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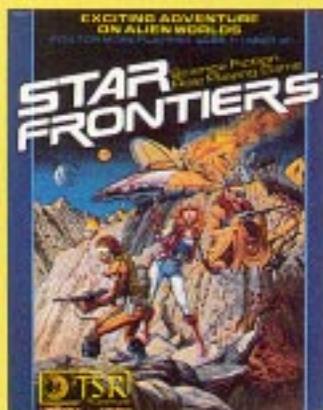
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We'll say it again

From time to time in the past, this magazine has proclaimed its editorial independence. "We're not a house organ," we have stated before, beginning in a time when many of our competitors in the field could justifiably be called that. We pointed this out because it seemed the point needed to be made.

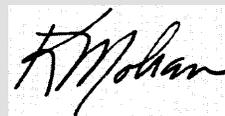
We haven't talked about the subject lately because there didn't seem to be a need to. What we *did* backed up what we *said*, and the turn of events in the gaming industry made the topic unimportant for comparative purposes; no sense beating a dead issue.

Which brings us to the recent past — DRAGON™ issues #65 and #66, wherein some opinionated remarks by E. Gary Gygax appeared. We got a lot of letters about those articles. Those that have the most impact on me, as the editor of this magazine, are the ones that berate the magazine for being a "mouthpiece" (one of the tamer adjectives I recall) for Mr. Gygax and TSR Hobbies because those articles were printed.

Gary Gygax, the individual, is the foremost authority on the two most popular fantasy role-playing games. As the creator of those games, he writes rule additions and explanations and offers them to DRAGON Magazine for publication. I'll print everything he sends us, just like any editor of any gaming magazine with a similar opportunity would.

Gary Gygax, the president of TSR Hobbies, Inc., is one of the preeminent figures in the gaming industry. His opinions are important to others in the field. I want those opinions, whenever they are published, to appear in this magazine — again, just as any editor in the same position would not turn them away.

To suggest that DRAGON Magazine is a "puppet" (that's a little worse than "mouthpiece") of TSR on the basis of these two articles is to ignore the rest of the evidence. Nothing that appears between these covers is approved prior to publication, by Mr. Gygax or anyone else, unless it came out of Mr. Gygax's typewriter. We've printed lots of articles that were anything but complimentary to a TSR™ game. We've printed articles that Mr. Gygax has said — afterward — he didn't agree with or appreciate. But he has never even suggested exercising any prior restraint or approval privileges. That's not the kind of magazine he wants — and that's good, because that's not the kind of magazine we're making.





ouldn't it be nice to have a magic item that would keep us from breaking our New Year's resolutions? What a different place this

world would be. . . . Come to think of it, C. C. Stoll did mention to us that some of the powers of *Arrakhar's Wand* have yet to be discovered; maybe that's one of them — and maybe the forces of good will prevail in their quest to regain the wand. You won't know for sure until you've played the game in the center of this issue of DRAGON™ Magazine. *Arrakhar's Wand* is the second game from C. C. Stoll we've published; this one is more complicated, and perhaps more challenging, than *Flight of the Boodles* (from issue #60). Tell us what you think.

Just about everybody who's interested in fantasy role-playing or fantasy literature knows *what* runes are — but perhaps not *why* they are what they are, and *how* they can be used in a campaign. All you need to know to use runes accurately and imaginatively in gaming is summarized in a special package of articles leading off our feature section.

Elminster the sage, an old friend of contributing editor Ed Greenwood, was in a talkative mood the last time he stopped by. The result is *More Pages from the Mages*, a sequel to Ed's article from issue #62, spotlighting four more volumes of magical and medical lore that all you treasure-seekers should be on the lookout for.

Roger Moore, our other contributing editor, also has some pretty powerful friends — at least, when he and his gang sit down to play the roles of superheroes. *Caped Crusaders and Masked Marvels* is Roger's overview of superhero role-playing games and how to get the most out of them. Apparently, one of Roger's closest inanimate friends is his calculator: He's also responsible for *Charting the classes*, a statistical summary of the different AD&D™ character types which illustrates just how *different* some of them are.

Some characters that Roger's article doesn't consider — but which you ought to — are the new Thief-Acrobat "split class," the latest offering from *the Sorcerer's Scroll* by E. Gary Gygax, and the trio of character types that make up the Entertainer class, suggested by Len Lakofka in his *Leomund's Tiny Hut* column.

For a change of "scenery," take a look at *Everybody Eats Everybody on Sunday's Planet*, a piece of thought-provoking fiction by Jeff Swycaffer. After reading it, you might want to make a resolution to never bite off more than you can chew. . . . — KM



Cant see the point

Dear Editor:

Issue #66 (October) was very informative and entertaining. Of special interest were the articles on the origins and designs of fantasy languages.

However, I take exception to the article on Thieves' Cant. There is no evidence in fantasy fiction, historical parallels, or in any of the AD&D™ books to suggest that Thieves' Cant is anything more than a complex jargon. I equate Thieves' Cant to the kind of conversations that gamers often get into. Sometimes specialization words get so thick that those listeners who aren't gamers can't make heads or tails of what's being said.

Why would thieves bother developing their own grammar system? Naturally, they would borrow the grammar and vocabulary of their locale. Most importantly, Thieves' Cant would be very contemporary, and fluid, easily assimilating words and phrases brought in by migrating thieves, and connections with foreign traders.

A typical conversation should sound something like this:

"Got some part time comin'. Interested?"

"What is it? A box-top job? Taking boarders?"

"No, I'm gonna visit the Auntie. She's got some rocks worth a coupla tons of crackers, each."

"What's the bind? She got a breadbox?"

"No, just bony cur. Look, meet me at home at two before The Hour. There we'll pick up tripa or quad more boys to take out the cur. We should be done by two before the glowin'."

Translated, that says:

"I got a job planned. Interested?"

"What is it? A second-story theft? A kidnapping?"

"No, a robbery. There are gems worth 2,000 gold pieces each."

"What's in the way? A safe?"

"No, just one guard. Look, meet me at the local hang-out at midnight." ("The Hour" is 2 a.m. You tell time by adding to or subtracting from The Hour.) "There we'll get three or four more thieves to disarm the guard. We should be back by 4 p.m. (two hours before the dawn)."

Contrary to the author's introduction, it would be unreasonable, if not impossible, for linguists to write down Thieves' Cant. There would be thousands of versions and dialects — one for each community or organization. You might as well try to make a comprehensive language by combining Encino Valley talk and Pennsylvania Dutch.

Thieves' Cant will always be based on the local language, with some cross-over jargon by which thieves can identify each other. But they will barely be able to communicate on an intelligent level until the newcomer learns

both the local language and the local slang.

Finally, there is never a good reason to invent a sophomoric pseudo-language, which does nothing but waste the learner's time. If you must have language, why not use something that will be of use outside the game? Esperanto is one of many easy-to-learn languages that would be perfect for this use. It has a German/Spanish flavor that is guttural enough to be a street jargon, yet universal enough so that non-thieves will be able to understand words here and there. At the same time, the learner will be gaining a usable language that actually has literature and a society. Don't you think that a playing aid should give the gamer a real-world edge? I thought that was what gaming was all about.

Scot Fritz
Allentown, Pa.

Spelling if out

Dear Editor:

In reading the new illusionist spells devised by Mr. Gygax (issue #66), I came across the spell *Read Illusionist Magic*. But on page 39 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide* it states, "Illusionists do not need the spell *read magic* or anything like it in pursuit of their profession." Was this merely an oversight on the part of Mr. Gygax, or is this a definite rule change?

Larry Smith
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

*It's not an oversight, Larry. Using what Frank Mentzer likes to call the "latest published" principle, the creation of the new spell Read Illusionist Magic means that the statement you cited from the DMG no longer applies. When the participants in an AD&D™ campaign adopt the new official illusionist spells, they should use Read Illusionist Magic (for illusionists) the same way that the Read Magic spell is used (for magic-users). When you're in doubt about how to interpret an apparent contradiction that springs up in "official" material, you can assume that the "latest published" information takes precedence over what was written earlier. If the *Players Handbook* and the *DMG*, for instance, appear to be in disagreement about a point, go by what the *DMG* says, since it was published after the *Players Handbook*. If official material from the pages of DRAGON™ Magazine (from issues published since the *DMG* came out) seems to be in conflict with any of the hardbound rule books, you can assume (unless we say otherwise) that the magazine material supersedes the book.*

The only "oversight" involved in this instance was committed by the person Mr. Gygax likes to call the Kindly Editor, who should have thought to point out this rule change in a short note when the new spells were published. — KM

Barbarian error

Dear Editor:

I was reading your article (by E. Gary Gygax) about what's official in DRAGON #67, and I think it was very good of you to admit your mistakes, but I've found another one.

In issue #63, it says about the barbarian, "If at least fairly bulky armor is worn, reduce the [AC] bonus to +1 per point of dexterity in excess of 14." And, as it says on page 27 of the DMG, chain is fairly bulky, therefore reducing the AC bonus to +4 for a character with an 18 dexterity. In the article, there is an example of a barbarian with chain mail and shield getting the full AC bonus. As far as I can see, without somehow acquiring elfin mail, the best armor class a barbarian can have is -1.

Jack Lyons
Valparaiso, Ind.

Jack and all the other readers who spotted this passage are correct: The example was in error, and Mr. Gygax (through us) offers his apologies for any confusion it may have caused. Not all the rough spots in the presentation of the barbarian class were smoothed out before the text was presented in issue #63 — a fact which was borne out by the additions and corrections to the class that Mr. Gygax wrote up for issue #67, but you can expect that all the details will be worked out by the time the particulars of the class are published in the upcoming AD&D expansion volume. Even though some articles are deemed "official" when they appear under Mr. Gygax's byline, it may also be true that the material hasn't been completely developed when it's submitted to us for printing. That fact, we think, is a small price to pay for getting the information well in advance of its publication in a more permanent form. — KM

Exceptional elf

Dear Editor:

In issue #67, Mr. Gygax stated that grugach elves (in Featured Creatures) were not magic-users, but fighter/druids. I can understand why they aren't magic-users, but my Players Handbook says in the Character Race Table II on page 14 that elves, even NPCs, can't be druids. Please clarify.

Ned Zimmerman
Summit, N.J.

According to resident AD&D rule authority

Frank Mentzer, speaking on behalf of Mr. Gygax, this is another example of how the "latest published" principle applies. (See the letter printed earlier in this column about the Read Illusionist Magic spell.)

Grugach are exceptional elves who can operate as dual-classed fighter/druids but at the same time are prohibited from being magic-users. Since the Players Handbook was published several years ago, when the new elves described in issue #67 didn't "exist" officially, that rule book obviously could not have made note of this exception.

Players and DMs should be aware that this exception applies only to grugach and not to other types of elves — and certainly not to player-character elves, since only high elves can be player characters. That's one rule that hasn't been "overruled." — KM

'Aura' alteration

Dear Editor:

I enjoyed your issue describing new illusionist spells (#66) and thought it was a bit overdue. I was disappointed to see that one spell was left out: Nystul's Magic Aura. This spell is more an illusionist spell than a magic-user spell, I think. It does not create any magical capability or power, it merely creates the misguided conception — one could say the illusion — that an object is in some way magical. This, I think, definitely makes it a 1st level illusionist spell, and it should be so listed. The seventh level spell of obtaining 1st level magic-user spells is not a sufficient reason for why this particular spell is not a 1st level illusionist spell.

Carl Malec
St. Louis, Mo.

Language lesson

Dear Editor:

A. D. Rogan's article on the use of language in the AD&D™ game (DRAGON™ issue #66) was useful in that it provoked a great deal of thought on the subject. We must, however, disagree with many of your assumptions. We do not wish to imply that the article was not useful, but it contained some complications and some inaccurate generalizations.

First, true neutrals do actually have an alignment tongue; you need only ask your neighborly assassin, who may have learned it (page 29, Players Handbook).

The hypothesis that the Elvish language influenced many — possibly most — other languages is a good one and bears out under the rigorous test of common sense. Such an ancient civilization as the elves' would certainly be more sophisticated than man's; and, in the dawn of human history, this kind of advanced culture would influence the crude efforts of mankind to build a society. Such influence could not occur unless the language barrier was breached. We find it unlikely that the elves would adopt the human tongue; therefore it follows that the humans, or at least their leaders, would learn Elvish. When the times forced humans to acquire a written language, the elvish system would provide comprehensive characters appropriate to the spoken tongue. So, this explains why elves would know some human tongues and, conversely, why human tongues bear a close relationship to Elvish. Nonetheless, the "baffling fact" that elves know many humanoid tongues is still unexplained. The occurrence is not all that baffling when you consider elvish psychology. Their incredibly long lifespan makes elves disdainful of wealth and material possessions, but knowledge is everlasting, so why not learn the tongues of these annoying humanoids who seem to hate them so? Any Elvish magic-user (above 7th level) is capable of obtaining a polymorph self spell, so the possibility is there.

Contrary to the statement in the article, no demi-human character is able to learn more than three languages in addition to those stated under race descriptions. Thus, with a bit of extrapolation, the nymph used in the example might possibly qualify for one additional language. We imagine that concentrating on conjugating would be a bit difficult with a nymph as a student.

The issue of literacy amongst the character classes as portrayed in the article must be questioned. How can the author state that practically all fighters should be illiterate? Any soldier of above-average rank must be able to read written orders. A city guard should be able to read a city map or the name of a business. A fighter of ninth level is allowed to establish a freehold and collect taxes, and such a fighter can also attract more than 80 followers. It is a mistake to suppose that any but the most clever of men or women could keep track of such responsibilities without being able to read or write.

A cleric, on the other hand, need not be able to read. Clerics do not keep spellbooks and
(Turn to page 84)

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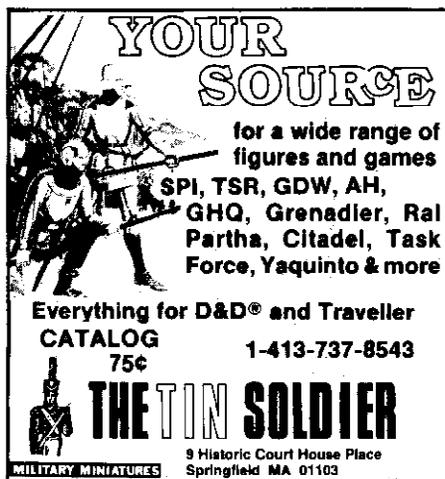
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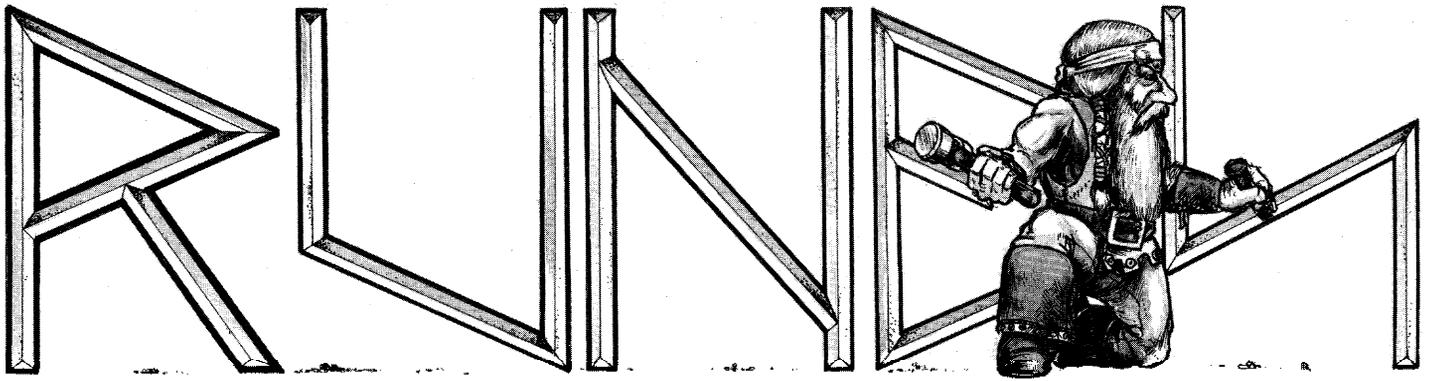
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BY PHIL TATERCZYNSKI AND ROGER RAUPP

A band of adventurers is tramping through what seems like miles of endless, featureless corridors, devoid of any traces of the enemy, when all of a sudden a fighter notices a set of symbols carved in the wall. "What do they say?" he mutters.

The thief moves forward to apply his skill. "These are runes," he says, "fortunately of the common sort. I think I can read them. . . ." He concentrates for a moment, then adds, "They warn of deadly peril ahead for any who are brave enough to pass."

Runes are one of the oldest forms of writing known to exist in western Europe and Scandinavia. They were used extensively by the cultures of those areas in pre-medieval and medieval times.

Since this era roughly parallels the time frame of most adventure gaming campaigns, referees might find it useful to incorporate runes into their fantasy settings.

A modern dictionary defines a "rune" as a letter in one of several old Germanic alphabets, or simply as an occult symbol. The word "rune" translates from Old Germanic as "secret lore"; in Anglo-Saxon, the same word means "secret." A similar Anglo-Saxon word, "runa," translates to "magician"; another similar word, "runar," which is Norse, means "friend." All of these descriptive words relate to the history of the rune — a past often blurred by superstition, myth and misinterpretation.

Scandinavian legends offer varying accounts of how runes were discovered; even today it is a popular misconception that runes were developed in those lands. The following is an excerpt from the poem *Havamal* (Sayings of the High One), words of wisdom as spoken by Odin, the chief god of Norse mythology.

**THIS RUNE-STONE (LEFT)
STANDS TALL ON THE
GROUNDS OF A CEMETERY
IN REYKJAVIK ICELAND.**

(Photo by Phil Taterczynski)

In this account, Odin finds a runic alphabet at the price of many torments:

*I know that I hung from the windy tree,
For all of nine nights, stuck by a spear,
Given to Odin, myself to myself;
Of that tree, no one knows whence run
its roots.*

*I was brought no bread, no horn to
drink from.*

*I gazed down, then grasped the runes,
Crying aloud, finally I fell.*

*You shall find runes and read the
staves*

*Great strong staves, great mighty
letters,*

*The mighty sage wrote them,
Given by the gods, made by their chief.
Do you know how to write?*

Do you know how to read?

Another Norse myth relates how a Valkyrie (one of the female warrior-servants of the Norse gods who carried away men slain in battle) gave the mighty hero Sigurd the knowledge of how to use magic runes and also obtain the favor of Tyr, the god of war: "For victory one should carve Runes in thy sword-hilt and twice name Tyr."

Germans got the idea first

Though these tales from folklore are interesting, they do not tell the entire truth of the matter. Actually, it is among the early Germanic people — not the Norsemen — that the history of the rune begins. The Germanic people lived in northern Europe from the time of the earliest surviving descriptions of the lands north of the Alps. A Roman historian named Posidonius, who died in 50 B.C., mentioned the Germans in his books of histories. In A.D. 98, Cornelius Tacitus wrote detailed accounts of the Germanic tribes in a book called *Germania*. These tribes appear in later historical references as the barbarian Vandals, Goths, Lombards, Franks, Teutons, Angles and others who kept the Romans busy in the final days of their empire.

The Germans, according to Tacitus, had a high regard for omens, and used sticks, each marked with a different sign, to cast fortunes. The signs used on the sticks may not literally have been runes,

but this is where the history of runes starts.

In earlier times, the Germanic tribes and their forerunners used written or carved symbols as representations of events, ideas, and objects. These were not runes, in the sense that the term is defined here, but they could be considered descendants of runes. Carvings from the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age, some made as long ago as 1600 B.C., are found on the rocks throughout Scandinavia, particularly in Sweden. These prehistoric symbols, known as *Hallristningar*, represent man and nature: tools, body parts, animals, and sun symbols. (The era during which these marks were originally scribed can be considered prehistoric, since the people of these lands were at the time far more primitive than the Greeks or Egyptians to the south.)

It is believed that these symbols carried deep religious and mystic significance, showing in pictures the power of the things they represented. These symbols were apparently not used as a form of writing, although it is reasonable to assume that the people who used them gave names to each one. A modern example of the same principle is the skull-and-crossbones symbol, which conveys a meaning of "poison" or "danger" to someone viewing it, but is not actually a word, or part of our alphabet, in itself.

Theories of the origin of runes

Inscriptions using letters resembling runes appear in rock carvings found near the Alps dating from about A.D. 235. They are clearly related to later runes, and many letters also look similar to their Latin counterparts. These symbols are thought by some to have belonged to the Etruscans, a tribe from northern Italy.

But authorities don't all agree on the exact time and place of the origin of runes. The alphabets of the Etruscans, Romans, Greeks, Illyrians, and Phoenicians, as well as the *Hallristningar*, have all been proposed as the particular or primary source. The most popular theory on the origin of runes incorporates several of the possible answers: The

consisted of slashes cut into the corner of a beam or stone, but they were arranged into divisions in a like manner.

The decline of runes

In the year 1000, Iceland became a Christian nation by vote in the Althing, the national assembly. Greenland was converted within a few more years; this turn of events led to the adoption of the Roman alphabet in those areas, and so to the passing of the last of the runic scripts.

The church was indirectly responsible for the decline in the use of runes in most cases. Along with fostering the spread of Christianity, it also encouraged literacy and education. Latin was the alphabet, and the language, that churchmen taught to converts. Since the runic alphabets had never been widely developed into a manuscript form, the Roman letters became more popular, and thus the full development of runes into a manuscript language never took place. An exception to the norm was a Goth named Wulfilas, who was working to bring Christianity to his people. He translated the Bible into the Gothic language and invented a script which used many rune-like letters.

Though the church didn't always actively try to suppress the use of runes, no doubt some parishes did. Even after the Roman alphabet had become widely used, some parts of the population held on to the use of runes. They were mostly

lorekeepers and poets, those who maintained the legends and knowledge of their societies' pre-Christian cultures. Much of this knowledge was frowned upon by advocates of the church as being paganism, black magic, and contrary and offensive to the ways of the church. Runic writing was looked on with equal disfavor, considered to have mystic properties because it was the means by which these "pagans" recorded their thoughts and recollections.

Runes have resurfaced in history since their decline, but only in isolated cases. Two Swedish military leaders used runes: Admiral Mogens Gyldenstjerne, in the year 1543, kept a private journal written in runes. General Jacob de la Gardie used a runic military code system during the Thirty Years' War in the early 17th century. The use of runes as a craftsman's mark survived among guilds and other artisans' groups. Adolf Hitler, in his efforts to incorporate Teutonic mythology into Nazi ideology, used runic and *Hallristningar* symbols. Two outstanding examples are the swastika, a mystic sign which was originally a sun symbol, and the double sig (victory) emblem worn by SS troops.

Recently, the popularity of fantasy literature — spearheaded by the publication of the work of J.R.R. Tolkien — has brought about a renewed interest in runes. Different authors have devised different runic alphabets for use in their

works, prompting more people than ever before to wonder where the whole idea came from.

All of the foregoing offers an overview of how runes came about and where they went, and a bit about how they were used along the way. Unfortunately, few accounts have survived about the actual use of runes by, and their effect upon, historical personages; little is known about the "inside story" of runes during the Dark Ages. However, one such legendary tale involving an actual person does exist, though the story may have been exaggerated over the years.

Egil Skallagrimsson and his saga

The tale of Egil Skallagrimsson survives as one of the legends of the Vikings — stories which are well-known, and rightly so, for they offer an inside view of a dynamic young society. Although these stories were finally written down during the Christian period, many of them were maintained through generations of oral story-telling going back to pagan times. Iceland became the home of the majority of the surviving manuscripts, and the Icelandic scribes for the most part failed to succumb to the temptation many clerical copyists felt to Christianize their cultures' tales. Thus, the Viking sagas present a reasonably dependable portrait of pagan Nordic society. But, since Iceland was and remains the home of the sagas, it is no surprise that the central figures in most of them are Icelanders.

One such figure, Egil Skallagrimsson, a warrior and rune-master, is told about in a tale called simply Egil's *Saga*. The story contains several passages and parts that describe Egil using runes for various purposes, including healing, the placing of curses, and detection. These accounts were written sometime around the year 1230, telling of events that took place from the years 858 to 990, beginning with the story of Egil's father and uncle and ending with Egil's death. Two of the tales are summarized below:

Egil, his comrade Olvir, and their crew were travelling by ship and landed on Atley Island, one of the estates of King Eirik Bloodaxe. The caretaker of the King's land, a man named Bard, offered to let Egil, Olvir, and the men stay in a barn, gave them straw for bedding, and only bread, sour curds, and skyr (a sour, partially fermented whey drink), to eat, claiming he had nothing better. Meanwhile King Eirik and his wife Gunnhild were in the main hall, presiding over a feast. The king asked where his caretaker was, and a man replied that "Bard is out looking after his guests."

"What sort of guests are these," said the king, "that he'd rather be with them than here with us?" The man replied that they were some of the Chieftain Thorir's men, which indeed Egil and the others were.

SWEDISH-NORWEGIAN RUNES

F U T H A R K H N I A S T B M L R

F U T H A R K H N I A S T B M L R

P R S T B E M L N G O D

P R S T B E M L N G O D

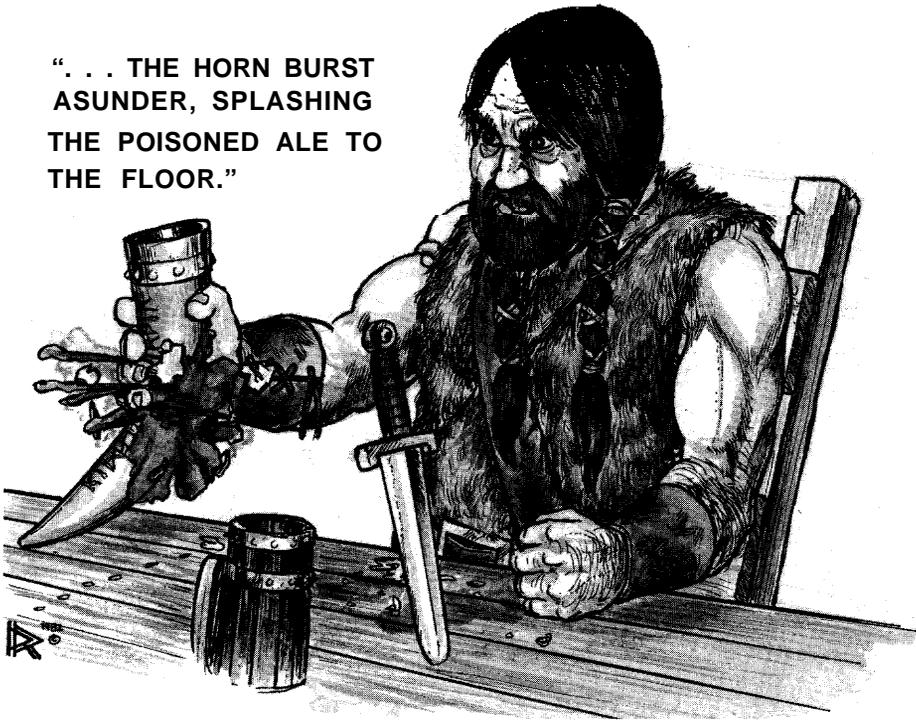
S T B E M L N G D O E A O E E A Y

S T B E M L N G D O E A O E E A Y

T B E M L N G D A A E Y I O E A K E S T

T B E M L N G D A A E Y I O E A K E S T

“... THE HORN BURST
ASUNDER, SPLASHING
THE POISONED ALE TO
THE FLOOR.”



“Go out and inform them,” said the king, “that I want them to come inside.”

Egil, Olvir, and their men were welcomed warmly by the king. Olvir sat at the king's side, with Egil next to them, and they all drank toasts (refusing would have been a slight to the king) until Olvir's men became quite intoxicated. Bard, displeased with how things had turned out, pressed one ale-filled horn after another on Olvir, hoping to embarrass him. Egil, however, began to drink Olvir's share. Bard remarked how great Egil's thirst was and passed him another full horn. Egil took the horn and spoke this verse:

*“You spoke to this ogre-slayer of a
scanty feast
While there was a sacrifice — a
woman's cunning.
It was a badly kept secret, your
unseen guests,
This meanness lasted too long,
small-hearted Bard.”*

Bard told him to drink and stop being

abusive, whereupon Egil drank all that was proffered to himself and Olvir.

Then Bard turned to the queen and complained that this man was insulting his hosts by claiming to be thirsty no matter how much he was given. The queen and Bard conspired to put poison in a drink, and the queen gave it to Egil, ordering him to quaff it.

Egil brought out his knife and stabbed his palm, then took the horn, carved runes into it, and smeared them with his blood while saying:

*“Cut runes in the horn. Redden them
with blood.*

*Then speak the words of the rite, a
poem over the horn.*

*Drink this draught who will, the
glad maid's gift,*

*But note which mouth it's meant for,
this ale Bard has signed.”*

With that the horn burst asunder, splashing the poisoned ale to the floor.

This legendary incident indicates the potency of the magic attributed to runes.

Egil killed Bard that same night, and in so doing earned the lasting enmity of Eirik and Gunnhild.

The second tale takes place sometime later, when Egil returned to Norway to pursue a lawsuit concerning his wife's inheritance. King Eirik declared him an outlaw; in retaliation, Egil attacked the king's hall on the Isle of Herle and killed the king's son Rognvald.

After the battle, when his crew was ready to sail, Egil climbed onto a rock outcropping on the island that faced the mainland of Norway. He took a horse's head and set it on a hazelwood staff, saying, “Here I set up a staff of scorn, and place this scorn on the hand of King Eirik and Queen Gunnhild.”

He then pointed the horse's head toward the mainland and continued, “And I place this also on the spirits of the land, that they all should be lost and unsettled, until they drive King Eirik and Queen Gunnhild from this land.” Egil stuck the staff between the rocks and left it there with the head facing the mainland, cut runes in the staff to proclaim his speech, and returned to his men to set sail.

Egil's curse was fulfilled, or so it would seem: King Eirik's brother, Haakon, returned from a stay in England soon afterward. The brothers shared the kingship for a while, but Haakon eventually drove Eirik from the throne.

Using runes in role-playing

After learning the legendary and historical facts about runes, many referees and players in fantasy role-playing games can easily imagine how runes can be used in an adventure or a campaign. Runic alphabets can be designed as a form of code; cryptic messages could be found carved into walls, doors, monuments or whatever, as memorials or warnings. A character's weapons and armor might carry runic inscriptions of the equipment's name or the name of its (past or present) owner.

In an AD&D™ campaign, the DM might allow magic-users to carve runes for the casting of some spells instead of using

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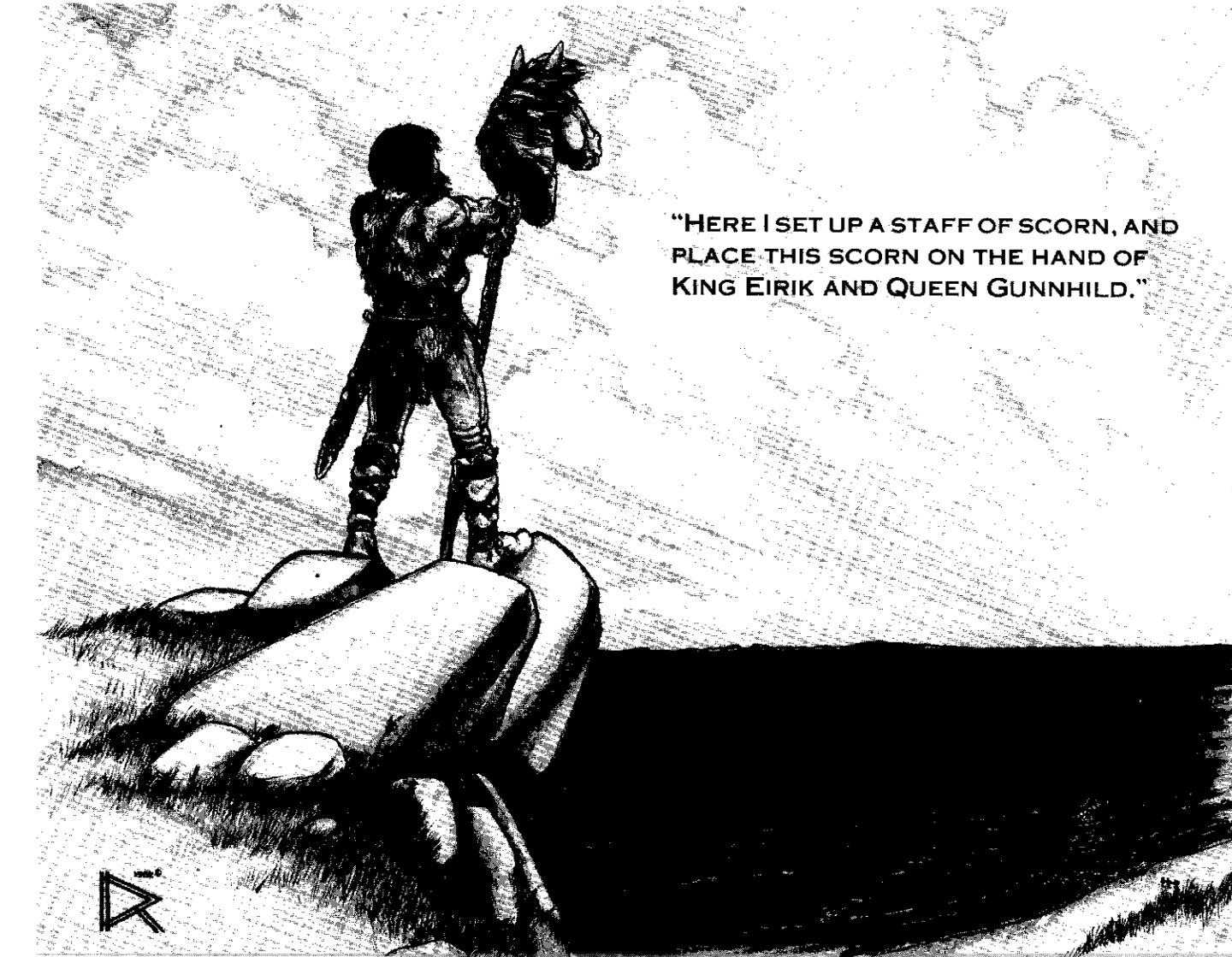
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**"HERE I SET UP A STAFF OF SCORN, AND
PLACE THIS SCORN ON THE HAND OF
KING EIRIK AND QUEEN GUNNHILD."**

material components. If a referee allows characters to learn a runic alphabet, the character may use it to mark maps, write spells into spell books, or send messages.

The possibilities for using runes in gaming seem great, but there are some limiting factors to keep in mind. If only one culture uses runes, fine. But if several do, then similarities and differences between the various systems should be accounted for. Are these cultures living in close proximity to one another? If so, is there then a reason for their runes to illustrate influences gained from one another? For instance, if a fairly civilized group of elves, who had long been developing their linguistic and writing skills, lived next to a society of humans that had only recently (in elvish terms) developed, and if they both have runic alphabets, chances are great that the humans' alphabet demonstrates a lot of elvish influence. When considering the runic system of a particular culture in a world where runes are in widespread use, a DM should be able to answer these questions: Did this culture develop their runes or borrow them from someone else? If so, who? When? How? And why?

If a society or culture in a campaign develops runes independently, then the materials they use for carving must be considered when determining how the rune characters are designed. Earlier it was explained how the Germans had very simple runes that had either vertical or perpendicular staves, because such a formation was easiest to carve into wood, their most abundant material. In a fantasy campaign, dwarves who created their runes for carving into stone or metal wouldn't be restricted by such a form, since most metal and stone doesn't have a "grain." However, they would still probably use straight staves, to keep carving fairly efficient. A culture which used runes in a script form, instead of in carvings, would most likely form the characters for ease of writing with a pen or brush.

Once the general method of employment of runes in a campaign has been laid out, it then becomes necessary to develop a system for creating runic alphabets, matching symbols to sounds, and scribing the runes. A "Common Tongue" runic alphabet is offered with this article. This alphabet, or a form of it,

may be usable as a starting point, since the common tongue is generally known by most AD&D characters. Much of the following system can be incorporated into other alphabets.

The Common Tongue runes were designed under the assumption that the common tongue is equivalent to English, since that is in fact the "common tongue" most of us know in real life, and since English and the AD&D common tongue both are combinations of many different languages.

The Common Tongue runic alphabet (pictured on the following page) has a few more symbols than the twenty-six letters of the English alphabet of today. This is justified by the likelihood of the different evolution of such a language in a fantasy campaign. A writing system that developed without the influences that affected the English language quite possibly might have individual symbols for sounds which can only be obtained in English by a compound-letter form (such as "ch" or "th"). Also, to speed the carving of runes, symbols would likely be created for commonly used words, so a thing or a concept could be expressed

COMMON TONGUE RUNES



A \bar{A} AU B CH D E \bar{E} F G H \bar{I} J K L M N NDNG O \bar{O}



P QU R S SH ST T TH U \bar{U} V W X Y Z AND OF (SEPARATORS)

with one character instead of a series of characters.

Another aspect of English that might be awkward for someone trying to learn the language is that words are not always pronounced the way they seem to sound. In a fantasy world where a truly universal Common Tongue would have developed, the language would probably not exhibit such tendencies, or the

inaccuracies, if they once did exist, might have been eradicated over time.

To translate scribed runes into English words, consider how a letter sounds instead of just how it looks, because some letter-symbols in English represent the same sounds. To translate the other way (from English into runes to be carved), break the English words down phonetically and spell them as they sound.

In the Common Tongue runes, there are more vowel sounds given than there are vowel characters in English. This is done so that the sound a vowel (or vowel combination) makes can be accurately depicted. Using similar reasoning, consonant characters that represent sounds similar or identical to other consonants have been eliminated: for instance, the letter "c" does not exist in this alphabet,

RUNESTONES

One night Elminster and I were sharing what fantasy writer tin Carter calls a "round of converse" (the sage has acquired a weakness for pina colodas, a beverage unknown in the Realms from whence he comes), and our talk turned to the dwarves.

Elminster thought the picture of the Hill Dwarf in the AD&D™ Monster Cards very striking. While he was admiring it, your wily editor asked if he knew of any written dwarvish records: tomes of lore, for instance, and, ahem, *magic*. Elminster chuckled and reached into one of the many pockets in his voluminous robes (yes, I know he looks odd, but the neighbors think I'm strange anyway),

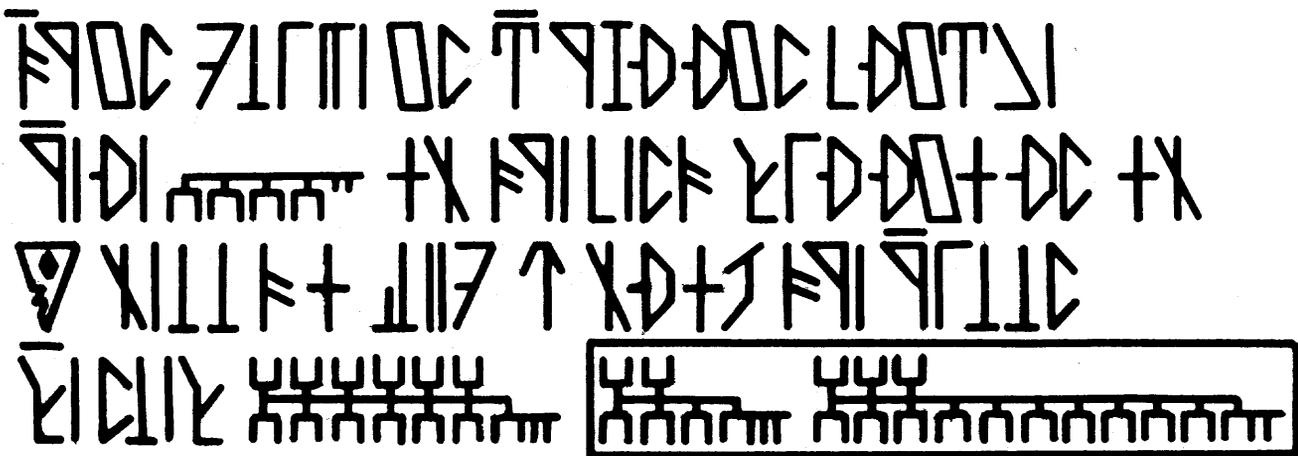
coming out with his pipe and pouch — and a stone, which he handed to me.

"Dwarves seldom write on that which can perish," Elminster said, lighting up. "Rarely, they stamp or enscribe runes on metal sheets and bind these together to make books, but stone is the usual medium: stone walls in caverns, stone buildings, pillars or standing stones — even cairns. Most often, they write on tablets — 'runestones,' as we call them in the Common Tongue."

The stone I held was flat and diamond-shaped, about an inch thick, and of some very hard rock I did not recognize. It was deep green in color, polished smooth, but it was not, Elminster assured me, any

sort of jade. The face of the stone was inscribed with runes in a ring or spiral around the edge (see illustration), and at the center bore a picture. Some runestones have pictures in relief, and are used as seals or can be pressed into wet mud to serve as temporary trail markers underground.

To a dwarf, all runestones bear some sort of message. Most are covered with runic script; Elminster knows of three such scripts. One of them, known as "Dethek," translates directly into Common, and all of the stones he showed me that night and subsequently were in this script. The runes of this script are simple and made up of straight lines, for ease in



THE 'DETHEK' RUNES ON THE STONE SHOWN AT RIGHT ARE SPELLED OUT IN LINEAR FORM ABOVE. THE TRANSLATION: 'THIS PLACE IS DHURRI'S BRIDGE. HERE FORTY-TWO OF THE BEST WARRIORS OF (THE HOUSE OF HELMUNG) FELL, TO KEEP ORCS FROM THE HALLS. WE SLEW SIX HUNDRED AND EIGHT. (DAY) 218, (YEAR SINCE FOUNDING OF THE HOUSE) 377.'

since the sound it makes in a word can be expressed by an "s" or "k" character.

Players and DMs have to consider what sorts of materials and techniques are available for scribing or writing the runes onto a surface. Geography will have an effect on available materials, just as it did with the Germanic tribes. Tree limbs and large rocks, for instance, were in abundance where the Germanic tribes lived. In a fantasy environment that contains large trees and rocks, these would be obvious and often-used surfaces for carving. But in a world devoid of trees or rocks (a distinct possibility in a fantasy milieu), choices for a carving medium would be restricted to other suitable materials that are available.

Runes can be carved on manufactured items — rings, weapons, gauntlets, and so forth. Even a world that doesn't contain an abundance of suitable raw materials will have weapons, magic items, and other things that can be inscribed.

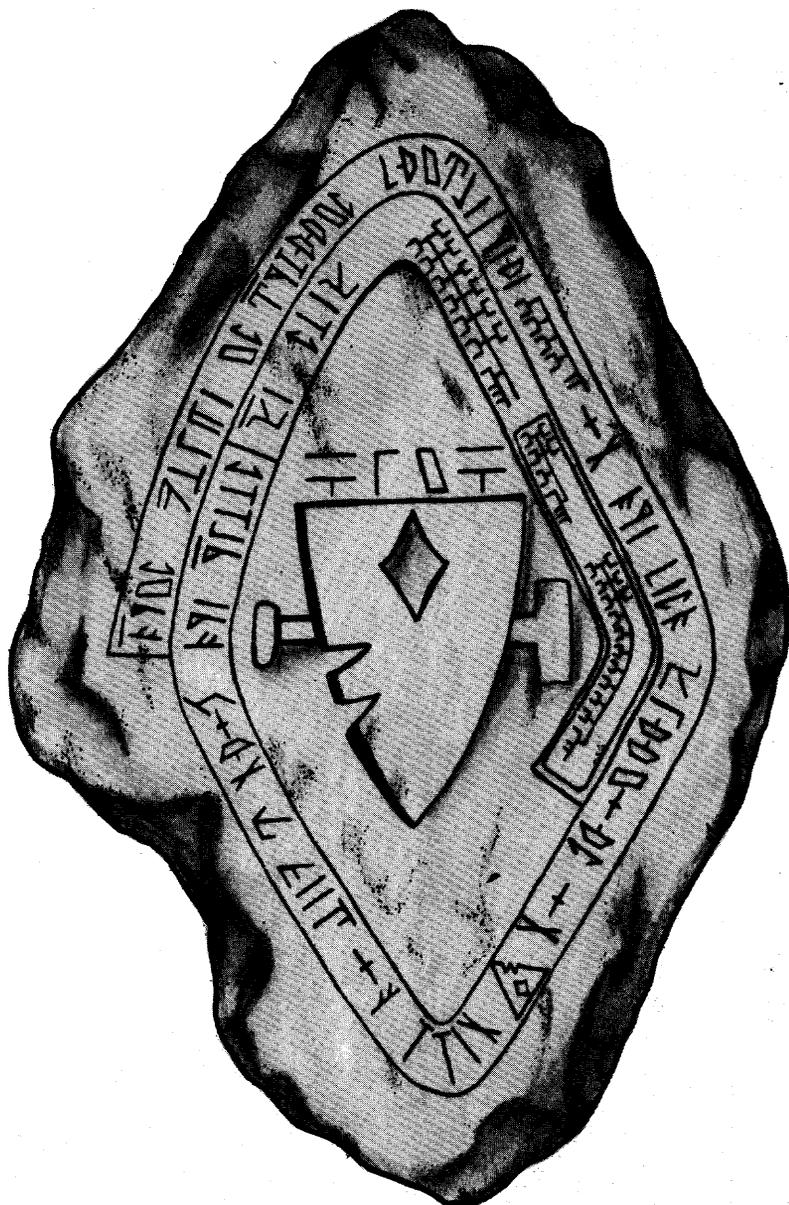
Runes can be written (applied *upon* a surface instead of being etched *into* it) on almost any material that will accept ink, pigment, charcoal, or other writing mediums. Parchment, animal hide, or — for the very lavish — vellum (calf's hide finely tanned and scraped) will hold ink from a quill or pigment from a brush.

Historically, certain techniques were used in the configuration of rune characters in or on a surface. On free-standing stones (rune-stones), the characters were often carved between parallel borders in the form of a winding "snake" design which served to embellish the work and make the stone more attractive. A less artistic method of carving was to simply put down the characters in "rune-rows," set off from one another by straight horizontal lines, often spaced so that the tops and bottoms of the rune characters touched the lines.

Words were not usually set off by spaces between them; rather, one would be

separated from the next by a dot or a small "x." Words were also distinguished by painting them in different colors, but if the coloring washed away or was worn away, the message could become rather cryptic. According to many legends (including *Egil's Saga*), the magic of runes would not work unless the writing was smeared with blood.

As with any other subject that has a foundation in history, the concept of runes can be adapted by players and DMs for use in a fantasy role-playing game, without necessarily remaining totally faithful to the way runes were used in history. Perhaps a runic alphabet will be developed into the most widely used form of communication in a fantasy world. Or, perhaps the "art" of scribing runes will be only partially developed and known only to a select few. Any system is appropriate, as long as it's logical and as long as it "fits" in the world for which it was designed.



BY ED GREENWOOD

cutting them into stone. No punctuation can be shown in Dethek, but sentences are usually separated by cross-lines in the frames which hold the lines of script; words are separated by spaces; and capital letters have a line drawn above them. Numbers which are enclosed in boxes (within the frames) are dates, day preceding year by convention. There are collective symbols or characters for identifying peoples (clans or tribes) or races. If any runes are painted, names of beings and places are commonly picked out in red, while the rest of the text is colored black or left as unadorned grooves.

