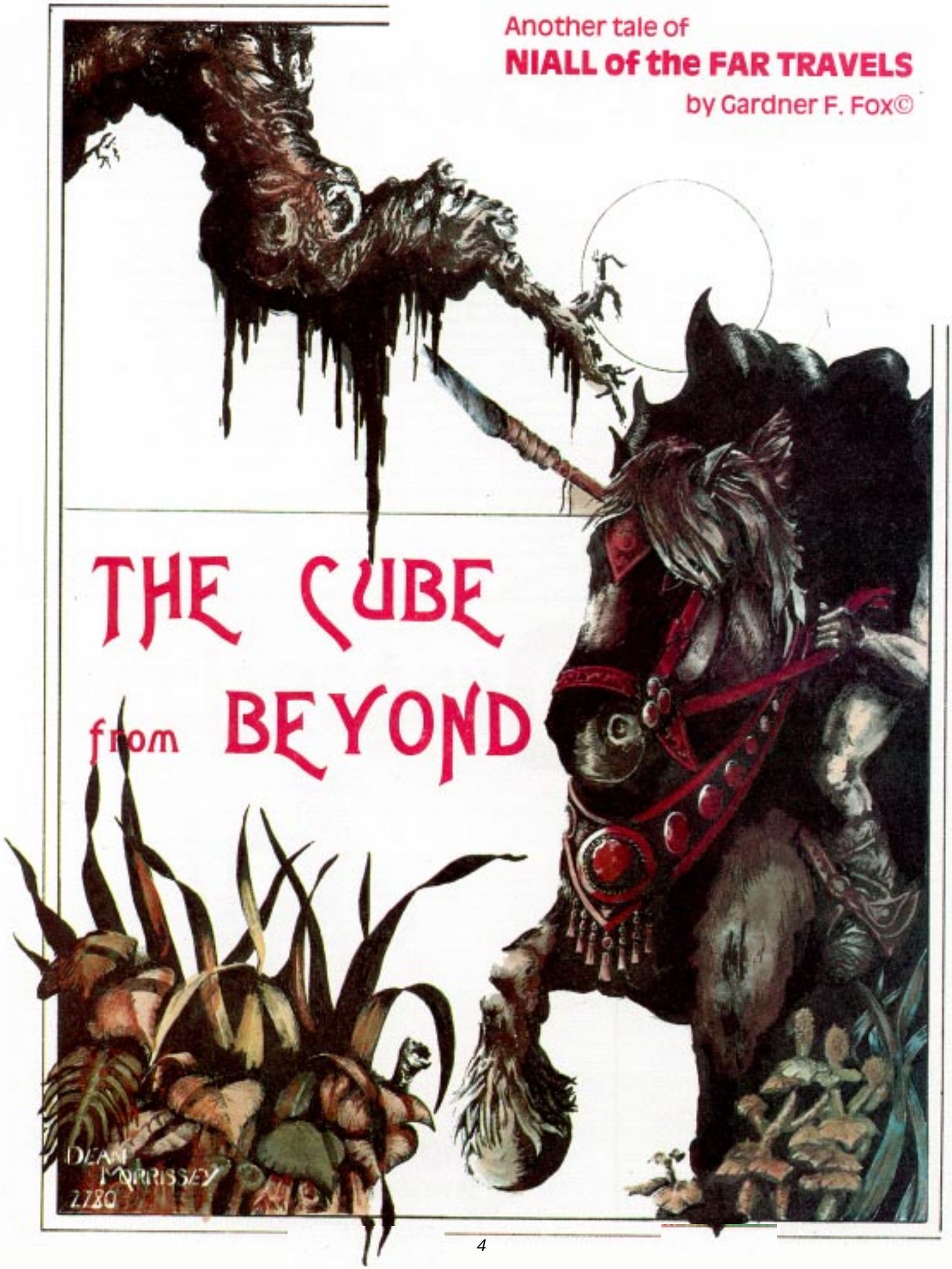
Tell them you saw it in The Dragon

Another tale of
NIALL of the FAR TRAVELS
by Gardner F. Fox©

THE CUBE from BEYOND



1.

Sword in hand, Niall of the Far Travels raced down the long palace corridor. All around him in this city of Bar Gomal, rising and falling in cadence, were the sounds of battle. As general of the armies of Lurlyr Manakor, lord king of Urgrik, he was leading his men against the stronghold of Thavas Tomer, magician-king of this strange land which threatened the safety of Urgrik itself.

For three weeks, his army had besieged the high walls of Bar Gomal. For three weeks Niall had hurled the might of his army against those walls. Only this morning, under shelter of a storm of war arrows, had he been able to mount to the top of a scaling ladder and lead his men to the ramparts.

Now Thavas Tomer was a doomed man. He had fled down the halls and corridors, seeking sanctuary—where no sanctuary was to be found. At his heels had come Niall, his great sword Blood-drinker in his hand, seeking to make an end to this magician-king who had slain and raped and robbed all those against whom he had sent his mercenaries.

Now the end was close.

A flutter of a cape, a brief glimpse of a sandal, and Thavas Tomer was gone around a corner. Where was the man heading? To throw himself from the top of a tower? Now he was mounting a curling stairway toward the very topmost part of the palace.

Niall went after him, grinning wolfishly. Already the sounds of battle had died down. The mercenaries in Thavas Tomer's employ did not want to die for the man who had hired them. Seeing that the battle had turned against them, knowing that their commander had fled, they would be throwing down their arms.

Up the staircase Niall went, always upward.

He came at last into a small room, the windows of which looked out over the city and the plains stretching in all directions beyond it. Thavas Tomer was standing beside a large blue cube dotted with a myriad of bright little specks that looked like imprisoned stars.

The magician-king was tall, almost as tall as Niall. He was broad of shoulder and lean of waist; he looked more like a warrior than a magician. There was a cunning smile on this thin lips.

"No more, Niall," he rasped. "I flee no further."

"Then surrender."

Thavas Tomer laughed: harsh, mocking laughter it was, as he drew himself to his full height. "You can never make me surrender, general. Na, na. I have a way to get away from you, even here and now, with you so close."

His laughter rang out as Niall started forward. With the ease of a trained athlete, Thavas Tomer leaped upward to the top of that big cube— *and began to sink into it.*

Niall rasped a curse as he too leaped upward. His warboots landed on top of the stone, and remained there. Surprised, Niall stared downward at the cube. It was hard, adamantine.

How in the name of Emalkartha of the Eleven Hells had the magician-king disappeared inside it? For he had gone into it, Niall had seen that much. With the sharp point of his steel sword, Niall jabbed at the stone. It resisted his every effort.

He sprang back onto the carpeted floor, paced around the queer cube, eyeing it suspiciously. He replaced the sword in his scabbard, put both big hands to its edge and tilted it. The cube was heavy, but it moved under the pressure of Niall's great muscles.

There was no trapdoor under it, just the thick rug.

Obviously, then, Thavas Tomer was inside the cube. Ah, but how could that be?

Magic, of course. There was no other answer.

A sound swung Niall around. Half a dozen of his men were crowding into the room, weapons in their hands. Niall grinned at them wryly.

"He's inside that," he growled, gesturing at the cube, "by some trick of an evil god. Pick it up, carry it back down to the ground. I'll take it back to Urgrik with me. Thavas Tomer isn't going to escape from me that easily."

He watched as the burly man bent to their task. He walked with them, supervising their carrying of the cube. His eyes never left its blue surface, never turned away from the tiny white stars imprisoned inside it.

Out in the sunlight, he watched as other men came with hide wrappings and bound up the cube inside them. Ropes were knotted all about the hides, and then the whole thing was lifted onto a cart.

"We'll take it back to Urgrik with us," Niall growled. "I don't want it unguarded or unattended at any time. If Thavas Tomer comes up of it—by some devil's trick—run your spears into him."

He detailed men to watch the cube, standing about the wagon. No one was to be allowed near the cube, under pain of death for the men watching it. He had the king-mage in his grasp, and Niall was not about to let him go.

For a full week he remained in Bar Gomal, razing the city and scattering salt on the gardens which had furnished it with food. When he finally gave the signal to march back to Urgrik, Bar Gomal was only a memory.

Niall rode at the head of his troops, the captured mercenaries, the women and children. Everything worth taking that had been in Bar Gomal was being brought back with him. From time to time Niall stood in his stirrups and directed his gaze at the farm cart which held the strange cube. It was still wrapped as he had seen it wrapped. There had been no sign, no hint of Thavas Tomer.

They came into Urgrik to the singing of the crowds watching as he rode at the head of his armed columns. Music blared everywhere, mingled with the shouts of the populace. They screamed in delight as the captives swung past, at the sight of the vast treasures that had been in the city of Bar Gomal.

"Thavas Tomer," they screamed.

"Where is he?"

There was no reply to that, and Niall made none. Only to Lurlyr Manakor would he make answer, and he did not know whether or not he would be believed. In one way, his failure to bring the king-mage back in chains spoiled his sense of triumph.

Yet when he stood before the king and made his report, he knew that he was being foolish. Lurlyr Manakor came down from the throne and put both hands on his shoulders, smiling at him.

"You have done what no other man could do, Niall. You have destroyed Thavas Tomer, you have made him flee into some magical place where—we hope—he shall remain forever."

Niall shook his head. "You are too kind, majesty. I fear such a man as Thavas Tomer. I doubt that he'll be content to stay lost inside that cube. I mean to find a way to bring him to justice."

Lurlyr Manakor shrugged. "The cube is yours. Do with it as you like. But for now, forget everything but the victory celebration. There are many of my noblemen who wish to congratulate you."

Niall brought the cube to his little palace and set it up in an otherwise empty upstairs chamber, cutting away the ropes that bound the hide to it. For hours he would stand and study that cube, and he noted that the tiny white dots moved, that they followed a set pattern, swinging through the blue spaces of the cube as do the stars on which he looked every night from a balcony of his palace.

There was no answer to his problem.

For a time he lost himself in the feasts and banquets which Lurlyr Manakor held to honor him. He listened as men made much of him, and he smiled as the lovely women of the court flattered and flirted with him. Always at the back of his mind was the strange cube and the man it held in its grasp.

Then on a warm spring night, he had his servants carry the cube down to the courtyard and place it in a cart. He himself took the reins of the big draft horse and urged the horse and cart through the city streets until he came to a section of the city that was close to a hundred centuries old.

Here the houses leaned against one another, weak with age, and the windows were narrow and small. There were slops in the street here, and ordure, and Niall told himself that only for one reason would he come to these haunts.

He came down off the cart and knocked at a narrow doorway. When the door opened, he saw no one there, but in the flickering light of a fireplace, he saw a stout old man wrapped in richly ornamented robes, lying back in a vast chair.

The old man chuckled and waved a hand. "Enter, Niall of the Far Travels. What brings you to my humble abode?"

Niall moved into the vast room with his pantherish stride and came

(Turn to page 48)

STELLAR CONQUEST for TWO

The Perseid War:

A new scenario by the designer

(Editor's note: Stellar Conquest, one of the classics among science fiction games, is bound to become even more popular now that a boxed version of the game is on the market. One of the "drawbacks" to Stellar Conquest, howver, is that it is generally only playable by four people.

Steve Jackson, who designed the game, offers the following solution to that problem: a two-player scenario for Stellar Conquest, which he has entitled "The Perseid War.")

Steve Jackson

"Ceti Control to scout Arday. Come in, Arday." The radio operator's voice was weary. He had been repeating that call since his shift began.

"Still nothing, sir. They should be in Pherda system by now, but there's no answer."

"Well, keep tying, lieutenant. Draw on emergency base power and increase your cone a half-minute. They may be investigating an outer planet."

The operator complied and began his chant again, without much hope. There were any number of things which could keep a scoutship from finishing a hop in the expected time. Most of them were fatal. And there was no way for the scoutship—or anything else—to transmit or receive an n-space message without a mass of at least planetary size nearby. A Thompson unit that could function in unstressed space was theoretically possible, but in practice. . .no way. Which meant that a ship between stars was totally out of touch. And it looked as though the Republic scout Arday, which should have arrived at the blue star Pherda two days ago, would never arrive at all.

"Well, carry on, lieutenant. Call me if you What's that?" But the lieutenant, blessed with quicker reactions and his own set of earphones, was already in action. A reply was coming in! As the operator adjusted dials, a flickering light burned steady green, and a thin gabble became a whisper, and abruptly, a voice.

". . . restricted channel. This is a Comarch restricted band. Identify yourself at once."

The operator shook his head in puzzlement and started to reply, but the general behind him had already grabbed the mike.

"What do you mean, restricted band? Cut the clowning, Arday. This is Liparia, commanding Ceti Base. Now report."

The answer came back immediately, like all such messages, transmitted through n-space with no detectable lag.

"Bootis Control to unauthorized transmitter. Identify yourself at once. There is . . ." The voice broke, and resumed in a less formal tone: *"Ceti* base? Where the hell are you?'

The general looked at the operator; the operator looked back. Then the general spun, shouting an order over his shoulder: "Keep talking! Whatever you do, don't lose that contact! And don't say anthing!"

The lieutenant was much less disturbed by the contradictory orders than by the fact that, for the first time in his six years of military life, he had seen a general running.

* * *

The Perseid War is a two-player scenario for *Stellar Conquest.* It assumes that two colonies, each unknown to the other, have been established in the Perseid Cluster, far distant from any other human-occupied areas. Discovering each other by accident, they become quite perturbed.

* * *

"This cluster is ours, and we've got a right to it!"

Thank you, sir. And now back to our studio."

The interviewer's voice vanished from the vision set, to be replaced by that of a commentator: "To recap, then: The seeds of the current crisis were sown nearly two hundred years ago, when our colony ships took the Big Jump from Alphacent. We may never know what colossal mistake caused two nearly identical colony expeditions to be sent to the same cluster—but it happened. Our own fleet left on March 3, 2606, and made landfall here on Diphda on July 34, 2788. But a year after we left, the colonial fleet of the Comarchy Project jumped from Terra for this same cluster—and, because the ships made a closer breakout, set down two years before we did. They colonized the world of Dubhe IV, and have since planted thriving colonies around the suns of Scorpii and Bootis—just as we have colonized Ceti and Canis.

"Now, space is big, and certainly we can work something out in time. But right now, both governments—and both peoples—are up in arms. There seems to be no doubt that the Comarchs honestly believed that they were setting out for an unclaimed cluster—and they attach great importance to the fact that they got here first. Of course, our claim

was duly registered with Colony Central on Alphacent. . .but until somebody builds a transmitter that can talk to the home worlds from here, we have to work it out between us. Or take the next ship home. Ha-ha.

"After all, we speak the same language, and our governments aren't too dissimilar. And naturally the original colony groups were almost identical. Once all this furor dies down, we should be able to cooperate with the Comarchs in building up our cluster."

* * *

SETUP

The sides have very similar opening positions. The Republic of Diphda has a TR-80 (80 million people) at Diphda, a TR-60 (40 million people) at Ceti, and another TR-60 (40 million people) at Canis. No Star Cards are drawn for those stars; there are no other usable worlds at any of them. In addition, the Diphda player may immediately "scout" —that is, pull Star Cards for—the stars of Ross, Lalande, Mira, Luyten, Kapetyn, Ophiuchi, Rastaban, Indi, Eridani, Sirius, and Deneb. This information is not given to the Comarchy player. The Republic has already scouted these stars in order to plan for further colonization, but has no people there yet.

The Dubhe Comarchy has a TR-80 (80 million people) at Dubhe, a TR-60 (40 million people) at Scorpii, and a TR-60 (40 million people) at Bootis. The Dubhe player may immediately pull Star Cards for Barnard, Kruger, Mirach, Wolf, Arcturus, Hamal, Polaris, Procyon, Wezen, Vega, and Altair. The Diphda player does not receive this information.

Each player starts with ten scoutships (some, no doubt, being quickly converted cargo ships) located anywhere on his three colonies. Neither player begins the game with Bonus IUs or military force of any kind; they both started with planned, peaceful economies. But when those worlds start cranking out warships . . .look out.

* * *

"Although 'arbitration' talks continued until 21.79.4 (early AD 2830), both sides had long since begun to gear for war. The inability of the two governments to agree on either a cooperative arrangement or a simple division of territory has been laid to many causes, but the most probable explanation is simply the feeling of "manifest destiny" discussed in earlier chapters. Simply put, neither the Republic nor the Comarchy was willing to cede its "own" territory—and most citizens on both sides, from the man-in-the-street to Rossaka and the Council, felt that their own group was the rightful owner of the whole Cluster—and that the others were interlopers, pure and simple. Conflict was inevitable.

The first shots of the Perseid War were fired on 21.93.9, when an Escort-class Republican ship, the Tara, fired on a Comarchy scout entering the Sadir system. S-102 (captained by Harv Tel-Masso, who commanded a dreadnought at the Third Battle of Aurigae [q.v.] and received the Order of Extreme Merit there) aborted its scouting mission and escaped undamaged. Two months later, a Comarchy attack squadron struck Lyrae, destroying two of a group of ten Republican CTs orbiting Lyrae II and forcing the rest to flee. Matters went downhill from there. . .

—Lubayoff, History of the Perseid Cluster, d. 13/99

* * *

SUGGESTIONS FOR PLAY

The Perseid War invites—nay, demands!— a style of play rarely seen in standard games of *Stellar Conquest* —the "General Motors." Both players start out with a tremendous amount of production, and the ability to increase it rapidly. By the second production turn (Year 8) each player should have mapped most of his side of the board, and discovered and colonized at least a couple of NM planets. It is not quite possible to build a Dreadnought on the first production turn; on the second, it's easy. DN fleets will dominate the game, but players will find Escorts and/or Attacks (depending on personal preferences) useful also . . .as cheap distracters, occupation forces, behind-the-lines raiders, and general nuisances.

This is definitely a game of production; you can always roll your enemy back by sheer force of numbers. Most players dream of building a couple of DN groups every turn—of having ALL the technological developments—of piling RIU on RIU. It doesn't happen in regular games. In this one, it can and does.

This also tends to be a positional game. (For a much more positional variant, try, playing without the USR development. Forcing ships to stay within 8 hexes of a friendly colony throughout the game will change things radically.)

In general grab as much territory as you think you can hold on to; try to keep your opponent off balance, and force him to use his ships to defend what he has already. If he beats you to several good worlds and starts building PFSs, you're in trouble: Unless you've been spending your time building up a technological advantage . . .

* * *

"So we're besieged. So what? The relief force is only a couple of years away, and we can spend the time building up industry. The Commandant knows what he's doing."

"Well, I still don't like it." A thumb-gesture over the shoulder, jabbing at the strangely glimmering sky. "They tell us that thing's invulnerable. I don't feel invulnerable. Twelve Archie ships up there, just waiting. What if we get a saboteur or something?"

"Not twelve. Sixteen. Didn't you see the news? They ran in a bunch of new ones, and some of the old batch left. Last night, it was. Big article in the fax this morning."

"Yeah, I remember reading they'd picked up drive-traces coming this way. More little friends, eh? Great."

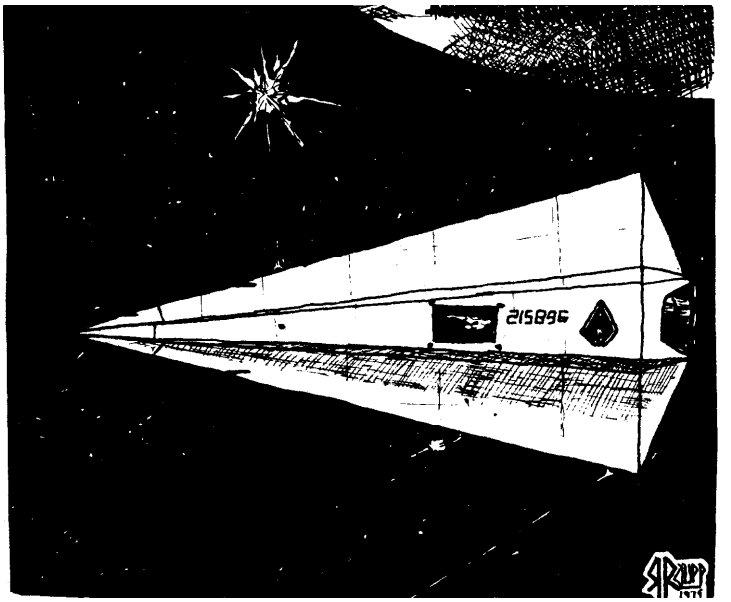
"Not so little. A couple of them look like something new. Commandant's office isn't saying anything, but anybody with a scope can see them. Bigger than colony ships, and kind of egg-shaped."

"Well, that's just great. We may be here a long time. If . . ." A flash and crack interrupted his words. "What's that? Lightning? We never get storms this time of year! Will you LOOK at that!"

A massive display lit the sky from horizon to horizon. Lightning danced from cloud to cloud and struck the earth in a dozen places at once. An aurora appeared, faint at first, then brighter. The watchers gaped in awe.

"Powers above! Come on. Let's get to a shelter."

"Huh? What for? Lightning?"



"Look! The screen's gone. I bet those new Archies did it."

"But it's theoretically impossible . . ." A fireball boomed on the horizon.

"And we're going to be theoretically dead if we don't find cover. Those ships are bombarding, and our missile bases are going to be shooting back, and I'm getting out of here. Come on!"

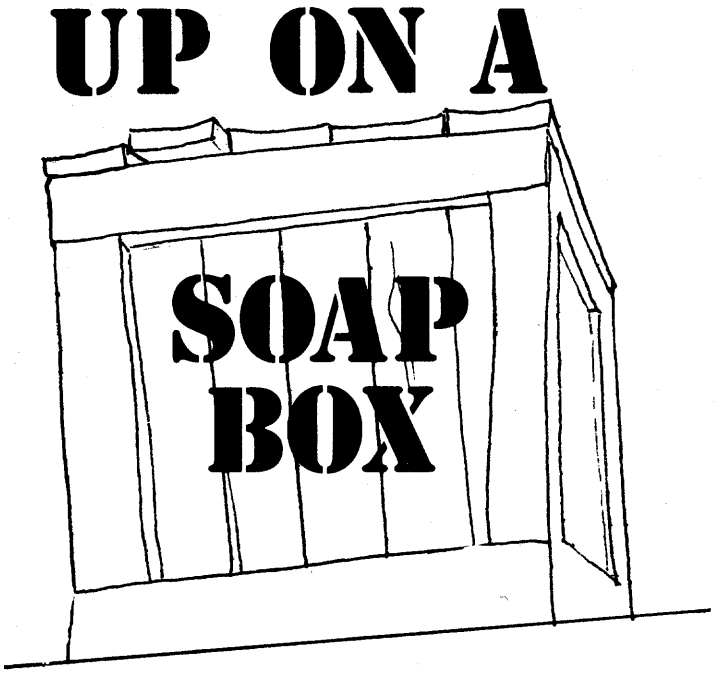
* * *

NEW TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS

None of these devices are necessary to the play of the game, but all add interest to either Perseid War or a standard *Stellar Conquest* scenario.

Weapons Systems Sequence, Level 3 *(SMB):* The Super Missile

(Turn to page 57)



Painted Ladies & Potted Monks

Larry DiTillio

"The room is illuminated by light of a provocative, scarlet hue. The air is musky, smoky, honey-sweet. A luxurious carpet of thick, black fur covers the floor and in the center of it is a pedestal which has a golden bowl affixed to it. The four walls are adorned with lurid reliefs of men, women and other creatures locked in all manner of sensuous embrace. An unseen voice speaks as the party of adventurers enters. 'Seek Ye Fulfillment?', it asks . . . "

This room is one of thirteen which constitute the first level of a dungeon adventure I call The Inn of Ootah. The purpose of it should be clear to even a hobbit-sized imagination. Once a party enters, the unseen voice offers them a choice of delicacies and if the heroes and heroines care to view these, then shimmering, colored forceportals open in the walls. Behind these portals exotic women and men (The E.R.A. already passed in my world) beckon seductively. If a character is interested, he or she renders payment to the golden bowl, there is a spurt of obscuring gas and in place of gold is a heart-shaped talisman that permits a single party member entry through the forceportal opted for. Once through, the portal closes and the hardy soul is left quite alone with the delicacy of his choice. What occurs then is strictly between me and the character who has entered, though of course he or she has the option to kiss and tell, IF and when he/she returns.

I originally constructed the Inn of Ootah as a personal campaign game. The participants in my campaign are all adults, well past the age of consent and fairly sophisticated in their approach to play. The room I have just described would cause them no shock or embarrassment, they'd simply take it as it was and "seek fulfillment" according to their mood.

Recently, however, I carted the Inn along on a trip to GrimCon, a fresh addition to the West Coast fantasy-gaming scene. I intended to run it for three friends who moved north from L.A. to San Francisco and who are all devoted *D&Ders* without a campaign to play in. My idea was to use my friends' campaign characters as a core group and recruit other players from those attending the con. This was easy enough to accomplish, but the resultant play left me with some rather heady food for thought, and this nourishment prompted me to share some conclusions with some of you older DMs out there.

As we all know, a large percentage of those who enjoy fantasy gaming are youngsters between the age of 12 and 16. They appear in gargantuan hordes at every con, madly seeking games in a fashion that is best described as True Chaotic. DMs in their 20s 30s and 40s often shun these kids as players, or patronize them contemptuously, attitudes I find distasteful to say the least.

Younger dungeon-delvers bring a fresh, uncynical viewpoint to the game that augments the fun of it, and if in their exuberance they tend to talk all at once this is understandable. Any adult DM who can't control 5 or 6 prepubescent lads by means other than the Instant Balrog Gambit should check out his own means of relating to people. Besides, there are plenty of players out of their teens who can be just as obnoxious (or even more so). By the same token, there are certain stumbling blocks inherent in DMing for younger players, particularly if you are as fond of role-play as I am.

Take, for example, that scarlet-hued room with the black carpet. When the party entered, my friends were instantly delighted, but the players I had "picked up" sat there with mouths agape. There were five of them, the oldest about 14, and it was painfully apparent that not one of them had ever encountered a dungeon room where outright sensual activity was offered. Ferocious monsters they could deal with, traps that sliced off limbs they could face jauntily, but painted ladies beckoning absolutely stunned them. There were a few nervous giggles and one kid, playing a Paladin, reacted with extravagantly Paladinish shock, covering his eyes to blot out the "filth" on the walls.

Nevertheless, a few moments later when a mage and a fighter (both played by my adult pals) essayed the shimmering portals to glean what, uh, "information" they could from the ladies within, this same Paladin grew extremely interested. I could see a struggle taking place within the lad, and sure enough, after a while he inquired if partaking of the "delicacies" would be against his alignment. His pals giggled some more, but the question floored me. I suddenly realized that here I was, 31 years old, the product of a, shall we say, "liberated" New York City youth, and this 14 year-old was asking me if an act of sex was evil.

For one frightening moment I was in a situation of responsibility that related to more than just a game of D&D.

Think about it, you adult DMs. Think how your fantasy activity touches your real life, then consider yourself at 14 when everything you did loomed large in the way you continued to live. If you'd been a D&D fanatic at the time, I would guess many of your attitudes toward right and wrong would have been molded by your game experience, even if only subconsciously. It flashed through my mind that in some way my answer would have an influence on this youthful Paladin and his friends as well, not in their game lives but in their actual growing up. Gad, save vs. responsibility!

The answer I finally gave wasn't profound but it was honest. I told him if he considered sex evil it was, though in my opinion it wasn't. He thought about it, still a tad nervous. He asked if perhaps he could go into one of the portals and not do anything. I allowed as he could, if he wanted to blow 40 gold pieces.

At about this time the fighter and mage appeared back in the room, both professing to feel "weaker" though both had had a "real good" time. The Paladin begged off and not one of the other kids had even dared to consider such goings-on, so the party left the room. The encounter, however, roamed around my greymatter for the remainder of the convention. I was having thoughts about D&D that had never occurred to me previously.

In the same game another incident occurred, again with that same Paladin player. This one involved a mysterious monk smoking a substance from a hookah which he offered to certain party members. My friends accepted somewhat overeagerly, while the Paladin again asked me that question. Was smoking a drug against his alignment? Now, I'm not a junkie, nor do I think drugs are of any benefit to teen-agers (no high is as good as your own natural openness to things at that age), but I have had a good deal of experience with a whole gamut of consciousness-altering substances and would be hard pressed to declare them categorically evil.

I therefore opted for the same answer regarding drugs as I had given regarding sex, namely, if he thought they were evil then they were. I myself did not consider them so. He obviously feared drug use less than he did sex (natural for a 14-year-old), because he took the toke offered. The result was a three-turn zombieized state during which he enjoyed some vivid, though not unpleasant, hallucinations regarding holy symbols and the like. Of course, he had to be walked around during this time and wasn't of much help when the party was attacked by two doombats shortly after.

"That'll teach you to get stoned on an expedition," said one of his friends self-righteously, but it didn't faze him. I think he actually enjoyed his pseudo-high, and this fact really set my brain machinery in gear. I had begun with a nice, amiable kid who seemed to hold the belief that sex and drug use were inherently evil things and in the course of our mutual gaming I opened his head to the POSSIBILITY that this was not always so. My personal moral viewpoint had been passed on in an unthreatening manner to a boy who might very well be influenced by it at such time as those areas crossed his life.

I fully realize that my Paladin friend is intelligent enough to make his own decisions in these matters; nevertheless, I can't help feeling that our role-playing interaction will have an effect on those decisions. In D&D we PLAY a character, but invariably that character contains elements of our own selves. For adults, those selves are already firmly fixed; for younger players those selves are still being shaped by EVERY experience they have, INCLUDING *D&D*. The game becomes not only a leisure activity, it becomes a teaching instrument as well.

A young man or woman running through an adventure charted by an adult is open to picking up attitudes of that adult in regard to certain activities. The most evident of such activities is killing. Every melee involves killing, generally in a black-and-white manner, i.e. those orcs are evil and deserve to die and besides, they'll slay us if we don't slay them. Fine, no problem. Most young players will never have to face a need to kill in real life, assuming that the powers that be are not insane enough to start another major war. Despite this, a DM should stress that killing is the least preferable solution to conflict, avoiding the tendency to glorify life-taking.

On the other hand, these young players will in real life face sexual encounters, drug use, racial prejudice, religious crisis, political corruption and numerous meetings with other human beings who may very well be of "evil" alignment. At the moment of such confrontations, all their experiences will carry weight, fantasy experiences as well as real. The more open-minded a DM is in providing such real-life simulations in a dungeon, the more his players will pick up reasonable attitudes toward the very real evils of life. Role-playing is meant to do this and *D&D* is a legitimate arena for espousing the good.

I don't mean you should forego the thrill of fang, talon, claw and sword, I only suggest you balance it with good role-play of a SIGNIFICANT nature. One good-aligned helpful character who happens to be gay can change a passel of bigoted attitudes that have no basis. Adding racial strains that are not lily-white to your world goes a long way in telling an impressionable youngster that black, brown, yellow, red and even blue-skinned people are not all that different and shouldn't be feared or hated. (If you think I emphasize this too much, take a gander around you at the next convention and see how many races other than Caucasian are present.).

Having the belief in a God or Goddess be the key factor in sustaining a player's life goes a long way in showing that religious faith can be of real value in the world. Use of a drug that addicts a character with horrible consequences says more than any dry lecture about the real dangers of drug abuse.

I am not saying you should go heavy-handed on this. Nobody's looking for a message in every dungeon room. The point is, a message can be delivered, light-heartedly and subtly, and it can HELP a person who has yet to go through what you already have faced.

We older DMs didn't have *D&D* when we were that age, but the generation following us does. They will learn from us, if we dare to teach. The result will be better, more imaginative gaming for all of us, and just possibly we might even build a real world where dice are the *only* means of killing and hatred is only vented on Evil High Priests. The power to promote weal exists. I intend to use it and have fun in doing so.

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Tell them you saw it in the Dragon

Conan!

E. Gary Gygax©

The Schick-Moldvay treatments of fictional characters from heroic fantasy and swords & sorcery have interested quite a number of adventure gaming enthusiasts, including this one. Having picked up a batch of new "Conan" books recently, I could not resist rating this "Giant in the Earth" in the same manner (or nearly so anyway) that Messrs. Schick and Moldvay have treated like characters.

Please be aware, gentle reader, that this rating is strictly subjective and done to the best of my current recollection; I have not gone back through all of the "Conan" books and re-read them to prove my accuracy. Nonetheless, I feel that the parameters are correct, and I hope you will be satisfied after reading them. Please let me know if you detect any *glaring* errors—and notice I emphasize the word *glaring;* I don't particularly care if you rate him as a 14th-level Thief or a 22nd-level Fighter, for there is no profit in quibbling over this sort of detail. For example, if Conan used a sling with skill in a story, and I have, in fact, omitted this weapon from the list of those he uses with proficiency, that is a *glaring* error! Read on and enjoy!

Notes Regarding Ability Statistics:

Strength shown indicates Conan's development from early manhood through old age. The transitions are, of course, gradual over the years shown.

Intelligence shown is that developed and used, the figure in parentheses is the potential, and until later life it was used only insofar as linguistic ability was concerned.

Dexterity is indicated at a peak during the earlier years when Conan exercised his thieving ability more frequently.

Constitution shown reflects only additional hit points; see also the section hereafter dealing with *Saving Throws.*

Charisma, being a reflection of personality and other factors in addition to physical appearance, often shows two ratings: The first of a dual rating is Conan's charisma effect upon males, the second shows his effect upon females. All ability statistics are based on the assumption that Conan was a prime example of the physically and mentally superior individual, maturing late, retaining peak form for a long period, and living longer than average as well. (Although REH never said anything about Conan's lifespan, I can not conceive of it being under a minimum of 100 years—barring something untimely, shall we say . . .)

Fighting Ability: The skill levels shown are matched, more or less, to the adventures Conan had during the period. He gained expertise more slowly between 20 and 30 years of age because of his practice in thievery at that time. The drop-off in level in later years is meant to reflect the effects of advancing age, and while hit points might drop off more, skill level would not drop below 9th level—say until 100 years of age, perhaps, and possibly not even then.

Weapons Proficiency: Conan's weapons are:

UP TO AGE 20 —axe, battle; axe, hand; dagger; spear; sword, long
20 TO 24 —*add* bow, long; sword, broad
25 TO 29 —*add* bow, composite; scimitar
30 TO 39 —*add* javelin; sword, short
40 & after —*add* flail; lance; mace

Thieving Ability: Conan has the *climbing* and *moving silently* abilities of a 10th-level Thief at age 15. As soon as he attains 1st level of thieving ability, the *climbing* ability increases by 1 level (to 11th) and so on until attaining 17th level of climbing ability (at 7th level of thieving ability); this skill is never lost. Conan's penchant for fighting and weapons prevents him from *picking pockets* and *opening* locks. His high dexterity gives him +10% *additional* bonus per point of dexterity over 18, however, for *moving silently* and *hiding in shadows. (See Special Abilities* notes below for additional details.)

Armor Class: Until his later years, Conan scorned body armor and shield most of the time. However, in battle or perilous situations where protection was available, he would usually don some simple protection

	Conan At Age —							
	15	**20**	**25**	**30**	**40**	**50**	**60**	**70**
Strength	18/76	18/91	18/00	19	18/00	18/91	18/51	18/01
Intelligence	12(18)	14(18)	15(18)	16(18)	17(18)	18	18	18
Wisdom	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Dexterity	18	19	20	19	19	18	17	16
Constitution	18	18	18	18	18	17	16	15
Charisma	15	15/16	15/18	16/18	18	18	17	17
Fighter Level	4	8	12	16	24	20	16	12
Thief Level	—	4	8	12	12	12	10	8
AC-Bonus	+4	+5	+6	+5	+5	+4	+3	+2
Move Base	18"	21"	21"	21"	18"	15"	15"	12"
Hit Points	52	108	132	143	167	144	123	104
No. of Att.	3/2	2/1	5/2	3/1	3/1	5/2	2/1	3/2
Damage/Att.	+4	+5	+6	+7	+6	+5	+3	+3
Spec. Att.	See Below							
Spec. Def.	See Below							
Magic Resist.	See Below							
Alignment	Chaotic Neutral (towards good)—						Chaotic Good (neutral leanings at times)	
Psionics	Latent: *Animal telepathy,* detection *of magic, precognition, mind bar*							

such as leather armor or a chainmail shirt. Conan would wear "Elfin Chain," but he would scorn wearing magic armor. In his Aquilonian period, Conan certainly wears full plate armor and uses a shield as well.

Number of Attacks: Conan's native ability and barbarian upbringing give him a great edge in combat, and this is reflected in the number of attacks per round he receives. He will always attack first in a melee round, and, if applicable, at the mid-point and end of the round as well.

Damage Per Attack: In addition to the damage shown (the standard strength bonus), Conan's swordsmanship enables him to wield a sword as if it were magic, even though he never willingly uses a magic sword. Below 8th level, the sword is treated as +1 for bonuses to hit and damage, from 8th to 12th levels it is treated as +2, and at 13th and above it is treated as +3. (This includes ability to hit those creatures subject only to magic weapons.) See also Special Attacks below.

Special Attacks: Gaining experience rapidly, Conan becomes a deadly opponnent—well beyond the average Fighter of the same level. Therefore, if he scores a hit which totals 21 or better after adjustment, he scores double weapon damage. Note that this does not apply to a blow struck from behind (which is unlikely for Conan, of course). Also, due to his early training and experience, Conan is able to hide so as to be 75% undetectable in underbrush or woodlands. Indoors or in the dungeon or similar setting he operates as a 4th-level Thief, even before becoming one, with respect to *hiding* in shadows. (See Thieving Ability above.) Due to all of this, Conan will surprise *opponents 50% of the time,* when such determination is necessary.

Special Defenses: There is only a 1 in 20 chance (50%) that Conan will be *surprised,* even by creatures normally having a much higher probability for surprise (see Psionics below). Conan's *saving throws* are always made at +4 on the die, and poison can not kill him, even if he fails the saving throw—he will take damage to within 1 hit point of death and fall unconscious. Finally, Conan regains *hit points* at twice the normal rate, with 10 hit points being recovered after a single day of rest. He is also able to regain lost hit points without rest, but he does so only at the normal rate, not double normal with a first-day bonus.

Magic Resistance: See Special Defenses above and *Psionics* below. If Conan is aware of magic being used against him, he gains a 25% magic resistance. He will always move to slay the foul mage daring to try such witchery against him!

Psionics: All of Conan's psionic abilities are latent. He does not understand he has them, and he never consciously attempts to use them. They only operate in stress situations or when he is in danger. *Animal telepathy* operates at 14th level of mastery, but it actually allows Conan to at best sense the emotions of the creature concerned, so it is more an *empathy.* He can, in turn, send his own emotions back to the creature 50% of the time. *Detection of magic* does not determine the type of spell. *Precognition* operates only in a "sixth sense" feeling of unease when something threatens Conan's life or freedom. *Mind bar* functions only against spell attacks. He can not be attacked psionically, as the talent is latent. Conan can not expend more than 30 psionic strength points per day.

Special Abilities: Besides those noted heretofore, Conan has the special ability of being able to fight equally well with either hand. He seldom uses two weapons at once, but if he does, this does *not* increase the number of attacks per round; it simply allows him to parry one opponent attack per round. It does not reduce his attacks per round. Conan can move at a trot all day long without becoming tired. In woodlands, Conan is able to conceal his trail so that it is 75% undetectable to the average woodsman (use 50% of normal Ranger chance and adjust accordingly). His vision and hearing are 50% above normal.

Secondary Skills: Hunter/fisher (at age 15); navigator (after age 25), sailor (after age 20); shipwright, boats (after age 25); teamster (after age 20). Conan can also determine the relative worth of any weapon by age 20 and the relative value of gems and jewely by age 25.

Pummeling, Grappling, etal.: Conan always gets a score of 6 on his *variable die.* Other differences are:

Pummeling: Conan's power and ability are such that any opponent is treated as *slowed* and a 10% bonus is always applicable. Conan's fist is treated as *mailed* when bare, as a *metal pommel* when mailed or using a wooden butt, and if actually using a metal pommel, he receives a 15% bonus. Conan can choose to make his pummeling attacks cause full damage.

