# Queensland Wargamer

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# QUEENSLAND WARGAMER

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## Editorial

Greetings, felicitations, and welcome to the *Queensland Wargamer*, the club magazine of the Queensland University Games Society!  The *Wargamer* is published three or four times a year, depending on the number of contributions members of the Society submit for publication.  Anyone can offer material for publication in the *Wargamer*, and everything will be considered:  articles, pictures, scenarios, reviews, fiction, letters, et cetera. Don't feel you can't contribute just because you don't think you can write a good article!  Remember, this magazine is meant to be a forum for society members to discuss their opinions on subjects relating to gaming, and there *will* be a letter column in the next issue *if* there are any letters.  Send your contributions to Gary Johnson, History Department, University of Queensland, QLD 4072, visit me in Room 324 of the Gordon Greenwood Building, or talk to me at the monthly QUGS meetings.

There are, however, a few things you should keep in mind.  Firstly, anything I receive must be legible, and contributors should give me their phone numbers so that we can discuss any problems that come up with your submissions.  Secondly, there are some Student Union rules that the *Queensland Wargamer* must follow, or else we will not receive any funding to print the magazine.  **Sexist, racist, and homophobic material will not be printed**.  Non-inclusive language (i.e. the generic "he") comes under this prohibition.  *Dragon Magazine* meets these standards, and if they can do it, so can we!  Editorial policy is to correct unacceptable material and offer the revisions to the author for approval:  note, however, that letters will not be offered back to the writer, but printed with any unacceptable content deleted. Thirdly, libelling, defaming, and generally insulting other people is not acceptable.  Finally, contributing to the *Queensland Wargamer* is voluntary, and you don't get any money for doing it (just a warm inner glow).

On a different point, most of this issue is, in fact, a recently designed, simple and easy to use role-playing game called *Tripod of Light*, which can be detached from the front part of the *Wargamer* if you prefer.  There will be supplements for *Tripod of Light* in following *Wargamers*: next issue will have a map and some notes on the Known World.  The deadline for submissions for the next issue of the *Queensland Wargamer* is Friday the 19th of April.  Do your bit and contribute!

Gary Johnson

# Communication between Role-players

## by Gary Johnson

Let me tell you a story. I once played in a brief campaign, set a few hundred centuries in the future, where the PCs were a team of secret agents working for a secret government organisation. We were supposed to investigate strange incidents and situations in order to find out if there was some conspiracy from beyond the solar system to conquer Earth, Mars, and Venus. In other words, the campaign was somewhat along the lines of *The X-Files*: we were supposed to find out "the truth", help to save life as we knew it, etc.

However, I had a number of problems with the campaign. One was that the players designed their characters without taking into consideration the need for our characters to get along with each other. Thus, we wound up with a group of five individuals, two of whom had worked together before the campaign began. In this group we had two computer-hacking anarchists (the two who knew each other) and one psychotic knife-wielding loony. My character was nominally group leader because of his background in the army, but it was beyond my ability as a leader to make our dysfunctional group of characters functional. At the end of the first session, I had to present a "report" to H.Q. I summarised my impression of the team's first mission, and made the point that we were not a functional group. H.Q. (i.e. the GM) had to tell my character that he was stuck with the people assigned to him. Things grew progressively worse as time passed, and I was happy to leave the campaign.

The day after the last session I played in, we (three of the players and the GM) sat around and talked about the way the campaign had gone. It was at this discussion that I found out from the GM that he had envisaged us as being spies like James Bond, and not at all like the serious and cautious Mulder and Scully of *The X-Files*. I recall saying at the time that if I had known this, I would have played my character in a very different way. Unfortunately, I didn't, and my memories of that campaign will forever be coloured by the fact that I didn't enjoy playing in that game.

I think it is clear from my story that there were a number of things I could have done to try and avoid the problems that did crop up once we began playing. Most obviously, the GM and I could have talked about what kind of spies the PCs were going to be before the campaign began, and not once it was all over. Both of us assumed that the game world was going to be a certain way, and that everyone else had made the same assumption about the way things were going to be. I got it wrong, and my error ruined my enjoyment of the game.

Another thing that I should have done but didn't was talk with the other players about the characters we would play, and how they would interact with each other. We did get a good mix of fighters, computer experts, and burglars; however, when it came to characters who could get along with each other and work as a team to achieve our common goal or goals, we

failed to create a group of people who could be friends, or at least working partners. Both of these things I should have done but didn't: admittedly, nobody else thought that they should do these things either, but that doesn't cancel out the fact that I didn't do them. In this particular campaign, neither the GM or the players talked to each other enough about some of the most important aspects of role-playing: co-operating and having fun.

I have given you a specific example: let me now talk in general terms. My understanding of how groups of role-players function revolves around the idea of a "social contract". A "social contract" is a voluntary agreement between equals, in which some may give up certain rights or powers to others. However, everyone continues to have some rights or powers: there are checks and balances held by various members of the group.

It seems to me that this idea of a "social contract" applies to role-playing groups. Everyone agrees to participate, and one person is accepted as GM by the others, who are the players. The GM has potentially autocratic powers over what happens in a session, especially with regard to the game world and the result of events in the game, but players do not forfeit their rights to withdraw from the game or to ask for explanations from the GM. As I have suggested in a previous editorial (*Queensland Wargamer* 41, September 1995) the GM has executive control over the game, but the players possess the "reserve powers", the right to choose whether or not to take part.

Of course, the "social contract" is more than just a division of roles and power within a group. The basis of the "social contract" is that all participants, players and GM alike, agree to place certain constraints on their actions and behaviour during the game. In most cases, this consent is not consciously verbalised, but given without thought. For instance, how many of you have said to another person in your gaming group, "I voluntarily accept that whether or not my character succeeds in opening this locked door depends on me rolling equal to or less than a certain number on these dice "? We accept that only the GM can decide that a character automatically succeeds at a task such as opening a lock: only the GM can say, "Don't bother rolling, you can open the lock even though your skill level is less than 100%." There is usually very little debate on issues like the two examples given above: questions of procedure, rules application and rules interpretation are intimately related to the power structure created by the division of the group into the GM and the players, and role-players rarely disagree over who should be the one to make such decisions in a game. Players may disagree with a decision, but they still respect the right of the GM to make that decision.

However, most of the serious problems within a gaming group do not revolve around the rules, but are caused by the differing expectations of the people involved. To deal with an obvious case, let me make the point that my discussion revolves around the idea that people derive their enjoyment from role-playing in a functional group. Sometimes, people derive their enjoyment from role-playing a dysfunctional and volatile group of murderous and greedy thugs who spend their time watching their backs

because the other player characters may stab them when they aren't looking. That may be fine for those people: my article is for those who think that the point behind being in a group is to work together and have fun.

At the heart of role-playing is the idea that everyone is meant to have fun. Role-playing is a hobby: we role-play because we enjoy it. Furthermore, role-playing is a group experience. Logically, we should draw the conclusion that, when role-playing, everyone is meant to have fun as part of a group. Everyone is responsible for trying to ensure that everyone has fun when role-playing. What we have to do to ensure that everyone has fun is not always clear, however. It is my assertion that most serious conflicts within a gaming group occur because people have different expectations of what being part of the group means, assume that everyone else thinks like them, and don't ask the others what their expectations are. If we don't talk with each other about our expectations in role-playing, sooner or later someone's expectations will not be met, and there will be a problem.

One point that I feel has to be made is that participation is important in a role-playing group. Obviously, the GM is meant to be prepared to run a session when the group has assembled. In return for ceding the GM control over the game universe and the running of the campaign, players expect that the GM will regularly provide them with something to do, or at least a forum for interacting with each other. If the GM does not run, then the entire "social contract" is invalidated, because there is no game. The converse of this is less obvious, but no less important. When the GM does present the players with something to do, they should be interested and willing to participate.

It is incredibly frustrating for GMs when their players do not care about what they have prepared, and are "going through the motions" rather than trying to be involved in the game. If a scenario does not interest you as a player, it is your responsibility to tell the GM and explain why. Whenever I GM, I assume that my players are enjoying themselves unless they tell me they are not. I have played in a number of campaigns where at times I found myself thinking, "What am I doing here? I'm not interested, I'm not having fun, why am I bothering?" However, I did not try to involve my character, or interest myself in what was going on. Why should the GM have to interest the players in a scenario? Isn't it the players' responsibility to ensure that their characters are interested in what is going on?

When it comes to interacting with other players, I have noticed that some players have strange ideas of social behaviour. It seems that things that would be offensive if people did them in their real lives are acceptable when role-playing. For instance, I have seen someone reduced to tears by a player who clearly believed that it was acceptable for one character to continually insult and harass another character. There seems to be a certain mentality which runs along the lines of "What happens on the field stays on the field." However, not everyone makes this assumption, and as you should all realise by now, it is not safe to make assumptions about other people's beliefs, interests or preferences. Whether the player is obnoxious or the player

character is obnoxious, the group is still disrupted by their antisocial behaviour, and this is undesirable.

Players are meant to be a working group. Sometimes, a character might be an unwilling participant in the group, but the player should not be unwilling to play. If they are, why are they playing? Role-playing is a voluntary activity; nobody is forcing you to spend your time playing or running a game. It is not the responsibility of the other players or the GM to keep a recalcitrant character in the group, just because the player wants to participate in the game. A character's motivations should be compatible with the GM's campaign and the other player characters. I think that players should try and develop ties of friendship or common interest between their characters, because groups stay together more plausibly when these conditions are met. If you want your character to dislike the group and not want to associate with them, that's fine, but you had better work out why your character stays with the group. Motivating your character is your responsibility, and no-one else's.

I have discussed at length the concept that players and their GM should try to minimise disagreements between each other by moderating their behaviour and trying to co-operate with each other. It should be noted, however, that not all problems can be solved by talking about them, and sometimes it may be necessary for someone to leave a group of role-players because of irreconcilable differences between what that person wants and what the group wants. For instance, player A is not happy when there is no combat. However, players B, C, D, E, and the GM dislike combat, and prefer to resolve potential conflicts by diplomacy, stealth and careful planning, rather than hoeing in with their plasma rifles. Player A simply will not get what they want from role-playing in this group: the wishes of one person are not more important than the wishes of five people. If player A cannot put up with extended periods of boredom, only broken by the occasional flurry of violence (possibly deliberately included by the GM so that player A has something to do), then player A should find a new group of people to role-play with, a group that represents player A's interests better than the first group. Attempts at compromise do not always lead to a consensus, and even if it does the consensus may leave everybody partially dissatisfied and unhappy.

Some players tend to see a game as a case of the GM serving the players, interesting them in what is happening, and letting them do what they want. This attitude is unfair on the GM. The game is a shared enterprise, and everyone is responsible for the success of the game and of the group. Role-players should talk to each other about what they want out of role-playing, so that everyone has fun. I know that it can be hard to criticise your friends or argue with them, but the only way to avoid or resolve problems is to try and deal with it: problems don't go away when you ignore them.

# Campaign Settings and Game Worlds for AD&D: An Update

## by Travis Hall

My review of the various AD&D campaign worlds appeared in the last *Queensland Wargamer* (No.42, November 1995). Unfortunately, that article was written some months before it came to print, and as a result it was out of date before you, the reader, ever saw it. Sigh. It's so hard keeping up with the changes happening to the worlds nowadays. Here, then, is an update.

## Dragonlance

It's gone. The Dragonlance setting for the AD&D game is no longer in print. As you may have noticed, Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman have published a new novel, *Dragons of Summer Flame*. Fans of Dragonlance have been anxiously awaiting this novel, saying that it would herald the beginning of a new age for Krynn. The fans meant that figuratively, but Weis and Hickman seem to have taken it literally. Their new novel has changed the world dramatically. The Fifth Age of Krynn has begun, and with this new Age, TSR has discontinued Krynn as an AD&D campaign world. It will instead be returning later this year with its own game, entitled *Dragonlance: The Fifth Age*. This new game will not be based on AD&D, and will focus specifically on Krynn. Whether the system of the game will convert to more generic fantasy settings remains to be seen. Finally, in the most dramatic departure from AD&D, the new game will use no dice TSR Editor Steve Miller has stated that *Dragonlance: The Fifth Age* will include a special deck of cards which is used to resolve all game mechanics, though how this all works has yet to be revealed.

