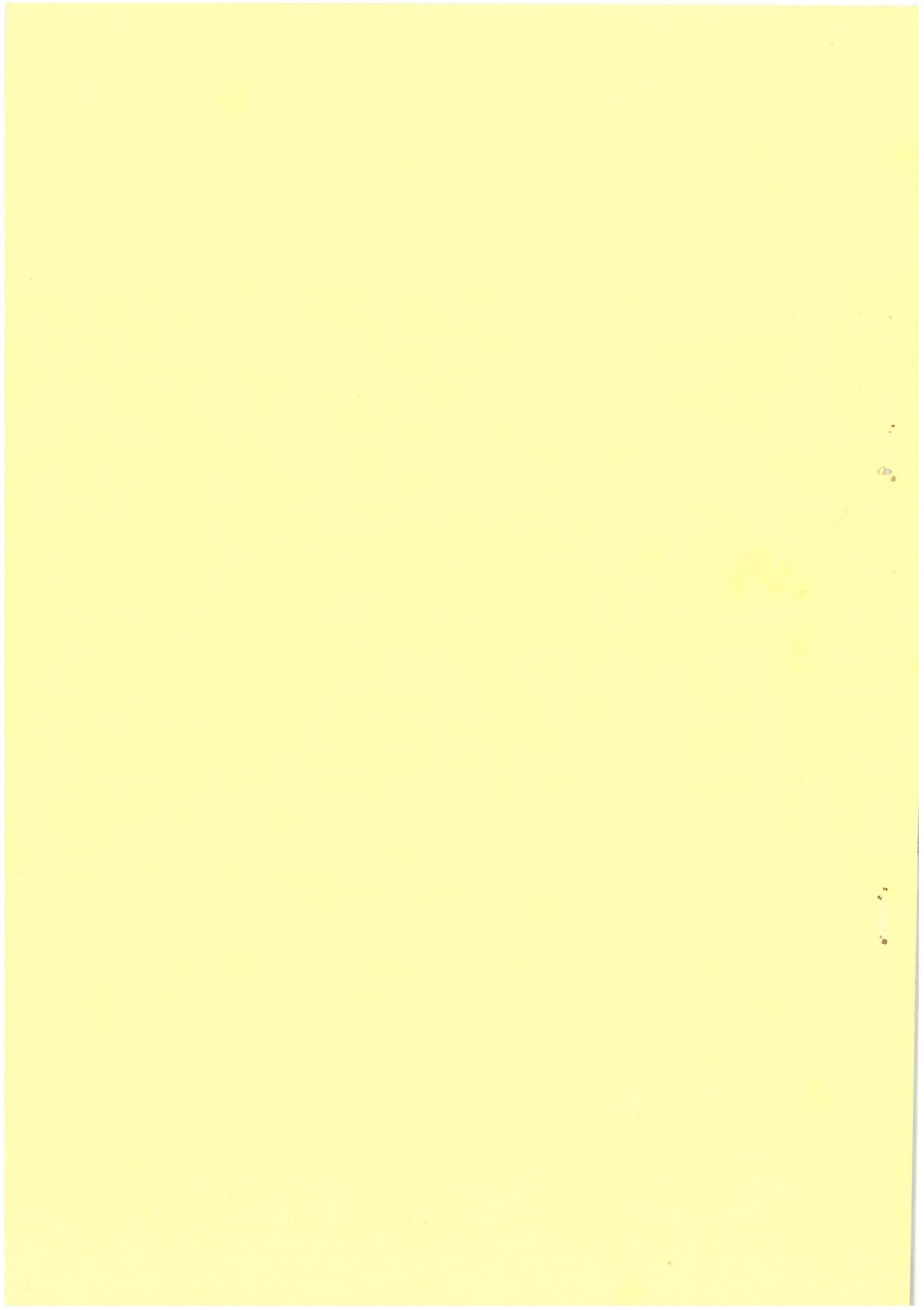


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QUEENSLAND WARGAMER

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Editorial

Here is the present of the Queensland Wargamer. What lies in our past? The magazine has changed quite a bit over the years, as the club membership's interests changed, but it has remained a place where the ideas of club members can see print. As we now have a very large membership, we should be receiving more contributions for the Wargamer. In fact, we have six major contributors for this issue, which isn't too bad, but few are new members. What about the rest of you? We are after reviews, articles, artwork, fiction, scenarios, and just about anything else. (Even crosswords and puzzles.)

What lies in our future? Well, that's up to you. We will try to include a complete boardgame in one of our future issues. Then we will be up there with magazines like S&T. Any budding game designers out there? We are also looking for mini-modules etc. for games. Give your contributions to any of the executive, either at meetings, or elsewhere. Or mail them in.

Timo



Claws of Bagh Nakh: A Champions Column

Scenario Design: Some Ideas

by Timo Nieminen

Having a three and a half year old Champions campaign, I have done quite a bit of scenario design. Having also done a lot of playing in other people's campaigns, I've also seen the results of other peoples scenario design. Here I present some thoughts on the subject.

The scenarios that you use will be affected by two main factors: what you, as a GM, want to run, and what the players want. Remember, the players outnumber you, so they deserve due consideration. Find out what the players want, and then give it to them. If a player even went so far as to design a complete scenario, I would run it, provided it was acceptable to me as a GM.

Apart from your players, there are other sources of ideas, such as (of course) comics, books, movies, television shows, and old myths and legends. What kind of idea can we turn into a scenario? I tend to build scenarios from small bits and minor scenes. As the players have a lot of effect on play, the original scene may never actually occur, but that's OK.

An example: Supervillain (or a hero?) striking a typical heroic posture on the rubble-strewn site of a destroyed building (or a construction site?). Suddenly he is blasted down from behind. How do we turn this into a scenario? There are many possibilities. Is he (She? It seems to me that the women do less gratuitous posing and showing off than the men, so I'll stick with he.) the friend or foe of the PCs? Or something in between? We'll assume that he's the enemy. And we'll assume that he's just defeated the PCs. Who blasts him? Perhaps one of his team-mates performing an act of dire treachery, or one of the PCs snatching victory from the jaws of defeat. Or it could be a last minute rescue. (Who is the rescuer?) Why did he fight the PCs to start with? Was he alone?

Once we answer these questions, we have a scenario! We decide that we want the fight, so we come up with a reason. The reason will very much depend on the style of the campaign. His motives could range from simple revenge, robbery, liking of wanton violence, or he could perhaps be searching for something in the ruins. Or, the PCs could be searching in the ruins for something, perhaps in the aftermath of the fight which caused the ruins, and the villain catches them by surprise.

Now we come to details. Is he an old villain, or a new one for you to design? Here we must remember that he (and his possible team-mates) should be able to defeat the PCs, (perhaps with surprise on his side) but should then be

defeatable by the PCs in the rematch. (Or by the mysterious rescuer. This could be a good way to introduce a new PC.) Perhaps he overlooked one of the PCs in his initial assault.

The scenario can diverge from this plan, if for example, the PCs defeat him in the first encounter. That's okay, as they will have the satisfaction of defeating a difficult opponent. The PCs may well lose the second fight as well. If so, the villain had better not be a bloodthirsty maniac. But remember, when designing or selecting the villain, he'll probably do double stun on his first attack (out of combat surprise), and if he has a middling area of effect attack, he can take out all the PCs without real defences right at the start. Then, if he has a big attack (perhaps with limited uses, so he can't use it in the second round), he can defeat the others before the first lot recover. Then, he leaves himself open to a surprise attack from an overlooked PC (one with a big energy blast perhaps) and now it's his turn to take double stun.

This would give us two rather short fights. We might not have a very long scenario. Well, you could run two short scenarios in one session, or else expand the bit before the fight, or introduce some stuff for afterwards. There were also many other ways in which the scenario could have developed. Think about the other possibilities if you run into problems with one.

The original scene need not be very complete; it could be a soliloquy, an idea for a character (eg a costume) etc. These bits can be worked from as well.

In designing scenarios using this method, keep an eye on the logic and flow of events. Don't try to force the scenario to go the way you want it to. Let it go where it wants to. If you designed it properly, and the PCs don't do anything particularly strange, it'll go roughly where you want it to. If the PCs don't want any part of it, you should have gone back to step one, and started again with a different idea.

We can also design a scenario from a plot. We might think "Let's use the great old plot where the heroes turn up, find a fight in progress, help the ones who are obviously the good guys, and turn out to be wrong." This kind of design is related to designing from scenes, but instead of fitting a plot to some scenes, we need to fit scenes to our plot. Again, we need to be flexible about it, as the players are quite capable of tying the best laid of plots in knots.

I usually use the first method, but will use both. I'll raid all sorts of sources for my initial ideas, including picking my player's brains, using ideas that I see in other campaigns, and lift ideas from fiction. Small

ideas can turn into big multi-session scenarios. (Great oaks grow from little acorns.)

As this article has been all about how to turn small ideas into scenarios, here are some small ideas to get you started. (Note that when thinking up your own, or when reading your comics, you can be much more visual about it all.)

The unstoppable opponent (eg Juggernaut)

A theme oriented villain eg Chessmaster and his Chessmen

The noble, admirable villain who must nevertheless be stopped

The hostage crisis

The despicable villain protected by your own government (why?)

The misunderstood hero believed to be a villain, who they try to nab

The Mk VII deathtrap (or the Mk VII Super-Scream Torture Machine)

A villain whose attacks match a particular hero's vulnerabilities

A foe from the past seeks vengeance

Mysterious, seemingly random events which lead to a terrible plot to ...

The radiation crazed monster (which may even fall dead on its own)

The ever-popular "Let's kidnap the DNPC"

Let the heroes meet the villain's DNPC (Will they kidnap or just chat?)

Hopefully, some of these will inspire you. If it just doesn't want to turn into a scenario, but remains as a five minute brief encounter, use it as such to fill in the occasional blank "page". Remember that not every idea will suit your group of PCs, and that scenarios do not spring into existence fully developed. Also, aim for variety. Avoid the "which supervillain group loots all the banks in the city this week" syndrome. But make sure that what you introduce into your campaign is what you want. You'll have to live with it afterwards. (But that's probably another article all on its own.)



The Man From QUGS returns in a heartrending, dystopian cyberpunk adventure:

TMFQ in Gamersland

It was quiet as usual. I've come to expect that - a burnt-out gaming junky like me. The QRPS hacks had been on my back again to write a sequel to "Illegal Aliens", but nothing excruciatingly funny had happened to me lately. (Well, funny-humorous no, but funny-weird yes : a moose had sat down opposite me in the hospital cafeteria that morning. I'd tried to be polite but I couldn't help staring. I'd never seen a moose eat quiche before.) So I lounged over the end of the sofa and tried to look busy.

A foot high rabbit ran out from under the seat and across the floor into a hole in the skirting board. I looked at the empty beer bottles in front of me and swore off Victoria Bitter. The hole was still there, so I cleared my throat. "Um, Frances, did you just see something run across the floor then? Like a mouse maybe?"

My housemate didn't bother to raise her eyes from 'Writing Really Complex But Essentially Useless Programs in C'. "It was a rabbit," she said.

"Uh, huh," I replied drawing upon my 16 years of formal education.

"It ran across the floor and into that hole," she continued. "Had a stack of 'StarFleet Battles' errata under its arm. Should tell the landlord about the hole."