Grappling: Bonuses for *slowed* do not apply here, unless the condition actually exists. Treat Conan's effective height as 7', and his *effective* weight as 350#. When at 19 strength, he receives a 10% strength addition. All grappling damage scored on the opponent is normal damage.

Overbearing: Conan is always considered to be *rushing leaping to attack* (15% bonus). At 19 strength level the 10% additional strength bonus applies. *Effective* height and weight are the same as for grappling. All overbearing damage socres is normal.

Weaponless Combat: Conan may elect to attack any opponent with his bare hands. Hits are scored as if he were attacking with a club, and damage is likewise determined, adding the appropriate strength bonus to each successful hit in any given round. In such cases, there is no option as to whether damage stuns or is normal.

I do not recommend that you rush to include Conan in your campaign for whatever reason—except, perhaps, to slay one or two brash characters who are too far out of line to accept gentle reproof. NPCs such as this are nice, though, for occasional encounters and as "heavy artillery" in case of extraordinary need.

As a word of further caution, remember that Conan will surely be greatly displeased if anything should happen to his star pupil, and then perhaps a Conan from a parallel world would have to be brought into yours-for real. (If you can swallow that, you probably play D&D!)

* * *

The hardcore Robert E. Howard buffs will probably blast me for saying this, but the new series of Conan books (Bantam) is well worth reading. The books are *not* REH, but they have sufficient flavor to be "Conan stories." After all, we all have slightly different personalities at times-as Conan does in these works. There are at least four titles available now, all prominently displaying the name, CONAN, in bold letters, so you can't miss them. Seeing as how I had to buy my copies, I won't give their titles and so on (if Bantam wants reviews in *The Dragon* they can ship freebies to us!).

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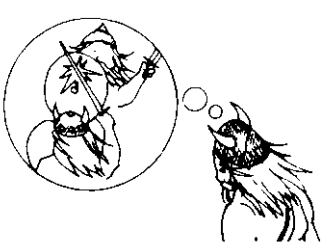

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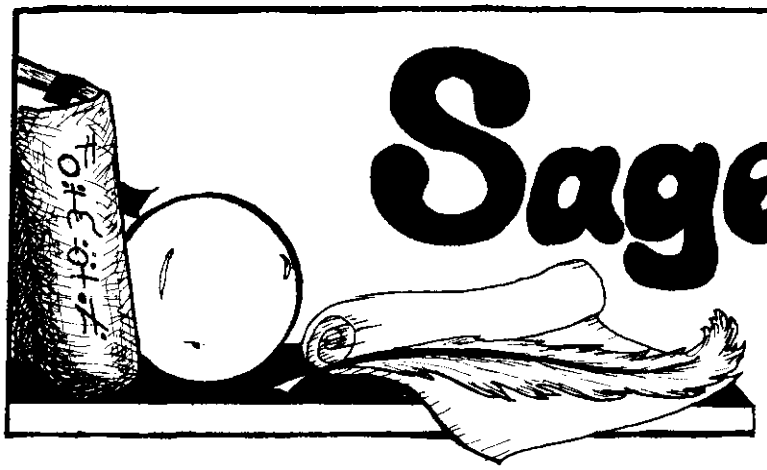

Sage Advice

from Jean Wells

Question: Must all characters that can use magic record their spells on books or scrolls in order to remember them?

Answer: If the characters are spell casters, yes; some of them must record their spells on books. Only Clerics and Druids get theirs each day through prayer and meditation. Magic-Users and Illusionists must keep one or more spell books. Some people like the idea of all spells being contained in one book, while others, including myself, like the idea of one book for each level of spells. How many spell books you will have and what size they will be is up to the DM of the game you play in.

* * *

Question: Can a Paladin put someone to death if the victim is severely scarred and doesn't want to live?

Answer: **Absolutely not!** The Paladin would try to find a reason for the person to live, if not with the world, then shut away doing religious work where those who benefit from the aid would not care what he looks like. The Paladin would also do all that he could to see that the character did not succeed in taking his own life.

* * *

Question: I am a 12th-level Paladin and I want to start a lineage. Is this possible? Can my Paladin get married, and if so, can he have children?

Answer: Well, most believe that Paladins practice celibacy. I firmly uphold this belief and will not allow my Paladin, Guinivere, to marry. This is a personal decision, or it can be made by your DM for you. Even if they don't marry, I am quite sure that Paladins are capable of having children.

* * *

Question: How does a first-level Magic-User get spells in his first-level spell book? Also, what obligations does he have to his master for his spell book?

Answer: A first-level Magic-User gets his spells placed in his spell book by himself or his mentor by way of a Write spell. This is the way he places all his spells in his spell books. As to his obligations to the Magic-User who was his master, that is between them. I myself am cleaning up after a 10th-level Magic-User's young black dragon twice a week in return for a book of third-level spells.

* * *

Question: Why can't demi-humans be Sages? Also, enclosed is a check for an order.

Answer: Demi-humans can be Sages. However, they are not as readily available as humans. Demi-humans are especially not interested in answering adventurers' questions. As for the check for the order: **DO NOT SEND ME ANY ORDERS OR MONEY.** I may work for TSR Hobbies, but I don't handle any money. If you have an order for *The Dragon*, send it to *TD* at POB 110, Lake Geneva VJI 53147. If it is an order for The Dungeon Hobby Shop, send it to 772 Main Street, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

* * *

Question: In the *Dungeon Masters Guide* it says that rechargeable items can be recharged and yet it says elsewhere that once they are used up, they can't be recharged. Please clear this up for me.

Answer: Any items that are rechargeable have to have one charge left in them to be recharged. To recharge them, you cast spells at them. One major problem with such items is that one is never sure how many charges they have.

* * *

Question: If you keep using a *Ring of Invisibility*, will you slowly become invisible forever?

Answer: My stars, no! That would make the ring too powerful. For something to bestow permanent invisibility to a character is making it much too powerful. Just go around doing anything you want without ever being seen? No, no?

* * *

QUESTION: If a party comes across a magic item, should one tell them it is magic? Would it feel magical?

ANSWER: Only tell the party that something is magic if they throw a *Detect Magic* spell on it. The only other way to find out is to pick it up and try it out. That might be dangerous, but that's the way it goes sometimes. Never, NEVER, tell them, "Oh gee, it feels like a +2 sword." Make them work to find out what it is, never just give anything away.

* * *

QUESTION: We had a bit of trouble last week with this problem: A lawful good Ranger was in our party and we came across a wounded Wyvern. He and the DM said he had to protect it from the rest of the party until it attacked him. What happens now?

ANSWER: I don't see what the problem is. If your DM said that the Ranger will protect the Wyvern, then I guess he will. All you can do is wait and see if the Wyvern attacks him or anyone else in the party. Simple matters similar to this are the sole responsibility of DMs. If a DM writes and asks this question, then I would give him an answer slightly different from yours. Otherwise, the DM is the final word in matters of his or her own campaign.

* * *

Question: Does the spell *Resurrection* require a Constitution percentage roll? If so, does the character lose a point from his Constitution?

Answer: Yes, to both. However, some DMs don't make you lose the point. They only want you to keep track of how many times you have raised, and once you have been raised as many times as you have Constitution points you can no longer be raised. This way, you don't lose the benefit of extra hit points if you have a high constitution.

* * *

Question: Why can't half-orcs be raised, especially if they are 90% human as the *Players Handbook* says?

Answer: *The Players Handbook* does not say that half-orcs are 90% human. It says that 10% of them (from which player characters are drawn) resemble humans enough to pass for one under most circumstances. Genetically, a true half-orc is always 50% human.

Half-orcs cannot be raised simply because they do not have souls. I went right to the top for the answer to this one, and according to Gary Gygax himself, "Half-orcs cannot be raised-period."

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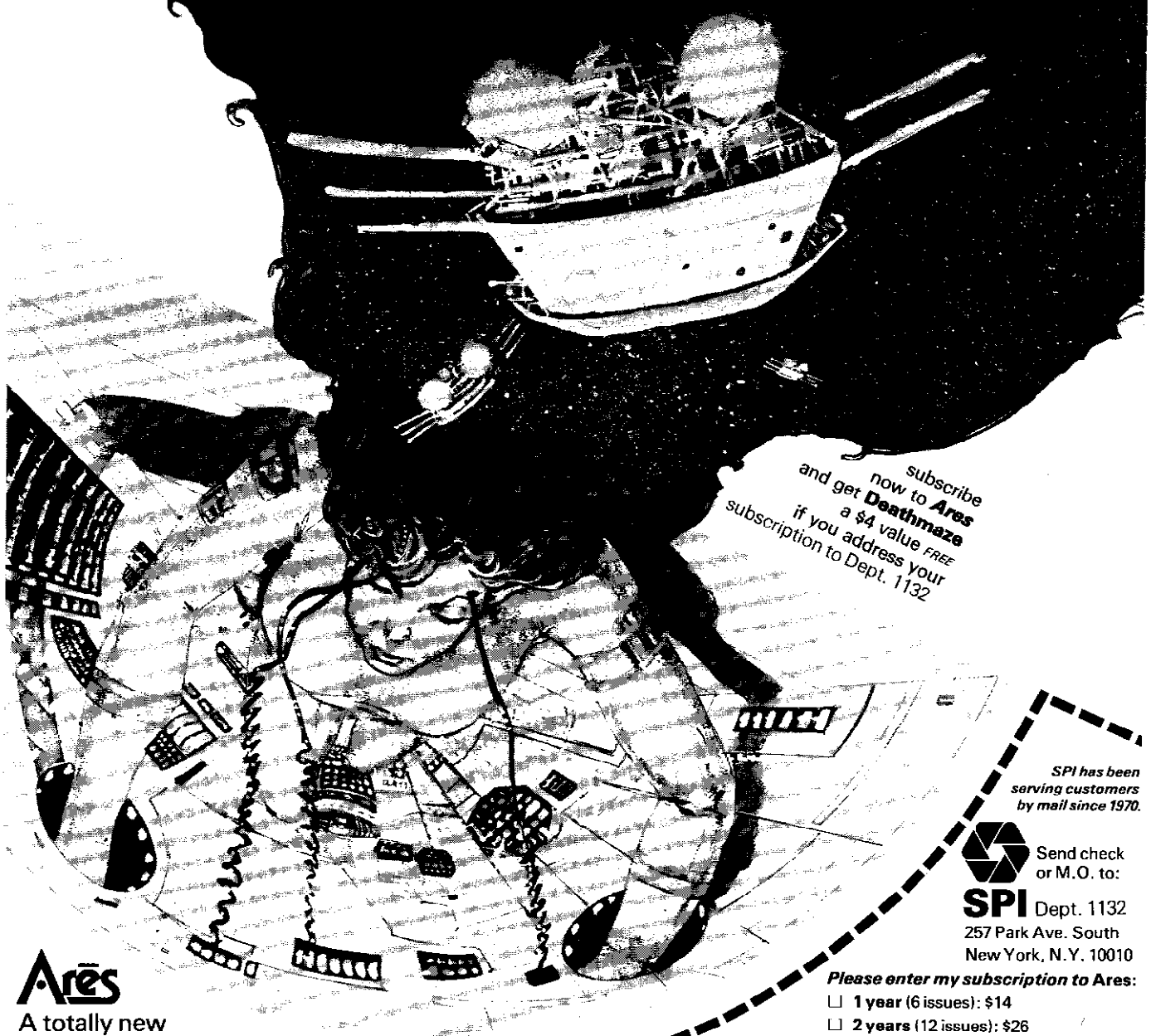

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Tell them you saw it in The Dragon

Honorable Designer speaks!

SAMURAI

Dan Campagna
Designer of *Samurai*

Samurai is a game of grand strategy covering the vast sweep of history in feudal Japan. As such it was necessary to reduce generations of conflict into the abstract to make the finished product both playable and fast-moving. Centuries of endless warfare and political machinations were compacted into a 20-turn, four-clan simulation of the incredible era of warrior supremacy represented in the *bakufu* (military government). It is a game of civil wars, clan treacheries, tidal waves, pirate raids, warrior monks, and sieges. The purpose of this article is fourfold: to describe the basic structure of play, explain the game's overall design, outline the major historical events, and suggest some strategies for play.

There are three main islands, Kyushu, Shikoku and Honshu, and five off-islands, Tsushima, Iki, Awaji, Sado, and Oki, located on the map. The major islands are divided into approximately 65 provinces and numerous minor fiefdoms (indicated by dotted white lines). A player must maneuver one of the four clans, Taira, Minamoto, Hojo, or Fujiwara, across these far-flung provinces and capture two of the imperial articles. If you can hold onto two of the four articles (Kyoto, Emperor, Heir, and Regalia) until game's end, you win the coveted title of Shogun (literal translation-"sent against the barbarians").

The order of play is simple. A die is thrown and the event table consulted for the possible effects of famine, earthquakes, Mongol invasions, and so forth. Then movement and combat take place, followed finally by a draw from the "fate cup" by which new holdings are acquired. The player battles his way through a maze of alliances, assassinations, and catastrophic natural events while striving to avoid the attrition/extinction of his clan. You only receive ten nobles per clan. If at any time all your nobles are rubbed out, you're subsequently eliminated from play. Dead nobles reappear in the fate cup as offspring of the previous generation, but it could be a while before you draw one. Attrition of clan strength in pointless engagements is the road to ruin.

Sprinkled across the board are locations in the form of castles, monasteries, cities, and port cities, each with its own intrinsic garrison strength. There are only three terrain types to contend with-seas, mountains, and open areas. Crisscrossing the major islands are trunk roads or highways that facilitate movement through the provinces.

Combat consists of normal battles, sieges, and personal challenges. Each noble possesses a samurai ability rating which fluctuates according to his success or misfortune in one-on-one swordplay with other nobles. Happy is the player who remembered to sharpen his blades before stepping onto the battlefield because in *Samurai* it's difficult to sort out the good from the bad guys.

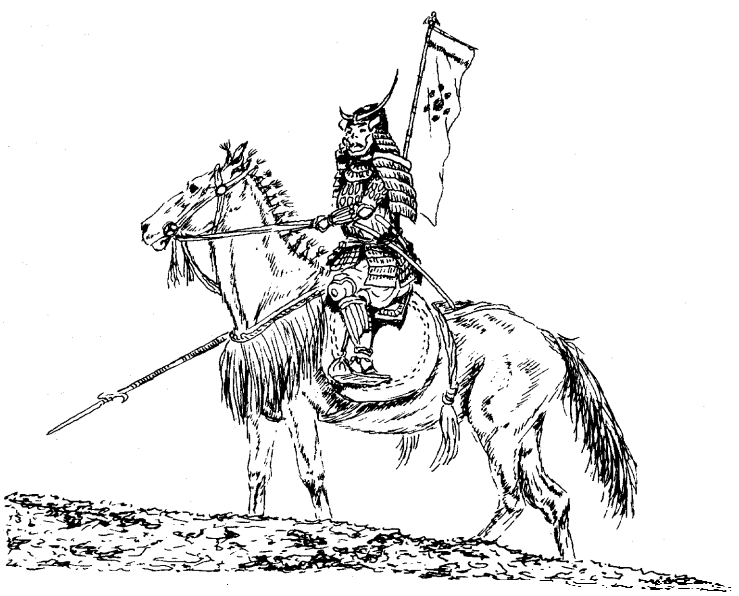
There are rules for ninja (cult assassins), Buddhist warrior monks, defection, *ronin* (freelance samurai), pirates (wako), and others. The faithful ally of yesterday may prove to be tomorrow's traitor.

In playtesting, the game turned into a seesaw struggle. On one occasion three players of almost equal strength had survived until turn 17. However, the Taira and Minamoto clans tried to simultaneously assassinate each other and both failed. Which brings me to the next curious point— *hari-kari (seppuku).* Under certain circumstances a player is compelled to order one or more of his nobles to commit ritual suicide. And a backfired assassination attempt is one of those cases.

Yet *hari-kari* is really the least of your worries. If you set sail on the high seas, you can be sunk by tidal waves, intercepted by pirates, or trapped by bad weather in some obscure port As if all this isn't tough enough, you may find your armies surrounded outside Kyoto because of a "call to arms" issued by the defenders within. A call to arms enables the occupant of Kyoto to levy troops in surrounding provinces and thus cut off besieging forces from an easy withdrawal. Samurai armies, by the way, are divided into six categories; swordsmen, mixed weapons, light archers, heavy archers, horse archers, and ronin. Obviously, some have higher offensive punch than others. A player's cumulative troop strength is not revealed until the moment of combat.

Separate charts are available to each clan for allocating troop counters, holdings, etc. Losses due to combat or siege are calculated by a percent or fraction of the whole. Therefore, no single battle can result in total annihilation of the opposition unless he sticks around to slug it out until the bitter end. This also places a heavy burden on the attacker. While he is occupied in a lengthy siege, for example, enemy reinforcements may arrive on the scene in time to sweep him away. Timing and proper execution are everything, plus an appreciation for random inevitability, i.e. peasant uprising.

The sequence of play, then, can be summed up in two sentences. Each player controls a clan whose principal objective is to seize and hold the imperial articles until game's end. If you can withstand the tides of



fate and fortune, you'll emerge as Shogun.

Feudal Japanese history is a complex affair. Scholars disagree frequently on specific dates and incidents. Plus, the terminology itself is a bit baffling. To help put the game in perspective it is useful to provide an encapsulated version of some of the more significant events and people in feudal Japan.

Heian Period (794-1185)

The Fujiwara established a strong central government after a protracted struggle for political supremacy with the Emperor. A military class began to develop during the reign of the Fujiwara regents because of the need for self-protection in distant provinces and the appointment of imperial family members (Taira and Minamoto) to provincial administrative posts.

Internal strife among the Fujiwara and challenges by the Cloistered Emperors culminated in armed conflicts within the capital. A ferocious civil war ensued between the Taira and Minamoto. Led by Kiyomori, the Taira triumphed in 1160. After assuming possession of Kyoto, the Taira continued the Fujiwara's state policies while the Minamoto regrouped for a final confrontation. Under Yorimoto, the Minamoto succeeded in killing off the Taira during the Gempei War (1180-1185). Finally in 1185 the Taira boy emperor and a substantial host of Taira warriors were drowned and defeated in a major sea battle at Shiminoski Strait. It was Yorimoto who in 1190 created the bakufu, the title given to the shogunal government in the province of Kamakura.

Kamakura Period (1185-1333)

Minamoto Yorimoto emerged as Shogun, leaving the emperor installed in Kyoto while establishing the real seat of government in Kamakura. The Mongol invasion armadas of 1274 and 1281 were repulsed by the kamikazi or "divine winds" (actually a fortuitous typhoon). Post-invasion discontent among the clans resulted in a bid for restoring imperial power by the emperor Go-Daigo. The subsequent struggles produced a split court with Go-Daigo ruling in the south and General Ashikaga Takaiji reigning in Kyoto.

Ashikaga or Muromachi Period (1336-1573)

Warfare between the rival courts continued for over fifty years. Go-Daigo was defeated at the Battle of Minatogawa (1336). The Ashikaga Yoshimitsu Shogunate (founded from 1368-1394) reunited the two courts. Disputes regarding Yoshimasa's successor led to the Onion War (1467-1477) and the devastation of Kyoto. Lack of central control gave rise to new provincial forms of fighting, the growth of fortified towns, and an epidemic of piracy in the 1550s. Oda Nobunaga eliminated the Ashikaga Shogunate and assumed power in Kyoto until his death in 1582. It was Oda's troops who, in 1571, leveled the Enryakuzi Buddhist temple at Mt. Hei.

Tokugawa Period (1573-1600)

In 1575 Nobunaga used guns against the Takeda clan. Assassinated in 1582, he was succeeded by General Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Hideyoshi attempted to expand his dominion into mainland China by way of Korea. The invasions of 1592 and 1597 were unsuccessful, resigned after initial victories to defensive positions outside Pusan. Tokugawa Ieyasu succeeded Hideyoshi after his demise in 1598, assuming total authority after Ishido's defeat at the Battle of Sekigahara (1600). Ieyasu exterminated the remainder of Hideyoshi's offspring at Osaka Castle (1615). Ieyasu was proclaimed Shogun and the capital moved to Edo (Tokyo). Consolidation of the Tokugawa bakufu resulted in almost 250 years of internal harmony.

Obviously, I have omitted a mass of details relating to individual incidents, the bakufu structure, and so forth. Samurai deals specifically with only these four periods beginning with the dissolution of the Fujiwara government and ending with Ieyasu's accession. The historical sequence of events listed in the rules booklet is a bit disarranged, but that is entirely my fault. The preceding outline should straighten out any inequities and give you a general impression of the flow of activities as they relate to playing the game.

Movement back then was a ponderous affair, so each noble is restricted to moving only 4 areas per turn. Personal combat was included because it represents the spiritual core of the samurai philosophy, the code of Bushido—better to die with honor than live without it. The available titles and offices, i.e. General of Invasion, are by no means comprehensive and many of them were often ceremonial. I selected only those that normally contained some troop strength and neglected the rest.

Neither are the four clans representative of all the families. I picked those four due to their dominant role in Japanese politics and warfare. Future rule revisions could incorporate such clans as the Ashikaga and Tokugawa. A second reason for keeping to four families is that it tends to speed up play.

The provisions for the use of ninja were perhaps the most difficult to balance into the design. Ninja assassins did not play a dramatic part in the shaping of history but their presence and their *esprit de corps* were too attractive to omit, so I have introduced three such killers into the game. Castles and fortified cities were given alternating garrison sizes depending on their relative value and location.

The three ingredients which make *Samurai* a tough game to dominate are *hari-kari,* natural events tables, and the combat resolution tables. The first can offset the most grandiose of ambitions. The second

is uncontrollable and frequently devastating in its effects. The third is more predictable but prohibits any sort of staggering losses due to battle. Twenty turns is sufficient to force the most cautious player to strike hard. For tournament play I would recommend no more than thirty turns. If you can't win by then, you never will.

Comparisons of Japanese and European warfare are inevitable but misleading. After all, it's hard to imagine the cream of French nobility ripping open their abdomens in despair after the debacle at Agincourt. The fatalistic attitude of the samurai stands in stark contrast to the rules of war observed by their dashing Occidental counterparts in their iron-laced costumes. By and large, Japanese warfare was far more brutal and cold-blooded. Keep this in mind when you play.

The fourth and final area to be discussed is strategy, and the hints and suggestions are aimed primarily at the novice. *Samurai* requires a radically different frame of thinking in order to win. And since this is a role-playing game of sorts, a player should start off in the proper mood. First, put on a silk kimono. Then sharpen your family swords and knives (Japanese model preferable—razor sharp). Next, turn on some soft atmosphere music (lots of bells and flutes). Lastly, uncork a bottle of

sake and pour a liberal dose into everyone's porcelain tea cup. After a fervent toast or two to the emperor's health, you're ready to play.

Success lies in audacious planning and fortuitous plotting. There are three key elements of play: positioning, assassination, and the O-ban. Positioning means knowing where to move and strike so as to achieve maximum long-term benefits. By game turn 3 or 4 a player should consider making the following geographic dispositions:

1. By guile or force, create a buffer zone of provinces and locations around your most potent noble(s). Few opponents will be eager, patient, or strong enough to punch their way doggedly through a ring of hostile outer territories just to hit at the interior. The attrition rates are too high. This buffer zone is your power base.

2. Try to link key sections of highway together by controlling those locations (i.e., castles) situated on roads, especially the vital stretches running along the coastline. This is an added bonus in terms of rapid movement.

3. *Samurai* is more than a game of territorial ownership. It's being at the right place at the right time with the bigger battalion. Use your troops to hem in weaker enemy nobles by blocking their access to other areas. Appreciation of the terrain, in other words, is worth extra strength in the long run.

4. Raise the clan banner anywhere that is relatively safe from immediate retaliation. Devour unguarded provinces and lightly manned locations. This maneuver is of enormous value in later efforts to outflank or envelop unwary opponents and serves as a secondary power base in the event of future catastrophes.

The trick with positioning is to move swiftly, strike hard and often and rely on the threat of force to intimidate weaker clans. Assassination, though, is meant to cover a spectrum of political options as they arise during the course of play:

1. Alliances—Unless there is a clan threatening your immediate survival, begin negotiations early with an eye for future deals made later from a position of power. Offer weaker nobles as hostages and pay particular attention to potentially dangerous clans that are open to compromise. Alliances serve several useful functions. They establish your credibility as a trustworthy ally. Alliances enlarge your supply of potential resources (why waste your men in sieges when your ally will do it for you?). They also reduce temporarily the number of clans you must worry about Of course, you break any alliance if it's to your distinct advantage to do so.

2. Ninja—Save the ninja assassins as your trump card in case things get desperate for you. Make sure a minor lord is assigned the use of ninja to keep bungled assassination losses to a minimum.

3. Ships—If you're fortunate enough to own a navy of any size, try exercising some good, old-fashioned "gunboat diplomacy" along the off-islands. The threat of amphibious invasion will often deter lesser lords from sallying forth from their island strongholds. If nothing else, your maritime muscle will be a factor in other player's plans.

The last ingredient is the O-ban or Great Guard. I refer to the O-ban here as a principle of play. It represents the construction of a mobile and highly lethal military force intended to withstand attrition, natural events, and player mistakes. Its components are:

1. A noble with a samurai rating of at least +4.
2. Two ships located on either side of the major islands.
3. A composite field army strength of 125-175 points, not including the ronin, who are subject to recall.
4. Control of at least one imperial article.
5. Control of at least one province within four moves of Kyoto.
6. Control of either a castle, city, or major port on each of the major islands.
7. One extra noble to absorb losses, act as hostage, etc.

The +4-rated noble is essential to insure successful combat by challenge. Ships are the mother lode, so to speak. Without them a player is restricted in movement and his bargaining powers reduced. A ship acts as a hedge against a terrible turn of events by giving you a back-door escape to the sea. An army of 125-175 points is large enough to lay siege, offer battle, perform garrison duty, and serve as a subtle threat to reluctant allies—"iron fist in a velvet glove." Control of a province within four moves of Kyoto permits a player to pounce on the capital city when the time is ripe, and is a handy place to plot strategic advances or retreats. A controlled location on each main island is a convenient nest for hoarding imperial articles and for regrouping, otherwise known as a place to keep one's head when everyone else is losing theirs.

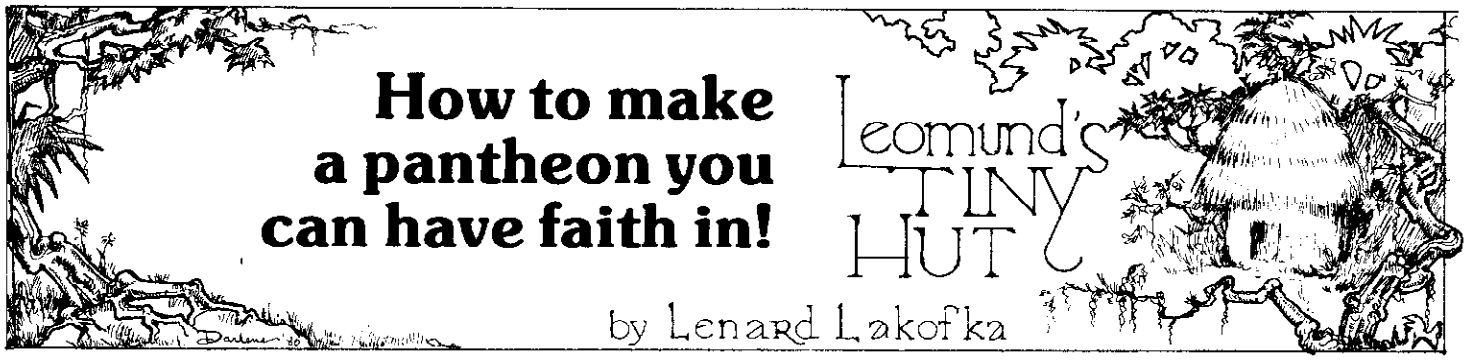
Properly built, the O-ban is more than mass in motion. It is a veritable juggernaut capable of wreaking havoc wherever it travels. But what do you do with it? Ignore Kyoto during the opening rounds. Try Lidell Hart's "indirect approach." Use the O-ban to seize key road sections (Yami to Miyazu, Kotmatsu to Sakata, Yamaguichi to Himeji). Split the Great Guard temporarily to assault small garrisons in neglected provinces while keeping a careful eye on the geographic utility of the province. Always ask yourself—what will I get in return for my efforts? If you're not entirely satisfied with the answer, look elsewhere for a more tempting target. Every attack consumes time and troops no matter how feeble the defense.

The O-ban is a standard around which your clan can rally in times of dire need. Don't overburden it. You end up with a lump of samurai meandering across the board like a typhoon gone astray. If misfortune hits that ungainly mass you'll have to begin anew. The O-ban is a compromise between overwhelming strength en masse and a disjointed confederation of clan nobles.

Position the Great Guard so as to isolate enemy forces located in extreme island tips. Block roads and force combat. Unless there's a grand alliance dedicated to your demise, you should meet with success. Strike at perimeter provinces surrounding Kyoto, with the ultimate goal of a massive offensive on the capital if need be. Don't forget that if you acquire two imperial articles early in the game you'll spend the rest of your turns fighting off all comers.

Be resigned to inevitable losses and remember that alliances were made to be broken. Be prepared to pamper your worst enemies and to slaughter your gentler relatives. This is not a game for the timid, and there is more than one road to Kyoto. Be unorthodox. As you sit sipping your sake, ponder on that ancient Japanese proverb—the passive noble who sits quietly contemplating the stars may well be a legendary samurai simply waiting for his sword to return from the shop. Good luck.

P.S.: For those of you who have read James Clavell's book *Shogun* it may interest you to know that the English navigator was a real-life character by the name of Will Adams. Washed ashore in 1600 near Kyusu, Adams spent the rest of his life as a personal advisor to Leyasu.



How to make a pantheon you can have faith in!

by Lenard Lakofka

"My 52nd-level Fighter/43rd-level Magic-User/27th-level Thief has the *Wand of Orcus* in one hand, the *Rod of Asmodeus* in the other and carries the *Staff of Zeus* between his legs! Besides that, I have just acquired the heads of all the Polynesian Gods, had them shrunken, and now they are this necklace I'm wearing! I can hardly wait for *The Dragon* to print another pantheon so that my best character can kill them off!!"

Sound like a Jim Ward article? Alas, just about every player in what I'd like to call "Circus D&D" has all of these trophies, and more!

Why does it happen? For a few reasons. The DM is too much of a nice guy. The DM does not give the Deity all of his/her/its powers. The players abuse the books and spells and the DM lets them get away with it. The magic items available are too powerful and too easily acquired, and so on.

I hope in this article to set things aright! Cheer up, Gods, it's your turn to get even!

I will begin by defining a Deity-Ranked Figure. Obviously, all Gods are Deities. However, you may go so far as to say that unless a God passes one of the following tests, he/she/it is only a minor God with less than full powers:

A. Has 180 or more hit points

B. Can cast some spell or has some power that is at 20th-level ability

C. Can fight or perform acts as a 20th-level Lord or 20th-level Thief

Those of lesser abilities are not "Deities." Thus, Baal, Orcus, Tiamat and Bahamut are "deity ranked" but Juiblex, Ki-rins, and Yeenoghu are not (though the three latter figures are certainly not to be taken lightly). The differentiation will become important when the powers of Deities are discussed hereafter. No Demigod is a Deity, though their powers are also formidable.

The difference between Deities, lesser beings and men (and other spell-casting creatures) is the basis of their power. Deities gain their abilities from the outer planes. Men and creatures of the Prime Material gain their powers, abilities and spells from the Inner Planes or from Deities. Lesser beings like Devils, Demons, Angels, Demigods, etc. might have some access to "Astral Power" (i.e. power from the outer planes) but it is limited both on the outer planes and on the Prime Material. Thus, when the basis of Astral Power is understood the method of playing these creatures is also cleared up.

A Deity-Ranked Figure has the greatest power on his/her/its own plane of existence. There his power is supreme and he is difficult to challenge. The reverse is also true. On the other outer plane his power is less, on the inner planes it is lower still and it is least of all on the Prime Material. Thus, while Deity-Ranked figures are powerful on "earth" they are super beings on their own plane.

In game terms this can become the following rule. A Deity on his/her/its own plane has full magic resistance (plus full benefit of any immunities) regardless of the level of the creature casting a spell at him/her/it! This Magic Resistance includes the powers of items (like a vorpal blade, artifact, relic, staff of the Arch Mage etc.) as well as breath and gaze weapons. In his home a God is supreme!

If the Deity goes to another of the Outer Planes, his/her/its magic resistance is measured against a Mage instead of a Wizard, i.e. versus 16th-level magic instead of 11th-level magic. Within the Inner Planes including the Prime Material, his/her/its magic resistance is standard, i.e. measured versus an 11th-level base. This rule prevents players from going to the Abyss, Hell, The Happy Hunting Ground etc. and totally negating the magic resistance of a resident creature because the character is 30th-plus-level (the concept of a 25th-plus-level player character is ridiculous anyway, but I'll leave that for another article).

On the other side of that coin, the farther removed a character gets from the Prime Material, the less his/her/its power. Therefore men are strong Magic-Users and Clerics on the Prime Material but lose some of that power on other planes.

Again, let's make that into rule form. A protection device, including scrolls, rings, cloaks, etc. will not function at all on the outer planes. Thus a Protection from Demon Princes Scroll is not worth the parchment it is printed on in the Abyss. (You might wish to reduce this slightly by saying it offers the reader a magic resistance of not more than 30% on that other plane!) In no case will it prevent bodily contact.

Thus, players can not trip off to the outer planes with a few scrolls and wreak havoc on the Gods/Demons/Devils! Magical items that have a plus to hit, to defend or to damage are also reduced. On the other inner planes they are -1, on the Astral -2 and on the outer -3. Items that convey an ability or power might lose it totally on another plane, e.g. a Cystal Ball is useless on the Elemental Plane of Air; A Girdle of Fire Giant Strength might be reduced to a Girdle of Stone Giant Strength on the Ethereal plane; a potion of any type might be destroyed by taking it to another plane (i.e. give it a s.t. versus magical fire or it is destroyed, for each plane passed through!)

You might go so far as to forbid some spells on some planes, like Fire Spells in the Abyss or Hell, Cold Spells in the Negative Material, Cause Disease in Heaven, etc. In this way Deities have real power in their own plane and the extra experience for killing them on their own plane has meaning. Furthermore, Deities should have increased chances to summon on their own plane, but enough said on this subject.

The Dungeon Master must become the Deity. To this end he/she must realize that a Deity acts according to four major principles: alignment, intelligence, ego and power. To begin with a Deity will not tolerate some punk getting smart with him/her/it regardless of alignment similarity! A God's ego should make a player character's dim by comparison! Simply do not take any garbage from smart players when you are playing a God! At the very least, just leave and give them nothing for their trouble! Even if Gated in, a Deity need not stay around and take abuse from a player character.

A Deity almost always has an intelligence of 17 plus, and usually it is 20 or more. Thus he will not do something meaningless or stupid when it comes to fighting. He/she/it will select his/her/its best power or ability and manifest it at once. Even if this means wholesale slaughter of player characters. Either the character shows respect (or a healthy fear), or he/she can go to Hell—perhaps very directly! A Deity will never forget its ability to teleport away without error and will not hang around when some player is beating it to within an inch of its Prime Material Life! If a Deity cannot win, it will escape.

A Deity will remain true to his/her/its alignment in all dealings. Thus if a player wins a granted wish from Asmodeus, that player had better phrase that wish with unparalleled caution! Thinking you have a Deity "by the short hairs" is an unbelievable mistake! Remember, these beings do not "die" in the classic sense, and almost all will have allies who will help them escape given a proper period of time or beings who will bring them back to the Prime Material by evoking them at a later date. Enmity between a player and a Deity can be the kiss of ultimate death. Even a lawful good Deity will seek to get back at an evil character who has forced something from him/her.

With all of this to consider, how can a player create a pantheon or a

new Deity? If an entire pantheon is required, it is a great aid to write out a detailed creation myth. This interrelates the Gods (Devils/Demons) and makes it possible to understand what their powers might be. At that point it is necessary to decide what various powers and abilities are unique and appropriate to the pantheon and what abilities are inherent in the being's characteristics.

It has been established in the *Monster Manual* that beings exist with a Strength of 30 (cf. *MM* page 44, Giants). Thus the most powerful God in a pantheon might have that strength or even 31 or 32. *(See editor's note below.*) The DM Guide (cf. page 145, Girdle of Giant Strength) gives some idea of what those numbers translate into. A logical extension might be along these lines:

Rating	To Hit	To Damage	Open Doors	Weight	Bend Bars/Gates
25	+6	+13	96 in 100	+13,000	100%
26	+7	+14	97 in 100	+ 14,000	100%
27	+7	+15	98 in 100	+ 15,000	100%
28	+8	+16	99 in 100	+ 16,000	100%
29	+8	+17	99 in 100	+17,000	100%
30	+9	+18	99in100	+ 18,000	100%

Note the MODERATE increase to prevent too much abuse. Remember that Giants themselves have a built in hit point range and "to hit" is partially assumed in their increased chance to hit due to their higher number of hit dice.

(Editor's note: The Monster Manual *has been amended, changing the strength range for giants to 19-24 instead of 21-30. This makes the giants' characteristics conform to the statistics listed in the* Dungeon Masters Guide *for the various Girdles of Giant Strength. Rather than alter the text of this article to conform to the revised figures, we attach only this word of caution: The intent of Mr. Lakofka's article is that no being should have strength greater than 1 or 2 higher than a Storm Giant, i.e. 25 or 26. Limiting a being's strength to 26, 25 or even 24 would fall well within reason, since the author projects no other ability higher than 25.)*

As Intelligence goes up to 19 or 20 or beyond it is necessary to decide what powers might go along with it. For example:

Rating	Know Spell	Minimum#	Maximum#	Abilities
19	95%	10	all	Inherent short-range ESP (20')
20	96%	12	all	Increased ESP (50')
21	97%	14	all	ESP 50' plus creation ability of a Djinni but usually permanent (objects only)
22	98%	15	all	ESP 75' plus creation ability of an Efreeti but permanent (objects only)
23	99%	16	all	Clairvoyance 75' plus creation of short-term life (under 2 H.D.)
24	99%	17	all	Clairvoyance 120 plus creation of self-sustaining low level non-intelligent life (under 2 H.D.)

As Wisdom goes up the saving throw against mental attack increases, but nothing else. At Wisdom 22 (+8 adjustment), immunity from mental attack might come into being.

As Dexterity goes up, Reaction Adjustment goes up, Defensive Adjustment goes down and the number of attacks goes up. For example:

Score	Reaction Adj.	Defensive Adj.	Number of attacks
19	+4	- 5	2/round, Fighters 5 every 2 rounds
20	+5	- 6	2/round, Fighters 5 every 2 rounds
21	+5	- 6	Z/round, Fighters 3 every round
22	+6	- 7	5 every 2 rounds, Fighters 3/round
23	+6	- 7	5 every 2 rounds, Fighters 3/round
24	+7	- 8	5 every 2 rounds, Fighters 3/round

For a Thief I'd stop at these limits on ability: Pick Pockets 140%; Open Lock 99.9% (regardless of race), with the exception of complex locks whose limit might be 80%; Find/Remove/Place Trap 99.9%/ 99.9%/100%; Move Silently 99.9%; Hear Noise 55%; Climb Walls 99.9%; Read Languages 90%.

