

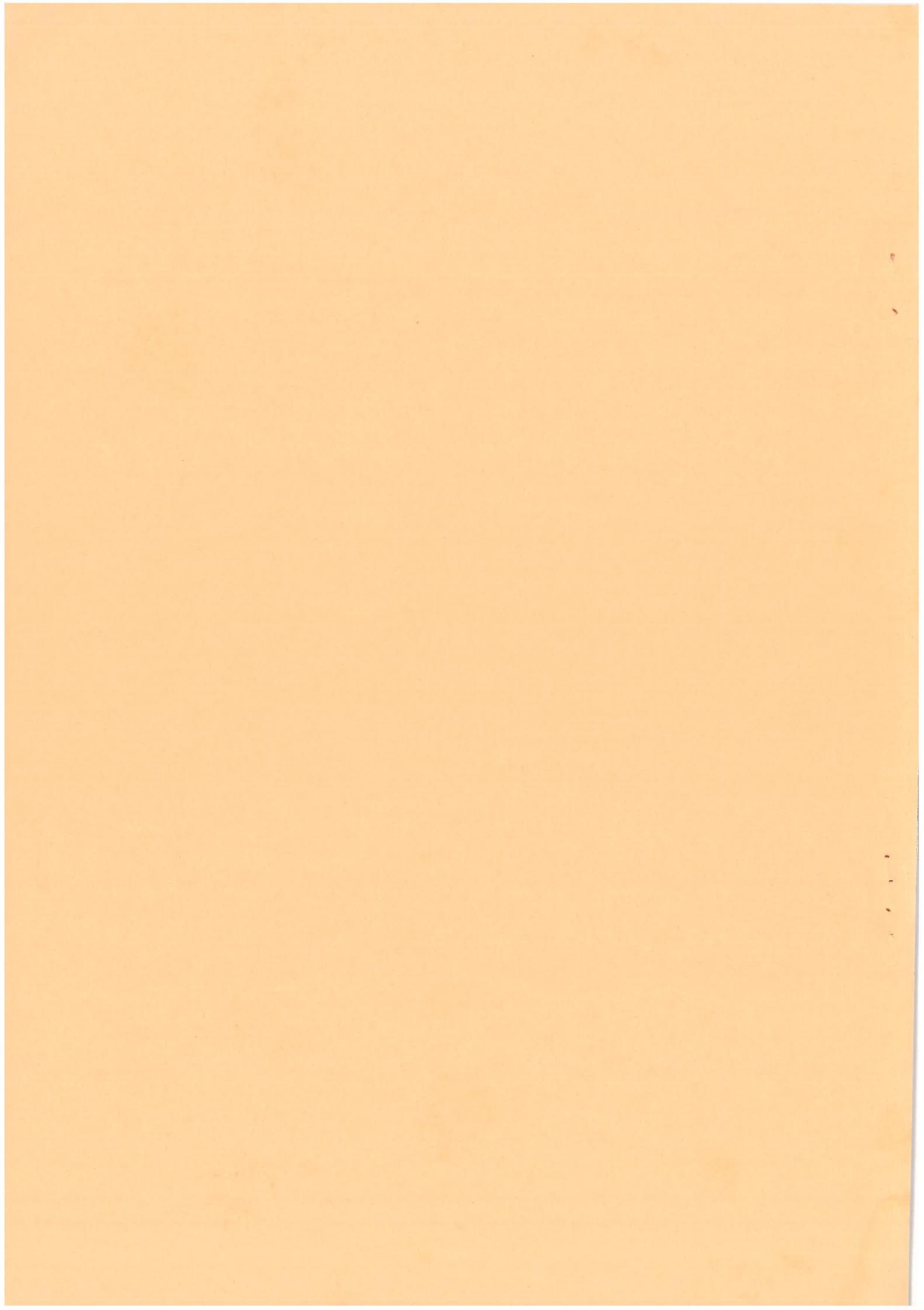
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QUEENSLAND WARGAMER

No 28 April 1989

Special 10th Anniversary issue!





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The Queensland Wargamer is the journal
of the Queensland University Games
Society.

Published irregularly during the year.

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Editorial by Timo

Welcome to yet another issue of the Queensland Wargamer, our first for this year, but then it is our April issue, and in true QUGS style is issuing in September. This year is not only the tenth anniversary of the club, but also of the magazine, so to mark this occasion we have done nothing in particular. In this issue, the centrepiece (to be found in the middle) is a truly wonderful solo adventure written by Garth Nix which first appeared in Breakout magazine. We also have in this issue some old Norse SF and reviews.

Current Happenings: On the 2nd of September, we had our [drum roll] QUGS AGM. Your new QUGS executive is:

President: Paul Kinsler

Editor: Timo Nieminen.

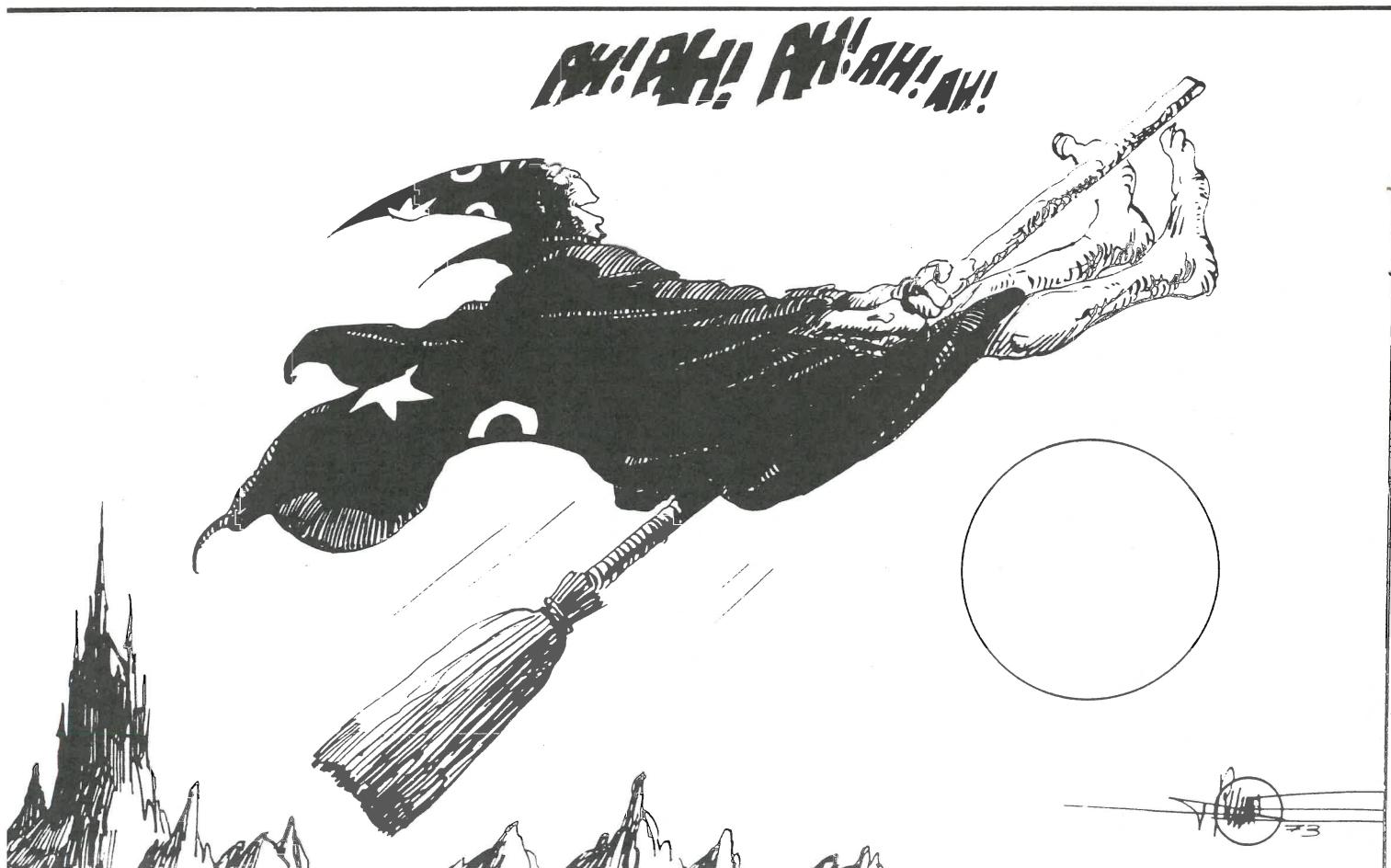
Treasurer: Neil Mack

Custodian: Jack Ford

Secretary: vacant

Vice-president: vacant

The president and myself can be contacted through the Physics Department. The president, incidentally only became a member at the AGM. How many other people have become president of QUGS on the same day as they join. If anybody out there wants to be the secretary, see Jack Ford. See you next issue. (Which may even come out later this year!?)



Yes folks, QUGS is more than a decade old, which makes it one of the longest existing clubs in Queensland.

Origins of UQWS (ie. QUGS)

In 1978 a small group of UQ students and former students, who were all involved to some degree in figurine wargaming, began to think about getting together on a more formal basis as a club or society. We were prompted partly by the desire for a regular venue in which we could play, and partly by the benefits of a formal organisation; my own desire was to see some sort of magazine produced with articles of specific interest to wargamers.

Soon after the idea was floated, we discovered that the Student's Union Clubs and Societies people actually gave money to approved organizations - here was the big time! Certain conditions had to be met first, though. Drawing up a constitution was easy enough - though productive of some acrimonious debate on the relative powers of the executive positions. The big stumbling-block was gathering the required minimum number of members (30, I think), of which two-thirds had to be UQ students.

However, we did it, and by the end of 1978 had officially formed the University of Queensland Wargaming Society, recognized by Clubs and Socos. "We" in this context meant a handful of keen types: Noel Bugeia, John Sandercock, Ken Toohey, Dal Davies and myself. Once the society was up and running, friends of friends did manage to expand the membership quite well - I remember, though, that we were constantly worried about meeting the required percentage of student membership. At one time it was suggested that we have two membership lists, one "real" and one for Union examination! Fortunately, this never proved necessary.

The Society began producing a newsletter (later a Journal) in 1979, and it stumbled from issue to issue thereafter. As founding editor I had enormous difficulty in getting contributions (a lot of the early articles I wrote myself); and my successor, Kevin Flynn, had the same problem. It seems there will always be a small minority keen to write about what interests them, and conceited enough to run a magazine to be published in!

Soon after UQWS was founded, the initial dominant interest in figurine wargaming began to fade; most of the membership was principally interested in either boardgames or fantasy gaming. While there has never been a hard and fast division along these lines, it did mean that within a couple of years the founding group had little in common with the rest of the Society, and we tended to drift away. I do, however, remember with pleasure the way we managed to sting the Student's Union for large sums of money (\$30 or \$40 a year, as I recall), in order to indulge our personal interests. And that, I

think was why we set up UQWS in the first place.

David Bugler ex-member and now Thatcher Library staff member.

Postscript: By 1983 the club was being referred to as the Games Society, as the Union objected to the term "war" in our name. Soon after this the name was restructured to read Queensland University Games Society, or QUGS for short. This was a dig at the fantasy role-players who made up the bulk of the club's membership. At various times, the club President has been officially titled as "Das Führer", but this has been dropped because it offended the Union and some of our members. In 1985, the club reached the big time, membership wise, with 50 members! Some of Davids comments about the apathy of the initial membership still apply today.

Jack Ford

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FOR PROTECTING GAMING MAGAZINES AND COMICS.

90 CENTS EACH

CONTACT JACK FORD ON 371 1611 (W) OR AT THE UNION



A traveller scenario from Briscon 5, 1989, happily provided by Keith.

Under Pressure

Referees Note: Here is the plot, pure and simple.

Players are given a System Defence Boat with which they are to neutralise an interdiction base left by Solomani forces who had to leave this planet when the Imperial forces beat them in fleet combat. The interdiction base effectively covers a 1000 km radius "failsafe" zone where no surface or air vehicles can operate, therefore reducing all Imperial attempts to reuse the major facilities on this planet, including a "C" type starport which is important to the Daibei forces to repair some damage that was done to their ships in combat with the Solomani. The Daibeian Star Fleet has set up another starport on the planet, but as the interdicted port is on the only sizable island, the new base could only be rated an "E" type and that is only if you were very generous. So the players (who are members of the Daibeian Star Force) have been ordered to clear this obstacle or else they will be charged with their various crimes and misdeeds. The players will be given a standard System Defence Boat, which is all that is available to be spared from the battle.

Players introduction:

The players are met by Force Commander Joshua "Kerr" Splatt, Commander of Ground Forces, Sturay.

"Good morning, 'gentlemen'", with a sneer on his face as he says it, "I can see you have all 'volunteered' for this vital mission. Up until now you have been kept in the dark concerning the mission, but now all can be revealed. What we want you to do is to neutralize a Solomani interdiction base that was left behind by those fascist Solomani, and because of this base we can't use the only sizable island on this Zhod forsaken dirtball. Now, there are three problems with taking out this base: one; it's under 4000 metres of water; two, it has nuclear dampers and meson screens, so we can't use anything long range on it and if we did it would trip past failsafe and nuke everything on this planet until it glows in the dark; and three, we want any information on this base so we can both build them ourselves and also use this one if we have to leave Sturay [ie this planet]. For those of you who are scouts or who like to collect useless information about planets, here are the stats given in the usual unhelpful Scout method:

Sturay 0304 C(E)-7646DD-B(M)-R600 Im

The letters in brackets refer to the new starport, and the interdiction base, and with the law level, you don't have to worry as you idiots are part of the military and it is only in place in case of Solomani sympathisers, but don't think you can go harassing the local population because the MPs will get you and we in the military are a lot more ruthless on our own when we are under martial law law than we are on the local population. Now, what we have to spare for this mission is one System Defence Boat. [Referees note: The SDB is built by Sagatech, but the one thing that Sagatech is good at is building weapon systems so that nothing will go wrong.) It has been streamlined and fitted out for subsurface work, because the only way the Top Brass can see of getting this base is through a submarine strike. Here is the map we were able to obtain [see map] of the basic layout of the base from orbital ladar mapping, but there are some inaccuracies due to water refraction and atmospheric dissipation, but no more than 5%. As you can see the base is surrounded by six outposts at 500 km range all with a 600 km passive detection range, creating an overlap at all the outposts. Between the outposts are a series of underwater railway lines on which heavy weaponry can be maneuvered along to create along with the main base's and the outpost's long range weaponry an interdiction area of up to 1100 km of which 1000 is absolutely impenetrable. What we recommend is you leave the set down point which will be 1500 km away from the central base and proceed quietly into the interdiction zone, and from there you are on your own, because we don't have any idea of how to deal with this thing but until you enter into the 1100 km zone we can communicate by rapid pulse sonar, but time is important, so dismissed and get immediately to the SDB because within one week we will need that Starport for vital reinforcement of the Star Fleet to be used against the Solomani. So dismissed and MOVE IT!!"