## Mystara

Mystara seems to be a failure. While TSR have not yet (to my knowledge) officially discontinued this line, there seem to be no plans for further supplements for this world. This is a pity, but it seems that Mystara has not been strongly supported by the buying public, prompting TSR to make the sensible but lamentable decision to drop Mystara in favour of the far more popular Forgotten Realms.

## Birthright

Shortly before my previous review was published, the new Birthright campaign world reached the shops. In many ways, the Birthright campaign world seems similar to the other standard AD&D settings (Forgotten Realms is the best current example) but do not be fooled. Birthright focuses on the rulers of the various nations in the campaign world, and is a setting geared towards letting players be Kings, Queens, and other assorted rulers. If you are not prepared to give players characters control over kingdoms very early in play, this world is not worth your while. On the other hand, if you do like the idea and want to use a very politically oriented fantasy setting, Birthright is definitely worth a look. Like some of the other non-standard campaign worlds, Birthright is not a beginner's setting, but the supplements for this line seem to include some very interesting ideas for high fantasy political role-playing. Just remember, if you don't like the setting, the supplements will be a complete waste of your time.

# The Tower

## by Stephen Bennett

"You'll be afraid," Cavan was saying. I was sitting in his study, on the third floor of his tower. The shutters were closed against the snow outside and the room was dark and shadowy. The only light came from the fire and gave everything a warm flickering glow. I'd been building the fire up for the last half hour and was just starting to feel that I might not be frozen for the rest of my life. It was always cold in Cavan's tower—as if the stone itself drew all the warmth out of the air, even in summer. Now, a week after the first snowfall of winter, Cavan's tower chilled me to the bone. I sat in the armchair closest to the fire, my cloak pulled around me, holding my hands out to the blaze.

Cavan stood by the bookshelf, his back to me. He kept his whisky on the fourth shelf from the bottom and was pouring himself a drink. "You'll be afraid," he said, and I imagined that he was smiling. He'd be smiling the same way that the wretched imp perched on his shoulder was smiling. The imp had swivelled its head around to glare at me: its coal red eyes, sunk deep in its wizened face, peered out of the gloom. Its shrivelled, black wings were folded across its back, framing its head neatly between them. The imp changed its smile to a sneer and then broke out into the high-pitched screech that passed for its laugh.

"Maybe you not up to this one, eh?" It cackled and screeched again. "Everything been too easy so far. Cavan been too soft on you. Maybe that all stop now, eh?" It gave another screech and then swivelled its head back to look at Cavan and whispered something into his ear.

I threw another piece of wood onto the fire and waited for Cavan to continue.

"Oh, Rhys will do it, just like everything else," Cavan said to his imp as he turned around. He stayed where he was, next to the bookshelf, the dark brown robe he wore blending into the shadows. The bookshelf was on the far side of the room from the fire but Cavan never seemed to feel the cold. I had no idea how old Cavan was but he looked hale. There was no grey in his dark hair and his eyes were still a piercing, bright green. The contrast between Cavan's pale, smooth, unlined face and the tough, wrinkled, leathery skin of the imp perched on his shoulder was eerie in the firelight.

I shivered and pulled my cloak closer around myself. I hated Cavan's tower and I hated Cavan and went only when he summoned me.

"Galiena's tower is filled with mistfear. It's a mistfear that makes you a little nervous during the day when she has guards there, but at night, give most people a breath of it, and they'll run in panic." He paused to sip his whisky. "But you're going to be much more afraid of me than anything in that tower."

The imp screeched again and clapped its hands together. Its wings fell into Cavan's face and he brushed it off his shoulder. It wailed in protest and flapped up to the chandelier where its red eyes gleamed out of the shadows.

"Are you sure you don't want a drink, Rhys?" Cavan asked, feigning concern. "Maybe it'll help warm you up."

I shook my head. I wanted to go home, have a warm cup of mead and shut out the dark winter night. I wanted to go to the *Queen's Arms*, where

the noise would drown out the thoughts in my head, or maybe see Ahren, who had other ways of taking my mind off my problems. All dreams. I was stuck in the tower until Cavan gave me leave to go. That's what it's like when someone owns your soul. I didn't like it but there wasn't anything I could do about it. It wasn't actually Cavan who owned my soul—my soul, like that infernal imp, had been lent to him by his demon master, Avasq. Avasq was unpleasant. If Cavan ever thought that I was being especially uncooperative, he'd summon an image of those under Avasq's rule into his scrying pool. Avasq owned my soul because I'd been weak in the face of death. That was why I had to sit in Cavan's tower, even though it chilled me to the bone, and listen to him set the next task he had for me.

"So there it is, Rhys, you're not going to run because you're going to be more afraid of me. You'll be able to do what no one else can—kill Lady Galiena." Cavan had never sent me to kill anyone before. He had other assassins on hand and kept me for burglaries and espionage. After I killed Lady Galiena, I wondered, would he send me to kill others?

I left Cavan's tower half an hour later, with a plan of Galiena's house and tower tucked inside my jacket, and a leather bag with a thin coil of rope inside tied to my belt. The imp's screech echoed in my mind as I trudged back to the city. Snow had been falling steadily all evening and was now more than ankle-deep on the ground. It was out of my way but I went by the tenements where Ahren lived. I ducked inside the building and trailed snow through the dank hall. I knocked at Ahren's door and waited impatiently, shivering. The bag that Cavan had given me rested against my thigh and I thought I felt its weight shift; the back of my neck prickled. The hall was unlit and the sounds of a boisterous party drifted down the stairs. After a while, I decided that Ahren, even if home, was not going to answer the door, and left.

\* \* \*

Four nights later, I was lying in a tree looking down at the dogs that roamed the grounds of Lady Galiena's house. It was a windy, moonless night and although it wasn't snowing just then, the sky was heavy with storm clouds. The glass on top of the walls had cut through my thin gloves. I pulled them off and dropped them into the small pack I had with me. The gloves fell onto the bag with the coil of rope inside and the bag shifted. I slipped on a new pair of thin, leather gloves and over them, a pair of heavy, fur-lined ones. I fished my boots out of the pack and pulled them on over the soft shoes I'd worn to scale the wall.

The tree with the branch in reach from the wall was an oversight on the part of Galiena's security, but one that was almost understandable. The wall was well-built and worked smooth, giving only the barest of holds. The glass embedded on the top was more a nuisance than a deterrent, but could slice unwary hands to shreds. It had been a hard climb and the tower was going to be harder, but I was Rhys Echevin, the best cat-thief this side of Myrinen, now embarking on the new path of assassin. The tree would help me where it wouldn't help most people that much. The grounds were sparse and there was a clear forty feet between where I was lying and the roof of the outermost part of the house. The lowest windows of the tower, jutting out from the middle of the house, were some fifty feet above the roof. As far as I could see, there were no patrols in the grounds, but there would be

guards inside the house and they'd come out if the dogs raised any sort of fuss.

I'd chosen a windy night, to reduce the chances of the dogs picking up my scent. Conditions had been better two nights ago but I hadn't finished my research then. I'd still had to look at the old sewer and stormwater drain plans that were kept in the Council Hall. It was just as well that I waited, because they'd turned out to be essential. With the help of the plans Cavan had given me, I worked out that there was a drain from the kitchen into the sewers. It was almost certainly barred so that you couldn't break in that way, but I counted on being able to unbar it from the inside.

I brought my mind back to the problem at hand: getting in. I unslung the crossbow from my back and took the rope out from its bag, holding it gingerly between my fingers. I tied one end around the branch I was lying on, and passed the other through a bolt that I'd drilled a hole through. I fastened the rope and then fitted the bolt to the crossbow. I pulled back the lever and aimed at the shutters of an attic window. I had only one chance. If I missed, the bolt might shatter, and even if it didn't, I'd have to pull the rope back across the snow and the movement might be enough to alert the dogs. I waited till they'd trotted off to a more distant part of the grounds and fired.

The arrow spun towards the house, trailing the thin length of rope behind it. It hit the shutter and I breathed out in relief. A few tugs on the rope reassured me that it was holding firm, and setting my pack on my shoulders, I started off across the rope, hand over hand, praying that no one would come out of the house and look up. By the time I reached the house and swung up onto the roof, my inner gloves were plastered with sweat. I took off my pack and reached down to grasp the rope in my hands.

"Come home," I said softly, and gave it a sharp tug. The rope uncoiled itself from the branch I'd left it tied to and flew over in one rapid movement. It landed across my body and I felt it start to slither around my throat. Grabbing it with one hand, I pulled the leather bag out of my pack with the other and began to stuff the rope into it. It untied itself from the bolt, and the last foot slid into the bag on its own. When I pulled my pack on again and started across the roof towards the base of the tower, I could feel its weight shift against my back.

I hesitated at the base of the tower. It was too much like Cavan's tower. The only differences were the house around it and the fact that Cavan's tower had lower windows. I looked up and for a moment the climb seemed impossible. The wall was sheer. There were no cracks between the stones or unevenness in the rock to provide holds.

I crouched at the foot of the Lady Galiena's tower and remembered the climb that I'd made of Cavan's tower, partly on a dare, partly on a whim, to prove that I was the best cat-thief this side of Myrinen. It was a difficult climb and I'd done it slowly, floor after floor, and had almost reached the top. There I found a small window ledge, an inch or so wide, and rested for a while, standing forward on my toes, leaning against the wall, fingers wedged between two stones. I had just let myself begin to feel the exhilaration of a job done when something small and quick and dark brushed past my face, flew around my head and darted back. I brought up a hand to protect my eyes and my weight shifted. I came off the ledge and fell back towards the earth.

The fall couldn't have taken more than two seconds, but I remember falling for a long time, through a thick blackness, and I don't remember hitting the ground. I think I must have, and died, because later I woke up in Cavan's tower and couldn't move. But while I was tumbling through the endless shadows that come after death, the demon Avasq spoke to me and offered me life. It came with a price, of course, but I grasped at the offer because I was afraid of dying. My life hadn't been long, but it had been bad: theft and drunkenness, assault and vandalism, and the most condemning, a murder. That one, I didn't remember very well—only the piecemeal images that flitted through my dreams—because I'd been so drunk at the time. I'd never been caught for it, which was not so surprising because the sorcerers who ruled the city didn't care much what the rest of us did as long as we didn't disturb them. What disturbed me most about the murder was how opaque my own motivations were. Why had I done it? Was there a reason or was it just a drunken whim? I could not remember.

I'd come round to Cavan's smiling, ageless face and the screech of his imp. He welcomed me back to the world of the living and told me that as Avasq was his master, he was now mine. Since then, he'd set me a series of tasks, and I'd done them with more or less complaint and protest. I looked up at Galiena's tower and the knife that hung at my side reminded me that this job was going to be different.

I sat back to take off my boots, followed by the heavy outer gloves that I wore. My inner leather gloves were damp inside but I knew that if I took them off, they'd freeze. I hadn't thought to bring a third pair. I shoved the heavy gloves inside the pack, settled both pack and crossbow on my back, and felt for the first hand hold.

Halfway up, the snow began to fall.

\* \* \*

My fingers were cramped and frozen when I swung in through a window at the top of the tower. I'd spent over half an hour balanced on the window ledge, in what was going to become a storm before the night was out, using a wire file to saw through the bolt that locked the shutters. When I was through, I pulled the file back and tried to put it in my pocket but dropped it instead. I didn't hear it hit. Any sound it made on the roof below had been lost in the rising wind. I prised the shutters open and stepped in through the window with relief. If I'd stayed out on the ledge any longer, I'd have followed the file, and it was disconcerting not to know exactly how far it had fallen.