For Constitution, the following might be considered:

Score	Plus to Hit Points	System Shock	Reaction to Poison/Regeneration
19	+2 (fighter +5)	99.2%	+ 1 vs poison, regain hit points by healing 25% faster
20	+2 (fighter +5)	99.3%	+2 vs poison, regain hit points by healing 50% faster
21	+3 (fighter +6)	99.4%	+3 vs poison, regain hit points by healing 75% faster
22	+3 (fighter +6)	99.5%	+4 vs poison, regain hit points by healing 100% faster
23	+3 (fighter +6)	99.6%	+5 vs poison, regenerate 1 point/turn
24	+3 (fighter +7)	99.7%	Immune to poison, regenerate 1 point/round
25	+3 (fighter +7)	99.8%	Immune to poison, regenerate 1 point/round, Immune to disease

Charisma:

Score	Henchmen	Loyalty	Special
19	20	+50%	Charms cast by this figure at -1 from s. t.
20	25	+60%	Charms, suggestions at -2 from s.t.
21	30	+70%	Charms, suggestions at -3 from s. t.
22	35	+80%	Charms, suggestions at - 4 from s. t.
23	40	+90%	Charms, suggestions at -5, those under 5 H.D. stand in awe
24	50	+95%	Charms, suggestions at -5, those under 10 H.D. stand in awe

With the parameters defined, it is easier to assign abilities. Here follows a format for such Deity creation. You may think of items to add. Make up a blank character sheet outlining these items, not necessarily in this order, and creation of a pantheon is easy.

* * *

Name, Title, Type _____

Experience Level as Fighter (Ranger, Paladin) _____

Magic-User (Illusionist) _____

Cleric (Druid) _____

Thief (Assassin) _____ Monk _____

(I *strongly* recommend a limit of 30th level, even for gods, with players not allowed to rise above 25th.)

Strength _____ Dexterity _____

Intelligence _____ Constitution _____

Wisdom _____ Charisma _____

Extra Abilities Gained from Above: _____

Armor worn _____ Adjusted AC _____

(Note: An unarmored God might have a base AC of 8,5,2 or even 0, while unarmored men have a base AC of 10.)

Hit Points _____

(I'd limit this to 500 or so.)

No. attacks per round _____

Bonuses to hit: Magic ___ Strength ___

Bonuses to damage: Magic ____ Strength ____

Weapon(s) carried _____

Basic Damage/Attack range of weapon _____

(Note: Magic and strength bonuses, if any, are recorded above and not here. This space should include the unadjusted range of dam-

age for automatic weapon hits to which a God may be entitled because of "to hit" bonuses. For instance, a fighter with strength 18 (00) has a +3 to hit If he has a sword which is +3 to hit, he scores automatic damage on every hit within the damage ranges for a long sword, i.e. 1-8 vs. S & M and 1-12 vs. L. If the sword also has a plus to it or damage against a particular monster or alignment, that would be listed here.)

Special powers of weapon _____
(e.g. vorpal, paralyze, disintegrate, charm)
Move (walk/fly/swim/teleport) _____
Special Attacks _____
Special Defenses _____
Magical Items carried _____
Immunities, Magic Resistance on:
Prime Material Plane _____
Home Plane _____
Spells, spell-like abilities available each round _____
_____
Innate Powers _____
(Infravision, ultravision, extraordinary hearing, etc.)
Spells available less often than each round (and frequency) _____
_____
Other special abilities _____
Can cast limited wishes?
Full wishes? Make decrees? ____
(A decree is equivalent to a 10th-level spell, which no player can ever cast. It is a more powerful form of wish which can alter ability scores, hit point totals, or perhaps experience level-temporarily. Even a Deity cannot raise a player more than one experience level on a permanent basis.)
General Apperance _____
(Height, weight, coloring, clothing, carried items)
Plane of principal existence _____
Can travel to which planes? _____
Can teleport in _____ segments
Summon aid on Prime Material _____
Summon aid on Inner and Outer Planes _____
(Number and type of followers, chance to summon successfully)
Summon aid on home Plane _____
Symbol(s) of Deity _____
Basic alignment, tendencies (if any) _____
Character types or alignments which pray to this Deity _____
_____
Spells grantable/disallowed by Deity to His/Her/Its clergy _____
_____
Highest level of spell grantable to clergy _____
Psionics: Ability Attack modes Defense modes
Carried Treasure _____
Treasure trove contents _____
(It is very wise to have a list Every God does not own one, at least, of everything!)

* * *

Once you have defined a format, you will know what your Deities can and cannot do. Remember, if played properly the Planes will limit what a man and a Deity can do, and these limitations will make the Deities much more potent and believable at the same time.

(Next in Leomunds Tiny Hut: An instructive and entertaining demonstration of how to create a pantheon: Len Lakofka, with thanks and apologies to Jim Ward, presents his Monty Haul Pantheon. You have to read it to believe it.)

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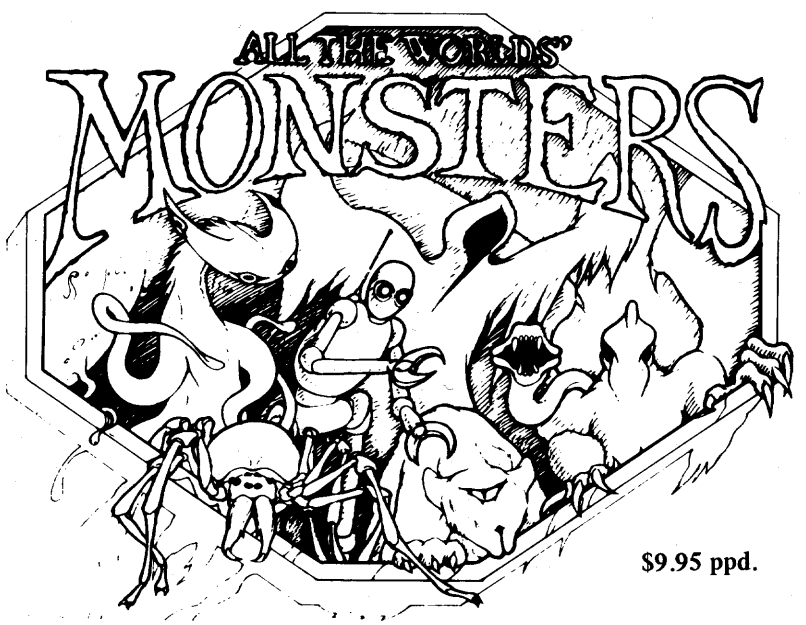

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Tell them you saw it in the Dragon

The History of Immer

G. Arthur Rahman

Before the destruction of the Lloroi Empire, the land destined to rise as the kingdom of Immer remained undeveloped taiga, only nominally subject to the emperor's agents, who ruled from a cold and lonely fortress called Agada. A small native population roamed the northlands herding snow ox or hunting wild game.

After the Cataclysm, what had been arctic borderland overnight became a temperate zone of hot summers and cold winters. Game multiplied and men adjusted to a new, easier way of life. These first inhabitants of proto-Immer developed into several large tribes, called by the general term of "Conodras." As much as possible they continued the peaceful ways of their ancestors, although more and more often invasion by Goblin tribes and savage men forced them to fight.

But the Conodras remained rather primitive and were not destined to found a civilized state upon their ancestral hunting grounds. That would be the work of a foreign people called the Vidarnas.

As with most tribal peoples, the origin of the Vidarnas is cloaked in mystery. Dura Nabuna, their first important chronicler, completed his Kings of the Vidarna in the twelfth century after the Cataclysm. This is rather late, as far as Minarian histories go, but internal evidence argues that Nabuna worked from a tradition both written and oral reaching back several centuries. Moreover, the early Vidarnas are often mentioned in the chronicles of their Muetarian neighbors, as well as the annals of the Invisible School of Thaumaturgy—where dwelled the Eaters of Wisdom from ancient times.

Nabuna states that the parent stock of the Vidarna tribe dwelt south of the Well of Lered. About five centuries after the Cataclysm, a portion of these people was forced by famine to migrate from the rugged lands of their nativity. The clan leaders drew lots and the losers were enjoined to lead their kin in search of new hunting grounds.

Says Dur Nabuna: "Therefore that section to which fate had assigned the abandonment of their native soil and the search for foreign fields—after two leaders had been appointed over them, to wit: Authari and Euin, who were brothers in the bloom of youthful vigor and more eminent than the rest-said farewell to their own people, as well as their country, and set out upon their way to seek for lands where they might dwell and establish their abodes. They were sprigs of the noblest clan of their warrior nation, and Darnu, from whence their followers took the name of 'Vidarna' [Vi-Darnu, 'Of Darnu']."

The aggressive Vidarnas gradually displaced the earlier inhabitants of the north shore of Lake Lorimer. For the next several generations they maintained a canoe-borne trade with the young market town of Pennol, furnishing furs, honey and amber in exchange for metal tools, armor and a few items of luxury. However, they resisted the example of Pennol and did not build permanent towns of stone.

The slow progress of Vidarnan culture was in part the result of the conservative triple-goddess religion that the tribe observed. This cult, led by a complex hierarchy of virgin priestesses, was closely related to other matrilineal cults of the barbarian north. Such worship developed naturally from the conditions of the early post-Cataclysm, when the fertility of the clan was the overriding factor in its survival. Its Dionysian nature was ill suited to the Apollonian arts of an advanced, ordered society.

By the mid-tenth century the old traditions started to erode and the Vidarnan villages began to resemble in some degree the Pennolite towns on the other side of the lake.

This process of cultural assimilation was painfully interrupted by the catastrophic invasion of Minaria by what is called "the abominations of the land and the horrors of the air." These titanic monsters, surging up the River Deep and overwhelming Lake Lorimer, fell ferociously on the shore villages. Neither the Vidarnan warriors nor the priestesses could defend their homes and shrines. The Vidarnas survived only by a retreat into the wilderness of Immer—a term [Im Mer] that meant in the language of the Vidarna, "The North."

In withdrawing, the vidarnas rallied at their northernmost village, the town of Muscaster. They hurriedly raised ramparts around the hill where Muscaster stood. Fortified in Muscaster, the Vidarnas withstood the drift of abominations from the south—until

the monsters' momentum was lost and their numbers began to decline.

The abominations eventually vanished, leaving only some terrifying legends along Lake Lorimer (afterwards called "Lake Carth").

Cautiously the Vidarnas advanced to the limit of their old range. But there was no hope of returning to the past Pennol had fallen into ruin before the abominations and the Vidarnans were impoverished by the loss of its trade.

Within the same generation, Pennol also succumbed to the aggressions of Muetar. Only a decade after that, the Vidarnans too found themselves the target of Muetarian invasion. Defeated, the Vidarnans retreated to Muscaster for the second time in less than a century. The Muetarians annexed the north shore of Lake Carth, but their subsequent attacks were sporadic and half-hearted. The milder climate of Hothior drew most of their aggressive fury southward.

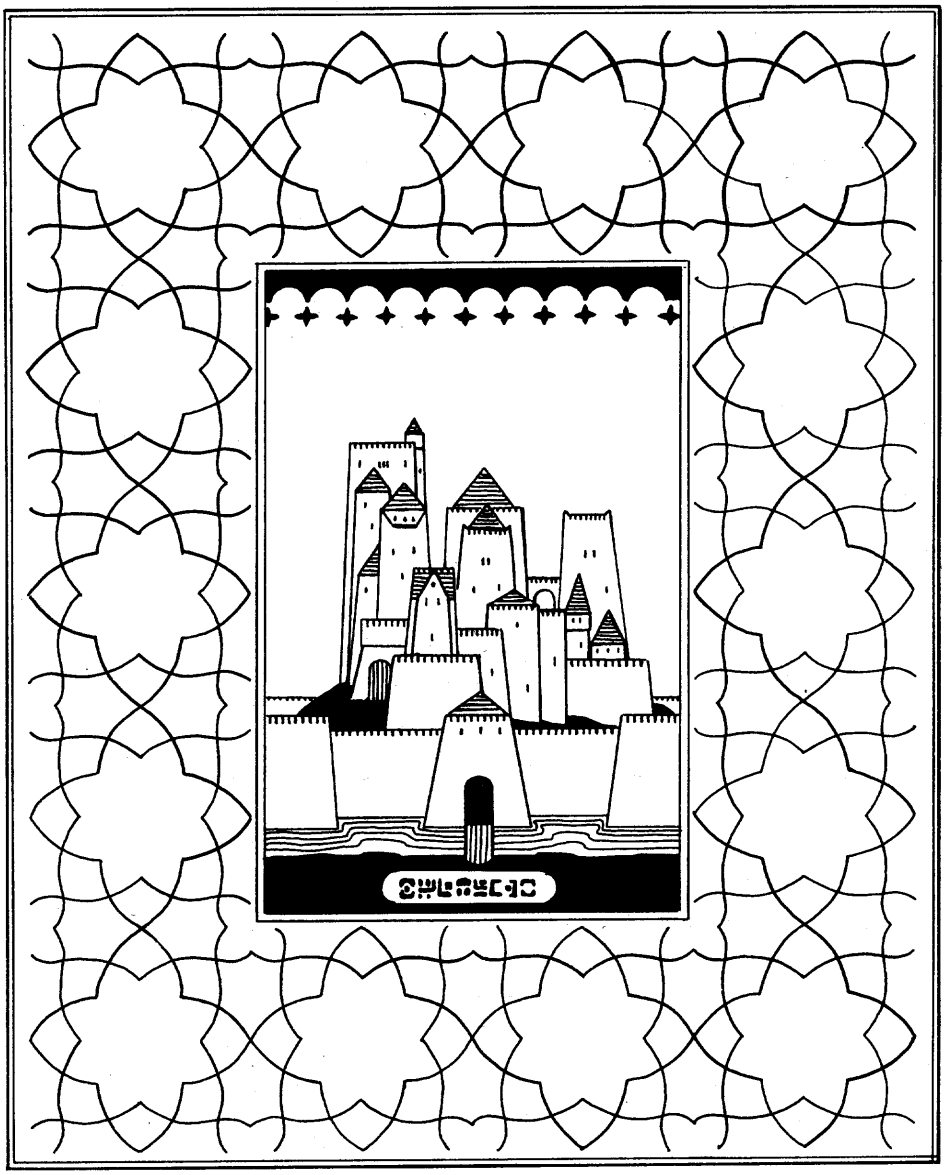
Vidarnan history becomes murky in the eleventh century. Internal strife distracted the chroniclers of Muetar, while Dur Nabuna seemingly had to fall back on mythic and legendary material for his account. For earlier times he had depended on the sacred notes preserved by priestesses of the goddess cult; these ceased in the eleventh century due to the turmoil then current in Vidarnan religious matters.

In the context of these days, Nabuna gives a long and fanciful report of the life of Teredon, the son of the god Anshar, relating his innumerable combats and miracles. From the more prosaic testimony preserved in the Invisible School of Thaumaturgy, Teredon emerges not so much a warrior and a magician as a thoughtful man of philosophy.

His role looms large in bringing patriarchal worship to the Vidarnas. His real father as a chieftain, not a god, who sent him to the Invisible School during the invasion of the abominations. There he studied theology, only returning to his people when he saw them defeated by the Muetarians and in need of a new faith.

One myth involving Teredon merits special interpretation. Shortly after leaving the house of his divine father Anshar, says the myth, Teredon journeys toward the town of Muscaster. On the road he encounters a fabulous creature with three devil-heads and a feathered body, called the Lubar. The Lubar endeavors to slay Teredon, but he gets the better of the creature and severs all three of its heads, afterward putting the body to cremation.

The victorious hero continues on to Muscaster, where he finds a beautiful girl staked out before the town in chains, as a prey for wild beasts. She is Zikia, the daughter of Elhalyn who rules in Muscaster, disposed so in accord with a prophecy that the survival of the Vidarnans demands such a sacrifice. Teredon announces the death of a Lubar, which had been menacing Muscaster, and is acclaimed by the town. Subsequently, he removes Zikia's chains and takes her to wife.



Castle Altarr from the illuminated manuscript, Book of Vierdi

Later scholarship makes different sense out of this heroic myth. Dur Nabuna, who told it, may not have realized that "Lubar" was a variant name for the inner priestesshood of the triple goddess. The story recalls a violent assault led by Teredon against the supporters of the outworn old religion, removing the ceremonial devil masks from the priestesses (the Lubar's "heads") and burning their shrines (the feathered body-representing the sacred bird of fertility). "Zikia" was not originally a girl's name, but a title of high rank within the religious hierarchy. Neither was "Elhalyn" a human ruler, but describes the triple goddess in her aspect as "matron."

Apparently, after Teredon's overthrow of the old cult, zealous followers and/or disillusioned old-believers attempted to do violence to the female clergy. Teredon, desiring no innocent blood to fall, prevented cruel reprisals and found protectors and husbands for the unfortunate woman, probably marrying one or more himself (legend credits him with fifty sons).

In the wake of the religious revolution, the Vidarnans reorganized swiftly. Anshar-worship provided a model of a modem kingship. A man named Kharkem of the clan Shirpur was acclaimed king, behind whom the warleaders, angered by foreign invasion, willingly rallied.

Kharkem and those who succeeded him maintained the Vidarnans' borders and even avenged themselves on the Muetarians—who were then weakened by internecine strife-by many punishing raids. Meanwhile, there developed a gradual expansion of the frontier northward through military colonization. Frontier life was much to the advantage of a new-fashion warleader. These Vidarnan dukes followed the paths of hunters and trappers into the fair lands beyond the borders, driving out the Conodras tribes who occupied northern Immer. The initiative lay with the dukes who, with their armed bands (thargals), wrested the land from its inhabitants and protected the agrarian settlers, to whom they granted the privilege of occupation. Thus the conditions under which these new principali-

Finely wrought golden sacrificial dagger used by the Lubar Priestesses

ties grew tended to enhance the position of the duke and fostered in the aristocracy a power that—locally, at least—was more tangible than that of the king himself.

At this point, the early thirteenth century, the Eaters of Wisdom intervened. The wizards had been studying the problem of aristocratic independence, disturbed by examples of its misuse in Muetar and Hothior. They judged that royal power had to take a decisive hold in the northland or the Vidarnan state would be doomed to impotence and civil war for many generations to come.

They approached the reigning king in Muscaster, whose name was Mesilim, and prevailed upon him to marshal his forces for a thrust northward. As the Shirpur Dynasty of Muscaster was well disposed to the Eaters of Wisdom since the days of Teredon, the young prince yielded to their persuasion, going so far as to allow the Eaters to lead his expedition.

Moving northward, Mesilim impressed his authority upon the dukes whose land lay in his path. Upon reaching the frontier, he found the Conodras—now banded together in a confederacy—drawn up within the ancient Lloroi fortress of Agada, which they had crudely repaired.

Even in ruins, the fortress loomed majestically over the forest and the natives defended their stronghold manfully. But at long last they succumbed to Mesilim's more disciplined armies and the cunning magic of the Eaters of Wisdom. It was the 1209th year after the Cataclysm.

Even in triumph, Mesilim continued to defer to the wise counsels of the wizards. He received the surrendering confederacy leaders with mercy and justice. His clemency impressed the Conodras, who were more accustomed to the blades of the ruthless thargals. After having established good terms with the natives, the king transferred his capital from Muscaster—a town too isolated and tradition-bound to properly serve his government-to the fortress of Agada. Mesilim renamed Agada "Castle Altarr"—after the altarrwood that grew abundantly around it, a tree holy to the god Anshar.

Throughout the last part of his reign, Mesilim sought to set matters right in the north. To those tribes who submitted to his authority, he extended royal protection—limiting to some degree the predatory, self-serving march of the Vidarnan dukes. He admitted the sons of the Conodras' leaders into a university which the Eaters of Wisdom helped him establish in Castle Altarr. By this and other means at his disposal, he sought to accomodate the Conodras to Vidarnan civilization—not an impossible leap, as the young kingdom was still half-barbaric. Before his death, many parts of the north were wardened by Conodran dukes and native levies.

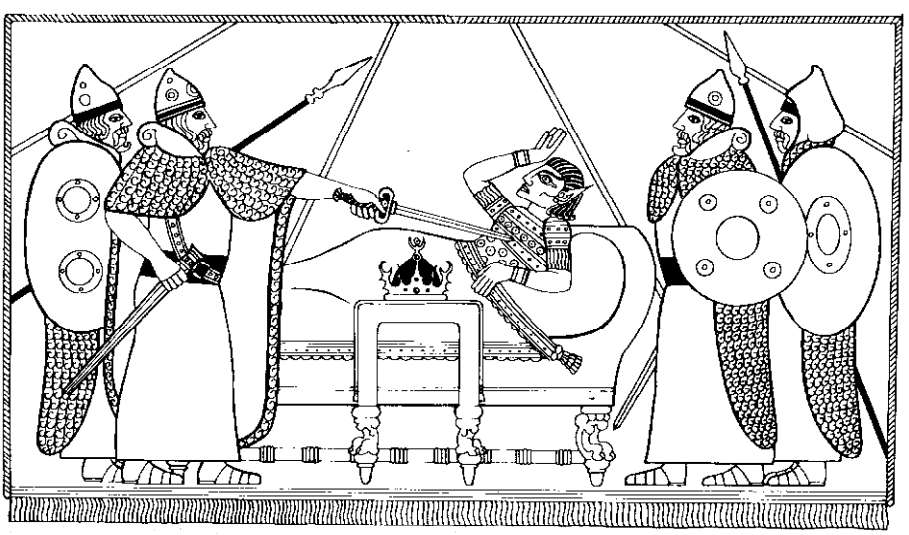
Mesilim had the misfortune of being predeceased by both of his sons. His throne passed to a young grandson, Pisiris. The Vidarnan dukes, long resentful of Mesilim's restrictions on their ambitions, recommenced their attacks on the Conodras.

As the Conodras of the frontier were by now subjects of Immer—a name that now officially designated the kingdom-these raids were clearly against the peace of the state. But the elderly regents surrounding the child-king—often in the pay of different baronial factions—could neither agree to support the dukes nor to oppose them.

By this time the Elven kingdom of Neuth had grown hostile to the developing state on its borders. Shedding their customary isolation, the Elves moved troops into several disputed border areas and deliberately provoked the Immerite government. The high prince of Neuth, Etirun, hoped to occupy the vacillating regents with the threat of war until the dukes' power grew too great to be curbed. By this policy, the Elves hoped to fragment

(Turn to page 58)

Example of Conodras pottery —An urn depicting Conodras way of life



Tapestry represents the popular legend of Etirun captured unawares in his tent

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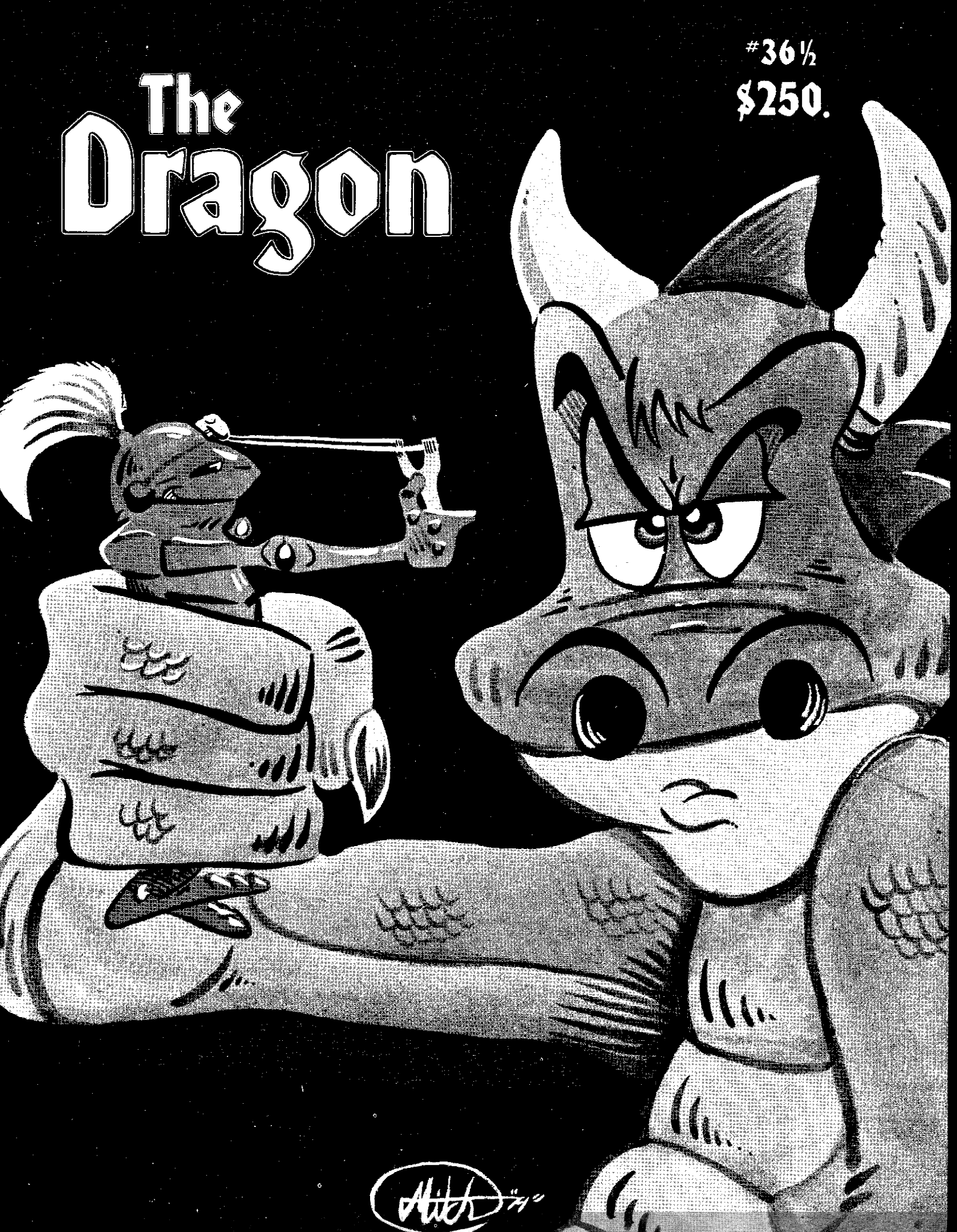
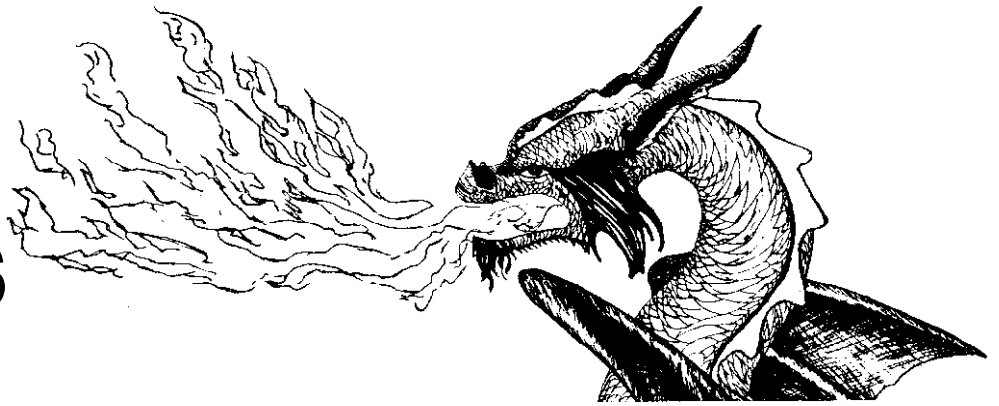


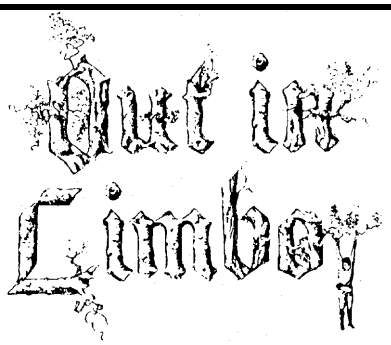
DRAGON GRUMBLES



Boy, did you ever stop to think what it takes to put out a magazine? The deadlines, the phonecalls, the typing, the editing, the layout, the paste-up, the shipping, the . . . People calling up: "I want a copy of #1. " "Why didn't you print my article?" "When do I get paid?" . . . And doing it all for tiny little paychecks that don't even keep up with inflation . . . And having people ask you what you do for a living and telling them you put out a game magazine and then listening to giggles and remarks about Parcheesi.

Well, enough is enough! Today we clean out the bank account ("used bills in small denominations, please"), sell the company car to Cousin Sid, make arrangements for the Midnight Office Supply Co. to liquidate our typewriters and desks, and buy our tickets to the Bahamas. Good-by, office; hello, beach!

It's been real . . . .



Who's right?

Dear Dragon:

My brother and I are having an argument about your magazine that I hope you can settle for us. He says that every article in *The Dragon* is an official rule addition for *D&D,* and every one of your variants and other changes are supposed to be used in everyone's campaigns. Otherwise, he says, why would a magazine print all that stuff? If *The Dragon* didn't want people to use the official material, why would *The Dragon* print it in the first place?

I say that's ridiculous. Things printed in *The Dragon* are just supposed to be used by people if they want to use them. Besides, if everyone used every variant, campaigns would be so cluttered up with rules that they would be unplayable.

So, now that you know both sides of the story, who's right?

Billy & Bobby

Billy is. —Editor

The chief thief

Dear Dragon:

Life has been pretty dull for me for the last few years—until recently, when I discovered D&D. Let me just say this about that: *Dungeons &Dragons* has changed my life, and I thought your readers would be interested in my thoughts on the game.

Let me make one thing perfectly clear: I am *not* a crook! But I am a Thief—and a good one, too. Hiding in shadows and listening at doors reminds me a lot of my last full-time job. And in the specially designed dungeon at our house, I can vanquish the great Congressmonster every day if I want to. It makes me feel really good when I get a chance to save my little dwarf friend, Bebe, from the clutches of Truth and Honesty.

Also, while I think of it, would you people be interested in some of my ideas for DD&DD? I have a couple of old CIA files that would take your dragon's breath away.

That's all for now. May you always make your saving throw vs. Democrats!

Dick's Dungeon

Crazy about us!

Dear Dragon:

I first saw your magazine several months ago in my doctor's office. The last issue was so wonderful that I decided I couldn't wait any longer to write to you and tell you what a terrific magazine you have.

I'm hard at work at the present time on a module which I think you will be very interested in printing. It's all about a dungeon where all the walls are covered with some sort of mysterious padding . . .

Stu Tumeny

State Hospital for the Harmlessly Insane

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Enjoying Your Dragon

BarryFowkes

So you own a dragon! Congratulations! You've made a wise choice of a pet. Whether you bought him from your local dragon-broker or a relative who came home from an adventure dragging a very large carcass and a few dragon's eggs, your dragon can be a useful, loyal and loving pet of the family. (NOTE—For the purposes of this article, it is assumed that you own a baby dragon. If your dragon has grown to any respectable size —six feet at the shoulder is a reliable rule—you are reading the wrong article. You should be reading "How to Survive a Disaster.")

You mustn't expect your dragon to be any good to you, however, if you're not good to him. You must show him that you are loving but firm, stem but fair. A well-trained dragon is a joy in any household, serving as a first-rate guard dog, cleaning crew, and fireplace lighter. A poorly trained dragon is a nuisance, and a neglected one is a menace.

You must start by giving your dragon a name. Giving your dragon a name gives him a sense of belonging, of being somebody. DO NOT, however, name your dragon after a flower or some such item—the other dragons will tease him, beat him up, and eat him. Also, names like "Killer" or "Napalm" are to be avoided, as the dragon tends to take them too seriously. "Irving" is a good, respectable name for a dragon.

As in any relationship, there must be a few ground rules, and punishment for breaking the rules must be swift but not overly harsh. If, for example, a noble from a nearby castle is visiting and your dragon sneezes at the guests leg, it isn't good practice to ignore it by saying "You don't use that foot anyway, my lord," because the dragon won't know he's done anything wrong and will very likely do it again. On the other hand, cursing, dragging your crossbow off the wall and giving your dragon 20 or 30 bolts around the head has an equally bad result-a dead dragon. About the best course of action is to wag the forefinger of your left hand in the dragon's face, saying "No, no—we mustn't fry houseguests," while giving the dragon a few medium blows with a light mace.

Rewarding your dragon for good behavior should be equally swift and sure. Dragons love to be patted, talked to and generally pampered. Remember at all times, though, that you own a BABY dragon and that it is FRAGILE. You needn't be over enthusiastic when patting your dragon—a good uppercut and a few roundhouse swings should suffice to give your dragon a feeling that you love him.

A dragon will eat anything you will—and quite a few things you won't. Dragons do, however, have certain basic requirements that must be met. A few head of cattle, 30 or 40 gallons of water, and one or two buckets of assorted spices will last for about a week. Your dragon also needs a supply of coal, which, obviously, you must provide. You must also keep a close watch on your dragon's diet. Given half a chance, a dragon will do nothing but eat until it quite actually explodes. Not only does this kill the dragon it can make a real mess of your dining room, and so is to be avoid.

Which brings us to our next subject—cleaning up after your dragon. For some reason unknown to science, dragons are hatched house-broken. Thus, all you have to do is show your dragon a spot of his own and teach him how to open the doors of your house. He will let himself out and go to his spot if he has to. (A point of interest—dragon droppings are probably the most potent acid known to man, and can eat through a foot of stone in almost no time. Therefore, don't plan on growing anything near your dragon's privy for about 200 years.)

Dragons do have one rather bad habit—they tend to spontaneously belch. Unfortunately, when they do, objects around them tend to spontaneously ignite. Therefore, if you see your dragon looking as if he's trying to hold back an explosion, GET HIM OUTSIDE IM-MEDIATELY! If he looks like that, he probably IS trying to hold back an explosion, and you're not helping any by just sitting there and watching.

That's just about it Just remember, if you take good care of your dragon while he's a baby, he'll take good care of you when you're old and gray—and he's still a baby.

New Monsters to Scare You Silly

The DM

Created by Blake Ward

FREQUENCY: Too often!
NUMBER APPEARING: Always one too many!
ARMOR CLASS: Class of 1974, Dwarf Hall
MOVEMENT; Slooooow
HIT DICE: A good-sized box full.
% IN LAIR 100%
TREASURE TYPE: HOARDS (After all, somebody must have it, and the players sure don't.)
NUMBER OF ATTACKS: Your guess is as good as mine. . . .
DAMAGE/ATTACK: By weapon type (pencil 1-3, ruler 1-2)
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Create fear 10' radius (sound of dice rolling).
SPECIAL DEFENSES: "I QUIT" or "YOU'RE DEAD"
MAGICAL RESISTANCE: 100%
INTELLIGENCE: Low to non-existent
ALIGNMENT: Anything but neutral!!!
SIZE: Variable
PSIONIC ABILITY: Call it what you want, but he sure can make the dice perform (in his favor).

This, the most hated and feared of all monsters, can only be found lurking in a secluded shadowy room at the bottom of the deepest of dungeons. He is rarely if ever encountered, and when he is the encounter is always brief but deadly. His powers seem akin to those of a god, and for all intents and purposes he can do anything he wants (and usually does).

Picture yourself breaking down a heavy (seemingly never used) door at the end of a long, dark corridor. The door opens on your first try and what you see inside brings, in the same moment, both joy and fear to your heart. At last you meet your dreaded enemy face to face, on your ground. A shout goes up from the entire group, "AT LAST. . . REVENGE!!!"

Sitting at a table in the center of the room is a tired young man, his face a visage of panic. He can barely be heard to whisper, "I never thought they'd get this far. . . ." He quickly begins to sift through the mountains of maps and books on the desk until his bloodshot eyes come across the sheet he was looking for. With a sigh he tears the sheet in two and tosses the crumpled-up pieces into his always-handy wastebasket. The last thing you hear before the walls come tumbling down around you is a somehwat depressed Dungeon Master's voice, "Damn, I hate to lose a perfectly good dungeon. . . . ."

Description: The Dungeon Master almost always appears to be a worn out, somewhat unkempt man. He's likely to have a worn-out pencil stub and a piece of cold pizza in one hand and a pair of rather dilapidated twenty-sided dice in the other. A search of his pockets will reveal several more dice of assorted shapes, erasers, pencils, pens, rulers, bits of scrap paper, and the occasional well-worn lead figurine. The DM is best remembered for his ability to misplace maps, charts, etc. (He is especially adept at losing character record sheets, strangely enough always the ones belonging to the most powerful characters in the party). Please note that AD&D is an equal-opportunity employer: The Dungeon Master wandering monster is not necessarily male and is usually not even human.

The Keebler

Created by Roger Moore

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*
NO. APPEARING: *1*
ARMOR CLASS: *7*
MOVE: *18'*
HIT DICE: *1-4 Hit points*
% IN LAIR: *05%*
TREASURE TYPE: *Q, S, X (in lair)*
NO. OF ATTACKS: *0*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *Nil*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *60%*
INTELLIGENCE: *High to Exceptional*
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral (good)*
SIZE: *S (2½'-3' tall)*
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

Keeblers are hobbit-sized beings, elven in appearance, and inclined to be chubby. As far as anybody can tell, Keeblers orient their whole lives to cooking and baking, particularly cookies and cakes. They dress in browns, yellows, and greens, and have a fairly hard-nosed attitude about work. They are generally carefree and sometimes make friends with small children and woodland animals. Their hearing and eyesight prevent their being surprised. They don't believe in causing mischief.

A Keebler may throw each of the following spells up to three times each day: Create Water, Purify Food & Drink, Slow Poison, Create Food & Water, Neutralize Poison, and Locate Object (Edible Substances). The spells count as if thrown by a 7th-level Cleric.

Keeblers originate from the Great Nabisco Tree, the location of which is not known to outsiders and is never divulged by a Keebler, even under duress. Keeblers can, once a week, bake a special sort of cookie that causes the eater to save versus magic at -4 or be charmed by a Keebler; the Keebler is likely to have the person then either serve as a baking assistant for a couple of days, or, if the victim is evil, tie the victim up and leave him outside a monster's lair. Keeblers can supply food to parties lost in the wilderness.

Keep your players poor!

THE TAX MAN COMETH

Kristan J. Wheaton

In even the most balanced of dungeons, there comes a time when the players will, against all odds, beat the monster that couldn't be beaten and suddenly become fantastically rich. The treasure burns a hole in their psyches, and they find all sorts of ways to put it to use. For the next six months, the DM is liable to be plagued with questions like "What are the technical aspects of pyramid building?" or "Are war galleys a tactical necessity in desert defense?"

To keep the economic situation from getting out of hand, all the DM needs to do is plug in a new non-player character: The Tax Collector.

The Tax Collector (TC) should be played by the DM in the same manner as a Ninja (TD #16). But whereas the Ninja (fighting for the glory of the DM) clobbers characters for their impertinence, the TC hits 'em where it really hurts—below the belt (in the pocketbook, of course).

TC's are gated in from their temples whenever a stash of gold, gems or the like changes hands. The particular taxes to be applied can be chosen by the DM, with the following list as a guide:

—The Rich Tax: Used on players who have just come into a sizable bankroll. The rate may be somewhere around 75 percent of the wealth gained. If a taxpayer complains, tell him the money is an assessment for SEAKOG (Society for the Evolutionary Advancement of Kobolds, Orcs and Goblins).

—The Poor Tax: Used on players who have just paid the Rich Tax. They should be poor now. If they aren't, you better raise the Rich Tax.

—The Tax Tax: Used to pay the TC's salary and expenses. It is based on the amount of all taxes previously paid, and should always amount to more than the value of a character's or party's total wealth.

—The Property Tax: A general tax on all property, real or personal, owned by the character.

—The Non-Property Tax: A general tax on all property, real or personal, not owned by the player.

—The Inn Tax: A tax paid by all people sleeping in inns.

—The Out Tax: A tax paid by all people sleeping anywhere else.

—The Carpet Tax: A seldom-used assessment on all players who make bad puns during the course of an adventure.

The TC has the ability to cast many spells of a magical or clerical nature, and also has a number of special powers at his disposal.

The most powerful of these is a super-powerful Confusion spell. Used but once a year, it has no saving throw and causes immediate, severe confusion for 1-12 weeks. In our country, the spell is in the form of a scroll which we call Form 1040.

The TC's other major power is the Audit spell, basically an offensive maneuver to be used when all other methods have failed.

The appearance and employment of a TC goes something like this: TC's will gate in before a party has time to do anything about it. There will always be at least one more TC than there are members in a party.