Runestones are commonly read from the outer edge toward the center; the writing forms a spiral which encloses a central picture. In the case of the stone illustrated here (Elminster said this stone came from a place now destroyed), the crude central picture identifies the writer as a warrior (the hammer) of the House of Helmung, now thought to be extinct. (His name, "Nain," is written above the shield of Helmung, as is the custom. A dwarf of some importance would place his personal rune here.)

Runestones telling a legend or tale of heroism usually have a picture of the climactic scene described in the text; grave markers or histories usually reproduce the face or mark of the dwarves described. The central symbol may also be a commonly understood symbol (e.g., a symbol of a foot for a trail marker, or an inverted helm to denote safe drinking water), or sometimes nothing more than simple decoration.

0 XG11 X+DIII-D #T #+F F F 11
 0 CIGZ XODI
 0 ΔIFD'T LI#IF#9 9Γ#9+D CILL
 0F 9+ITC #9I ΔIZ
 F+ DILDID 卍
 CΓ779DID 卍
 F#T #D+L# +X XODI
 LI# DIZIZLID 9Γ#9+D #IDD

'I FALL FOREVER AND NOT AT ALL
 I SLAY FIRE
 I GUARD, BENEATH, HATHO'S SKULL
 IT HOLDS THE KEY
 TO RUBIES THREE
 SAPPHIRES THREE
 AND CROWN OF FIRE.
 BUT REMEMBER HATHO'S CURSE.'

F#F L9DIF9 #DΓ LID Δ#+L# 7I #+F
 CII ΔIFD #9I 9ΓD7IDC C0LI#F C#D0#ΔC
 9IFIIOD #9F# 0F 9+IIT LI
 F7I#IT 0F #IIT LI
 F+ CII L9GF 9ΓD7 0#Δ L00#ΔC

'THAT WHICH CRAWLS KNOWS ME NOT
 SEEK NEAR, THE HARPER'S SILENT STRINGS
 HEAVIER THAN IT SHOULD BE
 OPENED IT COULD BE
 TO SEE WHAT HARPING BRINGS.'

BE QUEST

FICTION BY ATANIELLE ANNYN NOEL

Hoofbeats hammered the causeway rising across the bogland. Marsh-birds scattered in, a clap and whine of wings. Hearing'd his farmstead waited mute in a wash of mist.

Brand skinned a hare on the hearthstone, admiring the gray gleam of use on his knife-blade. With pride he read the rune-scratched name on the hilt. The names of the letters — *birch, ride, Asir-god, need, day* — formed a blessing: *Gods will ride through the birches on your day of need.* The blessing was his own, unshared. None other in the household could read.

The knife and the understanding of letters, which his father had learned as Thegn to Eorl Athelstan, were all he could thank his father for. His young mouth set in a grim line.

He sliced neatly through the pelt, careful to avoid the muskglands that could ruin the skin. He probed with skilled fingers between hide and body, bringing the pelt away whole.

Hearthfire blazed, a kettle boiled, hens shuffled their feathers. A sleeping dog twitched inside his loose and scar-lashed skin. Outdoors a cockerel crowed, brighter than the mist-moored sun. Then the dogs outside racketed an alarm, wakening the hearth-dog.

"Down, Grim," Brand admonished as he held the hare out of reach. In the firelight, the boy showed as lean and wild, at seventeen, as the wolfish dogs leaping and howling at the sound of hoofbeats. Pale brown hair, like autumn straw after rain, hung comb-shy around eyes trained into an untrusting stare, green-gray eyes glowering out of a briar-scraped face.

Brand thrust the hare on a shelf and rushed to the door. Chill mist made of the rider a grizzled grave-shape. "Guthmod's men have landed!" The stranger's voice wavered in and out of the squall of fowls and dogs. "Eorl Athelhelm requires a man from each hearth to meet on the morrow at Weland's Stone. Have ye heard?"

Brand's uncle shouted assent from the byre door.

"Then meet in the morning, and Tiw bless your blade."

Brand stood clutching the doorpost, his heart echoing the retreating hoofbeats, drumming out silent words: "*War! I am going to war! I was chosen. Uncle is old, his son is simple. I go to war to rout the raiders.*"

"Brand, did you hear?"

His uncle and mother, weather-wizened, wind-bent folk, each took him by the hand, one rough, one tender. His uncle, peering from red eyes, matched him, as though matching horses to a team, to the memory of his father — warrior, hero, Thegn to Eorl Athelhelm's father. His mother, tears drenching her cheeks, memorized the features of her only living son. Looking into her eyes, Brand realized for the first time that he could die.

"I wish I had my father's sword."

Why had he spoken aloud? The startlement in the faces before him was condemnation enough. But if it were his father before him, age-bent, and not his uncle, would not his father have lent him his sword?

Would he have, though?

Tall, fierce-haired, hard of hand and eye, the unrelenting man who was his father stood forth in his memory. Brand cringed back, as from a blow.

In that moment he hated the indomitable dead as fiercely as he ever had the living man. What right had he to reach out from the grave, making his son cower in the daylight? Worst, Brand saw himself as the craven his father had called him.

"Eh, Brand, boy, I'll tell you the way to Weland's Stone. You'll show those cutthroat Guthlings the fastest way back to their harbors — or how deep we bury brigands and bandits!"

Brand let his uncle lead him away to point out the road. His mother, turning back to the house, smiled through her tears, the smile with which she had tried all his life to heal his father's beatings.

He must have his father's sword, and stay alive.

He had thought himself young and strong and tireless, as brave as any lad years his senior, but if his dead father could hurt him so, what could Guthmod's men, living, do?

". . . left beyond Denebridge, in a meadow between three hills. The men will muster by the stone. When you see the Eorl, go down on one knee to him, and speak only to answer his asking.

"There, boy, the sun breaks through a bit. Sit down, rest awhile.

"I remember my first battle, lad, but your father . . . if ever a brother worshipped his brother, it was I. I've seen him splashed about hair, boots, and all between with the blood of enemies. He was a hard man, but we'd go anywhere at his heels.

"The only man to equal him, Eorl Athelstan, father to Eorl Athelhelm, knew the measure of the man who served him. He made him Thegn and gave him honor, and your father answered, 'My Eorl, I, your Thegn, oathbind my aid to you and your household. As I am beside you at the dawn of battle, beside you I stay to death and beyond.' I heard him swear so before the Battle of Warren Hill.

"He is still beside him, beneath the barrow. Faithful in death..

Few are like him. Be glad today you had his teaching."

Brand fisted his white-knuckled hands to help him keep his silence. Unvoiced angers roiled within him. His voice, when he tried to use it, choked him.

"There, lad, I'll leave you be. You're going on to glory from the battle before you." The uncle scuffed back to the byre, favoring one knee.

Brand, looking after him against his will, thought: *If my father were so old now, perhaps we could make peace. I only remember him in his prime, despising the weakness of his son — the weakness he himself would have had if he had grown old.*

Facing his mortality in his father's battle-death, Brand knew he himself could die on the field. He must have the sword — the sword buried in his father's hand.

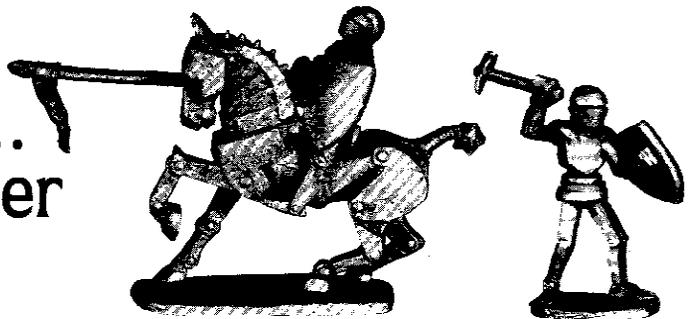
He must go to the priest. He knew what the priest would say, but until it was said, Brand couldn't act. He returned to the hearth to retrieve the flayed hare; the priest would require an offering.

Inland from the marshes, the causeway passed an isolated thicket of birches so interwoven, so matted together, that they seemed one entity. A green mist of buds softened branches as entwined as vipers in a pit. Slightly removed from the grove, half hidden in bracken and briars, the priest had his dwelling.

A man of presence, the gray-cloaked priest strode out to meet Brand as if he anticipated his visit. Brand stood unmoved by the baleful gaze of the priest. Over a massy beard spread fanwise on his chest, over a sharp, prying nose, under a grayish leather cap, hard eyes measured the boy's strength of will.

For Brand, though, the granite crag of a man held no terror. He felt relieved; if he were undaunted by a priest of Tiw, he had little chance of turning coward before Guthmod's men.

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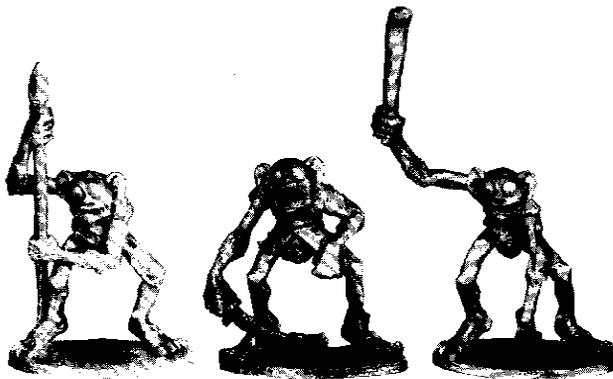
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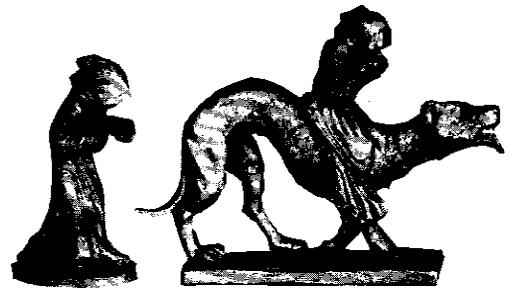
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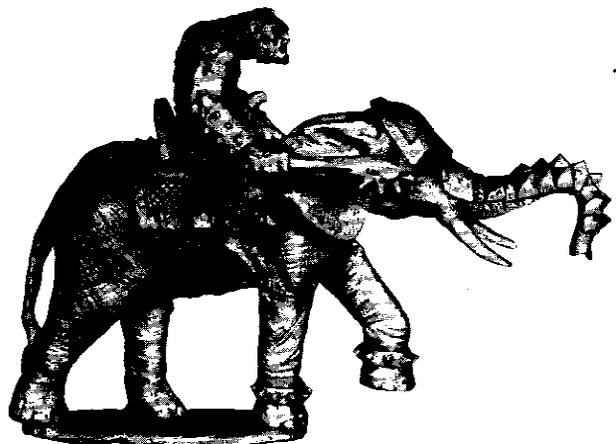
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Armored Giant on War Elephant

"Ah, Brand, do you ask an advice?"

"Yes, wise one. Can you give me counsel?"

The Tiw-priest glanced sharply aside toward the grove. The lower branches were festooned with shreds of cloth, holed stones, small skeletons, and carved rods tied in place. Brand broke a twig off a briar bush, whittled it sharp, and with it skewered the hare's hind legs together over a limb. Hanging, without pelt or ears, the hare was horribly human, naked, dead.

"Guthmod threatens. Battle will join," Brand stated formally. "My father's blade rusts in Athelstan's barrow. Is it wrong that I should wear it?" He watched the hare shift in a faint wind, a hanged man, a dead man, himself after battle.

"The dead in the darkness face dread and danger. Would you leave them weak and weaponless? Athelstan's captain serves his Eorl. He knows that need, and not his sons."

Brand held in a breath of anger, feeling a hot pulse shake him. "He never knew my needs alive, never nodded to all my asking."

"Do what you must. The fate that moves you goes beyond question and counsel. Pray to Tiw. Tiw's guiding takes a man past death and darkness." Fierce-eyed and threatening, the priest nodded dismissal.

Brand saluted him and left, inwardly scornful. He had guessed right. To the priest, the best advice was no advice, a safe path, inappropriate to the servant of a warrior-god.

One does not rob the dead, but do the dead have the right to rob the living?

Already the shadows stretched long, stark hands, reaching, beseeching, eastward across the marsh to the first low hills and the west-facing barrow.

Brand turned back to the farm for a torch, lit at the hearth. The firebrand, his namesake, armed him against night. He followed the shadows, his own shadow lengthening before him. Dark came before sunset. Cloud-drifts settled low and bitter, small rain fell with furtive sounds in the furze and bracken.

The torch's light was vague, illusory, and the flames gasped and shuddered in the thin rain. Brand held it high where the glare wouldn't dazzle him; he couldn't shelter it with his body. All he could hope in that light was to keep to the path that ran past the barrow, avoid the marsh-pits, and see within the burial chamber.

It seemed, as he walked in the dark, that the land flowed past him. Shrubs and stumps started up suddenly, silent phantoms in the circle of light. Red-ember eyes — hares, perhaps, or ferrets — glowed, blinked, and vanished.

A breeze off the bog choked him as though a rotten leaf had lodged in his throat. Otherwise, all smelled damp, fresh, cold: pine, wet earth, pitchy smoke.

Off in that dark the body of his father lay, in a hollowed oak-trunk, the boat of souls. His lifeless hand clasped the sword that could save his son. Brand shuddered sickly at the thought of prying the dead hand from the hilt, seeing the glare of dead eyes or soulless sockets.

Could jealous dead, powered by berserk afterlife, rise up, throwing back coffin lids, drawing swords against intruders — even their own flesh? Halted by the vision, Brand stood cold in the rain. The world shrank to a circle of torchlight. Beyond it, Eorl Athelstan and followers dead in twenty battles stood by his father, who, grayer than the Tiw-priest, mighty in death, tight-grasped the blade his Eorl had given him.

An owl drifted across the light, a pale shadow, amber-eyed. Brand shook off his dark dreaming, trudged forward in blackness starred by sparks of torchlit rain.

Two white cobbles flanked the edge of the road, marking the path that branched to the barrow-mouth, a steep path ending in stone. The stones placed to block the barrow-mouth were large. To prop his torch where it gave any light, to grip and shift cold and rain-slick stones, was a long and frustrating struggle. As he worked, prying and levering, visions of death filled the dark.

Brand had seen dead men before; he had seen his father borne in on a makeshift bier behind Eorl Athelstan's. His father was still fierce then; his beard and eyebrows bristling, he had

seemed ready to bellow forth all the hate and blame to his son that he had ever said before.

But what is a man three years dead? Bone, or leathery skin, or loathsome rottenness? Brand found it ironic that he struggled so hard to reach the man he wanted least to see.

He cleared a passage and crept inside, gasping on the smoke of his torch. The chamber was small and low-ceilinged in the swelling flank of the barrow hill. The barrow itself was age-old, housing forgotten kings in a chamber whose door was lost. In these times, the mound-side was burrowed now and then to hold a mighty Eorl or hero.

Out of the rain, the chamber seemed startlingly dry, smelling only of dust, stone, and a slight, mousy mustiness. The footprints of the burial party were still clear, overlain by prints of rats and weasels. Here, near the entrance, the floor was pocked and knobbed in a minute pattern where water had leaked and dripped. A few pieces of war-gear, shields and spears, leaned against the wall as if in a storeroom. Torchlit, enclosed from the weather, the room had the familiar feeling of a farm-shed. Like grain-chests, the hollow oak logs stood by the wall. The lesser of the Earl's men had been buried in a ditch near Warren Hill. Only two men were here, and — now — one boy. . . .

Brand unlidded one of the chests. He glanced inside sideways, saw enough to see that the bones were not clean.

Gnawing beasts had done their work, but brown blotches of dried flesh marred the pure skeletal lines. The wood showed minute chisel-tooth marks where the beasts had forced a hole through through just below the edge of the lid. The gnawed space stood out vividly in the torchlight as Brand, half-blind, willed himself to examine the bony heap that lay within.

He could see by looking at the trunk that the body was not the Eorl's. The copper arm-ring, the checked pattern of tunic were familiar to Brand; they formed into images at the edge of his eye, harmless. And then . . .

There was no face.

Brand dared look full at it for a fraction of time. Stained bone, naked teeth, a curve of leather that might have been an ear lost in the mat of hair. . . . No light shone in the empty skull as baleful as the living eyes had been. No bony hand raised to strike him. No voice bellowed from bony hroat.

The flayed hare, limp, damp, pallid, had had as much dignity as this. Was this the response to that sacrifice? Had the gods ridden through those birches on this day of need to bring him this? And then . . .

The hand had fallen from the hilt.

Slowly, as if struggling in deep water, Brand shifted the torch to his left hand, leaned, and took up the sword.

Heavy in his hand, plain, roughly made, scarred and dented with such war-work as he would put it to, the sword gleamed dully.

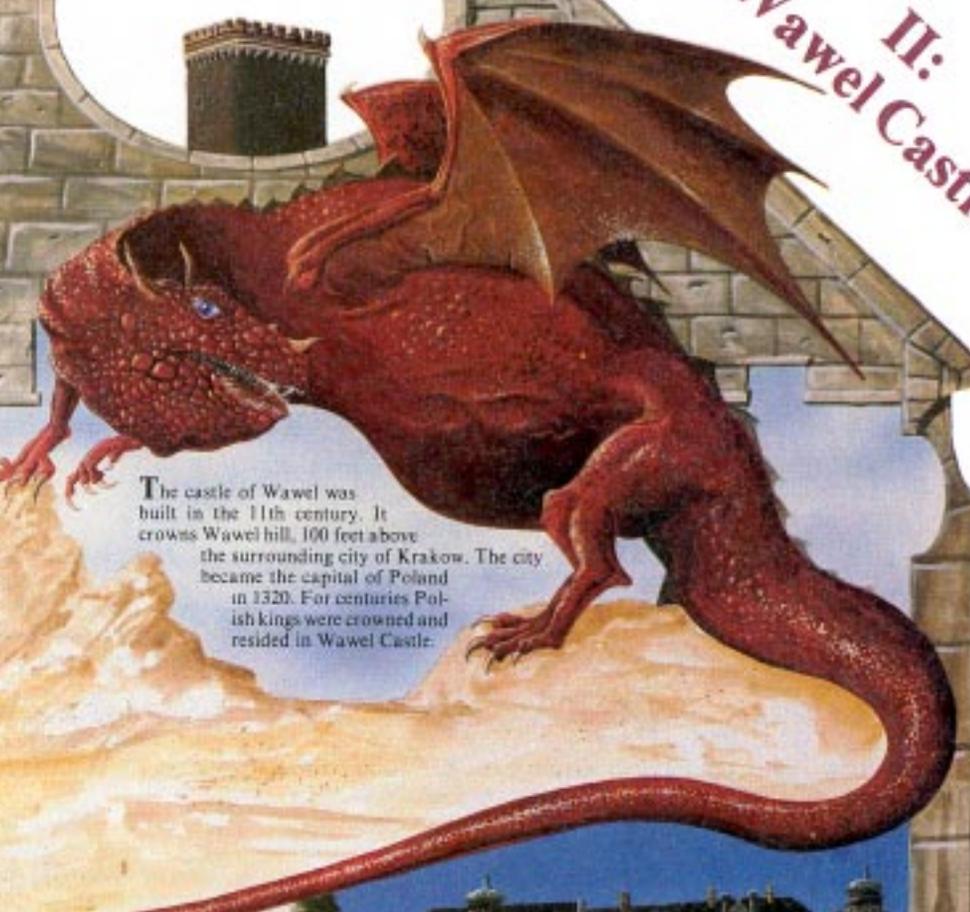
The quest was achieved, but not as in old tales with flaming glory and horns bellowing, but with a hilt in his hand, ascent of rust and mildew, and the hissing whine of torch-flames.

Brand glanced back at what had sired him, no longer terrifying, and, if loathsome, loathsome as a thing of worth now ruined. Perhaps the proud warrior spirit still dreamed in those bones, living an unlife of hazard. Brand drew his knife, placed its hilt beside the withered hand. He slid the lid back into place, slumped for a moment with the exhaustion of relief, and examined the sword once more.

His sword. His fate. The lines of the blade, the binding of the hilt, the heft and swing of it, must become familiar to him. Here, parallel scratches grooved the blade. Runes. Words. Brand spelled them out in wonder.

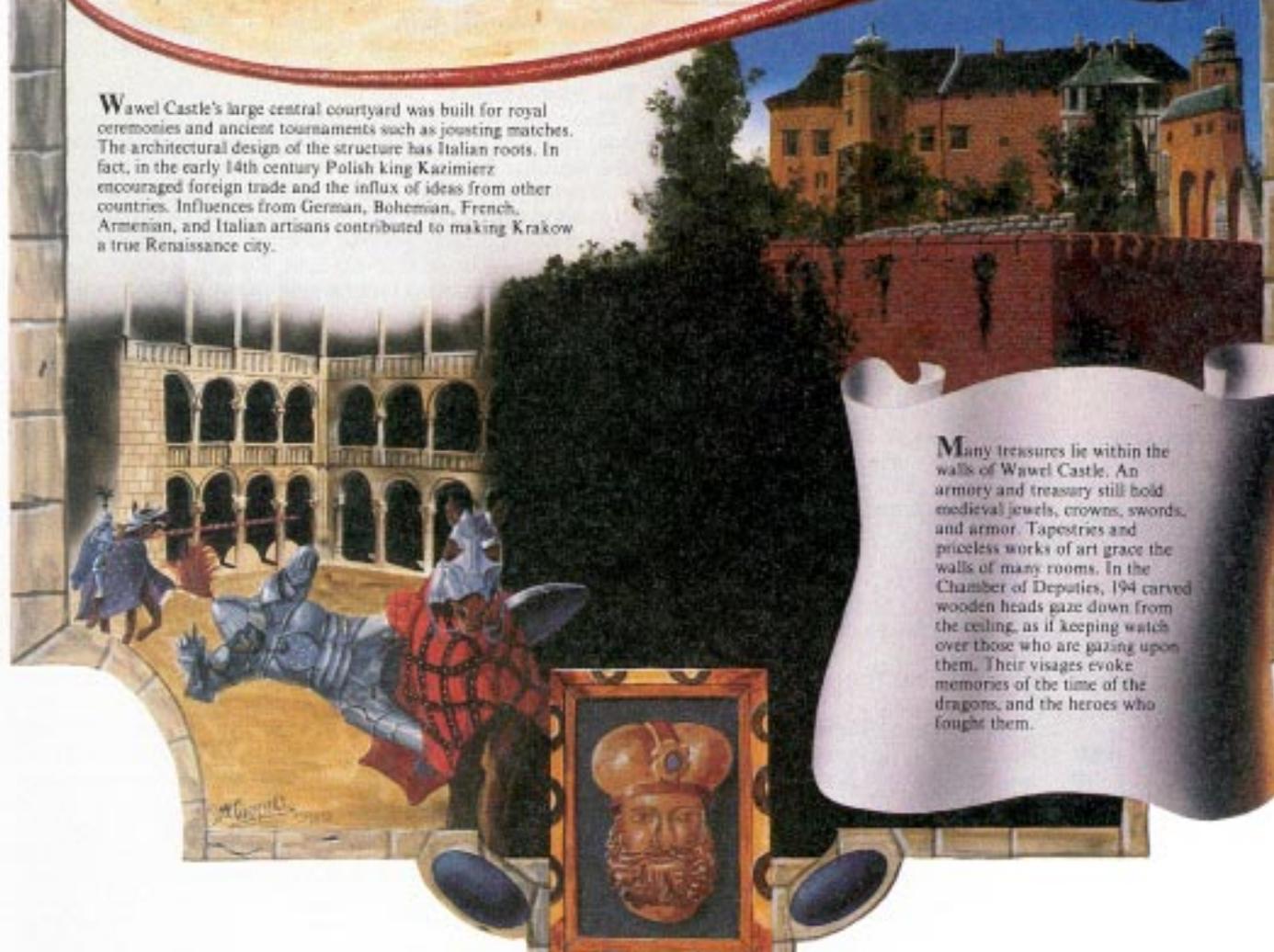
Weeping, he leaned his torch against the wall, blackening the stones. Weeping, he knelt by the oak-coffin, hugging the wood for comfort, all too late. Through tears he read the letters on the blade, torchlit on coffin-lid, and sobbed again. Perhaps months before his final battle, his father had scratched out what none had seen or understood:

GIF MI SONNE MI SWEORD

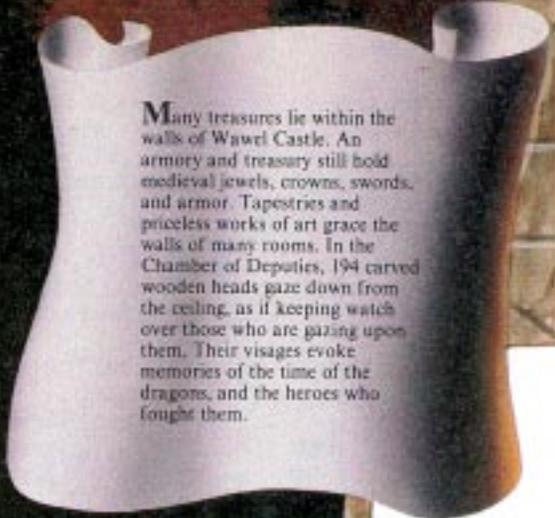
A large, detailed illustration of a red dragon breathing fire. The dragon is positioned in the upper right, with its wings spread and its mouth open, exhaling a large plume of orange and yellow flames that fills the lower left and center of the frame. The dragon's body is covered in scales, and its wings are a darker red. The background shows a stone archway and a castle tower.

From the Dark Ages comes a Polish legend about a dragon that ravaged the countryside around the hill of Wawel. A clever shoemaker's apprentice named Krak threw a sheep soaked in burning pitch into the monster's lair; the dragon ate it and died. Krak went on to found the city of Krakow and was its first prince.

The castle of Wawel was built in the 11th century. It crowns Wawel hill, 100 feet above the surrounding city of Krakow. The city became the capital of Poland in 1320. For centuries Polish kings were crowned and resided in Wawel Castle.

A composite illustration of Wawel Castle. The top part shows a red dragon breathing fire. The middle part shows a view of the castle's architecture, including a large central courtyard with a jousting arena. In the foreground, there is a jousting scene with two knights on horseback, one of whom is falling. Below the jousting scene is a framed portrait of a king with a crown and a beard. The background shows the castle's towers and walls under a blue sky.

Wawel Castle's large central courtyard was built for royal ceremonies and ancient tournaments such as jousting matches. The architectural design of the structure has Italian roots. In fact, in the early 14th century Polish king Kazimierz encouraged foreign trade and the influx of ideas from other countries. Influences from German, Bohemian, French, Armenian, and Italian artisans contributed to making Krakow a true Renaissance city.

An illustration of a white scroll unrolled to reveal text. The scroll is positioned in the lower right corner of the page. The text on the scroll describes the treasures found within Wawel Castle.

Many treasures lie within the walls of Wawel Castle. An armory and treasury still hold medieval jewels, crowns, swords, and armor. Tapestries and priceless works of art grace the walls of many rooms. In the Chamber of Deputies, 194 carved wooden heads gaze down from the ceiling, as if keeping watch over those who are gazing upon them. Their visages evoke memories of the time of the dragons, and the heroes who fought them.



A "split class" for nimble characters: the Thief-Acrobat

by Gary Gygax

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This time, rather than reveal a new sub-class such as the Barbarian, I thought the Enlightened Readership of this splendid vehicle might enjoy another concept. What you are about to read is the information so far developed pertaining to a split class. This is a first: To my knowledge, such a possibility has not been expressed before in any similar game system. There is nothing similar to it in the AD&D™ game system, although choosing to change from one profession to another is not too unlike the idea. Let us then get to the business at hand. I bring you, without further ado, the official new split-class for thieves.

THE THIEF-ACROBAT

Any thief character with a minimum strength of 15 and a minimum dexterity of 16 may decide to forgo normal thievery to become a specialist, a Thief-Acrobat. The thief then leaves off all practices which increase his or her manual dexterity and begins a regimen of physical exercise in order to build coordination, muscle tone, and balance. This program of gymnastics precludes any further progress in the following skills:

<i>pick pockets</i>	<i>find traps</i>
<i>open locks</i>	<i>remove traps</i>
<i>read language</i>	<i>read magic (never gained)</i>

Skills ended at 5th level, while no longer improving, are not forgotten, so they remain at the level (5th) which the thief was when he or she began to specialize in acrobatics in conjunction with his or her profession.

Character abilities

Thief-acrobats with a strength of 16 or better and a dexterity of 16 or better add a 10% bonus to earned experience.

Strength Table III: Adjustments for Thief-Acrobats

Strength score	High jump	Bonus for:	
		Standing broad jump	Running broad jump
16			½'
17	¼'	¼'	1'
18	½'	½'	2'

Note regarding Strength Table III: All bonuses are used to adjust the *Thief-Acrobat Function Table* detailed later. The adjustment for strength, plus racial adjustments, are added to the base chance for success or function maximums found there.

Dexterity Table III: Adjustments for Thief-Acrobats
Bonus for:

Dexterity score	Tightrope walking	Pole vaulting	Tumbling:		
			Attack	Evasion	Falling
16	5%	—	1%	2%	—
17	10%	5%	2%	3%	—
18	15%	10%	3%	5%	5'
19	20%	15%	4%	8%	10'

Note regarding Dexterity Table III: All bonuses are used to adjust the *Thief-Acrobat Function Table* detailed later. The dexterity bonuses here are added to the base chances for success or function maximums found there. Racial adjustments must also be made.

Race of thief-acrobat characters

A member of any character race may opt to specialize as a thief-acrobat.

Character Classes Table II (Addition):
Armor & Weapons Permitted

Class of character	Armor	Shield	Weapons/Oil/Poison
Thief-Acrobat	as thief	as thief	as thief, plus staff

The Thief-Acrobat

Upon gaining sufficient experience points to achieve 6th level ability as a thief, the character desiring to specialize as a thief-acrobat must seek out a character already in this profession to train him or her. The established thief-acrobat must be of at least 10th level. It will require 6 full weeks of training to learn the basic skills needed to begin active practice of the special profession of thief-acrobat. Except as noted, the specialization procedure is otherwise the same as that for a regular thief.

The primary functions of a thief-acrobat are: 1) *tightrope walking*; 2) *pole vaulting*; 3) *jumping*; and 4) *tumbling*. In addition to these functions, the thief-acrobat retains the abilities to *move silently*, *hide in shadows*, *hear noise*, and *read languages* which he or she acquired through 5th level of the standard thief profession. Although the ability to read magical writings is never gained, the ability to *climb walls* is still increased according to experience level.

Tightrope walking assumes that the character will use this means to cross from place to place. The skill allows ascent up a rope or beam of about a 45° angle (maximum) or descent at a slightly steeper angle, all while upright and with hands free (in general). This is accomplished by balance, muscle coordination, and superb reflexes.

Pole vaulting includes any jumping which employs a leverage device to assist the individual in gaining height from momentum; i.e., a teeter board or springboard might serve as well or better than a pole in some cases. It will help to get quickly to the top of or over obstacles. It requires strength, dexterity, and practice to improve.

Jumping includes all sorts of unassisted leaps — high jumping and broad jumps (both from a standing and a running start) being important here. The skill requires coordinated strength and continual practice.

Tumbling assumes all sorts of gymnastic skills — tumbles, rolls, jumps, handstands, and so on. These routines are then used in attack, defensive evasion, and in jumping/falling.

THIEF-ACROBAT FUNCTION' TABLE (plus racial adjustments)

Character level	Tightrope walking	THIEF-ACROBAT FUNCTION' TABLE (plus racial adjustments)					Tumbling:	
		Pole vaulting	High jumping	Broad jumping: Standing	Broad jumping: Running	Attack	Evasion	Falling
6	75%	9'	4'	4'	8'	6%	10%	25%/10'
7	80%	9½'	4¼'	4½'	8½'	7%	15%	50%/10'
8	85%	10'	4½'	5'	9'	8%	20%	75%/10'
9	90%	10½'	4¾'	5½'	9½'	9%	25%	25%/20'
10	95%	11'	5'	6'	10'	10%	30%	50%/20'
11	100%	11½'	5¼'	6½'	10½'	11%	35%	75%/20'
12	100%	12'	5½'	7'	11'	12%	40%	25%/30'
13	100%	12½'	5¾'	7½'	12'	13%	45%	50%/30'
14	100% ¹	13'	6¼'	8'	13'	14%	50%	75%/30'
15	100% ¹	13½'	6½'	8½'	14'	15%	52%	20%/40'
16	100% ²	14'	7'	9'	15'	16%	54%	40%/40'
17	100% ²	14½'	7½'	9½'	16'	17%	56%	60%/40'
18	100% ³	15'	8'	10'	17'	18%	58%	80%/40'
19	100% ³	15½'	8½'	10½'	18'	19%	60%	20%/50'
20	100% ⁴	16'	9'	11'	19'	20%	60%	40%/50'
21	100% ⁴	16½'	9'	11'	20'	20%	60%	60%/50'
22	100% ⁵	17'	9'	11'	21'	20%	60%	80%/50'
23	100% ⁵	17½'	9'	11'	21'	20%	60%	20%/60'

Racial adjustments:

Dwarf	-5%	-2'	-1'	-2'	-3'	+10%	+5%	—
Elf	+10%	—	—	—	-1'	—	+5%	+5%
Gnome	—	-2'	-1'	-1½'	-4'	+5%	+5%	—
Half-elf	+5%	—	—	—	—	+5%	—	—
Halfling	—	-2'	-1'	-1½'	-4'	+5%	+10%	+5%
Half-orc	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	+10%

¹ — Includes the ability to carry up to 1,000 g.p. weight/encumbrance in addition to normal load, or handle a moderate wind with no penalty to the chance for success.

² — Includes the ability to carry 1,000 g.p. weight/encumbrance in a moderate wind, or carry up to 2,000 g.p. weight/encumbrance, or handle a strong wind.

³ — Includes the ability to carry up to 2,000 g.p. weight/encumbrance in a moderate wind, or 1,000 g.p. weight/encumbrance in a strong wind.

⁴ — Includes the ability to bear up to 3,000 g.p. weight/encumbrance or as in ³ above

⁵ — Includes the ability to carry up to 2,000 g.p. weight/encumbrance in a strong wind or bear up to 3,000 g.p. weight/encumbrance in a moderate wind, or bear up to a maximum of 4,000 g.p. weight/encumbrance.

Notes regarding Thief-Acrobat Function Table: Where applicable, roll percentile dice to determine success or failure of an attempt. Scores must be not greater than the percentage generated in order to be successful.

Tightrope walking assumes that the character will be traveling no more than 60' distance. Movement rate is 60'/round. If distance is greater than 60', then additional checks must be made. Moderate winds decrease chance of success by 10%, strong winds by 20%. In strong, gusty wind conditions there is *always* a 5% chance of failure. In non-windy conditions, a balance pole increases the chance of success by 10%. Failure to perform successfully means that the character falls to the area below, taking damage accordingly.

Pole vaulting requires at least a 30' running start and a pole of

THIEF-ACROBAT TABLE I

Experience points	Experience	
	Level	Level title
20,001 — 45,000	6	Burglar-Acrobat
45,001 — 75,000	7	Second-Story Thief
75,001 — 125,000	8	Cat Burglar
125,001 — 180,000	9	Master Cat Burglar
181,001 — 250,000	10	Thief-Acrobat
250,001 — 500,000	11	Master Thief-Acrobat
500,001 — 750,000	12	Master Thief-Acrobat (12th level)

250,000 experience points for every level beyond the 12th.

Falling damage

The correct procedure for determining falling damage in the AD&D game system is to roll 1d6 per 10' fallen, *cumulative*. Since a falling body accelerates quickly, the damage mounts geometrically: 2d6 for the second 10 feet fallen, 3d6 for the third 10 feet, etc.

The maximum of 20d6 is therefore reached after a fall of approximately 60 feet for most characters. A thief-acrobat can often fall further distances, but the same 20d6 maximum should be applied.

The rationale behind this system will be discussed in the next issue (#70) of DRAGON™ Magazine.

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at least 4' greater height than the vaulter. The pole is dropped when the vault occurs. The vaulter can land on his or her feet atop a surface of 1/2' less height than the maximum height of the pole vault if so desired, assuming such a surface exists. Otherwise, the vaulter lands, tumble-rolls, and is on his or her feet in 1 segment.

High jumping requires at least a 20' running start. The high jumper clears the obstacle in a near-horizontal position but lands on his or her feet. If some elevated step, or a series of such steps, enables the character to maintain rapid motion, he or she can then high-jump from such an elevated position just as if doing so normally. Alternately, the jumper can opt to land atop some higher surface. This surface must be no more than 4' above the level from which the jump is made, or 2' under the maximum height for normal high jumping, whichever is the greater. In either case, the thief-acrobat lands on his or her feet in 1 segment.

Broad jumping is self-explanatory. A jump of any sort requires but a single segment to accomplish. A running broad jump requires a run of at least 20'. In standing jumps, the thief-acrobat can leap forward up to the maximum distance, or backward up to half the maximum distance, in order to attack or avoid being in attack range, if this is deemed possible by the DM. All jumps assume the character will land on his or her feet. If the character wishes to leap in an extended position, 2' of additional distance can be gained, but the character will then land prone and take 2 full segments to get back on his or her feet. A 3' extension can be attempted, but this has a 25% chance of failure and a 3-segment period of recovery; a 4' extension has a 50% chance of failure and a 4-segment recovery; a 5' extension has a 75% chance of failure and a 5-segment recovery period.

Tumbling routines have the following benefits: *Attack* adds the indicated percentage to the character's chance for success in hand-to-hand combat involving grappling, pummeling, etc.

Evasion enables the character to opt to evade attacks directed at him or her — just as a magic resistance would work with respect to magical attack forms directed at the individual (or a relatively small area, such as a few square feet, from which the thief-acrobat could easily remove himself or herself), or from melee combat — in the case where the thief-acrobat has the initiative, but only in this case. In any event, the chance for success cannot exceed a base of 60%, adjusted for dexterity and/or race. *Evasion* routines of any sort require 1 segment maximum to perform. *Falling* percentage indicates the chance for the thief-acrobat to take no damage from a fall of the indicated distance. Thus, at 6th level there is a 25% chance that the character will take no damage from a 10' fall. If damage is taken, the converse of the percentage to avoid damage is used to find maximum damage. Again in the case of a 6th level thief-acrobat falling 10' and taking damage, only 75% of normal (1d6) damage, rounded down, is taken. Note that at 9th level it is not possible for a thief-acrobat to take damage from a 10' fall, and it is 25% probable that he or she will take no damage from a 20' fall. Again, only damage from the second portion of the fall's distance would be considered if damage was indicated. Example: A 23rd level thief-acrobat is knocked off a tightrope and falls 60' to the rocks below. No damage would be sustained if the fall were 50' or less, but in a 60' fall the character's body reaches a high velocity, such that unless 20% or lower is scored by the character on a falling roll, he or she will take 80% of the usual amount of damage for a 60' fall, so it is 80% likely that 80% of 6d6 damage would be taken. Falls of a distance longer than the "safe" distance for a particular thief-acrobat add their normal increment of damage dice, regardless of elimination of shorter distances. Thus, in the example above, the 23rd level thief-acrobat falling 70' instead of 60' would suffer 80% of maximum damage for a 60' fall (80% of 6d6), plus 100% of 7d6. For an 80' fall, 100% of another 8d6 would be added; the total damage therefore would be 15d6 plus 80% of 6d6.

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Thief-Acrobat Weight/Encumbrance Table

Experience level	Body-associated wt./encumbrance	Additional (carried) wt./encumbrance
6	450 g.p.	100 g.p.
7	460 g.p.	200 g.p.
8	470 g.p.	300 g.p.
9	480 g.p.	490 g.p.
10	490 g.p.	500 g.p.
11	500 g.p.	600 g.p.
12	510 g.p.	700 g.p.
13	520 g.p.	850 g.p.
14	530 g.p.	1,000 g.p.
15	540 g.p.	1,500 g.p.
16	550 g.p.	2,000 g.p.
17	570 g.p.	2,250 g.p.
18	600 g.p.	2,500 g.p.
19	625 g.p.	2,750 g.p.
20	650 g.p.	3,000 g.p.
21	660 g.p.	3,500 g.p.
22	670 g.p.	4,000 g.p.
23	700 g.p.	4,000 g.p.

Notes regarding Thief-Acrobat Weight/Encumbrance Table:

The term *Body-associated weight/encumbrance* refers strictly to the clothing, accessories, armor, and weapons of the character. Consider the following example of this for a typical character:

Clothing (partial only due to armor)	20 g.p. w/e
Leather armor	150
Boots, soft	30
Belt	3
Belt pouch, large	10
Belt pouch, small	5
Cloak, hooded	25
Dagger and scabbard	10
Short sword and scabbard	35
TOTAL	288 g.p. w/e
Balance for additional equipment and/or loot:	162 (minimum)
GRAND TOTAL	450 g.p. (maximum for 6th level)

No more than the indicated weights/encumbrances can be borne by the thief-acrobat at any time if he or she is to be able to perform the functions of his or her class (except for tightrope walking, as outlined in the footnotes to the Thief-Acrobat Function Table). Thus, loot will typically be carried in a hand-held container in order to be quickly rid of it so as to be able to vault, jump, or tumble. No backpack can ever be worn during thief-acrobat activities, other than during tightrope walking. Climbing functions of the thief-acrobat assume that only the stipulated weights/encumbrances will be borne.

The term *Additional (carried) weight/encumbrance* refers strictly to the weight borne when tightrope walking. Since this movement is very slow anyway, such great encumbrance is of no matter as long as it is evenly distributed and properly balanced. Thus, a 14th level thief-acrobat can carry an additional burden of 1,000g.p. weight/encumbrance in tightrope walking, but he or she cannot expect to otherwise move freely during vaulting, jumping, or tumbling routines, or even to climb walls with an extra 100-pound load. At 22nd level, a 400-pound person (perhaps a man in, plate mail) could be carried on the thief-acrobat's back, but only so long as that individual did not move so as to throw the thief-acrobat off balance.

Other information

In all other respects the thief-acrobat is treated as a thief. This includes *followers, abilities, setting traps* (at 5th level of ability, of course), and *gaining experience*.

Thief-acrobats will be a part of the normal thieves' guild if any such characters exist in the territory controlled by the guild. They can be leaders in such organizations, since they are treated the same as a regular thief by their brethren.

There it is! Comments are welcome.

News from the TSR front might encourage some of you. Despite the bad economic conditions and a slower growth trend, we are still hiring during this fiscal year (now through June 1983). We'll be employing some 160 additional persons, in fact! Positions posted for this period include *Developer, Game Designer, Manuscript Editor, Copy Editor, Technical Copy Writer, Creative Computer Programmer, Advertising Graphics Artist, Product Designer, Graphic Artists*, and a whole host of positions pertinent to work in our consumer services division, our crafts company, entertainment/media, sales/marketing/advertising, international division, business information services, and service groups such as computer services, education, human resources, publishing, and manufacturing. Any interested reader should send a complete resume to: TSR Hobbies, Inc., Personnel Dept., P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

Do not telephone! Don't just write a letter! Neither can be accepted. Our personnel people need only your resume, and then they will be in a position to contact you. We have about 200 persons on the payroll now, and by mid-1983 that number will be around the 350 mark. If you are interested in being one of the new additions, act quickly, please.

(Editor's note: This information was composed and submitted in early autumn of 1982; many of the position openings referred to may already be filled by the time you read this. Nevertheless, anyone interested in being considered for a position should still send a resume as per the instructions above. You never know. . . .)

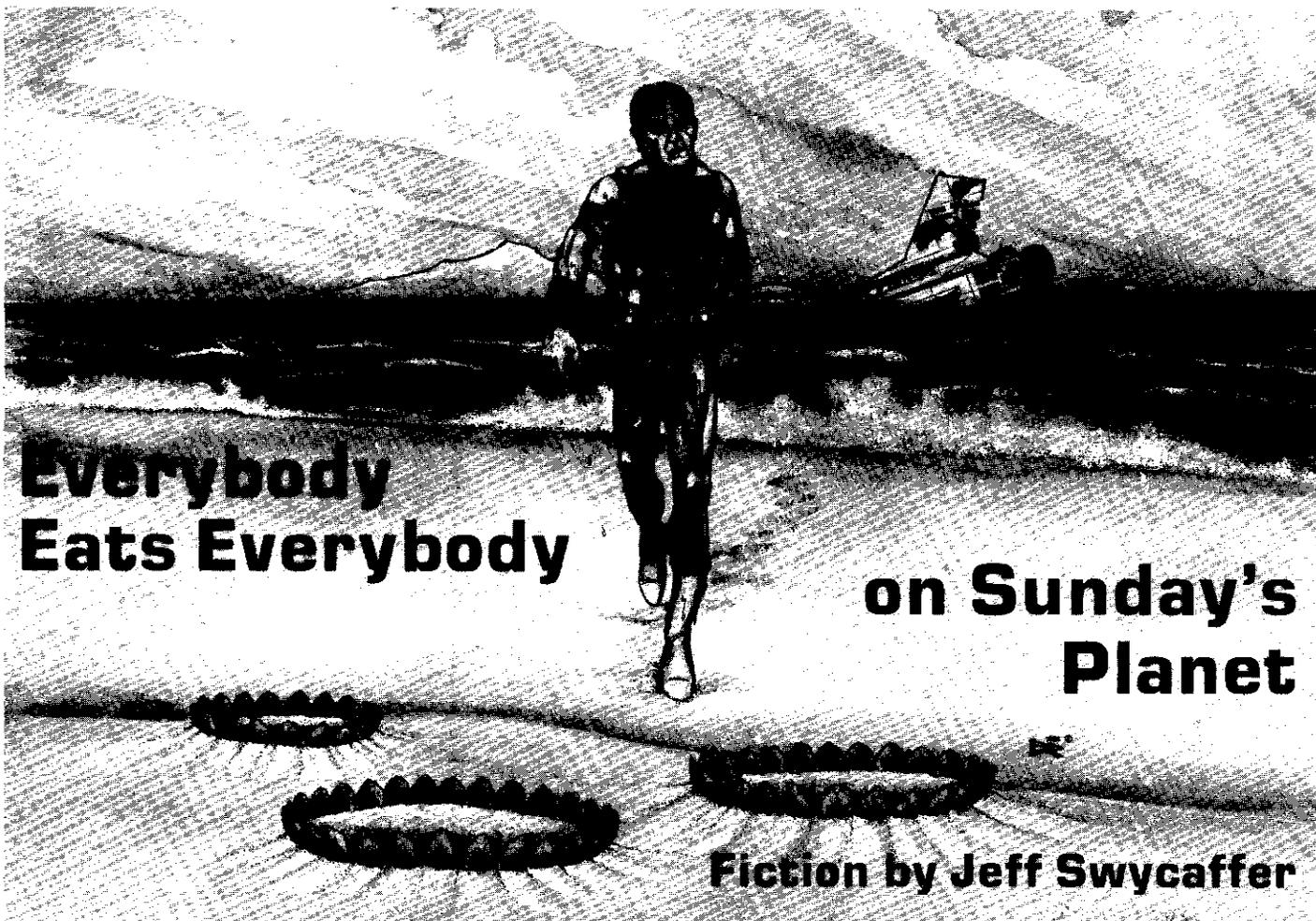
Most, if not all, readers are aware that TSR has an English operation. It is TSR Hobbies (UK) Ltd., headed up by Managing Director Don Turnbull. The estimable Mr. Turnbull will soon be publishing a magazine of his own, so to speak. The tentative title is IMAGINE. Publication is initially slated for bi-monthly release, but I am sure that the goal will be monthly issues as soon as possible. Interested contributors should send submissions to the magazine at: TSR Hobbies (UK) Ltd., The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB14AD, United Kingdom.