I looked back out the window. The roof was hundreds of feet below and I imagined spinning down to those depths. I closed my eyes and saw my body hit the roof, bones shattering, hearing my scream cut off abruptly. Had I screamed all the way down from Cavan's tower? I couldn't remember. I thought of meeting Avasq again and hearing his honey-sweet words and pulled the shutters closed. The interior of the tower was inky black and still and cold. I felt faint and for a moment I thought I had fallen and was still falling until I remembered the floor solid under my feet. I had to take a step forward to catch my balance. I made my way to the wall, keeping my hands low to ward off any furniture, and then found the door to the curved staircase that led down through the tower, down and down through the dark.

Lady Galiena's room was two floors below and my heart hammered wildly as I walked down the stairs. I was certain that everyone in the

building could hear it: the only other sound was the wind outside. The floor was icy and bare beneath my slippered feet. The air was as cold as in Cavan's tower. I kept one hand on the banister and went down two flights of stairs in the blackness. The landing I came out onto had three doors and I counted my way to the right one: Lady Galiena's door. A small bar of soft, silver light spilled out near the floor. The fear welled up inside me again as I contemplated what might be behind the door. Only the thought of facing Cavan empty-handed kept me there. I expected the door to be locked and stepped back in surprise when it fell open as I tried the door handle.

The room behind the door was large and open, with clothes and books and papers strewn over chairs and bureaus. The silver light that filled it had no apparent source. It was like nothing I'd seen before. There, in the still cold of a winter night, slept Lady Galiena, with only a thin silk sheet for a cover. The sheer curtain around her bed softened her features. Apart from Cavan, she was the only sorcerer I'd seen close at hand. Her thick, rich, red hair spilled out over the pillow. She had the same pale, smooth skin that Cavan had. Her face was beautiful, sharp and angular, like Cavan's. I had no idea how old she was, and wondered who she'd made her pact with.

Staring at Galiena in that room, I realised that I was no longer afraid, and that most of what I'd felt upstairs had been the mistfear. Most, but not all, because I still shuddered when I thought of Avasq and Cavan and the imp waiting for me. Galiena slept peacefully and I drew out the knife that hung from my belt. The blade glinted silver in the light and I stared at it for a long time, thinking about the man I'd killed and how little it had meant at the time, apart from the fear of being caught. I thought of what Cavan threatened, of what Ahren promised, of what life might mean after Cavan freed me from his service. As he had promised to do. In the future.

I watched Galiena's breast rise and fall with each breath and pulled the curtain open quietly. The skin of her throat was white and unblemished and I wondered how it would look with crimson strands flowing into the white silk sheets and over the gown that she wore. I lifted up the blade and, not wanting to think about what I was doing, stabbed it into the pillow beside her head. Her eyes flicked open and looked straight into mine. I blinked as if I'd been asleep and dreaming. I looked again and Galiena's eyes were closed. She hadn't moved. Quickly, before I could change my mind, I fled from the room. Once out on the landing, in the mistfear again, my fear of Cavan returned, many times multiplied, and I panicked, bolting down the stairs until I reached the ground several floors below.

The door leading into the house was barred from the inside, and I fumbled desperately with it for long seconds before I freed the bar and dropped it to the floor. It hit the stone slab with a crash that reverberated through the house. I could hear voices in a far part of the building and ran on. I'd memorised the route to the kitchen and the house, unlike the tower, was lit with torches. I heard the dogs barking in the grounds as I stumbled into the kitchen and slammed the door shut behind me.

I leant against the door, breathing hard. The commotion was still a long way away, probably in the tower, but it would reach the kitchen soon enough. I stilled my panic and looked for the way out. It took only a cursory search to find the drain to the sewers. The grating over it could be taken off but was padlocked to a frame set in the stone. I swore to myself as I shrugged my pack off and hunted around inside for my lockpicks. The

pouch they were in lay beneath the bag with the rope and I reached for it with my fingertips. I pulled the pouch out and tipped the lockpicks onto the floor. Thank the gods for the torches; I couldn't have worked in the dark. I was more afraid now of being caught by Galiena's guards than of facing Cavan. I wondered if I'd ever see Ahren again. Ahren who knew that I worked for one of the sorcerers on the west hill but who didn't care or ever ask why. No questions meant no lies.

My hands were wet and slippery inside my gloves and I couldn't hold the picks steady. I peeled off my left glove, then the right one, and dropped them to the floor. I wiped my hands over my trousers and breathed on them for some warmth. I took up the lockpicks again, steadier now, further away from the mistfear, and concentrated better. The padlock came open and I scooped up the gloves and the picks and the pouch and dumped the lot into the pack, slung it back on my shoulders, and droped feet first through the drain. I landed in icy cold water that reached halfway to my knees.

* * *

It was only a mile or so through the dark tunnels to the safest exit, but it took me the rest of the night to reach it. The sun was well above the horizon by the time I came out into the open again, in a marsh to the south of the city. The storm had passed and the clouds were making way for a clear, blue sky. I waded out through the dank water to firmer ground and sat there in the snow, breathing in the fresh air and letting the sun wash over my face. I drew my bare hands from my pockets and held them up to the morning light. My gloves were still in my pack.

I pulled off the sodden leather slippers that I'd worn to climb Galiena's tower and remembered the fur-lined boots in my pack. I reached in to pull them out and closed my hand on the coil of rope instead. It slithered through my fingers and I pulled my hand out with a cry. I tipped the contents of my pack out onto the ground and kicked the bag with the rope in it down towards the marsh. I didn't want to know if it could find its way home.

I sat there in the sun for half an hour, thinking about Cavan and what he would do to me. I faced a new road now and wasn't quite sure how to go about following it. Ahren was all that I had in the city and I'd be better off alone. There was nothing else to go back for. I knew that Cavan was going to be angry and I might not be able to escape him, but I was going to stand by the choice that I'd made in Galiena's tower, and I was going to at least make it difficult for him. I pulled on my boots and my heavy gloves, shouldered my pack again and set off for the highway.

JC60345

● Raistlin the Dungeon master plays the part in the new gaming rooms.

# Escape from reality

BRISBANE'S only bridge between reality and fantasy has opened its doors at Nundah.

The Hit Point — a set of gaming rooms designed specifically for the city's 17.000 role players. war game players and card lovers — is the brainchild and long-time dream of four young enterpreneurs.

Kym and Jonathan Lincolne and Andrew and Tina McGown are avid lovers of all of the above games and the concept of themed gaming rooms.

They first came across this novel concept in America.

Aware of the lack of similar facilities here in Brisbane, the group pooled their resources and opened The Hit Point above a local business house.

"It's a sizeable commitment for us but we know there's nothing like it in Brisbane." Jonathan said.

"The idea behind it was to combine full role play games. war game rooms. areas for games like Dungeons and Dragons and put them together in one centre.

"The rooms are decorated to a theme or atmosphere and we've provided a database so people can network together.

"The rooms actually came out better than we had hoped and we've made a profit in our first week. so we're pretty excited about it."

The Hit Point was officially opened last week with an open day and all night role playing quest.

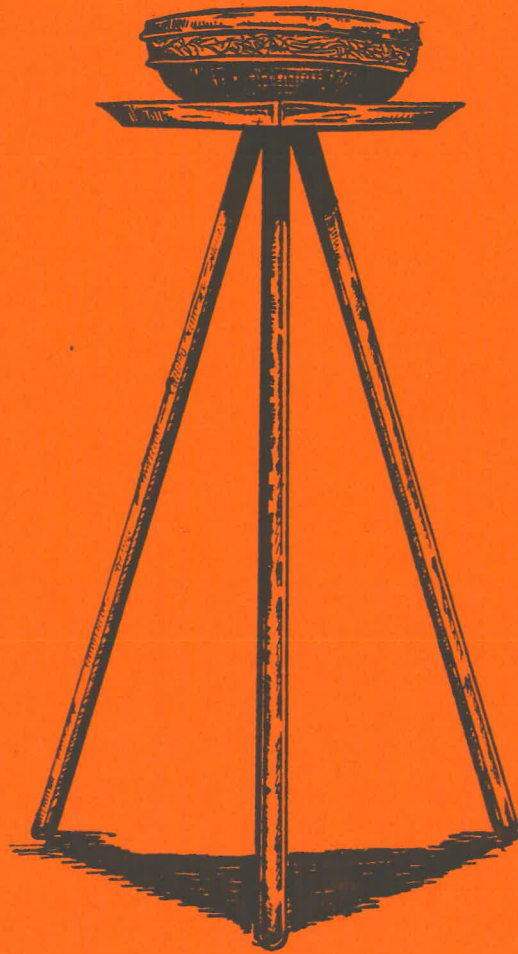The centre is now open from 10am to 10pm each day.

Contact 3256 7560.



JC60345

● Role players all set for action in the themed gaming rooms now open at Nundah.

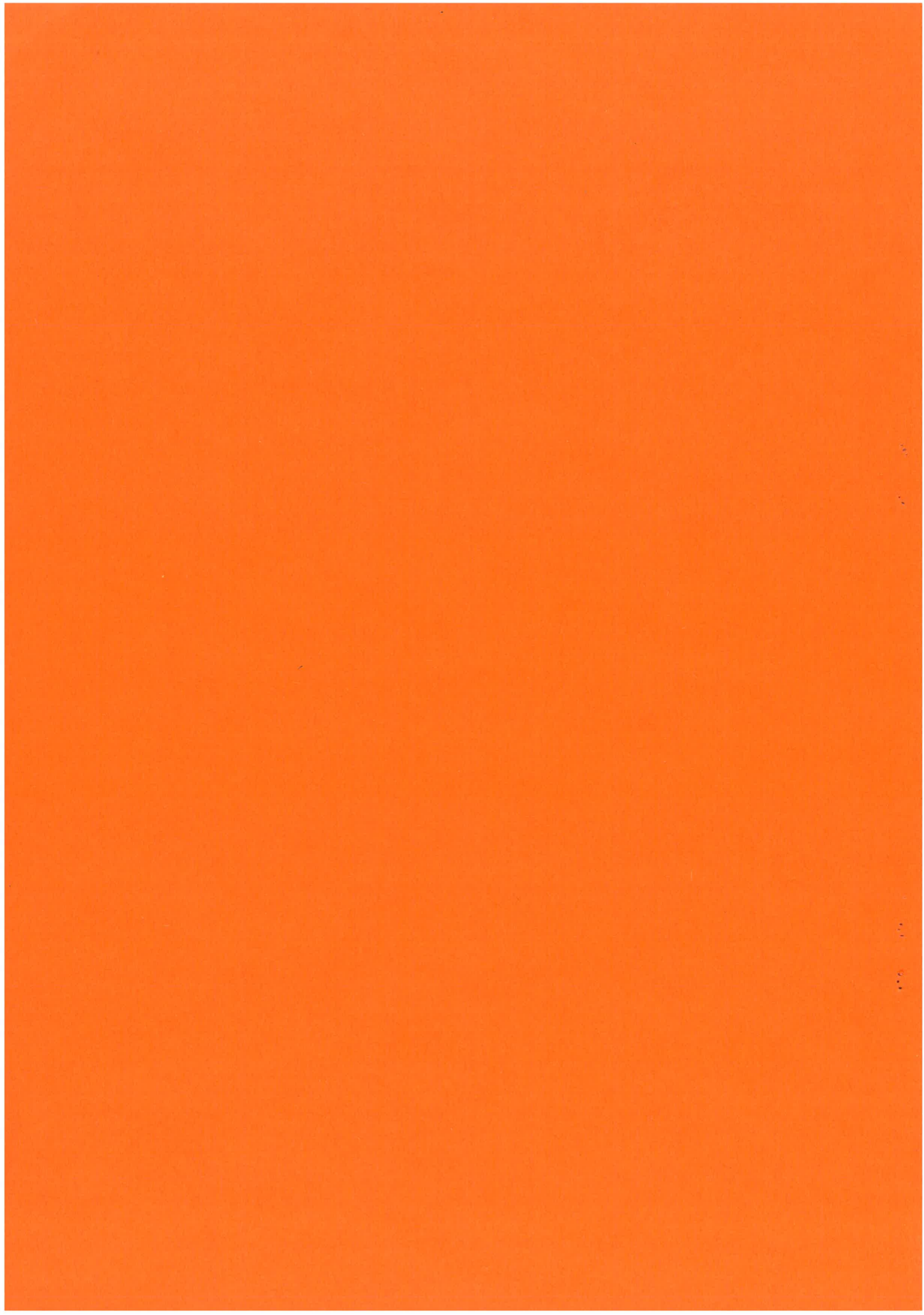# Tripod of Light

A simple and easy-to-use
Role-Playing Game.