TC's will be armed with tridents, which they will poke into their victims until the hapless taxpayers hand over the amount of valuables required. When this is done, the TC's are ready to be recalled to their temple. In our country, the temple is known as the Treasury Building, and the members of the cult are those people who worship the Almighty Dollar.

If the collection attempt fails for any reason, the TC will use his powerful Audit spell. This spell is a combination of Time Stasis (the audit starts at 8:00; three hours later, you look at your watch and it's 8:20), Feeblemind (even the most intelligent Magic-User or the wisest Cleric has no saving throw) and Reduction (because the taxpayer feels about three inches tall when it's over). The Audit spell is always successful, unless the player happens to have a Tax Advisor.

The Tax Advisor (TA) is a very rare subclass of TC. A TC becomes a TA when he performs acts that cause him to change alignment (all TC's are lawful neutral).

The TA has three special spells: Shelter, which allows a character to hide his gold and gems before the TC can get to them; Invisible Deduction, which gives a character bargaining strength when discussing the "real" reasons why a 1 million g.p. tax is necessary; and Reverse Audit, which can negate the effects of an Audit spell. The chance of this spell working is 10% for every level of experience that the TA is over the TC casting the Audit. Of course, good, high-level TA's are as hard to find as 18/00 strength Kobolds.

DM's don't need to feel guilty about introducing the TC into a campaign; think of it as reminding the players of their roots in poverty. And always remember: The only two sure things are death and you know what.

Meeting Demogorgon

Last Great Acts Of Defiance and Cowardice

Jeff Spitler and Roger Moore

Imagine this: You are on an adventure in the wilderness, everybody in the party is feeling mellow and you've had a good adventure, your pockets are crammed with gems and gold, and you're enjoying the sunshine and warm breezes.

You happen to be joking around and you carelessly mention the name of a greater demon, and eveyone gives you the eye but nothing seems to happen so you relax again.

Your party walks around the bend in the road and THERE HE IS, out of *nowhere*, complete with tentacles and chicken-feet and eveything, all eighteen terrifying feet of him, standing as far away from you as the magazine you're holding now. In a loud, deep, Doomsday roar he thunders, "WHO CALLS UPON DEMOGORGON, PRINCE OF DEMONS, RULER OF THE ABYSSAL, THE INVINCIBLE HORROR?!?!"

What do you do next?

1. Say, "Whoops!"
2. Point to someone else in the party and say, "He did it!"
3. Spit in one of his eyes (Paladins only, of course).
4. Draw your sword and fall upon it.
5. Ask directions to the nearest lawful good Cleric or temple.
6. Cup your hand to your ear and say, "Eh?"
7. Pretend he's not there.
8. Act surprised and say, "What? Do you mean me?'
9. Make a joke about his mother: "I heard she was a Red Cross volunteer and passed out cookies to Paladins' children." (There is a 5% chance he will be impressed with your courage and will only maim you. Otherwise . . .)
10. Snarl and say, "I did. What's it to ya?"
11. Grin and say, "I did, 'cause I'm a wild and craaaazy guy!"
12. Climb the nearest tree (Note: this only delays the inevitable).
13. Ask him for a present.
14. Convert to his religion immediately.
15. Try to convert *him* ("Hey, wanna be lawful good?")
16. Faint.
17. Pretent to faint.
18. Attempt to summon a lawful good god; the cry may be shortened to, "Good God!"
19. Offer up one of your companions as an involuntary sacrifice (Warning: The group may already be considering you for this honor).
20. Fake amnesia: "Did I do that? Wow, I can't remember . . ."
21. Pull pin on your Holy (Nuclear) Hand Grenade and release.
22. Run like hell (has same drawback as climbing a tree).
23. Call the Strategic Air Command on that weird artifact of yours and request an air strike.
24. Sink into the ground.
25. Apologize for the mistake and ask him to leave.
26. Go berserk and bite him on the ankle (good option for hobbits and gnomes).

    Decide this is a nightmare and try to wake yourself up.
28. Try to knock him down and step on his throat (if you happen to be into street-fighting).
29. Assume standard nuclear attack defensive position, and kiss your behind good-bye.
30. Do all of the above at once.

This table may be used to determine random reactions of henchmen and hirelings in situations such as this, if the DM so desires. In usual game situations of this sort, everyone says, "Oh, shoot!" and either they go nuts and attempt to attack him or they go to one of the above options. Either way, it's still a sure ticket on the Grim Reaper Special, so watch what you say.

Bazaar of the Ordinary

Shoes of Walking— These objects, when placed upon the feet of their owner, will enable that character to walk through a chilly dungeon without catching cold. These items may be found in the bottoms of closets, in the middle of living-room floors, and on the feet of other characters. There is a 10% chance that a closet with shoes will contain a shoe tree bearing from 7-12 pairs of shoes. Once picked, the tree will not sprout new shoes.

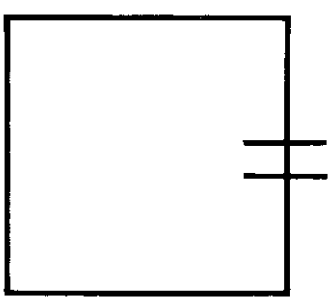
Grounds of Coffee —This substance, the byproduct of a process which produces a popular beverage, is itself inedible. It has no usefulness whatsoever to a player, but those with low intelligence should be discouraged from carrying it around for a while just in case. If Grounds of Coffee are allowed to lie undisturbed for one week, they will lose their internal moisture and develop a green mold which is equally harmless but much more disgusting than the Grounds themselves. Anyone encountering moldy grounds must save vs. nausea (roll Constitution or lower) or become violently sick for 1-4 turns.

Web of Cob— An artifact found in virtually every comer and crevice of even the best-kept dungeon. It will generally go unnoticed by characters unless an especially large web is blocking a door or window and must be cleared away. Those with a wisdom of 6 or better will have the sense to poke at the web with a stick or pole, wrapping it up cotton-candy style. Anyone who's a real jerk will do the same thing with his bare hands. In such cases, there is a 20% chance that the Cob which spun the web will still be around. The angry Cob will hide its microscopic body on the victim and inflict the Curse of Pigpen, which causes the character to exude an aura of dirt and dust and lowers his Charisma to 3 until he touches another Cob web—at which time the Cob will scurry to its new home.

Caps of Bottling— These are brightly colored, small metal objects with a serrated edge. They are encountered amidst other types of waste matter, but are one of the few potentially useful things in a typical load of garbage. Each pile of refuse will contain 10-40 Caps, and there is a 25% chance that someone in the party will risk the ridicule of other members by collecting them and saving them. One of the most logical possible uses for Caps is as false currency for bargaining with stupid monsters. There is a 50% chance that any monster with low intelligence will believe, for instance, that three Pepsis are worth 100 g.p., and it will be glad to trade so it doesn't have as many pieces of treasure to guard.

This Month's Module

In response to the dozens of requests we've received to "print a module every month," we're going to do just that. Here is this month's module, ready to play with:

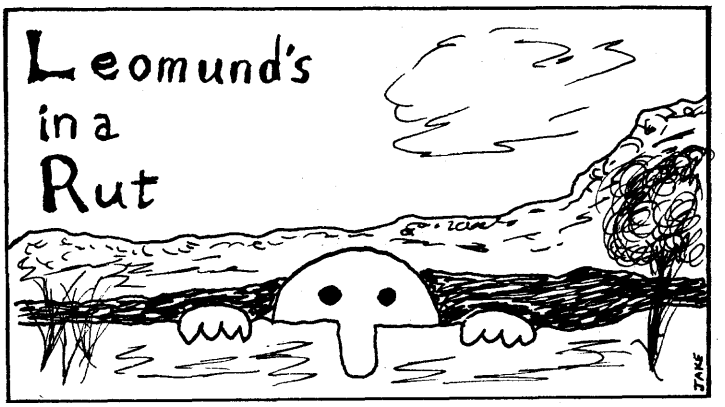


Level I

Room 1 (to be read aloud to players): When you open the door, you see in front of you what appears to be a 10' square room with nothing in it.

Room 1 (for DM's information only): In actuality, this is a 10' square room with nothing in it.

Next month: Room 2—Twice the danger!



There is a long-overlooked aspect of every player and non-player character's persona that should no longer remain shrouded in obscurity. I refer, of course, to the great lack of information, even in a work of such scope as AD&D, about a character's footwear.

According to the Players Handbook, you can buy high or low boots, hard or soft soled, for anywhere from 8 s.p. to 2 g.p. Boy, how boring and uncomplicated can you get?

There can be as many different types of footwear in a campaign as there are feet to put them on, and each particular shoe, boot or glass slipper can be made to have its own peculiar properties. You can make the choice of shoes one of the most important moments in the generation of a new character (as well it ought to be), or you can inject a new flavor into an existing campaign by suddenly rendering everyone barefoot: "You have just set foot on a section of floor coated with an invisible magic glue. It holds your boots fast, but nothing else will stick to it." Players, being the clear-thinking, ingenious lot we know them to be, will surmise that all they have to do is step out of their boots and leave them behind. Now you've got 'em barefoot, and when they return to town for more footwear, you hand 'em a price list like this:

Shower thongs (5 c.p.)—Good, limited-purpose protection for the bottom of the feet, but leaves the top of the feet vulnerable to hits on that part of the body (For more information on hits to the upper part of the foot, see my upcoming article, "A More Complicated System for Determining Where It Hurts.").

One-owner sneakers (6-10 c.p.)—Barely a cut above the lowly thong, this piece of footwear will have from 3-18 holes on the top and sole. It will develop new holes at the rate of 1-4 per week, and will literally fall off a character's foot when it accumulates a number of holes equal to the wearer's shoe size x 5.

Dimestore loafers (2 s.p.)—These shoes have the look and feel of footwear costing 10 times as much—until they are purchased and worn outside the store (so they can't be returned). There is a 2% chance cumulative per day that a dimestore loafer will begin to come apart at the seams (perhaps causing its owner to do the same thing). There is a base 30% chance that the heel will fall off after a week, modified upward by .001% for every step the character takes.

(Continued on page 73)

Sage Advice

Question: My recipe for pork sausage seems to have a mistake in it—it calls for four cups of sage. This amount seems a little excessive. Could it be a misprint?

Answer: Yes, the recipe should call for four *tablespoons* of sage.

* * *

Question: I am interested in acquiring large amounts of sage. Where should I look?

Answer: Try the yellow pages of your phone book. Look under "Herb dealers—Sage".

* * *

Question: In the folk song "Scarborough Fair" there is a line that goes, "Parsley, something, rosemary, and thyme." What word am I missing?

Answer: Sage.

WHAT'S THE NAME OF YOUR GAME??

No matter what your preference or passion, you can get the best in gaming merchandise—at prices you won't *believe*—from Omar & Irving's Fantastic Traveling Flee Market. Check out this month's Big Bargains:

—**From the Sorcerer's Scratch Pad:** The *actual* note paper used by Gary Gygax *himself* to compute the daily increases in his bank balance. A real Steal! Sold in square-inch increments, packaged securely, for only $1.95

—**No-Fail Randomizer:** A dependable, easy way to generate *any* random number from 1 through 2. Looks and feels like an ordinary penny, but how could it be if we're selling it for $1.00

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—**The Dragon #1:** The premiere issue of the premier magazine of games and gaming. One of a kind! This offer will not be repeated! TD #1 will be sold at auction. Send sealed bid and $5 registration fee.*

—**Pencil of Poor Visibility:** This is the ultimate in D&D playing aids. To activate the powers of this special implement, don't sharpen it and write very small. The resultant scrawlings will be decipherable to only you, and you can decipher 'em any way you want for only $6.49

—**The Next Threshold:** DAD&D, developed by the Omar & Irving Design Department, is the next logical—and truly inspired—stage in the evolution of D&D. Detailed Advanced Dungeons & Dragons adapts the game for playing on the head of a pin—with figures you make yourself!! Just add your imagination, after you pay us $15.95

*—Auction will be held on April 1, 1996, at a location to be determined on March 31, 1996. The highest bidder must be present to claim the magazine.

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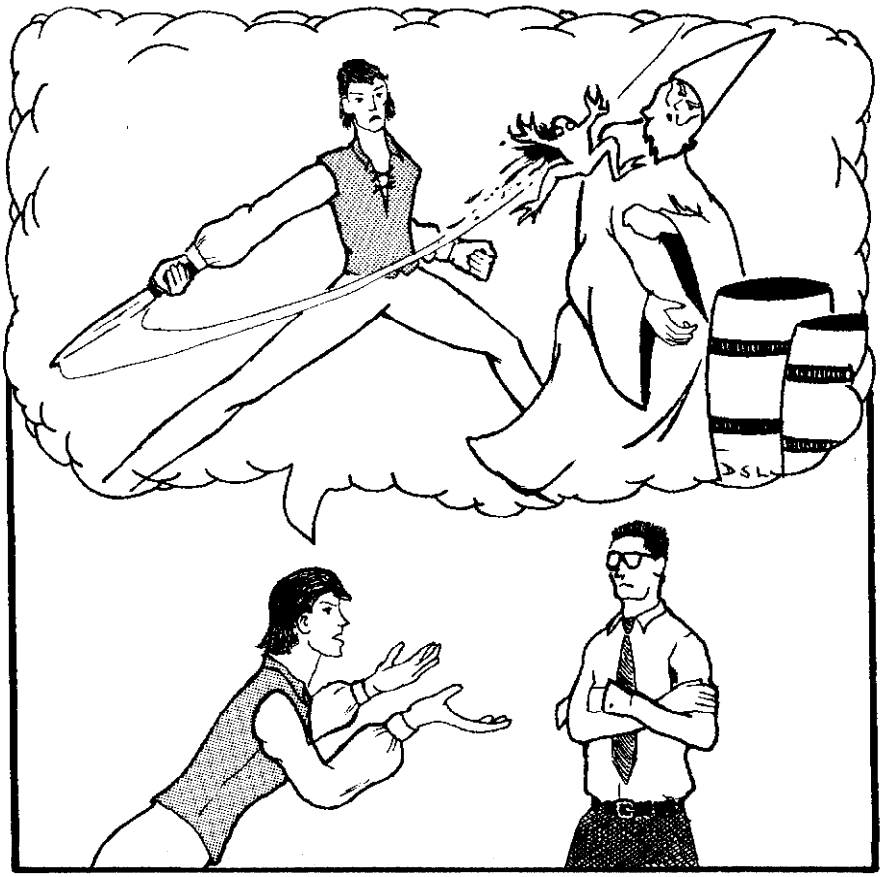
every once in a while
from **OMAR & IRVING'S FANTASTIC TRAVELING FLEE MARKET**
appearing soon (but not for long) on a street corner near you.

A Visit to an Interesting Place

Mark Welch



The despot teacher had finally caught me. I answered, "You want to hear a story about an interesting place? I once had a visit to an interesting place.

"I guess it all started when I got that wish from the neighborhood Magic-User. He was at the Wizard's mart, inspecting some pickles that were supposedly able to cure all warts, when one of those killer frogs jumped out of the pickle barrel, gnashing its teeth on the Wizard's shoulder (You with the big nose, stop that snickering!).

"I quickly pulled out my sword and cut the frog from the wizard. Luckily, it wasn't the kind that had poison glands.

"Well, right after the sorcerer got done turning the merchant and his family into large dragon flies, he took me by the shoulder and said, 'My son, is there anything I can do for you?'

"I replied, 'Sure, doc, how 'bout a wish?'

"'Done!' he said. 'And what, pray tell, do you want?'

"'How about a visit to an interesting place?' I said.

"And here I am, in this queer place (I said, *Stop* laughing!), and I don't even know what you mean by. . .ah . . .homework. I'm not even from this universe! Really I'm not . . . . .really."

Campaign Mixing Sure Stirs Things Up!

Brent Capps

But first, let me introduce the band! On laser rifle, Stacy Clark. On submachinegun, Harley Willcox and Scott Cloud. On automatic pistol, Randy Roush. And on automatic rifle, Bryan Ivy. Give them a hand!

I guess I got the idea from Harley one day, when he was telling me of his Boot Hill solitaire game of the night before. He had hit upon the (then) novel approach of having a group of Traveller characters crash on Boot Hill and, having nothing better to do, rob a bank. I really should have listened to the details of how the starmen proceeded to destroy the town. There was only a small greasy spot where a town had once been. But I was too preoccupied with my own plans to listen to him. What if a group of characters from my Traveller campaign landed on Phoenix, my D&D world? Interesting thought!

It took several weeks of playing to engineer the feat. Finally, the Travellers, being hotly pursued by ships from a local government, crashed on Phoenix. And then the trouble began.

They had landed in a desert in a sparsely populated part of the planet. Right away they set out to find civilization. They quickly found a group of locals who directed them to the nearest town. They never realized that these locals were their own D&D characters, who were in the desert on a quest.

Booking passage to a distant city, they joined a caravan. Once the caravan was attacked by a band of thieves and bandits. After the smoke cleared, those had proved to be some of the deadest bandits I had ever encountered. Talk about overkill—some had taken more than 80 hits!

I was beginning to get that dark, foreboding feeling one gets when a DM lets a player get too powerful. I resolved to try to kill them off quietly. But quickly, before they wrecked my planet.

It was not until they killed two fully grown Tyrannosaurus Rex with no appreciable damage to themselves that I decided to give up. I teleported them to Metamorphosis Alpha. That was ironic, because the SM of our MA game is Bryan Ivy, one of the offending Traveller characters. I took his place on automatic rifle.

We proceeded to destroy with impunity, killing any mutant unfortunate enough to cross our path. Once we were attacked by five birdlike creatures. After the barrage of firepower we levelled at them, not so much as a feather remained. This brings out the advantage the Travellers possessed. They effectively dispatched the opposition before the poor mutants could even get within range. Only once did a mutant get close enough to use a mutation, and even then the mutant was killed before it went into effect.

I will not bore you with the details of how we proceeded to virtually destroy all life on our level. But, as you can guess, we soon grew tired of our sport. So we took to the elevator for fresh game. As I write this little story, we are still on the elevator, but I fear we may never reach our destination. Bryan is talking about teleporting us to Gamma World, the game of Scott Cloud, another player. The monsters are tougher there.

Heaven help the working mutant.

THE MONGOLS

•History •Weaponry •Tactics

Michael Kluever

From the steppe lands of Central Asia in the 13th century rode the most successful totally warrior society the world has ever known. Toughened by the rigorous climate, living on horseback, they had to fight for every piece of ground they occupied. In the end their empire would stretch from Eastern Europe through China and southward to the Persian Gulf.

United by Genghis Khan (1162-1227), the Mongol Armies descended upon a world too busy fighting among themselves to unite against the new danger. The Chin emperors in China were politically weak and unable to rally a military force sufficient to throw back the Mongol wave. Europe was beset by a series of wars between the Papal armies and those of the Holy Roman Empire. Russia and Poland were subdivided into a series of weak feudal states, so distrusting of each other that they could not unite even when the Mongols were upon them. The Islam nations, when not fighting crusaders, fought among themselves and failed to unite even when the religion itself was endangered.

The chief European opponents of the Mongols were the Russian states and Poland. The armies of the Russian states resembled those of the 8th- and 9th-centuy Franks. Each noble possessed a small retinue of horsemen clad in chainmail and equipped with lance and shield. The real nucleus of the army was the infantry, armed with axe and spear. The bow was never used in great numbers.

The usual Russian battle tactic was to draw up the army in front of a palisaded camp, with the cavalry in the center and the infantry on the wings and in the rear as a reserve. The decisive blow was struck by a frontal cavalry charge, while the infantry was left on its own.

The Polish army was predominantly cavalry. Free yeomanry, which was still prevalent in Russia, had practically ceased in Poland. All landowners, from the humblest who owned but a few acres, to the great barons who could put hundreds of vassals into the fields, were expected to ride if danger existed. Predominantly lancers, the Poles had no archers and little infantry. The rich nobles were equipped with complete mail and an armored horse. The poorer nobles frequently wore a leather jerkin and had no armor for their nags. The two principal classes of warriors were light cavalry and heavy cavalry.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ARMY

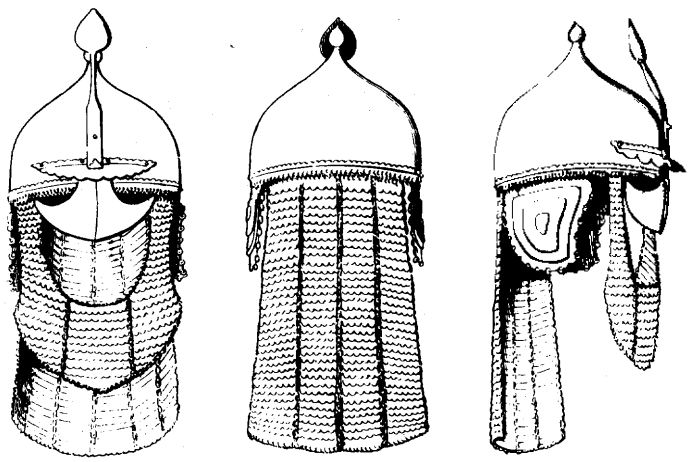
The Mongol Army was divided into multiples of tens. A division (Tumen) consisted of 10,000 men. Each tumen was divided into ten regiments of 1,000 men each (Minghans). A Minghan was subdivided into ten squadrons (Jaguns) of 100 men each. The Jagun consisted of ten troops (Arbans) of ten men each.

Determination of command was dependent upon unit size. Each ten-man Arban selected its own commander. The ten Arban leaders determined the Jagun commander. Commanders of the Minghans and Tumens were appointed by the Khan and given the title of Noyan.

A typical army was composed of three or more cavalry Tumens accompanied by several Minghans of artillery and engineers. An Army was commanded by an Orlok.

The logistics of the army was the responsibility of the Yurtchis, who chose camp sites and organized supplies and communications. The Chief Yurtchi was of high rank and was also given the responsibility for reconnaissance and intelligence. Each Arban was supplied with two or three Yurts (tents made from felt stretched over a wooden frame and also used as shelter by the warriors), to which food was distributed each day.

The recruitment of the army was by a universal conscription system. All men over the age of twenty except physicians and priests (of any religion) were liable for military service.



Typical Mongol helmet

ARMS AND ARMOR

The Mongol army was primarily a cavalry force consisting of 40% heavy and 60% light cavalry. The basic uniform was either a blue or brown tunic (Kalat). The blue kalats were faced in red around all borders, collars and cuffs. The brown were similarly trimmed in light blue. Officers' uniforms were faced, with gold and silver thread running through the facings. In winter, Kalats were lined and trimmed with fur. Trousers were usually either grey or blue and lined with fur in winter. Laced leather boots with no heels completed the uniform.

A coat of mail with a cuirass composed of oxhide or iron scales covered armor consisted of a lacquered leather cuirass or a heavy quilted kalat, and sometimes no armor at all.

Each Mongol warrior was required to wear a loose, raw silk undershirt. The silk would be carried into any wound made by an arrow without cutting the material. By gently lifting the twisted silk in the wound and turning out the arrow along the same route that it had entered the body, the wound was kept small, greatly improving the wounded man's chances for survival.

The battle headgear of heavy cavalry consisted of a conical iron helmet. Chainmail frequently hung down, protecting the neck and the sides of the face. A leather helmet of similar shape or a heavy quilted cap with a thick, firm brim was worn by light cavaly. Design and decoration of the caps varied by Tumen; the Uighur tumens, for instance, wore black velvet with yellow cloaks. Fur trimmings of wolf, fox, badger and monkey skins were worn by officers, in ascending order of rank. The common warrior wore goat or dog pelts.

All warriors carried a shield. The Mongol shield was small and circular, made of wicker covered by thick leather.

Each cavalyman carried two bows—one for long range, the other for short range. The bow was his primary and most deadly weapon. The pull of the bow varied from 100-160 pounds. It had a maximum range of 350 yards (compared to 75 pounds pull and a range of 250 yards for the English Longbow).

The Mongol bow was made from layers of horn and waterproofed by lacquer. The layer nearest the warrior was composed of horn, the furthest of sinew. Unstrung, its shape was like three-quarters of a circle. Strung, the outer curve of the circle bent towards its center, forming a double-curve configuration with ears at either end bending away from the archer.

When released, the horn would snap back to its original shape while the stretched sinew would contract, thus propelling the arrow faster and

with more power than a wooden bow. The Mongolian thumb lock (a stone ring on the thumb) further increased the arrow's velocity.

Arrows varied in size and shape, depending on use. Three "fast" arrows, whose tips had been hardened by plunging their red-hot heads into salt water, proved efficient at piercing armor. Whistling arrows were used for signalling and identifying targets. Arrows tipped with tiny grenades were put to good use as incendiary devices.

The Mongol warrior, carrying at least two quivers on his right side, each containing a minimum of 60 arrows, soon mastered the art of shooting arrows in any direction at a gallop. He carefully timed his release between the strides of his horse so his aim would not be affected by the horse's hooves striking the ground. The results were as remarkable as they were deadly.

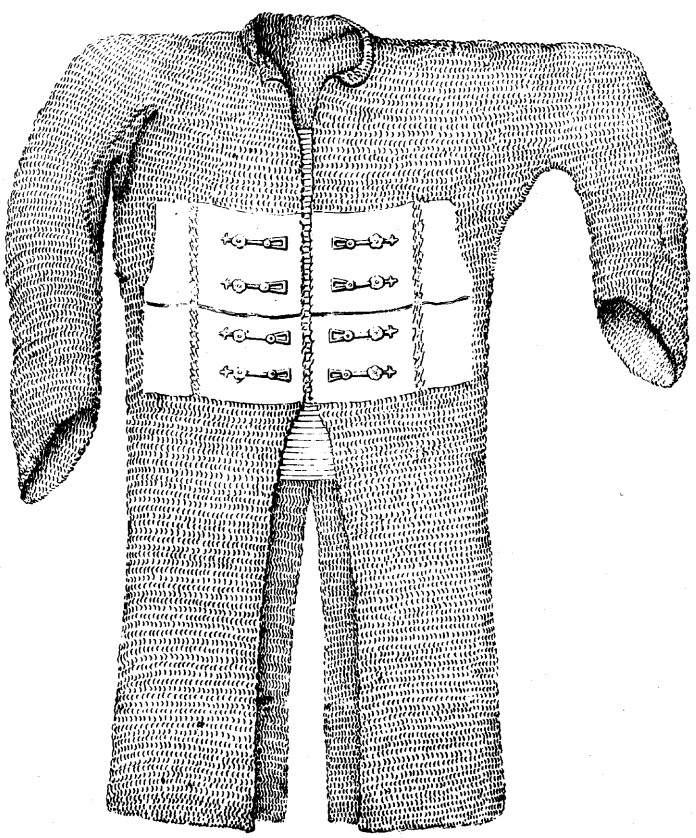
Weapons supplementing the bow were quite varied. Heavy cavalry were equipped with a scimitar (a long, curved-blade sword). A battle axe or iron mace hung from the saddle. A twelve-foot-long lance with a hook for yanking opposing warriors from their mounts was common. A horsehair pennant usually hung from the lance. The light cavalry sword was lighter and shorter. The lights carried two or three javelins. Roth carried a lasso, used for pulling heavy equipment or roping an enemy from the saddle. A dagger strapped to the inside left forearm was quite popular.

SIEGE WARFARE

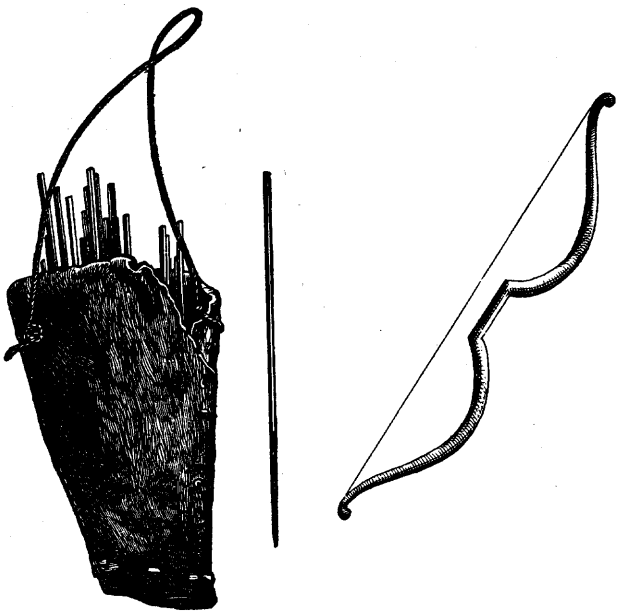
The Mongols' inability to take walled cities during their initial incursion into China drove home the need for siege artillery. The Mongols quickly recognized the potential of the Chinese light and heavy catapults and adapted them for their own use.

Requiring forty men (usually prisoners) to create sufficient tension on the ropes, the light catapult was capable of hurling a two-pound missile more than 100 yards. While this limited range could prove extremely perilous to its crew, the piece had the distinct advantage of being easily carried on the back of pack animals and quickly assembled.

The heavy catapult required a crew of more than 100 men. Capable of launching a twenty-five-pound missile at ranges exceeding 150 yards, these engines were especially effective against fortified gates and walls.



Coat of mail



The tools of a Mongol warrior's trade

From the Khwarizmians the Mongols borrowed the counterpoise Trebuchet and Ballistae. Operating upon the principle of counterweights, the Trebuchet possessed an effective range of 350 yards or more. The Rallistae had the appearance of a giant crossbow and propelled a huge arrow at ranges exceeding 150 -yards with much greater accuracy than either the catapult or Trebuchet.

The-Mongol use of this artillery was not limited to fortified targets. Containers filled with burning tar were used to smokescreen troop movements and confuse enemy concentrations. Grenades and fire bombs were launched to harass enemy lines. Should an enemy withdraw to a fortified position, siege engines were brought up. They were concentrated on specific areas to create gaps for cavalry to exploit, or to drive the enemy out in the open where the superior Mongol maneuverability and firepower could be best employed.

Gunpowder was also utilized by the Mongols; the oldest Mongol cannon dates back to 1332. Rockets made from bamboo wrapped in leather had range capabilities of more than 1,000 yards. Fired several at a time from box-like launching platforms, they proved more of a harassing weapon than a destructive one.

Most artillerymen were prisoners. The art of range determination and firing the weapon was often handled by Chinese or Moslem artillerists.

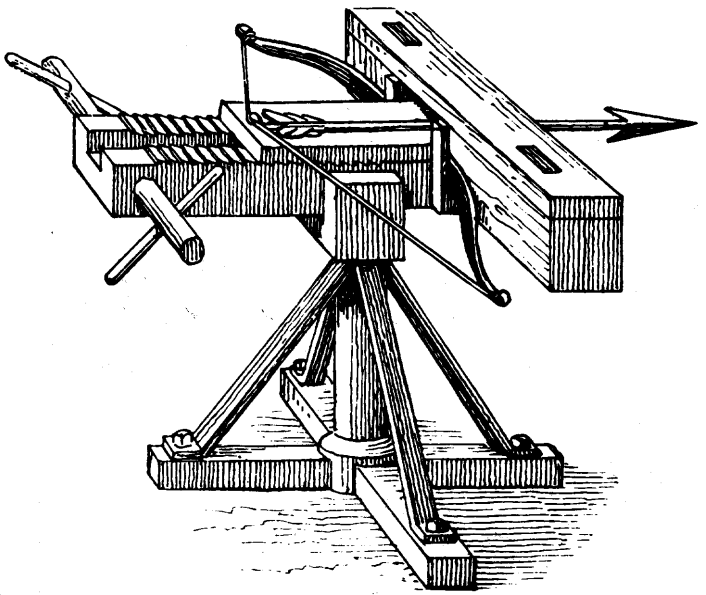
TACTICS

Entering battle, the Mongols advanced in five single ranks, the first two heavy cavalry, the last three light cavalry. In front and on either flank rode separate detachments of light cavalry. One of these would open the attack Should an enemy advance against one of these units, this detachment would become the vanguard and while the main body deployed to join the battle, the nearest light cavalry detachment would move quickly to protect the exposed flank.

Generally, light cavalry would not directly engage the enemy at close quarters. Instead, they would ride across the front, showering the front line with arrows and javelins. If gaps were opened, the light cavalry would open ranks and the heavy cavalry would charge through. Should the enemy front line remain firm, heavy cavalry would gallop around behind the enemy and attack its rear.

Another favorite tactic was the use of the Mangudai, a light cavalry corps of "suicide troops." In a maneuver which was more a tribute to their bravery than a tactical necessity, the Mangudai would charge the enemy alone, feign confusion, and take flight. Their plan was to entice the enemy to chase them into a carefully planned ambush which frequently led to the annihilation of the opponent.

In 1221, on the plain of Khuman where the Berduj meets the Kura, the Georgian Army of Giorgi Lasha (George IV), of over 70,000 men,

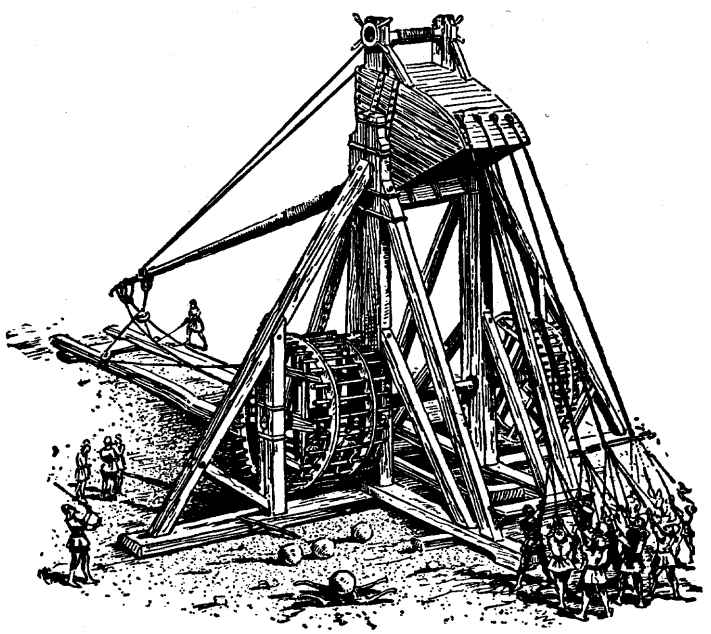


Ballistae

charged the Mongol army. The Mongols' horses, faster than the Russian mounts, kept ahead of the Georgians. Their ranks decimated by Mongol firepower, their horses exhausted and their force scattered across the plain, the Russian Army was vulnerable. After mounting fresh horses and advancing under a screen of arrows, the Mongols formed a wedge which was quickly driven through the Russian forces. All that remained was the mopping up.

After gathering another army, George IV rode out to meet the Mongols again. Thanks to keeping in close order and staying out of range of the Mongol arrows, the Russians pushed part of the Mongol Army into a pass. At that moment the remaining portions of the Mongol Army, hiding in ambush, appeared and attacked the Russian rear as the "retreating" Mongol army turned and charged the Georgian front line. The Russians' defeat was complete.

When totally outnumbered, the Mongols were adept at negotiating a way out of difficult situations. Confronted by a much superior army of Bulgars, Khazars, Alans and Cumans, the Mongols were forced to take up defensive positions near the Bab al-Abwab Pass. At dawn one morning, a Mongol ambassador rode into the Cuman camp with over half of the Mongols' horses and pack animals, laden with all their booty. Thus bribed, the Cumans betrayed their allies, whose remaining army was then destroyed by the Mongols



Trebuchet

After the battle, the Mongols rode after the Cumans. They caught them, decimated the army, executed its leaders, and recovered all their horses and treasure.

At Dnieper, 10,000 Russians held a strongly fortified camp. For three days, every Mongol attack was repulsed. At last, by offering to negotiate a surrender and ransom, a Mongol detachment was allowed into the camp. While the soldiers were off guard, the Mongols struck and wiped out the camp, taking no prisoners.

When, in 1257,20,000 men of the Caliph of Baghdad rode out to challenge the Mongols, Mongol soldiers broke dikes along the banks of the Tigris, flooding their camp, cutting off any line of retreat, and drowning a good portion of the detachment The few survivors were cut down by the main attack that followed.

The toughness of the Mongol warrior often determined the outcome of a battle. In 1221, at the Battle of Indus, the Turkish Army of Jellaluddin took up an excellent defensive position beside the Indus, its flanks protected by the mountains and a bend in the river. After being repulsed in the front, Genghis Khan sent a tumen over apparently impassable mountains to strike the Turkish flank Struck from two sides, the Turkish defense collapsed.

Having grown soft from the riches of conquest, divided by fighting among themselves for control of the Khanship, and facing a united Islam and a Europe no longer divided, the Mongols ceased to be a threat to Europe by the year 1290.

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ANOTHER CHAPTER FROM fantasysmith's notebook

Skeleton Crew: Down to the Bare Bones

Many of the figures you buy for fantasy gaming are not quite in the position you want them. As you go further into miniature modelling, this will be more and more irksome. Without being able to change your figures, you may have to paint up miniatures that aren't the way you want them.

Actually, minor alterations are fairly easily done. This article will discuss basic, simple reanimations that can add to the variety of your miniature set, and require no special tools. It will do so in the context of the skeletal undead.

Skeletons used to be a bit scary to me. Going to museums and seeing the bones of great mastodons and reptiles was spooky, even though I knew they couldn't hurt me. Human skeletons were even spookier; they always seemed a bit threatening. Skulls were especially weird, with their dark, empty eye sockets and eternal grins.

But in order to get to the bare bones of things, you have to understand skeletons. Their bones are the basic structure on which all else is hung. Bones give support to the muscles and flesh, and determine balance and proportion.

My own mistrust of skeletons evaporated in a physical anthropology class. There I met a fellow who believed that beauty is much more than skin deep. He thought that Marilyn Monroe must have had a particularly beautiful skeleton. After I stopped laughing, I had to admit that perhaps he was right. After all, every beautiful woman I have ever known had a skeleton inside her. So do you.

All art students who wish to draw people must first learn about the skeleton, and medical students agonize over the Latin names for your bones. A miniature painter needs only to know that "de head bone's connected to de neck bone," but a little more knowledge in this area is essential to being able to modify miniatures. Skeletal figures will be extremely useful in D&D in their own right, since skeletons are fun to have around to throw at adventurers that do not have Clerics with them. All the best families have skeletons in their closets, and you should have a few in your fantasy miniature collection.

The reason behind needing to know skeletons is that any miniature will look ill-proportioned if it doesn't have its arms, legs, and head in the tight place, at a reasonable angle, and of properly proportionate length. If you know "dem bones," you'll never make mistakes by proportioning miniatures wrong. This article will use a particular set of miniatures as an example: Grenadier set #W-51, "Skeleton Warriors."

When I first looked at this pack of figures, I was a little disappointed. There they were: six figures exactly alike. The minor anatomical problems could be easily overlooked—after all, these were fantasy miniatures and were less than 1" tall. But how could anyone live with regimented undead? *'Tenshut! Forward, Stagger! (Rattle, shuffle, rattle, rattle, rattle)"* Those skeletons were much too orderly! They probably didn't have a brain in their head.

Yet the Grenadier figures are close to ideal for alteration. Because of their construction of soft metal, and the fact that there was no clothing or flesh to give problems, the figures are easily altered. The basic skeleton is illustrated on the accompanying instruction page-hand to side, sword raised, jaw open. Not a pretty prospect, but even worse when there are six all alike. You only need your hands to modify these guys-but possibly a small metal ruler or pliers will come in handy to increase your

(Turn to page 60)

The 'degrees of difficulty' and what they mean

This article is an introduction to alteration of miniatures, and covers reanimation and adaptations. The alterations below are defined as they will be used in future columns. They have not been defined exactly this way before. This series of definitions was needed to differentiate a progressive increase in complication of operations, and increasing use of tools and skill. The definitions do not include "putting together" kits, but only changing some aspects of a standard one piece miniature.

CONVERSION: Use of one figure to represent another type of figure. This is normally accomplished by simply painting a figure differently after scraping or filing off some figure details. For example, a head of hair can be filed down and painted silver to produce a helmeted figure.

