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Publishing a magazine requires the performance of a myriad of tasks besides editing and typesetting, not the least of which is complying with a government regulation requiring the publishing of a form called “Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation.” In order to keep our second-class mailing permit, once a year about this time we are required to show who owns this magazine, who’s in charge, and what our circulation is — not that any of these things are great secrets, and indeed we are quite proud of the information reproduced at the bottom of this column.

DRAGON™ magazine is now far and away the largest publication in the adventure-gaming field. Credit for this must go to Editor Kim Mohan, who performs the Herculean task of ensuring that there is a DRAGON magazine each month, and to you, the readers, who are buying more copies of each issue than ever before.

Even though Mr. Deadline is beating on my office door and this piece of writing must be done in a matter of minutes, I find myself staring out the window at the trees of southern Wisconsin as they go through their annual changing of the hues. Soon, the snow will return to Lake Geneva. Thanksgiving is on the way. Then Christmas...

Christmas? Back to reality, Jake. Soon we’ll all be inundated with radio, TV, and print-media ads urging us to buy this doll or that train set, or whatever. Well, we all expect that. But something different is happening this year.

Look in the Sears catalog, and you’ll see DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game sets for sale. Watch the TV, and you’ll see Mattel’s new D&D electronic computer labyrinth game advertised. Can you believe it? Sears, Mattel, television, and adventure-role-playing in the same breath!

This is big time, folks. Those guys don’t waste time and money on anything less than a mass market that they think they can make a buck on. Which means that finally, finally, adventure-role-playing is becoming accepted by the general public.

No more “What kind of a weird game is that?” questions. No more “Dungeons and what?” responses from store proprietors. I remember a similar phenomenon about 20 years ago (Boy, does that make me feel old), when a group of long-haired musicians from England were “a fad” and “weird.” And how, after about their third gold album, the general public started saying, “Maybe there is something to those Beatle characters....” It’s been a long time coming.

J. Michael Mays
The highlights of DRAGON #55, to a veteran reader, may well be the re-appearance of two authors whose work hasn’t been in these pages for many months. Those of you who have joined the ranks of our readership in the last 11 months will be seeing one of DRAGON’s specialties — a Niall of the Far Travels story by Gardner Fox — for the first time. Gar hasn’t had a story published since ’way back in #44 (our fault, not his), and the tale that resumes the Niall series is, fittingly enough, the story of Niall’s first adventure away from his homeland and how he came to possess his great sword. “The Coming of the Sword” begins with Thom Gillis’ full-page illustration on page 24.

Gary Gygax has been “gone” even longer than Gar Fox. It’s been more than a year since the creator of the AD&D™ game and former publisher of DRAGON has penned an edition of his column, “From the Sorcerer’s Scroll.” But there’s one inside (page 17), and we have the promise of many more words to come in the immediate future from the master of Dungeon Masters.

So much for the triumphant returns. Now let’s take it from the top: The cover painting you just got done looking at is an Erol Otus original — and original is certainly the word for that bizarre monster. Erol also provided the idea and the color art for the devil spider, which leads off this edition of Dragon’s Bestiary.

All in all, this is perhaps the most colorful issue of DRAGON magazine ever. You’ll find a small-size rendition of the cover of the FIEND FOLIO™ Tome on page 6, leading off a short section about the latest official AD&D volume. Contributing editor Ed Greenwood and reader Alan Zumwalt offer their views on what’s good and bad about the book, and FF editor Don Turnbull takes the better part of a page to respond to their criticisms.

The next step along the way is Lawrence Schick’s essay on revising the AD&D dinosaurs— unofficial recommendations on how to change the creatures’ statistics to conform with new scientific discoveries about the big lizards. (Or were they lizards?) That feature is accompanied by a couple of striking color plates from “The Dinosaurs,” a new release from Bantam Books, and a review of that same book prepared by professional literary critic Chris Henderson.

Katharine Kerr, a frequent contributor to our “Giants in the Earth” column, is responsible for this month’s “celebrity characters” — none other than Robin Hood and all the other men of Sherwood Forest, plus the nasty Sheriff of Nottingham.

The center eight pages of DRAGON #55 contain The Creature of Rhyil, Kevin Knuth’s adventure for the D&D® Basic Set rules which won second place in the Basic division of our International Dungeon Design Contest. You need ingenuity, but not necessarily a lot of playing experience, to overcome the obstacles this adventure presents, which makes it ideally suited for beginning players and player characters as well.

Also to be found inside are Pat Reinken’s courageous look at the ways and means to conduct a successful escape, when running away becomes the best course of action, and Jon Mattson’s multifaceted examination of the “skill” system in Traveller. Glenn Rahman, designer of the DIVINE RIGHT® game, describes famous monuments of the land in the latest installment of “Minarian Legends,” and John Prados’ series on game design in “Simulation Corner” continues with an examination of the concept of “state of the art.”

Our review section covers a lot of bases — taking in the whole Universe, not to mention the entire Third Reich, and a diverse collection of other new products in the gaming marketplace. Returning after a two-month absence (our fault, not Bill’s) is Bill Fawcett’s “Figuratively Speaking” feature.

And just ahead of our usual hodgepodge of humor at the back of the magazine, you’ll find “Da Letter.” If it isn’t the most interesting communication we’ve ever received at this office, it’s in the top two. — KM

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Dear Editor:

I’ve been a reader of DRAGON™ magazine for about a year now, and I really enjoy reading everything it has to offer. Issue #53, however, had an article that I hope doesn’t become a trend.

Phillip Meyers’ article on monks for me was a bit of a letdown. I don’t mind that he thought that the monk class was about the weakest there is (I disagree), but I did not like the article as a whole. I would have rather seen an article about the fine art of playing a monk character in addition to, or instead of, Mr. Meyers’ article.

I think the subject of monks could have been better handled by following in the footsteps of the kind of articles on paladins in DRAGON #51 or the articles on clerics found in issue #52. I enjoyed those articles much more because they told you the best way to play, not to change, the particular class of character to add to the enjoyment of playing that kind of character.

Of course, I think it would be somewhat better if there were two such articles in a given issue of DRAGON. One article to explain the proper way to play a character class, in broad outline, and another article to suggest changes or re-writing of a given class. I did find the question-and-answer articles concerning character classes useful, but on the whole I feel the outline articles were much better and more useful for helping a player to get out of the dark on how to best play his or her character.

I hope that future issues of DRAGON magazine will continue to publish the excellent articles that have hooked me as a reader.

Malcolm B. Maynard
Delta, B.C., Canada

‘Some good and...’

Dear Editor:

I’ve been subscribing to DRAGON magazine for more than a year now, and in that time several items relating to the gaming hobby have accumulated about which I’d like to comment. Like everything, there is some good and some bad.

First of all, in relation to the RPG hobby in general, I am sick and tired of all the bickering about which game is best. Frankly, I couldn’t care a kobold’s worth that Runequest is superior to AD&D™, Tunnels & Trolls, or any of the other FRP games; nor do I see much sense in arguments for the opposite case. The fact is that each game has certain advantages and disadvantages and that each appeals to a slightly different audience. AD&D™ appeals, I believe, more to those who enjoy symbiotic relations between specialized classes rather than a game wherein all characters have very similar abilities. The other games each offer something else of value, but all, I believe, can be equally enjoyed.

Turning to Advanced Dungeons and Dragons™ itself, it is my favorite among the FRP games for the reason I mentioned above: I like the idea of cooperating specialists. The books are thorough and generally well thought out. At the same time, the framework they set up is very flexible and allows for plenty of creativity on the part of players and Dungeon Masters. But, as always, there are problems. The books, which are thorough, are at the same time carriers of confusion and glaring self-contradiction. Some examples:

First, regarding magic armor, page 28 of the Dungeon Masters Guide states that magic armor allows movement at the next higher base rate and that weight is cut by 50%. On page 164, we read that, for game purposes, all magical armor should be considered as being virtually weightless — equal to normal clothing. This gives characters a base movement equal to an unarmored man.

Another area of confusion lies in the combat rules. The DMG on page 65, rule 2, states that attacks against spell-casters occur on the segment of the round indicated by the appropriate initiative die. But nowhere in all the AD&D volumes is there any mention of what the correct die is!!! Very frustrating for the DM.

Another problem is organization. Information which should all be in one place is scattered throughout the four volumes. If any player wishes to know all about the abilities and rules concerning his character race, he must dig through both the Players Handbook and the Monster Manual. This wouldn’t be such a galling problem if the index were accurate and complete, but it isn’t.

There are many other examples of organizational and clarity problems with the rule books, but, there is no need to go into them now, what is truly needed is a major re-writing of all the volumes (with a complete index!!!) in order to eliminate all ambiguities, mistakes, and contradictions. All information pertaining to a particular subject should be written in a single place, whether or not it appears elsewhere. (After all, the information may be applicable to several different cases.

The subject of the rule books leads to that of the various AD&D modules. Generally, I think that they are great. I often include them in my campaign, whether as a whole or canibalized ideas from the series modules are all excellent and exciting. I buy them as soon as they are issued. It’s like being hooked on a soap-opera. However, there are again problems with quality control. I have in mind specifically the “A” series, which deals with an assault against slavers. In A2, for example, on page 14, most of a sentence has been left out. While it is easy to interpolate what was meant, such an error should not have occurred. A close examination of the Tournament Char-

acters list on page 38 will reveal many errors and critical typos. There are errors on the maps as well.

In any event, please understand that I enjoy TSR products immensely. However, it pains me to see such shoddy quality control. My criticism is the kind given by a fan who wants to see something great made even better.

I also enjoy DRAGON magazine immensely. Almost all the articles are very enjoyable and usually quite helpful. Sage Advice, Leo-mund’s Tiny Hut, and the article on Kzinti (#50) immediately come to mind.

My final comments concern the people I’ve met in my few years of active gaming. Almost as a whole, the gamers I’ve met have been friendly, helpful, and basically a lot of fun to play with. This includes the hobby store owners I’ve met as well. Several people I’ve met through gaming have become good friends of mine. This is one area where I don’t have any complaints (oddly enough, I do about everything else), and I owe AD&D and TSR Hobbies, Inc., a debt that I can never fully repay.

In the final analysis, then, I’m very happy with this hobby and with the company I have chosen to patronize. I only hope that all gamers will remember that our hobby is first and foremost meant to be fun, and that all the games around are supposed to be enjoyed for themselves, not to be promoted like political candidates.

Anthony Ragan
Los Angeles, Calif.

The other side

Dear Dragon:

We have recently finished reading issue #50 of DRAGON and thought it superb, aside from the first letter in the Out on a Limb column written by Steve Meyer. Steve’s first ex-postulation was the fact that not all of the articles in a certain issue were useful. Perhaps somebody else found them useful . . . we did.

Mr. Meyer’s next assault was on the Temple of Poseidon (issue #46). He states that “it probably won’t be used in a campaign.” I, however, enjoyed it greatly and can wait patiently until characters advance to the levels best suited for it.

It seems quite upset that DRAGON does not publish wilderness and town adventures for his own personal benefit. Steve, if you would like such adventures, why don’t you create one or tell a local DM to create one? It shouldn’t prove too difficult for a good DM to produce a wilderness or town adventure that has a purpose and is still worthwhile for the players.

It appears that Mr. Meyer (as well as many other writers to Out on a Limb) should be reminded of those little words printed above “Dragon” on every cover of the magazine which read “Monthly adventure role-playing aid.” Such publications as DMG, PH, and, of course, DRAGON only make up a skeleton in the immensity of role-playing games. It is entirely up to the DM to knit together the flesh and muscle of the system.

We have purchased every issue of DRAGON that we could get our hands on, well aware of the fact that not everything was written with our personal tastes in mind. This would be impossible as well as absurd.
We have yet to use TOP SECRET information but continue to bear with it as someone else does find it useful; therefore, such articles continue to appear.

In closing, we would like to thank DRAGON, TSR, and all responsible for creating the intensity of AD&D. We remain hopeful that AD&D will continue to live throughout these people and, of course, all DMs and players. Keep up the good work.

Jarome G. Wilson
J. Cory Dyer
Chino, Calif.

Saving throws

Dear Editor:

I have been an avid D&D® player for almost two years now. I have always been interested in devising new ways of making the game even more exciting for both the DM and the players, and to this end I wish to contribute a saving-throw conversion table.

I offer this scenario: Garth and Adalard, a ranger and thief, have been tracking an assassin (who murdered the third member of their party) for several days. They ride into town and wearily enter the first tavern, where they immediately spot the killer on the other side of the room. After a short chase through corridors and alleys, the assassin whirls, throws, and hits Adalard with a dagger tipped with, say, a Type A or B poison. The DM calls for a saving throw—whereupon Adalard rolls with, say, a Type A or B poison. The DM calls 1-20 randomly listed in each column. Each column is assigned a heading number (1-4).

To use the table, the DM rolls d4 to determine which heading to use for a particular save. The player then rolls a die for his saving throw and gets, say, a “7.” The DM consults the 7th entry from the top in the appropriate column to find the number to be applied for that save in place of the “7.” Bonuses and/or penalties are applied only after the conversion on the table has been made.

The table should be explained to players before beginning an adventure or campaign with it, since it is for their benefit; namely, to increase and hold their anticipation when making a save, as well as keeping them in suspense in cases when the success or failure of a save would not be immediately apparent.

I plan to incorporate the table into my next campaign because I believe it allows characters the right to determine their own fate without the ability to know that fate too soon.

Wayne A. Langguth
Findlay, Ohio

How can Adalard know that the poison will have no further effects upon him? For that matter, if the poison were of a stronger variety, how can Adalard be assured of surviving the night, even if he feels fine right now?

The point here is that many times (not always) a player character is required to save in a situation where he/she should not immediately know whether or not the save was successful. The purpose of a saving-throw conversion table is to keep players off balance with regard to what constitutes “good” and “bad” saving rolls. It is constructed of four columns of 20 entries each, with the numbers 1-20 randomly listed in each column. Each column is assigned a heading number (1-4).

In the example given, the saving roll and its corresponding number to be added to it can be found as follows: the player rolls a 7, and in column 4 he finds the number 3. The saving roll is then 7 + 3 = 10.

If the saving roll is less than the number given in the table, the save is successful. If the saving roll is greater, the save is unsuccessful. If the save is successful, the poison’s effects are negated. If unsuccessful, the poison affects the saving character. No further effects occur to the saving character unless the poison is a stronger variety. (For the purposes of this conversion table, stronger varieties are those which allow the poison to affect the save character another time. This is based on a Type B poison.)

We have no further effects upon him, therefore the poison will have no further effects upon him. The poison will have no further effects upon him...

‘Enough!’

Dear Editor:

Enough is enough! Just recently, I have encountered player characters which could probably beat Odin two out of three falls and still have the energy to knock off a Chicken Delight truck. Mr. Luna’s letter in issue #52 of DRAGON was the final straw.

A lot of people seem to have a warped view of how to create a character. Some think you start off at 20th level with all the magic you can carry. Others have the strange notion that you get experience from taking damage. (A character in my world was nearly cut in half by a weapon hit and demanded he get experience for it. Why didn’t he just beat his head against a wall until he achieved godhood?) Contrary to Mr. Luna’s opinion, it doesn’t take any imagination to create a high-level, near-invincible character, any more than it makes a campaign more interesting.

Also, some people fail to realize the limits for character stats. I’ve seen a multitude of characters with statistics as high as 25 and no lower than 20. When was the last time those numbers ever came up on three 6-sided dice? If all this sounds like I am against high characters, you’re right. But I have no objection to a moderately high-level character, achieved after years of play and hardship. My point is to use common sense, and know when to retire a character and start anew. High-level, super-powerful characters ruin a game, and I hope the staff of DRAGON continues to “preach” against them.

Greg Fox
Scotia, New York

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Coming This Month: MARTIGAN BELT Adventure scenario for use with Space Opera.
Flat taste didn't go away

by Ed Greenwood

Its cover was beautiful; I bought it eagerly, and retired from the din of the GEN CON® XIV dealer area to a dimly lit booth, to devour a pizza and my brand-new FIEND FOLIO™ Tome.

Four hours later, I set the book aside, hoping my views would change upon later reflection. Perhaps it had been the pizza.

Come later reflection, and much discussion with friends and other gamers at the convention: no change. The FIEND FOLIO was a disappointment. Not a crushing disappointment — a new collection of official AD&D monsters is not exactly a cause for sorrow — but irritating nonetheless. Perhaps it should have been a D&D® book, not one for the AD&D™ game.

The beauty of the AD&D rule system is its careful attention to detail, "serious" (i.e., treating monsters as creatures in a fantasy world, not as constructs in a fantasy game) tone, and consistency.

The FIEND FOLIO Tome mars this beauty. In its pages this DM finds too much lack of detail, too many shifts in tone, and too many breaches of consistency. I do not know why the book has these failings—and I hasten to add that I do not know of Don Turnbull or British gaming beyond what one learns from a few contacts and magazines such as White Dwarf (which I've followed eagerly since its first issue) and Trollcrusher.

I suspect that most of the book's flaws have come from viewing the AD&D game as one in which monsters are sudden new challenges to a party rather than creatures who live out an existence before — and sometimes after — a party encounters them. But perhaps it would be better not to speculate. Here, then, is what I find wrong with the book.

First and foremost, contradictions of, or inattention to, existing (official) AD&D rules. Careful editing should have prevented these mistakes — such as the mention of raise dead fully in the description of the Pernicon, and “anti-paladin” in the listing for Githyanki.

Minor quibbles? Not if the careful “international tournament standard” consistency of the AD&D game is to be maintained. Gary Gygax speaks of this as one of the reasons for creating the game in the first place, and an official AD&D book such as the FF Tome should contribute to that sought-after consistency. In many places throughout the work, one is reminded more of the free-wheeling, decide-it-yourself D&D rules than the more specific and detailed descriptions of the AD&D game.

There are many incomplete or inadequate monster entries. Monsters such as the Al-mi'raj and the Hook Horror have strange appearances and little else; there is no depth to their listings. Certainly not enough information is given to ensure that one DM will present them in a manner similar to another DM's handling. Similarly, one needs to know more of the real nature of the Dune Stalker, the Dire Corby, the Eye of Fear and Flame, and the race of Dark Creepers.

Why are the languages of the Dark Creeper and the Babbler incomprehensible? Many weird creatures in the Monster Manual have languages usable by other creatures through study and magic (i.e., a Tongues spell); DMs should be told why these two are special.

And phrases like “mysteries so far unexplained” (in the Berbalang listing) are
Dwarf, no rationalizations are required. The origin of the Achaierai, for instance, would seem to be Acheron ("infernal regions") but the exact home plane would be nice for DMs to know. The Guardian Familiar's plane of origin is likewise a mystery. The identity of the Vision's "own plane" is unclear, as are its powers when on that unknown plane. Explanations should be given for the humanoid appearance of plant life such as the Cifal and the Needleman, or the possibility of having to invent justifications for the creatures' existence.

Other monsters seem to have no ecological niche, being merely "gamey" party opponents — such as the Adherer (originally the Gluey of White Dwarf #7) and the Enveloper. In the pages of White Dwarf, no rationalizations are required for the appearance of such things as the Russian Doll Monster, the Dadhi, and the Nilbog. When (as in the case of the Nilbog) these creatures are adapted and/or rewritten for inclusion in official AD&D rules, the results are sometimes clumsy or worse.

Some of the monster's names grate on the mind's ear; one cannot envision sweat-dripping adventurers fleeing a cavern with one saying, "Warily, now! That Protein Polymorph almost slew us, friends!" Try inserting "Caryad Column" or "Symbiotic Jelly" into that sentence, and the result is the same. One would expect adventurers, and not 20th-century North American scientists, to have named such beasts. (I suspect this is the root of my disaffection with the "Adherer.")

There are two other major problems with the book. First, a host of new undead (specifically described as such) or undead-like creatures see print. Many contributors to the expansion of the AD&D rules have felt that there is no more room for additions to the undead class save under the "Special" heading; there is little one can add that is not a simple variation on, or overlapping of the powers of, existing undead.

The Penanggalan, the Revenant, the Skeleton Warrior, and the Death Knight — although possessing some abilities of existing AD&D undead — are well-developed and therefore distinct. But other of the book's contributions appear to be no more than skeletons with special powers tacked on, such as the Huecuva, the Crypt Thing, and the Eye of Fear and Flame. (The latter creature probably isn't undead, but the entry doesn't say enough to determine this with certainty.) One must know more of the origin of all of these creatures and their powers. The Sheet Phantom, in particular, needs more information to link it with already-existing undead. Is it a wraith or an undead lurker above? The listing hints at both, and in the end gives no reason for the formation of this monster.

The origin of the creature needs be a part of every new undead write-up. An undead lacking an origin has the air of a one-shot "DM's special" variant concocted for an interesting party encounter ("Well, this mummy is green, and it drains levels . . . .heh-heh, surprise, surprise!"). The "statement of origin" is the anchor that lends an air of legitimacy to other new undead entries in the FF Tome such as the Coffer Corpse, the Apparition, and the Son of Kyuss.

In all, the FIEND FOLIO Tome adds several good low-level undead to AD&D play (although I had hoped to see the very playable Blink Skeleton also make the leap from White Dwarfs Fiend Factory to the Folio). All of these should see yeoman service in AD&D campaigns; the three skeleton variants mentioned above need more depth if this expected heavy use is not to put too many DMs in the position of having to invent justifications for the creatures' existence.

The second large problem found in the Folio has to do with races: too many of them, that is. Some new races such as the Firenewt, Flind, Forlarren, Norker, Quaggoth and Skulk may assume a comfortable place in the AD&D bestiary rolls. Others, such as the Crabman, Booka, and Bullywug, leave one desirous of more information as to their social life and activities, but are adequate. And then the problem is upon us. Too many races are incomplete — is the Frost Man human (as in "Men, Berserker et al from the Monster Manual)? Is the Quillan race humanoid? What are their interests and aims? Why do the Lava Children — "offspring of a union between spirits of earth and fire" — appear human, specifically resembling the famous visage of Alfred E. Neuman of MAD magazine fame?

Too many races must be fighting for elbow room in the caverns and deep places beneath the earth; in addition to the Jermlaine, Drow, Kuo-Toa and Svirfneblin (from TSR™ modules), found herein are the (deep breath) Gibberling, Grimlock, Hook Horror, Kenku, Killmoulis, Meazel, Meenlock, Mite, Snyad, and Xvart. All of these creatures have promise, but the Hook Horror and the Grimlock again seem incomplete.

The Xvart, a rewritten Svat from the Fiend Factory in White Dwarf #9, is redundant; the Factory original was a poor variant of Alan Garner's presentation (in the novel Weirdstone of Brisingamen) of the svart-alfar and lios-alfar of Scandinavian mythology. The svart-alfar are already in the AD&D rules; they were the model for Gygax's Drow. The Xvart, a 3-foot-tall beastie with no strikingly unique or colorful characteristics, is a prime example of needless overpopulation.

(Continued on 2nd page following)
I was about to enter my friendly neighborhood hobby shop on my weekly visit to see if any new AD&D modules or accessories were in, when out of the corner of my eye I saw something in the store window. I did a double-take, then my eyes bulged out, and alarms went off in my head. At last it was here—the FIEND FOLIO had arrived!!! I had been waiting for it for a year, since I saw it mentioned in the DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ Cyclopedia. I grabbed a copy off the shelf and sprinted to the counter.

After I left the store, I sat down on the curb and started looking. It was a good-looking cover: a blue background with a hideous brown and yellow humanoid in the foreground (which I later found out was a githyanki). I would have liked to see more monsters on the cover (like the Monster Manual has), but the cover is not the most important part; the inside is. I quickly flipped through the pages and looked at the pictures—and boy, what pictures! Drawings of all sorts of new weird monsters—from tall, stilted birds that are mostly head, to lady vampires with no body. More illustrations than the Monster Manual. “So far, so good,” I thought. “All outward appearances look fine.” But are the words as good as the pictures? I looked further, and found most of the monster descriptions to be interesting and original, but...

But a few of them are just Monster Manual creatures that are changed or crossbred with other monsters. The Vodyanoi is a prime example. The Vodyanoi is an aquatic umber hulk that, instead of the ability to confuse, has the ability to summon electric eels. This monster is a cheap ripoff of the original AD&D monster, and shouldn’t have been allowed in the book. Others I don’t like for similar reasons are the Kamadan, the Lamia Noble, the Lizard King (I would accept this monster as a leader of lizard men, but not as a separate race), the Ogrillon, and all the new trolls. This book was going to have new monsters, I thought, not mutations of the old.

One pleasing thing to see, at last, was the establishment of some official neutral dragons. The Oriental dragons in the book are fairly interesting dragons (although I was sort of disappointed that some of them didn’t have a breath weapon), but I did find three problems in their presentation that makes these dragon descriptions inferior to the ones in the Monster Manual.

First, the names of the dragons are given in the wrong order. If you look in the Monster Manual under the entry indexed as “Dragon: White” you would see at the top of the description, “White Dragon (Draco Rigidus Frigidus).” The Latin name of the dragon is put in parentheses after the English name. But in the FIEND FOLIO under “Dragon, Oriental” a subtitle will read, “Li Lung (Earth Dragon),” with the Chinese name first and the English name in parentheses. Now, who is going to call this dragon “Li Lung” when “Earth Dragon” is much easier to remember? The names should have been given in reverse form (Oriental name last) for the sake of convenience, if nothing more.

Second, these dragons are distinctly and undeniably Oriental in nature, and I don’t think Oriental monsters fit very well into the European medieval-era environment that most AD&D campaigns use. I wish the game’s official neutral dragons had been constructed more similarly to the Monster Manual dragons.

The most important problem of all is the lack of a leader for the Oriental dragons, corresponding to Tiamat and Bahamut. A rulership structure of some kind for each type of intelligent monster helps lend credibility to the existence of that type of creature. I discovered that many of my favorite monsters from past issues of DRAGON magazine and AD&D modules were not included. The only module monsters included in the Fiend Folio were from G3 and the D series. I realized the monsters from the more recent modules and issues of DRAGON could not be included in the FIEND FOLIO, but the S series monsters and some of the earlier Dragon’s Bestiary monsters could have been included.

One of my favorite monsters in the book is the Slaadi. At last, creatures that live on the chaotic neutral planes! The race has leaders (unlike the Oriental dragons) and understandable names (except for the leaders). Reading about the different types of Slaadi brought a question to mind: Why no monsters for the lawful neutral planes or the lawful, neutral, or chaotic good planes? I would have liked to have all the planes around the astral plane “filled in” by having resident creatures among the listings in the second book of official AD&D monsters.

I also liked the Elemental Princes of Evil—but where are the Elemental Princes of Good? Surely there must be some, or else the Elemental Princes of Evil would just be called Elemental Princes.

In my first look at the end of the book, I was pleased to see a new random monster encounter table containing all the monsters from both books. But there isn’t an ocean encounter table, although there were plenty of new sea monsters in the FIEND FOLIO Tome. This was probably an oversight, and I hope such a table will soon be offered. Tables for seashore encounters and underground-lake encounters would also be good.

This commentary has been predominately negative; maybe that’s because it’s easier to put negative comments into specific words than it is to do the same with positive comments. As a whole, it is a good book, with a lot of interesting creatures that are destined to become someone’s favorite monster. How to sum it up? I would say the FIEND FOLIO Tome is like a basket of peaches: Most of it is pretty good stuff, but part of it is the pits.
(Continued from page 7)

Including the other new races of small beings, the list (just of those who dwell in subterranean or related surroundings) is now comprised of goblins, kobolds, dwarves, halflings, gnomes, svirfneblin, meazels, mites, snyad, jermlaine, and kill moulis. The race of xvart need not have been added to the list.

Obviously, a DM need not use all of the above races in a campaign, but all now are now considered to officially exist in the AD&D multiverse. To their ranks the Folio adds yet another creature type not listed above: the mysterious Dark Creeper, about which too little is revealed to be certain of its nature. It is of dwarf height and wears clothing over its lower face in such a fashion as to cause one GEN CON attendee to disgustedly label it a "bedouin dwarf," and another to add, "No, it's a dwarf ninja."

Those descriptions are personal reactions, yes, but they are rooted in a real problem; either or both of them could be correct, given the vagueness of the FF description. Likewise, too many of the book's other entries offer too little information to play a creature without running into questions.

The Monster Manual has many truncated entries, but most of these cause no problems, since the creatures (for example, the dinosaurs, "Herd Animal," and "Cattle, Wild") need nothing more. The FF Tome has a few entries which can be taken care of with brief descriptions; the Rothe is one. But most of the book's creatures require longer, more carefully worded entries.

The only entries in the Monster Manual I have often heard criticized for incompleteness or lack of clarity are the beholder — Does the central eye produce the anti-magic ray? It would seem so, but there is room for argument — the rakshasa, the lich, and the vampire. (Speculation concerning the rakshasa usually centers on its place in the ranks of the demons vis-a-vis the demon princes and their orders, conjurations and the like.) Many DMs have filled in the details of these complicated monsters as they saw fit, or perhaps have followed the guidance of magazine writers. Similar salvage work is needed for many entries in the new book — more than there should need to be, given the advancement of the state of published AD&D rules between the release of the Monster Manual and the FIEND FOLIO Tome.

Other criticisms of the Folio fall into the category of personal disagreements over style. Every DM has these disagreements over style. Every DM has these disagreements with many parts of the AD&D rules, but I have more with the FIEND FOLIO Tome than with any other of the official volumes. Here are a few:

If new dragons, why oriental dragons and not also the carefully composed neutral dragons published in DRAGON™ #37?

Why is a poltergeist lawful evil, when its behavior, both as described in the FF and as allegedly exhibited in the real world, suggests a chaotic evil, or at least chaotic, alignment?