Referees Notes:

The players are shown a standard Sagatech System Defence Boat that has been highly streamlined and all external protuberances removed. The avionics bay has had a sonar put in place. The triple laser fitting has been removed and a missile rack has been fitted for bolts. (Bolts are short range anti-torpedo missiles which look very much like present day air-to-air missiles.) The other missile rack is retained but has long range torpedoes fitted instead; however these are not like present day torpedoes as they are fusion powered and use thruster plates for propulsion so they can go a long distance and at

any speed so as to avoid detection.

The streamlining and removal of extruberances makes the SDB quieter for its planned mission to attack the base. For any problems with SDBs consult supplement 7: Traders and Gunboats or supplement 9: Fighting Ships.

The Base

This is the big bogey of the adventure, and so it should be, for this base is a totally automated, (but don't tell the players that, so if they think it is manned by Solomani personnel when they get to the base, well and good.) self defending base, and in a small way able to replace some of its losses through the underwater MagLev lines to rearm a magazine that has run out.

The base lies at a depth of 4400m below the surface of the ocean, and at this depth there are about 450 atmospheres of pressure, so the players cannot leave the SDB without being crushed flatter than a pancake. (How's that for a change from explosive decompression.) The main reason for the depth is security of the base as anything coming down from orbit must travel the 4400m down, in which time the base can destroy it. (Also it stops the players from leaving the ship, and also to a great extent they can't separate into various groups, so once more we have created a restricted area for the players so they can't upset the system of Convention Playing.)

Its defences are as follows:

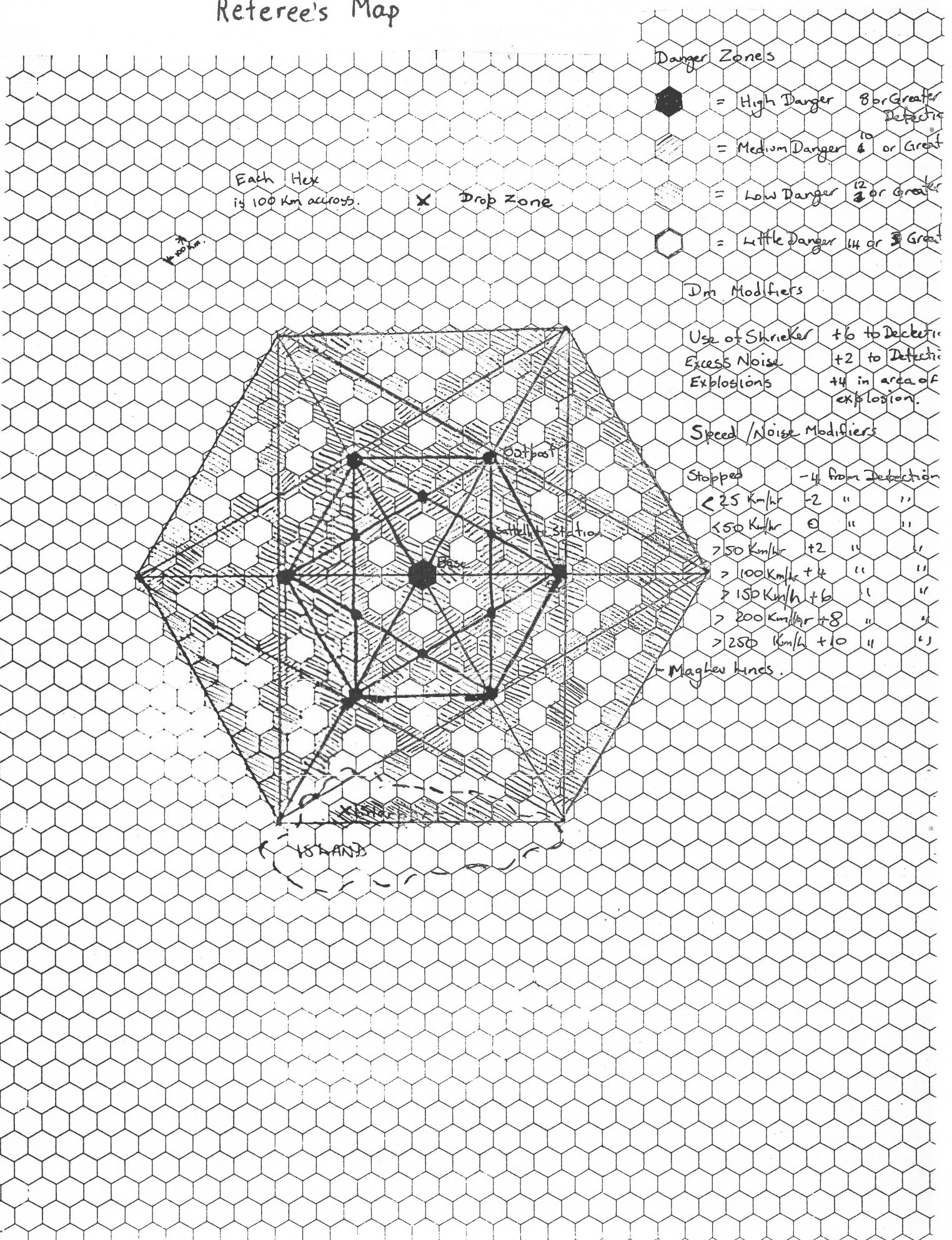
Air Defence:

Several buoy mounted ladar systems (LAser Direction And Range system.) that can be controlled such that almost as soon as something is detected the intensity of the laser in the ladar is increased into the equivalent of a pulse laser. This effectively denies all air access to the denial perimeter due to the MagLev carrying mobile ladar systems directed by over the horizon radar. (Very much like the soon to be introduced "Jindalee" system for use by the Australian Armed Forces.)

Surface Defence and Attack:

The base has many Harpoon or SubRoc style weapon systems that can be launched from below the surface and when at the surface the airborne missile detaches from the torpedo carrier and ignites, then proceeding to the target at wave top height. The means of detection of these surface vessels is a combination of acoustic detection, magnetic anomaly detection, and sonar.

Referee's Map



This therefore rules out any attempt at destruction of the base via this approach.

THIS LEAVES ONLY ONE APPROACH. THAT'S RIGHT, YOU GUESSED IT.

Submarine Detection, Attack, and Defence:

Sub-surface detection is carried out by the use of vast arrays of sound detectors set up beside the MagLev lines to try to detect the presence of a vessel by its varied sounds, including propeller rotation which produces noise in the water, engine noise, and even crew conversations if the vessel is close enough.

Active sonar is used at times but not unless the attacker is known to be very close as it could (a) drown out the sound detectors and (b) sonar can be put off by thermoclines (Temperature differences in the water.)

Attack: This is provided by torpedoes which are just like a standard space combat missile but the range is reduced greatly by the friction in the water, therefore giving an effective range of 50 km and the torpedoes that can be used by the base at its present alertness state are conventional, NOT NUCLEAR.

Defence: Defence is provided by short range missiles known as "bolts" which as mentioned above are capable of destroying any torpedo or other weapon systems sent at either the base or the satellite stations. The missile launchers on the MagLev lines are however left unprotected.

HOW THE SDB HAS BEEN CONVERTED TO GET THROUGH ALL THESE NASTIES:

Sound detection: Through streamlining and propulsion by thruster plates water disturbance has been reduced to almost zero as long as the SDB is moving at a speed of less than 50 kph, and the engine has been dampered so as to not create excess noise.

Internal noise should be kept to a minimum as well.

Vs Missiles: The SDB is carrying a store of 100 bolts which are best used in pairs. Also there are 10 decoys (which are launched from the main missile racks.) which create an exact sound duplicate of the SDB but are louder so as to draw more fire.

And in last defence there are "shriekers" which create excess noise to swamp out any active sonar used by torpedoes. However these are definitely last defence as they your location away any sensor in 100km range. There are 15 shriekers.

Attack: The SDB is carrying 20 torpedoes in its own missile racks with which

to destroy the MagLev lines, the satellite stations and the outposts.

Amounts of weapons for the base:

Main base

60 bolts

30 torpedoes

Outposts

10 bolts

5 torpedoes (but can be resupplied in 2 hours.)

Satellite Stations

10 bolts

5 torpedoes (but can be resupplied in 6 hours.)

Plus a central store of

100 bolts

40 torpedoes

These can rearm the main base in 1 hour, the outposts in 12 hours, and the satellite stations in 24 hours.

Each MagLev Missile Launcher (one for each MagLev line) has 2 torpedoes.

Feel free to invent the various possibilities of detection.

The Base

So here are the players at long last. The players have been asked to shut down the base with a minimum of destruction to the base. The base is unmanned but has laser weapons fitted intermittently through it. The lasers are controlled by the base's computer system. The lasers are equivalent to laser carbines. Once at the base all the players have to do is close down the computer, but this is not just shutting off one computer but three on the computer level. Once this is done the interdicted zone is no longer and the players can signal the Daibei Star Forces to start using the old starport.

Deus Ex Machina (Ghost in the Machine)

Every year we have to do this because some gumby team will die through their own recklessness and will thereby not be able to complete the scenario.

So, if a party does die, "awaken" them after a training session (Full interactive training should be available by the 57th century) and send them on the mission, giving them a few hints on how to approach an underwater target.

Why did I do this?

This is a question I ask myself a lot, why do I every year write, organise or write and organise conventions. Perhaps it's because I like Traveller and try to spread my liking to other people, or else it's just because I am a Certifiable Maniac. (I fear it is probably the second reason.)

What sources did I get all this SHIT from?

Over the last year I have tried to create an environment that many players don't know about or have never thought about playing in. So while reading "Demon 5" by David Mace, I altered his ideas to create this scenario. Other books I have read to further understanding of underwater combat and exploration were "Red Storm Rising" and "The Hunt for Red October" by Tom Clancy, "Sea Leopard" by Craig Thomas and several other books whose titles I have forgotten by authors including Arthur C. Clarke and Harry Harrison.

The Characters

5 or 6 to a team (depends on numbers)

1. Army
2. Sailor
3. Bureaucrat
4. Naval Enlisted Personnel
5. Scout
6. Naval Officer



Characters

1. Army

Major 976EA8 Age 30 3 terms

Tactics 3, Mech 1, Admin 1, Medic 1, Blade 1, Rifle 1, SMG 1
Possessions

1 Rifle (with 2 clips of ammo)

1 SMG (" 3 " " ")

1 Blade

1 Medical Kit

1 Mech Tool Kit

Personality

You thought that Rambo was a film that shows how it actually is. You live and breathe Army; even your teddy bear had a set a Camo. (But like a good soldier you gave it up when you left Officer Candidate School.) The reason for your fast promotion is your intelligence. You are not dumb, just misinformed. You volunteered for this mission.

2. Sailor

Sailor 7 585AB6 Age 46 7 terms

water craft 2, elec 1, navigation 1, comp 3, gunnery 2
Possessions

electronic tool kit

navigation map of area

hand computer

Personality

You have been assigned this mission to handle the underwater weapons and anything else that pertains actually to the "wet" naval operations. You "landed" this job by doing an impression of your Commanding Officer within his hearing. You have also seen and read too many pirate movies and novels and under times of Stress and Anxiety (ie during combat) you sound like a cross between Long John Silver (do silver long johns really stop werewolves?-Timo.) and Captain Hornblower.

3. Bureaucrat

Asst manager 655889 Age 42 6 terms

Liaison 3, Admin 1, Comp 3, Blade combat 1

You were "chosen" for this mission due to a curfew infraction you made. You are native to Sturray and are sympathetic to the Solomani cause, but not so much so that you would lose life or limb over it, but if you can slow down the task by using bureaucratic methods you will as long as you are not in danger. You are the computer specialist on this mission. You and your friend the doctor were picked up for the curfew infraction.

4. Naval Enlisted Personnel/Doctor

Starman/Medic 865896 Age 30 3 terms

Ship's boat 1, Medic 3

Possessions

Medical Kit

Personality

You were picked up, like your friend the Bureaucrat for curfew infraction, and have landed this mission as penalty. The reason you are a medic is you hate the killing of fellow Sentient Beings. You will try to save the life of any creature. You are, as you could have guessed, the medic of this crew.

5. Scout

Scout A8B7A8 Age 30 3 terms

Nav 1, Elec 1, Pilot 1, Gunnery 1, SMG 1

Possessions

Electronic tool kit

SMG (with 3 clips of ammo)

Personality

You got this mission because of some comments you made at a Naval Officer, which ended in a brawl between both of you. It was a dimly lit barroom in which the brawl took place, but you think the Naval Officer aboard is the same one. The reason for the scuffle was some remarks made by the Naval Officer against the Scouts; you are of the old tradition that believes that Scouts can do anything and that you could do this job single handed and the rest are dead weight (but you have since found out this is not quite true, but you don't want the others to find this out). You are pilot for this mission.