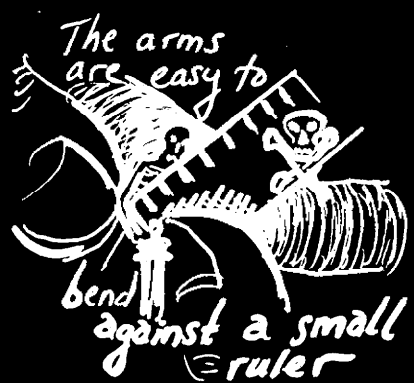
REANIMATION: Minor alteration of a figure's appearance by bending arms, legs, or equipment into a new position. Minor additions of equipment also fall into this category. Shields, capes, weapons, or other equipment may be easily glued onto the figure without use of complicated operations.

ADAPTATION: Minor additions and changes to a figure made with putty, filler, or solder. Substitution of a head or weapon from another figure that requires drilling and filing also is included. The repairs recommended in the article are similar to adaptations.

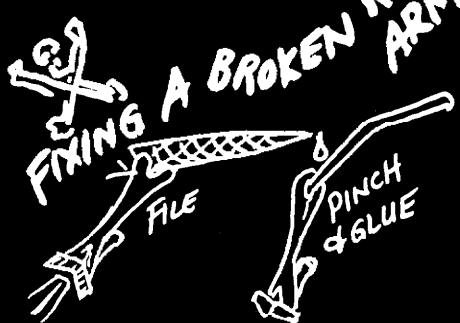
MODIFICATION: Major alteration of figure requiring considerable cutting, filing, and grinding. Figures are also modified by cutting off limbs and substituting different ones-often from another figure. This method is sometimes accomplished with an assist from a power tool, or with specialized hand tools, vises, or jigs. The finished figure will be unique, with those items of the original casting that are still visible being overshadowed by modified parts.

SCRATCHBUILT: Rather than an alteration of a figure, this is actually the production of a completely new figure from basic materials. Although some commercially available pieces may be included, the major segments of the figure are constructed by the modeller. Clay, wax, putty, wood, plastic, paper, metal, or other materials are formed and assembled to make a piece specifically for the purposes of the modeller. Scratchbuilding is most often used for a special display piece or a diorama. This is the most demanding type of modeling and the most advanced. It is included here for comparison with alterations, and will be covered in some detail in a later issue of *The Dragon.*

SKULLING



None of this is law. Take these suggestions as a start



GRENADIER SET W-51

Hope you increase your skull skill! Fantasysmith!

IS USED HERE. OTHERS MAY BE GOOD FOR YOU.

GIANTS IN THE EARTH

CLASSIC HEROES FROM FICTlON & LITERATURE

Lawrence Schick and Tom Mokdvay

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to add on element of novelty and unknown danger to the DM's high-level encounter table, and to give players a chance to actually meet up with heroes from their favorite fantasy books. The referee is advised to use these characters with discretion. They are a lot of fun to run, and the players should haue an interesting time dealing with them.

These heroes are all in some fashion exceptional, and thus they deviate a bit in their qualities and capabilities from standard D&D. Also, most originated in other universes or worlds, and so were not bound by the same set of restrictions that apply to the average D & D character. Some are multi-classed, for example. This system has been used to describe the skills and abilities of the characters as they appear in the literature, even though some of these combinations and conditions are not normally possible. In addition, some minor changes have been made in order to bring them in line with the game and to enhance playability.

Note: *For the game purposes of these heroes: Dexterity 18 (00) gives +4 on Reaction/Attacking, -5 Defensive adjustment and three attacks per round for high level fighters. Constitution 18 (00) gives fighters +4.5 per hit die bonus.*

Rafael Sabatini's CAPTAIN BLOOD

17th level fighter, 10th level thief, 8th level cleric
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic good
HIT POINTS: 89
ARMOR CLASS: 0
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2/1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8 (+ 5)
HIT BONUS: +4
MOVE: 9"
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil
STRENGTH: 18 (51%)
INTELLIGENCE: 17
WISDOM: 15
DEXTERITY: 18 (00%)
CONSTITUTION: 16
CHARISMA: 17

Thieving Abilities:

Pick Pockets:	Open Locks:	Locate/ Remove Traps:	Move Silently:	Hide in Shadows:	Hear Noise:	Climb Walls:
95%	87%	75%	93%	78%	30%	99%

Captain Blood cannot read the languages of the D&D universe.

Clerical Spells:

1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Command	Detect Charm	Cure Blindness	Cure Serious Wounds
Bless	Know Alignment	Cure Disease	Neutralize Poison
Remove Fear	Slow Poison	Feign Death	
2/ Cure Light Wounds	Hold Person		

Peter Blood was the son of an Irish medicus in the 17th century. Following in his father's footsteps, he achieved his Bachelor of Medicine from Trinity College, Dublin, at the age of 20. He showed little disposition to practice the peaceful art to which he was qualified, preferring a career with a sword to one with a scalpel.

Peter Blood wandered Europe as a mercenary, eventually finding service with the Dutch under the brilliant Admiral de Ruyter. After the Peace of Nimeguen, he once again served in a variety of armies and navies until, in 1685, he decided to settle down in England and return to his medical profession.

Unfortunately, he ministered to a patient who had taken part in the Monmouth Rebellion, and he was arrested along with his patient He was convicted of treason and his death sentence commuted to transportation and slavey in Barbados.

Peter Blood and several of his friends eventually escaped, capturing a Spanish ship of war. He was chosen captain and began a life as a privateer and buccaneer. Captain Blood became one of the most famed and feared captains of the Caribbean. His courage and daring, and his phenomenal luck, were legendary.

Peter Blood looks remarkably like Errol FIynn with long hair. He is one of the Black Irish, dark in coloring, with an occasional burst of temper, particularly when he feels an injustice has been done. He combines ruthlessness and common sense with magnanimity and a sense of fair play. He hates cowards, cheats, and bullies, and will often champion the underdog. When Peter Blood is mad, or in a sarcastic mood, he often reverts to a heavy Irish accent

Peter Blood carries a brace of flintlock pistols tucked into his belt Each pistol fires one shot with an effective range of 30 feet (3" in dungeons). A pistol ball does 1-20 points of damage. Each pistol takes 4 segments to reload. Peter Blood is dressed as a Spanish grandee of the 17th century, with long coat and vest, hip boots, and wide-brimmed hat sporting a peacock feather. He is an expert with both the rapier and knife belted at his side.

Peter Blood's luck is amazing. He is +2 extra to hit and damage, armor class, and all saves. He is a brilliant leader, particularly at sea. In sea battles, his apprenticeship under de Ruyter, coupled with his intuition, lead him to almost always make the correct decision, anticipating the enemy's moves beforehand.

One day in the 17th century, Captain Blood accidentally sailed through the Bermuda Triangle into the magical universe of D&D. When encountered, he may (50%) be accompanied by 1-20 members of his crew, each armed with pistol and cutlass. If there are more than 10 crew members, one will be 3rd-level and one 5th-level; the rest are all 1st-level fighters. Peter Blood is seeking to return to his own world, but he is not above a bit of adventure and loot in the meantime.

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H.P. Lovecraft's RICHARD UPTON PICKMAN (King of the Ghouls)

9th level fighter with special magical ability
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic neutral
HIT POINTS: 77
ARMOR CLASS: -3
NO. OF ATTACKS: 3/2
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8 (+4 or +1)
HIT BONUS: +4 or + 1
MOVE: 6"
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil
STRENGTH: 14
INTELLIGENCE: 18 (00%)
WISDOM: 11
DEXTERITY: 17
CONSTITUTION: 15
CHARISMA: 15 (to humans, 19 to ghouls)

"Self -Portrait" circa 1929 Arkham Collection.

Richard Upton Pickman was a Boston painter who disappeared in 1927. His family was of old Salem stock, and one ancestor was hung as **a** witch in 1692. Pickman was a noted genius who specialized in painting the morbid and bizarre. His most famous painting was "Ghoul Feeding." Its disgusting realism was the main reason that the Boston Art Club and all respectable galleries shunned Pickman and his paintings, Richard Upton Pickman's paintings were realistic for a good reason—they were copied from photographs.

When Pickman grew weary of this world, he disappeared through one of the many tunnels the ghouls had dug under New England. Journeying deeper and deeper into the black, dank burrow, Pickman eventually crossed through the Gate of Deeper Slumber, into the Realm of Dream. He joined the ghouls in their lairs, slowly devolving into a ghoul himself, though he retains more human features and mannerisms than is normal among ghouls.

Perhaps the remnants of his humanity impressed the ghouls, or maybe it was his talent for leadership or his artistic genius. For whatever reason, Richard Upton Pickman first became a noted ghoulish advisor, when was chosen as king by one large band of ghouls. He is always accompanied by a bodyguard of 8 ghouls and 4 ghasts. He wears +3 plate armor (no shield) and carries a +1 sword which is +4versus ghoul enemies (most living creatures).

Pickman has acted as a civilizing and restraining influence on his ghoul band, hence the change from evil to neutral in alignment While somewhat temperamental, particularly when he regresses into his more ghoulish personality, Pickman is still impressed by Victorian and Edwardian manners. He may befriend a player character who acts like a "gentleman." Richard Upton Pickman will not take it kindly if members of his bodyguard are turned away. An evil Cleric can only befriend the ghouls if his charisma (toward ghouls) is greater than Pickman's.

Before his devolution grew too extreme, Richard Upton Pickman painted seven magical paintings which he carries with him in a backpack. Each painting is one foot square and has a save versus fire of 10. Player characters who gaze upon a painting are liable to suffer the magical effect of that painting. Only ghouls from Pickman's band are immune, having admired the paintings countless times. Pickman may display one painting per round, even if he is under attack. He may use a painting as a shield, flashing it in the eyes of an attacker while slashing with his own sword.

Richard Upton Pickman's paintings are:

1. "The Lesson" ("A circle of nameless dog-like things in a churchyard teach a small child how to feed like themselves.") Unless a save versus spells is made, the player character is changed into a ghoul.

2. "Ghoul Feeding" (description self-evident from title). Treat as a *Fear* spell.

3. "Subway Accident" ("A flock of vile ghouls and witches clamber up from some unknown catacomb"). Treat as a Confusion spell.

4. "Welcome to Innsmouth" (A smiling, ichthyic humanoid holds out a tentacle, as if to shake hands.) A devolution spell. If save versus polymorph is not made, roll % to determine degree of devolution. For a normal human, an approximate devolution scale would be 01-25 = half-(sea) orc, 26-50 = lizard man, 51-75 = troglodyte, 76-90 = sahuagin, 91-00 = lacedon (sea-ghoul). Modify at DM's discretion for character race. The DM may wish to give the character a second save (versus spells at -4 on die roll) to determine whether or not the character's personality is intact (i.e. whether or not he remains a player character). The character may be restored to normal by a *Remove Curse* spell cast by at least a 10th-level Cleric or an 11th-level Magic-User.

5. "The Silver Key" (a massive silver key engraved with cryptical arabesques).- Treat as a Maze spell with the victim cast into an astral realm. Roll for possible encounters (20 on 1d20) each round spent on the astral plane using the Astral Encounter Table (pg. 181, *Dungeon Masters Guide)*

6. "The Colour out of Space" (a stone well covered with graying iridescent fungus). Unless a save versus spells is made, the character will become covered with the fungus in the picture. Death will occur in 10 rounds unless a *Cure Disease* spell is cast upon the victim by at least a 10th-level Cleric.

Thomas Burnett Swann's
SILVERBELLS

Forest Minotaur; 15th level ranger, 13th level paladin
ALIGNMENT: Neutral good
HIT POINTS: 105
ARMOR CLASS: 1
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2/1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8 (+9)
HIT BONUS: +6
MOVE: 12"
STRENGTH: 18 (00%)
INTELLIGENCE: 13
WISDOM: 14
DEXTERITY: 18 (09%)
CONSTITUTION: 18 (71%)
CHARISMA: 17
PSIONIC ABILITY
Psionic Strength = 72.
Psionic Ability = 144.
Attack & Defense Modes= All
Disciplines
Animal Telepathy
ESP
Teleportation

Spells:

Clerical	Druidical	Magical
Detect Magic	Animal Friendship	Spider Climb
Remove Fear	Locate Animals	Feather Fall
Speak with Animals	Barkskin	Knock
Know Alignment	Trip	Detect Evil
Continual Light		

The minotaur race originated on our world at a time when earth was still magical. As human civilization spread, and the areas of wilderness dwindled, minotaurs retreated further and further until they finally abandoned the earth for more magical realms. While they lived on Crete, wild minotaurs were hunted for games in the arena. Humans began to breed captured minotaurs and eventually evolved the breed of chaotic evil cave minotaurs found in the *Monster Manual.*

The original stock of minotaurs are neutral good. They are the guardians and protectors of forest animals and races, particularly dryads, satyrs, centaurs, naiads, panisci, and the miniature bears sacred to Artemis. The forest minotaurs hate harpies sphinxes, and lamias, and are feuding with the cave minotaurs. Forest minotaurs are friends with elves, dislike men (except druids), and are tolerant or neutral toward other races.

Silver Bells (so named because of the bells which adorn his horns) is a "paladin" of the forest folk. To cry "Silver Bells" is to evoke his aid. He will rush to help any forest animal or individual who calls upon him. Calling on Silver Bells is an instinct in non-intelligent animals, there is a 50% chance Silver Bells will recognize the plea. If Silver Bells is not physically near, there is still a 50% chance he will psionically hear the cry and teleport to the rescue (75% if psionic individual or animal calls for help).

Silver Bells is usually a reasonable, passivistic individual. He will not even attack humans, unless it is obvious they have recently harmed one of the forest folk. He prefers protective action to combat, but will fight ferociously to the death if necessary. He is reasonably cautious but somewhat naive and open to trickery.

Silver Bells was once captured and forced to fight in a Cretan arena. His reaction to human hunters, trappers, and gladiators is a hostile -2. He will attack sphinxes and harpies on sight. He wears a +2 ring of protection and fights with a +3 double-headed axe.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: *Cry Silver Bells* (paperback, DAW Books) by Thomas Burnett Swann.

Bryan Bullinger

The *Squad Leader* gaming system opened new vistas to the WWII boardgamer. The rules have the flavor of miniatures without the expense. Like most tactical boardgames, *Squad Leader* has predesigned scenarios to facilitate the learning of the rules. Once the players have become familiar with the rules, however, they are encouraged to design their own scenarios. However, without considerable time and work, the "design your own" scenario frequently lacks play balance-and by the time playtests have been completed most players suffer from a severe lack of interest.

The following scenario has been playtested and run by myself in numerous tournaments with excellent results (47 German wins, 49 Russian wins, and 6 draws). I have outlined below some general suggestions for successful play in this scenario. Next month I will offer a detailed discussion on tactics for this scenario and have another scenario which will hopefully try your tactical mettle.

The following scenario will force the development of streetfighting skills for both sides. Tactical doctrine for successful streetfighting depends on the player's successful use of combined arms (if available). Given a situation where only infantry and machine guns (MG's) are available the technique is to cut off, soften up, and smoke 'em. To cut off, one must ensure—through the use of fire lanes—that the target hexes are not reinforced. The target hexes are then attacked during prep fire to attempt to break or kill-in-action (KIA) as many enemy units as possible. Also during the prep fire phase, smoke is placed in anticipated lanes of movement. The movement phase then requires the advance of the player's best available close assault (combat) units adjacent to the target hex. The target hex is then taken in the close combat phase.

One last word of advice: Read the scenario carefully, as the definitions of control and the set-up instructions are important to achieving play balance. Also, the time length given is approximate and should only be strictly adhered to during tournament play.

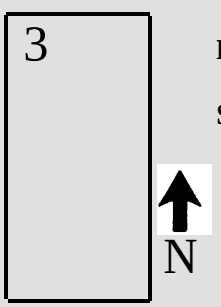
SQUAD LEADER SCENARIO #1

Rules used: Scenarios 1-4 and Sec. 54 & 57

Time period: June 1942

Game length: 2½ hours
Game turns: 6 turns

Victory Conditions — The player who controls the most buildings is the winner. Control is defined as the building being occupied by an infantry unit (may be broken) such as a squad, crew or leader with no enemy units present. Should both players control an equal number, the German wins.



BOARD SETUP

Player Setup— The Russian player sets up first, the German player moves first. The Russian sets up on row F and north in woods hexes. The German sets up on row BB and south in woods or building hexes.

Special Terrain Rules —All hills are considered as wheatfields. Other terrain in former hill hexes remains unchanged.

German units —A 10-2 plus any two (2) of the groups below.
Group 1—8-1,8-3-8 (x2), 4-6-7 (x6), 2-4-7 (x3), HMG, MMG
Group 2—9-2, 7-0,4-6-7 (x10), 2-4-7, MMG, LMG (x5)
Group 3—9-1,8-1, 8-0,8-3-8 (x3), 2-4-7 (x5), LMG
Group 4—9-1, 8-0,4-6-7 (x10), 2-4-7 (x2), MMG (x2), LMG (x5)
Group 5—9-2,8-1, 9-1,4-6-7 (x5), 2-4-7 (x5), LMG (x4)

Russian units—A 10-2 plus any two (2) of the groups below.
Group 1—9-1, 6-2-8,4-4-7 (x13), LMG (x5)
Group 2—8-1,6-2-8 (x3), 4-4-7 (x10), 2-3-7
Group 3—8-1,4-4-7 (x12), 2-3-7(x3), HMG, MMG, LMG (x3)
Group 4—B-1, 8-0,4-4-7 (x15), 2-3-7, LMG
Group 5—8-0, 7-0,6-2-8 (x6), 2-3-7 (x2)

Note: German 8-3-8's and Russian 6-2-8's may make unlimited smoke.

Victory Conditions Note: In non-tournament play, both players controlling an equal number of buildings at the game's end constitutes a draw.

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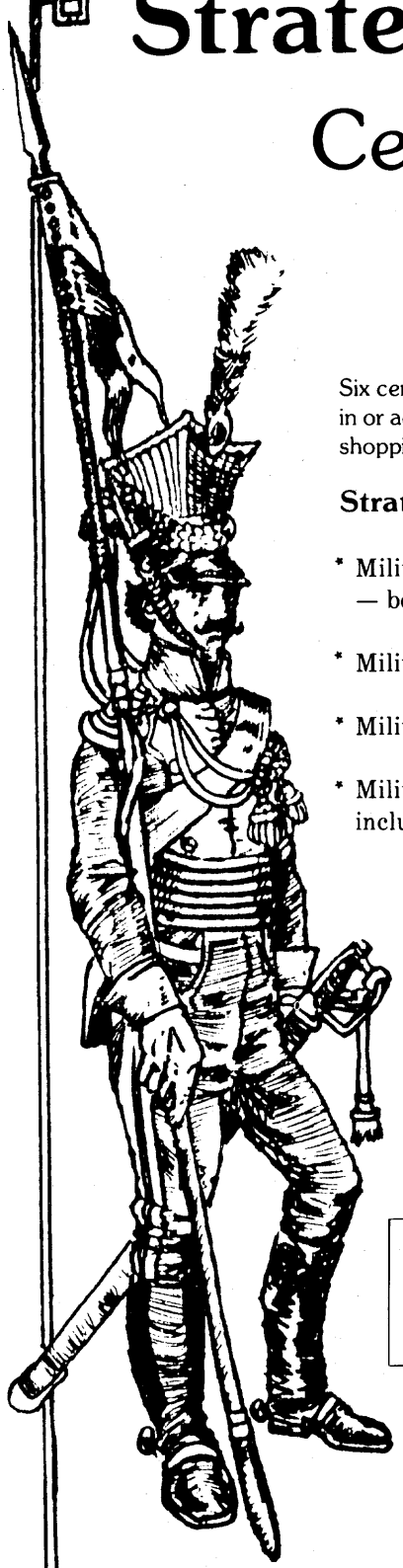

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Experience Points to Ponder: A new system

A System based upon actual Damage Done
Or activities successfully completed
With modifications for the strength of the opponent(s),
As used in the Darlethian Millenium

William Fawcett

The heart of this system is a record kept by the DM of the number of points of damage done in combat by a player. This is done on a worksheet and is recorded as it occurs.

The advantage of this system is that it rewards efforts in a manner based upon their degree of success. It proportionally rewards those who participate in combat without regard to who delivers the coup de grace. This system also allows for the differences between individuals of the same type of monster or class. For example, the experience for slaying in single combat a 2-hit-point Orc would only be 1/3 of that for doing so to a 6-hit-point Orc. Similarly, a really gigantic Dragon (or powerful Patriarch) slain would be even more rewarding.

Two further modifications are needed. The first of these is designed to take into account the greater risk posed by certain creatures. A magic-using or enchanted opponent is more dangerous, so the point value needs to be greater than for a less formidable opponent with an equal number of hit points. Otherwise, a Black Pudding and an Ogre Magi, for instance, could be the same value. Enchanted or magic-using creatures have a base value of 10 EPs rather than the normal 5 per hit point.

The second modification takes into account the difficulty that is faced in hitting an opponent with a low Armor Class. The Armor Class is compensated for by subtracting the class from 10 (treating minus values as such: 10 - 2 = 12). The resulting number is then multiplied by the creature's base AC to determine the exact number of points awarded per hit. For example, an AC6 Orc with five hit points is slain by Beowolf Schaefer. The base per point is 5, which is then multiplied by 4 (10 minus 6) for a total of 20 EPs per hit point. Since the Orc had five hit points, Beowolf gains 100 EPs from the battle.

Later that day, Beowolf is feeling brave and takes on a Troll. Since the Troll has a magical ability (regeneration) it has a base of 10 points. This was a big Troll with 34 hit points and AC5. Each point of damage done will be worth 50 points of experience. Beowolf would receive 1700 points for singlehandedly slaying the Troll. (It is up to the DM whether or not to reward experience points for redamaging regenerated hit points.)

Unfortunately, Beowolf was only third level and after a few melee rounds was down to three hit points himself. He chose to flee having only hit once for six points of damage. At 50 points per hit, he gained 300 EPs for his efforts. After all, we learn also from failure (he'll never pick on Trolls again, you can bet). And Beowolf learned something about how to fight Trolls again should he be forced to.

You can learn from failure, if you live to think about it. It is unrealistic to reward only complete success. Therefore, a player can gain experience even if a creature is not slain. If a first-level halfling Thief lives to tell of sticking a Red Dragon with his dagger, he deserves some experience, doesn't he?

The other way in which experience can be gained immediately in this campaign is in the use of magic. Successfully using magic does add to the store of experience of a Magic-User or Cleric. This is especially realistic in a combat or adventuring situation when rapid decisions would be necessary. To reflect this, the following Experience Points are granted:

10 pts x spell level if used during a melee
5 pts x spell level if used when in hostile surroundings
0 points at all other times

Experience point Record

Monster(s)	A.C.	Base Hit Pts	EP value	Experience Points attained by each player					

Summary of Experience Point calculations:

For enchanted or magical monsters, players receive 10 EP for each point of damage they inflict, multiplied by the difference between the monster's AC and 10.

For non-magical monsters, players receive a base of 5 EP per point of damage done, with the same multiplier.

Special Experience for Magic-Users, Clerics:

For spell casting in melee situation, player receives 10 EP x level of spell.

For spell casting in hostile environment, player receives 5 EP x level of spell.

For spell casting in friendly environment, NO award.

Party Experience

Party Experience has evolved into several different programs in this campaign as the sophistication of the players increased. The purpose of party experience is to compensate lower-level characters for what they would learn when traveling with more powerful players or from marginally participating in battles with creatures that they would individually be unable to cope with.

The first system consists of merely totaling the experience gained by all of the characters in the adventure and then dividing it evenly. The individual players then divide their totals by the level they are at. First-level characters then would receive all, second levels half, third levels a third, etc. This system tends to be a quick boost for players with characters in the lower levels and provides little reward to those who have progressed into levels higher than third. It works best in campaigns with a large number of new players or in those campaigns that are particularly bloody and so have players rolling up new characters fairly often.

The second system also takes into account the total damage done by the party on the adventure, but requires more bookkeeping in exchange for a further step towards reality. In this system, each group of players will receive as party experience the total, once again divided by their level, of all the experience gained by their type of character (Fighters, Magic-Users, Clerics, Monks, etc.) only. This is intended to take into effect the fact that a Magic-User would learn little from watching some musclebound Fighter pounding on a hapless Orc. The Magic-User then would tend to attach himself to parties that contain others of his ilk

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SIMULATION CORNER

John Prados

To Complicate or Too Complicated?

Tactics II is one design that should be on everyone's game shelf. Napoleon at Waterloo, Panzergruppe Guderian, and Air Force are others, and they are important to this discussion because each of these designs marked and important advance in the "state of the art" of simulations. Viewed historically, each of the four games is representative of new trends incorporating detailed types of subsystems in games. Because their game systems featured different elements of the historical situation, or pictured them in a novel way, the new games provided more feeling for the historical situation and more interest for the gamer.

The notion of a game "state of the art" is worth taking a look at, both because it furnishes insight on why some things are easier to game than others and because "state of the art" has been influenced by the taste of consumers.

The first games were very crude, but they were impressive because no such things had been available before. That there was not much explicit thought given to modeling in design at that time is apparent from the repetition of game system that occurred in the early Avalon Hill designs. Despite this, the novelty of historical games at that time attracted a large following, and for a very long time AH furnished the complete realm of games available to hobbyists. Only in the last ten years has Avalon Hill been challenged by the appearance of other game publishers, and it is significant that advances in the "state of the art" played a vital role in the challenge.

Simulation Publications, Inc., brought to games a new attitude toward design and graphic representation. Even a small touch like running rivers along hexsides rather than through hexes eliminated a persistent ambiguity in games. Napoleon at Waterloo established a new tactical battle game standard design.

SPI rapidly gained a name for more "realistic" design work than Avalon Hill. SPI's Strategy & Tactics magazine, with a game in each issue, was a departure in game publishing practice and was soon given the compliment of emulation by Simulations Design Corporation of California. SDC and Gamescience were a couple of members of the constellation of small game publishers who got their start in the 1969-1972 period, which was something of a boon for hobbyists looking for different approaches to game design.

It was at about this time that innovation in design began to be seen as an independent value that should be part of a good game. The "state of the art" that was so primitive in 1965 advanced to a second generation of historical games, in which "realistic" presentation of historical elements achieved a new level of specificity. Games began to include explicit treatments designed to show operational methods, mechanized movement, unit integrity, leadership, the impact of economics on warfare and other factors. One new company, Game Designers' Workshop, actually established itself by means of giving great attention to the new realism and to historical research in their games.

Panzerguppe Guderian is certainly a design that is characteristic of the second generation games, whose complexity levels measured in SPI Feedback crept up from the 5.0-6.0 range to 6.0-7.0.

Once innovation was accepted as a value, the sky became the limit Some deprecated the trend as merely adding "chrome" to the games, but out of the past few years has flowed both an extremely sophisticated state of the art and wholly novel forms of game, such as role-playing games.

In the board wargame field, the trend took the form of creating larger and larger games with increasingly detailed rules, most prominently the "monster" games with numerous maps and thousands of counters. DGW made an early impact with its huge *Drang Nach Osten*, kicking off its Europa series that will eventually encompass all of the European Theater in World War II. Even a tiny company like Martial Enterprises was able to get notoriety for its Napoleonic *Bataille de la Moscova* simulation of Borodino. Simulations Publications followed the trend with a series of multimap games on different subjects ranging from both theaters of World War II to the Civil War.

"Third generation" games offered the designers an opportunity to conceive games totally unfettered by considerations of size or rules complexity. Of course, not all the games that resulted were huge presentations. I have picked Air Force as representative of the third generation games precisely because it included an innovative vision of game action rather than a large size format This standard size game furnished a miniatures-like detailed simulation of aircraft-to-aircraft combat at the tactical level and was quite manageable in terms of variables included and functions in the game turn.

In some other games, however, the marriage of scale with level of detail has not been as happy. Along with the desire for innovation, basically, there has come something of a sense that the more complex a game is, the better it is as a game. The SPI feedback, for example, is ranked in terms of complexity and helps to reinforce this impression.

Moreover, gamers must believe the highly complex game is realistic in order to justify the level of detail with which they must deal. Consequently, as the games tended to become more complex it was almost as if they were deliberately aiming for a feedback rating at the 9.0 level. Things reached the point where playing the game inevitably included a substantial amount of paperwork, where supply as a factor might comprise the use of a number of different types of supply points rather than being a single, undifferentiated consideration.

Most recently we have seen the beginning of what looks to be an even newer trend in game design. Interestingly, the new trend is a reversion toward an earlier, simpler vision of what is the game. The reference is to the increasing poliferation of what are called "micro-games," simple one-map (or M-map) games of specific situations with 100 or 200 counters.

This is not a brand-new concept—for some years now Excalibre Games has been subsisting on designs of this type, and an earlier format of the "micros" was SPI's quad games—what is new is the degree to which the different publishers' plans have begun to center upon the "micros" as the most likely avenue of future game hobby development SPI, GDW, OSG, and other companies have moved into the "micro-game" area with great alacrity. Only Avalon Hill seems to hang behind, in much the same manner as it has not yet produced any of the grand "monster" designs (although it has had plans for such games on a couple of occasions).

For the designer, the two genres, "monsters" and "micros," are opposite extremes of the design continuum, one game the province of incredible complexity, the other the product of high-level abstraction. If innovation remains valuable in game design, however, these extremes are the opposite horns of a dilemma. Should the designer complicate his game system so as to achieve state-of-the-art improvement (with or without "monster" format treatment), or must he recognize that his

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THE DM's RIGHT-HAND MAN [?]

Roy Earle

In the June 1979 issue of *The Dragon* (#26), Rick Krebs described a microcomputer-based system designed to assist the DM in the more mundane details of running his campaign. He characterized himself as "by no stretch of the imagination a computer scientist, merely a gamer looking for new ways to use technology in gaming." Let me give you the viewpoint of one computer scientist who has recently discovered gaming.

The computer is merely a tool. Although it can execute millions of instructions each second, it can only perform tasks which have been explained to it in agonizing detail. It is therefore notably lacking in creativity. Almost by definition, anything which we understand well enough to program into a computer is not creative. (The predictions of a super chess-playing program, for instance, have yet to be fulfilled. The artificial intelligence researchers discovered that we do not know how human experts play championship chess. There are programs which are excellent chess players, but the top players are still human.) Those tasks which we understand fully-especially repetitious clerical tasks—can often be performed more quickly and accurately by the computer than by humans. The computer is the ideal drudge.

In the realm of AD&D, a computer can perform many dull housekeeping chores so that the DM may concentrate on the creative aspects of his task. Artificial intelligence research has taught us how to organize goal-directed games. Computer simulation techniques used in engineering and economics allow a changing world to be modeled within the computer. (See "Zork A Computerized Fantasy Simulation Game" in the April 1979 issue of *Computer*. Zork is like single-player D&D without role-playing or campaign background.) Let us consider eight of the DM's tasks and the ways in which standard computer science techniques might simplify them:

First, the DM describes the players' immediate environment to them. Keeping track of the dungeon map, the players' positions on it, and any changes to the dungeon (forced doors, etc.) is trivial for the computer. In fact, a schematic display of the visible room and corridor layout could be maintained by the computer.

Second, the DM enforces (or fails to enforce because they are too much bother) restrictions on time and movement. The inventory of items carried by each player and their effect on movement can be maintained by the computer. Various time-related limitations such as torch consumption, rest periods, healing, and spell duration are easily monitored if the computer is keeping the game's master clock.

Third, probabilistic outcomes (combat results, saving throws, wandering monsters, etc.) decided by the DM depend upon dice throws and tables. It is easy to program a random-number generator to simulate any combination of dice; all the many tables (combat, armor, etc.) may be stored in the computer. This would speed up melee immensely.

Fourth, the DM is responsible for unintelligent monsters and subservient allies and hirelings. Those monsters and non-player characters who simply attack, retreat, or follow orders can be controlled by the computer. (A gelatinous cube does not require much attention from the DM during an encounter.)

Fifth, the DM operates the intelligent monsters and non-player characters. When negotiation, trickery, or flexible response are required, the DM draws on decades of social experience which cannot be programmed into any computer. Given the numerical information from the *Monster Manual*, however, the computer can randomly generate monsters or henchmen and keep track of their hit points while the DM directs their behavior. Like other tabular information, the monster characteristics need only be entered once when the program is written. Variations can be made at any time at the DM's discretion, of course.

Sixth, the DM designs the layout of the dungeon and places treasures, traps, and monsters within it All of these can be generated randomly under constraints imposed by the DM (total size, average corridor length, average treasure value and monster strength for each level, etc.). For the solo player, automatic dungeon creation would be a real boon. Unfortunately, a machine-created dungeon lacks the fiendish ingenuity provided by a human DM. In practice, I would expect the DM to design critical areas and let the computer flesh out the dungeon or to edit a randomly generated dungeon to create a more interesting setting. As users of office word-processing equipment know, just having information stored in the computer makes it infinitely easier to change things—especially if you have a video display screen.

Seventh, the DM must create the culture and terrain in which the campaign takes place. Not having read Tolkien, Leiber, or Vance, a computer can contribute little here besides randomly generated names. (Computers can tell stories or converse like Freudian analysts, but they usually do it by randomly selecting items from their limited store of cliches. Just like humans, when they have no real knowledge of a subject they resort to b.s.)

Eighth, the DM is the referee and final arbiter for the campaign. The computer can keep track of monsters killed and treasure gained, but all advancement decisions and player disputes requiring judgment are the responsibility of the DM.

The computer can take over many burdensome and repetitious housekeeping chores, thereby speeding up play and freeing the DM for his more challenging and creative tasks. One interesting possibility is that with enough help from the computer the DM might be far less reluctant to let the party split up temporarily. At present it is not really practical for the DM to run several scenarios at once. There are also very good reasons discussed in the AD&D manuals why splinter groups may be bad for the campaign. If, however, those leaving (or cut off from) the main party are willing to accept less of the DM's personal attention, the computer may be able to keep their part of the dungeon operating until they are reunited with their fellows.

So why don't I have all these wonderful aids running in my living room? The answer is money, of course. Rick Krebs somehow managed to shoehorn his program and tables into a microcomputer with only 4,096 characters of memory. His program was written in BASIC, a programming language too weak for an extensive project His microcomputer cost a few thousand dollars at most In contrast, artificial intelligence programs are usually run in a sophisticated language, such as LISP, on a machine having hundreds of thousands of characters of memory and costing hundreds of thousands of dollars. This means that the sophisticated techniques which are the fruits of decades of research are not applicable to a machine that the average gamer or group of gamers can afford.

The situation is improving rapidly, however. The next generation of microcomputers will sell for a few thousand dollars but have most of the capabilities of the previous generation of large computers. Sophisticated languages such as Pascal and LISP, formerly available only on large machines, are now available even on microcomputers. There is a growing realization that a microcomputer can do almost anything a large machine can do—only more slowly. Since a significant percentage of computer science students have grown up on fantasy and science

fiction, you can expect to see some very powerful AD&D aids in the next few years.

As an example of what can be done now, consider the problem of describing the adventurers' surroundings to them. Ideally, one might like to display the visible area of the dungeon, the adventurers, and the monsters on a color television screen. Realistically, enough resolution to draw the characters well and enough speed to allow even cartoon-like movement are prohibitively expensive. Painted figures give much more realism than could be afforded with a fully animated dungeon.

Nevertheless, available displays do have enough resolution to easily depict the rooms and corridors, if not the characters and items within them. The Apple II microcomputer, for example, has a simple color graphics capability. An option allows display on any color television. Large-screen projection televisions have been available for years now. Why not place standard painted figures in their marching order on a table and project the dungeon around them? As the adventurers move through the dungeon, the projection could be made to advance and turn around the stationay miniatures. Special mounting would be needed to direct the projection onto the horizontal surface, but the whole system could be bought for less than the price of a car. Its two major components, the microcomputer and the television, would be available for their normal functions. Having a clear visual display of the adventurers' surroundings would enhance the realism of the fantasy. Retaining the use of miniatures would preserve that artistic aspect of gaming, as well as keep the system cost within bounds.

Although we can expect some fantastic playing aids in the near future, a note of caution is in order. Since the computer is intended to be the DM's assistant, the interface between DM and computer must be very carefully designed. If the DM spends all of his time typing data into the machine and muttering at his private display screen, the players will become bored and leave. The computer must be fast, unobtrusive, and completely subservient to the DM.

Experience Points

(From page 40)

whom he can observe and copy. The cleric here presented some extra problems since he is a hybrid between the fighter and a more mystical type. Half experience for all points gained by fighters or clerics in physical combat was the eventual solution, but was not entirely satisfactory.

The third system was introduced with the appearance of the ***DMG.*** This system involved rewarding party experience only for those creatures which were killed in combat with the players. Since the level of sophistication of those in the campaign has increased, it is less generous than the systems used earlier. A side total of 20 points per hit die for every creature slain is kept This is easily done in the last column of the record sheet. Added to this total is the Experience Point value of any magic items obtained (and recognized) by the party during the adventure. This total was not divided by any factors. One group uses this system with gold also included, but on occasion the result has been an unwarranted windfall when unusually large numbers of gold pieces were rolled for wandering monsters. Another Dungeon Master felt the system was not generous enough and awarded 25 points per die.

An interesting practice evolved as the party experience system developed. Higher-level characters, whose parties were able to slay larger monsters and were likely to obtain more treasures, began demanding a larger share of the party loot, or their choice of magic items. This was not discouraged, as it lead to an entertaining degree of realistic bargaining.

One problem with both the standard system and the alternates that this writer has dealt with has been the handling of the Thief's receiving experience for gold he has stolen. This assumes you don't reward points for gold obtained by other character classes. Due to this unique nature, it seems to be very appropriate to reward experience on the basis of the success of a Thief's larcenous actions, but in deciding when this is appropriate beyond a single picked pocket can lead to confusion.

Where this method is used, many thieves are rewarded for gold only when they are able to fool or pilfer from the party a larger-than-normal share. ("Gee, it's practically empty, fellas." Clink, clink) A problem arises with whether points should be given for gold gained by the ambush of an NPC or player, above the experience obtained for the damage done. Even a deeper Pandora's box is opened if a Thief is rewarded with the points for gold gained by any of his other thieving abilities. Say, for the lock to a chest being picked after the Fighters have dispatched its guardian. All in all, the problem seems far from resolution.

Once you have moderately experienced players, a minor addition to the system adds a little more spice to the game. This is simply a rule that if a character is killed, the shock to his psyche is so great that even if he is raised, all memories will be lost and with them all experience from that entire adventure.

Simulation Comer

(From page 41)

game system is too complicated for the desired design impact? The choice is a difficult one. The most interesting creative involvement lies in pressing the frontiers of the state of the art, while the requirement of getting the message to the gamer imposes limits on how complex one can make game rules and therefore on how far the state of the art can be pushed ahead through the rules.

If innovation remains a major goal of new game designs while the trend toward "micro" games simultaneously begins to dominate the research and development departments of the game publishers, then the dilemma of complexity becomes an important current issue. With inherent limits on what can be done with a "micro" design, innovation could slow or come to a complete halt. Perhaps some really interesting historical situations (the Battle of the Alamo, for an example) would be readily adaptable to "micro" presentation, but by and large the vast majority of innovative areas for design are here excluded. Probably the most innovative design work being pushed forward today is in the areas of command and control modeling, representation of formation status and combat losses, and in role-playing. Rules of all these types require substantial manuscript space if they are to be used at all, and add substantial complexity if players must master lists of capability levels in different areas. It is no coincidence that 1979, which saw the emergence of the "micro," is already being recalled as a sparse "game year" in terms of new designs.

Looking toward 1980, an important question will be the mix of "micro" games that are available as opposed to full-scale game treatments of given subjects. It is already apparent that the output of the small games will be quite large, and with a broad range of subjects from almost all companies to boot.

What is less apparent is what impends for large or complex treatments. It does seem fairly clear that very large "monster" treatments have had their day. When Avalon Hill brings forth its huge Normandy game by Randy Reed, this will very likely be among the last designs of its kind. Meanwhile, the outlook for innovation in game design depends in part upon the types of games that are produced and also on the number of game companies that survive the current economic crunch.