That's the problem about computer programmers - they've got absolutely no imagination. However seeing the possibility of garnering a story out of this trivial incident I went to check out the hole. It looked bigger up closer, so big I thought I could squeeze into it. So I tried. I was wrong. After 5 minutes of resorting limbs and exertion all I'd done was look a fool trying to fit in a 20 cm hole and put my back out. I decided to stop trying when the rabbit stuck its head out. "Listen asshole," it said "The large entrance is around the back. Go there to get in, hmmm?" And so it was. Going through a door labelled "Tradesman and Gamers entrance" (that for some reason I hadn't previously noticed) I found myself in a wide sweeping pasture. In front of me, the rabbit was setting up a table covered with counters and tables. Opposite was a giant caterpillar smoking a pipe and sitting on a giant pile of 'Europa' rule amendments.

"Where's the Leaf Plus when you need it?" I said.

The giant grub noticed me and sat up. "Oh - hello. Um, want a smoke of this? It's mind altering."

"No point in his case then, is there?" said the rabbit.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"I stand vindicated by his own words," the rabbit murmured and placed another heap on counters on the map.

"Where is this place?" I asked.

The rabbit sighed and looked at me, dropping a tape measure in its waistcoat pocket. "Look," it started, "This place is called 'Gamersland'. As for where ... you know how when you look in a mirror everything is backwards? Your left hand is your right, your hair is parted from the other way and so on?" I nodded. "Well," the rabbit continued. "It's exactly the same here." And it went back to setting up the board.

I thought about for a while and then politely cleared my throat. "Um look - that doesn't help me a lot really ..."

"Don't bother us with your problems," replied the grub testily. "Go over there and ask them. If all three of us stand here together for long enough the Qld. police are likely to come over and beat us up for having an illegal demonstration."

'Over there' was even weirder. A perverse looking dwarf was shouting from behind a stack of manuals at a dazed looking hare and a pimply faced dormouse. The hare was dressed in a chainmail bikini and quoting issue numbers of 'Dragon' between mouthfulls of greasy takeaway food. The dormouse stirred and muttered, "Wake me when the fighting starts," and then fell to sleep again.

"You must be D&D players," I said.

"You walk around a corner," said the dwarf, "And are confronted by an old man wearing torn rags and quivering in fear."

"I pull out my +5 sword of Hurting Things and kill him!" yelled the dormouse, and then promptly fell to sleep again.

The hare blinked and murmured, "Come on - what's the result on the 'Decapitated Old Man Treasure Table'?"

The dwarf rifled through a play manual. "Uh - 10 million gp, mithril ring mail - hobbit size - and a Ring of Crushing Comments. Suddenly, 50 mindflayers and 20 golden dragons race around the corner and attack you!"

"I draw my sword," said the dormouse.

"I think about casting a spell," said the hare.

"You are D&D players," I said. They all looked at me with puzzled expressions. "Look," I continued, "You're obviously having fun here but - haven't you ever thought of ROLEPLAYING? Acting out characters? Thinking your way through scenarios?"

"We do," said the dwarf in a wounded voice. "I let them have their choice of weapons."

We looked at each other for a while, until I shook my head, and said "We are obviously not even on the same planet," and walked off.

It's tough being a gaming guru. I walked a street of golden cobblestones briefly, then stopped to rest against a condominium made of gingerbread. Breaking off a piece of sugar-frosted drainpipe, I considered whether it was all worth it. Having to protect my real identity, fighting gaming crimes where I find them, all that. A warty old woman wearing a pointy hat leaned out the window of the condo to glare at me, and then inspiration hit. I cleaned it off, rubbed the ugly bruise where it had impacted and thought hard.

I realized why the dwarf looked so familiar. I knew who he was. F Harry Hyjax, the designer of D&D - "Dwelvers and Dwarves" - one of the best selling RPGs in gaming history. Also one of the worst written and most gratuitously violent.

Just then I heard a disturbance from behind a nearby bush. Sticking my head through, a broadsword (with a 100 kilo barbarian on the other end) whistled past my neck. Leaping out from cover, I delivered a cutting comment about his loincloth and then while he was distracted, gave him a sharp blow to the kidneys. Recovering from subsequently getting beaten to a pulp, I looked up through the blood in my eyes to see an apologetic expression on his face. "Sorry," he said. "I thought you were an orc."

"I do not look like an orc," I said.

He looked huffy. "Well how do I know? I've never seen one anyway."

"Not much of a barbarian are you then?" I sneered.

The barbarian glowered briefly. "It's not my original job, y'know," he replied in a wounded voice. "It's just the one that got assigned me"

"What - assigned? By who? F Harry Hyjax?" The barbarian looked at me curiously. I could now see most of his muscles were in fact stick-on latex casts. There was a sign saying "37th Level" hanging around his neck.

"Sure. Hyjax is the one that runs this place for the Red Queen. How did you ..." A trumpet call sounded out in the distance and I raised an eyebrow at the barbarian. The effort exhausted me and I sat for a little rest while he answered. The barbarian shrugged. "Obviously you're new around here. I'll explain : the Red Queen, she's going to play D&D. And like she doesn't use miniatures, she uses People."

We stared at each other. "You mean, I'm in the middle of one huge, to life scale, hack and slash session?"

"Yup."

I stared closer. "Hang on ... you're, uh, Marc Dunnigan-Hill right? The games designer?"

He shrugged.

"Wow," I continued, "The designer of 'PanzerSchmuck', of 'Horrible Green Things from Narvik' ..." Dunnigan-Hill shrugged again.

"Sure. Hyjax has kidnapped most of the major game designers in the world and brought them here. The in-house game testers from Chaosium are just south playing a tribe of orcs, the guys from GDW were cast as elves and things. The design team from TSR got wasted last week by a hobbit with a blowtorch. They were playing gelatinous cubes."

"Appropriate really," I said.

The game designer nodded. "I thought so. It's all pretty ugly. The 'Europa' designers were cast as dwarves. Last I heard, they were trying to carve 10,000 counters out of solid basalt."

There was crashing in the bushes near us, and a thought that had been bothering me finally materialized. "Hang on, if she uses real people for NPCs, what does she use for".

Dunnigan-Hill got as far as the "real" in "real monsters" about the same time I hit lightspeed going in the opposite direction. In the corner of my eye, there was an increasingly small image of him fighting something with a lot of teeth. My glee at having such willing cannon-fodder was destroyed when I collided with a large immobile object.

It was a dungeoneering party. There were magic-users and fighters and thieves and half- orc/bard/monk/asassin/barbarians (well - there was only one of them actually) and clerics and an extremely cross queen. "Well," she huffed, "What are we supposed to do - eat you or kill you?" I sat in front the word-processor for ten minutes trying to think of a witty reply before giving in and deciding to resurrect Marc Dunnigan-Hill instead. The game-designer jogged over the horizon trying to hide a machinegun behind his loincloth, while putting fake blood on his broadsword. As he joined us, the Red Queen looked carefully at me. "And what are you?" she sneered.

"A student ma'am."

She frowned. "A Student? What sort of a character class is that? Did that appear in a back issue of 'Dragon' or something?"

"It's a subclass of Thief ma'am," said Dunnigan-Hill. "It appeared in 'Forgotten Realms' and briefly in a Federal budget 18 years ago."

She kept frowning. "Do we need a Student in the party? What abilities do they have?"

Dunnigan-Hill was quick thinking, I have to say. "Uh, they can survive on virtually nothing at all, take loads of damage, quote Pink Floyd and Monty Python at will. If necessary they can go for weeks on end without sleep,

ingesting nothing but coffee and Mars bars, while learning huge slabs of information."

"But they can only use that last ability twice a year," I added.

"Do we need a Student in the party, though?" she said.

Dunnigan-Hill shrugged. "Better. I'm told that we're bound to run into an Academic or two."

"A sub-class of Illusionist," I quipped. "Yeah, they get the spells 'Invisible', 'Obscure' and 'Turn Thesis To Ash'."

My fit of giggling was interrupted when from behind the Queen, an ugly dwarf leapt. It was Hyjax, of course. "That's him," he shrieked. "The heretic! The one who suggested that we **roleplay!**" The party began to mutter as Hyjax jumped up and down. "Next he'll be saying D&D isn't the best system!"

"It isn't," I said. "And I'm breaking this operation up. All the game-designers are going home."

Dunnigan-Hill was sweating and muttering under his breath, "Cut it out, man. This isn't funny."

The Queen snorted. "Humph! And who do you think you are?"

"I'm the Man From QUGS," I said.

Silence descended. The half-orc/magic user/something else coughed nervously. Hyjax tensed. The Red Queen glowered. The rest of the party waited. Dunnigan-Hill wailed "I'm going to die!"

The party moved towards me, unsheathing swords, stringing bows, looking up tables. Dunnigan-Hill and I stepped backwards, then again. "Any last words?" I said.

"Aardvark - (ahrdvahrk) - noun - singular - a small burrowing animal .." began the game-designer. Then I had an idea. I grabbed his machine-gun and turned it to rapidfire, turning it on the party. I sprayed them liberally with bullets until nothing moved.

"Amazing!" Dunnigan-Hill gaped. "How did you think of such an amazing lateral idea?"

I shrugged and slung the machine-gun. "Us gaming gurus have to know these things." I crouched and growled. "Now comes the hard part : how to wrap the story up quickly and get back home."

Dunnigan-Hill dropped his sword and sat down next to me. "But you had the power to go back anytime."

"How's that?"

"Why, those magical red shoes you're wearing."

I looked down at the the bright red Reeboks that had mysteriously

appeared on my feet. "Oh no, you're not going to do it this way, you couldn't . . ."

"I'm afraid so," the game-designer apologized.

"Damn you Paul-Michael," I growled. "This isn't very funny."

The author said nothing. "Now just tap your heels together," Dunnigan-Hill said, "And say 'There's no place like home'. You'll instantly go back to where you came from."

I did and I did.

The Reeboks fell apart the next day.

THE END

(The Man From QUGS will return in "A Fistful of Counters")

(That scared ya, didn't it?)

BENT OFFERINGS

By Don Addis



During World War II, German subs were equipped with high-pressure underwater toilets so complex that a specially trained crewman was assigned to tend them. At least one boat, U-120, was lost as a result of improper maintenance of her toilet.

FTL and SF games

Sure, people say, SF games need FTL. How true is this? Well, it's not. Which is not to say that it can't be used. If you want large star-spanning empires, you need it. But some types of FTL are better than others. Within about 5 parsecs (1 parsec = 3.626 light-years) of our sun are some 50 stars. This gives us about one star for every 10 cubic parsecs. As a number of these are in binary or trinary systems, we have about one star system to every 15 cubic parsecs. Also, most of these are poky little red dwarf stars, usually of little use to the really big empires.

Now, the big catch is that our standard FTL drive, using some kind of hyperspace, means we can go fairly quickly from any point to another as long as they aren't too close to a planet or star. This means that a truly enormous number of stars are accessible, as stars aren't distributed in a flat sheet as games like Traveller might have us believe. The number of stars accessible will go up by the cube of our hyperdrive range. So with our Traveller Jump-5 starship, we have 50 stars we can reach already with only one jump. This means that our empire is very large in terms of stars.

This is also not a bad thing, as presumably, many of these will remain uncolonized or even unexplored. It does mean that the poor GM has a lot of work to do, as, if the players can go to any star, they have a lot to choose from, and the GM will need to know something about them.

So what are our alternatives? An interesting type of FTL is that which only allows you to jump between certain points. (See "The Mote in God's Eye"—the Alderson Drive.) With this system, the GM need only know which systems connect up to which systems. These connections need not relate too closely to where the stars actually are, although near stars are probably more likely to be connected. Travel between the jump points would take quite a bit of time, and the GM can note how far apart the jump points in a system are from each other and the main planet. Travel in a jump could well be instantaneous.

A closely related system is where our jumps are between black holes. This means that we usually have further to travel to reach our jump points. An example of this set-up can be found in "The Forever War."