6. Naval Officer

Commander 789677 Age 38 5 terms

Vacc 3, Gunnery 3, Ship's boat 1, Dagger 1, SMG 2

Possessions

SMG (with 3 clips of ammo)

Bayonet for the above

Personality

You were put on this mission after being arrested in a Barroom Brawl. The barroom was dimly lit but you think that the Scout was the one who hit you, over some slight you made about Scouts. You are a typical Naval Officer; ie pompous, self-opinionated, and believe you are better than all the Common Riff Raff. You think now that you would probably have volunteered for this mission if you hadn't been forced.



Down to the Scum Quarter

A Farcical Fantasy Solo Adventure by Garth Nix

THE PRELUDE

Your beautiful mistress, the Lady Oiseaux, has been kidnapped. There is only one slim clue that may lead you to her — a brief message, scrawled in pale gold eye-paint across the side of her hijacked palanquin:

Oh! This is awful! I am being kidnapped! They are taking me to sell to a desert chieftain at an auction, which I think is going to take place at midnight somewhere near the river, and I'll miss the party tonight. And I was going to wear my new dress with the ruby chips sewn on cloth of gold, and the peacock feather fan from ...

Those few words, and the 'For Sale' brochure you hold in your kid-gloved hand, lead you to suspect that Lady Oiseaux is being held at the infamous Quay of Scented Rats — a floating bordello now stuck in the mudflats of the river Sleine.

Pausing only to slip your trusty rapier into its scabbard, you draw your cloak around you, and erupt out into the shadows of the night — towards the Sleine — and the vicious, nasty, disgusting ... (roll of drums) ... Scum Quarter of the Old City!

You walk a few yards with considerable bravado, and then whip back to your town-house. Only a complete fool would go down to the vicious, nasty, disgusting Scum Quarter without pistols and a dagger or two. Maybe you should call in on the lads at the Fencing Academy ... but there's no time. Select five items from the following list, before once again slinking out into the shadows of the night ...

How to Play

1. Decide whether you're going to cheat or not. Most people cheat in solo adventures, even if they don't admit it. If you're not going to cheat, get a six-sided die.

2. Go down to the local costume hire shop and get a *Three Musketeers* outfit. This is called getting 'into character'.

3. Stop by the bottle shop on the way back and pick up a few bottles of cheap red wine.

4. Hire a video of *The Three Musketeers*. Start watching it, and practice knocking the top off the wine bottles with your plastic rapier. This is called getting 'the atmosphere'.

5. Give up after you break the rapier, and open a bottle with a corkscrew. Drink all of it.

6. Read 'The Prelude'.

7. Select five items from the list of equipment (unless cheating, in which case you presume you always have exactly what you need).

8. Go to 'The Adventure Begins!'

9. Carefully evaluate the situation, choose a course of action, and go to the paragraph indicated, rolling a die when necessary.

The Simple Method
Get a 6-sided die, and ignore steps 1-5.



EQUIPMENT

Dagger

Pistol (with powder & ball for five shots)

Bag of 20 Gold Bezants

Portrait of Lady Oiseaux (3'6" square)

Scented handkerchief

Halberd

20' rope

Repeater Watch

1 Bottle 'El Superbeau' Cognac

2 Pairs Silk Stockings

A glove puppet of Cyrano de Bergerac

Small Plaster Saint

1 Bottle 'Opossum' perfume

A Five-Pronged Fish-Spear

Down to the Scum Quarter

1

The Adventure Begins!

Moving from shadow to shadow down the wide Boulevard of the Muses, you feel very much like the intrepid adventurer hurrying to rescue his beloved lady. You are so caught up in this delightful little daydream that you don't notice the six Watchmen following your erratic shadow-to-shadow progression down the street, till you go one shadow too many and find yourself caught in the glare of their lanterns.

If you are carrying a halberd or five-pronged fish spear, Go to 50

If you aren't carrying either of these, Go to 30

2

Who do you think you are — the unnatural offspring of the Three Musketeers and Michael York? Roll one die.

1-3 At least you feinted towards somebody's left eye. Pity it was your own. Then you stuck your rapier in your left foot ... the bravo takes pity on you and lets you limp away. Minus one on all future combat rolls due to both stupidity and injury. Go to 52

4 Both of you fence away quite competently, crying 'Caramba!' and 'Take that! And that! And this little one! And that that'. Eventually you become so tired you lean on your swords and just whisper: 'Aha — foul blaggard!' etc. The bravo gets bored of this first, and leaves. You rest briefly, then continue on your way. Go to 52.

5-6 Your fencing master would be proud — there's always a first time. You feint, parry and riposte like you knew Errol Flynn intimately when you were a young boy — and tried to keep him at a distance. The bravo is struck several times, and retires bleeding to the nearest laundress. You continue on your way. Go to 52.

3

Descending to the next floor, you find yourself in a barber-shop, the walls lined with mirrors. There are four doors, sixteen reflections and a trapdoor.

Do you go through the door marked with a tiger? Go to 85

Or the door marked with a lady? Go to 39

Or through the door marked with both a lady and a tiger? Go to 34

Or the one with two ladies and a tiger? Go to 92

Or through the trapdoor, which is marked with a lamb chop? Go to 58

4

It's not very nice up the Emperor August's nostril. Four or five hundred bats seem to have used it as a toilet for about a century. You wait inside for several minutes, then emerge as a grotesque mound of bat guano. The balloon is still there, but whoever is in it doesn't recognise you. Add one to all future combat rolls due to your repellent exterior. You head south. Go to 54

5

You smile sickeningly, and cross over to the tiger, mumbling 'nice pussums ... good kit-e-kat ...'. You reach down to scratch its stomach, and it grabs you with both paws and bites your head off. As your soul becomes a delicate butterfly and floats off to the transit lounge, you feel that this would never have happened if you had read 'The Jungle Book' as a child.

6

THE WESTERN WALL

Originally built to hold out the barbarians, the Western Wall fell into disrepair when the barbarians became civilised and bought the city in an underhand real-estate deal. Now only a crumbling ruin inhabited by thieves, cut-throats and defrocked clergymen, the Wall is rarely visited by anyone else.

You remember this as a defrocked clergyman bears down on you, swinging his incense-pot with deadly intent.

Do you get out your five-pronged fish spear, leer evilly and say: 'How many prongs do you want, and where do you want them?' Go to 77

Run back to the Arc de Trihump Go to 99

7

You stand in the queue before the main entrance to the Quay of Scented Rats — a vast over-decorated houseboat that is now firmly embedded in the mud-flats of the Slein. At the front of the queue, two burly men (who look suspiciously like beavers) demand the five bezant entry fee.

Do you pay them? Go to 55

Say, 'Back off, buck-tooth. I'm with Scum-Quarter Vice?' Go to 36

Offer them a bottle of 'El Superbeau' cognac? Go to 17

8

Hanging by one hand, you tie the rope to the sail, and climb down to the next one. From this one, you climb through a window to the inside of the Mill. Go to 35

9

You wrench the door open and leap through it. But will you evade the tiger? Roll one die.

1-3 Damn! The door-knob would be stiff ... you half turn to meet your doom like a brave warrior, but the tiger smashes you to the floor, and you let out a pitiful little shriek instead. Fortunately, this is the exact cry of an orphan tiger-cub! The tiger stands back, bemused, while you crawl across the room and out through the exit. Go to 79

4-6 The door slams shut just as the tiger slams against the other side. You lean against it, sweating in fear. Go to 3

Down to the Scum Quarter

You wrench open the bottle of 'Opossum' perfume, and scatter a few drops towards the awful Hag. A beautiful aroma fills the room, and she steps back, spitting and cursing. 'Back, foul fiend!' you cry, throwing a few more drops, which burn through her outstretched arm like acid — so you throw the whole bottle, and bolt for the exit. You don't look back. Go to 79

10

Just as you are about to fleché across the room, and drive your rapier through the poor unsuspecting woman's heart, a great gong rings ... and time stops. As the echoes of the gong die away, a disembodied voice fills the room, with the weary pronouncement, 'The Age of Chivalry is Now Officially Dead'. Time suddenly resumes, but your heart isn't in the wild attack, so you merely lunge at the tiger. It backs off snarling, you circle around to the other door, and nip through it. As you leave, the woman throws the voodoo doll at your head. Subtract one from all future combat rolls due to wax burns on your face. Go to 79

11

FISHGUT ALLEY

And you thought the Street of Fishmongers smelt bad. Obviously this is where all the fish-guts end up after the beggars have tried to eat them — for the second time. At the other end of the Alley, a hulking giant of a man is standing, a spiked club in his hand.

Do you approach him for directions to the Sleine? Go to 57

Or return to the Street of Fishmongers? Go to 41

12

As your hand touches the hilt of your rapier, you start, and the eyes in your head bulge dramatically. The Hag is wearing the Black Apron of a Master of Cleaver-Fu — a deadly martial art you cannot possibly cope with! Go to 62

13

There really is nothing like just messing about in boats. Pitting one's strength against the vicious tidal bores that sweep up the river, or the onrush of sewage from the city that sweeps down. But lo! There on the port bow, you see a heavily decorated house-boat, firmly embedded in the mudflats. The heavy use of purple fur around the windows (and fake gold trim on the gutters) convince you this must be the infamous Quay of Scented Rats.

Do you heroically leap from your boat as you pass the Quay of Scented Rats, do a triple somersault in the air and land upon its sleazy deck with an air of casual arrogance? Go to 64

Or do you cautiously pole up to one end, tie up your boat, and sneak aboard like a rat?

Go to 26

14

You emerge into a long corridor lined with various prints of the activities of the Quay of Scented Rats. To your right, there is a door marked 'Auction Goods'. To your left, there is a door marked 'Not the Auction Goods'.

Do you go left? Go to 80

Or right? Go to 23

15

THE RIVER SLEINE

You sneak past the hustlers of the Southgate and out through a postern. Before you lies the winding, deep blue waters of the River Sleine, alive with wildfowl amidst the teeming rushes ... then your eyes clear, and you realise you are looking at a picture tacked to the postern door. You open it, and there before you lies the turgid, coal-black watercourse that makes slimy pollution look good — the true River Sleine. Steps lead down towards the river, and you think you can see a boat tied up at the bottom.

Do you go down? Go to 27

Or do you turn back, you coward, only to be killed by a lightning-struck albatross falling out of the sky? (this is called a premonition) Go to 45

16

'Before we descend to crass commercial transactions,' you say suavely, 'You may care to have a drop of ... El Superbeau Cognac.' You hold the bottle in front of them as they drool and reach out with grasping fingers — then fling it into the Sleine! The two guards hurl themselves into the slime, desperate to reach it before it gurgles away into the murky depths. Seconds later, you are flattened as a horde of eager customers storms across the bridge. You get up wearily, and hobble after them. Go to 61

17

The merchant reels back, a garfish sticking out of his left ear. Bleating with fear, he crashes into another merchant's stall. Within seconds, the Place of Plaice becomes a whirling mass of rioting merchants, customers and airborne tubs of fish. You have to get out! You run towards the Arc de Trihump. Go to 99

18

Roll one die.

1-3 The man in black is entranced. Your fingers manipulate Cyrano's arms brilliantly, and his rapier flickers back and forth, gleaming in the light from the 200-watt chandelier above. 'Z' draws closer and closer ... then you strike. The puppet's sword shears off half of Z's moustache! Shrieking, he bursts past you, smashes through the door and runs away. Go to 100

4-6 You are a little nervous, and Cyrano moves jerkily, producing a very second rate display of swordsmanship. 'Z' watches for a while, then exclaims: 'Non! Non! Ziss iz not ze way ze Thibault iz exerized! Give eet to me!' You hand over the puppet. Soon Z is totally occupied, putting Cyrano through the seventy-seven Lunges of Senor Ricardo. You slink past. Go to 100

19

Down to the Scum Quarter

20

'Twenty!' you exclaim, exhibiting profound knowledge of history that hasn't happened yet, the current year being a sort of alternate 1624. Still, what's an anachronism between friends, you mutter to yourself. Z takes this as a riddle, and begins to knead his forehead in deep thought. Six hours later, still unable to answer your question, he over-exerts his brain, and faints away. You step over his unconscious form, and go through the door. Go to 100

21

Avenue of Champignons

A broad and leafy avenue, much frequented by bands of rioters from the Green and Blue factions of the donkey-cart races. Many bravos stalk the avenue, seeking opponents from rival factions.

Are you wearing a blue one-piece body stocking? Go to 33

Are you wearing something else? Go to 33 anyway

22

You stand there, gaping. The shadow of the balloon looms closer and closer, and the stench of manure is overpowering. A man in a pin-striped suit looks out at you, says, 'Nah — he hasn't got what it takes', and the balloon flies on. Sometimes it pays to be a ninny. Go to 54

23

You open the door marked 'Auction Goods' only to be confronted by the giggling eunuch you may have been unlucky enough to see earlier. The thin, sickly man accompanying him carries a gladstone bag in one hand, and a gleaming scalpel in the other. The eunuch titters, 'That's him, Doc!' and leaps forward to pinion you in his blubbery arms.

Do you trip the eunuch, use him as a springboard, hurtle through the air, headbutt the doctor, somersault, and land on your feet whistling 'Dixie'? Go to 68

Or pirouette gracefully and bolt back through the door? Go to 47

24

Your rapier is barely out of its scabbard before the black-clad man has reduced your clothing to tatters. Little 'Z's have been cut in every available piece of cloth and leather. Your trousers fall down.

Do you attempt to continue this rather farcical duel? Go to 73

Or say, 'Sorry — wrong door,' and back out, holding up your trousers with both hands, rapier clutched between your teeth? Go to 94

25

'You sure it's only a five-pronged fish-spear?' asks the Sergeant. 'Because a six-pronged fish-spear is a different kettle of ...'

'Halberds?' you suggest.

'Right. That's a different kettle of halberds. Now, be on your way.'