Regarding overseas activity, TSR has nearly completed its work with regard to establishing itself in France. Concurrent with this, we have completed translations of the material in the D&D® Basic Set, and the next step will be the Expert Set material — soon! Francois Marcela-Froideval is going to work with Frank Mentzer and me on the various TSR fantasy games and game projects, then spend some time working with our marketing and sales personnel. Finally, Francois will get some training in our business systems and so forth. Frank Mentzer, meanwhile, will be doing much the same thing, for he is slated to become Product Manager for TSR's line of FRP games. Call him a trainee while you still have opportunity! Some of our Good Readers will be especially pleased about this, I am certain, as it means that you'll have to read less of my material regarding official rulings and new material — but more of Frank's.

By the by, in case some of you haven't heard, Kim Eastland has taken over the management of the RPGA™ network as Frank moves elsewhere. We are not losing an excellent coordinator at all, for we gain another in Kim and now can use Frank's abilities to their full extent. Watch for great new things from RPGA™ headquarters. Also keep your eye on what is added to the D&D game system and the AD&D game line as well! Great things are in the offing!

As a final note, I am very pleased to comment on the recent decision by TSR's management to support the RPGA Scholarship Fund. What that means is that instead of a single \$1,000 award, four additional, smaller, scholarships were given to other deserving applicant members of the network. Although these additional scholarships are optional, it is quite likely that one or more such awards will be given next year as well. All Learned Enthusiasts currently in high school and members of the RPGA™ network should keep this in mind.

Until next issue, then...



Everybody Eats Everybody

on Sunday's Planet

Fiction by Jeff Swycaffer

When Albrecht Sonntag discovered the pastry-colored planet beyond the star-reaches of the Harmonic Federation, it was interesting to him only as a spot to mark the end of his flight. He could run no further in his ruined, pretzel-twisted spacecraft.

The people of the Harmonic Federation called Albrecht Sonntag by no such names as the familiar "Hitler," "Stalin," or "Nero"; these were names unknown to them. But all were names that could apply, and in another milieu would have applied.

Albrecht Sonntag had invaded his last neighbor, had betrayed his last alliance, had escaped with his life and nothing else. And now, as the wrathful hounds of vengeance slowly, slowly sniffed out his trail, he hung in orbit above a fried and sugared doughball of a world.

"Oxygen, and carbon dioxide," he muttered to himself, in his well-known voice. The same voice that once screamed to wild crowds, exhorting them to war, was a pleasing and soft voice in private. "And water, not too hot, not too cold." A grin split his broad, massive, too-handsomely carved face. "And life, upon which I can feed."

As a child, he had never read the tale of Robinson Crusoe, but the concept was universal enough. And whether one calls one's tropical paradise Pirinoa-noa (near

Tahiti, where Albrecht Sonntag had never been) or Sunday's Planet, the notion of spending one's life on a deserted island washed by a warm sea is an appealing one. At least, it is to one whose dream of empire has been crushed, and for whose blood the star-realms thirst.

He landed the ship in shallow water, near an archipelago whose thousand islets varied in size from intertidal sometimes-rocks to Mindanao- or Borneo-sized islands, deep-wrinkled with winding, branched canyons, many-spined with up-thrust mountains.

With a belch of released air, the underwater lock of the ship opened, and Albrecht Sonntag stroked up for the surface. Nothing tried to eat him, which he took for a good sign.

The beach was beautiful, crystal-bright in the sharp rays of the world's life-giving sun; a beautiful beach, indeed, but the island behind it was unpromising. No palm trees waved in the onshore breeze; no acacias rippled, no lianas clung. All that was visible by way of plant life was a scattering of what appeared to be a single species of short, ground-hugging things, tooth-petaled, unpleasant to look upon, their dull, drab green shapes distributed unaesthetically over the rich, moist soil. Albrecht Sonntag moaned inwardly, without showing any expression at all upon his brave and manly face, guessing that he

would soon — very soon — grow tired of making his meals from one kind of plant. Orbital spectroanalysis had assured him that they would be nourishing to him; he simply hadn't foreseen their low-lying, ground-clinging sameness. So dull. . .

"And one cannot build a shelter out of mushrooms," he said to himself. His was the only voice on the planet — or so he thought — and so he saw nothing wrong with the affectation of speaking aloud to himself. Albrecht Sonntag wasn't the most intelligent individual of the Harmonic Federation, but he was bright enough and sensitive enough to be unhappy living in exile with no one to talk to but himself.

His ship had shelters that he would — later — drag forth, and water-stills, and vitamin supplements to add what the native life probably lacked, and dull-green spray paint, to disguise his shelter once it was erected, and . . .

Albrecht Sonntag stripped off his outer garments and went to bask upon the beach. There is a precision about going native, and the first lesson is to relax. Albrecht Sonntag had the rest of his life to live here; there was no need for hurry.

It was then, while he broiled himself under the sun, nearly napping, that something tried to eat him.

Albrecht Sonntag, in the tradition of those who embrace the primevalist heresy, had kept his body fit, his eyes and

hearing trained, and his reflexes alert. That had saved him when von Bork tried to have him assassinated, and it saved him today.

He rolled down the beach and into the light surf at the first touch of the creature, his body in motion before his mind was fully aware that movement was necessary. The creature, rebuffed, expelled a drizzling cloud of black mist and folded itself up into a doughy mass, watching Albrecht Sonntag with wide-set and independent eyes.

And Albrecht Sonntag gave back the creature's fixed fascination, while he thought: Kingdom, Animal (he presumed); Phylum, Porifera . . . ? A sponge-like animal?

It was dry on its surface, despite the liquid versatility with which it wobbled. Watching carefully, Albrecht Sonntag saw clearly that it did not form pseudopodia, but instead made its way with a soft, rolling, flexible motion that nevertheless admitted of internal structure. It never flowed, and it never moved through itself, and its two happy blue eyes seemed to be set a fixed distance apart. . . .

The creature — which Albrecht Sonntag immediately named Spitter as a more moderate and polite alternative to the name that first came to mind — moved forward, almost to the water's edge, but ducked nimbly back when Albrecht Sonntag splashed a sheet of water toward it.

Spitter proved its name by unleashing another gout of unpleasant sputum. Albrecht Sonntag rinsed it quickly off of him where it touched him, and was relieved to discover that it was in no way corrosive or allergenic. It was some time before he discovered the reason for it.

"Go away, that's a good sponge," Albrecht Sonntag said.

"Bundi ti Ubundi," replied Spitter.

Albrecht Sonntag was rendered dumbstruck for the first time in his eventful life. Sentient sponges? he thought, the driving engine of his mind momentarily uncoupled from the flywheel of reason. Language use without manipulative organs? That surely can't be! Then reason reasserted itself upon his whirling thoughts. He remembered that the sea-going mammals of Blister's Planet are sentient (in a way), developing language after they evolved underwater sonar. Perhaps . . .

"Don't eat me; I'm coming out," he said. Albrecht Sonntag was embarrassed, without reason, of his near-nakedness, and covered himself with his arms before emerging from the water. The creature responded with a series of gibberish syllables. Following that, it projected another cloud of mist and moved hostilely toward Albrecht Sonntag.

"No, you don't," the man called, and kicked the creature bluntly under one of its eyes. The creature backed off.

Language lessons began immediately after Albrecht Sonntag got dressed again. A paucity of nouns soon became

obvious, as did Spitter's habit of driving forward every few minutes, seemingly with hostile intent. Albrecht Sonntag became adept at dodging the half-open slash of its mouth, lined inside with scarcely visible petals of teeth.

Another creature, in appearance nearly indistinguishable from Spitter, rolled by. Spitter ate it. Albrecht Sonntag watched this turn of events with interest. From whence had the second creature come? Were burrows located beneath the ground-hugging plants? A few minutes of research denied that possibility; not only was the sand of the islet too loosely constituted for burrow-making, but the plants were so tough, made up of horny, shell-like chips, that they could not be pushed aside, as would be necessary in digging or emerging from a hypothetical burrow.

The islet was small. Albrecht Sonntag, followed by the devoted Spitter, made its circuit in ten minutes. Nowhere was another creature to be found — just scores of the irregularly arranged drab green plants. Nevertheless, Spitter made its second meal since Albrecht Sonntag's arrival, ruthlessly devouring yet another similar creature that had appeared from some unknown location while Albrecht Sonntag was looking in another direction.

Eventually, after several days of frustration and perplexity, Albrecht Sonntag discovered the source from which new creatures came, although they seemed to live only long enough to provide Spitter with a quick meal. They came from the plants — or, rather, the plants, with a wriggle, shed their protective coating and drew themselves up to become replicas of Spitter. The sharp, leaf-like petals formed themselves into the mouth-gash, and proved adept indeed at ripping pieces from strangers. Each time Spitter ate one of the newcomers it gained in bulk, but this was compensated for by its constant habit of ejecting odorous mists, usually in the direction of Albrecht Sonntag.

Spitter was lost, finally, when Albrecht Sonntag had learned no more than a few of the obscure words-not-words that made up the voracious creature's vocabulary. The language seemed to be referential only to moods, conditions of terrain, or the weather, and lacked real meat in the form of nouns and verbs. "Ti," however, as a transitive verb, was clear. It meant "Eat."

Spitter, unprepared, succumbed to the simultaneous attack of three hatchlings, which draped themselves helter-skelter over him and devoured him. Albrecht Sonntag satisfied himself, by way of revenge, of the nutritive value to himself of the three killers. They were quite edible. On the site where he tore them apart, three new plants took root, and it was fully clear that they were made of the inedible mouth-and-jaw parts of the departed little spitters.

When sunlight gives the plants enough

growth, Albrecht Sonntag deduced, they take up their previous existence as young spitters. A truly tight little life-cycle, he told himself.

An experiment ensued. Albrecht Sonntag taught several new spitters certain words, names like Marvin, Jan, Heinrich, Gustav, and gave them a very real reason to respond to these names. "Heinrich," he would call, and with booted foot hoist the little spitter twenty yards away, where it would land, lie stunned, and take a bite out of the nearest passer-by. Methodical, Albrecht Sonntag was.

When he felt that the spitters knew their names — when the appropriate spitter shied away and curled into a protective sphere upon hearing its name — he killed them and ate them, carefully noting the location of each of the self-planting jaw-flowers.

Eventually, they re-awoke, and to Albrecht Sonntag's delight, they remembered their names.

It was little more than an anticlimax when he discovered the final missing link in the natural cycle: the spit. In a day, a spitter might lose as much as two-thirds of its mass by venting the bitter ejecta. The oily liquid went to enrich the soil for the growing plant-forms, which would be joined by the depleted spitter unless it found someone to eat.

The oxygen-to-carbon dioxide-to-water cycle that made the air breathable was of no interest to Albrecht Sonntag; he might well have been the best dictator the Harmonic Federation had ever known, but as a scientist, he had little more than the basic philosophy: Tinker with it until you learn something.

He did discover, being good at calculations, that the spitters spent ninety-nine percent of their lives in plant-form. That didn't mean much to him as a fact, but as a matter of principle, all details are important to a dictator.

He taught them all their names; they tried to teach him their language. They were definitely sentient, and also clever, wise, playful, and hungry.

He played the flute for them; they tried to eat him.

He sang them thunderous military marching songs; they tried to eat him.

He was not deductive, not Albrecht Sonntag, but it didn't take him too long to deduce that "Bundi ti Ubundi" meant "everyone eats everyone."

"No one eats me," he told them, couching the concept in the difficult syntax and mellifluous phonemes of the spitters' language.

"Heresy!" they cried, or something that meant more or less the same, and massed upon him, trying to eat him. At least, that was what he had to assume they meant; he hadn't time to be certain. Left and right he kicked them, scattering them to the corners of his islet kingdom.

Kingdom? Too right. Only three more days of earnest inquiry — and a shame it

was that torture didn't work on the hungry puffballs — showed him that his heresy was that of trying to be a king. He called it "king"; the spitter word seemed to translate as "he who is not eaten."

"Universal democrats!" yelled Albrecht Sonntag, the veins sticking out from his stiff neck, his face becoming flushed. "Communists!" But that was their code: Everyone eats everyone.

He retreated to his submerged spaceship to think, deeply, upon how to subjugate this ungrateful people. An army whose soldiers didn't fear death? An army whose soldiers were their own provisions? It could all be worked out, he told himself. . . .

Where did little spitters come from, in the first place?

The question so startled Albrecht Sonntag that he immediately swam up to the islet and asked. It was not easy.

"Oh," little Rolf finally made an answer. "You mean egg-laying."

Naturally, thought Albrecht Sonntag; what else could I possibly have meant?

"Tell me about egg-laying."

"Here in this place —" several long sentences followed that specifically described the island — "an egg is laid, on the seasonally adjusted least-squares average every two times fifty-four times fifty-four days." Albrecht Sonntag was so amazed that he only narrowly escaped when Rolf tried to eat him.

Population divided by birth rate equals life span, he pondered heavily, taking all factors into account. A hasty census of the island showed 745 plant-forms — 744, actually, since one awoke just then and tried to take a bite out of Albrecht Sonntag's kingly leg — and six (now, all of a sudden, seven) live and animate spitters. Seven hundred fifty-one divided by one over two times fifty-four times fifty-four days . . .

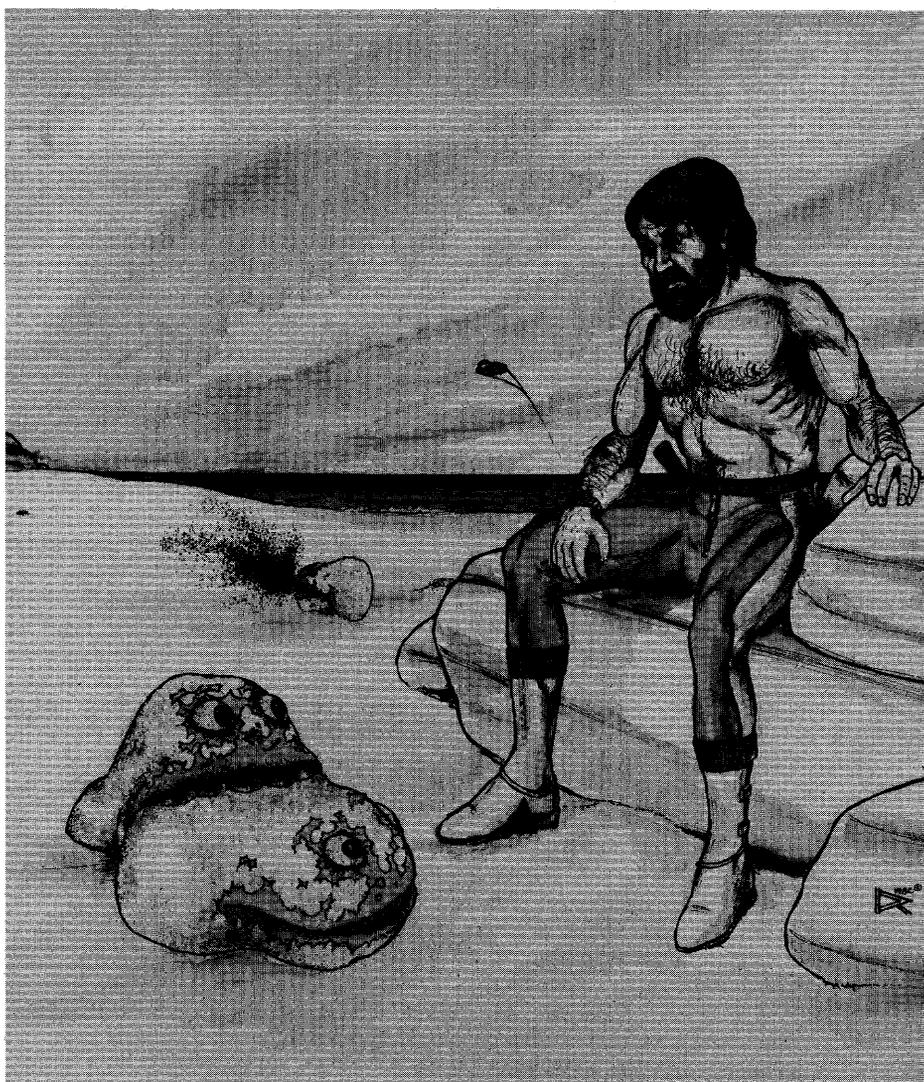
Albrecht Sonntag retired to the beach to perform his calculations on the fine white sand. A spitter followed him, probably with hunger aforesought, Albrecht Sonntag kicked it vigorously amidsthips. "King," it said reproachfully, and rolled off to eat Rolf.

A lifespan of. . . "Four and a half million days? Um —" he bent to the sand-table — twelve thousand years?" Of which, he had already discovered, some ninety-nine percent was spent in plant-form.

"If I conquer them, I will be remembered forever!" he cried, triumphant not over his fellow men, but at least over his enemies of time and mortality.

An inflatable raft from his ship took him to a nearby, Java-sized island, where conditions were almost the same as they were upon the first islet.

The population was much larger, however, and when Albrecht Sonntag stepped ashore and announced, "I am your new king," he was nearly buried beneath a pile of hungry and resentful spitters. He escaped, saved by their dislike for seawater.



At the next island, Hawaii-sized, he suffered the same fate. And at the next. Albrecht Sonntag was never terribly quick on the uptake. Dictatorship suited him, and he knew it; at the next island, he didn't announce his intentions, but merely put them into effect. He would not be eaten, he gave orders, and he enforced his will with the toe of his boot. In response, they tried to eat him.

After many and varied adventures, all of which ended in his narrow escape, he found an island where the spitters were willing to discuss philosophy with him. They were well suited to it. He was not.

"Communism is the wrong word," one spitter told him, after having made the effort to learn the human's language. "There is no property to be wrongfully accumulated in order for the revolution to restore that property to the workers, which we also have none of."

"Feudalism?"

"With no labor to be accomplished by the serfs, there is no need for a nobility."

Albrecht Sonntag saw that he would have been just as well off trying to found an empire among the fish of his home world. He would have understood the uselessness of trying to become emperor of the dolphins, except that he had never seen a dolphin.

"What does 'king' mean, then?" he asked.

The philosopher spat explosively. "It means one who is too self-important to be eaten. We use it the way you would use 'fop' or 'dandy' or 'sissy' or —" The fourth alternative was never to be known to Albrecht Sonntag, for at that moment the patient philosopher was eaten by an undergraduate.

When the patrol from the Harmonic Federation finally found Albrecht Sonntag, they found him completely willing to be led away to captivity. His spaceship, of course, was ruined, but in the months he'd spent on Sunday's Planet, he had decided that he'd rather bow out in a starburst of glory, which his televised show trial would allow him, than be the highest "king" of all the spitters.

Perhaps he learned something from them after all. When the headsman with the silver sash came forward to affix the silk noose to his neck, Albrecht Sonntag leaned forward swiftly and tried to take a bite out of the man. The gesture was spoiled, however, when the headsman gave Albrecht Sonntag a stiff kick in the rear. A television monitor caught the action, and it is thus, with an expression of utter, pop-eyed surprise, that Albrecht Sonntag will be remembered forever.

The Deities & Demigods of the WORLD OF GREYHAWK

by E. Gary Gygax

ISTUS

(Lady Of Our Fate)

Major goddess

Fate, Destiny, Predestination, Future

ARMOR CLASS: -8

MOVE: 12"

HIT POINTS: 377

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-12

SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 100%

SIZE: M

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

WORSHIPPERS' ALIGNMENT: Any

(Neutral preferred)

SYMBOL: Golden spindle with
three strands

PLANE: Uncertain

CLERIC/DRUID: 14th level in each

FIGHTER: Nil

MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: 24th level
(savant)/14th level illusionist

THIEF/ASSASSIN: Nil

MONK/BARD: Nil

PSIONIC ABILITY: 1

Attack/Defense Modes: All/all

S: 15 I: 23 W: 25

D: 21 C: 17 CH: 19

Istus, The Colorless and All-colored, Lady of Our Fate, is honored and feared as the controller of foreordination. While she has relatively few faithful devotees, many persons will call upon Istus in time of want or need. She may or may not heed this call; no one knows. Because fate is so often cruel or unkind, only very cynical or unfeeling persons tend toward service of Istus.

No one knows where (or when) Istus makes her abode. Some savants postulate that there is a nexus linking the other planes of existence to a pocket universe which only she, and her webs of fate, can enter or exit. Istus does certainly make appearances on other planes, including the Prime Material. Sometimes she is an old crone, other times she appears as a noble dame, then again as a lovely lady or even as a shepherd girl. In whatever



form, Istus never bears an obvious weapon, for she is able to employ any object to cause damage. With any such item she will always hit any creature, even another deity, since she controls fate. The damage so inflicted is, however, variable due to the immediacy of such an encounter.

Istus can create and cast strands and webs. This she does one of a kind, at will, once per melee round. Each strand or web has its own powers and effects. Each type has a limited number of usages per day. These strands and webs are:

Strand of Binding: Any creature failing to save versus magic will be as if wrapped in iron chains. This effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to 100 minus the level or hit dice of the creature affected, strength notwithstanding. This power is usable three times per day.

Strand of Cancellation: This strand causes the object struck to become as if it never existed. Only non-living things are affected. Magic items are entitled to a

save at 5% per +1 or equivalent. Artifacts and relics have a 50% and 75% chance to save, respectively, exclusive of the basic percentage chance indicated above; i.e., a +4 artifact sword would have at least a 70% chance to save. This power is usable twice per day.

Strand of Death: The creature (or even a deity) struck by this strand is turned to dust and forever gone, unless a successful saving throw versus magic is made. Magic resistance is, of course, also applicable. This power is usable once per day.

Strand of Hostility: This strand affects any creature failing its saving throw versus magic. The affected creature becomes immediately hostile to all who oppose Istus, because destiny would have it so. Any and all possible actions in defense of Istus will be used by the creature affected, immediately, against former friends or associates, without direction from Istus. This power is usable twice per day.

Strand of Passage: This glowing strand

is unlike the others in that it instantly connects the plane it is on with any other plane Istus desires. It lasts for 3 rounds, and any creature touching it is transported instantly to the connecting plane. The power is usable twice per day.

Strand of Sending: Any character or creature touched must save versus magic or be sent to the time and place in the near future which poses the greatest threat to its freedom of existence. Willing creatures need not save, and Istus can send them to a place of future opportunity. The power is usable three times per day.

Web of Enmeshment: This 30' square net causes all creatures within to become lost in a maze-like space, their vision clouded by mist, and causing them to be filled with apprehension so as to be 50% likely to attack another creature, friend or foe, upon sight. Effective distance within the web is boundless. Sighting distance is 10'. Initial movement is disoriented, and determination of direction is impossible. A victim making a successful saving throw versus magic will be free of the web on the following round. This applies to magic resistance as well, but the latter is checked only initially; if a magic resistance check succeeds, the victim is freed on the following round. Saving throws can be attempted in every round a victim continues to be *enmeshed*. All creatures, even those making a successful saving throw or magic resistance roll immediately, will be *enmeshed* for at least one round. This power can be employed once per day.

Web of Entropy: This invisible web is 30' square and affects all magical energy which is within it or enters it. Each round all magic items so exposed must save as if struck by a *strand of cancellation* or become non-magical. Spells attempted from outside or inside the web have all power drained in the area of the web. This web can be cast once per day.

Web of Stars: When this web is cast, Istus and all within a 15' radius of her are immediately transported to a time-space of unknown type and of boundless proportions. All affected see an infinity of starry space draped with endless nets of silken strands. Distances are distorted, and each step taken moves the individual a vast distance — or so it seems. Any creature more than two "steps" away appears as a glowing star of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, violet, or white. This web is an ultra-dimensional pathway to virtually anywhere or anywhen, provided the way is known. (Istus, naturally, knows the way.) Creatures of supra-genius intelligence can return to their point of origination. Those with greater than supra-genius intelligence can determine the actual location of other points along the web, on a 10% chance per point of intelligence above 20. The web lasts for 1 hour of actual time or 600 "steps" of traveling time. When the web

fades, all creatures return instantly to a random location on their respective home planes, unless they have found and entered some other plane. The "stars" are entryways into other times and planes, but unless the nature of the time/plane is known, these portals are impassable. There is a 1% chance per point of intelligence that any creature with genius intelligence will be able to discover the nature of the time/plane, but it will require 1 turn (100 steps of movement time) to study the portal. Only one attempt per individual is possible for any portal. Istus is able to cast this web once per day.

Istus, and only Istus, can employ a spindle-like instrument to cast strands and webs. Strands can be cast up to a range of 6", webs up to 3", except with regard to the *Web of Stars*. These strands and webs, as well as all spell-like powers of Istus, are cast at the 24th level of ability.

All times and places and planes are known to Istus, and she may move freely from one to another so long as she has her spindle. If it is lost, she will immediately and instantly return to her own plane. The lost spindle will then crumble into powder, and Istus will not control fate, *et al*, for from 30-300 days while she remakes her magical spindle.

Istus can be hit only by +4 or better

weapons. She can never be surprised. Istus can move into the future and back, instantly, once per day. Such movement will restore 30-300 lost hit points. All time-related spells (such as *divination*, *augury*, and *time stop*) are useless when applied to Istus in any manner. She has all the attributes and powers typical of a greater deity. Istus is said to be served by a strange companion, a creature of time similar to an elemental prince (see *Time Elemental*).

Clerics of Istus wear gray robes, or black ones on occasion. Leading clerics have web-patterned formal vestments. Most (80%) of the clerics of Istus are female. Those of 3rd or higher level have the ability to cast one *augury* spell per day without actually "taking" the spell; i.e., it is known in addition to all other spells. Clerics of 7th or higher level gain the ability to cast a *strand of binding* once per day with a 1" range, with aduration of 1 round per level of the cleric. The *binding* can be broken only as a function of strength, with a chance equal to that to *bend bars*. In addition to the holy symbol of Istus, the cleric must possess a hair of at six inches in length.

Centers of worship of Istus are in Dyvers, Greyhawk, Rauxes, Rel Mord, and Stoink. Services include gauze hangings, clouds of incense, woodwind music, chanting, and meditation.

TIME ELEMENTAL

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*
NO. APPEARING: 1; see below
ARMOR CLASS: 2
MOVE: 1"
HIT DICE: 12 or 16 (20)
% IN LAIR: Nil
TREASURE TYPE: Nil
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-12 or 4-16 (5-20)
SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES: +3 or better
weapon to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE: See below
INTELLIGENCE: *Very — Exceptional*
(*Genius — Supra-genius*)
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*
SIZE: S
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil
Attack/Defense Modes: Nil
LEVEL/X.P. VALUE: VIII/3,000 + 20/hp

Time elementals are basically of two sorts, common and noble. Information given in parentheses in the statistics above pertains to noble specimens. Time elementals exist in multiple times, so they are always perceived as small creatures resembling a cloud of fire, dust, or vapor. They usually attack by spraying a fine, powdery substance at opponents. Those hit suffer damage due to cell death (aging).

Common time elementals can bring in

parts of themselves from other times so as to effectively add 1-4 additional creatures, but a hit on any one damages each and every manifestation of the time elemental. Therefore, under attack a time elemental will typically bring its other manifestations to its time locale, gain multiple attacks in that round, and then vanish completely into the time stream in the next round. Since a time elemental



has the power to move forward, backward, or sideways in time (one round worth of such "movement" for each hit die), a time elemental can usually avoid contact or break off contact at will. Unless the avoided party has the ability to likewise travel in time, the time elemental is then absolutely untraceable. (Those able to follow will see a faint trail of haze in the direction of the time elemental's movement.) Similarly, a time elemental can pursue by time movement, 1" additional for each hit die, thus equaling up to a 13" or 17" movement rate. This could put the elemental in front of a fleeing opponent.

All time-related spells are useless within 3" physical distance of a time elemental, and no such spell will affect or reveal anything about a time elemental or its actions. In addition, since these creatures exist across a multiplicity of times, there is only a 10% chance that any spell cast or magic employed against or upon a time elemental will actually function. (To determine this, roll d10 to find the elemental's current center of vulnerability, then a second d10 to see if it matches the first number rolled. If so, the spell or magic works.) Any opponent able to move through time can automatically determine where the time elemental is most vulnerable, so magic or spells used by such an opponent will function properly, although the time elemental is still allowed a saving throw.

Noble time elementals have all the powers of common ones. In addition, each has the power to cast a time stop spell which will affect even time elementals of common sort, age a creature by 1-20 years, make a creature younger by 1-20 years, age non-living vegetable matter by 10-200 years, age mineral material by 100-2,000 years, or move up to 4 other creatures in time (forward, backward, or sideways) randomly, or to a desired locale, singly or jointly, providing the creatures are willing or otherwise

fail to save versus magic. Each of these time stop powers is usable once per round, at will, once per day.

Time elementals seldom appear on any plane but that of Time, because on such planes they feel discomfort and the weight of the forward (or other) motion of time in relation to the plane part of them is manifest upon. Similarly, time elementals can never be conjured, summoned, or otherwise brought into being by any standard means or known spell.

On the Plane of Time there are other creatures dissimilar to the elemental sort. There are also said to be certain royal time elementals of greater power than the noble sort. These creatures rule their fellows and serve certain deities. Royal time elementals have 24 or 28 hit dice, cause like hit points of attack damage (6-24 or 7-28), and have double the number of powers of noble ones. In addition, royal time elementals can *summon* 1-4 common (70%) or 1-2 noble elementals (30%) once per day.

OBAD-HAI

(The Shalm)

Lesser god

Nature, Wildlands, Freedom, Hunting, Wild Beasts

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 21"

HIT POINTS: 140 (see below)

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-12 +5
(+3, +2 strength bonus)

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 100%

SIZE: M

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*

WORSHIPPERS' ALIGN: *Neutral*

SYMBOL: *Oak leaf and acorn*

PLANE: *Prime Material*

CLERIC/DRUID: *9th level cleric/
15th level druid*

FIGHTER: *Nil*

MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: *Nil*

THIEF/ASSASSIN: *Nil*

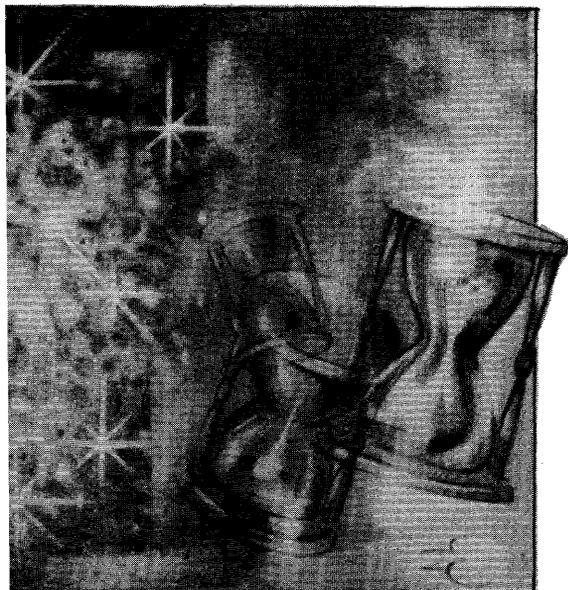
MONK/BARD: *Nil*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *1*

Attack/Defense Modes: *All/All*

S: 18 I: 17 W: 20 D: 18 C: 21

CH: 19 (24 as regards forest creatures)



Obad-hai, "The Shalm," is an archaic deity of nature and wildlands, one of the most ancient known having been worshipped by the Flan prior to the arrival of invading Aerdi.

Obad-hai can appear in human form as a lean, weathered man of indeterminate but considerable age. He is usually clad in brown or russet, carrying a hornwood staff, looking as if he were a pilgrim, hermit, or merely a rustic. At other times he will appear as a dwarf, gnome, or halfling.

The Shalm is also able to assume the form and characteristics of any of the creatures listed below. He can take any allowable new form instantaneously, and can use each form once per week. When he leaves that creature form, the hit points of the creature type accrue to Obad-hai if he is at fewer than 140 hit points, but such transferral never exceeds his maximum 140-point total. The allowable creature forms are: centaur, leprechaun, pixie, satyr, sprite, treant, badger, brown bear, boar, giant eagle, giant goat, giant lynx, giant otter, giant owl, giant pike, giant porcupine, giant stag, and wolf. It is not uncommon for The Shalm to roam about in the guise of any of these creatures.

The *Shalmstaff* is a weapon which delivers a blow as if it were a +3 magic weapon. When it is discarded by Obad-hai it instantaneously flies to the nearest

hornwood tree, where it remains until summoned by Obad-hai (cf. *Drawmij's instant Summons* spell). This staff also allows its bearer to walk tirelessly without food or water for as long as desired. Animals will never harm the bearer. For the bearer of the staff, vegetation will part to allow easy passage.

In any form Obad-hai can be harmed only by +3 or better magic weapons. As is usual for lesser gods, The Shalm can become *invisible*, *polymorph self*, use *detect* and *dispel* abilities, and communicate. He regenerates 2-8 lost hit points per round.

The Shalm loves nature and wilderness. He is a patron of druids and a friend to those who dwell in harmony with their natural surroundings. Characters or creatures who despoil or wantonly harm either animal or vegetable life are his foes. Because of Obad-hai's particular neutrality, and his favoritism toward certain creatures, notably satyrs and centaurs, a rivalry and antipathy exists between this deity and Ehlonna of the Forests. Thus, the majority of Obad-hai's followers are male, and those of Ehlonna are female. (*Editor's note: Ehlonna was described in issue #68 of DRAGON™ Magazine.*)

Clerics who follow Obad-hai are usually druids. A few others are of the normal sort, although they wander as pilgrims in most cases. Such clerics wear

russet garments and carry staves. At third level they may substitute one first-level druid spell for a cleric spell, at sixth level one second-level druid spell for a like level cleric spell, and at ninth level, the same is true of third-level spells. Thus, at ninth level, a cleric of The Shalm can have one each of first, second, and third level druid spells in place of like levels of cleric spells. At twelfth level, such clerics gain the ability to take the form of any small woodland animal or bird. They may use druidical as well as clerical weapons. Druidical clerics likewise get cleric spells/weapons.

Churches or chapels of Obad-hai are always in rustic settings and made of rough timber. Services are brief and not particularly ritualized. Living flowers, earth, water, and fire are typical service adornments.

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Charting the classes

How do AD&D™ characters compare?

by Roger E. Moore

One of the distinctive features of the AD&D™ game system is its use of character classes, professions for player characters to adopt and follow through a campaign, each with its own inherent advantages and disadvantages. The skills used by each class vary considerably, and each class has its own areas of special proficiency. A great deal of emphasis has been placed in recent writings on the point that character classes should be well-balanced to prevent one class from gaining an excessive advantage or being at a great disadvantage in the game.

A natural question to ask, then, is whether or not the official AD&D character classes are themselves balanced with respect to one another. This article uses some simple statistical comparisons to determine one possible answer to this. The first part of this article will examine the ten "regular" AD&D classes and sub-classes (fighter, ranger, paladin, cleric, druid, magic-user, illusionist, thief, assassin, monk). The next section deals with the bard class, and a final section concerns the newly presented class of barbarians (from DRAGON™ issue #63).

Evaluating character classes is very difficult. The great variety of special abilities each class has makes a complete analysis just about impossible, and most people are reduced to simply role-playing such characters in different adventures to get a subjective "feel" for how well a particular class works.

One possible test was suggested by Lewis Pulsipher in *White Dwarf* #25 ("What Makes A Good AD&D Character Class"). That author wrote, "Experience levels are a convenient signpost; a third level 'X' class is not necessarily equal to a third level 'Y' class — compare experience points, not levels." He makes an excellent point. One experience point for any class is the same as one x.p. for any other class. In a well-run campaign, all characters should gain experience points at about the same rate — but *not* necessarily levels, since most level boundaries are not the same. An easy way to start comparing character classes would be to examine fixed amounts of x.p.'s and see what level that corresponds to in each class.

A good set of arbitrary "fixed amounts" are the powers of 10 (1, 10, 100, 1000, etc.). All character classes are at the same level (first) between 10^0 and 10^3 (1 and 1,000) x.p.'s, so we can start comparing classes at 10^3 x.p.'s and proceed up from there to 10^4 , 10^5 , 10^6 , and, to include very high levels, 2×10^6 (two million) x.p.'s. Table 1 shows the results of this comparison.

It becomes apparent in looking over the table that paladins are the slowest to gain levels, and thieves the fastest (with illusionists running a close second). This seems to make sense, as paladins are very specialized fighters and their training could be said to be very rigorous and demanding. In more practical terms, paladins are just about the most powerful fighting-types in the game because of their special abilities, and the limitation on how fast they rise in levels keeps them from becoming too powerful too quickly. A 13th-level paladin is still quite capable of stomping a 19th-level thief in face-to-face combat, and probably even when allowing the thief a surprise backstab attack at the start of the combat.

It seems odd that illusionists gain levels so much more quickly than magic-users do, but the former do not have spells of the same power as magic-user spells of 8th and 9th level, and (as shown below) the two classes 'are still very close in hit-point

averages. Magic-users are generally more versatile as well, by virtue of their more varied spell powers.

Another comparison involves finding out the average number of hit points that a character in each class has at particular x.p. levels. Because constitution scores can cause hit-point totals to vary, Table 2 is divided into two parts. The first part notes hit-point averages for characters with constitution scores of 7-14, and the second part for those with scores of 16 and 18. Since all non-fighters have the same number of hit points for an 18 constitution as they would have for a score of 16, the hit-point averages for characters with 18 constitution apply only to fighter-types.

Unlike Table 1, Table 2 offers some surprising results. Druids show up as unusually powerful, rivalling and often surpassing fighter-types in terms of average hit points at each x.p. level. This seems inconsistent with the fact that druids are clerical in nature and not supposed to be as powerful as fighters. Note that a 14th-level druid has only 1,500,001 x.p.'s, yet has more hit points than almost any other character type has at 2,000,000 x.p.'s. With a 16 constitution, a Great Druid is especially tough; this is due to the character's acquisition of one new hit die at every level, and also for another reason mentioned later.

Table 2 also reveals that monks, who are expected to perform hand-to-hand combat without wearing armor of any sort, have only slightly more hit points on the average than magic-users or illusionists. True, at the higher experience levels monks gain armor class advantages, but it seems inconsistent for a monk to be able to absorb less physical punishment than a thief can.

The rest of the results in Table 1 and Table 2 appear to be in line with what one would expect, except that clerics and thieves have very similar hit-point averages in Table 2. This appears to be a result of the ease with which thieves gain levels (and hence hit points).

Table 3 diagrams the "level widths" of the official AD&D character classes; i.e., how many x.p.'s are needed to go up each level. Here the exceptionally narrow level widths of the druid and thief become apparent; illusionists also have narrow level widths, only marginally less so than the other two classes.

Suggestions

The AD&D system, as has been pointed out before by many people, is not perfect. As time goes on, suggestions can and should be made for how the system can be improved. Though the system is playable as it is, this article is intended to point out that the system might be unbalanced in several areas. The following suggestions are not by any means official, and better ways of improving the game balance may be found; I've taken some pains to make them as reasonable as possible.

1. The druid class should have its x.p. table changed so that greater amounts of experience points are required to reach the lower levels, and so that hit-point averages are more in line with the other character classes for playability and balance (see Table 4 for suggested x.p. modifications). In Table 5, the suggested change in the druid x.p. table is, rated at various x.p. levels; it may be seen that though the druid is still tougher than a regular cleric (probably from all that outdoors conditioning), it is not more powerful than a ranger or other fighter-type. It

TABLE 1: LEVEL PROGRESSION OF OFFICIAL AD&D CHARACTER CLASSES

Experience points	CLR	DRD	FTR	PAL	RNG	M-U	ILL	THF	ASN	MNK
10 ³	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
10 ⁴	4	4	4	3	3 ¹	3 ¹	4	4 ¹	4	3 ¹
10 ⁵	7	9	7	7	7	8	8	8	7 ¹	7
10 ⁶	12	13	11 ¹	10	12	12	13	14	13 ¹	12
2x10 ⁶	16	(14) ²	15 ¹	13	15	15	18	19	(15) ³	14

¹ — At the listed amount of x.p.'s, the character is 1 x.p. short of entering the next higher level.

² — Druids cannot advance beyond 14th level (1,500,00) experience points).

³ — Assassins cannot advance beyond 15th level (1,500,00) or more experience points).

TABLE 2: HIT POINT PROGRESSION OF OFFICIAL AD&D CHARACTER CLASSES

Experience points	Average Hit Points (Constitution of 7-14)									
	CLR	DRD	FTR	PAL	RNG	M-U	ILL	THF	ASN	MNK
10 ³	4.5	4.5	5.5	5.5	9.0	2.5	2.5	3.5	3.5	5.0
10 ⁴	18.0	18.0	22.0	16.5	18.0	7.5	10.0	14.0	14.0	10.0
10 ⁵	31.5	40.5	38.5	38.5	36.0	20.0	20.0	28.0	24.5	20.0
10 ⁶	46.5	58.5	55.5	52.5	53.5	28.5	28.0	43.0	45.5	32.5
2x10 ⁶	54.5	(63.0) ¹	67.5	61.5	59.5	31.5	33.0	53.0	(52.5) ²	37.5

Experience points	Average Hit Points (Constitution of 16 / Constitution of 18)									
	CLR	DRD	FTR	PAL	RNG	M-U	ILL	THF	ASN	MNK
10 ³	6.5	6.5	7.5 / 9.5	7.5 / 9.5	13.0 / 17.0	4.5	4.5	5.5	5.5	9.0
10 ⁴	26.0	26.0	30.0 / 38.0	22.5 / 28.5	26.0 / 34.0	13.5	18.0	22.0	22.0	18.0
10 ⁵	45.5	58.5	52.5 / 66.5	52.5 / 66.5	52.0 / 68.0	36.0	36.0	44.0	38.5	36.0
10 ⁶	64.5	84.5	73.5 / 91.5	70.5 / 88.5	75.5 / 97.5	50.5	48.0	63.0	71.5	58.5
2x10 ⁶	72.5	(91.0) ¹	85.5 / 103.5	79.5 / 97.5	81.5 / 103.5	53.5	53.0	73.0	(82.5) ²	67.5

NOTE: Only the fighter classes are given a listing for average hit points at 18 constitution; all other listed classes have the same average number of hit points at 18 constitution as at 16 constitution.

¹ — The h.p. average is for a 14th-level druid.

² — The h.p. average is for a 15th-level assassin.

TABLE 3: LEVEL WIDTH IN EXPERIENCE POINTS FOR OFFICIAL AD&D CHARACTER CLASSES

(Figures given are in thousands of experience points)

Level	CLR	DRD	FTR	PAL	RNG	M-U	ILL	THF	ASN	MNK
1	1.50	2.00	2.00	2.75	2.25	2.50	2.25	1.25	1.50	2.25
2	1.50	2.00	2.00	2.75	2.25	2.50	2.25	1.25	1.50	2.25
3	3.00	3.50	4.00	6.50	5.50	5.00	4.50	2.50	3.00	5.25
4	7.00	5.00	10.00	12.00	10.00	12.50	9.00	5.00	6.00	12.50
5	14.50	7.50	17.00	21.00	20.00	17.50	17.00	10.00	13.00	25.00
6	27.50	15.00	35.00	50.00	50.00	20.00	25.00	22.50	25.00	50.50
7	55.00	25.00	55.00	80.00	60.00	30.00	35.00	27.50	50.00	102.00
8	115.00	30.00	125.00	175.00	75.00	45.00	50.00	40.00	100.00	150.00
9	225.00	35.00	250.00	350.00	100.00	115.00	75.00	50.00	100.00	150.00
10	225.00	75.00	250.00	350.00	225.00	125.00	220.00	60.00	125.00	200.00
11	225.00	100.00	250.00	350.00	325.00	375.00	220.00	220.00	150.00	250.00
12	225.00	450.00	250.00	350.00	325.00	375.00	220.00	220.00	175.00	300.00
13	225.00	750.00	250.00	350.00	325.00	375.00	220.00	220.00	250.00	500.00
14	225.00	—	250.00	350.00	325.00	375.00	220.00	220.00	500.00	500.00
15	225.00	—	250.00	350.00	325.00	375.00	220.00	220.00	—	500.00
16	225.00	—	250.00	350.00	325.00	375.00	220.00	220.00	—	500.00
17	225.00	—	250.00	350.00	325.00	375.00	220.00	220.00	—	—

All values for levels beyond the 17th are the same as for the 17th level.

TABLE 4: SUGGESTED X.P. TABLE FOR DRUIDS

Level width	Experience points	Experience level	8-sided dice for accumulated hit points
2.0	0—2,000	1	1
2.0	2,001—4,000	2	2
3.5	4,001—7,500	3	3
7.5	7,501—15,000	4	4
15.0	15,001—30,000	5	5
30.0	30,001—60,000	6	6
60.0	60,001—120,000	7	7
130.0	120,001—250,000	8	8
250.0	250,001—500,000	9	9
250.0	500,061—750,000	10	10
250.0	750,001—1,000,000	11	11
500.0	1,000,001—1,500,000	12	12
750.0	1,500,001—2,000,000	13	13
—	2,000,001+	14	14

definitely takes longer to reach the higher levels, but the continual addition of a new hit die (plus very powerful spell abilities and followers) even this out. Druids, no matter how you cut it, are a lot tougher than one might think.

2. The monk class should have its hit dice adjusted so that it has a higher average of hit points, putting it at least on a par with the thief class. It is suggested that either 6-sided dice or 4-sided dice plus one point per die be substituted for the given 4-sided dice; the hit-point range would be broader in the former case and narrower in the latter, but the average number of hit points per level would remain the same. Table 6 and Table 7 contain statistical data on these suggested changes. These changes would help keep the monk alive in close combat at all levels, and make it a more effective and viable class. Note that at high experience levels and with high constitution, monks become as powerful as assassins in terms of hit-point average, which seems reasonable enough.

TABLE 5: LEVEL AND HIT POINT PROGRESSION FOR DRUIDS (modified)

Experience points	Druid level (new)	Average hit points	
		7-14 Con	16 Con
10 ³	1	4.5	6.5
10 ⁴	4	18.0	26.0
10 ⁵	7	31.5	45.5
10 ⁶	11	49.5	71.5
2x10 ⁶	13	58.5	84.5

TABLE 6: SUGGESTED HIT DICE TABLES FOR MONKS

Experience level	Possibility 1:	Possibility 2:
	6-sided dice for accumulated hit points	4-sided dice for accumulated hit points
1	2	2+2
2	3	3+3
3	4	4+4
4	5	5+5
5	6	6+6
6	7	7+7
7	8	8+8
8	9	9+9
9	10	10+10
10	11	11+11
11	12	12+12
12	13	13+13
13	14	14+14
14	15	15+15
15	16	16+16
16	17	17+17
17	18	18+18

TABLE 7: HIT POINT PROGRESSION FOR MONKS (modified)

Experience points	Average hit points	
	7-14 Con	16 Con
10 ³	7.0	11.0
10 ⁴	14.0	22.0
10 ⁵	28.0	44.0
10 ⁶	45.5	71.5
2x10 ⁶	52.5	82.5

The bard

Tucked away in the back of the Players Handbook is the bard character class, surely one of the most misunderstood character classes in the AD&D game. There is a popular misconception about this class: People feel it's too difficult to become a bard because one must work through 11 to 15 levels in the fighter and thief classes first. However, when x.p. totals are considered, this assumption is shown to be false. It is very easy to become a bard. In fact, the bard is the most "unbalanced" character class in the AD&D system.