Why are distinctly separate listings necessary for creatures which are essentially sub-races or variants of, or additions to, existing Monster Manual entries? Examples of these are the Lamia Noble, the Lizard King, and the Babbler. These could be sub-classified in the same manner as the Drow, the new Giant sub-races, and the new Demon and Devil are, so that the MM and FF are closely linked.

The Aleax entry is uneasily vague; it is of necessity not firmly tied to any deities, but I feel it should contain more directives for the DM as to what sorts of deities would and would not employ such a creature.

The Hell Hound from the Monster Manual is a familiar DM's friend, but adding the Death Dog and the Devil Dog to the canine community is perhaps too much of a good thing.

When some names such as as "Screaming Devilkin" threaten to outstrip the monsters they describe, why must there

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also be such unimaginative names as “Gorilla Bear” or odd-sounding names such as “Ogrillon” (for an orc/ogre crossbreed)? But enough of style grievances; others will find reason for praise in the same things I complain about.

The graphics and overall layout of the FIEND FOLIO Tome are both beautiful and clear, making for ease of finding and reading desired information. Some illustrations are particularly effective — the Revenant scene on page 76 comes immediately to mind.

But many illustrations are irritating, in that they do not closely resemble depictions of the monsters already published in the official AD&D modules. The Medusaemon is one such example; so is the related Nyctademon. Some illustrations are not as visually striking or as complete as those published earlier in the Fiend Factory (such as the Sheet Phantom, Tawen, and Sandman) and the modules (the Kuo-Toa, Jermlaine, and Kelpie). Why the change, if it was not markedly for the better? Other illustrations are noticeably crude, particularly those of the Mephits and the Enveloper (which at first sight earned the nickname “Pilsbury Doughboy” among gamers at GEN CON XIV). But all in all, the artwork and design of the book are excellent.

Also on the positive side, there are some very good monsters here. It is nice to see the Volt and the Necrophidius made official; new arrivals such as the Slaad, the Elemental Prices of Evil and the Penanggalan are also worthy additions to any campaign. Monsters from the modules such as the Drow and Kuo-Toa are expected attractions, but good to see nonetheless.

The FIEND FOLIO Tome has much promise; a revised edition which disposes of most of the omissions and problems mentioned above would win my warm welcome. Many thousands of people consider the AD&D game to be the best thing going; a revised and polished edition of the FF Tome would help reinforce that opinion.

Apologies — and arguments

by Don Turnbull
Managing Director of TSR UK, Ltd.
and
Editor of the FIEND FOLIO™ Tome

I will be more careful in future when passing Kim Mohan’s door on my visits to Lake Geneva. He pounces! On this occasion, politely but firmly, he asked me to reply to the comments by Alan and Ed on the FIEND FOLIO™ Tome and not to leave the country until the job was done.

An Alex, cunningly disguised as Kim Mohan, has struck; I have somehow transgressed the unwritten law; retribution and penance are sought. (Who, me? Behaviour outside alignment?)

Very well — I’ll try.

Perspectives change, don’t they? There never was a time when I regarded the Tome as perfect; anyone thus making himself a hostage to fortune deserves what he gets. But my view of “my” work has changed perceptibly over the years, and the years themselves are responsible for that change.

The fact is that, for various contractual reasons with which I won’t bore you, the book was in a sort of legal limbo — un publishes. (Editor’s note: DRAGON #52 was on sale when the FIEND FOLIO™ Tome was released at the GEN CON® XIV Convention.) For instance, a host of new modules made their debut.

These are the reasons why monsters from more recent modules were not included and why monsters from DRAGON™ magazine did not appear. It is also, at least in part, the reason for my Raise Dead Fully gaffe; for this I accept full responsibility and, red-faced, back off to the position of “I’m sure you know what I mean.” (But not for “anti-paladin” — the full reference includes words which clearly deny any implications of official status.)

I suspect this information alone answers a number of questions in readers’ minds. There has been some temporal distortion — enough to raise at least a flicker of curiosity but not enough (I sincerely hope) to detract.

Ed criticizes some entries on the grounds of incompleteness and inadequacy. This begs the questions — what is “complete”? What is “adequate”? I suspect these are, in the final analysis, matters of personal taste. For every person criticizing absence of information on these grounds, someone else will say that certain information actually presented is superfluous, and accusing me of padding. I have no god-like wisdom on this score (nor, I suspect, has anyone else) — only instinct about what “feels” right within certain obvious boundaries. If my instinct differs from others, perhaps it’s because we’re only human.

Mind you, I don’t accept what Ed says about certain languages being incomprehensible. If one admits to the existence of the Tongues spell, then surely it requires no further stretching of one’s imagination to postulate a language which somehow has defied analysis. In like view, it would be a dull world (real or fantasy) if everything was explained and comprehensible.

A personal point of view, certainly, but one which I believe is shared by many. Once every problem is solved, every question has an answer, and every mystery has been explained, the imagination can turn up its toes and call an end to the matter, its work accomplished. A sad and boring death.

Names. Try inserting into Ed’s quotation the Baluchitherium, Titanotheres, or (this is a real beauty) the Ixixchitl. Or even the duck-billed platypus and many others from our real world. No, I did not name monsters with particular regard for the smooth flowing of the vocal chords. I imagine the word “man” might not flow too well off a Martian’s tongue (or whatever organ is appropriate).

The Eye of Fear and Flame is not undead. If it were, it would be on the undead table (page 115). Nor is the Crypt Thing an undead monster. In neither case does the text leave any doubt — and even if it did, the undead table would resolve the matter.

No, the Frost Men are not human. The text makes it quite clear by saying they are “...in most respects very like normal humans...” and then going on to say in what respects they differ. The Qullan isn’t human, either — it says in the text that they are humanoids. Ed, you are either not reading thoroughly or just trying to put words into my pen in order to criticize them. Tut — this is not worthy of you.

If Ed reads White Dwarf as carefully as seems to be the case, he knows the Xvart is far from redundant to some, since the monster features quite prominently in a “mini-module” in the magazine’s pages, and furthermore, a mini-module which I am assured is very popular. Are the dinosaurs (5 pages) in the Monster Manual redundant? I doubt if one answer suits all.

As for the Elemental Prices of Good (or of Neutrality, or of any of the nine ways), the leaders of the oriental dragons (if they have any; they could simply be real democrats), the inhabitants of the other planes Alan would like to populate and literally hundreds of other new and not-so-new monsters which would have been included... well, perhaps next time.

There are three types of complaints. In one category I retire red-faced; in another I fear the critic is mistaken. But in the third — and largest — category I think we have conflicts or less major differences in personal opinion (and for this reason I haven’t commented on every example cited). If my personal opinions don’t align with yours, I’m sorry. What more can I say?
A herd of brontosaurus stomps across the plains of Utah in search of food

DINOSAURS

NEW THEORIES FOR OLD MONSTERS

(Editors note: This article is a discussion of dinosaurs as depicted for use in the AD&D™ game, with regard to recent additions to the body of scientific knowledge about the creatures. It is not an official alteration to the dinosaur listings in the AD&D Monster Manual.)

by Lawrence Schick

The sages of paleontology have discovered a great deal of information about dinosaurs and their habits in the last 15 years. The new knowledge is not reflected in the AD&D Monster Manual. Many of these new ideas can have a bearing on the play of dinosaurs in the game.

For example, debate is currently underway among scientists over whether dinosaurs are ectothermic (cold-blooded) like reptiles, endothermic (warm-blooded) like mammals, some of each, or something in between. Regardless of how this question is eventually resolved, it seems certain that dinosaurs are not the slow-moving, slow-reacting sluggards they were once commonly thought to be. Regard their intelligence as at the level of alligators or snakes.

There are hundreds of known distinct species of dinosaurs. Obviously, these are more than can be covered in a magazine article. Fortunately, however, most dinosaurs belong to a family of similar creatures, and statistics for one member of the family can usually be applied to other members with little alteration. This is why the dinosaurs covered in this article have been grouped into families rather than listed alphabetically. In each section, general traits are covered first, followed by statistics for the best-known or most interesting group members.

Use of dinosaurs in AD&D games

Dinosaurs will generally be found in areas completely separated from the ecologies of the human-inhabited world. This is just as well, for a full-grown specimen of the larger dinosaur species makes a formidable adversary, one that few humans can cope with. The big dinosaurs, particularly the meat-eaters, are suitable opponents only for middle- or high-level parties. An adult allosaurus can wipe out a low-level party without even working up a sweat.

This doesn't mean that low-level characters should never encounter dinosaurs; but DMs should use good judgement when picking an adversary. Most dinosaur families have creatures of every size from 3 feet tall on up. The individual species detailed here are generally among the largest of their types. Similar creatures in smaller versions are not uncommon. The DM can use these unnamed cousins if their larger relatives would be too tough. For example, if an encounter table indicates a party of characters averaging 4th level meets an allosaurus, the DM can decide the party instead encounters a much smaller megalosaurus, perhaps with only 1/3 the hit dice and 1/3 the damage potential of an allosaurus. (This might be a small ceratops.) Optionally, the DM could just make it an immature allosaurus, similarly scaled-down. After all, big dinosaurs aren't born colossal — they have to start out "merely" large.

Common statistics

Certain standard AD&D monster statistics are the same for all dinosaurs. These are given here to avoid repetition in the listings that follow.

(Continued on 2nd page following)
Every kid loves dinosaurs; no one knows why. Whenever the family goes to the museum, the spot everyone stands in the longest is the one in front of the biggest skeleton in the place.

No matter what their age, everybody loves the gigantic lizards of our past. Their movies make money; the bad handling of their characteristics sells novels and comics; dinosaurs helped to make the reptile species more loved, hated, and misunderstood than any other.

For those people who openly admit to loving the dinosaur, there is a new book, creatively entitled “The Dinosaurs.” It is the work of many hands; it has been packaged and edited by Byron Preiss, narrated by William Service, illustrated by William Stout; and introduced and kept scientifically accurate by Dr. Peter Dodson. Together these men have crafted a truly remarkable look at one of mankind’s favorite subjects. And, although in any joint venture everyone should share equal credit, there is no doubt that what makes this newest dinosaur book distinctive and very desirable is the fantastic art of William Stout.

Given 70 full-color pages to play with (and dozens of black and white ones), Stout shows the everyday life of the dinosaur — herd life, play, birth, duels, hunts, childhood, bathroom habits, etc.; their reactions to danger; their movement through the elements, across the land, over the seas, through the air; their bodies, eyes, plates, claws, teeth, bones, feathers; their neighbors: the climates they lived in; and much, much more.

The narration and scientific commentary flow nicely with Stout’s ever-present art. What is also nice is the range of the illustrations. Stout travels the gamut from basic comic-book style sketches to masterful finished pieces, each one perfect for the area it is in.

Is the book perfect? No. It is not a deep, ponderous tome which goes into detail on each phase of life for every dinosaur that lived. Rather, it is an overview, one which links all of the great sau- rians through their common traits, and then goes into their differences. It is a book to be had more for its beauty than its brawn.

This is not to downplay the work of Bill Service and Dr. Dodson. Their information is (as far as this reviewer knows) correct and up to the minute. Many of the theories put forth have only come to light in recent years. But the text portion of the book is fairly brief: Of the slightly more than 150 pages, many are full-page illustrations, and on the average at least half of each page is art.

At best, from a literary standpoint, “The Dinosaurs” is an excellent introduction to most of what is known about dinosaurs today. From an artistic standpoint, however, it is grand, maybe the ultimate dinosaur art book. It does, as the back cover copy proclaims, show dinosaurs as never seen before.

As Ray Bradbury says in his introduction to the book:

“...the fact is, we all love dinosaurs! There isn’t a man, woman or child in the world, who if I built it, wouldn’t rush to climb in a Time Machine to jump back and be devoured by a Tyrannosaurus Rex or stomped on by a friendly local Brontosaurus....”

Science will have to make a great step forward before we will be able to see dinosaurs in the flesh. Fortunately, we have Bill Stout’s masterful interpretations to tide us over until that day arrives.
% IN LAIR: Nil
TREASURE TYPE: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard
ALIGNMENT: Neutral
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil
Attack/Defense Modes: Nil

CARNOSAURS

The listing will start with the carnosaur (meat-eating dinosaurs), since many players and DMs find them the most interesting. All dinosaurs belong to one of two groups: the saurischians (lizard-hipped) or the ornithischians (bird-hipped). All carnosaur are saurischians, or sauropods. In general, carnosaur walk on two legs, with the body held forward horizontally (not up at a 45-degree angle). The tail is held out behind as a counterweight; it does not drag on the ground unless the creature is at rest or moving very slowly. Occasionally in its search for prey, a carnosaur will stop and rear up to its full height to get a better view. Carnosaurs rely on sight to find their victims.

A carnosaur is always hungry, but like most modern predators it will always take the easiest food it can catch: the young, the weak, the small, and the slow. Like a lion, a carnosaur usually won’t pursue a fleeing target for more than a few hundred yards. A carnosaur faced with fighting dangerous prey will almost always give it up if easier prey is offered.

Allosaurus
FREQUENCY: Uncommon
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: 5
MOVE: 15'
HIT DICE: 12
NO. OF ATTACKS: 3
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6/1-6/3-24
SIZE: L (30' long)

Though it weighs several tons, allosaurus is easily one of the quickest and most agile of the large carnosaur. Its forelimbs are strong compared to those of the tyrannosaurs, and are useful for helping to hold and tear its prey. However, allosaurus’ long teeth are its primary armament. When on the move, an allosaur’s tooth-filled head is held about 10 feet above the ground.

Allosaurus is one of a group of species called megalosaurus, a family that includes carnosaur like megalosaurus (naturally) and ceratosaurus. These creatures are all similar to allosaurus, though slightly smaller. (Megalosaurus is about 10 HD, ceratosaurus about 8.)

Deinonychus
FREQUENCY: Uncommon
NO. APPEARING: 2-12
ARMOR CLASS: 6
MOVE: 21'
HIT DICE: 3
NO. OF ATTACKS: 5
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-4/1-4/1-6/1-6/1-6
SIZE: M (12’ long, 175 lbs.)

The sages have recently discovered a remarkable group of carnosaur called the dromaeosaurs. These are all smaller carnosaur, in the range of 6 to 15 feet long, but with some outstanding features: very keen eyesight (binocular vision in some cases), strong grasping hands with long clawed “fingers,” and most importantly brains far larger than those found in other dinosaurs. As intelligent as large birds, they must be many times more cunning than their average prey. The best known of the dromaeosaurs is deinonychus.

For its size, deinonychus is one of nature’s most savage killing machines. First, it has long, strong arms with clawed hands suitable for grasping or slashing (inflicting 1-4 points of damage each). Next, it has a head full of teeth for ripping its prey (for 1-6 points damage). Finally, each of the powerful legs ends in a foot equipped with a huge upward-curving slashing claw, like a curved disemboweling knife. Deinonychus slashes upward with these in powerful kicks, one after the other, meanwhile balancing on its tail and its other leg. Worst of all, this highly coordinated killer hunts in packs. Typically, several pack members will keep their prey busy from the front while others leap in at its back. Deinonychus reaches 4-5 feet off the ground running, but rears to 6-7 feet in height attacking.

Teratopaurus
FREQUENCY: Uncommon
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: 5
MOVE: 18'
HIT DICE: 6
NO. OF ATTACKS: 3
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6/1-6/2-16
SIZE: L (20’ long)

A quick ancestral carnosaur, teratopaurus has good stout forelimbs in addition to the usual battery of big nasty teeth. A teratopaurus weighs 1,000-1,500 pounds and is 7 feet tall when moving.

Therezinosaurus
FREQUENCY: Uncommon
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: 5
MOVE: 15'
HIT DICE: 15
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2-12
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-12/2-12/3-18
SIZE: L (40’ long)

This murderous large carnosaur took rather a different route from the usual carnosaur reliance on large teeth. “The slasher” relies at least as much on its claws as on its fangs.

Most large carnosaur have small fore-legs, but therezinosaurus’ “arms” are an incredible eight feet long, terminating in two-foot-long claws curved like scimitars. The creature stands 12 feet tall when moving.

Tyrannosaurus Rex
FREQUENCY: Uncommon
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: 5
MOVE: 15’
HIT DICE: 18
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 5-50
SIZE: L (50’ long)

It hardly needs to be said: Tyrannosaurus rex is the largest, most formidable natural carnivore ever to walk the face of the earth. In tyrannosaurus rex, the huge head and teeth typical of the carnosaur are taken to their furthest extreme. Its pathetic forelimbs are useless for combat. Despite its bulk (up to 8 tons), its powerful legs can bear it quite swiftly for short distances. Its head is carried about 14 feet from the ground when moving. Tyrannosaurus rex is the largest member of the family of tyrannosaurs, a group that includes tarbosaurus (15 HD) and gorgosaurus (12 HD).

SAUROPODS

This group includes the huge herbivorous (plant-eating) dinosaurs, which are all saurischians like the carnosaur. Though their ancestors were all bipedal, the great size the sauropods attained forced them to return to standing on four legs. There are many types of sauropods, but most of them are similar to the well-known types described below.
Sauropods are herding beasts, constantly searching food. Previously placed near lakes and streams, recent analyses show they are land dwellers. Sauropods live an elephant-like existence in the scrublands and forest (kept open by their passage), browsing on trees and thinning out vegetation. Their heads are set on long necks, and they can munch on the tops of very tall trees.

Sauropods’ tails are held out behind them to counterbalance their necks. They rely on their huge size to keep safe from most carnosaurs. They defend themselves clumsily by rearing up and kicking with their forefeet, but are poor fighters and attack at a level equal to one-quarter of their number of hit dice. (A 40HD sauropod, for example, attacks as a 10HD monster.) If a herd is stampeded by a big carnosaur (the only thing these creatures fear), they will probably crush everything in their path.

**Apatosaurus (Brontosaurus)**

- **Frequency:** Common
- **No. Appearing:** 1-12
- **Armor Class:** 5
- **Move:** 9'
- **Hit Dice:** 21-40 (d20x20)
- **No. of Attacks:** 1
- **Damage/Attack:** 2-20
- **Size:** L (up to 70' long)

Apatosaurus (also known as brontosaurus) is among the most famous dinosaurs. Weighing up to 40 tons, it fears no carnosaurs less than 20' long. Allosaurus is its arch enemy. There are many other members of the brontosaur family, such as camarasaurus (about 25HD).

**Brachiosaurus**

- **Frequency:** Uncommon
- **No. Appearing:** 1-8
- **Armor Class:** 5
- **Move:** 9'
- **Hit Dice:** 31-50 (d20 + 30)
- **Damage/Attack:** 3-30
- **Size:** L (up to 60' long)

Brachiosaurs are the heaviest and tallest sauropods. Their forelegs are much longer than their back legs, giving them a greater reach and a more powerful kick than other sauropods. Recently, paleontologists have found evidence of members of the brachiosaur family even more gigantic than brachiosaurus. These creatures have been tentatively dubbed “supersaurus” (up to 60HD, move 6’) and “ultrasaurus” (up to 70HD).

**Diplodocus**

- **Frequency:** Common
- **No. Appearing:** 1-12
- **Armor Class:** 5
- **Move:** 9'
- **Hit Dice:** 21-30 (d10 + 20)
- **No. of Attacks:** 1
- **Damage/Attack:** 2-16
- **Size:** L (up to 90' long)

Diplodocus is among the most attenu-
ated of the sauropods, with a long thin neck and a long tapering tail. Otherwise it differs little from the brontosaurs.

**Plateosaurus**

**FREQUENCY:** *Uncommon*
**NO. APPEARING:** 2-16
**ARMOR CLASS:** 5
**MOVE:** 12”
**HIT DICE:** 5
**NO. OF ATTACKS:** Nil
**DAMAGE/ATTACK:** Nil
**SIZE:** L (20’ long)

This early sauropod can move on two or four legs, but it goes on two legs when in a hurry. Members of the herd take turns watching for predators while the others eat. Fleeing is their only defense.

**HADROSAURS**

These prolific ornithopods are found nearly everywhere. They collect in herds, relying on their senses of sight, hearing and smell to warn them of approaching carnivours. They are the main diet of killers like the tyrannosaurs, and will run in panic at their enemies’ approach. Though most can go travel on four legs when convenient, they run on two legs.

**Anatosaurus (Trachodon)**

**FREQUENCY:** *Common*
**NO. APPEARING:** 2-16
**ARMOR CLASS:** 5
**MOVE:** 15”
**HIT DICE:** 8
**NO. OF ATTACKS:** Nil
**DAMAGE/ATTACK:** Nil
**SIZE:** L (30-40’ long)

Anatosaurus is among the largest of the duck-billed hadrosaurs. It can usually be found rooting around in lakes and rivers.

**Iguanodon**

**FREQUENCY:** *Common*
**NO. APPEARING:** 2-8
**ARMOR CLASS:** 5
**MOVE:** 12”
**HIT DICE:** 8
**NO. OF ATTACKS:** 2
**DAMAGE/ATTACK:** 1-4/1-4
**SIZE:** L (30’ long)

An early hadrosaur, iguanodon can defend itself — if it must — by stabbing with its two “thumb” spikes.

**Parasaurolophus**

**FREQUENCY:** *Common*
**NO. APPEARING:** 2-16
**ARMOR CLASS:** 5
**MOVE:** 15”
**HIT DICE:** 6
**NO. OF ATTACKS:** Nil
**DAMAGE/ATTACK:** Nil
**SIZE:** L (24’ long)

Parasaurolophus is one of the many crested hadrosaurs, a family that includes corythosaurus, pachycephalosaurus, and lambeosaurus. These dinosaurs’ skulls are topped with elaborate bony crests. The creatures’ nasal passages wind through the crests, giving them very acute senses of smell. Crested hadrosaurs can only be surprised on a 1.

**OTHER ORNITHOPODS**

This catch-all group includes all of the armored dinosaurs. These herbivores rely on armor and bony defenses instead of speed to protect themselves from carnivours. They are all quadrupeds.

**Ankylosaurus**

**FREQUENCY:** *Uncommon*
**NO. APPEARING:** 1
**ARMOR CLASS:** 10
**MOVE:** 3”/18”
**HIT DICE:** 12
**NO. OF ATTACKS:** 1
**DAMAGE/ATTACK:** 1-6
**SIZE:** L (20’ long)

**Stegosaurus**

**FREQUENCY:** *Common*
**NO. APPEARING:** 1-4
**ARMOR CLASS:** 4
**MOVE:** 12”
**HIT DICE:** 9
**NO. OF ATTACKS:** 1
**DAMAGE/ATTACK:** 2-16
**SIZE:** L (20’ long, 8’ tall at the hips)

Stegosaurus is a heavy four-footed herbivore of wide distribution. Its most outstanding feature is the double row of upright bony plates that line its back. Paleontologists are uncertain of the plates, exact function; they seem to have something to do with the creature’s biological heating/cooling system. They are certainly placed too poorly to function as armor, though they may provide some slight protection against carnivours taller than stegosaurus. The four long spikes on its tail provide a better defense: when it is threatened, stegosaurus hunkers down and slashes at its enemy with its tail.

**PTEROSAURS**

Pterosaurs are in a class by themselves, and are not strictly dinosaurs as such. Flying requires a great deal of energy, so the pterosaurs are the best candidates for being endothermic. Also, their bodies are covered with a fine, furry down — insulation unneeded by ectotherms. Pterosaurs would be remarkable if only for their intelligence, which is on par with that of the dromeosaurs and modern birds. Flying also requires a lot of nervous coordination.

Pterosaurs come in all sizes, from animals no larger than sparrows to the largest natural creatures ever to fly. The smaller pterosaurs are actually wing-flapped flyers, but the larger pterosaurs are primarily gliders, capable of no more than an occasional weak flap to help them in the right direction. The smaller pterosaurs are of little consequence to adventurers (except possibly as pets), so the descriptions will deal only with the larger ones.

**Pteranodon**

**FREQUENCY:** *Uncommon*
**NO. APPEARING:** 1-12
**ARMOR CLASS:** 10
**MOVE:** 37’/18”
**HIT DICE:** 1
**NO. OF ATTACKS:** 1
**DAMAGE/ATTACK:** 1-6
**SIZE:** M (4’ tall, 25’ wingspan)

This large pterosaur eats fish which it gulps into its pelican-like throat sack or spears with its toothless beak. A ptera-
More “meat” for Greyhawk

by Gary Gygax

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Not much magical ink has flowed from cockatrice quill to parchment for this column for a year now. Truth be known, a combination of other demands, a bout of illness, and sheer procrastination are responsible for the hiatus. At GenCon XIV, however, I had the opportunity to talk with many of you good folks again, and a message came out loud and clear. It is high time that I got busy and finished the TEMPLE OF ELEMENTAL EVIL module and started producing regular information regarding the WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ Fantasy World Setting.

Those readers who attended my two seminars at GenCon XIV, or otherwise spoke with me about developments on Oerth, know that the revised and expanded edition of WORLD OF GREYHAWK Fantasy World Setting will contain a score or so of the deities popular in the Flanaess. Len Lakofka has done those of the Suel people, while I detailed those generally served in the area from the Grand Duchy of Geoff to the Great Kingdom. There is the first bit of good news for those who are chaffing for more information. I am also hopeful that the Kindly Publisher and his Esteemed Editor will see fit to publish the data on those deities herein, so as to obviate the need for all who own original editions of the campaign setting to purchase the new. (If they seem recalcitrant, Good Readers, a bit of pressure will surely smooth the way...)

Because TSR needed a competition level module (originally planned for release this fall, but now to be held until early 1982), the effort needed to finish the second hundred or so pages of ELEMENTAL EVIL went into preparation of THE LOST Caverns of Tsojcanth. The scenario was initially done for a convention tournament, but the new product has an extensive outdoor adventure and a completely new series of encounters, so the effort wasn't wasted, I believe, and I hope you will agree.

Then, in clearing the decks to take on the TEMPLE, other chores popped up: The last-minute refining of the deities, and the development of a couple of dozen creatures, frittered away another month's worth of designing time. This effort steals from ELEMENTAL EVIL too, but because what follows over the next few issues will be quite helpful to those utilizing the GREYHAWK world setting, it is hoped that the few extra weeks added to the eventual release time for TEMPLE will be forgiven. (Yes, Virginia, I am working on it, and T2 will be out no later than GenCon XVI)

Finally, I had heartening news recently. Rob Kuntz, after a long stint away from AD&D™ gaming (reputedly due to a case of reveling in royalty income) has again returned to the creative fold. Being first one of the original participants in my Greyhawk campaign, and eventually its co-DM, Rob is eminently qualified to assist in the production of the storehouse of material and information which you are asking for. Rob and I have sat down several times over the past few weeks to discuss how we should go about this production in order to assure an orderly and useful flow of new things. Here is the tentative list we are now aiming at:

A. Regular WORLD OF GREYHAWK game information via the “Sorcerer’s Scroll” column — you have the first here! B. Completion of the CITY OF GREYHAWK map and gazetteer. Rob, Terry Kuntz, and Eric Shook are now at work on the project. C. Detailed, smaller-scale maps of important areas of the Flanaess, complete with important residents and some encounters. The same team has ruled off the world map, and as soon as CITY OF GREYHAWK is finished, I expect this project to move ahead with force.

D. Miniatures rules for large-scale battles between the states of Oerth — in limbo now, although Steve Carpenter of Minifigs has mentioned that he is working on possible rules for this use.

E. GREYHAWK CASTLE & DUNGEONS production — at this point, this is only in a very general discussion stage, because of the other projects and the fact that the existing work on the project is only suitable for use by Rob and I. (As with most extensive dungeon complexes, much is developed and kept in the head due to actual play, and some areas are so difficult as to be impossible for those not used to our DM style.) So, initial work is unlikely to begin on this effort until sometime late in 1982.

This column will keep you up to date in the meantime. It should also give a fair amount of information not otherwise detailed in commercial releases, so if you have a campaign taking place in the Flanaess, be sure and stay tuned here.

For openers, I offer the following regarding racial types and dress. Future columns will deal with regional and national events, as well as smatterings of information on reported political plots and the like.

RACIAL TYPES OF THE FlANAESS

There are few “pure” racial groups extant on the Flanaess, save perhaps at the fringe areas of the continent. Of course, the races of demi-humans are relatively unmixed, but humankind, as is its wont, has industriously intermixed in the central regions to form a hybrid type which has actually become the norm.

Baklunish: The Baklunish people have golden-hued skin tones. Eye color is commonly gray-green or green, with gray uncommon and hazel rare. Hair color ranges from blue-black to dark brown. Ebkir, the Tiger Nomads, Ulra, and Zeif typify the...
straight Baklunish strain. The Wolf Nomads are intermarried with the Rovers of the Barrens, so they show the darker Flan blood. Ket is so mixed with Suel and Oeridian blood as to be the least typical of the Baklunish race, for the people of Ket are pale yellow or golden-brown or tan in skin color, with virtually any hair color possible save the lightest yellows and reds. Both the Paynim tribes and Tusmit show occasional admixture also.

Flannae: The Flan race have bronze-colored complexion. This varies from a lighter, almost copper shade to a very dark tone which is deepest brown. Eye color is commonly dark brown, black, brown, or amber (in declining order of occurrence). Hair coloration is black, brown-black, dark brown, or brown. Also, Flannae tend to have wavy or curly hair. The Duchy of Tenh are pure Flan, proud of their bronze color. Geoff and Sterich, despite mixture, show strong Flan racial influence. The Rovers of the Barrens are of the copper-toned sort of Flannae, although the western tribes show the golden skin color of the Baklunish due to interbreeding with the Wolf Nomad tribes. The people of the Hold of Stone Fist and the citizens of the Theocracy of the Pale are primarily hybrids, the former Flan/Suel, the latter Flan/Oeridian. The inhabitants of the Pale are particularly handsome.