Of course, we can also forgo FTL altogether. This means that travel between stars would be SLOW, with an absolute maximum speed of 1 light year per year. A trip at 4 years to the parsec would be fast, with maybe 15 years per parsec being more easily achievable. If the PCs want to travel, they'd best hope for reliable suspended animation.

With travel times like these, a nearby colony would be 4 years away for

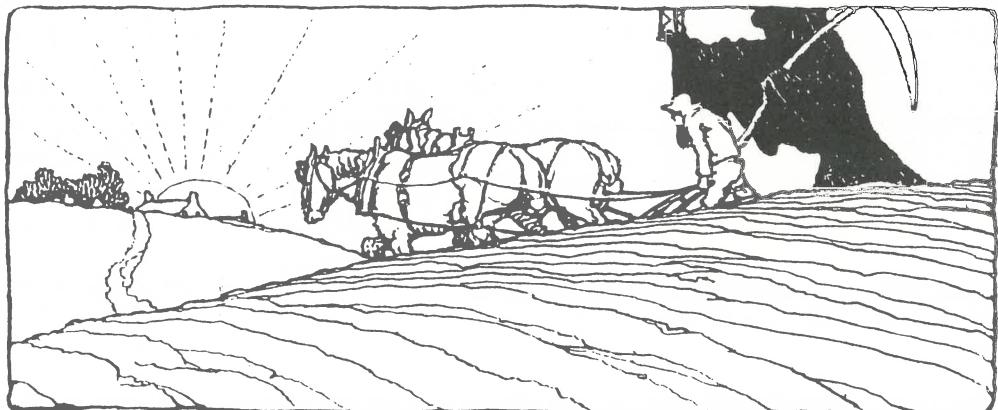
messages, and perhaps 20 years away for a one-way trip. If the players are on such a colony world, they can't get extra help very quickly, if at all. The colony is pretty much on its own. This kind of game would work very well. Players often want their characters to be important people. With a small colony, everybody is important. Combat related skills could be useful, depending on the native life forms. And what happens to our colony when the countries back on Earth decide to nuke each other? Then the colony really is on its own. And if the colonists come from both sides of the war, and there are military fanatics there, that may not be the end of the war yet. The war of course, is 4 years old already, and if anybody returns, anything could have happened in over twenty years.

There could also be more travel, but with 20 to 50 years between stars, the planets visited could change quite a bit between stops. This would take a bit of work to do, as the GM would need to know quite a bit about each planet.

Any of these non-FTL options involve fewer planets than say, a typical Traveller empire. Thus, much more is known about each planet, and each planet will be more convincing. (Especially if there is only one.)

Yet another idea is to have the players aboard a large colony starship still on its way. Perhaps something has gone wrong.

Finally, it should be pointed out that an SF game doesn't even need any kind of interstellar travel. There is plenty to be done right here on Earth. A slightly different Earth; perhaps very crowded, dirtier, nastier. Post-holocaust games usually fall into this category. So do movies like "Bladerunner," "Escape from New York," and others.



During the Iran-Iraq war, troop densities sometimes reached 1800 men per kilometre of front line, densities not seen since World War II, and rare even then.

Helgi Thorisson

I. The Woman

There was a man called Thorir farming at Raudaberg near Oslofjord in Norway. He had two sons, Helgi and Thorstein, both fine men, though Helgi was the more talented of the two. Their father was a man of some rank and enjoyed the friendship of King Olaf Tryggvason.

One summer the two brothers went on a trading voyage north to Finnmark, with butter and bacon to sell to the Lapps. Their trade went very successfully, and late in the summer they sailed back south again. One day they came to a headland called Vimund where there are fine woods. They went ashore and cut themselves a certain maple tree. Helgi happened to stroll deeper into the woods than the rest of his men. Suddenly a heavy mist came down over the forest, so he couldn't find his way back to the ship that same evening, and soon night fell and it grew very dark.

Then Helgi saw twelve women come riding through the wood, all of them on red-coloured horses and wearing red costumes. They dismounted, and all their riding gear shone with gold. One woman was far lovelier than all the others, and they were in attendance upon this great lady.

They put out their horses to graze, then the women set up a splendid tent, with stripes of alternating colours and embroidered everywhere with gold. The points of the tent were ornamented with gold, and on top of the pole which stood up through the tent there was a great golden ball. When the women had made these preparations, they set up a table and laid it with all kinds of choice food. Then they took water to wash their hands, using a jug and basins of silver, inlaid everywhere with gold.

Helgi was standing near the tent watching them, and the great lady said to him, "Come over here, Helgi, have something to eat and drink with us."

So that's what he did, and he could see that the food and wine were delicious, and the cups quite splendid. When the table had been cleared, and the beds were made - these beds were much more ornate than those of other people - the great lady asked Helgi if he would prefer to sleep alone or share a bed with her. He asked her name.

"I'm called Ingibjorg. I'm the daughter of Godmund of Glasir Plains," she said.

"I'd like to sleep with you," he said.

So they slept together for three successive nights.

On the third morning the weather was fine, so they got up and dressed.

"This is where we part company," she said. "There are two boxes here, one full of silver, the other of gold. I'm going to give you these, but you must on no account tell anyone where you got them."

Then the women rode off the same way as they had come, and Helgi went back to the ship. They gave him a great welcome and asked him where he'd been, but he wouldn't tell.

They sailed on down the coast until they came home to their father with plenty of money. Helgi's father and brother wanted to know where he'd got all this money in the boxes, but he said nothing.

2. The Strangers

So time passed till Christmas, and then one night a terrible gale began to blow. Thorstein said to his brother: "We'd better get up and see what's happening to our ship."

So that's what they did, and saw the ship was secure.

Helgi had had a dragon-head fitted on to their ship's prow, and the whole stem was decorated above the sea-line. This is how Helgi had invested part of the money Ingibjorg had given him, but some of it he'd locked in the neck of the dragon.

The brothers heard a loud crash, then two riders suddenly appeared and carried Helgi off with them. Thorstein had no idea what could have happened to him. When the weather cleared up, Thorstein went home to tell his father what had happened, and everybody thought it was terrible news.

Helgi's father went at once to see King Olaf, told him all about it and asked him to find out what had happened to his son. The king said he'd do as Thorir wished but he added that he very much doubted if Helgi would ever be much use to his family again. After that, Thorir returned home.

The year went by, till it was Christmas again. That winter, King Olaf was in residence at Alreksstead. On the eighth day of Christmas, in the evening, three strangers came into the hall before King Olaf as he was sitting at table. They greeted him respectfully, and the king returned their greetings. One of these men was Helgi, but no one recognized the other two.

The king asked them their names, and each said he was called Grim. "We've been sent to you by Godmund of Glasir Plains," they said. "He sends you his compliments and also these two drinking horns."

The king accepted the horns. Precious thing they were, all inlaid with gold. King Olaf owned two other drinking horns, called the Hyrnings and

thought to be great treasures, but the horns from Godmund were far better than those.

"What King Godmund wants, my lord, is for you to be his friend. He sets a higher value on your friendship than that of any other king," they said.

The king didn't answer that, but had them shown to their seats. The king had the two horns (both also called Grim) filled with good ale and after that had them blessed by a bishop. Then the king had the horns called Grim brought to the two men called Grim, so they could take the first draught.

King Olaf said:

These drinking horns,
One for each guest,
For Godmund's men
While here they rest:
Each Grim shall drink
From his namesake,
To test the worth
Of the ale we make.

The two Grims took the horns and now they realized what the bishop must have sung over the drink.

"It's just as our King Godmund told us," they said. "This king is full of tricks, he exchanges evil for good, while our king treats him with the greatest honour. Let's get up and go."

And that's what they did, causing a great stir in the hall, as they spilled the drink and put out all the lights. Then everybody heard a great crashing sound. The king prayed for God's protection, and told his men to get up and put an end to the noise, but by this time the two Grims and Helgi had got outside. When the lights were relit in the king's hall, they saw three men had been killed, with the Grim-horns lying beside their bodies.

"This is a strange business," said the king. "Let's hope it doesn't happen too often. People tell me Godmund of Glasir Plains is a great sorcerer and a bad man to have as an enemy. It's no joke for anyone to get into his power, even if we could do something about it." Then the king told his men to take care of the horns and carry on drinking from them, and they gave no trouble to anyone.

The mountain pass the two Grims had travelled through on their way west down to Alreksstead is now known as Grim pass and no one has ever used that route since.

3. *The Victim*

Winter passed, and the rest of the year, till it was the eighth day of

Christmas once more, and the king was in church with his retainers attending Mass. Then three men came up to the church door, and one of them stayed on, but the other two went away again. This is what they said before they left: "We've brought a skeleton for your feast, my lord, and you'll not so easily get rid of it again."

The retainers saw that this man was Helgi. When the king went in to eat and his men tried to talk to Helgi, they realized he was blind. The king asked how things were with him and where he had been all this time. Helgi told him the whole story, how he'd met the women in the wood, how the Grims had brought the gale on him and his brother when they were trying to save their ship, and how the Grims had finally brought him to Godmund of Glasir Plains and handed him over to Ingibjorg, Godmund's daughter.

"How did you like it there?" asked the king.

"Very well," he said. "There's nowhere I've liked better."

Then the king asked him about the way King Godmund lived, how many men he had, and what kind of things he did. Helgi spoke very highly of everything and answered that there was much more to be said about King Godmund than he could ever tell them.

"Why did you leave in such a hurry last winter?" said the king.

"King Godmund sent the two Grims to fool you," said Helgi, "and he only let me go because of your prayers, so you could learn what had happened to me. The reason we left in such a hurry last year was that the Grims weren't able to drink the ale once you'd had it blessed. It put them into a rage to be beaten like that. They killed your men because Godmund had told them to, if they couldn't harm you personally. But he sent the horns just to make an impression, and to take your mind off me."

"Why did you go away this time?" asked the king.

"Because of Ingibjorg," said Helgi. "She said she couldn't sleep with me without feeling uneasy whenever she touched my naked body, that's mainly why I had to leave. In the long run, King Godmund didn't want to argue when he realized you were so keen to get me away from there. As for King Godmund's style and splendour, I haven't the words to describe it, nor the great numbers he had with him."

"Why are you blind?" asked the king.

"Ingibjorg gouged out both my eyes when we parted," said Helgi. "She said the women in Norway wouldn't enjoy my company very long."

"Godmund needs to be taught a proper lesson for all those killings of his, God willing," said the king.

Then Helgi's father, Thorir, was sent for, and he couldn't thank Olaf

enough for getting his son out of those monster's hands. Thorir went back home, but Helgi stayed on with the king and lived for exactly one more year.

King Olaf took the Grim-horns with him when he set out on his last journey. It's said that when King Olaf disappeared from the Long Serpent, the horns vanished too, and no one has ever seen them since. And this is all we can tell you about the Grims.



Turn Water To Wine (Alteration) Reversible

Level: 2

Range: 3"

Duration: Permanent

Area of Effect: 1 cubic foot/level,
1" square area

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 1 round

Saving Throw: None

Explanation/Description: This spell enables the cleric to turn water into an equal quantity of wine. The material component of the spell is a drop of wine, and the wine created is of the same type and quality as that drop. The maximum concentration of alcohol that can be so created is 15%.

In RealTime : More Ramblings
(A Reply to a Flame Inflicted Upon Me)

I agree fully that dice in moderation can add interest and variation to a generation system. (I groused in a previous communication about players who take hours weighing up 1% Foraging vs 2% Nuclear Warhead etc. I'm just as prone to this as anyone else, and the dice speed the procedure up and add variety to the character : a failing that some point systems fall into, every character being the players idea of a "perfect" balance and thus looking extremely similar.)