There are two possible extremes one may take in the approach to creating a bard character. One is the "fast" way; the absolute minimum number of experience points are gained in passing through the fighter and thief classes in order to enter the bard class as soon as possible (as detailed in Table 8). People who use this method obviously cannot wait to get their hands on a lute. And there's the "slow" way, taken by those who would rather build up other skills first. Using the "slow" way, a character gains the maximum possible number of x.p.'s in the fighter and thief classes before turning into a bard. Of the two extremes, the fast method will produce the lowest possible hit-point average in a bard character, and the slow method will produce the most powerful character, in terms of hit points.

Tables 8 and 9 offer the same statistical analysis for bards as was done in earlier tables for the other ten official AD&D character classes. The results are rather surprising. Regardless of which method, fast or slow (or any procedure between the two extremes), is employed to create a bard, the bard character advances just as fast in levels, if not faster, than a member of any other class — and this takes into account the experience

that must be gained in the fighter and thief classes. This phenomenon exists because the lower levels of any class are relatively easy to attain in terms of the number of x.p.'s required.

Furthermore, there is the problem of hit-point averages. At medium and high levels, bards are incredibly tough; "slow" bards are especially mighty, tougher than any other character class, and actually reach, or at least approach, demigod status in terms of hit points. A 23rd-level Magna Alumnae with an 18 constitution and a background as a 7th-level fighter and 8th-level thief has an *average* of 139 hit points, and a possible maximum of 198 hit points. This amount cannot be justified in terms of the nature of the class: Is a person who recites poetry and plays musical instruments for a living innately tougher than a Ranger Lord who kills dozens of orcs, trolls, ogres, and giants each month? Likewise, it cannot be rationalized by the need for game balance: Why are that many hit points necessary? Should bards be that hard to kill?

Table 10 elaborates on the problem. Most of the trouble with the official bard comes from the continual addition of hit dice once the character reaches the bard class, with attendant bonuses for constitution added on. Another source of trouble is the fact that the width (in x.p.'s) of each level in the bard class is quite narrow compared to those of other character classes; this means it is easier to gain levels in shorter times. This aggravates the hit-point problem further, of course, and contributes to the hit-point inflation.

Other criticisms may be leveled at the bard. It is rather clumsy to have to work through two other classes to become a bard, whether the process is easy or not; in many ways it would be better to develop the class on its own (as was done by Jeff Goelz in DRAGON™ issue #56; his version of bards is worth looking up). A friend of mine has pointed out the aggravation of having a medium-level bard run into a group of life-draining undead; with their fighter and thief levels behind them, they can outlast all other group members in the ensuing combat. Beyond this, the bard class as written violates two previously established tenets of the AD&D rules: It allows a human to gain three classes, one after the other, when humans are supposed to gain only two classes, and it allows half-elves to do the same when they are normally supposed to be advancing in two or more classes simultaneously. It is also rather strange to declare that bards cannot use weapons they had learned previously as fighters, such as bows or polearms. This could be circumvented by, again, developing the class on its own and making the appropriate weapon restrictions apply, as with other classes.

Suggestions

The bard class, as written in the Players Handbook, should probably be dropped from use in play and revised in terms of hit-point accumulation and overall advancement. For a number of reasons, I believe Jeff Goelz's bard (DRAGON issue #56) to be superior when considering the factors of game balance, playability, and "realism."

TABLE 8: LEVEL PROGRESSION FOR BARDS (Official AD&D character class)

Experience points	"Fast" bard level	"Slow" bard level
10 ³	1 (fighter)	1 (fighter)
10 ⁴	4 (fighter)	4 (fighter)
10 ⁵	8 (bard) ¹	7 (fighter)
10 ⁶	15 (bard) ¹	14 (bard) ²
2x10 ⁶	20 (bard) ¹	19 (bard) ²

¹ — A "fast" bard is assumed to have expended the minimum number of experience points in going through the fighter and thief classes (18,001 for a 5th-level fighter and 20,001 for a 6th-level thief) before becoming a bard.

² — A "slow" bard is assumed to have expended the maximum possible amount of experience points in going through the fighter and thief classes (125,000 for a 7th-level fighter and 110,000 for an 8th-level thief) before becoming a bard.

TABLE 9: HIT-POINT PROGRESSION FOR BARDS
(Official AD&D Character Class)

Exp. pts.	"Fast" bard, for constitution of:			"Slow" bard, for constitution of:		
	7-14	16	18	7-14	16	18
10 ³	5.5	7.5	9.5	5.5	7.5	9.5
10 ⁴	22.0	30.0	38.0	22.0	30.0	38.0
10 ⁵	55.5 ¹	81.5 ¹	91.5 ¹	38.5	52.5	66.5
10 ⁶	70.0 ¹	102.0 ¹	112.0 ¹	80.0 ²	116.0 ²	130.0 ²
2x10 ⁶	75.0 ¹	107.0 ¹	117.0 ¹	85.0 ²	121.0 ²	135.0 ²

¹ —The average hit points for a "fast" bard are calculated by taking the average h.p.'s for the fighter class background (5.5 h.p. for each of 5 levels), adding the average h.p.'s for the thief class (3.5 h.p. for 1 level), and then adding the average h.p.'s for each bard hit die (3.5 h.p. per die). Constitution bonuses are then added to each hit die; bards with constitution scores of 17+ receive bonuses to their hit dice of +3 or more only on their fighter hit dice; thief and bard hit dice still get a +2 bonus each at best. The average number of hit points for a 5th-level fighter/6th-level thief of 7-14 constitution is 31.

² — The average hit points for a "slow" bard are calculated as per the note above, except that 7 fighter hit dice and 1 thief hit die are taken into account. The average hit-point total for a 7th-level fighter/8th-level thief of 7-14 constitution is 42.

TABLE 10: LEVEL WIDTHS FOR BARD CLASS

Level	Pts.	Level	Pts.
1	2	13	200
2	2	14	200
3	4	15	200
4	8	16	200
5	9	17	200
6	15	18	200
7	20	19	200
8	25	20	200
9	25	21	200
10	40	22	800
11	50	23	—
12	200		

Figures given are in thousands of x.p.'s. The table pertains only to the bard class as per p. 117 in the Players Handbook, excluding the initial fighter and thief levels required to achieve bard status.

The barbarian

A new "official" character class, the barbarian, was introduced in DRAGON issue #63 by E. Gary Gygax. This is a fighter sub-class that seems to have been designed as the ultimate "survivalist"; a barbarian character is very independent, apparently distrustful of society and magic in general, and prefers to rely upon his own skills. There is much about this class that I must confess I like; barbarians have been long overdue for their share of attention in this game. However, there are some apparent problems presented in the class as described (with additional materials provided by Mr. Gygax in DRAGON issue #67). There are also some unusual features that appear to be inconsistent with established AD&D rules, though some of these things may be justified and are not all that unbalancing.

Since the barbarian class is, essentially, just another character class among many, there seems to be no reason to offer it up as a pre-determined choice as a character, prior to rolling up ability scores. If barbarians can do this, why not other classes? Magic-users could roll 9d6 for intelligence, dropping the lowest 6 results, and so forth. There is no reason to treat barbarians differently. This option, in fact, has much to recommend it; rather than having to roll hundreds of times in order to get the right set of stats for a monk character, one simply selects the class first, rolls out the characteristics, adjusts them in order to meet minimum scores, and sets in to play.

There are numerous rules of the AD&D system that the barbarian class appears to violate:

1. Excessive dexterity bonuses to armor class. Though this bonus appears very unbalancing at first glance, a little research reveals that the lowest possible armor class a barbarian in non-bulky armor could have would be AC -1 (using leather armor or furs and a small shield). This ability could be easily justified by noting that barbarians (especially those in fantasy literature) are highly skilled at dodging blows from their long-practiced habits of fighting with little armor. Heavier armor slows them down and they lose this ability. (Note: Mr. Gygax's contention that a barbarian could wear chainmail and use a shield, apparently of any size, and receive an AC of -4, appears to have been in error (see DRAGON issue #67). Use of any shield larger than a small one, or any armor bulkier than leather, removes the added dexterity bonuses to armor class. Overall, this "violation" is not too bad, considering that not all barbarians will have dexterity of 18. A fighter in plate mail with magical and dexterity-related bonuses to armor class can do much better than that.

2. Lack of an alignment tongue. The Players Handbook says that all intelligent creatures use alignment tongues, but barbarians know only a couple of tongues at best; their poor education could be the reason for this deficiency. Alignment tongues in general are not innate powers; they must be learned, and barbarians just don't have the background (or inclination, probably) to learn them. This "violation," too, is no problem.

3. Excessive hit-point bonuses for constitution. Unfortunately, this "violation" *does* cause problems. Table 11, which outlines the level and hit-point progression of the barbarian, shows that at medium and high x.p. levels, the hit-point average of a high-constitution barbarian outstrips every other character — *despite* the fact that this class gains levels more slowly than all the rest. It seems unrealistic for a barbarian to so outstrip other fighter-types; the hit-point average for a barbarian with 18 constitution in particular appears off-balance in game terms.

4. Exceptionally slow level advancement, and no need for a tutor or instructor in order to advance in levels. These two points are tied together; the latter one, is a "violation" of the tenets on p. 86 of the Dungeon Masters Guide, and is used to justify the former point. There is no reason for barbarians to be exempt from needing tutoring in the art of weapon-wielding, or other skills such as climbing, hiding, tracking, animal handling, and so forth. Even Tarzan and his son Korak received tutoring in these skills, though it came mostly from watching others use these skills or from the teachings of the Mangani apes who raised them. The hard knocks are there, as for any other class, but very few characters could possibly learn to use a sword or bow to full effect without any instruction.

Level advancement for barbarians is slow enough to make the class distinctly less effective in combat than other fighters, even though barbarians would have as many or more hit points. This deficit, however, appears to be balanced out by the large number of weapons that barbarians can learn to use, their low non-proficiency penalty, and their rapid acquisition of new weapons. Improving level advancement (and the ability to hit opponents in combat) would unbalance the barbarian class by making it too powerful.

Even though barbarian characters will have to get used to rather slow level advancement compared to other classes, this does not appear to be an exceptionally difficult problem. Low-level barbarians, unless they have very high dexterity (17 or 18), would be well advised to use heavier armor until their hit points improve on a par with other fighters, just before 6th level.

5. Ability to strike creatures resistant to non-magical weapons. At first glance, this ability seems outrageous. No other player character can attack such monsters without magical weapons; it seems highly unfair for barbarians to knock off gargoyles with regular swords. Take a second look at this ability, though. Barbarians would not gain any bonuses to hit or damage in such attacks, as regular fighters with magical weapons would. This ability is also gradual; barbarians of 1st

through 3rd level cannot attack monsters affected only by magical weapons, only characters of 4th level and above can hit creatures affected by +1 weapons, etc. Since barbarians abhor the use of magical weapons, this ability gives characters a chance to survive encounters with such monsters — though not quite as good a chance, perhaps, as someone else with a +5 sword would have. I find nothing wrong with this ability, and do not believe it unbalances the game or the character.

There are some other aspects of the barbarian class that I have difficulty swallowing, not because the abilities are unreasonable but because of the loopholes created by their inclusion, and because some abilities are not well explained. The “detect magic” ability is not well outlined; it is not clear if this ability has a range, how often checks must be made to see if a barbarian recognizes an object as being magical, and how referees can prevent the players of barbarians characters from accumulating magical treasure that their characters “don’t know” is magical.

I would suggest that a barbarian could *automatically* detect by touch if something is enchanted; this would be a sure way of keeping magical weapons and armor out of their hands at any time. This would serve as a “sixth sense” for barbarians; they would distrust and possibly fear magical things, and would want nothing to do with them. This is not an overbalanced power, since its main function would be to keep the barbarian “legal,” and also would enable a barbarian to identify an item as having magical powers or enchantments. However, barbarians would not care to serve as the “magic detectors” for their dungeon party. What if there’s a cursed sword in a treasure pile? What about other sorts of dangerous items? And why should a barbarian take all the lumps for everyone else? A *real* barbarian would clobber anyone who suggests that he or she serve as an errand-runner for the group. The 5%-per-level ability to detect magic should not have a range of more than 10’ from the barbarian in any event, and would require concentration for a full round in order to use. I would suggest that this power could be used any number of times on an object; sometimes a barbarian would sense an “aura” and sometimes not. Sixth senses can be tricky.

Many questions are left unanswered by the secondary and tertiary abilities listed for this class. Among them:

Exactly how far should a barbarian’s skills be reduced in effectiveness if the character is operating in unfamiliar terrain?

What bonuses does the horsemanship ability confer? What difference would it make if someone didn’t have it?

How accurate is “general weather prediction”?

How long does it take to train an animal, build a boat, or construct a pitfall? How would a typical pitfall work in the context of the game (chance for pit to be spotted, damage done, etc.)?

How does the running skill work? Does this mean the barbarian could travel in a dungeon at a speed of 30’, or that the character moves at 20 times the normal dungeon movement rate (about 5’ per second)? Would a running barbarian get charge bonuses as listed per the DMG, p. 66?

How far can a normal (non-barbarian) character leap and spring?

Does the “detect illusions” power act in conjunction with a saving throw vs. an illusion?

How do the rules on first-aid skills work with regard to poisons and diseases? How long would potion-concoction take? How effective would it be? What things could be defined as “natural poisons” and “minor illnesses”?

How does one calculate the effect of charisma values greater than 25?

One secondary ability that might be added to the list is knowledge of how to make primitive weapons (spears, javelins, etc.) and how to fashion armor from leather or furs. This would keep the barbarian supplied with assuredly non-magical weaponry and protective clothing. No one said the weapons and armor would be of high quality, or even good quality, but at least they would work, and replacement would be cheap.

All in all, barbarians seem very acceptable in the AD&D game. My strongest suggestion for the class would be to drop the constitution bonuses and use the older system of +1 hp per constitution point over 14, unless it could be shown that the extra hit points are essential for the character’s survival. I am not inclined to believe this is so.

I also have some questions about the slow level advancement, though this is still, for reasons explained, within acceptable margins. Secondary and tertiary abilities should be more clearly described to eliminate areas of confusion; too much is left to the referee’s whims in interpreting them in game situations.

When I first saw this class, and for some time afterward, I really felt it was way out of whack with the game system. After sitting down and literally taking it apart, however, I find that it is ‘not as bad as I’d thought; in fact, it seems that this class would work quite well. What bothered me most were the inability to use magical items (though it is interesting to imagine a character doing without them), the various combat abilities (which seem to balance out anyway), the hit-point bonuses (which still bother me), and the saving-throw bonuses (which also bother me). The bonuses to saving throws seem rather unreasonable, and justification for them seems hard to find.

At any rate, I would accept barbarian characters into my AD&D campaigns as written. It would be nice to iron some things out, but it still seems to work.

Author’s note: Interested persons may want to know what the chances are of getting high ability scores using the “roll 9d6 and drop the 6 lowest” method recommended for generating a barbarian’s strength. By the use of a complex formula (not reproduced here), the probability of getting a score of 18 using this method is about 17.75%. The probability of rolling a score of 15 or better using this method works out to 62.2%. There is one chance in 10,077,696 of rolling a 3 (in this case, all of the dice would have to come up 1’s). With their strength generated by this method, most barbarians end up with physiques like Arnold Schwarzenegger.

TABLE 11: LEVEL AND HIT-POINT PROGRESSION FOR BARBARIANS (Official AD&D character class)

Experience points	Level	Hit-point averages		
		7-14 Con	16 Con	18 Con
10 ³	1	8.25 ¹	12.25	16.25
10 ⁴	2	14.75	22.75	30.75
10 ⁵	6	40.75	64.75	88.75
10 ⁶	9 ²	57.75	89.75	121.75
2x10 ⁶	11 ²	65.76	97.75	129.75

¹ — Though barbarians at 1st level use a d12 for hit points, results of 1-6 are counted as 7. This procedure also affects all future determinations of hit-point average.

² — At the listed amount of x.p.’s, the character is 1 x.p. short of entering the next level.

TABLE 12: LEVEL WIDTHS FOR BARBARIANS

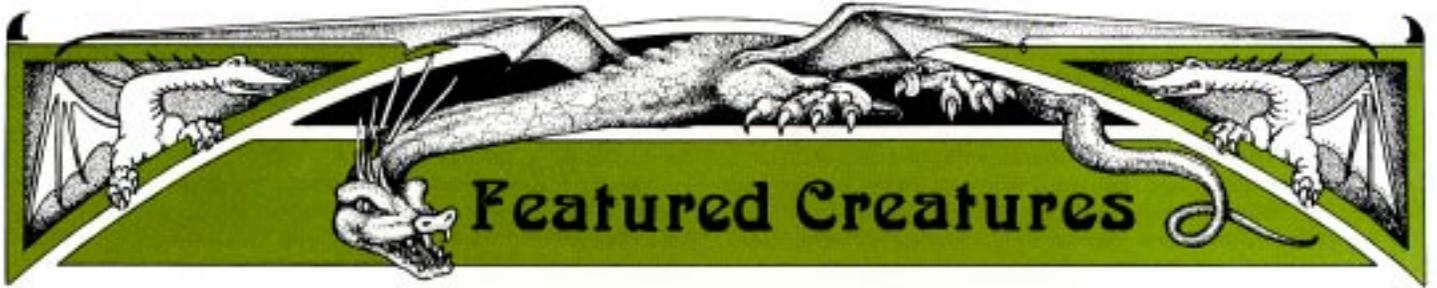
(Figures are in thousands of points)

Level	Pts.	Level	Pts.
1	6	6	70
2	6	7	125
3	12	8	225
4	24	9+	500
5	32		

TABLE 13: HIT-POINT PROGRESSION FOR BARBARIANS (suggested)

(If only +1 hp per constitution point over 14 is allowed)

Experience points	Hit-point averages		
	7-14 Con	16 Con	18 Con
10 ³	8.25	10.25	12.25
10 ⁴	14.75	18.75	22.75
10 ⁵	40.75	52.75	64.75
10 ⁶	57.75	73.75	89.75
2x10 ⁶	65.75	81.75	97.75



by Gary Gygax

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Last issue three nasty new fungoid monsters — the Ascomoid, Basidirond, and Phycomid — were offered. The Ustilagor and Zygom, described herein, complete the offering. Now, would you enjoy meeting the creature who has them for playmates? In case anyone is wondering if these creatures were the result of requests from readers, the answer is no. In order to make certain our Kindly Editor had a sufficient supply

of monsters, I went ahead with the fungi. Months have a way of rolling past without notice, and Yours Truly too often gets caught with nothing in print in any of the columns promised. I hope there will be sufficient feedback from you Gentle Readers for a column devoted to requests.

At some point there must be an end to monsters. I employ only a certain few in my general campaigning and load the

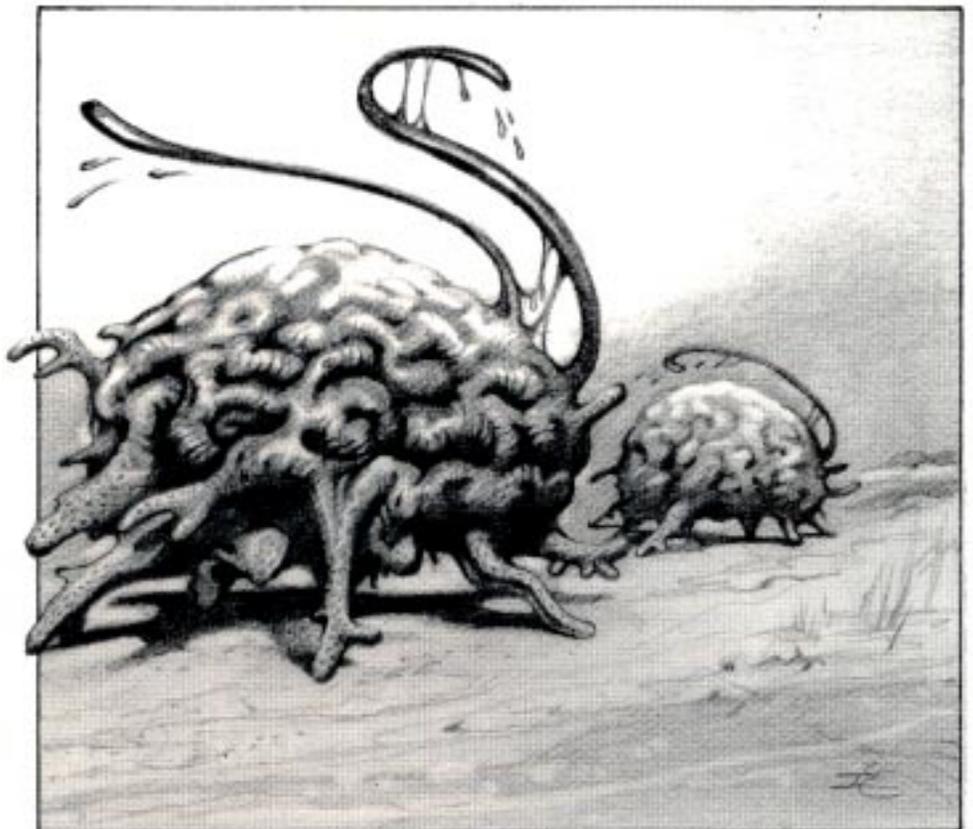
unusual critters into weird settings or deep dungeons. While we present many new and different creatures, the world of monsters has finite limits — or does it? If the various planes of existence are detailed, then there is room for many hundreds of new creations. Do you Thoughtful Gamers desire an enumeration of the inhabitants of the uncounted planes? If so, this column will eventually turn to that area. What say?

Ustilagor

FREQUENCY: *Rare*
 NO. APPEARING: 1-3
 ARMOR CLASS: 5
 MOVE: 9"
 HIT DICE: 3 + 3
 % IN LAIR: 90%
 TREASURE TYPE: Q (x1-20)
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-5 (+ poisoning)
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Psionics*
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Psionics*
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See below*
 INTELLIGENCE: *Unratable*
 ALIGNMENT: *Neutral (evil)*
 SIZE: S (1'-1½' diam.)
 PSIONIC ABILITY: 150 + 5-30
 Attack/Defense Modes: D/F
 LEVEL / X.P. VALUE: V / 215 + 4/hp

Ustilagor fungi appear to be brain-like growths with coral-like appendages. Although soft and not fast in normal movement terms, they can scuttle and dart, and this accounts for their relatively high armor class. Their attack form consists of flicking out ribbon-like tendrils about 3' long. A hit inflicts damage due to alkaline fluids and causes the victim to save versus poison or suffer additional like damage (2-5 hp) next round as the caustic substance affects its body.

Ustilagors have no intelligence or mind as defined by human standards, so mental attacks do not affect them. (See AD&D™ Players Handbook, p. 11, *Wisdom Table*, asterisked paragraph regarding Magical Attack Adjustment.) These monsters do, however, have some form of brain, for they have psionic powers.



Ustilagors can employ *telempathic projection* to project the following emotions at an individual during a round: *hate* (of associate), *distrust* (of associate), *fear* (of fungi), *loathing* (of area), or *uncertainty*. These projected emotions cause attack, bickering, desertion, or

dithering, accordingly. Ustilagors also use *energy control* to protect themselves from spell attacks and the like. They attack psionic individuals only by *id insinuation* (as related to the strongest basic emotions). Only a *psionic blast* will affect them in turn.

Zygom



FREQUENCY: *Rare*
 NO. APPEARING: 1-3
 ARMOR CLASS: 8
 MOVE: 1" (or as host; see below)
 HIT DICE: 3 (+ host's; see below)
 % IN LAIR: 50%
 TREASURE TYPE: *By host type and/or incidental*
 NO. OF ATTACKS: *By host type*
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By host*
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Milky glue*
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See below*
 INTELLIGENCE: *Unratable*
 ALIGNMENT: *Neutral (evil)*
 SIZE: *By host size (1/6' - 1/4' per growth)*
 PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*
 Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*
 LEVEL / X.P. VALUE: *III / 65 + 3/hp*

Zygom is individually small fungoid growths which consist of a short, thin stem with an ovoid cap. One or two dozen such growths are conjoined by a rhizome structure to make up a singular community creature, a zygom. Although able to exist in earth, zygom prefer to infest living creatures, nourishing themselves on the host's blood and flesh. This infestation controls the host creature by

brain and nerve connections. It leads to death of the host in 1 to 8 weeks, depending on the size and constitution of the host creature. The zygom remains until the whole of the dead body is consumed and then moves on.

As host creatures are controlled, they move, attack, and defend according to the dictates of the possessing zygom. Infestation is typically on the head, neck, and back (spinal) areas. Typical host creatures are: ants (giant), rats (giant), osquips (see FIEND FOLIO® Tome), and occasionally small humanoids.

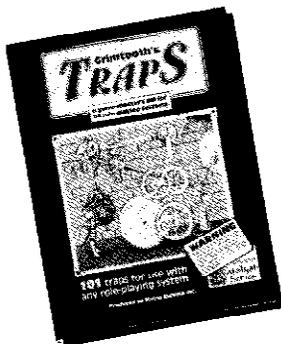
Whenever a colony of zygom comes into rough contact with any creature, there is a 1 in 6 chance that the pale blue "milk" of a broken cap will stick fast to the creature. This "milk" is extremely sticky, and it has the power to glue materials together for 2-5 days before the substance dries and crumbles. If glued to flesh, a colony of zygom spores will infect the creature and begin growth by the time the glue powders, i.e. infest and control the host. Only a *cure disease* will remove this infestation. Zygom glue can be otherwise embarrassing, for it will stick weapons to targets, creatures to creatures, etc.

As zygom have fungoid intelligence which is totally alien to humans, no magic affecting the mind — *beguiling, charming, dominating, holding, hypnotizing*, etc. will affect them.

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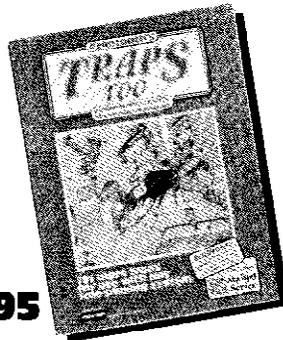
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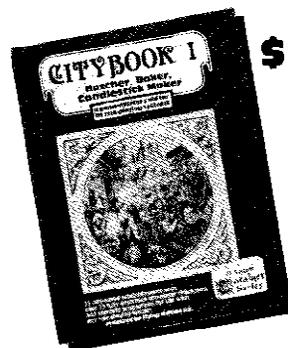
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Caped Crusaders and Masked Marvels

by Roger E. Moore

Role-playing games come in several broad categories. There are fantasy sword-and-sorcery game systems, spy games full of secret agents and special gadgets, space operas with lasers and starships and games about intelligent rabbits, samurai, pirates, post-atomic mutants and so on. There are also a number of games out now about superheroes, in which players take on the personas of various costumed do-gooders of comic-book fame. There are some distinct differences between this last sort of role-playing game and the other types.

This article is a collection of notes made over a couple of years of refereeing role-playing games, with particular attention to superhero games. At the end of the article is a list of all the superhero role-playing games on the market today, to the best of this author's knowledge (*Editor's note: And as of this writing of*



the article, which was submitted to us several months before its publication.) While the article does not contain a critical review of each game, references are made to the elements of such games that seem to be the most useful (or most bothersome) to superhero campaigns.

Superheroes and realism

Most role-playing games make a serious attempt to present themselves as "realistic," in the sense that they try to duplicate real combat, social systems, personalities, skills, and so forth. They also try to be internally consistent and logical; this helps the players suspend their disbelief of sorcerors and starships more easily. A role-playing game is often more enjoyable when you find that thread of "realism" in it.

Superhero games, on the other hand, seem to lack any sense of realism. Caped

crusaders get the daylight knocked out of them, yet bound back with great agility to punch out their evil opponents. Villains use every device that could be imagined by pseudo-science that could be the world, and wizards can rub shoulders with starship troopers and secret agents in the ensuing battles. Just five minutes in front of any comic-book rack illustrates this point nicely. Sword-and-sorcery games spend a great deal of time justifying their magic systems, making them logical; space-opera games often have long paragraphs of scientific data showing that fusion guns are possible and practical. Superhero games don't bother with such trivial details; if somebody wants a pistol that fires laser bolts and doubles as a magic wand, boomerang, and backscratcher, that's fine. He's got it. If you can accept superhero characters to begin with, you can accept anything, and this is great because play becomes more spontaneous and less likely to bog down over technical details. Sure, someone may fire a fusion gun underwater and it may take a few minutes to figure out the effects, but the point is that no one questions whether the gun is ten feet long or pocket-sized. It simply is.

Some people think that superhero games are just too "wild" and silly — and that's the way I felt when I was first exposed to them. Unexpectedly, though, the element of unreality in superhero games is also one of their greatest assets. Aside from making play more spontaneous, this puts more emphasis on just having fun. Those who like realistic role-playing games may try superhero games now and then as a break from all that "reality." And then some people would rather play entire superhero campaigns; for them, you can't beat the thrill of knocking a caped crook across a room.

Life and death

Closely related to the question of realism is that of death in superhero games. Player characters in other role-playing games seem to come and go with regular frequency; old characters get eaten by dragons, lost in spacecraft accidents, shot in bank robberies, etc. Superheroes, though, seem to last forever. Death is one of the props that other role-playing games use to enhance their "reality." If your character falls off a cliff in most other games, he or she will probably be seriously hurt or killed. In superhero games, the combat and damage systems are often designed to allow characters, even run-of-the-mill sorts, to take great punishment and keep on going (no matter how high the cliff was).

This sort of near-immortality is derived directly from the nature of the comics themselves. You could probably count on the fingers of one hand the number of superheroes who have been

killed in the comics. Supervillains, although killed more frequently than heroes, are also prone to hang around for long periods of time and rarely take their "final bow." Not many cartoonists or writers would like having to create a new super-crook for every magazine. Not many people are going to buy comics in which the hero bites the dust in the second or third issue.

Superhero combat is intensely personal and individualistic. Grudges are allowed to develop, and off-and-on struggles are allowed to continue through many issues of a comic to establish a certain consistency in the superhero world. Keeping the enemies alive not only ensures employment for superheroes in the future, but keeps up the dramatic elements, in the game. Will that archcriminal Bulldozer escape from prison and come searching for the heroes who had him locked up? Will the heroes ever manage to defeat the minions of that world-wide organization known as SHADOW? Long-running campaigns may be developed with ease using this sort of "stretching" technique.

Another good reason for keeping criminals alive in superhero games is because there is (or should be) an unwritten rule in the comics world that says that killing is evil. (Amazing how few games utilize this assumption, isn't it?) All player characters of a superhero game are usually good guys, and should, whenever and wherever possible, avoid killing their opponents. The object is to bring criminals to justice, and if possible help them mend their ways and become good citizens. But criminals don't care about being good citizens, and will want to rub out all the good guys as soon as humanly possible; superheroes are assumed to be a cut above this level of thinking, and should abhor the taking of lives.

There are some superhero players who don't go along with this tenet, and would rather play ultra-powered Mack Bolan types who routinely kill criminals. After all, Doc Savage and Tarzan have killed criminals, and probably if you dig deeply enough into comic literature you'll find superheroes who have killed crooks with impunity, too. That's not the point. Very often such killings occurred under extreme circumstances. Both Tarzan and Doc Savage made a habit of sparing the bad guys (Doc Savage even ran a hospital where criminals were cured of their anti-social tendencies); they tended to kill only when their immediate families were harmed, placing them under tremendous stress.

Referees of superhero games can discourage "vigilante" characters of this sort by having criminals single them out for special vengeance — so that they are slain in the course of play, rather than

"just" being knocked out. The message (to players) should get across.

The criminal mentality

Most superhero games have no alignment system as such, but there are still fairly clear divisions between good and evil behavior. Referees must role-play the villains so as to keep this division clear. Criminals are often just *bad*, with few or no redeeming qualities. Bad guys should be the sorts of characters that no one would care to be like. They may be handsome, but they despise everyone but themselves; they may be brilliant, but their minds are twisted toward thoughts of conquest and vengeance; they may be cultured and polite at times, but it is only a cover for their true intentions, done to fool their opponents.

Referees should be inventive when playing crooked NBC's; not all criminals are alike. One may be a cheap hood who struck it big, while another may be a retired military man with a grudge against the service and his country. Another may be the ruler of a small country, obsessed with dreams of ruling the world. Every now and then a referee may toss in another sort of criminal: the sort who actually might reform under the right conditions. Humane treatment of these villains by superheroes might help bring out these better qualities. For example: The criminal known as Blue Streak is actually a research scientist whose family has been kidnapped by some sinister organization; in order to keep them alive, he must carry out robberies and hijackings and return the money to his enemies. If treated badly by superheroes (beyond the usual subduing combat), he may come to hate everyone and will continue his life of crime, and may also seek vengeance against the heroes who treated him so poorly. On the other hand, if the superheroes treat him well and seem trustworthy, he might confess his problem to them and they would have a new adventure to undertake; they might also gain him as an ally and as a new member of their group (if they can get him cleared of any criminal charges).

By and large, such reformable supervillains should be fairly rare; most criminals are not normally prone to repent or learn from past mistakes. They would rather be rich, powerful, and rotten.

Supervillains do not generally want to kill captured superheroes, not so much because they don't approve of killing, but because (in the context of the comics and of the game) superheroes were simply meant to hang around for a long time. A referee can say that heroes are just lucky, or that criminals are too cowardly to kill their foes at once, or too smart, or too stupid, or the referee can make up some other excuse to justify it; the point is that superheroes are, in effect, the center of the comic universe and should be presented with challenges

at every turn to sharpen their wits and skills. Killing heroes out of hand makes the game inconsistent with comic-book themes and very aggravating for the players. Thus, captured heroes are usually dragged down the stairs and thrown into dungeons, or locked in special death-traps requiring great skill and ingenuity to escape from.

A superhero should have at least one chance to escape from his or her capturers; if the hero fails, the referee can declare the character out of action until he or she gets rescued by other heroes later on. Maybe the criminals will use the hero as a bargaining chip, or as a guinea pig in some awful experiment. Superhero game adventures should contain clever alternatives to knocking off superheroes, and make the players sweat about those alternatives as much as they would sweat about being "killed." With the rich background provided by the comic books, this should not prove too difficult.

Characters with consistency

One of the other generally accepted tenets of being a superhero is that a character's special powers and abilities should be appropriate to the character's name, and vice versa. The Leopard would not be expected to have wings, and Fireball would not be expected to swim. Some superhero games have random-roll tables to determine which powers a superhero gets, and these tables can produce some very curious "mishmash" characters that are hard enough to name, let alone to play. The best policy is to allow players to choose their own characters' superpowers and names. This insures that player characters will be better enjoyed and related to by the person(s) playing them. If possible, each character should have a certain theme running through his or her life, abilities, personality, occupation, etc. The Leopard has liked cats all of her life; she works at a local zoo, tends to travel alone, and doesn't say much — but man, when she gets into a *fight*. . .

Whenever possible, too, the referee should encourage players to develop their own characters' histories, detailing how they got their special powers. Some such histories may prove highly useful when creating new adventures; some old acquaintances (good or bad) may decide to reappear in the character's life and complicate things.

An example that I refereed in play should illustrate this well. One of the players in our current campaign has a character named Sidewinder. It was noted in Sidewinders history that he got his superpowers from being experimented on by an unscrupulous secret government agency called ISENGARD. Sidewinder escaped from this agency and has been on the run from ISENGARD for some time now. As the campaign went on, the character did not really worry so

much about ISENGARD and relaxed his guard. One day some policemen came to his door and asked him to accompany them to the station; his car had been stolen, they said, and he needed to come and claim it. He went along, and somewhere along the road the driver hit a button, the glove compartment fell open, and gas sprayed in Sidewinder's face; the cop in back, to make sure, shot the hero with a stun pistol. Sidewinder was now back in the hands of ISENGARD, but his fellow superheroes picked up his trail in an attempt to bring him back, sparking some epic battles ranging across the midwestern United States. Of course, there could be many ISENGARD agents and stations around the world; if one group failed, maybe another would not. One small detail in the character's past was enough to generate several good adventures and provide for occasional future conflicts as well.

Settings for superheroes

There are essentially two types of settings that can be used in a superhero game: a fictitious city or country, or a real one adapted for a superhero world. The former setting would involve the creation of a town like Metropolis or Gotham City, or the island/nation of Inguria used in *Superhero 2044*. This technique is useful for referees who want to have a free hand in designing the landscape to include special items like factories, research stations, etc. It is also good to use when the players and referee do not live near enough to a major city with which they can identify and which they can use as a setting. But from my viewpoint, the latter alternative of using a real city as a backdrop for superhero campaigns is best whenever it's a viable alternative.

Players and referees living in or near a major city may find it both helpful and amusing to make the city the setting. Helpful, because maps of the city should be readily available and the group's familiarity with the area should make it easier to visualize the scenes where the action takes place; amusing, for reasons that should be (or would soon become) obvious.

Popular landmarks might be the backdrop for great fights between heroes and villains; local governments and organizations can be caricatured, and (unless you live in New York or Los Angeles, where most comic superheroes seem to reside) there is always the weird element of trying to imagine *your* city as actually having superheroes. The campaign I am currently running is based in Louisville, Kentucky (where all of us live), but it is the Louisville of an alternate world where places like Metropolis exist as well.

Louisville is a great city, but it isn't the sort of place you automatically think of when you think of superhero cities. Oddly enough, though, once you get used to the idea after a couple of sessions of

play, it grows on you like crazy. Of course Louisville can have superheroes. It has six at the moment: Gigantus, Assimilator, Sidewinder, Phantos, Leopard, and the teen genius Philip Pieser. So far they've captured a rampaging minotaur that escaped while being sent to the local university for study, and broken up (rather literally, thanks to Gigantus) a bank-robbery ring that used weapons stolen from Ft. Knox. They've met and defeated Armadillo, his giant yellow android Bulldozer, and his assorted henchmen; Wolfman escaped their clutches, however, and might show up again later on. And maybe Armadillo will escape from prison and plot vengeance. Or some new criminals may appear and wreak havoc until the team arises to fight them. And on it goes from there.

Egos — or is it superegos?

As mentioned before, superheroes are by nature a very individualistic lot. Each hero (meaning each player) is going to want some glory; fame is what keeps superheroes going, after all. More often than in other sorts of role-playing games, player characters may go off on their own to try to pick up leads to solve crimes, or fight criminals without other people's (or heroes') help. When possible the referee should try to encourage players to work together, and should design adventures that will require the

close cooperation (and proximity) of the characters. This ensures that everyone gets their share of attention. If some players want to do things on their own, some other adventures may be set up as a sideline to the main campaign that require only one or two heroes at most (small isolated crimes, some detective work, or similar jobs). In any case, the rule to remember is that a Superhero who doesn't get to beat up on the bad guys like everyone else is not much of a superhero; each character deserves an equal part of the referee's consideration.

Resources

Until recently there were not very many playing aids specifically designed for superhero games; this should not deter prospective referees, however. Ideas for adventures may be taken from many other game systems, if properly adapted. *Research Station Gamma* (GDW) may be easily form-fitted to superhero adventures as the abode of evil arch-criminals; many other *Traveller* and related science-fiction/space-opera modules depicting futuristic weapons or buildings are useful, too. The GAMMA WORLD™ game (TSR) and the spell lists in the AD&D™ Players Handbook (TSR) provide much interesting reading for those looking for new sorts of super-powers to develop. Spell-casting superheroes may check through *RuneQuest* (Chaosium) for possible magics to use, or look in *Magic*

World (Chaosium). Obviously, materials designed for any particular superhero game would also be good for use in any other superhero game, once the referee figures out the conversions to change the specifics of one game system into the other. And there are *always* the comics to draw upon. . . .

The games

The following games are generally available in most hobby and game stores. It should be noted that *Superheroes and Supervillains* contains miniatures with rules for combat, but is not designed for broader use in role-playing Campaigns.

Champions (Hero Games, 19881) by George MacDonald and Steve Peterson
Superheroes and Supervillains (Heritag, 1981); rules by Brian Phillips, figures by David Helber

Superhero 2044 (Gamescience, 1977) by Donald Saxman

Supervillains (Task Force, 1982) by Rick Register

Superworld (part of the *Worlds of Wonder* boxed set of games, Chaosium Inc., 1982) by Steve Perrin and Steve Henderson

Villains and Vigilantes (Fantasy Games Unlimited, 1979) by Jeff Dee and Jack Herman

The Official Superhero Adventure Game (1982) by Brian Phillips

Supergame (1982) by Jay and Aimee Hartlove

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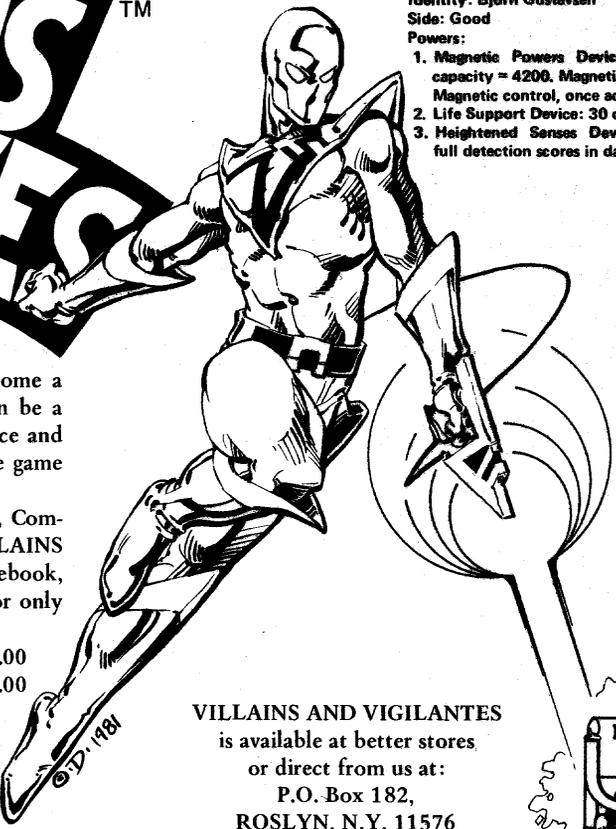
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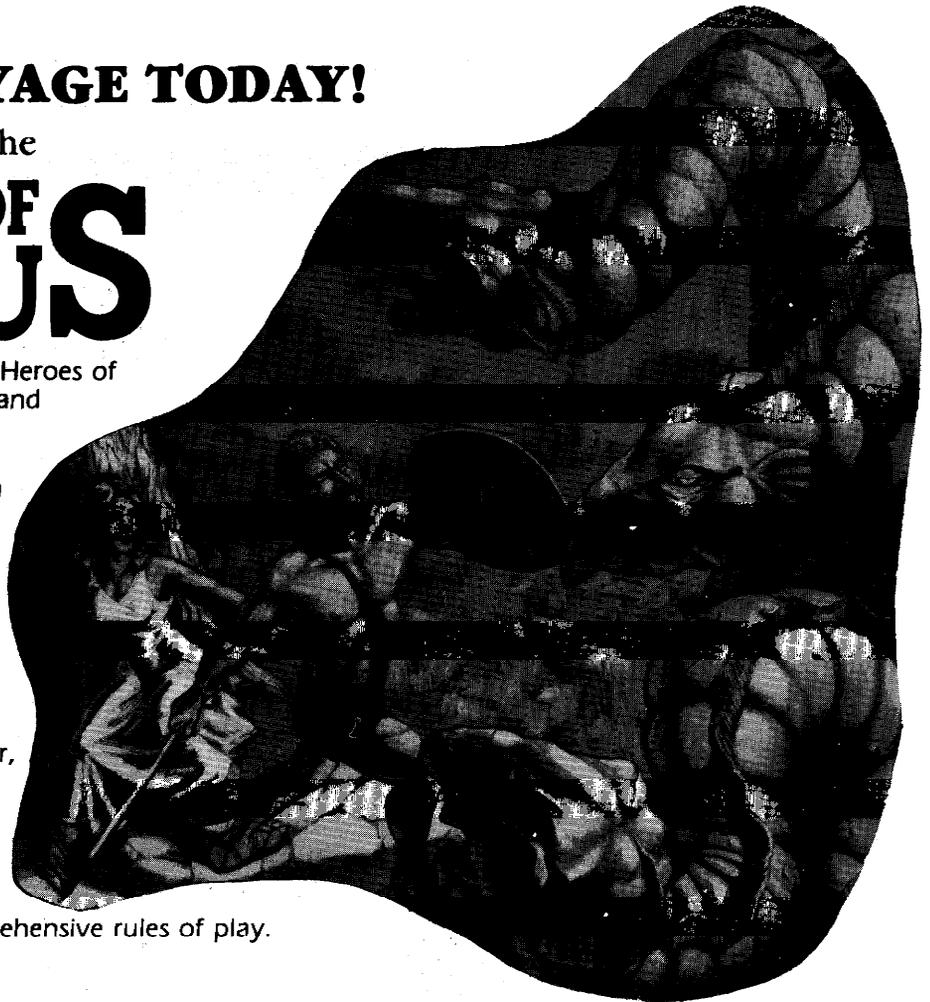
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Character Statistics:

Class	Level	Hit Points	Strength	Dexterity	Constitution	Intelligence	Wisdom	Charisma
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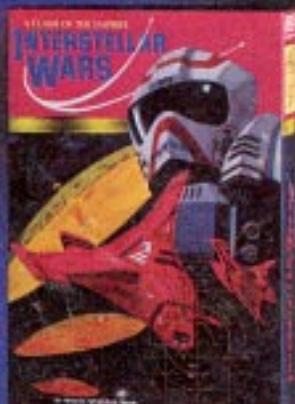
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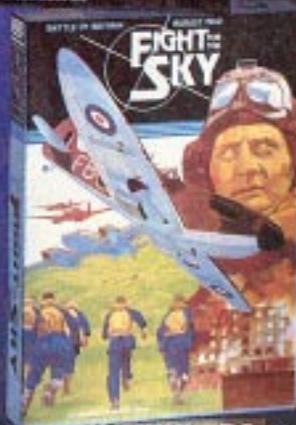
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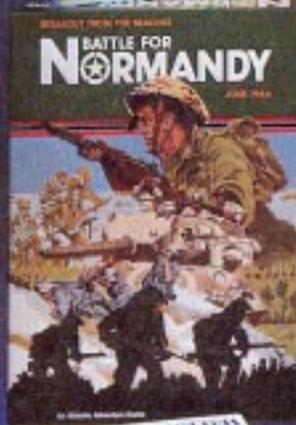


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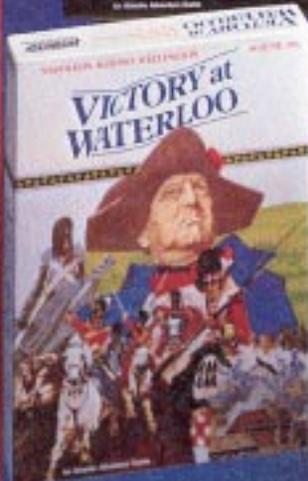
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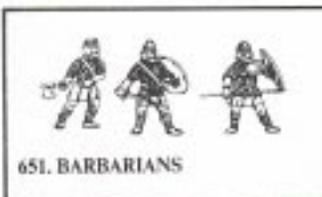
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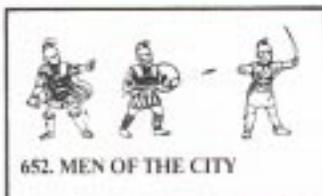
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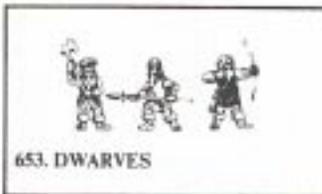
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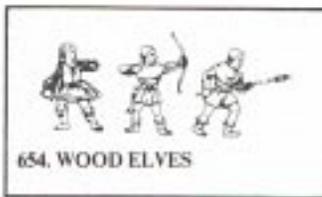
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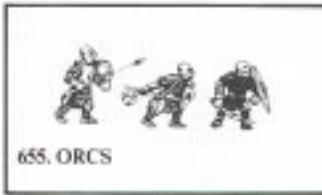
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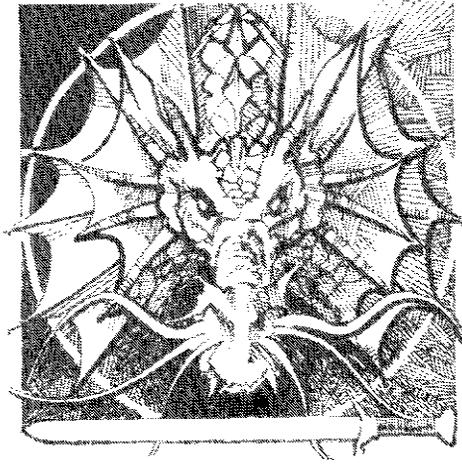


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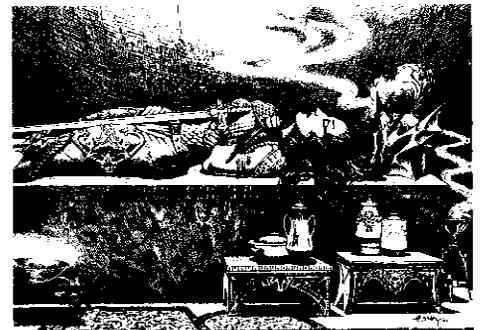
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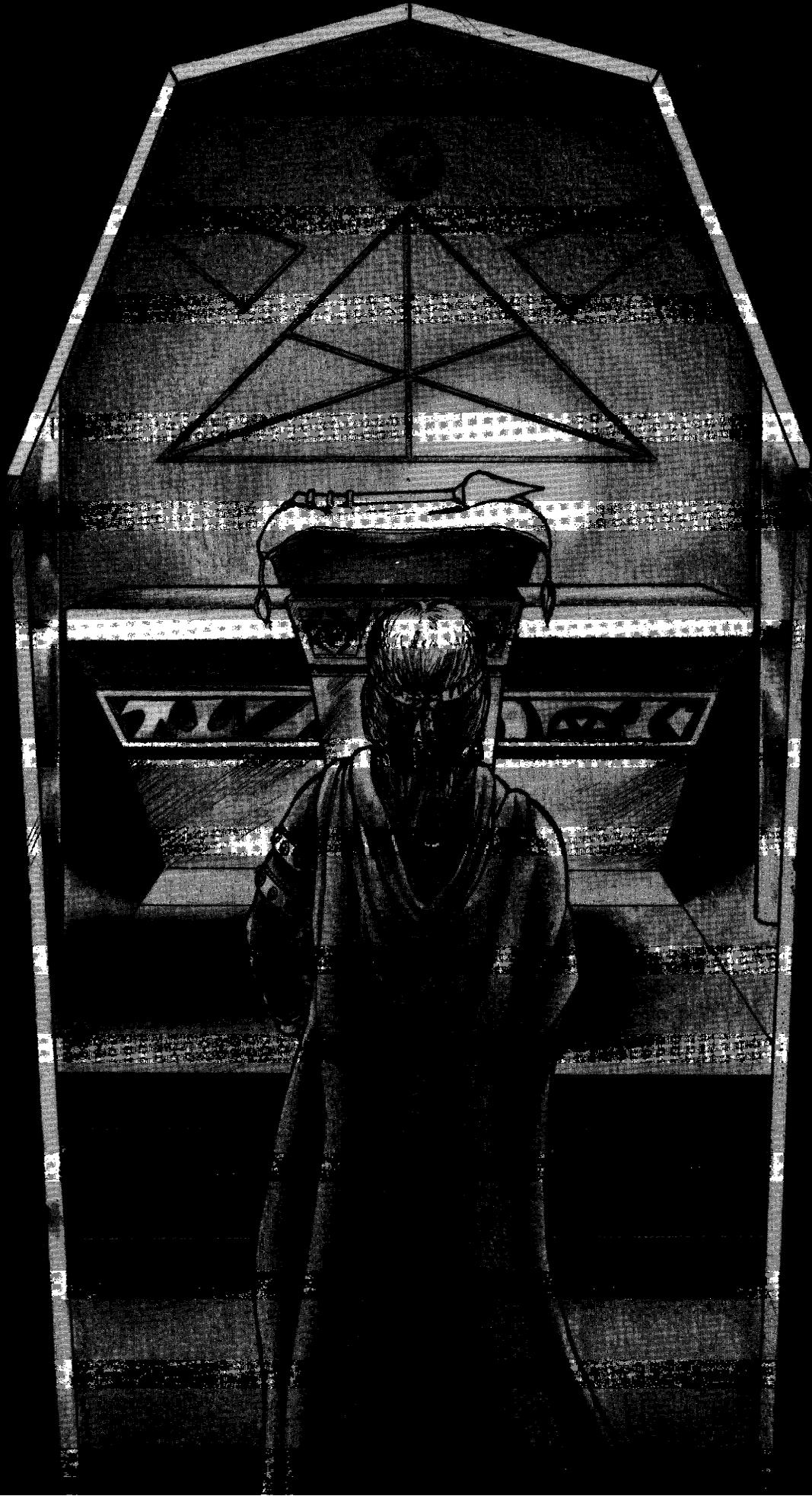
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ARRAKHAR'S WAND



ARRAKHAR'S WAND

A game for two players

"Its shaft is a slender rod of some unknown steely-grey metal; about its base run three fine circles of gold. It is capped by a large wine-dark stone, full and round at first, but tapering to a point that glistens in the light.