Oeridians: The Oeridians have skin tones ranging from tan to olive. They have hair which runs the gamut of color from honey-blonde to black, although brown and reddish brown are most common. Likewise, eye coloration is highly variable, although brown and gray are frequently seen in individuals. Unmixed Oeridians, despite claims of the Great Kingdom, are most common in Furyondy, Perrenland, the Shield Lands, and in the east and south in North Province, Medegia, and Onnwal and Sunndi.

Suloise: The fleeing Suel folk were scattered in a broadcast fashion across the Flanaess, so that most tended to mix with other groups. The Suel race is very fair-skinned, some being almost albino. They have light red, yellow, blond, or platinum-blonde hair. Eye color varies from pale blue or violet through deep blue, with gray occasionally occurring. Curly to kinky hair is common. The inhabitants of the Duchy of Ernst are nearly of pure Suel race. The Frost, Ice, and Snow Barbarians are perfect specimens of unmixed Suloise blood; the nearly albinoid Snow Barbarians are the best example. The Suel folk are quite predominant in the island groups off the eastern coast of the Flanaess as well as in Tilvanot Peninsula (Scarlet Brotherhood region). Those bands that migrated into the vast Amiedio Jungle and Hepmonaland are so altered as to be no longer typical of the race; they are tan to brown with heavy freckling.

The predominant racial strain and particular admixtures of each of the major states of the Flanaess is given in the list which follows. The first letter is the predominant strain. Thus, “OSf” would mean an admixture of Oeridian with a strong Suel strain and a weak Flan mix, as the “f” is uncapitalized. Had it been “OSF” (with a capital “F”), the indication would be that the Flan influence was only scarcely less than that of the Suel.

- Almor: OS
- Bandit Kingdoms: OFSb
- Bissel: OSB
- Bone March: (SO)
- Dyvers: OSfb
- Gran March: SOf
- Great Kingdom: OS
- Greyhawk: OSfb
- Highfolk: Os
- Idee: OS
- Irongate: Os
- Keoland: SO
- Lordship of the Isles: So
- Nyond: Os
- Pomarj: (SO)
- Ratik: Sof
- Rel Astra: Os
- Sea Barons: So
- South Province: Os
- Spindrift Isles: So
- Sterich: OFS
- Ulek, County: OFS
- Ulek, Duchy: (So)
- Ulek, Principality: (SO)
- Veluna: Osf
- Valley of the Mage: OBf
- Verbobonc: Ofs
- Yeomanry: SOf

The predominant racial strain and particular admixtures of each of the major states of the Flanaess is given in the list which follows. The first letter is the predominant strain. Thus, “OSf” would mean an admixture of Oeridian with a strong Suel strain and a weak Flan mix, as the “f” is uncapitalized. Had it been “OSF” (with a capital “F”), the indication would be that the Flan influence was only scarcely less than that of the Suel.
The inmixture of Oeridian and Suel (expressed as “(SO)” in the above list) tends to develop a skin coloration similar to that of Earth’s European. The original Flannaean stock shows up with either Oeridian or Suloise or both as a coppery or bronze over-tone. Oeridian and Baklunish develops a fairly light complexion, but the skin coloration is true yellow, as opposed to the vague yellow-brown of Earth’s oriental race. A hybrid of Baklunish and Flannaean gives a golden-copper or golden-bronze color which is possibly the most attractive complexion of any of the admixtures of the basic races.

In general, the skin color of an individual is of no particular importance. The dark Flan complexion shows up quite often in most nations. By contrast, the nobles of the Great Kingdom are proud of being light-skinned, just as the rulers of Tenh are overly conscious of the supposed superiority of their deep bronze color. In the central region of the Flanaess, from western Urnst Duchy to Geoff, there is little heed paid to either skin color or racial type, whether human or demi-human (or even humanoïd in some places. The main exception to this is the demi-human kingdoms where humankind is judged inferior, especially in Celene.

Racial/national dress

**Oeridians** typically favor checks and plaids. Aerdi and Nyrondelian houses tend to wear plaids, while the southern and western Oeridians favor checks, often of a diamond pattern or similar variation from the standard square. Clothing tends towards tight-legged trousers, close-fitting upper garments, and capes or cloaks.

**Suloise** folk have long used solid colors. Aristocratic houses have two or more such colors in their dress, so parti-colored garments are not uncommon. Similarly, the Suel people tend to favor display of emblems or tokens on their garments, typically of a contrasting color to their basic one. Dress was originally loose pantaloons topped by a baggy blouse. This form of dress has been changed to meet the needs of the varying climates, so the northern Suloise barbarians wear furs and skin garments, while those in the southernmost area have replaced the blouse with vest-like upper wear.

**Flannaean** once wore brightly hued body paints, with yellow ochre and vermilion being the favorites. While the Rovers of the Barrens still use considerable body painting (where their high boots, loincloth and chest and arm leather don’t cover them), the more civilized Flan dress in the mode currently fashionable in their portion of the continent. Garments, however, tend to be of solid primary colors, with very bright hues predominant.

**Baklunish** peoples are of two sort. The northern branch favors bright patterns and gaudy colors. They wear gowns and robes, or else short breeks and flowing coats. The poorer folk even wear gaudy prints, although their garments are typically a one-piece coverall with whatever additional garb they can add. The southern branch likes parti-colors of a more pastel hue. Their dress is complex and full of many puffs and slashes when adorned for special events. They commonly wear rough hide and cloth when traveling or at war, with shields and banners showing clan colors.

**Dwarven** folk love shades of brown, red, and gray contrasted with a bright splash of color and picked out with as much precious metal as they can possibly wear. Leather is a favorite material, with wool being popular also. Dwarves wear clothing similar to that of the Oeridians.

**Elves** of the Sylvan ilk dress similar to Suloise, except their colors are pale tints of green, fawn, ecru, and dove gray. High elves are similar in mode of apparel, but they add blues, lilacs, and purples to the more natural forest hues of their woodland kin. Hunting and war garments are brown, russet, or tan. Gray elves wear very complex and flowing garb of pure white, sun yellow, silver and gold lame’ set off by polished leather of contrasting colors and highlighted by jewels. All elvenkind wear cloaks, especially when traveling. These garments are neutral gray or gray-green.

**Gnomes** and halflings dress in a similar fashion, often replacing their trousers with knee-length britches. The gnomes favor more stolid colors — brown breeks, a tan blouse, green boots and belt, with a dark brown jacket or coat. A halfling in the same garb might have a yellow shirt and top off with a cap of green with a bright yellow feather in it. Both races will often wear striped clothing. When hunting or at war, they likewise favor garb of a curiously mottled sort, with greens and browns intermixed.

Next issue we will deal with events in the north central steppes and the areas below — the Horned Society, Bandit Kingdoms, and the Duchy of Tenh. Until then, avoid staredowns with medusae.

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**Convention calendar**

**ALPHACON III, Nov. 14-15** — A science-fiction and gaming convention to be held at the Ramada Inn, Ithaca, N.Y., Alphacon will feature a film program, displays, computers, and tournament competition in the D&D® game, Diplomacy, and other games. Convention membership is $9 at the door. For more information: Alphacon III, c/o Bill Freebairn, 310 N. Sunset Drive, Ithaca NY 14850.

**RICON ’81, Nov. 14-15** — Rhode Island’s first fantasy role-playing convention will be held at the Howard Johnson’s motel in Warwick. Further information is available from RICON ’81, P.O. Box 171, Lincoln RI 02865.

**CONTRACTION, Nov. 20-22** — A science-fiction convention to be held at the Buffalo Marriott Inn, Amherst, N.Y. For more information, contact Linda Michaels, 27 Argosy Street, Amherst NY 14226.

**WINTER GAMEFEST, Nov. 20-22** — The annual event sponsored by the Metro Detroit Gamers which was formerly known as WinterCon. It will be held in Cobo Hall in Detroit for the first time. More information can obtained by writing to Metro Detroit Gamers, P.O. Box 787, Troy MI 48099.

**WINTER FANTASY, Jan. 9-10, 1982** — Role-playing games, miniatures battles, mah jongg, an auction, hot dogs and a fun time with the TSR Hobbies gang. Held at the American Legion Hall, 735 Henry St., Lake Geneva, Wis. Admission $2 daily, $3 weekend. Write to Winter Fantasy, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

**GEN CON® SOUTH, Feb. 5-7, 1982** — The Cowford Dragoons and TSR Hobbies, Inc., again sponsor this wintertime retreat at the Jacksonville Beach (Fla.) Convention Center. For more information write GEN CON® SOUTH, P.O. Box 16371, Jacksonville FL 32216.

**MANNHEIMERCON, Feb. 19-22, 1982** — Sponsored by the Grenadierstrasse Kriegspiel Society, the second Mannheimercon will be held at a site in Mannheim, West Germany. Tournament games to be held are: AD&D, Traveller, Civil War miniatures, Napoleonics miniatures, modern and WWII micro armor, naval miniatures, Battle of the Bulge, Dallas, Magic Realm, Panzer Leader, Wizard’s Quest, Russian Campaign, Victory in the Pacific and Squad Leader. For more information, contact Grenadierstrasse Kriegspiel Society, c/o Raymond Norton, 181st Trans. Bn. APO New York 09166 or call Mannheim Civilian 731-575 or Mannheim Military 8281.
Many of us derive our image of Robin Hood from the movie versions of his story, where he is portrayed as a noble lord, the Earl of Huntingdon, living in the late 12th century. Although it makes for a good cinema plot, this version has nothing to do with the body of ballads and popular poems that tell the real legend of Robin Hood. It depends on one portion of the work of a very late (1627) writer who was prey to the typical British feeling that any hero has to be an aristocrat.

In truth — if there is any truth about Robin of Nottingham — he and his Merry Men were solid, middle-class yeomen who took to the forest because of the chaotic social conditions of the late 1300s. In those times, weak kings could not check their barons, who raised their own illegal taxes and hired men like the Sheriff of Nottingham to keep their private peace, not the King's.

In 1354, in fact, civil documents record a certain "Robin Hood" as being in prison, awaiting trial on charges of poaching and forest trespass. Since there is no record of his having been hanged, one may assume that he escaped — into legend, if not back into the forest.

As a general note, the proper setting for the following non-player characters is, of course, Sherwood Forest, just to the north of the little farming town of Nottingham. The forest should be a long strip, about fifteen by forty miles, of virgin oak, thick with underbrush.

For Nottingham, the Dungeon Master can use any small-town module by simply designating the largest secular building as the Sheriff's house and dungeon keep. The only road to town should run directly through the forest, ensuring Robin's band of a ready supply of cash.

The DM should also keep in mind that hunting in a lord's preserve like Sherwood Forest is considered poaching, punishable by hanging — a law that applies to player characters as well as Merry Men.

**ROBIN HOOD**
12th-level fighter
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic good
HIT POINTS: 70
ARMOR CLASS: 7
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2/1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8 (+1)
HIT BONUS: Special
MOVE: 12"
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil
STRENGTH: 16
INTELLIGENCE: 17
WISDOM: 14
DEXTERITY: 18
CONSTITUTION: 16
CHARISMA: 17

When pressed for information about his background, Robin will only joke that he was in trouble with the law — or the law with him — at a very young age. One may assume he was born into a respectable farming or craftsman's household. His great skill with weapons implies that at some time he served (or at least trained) as a yeoman archer with the King's armies. Some folk say that he returned home to find his family victims of the Sheriff's grasping violence. Others say that he was goaded into killing one of the King's deer on a wager and then outlawed. Whatever the reason, he has lived in the forest for the past five years, since the age of twenty, with the price of two hundred gold pieces on his head.

Robin is tall, slender and good-looking, with dark, untidy hair and an engaging smile. His usual clothing is a faded green tunic over torn hose, a studded leather doublet for armor, and leather boots. He wears a broadsword with a dagger at his belt, has a quiver of arrows slung over his back, and carries a yew longbow. He moves quickly and restlessly, rarely still for a minute unless lying in ambush. He talks fast, too, sometimes in a compulsive string of jokes or idle chatter which lasts until one of the band makes him hold his tongue.

There are two main motivations in Robin's life: his love of total freedom and his hatred of injustice. Both combine to
drive him to his rebel’s life of robbing the rich to give to the poor. Like most char-
tics, however, he cares little for any ab-
stract principle of justice or equality. He
centers his hatred on the person and
specific unjust acts of the Sheriff of
Nottingham.

He gives his stolen gold to whatever
poor person happens to need it at the
moment. Fomenting a social rebellion
would be the last thing he’d think of. He
will lend his aid and his men to a good
cause, but only if it is glamorous or di-
rectly aimed at the Sheriff. Once Robin
has given someone his friendship, he is
very loyal, willing to risk his life to save
a friend from harm. He is not, however,
above pulling low practical jokes on the
same friend.

Robin robs strangers first and makes
friends later. Since he has scouts placed
at the edge of the forest, a party charac-
ters using the road through it is certain to
be ambushed by Robin, Little John, Will
Scarlet, and 4-24 (4d6) of the Merry Men.
The band is so practiced at forest
movement that there is only a 15% chance
(25% for elves) of a party member hear-
ing them in time to be warned. If un-
warned, the party will suddenly find itself
surrounded on all sides by men with
drawn bows. Robin will step out into the
road and demand the party’s surrender.
He will promise that they’ll come to no
bodily harm if they simply turn over their
gold and jewels. If a player character
asks his name, Robin will answer readily
from those obnoxious players in your
will afford and begin asking them questions
about themselves and their travels while
two of the men are stripping the party of
their valuables. Once the party is robbed
and disarmed, Robin will play one of his
standard jokes. He will tell the party that
since they’re paying for the feast tonight,
they should share it. Party members
have no choice in this matter—the men
will surround the party and march them
off to the forest hideout. If Robin likes
the party, or if he feels that they are en-
gaged in some good cause, he will return
their valuables in the morning. (The DM
will have to role-play Robin here; dice
rolls aren’t adequate for this decision.)

If Robin dislikes the party, he will have
them escorted back to the road after
dinner — a good bit poorer for the expe-
rience. If the party attempts to find him
for revenge, they have a 5% chance,
cumulative per consecutive day of search-
ing, of finding the hideout again.

Robin will never knowingly befriend
an evil character. He has a base chance
of 60% of guessing evil alignment, and
the DM should increase this chance if
the character in question is acting in an
outrageously evil manner or has some ob-
viously evil symbol about his or her
person. Unless his life is in danger, Robin
will never kill an evil character (or anyone
else, for that matter) in cold blood. He
will simply do his utmost to humiliate
that person, leaving him or her alive for a
fair fight later. For instance, he’s been
known to make a fierce warrior put on a
woman’s dress and walk into town so
to the sheriff’s men upside-
down to trees and left them there for
their boss to find; he’s stripped pompos
clerics down to their underwear for the
walk into town. (DMs, please note: If you
have one of those obnoxious players in
your group, Robin’s pranks offer a sa-
tisfying way of teaching him or her a
lesson.)

Although Robin is normally proficient
with a sword, his weapon of choice is the
longbow. His uncanny talent has been
so refined by years of practice that he
has an extra “to hit” bonus as well as his
adjustment for high dexterity. The DM
should allow Robin +1 to hit on moving
targets and +2 to hit on stationary ones.
Though all his men are proficient with a
bow, no one else has his skill.

With, hand weapons or in weaponless
combat, Robin is far from the best fighter
in the band. His intelligence, high spirits,
and eloquence have won him his place
as leader — not his fists.

At all times, Robin carries a horn at his
belt; three blasts on it will summon the
Merry Men as fast as they can possibly
reach him.

The Merry Men

The traditional number for the ranks of
Merry Men is nine and thirty archers, not
counting the lieutenants profiled below,
but the DM may adjust this number down-
ward if a large troop will unbalance
his or her campaign. The Merry Men are
all 5th-level fighters, wearing leather ar-
mor and armed with sword and longbow.
They are all fanatically devoted to Robin
(+25 on any loyalty check, plus Robin’s
charisma bonus).

Contrary to opinion created by the
 cinematic versions, none of these men
have horses. (It is extremely difficult to
feed horses in a forest, not to mention
hide them. If Robin and his band owned
a herd of forty-odd horses, the Sheriff
would have to be blind and possess a 2-
intelligence to avoid finding their trail. If
Robin needs horses, he merely steals
them, then gives them to some poor
farmer. when the need is past.)

WILL SCARLET

8th-level fighter
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic good
HIT POINTS: 48
ARMOR CLASS: 8
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8
HIT BONUS: None
MOVE: 12”
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil
STRENGTH: 15
INTELLIGENCE: 15
WISDOM: 11
DEXTERITY: 16
CONSTITUTION: 16
CHARISMA: 13

Will, Robin’s closest friend and most
trusted lieutenant, joined the band be-
cause he hates the sheriff as much as
Robin. During one particularly bad win-
ter, Will’s family was close to starvation.
When Will shot a deer to feed them, the
Sheriff put a price on his head. Having
little choice, he fled to the wilderness,
where he became Robin’s first recruit.

Somewhat moody and withdrawn, Will
has a hot, quick temper. If he feels his
honors is being insulted, he will challenge
the offender to a duel. Robin, however,
will intervene and suggest an archery
contest or non-lethal combat, with a
large forfeit and much good-natured
 teasing in store for the loser. Will is also
likely to get carried away by enthusiasm
and find himself in dangerous places,
such as at the head of a charge with the
others still twenty yards behind. But his
temper makes him extremely brave. In
morale checks, the DM should always
allow Will a +15 bonus.

Will is something of a dandy when the
fortunes of the road allow. He has a
fondness for silk shirts, stripped from an
arrogant lord’s back, embroidered dou-
bles, and fine jewelry. Anyone who
peases him about his clothes will be chal-
gened to a fistfight. Will carries a sword
and is also proficient with the longbow.
LITTLE JOHN
10th-level fighter
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic good
HIT POINTS: 76
ARMOR CLASS: 8
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8 (+3)
HIT BONUS: +3
MOVE: 12'
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil
STRENGTH: 18/00
INTELLIGENCE: 12
WISDOM: 10
DEXTERITY: 14
CONSTITUTION: 18
CHARISMA: 14

Little John's given name is John Little. The nickname comes from one of Robin's jokes: John is seven feet tall, barrel-chested, and fairly bulging with muscles. Blond and bearded, he dresses much the same as Robin, but his leather doublet is unstudded, and he carries a heavy oak quarterstaff instead of a bow. If pressed, John can fight well with a sword, but the staff is his weapon of choice.

It was his skill with a quarterstaff, in fact, that won him his place in the band. One day as Robin and Will were hunting in the forest, they came to a narrow bridge over a stream. John was just stepping onto it to cross from the other side. When Robin demanded that John retreat and give him precedence, John challenged him to a duel with staves. In record time, Robin was flying through the air and into the water. Much impressed, Robin asked John to join the band. Since John has no love for the Sheriff (and several poaching charges on his record), he agreed.

Generally, John is easy going and good-natured, but at times Robin's constant teasing drives him wild. John then quarrels bitterly with Robin and walks off in a huff. The conflict lasts until Robin apologizes or some danger threatens. No matter how angry John may be with Robin, he will always go to his leader's rescue if needed. Since John tends to belittle his own intelligence, he follows Robin's orders without question, occasionally with unfortunate results when Robin is in a daredevil mood.
Robin and John came upon him just as
the friar was sitting down to a lunch large
enough for three ordinary men. When
Robin began mocking his greed for food,
Tuck challenged him to a wrestling
match, which Tuck won handily, passing
his version of Robin’s “trial by combat”
membership test.

Besides being an expert wrestler (use
the grappling table on page 72 of the
Dungeon Masters Guide, not the special
monk’s combat), Friar Tuck is highly
skilled with a quarterstaff. He also
fights well with a bench or a piece of firewood,
which the DM should treat as clubs in his
hands. Though he cannot use a bow, he
has a good eye for a thrown missile, such
as an ale pitcher or tankard — and tank-
ards and ale pitchers are never far from
the good friar’s reach.

Though he’ll fight to defend the camp
or his friends, Tuck takes no part in the
robberies of the band. As a precaution,
though, he wears leather armor stretched
tight over his fat paunch. Robin often
reminds that Tuck’s fat is as good as
another layer of armor, but only he can
and suspicious, he will impulsively fol-
low any stranger who claims to know the
whereabouts of Robin’s lair.

The Sheriff will, of course, take his
men-at-arms along with him on these
hunts. In fact, he is so afraid of Robin
that he never goes anywhere alone. If
met in town, the Sheriff will have an es-
cort of ten 5th-level fighters, each armed
with swords and daggers and wearing
studded leather.

If met on the road, the Sheriff will be
accompanied by his full troop, which in-
cludes, besides the men above, ten 4th-
level fighters armed as above and ten
more 4th-level fighters armed with long-
bows. These men are mounted and have
no qualms about running a helpless op-
ponent down in the road. They also tor-
ture prisoners and strip them of their
valuables, regardless of whether the ac-
cused is guilty or innocent.

The Sheriff is employed by the evil Sir
Guy of Gisborne, an archetypal absen-
tee landlord. Sir Guy visits Nottingham
only once a year — to browbeat his es-
tate steward, pick up his share of the
taxes, and get disgustingly drunk with
the Sheriff. Since he is terrified of Sir
Guy, the Sheriff admires him and serves
him faithfully.

The Sheriff is in general a typical law-
ful evil type, a nasty bully to those below
him and a licksiptle to those above. If a
party of player characters intimidates
him, he will aid them as long as he’s
under their direct supervision, but he will
never give up his pursuit of Robin or
knowingly aid Robin’s friends.

Bibliography: The legend of Robin
Hood is comprised of popular ballads
and anonymous poems dating roughly
to the 15th century. The best collection
of the 39 stories and their variants is in
The English and Scottish Popular Bal-
lads by F. J. Child, which has recently
been reprinted by Dover Books and
which should be available in any good-
sized public library.

When it comes to modern retellings,
there is remarkably little material available
on an adult level. Persons who have
access to a university library might find
J. Ritson’s Robin Hood, first published in
1795 but last reprinted in 1885. There are
a great number of children’s books avail-
able on Robin Hood, but all of them are
pretiffied and most are stories retold in
pseudo-archaic language. Making an ef-
fort to find Child’s compendium of bal-
lads is well worth it.
It has been recorded, in the lost scrolls of Caractos the Scribe, of which only fragments now exist, that... from the ice-world of Northumbria, many ages ago, there came a youth named Niall, son of Thorkon the Mighty, who was destined to roam the world as he knew it, and to whom was to be given the appellation, the Far-Traveler...
The coming of the Sword

Fiction by Gardner F. Fox

For many days he had trotted across the ice field, always straining his gaze ahead, ever seeking the figure of the man he hunted. He was close now, so close that he needed no longer to stare at the ground in search of footprints. For there ahead, revealed in the weak sunlight of this northernmost region, was the man, Gunthar.

Niall grinned wolfishly. Soon would Gunthar face the death he deserved for the attempted rape of lovely young Althia, who was sister to Niall and daughter of Thorkon the Mighty. In less than an hour, Niall would be up with him, would draw his sword and take the vengeance that was due his family.

Niall shifted the white bearskin which covered his side shoulders. Under that skin he wore a mail shirt, covered by a leather kaunake. Around his middle was a broad leather belt from which hung a dagger and a sword. Over his shoulder was his horn hunting bow and a quiver of long war arrows.

Niall disdained the arrows and the bow. He wanted Gunthar face to face, to stare at the ground in search of footprints. For there ahead, revealed in the weak sunlight of this northernmost region, was the man, Gunthar.

Niall shifted, rolled, began to rise and fall off to one side. It was as if the very world shared his fury, Niall thought, as he beat the ground. "This is the day you die, Gunthar," he growled.

"Did I do no harm to Althia," the other panted. "She screamed, and others came to stop me. I fled..."

"You fled to your death! You know the law! To him who transgresses against a priestess of Freya, there is only one reply! Death!"

The ground rolled upward, cresting an arc of light where the sunlight caught the ice field, always straining his gaze ahead, ever seeking the figure of the man he hunted. He was close now, so close that he needed no longer to stare at the ground in search of footprints. For there ahead, revealed in the weak sunlight of this northernmost region, was the man, Gunthar.

"Death, Gunthar!" he roared.

His blade flashed downward. It made an arc of light where the sunlight caught it. It slanted into Gunthar's steel, brushed it aside, then continued downward into the man's neck, cleaving through flesh and bone. Gunthar's eyes rolled up into his head and he fell backward, mouth open in a soundless scream.

And in that very instant — The ground rose, pitching Niall forward, over the body of the man he had been fighting. There were the screams of tortured ice and grinding stone. The earth shook wildly.

Niall clung to the tall grasses into which he had been toppled. "Great Thor! Save me!" he breathed.

Yet the earth went on quaking and rolling. Behind him he heard stone crashing on stone, and he listened as great blocks of ice came free of the glacier and plummeted to the ground nearby.

Long he clung to the grasses, which held fast in the earth under them. Not until the last of the sounds had drifted away, until the ground had stilled, did he lift his eyes to stare about him.

Great Wodin," he gasped. The pass was no more. It was blocked now with crumbled, splintered masses of stone, with awesome slabs of glacial ice. No one could travel through that pass. It was closed forever. He would not be able to return to the stead of his parents — at least, not the way he had left it. He was excluded from the home he had known for all his seventeen years. The youth was an outcast, thrust into a strange land.

And yet it was not the tumbled mixture of rock and ice which caught and held Niall's attention. There was something else, something within the glacial ice itself. Niall growled low in his throat.

"What was this thing he saw? Covered with ice, yet it had human form. He could see an arm, and the glint of sunlight revealed what seemed to be a golden bracelet adorning that pallid arm."

Niall took a few steps forward, his flesh crawling with wonder and readiness.

"Could it be human, that which he was staring at? Now he could see golden hair, lighter even than his own, appearing white rather than yellow. There was pale flesh, covered in some way by a fur garment."

"And — blue eyes, wide open! Staring at him!"

"Those eyes pleaded! They called to him, begging!"

Niall shook himself. "I dream," he murmured to himself. "There is no woman in that ice. And if there is — she must be dead! Long dead!"
Aye! How long ago must she have toppled into that ice? Or — been put there?

Was she a witch? A lamia?

No matter! For now he saw, as he moved closer to that ice barrier, that she was lovely, more beautiful than any woman he had ever seen before. Her eyes were blue, her mouth like a round, red fruit. Her body was full, her hips pleasantly rounded.

His hand lifted to touch the ice that held her.

Close were her eyes now, even more urgent the message they seemed to be sending. *Free me! free me, man of the outer world! free me — and know my gratitude!* It was as though her voice whispered in his mind.

Niall raised his sword and began hacking at the ice. Frozen chunks flew. Long he worked, and carefully, because he did not want to harm the white body that lay encased in this frozen sepulchre.

For hours he worked, stabbing with great care at the ice. After a time he could reach around the sides of the body, slashing with his dagger, using it as a pick. Slowly he freed the unknown woman.

Yet there was ice still close about her body. And now Niall paused, knowing that if he cut deeper into the ice, he might harm her. He turned and began cutting some of the tall grasses, arranging them in a pile about the icy statue.

He set fire to the grasses and watched as the yellow flames began to lick upward. Drops of water formed, glistened, ran down the ice. He cut more grass, piling it higher, growing as the water from the melting ice dripped and put out some of that fire.

When the fire had done its work, only a thin coating of ice remained.

The woman's body moved slightly. Some of the thin ice-crust cracked and fell away. Seeing this, Niall gripped the edge of another hunk of ice, tugged at it until it cracked and dropped.

And then the woman moved a leg. Both legs. Her arms lifted, freeing a hand with which a ring glinted. Niall worked faster, chipping away gently with his dagger so that more and more of the ice fell away.

First all of her body was free, and at last the ice fell away from around her head and shoulders.

Her blue eyes gazed upward into those of Niall. Her full mouth trembled, curved into a smile. "My thanks, stranger. Accept the gratitude of Clovia, who was once — many years ago — queen in Helios."

Niall shook his head. "Hellios? I've never heard of it."

Clovia smiled wryly. "Is my fame so quick to fade? Once I was mistress of a mighty fleet, a great army. Kings and emperors paid me homage, until..."

Her lovely face darkened, her features twisted in anger. "Until a magician came out of the East and worked his magick in my city, and by them caused me to be borne away and imprisoned in that ice!"

She drew a deep breath, and her eyes roamed the grasslands. "Have you any idea what it was like, buried in cold and darkness — still alive! — for so many years? So many years!" Her eyes focused on him. "What is the year?"

Niall shrugged. "The year of the Boar, the month of the Ice Gods."

Clovia rubbed her hands up and down her arms. "That means nothing to me. Ah, well... This is a different world than the one I left, I know that. Even that magician is no longer alive. Dalvuus, his name was. Ha! If I could get my hands on him..."

She looked hard at Niall. "What about you? From whence came you?"

Niall explained how he had followed Gunthar... killed him... how the earth had shuddered. His hand gestured at the fallen rocks and tumbled blocks of ice.

"I can go home no more. The way is closed. I must reach a seaport and find a ship to take me back to Northumbria."

Clovia eyed him musingly. "Stay with me, Niall. Be my guard, my warrior. Travel with me to Hellios, where I will make you rich."

Niall grinned. "Lady, your kingdom may no longer exist. You are an outcast, like myself." He hesitated, then said, "Still, I have a fancy to wander about this warmer world, to sip its ales and wines, to taste its foods. It might be that I will walk with you, take you to this Hellios."