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THE FASTEST GUNS THAT NEVER LIVED PTS. I-IV

**Allen Hammack, Brian Blume,
Gary Gygax, Tim Kask**

This article is a combination of reprints from "The Fastest Guns That Never Lived" articles and some new entries. Since many of the first articles (and the most famous stars) appeared in issues of *Strategic Review* and *The Dragon* that are out of print, it seems logical to reprint them so that new readers and players of the revised BOOT HILL game could enjoy them. It must be stressed that these "guns" are far stronger than most player characters and will unbalance the game unless caution is exercised, but special scenarios using one or two of them might be enjoyable.

* * * *

Movies and television have given us some of the greatest gunslingers of all time. Their abilities are far superior to those of any gunfighter who really lived, or so it seems from the old shows. Some of those heroes and villains are presented here for the benefit of those who would like to see what they could do. The ratings correspond to terms of TSR's *Boot Hill* game rules for gunfights with counters or miniatures.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

A—½ penalty when shooting from horseback
B—Never surprised
C—Double the length of medium range when shooting
D—Shoulder arms are considered as "fast"
E—May "hipshoot" with no penalty
F—No penalty for giving opponent first move
G—Treat wounds as one type lower when shot. A "Mortal Wound" result becomes a "Serious Wound", etc.
H—½ penalty when shooting at moving target
J—Must use Sharpshooting rule, and must fire at "gun arm/hand' only
K—No penalty for "wrong hand" shooting

The Lone Ranger (Clayton Moore) is probably the premier hero of the western sagas, going back into the days of radio adventures. Together with Tonto (Jay Silverheels), his faithful Indian companion, they were a match for any bad men.

The Rifleman was played by Chuck Connors on TV in the early Sixties. Deduct 20 from his chance to hit when he uses any weapon but a rifle.

Matt Dillon, the marshal of Dodge City on "Gunsmoke," was portrayed by William Conrad on radio and James Amess on television.

Paladin (Richard Boone) was the finest example of the paid gunman. His card read "Have Gun, Will Travel"—which was also the name of the show.

Josh Randall was played by Steve McQueen on "Wanted: Dead or Alive." Josh was the perfect bounty hunter; he carried a special handgun which has the effect of a single-action revolver, except that it is "very fast" and has a range that is 2" (or spaces) longer in all categories.

Hopalong Cassidy (William Boyd) was one of the early TV heroes of the Fifties. "Hoppy" was the two-gunned champion of justice.

Yancy Derringer (Jack Mahoney) and Pahoo, his Indian sidekick, were a tough pair. Yancy has a Gambler Rating of 14.

Johnny Yuma was played by Nick Adams on "The Rebel," a TV series of the early Sixties.

The Cisco Kid (Duncan Renaldo) and Pancho (Leo Carrillo) wisecracked their way across the television screens of the late Fifties and early Sixties. "The Cisco Kid" is still in syndication in some areas.

Bret, Bart, and Beau Maverick were played respectively by James Gamer, Jack Kelly, and Roger Moore in one of the most popular and well-written television shows ever produced. The "tall, dark strangers" all have Gambler Ratings of 02, and they all prefer talking their way out of trouble to shooting; they will, however, support their friends to the end.

Will (Walter Brennan) and Jeff Sonnet were grandfather and grandson, looking for a missing gunslinger (Will's son and Jeff's father) on "The Guns of Will Sonnet." Will claimed the prodigal son was the third fastest gun in the West. "He's good, but Jeff's better—and I'm better than both of 'em." No brag, just fact.

Jason McCord was portrayed by Chuck Connors in the TV series "Branded." Every time McCord comes into a town there is a 75% chance that someone will recognize him who had a close relative who was killed at Bitter Creek, and will challenge McCord to a gunfight.

Ben, Adam, Hoss, and Little Joe were the Cartwrights of "Bonanza," played by Lorne Greene, Pernell Roberts, Dan Blocker, and Michael Landon. Little Joe was the only left-handed gun in this powerful ranching family, and he also had the quickest temper.

Don "Red" Barry is probably most remembered for his starring role in the movie series "The Adventures of Red Ryder" from 1940 to 1944. His last starring role was in "Iron Angel" (1969) but he has appeared constantly in supporting roles in movies such as "Johnny Get His Gun" (1971) and "Showdown" (1973) since then.

William "Wild Bill" Elliot rose to fame by starring in the movie serial "The Great Adventure of Wild Bill Hickok" in 1938. In 1944 he took over the lead of the "Red Ryder" series from Red Barry in 1950 and 1951 he ran the "Wild Bill Elliot" series on the radio. He continued to make top westerns until the later 50's.

"Hoot" Gibson was one of the first cowboy stunt men. "Action" (1921) began his rise to stardom. During the 1920s. Hoot ranked second only to Tom Mix as the leading cowboy star. His pictures were fast, full of action, but mainly nonviolent. By the 1930s Hoot's popularity declined with the rise of the talkies, but he kept some attention by starring in the first of the "Three Mesquiteers' series (which would later feature such greats as John Wayne and Bob Steele). He later starred in the "Trail Blazers" series in 1943.

William S. Hart, probably more than any other of the early western stars, portrayed the Old West as it really was. Films such as "Tumbleweeds" (1925, 1939) are now classic westerns. When realism in the westerns no longer had box office appeal, Hart retired from his movie career. He never made a talkie!

Tim Holt was a real star. Admittedly, much of the acting, in even the finest of the old western movies, was not top notch. However, Holt displayed a quality of acting ability far above most of his contemporaries. In the late 30's and into the 40's Tim was one of the leading box office draws. In 1946 he made "My Darling Clementine" along with Heny Fonda, Victor Mature, Walter Brennan and Ward Bond which portrayed the events leading up to the famous Gunfight at the OK Corral. It was a top effort. His career ended in the early 50's, but he appeared as late as the 60's in a segment of "The Virginian."

Allan "Rocky" Lane achieved cowboy stardom in the mid-40's. He developed a character who was neat, kind, pleasant, handsome, quick on the trigger and tough in a fist fight. In 1946, he replaced Wild Bill Elliot as the lead in the "Red Ryder" series. His career faded out, along with most of the other movie cowboys, with the rise of TV in the early 50's.

Colonel Tim McCoy was most remembered for the series of films in which he played Lightning Bill Carson. McCoy developed a screen character who was "The Detective of the Range." His character frequently donned disguises during the course of a movie. He starred from the late 20's through the early 40's when he joined the army and attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Joel McCrea rose to stardom in the mid-30's on the strength of some fine non-westerns. His popularity was slipping when, in 1944, he made "Buffalo Bill." After 1945 Joel made mostly westerns, including the title role in "The Virginian." He portrayed various historical figures including Wyatt Earp, Bat Masterson and Sam Houston. In the late 40's and early 50's, he did the radio serial "Tales of the Texas Rangers" and in 1959 starred in TV's "Wichita Town." He is still active (starring in "Mustang Country" in 1975) and is currently the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Cowboy Hall of Fame.

Tom Mix was, before becoming a movie actor, once a U.S. Marshal and a Texas Ranger. By 192 1 he was the "King of the Cowboys" of the movie western. His films had lots of action, chases and fight scenes. He never smoked or drank on screen and usually no one was killed. He did all of his own stunt work and suffered over eighty injuries during his professional career. He retired from the movies in 1935 and died in an auto wreck in 1940.

The Durango Kid (Charles Starrett) rode across the screen in 56 movies starting in 1940. The "Return of the Durango Kid" appeared in 1945 and continued until 1952. The Kid would appear from nowhere, save the day and reappear as the mild-mannered nobody.

Bob Steele was probably the fastest draw of all of the old movie cowboys. He rose to fame in the late 20's. In the 40's, he did a series as Billy the Kid and made 20 pictures in the "Three Mesquiteers" series. He also starred in the "Trail Blazers" series. He has continued working until the present and the younger generation may remember him as Trooper Duffy on TV's "F Troop."

John Wayne has appeared in a great number of western movies. These ratings represent a composite of his various roles.

Clint Eastwood did appear in westerns on TV, but his career wasn't in the "star" category until he played the "man with no name" character in the "Dollars" movies. Definitely one of the finest gunfighters ever seen, Eastwood has a Gambler Rating of 12.

Lee Van Cleef is one of the few "bad men" who has made it big in

(Turn to page 60)

NAME	SPEED	GUN ACCURACY	THROWING ACCURACY	BRAVERY	STRENGTH	EXPERIENCE	SPECIAL ABILITIES
The Lone Ranger	92	98	78	98	95	11+	A,E,F,G,H,J
Tonto	80	91	96	89	83	9	
The Rifleman	90	98	51	91	91	11+	C,D,E,F
Matt Dillon	88	95	45	95	99	11+	E,F,G
Paladin	98	98	80	98	94	11+	A,B,E,H
Josh Randall	91	90	66	91	82	11+	E,F
Hopalong Cassidy	87	86	65	91	79	11+	A,E,F,G,H,J,K
Yancy Derringer	94	97	70	90	77	11+	B,E
Pahoo	90	84	100	90	95	8	D
Johnny Yuma	91	88	65	90	66	11+	E,F
The Cisco Kid	88	96	66	96	67	11+	A,B,E,G,H, J
Pancho	38	66	34	34	76	8	G
Bret Maverick	89	76	47	88	77	8	E,G,K
Bart Maverick	85	77	45	72	79	8	E
Beau Maverick	85	77	45	72	79	8	E
Will Sonnet	90	99	72	92	58	11+	A,E,H,K
Jeff Sonnet	86	88	76	89	84	5	A,E,H
Jason McCord	88	88	79	92	91	11+	E,G,H,J
Ben Cartwright	75	76	51	92	75	11+	A
Adam Cartwright	86	90	47	94	87	11+	A,E
Hoss Cartwright	70	75	45	92	100	9	A
"Little Joe" Cartwright	81	75	47	92	75	7	A
Don "Red" Barry	92	96	66	98	59	11+	A,B,E,H
"Wild Bill" Elliot	95	90	78	96	84	11+	A,E,F,H,K
"Hoot" Gibson	88	90	81	98	91	11+	B,G,J
William S. Hart	89	90	72	96	77	11+	A,E,F,H
Tim Holt	91	91	48	94	63	11+	A,E,F,H
"Rocky" Lane	97	90	52	95	97	11+	A,B,E,H
Col. Tim McCoy	88	99	69	94	82	11+	A,B,E,H
Joel McCrea	95	94	59	95	77	11+	A,E,F,H
Tom Mix	96	90	88	98	98	11+	A,B,C,E,G,H,J,K
The Durango Kid	97	95	42	96	45	11+	A,B,E,H
Bob Steele	99	96	55	97	59	11+	A,B,F,H
John Wayne	96	96	60	96	97	11+	A,B,C,E,G,H
Clint Eastwood	100	100	96	99	85	11+	A,B,E,H
Lee Van Cleef	98	98	63	99	77	11+	B,E,H
Eli Wallach	95	85	80	60	78	11+	E,F
The Magnificent Seven:							
Yul Brynner	92	95	94	98	92	11+	B,E,H
Steve McQueen	91	92	80	98	90	11+	B,C,D,E,H
James Coburn	95	83	100	99	92	11+	B,E,F,H
Charles Bronson	91	89	74	100	91	11+	A,B,D,E,H
Robert Vaughn	88	92	68	15/99	85	11+	E,F,H,K
Horst Buchholz	88	90	62	95	85	11+	A,E,H,K
Juan Mateos	72	80	71	97	77	2	B,H

"MacLankhmar": A Compromise Game

F.C. MacKnight

Suppose one considers that the probability method of deciding the outcome of a battle is better than the rigorous, chess-like decisions of LAHKMAR. Must the defender always win? Normally one would think that the attacker would have a slightly better chance in close combat (adjacent squares). But in LAHKMAR a horseman with an ax is going to be defeated by a standing swordsman upon whom he rushes. Always! So he doesn't do so unless he has help.

Two-on-one between peers is necessary to take out a defender, and one of the attackers must die, regardless of the logic of the situation. So there must be a more careful attitude toward free-for-all brawls. One must try to use spears and arrows at distance to gain an advantage before wading in at close quarters, and the victory will go to the more cautious strategy, as perhaps it should. But there are those who object to this as being out of harmony with the basic, adventurous atmosphere of the game. I was no party to originating LAHKMAR, but if I had been I would have advocated the use of dice in deciding the outcome of a battle.

As I remember some research I did some 40 years ago, the first advocacy I found of battle decisions by probability, rather than cold logic, in wargames was in the era of World War I by an American naval officer who advised the use of probability tables and dice in simulated naval engagements played by naval strategists on their large tables with miniature ships.

One cannot be completely confident of position and fire power, he argued. There is the chance that something may go wrong even in superior positions. Sometimes the superior fleet loses in actuality, but never in their theoretical battles, so there should be a guard against bad luck by allowing the possibility that it could happen. And then, of course, there may be a victory for one side even in positions that seem completely equal and should be a stand-off.

So it is in war games like LAHKMAR-LANKHMAR. A warrior might defeat a hero by a lucky thrust even though the chances are 20-1 against it And a rushing horseman should have a better-than-even chance against a man on foot.

But if you want a probability game, why not just play the new game as it is?

For me there are these reasons.

Regardless of how combat is decided, there is a need to "increase" the size of the board by cutting down the maximum movement of men and mounts by 2/3 to 3/4 of that allowed in the LANKHMAR rules, as argued earlier in this series.

The Movement Points cost system which includes engaging in combat, embarking, mounting, changing weapons and picking up weapons (why not disembarking and dismounting, too?) is dismaying to all but dedicated wargame players, I would think I won't submit to it! All this may reasonably be dispensed with. For instance, dropping a bow to draw a sword takes no more time than merely drawing the sword. And in theory a man should be preparing himself against the next onslaught when it arises.

The straying of animals and drifting of boats has some realism but is not essential. Beached boats may be moored and animals tethered when mounted. Only animals that lose their riders in battle and boats depopulated in open waters need to be considered, and could be neglected without damaging the game.

The probability tables as given in the Rules for LANKHMAR need rigorous revision. If the reader has played it the faults will probably have been noted. Here are some:

There is no distinction between the attacker and the defender. Perhaps there should be.

There is no allowance for the weapon the defender has at his disposal.

There is no allowance for one man being mounted and the other being on foot

There is no allowance for one adversary being wounded. It is possible for a hero to fail to kill or even wound a wounded or even an unarmed adversary. How is this supposed to happen? Does the hero have sudden qualms about the sportsmanship of it? Does he recognize his adversary as a distant cousin by marriage? Or is he suddenly afflicted by a seizure of some hereditary malady that renders him temporarily incapacitated?

My conclusion is that while Movement Points are too cumbersome, the LANKHMAR Combat Tables are too simplistic, and my "Compromise Game" will require new tables. With this goal in mind I shall examine separately the cases of attack at a distance, and attack from an adjacent space.

Attacks at a distance: arrows, spears and thrown axes:

One of the more objectionable features of the old LAHKMAR game was the assumption of the deadlines of attack at a distance. When Nehwon warriors threw a spear or shot an arrow, they never missed! In the execution of their craft they were experts of heroic proportion (led by a super-hero who didn't miss either)! I find this inhuman accuracy a bit hard to swallow, and would prefer to be more realistic about it. At a distance of 2 spaces the odds should favor a fatal hit but not mandate it Wounding and a clean miss should also be represented on the tables. The dice throw for a hero should be even more favorable to him, even eliminating the miss at two spaces. And the hero should be given a better chance of surviving a spear throw because, having quick reflexes, he may dodge or possibly parry the cast with his own sword, pushing it aside, diverting it or turning an on-target fatal throw into a wound.

Extended probability tables also allow us to consider spear throws at greater distances with less chance of success; even at 4 spaces, though at that distance only Fafhrd and Pulgh should be allowed any possibility of success. The Mouser, for example, might cast an accurate spear, but his physique would not be adequate to handle a very long cast He should lose his hero rating even at 3 spaces.

(Note that I do not suggest the probabilities in actual numbers. I think the player would be more satisfied to construct his own tables after such discussion as I bring to bear on the subject, and that such tables would depend on how many and what kind of dice he uses. One normal die as suggested in the LANKHMAR Rules is insufficient to properly appraise the probabilities: 2 dice are better. And he may wish to use octahedral, dodecahedral or icosahedral dice from a *D&D* set)

To continue, the thrown ax should be only for Norsemen and Fafhrd. If others throw the ax they should have a very small probability of success. Fafhrd should be allowed a 3-space throw with fair success; possibly the other Norse also, but with significantly smaller chances. Generally the Northerners should avoid a cast with improbable success because they are left defenseless unless a corpse is handy from which to pick up another weapon.

It is with the bow that the probability tables give a definite advantage in reasonableness. The three-arrow rule of LAHKMAR may be dispensed with and the holder of the bow may be considered as having a quiver full of arrows. Probability of success should be high at 2 spaces, and successively less at 3,4 and 5 spaces. Some slight possibility should exist for a fatal wound at the shorter distances, but the probability of a miss should always be high. It seems doubtful that a hero should have a

greater likelihood of avoiding an arrow than anyone else except maybe the Mouser who is a small man, offering a smaller target. Mouser's sling effectiveness should be something like that for an arrow, with perhaps a little more probability of a fatal throw.

Shooting from a horse or camel should be a shade less effective than when the archer stands on solid ground, unless one thinks that the added elevation would compensate for the less certain aim.

Another benefit of the full-quiver concept vs. the three-arrow rule is the elimination of the necessity in LAHKMAR of using arrows taken out of a dead man. A messy business, pulling them out, since at least one must have penetrated a vital spot! And we know too that the corpses are quickly removed from most localities by the Pleistocene Vulture, or the giant Nehwonian Condor, which would doubtless carry them off, arrows, swords and all, even maybe a protruding spear! An optional rule, then, might be that all fatally thrown spears would be eliminated with the corpse, and the only weapons left for recovery would be the victim's own spear, ax or bow which could have been carried rather than worn. Of the death-dealing weapons thrown at the victim, only an ax would remain after the victim has been flown off to the nearest mountain. Allow two moves for the giant scavengers to get there. Swords might be left if the victim dies with it in his hand, but since only the Norsemen would need one it isn't important.

Hand-to-hand combat, at adjoining spaces:

This is an even more complex situation. First, take the case of combat with the same weapon. There would be a table for peers and one for unequal fights. Between peers there should be the same chance for either contestant to kill, wound, or no-decision unless you think that the attacker has a slight initial advantage. If there are enough numbers on the chance-mechanism used, this can be taken care of. It also assumes that the combat throw (of dice) will be made as soon as the attacker moves into position, rather than waiting for the defense to decide whether to move or fight as in the non-chance LAHKMAR. (I would favor this in the Compromise Game but the other way is equally possible.) If a no-decision throw is cast, the "defender" has the option of continuing the fight on his next move or retreating out of range.

The table of hero vs. warrior-or-equivalent should give the hero a heavy advantage with a very small probability of anything other than total victory.

If the engagement involves one man who is already wounded, I see no reason to allow any hope in close combat, and he should be considered eliminated without a throw.

How about disparity of, weapons? Is sword vs. spear an equal contest? Sword vs. ax? Spear vs. ax? In sword vs. spear, if each contestant carries a sword it may be considered that the spearman may use his sword if he considers his spear would not give him an equal chance, so I see no reason to worry about that If the spearman is a Quarmallian that is all he has, but since he is aided by magic he should be at no disadvantage anyway.

So, only if one considers that the spearman has an actual advantage over the swordsman (which I do not) would one need a special table for spear vs. sword. As I see it, the only advantage a spearman has is to make a strong cast as soon as he gets just beyond the reach of his opponent's weapon, and if that is deflected he is beaten before he can bring his own sword into action (unless he is ambidextrous!) If he chooses not to do this I think the spearman is at a slight disadvantage at least.

In sword vs. ax, there should be a slight advantage to the ax if the ax-man is on the attack; not otherwise. This is based on the premise that the ax is a long-handled, two-handed type; not the short, one-hand variety Fafhrd holds in his left hand like a parrying dagger on the LANKHMAR box lid. Ax vs. spear may also warrant a slight advantage for whichever is the attacker.

In all these cases the hero should have a great advantage over the warrior.

How about a mounted man vs. a peer on foot? I must admit ignorance here. How important is the horse? Can it be trained to charge and strike with the hooves against an armed man? If not, it may be as much a disadvantage as an advantage. It may aid the foot warrior if the horse becomes difficult to manage. And unless the horse is regarded as an efficient fighting force, a hero should get his usual assist from the probability tables even if he is on foot

I think camels would be more of a hindrance than a help and would favor the foot warrior.

If both contestants are mounted, the odds for no-decision should be raised since it will be more difficult for men to get at each other unless they use their spears as lances and run together.

Finally, there is the case of a two-on-one combat. Unless the single is a hero, there should be no chance for the single fighter. Hero vs. 2 warriors is a complex matter and would depend on the weapons used and which of the contestants is mounted, if any. By this time the reader may have decided that the whole thing is too involved and one had best stick to the regular LAHKMAR convention! And it should be more apparent why I prefer to leave the actual making of the tables to the player.

It should help if in a game of this complexity there were a third, fourth or fifth party who is not an active player but a referee who would be in charge of such tables, and when a special situation comes up invents a compromise between two other tables. Or quickly makes a new one!

Such a referee would also be in charge of the cycles of the sinking land, and these other responsibilities:

Be sure the weapons left on the board by a dead man are the right ones.

Remember how long a body remains on the board before being carried off by a giant vulture.

Remember where there might be a sword lying about for a Norseman who has thrown his ax and can't easily recover it.

Give out and keep account of geases and rewards; decide if a geasman is proceeding most directly on his quest and still in accord with safety.

Be in charge of movements of loose boats and animals as per directions in LANKHMAR, and animals being called to Movarl.

Decide on points that rules don't cover.

It should possibly be mentioned that geases are the same in this Compromise Game as in the others.

Finally, I would like to comment on and protest against this statement on the cover of the Rules Pamphlet of the LANKHMAR game: ". . . but while this combat is seemingly on a man-to-man basis, the pieces actually represent whole companies of men. . . ."

No! Spell it anyway you like. Lankhmar is a game of single men; heroes led by super-heroes. Even if it doesn't make much sense to have 8 men and a leader going out to conquer another citadel, that's the way it is! To make it otherwise would change the whole game. And the statement is obviously out of harmony with the directions contained in the Rules pamphlet, seemingly written by someone, other than the authors of the Rules, for the benefit of diehard wargame players who like to think in those terms and are uncomfortable without masses of soldiers. If they can't adjust, the game is not for them.

LANKHMAR (LAHKMAR) is a game of personal involvement with individuals. It is also a game involving verbal banter, bombast and braggadocio on the part of the players.

Some examples:

At the onset of the game from the Lankhmar player:

"Pulgh is making a statement to his constituents and all enemies: 'Let it be known that it is my intention and pledge to end the nefarious existence of that loutish boor Fafhrd. I shall feed his liver by hand to my pet vultures, and hang his dismembered carcass on the walls of Lankhmar. And as for that disreputable cutpurse and varlet known as the "Mouser" . . . ' ", etc., etc. Or "'Aided by my honored ally, the Mouser'", if that be the case!

An intergame conversation:

"That was a dastardly deed truly worthy of your thoroughly corrupt regime— to deliberately attack and finish off a heroic wounded warrior to no advantage."

"Would you deny that that 'heroic' warrior was none other than the infamous Grotch who vilely and gratuitously slaughtered that group of children in your expedition against Ilthmar?"

"What else would you have had him do with the little vipers? They would only grow up to be like the rest of those basilisks that inhabit that den of thievery, debauchery and every iniquity! It was a blessing to Nehwon to dispatch them."

This sort of thing doesn't go with massed armies!

The Cube From Beyond

From page 5)

to a halt before Danko Penavar. He had no eyes for the golden censers and silver athenors, for the chests heaped high with strange and almost unobtainable magical condiments. All his attention was concentrated on the old man who sprawled in the big oaken chair.

Niall began to talk. He spoke of Thavas Tomer and of the manner of his escape. As he talked, he saw that old Danko Penavar seemed startled, then highly interested. The big old man actually rose up straighter in his chair that so much resembled a throne, and his eyes glistened.

Almost under his breath, the old man whispered, "I have heard of it. In very ancient tomes have I come upon faint hints of it, fearful references to that cube."

He shook his head until the white hairs of his head and beard swayed lazily. "Never did I think to lay eyes upon that thing. I believed it lost forever."

"Well, what is it?'

"It was created long and long ago by a great magician. It is a universe unto itself, that cube. It is protected by secret sigils and enchantments that have long since been forgotten."

"Not by Thavas Tomer, it seems."

The old man smiled wryly. "I wonder where he found it? Where he discovered the way in which to make it work for him?'

"Can I go into it, as Thavas Tomer did?"

Danko Penavar scowled. "You would be advised not to. I know nothing of what might await you inside that thing-always assuming there is a way into it. For you, I mean. It would be best for you to forget the cube—and Thavas Tomer."

Niall scowled. He was not a man to relish defeat, nor to accept it lightly. And Thavas Tomer had defeated him. His gaze went around the room, studying the dusty old tomes that lay on the shelves, tomes that held the magic of uncounted centuries. It seemed strange to him that nowhere in all those old archives was a way to enable him to enter the cube after the king-magician.

"He could stay in there for a century, and then reappear. If he were not too old," Niall announced at last.

Danko Penavar nodded. "He could, yes. He would not age in there, I think. According to the old legends, anyhow."

The old man sighed. "When Tarj Needal invented that cube-or created it, rather—it was to act as an escape for him, in case he ever needed it to escape the vengeance of some king or emperor. Whether he used it or not, I have no way of knowing. No one does, except perhaps Thavas Tomer."

Niall stalked up and down the room. He was troubled. He knew the evil of the king-magician, knew that if he himself abandoned the quest for him, the man would escape, perhaps to return to this world when everyone now in it was in their graves.

If he did that, with his powers he might rule the world. Niall shuddered at that thought, for Thavas Tomer was a cruel, haughty man with no consideration for anything but his own desires.

There must be a way. There had to be!

He turned and moved toward the door which opened for him by itself. Framed in the doorway, he turned and regarded the old man.

"If ever I find a way into that cube, I shall go," he growled. "No man escapes me when I have marked him for death."

Danko Penavar said, "Be advised, Niall. I like you. I have always given you good advice. Leave the cube. Lock it up somewhere. Buy it in the sea or in the river. Forget it—and live. You are too young to die."

Niall grinned coldly. "We shall see," he muttered.

All the way back to his little palace he sat hunched forward on the cart seat, the reins all but forgotten in his hands. There had to be a way to go into that cube. There had to! If Thavas Tomer had done it, so could he.

Ah, but if old Danko Penavar, who knew the secrets of the ages and of all magic, could not tell him how to do it, who could? Niall sighed and shook his head.

When he was back in his palace courtyard, he called to his servingmen and with their help carried the cube up the stone steps and into a small room fitted out with thick rugs and a pair of comfortable chairs. He dismissed the man, went around the cube, just touching it with his fingertips.

He would not be defeated. He would not let himself be beaten.

"Emalkartha," he whispered.

She could help him, the goddess of the Eleven Hells. Always she had come to him in his world, to lend her aid. She would not refuse him now. Or—would she?

She was a wayward goddess, was Emalkartha. Ever since that day when he had accosted her—in her human guise as the maiden Lylthia—she had come to him in his hours of need, to lend her assistance-aye, and her love.

Niall grinned at his memories. She was a jealous one, was Lylthia. She did not like him to pay attention to any woman other than herself. Ah, but she had kept him alive on a number of times, when he had been beset by demons as powerful as herself.

"Maybe I ought to summon a maidservant to me," he grinned. "That new girl from the farmland country, for instance. She's made eyes at me, she would come."

"Theres no need for that," said a cold voice.

Niall swung around.

Lylthia was sitting in one of the chairs, arms wrapped about her knees, scowling at him. She wore a leather garment, much shredded and rent so that he could see her pale white skin through the tears. Her long black hair was piled on top of her head, with some of it hanging down past her cheeks.

"You're a fool," she snapped. "Forget Thavas Tomer. Enjoy life. Why must you always be poking your nose where it will only get you into trouble?"

Niall gave a great shout of delight. He leaped toward her, caught her bare arms and yanked her up against him. He kissed her hungrily even while she struggled—but not too hard—to evade him.

When he had kissed her until she clung to him, he said, "Help me, my darling. I want to go into that cube and fetch Thavas Tomer back to stand trial for his crimes."

Tears came into her eyes.

"I dare not," she whispered.

2.

Her palm stroked his cheek tenderly.

"You big foolish man! Why won't you be guided by me? I tell you no one—no one!—knows what is inside that cube."

"But you are a goddess! You know—"

"Yes, yes. I have great powers. But where that cube is concerned. . . . sit down, Niall. I want to tell you about it."

He drew her with him, onto his lap with his arms locked about her as she nestled against him. He nuzzled her soft throat, kissing it, until she laughed and pushed him back.

"Behave yourself. This is important. Now listen!

"Long, long ago when Tarj Needal lived and was a mighty magician, he sought the help of the gods to make for him a world into which he might go from time to time when dangers threatened him here on this world.

"They worked together, did the evil gods, to make the cube. Into it they poured their powers, fashioning it of the stuff of the god-worlds where they lived. They snatched stars from other dimensions and embedded them within the cube.

"When they were done, they told Tarj Needal that they had made a masterpiece, incapable of destruction, incapable of being made again. There was only one cube like that. There would never be another."

Lylthia sighed and shook her head, cuddling closer to the man who held her. "They spoke the truth, did those evil gods. They had made a masterpiece. And they told Tarj Needal the one and only way of entering and leaving it."

"But Thavas Tomer entered it."

Lylthia sighed. "Then Tarj Needal must have left a record of it, and this magician you seek found out where he had hidden that record. Perhaps it was with the cube when he found that."

Niall growled, "I can't believe no one among the gods knows the way to enter that thing."

Lylthia smiled sadly. "Oh, I know the way to enter it, all right—but I can't tell you how to get out of it."

"I could make Thavas Tomer tell me that."

"No! You must not risk it. It would be too dangerous."

Niall eyed the cube where it stood close to the flames of the fireplace. It seemed to mock and taunt him as those tiny stars slowly revolved and swung in their courses. Anger built in him. If Thavas Tomer could go into that thing, so could he. If Thavas Tomer knew of a way out, he would force him to tell it to him.

Ah, but he must not let Lylthia suspect what he meant to do.

He sighed, saying, "I guess you're right. I'll leave well enough alone. ''

A soft hand caressed his cheek. "Now you're being sensible." Laughter made the corners of her mouth quiver. "As long as I'm here, I might as well stay the night. Take me to your bedroom, Niall."

When he woke in the morning, Lylthia was gone. Niall lay a moment, breathing in the fresh spring air, remembering the night and the goddess who had shared his bed. He grinned slowly. Well, Lylthia was gone, now.

And the cube waited for him, downstairs.

During the night, as they had talked, Lylthia had divulged the way to enter the cube. She had whispered the magical words almost under her breath, but Niall had heard and memorized them.

He rose and dressed himself in worn leather garments, over which he pulled a chainmail shirt. His belt and the scabbard attached to it that held his sword he buckled about his lean middle.

Niall moved down the stone staircase, scowling blackly. He knew he was risking his life by trying to enter the cube. Emalkartha had warned him, as Lylthia. In the world within that cube, her great powers could not reach.

And yet—the idea of allowing Thavas Tomer to escape the consequences of his robberies, rapes and killings was too much to endure. He had to make his try. If he failed. . . .ah, but he would not think of failure.

He turned into the room that held the cube. It waited almost sullenly, its deep blues and the twinkling dots that seemed to be stars quiescent, almost inert. Niall approached it, and with a lithe bound, leaped up onto it. He drew a deep breath.

"Tamalka frathanis devor, hoppolis entrala porvor," he growled.

Almost instantly, the hard surface of the cube seemed to melt away under him. Suddenly he was sinking downward, slowly at first, and then more swiftly. His open eyes beheld a vast firmament of dark sky and brilliant stars through which he was being swept as by a godlike hand. He felt no cold, no warmth. In a way, it was almost as though he were dead.

Downward he was pulled, ever downward.

Faster those strange stars seemed to rotate in their courses, faster, faster, until a sort of dizziness overtook him. He closed his eyes, he gasped for breath.

Then—his feet were planted on a flat, white rock, and he opened his eyes, staring around him. He looked out upon a lush land covered with green grass that grew to the height of a tall man's knee. Here and there upon that sward were great trees, thickly boled and heavily leaved.

Niall blinked. It was a pleasant land over which a soft, sweet wind blew fitfully, carrying with it the scents of flowers and growing things. He drew a deep breath and stepped off the rock.

Gods! This was like the Nirvana of which the priests of Urgrik sometimes preached. He took a step, and then another, turning to scan the horizon. Far away there were mountains, dim with distance and faintly blue.

How could he find Thavas Tomer here? This world seemed to be as large as the one he had left The magician-king might be anywhere, half a continent or more away. Still! The man had come here through the cube as he, Niall, had done. The man had to walk as he himself was going to do. If he were here, he would find him.

Niall began to walk

He walked for a long time, until the tireless muscles of his legs began to feel the strain. There was no night here, apparently. Everywhere the light—softly glowing—as all around him. There was no sun, none that he could discover, anyhow.

The trees under which he moved at times were huge, multi-branched, shedding their shadow over the ground beneath them. When he was tired, Niall lay down under one of those trees and fell asleep.

He woke to a faint sound moving across the grasslands. Sitting up, he listened, hearing the baying of wolves. Niall scowled. Could this be? Were there wolves in this paradise?

Rising, he loosed Blood-drinker in its scabbard. Just as well to be prepared. Standing beneath the tree, he let his eyes roam out across the grasses.

There was movement out there. Something or someone was running toward him. He could not make out what it was, it was so far away. He heard the wolfcry louder now, savage and hungry, and he drew out his sword and held it in a big hand.

Now he could make out the shape of that which ran before the wolves. It was a woman. A girl, really. She seemed young, lithe, shapely. There was a mane of yellow hair on her head that ran out behind her in the swiftness of her running.

She came closer, closer. She had seen him, he knew, and she lifted an arm, waving it, as she turned and came toward him.

"Run," she called, "run! The wolves of Thavas Tomer are on the hunt. "

Niall grinned. He could fight wolves, and slay them. He stepped out from beneath the tree and waited as the girl stumbled now in her running, moving toward him. She was exhausted, he could see. Only the Gods knew how long she had been running like that, with the fear of death in her throat.

He moved toward her, caught her as she was about to fall. Her soft body lay pressed against him as she fought for breath.

"He wants—to kill me,"she gasped. "He came to the Citadel and now he—rules there."

"Thavas Tomer?"

Her eyes studied his face. They were purple, those eyes, and they were filled with fear and wonder. "Who—are you?" she whispered. "Are you a magician such as Thavas Tomer?"

"Na, na. I came here to kill him. The man's wicked."

She lifted a hand to brush away some of the tumbled hair from her face. That face was beautiful, Niall told himself. By the Gods, she was as lovely as Lylthia herself. But who was she?

When he questioned her, she shrugged. "What does it matter who I am? I am soon to die." Her hand waved back in the direction from which she had come. "The wolves are on my trail. They will be here soon, to kill us both."

He shook his sword. "We will take some killing. I am not afraid of wolves. "

Her eyes studied him more closely. "There are more than wolves that obey the lord of this world. Devils! Evil things that crawl and fly." She shuddered. "Nothing can defeat them."

Niall felt the despair in her. He shook her a little, trying to rouse up her courage. "I've fought wolves before—aye, and demons, too. I'm still alive. "

In the back of his mind was the realization that at many of those other times, especially when he had been dealing with demons, Emalkartha had been there to help him. She was not here now; she could not be, she had said.

No matter, He had depended on his wits and his skill with a sword before Emalkartha had come into his life. He lifted his head and stared out across the grasslands.

He could see them now, big wolves and well fed. They were strong and powerful, and their tongues lolled in their open mouths. Their fangs seemed huge.

They saw the man and the girl near the tree and now they howled no longer but ran with silence, even faster. They came swiftly, heads low, and a lust to kill shone in their greenish eyes.

Niall pushed the girl behind him and set himself with his sword up, to defend her and himself. There was a calmness about him now, as he was always calm before a fight. And there would be a fight He could count ten of the great beasts as they coursed the grass to come at him.

Foremost among the wolves was a great beast even larger than the others. It came swiftly, running low to the ground, and then it was gathering its muscles to make the leap that would carry Niall backward off his feet. When that happened, the rest of the pack would close in.

The wolf leaped. Niall swung his sword.

The sharp steel almost split the wolf in half. Its body fell and twitched convulsively on the ground. Then the others were upon him.

Niall fought as savagely as he had ever fought. His great steel blade swung in blazes of light, darkened as the steel went through a great, furry body. He shouted in the fury of his onslaught His arm was tireless as he drove the two edges of his blade back and forth, sometimes turning the point into the chest of a beast as it sprang for him.

Sharp fangs gashed his thighs, his calves. They seemed to be everywhere, those great beasts, and their fangs were sharp as knives.

One beast who sprang chest-high he caught with his left hand at its throat and that beast he choked to death, holding it out at arm's length, even as he plied his steel to kill the others which attacked him. When the wolf went limp, he dropped it.

As he fought, Niall backed up toward the big tree, crowding the girl behind him, growling orders at her between his teeth.

"To the tree, girl! Hurry, hurry! These aren't your ordinary wolves. They're demons of some sort. Back up, I say. And hurry if you want to stay alive!"

With the treebole to his spine, he did not have to worry about one of the animals getting behind him. He wished he had thought to bring his dagger. He could have given it to the girl, who might then have been able to help him.

Now he fought more carefully, thrusting savagely when a wolf leaped, slashing fiercely when two came at him at once. There were many dead wolves now; their bodies lay quivering here and there half-hidden by the tall grasses. Behind him he could hear the spasmodic breathing and the occasional frightened sobs of the girl.

Three wolves left, now! Niall grinned into their snarling faces as they paced back and forth before him, working themselves to a final attack. Niall rested his back against the treebole, gulped in air.

They came in a rush, all three at once, leaping high and low and in the middle. Niall cleaved downward with his blade, felt bone give and flesh split under its edge. One wolf he decapitated, another he cut across its back so that it lay and flopped about, unable to rise. The third took his point in its chest and hung a moment, slavering, before it fell away.

Niall dropped Blood-drinker's point to the ground, dragging air into his lungs. By the Gods! This had been a fight! He was gashed and tom, but his wounds would heal. He was alive, at least.

He sank downward to sit at the base of the tree. The girl crouched near him, her purple eyes wide and wondering.

"You killed them all," she whispered. "I did not believe anyone could harm those wolves. Who are you?"

"Niall of the Far Travels," he muttered, and looked at her more closely. "And you?"

"My name is Parlata. I have lived here in Norlana for all my life."

His eyes scanned her face. "Your folks? Your father and mother?'

She shook her head. "I do not know what you mean. What is a father? A mother?"

He explained what he meant, but she only looked the more puzzled. "I have always been like this, for a long, long time. I was never a child. I can remember far back, to the days when Tarj Needal came here from time to time."

Niall blinked. "Tarj Needal! But he lived thousands of years ago."

Parlata shrugged. "I do not know about that. I have lived in this world all my life. Yet I know there is another world beyond this one, a world to which Tarj Needal went and from which Thavas Tomer came. And you also, I suppose."

So, then. She was a creation of magic. A plaything to amuse Tarj Needal who had made her. Niall wondered how she spent her days.

Parlata smiled. "I roam the grasslands. I lie down and sleep when and where I will. I tire of the palace."

"What do you eat?"

She shook her head. "I do not know what you mean. Eat? What is that?"

"You must have food."

She could not understand, no matter how Niall sought to explain it. When she explained that there was no need to swallow anything, that the very light here gave her all the sustenance she needed, Niall began to realize that he himself had felt no hunger since entering the cube.

It was beyond him. But then, all magic was. And this cube and

everything in it had been created by magic, the powerful magic of Tarj Needal. Somewhere in this land, Thavas Tomer was hidden. It was up to Niall to find him.