"For nearly two centuries it has been lost. Now it is known to rest in the hands of the evil sorcerers.

"Grave is our peril. This is the Wand of Arrakhar the Unsleeping, greatest of all the wizards of the Council of the Red Sun, foil of the dread sorcerer Logar Zor and his schemes of world domination.

"Whether Arrakhar perished at last from some dark intrigue fostered by the sorcerer, or whether he still dwells in some far realm, none here can say. Yet our duty is clear: to retrieve the wand from the circle of sorcerers who now possess it. We must strike at once, before they unlock its secrets and are able to turn its tremendous power to their own dark purposes."

Introduction

ARRAKHAR'S WAND is a fantasy boardgame of tactics and strategy for two players. One player (the sorcerer player) hides the wand in his realm and defends it with a group of evil sorcerers who can summon the aid of demons, orcs, and ghouls. The other player (the wizard player) invades with a force of good wizards, barbarians, dwarves, and elves, seeking to locate the wand and escape with it.

Before the play of the game begins, both players secretly design their forces. The board portrays the valley of the evil sorcerers, and on it the sorcerer player places the counters representing haunts (temples, ruins and crypts), secretly recording one of them as the haunt in which the wand is hidden. The counters representing the sorcerers and their minions are then placed on the board, and on the sorcerer player's first turn they can begin summoning other evil units. The wizard player brings in the wizard units and their allies through one or more of the hexes along the valley border, and the struggle begins.

Each side can attack with spells and by physical combat. The wizard player should usually try to strike quickly, before the sorcerer player can organize an effective resistance. Only the sorcerer player gets a steady stream of reinforcements, in the form of wandering-orc counters, but the wizard player has the advantage of special attacking bonuses. To win, the wizard player must locate the wand and remove it from the sorcerers' valley through an entry/exit hex.

Designed
by
C. C. Stoll

Game Components

1.0 — The game includes this set of rules, the board, and a sheet of counters. Also required is one six-sided die, which must be supplied by the players.

1.1 — The board has three types of hexes: clear terrain, which may be moved into by all units; mountains, into which no movement is allowed; and entry/exit hexes (marked "E") used only by wizard-player units. Sorcerer-player units may never enter "E" hexes. Once a wizard-player unit enters clear terrain, it must remain on the board until it is eliminated by the enemy or until it leaves the playing area by exiting through an "E" hex. A unit that leaves the board in this manner may not return. "E" hexes are considered off the board; stacking restrictions (see 3.3) do not apply to units located on them, and no attacks may be made on or by units in these hexes.

1.2 — The four main types of counters (identifiable by color and initial letter) are these:

Wizard-player units: 20 counters each of wizards, dwarves, barbarians, and elves.

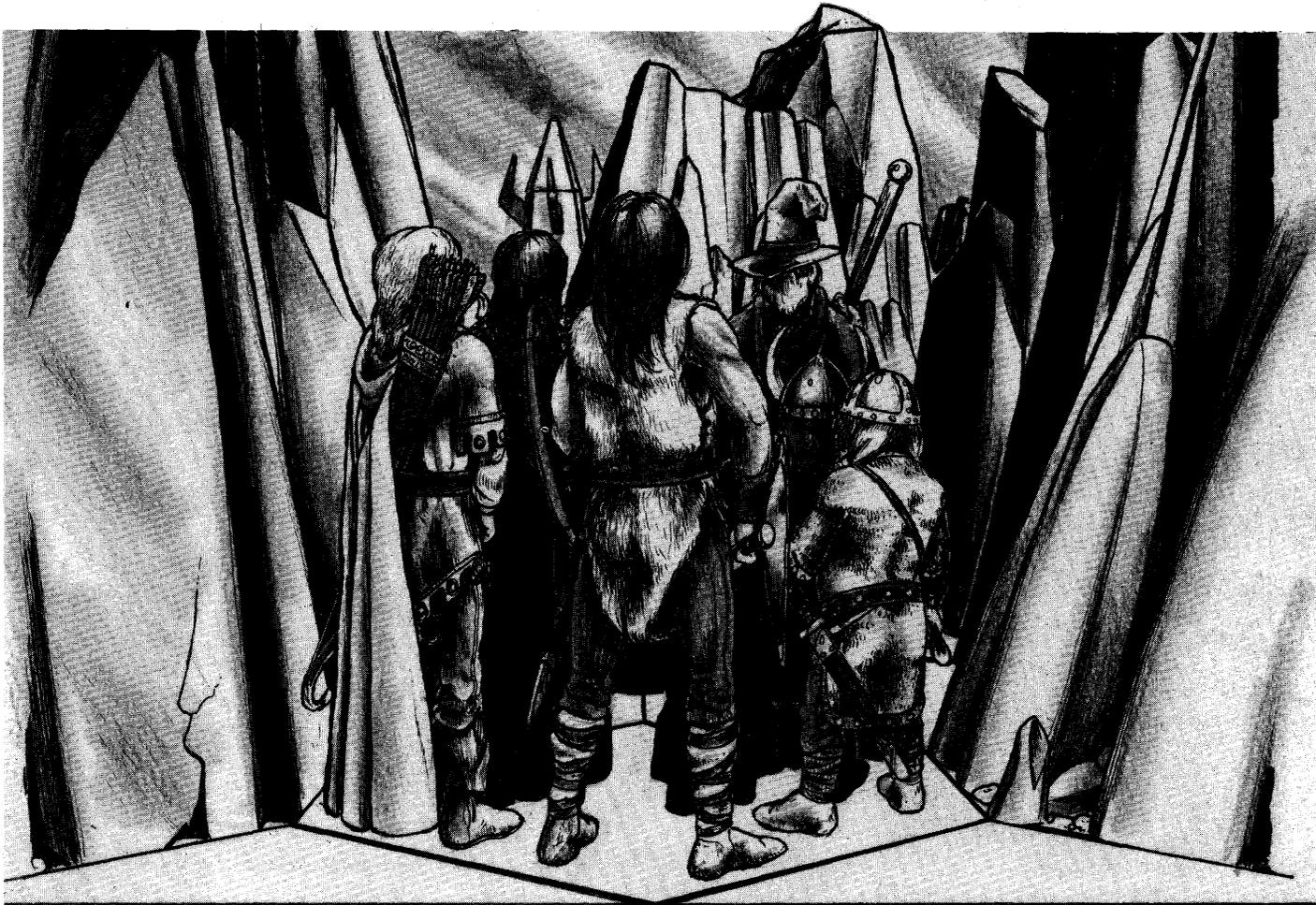
Sorcerer-player units: 20 counters each of sorcerers, demons, orcs, and ghouls.

Wand: 2 counters (one is a spare).

Haunts: 3 numbered counters of each type — temples (T), ruins (R), and crypts (C).

The counter mix also includes pieces marked +2, +4, or +6, which are used to keep track of the effects of *haste* spells (see 3.6) on units and stacks of units, plus a few blank counters for each side, to aid in the replacement of lost or damaged pieces.

Note: The rules on the following pages pertain specifically to the Basic Scenario. Once they are understood, players will have no difficulty adapting them to other scenarios.



Set-up for Play

2.0 — The three steps in preparing for play are: designing forces (see 2.1); sorcerer-player force placement (2.2); and wizard-player force placement (2.3).

2.1— Designing forces: Both players secretly design their forces out of unit counters (neither the wand nor the haunts are units). The point cost for a certain type of unit counter is given on the Counter Chart (see charts and tables page at the end of the rule text). Each unit available to a player costs either 1, 2, or 3 points. The point limit for a force depends on the scenario being played (see below). No units should be revealed to the opposing player until they are placed on the board. Once a unit is positioned on the board, its identity cannot be concealed.

The following restrictions apply to force design:

(1) For the Basic Scenario, the wizard player may not spend more than 60 points in designing his force, and the sorcerer player may not spend more than 66 points.

(2) Neither player can exceed the countermix, which provides 20 units of each type.

(3) The sorcerer player must include at least 6 counters of each of his four types of units in his force design. The wizard player must have at least four counters

of each of his four types of units in his force design.

(4) All units not allocated to force design are set aside and out of play. (Exception: As explained later, the sorcerer player has a chance to receive wandering-orc reinforcements on each turn of the game; these units can be taken from orc units not part of the sorcerer-player's force design.)

2.2 — Sorcerer-player force placement: The sorcerer player first takes all haunts numbered "1" or "2" (two each of the temples, ruins, and crypts) and places them on the board. (Haunts numbered "3" are not used in the Basic Scenario.) Haunts must be placed in clear terrain hexes; they may not be placed within a two-hex radius from an "E" hex, and one haunt cannot be located within a three-hex radius from another haunt. This three-hex distance is counted through clear terrain only, not over or through mountain hexes; haunts *can* be placed so that they are separated by only one hex, so long as that is a mountain hex, and a path more than three hexes long through clear terrain is required to move from one haunt to another. (For movement, hexes containing haunts are treated as clear terrain.) Next, the sorcerer player secretly records (by type and number) the haunt in which the wand is hidden.

Then the sorcerer player places all the

sorcerer units in his designed force — but *not* any demons, orcs, or ghouls in the designed force — on clear-terrain hexes. Sorcerer units may not be placed within a two-hex radius from an "E" hex. Up to four sorcerer units may be placed in the same hex (see 3.3).

Other units in the sorcerer player's designed force are set aside until they may be brought into play by a *Summon* spell (see 3.2).

2.3 — Wizard-player force placement: The wizard player places all of his units on the board in "E" hexes; the sorcerer player may examine the counters after they are placed on their respective "E" hexes to determine the makeup of the wizard player's force. The wizard player may keep all of his units in one group (entering through only one "E" hex) or he may divide them into as many as six groups (one group entering through each "E" hex). All of the wizard-player units committed to enter through a given "E" hex are considered to be located in that hex before movement begins, but since "E" hexes are considered off the board (see 1.1), stacking limitations (see 3.3) do not need to be met until wizard units actually enter the valley and complete one turn of movement. No wizard unit spends movement points until it enters its first hex of clear terrain; placement in an "E" hex does not constitute movement.

The Game-Turn

3.0 — A game-turn consists of a sorcerer-player phase followed by a wizard-player phase. Neither player engages in any activity during the opposing player's phase. Each phase consists of five segments which must be carried out in strict sequence:

Sorcerer-player phase:

1. Wandering-orc check (3.1)
2. *Summon* spells (3.2)
3. Movement (3.3)
4. *Fireball* spells (3.4)
5. Combat (3.5)

Wizard-player phase:

1. *Haste* spells (3.6)
2. Movement (3.3)
3. *Fireball* spells (3.4)
4. Combat (3.5)
5. Haunt check (3.7)

3.1 — Wandering-orc check: At the beginning of each game-turn, the sorcerer player rolls one die. On a result of 1 or 2, the sorcerer player receives 1 orc counter as reinforcements for that turn. On a result of 3 or higher, 2 new orc units enter the game. Wandering-orc units are immediately placed on the board in either (1) any empty clear-terrain hex adjacent to any sorcerer-player unit, or (2) any hex already containing orc units (up to a limit of four units per hex). Wandering-orc units are not taken from the sorcerer player's designed force; they are taken either from the supply of unused counters or from orc units previously eliminated.

The supply of reinforcements is limited by the counter-mix; if all 20 orc units are already on the board, the sorcerer player can receive no reinforcements

until the turn after one or more orc units are eliminated.

3.2 — *Summon* spells: This type of magic is only usable by sorcerer units, and is one of the two spells sorcerers may cast; however, each sorcerer unit can only cast one spell per turn.

A *summon* spell is the only means by which the demons, orcs, and ghouls in the sorcerer player's designed force may be brought into play. (The sorcerer player should conceal from his opponent the identity of these units until they enter the game.) Each type of unit may be summoned only at, and into, hexes occupied by one type of haunt: Demons may be summoned only at temples, orcs only at ruins, and ghouls only at crypts.

For the spell to be effective, three conditions must be met:

(1) A sorcerer unit must be adjacent to a haunt for which a *summon* spell is to be cast.

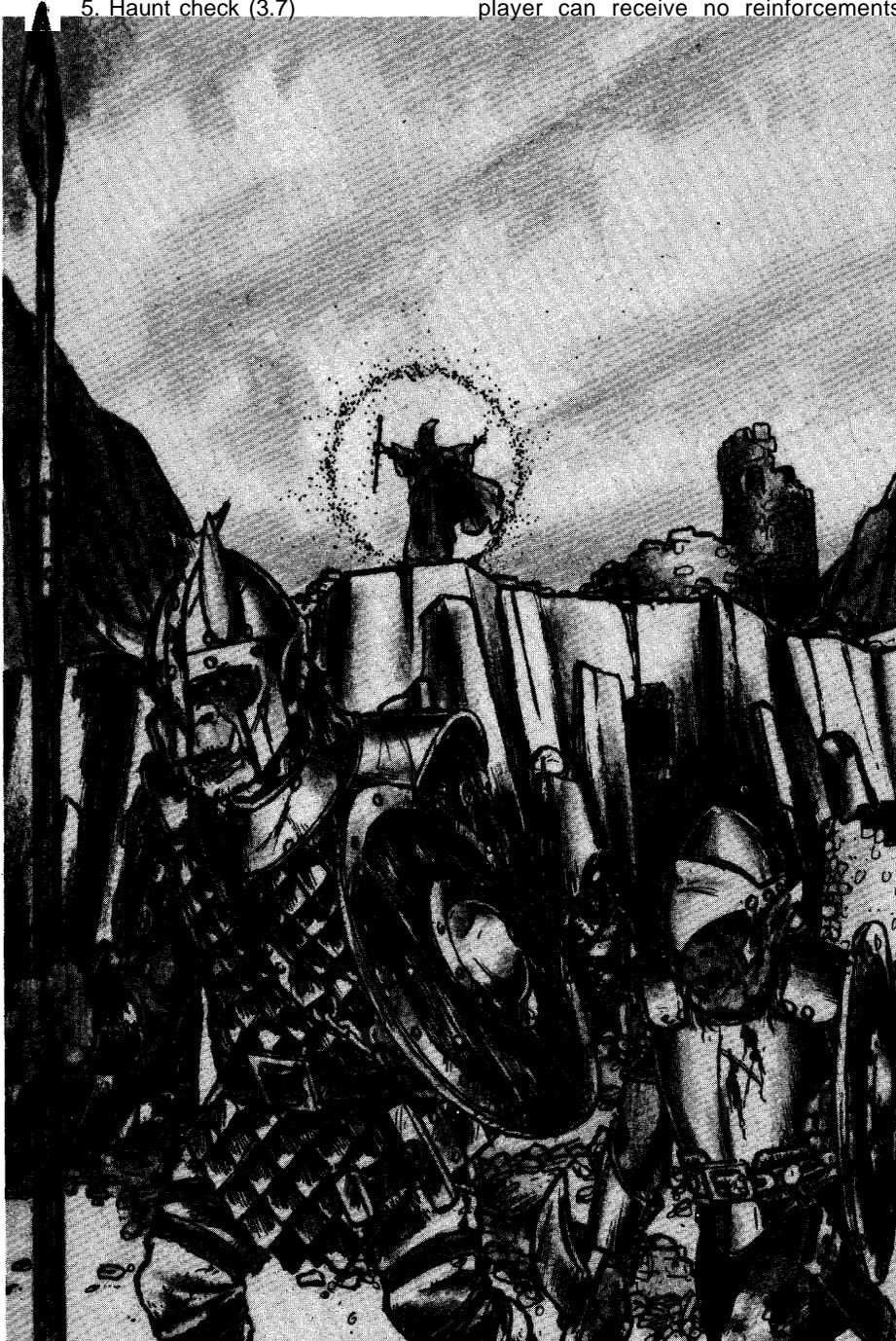
(2) There must be at least 1 unit of the type that can be summoned at that haunt still available in the sorcerer player's designed force.

(3) The hex containing the haunt must be either empty of units or occupied by three or fewer units of the type that can be summoned at the haunt.

For one casting of the spell by a single sorcerer unit, the sorcerer player must first designate the haunt in which the summoning is to take place and the sorcerer unit that is to cast the spell (if more than one is eligible). Then the sorcerer player rolls a die and consults the Summon Table to see whether he may place 2, 3, or 4 of the appropriate units on the board (in the hex of the haunt).

The sorcerer player may bring in fewer units than the number indicated by the table if he so desires. The sorcerer player *must* summon fewer units than the number indicated by the table if either (1) he has an insufficient number of available units of the appropriate type left in his designed force, or (2) to bring in the indicated number would cause five or more units to be stacked in the hex of the haunt. (If the sorcerer player summons fewer units than the number on the table indicates, and it is clearly not due to stacking limits, he need not reveal to the wizard player whether this action was the player's choice or was taken because he has run out of that type of unit.)

Only one *summon* spell may be cast at each haunt per turn. Because this spell can work only if a sorcerer is adjacent to a haunt in this segment (before sorcerer-player movement), it is a good idea for the sorcerer player to place at least some of his sorcerers next to haunts during his original placement of haunts and sorcerers (2.2). Sorcerer units that cast a spell should be inverted immediately, for the rest of the current phase, to remind players that they cannot cast another spell this turn.



3.3 — Movement: The rules governing movement are the same for both players. The Counter Chart shows that barbarians and demons have a movement capability of 6 hexes per turn, and all other units can move up to 4 hexes per turn. Units may be moved into any clear-terrain hex (including a hex containing a haunt) that is not occupied by an enemy unit (there are no "zones of control"). Wizard-player units spend their first movement point when they enter the board from an "E" hex; sorcerer-player units spend their first movement point when they move from their initial placement (for sorcerer units) or when they move away from the haunt in which they were summoned (for demons, orcs, and ghouls). Haunts, of course, can never move, and the wand can only be moved if it is being carried by a wizard-player unit.

Movement is always optional; units cannot "store up" movement points from turn to turn or transfer them from one unit to another.

At the end of a player's movement segment, only units of the same type may occupy the same hex, and there may be no more than 4 units per hex. On the first turn only, sorcerer-player units may not end their movement within 2 hexes of an "E" hex. Units may move freely through hexes containing friendly units, but may not violate end-of-movement stacking restrictions.

3.4 — Fireball spells: The rules governing *fireball* spells are the same for both players. Both wizards and sorcerers may cast *fireball* spells in the appropriate segments of their respective phases. However, neither type of spell-caster can employ more than one spell per turn.

Fireball spells are the only means by which wizard and sorcerer units can attack enemy units; they cannot engage in combat (3.5) like other units. The *fireball* spell has a range of 2 hexes; it can be cast on opposing units in a hex adjacent to the wizard or sorcerer, or on opposing units one hex removed, as long as a two-hex-long path of clear terrain can be traced from the caster to the target. The spell can be cast "over" an adjacent hex, not affecting the units in that hex, if the adjacent hex happens to be in line with the target hex.

To cast the spell for a single sorcerer unit or wizard unit, the phasing player designates the spell-caster and the target hex (which must be done for all *fireball* attacks before any of them can be resolved; see below), and then rolls one die for each unit in the target hex and refers to the Fireball Table to obtain a result for that unit only against that specific attack. For example: If a wizard is casting a *fireball* spell against a stack of three ghouls, each ghoul unit is rolled for to see whether it is eliminated or not. (Obviously, the spell is most useful against



stacks of units, even though it is far from "automatic" that every unit in a stack would be eliminated.) Note that barbarians and demons are the least susceptible to *fireball* attacks, and sorcerers are more vulnerable to an opponent's *fireball* than wizards are.

In either player's appropriate segment, all *fireball* attacks must be designated before the results of any single spell are rolled for. If more than one *fireball* attack is directed against a single target hex, only units that survive the first attack(s) are rolled for when resolving subsequent attacks. For example, if 3 wizards are all casting *fireball* spells against a stack of 4 orcs, the first attack is resolved with three die rolls. If two orcs are eliminated in the first attack, only one die roll is needed to resolve the second attack. If the first two attacks result in the elimination of all three units, the third *fireball* is wasted and cannot be re-directed at a different hex.

Wizards or sorcerers stacked together may cast *fireball* spells at different target hexes. The spell may be cast into or out of hexes containing haunts, but not into or out of "E" hexes. A *fireball* spell has no effect on haunts or on the wand.

3.5 — Combat: The rules governing combat are the same for both players. Combat is always optional on the part of the would-be attacker, and never causes the elimination of an attacking unit. The basic rules concerning combat are these:

An attacking unit (or stack) must be adjacent to a defending unit (or stack) to engage in combat.

All attacks must be designated before any are resolved by rolling on the Combat Table.

Units stacked in the same hex can "split" their attacks against adjacent enemy units in the same or different hexes, but each unit may only attack once per turn.

Units in two separate hexes can combine in a mass attack against one or more units in a single hex.

The same unit may be announced as the object of more than one attack in a given turn; however, if the target unit is eliminated by an earlier attack, subsequent attacks are wasted and cannot be re-directed against a unit which has not been eliminated.

Not all units adjacent to an attacking force need be attacked; one or more of the units in a single hex may be "ignored" during an attack on other units in the same hex.

As shown in the Counter Chart, barbarians and demons each have a combat factor of 2; dwarves, elves, orcs, and ghouls each have a combat factor of 1.

Wizards and sorcerers have a combat factor of ½, but these units may not attack in combat — their factors are used only in figuring odds for combat attacks made against them.

To resolve each attack, the attacking player compares the total of the combat factors of the attacking unit(s) to the total of the combat factors of the defending unit(s), expressing it as a ratio (always rounded down in favor of the defending units). The attacking player then rolls a die, consults the table, and applies the result to the defending units. Attacks at odds greater than 6:1 are treated as 6:1; attacks at odds less than 1:2 are not allowed.

If all the units in a hex are eliminated, any units that attacked that hex (up to four of one type) may advance into the hex vacated by the eliminated units. *Special:* If all units in a hex were eliminated by *fireball* spells in the segment immediately preceding combat, any of the phasing player's units adjacent to the now-vacant hex (up to four of one type) may be moved into the vacant hex; however, units that do this may not attack during the current combat segment.

Each type of wizard-player unit receives a combat bonus against one type of sorcerer-player unit. As noted earlier (3.4), *fireball* spells cast by wizards are especially dangerous to sorcerers. In regular combat, barbarians receive a



bonus vs. demons, dwarves have a bonus vs. orcs, and elves have a bonus vs. ghouls. Whenever all the attacking and defending units in a single attack (made by the wizard player) are of the specified types (barbarians vs. demons, dwarves vs. orcs, or elves vs. ghouls), the attack result is read as if the odds were one step better (for the attacker) than they actually are (an attack at 1:2 becomes 1:1; 1:1 becomes 2:1, etc.).

The combat bonus does not work both ways; sorcerer-player units always attack at the regular odds. The combat bonus does not apply if two different types of wizard-player units are participating in the same attack.

Some examples of the calculation of combat odds are given in the next column. It should be noted that there is never more than one type of unit defending against an attack, because each attack is made against one or more units in the same hex, and stacking restrictions do not allow different types of units to be stacked in the same hex. By referring to the combat factors and combat bonuses listed in the Counter Chart, players should see why the odds listed for each attack are appropriate.

Attacker(s)	Defender(s)	Odds
2 elves	2 ghouls	2:1
2 ghouls	2 elves	1:1
1 elf, 1 dwarf	2 ghouls	1:1
3 barbarians	3 sorcerers	4:1
2 barbarians	3 sorcerers	2:1 ¹
4 wizards	1 orc	— ²
1 dwarf	3 ghouls	— ³
4 barbarians	1 orc	6:1 ⁴
3 orcs	2 elves	1:1 ¹
2 demons	1 dwarf	4:1
1 demon	2 wizards	2:1
1 demon	2 barbarians	1:2

¹ — rounded in favor of defender
² — not allowed; wizards can't attack in combat
³ — not allowed; odds are less than 1:2
⁴ — best ratio possible, even though actual odds are 8:1

3.6 — Haste spells: This type of magic is only usable by wizard units, and is one of the two spells wizards may cast; however, each wizard unit can only cast one spell per turn.

A *Haste* spell enables a wizard to give a single stack of wizard-player units (up to four of the same type in the same hex) a bonus of 2, 4, or 6 hexes to the movement

capability of each of the target units for the movement segment that immediately follows the *haste* spell segment. The target hex must be the same hex the spell-caster is occupying (if the spell-caster and/or other wizards are being *hasted*), or an adjacent hex containing friendly units. Wizards stacked in the same hex may cast *haste* spells on units in separate hexes.

No units can be under the effect of more than one *haste* spell per turn, but the same target unit(s) can be the object of more than one casting of the *haste* spell. For example: If the result of the first casting is a movement bonus of 2 or 4 for the affected units, a subsequent *haste* spell cast on the same units in the same segment might yield a higher result, and in that case the higher result would apply. If the result of the first casting is a movement bonus of 6, subsequent spells cast on the same units are effectively wasted and cannot be applied to a different target. The counters printed +2, +4, and +6 are used to keep track of the movement bonus a certain unit or stack will receive in the ensuing movement phase.

To cast the spell, the wizard player first

designates the casting wizard and the hex whose units are to be *hasted*. This designation must be announced for each intended casting of the spell before any of the spells are resolved. Then the wizard player rolls a die and consults the Haste Table for each casting, in any order the wizard player desires.

Units in a *hasted* stack need not move to the same destination hex. At the conclusion of movement, stacking restrictions must be observed. Since this spell segment comes immediately before the wizard-player movement segment, the *haste* spell is useful to give wizard-player units "long-range strike capabilities."

Wizard units that cast *haste* spells should be inverted immediately, for the rest of the current phase, as a reminder to players that they cannot cast another spell this turn.

Special: A wizard in an "E" hex at the start of the wizard player's first turn may cast a *haste* spell on up to four units of the same type to be entered through the same "E" hex.

3.7 — **Haunt check:** This final segment of the wizard player's phase comes into play only when at least one haunt is currently occupied by wizard-player units. A haunt check is not conducted if the wizard-player unit(s) is simply moved through a hex containing a haunt.

Each occupied haunt is "destroyed" (the counter is removed from play) and the sorcerer player must reveal the location of the wand if the haunt that contained it was destroyed. (Players, of course, will never cheat; in any event, the sorcerer player could be required to produce the notation he made during set-up (see 2.2), after the game is over.)

If a destroyed haunt did contain the wand, the wand counter is brought into play and stacked with the unit(s) that occupied the hiding place.

Note: If the wizard player eliminates all haunts of a certain type, the sorcerer player cannot *summon* any more units of the type corresponding to that type of haunt (see 3.2). Haunt checks can be conducted, and haunts can be destroyed for this purpose, even after the wand has been discovered.

The Wand

4.0 — The counter of *Arrakhar's Wand* can only be moved if it is stacked with at least one wizard-player unit (not necessarily a wizard). It can be moved by one carrier (one wizard-player unit or stack) each turn, when that unit or stack moves. The wand may be "handed off" from a stationary carrier to a unit or stack which is moving through the carrier's hex, but only if the stationary carrier has not already moved in that turn. (The unit or stack receiving the wand becomes the new carrier, and must have movement

capability left so that it can leave the hex where the transfer took place.)

The wand's power will function only for wizard units — not *any* wizard-player unit, although they can all be carriers. A wizard unit or stack possessing the wand can cast a single "extra" spell — in effect, a more potent version of the *fireball* spell — once per turn during the wizard-player's fireball-spell phase. The effects of the *wand fireball* spell are rolled for on the Wand Table instead of the Fireball Table. Even if the wand is carried by a stack of wizards, only one *wand fireball* spell may be cast per turn.

Sorcerer-player units can retake the wand after it is discovered by eliminating all the wizard-player units in the hex containing the wand, and then occupying that hex (possibly by an advance after combat) with at least one sorcerer-player unit. The sorcerer player cannot move or use the wand, but can cluster units in and around the hex it occupies to keep it away from wizard-player units. If the wand is in an otherwise empty hex, it is simply left there until other units enter the hex.

The wizard player wins by carrying the wand into an "E" hex and thereby escaping to safety. The sorcerer player wins by eliminating all wizard-player units, keeping the wand in his clutches even if he can't do a thing with it.

Notes on Strategy and Tactics

Although there is no turn limit to the game, it is obvious that the wizard player must achieve victory before the sorcerer player's constant reinforcements make such a result impossible. Usually the sorcerer player will place the haunts in the shape of a rough circle around the board. After the wizard player places his forces at "E" hexes, the sorcerer player will summon demons, orcs and ghouls to block off access to the haunts and the vulnerable sorcerer units. (Even a single sorcerer-player unit can block an advance, as a sacrifice to buy time for summoning and effectively deploying other sorcerer-player units). If the wizard player cannot establish an edge in eliminated units early on, he will find victory difficult to achieve.

Alternatively, the sorcerer player might place haunts in a tight pattern, intending to hole up in a corner of the valley and fight a war of attrition. Or, he might spread haunts and sorcerers far and wide, turning the contest into more of a bluffing match.

If the sorcerer player, by an exaggerated deployment of units, clearly indicates the haunt in which the wand is hidden — and such is actually the case — it is possible that the wand will not come into play until (or unless) the larger issue

is already decided; such a "last stand" defense will usually result in a clear victory for one side or the other through decimation of the loser's units. (But what if the wand turns out to be in one of the haunts that isn't even defended, and which the wizard player hasn't bothered to check?)

Much of the tactical approach to a game is dictated by the initial force design. Both the heavy-duty shock troops (barbarians and demons) and the fireball artillery (wizards and sorcerers) are attractive, but also expensive. The other units can be useful for blocking avenues of attack; this becomes especially important as more units are eliminated.

Variations

1. Short Scenario. Initial force points: Wizard 40, Sorcerer 44. The sorcerer player is only required to have four of each type of unit in his force design; the wizard player is only required to have three of each type of unit in his force design. All other rules of the Basic Scenario apply.

2. Long Scenario. Initial force points: Wizard 90, Sorcerer 100. The sorcerer player is required to have nine of each type of unit in his force design; the wizard player is required to have six of each type of unit in his force design. The sorcerer player places all haunts (three of each type) on the board. All other rules of the Basic Scenario apply.

3. Advanced Play. This rule change can be applied to all scenarios. In designing forces, players are not required to have a minimum number of units of a given type. They are restricted only by the countermix and the point limit of the scenario being played, whether it is one given here or one of the players' devising.

4. Handicapping. Reduce the number of force-design points available to the more experienced player (for a shorter game), or increase the number of force-design points available to the less experienced player (for a longer game). If either the wizard-player side or the sorcerer-player side wins too often for a given set of players, adjust the design points available to the sorcerer player up or down in increments of two points.

Credits

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Inspiration: Kimmel of Cimmeria (Scourge of the Western Coast)

SEQUENCE OF PLAY

Set-up:

1. Design forces (secretly)
2. Sorcerer-player unit placement
3. Wizard-player unit placement

Game turn:

Sorcerer-player phase

1. Wandering-orc check
2. *Summon* spells
3. Movement
4. *Fireball* spells
5. Combat

Wizard-player phase

1. *Haste* spells
2. Movement
3. *Fireball* spells
4. Combat
5. Haunt check

FIREBALL TABLE

Result when used against:

Die roll	Barbarian, Demon	Wizard, Dwarf, Elf, Orc, Ghoul	Sorcerer
1	---	---	---
2	---	---	---
3	---	---	---
4	---	---	E
5	r	E	E
6	E	E	E

E: Unit eliminated

r: Roll again; no effect on 1-3, unit eliminated on 4-6

---: No effect

WAND TABLE

Result when used against:

Die roll	Demon	Orc, Ghoul	Sorcerer
1	---	---	---
2	---	---	E
3	---	E	E
4	E	E	E
5	E	E	E
6	E	E	E

E: Unit eliminated

---: No effect

COMBAT TABLE

Combat odds:

Die roll	1:2	1:1	2:1	3:1	4:1	5:1	6:1
1	---	---	---	---	---	---	r
2	---	---	---	---	---	E	E
3	---	---	---	---	E	E	E
4	---	---	---	E	E	E	E
5	---	---	E	E	E	E	E
6	r	E	E	E	E	E	E

E: Unit eliminated

r: Roll again; no effect on 1-3, unit eliminated on 4-6

---: No effect

SUMMON TABLE

Die roll	Number summoned
1	2
2	3
3	3
4	4
5	4
6	4

HASTE TABLE

Die roll	Movement bonus
1	2
2	4
3	4
4	6
5	6
6	6

COUNTER CHART

Unit	Move	Combat	cost	Summoned in:	Combat bonus vs.:
Wizard	4	½	3	---	sorcerer (with fireball)
Barbarian	6	2	2	---	demon (in combat)
Dwarf	4	1	1	---	orc (in combat)
Elf	4	1	1	---	ghoul (in combat)
Sorcerer	4	½	3	---	---
Demon	6	2	2	temple	---
Orc	4	1	1	ruins	---
Ghoul	4	1	1	crypt	---



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LEOMONDS TINY ADVENTURE

Let them entertain you

by Lenard Lakofka



Entertainers are members of a complex character class with three major sub-classifications. The entertainer, to begin his or her life of giving performances, needs very low minimum ability scores. However, once he or she specializes in one of the available sub-classifications, then requirements become stiffer. Listed below is the minimum score needed in each ability for a Stagehand, each of the three sub-classifications (Juggler, Acrobat, Troubadour) that become available to the character once the Stagehand becomes a Performer, and the two high-level special categories (Showman and Entertainer).

	Str	Int	Wis	Dex	Con	Cha
Stagehand	6	9	6	10	10	9
Juggler	9	9	13	16	12	9
Acrobat	13	9	6	15	15	9
Troubadour	9	15	6	10	10	15
Showman	as per the sub-groups selected, (see text)					
Entertainer	13	15	13	16	15	15

Entertainers can be of any alignment; in cases of doubt, or where random determination is desired, use this table:

01-40 pure neutral	89-92 lawful good
41-52 neutral good	93-95 chaotic good
53-64 lawful neutral	96-98 lawful evil
65-76 chaotic neutral	99-00 chaotic evil
77-88 neutral evil	

Race, secondary profession, and the makeup of the party can influence the determination of alignment in some cases.

Weapons and armor

Stagehands are allowed leather armor. No sub-class is ever allowed scale, ring, plate, padded, studded leather, or splint. A Troubadour may wear chain mail and may carry a shield when adventuring. A Juggler may wear magical chain that leaves the arms bare. An Acrobat cannot wear chain of any type. All sub-classes may use *bracers of defense*, or any of the various

magical jewelry (brooches, talismans, necklaces, rings, etc.) that offers protection. Troubadours may wear cloaks and robes if they wish, but garments such as these would inhibit Jugglers and Acrobats.

The first weapon of a member of the entertainer class is usually either a dagger or a club, with some few knowing the use of the quarter staff. One new weapon is gained at third level and another at seventh level. Double-class entertainers (see hereafter) may add a second new weapon at third and again at seventh level, and those who seek to advance all the way to becoming an Entertainer get a third new weapon at both third and seventh levels.

The weapons made available to the entertainer as he or she begins advancing in one of the major sub-divisions are as follows:

Juggler: Any hand-held throwing weapon (hand axe, dagger, hammer, spear, javelin, dart, etc.) will be taken at third level. At seventh level, he or she may choose another throwing weapon or select a short sword, long sword, broad sword or quarter staff.

Acrobat: A member of this sub-group may select any of the following: short sword, hand axe (hand-to-hand or thrown), dagger (hand-to-hand or thrown), dart, hammer, or horsemen's mace.

Troubadour: A member of this sub-group may use a scimitar, morning star, flail, hammer, mace, quarter staff, long bow, short bow, or any type of sword except a bastard sword or two-handed sword.

Magic items usable

The entertainer may use any magical weapon that his or her sub-class may know, as well as the magical armor and jewelry described above, including all types of magic rings except those usable only by magic-users. An entertainer can use any potion allowed to all classes. He or she can use scrolls of

THE ENTERTAINER CHARACTER CLASS GROUP

Experience points	Level	Dice for accumulated hit points (see text)	Level titles for:		
			Jugglers	Acrobats	Troubadours ¹
0— 850	1	1d4	Stagehand	-----	-----
851 — 2,250	2	+1d4	Performer	-----	-----
2,251— 4,600	3	+1d6 or +1	Catcher	Balancer	Storyteller/Joker
4,601— 10,000	4	+1d6 or +1	Blade	Athlete	Rhymer/Player
10,001— 17,500	5	+1d6 or +1	Manipulator	Gymnast	Singer/Musician
17,501— 37,500	6	+1d8 or +1	Deluder	Trapezist	Poet/Clown
37,501— 75,000	7	+1d8 or +1	Deceiver	Aerialist	Actor/Mime
75,001—200,000	8	+1d8 or +1	Trickster	Tumbler	Star/Jester/Fool
200,001—400,000	9	+1d8	Juggler	Acrobat	Troubadour
400,001—600,000	10	+1d10	----- "double title" of Showman/Showwoman (for any sub-group) -----		
600,001 +	11	+1d10	----- Entertainer (for any sub-group) -----		

¹ -A troubadour sometimes prefers to be more serious in his profession and thus will elect to be more of an actor than a comic. A choice of titles is thus provided for troubadours of a given level.

protection, but not scrolls of spells. An entertainer can freely use magical clothing that is not specified for use by only one class (i.e., boots, gauntlets, girdles and helms). Cloaks and robes will prevent juggling and acrobatic functions and must be removed first before the performance of the function will be allowed.

Entertainers can use magical books, tomes, and manuals that affect ability scores, but not those that affect levels of experience or allow the construction of golems. They cannot use scrying devices of any kind. In general, they can only use items that can easily be transported by themselves alone (in a backpack, hand-carried, in a pouch, etc.). Large items will be forsaken and will usually not operate for them in any case.

Combat abilities

Entertainers fight as thieves and obtain the saving throws and magic resistances of a magic-user in general melee. However, each sub-class has some advantages in particular situations:

In regular hand-to-hand melee, an Acrobat gains a +2 bonus to armor class for each point of dexterity above 14.

In weaponless combat, an Acrobat gains a bonus of +2% per level above 2nd, on both the "Base Score to Hit" table and the particular Result table being used.

When firing a bow, a Troubadour uses the fighter table instead of the thief table for "to hit" determination.

If a Juggler is the target of a thrown weapon and sees it coming, he or she has a 15% chance per level above 2nd to catch the weapon. An Acrobat in the same situation gets a +2 bonus to AC for each point of dexterity above 14.

If a Juggler is the target of a fired arrow or crossbow bolt and sees it coming, he or she has a 5% chance per level above 2nd to deflect the arrow or bolt. An Acrobat in the same situation gets a +2 bonus to AC for each point of dexterity above 14.

If a Juggler throws a hand-held weapon with which he or she is trained, he or she receives a +1 bonus "to hit" for each level above 2nd.

If a Juggler is subjected to any illusion, including invisibility, at a range of 10 feet or closer, he or she has a 7% chance per level above 2nd to disbelieve and discover the illusion, in addition to the character's usual saving throw.

If a Juggler is attacked by telekinesis or levitation, he or she gains a magic resistance of 5% per level above 2nd. For an Acrobat in the same situation, the magic resistance is 15% per level above 2nd.

If a Juggler puts on or is forced to put on a pair of cursed gauntlets, the character has a 15% chance per level above 2nd of being able to remove the gauntlets — but only one such attempt can be made per day. An Acrobat in the same situation has a 5% chance per level above 2nd to remove the gauntlets.

If an Acrobat puts on or is forced to put on a pair of cursed boots, the character has a 15% chance per level above 2nd of being able to remove the boots — but again, only one such attempt can be made per day.

A Troubadour who is the target of a charm, command, or other control-type magic gains a bonus to his or her saving throw of +1 per level above 2nd.

A Troubadour who is the intended target of any sort of scrying, or a spell such as *ESP*, gains a magic resistance of 8% per level above 2nd against such attempts.

A Troubadour gains +3 on all allowed saving throws whenever the character is the target of an attack involving psionics.

If a Troubadour puts on or is forced to put on cursed jewelry, he or she has a 4% chance per level above 2nd of being able to remove the jewelry (as above, one attempt per day).

A Troubadour has a 3% chance per level above 2nd of being able to detect lie whenever a falsehood is told to the character, but only one such attempt can be made for each falsehood.

If a Troubadour is given any "fake" item (paste jewelry, fool's gold, an item with an illusion cast on it, a magic item drained of all its charges, etc.), the character has a 7% chance per level above 2nd to know that the item is not what it might appear to be — but only one such attempt can be made for each item.

Races of entertainers and allowed multi-classes

Humans, elven, and half-elven entertainers may progress to the rank of Entertainer (i.e., 9th level Juggler/9th level Acrobat/9th level Troubadour). Dwarves may be Jugglers and/or Acrobats but not Troubadours; they can advance to the rank of Showman (9th level Juggler/9th level Acrobat). Gnomes can advance to 7th level in any single entertainer profession (Juggler, Acrobat, or Troubadour). Halflings make good Jugglers (they may rise up to 9th level) and fair Troubadours (5th level maximum). Half-orcs cannot be entertainers at all due to their low charisma and dexterity.

An entertainer who plans to become a double-classed entertainer or a triple-classed entertainer (perhaps with the goal of becoming an Entertainer and thus an 11th level character — see hereafter) cannot be multi-classed in any other profession. He or she may give up entertaining and take up another class (as is allowed to any human) as permitted by alignment. An entertainer cannot become a bard or vice versa.