However (clenches teeth and dons Clint Eastwood expression) someone has had a go at me for my comments on RQ III. (Dons patient expression) So to explain further....

- a) In RQ your statistics have no bearing on your profession, the selection is entirely random.
- b) More seriously the variation between characters is extreme [witness our POW 8 shaman (his highest stat, remember) venturing in a party of fighters without a single stat below 12, all having been generated in the same session].
- c) Your choice of skills is extremely limited (eg. 10% in dodge or parry, 20 % in your primary weapon etc).

Don't get me wrong : the RQ III system is wonderful for generating realistic generic-professional characters. But in terms of fairness and playability of adventuring characters ...? Admittedly the designers do provide notes that allow for choosing stat levels and experience, but these are put in as asides or minor options, and don't solve all the problems mentioned above. The main/official RQ III generation system is horribly random and a step back from that of other Chaosium games (CoC etc. Do I detect the looming shadow of the Avalon Hill games Co behind this?).

As a byline, I thought of one disadvantage to dice based systems I left out of my previous article : fudging rolls. Lets face it : players will be tempted to roll again or just make up rolls and defend it by saying "But that's what I rolled ..." and you can't disprove it. At least point systems stop this (but then you have to worry about characters from other campaigns and play balance).

Is there any right solution to PC generation? No, just refinements.

Paul-Michael Agapow

QUGS Crossword

This crossword was compiled by certain executive members who prefer to remain anonymous. They are giving a mystery prize to the first person to get all of the answers right. Take entries to Taina Nieminen, at the History Department. (Room 324, Gordon Greenwood Building, next to Abel Smith.)

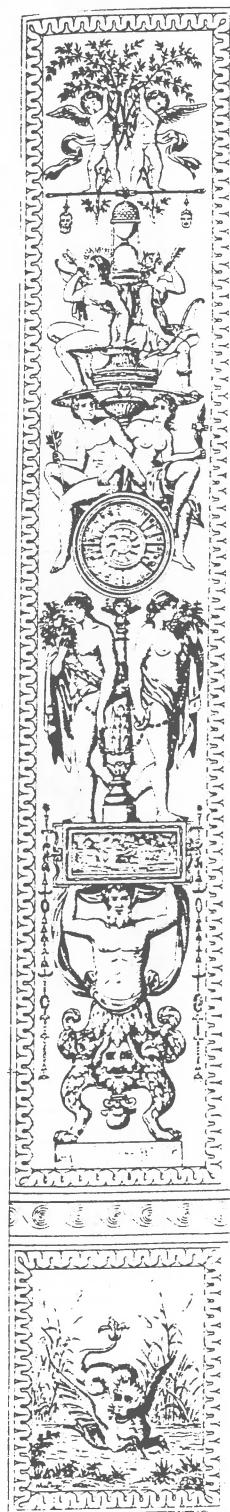
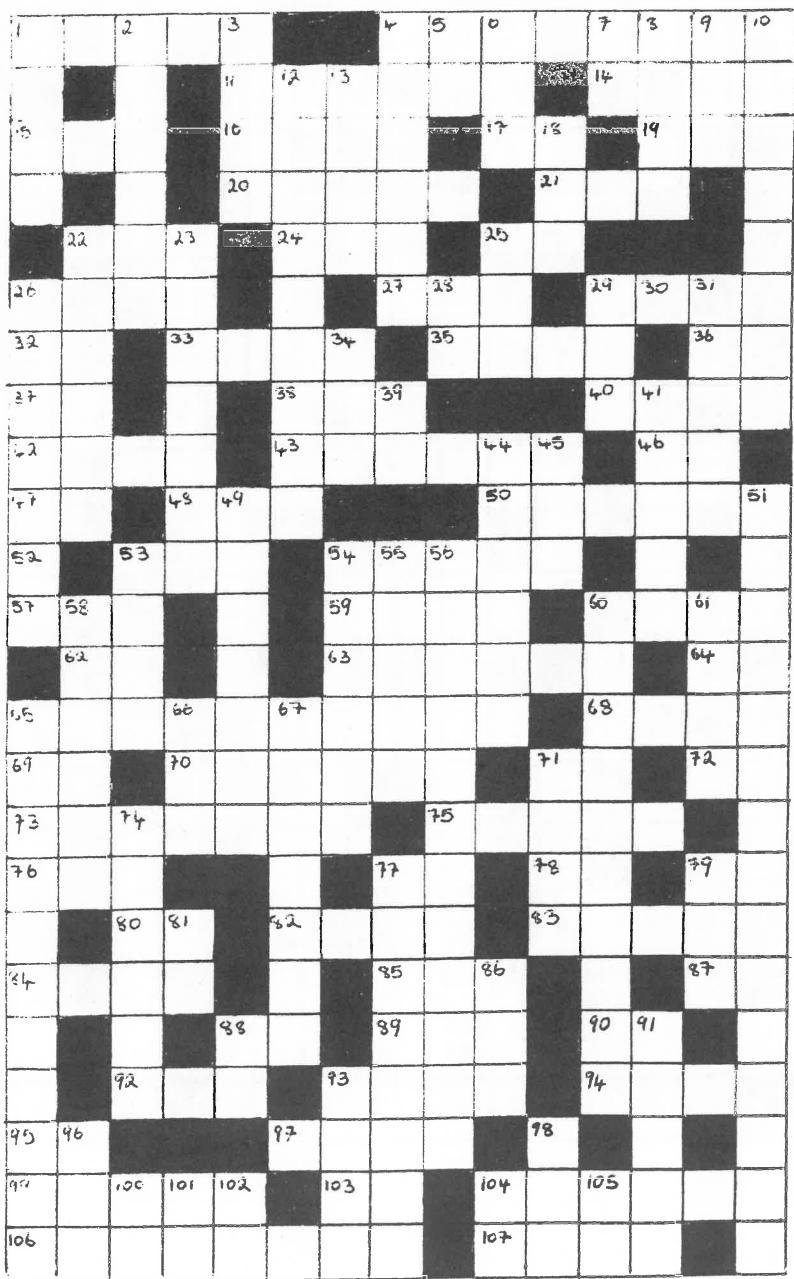
Across

1. Pyramid dweller (5)
4. Minor Asians who fought at Khadesh (8)
11. Exit (6)
14. Thanks - I'm not wild (4)
15. Craggy hill (3)
16. Neckwear with right rank (4)
17. Rest and recreation (1,1)
19. Drink from FA's partner (3)
20. The Japanese art of sword drawing (5)
21. Tree (3)
22. Odoriferous fen (3)
24. Compass direction (1,1,1)
25. Half of heavy metal defence (1,1)
26. Not there (4)
27. Decaying grubs (3)
29. Blake's 7 character (4)
32. Home of Gilgamesh (2)
33. Eft (4)
35. Legionnaire's cap (4)
36. Preposition (2)
37. Go home! (1,1)
38. Atmospheric music (3)
40. Coyote's downfall (4)
42. Burn (4)
43. Split (6)
46. Skirmishers (1,1)
47. The Great Satan (1,1)
48. Little devil (3)
50. Greek (6)
52. SF series (1)
53. Mediaeval lunatics (1,1,1)
54. Perfume (5)
57. $42 + 21 = ?$ (3)
59. This kingdom, under the very fat King Eglon, conquered Israel (4)
60. A male cat is very small (4)
62. Italian river (2)
63. Minor quest (6)
64. About (Latin) (2)
65. A favourite wargamer (10)
68. At a distance (4)
69. Amar-Sin cleaned up Sumer's city (2)
70. No kidding? (6)
71. Breakfast radio (1,1)
72. He's in charge (1,1)
73. A dangerous game at picnics (3,4)
75. It's vital that this remain unpunctured (5)
76. Champions dice rolling can give you this (1,1,1)
77. Sorcerer (1,1)
78. Ineffectual organization (1,1)
79. Like (2)
80. Distance measure 里 (2)
82. Bring up admiral (4)
83. Two faced monster (5)
84. Electric fish (4)
85. Also (3)
87. Entertaining hoax (2)
88. Greek pikemen (1,1)
89. Opium lair (3)
90. The way out of a dungeon (2)
92. Unsuccessful adventurers do this (1,1,1)
93. A type of stone (4)
94. Territorial division (4)
95. 4 Romans (2)
97. Perpendicular to weft (4)
99. Greek nymph (5)
103. Jovian moon (2)
104. Corn depot (6)
106. Field Marshal's minions (8)
107. Ubiquitous monsters (4)

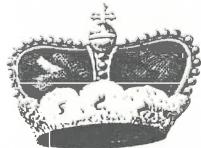
Down

1. Something in God's Eye (4)
2. Guarded by Shelob (6)
3. A monster - only one (4)
4. Nomad with cattle (6)
5. To exist (2)
6. A company, for example (1,1,1)
7. Eats King's children (2)
8. Small caltrop (4)
9. Initially excited, 77 across is a bird (3)
10. Apart (4)
12. Large stinger (5,4)
13. Horse controller (4)
18. 44's transport (3)
22. Sea-rooms (6)
23. Universal (7)
25. What the dragon did to the pony (3)
26. Undead fiend (7)
28. Knockout backwards (1,1)
29. By way of (3)
30. Myself (1)