Swiftly she twisted off the great emerald ring that graced her finger. To go with it, she took off a bracelet encrusted with diamonds. "Take these as first payment, warrior! They are but a small part of what Clovia will give you if you escort her safely to Hellios."

Niall chuckled, waving a hand, "Keep them, lady. They look better on you than they would in my pouch. Time enough for reward when I do what you ask — if I can."

He turned to stare out over the grasslands, which extended as far as he could see. The unchanging horizon extended toward the city Hellios. The river is named Thangara. It is long and winding, running across half the world. Could we but fashion a raft..."

Her words drifted off. Niall shrugged his muscular shoulders and said, "It isn't around here, so let's go find it."

He began to walk, and after a moment Clovia followed. They walked the sun out of the sky, pausing at last when the shadows lengthened and darkness began to creep across the grasses. They found refuge close by a rock formation.

Niall gathered sticks from the fallen branches of some trees that grew near that stone bulwark, set them together and made a fire, scraping a bit of flint against his dagger blade. From his pouch he took a bit of meat, some cheese, a little bread. Hunkered down, he offered half of what he had to Clovia.

They ate, and then they lay at arm's length, both within touching distance of the fire. Overhead the stars glinted in black space, and a cool wind roamed the grasses. Niall slept soon and soundly.

For three days they traveled south. The great bow and the arrows Niall carried were put into use, felling a deer and then a boar, so that the young man and the woman ate well. His companion was given to moody silences, or so it seemed to Niall. She brooded long and often, her blue eyes slightly veiled.

To Niall, it was a pleasant time. This was a new land, and there was much to see. The unchanging horizon extended as far as his eyes could reach — and he had excellent vision — but as the days went on, it became monotonous.

Something of this he said to Clovia, adding, "Even my northland gives me a new view every so often. A bear might rush out at me, or a giant elk, or even a man who had been outlawed. But here..."

His huge shoulders lifted and fell. "...there is nothing to stem the boredom."

Clovia turned her head and smiled faintly. "Do not be too sure, Niall. Slowly, oh so slowly, I have been remembering. We are not far now from the river — and from the underwater lair of the sea serpent Xithalia."

"Sea serpent? I've heard of them. Some of them dwell in the Cold Sea. But I've never known any to swim about in rivers."

"The river Thangara is deep, very deep. It sweeps in from the ocean, and there are caverns inside its stone walls where Xithalia dwells."

Niall stiffened his shoulders. He did not like this talk of sea serpents. By Wodin! How could he fight off a sea serpent from the deck of a raft?..."
the tents of prairie dwellers nor the mud huts of men who had been outlawed from the cities.

With his sword, Niall hacked down all the saplings he could find, trimmed them and then lashed them together with tough vines that grew nearby. With Clovia helping to twist the vines and saplings together, they built a serviceable raft, though Niall eyed it dubiously. It would have to do; they had no boat, nor any prospect of finding one in these remote regions.

They launched the raft, balanced themselves carefully on it, and pushed out into the river, Niall poling them along. The sun grew warmer as they made their way between high banks covered with wildflowers. Then they moved into an area where trees all but shut out the bright sky overhead.

Clovia sat quietly, seemingly lost in thought. Niall stared about him, his heart beating to the pace of this land where he was a stranger. How vast it was! He had never imagined that his world was so huge. All he had known until now were the cold sea waves and the little strand where his father had his steading. What wonders was he now to see?

All day they rode the river, landing at dusk to make a little fire and cook the fish Niall caught with a hook and some thin cord from the pouch on his belt.

When they were done eating, Niall asked, "How far do we have to travel to reach this city where you were queen?"

Clovia smiled grimly. "Many, many more days. We are now in a country where my people never went. Why should they? There is nothing here to tempt the merchants."

They had been traveling on the raft for four days when they saw the sailing ship. It was in the middle of the river, its sail billowed out, yet it did not move. Then Niall saw something wet and shiny moving slowly alongside the vessel. Thick and massive — and menacing — was that something.

Clovia cried out. "Xithalia! He has come from his rocky lair to feast on human flesh, to fill his belly and then retire to sleep."

Niall sought purchase for the pole, to make the raft move faster. As he did, Clovia turned a frightened face to him. "What are you doing? You're taking us toward that thing! Try to go around it. It may not see us."

"Those people aboard that ship may need help."

Niall glanced at them, his eyes wide. "What is that to us?"

The youth glared back at her. "It may be nothing to you, but I can't run away to let those folk face death."

He could see the head of the serpent now, as the beast moved out from behind the sail which had hidden it from his view. Vast was the head, wide its mouth. The creature slavered as it poised above the deck, where a group of terrified people stood huddled.

Niall reached for his bow. He knew arrows would be useless against such a creature, unless...

He pulled his bow, sent an arrow winging through the air. It hit the scaly hide of the serpent's neck and fell away. Niall grunted, lifted another arrow to the string. He took more time, studying the distant creature's movements, before he let fly again.

The arrow arced high, then as it began to descend it drove into the eye of the serpent. From its open throat came a scream of agony. Up reared Xithalia, its head turning one way and another as it sought out the cause of its pain.

Clovia hunched down upon the raft's deck. Her white hands were clenched into fists. To her continued amazement, Niall was poling feverishly, urging the raft toward that nightmare monster, and shouting as he worked.

"Have you gone mad?" Clovia yelled. "No, no. Look — The beast is leaving the ship. It is starting to turn, to come toward us."

Niall moved to the edge of the raft,
balancing himself carefully. He drew his sword and waited as Xithalia glided through the river toward him.

“What can you hope to do with that puny weapon?” Clovia panted. “He will open his mouth, gobble you up!”

Niall grinned. “That’s what I hope he does.”

The great head was over him now, its jaws wide apart. Long teeth glinted in the red cavern of a mouth. For a moment Xithalia paused, then its head darted downward.

Clovia screamed. Niall sprang upward to meet the gaping jaw, his sword held up before him as if he meant to fend off that gaping mouth.

The jaw snapped almost shut—just as Niall fell sideways into the river. But before he fell, the thrust lodged his sword in the flesh of the sea serpent, with the point puncturing the roof of its mouth and the pommel lodged up against its bottom jaw. Even though impaled on the sword, those jaws gaped wide.

Xithalia bellowed. It thrashed its head and its vast body, straining to force the sword back out the way it came. When light caught the edge of the blade, it could be seen in the beast’s throat cavity, lodged at an angle that made the serpent roar every time it moved its jaws up and down. Water foamed and flew about.

Niall swam to the raft and hoisted himself upon it. His booming laughter rang out. “Try now to swallow me, eater of men! Maybe now you’ll starve to death.”

He took up the pole, thrust it into the soft bottom of the river, and propelled the raft toward the ship which now sat sideways in the river, the people on it staring and crying out to him. Clovia rose to her knees, then to her feet, all the while eyeing the injured and enraged serpent, convulsing as it sought to free itself from that sword. Xithalia lost interest in its prey, and its thrashings carried the scenes before him.

Two days later the ship pulled into a wharf before a riverside city. Niall was at the railing, staring at the many rooftops, at the distant shine of sunlight on a golden dome. This was the first city he had ever seen. In his country there was no more than small steadings or perhaps a gathering of steadings together with warehouses in which merchants stored their goods.

“You find it exciting?” Clovia asked from where she stood beside him.

“I’ve never seen anything like it,” Niall told her, not taking his eyes off the scenes before him.

Her lips curved into a smile. “Wait until you glimpse Hellios. There is a city, a city that houses thousands upon thousands of people.”

“The captain says there is no such place. I’ve spoken with him. He knows this river as he does his own home.”

“Clovia snapped, ‘The man is mad. I tell you, not taking his eyes off the scenes before him.’

“Her lips curved into a smile. ‘Wait until you glimpse Hellios. There is a city, a city that houses thousands upon thousands of people.’

“The captain says there is no such place. I’ve spoken with him. He knows this river as he does his own home.”

Clovia snapped. ‘The man is mad. I tell you, I know Hellios! I reigned there, as did my father and my forefathers.’

Very gently, Niall murmured, ‘But that was a long time ago; Clovia. A very long time ago’…” He put his arm about her. “How long were you inside that river of ice?”

“I — I don’t know. But Hellios must still live. It must!”

“If it does, we’ll find it.”

Niall did not notice the sadness in her eyes, nor did he pay any attention to the manner in which she pulled her cloak about her. And though he sensed it when she shivered, he put that down to the cold wind blowing off the land.

They went with the captain, whose name was Dalamar, to his big stone house on a hillside north of the town. Clovia would have preferred to be alone with Niall, but the shipmaster would not have stood for that. The two were to be his guests, to enjoy his hospitality.

They met his wife and children, they feasted at a huge table, they enjoyed the warmth of a great log burning in the huge fireplace. They shared bowls of rich wine, and when the children had been put to bed Dalamar brought out narrow wooden tubes which held maps. These maps he unrolled on a table, and as Clovia and Niall bent over them, the captain’s finger traced the route of the river Thangara from the mountains to the sea. On those parchment scrolls, there was no mark to point out the city Clovia called Hellios.

Her face grew paler as she examined the parchments. Her finger trembled as she pointed, “There is where Hellios should be. There!”

Dalamar’s face wore a puzzled look as he stared at where she indicated. He drew a deep breath and said, “Lady, there is no city there. True, there are strange stones standing about — I’ve never put ashore to look at them closely — but only the wind roams between those stones. There are no people, there is no city. Believe me.”

Clovia turned suddenly and walked across the room to stand at a window and stare out into the dark night. She stood there, motionless, for many minutes before she turned and came back to them.

“I have been gone far longer than I had believed,” she whispered. “Far longer. When I was taken out of Hellios and put into that glacier by the magic of the wizard Dalvus, Hellios was the greatest city in my world. Now it is dust and dead stone.”

Dalamar cleared his throat. “But you still live, lady. There is much to be seen in this new world. You both must stay here with me and my family.”

Clovia smiled and shook her head. “I thank you, but — no. I must look upon Hellos once again, or at least upon what remains of it.”

Then she gazed at Niall. “Will you come with me? Or do you choose to stay here, or to wander elsewhere?”

“I agreed to see you safely to Hellios,” the youth replied. “I will keep my word.” The next morning Niall went with Dalamar to the docks, where the captain pointed out a small boat with a mast. “It’s a cockboat I sometimes take with me when I sail out upon the ocean. It’s fast, it moves well. I’ll provision it for you, and give you a new sail.”

“Accept my thanks, Dalamar,” Niall said briskly and sincerely.

The captain chuckled. “If you hadn’t come to fight the serpent, I wouldn’t be here now. Speak no more of thanks.”

Two days later Niall and Clovia pushed away from the wharf, with Dalamar seeing them off. The wind was brisk. It filled their sail and sent the craft speeding through the water. Niall waved once more to Dalamar, then set his face to the east and his big hand on the tiller.

(Continued on 3rd page following)
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Clovia sat in the prow, leaning forward, staring ahead of her as if she were trying to will the little craft to go even faster. She was huddled beneath her cloak, and every so often she shivered.

For five days they sailed, pausing only to sleep for a few hours each night along the deserted riverbank. Always, Clovia urged speed. It was as though something inside ate at her and would not be satisfied until she stood again in Hellios.

The little sloop seemed now to run faster through the waves. It left Norban’s Tongue far behind and approached a mass of tumbled blocks of stone along its banks.

Clovia stood and cried out, “This was the harbor!”

Niall merely grunted in acknowledgment. He was enjoying this trip. This was his chance to see more of this world into which he had been catapulted by the fates — though there was little to see, outside of the river and the plains and the forests through which they sailed.

He hoped Hellios would prove interesting, though he suspected it would not. What was so interesting about a lot of ancient buildings? Yet he could understand why Clovia wanted to walk there, to set her eyes on those places she had known so long ago.

The youth shrugged. He might as well go along with her. Who knew? Perhaps he might find something here to take away with him: a bit of buried gold, or even a rare gem or two. He needed money to live, to eat and drink until he found service somewhere as a warrior or a laborer.

Clovia wandered along what might have been a great boulevard many years ago. From time to time she would pause to run her eyes this way and that way, and the wind blew her pale hair about her face as though to hide the tears that streaked her cheeks.

“Gone,” she whispered, so softly that Niall could scarcely hear her. “All gone, all the ships, all the riches. Forgotten by the world. No more do the armies march, no more do the golden banners wave in the breezes. Dead. All dead!”

Niall did not speak. He looked out over the ruins which, from this vantage point, extended as far as he could see. From the river, a man could not glimpse the extent of what had been the glory of Hellios, but from atop this high rock the truth of Clovia’s memories was plain to see.

The woman moved away, walking from the rock to the earth of the shore itself, striding slowly forward on what had been paving stones but which were now half-buried under dirt and grass. She went with bowed head, and Niall knew that she was weeping.

The youth shrugged. He might as well go along with her. Who knew? Perhaps he might find something here to take away with him: a bit of buried gold, or even a rare gem or two. He needed money to live, to eat and drink until he found service somewhere as a warrior or a laborer.

Clovia wandered along what might have been a great boulevard many years ago. From time to time she would pause to run her eyes this way and that way, and the wind blew her pale hair about her face as though to hide the tears that streaked her cheeks.

“There stood my palace,” she said to...
Niall stood over them as Clovia came running up.
"You killed them all," she accused. "They might have told us something!"
"What could such as these have told you? They're carrion eaters, and I would guess they eat human beings, too. Still, I think they have told us a little."
"What do you mean?"
He knelt, stripping golden rings and armbands from the dead men, and held them up to Clovia, who stared at them with incredulous eyes.
"Those were made in Hellios!" she said. "I know that workmanship." Her words tumbled over themselves as she sought to explain. "This ring was made by Frondag, who fashioned jewelry for me. Ah, and this armllet by Rogonor, whose artistry in gold has never been challenged. But how can this be? It was so long ago!"
"Gold doesn't die," Niall reminded her.
She shook her head impatiently. "No, no. I didn't mean that. Where did they find these things? That's what I want to know. If they stumbled on some lost hoard of gold, so can we!"
Niall grinned exultantly. "Now where would such a hoard be hidden?"
"In the palace, of course. And it is just over there."
They ran to where colored columns and tinted stone blocks lay in mad disarray. Clovia began to search with Niall at her side. They turned over stone blocks, they dug where she suggested, but the ruins were too heavy, and too much earth had blown into what once had been stairways.
Niall stood at last, scowling. "There is a different way into the cellars. There has to be. Those ragged men I killed would never do any digging. Besides, if they had, we'd see some sign of it."
Clovia sat on a fallen column. "Yes. There's a way in that is not blocked by rubble. All we have to do is find it."
They searched until hunger sent them back to the boat for the leathern sacks that held their food and drink. As the sun sank, Niall built a fire in the shelter of two standing walls, and there he cooked a meal.
While they were eating, Niall heard the beating of wings. Outlined against the darkening sky, he saw small flying things. He was about to put more meat in his mouth when he sprang to his feet instead.
"Those bats!" he shouted. "They can show us the way in!"
Clovia stared at him. "What?"
"Bats nest in caves — or an underground place like a treasure house. Or a corridor that will lead us beneath your palace."
"Then let's go find it."
"Not until the bats return," Niall responded. "Now, you sleep. I'll watch for them."
When the woman had rolled up in the cloak and fur wrap which Dalamar had given her, Niall sat back against a stone pillar and let his thoughts roam. He liked the excitement of this strange land into which he had come. Even more, he liked the idea of finding treasure. For hour upon hour he yielded to his dreamings, staying alert but preoccupied.

With golden coins, he could travel leisurely about this land, discover its deepest secrets, know its fairest women. There might be jewels too, and a mere handful of pearls or rubies or diamonds would make him a rich man.

He was reflecting on this when he heard a stone roll across other stones. Instantly he was ready, rising quietly, lifting out his dagger. If death or danger came crawling forth in dawnlight, he would meet it.

Then it came, a nightmare-thing with five legs and three arms, hunched over so that it seemed to be a ball of black leather with red, glowing eyes.

The thing moved in the direction of the sleeping Clovia, and Niall saw fangs glint in the dying firelight.

He rushed forward, putting his body between the leathery thing and Clovia. His shoulder hit the beast's body as he swung his dagger in a short, vicious arc. The short blade bit deep. The beast-things were weakening quickly. Its struggles were driven by all the power of his brawny arm, and flush against the forehead of the beast-thing it landed.

The creature bellowed. Its mouth gaped wide, showing fangs that threatened but could not penetrate Niall's defenses from such close range. Niall lifted the rock and hit it with again and again. He drove the creature backward with the rock-blows, never giving it a chance to steady itself for a counterattack.

"Water!" Clovia's voice cried from behind him. "It cannot stand the touch of water!"

Niall feinted another attack with the stone, then suddenly leaped toward the beast, his arms spread wide. He grabbed the leathery beast around the lower part of its torso, bore it backward, and rolled over and over on the ground with it. The river was not far away.

The young warrior snarled. He struggled to regain his feet and lift the thing off the ground. While straining to raise it, Niall began to move forward.

The monster's arms and claws raked at him, digging into his arms and shoulders. Niall grunted in response to the pain, but did not lose his grip. Now he was able to walk carrying the beast-thing. The river was closer... closer.

Within a few feet of the bank, Niall left his feet in a lunge. Still clinging to the leathery creature, he toppled into the water. Immediately there was an awful hissing. A stench rose into the air. Niall choked and felt nausea all but overwhelmed him. The thing he clung to was moving, driving him forward.

Niall felt the touch of hands from behind him, trying to help draw him upward out of the churning water. He released his grip on the beast's body and allowed himself to be dragged back onto solid ground.

He stood tottering at the river's edge. Clovia was beside him, gripping his arm tightly as she stared into the water. The creature was disappearing — dissolving in the water! Fumes rose from the bubbling river, fumes that made Niall curse and draw Clovia away from the river, back to his grasp.

He drew a breath. "How did you know that water would slay that thing?"

In a voice trying to be calm, Clovia replied, "It was a thordio, a thing that had come to my city from some forgotten world long ago. In my time it was only a legend. Something seems to have summoned it back now. But why?"

She stared at the ruins of the city and asked harshly, "What is there to protect here? What purpose would there be in summoning the thordia out of its own world to roam these ruins?"

To Niall, the answer came quickly. "Treasure."

"No. Something more important than gold or jewels, Clovia murmured, shaking her head. Her fingers tightened once again upon his arm. "Come! This has restored hope to me. There is something here, something waiting — sleeping, perhaps."

The big barbarian shrugged. "I care not for anything like that. What good would that do us?"

Clovia glanced at him slyly, smiling faintly. "Ah, but there will be treasure, young man. Treasure so great ten boats could not carry it. Are you interested?"

Niall grinned, putting his hand on her shoulder and squeezing it. "Lead on, lady. We'll forget about waiting for the bats."

Clovia walked forward, at times almost breaking into a run. It seemed as if her memory were coming back to her, as if in her mind's eye she could see Hellios as she had known it when she had walked its streets. Niall followed at a strolling pace, keeping up with her, fingering his ancient empty scabbard. She felt partly naked without a sword at his side. Ever since he had been twelve years old — and then a huge child for his age — he had walked with the weight of a sword dragging down his belt.

Clovia went between still-standing walls and broken columns, following an unseen path. Twice she hesitated, standing motionless and staring about her, frowning, before she resumed her stride.

At length she came to what must have been a big building. Between its walls she walked, on ornate paving stones half-hidden under grass and wildflowers. Then she paused at a place where two cracks showed the shape of a tunnel, and Niall could glimpse a larger paving stone set among the others.

"Lift this," she said, tapping the stone with a foot.

Niall knelt and slid his fingers beneath the bluish stone. Rising from his knees, he straightened his back until his arm and shoulder muscles bulged. Slowly, the stone came up. It was well over a minute later that he had raised it high enough to topple it, revealing a narrow stairway beneath where it had lain.

"Let me enter," Clovia said.

But Niall held her back, drawing his dagger. There were skeletons down there, lady. Let me go first. You follow."

He put his feet to the stone of that ancient staircase, descending into almost total darkness. The sun's rays did not penetrate far, but they showed the barbarian the shape of a tunnel stretching out ahead of him.

Clovia was right behind him, fingertips touching his back. "Search along the walls. There ought to be torches thrust into iron holders."

By groping in the darkness, Niall discovered a length of resin-soaked wood. With flint and a bit of steel from his pouch, plus some tinder, he made a
flame and ignited the torch. Holding it high, to cast the light as far as possible into the tunnel, he moved on.

It was dim in this tunnel, even with that torch, but there seemed to be nothing dangerous lurking within. At length they came to an oaken door, barred in iron and with a rusty lock.

Clovia said, "This is the treasure house of my people. Stand aside, Niall." From her pouch she drew a small length of steel. At Niall's questioning look, she smiled wryly. "This I took with me — unknown to Dalvuus, naturally! — when they stole me from my palace."

She fitted the key into the lock, but could not turn it. Niall grasped her upper arms, moved her aside, put his hand to the key and, after grunting a bit from the exertion, turned it. His big hand pushed the door wide.

They looked in at a big room, fitted out with chests and coffers of varying sizes. As Niall strode forward, holding the torch before him, he saw what appeared to be a corpse lying atop one of the biggest chests. But it was not the sight of the body that his eyes rested on last.

T
or!" rumbled Niall. "What a sword!" It lay beside the corpse, its haft glittering from the torch-light, its scabbard revealing the jewels with which it was emblazoned. Its blade was partly out of the scabbard and shone with which it was emblazoned. Its blade was partly out of the scabbard, yanked free the blade. He held it up, staring at its length. Never had he seen such a weapon as this; he had not believed that one could exist.

Clovia said softly, "That is the weapon called Blood-drinker. It belonged to my father, to his father, to all my male ancestors! — live!"

"Just this! With it I can gain all the gold I'll ever have need of!"

As Niall strode forward, holding the torch before him, he saw what appeared to be a corpse lying atop one of the biggest chests. But it was not the sight of the body that his eyes rested on last.

Niall opened his eyes to stare upward at a yellow sky, a sky in which the sun glowed. He rose up on an elbow and saw Clovia lying beside him, unconscious but breathing normally. He lay upon ground that was brown, riven here and there by furrows from which steam rose into the air.

He looked around. Everything was desolation here. Ruin, emptiness, there was no life, except for himself and the woman who had been queen in Hellios. "Tartarus," breathed a voice at his feet.

Niall looked down at a haggard Clovia, then put out a hand to yank her to her feet. She shuddered and great tears rolled down her cheeks.

"The gods have abandoned us," she wept. "There is no hope now. We will die here, without food and water."

Niall scowled blackly. He was not one to admit defeat so easily. He had been put here, true. Yet where he had entered, he could leave.

"Think, woman!" he urged. "If you know of this place, you must know more about it. If there is any way out of here — any way at all — it's up to you to remember what it is."

She stared up at him, eyes rimmed by tears. She shuddered, rubbing her hands on her arms. "No one has ever returned from here. No one!"

Niall growled, "That's no answer. What is this place? What do you know of it?"

"Tartarus is a magic region created by great wizardry. Only the mightiest magicians know the way to and from it." Her eyes were wet. "Yes, there is a way out, but I know not it. When I was queen in Hellios, I studied the history of many magicks, as a pastime..."

She broke off, stood with bowed head, deep in thought. Niall eyed her for a moment, then took to studying his sword. It was a splendid blade, the finest he had ever seen. Its edges looked sharp enough to shave the hair from his head. He moved it back and forth, getting to know its feel.

Clovia said dreamily, "There is a guardian over this dead world, placed here eons ago by those who created this place. His name is... his name is... I cannot recall it."

"Try! If ever you would return to our own world, woman — think!"

Clovia looked up at him, eyes wet, tears running down her cheeks. She shook her head, her misery plain to see. "It's no use. I just can't remember. Dalvuus has won!"

Dalvuus?

It was a word from out of the very air. Niall grunted, lifted his sword and stared about him. Clovia gasped and clung to his side.

"Who is it who speaks of Dalvuus?"

A vast green shape appeared high above them, seeming to grow in size even as it lowered itself to the bare brown ground where Niall stood with Clovia. The greenness was a vast cape or cloak, or appeared as such, with a hood beneath which was utter blackness.

"What know you mortals of Dalvuus? Long and long ago did Dalvuus live!"

Niall found his tongue. "He lives still, back in that land from which we came! He sent us here, to perish. The darkness under the hood seemed almost to meditate. The cape which surrounded that darkness swirled as though blown about by mighty winds. From it stabbed an arm tipped by a dark hand.

"Would you return to where it is Dalvuus lives? Would you slay Dalvuus?"

"I would," Niall rasped, "if by his charms and incantations he gave me a chance to use this sword on him!"

"Only I can send you back to that world. And only I have the power to draw you back here — should you fail in your quest!"

The strange voice paused, as though the black being in the vast greenish cloak were thinking. Niall spoke into that silence.

"Return us and I'll kill Dalvuus for you!"

Eerie laughter rose from the seemingly empty hood.

"Rash mortal! Dalvuus cannot die. Oh, yes — as you know death, he can. But should you slay him, his soul would come here to me, Tartarus. Ah! I have waited long for that, to exact my vengeance!"

"Go then — back from whence you came! With my protection!"
Ten men in mail shirts came marching into the throne room, and Niall viewed them with narrow eyes. A man followed them inside. It was Dalvuus — but what a change there was in his appearance! No longer did he wear age-rotted garments, but now he strode along in an ankle-length garment of ebon blackness on which were sewn thaumaturgic symbols in silver thread. A golden cloak hung from his shoulders.

Niall bellowed and leaped out of hiding, placing himself between the guards and Clovia. Instantly Dalvuus halted. His eyes went wide, his mouth fell open. Just for a moment he was paralyzed by amazement. Then his arm came up and he cried out orders to the marching guards.

“Slay that man! And the woman with him!”

But before any of them could react to his voice, Niall was upon those warriors. His blade darted once, twice, and two men dropped. Nor did he pause, but came on like a maddened elephant, his sword out before him, slashing, cutting. “Abaddon,” chanted Dalvuus. “Great Abaddon, hear me! Slay this man who kills my soldiers. Slay him and — ”

Dalvuus paused for breath. Six of his men were down, and Niall was fast upon the others. Like a Styrethian lion, he moved here and there, out of reach of the blades that sought to sap his life’s blood, always slashing back in return and slicing through flesh and bone.

Dalvuus turned to flee, his robes flapping as he ran, and after him went Niall, blood dripping from his sword. Niall could run like a frightened deer, but there was speed in the magician, too. He fled up one hall and down another, never pausing to glance back.

Up to a blank wall Dalvuus ran. His hands went out to the cold stone — and where he touched, the stone slid back. Dalvuus leaped through the opening, and the stone wall closed just as Niall arrived. The warrior cursed silently as he heard faint, mocking laughter from inside the passage.

From behind him came the sound of sandals slapping the stone floor. He whirled, swordpoint thrust up so that Clovia almost ran herself upon it. He let the blade drop and caught her in his arms.

“He’s escaped me,” he growled.

Clovia tried to catch her breath, shaking her head. At last she said, “No, no. Just a trick. A trick I know. Let me at the wall.”

She reached to the wall, touched it with her fingertips as Dalvuus had done. “See? It operates in this fashion. Hidden valves force air into locks and — see! The stone turns.”

Niall caught her up and leaped through the opening. Into a small antechamber he ran, still carrying the woman. Ahead was an oaken door, reinforced with iron. Setting Clovia down, Niall ran forward. He leaped at the door, boots upraised, and slammed into it with all the fury his massive body could muster. He heard wood give way, heard and felt the screech of twisting metal . . . and the oak door burst open.

Niall stood in the open doorway, staring into a chamber fitted out with strange vials and alembics, with hornbooks and palimpsests on racks and shelves. Standing before an altar of black stone, his back to the door and arms upraised, was Dalvuus.

“Great Abaddon, do not abandon me in my time of need! Heed my call, great lord of evil! Come to — ”
“Foul slug,” bellowed Niall, running forward. “Prepare to die — and to be welcomed into Tartarus by one who has waited a long time to get his hands on you.”

Dalvuus swung about. Utter fear was etched on his face. His lips were drawn back, his eyes distended.

“Begone, creature of this world! Begone, into that world of Tartarus where once I sent you!”

The mage lifted his arms, made mesmeric passes with his hands. Yet still did Niall come for him.

Now Dalvuus screamed, sought to escape by dodging behind the altar. His hand lifted a vial of purplish liquid and hurled it at Niall.

Clovia screamed shrilly. Niall ducked under that hastily hurled glass tube, heard it fall and break on the floor behind him. Purple, searing flames leaped up under that hastily hurled glass tube, and the magician's dead weight sifted through Niall's grasp and crumpled on the floor.

Dalvuus whirled and fled as soon as he threw the vial. His hands reached for a corner of the wall, and that wall also turned as he touched it, revealing a narrow passageway. Dalvuus leaped for the opening.

The magician was swift, but Niall was fast as lightning. No sooner had the magician entered the narrow opening than Niall was at his heels. Dalvuus stayed in the lead as the pair threw themselves up the narrow stairs leading to the top of the tower they were in.

Dalvuus ran into the topmost room of the tower and his hands went out toward a metal canister that stood upon a stone table.

His hands grasped that metal alembic, sought to tear away its cover. Niall did not know what power was in that thing, but he knew it would be deadly to him.

He caught the mage from behind, fastened his big hands on Dalvuus' wrists, and exerted just part of the strength of his mighty muscles. Abruptly, Dalvuus' fingers were pulled from the metal top. Then Niall whirled Dalvuus' body around and drove his fist into his face.

And Dalvuus — or that essence which was, though her flesh was that of a man, was apparently using some form of magical protection. Such a blow would ordi-

Niall leaped between the mage and the alembic he was after, intending only to forestall the magician until he must certainly succumb to the sword upon which he was impaled.