Demi-human entertainers may be multi-classed as follows: Halflings may be Juggler/thieves or Juggler/fighters. In a band of halflings, there may be a non-player character Troubadour/fighter or Troubadour/druid. Elves and half-elves may be Juggler/thieves, Juggler/assassins, Acrobat/thieves, Acrobat/assassins, Juggler/magic-users, or Troubadour/druids. Gnomes may become Juggler/illusionists or Acrobat/assassins. Some few Troubadour/fighters might be found as non-player characters in a gnome band. Dwarves can be Juggler/thieves or Acrobat/assassins. No other multi-class combination is open to a dwarven entertainer.

Hirelings and henchmen

Entertainers can be hired by, or become the henchmen of, members of any class except bards, clerics and monks. Troubadours, especially, are common henchmen of fighters, rangers and paladins. Acrobats and Jugglers are common henchmen of magic-users, illusionists, thieves and assassins. As a henchman the entertainer might become an advisor as well.

Entertainers cannot employ henchmen until they are 7th level themselves. The characters who might come to them are entertainers of the same sub-class, illusionists, thieves, assassins, fighters, and perhaps druids. Any of the above classes might be hirelings of an entertainer as well. A paladin, ranger, cleric, monk, or bard will not become a henchman or hireling of an entertainer. A lawful magic-user will not join an entertainer, but a chaotic one might.

Benefits of upper level entertainers

Upon reaching seventh level, an entertainer may buy or build a small theater or large tent. He or she may hire other entertainers to perform therein. Entertainers of seventh level or higher may charge an admission of 1 s.p. per level for a performance, and levels are cumulative so that a Juggler/Troubadour (9th level in two professions — also called a Showman) could charge 18 s.p. per head for his or her performance. Additional acts on the bill can add to the price of the ticket, of course.

Once a theater is established, the entertainer will find his advertising costs (see hereafter) cut by one-third, and his accumulated props and sets will allow his "success money" (see hereafter) to be reduced by one-fourth.

Giving performances

All entertainers desire to perform before an audience. Those having bare minimum ability scores can never achieve third level or higher in any sub-division. They might, however, still be associated with the theater, acting or doing some type of performing, but they will never achieve any great success. Stagehands and Performers are just beginning to learn their art and haven't decided on a specialty yet. They gain none of the bonuses that apply to third level or higher in the sub-divisions.

A Stagehand or a Performer might know how to carry a tune as a singer, play an instrument (just barely), dance a little (only one or two types of steps), or perform the basics of juggling

three balls (dropping one every now and then). He or she will know one weapon and will have no basic bonus skills, except for the minor abilities of *hide in shadows* and move silently as a first-level thief.

If a Performer has the minimum requirements for a profession in one or more of the sub-divisions (Juggler, Acrobat, Troubadour), then he or she may begin to learn that trade from another who already knows it and is at least fourth level. This training for specialization will require 2-5 months, and the character in training can do no adventuring during that period.

Members of the entertainer class can never gain a new level of experience without giving a performance for an audience of two dozen or more spectators. Failure to give this performance will negate the opportunity to go on to a new level, regardless of experience points gained in adventuring and regardless of the number of small tricks, jokes, acts, or dances the character might perform in lieu of the "level performance."

When an entertainer gives a "level performance," he or she must obtain the support (via applause, laughs, thrown coins, etc.) of the majority of the audience. An entertainer who does not receive praise, accolades, money, etc., from at least half the members of his or her audience has failed and will lose enough experience points to place him or her at the midpoint of the next lower level.

When giving or preparing to give a "level performance," the entertainer must abide by certain restrictions and procedures:

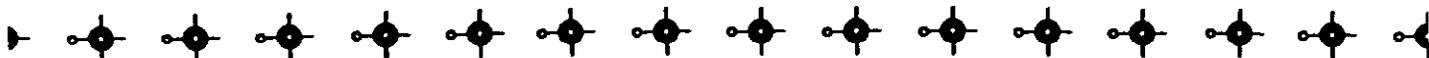
1. The entertainer must have at least 70% of the experience points needed to advance to the next level; for instance, an Actor (7th level) who wishes to become a Star (8th level) must have 70% of 75,001 experience points, or at least 52,501, before he gives this "level performance." He or she can wait until the entire 75,001 points is accumulated if he or she desires, but until the performance is done successfully he or she will remain 7th level even if more experience is gained. If the performance is completed successfully before the entertainer has enough

experience points to qualify for the next higher level, then the entertainer will be able to advance to the next level as soon as the required number of experience points are accumulated. Note: An entertainer could give regular performances using old material, sets, etc. at any time, but no experience is gained for such efforts (although they might bring in some revenue); only "new" performances count toward the awarding of experience.

2. The performer's audience of intelligent beings must number 24 or more.

3. The performer sums the levels (hit dice) of the audience and divides this number by his or her current level in the profession for which he is giving the level performance. The result is always rounded up in favor of the audience. (Zero-level figures and 1-1 hit die intelligent monsters count as one hit die/first level.) For example: Eleven zero-level humans, ten first-level humans, six second-level humans, three third-level humans, and a fifth-level gnome fighter/thief show up for the performance. They add up to $(11 \times 1) + (10 \times 1) + (6 \times 2) + (3 \times 3) + (1 \times (5+5)) = 52$ levels. His current level is 7 (Actor); 52 divided by 7 = 7.42, which is rounded up to 8. This means the performer must roll 8 or higher on a d20 for this audience to like the performance. If 7 or less is rolled, the Actor goes back to being a Poet (one level lower) at half of the required experience points to hold the level — in this case, 27,501. The performer can try to qualify as an Actor again since he or she has more than 70% of 37,501 points, or 26,251. Of course, he or she must also rise to 37,501 points, as well as succeed in a new level performance, to again be the level of an Actor.

4. A performer obtains 25 experience points per level of the audience if successful. In the example given, this comes to $(25 \times 52) = 1,300$. But being successful does not mean that he or she becomes 8th level at that moment in time. The performer would add the 1,300 to his or her current experience point total, and if that brings it to 75,001 or more, then the new level is gained. In any event, the Level Performance is now out of the



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way, so that when the required amount of experience is gained, the figure can become 8th level.

The performance is always given at the level the character is currently at in the appropriate profession. An entertainer who has already earned the rank of Juggler (9th level) might wish to learn acting (being a Troubadour) as well. He or she must train for 1-4 months and then he or she will become a 3rd level Troubadour (Storyteller)/9th level Juggler (Juggler). To become 4th level as a Troubadour, he or she will have to give a level performance using 3 as the denominator in the given equation. He or she cannot use juggling ability during such a performance or it will automatically fail.

A Storyteller who fails to become a Rhymer (4th level) is allowed one more try. If he or she fails that try, then advancement as a Troubadour is forever closed. This is also true of a Rhymer who tries to become a Singer (5th level), fails, and drops back to 3rd level. Now he or she tries for 4th level again and fails. If he or she fails one more time, Actor is closed to him or her. The only exception to these rules is for a 3rd level figure who fails in his performance for fourth level; he does not fall to 2nd level, but instead goes back to 2,251 experience points in that profession and must work back up to 3,221 (70% of 4,601) before the performance for fourth level can be tried again.

The Great Performance

When an entertainer is ready to become 9th level for the first time in any of the three sub-classes, he or she must give a Great Performance. This Great Performance must have a minimum audience of 36. His denominator in the calculation will, of course, be 8.

When an entertainer who has already become 9th level in one sub-class is ready to give a performance for ninth level in a second sub-class, another Great Performance is required. If this is successful, the character becomes 10th level for the purposes of "to hit" determination in melee, for saving throws,

and for the special abilities allowed to each sub-class of entertainer.

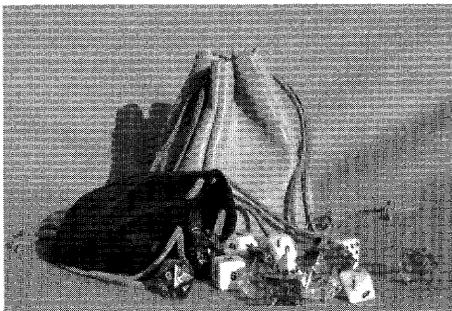
The Command Performance

When an entertainer who has gained 9th level in two sub-classes (a 10th level Showman) is ready for his or her last performance for ninth level, it is called a Command Performance. In this case, the audience must number 48 or more people, and at least one of them must be 9th level. The calculation is as before: The performer sums the levels of the 48 or more people attending and divides by 8. If he or she makes this roll on d20, he or she is an Entertainer (11th level) in all three sub-classes and thereafter can draw on all of his or her abilities at any time he or she desires. All "to hit" figures and saving throws, plus special abilities, are calculated as for an 11th level character. If he or she fails in this Command Performance, there is no second chance: the performer drops back to 7th level in that last sub-class and can never again try to become an Entertainer, though he or she is still a 9/9/7 level character, is called a Showman (or Showwoman) and earns "to hit" abilities, etc., as for a 10th level character.

The entertainer, assuming that he or she never fails in a performance in the quest to become an 11th level Entertainer, would have to make performances for advancement from level 3-4, 4-5, 5-6, 6-7, and 7-8 in three sub-classes, for a total of 15 level performances. These would usually be called and advertised as, for instance, the "Fifth Level Performance for the Great Juggler Harvey," meaning he is trying to go from 4th to 5th level as a Juggler. The entertainer must make two Great Performances when he tries for 9th level for the first and second times. Then he must give one Command Performance to become 9th level in all three professions and be counted as an 11th level Entertainer. (He would charge, usually, $9 + 9 + 9 = 27$ s.p. maximum for later performances, but many Entertainers charge 2 g.p. per head for a performance if they have their own

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the result is only 20. So far the advertising has cost the performer 180 g.p. He gives the show, but cannot use it as his Level Performance since 24 spectators are not present. He spends 180 g.p. more to advertise for another three days. The DM rolls 6d8 and this time gets a result of 38. According to the stipulation given above, 10 people from the first audience will also show up, yielding a packed house of 48. The entertainer must go on, even though his chance of giving a successful Level Performance under those conditions is greatly diminished from what it would be if only the required minimum of 24 people were present.

theater.) Naturally, if the entertainer botches a level performance he will have to give two performances to make it up. (Exception, as noted before: If he tries to go from 3rd to 4th and fails then he does not have to perform again to regain 3rd level.)

Obtaining an audience

The entertainer cannot cheat in his attempt to stack the audience in his or her favor. He or she must advertise in pubs, inns, via town criers, with handbills, etc., that he or she will give a level performance, Great Performance, or Command Performance. Advertising must begin at least three days before the event. The event must be in a town, at a reasonable time, and in a safe place. The advertising cost is 60 g.p. per day. This outlay of (at least) 180 g.p. can be cut by one third (from 180 to 120 g.p., in this example) if the entertainer already has his own theater. He or she must provide enough room for double the number of people required to see the performance. Excess people up to the capacity of the room/hall/arena cannot be turned away. People who come with money in hand must be let in, whether they are peasant or king. The theater management (perhaps the entertainer himself) does have the right to forbid drunks and to stop hecklers and rowdy behavior in the audience.

The DM will roll 6d8 for a level performance, 9d8 for a Great Performance and 8d12 for a Command Performance to determine the number of people who show up. If the size of the audience falls short of the required 24, 36, or 48, then a show must still go on that night (no disappointing those who do show up), and the performer must advertise for three more days and again attempt to stage the required level, Great, or Command Performance. However, in such a case, half of the number of people who showed up the first time will come back for the second show, in addition to the new audience. Example: A character is to give a level performance. He provides room for 48 spectators, as required (even though only 24 have to attend for the level performance to qualify), and the DM rolls 6d8 but

Race and type of audience members

If an audience is made up of a sizable percentage of some race or type of creature, this will slightly skew the result. Given in the following list is the minimum number of a certain race or type necessary to cause an effect and the result for each member of the race. For instance, if at least five elves are at a performance, all of them will tend to laugh easily and applaud often. Count the elves as one level lower than they really are even if this means "zeroing out" first-level elves. Naturally, since even "zero level" elves are present, they do count toward the total required audience. Second-level elves would count as first level; an elf who is third level in two professions would count as one fifth-level character instead of sixth level as usual. Fewer than five elves will not have the group effect of his or her peers and will not be counted as one level lower.

Given below is each race or type of creature for which adjustments would be made, followed by a number in parentheses which is the minimum number of that type that must be present to affect the adjustment, and details of the adjustment that applies in such cases:

Elf (5) — Elves will be one level lower than they actually are; i.e., an easy audience to please.

Dwarf (4) — Dwarves don't laugh at much. Count each as one level higher. A tough audience.

Gnome (any) — Same as humans.

Halfling (3) — Halflings laugh at almost anything and are easily enraptured. "Zero out" any halfling regardless of level.

Humanoids of up to 3 HD (4) — Stupid and dour, they will miss the point of a story or miss a punch line. Virtually everything goes over their heads. Count as double their hit dice in levels.

Dragon (1) — Dragons love entertainment. They are more gullible than halflings. "Zero them out," and subtract 1 from the audience level total for each of the dragon's age levels.

Ogre and giant (1) — Usually not too bright, they count as 2 levels higher each.

Minotaur (1) — Each counts as a 12th-level figure — they have no sense of humor at all!

Treant (1) — Count each as two levels higher than actual. They would like to laugh, but it all happens too quickly for them — they get the joke three days later!

Undead (1) — You've got to be kidding! Triple the hit dice of any undead in the audience.

Note: Evil humanoids, ogres, giants, minotaurs, undead, dragons, etc., if they dominate or control the audience might eat the entertainer if he or she fails to please them. Any entertainer giving his level performance to a band of ogres has got a lot of moxie — and no brains at all!

Making the performance a success

An entertainer can make a level performance more likely to be well received. He or she can spend additional gold pieces to hire backup singers, more musicians, extra props, lavish sets, new material, etc. For every 100 g.p. invested in making the show grander, the entertainer may add +1 to the required d20 roll for success. But alas, for every 100 g.p. added, he is detracting from his own potential gain in experience points, so that the 100 g.p. must be converted directly to experience points (one for one) and subtracted from the experience points he would normally gain for the performance. For the performance to be a success, he must gain some experience, thus limiting the amount of gold he can pour in for extra trappings. Example: A Singer (5th level) is about to give his level performance to become a Poet. He posts the proper advertisements and sends out the proper street criers for an investment of 180 g.p. The night of the performance arrives and, much to his sorrow, instead of 24 low-level figures arriving (the "perfect" audience), 42 people arrive. Many of them are second level, a few are third level — and the mayor himself, who is seventh level, is also in attendance. The entertainer sums the crowd to get a total level figure of 78. Divided by his level (5) and rounded up, he obtains

16 as his required saving roll. He would gain $78 \times 25 = 1,950$ experience points if he went on stage right now. However, he could invest some money to lower his roll for success. Let's say he will spend 1,200 g.p. to make the production truly lavish. Now he need only roll a 4 or better (counting the +12 bonus) to succeed. He would then obtain $1,950 - 1,200 = 750$ experience points for the successful performance.

Important: The performer can never make the performance a sure thing. If he or she rolls a natural 1 on the success roll for a level performance, then he has dropped the items he was juggling, forgotten the punch line of a big joke, sung off key or fallen off the stage in a difficult jump; just as a roll of "1" on a saving throw is always a failure, a natural 1 on the performance success roll means he or she has blown it regardless of the extra gold that was spent. A Great Performance will always fail on a natural 1 or 2. A Command Performance will always fail on a natural 1, 2 or 3.

Entertainers' hit points

Entertainers begin with one four-sided die for hit points. They may add a bonus for constitution of 15 or above, just as other classes. At second level they add another four-sided die. Now they will specialize in one of the three sub-classes. Whichever one they choose, they add one six-sided die for third, fourth and fifth level. For sixth through ninth they add one eight-sided die for each level.

Now, if they choose to become a second sub-class of entertainer, they begin again at third level in the new profession after a training period of 1-4 months with someone who is already at least fourth level in that sub-class. Upon becoming this third level in this second sub-class, they add one hit point (the constitution bonus does not apply any more). Thus, for example, an entertainer's hit points might go like this: 1st level, roll d4 = 3; 2nd level, roll d4 = 1 (total 4); 3rd level, roll d6 = 5 (total 9); and so on, until 9th level, roll d8 = 7 (total, let's say, 30). The character



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now enters a second sub-class and trains for 3 months (rolled on d4) and adds one hit point for a total of 31. At fourth level in the new profession he adds one more point for 32, etc., until at 9th level he adds 1d10 because now he has become a Showman (10th level). At eighth level he would be up to a total of 36 and then add 1d10 for, let's say, 7, yielding a total of 43 hit points. He now begins again in the third and last sub-class (assuming he has the proper ability scores and is of the proper race). After 1-4 more months he adds 1 hit point. From 3rd to 8th level he adds +1 and is then up to 49 hit points by the time he is a Showman as well as 8th level in the new profession. If his Command Performance is a success, and he has 600,001 experience points or more, he adds 1 last d10. With a constitution of 16 to 18 and the best die rolls possible, an Entertainer could have as many as 120 hit points, and he would have a minimum of 28 hit points with a constitution of 15 or less (he must have a 15 constitution for acrobat, as stated earlier). Entertainers who botch a level performance lose hit points and must regain them.

Skills of entertainers

Stagehand: A stagehand learns how to *move silently* and *hide in shadows* as a first-level thief, so that he will be out of the way as things occur on stage. He understands lighting, and a very little about a number of performing skills. He can sing a little (off key), play a little (very little), juggle a simple cascade for 2-7 segments, do a shoulder roll, tell a little joke, etc. He has no special ability otherwise. He fights as a first-level thief and saves as a first-level magic-user. He will begin to learn the crude beginnings of makeup, but someone can see through one of his disguises at a 75% chance plus 5% per level of the viewer. This chance goes down by 10% base for every level the entertainer gains thereafter (the 5% chance to spot the disguise per level of the viewer remains), so that a fifth-level entertainer would do a disguise that a first-level character could see through 40% of the time (75 minus 4x10 plus 5). An Entertainer (11th level) would have a chance of 75 minus (10x10) plus 5% = -20% to be spotted by a first level; i.e., he would not be spotted. Note that being double-classed as an entertainer does not help this percent chance until Showman is achieved and the entertainer can count himself as 10th level.

Performer: The ability to *move silently* and *hide in shadows* goes up just as if the entertainer were a thief for his or her entire career. Otherwise, no new skills are added at second level.

When the Performer is studying to become third level in one of the three sub-classes, he will begin to specialize. However, every entertainer begins to learn the gift of gab. Upon becoming third level in any of the sub-classes, he or she has a 5% chance per level to enrapture zero-level type peasants. This does not include a zero-level master craftsman or a zero-level educated figure; it pertains only to the uneducated clodhopper or the typical group of children. Such an ability can often get an entertainer free room and board in a home, hut or barn.

The ability to act, sing, dance, juggle, tumble, etc., can be a great asset even in front of small audiences or in one-on-one situations. Even educated characters of second level or higher might like a joke, story, or trick. Give such a figure a normal saving throw. If the throw is failed, the "audience" likes the joke, story, trick, or whatever, and he will offer to give the entertainer a free drink, a few coins (silver), and perhaps food and a place to sleep. This ability does not necessarily gain any direct benefit for the party, but a performer can often "work the streets" for a few hours and get enough silver pieces to put himself and his friends up for the night. Alignment of the entertainer and the figure being entertained must be identical or (at most) one step apart for this form of entertainment to work.

Other special abilities

In addition to the special abilities described earlier that relate directly to combat and saving throws, each sub-class of entertainer has other particular talents:

A Juggler has a 25% chance at 3rd level and 9% better per level thereafter to hide a small item (coin, silk handkerchief,

ring, gem, etc.) on his person successfully. A side occupation for a Juggler is the performance of small acts of "magic" — sleight-of-hand magic, *not* real magic. Jugglers are good at the "old shell game" and other types of "con games." Someone watching the "game" is allowed a saving throw (vs. spells) to see through it, but that saving throw is adjusted for their difference in levels (if any). If the "patsy" is of lower level than the Juggler, the die roll is adjusted down by the difference in levels. If the observer is of higher level than the Juggler, the die roll is adjusted in the observer's favor.

A Juggler can throw any object of reasonable size (a bottle, a candlestick, a beer mug, an indian club, etc.) with no non-proficiency penalty. However, he or she only gains the aforementioned +1 per level bonus "to hit" when using weapons with which the Juggler is proficient.

If a Juggler, empty-handed and alert, has an object thrown to him or her so that he or she knows and sees it coming, there is only a 1% chance that the Juggler will fail to catch it. That 1% chance is reduced by 1/10% for each level above 3rd.

A Juggler can throw items very rapidly. If he is not proficient with the item (weapon), he is limited to one "burst" that allows two items to be thrown in one round. However, both are -2 to hit. He must state that he is going to throw two items (weapons) rapidly before the first is thrown. The amount of time between the two throws is 1-4 segments.

A Juggler who throws a small weapon with which he is proficient (dagger, dart, or hand axe only) can be very rapid indeed. The normal rate for throwing daggers is 2/round, for the dart 3/round, and for the hand axe 1/round (see *Players Handbook*, page 38). A Juggler of 4th level or higher can exceed this rate in most cases (see the chart below).

If a Juggler wishes to fire a "burst" of identical thrown weapons, he will suffer some loss of accuracy. As stated earlier, he is +1 "to hit" per level above 2nd with hand-held weapons that he is proficient with. This +1 per level is taken into account along with the "to hit" penalty prescribed for each weapon in a given "burst," as given in the following chart. The Juggler must state how many weapons he will attempt to throw in a "burst." If he is hit for damage during the "burst," it comes to an end. All "bursts" must be fired at the same target, even if that target is hit or falls over (dies) as a result of one of the hits prior to the last weapon in the "burst." Leftover shots are wasted.

Weapon	Maximum size of burst at level given										Penalty for each weapon in burst
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
Dagger	2*	2*	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	-3
Dart	3*	4	4	4	5	5	5	6	6	6	-4
Hand axe	1*	1*	1*	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	-2

* — normal number per round allowed, not considered a "burst," no penalty applied.

Example: A Showman of 10th level (i.e., he has become a 9th level Juggler and 9th level in another entertainment profession as well) decides to throw a burst of daggers on one round, then darts on another. He selects 4 daggers and 6 darts for the two bursts. Since he is +8 to hit normally with these trained weapons, his accuracy is now +5 with each dagger and +4 with each dart. Note: Adjustments of -2 and -5 for medium and long range apply, just as with any other missile weapon attack.

An Acrobat can *jump* (as the spell) at will once for each level of experience during any single turn if the Acrobat has taken less than half damage. If current damage is more than half the character's total hit points, he can *jump* only once per turn regardless of level.

Magical clothing operates well for Acrobats in some specific cases. *Boots of elvenkind* make them only 1% likely to make noise in the worst conditions. *Boots of striding and springing* will never cause them to fall or trip from a misstep or poor jump. An Acrobat can march for 15 hours in such boots. *Boots of speed* allow an Acrobat to move at a base speed of 25" plus 1" per level above 2nd.

Gauntlets of ogre power give an Acrobat a grasping strength

of 19. *Gauntlets of swimming and climbing* give an Acrobat a 3" movement bonus in water.

An Acrobat can *climb walls* like a thief, but he is better at it. Use the following table for an Acrobat's chance to climb a wall successfully (this is a base chance; see the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, page 19).

Race	Level of Acrobat										
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
Human, Half-elf or Elf	92%	93%	94%	95%	96%	97%	98%	99%	99.5%		
Dwarf	84%	85%	86%	87%	88%	89%	90%	91%			
Gnome	81%	82%	83%	84%	85%						

An Acrobat can walk a taut wire (or rope) in calm wind conditions (less than 3 mph wind velocity) at the rate of 1"/round plus 1/2"/round per level above 3rd. His chance to fall is a base 3%, minus 3/10% per level above 3rd.

An Acrobat can walk a slack wire in calm wind conditions at the rate of 1/2"/round plus 1/4"/round per level above 3rd. His chance to fall is a base 7%, minus 7/10% per level above 3rd. Note: A "taut wire" has to be pulled tight by a winch or a series of pulleys. A taut wire is not achieved by tying a rope between two trees — that is a "slack wire."

An Acrobat can walk up a slanted wire in calm wind conditions at the rate of 1/2"/round plus 1/4"/round per level above 3rd. His chance to fall is a base 6%, minus 4/10% per level above 3rd. The wire's angle can be up to 15" with no penalty. Thereafter the chance to fall is increased by 2% per degree of angle, with 35° being the maximum slant in any case.

Each full 3 mph of wind velocity adds 1% to the chance to fall from any sort of wire, and a wind velocity of more than 45 mph makes the acrobat also have to save vs. spells each round or be thrown off the wire. An Acrobat is allowed a save vs. wands to catch himself in a fall from a wire (on the wire itself). If such a catch succeeds, the Acrobat will take a full round to regain his footing. Note: 1" on ropes and wires always equals 10 feet, never 10 yards.

A Troubadour has a 5% chance per level above 2nd to know if an item, person, or place is historical or legendary. The item, person, or place must be within 10 feet of the Troubadour, and it must have a history that is meaningful and relevant for the Troubadour to have any chance to relate some fact about it.

Troubadours have a 10% chance per level above 2nd to relate a list of possible uses for an item found to be magic. For example, if a wand is found by a Troubadour or a member of the Troubadour's party, the person playing the Troubadour (who will be the DM if the Troubadour is a non-player character), if the appropriate dice roll is made, can relate the names and uses of every wand in the *Dungeon Masters Guide* that the player can actually remember! No looking in the book is permitted (if

this is done, the ability is cancelled), and this ability is negated if the playing session ends before the ability is used.

A Troubadour who finds a scroll of *commune* or *legend lore* has an 11% chance per level above 2nd to use the scroll successfully. If a Troubadour is present during the casting of a *commune* or *legend lore* spell, either one extra question can be asked or the chance of success will go up by 3% per level of the Troubadour above 2nd. This benefit does not apply to a spell cast from a scroll.

A Troubadour, when trying to "sing for his supper" (act, tell a story, tell a joke, etc.) affords the listener a saving throw at -1 per level of the Troubadour above 2nd. This does not work on listeners of radically different alignments (more than one step removed from the Troubadour).

Spell casting — for exceptional entertainers only

Elf, gnome, half-elf, and human entertainers who select entertainment (anyone or more than one of the three sub-classes) as their sole class and have intelligence of at least 15 and dexterity of 16 may learn limited spell casting ability. The character can use either M-U (for a human, elf or half-elf) or illusionist (for a human or gnome) spells.

The entertainer must be trained by a magic-user or illusionist for a period of 2-5 years, just as a "real" magic-user or illusionist must be trained. This training must be accomplished before the entertainer reaches third level in any of the entertainment sub-classes.

When the training is complete, and upon becoming 3rd level as an entertainer, the character can take up some low-level cantrips and spells. Given below is the maximum spell/cantrip capacity (in number and level of the spells/cantrips) for a character of a certain level. Important note: The fact that the figure becomes an "amateur" spell caster does not give access to scrolls or magic items usable only by M-U's or illusionists.

An entertainer of 3rd level (in his or her highest sub-class) can have either two M-U cantrips or one illusionist cantrip.

A 4th level entertainer can have four magic-user cantrips or two illusionist cantrips.

5th level: Four M-U cantrips plus one 1st level M-U spell, or three illusionist cantrips.

6th level: Four M-U cantrips plus two 1st level M-U spells, or four illusionist cantrips plus one 1st level illusionist spell.

7th level: Add one 1st level M-U spell or one 1st level illusionist spell.

8th level: Add two M-U cantrips and one 1st level M-U spell, or one illusionist cantrip and one 1st level illusionist spell.

9th level: Add one 2nd level M-U spell, or one illusionist cantrip and one 1st level illusionist spell.

10th level: Add one 2nd level M-U spell, or one 2nd level illusionist spell.

11th level: Add one 1st level M-U spell and one 2nd level M-U spell, or one 2nd level illusionist spell.

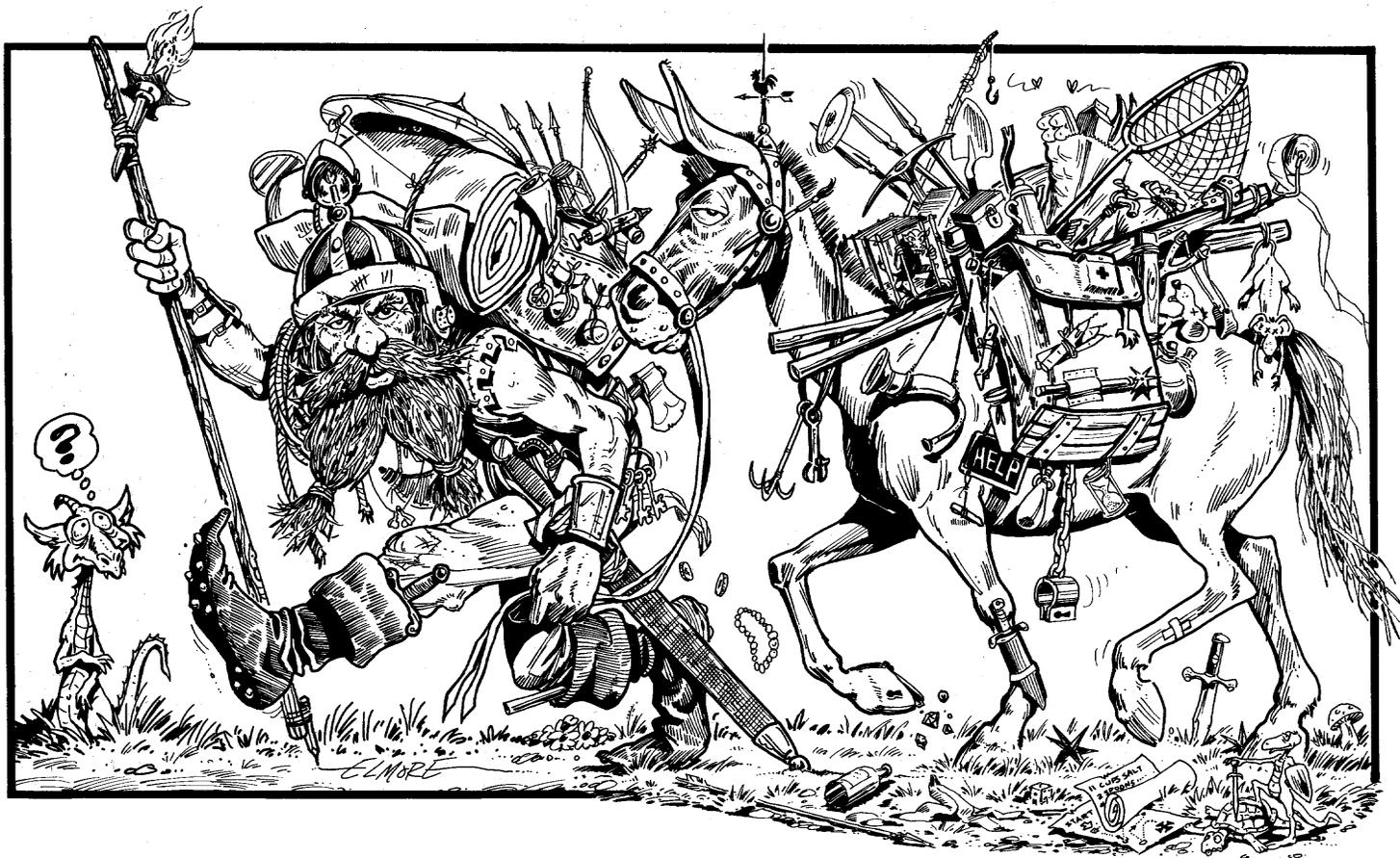
The magic-using or illusion-using entertainer may not substitute more cantrips for a 1st level spell the way a magic-user or illusionist can. For the purpose of range, duration, and area of effect the entertainer is considered two levels lower than his or her actual level.

Magic-using and illusion-using entertainers may take any spell they can learn. They need spell books and cantrip books just as magic-users and illusionists do. Their chance to know any single spell is 20% lower than a magic-user or illusionist with the same intelligence rating. The maximum and minimum number of spells they may know is as if they had two less points of intelligence than they actually do.

Spell-casting entertainers need 80% of the experience points necessary to rise to the next level (instead of the usual 70%) before they can give a Level Performance — and they can *never* use magic in such a performance. They must, in all cases, earn 5% more experience points than would ordinarily be necessary to rise in level when that rise gives them a larger spell capacity.

Entertainer spell casters, while they may select attack spells, may not memorize duplicate spells of the same kind.





Ready for anything!

Be prepared to carry more than just a sword

by Lewis Pulsipher

Has an oil flask ever been broken when a character was hit, a prisoner freed from his bonds while another character wasn't looking, or a character injured because his torch went out? Why didn't these characters have a metal or ceramic flask, chains with manacles, or *continual light* cubes? Many fantasy role-players allow themselves to be confined to the list of equipment given in the rules. If an item isn't there, players often don't think about the possibility of obtaining it.

Fortunately, at least in the AD&D™ game system, some important — perhaps vital — items as wolverbane and belladonna are on the price lists. However, dozens of easily made and potentially useful items are not. Just a little thought and ingenuity are required to devise some of these items. Even if a referee refuses the construction of mechanical monstrosities like a 10-shot crossbow, he'll find it hard to refuse the construction and purchase of the items described below. Every well-equipped adventurer should have these items on hand, unless he's so devil-may-care that

planning and sensible caution are beyond him.

The items presented here pertain primarily to the AD&D system; for other games, certain spells peculiar to those games may enable player characters to make additional useful items. The items have been separated into categories to aid presentation, but in some cases an item could just as well be included in one category as another; this is especially true with respect to offensive/defensive items.

Containers

If an adventurer finds a liquid or solid item that he or she wishes to take along, but doesn't want to touch, a reliable, easy-to-handle container is necessary. Small creatures may also be imprisoned therein, but don't forget they need to breathe if you intend to keep them alive.

A screw-top jar of any reasonable size is a handy thing to have. The jar should be of metal-reinforced ceramic or glass so it won't break easily. An airtight box, padded on the inside, is necessary to hold the jar safely and securely. The jar ought to fit snugly into the padded box

to avoid spilling the jar's contents. When transporting small creatures, holes must be drilled in the jar lid and box top so the animal can breathe. The box should be able to be closed securely, perhaps with a simple keylock. The idea isn't to keep anyone out, but to keep whatever is in the box *in* it and undamaged.

Probably, a backpack will be relegated to carrying everyday articles, some of which may be in jar containers. For additional security, a hard surface, made of wood or metal, can be used to line the bottom of the backpack. With a hard-surface bottom, the pack will still remain flexible. During transportation, this measure can prevent spillage of the entire contents, if (for instance) a thief were to cut out the bottom of the backpack. Jewels, gems, and magic items should be carried between robe and armor, or even inside the armor if the object is small enough that it won't be irritating. One could even include compartments in the armor, such as a false pouch, to conceal valuable items.

Consideration must be given to containers for holy water, oil, scrolls, potions, wands, or other magic items. The

notion that containers for such items should be made of a single material, such as glass, is ludicrous. Glass is simply too fragile to be dependable in an adventuring setting. No material, including metal, is proof against all the dangers of magical and monstrous combat. A sensible adventurer would have containers of several materials. For example, a metal container will fend off violent blows, but may be endangered if a rust monster is encountered. Certain potions may deteriorate or decompose when in contact with metal. A tin container tends to be better than iron since it doesn't rust, yet iron is stronger. In many respects bronze is the ideal single material, but iron is usually more available. A thin layer of iron, covered inside and out with pottery or other ceramic material, serves well as the basis of a container. The ceramic will protect the contents from lightning, one of the forces to which hard metal is most vulnerable, as well as protecting the contents from direct contact with, and possible contamination by, the metal. Ceramic material also has a slightly better save vs. *fireball*. And even if the first layer fails to save, the second might succeed. (See the saving throw table on page 78 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide*.)

The drawback of this type of container is that it won't smash easily (releasing the contents when you want them released) if thrown against a wall or a creature. However, if the container is cylindrical, the contents can be thrown or sprayed with considerable accuracy. Of course, adventurers can carry some containers of the "safety" type and some of the "smash" type. Finally, some referees may allow player characters to carry a container with a pump to spray holy water or oil.

Communication aids

This category includes some rather fundamental and straightforward items and techniques. A piece of chalk or charcoal, for example, can be used for marking dungeon walls. Such primitive markings might be most useful if there are only illiterate or unintelligent enemies about; an intelligent foe could easily duplicate the marks, thus confusing the adventurers. Pen, ink, paper or parchment (very durable, especially if made of treated hide), paint, and a paint brush are more useful than chalk and charcoal. Since the right color of paint and the proper type of brush would be needed in order to make a mark similar to that of the party's, an enemy would have a more difficult time trying to foil the communication system devised by the party.

When adventuring outdoors, visual and audio techniques are important for fast and effective communication. For example, strips of white cloth could prove to be useful. Stretched on the

ground, these pieces of cloth serve as landmarks for returning aerial scouts or for airborne reinforcements. A horn, some mouthpipes, and other audio devices can be used for signalling to someone at a distance. A clever and ambitious party may devise a musical code for its members who play the pipes.

Tools

More than once, a party in a cul-de-sac has elected to cut its way out through a wall rather than face some menace. In order to do this effectively, tools are necessary. Such items as a crowbar, candles, stone-mining tools, a small pack for carrying bigger mining tools, and a small shovel are usually helpful.

In addition, adventurers might consider taking a trick 10-foot pole, a three-pronged grappling hook, and some torch adaptors. The trick pole consists of two five-foot sections connected by a screw joint, or by a collar joint with a pin to hold the two sections together. When a long pole is needed, the two pieces are assembled. In normal circumstances, the five-foot pieces remain unattached so they don't get in the way. The grappling hook, most useful for scaling, resembles the ones often seen in war, prison-escape, and spy movies.

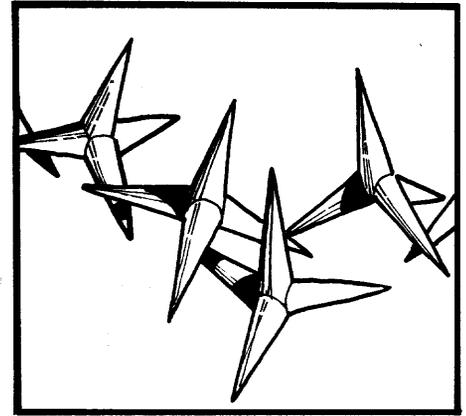
Torch adaptors are simple square pieces of metal with a hole/collar in the middle. The adaptor is placed onto a torch from the bottom, so that it lies just under the flame. Though the adaptor protects the hand holding the torch, it also blocks some of the light from radiating downward. If the torch is dropped or thrown, the adaptor may keep the flaming part from lying on the floor, since the torch will be supported by its non-burning end and the adaptor. And it won't roll around, either. This means a better chance of throwing a torch without extinguishing it.

Offensive devices

A wine sack can prove useful as an attack device, especially if it is the type that can be used as a kind of short-range squirt gun. Perhaps the skin can be made of, or reinforced with, a material tougher than ordinary hide. A character may want to squirt wine, water, light oil, or some other liquid at an enemy or at an object. Squinting offers a greater range than pouring, and has almost as much accuracy.

Adventurers should carry plenty of holy water. If they can afford it, all their weapons should be blessed by a cleric, and perhaps bathed in holy water before an adventure. This may not help every time, but it can't hurt, and may thwart a referee's most subtle plans.

Colored dust or flour, contained in paper packets and/or small spheres of pottery, can be thrown at an enemy. At worst, the opponent(s) will be slightly worried; at most, they'll flee from the



"dust of choking" they think was just thrown. A little pepper or itching powder in the flour may offer more benefit, but it can hurt or hinder the party just as easily as the opposition in certain situations.

Adventurers should not forget to take oil and non-metallic weapons. When feasible and possible, one should carry an extra sword of bronze and a mace or hammer made of flint or stone. Bronze may be no match for iron in general, but it may harm monsters which cannot be hurt by iron weapons. A stone weapon is useful against (for instance) rust monsters. A well-made flint dagger can be just as sharp as a metal one, even though it will be expensive.

Finally, characters ought to remember to use silver coatings on weapons when that might aid their cause. A large net, as well as a smaller butterfly-style net, are potential weapons that should not be overlooked as often as they are.

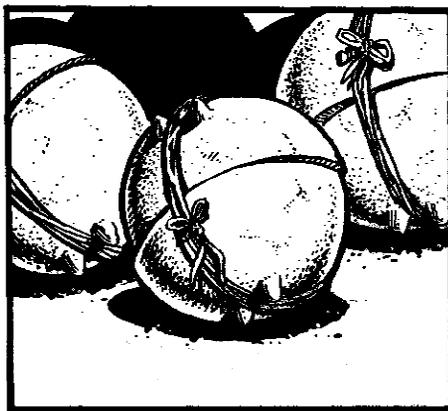
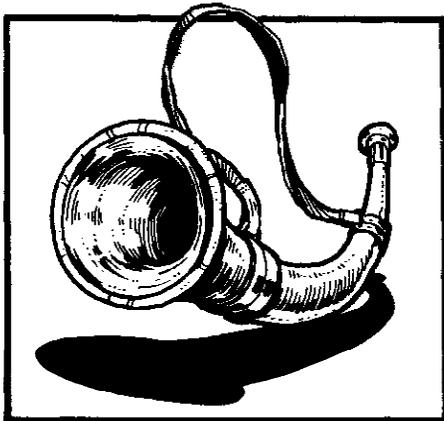
Defensive items

When an individual or a party is attempting to flee an area, mustard powder, oil of citronella, or other strong-smelling concoctions can be strewn about to cover a party's trail. "Cover," in this sense, means preventing the pursuer from using its sense of smell effectively, so that after it passes the affected area, it still won't be able to smell the party (or anything else). The powder should be put in a paper packet, the oil in a small, smashable flask.

Caltrops are four-pointed metal objects shaped in such a fashion that one point is always up and the other three act as a base. This device will slow down pursuit, and can also be used to create an alarm perimeter around a camp. If the tips are poisoned, caltrops can be a surprisingly powerful weapon, particularly in darkness.

In addition, wedge-shaped pieces of wood or metal, with a rough, slightly flexible bottom "shoe" base, are excellent doorstops. Laying down a doorstop and kicking it into place takes much less time than pounding in a spike to hold the door open.

Another defensive item with many uses is a dead rat (or other small animal). These rats (if you carry one, you may as



well take at least two) can be wrapped securely in oiled paper to conceal the smell, or simply hidden until needed. The creatures' bodies can be used to test liquids for acidic and similar effects, although a substance that rots animal matter might not affect wood or metal. The rats should be recently killed; animals with which one is trying to talk or bargain may prefer fresh meat over iron rations. Fresh meat tossed aside during flight may also slow down pursuers.

Noseplugs and earplugs, mundane as they may seem, have saved many lives; however, a referee might penalize those who try to wear them all the time. By submerging all but the tip of a hollow metal tube, a character can breathe inconspicuously underwater. Another tube filled with fine charcoal (held in place by a bit of fine netting glued to each end) could serve as a primitive filter which might reduce the ill effects of gas.

By sewing a sharp coin into the lining of a robe, a character, when captured, may be able to free the coin and then sever his bonds. Characters should remember to carry a steel mirror and a silver holy symbol, and to insulate weapons against a *heat metal* spell. Finally, an alkaline solution carried in a flask can help counteract any acids encountered.

Miscellaneous items

Numerous smaller items, such as those mentioned below, can be of additional service to adventurers. For example, wire can sometimes be used where rope cannot. With appropriate wooden or metal handles, a short wire becomes a garotte. Piton rings for climbing can be used when a thief is unwilling, unable, or unavailable. A pair of five-foot chains with silver-coated manacles at the ends has many uses. There is no need to rely on rope when the silver should help prevent a lycanthrope from changing into its animal form, though this varies from referee to referee. An adjustable leather collar, reinforced with metal, with loops for attaching rope or chain is a similarly useful item.

Other useful (perhaps even essential) items include flint and steel, which are mandatory for fire-making; a blindfold and a gag, to be used in conjunction with

the restraints mentioned above; an eyepatch, for a quick disguise, for medical purposes, or even for (temporarily) blinding a prisoner in one eye for some reason. Though smelling salts will probably never save anyone's life, sometimes a quick recovery from unconsciousness can be vital.

Flashy trinkets, counterfeit coins, silver-coated slugs, gold-plated copper pieces, and other deceptive valuables can be carried either for dishonest trading or for throwing down while fleeing an enemy. Some of the items — especially large but flawed (and thus relatively worthless) gems — can be placed in a paper packet which can be easily torn, so that the contents will scatter and attract a pursuer's attention. Weak, rotten cloth can be a substitute if paper is not available in the adventure setting.

A character who can cast *continual light* (which has no duration limit) should place that spell on a variety of objects, especially cubes, slabs, and spheres. These can be stored in containers slightly larger than the objects themselves and then revealed when the party wants to "throw a light" somewhere. For example, rather than walk down a long, dark flight of stairs, a character rolls a "light ball" down to get a good view. If a cube or slab is made of flexible, shock-absorbent material, it won't bounce far when light is desired in a specific place. A sphere, on the other hand, will go a long way in a dungeon-like interior. If the referee agrees, characters can even make "light frisbees" from pie plates.

A particularly useful variation of *continual light* objects is the "light bomb." To make such an item, a light cube is placed into a pottery ball. The ball can be made of two hemispheres bound together with twine, or the light cube can be baked inside a one-piece sphere. Then when a character who is invisible or hiding in shadows wants to attack with surprise and have light to see by, he can throw a light bomb. Suddenly, a light as bright as daylight appears in the midst of the enemy! The bomb might even frighten off unintelligent monsters.

Another useful variation involves using a tube that contains a long cylinder or stick with the *continual light* spell on

Handy things to have
(from left): caltrops; a horn for signalling; spheres filled with powder; a monster-sized net.

it. The cylinder can be pulled out or pushed in to increase or decrease the strength of the light.

For a "light helm," a *continual light* spell is cast on a projection at the top of a helmet, which is covered by a visor-like piece. Whenever the wearer wants light, he raises the visor.

At times, a party may want to record the passage of time with fair accuracy. Since watches do not exist, an "hour-candle" can be constructed. This is a candle of different-colored layers, each layer representing a certain increment of time.

Encumbrance

Where does one carry all of this? If the referee allows the players to take along a mule, or if they're outdoors riding horses, distributing the weight of extra items such as these should not pose a problem. Using a *charm monster* or *charm mammal* or *animal friendship* spell can make animals more docile. Defensive materials should be kept close at hand so they can be used on short notice. Containers, tools, most communication aids, and many of the other items can be stored in a place where a minute or two will be needed to bring them into play, since these aren't necessarily emergency items.

Although a large number of items have been mentioned, most of them are quite small and light in weight. Moreover, in many instances, only one or two of a certain item is needed for an entire party. This makes it easy to pass the objects around, just in case a character is unable to carry them all by himself or is without a mule. If one has a beast, most of the objects it carries should be spares of everyday items such as blankets and rope — things which aren't quite as interesting, perhaps, as the items and devices mentioned here, but just as necessary for the well-equipped adventuring party.