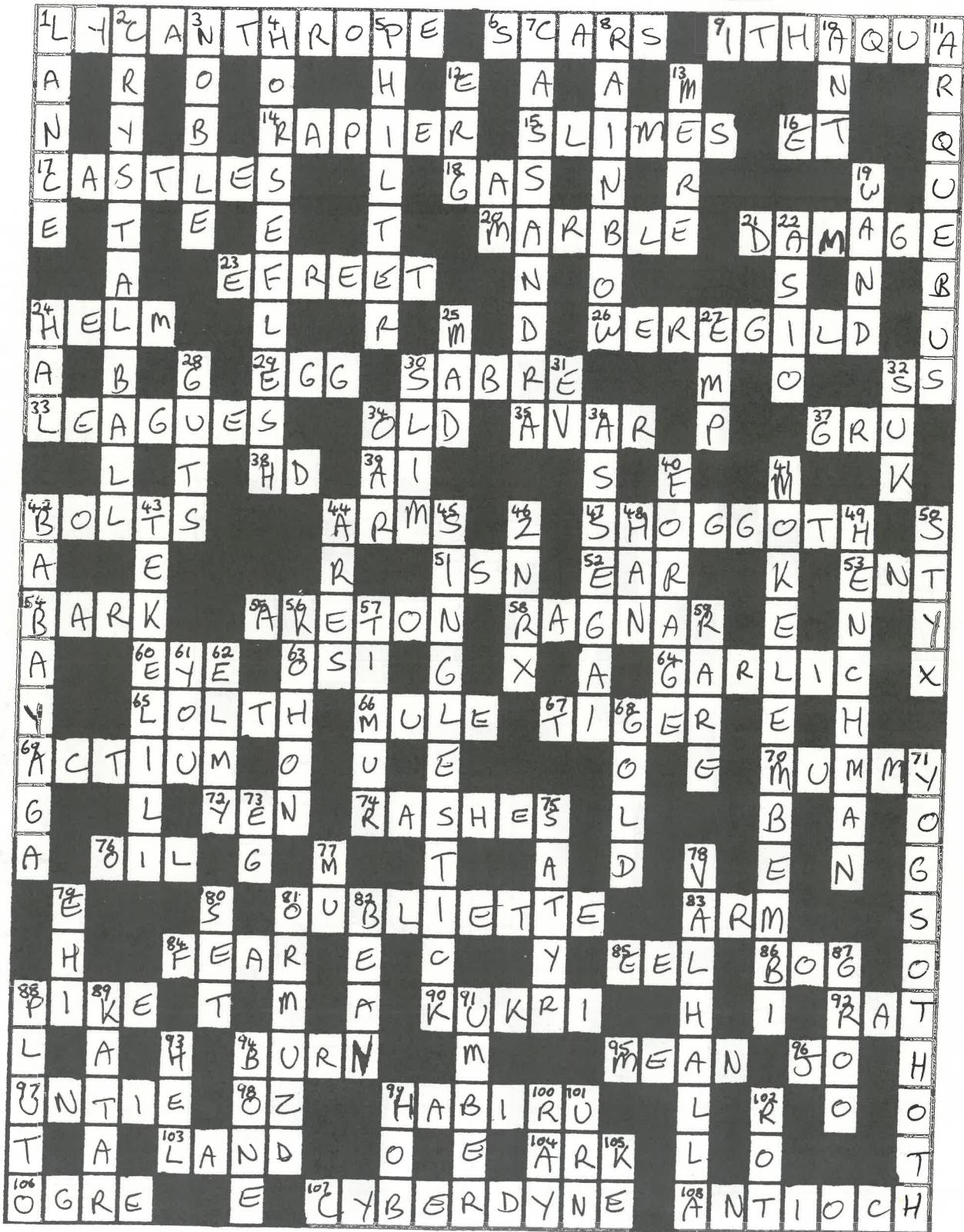
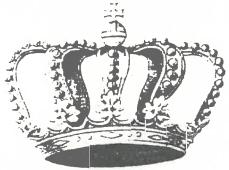
31. AD&D monster (5)
 34. Facial twitch (3)
 39. Royal Horse (1,1)
 41. Hawkeye's secret
 ID (5)
 44. Carried by 18 (6)
 45. Witty saying (3)
 49. An ancient sailor
 (7)
 51. Alliteratively
 dangerous enemies
 (8,7)
 53. A horse's good luck
 charm (4)
 54. Nimrod's armour is
 this (6)
 55. Sea battle (5)
56. To build a castle, you
 must first - - -
 (4,4,4)
 58. Kicks away (6)
 60. Hard to get (10)
 61. TV computer (4)
 65. A small hobbit (11)
 66. Age (3)
 67. Japanese seven (7)
 71. Fever (4)
 74. A Hunnish farmer,
 we hear? (6)
 77. One handed elf (8)
 79. Always welcome (3)
 81. UQ club (1,1)
 86. Sentient tree (3)
 88. Initially a writer of
 horror (1,1)
91. Efforts (5)
 93. Plaintive cry (4)
 96. Compete (3)
 98. A world wide
 pastime (3)
 100. Old Norse (1,1)
 101. Initially the
 largest empire
 (1,1)
 102. Black Adder II's
 sovereign (1,1)
 104. Start the game (2)
 105. A universal
 religion (1,1)



And now, the solution to last issue's



QUGS Crossword



The More Things Change

by Patrick O'Duffy

"Is it safe?" I asked the Guildmaster.

"Safe? Of course it's not safe! If it was safe, we'd send some-one important to do it, not a first-year apprentice!" the Master rumbled from his throne. I knelt before him in the Great Hall, my forehead touching the flagstones of the floor.

He went on. "Mind you, it's not all that important either - another reason why you're going. Face it, you're probably the most incompetent thief we've had in fifty years!"

Personally, I don't think it's all my fault. Blame my parents - whoever they were. After all, you show me a successful thief who's six foot six, clumsy and has flaming red hair. Inconspicuous I'm not.

"You will go to the home of the Dwarf, Tarkland. There, you will steal a book bound in leather. Do not open it! It has runes on it that would both kill you - which would be no great loss - and destroy the book's contents - which would be an annoyance." The Guildmaster stepped off his throne and walked towards me, stopping when he stood before my kneeling form. Prostrate as I was, I only came up to his waist, instead of towering over him as I normally do. "Never annoy a Dwarf - especially me!" he growled. He spoke towards the guards standing by the walls. "Take him to be outfitted - then throw him out. If he returns without the book - well, you know what to do." He turned and marched back to his throne.

As a first-year, I couldn't rise in the presence of the Guildmaster. So, one of the guards picked me up and threw me over his shoulder. Take my advice, never pick a fight with a Troll. Ever. He didn't put me down until we reached the supply room, where I got my equipment and a map of my target. Then he escorted me up the staircase to the building above. Leaving him behind, I went outside into the night.

Since Tarkland lived across town, I caught a taxi.

Quite frankly, being a thief's not all it's cracked up to be, especially not these days. I mean, it was bad enough with paladins, clerics and psychotic barbarians a few hundred years ago. Now we've got all of those, as well as the police, the FBI, private detectives and Goddess knows what else to contend with as well.

Mind you, the Guild does keep up with the times. They teach you cryptography, bugging and computer hacking right alongside lockpicking, swordsmanship and acrobatics. Frankly, I'd rather be a computer programmer, but when you're an orphan in New York, you usually end up being raised as a thief. Of course, most thieves don't stay first-years for six years, but that's my problem.

The taxi pulled up outside Tarkland's apartment complex. The driver was a Hobbit, so I paid him in Fool's Gold - Hobbits are so dumb that he probably wouldn't notice until he checked his takings at days' end.

I slipped into a nearby alley to prepare. I took off my overcoat, revealing the thieves' vest I wore beneath. Thieves' vests are a great idea. The pockets hold all the equipment you need on an outing, and it's lighter and easier to get at than a backpack. The Kevlar sewn into it doesn't hurt either.

I'd have to climb up to Tarkland's apartment - thieves never use elevators, matter of principle - so I took two pairs of suction cups out of a pocket, plus a glass cutter to get through the window. When I was ready, I checked my map to find his room number.

Tarkland lived on the forty-second floor.

Okay, so maybe thieves use elevators *sometimes*.

I reached his apartment. Luckily, the building wasn't classy enough to warrant electronic locks (I could have bypassed them too, but it would have taken too long). I picked the lock in a few seconds, and slipped inside, closing the door behind me.

The room was dark, and I couldn't risk turning the lights on, so I fished a lightstick out of my pocket and snapped it on. The green glow revealed an apartment with comfortable furniture, some paintings, and a very expensive stereo. Unfortunately, I was here for something else.

The map didn't show where the book was, so I looked for it's hiding place. A quick search didn't reveal any chests or strongboxes, so it was probably a wall safe. I checked behind the paintings, and found it behind a print of *The Battle of the Alamo*, showing Orc forces storming Davy Crockett's fort. I uncoiled a stethoscope and held it to the tumblers. After about a minute (I'm not the world's greatest safecracker), I had the safe open.

The book was there, lying on a pedestal. It was bound in old black leather, with a complicated runic symbol on the cover. I don't know much about runes, but I knew enough to be very cautious. I carefully lifted it up, and was just about to put it in my large carrying pocket when the lights came on.

I whirled around, book in hand, to see a Dwarf standing in the doorway, a shortsword in one hand and a .357 Magnum clenched in the other. He was about four foot ten, with a black beard and a patch over his right eye. With a sinking heart I knew it had to be Tarkland.

"Put it back in the safe, very slowly," he said quietly, "and then put your hands on your head." I did as he said. I had a .22 derringer sewn into one pocket, but I figured my chances of using it and living were zero. Quite frankly, dying wasn't something I wanted to try.

The Dwarf walked towards me, gun aimed straight for my head - I guess he knew about the Kevlar. "I take it you're from the Thieves' Guild?" he asked. I nodded. "Typical. Hugo always was a bad loser." Hugo? Who was Hugo?

"Tell me, boy," he stressed, "do you know what it is that you try to steal for your master? Hmm? Would you like to see?"

"No!" I cried. What kind of sadist was this guy? If it was a choice between being shot and having my life sucked out by magic, the .357 looked good. "I like my soul where it is!"

He laughed. He actually *laughed!* This guy was some sort of monster! "Your soul! Boy, you can keep your soul!" He reached into the safe and pulled out the book. Opening it, he thrust it into my face! I shut my eyes instinctively - and then opened them again, wondering if I had seen what I thought.

It was a Photo album.

A *photo album*? I risked my life for a lousy *photo album*? How could the Guildmaster do this to me? I was so shocked that it took a few seconds for me to realize what was in the photos. In front of me was a

old print of two young Dwarves. Despite his having both eyes, one was definitely Tarkland. The other -

The other one was the Guildmaster. A much younger Guildmaster, but him all the same. I looked at Tarkland in confusion.

"Hugo was very close to Mother," he said. "When she left me the album in her will, he vowed that he'd get it back. Hugo always did have a sense of the... *melodramatic*."

The Guildmaster had a mother? I couldn't visualize it. All the apprentices thought of him as being basically immortal or something. I really couldn't deal with this. No wonder he'd sent an apprentice to steal it - if people found out he actually *cared about his mother*, his reputation would be ruined - but who would believe an apprentice?

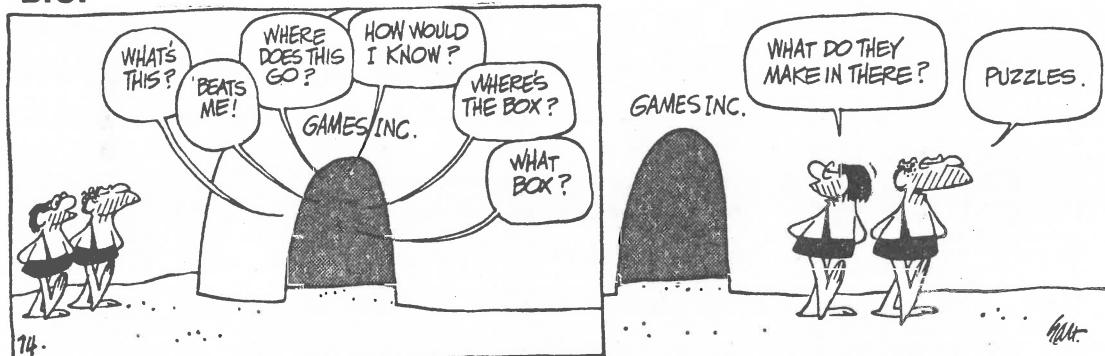
Tarkland must have seen the look on my face, because he lowered his gun - although he kept the sword raised. "You may leave here, if you wish," he said. "Personally, I would advise leaving town before Hugo finds out that you have failed. Go on, get out!" He raised his gun again. I bolted out the door, for once not tripping over my feet. At the elevator, I somehow managed to punch the ground floor button without passing out. As the door closed, I could hear Tarkland laughing - but not unkindly.

On the ground, I came back to a degree of calmness. If I went back to the Guild, I was a dead man. If I left New York and joined another thieves' guild, the Guildmaster (Hugo?) would find out, and have me killed there.

On the other hand, I always wanted to be a computer programmer. I had enough gold stashed away at the bank to get me to Silicon Valley, and I could persuade the Valley Gnomes to let me join the Guild of Programmers. This time next week, I thought as I hailed a taxi, I could be looking at a whole new life.

And I wouldn't care if I didn't see another Dwarf as long as I lived.

B.C.



US M1 MBT tank drivers tend to fall asleep while driving, as the driver is in a reclining, and apparently very comfortable, position.

Review: Lion Rampant's "Ars Magica"

by Patrick O'Duffy

You know old fantasy RPG saying that "wizards and fighters are just as powerful as each other; their strengths balance their weaknesses." Well, forget it. In Ars Magica, wizards are the bosses, and don't you forget it.

Ars Magica is set in a fantasy version of Mediaeval England, in about 1250, as opposed to the very much pseudo-mediaeval environment of AD&D and most fantasy novels. It's an interesting setting.

There are three classes: Magi, Magi's companions, and fighters (also known as "grogs"). Only magi and companions are actually player characters; grogs are shared among the party, so that everyone looks after at least two characters. It may sound a little odd, but when you consider the emphasis on magic, it makes sense.