Dalvuus laid his hands on Niall, sought to push him aside. His eyes were wild, pleading. Niall did not know why, but that voice he had heard was warning enough. He stopped him: His big hands came up, caught Dalvuus, held him motionless — and in that instant, the magician collapsed and died. Niall's grip relaxed, and the magician's dead weight slithered through Niall's grasp and crumpled to the floor.

A blackness was now in the tower room, gathering slowly. Niall knew what that blackness was, and he shrank from it.

Yet that darkness held no menace for the big Northumbrian. It crept toward Dalvuus, slowly, and as though aware of its coming, the mouth of the dead magician opened as if to scream.

Then the blackness touched Dalvuus, embraced him.

And Dalvuus — or that essence which still lived within him — did scream. His body had dropped, yet some part of Dalvuus struggled and the blackness took over. Was this an act of Dalvuus' soul? Niall did not know, did not want to know.

Go, earthly being! Flee! And take with you my gratitude!

Niall yanked his sword from the cadaver that lay upon the stone floor, then ran. Swiftly had he run up those narrow stairs in pursuit of the mage. More swiftly still did he run down them, back into the room where he had left Clovia.

He said no word but snatched her up, still running. He bore her over his shoulders as he ran, with Clovia yelling questions, asking if he were mad.

Downward he ran, downward until he stood on the ground floor of what had been a palace thousands of years before, and was now again — at least for the time being. As Niall ran, he saw that the walls and floor, although still seeming solid, were shimmering and fading.

Just as he started to lower Clovia to the paving stones outside, the buildings disappeared, and they once again stood on the grass-infested debris of a ruined Hellos.

Niall lowered the terrified Clovia to the ground. Her eyes stared up at him, mutely questioning.

“What was it?” she quaked. “Why did you run so fast? What frightened you so?”

“Stop him, barbarian!”

Niall leaped between the mage and the alembic he was after, intending only to forestall the magician until he must certainly succumb to the sword upon which he was impaled.

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“What was it?” she quaked. “Why did you run so fast? What frightened you so?”

“The thing we saw in Tartarus. It came for Dalvuus! It caught his soul — or something — in its grasp and carried him off.”

Sweat was running down Niall's face. With a brawny arm he wiped it away, and then a grin rose on his face.

“He has what he wanted, that one. Now we shall take what we want.”

Clovia asked, “And what is it you want, Niall?”

“Gold! Gold and jewels to see me on my way in this new world — new, at least, to me — into which I have been tossed.”

His arm went about her, hugging her. “Together, we can be rich, Clovia. We can hire a boat to take us to the southland, into rich cities.”

Clovia brooded. “I don't want to go.”

Niall stared at her. “Not go? What will you do, then? Die here?”

Her shoulders lifted in a shrug. “It matters not to me. Hellos is dead. I might as well be dead, too.”

“Nonsense. Come along! Feast your eyes on treasure and you'll change your mind.”

He drew her unresisting toward the narrow stairway, lighted the torch Dalvuus had dropped, brought her with him back to the treasure chamber of the emperors and kings of Hellos. Clovia watched as Niall emptied out a section of the leather pouch he carried at his belt and began to fill it with the biggest gold coins, diamonds, rubies and pearls he could find, making his selections carefully. When his treasure pouch was full, he turned to the woman who had sat on a chest and watched him, vacantly smiling.

“Are you going to take anything?” he asked. “You'll need money in that world outside.”

Slowly she shook her head. “I will remain here. You go, Niall — with my thanks. You helped destroy Dalvuus. You brought me here, to my birthplace. Here I shall stay, at least for a while.”

He tried to argue, but she was adamant.

She walked with him to the cockboat, watched as he tossed the anchor into the boat and then entered it himself. The wind had picked up; the sail filled rapidly.

“Come,” begged Niall, making one last plea. “Come and see this world which will be new both to you and me.”

Clovia only shook her head, and in that instant, Niall realized how very old she was, though her flesh was that of a mature woman only. She lifted a hand and whipped her garments about her body. She turned to the woman only. She lifted a hand and whipped her garments about her body.

“I will stay here. You go, Niall — with my thanks. You helped destroy Dalvuus. You brought me here, to my birthplace. Here I shall stay, at least for a while.”
The **CREATURE of RHYL**

A Basic D&D® adventure by Kevin Knuth

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**Background for players**

The country of Rhyl has been beset nearly every night for many years by a large, terrible creature that flies out from the mountains near the city of Asereht. The creature soars over farmland, picking up livestock or an occasional unfortunate farmer and carrying the victim back into the mountains. After the creature appears, the early-morning air in Asereht is unusually cold and misty.

Nearly a year ago the creature broke through the wall of King Namreh’s castle and carried off the king’s son, Prince Laechim, along with a large amount of the royal treasure. Since that incident, which did not seem like the act of an unthinking creature interested only in food, King Namreh has suspected that the creature is somehow under the influence of the mad magician Astylis, who is believed to reside in the mountains in a vast complex at least two days away on foot from Asereht.

After the creature’s raid on the castle, King Namreh ordered his army to search the mountains and discover Astylis’ complex. The soldiers made two forays into the mountain wilderness, but each time were harassed and eventually driven back by goblin raiders. Since the failure of the second assault, the king has taken to commissioning small parties of mercenaries and adventurers, sending them into the mountains with promises of great reward upon the completion of the rescue mission, and hoping that a small body of searchers will be less likely to attract the goblins’ attention along the way.

For reasons which the king has never found out, none of these rescue parties has ever returned to Asereht. Your party is now attempting to be the first.

The trek through the wilderness has been, amazingly enough, uneventful. No goblins, and little else of note except for some harmless wildlife. Some members of the party are beginning to wonder what did cause the other missions to fail if it wasn’t the goblins and the wilderness. Finding Astylis’ residence was a simple matter; the skeletons and possessions of some of those who had gone before were littered through the mountain passes like a trail. And Astylis, if he was inside, was making no attempt to discourage intruders. The entry to the complex, as well as the stairway leading up to it, is found to be free of traps and unlocked.

Your mission, as prescribed by the king, is to go to Astylis’ complex (so far, so good), rescue Prince Laechim plus the royal sceptre and crown and the Rod of Cancellation and Medallion of ESP that were also taken, and kill the fearsome creature that seems to be under the wizard’s control. After taking one last look around at the outside — and hoping you will see it again soon — you turn toward the entrance and step inside.
The CREATURE of RHYL

Notes for the Dungeon Master

This adventure, designed for use with the D&D® Basic Set rules, can be played by as few as two or three characters or as many as half a dozen. Some of the rescuers can be first-level characters, but a strong party would probably include at least one third-level spell-caster or a pair of non-spell-casters (fighter types) of at least second level.

The structure of this module provides an opportunity for the Dungeon Master to embellish the environment with more detailed descriptions of "empty" areas, and perhaps introduce a few new challenges for a formidable party. (For instance, the trip through the mountains doesn't have to be uneventful.) In some places, it may actually be necessary for the DM to fill in particulars at the players' request. For this reason, anyone intending to DM this adventure for a party of player characters should read the text thoroughly to develop a "feel" for the places where imagination and ingenuity might be needed.

Standard dungeon features

All doors in this complex are eight feet in height, four feet wide, and one foot thick. All doors are made of oak. All walls are two feet thick unless otherwise indicated on the map. The corridor ceilings are 10 feet high.

Wandering monsters

In the upper level, roll for wandering monsters every three turns. An encounter occurs on a 1 in 12. Then roll d4, treating a roll of 1-2 as 1 and 3-4 as 2:

1) 1-3 goblins (HD:1-1; #AT:1; D:1-6; AC:6; SA:None).
2) 1-3 giant rats (HP:1-4; #AT:1; D:1-3; AC:7; SA:Anyone bit has a 5% chance of contracting a serious disease).

In the lower level roll for wandering monsters every two turns. An encounter occurs on a 1 in 6. Then roll d4:

1) 1-7 goblins (HD:1-1; #AT:1; D:1-6; AC:6; SA:None).
2) 1-5 giant rats (HP:1-4; #AT:1; D:1-3; AC:7; SA:Anyone bit has a 5% chance of contracting a serious disease).
3) 1 shrieker (HD:3; #AT:0; D:O; AC:7; SA:Emits a piercing screech which has a 50% chance of attracting other wandering monsters).
4) 1-3 giant ants (HD:2; #AT:1; D:1-6; AC:3; SA:None).

ASTYLIS' COMPLEX

Upper level

Area A: Before you is a door. Painted on the floor in front of the door is a green circle.

Area B: Ahead of you is a large fire pit. You cannot see what is beyond it. (The fire pit is an illusion and when anything touches it, it will disappear.) Painted on the floor is a red circle.

Area C: Painted on the floor in front of the wall is a blue circle.

Area D: You see a long corridor leading into the darkness. (The corridor is an illusion. After the party advances 10 feet east into the corridor, they will fall into a pit. When they fall into the pit, the illusion disappears and each member will suffer 1-4 HP damage from the fall.) Painted at the bottom of the pit is a large yellow circle. The pit is 30 feet deep, 20 feet long and 10 feet wide.

1. Entry Hall: As you enter this room you see a doorway in the center of the north wall. To the right of the door is a passageway that seems to angle off toward the northeast. Lining the east and west walls are sconces which hold the remains of burnt-out torches. On the east and west walls are hung shields bearing the image of a dragon. Above the doorway on the north wall is a pair of crossed swords. Against the west wall is a wooden bench.

2. Storage Room: This is a small room containing four chairs, a bench and a round table. On the table, covered with a thick layer of dust, is a wooden box of nails, a hammer, 30 feet of rope and a lantern. Next to the table is a large box filled with scrap wood.

3. Guest Room: Against the northwest wall are two beds, their canopies yellowed with age and laced with spider webs. Next to each bed is a nightstand. On one of the nightstands is a lantern and an hourglass. There is nothing on the other nightstand. Against the southwest wall is an empty chest of drawers. There are two doors on the southeast wall.

4. Guest Room Closet: Except for a shelf and some pegs in the wall, the closet is empty.

5. Guest Room Closet: In this closet is a chest which is empty, a shelf and some pegs in the wall.

6. Privy: This room is empty. Along the east wall is a trench which slopes from either side toward the center. In the center is a hole in the floor about one foot in diameter.

7. Stairway: A stairway descends 30 feet into darkness. Lurking at the bottom of the stairs are two goblins (HP:6,6; #AT:1; D:1-6; AC:6; SA:One has a +1 war hammer).

8. Guard Room: This is a small, irregularly shaped room. There are beds against the north and southwest walls, each with a blanket, a mattress and a pillow. There is a chest of drawers, which is empty, located against the northeast wall. There is a lantern on one a nightstand next to the bed on the north wall. There is a door on the south wall.

9. Guard Room Closet: In this closet there is a shelf lying on the floor. There are pegs in the wall, from which are hung...
10. Guard Room: This is a small, irregularly shaped room. There are beds on the north and southeast walls. Next to one bed is a nightstand with an hourglass on it. (Concealed in the sand at the bottom of the hourglass is a +1 Ring of Protection.) In the middle of the room is a round table and four chairs. There is a small chest of drawers against the south wall, which contains trousers, a cap, underclothing and a robe.

11. Guard Room Closet: In this closet is an empty shelf and a suit of leather armor hanging on a peg. On the floor is a locked chest. (The chest contains two gold medallions worth 50 gp each, a jewelled armband worth 20 gp, and — in a secret compartment — 20 platinum pieces.)

12. Guard Room: This is an irregularly shaped room. Against the south wall is a bed with a pillow, a blanket and a straw mattress. Next to the bed is a nightstand. Against the southeast wall is an empty chest of drawers. On top of the chest of drawers is a lantern and an hourglass. In the middle of the room is a round table with six chairs. (Under the mattress on the bed is a +3 Sword vs. Dragons.)

13. Guard Room Closet: In this closet is a single chest on the floor and a leather pouch hanging on a peg. The pouch is empty. (In the locked chest are two gold medallions worth 50 gp each, a jewelled armband worth 20 gp, and — in a secret compartment — 20 platinum pieces.)

14. Guard Room: This is an irregularly shaped room with beds on the northeast and south walls. Each bed has a mattress and a blanket. (Under the bed on the floor along the south wall is a +1 Shield.)

15. Guard Room Closet: Besides an empty shelf and some empty pegs in the wall, the only thing of note in this closet is a large locked wooden box on the floor. It is also empty.

18. Diamond Room: This is an octagonal room, 30 feet from side to side. The walls, ceiling and floor are constructed of shining white marble. There are four identical doors to the room, including the one through which you entered. In the center of the room, facing the way you entered, is a gold-colored statue of a human fighter holding a sword raised above his head in his right hand. Its eyes are of clear crystal and there is a bright green light emanating from them. Shortly after entering the room, you notice that the green light in the eyes of the statue fades and turns to red. A few seconds later the red light fades and turns to blue, then to yellow, then to green and red and so on.

After the players enter this room, the entire diamond-shaped section, which includes Rooms 8 through 16, begins to slowly rotate. As the section rotates, the doorway at Area A rotates as well, contacting in sequence corridor B, then C, then D, then A again, and so on. The eyes change color according to the corridor the doorway is facing out onto, matching the colors of the circles in each of those corridors. The rotation will be noticeable to the players, but since they are near the center of the rotation, their ability to move about will not be greatly hampered. They will be unable to stop the rotation, except by the method described below, but it will not be harmful to them. Note: The statue does not rotate.

The rotation will stop as soon as one of the party members succeeds in opening one of the four doors. (How to accomplish this is described below.) The doorway which started out being at the end of corridor A will end up in front of one of the four corridors, and the statue’s eyes will glow with the color of the circle in that corridor. The stopping point of the doorway is determined randomly by rolling d4: 1 is A; 2 is B; 3 is C; and 4 is D. (Note: The only access to the diamond-shaped section is the single doorway. If the party reaches the lower level of the complex by a means other than the elevator in this room, the chamber below will be empty and there will be no way of causing the elevator to operate from the lower level.)

If party members examine the statue closely, they will notice a small groove-like separation around its neck. The statue’s head can be turned to face any door in Room 16. (All doors in the room are locked from the inside after the party enters and cannot be opened by any means unless the head of the statue is turned to face the desired door. However, any of the four doors to Room 16 can be opened from the outside.)

A similar groove-like separation can be seen around the statue’s right shoulder. The right arm of the statue can be pulled downward by one character with a strength of 17 or more, or by two char-
Upper Level

Door

Secret door

Stairs up

Stairs down

1 square = 10 feet
Lower Level

1 square = 10 feet
acters with a combined strength of 25 or more pulling together. Accomplishing this action is the last step in the process that turns Room 16 into an elevator which goes down to the lower level of the complex.

To begin the operation of the elevator, the doorway of the diamond-shaped section must be facing corridor B, and must be held in that position by keeping the door to Room 16 which points in that direction open. (To accomplish this, players must stop the rotation at the right time, open the proper door, and devise a means of keeping that door open. The passage will shut and lock if the door is not secured in an open position. After that preparation, pulling down the right arm of the statue will cause the elevator to descend. The arm will move down at any other time when sufficient strength is applied to it, but nothing else will happen if the elevator has not been activated.)

17. Menservants' Quarters: Against the south wall are two beds, each with a pillow, mattress and blanket. Next to each bed is a nightstand. On one of the nightstands is an hourglass, and on the other is a lantern. In the middle of the room is a large round table with four chairs. On the table are two small leather pouches. In one of the pouches is a gold ring worth 5 gp, and a small vial filled to the top with a clear liquid. This is a *Haste Potion*. The other pouch, which is empty, is a Bag of Devouring.

18. Menservants' Closet: On the wall is a small shelf. Hanging on pegs on the wall are three robes and a black cloak.

19. Maidservants' Quarters: There are two beds against the south wall and another against the east wall. Each bed has a blanket, a pillow and a straw mattress. There is an empty chest of drawers against the west wall. On top of the chest of drawers is a comb, a silver mirror worth 15 gp, and a lantern. Hidden under the chest of drawers is a small wooden chest (with a simple lock) containing two gold earrings worth 5 gp, a necklace worth 20 gp, and a bracelet worth 25 gp.

20. Maidservants' Closet: On the east wall of the closet is a shelf on which there is a metal comb. Hanging on the south wall on pegs are two coats and a robe.

21. Cook's Quarters: Against the east wall are two beds. Each bed has only a mattress. In the middle of the room is a table and four chairs.

22. Cook's Closet: This room is empty.

23. Kitchen: In the southwest corner is a firepit over which hangs a large iron cauldron. Along the north wall is a long table with a drawer. In the drawer are spoons, forks, and knives. On top of the table is a tray, a plate, some moldy food and a butcher knife. Above the table are cupboards which contain plates, bowls, mugs and two trays. There is a lo-foot-long table in the middle of the room. On the table are some bones, dried bread and an empty jar.

In the southeast corner of the room are the remains of a goblin. Around its waist is a wide leather belt with a small leather pouch. In the pouch is a ring worth 5 gp.

24. Pantry: On the west wall is a shelf. In the middle of the room is a 40-foot-long table with 30 chairs.

25. Banquet Room: Against the north wall is a throne. In the middle of the room is a 40-foot-long table with 30 chairs.

26. Worshiping Room: Located against the south wall on a stone pedestal is a gold-colored statue of a demon god. In front of the statue is a prayer rug. Engraved in the walls are unholy symbols and writings. Behind the prayer rug is a kneeling bench. In the northwest corner is a sacrificial altar. Hanging on the wall above the altar is a golden, jeweled dagger worth 100 gp. Against the east wall is a table on which there is an incense burner and a candelabra with 13 candles.

27. Astylis' Storage Room: This is a triangular room. Along the east wall is a 30-foot-long table. On the north wall is a shelf. Below the shelf are three large boxes. The first box is empty. In the second box are some candles, a tinderbox, two flasks of oil, a torch, and some scrap wood. In the third box is a crucible, a pair of tongs, a ladle, a funnel, two bowls, an empty flask, and a brazier. In the northwest corner is a large iron cauldron. On the table is a balance with weights, two beakers, three empty scroll tubes, and a
pair of tweezers. On the shelf is an empty jar, a roll of wire, a measuring spoon, and a humanoid skull.

28. Astylis’ Laboratory: There is a 40-foot-long table against the west wall. In the northwest corner of the room is a large iron cauldron hanging from the ceiling over a firepit which is 10 feet in diameter. The pit contains a large amount of ashes. There is a small shelf on the east wall. Standing on a small pedestal in the southeast corner is a large stuffed griffon. Scattered about on the table are an alembic, a small burner, some glass tubing, a measuring spoon, a wooden stirring rod and a waterclock. Next to the burner is a candle stub and a mortar and pestle.

A shelf on the east wall holds seven bottles. One contains a clear liquid which is pure ethyl alcohol. A slight taste of this will intoxicate anyone with a constitution of 10 or less for 1-10 turns. Anyone with a constitution of 11 or more will have a 50% chance of intoxication for 1-6 turns. Anyone who drinks the entire contents of the bottle will fall unconscious and will have a base 50% chance of dying from alcohol poisoning. The chance of surviving increases by 5% for every point of constitution above 10, but a character who survives will still be incapacitated for 5-10 turns.

Another of the bottles contains a thick, red liquid (human blood). Another bottle is filled with a clear, odorless liquid (water). Another contains a yellow powder (sulfur). The other three bottles on the shelf are a Gaseous Potion and two Healing Potions.

29. Astylis’ Study: Against the north wall is a bookshelf. On the bookshelf is an old, faded book and an onyx idol. The book contains notes and sketches which appear to be plans for some sort of elevator system. In the southwest corner is a three-drawer desk with a chair behind it. On the desk is a lantern with scented oil, a pile of papers, an hourglass, a quill, and a bottle of ink. Partially concealed in the pile of papers is a Ray of Enfeeblement Scroll. In the top drawer of the desk is a quill, some papers and a Wand of Fireballs (3 charges). In the middle drawer is a piece of chalk, a quartz crystal, a scroll tube, and a vial filled with a grayish liquid. If the vial is opened the liquid vaporizes, filling the room with sleeping gas. The characters must each make a saving throw vs. poison or fall asleep for 1-6 turns. The bottom drawer is empty.

In the southeast corner of this room is a fireplace. Imbedded in the wall next to the fireplace is a golden lion’s head with a silver tongue. If the tongue of the lion is pulled away from the wall, the fireplace will pivot and face the desk, exposing a secret passageway.

Hanging on the east wall is a vast tapestry depicting a magician and a large white dragon.

30. Astylis’ Bedroom: There is a bed in the southeast corner of this room with a straw mattress, a pillow, and a blanket. Next to the bed is a nightstand on which stand an empty mug, a spoon, and a kerchief. Leaning against the nightstand is a wooden stirring rod and a waterclock. A shelf on the east wall holds seven bottles. One contains a clear liquid which is pure ethyl alcohol. A slight taste of this will intoxicate anyone with a constitution of 10 or less for 1-10 turns. Anyone with a constitution of 11 or more will have a 50% chance of intoxication for 1-6 turns. Anyone who drinks the entire contents of the bottle will fall unconscious and will have a base 50% chance of dying from alcohol poisoning. The chance of surviving increases by 5% for every point of constitution above 10, but a character who survives will still be incapacitated for 5-10 turns.

Another of the bottles contains a thick, red liquid (human blood). Another bottle is filled with a clear, odorless liquid (water). Another contains a yellow powder (sulfur). The other three bottles on the shelf are a Gaseous Potion and two Healing Potions.

31. Astylis’ Closet: In the closet is a large unlocked wooden box on the floor and pegs in the wall. Hung on one of the pegs is a spacious leather pouch. In the box is a stuffed owl, a humanoid skull, and a small cage. Inside the stuffed owl is a +2 Dagger vs. Goblins and Kobolds. In the pouch is a flask of oil, 50 feet of rope, a bud of garlic and one iron spike.

32. Corridor: Walking toward you are three goblins (HP:3 each; #AT:1; D:1-6; AC:6; SA:None).

33. Corridor: On the west wall of this corridor is what appears to be a portion of some strange rune-like writings:

34. Torture Chamber: In this room are five goblins (HP:6,6,5,2,2; #AT:1; D:1-6; AC:6; SA:None). They are torturing two dwarven fighters, one in a stock in the center of the room, and the other on a rack in the southwest corner. In the southeast corner is a firepit. Next to the firepit is a brazier in which two branding irons are being heated. In the northeast corner is a table. On the table is a knife, a...
whip, a pair of thumbscrews and a vise. If the stock is examined closely, the shape of an octagon can be seen engraved into its front surface.

35. Dungeon: Fastened into the north wall are five pairs of chains. Chained by the wrists in the northeast corner is the corpse of a man wearing a royal robe. (This is Prince Laechim.) Beneath the body, lying on the floor, is a gold-colored ring which is a +1 Ring of Protection. Roughly engraved on the floor next to the body is a symbol of a human figure with a raised arm holding a sword. Beneath the arm is an arrow pointing downward. In front of the man-figure is a circle drawn in blood. There are four 10x10-foot cells along the south wall, all empty and open.

36. Under construction: This is a room that appears to have been recently dug out of rock. Standing between the entrance and the exit is a goblin (HP:7; #AT:1; D:1-6; AC:6; SA:None). In the southeast corner are two wooden boxes filled with food, two pickaxes, a hammer, 50 feet of rope, a tinderbox, three flasks of oil, six torches, and a leather pouch. Inside the leather pouch are 150 gold pieces.

37. Stream: Ahead of you is a swiftly moving stream 15 feet across and appearing to be about 10 feet deep. (A character with strength of 16 or more can swim across, if unencumbered, without coming to harm. A character with strength of 15 or less, or any character who attempts to swim across while wearing armor and gear, will have a chance of being swept downstream and, unless rescued in time, will end up in Area G. The chance of successfully swimming across the stream for such a character is equal to his strength x 5 expressed as a percentage; i.e., a 50% chance for a character of 10 strength.) The stream runs through a tunnel in the wall of the corridor and out another tunnel in the opposite wall.

38. Dead-end Chamber: A minotaur, having heard the approach of footsteps in the section of the maze near this chamber, has retreated to this area and is lying in ambush. The minotaur (HP:20; #AT:3; D:1-6; AC:6; SA:None) will attack immediately as soon as a party member rounds the last turn before the dead end.

39. Dead-end Chamber: At the end of this twisting corridor is a nest of 5 giant rants (HP:4,3,3,2,1; #AT:1; D:1-3; AC:7; SA:5% chance of contracting serious disease).

40. Creature’s Lair: This is an enormous chamber that has been carved or blasted out of the surrounding rock. Area E: Lying here is a sleeping white dragon (HD:6; HP:24; #AT:2 claws and 1 bite; D:1-6 claw, 4-24 bite; AC:3; SA: Cold breath weapon which does 4-24 HP damage if saving throw not made, 2-12 HP damage if saving throw is made). Beneath the dragon, visible if it is awakened and rises from its resting place, is the body of a man in sorcerer’s garb — presumably the magician Astylis himself. Around the dragon’s sleeping place, intermingled with the bones of cattle and humanoid figures, is a great amount of treasure. The horde consists of 500 pp, 350 gp, 4 gems worth 100 gp each, and all four of the items the king wants returned: a sceptre worth 180 gp, a crown worth 150 gp, a Rod of Cancellation, and a Medallion of ESP.

Area F: This is a large tunnel in the ceiling of the cavern. It goes up 350 feet and comes out on the side of a very steep cliff. The dragon uses this tunnel for its exit and entrance into the cavern.

Area G: This is the stream that passes through the corridors of the northern portion of the lower level. The dragon uses this for drinking water, and occasionally fishes an easy meal from the rushing waters.

Area H: These are large columns of rock which were not completely cleared away when the chamber was excavated. Many of the barriers are large enough to provide one or more characters with a place of refuge from the dragon’s breath weapon.
The Adventurers from Ral Partha.

98-001 Wizards and Clerics (8)
98-002 Adventurers (8)
98-003 Monsters (6)
98-004 Goblins (8)
98-005 Fantasy Knights (4)
98-006 Dungeon Party (8)

(shown below)
Crudely carved mossy steps lead down...down...down...until darkness swallows them. Chills run up your spine as you begin your descent.

Suddenly—you are struck from behind! You fall endlessly; cruelly tumbling down rough-hewn steps...

You awaken with a start. A torch flickers above you, dimly illuminating an impenetrable door. From the blackness comes a menacing low hiss and the rasp of scales sliding on stones...
and the Real Fun Begins!

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It’s time to plug in the answers to last month’s computer quiz and see how you did. The correct choices are as follows:

**Part I**
1) a  
2) c  
3) d  
4) c  
5) d

**Part II**
6) a  
7) d  
8) a  
9) c  
10) b

**Part III**
11) d  
12) b  
13) a  
14) c  
15) c

**Part IV**
16) a  
17) c  
18) b  
19) c  
20) a

**Part V**
21) d  
22) a  
23) b  
24) c  
25) c

**Scoring**
- 22-25 correct answers: They couldn’t all have been lucky guesses. You must know a lot about computers.
- 15-21 correct: Above average. There are at least 10 answers that wouldn’t be known by someone who hadn’t at least done some reading on computer history.
- 8-14 correct: Average. A good score, for instance, for a student who has been exposed to modern-day computers but hasn’t learned a lot about their history.
- 0-7 correct: You might have had better luck having a computer pick your answers at random.

**Debugging the Time Keeper**
For the benefit of those who have yet to see the “Time Keeper” program in DRAGON #49 and might try to key it in to a terminal: Be sure to change lines 5 and 11, replacing the colon after the input string with a semicolon. Without the changes, the program will get hung up at line 5 when a run is attempted.
The Martian Chronicle
Factory Avoids Disaster

INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT IN MARTIAN PLANT AVERTED

(Martian Wire Service) Only the quick thinking of a senior supervisor prevented a major industrial disaster at the Martian Metals Processing Plant. The possibility of Venusian industrial sabotage has not been ruled out yet by the authorities or by the operating/production staff at Martian Metals.

It is presently assumed that someone activated the realtime switch on the Bopper production line, thus setting off a chain reaction of Jack Boppers jumping Dive Boppers, which were swimming all over the Tiny Boppers, which were expending their efforts to take over the Big Boppers, which were trying to switch off the Light Boppers before the Light Boppers lit the fuses on the Rocket Boppers.

The supervisor’s quick action limited the damage to only a small testing lab used by the quality control technicians. He released a full complement of Ogre Mk. VI and accompanying vehicles, such as G.E.V.s, Heavy Tanks, and Missile Tanks into the Bopper Quality Products Area. They eliminated the problem by eliminating the Bopper...

The supervisor was rewarded for his solving of the problem with a fully paid round trip vacation on the King Richard luxury liner. His parting words were, “Where’s the boss when we really need him…”

The only civilian casualty seems to have been a large fire-breathing dragon that was hit by an errant rocket fired by a Rocket Bopper. A passer-by received some minor burns giving the dragon mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. The admission form listed the dragon as suffering from systemic shock and broken tail.

He serves as a watch-dragon in the Martian corporate offices, when not modeling the latest in fashions for Martian Metals publicity.

A METAL FOR THE GENERAL

Three-month-old mystery solved

The mysterious disappearance of Star General Krogott has been solved by the roving reporter, Rathia Stonogin.

Three months ago, while touring the Olympus Mons Territorial Metal Miniatures Factory, the General apparently disappeared. An immediate search was begun and when it failed to locate him the Martian Investigative Team Imperial (MITI) was called in. A more extensive search was begun all the Thre Imperium, even to such remote spots as Mithril and the Two-Thousand Worlds. The possibility of a Venusian plot was probed and hefty rewards were posted. However, all seemed in vain, and the search was finally given up...