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from the MAGES

The latest words of wisdom from Elminster the sage

by Ed Greenwood

On his most recent visit, my good friend Elminster came through the gate from the Realms into a gentle snowfall. On his walk through the darkening ravine to my garden gate, he passed a neighbor's house, and through its floor-to-ceiling windows he saw a swimming pool and in or around it a bevy of young bikini-clad women. He came in my back door muttering and shaking his head. "How they keep from catching their

deaths of the chill is beyond my knowledge," he said to me over a mug of hot cocoa, "... and such a waste of good talent, too!"

I raised my eyebrows. "Talent?"

Elminster snorted at my inference. "At least four I saw had the Power; fairly bursting with the hunger for the Art that all good apprentices have — and yet no tutors, no scrolls! Such a pity..."

"No tutoring here, mind you," I warned

him. "The Power, loosed here, would soon —"

He waved an impatient hand. "Yes, yes, I'm fully aware of that. Who put the Decree of Magical Limitations before the Council of Far Travellers in the first place, anyway?"

"And yet," I reminded him, "you've told me more than once that magic does exist here, and even used to be as dominant here as in the Realms. You let me publish



details of some magical books, too." (Editor's note: See "Pages from the Mages" in DRAGON™ issue #62.)

"That's to tell those who are most interested that the Art is available to them," the sage answered. "But not here; they must seek it in the Realms. I think I'll have to give you some more information about lost and missing books of magic, to whet the appetites of those maids I saw, if naught else."

"Oh," I sighed, reaching for a pencil and failing to entirely hide my eagerness, "all right . . ."

Accordingly, here are another four selections from Elminster's notes, describing books of magical importance whose present whereabouts are unknown. If you feel a stirring within as you read on, seek you a way to the Realms. But you will find no clues to your route here, for that is part of the test. . . .

The Magister

Appearance: This tome bears no title? and consists of sixteen sheets of parchment bound with gilded cord to two polished plates of ivory. The plates measure four hands across by seven hands in length, and are only a little less than a finger thick. (A "hand," or "handwidth," is about 3½ inches, a measurement based on the size of the delicate hand of the scholar Aleric.) The "back" ivory plate is scarred and scratched, and marked with burns and bloodstains, but both plates are by all accounts solid and of surprising strength. The book has reportedly been dropped at least four times, and hurled at a person once, and yet the ivory shows no signs of chipping or shattering. It has been reported that these ivory bindings glowed with an eerie "dead-white" or "pearly" radiance while a spell was being read aloud (i.e., being cast) from the tome.

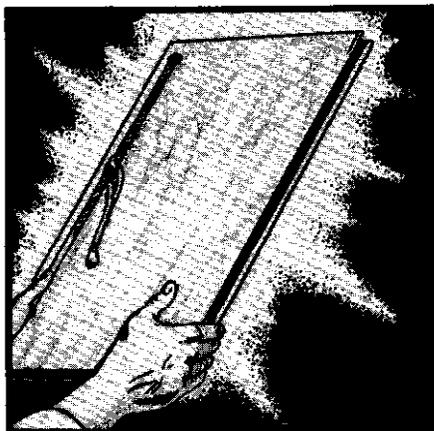
History and description of contents: This tome is commonly called "The Magister" after the title of the mage who is believed to have written it. (The Magister's tale is too long to be recorded here; suffice it to say that he was regarded as an unmatched magic-user and a neutral force of what he saw as justice and reason, and is remembered with awe and respect for his deeds. He disappeared some ninety years ago; some say he now dwells on another plane. Since the bulk of the volume under discussion lies clearly in the province of the illusionist and not the magic-user, The Magister may well not be the author of it.)

Reports vary concerning its contents (some clearly do so in a deliberate attempt to deceive and conceal), but a significant number of observers quite independent of one another state that the Magister opens with a brief and general discussion of the uses of illusion and the extent of knowledge concerning magical illusions (in the Common Tongue,

and surprisingly current, suggesting that the art of the illusionist has advanced but little in the last hundred years), and then lays down (in the Ruathlek or "secret language") the spells *Change Self*, *Color Spray*, *Phantasmal Force*, *Detect Illusion*, *Mirror Image*, *Dispel Illusion*, *Non-detection*, *Massmorph*, *Shadow Door*, *Programmed Illusion*, and *True Sight* in full, none varying from the accepted form (as presented in the AD&D™ *Players Handbook*).

These are followed (here the text again reverts to the Common Tongue) by a brief description of the casting of three spells, two of which are clearly *Rope Trick* and *Summon Shadow*, the third being a *Shades* spell or similar magic (such as *Shadow Monsters* or *Demi-Shadow Monsters*). Details and formulae are not given, but enough of the somatic and material components are described to allow a non-illusionist to recognize these spells as an illusionist begins to cast them.

The book closes with what is clearly a *Clone* spell, followed by a last page whose contents are given differently by each source. Some mention a curse, others an illusion which appears in the air each time the page is exposed, and others state that it presents this or that spell in full — all giving a different spell. Several of the sources are known to be absolutely accurate in other accounts, and yet all conflict on this point. Elminster says emphatically that it is not possible that several tomes exist that are identical, save for the contents of this last page — and so the only explanation left is that the contents of this last page may change from time to time, either at random or in a set sequence or cycle. This is by no means certain, and it is hoped that the present owner of The Magister, if it still exists, or anyone coming into possession of it in the future, will (in confidence as to the identity and whereabouts of himself or herself) reveal to this scribe the true nature of this Last Page. It should also be noted here that Suljack of the High Captains of Luskan has made a standing offer of 55,000 pieces of gold for delivery to him of the complete Magister.



'Seven Fingers' (The Life of Thorstag)

Appearance: This memoir is a thick bundle of vellum sheets bound about with two leather straps and enclosed in a leathern bag. A recent owner, the merchant Zephrum Nelagul, noted in his ledgers that "Seven Fingers" had 278 sheets, but also noted that it ended precipitously and seemed to have gaps in the narrative, which suggests that some pages have been lost or deliberately removed.

History and description of contents: The book was written by (or at least under the supervision of) the adventurer Thorstag "Seven Fingers" Amareh, a fighting man who rose to take the lordship of a tiny northern dale, where he died some seventy winters ago. Thorstag's nickname and the main title of this volume come from his habit of severing the fingers of important enemies whom he slew, and storing these in an iron box. There were seven such enemies, and Thorstag evidently put the fingers to some sort of magical use, but their present location is unknown. The volume recounts Thorstag's reportedly boring and trivial life ("wearisome pages of dreams, underhanded schemes, and malicious violence," Zephrum records), but contains three passages of special note.

The first is a detailed and exacting description of the selection of a card, *Void*, from a *Deck of Many Things*, so complete that anyone who reads this section could immediately recognize the same effects if they occurred in his or her presence.

The second is a recipe or description of the making of *Keoghtom's Ointment*, which may or may not be correct. Curiously, no owner of the memoir has made any mention of the accuracy of the recipe, but only of its inclusion; this hints that they have not attempted the process because it is obviously incomplete, or too difficult in execution or the procurement of the ingredients, or the writing itself contains some magical trap or guardian they would prefer not to disturb.



The third is a detailed inventory of the dowries of the princesses Elmyra and Hlassela of Cormyr, which Thorstag took part in guarding on an overland journey from Suzail, the capital of Cormyr, to Arabel, a city some distance to the north and east. The journey was safe, the princesses married, and set out forthwith eastward with their (royal, but not identified by Thorstag) husbands. Neither Thorstag nor this writer (the sage Elminster) has heard of their fate, but in some eastern tomb or treasury the greater part of these dowries must now lie. Thorstag's list includes weights and identifying marks of jewelry (since he had to guard against forgery and substitution of the pieces), and adventurers or historians will surely find it a source of inspiration, if not a path to wealth.

The present whereabouts of the memoir is unknown. It was last seen in the hands of an unidentified man "with the clothes and manner of a southern merchant," according to Zephrum Nelagul, who sold it to said merchant at a bazaar in Waterdeep for nine hundred pieces of gold. Zephrum attests that he obtained the book from an ignorant bailiff in Longsaddle, who sold it as part of the contents of a dead man's house. The dead man, one Borwyn, was a trader in hides and leather goods who covered much of the north in his trade, and had acquired, in Zephrum's words, "an odd assortment of keepsakes and valuables" One can only conjecture that somehow Borwyn the trader visited the dale where Thorstag had ruled and was buried, or got the book from another person who was given it by Thorstag for safekeeping, or who took it after Thorstag's death. If any reports come to light of the possible missing pages, more might be said of how Borwyn got the memoir, and of its original, complete contents.

The Nathlum

Appearance: A nondescript volume of brown, curling parchment leaves sewn to a grey canvas cover.

History and description of contents: The Nathlum is wholly and strongly Evil; its protective magics cannot be dispelled (at least, not by the spell commonly known as *Dispel Magic*), and these protections cause all creatures of alignment and instinct deemed "good" to suffer blinding, burning pain in the eyes and head. (Elminster offers a confusing description of the symptoms which need not be detailed here but can be interpreted thus: Anyone of good alignment will suffer 2-4 points of damage per round that the book is held or perused.) Its origin and the reason for its name are unknown; its first definite identification is in the catalog of Tymor Threeshields, the inventory of the booty he brought back from the Orcfastings war, but hints of it can be traced through the scanty written records of the orcs under the leadership of Wund, and Orfidel writes almost four hundred years ago of his meeting with the evil mage Lethchauntos the Black, who went to dwell among the orcs, and describes what could well be the Nathlum in Lethchauntos's possession. From Tymor's hall, the volume went to Neverwinter as part of the dowry of Tymor's daughter Nulauznee (Elminster suspects that Tymor wished to be rid of it), and nothing more is heard of it until the Nathlum passes unexpectedly into the hands of Phrandjas of Port Llast (a northern town), a thaumaturge whose careful and exacting studies enabled him to subsequently rise quickly in the ranks of the Art. Phrandjas takes characteristic pains over his notes regarding the Nathlum; we learn that it appeared to

be complete when he received it, and held sixteen recipes for poisons, four *glyphs of warding* set down nowhere else, and the formula of the spell *Maze*. Phrandjas, despite the pain caused him by perusing the book (because he was good), copied certain of the recipes for later sale to the alchemists of the town, and all of the glyphs, and Elminster has passed on some of this information.

The poison recipes have not been made known by Elminster; in his words, "They are largely simple to make, and recipes will undoubtedly fall into the wrong hands, given your sometimes too efficient communications." For adventurers, however, he has provided the means of identifying the substances.

Lhurdas (also known as "the yellow death" and "Belym's Last Drink") is a wine-based poison. It has a sharp, dry white-grape wine taste, and will readily mix with such wine. It reacts with the digestive acids in the stomach (and is effective in human, orc, and elvish body chemistry) to eat away internal organ tissues. Ingestion produces rapid (within 2 rounds) nausea, convulsions, and terrific internal cramps and burning pain, doing 1-6 points of damage in its first effective round, 2-12 in the second, and 1-4 in the third. Thereafter it will do no more damage, regardless of dose, and further exposure to *Lhurdas* will cause discomfort and inhibit healing, but cause no greater damage to the body for a period of 3-24 days. It is ineffective if applied externally. (Save for half damage.)

Varrakas is a black, thick syrup. To avoid detection, single drops are usually added to gravy or dark sauces, but the effects increase with the dose ingested. *Varrakas* has a slightly oily taste, but no strong flavor. Every drop of *Varrakas* does 1-4 points of damage when it enters the bloodstream (it passes the digestive



The ivory covers of The Magister (far left) are said to glow while the book is used.

'Seven Fingers' (center) has a lot of pages — and, some say, a lot more that have been removed.

If anyone of good alignment reads or holds The Nathlum, this (near left) is what will happen.

system masquerading as a nutrient), and does not act for a period of 18-24 turns after ingestion. *Varrakas* is harmless if applied externally. Effective in all mammals. (Save for half damage.)

Prespra (also known as "Mother's Bane") is an odorless, colorless liquid that mixes readily with all drinkables except milks and products made from them, from which it separates. Effective only in humans and only when ingested, it causes sudden dizzy spells and visual distortion, beginning 1-3 rounds after contact and lasting for 1-12 rounds. During this time the victim moves unsteadily and fights at -2 to hit, +2 (worse) on AC if having only normal (distorted) vision, or -1 to hit and +2 on AC if endowed with infravision or heightened visual senses. At the same time the victim endures 1-2 points of damage per round as surface blood vessels burst all over the body (giving a blotched, reddened appearance to the skin). Each round a successful saving throw will avoid such damage, but if the victim suffers an injury through combat or misadventure during the round, no saving throw is allowed (the cause and shock of the injury aggravates the sudden fluctuations in blood flow and pressure *Prespra* causes; it works by alternately and erratically constricting and expanding blood vessels throughout the victim's body).

Belpren is a luminescent blue, acidic substance that does 1-12 points of damage instantly upon contact with skin or internal tissues. (No save.) Further applications of *Belpren* to affected areas will not cause any further harm, but the damage given above is for a roughly hand-sized area of body exposure; for each additional such area of skin affected, an additional 1-12 points of damage will be suffered. However, no additional damage from ingestion is possible; immediate and involuntary vomiting will be induced by any further *Belpren* applied to affected internal areas. *Belpren* will not corrode metal, nor will it harm cloth or cured leather. It dries and becomes ineffective in just over one round when exposed to air, and so cannot be used on weapons. *Belpren* can be neutralized by the application of lamp oil. It is effective on all creatures.

Orvas is a translucent liquid with a green cast and a bittersweet taste. It does 1-6 points of damage upon entering the bloodstream (immediately if by insinuation, which must be through a scrape or wound, or in 18-24 turns if by ingestion), and 1-4 points of damage each round for the following two rounds. A successful saving throw means that *Orvas* is ineffective against the target creature. *Orvas* is an antidote to *Varrakas* (see above) if introduced into the bloodstream before *Varrakas* has run its course. *Orvas* works in all mammals.

Huld (also called "Leap" or "Death-dance") is an odorless oil that is effective

on non-humanoid creatures — except for demi-humans and humans — and works only by insinuation. Its effects are the same regardless of dosage, and appear 1-4 rounds after the application. (Save for no damage.) *Huld* causes severe muscle spasms involving nausea and the loss of motor control, balance, and speech, lasting for 1-6 rounds. During this time a victim is helpless but by no means an easy target for physical attack, since he or she is usually thrashing and moving about rapidly and wildly. Mental processes are entirely unaffected (i.e., psionic or other communication can be initiated or will continue, and in some cases can be used by the victim, as well as others, to control the poison's effects). A particular individual will be 95% resistant to *Huld* for a period of 10-21 days after an exposure to it, and thus repeated dosages in a single encounter will almost always not be effective. *Huld* is generally thought to affect all individuals, but some apparent immunities are reported and conjectured.

Jeteye is a glossy (i.e., reflective) black liquid that affects all mammals upon ingestion. (Ineffective if insinuation contact only; save for half damage.) It causes the pupils of the eyes to go black (although this does not affect vision) and causes 1-8 points of neural damage immediately. No pain is felt by the victim, however, for *Jeteye* kills all pain and tactile sensation for a period of 9-16 rounds (the "black eyes" sign will be of the same duration as this anesthetic effect). *Jeteye* is sometimes voluntarily used before torture or immediately after battle injuries (preventing a system shock survival roll). It has a bitter, black walnut-like taste and is hard to conceal in food or drink.

Ulcrun is a milky-white, viscous liquid that is effective on all warm-blooded creatures, by insinuation only. (No saving throw.) Two rounds after contact, it causes 1-4 points of muscular damage, weakening and softening tendons, ligaments, bones, and cartilage. On the following round it causes 1-12 points of damage, and 1-4 points on the round thereafter, whereupon its effects pass. Until healing processes (natural or magical) counter its effects, the creature affected will have lost 1-4 points of strength and one point of dexterity.

Dwarfbane is a rare, gummy oil that is poisonous only to dwarves. Insinuation, it is commonly smeared on weapons. It does not dry out, but prolonged exposure to air lessens its potency: it is effective only for 26-31 days. Upon contact, *Dwarfbane* does 1-8 points of damage with a pain "like blazing skewers," and a further 1-6 points on each of the following three rounds. (A successful saving throw will halve all damage suffered.)

The *glyphs of warding* found in The Nathlum reflect its evil nature. All may be

used only by those of evil alignments, and will only harm those of good alignments. Anyone of good alignment may pass a glyph's location unharmed by speaking its name or by destroying the glyph. The passage of neutral or evil characters will not trigger any of these glyphs. They are:



Zuth



Yammias



Hlack



Curtal

Zuth can be cast only by a cleric of 6th or higher level. It is cast upon a door or the frame of an opening; anyone of good alignment passing through or under the portal will suffer 2-12 points of electrical damage arcing from side to side of the frame at many points around it, across the opening.

Yammias can be cast only by a cleric of 8th or higher level. When activated, from 11-18 screaming, chattering mouths will appear all about the glyph, and shoot forth on long (up to twenty feet) snake-like necks to bite at the creature activating the glyph. The victim must save against each manifestation or be struck by it, suffering 1-4 points of damage. The fangs dig in, much like a lamprey attacks, and the mouths will drain 1 hit point of blood each per round thereafter until they (all are AC 7) or the victim are destroyed. Each can be severed by inflicting 7 points of damage on it (as long as at least the seventh point is caused by an edged weapon), or by the victim pulling free of its grasp. Any character with a strength of 16 or more is allowed to attempt saving throws against three of the mouths each round — if a particular save is successful, the mouth's grip breaks. It does not drain blood on that round, and it shrinks back into the wall or hangs lifeless. This glyph does not vanish after one activation; it will retract its surviving mouths and wait for the next victim, until all the mouths have been destroyed.

Hlack can be cast only by a cleric of 9th or higher level. This functions as a magical barrier preventing those of good

alignment from passing. This barrier of force will stand until the actual area on which the glyph was cast is destroyed, thus breaking the glyph, or until a *Knock*, *Erase* or similar spell is employed. Any one of good alignment will strike an invisible wall and suffer 1-6 points of electrical damage. Further contact with the barrier will cause 1-6 points of electrical damage per round (no save).

Curtal can be cast only by a cleric of 10th or higher level. Attempts to pass this Glyph will cause arms of fire burst from its three pointed ends and strike the creature or creatures attempting to pass, each arm doing 4-16 points of damage. Each arm of fire will strike a different target if there are three or more targets available; otherwise two will strike the nearest target and one another, or all three will strike at a solitary target. (Save for half damage.) Activation of this glyph always alerts a guardian, sometimes summoning a demon or devil to the spot instantly, but more often warning spellcasters or beast-keepers to ready their charges. The glyph remains until *Erased*, striking out with its arms of flame every time it is activated. *Dispel Magic* will cause one of the arms of fire to shrink back and not strike for that activation. In each round that creatures stand before the glyph but do not speak its name (i.e., not having passed it, but within 15 feet), *Curtal* will activate — so slow-moving creatures could be struck several times.

The Workbook

Appearance: Details of the appearance of the Workbook are unknown, but it is said to be a bound volume with no inscriptions on the covers.

History and description of contents: Once in the elven city of Myth Drannor there was a school of magic. Its teachers were known as the Seven Wizards, and included the one known only as Mentor. Its founding and objectives are forgotten, for Myth Drannor has long been a ruin, and the Seven Wizards disappeared even before Myth Drannor's destruction.

Many of the mages whose names are now known all across the Realms were tutored at the Wizards' school, and it is common knowledge that Mentor caused spells of his pupils' devising to be collected in a book, once he had tested and approved their dweomerwork. Accounts of the Workbook's contents vary; it is quite possible that more than one such book was collected, although only the existence of this one book is certain.

The sage Flamsterd, of the Moonshae Isles, purchased the tome known as "The Wizards' Workbook" from a band of adventurers, and carefully copied its contents. He later sold the secrets of several of the Workbook's spells for very great sums of wealth, and purchased the entire island that now bears his name. His enjoyment of the isle was short. It is

thought that one of his clients guessed what the sage possessed, for one night the sage and his entire Tower, on the seaward end of the isle, simply vanished. Others believe the sage came to grief while practicing his magic. Still others hold that he left this plane of existence.

No sudden rise in power was noted among those of the Art, however, and it is thought that the Workbook may have been lost or destroyed. Installments of Flamsterd's personal diaries, the *Moonshae Chronicles*, were sent regularly from the sage's isle to his friend Elminster, and in one was set down the entire text of the Workbook. The purchased records of individual spells still exist, of course, scattered throughout the Realms. It is from Elminster's library that we learn the spells below; the present contents of the Workbook may well vary slightly. *Dismind* is thought by some to be the work of Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun, and by others to be the work of Mentor himself. The other spells bear the names of their creators.



Spendelarde's Chaser (Necromantic)

Level: 4
Range: *Touch*
Duration: 1 *turn/level*
Area of Effect: *One creature*
Components: *V, S, M*
Casting Time: 8 *segments*
Saving Throw: *None*

This spell negates the adverse effects of all drugs (including alcohol) in the recipient creature. Dexterity and mental impairments are instantly "cured," leaving the recipient clear-headed and free of pain, able to undertake complex tasks requiring intense concentration, such as spellcasting. The pain of even mortal wounds will be removed, although the *Chaser* in no way heals any damage extant in mind or body. If the condition has not righted itself by the time the spell wears off, its effects will return. But natural body processes continue while a creature is under the influence of the *Chaser*, so that a hangover or other temporary discomfort may well vanish before the spell expires. The *Chaser* will have no effect on insanity or magical conditions (such as *Feeblemind*), but does give a +4 saving throw versus any

poisons present in the recipient at any time while the spell is in effect. (If a saving throw versus the poison has already been failed, application of the *Chaser* will permit a second, unmodified saving throw: it will not be at a +4 bonus, but will not have any subtractions either.) The material component of this spell is a drop of holy water, touched to the tongue or skin of the recipient (the spell may be cast on oneself).

Caligarde's Claw (Conjuration/ Summoning)

Level: 4
Range: 6"
Duration: 1 *round/level*
Area of Effect: *One creature*
Components: *V, S, M*
Casting Time: 4 *segments*
Saving Throw: *Neg.*

Use of this spell requires the claw or foot of a creature, which is consumed in the casting, and brings into existence an invisible claw of force. The spellcaster indicates (by pointing toward a location; sight is not necessary) a target within 6". If the target saves, the *Claw* will not come into existence. If the target does not save, the *Claw* must locate the target (with a "to hit" roll as though it was a weapon wielded by the caster). If it does so successfully, it will immediately do 1-4 points of damage. Thereafter, until the spell expires, the *Claw* is destroyed, or the target escapes pursuit by becoming ethereal or otherwise physically leaving the plane of the caster, it will strike infallibly once per round for 1-4 damage.

Although the *Claw* never misses, the damage done by its strike can be negated by an *Anti-Magic Shell*, *Shield*, *Bigby's Interposing Hand* or similar magical barrier. It can be destroyed by *Dispel Magic*, but cannot be controlled or physically harmed. It is not a living thing, is not intelligent, and cannot perform any task other than its slashing, tearing attack. It can be dispelled at will by the caster, but does not require continued concentration for its maintenance, and will not vanish if the caster is killed or rendered unconscious. (The spellcaster can of course engage in further spellcasting while the *Claw* operates.) Its attacks do not necessarily physically interfere with the actions and movements of the target, who may well cast spells or engage in physical combat.

The *Claw* will remain with its target unshakably, regardless of distance travelled, physical barriers, or aerial or underwater travel. It will never change targets, but will vanish at the death or disappearance (see above) of its target. If it fails to initially locate its target, it will remain within a 1" distance from the intended target's initial location, an invisible presence (use Grenade-Like Missiles: Misses Location Table, DMG p. 64, for the *Claw's* precise location), until the spell expires. If any creature approaches

within 1" of its location after the missed target withdraws, the *Claw* will automatically strike ("to hit" roll required) without any attention or act of will on the part of the caster. The *Claw* can thus be cast at a door to prevent unharried future entrance or egress. Note also that a careless or forgetful spellcaster could well be attacked by his or her own *Claw* if it is approached too closely after missing its intended target. A spellcaster does not know if a *Claw* is active, once cast, except by observing the behavior of the target — or, in the case described above, by suffering a surprise attack. The *Claw* can then of course be immediately dispelled by the caster. If unsuccessful in a second attack against a different target than the initial one, the *Claw* will continue to attack any target within a 1" radius of it until the spell expires, and may attack the target it originally missed if said target leaves and then re-enters the *Claw's* area. The *Claw* will not attack anything if the originally missed target remains in the area — but such immobility seldom occurs in battle. The *Claw* can only locate and affect targets having a tangible existence on the plane in which it is cast.



Tulrun's Tracer (Divination, Alteration)

Level: 4
Range: 1"
Duration: 4 rounds/level
Area of Effect: *Special*
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 8 segments
Saving Throw: *None*

When this spell is cast, the *Tracer* — a continuous, luminescent pathway akin to a *Light* spell — comes into being within a 1" radius of the caster. It shows the most recent path of any single creature whose path the caster wishes to trace, described verbally by the caster over the material component (a pinch of phosphorus or a glowing life-form such as a fungus or glowworm). The creature must have been present in the 1" radius area about the caster within a period of 1 day per level of the caster for the *Tracer* to appear. The *Tracer* will show the route of the creature within the 1" area, and then expand (at a rate of 60"/round) along the route taken by the creature, moving in

that direction for the duration of the spell. Once beyond the 1" initial radius, it will only show the path of the creature — who need not have been seen by, or be known to, the spellcaster — as long as it remains in physical contact with the ground. *Pass Without Trace* and similar magics will not confuse the *Tracer*, and it will follow the creature's route through physical barriers (i.e., doors) and across gaps (i.e. the results of a *Jump* or *Dimension Door*, or purely physical acrobatics) of up to 14". It will not otherwise show aerial travel, but will shine in and under water.

The path will end when the target creature is reached, when the spell expires, or at any place to which the target creature *teleported*, left the plane of the caster, or embarked upon a mount or conveyance such as a cart, ship, or *Carpet of Flying*. In the latter case, an individual reaching the path's end will receive a clear mental picture of the destination travelled to, even if on another plane. If the target creature took a mount or conveyance, the mental picture will be of the act of doing so and not of the eventual destination reached. Portions of the *Tracer* can be negated by *Dispel Magic*, *Continual Darkness*, and the like, but it cannot be physically disturbed (i.e., a *Gust of Wind* would not shift it). When the spell expires, the *Tracer* will have slowly faded into nothingness; no one not having reached its end will receive any mental picture of the target's destination. The *Tracer* is intangible and cannot be walked upon. It may be passed through or travelled within without harm and does not activate magic upon contact or distort magic or physical phenomena passing through it.

Tasirin's Haunted Sleep

(Enchantment/Charm)

Level: 3
Range: *Touch*
Duration: *Special*
Area of Effect: *One creature*
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 round
Saving Throw: *Neg.*

This spell can only be cast successfully upon a sleeping creature. The slumber must be normal — unconsciousness, coma, or similar states of mental injury, such as concussion, drugs, astral or psionic activity, and Charm-related spells will all cause the spell to be ineffective. *Tasirin's Haunted Sleep* puts the recipient into a deep sleep for 1 turn per level of the caster, and early awakening from this state can only be accomplished by a (*Limited*) *Wish*, *Dispel Magic*, the infliction of acute physical pain (i.e., wounding) upon the recipient, or at the caster's will. The target creature is allowed a saving throw, which if successful will negate the effects of the spell.

The caster is never directly aware of the target's thoughts or mental state, or

of the success of the spell. While in such a deep sleep, the creature is open to the influence of subconscious visions or dreams. The spellcaster can project one specific scene or vision into natural mental activity, and this will come into the victim's consciousness soon after awakening. The vision's clarity, detail, and accuracy depend upon the caster's concentration, for the scene must be held in mind during the casting. Such visions can masquerade as divine communications or memories, and can be used to influence decisions, goad the recipient into a certain course of action, trouble the recipient, or, conversely, to calm and rest the recipient at a time of mental anguish or troubles. A spellcaster skilled in the use of this spell can boost morale, joy, or enthusiasm — or crush it.

During the "haunted sleep," the recipient is especially susceptible to any one *Suggestion* spell, which can be cast by the caster of the *Haunted Sleep* or another spellcaster, and is saved against at -3 by the creature in "haunted sleep." Such a suggestion will be "heard" by the recipient as an inner mental voice, and must of course be in a language which the recipient understands to be successful. This spell cannot be cast on oneself.

Laeral's Dancing Dweomer

(Alteration, Illusion/Phantasm)

Level: 3
Range: 2"+1"/level
Duration: 1 turn/level
Area of Effect: 4" diameter sphere
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 6 segments
Saving Throw: *Neg.*

This spell requires a pinch of dust thrown into the air about the caster and any object (which will not be changed in any way by the spell) radiating a *dweomer* at the time. When cast, the spell causes many magical auras to flicker and dance about from object to object (including creatures and areas with large surfaces, such as walls). The auras are not visible to the unaided eye (i.e., *Detect Magic* or similar means must be used), and will not be seen by a creature saving against the spell or having *True Sight*. If the spell is not saved against, the auras will totally confuse a *Detect Magic* or the like for the spell duration. The auras will not disappear when touched, but *Dispel Magic* will destroy all auras within its area of effect.

Archveult's Skybolt (Alteration)

Level: 4
Range: 1"/level
Duration: 2 rounds
Area of Effect: *Special*
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 4 segments
Saving Throw: ½

This spell requires a crystal — a faceted gem, quartz, or cut glass — of at least an inch in length. The spellcaster throws

the crystal at a target creature or area while speaking the final words of the spell, and its path creates a glowing "bolt" in the air similar in appearance to *Tulrun's Tracer* (q.v.). The bolt is four feet in diameter, begins 1" from the caster, and extends onward to a maximum length of 1" per level of the caster. The bolt will not materialize underwater, and ends where the crystal strikes water, strikes any barrier, or passes beyond the caster's range. (The crystal is consumed instantly, in a burst, if it passes beyond the caster's maximum range, and is otherwise consumed at the expiration of the spell.) Any living thing coming into contact with the bolt will suffer 1-4 hit points of shock damage per level or hit dice it possesses (ignoring additions; a 5+5 hit dice monster would take 5-20, just as one of 5 hit dice would). A creature struck by the crystal (a "to hit" roll, with any modifications for missile-weapon ranges, is made when the spell is cast; refer to Grenade-Like Missiles: Misses Location Table, DMG p. 64, if a miss is indicated) suffers 1-6 points of damage per level or hit dice it possesses. The creature may grasp the crystal and hurl it back at the caster, and the bolt will continue to form to the limit of the caster's range (so that a caster may be struck by his or her own bolt), but when directly grasping the crystal, any creature will suffer a further 1-6 hit points of damage per level or hit dice it possesses and must make a system shock survival roll.

A *Skybolt* lasts for 2 rounds after its casting. It can be destroyed in whole or in part by contact with an *Anti-Magic Shell*, *Wall of Force*, *Shield*, or similar spells, *Dispel Magic*, or *Gust of Wind*. It cannot be deflected, grounded, or insulated against. It will not conduct through metallic substances, but note that armor that is not airtight will not negate the effects of a *Skybolt*. Creatures and non-magical objects entering the *Skybolt* will not deflect, negate, or sever it. A crystal entering an area of magical protection which does not allow formation of the bolt is instantly rendered harmless.

Dismind

(Enchantment/Charm) Reversible
Level: 9
Range: Touch
Duration: Special
Area of Effect: One creature
Components: V
Casting Time: 2 segments
Saving Throw: Neg.

This spell consists of a phrase spoken while the caster touches the recipient (the spell may be cast on oneself, serving as a "last resort" escape from certain death, torture, or mental damage), causing the recipient's mind to fly from his body. The body instantly undergoes a curious transformation: It remains in the position it was when the spell was cast, surrounded by a glowing aura of force

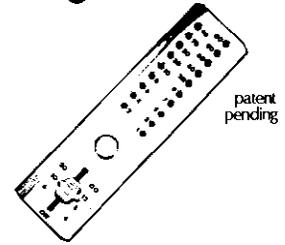
that allows nothing to touch the body, stopping all physical attacks, crushing, or probes. The limbs of the body can be shifted by pushing on the invisible armor of force, but when released will slowly drift back to the original position. Magical attacks, fire, poisons, and corrosive and disease-producing substances (including ochre jelly, green slime, rot grubs, and the like) cannot reach the body to do it harm. The bodily processes of a *dis-minded* person are totally suspended, so that the body does not age or breathe. *Dis-minded* persons have a vacant stare. They cannot use any of the senses of the body they have abandoned, nor can they return to it without aid.

The freed mind wanders behind mental defenses of its own making, immune to all forms of magical, psionic, and other mental contact or attack. A wandering mind is not detectable by any known means, and never leaves the Prime Material Plane. It cannot control where it goes and what it observes, and typically retains little memory of its visions and speculations. (A DM should describe 1-6 scenes or phrases of thought without giving any explanations.) A wandering mind cannot deliberately pray, study, or research spells, or choose to observe any particular event, locale, or individual.

A wandering mind can be fully restored to its body by an *Alter Reality*, (*Limited*) *Wish*, or *Restore Mind*, the reverse of this spell. The reverse can also be used to cure insanity and all mental disorders, feeble-mindedness, and physical brain damage. It will end any mental controls (including *Quest*, *Geas*, and magical *Charms* cast by spell or by creatures such as nixies or vampires) of any form upon a recipient mind, totally freeing the mind from the influence(s) without causing the individual any harm — but it cannot restore lost psionic powers. A delirious, drunken, exhausted, or drugged creature can become clear-headed and mentally alert by means of this spell. A saving throw applies to both spells, and if successful against a *Restore Mind* (regardless of the wishes of the *dis-minded* recipient creature), the spell will have no effect. Such a failure does not mean the mind cannot be restored, but only that the particular spell cast at that time did not work.



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ORCCON 1983, Feb. 19-21 — All types of gaming activities are offered at southern California's largest strategy game convention and exposition. The site is the Sheraton-Anaheim Hotel, next to Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif. Membership fees are \$13.50 for advance pre-registration (must be postmarked by Jan. 28), \$15 at the door for all three days, and \$10 at the door for one day only. For more information, write to Strategicon PR Dept., P.O. Box 2577, Anaheim CA 92804.

GAME FAIRE '83, Feb. 26-27 — This fourth annual convention will be held at Spokane Falls (Wash.) Community College. A full schedule of tournaments, contests, and other gaming activities is planned. Admission is \$6 for a two-day pass or \$4 for one day, with all profits from the event going to the Spokane Guild schools. More information is available from Shannon Ahern, Book and Game Company, West 621 Mallon, Spokane WA 99201, phone (509)325-3358.

WISCONSIN SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION, March 4-6 — The seventh annual staging of the event known as WisCon will take place at the Inn on the Park in downtown Madison, Wis. Guests of Honor will include fantasy author Lee Killough and noted editor and author Marta Randall, currently the president

of the Science Fiction Writers' Association. Membership fees are \$10 until Feb. 25, or \$15 thereafter and at the door. Information can be obtained from SF³, Box 1624, Madison WI 53701.

CRUSADERCON II, March 4-6 — Located on the Metro State Campus, Denver, Colo. For more information, contact MSC Gamers Club, Box 39, 1006 11th St., Denver CO 80204.

HALCON 6, March 4-6 — Robert Lynn Asprin will be the guest of honor at this SF convention, to be held at St. Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. For details, write to Halcon 6, P.O. Box 295, Station M, Halifax, N.S., Canada B3J 2N7.

COASTCON 83, March 4-6 — A convention for all types of game enthusiasts, held at the Royal D'Iberville Hotel in Biloxi, Miss. Special guests will include Jo Clayton, Andrew Offutt, Robert Adams, George Alec Effinger, and Prof. M.A.R. Barker. Membership fee is \$10 before Jan. 15, \$12 thereafter and at the door. Contact: CoastCon 83, Box 1423, Biloxi MS 39533.

FANTASY WORLDS FESTIVAL, March 18-20 — A SF/fantasy convention to be held at the Oakland Airport Hyatt Hotel. The list of special guests includes Marion Zimmer Bradley. For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Fantasy Worlds Festival, P.O. Box 72, Berkeley CA 94701.

EMPEROR'S BIRTHDAY CONVENTION XII, March 19 — To be held at the Century Center, South Bend, Ind. Pre-registration is \$4.50 (by March 1), and admission is \$5.25 at the door. Contact: Emperor's Birthday Con XII, P.O. Box 252, Elkhart IN 46516.

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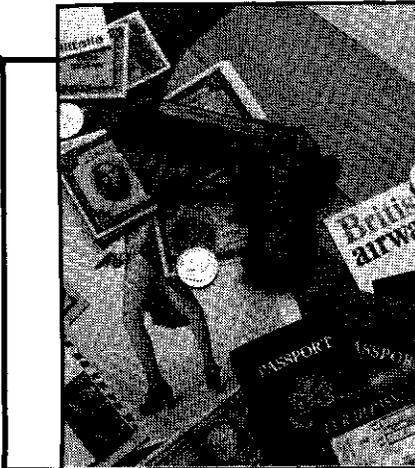
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A few Words of wisdom about weapons statistics

TOP SECRET

SECURITY CLEARANCE LEVEL:
For Administrators and Agents

BEGIN MESSAGE

TO: Administrators desiring clarification of inconsistencies between the statistics found on the Weapons Chart and statistics as generated using the optional Gun Design rules.

BY AUTHORITY OF: Merle M. Rasmussen, designer, and Allen Hammack, editor.

PURPOSE: Because of the bulk of correspondence we receive concerning weapon-statistic incongruities and gun-design problems, we have conspired to issue a statement in hopes of alleviating rule misunderstandings. We also hope to explain our reasonings behind particular rules and statistics within the current TOP SECRET® Espionage Game rules system.

MESSAGE: Why aren't the PWVs of certain guns from the Weapons Chart the same as PWVs calculated from their A, F, P, R ratings using the optional Gun Design rules?

1) Five of the weapons (a, c, j, k, p) have PWVs left over from the original TOP SECRET manuscript and were never modified during editing.

2) One of the weapons (j) is the victim of a typographical error found under Gun Design in the section on Accuracy. A Rating of 4 should have a PWV of -4, not -2.

3) Variations between similar weapons are based on specific performance data and subjective reports from users of various gun types.

4) Different weapons with statistically identical A, C, F, P, and R ratings had their values slightly modified to make the weapons different from one another for game purposes.

5) For game balance, PWVs were varied independently of the weapon's A, F, P, and R ratings with a tolerance of plus or minus 0 to 19.

6) All PWVs on the Weapons Chart were assigned and are "official." Weapons denoted a, b, c, g, h, i, j, k, p, and u-ee are inconsistent, but will not be officially modified at this time.

Why are designed guns using the Gun Design 20 or less trait rating total such poor renditions?

1) Unlike weapons produced by professional manufacturers who spend a great deal of time and money on research and development, "homemade" weapons are pitiful reproductions. Few espionage agencies can afford a private armorer or an in-house gunsmith, and are more likely to contract the work out or buy standard weaponry commercially produced.

2) We strongly suggest modifying the given weaponry to suit your needs, as opposed to designing new weapons from scratch. Homemade weaponry would be easier to trace than mass-produced guns because of the distinctive rifling marks,

unique calibers, and ballistics behavior of these relatively primitive firearms.

3) Many Administrators disregard the 20 or less trait rating total and convert real-life guns to TOP SECRET statistics directly. Overall average PWVs for weapon types are offered here to indicate design standard guidelines. The proposed values are: Pistols 35, Carbines 65. Rifles 75, Submachine Guns 80, Assault Rifles 70, and Machine Pistols 30.

4) These average PWVs can be modified plus or minus 0 to 19. For random modification, roll a 20-sided die and subtract one from the roll. To alter the average PWVs subjectively, simply adjust the figure (within the 0-19 range) by an amount you deem appropriate. The widest possible variances are found in pistols. One-handed machine pistols are deemed inaccurate in combat and are given low PWVs. Their lack of accuracy is compensated for by their increased rate of fire.

5) The data in this document is suggestive only and does not comprise official rule changes.

6) Shotguns are a class of weapons unto themselves. Their design, suggested PWVs, and Range Modifier statistics will not be addressed at this time.

How are Range modifiers defined for weapons being designed?

1) See reason 3 under the first question above.

2) Different weapons with statistically identical A, C, F, P, R ratings had their Range Modifiers slightly changed to differentiate them.

3) Based on statistical comparison of compiled weapon data for TOP SECRET guns, we would like to propose the following overall averages for Range Modifiers:

	PB	S	M	L
Pistols	0	-45	-145	X
Carbines	+3	-10	-75	-195
Rifles	+5	-5	-45	-115
Submachine Guns	+4	-25	-95	-245
Assault Rifles	+5	-10	-60	-170
Machine Pistols	+1	-25	-80	-220

4) These average Range Modifiers can be subjectively altered within the following parameters:

PB: + (0-5), but PB can never be less than 0

S: + or - (0-9); randomly, equivalent to d10-1

M: + or - (0-19); randomly, equivalent to d20-1

L: + or - (0-49); randomly, equivalent to ½d%-1

5) In all cases, if the actual gun cannot shoot further than medium range (600ft.), its long-range modifier should be X (not possible).

How were the weapons chosen for inclusion in the TOP SECRET rules, and why were those weapons chosen?

1) During the research phase, some weapon descriptions were determined to be so sketchy and vague they weren't even passed on from the designer to the editor.

2) Certain obscure notes made during research were not deciphered, and hence there was a question as to whether such weapons actually existed. These questionable weapons were never submitted to the editor: the .38 S&W (5 shot) small-frame side swing revolver, the .38 Llama and the 9mm Double col. mag. self load.

3) Three weapons had identical weapon statistics, but the descriptions were so sketchy none were included. These weapons are the .41 mag., .44 special, and .44 mag.

4) All of these weapons were pistols, and we had a dozen others with fuller descriptions. We also wanted to include carbines, rifles, submachine guns, assault rifles, shotguns and other weapon types.

5) We wanted to include common weapons used in popular espionage stories or used in real espionage and/or police work, not necessarily military weaponry.

The chart below lists statistics for some of the weapons which were eliminated from the original TOP SECRET manuscript for the reasons given earlier. Please keep in mind that the statistics are not necessarily accurate or complete. Note that each of the five gun traits range from 1 to 6. When comparing these trait values using the Gun Design tables, note that the phrase "equivalent to" means that the weapon *acts like or fires the same as* what is listed corresponding to the rating. The weapon may not actually be or *appear as* it is rated. For example: The Accuracy rating of "3" for the .44 mag does not mean that the gun has a 2½-inch barrel, but rather that in comparison to other weapons and in combination with the other four ratings the .44 mag fires as if it had a 2½-inch barrel. These weapon statistics are offered in the hope of further expanding the selections of pistols available to agents — *and* to their opposition. Happy hunting!

QRC	Weapon	PWV	Range Modifier				L	WS	R	AM	CST	DC	A	C	F	P	R	HW
			PB	S	M	L												
vv	.25 self-load	31	0	-54	-154	X	F	1	6?	360	0	2	6	5	3	2	3	
ww	.32 self-load	43	0	-50	-150	X	VF	1	6?	370	-2	2	5	5	4	4	4	
xx	9mm Double col. mag. self-load	47	0	-46	-148	X	VF	1	8?	365	-4	3	4	5	4	6	4	
yy	.357 Mag. 6-shot small-frame rev.	33	0	-40	-140	X	F	6	325	-4	3	4	4	4	6	4		
zz	.380 self-load	45	0	-41	-141	X	VF	1	8?	380	-2	3	5	5	4	4	4	
aaa	.38 S&W 5-shot small-frame rev.	34	0	-41	-141	X	VF	1	5?	375	-2	4	5	3	4	6	4	
bbb	.38 Standard wt. 6- shot revolver	35	0	-41	-141	X	VF	1	6	370	-4	4	4	4	4	6	4	
ccc	.38 Llama	47	0	-39	-139	X	VF	1	8?	380	-6	3	3	5	4	6	4	
ddd	.41 mag.	43	0	-38	-138	X	F	1	6?	320	-8	3	2	4	5	6	4	
eee	.44 special	43	0	-37	-137	X	F	1	6	260	-8	3	2	4	5	6	4	
fff	.44 mag.	43	0	-36	-136	X	F	1	6	280	-8	3	2	4	5	6	4	

ADMINISTRATIVE CORRECTION

In reference to the article in DRAGON™ issue #49, concerning ammunition, the following clarification is necessary:

Gyrojet and microjet ammunition may not be fired from conventional firearms (ones containing firing pins). Such specialized ammunition is fired from cast aluminum launchers possessing electrical igniters. These miniature, solid-propellant rockets produce a visible burning tail and are not particularly accurate. The bonus to hit with such a weapon should be applied for targets at long range due to the acceleration of the projectile after launching.

Launchers may be used in a vacuum or underwater, since the projectiles carry their own oxygen supply to support combustion. If a launcher is used underwater, reduce all ranges by 75%; however, the damage from striking the target remains unchanged. Firing-pin ammunition may not be used in a gyrojet or microjet launcher. If they are the correct caliber, both microjets

and gyrojets may be launched from the same device.

Residue buildup within the weapon barrel may cause the launcher to misfire after the tenth shot unless the weapon is cleaned properly. The chance of a misfire after the tenth shot is 5%, added cumulatively for each succeeding shot. Hence, if the gyrojet hasn't misfired by the fifteenth shot there is a 25% chance it will misfire on that shot.

Gyrojet/microjet launchers operate off a simple nine-volt battery which is good for 30-90 [10x(1-6)+20] launchings. Cost of the battery is \$1. Launchers cost \$150, are pistol-sized, and may be smuggled past most metal detectors and some searches if they are disassembled. Launchers generally act as other pistols, duplicating their PWVs, Range Modifiers, WSs, Rates, ammo supplies, and other characteristics.

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The world's up for grabs in UN

Reviewed by Tony Watson

UNITED NATIONS, one of the newest releases from Yaquinto Publications, is an interesting, power-politics style game dealing with current international relations. While the game is rather simple (just four pages of rules), it offers tense and thought-provoking play and does a surprisingly good job in portraying the main elements and factors that come into play in international politics.

Each of the three or four players assumes the role of one of the world's superpowers (the United States, the People's Republic of China, the USSR, or the European Economic Community) and vies for control of the world's minor countries, with the ultimate goals of increasing their economic power and political influence, thereby gaining prestige and winning the game.

UN is one of Yaquinto's nicely packaged Album Games; the wraparound cover folds out to reveal a sturdy, colorful mapboard. In the case of UN, the map presents a somewhat skewed global projection. The major powers are depicted in solid colors; their geographic areas have no effect on the course of play. The rest of the world is shown in natural terrain colors. Each of the forty "rest of the world" areas, such as Brazil, Coastal Africa or the Mid-East, has a box containing three numbers that represent the political factors needed to control the area, its prestige value to the owning superpower, and the number of votes the region has in the General Assembly of the United Nations. (Each *nation* only has one vote, but many of these regions are composed of more than one nation.) For the advanced game, which concentrates more on economic matters, there is also a number from 1 to 9 showing the relative worth of the area to the controlling power's economy and, perhaps, a special symbol denoting a fuel-producing, livestock-raising or similarly specialized area.

The mix of 240 counters is divided into four identical sets, one per player. They

consist of political influence markers (PIMs) to show control of a region, five counters to denote any guerrilla or conventional wars which that power may choose to start, and various denominations of economic and military aid counters. Each aid counter has its political value, military value, and cost printed on it. (Cost only applies to the advanced game, where aid counters must be "bought.")