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# DESIGNER'S NOTES

*Tripod of Light* is a simple and easy to use role-playing system that I created because I wanted to make a better and more flexible game system than *Dungeons and Dragons* or *DragonWarriors*. My system moves away from the restrictive class schema of both role-playing systems, and levels are a measure of "life experience" rather than dead enemies and treasure. Where possible, *ToL* (*Tripod of Light*) emphasises simplicity over the often unnecessary complications of *D&D* and *DW*: all characters have the same hit dice, experience progression table, THAC0, and Resistance Rolls (the equivalent of saving throws). To the best of my knowledge, the way I treat Spells and Miracles is unique. On the other hand, there are some appalling glitches in this system. Combat movement is more realistic, and avoids one group finishing its movment before the other group starts moving, but it is a nightmare to adjudicate interceptions and facing. More importantly, levels are meant to increase as you get older, because the older you get, the more "life experience"

you have had: however, this means that the older you get, the harder you are to kill, because you have more hit points. This is not plausible for human beings. The only way I can think of to get around this problem is to separate hit points and levels. Perhaps characters shouldn't gain more hit dice as they go up levels, but then Spellcasters will be profoundly disadvantaged, and all my efforts to avoid having magic points will be for naught.

Some of this system has been play-tested a little, but most of these rules have not been adequately play-tested. If anyone uses this system, I'd like to know how well it plays. If anyone has comments on this system, send them to me and I'll be happy to put them in the next *Queensland Wargamer* with answers to any questions and my replies to your comments.

Thanks to Taina Nieminen and David Lloyd for their comments and suggestions, and to Graeme McCowie and Richard Hepworth for providing artwork.

Gary Johnson

## Ability Scores

Every character has a value for each of the six Ability Scores: Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. Strength measures a character's physical power, Dexterity measures agility and hand-eye co-ordination, Constitution measures fitness and healthiness, Intelligence measures cleverness, Wisdom measures common sense, and Charisma measures personal appeal.

The player should roll 3d6 six times. After rolling, the player distributes these six totals as he or she wishes among the six Abilities. If the total of the six dice rolls is less than 66, the player can choose to divide 66 points between the Ability Scores instead of using the dice rolls.

The first three Abilities all have a direct effect on combat, and a character's Ability Scores in these Abilities can give a modifier to certain die rolls, as follows:

| Ability Score | Adjustment |
|---|---|
| 3 | –3 |
| 4–5 | –2 |
| 6–8 | –1 |
| 9–12 | — |
| 13–15 | +1 |
| 16–17 | +2 |
| 18 | +3 |

Strength affects damage and the "To Hit" roll for mélée combat. Dexterity affects Armour Class and the "To Hit" roll for ranged combat. Constitution affects Hit Points.

The second set of three Abilities does not have a direct effect on game mechanics. Instead, Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma provide guidelines for role-playing the character, and may have an indirect effect on game mechanics (e.g. low Intelligence affects a character's literacy).

## Levels

Level is an abstract game mechanic for measuring life experience. Characters begin as youthful people with 0 Experience Points and 1 Level. As time passes, characters gain Experience Points. When their total Experience Points equals or exceeds 1000, the characters gain a Level, and their Experience Points total drops by 1000. A Level is thus a convenient way of measuring 1000 Experience Points. This conversion occurs automatically.

*Bill the Orc starts off with 1 Level and 0 Experience Points. After several sessions, Bill's total Experience Points are 1025. Bill deducts 1000 from his total Experience Points and adds 1 to his Level, so that Bill now has 2 Levels and 25 Experience Points.*

The average Experience Award should be 200 to 300 Experience Points per session, regardless of the violence or peacefulness of the characters.

Increasing in Level has a number of benefits for characters. A character receives 1 Character Slot for every three Levels after 1st Level (i.e. at 4th Level, 7th Level, 10th Level, and so on), because Levels represent life experience. Levels also represent practice, and thus all characters receive a bonus of 1 to their Combat Modifier for every two Levels after 1st Level (i.e. at 3rd Level, 5th Level, 7th Level, etc.). Skills that benefit from gaining life experience also receive a modifier of 1 for every two levels after 1st Level: examples of such skills are Sneaking, Hiding, and Filching. Finally, characters have 1 Hit Dice for each Level they possess, increasing their chances of surviving a battle or casting a spell.

People who have uneventful lives should be 5th or 6th Level by the time they are about thirty years old.

## Hit Points

Hit Points measure a character's capacity to absorb damage before she or he dies. They also measure the amount of "life force" a character possesses, and are reduced when a character casts Spells. If a character's Hit Points reach 0, he or she is dead.

Hit Points are determined by rolling Hit Dice and applying any modifier for a high or low Constitution Score to each dice. Players roll 1d8 for each Level their characters have. A character will always gain 1 Hit Point per level, even if a low Constitution Score reduces the actual total to less than 1 point.

When recovering from injuries without using magic, characters will regain at most a quarter (25%) of their Hit Points in one week.

## Alignment

There are two Alignments, Good and Evil. Good is the usual Alignment of individuals from all four character races. Evil is the Alignment of those who deliberately choose to ally with Morgoth, the Dark God. Thus, there are many more Good people than Evil people. Good characters are not necessarily altruistic or compassionate; Good is the alignment of those who do not choose to be Evil. A Good character can have wicked intentions or perform bad actions, just as an Evil character can have kindly intentions or perform helpful actions. Alignment simply indicates a character's position with regard to the divine forces of Evil.

## Resistance Rolls

Resistance Rolls are a game mechanic for determining whether or not a character can ignore the effects of an unusual type of attack. When poisoned or magically attacked, players must roll equal to or greater than 16 (11 for Dwarves) on 1d20 or their characters will succumb to the effects of the attack.

Weak poisons give players a bonus of 5 to their die rolls, while strong poisons give a penalty of 5 (i.e. only Dwarven characters have a chance of resisting the effects of a strong poison without magical assistance).

## Character Slots

All characters begin the game with 4 Character Slots. Players help define their characters by allocating these Character Slots to certain advantages, such as skills, innate abilities, and training.

Players do not have to spend all 4 Character Slots when a character is first designed: Character Slots can be "saved up" and kept for later. As characters increase in level, they will receive additional Character Slots at the rate of 1 Slot for every three Levels after 1st Level.

## Warriors

All characters can fight, using any type of weapon and wearing any kind of armour; however, those who have not been properly trained to fight will be at a fearsome disadvantage. Fighting Training confers a bonus of 5 to a character's Combat Modifier. Furthermore, characters who have been trained to fight are capable of fighting from horseback (unless they come from a part of the world that does not have horses).

The mechanics of combat are dealt with in detail later in the rules.

## Spellcasters

All characters have some potential to cast Spells, but if this potential is not nurtured in their youth, it will never develop. Characters with this potential must begin the game with Spellcasting Potential, even if they do not begin with Spellcasting Training.

Spells are cast by reciting a brief phrase in an ancient language known only as *Magic*. When the words are spoken, the caster uses some of her or his "life force" to trigger the Spell, which is represented in game mechanics by the loss of Hit Points. Each Spell description defines the number of dice the GM should roll to determine the number of Hit Points lost by the character. If the character dies because he or she is trying to cast a Spell, the Spell will not go off unless the character was reduced to exactly 0 Hit Points. Characters cannot jointly cast a Spell, or pool their Hit Points.

Once a Spellcaster has learnt a Spell, he or she will remember the formula forever and can cast the Spell at any time. Spell formulas are often kept in small notebooks;

| Advantages | Number of Slots | Effects |
|---|---|---|
| Fighting Training | 1 | +5 Combat Modifier, can fight on horseback |
| Spellcasting Potential | 2 | potential to cast Spells, MUST BE TAKEN WHEN CAMPAIGN BEGINS |
| Spellcasting Training | 1 | can cast Spells, MUST HAVE SPELLCASTING POTENTIAL |
| Non-Human Race | 1 | Character is of a non-Human race |
| Piety | 3 | can perform Miracles, MUST BE TAKEN WHEN CAMPAIGN BEGINS |
| Skills | 1/2 | Any 1 Skill or Language |

there are also larger notebooks that contain not only the formula but also a detailed description of what the Spell does. Reading from a notebook or scroll does not "use up" the Spell, but the words will have no effect if the character does not have Spellcasting Potential and Training.

Spells are described in detail later in the rules.

## Character Races

There are four character races: Dwarves, Elves, Humans and Orcs. Humans are the most populous of the four races, and most characters should be Humans. The other three races have various advantages over Humans, and it costs 1 Character Slot to be a non-Human.

Dwarves are short and stocky, standing about 4' tall and weighing about 70kg. Both male and female Dwarves have beards. Their skin is earth-coloured (i.e. brown) and their hair is dark brown, gray, or black. Dwarves have a bonus of 5 to Resistance Rolls, bestowed upon them by their Goddess, Aulë. They have infravision (i.e. can see in infra-red) as well as normal vision. Because of their short stature, no Dwarf can use a large bow, pole arm, staff, large spear, or two-handed sword.

Elves are slender and graceful, usually blond and fair-skinned, with delicate features and pointed ears. An Elf is usually between 5' and 5'6" tall, weighing between 50kg and 55kg. They have ultravision (i.e. can see in ultra-violet) as well as normal vision. Elves are more perceptive than other races, and have a bonus of 3 to all rolls to notice hidden or concealed things. As a gift from their God, Alderon, all Elves are immune to the paralysing touch of Ghouls, though other paralysing attacks still affect Elves.

Orcs are solidly built, with jet-black skin and hair. They are roughly the same size as Humans, and have a similar range to Humans in height and weight (i.e. average male height 5'10", weight 70kg, average female height 5'4", weight 55kg). Their faces are coarse and brutish, and their ears are pointed. Orcs have ultravision (i.e. can see in ultra-violet) as well as normal vision.

## Miracle-Workers

All characters can be religious, and players should specify at the start of the campaign whether or not their characters believe in the existence of the gods. Characters who have Piety as an advantage are always religious, and have a special and intense relationship with their deity (Aulë for Dwarves, Aldaron for Elves, Eru for Humans, and Morgoth for Orcs). Because of these close and personal ties, such characters are sometimes capable of causing miracles by invoking the assistance of their god.

A Miracle-Worker attempts to cause a Miracle by asking for the assistance of his or her deity. For instance, a holy warrior of Eru, Queen of Light, could invoke Sunlight by calling out, "Eru, shed your Light upon the Dark!" Causing Miracles does not cost Hit Points, but there is always a chance that the Miracle being called for will not occur. Each Miracle description includes the target number that the player must roll equal to or greater than on 1d20 for the spell to work. The GM should be prepared to take into account the recent devoutness, obedience, and morality of the character when considering whether or not to modify this target number.

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*Bill the Orc, devotee of Morgoth, the Dark God, has been busy arranging an assault on an Elven glade containing a sacred tree. Should Bill need to call on Morgoth for assistance during this endeavour, the GM may feel that Morgoth will be more willing to help Bill than usual; because Bill is trying to harm one of Morgoth's enemies, Aldaron. Alternatively, Morgoth may despise Bill for being so weak that he needs Morgoth to save him from the Elven warriors, and be more prepared than usual to ignore Bill's fervent invocations. Morgoth's like that ...*

---

Miracles are described in detail later in the rules.