"It's time to go," he said slowly, rising to his feet.

Parlata stared up at him. "Go where?"

"To find Thavas Tomer. I have to kill him, or take him back with me to his own world."

The girl went white. "It is impossible! You don't know his powers." She stared around her as though half expecting demons to rise up from the very ground. "He has great powers. He can call on evil beings to aid him. Nothing can overcome him while he is here."

Niall grinned, extending a hand to her. "We'll see about that. His wolves didn't get us, did they?"

She let him pull her to her feet, but she was visibly shaking. "The wolves were only sent out after me," she told him. "He wanted this world all to himself. He said the sight of me offended him. He—he gave me a head start, and then he let the wolves loose."

Parlata shivered. "Who can guess what things he will send against us now?"

"Well, we can't just stay here forever. We can begin walking."

"Not that way,"she begged, pulling back. "That way leads to the palace, where Thavas Tomer is."

"It's the way I'm going," Niall told her and let go of her. If she did not want to accompany him, there was no way he was going to force her.

He strode off, moving with slow, deliberate steps. After a few moments, the girl called to him and ran to catch up. "I am afraid to be alone," she admitted.

For a long time they walked across the grasslands, until Niall saw how tired Parlata had become. She staggered as she walked, and there were strain lines on her face. It was then that he pulled her down onto the ground.

"Sleep now," he ordered.

There was little tiredness in him. He lay back on the grass, his hands beneath his head, and he stared up at the whitish sky that was flecked, here and there, with blue clouds. A strange world, this, stranger than any land he had ever been in. He thought of Emalkartha, and of how she had told him that she herself could not enter into this world.

Whatever magic had made the cube and this land inside it, it must be very powerful to be able to keep out Emalkartha of the Eleven Hells. Niall wondered if he himself would ever be able to get out of it.

As he thought, his eyelids grew heavy and he slept. It was a dreamless sleep, and refreshing. When he woke, all tiredness was gone from him. Parlata was sitting up, eyeing him from under knitted brows.

"We are both of us dead, you know," she said slowly. "It is just a matter of time until we actually die. Thavas Tomer will want us dead, and he will find a way to kill us."

"He hasn't yet," Niall grinned.

The girl sighed. "You are very stubborn. In the old days, that were so long ago I can scarcely recall them, Tarj Needal used to bring his enemies into this world. He would set them free to run, as Thavas Tomer did to me. Then he would send his—servants—to run them down and slay them. Sometimes he would have those servants capture them and bring them back to the palace for torture."

The girl shivered. "I did not like it, then. I could hear the screams. I was always ill after times like that I would run away and wander the grasslands for a long time, hopefully until Tarj Needal had gone back to his own world. "

"All that was a very long time ago."

"But I remember and—I am still afraid."

Niall stared at her, frowning. "Why did Tarj Needal create you? Why did he leave you here?"

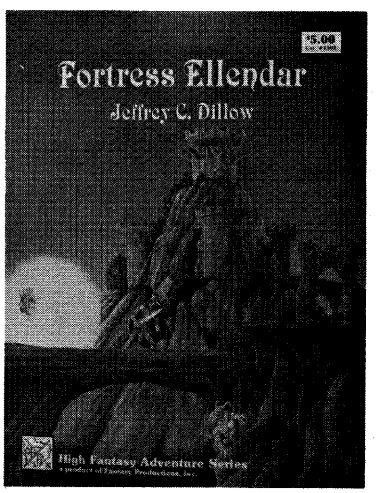
She shrugged. "He told me once he liked company, even such company as mine. Oh, he would amuse himself with me. He told me once he made the most beautiful girl in any world because he liked to look on beauty."

"You're very beautiful."

Parlata smiled at him. "Am I? I have no way of knowing. I have never seen another woman."

Niall sighed. It must have been almost unendurably lonely for the girl, living alone in this world, all by herself for so many thousands of

HIGH FANTASY ADVENTURE GAMES



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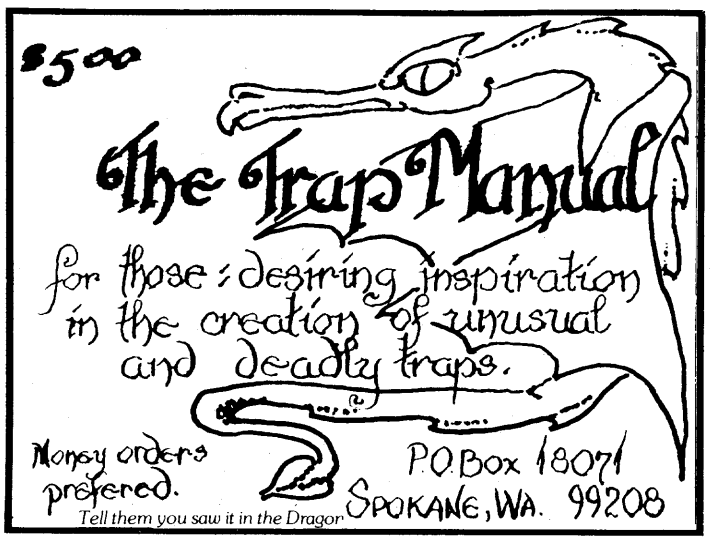
Tell them you saw it in The Dragon

years. It was a wonder she had not gone mad. Perhaps when Tarj Needal had created her, he had made her in such a manner that she would never know loneliness.

They walked on, side by side, across the rolling grasslands. They came to some low mountains and moved over them, and then crossed over more grasslands. Niall marveled that Parlata could have run so far to escape the wolves.

"Oh, Thavas Tomer caused a spell that lifted me out of the palace and put me down somewhere on the grasses. He said it would give me more of what he termed a sporting chance."

She shuddered. "Thavas Tomer is very cruel. Crueler even than was Tarj Needal. At least Tarj Needal liked me."



Parlata was close to tears. Niall felt tenderness well up inside him. He put an arm about her shoulders, drew her against him.

"I'll see you safely out of this. You won't have to worry about Thavas Tomer once I get my hands on him."

She gasped, lifting an arm and pointing. "You will never do anything to him. See there, low on the horizon. Thavas Tomer knows where we are. He has sent the coorjas to find and kill us!"

Niall stared where she pointed and knew a moment of awed wonder.

3.

Giant birds were flying low in the sky, barely skimming the tops of the grasses. They were quite the most gigantic birds Niall had ever seen. Indeed, they were as large as men, or perhaps even larger.

They came in a great cloud of swiftly moving brown wings. They skimmed the ground, and they headed straight for Niall and Parlata. Since there was no cover on these vast prairies, they must be quite plain to see, even from a distance.

Niall growled low in his throat and yanked out his sword. He was vastly outnumbered, there seemed no chance for him at all. Yet he was determined to sell his life dearly. If those birdmen managed to kill him, there wouldn't be many of them left.

As they swooped in closer, he saw that each birdman carried a long, slender spear. They held those spears before them like a fence of steel points. They would spit him on those sharp barbs and he would wriggle out his life on them.

They darted in—

Niall fell flat, knocking Parlata down with him.

As he did so, he thrust upward with Blood-drinker, slashing savagely. The spearpoints skimmed over them, but the sharp edge of his blade bit into flesh and blood. Three of the birdmen fell, either slashed or with their wings hacked off.

The wingless ones flopped helplessly. Niall ran to them and stabbed at them, dispatching them as the others wheeled in the sky and came at him again.

Niall ran, drawing them toward him and away from the girl. He had no experience in fighting such creatures, yet he knew they were not at home on the ground, only in the air. He dove under their spears, stabbing upward, catching one and then another.

Their cries of rage and pain were sharp and shrill, and they looped upward into the sky, to come at him again. Those he had slain lay on the ground near their fallen spears. Niall eyed those long, slender spears calculatingly.

He knew how to fight with spears. He ran to one, lifted it, hefting it. It was perfectly balanced. Niall smiled grimly. Now as the birdmen circled to dive at him again, Niall stood to meet them, half a dozen of their own spears in his hands.

He waited, seeing them come. Then he swung up a spear and hurled it. Straight it went, as might an arrow from the bow. It pierced one of the birdmen; Niall could hear his scream of agony as he plummeted groundward.

Again he hurled a spear, and again.

Each spear was perfectly balanced. Each spear flew as he wanted it, and where it went, a birdman died.

Niall ran to where their bodies lay, snatched at the spears near them. He had destroyed half their number and those others who still lived had drawn off, flying about in the air, speaking to each other with weird and alien cries.

Parlata ran to Niall, eyes wide and worshipful. She wrapped her arms about him and pressed her body against his.

"No one has ever stopped the birdmen before," she babbled. "I did not think it could be done."

"We aren't out of it yet," he growled. "There's more of them to slay.''

It seemed that the birdmen had had enough. They still circled in the sky, but they made no move to attack. It was almost as if they were waiting for something.

Niall picked up what spears he could, giving some to Parlata to carry. Then he gripped her wrist and began his walk.

"They won't attack for a time," he told her. "We'd best be moving onward to where I can find Thavas Tomer."

"It is not far now," Parlata murmured, but she shuddered as she spoke, and as she walked, she held back as if reluctant to accompany him.

"Now what ails you?" he demanded, turning to look down at her.

"Frightful things will happen to us if we go forward," she breathed. "The magician has strange and awful powers in this world."

Even as she spoke, the ground began to ripple as though it were a rough and choppy sea. Niall went sprawling, with Parlata to one side of him. Up and down they heaved, with the ground bucking and falling beneath them. Sickness churned upward from their middles, and nausea ate inside them.

"By Emalkartha of the Eleven Hells," Niall rasped. "I can't take much more of this."

Parlata was being sick off to one side, and Niall felt like joining her, but he fought off the illness, clamping his teeth together, and he managed to bellow out his defiance. He rolled over and got to his feet, and his legs kept him upright. It was like standing on the deck of a ship during a terrible storm, he decided.

Gradually the shaking earth quieted under them. It seemed to Niall, as he bent to assist Parlata to her feet, that he could hear mocking laughter from a long way off.

With his arm about her middle, Parlata quieted her shakings. She lifted a hand and brushed back her tumbled hair.

"Thavas Tomer is amused," she whispered. "He but toys with us."

For the first time since he had entered the world of the cube, Niall began to have misgivings. What could he do against a man whom even the very ground obeyed? He wished that Emalkartha were with him. What was it she had said? Yes. She could not enter the cube, that the very enchantment which had brought it into being was strong enough to keep her out

His jaw firmed stubbornly. He was not yet beaten. Thavas Tomer would have to send something more dreadful than wolves and birdmen against him, if he wanted to defeat him.

He yanked Parlata forward. "Come on. Let him do his worst. We'll see what happens."

They moved now toward an upjut of land, covered with grass and

with here and there some underlying rock showing. That land rose upward into the air; it would make a good point from which to scan the surrounding countryside.

To the top they climbed, and when they stood on that great precipice, Niall made out in the near distance another height of land, even higher than this, and on its top there stood a castle. He knew, without being told, that this was where Thavas Tomer had taken up his residence.

He glanced down at Parlata, "Is it?" he asked. "Is that where the magician lives?"

She nodded dumbly, crowding closer to him.

"Even now he will be preparing some new danger for us. I can almost hear him laughing to himself as he does."

"If I can get inside that castle, he won't be able to create many more magic spells. My steel will remove his head from his body."

Parlata shook her head. "No. You will never be permitted to enter. Look! Even now Thavas Tomer is sending more of his creations to do battle."

Niall saw them coming from the castle, a long line of centaurs, with the bodies of men above the waist and the bodies of horses for the rest. Each centaur carried a net. They came at a gallop across the castle causeway and down onto the grasslands, and they rode straight for the height of land where Niall stood with Parlata.

"He intends to capture us and bring us into the castle," she whimpered.

"First they have to catch us."

Niall glanced around him. They stood on high rocks, here, and anyone who tried to get at them must move up the grassy slope which slid away into the vast grasslands over which they had come.

Oh, it would not be easy. He knew that. But he meant to fight as he had always fought, without thought for anything but the slaying of as many of his enemies as he could reach. He checked the number of spears they still had and rested them butt down in the ground for easy snatching.

He watched the centaurs galloping. They were big, bulky, and the thought came to him that they might be a little clumsy. His lips widened into a grim smile. Clumsy or not, there were a lot of them, and they would take a lot of killing.

Fortunately, those men-horses had to come up a rise to him, which would slow them. He bade Parlata sit down, to hide herself as best as she could behind some rocks.

"They will throw those nets at us," he explained. "Don't let yourself be caught in one."

There was no more time for talk. The centaurs were coming up the hill at them, their nets swinging overhead, ready to be hurled. But the men-horses were too close together, some of the nets tangled in others, and it was then, at that moment of disarray that Niall leaped forward.

Sword in hand, he ran down the slope and his blade winked in the pale light as he swung it. He thrust and cut, and every time he moved his blade, it was bloodied anew. Hands reached for him, the centaurs sought to loop their nets over him, but he was too quick, too spy.

He hacked and stabbed, he cut and slashed, and as the blood flew, he saw centaurs drop stricken in their death agonies. For long moments he leaped and darted, always slaying, and then he ran back up the slope and left behind him dying things that threshed out their life's blood on the grass.

Niall stood then, and waited, hearing the blood drip from his sword onto stone. More than half of them he had already dispatched, no more than a dozen yet remained.

"You are a great warrior," Parlata whispered from his feet, where she lay crouched between two big stones. "The greatest I have ever heard of.''

"Let's hope Thavas Tomer realizes it and surrenders himself to me."

"He will never do that. He is too strong, too powerful. He has only been playing with us, so far. Soon now he will tire of it and then we shall die."

"You're a cheerful little thing," he grinned.

Aye, almost as cheerful as Lylthia, warning him of this cube-land. Where was she now, that woman who was also a goddess? Could she see him where he stood, surrounded by enemies, a bloodied sword in his hand, awaiting the next charge of those centaurs?

Now the men-horses began to move. One stood forth and then another, each one swinging his net They formed a line, one behind the other, and while Niall knew what they meant to do, mentally he congratulated them on their clear thinking.

The foremost came up the hill at a gallop, the net waving over his head. In a moment it would belly out and open as it flew toward him. He must act—and fast!

From the ground where he had planted them, butts down, Niall snatched up the nearest of the spears. He lifted it and hurled it, and saw it fly through the air almost as swift as any arrow.

The centaur tried to dodge it, but he was too slow. Full in the chest it took him and the keen point slid out the other side, an inch to one side of his backbone. He stumbled, his hooves slipped on the turf and he went sprawling. Dead before he hit the ground.

The next centaur in line came racing forward, his net swinging high above his head and opening. Again Niall reached for a spear and hurled it. The centaur went down, dying.

They came swiftly, until all the spears were gone.

Niall gave a great shout, yanked out Blood-drinker, and ran down the slope as fast as any deer. His sword made a great arc of light in his hand as he swung it.

Sight of him may have confused them, for instead of rushing forward to meet him, the centaurs drew back and tried to hurl their nets as one man. Those thrown nets met in the air, became entangled, and as they drooped, Niall ran under them, his blade already stabbing.

One centaur went down, and then another. The balance would have turned to flee, but Niall gave them no time. Upward onto the back of one he leaped and from that vantage point, cleaved a second's head from his neck and drove his blade full length into the chest of another.

Next moment the man-beast he straddled was staggering, Niall's sword between his shoulder blades. Niall leaped aside as the centaur fell.

He turned his eyes toward the citadel that he could see in me distance. No doubt Thavas Tomer stood at one of its windows, staring out at him as he himself was staring. Niall lifted Blood-drinker and shook it.

"I'm still alive, magician! Try and kill me—if you can!"

There was a silence over all this curious cube-world. Nothing moved, there was no sound. And then, as clear as a bugle call upon the still night wind, came a voice.

"I see you, Niall of the Far Travels. I hear your voice. Now—hear mine! I vow your death, general. You have invaded the sanctity of this world where I have come to live for a while.

"For that, you shall be stripped of life. Ah, but not easily, not lightly! The time for a swift death is over. I have but toyed with you, thinking to dispatch you—and that little witch with you!—so that I may be about my studies.

"Yes, yes, I have much to learn, much to decipher of the incredibly ancient scrolls and parchments which Tarj Needal kept here for his own study and amusement. There is so very much that is new to me.

"You have become an infringement on my study, Niall. You annoy me. And so, I must use my arts to bring you to your knees in abasement, to surrender your person to me so that I may torture it throughout all eternity."

Laughter rose up, harsh and hateful, and Niall felt his flesh crawl at the sound of it. There was madness in that laughter, and sharp triumph. It seemed to rise up out of the very air and beat against the eardrums.

"Watch now," bellowed that voice.

Slowly, almost imperceptibly, the air about them seemed to darken. Blacker it became, until one could see little more than a foot or two away. Now there were violently scarlet streaks of what seemed to be living fire in that air. Those red lightnings shot here and there, thin and

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vicious, and where they streaked, Niall could hear a sharp crackling.

The voice went on, "Dodge, if you want, but those fiery bolts of mine will seek you out, no matter where you try to hide!"

Then there was silence, except for the crackling of those blood-red lightning bolts. Parlata was screaming beside him, clinging to him, and even Niall felt the hairs on the back of his thick neck stand up.

What could he do against such magics?

If only Emalkartha were here, to offset them with spells of her own! But he was on his own, now, and so he caught the girl and dragged her down in among the rocks.

There was shelter here, of a sort. If the lightnings hit at them, they would strike the rocks first. Niall kept an arm about Parlata, and an eye on the black sky which rained down those fiery bolts.

He never knew how long that eerie bombardment went on, yet after a long time it slowed its anger, the air began to lighten once again, and gradually everything went back to normal. Niall sighed and lifted the girl, standing on top of the rocks.

"We live," he breathed.

"Of what use is living? Better to have let those bolts hit us and relieve us of this torture."

Grimly, Niall shook his head. He still held his sword, he had life in his body, and there was an enemy to catch.

"Come," he growled. "We go forward, up to that castle."

Parlata stared at him with huge eyes. "Are you mad? He will capture us, torture us—forever! There is no escape. None."

But he was moving forward, his hand holding hers, and she was dragged along at his side. Down they went off that pinnacle of rock where they stood, and began striding toward the distant lair where Thavas Tomer made his home.

They were halfway to the mountain on which the castle stood when Niall saw a black cloud forming above one of its spires. It swirled, that cloud, faster and faster, and then it darted forward, straight at them.

Parlata screamed. Niall lifted his blade and as that menacing cloud swept down and around him, he struck out at it. His blade went through the darkness, and now that cloud was all about them, lapping at their bodies, lifting them upward off their feet, swinging them around and around.

They went through the air, gripped by that black cloud, heels above their heads, parallel to the ground, rotated like spinning wheels. High into the upper air they were swept, faster and faster, until they were no more than leaves in a strong gale.

This is the end, Niall thought. There is no way I can fight anything like this! His doom was upon him. They would be hurled groundward, smashed against it, crippled and helpless. It was useless to fight any longer.

Yet even as he consigned himself to death, Niall felt the fury of the cloud lessening. No longer did it rotate so swiftly; its swirlings lessened, grew feebler. Yet still it sped on, always onward.

Now the cloud began to relax a little, come closer to the ground. Niall felt a foot touch the earth, then was swept upward again. When next he was driven groundward, he caught hold of Parlata, wrapping his arms about here, and hurled himself sideways.

They tumbled across the grass, and lay flat.

When Niall raised his head, the cloud was dissipating into thin wisps of blackish smoke. And mad laughter filled the air.

"You are back where you started from, Niall of the Far Travels. How did you like that way of traveling? You have it to do all over again. And next time, you shall face even worse dangers."

Mad laughter rang out. "Oh, I am enjoying this. I wait to dream up more dangers for you to overcome. So come at me, Niall. Come at me again and again until at last you crawl to me on your belly, begging my pity. Ha!Ha!Ha!Ha! . . . ."

Niall shook himself, staring about him. Yes, Thavas Tomer was right. There was the rock on which he had stood when he had first come inside the cube. It loomed before him, flat of top and of a whiteness that almost hurt the eyes.

Parlata shook beside him, crawling closer so that his big body might shelter her own. He put his arms about her and held her, his eyes still fastened to that white rock.

"I have been thinking," he said slowly. "It is useless to try and fight Thavas Tomer any longer. He is too strong for us."

Eyes wide, she stared up at him. "But what can we do? No matter where we go, he will follow and torment us."

He dragged her to her feet, urged her along the grasses until they came to the white stone. Lifting her in his big hands, he put her on its flat top. Then he joined her.

"Tamalka frathanis devor, hoppolis entrala porvor," he breathed.

Then he was rising upward, seeming to expand. . . .

Once again, he stood in his own palace, beside the strange blue cube with the stars. Beside him, shivering and staring around her, was Parlata. Her eyes were large and fearful as she swung them toward him.

"Where are we?" she whimpered.

"In my palace. Now, now, there's no need to fear. You're safe enough here. Thavas Tomer is inside that thing, along with the world from which we've come."

She stared at the cube, brows wrinkled. Niall pushed her gently into a chair and began to explain all that had happened ever since he had attacked Thavas Tomer in his stronghold.

"But—but—what am I to do in this world? I know nothing about it—or even where it is! What does it hold for me?"

"I'd like to know the answer to that, myself," said a cold voice.

Niall swung around. Lylthia was sitting in a chair to one side, her arms wrapped around her knees. Her eyes were angry, her cheeks flushed.

He threw up his arms. "What could I do with her? Leave her to be tortured to death by Thavas Tomer? I brought her with me, as I'd have done with anyone that demon planned to kill!"

His eyes locked with those of the woman he loved. Lylthia sighed softly, then turned her eyes toward the shrinking Parlata.

"Well, perhaps you did the right thing. I say perhaps, mind. I don't like the idea of your keeping her under the same roof with you. She's too pretty."

"What is this 'pretty'?" asked Parlata, leaning forward.

Niall growled, "Quiet, both of you. I have more important things on my mind, right now. Mainly, what am I going to do about Thavas Tomer?"

Lylthia smiled wryly. "There is that problem, isn't there?'

Niall went on scowling at her. Even as he did, his scowl began to relax and his lips curved into a big grin. Lylthia straightened up, frowning.

"What's so funny?" she snapped.

"I just thought of the perfect way to dispose of him. Now, now. I'm not going to tell you yet. We have something else to discuss, you and I."

"Oh? And what's that?"

"What do we do with the girl? We can't leave her to starve to death. You don't want me to take care of her. So what do we do?"

"Turn her loose. Let her wander our world."

"Penniless? Oh, come now, Lylthia."

The goddess glared at him. "Well? What would you suggest?"

"Let's make her a rich woman. You have hoards of gold and jewels in those eleven hells of yours. Be free with them. Give her some gold, some jewels. Let her buy a house here in Urgrik—or even better—let her go roaming this world and learning all about it as a rich traveler."

Lylthia turned her green eyes upon Parlata. She studied her beauty in the tom garments that did little to conceal her body. Slowly, she nodded.

"Yes. I think that might be best. What do you say, girl? Would you like to be rich, to wander as you will wherever your fancy might want to take you in this world that is so new to you?"

Parlata stared back at the goddess. Their eyes met and their minds seemed almost to speak, one to another. Then Parlata smiled and nodded.

"Yes. I do not love this big man who came so suddenly into my life, though I do admit my gratitude to him for having saved that life for me. I find there is a curiosity in me to learn more about this world into which he brought me. I should like to wander over it, to see it, to learn all I may about it."

"Good, then that's settled. I'll see that you have enough gold and jewels to last you a lifetime. Oh, by the way. You will age in this land. It isn't magical, as the cube-world is. You will grow old. You will die, some day."

Parlata shrugged. "I would have died in the cube, if Niall hadn't saved me."

Lylthia turned her stare at Niall. "And now that's settled, what do we do about Thavas Tomer?"

"I give him to you, my darling. He's all yours."

The goddess blinked. "All mine?'

"Of course. Take the cube into one of your eleven hells. You are immortal. It doesn't matter when Thavas Tomer emerges from his cube. You will be there to greet him and let him have the taste of every one of the hells you rule."

Lylthia burst into laughter and clapped her hands. "I shall love it! Oh, what a solution to our problem. You know, Niall—sometimes you prove yourself smarter than I think you."

She ran to him, hurled herself into his arms and was soundly kissed. They forgot about Parlata, they enjoyed the pleasure of the moment.

Only when she coughed a little, to remind them of her presence, did they break apart and look at her.

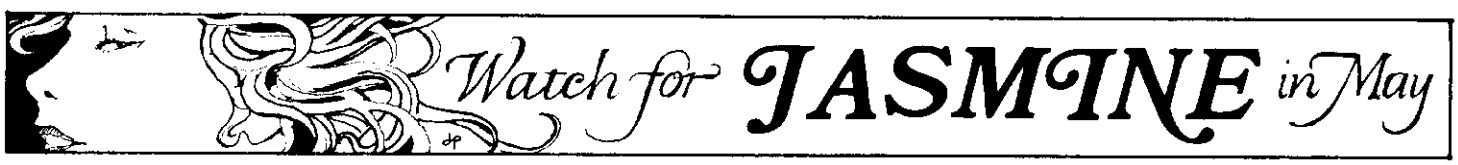
"What is that which you two do?' she asked. "I find myself oddly affected by it."

Lylthia tinkled laughter. "It's love, girl. Go find yourself a man and let him teach you what I mean." She pushed away from Niall and turned toward the cube. "I'd better be about my business. The sooner I take the cube away with me and return with some gold and jewels, the sooner you can leave and I can have Niall all to myself."

Niall grinned, calling, "Hurry back."

Lylthia nodded soberly. "Oh, I shall-believe me."

Then she was gone, and the cube with her.



History of Immer

(From page 22)

their neighbor into many autonomous principalities, none a threat to Neuth.

It was the worst move the Elves could have made, for it convinced the royal party and its supporters that the truculent dukes were engaged in a conspiracy with a sinister, non-human power. The aristocratic party in the council was disgraced and rendered powerless, while royalists rushed zealously into a prolonged war with the Elves and the dissident dukes.

At first the war—the Ducal War—went badly for the royalists, who did not have as many trained fighters as the frontier dukes. But decisive victory eluded the enemy coalition, which could agree on nothing except a general enmity toward the royalists. Oftentimes the appearance of one faction in an area caused the withdrawal of the other, for the Elves' xenophobia was not diminished by the alliance, while the dukes were badly divided on the morality of fighting their own kind when a foreign power—a non-human one, at that—benefited by it even more than they.

The royalists held on until luck came to their assistance. A party of their Conodran allies attacked an Elven warcamp and captured the high prince, Etirun. Forced to sign a peace, the mortified high prince withdrew to Ider Bolis, leaving the dukes to their own devices. Disheartened, many of the weary thargals surrendered, accepting heavy restrictions on themselves and their dukes. Shakkan, one of the most daring of the rebel dukes, rejected the option of surrender to Pisiris. He led his dependants across Goblin-haunted territory and built a settlement on Ozerg Mountain. Another thargal, led by the outlaw duke Gorpin, anticipated no clemency after its excesses, so it withdrew into the barbarian north of Wild Woods.

With the arrival of peace, the next few reigns saw continued growth. The divisions between Conodras and Vidarnas blurred as the peoples mingled. The Elves kept the peace in the west, but a rising Goblin menace in the east compelled the construction of the Gap Castle. The discovery of gold in the River Rapid renewed the drive toward the north country. Another barbarian war followed, against tribes fiercer and stronger than the Conodras. The war brought at least a limited access to the River Rapid, as well as the conquest of the Wild Woods. The citadel of Lone Wizor was raised to consolidate these gains.

Early in the fourteenth century, in the reign of Mesilim II, the Elven problem burst forth again. Large Elven armies poured into Mivior, Hothior and Immer, sworn to eradicate human life everywhere and restore the ancient dignity of Neuth.

Mesilim II, little like his namesake, quailed before the magical armaments of the Elves and withdrew to the Gap Castle, leaving rapine to reign in his place. Too-easy early successes led the Elven monarch to insult and threaten the Goblins of Zom, who responded with a surprise attack that drove the Elves out of Immer.

His reign a failure, Mesilim II abdicated in favor of his brother Reglissar, who had led the Immerite forces at the sack of Ider Bolis. When not repelling predatory raids from Zorn and Muetar, Reglissar worked to rebuild his kingdom. Cattle herding spread over empty land where the serfs had fled. The death of many large landholders allowed the king to distribute much new land to free yeomen, creating a vigorous new class of freeholders with strong royalist leanings.

After ruling twenty-one years, an assassin's blade cut short the noble reign of Reglissar. In the wake of the tragedy, his son Euwint returned from the Invisible School where he had been studying, and assumed the throne of the Immerite nation.

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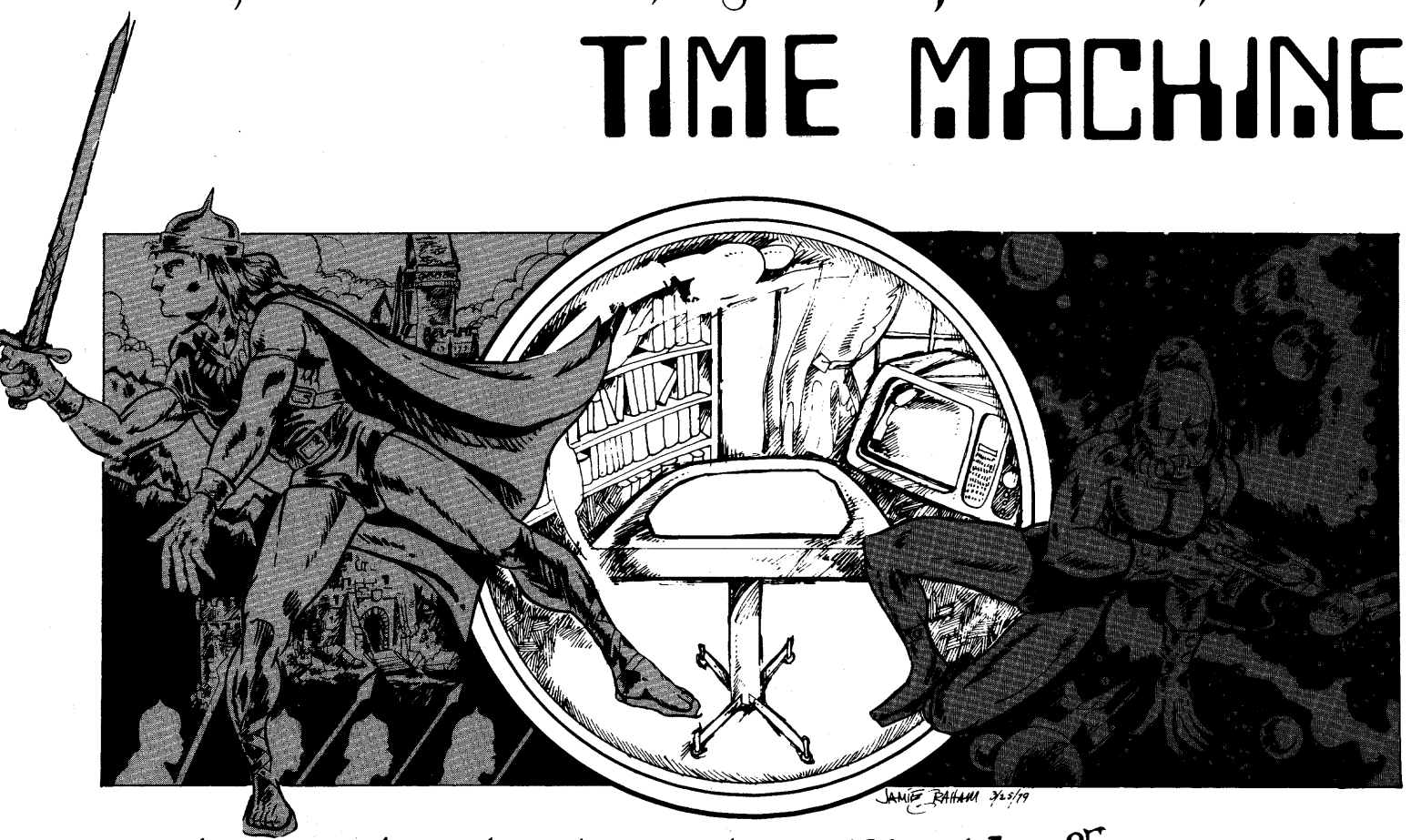

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Stellar Conquest

(From page 7)

Base is the equivalent of a permanently grounded Dreadnought. Each SMB costs 20 IU after the research cost has been paid. Predecessor: AMB. Development cost with pred 80, without 110.

Weapons Systems Sequence, Level 4 (SKR): The Screencracker is a warship designed for the single purpose of eliminating Planetay Force Screens. At the beginning of his attack phase, the attacking player may roll one die for each SKR in the same hex with a PFS. (Each SKR may only attack one PFS per turn, even if there are several screened worlds in the system). On a roll of 1 or 2, the screen goes down, and other ships may attack the planet that turn. On a 3,4,5, or 6, the screen stays up. In either event, the planet's bases may fire on a SKR on any turn it attacks that planet's PFS.

A SKR defends as though it were a Dreadnought, but cannot attack ships or planets; its one function is to destroy the PFS. Each SKR costs 100 IU to build after the research cost has been paid. Predecessor: PFS. Development cost with pred 300, without 400.

Weapons Systems Sequence, Level 4 (SBM): The Sunbeam (inspired by Doc Smith's "Lensman" series) is a device for harnessing the energy of an entire star into an offensive weapon. Only one Sunbeam device may exist at any one star at a time; it must be built on one of the planets. The Sunbeam is not fired at ships, but at enemy worlds. It may be fired once per turn, at any world. The beam travels at light speed (1 hex per turn). When the beam is fired, place a counter in a hex adjacent to that star; this represents a "blip" a year long, heading out. Each turn thereafter, the player owning that Sunbeam rolls two dice for each "blip" counter on the board. On a total roll of 2 or 4, that segment of beam goes slightly off-course (enough to miss its target) and may be removed from play. On any other total, it moves one hex closer to its target (which must be announced when the beam is fired).

A dust cloud stops Sunbeams. Nothing else (including the destruction of the device that fired it) will halt a Sunbeam once fired. If it stays on course, it will strike its target. When a Sunbeam strikes a planet, it kills 10 million population and reduces the planet's habitability as described below. Sunbeams are not affected by a PFS. Sunbeams do not affect ships, which can dodge at greater-than-light speed.

A Sunbeam fired at another world in the *same* system strikes on that same turn (that is, immediately) and does double damage.

Each Sunbeam device costs 300 IU to build, once the research cost has been paid. The cost of a device may be spread over 2 or 3 turns (note that this is an exception to the general rule; all other units must be built all at once). Cost to develop this device is 400 IU; there is no predecessor.

If a colony possessing a Sunbeam is captured or wiped out, the device is destroyed.

Technical Sequence, Level 4 (TRF): Terraforming is the art and science of making a world more fit to live on. In order to terraform a world, a colony must already be present—thus, an unusable or BR-0 world cannot be terraformed.

For each 10 IU spent in terraforming, the habitability level of a planet is raised by 1. Furthermore, for each 15 million added to a planet's habitability level by terraforming, the planet's type improves by one. For instance, if 140 IU are spent on terraforming an MT-40 planet, it becomes an MT-54. If another 10 IU are spent, it becomes an ST-55. The IU spent to terraform a world do not have to come on the same turn, but they must come in increments of 10.

A planet may not have a type better than TR or a habitability greater than 100.

* * *

The old man turned away from the fax-screen, where headlines blared "NEW COMARCH ATROCITY!" He spat on the sidewalk. Ten million dead. Six million packed into quickly built colony ships and aimed back toward a Republic that had no room for them. And Comarchy colonists heading for Schedar right now, no doubt.

"Well, at least they let some go. On Wolf we fried the whole damn planet. Killed them all, men, women, and children. . ." He trailed off, suddenly realizing that he had spoken aloud. He glanced about worriedly, but no one was close enough to have heard.

Pulling his coat tighter around him, the old man leaned into the freezing wind and headed back to work.

* * *

KILLING PEOPLE AND DESTROYING WORLDS

Those still with us after that catchy title may replace Rules 7.2.8 and 7.2.9 with the following:

Each turn, a conqueror may destroy the population of a conquered colony on the following basis: for each ESC, 1 million population; for each ATK, 3 million; for each DN, 5 million. SCTs and SKRs cannot attack population; neither, of course, can CTs.

A Sunbeam destroys 10 million population when it strikes.

Each lost million population naturally reduces the world's IU production by 1. Each slain million also reduces the habitability of that planet by 1 million. For instance, a ST-40 with 27 million population is conquered. A single Dreadnought fires on the population for one turn. The population is reduced to 22. The planet is reduced to an ST-35.

Furthermore, for each 15 million population destroyed (in any fashion) over the course of the game, the type of the planet is reduced by one level—that is, a TR is reduced to ST, an ST to MT, and an MT to BR. If at any time the habitability of a planet is reduced to zero, its type automatically becomes BR and the planet is useless.

If a colony is wiped out by Sunbeam attack, all human works on the planet (Sunbeam device, IUs, RIUs, or bases) are considered destroyed as well.

It is legal to fire on an empty (or almost empty) world to reduce its habitability. For instance, a Sunbeam will reduce the habitability of a world by 10 million, even if less than 10 million people were actually present. Even an empty world takes damage.

* * *

Anya deVries was very close to panic. For all of her seventeen years, (and for some time before that) the Republic had been fighting the Comarchy. War was the normal order of things. All her life she'd wanted to be a pilot; for very nearly all her life she'd been trained for just that. And now—Why were those old fools looking so cheerful? Hadn't they heard the stories? Everyone was saying the war was going to be over soon!

It just wasn't *fair!*

* *

VICTORY CONDITIONS

This scenario can be played with either of two sets of victory conditions:

(1) To the bitter end. Continue until one side is obviously beaten. This is more likely to happen if you are using Screencracker ships; two evenly matched players, each with a number of worlds beneath invulnerable PFS shields, can fight for a *long* time before one gets enough of an upper hand to blockade the other completely.

(2) Time limit. Play either to a given number of years (at least 60) or to a given time of day (3 a.m. is always good). Then figure scores according to this formula:

Worlds Controlled: For each TR planet, 100 points. For each ST planet, 50 points. For each MT planet, 20 points—40 if it is MT-NM. For each BR-NM, 20 points. Other worlds count nothing. It is not necessary to have a colony at the planet—a ship at that star establishes control.

Population: For each million population on planets or in CTs, 1 point.

Industrial Capacity: For each IU or RIU under a player's control, 5 points.

Technological Development: For each Development a player has, points equal to the IU cost (without pred) necessary to research that development.

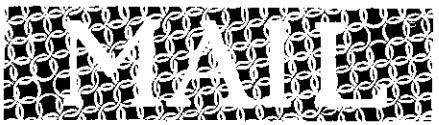
Military Strength: For each ship, base, PFS, or SBM a player has (except CTs), points equal to half the IU cost required to build it.

* * *

"Well, it's over. No question about it. And we won."

He looked at the bright young aide who had spoken, and shook his head. Gazing at the Starmap—at the markers that indicated dead or battered worlds where once there had been green homes for men-he sighed.

"No, Vlad. I'm afraid not. Nobody won."



(From page 3)

always use the back issues, and the theory is, that with no worry of being stuck with unsold magazines, the retailer will always order plenty. Obviously there is some breakdown between the theory and the practice. So, your best insurance to avoid missing any issues of The Dragon *is to subscribe. You get your magazine delivered to your door, and you save money—what could be better?—Jake*

Monty Haul I

Dear TSR Periodicals Staff:

The Fell Pass by Karl Merris is an excellent dungeon. The idea of a dungeon appearing in The Dragon regularly appeals to me. Hopefully, a dungeon the size of The Fell Pass can appear at least three or four times annually. Small dungeons, which are a couple of pages and one level, should be a regular feature each issue. These mini dungeons could be submitted by anyone.