The aid counters are the main instruments of the game. Each turn, the players buy (in the advanced game) or are given an allotment (in the basic game) of aid counters. Each player in turn places aid counters face down in boxes representing that player's target regions, in an attempt to gain control of those regions. If the player can maintain political factors equal to the region's value (which range from a low of 4 for Afghanistan to a high of 28 for Iran, but average from 12 to 18) for two consecutive turns, that player may place a PIM in the region, thereby gaining the area's prestige value to add to the controlling player's prestige index and also gaining control of the region's voting power in the General Assembly. Naturally, other players can oppose such take-over efforts by placing their own aid counters in the region; opposing factors cancel each other out on a one-for-one basis.

In addition, players can challenge existing control markers either politically or militarily. In the latter course, one of the guerrilla or conventional war counters is played. PIMs are vulnerable to such forms of military attack, but there is a heavy cost in lost prestige for the player employing military tactics. Finally, in the advanced version, players can place industry counters in countries. These are very expensive, but they add to the military and political stability of the region and produce revenue for the controlling power.

Strategy in UN is largely a matter of bluffing, feinting, and mounting swift strikes against opposing centers of power. The order of placement of the aid

counters, determined randomly at the start of each set of player-turns, is critical: Having to move first is a decided disadvantage, since the other players can see where your counters have been placed. However, the counters are placed upside down, the use of dummies is allowed, and since the counters come in varying denominations, one counter could represent a major effort or a small attempt to block the opposition. The play in UN is a combination of guesswork and strategy, and since no dice are used, the only random element is the order of play on each turn.

The game incorporates some aspects of the United Nations and its operation into its play. On a turn in which a war counter has been played, a Security Council meeting can be called to vote on proposals concerning counter placement in the disputed area or to censure the player starting the war. At various times in the game, meetings of the General Assembly are held, and players can use the leverage offered by the votes they control to impose economic boycotts on other players, limiting the number of counters the offenders can obtain for placement. The rules regarding United Nations activity seem to accurately portray the way in which that body is used as a tool of the superpowers rather than as an instrument for collective security.

Victory in UN goes to the player with the highest prestige at the end of the game. Prestige points are won or lost by gaining or losing control of regions, starting wars, and agreeing to treaties.

UNITED NATIONS is a mechanically simple, but surprisingly challenging and intriguing multi-player game. The rules are easy to grasp, though strategy is a bit more subtle. With a playing time of about two hours, this is a fine beer-and-pretzels offering — just the ticket for three or four aspiring world dictators.

UNITED NATIONS was designed by J. Michael Hemphill and sells for \$9.00 at many game stores, or can be obtained by direct mail from Yaquinto Publications, P.O. Box 24767, Dallas TX 75224.

Fun is in the cards with *JASMINE*

Reviewed by Merle M. Rasmussen

JASMINE, subtitled *The Battle for the Mid-Realm*, is a strategy card game set in a fantasy environment. The game was designed by Darlene, the same artist whose *Story of Jasmine* illustrated adventure was published in DRAGON™ Magazine from issue #37 through #48.

The game is being marketed as a limited edition, each set of cards and rules numbered and signed by the artist/designer.

Playable by two to four opponents, this card game calls for strategic thinking on the part of the players and offers them a wide variety of tactical options. It is distinctive in both appearance and the way it plays.

The 112-card deck and a foldout rules brochure are packaged in a clear plastic case and priced at \$13 (postage paid) from Jasmine Publications, P.O. Box 684, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

The game features the same main characters as the illustrated story which appeared in DRAGON Magazine; however, the game does not follow the plot of

the fantasy strip; instead, the rules allow for different turns of events and combinations of circumstances every time the game is played.

Players represent one of four warring Factions, led either by Jasmine, Bardulf, Melantha, or Thorgall. In forming her Faction, Jasmine has united the forces of good to keep the Mid-Realm free, and at peace. Bardulf's Faction is built on subterfuge, using spies and assassins to penetrate enemy defenses. Melantha is an evil sorceress who has conjured up a magical demon force to fight for her. Thorgall has a mighty, defensive army to rebuff any possible attacks. Each Faction has different strengths and weaknesses, the end result being a delicate balance of power in which each Faction is an even match for another. In the course of the game, Factions will come into possession of certain magical items which will tip this balance and eventually resolve the four-way struggle for control.

The object is to either be the first to collect three powerful magic items inside one's Castle or to have the last standing Castle in the game. To accomplish this, each Faction may use combat, magic, spying, assassination, bribes, politics, or special powers of that Faction. A little chance and a lot of strategy play important roles in determining a winner.

Options abound for the players of *JASMINE*. Since one can only hold seven

cards at a time, players must continually choose whether to play, save, protect, or discard their holdings. If a magical item is used in combat, the player doing so runs the risk of losing it. But if the magical item is not used, the same player may be overpowered and an Army or Leader of that Faction may be destroyed. Armies and Leaders may be placed on the Battlefield (made available for combat) or used to protect the player's Castle (by adding to the Castle's defensive strength because of their presence within it). The exact deployment of a Faction's force is unknown by an opponent until the opponent's attack is made. A player's choice of deployment between the Battlefield

and the Castle can be changed each turn and is not irrevocable.

The game includes some innovations, such as the Politics card, which gives the Faction using it two minutes or less to make a mutually binding verbal agreement between players. Instead of permanently annihilating them, opposition leaders can be taken prisoner in the victor's Castle after combat. The Unicorn card will bring a dead Leader back to life. The Underworld card allows the trade of a living Leader for a dead one. The East Wind card will automatically free any one Leader from being held prisoner. If fewer than four persons play, neutral Factions (those not directly controlled

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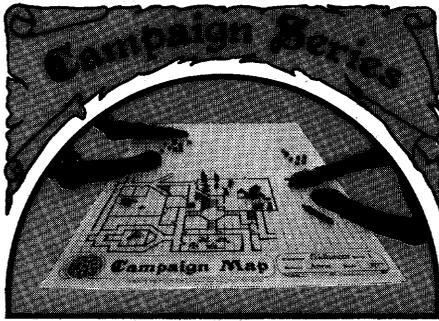
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by a player) can be turned to one's advantage.

The many options and exceptions work well together. The rule alterations caused by Special cards and Faction combinations are reminiscent of the alien powers used in *Cosmic Encounters*. The game balance seems to tip to one Faction's advantage, but is then countered by defensive combinations. Thorgall has overpowering military strength early in the game and should use it before the magic-users can collect their necessary items. Bardulf can look at opponent's cards by spying on them, and can use a Crystal Ball to look at face-down cards in the draw pile. Melantha can use the West Wind to take two Leaders prisoner. Jasmine can use the Staff of Erlkyng to appear in two places at one time. All such advantages are important to the Faction eligible to use them, and for a player to have the best chance of victory, they should be used.

The artwork is worth the price of the game. I have visions of fantasy role-players using the cards as visual aids. Cards depicting nomadic barbarians, battle maidens, dwarven clans, reindeer, and polar bear mounts could be used to illustrate chance encounters. Particular magic items or Castle cards could be used to help players better visualize what a game master is describing. Buyers get three products for the price of

one: a game, an assortment of visual aids, and a set of quality fantasy art.

As the rules state, the description of the cards is a section that "must be read in order to have a full knowledge of the rules." Darlene isn't kidding! By the time I read through the description of the Event cards, I wanted a quick reference chart to refer to — and, not surprisingly, one is provided. The Faction and command symbols make sense as long as I remembered I could use particular Leaders to command particular forces. (The symbols appear on each card belonging to a set.) Playing the game with someone who knew it already was the best way for me to learn the rules. As with many games, experience is the best teacher, and I quickly saw the "whys" and "hows" of the game system. The game may be a bit much for beginning fantasy gamers, but strategists will love it. It plays quickly, and combat is relatively simple to resolve. Two-, three-, and four-player games each have a different twist, depending on which Factions are controlled by active players and which Factions begin the game as neutrals.

Persons familiar with Darlene's art will want to get a copy of *JASMINE*, as will card-game collectors. Players of *Nuclear War*, *Sqwyrn*, or *Power Play* will see that *JASMINE* incorporates a few old ideas with many new ones to create a fresh approach in card gaming.

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The Role of Books, Part Two

Change-of-pace adventure venues

by Lewis Pulsipher

All too often, referees of fantasy role-playing games run adventures nowhere but the "dungeon" — a very illogical

place, when you think about it — or the wildest area of the great outdoors. Consequently, many interesting variations on adventure venues are never encountered by the players. There are many

books available which can help referees imagine and design "someplace different" to use instead of the old hole-in-the-ground; several are described in the following column.

Life in a Medieval City

by Joseph and Frances Gies

\$4.95 (paperback), 288 pages

pub. 1981 Harper (originally 1969)

Every well-developed FRP campaign includes at least one city, even if the adventurers are actually based in a small village. A city exists to provide a focus for services and manufacturing facilities which no small congregation of people can supply, and sooner or later adventurers are going to require these facilities. In so far as most FRP campaigns have a strong medieval flavor, the more a referee knows about conditions in medieval cities, the more authentic his city will seem and the less he'll suffer from ignorance when asked questions by the players. Unfortunately, most FRP rules, supplements, modules, and articles, though often useful, leave much unsaid about cities.

Life in a Medieval City takes care of

this "information gap" in a thorough and readable manner. Almost every aspect of city life in northern France of 1250 is described. ("Almost every," because some information we might desire no longer exists. For example, you won't find any crime statistics here.) The city of Troyes, in Flanders, sheltered 10,000 inhabitants, as well as hundreds of merchants during two annual mercantile fairs which were famous throughout western Europe. As such it was a city more well-known, and more often written about, than most.

This book was written by amateur (but thorough) historians for non-historians. The authors go from such mundane details as clothing (there were no pockets, but buttonholes would soon be invented) and storage (ever wonder why the Greeks and Romans used pottery containers? — barrels were a medieval invention), to taxes, and finally to such

generalities as the form of government and the guild system. We learn that while cathedrals normally took centuries to construct, with sufficient funds a great church could be built in as little as 33 months. One of the most surprising aspects of life is how regulation — often stemming from religion — affected so much, even the size of a loaf of bread.

The book's chapter titles are: *Troyes 1250, A Burghers Home, A Medieval Housewife, Childbirth and Children, Weddings and Funerals, Small Business, Big Business, The Doctor, The Church, The Cathedral, School and Scholars, Books and Authors, The New Theater, Disasters, Town Government, The Champagne Fair, and After 1250.*

It's not necessary to know much about the Middle Ages to understand this book. Anyone who runs a medieval campaign would profit from it.

(Continued on following page)

How to use these books and not spend a fortune

Many of the books examined in this column (and future columns in this series) will be available only in fairly expensive editions, or will be out of print. Since most of the books will only be indirectly valuable to gamers, as opposed to, actual game aids which are directly applicable to a game, few readers will want to lay out large sums to purchase the books even if they're available. So how can you avoid spending the money and still use and enjoy the books?

First, you can borrow them from your local public library, or read them in a library. College and university libraries are probably more likely to have a given book, but even if you can't borrow books from such libraries, many will allow you to use their books in the building. It doesn't hurt to phone or visit to ask about the library's policy.

If libraries you can use don't have a book you want, you can ask them to buy it if it's still in print. Perhaps the library will be inclined to take the requests of adults more seriously than those of younger persons, but in any case most librarians *want* to know what their patrons are interested in. Once again, it doesn't hurt to ask, and if you and several friends all request the same book (at

different times), the library is more likely to buy it. In some cases showing the librarian a copy of the column from this magazine may help.

If your local library won't purchase the book, or can't because it's out of print, ask about an inter-library loan policy. Any library can borrow books from another library, even one in another state. There will be very few books a library can't borrow from somewhere, but the question is how much it might cost you. Some libraries charge patrons nothing, others sometimes charge and sometimes don't, depending on whether the lending library charges the borrowing library, and some libraries routinely charge the patron for their trouble. A typical charge can vary from a few dollars to as much as ten dollars a book. But it won't cost you anything to ask what they charge. Generally you'll be able to keep the book a week or two, usually no more.

If none of these avenues bears fruit, try looking for the book in second-hand bookstores. Prices are, naturally, much lower than list, yet a used book is just as readable as a new book. Ask around.

If there aren't many second-hand bookstores in your area, you can consider mail-order booksellers. A few of

them sell used books, but most specialize in publishers' overstocks and remainders. Overstocks are sold because the publisher feels it has more copies on hand than it can sell normally through bookstores. By selling its extra books cheaply, the publisher reduces inventory and consequently reduces taxes and storage costs. Remainders are books for which there is no further demand from bookstores. The publisher sells them at a large discount to a mail-order firm, since some revenue is better than none. In either case, the books cost around half of list price, plus postage (which is less per book the more books you order at one time). The mail-order catalogs describe each book in one sentence or one paragraph (with some exaggeration, I might add), and books are categorized by subject. For a free catalog, write to one or both of these mail-order houses:

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yet either milieu could be used by a gaming referee.

Pyramid may be the least interesting of these three books. At least it shows that, charlatans' claims to the contrary, there are no mysteries about how the Egyptians built the pyramids. Ingenuity and immense amounts of hard work can result in creations seemingly too awesome to be made by ordinary men. One of the simplest tricks, to lower a huge block into a small room below ground level or to use two huge blocks for a peaked roof (the Egyptians constructed no arches), was to fill the room or area with dirt, put the block(s) on top, then remove the dirt. Tedious, but how else would you do it without a crane?

Macaulay's book *Cathedral* has unfortunately disappeared from local libraries, but is undoubtedly worth reading. Castles, cities, and pyramids make good adventure locations, but I've found that a cathedral provides fascinating tactical problems. If you can't find *Cathedral* either, any book about a particular European cathedral should do. Most non-specialist libraries will have a few such volumes, some with extensive floor plans, most with many photos.

Finally, note that Macaulay's *Underground* and *Great Moments in Architecture*, though similar to the above books, are not applicable to fantasy role-playing. The first is about rail subways,

highway tunnels, and so forth, and the other is a weak attempt at humor.

Life in a Medieval Castle

by Joseph and Frances Gies

\$3.95, 269 pages

published by Harper, 1979

This book complements rather than duplicates the material in Macaulay's *Castle*. The text discusses development of the castle, but the descriptions of structures are not always clear, and the single diagram (of Chepstow Castle) and photos do not help much.

The authors devote most of the book to feudalism and the way of life in castles and villages, subjects not touched on by Macaulay. As in their other medieval book, the authors describe the routine of life in detail, down to the special days of the calendar and the superiority of the fireplace (a medieval invention) to the central hearth for heating a room. Feudal obligations (of both lord and vassal) dominated "castle" life, of course.

This book gives a more accurate impression of medieval life than *Life in a Medieval City*, if only because all but a small fraction of the population lived outside cities. Consequently, if you want to learn about medieval life in general, read *Medieval Castle* before *Medieval City*, but if you know quite a bit about the era already, the latter book will probably be more useful for gaming.

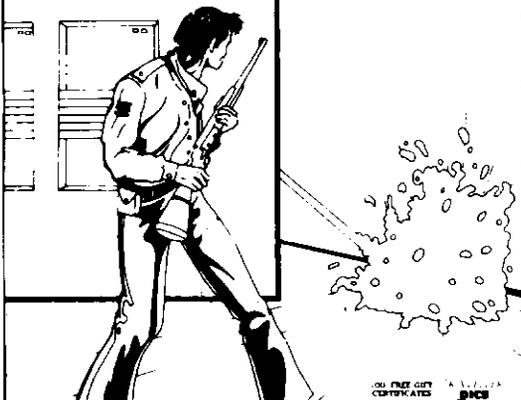
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Castle

80 pages, pub. 1977

City, a Story of Roman Planning and Construction

112 pages, pub. 1974

Pyramid

80 pages, pub. 1975

All written by David Macaulay, published by Houghton Mifflin; all pages 9" by 12"; all available in hardcover for \$10-13 each; Pyramid issued in paperback in April 1982.

These books are aimed at the "juvenile" audience, and may perhaps be found in the non-adult section of your library — but, as someone once said, if a book isn't good reading for an adult, it's not worth publishing, regardless of the intended readership. These books are certainly worth adult reading, treating each subject simply but thoroughly in both text and drawings. I suspect that David Macaulay is primarily an artist who has found a niche in this complementary form of art and text. While there is nothing outstanding about his line drawings, they show you exactly what he, as the author, wants to illustrate.

All the books follow the same pattern. Each discusses and illustrates the construction of a complex of buildings. One or two paragraphs of explanation accompany a large drawing on each page or two-page spread. Drawings range from panoramic views of the building

site, to plans of buildings or rooms, to depictions of tools used during the construction. The construction used as an example is fictional, but typical, and is followed from conception to completion, with names given to the principal participants so that there is a story, of sorts, to follow. Each book ends with a one-page glossary. Unfortunately, there is no bibliography.

Castle describes a typical siege as well as showing how the castle (and associated village) is built. Macaulay explains why the typical movie climax where a good guy cuts the rope to lower the drawbridge to let the other good guys into the castle wouldn't work, because a counterweight kept the drawbridge up unless the rope held it down. Toilets, chimneys, lighting, the dungeon (a single room at the bottom of one tower with access only through a trap door in the ceiling) all are explained.

City describes the construction, on a vacant site, of a Roman city in the time of Augustus. Some of the edifices described are a large bridge, a gatehouse, the walls, the coliseum, the aqueduct, sewers, and the baths. The most surprising aspect of a Roman city, to my mind, is the snack bars scattered through it. Somehow snack bars seem terribly modern, but this merely shows again that few ideas are really new. The contrasts between this city and Troyes are extensive,

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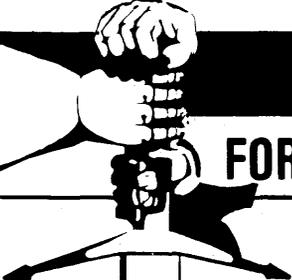
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(Continued from page 4)

could certainly memorize most stories, prayers, rules, and teachings of their religion. Bards, as an example, practice much the same sort of mass memorization when learning songs. At higher levels (around fifth level), a cleric may be required to read and write in order to play a greater role in the church, but until then there is no reason to think that a cleric need be literate.

If we assume, as the author suggests, that the magic-user's requirement of nine points of intelligence is the minimum literacy score, then both the paladin and ranger easily qualify, even though they are fighter sub-classes and cannot use scrolls. Furthermore, paladins and rangers gain clerical and magic-user spell abilities respectively, and the author proposes that both clerics and magic-users must be literate. Like the fighter, both sub-classes may construct a stronghold, so that argument for literacy applies in both cases.

It is absurd to suggest that monks cannot read nor write because they cannot use scrolls — a fallacy we hope we have exposed — and since they do not gain the thieving skill of *reading languages* are we to conclude, then, that monks have no fingers because they do not *pickpockets*? If the monk class is to have any basis in the Oriental martial arts, it should be noted that many schools of the martial arts

granted certificates of graduation, giving authority and prestige to their students. These certificates were not meaningless scribbles to the students. In fact, monastic orders of this kind were often the keepers of education, much like the Roman Catholic Church was during the Dark Ages.

We feel that the article is most mistaken with regard to druids. The statement that "all we know about the true druids and their culture indicates that they were anti-literate" is contradicted by the historical fact that the druids developed their own written and spoken language, known as Ogham. This tongue was the root of the Gaelic languages and was certainly used often by the druids in their capacity as dispensers of lore and justice to the Celtic peoples. Clearly, the true druids were not anti-literate, and the game variety should not be considered as such.

Language and literacy rules can be added into a campaign without reworking or ignoring any rules. Furthermore, language proficiency should be a product of circumstance and character background — not of character class or the ability to read scrolls. We disagree with the author's assumption that the gods developed language and gave it to the creatures of the Prime Material Plane. It is, of course, a question answered by each campaign's theology, but we would like to be

noted as putting in a vote of support for development of language by mortals. After all, why would a language suitable for god-like intellects be even comprehensible to average minds?

The use of varied languages and alphabets will enhance any campaign. While few players or characters will take the time to master the linguistics of a world, the individuality and life of both disparate and related tongues will add an originality that will be appreciated by everyone.

Stephen Howard
Stig Hedlund
Winnetka, Ill.

Illusionist ideas

Dear Editor:

Being quite fond of illusionists, I read issue #66 of DRAGON Magazine with some interest, and decided it would be worth offering my reactions.

First, I disagree with Tom Armstrong's assumption that there is no physical element in illusionary damage — that it's entirely a product of mental shock. It's a well-known fact that a hypnotized man with his hands in lukewarm water will blister and receive burns if he is told the water is scalding hot. In the same fashion, as I see it, an illusionary fireball could fry a body to a crisp, even though its effects were mental. The same thing will apply to other forms of attack, like wounds. Some readers may have heard of stigmata — wounds which spontaneously open and bleed in imitation of Christ on the cross (at least, I take this as an example of mind-over-body; those who

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take it as a religious sign will have to bear with me).

Now, the reason Mr. Armstrong stressed the illusory nature of damage was to argue that an illusionist couldn't create an illusory cleric to heal wounds; however, even if illusions are capable of affecting the body physically, as I assume, this doesn't mean the body can be healed the same way. After all, it takes more effort to build up than to destroy, so it might take a far more powerful spell than a *phantasmal force*, or even a *spectral force*, to work healing magic like this. A *mirage arcane* spell might be powerful enough (since it allows the subjects to eat phantasmal food and be nourished), but that's sixth level. I would assume that nothing less than a fifth level spell could actually rebuild the body (excepting special ones such as *dispel exhaustion*). Even then, I'd insist that if the party knew the cleric was illusionary, they couldn't summon up enough belief to heal themselves. This would put pretty reasonable limits on the use of the spell, I think — the only way you could effectively use an illusory cleric would be if you were high enough to have a *permanent illusion* of one following you around, and didn't tell the others in your party.

I agree that saving throws should be improved if the illusionist is unfamiliar with his subject, and adjusted for *phantasmal force* (as opposed to *spectral force*), the way Quinn and Young suggest. However, I wouldn't improve saves quite as much as they do (a maximum of +2 if the illusionist has never seen the subject before). After all, an illusion does have one sizable weakness over a magic-user spell: a fireball cast by a magic-user does damage even if the subject makes a save, but

a phantasmal fireball disbelieved is entirely useless — no damage at all. That in itself limits the power of illusory attacks. I also think saves should be reduced if the illusion is particularly convincing for some reason. For example: a magic-user uses a *wand of frost*, then an illusionist creates a phantasmal *cone of cold* while holding the same wand.

Mr. Armstrong suggests that some monsters may not be affected by illusions if they fail to recognize, say, that a fireball is actually a form of fire. I probably wouldn't take that into consideration in my dungeon, but if I did, it would work to the advantage of illusionists as well; intelligent creatures or characters who have not seen a fireball or a blue dragon (but had the intelligence to know what it was) would probably save at a minus, since they lack the familiarity to spot any errors in the illusion.

Finally, I think the new illusionist spells are outstanding — good job, Mr. Gygax.

Well, since I have the typewriter going, I'd also like to add something on the subject of languages. Both articles on this subject were excellent, but there was one aspect they didn't touch upon. Just as Eskimo, in our world, contains over a dozen different terms for "snow," some languages in a D&D game will go into certain subjects in far more detail. Druidic speech, for example, might have ten to twenty words that all translate into "withered tree" or "dense forest," since a non-druid wouldn't perceive any distinction between the terms. It's a minor point, of course, but it could cause some confusion, since even a *tongues* spell would probably be unable to clear things up. ("The druid's crazy! He keeps saying we should meet under the oak with

green leaves!" "No, you fools! I didn't say green leaves, I said *green leaves!*")

Fraser Sherman
Ft. Walton Beach, Fla.

Game credit

Dear Editor:

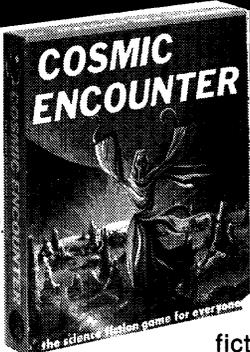
We would like to make public the fact that the name of David R. Megarry was erroneously omitted from the list of credits in the first print run of the DUNGEON!™ computer game. We wish to acknowledge that the DUNGEON! computer game is based upon the DUNGEON!™ boardgame by David R. Megarry, and Mr. Megarry's name will be included in the credits of all future print runs of the DUNGEON! computer game.

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Correction

The advertisement for Entertainment Concepts, Inc., on page 23 of issue #68 was in error. The deadline for players to enter the *Silverdawn* game and receive a discount should have been Feb. 1, 1983 — not Oct. 1, as printed.

Dragon Publishing regrets the error, and we apologize for any confusion or inconvenience the mistake may have caused.



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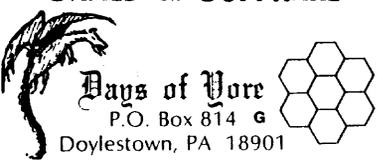
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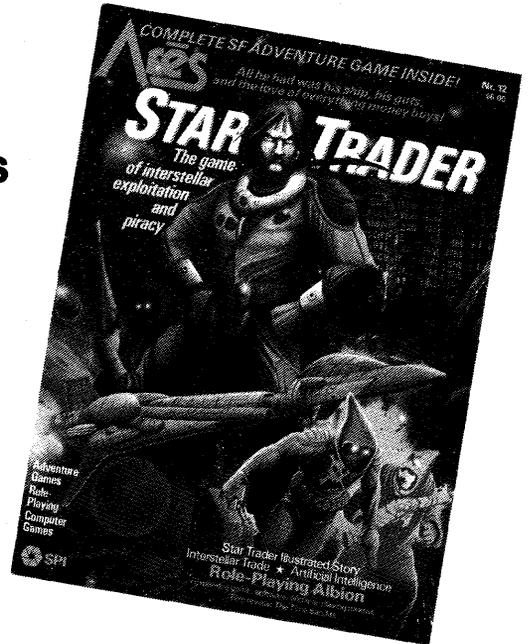
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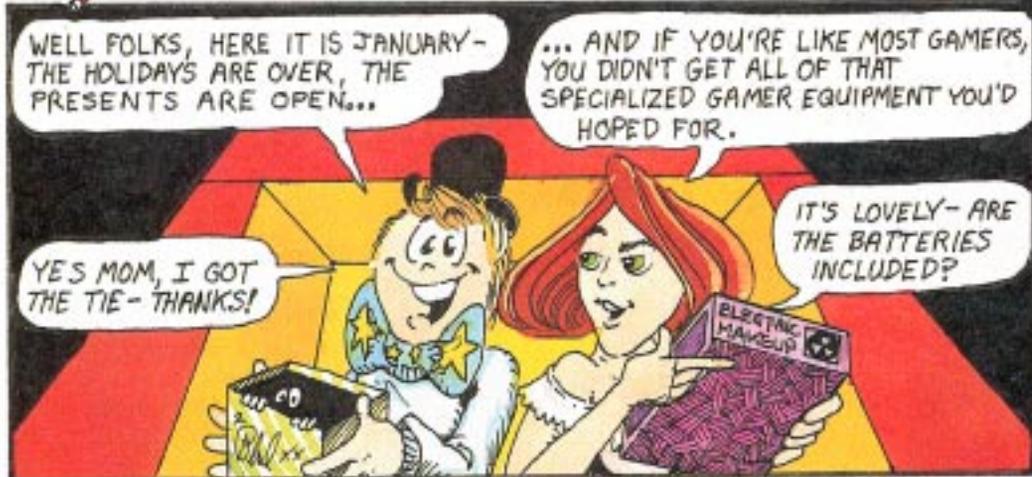
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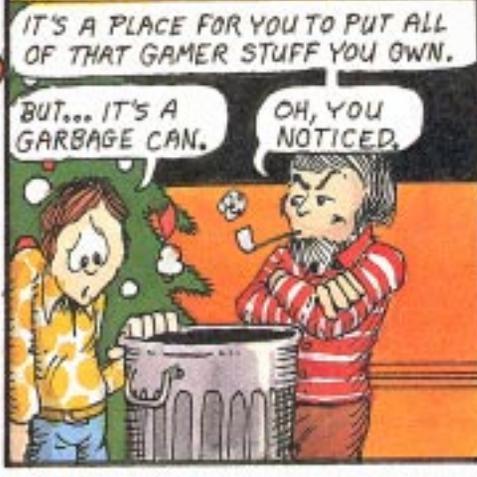
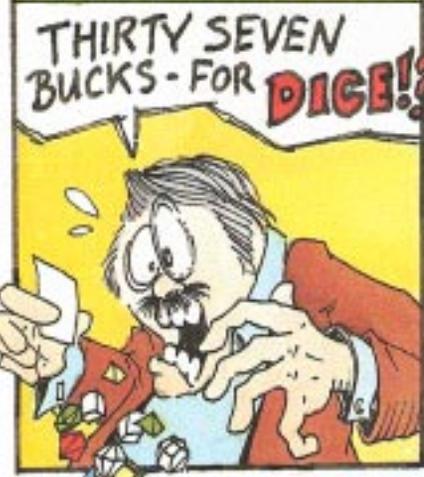
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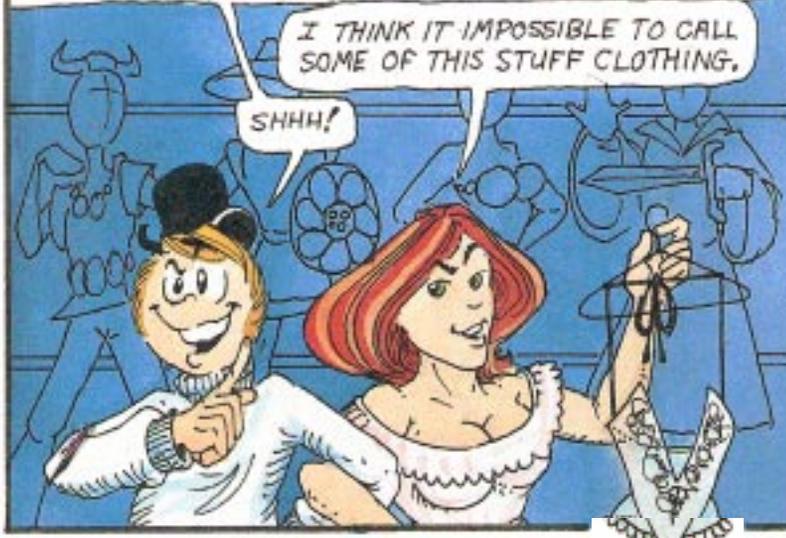
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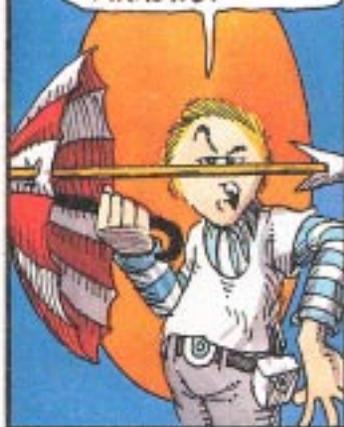
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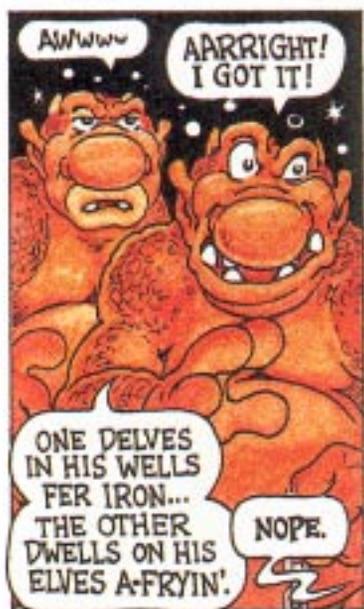
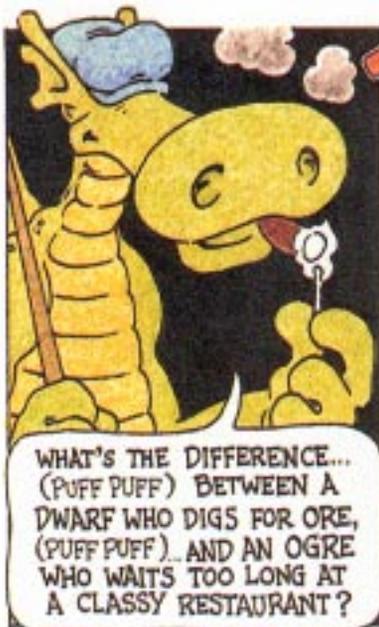


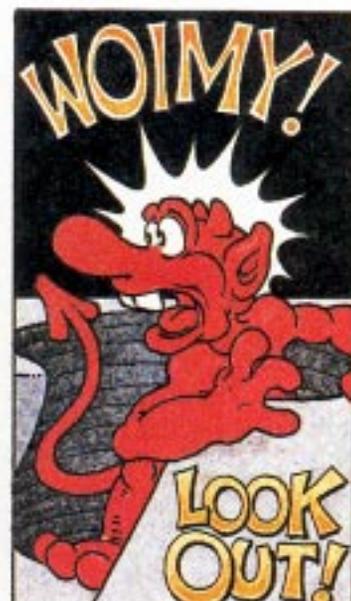
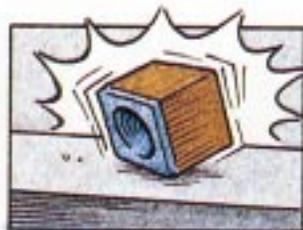
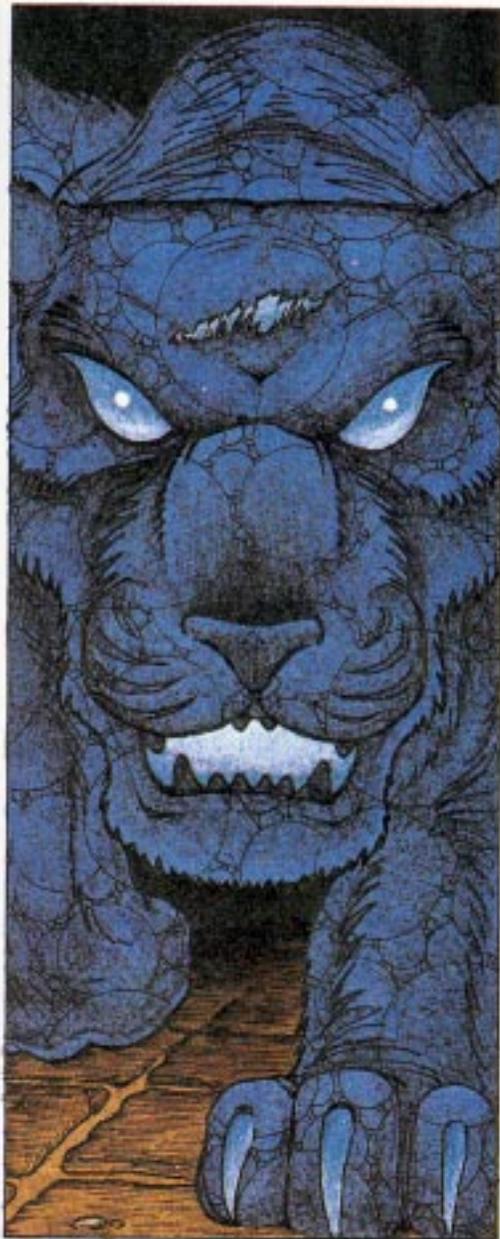
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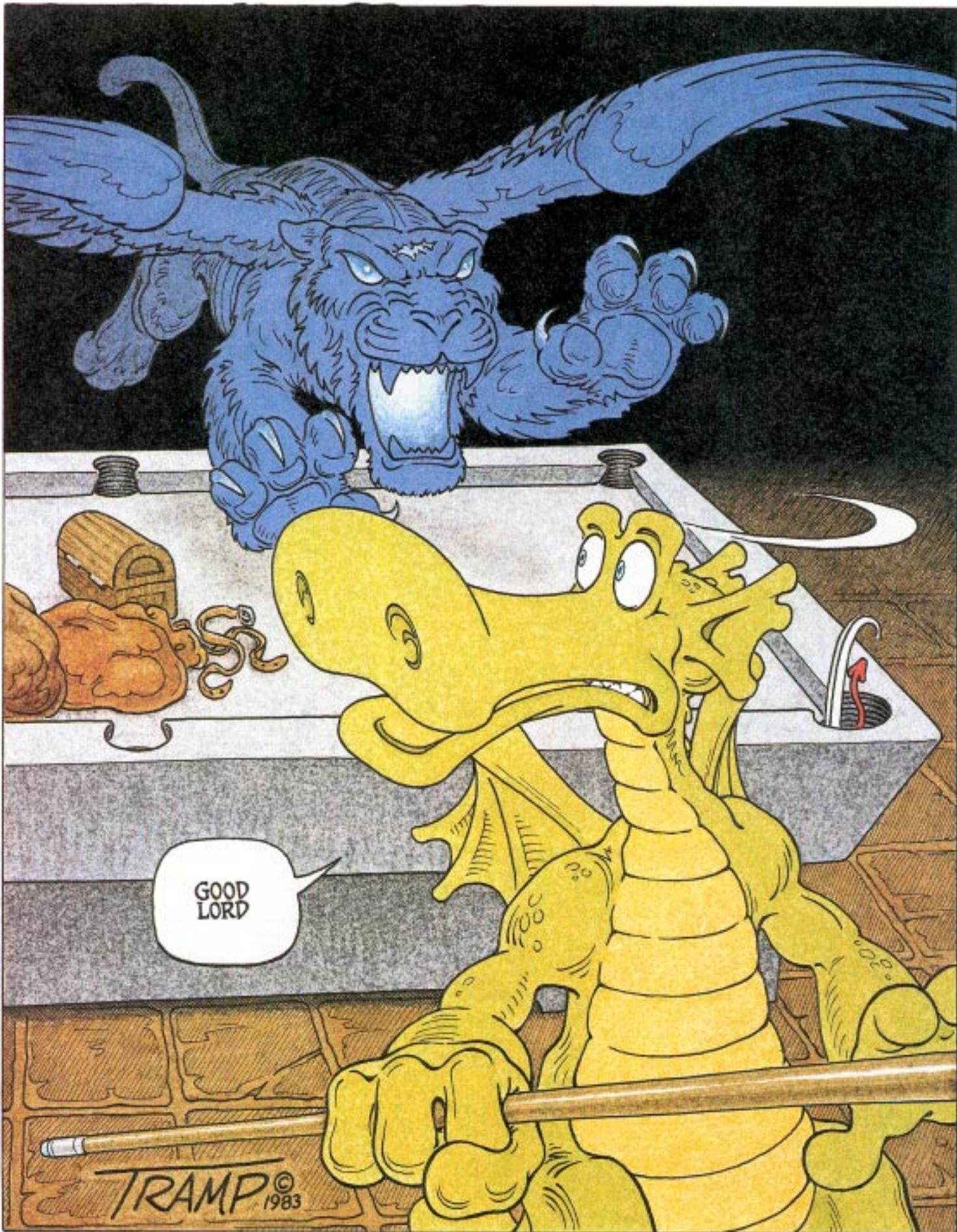


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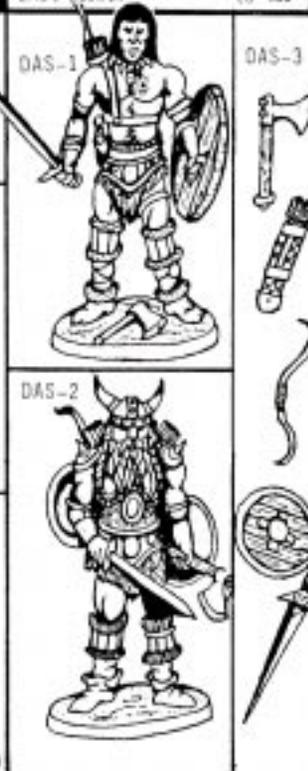


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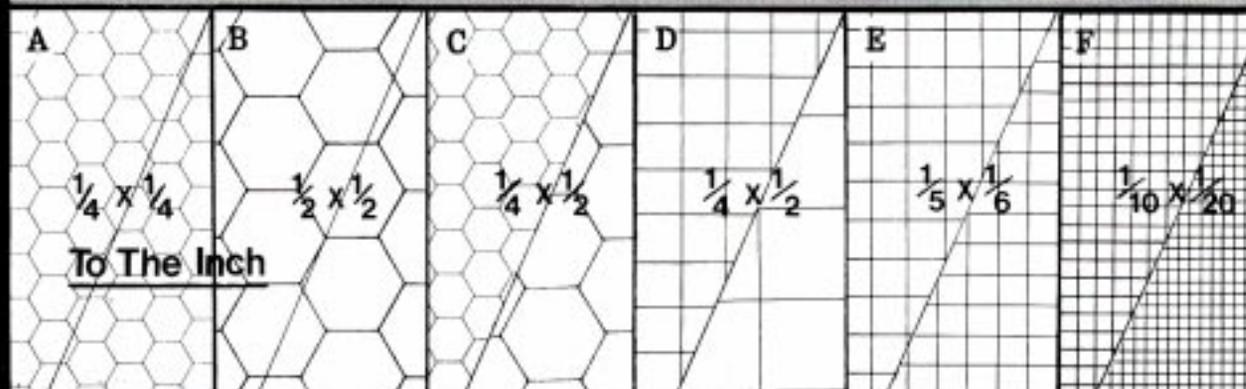
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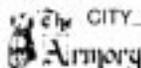
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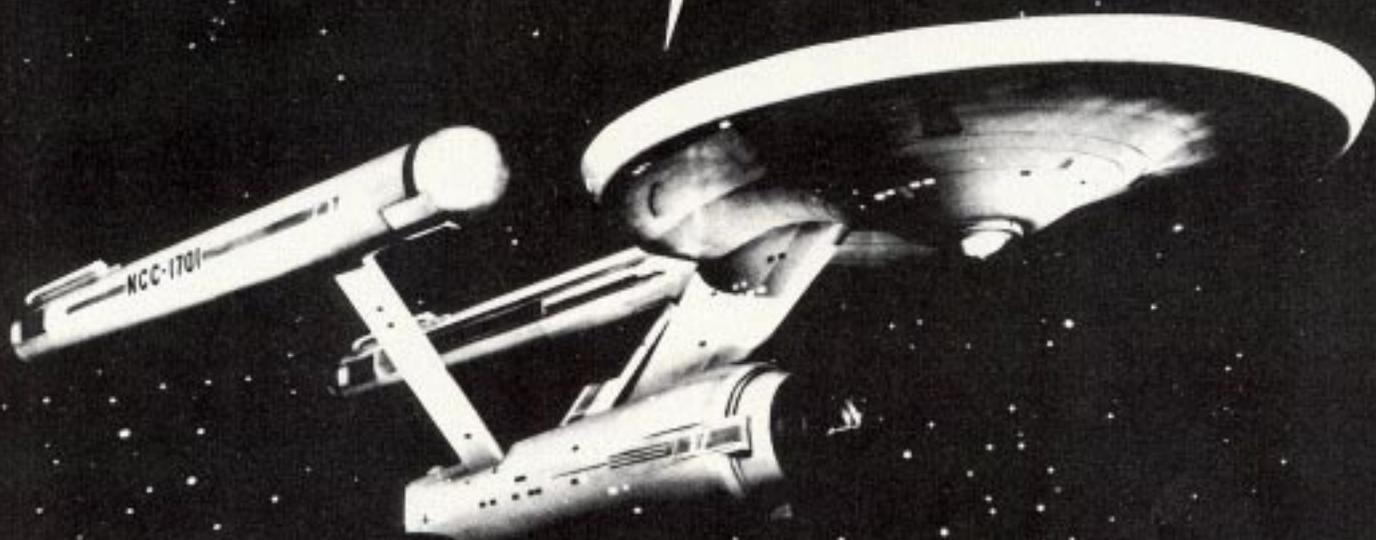


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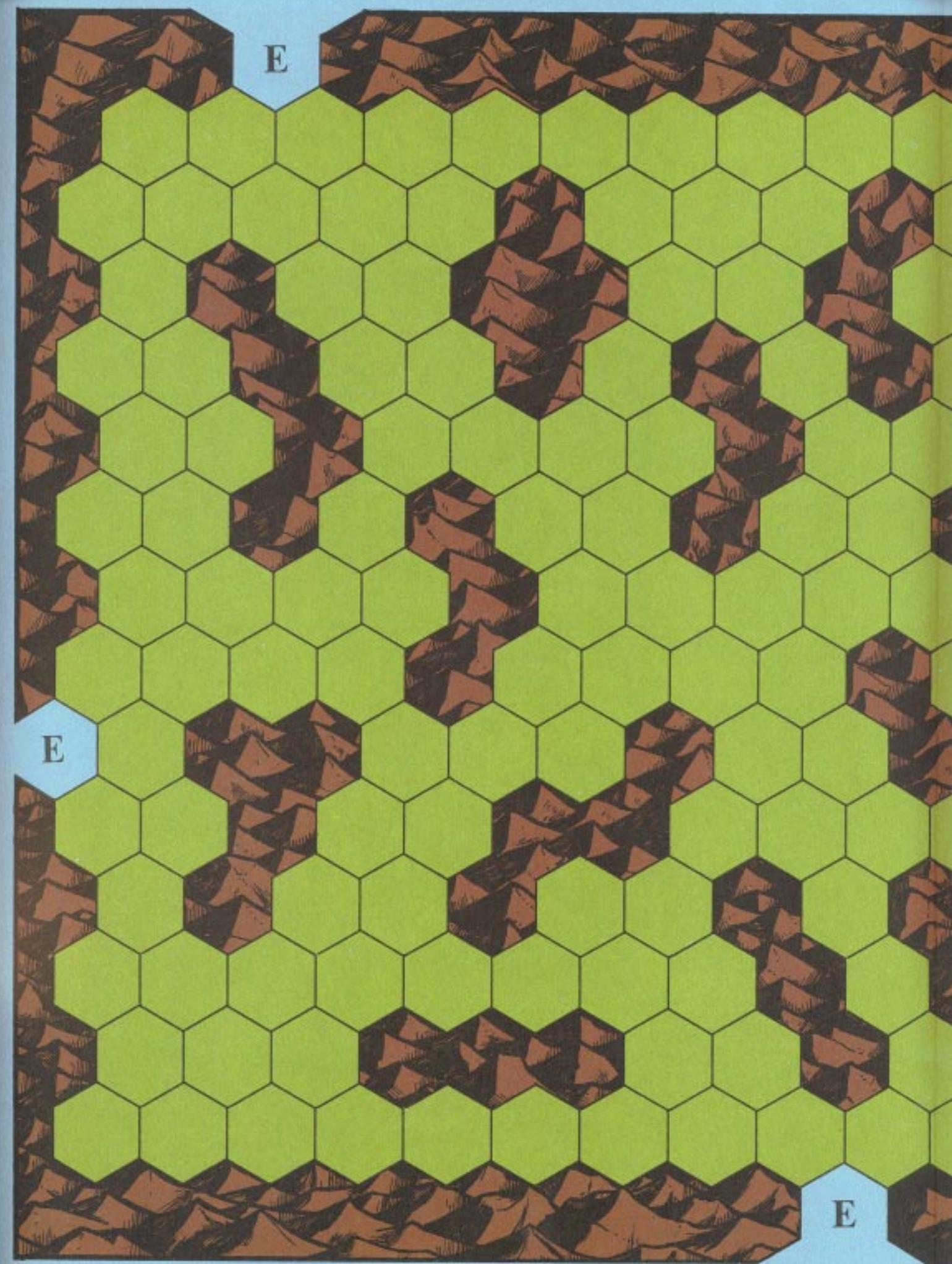
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