You leave the Sergeant and his men discussing what a kettle of halberds would actually look like, and proceed to the Street of Fishmongers. Go to 41

26

You pole to the southern end of the gaudy monstrosity, and carefully tie up your boat. Several guards look over the railing at you, but you remember your Mandrake lessons well. A few hypnotic passes convince them you are a harmless moron who thinks he's a rat. Squeaking feverishly, you swarm up the bowline, and onto the deck — then it is but the work of moments to chew a gaping hole in a nearby door. Go to 44

27

You leap into the boat just like Captain Silver used to — but he only had one leg, so it was excusable. Eventually you get upright again, ship the oars, hoist the top gallants, splice the mainbrace, cast off and purl three. That all taken care of, you push off with a piece of old stick and head downstream. Far off, you can see pink lights on the water, and smell cheap scent. There lies the infamous Quay of Scented Rats. You pole on. Go to 14

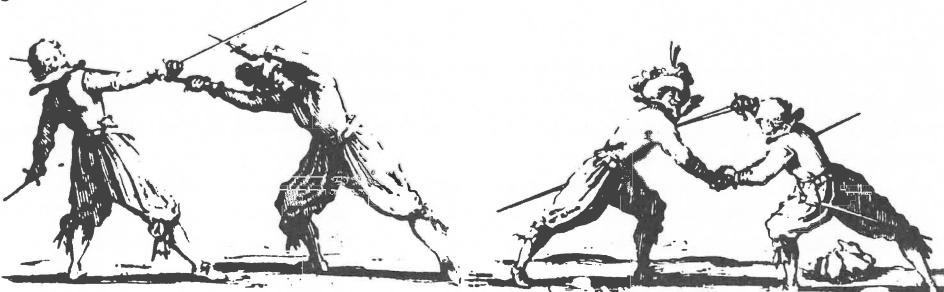
28

Roll one die

1-2 As you poke out your tongue, you slip on some slimy fish and bite the end off this valuable appendage. The pain is intense! You drop your rapier, and stagger about howling. The hulking giant runs away in terror. Go to 95

3-4 To cut a long story short, the hulking giant gets in a few good blows and gives you a black eye, before you see him off with some little cuts to the face. Subtract one from all future combat rolls due to partial blindness. Go to 95

5-6 The tongue goes out ... the rapier goes in. The hulking man is surprised. So are you — you nervously let go of your rapier. The giant staggers off with it still in his chest. You chase after him, and pull it out when he falls over and expires. A quick search gains you a silver Bixby — a pair of long-handled biscuit tongs. Go to 95



Down to the Scum Quarter

The tigers settle back down as you sit, and the two women explain that they're playing a local variation of poker, where a red Two is called the tiger, and can be used as any other card. There are a number of other special rules, but you're sure you can get the hang of it. Roll one die.

29

1-3 You lose all your money and possessions, except for your clothes and rapier. You're sure there's cheating going on, but every time you try and look more closely at the others, or under the table, the tigers come and breath heavily in your ear, licking their chops and slavering. After an hour, you retire gracefully through the other door, declining their offer of 'just another hand'. Go to 79

4-5 You know they're cheating after about fifteen minutes. Those tigers are reading your cards and signalling to the women by twitching their whiskers. With this knowledge, you keep your losses to a minimum — and lose half your money. After about ten hands, you get up to 'stretch your dealing hand', and dash through the other door, the tigers hot on your heels. Go to 79

6 Ah, those long days spent visiting your grandfather in Cell 3B of The Pastille (an infamous lozenge-shaped prison) at last reap their reward. You use all your dear grandpapa's tricks, and win 28 bezants over sixteen hands. You bow gracefully, thank the ladies for the game, and saunter to the exit, gloating over your new-found wealth. Go to 79

'Wot, I say, wot have we 'ere, then?' says the Watch-Sergeant, in the peculiar patois spoken by watchmen everywhere. 'Oi (I) fink (think) we might 'ave (have) a Nimoy (person in search of something) 'ere (at this location) ... perhaps (perhaps) searching (looking) for his lost (mislaid) demoiselle (lady who drinks a lot of sweet white wine). While the other watchmen are trying to translate the Sergeant's words with their Watch Patois/English phrasebooks, you slink past and continue on your way. Go to 41

30

THE CARVED HEADS OF PAST EMPERORS

The Carved Heads of Past Emperors were once ranked as the four hundred and sixteenth wonder of the world. Now, only twenty of the sixty heads carved into the Eastern Wall have any discernable features. You scan them briefly, but the Montgolfier is still approaching from behind.

Do you hide up the stone nostril of Emperor August the 10th? Go to 4

Climb the profile of HIH Alfredo (known as 'Alfredo the Chinless') Go to 89

31

The Hag raises her cleaver as you reach inside your doublet, then drops it on the floor as you proffer the silk stockings. 'Just what I wanted for my Thugee lessons!' she exclaims, swiftly making the stockings into a noose, and looking around for a test neck. But you are long gone, running like a young colt (i.e. on shaky legs), through the other door. Go to 79

32

As you casually saunter down the Avenue in your unobtrusive blue bodystocking (or whatever), a bravo leaps out, brandishing his rapier. You have only a moment to realise that he is dressed entirely in green, before combat is upon you.

Do you tremble with fear, knock your knees together and start blubbering? Then, when he starts laughing, whip out a pistol and blow the smirk off the blaggard's face? [You must have a pistol] Go to 76

Or feint towards his left eye, parry in sixte, and riposte over your shoulder, plunging your rapier through the knave's heart? Go to 2

33

A harsh-faced woman looks up from her voodoo doll as you enter, and screams, 'A burglar! Sic him, Tiggums!' A tiger leaps down on you from a platform above the door.

Do you run back through the door? Go to 9

Fleché across the room and run the woman through? Go to 11

Shoot the tiger with your pistol Go to 43

34

You are now on one of the floors of the Windmill. It is an eery place, all white with flour dust, and the sound of the creaking sails and machinery echoing in every nook and cranny. Strange cogs and mechanical arms move back and forth, and a central drive shaft turns with uncanny speed.

There is a piece of paper lying on the floor. Do you pick it up? Go to 60

Or do you ignore it, trip over, and fall down the central drive shaft into the grinding stones below? Go to 70

35

They look at you, taking in your cheap cloak, three-bezant hair-cut, muddy boots and distinct lack of a ferrari-red palanquin. 'Make that ten bezants, for trying to be smart,' says one, crushing a rock, and snorting the fragments to show how tough he is.

Do you pay ten bezants? Go to 55

Go back to the end of the queue? Go to 7

Or follow the river west-ish, hoping to find another way to the Quay of Scented rats? Go to 52

36

Your arms get more and more tired, the wind comes up, and it starts raining. You almost fall several times. Then, in desperation, you start to climb down. Unfortunately, you slip, slide down the windmill's roof, and out ... down at least forty feet. Fortunately, the hunchback breaks your fall ... and you break both your legs. You crawl away before the hunchback regains consciousness. For you, this adventure is over, and you are about to embark upon another. [See 'The Ferocious Bill of Orthopaedic Surgeon Fu Manchu' Adventure 27 in this series]

37

Down to the Scum Quarter

38

Roll one die

1-6 You back off, and off — this guy twirls his club so fast you think he may moonlight as a windmill. He drives you back to the Place of Plaice, before losing interest. Go to 83.

39

There is a heavily clawed mannequin in the opposite corner, and a low, menacing growl from a platform above the door. Go to 85

40

The tiger stops in its tracks, and looks from side to side, as if to see if anybody is watching. Then it rolls on its back and starts making purring sounds.

Do you go over and scratch its stomach? Go to 5

Or run like a million zephyrs (windily) to the other door? Go to 79

41

THE STREET OF FISHMONGERS

This street really stinks. Rotten fish guts, rotten gut-fish, and people who smell like they died at sea several years ago — and look like they died several centuries ago. You hurry through, with a fold of your cloak stuffed up each nostril — all the fashion in the Street of Fishmongers.

Towards the end of the street, a porcelain model of a toad-fish points towards Fishgut Alley, and a statue of a naked mermaid (with rotating flukes) beckons towards the Place of Plaice.

If you walk towards Fishgut Alley, Go to 12

If you stroll towards the Place of Plaice, Go to 83

42

As you say 'no thanks', the agent's forked tail and horns break out of his pin-striped suit. He draws a pitch-fork from his shoulder-holster ... just a little too late. There is a flash of blue lightning, and the 'Choose Your Own Adventure' agent is now no more than a patch of oily scum. A white-suited man strolls up, the gold wings on his breast-pocket gleaming in the sun. He blows the smoke from a magnum biro, and slips it back into his pocket. 'Get on with it,' he says. 'Finish up — I need the money'.

You nod, and head south. Go to 54

43

As the tiger leaps, you draw your pistol in one smooth motion, wind the wheel-lock faster than a speeding bullock-cart, prime it quicker than a flash of lightning, aim, and Roll one die.

1-3 Congratulations. All these frantic motions have hypnotised the tiger. It is staring at you, its eyes great circles of disbelief. This puts you off, so you don't fire, but edge past to the other door. Go to 79

4-6 It springs on you before you can fire, so you have to do all the winding, priming and so forth at the same time as being savagely mauled by a 400-pound Bengal tiger! Its lucky you're a hero — you fire, the tiger dies, and you get to live out the rest of your tragic life with the terrible scars the tiger has inflicted. You staunch the blood where you little finger is bleeding, and eye the scratch marks with depression. Absolutely bound to scar, you think sadly, as you head for the other door. Go to 79

44

THE SALON

You open the door of the Salon, enter, and quickly close it behind you. It is very dim inside, and your eyes take several seconds to adjust. There is a sort of snuffling sound in one corner, and you start to draw your rapier before you realise it is ... seductive breathing. Your eyes adjusted, you see the fabled courtesan Yvette lying on a couch, her fish-net stockings gleaming against the red plush. She languidly stretches out one slim arm, and beckons to you.

Do you abandon your mission, shout 'every man for himself' and fling yourself upon her? Go to 67

Allow her to seduce you, pay her, then resume your search for your true love? Go to 53

Call on Sir Galahad, the Pure Knight, to help you fight temptation? Go to 71

45

You turn back towards the Southgate. Lightning flashes across the sky. Thunder resounds throughout the postern-tunnel in which you are sheltering from falling albatrosses. An ancient mariner appears and shoots you with his crossbow. The last words you hear are the senile old fool saying: 'That's funny. I could have sworn it was an albatross. Must have been the lightning ...'



46

The Bittern approaches, and circles lazily, just out of reach of your rapier. You think you've got it beat, and start to edge across the square. At that precise second, the Bittern strikes, jabbing you savagely in the left buttock. Shrieking, you run across the square, hand clamped to your backside to guard against the infamous second strike. Go to 93

Down to the Scum Quarter

You slam the door behind you, and brace yourself against it as the tremendous bulk of the eunuch slams against it.

Do you wait for him to charge again, then let the door fly open? Go to 75

Or fire your pistol (if you have one) through the door? Go to 87

47

You start sweeping the halberd viciously back and forth like some sort of deranged lawn-mower — but this only makes the giant man angry. His shirt splits up the back, his eyes and muscles bulge, and he puts on a pair of glasses. You stare aghast as he grabs the swinging halberd and breaks it into several pieces, then advances upon you with a particularly sharp splinter, grinning inanely ... but this is all a product of your fevered imagination. You shouldn't swing that halberd so vigorously! Actually, he ran away as soon as you got the halberd out. Go to 95

48

Hampered by the body, the Hag fails to intercept you. She howls abuse as you speed past, through the door, up the stairs, and out. Go to 79

49

'Ullo, Ullo, Ullo,' says the Sergeant of the Watch. 'Wot have we 'ere then, sunshine? Is that an 'alberd sticking up out of your cloak?'

Do you —

Say 'No, it's a five-pronged fish spear.' Go to 25

Say 'Yes, I am going to visit my mother-in-law.' Go to 72

Say 'Take that, garboil!' and attack. Go to 65

50

You lose your grip as you fumble one-handed for the Saint, and begin to fall. Fortunately, your shining white heroic teeth manage to clench on the sail. You pray for a miracle (silently), but the effort is too much. You drop the plaster Saint and grab the sail. The Saint falls on the hunchback's head, he looks up, and activates the windmill again. You descend gracefully, land with elan, and cross yourself. The hunchback head-butts you in a very sensitive region (he couldn't reach higher) and drops a pile of plaster shards on your doubled up form. You hobble away, groaning. Go to 54

51

THE SOUTHGATE

A grim complex of towers, barbicans, murder-holes and dungeons, the Southgate Fortress was transformed into an amusement arcade several years ago. Now, from the Wheel of Fortune to the Headless Ventriloquist, you'll find fun at the Southgate. Only twenty bezants for the whole family — forty if you don't want the kids back at the end of the day ... but this is all meaningless hype to you. Your mind is set on rescuing the fair lady ... what was her name ... Oiseaux. You ignore the Southgate, and go

South (sort of) Go to 16

Sort of East Go to 88

52

Nice try, but its money up front at the Quay of Scented Rats. As you cannot possibly have the hundred bezants Yvette demands, she rings a little bell. Moments later, an enormous eunuch servant appears and escorts you back to the Main Hall of the bordello. Go to 61

53

QUAY OF SCENTED RATS (Landwards side)

At last, you have reached the Sleine! You can't see it through the ramshackle warehouses and wharves, but that odour of muddy decay and raw sewerage could only be the river. On the other side of the warehouses, you can just see a ramshackle bridge and the hundred lanterns that spell out 'S en ed R ts' (there should be 140 lanterns). Loosening your rapier in its scabbard, you stride on. Go to 7

54

55 The guards take your bezants with suspicion, subject them to their beaver like teeth, then reluctantly stamp the back of your hand with today's date and the scented rat symbol of the bordello. They let you pass onto the rickety bridge, and warn you not to approach the old troll who lives underneath. You cross the bridge speedily, and enter ... the Quay of Scented Rats. Go to 61

55

56 Roll one die

1-3 You're running full pelt when you realise you can no longer hear the Bittern. You slow, look around, and see that it has gone into whisper mode, gliding along and changing direction by means of small puffs of air from its beak. Too late, you start to run again ... and it strikes you savagely in the balls. You can't believe how lucky that was ... you hardly ever carry tennis balls around in your pockets. Lucky you were planning to have a game this morning. Relieved, you put on speed. Go to 93

56

4-6 You cross the square miles ahead of the Bittern — which, in fact, turns out to be a harmless Tittern. Very similar, but the tittern's beak is non-rigid, and the feathers on the back of its neck are more golden, and have a barred pattern.