At this point moving martia stepped in. The following capsule report was submitted: “I ruffled through our comment files and came across a strange case from...

TRAVELLER EXPANDS

Martian Metals has added more packs of figures to its Traveller range and has added 15mm scale vehicles. Figure packs are as follows:

2013 Beast of Burden
2015 Droyne
2017 K’ree Military (TL:12/10)
2018 K’ree Military (TL:10/10)
2019 Vaco-eel
2020 Zhozdai Millitary (TL:12/14)
2100 Light Grav Tank (TL:12/15)
2101 Medium Grav Tank (TL:12/15)
2102 Recon/Command/Scout (TL:12-15)
2103 Medium Grav Tank (TL:12/14)
2131 Recon/Command/Scout Pod (TL:12/14)
2131 Recon/Command/Scout Pod (TL:12/14)
2131 Recon/Command/Scout Pod (TL:12/14)

All figure packs retail for $3.95 each and contain approximately 12 figures each, which contains the beast and a rider. The combat vehicles pack retail at $4.95 each.

If placing an order from this ad, include $1.50 for shipping.

VERMITHRAX RELEASED

Martian Metals has just released a monstrous dragon for all dragon lovers and dour gamers. The dragon is the one and only VERMITHRAX PERJURATIVE of the movie "DRAGONSLAYER" (sound familiar?). This new figure looks just like the "real" dragon from the movie but remember it’s only metal. It has a whopping 24" wingspan and is 12'' in length. It comes in nine (9) pieces and the kit includes Ulrich the Wizard. All this for a measly $29.95. Ask for VERMITHRAX at your local game or hobby store or write to the Martians for more information. Truly the most incredible dragon ever manufactured.

GUESS YOUR OWN NAME WINNERS

The following earlings have correctly identified their own names and address's and will receive a figure manufactured just for them by Martian metals. Joey P. Brown of Seattle, W. Laurence McNamara of Mooresett, NJ Richard Daves of Great Oak Lake, II Albert Dietz of Baltimore, Md. These individuals are now eligible for Martian citizenship and all are being drafted into the Martian army. Congratulations.

LEADS MITH LEEPER SAYS: Don’t turn your back on Vermithrax...
The many ways of getting away
Methods and magic to keep your character out of the crypt

by Pat Reinken

Role-playing games are quite an outlet from everyday life. They allow a person to slay fantastically powerful creatures and gain fabulous riches and wonderful allies while doing so. They let a player use his wits to outsmart his monstrous foes and become a famous hero.

And they give everyone an opportunity to die at the hands of those fantastically powerful creatures and monstrous foes.

Yes, players, our characters can all bite the dust as we strive to reach our goals and fulfill those dreams. It's happened to nearly every person who plays role-playing games. Sometimes it strikes the older, more valuable and experienced characters, sometimes the young, promising ones. But it all turns out the same way: Another sheet of paper is moved to the notebook of deceased characters, or, worse yet, goes to that great metal basket in the corner.

In a few instances, fighting to the death is unavoidable. In a great many more, however, combat should be avoided — but isn't. Why not? Because players have not fully developed one of the most valuable skills they can possess. They have not mastered the art of running away.

It is also wise for players to take into consideration the movement speeds of each member of the party before any of them runs too fast for too long. It is rare that every member will be able to match the running speed of the fastest character, and no one likes to run panting too around a corner only to discover that his "buddies" have vanished in the darkness.

Boots of speed are probably the best aid to running. They provide a base movement of 24 and also give a two-notch improvement to the armor class of the character.

Boots of striding and springing are also helpful, especially to a character whose base movement rate is less than 12". These boots raise it to 12", regardless of the size or weight of the wearer, and also increase armor class by +1.

A Potion of speed is only so-so as a means of increasing the chance for a getaway. Although it does double the user's base movement rate and number of attacks, the potion ages a character one year and only lasts for 5-20 rounds. If he's being chased by a long-winded enemy, a character accepts the risk of having the effects of the potion wear off before the monster wears out.

If a character is lucky enough to have a horse, it would be wise for him to buy (or otherwise acquire) either Horseshoes of speed or Horseshoes of a zephyr. The speed shoes are generally preferred for escape purposes, because they allow the horse to move at twice its normal rate. The zephyr shoes allow a horse to travel without touching the ground, thus making it able to pass over natural barriers such as rivers, but zephyr shoes do not change the speed of the horse.

Up, up and get away

Flying is an alluring, glamorous prospect. To fly away from an opponent somehow seems more exciting and courageous than running from the same opponent. But flying has its drawbacks, too. Although exhaustion from flying is rare, it does sometimes happen — and the fall can hurt more than what happens afterward.

Mapping is still virtually impossible when flying, and the speed difference between individuals in the party still shows up. Because every member of a party does not usually have the same ability to fly as the other members (if they have it at all) and those who are able to fly cannot always carry those who are unable, some characters are left behind.

The old standby

One of the most popular methods of fleeing is the simple, direct approach: running away. But remember that running away will not only cause tiredness and possible exhaustion but can lead to getting lost as well. Because of the impossibility of mapping while running away, combined with the confusion of the moment which makes memory unreliable, parties are often split up and lost in a maze of tunnels after an every-man-for-himself escape.

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The duration that an airborne state can be maintained is also a major factor in fleeing by this method. If durations differ greatly, some characters will end up facing the enemy anyway, while the others sail into the sunset.

The Broom of flying is the best magic item to use for a flying escape. Its movement speed is 30", although this drops by 1" for every 14 pounds carried over the 182-pound normal load. It will also travel alone to any destination named and will move up to 30" to reach its
The only major problem with the broom is its length, which makes it cumbersome to carry and a possible hindrance during activity.

Carpets of flying, which vary in size, carrying capacity, and speed, are not as cumbersome as the broom but, if torn, will lose their magical capabilities until repaired by special weaving techniques. However, carpets have a greater carrying capacity than most of the other flying devices. The 5'x7' carpet, for example, which moves just as fast as the broom, allows a character to fly at speeds during activity. sensitive enough to sniff out a character from 12" to 32" (depending on the duration of invisibility can be heard or smelled as usual, and will become visible if he attacks.

Dust of disappearance is a better measure of invisibility than the spell or the ring. This magical powder bestows invisibility on anyone who covered with it. It also has the added benefit of not revealing the user when he attacks an opponent. This benefit can turn into a disadvantage, however, if the character is knocked unconscious while under the effects. This in itself would not be too bad except that the dust bends light of all sorts, making infravision and ultravision useless as well. Many a turn has been spent looking for characters under the effects of the dust while they were unconscious.

The Cloak of elvenkind is for those who do not wish to spend time casting spells or dusting themselves. It enables the wearer to be nearly invisible when it is worn with the hood drawn up around the character's head. The only major problem with this item is that the wearer is not totally invisible (extent is determined by the Dungeon Master), and that to maintain even partial invisibility, the wearer must move slowly and cautiously.

A Robe of blending is another useful garment to have when hiding. This robe allows a character to appear as a different creature, part of a wall, etc., and duplicates the coloration, form and even odor of the object. This would successfully conceal a character, except that the robe does nothing to cover body heat. If the player wished to appear as a creature of the type that is following him, he would still have a major problem because the magical garment does not bestow knowledge of languages.

A Potion of diminution offers a way of hiding without becoming invisible. The potion makes the consumer approximately 5% of his original size (50% if only half a dose is quaffed). Small size can be a detriment if the character doesn’t already have a place of safety for his diminutive frame, because the danger of being stepped on or crushed becomes very real. The effects of the potion wear off in a certain number of turns — and the character must be careful not to be hid- ing in too small a place when the effects stop.

The Portable hole is potentially one of the best methods of short-term hiding. This can be unfolded (if there is sufficient time) to provide a convenient hiding place when the hole is pulled in after the character. The shortage of oxygen is the only real disadvantage, allowing only enough air to breathe for one character for one turn (unless magical breathing assistance is being used). This will still probably be enough time to allow any undesirables to pass.

Other last resorts

The Potion of climbing gives a character the ability to climb as a thief. There is a chance of slipping, but the real risk with the potion concerns its duration. If this is a possibility that the involved character may remain in a high place for much more than one turn, don’t risk using this potion.

Gauntlets of swimming and climbing are better for escape than the climbing potion. As the name implies, these gloves have an added plus: They enable the wearer to increase his swimming speed.

A Potion of water breathing is very useful for swimming as it allows its consumer to remain under the water for over an hour.

Rings of swimming and water walking are beneficial during an escape that runs across a body of water. The swimming ring gives a bonus to swimming speed and breathing abilities while underwater. The water-walking ring allows a character to move across any liquid, thus making it possible to place a natural barrier behind him.

Levitation for escape is usually accomplished through the use of the second level Magic-User spell of the same name, the potion of the same name, or with Boots of levitation. The potion and the spell offer a better weight allowance than the boots, however.

Other magic items can be handy to have in getaway emergencies. Oil of ethereality and its companion in the hard-cover form, Plate mail of etherealness are nice to have in desperation. Their close relatives, the Amulet of the planes and the Cubic gate follow in right behind the ethereal magicks. All of these have the same risky factor: Being trapped in the 666th layer of the Abyss is not a substitute for a successful escape.

The Helm of teleportation, or any of the other teleportation devices, is a very good item to have when being chased by a great number of unfriendlies. Thirty thousand gold pieces, however, is a lot to pay for an armor hat which, at best, can cause a wicked case of motion sickness or possibly even jet lag. Other more mundane means of escape should be sought by those of low constitution.

if you can’t get out, hide out

Hiding is another method of running away. Actually it is not a method, but instead can be a wise thing to do before, during or after running away. This topic involves everybody’s favorite spell, Invis-
Experience, service-switching make TRAVELLER more ability-oriented

by Jon Mattson

The Traveller game system, over the passage of years, has metamorphosed in many ways. Not only has it developed and changed noticeably with the addition of various supplements, but it has also been transformed to suit the style and creativity of each individual referee. Traveller is very open-ended in this respect: It can easily be added to or changed to come up with one's own version of the "ideal" science fiction role-playing game.

When all is said and done, the thing which has probably undergone the most transformation in my campaign without changing the premise of the system greatly is the prior service and skills procedure. The skill system in the Traveller rules is a double-edged blade: On one hand, it is easy to utilize and fits very well with the rest of the game system (and many other science-fiction game systems, for that matter) but, on the other hand, when used directly as is, it can be a source of several problems and much misuse. The ideas presented below are an attempt to solve some of these problems.

Experience

Probably my biggest complaint with the Traveller system right from the beginning was its lack of some form of experience system. Basically, once a character is generated with his prior service and skills, he changes very little, if at all, through the course of his adventures. Since the player cannot improve his character, one of two things often occurs: Either he becomes somewhat disinterested in the character after several adventures (certainly the worst possibility in role-playing games, which depend for success on a player's ability to relate to his character), or his motives quickly turn from improving himself to improving his financial situation (which also usually results in the discontinuation of the character if and when he becomes rich and his player gets bored).

I have experimented with several systems of "learning by doing" experience, trying to keep them simple, with a minimum of paperwork and an optimum amount of realistic playability. The following system seems to work the best and seems generally the most acceptable to players.

During the course of an adventure, whenever a player's character uses a skill successfully in a trying situation (hits an opponent in combat, flies a ship through hazardous conditions, etc.), he notes this on his character sheet (a small tick mark for each successful usage pencilled in beside the skill listing is the easiest way to do this). Then, after the adventure, when he has time to relax and learn from his experience, the character may attempt to improve the skill in question by one level. This will require a number of days of practice equivalent to the number Of the skill level being practiced for. (For example, to advance from level 2 to level 3 in a skill area takes 3 days of practice.) A maximum of two skills can be practiced in this manner at one time. At the end of this practice period, the player makes an experience roll to see if he has improved the skill by one level.

The experience roll required is equal to:

\[(3 - \text{Present skill level}) + (\# \text{ of times skill was used})\]

The player must roll this number or less on 2d6 to successfully make the experience roll. A DM of -1 is applied if the character's intelligence is 8 to 12, and a DM of -2 if it is 13 or more. The referee may also award any other reasonable DMs he sees fit (some skills would be easier to increase than others). In any event, a roll of "2" is always successful (as long as the skill was used at least once since it was last raised), and a roll of "12" is always failure, regardless of DMs.

Example: Jor Roger’s, galactic merchant with an intelligence of 9, uses his Bribery skill (present level of 2) three times during an adventure. Thus, his basic roll is 4 or less to learn from experience (3 minus 2 plus 3). He rolls a 5, which would normally be a failure, but subtracts one from the roll because of his high IQ, to get a modified result of 4. He has successfully made the roll and increases his Bribery skill level to 3.

Players should note that when they take the experience roll is totally at their option, as long as they take the required practice time just before it. Thus, a player could save the roll for several adventures, hoping to increase his chances of making it by using the skill more often (although getting fewer total rolls because of this). There must always be at least one adventure between each roll, and rolls cannot be "saved up," although the chance of making any single roll can be increased by waiting as noted above. (Waiting for three adventures does not entitle a
player to three rolls, only one roll with a better chance of success.)

Optional combat rule: Referees may rule that for combat skills (only), the "number of times skill was used" should be halved (rounding fractions up) in the above formula. Otherwise, it may become too easy to assure oneself of improving a combat skill just by participating in one long battle. Or, instead of doing this, the referee may rule that, regardless of the number of times a character hits an opponent in combat, each battle (not each hit) counts as only one use of the skill (and then only if the character hits at least once). Either method is acceptable, but the referee should be consistent.

Limitations on skills

When judging how adept a character is with a given skill, the referee must make some kind of decision about just what each skill level represents. In my campaign, I have rated each skill level as follows:

- Novice, skill level 0: The character has no real knowledge of the skill in question and may receive certain penalties (especially in combat) because of this, as noted in the Traveller rules.
- Inexperienced, skill level 1/2: The individual may have some vague knowledge of the skill in question, but has no formal training in it. This level will not give him bonuses, but will prevent him from receiving non-proficiency penalties in combat, as noted in Traveller.
- Above average, skill level 1: The individual has an above-average knowledge of the skill in question, enough to use it in an elementary manner.
- Knowledgeable, skill level 2: The individual has a good background knowledge of the skill and can use it fairly well (with a reasonable bonus) in most situations.
- Adept, skill level 3: The individual has a good background knowledge of the skill in question and has mastered some of the more intricate workings of it. He is qualified to obtain a job using this skill.
- Expert, skill level 4: The individual has profuse knowledge of almost all areas of the skill in question and has no difficulty finding a job using this skill if one is available.
- Master, skill level 5 or higher: The individual is a veritable encyclopedia of knowledge on the skill in question and understands its most intricate workings with ease. He will be a leader in any field involving the use of this skill and may well be much sought after. He does not need to look for jobs using this skill; they are made for him.

Obviously, when considering skills in this light, there must be some realistic limitation on how high a skill level can be increased, either through the prior service tables or through experience (if the experience rules above are used). Thus, the following rule:

Once a character begins increasing a skill beyond level 5, it will no longer go up by a full level for each increase. Instead, it will increase by a fraction. To move from level x to level y when x is 5 or more will take a number of steps, according to the formula:

\[ \text{Skill Increase} = \frac{1}{x/2} \]

The amount of level increase is the reciprocal of one-half the lower level, x (fractions rounded down when halving). This means that the number of steps needed to rise from one whole-numbered level to the next one increases as the skill level increases.

Thus, a character increasing a skill from level 5 to 6 would only add one-half a level per increase; the reciprocal of 2 (half of 5, rounded down) is 1/2. Going from level 5 to level 6 would take two steps: going from level 6 to 7 and from level 7 to 8 would take three steps, and so on. The fraction of increase is noted on the character sheet each time one is achieved, but the improvement...
has no effect on the skill's usage until it is increased to the next higher whole number.

Jack-of-all-Trades

"Jack-of-all-Trades" is without a doubt the least used and yet most misused skill in Traveller. More often than not, players who attempt to use their Jack-o-T skill will be met with one of two reactions from the referee: He will either let them get away with murder ("Well, you do have Jack-of-all-Trades-1 so I guess you could fix the computer while piloting the ship at top speed through the asteroid belt..."), or he will ignore the possible effects of the skill entirely ("Aw, that doesn't mean you can do anything..."). For those referees who cannot decide how to use this skill arbitrarily, I offer the following system.

When a character wishes to use his Jack-o-T skill to assist him in an endeavor, rate the difficulty of the task at hand on a scale of 1 to 3 with 1 being the least difficult (fixing a slightly damaged radio, driving an unusual vehicle) and 3 being the most difficult (piloting a ship through an asteroid belt when your pilot skill is only 1, or piloting a ship at all if your pilot skill is only one-half). Subtract the difficulty rating from the character's Jack-o-T skill (minimum result of zero), and the remaining number represents the effect the Jack-o-T skill will have. This number can be used in one of three ways, depending on the situation:

1: If the player has skill of at least level 1 in the field in question (for example, if he is trying to shoot down enemy ships and has Gunnery of at least 1), the number can simply be added to this skill level temporarily.

2: The number can be used to modify any dice rolls involving the situation to which the player has applied his Jack-o-T skill.

3: The number can be used to represent the chance out of 6 (i.e., this number or less must be rolled on 1d6 to succeed, and a roll of "6" is always failure) that the character will be able to gain the advantage in a given situation. This generally results in the character temporarily acting as if he had a skill level of 3 in an applicable skill. For example, for a character trying to pilot a ship through an asteroid belt, the applicable skill would be either Pilot or Navigation, at the referee's discretion.

The referee must decide which of the above three methods of applying the modifier should be used in each situation.

Multiple services

I have often wondered why a character cannot, after leaving one service, join another one. In terms of playability I can understand this rule to some extent: A character who goes into more services will get too many skills. Yet, all things considered, this specification does not hold much water: If it is all right for a character to leave one service and join another one, join another one.

Barbarian could not usually become a doctor. But why couldn't a young belter become a merchant? Obviously, if multiple services are to be allowed, they must be limited to certain combinations for realism and playability, but equally obviously, a character should not be restricted to one service all of his life.

The table below lists which services can be combined and under what conditions. These combinations have, for the most part, been playtested and work quite well; however, the referee may suit his own views. Note that only services from Traveller Book One and Citizens of the Imperium are included here (although Army and Marines are considered to be as of Mercenary, and Navy is considered to be as of High Guard). Also note that, using this system, it is possible for a character to enter even more than two services (though age limits him to one or two terms in each); in this case, all Enlistment DMs are cumulative.

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†— Assume that the basic Enlistment Roll for Nobles is 2+, but a minimum Social Standing of 10 is still required.

Educated is a group heading which refers to any service which is able to receive at least +1 Education, either on its skills table or as a mustering-out benefit, but which is not already, listed under the same service heading.

Example: Flash Indapan, after having spent two terms in the Scouts, fails his re-enlistment roll and is given the boot. He decides that he would like to become a Belter now and try to make his fortune mining asteroids. From the table under the service heading of Belter, it is found that a Scout can indeed become a Belter as long as he is 26 or younger. Flash is 26, so he has no problem there. He attempts to make his enlistment roll with no modifications ("0" under Enlistment DMs), and manages to enter the new service. He would then continue in the Belters normally as if he had entered that service in the first place, except that he already has 8 years of experience behind him.
SUPERVILLAINS SEIZE CITY
BY "SCOOP" RICHARDS

The Human Flame has struck again, this time killing 247 and seriously injuring 30 more, by derailing the 12:04 subway from the Bronx.
Bystanders report seeing a man strolling casually onto the tracks as the train approached.
"I thought he was dead for sure," one woman, in near hysterics, reports. "Everyone was screaming. It was horrible. But then the man bent down, just as calmly as you please, and took hold of the tracks."
The woman goes on to state that bright flames erupted from the man’s arms and hands, burning the tracks in two almost instantly.

He then twisted a section of track back upon itself, according to the woman, while the group of 42 commuters stood by in silent shock.
The Human Flame fled the scene as the train derailed, killing all of the passengers aboard, as well as five commuters standing on the platform, waiting for the train.

One man reports seeing the Human Flame dash into an alleyway near the site, and moments later emerge soaring across the sky in the arms of his supposed girlfriend, Fly Woman.

Police are at a loss as to what can be done to end this reign of terror. This is the fourth incident this week involving these so-called super-beings, or Supervillains.

MAYOR THREATENS RESIGNATION
The mayor threatened to resign today, unable to cope with the threat of the Supervillains. "Supervillains are going to kill us all," he shouted, laughing hysterically, and dancing around the room.

By this time the mayor was pulling his hair and making unintelligible noises like a mad dog.

(SEE SUPERVILLAINS, PG. 2)

SUPERVILLAINS

is a game of role-playing and tactical combat in New York City. Many different scenarios are possible. In its fullest form SUPERVILLAINS allows as much freedom of character play as any role-playing game, but its simpler forms allow the players to exercise their tactical expertise, using the characters as units with various capabilities.

SUPERVILLAINS,
available at fine game and hobby stores,
is published by

TASK FORCE GAMES
The monuments of Minaria

by Glenn Rahman

The Altars of Greystaff

In the far southeast of Minaria, amid the craters of Blasted Heath, looms a great grey pillar. An array of broad stone altars stands at its foot. From them — even if they have seen no sacrifice in years — blood endlessly drips. Philosophers, scholars and sorcerers have pondered the sinister nature of Greystaff, but no one has conclusively defined its nature, be it of god, demon or natural spirit. What is known about Greystaff is cried into the sleeping minds of mediums the length and breadth of Minaria — that its altars crave blood, and in exchange for it Greystaff shall grant power over the elementals.

A myth of the South Plains maintains that man was created on the eighth day of the world. To test man’s obedience, the Maker God created Greystaff to tempt him. Alas, on the tenth day of the world, one of the two tribes of men approached Greystaff, threw half its members upon the altars, and called down a firestorm to destroy the other tribe the god had made.

The Maker was outraged by man’s perfidy; he poured out a black vat of ills across the world, expecting the flawed creation to despair and commit mass suicide. Once again he was thwarted; even in the face of all the physical and emotional ills that oppressed mankind, it perversely clung to life.

The most plausible theory of the origin of Greystaff comes from a little-known manuscript written by the unnamed “Mage of Jipols” in the tenth century. How this late source came by knowledge of ancient doings is not explained in the manuscript as we know it.

According to the Mage, when the Scarlet Witch, King, rose against the Lloroi Empire, he employed many blasphemous magicks that challenged the harmony of the natural universe. The lawful spells of the Lloroi magicians and priests were ill-matched against such mad conjurations. It seemed that no spell or army could stem the Witch King’s relentless advance.

The Mage says that the great of the realm agreed to a project of the utmost desperation. It seemed as if the powers arrayed against them had to be matched by powers of the same type. So by means of soul-wrenching incantations, over a period of several years, the wizards of the Lloroi raised a pole of negative magic power. They threw crowds of war prisoners across its altars and enlisted the powers of evil into the cause of the Lloroi Empire. Afterward, the Witch King’s victories ceased and his power was eventually beaten down.

Ancient historians have often conjectured that it was the practicing of forbidden sorcery that brought about the great Cataclysm. If the Mage of Jipols is correct, the Altars of Greystaff may have contributed to the catastrophe. Indeed, earthquakes, hurricanes and all manner of natural disasters have been correlated with sacrifices at the Altars. For example, when the tyrant of Adeese sacrificed to Greystaff in the year 1250, volcanoes erupted in the Barriorr Mountains, a tidal wave devastated the Sea of Drowning Men and severe flooding struck the kingdom of Immer.

It can be justly said that the king who invokes the power of Greystaff for short-term gains only risks disaster in the long run.

The Faces to the Sea

Many civilizations have come and gone on the face of the Minarian continent. It is one of the most regrettable features of Lloroi rule was that they cared so little for preserving knowledge of the ancient states which they overcame.

The Faces to the Sea are relics of one of these early cultures. The giant heads, sculptured to the shoulders, have features resembling no race that lives today on the continent of Minaria. A legend of Parros says that as long as the Faces watch the sea, no invasion from that direction will ever overthrow Minaria. It seems unlikely that this is the true reason the Faces were built; in the days of the Lloroi Empire, the Faces were much farther from the seacoast than they are today.

The lost culture that created these, heads seems to have been widespread. In 1340-43 a long drought troubled the Ercii people of the Wetlands (the Ercii being a hybrid race which lives by hunting, trapping and hiring out as military scouts in times of war). Their otter hunters discovered that the dropping water level had revealed a series of sculptures much like the Faces to the Sea. But before qualified scholars could study the discovery, the drought broke and water hid the objects once more.

The Isle of Fright

In ancient times, the Isle of Fright was part of the peninsula of Umiak. When Umiak went into the sea, a high plateau remained as the focus of a strange vortex of water called the Spiral Current. This current, drawing in waters from the whole of the Sea of Drowning Men, carries many strange things to the beaches of the Isle of Fright.

The flotsam that comes to the Isle does not wholly consist of junk. The masts, ribs and planks of many a noble vessel find their resting place here. So do the disassociated bones of the countless sailors who have lost their lives in the storms and accidents of the sea. Of even more interest is the treasure and valuable cargo litters the beaches and the stony reefs that ring the mysterious islet.

The Isle of Fright received its name partially from the vista of ruin and death upon its shores. Then too, pirates and freebooters, who have been visiting the island for centuries, have tried to ward off other treasure hunters by telling frightful tales of selkies and mermen which haunt its outlying shoals.

But the secret of the Isle of Fright is long out. Minarians are now more familiar with selkies and mermen and do not
November 1981

fear them so much. It is also well known how much treasure the island holds; fleets from civilized nations commonly engage in salvage operations off its reefs. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the isle holds its dangers. The unpredictable currents have forced many a vessel to wreck upon the rocks; others have been lost to the pirates who know its hidden channels. These pirates, when not engaging in drunken treasure-hunts, keep a lookout for the castaways whose rafts are inevitably drawn in by the Spiral Current. The rich captains and nobles usually are ransomed back to Minaria. Less happy is the lot of common sailors captured, who are worth no more than their bid price on the auction block of Slave Island.

The Lost City of Khos

For more than thirty-four centuries the city of Khos has stood deserted by man, shunned by the tribesmen and nations of eastern Minaria. According to the travelers who have visited it, there is majesty in the ruins of Khos — but also mystery and danger.

For the last few centuries, the danger has issued from the strange race of flying beings which lives in the cave-filled hills to the north of the city, and which comes to roost in the crumbling towers at sunset. A colony of gargoyles these are, a type of creature that has long inhabited the Wastes of Folmar in Girion.

No one knows what forced the gargoyles’ ancestors to make the long migration from their own country, but they are hated by the dwarves and the men of Pon. Too many thefts, of livestock and women can be laid at their door. Then too, their numbers are increasing; lately they have organized enough to name themselves a king.

But before the gargoyles came, Khos still evoked awe in the hearts of its visitors. The dwarves, a people accustomed to placing their emotions in verse, have left us a fragment of a tenth-century poem, attributed to Aether, the semi-legendary warrior-bard:

The work of Giants, the stonemasons
Frost cloaks the gatetowers, frost on mortar
Well-built this wall; fate broke it
The stronghold burst, the stout wall breached
Roofbeams snapped, towers fell
Shattered are the battlements, roofs r u i n e d
Age undermined them; time their undoing
 Came days of pestilence, on all sides men fell dead
War fetched off the flower of the people
The hosts who would build again shrank to earth
Therefore are these courts dreary, r i m e -l a d e n e d
These many feasthalls, empty...
The dwarf who composed these lines was moved by the spirit of the place, but likely did not know anything of its real history — those facts are lost in time. Tradition has it that Khos was the capital of a state that predated the Lloroi conquest. The Khosites supposedly practiced blasphemous sorceries and defied Lloroi rule. This led to a centuries-long struggle.

The Khosites must have been a heroic people: Even after the young men of Khos perished in battle, their wizard-priests brought their vengeful spirits back to continue the struggle. These wraiths, the Ghost Troops of Khos, won their greatest victory when they annihilated a Lloroi army south of the city. The specters drove the Lloroi soldiers to their deaths with terror; visitors can still hear the crazed laughter of the vanquished Lloroi drifting over the old battlefield. Hence the name of the place — the Field of the Laughing Dead.

Despite the wraiths, the Lloroi eventually destroyed the city of Khos. But by some chance, the spell to summon one of the Ghost Troops is preserved today in Minaria; therefore, the kings of Minaria can sometimes rally the spirits of these ancient heroes for their own warlike causes.

The Spires to the Sun

Before the demise of the Lloroi Empire, the most sacred ceremonies of the official state cult were conducted in the slender pyramids called the Spires to the Sun. The noble Lloroi sent their offerings to the Spires continuously for centuries, until the several temples of the god Taquamenau equalled the Imperial Palace in opulence.

Although the Emperors trusted in the protection of the Sun God, they did not fail to maintain a unit of personal guardsmen — The Order of the Hippogriff. These were recruited from among those who distinguished themselves in the Im-

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perial army. Their mounts were hippogriffs — strange offspring of horses and eagles, whose courage and agility exceeded even that of the thunderbirds and wyvverns which the Lloroi sometimes trained for war.

Man for man, the knights of the Order were the best fighters in Minaria. They were trained in taking strength and guidance from a mystical source called the “Flow.” It was this same power that a wizard had to tap to work his magic, but the knights were drilled in making the Flow part of their nature, and shunned vulgar thaumaturgy.

Once, when the renegade warrior Sir Morholt stole the one hundred and nine lenses from the Spires to the Sun, he eluded capture for three years. Finally he was run to ground — by the Order of the Hippogriff, which had been unerringly guided to its quarry by the Flow.