Characters have eight statistics, ranging from -5 to +5. Stats work with skills, by adding the appropriate skill and statistic to a D10 roll, on which you need to beat a particular difficulty level. Skills are bought with a point system, with the number of points you get being linked to your age and class. Companions get the most skills, magi the least. Characters also receive Virtues and Flaws (ie advantages and disadvantages). Magi and companions get seven points of each, while grogs receive only one of each. Virtues include having better stats, ambidexterity, and having a Guardian Angel. Oddly enough, Berzerkerism and Lycanthropy are both virtues. Flaws include having a Bad Reputation, Blindness, and being susceptible to magic. There are also special magi virtues and flaws, including having an affinity with a particular art (more on that later), and having a deficiency in an art. There are a lot of different virtues and flaws, so making an interesting character is quite easy.

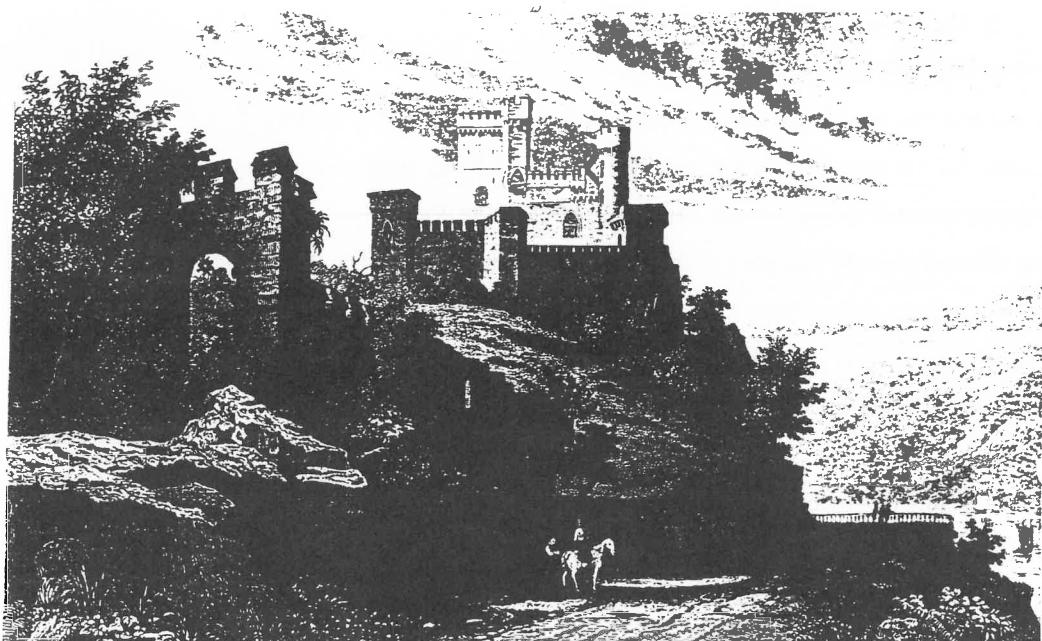
The real meat and drink of Ars Magica is, of course, the magic system. This is one of the most flexible and believable systems that I've seen in a long time. There are fifteen magical arts: five techniques and ten forms. Each art has a Latin name, with techniques being verbs and forms nouns. Thus "Perdo Cörporem" means "Destroy Body" and "Creo Mentem" means "Create Mind." Each "phrase" is then broken down into a variety of spells, each with a different cost. Magi get 150 points of spells. These spells all have interesting names. For example, "Muto Ignem" (Transform Fire) includes "The Many-Hued Conflagration", "Show of the Flames and Smoke", "Prison of Flames", and "Flames of Sculpted Ice." It really adds to the atmosphere of the game.

Besides the basic spells, there are many other magical abilities. Spontaneous magic allows you to cast a spell you don't actually know (risky!),

or make up a new spell on the spot. The Magi's Duel, or "Certámen", is a ritualistic way in which wizards do battle. And comprehensive rules on artificiery allow player characters to make their own magic items, potions, invent new spells etc.

All in all, Ars Magica is very good. The information given on mediaeval Europe gives the game an atmosphere almost as enthralling as that of "Lace and Steel." The magic rules are marvelous, and allow you to finally play the type of wizard that you always dreamed of. Ars Magica won't suit everyone. If you like an action-packed non-stop adventure, then look elsewhere. This is not to say that an Ars Magica game is dry and cerebral, but rather that a lot of time will elapse between adventures. This isn't a game of justice seeking heroes, instead, it's a game of magical feuds, inter-house politics and character interaction (plus a bit of monster-bashing). This is one of the most innovative games in years. Try it, it's well worth it.

Rating: 89%.



The problem of the "language of command" in a new mixed Franco-German brigade designed to perform rear area security duties in West Germany has been resolved by having the troops alternate speaking German and French on a weekly basis.

House hunting

by Paul Kinsler

The plot of this story is based on a role-playing adventure GM'ed by Timo.

1

'Christ! Fuck! What the hell . . .'

Blam. Blam. Blam.

Crazy Eddie left the decrepit tenement block at a flat run. He passed through the cordon of AceCorp security guards and stopped next to a tall, long haired woman. Barbara. She was just completing an elaborate curse. Crazy Eddie snorted in disgust. Barbara, who had been squatting in the flat down the hall near the stairs.

'Bastards': Crazy Eddie, 'Mothers nearly broke my slide rule'

'What ? Oh, yeah': Barbara.

Gunfire on the upper floors.

'MOVE MOVE MOVE' amplified hard.

About sixty people were being escorted at gunpoint out of the front entrance.

'Hey, there's the band': Barbara, 'Still got their gear I see.'

'Can't see Horace Horace though': Crazy Eddie.

John Watt and Jo Everett left the group and came over. John was carrying his TV.

'Bastard camel mothers shot Horace. Fucking shot him !': John was clearly very angry.

Jo put her guitar and amp on the ground: 'Just came through the door firing.'

'Jeez. What will you guys do without a drummer': Kim, blonde and vacant. 'What's going on ?'

'Eviction' grinned Crazy Eddie, 'With extreme prejudice. Buy anything at the market ?'

'Yeah - do you like my earrings ?': Kim shook her head so that they caught the light.

'Jesus'. John and Jo turned back to the scene of the action.

'Rambo's still alive': Jo.

Charlie 'Rambo' Piles was indeed still alive. He was backing down the outer stairwell, explosive pistol in hand, shotgun in the other, facing off a group of AceCorp guards.

'A textbook case of MAD': Crazy Eddie.

More gunfire from above. An explosion. Flames and smoke snake out of the windows.

The next group of evacuees were being escorted out of the main entrance. Paul the Puritan and Jason left the group and came over. Both seemed almost unconcerned. But then Paul rarely reacted to anything.

'Where's Pavlov ?': Jo, 'I suppose that paranoid looney knew they were coming and left beforehand.'

Charlie wandered over, honour having been satisfied.

The group of them stood around for a few minutes, surveying the scene. The other victims of the AceCorp guards slowly moved off, carrying what was left of their possessions.

'Revenge': Pavlov suddenly appeared behind them.

'Revenge': Charlie, waving his shotgun.

'Vengeance': Barbara.

General nodding and muttered agreement. Above, AceCorp firefighting equipment had arrived, and was pumping the building full of foam.

'But did anyone remember to turn off the gas before we left ?': Crazy Eddie.

'We must make a formal complaint': Charlie. 'We will go to Head Office (AceCorp) and make a formal complaint.'

'But first I need a shirt'. The old one was definitely the worse for wear.

They wandered off to the market while Jo dropped off her guitar and amp with a friend. John off-loaded his TV for \$150. Charlie managed to get an old AceCorp security guard shirt. A neat hole just above the chest pocket testified to its origin, and its authenticity.

'OK, lets go.': Charlie, 'Er, where's Kim ?'

Fifteen minutes later and John had rescued Kim from the clutches of a cheap jewellery stall.

2

The subway station was nearby.

'Get tickets to the McDonalds factory, the last stop': Paul, 'That's closest to the business sector.'

'Er, I haven't got any goddamn money': Crazy Eddie, 'Someone will have to pay for me.'

Someone did.

They got on the next train. It was packed with the working proles, dull eyed and smelling strongly of sweat.

Charlie examined the mechanism of his explosive slug pistol as conspicuously as possible. The mass of humanity left them with plenty of room.

The group got off at the end of the line. Following the mass of workers out of the station, they came to the factory gates just outside. The workers filed through the factory entrance, the barcode tattoos on their wrists clocking them onto their shift. Trucks sped along the nearby highway. Company guards, fingering their guns, glared suspiciously at the untidy group of individuals left outside.

Pavlov picked up a sixty centimetre long piece of steel pipe that was lying beside the road. He tossed it into the air and caught it. Then threw it at some rubbish bins at some distance up the road. Direct hit. Pavlov grinned and retrieved the pipe.

They started walking up the edge of the road, periodically gassed by the aldehyde fumes from the passing traffic.

'Can't we hitchhike ?': Kim.

'All nine of us ?': Barbara

'We can hijack': Charlie, 'Someone stop a truck. That one.'

Kim waved and smiled as the truck approached. It passed by without stopping. Kim grimaced and provided a more serious distraction. The next one stopped. The McDonalds driver opened the door and smiled: 'Can I give you a lift ?.'

'Blam. Blam.': 44 Magnum.

'You aren't taking us anywhere': Charlie.

The body slid out of the cab and sprawled on the ground. Kim rifled its pockets, retrieving about \$10 and half a packet of cigarettes. Charlie got into the drivers seat: 'Let's go. You guys, get in the back.'

'The doors are locked': John.

'Use my gun, Crazy Eddie, blow the lock off.': Charlie

Crazy Eddie took the explosive slug pistol and took it around the back. A single shot and the rear door could be pried open.

'Get in, let's go': Crazy Eddie.

Charlie gunned the engine and the truck accelerated off down the road.

In the back of the truck.

'What's in these crates ?': Jo.

She levered the lid off one of the cubic metre crates, and ripped open the plastic packing. It was full of metal cans, labels denoting the contents as "FoodStuff-A".

'I don't know exactly': Crazy Eddie, 'but it is mildly radioactive.'

His geiger counter clicked sporadically. Using her Swiss Army knife, Kim opened a can, revealing the grey and fatty contents.

'Er, has anyone seen Pavlov ?: Crazy Eddie.

Blank looks. Eddie pounded on the partition between the back and the cab. Eventually the truck stopped.

'What's up ?:Charlie, as he opened the rear doors.

'Where's Pavlov ?: John.

'Dunno': Charlie.

Crazy Eddie alighted from the back and checked underneath the truck. Then he started to clamber up the cab.

'We'll have to go back and look': John.

'No need': Crazy Eddie, yelling from the top of the truck. 'He's up here. Hang on, Pavlov, we'll get there soon.'

Pavlov the Paranoid grinned and nodded.

Crazy Eddie climbed off the top and got back into the truck with the others. Charlie drove the truck off, choking the few incurious passers-by with alcohol fumes.

'So, anyone want to try eating this stuff ?: Jason.

No answer. He tossed the can into a corner.

3

Charlie drove past AceCorp head office before he saw it. 'Shitfire.'

He pulled the truck to a halt a block down from the main entrance. Head office took up an entire block itself, the upper disappearing into the pervasive photo-chemical haze. No windows. The main entrance had a gate manned by security guards. Armed security guards. Not that this was unusual. There was a side goods entrance, and a complaints department window at the rear.

They all got out of the truck.

'We must make a formal complaint': Charlie.