Its feeding habits are also markedly different, particularly on Wednesdays, when the Tittern is a familiar sight at the kitchen doors of many fashionable restaurants, pecking at paté de fois gras and trying to get the dregs out of champagne bottles. It is here that the tittern's remarkable flexible beak comes into its own. A tittern found trapped in a bottle of Pom Derryong '47 had a beak seven inches long (extended), and three inches long when rolled up on top of its head ... but you have no time for ornithological observations. On to 93

→ Down to the Scum Quarter ←

57

You approach the hulking giant. Close up, you see that he has a greenish tinge — but then the smell of this place is enough to make anyone sick.

'Excuse me, peasant,' you say nicely. 'Point me to the river Sleine and be damned quick about it.'

He growls, burps, and raises his club to attack.

Do you run back to the Place of Plaice? Go to 83

Calmly fix him with your steely gaze, poke your tongue out and finish him off with a single lunge? Go to 28

Back off and look for an opening? Go to 38

Get out your halberd (if you have one) and go for his kneecaps? Go to 48

58

You drop down a long chute, accelerating through several twists and curves, then explode out into a dimly-lit room. A cackling old hag is lifting a body from another chute, a huge, evil-smelling pot is bubbling on a central stove, there are pastry pie cases laid out on the table, and a big autographed picture of a nasty-looking barber is in the corner.

Do you run for the door? Go to 49

Try and climb back up the chute Go to 78

Attack the hag with your rapier Go to 13

59

MA'S FIELD
Heading North-by-Northwest, you arrive in Ma's Field — a small patch of greenery, where many aged women farm market gardens. At the other end of the field, a resplendent red & gold Montgolfier is drifting along, with a man throwing primitive fertiliser over the side — it is obviously one of those new fangled cropdusting balloons. It drifts closer, and the occupant seems to take an interest in you.

Do you run away towards the carved heads of past Emperors? Go to 31

Do you stand there like a ninny? Go to 22

60

You hold the piece of paper to the light from the window — or you would, if the window was there. You stare around the solid, windowless walls, and then back to the paper. In the dim, unearthly light, you see it is an invitation — an invitation to 'spend the rest of your days in Monsieur Moorcock's Mill of Mazes'. You sigh heavily, and open the nearest trapdoor. Why, oh why, you ask yourself, is there a maze in every adventure? Go to 3

61

THE GREAT HALL
You enter the Great Hall of the Quay of Scented Rats, and are stricken with awe! The basilica of St Peter's, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Fabled City of Gold — they cannot compare ... as they are far more awe-inspiring. But the Great Hall is a splendid exhibition of bad taste. Purple fur lines the walls and floor, growing like some sort of fungus between the huge plaster sculptures of Aphrodite and Eros. Glass Cupids swing on chains of worn silver-plated steel, and tangle in the papier maché ferns. Red plush lounges line the walls, where gentlemen and lady customers leaf through the catalogues of men and women of ill repute, and an old madam constantly sprays the lot with gallons of cheap scent from a mammoth atomiser.

Do you stride through the Hall, and out the door at the other end? Go to 44

Or do you stride through the Hall and out the door at the other end, feeling as if your life is somehow being manipulated by unearthly powers? Go to 44

62

You draw your rapier, expecting certain death at the monstrously skilled hands of a Cleaver-Fu Master. But the Hag is strangely motionless, and you realise that by some quirk of fate, you will be spared. You edge past the Hag, and out the door. Go to 79 [Please note: Only one quirk of fate allowed per adventure]

63

You pass the tiger in an adrenalin-assisted blur. Obviously it was just trying to lull you into a false sense of security, because it leaps at you, snarling, as you pass. You wrench the other door open, and fall out into the street, babbling 'Nice Mister Tiger. Nice Tiger, Don't bite. I give to the World Wildlife Fund. Sixty bezants every full moon. At least I will. Starting next year. I honest, Mr Tiger ...' You stop babbling as you realise the door has swung shut behind you. Go to 79

64

As your boat makes its closest approach to the house-boat, you leap from its prow! Roll one die.

1-2 Splosh! You managed to perform one and a half somersaults before entering the Sleine at an obtuse angle. Various courtesans, gigolos and guests come to the rail of the houseboat, and laugh as you are dragged away by the current, threshing and cursing. Mortally embarrassed, you decide to sink to the bottom of the Sleine and end it all. However, when you do sink to the bottom it is so disgusting you change your mind, and swim ashore. Go to 7

3-5 As you leap, you wisely decide to dispense with the somersaults, and your leap carries you to the prow of the house-boat, where you cling for dear life. You prepare for another leap onto the deck, but that last one really took it out of you, so you slither under the rails and crawl across the deck instead. Go to 44

6 You hurtle eighteen feet into the air, do three full somersaults, flourish your hat, and land on the deck in front of several guests of the establishment. Astounded, they can merely gasp as you calmly light a cigarillo, and stride towards the salon door. Go to 44

Down to the Scum Quarter

As you struggle to get the halberd out from under your cloak, the Sergeant steps back, and all four watchmen lower their blunderbusses and fire.

Your last thought before you shuffle off this mortal coil is whether you left the mulled wine on the fire. Maybe it's boiled dry ... The End.

65

You treacherous little worm! O.K — leave Lady Oiseaux to the tender mercies of a desert chieftain. Don't sample the delights of the Quay of Scented rats or ... or ... words fail me. I hope you get a part as Minotaur bait in 'Theseus does Knossos: Choose Your Own Adventure 288'. And you can leave the 'El Superbeau' cognac behind.

66

You fling yourself towards the lovely Yvette, only to be met by an upraised knee. You bounce back, whimpering, and she calmly rings a little bell. An enormous eunuch servant enters, giggles, and picks you up. 'A new recruit for uth, Mithtreth?' he lisps. She smiles, and you are carried away, still whimpering. Go to 90

67

Failure! You go for the trip, but the eunuch isn't as slow as he looks! In the blink of an eye, he has you in a half-nelson! You struggle uselessly in the eunuch's deceptively strong grasp. The Doctor snaps open his gladstone bag, pulls out a pair of shears, and grins evilly. Suddenly, andrenalin you never knew you had shoots through every muscle in your body, transforming you into someone that makes Arnie Schwarzenegger look like a wimp. Roaring with berserk fury, you pick the 300 pound eunuch up over your head and throw him at the Doctor, before smashing through the wall into an adjoining room. Go to 93

68

'I demand 20 bezants for my ruined clothes, you ghastly lump of lard!' you cry indignantly at the merchant. He rubs his hands together obsequiously, offers four trillion billion humble pardons, and begins to bargain with you.

69

Five minutes later, you leave without the bezants, but with your clothes replaced by a bright blue one-piece seal-skin body stocking with bronze buttons, which the merchant assures you will be the perfect disguise for the riverside slums. You walk towards the Arc de Triump, glad that you got the better of the merchant. Go to 99

70

Could you really be that stupid? You trip, recover, and just manage to grab hold of the trapdoor's iron ring — saving yourself from certain death. Shaking with relief, you crawl back, and pick up the piece of paper. Go to 60

71

You cry out: 'Sir Galahad come to my aid!' Suddenly, a white light fills the room, there is an explosion of white petals, a miniature snow-storm hurtles past, and there is the knelling of a great bell. A man appears, and bows. He is six feet six inches tall, incredibly handsome, and has a smile that blinds at thirty paces. It can only be ... Sir Galahad! He takes one look at Yvette (who sits up and puts on her Raybans), and says, 'Right! I'll take care of this one!'

Yvette says 'Yes please!', and you exit, with the slight suspicion that Galahad might not be as pure as everyone thought. Then you see him getting his prayer book out, and pointing to a particular illustrated psalm, so you know he will reform the fallen woman. You open the other door, and dash through it, in search of Lady Oiseaux! Go to 15

72

The Sergeant raises his eyebrows for a moment, then waves you on. You walk past, down to the Street of Fishmongers, which marks the beginning of the Scum Quarter. Behind you, the Watch are discussing halberds, and possibly, mother-in-laws.

'Of course, you've got to get in with an overhand ...'

'Nah, what you do is get one with a six-foot handle ...' Go to 41

73

There's no point beating about the bush on this one. I'll tell it to you straight, without circumlocution, shilly-shallying or avoiding the subject. It's bad news, but what isn't these days? What with the price of El Superbeau up to 400 bezants the tun, the King frolicking in orange orchards, the country going to the dogs ... it's all bad news. Oh yes ... Z—O kills you. Right through the heart. Thock! And it's all over ... and you were so close to success ...

74

You hear the groans and moans of the eunuch and the doctor on the other side of the splintered wall. Dimly, you hear your brain telling you this is going to really hurt later. There is another door.

Do you wrench open the other door? Go to 80

Or take advantage of your berserk strength to smash through the adjacent wall? Go to 93

75

You hear the eunuch backing off, then galumphing forward to batter the door. You fling it open, and step aside, as a huge blubbery mass hurtles past and smashes against the other door. The doctor, seeing his protector lying unconscious on the floor, begs for mercy.

'Where are the auction goods?' you ask sternly. Shaking, he points at the door marked 'Not the Auction Goods'. You nod, and continue to stare at him. The slight smile you learned from Clint Eastwood creeps across your face, and you take the shears from his nerveless fingers, and click them twice. He looks aghast, and faints. You use the shears to trim the end of your Van Dyke beard, then go to the other door, stepping on the unconscious eunuch. Go to 80

Down to the Scum Quarter

76

Roll one die for a highly realistic resolution of this situation.

1-3 He doesn't start laughing. Your eyes clouded with forced tears, and mind numbed by the effort of concentrated blubbering, you hardly notice his rapier cut you from your guggle to your zatch (don't ask). You blubber for real ... then it is all over. Your last thoughts are of the stupid guide-book that said this dopey manoeuvre never failed.

4-6 He guffaws. He nearly chokes with laughter. His eyes pop out of his head. Before you can even draw your pistol, he's lying on the ground, kicking his legs and giggling inanely. You stop blubbering and continue on your way. Go to 52.

77

If you don't have a fish-spear, your head is bashed in by the ex-priest. Tempus Fugit. The End. That's it.

If you do have a fish-spear, roll one die.

1-3 Your spear is longer than the ex-Priest's thurible. He is pronged several times before retreating.

4-5 You entangle the thurible's chain in your prongs, and whip it away. bereft of his weapon, the defrocked clergyman retires to contemplate the infinite.

6 You trip over, the thuribler hits you with his thurible. It doesn't hurt that much, but the incense makes you feel sick. He steals your fish-spear.

Unless you are deceased, you return to the Arc de Triump. Go to 99.

78

You try and climb back up the chute, but it is too steep. Behind you, you hear the sound of a body being tipped into the pot. You turn, and the hag is advancing upon you, brandishing a cleaver. Your stomach churns as you realise that she is wearing the Black Apron of a Master of Cleaver-Fu.

Do you have two pairs of silk stockings? Go to 32

Or a bottle of 'Opossum' perfume? Go to 10

Or will you draw your rapier and try and fight your way past? Go to 62

79

Once again, you stand outside the Mill. A hunch-back looks at you curiously, then wanders off, muttering 'she gave me water. I ordered wine ...'.

You may go North-by-northwest Go to 59

Or South-by-southwest Go to 54

80

You wrench open the door, and there before you is a great gate of bronze, studded with rubies and emeralds. In front of the gate of the gate stands a mighty Djinn, clutching a scimitar of mirrored steel in a fist of herculean proportions... oops, that's 'Down to the Sleazy Sandpits of Samarkand', Adventure 31 in this series. Actually ...

You wrench open the door, revealing an antechamber. There is another door, marked 'Secret — The Real Auction Goods'. You step into the room, and the door swings shut behind you, with an audible click that certainly means it is now automatically locked. A man steps out of the shadows, brandishing a rapier. You have only a moment to take in his black hat, black mask, black shirt, black trousers, black boots, black cape, 'Z' signet ring, and stupid little moustache, before he cries 'En garde!'

Do you swear at him in Spanish and lug out your own rapier? Go to 24

Whip out your glove puppet of Cyrano de Bergerac, entrance him with an impromptu display of puppet swordsmanship, then stick the puppet's sword up his nose? Go to 19

Say 'Violence is the last resort of the incompetent, you childish fellow!', and attempt to walk past? Go to 86

81

This was originally a brilliant paragraph detailing a combat with an enraged Purple-Assed Baboon. However, when Adventure 46 'Down to the Chlorophyllic Jungle' ran short, it had to go over to it. Also, if you are reading this, you must be cheating.

82

Eighty-two was also a brilliant paragraph, describing the awesome Slime Serpent that was going to emerge from the Sleine at a strategic moment. Once again, that paragraph had to go over to 'Down to the Chlorophyllic Jungle'. Honestly, I don't know how Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone do it. They must be good with numbers or something ...

83

PLACE OF PLAICE

This is the upmarket part of the Street of Fishmongers — a pleasant, open area, strewn with rancid squid carcasses and buckets of prawns left out in the sun. Smiling merchants offer you slightly fresher wares.

You walk through haughtily, oblivious to this crass business — when, without warning, a fat merchant emerges from behind a crate and knocks you down with his enormous silk-wound belly!

Do you leap up and stick the fellow with a convenient garfish? Go to 18

Leap up and demand twenty bezants for the damage to your clothes? Go to 69

Lie there and hope he doesn't tread on you? Go to 98



Down to the Scum Quarter

You grab hold of one of the windmill's sails, and are soon lifted high above the city. It is a somewhat tiring mode of sight-seeing, but most educational. You have never seen the city's dumps, ruins, broken sewers and slums laid out in all their splendour before. As the sail reaches the top of its arc, a hunchback emerges from the mill below, says 'she gave me water', and stops the sails. You are left dangling seventy feet above the ground, and your arms are getting tired.