When the Cataclysm struck; the Sublime Emperor perished in his submerging palace. Fortunately, some of the Order of the Hippogriff were on hand to lift High Priest Winabigo out of doomed Niiawee — no mean feat, since a hippogriff will invariably balk at transporting one whose scent and voice is unfamiliar to it.

They escorted Winabigo to the Spires to the Sun, but he was already dying of remorse for the shattered empire. Before his death, he gave the Spires over to the safeguarding of the Order and placed a blessing upon them. The men would never lack for dedicated heirs, he said, who would carry on their fathers’ tradition. Neither would the flock of hippogriffs fail to increase with the needs of the knights. Seemingly the priest’s words were straight to his heart; for in the thirteen centuries since his dying, all he promised has come to pass.

During the dark centuries following the Cataclysm, the worship of the Sun God was forgotten in Minaria. Even the people of the South Plains who held onto civilization rejected Taquamenau in favor of local cults. The knights of the Order are the god’s last congregation.

Throughout the long years, the knights have obeyed the promptings of the Flow and fought for justice. Sometimes this has meant taking sides in war, such as the War of the Three Tyrants and the Wisnyo War, in both of which the knights figured prominently.

More often, however, the knights have performed individual feats of daring while gliding over the face of Minaria, going where the Flow might lead them. Often the Flow has led a knight to his destined fate — perhaps to be beleaguered by villains or monsters. Or, perhaps there is a village being ground down by a rapacious baron, a parish terrorized by an evil witch, a countryside menaced by rampaging beasts. All of these are jobs for the Order of the Hippogriff.

Winabigo promised that the Order would never die, and there are few persons in grateful Minaria who do not hope that the gods will continue to grant the priest’s dying wish.

The Tombs of Olde

When the Emperors of the Lloroi ruled from the city of Niiawee, the Tombs of Olde were named the Necropolis of Minjekahuian. Here, in a gleaming grave-city of alabaster and jacinth, the embalmed bodies of deceased Emperors and high priests were lain amid lamentation and flawless ritual. The last Emperor to be interred in Minjekahuian was Nibagisias; his unfortunate successor had his resting place in the Sea of Drowning Men.

Antiquarians have collected an abundance of myths about the Tombs; some have even dared to visit the city of sunscorched mausoleums. They have found that the ancient Lloroi planned well for the protection of their high-born deceased, with mechanical devices, curses, and guardian demons. And beyond these technological and supernatural terrors, they invested the Necropolis with a living menace.

From the faraway corners of Girion, the Lloroi brought strange, ghoulish beings called “kutrubs” to Minjekahuian. At home surrounded by sorcery and death, these creatures were entirely obedient to the charm-spells of the Lloroi priesthood. Lest they increase and spread beyond the tomb city, the priests wrapped a confining spell around the outer perimeter of Minjekahuian.

But it seems that the old, confining spells have faded. For some centuries the kutrubs have been expanding into the surrounding Waste of Vah-ka-ka. Until recently they did not constitute more than a local hazard to lone travelers and small groups. But by the early fourteenth century they had grown numerous enough to drive the nomadic tribes of the Vahka-ka into the Dry Mountains and the Banished Lands.

Many are the legends of doom surrounding the fate of tomb robbers who seek the treasure and magical devices buried in the crypts of the dead. One such tale speaks of Monju, king of Zefnar, who sent a host of slaves into Minjekahuian with picks and shovels. Until recently they did not constitute more than a local hazard to lone travelers and small groups. But by the early fourteenth century they had grown numerous enough to drive the nomadic tribes of the Vahka-ka into the Dry Mountains and the Banished Lands.

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Devil spider

Created by Erol Otus

FREQUENCY: Rare
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: 2 (except underbelly, which is AC5)
MOVE: 18 *12
HIT DICE: 13
% IN LAIR: 75%
TREASURE TYPE: H
NO. OF ATTACKS: 3
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-10 and 1-10 (2 claws) plus 2-12 (bite)
SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 25%
INTELLIGENCE: Average
ALIGNMENT: Lawful evil
SIZE: L (10' legspread, 5' high)
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

This creature's true name — if it has one — is unknown. It has come to be known by the name "Devil spider" because it certainly is some type of spider, and because it is devilishly evil in its attempts to capture prey and treasure.

The devil spider usually makes its lair in a chasm or large pit, or in an open area near a well-traveled path or under a bridge. It will spin a web which spans an open area (minimum 10'x10', maximum 100'x100') and will then lurk nearby, waiting for a potential meal to arrive on the scene. A spider may attack from ground level, or may descend on a victim from above, suspended by a single strand of webbing material.

The web is made of non-glossy, nearly transparent strands which cannot be detected by torchlight from farther than 5 feet away. And if a victim gets close enough to see the web, the spider will automatically attack. The devil spider will surprise an adversary on a roll of 1-4.

If at least one character or creature is no more than 10 feet away from the web, the devil spider will not usually make a normal attack but instead will attempt to shove the character nearest the web into the strands. If it has a choice, the spider will go for the target which is smallest or looks weakest. On a result of 11 or higher on a d20, this "push attack" will succeed. The die roll is modified by the following factors:

Target smaller than man-sized: -2
Target larger than man-sized: +2
Target surprised: -2

Target secured in position (using rope, spikes, or other devices): +1 to +4
Target in precarious position (clinging to cliff wall, etc.): -1 to -4

The strands of the devil spider's web are very strong. Any particular strand will be broken only if it takes 10 points of damage in a single round, from one or more hits on the same spot. If a web strand takes less than 10 points of damage in a single round, it will be able to absorb up to 10 more in a subsequent round, because the attacker(s) is not able to hit precisely the same spot with attacks in two different rounds. It takes 40 points of damage to sever a web at the intersection of two strands, where the material is much thicker, but damage to a web intersection is cumulative over more than one round.

Blunt weapons do only half damage to the web. It is fireproof, but takes double damage from cold-based attacks.

The web strands are coated with a clear, glue-like substance. A character whose body contacts the web will be immobilized by the sticky goo, but may pull one or two extremities free. If a roll of d20 is equal to or less than the average of the character's strength and dexterity (round fractions down), one limb (victim's choice) is freed. A victim can roll to try to partially escape once per round, but no more than two limbs can be pulled loose in this manner. The spider will attack at +2 "to hit" against a victim in the web, and the victim (if able to fight back) will be at -4 "to hit" as long as he is in the web.

A devil spider is reasonably intelligent, and its course of action will always be dictated by circumstances rather than instinct. However, the creature is somewhat predictable. It will always begin a combat situation by making repeated attempts to push a target into its web, as long as a target is available. Then it will assault the victim, trying to kill or weaken it so it cannot escape. During all this time, the spider will generally ignore attacks on its body, but if its hit points are reduced to less than half of the original number, it will either turn to take on the ones doing the damage, or it will attempt to flee (depending on its estimation of the strength of its enemies). After it has captured one victim, it will not attempt to push another one into the web until the first victim is killed or freed.
This loathsome creature has no redeeming physical features. Vaguely humanoid, the creature's body is light brown to tan in color. Protruding from the upper front of the body are eight slimy, brownish-green tentacles. These tentacles range from 6-8 feet in length, depending on the creature's body size.

The mouth of a surchur doesn't have teeth, but is lined with rows upon rows of sticky cilia that secrete a chemical which digests the flesh of humans and demi-humans. Two stout horns protrude from the middle back of the beast. They are not unlike those of a bull, but somewhat larger. The horns are composed of an ivory-like material which is generally of good quality. Each horn can be sold for 100-600 gp, depending on its quality and the size of the surchur it came from.

The surchur will typically attack first by trying to grab a victim in its tentacles; if an 18 or higher is the result of the monster's “to hit” roll, the victim is caught and immediately takes 5-20 points of damage. During the next two rounds the surchur will attempt to pull the captured victim into its mouth. The victim may attempt to break free in each round, with a base chance of 20% for success, plus 10% for each plus “to hit” the character may have due to high strength. While the surchur is holding a victim it cannot attack another figure.

A victim which is dragged into the surchur's mouth will take 2-8 points of damage per round from the digestive juices until the victim or the monster is dead.

A surchur cannot put more than one victim in its mouth at one time. However, it prefers fresh food if it has a choice. A second victim can be grabbed and held while the first is in the mouth. When the tentacles have immobilized another victim, the first one will be expelled from the mouth cavity even if it isn't dead, and the new victim will be engulfed instead.

If the surchur does not succeed in grabbing a victim, it will still do damage to an adversary within range of its tentacles by hitting with the tentacles themselves. A surchur which is not injured will be able to effectively attack with a bunch of five tentacles at once, with each tentacle considered to do 1-4 points of damage on a successful hit. Any blow which is aimed at a tentacle, hits it, and does at least 3 points of damage will sever a tentacle. A surchur with fewer than 5 tentacles intact will do correspondingly less damage from a strike, and a surchur with fewer than 4 tentacles will not keep its grip on a victim as easily; the chance to escape per round is increased to 60% against a surchur with 4 tentacles, +10% for every tentacle less than four.

If a surchur is very hungry, it will continue to attempt grabbing victims as long as it is able. If its appetite has been at least partly satisfied, it will attempt to flee when seriously injured. A surchur's lost tentacles will grow back in 3-6 days.

The typical climate in which surchurs are found is jungle-like, but they can be found in just about any environment except extreme cold.
Dyll

Created by Ed Greenwood

FREQUENCY: Rare
NO. APPEARING: 30-300
ARMOR CLASS: 7
MOVE: 6'/18"
HIT DICE: 1-3 hit points
% IN LAIR: 45%
TREASURE TYPE: See below
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-3
SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard
INTELLIGENCE: Animal
ALIGNMENT: Neutral
SIZE: S (4-8 inches long)
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil
Attack/Defense Modes: Nil

The bloodsucking swarms of the dyll occasionally descend upon herds of cattle or small settlements, and are greatly feared. Dyll are small, leech-like creatures. Teardrop-shaped and glossy silver in color, they wriggle in the manner of worms when on the ground, but prefer to fly upon their rubbery "wings," darting about with great maneuverability (Flight Class A).

Dyll locate their prey by sensing vibrations, by, smell, and by homing in on sources of heat. These senses act in combination, and are effective up to a range of 6". Dyll swarms will attack creatures of any size, surrounding their victims in a blinding, hampering cloud. Creatures in the cloud attack at -1 "to hit" and are unable to read spell books, scrolls, or inscriptions, for these are obscured. Such a swarm will always contain at least 30 dyll and perhaps as many as 100. Groups of more than 100 dyll are extremely rare, and if such a large group attacks it will always form at least two swarms.

A swarm can hamper as many as three human-sized victims at a time, if they are within 5 feet of each other. Within the swarm, from 2-24 dyll will attempt to strike at each victim every round. Solitary dyll will attack only motionless (i.e., sleeping or disabled) creatures.

A dyll is covered with thousands of microscopic, hollow spines. Using these, it sucks 1-3 hit points worth of blood from a victim each round. The initial strike of the dyll does 1 point of damage as it attaches itself. It begins draining blood on the round thereafter.

A dyll gains strength from the blood it ingests, at the rate of 1 hit point for each 2 points of blood-draining damage it causes. It will remain attached and continue to drain blood until it is killed or until it reaches 9 hit points, whereupon it will loosen its grip and fly away.

Dyll typically lair in rocky areas or caverns, usually near water where creatures come to drink. Such lairs often contain the drained husks of past victims, and any treasure borne in by those unfortunate.

One dyll in every 10 creatures will be able to cast a Sleep spell affecting creatures with up to 3 hit dice when attacking a victim. If its initial strike is successful, the spell is cast. Sleep spells cast by dyll striking in the same round are cumulative; thus, a pair of dyll may strike and sleep a creature of up to 6 hit dice, three dyll can affect a creature of 9 hit dice, and so on.
Poltergeist

Created by Craig Stenseth

FREQUENCY: Very rare
NO. APPEARING: 1-4
ARMOR CLASS: -3
MOVE: 12"
HIT DICE: 6
% IN LAIR: 20%
TREASURE TYPE: C, Q x 5
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: By weapon type
SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES: +2 or better weapon to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 65%
INTELLIGENCE: High
ALIGNMENT: Chaotic neutral
SIZE: S (3' tall)
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

Poltergeists are the spirits of chaotic gnomes from Limbo and Gladsheim sent to the Prime Material Plane to spread the influence of chaos. They enjoy jokes and tricks, and their magical nature makes it difficult to do anything to stop them. And when they are provoked by someone trying to spoil their chaotic fun, they become as single-minded in their purpose as a berserker.

Poltergeists can use several spells of an illusionary nature. At will, they can perform the following feats of magic, at the 8th level of spell-use ability: Audible glamer, Hypnotism, Invisibility and Ventriloquism. They have infravision (60') and can teleport with no chance of error up to once per turn.

The creatures are immune to cold-based attacks and are unaffected by charm, hold and sleep spells and attack forms. A poltergeist only takes half damage from electrical and fire-based attacks, which is reduced to one-fourth if it makes a successful save.

Poltergeists will be armed as follows: 15% with club & sling, 30% with club & spear, 40% with short sword, 15% with short sword & spear. There is a 15% chance for any poltergeist carrying a club or sword that the weapon is magical (+1).

The chaotic nature of poltergeists makes it difficult to describe them in terms of general characteristics. They tend to show hatred for the same creatures that gnomes hate (goblins, kobolds and orcs in particular), but will not hesitate to attack or beleaguer any character they encounter.

Poltergeists cannot be forever slain when encountered on the Prime Material plane; one whose body is killed will have its essence banished to Limbo or Gladsheim for a time and will then be able to reappear.
This is the fourth of a five-part mini-series in Simulation Corner that gives a detailed but non-technical answer to the question of how to make a game. The series discusses this question in regard each of the various steps of game design, starting with the selection of a topic. Last month’s segment covered ways and means of designing for realism. This month’s intention is to move beyond that point to discuss the notion of “state of the art” in game design.

The series is based upon the experience of professional game designers drawn from three sources: interviews in the hobby media; my own experience; and the testimony of a panel of game designers who were asked to give their opinions on these subjects.

The expert panel was composed of Jay Nelson, noted for his designs Bridge Too Far and Highway To The Reich; Jack Greene, author of the exciting new Ironbottom Sound (Quarterdeck Games) as well as the Avalon Hill update of Bismarck; and Stephen Newberg, veteran innovator with his Lee At The Crossroads and his WWII naval trilogy IJN-Torpedo-Kriegsmarine (all games by Simulations Canada). These highly qualified designers are together responsible for roughly two dozen published game designs.

In an earlier column (“State of the Art,” DRAGON #42), Simulation Corner analyzed two games on the same subject by the same company done ten years apart. We found that the newer game had a much more sophisticated approach, to modeling a number of game elements and concluded from this that there has been a improvement in the general “state of the art” with respect to game design.

Among professionals there is incomplete agreement on this point. Jack Greene, on the one hand, sees the state of the art as “moving forward certainly,” while Jay Nelson cautions that “state of the art is an amalgam of inspiration and stealing (not to mention some inspired stealing).” Unfortunately, many times “state of the art” is only thought to be that which is new. Many games which are no longer played contain ideas which are even now “state of the art.”

Here is the first point: What is “state of the art” may not necessarily be new in games. State of the art may mean that a traditional element of a game system has been handled with excitingly different mechanics. Or it may mean that the design has found ways to present things ignored or factored out in previous designs.

While it is not possible to give a precise definition for “state of the art” as a concept, it is relatively easy to identify state of the art in retrospect. The rule of thumb to identify a state-of-the-art change is to ask whether the game design contains one or more new elements that future designs on similar topics cannot get along without.

Designing for state of the art is not the same as designing for realism, although the design tools (game mechanics) used in the service of both objectives are the same. A game need not be realistic to attain state-of-the-art distinction, but a realistic game will either attain the state of the art or else it will be perceived as too complex for comfortable play.

Thus, the task for the designer in achieving state of the art is different than in his quest for realism. Whereas in designing for realism the creator of a game must seek to identify all the elements relevant to the situation, in designing for state of the art the task is to see if those elements can be handled reasonably without overloading the overall design. Although in reality these are complementary design tasks, for ease of understanding it may help to think of realism as a stage of, including elements and state of the art as a stage of excluding things.

Why is state of art being defined in this essentially negative fashion? Isn’t “state of the art” a process of modeling more things more accurately in games? Yes, but... The problem is that the term can be used in different senses: “State of the art” can denote the outer limits reached by design technique in modeling processes, or it can be used to mean an average level of modeling sophistication in games of a certain type or period.

As a general question for game designers, it is this second meaning that is now our concern. This is why “state of the art” is presented here as a process of exclusion: The problem is to create a game system with the highest possible level of “average” modeling sophistication without overburdening the game as a whole so that it is perceived as excessively complex. The mark of excellence in game design is the elegance with which inclusion and exclusion decisions have been made, and the measure of the quality of a game is how high its “average” sophistication remains despite the accommodations that must be made to retain the desirable feature of playability.

As with the perennial problem of the quantifications that underpin game capabilities, a trouble with inclusion/exclusion decisions is the subjective nature of the beast. There is no rule a designer can use to simplify his decisions on these matters. But it may help to consider for a moment the other meaning of “state of the art”: the outer limits of design technique. Clearly a relationship exists between the topic of a game and which elements in its system will be at issue when a gamer looks at the design to see if it achieves this “state of the art.” Because of this, the designer has a guide to where he should focus his detailed game mechanics. Here is the second point to mark: Focus the game mechanics on design elements that contribute to the state of the art in that type of game.

The third point to mark is to always conceive of the game as a totality. From the beginning of the innovation process, the designer should have in mind a given level of complexity for the whole game and he should keep in mind how each rule, mechanic, or subsystem builds toward that level. If the total “design load” of the game system exceeds the designer’s original intention then something in the system should be pared down, or the designer treads on thin ice.

In Highway To the Reich, for example, Jay Nelson recalls that the use of numbers in the game became so prevalent that finally “the numbers took control, not me.” This is a predicament to be avoided unless the intention is expressly to design something like Campaign for North Africa.
Let's take this notion of a "design load" and make it more concrete. The essence of game mechanics and subsystems are created by the rules, so it's a fair assumption that there is a relation between the complexity of a game and the length of its rules. In practice, the typed manuscript for a "simple" game should work out to less than twenty pages, that for a "moderately complex" one to no more than forty.

Of course, this last proposed solution is a mechanical formula. It is subject to manipulation in a way that does not ensure the continued quality of the game system. Much better is for the designer to confront his design problems squarely, by working with each major subsystem until that rule briefly expresses a game mechanic that deals with some real element in a satisfactory way.

Mechanical solutions or rules of thumb are useful, but the best designers, in addition to knowing "the book," also know when to throw "the book" away. This is true both in the initial design stages and at the advanced game-development level.

The best way to gain a feeling for this instinctive solution-finding is through obtaining and following a conscious philosophy of game design. In the last installment of the "Practicing Game Design" series next month, Simulation Corner will turn to this issue of design philosophy.

There's more!

Proud as we are of this issue of DRAGON™ magazine, we're pretty pleased with what we've done in the past. And apparently, so are our readers, because most of our back issues are sold out. We do have copies of some magazines for sale, including issue #22 and issues #40 through #54.

If you've searched in vain for a copy of one of our early issues, the BEST OF THE DRAGON™ may solve the problem. This anthology of reprints of our most requested material from issues #1 through #14, is one of several other products sold by Dragon Publishing: THE FINIEOUS TREASURY™, a collection of adventures featuring the hero of our most popular comic strip; and DRAGONTALES™, an anthology of original heroic fantasy fiction and art.

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Universe is an artistic triumph

by Jeff Swycaffer

With precision typical of SPI, the game Universe was released exactly when the public seemed most ready for it. It's a big game, of wide scope, and SPI has big plans for it.

The first thing one sees upon examining the box — after the price ($20 for the boxed version, including the Delta-Vee tactical combat system) — is the cover illustration: a family snapshot of a pair of adventurers and their trusty robot, all busily engaged in shooting their way out of a heavy ambush. It seems somehow typical of the far future that the woman is busily firing her pistol at some unseen threat while the man and the bot take time out to smile at the camera.

The hopeful gamer moves on to the components, and here the first reward is striking: the four-color star map. Similar to the map for SPI's StarForce, this map is a true three-dimensional display of all known stars within thirty-one light years of Earth, shown in brilliant colors against the deep black of space. The grid is rectangular, as opposed to hexagonal — a change that subtly enhances the believability of the situation. As in the StarForce map (the most beautiful piece of artwork SPI had ever produced, as of the time of its release), the stars here are small, colored points, accompanied by a brief label that names each star and gives its spectral class. Gone — and good riddance — are the ugly poker-chip stellar displays of Freedom in the Galaxy and Sword and the Stars. The effect here, as opposed to those latter maps, is a chilly, naturalistic, and usable depiction of the far heavens. Another bonus: Only a portion of the mapsheet beyond the map is taken up with charts and tables, and these are useful ones, referring to the map itself. In one corner, marring the overall effect, is yet another reproduction, making three in all, of the cover-art family snapshot, robot and man posing with wide smiles while the woman fires to stage left.

But all other types of art pale in comparison when the rules are opened: Here is art to be appreciated with another portion of the mind altogether. Character generation takes up nearly half of the 76-page rule book, and comprises the most complex and complete character-generation system that role-playing has yet developed.

The system is nearly as complex as character generation would be in real life; nevertheless, most desired results are within reach. Even the most difficult character type to obtain, the character that is powerfully psionic, doesn't take more than five or six runs through the system to produce.

Skills have levels, and usually the square of the skill level is the bonus to the percentage chance for success listed for a certain task. If the base chance to ambush a party, for instance, is 30%, then a character with Ambush-6 has a 66% [30 + (6 x 6)] chance, and a character with Ambush-7 has a 79% chance. Although other modifiers apply, such as agility and battlefield skill, it is the preferred skill, when squared, that gives the greatest contribution to success.

There seems to be quite a bit of psionics in this game, far more than a strictly materialistic referee might be able to swallow. True, the power of these favored and somewhat rare people is kept within reasonable limits, so that no psionic strongarm ruffian can take over the game. And true, the power is written into the game so that it can, with effort, be deleted, but far too many basic game systems are based upon the existence and use of psionic talent. Interstellar navigation is based on psionics, guaranteeing that there will be at least one of these not-quite-humans aboard every starship; this will be unacceptable to many gamers.

On, then, to robots and equipment. Unlike any system previous to Universe, robots are built according to a simple "shopping-list" approach, with money being the main limiting factor. Fortunately, not all that many different robotic systems are available, leaving it impossible for a player to produce anything too grotesque. As always, play balance is uppermost in the designer's mind. Personal equipment is fairly standard — if useful — stuff. Most of it is cash and carry, but a few very useful and needed items have a waiting time for acquisition.

The world-generation system is superb. Everything from a planet's position in the orbital sequence to its size, number
of moons, civilization level, and proper place in the overall Federation is covered; mapping the planet's surface is handled in a manner far more realistic and useful than the system of icosahedron/hexagons that other systems apply. The new system gives larger planets more actual area, rather than simply increasing the scale on one standard map. This may well be the game's most outstanding feature. Due to the fact that a standard—and real—star field has already been generated (by nature, and not by any mapper's art), no system is included for generating a new stellar map. On the other hand, one won't be needed during the course of play, so nothing is lost.

The section following this in the rules may well be the game's worst: Character Action. The action sequence is dense, slow, and, for referees without a computer, just about useless. The calculations aren't complex at all; there are simply too many of them. It has long been the primary fault of percentage-based game systems that every action that could possibly add even as much as one percent to the probability of success of a given task must be taken into account.

The end result of this is not realism, it is death by detail. If UNIVERSE doesn't suffer from this as much as does TSR's TOP SECRET® game (including the designer's additions, official or not), it does suffer from this fault more than TSR's BOOT HILL™ game or SPI's Dragon-Quest. This fault in this section by no means makes the game unplayable; it does raise the complexity level overall a little more than was necessary.

The Delta Vee tactical system

Delta Vee, as a space combat system, is unparalleled—the best space combat system on the market, narrowly beating out GDW's Mayday and High Guard.

The Delta Vee system is, by its nature, unrealistic, and that is one of its greatest assets. Rather than trying for a simulation of true zero-gravity maneuver, as was done in Vector-3, SPI and Butterfield have developed a free-wheeling, yet controlled system, more like an air battle than anything else. Since in all of the big-name movies and television series we've come to love, the space combat is essentially World War II air combat, this simplification is not only acceptable, it is nearly ideal.

Both Mayday and Vector-3 suffer from the perfectly realistic fact that to slow down in space takes as much time as to speed up. Because of this, players constantly overshoot their targets, their objectives, and the edge of the map while trying to line up the perfect bead on the fleeing enemy.

In Delta Vee a number of unrealistic, yet necessary, game devices are employed to keep the speeds down. Now, cleverness and a little foresight can offset the advantage an enemy might have even with a bigger ship and heavier engines. Combat is by missiles and by beams, with a pleasant variety of each; there aren't many instant deaths out there, with one ship blowing another into component atoms, but the damage to a hit ship is satisfyingly severe, and is not reparable (as opposed to Mayday, in which repair rolls can make the effects of any hit meaningless, and in which winning means getting a dozen or so hits on one section of the target over several hours of play). There are no computer rules for Delta Vee, a slight omission but not a disheartening one.

Perhaps the less said about the counters, the better. Better counters, while not adding much to the game, could have been expected. True, the counters serve their purpose, and true, the real record-keeping is in the paperwork on the players' clipboards at their sides. But, all in all . . . better could have been expected.

The big question

How does the UNIVERSE system compare with Traveller? The question practically begs to be answered. SPI asks it on the feedback card that accompanies the game. Players will ask it upon opening the box. The noble worthies at GDW will endeavor not to ask it at all, trying to avoid calling all that more attention to it. Well, how do they compare?

Details come first to mind. Traveller ships are built within a hull; Universe ships use interchangeable pods.

Traveller has fewer concerns with robots; Universe cares less about the military. Both systems use a variation of teleportation for interstellar travel; both systems feature psionics, swords, the concept of law being equivalent to totalitarianism, free trade between planets, and so on.

The essential difference, it seems, is this: Universe, in what it offers, is superior. The character-generation and space-combat systems are superlative. The world-generation and mapping systems are unexcelled. Probably, many currently ongoing Traveller games will have these and other systems adapted for use in those campaigns.

But it will be Universe that is adapted into a Traveller campaign, not the other way around. Because Universe does not yet offer a grand scope, like the Imperium of Traveller, and does not offer the militaristic splendor that Traveller players have come to love, it will be hard put to become more than just a Traveller supplement.

In conclusion, and without fear of overstating an essentially pretentious view, Universe is highly recommended, simply because if it cannot be appreciated for itself, it can be viewed as the best Traveller supplement on the market. In time, with proper supplementation of its own (SPI has great plans for add-on elements), it has promise of becoming far more. Buy it.
made. If the second edition was fine tuning, the third edition is a major overhaul.

THIRD REICH is a strategic level game of the war in Europe 1939 to 1945. The large map depicts Europe from Lisbon to the Caspian Sea and Alexandria to most of Scandinavia. The units are approximately corps size and come in armor, infantry, and airborne (all land units) as well as air and naval units. The actual movement and combat mechanics are not overly complex, but take a bit of practice to master. Players have the option of making attrition attacks on a given front; a sort of all-inclusive summation of the operations in a region, one maneuver, during which attacks are made on an odds-chart CRT between adjacent units and nearby air fleets. The turn sequence is move-combat-exploitation, the final phase being a second movement and combat opportunity for armored units that did not attack in the first combat phase and were adjacent to attacking units that eliminated their defenders and advanced after combat. It is this exploitation segment that really gives the game a great feel for mechanized warfare. Combined with air units, armored forces can recreate the blitzkrieg of rapid advances and massive encirclements. Naval units operate a little more abstractly, but can still perform their historic functions of ground support, naval transport, amphibious assault, and foiling of enemy naval missions.

While THIRD REICH's mechanics are interesting enough, the game has another whole level of play that forms an intensive backdrop to the operational/military aspects of the game. Players not only assume the role of general staff, plotting out and executing operations, but they must also take on the mantle of grand strategists, making the political and economic decisions of when and where to fight. Clausewitz's maxim that war is an extension of politics is aptly illustrated. The players are given basic criteria for victory (such as the control of a certain number of objective cities, or conquest of a number of enemy powers) but are left entirely on their own as to how to do it. For example, while it might be wise for Germany to attack Russia on or before summer of 1941, the Axis player is never compelled to do so by an arbitrary rule. There is no rule compulsion to attack minor countries such as Norway, only that the Axis (or perhaps even the Allies in rare instances) might find it advantageous for reasons of position or economic aggrandizement. The options and strategies are variable and flexible.

Economics plays a large part in the game. Basic Resource Points (BRPs) are granted to each country; more can be obtained through economic growth or absorption of other nations. They are expended in purchasing units from a country's force pool or for paying for declarations of war and offensive options. Alcioneas will be pleased to know that the 1981 version is same as the one they own, but they may be curious as to what they will be getting for the $9 price Avalon Hill is asking for an update kit, containing a new board, scenario cards, and rule book.

The main reason for the high price is the new mapboard. Differences from the old map are relatively minor. Sevastopol is now a fortress, Aachen has been renamed Bonn, and The Hague has been moved north one hex. Constantinople is now a Black Sea port as well as a Mediterranean port, giving the Turkish fleet something to do if the Russians invade. The mapboard is more aesthetically pleasing; the blue used for the water has been muted, and the coastlines are thinner and thus more defined.

In the new force-pool cards, France and the U.S. now have separate cards instead of being backprinted, so that both nations can be in the game at the same time — if, for some reason, France should survive until 1942. The force pools have not been altered, and the original countermix is still used.