## Skills

Players buy Skills for their characters by spending Character Slots on whatever Skills they want. A character with a particular Skill can do or know that Skill very well: if a player wants to have a character with a passing acquaintance with a particular profession or academic discipline, she or he does not have to

commit a 1/2 Character Slot to that Skill. For instance, every character has some familiarity with History, Geography, and Arithmetic. Anyone who watched the village smith when they were young has some familiarity with Blacksmithing. Players should not buy a Skill for their character unless they want their character to be significantly better than average at that Skill, whether Mining, Singing, or Bowmaking.

There are some Skills that require players to roll a die to determine if the character has succeeded in their task: examples include Filching, Hiding, Lockpicking and Sneaking. Whether or not a character succeeds at these Skills is resolved using the same game mechanic that determines whether or not a character succeeds in hitting another character in combat: the task is assigned a particular "Armour Class" by the GM, the player (sometimes the GM) rolls 1d20 and applies any Skill modifiers to the die roll, and checks the resulting number against the number needed "To Hit". If the result is a "Hit", the character has succeeded; if the result is a "Miss", she or he has failed.

| Difficulty of Task | Equivalent "AC" |
|---|---|
| Easy | AC 0 |
| Average | AC 0 |
| Hard | AC 5 |
| Very Hard | AC 10 |
| Next to Impossible | AC 15 or more |

Some Skills allow repeated attempts to succeed at a task that the character failed at on the first attempt. There is a cumulative penalty of 2 subtracted from the die roll for each unsuccessful previous attempt.

**Examples of Skills**

*Aboveground Construction*

A character with Aboveground Construction notices secret doors and some traps on a 14, and will find such things if making a deliberate and detailed search on a 7. Elven characters have a bonus of 3 on any die rolls to notice hidden doors and the like, giving them a chance of noticing such things on a roll of 18 or better even if they do not have this Skill.

*Climbing Sheer Surfaces*

The art of climbing sheer cliffs, walls, and so forth. The character has a 1 in 20 chance of falling for every 30m climbed. If the character does fall, she or he falls from the halfway point of the climb (or part thereof), taking 1d8 damage for each 3m fallen. A fall of less than 3m does 1d8–4 damage, and can do 0 points of damage.

*Filching*

This represents the ability to filch small and portable objects from another person's body. If the character fails the roll, roll again. If the second roll was also a failure, the character is noticed and caught. If the second roll succeeds, the character gets away (without any loot).

Characters with this Skill have a bonus of 5 to their "To Hit" roll, and can add a bonus of 1 for every two Levels after 1st Level. Characters without this Skill cannot add any bonuses for high Level.

*Hiding*

Also the art of hiding behind cover, but the character must be moving slowly or standing still. The character will always think he or she is successfully hiding (i.e. the GM rolls, not the player). Hiding from an Elven character increases the "AC" by 3, because of the heightened perceptions of Elves. Dwarves, Elves and Orcs may notice a character hiding in shadows with their enhanced senses.

Characters with this Skill have a bonus of 5 to their "To Hit" roll, and can add a bonus of 1 for every two Levels after 1st Level. Characters without this Skill cannot add any bonuses for high Level.

*Languages*

There are five languages in the Known World: *Dwarf*, *Elf*, *Human*, *Magic*, and *Orc*. *Magic* is a dead language, and is only used to cast Spells. It is not possible to converse in *Magic*.

All characters can speak their native language. Any character with an Intelligence of less than 9 cannot learn additional languages. Characters with an Intelligence of 9 or more can learn as many languages as the player is willing to spend Character Slots to obtain.

All characters with an Intelligence of 9 or more can read any language they can speak. A character with an Intelligence of 6, 7 or 8 is partially literate in their native language, but will never be a fluent reader. Characters with an Intelligence of 5 or less cannot read.

*Lockpicking*

Can only be attempted if the character has lockpicks. It takes up to 10 minutes to attempt to pick a lock. Repeat attempts are allowed, but with a cumulative penalty of 2 for each failure.

Characters with this Skill have a bonus of 5 to their "To Hit" roll, and can add a bonus of 1 for every two Levels after 1st Level. Characters without this Skill cannot add any bonuses for high Level.

*Mounted Combat*

A character with this Skill can fight from horseback, ride a warhorse in battle, and charge opponents while on horseback.

Any character who has Fighting Training automatically has this Skill (i.e. costs 0 Character Slots).

*Sneaking*

The art of moving slowly and silently. The character will always think he or she has succeeded (i.e. the GM rolls, not the player). Sneaking near an Elven character increases the "AC" by 3, because of the heightened perceptions of Elves.

Characters with this Skill have a bonus of 5 to their "To Hit" roll, and can add a bonus of 1 for every two Levels after 1st Level. Characters without this Skill cannot add any bonuses for high Level.

*Trapping*

Setting or removing a trap will usually require special equipment, though some simple traps will not. If the character attempts to remove a trap and fails, roll again. If the character would have failed the second roll, he or she sets off the trap. Characters can repeatedly attempt to remove a trap, but there is a cumulative penalty of 2 for each failure.

Characters with this Skill have a bonus of 5 to their "To Hit" roll, and can add a bonus of 1 for every two Levels after 1st Level. Characters without this Skill cannot add any bonuses for high Level.

*Underground Construction*

A character with Underground Construction notices secret doors and some traps (e.g. a deadfall) on a 14, and will find such things if making a deliberate and detailed search on an 7. Elven characters have a bonus of 3 on any die rolls to notice hidden doors and the like, giving them a chance of noticing such things on a roll of 18 or better even if they do not have this Skill.
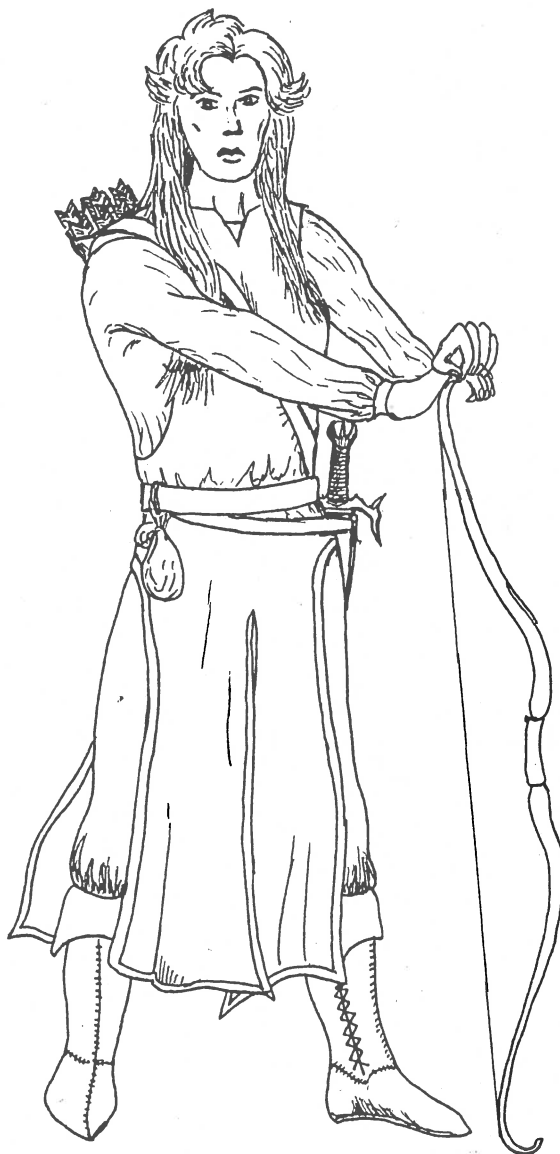
## Movement Rates

All characters can walk, run, and sprint unless disabled. Different races have different Movement Rates.

|  | Human, Elf, Orc | Dwarf |
|---|---|---|
| Fast Walk | 100m/minute | 100m/minute |
| Run | 200m/minute | 150m/minute |
| Sprint | 400m/minute | 200m/minute |

A character can sprint for a minute before becoming exhausted and having to stop. A character can run for 10 minutes before becoming exhausted and having to stop. A character can walk quickly (or jog) for much longer periods of time without needing to rest.

The figures given above are for relatively unencumbered characters. Characters carrying equipment weighing less than 25% of their body weight can move at the above rates. When characters carry equipment weighing 25% or more of their body weight, they start slowing down.

| % of Weight Carried | % of Movement Rate |
|---|---|
| up to 24% | 100% |
| 25%–49% | 75% |
| 50%–69% | 50% |
| 70–89% | 25% |
| 90% or more | can move a step or two |

Dwarves calculate the amount they can carry by multiplying their body weight by 1.5.

> *Corë Darmon, Champion of Aulë, weighs 70kg. She can carry 70x1.5kg, or 105kg.*

This procedure for calculating Movement Rates when encumbered assumes that players give their characters reasonable body weight for their size and Strength, and do not make their characters overweight. GMs and players may prefer to adjust this system so that the character's Strength is a more important determinant than the character's body weight.

## Travelling Across Country

When travelling from one place to another, it is generally more convenient to deal with kilometres travelled in a day rather than metres travelled in a minute. Assuming that the character walks for 10 hours, the distances travelled are as follows.

| Encumbrance | Distance |
|---|---|
| up to 32% | 40km |
| 33%–65%% | 20km |
| 66%–89% | 5km |
| 90% or more | insignificant |

The terrain the character travels through has an effect on the character's Movement Rate, whether per minute or per day.

| Terrain Type | Movement Rate Reduced To |
|---|---|
| Clear, Flat | 100% |
| Forest | 50% |
| Forest, Road | 100% |
| Hills | 30% |
| Hills, Road | 50% |
| Mountains | 10% |
| Mountains, Road | 30% |



At the GM's discretion, factors such as pursuit up a tree by an enraged Grizzly Bear may affect the Movement Rate of a character. Or not...

## The Combat Round

Fighting is a complicated affair, but of crucial importance in most game sessions. The basic time unit of battle is the Combat Round, 10 seconds long. In each Combat Round, the following procedure is followed.

1. Both sides roll for Initiative on 1d20. The side with the higher score wins Initiative. If there is a tie, roll again until there is a result.
2. The losers set out their intended movement.
3. The winners set out their intended movement.
4. Movement is carried out, any interceptions are resolved, and any free changes of facing take place.
5. The losers indicate what magic they will use.
6. The winners indicate and use their magic.
7. The losers use their magic, then indicate what ranged attacks they will use.
8. The winners indicate and use their ranged attacks.
9. The losers use their ranged attacks, then indicate what mêlée attacks they will use.
10. The winners indicate and use their mêlée attacks.
11. The losers use their mêlée attacks.

## Combat Movement

The maximum distance a character can move in one combat round is 16% of his or her Fast Walking or Running Movement Rate. A character cannot sprint in combat.

Characters cannot move more than 10% of their Movement Rate if they want to perform an attack. Characters cannot cast spells or use ranged attacks while running, but they can use mêlée attacks.

If a character wants to withdraw from a mêlée without turning away from the enemy, she or he can move up to 5% of their Fast Walking Movement Rate without turning away from their opponent. A character cannot run backwards.

At the end of all movement, characters can change the direction they are facing as long as they did not run during movement. Characters cannot attack an enemy they are not facing.

## Magic in Combat

Spellcasters and Miracle-Workers can cast one Spell or cause one Miracle per Combat Round. A character can do this and still attack, either with a ranged attack or with a mêlée attack, but if the Spell or Miracle is ranged the caster must carry out a ranged attack to complete the Spell or Miracle. This ranged attack will always hit, but the caster cannot carry out a second attack in the same Combat Round.