84

Do you have 20 feet of rope? Go to 8

Or a plaster Saint? Go to 51

If you have neither Go to 37

As you open the door, a fully-grown Bengal tiger leaps down from above, and advances, growling.

Do you run back through the door? Go to 9

Shoot it with your pistol (if you have one) Go to 43

Say 'Nice pussums' and head for the door opposite marked exit Go to 40

85

'Z' looks surprised, then a grin slowly spreads across his face. 'You are right!' he exclaims. 'But I canot let you pass unless you overmaster me in a contest of some kind. Mmmmm ... how about a riddle game?'

Reluctantly, you accept. It's been a long time since you read *The Hobbit*, and you never did know why that stupid chicken crossed the road.

He asks: 'Take a span of mortal life, less a score times two
Add a number equal to a witch's coven thrice
Less the year, but not the century,
of the most famous gold rush in America.'

You mutter something about rhyming, but desist when he absent-mindedly cuts the wings from a passing fly with his rapier. Go to the Answer

86

You level your pistol at the door and fire point-blank. There is a deafening crash! Splinters fly everywhere, smoke billows out, and you curse, cough and shriek in pain. You pick a few of the splinters out, then peek through the bullet-hole in the door. There is no sign of the eunuch or the doctor, so you reload, kick the door in and level your pistol at every corner of the room, screaming: 'Hands up!' But these histrionics are wasted, as a quick glance out the window reveals the eunuch and the doctor being carried away by the swift currents of the Sleine, hotly pursued by the Slime Serpent of paragraph 82. You check out the room, but there are no other exits, or any sign of Lady Oiseaux. You go down the corridor to the door marked 'Not the Auction Goods' Go to 80

87

THE WINDMILL

In the middle of the city there is a field. In the middle of the field there is a windmill. There is no reason there should be a windmill here, except that it comes in handy for hooking people up during duels.

You may go North by Northwest Go to 59

Or grab onto one of the sails of the Windmill Go to 84

88

It's hard to get a grip on a smooth chin that curves in instead of out. You are feebly struggling for a hand-hold, when the montgolfier lands and a pin-stripe suited man alights. He introduces himself as an agent for 'Choose Your Own Adventures', and offers you a part as the hero in a 'serious' solo adventure.

Do you accept? Go to 66

Do you politely refuse? Go to 42

89

The Eunuch carries you into a Turkish Bath room, which is currently unoccupied. He dumps you on a bench, and you hear him disappear off into the steam, lisping, 'I'll just fetch the doctor to finish off.'

You feel that waiting for the doctor would be imprudent, and you are feeling much better, so you creep back out the door. Go to 15

90

BITTERN SQUARE

You know the old saying 'once bittern, twice as painful the next time'? That saying comes from this Square, where fearsomely accurate sea-birds always beak you in the same place.

You try and creep past, but ... oh no ... you've trod on a stick near a bittern's nest. You hear the 'snap!' of the twig, and then the fearsome 'wokka wokka wokka' of a fully-beaked bittern taking off.

Do you stand there, waving your rapier over your head? Go to 46

Or run like blazes for the narrow alley on the other side of the square? Go to 56

91

Two women are playing cards around a small table. Two tigers are sleeping nearby. As you enter, the tigers leap up, growling.

Do you run back through the door Go to 9

Or pull up a chair, and say 'Deal me in. What's the game? Stud, draw, three-up two-down, écarte, vingt-et-un, snap, canasta, sudden death, gin rummy, five hundred, strip jack naked? Go to 29

92

→ Down to the Scum Quarter ←

93

Smack! Crash! Thud! Wallop! Bull-like, you smash through one ... two ... three ... four interior walls, leaving a trail of shrieking customers and their chosen consorts (not to mention splinters, broken furniture, embarrassment etc.) This is fun! Smash! Crash! Splash! You fall into the Sleine, and drained by your berserk fury, dog paddle ashore. You rest for a moment in the comfortable slime, moving on when it starts to grow on you. You head back to the main entrance of the Quay of Scented Rats. Go to 7

94

You've forgotten the door is locked. You back against it, knees knocking in fear, and mumble something about, 'Wrong room ... sorry ... I was looking for ... ummm ... eeerr ...' He says, 'Oh, that's alright then. Thought you were after the auction goods. I'll just get the key and let you out.'

He sheathes his rapier and turns to a cabinet. You leap forward, swinging the rapier in your mouth, knock him out with the pommel, and make your smile 3/4" wider. Before he has a chance to recover, you sprint across the room and open the other door. Go to 100

95

That's the last of the hulking giant. You compose yourself (bandaging appendages where necessary), and continue on your way. Soon, Fishgut Alley branches into a Y-fork.

Do you go South (That must be south ...) Go to 88
Or South, sort of West a bit Go to 52

96

The dragon rears back, its rainbow-scaled head writhing in agony as your sword sinks ever deeper into its primary brain. But the secondary brain still functions, and you see the great tail swinging around, the venomous sting preparing to punch through you where you stand, precariously balanced between the creature's great yellow-centered eyes.

Do you press the stud that will explode the sword-blade into a hundred heat-seeking flechettes? Go to 426
Or dive off the creature's back, trusting that your G-harness battery is not exhausted? Go to 507

97

The tank glimmers with an unearthly light — surely this is the wellspring of the changelings, the nutrient tank where the Technomancer has been growing the nervous systems of his hideous creatures. You approach closer, scanning for search webs and tracksprings. Nothing shows in the visual spectrum, but the NecroVision™ sight shows stirrings beneath the floor. Forwarned, you spring back and draw your sword, a .45 calibre emulsion-sprayer springing into your left fist, just as a Mordicant emerges through the flagstones, its gravemould arms writhing!

Do you chop at its head? Go to 650
Or fire a pulse of violet emulsion at its brain-stem? Go to 202

Paragraphs 96 and 97 are a blatant advertisement for 'Dark Realm of the Technomancer', which is at present, little more than those two paragraphs. But that's what advertising is all about. Order now!

98

Aaarghh! The pain is intense as the fat merchant rests his bulk upon you, in the mistaken belief that you are a convenient seat. Your screams of agony disconcert him — he leaps to his feet and hurries off. You slowly clamber to your knees and crawl towards the Arc de Trihump (or the other way). Subtract one from all future combat rolls due to a severely bruised back. Go to 99 or 91

THE ARC DE TRIHUMP

A huge monument raised to celebrate the prowess of a long-dead Emperor in his personal dealings with camels, the Arc de Trihump is near the western wall of the city.

If you continue west (or thereabouts), Go to 6
Turn to the broad avenue that heads south Go to 21

You fling open the velvet-padded door, and strike a commanding pose in the doorway. Your love, the Lady Oiseaux, is sitting by the mirror, putting on her ear-rings. She ignores you for a moment, then says: 'If you're coming in, come in. Ow! And help me with this ear-ring. What took you so long anyway? You used to rescue me in no time at all — I guess you're getting tired of me. No, don't say you're not. I know you are, otherwise you would have been here hours ago (sob) ...'

You stride across the room and stop her protests with a passionate kiss, sweep her into your arms, and leap out the window — onto the deck of a conveniently passing luxury wide-bodied gondola. The string-quartet look surprised, then break into the theme from 'Love Story'. The waiter pops the champagne as you and your lady recline into the lavender-scented pillows, and the gondola gondols away into the setting sun, long life, and happiness ever after.*

★ Hardened cynics may order the alternative, realistic, non-romantic ending (involving several hunchbacks, gruesome deeds, tragedy and despair) by sending \$2.00 to the author, c/- this magazine.

Text, Design & Layout: Garth Nix
Illustrations: Jacques Callot (1592-1635)
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For players

Why does your character do the things he or she (or it) does? I believe that one should have a better reason for killing three orcs than gaining experience points and money. Chaotic Evil characters of course have their reasons for killing things. (But why are they chaotic evil?) Why go adventuring? Things like that are dangerous! Is your character so gold-hungry as to risk life and limb for riches? If so, why not try Marco Polo style trading/exploring trips. It's safer, and often much more interesting even if not quite as financially rewarding. Or does your character go adventuring to prevent boredom? This is in fact one of the better motives, but one hardly likely to lead to rabid hack-and-slay unless it is life itself that causes the boredom. A character may adventure out of duty. (Especially good for the Lawful Good types.) Perhaps a need to protect the people from orcs, gibbering Cthulhoid monsters or whatever, is felt. Perhaps the character has the "With great power comes great responsibility" syndrome. Why would a character seek great treasure and only use it to seek even greater treasure? He doesn't even get to enjoy it. Adventuring is wet and uncomfortable. Are such characters masochistic? A character in my campaign, though possessing the usual greed for treasure and love of violence, (perhaps to a lesser degree than many) went on many explorations. He bought a map, and noticed that far in the north, it said "Here be Yetis," so he travelled there to see if this was in fact true. His income from his adventures tended to be invested, with aims of setting up a shipping line. In all this, the character tended to do things for motives (including simple curiosity) not directly linked with the game system. He didn't go adventuring solely to gain experience points and g.p.s, but for his own reasons. Thus, a journey could be successful even if it didn't greatly benefit him in game terms. If all you want to do is kill monsters, fine; but there are other alternatives; ones which will allow you to have fun even when the monsters obstinately refuse to die (or appear). Motives can even make the difference between a good death and a bad death. Many berserkers would like nothing better than a death in a good fight against overwhelming odds, especially if the witnesses sing songs and tell tales about it for years to come. If you just know you are going to die, try to do something memorable, useful, noble, or just something typical of the character.

Crossword by Timo

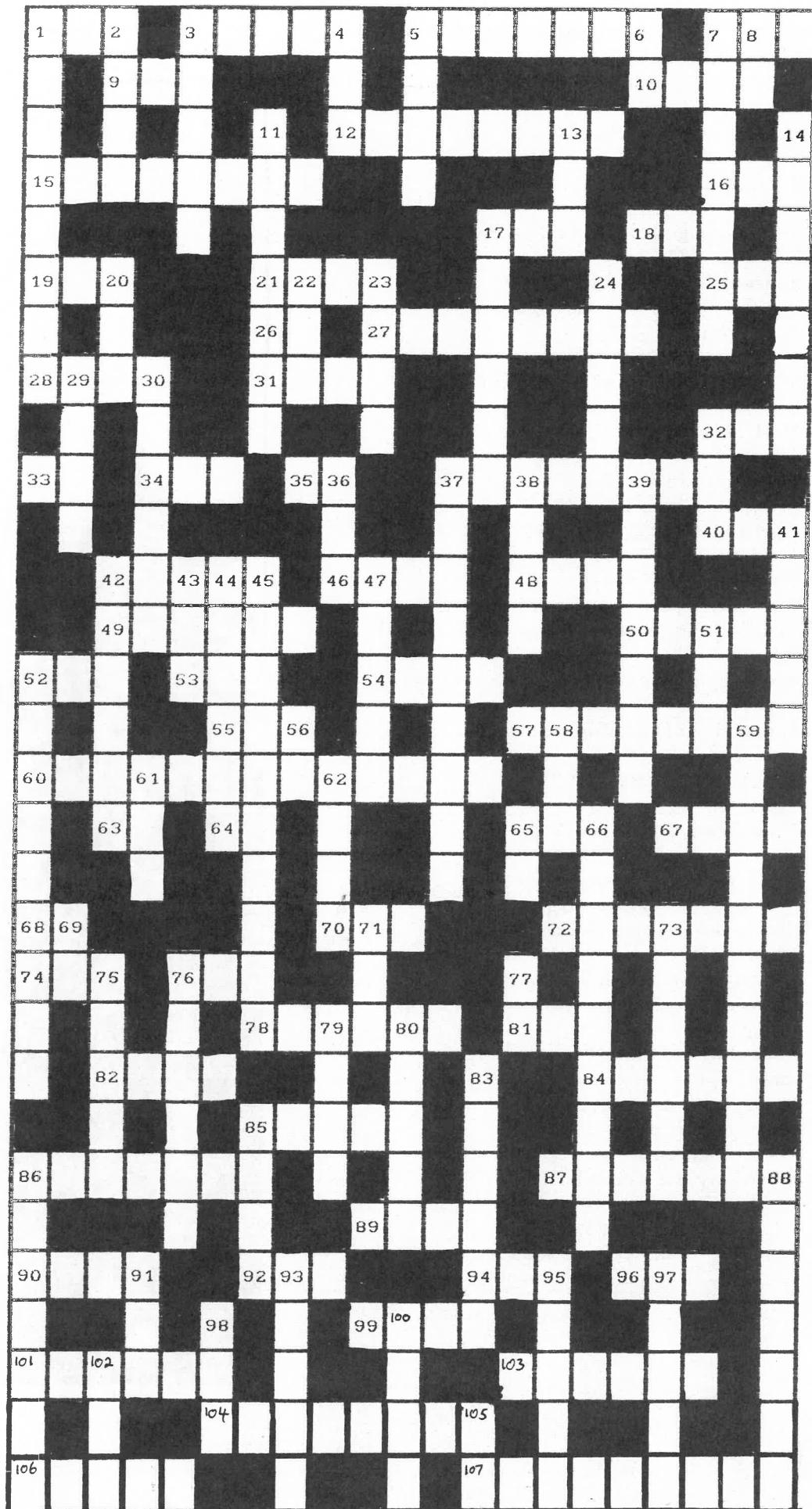
Across

1. A cave dweller with a reputation for vampirism (3)
3. Egyptian god, son of Osiris (5)
5. Imprisoned dreaming under the Pacific Ocean (7)
7. ___ orc is a bad orc. (3)
9. This causes problems, especially when dealing with swords (3)
10. The Hulk's opinion of humans (4)
12. To be found at the centre of the universe (8)
15. Not what it seems to be (8)
16. "The ___ of War" by Sun Tzu (3)
17. Carelessness can cause the French version, but the small one is worse. (3)
18. Where the riches often are (3)
19. You are this if you have 17 across (3)
21. A tasty morsel for many monsters (4)
25. A feature of many wizards and their modern counterpart (3)
26. Machine-world in Dune. (2)
27. Often revealed by combat (8)
28. A high level character could become one (4)
31. Adventurer's accommodation (4)
32. Describes few adventurers (3)
33. Chinese halberd (2)
34. Favourite hang-out of adventurers and good for gossip (3)
35. A staff (2)
37. A comely monster. (Remember, beauty is ...) (8)
40. Effect of sword (3)
42. Useful for climbing, but not social climbing (5)
46. Can be found in black, brown, white, or drop (4)
48. A place visited by adventurers, after if not before (4)
49. Used to pull chariots (6)
50. Their story-tellers tell very tall tales (5)
52. Players like to roll to do this (3)
53. Path of arrow (3)
54. Often gives extra movement points (4)
55. Players often do this (3)
57. A Corsican, 1769-1821 (8)
60. Mournblade & Stormbringer (6.2.5)
63. Common GM word (2)