Pavlov had thought ahead. He jumps off the roof and grabs a crate. He is wearing the drivers overalls, bloodstains and all. Holding the crate in front of him to cover the bullet holes and blood, Pavlov marches into the front entrance, the delivery invoice clenched between his teeth.

The rest of the group wonders what the hell he is up to.

Pavlov tries to bluff his way through. It doesn't work. Frustrated, Pavlov hurls the crate at one of the guards, crushing her under its weight. He wheels and smashes another in the face with his steel pipe.

Charlie gets into the truck and turns it around, toward the entrance. Pavlov is running now, the guards firing.

Some of the shots strike home. Pavlov staggers under the impact, but keeps running.

Charlie slows the truck near Pavlov, and opens the door so he can get in. He turns the truck and drives off.

'What the fuck were you doing': Charlie yells, 'And why aren't you dead ?'

'Bullet-proof vest': Pavlov smiled.

Back to the others.

'Well, what do we do now ?': John.

'What we need is a bomb': Crazy Eddie.

'Can we rig up the truck to explode ?': Jo, 'With the fuel tank or something.'

Pavlov leapt into the back of the truck, looking in the open crate. He ripped out some of the plastic packing.

Pavlov dismounted, grinning: 'I think I can manage something. Barbara, someone, start siphoning the fuel into this can.'

Fifteen minutes later and one of the crates was filled with a gooey mass of mixed alcohol, plastic, and lubricating oil.

'Christ, that smells. Hey, Jason, come back over here': John.

'Right': Charlie, 'We'll deliver this message to the complaints department. He got into the truck and drove around there. The rest of the group followed on foot.

The complaints department was a window set into a wall of the building. A nearby roller-door was partly open.

There was a queue of forty or fifty people at the window.

'Shit': John, 'How will we shift them ?'

'Why bother ?': Pavlov.

Kim went over to the queue: 'Move along, move along. The office is now closed'.

Charlie revved the truck engine. The queue did not seem entirely convinced, but clearly thought discretion to be the better part of valour. And left.

'Here, Crazy Eddie, take my .44 Magnum': Charlie.

Charlie gunned the engine and accelerated towards the wall. He leapt out of the cab, rolling to break his fall. The truck hit the roller-door and smashed part way through. Silence. And then electronic alarms.

'It hasn't exploded': Paul the Puritan.

Three security guards appear from around the truck.

Blam. Blam.

Blam.

They go down under the combined fire of Charlie and Crazy Eddie.

'Lend us your explosive pistol, Charlie': Pavlov. He catches it and takes careful aim at the back of the truck.

Bla-am.

Flames, a dull explosion.

The fireball engulfs the truck and the dead guards. And retreats, leaving flames and black, greasy smoke coming from the truck.

John and Jo race forwards. They grab the guards SLR's and enter the building, firing. Jason follows, his actions deliberate. Gunfire.

The truck blazed away, periodically producing popping sounds as the cans of FoodStuff-A burst in the heat. More gunfire from inside. Then the buildings automatic foam dispensers activate, and flood the area with fire retardant foam.

'I think we have made our complaint': Charlie.

'In triplicate': Crazy Eddie, indicating the bodies, 'What are they doing in there ?'

They all retreated across the road to watch and wait. More gunfire.

Jason emerged from the building at a sprint. Throwing away an empty magazine.

'Jo. John. Dead. Guards got them.'

'I didn't know you were a kill-crazed lunatic, Jason. What made you go in there ?': Paul.

'I thought they might need some help': Jason, looking away, 'They needed more than I gave them, anyway.'

'Well, are we just going to hang around, or what ?': Kim.

They strolled off down the street, looking for transport. Behind them was chaos. Ahead they could hear the sirens of approaching ambulances.

'Let's hijack an ambulance': Crazy Eddie.

'How ?': Kim.

'OK': Pavlov, I'll lie on the ground, Charlie, you flag down the ambulance. It should work with your AceCorp shirt. The rest of you, act like bystanders and ignore us.'

Charlie waves down the next passing AceCorp ambulance. The two medics get out and run over.

'A shooting': Charlie.

As the medics reach Pavlov, he grabs both of them by the neck and smashes their heads together. Grabs his steel pipe. And beats their heads to a pulp.

'Business before pleasure, Pavlov, let's get out of here': Crazy Eddie.

They got in the ambulance and drove towards the suburbs. The late afternoon sun glowed red through the pollution haze towards the west.

'What do we do now ?': Paul the Puritan.

'There are some squats down in the old university': Barbara.

'My boyfriend lives in SouthWest. I'm sure he would let us crash': Kim.

The next turn but one, and Charlie drove the AceCorp ambulance off the express-way and into the SouthWest residential sector. They passed between multi-story apartment blocks.

'Block SW5, floor 3': Kim, 'We can use his garage.'

Pause.

'Oh, hi Kim. . . .'

'Do you mind if some friends crash here overnight ? They just got evicted': Kim.

'Er, yeah, I guess so.'

'OK guys.'

Paul the Puritan walked into the cramped apartment. Then Pavlov, with steel pipe. A bloodstained steel pipe.

Then Jason: 'Hi'. And Charlie, complete with matching accessories. Also Barbara. Crazy Eddie walked in last.

The boyfriend, faced with this array of assorted weirdo's and armed crazies, went pale: 'Er, I just have to go out now. Not sure when I'll be back.'

'Where do you think you are going': Pavlov and steel pipe.

'Hey, let him go Pavlov. He's OK': Kim.

The boyfriend left. Fairly rapidly.

Charlie settled down to watch violence and mayhem on TV. Sound turned up. Crazy Eddie sat down in the other chair and started scribbling in his notebook. Kim started to cook.

They all ate, except for Paul. Who never seemed to eat. Pavlov stared closely at Paul.

'I'll find somewhere else'. And Pavlov left.

He went up a floor, and picked the door directly above the boyfriends apartment. He knocked.

'... Who is it ?.'

Silence.

'... Who is it ?.'

Pavlov shoulder charges the door, and smashes it in. The old man behind it is barged into the opposite wall, and collapses unconscious. Pavlov hits him with the steel pipe to make sure. And looks around.

The old man's wife was reaching for the phone, dialling.

Pavlov throws his steel pipe, striking the phone hand-piece, breaking both it and her hand. He ties and gags both of them. He turns out the lights and sits facing the door.

Downstairs.

Crazy Eddie was disassembling the phone. Charlie was still watching TV.

I'm going to sleep in the ambulance, where there's more space': Jason. He left.

'Ha!': Crazy Eddie, 'Now the phone is fixed so as to dial the reverse phone numbers.'

A pause. Paul sat in a corner, apparently asleep. Barbara and Kim had gone to sleep.

'Aha! Now the phone will only dial the Tokyo speaking clock': a triumphant Crazy Eddie.

Nobody seemed particularly interested.

Some distant gunfire about three o'clock that morning woke Charlie up. Briefly.

Next morning.

A knock at the door.

Charlie sprang into action, training his shotgun at the door. Crazy Eddie opened it and stepped back to give

Charlie a clear shot.

'Telecorp telephone repairmen, our auto checks picked up a fault in your . . . ': First repairman.

They saw Charlie.

'We'll come back at a more convenient time, shall we ?': Second repairman.

They left. For their other call in the building.

'Was it something I said ?': Crazy Eddie

Upstairs.

The repairmen knock on the broken door: 'Um, good morning sir, we've come to fix your phone.'

They enter at Pavlov's nod, carefully failing to notice the two bound figures.

'I accidentally dropped the phone': Pavlov.

'No problem. But this will be added to your next phone bill'. They change the broken telephone for a new one.

And then leave.

Downstairs.

Pavlov arrives.

'No food': Charlie.

'We'll have to go shopping': Barbara.

'Shopping ?, OK !': Kim.

'I'll fetch Jason': Barbara. A ten minute wait. Barbara reappears, pale: 'The ambulance has gone. Jason's been shot. He's dead.'

'That must have been what I heard last night. There was a bit of gunfire': Charlie.

'Presumably AceCorp repossession agents': Crazy Eddie.

5

They go up four floors to the mall.

Kim disappears into the half of the mall dedicated to shoe shops, dress shops, and more shoe shops.

Barbara, Paul and Pavlov stand around the combined fountain, shoe shop and amusement park. Pavlov glares suspiciously at Paul, and fingers his (well, Charlie's actually) pistol. And mutters under his breath: 'Android.'

Crazy Eddie and Charlie had headed off to do the food shopping. They wandered around the mega-market.

Collecting food at random. But ignoring the cheap shoes on special bonus once in a life time only offer.

Meanwhile, in a shoe shop not far away.

'Oh, wow, how much are they ? Oh': Kim.

Back at the fountain.

Bla-am. Bla-am.

Pavlov shoots out Paul's knees from behind, the explosive slugs blasting his lower legs off.

Paul crashes to the floor, face first. Hydraulic fluid leaks from the stumps of his legs.

Pavlov takes careful aim at the back of Paul's head.

Click. The firing pin falls on an empty chamber.

'Shit': Pavlov.

'Huh ?': Barbara.

Pavlov steps forward, wielding the steel pipe. And smashes it into Paul's head. And again.

Paul spins around, using his arms. The metal of his scalp showing, his features twisted out of shape. He grabs Pavlov's legs. Pavlov tries to escape. But overbalances, and falls over. Paul pulls himself forward, his free hand flailing at Pavlov. And then hits him in the face. Hard.

Pavlov slumps to the floor, dead, his face a bloody ruin.

'Shit': Barbara. She backs away, close to a fire exit.

A crowd gathers, at a safe distance. Paul drags himself away, to a corner. Auto-cleaners whirr past, removing most traces of the disturbance. Including Pavlov's body.

'What happened ?': Kim returns, staring aghast at Paul's mutilated legs and face, 'Where's Pavlov, and Barbara ?' Charlie and Crazy Eddie return, with food.

'Did I hear shooting ?': Charlie.

'Pavlov and I had a disagreement': Paul, 'He came off worst. But only just.'

'Hmm. I suppose Pavlov noticed that you were android. Just like him to start shooting': Crazy Eddie, 'Where's Barbara ?'

They wait for Barbara to show. Crazy Eddie bought some stuff, and rigged up some crutches for Paul. And taped up the gashes in his 'skin'. And isolated the exposed wiring in what was left of his legs.

Barbara doesn't show.

'We may as well go find somewhere to squat': Charlie.

They left, carrying the shopping, down to street level, by the nearest fire exit. Ignoring the body slumped in a service alcove.

And walked out into the midday heat.



TOUJOURS EST-IL QUE LE COMBAT FUT TOUT CE QU'IL Y A D'APRÈS

Review: Day of the Destroyer

by Patrick O'Duffy

"Day of the Destroyer" is the latest adventure for Champions, which for those of you who don't know (both of you!), is Iron Crown's/Hero Game's superheroic RPG. This is the eighth release for the new 4th edition rules (not counting the new edition rulebook itself). It is concerned with the latest plot by the evil, dastardly Doctor Destroyer (Boo! Hiss! Snarl!) to take over the world. Dr Destroyer is of course the Champions' version of Dr Doom. He's also the most powerful being ever published in a Champions product. (Dr Destroyer has 1300 points, compared to the average PC who starts with 250.) He's appeared before in an early Champions product, "The Island of Doctor Destroyer", (which ties into this adventure in several ways) and also in a plot outline in the book "Classic Enemies".