The comic features, Wormy and Finieous, are one of the best in your magazine. I would like to see more fantasy stories appearing in *The Dragon.* I am principally an AD&D player and would want the whole magazine to be D&D oriented, but I can understand that you must include other games. The Fantasysmith's Notebook is a very informative and well done article.

I'd like to see a column appearing regularly that deals with some of the nebulous areas in AD&D.

People claiming they have characters with +10 swords, -10 armor, and 100 levels are common to my knowledge. Many people I know, but don't game with, don't distort the game that much. They, however, have a tendency to work and play the game to their advantage too often. I don't think the total amount of players in D&D take it too seriously.

At our school a D&D club has been founded and many opportunities to meet new players and game have resulted. I hope the game continues to grow and get better.

Andrew Kaspryk—Park Ridge, IL

Monty Haul II

Dear Editor,

I've created a monster! No, not that kind; what I mean is this: A few months ago I DM'd for one of my friends, and he rose to 3rd level while in my campaign.

Last week I met him again and I was appalled! His Magic-User had risen to 11th level, made a citadel (with a laser turret on top) with a maze of dungeons under it (including a garage for his starship and three shuttle craft). Also included in this "Monty Haul" package was a complete room of magics, including a rod of rulership, beaker of many potions, and he has even changed the rules as much as to, say, a magic-user, after reaching 11th level, can use a sword and carry his tome around like a scroll!

I am not worried about him, I'm worried about the people he is teaching! He has taught about 15 people at a private boarding school. He is perverting D&D, and I can't get it through his head! What can I do before the name of D&D runs putrid in the Ojai Valley?

Dwaine Wright—Ojai, CA

Monty Haul III

Dear Editor,

One thing (that bothers me) is the number of Monty Haul dungeons there are in the U.S. I'm not knocking a Monty Haul dungeon as a training aid for beginning players. But once a player has gained experience in using the rules, they should be introduced to the cold, hard facts. Their characters developed in the Monty Haul dungeon should be left there and new characters developed.

Example of what I'm trying to say: A wise DM used a Monty Haul dungeon to introduce us to the system of play. Therefore, we were never discouraged by too little treasure or experience points. But after a few months of playing he terminated his Monty Haul dungeon and introduced us to the World of Greyhawk.

All of a sudden, we could see where our characters developed in the Monty Haul dungeon were unrealistic. In the Monty Haul dungeon, we were going up at least one or two experience levels for each level of the dungeon. In a matter of only about a hundred hours of playing time, I had developed a very powerful 8th-level Wizard. Of course, I left him there!

Since then, I have played over 600 hours of D&D and I have yet to get a character over 5th level. I have a couple of 4th-level Fighters developed, but nothing approaching an 8th-level Wizard.

Of course, each DM is the God of his fantasy world and can do as he wishes, but my group prefers to fight a little harder to get promoted than is obviously required in a Monty Haul dungeon. Imagine what types of fantasy worlds there are that let a 100th-level Fighter develop! And in less than a year's playing time!

Ben W. Lane—Fresno, Calif

The Monty Haul dungeon and DM can *be a serious problem in D&D and AD&D, when the people who enjoy that style of play encounter others who do not. It all depends on your frame of reference.*

Does anyone out there remember when 5,000 points on a pinball machine was a great score? Nowdays, if you don't score half a million, you're wasting your money. The game itself hasn't changed that much—the goal (winning games or free balls) is still the same—it's just that the manufacturers have tacked a couple of zeros onto everything. Those bigger scores sound more impressive.

You can look at D&D and AD&D in much the same manner. As long as the balance of the game remains constant, it shouldn't make any difference, play-wise, if you're 1st level or 10th level or 100th level. The problem that arises, though, is that generally higher level characters are not met with correspondingly higher level difficulties, and the game falls apart.

D&D and AD&D, as presented within the rule books, is generally geared for "lower-level" characters—say, between 1st level and 20th. The monsters and creatures are geared towards these level characters, the treasures (except when piled up in ridiculous amounts) are geared towards these levels, the experience point system is geared towards these levels, and so forth. This is not to say that one cannot expand the game to higher levels, if that is the choice. But, played according to the way the rules are set up, that should actually never be necessary. Indeed, following the rules, it shouldn't even be possible, *except in extremely long-lived campaigns. But, if a DM decides to arbitrarily start all his players at 15th level (an alteration of the game, in my mind, akin to dealing out all the properties in* Monopoly, *and giving everyone a couple of hotels to boot, before the game even starts), he must be prepared to have correspondingly high-level situations for them to encounter. If he can, fine. And if he continues to present a challenging campaign to the players, great. But if he lacks the imagination and ingenuity to continue what he has started, he is doing both the players and the game an unfair disservice. —Jake*

'The best around'

Dear Editor:

I just received a copy of the January issue of "The Dragon," and I would have to say that it is the best fantasy mag around. My favorites are "Wormy" and "Bazaar of the Bizarre." Hope you'll keep the "Wormy" series for a long time. Sorry to hear about the "Sorcerer's Scroll's" discontinuation, maybe Mr. Gygax will pick it up once TSR's sales drop a bit (Thor forbid!). A big cheer for "Clerics and Swords," "Sage Advice," and "Leomund's Tiny Hut;" even though I don't agree with all they had to say, any AD&D insights are very welcome.

One of the few things I didn't like about the issue was the cover. What was that thing supposed to be? Certainly not a dragon, because where was all the treasure? A basilisk maybe? Anyway, that's just a trivial complaint compared to the vast majority of excellent articles as well as artwork #33 included.

Re "The Electric Eye," the little excerpt from the game sounded quite a bit like a program that we have on our school computer called "Adventure," which is a very good version of a D&D game, with the DM being an all-powerful djinni—any connection? I agree with Mr. Herro's views, I myself having developed an AD&D player creating program that eliminates a lot of the hassle involved with that part of the game. I hope to see more of this sort of thing—maybe leading to a complete campaign program? Who knows?

John C. Coates IV—Lynchburg, VA

Glad you liked the January issue. You'll be happy to know that though TSR's business is continuing to boom, Gary has managed to produce a few more Sorcerer's Scrolls for us (in case you missed it, the first return of the Sorcerer's Scroll appeared last month, and you'll find another in this month's magazine).

The Electric Eye column has been very favorably received, and will hopefully be expanded in the future—just how far remains to be seen. Ideally, we would like it to touch on all aspects of electronic games and gaming, including, perhaps, actual programs. However, we will most likely start with commercially available equipment and software before getting into any custom programs.

As for the cover of the January magazine, who says that dragons must always be surrounded by treasure??? If you read "Cover-to-Cover" that month, you know that the title of the painting is "Dragon's Lair," not "Dragon's Treasure Room." Maybe its the dragon's dining room. In game playing or in real life, it's a dangerous business to let your mind become locked into a single or absolute concept of how something should appear or behave—therein lies the path to stereotyping and prejudice, not to mention that creature you encounter in the dungeon which outwardly appears to be a fist-sized rock, but in actuality is a bizarre creature whose touch is instantly fatal to AD&D characters played by people named John. Q.E.D. —Jake

Convention Schedule 1980

WEST POINT CON III (April 5-6,1980)-Conducted by the Military Affairs Club of the U.S. Military Academy. Games, seminars, films and dealers. For more information: Jacob Kovel, Company H-4, U.S. Corps of Cadets, West Point NY 10997, phone 414-938-4346.

WV U-CON II (May 2-4, 1980)-Sponsored by WVU Simulation Gaming Society, to be held at the WVU Student Union, Morgantown, WV. Pre-registration forms available in February. Contact: Bryan Bullinger, 240 McLane Ave., Morgantown WV 26505.

MARCON XV (May 2-4,1980)-A science fiction convention featuring L. Sprague de Camp as guest of honor. To be held at the Holiday Inn on the Lane, 328 W. Lane Ave., Columbus OH 43201. Registration $8 until April 1, $10 thereafter. contact: MARCON, P.O. Box 2583, Columbus OH 43216.

GROSSMONT COLLEGE RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL (May 8-11,1980)—Medieval costume, dancing and music exhibits and presentations, plus demonstrations by the San Diego and Los Angeles chapters of the Society for Creative Anachronism. For further information, contact Jodi Stump, c/o Grossmont College, 8800 Grossmont Drive, El Cajon CA 92020.

NEW CON 2 (May 23-25, 1980)—A general gaming convention sponsored by the Toy Soldier Shop of Newburyport, Mass. to be held at the West Newbury Town Hall, Route 113, West Newbury MA 01985. For more information, contact The Toy Soldier, 1 Temple St., Newburyport MA 01950.

GENGHIS CON II (May 23-26, 1980)—Sponsored by Denver Gamers Association, to be held at Colorado Women's College, Montview Blvd. at Quebec, Denver CO. Dormitory lodging available. Contact: Genghis Con II, 2527 Gaylord, Denver CO 80205, or call Mark (303) 761-2465 or Alex (303)798-1404.

BLOODY SUNDAY '80 (May 25, 1980)—A day of wargaming and socializing scheduled to be held at the Waterloo Regional Police Association Recreational Centre, R-R. 2, Cambridge, Ontario, Canada. Information is available from Les Scanlon, president, MIGS, 473 Upper Wentworth, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

GRIMCON II (May 25-28, 1980)—This fantasy and science-fiction gaming convention will be held at the Hyatt Edgewater Hotel in Oakland, Calif. Information is available by writing to GRIMCON, 1749 Sonoma Ave., Berkeley CA 94707.

MICHICON IX (June 6-8, 1980)—Another gala production by the Metro Detroit Gamers, to be held at Oakland University in Rochester, Mich. For advance information, write: Metro Detroit Gamers, P.O. Box 787, Troy MI 48099.

RIDES NEEDED/RIDES OFFERED

With the convention season fast approaching, TSR Periodicals and The Dragon will be offering, as a service to our readers, free listing of requests for rides and offers for rides to the various 1980 conventions. If you're looking for a ride or would like to offer a ride, drop a card to: RIDES, c/o TSR Periodicals, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. State the convention you're interested in, your name and address, and any other pertinent information (day leaving, returning, etc.). We'll list as many names as possible each month. And here's the first:

> RIDE OFFERED: I am going to GenCon '80 from Burlington, Vermont and can take three riders from Vermont or the Adirondacks in exchange for help with gas and tolls. If interested write me immediately: Shar Fortier, 27 N. Winooski Ave., Burlington, VT 05401.

WV U-CON II

MAY 2,3,4

West Virginia University Student Union

Morgantown, WV

(South of Pittsburgh on I - 79)

SPECIAL GUESTS: TSR'S JIM WARD AND TOM WHAM AND GDW'S FRANK CHADWICK

FEATURING...

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- Hobby Exhibitors, Including TSR Hobbies, Inc.
- Auction and Flea Market
- Painting Competition
- Seminars
- Open Gaming
- Food on Premises
- and Much More....

SPECIAL FEATURES...

- 100 + Person AD & D Tournament -- Designed and Run by Bob Blake.
- WRG Ancients Tournament Ref'd by Tom Hazlett and Steve Herndon.
- Longsword Fantasy Miniatures Ref'd by Designers Rich Baier and Mike Thomas.
- Gamma World and Snit's Revenge Tournaments Run by Jim Ward & Tom Wham.
- Seminars by Chadwick, Ward and Wham.
- Squad Leader Revenge -- Players vs GM Bryan Bullinger.

(PRE REGISTRATION FORMS AVAILABLE MID FEBRUARY)

FOR MORE INFORMATION WRITE: WV U-CON II, c/o BRYAN BULLINGER, 240 McLANE AVENUE, MORGANTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA 26505

THE GREAT CANADIAN GAMES ADVENTURE

Friday May 16 from 6.30 pm through to 6.00 pm Monday May 19. Located at King Edward Ave., Ottawa, Ontario, on the Ottawa University campus. Our Guest of Honour will be Frank Chadwick of G.D.W.. The program shall include; tournaments, dealers, seminars, auctions, and films. Admission is $9.00 until March 31 and $12.00 after April 1. For more information phone Bruce Knight at 613-745-2073 or write to CANGAMES 80, 201-360 Dundas St., Vanier Ont., Canada K1L 7W7.

CANGAMES 80

Fantasysmith's Notebook

(From page 26)

leverage. You'll want to leave at least one piece in its initial pose so you can show it to admiring friends and say: "See, they all looked like this when I started."

Don't clean off the flash before modifying: it will give a bit of extra strength to the areas you are bending and can be removed later. A lucky bit of flash could give you the opportunity of making a dagger if you wish. Start off by filing or sanding the bases flat. This will allow you to stand them up easily during the process to come. When the bases are flat, you can start bending the figures. This is called reanimation.

Remember that although the metal casting will try to bend in a curve, a bone would not bend that way, so you'll have to take care. The arms are the most important part to bend. By putting arms in a different position, you can radically alter the visual impact of a skeleton. Some possible reanimations which affect only the area above the hip bones are illustrated. In order to assure a clean, straight bend, put a brace at the bend point. Almost anything that is small and strong, such as a small steel ruler, will do. You could also use your small pliers to do this—and have a much easier time of it.

Don't push too hard on the arms, especially if you begin to feel metal fatigue. When the metal begins to bend really easily it has become fatigued and will snap. Oops! Too much? Well, read on, and Ye Fantasysmith will tell you how to fix it right up.

Torsos and heads can be bent around to give a new position; just incline them as you wish, and swivel them a bit Watch out for that metal fatigue, though. It's deadly to undead miniatures.

If you're careful enough, you'll hardly ever need the repair tips that follow. But you still should know them. In one case, a casting from my set of figures simply did not have a left arm. This is the same circumstance that occurs when you snap off an arm. To save the casting, glue a cardboard shield to the stump that remains, and hopefully no one will be the wiser. Use a simple rectangular shield. This is not only easier to cut out, but matches the Roman short sword the skeletons carry.

If there hadn't been a stump big enough for attaching the shield, you'd need more tools to save the casting. Take a small twist drill and put a hole into the ribcage right about where the arm socket would have been. Then get a small piece of copper or other soft wire ready to glue into the hole. Shape the wire and flatten the "forearm" with a file before gluing the shield on. Shaping means that you will not have to put any pressure on the glue joint. The flattening means that you'll have more surface to attach the shield to and, because the wire is roughed up, the glue will adhere better. Now glue the shield onto the wire, let it dry, then glue the whole thing into the arm socket you drilled previously.

If the right arm (which holds the weapon) breaks off, you'll have to modify around the breakage. Right arms are not too hard a problem, and require much the same method as the left arm. You start off by gluing the forearm and weapon to the wire instead of a shield. This is a bit trickier and will require more skill; a method is illustrated on the instruction page. Human forearms have two bones so that the hand can swivel about 270 degrees. The hand and weapon are on the end of the forearm. This makes for a complicated shape, so it is always easier to save the broken piece and use it rather than trying to build the arm from scratch. If you get a casting without a right arm, you can always make that skeleton into a left-hander—it's easier than fabricating the arm.

Any skeleton with a trick back needs all the help it can get Start by gluing a support between torso and hip bone. The flat end of a toothpick will do nicely. Use epoxy cement to attach the toothpick to the torso. After that has dried, glue the entire thing to the hip bones. With this kind of support, it is best to have the skeleton facing directly forward so as to get the maximum area for the glue to hold. After "de back bone connected to de hip bone" again, you have the same problem that Richard Nixon had with his skeletons—coverup. Really now, you wouldn't your skeleton to develop an inferiority complex when all its buddies called it "toothpick back," would you? Get over this problem by improvising a ragged cape.

Take some very light cardboard or heavy paper, the thickness of an old Dragon cover, to make the cape. Cut out the paper in a rough cape shape with ragged edges. Weaken this a bit by rolling it on a pencil and make folds for the neck and shoulders where the cloth would naturally fall over the bones. Working the cape will make it fall into a drape shape—now keep it in shape by strengthening the entire cape with glue. Moisten the cape and skeleton's back thoroughly with your favorite quick-drying cement and hold it in place until it sets up. Presto! a skeleton with some shreds of dignity.

Now you're ready to paint. Here are a few hints. Bones normally bleach white, but would usually have darker parts. Use a light flesh color to indicate these parts by giving areas like the rib cage, forearm, and lower leg a base coat of flesh color or darker shade first. Then dry brush some white over the bones. The skull is all white, of course, but shading is necessary around the temples and jaw. Eye sockets, nose and mouth cavities are often painted black, but a dark brown will be more effective. An interesting effect is created by putting a tiny dot of red directly in the middle of the eye cavity. If this proves to be too difficult for you, though, forget it

Swords, of course, will be nicked, dull, and rusty. A quick shot with knife or file can nick the swords quite convincingly. If you do not have a dull silver or "gunmetal" color, put a black wash over your normal silver paint after it dries. This will do nicely. As a last detail, a small bit of red orange color on the blade with indicate rust Any capes you have added will have to look old as well as tattered, so mix grey with any color you choose, and give it a wash of lighter grey as a finisher. You can paint in the smallest tatters, holes, and frayed edges with black if you wish.

There you have it—your skeleton crew is ready to go out and spook adventurers in varied poses, dressed to the height of bony fashion! You may want to look at a good figure-drawing book to learn more about skeletons. If you do—BRAVO! Interests developed in fantasy modelling can lead to much more than better fantasy play. Whirling anatomically correct skeletons through your games is one example of positive spin-off—no bones about it!

The Fastest Guns

(From page 45)

the western movies. He played heavies on television and movies from the early Fifties all the way to his most successful role, one of the three gunfighters in Clint Eastwood's movie "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly." This launched him in a starring career in European westerns.

Eli Wallach has also achieved some notoriety as a villain, especially in "The Magnificent Seven" and "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly." He was a scrappy, trouble-making gunfighter.

Yul Brynner has made several westerns, and the ratings are a composite of these, most notably "The Magnificent Seven," "Catlow," and "Westworld."

Steve McQueen played Yul Brynner's friend in "The Magnificent Seven," where he was a superb rifle shot.

James Coburn is always as "cool as ice" in his best westerns. In "The Magnificent Seven" (on which the ratings are based) his favorite weapon was a stiletto throwing knife with which he had deadly accuracy and speed.

Charles Bronson has been excellent in many movies, including "The Magnificent Seven." His fearlessness and strength have won him the reputation of being a very tough hombre in a fight.

Robert Vaughn was also in "The Magnificent Seven." He portrayed a cowardly con man who overcame his cowardice at the end of the movie, where he died bravely. Before play begins roll percentile dice and a score of 75 or below indicates that the lower bravery score should be used.

Horst Buchholz played the last of the professional gunfighters of "The Magnificent Seven." He was greedy and careful about the odds in a fight, but was dependable and steadfast when in action.

Juan Mateos played Chico in "The Magnificent Seven." Brynner and McQueen were uncertain about taking this brash, untried youth along, but finally gave in because he would make their number seven— "for luck". He survived that movie and reappeared in "Return of the Seven."

WANTED!

Judges for convention tournaments

This convention season, TSR Periodicals will be sponsoring tournaments at four major conventions across the country:

MichiCon IX	**June 6-8**	**Rochester, MI**
Origins	**June 27-29**	**Chester, PA**
GenCon XIII	**August 21-24**	**Kenosha, WI**
PacifiCon	**August 29-September 1**	**San Mateo, CA**

TSR Periodicials will be sponsoring Tournaments of:

The Awful Green Things from Outer Space (TSR)
Ironclads (Yaquinto)
Giant Circus Maximus (Heritage)
Star Fire (Task Force)

If you are planning to attend one or more of these conventions and would like to help judge one of these tournaments for TSR Periodicals, contact: TOURNEY, c/o TSR Periodicals, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. List your name, address, phone number, the convention(s) you will be attending, and which event you'd be interested in judging. TSR Periodicals will arrange for free admission for all judges for the days they judge.

THE ELECTRIC EYE

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY AND TERMINOLOGY

Mark Herro

The first "Electric Eye" introduced the physical components (or hardware) and general operation of the home computer. This "Eye" concludes the introduction by discussing another important aspect of the home computer: the computer program, or software.

A computer program is a set of instructions that the computer follows. Instructions arranged in different ways make the computer respond in different ways. I'm going to go over the various kinds of computer programs, and where they can come from. While this "eye" will be devoted to an overview of the software scene, future installments will concentrate on reviews of specific programs that will interest the gamer.

Types of Software

Computer software comes in a wide variety of subject matter. Although there are no industry-wide, accepted topic groupings, for the sake of simplicity I'll divide the different types of programs into six general categories. I'll also discuss what's generally available within those categories:

Utilities. Utility programs are those that change or test the internal operation of the computer in some way. Programming languages, internal system testers, and other programs that help the computer "do its thing" are among those that populate this category. BASIC is by far the most popular programming language, but FORTRAN and PASCAL are enjoying increased popularity. I mention this because programs written in one programming language won't "run" on a computer using another language. There are even different "dialects" of the same language that are incompatible with one another!

Business. Home computers are also being used in small businesses for several applications. Programs are available to perform such "routine" jobs as inventory, payroll and accounting. In addition, some programs can do more uncommon jobs, like sales forecasting and word processing. Lately, programs for specific applications like real estate estimating, interior decorating assistance, and land surveying have become more numerous.

Business programs are among the most complex and the most expensive in the industry. Many times these programs require expanded computer equipment, such as disk drives and expensive computer printers, that greatly increase the cost of the total computer system.

Educational. Probably the smallest category. The majority of the programs under this heading are drills of one kind or another for young children. Many times these drills will be in the form of a game, to keep the student's interest. Although math games are the most popular, other topics are available, including history, geography, and the social sciences. As of this time, there is very little for the older student

Personal application. Personally, 1 consider this category as the most useful to the average home computer user (if there is such a thing as an "average" user). Here we have non-game programs designed to ease the burden of some common household jobs, or complement the enjoyment of some other hobby. Programs in this category include those for checkbook balancing, personal budget control, houseplant selection and care, physical exercise analysis, stock and option analysis, amateur radio, IQ tests, bartending, music composition, stamp collecting, and many, many more.

Simulations. I define simulations as programs that are computer versions of established board games, or programs that attempt to recreate real-life situations or events. It is the programs within this category that will probably be of most interest to readers of *The Dragon.* The first part of the definition includes programs like checkers, chess, backgammon, Mastermind, poker, bridge, Yahtzee, and more. I also include all the D&D-type games in this part of the definition.

Programs in the second part of the definition try to simulate some real event, although they may not do so down to the last detail. Some of the programs contained in this section include lunar landing module simulations; aircraft take-off, flight, and landing; aircraft traffic control; bacteria growth; economic and military simulations (war gamers would love some of the Civil War simulations that are available); and others.

Most of the programs I will be reviewing in future installments of "The Electric Eye" will be simulations of one kind or another.

Miscellaneous games. This last category is sort of a catch-all for those programs that don't fit into any other category. The variety of programs here is such that no generalities can be "tagged" to this category as with the others. Specific programs might include various versions of the Star Trek game (easily one of the most popular games for *any* kind of computer, large and small alike), Star Wars games, picture-drawing programs, trivia contests, and other programs too numerous to name.

Where to Get It

OK, now that I've discussed what kinds of programs are available for a home computer, the next logical topic should be where to find them. There are three general sources for home computer programs: software vendors, books and magazines, and custom programming.

Software vendors are those who sell their programs, usually ready to run (cassette or disk with programs on it), on the open marketplace. These vendors also come in three forms: the software "house," whose sole business is selling programs; the computer manufacturer, who may sell a limited amount of software for the computer it produces; and the software exchange, which will "swap" an originally produced program for one or more from the exchange.

Software houses offer a variety of programs for a variety of prices. Some of these companies specialize in one category of programs, while others offer a wider assortment Prices for programs vary in each category. Many business programs cost upwards of $25, some reaching $200; utilities generally cost either between free and $8, or between $20 and $100, depending on the function of the program; most personal, educational, and miscellaneous programs cost under $10; and simulations usually go for about $15.

Books and magazines offer the best "deal" on programs, as long as certain criteria aren't important A book of program listings may cost about $10 and contain between 50 and 100 programs. Similarly, a magazine with a subscription costing, say, $20 per year, may have 10 to 15 program listings printed in the magazine in an average year. It's easy to see how "cost effective" this approach can be when it is compared to buying a program from a software vender.

Of course, the last way of obtaining programs is "rolling your own." Obviously, creating a computer program requires knowledge of a programming language and the capabilities of the computer. Future "Electric Eyes" will deal with creating computer programs.

The Last Word

As with the first installment of "The Electric Eye," I've kept things general and a little simplistic—I suppose that's what an introduction should do. Now that I've laid a foundation of understanding, I hope to get on to things that will be more interesting to *The Dragon's* readers. If you'd like to know about a specific topic, or if you have a question about computers or electronic games, don't hesitate to write. Address correspondence to: "The Electric Eye," c/o *The Dragon,* PO Box 110, Lake Geneva, Wis., 53147.

Dragon's Bestiary

KROLLI

Created by Todd Lockwood

FREQUENCY: *Rare*
NO. APPEARING: *1-20*
ARMOR CLASS: *3*
MOVE: *10"/18"*
HIT DICE: *2-6 + 2/die*
% IN *LAIR:10%*
TREASURE TYPE: *A in lair, Q individual*
NO. ATTACKS: *3 (4)*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *Bite: 2-7, rear claw 2-9, hand 1-8 or by weapon (+4 damage w/weapon)*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *High dexterity, multiple attacks*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Acute senses: surprised only on a 1*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *25%*
INTELLIGENCE: *Average to very*
ALIGNMENT: *See below*
SIZE: *Average; (7-8' tall, 17-20' wingspan)*
PSIONIC ATTACK/DEFENSE MODES: *Nil*

Remote, less traveled parts of the world, away from humans, are inhabited by Krolli, a strong race of warm-blooded flying reptilians. They form solitary communities, or eyries, (3-60 in lair, 25% women and young, with 2-3 and ½ hit die each, respectively, and 1-8 7 + 2-hit-die chieftains) which are greatly self-supportive. Krolli live to about 125 years of age.

The Krolli, however, are seldom met at home. While they don't relish the company of humans (and their cousins), they appreciate the wealth to be had in dealing with men, and venture forward to ply their trades.

Krolli encountered among men are generally mercenaries or slavers, when the price is right, though they have been seen as bodyguards or even military officers. Some Neutral and Evil clans use slaves to work fields and mine gems for profit. In short, if profit is to be had among men, Krolli are not averse to investigating the possibilities—but they never intentionally build their eyries within the general sphere of human influence.

Krolli have a high natural dexterity (18/00), 18/89 strength, and extremely acute senses. Rigorous training from youth enhances these qualities, enabling them to attack with a vicious 3/1 (hand, hand, bite) ratio when standing, or a 4/1 (combo of hand, claw, bite) when airborne. They fight at 3/1 in the air when employing weapons, and there is a 70% chance that no weapon will be used. Krolli can melee with a standing opponent from the air. Note that with a shield, their armor class becomes 2.

Krolli cannot fly for long periods of time, but are easily capable of overtaking a fast horse and rider.

Krolli may be of almost any class, though 95% will be Fighters. Of the remaining 5%, 70% will be Clerics. They can wear no armor, though they often (50%) carry shields. Krolli are almost never Thieves or Assassins.

Krolli are aligned as follows: 60% Neutral, 20% Lawful, and 20% Chaotic (each with 20% chance good, 10% evil).

Krolli eggs have no value on the open market

Game review

StarshipTroopers

Produced by: Avalon Hill
Retail price: $12

STARSHIP TROOPERS has been around for a few years now, but aside from articles in Avalon Hill's house organ, *The General*, little or nothing has been written about this fine game. The game concerns itself with the novel of the same name, written by Robert Heinlein. It is the stoy of a war between the earth Federation, the humanoid "Skinnies," and the alien hive-dwelling Arachnids, with the focus being on the ground (or underground) combat of the three belligerents. The game succeeds in simulating some of the novel's aspects and fails in others, but more on that later.

The base of the game is the rulebook, written in Avalon Hill's Programmed Instruction (PI) method, where a simple groundwork of rules is presented, with a simple scenario presented along with it-ready to play in less than half an hour. Other scenarios are also provided, each scenario adding progressively harder rules, with a scenario addenda at the end so all the rules may be used with every scenario.

If the rulebook is the base for the game, then the first scenario, Raid on the Humanoids, is the skeleton on which the rulebook is laid. This scenario introduces only the most basic rules, with the stacking, close combat, and organization rules providing a basis for later rules. The scenario is fairly bland, as might be expected, but provides a basic "feel" for the game.

Scenario two is the meat of the game, with the Terrans' arch-rival, the Arachnids, being introduced in this scenario. The Arachnids live below the surface in complexes, with their location being plotted on an "Alien Control Pad" which shows a layout of the complex in relation to the mapboard. This is a substantial advantage for the Arachnid player, because he knows where all the Terrans are, while they have no idea where he is! The alien player also receives the added advantage of super-strong heavy weapon units that have the strongest attack and defense factors in the whole game-which they need to match the plethora of Special Weapons & Equipment that the Terrans receive in this scenario. The Terran Mobile Infantry also receives the advantage of an extended jump phase which, in effect, allows the Mobile Infantry to close in on the Arachnids, shoot, and then run away.

Later scenarios add Terran Combat Engineers, Arachnid Demolition Munitions, Terran Casualty pons, Terran Special Talents and a host of other new rules.

As the rules become progressively more complex, the scenarios become progressively more challenging and much longer. The rules do not, however, ever become too cumbersome to be effectively used, nor do the scenarios usually extend beyond the 4-6 hour mark. The usual playing time is 3-4 hours for two fairly experienced players.

The game tries to simulate the novel and provide an exciting, playable format also, so something has to suffer. In this case it's the simulation of the novel: The very effective Arachnid Heavy Weapon Units are not present in the novel, and some interesting concepts from the novel are eliminated in the game, such as the Neodog scouts. All in all, however, the game does provide a general "feel" for the novel with various quotes and pieces of paraphernalia spread through the rulebook and presented on the counters.

The game components are up to Avalon Hill's usual high standards. The counters are well done, with the illustrations of the units they represent well rendered on the high-gloss finish. The rulebook is well done and, with the exception of the lack of a table of contents, is well thought out, as are the playing aids. The only complaint I have with the components is with the board, the color selection of which is enough to make the stomach turn. Aside from this, the game is an excellent buy.—*Michael Crane*

Game review

Mech War 2

Produced by: SPI
Retail price: $35 (boxed)

MECH WAR 2 is more than a game on modem tactical ground warfare, it is a case study of the subject. In fact, it is such an exhaustive thesis that it had to be separated into two games: *Red Star/White Star*- The NATO theater, and *Suez to Golan*- the Yom Kippur War.

Mech War 2 would hold the title of the most complex simulation around except that Air War, its counterpart for "jet jocks," is harder to grasp conceptually.

The amount of detail is staggering, and expected. The standard rules, common to both games, address the fundamentals up to aircraft, night operations, electronic warfare and river crossings. The heart of the system is the issuing of orders to companies, either bound—which allows movement, or overwatch—which allows fire. These decisions are not lightly made, as the game system is unforgiving, due in great part to the morale rules.

To the players' great frustration, higher-echelon units such as companies and battalions will crumble and cease to function as fighting elements after taking relatively light losses because their morale has been shattered. The shorter the time period in which the casualties are suffered, the more pronounced the effect. Armchair strategists who are prone to criticize this or that military figure will find the morale rules a humbling lesson.

One of the game's basic premises will alienate many of the armor buffs who are naturally drawn to it. At *Mech War 2's* level (platoon), the designer felt, and it is difficult to argue to the contrary, that there is little difference between the main battle tanks and no difference between their guns. With the hobby's preoccupation with "chrome," it is a courageous design decision.

The special rules unique to *Suez to Golan* are minimal in number; not so with the other game. In *Red Star/White Star,* doctrine restrictions compel players to conform to their armies' actual operating tendencies, and are one of the few points in NATO's favor. One would suspect that this forcing of the players' hands stems from the game system not naturally leading players to parallel battlefield reality. But then again, the designer is dealing with a complex subject, and this might have been the only workable method.

The tactical nuclear weapons section is involved, yet clearly meant to be incorporated easily and painlessly. But it may disappoint the more bloodthirsty, as it shows the major influence of battlefield nukes is often through secondary effects like the conversion of terrain, optical dazzle, and an electromagnetic pulse.

Chemical warfare is the ultimate Christmas present for the Warsaw Pact; it has literally tons of lethal chemicals, while the West has practically none. This imbalance places NATO in a damned-if-you-do, damned-if-you-don't situation. Should NATO's infantry button up, they are likely to fade and wither away. If they don't, then the Soviets drop a load of chemical agents on them, causing heavy casualties. Either way, the NATO player has suffered a crippling blow in a most decidedly combined arms game.

The rules for both games handle weather nicely. It is an integral but not dominant component of the game. Many designers shun environmental rules as a nuisance, sweeping them under the rug. Players who favor this approach will not appreciate *Mech War 2*, for much of its value lies in "nuisance" rules. Any simulation's claim to being a realistic account of modem warfare is a mockery if these realistic, but irritating, aspects are not portrayed, at least in the optional rules.

This leads to the essential difference between Mark Herman's design for *Mech War 2* and the majority of tactical games. Prospective buyers should be aware that learning and playing this game is a commitment. A cursory reading or two of the eighty-eight pages of rules and charts does not suffice. Group discussion of the meaning and implications of the rules (sometimes badly written), homemade playing aids, and extensive pre-session preparation are all vital if the game is to be played with any degree of competence.

Players who will spend in the neighborhood of thirty dollars for a game are probably inclined or resigned to investing some effort. Just as they would expect physically a high-quality package. And in general they get it in *Mech War2.* It has four maps (though with awful artwork), an abundance of charts, and hordes of counters. (But with insuf-

ficient counter trays to sort them in any reasonable fashion.)

To say that a certain game is a must for a wargamer or even a certain type of wargamer, as though his manhood or standing among his peers is contingent upon ownership of the game, seems a bit ridiculous and sometimes self-serving. But for those with interest in the essentials of modem tactical ground warfare, and not infatuated with trivia, as many of the followers of *Cross of Iron* and *Tobruk* appear to be, this design is the best available, and quite good in its own right— *Roberto Camino*

Program review

Trek-80

Produced by: Judges Guild
Retail price: $14.95

The latest in a long line of Star Trek computer games has been introduced by the Judges Guild. ***TREK-80*** is a basic language, 16K program written by Bruce Berry. This program is the first (and hopefully not the last) noticeable production of a computer game by a science-fiction/fantasy wargaming company.

Mr. Barry has taken many ideas from the numerous Trek programs already on the market, and added a few new and different twists. The object of the game is to destroy all the Klingon vessels while losing no more than five (5) supply tugs in a specified period of time; the addition of supply tugs to the game makes it much more challenging for the player.

The mechanics and graphics are well adapted, but nothing new. The graphic layout is the usual galactic grid overlayed by an 8 x 8 quadrant grid. The Enterprise is depicted by an "E", and Klingons by a "K", and the tugs by the up arrow. Additional information displayed is: stardate, condition, quadrant, ship's energy, bases, torpedos, Klingons, and number of tugs lost.

Movement is by warp drive for galactic travel, and impulse drive for inner quadrant movement Time is listed by stardates and is a measure of speed of movement (an excellent method). The faster you move, the less time will pass; however, by moving faster, energy is consumed at an increased rate. Ship weapons are phasers and photon torpedos for the Enterprise and Klingon vessels, while the supply tugs can fire only phasers. The Enterprise also has the unique ability to use the ram as a weapon.

Evasive movement after firing is an excellent addition to the game. Also, a priority target system is used where the Enterprise assumes priority only after firing upon the Klingons; otherwise, the tugs are the main targets. The use of ramming is a new feature to Trek games, and has an important role in the play of the game.

Some of the problems with the game are: play proceeds rather slowly—a lot of time is wasted between weapon firing and movement; average play takes about two (2) hours, with play often going on for much longer, and a self-destruct sequence, which when used ends the game in a loss, does not find any use in play. However, these few shortcomings do not overshadow the interesting features of the game.

In summary, TREK-80 is a well written program and a good Star Trek game. The program's graphics are well laid out and easy to read, the mechanics are adequate, and the introductions of ramming and tugs are excellent features— *Michael Dodge*

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WATCH YER NOSE! IT MIGHT BE A GATOR!
GBLUB
??
WHAH!
BLASH!
GUG BLORK! CAT FISH! CAWF GAWF
FRANK!
WHAT IN BLUE MOOSES!
HUH!
IT'S A WOOLY TROLL!
FIRELILIES, FISH- YOU GOT ANY? DUDLY'S HOLED UP ACROSS THE BOG- BURNT REAL BAD!
SNGG!
HAROOG! YER KIDDING! NO WONDER YOU SWAM ALL THE WAY IN HERE!
HOOH! —WHEN ARE YOU GONNA GET A DOORBELL?
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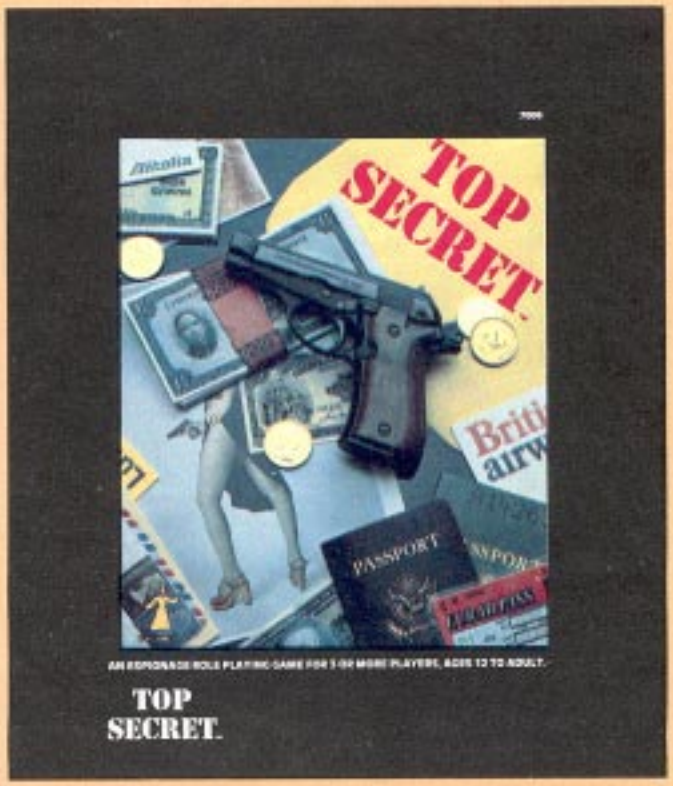

BACKGROUND BRIEFING: This new product, published by the company TSR Hobbies of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin USA, has recently come to the attention of our agency. Certain high-level sources have maintained that this item is of great interest, and it is imperative that the following information be verified and its veracity established.

Reliable reports reaching our intelligence bureau describe this product as one where participants willingly assume the identities of various secret agents and undercover operatives, engaging in covert activities, ostensibly as part of a game exercise for personal challenge, enjoyment, and diversion. These missions encompass the full range of espionage undertakings, including gathering intelligence, smuggling valuables and documents, infiltrating enemy agencies, and rescuing defectors. It is said that nothing more than paper, pencil and imagination are required to play. Our sources indicate that this process is highly enjoyable to all those participating, who vicariously experience the thrills of a secret agent's life through the process known in technical parlance as "role playing". Our agency analysts estimate that tens of thousands of copies of this product will be purchased, with proliferation worldwide in a matter of months. This phenomenon is remarkable indeed. . . .

The source of this item, the firm variously known as "TSR" or "TSR Hobbies, Inc." (a/k/a "The Game Wizards") is a rapidly growing publisher of quality games, including those in the field of role playing—an aspect of this hobby established during the last decade with a best-selling release entitled DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®. Not only are the games enhancing TSR's reputation as one of the top publishers in the field, but it appears that this new item will introduce many more participants to the experience of role playing.

YOUR MISSION: Find this product at your local game outlet and remove it after paying the proper remittance in local currency. Examine and play the game using its component parts: 64 page instruction and data booklet, 32 page introductory mission scenario and map folder, and randomizer instruments. Report your evaluation and share it with as many others as possible. Good luck—that is all. . . .

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