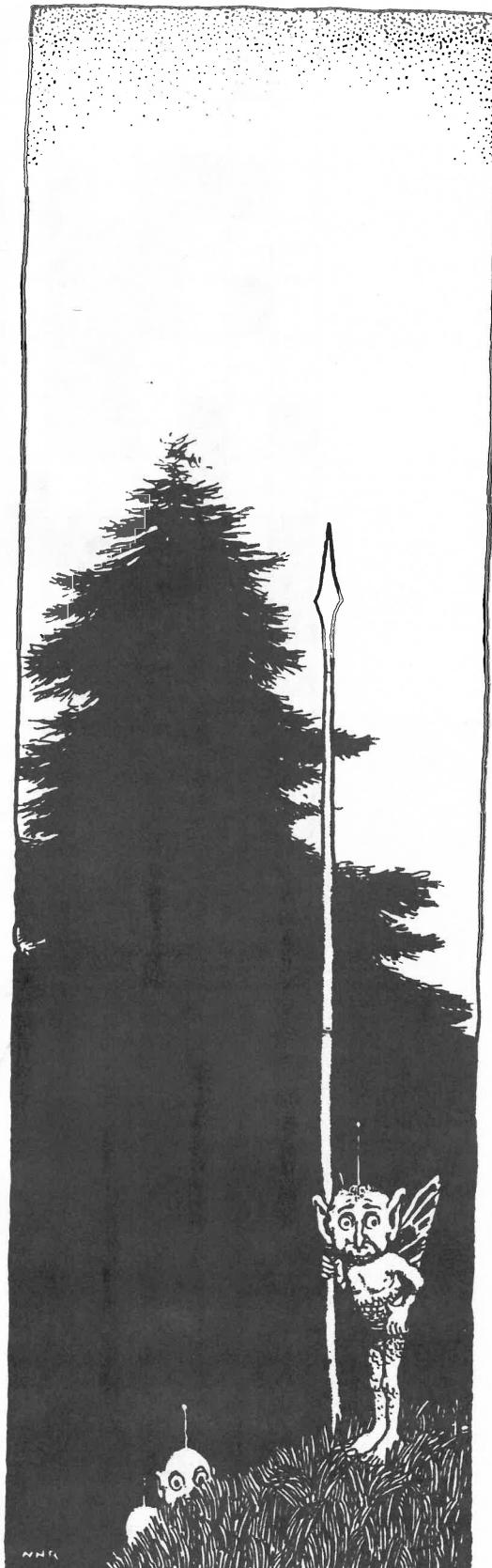
64. Gee, it's a gun (2)
65. Furred hominid (3)
67. Dice often determine it (4)
68. Sumerian city (2)
70. Home of the Warhound (3)
72. Vines do this (7)
74. A great relief (3)
76. This bird would add a new dimension to hawking (3)
78. Type of AD&D mold (6)
81. If the wrong number came up on it, you might do it (3)
82. A civilization-supporting river (4)
84. When the wights come out (6)
85. Trojan king (5)
86. Castle component (7)
87. Often the survivor (7)
89. The burning question about ankhegs (4)
90. Catastrophic defeat (4)
92. Walking trees, not sticks (3)
94. What many monsters like to do (3)
96. Early Blake's 7 casualty (3)
99. Berserker god (4)
101. Troop unit in 7 down (6)
103. Common distance measure for long trips (6)
104. It lets you see in the dark (3.5)
106. Water sprite (5)
107. Searched for, but not found, in Graveyard (9)

Down

1. An easy way to get stoned (8)
2. William was one; Babylon is one (4)
3. Prime cavalry ingredient (5)
4. There is one named after the middle of the Earth (3)
5. This is QUGS, where any ___ will do (4)
6. Way out of dungeons (2)
7. Popular QUGS game (3.4)
8. Where the Emperor I.M. Wundafull went hunting (2)
11. Favourite food for orcs (7)
13. Kings like to do this (3)
14. It happens to leather and jewelry (7)
17. Sea raider (7)
20. A famous Carter (3)
22. Multi-purpose tool; kills orcs and trees. (3)
23. A high mountain monster (4)



24. Favourite peasant weapon (5)
 29. Often found in temples (4)
 30. A small humanoid monster (6)
 32. A larger humanoid monster (3)
 36. Often part of royal regalia (3)
 37. Describes most humanoids (8)
 38. You do this to javelins (4)
 39. A lock-up (7)
 41. Kronos was one (5)
 42. A soothing drink; odd side-effects (6)
 43. Homeworld of Galactus (3)
 44. A good match for an ogre (6)
 45. Death magic (10)
 47. A famous planet (5)
 51. Adventurers often drink it (3)
 52. Famous Carthaginian. (No, not that one!) (9)
 56. Type of EM waves used for communication (2)
 58. Cleopatra's snake (3)
 59. Eastern Germanic tribe (10)
 61. A short staff, or a long wand (3)
 62. Cheap weapon (4)
 65. For use against werewolves (2)
 66. Fire, earth, water, or air being (9)
 69. Sun god (2)
 71. Meeting one can be an electrifying experience (3)
 73. A small shield for use when you are one (6)
 75. Minstrel produce. (5)
 76. Frankish hero (6)
 77. Fictional kingdom (2)
 79. Where a monster lives (4)
 80. Meso-American people (5)
 83. Feature of traps (6)
 85. Where adventurers suffer from terminal burn-out (4)
 86. Alien to be found in wells (7)
 88. They lost the war due to horsing about (7)
 91. There are five of them a foot away (3)
 93. Describes monsters (5)
 95. Mercantile occupation (5)
 97. Formal combat area (5)
 98. Fast way to travel (3)
 100. Often bears poison (4)
 102. Type of sword (3)
 105. Useful door opener (abbrev.) (2)



A Battle, from the Saga of Bosi and Herraud

[This is a section of the saga of Bosi and Herraud; a short mythical saga which can be found in full in "Seven Viking Romances", published by Penguin in their Penguin Classics series. King Harek of Permia has been hard done by and is proceeding with an army to Gotaland, the home of Bosi and Herraud.]

When they heard that King Harek and his sons were approaching the coast, and things didn't look so good, Herraud ordered ships to be launched to meet them. He had a large force of hand-picked men, but it was much smaller than King Harek's. Smid attacked the king's ship, while Bosi went for Hrærek, and Herraud for Siggeir. [Smid is Bosi's brother, and somewhat of a magician. (so is King Harek.). Siggeir and Hrærek are King Harek's sons.] There is no need to go into detail over what happened next. A fierce battle broke out, with both sides eager for action.

Shortly after the battle had begun, Siggeir boarded Herraud's ship and soon killed one of his men. Herraud had a forecastleman called Snidil, and he threw a spear at Siggeir, who caught it in flight and hurled it back at him. The spear went right through Snidil and into the prow, pinning him fast to the timbers. Herraud turned to meet Siggeir and lunged at him with a halberd. It broke through his shield but Siggeir gave it a powerful tug so that Herraud lost hold of the weapon. At the same time Siggeir hit back at Herraud, slicing off his ear and part of his helmet. Herraud picked up a great log that was lying on the deck and hit him on the nose, knocking the visor off the helmet and breaking his nose and all his teeth. Siggeir tumbled back into his own ship and lay there unconscious for some time.

Smid fought bravely, but King Harek managed to board his ship with eleven men and they caused a lot of damage. Then Smid turned to meet him and lunged at him with a special short-sword that Busla [the sorceress who taught him magic] had given him, since Harek couldn't be hurt by ordinary weapons. The blow caught him in the face, breaking all his teeth and cutting his palate and lips. Blood poured out of his mouth. This blow so upset King Harek that turned into a flying dragon and spewed venom all over the ship, killing a number of men, then dived down at Smid and swallowed him in one gulp.

Next, they saw an enormous bird, called *skergipr*, flying down from the land. [Monsters hate competition.] This bird has a nasty big head, and is often compared with the devil himself. The bird attacked the dragon, and a savage battle began. Eventually, they both came plunging down, the *skergipr* crashing into the sea and the dragon onto Siggeir's ship. Herraud was already there, letting fly with the log on either hand. He struck Siggeir on the ear, cracking his skull and knocking him overboard, and he never came up after

that.

Then King Harek came to and transformed himself into a boar. He snapped at Herraud with his teeth, tore the mail-coat off his body and bit into his breast, ripping off both nipples and all the flesh down to the bare bone. Herraud struck at the boar's snout, cutting clean through the head below the eyes. Herraud was now so exhausted that he collapsed on his back. The boar trampled on him but wasn't able to bite him as its snout had been cut off.

Next a monstrous bitch with enormous teeth appeared on the deck. She tore a hole into the boar's groin, unraveling his guts and jumped overboard. Harek reappeared in human form [one wonders what he would have looked like after all this.] and dived into the sea after her. Both sank to the bottom of the sea and never came up again. It's commonly believed that this bitch would have been Busla, since after that she was never seen again.

By this time Bosi had boarded Hrærek's ship and was fighting like a true hero. Then he saw his father floating in the water just beside the ship, so he dived in and helped him aboard his own ship.

Hrærek was already aboard and had killed a good many men. Bosi was exhausted when he climbed aboard, but in spite of that he turned on Hrærek and hewed at his shield, splitting it in two and cutting off his leg at the ankle. The sword finished up in the yard-arm and broke in two. Hrærek hit back and struck at Bosi as he was turning. The sword caught him on the helmet and ran down onto the shoulder, ripping the mail-coat and wounding him in the shoulder blade, and so right down his back. All his clothes were torn off so he stood there stark naked with the heel-bone sliced off his left foot. Bosi seized a piece of the yard-arm, but Hrærek tried to jump overboard. He was leaning against the bulwark when Bosi struck at him, severing the body so that one part fell overboard and the other into the ship. By this time most of the enemy had been killed, but those still alive were spared.

The foster brothers now took a roll-call of their troops. No more than a hundred were in any condition to fight, but they had won a great victory, and now they shared out what they had taken in the battle, and gave treatment to all the wounded who could benefit from it.



Review of "Africa Orientale" by Jack Ford

or "The Italians Strike Back!"

"Africa Orientale" appears as the feature game contained in "Strategy and Tactics" no. 128, which has recently made it into the QUGS Games Cupboard. AO is designed to be compatible the Games Designers Workshop's Europa system, but it is not a GDW game. Instead it is produced by the Games Designers Group which has gone into the business of producing supplements to Europa.

For the uninitiated, Europa is a divisional level simulation of the World War II campaigns in Europe and Africa. AO simulates the British Empire's attack on the Italian East African Empire from December 1940 through to December 1941. The single map is on the scale of 1 hex = 32 miles, and it covers Ethiopia, Etruria, French Somaliland, Italian Somaliland, and parts of Kenya, Sudan, and British Somaliland.

Two hundred counters are supplied with the game. They represent on the Axis side Italian metropolitan, Italian colonial, Kenyan guerrilla troops plus air units; and on the Allied side, British, Indian, African, South African, Free French, Belgian Colonial and Ethiopian troops plus air units. Neutral Vichy French troops garrisoning their Somaliland are also present.

What makes AO interesting from my viewpoint is that it is the only Europa game where the Italians have a fighting chance against the Allies. In "The Fall of France" the Italians beat their brains out against the French Alpine defences. In "Marita Merkur", the Italians launched their ill-conceived offensive against Greece, and get slaughtered by the Greek's +2 attack bonus. In "Western Desert", the Italians get cut up by the more mobile British Empire forces and usually await the arrival of the Afrika Korps to save them. In "Fire in the East" and "Scorched Earth", The Italians are only minor appendages to the massive German forces on the Eastern Front, but in AO, the Italians are on their own. The Germans cannot get the Italians out of trouble in East Africa, but ironically in this game, the Italians can use their own mountain defences to help them repel the Allied offensives.

Therein lies the crux of the strategy for the Italian player- defend your territories. The Italians are hampered by the fact that they are totally cut off from outside supply and assistance. Only on the first turn and the fourth turn do the Italians receive reinforcements- a SM79 bomber unit and a supply counter. The Italians are never in general supply because they are cut off from Italy. Therefore they cannot always fully utilise their defensive resources because being out of general supply causes the Italians to halve their defence strength and movement factor, and to quarter their attack strength. The only way around this for the Italians is for them to use up

their precious supply counters. They commence the game with 25 of these counters and it is vital that they use these sparingly over the next 26 turns. They can of course supplement these with the supply counters they capture and the Japanese supply counter they receive in January 1941.

The Italians can also slow down the Allied offensives by retreating to their mountain defences, and building forts. In particular, the Italians must ensure that the Allies do not capture 20 points worth of Italian towns and cities as this will lead to a collapse of Italian colonial morale. Then there is a one in four chance that the Italian colonial troops which make up the bulk of the Axis player's forces could be removed from play. More importantly the Italian player must hold onto a dot city (Mogadishu, Harar, Massawa, Addis Ababa) or the Gondar fortress to stop the Allies from winning an immediate victory.