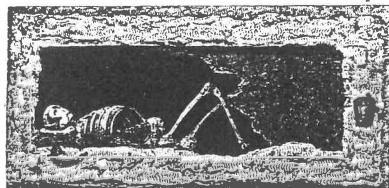
Anyway, Dr Destroyer has decided that the population of the world is far too high. So, he's going to kill 90% of the humans on Earth - no argument, no ransom. Obviously, the heroic PCs will want to stop him and to prevent interference from such costumed fools, Dr D has hired immense armies of supervillains to take out any heroes who might oppose him. The President declares a state of emergency. The UN trembles. Violence erupts throughout the world. Nothing can stop Destroyer! Fools! I shall triumph!!! ... sorry, I got a bit carried away there.

So far, it's all pretty cliched stuff: megalomaniacs, violent combat, gratuitous heroics - a typical Champions game. However, "Day of the Destroyer" does have some very surprising twists to it, which I can't reveal here, as they'd really wreck the plot for a player reading this. Suffice it to say that when I read the adventure, I was totally shocked at first, then indignant, then finally, quite pleased. All in all, quite good.

However, it's certainly not perfect. The plot is quite cliched, despite the finishing touches. There's possibly too much emphasis on combat, and not enough on character interaction. Worst of all, the artwork is terrible! It's the worst I've ever seen in a Champions product, even the first and second edition stuff. Now, bad artwork may not mean a lot to many people. Personally though, as a Champions GM, I like to show my players pictures of who they are meeting (or fighting). It's very clumsy work in here, and I hope that Iron Crown will go back to Patrick Zircher, who did the wonderful work in "Classic Enemies" and the 4th edition rulebook. It may be a minor point, but artwork is a part of the comic genre, and who likes comics with bad art?

On the whole, "Day of the Destroyer" is a good way to while away a couple of sessions of play; to use as a change from a series of quiet or combat

light/interaction heavy adventures. The best part, of course, is that Champions modules are really cheap (typically \$10--\$15), so it won't set you back much. Try this one; it might be fun.



Supplements for Cyberpunk the game :

Near Orbit

Infuriatingly, they produce an absolutely rotten game and then do some good supplements. Near Orbit covers generating Orbital characters, muscle atrophy in zero-G, radiation damage (the offspring mutation rules are bullshit tho'), a massive adventure (half of the book) and history and diagrams of Low and Geosynchronous orbit. Nice adventure, setting, history and no recycled artwork this time. Sensible rules for OG et al., and space is really painted as very dangerous. No firing guns inside ships in this game.

Bad points : once you take the scenario out it's a bit slim. The adventure is for experienced gamers only (neophytes would stuff it up in 10 seconds). There are no ship design or piloting rules. (I suppose that ships might be beyond the finances of most characters anyway. but)

Recommended.

Solo of Fortune

Not recommended. Supposedly the Solo/bodyguard supplement, but it's just bad fan fiction. It takes all the worst faults of the original game and commits them all over again. Not recommended.

A tree should not have died for this.

Hardwired

Yes, this is the supplement for the Walter Jon Williams novel of the same name, and written by the author. Yeah! It's got history, a revised combat system, a worthwhile net-hacking system (unlike the original one), some real zippy adventures, some proper equipment lists and modern weaponry and oh yeah, Recommended (as if you couldn't tell)

And now, from the people that brought you The Man From QUGS and endless conference scenarios :

SENSITIVE GAMERS FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

Do you find yourself out of place in normal gaming groups? Are you horrified by the rampant sexism and violence that takes place in an average game? Maybe then you are a *Sensitive Gamer*!

To establish this, answer this simple quiz :

1. A party of PCs including yourself meets a female NPC. Your response is -
 - a) F*ck her! (screamed in a drunken frenzied voice)
 - b) Is she good looking? Then f*ck her! (ibid.)
 - c) Ask her how her day was
2. Your party of Imperial Marines runs up against a patrol of Zhodani infantry. You immediately -
 - a) Charge in for a good old bit of hack and slash
 - b) Assess the situation and then charge in, all guns blazing
 - c) Attempt to negotiate with them, because you don't have to fight to prove your own masculinity
3. It comes time to divide the treasure after a sucessful dungeon bash. The method you use is -
 - a) Backstab everyone and make off with the loot
 - b) Threaten to backstab everyone and make off with the loot
 - c) Ask everyone if they are satisfied with their share, and if they feel that it fairly represents their contribution, as a whole, to the party's efforts.

Hagar



4. A female gamer joins your group. During the following play session -
- You act threatened and nervous, because you've never met a female gamer before
 - You act even crasser and more outrageous than ever, sleazing over her with no subtlety whatsoever
 - You accept and treat her with the respect due any person, irrespective of their sex.
5. When you, as a GM, design a scenario, what roles are usually played by female NPCs?
- Hookers, bimbos and helpless screaming victims
 - Laserbait
 - Assertive, intelligent, self-reliant and mature members of society
6. What would you describe as the greatest attraction of roleplaying games?
- The gratuitous sex and violence
 - Hurting small animals
 - The escapist pleasure of creating a complex and engrossing storyline in a caring group environment

If you answered (c) to three or more questions, then you are probably a ***Sensitive Gamer***. If you are, then you should join :

Sensitive Gamers For A Better Tomorrow

a support group for the encouragement of sensitive gaming. To join, ask everyone else if it's alright with them, then politely borrow an envelope and write to :

paul-michael agapow c/o Queensland Wargamer, QUGS.

"... cutting in the afterburners at the last possible moment, just to see the pale, upturned faces of the civilians ..."



"Nothing concentrates the military mind so much as the discovery that you have walked into an ambush." - Thomas Packenham, historian.

DRAGON WARS - A Review

by M. Marychurch

Although I obtained my copy recently, "Dragon Wars", the latest INTERPLAY computer role-playing game (CRPG), has been available for a couple of months. INTERPLAY have been noted for many very good CRPGs for many years. Starting with "Bard's Tale" for ELECTRONIC ARTS, they set a new trend for the computer fantasy fan. The 3D perspective views with full colour animated pictures of "monsters" pushed the previous text only (eg Zork) or low graphic quality (eg Phantasie) well out of the market. Many clones appeared but the INTERPLAY people kept pushing onward to bigger worlds (Bard's Tale 2 and 3) or attempting other fantasy genres ("Wasteland", my favorite, and "Mars Saga"). INTERPLAY left ELECTRONIC ARTS and started their own label, the first two releases being "Neuromancer" and "Battlechess". The third is a return to fantasy CRPGs, "Dragon Wars".

Like most CRPGs, in Dragon Wars, you start with a party of four characters who are complete novices, lacking ability, weapons, money, and oddly enough, clothes. By "hiring" more characters (a maximum of three at once) and improving your starting characters with experience gained from combat, you complete the game. A very brief outline of the game is as follows: the characters are on a world which is largely water covered. They start in a set of islands where magic has been outlawed by a demon called Namtar (The reverse of Ratman? It will obviously mean something!) who controls everything. The party has been arrested, stripped of all possessions and dumped in the local ghetto called, naturally, Purgatory. From here you have to escape and travel the land and to other islands and hopefully discover more of the outlawed magic until you are good enough to topple Namtar. Simple.

The game visually resembles Bard's tale but the game system is like that in Wasteland rather than the Bard's Tale system (although characters can be transferred from the Bard's Tale series), specifically resembling the HERO system (ie "Champions" etc). Characters are built on a point system where the attributes (Strength, IQ, Dexterity, Spirit and Body) and skills are bought for various point costs. Any character can use nearly anything or have any skill as long as they can buy the item, have the necessary attributes or available character points to purchase. The game clearly states that the scenario should be completed by a party of characters who have individual specializations, without every character trying to cover everything.

Combat is semi-tactical with ranged combat and individual orders for the characters. No true tactical window like "Pool of Radiance", but there is

party shuffling available to transfer characters into and out of the front line (the first four slots) from where they can attack and be attacked hand to hand. This can be annoying if not careful as healing spells can affect only one slot, so if a damaged character is moved, the healing spell will affect his replacement instead. [The voice of prior experience speaking? - Timo the Editor] Monsters have fully animated pictures which can be turned off to reduce disc access. Each character has various scores for Body, Stun, OCV, DCV and Def (using the Champions terms to simplify). These factors are based on characteristics and are affected by the skills and items used by the character (another Champions-like feature). Spells can be cast at various strength levels based on skill level, which is a neat feature.

One annoyance is that in the general game window, a character's damage level is shown by coloured bands; a complete band meaning no damage, while no band means that the score is exhausted. However, all characters have the same length band, so weaker characters don't seem to be really as puny as a number would indicate, and a very experienced character with only a small amount of band left is probably not as seriously threatened as this would indicate at first glance. The values are given in another window so an option to toggle the values might have been nice. But there is only so much space to work with, I suppose.

The full mapping feature is useful to show where you haven't been (but things can change, so retracing steps is necessary). Saving can be done anywhere, but there can only be one saved game at one time. Although there is no copy protection, liberal use of a paragraph booklet reduces the desire to pirate, which is terrific.

Although barely started, I've been impressed by what I've seen so far. There appear to be many ways out of Purgatory but I won't mention the way I used. That's for you! This to me makes for a good CRPG, where there is more than one way to do something, or a range of things to do where the order is not important. But the best suggestion is to try to go everywhere in a town or locale; you never know what might be found next. Thankfully, there are no obvious silly jokes or puns yet, but no doubt they'll appear (INTERPLAY tend to put them in). There isn't much to complain about so far, but as well as those previously mentioned, there is the silly "enemies are at 80 feet in a 10 by 10 room" gaff. Well, it really is only a break in logic and not an error, but it is dumb. Also I would appreciate a hint or two in the instruction book, but that's me.

I'd say if you liked Bard's Tale or other INTERPLAY games then you'll attack this one readily. There's enough variation from their previous format

to excite again if you are a little jaded. If you dislike this style of game, then I doubt that you would like it, but the new Champions-like style might impress you. Dragon Wars to me is very similar in game design and feel to Wasteland with the visuals like Bard's Tale. So that's probably the best description. In my opinion, not for beginners to the genre. If you want to start playing CRPGs, try "Pool of Radiance", Bard's Tale, or "Tangled Tales". The character design makes it a bit too complex and may detract from the game. To give it a score out of 10, I'd say at least 9 to 9.5, but as a tutor, I mark very hard. It's not perfect, but it is maybe as near to "regular" RPGs as a computer game can get these days.



The Realistic After-the-Holocaust Game

NUCLEAR WINTER

by Greg Costikyan

Credits

Design: Greg Costikyan

Development: Joe Balkoski, John M. Ford, and Nick Quane

(1.0) The 90-Minute War Table

- 1-4 You survive the first strike; roll on table 2.0.
- 5-6 You are killed in the fireball.

(2.0) Fallout Table

- 1-5 You survive the fallout with only minor radiation sickness; roll on table 3.0.
- 6 You are killed by the radiation.

(3.0) Collapse of Civilization Table

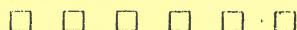
- 1-3 You survive the collapse of the food distribution network, the marauding bands, etc.; roll on table 4.0.
- 4-6 You die at the hands of looters, from starvation, etc.

(4.0) Nuclear Winter Table

- 1-6 A cloud of dust encircles the globe. Global temperatures drop by several degrees. Most plant life dies because it does not receive enough light. The glaciers advance. All animals larger than the rat become extinct. You die.

(5.0) *Optional:* If you live in New Jersey, add one to all die-rolls.

(6.0) *Optional:* Each time you take a breath, mark off one breath box. When all six boxes have been marked off, you are dead.



Designer's Notes: For some reason, after-the-holocaust games seem real popular right now. Why is beyond me; I can think of few more depressing environments in which to live. In addition, most such games are patently ludicrous; a few years after a full-scale nuclear exchange, nothing will be left but the rats and the roaches. However, I might as well cash in on the trend, too.

Coming Soon from Costikyan Publishing Empire

RAT AND ROACH WAR

The sequel to Nuclear Winter