> *A Bolt of Lightning Spell is cast before either ranged or mêlée combat occurs. However, the Bolt of Lightning is not fired until it is time for ranged attacks to be carried out. The Spellcaster cannot use another ranged attack or a mêlée attack in the same Combat Round that she or he casts the Bolt of Lightning Spell.*

Spells or Miracles that affect the caster (e.g. Warding) take effect before any combat.

Magic devices that are not being used as weapons are activated at this time.

## Armour Class

Armour Class is a number representing how difficult it is to hit a character. Without modifiers, a character's Armour Class is 0. Dexterity modifiers, body armour, Combat Modifiers and magic can improve (or worsen) Armour Class.

There are three different types of armour: leather (hard, not soft), chain mail, and plate mail (not full plate). Characters cannot wear more than one suit of armour, but they can use shields in conjunction with body armour to improve their Armour Class.

| Armour Type | Bonus to Armour Class |
|---|---|
| unarmoured | — |
| leather armour | +2 |
| chain mail | +4 |
| plate mail | +6 |
| shield | +1 |

## Ranged Attacks and Missile Weapons

Ranged attacks cannot be used on a target within 1m, unless that target moved within 1m during the current Combat Round. In this case, the attacker can shoot the target while the target is approaching.

All missile weapons can be used once per Combat Round. Different missile weapons have different ranges, and do diferent amounts of damage. If the target is at short range, there is a bonus of 2 to the "To Hit" roll. If the target is at long range, there is a penalty of 2.

| Weapon | Damage | Ranges (S/M/L) |
|--------|--------|----------------|
| Axe | 1d6 | 2m/5m/10m |
| large Bow* | 1d6 | 75m/150m/200m |
| small Bow | 1d6 | 50m/100m/150m |
| Dagger | 1d4 | 2m/5m/10m |
| Javelin | 1d6 | 10m/20m/50m |
| Sling | 1d4 | 10m/50m/150m |
| Spear | 1d6 | 5m/10m/20m |

* Dwarves cannot use large bows.

## Mélée Combat

Mélée combat cannot occur if the combatants are more than 1m apart. Opponents must close to mélée distance before they can fight hand-to-hand. Different mélée weapons do different amounts of damage. Strength modifies the amount of damage a character does in mélée combat, but a successful hit will always do at least 1 point of damage, even if the net damage rolled is less than 1 point.

| Weapon | Number of Hands needed to use | Damage |
|--------|-------------------------------|--------|
| small Axe | one | 1d6 |
| large Axe | one (Dwarves need two)† | 1d8 |
| Club | one | 1d4 |
| Dagger | one | 1d4 |
| Mace | one | 1d6 |
| Pole Arm* | two† | 1d10 |
| Staff* | two† | 1d6 |
| small Spear | one | 1d6 |
| large Spear* | two (one on horseback)† | 1d8 |
| short Sword | one | 1d6 |
| long Sword | one | 1d8 |
| two-handed Sword* | two† | 1d10 |
| weaponless | one | 1 |

* Dwarves cannot use pole arms. staffs. large spears. and two-handed swords.
† Two-handed weapons cannot be used with a shield.

Characters who Run to enter mélée have the option of Charging their opponent. To Charge, characters must Run at least 5m in a straight line immediately before attacking the enemy. If the attack hits, the damage done is doubled. A character who can fight on horseback can Charge on horseback; all characters can Charge on foot.

Someone being Charged can choose, if she or he has a spear or suitable polearm (i.e. one with a pointy end), to Set the weapon against the attacker. This is holding the spear firmly braced against one foot and the ground. The defender gets to roll "To Hit" first, even if the attacker won Initiative. If the defender hits, the damage done to the attacker is doubled. A character must be on foot to Set a weapon against a Charging foe.

## Special Combat Modifiers

*Surprise (+2 To Hit, x2 damage)*

If a character is not expecting to be attacked, she or he is at a disadvantage in the first Combat Round. When Surprised, a character cannot perform an attack or cast a Spell. Attackers gain a bonus of 2 to their "To Hit" rolls, and do double damage to the defender (triple if they Charge). Being Surprised only lasts for one Combat Round.

*Unseen Attacks (+2 To Hit, armour only)*

Any attacks directed at the target that she or he cannot see coming receive a bonus of 2 to the "To Hit" roll. The target's Armour Class consists only of the armour he or she is wearing. Invisible attacks gain this modifier, as do attacks from behind and unexpected ranged attacks using fast missile weapons (e.g. bows, slings).

## THAC0 ("To Hit" Armour Class 0) and "To Hit" Rolls

All 1st Level characters have a THAC0 of 10. This is the number you must equal or exceed on the "To Hit" roll of 1d20 for your character to hit an opponent. To determine the chance of hitting someone with an Armour Class other than 0, add the Armour Class to 10 (e.g. THAC6 is 16).

As characters go up in Level. they gain a bonus that represents their increasing skill at fighting. For every two Levels after 1st Level. characters gain a bonus of 1 to their Combat Modifier. Characters with Fighting Training receive an additional bonus of 5 to their Combat Modifier. This Combat Modifier can either increase a character's "To Hit" roll or increase that character's Armour Class. i.e. characters can use their extra skills to either attack or defend more effectively.

Players should indicate to their GM how their characters will usually distribute their Combat Modifier. It is assumed that surprised characters will put their entire Combat Modifier into their Armour Class.
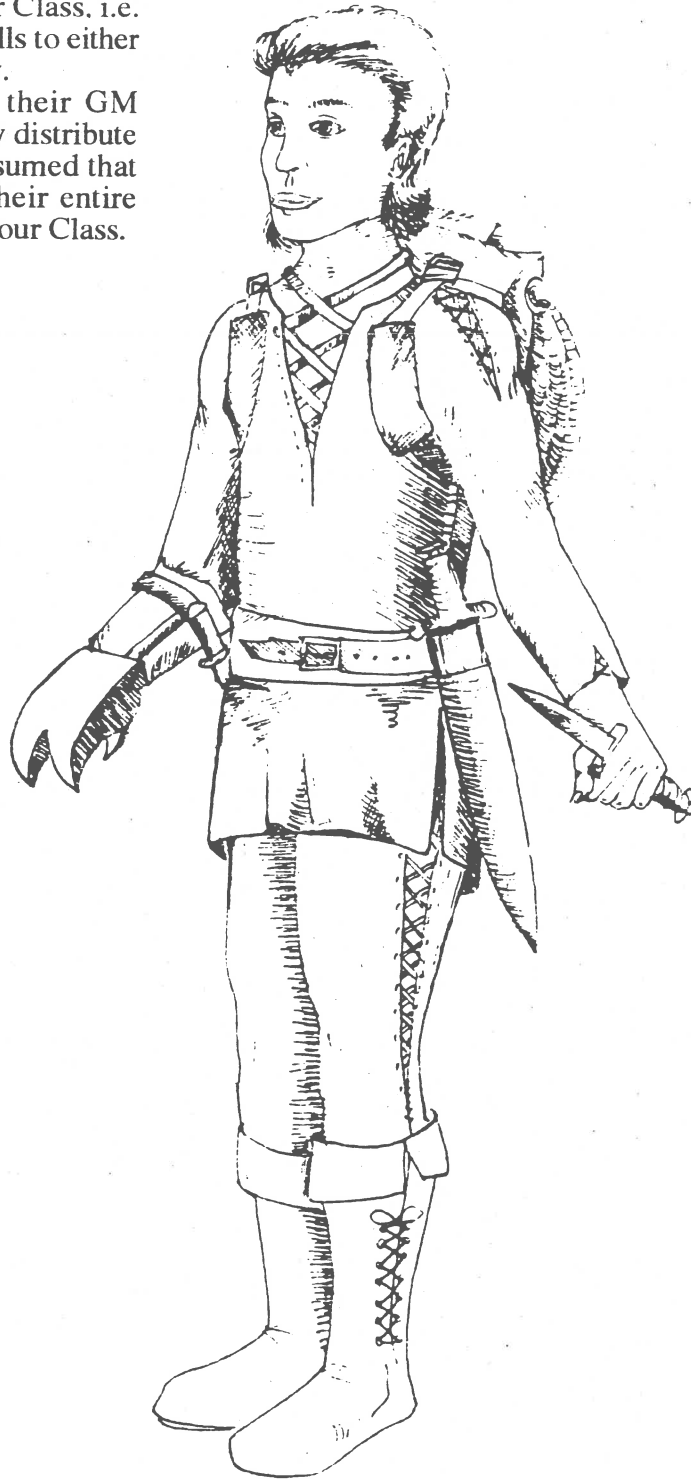
## Examples of Spells

*Bolt of Lightning*
Hit Points Cost: 1d8 per dice of damage.
Range: 60m.
Duration: instant effect.
Effect: This Spell creates a bolt of lightning 20m long, 1m wide and 1m high that will cause as many dice of damage to anyone hit by the lightning bolt as the caster takes to cast the Spell. Anyone hit by the lightning bolt does not get to make a Resistance Roll to avoid the effect of this Spell.

*Change Form*
Hit Points Cost: 4d8.
Range: 20m.
Duration: variable.
Effect: This Spell changes the target into a form of the caster's choosing. If the target wants, she or he may make a Resistance Roll to avoid being transformed. The Hit Dice of the new form must be equal to or less than the Level of the caster. Any physical properties of the new form are gained, but not any supernatural powers. For instance, taking the form of a Dragon would confer the ability to fly, but not to breathe fire. If the Spell succeeds, it will remain in effect until either the caster decides to cancel the effects or the target succeeds in Resisting the Spell. Transformed people may make a Resistance Roll every day to see if they revert to their original form.

*Charm*
Hit Points Cost: 2d8.
Range: 40m.
Duration: variable.
Effect: This Spell will affect any single being that fails to make a Resistance Roll. If the target fails the Resistance Roll, he or she will believe that the caster is a good friend, and will be prepared to help the caster if necessary. This spell will remain in effect until either the caster decides to cancel the effects or the target succeeds in Resisting the Spell. A Charmed person may make a Resistance Roll every day to see if she or he overcomes the beguiling effect of this Spell.

*Disintegration*
Hit Points Cost: 6d8.
Range 20m.
Duration: instant effect.
Effect: This Spell makes one creature or item crumble into dust. A living target may attempt to make a Resistance Roll to avoid being disintegrated.

*Dispel*
Hit Points Cost: 3d8.
Range: 40m.
Duration: instant effect.
Effect: When cast, this Spell will destroy all Spells and Spell effects in a 10m by 10m by 10m volume. Spells or Miracles cast by a character of the same Level or a lower Level than the caster are automatically cancelled out, while those of a higher Level caster have a 10% chance per Level of difference between the casters of Resisting this Spell. A magic item is treated as if it is a Spell cast by the Spellcaster who made it.

*Golden Arrow*
Hit Points Cost: 1d8.
Range: 50m.
Duration: 10 minutes.
Effect: When this Spell is cast, a glowing golden arrow which will automatically hit any chosen target appears beside the caster. The arrow is equivalent to a magic +1 arrow in effect (i.e. the arrow does 1d6+1 damage). The target does not get to make a Resistance Roll to avoid the effect of this Spell.

*Invisibility*
Hit Points Cost: 2d8.
Range: 40m.
Duration: 1 hour.
Effect: This Spell will make one person or object invisible for one hour. When a person is made invisible, anything being carried or worn at that time also becomes invisible, and anything picked up during the duration of the Spell also becomes invisible. If the invisible person is carrying a light source, the light source itself will be invisible, but not the light it generates. The target may attempt to make a Resistance Roll to avoid the effect of this Spell.

*See Magic*
Hit Points Cost: 1d8.
Range: Caster.
Duration: 20 minutes.
Effect: When this Spell takes effect, the caster will see all magic objects, creatures, and places within 20m glow with a golden light when looked at.

## Examples of Miracles

Each of the gods will help their followers in different ways (i.e. the followers of different gods perform different Miracles). The Miracles detailed below are some of those granted to her devout believers by Eru, Queen of Light, Goddess of the Humans.