To achieve this the Italians can use the fact that they have more troop counters than the Allied players. A clever use of the mountain fastness of central Ethiopia, forts and zones of control should slow down the Allies. As well the Italians have more air units than the Allies, though upon usage they are affected by a dice roll that could make the aircraft inoperative. Furthermore, the Italians have 6 armoured and mobile units with which they can launch mobile raids against British bases such as Port Sudan, Moyale, Galibat, Kassala, or Wadi Medair, to gain victory points.

For the allied player, the strategy is careful attack. The Allies do not have an overwhelming attacking force, as they are constantly being depleted through combat and compulsory withdrawals. As well the Allied initial set-up requires an attack on widely separated fronts. This dissipation of Allied resources means that the Allied player is often frustrated by the reality of not being able to bring sufficient pressure against the Italian mountain forts all of the time. This is where the Allied air power comes in, as it allows the Allied player to boost individual attacks. As well the Allies can race across the Italian Somaliland plains and capture the indefensible cities of Luch Ferranda, Kismayu, Mogadishu and Obbia, while Gimma and Harge Isa are fairly easy pickings. This gives the Allies an easy 8 points on the road to the 20 required to force a collapse of morale in the Italian colonial forces. Time is also on the Allies side as they have 26 turns in which to methodically reduce the Italian's hold over their East African Empire.

Both the Allied and the Axis player have the opportunity to attack the Vichy French units in French Somaliland. Neither side receives any points for doing so, and in fact they both lose points if they don't adequately garrison French Somaliland after its capture. So it is best to ignore the Vichy

French, as actually happened historically.

My only gripe with AO is that is not complete enough for me. The map does not include the important Horn of Africa. This is not the kind of omission that would normally be left out of a Europa game. Similarly, counters representing the substantial Italian naval forces that were based at their naval base of Massawa should have been included. The inclusion of naval counters even when they are not used in the game are a standard feature of Europa games. These destroyers, submarines and torpedo boats did actively participate in the game, and the inclusion of a naval interdiction table, similar to that which exists in "Marita Merkur" could have been included.

Overall "Africa Orientale" is an enjoyable game which is balanced so that either the Allies or the Axis player could win depending upon how they play. It is a good introductory game to the Europa system, but "Western Front" is even better.

Finally here are a couple of my suggested optional extras:-

1) Capture of transport units:

This works like the capture of supply counters (Rule 12.0). If an enemy counter enters a hex containing only a transport unit, or if as a result of combat, all of the units attacked with a transport counter are destroyed, then that transport counter may be captured. Roll a die, and on a 5 or 6 the transport unit is captured by the enemy player. On any other roll, the transport unit is eliminated.

2) Italian Naval Interdiction:

Refer to rule 27 - Special Operations. During the initial phase that the Allied player announces an amphibious invasion, the Italian player may announce an attempt at naval interdiction. If the Italian naval interdiction is announced, the Allied player immediately receives 2 victory points. Next the Italian player rolls a die to see whether naval interdiction is successful. On a roll of 5 or 6 it is. If the SM79 air unit is within range of the target, it may also be added to the interdiction. If this occurs then a roll of 4, 5, or 6 indicates successful interdiction. The SM79 unit may suffer interception and patrol attacks. The SM79 unit may not fly any other missions during that turn.

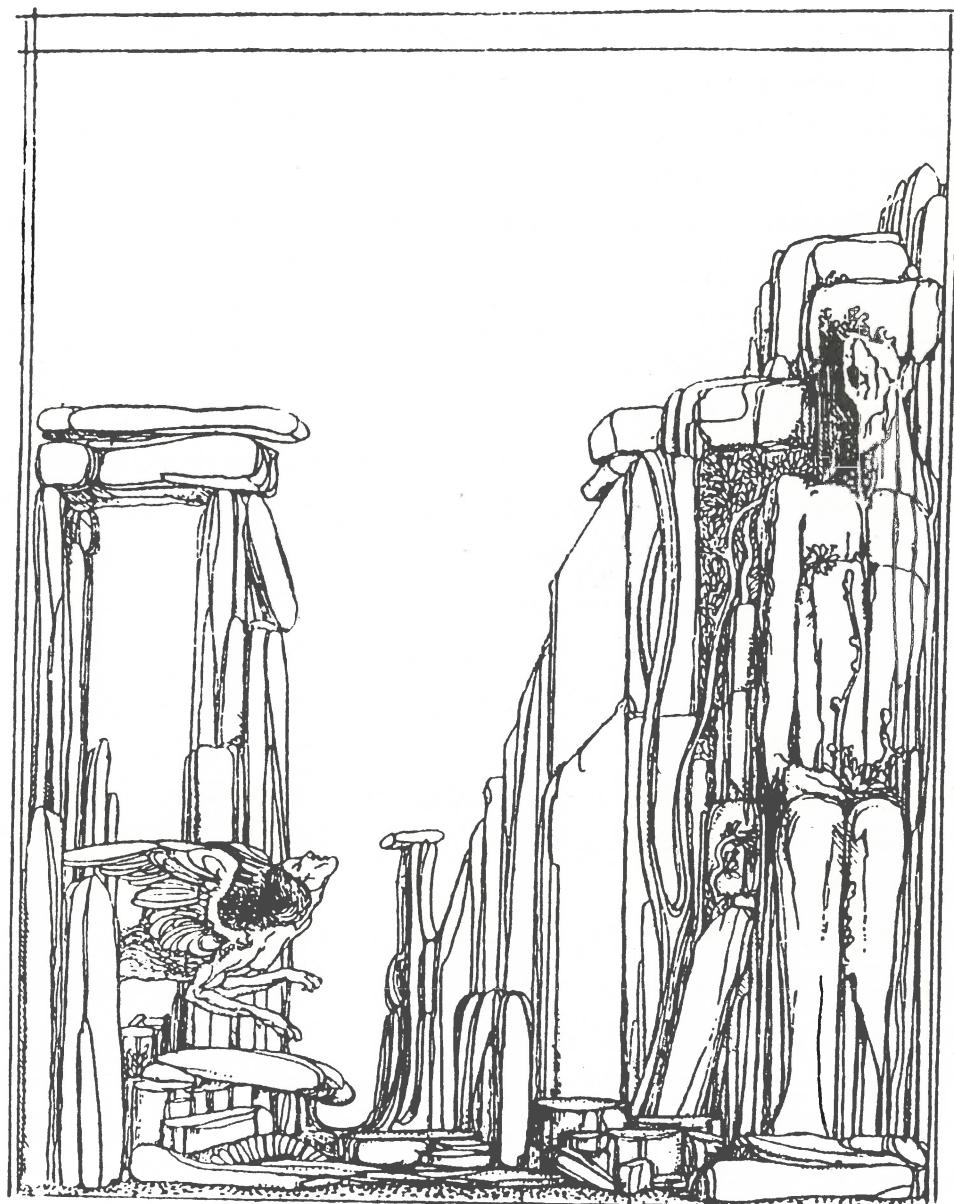
Results of interdiction: If more than one Allied unit was involved in the amphibious invasion, then the Axis player may choose one Allied unit that is eliminated. If there was only one Allied unit involved, it is automatically eliminated. All other units are returned to the point of embarkation.

The Italian player may only attempt interdiction once during the game. After this one attempt, no matter what the outcome of the die roll, there can

be no further naval interdiction, as it is assumed that the Italian light naval forces have been destroyed by the superior British naval forces in the region. The Italian player may never attempt a naval interdiction of an Allied amphibious invasion along the Indian Ocean coast.

"Falling does no damage whatsoever to a character. However, hitting the ground can be extremely painful."

from Justice Inc.



A review of many things by Timo

Pool of Radiance

Pool of Radiance is an AD&D computer game, available for the IBM PC and other computers (but I'm not sure which ones.). The game differs from other similar games such as Wizardry and Bard's Tale because, firstly, it actually uses the AD&D rules, and secondly, in fights, it displays a tactical map in a 3-D view, complete with monsters and the party members. The game actually has a plot; which I won't reveal, partly because I haven't figured it all out yet. The use of AD&D rules is either a good or bad thing, depending on your opinion of them. The game only implements the four major classes and the non-human multi-classed options. Only spells of up to third level appear, and not all of these, but everybody's favourites, such as fireballs and sleep are there. The player can have a party of up to six characters, with room for up to two more NPCs. The player chooses class, race, etc, and then the characteristics are rolled. There is an option which allows you to modify these rolls, so as to allow players to play their favourite character. (Or mega-character) In combat, due to the tactical display, things such as spell ranges, areas, and the movement rates of characters become important. Besides, you get to see each and every orc. The game runs on either an EGA or CGA display, but I have been using a Hercules card and CGA emulator. In all, I'd recommend this as a quite good hack and slash game, much better than many human run bad campaigns.

Assorted Magazines

The best magazine currently available to you is of course the one you are holding in your very hands, but there are others available. Steer clear of "White Dwarf". The last time I looked this was terrible. A fairly new English magazine is "GM". This seems quite good, but I've only seen one issue of it. Our very own Australian magazine "Breakout" has been very good lately; QUGS has a subscription, so it is available in the games cupboard.

Hack

Another computer game. This is a public domain game, so I can give you a copy of the IBM version if you want. The game displays a dungeon level (or the parts of it that you know about) in text characters, and your task is to find and recover the Amulet of Yendor. Similar to Rogue, which is probably better known, but it manages to be much better. An excellent way to waste time.

Hunter Planet

An Australian game, this is humorous SF role-playing at its best. The game is especially good for the particularly demented. Unlike most SF games where the players are the heroic humans resisting space pirates, aliens and so on, in Hunter Planet, you play the bug-eyed monsters who go hunting the

"semi-intelligent" natives on the planet Dirt. (As the Federation of Planets translated the local name.) While a genuine long term campaign with features such as character continuity may be difficult (~75% fatality rate among hunters.), the game is very good for conventions and other one-offs, such as QUGS meetings. The game would somewhat throw inexperienced GMs into the deep end, and much of the rule system is "do what you feel is right." The game resembles Paranoia in many respects, but is simpler, easier to run, and cheaper. (It is a local product.)

Warlords

A very cheap boardgame (\$10) by Panther games, dealing with China in the first half of the 20th century. It looks quite good, although I haven't played it yet. How can you go wrong for \$10? It is an army level game, with movement by the province, and the game turns are many months. If you like that kind of strategic level game, or are interested in the period, try it.



Sources for role-playing games

While many people are aware that a large number of fantasy books exist, and many are useful/interesting as sources of ideas for role-playing; both for players and GMs, many useful sources are overlooked. One problem is that many fantasy books are fairly rotten, or cannot be readily used.

What can we use such sources for? There are three main categories: character ideas, plot ideas, and culture ideas.

Character ideas are of use to players and GMs, as each player of course plays at least one character, and a GM will tend to run many, many NPCs. Examples of good characters can only encourage players to develop characters with character, rather than walking heaps of statistics. Major characters in literature tend to have well developed personalities, and often the minor ones as well. If, being a GM, you read a book and think "There should be a merchant like that in my campaign," by all means use the idea. The is especially good with minor characters as players are unlikely to remember them clearly and the ones that attract your attention will generally have some easily revealed features. A player can often be stuck for an idea for a character, especially if they are interested in personalities. Characters in literature can provide many things: motivations, personality traits, speaking habits, even appearances. A character can even be used essentially as is, with any needed modifications due to there upbringing in a different world. An especially useful thing is names. Don't know what to call your character? Find a name and use it.

Some things make better sources for this kind of thing than others. The best sources are those with many well developed characters. A suggested reading list will follow at the end of this article.

Plot ideas are also readily filchable. This of course applies more to GMs than players, but players may still get use from such things. "Oh, this is interesting. Our intrepid hero decides to do" Many plots are directly originated by player actions in many campaigns. (Personally, I like this kind of campaign, as if the players do want to do something, they can try, and besides, it saves on the work you have to do.) The problem with this is that many plots translate poorly. Few work well with high violence campaigns. Novels also tend to be quite long, with correspondingly more convoluted plots, so short stories are perhaps the best plot sources.

Culture ideas are also a very valuable thing to a GM. Many of the best are to be found in history and such non-fiction. Fiction gives us pictures of cultures that are affected by magic, non-human and alien races, and high-tech. A big problem is that such things are often poorly thought out. But even

these have their uses. See why you do not like it, and avoid making the same mistakes. Both external and internal features can be used. By this I mean you may choose merely certain elements, such as a system of types of clothing being restricted to people of certain social classes, and those who disobey these laws are suitably punished. Other things to look for are: how is the law defined and enforced, what do people wear, what hairstyles do they have? How is the army recruited? Religion? Warfare? Trade? Much, much more. Why these things are done the way they are can also be used, often with rather different results as the conditions will differ.

So, what would be good sources for what? Read these:
Groo comics. These are especially good for what people look like. Instead of saying "He looks like a merchant," you will be able to describe them exactly as, this being a comic, has many pictures. (And hidden messages.) It is also a suitable source of interesting characters and demented plots for certain types of fantasy campaigns.

"Lord Valentine's Castle" by Robert Silverberg. Good characters here for fantasy.

Superhero comics. Obviously a good source for superhero campaigns, but often contain good ideas for SF or modern era games.

Viking sagas. There are many of these available, especially at the Uni. Really good are the fictional mythic sagas. Everything can be gotten from these for an interesting AD+D campaign. Monsters, people, places, plots, and they present the interesting side of Viking life.

"The Mists of Avalon" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. Many interesting Arthurian characters.

Stuff by H.P. Lovecraft. Especially for Call of Cthulhu, but much to be used in almost any other game. (but sparingly.)

Stuff by Robert E. Howard. Not having actually read any Conan books, I don't know about them, but I have read much of Howard's other stuff. I would recommend his Solomon Kane stories, and a book called "The Sowers of the Thunder", a collection of four historical stories.

History and suchlike. Read about early cultures, "primitive" cultures, shamanism, myth. Celts, Scythians, Sarmatians, Egyptians, Aztecs, Tibetans, Chinese history, African history. These are not usually as well known as the usual Greek/Roman/Mediaeval history.

Also read collections of short stories, especially good ones, as these contain a wide variety of ideas.