The biggest changes are in the rules. Although basic concepts remain the same, there has been an almost total rewrite, and the effort has paid off. Of the three rulebooks for the variant editions, this one is the most tangible.

Some of the mechanics have been altered.

For example, an armored unit does not have to survive and advance into a hex during combat to achieve a breakthrough, but it does have to participate. This makes breakthroughs a little easier to effect.

The biggest rule changes have been made in air and naval combat. The old system was rather simple; no die rolls were required, and losses were extracted on a more-or-less even basis, though modified in favor of the larger force in the new system. Both sides roll a 6 on their die rolls and modify either up or down for such factors as numerical superiority and nationality. The modified results are compared, and the difference (in units) is lost by the lower roller, with the victor losing half as many units. The impact of this change on the game is considerable, especially in the air war, which is a crucial adjunct to land combat. It is more difficult for the offensive player to insure the destruction of the defender's air power, for one thing, and the air factors of both sides tend to survive a little longer than in the original game. More importantly, the introduction of a luck factor into the resolution process allows the possibility of a smaller force defeating a larger, something not possible before. Air attacks against fleets have been changed as well, now bloodier for both the navy units and the attacking planes.

On the economic front, there has been a reduction in the BRP loss to Britain for the Axis capture of Suez; the penalty is down from 50 BRPs to 25 BRPs, but Gibraltar is worth 25 now. The process for resolving Murmansk convoy attempts has been updated as well.

Rumors about the Red Tide front for the war, as the Soviet Union represents the most formidable obstacle to Axis victory. In the original rules, the USSR was conquered when reduced to less than 75 ground, air or naval factors. The third edition lowers that requirement to 50, but prevents the Soviet player from counting his fleets in his total. The Germans must have a 3:2 ratio in factors to Russian strength inside the USSR proper, a bit more than previously required. The net result is that the Germans can concentrate on attacking Russian units and not have to worry about the U-boat campaigns.

A new section of rules dealing with foreign aid has been introduced. This allows the major powers to make BRP grants to minor powers in an attempt to influence their activation. For example: Rumania, normally an Axis minor that activates in summer of 1941, could be prevented from doing so by BRP grants from Russia, which would modify an activation die roll in favor of the Soviets. The Germans, of course, could spend BRPs to counter the Soviet diplomatic effort.

Also new is the intelligence table, used in conjunction with the campaign game variant table. Players may expend BRPs and roll in hopes of discovering or possibly nullifying the enemy's variant chit.

The strategic warfare rules, which cover the U-boat campaign against British shipping and the bombing of German industry, have undergone some major changes. For one thing, the Allied ASW no longer eliminates Axis subs on a one-for-one basis; starting in 1943, ASW factors take out increased numbers of the opposition, preventing the Germans from enjoying quite the runaway success that strategic warfare afforded them previously.

There is also a new provision that in a strategic warfare phase when Allied bombers get through, the Axis must remove an air fleet from play for that year and convert it into interceptors. This keeps both sides on their toes and give incentives for the construction of both bombers and interceptors, units that had before been largely ignored in favor of U-boats and anti-submarine warfare factors.

This review includes only the most salient changes made in the third edition of THIRD REICH; numerous smaller alterations were made and even veteran players should re-read the rules to insure catching these.

One might ask if all the effort expended on a third edition of this venerable game was worth it. I would have to answer yes. Though some of the new rules take a little getting used to (the new air warfare sections are a prime example), once they are understood they prove out to be changes for the better. It would seem that it is possible to improve upon a good thing, and the folks at Avalon Hill should be commended for caring enough to take another look at one of their products.
New gaming accessories: Useful, durable, original

by Kim Mohan

I remember the days when the only things a game magazine reviewed were games — the days before people like Tim Orisek, Chuck Kennedy, R. B. Zajeski and some guy named Polly S started to carve out their own niches in the adventure-gaming market.

They don't do games, you see. They do game accessories — things that aren't games themselves, but are supposed to be used with a game to make the game itself easier or more enjoyable to use. Making game accessories is a good way for a manufacturer to get a slice of the game-playing consumer's dollar without going to all the trouble of creating a new game (and cluttering up things with yet another set of rules for something or other).

Does this mean that game-accessory manufacturers are trying to take advantage of the public's enthusiasm for the hobby by giving people more ways to spend their amusement money? Well...yes. But that doesn't mean they're crooks or clods — particularly not the manufacturers mentioned above. The game accessories they've produced are an asset to the hobby because they satisfy three important criteria: They're useful, they're durable, and most important of all, they're original.

Orisek Industries is a company that makes "How come nobody thought of that before?" products. The people who brought the third dimension into gaming with Counter Clips and Nebelwerfer Smokescreens have now come up with SPELLBINDERS™. Orisek's trademark for an assortment of vinyl notebooks. The flagship of the line is an 8½x11-inch, three-ring looseleaf binder that doubles as a storage place and a DM's screen. When the notebook is opened out, the cover can be tilted away from the center spine and the binder will stand up to keep its contents shielded from eyes on the other end of the table.

The big SPELLBINDER notebook has a suggested retail price of $8.95, which sounds a little steep for what is essentially an ordinary looseleaf binder with a gaming-oriented gimmick. But it appears to be very sturdily constructed and is covered in a tough plastic coating that doesn't seem likely to split at the seams. It'll last for a long time.

Another $8.95 will get you two smaller SPELLBINDERS designed for the computer-game enthusiast. Covered with the same gold vinyl as the big notebook, the smaller binders are for storage of computer mini-disks and tape cassettes. The three compository measures 7x10 inches, with four tape-shaped rectangles of molded plastic on one of the inside surfaces that sandwich and contain where documentation or rules can be stored.

All of the SPELLBINDER products have a valid purpose, but perhaps some purposes are more valid than others. Maybe it's because I don't happen to own a multitude of disks and cassettes, but I can't see the computer-game SPELLBINDERS being snapped up by everyone who's into that aspect of the hobby of gaming. For the price of a couple of binder sets, you can pick up some new blank disks or cassettes instead, and I have a feeling that's what a lot of people are going to do.

Contact Orisek Industries, P.O. Box 52, Hinsdale IL 60521, for more information on SPELLBINDERS or any of the company's other products.

Chuck Kennedy is the head of Creative Conceptions and the purveyor of a new playing aid called the MAGNE=MELEE™ Magnetic Graphic System, which is —

Heck, there's no way around it. It's a cookie sheet, folks. A deluxe cookie sheet, to be sure, with the other equipment and instructions you need to make moving miniatures around easier and more exact.

The product's conceptual claim to fame is something called the Diamo Dot™ pattern. The underside (where the cookies don't go) of the 11"x17" metal sheet is printed with the outline of a grid of larger diamonds and smaller dots. The diamond grid is set out in 1" squares, corresponding to 5 feet scale distance in 25mm. Each four-square-large section of the diamond grid contains 9x12 smaller squares defined with dots. Each of the smaller squares (7/16") represents a distance of 1 meter in 15mm scale. The overall pattern, while difficult to describe in words, is not confusing to behold on the back of the sheet. There aren't too many diamonds and dots, only as many as necessary to properly outline the playing area. It's easy to orient your eyes and "see" only the pattern you need for the scale of your figures.

The MAGNE=MELEE Basic Set includes a strip of magnetic material which can be cut into ½-inch squares and temporarily fastened to the bases of figures (one side of the magnetic strip is self-adhesive) so they'll stay where they're put, plus a couple of patches of magnetic stuff that can be chopped into chunks as desired and used to mark the location of stationary objects.

Magnetized characters are given a sense of direction by the use of a special marker supplied with the kit. It's called a dry erase marker, and it produces a dark brown line. Walls, doors and other terrain features can be drawn on the grid, and as characters move into different locations the DM can quickly redecorate by wiping away the walls that don't belong and drawing in the ones that do. The process is not as tedious or time-consuming as it may seem; step-by-step changes usually involve only a few lines' worth of redrawing, and the marker is erased very easily by a finger wrapped in a piece of tissue. (A finger not wrapped in tissue will erase a line just as easily; chances are if a number of players are moving figures around the sheet at one time, somebody will accidentally wipe out a wall with his thumb once in a while.)

The marker leaves a slightly visible residue on the metal after the fluid is wiped away, but the dingy buildup seems to come off easily with soap and water. The instruction sheet mentions, almost in passing, a point that should have been more strongly emphasized: Standard felt-tip markers will not work. If the fluid from a non-erasable marker is put on the surface and allowed to dry, it won't come off easily at all.

The three pages of instructions are very complete — so much so that a lot of the suggestions will seem self-evident to anyone with a bit of experience in playing with figures. The MAGNE=MELEE Basic Set is available for $11.95 plus $.50 postage. You can also get an expansion kit (black, blue, green and red markers plus more magnetic stuff) for $4.95 plus $.95 postage, and the colored markers are sold as a set by themselves for $3.85 plus $.65 postage. (Apparent ly to get another Diamo Dot sheet, you have to buy another Basic Set. Try making 'em an offer.)

MAGNE=MELEE is a good idea and a convenient, simple system. But I'm afraid that if a customer's initial reaction is, "$12 for a cookie sheet?" then his money is liable to end up in some other company's coffers. Chuck Kennedy doesn't attempt to ignore the origin of the playing surface; he brings it up in the instructions, and also points out that "it helps us provide serious gamers with an effective grasp of system at a reasonable price."

Maybe if the original product exhibits enough (ahem) attraction, Creative Conceptions would be able to sink some money into a new version with specially prepared board sections that could be added to one another in modular fashion. The scale size of the playing surface (40x70 feet) in 25mm is not sufficiently large for many encounter areas, and the obvious way to expand is to join two boards together. And if you've never tried to butt the edges of two upside-down cookie sheets together, go out to the kitchen right now and satisfy your curiosity.

After you've stood up your notebook and drawn out your map on metal, you can click on your DRAGONBONE™ and get ready for action. Now a DM can decide a character's fate with the flick of a switch and push of a button — and no more fishing around in the
shag carpet for that cute little 5mm micro-die that just tumbled off the table for the twentieth time. DRAGONBONE makes die rolling electronic without the use of a computer.

The device is made by R. B. Zajeski and DB Enterprises, 14030 S. Laramie, Crestwood IL 60445. It is a sturdy plastic cylinder about an inch in diameter and 7 inches long, with a dial on the bottom and a column of little red lights down one side of the cylinder. The dial can be set to simulate a roll of d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, d20 or percentile dice, and when a button is pressed one of the lights (two, if you’re rolling d%) within the specified range comes on.

The marrow of DRAGONBONE is an electronic clock that cycles 2,000 times per second. Different numbers are generated depending on when the pushing of the button interrupts the cycling of the clock. Thus the number generation is not literally random; it’s a function of the time between button-pushes. But there’s no way to beat the system unless you can estimate elapsed time with accuracy to 1/2000 second.

How do you playtest a product like this? You push a lot of buttons, trying to find out if the numbers seem to be random. They seem to be. You wait for the machine to make a mistake, like giving you a result of 12 when you roll a 10-sider. It didn’t.

DRAGONBONE does what it’s supposed to. I hope Son of Dragonbone, if there is one, does more. The machinery needs to be upgraded, if it can be, to allow for one-shot generation of numbers from more than one die. You can get a new number as quickly as you can push the button again, but it’s a pain to go “click” over and over to calculate a 6-die fireball when you can pick up a handful of dice and get it over with in one motion. DB Enterprises is reportedly at work on an improved model; if technological and financial considerations do not prevent it, maybe the “ultimate” hand-held random-number generator will be upon us soon. DRAGONBONE is certainly a big step in the right direction. It can be had by mail for $21.95 plus $1.50 postage.

It takes a lot of effort to keep up on developments in the world of fantasy gaming. Something as ordinary as a color chart from a paint company can provide a wealth of new information about a game—when the chart is from the new ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Color Series by the Floquil-Polly S Color Corp.

The 54 colors and (presumably) their names were developed by Polly S in cooperation with TSR Hobbies, Inc., and the line is licensed as an official AD&D™ product. The colors are available individually in the company’s standard 5/8-oz. bottles, and 15 smaller containers of basic paints are packaged in the Polly S AD&D Fantasy Paint Set.

If you want to consider the colors and names as official AD&D rule additions (and why not?), we now know the body colors of some creatures whose descriptions in the Monster Manual don’t even hint at an answer. The series includes Carrion Crawler Lt. Green, Couatl Orange, Hippogriff Yellow, and Djinn Lt. Blue, among others. At last we know what the “nauseous” Mind Flayer Mauve looks like. And, mysteriously, we learn of the existence of Basilisk Dk. Green. (The Monster Manual says basilisks are “usually dull brown,” so this must be what color the unusual ones are.) The major humanoid races, up to and including giants, are all represented by a shade depicting their appropriate skin color — at last, a definitive statement on the difference between Dwarf Flesh and Gnome Grey/Brown.

The list goes on — and I would be remiss in not noting Beholder Body Fuchsia, Anhkheg Underside Pink, Remorhaz Blue/Green, and Bulette Head — all the colors you never knew you needed until you found out they existed!

The Fantasy Paint Set comes with a couple of brushes, a 25mm wizard figure from Genadier Models’ official AD&D figure line, and little bottles of metal primer and clear gloss finish in addition to a good selection of starter colors. The whole thing is packaged in an official plastic tray that includes mixing wells for blending your own shades. Look for the Fantasy Paint Set, or the larger display of the entire line, in your store — if only to find out what color a cockatrice is supposed to be.
Figuratively Speaking

MASTERPIECE MINIATURES

The Great Dragon Drax
Prop: 5  Det: 6
Anim: 8  Tech: 8
The expression on the face of this large figure hints of wisdom. Detail on the mouth and scales is nicely done. The claws are poised as if to strike or grasp.

Red Dragon
Prop: 8  Det: 6
Anim: 8  Tech: 6
The pose and sense of movement of this figure are outstanding. Some flash marred the casting, but was easily cleanable. A most suitable figure for a gold dragon.

ARCHIVE MINIATURES

Manticore
Prop: 7  Det: 7
Anim: 7  Tech: 8
The high technical rating for this figure is due to the excellent system Archive uses to attach such parts as the wings and tail of this creature. The parts are cast with a peg which fits into a hole on the body, making them easy to assemble and able to withstand normal handling.

Gorillasaurus
Prop: 7  Det: 6
Anim: 8  Tech: 7
This creature looks like a cross between a rhinoceros and a gorilla. The body plating is well done, and the figure has an air of muscular power about it. Again, the system used to attach body parts makes it a breeze to assemble.

We show 'em, they sell 'em

Letters from readers concerning this feature are appreciated, but unfortunately Figuratively Speaking cannot provide more information to potential buyers of the figures which are reviewed, such as addresses of the manufacturers. Those who want to contact a figure manufacturer or dealer are encouraged to look through advertisements in this and other magazines. Your local hobby shop is also a good source for this sort of information.
FANTASY GAMES UNLIMITED

Prop: 5  Det: 7  Anim: 7  Tech: 7

FGU is now marketing its own line of 15mm figures, suitable for use with any SF game using miniatures rules for that scale. The figures are generally well posed, and are armed with a good variety of lethal-looking weapons. FGU expects to be issuing more figures in this line shortly.

GHQ

Japanese ships

DD Yagumo (above)
Prop: 7  Det: 8  Anim: 7  Tech: 8

IJA Tone (at right)
Prop: 8  Det: 7  Anim: 7  Tech: 7

These are two of several WWII vintage Japanese ship figures recently released by GHQ. The amount of detail on these 1/2400 scale ships is excellent. The Tone and several others in the line come with extra catapults, turrets, etc., to enable the builder to simulate the ship during any period of its service.

Winner of the losers

B. L. Simonsen of Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif., has been announced as the winner of the auction following the miniatures battle played at the GEN CON XIII convention. Ral Partha's team beat MiniFigs in the competition, and the losing side's figures were put up for auction by sealed bid. Proceeds from the sale were donated to the United Fund.

T-REX

Ground & Air Equipment for Space Opera


These tanks and aircraft are appropriate for SF gaming of all types. They are roughly 1/72 scale and have a good amount of fine detail.
DINOSAURS

(Continued from page 76)

nodeon weighs about 50 pounds, and can lift off to glide in only a moderate breeze. It uses the blade-like crest on its head as a rudder and stabilizer while flying. It cannot carry anything weighing more than a few pounds. A pteranodon is in trouble if it is caught on the ground or on the surface of the water by a predator, for its hollow bones and thin wing membranes make it highly vulnerable to attack. However, an entire flock will dive to attack anything which threatens its cliff-side nest.

Quetzalcoatlus
FREQUENCY: Rare
NO. APPEARING: 1-3
ARMOR CLASS: 10
MOVE: 3'/15''
HIT DICE: 3
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-10
SIZE: L (40' wingspan)

This huge pterosaur is an awesome sight as it sweeps across the sky. But though it is 15 feet long with a 40-foot wingspan, quetzalcoatlus weighs less than 100 pounds! It eats carrion and small prey. With a good wind, a full-sized quetzalcoatlus might be able to carry off a small child or light halfling.

MARINE CREATURES

Below are the most interesting-and well known of the marine animals contemporary with the dinosaurs. Not all of these are dinosaurs but will be encountered in the same time and place. Not covered is the megalodon, which is found in the Monster Manual under "Shark."

Archelon
FREQUENCY: Uncommon
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: 2
MOVE: 3'/12''
HIT DICE: 6
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8
SIZE: L (12' long)

Archelon is actually a giant prehistoric marine turtle. It feeds on swimming creatures smaller than itself.

Crocodile, Marine
FREQUENCY: Uncommon
NO. APPEARING: 1-4
ARMOR CLASS: 5
MOVE: 15'' (water only)
HIT DICE: 4-9 (d6 + 3)
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-12/3-18 (4-6HD) or 2-16/5-20 (7-9HD)
SIZE: L (15'-'40' long)

Crocodiles and giant crocodiles are common in the dinosaurs' world. Less well known is this species of fully marine crocodiles, with flippers instead of feet. The first attack listed is a whack with the tail; the second is the bite.

Dinichthys
FREQUENCY: Common
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: 6
MOVE: 15''
HIT DICE: 8
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-18
SIZE: L (40' long)

Dinichthys is a giant hunter fish with a huge mouth. It will attack anything smaller than itself.

Elasmosaurus
FREQUENCY: Common
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: 6
MOVE: 15''
HIT DICE: 8
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-18
SIZE: L (40' long)

Elasmosaurus is among the largest of the plesiosaurs. Though 40 feet long, over 20 feet of this is neck. Its long, needle-like teeth are made for catching fish, but it could also easily reach into a small boat and snatch a sailor.
A classic case of convergent evolution: An ichthyosaur looks so much like a dolphin that a character who hasn’t seen one before is 90% likely to mistake it for a dolphin. Unlike dolphins, these marine reptiles are savage predators, and are far more likely to attack a swimmer.

**Tylosaurus**

**FREQUENCY:** Uncommon

**NO. APPEARING:** 1

**ARMOR CLASS:** 6

**MOVE:** 18"

**HIT DICE:** 7-12 (d6 + 6)

**NO. OF ATTACKS:** 1

**DAMAGE/ATTACK:** 2-20 (7-9HD) or 3-30 (10-12HD)

**SIZE:** L (20'-40'-long)

Tylosaurus is a mosasaur, a giant marine lizard (not a dinosaur). It is propelled through the water both by flippers and by its powerful tail. It has a large head and mouth, shaped like a lizard’s rather than a carnivore’s. Other members of the family of mosasaurs include mosasaurus and nothosaurus.

**Plesiosaurus**

**FREQUENCY:** Common

**NO. APPEARING:** 7-6

**ARMOR CLASS:** 7

**MOVE:** 15"

**HIT DICE:** 4

**NO. OF ATTACKS:** 1

**DAMAGE/ATTACK:** 7-8

**SIZE:** L (10' long)

Plesiosaurus is representative of most plesiosaurs, being 10 feet long, of which 5 feet is neck. Like elasmosaurus, its main diet is fish.

**DINOSAUR ENCOUNTER TABLE**

When characters in an AD&D™ game are adventuring in dinosaur country and the DM is using this article as a reference, this updated encounter table will prove more appropriate than the one found in the Monster Manual.

<table>
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<th>Creative name and type</th>
<th>Plains Scrub Forest Marsh</th>
<th>Creative name and type</th>
<th>Plains Scrub Forest Marsh</th>
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<td>39-50 45-51 45-52 53-58</td>
<td>Other creature†</td>
<td>97-00 97-00 97-00 97-00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* — “Miscellaneous small dinosaur” includes all dinosaurs deer-sized or smaller. They are edible, but of no other interest to adventurers.

† — When “Other creature” is rolled, the DM should employ one of the following:

- A standard AD&D fantasy monster.
- A monster that might be found on dinosaur turf if it were real (lizard men, giant toads, giant snakes, etc.)
- A new kind of dinosaur of the DM’s creation, previously unknown.
- A highly evolved dinosaur: for instance, an intelligent dromaeosaur with “hands” (two fingers and a thumb) instead of mere clawed fingers.

As previously mentioned, the DM should use judgement about how tough the encounter should be. It may be desirable to use a species similar to, but smaller than, the one rolled up. Crocodiles may be normal or giant-sized, depending on the circumstances.

---

**Da story of “Da Letter...”**

by Kim Mohan

I’ve met Larry Elmore, and he would agree with me that he’s not the kind of person who stands out in a crowd. But he has two real good ways of getting attention: He paints terrific pictures, and he draws terrific letters.

“Da Letter,” which begins on the page following this one, arrived at the Dragon Publishing World Headquarters after a payment to Larry was, or was somewhat overdue and he decided we deserved a little poke in the ribs (or wherever it is you poke someone who owes you money).

The story actually started a few weeks before Larry’s reminder arrived, when I wrote to Larry to inform him that the painting he had sent us was indeed acceptable for publication, and (like it says on page 2 of Da Letter) “the money will be coming soon.” After “soon” had long since passed, Larry drew the following pages and sent them to us. His distinctive way of communicating didn’t go unnoticed or unappreciated: He got his money, and we got a great little set of comic-strip pages that I wished there was a way to publish...

Well, where there’s a madness, there’s a method. Sure we can publish it, I said. All we have to do is wait ‘til the calendar is due and we decided we deserved a little payment to Larry was, er, somewhat overdue and he decided we deserved a little poke in the ribs (or wherever it is you poke someone who owes you money).
DA LETTER

HEY SIRTH, HERE IS A LETTER TO OUR BOSS... DA MERCENARY

MAYBE IT'S ABOUT DA PAYOFF FOR DA JOB HE DONE.

HERZ BUT... A TIP TSORE.

DERS ONLY ONE WAY TA FIND OUT... WEZ GONNA HAN' DELIVER IT...

LET ME TELL 'IM, MARE. LET ME TELL 'IM.

DIS COULD BE DA BIG MONEY BOSS.

HEY BOSS... A LETTER?

WHA?!

IT'S FROM DA PRINCE MOHAN!

YEAH, THEN MAYBE WE COULD PAYOFF THAT DRAGON THAT'S ON OUR CASE.
WHATZ IT SAY?

GOOD NEWS - THEY LIKED MY WORK... AND THE MONEY WILL BE COMING SOON!

OH DATS GREAT!

SOMEBODY BETTER TELL DAT OL' DWAGON DAT WEZ CAN PAY 'IM IN A FEW DAYS.

WHY DON'T WE GET ALL OUR STUFF TOGETHER AN' GO OVER TO DAT OL' DRAGONS CAVE AN' TELL HIM DA GOOD NEWS.

OK

SO THE SCUZZY GROUP TROOPED OFF IN THE DIRECTION OF THE DRAGON'S LAIR...

WE GONNA GO UP IN DA MOUNTAINS WHERE DA DRAGON LIVES??

A FEW DAYS LATER

GOOD LUCK SMIRTH.

ZZZZZZ

WELL THERE'S HIS DEN, AND I THINK YOU SHOULD GO TELL HIM THE GOOD NEWS.

ZZZZZ

IF DIS OL' DWAGON DOESN'T LIKE ME WAKIN' 'IM UP, DEN I'LL TELL 'IM DAT HIS DINNER IS HIDDEN OUT DOWN AT DA BOTTOM OF DA HILL......
HEY MR. DRAGON
I WANNA TELL YOU DAT.....

ZZZZZZ

MY BOSS CAN PAY YOU DA...

ZZZZZ

... SNORT??

BLINK

CHEEEET

ROAR

STOP!! THIS SCENE IS ALL TOO FAMILIAR....

I'LL GET HIM!
365 REASONS...

...to own the 1982 DAYS OF THE DRAGON™ fantasy art & trivia calendar

Reason #32 (February 1): “On this day in 1974, the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® fantasy adventure game was first published.”

Keep track of your days and keep track of your dragons with the 1982 edition of Dragon Publishing’s DAYS OF THE DRAGON fantasy art & trivia calendar. Each day (actually 396, since January 1983 is included) includes one or more bits of historical, humorous or unusual trivia, such as reason #32 above.

The giant 12"x24" display (designed to be hung on the wall) features 14 striking, full-color pieces of fantasy artwork specially commissioned for the calendar from such well-known DRAGON™ artists as Dean Morrissey, Phil Foglio, John Barnes, Clyde Caldwell, and James Holloway. Each month is embellished with one artist’s conception of a D&D® dragon — and the results are, to say the least, interesting.

So go dragon hunting. Find the 1982 DAYS OF THE DRAGON calendar wherever you buy DRAGON magazine, or send $7.00 (includes postage and handling) to receive one by mail order from Dragon Publishing (a division of TSR Hobbies, Inc.), P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147.
Otis, you ever been over here on dis side of da hills?

Sure. Floyd an’ me, we got lost fer half a day once...wanderin’ around in these yggdrakles.

Huh. C’mere, Rudy. Take a look at this.

Otis, nothin’ in here, Otis.

Hope. Nobody home.

Darn! I bet they’re all up in the branches...watchin’ us right now.

What’s the matter?

What if they got bolin’ oil up there?

In a tree-house! Don’t be ridiculous!

I guess yer right...just freaked me out, thinkin’ about it.

Prob’ly nothin’ up there anyhow.

C’mon.

All of a sudden I felt like a sittin’ duck.

There goes one lucky ogre.

Yep. Shooda nailed him when we had the chance.
WHAT'S NEW?

HI FOLKS! PHIL FOSLIO AND DIXIE NULL HERE!
AND NO, DESPITE APPEARANCES - THIS IS NOT OUR STRIP ON "SEX AND D&D"!
WE'RE WAITING FOR SOME EXTRA EQUIPMENT, SO MAYBE NEXT MONTH.
THIS MONTH WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A NEW IDEA FOR MINIATURE WARFARE.

IT'S A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE TRADITIONAL SAND-TABLE: YOUR BED! BLANKETS DRAPE OVER A PERSON CREATE HILLS, VALLEYS, ETCETERA.
AND IF YOU OR YOUR OPPONENT IS SHAPED LIKE GETTYSBURG OR BUNKER HILL - SO MUCH THE BETTER.
IT'S CHEAP, SIMPLE, TAKES UP NO ADDITIONAL SPACE AND HAS MANY OBVIOUS ADVANTAGES...
FINE - YOU STUDY YOUR POSITION ALL YOU WANT, WAKE ME WHEN YOU'RE READY TO MOVE.

IT ALSO ENABLES PLAYERS TO BRING THE FORCES OF NATURE INTO PLAY...
HA! I'VE GOT YOU SURROUNDED! YOUR POSITION IS HOPELESS!
OH YEAH? WELL, A GIANT WHITE METEORITE JUST DESTROYED YOUR COMMAND CENTER!
ONE FINAL WORD OF ADVICE: WATERBEDS DO NOT MAKE GOOD FIELDS FOR NAVAL ENCOUNTERS.
AVAST! WE'VE SPRUNG A LEAK!
WHAT? THAT LAST SHOT MISSED YOUR SHIP BY 300 FEET!

HAH! I'VE DEMOLISHED YOUR LEFT FLANK!
BUT LOOK! AN EARTHQUAKE HAS JUST...

WHUMP!

...AND SO ON.

WHOA!

YEAH, YOU MISSED THE SHIP AND BLEW A HOLE IN THE BED!
"SURE IT WASTES A SPELL, BUT HOW ELSE DOES A WIZARD PUT OUT THE CATS?"

"ARGUING WITH THE DM ALWAYS GETS RESULTS!"

"HE'S SELLING RAFFLE TICKETS!"
The DUNGEON!™ Boardgame is a fantasy adventure the entire family will enjoy. Here is all the fun and excitement of discovering lost treasure, casting magical spells, and defeating fearsome monsters!

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Star Warrior: Slay the Dictator

You are the Slay the Dictator, a warrior who must rescue the Civilized people of a distant planet from the cruel, evil dictator. You have a selection of weapons and combat tools to aid you. The difficulty level can be adjusted, and the game is designed to be challenging.

The game is set in a futuristic, sci-fi environment. You must navigate through various levels, overcoming obstacles and enemies. The graphics are impressive, with detailed character designs and a vibrant color palette.

With the help of your abilities and the weapons at your disposal, you must fight your way through the levels, defeating enemies and rescuing the Civilized people. The game is a blend of action and strategy, requiring quick thinking and careful planning.

The game also features multiplayer options, allowing you to team up with friends and compete against each other. With its addictive gameplay and engaging storyline, Star Warrior: Slay the Dictator is a must-play for fans of sci-fi action games.

Specifications:
- Platform: PC
- Genre: Sci-Fi Action
- Difficulty Levels: Low, Medium, High
- Multiplayer: Yes
- Release Date: 2023

For more information or to purchase Star Warrior: Slay the Dictator, visit our website or contact us today.