*Avert Evil*
Target Number: 6.
Range: Caster.
Duration: 10 minutes.
Effect: When cast, this Miracle forces all Evil beings to flee from the presence of the caster. If an Evil being is of the same Level or a lower Level than the caster, it is automatically driven off, while Evil beings of a higher Level or with more Hit Dice have a 10% chance per Level of difference between themselves and the caster of resisting this Miracle.

*Cleanse Water*
Target Number: 8.
Range: 3m.
Duration: instant effect.
Effect: This Miracle will make spoiled or poisoned water safe and drinkable. Up to 1000 litres (1 cubic metre) of water can be purified by this Miracle. If cast at mud, the Miracle will make the dirt settle, leaving a pool of pure and clean water. This Miracle will not affect any living being.

*Remove Disease*
Target Number: 13.
Range: touch.
Duration: instant effect.
Effect: This Miracle will heal one living creature of one particular disease, including Lycanthropy. The target may try to make a Resistance Roll to avoid the effect of this Miracle.

*Resurrection*
Target Number: 21 (i.e. this Miracle will not work without the consent of the appropriate deity or deities).
Range: touch.
Duration: instant effect.
Effect: This Miracle restores a dead person to life, bringing their soul back from the Afterlife. If the recipient is a Human, Eru must approve of their resurrection; if the recipient is not a Human, both Eru and the deity of that particular race must approve. The body must be present and sufficiently intact to sustain life. If a part of the body is missing, but the loss will not cause the immediate death of the dead person when they are resurrected, the Miracle will work and the recipient will be disabled. A person can be resurrected if she or he has been dead for less than three full days; after that time, the body will have to be restored and the effects of decomposition removed before resurrection is possible. The resurrected person will be restored with 1 Hit Point.

*Sunlight*
Target Number: 9.
Range: 40m.
Duration: 2 hours.
Effect: This Miracle fills a 20m by 20m by 20m volume with gentle sunlight, which will also illuminate regions adjacent to the Miracle effect.

*Treat Injury*
Target Number: 8.
Range: touch.
Duration: instant effect.
Effect: This Miracle will heal 1d8 Hit Points of damage, up to the total possessed by the recipient. If the target wishes, he or she may attempt to make a Resistance Roll to avoid the effect of this Miracle.

*Warding*
Target Number: 8.
Range: Caster.
Duration: 10 minutes.
Effect: This Miracle creates an invisible magical shield around the caster's body, improving his or her Armour Class and Resistance Rolls by 2 points. In addition, supernatural beings may not be able to touch the caster while this Miracle is active. If of the same Level or a lower Level than the caster, such beings automatically cannot touch the caster, while beings of a higher Level or with more Hit Dice have a 10% chance per Level of difference between themselves and the caster of resisting this Miracle. Mélée combat is not possible for those who cannot touch the caster, unless the caster attacks them, in which case they can ignore the prohibition against touching the caster.

## Brief Descriptions of the Four Gods

*Aldaron, the Green Man, God of Elves*

Aldaron is vivacious, energetic, and flighty, but also grim and unforgetting. He has made a covenant with the Elves, his people, and will protect and nurture them as long as they care for the trees and remember the good things in life rather than give in to despair. Aldaron is first among the Elves, but not their master.

*Aulë, the Great Mother, Goddess of Dwarves*

Aulë is the most compassionate of the gods, and cares deeply about each of her Dwarven children. She is seen as a parent by all Dwarves, and loved greatly. Aulë is the most prepared of the gods to intervene on behalf of her children, but she is frequently occupied keeping the Demons pinned deep in the earth, away from her beloved offspring.

*Eru, Queen of Light, Goddess of Humans*

Eru is the light of the sun and the pure water of the rivers. Eru is the bread that sustains life and the monarch of Humanity. Proud and aggressive, Eru is proud of her people, the Humans. Those who fail to please her, who falter by the wayside in the struggle against Evil, do not remain in her favour.

*Morgoth, the Dark God, God of Orcs*

Morgoth is Evil. Cruel, petty, arrogant, vindictive, brutal, savage, heartless and terrifying, Morgoth is so dreadful a god that even the Orcs are happy that Morgoth has been banished from the Known World. Creator of the Undead, Lord of the Demons, Morgoth is always seeking out new ways to try and win the never-ending war against his siblings, the good gods.

## Magic Items

*Magic Armour (+1 or greater)*

Any suit of armour or shield can be enchanted so that it will help the wearer avoid being hit and improve the wearer's chance of Resisting a Spell. Magic armour will add the same bonus to both Armour Class and Resistance Rolls. Magic armour does not have charges.

*Magic Devices*

There are magic items that produce the same effect as a Spell. These devices function a certain number of times each day, regaining their charges at a certain time of day (e.g. dawn, midnight) or at a certain rate (e.g. precisely 24 hours after being used). Usually, these magic devices require a word or specific action to active the magic, but not always.

> *Ring of Invisibility: 1 charge per day, charge returns 24 hours after being used, activated by saying the word "Karimau".*

Only Spells can be used by magic devices. Miracles cannot be replicated by devices, although it is possible that a particular holy object or thing could increase the possibility of a deity granting a miracle (i.e. giving a bonus to the target number for causing a Miracle).

*Magic Weapons (+1 or greater)*

Any weapon can be enchanted so that it will be more accurate and do more damage. A magic weapon will add the same bonus to both "To Hit" and damage rolls. Magic weapons do not have charges.

A magic weapon is not a holy weapon. Holy weapons are Blessed by a Miracle-Worker or a deity, and do not add any bonuses in combat. However, they are capable of harming some beings (e.g. vampires and demons) that cannot be hurt by ordinary and magic weapons.

*Combination Magic Items*

Weapons and suits of armour can also be magic devices.

> *+1 Bow of Golden Arrows: +1 "To Hit", +1 Damage, can fire 6 Golden Arrows (total damage 1d6+2) per day, 1 charge returns every 4 hours, Golden Arrow created when the bowstring is drawn back and there is no arrow nocked, Arrow must be fired before bow can be put down.*

## Money and Equipment

There are four types of coins in the Known World: the crown, the half-crown, the coronet, and the half-coronet. The crown (cr) is a 20g gold coin, and the coronet (cor) is a 20g silver coin. The half-crown and half-coronet are made of gold and silver respectively, and half the size of the crown and coronet. There are 10 coronets to the crown, therefore:

20 half-coronets = 10 coronets = 2 half-crowns = 1 crown

A coin is usually marked on one side with the name of and a symbol for the place where it was minted, and on the other side with a profile of either the ruler or the god of the place where it was minted.

Often, coins are cut up into smaller pieces to pay for very cheap services. For instance, a pint of beer costs 1/4 of a coronet, which is smaller than all minted coins. To pay for this pint, a character has to cut a half-coronet in half.

## Armour
Barding (30cr)
Chain Mail (20cr)
Leather Armour (5cr)
Plate Mail (30cr)
Shield (21/2cr)

## Weapons
large Axe (2cr)
small Axe (11/2cr)
small throwing Axe (2cr)
20 Arrows (1cr)
large Bow (11/2cr)
small Bow (11/2cr)
polished Club (1cor)
Dagger (11/2cr)
throwing Dagger (2cr)
Javelin (1cor)
Mace (2cr)
Pole Arm (3cr)
Sling )1cor)
small Spear (1/2cr)
large Spear (1cr)
Staff (1cor)
20 lead Stones (1cor)
long Sword (21/2cr)
short Sword (2cr)
two-handed Sword (3cr)

## Equipment
Backpack (1cr)
Flint & Tinder (1/2cor)
Lantern (5cr)
Oil (1/2cr)
Torch (1/2cor)
Saddle, Bridle, etc. (5cr)

## Horses
Draft Horse (25cr)
Mule (15cr)
Riding Horse (25cr)
War Horse (50cr)

## Living Expenses
Bottle of Wine (1/2cor)
2 Pints of Beer (1/2cor)
Unprepared Food for 1 Day (1cor)
Prepared Food for 1 Day (2cor)
Food for 1 Horse for 1 Day (1/2cr)
Hire of an Inn Room for 1 Day (3cor)
Rent for a House for 1 Week (at least 3cor)

The minimum weekly cost of living is 1cr, which buys unprepared food for the week and pays the rent for a cheap house. The average weekly income is 2cr.

To calculate the cost of things not on this list, treat 1 coronet as the equivalent of $20.00 and work from the modern cost of the item.

## Monsters

All monsters are defined by several attributes: Hit Dice, Combat Modifiers, Armour Class, Damage, Movement Rates, Alignment, and Magic Resistance.

*Hit Dice*
The number of Hit Dice a monster has indicates the Level of that monster.

> *Mefanglis the Dragon has 15 Hit Dice. Mefanglis is treated as a 15th Level character when it comes to casting spells and resisting the effects of different magical attacks.*

*Combat Modifiers*
Monsters can accumulate Combat Modifiers in various ways. They gain a bonus of 1 for every two Hit Dice after the first (i.e. at 3 HD, 5 HD, 7 HD, and so on). If a monster has a high Strength or Dexterity, or has received Fighting Training, it will gain the appropriate Combat Modifiers. A monster must be sentient to be able to have Fighting Training; unintelligent monsters cannot haev this advantage.

## Armour Class

Some monsters may have special defenses, which will be noted in their descriptions. Examples include: half damage from weapons that are not silver (Lycanthropes); no damage from weapons that are not holy (Vampires, Demons).

## Damage

Like characters, monsters cannot make more than one attack each combat round.

## Movement Rates

Most monsters are restricted to moving on the ground, but some can fly or swim underwater. Flying creatures that cannot hover will not have the equivalent of a Fast Walking Rate when flying.

## Alignment

The alignment of monster that can choose to be either Good or Evil is described as "Good or Evil."

## Magic Resistance

Some monsters (e.g. Dragons, Demons) are resistant to the effects of Magic Spells and Miracles. If the monster's Level is greater than that of the spell-caster, the chance that it will resist the effects of a spell is increased by 10% (a bonus of 2 on the Resistance Roll) for each Level of difference between the caster's Level and the monster's Level. This chance of Resisting a Spell or Miracle applies even if there is usually no Resistance Roll, as long as the magic directly and magically affects the monster. The GM should decide whether or not a Spell or Miracle meets this criteria.

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*Golden Arrow creates a magical attack that directly affects the target. A monster with Magic Resistance may attempt to ignore the effect of this Spell. Bolt of Lightning creates an otherwise natural electrical discharge. Magic Resistance will have no effect on this Spell.*

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## Examples of Monsters

### Bear
| | |
|---|---|
| HD | 5 |
| CM | +2 (level), +4 (Str) |
| AC | 1 (thick fur) |
| Dam | 1d6 (claw), +4 (Str) |
| MV | 100m/200m/400m |
| AL | Good |
| MR | No |

Decription: Bears are big and hairy, and live in forests and mountains. The Bear detailed above is a very large (3m tall) Grizzly Bear: most Bears are smaller and not as strong.

### Dragon
| | |
|---|---|
| HD | 15 |
| CM | +7 (level), +5 (F.T.), +10 (Str) |
| AC | 7 (scales) |
| Dam | 1d12 (talon), +10 (Str) |
| MV | 100m/150m/200m |
| | fly —/500m/1000m |
| AL | Good or Evil |
| MR | Yes |

Description: Dragons are large winged reptilian monsters, famed for their treasure hoards. However, Dragons are fearsome opponents. As well as their impressive physical prowess, Dragons can breathe a vast sheet of flame 20m long, 1m wide and 1m high once every minute (6 Combat Rounds) that causes 10d8 damage to anyone it strikes. Furthermore, most (though not all) Dragons are Spellcasters.

### Ghoul
| | |
|---|---|
| HD | 1 |
| CM | — |
| AC | 1 (Dex) |
| Dam | 1 (claw) + paralysing touch |
| MV | 100m/200m/400m |
| AL | Evil |
| MR | No |

Description: Ghouls are Undead monsters, corpses that hunger for flesh, living or dead. They are often partially decomposed, and horrifying to look at. Sunlight and pure water burns Ghouls, who take 1 Hit Point of damage every Combat Round they are in contact with sunlight or pure water. The touch of a Ghoul can paralyse an opponent with fear for up to 10 minutes, unless the target makes a Resistance Roll. Elves are immune to this paralysing attack. If given the chance, Ghouls will kill their helpless victims and eat the bodies.

### Horse
| | |
|---|---|
| HD | 2–4 |
| CM | — or +1 (level), +0, +1 or +2 (Str) |
| AC | 0 (4 in barding) |
| Dam | 1 (kick or bite), +0, +1 or +2 (Str) |
| MV | 100m/300m/500m |
| AL | Good |
| MR | No |

Description: Horses vary in size, from small ponies and mules (2HD) to huge Clydesdales (4HD). The larger a Horse is (i.e. the more Hit Dice it has), the stronger it is. Warhorses are trained not to panic in battle; other Horses will flee rather than take part in a fight.

*Lycanthrope*

| | |
|---|---|
| HD | as animal |
| CM | as animal |
| AC | as animal |
| Dam | as animal |
| MV | as animal |
| AL | Good or Evil |
| MR | No |

Description: A Lycanthrope is a person afflicted with the disease of Lycanthropy. People are infected when they come into contact with the body fluids of a Lycanthrope (usually from saliva when bitten by a Lycanthrope). Every night when the full moon is in the sky, the infected person turns into the same type of animal as the Lycanthrope who infected her or him. While transformed, the Lycanthrope is bestial and violent, but not incapable of recognising friends and enemies. The Lycanthrope has the physical attributes of the animal she or he has transformed into, with the added advantage that he or she takes half damage from non-silver weapons. Even magic and holy weapons do half damage. Natural attacks like fire, lightning and acid still do full damage. Sunlight always reverses the transformation, restoring the Lycanthrope to her or his original form. Afterwards, the Lycanthrope has very little memory of what he or she did while transformed. Lycanthropy is a curable disease.

*Pegasus*

| | |
|---|---|
| HD | 3 |
| CM | +1 (level), +1 (Str) |
| AC | 0 |
| Dam | 1 (kick, bite), +1 (Str) |
| MV | 100m/300m/500m |
| | *fly* —/300m/500m |
| AL | Good |
| MR | No |

Description: Pegasi are winged horses, wild and shy. Adult Pegasi cannot be tamed, but it is possible to train a Pegasus to carry a rider if the Pegasus is captured and trained when young.

*Troll*

| | |
|---|---|
| HD | 7 |
| CM | +3 (level), +5 (F.T.), +4 (Str) |
| AC | 2 (leathery skin) |
| Dam | 1d8 (talon), +4 (Str) |
| MV | 100m/200m/400m |
| AL | Evil |
| MR | Yes |

Description: Trolls are tall and gaunt monsters that often roam about at night. Their skin is leathery and their faces ugly. Sunlight turns Trolls into stone: every combat round they are in sunlight, they must make an unmodified Resistance Roll or be turned to stone.

*Wolf*

| | |
|---|---|
| HD | 1 |
| CM | — |
| AC | 0 |
| Dam | 1d4 (bite) |
| MV | 100m/250m/500m |
| AL | Good |
| MR | No |

Description: Wolves roam in packs, and are bravest when with other Wolves.

## The History of the World and the Tripod of Light

*I: The Gods Cast Lots.*

When the world was young, the gods divided the peoples between themselves. The two sisters and two brothers, Aulë, Aldaron, Eru, and Morgoth, met together and said to each other, "There are four of us, and four peoples upon the world. It is fitting and proper that each of us should gather one of the peoples to us, that we may protect them and they may serve us." All agreed and cast lots, one after the other.

Aulë cast first, and to her fell the Dwarves. "This people shall dwell in my body and come forth from my womb. I will sustain them with love, and I will nourish them with food." And the others said, "It is fitting and proper."

Aldaron cast next, and to him fell the Elves. "This people shall dwell among my seed, the trees, and live as masters and servants of the woods. They will live, and love, and remember the covenant we make. I will not forsake my people unless they break our covenant." And the others said, "It is fitting and proper."

Eru cast third, and to her fell the Humans. "This people shall spread across the world, and become as numerous as the stars. My light will guide them, and my water will nurture them. My people will please me, and I will be proud of them." And the others said, "It is fitting and proper."

Morgoth cast last, and to him fell the Orcs. "This people shall burn with hatred for all those who oppose them. They will live in darkness, deep in the earth, among the trees, across the world. They will crush the other peoples, or I will punish them." And the others said, "This is neither fitting nor proper. Do not cling to this folly."

*II: Morgoth Declares War.*

But Morgoth was obstinate, and cried, "My people are stronger than your three peoples, and will conquer the world for me." And the others said, "How can you drive your people to this reckless course of action? Do you not love them?" Morgoth replied, "Delude yourselves if you wish, but the peoples are cattle, ours to herd and cull as we desire." And he departed, leaving them sorely troubled.

And there was war between the Orcs and the Three Peoples. Many fell on both sides, and Morgoth found to his dismay that the Orcs were not mightier than the Three Peoples. He inflicted dreadful punishments upon his people whenever they failed him, but to no avail. In disgust, Morgoth withdrew into the depths of the earth.

*III: The Demons Attack the Three Peoples.*

Deep within the ground, Morgoth encountered the Demons, who became the second of his peoples. Unlike the Orcs, the Demons were easily persuaded to make war upon the Three Peoples, for whom they felt no compassion or love. And many of the Three Peoples died. Hearing the pleas of their peoples, the Three met and decided to strengthen their peoples against the servants of Morgoth.

Aulë made the Dwarves resistant to the poisons and Magic Spells of the Demons. Aldaron taught the Elves their own Magic Spells to use against the Demons. Eru gave the Humans great heroes to follow into battle, champions such as the world has never before seen.

Thus enhanced, the Three Peoples strove against the Demons with renewed vigour. United, they drove the Demons back into the darkness deep under the earth. Aulë trapped them deep in her bowels, where they could no longer harm the peoples. And Morgoth was furious.

*IV: Morgoth Creates the Undead.*

In fury and fear, Morgoth drew upon the power of death, creating horrors that were neither alive nor dead. These creations were the Undead, not as powerful as the Demons, but more dangerous than the Orcs. Once again, many of the Three Peoples died. And once again the Three heard the pleas of their Peoples and met in council.

Aulë was unable to strengthen the Dwarves, because her watch over the Demons in her bowels took much effort. "I cannot help my people against this lesser threat when a greater threat could free itself because I am distracted."

Aldaron made the Elves immune to the paralysing touch of the Ghouls, because at that time there were many Ghouls among the trees. "I cannot help my people against all the Undead, but this much I can do."

Eru spoke last, and longest. "The Undead are many, and powerful. My people have pleased me, and I am proud of them. I will make myself present in my light, in my water, and in life itself, so that Morgoth's creations cannot prevail."

Once again the Three Peoples strove against the servants of Morgoth, the Orcs and the Undead. And while the Undead could no longer walk freely by the light of day, there were still many battles, and many wars, and untold numbers of the peoples died.

*V: The Three Send Forth Their Champions.*

The Three met again in council to try and discover some way to drive Morgoth from the world. After much deliberation, and with great sorrow, they decided to set in motion a process that would certainly drive Morgoth out of the world. Each of the Three went to their peoples and said, "Make for me a symbol of your love for me." And it was done. Then each of the Three chose a champion from their peoples, and said to them, "Go to Morgoth's throne room with the other two champions, and take from there a tripod of blackest iron." The Three Champions were Gimpë Darmon of the Dwarves, whom Aulë loved dearly, Linaewen Ar'Culurien of the Elves, who was a good friend of Aldaron, and Thomas of the Islands, who filled Eru with great pride and worked great miracles in her name.

The Three Champions went to Morgoth's citadel, Black Doom, and after many trials carried off a tripod of blackest iron. The Three Champions, aided by

Korlun the Orc, fled towards Ouro Preto, the underground city of the Dwarves, pursued by an army led by Morgoth himself. Gimpë Darmon fell on the ancient Battlefield of Maldon, and the others would surely have died also if Aulë had not come forth and battled Morgoth for the body of Gimpë whom she loved dearly. In Aulë's absence, several of the strongest of the demons escaped from her bowels, and swept through Ouro Preto, causing great destruction. The surviving Champions, aided by Korlun the Orc and Gorlë Darmon, cousin of Gimpë, drove away the demons, some back into Aulë's bowels and others away into the world.

After Aulë returned to Ouro Preto, she gave her symbol to Gorlë Darmon, and named him the new Champion of the Dwarves. Renewed in numbers, the Three Champions, accompanied by Korlun the Orc, crossed the Luin Erod Mountains with the tripod of blackest iron and Aulë's symbol. They travelled through Khantai to Fanchul, where Eru greeted them. She gave Thomas her symbol, and told the Champions to dip the tripod of blackest iron in the waters of Eru. When they did this, straightaway it turned into a tripod of shining gold, and Eru said, "This tripod, taken from the heart of Morgoth's darkness, is now a Tripod of Light. Go to where Aldaron waits for you with his symbol in the Menehalad Forest, for when our three symbols hang upon the Tripod of Light, Morgoth must flee the world or surely perish."

The Three Champions, accompanied by Korlun the Orc and Wulf, a Human from the Freeholds, took the Tripod of Light and the symbols of Aulë and Eru, and travelled around the Nevrast Mountains and along the Lemaris River to the Menehalad Forest. Despite the army of Orcs and Undead and Demons that Morgoth had brought to stop their journey, the Champions and their companions reached Aldaron in the Menehalad Forest. Aldaron gave Linaewen Ar'Culurien his symbol. The Champions put together the Tripod of Light, and hung the symbols of the Three upon it, sending Morgoth fleeing out of the world, for fear that the power of the Tripod of Light would destroy him utterly.

## VI: *The Three do not Forsake Their Peoples.*

After Morgoth had fled the world, Aulë and Eru came to the place where the Tripod of Light was set up, joining those already there. To the dismay of the peoples, the Three said that they had to leave forever, or else Morgoth would be able to return to the world.

"Why?" asked Thomas of the Islands.

"Because our brother must be where we are," replied Eru.

"It is so willed where will and word are one," continued Aulë.

"And ask no more," concluded Aldaron.

But the peoples were not willing to let their gods leave them.

"Mother, how can you leave us? We love you!" begged Gorlë Darmon.

"And I love you," Aulë sadly replied, "but I must leave. I will always love you."

"Have we shamed you?" implored Thomas of the Islands.

"No," said Eru, "you have made me very, very proud. But I must leave."

"You cannot leave," said Linaewen Ar'Culurien. "We have not broken the covenant." And there was silence.

Korlun the Orc spoke up, to the surprise of several present. "Aulë," he asked, "if you leave, who will stop the Demons rising up to kill the peoples?" And there was silence.

"We did not suffer at the hands of Morgoth for so long so that you could forsake us," growled Wulf. And there was silence.

"I cannot leave," said Aldaron. "I will not break the covenant."

"I cannot leave," said Aulë. "Who will protect my children?"

"I will not live alone with our brother," said Eru. "If you two stay, then so will I."

"But if we remain in body, Morgoth can return freely, and without fear," said Aulë, "and all this will have been for naught."

"There must be alternatives," replied Eru.

"If we remain in spirit but not in body, Morgoth could return in spirit, but his power would be reduced accordingly, and his presence would be less of a threat to our peoples," counselled Aldaron.

And thus the Three agreed to remain in sprit, but not in body, distant from us physically, but still close spiritually. Then, they left to dwell beyond the world and restrain their evil brother, Morgoth. The symbols of the Three were sent back to the places from which they came. The Orcs turned against their former masters, butchered their priests, and rejected their god, Morgoth, with rejoicing and celebrations. And life went on.